

**WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS IN 1 COR 1:18-2:5.**

**TOWARDS AN INTERACTIONAL MODEL OF**

**INTERPRETATION**

**by**

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**Declaration:**

I the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

**Date : February 1995**

## **SUMMARY**

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The study on wisdom and foolishness was done in the realization that our descriptions of language in terms of single decontextualized sentences could never hope to reveal the true essence of the structure and use of natural language. A sentence is not a purpose unto itself. Sentences occur in situations, they are embedded in discourse, they are surrounded by sentences and perhaps pictures or actions and gestures with which they must link. In order to understand why Paul has chosen to describe the cross event in seemingly mutually exclusive terms we must reckon with overall text strategies and with the links of the sentence with its textual, discursal and situational environment.

Once you are committed to describing language in terms of processes, a text becomes a communicative interaction between its producer and its consumer within relevant social contexts. The moment one canalizes a text as communicative interaction one is under an obligation to develop a proper apparatus or model which will take into consideration concepts such as strategies (a goal determined weighing of various alternatives) and tactics (the choice of words and sentence patterns).

Hence the development of the interactional model. Working and analyzing wisdom and foolishness within this model I have found it to be two strategic phrases in Paul's strategy to achieve the double edged goal of defending his apostleship and provoking the Corinthian reinterpretation of their calling. Through the use of irony Paul attempts to implement a system of value that is itself ironic. As prospected by 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5, the world of God's calling takes to itself and transcends the appearances of the realities that occur within it. In that world foolishness expresses the value of wisdom and wisdom foolishness. Strength expresses the value of weakness and weakness expresses strength. Wisdom and foolishness become two important terms through which Paul would enable his reader to perceive the world's realities and their value in terms of their opposites.

What Paul intends to achieve through the ironic use of wisdom and foolishness can best be understood by means of the different strategies he employed.

His apologetic strategy is to concede his limitation of wisdom and strength, a limitation which has already engendered criticism of Paul or constitutes an accusation he anticipated.

In establishing an ironic perspective in 1:18-2:5 of the cross, Paul takes hold of the very categories of the controversy and gives them paradoxical values. When interpreted in the light of the cross Paul's apparent lack of wisdom and so called foolishness becomes ironic testimony on his behalf. It is these realities, he would claim, that demonstrate God's backing of his apostleship. Paul engages the Corinthians not at the point of whether he lacks wisdom or whether he is foolish, but at their valuation of wisdom and foolishness. He engages his readers not over the evidence, but over the criteria, the system of values, which shapes their interpretation.

Paul's epideictic strategy is to juxtapose and maximise the tension between what he considers to be the reality of the Corinthian calling and what he understands to be their perception of it. What is proven in the calling of the Corinthians is God's and Paul's ironic system of values, namely wisdom that is foolish and a foolishness that is full of wisdom.



## **OPSOMMING**

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Die doel van hierdie proefskrif en basiese voorveronderstelling ten grondslag van hierdie studie was om aan te toon dat teks en konteks interafhanklik is.

Navorsing in die verlede het gepoog om die terme wysheid en dwaasheid vanuit 'n sogenaamde historiese konteks te bepaal. Die wyse waarop die historiese konteks van die twee begrippe dikwels gekonstrueer is, gaan egter mank aan 'n gebrekkige taalbeskouing. Om die twee begrippe te verstaan moet daar rekening gehou word met oorhoofse teks strategieë sowel as die interaksie tussen teks en konteks.

Die vraag na hoe die interaksie tussen teks en konteks daaruit sien word beantwoord met behulp van die interaksionele model. Hierdie model het insigte vanuit die leser georiënteerde vakdissiplines soos pragmatiek, resepsiekritiek en retoriek geïntegreer en die leser in staat gestel om die teks van 1 Kor 1:18-2:5 te lees teen die agtergrond van 'n kommunikatiewe interaksie tussen teks en konteks. Hierdie funksionele interaksionele model het die leser verder in staat gestel om die begrippe wysheid en dwaasheid as strategiese begrippe te verstaan. Strategies in die sin dat Paulus deur hulle aanwending en gebruik nie net sy apostoliese gesag verdedig nie, maar tegelykertyd ook sy lesers noop tot herbesinning ten opsigte van hulle roeping en die uitlewing daarvan. Wysheid en dwaasheid funksioneer binne hierdie strategiese raamwerk boonop ironies. God se wysheid veronderstel 'n dwaasheid en God se dwaasheid veronderstel 'n wysheid. Ironie lei hier tot disassosiasie. Die gevolglike disassosiasie bied aan Paulus die geleentheid om 'n herwaardering van waardes te maak. So verstaan is die begrippe wysheid en dwaasheid dus die noodwendige uitvloeisel van bepaalde teksstrategieë.

Daar is eerstens Paulus se apologetiese strategie wat daaruit bestaan dat hy sy lesers gelyk gee in die opsig dat hy nie geleerd of welsprekend is nie. Tog weerspieël die skynbare gebrek aan geleerdheid en status in 'n ironiese sin nie net die sosiale status van sy lesers nie, maar dit bevestig tegelykertyd dat Paulus werklik 'n apostel van Jesus Christus is. Beide die gekruisigde Christus en Paulus illustreer immers tiperende kenmerke van die dwase wyse man. Gesien teen die lig van die Kruisgebeure word Paulus se eie gebrek aan geleerdheid en status 'n ironiese

bevestiging dat hy die ware evangelie verkondig.

Paulus se epideiktiese strategie bestaan weer daaruit dat hy deur middel van die begrippe wysheid/dwaasheid 'n herwaardering maak van sy lesers se onderliggende waardes en hulle beleving daarvan. Wat die roeping van die lesers eventueel illustreer, is 'n wysheid wat dwaas is en 'n dwaasheid wat vol wysheid is.

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D.H. Lawrence in his 'Studies in Classic American Literature' once wrote that "men are less free than they imagine; ah far less free. Men are free when they are obeying some inward voice of religious belief. Obeying from within. Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose... Men are not free when they are doing just what they like. The moment you can do just what you like, there is nothing you care about doing. Men are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes".

This study is a result of my freedom - doing what my deepest self likes. All the trials and tribulations and forces that coerced against the writing of this dissertation only made me more determined to be free.

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## INTRODUCTION

We are confronted with a paradox: the concomitant familiarity and obscurity of the New Testament, which requires the search not simply for more data, but for more adequate methods of relating and interpreting the data already possessed. (Burres as quoted by Erickson 1980:67)

Let me commence by requesting you to look carefully at the following paragraph in order to see just how sharp your eye is and how much you know about language, especially about the words and metaphors which many of us use every day.

It really bugs me, whenever I see a bride walking down the aisle, that she has a Mona Lisa smile on her face and her attendants who walk behind her two by two like the animals going into Noah's Ark have the same soporic grin. And then, of course, there is the groom, all bright-eyed and bushy tailed, like a French Poodle, beaming as if no one was aware of the blood, sweat and tears that go into the making of a modern marriage, that complex legacy left to us after Adam took the fatal bite of that apple in Eden.

Now there may be several sentiments with which you disagree in such a paragraph, but I am pretty sure most of us would claim to understand every word of it. The plain truth, however, is that there are six major errors in that statement and at least one word which we all use, for which I am sure very few of us can give an accurate explanation.

The word in question is "bug", a colloquial word which means to irritate and annoy. What does it mean? Where does it come from? Well surely it relates to the troublesome buzzing of mosquitoes, flies and other bugs which can be a major irritant and although it is pretty slangy, it remains a colourful and descriptive word. Right?

Wrong! The word has nothing to do with insects and never has. It derives from a West African word "bagu" which means to annoy and the slaves who were seized in Africa and forced into labour in America retained the word as part of a kind of slang code which their masters and overseers could not understand. However, as black jazz music began to shift out of the ghettos into the mainstream, much of the ghetto slang - which, in its turn, derived from the slave quarters - went along with it. So before one could notice, "bug" had found a home in the English language where it buzzes in our daily idiom while we are blissfully unaware that we do not know what it means.

What about the six other errors which exist in that passage? Let's take them one by one.

To start with, very few brides really walk down the aisle of the church, and, if they were actually to do so, most people would think them daft. The central passage of any church is called a nave, which is hardly an archaic word. You will find it in just about any tourist pamphlet. The aisle is the passage that runs down either side of the church where, in older buildings, the special shrines and windows are. But somewhere in the befuddled evolution of the public mind the nave became the ceiling and aisle leaped over the seats to become that passage which so many brides are accustomed to walk with a blithe indifference to the imprecise use of language.

Returning to the passage, we then consider the bride's Mona Lisa smile. How can that be a mistake? We all know who Mona Lisa was, don't we? Well if you do, then you are better informed than most Renaissance scholars. The famed da Vinci painting we call the Mona Lisa is, in fact, called La Gioconda, and no one knows the name of the woman who sat for the portrait. Because there was no record, she was for a while referred to as Madonna Lisa, which became corrupted to Mona Lisa, which is what millions now believe her name to be.

And what about the famous mysterious smile? Some have speculated on a subtle love affair and the wicked Aldous Huxley even suggested that her close-lipped smile was because she has rotten teeth which she was to ashamed to show. Recent x-rays, however, show that this head was painted over another portrait that was already on canvas and that in order to paint out the old image, Leonardo was compelled to use this form.

These are only two errors. Where are the others? It will be a surprise to many ordinary folk to learn that the animals did not enter Noah's Ark two by two until he had two of everything. In fact, the Bible tells us that he took two of each "unclean"

animal, which means animals with single hooves, while the "clean" animals (those with cloven hooves) were gathered in groups of seven (Gn. 2:7). There is no mention of birds, reptiles or insects, so who knows how many he took? One thing is sure though the popular image of the dual parade is a genuine mistake.

Then of course, it is worthwhile pointing out that a French poodle is by no means a French dog. The breed originated in Germany where they were used as water hunting dogs which were specially trained to retrieve birds that were shot and fell into the water. The water dogs were called "puddel" dogs in German, which the English mispronounced and turned into "poodle". Somewhere before the time of the French Revolution a couple of these water hunters were presented to the French Court and they became great favourites, prompting everyone to think of them as French dogs.

Who can doubt the accuracy of a phrase like "blood, sweat and tears" used so magnificently by Winston Churchill. Well, what he actually said was "blood, sweat, toil and tears" and he was not the first to say it. The phrase came from John Donne in 1611, was cribbed by Byron in 1823, and made immortal by Churchill during the War and misquoted by the rest of us ever since.

Finally, of course, there is that business of the apple which proved to be Adam's undoing. Of course the Bible makes no mention of it being an apple: indeed it does not identify it at all. It speaks only of the "fruit of the tree" (Gn. 3:3).

It seems that the language we use with such casual confidence is fraught with pitfalls and that, if someone were to tell us that we really do not know what we are saying, they would probably be right. The problem which we encountered in the passage above relates to the very essence of understanding. Understanding and construing a text is **always also construing its context**.

