

SOCIORHETORICAL INTERPRETATION (SRI) AND INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY (IBS): OUTLINES OF MARK, THE LORD'S PRAYER, AND THE SON'S PRAYER IN JOHN 17

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Abstract: There are many things in common between Inductive Bible Study (IBS) and Sociorhetorical Interpretation (SRI) as I practice it in the context of the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity (RRA) project.¹ Many of the similarities are a result of detailed focus on texts. The multiple strategies of interpreting both the inner texture and the intertexture of texts in SRI share much in common with IBS. As a result, many of the strategies of analysis and interpretation in the sections on "Observing and Asking" and "Answering or Interpreting"² in particular are highly congenial with or naturally integral to SRI.

BOOKS-AS-WHOLES

I did not include "books-as-wholes"³ either in *Exploring the Texture of Texts* or *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*,⁴ but I have been engaged in this especially energetically during the last decade. Instead of "determining" "the" division of the book (88), "the" main units (90), "the" book's subunits (90), and thereby "the" structure of the book (94) as is done in *Inductive Bible Study*, I am interested in the "implications" of displaying the sections of a book and its units in a certain way. IBS recognizes that different interpreters reach different conclusions about the sections in books, and that these differences regularly lead to different decisions about the nature of the book (89). The discussion in IBS gives me the impression that in the end there is "a correct" way to display the sections of a particular book. In my experience, the outline of a book and its units that an interpreter displays is a combination of careful analysis and artistic, or perhaps rhetorical, perception of the progressive texture of the book. I have become more and more fascinated with the different ways in which interpreters (and my very bright students) display sections of books and units, and what they see when they display them differently. This indicates to me that books and units of writings regularly have such complex, interwoven structures that it is often beneficial even for one interpreter to explain how different ways of displaying a sequence of text may lead to highly informative insights into things going on in the text.

An outline of the Gospel of Mark is a case in point. A display of only five of the many outlines of Mark during the past half century shows the remarkable variety of perceptions of divisions in the text. In the context of this variety, it does not seem good to me for an interpreter to assert that she or he will present the "definitive" outline of Mark. It would be better for interpreters to assert that they will introduce an outline that shows a particular aspect of the text that is related to the interpreter's choice of analytics and point of view about the text.

1. See <http://www.rra-sri.org/> for the regular meetings of the SRI and RRA project. I am deeply grateful to the following people for reading a penultimate version of this essay and making substantial suggestions that I have incorporated in the final version: L. Gregory Bloomquist; Robert H. von Thaden, Jr.; Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay; Roy R. Jeal; Susan E. Hylen; Juan Hernández, Jr.; Fredrick J. Long; Michal Beth Dinkler; and Robert L. Foster.

2. David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 75-175, 177-277.

3. Ibid., 79-142.

4. Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, ©1996, 2012); idem, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Vincent Taylor's outline was influenced especially by Mark's geographical framework.⁵ In contrast, Vernon K. Robbins's outline highlighted stages of interaction between the teacher and his disciples.⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins's outline makes use of multiple criteria like geography, themes, and various literary devices like *inclusio*.⁷ C. Clifton Black's outline emphasizes thematic structure along with summary transitions.⁸ Mary Ann Beavis's outline highlights transitions and interludes throughout the story.⁹

Outlines of Gospel of Mark				
V. Taylor 1963	V. K. Robbins 1981	A. Y. Collins 2007	C. C. Black 2011	M. A. Beavis 2011
1:1-13	1:1-13	1:1-15	1:1-15	1:1-13 Prologue 1:14-15 Tran.
1:14-3:6	1:14-20 Tran. 1:21-3:6	1:16-45 2:1-3:6	1:16-3:6	1:16-3:35 Act 1
3:7-6:13	3:7-19 Tran. 3:20-5:43 6:1-13 Tran.	3:7-35 4:1-34 4:35-6:6a	3:7-12 Tran. 3:13-6:6a	4:1-34 Int. 4:35-6:56 Act 2
6:14-8:26	6:14-8:26	6:6b-8:26	6:6b-8:21	7:1-23 Int. 7:24-9:29 Act 3
8:27-10:52	8:27-9:1 Tran. 9:2-10:45 10:46-11:11 Tran.	8:27-10:45 10:46-52 Tran.	8:22-10:52	9:30-10:52 Int.
11:1-13:37	11:12-12:44 13:1-37 Tran.	11:1-13:37	11:1-13:37	11:1-12:44 Act 4 13:1-37 Int.
14:1-16:8	14:1-15:47 16:1-8	14:1-16:8	14:1-15:47 16:1-20	14:1-15:47 Act 5 16:1-8 Epilogue

*Int. - Interlude, Tran. - Transition

5. Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1963), 107-111.

6. Vernon K. Robbins, "Summons and Outline in Mark: The Three-Step Progression," *NovT* 23 (1981): 97-114; idem, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress, ©1984; 2009).

7. Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 85-93.

8. C. Clifton Black, *Mark* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 2011).

9. Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark* (Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

There is one constant in these five outlines: all agree that 14:1 is the beginning of the ending of the Gospel of Mark. Beyond this, at least one person has an alternate point of view concerning the beginning and ending of a section. Does this mean that at least one person out of five is "always wrong" in the way they display sections of a text? I do not think so. The issue is what a person is looking at in a text, what they see, and how what they see in one portion of the text leads them to see particular things in additional portions of the text. It is important, in my view, to indicate where an author has included repetitive clauses or other formulations that signal an introduction, conclusion, or transition, like the repetitive statements in Matthew at the end of long speeches by Jesus.¹⁰ Even where clauses or other formulations like these are present, however, there still may be quite different ways of displaying its overall outline.

At the beginning of my career, I searched for "the correct way" to outline books in the NT. As a result, when I first taught I regularly "corrected" the way students identified the opening, middle, and closing of texts. I distinctly remember the day when I displayed the work of two students who had made noticeably different decisions about opening, middle, and closing in a unit of text. When they were displayed on two drop-down screens in the classroom, I asked the crucial question to each student, "What did you see that caused you to divide the text in this way?" The result was remarkable. Both students had cogent, persuasive reasons for determining the opening, middle, and closing for the unit, and both students called attention to very interesting phenomena in the text on the basis of their division. I had to revise my "scientifically precise" insistence for "my" way of determining opening, middle, and closing. To be sure, certain students did not make good decisions as they made the opening or closing just one line and lumped everything in the middle. And, to be fair, there was always a "range of variation" rather than "anything goes." I have concluded that texts are so complex that various ways of determining their opening, middle, and closing provide the opportunity to see different clusters or constellations of emphases within texts.

10. Matt 7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1-2.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMES GUIDING ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A major difference between IBS and SRI, as I experience it, is in the conceptual frame that guides them.¹¹ My experience of the description of procedures in IBS suggests that it is framed by what I understand to be “philosophical-theology in a canonical mode.” In this mode, one major goal is to move steadfastly toward “truth claims.” Another goal is to interpret scripture within canonical boundaries.¹²

My version of SRI is framed by an understanding of texts as social-cultural-ideological-religious discourse.¹³ This means that the goal is to describe how the language in the text functions as a social-cultural-ideological-religious “tool” of communication among humans during a particular time in a particular locale or region. This means that practitioners of SRI perceive words always to be interactive within contexts as they attempt to discern meanings and meaning-effects of texts of any kind, whether these are biblical or other texts. For me, philosophical-theology is a very important form of discourse, and discourse in the biblical canon has special authority within Christian belief, tradition, and practice. But there is no special reason that interpretation of the Bible should remain either within the confines of philosophical-theology or texts in the Bible. A major reason that leads me to resist these confines is context, which always reaches beyond the boundaries of any particular text. Another reason lies in the polymorphous components of any corpus of literature. Indeed, the initial biblical texts were written precisely to engage alternative stories and texts in their contexts. Thus, to close off this horizon delimits the texts in quite an unnatural way in relation to

11. For conceptual frames and framing, see Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 251-55, 261-62. For application of conceptual blending within an SRI framework to the New Testament, see Robert H. von Thaden, Jr., “Pauline Rhetorical Invention: Seeing 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:7 through Conceptual Integration Theory. A Cognitive Turn,” in *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies* (ed. B. G. Howe and J. B. Green; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 101-21; idem, *Sex, Christ, and Embodied Cognition: Paul's Wisdom for Corinth* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 16; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2012).

12. See especially Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 66-70, 343, 346, with very important clarification and application in 346-60.

13. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*; idem, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*.

their function in the contexts in which they were composed. In addition, the multiple modes of discourse in any corpus of literature evoke an emergent environment of conceptual blending that produces ever-productive networks of ongoing reconfiguration.¹⁴ The reconfiguration occurs, however, in contexts of persistent restraint activated through interplay with other modes of discourse either in one writing itself or in an overall corpus of select writings. In other words, all human communication occurs through interplay between discourse that has a certain degree of rhetorical power or stability through its acceptance as somehow “conventional” and discourse that subtly or dramatically reconfigures or reacts against this discourse.

This leads to another aspect of SRI which, if I understand correctly, differs from IBS. It seems to me that IBS is a “canonical” discipline as mentioned above. In other words, the interpretive strategies function centripetally so that intertextual interpretation is designed to move “inward” to interpret meanings and meaning-effects of books inside the canon. SRI, in contrast, is a “comparative” discipline. This means that intertextual interpretation is designed to move both centripetally and centrifugally. Not only are intertexture strategies designed to move from “outside” phenomena into canonical biblical texts to display potential meanings and meaning-effects evoked by them, but intertexture strategies also function to move from phenomena “inside” the biblical canon out into the Mediterranean world. These strategies display the manner in which biblically canonical texts functioned as emergent environments where phenomena moved “centrifugally” out from the texts and moved the texts “forward” conceptually in time and space.¹⁵

A major aspect of my view is that practices of analysis and interpretation grounded in the social and cognitive sciences hold great promise for 21st century Christians to participate fruitfully and faithfully in activities that can help Christianity find a rich and abundant home among all the religions of the world. Indeed, the social and cognitive sciences may help Christians to move beyond division and even hatred in the present global context of religious belief and practice. Humans

14. Vernon K. Robbins, “Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination,” in *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science* (ed. P. Luomanen, I. Pyysäinen, and R. Uro; Biblical Interpretation Series 89; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 161-95.

