DISCIPLINARY MATTERS:

A CRITICAL RHETORIC AND ETHIC OF INQUIRY[1]

In the past decade or so rhetorical criticism has developed not only as a textual-exegetical method but also as an interdisciplinary epistemological meta-reflection on the theoretical and methodological practices of the discipline. Thomas Olbricht has pointed to the broad interdisciplinary character of rhetorical criticism insofar as the academic study of rhetoric encompasses divergent fields of inquiry.[2] Nonetheless, biblical rhetorical criticism has not yet fully developed an interdisciplinary critical rhetoric and ethic of inquiry[3] into the disciplinary practices of biblical studies.

To that end my own work has advocated a paradigm shift in biblical studies from a disciplinary ethos of positivist scientism and cultural hermeneutics to rhetoric as an interdisciplinary critical inquiry. Paradigm criticism[4] explores theoretically the struggle between different epistemological approaches, the theological, the historical, the

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[1] I want to thank first of all professor Thomas Olbricht for inviting me to the tenth anniversary Conference on Rhetoric in Heidelberg, even though such an invitation entailed a certain risk. In the past two decades professor Olbricht has not only done much to revive rhetorical biblical criticism but also insisted on the need for a critical historiography of biblical studies. I am particularly grateful that he graciously has allowed me to peruse his unpublished manuscript on the history of biblical studies in the U.S.A. I am also grateful to Laura Beth Bugg for cleaning up my text and notes and to Francis Schüssler Fiorenza for reading several drafts of this paper and especially for saving me from the pitfalls of computer illiteracy.

[2] Thomas H. Olbricht, "The Flowering of Rhetorical Criticism in America," in The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture. Essays from the 1995 Conference (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 79-102; see also J.D.H. Amador, "The Word Made Flesh: Epistemology, Ontology and Postmodern Rhetoric," ibid., 53-65.

[3] The dissertation of David Hester Amador has carefully analyzed the academic discourses of rhetoric in Christian Testament studies. However, his argument for a rhetoric of power has not received the attention and recognition it deserves. See J. David Hester Amador, Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction to A Rhetoric of Power (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[4] For a different paradigm construction see the various publications of Fernando Segovia, especially his contributions in Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., Teaching the Bible. The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998), 1-30; 137-167.

hermeneutic,[5] and the rhetorical paradigms -- a struggle that has been underway for quite some time in biblical studies. I have initiated such a discussion of disciplinary paradigms[6] in order to bring about a change in the ethos and ethics of biblical studies. Only if we bring about a critical rhetorical-emancipatory[7] paradigm shift, I argue, will the theoretical contributions of the margins, such as feminism, post-colonialism, critical race and ethnic-cultural studies, be heard.

The emerging paradigm shift from a positivist scientific or cultural–hermeneutical to a critical emancipatory ethos, from rhetoric as a purely technical analysis that focuses on the exegesis of texts to rhetoric as critical meta-level inquiry into the practices of biblical criticism is a process that has been underway in the past decade or so in biblical studies and has far reaching consequences for the self-understanding and ethos of the discipline. [8] Rhetorical criticism has been enthralled for far too long by "scientific" method, historical positivism, and the use of classical categories. It has tended to remain

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[5] In his contribution to the Pretoria Conference Peter F. Craffert argued for a historical hermeneutics and ethics of interpretation that would respect the integrity of the text in its past Otherness. He mentions three paradigms – the theological, the historical and the rhetorical - as operative in the practices of an Ethics of Interpretation in South Africa, but he himself opts for a hermeneutical-rhetorical approach that insists on personifying the text and respecting its past Otherness. However, Craffert overlooks the fact that the hermeneutical and the rhetorical paradigm are based on two different methodological assumptions. Whereas the hermeneutical paradigm construes a spiraling dialogue between the interpreter and the text, us and the past, the rhetorical paradigm presupposes the interaction between "rhetor-audience-situation-world" on the one hand, and the distinction between the inscribed textual and reconstructed historical rhetoric on the other. It thereby avoids both the dualistic "othering rhetoric" engendered by the hermeneutical-cultural paradigm and the positivist reification of the rhetorical process. Peter F. Craffert, "Reading and Divine Sanction: The Ethics of Interpreting the New Testament in South Africa," in <u>Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference</u> (ed. S.E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 54-71.
[6] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza , "For the Sake of Our Salvation: Biblical Interpretation as Theological Task," in <u>Sin, Salvation and the Spirit</u> (ed. D. Durken: Collegeville: Liturgical Press, l979), 21-39. See also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, <u>Bread Not Stone</u> (Boston: Beacon, 1984).
[7] For the concept of emancipation see Jan Nederveen Pieterse, ed., <u>Emancipations: Modern and Postmodern</u> (London: Sage, 1992).
[8] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism," in <u>Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology. Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference</u> (ed. S.E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

on the literary level of text and exegesis rather than become engaged in an interdisciplinary rhetoric of inquiry.

A Rhetoric of Inquiry

My book *Rhetoric and Ethic*[9] has elaborated the methodological and theoretical conceptualization of rhetorical criticism as a critical emancipatory rhetoric and ethic of inquiry. In this paper I seek to deepen this approach by focusing on the disciplinary discourses of biblical studies. Since this 10th anniversary Heidelberg conference focuses on "rhetorics, ethics and moral persuasion in biblical discourse," I will explore the discipline's self-understanding and professional discourses in terms of "ethos and ethics." Hence, I will look at both the pedagogical professionalizing practices and theoretical discourses of the field[10] in term of a rhetoric and ethic of inquiry.

I will conclude my explorations by looking at two concrete examples of hegemonic scholarly discourse and their "othering rhetoric" in order to the show how they consciously or not marginalize and exclude those intellectual voices that have been silenced for centuries and excluded from disciplinary authority and power. I argue that it is impossible for minority speakers to be heard if the disciplinary ethos of biblical studies continues to be defined as a "rhetorical space" in which critical challenges to the hegemonic ethos of the discipline are construed either as romanticized or as oppositional discourse.

