STYLE, STYLISTICS AND THE STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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ABSTRACT
In this paper it is argued that stylistic analyses and studies of New Testament documents have, for the greater part of this century, been inadequate and very limited. The different approaches to New Testament style and the sources of stylistic information available to researchers are indicated, and their limitations pointed out. The question of possible solutions to this problem is subsequently raised, and a few suggestions are made regarding a possible redefinition of style in terms of more modern approaches to language and the implications of this for future New Testament style studies are pointed out.

1 INTRODUCTION
Nobody will deny that it is rather difficult to define the term 'style'. Enkvist (1985b:14) remarks that 'both "rhetoric" and "stylistics" are terms notorious for their richness in ambiguity.' However, despite the fact that style seems somewhat elusive as to its meaning, the fact remains that there is indeed a science called 'stylistics' which purports to deal with this phenomenon and which is also a subject studied by Biblical scholars, albeit not without serious limitations and problems.

In this paper I will attempt to show that the current state of affairs regarding the study of style and stylistics in New Testament research is to a great extent static and inadequate, and that the scope of these studies is very limited. This I will do by using examples from different sources of stylistic information available to New Testament scholars, such as grammars, commentaries, and studies dealing specifically with style. After indicating the problems and limitations of current New Testament style studies, I will offer a few suggestions with regard to rectifying some problem areas in future.

2 NEW TESTAMENT STYLE: SOME TRADITIONAL APPROACHES
I have used the word 'traditional' intentionally in the heading of this paragraph since it contains in its reference some components of the meanings of static, acceptable, unaltered, time-honoured, obdurate, etcetera, which to my mind are all rather apt descriptions of New Testament style studies done in the course of this century.

Most of the blame for the current state of affairs in New Testament style studies can probably be ascribed to the very sources New Testament scholars rely on to discover something about the style of the New Testament. These sources are mostly grammars (the few which deal with style) and the information contained in some of the commentaries on individual New Testament books. Very seldom do we find individual studies dealing with style as such (e.g. Nida et al 1983; Snyman 1984; Tolmie 1985; Nell...
1985; Louw 1986; Floor 1986; Cronjé 1986; Amphoux 1988; Vermaak 1989), because mostly only some individual aspects dealing with language, meaning, literary features etcetera are discussed, but not with a view to a comprehensive approach to style (e.g. Du Toit 1986; Harding 1986; Richard 1985; Welch 1981; see also Botha 1989:35-42 for information on studies of John’s Gospel). While some serious attempts have been made to incorporate stylistic analysis in a broader theoretical framework (e.g. Cronjé 1986), these are the exception to the rule and far from presenting the general trend in style studies.

2.1 Grammars

The basic sources for New Testament scholars wishing to learn something of the style of the New Testament documents are the few grammars of New Testament Greek which do deal with style. Despite the seemingly late dates of some of these grammars (Moule 1977; Blass-Debrunner-Funk-Rehkopf, 1976 and Volume 4 of Moulton’s grammar by Turner 1976), one should recognise that these works do not reflect contemporary scholarship, but are actually just reprints of much older information, done over and over again, without much alteration. This is also alarmingly true with regard to the basic methodologies. For instance: Funk (1961:xiil in his foreword to the first English edition states that ‘while both format and content have been radically transformed since Blass created the work, the basic principles upon which it is based have remained substantially the same’ [italics mine], that is, since 1896! The phenomenon of static methodology is indeed not only limited to this grammar. Moule (1977) has been reprinted without any alteration since 1960. Similarly, the Grammar of the Greek New Testament by A T Robertson, first published in 1914, has undergone no substantial changes in its three subsequent editions and, with the exception of a few orthographic corrections published as late as 1934/1947, is still in frequent use. It is interesting to note that virtually all of the newer grammars on New Testament Greek contain no reference to style at all.

I will discuss two grammars as examples illustrating this approach to style. These grammars (Blass-Debrunner-Funk-Rehkopf 1976 and Volume 4 of Moulton by Turner [1976]) use different methodological approaches, but arrive at virtually the same end result.

