

Rhetorical Analysis of Biblical Documents in the Past Decade with Special Focus on the Seven 'Pepperdine' Conferences

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In George A. Kennedy's *Festschrift* published in 1991, Duane F. Watson wrote:

It is well known in horticulture that crossing diverse strains of plants often yields a hybrid more vibrant than the parent strains. The same can be said of crossing diverse branches of knowledge. The integration of biblical and rhetorical studies has yielded the new hybrid of interpretation – rhetorical criticism.¹

This statement reveals just how new and daring rhetorical interpretation of the Bible felt to many biblical scholars at the beginning of the 1990s. A major reason was the challenge biblical interpreters faced to master entirely new fields of study. After describing Kennedy as one who "bravely and successfully traversed the domain of biblical studies to chart new territory," Watson continues with the assertion that "Biblical studies is now awash in a flood of creativity in which rhetoric is a major part...."²

Heidelberg 1992

The year after the publication of the Kennedy *Festschrift*, Thomas H. Olbricht hosted the 1992 Heidelberg Rhetoric Conference at the Moore Haus in Heidelberg with support from Pepperdine University. The volume contains a dedication to Wilhelm Wuellner and a bibliography of some of his most important works. Among the words of praise is the statement that "More than anyone else, Professor Wuellner has been in contact with scholars in the United States, Canada, Europe, South Africa, Australia, Japan and elsewhere."³ The preface refers to Hans Dieter Betz's commentary on Galatians as marking "the rediscovery of rhetorical analysis of Scripture in America." It continues

¹ Duane F. Watson, "Preface," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. Duane F. Watson; JSNTSS 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 7.

² Watson, *Persuasive Artistry*, 7.

³ S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTSS 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 17-20.

with a statement that "A South African in a moment of euphoria declared that the conference roster was a veritable who's who of rhetorical scholars."⁴

The volume contains multiple references to rhetorical publications by Klaus Berger, Hans Dieter Betz, C. Joachim Classen, James D. Hester, Frank Witt Hughes, Robert Jewett, George Kennedy, Burton L. Mack, Margaret M. Mitchell, Vernon K. Robbins, Folker Siegert, Joop Smit, Stanley K. Stowers, Lauri Thurén, Johannes N. Vorster, Duane F. Watson, Wilhelm Wuellner, and others. In the volume, Dennis L. Stamps builds on the insights of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's work to explore the inscribed rhetorical situation in Paul's letters,⁵ and Duane Watson refers to her work in his essay on 1 Corinthians 15.⁶

There are references on ten pages to works of Kenneth Burke, in addition to an essay on "Burkean Rhetorical Criticism and the Biblical Interpreter."⁷ There are references on sixteen pages to Olbrechts-Tyteca and on twenty-six pages to Chaim Perelman, covering a span from page 59 through 513. There are references on nine pages to the work of Jan Swearingen, with eight of these pages in Wilhelm Wuellner's essay entitled "Biblical Exegesis in the Light of the History and Historicity of Rhetoric and the Nature of the Rhetoric of Religion."⁸ There are extensive references to H. Lausberg's *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* in Folker Siegert's "Mass Communication and Prose Rhythm in Luke-Acts,"⁹ David Hellholm's "Amplificatio in the Macro-Structure of Romans,"¹⁰ Duane F. Watson's "Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15,"¹¹ A. H. Snyman's "Persuasion in Philippians 4.1-20,"¹² and references on two pages in Johannes

⁴ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 9.

⁵ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 193-210; cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 33 (1987): 386-403.

⁶ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 233, 234.

⁷ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 171, 173, 190, 250, 359, 443, 444, 508, 509, 511; Jeffrey A. Crafton, "The Dancing of an Attitude: Burkean Rhetorical Criticism and the Biblical Interpreter," 429-442.

⁸ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 492-513. The additional reference is on the first page of Glenn Holland's "Speaking Like a Fool: Irony in 2 Corinthians 10-13," 250-264.

⁹ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 42-58.

¹⁰ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 123-151.

¹¹ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 231-249.

¹² Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 325-337.