W.S. Vorster (1984:111) has criticized conventional scholarship for seeing the scope and function of context far too limited. The way in which context is usually employed in much of New Testament research seems to refer to history as a backdrop to the texts.

The Twenty Sixth Annual congress of the New Testament Society of South Africa in 1990 dealt with the topic "The Language of the New Testament". This congress had a decisive influence on the study of the New Testament in this country. Every biblical student - indeed, anyone involved in the study of literary documents - recognises the principle of contextual interpretation. Even outside the academic

world people know the danger of taking a statement "out of its context". We seldom stop to think, however, that a writer's linguistic frame and stylistic traits are very much part of the context that must be taken into account.

One of the highlights and most thought provoking papers discussed at the annual meeting of the New Testament Society was the paper of Prof. Cilliers Breytenbach who dealt with precisely these issues. In his illuminating paper he challenged New Testament scholars to realize that discussions of style and tradition have value not only for aesthetic appreciation, but for the exegetical task as well. This study is a response to that challenge and I intend to do so under the title **"Wisdom and foolishness in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5. Towards an interactional model of interpretation"**.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY**

In order to take up the challenge it becomes of crucial importance to focus on the language and style of the New Testament.

We have come a long way since the Purist - Hebraist controversy and the Sacred-Common controversy. Yet as late as 1963 Nigel Turner still took great pains to present a plea for the peculiarities of the New Testament language, which is to be distinguished from the Classical and Hellenistic Greek. Turner (1963:9) pleaded for a "Holy Gost language" and the recognition "not only is the subject matter of the Scriptures unique but also is the language in which they came to be written or translated". In his 'Christian Words' (1980:ix) Turner confessed that his view on language is guided by the traditional views of inspiration: "I cannot believe that the Scripture enshrines any ultimate or essential error, any defect, any excess anything except heavenly wisdom".

Even today, we still hear many lay people or even scholars laying heavy stress on the peculiarity of the New Testament language. Simon Wong (1990:20) pointed out to two possible reasons for this situation. In the first instance there is the obvious misunderstanding between language as an abstracted linguistic system in the subconsciousness of a community (Saussure's *langue*) and speech as the actual speech performance (Saussure's *parole*). Secondly, it is convenient for people to attribute some degree of sacredness to the nature of New Testament language because the moment you confess to that you are no longer interested in the principle of interpretation. What counts, in stead, is one's spiritual insight into the passage.

It is therefore not strange that E. Güttgemans (1969:78) for instance declared that

...the exegete who turns from theological hermeneutics to the reading of international linguistics and literary criticism, encounters an absolute puzzling and completely incomprehensible situation: Protestant theology since Luther's discovery of the correlation of *promissio* and *fides* and above all since the rise of dialectical theology, has understood itself decidedly as a "theology of the Word of God"; but still, right up to today, it has had no adequate understanding of the science of language and linguistic processes, that is of general linguistics.

Biblical scholarship cannot afford any longer a simple pursuing the goal of reconstructing and interpreting an historical situation for distinctively religious purposes, we must also make ourselves interested in the linguistic description of the text. Whatever is created by an author is not the whole being of the text. The text is above all a cultural linguistic product, a prototype of a human phenomenon. It is indeed not possible to understand a text without the pre-existing discourse which is rooted in social, economic, political and ideological conditions. In other words, for New Testament science to be a truly text centered science we need to redefine the relation text and context. The relation is not one of equivalence in which the one causes the other, but one of interaction and interrelatedness which unites them and makes them text and context.

In chapter one I will indicate the limitations of the traditional approach in explaining wisdom and foolishness in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5. Most of the work done on these topoi, fails to grasp that linguistic structures are not a purpose unto itself. To understand why Paul has chosen these two terms we must take into consideration overall text strategies and the links of single utterances with their textual, discoursal and situational environment. Language and communication should be understood in terms of processes and not only in terms of structures. This point of departure has specific consequences. The Kuhnian and post-Kuhnian philosophy of science resulted in a paradigm shift in which the focus moved from texts as such to the communication events of which texts are part. This means a focus on the people in and around and created by the texts. One does not longer study the author and then the text and then the audience or in any such order. The only possibility is to look at the audience with the help of the text. We are only dealing with a text-author and a text-audience relationship (P. Botha 1993:33).

From this point of departure new developments concerning text theory will be discussed. My aim will be threefold: Firstly, to stress the fact that modern text theory has underlined the important role which common knowledge, plays in the process of interpretation. I will focus on the so called "script" or "frame theory" as well as the cognitive - psychological perspective on text understanding. It is important to keep in mind that context presupposes a statement of the inner logic, the interior structure, of the thing subject to interpretation. The relation between context and utterance is determined by various factors and it is the interaction of all these factors which constitute meaning.

**Secondly**, I hope to indicate that an interactional model for the analysis of letters has now become a necessity. It is even of greater necessity when a letter is studied as a form of argumentation. Let me explain.

The statement of Louw (1976:76) that semantics is more than the meaning of words and more than the meaning of sentences is just as treasured by New Testament scholars, as the now famous words of Churchill. I for one, am most grateful for the way Louw has helped us. But one should analyse his words very carefully to realise that they have now received a new context and therefore a new meaning.

Hieruit blyk dan nou dat betekenis 'n saak is wat sowel in die woorde, hulle kombinasie en hulle grammaties struktuur lê en dat dit ook in die situasie gebed is.

(Louw 1976:76).

The question is no longer only what wisdom and foolishness meant or said but rather why these two terms are appropriate to the context of 1 Corinthians. The habit of analyzing languages in terms of single, decontextualized sentences could never hope to reveal all the essence of the structure and the use of natural language. Sentences occur in situations, they are embedded in discourse, they are surrounded by sentences and pictures or actions and gestures with which they must link.

In other words, we must clearly distinguish between a semantic and pragmatic approach. Most of the research done on 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 was done in terms of a semantic approach which searches for the meaning in the relationships between linguistic elements. What is needed is a pragmatic approach which brings the situation of communication into play. Pragmatist theory stands in stark contrast to reductionist and dualistic epistemologies. It also utilizes the concept of interaction. If meaning is determined by the interaction between context and text, then we need an interactional model. Enkvist (1985a:262-263) stresses the importance of such a

model, because the focus has shifted to questions like:

...why a certain person in a certain situation chooses to express himself in a certain way? Why does he extract certain specific predications from his store of knowledge, and then textualize them. In his textualization, what politeness devices does he opt for, and why? Does he surround his text proper with metatext, modalities, phatic expressions and the like? How does he co-ordinate his behaviour with that of others in dialogue? Interactional models show how people behave, and perhaps to some extent why.

An interactional model will enable us to analyse both the communicative and argumentative aspect of a text.

My **third objective** is to show how pragmatics and rhetoric should work together in the application of the model. In order to analyse the communicativeness of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 I will focus on conversational analyses and on speech act theory. But, I shall also focus on rhetoric in order to analyse the argumentative character of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5, because rhetorics and rhetorical criticism

...changes the long established perception of authors as active and readers as passive or receptive by showing the rationale for readers as active, creative, productive. Moreover rhetorical criticism changes the status of the readers to that of judges and critics to that of validators. Taking us beyond the diachronic reading is a synchronic reading of texts, rhetorical criticism makes us appreciate the practical, the political, the powerful, the playful and delightful aspects of religious texts (Wuellner 1987:461).

Only by way of such an analysis, in which the communicative as well as argumentative force of an utterance is acknowledged, will we be able to discover that wisdom and foolishness are two strategic terms through which Paul achieves the twofold goal of defending his apostleship and provoking the Corinthian reinterpretation of their calling.

**Chapter two** will be devoted to the explanation and development of the interactional model. The implementation of the model in interpreting 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 will be illustrated in **chapter three**. **Chapter four** will form the conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER ONE

### LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF 1 CORINTHIANS. TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING.

Until comparatively recently the prevailing conception of the nature of the language was straight forward and simple. It stressed communication of thought to the neglect of feeling and attitude, emphasised words rather than speech acts in context.

(Max Black 1963:9)

**W**hen Matthew pictured Jesus first teaching in public he explained that "he used parables to tell them many things". (Matt. 13:2). Readers of that time would surely have known that Matthew made his point by depicting a very distinctive rhetoric for Jesus. I believe the same holds true for Paul.

When he explained to the Corinthians that he did not preach the gospel "using" the language of human wisdom in order to make sure that Christ's death on the cross was not robbed of its power (1 Cor. 1:17), he made the contrast by reference to a style of oratory familiar to his readers.

It is rather surprising that the New Testament authors described the novelty of early Christian speech in terms of contrast to conventional rhetorics. To a few scholars it may even be more surprising to discover that New Testament authors made abundant use of rhetorical figures and patterns of argumentation customary for their cultures of context. At the present moment, however, discussion about Paul's use of rhetoric is experiencing a new upsurge<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a preview and therefore an overview of 1 Corinthians 1-4 and the way in which scholars have looked for answers to the problems they encountered. From there I will try to indicate how the marriage of stylistics to modern linguistics and hence the rediscovery of rhetoric could aid our understanding of Paul's message to the Corinthians.



## 1.1 1 Cor. 1-4: Preview and Overview

Literary and rhetorical criticism thrive upon and seek to illumine the interaction of textual part and whole. Although this study is focussed on a very small section of the text (1 Cor 1:18-2:5) this pericope cannot be isolated from its relations to and functions in the broader context. Accordingly, the study of wisdom and foolishness in 1 Corinthians 1 must be accompanied by a consideration of the broader textual context and its problems.

### 1.1.1 The Corinthian conflict and the nature of the σοφία

As a letter 1 Corinthians presents many problems<sup>2</sup> to the interpreter. The difficulty is compounded by the interrelatedness of these problems. However, the major problem of the first four chapters is the nature of the σοφία against which Paul polemicizes. As it is so closely linked to the σχίσματα which is the topic of 1:12-17, 3:1-17 and 3:22-3, and other verses, it is necessary to begin with a brief discussion of that question.

Obviously the σχίσματα and the question of σοφία are linked because Paul ends 1:12-17 by saying that Christ sent him to tell the Good News not ἐν σοφία λόγου.

In 1:12 Paul speaks of four groups, associated with the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ. The same hold true with regard to 3:22. The identity of the Christ group remains a problem. Chrysostomus already assumed that the reference to Paul, Cephas and Apollos was fictive. Calvin followed him in assuming that Paul in actual fact kept secret the real names of the persons that formed the opposing parties.

In 1797 J.E.C Schmidt suggested that there were only two groups, namely the converts of Paul and Apollos on the one hand and a second group that regarded Peter as leader but expressed their ultimate allegiance as to Christ on the other hand. This hypothesis was developed and made famous by F.C. Baur<sup>3</sup>.

According to Schmidt and Baur Paul's opponents were representatives of Jewish Christianity. Although Baur's hypothesis has been questioned because of the apparent absence of Judaizers in 1 Corinthians, variations of it are defended<sup>4</sup>.

Although Dahl (1967:315) says of this hypothesis that there is wide negative agreement that Paul is not opposing Judaizers, a careful assessment of its arguments is necessary.