It seems that grammars dealing with New Testament style can be classified into two groups — according to their approach to style. First there are those based on the presupposition that style needs to be addressed from the classical vantage point. Underlying this viewpoint is the presupposition that the language of the New Testament is excellent Greek — the so-called ‘purist’ tradition. The Blass-Debrunner-Funk-Rehkopf (1976) grammar is an excellent example of this. This grammar deals with style in the last four chapters — chapters 12-15. The first three deal respectively with Sentence structure/Satzfugung (12), Word and clause order/Wort und Satzstellung (13), and Ellipse, brachylogy and pleonasm (14). To these typical figures of speech is added, in chapter 15, The arrangement of words: Figures of speech/Komposition der Worte: Figuren, which corresponds with classical distinctions of σχήματα λέξεως and σχήματα διάνοιας, which also occur in the Rhetorica ad Herennium (see Snyman & Cronjé 1986:114). The depiction of style in this grammar deals mainly with grammatical and syntactical figures of speech in chapters 12-14, such as asyndeton, the
period, anacoluthon, parataxis, word order, clause order, ellipsis and so on. In chapter 15, on a more limited scale, figures of expression and thought are dealt with, which are rhetorical figures of speech in the classical definition. It is therefore clear that the main emphasis in this grammar falls on grammatical elements such as style/stylistic features with the addition of a little rhetorical information.

Following a different approach, but arriving at virtually the same final position is the Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol IV dealing specifically with style and compiled by Turner (1976). Turner is representative of the viewpoint that New Testament Greek is a sui generis and influenced to a great extent by Semitic influences. This is also reflected in his approach to style. He argues that 'since style, in our view, involves the same considerations as syntax, there must be some duplication, but this fourth volume rather concerns itself with grammatical and other linguistic features which distinguish the work of one author from another' (Turner 1976:1). While the emphasis is very strongly on grammatical and syntactical elements as being equal to style, Turner (1976:1) also says that he pays attention to 'wider categories', such as word order, parallelism, rhetoric, parenthesis, and irregularities stemming from Semitic influences. These are the only aspects involved in 'style' for Turner. Turner (1976:2) furthermore argues that the Biblical Greek shows a uniform style and that the styles are not so far apart as to impart the inner homogeneity of Biblical Greek. In his discussion of the various New Testament authors, Turner in effect concentrates on sources, the Aramaic, Semitic and Hebraic influences on the language of the authors, which is evident from the grammar and syntax of these books. Again the emphasis mainly falls on vocabulary, syntax, grammatical structures and word order. Very seldom is there any other mention of style or rhetorical features. For instance, his treatment of the Gospel of John includes the following: '1. The main sources; 2. Septuagint influence; 3. Other Hebraisms; 4. Aramaisms; 5. Semitisms; 6. Johannine clause order; 7. Use of particles; 8. Use of prepositions; 9. The limited vocabulary; 10. Pointless variety of style' (Turner 1976:64-79). Of the so-called classical figures of speech and even the universally accepted features of John's style such as irony, misunderstandings, double meanings and so on, there is no mention at all. What makes this even more significant is the fact that Turner's work was published for the first time as late as 1976. His work reveals what his perceptions are regarding the nature of style and is also an indication of what he accepted as qualifying for being classified as 'style'. Even more disturbing is the very positive reaction with which Turner's work was received. For instance, Giggnac (1977:167) remarks that Turner's work is the 'soundest we have in NT grammatical literature.' Hughes (1976:152-155) has a similar positive attitude towards Turner's work. This is an indication that the perception of style according to Turner was widely acceptable in New Testament scholarship as recently as a decade and a half ago. This means that the majority of New Testament scholars also perceive style to be nothing more than a few grammatical items and a few well-worn rhetorical features. However, there is also strong opposition to the kind of approach that Turner follows — such as the severe criticism of his work by Nieting (1977:591-592) who concludes that 'those who do research in the language of the bible [sic] ought to base their work on modern post-Saussurean lin-
guistics. Turner has not done this. His perception of style is through and through nineteenth century. Silva (1980:217), Louw (1986:5) and Botha (1989:13-14) are also extremely critical of the approach followed by Turner.