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[9] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Rhetoric and Ethic. The Politics of Biblical Studies (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

[10] For the exploration of the relation between discourse and rhetoric see Stephen R. Yarbrough, After Rhetoric: The Study of Discourse Beyond Language and Culture (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999); Diane MacDonell, Theories of Discourse: An Introduction (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1986)..

In short, I will pay special attention to the argumentative discourses of scholarship and their theoretical presuppositions, social locations, investigative methods, and socio-political functions. Since the space of rhetorical discourse is the public and political realm, a rhetoric of inquiry does not need to suppress but is able to investigate the socio-political frameworks, cultural perspectives, modes of argumentation, and symbolic universes of religious texts and biblical interpretations. [11] It is keenly interested in exploring the notion of ethos and ethic in epistemological rhetorical terms. Because of space limitations I can only indicate here the importance of a reconsideration of the professional educational and rhetorical practices shaping the discipline. The critical pedagogy, for instance, that Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert have pioneered with Teaching the Bible,[12] is an important step in the rhetorical re-articulation of the discipline, particularly because of the growing recognition that biblical studies are unable to intervene critically in the uses of the bible in either public societal discourses and global inter-religious contexts or in religious communities, churches, mosques and synagogues.

A critical rhetorical conceptualization of the discipline seeks to foster a discussion of the disciplinary practices of the field and to propose theoretical- methodological steps for reconstructing biblical studies in ethical-emancipatory and feminist- rhetorical terms. With Susan Jarratt I understand rhetorical criticism not only as a as form of textual-

[11] For an exploration of rhetoric as argumentation see Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Übelacker, eds., Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002).

[12] See the contributions in Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., Teaching the Bible.

hermeneutical analysis but as a "meta-discipline through which a whole spectrum of language uses and their outcome as social action can be refracted for analysis."[13]

I would therefore suggest that a rhetoric and ethic of inquiry is best understood as a critical meta-discipline. A redefinition of rhetorical criticism as ethico-rhetorical inquiry into the religious, cultural, social and political functions of past and present biblical discourses at the very least must include the following areas of analysis:

> The rhetoric and ethic of reading pertains to the text and the methods used to interpret it. Such exegetical and interpretive practices are usually the focus of rhetorical criticism, which is concerned with text and texture as object of analysis rather than with the agents of such an analysis.
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> The rhetoric and ethic of interpretive practices or scientific production has the task to critically analyze the research methods used and to investigate the process of how interpretation is produced, authorized, communicated, and used and in what kind of power relations it is embedded.
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> The rhetoric and ethic of the discipline inquires into the ethos, social location and positionality of biblical studies: how is the field structured, what kind of assumptions govern its practices, how is professional authority exercised, academic excellence adjudicated or what kind of discourses are excluded or emphasized?

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[13] Susan C. Jarratt, Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Reconfigured (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 14; See also Franco Crespi, Social Action & Power (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 52. He argues, "When knowledge is being oriented towards descriptive and value-neutrality, as the only basis for rationality and science, then the concept of action becomes a nuisance… since action, as opposed to the concept of behaviour, has always to be referred to subjectivity, it appears to be fatally opposed to the aforementioned idea of science, for it stresses precisely those dimensions of affective and evaluative *un-neutrality* and unpredictability which undermine the model of natural science..

> The rhetoric and ethic of communicative practices analyzes biblical and contemporary rhetoric as an ideological/theological communicative undertaking that either promotes violence or well being for all. Hence, biblical rhetoric must be assessed in terms of an ethics and politics of interpretation.

As a result, rhetoric is best understood as epistemic because it reveals an ethical dimension of knowledge production as political practice. Rhetorics, politics, and ethics are epistemologically as well as historically intertwined. Since its goal is persuasion, the ethical knowledge rhetoric strives to achieve is that of commitment and accountability.[14] A re-conceptualization of the discipline, moreover, would require that disciplinary excellence be judged not only in terms of competence in historical-literary critical and hermeneutical–cultural methods but also in terms of a critical rhetorical meta-reflection on the ethical, communicative and educational practices of the discipline.

Accordingly by an ethic of inquiry I mean a new evaluative form of cultural practice and critical investigation that is no longer circumscribed by the positivist objectivism, subjectivism, liberalism, and nationalism of modernity or the masculine rationalism and European colonialism that have tended to relegate rhetoric to mere talk and to the dustbins of history. Thus my project understands rhetoric not so much as *technê* that limits itself to literary analysis in terms of classical or modern rhetoric. Instead rhetoric as a field of study insists on bringing together textuality, society, religion and politics and is concerned with how "knowledge" is constructed, the ways individuals and groups wield power, and the values and visions biblical discourses engender. Such a

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[14] Robert L. Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic: Ten Years Later," in Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective (3rd ed.; ed. B. L. Brock, R. L. Scott, J. W. Chesebro: Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 140-141.

rhetoric of inquiry necessitates a critical assessment of the ethics and ethos of the discipline.

Ethics and Ethos

Disputes about the relationship between rhetoric and ethic[15] have been alive in rhetorical theory throughout its history. As Celeste Michelle Condit has pointed out, however, recently theorists have tended to use privatized and individualistic models of morality, such as the conversational model of discourse, rather than engage in public rhetoric "viewed as a process in which basic human desires are transformed into shared moral codes."[16] A rhetoric of morality is constructed, implemented, and enhanced through public argument. It "utilizes the capacity of discourse simultaneously to create, extend, and apply moral concepts," a process that is "bounded by an inductive historical objectivity."[17] It is both intersubjective and political, made and unmade by rhetorical practices, which are not to be seen as mirrors that reflect the world back to us.