Essentially these arguments are the following:

- a) In the σοφία discussion from 1:17 there is a polarization: the Pauline λόγος of the cross is contrasted with the σοφία λόγου without the suggestion of some third gospel. This would point to only two opposing parties.
- b) In 3:10-12 where Paul uses the analogy of his mission with the building of a house, he mentions the opposition in the singular (ἕλλος, τις, ἕλλα).
- c) In 4:6 Paul transfers these things to himself and Apollos so that "none of you should be proud of one person and despise another". This seems to indicate tensions on leadership levels.
- d) According to 4:3 Paul is not concerned about being judged (ἀνακρίνω) and in 9:3 says: "When people criticize me, this hour I defend myself". He then proceeds to defend his rights and duties as apostle. According to this hypothesis it is not easy to see how anyone could have distinguished between the apostolic authority of Paul and Apollos to the latter's advantage, while it is easy to see that such a distinction could have been made between Paul and Cephas. Such a reading is strengthened by the presence of anti-Petrine passage in Galatians 2.
- e) 4:6 is a key verse for the understanding of the letter. Paul is applying what he has said thus far to Apollos and himself (μετασχημάτιζεν). While the real issue was between (δὲ ὑμῶς) the two of them and Cephas, Paul for pastoral reasons has changed it to an issue between himself and Apollos. Cephas is carefully kept anonymous throughout - he is τοῦ ἐνός, which is in line with 3:10 where he is referred to as ἕλλος and τις at 3:12-17.
- f) Once we have alignment rather reminiscent of Galatians, σοφία refers to a way of life in accordance with the torah. Judaism sounded more attractive to Greek ears when presented as a σοφία, a wise way of life, rather than a νόμος, a set of divine rules with severe penalties attached.

Lütgert (1903:43) has argued that Paul's opponents are either "libertinische Pneumatiker" or "antinomistische Gnostiker". The chief opponents according to him are to be identified with the Christ party, who were enthusiasts who distorted Paul's doctrine of freedom. Instead they embraced sexual license and inflated the value of visions and revelations.

Schmithals (1971:286-287) sees the Christ party as the only front of opposition in Corinth. They were Jewish gnostics in opposition to the apostolic groups of Paul, Cephas and Apollos.

One of the most intriguing proposals was made in 1911 by Perdelwitz (1911:180-193) who claimed that the difficulty of identifying the Christ party can be resolved by textual emendation. Instead of reading 'Εγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ, the text should read 'Εγὼ δὲ Κρίσποῦ - a change of two letters. The result being that the so - called Christ party is actually the party of Crispus. He followed that up with another minor emendation in changing κόσμος to Κρίσπος in 3:22. Although no one has accepted Perdelwitz's theory, it illustrates to what absurdities the investigation of the Corinthian parties could lead to. If the grammatical structure of 1:12 implies the existence of a fourth party, strange as it may seem, the party about which we know the least - and which may not even be a party - has become the major preoccupation of a large number of New Testament scholars.

All the above hypotheses mentioned above reflect the traditional approach with regard to language, style and texts. As many stylistic features reside not within individual sentences, but in the way sentences are linked into texts, simple sentence grammar will prove inadequate for the description of certain important elements of style. It is important to realize "that descriptions of language in terms of single, decontextualized sentences could never hope to reveal all of true essence of the structure and use of a natural language" (Enkvist 1985a:258). The moment the context comes into play (eg. Vielhauer 1975:135-137; Lampe 1990:117-118; Von Lips 1990:2146-148), 1:12 becomes more than a Corinthian slogan, but a rhetorical formulation by Paul himself, exposing the absurdity of the party slogans as illustrated in 3:22.

A completely new hypothesis was proposed by Wilckens. The focus on the party named for Christ, together with the emphasis on wisdom has led Wilckens to understand Paul's struggle with the Corinthians as an ideological battle. Wilckens (whose book "Weisheit und Torheit" has done more than any other book to establish a Gnostic interpretation of σοφία) is perhaps the best known critic of the rhetorical interpretation of 1 Corinthians. Wilckens proposed that Paul was engaged in a christological controversy with Jewish-Christian Gnostics who identified the risen Christ as God's wisdom personified and experienced through baptismal initiation. In his TDNT article (1979:522) on wisdom he summarizes his hypothesis as well as his opposition to a rhetorical interpretation as follows:

Most exegetes in expounding the whole discussion in 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 concentrate on the phrases σοφία λόγου in 1:17, ὑπεροχὴν λόγου σοφίας in 2:1 and ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας λόγοις in 2:4. It thus seems that in this section the Christian preacher is opposing any philosophical or rhetorical presentation of the Gospel according to the standards of Greek philosophy. Against this, however, is the fact that the section 1:18-2:16 is not theological reflection but polemical discussion closely related to the situation in Corinth, cf. the direct and by no means angular transition in 1:17. σοφία is obviously a catch-word of Paul's opponents. What is meant may be seen from 2:6-16. His opponents are thus Gnostics, not Greek philosophers... To be sure, Paul is attacking a specific λόγος of his adversaries. Yet this is not traditional Greek rhetoric, which without adequate foundation is often associated with Apollos simply because he is called ἀνὴρ λόγιος in Acts 18:24 and one of the parties in Corinth happened to be linked to his name (1 Cor. 1:12). On the contrary, what is at issue is Gnostic charismatic utterances, as may be seen from a comparison of 2:1 and 12:8 and especially from Paul's argument in 2 Corinthians cf. 11:6, and 10:10... A final point in this regard is that the attack on σοφία λόγου is not so much on the form of speech as on the content, i.e. on the whole theological position of the Corinthian adversaries, whose wisdom would appear to have been a gnostically absolutized pneuma-Christology. On the other hand, Paul does not say in 1 Corinthians that it is impossible in principle to preach the Gospel in the language of Greek philosophy or that this would be a distortion of the Christian kerygma. In terms of his own experience he probably could not say this. There is no evidence in the epistles that he was educated in one of the Greek philosophical schools<sup>5</sup>.

In some quarters the reconstruction of the Corinthian conflict became over doctrinaire. H.D. Wendland (1962:12) used gnostic disparaging of the body to explain libertinism and asceticism equally and simultaneously. Walter Schmithals made gnostic dualism the measure of the Corinthians at every point<sup>6</sup>.

The still reigning thesis of a spiritual or wisdom-oriented movement in Corinth goes back to Johannes Weiss. Weiss argued that a spiritual or wisdom orientated movement in Corinth gave rise to this conflict in the midst of the Corinthians.

Weiss (1910:86) interpreted the parties in the light of Paul's general struggle against confident, spirit-filled perfect ones whose gnosis told them no physical act of eating idol sacrifices, or immorality could threaten their spiritual union with Christ. According to Weiss women pulling off veils and slaves seeking emancipation were probably part of this movement. Scholars such as Conzelmann<sup>7</sup> and Koester<sup>8</sup> remind one of Weiss's original care to work deductively from the texts to reconstruct what unified the Corinthians' high spirituality, resurrection Christology, and radical ethics. But the important question concerning rhetoric and women's possible roles in this movement is not developed. In 1982 Gerhard Sellin wrote an article: "Das 'Geheimnis' der Weisheit und das Rätsel der 'Christuspartei'<sup>9</sup> (Zu 1 Kor 1-4)". He followed it up with monograph on the discussions about the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15 in which Sellin pointed out according to Acts 18:24 that Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew. He linked this observation with a new hypothesis of his own, suggesting that the wisdom brought by Apollos to Corinth was of the Philonic type. This hypothesis was strongly substantiated by his 1986 study of the Philosophy of Philo. His view had important consequences. According to this there was no gnosticism in the Corinthian church. What Apollos introduced there had as little to do with gnosticism as had the philosophy of Philo.

If, one must summarize all the above mentioned hypotheses, one could say that the primary trend in scholarship has been to explain Paul's focus on wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1-4 as a reaction to alternative wisdom claims in Corinth. Scandinavian and English speaking research tends to limit itself to a minimal description of Corinthian wisdom built on Paul's explicit charges about strife, boasting and overconfidence. However, similar accusations in other letters on different issues suggest that Paul's charges are more polemical than descriptive. German research on the wisdom texts builds on the extended debate about whether Paul's Corinthian opponents were Judaizers or Gnostics. Other writers insist on a positive interpretation of Paul's wisdom claims. The dominating question in this regard have been: What is the origin of wisdom's multiform? In what way and under what influences does Jesus Christ become identified as God's wisdom?

Different answers were given to these questions. With regard to the origin of wisdom few scholars would today agree with Bultmann's thesis<sup>10</sup> of a single myth of wisdom created, appearing on earth, rejected and returning to heaven. Hans Conzelmann (1964:234) in an article on "The Mother of Wisdom" shows how the years of research by Reitzenstein and others revealed the process of reflective mythology as motifs from many myths were adapted to preserve and enhance Yahwism in different multi-cultural settings. Burton Mack<sup>11</sup> traces this process through the Hellenistic-Jewish wisdom hymns and Fiorenza<sup>12</sup> shows Christians

drawing on similar traditions, perhaps including the Isis myth and cult, in forming christological hymns. But how reflective is this mythology? If the borrowing appeared initially in hymns, it is more probable that community worship gave birth to this syncretism, as people who knew many traditions spoke in praise of Christ, provoking some among them to reflect on what can hardly be rejected in their own worship practice. Another research topic is the relation of Jewish wisdom traditions to the origins of Gnosticism. Although the seminal work was done by scholars such as Jacob Jervell<sup>13</sup> and Birger Pearson<sup>14</sup> on the exegesis of Genesis texts in Jewish and gnostic writing, and by J.M. Robinson on the genres used in Jewish and gnostic writing, no adequate answers have been given to this question.

Another particular concern with regard to the wisdom issue is the point at which Jesus Christ becomes identified with God's wisdom. Some, e.g. Windisch<sup>15</sup>, and Knox, have argued that Paul applied to Christ, quite explicitly and deliberately, what was said of the divine wisdom in the Old Testament and Judaism, either directly, or as W.D. Davies<sup>16</sup> has argued via the identification of wisdom with the Torah (especially Sir 24). Even if this is the case, the question remains as to its relevance for 1 Cor. 1-4. Others have started from the Corinthian perspective and have seen wisdom as a treasured possession understood in Hellenistic<sup>17</sup> Jewish categories.

Recently Earle Ellis<sup>18</sup> and Robin Scroggs<sup>19</sup> have turned to Jewish apocalyptic and wisdom teaching including Qumran, for understanding the concept of wisdom. But most distinctive, has of course been the view to which I have already referred, namely that the Corinthians have adopted a mythological gnosis incorporating the idea of a divine wisdom, with or without a specific redeemer-myth, against which Paul polemizes in 1 Cor 1-4.

Then there is the interest in wisdom Christology in the Synoptics and the fact that Matthew uses Q as a source. The relationship between these synoptic wisdom traditions and in particular the thunderbolt or *Jubelruf* in Matt. 11:25-26 and 1 Corinthians 1-4 has been probed by J.M. Robinson<sup>20</sup> B. Fjarstedt<sup>21</sup>, B.W. Hinaut<sup>22</sup> and P. Richardson<sup>23</sup>, without precise literary or historical results.