N. Voster's "Strategies of Persuasion in Romans 1.16-17"¹³ and in C. Joachim Classen's "St Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric."¹⁴

The 1992 Heidelberg Conference volume contains seven essays on the history or theory of rhetoric; five papers focused on Luke-Acts; fourteen papers on Pauline epistles;¹⁵ and one on Hebrews. This means there are no essays on the Hebrew Bible, the book of Revelation, or the NT Apocrypha. There are, however, significant essays on the biographical historiography and epistles in the NT using strategies that cover a spectrum from classical rhetorical interpretation through the new rhetorical criticism of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca.¹⁶

Pretoria 1994

The volume from the Pretoria, South Africa, conference in 1994 featured a location on a different continent and the inclusion of new voices. Pieter J. J. Botha and Johannes N. Vorster begin their introduction to the volume with a statement that "The rhetoricity of religious discourses is not something easily acknowledged... Religion is usually associated with certainty, stability, objectivity, truth."¹⁷ At the end of the introduction, they observe:

Obviously our own context played a role in our aims for organizing the conference of which these are the proceedings. It is of the utmost importance that biblical and religious scholarship in South Africa be challenged in a fundamental way for their complicity in our sad history. Scholarship cannot foster the "consumer-oriented use of authoritative texts" (to use Craffert's phrase) but should rather promote an awareness of the power of language, the power that binds *and* liberates that we call

¹³ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 154, 157.

¹⁴ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 270, 280.

¹⁵ 5 on theory; 1 on Acts and Paul's epistles; 2 on Romans; 2 on 1 Corinthians; 1 on 2 Corinthians; and 3 on Philipppians.

¹⁶ The editors observe in the introduction that the essay by Vernon K Robbins praises Wilhelm Wuellner's earlier work and "challenges Wuellner to explore more fully than he has the concept of the diversity of cultural rhetorics at play in a social-rhetorical context" (Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric*, 25).

¹⁷ S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht (eds.), *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference* (JSNTSS 131; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 17.

"real." Hence, a rhetorical awareness will also create respect for the plurality inherent in human discourse."¹⁸

After the introduction, the Pretoria volume features a lead-off essay by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza.¹⁹ In the essay she builds especially on her earlier work on political rhetoric in the book of Revelation,²⁰ rhetorical situation and historical reconstruction in 1 Corinthians,²¹ and a rhetorical-ethical approach that challenges the social location of biblical studies in programs of research formulated by men.²² The opening footnote indicates that Schüssler Fiorenza changed her original title and focus after reading the essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference. After reading those essays, Schüssler Fiorenza decided to focus "on the problematic relationship between feminist and rhetorical criticism rather than put feminist criticism at the service of rhetorical criticism."²³ In the context of highly critical comments about the limitations of the work of the people frequently cited in the 1992 Heidelberg volume, the essay "challenges rhetorical studies to engage with feminist biblical studies and feminist theory to create a theoretical space in which a radical democratic politics of meaning and a religious rhetoric of transformation can be articulated."²⁴ Her basic criticism is that "biblical scholarship has not yet made the full epistemological turn to a rhetoric of inquiry insofar as it has barely recognized the contributions which feminist and liberationist scholarship have made to the New Rhetoric."²⁵ The result, she says, is that "Most recent malestream works on the reinvention of rhetorics or on new approaches in Christian Testament studies barely take note of feminist and critical liberationist theories because they remain caught up in the scientist and objectivist ethos of the modern logic of identity."²⁶

¹⁸ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology*, 25.

¹⁹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism," in Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology*, 28-53 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 83-102.

²⁰ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

²¹ Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Rhetorical Situation."

²² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 107 (1988): 3-17.

²³ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn," 28 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 83.

²⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn," 29 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 84.

²⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn," 30 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 84.

²⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn," 30 = *idem*, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 84-85. See a response in Vernon K. Robbins, "The Rhetorical Full-Turn: Reconfiguring Rhetorical-Political Analysis,"

Schüssler Fiorenza comments in a footnote that L. Olbrechts-Tyteca is a woman and "is hardly mentioned although she has for ten years collaborated with Perelman in the study of rhetorical discourses." Then she adds that "Olbrechts-Tyteca is a good rhetorical example of how women and their intellectual work are 'written out' of history."²⁷ I will add at this point that the L. before Olbrechts-Tyteca's is an abbreviation for the name Lucie. I found this through a library search and have not yet seen a publication that includes the name Lucie instead of the abbreviation L., nor does Schüssler Fiorenza reveal the first name of Olbrecht-Tyteca to the reader in her essay.

