Conversations and Prospectives

Introduction
Up to this point, we have analyzed, interpreted, and discussed first century Christian rhetороlects as idealized cognitive models (ICMs).¹ We have used this approach, which emerged out of the discipline of cognitive semantics, because it offers strategies of analysis and interpretation of texts that are exceptionally helpful for moving from 19th and 20th century practices of biblical exegesis and commentary to 21st century sociorhetorical practices of analysis, interpretation, and commentary. Comprehensive essays by David B. Gowler² and H.J. Bernard Combrink³ have assisted the analysis and interpretation in this volume, as well as Fabrics of Discourse in 2003.⁴ In addition, published or forthcoming collections of essays and special programmatic essays by Duane F. Watson,⁵ Gregory Carey, L. Gregory Bloomquist,⁶ and Robert L.

⁵ Duane F. Watson, “Why We Need Socio-Rhetorical Commentary and What It Might Look Like,” in Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible (JSNTS 195; Sheffield: Sheffield
Webb have played an important role. In addition, many participants in the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Research Group, which is now a Seminar in the Society of Biblical Literature chaired by David A. de-Silva, have produced various essays that were part of the ongoing conversation. These include Russell B. Sisson, Wesley H. Wachob, Charles A. Wanamaker, Gerhard van den Heever, Roy R. Jeal, B. J. Oropeza, Dennis Sylva, Terry Callan, and others. Approaching first century Christian rhetorolects as ICMs, we have been able to work strategically with descriptive-narrative structuring, argumentative-enthymematic structuring, metaphoric mapping, and metonymic mapping in wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic discourse both prior to and during the first century CE in biblical, deutero-canonical, pseudepigraphical, and Greco-Roman literature.

In this chapter, we will engage in a series of conversations and prospectives that relate the work in this volume to various ongoing...


Including a forthcoming volume of essays on precreation discourse in Religion and Theology.

discussions and to research and interpretation that will occupy the second volume. Along the way we will use some insights from cognitive sociology to move beyond a discussion of rhetorolects as ICMs to a discussion of their role in social and collective memory among first century Christians. The writings of Eviatar Zerubavel will function as an important resource, since he has worked energetically with a “sociology of thinking,” which he calls cognitive sociology, to exhibit the nature of social memories and the relation of social memories to collective memory. Recent work on NT writings by Philip F. Esler and Samuel Byrskog will be used to focus and add perspective to this step in our discussion. Overall, this chapter will invite many voices into the conversation as this volume comes to a close and we move toward the next volume, which will investigate precreation, priestly, miracle, and creedal rhetorolect in early Christianity.

A Conversation with Jerry L. Sumney and Edith M. Humphrey: Chronology
At a review session of the manuscript of this first volume at the Society of Biblical Literature Meetings in San Diego during November 2007, Jerry Sumney and Edith Humphrey criticized the sequence of chapters in the volume. Since most interpreters consider wisdom discourse to be secondary to apocalyptic as a result of emphases within the teaching of Jesus and the letters of Paul, they argued, apocalyptic should have been the first rather than the last topic of research and discussion. At present, many will know, there is a bitter divide in New Testament studies over the chronological relation of wisdom and apocalyptic discourse in both the Q Sayings Gospel and the teaching of the historical Jesus. Both Sumnney and Humphrey construed my discussion in this volume to side with those who argue that wisdom discourse preceded apocalyptic discourse in the teaching of Jesus and the Q Sayings Gospel.

10 Eviatar Zerubavel’s writings became known to me through an email from L. Gregory Bloomquist on November 27, 2007, and from Samuel Byrskog’s essay, “A New Quest for the Sitz im Leben: Social Memory, the Jesus Tradition and the Gospel of Matthew,” NTS 52 (2006) 319-36, which Samuel told me about on November 26 at the 2007 AAR/SBL meetings in San Diego.


From my perspective, the presentation of wisdom rhetorolect first in this volume should not be construed as a strategy to enter, either implicitly or explicitly, the debate about the priority of wisdom or apocalyptic in the teaching of Jesus or the Q Sayings Gospel. Rather, the analysis and interpretation first of wisdom rhetorolect is based on insights from cognitive science that can help us understand how the earliest extant Christian writings communicated their message in all kinds of regions and locations in the Mediterranean world. The key is the way in which wisdom rhetorolect in the midst of the other five rhetorolects helped to make the unusual message of the earliest Christians accessible, in other words “familiar,” in unexpected regions and locations throughout the Mediterranean world.

In terms of chronology, it is likely that apocalyptic rhetorolect provided the earliest distinctive characteristics of first century Christian discourse. To understand how first century Christian discourse works cognitively, however, it is important to begin with wisdom rhetorolect. A noticeable feature of the earliest extant Christian literature is a significant presence of wisdom rhetorolect that functions as a medium for communicating the meanings of prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, priestly, and miracle rhetorolect. A major issue is how Christian discourse could gradually become a dominant discourse in the Mediterranean world, when other religious discourses did not, and how Christian discourse has been able to spread throughout other regions of the world in succeeding centuries to the present. The answer lies, from the perspective of the analysis and interpretation in this volume, in the multiple ways in which “conceptual blending,” namely “cognitive mapping between mental spaces,” occurs among wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, miracle, and priestly rhetorolect in the literature that became “canonical” for the Christian movement in the context of the first four centuries of its existence in the Mediterranean world.

Underlying the decision to analyze and interpret wisdom rhetorolect before the other rhetorolects is a presupposition that first century Christian wisdom rhetorolect was a primary medium for communicating the meanings of Christian thought, belief, and practice in the Mediterranean world. Wisdom rhetorolect provided basic cognitive frames during the first century with which people could negotiate the meanings of other rhetorolects in Mediterranean society and culture, it continued to provide those cognitive frames throughout subsequent centuries, and it provides those cognitive frames today. The issue is how Christian thought, belief, and action was appropriated cognitively.

by large numbers of people in the Mediterranean world, rather than a
chronology that insists that wisdom rhetorolect preceded or succeeded
apocalyptic rhetorolect in early Christian discourse. At stake is an ap-
proach to first century Christian writings that became "canonical" for
Christianity that explains the way in which Christian discourse also
works today in multiple regions and cultures throughout the world.

The conclusion of our investigation is that people learn basic cogni-
tive frames of wisdom discourse during childhood in the family house-
hold. An interesting issue is the degree of adult development of the
cognitive frames of wisdom discourse when people blend other cogni-
tive frames of discourse with them. When people encounter discourses
that concern the "adult" world of political decisions (prophetic), "spe-
cial" revelation (apocalyptic), philosophical discourse (precreation),
sacrificial discourse (priestly), and healing discourse (miracle), they
negotiate them with frames and modes of wisdom argumentation
which they learn from childhood and continually make richer and
fuller in significantly individual ways as they grow older. These nego-
tiations among frames and modes occur through conceptual blending
that takes the form of "overmapping." Adults place various networks
of meanings functioning in the "world of adults" over matrices of
more basic cognitive networks of meanings they learn as children.14
These overmappings reconfigure basic cognitive modes of thought,
belief, and action by bringing certain topics and patterns into the fore-
ground. This foregrounding, in turn, pushes other topics and patterns
into the background. The suppression of certain topics and patterns
does not cause them to disappear. They may be experientially ex-
cluded, but they remain in the background to reappear at any time that
people's minds, for one reason or another, recruit them. The "adult"
modes of thought, belief, and action, therefore, do not completely
displace the more basic cognitive modes. Often they do, however,
establish significantly new "priorities."

New modes of reasoning can establish new priorities in multiple
ways. As people's minds push different selections of topics into the
background and bring other selections of topics into the foreground,
highly different "blendings" emerge. A major issue in different con-
texts of communication is the dominance of certain blendings over
other blendings. The existence of multiple kinds of blendings creates
environments where "newly blended" networks of meanings regularly

14 These overmappings occur through complex processes associated with "final cul-
tural categories" and the "ideological texture" of people's locations, choices, belief, and
actions; see Robbins, Exploring the Texture of Texts, 86-119; idem, The Tapestry of Early
167-236.
have certain kinds of “familiarity” as a result of the presence of very basic modes of reasoning in them. Nevertheless, noticeable kinds of “strangeness” emerge and attract special attention. Communications of various kinds occur in contexts of strangeness, since those things which are unusual are related in various ways to things that are familiar. Thus through various kinds of blendings things are, as F. Gerald Downing captured in a book title, “strangely familiar” at the same time that they are unusually strange.