#### 1.1.1.1 Critical reflection

In appraising the above mentioned data I would like to return to the words of Max Black (1963:9) cited at the start of this chapter:

Until recently the prevailing conception of the nature of language was straight forward and simple. It stressed communication of thought to the neglect of feeling and attitude, emphasised words rather than speech acts in context.

Indeed, the larger question can be raised: Should the exegesis of 1 Cor. be dominated by the thesis that Paul is primarily addressing opponents? The pre-occupation with opponents has encouraged exegetes to embrace a methodology whereby texts are read as antithetical responses to that which hypothetical opponents are supposed to have said. If Paul denies something, the opponents must have affirmed it. If Paul affirms something, the opponents must have denied it. This method of mirror reading has imposed an oppressive rigidity on the interpretation of 1:18-2:5.

The one common feature in all the work done on wisdom in 1 Cor. 1-4, is that it emphasizes words rather than speech acts in context. More than one scholar reflected on this deplorable state of affairs. Erhardt Gütgemanns (1969:68) declared in a remarkable passage:

... the exegete who turns from theological hermeneutics to the reading of international linguistics to the literary criticism encounters an absolutely puzzling and completely incomprehensible situation. Protestant theology since Luther's discovery of the correlation of promise and faith and above all the rise of dialectic theology has understood itself decidedly as a "theology of the Word of God" but still, right up to today, has had no adequate understanding of the science of language and linguistic processes, that is, of general linguistics.

Already in 1971 W.S. Vorster argued convincingly that "Nuwe Testamentici verplig sal wees om aandag te skenk aan moderne opvattinge oor taal en taalondersoek" (1971:139). This call went largely unheeded because most ministers would agree with Malina (1983:119):

For the busy pastor, the rise and fall of fads and fashions in biblical study must seem rather bothersome. The Germanic hyphenated criticisms (form-, redaction-, tradition-, source- etc.) the Gallic "ist" approaches (structuralist, materialist, grammarologist, narratologist) and the American Bible-as-literature contributions all must seem as



so many passing fancies which for all their hermeneutic power add nothing to the sheer delight of reading and using the Bible as it is.

Why this deplorable state of affairs?<sup>24</sup> According to W.S. Vorster (1971:140) it has to do with the fact that "die uitleg van die Nuwe Testament grootliks afhanklik is van die verstaan van die taal van die Nuwe Testament". The Greek of the New Testament has been variously explained throughout the centuries with significant implications for hermeneutics due to different definitions of its nature, and to applying different linguistic methodologies<sup>25</sup>. Another reason for this sad state of affairs is that until recently biblical scholars have been totally oblivious of the new approach to language introduced by de Saussure in 1916. He insisted that the synchronic structural approach to language should be primary and that the historically comparative method should be supplementary in determining the meaning of the text. In fact, obvious misunderstandings of certain linguistic concepts, especially what Saussure called *langue* and *parole*, made the situation worse.

Traditional research on the concept of wisdom in 1 Cor. 1-4 reflects an a-linguistic view of language<sup>26</sup>. Such an a-linguistic view fails to distinguish between (a) thinking and speaking (concept and word) (b) thinking and naming (concept and word-meaning) (c) ways of thinking (world views) and the morphemic make-up of a language - that is to say, between what is said and how it is said, (d) word meaning and the thing meant, and (e) meaning and meaningfulness.

This is primarily due to a lack of proper methodology and a satisfactory linguistic theory. It is therefore of paramount importance to integrate the knowledge of modern linguistics into the study of biblical language.

A reconstruction and interpretation of a historical situation for distinctively religious purposes is no longer sufficient. The linguistic aspect must be taken seriously, "since a text is above all a cultural linguistic product - a prototype of a human phenomenon" (Sawyer 1967:137-38).

This is the background that prompts a reconsideration of rhetoric, stylistics, text and discourse linguistics, conversational analysis, pragmatic and other related areas of language study such as socio-linguistics and psycho-linguistics<sup>27</sup> in order to come to a fuller understanding of wisdom in 1 Cor 1-4.



### 1.1.2 The form and style of 1 Cor. 1-4

Like people in a society, arguments in a text do not function in isolation. They form a complex network of interrelations and inter dependencies. From Paul's first word - his name - followed by his greetings and prayers for the Corinthians, to the last line of the fourth chapter where he calls himself their only father in Christ, Paul is presenting himself to his readers. There are notable differences in the way he does this.

On the one hand the opening is cordial and modest as Paul praises God for gifts given to them. On the other hand the conclusion is stern. Paul demands that they follow his example and he even contemplates to visit them with a whip in the hand.

It seems as if Paul assumed that between the two he had established the authority needed to bring off the changes he is about to demand in Corinth. It is these features, common to 1 Cor 1-4, that pose two problems. In the first place it is not clear why Paul took so long to clarify his relationship with the Corinthians. Almost a fourth of the letter goes into this introduction - not the normal procedure between two correspondents who enjoyed the good relationship that Paul's cordial opening implied. Secondly, it is not clear why he launches an attack on worldly wisdom and then defends his own different wisdom in the middle of this discussion of Corinth's leaders.

The first of these problems concerns the question as to why Paul took so long to clarify his relationship with the Corinthians. This is seldomly recognized by scholars as an issue<sup>28</sup>. A notable exception is the work of Wire<sup>29</sup> (1990:40) and Plank<sup>30</sup> (1983:25). The fact that these two scholars use rhetorical criticism in their studies is rather indicative of things to come. Plank (1983-25) understood the introduction rhetorically as the point where

... Paul's concern is to influence the basic disposition of his audience toward him, as speaker, promoting their goodwill and his own credibility. This he achieves by identifying both himself and his audience in terms of a "calling". The notion of "calling"...marks a shared common point between Paul and his audience and provides a frame or reference within which his argumentation can proceed.

With regard to the second issue it is rather surprising to see Paul's reaction to the party strife. He allots only eight verses (1:10-17) to the issue and does not return to

speak about this disunity until 3:3. Between 1:28-3:2, we find a surprising silence about the previously addressed problem of factions reigns.

What is then the point of this fundamental theological section with regard to the specific problem of Christian parties? Some radical solutions have been proposed. V.P. Branick (1982:267) sees little relation between the homily of 1:18-31, 2:6-16 and 3:18-23 and the party strife. According to his source critical method "the homily was very probably written for another group" (1982:267). Branick (1982:269) also points out that it "was a coherent unit before its insertion into the letters to the Corinthians and there is only a "general relevance of the homily to the conditions at Corinth".

Hans Conzelmann (1975:79) views 1 Cor. 1-3 as a circular composition. Yet even he is not quite clear as to why Paul inserts 1:18-2:16 into the discussion of the party strife and why 1:18-2:16 represents a necessary building block in the argument against the party disorder. Is this merely a digression of an absent-minded man? Conzelmann is also not interested in rhetorical techniques because he maintains that Paul does not knowingly employ any sort of rhetorical device. He observes that "despite breaks and joints (1 Cor. 9,13, 10:1-22) one can detect interconnections that are plainly from the hand of Paul" (1969:19). Conzelmann's argument for the unity of 1 Corinthians rests solely on theological considerations. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians C.K. Barrett refers to the work of Johannes Weiss and even urges one to read it in its entirety, but his own work lacks the insight gained from rhetoric. According to Barrett (1971:49):

The essential question that must be asked and answered is whether 1 Corinthians makes sense in its present form, or is it so manifestly inconsistent with itself that its illogical movement and internal contradictions can be remedied only by separating the discordant parts into different letters. At present I record the view... that Paul simply wrote the letters through, beginning with chapter i and finishing with chapter xvi.

Barrett (1971:49) is also of the opinion that Paul did not use wisdom as a rhetorical device. However he has not clarified the many complexities in the opening sections of the letters nor has he adequately investigated the meaning of 'not in persuasive words of wisdom'.

Wilhelm Wuellner on the other hand sees Paul consciously inserting rhetorical digressions in the course of his arguments, with specific argumentative goals in

mind. According to Wuellner (1979:186), one such a digression is 1 Cor. 1:19-3:20 and it

...offers an amplification in "intensive terms", of what awaits all believers no less than all apostles (regardless whether they are "fathers" or merely one of the numerous "guides" of believers), namely the only alternative there is to the "call"-status, or being subject to the power of God: either doom or salvation.

Wuellner understands the function of this digression as a way to highlight how faithful God is to those who wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ and as such keep or hold themselves to the end guiltless (1 Cor. 1:7-8). Although the party strife plays too small a role in this interpretation, Wuellner nevertheless takes an important step by interpreting Paul's digression as a deliberate rhetorical device. He has proved beyond doubt that these digressions are "more than evidences of Paul's style. Instead we have demonstrated that the stylistic devices are functionally determined by the rhetorical situation" (1979:188).

More recently, M. Bünker (1984:52) also asserted that Paul consciously employed rhetoric in 1 Cor. 1-4. Bünker (1984:58) characterized 1 Cor 1:18-2:16 as a rhetorical narratio between the exordium of 1:10-17 and the probatio of 3:1-17. But once again, the relationship between the content of 1:18-2:16 and the parties remains unclear.

On the other side of the spectrum there was no shortage of opinions<sup>31</sup> as to the literary genre of the opening chapters. Different answers have been given which range from Dahl (1977:329) who understands 1 Cor. 1-4 as an apologia whereby Paul re-establishes his apostolic authority as the founder and spiritual father of the whole church to that of Wuellner (1970:199) who sees it as Haggadic homily. No adequate answers have been given to the two basic issues and the interrelatedness of 1 Cor. 1-4.

#### 1.1.2.1 Critical Appraisal

The limitations of the traditional approach to style which, with a few exceptions, is part and parcel of much of the work done on the style of 1 Cor. 1-4 cannot be denied. In the traditional approach the function of stylish elements does not get the attention it deserves. Consequently aspects such as narratology, reception theory, socio-linguistics, semiotics and semantics are not taken into consideration nor understood as necessary elements of style.

As many stylistic features do not operate on the level of individual sentences, but in the interrelations of sentences within the wider web of the text, sentences cannot be considered in isolation.

Sentences rather occur in situations, they are embedded in discourse, they are surrounded by other sentences and perhaps pictures or actions and gestures with which they must link. To understand why Paul has chosen a specific form for a certain sentence we must take into consideration overall text strategies and the links of the sentence with its textual, discursual and situational environment. Lundin (1985:27) is therefore quite correct when he says that we all inevitably read as people who seek, belong and act. The sociology of knowledge and the Kuhnian and post-Kuhnian philosophy of science have of course underlined this idea<sup>32</sup>. Enkvist (1985a:258) says in this respect

...texts are governed by their overall text strategies. These strategies are realized by tactical means: the task of lexis and syntax is to make possible the conveyance of information in the order, sequence, and form required by the strategy. In other words, the strategy governs the formation of individual sentences through the tactical choice of words and syntactic structures. Here too, as in wars, strategy, comes before tactics; the text is father of the sentence, and not the other way round.