2.2 Commentaries

The various individual commentaries are a second source of information on style. Unfortunately, the shoddy stylistics of the grammars is also carried over to these works — with one exception: While those grammars which deal with style devote considerable space to this phenomenon, the nature of commentaries does not allow for any comprehensive approach. There is too little space available and the treatment of style — if done at all — is eclectic and very brief. For instance, the excellent commentary by Brown ([1966] 1982) which devotes two volumes to the Gospel of John, treats style under ‘Notable characteristics in Johannine style’ (Brown 1982,1:cxxxv). Without explaining why he chose only these specific features (frequency? significance?), he lists ‘inclusion’, ‘chiasm’, ‘twofold or double meaning’, ‘misunderstanding’, ‘irony’ and ‘explanatory notes’. (It is interesting to note that Turner [1976:64-79] does not mention even one of these despite the fact that his work post-dates that of Brown.) While being eclectic in choosing certain features, Brown (1982,1:cxxxv) also does not explain why he deems the inclusion of a section on style necessary. One would assume that these ‘notable characteristics’ of style would be of significance in understanding the text. This is, however, not the case. There are merely cross-references explaining that one of these style features is used, but how the identification of this feature enhances the exegesis is, unfortunately, not indicated. For instance, Brown (1982,1:cxxxvi), when discussing Johannine misunderstanding in the introduction, refers the reader to John 2:19-22. But in the discussion of this specific section in the commentary (Brown 1982,1:114-125) he never again refers to the style feature, its function, or why it is important. Similarly, in referring to John 4:12, Brown (1982,1:170) states: 'This is a perfect example of Johannine irony (see Introduction, p cxxxvi), for the woman is unconsciously stating a truth.' The significance of this for understanding the specific passage is never indicated, which constitutes a serious deficiency. In this excellent commentary on John it also becomes clear that the question of Johannine style is neglected, not because Brown was unaware of, or deemed the examination of style unnecessary, but because the traditional narrow view of style necessarily limited him to mentioning only certain characteristics, without explaining or expounding their significance for understanding John's Gospel. This is not done in his discussion of the characteristics of Johannine style or in the detailed commentary. The inevitable question to be asked is why the inclusion of the section on style was deemed necessary. This is a perfect example of how the traditional view can inhibit an exegete in the implementation of the results of a style analysis and in incorporating them in the whole of the discussion on the meaning and understanding of a document.

This practice of merely selecting (without giving reasons for the selection) a few different so-called style features is widespread amongst commentaries. Barrett (1978:5-11) when dealing with Johannine style states: ‘John’s style may be more particularly studied by the examination
of a number of characteristic expressions and usages.' He then goes on to list a number of these, such as parataxis, asyndeton, usage of οὐν, ἐκείνος, οὗ, δῶλα, and so forth (Barrett 1978:9-10). This is based, according to Barrett (1978:7), on Schweitzer, Goguel, Howard and Ruckstuhl. But again the question arises as to why he chose to select certain features above others. For instance, Schweitzer (1939:87-99) mentions at least 32 characteristic stylistic features, and Ruckstuhl (1951:203-205) adds some 18 more to this. Barrett does not explain why he considers the few he selected as more important than others. He also fails to indicate how knowledge of these style features can assist in analysing the Gospel. I will give a single example of this. Regarding some of these 'stylistic features', Barrett (1978:8) argues that they are 'really significant; for example the Johannine ἔση έαυτοῦ, ἐπ' ἐμαυτοῦ points to a fundamental element in John's Christology (see especially on 5:19). But when one examines the relevant section in the commentary (Barrett 1978:257-259), nothing of the significance of this 'stylistic feature' is mentioned or even vaguely linked to the discussion and interpretation of 5:19. Again this clearly illustrates the inability of the traditional approach to show the relevance of an examination of style for the understanding of the Gospel.

We find the same practice in other commentaries dealing with style — an eclectic selection of style features of mainly a grammatical and syntactical nature. Gniltka (1971:31-32) on Ephesians mentions aspects such as sentence types, the 'abundance' style (accumulation of grammatical aspects, synonyms and the lengths of sentences. Davies and Allison (1988:72-96) on Matthew concentrate mainly on characteristic expressions, vocabulary, semitisms in words and constructions, penchant for numbers, repetition, chiasm, etcetera — again without referring to the function of these features, or explaining in which way they serve to make the message clearer. Hendriksen (1973:25-41) deals with the style of Matthew in the sections where he discusses the synoptic problem and is clearly of the opinion that style equals vocabulary, grammar and syntax. He also has a section on 'Characteristics' of Matthew (1973:79-92), but here he lists the characteristics according to the letters of Matthew. M = methodical A = appealing T = turned towards the present etcetera! Examples from commentaries can be multiplied.