Inviting George A. Kennedy into the Conversation:
Worldly and Radical Rhetoric
The approach in this volume builds on the observation by George A. Kennedy that there is a significant intermingling of “worldly rhetoric” with “radical rhetoric” in the writings in the NT. In our terms, wisdom rhetorolect is grounded in topics and modes of argumentation Kennedy calls “worldly” rhetoric. Wisdom rhetorolect, therefore, is the “worldly rhetoric” that is a primary means by which the meanings of Christian thought, belief, and practice were communicated to people in the Mediterranean world. From a “sociorhetorical” perspective, in other words, a primary reason for the success of the earliest extant Christian literature was the presence of wisdom rhetorolect that contained major aspects of Mediterranean “worldly” rhetoric in its discourse.

Inviting George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Gilles Fauconnier, Mark Turner, and Critical Spatiality Theorists into the Conversation
George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have shown that metaphors people live by come from the contexts in which they live with their bodies. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner have shown, in turn, that people think by bringing insights from one domain into another domain, namely through metaphoric reasoning. This means that the metaphors

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15 F. Gerald Downing, Strangely Familiar (Manchester, 1985).
people use to think, believe, and act emerge in relation to their bodies in certain contexts.

**Wisdom Rhetorolect as Family Household Discourse**

When humans are born into the world, they are born into some kind of “family” location. The standard location into which children are born in “civilized” society is the family household. The everyday experiences and activities within the family household establish the basic cognitive frames and modes of thought, belief, and action of “wisdom” in humans. First century Christian wisdom rhetorolect is an adult version of wisdom that was developed by people living in the Mediterranean world during the first century who believed that God worked in a special way through Jesus of Nazareth to reveal a way to live in the world that is especially “fruitful.” Early Christian wisdom rhetorolect blends human experiences of the family household, one’s interpersonal body, and the geophysical world (firstspace) with the cultural space of God’s cosmos (secondspace). The goal of wisdom rhetorolect is to create people who produce good action, thought, will, and speech with the aid of God’s wisdom.

This means that while the primary cognitive location of first century Christian wisdom rhetorolect is in the family household, its radicality lies in its blending of God and God’s created world with the family household. This creates the primary metaphoric mapping in the discourse. In the lived space of blending (thirddspace) in early Christian wisdom rhetorolect, God functions as heavenly Father over God’s children in the world, whose bodies are to produce goodness and righteousness through the medium of God’s wisdom, which is understood metaphorically as God’s light in the world. In this context, wisdom rhetorolect emphasizes “fruitfulness” (productivity and reproductivity).

The time-space (chronotope) of first century Christian wisdom rhetorolect is “household-created world” time. In this context, wisdom time is production-reproduction time. This is “seasonal” time focused on “productivity” in an ongoing cycle of “birth-growth-death.” One of the characteristics internal to this “wisdom” belief system is to place ethical expectations on humans in relation both to their

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time in the cycle of life and to their location in God’s created world. Thus, different things are expected from full-grown adults, elderly people, young adults, and children, as well as different things from householders, leaders, overseers, stewards, servants, workers, strangers, and dependents. God’s time as “productivity” time, therefore, holds humans responsible for their words and deeds in relation both to “the season of their life” and to their location in God’s created world.

Christianity gave its foundational wisdom discourse distinctive features by embedding it in a holy family of God the Father, Jesus the only Son of God, and Mary the earthly mother of Jesus. This configuration of a holy family blends the concept of an earthly household containing a mother and a son with the concept of a world created by God, who is Father both of the universe and of the Messiah (chrestos) Jesus, from whom the followers of Jesus received the name Christian (christianoi: Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). When this family discourse blends with God’s created world, the concept of Holy Spirit blends with Mary, the mother of Jesus, especially through the stories of Jesus’ birth, where Jesus is “from the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:18, 20; cf. Luke 1:35). This blending creates a framework of belief that gradually overmaps the initial concept of the holy family with the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Christian creedal rhetorolect of the fourth century.

Prophetic Rhetorolect as Political Kingdom Discourse

Early Christian prophetic rhetorolect blends the speech and action of a prophet's body in an experiential space of God’s kingdom on earth (firstspace) with conceptual space of God’s cosmos (secondspace). The goal of prophetic rhetorolect is to create a governed realm on earth where God’s righteousness is enacted among all of God's people in the realm with the aid of God’s specially transmitted word in the form of prophetic action and speech. The metaphoric mapping of early Christian prophetic rhetorolect focuses on God’s “earthly kingdom” over which God is heavenly king, in which Jesus is God’s prophet-king Messiah, and in which followers of Jesus are authoritative prophets “anointed” for confrontation of people that leads to their rejection and perhaps even their death.

In the space of blending (thirdspace) in early Christian prophetic rhetorolect, God functions as heavenly King over his righteous kingdom on earth. The nature of prophetic rhetorolect is to confront religious and political leaders who act on the basis of human greed, pride,
and power rather than God's justice, righteousness, and mercy for all people in God's kingdom on the earth. The time-space (chronotope) of first century Christian prophetic rhetoroelect is “continued” time in the context of the beginning and ending of kingdoms. This continuation provides the occasion for various people to extend the manner of life into the present and future that certain people lived in the past. Since kingdoms have a beginning, middle, and end in the history of God’s world, different challenges exist in relation to responsibilities during the beginnings, highpoint, and final days of a kingdom. In order for a kingdom to come into existence, there must be “a call” of a prophet to take unusual actions that provide a context for God to bring a “special” kingdom into existence on earth. Once the kingdom has come into existence, God calls prophets to confront leaders of that kingdom with their violations of agreements God has made with them to establish their special blessings as they live on earth. During a nation’s downfall and end, and immediately after these tragic events, prophets turn more and more to visions as a medium of God’s communication with them.

**Apocalyptic Rhetoric as Imperial Military Discourse**

Early Christian apocalyptic rhetoroelect blends human experiences of the emperor and his imperial army (firstspace) with God’s heavenly temple city (secondspace), which can only be occupied by holy, undefiled people. The goal of this blending is to call people into action and thought guided by perfect holiness. The presupposition of the rhetoroelect is that only perfect holiness and righteousness can bring a person into the presence of God, who destroys all evil and gathers all holiness together in God’s presence. Apocalyptic redemption, therefore, means the presence of all of God’s holy beings in a realm where God’s holiness and righteousness are completely and eternally present. In this context, God is not simply “king,” but is “pantocrat r,” an emperor with “almighty” power over all things.

In the space of blending (thirdspace) in early Christian apocalyptic rhetoroelect, God functions as a heavenly emperor who gives commands to emissaries to destroy all the evil in the universe and to create a cosmic environment where holy bodies experience perfect well-being in the presence of God. Apocalyptic rhetoroelect, then, features destruction of evil and construction of a cosmic environment of perfect well-being.

The time-space (chronotope) of first century Christian apocalyptic rhetoroelect is “partitioned” time in a context of “eternal empire” time.

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This partitioning creates at least the following “parts” of time: (1) before creation; (2) creation; (3) Adam; (4) Noah; (5) Abraham; (6) Moses; (7) David, Solomon, and the kings of Israel; (8) the time of the nations (exile); and (9) “that time” (the end of times or the end of “time”). The issue, then, is not the beginning and ending of kingdoms, as in prophetic rhetorolect, but the beginning and ending of “all time” in the context of eras of time from the beginning to the end.