15. Vernon K. Robbins, “Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation,” in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. D. E. Aune; London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 192-219 at 195.

always have the ability to use their tools of communication for conflict, divisiveness, and destruction. My goal, in contrast, is to move toward understanding, cooperation, and building a highly complex world together with highly diverse people in our midst. Indeed, underlying my SRI approach is a belief that Christians have a responsibility to move toward cooperative relationships with other religious communities and traditions, rather than to foreground competitive relationships with them. The primary reason that the social and cognitive sciences may help Christianity with this responsibility is that these sciences seek to understand the overall nature of humans in the world, in their communities, and in their bodies. This kind of understanding naturally provides resources for being interested in people who are different from us, rather than disengaging from them or attempting to dominate them especially out of fear that otherwise they may dominate us. It is natural for a particular tradition of humans to think they are genuinely superior to other humans. While this ambience of superiority may create remarkable personal and cultural energy, it also naturally harbors and nurtures conflict, hatred, and destruction.

FROM WORD USAGE TO TOPOS AND RHETOROLECT ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The difference between the conceptual frames that guide IBS and SRI has a substantive effect on how a person understands “words” in a text. There are excellent guides for analyzing and interpreting “Word Usage” in IBS.¹⁶ A primary difference for SRI lies in the perception that many words and phrases evoke *topoi*, namely “locations” of social, cultural, ideological, and religious “reasoning.”¹⁷ Words and phrases, therefore, are not so much “things in themselves” as things related to other things. They are “locations of reasoning” within constellations or clusters of meanings and meaning-effects that function within social,

16. Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 186-201.

17. Vernon K. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse. Volume 1* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2009), 81-88; Carolyn R. Miller, “The Aristotelean *Topos*: Hunting for Novelty,” in *Rereading Aristotle’s Rhetoric* (ed. A. G. Gross and A. E. Walzer; Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 130-46; Barbara Warnick, “Two Systems of Invention: The Topics in the *Rhetoric* and *The New Rhetoric*,” in *Rereading Aristotle’s Rhetoric* (ed. A. G. Gross and A. E. Walzer; Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 107-29.

cultural, ideological, and religious networks of meanings. In the words of L. Gregory Bloomquist: “*Topoi*, thus, can be understood as those landmarks on the mental geography of thought, which themselves evoke a constellation of networks of meanings as a result of social, cultural, or ideological use—and the argumentative embedding of these *topoi* in the presentation of the argument(s) of the text.”¹⁸

The focus in SRI on *topoi* in their social, cultural, ideological, and religious contexts has led to a taxonomy of “rhetorolects”¹⁹ in emerging Christian discourse. A rhetorolect is “a form of language variety or discourse identifiable on the basis of a distinctive configuration of themes, images (rhetography), topics, reasonings, and argumentations (rhetology)...By their nature, rhetorolects blend with one another, interacting like dialects do when people from different dialectical areas converse with one another.”²⁰ Conceptual blending in the first century Jesus-to-Christ movement²¹ featured six major rhetorolects: wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, miracle, and priestly.²² Interaction between rhetography, the rhetoric of a text that evokes argumentatively effective graphic images and pictures in the mind, and rhetology, the rhetoric of a text that relies upon word-based argumentation, is especially important for understanding the internal processes at work both in a

18. L. Gregory Bloomquist, “Paul’s Inclusive Language: The Ideological Texture of Romans 1,” in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (ed. D. B. Gowler, L. G. Bloomquist, and D. F. Watson; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 165-93 at 174.

19. Pronounced rhetórolects, an elision of “rhetorical dialects.”

20. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 1:xxvii-xxviii.

21. In the present context where many scholars are still searching for what might be the best way to describe the first century Mediterranean people who were gaining an identity as believers that Jesus was Messiah and Lord, I prefer either the “emergent” phrase “Jesus-to-Christ movement” or the phrase “emerging Christianity,” rather than Jesus movement, Christ movement, Messianite movement, members of The Way, or some other terminology.

22. Robbins, “Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination”; Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: the Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). Conceptual blending can also be called conceptual integration: see Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 328-29.

rhetorolect and in the blending of rhetorolects with one another.²³

This essay starts with analysis of the two versions of the Lord's Prayer in Luke and Matthew and moves toward a display and interpretation of the reconfiguration of certain Lord's Prayer *topoi* in "the Son's Prayer" in John 17. My perception is that the Son's Prayer contains an elaborate reconfiguration of major *topoi* in the Lord's Prayer in a mode of precreation conceptuality.²⁴ The Synoptic versions of the Lord's Prayer contain a blending of priestly, wisdom, and prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect. The Lord's Prayer is "composition" that makes the *topoi* in the blend available, and the blend evokes "emergent structure" for new configurations of the *topoi*. Jesus' prayer in John 17 remolds the "emergent structure" in an enactment of precreation rhetorolect in emerging Christianity. The conceptual blending prompted by the Lord's Prayer makes the following eighteen *topoi* available to participants in the Jesus-to-Christ movement: Father; heaven(s); sanctify/hallow/be holy ($\alpha\gammaι\alpha\zeta\omega\mu\alpha\iota/\alpha\gammaι\omega\zeta$); your (God's) name; come; kingdom; your (God's) will; earth; daily bread; give; this day; forgive; debts/debtors; sins; trespasses; time of testing; the evil one; and rescue. As shown in the table below, six are "open-use-topoi," namely they may readily appear in any rhetorolect, while twelve are foundational for a particular rhetorolect.

"Open-Use" Topoi		
HEAVEN(S); your will; EARTH; trespasses; time of testing; rescue		
Foundational Topoi		
Wisdom	Priestly	Prophetic-Apocalyptic
FATHER	SANCTIFIED/HALLOWED	kingdom
daily bread	YOUR NAME	COME
GIVE	forgive	THE EVIL ONE
debts	sins	
this day		

23. Vernon K. Robbins, "Rhetography: A New Way of Seeing the Familiar Text," in *Words Well Spoken: George Kennedy's Rhetoric of the New Testament* (ed. C. C. Black and D. F. Watson; Studies in Rhetoric and Religion 8; Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2008), 91–106.

24. Many, perhaps most, previous interpreters have foregrounded a relationship between Jesus' prayer in John 17 and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane in the Synoptic Gospels.

We will see below that the Son's Prayer explicitly reconfigures the eight Lord's Prayer *topoi* in bold capital letters in the table above. Two are open-use *topoi* that can regularly appear in any rhetorolect: heaven(s) and earth. Six play a central role in a particular rhetorolect: two in wisdom (father; give); two in priestly (sanctified/hallowed; the name of God); and two in prophetic-apocalyptic (come; the evil one). The meanings and meaning-effects of the eight Lord's Prayer *topoi* that appear explicitly in the Son's Prayer are reconfigured conceptually into a "precreation blend" through composition, elaboration, and completion in John 17.²⁵ In addition, I propose that the five *topoi* in italics have been reconfigured into other terminology: "your will" into "the work you gave me," "daily bread" into "eternal life,"²⁶ "kingdom" into "above," "this day" into "the hour," and "rescue" into "be with me." The last three concerning the kingdom, the hour, and being with the Son require further comment.

In John, the kingdom is above and remains above—a place that a person may "see," if one is born from above (3:3), and "enter," if one is born of water and Spirit (3:5). In the Fourth Gospel, the kingdom does not "come," "draw near," or "appear," as it does in the Synoptic Gospels,²⁷ which means it does not come on earth or into the world; but in John the Son takes people to the place they will go.²⁸ In relation to this, in John there are no "days of the Son of Man,"²⁹ and there is no "day" of the revelation of the Son of Man³⁰ or of the coming of the Son of Man "on the clouds."³¹ Instead, the precreation Son of Man has already "descended from heaven" (John 3:13), become flesh, and tabernacled as light and life in the world. In this reconfigured scenario, "the hour" of the Son of man

25. Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think*, 44–50.

26. John 6:51, 58.

27. Come ($\xi\rho\chi\omega\mu\alpha\iota$): Matt 6:10; Mark 9:1; 11:10; Luke 11:2; 17:20; 22:18; φθάνω: Matt 12:28//Luke 11:20; draw near ($\eta\gamma\gamma\iota\zeta\omega$): Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9, 11; 21:31; appear ($\alpha\eta\alpha\varphi\alpha\iota\omega$): Luke 19:11; ἐπιφαίνω: 2 Tim 4:1.

28. John 12:32; 14:2–3; 17:24 (but see 13:33; 17:15).

29. Luke 17:22, 26.

30. Luke 17:24, 30.

31. Mark 13:26//Matt 24:30//Luke 21:27. One should not think this means there is no apocalyptic rhetorolect blended into the precreation rhetorolect in the Fourth Gospel. Rather, as the "host" rhetorolect precreation discourse substantively "reconfigures" apocalyptic *topoi* as they are brought into its particular precreation blend. Thus, the Son "will come again" in John

comes (12:23) rather than “the day,” and the Son of Man “comes to the hour” (12:27), which means he comes to the time of his crucifixion in Jerusalem when he is “lifted up” and glorified on the cross (3:14), before he ascends to where he was before (6:62).