Participants in such moral discourse are active moral agents who deliberate, urge, validate, and argue meanings and actions with each other. Such a critical democratic conceptualization of ethic has rhetoric at its center. Rhetoric as an intersubjective-democratic process

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[15] For a critical discussion of ethics see among others Marjorie Garber, Beatrice Hanssen, Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds., The Turn to Ethics (New York: Routledge, 2000); Annemarie Pieper, Ethik und Moral: Eine Einführung in die praktische Philosophie (München: Kösel, 1985), 10-43; Gunhild Buse, Macht-Moral-Weiblichkeit: Eine feministisch-theologische Auseinandersetzung mit Carol Gilligan und Frigga Haug (Mainz: Grünewald, 1993); and Rey Chow, Ethics after Idealism: Theory-Culture-Ethnicity-Reading (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
[16] Celeste Michelle Condit, "Crafting Virtue: The Rhetorical Construction of Public Morality," in Contemporary Rhetorical Theory, ed. Lucaites et al., 311.
[17] Ibid., 320.

> is doubly ethical: it is the result of a choice on the part of the rhetor as to the reality advocated and the method of doing so, and it urges choice rather than complete and necessary acceptance on the part of the audience. Truth that is rhetorically made encourages choice and awareness of alternative realities.[18]

The meaning of *ethos* just like that of rhetoric [19] has changed over time and its definition is different in different cultures. According to Baumlin, in antiquity *ethos* articulates the "problematic relation between human character and discourse. More specifically it raises questions concerning the inclusion of the speaker's character as an aspect of discourse, the representation of that character in discourse, and the role of that character in persuasion."[20] In modernity Peter Ramus greatly influenced the ethos of the discipline[21] insofar as he held sway among Protestant interpreters of the 16th century. Since Ramus sought to sever logic from rhetoric and then to retain logic as the only valid component that generates a mode of "pure reasoning," he introduced the split between rhetoric and logic that demoted rhetoric to mere style, decoration, manipulation, and eloquence in oral performance.

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[18] Barry Brummett, "Some Implications of 'Process' or 'Intersubjectivity' in Postmodern Rhetoric," in Contemporary Rhetorical Theory, ed. Lucaites et al., 166. However, a purely intersubjective conceptualization is still too privatized and individualist. Hence, I have qualified it with "democratic."

[19] For a history of rhetoric see e.g. Thomas M. Conley, Rhetoric in the European Tradition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990). For a feminist history of rhetoric see Cheryl Glenn, Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition From Antiquity Through the Renaissance (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997).

[20] James S. Baumlin, "Positioning Ethos in Historical and Contemporary Theory," in Ethos, xi-xxxi; xiii. See also William W. Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's Accounts of Persuasion Through Character," in Theory, Text, Context: Issues in Greek Rhetoric and Oratory (ed. Christopher Lyle Johnstone: Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 147-168; George A. Kennedy, "Reworking Aristotle's Rhetoric," ibid., 169-184, and especially Nan Johnson, "Ethos and The Aims of Rhetoric," in Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse (ed. R. J. Connors, L.S. Ede, A.A. Lunsford: Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 98-114. See also the contributions of Kraus, Eriksson, Olbricht Vander Stichele/Penner and Hester-Amador in this volume.

[21] See Thomas Olbricht, "Rhetorical Criticism in America," 80: "Studies in rhetoric were not unfamiliar to our Puritan forefathers. Puritan scholars embraced particularly the grammar, rhetoric and logic of Peter Ramus (1515-1572) and Omer Talon…. The biblical scholars of the era borrowed from these insights, structuring commentaries according to dictates of the Ramian logical divisions and subdivisions."

Etymologically the meaning of *ethos* can be derived either from the Gk *ethos* meaning custom, habit, usage, folkways or from the Gk *êthos* meaning character formation as the totality of all characteristic traits rather than mere custom or morally approved habits. A third etymological root suggested by Susan Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds is *êthea*, a plural noun that is the original root of both terms and means "hunts" or "hang outs." This etymology understands *ethos* as a space where customs and character are formed, "where one is accustomed to being."[22] Ethos as a disciplinary space determines the professional character of individuals and expresses the way one lives. *Ethos* in this spatial sense theorizes the "positionality" inherent in rhetoric. This notion of ethos is, for instance, typical for Hannah Arendt's political philosophy, as John McGowan has pointed out:

> By extension, ethics can thus be understood not simply to encompass the formation and judgment of character, but also to include the production of a place that character can inhabit. To put it in even more strongly Arendtian terms, ethics must build on the intimate connection between character to place. Only where we create a certain kind of place can a certain kind of person emerge. [23]

Habit and customs always form character in a social space and locate the speaker in the practices and experiences of the group to which s/he belongs or speaks. *Ethos* like experience then can be understood in terms of "positionality" as the "place from which values are interpreted and constructed rather than as a locus of an already determined set of values."[24] *Ethos* understood as positioning is "the awareness that one always speaks

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[22] Susan C. Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds, "The Splitting Image: Contemporary feminisms and the ethics of êthos," in Ethos. New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory (ed. James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin: Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994), 37-64, 48; See also Tobin Siebers, Morals and Stories (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 63.
[23] John McGowan, Hannah Arendt. An Introduction (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 167.
[24] Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism Versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," Signs 13 (1988): 405-436; 434.

from a particular place in a social structure."[25] The willingness of the audience to step into the space occupied (temporarily) by the speaker is crucial in establishing the ethics of ethos while acknowledging the differences rather than the sameness between speaker and audience.

Read through a feminist optic, *ethos* can be understood "as an ethical and political tool, as a way of claiming and taking responsibility for our positions in the world, for the ways we see, the places from where we speak."[26] To understand *ethos* in terms of " rhetorical space" elucidates why voice and position are central to rhetorical inquiry and scholarly authority. According to Lorraine Code, rhetorical spaces

> are fictive but not fanciful or fixed locations whose tacit (rarely spoken) territorial imperatives structure and limit the kind of utterances that can be voiced within them with a reasonable expectation of uptake and choral support, an expectation of being heard, understood, taken seriously. They are the sites where the very possibility of an utterance counting as "true-or-false" or of a discussion yielding insight is made manifest.[27]

To understand biblical criticism as an epistemological[28] rhetorical space would mean first of all to examine the conditions for the possibility of constructing and using biblical knowledge that does not reinforce the structural violence of the status quo in society, church and academy. It would mean to investigate the kyriarchal (gendered, raced, classed and colonized) structures and circumstances in which wo/men and