One of the questions our analysis of apocalyptic discourse raises is the presence or absence of “earth material” substances in the heavens and in God’s nature. It appears from our search of the literature that this topic has not attracted serious attention in modern scholarship. The account of creation in Genesis 1 gives the impression that God’s nature is intimately associated with light, sound, and “moisture” in the form of breath-vapor, but not with earthly substances like clay, stone, and metal. What one would call “earthly” substances, therefore, are perceived to be “outside” of God’s internal nature: part of the realm in and through which God “created” things. The account of creation in Genesis 2 pictures God as “forming” animals and humans from “earth.” While this account features “earth” as an important inner substance of animals and humans, it does not bring stone and metals into view, nor does it suggest that God’s nature is somehow like earth, stone, or metal. No one would anticipate even from Genesis 2, therefore, that animals, humans, God, or any divine beings could have stone (albeit “precious gem-stone”) or metal (albeit “refined/purified metal”) as part of their inner substance.

The nature of God as fire in prophetic discourse appears to be the context in which the relation of God’s nature to earthly substances, namely “fiery coal” (Isa 6:6; Ezek 1:13) and “precious gem-stone” (Ezek 1:4, 27), came into view. In turn, “living creatures” in heaven are a combination of animal, human, and “purified” metal (Ezek 1:5-25). Earth-material apocalyptic elaborates these images and extends them to living beings on earth who are manifestations of political kingdoms (e.g., Dan 7-11).

If we place our observations about locations in a table that displays not only wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic rhetorolect discussed in this volume, but also precreation, priestly, and miracle rhetorolect, which will be the subject of the next volume, we get the following table:

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24 See the twelve parts of “that time” or “the end of times” in 4 Ezra 14:11-12 and 2 Bar. 27; 53-70. Also, see 4 Ezra 14:10-18 for the concept that time grows old and weak.
Discourses/Rhetorolects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Prophetic</th>
<th>Apocalyptic</th>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Precreation</th>
<th>Priestly</th>
<th>Miracle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Locations</td>
<td>Kingdom</td>
<td>Heavens</td>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Primordial Realm</td>
<td>Temple</td>
<td>Earthly Physical Bodies; Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging Locations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Household (family; school-house)</td>
<td>Household (imperial [emperor’s])</td>
<td>Household (God’s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eternal Realm (future)</td>
<td>Eternal Realm (future)</td>
<td>Eternal realm (timeless)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inviting Timothy Beech into the Conversation: Mediterranean Discourses

In a Ph.D. thesis written at St. Paul University, Ottawa, Canada, under the guidance of L. Gregory Bloomquist, Timothy Beech proposed that first century apocalyptic rhetorolect is a localization of Mediterranean “mantic” discourse along with “oracle” discourse. Then in response to a question at his oral defense of the dissertation, he proposed that Hebrew prophetic discourse also is a localization of Mediterranean “mantic” discourse. This would mean that early Christian prophetic and apocalyptic rhetorolect are both localizations of Mediterranean mantic discourse, alongside Greco-Roman oracle discourse, which is another localization of Mediterranean mantic discourse.

The interchange has caused me to expand the insights of Beech beyond first century Christian prophetic and apocalyptic rhetorolect as localizations of Mediterranean mantic discourse. My provisional conclusion is that first century Christian wisdom and precreation rhetorolect are two localizations of Mediterranean philosophical discourse. Wisdom rhetorolect is a localization of Mediterranean moral philosophical discourse, and precreation rhetorolect is a localization of Mediterranean speculative philosophical discourse. In addition, first century Christian priestly and miracle rhetorolect are two localizations of Mediterranean ritual discourse. This produces the following table, which points toward discussions that will be developed in the second volume:

Discourses/Rhetorolects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediterranean Discourses</th>
<th>Manie Discourses (Divine Communications)</th>
<th>Philosophical Discourses (Mental Searching)</th>
<th>Ritual Discourses (Religious Actions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jews/Christian Religious-Theological Belief Systems</td>
<td>Prophetic</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inviting College Students and M.M. Bakhtin into the Conversation: Belief Systems

As I faced the challenge during Spring 2008 of communicating to a new class of Emory College students the nature of early Christian rhetorolects, instead of introducing the word “rhetorolect” I used the combined phrase “Discourses/Belief Systems.” The students immediately gravitated to the phrase “belief systems,” never using the term “discourse”! As I reflected on this, I realized that I myself had used M.M. Bakhtin’s understanding of belief systems in Chapter 4 on wisdom rhetorolect (p. 148, n. 33), where he defines a belief system as “the circle of one’s vision” or “conceptual horizon.”

It seems to have helped the students that I never once used the term “rhetorolect” in the classroom, and I do not insist on using the word “discourse.” To them, what I have called rhetorolects throughout this volume are alternative belief systems that blend with one another in early Christian writings.

The college students in my class seem to have no difficulty with the idea that there could be multiple, different belief systems functioning in first century Christian writings and in Christian writings today. Indeed they have become energized by the possibility of multiple belief systems in first century Christian writings, and they would like more class time to “practice” identifying, discussing, and interpreting the major, alternative belief systems that were present, and in some reconfigured way are still present today. They also are intrigued by the way these belief systems blend with one another. They consider this blending to be similar to the blending that occurs when they purchase a “smoothie” at the Cox Hall Food Court. Indeed, they know that when different things are blended together in the smoothies they order, some things remain quite “chunky,” while other things blend together so thoroughly that it is almost impossible to identify their particular characteristics, except that they know they are there! Then their next question regularly is, “Exactly how are the belief systems related to inner texture, intertexture, social-cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture?” This takes us to our next conversation.

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26 Bakhtin, The Dialogical Imagination, 425. The editors explain that “When the term [Russian: krugozory] is used on a global or societal scale we have rendered it as ‘belief system’; when it refers to the local vantage point of an individual, as ‘conceptual horizon’.”
Inviting Exploring the Texture of Texts into the Conversation: Deity, Holy Persons, Spirit Beings

As I was writing this volume, colleagues asked me regularly about the relationship of early Christian rhetorolects to the sociorhetorical textures discussed in publications that appeared in 1996. Gradually I have become convinced that the first century Christian rhetorolects discussed in this volume came into view as a result of applying the analytical strategies of “sacred texture” to the inner, inter-, social-, cultural, and ideological texture of writings that emerged during the first four centuries of the Christian era. As a result of this awareness, it is now possible to present an initial discussion and display of the dimensions of the six rhetorolects on the basis of the topics of sacred texture as they were presented in 1996: deity, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics. Let us begin with deity, holy persons, and spirit beings. Then as we discuss the other topics, we will bring other people into the conversation.

A key to understanding the changing role of deity, holy persons, and spirit beings in the six rhetorolects lies in the studies of Fauconnier and Turner. In their discussion of simplex networks, Fauconnier and Turner introduce the relation of frames to character in blending processes. From our perspective, rhetorolects are cultural frames that are so robust they are idealized cognitive models (ICMs). When Fauconnier and Turner describe a frame in the context of explaining a simplex network, they say: “An especially simple kind of integration network is one in which human cultural and biological history has provided an effective frame that applies to certain kinds of elements as values, and that frame is in one input space and some of those kinds of elements are in the other input space.” For an example they use the “readily available frame of human kinship,” which is “the family, which includes roles for father, mother, child, and so on.”

From our perspective, Fauconnier and Turner’s discussion of the family as a human kinship network applies to the experientially

29 Ibid., 120-23.
30 Lakoff, Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things, 68-76.
31 Fauconnier and Turner, The Way We Think, 120.
32 Ibid.
grounded (firstspace) frame that first century Christians built up into an ICM we call wisdom rhetorolect. In their discussion, Fauconnier and Turner introduce two human beings, Paul and Sally, who blend through cross-space mapping in a simplex network that is a “Frame to values connection – that is, an organized bundle of role connectors. In this case, the role father connects to the value Paul and the role daughter connects to the value Sally.”

In first century Christian wisdom rhetorolect, there is, first, a frame to values blend that connects the role Heavenly Father to God and the role earthly Son to Jesus. Second, this simplex network has a potentiality of blending with any number of “fathers,” “mothers,” “sons,” and “daughters” with or without specific names in Christian “stories.” In this context, the father-son “frame to values” simplex network may blend with people in Christian stories in the form of mirror networks, single-scope networks, double-scope networks, or even multiple-scope integration networks.