One of the frequently cited authors in the Pretoria volume is Dirk J. Smit, a South African scholar who at the time was Professor at the University of the Western Cape and now is at the University of Stellenbosch. Smit has published essays on biblical interpretation during the various stages of apartheid in South Africa, and he has an essay in the volume entitled "Theology as Rhetoric? Or: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner."²⁸ The volume further exhibits the South African context for the Conference with its second essay by Pieter F. Craffert, entitled "Reading and Divine Sanction: The Ethics of Interpreting the New Testament in the New South Africa."²⁹ Craffert builds on Smit's description of three stages in NT scholarship in South Africa: (1) scriptural legitimation of apartheid by prominent scholars; (2) an ethos of scientific research that objected to the apartheid interpretation but did not bring politics into scholarly interpretation; and (3) a phase of committed, socio-politically involved reading of the New Testament.³⁰ There is tension in the essay between statements transported from Schüssler Fiorenza's prose and Craffert's own social-scientifically oriented humanist prose. He describes his position as an ethics of interpretation that "challenges biblical scholarship in a fundamental way" and ends with the statement: "It is when human dialogue claims divine sanction that adverse viewpoints and alternative voices are also damned or exorcised by means of something more than human power, the power of divine sanction."³¹ In the end the deepest loyalties

in S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps (eds.), *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible* (JSNTSS 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 48-60.

²⁷ A library search revealed that her first name is Lucie, but this name does not appear in her publications with Perelman.

²⁸ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology*, 393-422.

²⁹ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology*, 54-71.

³⁰ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology*, 54-55.

³¹ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology*, 68.

of Craffert appear to lie in "the investigation of alien systems of belief, whether text or culture," which "allows us to stand back from own own prevailing assumptions and structures and to discover their contingency. This paves the way for a greater degree of understanding, hence tolerance, of cultural diversity."³²

H. J. Bernard Combrink is the only author to make a reference to Kenneth Burke in the Pretoria volume.³³ In addition to Schüssler Fiorenza's references, there are nine references to Olbrechts-Tyteca and sixteen references to Perelman. There is only one reference to Lausberg, in the essay by Lauri Thurén to support his view of the *exordium* and *peroratio* in 2 Peter.³⁴ Again there are multiple references to Betz, Classen, Kennedy, Mack, Mitchell, Olbricht, and Wuellner. There also are multiple references to works by Bernard Lategan, whose leadership in creative biblical scholarship in South Africa is well known. The essay by Elna Mouton, a South African scholar who was at the University of Port Elizabeth but is now a Professor at the University of Stellenbosch, raises the number of women authors in the volume to two. Eleven South African scholars have essays in the volume,³⁵ and two more make a substantial contribution by authoring an introduction for it.³⁶

The 1994 Pretoria volume contains seven essays on theory, four on the Hebrew Bible, one on Acts, four on Pauline epistles,³⁷ one on 2 Peter, and one on *Acts of Thomas*. This means there are no essays on a Gospel or on the book of Revelation in this volume, but there are essays on the Hebrew Bible and NT Apocrypha. Bernard Combrink's essay adds a special dimension by discussing the nature of sacred scripture in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. An interesting moment arises in the volume, keeping in mind the opening essay, when Jeffrey L. Staley queries Sandra Schneiders' *The Revelatory Text* for separating the personal life of the author "from the search for definitive 'norm[s] against which interpretation can be judged'."³⁸ Staley, in an

³² Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology*, 66.

³³ Page 105, in H. J. Bernard Combrink, "The Rhetoric of Sacred Scripture," 102-123.

³⁴ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology*, 344.

³⁵ H. J. Bernard Combrink, Pieter F. Craffert, Paul Germond, Yehoshua Gitay, D. P. Goosen, Richard Lemmer, Elna Mouton, Philippe-Joseph Salazar, Dirk J. Smit, Gerrie Snyman, J. P. H. Wessels.

³⁶ Pieter J. J. Botha; Johannes N. Vorster.

³⁷ One each on theory, 1 Thessalonians, Ephesians, and Colossians.