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[25] Susan C. Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds, "The Splitting Image," 47ff.
[26] Susan C. Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds, "The Splitting Image," 52.
[27] Lorraine Code, Rhetorical Spaces. Essays on Gendered Locations (New York: Routledge, 1995), ix-x. For the discussion of feminist epistemology see also Nancy Tuana and Sandra Morgan , eds., Engendering Rationalities (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001) and Liz Stanley, ed., Knowing Feminisms. On Academic Borders, Territories and Tribes (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 1997).
[28] See the essays in Part II, "Rhetoric and Epistemology," in John Lois Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit, Sally Caudill, eds., Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999), 137-247; Richard A. Cherwitz and James W. Hikins, Communication and Knowledge: An Investigation in Rhetorical Epistemology (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986); see also Richard Harvey Brown, Society as Text. Essays on Rhetoric, Reason and Reality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

subaltern men "occupy positions of minimal epistemic authority and where questions of differential power and privilege figure centrally."[29]

Such a rhetorical re-conceptualization of the disciplinary *ethos* of biblical studies is necessary for overcoming the false dichotomy between engaged, socially located scholarship (e.g. feminist, postcolonial, African-American, queer and other sub-disciplines) and allegedly value neutral "scientific" (malestream) biblical interpretation. Whereas the former allegedly utilizes ethical criteria, the latter is said to live up to a scientific *ethos* by making use of cognitive criteria. Instead, I would argue that a scientific ethos demands both ethical and cognitive criteria, which must be reasoned out in terms of inter-subjectively understandable and communicable knowledge.

In short, if *ethos* is a habit or a pattern of social practices which are inseparable from social location and are always shaped by relations of power, it becomes important to explore the concept not just in terms of the *ethos* of the individual biblical scholar but also in terms of the professional *ethos* of the discipline that determines the social self-identity, positioning, and socialization of the emerging biblical scholar.

Professional Ethos

Traditionally, rhetorical theories have been linked to the goal of education as a means of transforming society. For instance, while Plato constructs a perfect *polis* in order to educate its citizens in accordance with it, Isocrates wants to educate citizens to eliminate strife and enmity by teaching them how to achieve *homonoia* (like-mindedness), and Aristotle teaches rhetoric as a faculty for using the means of persuasion in any given situation. For Cicero, in turn, the point of education is its application to the

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[29] Lorraine Code, Rhetorical Spaces., viii.

practical ends of daily lives, and in the Pan-Hellenic program of Alexander the Great the goal is *enkyklios paideia, the "rounded" education"* which consists in instruction in the trivium grammar, rhetoric, logic, and in the quadrivium arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Thus explorations of the role of *ethos* have been crucial not only for rhetorical theories but also for rhetorical pedagogy. [30]

In the 19th and beginning 20th century the scientific *ethos* of value-free scholarship that was presumed to be untainted by social relations and political interest has been institutionalized in professions that assure the continuation of the dominant disciplinary ethos. Among others, Nancy Leys Stepan and Sander Gilman have pointed out that the professional institutionalization of scholarship as value-neutral, apolitical, universal, empirical and methodologically objective science and an "unbiased arena of knowledge" was not a "natural" outcome of unbiased study but

> a social outcome of a process whereby science was historically and materially constituted to have certain meanings, functions and interests. In a complex series of innovations, science's epistemological claims were given definition and institutional representation in the form of new scientific societies and organizations sharply delimited from other institutions. These innovations were tied not only to industrialization, but to the politics of class and the closing of ranks of bourgeois society….Race and gender were also crucial in the construction of modern science, in that science was defined as "masculine" in its abstraction, detachment and objectivity.[31]

This professionalization of the academic disciplines engendered theoretical dichotomies such as "pure and impure, theoretical or applied science. Dualistic opposites

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[30] For this section see not only Conley and Baumlin but especially also Nan Johnson, "Ethos and the Aims of Rhetoric," in Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse (ed. Robert J. Connors, Lisa S. Ede, and Andrea A. Lunsford: Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 98-114.
[31] Nancy Leys Stepan and Sander L. Gilman, "Appropriating the Idioms of Science. The Rejection of Scientific Racism," in The "Racial" Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future (ed. Sandra Harding: Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 170-193, esp. 173. See also Londa Schiebinger, The Mind Has No Sex? Wo/men in the Origins of Modern Science (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

such as rational and irrational, objective and subjective, hard and soft, male and female, Europeans and colonials, secular and religious were given material form not only in professional disciplines but also in their discursive practices. For instance, the methodologically dense, scientific, depersonalized, empirical- factual text of the research paper emerged as a new standardized academic genre. This genre replaced the more metaphorically porous, literary varied, understandable forms of writing that were accessible also to the non-scientific "popular" reader.

The development of biblical studies as a scientific discipline adopted a similar scientific professional elite male *ethos*.[32] The SBL was founded in 1880,[33] around the same time that the American Philological Association (1869), the American Social Science Association (1869) the Archeological Institute of America (1879), the Modern Language Association (1883) and the American Historical Society (1884) were initiated. The feminist historian Bonnie G. Smith has argued that, for instance, the ethos of the American Historical Association cultivated a value-detached, "gender-neutral" community of scholars and developed an "objective" narrative in the course of professionalization as "a modern scientific profession."

Scientific-historical practices were not only unconcerned with considerations of gender, class, politics, culture or society at large but they openly required "a commitment

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[32] See Anne Witz, Professions and Patriarchy (New York: Routledge, 1992) for the medical profession. For the notion of professional authority see the sociological study by Terrence J. Johnson, Professions and Power (London: MacMillan, 1972).