The value “Paul” blends into the first century Christian wisdom “family” network when Paul himself sends a letter that says, “For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel” (1 Cor 4:15). In this communication the role father connects to the value Paul in such a way that it invites the Corinthians to recruit first century Christian wisdom rhetorolect, which supports Paul’s speaking to them in an instructive, didactic mode. Paul fills this frame with discourse when he says: “I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children…. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. For this reason I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church” (1 Cor 4:14, 16-17). In this wisdom rhetorolect, the role father connects to the value Paul in such a manner that the role child connects to the value Timothy, who has learned from his “father” Paul and can transmit what he has learned from his father to Paul’s other “children”

33 Ibid.
34 I am grateful to Gilles Fauconnier for sharpening this issue for me both in emails before the November, 2007, SBL Conference in San Diego and in the session with him during the meeting. He clarified the importance of the people in the blends in the rhetorolect by responding in particular to my discussion of role, value, identity, and character in Vernon K. Robbins, “Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination,” in Petri Luomanen, Ilkka Pyysäinen, and Risto Uro (eds.), Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science (Biblical Interpretation Series 89; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007) 184-92 [161-95].
36 Ibid., 299-308.
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(Timothy’s “brothers and sisters”) in the Corinthian church through an activity of “teaching.”

When the frame shifts from human kinship, in which wisdom rhetorolect is grounded, to the readily available frame of political kingship, in which prophetic rhetorolect is grounded, the frame contains “political interlocutors,” who function in roles of king, prophet, emissaries, and so on. The existence of the Herodian dynasty during much of the first century CE provided an experientially grounded (firstspace) frame for early Christian prophetic rhetorolect to be built up into an ICM. In this context, the frame to values connection in the story of Israel played a role through people like David and Nathan (2 Sam 7); Uzziah, Jeroboam, and Amos (Amos 1:1); Josiah, Jehoiakin, Zedekiah, and Jeremiah (Jer 1:1-3); and many others. In this “Israelite story,” the values David, Uzziah, Jeroboam, Josiah, Jehoiakin, and Zedekiah connect to the role king and the values Nathan, Amos, and Jeremiah connect to the role prophet. First century Christian prophetic rhetorolect, which is grounded in the frame to values connection in the political kingship simplex network, blends into this network the values God connected to the role Heavenly Father-King and the value Jesus connected to the role earthly-Son King-Messiah. In this frame-shifting to prophetic rhetorolect, the wisdom Father-Son frame to values blend does not disappear. Rather, it blends with the prophetic King-Messiah frame to values network in a manner that places the Kingship of God and the Messiahship of Jesus in the foreground, supported by the Fathership of God and the Sonship of Jesus in the background.

When the Christian story introduces someone like “Paul” into the prophetic political kingship blend, we begin to see how the different rhetorolects worked in first century Christian discourse. It did not work right to connect either the role “king” or the role “messiah” to the value Paul. Therefore, another role had to be recruited from the network for Paul. One of the natural roles for the value Paul in the “God-King/Jesus-Messiah” network was “prophet,” one who receives divine messages from God-King and delivers them to earthly kings, leaders, and members of the political kingdom. Paul, of course, would not be confronting Jesus-Messiah-King, like the prophets of Israel might. Thus the role had to be reconfigured. Paul reconfigured the language of prophet to “apostle” as he localized the prophetic network in his discourse. The reconfiguration worked in the context of Paul’s “identity” and “character,” to which we must turn next. Paul’s identity does not allow the role king or messiah to be connected to him. Therefore, the role prophet is the natural candidate. But Paul’s character in his letters is not one that foregrounds his confrontation of kings. In his discourse, therefore, Paul reconfigures the language of “prophet”
through a “prophet-wisdom blend” into the language of “apostle,” one sent by both God and Messiah Jesus to create “families” belonging to both God and Christ. The prophetic-wisdom blend foregrounds Paul’s authority to confront people with a specific message he has been given by God and Messiah Jesus to deliver to people, but it also supports Paul’s presentation of this message in a didactic, “fatherly” mode for the purpose of building “family–communities.”

Another readily available frame during the first century CE was “imperial domain,” which includes roles for emperor, emperor’s son, ruling elite, military forces, and elite alliances, all supported by divine sanction and elite values. From our perspective, first century Christians built up both apocalyptic and precreation rhetorolect on this experientially grounded (firstspace) frame. Apocalyptic rhetorolect emphasized the presence of God’s ruling elite (Son of man, angels, etc.) while precreation rhetorolect emphasized the presence of the God’s heavenly household, God’s imperial son, and elite alliances established through the emperor’s son. We will not discuss precreation rhetorolect here, since this is a major topic for the second volume. When Paul’s discourse places him within the apocalyptic imperial domain frame, the role of seer who receives “revelations” connects to the value Paul received a special “gospel” through “a revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:12). This enabled him not only to speak as a teacher of “knowledge or prophecy or teaching,” but as one who could speak with “a revelation” that would benefit his hearers (1 Cor 14:6). Indeed, Paul had received special “visions and revelations of the Lord” in which he had been caught up into the third heaven (2 Cor 12:2). This allowed him to “speak God’s wisdom, in mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory,” which no earthly rulers understood (1 Cor 2:7).

Blending wisdom with apocalyptic, Paul presents himself and his associates “as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries” (1 Cor 4:1). In addition, Paul knows a special apocalyptic mystery concerning how “we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet” (1 Cor 15:51-52). Indeed, Paul “knows” that at the coming of Christ all who belong to Christ will rise up in the resurrection (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 4:16), after which will come the end, when Christ “hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power” (1 Cor 15:24). In first century Christian discourse, then, the value Paul not only connects to the roles of teacher of wisdom and prophetic apostle of the gospel, but also to the role of apocalyptic seer of the resurrection of God’s Messiah, the coming again of God’s Messiah, the resurrection of the dead, and the end time. In other words, multiple frames blend with

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one another to make a robust belief system filled with networks of human kinship, political kinship, and imperial domain.

When a value like Elizabeth, Zechariah, Mary the mother of Jesus, John the Baptist, Peter, Mary Magdalene, Judas, James, or Stephen is present in a network, identity and character function dynamically to limit, direct, or reconfigure relationships in the blending. As Fauconnier and Turner state: “It is a central aspect of human understanding to think that people have characters that manifest themselves as circumstances change…. Character transports over frames and remains recognizable in all of them.” During the first century, Christians found a way for the identity and character of God and Jesus to transport over six major cultural frames: wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, priestly, and miracle. Both the character of God and the character of Jesus became more robust as the six rhetorolects blended with one another. In first century Christian discourse, God functions as Father (wisdom); King (prophetic); Almighty Emperor (apocalyptic; precreation); Holy God (priestly); and Divine Power (miracle) with multiple roles in multiple blends. In turn, Jesus functions as Son (wisdom); Messiah (prophetic); Son of Man (apocalyptic); Word (precreation); High Priest (priestly); and Son of God/Son of David (miracle), again with multiple roles in multiple blends. For first century Christians, the identity and character of both God and Jesus allowed them to function robustly in multiple “cultural roles” in the six different frames (rhetorolects).

Interpreters have much to do, of course, to “update” our understanding of how blending works in relation to identity and character in both God and Jesus in first century Christian writings. But the other major topic is, “What about all the people in the ‘story’ of Israel as well as the unfolding story of Christianity?” This is where the story-lines discussed in this volume become important in the discussion of blending in rhetorolects. First century Christians were able to find a robust role in at least four of the six rhetorolects for people like Moses. Some people however, like Solomon, only functioned prominently in one rhetorolect (in this instance, wisdom). In other words, first century Christians “presupposed” that God functioned robustly in all six frames (rhetorolects), and they “built up” the character of Jesus to function robustly not only in wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic rhetorolect, but also, as we will see in the next volume, in precreation, priestly, and miracle rhetorolect. But they did not try, or not were not able, to build up the character of every “biblical” or “Christian” person in such a way that they functioned dynamically in all six rhetorolects. Rather, “identity” and “character” put certain “biblical” and “Christian” people

38 Ibid., 249.
either decidedly in the background of certain rhetorolect story-lines, or it eliminated them altogether from a particular story-line.