In the Synoptics, the apocalyptic “tribulation of those days” ($\alphaἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι θλῖψις$)³² are the “birth pangs” ($\omegaδίνων$)³³ of the cosmos that start the end ($\tauὸ τέλος$)³⁴ until “the day” of the coming of the Son of Man. In the Fourth Gospel, the day of the precreation Son of Man is reconfigured into “the hour” of pain ($\lambdaύπη$) both for those whom the Father gave to him and for the world (16:20) until all is “finished.”³⁵ The hour of the precreation Son is like the hour when a woman is in labor and tribulation ($\thetaλῖψις$), until her joy when she has brought a human being into the world (16:21). The work of the precreation Son as light in the world is to give birth to children of the Father (1:12). In the Fourth Gospel, therefore, the apocalyptic “end” in the Synoptics is reconfigured into the “finishing” of the work of the precreation Son before he returns to the Father. The Synoptic apocalyptic drama of the day of the Son of Man at the end-time is reconfigured in John into the hour of the Son of Man when he finishes the will of the Father on earth and returns to where he was before.

There is one more very important difference between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. God and Jesus never “forgive” ($\ἀφίνημι$) sin(s) in the Fourth Gospel.³⁶ In relation to this, the *topos* of forgiveness in the Synoptic Lord’s Prayer does not occur in the Son’s Prayer in John 17. In John, “the sin of the world”³⁷ is “taken away” ($αἴρεω$) by the Son, according to John the Baptist’s words: “Behold the lamb of God who

14:3, 18, 28, but as an event within the precreation drama rather than an apocalyptic event at the end-time. Likewise, the precreation Son of Man has been given “authority” to execute judgment in John (5:27), but the manner in which he does and does not (5:24) execute it, again, is configured by precreation conceptualization: cf. 3:19; 5:22, 29, 30; 7:24; 8:16; 12:31; 16:8, 11.

32. Mark 13:19, 24; Matt 24:21, 29; cf. Rom 2:9.

33. Mark 13:8//Matt 24:8; 1 Thess 5:3.

34. Mark 13:7-8, 13//Matt 24:6, 13-14; cf. Luke 21:9; Matt 10:22.

35. John 19:28, 30: $\tauετέλεσται$; cf. 4:34; 5:36; 17:4.

36. 1 John refers twice to God forgiving sin.

37. In John there is reference to people dying in sin (8:21, 24[2]); being a slave to sin (8:34); being born in sins (9:34); having sin (15:22, 24); being guilty of sin (20:23); and having their sin remaining (9:41).

takes away ($δ αἴρων$) the sin of the world” (1:29). Humans are to forgive the sins of other humans after the Son returns to the Father, according to John 20:22-23,³⁸ but they do not forgive sins in a reciprocal relation to God’s forgiving of their sins, nor is it clear that those who forgive have been sinned against. To understand these things further, we must first do a careful *topos* analysis of the Synoptic versions of the Lord’s Prayer.

OPENING-MIDDLE-CLOSING (OMC) TEXTURE AND COMPARISON

One of the results of using *Exploring the Texture of Texts* and *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* in the classroom since 1996 is a conclusion that I should have put provisional opening-middle-closing texture as a first activity with any length of text, whether the text is an entire book in the Bible (or some other writing) or a particular section of a writing in a text.³⁹ Since of necessity such a first activity yields a “provisional” view, interpreters should always be ready to adjust their initial view on the basis of more specific patterns that emerge during further analysis. This leads to a second insight. In the context of any textural or subtextural analysis, the emphasis needs to be on “patterns.” Patterns are constellations of words and concepts that point to “locations” of thought, belief, and practice, namely to *topoi* and constellations of *topoi*. In other words, interpreters should not observe and display repetition simply for its own sake. Rather, the task of interpreters is to seek patterns of meaning and meaning-effects as they apply various textural and subtextural strategies of analysis and interpretation.

Let us start, then, with opening-middle-closing texture of the two versions of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew and Luke, which my students some time ago began to refer to as OMC texture. Indeed, where possible we will not only observe OMC texture in the overall version of the prayer but OMC texture in the opening, middle, and closing respectively. A display of OMC texture of the two canonical versions of the Lord’s Prayer

38. After he said these things, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive ($\ἀφῆτε$) the sins of any, they are forgiven ($ἀφέωνται$) them; if you retain ($κρατήτε$) the sins of any, they are retained ($κεκράτηνται$).”

39. One of the noticeable strengths of IBS is its focus on “books-as-wholes” and careful attention to divisions, sections, and segments of texts (Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 79-158).

can look as follows:⁴⁰

Luke 11:2-5	Matthew 6:9-13
<i>Opening:</i> O: Father, M: hallowed be YOUR name. C: let come YOUR kingdom.	<i>Opening:</i> O: (a) ⁹ Father of us (b) the one <i>IN THE HEAVENS</i> , (c) hallowed be <i>YOUR name</i> . M: ¹⁰ let come <i>YOUR kingdom</i> . C: (a) let be done <i>YOUR will</i> , (b) as <i>IN HEAVEN</i> (c) also on earth.
<i>Middle:</i> O: ³ <i>OUR daily bread give US each day.</i> M: ⁴ And <i>forgive US OUR sins</i> , C: for even <i>WE OURSELVES forgive everyone indebted to US</i> .	<i>Middle:</i> O: ¹¹ <i>OUR daily bread give US this day.</i> M: ¹² And <i>forgive US OUR debts</i> , C: as also <i>WE have forgiven OUR debtors</i> .
<i>Closing:</i> O: And do not M: bring <i>US</i> C: to the time of trial.	<i>Closing:</i> O: ¹³ And do not bring <i>US</i> to the time of trial, C: but rescue <i>US</i> from the evil one.*

*There are additional expansions in the textual tradition including variations of: (a) because the kingdom and the power and the glory are forever. Amen; (b) because you are the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen; and (c) because you are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father and Son and Holy Spirit forever [and ever]. Amen.

40. As is evident from the display, within the overall OMC texture there may be OMC within each opening, middle, and closing, and then another possible O:a, O:b, O:c, etc.

The Luke version exhibits an abbreviated opening in relation to Matthew's expanded opening. This does not mean that the Luke opening is earlier, since the Luke version could be an abbreviation of the Matthew version or the Matthew version could be an expansion of the Luke opening.⁴¹ The Luke opening exhibits strong progressive texture from "Father" to "name" to "kingdom." There is no presence of heaven or earth in the progression. Also, there is no mention of God's will. The progression moves quickly and decisively from acknowledgement of God as Father to sanctification of God's name and petition to let God's kingly power and rule come. This movement evokes the cognitive frame of prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect.⁴²

The opening in Matthew shows significant repetitive texture with the occurrence of "your" three times in the center of the opening that creates progressive texture featuring "your name," "your kingdom," and "your will." In addition, "in the heavens/in heaven" occurs in the center of the opening statement and the center of the final statement. Thus, overall repetition in the opening creates an environment of progressive texture from hallowing (sanctifying) God's name as "Father" to the coming of God's kingdom and enactment of God's will. An important part of the progression in the Matthean opening is downward movement from God's presence "in the heavens" to the actualization of God's will on earth.

The middle in both versions emphasizes first person plural "we," "us," "our," and "ourselves." There is no mention of God, God's name, or God's kingdom. Rather, there is petition from "us" in a context of what

41. Vernon K. Robbins, "The Woman who Touched Jesus' Garment: Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of the Synoptic Accounts," *NTS* 33 (1987): 502-15 at 504-11; idem, "Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. D. A. Watson; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 157-86 = idem, *Sea Voyages and Beyond: Emerging Strategies in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (ESEC 14; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2010), 233-57; Burton L. Mack and Vernon K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, ©1998, 2008), 11-22.

42. See prophetic and apocalyptic rhetorolect in Robbins, "Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination," 163-81; idem, "Rhetography," 88-92; idem, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 1:xxi, xxvi, 219-482. It is not possible to distinguish prophetic from apocalyptic in the Synoptic Lord's Prayer; rather, the coming of the kingdom evokes a prophetic-apocalyptic blend.

"we" already have done or regularly do. The first *topos* is giving bread in a context of asking, and the second *topos* presents reciprocal forgiveness that creates a qualitative progression from requesting and receiving the staple of daily life within God's created world to reciprocal forgiving; in the context of petitioning for daily bread, humans petition God to forgive them as they also forgive others. In Luke, the forgiveness concerns both "indebtedness" and "sinful actions," while the Matthean version focuses strictly on indebtedness. Since the Gospel of Luke frequently highlights the relation of the poor to the wealthy, one might expect the emphasis in Luke to be on indebtedness. In contrast, the Lukan version interweaves forgiveness of sins by God with forgiving of indebtedness by humans, while the Matthean version focuses solely on debts and indebtedness until, as we will see below, the addition of commentary beyond the prayer itself.

In an abbreviated mode, the Lukan version of the closing moves quickly and directly through a progressive request for God "not" to bring testing. One can see "elaboration" in the Matthean version, where God's bringing of a test could invite personified evil to do evil work. The Matthean closing has no middle, presumably as a result of Semitic *parallelismus membrorum*. It contains a double statement that, again focusing on "us," petitions God not to bring testing but to rescue us from "the evil one," who presumably is Satan or the devil. The Matthean version, then, exhibits additional prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect as it envisions a personified evil force at work in the world in the context of the coming of God's kingly activity.⁴³ Progressive texture is notable in both closings as the prayer moves to a concluding petition for God "not" to act in a way that could "invite" evil into a human's life. A major function of rhetorical contraries and opposites is clarification.⁴⁴ The "contrary" ending in the Synoptic Lord's Prayer highlights God's primary nature as beneficent towards humans on earth. Thus, the opening and middle focus on beneficial actions "to be done" both by humans and by God. The closing, in contrast, petitions that certain specific things "not"

43. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse*, 1:341-43, 361-66, 464-68.