³⁸ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology*, 145, citing Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 145.

exercise of uncovering areas of an author's writing "where their subjective, personal autobiographies inadvertently cross the boundaries into their objective, public scholarship,"³⁹ asserts that "Sandra Schneiders's consciously constructed self is a bodiless person, one who is strongly unified by a determined will and a focused intellectual quest."⁴⁰ The Pretoria volume of essays, then, contains significant journeys into the political rhetoric of men and women working in contexts where they confront one another with the challenging issues of rhetorical interpretation of the Bible.

London 1995

When Thomas H. Olbricht planned a rhetorical conference in 1995 at Pepperdine University's Prince's Gate facility in London, five South African scholars contributed essays that appeared in the published volume.⁴¹ The lead-off essay at the conference was by Vernon K Robbins entitled "The Present and Future of Rhetorical Analysis."⁴² Robbins had not attended the Pretoria Conference, nor had he read the essays from the Conference. Nevertheless, introducing a sociorhetorical interpretive analytics for interpreting the Bible, the essay explores the historical-ideological relation of Schüssler Fiorenza's commentary discourse on 1 Corinthians to Betz's commentary discourse on the Sermon on the Mount. The essay observes that:

She, like Betz, discusses "them" rather than "us." Her focus is on the historical, social and cultural intertexture of the biblical text, namely the relation of the text to the historical, social and cultural context of the Corinthians. She merges this historical mode of commentary with an ideological mode of discourse that focuses on Paul and on women in the context of varying social and educational status in the Corinthian community. Paul does not foster "independence, freedom and consensus" but "subordination and silence."⁴³

³⁹ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology*, 134.

⁴⁰ Porter and Olbricht, *Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology*, 145.

⁴¹ Pieter J. J. Botha, Lambert D. Jacobs, Hendrik Viviers, Johannes N. Vorster, J. P. H. Wessels.

⁴² 24-52.

⁴³ S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference* (JSNTSS 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 45.

Pushing toward a goal of "Reconfiguring the Discourse of Commentary," the essay explores the manner in which Elizabeth Castelli used Michel Foucault's proposal for analysis of power relations in a text to present discourse that "includes the ideological texture of modern commentary discourse on 1 Corinthians."⁴⁴ The essay observes that after showing how Paul constructs his authority within the discourse, both Schüssler Fiorenza and Castelli "reenact this aspect of Pauline discourse themselves, adopting a powerful, authoritative rhetorical mode of discourse filled with rich inner textual images and intertextual recitation." The paragraph concludes with the comment that "In many ways, then their own discourse is imitative of the powerful and richly-textured discourse the New Testament writings attribute to Paul."⁴⁵ The essay continues with praise for the manner in which both Schüssler Fiorenza and Castelli explore and exhibit a wider range of rhetoricity in Pauline discourse than many other commentators, "since they use multiple strategies and insights from rhetorical method and rhetorical theory to enrich their analysis and interpretation of the ideological texture of Pauline discourse."⁴⁶ The essay concludes that

none of us has the final say on ideology.... The name of the game here needs to be perspicuity and humility.... The word is out that there is no "one" insight that holds "the" key to any text. Rather, every text invites commentators to re-enact multiple meanings and meaning effects in their new context. We have been entering a postmodern era of interpretive "self-awareness" for some time now, and my recommendation is to build upon traditional, modern and postmodern rhetorical method and theory by reinventing it into an interpretive analytics both of biblical discourse itself and of past and present commentary on biblical discourse.⁴⁷

The second essay in the London volume is by J. D. H. Amador, entitled "The Word Made Flesh: Epistemology, Ontology and Postmodern Rhetorics,"⁴⁸ followed by Erika Mae Olbricht's "Constructing the Dead Author: Postmodernism's Rhetoric of Death."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 46.

⁴⁵ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 46.

⁴⁶ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 47.

⁴⁷ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 48.

⁴⁸ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 53-65.

⁴⁹ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 66-78.