The relation of frame to identity and character, then, is a highly important issue in analysis and interpretation of conceptual blending in early Christian discourse. Fauconnier and Turner list five character types: saint, diplomat, hooker (prostitute), mediator, and conqueror. Then they say: “Construing prostitute as just a general frame, we can investigate character by asking how such a character would perform in that frame.” Then they ask how “Mother Teresa, Margaret Thatcher, Cleopatra, or Bill Clinton would operate within the prostitute frame.” They observe that Mother Teresa’s character (saint) might reveal itself in acceptance of “the sacrifice with fortitude, by never complaining, by trusting God.” But “the frame cannot impinge upon her character, for ‘To the pure, all things pure’.” Therefore, character will prevent her from ever becoming a prostitute. In the case of Mary Magdalene, they suggest, there is a requirement of a change in character from prostitute to saint. This is a very important discussion for the first century Christian rhetorolects. The rhetorolects I have introduced suggest that both God and Jesus somehow fill both the frames and the roles internal to wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, priestly, and miracle rhetorolect. But how do God and Jesus operate within each frame? How many “biblical” people from the “story of Israel” may operate within each frame? Then how do people in the “Christian” story-lines operate within each frame?

One of the key aspects of early Christian discourse is its presentation of Jesus as a character who is transportable over many different frames and activities. The transportability has certain limits, but the nature of the different frames is truly remarkable, since a significant number of the frames have counterfactual relationships to one another. There are frames that present Jesus with seemingly unlimited power, juxtaposed with frames that present Jesus with power so limited that people are able to kill him and bury him. There are frames that limit Jesus to a human personage born on earth, and frames that present Jesus as a cosmic being who existed “before all other things were created.” There are frames that limit Jesus to a human personage who “loves even his enemies,” and frames that present Jesus as destroying people on earth with a two-edged sword that comes out of his mouth. There are frames that present Jesus as “a friend of prostitutes and tax-

39 Ibid., 253.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 31–32, 87–88, 218–19, 224–31, 238–47. I am grateful to L. Gregory Bloomquist for continually pursuing the issue of counterfactuality in the rhetorolects.
collectors,” and there are frames that present Jesus as the perfect, holy high priest in the heavens. On the one hand, the rhetorolects blend Jesus with six major “character types”: sage; prophet; end-time seer and judge; eternal being; priest; and miracle worker. On the other hand, the rhetorolects blend Jesus with six major cultural frames: wisdom; prophetic; apocalyptic; precreation; priestly; and miracle.

In this volume, we have discussed not only how God and Jesus function within the three frames of first century Christian wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic discourse. We have also discussed how certain “biblical” people in the story of Israel either function in them or are not included in them during the first century. In addition, we have discussed some of the ways Paul himself functions in the “Christian story-lines” of first century Christian wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic rhetorolect. But there is much work left to be done. An initial attempt to display the appearance of major personages (deity, holy persons, and spirit beings) in the six rhetorolects has produced the table below. The table does not try to include the function of people like John the Baptist, Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary the mother of Jesus, John the Baptist, Herod, Peter, Judas, Mary Magdalene, James, etc. in the frames. Nor does it analyze, describe, and interpret the function of unnamed people like Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, tax collectors, etc. in the frames. This means that much work remains to be done to describe the manner in which identity and character transport across the frames in the six major first century Christian rhetorolects.

### Deity, Holy Persons, and Spirit Beings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediterranean Discourses</th>
<th>Mantic Discourses (Divine Communications)</th>
<th>Philosophical Discourses (Mental Searching)</th>
<th>Ritual Discourses (Religious Actions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jewish/Christian Religious-Theological Belief Systems</td>
<td>Prophetic</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deity</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>God (Jesus): Robbins, Exploring, 120-121</td>
<td>God as Cosmic King</td>
<td>God as Cosmic Military Emperor</td>
<td>God as Cosmic Father of the Earth</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Holy Persons</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus: Robbins, Exploring, 121-122</td>
<td>Jesus as Prophet</td>
<td>Jesus as Son of Man</td>
<td>Jesus as Son/Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Inviting John D. Caputo into the Conversation: Story-Lines in Divine History

The next “sacred texture” category in Exploring the Texture of Texts is “divine history.” In this analytical frame, “divine powers direct historical processes and events toward certain results.” At this point, it is important to invite John D. Caputo into the conversation. His book The Weakness of God programmatically explores the content of names as “events.” Of special importance is the way in which “Events are what names ‘mean’ in the sense of what they are getting at, what they are trying to actualize, the source of their restlessness, the endless ends toward which names reach out, hurling themselves forward toward something, I know not what, toward God knows what.” In his presentation, names are “events” that are known by their uncontainability, translatability, deliteralization, excess, and evil, and which are beyond being, constitute the “truth” of a name, and have an irreducibly temporal character.

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44 Robbins, Exploring the Texture of Texts, 123.
46 Ibid., 5.
47 Ibid., 2-7.
Caputo’s discussion explains how and why most of the “events” in the story-lines of the six first century Christian rhetorolects are “names.” The issue is a theological hermeneutics which “tries to follow the tracks of the name of God, to stay on the trail it leaves behind as it makes its way through our lives.” Of special importance is his description of a “bipolarity” in theology. In his words, “theology is a house divided against itself … it lacks self-understanding to the point that it is intellectually bipolar, vacillating wildly between the heights of power and the depths of weakness.” In my terms, where there is wisdom about loving one’s enemy, this wisdom blends conceptually with power that judges and destroys. Where there is prophetic confrontation that judges, this prophetic confrontation blends conceptually with wisdom that says he who judges shall be judged. The question at any point is what rhetorolects are overmapping one another and how. The real complexity is that two, three, or four “naming” discourses “team up” at times either with or against one or two others that are blended together. We will see in the next volume that where there is love before creation, it blends with judgment in the present. Likewise, where there is sacrifice that redeems, there is killing that judges. The bipolarity is so complex and so convoluted that it blends conceptualities “all which ways” in its attempts to express itself. All of this requires “continual conceptual blending.” What Caputo attempts through deconstruction, therefore, this volume attempts through conceptual blending. An initial table of names as events in the six major first century Christian rhetorolects looks as follows:

### Divine History/Story-Lines (Names as Events)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robbins, Exploring, 123-125</th>
<th>Prophetic</th>
<th>Apocalyptic</th>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Precreation</th>
<th>Priestly</th>
<th>Miracle</th>
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Ibid., 7.
Ibid., 7-8.
In sociorhetorical terms, these names emerge from the descriptive-narrative structuring in the rhetorolects that produce rhetography, the image-schemas and pictures that invite people’s minds to recruit plot-lines and story-lines in the history of the world God produced through his act of creating. In this volume, we have explored three of the six story-lines: wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic.

**The Story-Line of Wisdom: Creation, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus**

Resources for the wisdom story-line lie in Genesis, the Deuteronomistic literature, literature attributed to Solomon, the psalms, the prophetic literature, and common knowledge about people who sow grain, bake bread, herd sheep, sweep their houses, and tend vineyards. This means there are four basic rhetorical resources for early Christian wisdom rhetorolect: (1) Torah wisdom; (2) wisdom story; (3) proverbial wisdom, and (4) argumentative wisdom. The resource for Torah wisdom lies primarily in statements that God told to Moses and Moses told to Israel. Resources for wisdom story lie in traditions about people like Joseph and Daniel, but in many other places as well. Resources for proverbial wisdom lie in traditions about Solomon and other people like Job in the Hebrew Bible, in Hellenistic Jewish literature both inside and outside the OT Apocrypha, and in Hellenistic-Roman moral philosophical literature of various kinds. Resources for argumentative wisdom are especially rich in the sphere of Hellenistic literature, both Jewish and Hellenistic-Roman. Sirach 40-48, in particular, exhibits a

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"Robbins, “Rhetography.”"
wisdom story-line of famous people on earth. The resources for early Christian wisdom rhetorolect, therefore, are both deep and wide in the Hebrew Bible, in Hellenistic Jewish literature, and in Hellenistic-Roman literature contemporary with early Christianity. The story-line features God as giver of wisdom and a prestigious line of wise people down to Jesus, who possessed special wisdom, and people after Jesus, who continued, and continue today, to present the wisdom of God to others.