44. Vernon K. Robbins, "A Comparison of Mishnah Gittin 1:1-2:2 and James 2:1-13 from a Perspective of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Elaboration," in *Mishnah and the Social Formation of the Early Rabbinic Guild: A Socio-Rhetorical Approach* (ed. J. N. Lightstone; Studies in Christianity and Judaism/Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme 11; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion/Corporation Canadienne des Sciences Religieuses, 2002), 201-16.

be done by God, lest these things produce evil on earth rather than good.

Once we have seen the opening, middle, and closing in each Synoptic version of the Lord's Prayer, it is instructive to see the broader context of the presentation of the Lord's prayer in each Gospel.⁴⁵ The prayer in its broader context in Luke looks as follows:

Luke 11:1-13
<i>Opening</i>
<i>Opening:</i>
11:1 He was <i>praying</i> in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, TEACH us to <i>pray</i> , as John TAUGHT his disciples.'
² He said to them, 'When you <i>pray</i> , say:
<i>Middle</i>
<i>Opening:</i>
O: Father,
M: hallowed be your name.
C: let come your kingdom.
<i>Middle:</i>
O: ³ our daily bread <i>GIVE</i> us each day.
M: ⁴ And <i>forgive</i> us our sins,
C: for even we ourselves <i>forgive</i> everyone indebted to us.
<i>Closing:</i>
O: And do not
M: bring us
C: to the time of trial.

45. Attention to the broader context is another common emphasis in SRI and IBS: see Bauer and Trainer, *Inductive Bible Study*, 63-65; cf. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 8-14.

Closing**Opening:**

5 And he said to them, ‘Suppose one of you has a *friend*, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, “*Friend*, lend me three loaves of bread; for a *friend* of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.”’⁴⁶ And he answers from within, “Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and *GIVE* you anything.”⁴⁷ I tell you, even though he will not get up and *GIVE* him anything because he is his *friend*, at least because of his persistence he will get up and *GIVE* him whatever he needs.

Middle:

9 ‘So I say to you, *ASK*, and it will be *GIVEN* to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.¹⁰ For everyone who *ASKS* receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child *ASKS* for a fish, will *GIVE* a snake instead of a fish?¹² Or if the child *ASKS* for an egg, will *GIVE* a scorpion?’

Closing:

¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to *GIVE* good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father *GIVE* the Holy Spirit to those who *ASK* him!’

Let us notice first the disciples asking Jesus to “teach” them how to pray, as John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. In SRI, teaching is perceived to evoke wisdom rhetorolect, which is prominent in Luke, where people call Jesus teacher fourteen times,⁴⁶ and Jesus is described as teaching thirteen times.⁴⁷ Let us notice second that Jesus is engaged in prayer as the scene opens. In SRI, prayer is a central *topos* in priestly rhetorolect, which focuses on ritual performance that activates beneficial exchange between humans and the divine. A survey of praying in Luke shows people outside the Jerusalem temple praying while Zechariah, who will become father of John the Baptist, experiences the presence of an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense

46. Luke 3:12; 7:40; 8:49; 9:38; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39; 21:7; 22:11.

47. Luke 4:15, 31, 32; 5:3; 6:6; 11:1; 13:10, 22; 19:47; 20:1[2]; 21:37; 23:5.

(1:9-11). The next context for prayer in Luke is Jesus’ praying after he has been baptized. While Jesus prays, the heaven opens, the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus in bodily form like a dove, and a voice comes from heaven saying, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (3:21-22). Later while Jesus travels around speaking to crowds and curing diseases, the narrator says Jesus regularly “would withdraw to deserted places and pray” (5:15-16). In chapter six, after a dispute with Pharisees about plucking and eating grain on the Sabbath and healing a man with a withered hand on a Sabbath (6:1-11), Jesus goes up on “the mountain” and spends “the night in prayer to God” (6:12) before he selects twelve of his disciples and names them apostles (6:13-16). Then in 6:28 Jesus tells his disciples to “pray for those who abuse” them. Later in chapter nine, Jesus is “praying alone, with only the disciples near him” when he asks them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” (9:18). About eight days later, when Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up on “the mountain” to pray, while Jesus was praying “the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white” (9:28-29). Two chapters later, then, after Jesus finished praying “in a certain place” his disciples ask him to teach them “to pray, as John taught his disciples” (11:1).

While it seems obvious that special “divine” things often happen when Jesus prays, it also appears that Jesus’ “regular prayer life” has made him an “example to be imitated.” This is the nature of wisdom rhetorolect, where people learn how to think and act by what they both hear and see. When the disciples ask Jesus to “teach” them to pray, like John taught his disciples, the overall context for the Lord’s Prayer in Luke is a teaching context. If the prayer “teaches” something to the disciples, “what” does it teach them? This leads us to the “closing,” which focuses on one particular *topos* in the prayer, “giving,” in a context of asking and receiving.

When Jesus completes his recitation of the prayer the disciples should pray, he continues immediately with a story about “friends.” In relation to the way in which Jesus himself has functioned as “an example” for the disciples, now Jesus presents an “example story” of how “friends” interact with one another. This is a natural progression in wisdom rhetorolect, which foregrounds households, neighborhoods, and networks of kinfolk and friends as an environment of learning, growing, and becoming “fruitful” through reciprocal exchange. The story features a friend asking another friend for three loaves of bread, because a friend has arrived and he has “nothing to set before him” (11:5-6). The story, of course, has an unusual dimension: the friend does not want to get up and give his friend anything, because the door is already locked and

his children are in bed with him. Then Jesus says that the friend will get up and give him “whatever he needs” not “because he is his friend” but “because of his shamelessness” (*ἀναιδεια*: 11:7-8).⁴⁸ This story about “giving,” then, introduces the *topos* of “shamelessly asking.” This leads to the middle of the closing.

After telling the disciples the story about the friends, Jesus teaches with a saying that functions as a “thesis” followed by an elaboration of the saying with a rationale and two rhetorical questions that present an argument from the contrary.⁴⁹ The thesis is: “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.” The rationale reiterates the topics of asking, searching, and knocking, but the rhetorical questions make it clear that the primary focus is on asking and being given in the context of a parent-child relationship: “Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if a child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?” (11:11-12). The obvious answer to both questions is, “No.”

Then Jesus brings his argumentative elaboration about asking and giving to a conclusion with reasoning from lesser to greater: “If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give holy spirit to those who ask him!” (11:13). There are a number of things about this conclusion that are interesting. First, Jesus refers to God as “the heavenly Father” when there is no mention of heaven in the Lukan version of the Lord’s Prayer. Second, Jesus calls his disciples evil (*πονηρός*), but surely this is simply a contrast between humans and “the heavenly Father.” Third, human fathers give “good gifts” to their children, but God gives “holy spirit.” Here it is interesting that “holy spirit” has no articles, like holy spirit that fills John the Baptist while he is still in the womb (1:15), comes upon Mary (1:35), fills Elizabeth (1:41) and Zechariah (1:67), and rests on Simeon (2:25). Even more, the one coming after John (namely, Jesus) “will baptize with holy spirit” (3:16), Jesus himself is “full of holy

48. The NRSV translates this “because of his persistence.”

49. See the natural steps in a rhetorical elaboration in Vernon K. Robbins, “Prognostic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Traditions: A New Approach,” in *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (ed. Camille Focant; BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 111-47 at 121-31. Cf. idem, “From Enthymeme to Theology in Luke 11:1-13,” in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (ed. R. P. Thompson and T. E. Phillips; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 191-214 = Robbins, *Sea Voyages and Beyond*, 349-71.

spirit” when he returns from the Jordan (4:1), and Jesus reads from Isaiah saying holy spirit is upon him (4:18). These anarthrous formulations of “holy spirit” in Luke appear to have a dynamic relation to the heavenly Father’s gift of holy spirit to people who ask. In conclusion, an especially noticeable aspect of the context of the Lord’s Prayer in Luke is the wisdom rhetorolect context: Jesus teaches the disciples about asking and giving, using examples from the daily lives of friends, parents, and children. The progressive texture moves from Jesus teaching his disciples to households of friends to fathers in households to “the heavenly Father” who gives greater gifts than “earthly” fathers. This is a natural progression in wisdom rhetorolect from observation of daily activities on earth, regularly foregrounding household imagery, to conclusions about God “the Father” in heaven.

The prayer in its overall context in Matthew looks as follows:

Matthew 6:5-15

Opening

Opening:

O: ⁵And whenever you *pray*, DO NOT be like the hypocrites;
M: for they love to stand and *pray* in the synagogues and
at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others
(humans, *τοῖς ἀνθρώποις*).
C: Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

Middle:

O: ⁶But whenever you *pray*, go into your room and shut the
door
M: and *pray* to your Father who is in secret;
C: and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Closing:

O: ⁷ ‘When you are *praying*, DO NOT heap up empty phrases as
the Gentiles do;
M: for they think that they will be heard because of their
many words.
C: ⁸DO NOT be like them, for your Father knows what you need
before you ask him.

Middle

⁹ PRAY then in this way:

Opening:

- O: (a) Father of us
- (b) the one *IN THE HEAVENS*,
- (c) hallowed be *YOUR name*.

M: ¹⁰ let come *YOUR kingdom*.

- C: (a) let be done *YOUR will*,
- (b) as *IN HEAVEN*
- (c) also on earth.