Amador's stated interest is "an approach to the rhetoric *of* the Bible that considers the ideological echoes and reverberations that are at work below/within a culture's discourse practices which do not purport to be specifically religious or theological."⁵⁰ He continues: "A rhetoric *of* the Bible ... would *speak* what is left *unspoken*, but is nevertheless *present* and at *work* in the rhetoric of a particular system of thought (political movement, system of punishment, economic, social structures and academic discourse)."⁵¹ Erika Mae Olbricht's essay explores the birth of the reader in the context of the death of the author in postmodernism. Above all, the essay is an exploration of the disappearance of origins as one approaches a text. She ends with: "Of course there are 'origins'. But they are always already indebted to culture, to identity, to theory and history, even as writers and readers. They are always shifting, always modifying, never still or static."⁵²

The initial essays on rhetorical theory continue with Thomas H. Olbricht's "The Flowering of Rhetorical Criticism in America,"⁵³ followed by Robert G. Hall's "Ancient Historical Method and the Training of an Orator."⁵⁴ Then, the volume concludes with reflections on the London Conference by David Jasper.⁵⁵ Jasper adopts a highly critical approach, asserting that even though many of the papers "recogniz[e] the 'postmodern' situation within which we are writing, nevertheless the parameters of the project ... remain on the whole comfortably lodged within the traditional critical limits of authorial intentionality and historical criticism."⁵⁶

Perhaps the index of author bears out Jasper's assertion. The most frequently cited authors in the London volume are George A. Kennedy and Burton L. Mack, each with references on twenty-three pages. Close behind are Perelman (20), Betz (19), Wuellner (19), Olbrechts-Tyteca (18), Robbins (16 outside of his own essay), and Olbricht (10). On nine pages there are references to writings by Schüssler Fiorenza. At a rhetorical conference outside of South Africa, even when the South African scholars presented elegant, postmodern analysis and interpretations, their interpretations were

⁵⁰ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 54.

⁵¹ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 54.

⁵² Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 78.

⁵³ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 79-102.

⁵⁴ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 103-118.

⁵⁵ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 476-482.

significantly non-political. J. P. H. Wessels explored the celebration of differences in Judges 2:20-3:6,⁵⁷ and Hendrik Viviers probed why Elihu is ignored in Job 32-37.⁵⁸ Pieter J. J. Botha sought why Mark's story of Jesus persuades the reader,⁵⁹ Lambert D. Jacobs explored a new value system in Corinth,⁶⁰ and Johannes N. Vorster investigated the construction of culture through the construction of person in the *Acts of Thecla*.⁶¹ In studies by two scholars from Canada, Willi Braun probed the relation of argumentation to authority in the Synoptic Gospels,⁶² and L. Gregory Bloomquist investigated the social context of cynic rhetorical practice.⁶³ Each essay represents a forward-reaching mode of rhetorical interpretation, incorporating fascinating new material to guide the investigation and conclusions. There are eleven essays on Pauline epistles: three on theoretical issues,⁶⁴ two on Romans,⁶⁵ four on 1-2 Corinthians,⁶⁶ one on Philippians,⁶⁷ and one on Titus,⁶⁸ Once again there are two women authors in the volume of essays.⁶⁹ If the volume does not fulfill the expectations of a postmodern rhetorician, nevertheless it contains deeply researched, theoretically informed, and elegantly formulated essays.

Malibu 1996

The Malibu volume, exhibiting papers given at the Malibu campus of Pepperdine University, opens with a dedication and tribute to Thomas H. Olbricht. Then the opening essay is an interview by Erika Mae Olbricht of Thomas Olbricht on his autobiographical

⁵⁶ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 476.

⁵⁷ J. P. H. Wessels, "Persuasions in Judges 2.20-3.6: A Celebration of Differences," in Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 120-136.

⁵⁸ Hendrik Viviers, "Elihu (Job 32-37), Garrulous but Poor Rhetor? Why is he Ignored?", in Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 137-153.

⁵⁹ Pieter J. J. Botha, "Mark's Story of Jesus and the Search for Virtue," in Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 156-184.

⁶⁰ Lambert D. Jacobs, "Establishing a New Value System in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 5-6 as Persuasive Argument," in Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 374-387.

⁶¹ Johannes N. Vorster, "Construction of Culture through the Construction of Person: The *Acts of Thecla* as an Example," in Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 445-473.

⁶² Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 185-199.

⁶³ Porter and Olbricht, *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, 200-231.

⁶⁴ Glenn Holland; Stanley E. Porter; John T. Fitzgerald.

⁶⁵ Jean-Noël Aletti; Ira J. Jolivet, Jr.