The Prophetic Story-Line: Abraham, Moses, Prophets, Kings, Exile

In first century Christian prophetic rhetorolect, God functions as King of the heavens and focuses in a special way on people God has chosen and called to enact and exhibit righteousness and justice on earth. When Jesus functions as God’s Messiah on earth, his rule as earthly king blends with the fate of God’s prophets. This creates a curious blend of earthly king and earthly prophet, where God authorizes an earthly prophetic king to die a kingly prophetic death. The first century Christian focus on Jesus as an earthly Messiah therefore blends three spaces – God’s kingship in heaven, God’s kingdom on earth where God’s Messiah was killed, and God’s special people who believe in Jesus as God’s Messiah.

Rather than focusing on people from childhood to adulthood, prophetic rhetorolect focuses on the responsibilities of adult leaders to fulfill God’s will to have a special kingdom of righteous people on earth. The effect of prophetic rhetorolect in first century Christian discourse was not only the production of distinctively authorized confrontational modes in the Mediterranean world but also the production of story-lines that validated the authorization. There are three basic rhetorical resources for early Christian prophetic rhetorolect: (1) the story of Abraham; (2) the story of Moses; and (3) stories and oracles of prophets and kings during the time of kings over Israel.

The image-description structuring (rhetography) of early Christian prophetic rhetorolect emphasizes the relation of events in God’s renewed kingdom on earth to God’s initial inauguration of and communication with a chosen kingdom of Israel. This structuring produces a sequential history that begins with Israel in the past, continues with Israel in exile through the time of the emergence of Christianity, gains new momentum with the story of Jesus in the context of the exile of Israel, and continues after the death and resurrection of Jesus in the lives of Jesus’ followers. Instead of simply creating a picture, the story-lines in first century Christian prophetic rhetorolect function as emergent structures for assertions, arguments, and stories based on: (1) specific people (including the speech of “personified scripture”); (2)
specific “event-pictures”;\(^{51}\) (3) specific stories; or (4) a series of events that comprise an “overall story.” Since kingdoms have a beginning, middle, and end in the history of God’s world, different challenges exist in relation to responsibilities during the beginnings, highpoint, and final days of a kingdom. In order for a kingdom to come into existence, there must be “a call” of a prophet to take unusual actions that provide a context for God to bring a “special” kingdom into existence on earth. Once the kingdom has come into existence, God calls prophets to confront leaders of that kingdom with their violations of agreements God has made with them to establish their special blessings as they live on earth. During a nation’s downfall and end, and immediately after these tragic events, prophets turn more and more to visions as a medium of God’s communication with them. These dynamics inform the prophetic story-line in God’s world. First century Christian prophetic rhetorolect produced multiple story-lines in which John the Baptist, Jesus, and followers of Jesus “continue” the lives of various prophets in the past through their confrontation of immoral and unjust practices, which brings them rejection, suffering, and even death.

**The Apocalyptic Story-Line: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Sodom, Gomorrah, Egypt, Son of Man, Resurrection of the Dead**

In apocalyptic rhetorolect, the discourse introduces theses, rationales, and conclusions to the hearer/reader through exceptionally picturesque scenes. The specificity and concreteness of apocalyptic discourse lies in revelation to specific people, display of very detailed descriptions of beings (God, beasts, evil personages, good personages), display of spaces (bountiful gardens, beautiful cities, spaces of punishment, spaces of worship, altars, temples, walls), and display of procedures (programmatic destruction of portions of the earth, specific procedures of torture, specific processes of journey of a righteous soul into heaven and then into the paradise of jubilation, specific processes of journeys through the heavens and throughout the cosmos).\(^{52}\)

\(^{51}\) An event-picture evokes a situation that implies a specific action or set of actions. Therefore, rather than simply picturing a “situation” like a household, it pictures a context in which an event took place but does not present a story of the event.

Apocalyptic produces a periodization of history that names a sequence of eras. Writings in the New Testament focus especially on six eras in the Hebrew Bible as they create an apocalyptic story of God’s world:

1. The time in which Satan, who is understood to be an evil angel cast out of heaven by God, successfully tempted Adam and Eve. Satan, working through Eve, caused God to cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, and Satan continually causes people to go astray in the present;
2. God’s taking of Enoch into heaven, where he oversaw God’s destruction of the world through a flood and the rescue of Noah by means of an ark that floated on the water;
3. God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven;
4. God’s sending of ten plagues against the Egyptians;
5. God’s empowerment of “one like a son of man” in the heavens to have authority and power over kingdoms on earth;
6. God’s development of a process of resurrection of the dead as a way to transport faithful people who have died away from an environment of divine destruction into an environment of eternal well-being.

For the Christian apocalyptic story, these periods of time became important for God’s apocalyptic transformations of Jesus, and for the eventual transformation of believers.

In addition to Jesus Christ and believers, the world is a focus of God’s activities of transformation in early Christian apocalyptic rhetoric. Within time, there will come a period when God brings all things to an end and will create a special era beyond time.

Inviting Seanna Coulson into the Conversation:

Human Redemption

In the midst of a discussion of deity, holy persons, spirit beings, and divine history, human redemption is a topic of great importance for first century Christian rhetoricians. In *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, I wrote that human redemption is the transmission of benefit from the divine to humans as a result of events, rituals, or practices. As a result of things that happen or could happen if people do them, divine powers will transform human lives and take them into a higher level of existence. Perhaps the result will be the changing of the mortal nature of humans — namely, a state of existence that leads to death — into an immortal nature, a state where they will no longer die. Or perhaps a burden of impurity or guilt is removed in such a manner that a person is liberated from powers or
practices that are debilitating and destructive.53

When I look back on this description of human redemption, I realize that I was describing some of the alternatives within the first century Christian rhetorolects. What is the view of human redemption in any one rhetorolect? Is it possible to describe the nature of human redemption foregrounded in each of the six major first century Christian rhetorolects?

Especially as I was working with the issue of the nature of human redemption in each of the six rhetorolects, I became aware of the importance of “frame shifting” as Seanna Coulson has discussed it in her book entitled Semantic Leaps.54 She describes frame-shifting as an emergence of meaning “from the integration of linguistic and nonlinguistic knowledge, as meaning and background are intimately intertwined.”55 Thus, she says, “Understanding which space is being built, and consequently which background frames are relevant, often proves crucial for understanding the overall significance of a linguistic utterance.”56

Frame-shifting is particularly important in first century Christian writings about human redemption. Let us take, for example, Mark 8:34-9:1. This unit begins with:

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? (Mark 8:34-37)

This appears quite clearly to be some kind of wisdom discourse. There are two rationales (8:35-36) that support a conditional clause (8:34) that presupposes that following Jesus will bring some kind of human redemption. This redemption comes from a paradoxical wisdom about gaining life by losing it, accompanied by the insight that attempting to save one’s own life will only lead to losing it. As Robert C. Tannehill has said, “The saying intends to be a paradoxx.”57 This paradoxical wisdom is supported by two rhetorical questions, one that asserts that attempting to gain the whole world will only cause one to forfeit one’s life and another that presupposes that there is nothing a person can give in return for their life.

55 Ibid., 31.
56 Ibid., 32.
So where can a person recruit meaning for this argumentative sequence? It would seem to lie in some kind of cultural frame of paradoxical wisdom. In a broad Mediterranean context, the cultural frame would seem to lie in some kind of Cynic wisdom like one sees in Epictetus: “If you want to be crucified, just wait. The cross will come. If it seems reasonable to comply, and the circumstances are right, then it’s to be carried through, and your integrity maintained” (Diatr. 2.2.10).\(^58\) In addition, one finds: “[S]ome persons, like cattle, are interested in nothing but their fodder; for to all of you that concern yourselves with property and lands and slaves and one office or another, all this is nothing but fodder!” (Diatr. 2.14.24).\(^59\)

But the cultural frame shifts in Mark 8:38-9:1:

> Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.’ (Mark 8:38-9:1)

A reader who has no ability to shift the frame from paradoxical wisdom to first century Christian apocalyptic rhetorolect will not be able to understand the meaning of these verses. Frame-shifting occurs in the sequence of statements away from paradoxical wisdom that might be informed by a Cynic-Stoic orientation to an apocalyptic view. In other words, in the sequence of statements there is a shift of frame from a perspective where a person achieves some form of “redemption” by learning a particular philosophical view and adopting a particular lifestyle to a perspective where a heavenly figure called “the Son of man” will come to judge people’s lives according to principles of God’s rule that come from Jewish heritage and will bring in God’s kingdom, understood as an era of the end time.