Middle:

O: ¹¹ *OUR daily bread give US this day.*

M: ¹² And *forgive US OUR debts*,

C: as also *WE have forgiven OUR debtors*.

Closing:

O: ¹³ And do not bring *US* to the time of trial,

C: but rescue *US* from the evil one.*

Closing

O: ¹⁴For if *YOU forgive others their trespasses, YOUR heavenly Father will also forgive YOU;*

C: ¹⁵but if *YOU do not forgive others, neither will YOUR Father forgive YOUR trespasses.*

*There are additional variations and expansions in the textual tradition, including versions of: (a) because the kingdom and the power and the glory are forever. Amen; (b) because you are the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen; and (c) because you are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father and Son and Holy Spirit forever [and ever]. Amen.

In contrast to the short opening and long closing around the Lord's Prayer in Luke, Matthew contains a long opening and short closing. The opening before Jesus recites the Lord's Prayer to the

disciples in Matthew functions as new Torah about what "not" to do and what "to do" when performing prayer ritual. As Jesus speaks, the Matthean opening evokes priestly rhetorolect, which concerns human ritual action performed to activate beneficial exchange between humans and the divine.

As the Matthean opening brings priestly rhetorolect into the foreground, it exhibits the presence of already existing prayer practices, to which Jesus' instruction presents an alternative. This context creates an opening with three negatives:

DO NOT be like the hypocrites; ...

DO NOT heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; ...

DO NOT be like them....

This opening in Matthew is reminiscent of Exod 20:2-8:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt...;

You shall have NO other gods before me.

You shall NOT make for yourself an idol,...

You shall NOT bow down to them or worship them,...

You shall NOT make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God,

for the Lord will NOT acquit anyone who misuses his name.

In the middle of the Matthean opening that refers to things "not to do," there are specific guidelines for what "to do":

1. go into your room;
2. shut the door;
3. pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

This is like the transition to things "to do" in Exod 20:8, 12:

1. Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy...
2. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Much like the assertion that "your Father ... will reward you" in Matt 6:6, the directive in Exod 20:12 ends with a statement that "your days" will be "long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." Habitual action by humans in the Exodus context is conceptualized as enactment of God's will on earth. Therefore, the activity generates reciprocal beneficial exchange between humans and God. In Matthew, regular

prayer by humans in secret creates a context of benefit for both God and humans. Humans acknowledge God in heaven as Lord over all things, and the result for humans is the presence of God's life-giving benefits on earth.

The Matthean focus on private ritual prayer in a secret room creates a "priestly" emphasis on "forgiving" in the closing in Matt 6:14-15 that is an alternative to the "wisdom" emphasis on "giving" in Luke 11:5-13. The foregrounding of forgiving is related to emphases in the Matthean beatitudes that establish the overall context for Jesus' teaching at the opening of the Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes in Matt 5:1-12 highlight the special relation among "inner spiritual" qualities, beneficial actions toward other humans, belonging to the kingdom of heaven, establishing justice in the world, and being called "children of God." Those who are poor in spirit and pure in heart exercise restraint (meekness) if they are in positions of power, they hunger and thirst for righteousness, they are merciful, and they are peacemakers.⁵⁰ How do people attain such a richly complex, beneficially-oriented disposition while on earth? The answer appears to lie in regularized or ritualized practices "in secret" that SRI calls "priestly" in conceptuality. The first step towards prayer is sacrifice of public honor: the rewards that accrue from public displays of prayer are sacrificed through a discipline that nurtures divinely inspired beneficence. The goal of being "perfect... as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48) requires ritualized nurturing of "inner qualities" that make it possible for a person to turn the other cheek (5:39), give one's cloak as well (5:40), go the second mile (5:41), give to everyone who begs and not to refuse anyone who wants to borrow (5:42), and even to love one's enemies and pray for those who persecute (5:44). These beneficent abilities cannot be acquired by "practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them" (6:1). In contrast, a person is to give alms in secret (6:4), pray in secret (6:6), and fast in secret (6:18), thereby storing up "treasures in heaven" (6:20).

For Matthew, then, praying in secret creates inner qualities that transcend being willing to give to a friend if he shamelessly asks (Luke 11:8). Forgiving others is more like giving to "everyone who begs

50. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 190-202, to which I would add the special orientation toward "doing justice" in Robert L. Foster, *Wrestling with God and the World: The Struggle for Justice in the Biblical Tradition* (Dallas, Tex.: A Journey Publication, 2013), 106-43. For "meekness" as exercising restraint when one is in a position of power, see the entry on PRAUTES in *Contexticon of New Testament Language*, www.contexticon.com, forthcoming.

from you" and not refusing "anyone who wants to borrow from you" (Matt 5:42). In Matthew, there is to be no limit on the number of times a person is to forgive, as Jesus makes clear to Peter with a number either of seventy-seven or seventy times seven (18:22).

Overall the movement toward inner spirituality—nurtured in Matthew through activities like praying in secret, giving alms in secret, and fasting in secret—reaches its highpoint in Matt 25:37-39, when those who gave food, drink, and clothing, welcomed a stranger, took care of the sick, and visited those in prison asked when it was they did these things. They did not remember, because their actions were "natural" responses toward the needs of others. Their responses came forth spontaneously, virtually automatically, "from the heart" (15:18). Their regularized, ritual actions "in secret" had nurtured an inner disposition that made it possible for them to hear the words of Jesus and act on them, as Jesus emphasizes at the end of the Sermon on the Mount (7:24).

Instead of emphasizing the *topos* of "giving," then, the progressive texture of Jesus' teaching of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew foregrounds "forgiving." This produces a cluster of six references to "forgive" in the closing of the Matthean unit:

1. *FORGIVE* us as we *FORGIVE*;
2. if you *FORGIVE*, your heavenly Father will *FORGIVE*;
3. if you do not *FORGIVE*, your Father will not *FORGIVE*.

It also produces a concluding emphasis on "your heavenly Father" who either will or will not forgive depending on the willingness of humans to forgive. This means that the opening repetitive references to "your (heavenly) Father" begins a repetitive sequence that extends to the final statements in the unit about forgiving:

Opening:

1. pray to *YOUR FATHER* who is in secret;
2. *YOUR FATHER* who sees in secret will reward you;
3. *YOUR FATHER* knows what you need before you ask him.

Middle:

OUR FATHER in the *HEAVENS*

Closing:

1. if you forgive, *YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER* will forgive you;
2. if you do not forgive, *YOUR FATHER* will not forgive you.

In the end, “forgiving” becomes the central focus of “doing” and “not doing.” The petition in the prayer is, “forgive us … as we forgive …” The closing foregrounds the “as we forgive” with the stipulation that “if you forgive, your heavenly Father will forgive you, but if you do not forgive, neither will your Father forgive you.” So the warnings “not to do” in the opening of the entire unit have been reconfigured into “if you do not do” in the closing.

There is still another *topos* to observe in the Matthean unit. What appears to be an incidental word in the opening of the unit translated “others” (6:5: humans: ἄνθρωποις) becomes a key repetitive *topos* in the context of forgiveness at the end of the unit:

If you FORGIVE “HUMANS” (others) their trespasses,
Your heavenly Father will also forgive you;
But if you do not FORGIVE “HUMANS” (others),
Neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Instead of standing and praying in the synagogues and on the street corners to be “seen by humans” (others), a person must engage in continual practice of “forgiving humans” (others). This focus on forgiveness of other humans is emphasized in Matthew 18 in the conclusion to Jesus’ story about the slave who did not forgive the debt of a fellow slave. When the slave whose master had forgiven his debt is unwilling to forgive the debt of a fellow slave, the other slaves tell the master of the slave, and he turns the slave over for torture until the slave pays the entire debt of which he had been forgiven. Jesus concludes the story with: “So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart” (Matt 18:35). The heart is the key to forgiveness, and for Matthew humans acquire the “inner spiritual ability” to forgive only through a blend of wisdom, prophetic, and priestly understanding and nurture. Wisdom learning and growth that is focused and energized by prophetic reasoning and understanding must become disciplined “in secret” through regularized, ritualized practice grounded in sacrifice of public honor. This “priestly” blend of understanding, motivation, and action foregrounds the development of “inner being” that is naturally inclined toward divinely inspired beneficent action related to being “perfect as your heavenly

Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48).⁵¹ In contrast to the foregrounding of teaching in Luke that emphasizes the importance of asking and giving, therefore, a priestly-wisdom-prophetic blend of understanding and action in the broader context of Matthew’s presentation of the Lord’s Prayer emphasizes the ability to forgive as the heavenly Father forgives.

From Comparison to Reconfiguration: The Synoptic Lord’s Prayer and “the Son’s Prayer” in John 17

John 17 exhibits reconfiguration of major Lord’s Prayer *topoi*. The reconfiguration represents a transition from the blend of wisdom, priestly, and prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect in the Lord’s Prayer to the particular blend of precreation rhetorolect in the Gospel of John. At the center of the reconfiguration is a dramatic reconceptualization of God as Father and Jesus as Son. Instead of focusing on a heavenly Father whose kingdom comes on earth and who gives daily bread, forgiveness, and holy spirit, the Johannine heavenly Father gives his Son to the world because of his love, so that all may believe in this Son and receive eternal life. This reconceptualization of God the Father and Jesus the Son is a major manifestation of the cognitive explosion that occurred in first century Christian precreation rhetorolect during a period of time ca. 40-90 CE.