[33] For the history of Biblical Studies see the forthcoming book of Thomas Olbricht and his various published contributions, e.g. Thomas Olbricht, "Alexander Campbell in the Context of American Biblical Studies," Restoration Quarterly 33 (1991): 13-28; Id., "Biblical Interpretation in North America in the 20th Century," in Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters (ed. Donald K. McKim: Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), 541-557 and Id., "Histories of North American Biblical Scholarship," Current Research in Biblical Studies 7 (1999): 237-256.

to objectivity"[34] over and above such categories as class and gender and demanded "the strict use of evidence, the taming of historical narrative to a less rhetorical style, the development of archives and professional libraries, the organization of university training in seminars and tutorials, and in the case of the United States, a commitment to democratic access to the profession based on ability ." In addition, professionalizing historians attempted to eliminate all personal or subjective meaning from their work. Thus historians "created a space inhabited by an invisible 'I,' one without politics, without an ego or persona, and certainly ungendered." [35]

Like its brother-profession the American Historical Society, the SBL was founded by Protestant "gentlemen,"[36] who were for the most part "European trained in such universities as Berlin, Heidelberg, Halle, and Tübingen." [37] . Even though the overall theoretical position of the SBL was apparently "impartial," seeking to make available "a forum for the expression and critique of diverse positions on the study of the scriptures," the position of the so-called higher criticism won increasing influence.[38] The professional scientific stance was complicated in biblical studies by the struggle of the discipline not only to prove its scientific "value-neutral" character within the Enlightenment university, which had only very recently more or less successfully thrown off the shackles of religion. It also was marked by the struggle to free itself from the dogmatic fetters of the

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[34] See Peter Novick, That Noble Dream. The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[35] Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender, Objectivity, and the Rise of Scientific History," in Objectivity and Its Other (ed. W. Natter, Th.R. Schatzki, J.P. Jones III: New York: The Guilford Press, 1995), 52.
[36] JBL 9 (1890): vi.
[37] See J. W. Brown, The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America 1858-1870: The New England Scholars (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), the above references to Thomas Olbricht's work, and Ernest W. Saunders, Searching the Scriptures: A History of the Society of Biblical Literature 1880-1980 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 6.
[38] E. Saunders, Searching the Scriptures, 11.

Protestant and Roman Catholic[39] churches. This conflict emerged between the advocates of scientific "higher criticism" and those interested in safeguarding the theological "purity" of the bible in the "heresy trials" at the turn of the 20th century.

The same rhetorical tension remains inscribed in professional biblical studies still today. Emblazoned in the professional *ethos* of biblical criticism is the conflict of how to study the bible. Should it be viewed either as a collection of ancient texts or as a normative document of biblical religions? Is the critical study of the theological meaning and normativity of traditions and scriptures part of the research program of biblical studies or must it be left to confessional theology? Is it part of the professional program of "higher criticism" to study the communities of discourse that have produced and sustained Scriptural texts and readings in the past and still do so in the present? Finally, does competence in biblical criticism entail the ability to engage in a critical theoretical interdisciplinary meta-reflection on the work of biblical studies? Would this require that students of the bible be trained not only in textual-historical analysis but also in the ideological analysis of the social and political discursive positionings and social religious-political relations of the discipline and its practitioners?

The scientistic academic ethos of the discipline also governs its pedagogical and credentializing practices. It reproduces the professional "club culture" that has engendered modern detached and value-free science. As Saunders puts it:

> We have noted occasional concerns to define the public audiences to which the work of the learned society is addressed. Obviously the primary concern is with the academic community. Truth for truth's sake and the scholarly enterprise

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[39] For the history of Roman Catholic scholarship see Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., American Catholic Biblical Scholarship: A History from the Early Republic to Vatican II (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publ., 1989); for Jewish scholarship see S. D. Sperling, ed., Students of the Covenant: A history of Jewish Biblical Scholarship in North America (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

> answerable to itself has been the customs of the confraternity of experts. But the ivory tower and mentality have been under heavy attack in recent times. [If results are not shared with church, synagogue and a wider public] the Society becomes (some would say has become) an antiquarian association more closely resembling an English gentleman's club than a laboratory. Do the Cabots speak only to the Lodges and the Lodges speak only to God? Some think so.[40]

If professionalization seeks to "discipline" its practitioners, because it has the "making of professionals" as its goal, doctoral education becomes central to maintaining such a positivist elite masculine ethos. Hence, one must problematize the discipline not only in theoretical terms but also with respect to its educational practices.[41] A *Rhetoric and Ethic of Inquiry* therefore must also critically investigate the pedagogical practices of the discipline. Not only doctoral but also ministerial students need to be educated in this new interdisciplinary rhetorical paradigm of inquiry, of critical reflexivity, and research that studies the pervasive and often only partly conscious set of value-laden dispositions, inclinations, attitudes and habits of biblical studies as an academic discipline. Rather than reproducing, e.g. in dissertation after dissertation on Paul or John, the scientist-positivist approach that restricts biblical studies to ascertaining the single true meaning of the text, research could focus both on the rhetorical function of biblical and other ancient texts in their past and present historical and literary contexts and on the ideological justifications presented by their ever more technically refined interpretations.

In order to show how professional ethos determines disciplinary discourses by establishing what can be said and what is a-priory ruled out of court, I will analyze two examples of argumentative discourse in the last section of this paper. I have chosen these

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[40]E. Saunders, Searching the Scriptures, 101.
[41] For a feminist educational introduction to biblical studies see my Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001). For a critical discussion of pedagogy see chapter six of my But She Said (Boston: Beacon, 1992).

rhetorical examples not because I want to enter into a personal quarrel with my colleagues but because their work enjoys wide recognition within the discipline of rhetorical biblical criticism. In short, I have chosen these disciplinary discourses as examples for showing how their argumentative moves establish disciplinary power and "rhetorical space" or ethos that marginalizes oppositional discourses.

Oppositional Discourse Labeled As Romantic Rhetoric

In his Pretoria Conference paper Bruce Malina also refers to the statement of Wilhelm Wuellner, which I have quoted in the introduction, but reads it in terms of the methodological split between historical social scientific and romantic or aesthetic literary biblical criticism rather than in terms of disciplinary ethos and rhetorical theory.[42] Malina intellectually locates himself as a "socio-rational empiricist" who has developed a social-scientific method that reads early Christian texts with the "awareness of the cultural perspective that generated those meanings."[43] Hence, the interpreter must use a social system to understand social texts.