⁶⁶ Frank W. Hughes; Gary Selby; Lambert D. Jacobs; Verena Jegher-Bucher.

⁶⁷ Duane F. Watson.

⁶⁸ C. Joachim Classen.

⁶⁹ Erika Mae Olbricht, Verena Jegher-Bucher.

book *Hearing God's Voice*.⁷⁰ Once again an essay by J. D. H. Amador appears near the front of the volume, this time entitled "Interpretive Unicity: The Drive toward Monological (Monotheistic) Rhetoric."⁷¹

The index of authors to this volume contains references to H. Lausberg in Thomas H. Olbricht's essay on "Classical Rhetorical Criticism and Historical Reconstructions: A Critique;"⁷² Duane F. Watson's "The Contributions and Limitations of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Theory for Constructing the Rhetorical and Historical Situations of a Pauline Epistle;"⁷³ Kota Yamada's "The Preface to the Lukan Writings and Rhetorical Historiography;"⁷⁴ Stanley E. Porter's "Paul as Epistolographer *and* Rhetorician?"⁷⁵ Anders Eriksson's "Special Topics in 1 Corinthians 8-10;"⁷⁶ and Lauri Thurén's "Was Paul Angry? Derhetorizing Galatians."⁷⁷

The name of M. A. K. Halliday makes a special appearance in the volume from pages 84-107 as a result of Gustavo Martín-Asensio's essay on "Hallidayan Functional Grammar as Heir to New Testament Rhetorical Criticism."⁷⁸ In the midst of these essays, Dale Patrick and Allen Scult discuss the debate in biblical scholarship over rhetoric and ideology;⁷⁹ L. Gregory Bloomquist presents a sociorhetorical analysis of Luke 21;⁸⁰ Ira J. Jolivet, Jr. performs an analysis of Paul's conversion in Acts from a perspective of the stasis theory of Hermagoras;⁸¹ Dennis L. Stamps explores the theological rhetoric of Pauline epistles;⁸² Glenn Holland examines the self against the self in Romans 7:7-25;⁸³

⁷⁰ Erika Mae Olbricht, "Acting on the Center: An Interview on Rhetoric and Hermeneutics with Thomas H. Olbricht in the Wake of *Hearing God's Voice*," in S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps (eds.), *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference* (JSNTSS 180; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 28-47.

⁷¹ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 48-62.

⁷² Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 108-109.

⁷³ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 125-151.

⁷⁴ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 154-172.

⁷⁵ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 222-248.

⁷⁶ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 272-301.

⁷⁷ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 302-320.

⁷⁸ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 84-107.

⁷⁹ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 63-83.

⁸⁰ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 173-209.

⁸¹ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 210-220.

⁸² Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 249-259.

⁸³ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 260-271.

Timothy W. Seid analyzes synkrisis in Hebrews 7;⁸⁴ and Mary W. Patrick explores autobiographical anger in Ignatius of Antioch.⁸⁵

If David Jaspers was critical of the London conference for not moving decisively into postmodern analysis and interpretation, he would have condemned this conference for returning to the deep trenches of modernism. In my view, a special contribution of the volume lies in the programmatic journeys the authors take through the strengths and limitations of classical rhetorical criticism, epistolography, rhetorical historiography, special topics in Christian literature, the functional grammar of M. A. K. Halladay, sociorhetorical interpretation, the nature of theological rhetoric, and expressions of anger and reflections on self in ancient texts. Again there are two women authors of essays in the volume.⁸⁶

Florence 1998

The editors of the Florence volume observe that "Over 30 participants from seven different nations (Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, Finland, South Africa, Sweden, United States of America) gathered to discuss the rhetorical analysis of Scripture."⁸⁷ Also they observe that at least ten of the papers are "marked by a growing interest in the tapestry or textures of socio-rhetorical criticism."⁸⁸ As the editors worked with the papers in the volume, they perceived a "shift to a rhetorics of how a text constructs a new sociology of being, a concern about the 'power of texts'."⁸⁹ They comment further:

... rhetorical critics are becoming more interested in how textual discourse constructs new sociological understanding and identity. In this perspective, rhetoric is more than how a text communicates and whether that "how" is effective, but what a text communicates. Rhetoric becomes the means of positing a new reality and persuading others to adopt it.... Perhaps a key to understanding this shift is the ... interest ... in how Christianity established its identity as a religion in the Greco-Roman

⁸⁴ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 322-347.