In the conceptuality of first century Christian precreation rhetorolect, there is a “fullness” in God (John 1:16; Col 1:19; 2:9; Eph 1:23; 3:19) that causes internal aspects of divine being to “emanate” or “generate” out from God. Within human thinking, emanation or generation naturally implies a time sequence. Within divine non-time, however, emanation or generation has no narrative sequence: it is simply “timeless movement” within divine non-time, non-space, and non-visibility. An especially “emergent” phase in the Jesus-to-Christ movement occurred when first century Christians conceptualized emanation or generation “out of” God in relation to “time” as it was

51. For wisdom growth that nurtures the heart, see Robbins, *Invention of Christian Discourse*, 1:178-80, 185-90, 193; for prophetic action in Matthew that comes from the heart, see *ibid.*, 284-92. Also see Matt 13:19: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.

conceptualized within prophetic and apocalyptic rhetorolect.⁵² The result was the emergence of multiple “precreation storylines” that used alternative terminologies. There was no uniform storyline, but envisioning internal attributes of God “coming out” of God created storylines that presupposed time, space, and visibility outside of the invisible non-time, non-space realm in which “eternal God” dwells.

One precreation storyline appears in Philippians 2, where the Son was in the “form” (*μορφή*) of God but “emptied himself” and took the “form” of a human. Still another is in Colossians 1, where “image” (*εἰκόνη*) came out of divine invisibility into visibility as the “firstborn of all creation” and “head of the body,” the church, ... “for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Col 1:15, 18-19). In another formulation “the Son” is the “reflection” (*ἀπαύγασμα*) of God’s glory and the exact imprint (*χαρακτήρ*) of God’s very being (*ὑπόστασις*) (Heb 1:3). In the midst of these alternatives, the Gospel of John presents a precreation narrative of the Word (*λόγος*) who came out of God “the Father” into the cosmos, became flesh, and “tabernacled”⁵³ as “the Son” on earth until his crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and return to “the Father.” This fully-developed precreation storyline created the context for reconfiguration of major Lord’s Prayer *topoi* in the Son’s Prayer in John 17.

The Johannine story starts with “the beginning” (*ἀρχή*), which can also mean origin, first cause, or ruling power. The beginning occurred when divine Word and divine “life” generated out of invisibility into the visible-world called the “cosmos” (*κόσμος*; 1:1-5, 9). At the “time” when *λόγος*/life generated out of invisible divine-being, all things that came into being “became” (*ἐγένετο*; 1:10). In other words, out of “being-being,” divine being that always “is,” emerged a “becoming-event,” an

52. Since humans naturally think in “time sequence” modes, it would not theoretically have been necessary for blends of prophetic-apocalyptic to play a particular role in the emergence of first century Christian precreation rhetorolect. As a result of the pervasive presence of those blends, however, “emergent structures” within those blends played a major role in first century Christian precreation rhetorolect.

53. John 1:14: ἐσκήνωσεν, from *σκηνώ*, to live in relation to a tent, temporary shelter, or tabernacle.

activity that created “time,” which is a “becoming-being” environment.⁵⁴ In Johannine precreation terminology, the “becoming-event” established the environment for *λόγος*/life “to be light that shines” in “the world” (*κόσμος*), which means that the world is a “place of darkness.”⁵⁵ It is not necessary to think that the darkness in the world is primarily evil: it is a place where there is no “light” without the presence of “life.” Another way to think about it is that darkness is a “ready environment” for life to function as light and light to function as life.

The world (*κόσμος*), then, is a place of darkness where humans live in the context of “created flesh” (cf. 17:2). In the Johannine precreation storyline, *λόγος*/life/light became (*ἐγένετο*) flesh as “the Son” of “the Father” and “tabernacled” among humans (1:14). As the Son tabernacled, the darkness in the cosmos did not “grasp” the light, which means either that it did not “overcome” or did not “receive”/“understand” the light (1:5). This storyline sets the overall context for the reconfiguration of Lord’s Prayer *topoi* into major *topoi* in the Son’s prayer in John 17 that evoke precreation meanings and meaning-effects.

There are, however, two special moments in the Johannine storyline that are important to notice before turning directly to John 17. The Son prays to the Father on two occasions prior to the extended prayer in John 17, and on both occasions he addresses God as Father and speaks to the Father in second person singular. This direct address by the Son to the Father three times in the storyline means that the Son’s Prayer in John 17 is not a scripted prayer for the disciples, as it in the Synoptic Gospels, but an inside look into the prayer-life, if you will, of the Son from the perspective of Johannine precreation discourse. On the first occasion, at the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus thanks the Father for having heard him and says he knows that the Father “always” (*πάντοτε*) hears him (11:42). On the second occasion, after people greet him with palm branches as he comes to the festival in Jerusalem, Jesus tells Andrew and Philip that “the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (12:23). Then Jesus embeds speech to the Father as he continues, reasoning “out loud” if he should ask the Father to “save him” from this hour. When Jesus answers his own question with “No” and says, “Father, glorify your

54. I am especially indebted to L. Gregory Bloomquist for a number of specific observations in this section. Foremost, these include his distinction between being-being and becoming-being, and the importance of second person singular in all of the Son’s praying to the Father, as observed below.

55. It is noticeable that *λόγος*/life does not “become” light; rather, it “is” light that shines in the cosmos, which is a place of darkness.

name,” a voice comes from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again” (12:27–28). In this context, then, the Son not only speaks to the Father but the Father speaks to the Son. Jesus’ praying in John, therefore, is not scripted prayer that Jesus teaches his disciples, but ongoing dialogue with the Father as he “tabernacles” among humans on earth. This ongoing dialogue sets the more immediate context for Jesus’ prayer to the Father in John 17.

Our initial task is to show the presence of Lord’s Prayer *topoi* in John 17, where “the Son” speaks directly to “the Father” before he goes “out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden” (18:1). In the prayer, God’s “precreation” Son, who was with ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha$ w. dative) the Father before the world had “being” ($\pi\rho\ddot{\rho}\tau\ddot{\nu}$ $\tau\ddot{\nu}\kappa\sigma\mu\nu\epsilon\tilde{\iota}v\alpha\iota$) (17:5) and who is “not of the world” (17:16: $\text{ou}\kappa\ \dot{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\ddot{\nu}\kappa\sigma\mu\nu$), petitions the Father to “glorify” his Son so that the Son “may glorify” the Father. To the casual reader there may seem to be no significant relation between the Synoptic Lord’s Prayer and the Son’s prayer in John 17. A well-informed SRI approach, however, shows that *topoi* in the Lord’s Prayer pervade John 17 even as additional new *topoi* drive the progressive texture of the precreation Son’s prayer forward. The reason for the particular blend in John 17, we propose, is the dramatic reconfiguration of Lord’s Prayer *topoi* through the rhetorical force of precreation rhetorolect in Johannine discourse.

Major Lord’s Prayer Topoi in the Son’s Prayer in John 17

Our approach to John 17 views the opening of the Son’s Prayer to be 17:1–8, the middle 17:9–21, and the closing 17:22–26. At the opening of the Johannine prayer, Jesus looks “up to heaven” and says, “Father ...” (17:1). This opening evokes the same blending of “Father” and “in heaven” that is in Matt 6:9–10. Instead of further evoking the priestly, wisdom, and prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect characteristic of Matthew and Luke, however, it invites argumentative petitionary discourse by “the precreation Son” to “the invisible Father” who sent the Son into the world. As the Son speaks, he presents a progression that uses eight *topoi* in the Matthean version of the Lord’s Prayer: 1) Father; 2) your (God’s) name; 3) come; 4) sanctify/hallow/make holy ($\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega\mu\alpha\iota/\acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omega\varsigma$); 5) the evil one; 6) heaven(s); 7) earth; and 8) give.

Conceptual Reconfiguration Using the Same Word		
“Open-Use” Topoi		
HEAVEN(S); EARTH		
Foundational Topoi		
Wisdom	Priestly	Prophetic-Apocalyptic
FATHER	SANCTIFY/HALLOW/ MAKE HOLY	COME
GIVE	YOUR NAME	THE EVIL ONE

Since the discourse in John is driven by precreation rhetorolect rather than the blend of priestly, wisdom, and prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect evident in Luke and Matthew, the argumentation has a dramatically different conceptual range. In many instances it is possible to see how certain meanings and meaning-effects generated out of conceptuality in the Lord’s Prayer. The overall conceptuality in John 17, however, is the result of multiple reconfigurations of meanings and meaning-effects that emerged out of wisdom, priestly, prophetic, and apocalyptic discourse. It will not be possible in this essay to exhibit and/or explain the processes at work in most of the reconfigurations. I hope, however, the reader will gain a substantive understanding of the basic “emergent” process at work in first-century Christian discourse. Below is a display of the opening of John 17 with Lord’s Prayer *topoi* in bold capitals, and with additional “precreation” *topoi* in the progressive texture in the headings in italic bold capitals and regular bold italics in the text itself.

Opening Texture in John 17
HEAVEN; FATHER; <i>the hour</i> ; COME
1 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to HEAVEN and said, ‘FATHER, <i>the hour</i> has COME;
Glorify/Glory; GIVE; Know
<i>glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have GIVEN him authority over all people, to GIVE eternal life to all whom you have GIVEN him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on EARTH by finishing the work that you GAVE me to do. ⁵So now, FATHER, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.</i>
YOUR NAME; Your Word(s)
6 ‘I have made YOUR NAME known to those whom you GAVE me from the world. They were yours, and you GAVE them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have GIVEN me is from you; ⁸ for the words that you GAVE to me I have GIVEN to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I CAME from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

“Father” occurs six times in the Son’s Prayer in John 17: twice in the opening (vv.1, 5); twice in the middle (vv. 11, 21); and twice in the closing (vv. 24, 25). When Jesus looks up to heaven in the opening verse and addresses God as “Father” (*πάτερ*), the words evoke the Matthean picture at the beginning of the Lord’s Prayer: “Father of us, the one in the heavens” (Matt 6:9). Instead of focusing next on hallowing the name “Father” or requesting the Father to let the kingdom come, however, the Son focuses immediately on “what has already come.”