Malina concedes that the articulation and choice of a social system such as honor and shame in Mediterranean culture must begin with the contemporary articulation of this social system in anthropology or sociology. Malina, however, does not engage in a critical epistemological reflection on the scientific articulation of social systems or of how persons reading the bible today communicate with and influence each other. Rather,

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[42] Bruce J. Malina, "Rhetorical Criticism and Social- Scientific Criticism: Why Won't Romanticism Leave us Alone?," in Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology. Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 72-101.
[43] Ibid.,73.

he insists that with the method of "retrodiction" it is possible to "strip off" from such a system all "post-first century accretions."[44]

Rather than engaging in a critical epistemological reflection Malina constructs a dichotomy between historical and social-scientific rhetorical criticism on the one hand and aesthetic or Romantic rhetorical criticism on the other. This dualistic typology seems to lump all (post- modern) critical intellectual approaches together under the rubric of Romanticism, which Malina defines as "Storybookism,"[45] because "Life in the new post-rationalist world is like a story in a novel." [46] He sees "little use, if any, for literary–aesthetic rhetoric in biblical studies since concern for texts, texture, and intertexture and the like has no impact on what an author said and meant to say to an original audience." [47]

Still, Malina's concern is really not with literary and esthetic rhetoricism but lies elsewhere, as the following blanket statement indicates:

> For it seems to me that the recent offshoots of the Romantic approach to the Bible include feminism, deconstructionism, fundamentalism, and hermeneutics. What all of these have in common is that they all dismiss the concrete, physical situation-conditioned, culturally based orientation of the first telling of the Christian story, much like Gnosticism in antiquity…. Thus like Romantics and their transcending self, feminism, deconstructionism, fundamentalism and hermeneutics are essential anti-incarnational. They are not interested in taking the *literal* (emphasis added), historical meaning of the New Testament seriously.[48]

While Malina's rhetoric theologically warms up the old chestnut of heretical Gnosticism as "anti-incarnational," his ire is really directed against all those who do not share his own reading of the Enlightenment and "its emphasis on objective universals."

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[44] Ibid., 97.
[45] Ibid., 86.
[46] Ibid., 85.
[47] Ibid., 85.
[48] Ibid., 96.

This is because the "Enlightenment's credo of freedom, equality and brotherhood remained accessible only to elites."[49] It is the reality of elite men and the truncated historical knowledge they have produced and still produce as social-scientific fact that Malina defends. Rather than arguing, for instance, why he does not recognize patriarchy- or as I would prefer, kyriarchy- as the overarching social system of the Mediterranean with which to interface biblical and other ancient texts in a critical reading, Malina categorically states:

> The hell of the feminists is patriarchy….Yet the presence of untrustworthy patriarchy ironically underscores the fact that there really would be no patriarchs and patriarchy without enculturation of males into their patriarchal roles, a task performed almost exclusively by their mothers.[50]

Historical social-scientific criticism here conveniently forgets that male education in antiquity was not performed "almost exclusively by their mothers" but was in the hand of male rhetoricians and tutors. Such historical forgetfulness is fueled by a polemical apologetics that seeks not only to forget its own rhetoricity and socio-historical location but also to avoid critical theoretical engagement with the issues raised by "feminism, hermeneutics, fundamentalism and post-structuralism."

A rhetoric of value-neutrality, cultural impartiality and scientific method understood as rules and procedures policed by juries of peers maintains the separateness and immunity of science from all kinds of social-political influences: The meanings scientific statements carry are irrelevant to their actual content. For instance, research on the social abuses of science in the interest of racism, heterosexism and colonialism are, according to such a social-scientific discourse, irrelevant to the validity of scientific

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[49] Ibid., 87.
[50] Ibid., 97.

concepts, theories, and methods. Although the enthusiasm for modern science is fundamentally motivated by democratic social values and science is constituted by certain social values, its *ethos* is such that at its best it neither defends nor recommends any particular social values. As Sandra Harding observes:

> What the defenders of the fundamental value-neutrality, the purity, of science really mean, they say, is that science's logic and methodology, and the empirical core of scientific facts these produce, are totally immune from social influences; that logic and scientific method will in the long run winnow out the factual from the social in the results of scientific research.[51]

Then again these defenders do not acknowledge that if scientific "fact" is a product of a particular social group and society, it is always already affected by the socio-cultural framework of the scientist producing such knowledge. The social-scientific rhetoric of Malina does not acknowledge that scientific "fact" and "objective data" about the Mediterranean are the results and a reflection of the power relations of the disciplinary culture in which they were developed. Hence, a critical rhetoric and ethic of inquiry must insist that biblical scholars analyze the ways in which both institutional power and disciplinary discourses help to construct the body of hegemonic biblical knowledge about gender, race, class, nation, or disability and the ways it is communicated.

Oppositional Discourse Labeled As Adversarial Rhetoric

Since Malina's polemics are theoretically rooted in a positivist or, in his words, in a socio-rational empiricist stance, he feels free to explicitly attack feminism and patriarchy. In contrast, Vernon Robbins' Florence Conference paper, just published

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[51] Sandra Harding, The Science Question in Feminism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 40.

recently,[52] seems to look at feminism favorably but employs resorts to an antifeminist *pathos* by claiming that feminist biblical interpretation has achieved the power and authority of hegemonic discourse. Because of this misjudgment of power relations Robbins misconstrues oppositional discourse as “adversarial rhetoric,” a strategic move that allows him to portray oppositional rather than hegemonic discourse in a negative light. Robbins’ plays on the title of my Pretoria paper “Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism,”[53] but blames feminist biblical interpretation for not having made a rhetorical full-turn.[54] Instead of acknowledging that we work with two different theoretical frameworks[55] – he with that of relationalism and I with that of kyriarchal domination - Robbins thwarts my critical challenge to the discipline by stigmatizing my argument as “oppositional rhetoric,” which he then defines as adversarial.