⁸⁵ Porter and Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture*, 348-375.

⁸⁶ Erika Mae Olbricht and Mary W. Patrick.

⁸⁷ S. E. Porter and D. L. Stamps (eds.), *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible* (JSNTSS 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 9.

⁸⁸ Porter and Stamps, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, 9.

world and culture, which included, of course, Judaism – and beyond that, how early Christians expressed this identity and persuaded others to adopt and retain this world-view. It is a fascinating project to uncover how these early followers of Jesus took the cultural and social ideas and conventions of their day and age and converted them into a continuous, but distinctive, new cultural and social pattern.⁹⁰

According to the index of authors, the Florence volume contains only one reference to the writings of Hans Dieter Betz, and this is to his essay on Jesus and the Cynics (p. 259). There is no reference to Lausberg's *Handbuch*. There are references on fourteen pages to the works of Stanley K. Stowers, on seven pages to Wilhelm Wuellner, and on only four pages to George Kennedy. There are ten references to the writings of Johannes N. Vorster and six references to Charles Wanamaker, both authors in South Africa. There are twelve references to the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein. There are ten references to Anders Eriksson, only three of which are in an essay authored by Anders Eriksson. There are twenty references to Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca and twenty-one references to Chaim Perelman. There are multiple references to the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in an essay where Vernon Robbins responds to her 1994 Pretoria essay about moving beyond a rhetorical half-turn into an epistemological rhetoric of inquiry that includes political rhetoric. There is no woman author of an essay in this volume.

Lund 2000

Prior to the Lund Conference all the rhetoric conferences except the one in South Africa had been hosted at a Pepperdine University campus, with Thomas H. Olbricht as the special host. Pieter J. J. Botha, Johannes N. Vorster, and their colleagues at UNISA in Pretoria were the special hosts in South Africa. Anders Eriksson and Walter Überlacker were hosts for the Lund conference, and it had a special nature since it was magnificently funded by their research project on "Early Christian Letters in the Light of Ancient Rhetoric and Epistolography." Special funds came for housing, food, and

⁸⁹ Porter and Stamps, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, 18.

⁹⁰ Porter and Stamps, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, 17.

publication of the volume from the Swedish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

The special funding and purpose for the conference created a special focus, namely on argumentation, and supported the special invitation of Frans van Eemeren, Dean Anderson, Manfred Kraus, Carol Poster, Joachim Classen, and Jan Swearingen. Unfortunately, Jan could not attend as a result of illness, so Carol Poster read her paper.

This volume contains multiple references to Lausberg only in an essay by Dean Anderson on "The Use and Abuse of Lausberg in Biblical Studies."⁹¹ There are references to the work of Hans Dieter Betz on only two pages in Michael R. Cosby's essay on "Galatians: Red-Hot Rhetoric." There is only one reference to George Kennedy and one to Wilhelm Wuellner, reference on two pages to Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca and on four pages to Chaim Perelman. Again, a major reason for many of the different patterns were the special focus of the conference on argumentation.

The volume begins with programmatic essays by Frans H. van Eemeren on "Argumentation Theory: An Overview of Approaches and Research Themes," and Vernon Robbins on "Argumentative Textures in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation." Then after Dean Anderson's essay on Lausberg and an essay by Lauri Thurén on "Is There Biblical Argumentation?", there is an essay by Manfred Kraus on "Theories and Practice of the Enthymeme in the First Centuries B.C.E. and C.E." and by Carol Poster on "The Economy of Letter Writing in Graeco-Roman Antiquity."

There are two essays on the Hebrew Bible (Chronicles, 1 Kings 22), four on Gospels, including an analysis of argumentation in John 5 by Harold W. Attridge. There are nine essays on Paul's letters, one on Hebrews, and one on the Shepherd of Hermas and the Acts of Peter.

All of the essays in the Lund volume in some way work with argumentation in the text. Two of the interpretive essays include the term enthymeme in the title, and two include the term socio-rhetorical. After an absence of women authors in the Florence volume, once again there are two women authors of essays in the Lund volume.

Heidelberg 2002

The second Heidelberg conference announced an opening address by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza on "Disciplinary Matters: Biblical Studies as Critical Rhetorics of Inquiry."