2.3 Individual aspects of style
Individual studies on aspects of style are a third source for stylistic information available to New Testament scholars. Most of these studies are also problematic in the sense that the aspects discussed are seldom seen as part of the 'style' of a specific document. Moreover, the nature and intent of these studies are not to give a synthesis of stylistic elements. Studies dealing with structure, literary aspects, reception theory, narratology and so on (for examples of these on the Fourth Gospel see Botha 1989:35-42) seldom perceive these aspects as part of a more complex whole. The problem here is that, while these features are often studied adequately, their interrelationship is never addressed and not regarded as part of a comprehensive approach to style. Indeed, some aspects which can be of extreme importance to style, such as literary devices and structures, are seldom correlated with style, but rather studied in isolation. This means that the fragmented and limited results of the study of style as grammatical...
cal style remain the only way of perceiving it, while other aspects are neglected as style features. A good example of this is Turner's approach to John. He lists a great number of grammatical and syntactical features as style features, but ignores other accepted features such as irony, misunderstanding, double meaning, etc. We also find that style is very often studied for an ulterior motive, that is, to prove or disprove authorship, sources, priority etc. Often style is reduced to style statistics and nothing more. For examples of how the study of style is used for secondary purposes in Johannine research see Botha (1989: 15-34).

To conclude this section, we can say that it is obvious that these traditional approaches to style are seriously limited in the sense that they deal only with grammatical and syntactical elements, with aspects of vocabulary, Semitic influences and a very limited number of rhetorical features added as an afterthought. Unfortunately, grammars and commentaries are our main sources of determining style and can at best be described as inadequate. So far individual studies on style have not been correlated and incorporated in a comprehensive whole and seldom contribute to the discussion.

In the following section we will spell out some of the implications and limitations of this traditional approach to style.

3 LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH
From the above it is clear that the traditional approach presents us with some serious problems. Perhaps it is advisable to spell out these limitations and indicate what their implications are for New Testament style studies.

* The notion of what style is has remained virtually static since the end of the previous century. The results of modern linguistic research and stylistics have not been adequately incorporated into New Testament style studies. (An exception to this is some of the work done at the University of the Orange Free State — see Tolmie 1985; Nell 1985; Cronje 1986 and Vermaak 1989.)

* It is clear that the traditional approach is extremely limited in its perception of style. The view commonly taken is that, by describing only a few eclectically chosen features of grammar and syntax, the style of a document is adequately described. By style 'grammatical style' is most often meant. The practice of indicating and listing these grammatical aspects is, in effect, not indicative of style as such, but often merely a statement that the New Testament writers used the Greek language.

* This notion of style results in a very narrow and limited view and utilisation of style features in exegesis and so forth. Usually style features and style characteristics are introduced as subsidiary aspects for some other purpose and not in order to contribute to a total understanding of a specific text.

* The use of the term 'style' is extremely problematic. Despite the fact that the term is vague and open to various interpretations, it is used without any qualification as if it could refer to only one thing. The term 'style' is used as a very vague umbrella term to depict virtually anything.

* The figures of speech identified by some of the sources as style such as ellipsis, brachylogy, pleonasm, chiasm, irony, and hyperbole are 'natu-
r al to human expression in general and it is therefore not surprising that one should find some of the figures of speech in various writings, including the Greek New Testament. . . what is more, these figures of speech are just one aspect of the total discourse style of a text' (Louw 1986:6). The mere listing of such features tends to divert attention from a comprehensive approach.

* The traditional approach is not conducive to leading us to a better understanding of the total picture of the style of a particular document. The emphasis is on very small aspects of (grammatical) style to be studied in isolation from one another. This leads to the fragmentation of the document and is also detrimental to obtaining a total picture. A correlation of different stylistic aspects and a definition of the interrelationship of different style features are still virtually absent. However, see Cronjé (1986) for an example of an attempt to rectify this situation.

* The traditional distinction between rhetorical style features and grammatical/syntactical features is problematic. Snyman and Cronje (1986:113) argue convincingly that most of the so-called rhetorical features are based on an unusual syntactical arrangement and that this explains the unsatisfactory treatment of typical figures of speech under the traditional headings.

* The traditional approach merely lists different stylistic features and this is usually seen as adequate. However, a mere listing or enumeration of different features contributes very little to understanding a particular document or passage, as the examples from Brown (1982:1) and Barrett (1978), mentioned above, clearly reveal. The significance of a specific feature needs to be addressed.

* If attention is mainly devoted to the grammatical aspects of style, very little can be said about an author's style, because only a small fragment of what makes up the style of a document is addressed. This has usually resulted in the use of so-called style statistics where opposing viewpoints were often justified on the grounds of the same principles. For instance, opposing viewpoints with regard to authorship may be defended on the grounds of the same 'stylistic' data.