In my Pretoria paper I had argued that biblical rhetorical criticism has not sufficiently developed a critical “rhetoric of inquiry” because it has not yet fully engaged the contributions of feminist and liberationist scholarship for the re-articulation of the discipline. It has not done so, I suggested, because of its unreflected disciplinary anxiety about becoming tainted with the centuries old negative reputation of “mere rhetoric,” which is traditionally figured as “feminine.” I had used one of Robbins’ articles to

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[52] Vernon K. Robbins, “The Rhetorical Full-Turn in Biblical Interpretation. Reconfiguring Rhetorical-Political Analysis,” in Rhetorical Criticism and The Bible (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps: Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 48-60; See also his books Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996) and The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[53] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza , “Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism,” in Rhetoric, Scripture & Theology (ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht), 28–53.

[54] This was made powerfully clear in his presentation of his Florence paper at the 2002 International SBL meeting in Berlin.

[55] See also Robbins’ London Conference contribution “The present and Future of Rhetorical Analysis,” in The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture (ed. S. Porter and T. Olbricht), 24-52.

illustrate my argument how even liberal rhetorical critics sympathetic to feminist concerns tend to resort to positivist and empiricist scientific arguments rather than critically assessing their ideological implications. In my Pretoria paper, I deliberately did not engage his argument on an exegetical-textual level but insisted on discussing the matter on a theoretical level. Insofar as he does not distinguish these two levels of inquiry, Robbins is able to claim that I acted against my own radical democratic ethos when I engaged in oppositional rhetoric, which he defines as closing off issues rather than moving them

> into a context of free exchange among equal partners in dialogue. This kind of political discourse, then, is a rhetorical half-turn rather than a full-turn. Turning away from serious scholarly deliberation, it attacks *typical rather than specific actions* to establish a frame for instructing disciples rather than engaging seriously with colleagues in scholarly investigation, exchange and debate. [56]

Emotionally loaded formulations such as "turning away from serious scholarly deliberation" or "to establish a frame instructing disciples rather than seriously engaging with colleagues" appeal to academic *pathos* in order to rhetorically undermine the *ethos* of oppositional discourse. Moreover, Robbins stereotypes such "oppositional rhetoric" as having as its goal "to dominate" and to make "generalized accusations." [57]

He then goes on to characterize such "oppositional rhetoric" with reference to the anti-Jewish rhetoric of John 8:43-47 and Matthew 23, suggesting that my "adoption of oppositional rhetoric as a central mode of discourse …has a strong precedence in the New Testament literature itself." In addition, he links my argument to the conservative writings of Luke Timothy Johnson whose rhetoric in Robbins's view is guilty of

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[56] Vernon K. Robbins, "The Rhetorical Full-Turn in Biblical Interpretation," 56.
[57] Ibid., 58.

"accusing people in categorical terms rather than picking up specific pieces of evidence" and "engaging in invective against groups of people who are 'misguided'." [58]

By lumping my argument together with the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the Christian Testament and the anti-historical and anti-diversity rhetoric of Luke T. Johnson, Robbins subtly discredits critical feminist oppositional rhetoric before a scholarly audience of mostly male biblical critics by privatizing and caricaturing it. Through the politics of citation he at the same time indirectly seeks to undermine my feminist *ethos* by positively quoting two wo/men scholars who agree with him. Robbins ends by advocating a liberal political rhetoric of an "equal playing field" by promoting a liberal pluralism of debate without recognizing that the "we" who engages in this debate is still the "we" of elite male scholars:

> … we must do it not only by joining voices and actions with women's voices and marginalized peoples in wide regions of our global village. We must engage in dialogical interpretation that includes disenfranchised voices, marginalized voices, recently liberated voices and powerfully located voices.[59]

What then is the concrete issue that has caused the ire of my colleague? The bone of contention appears to be our different readings of the story of the wo/man who anointed Jesus in Mark. Whereas in In Memory of Her[60] I read the anointing story in terms of the biblical story of Samuel's anointing of Saul, Robbins reads it in terms of Malina's social-scientific reconstruction of Mediterranean culture. Far from refusing to engage his interpretation, I pointed out that a critical rhetoric of inquiry would need to

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[58] Ibid., 56.
[59] Ibid., 58.
[60] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her: A Feminist Reconstruction of Christian Origins (10th Anniversary Edition; New York: Crossroad, 1984).

analyze carefully the historical, ideological and theological interests of the 20th century ethnological construct of the Mediterranean when using it to interpret the text.

In no way did this imply, as Robbins alleges, that my "construction of a Jewish scriptural context is not equally a scholarly construct." Rather, I suggested that what he had termed a "bible-class" construct was as historically possible and plausible (and therefore as scientific) as his Mediterranean culture construct. However, I also pointed out that both constructs had different implications for the reading of the text and for our knowledge of wo/men's historical agency in early Christianity. What I objected to was Robbins' uncritical acceptance of the intertext of Mediterranean hegemonic culture as social-scientific while rejecting the Jewish-Scriptural intertext of 1 Samuel as "bible-land" story, without reflecting on the ideological function of the constructed social scientific cultural intertext that reduces the wo/man's prophetic sign-action to hegemonic cultural femininity.

My main point was not the correct exegesis of the text but rather an epistemological one: without critically exploring the ideological functions of the social-scientific construct of hegemonic Mediterranean culture rhetorical interpretation imports hegemonic gender stereotypes that make wo/men's historical agency invisible again. Liberal scholarship is thereby in danger of serving antifeminist ends by trivializing or erasing the new insights of feminist scholarship, although it does not intend to do so.

My main concern with Robbins' Florence paper is not with his misconstrual of my argument but with his labeling of "oppositional" rhetoric as adversarial. I believe it is necessary to analyze this rhetorical move because more is at stake than simply a quarrel between good colleagues. Robbins' construal of my argument as "oppositional rhetoric,"

which according to him "attacks typical rather than specific actions" and "has as its goal to dominate," allows him not to engage my critical proposal for a rhetoric of inquiry.