What kind of human redemption is in view in the sequence in Mark 8:34-9:1, then? It is not a redemption that paradoxically comes in the context of a particular philosophical lifestyle on earth, but that comes through action inaugurated by God understood through Jewish heritage, who will redeem not only humans but the entire created world. To understand the sequence more completely, however, it is necessary to analyze and interpret the particular blending of first century Chris-

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tian wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic rhetorolect that occurs in the frame-shifting in these verses. An initial display of alternative forms of human redemption in the six first century Christian rhetorolects looks as follows:

**Human Redemption/Body**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prophetic</th>
<th>Apocalyptic</th>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Precreation</th>
<th>Priestly</th>
<th>Miracle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robbins, <em>Exploring,</em> 125-126</td>
<td>Commissioned by God; Filled with God’s word</td>
<td>Earthly bodies transformed into heavenly forms; Heavenly bodies transformed into visible [earth-like] forms</td>
<td>Enlightened</td>
<td>Born of spirit</td>
<td>Holy</td>
<td>Restored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inviting Eviatar Zerubavel, Philip Esler, Marco Cinnerelli, and Samuel Byrskog into the Conversation:**

**Individual Commitment, Religious Community, and Ethics**

Beyond human redemption as an important topic, a person also finds human commitment, religious community, and ethics to be important in first century Christian discourse. This brings us to important issues in cognitive sociology, which help us to understand “memory-communities” in the Mediterranean world. First century Christian literature played a major role in the production, nurturing, and maintenance of memory-communities. Yet many questions emerge when a person makes an assertion like this. Some of the questions are: What is a memory-community? How do humans create memory-communities? What is the nature of memory-knowledge? What is the function of memory-communities in localized geographical regions? What is their function in large geographical areas containing many localized regions?

Using the language of Eviatar Zerubavel, we are seeking to understand the “social mindscape” of first century Christianity when we talk about memory-communities. This means we are supplementing “conceptual blending” with a “sociology of thinking” that calls attention to “sociomental” topics and issues. At this point, it will be helpful for us to remind ourselves that some form of primary Greek words for wisdom, prophecy, and apocalyptic (revelation) occur in six books in the NT: Matthew, Luke, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Revelation. In the NT canon, this represents the first and last books (Matthew; Revelation), the two longest Gospels (Matthew; Luke); and

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62 Ibid., 5.
10. Conversations and Prospectives

the first and longest two letters attributed to Paul (Romans; 1 Corinthians), plus a letter that scholars consider to be a summary of Paul’s undisputed letters (Ephesians). This means that these books contain “primary” language for both “social” and “collective” memory about wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic in early Christian discourse.

Sociobiographical Memory and Memory-Communities
The beginning point for Eviatar Zerubavel is a distinction between “personal” and “social” memory. He observes that personal memories are only part of our fund of memory knowledge. To be sure, every human has individual, personal memories, which no one but that person has. But a significant portion of a human’s memory knowledge, he proposes, is “social” memory, namely knowledge possessed by “memory-communities,” which he variously calls “mnemonic communities,” “thought communities,” or “cognitive subcultures.” In contrast to “personal” memories, he proposes, knowledge that memory-communities possess is “impersonal,” namely, knowledge that groups of people who never “personally” experienced the events have at the basis of the “social” knowledge they share in common.

Language, of course, is “the” primary tool that enables social memories to exist among members of memory-communities. The oral production of language and then the interactive relation between oral and written literature are the major means by which humans produce memory-communities. By the end of the first century CE, virtually no one was alive who had “personally” experienced events with Jesus of Nazareth. But many people lived in the context of “social memories” of Jesus of Nazareth that were repeatedly communicated to them through various language media, including hearing portions of the Gospels “performed” orally to them or read aloud to them. In this context, regularized meetings, commemorative times of remembering and celebrating, and established rituals of various kinds produced social memories located in time and space.

Zerubavel’s approach helps to explain both the reason for and function of certain quite surprising aspects of the writings in the New Testament. One of the remarkable things about the NT writings, for example, is an absence of reference to John the Baptist in all twenty-one letters and Revelation, and an absence of reference to Jesus as the Son of Man in all twenty-one letters. In addition, there is an absence of

\[63\] Ibid., 7-8, 31-34, 46-47, 89-95, 100-102.
reference to Adam in Revelation, in all the Gospels except Luke (3:38), and in all the letters except Romans (5:14), 1 Corinthians (15:22, 45), 1 Timothy (2:13-14), and Jude (14). There are, on the other hand, references to Moses in all the Gospels, in Acts, in Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, 2 Timothy, Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation. Still, however, there is no reference to Moses in fifteen (more than half!) of the NT writings. References to Abraham also occur in all the Gospels, in Acts, Romans, 2 Corinthians and Hebrews, and in addition they occur in Galatians, James, and 1 Peter but not in 1 Corinthians, 2 Timothy, Jude, and Revelation! Currently there is a principle in literary-historical biblical interpretation that arguments from “silence” are faulty arguments. Our argument is an argument from “presence,” but an argument that looks at this presence with an awareness also of absence in first century Christian writings. This double awareness is energized by cognitive sociology about memory, which calls attention to what people place in the background, minimize, avoid, or even intentionally “forget,” in the context of “remembering,” which is a process of foregrounding, maximizing, continually calling to attention, and intentionally “remembering” for fear of forgetting.

Throughout this volume we have searched for data that exhibits the selective use of wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic personages, imagery, argumentation, and story-lines in first century Christian writings. What is present in and absent from New Testament literature, we have proposed, can help us see processes through which first century Christians used certain language repetitively to produce discourse that guided their thoughts, actions, emotions, and commitments. A remarkable aspect of these writings is their diversity. Many of the writings are highly different from one another. Despite this diversity, however, there is significant unity. Zerubavel’s writings can help us describe this diversity and unity in ways that can move us forward into the 21st century with tools of cognitive science to aid us in our work.

**Collective Memory and Possible Social Identities**

One of the characteristics of early Christian writings is the presence of alternative “possible social identities” in their discourse. As we have

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said above, the first century Christian rhetorolects blend Jesus with six major "character types": sage; prophet; end-time seer and judge; eternal being; priest; and miracle worker on the basis of six major cultural frames: wisdom; prophetic; apocalyptic; precreation; priestly; and miracle. How many of these social identities are possible for believers to adopt, activate, or reconfigure in their lives? The lines humans draw and the distinctions humans make “vary across cognitive subcultures within the same culture during the same period.” Perhaps certain identities are possible for some people in some cultures that are not possible for others in other cultures. Exploring possibility social identities in contexts the exhibit the activation of certain identities could shed valuable light on the rhetorical effect of Christian discourse in various contexts throughout various centuries.