To be continued.

Some Initial Observations

None of the Pepperdine volumes contains rhetorical analysis and interpretation of the book of Revelation.⁹² Outside of these volumes, Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist published a volume of essays given at the 1998 SBL meeting in Orlando entitled *Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999). In addition, a collection of essays on rhetorical analysis and interpretation of the intertexture of NT apocalyptic discourse, presented at the 1999 SBL meeting in Boston, has been edited by Duane F. Watson and will appear by November, 2002.

Also, there is very little rhetorical analysis of miracle discourse in the Pepperdine volumes.⁹³ Programmatic essays on rhetorical analysis of miracle discourse were presented at the 2000 SBL meetings in Denver, however, and these are being revised and prepared for publication by Duane F. Watson.

While only a few women have published essays in Pepperdine volumes, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza gave the lead-off address at the 1994 Pretoria Conference, her book on *Rhetoric and Ethics* was reviewed by panelists at a session of the Rhetoric of the NT Section, and now she has given the opening address at the 2002 Heidelberg session. Vernon Robbins responded in the 1998 Florence Conference volume to Schüssler Fiorenza's negative assessment of rhetorical analysis and interpretation of NT texts in her 1994 Pretoria essay. The Florence volume did not appear, however, until April, 2002, so Schüssler Fiorenza had not read the response prior to the review session on her book. Her negative assessments took the form in 1994 of calling for a political-rhetorical

⁹¹ Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Überlacker (eds.), *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002), 66-76.

⁹² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza had published a political rhetorical interpretation in *The Book of Revelation: Judgment and Justice* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985; 2d ed. with a new epilogue, 1998).

approach that would join with feminist critics. The essay adapted terminology from her political-rhetorical analysis and interpretation of the book of Revelation and reconfigured it into a plea for a move into a full epistemological rhetoric of inquiry, which she has emphasized in her address at the 2002 Heidelberg Conference.

Robbins has presented an additional response in a session on feminist hermeneutics at the 2002 International SBL meeting at Berlin to call for a "rhetorical full-turn" by rhetorical interpreters, a term Schüssler Fiorenza introduced in her 1994 Pretoria essay. My response describes sociorhetorical interpretation as a transmodern approach located in relational philosophy, which placed feminist criticism dynamically in its project at the stage where it was formulated into a multi-textural form of analysis and interpretation. The fullest expression of the role of feminist criticism in sociorhetorical criticism thus far has appeared in *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* and *Exploring the Texture of Texts* in 1996. Since 1996, I have been expanding sociorhetorical interpretation into a multi-discursive approach, and this formulation has used the works of Couze Venn's *Occidentalism*, Steven Mailloux's rhetorical hermeneutics, and Ellen Berry and Mikhail Epstein's *Transcultural Experiments* to locate its multi-discursive approach in transmodern relational philosophy.

J. D. H. Amador has played an important role in the Pepperdine Conferences, and outside them, in challenging rhetorical interpreters to move beyond its disciplinary, theological projects into a broader humanistically oriented program. Schüssler Fiorenza responded favorably to Amador's review of her work in the 2000 SBL session, (and one might anticipate that she will incorporate portions of Amador's work in her 2002 Heidelberg address).

I describe Schüssler Fiorenza's political rhetoric of inquiry as grounded in a merger of modern and antimodern strategies of analysis and interpretation, with moments of transmodern strategies of commentary and discourse. In contrast, Amador's program, thus far at least, has been almost totally located in the antimodern stream of postmodernism.

⁹³ A wonderful exception is Harold W. Attridge, "Argumentation in John 5," in Eriksson, Olbricht, and Überlacker, *Rhetorical Argumentation*, 188-199.

My prediction is that the history of rhetorical interpretation of biblical literature during the first decade of the 2000s will be an interplay of modern, antimodern, and transmodern strategies of analysis and interpretation, with a few representatives of ultramodern strategies. The Pepperdine Conferences from 1992 through 2002 have featured significant interplays between modern and antimodern strategies of interpretation, with some significant introduction of transmodern strategies in most of the volumes. The conferences, and the published volumes, have made a truly remarkable contribution to rhetorical analysis and interpretation of biblical literature, with some interesting journeys into second and third century Christian literature.