This is indicative of a paradigm shift in describing language in terms of processes and not only in terms of structure. In our study of 1 Cor. 1-4, we shall expose the consequences of this paradigm shift which understands language as a process. This understanding of language requires the development of a proper apparatus for processual description. We therefore make use of concepts such as strategy (a goal-determined weighing of the various alternatives one must choose from) and tactics (the choice of words sentence patterns). One of the benefits of implementing this paradigm shift is a comprehensive approach to style, for as Louw has (1986:5) pointed out

...style involves a much wider range of items, for style pertains to an author's choice from among the various possibilities of expression offered by language. Style also extends beyond sentence boundaries, it involves the structure of the total discourse.

If one views 1 Cor. 1-4 in such a processual frame - and that at least is the purpose

of this study - one might redefine style as a context-determined weighing of decision parameters. For example:

When a cookery book writer fronts a locative adverbial even with the verb put where such fronting is otherwise very rare (as in "Into a champagne glass put two lumps of sugar"), this strongly marked arrangement apparently owes to the importance of turning the sentences into an icon of events. The above sentence is short for "first take the champagne glass and then put into it two lumps of sugar". It mentions the champagne glass and the lumps of sugar in the order in which the cook will need them. It turns the sentence into an isomorph, a picture, an icon, of experience. (Enkvist 1985a:259)

That indeed would be the ultimate aim of this study - to understand 1 Cor 1-4 and especially 1 Cor 1:18-2:5 as a picture, an icon, of experience.

## **1.2 Towards a New Understanding**

There are compelling reasons for assuming that a new understanding of 1 Cor. 1-4 is possible and that an answer can be found as to why Paul bursts into an attack on worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-31) and then defends his own wisdom in the center of his discussion on Corinth's leaders. I believe it to be possible due to the following reasons:

### **1.2.1 A Shift in Paradigm**

It was Sally McFague (1983:7) who said

...Scientists today are well aware that "facts" are theory dependent, that there are no literal facts, that all exist within interpretive frameworks, and that these frameworks or paradigms can have and have changed over centuries.

The use of insight from contemporary literary theory and linguistics for the reading and interpretation of the Bible in recent years has provided New Testament scholarship with new opportunities and new challenges. New Testament scholars are increasingly utilising the concepts developed by modern literary and linguistic theories in dealing with the text of the New Testament. In his article on "Directions in Contemporary Exegesis Between Historism and Structuralism"<sup>33</sup>, Lategan (1978:18) therefore asks:

What is happening to Biblical exegesis? In recent publications in this field, the most unlikely phrases keep cropping up: "semiology", actantical level, deep structure, narrative syntax, synchronic and diachronic, meaning and sense, paradigmatic and syntagmatic, signifies and signified, to mention just a few of these unfamiliar terms. For exegetes trained in the reserved understanding Anglo-Saxon tradition in the wake of Lightfoot, Taylor, Manson and Dodd, for the exegetes steeped in the existentialist theology of Bultmann and committed to the historical critical method for exegetes, for exegetes from a Reformed background, following mentors like Berkouwer and Ridderbos, the initial introduction to this strange exegetical jargon is often disagreeable, disturbing and even an unnerving experience.

Why is it such an unnerving experience? Is it due to the strange terminology or is it due to the idea that the formation of theories is preceded by observation and that there is no such thing as pure observation without theory?

I believe it is an unnerving experience because the limitations of the historical paradigm have increasingly become evident. W.S. Vorster (1984:119) points out that the historical critical method is limited in the sense that it is able to answer only questions produced by a historical critical frame of mind. This focus is not able to address questions with regard to communicating meaning, function of language, semantics and so on. The implementation of new methods in recent years provides a very necessary correction to the historical critical method, in the sense that New Testament studies so acknowledges its nature as a text-centered science, and opposes the distorted perception that New Testament science is primarily a historical science. In essence the historical critical paradigm was neither historical or critical enough.

### Excursus

Although the historical critical paradigm has been the method used *par excellence* by Western interpreters (J. Eugene Botha 1993:36) its application has had the effect of alienating modern readers from the text because, if applied, the historical critical paradigm indicates the enormous difference between the world of the text and the world of today. In the historical critical paradigm the point of departure is the text, the world of the text and the original meaning of the text. It is clear that the historical critical paradigm, with its naive sense of objectivity could be guilty of the same fallacy

of which they accuse exponents of Liberation Theologies, namely of manipulating the text.

The inadequacies of the historical critical paradigm is notable in the numerous studies done on wisdom. Beckwith (1987:93-107) simply starts off by discussing the *hokmah* of the ancient world. The wisdom of Bezalel and Oholiab (Ex. 28:3) and that of Job and then continues into the New Testament. According to him the opening chapters of Corinthians "are like a summary of the teaching of the Old Testament" (1987:101)... and is also addressed to the "wise men of Greece who become the characteristic wise men of the pagan world, in the place of the wise men of Egypt and Babylon, known to Joseph, Solomon and Daniel" (1987:101). The mere identification of the world of the Old Testament with that of the New is but one indication that this study is neither historical nor critical. The same can be said with regard to the study of Best (1983:9-39). According to him Paul's style in 1:10-17 is staccato, while 1:18-25 is more carefully composed to be a theological argument (1980:16). This traditional approach to style presents us with some serious problems. The emphasis is on a very small aspect of grammatical style, which in any case is studied.

Best's interpretation of foolishness (1980:17) also indicates the inadequacies of the historical critical paradigm. Best's conclusion, namely that "Paul is not attacking wise men who have become arrogant and self assertive... but because they are wise" is therefore unconvincing.

Attempts by Wilckens and Schmithals indicate that the wisdom at Corinth is most adequately understood as expressions of a more or less fully developed Gnosticism. However, as I have indicated earlier, the study of Pearson (done in a remarkably historical as well as critical fashion) points out clearly, by means of a comparative analysis, just how far the evidence in Corinthians differs from that found in gnostic literature.

Barrett's (1971:49) use of the historical critical method has resulted, amongst others, in his view that Paul rejects wisdom as a rhetorical device. In the process the questions that were answered were those put by the historical critical paradigm. Aspects such as style, pragmatics, strategies or rhetoric were not taken into consideration.

The text can no longer be considered in isolation. The current change of paradigm has amongst others, indicated the enormous role of the reader in contributing meaning to the text. The reader brings his\her own presuppositions, abilities and context to the text and all of these contribute to reading and interpreting the text.

Recently, a few commentaries and articles did reflect on these matters. Talbert (1987:xiii) indicates that at the heart of the Corinthian correspondence are two issues: "What is said and how it is said". Attention is paid to studies in ancient letter writing as well as to rhetoric. Lampe (1990:117) analyzes the rhetorical scheme in 1 Cor. 1-4. His conclusion is that the discourse on wisdom is not so seemingly unrelated to the



problem of the parties. Lampe's and Talbert's approach differs remarkably from the historical critical approach in that it is more reader oriented. The same can be said of the work of Fiore (1985:88-89).

In recent years there has been a remarkable shift from the historical approach to that of a more *pragmatic* methodology. The question New Testament scholars need to answer is no longer "what does this sentence mean or say" but rather "why is this utterance appropriate to the context". Sentences occur in situations, they are embedded in discourse, they are surrounded by sentences and pictures or actions and gestures with which they must link.

This represents an important paradigm shift in which language is described in terms of processes and not only in terms of structures<sup>34</sup>. The effects of the paradigm shift are reflected in the pragmatic methodologies such as reception theories, and deconstruction in which the act of reading creates a radically new text. Closely coupled with these methodologies are developments in modern narratology and speech act theory.

It is within this context that one has to agree with Kurz (1987:195)

...Contemporary biblical exegesis is undergoing a paradigm shift as revolutionary as the shift to historical criticism has been. This paradigm shift is toward multi-disciplinary and more holistic approaches that supplement the almost exclusive reliance on historical critical methods in which most of us were trained. More and more scholars are finding historical critical methods inadequate for addressing contemporary concerns like liberation or service of the church, accounting for religious experience, or even dealing with the final state of the text.

Within the shift to a multi-disciplinary approach I opt for an interactional model in which the act of literacy communication is placed within the sphere of human interaction.

#### Excursus:

With regard to the interactional model the following: The exact nature of this model will be discussed in the next chapter. I am well aware of the work done by Dormeyer in this regard. According to his model the individual readers, the text and the circle of readers are factors of a triangular relationship. None of the factors dominates as a



subject. There is a constant change in the subject-object relationship, a permanent interaction. The model of van Dijk presupposes that language users construct a presentation not only of the text but also of the social context, and these two representations interact. There is not much of a difference between these models. However, I prefer the model of Van Dijk (1983:62), because it also operates within the framework of a strategy. In other words, his model not only acknowledges the interaction between text and context, but adds that this interaction is goal oriented, intentional, conscious and controlled behaviour.

The advantages of the interactional model, to my mind is twofold. Firstly it makes it possible to view language as a process of interaction between the language user and his or her social world. Language is used within social contexts and social contexts differ. Language can therefore be used in different manners for different purposes. It is indeed within the process of interaction between language and the social world that one is able to ascertain the purpose of argumentation.

Enkvist (1985a:262-263) underlines the advantages of this model by means of the following questions

...Why a certain person in a certain situation chooses to express himself in a certain way? Why does he extract certain specific predictions from his store of knowledge, and then textualize them? In his textualization, what politeness devices does he opt for, and why does he surround his text proper with metatext, modalities, phatic expressions and the like?

How does he co-ordinate his behavior with that of others in dialogue? Interactional models show how people behave, and perhaps to some extent why. When a person has opted for a specific interactional strategy he can start extracting things to say from his cognitive store, as modelled by cognitive models: he can textualize his predictions.

The interactional model builds on the assumption that grammar (formal system of language) and pragmatics are complementary domains and that it is indeed impossible to understand the real nature of language as a process without studying both these domains and the interaction between them. This in turn makes it possible for New Testament scholars to understand genre and figures of speech such as irony and rhetorical impact in terms of conversational and contextual rules. The use of the interactional model would not confirm the result that 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 is a digression, but it certainly will provide us with a reason why this passage is a way of interaction between Paul and the world of the Corinthians.

The second advantage of this model is that it leads to new understanding of the phenomenon text. This constitutes a second major reason why a new understanding of 1 Cor. 1-4 and of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 is possible.

### 1.2.2 Change in text and text theory

The understanding of texts and the meaning of texts have undergone radical changes. In the first place the focus has shifted from the author of a text to the text as auto semantic unit, irrespective of author or reader and during recent years to the reader as the instance which attributes meaning to the text. Furthermore the status of the phenomenon text has changed completely.