In Exploring the Texture of Texts and The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse,” the exploration of “specific social topics” established an initial framework for exploring possible social identities in first century Christianity. The table below exhibits a beginning point for exploring possible social identities in the context of the six major first century Christian rhetorolects. Much further work awaits to be done on bringing these identities into view in the earliest Christian writings, as well as in writings in Christianity and other religious traditions today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Commitment/Religious Community/Ethics</th>
<th>Prophetic</th>
<th>Apocalyptic</th>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Precreation</th>
<th>Priestly</th>
<th>Miracle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robbins, Exploring, 126-130</td>
<td>Reformat</td>
<td>Revolutionist/Conversionist</td>
<td>Gnostic-Manipulatior/Conversionist</td>
<td>Gnostic-Manipulatior/Thaumaturgical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Exploring, 73)</td>
<td>(Exploring, 72-73)</td>
<td>(Exploring, 72)</td>
<td>(Exploring, 72-73)</td>
<td>(Exploring, 73-74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Synchronization of Wisdom, Prophetic, and Apocalyptic Story-Lines in First Century Christian Discourse

Another issue in a discussion of cognitive sociology in relation to Christian discourse is synchronization of social memory in collective memory. According to Zerubavel, “Remembering and re-experiencing the past” are, over time, “fused into one comprehensive event.” This fusion produces “a single common collective memory”

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68 Zerubavel, Social Mindscapes, 63.
69 Robbins, Exploring the Texture of Texts, 72-75; idem, The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse, 147-59.
71 Zerubavel, Social Mindscapes, 95-99.
at the expense of personal and social memories. Individual, diversified social identities become unified, reduced by common forgetting linked to common remembering. This occurs through “synchronization” of social memory with collective memory. Individual writings exhibit negotiations of “social memory” with “collective memory,” and collective sociotemporal landmarks make it possible to integrate several different personal pasts into a single common past. ⁷² In addition, “[A] single common time (made up of a common past, a common present, and a common future) presupposes unmistakably impersonal, standard time-reckoning frameworks such as clock time and the calendar.” ⁷³ One of the major processes under way from the first through the fourth centuries CE were various synchronizations of social memory with collective memory. There is much here for investigators of Christianity to explore, analyze, and interpret. A very sketchy beginning point can be a tale like the following, which exhibits potentials for synchronization in the story-lines of first century Christian wisdom, prophetic, and apocalyptic rhetorolec.

### Synchronization in Process in First Century Christian Discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Prophetic</th>
<th>Apocalyptic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation: tree of the knowledge of good and evil</td>
<td></td>
<td>Creation: spirit-angels to watch over all creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam; death</td>
<td>Noah; flood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>Abraham and Lot: Sodom; Gomorrah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses; Torah</td>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>Moses: ten plagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>David</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon: proverbs</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel: Babylon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is gained by a collective memory is also a loss of diversity. Fortunately, writings are the products of a combination of socio-biographical memories, social memories, and collective memory. It is important in our research, analysis, and interpretation during the 21st century to remain in touch with all three kinds of memory not only in Christian writings but in writings throughout broad regions of our world.

⁷² Ibid., 101.
⁷³ Ibid., 102.
A Special Conversation with Eviatar Zerubavel about the Names of the Rhetorolects

Some colleagues have expressed disappointment that I did not find more innovative terms to describe first century Christian rhetorolects. To them, the terms wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, priestly, and miracle are too “conventional.” In retrospect, it may be the case that my analysis and description of first century Christian discourse has a relation to Columbus’s description of America when he “discovered” it. In Zerubavel’s words: “Whereas Columbus ‘viewed’ America as a mere extension of the familiar (that is, as a group of islands lying somewhere off the shores of China), Waldseemüller was prepared to re-view it as an altogether new cosmographic entity, and thereby to literally rediscover Columbus’s ‘Indies’ as ‘America’.”

I suppose it is natural that in my “discovery” of first century Christian discourse I have simply “viewed” it as an extension of the familiar, that is, as an extension of modes of biblical and deutero-canonical thought and writing during the Hellenistic-Roman period in the Mediterranean world.

The alternative could have been to “view” first century Christian discourse as “Christian discourse” rather than “emerging” discourse. I see a significant number of my colleagues describing the NT writings as “Christian discourse” rather than as a highly variegated “emerging Mediterranean discourse” during the first century CE. Some of the “issues” that have been raised about my analysis and interpretation of various portions of NT writings concern how certain emphases could be present (like “multiple” apocalyptic conceptions of the time[s] in which Jesus was transformed into a “divine-like” being) when these views do not appear among the early Church fathers and they are not consistent with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. A primary point of my analysis and interpretation is to exhibit the nature of first century Christian discourse prior to the “cognitive socialization” of it by leaders and writers during the second through the fourth centuries CE.

A major goal of my analysis and interpretation, then, is to view first century Christian discourse as “emerging Mediterranean discourse,” rather than as “fully-formed Christian discourse.” In other words, I think the NT writings indeed are “extensions of the familiar.” When we understand more clearly how they are extensions of the familiar, we are in a position to bring into sharper relief the “new” dimensions in the discourse. In other words, when multiple “discoveries” of the familiar and unfamiliar in first century Christian discourse are synchronized with one another, we can more sharply perceive and more

74 Zerubavel, Social Mindscapes, 27.
clearly display the nature of “an altogether new cosmographic entity” that emerged by the fourth century CE.

Why describe NT writings as “extensions of the familiar,” rather than as “an altogether new cosmographic entity”? It is my conviction that displays of the processes of change, like Zerubavel’s display of the steps in the shift from viewing the “New World” as part of Asia to viewing it as a continent of the “Americas,” is an important part of describing the nature of “the new.” Displaying these steps helps us understand how we as humans classify things, attending to certain things as “relevant” while relegating other things to “irrelevance,” placing certain things in the foreground and other things in the background, as we create “the story” of Christianity. This understanding can equip us both to understand the past responsibly and to live responsibly in a world bombarded with daily information from multiple forms of media.

**Inviting Relational Thinkers to Carry the Conversation into the Twenty-First Century**

This volume presents a thesis that the earliest Christian literature was informed by story-lines that presented God’s commitment to productivity (wisdom rhetorolect), the necessity for humans to engage in authoritative confrontation about the requirements of God’s ways (prophetic rhetorolect), and images of dramatic transformation of the created world (apocalyptic rhetorolect). A key to the thesis is a view that humans blend conceptualities, rather than setting them off from one another. This is likely to be an opposite instinct at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when religious traditions seem to be driven much more by opposition than by reconciliation. It might appear today that the great religious traditions set themselves apart from one another, and indeed internally set everything they do in opposition to what other people do. Actually, the opposite is true. The great religions have become what they are today through processes of dynamic blending of traditions and conceptualities with one another.

It is, in fact, a certain kind of science during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that has given scholars the impression that Christianity achieved its incredible influence in the world through processes of setting itself off from every other kind of thinking. This kind of science has led many scholars and theologians to argue that Christianity is a “faith” rather than a “religion.” This kind of argumentation and theology is a particular kind of Christian rhetoric, a rhetoric that results from blending certain kinds of specialist-oriented science with Christian belief. These specialist-oriented modes of science became highly prominent in a context in Western culture that emphasized the mind over the body. When a specialized focus on only one part of the body,
namely the mind, blended with a post-Kantian dualism between body and mind, scientific methods of literary and historical analysis and interpretation began to appear with processes, procedures, and goals that were intentionally extrinsic to the processes, procedures, and goals within the subject of study itself. The goal was to be objective, namely not to allow the processes, procedures, and goals of the subject performing the analysis or the subject under analysis to stand in the way. The goal needed to lie outside both the analyst and the phenomena being analyzed. The analyst needed to be kept out of the analysis, of course, because every analyst is biased, namely the analyst has his or her own self-interests. Ironically, it was considered important to keep the subject of the analysis out of the analysis, because the subject itself is deceptive, namely that which seems to be true is most definitely un-true! In other words, only that which is counterintuitive can be true. Those things which are obvious have to be thoroughly critiqued, tested under stringent procedures of analysis in contexts of attack from every conceivable angle a person can formulate. Only under these conditions, it was argued, can that which is true hold its own, namely to show itself for what it really is.

The present volume presupposes that modernist scientific procedures that exclude the subject from the analysis are insufficient for the tasks of exploration, analysis, and interpretation for the 21st century. While counterintuitive scientific procedures have produced highly valuable information, it is essential for us to engage in multiple kinds of cognitive scientific procedures of exploration, analysis, and interpretation to understand the nature of humans, human society, human history, human culture, and religions which humans have created over the centuries. Only to the extent that we find ways to robustly include subjects, subjectivities, and intersubjectivities75 in our interpretive analytics will we be able to deal dynamically and responsibly with the issues that face humans as they try to live together with one another throughout the 21st century.