* Individual aspects of style can often indeed be very valuable in expounding a text, but one usually gets the impression that, if other considerations were also taken into account, something much more satisfactory would result (see Cronjé 1986); but because of the limited perception of style, this possibility has as yet not been adequately explored.

* Because of the extremely narrow and limited views of style, some aspects which are of vital importance, were not recognised as pertaining to style and therefore not considered worthy of discussion. For instance, composition, narrative structure, and reception theory have so far very seldom been studied in terms of style.

* Grammars following a more classical approach do so according to the distinction between the σχήματα λέξεως and σχήματα διανοήσεως without any other distinctions. Snyman and Cronje (1986:114) argue that the figures are usually merely listed without any diagnostic principles for classification. And when an attempt at further classification of the figures is made, the principles according to which it is done become obscure. They give as example the fact that while both asyndeton and ellipsis rely on the principle of omission, they are grouped under different headings...
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(Snyman & Cronje 1986:114). This is a clear indication that a thorough review of the traditional approach is essential. With regard to these traditional features, Louw et al (1983) and Snyman and Cronje (1986:115-121) have at least attempted a redefinition of the schemata.

* Despite the fact that New Testament scholars are fairly well-educated in most aspects of modern literary, linguistic and semantic theory, this knowledge has so far not been introduced adequately or comprehensively into a serious rethinking of style in the New Testament. Again we must refer to the excellent work done at the University of the Orange Free State (Tolmie 1985; Nell 1985; Cronje 1986; Vermaak 1989) in this respect and express the wish that this research may reach a much wider audience.

* The purpose of style studies is usually not spelled out clearly. The nature of the work sometimes provides an indication, but why it is necessary to study style is seldom convincingly demonstrated. One gets the impression that dealing with style is one of the unavoidable necessities which has to be dealt with without a clear purpose in mind — at least in the grammars and commentaries.

* Style is quite often studied for subsidiary reasons. Most style studies on the New Testament or parts of the New Testament are not done to discover what style entails, or how stylistic knowledge can help us to arrive at a better understanding of the meaning of texts, but in order to use the so-called stylistic data for other purposes, without serious consideration as to whether these features are really of a stylistic nature. The work of Nicol (1972) and Fortna (1970), for example do just that.

* In view of the traditional perception of style, it is very difficult to decide what is relevant in style. Since everything that pertains to language and syntax is included under the term 'style', it is impossible to give an exhaustive account of all these features. This compels authors of works on the subject to eclectically choose only a few features which they are able to accommodate within the scope of their study.

* In the traditional approach there is very little room for critical literary considerations — and this imposes serious constraints on the introduction of modern literary theory and stylistics into traditional style studies.

* The current state of affairs in New Testament style studies makes it virtually impossible to obtain a unified picture of the style of a document. Because there is as yet no adequate paradigm in which a combination of style features can be incorporated and correlated, the different stylistic aspects are treated in isolation and this leads to a fragmentation of, and limited perceptions about style.

* According to the traditional approach, function is not considered a relevant part of the stylistic picture. This means that other aspects, such as narratology, reception theory, sociolinguistics, semiotics, and semantics, are neither accommodated, nor provided for and this necessarily limits the perception of style.

4 A PROBLEM EXISTS: BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

To my mind, there are a number of areas in which measures should be taken to at least rectify some of the problems we have encountered in the research so far. I would like to offer a few suggestions, not necessarily in order of importance, on what should be incorporated in a modern consider-
ation of style.

• The term 'style' needs to be qualified very clearly. Part of the problem we encounter when dealing with stylistics in general is that of terminology (see Abrams 1987:193 for a few usages of the term). Depending on the purpose of the study, the understanding of what style is should be spelled out. This would enable both author and reader of a particular work to shape their expectations regarding the nature of the study and to judge the work done in the light of the definition and not on vague general terms.

• The limitations of the traditional approach should be recognised. Recognition of the problem would force New Testament scholars to a better definition of style and the implementation of modern ideas.