“The hour” has come, and this creates the context for the “precreation Son’s” first petition: “glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.” Reciprocal “glorification” between the Father and the Son is a central *topos* in Johannine precreation rhetorolect, occurring more than twenty-five times in John.⁵⁶ The Son glorifies the Father “in the

56. John 1:14[2]; 2:11; 5:41, 44[2]; 7:18[2], 39; 8:50, 54[3]; 9:24; 11:4[2], 40; 12:16, 23, 28[3], 41, 43; 13:31[2], 32[3]; 14:13; 15:8; 16:14; 17:1[2], 4, 5[2], 10, 22, 24; 21:19.

world” and the Father glorifies the Son from “the invisible place of the Father.” “Glorify” occurs three times in the opening as the Son asks the Father to glorify him so he himself may glorify the Father (17:1), and then he says he has already glorified the Father on earth (17:4). This leads to a restatement of the Son’s opening petition in 17:5 as a conclusion to the Son’s reasoning in John 17:1-4: “So now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.” Here we have a statement that openly and explicitly evokes precreation conceptuality for the Son’s Prayer. Instead of opening with a blend of priestly, wisdom, and prophetic-apocalyptic conceptuality, which focuses on “the end” when the “kingdom” will come and bring in a new age, the Son’s Prayer focuses on the coming of “the hour” when the Father will glorify the Son with the glory he had in the presence of the Father “before the world existed.” The Son’s Prayer focuses on the arrival of “the hour” when the Son will “return” to that “timeless” precreation sphere when the Son existed in the presence of the eternal, invisible Father.

After the elaboration of the Son’s petition that the Father glorify him (17:1-5), the Son turns to the Lord’s Prayer *topos* of God’s divine name “Father” (17:6). The special emphasis in the Son’s Prayer is not on “hallowing” the name but on reciprocal “giving” between the Father and the Son. One of the things the Father “gave” to the Son was God’s “name,” with the understanding that the Son should give the name to those whom the Father “gave” to the Son, so the name would be “known” to them. Later in the prayer it becomes clear that an additional goal of the reciprocal “giving” is to nurture imitation of the “Father/Son giving” by “those whom the Father gave to the Son.” In other words, the purpose of the “giving” by the Father to the Son is to start a chain reaction: as the Father gives to the Son, so the Son gives to those whom the Father gave to him, so that those whom the Father gave to him will “give the name” to others so others also will “know the name.”

The “chain-reaction reasoning” in precreation rhetorolect is a reconfiguration of “imitative learning” in wisdom rhetorolect, of which we saw a glimpse in Luke’s elaboration of the Lord’s Prayer. Instead of Jesus simply becoming an example of one who “prays,” “heals those who are sick,” and “cares for the poor,” the “example” in precreation rhetorolect begins with the Father and starts a chain reaction from the Father to the Son to those whom the Father gives to the Son and from them to others who “seeing will believe.” In essence, therefore, in precreation rhetorolect the Father is the “example.” The Son is an extension of the Father’s activity out into the world so “people” can see

the Father and, as we will observe at the end of the Son's Prayer, imitate "the love of the Father" both for the Son and for the world.

The Son opens with a statement of what he "has already done" with the name, which is reminiscent of the assertion by humans praying the Lord's Prayer that "they have already forgiven" their debtors (Matt 6:12; cf. Luke 11:4). The Son asserts: "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world." The result, the Son says, is that they not only know the name, but they also know that everything the Father has given the Son is from the Father (17:7). This introduces the *topos* of God's "word." Those whom the Father gave to the Son have "kept" the "word" (*λόγος*) of the Father, because the Son gave the words (*τὰ ρήματα*) to them that the Father had given to him. As a result of this, those whom the Father gave to the Son have "received" the words, know in truth that the Son came from the Father, and believe that the Father sent the Son (17:6-8). The reciprocal Father/Son "giving," therefore, includes not only the name but also the words the Father gave to the Son. The combination of the name and the words has led to both "knowing" and "believing" by those whom the Father gave to the Son. What they primarily know and believe is the "precreation storyline." They know that the Son came from the Father and the Father sent the Son into the world; they know that everything the Son has been given has been given to him by the Father; and they have received and know the words the Father gave to the Son to give to them. As a result, those the Father gave to the Son "believe" that the Father sent the Son, they "know in truth" that the Son came from the Father, and they have kept the Father's "word."

The opening of the Son's Prayer, therefore, has reconfigured the Lord's Prayer *topoi* of Father, heaven, come, give, and name, which are framed by a blend of wisdom, priestly, and prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect into a prayer framed by precreation rhetorolect that evokes an explicit storyline about how the Son came from the Father into the world full of "words" of the Father, which include the name of the Father. The Son gave both the name and the words to those whom the Father gave to him, and the result is that they know, believe, and have kept the Father's word.

This sets the stage for the middle of the Son's Prayer:

Middle Texture in John 17

Asking

9I am *asking* on their behalf; I am not *asking* on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you *GAVE* me, because they are yours. 10All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been *glorified* in them. 11And now *I am no longer in the world*, but they are in the world, and I am *COMING* to you. *HOLY FATHER*, protect them in *YOUR NAME* that you have *GIVEN* me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12While I was with them, I protected them in *YOUR NAME* that you have *GIVEN* me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Coming to THE FATHER

13But now I am *COMING* to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14I have *GIVEN* them *your word*, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as *I do not belong to the world*.

THE EVIL ONE

15I am not *asking* you to take them out of the world, but I *ask* you to protect them from *THE EVIL ONE*. 16They do not belong to the world, just as *I do not belong to the world*.

SANCTIFIED in Truth

17SANCTIFY them in the truth; *your word* is truth. 18As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19And for their sakes I SANCTIFY myself, so that they also may be SANCTIFIED in truth. 20'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through *their word*, 21that they may all be one. As you, *FATHER*, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

While the opening of the Son's Prayer contains petitions by the Son to the Father, the middle features the Son "asking" specifically on behalf of those whom the Father has given to him. The focus on asking is a reconfiguration of the Lukan elaboration of asking after Jesus taught the disciples the Lord's Prayer. In contrast to asking for bread, or even for forgiveness as in the Matthean closing, the Son asks "Holy Father" to "keep" those whom the Father has given to him "in" the Father's

"name." The NRSV translates this "keeping" as "protecting": God is to protect them so they will not be destroyed or lost (17:12: ἀπόλλυμι). The meaning seems to be that they may become lost "again" in "the world." In other words, without knowing the Father, people are simply "lost in the world." This means they have no light that enables them to "know" the Father, and without this knowing they live in darkness. As the Son continues, it becomes clear that a major goal of "keeping them in the name" is for the Son's joy to "be filled" (πεπληρωμένην) in them (17:13; cf. 15:11; 16:20-24). Here again appears to be a chain reaction: as the Father has filled the Son with joy, so the Son's goal is to fill those who believe with joy. In the Son's Prayer, the Son asks the Father to "keep in the name" those whom the Father has given him, with the goal that they be filled with joy. In the chapter before the prayer, the Son tells those who have been given to him that they should "ask in the Son's name," and they will receive it so that their joy will be filled (16:24). The Son uses the experience of a woman in labor to explain how the process works. As the Son tells them farewell, those who have been given to him are in pain, because "the hour" has come. When the child is born, they will no longer remember the anguish "because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world" (16:21). Then he says: "So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you" (16:22).

Instead of asking for God's kingdom to come on earth, for daily bread, and for forgiveness, therefore, the Son's Prayer asks for the Father to keep people in the Father's name, so the Son's joy will fill them. In the midst of this, the Son says that those whom the Father has given him are "not of the world," just as the Son is "not of the world" (17:14, 16). The Son also says that the world has "hated" the ones the Father has given to the Son. Then the Son tells the Father he is not asking that the Father "take them out of the world" but that the Father "keep them from the evil one" (17:15). Here again we see a dramatic reconfiguration of a Lord's Prayer *topos*. In the Matthean version, the disciples are to pray that they not be "led into testing/temptation" but "delivered from the evil one." In contrast, the precreation Son asks the Father to "keep them from the evil one."

The middle ends with the Son asking the Father to "sanctify" (ἁγίασον) those he has given to the Son "in the truth," which is the Father's "word" (17:17). Instead of sanctifying the name of the Father as in the Lord's Prayer, then, the Son's Prayer focuses on becoming sanctified in the Father's word, which is "the truth." The sanctification of the Father by the Son is made clear in 17:11, where the Son refers to

God as "Holy (ἅγιε) Father." John 10:36 explicitly states that the Father has sanctified (ἅγιασεν) the Son and sent him into the world. The Son also says in 17:19 that he has sanctified himself so that they also may be sanctified in truth. Also, in 6:69 Peter says that they know that Jesus is the holy one of God. The goal of the sanctification is that all may "be one in us" (17:21). In the Son's Prayer, the Son's concern is the sanctifying of those who believe. Once again, then, we see the chain-reaction process in the precreation rhetorolect in the Son's Prayer. The sanctification/hallowedness of the Father, which is evident in the Son's reference to the Father as "holy," is to be transmitted from the Father through the Son to those who believe.

Closing Texture in John 17

Love

22The *glory* that you have *GIVEN* me I have *GIVEN* them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may *know* that you have sent me and have *loved* them even as you have *loved* me.

24FATHER, I desire that those also, whom you have *GIVEN* me, may be with me where I am, to see my *glory*, which you have *GIVEN* me because you *loved me before the foundation of the world*.