According to Eco (1990:21) a paradigm shift has led to the recognition that a text is a place where the irreducible polysemy of symbols is in fact reduced even further because in a text symbols are anchored to their context. Whatever series of symbols is created by an author is not the whole being of the text. Nothing is possible without the pre-existing discourse which is rooted in social, economic, political and ideological conditions. A text is a communicative interaction between its producer and its consumers, within relevant social and institutional contexts. In other words, the idea that a text has a unique meaning, and guaranteed by some interpretive authority, has made way for the insight that any act of interpretation is a "dialectic between openness and form, initiative on the part of the interpreter and contextual pressure" (Eco 1990:21). The shift in paradigm has resulted in the recognition that a mere reading of texts or collecting of facts is not yet contextualising, nor understanding.

Many text theories are not able to account for the fact that texts are paradigmatically open to infinite meanings, but syntagmatically open to only the indefinite interpretations allowed by the context. According to De Beaugrande (1981:114) this paradigm switch gave rise to the dispute amongst scholars with regard to the text as an object of linguistic inquiry. Some scholars have denied that texts are proper objects. According to them texts are sentences accessible via adequate or complete sentence grammars. A second group hoped that theories could be developed to focus on texts rather than on sentences and a third group abandoned prevailing sentence theories in search of alternatives more directly amenable to the special considerations of text and context.

This third group of scholars realized that languages are enormously broad communicative systems that are fully interfaced with the activities of human life at

large. They realized that the long standing tendency to draw a borderline around linguistics and to shut out everything else, is no longer productive. A new text theory is needed in which interaction is the focal point (De Beaugrande 1981:152).

The initial changes were brought about by text theories influenced by structuralist views which also influenced New Testament studies<sup>35</sup>. This was followed by the so-called "New Criticism" and modern text linguistic theories. The idea was promoted that the text should be seen as a process and not only as a structure (Harty 1985:2ff). In short, the phenomenon text has received a totally new epistemological status.

This change in epistemology had direct consequences for the way in which meaning in texts is constituted. New Testament texts were studied within the broader framework of communication and therefore emphasis was placed on the text as a system of signs. Recent developments no longer accept the notion that texts are objects which can be known, since they contain meaning, or that authors create meaning which can be found within the boundaries of the text (Ryan 1985:16ff). This explains the interest in the role of the reader in interpreting the texts.

Because of the interaction between text and reader and the idea that the reader actualises meaning in a text, the idea that the reader has the task of discovering meaning in texts has been abandoned. Reading is more than decoding of encoded codes in a system of signs. Reading is an active process of attributing meaning. It also means that the text has become unstable, thus causing a lot of frustration and fear in those circles where the Bible is regarded as something which has message and that the message simply has to be discovered. Deconstruction has taken the shift in epistemology to even more radical consequences, moving beyond the historical critical and structural approaches to that of post-structural literacy theory<sup>37</sup> where the act of reading that "creates a radically new text... becomes an active process of attributing meaning" (J.N. Vorster 1989:59). Texts are no longer regarded as objects, and meaning never seems to be present in a text. Texts do not have meaning because of their structures, but because of their relationship with other texts in a network of intertextuality (Derrida 1979:84; Ryan 1985:16). Based on this new perception of what texts are, the notion of intertextuality came to the fore which focuses on the interdependence of texts. "The phenomenon 'text' becomes a network of traces, no longer a unitary object which is knowable, or a completed work with a centre and an edge which is recoverable by the skilled readers" (J.N. Vorster 1989:60).

Related to these developments is speech act theory<sup>38</sup>. Speech act theory places the act of literary communication within the sphere of human interaction by stressing

conversational rules. The fact that some of the concepts of speech act theory are readily compatible with other critical theories such as narrative and reception criticism, provides us with a very versatile approach which can only enhance our reading of a text, where a number of aspects can be shown to co-exist, and co-influence communication (E. Botha 1991:302). The basic concept of speech act theory is that it views human verbal and literary interaction as rule-governed behaviour. This rings another change in text theory and makes it possible to view aspects such as genre, and figures of speech such as irony and rhetorical figures, in terms of breaking of or complying with certain conversational and contextual rules. This implies that speech act theory allows for the description of language on the phonetic, lexical, syntactical and pragmatic levels of language.

The rules that govern speech acts are of course not inscribed in the text but are extra-textual. Since no conversation takes place in a vacuum, no adequate speech act is possible without establishing the context. Since meaning depends on social contexts, and social contexts vary, language can be used in different ways or for different purposes. The fact that, in speech act theory, the success of an utterance is considered to be of prime importance thus also provides a new way of looking at a text.

The pragmatic function of language is thus one of the most important aspects which the reader and interpreter of the New Testament has to bear in mind. Most of the texts of the New Testament were not written for the purpose of giving information, but for the purpose of persuading readers and hearers to do something. The purpose of most of the texts was to persuade people to accept a particular point of view. We are therefore forced to account for aspects such as the appropriateness or success or functionality of an utterance in the text. In this regard speech act theory provides us with a more than useful tool. When the texts of the New Testament, and 1 Cor.1:18-2:5 in particular, are studied in this way, as a communication process in social systems of meaning, they are truly transformed from objects into communication between first century Christians. By implementing the text theories referred to above, it will be possible to give a satisfactory answer to the appropriateness of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 within the broader context of 1 Cor. 1-4 as well as to the dynamics of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 and the way in which Paul uses certain stylistic rules and devices.

### **1.2.3 A new look at historical understanding**

I have thus far argued that a new understanding of 1 Cor. 18-2:5 is indeed possible on account of a shift in paradigm which has also resulted in a change in the

epistemological status of the texts and language. Does this imply that it is unnecessary to pay attention to the historical nature of the New Testament texts?

Many scholars uphold the view that the only way to understand and explain the New Testament historically is to apply historical critical methods as used by biblical scholars to the New Testament texts. In some cases it is even maintained that historical critical interpretation is the only correct and valid interpretation and in any case evaluated as superior to other interpretations such as literary interpretations. Understanding the writing of the New Testament historically is necessitated by the very nature and origin of these documents. To this Lundin (1985:23) adds the important fact that there is no discourse, not even the discourse of sciences that can claim to be completely disinterested and untouched by the reality of human history. Like texts themselves and those who seek to understand them, our interpretations are always part of history.

In the past the historical understanding of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 was not always honoured. As a matter of fact, the kind of authority attributed to the text has been a major hindrance. Where any writer's view is taken as a divine oracle and the text is determined and the letter writing situation reconstructed to make the oracle at least tolerable to our ears, two sacrifices are made. The claims to legitimacy by other voices in the debate are denied in advance, robbing us of a sympathetic presentation of their challenges. Secondly, Paul's arguments cannot be heard and weighed in order to determine whether they are convincing or not - the possibility of an unconvincing argument having been excluded in advance - so that even the best argument cannot result in persuasion.

It is therefore of paramount importance to remember that any biblical text exhibits three closely related features, namely a historical, a structural and a theological aspect. By the historical aspect of a text is meant that the text is historical in a twofold sense. It is a historical phenomenon as such, with its own history which can be studied with historical methods; but at the same time it also refers to specific historical events in the past. By the structural aspect is meant that the text exhibits certain grammatical and semantic features and adheres to a specific code. But then the individual utterances themselves stand in a specific relation to one another to the text as a whole or the entire strategy of an author. By the theological aspects is meant that the Bible contains statements about God and man with specific sociological and theological implications. To this Lategan (1985:6) adds that these three aspects never function in isolation or in abstract, but as part of a dynamic process of communication.

The New Testament is therefore a collection of writings written by different authors, for different purposes, in different historical and sociological circumstances, and therefore for different audiences: historical interpretations are therefore no luxury.

To interpret something historically, simply means to attempt to interpret it within its own time and circumstances. Lategan (1985:9) adds to this

...that history is not based on the principle of completeness (giving all the facts) but rather on the principle of selection - John 20:30-31 expresses the same idea. Furthermore, history can never be merely the *bruta facta*, but in the narration of events a certain measure of interpretation is already implied. Not to acknowledge this, means to disturb the fabric of history.

Interpretation thus always depends on a theory or theories and on the context of interpretation, that of the interpreter (Herzog 1983:112). No interpreter enters the process of interpretation without some prejudgements, and included in these prejudgements through the very language we speak and write is the history of the effects of the traditions forming that language (Tracy 1977:357).

Two matters have recently aided our historical understanding of the New Testament. Firstly, there has been a renewed interest in socio-historical matters concerning the world of the New Testament (Meeks 1983; Elliot 1985; Malherbe 1983; Theissen 1983). Special attention is paid to the socio-historical contexts of early Christian communities.

Secondly, there has also been renewed interest in sociology and anthropology as an aid in understanding the world of the New Testament historically. Sociological and anthropological models of how societies function are used to make constructions of possible social contexts within which New Testament writing could have originated. Since texts have meaning in social systems of meaning, hypotheses are formulated about the functions and working of these systems. "To interpret any piece of language adequately is to interpret the social system that it expresses" (Malina 1986:3). But all the social systems are not equal. The social systems in modern societies can be totally different from those in first century Palestine Asia Minor. That is why social constructions are necessary. But let us be very clear on this point. Social constructions as a means of historical study of early Christianity is not an attempt to reconstruct history. They are rather attempts to construct possible social relationships of meanings.

However, these attempts do not have the status of speculation or uncontrolled guessing. They are rather attempts to make adequate historical interpretations of texts within their socio-historical and social meaning system in spite of the limited sources at our disposal. Every bit of socio-historical information can be important for interpretation.

It should be clear that this involves a new look at history as a science. The reality which is studied in this approach is not the *bruta facta* or people of flesh and blood, but the relationships of meaning between facts, deeds and persons. Isn't that what language and style are all about?

...Language arises in the life of the individual through an ongoing exchange of meaning with significant others. A child creates first his child tongue, then his mother tongue, in interaction with that little coterie of people who constitute his meaning group. In this sense, language is a product of the social process.

(Halliday 1978:1)

Of course not everybody will agree with the fact that language is a product of social processes. As Elliot (1984:1) remarks:

...for a time at least there may be more heat than light. Some can be expected to resist innovation on principle, or resign themselves to the kennels with the excuse that you cannot teach old dogs new tricks. Others may doubt the possibility or wisdom or legitimacy of the mixed marriages. Still others like Juvenal of old, may resent an attempt at disciplinary syncretism and regard the influx of new concepts and terminology into exegesis as a sad recurrence of Orantes' garbage flowing into the Tiber.

I don't share this jaundiced view, but opt for a social scientific approach to 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5.

#### 1.2.4 Rediscovery of Rhetoric

Rhetoric was a common feature in the world of the New Testament. It is hardly surprising that New Testament authors made abundant use of rhetorical figures and patterns of argumentation customary for their cultures of context. From the beginning it was taken for granted that writings produced by early Christians were read as rhetorical compositions.



...Origen, for example, or Augustine, knew no other school for making sense of written compositions but the school of rhetoric. One can follow the rhetorical reading of the New Testament through the Middle Ages and into the early period of Reformation where, for instance, Martin Bucer and Heinrich Bollinger simply assumed that Paul should be read through the eye of Quintillian.