• One of the arguments against the traditional approach is that it is virtually impossible to ascertain why the study is being undertaken. The purpose of study should be stated in no uncertain terms. In an article in which he proposes to analyse a specific text stylistically, Leech (1985:39) identifies two basic purposes of stylistic analyses within what he calls 'literary stylistics':

We may distinguish DESCRIPTIVE stylistics (where the purpose is just to describe style) from EXPLANATORY stylistics (where the purpose is to use stylistics to explain something). Again, within explanatory stylistics, we may distinguish cases where the explanatory goal is EXTRINSIC (e.g. to find out the author(s) or the chronology of a set of writings), or INTRINSIC (where the purpose is to explain the meaning or value of the text itself) [Leech's italics].

This is perhaps one way of defining what we are doing in New Testament stylistics. At least there will be no doubts as to the aim of the study if it is spelled out in these terms.

• Moreover, it seems inevitable that the underlying text theory which determines the stylistic approach, should be recognised and accounted for. Enkvist (1985a:262-263) identifies four types of text models, each with certain implications for the study of style. The sentence-based models allow for the description of style, not only in terms of the grammar, syntax, vocabulary, etcetera, of single sentences, but also in terms of those aspects of the text which focus on the relationships between sentences and clauses and the ways in which these relationships and links are effected. The second type of text model mentioned by Enkvist deals with predication and how, through a number of different text strategies, these predication are built and combined into a comprehensive whole. The question of the relationship between 'style' and 'text strategy' also becomes an important factor here (see Enkvist 1985a:263-264). The cognitive text models are valuable in the sense that they enable us to link the formation, production and understanding of texts and the styles of texts to human cognitive processes. Lastly, the models termed as interactional models by Enkvist, provide valuable clues as to which factors, on the interactional level, influenced the choice of words and caused an utterance to be structured in a specific way. It seems necessary that every style study should also take cognisance of the fact that the underlying text theory also needs to be spelled out or at least recognised, because it can radically influence the.
perception of style.

- Closely linked to the above is the question of the nature of the documents we are dealing with. Were they written with aesthetic purposes in mind, or were they primarily pragma-texts, that is, documents produced to achieve certain specific aims? Answers to this question will also play a role in the approach to the texts. However, to my mind, it seems inevitable that the New Testament should also be studied stylistically from a functionalist approach and not only from a formalist approach as has been the case so far. Leech (1983:4-5) gives a fair account of what both formalist and functionalist approaches entail and argues that they are complementary and that language usage and style cannot be studied adequately if one of these areas is neglected.

- The above then also means that a specific approach to language and language communication must be chosen from which to embark on a stylistic analysis which can accommodate these aspects. I have found a very useful and comprehensive approach in speech act theory and have applied it with some success to the text of John 4 (Botha 1989:68-211).

- The deliberate introduction of modern stylistics into the study of the New Testament is essential. Despite the fact that modern stylistics is not without its own problems (see Mair 1985), there is much that can be learned from the recent developments in this field (see Fowler 1981:1-9 for a discussion of the development of 'New Stylistics').

- All of the above points in the direction of a comprehensive approach to style. What Louw (1986:5) argues concerning the study of Johannine style is certainly also true for New Testament style studies in general:

Johannine style has been discussed by some scholars mainly in terms of Semitisms and related grammatical peculiarities. Should these features be classified as stylistic, however? Other scholars have restricted their remarks to the relative absence of rhetorical figures of speech, such as advocated by the earlier Greek orators. But figures of speech are merely one aspect of style. Style involves a much wider range of items, for style pertains to an author's choice from among the various possibilities of expression offered by the language. Style also extends beyond sentence boundaries; it involves the structure of the total discourse.

I have attempted such a more comprehensive definition of style in which the aspects mentioned are included (see Botha 1989:59). The work in the field of stylistic research at the University of the Orange Free State referred to above also represents attempts at addressing the serious deficiencies of the traditional approaches to style and placing style studies on firmer theoretical grounds.

5 CONCLUSION

It appears that the current state of New Testament stylistics is one of disarray. For the most part it is more oriented towards the 19th century way of doing things than towards the introduction of modern methodologies and insights. The causes for this situation are probably to be found in the sources available to New Testament scholars, which largely influence perceptions regarding style to this day — despite the fact that the meth-
odologies can be traced to the previous century. A possible remedy for the situation might be a clear rethinking of what style is, should be, and entails, with emphasis on a well-articulated definition of style in terms of its presuppositions, scope, aim and purpose and underlying text theory. This should enhance the study of style of the New Testament to such an extent that style studies will contribute towards determining the meaning of the texts which we are dealing with.

WORKS CONSULTED

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