25 'Righteous FATHER, the world does not *know* you, but I *know* you; and these *know* that you have sent me. 26I made YOUR NAME known to them, and I will make it *known*, so that the *love* with which you have *loved* me may be in them, and I in them.'

The closing reaches a very different place than the Lord's Prayer as a result of the precreation reconfiguration of the conceptualization and reasoning, which means a reconfiguration of the meanings and meaning-effects of the *topoi*. The relation of the Son's Prayer to the Lord's Prayer is fully evident in the closing, however, with its focus on what the Father "has given." Instead of asking the Father to give daily bread in the context of the coming of the kingdom, the Son's Prayer focuses on what the Father has already given both to the Son and to those whom the Father has given to him. The Son starts with "the glory" the Father has given to the Son, and the Son says he has now given this glory to those the Father gave to him. Here we see the chain reaction from the glory of the Father through the Son to those who believe, as we saw above with

the name, the word(s), and the sanctification. The closing uses the Son's giving of "the glory" to the believers as the stepping-stone for giving them "the Father's love," which the Father has for the Son, and the Son wants to see in those whom the Father has given to the Son.

The key to the possibility that those who believe the Son may have the love of the Father in them is that they be able "to be with" the Son once the Son returns to the Father, where he was, where the Father loved him "before the foundation of the world" (17:24). This is possible through the transmission of "the glory" from the Father to the Son to those who believe, so that "they are one" even as the Father and the Son are one, which means that the Son will be "in" them as the Father is "in" the Son. At this point, the Son presents "his will" ($\theta\acute{e}\lambda\omega$) to the Father. Throughout the Son's Prayer the Son has stated that he has fulfilled what the Father sent him to do. In other words, the Son has done the will of the Father in the world. Thus, in relation to the Lord's Prayer, where the Father's will is to be done in the present and the future, in the Son's Prayer the Father's will already "has been done" by the Son while he has been on earth. But the Son's Prayer takes an additional step. In the context of the Son's doing the Father's will on earth, the Son asks the Father to do the Son's will, which is to have those whom the Father gave to him be with him, so they may see his glory which the Father gave to him before the foundation of the world (17:24).

The context for this final step is the Father's "love." While the Son prays for those the Father has given to him, he does not pray for those of the world (17:9). Rather, the Father's love "for the world" reaches beyond the Son's specific prayer to those who may still come to believe after the Son returns to the Father. The Father's love was given to the Son "before the foundation of the world" (17:24). The Father's love for the Son, which created the context for the Father to give certain ones in the world to him, initiated not only the Son's love for the Father but also the Son's love for those whom the Father gave him. In this context, the Son asks the Father to fulfill the Son's will about those whom the Father gave to him.

The goal of the Son's request is for those whom the Father gave to him to become completely one, which means the Son will be "in" them as the Father is "in" the Son. This means that the love with which the Father loves the Son will also be in those whom the Father has given to the Son. In this context the Son refers to those in the world, who do not know the Father. The Son makes known the Father's name to those in the world, and if they know "the love of the Father," then the love of the Father for the Son might also be in them, and the Son in them. Here

we see how the precreation reconfiguration of the Father's will on earth, which invites the additional *topoi* of the hour, the glory, knowing the name and the words of the Father, and being sanctified in truth, creates emergent discourse regarding the Father's love for the Son potentially to be in those who know the Father's name. The Son himself was not able to fulfill the Father's "love" for the world. Rather, the Son did the Father's will for the Son, which focused on those the Father gave to the Son. The further fulfillment of the Father's love for the world is the responsibility of those who "come to believe" after the Son returns to the Father.

Conclusion

This essay began with a comparison between Inductive Bible Study (IBS) and Sociorhetorical Interpretation (SRI). In the context of the many strategies the two approaches have in common, the proposal was that some noticeably different conceptual strategies exist between them. While IBS appears to be strongly driven by a blend of philosophical and canonical interests, SRI is driven by a blend of conceptualities in the social and cognitive sciences, linked with substantive interest in extracanonical literature and diverse religious discourses.

The differences in conceptualities and strategies was applied first to outlines of the Gospel of Mark, with a proposal that SRI is probably more inviting to different divisions of units and overall writings than IBS. For practitioners of SRI, different divisions of writings, including different divisions of opening-middle-closing texture, may be quite informative for readers in order to see multiple webs of meaning within the highly complexly-textured biblical and extracanonical texts that we regularly interpret. This leads to analysis and interpretation of the two versions of the Lord's Prayer in Luke and Matthew.

An opening-middle-closing approach to the Lord's Prayer first exhibits expansion and abbreviation in the Lord's Prayer itself. Then it broadens to analysis and interpretation of expansion and abbreviation in the openings that set the context for the Lord's Prayer and the conclusions that build upon specific *topoi* in the Lord's Prayer. While Luke elaborates the *topos* of "giving" in an argumentative conclusion exhibiting the foregrounding of wisdom rhetorolect, Matthew elaborates the *topos* of "doing" and "not doing" in the opening and expands the *topos* of "forgiving" in the closing, both of which foreground priestly rhetorolect.

From analysis and interpretation of *topoi* in the Synoptic versions of the Lord's Prayer, the essay turns to analysis and interpretation of

reconfiguration of Lord's Prayer *topoi* in the Son's Prayer in John 17. A key for this interpretation is a perception that the Lord's Prayer evokes a blend of priestly, wisdom, and prophetic-apocalyptic rhetorolect, while the Son's Prayer evokes a precreation storyline. Instead of the emphasis in the Lord's Prayer on prophetic-apocalyptic time associated with the coming of God's kingdom, the Son's Prayer focuses on "the hour" when the precreation Son will be glorified and will return to the Father. As the Son's Prayer unfolds, eight major Lord's Prayer *topoi* are reconfigured into a drama of petitions by the Son to the Father, intermingled with assertions by the Son that evoke the precreation storyline. The storyline includes the Father's sending of the Son to the world to give the name and the words of the Father to those whom the Father gives to the Son.

As the analysis and interpretation of the Son's Prayer unfolds, it is noticeable how the reciprocal "forgiving" in the Synoptic Lord's Prayer is reconfigured into reciprocal "giving" in the Son's Prayer. Rather than an emphasis on the Father's forgiving of humans in a context where they forgive other humans, the emphasis in the Son's Prayer is on what the Father "has already given" to the Son and how this "giving" introduces chain-reaction imitation: what the Father gives to the Son, the Son gives to those whom the Father has given to him, with the presupposition that those who were given to him will give what they have received to other people in the world.

In the broader context of the Fourth Gospel, one of the things the Son gives is "taking away" of "the sin" of the world.⁵⁷ In relation to no mention of forgiving in the Son's Prayer, the concept of "forgiving" in the Synoptic Lord's Prayer is dramatically reconfigured in terms of "precreation giving" in the Son's Prayer. The focus is on giving in the "chain-reaction environment" from the Father through the Son to those who believe. The Father gave "the Son" to the world. The Son completed an "intermediate task" of the Father's will that believers are to carry further through a process of what has been given to them. This evokes the overall goal of the Father that is articulated in John 3:16, that God so loved the world that he gave his Son to the world so that "the world" could be saved.

The Son's task was simply to save those whom the Father gave to him. As a result, the Son does not pray for "the world" in his prayer, only for those whom the Father gave to him, so that they may all be one in the Father and the Son. Those in the world who believe, rather than the Son himself, are responsible for giving "of the Father's love" to those "in

the world who do not believe." This "giving" occurs in a context where the Son "takes away" the sin of the world rather than "forgives" sins in the world. However, as humans on earth give to others the name Father, which the Father gave to the Son, as well as the words the Father gave to the Son, humans are to forgive other humans (20:23).⁵⁸ In this context, one of the overall goals is that the joy which came from the Father to the Son will also fill those whom the Father gave to the Son, and it has the potential also to fill other humans to whom those who now believe give the gifts that come to the Father and the Son to them.

On the basis of what we have been able to see in the relation among the Synoptic versions of the Lord's Prayer and the Son's Prayer in John 17, perhaps it is appropriate to conclude that SRI contrasts with IBS by inviting interpreters to look more deeply into the emergence of inner reasoning among early Christian communities. The deeper look is enacted especially by the perception of words and phrases—and clusters of words and phrases—as *topoi* that prompt the retrieval of social-cultural-ideological-religious "frames" that SRI calls rhetorolects. These frames evoke clusters or constellations of images, rationales, and arguments that prompt networks of meanings and meaning-effects that are valued culturally within certain geographical areas. As people encounter new issues through regular activities in their daily lives, which may include significant crises, they blend aspects of multiple frames together conceptually to think and reason about them. This blending prompts emergent structures in alternative networks of meanings and meaning-effects that enable them to "think further into" the issues they face.

SRI, then, contains strategies, concepts, and terminology that can help interpreters see emergent blends prompted by the discourse of various early communities and begin to explore what exigencies may have led to certain "solutions" provided by the emergent blends. Overall, then, we may see how SRI is designed to analyze and interpret "meaning in action" within emergent Christianity itself. In this way, SRI presents a challenge to people who may think Christianity always means, and always has meant, the same thing at all times in all places. Underlying SRI is a presupposition that Christianity is a mode of reasoning, believing, and acting that has always been changing, and still changes today. The reason for the ongoing change is its existence among humans, who are always changing and adapting as they respond to the challenges that

58. 1 John 2:12 blends the logic of the chain-reaction imitation of the Father's giving in the Fourth Gospel with God's forgiving of humans in the Synoptics when it says: "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of his name" (cf. 1 John 1:9).

arise not only in the communities, nations, and continents where they live but also in the communities, nations, and continents they hear about, and may even see through modern media, on a daily basis.