(Mack 1990:10)

For long periods and due to various reasons (to which I will turn more specifically in the next chapter) interpreters understood rhetoric as mere ornamentation or embellished literary style. At present it is, however, experiencing a renewed interest. The new interest in rhetoric is often dated from the presidential address of James Muilenburg to the Society of Biblical literature in 1968. However, I would like to believe that it was the work of Nietzsche that was largely responsible for the twentieth - century revival of rhetoric. Foucault<sup>39</sup> (1973:309) claims that Nietzsche was a central figure in an epistemological transformation that ultimately will shift the attention of human sciences almost exclusively towards studying discourse and language.

But if that transformation began in the last century and primarily occurred in Europe, its beginnings would have been easily overlooked. Heidegger, Gadamer, Derrida, Ricoeur, Lacan and Foucault, all of whom share an interest in language, and all of whom were influenced profoundly by Nietzsche, have become pivotal figures in the study of rhetoric. Given these developments it may be fair to argue that Nietzsche's thought is central to a historical transformation that is still taking shape and which is very much evident in the paradigm switch I mentioned earlier. Nietzsche in his "On Truth and lying in an Extra-Moral Sense" (1873) argued that full and essential knowledge of the world cannot be had. Consciousness does not grasp things, but impulses or imperfect copies of things, and these impulses are represented only in images. The images are not the things but the manner in which we stand towards them. For this reason language is rhetoric, for it conveys an attitude or opinion, a partial view rather than an essential knowledge of the matter. Thus, there is no unrhretorical naturalness of language. Language is the result of audible rhetorical acts. So, for Nietzsche, the partial or partisan nature of rhetoric is a further, conscious refinement of the quality as it already exists in natural language. Language, the very citadel of perception and experience, is inherently partial and therefore perspectival.



But Nietzsche went further in demonstrating the perspectival nature of language. He argued that all words or signs are tropes, and because of their tropic nature as partial, transferable, and reversible they present an imperfect knowledge. Human thought is therefore inherently limited by the capacities and constraints of language. In Nietzsche's (1968:522) own words

...we think only in the form of language ...we cease to think when we refuse to do so under the constraint of language: we barely reach the doubt that sees these limitations. Rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme that we cannot throw off.

In essence, knowledge is social for Nietzsche precisely because it is shaped by the inherently social phenomenon of language. It is therefore not strange that he placed language at the forefront of his rhetorical theory and used its position to launch a full scale attack on logic and rationality. Language is indeed a social fact.

The benefit of this rhetorical view of language is that it takes us beyond viewing language as a reflection of reality even ultimate reality as understood in terms of traditional meta physical and idealist philosophy, and takes us to the social aspect of language which is an instrument of communication and influence on others.

The further question then becomes: What distinguishes all kinds of literary analysis (as has been done in the past on 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5) from the rhetorical interpretation of this text? According to Sloan (1975:798-799) it is the fact that in rhetorical criticism "a text must reveal its context". Accordingly a text's context means for the rhetorical critic

...the attitudinizing conventions, precepts that condition (both the writer's and the reader's) stance towards experience, knowledge, tradition, language and other people.

(Wuellner 1987:450)

As soon as rhetoric is defined in this way, it has to start looking at discourse in the light of a specific social interactional situation. Now we all know that in logic, propositions, once true in their logical frame, remain true in that frame. And in ordinary grammar-books, the usual implication has been that once a sentence is explained correct, it remains correct. With discourse the situation is much more complex because

...discourse which is effective in one situation, is completely out of place in another situation. One cannot therefore study the effectiveness of discourse without placing the discourse in a specific situation. And to view discourse against a situational background one must reckon with the people who communicate, the subject, the occasion, and the relevant cultural traditions, fashions, as well as taboos. Thus rhetoric comes to emphasize the kind of appropriateness that the Greeks called Kairos and the Romans decorum as well as the situation.

(Enkvist 1984a:16)

The subtitle of this chapter (Towards a new understanding) explains the conviction that this is possible due to a shift in paradigm that has resulted in a new look at the history and the phenomenon text and thanks to the rediscovery of rhetoric.

## NOTES:

1) See the following articles: Robert M Grant (1961:60-66); Wilhelm Wuellner (1979:177-188); Christopher Forbes (1986:1-30); Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza (1987:386-403); F. Forrester-Church (1978:17-33); H.D. Betz (1986:16-48); W. Wuellner (1986:49-77).

2) For a more detailed overview see G. Sellin (1988:2940-3044).

3) Baur made use of the arguments from Schmidt. See in this regard Baur's (1831:76).

4) Variations of Baur's hypotheses are defended by C.K. Barrett in (1963:1-12); P. Vielhauer (1974/5:34-52); Michael Goulder (1991:516-534).

5) It is interesting to note that Wuellner (1970:203) also rejected the rhetorical interpretation. According to him the "sophia concern at Christian Corinth was not inspired by people whose sophistication was qualified by sophistic rhetorical tradition".

Wilckens, on the other hand, in his article (1979:501-537) reconsidered his position with regard to 1 Cor. 2:1-16 thanks to a lively discussion and friendship with Erich Dinkler. He concedes to the claim of Dinkler that it is not possible to explain the wisdom issue in Corinth with reference to a Gnostic myth which identified the risen Christ as God's wisdom personified. The paradoxical result of Wilckens's original argument is that in those sections where Paul describes the Corinthian wisdom, one finds only Paul's derogatory and inaccurate judgement, while in the section where Paul would seem to be speaking of his own wisdom teaching, one can see the real view of the Corinthians.

Wilckens (1979:525) in his new approach, however, concedes to the claim that as far as Paul's understanding is concerned, the Corinthians do not hold a gnostic, revelatory sophia but one based on human thinking and assertions that did not claim a revelatory basis. Were the thinking represented in 2:6-16 gnostic, then Paul would be gnostic, not the Corinthians. This conclusion calls the gnostic origin of the disturbances in Corinth into question.

6) It was Schmithal's (1969:120) contention that the same gnostics John encountered was at work in Corinth. They confessed a heavenly Christ but denied the fact that He was *vere homo*. In an attempt to describe this sophia Schmithals (1969:134) came to the conclusion that it in essence rejected the cross.

7) See in this regard Conzelmann's commentary (1975).

8) Of particular importance is Koester's book in collaboration with J.M. Robinson (1971) as well as his review of U. Wilckens's book on "Weisheit und Torheit" (1961:590-5). In this review article Koester describes Christ functioning for the Corinthians, not as a revealer identified with divine

wisdom, but as an inspired mystagogue who mediates God's spirit and wisdom to the initiated, much as Moses functions for Philo. In reaction against this instrumental view of Christ, Paul presents Christ as God's wisdom in order to show Jesus' historical death as the point of deliverance for all who hear.

9) See in this regard Sellin's article in ZNW (1982:69-96). It was followed by his important book 'Der Streit um die Auferstehung der Toten. Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung von 1 Korinther 15' (1986).

10) See the following two publications of Bultmann's on this matter: (1971:21-31) and (1951:21-31).

11) Cf Mack 1973.

12) Of particular importance here is Fiorenza's article (1975:17-41).

13) Cf Jervell 1960.

14) Cf Pearson 1973.

15) Cf Windisch (1914:220-234).

16) Cf Davies (1955:147-176).

17) An exponent of this view is J. Munck (1954:127-161).

18) Cf Ellis (1974:127-161) and (1974:82-98).

19) This view was advocated by Scroggs (1967:33-55).

20) See the thought provoking work by Robinson (1971).

21) Cf Fjarstedt 1974.

22) See in this regard Hinaut (1987:282-300). In this article Hinaut agrees with the hypothesis of Richardson that the text of Matt. 11:25-26 and the source (Q) was the subject of controversy in Corinth and that Paul is actually alluding to it in his debate with Apollos.

23) Richardson wrote a very thought provoking article (1984:91-111). His hypothesis and theory amounts to the fact if Q is dated on 50 AC. Paul and Apollos were well aware of Q. As a matter of fact, Paul then made certain modifications on Q such as to emphasize the cross which is the

quintessence of the Gospel. Apollos on the other hand, adheres to Q. The difference is then of course related to the divisions within the Corinthian community.

24) For an analysis of the current state of affairs see the excellent article by Wong in *Scriptura* (1990:1-27). Cf also Louw (1990:159-172).

25) It is not the purpose of this chapter to reflect on the historical development of the New Testament Greek. The article by Wong traces these developments quite adequately.

26) See in this regard B. Siertsema (1961:1818-1826). Of course this a-linguistic view on language was not limited to the work of theologians, but also included philosophers. See also in this regard the criticisms of M. Heidegger's view on language by A.C. Thiselton (1977:303-333).

27) Louw's article (1990:159-172) mentions that despite recent developments two areas of linguistic namely discourse analysis and style/rhetoric, have had no treatment in any grammar. In this regard we must take notice of the work by J.N. Vorster who has written an excellent article (1990:107-130).

28) The fact that this issue is hardly discussed or seldom recognized as an issue proves the point that Paul's coherent strategy in 1 Cor. 1-4 is not yet fully understood. The majority of commentaries on 1 Corinthians reflect on the introduction (1 Cor. 1:1-9) and the divisions (1 Cor. 1:10-17) as two separate issues.

29) See the excellent work by Wire (1990a:40).

30) In this regard see Plank (1983:25).

31) See Vincent Branick (1982:251-269); Ellis (1978) and Bailey (1975:265-296).

32) To my mind, every New Testament scholar should take note of the important work by Thomas S. Kuhn: 'The Structures of Scientific Revolutions'. Second ed. Chicago (1970) See also W.S. Vorster (1988:31-48) as well as Combrink (1986:9-17). Both these articles are in line with the way in which Kuhn pictures developments and changes in science. Normal science (where there is a generally accepted paradigm) according to Kuhn is preceded by a pre-paradigmatic period in which different explanations are offered for one and the same problem. Keep in mind that normal science is usually characterized by agreement among scholars, but normal science can also run into trouble. It usually happens when a number of anomalies cannot be explained within the accepted paradigm. Such a crisis can only be solved by a revolution in that particular place. Such a revolution can result in a new paradigm in which normal science can again take place. Although the article by Combrink presupposes a change (paradigm shift) the publication 'A South African Perspective on the New

Testament' to which he contributed this article, still operates in a social vacuum and it actually fails to take cognisance of the shift in paradigm. See in this regard also the excellent article by P.G.R. de Villiers (1989:119-124) in which he struggles with the social vacuum in New Testament scholarship in South Africa. For an introduction to the problems surrounding New Testament exegesis and interpretation, see the articles by Lategan (1978:18-30) and (1984:1-17). In two recent article's by J.E. Botha (1991:177-203) New Testament exegesis is placed within the development of modern literary and linguistic theories.

34) Evidence of this paradigm shift is found in the more text-oriented methodologies to which I will turn in more detail in chapter two.

35) For an assessment on Structural Analysis see Greenwood 1985.