At the same time this move permits Robbins to indict all "oppositional discourse," which in my case speaks from a critical feminist political positionality as "the will to dominate". It allows him to use liberal pathos to appeal to the audience while at the same time constructing a politically explicit voice and proposal for a different disciplinary ethos as an "adversarial" discourse with Scriptural anti-Jewish precedent. These rhetorical strategies make it possible to avoid a direct engagement with my feminist arguments, which would require a recognition of my theoretical proposal as an alternative methodological approach in rhetorical criticism. It would have meant granting equal authority to both a critical feminist epistemological proposal and to a liberal one.

Can A Feminist Rhetoric Be Heard?

In a famous essay: "Can the subaltern speak?" the postcolonial feminist critic Gyatri Chakravorty Spivak asks After analyzing Malina's and Robbins scholarly polemics one is tempted to variegate her question to : "Can the subaltern be heard and understood? The definition and indictment of oppositional discourse as either romanticized or as adversarial discourse not only overlooks the power differential between oppositional and hegemonic disciplinary discourse but also the different implications of romanticized and adversarial rhetoric.

Whereas romanticized discourse overlooks the violence of oppressive power, adversarial rhetoric turns ones conversation partners into enemies to be obliterated in argument. In contrast, a critical oppositional rhetoric as a critical ethical discourse opposes power relations that are perceived as wrong, dangerous, oppressive or mistaken

in order to correct such violent relations. It concerns domination and pertains to persons only insofar as they engage in practices of oppressive power. Whereas in a positivist methodological approach adversarial debate is the preferred method for ascertaining truth (the arguments that can withstand the greatest assault survive intact, and become the strongest truth),[61] oppositional rhetoric seeks to make the point of view of the subaltern heard.[62]

In response, those in the center of power tend to turn oppositional arguments into idealizing or adversarial rhetoric in order to avoid hearing the points being made, becoming accountable and change. Rather than reconsidering their theoretical proposals and exercise of disciplinary power scholars use carefully crafted persuasive rhetorical strategies that work via identification for legitimating hegemonic arguments intellectually and ethically. When people identify with a speaker they can be maneuvered into accepting the speakers ideas, visions and values. Key to persuasion "is not the response to logical and factual reasoning but the prior gesture of identification. Character [ethos] is not something behind an argument but the force of an argument."[63]

Subaltern and marginalized speakers and oppositional discourses, however, find themselves in a different persuasive situation. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has argued:

> The woman in the West and its sphere of influences exemplifies the "subaltern" in that she never defines the position of the masterful subject, the one always benefiting from the exercise of power. On the periphery of culture and political relations, "she" is not completely separated from power and a particular woman

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[61] Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 205; See also Patricia Hill Collins, Fighting Words. Black Wo/men and the Search for Justice (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
[62] See my response to Heikki Räisänen, "Defending the Center, Trivializing the Margins," in Reading the Bible in the Global Village (ed. Heiki Räisänen, et al.: Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 29-48.
[63] Marshall W. Alcorn, Jr., "Self-Structure as a Political Device: Modern Ethos and the Division of the Self," in Ethos. New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory (ed. James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin: Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994), 4.

> could even occupy that position, but "she" will always be positioned against a colonial and hegemonic "center" of values so that speech is never in her own voice. The *ethos* of the subaltern I is self-limiting and self-negating in that the women who speak on their own behalf will be "subjects" only in the sense of being subject to domination, like a feudal subject under an absolute monarch.[64]

Hence, the subaltern can only speak either through ventriloquism, that is, "her" speech is always already defined and related to the master voice and discourse of those in power or if she speaks in her own voice she is not heard at all. For that reason , the situation of the intellectual inhabiting a hegemonic subject position is always already implicated.[65]

Since elite academic men still control language and knowledge production, it is difficult for the subaltern to find an acceptable "scientific" discourse and code for critiquing privileged men in power. As Chris Kamarae and Dale Spender observe:

> The absence of such a code allows individual males to respond personally and emotionally to critiques of the structure and dynamic of dominance. And while [elite] male is the norm , and as such is assumed to be unproblematic, it is those who are critical of this state who can be seen to constitute the problem. By locating the problem in the [subaltern] who protests rather than in their own privilege, [elite] men can deny their own agency…[66]

At stake in the "othering" rhetoric of malestream scholarship is the scientific ethos and academic authority of oppositional speakers. The malestream response to such scholars is often negative, undermining their academic ethos and standing. Since hegemonic scholarship is not able to identify with the scientific arguments and ideological/theological interests of subaltern biblical critics, it tends to categorizes their

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[64] Robert Con Davis and David S. Gross, "Gayatri Spivak and the Ethos of the Subaltern," in Baumlin & Baumlin, Ethos, 72; cf. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture (ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg: Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.
[65] Davis and Gross, "Gayatri Spivak and the Ethos of the Subaltern," 67.
[66] Chris Kamarae and Dale Spender, eds., The Knowledge Explosion: Generations of Feminist Scholarship (The Athene Series; New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), 10.

work as cultural-ideological rather than "exegetical" and text-focused discourse. Alternatively, such hegemonic rhetoric trivializes subaltern scholarship as "nothing new" or as "merely repeating old readings in a new epistemological guise."

Despite all attempts of subaltern scholars to articulate the scientific and innovative character of their work, it is often not possible to convince dissertation teams, hiring committees, promotion boards, academic publishers, or grant giving institutions that such work is of high interdisciplinary quality. When interpreted through glasses colored by the very biases a work would challenge, the innovative quality of the work becomes invisible and inaudible. If scholarly authority lies in the dominant cultural voice, how can a minority speaker impersonate such a voice if s/he is conscious of the problematics of her marginal status and refuses to revert to ventriloquism?

How can doctoral education and biblical pedagogy avoid reinscribing the rhetorics and politics of power that reproduce and inculcate the elite male positivist scientific ethos of the discipline? These are not mere "rhetorical questions" important only for the subaltern scholar. They are relevant to all of us concerned with changing both the ethos of biblical studies in general and the ethos of rhetorical criticism in particular. Indeed, interdisciplinary ethos, moral persuasion, and public accountability, in short, a rhetoric and ethic of inquiry, must become central to the disciplinary professional discourses of biblical rhetorical criticism.