37) See in this regard the article by Fowler (1989:3-28). Fowler refrains from a definite explication of the term "postmodern", but he nevertheless refers (1989:3 note 2) to Ihab Hassan who contrasts in two parallel columns the modern with the postmodern. A few contrasts need to be mentioned:

Modernism	Postmodernism
Form	Anti form
Purpose	Play
Art/Object/Finished Work	Process/Performance/Happening
Genre/Boundary	Text/Intertext
Semantics	Rhetoric
Distance	Participation.

In this regard one could say that the interactional model indicates that New Testament science is on its way to postmodernism. This would, of course, mean that I have shifted the focus of my historical inquiries dramatically - rather than continuing to seek out what one might call the history lying behind the biblical text, I am more concerned with examining that which lies in front of the text. Edgar Mcknight (1985:xvii) also states this goal when he says "our goal is no longer a meaning behind the text which creates distance but rather a meaning in front of the text which demands involvement". This has, of course, a major influence on meaning. **Postmodernism and the interactional model indicates a shift from meaning as content to meaning as event or interaction.** According to Fowler (1989:13) this shift can be explained by the fact that "most modern biblical criticism, has been chiefly concerned with the referential axis for language. Postmodern literary criticism... swing the focus over to the rhetorical axis". This, I believe, confirms yet again the necessity of the interactional model.

38) Although Speech Act theory has been introduced sporadically into research over the past two decades, it has not yet received its due credit. Several reasons can be given for this sad state of affairs.

However, in two recent articles by J.E. Botha (1991:277-303) the absolute necessity of this theory is stressed. I have to agree with the suggestion that speech act theory presents us with the challenge of a new hermeneutical paradigm and that it indeed opens the way to a new exegesis.

39) See in this regard Foucault (1973:303-343).

## CHAPTER TWO

### TOWARDS AN INTERACTIONAL MODEL FOR THE ANALYSIS OF LETTERS<sup>1</sup>.

Anyone familiar with the frustration of trying to solve the Rubic's cube will affirm that the puzzle cannot be solved without the blocks being moved in a specific order on each of the levels. The multifaceted nature and dynamic of the cube is a good illustration of the multidimensional nature of reality. It is obvious that this observation has important consequences for the theology in general. The acceptance of the multidimensional nature of biblical texts (as part of reality) challenges one not to overexpose one dimension of the text at the expense of other valuable dimensions.

Rousseau (1988:409)

**T**he following passage from William Kurz (1987:195) has become an echo of a similar viewpoint as Rousseau's

...contemporary biblical exegesis is undergoing a paradigm shift as revolutionary as the shift to historical criticism had been. This paradigm shift is towards multi-disciplinary and more holistic approaches that supplement the most exclusive reliance on the historical-critical methods in which most of us were trained. More and more scholars are finding historical-critical methods inadequate for addressing concerns like liberation or service to the Church accounting for religious experience, or even dealing with the final state of the text .

"Views on language and approaches to languages have always played a major role in the scientific interpretation of the New Testament" (J.N. Vorster 1990:108). The theological dimension of the Bible was so overemphasised, especially in the Middle Ages, but also more recently in orthodox and fundamentalist circles, that it was seen as a timeless, heaven-produced truth which failed to take the classical metaphorical nature of the Bible into account<sup>2</sup>. "As a consequence, New Testament studies were



inclined to search for the meaning of a linguistic entity in its history or development. As a direct result linguists were so concerned with problems below and within the sentence that their findings were of limited use" (J.N. Vorster 1990:108). As such, the relationship between linguistic elements within the text became the source of information.

...What the text says was the objective to be achieved. Therefore, corresponding to views on language, analysis of the New Testament was inclined to be informational. To put it differently: analysis of the New Testament was inclined to be referential, either in an extra-linguistic or in an automatic sense.

J.N. Vorster (1990:108)

Obviously, such a view on the text and language of the New Testament worked with the presupposition that language can be isolated and studied in isolation. Rousseau (1988:460) concludes that in the history of Bible interpretation

...the past does reveal the futility of our attempts to solve the "cube" of textual communication by turning only one of the squares.

In these circumstances it might be necessary to reconsider our whole approach to the methodological issue. Lategan (1988:68) points out the fact, that despite the plethora of methods and paradigms offered in the market

we have lost sight of the real purpose of our exegetical trade. There is an urgent need to change the order of our questions. Instead of asking: "What is the best method to use?", the first question ought to be: What is the 'object' to be interpreted?" This may sound like a small difference, but unless we regain a clear understanding of the nature of the phenomenon we are trying to interpret, we will not be able to choose or develop tools which are adequate for the task.

So what is the object to be interpreted? A biblical text of course. But what is a text and how do texts mean?

## 2.1 What is a text? How do texts mean?

It is a well-known fact that the historical-critical approach considered texts as fragments and not as entireties. That explains why the phenomenon text has always been related to growth. Furthermore, one has to bear in mind that within that view

the meaning of such a text was directly related to its original author and his intentions. According to critical scholarship it is the task of the interpreters to do everything possible to determine what the original author had to say to his original readers. It was furthermore believed that this could be done after the original form had been determined in the original life setting and historical context. To prevent arbitrary interpretations, a number of steps were invented to obtain objective results in determining the intention of the author. Meaning lies in the intention of the author.

I have drawn attention to the fact that the concept of texts has undergone radical changes among text theorists<sup>3</sup>. As Ricoeur (1976a:92) puts it unmistakably:

Not the intention of the author, which is supposed to be hidden behind the text, not the historical situation common to the author and his original readers; not the expectations or feelings of these original readers, not even their understanding of themselves as historical or cultural phenomena. What has to be appropriated is the meaning of the text itself conceived in a dynamic way as the direction of thought opened up by the text.

The changes concerning literary theories (contemporary theories of text and context) follow from epistemology rather than from theory. Literary studies are not exempt from the quicksand that underlines all objectivist epistemologies. Hugo Verdaasdonk (1981:91) for one, questions objective knowledge in literary studies in a no-nonsense manner:

Research in the philosophy of science, and in cognitive psychology has shown that perceptions are anything but "direct" and infallible. In order to judge the claim that a particular textual property has "really" been perceived in the course of the reading process, we at least must know the way in which a specific conceptual framework has been applied to a text.

In the light of some of the theorists and critics who point out that epistemological frames<sup>4</sup>, their socio-cultural origins and their laws, are as fully operative in literary studies as in the rest of the humanities, the social sciences and the sciences, it is of paramount importance to examine literary theoretical epistemology.

### 2.1.1 New Criticism and the meaning of text

In the first half of the twentieth century, Anglo American literary studies were dominated by a persuasive formalism. This formalism was especially evident in New Criticism. The central epistemological premise common to all formalist studies is that of textual autonomy, whereby the text is independent of both its author and its reader. This, of course, implies textual determinacy, or the conviction that a text has a centre and an edge which are recoverable, whole and unblemished, by the skilled reader. Susan Suleiman (1980:40) discusses this phenomenon as follows:

Perhaps no single idea had as tenacious and influential a hold over the critical imagination in our century as that of textual unity or wholeness. Amidst the diversity of metaphors which critics have used to describe the literary text-as an organic whole, as a verbal icon, as a complex system of interlocking and hierarchically related "strata" - the one constant has been a belief in the text's existence as an autonomous identifiable, and unique entity: the text itself.

Beardslee (1979 :37) states unequivocally that "text is the determiner of its meaning. It has the will, not at least a way of its own". As a consequence, interpretation was forced to accept a second class status, and became an implicit expression, of worship at the shrine of the text itself.

...The autonomous work became the standard against which all interpretations were measured: It was the raw data, provided the facts of the case, the object that existed prior to and independent of any interpretation.

Chabot (1980:642)

It is not my concern to trace the origin and growth of New Criticism but merely to disclose how successful this development was. As Cain (1982:1100) rightfully observed:

It is simply that New Criticism has become institutionalized itself, but that it has gained as the institution itself. It has in a word, been transformed into criticism, the essence of what we do as teachers and critics, the ground or given upon which everything else is based.

The effect on literary and text studies was disastrous as

...metacritical speculation shut down: theorists were replaced by technicians whose job it was to keep the machine running. The epistemological coup enabled critics to perform spectacular textual biopsy, quite unconcerned by the tenuousness underpinning their studies (Chabot 1980:642).

### 2.1.2 Text and Reading Theory

The locus from which anti-objectivist text theorists derived their impetus stemmed from an examination of how readers read, which in turn has implications for the epistemological status of what they read. Clearly many of them draw weapons from the Derridean armoury: the assault on logocentrism involves an assault on determinate textuality. However, the primary focus among the theorists is not Derridean. Rather, common to all of these studies, is the attempt to show that the communication process is not simply a channel of information, but it is also constitutive of meaning. With the introduction of the role of the reader in the process of interpretation and the idea of, as well as, interaction between reader and text, the reader's contribution to the meaning of the text, the situation has changed. As Kuenzli (quoted by Ryan 1985:20) maintains:

Paying attention to the reader is therefore often regarded as a subversive activity which re-opens Pandora's box and undermines our hard-earned "certainties" concerning literary texts. Indeed, a reader oriented theory exposes our "objective" analysis as sophisticated "subjective" readings.

Perhaps it is therefore appropriate to begin with Wolfgang Iser and reception theory. Iser encountered the shift away from objectivist epistemologies in the works of Heidegger and Gadamer. For both, reading is not a passive absorption, or simply a recovery or codified meaning. In his "Being and Time" Heidegger insists that an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us. Gadamer in "Truth and Method" suggests that prejudice (any interplay of psychological and sociological forces) does not simply hinder a clear apprehension of a text's meaning, but conditions and makes possible an understanding of the text:

What is necessary is a fundamental rehabilitation of the concept of prejudice and a recognition of the fact that there are legitimate prejudices if we want to justify to man's infinite, historical mode of being.

Gadamer (1975:246)

### Excursus:

There is of course a close connection between Heidegger, Bultmann and Gadamer. In the first instance each of these thinkers stands as a towering figure in his own right, who has had an enormous influence on twentieth century thought. Second, and even more important, all of them are concerned with philosophy as philosophical description. Keep in mind that Heidegger dedicated "Being and Time" to Husserl, the founder of modern phenomenology. Within the circles of phenomenology, the inquirer refrains from projecting a prior understanding onto facts, but lets things appear as they are. According to Heidegger the aim is to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself. In other words, he recognizes that man can only interpret the world as he sees it from within his given situation in life. Man can investigate Being (*Sein*) only if he begins with *Dasein*, the concrete, human "I". The implication being that *Dasein* does not have a viewpoint outside history. Heidegger therefore insists that an interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us.

Bultmann followed Heidegger in asserting that our relationship to history is wholly different from our relationship to nature. Man, if he rightly understands himself, differentiates himself from nature, because when he observes nature, he perceives there something objective, which is not himself. However, when he turns his attention to history, he must admit himself to be part of history. In other words, he is considering a living complex of events in which he is essentially involved. Bultmann, in his exposition of the concept *Vorverständnis*, realizes that man cannot observe history objectively, because in every word which he says about history he is saying at the same time something about himself.

Gadamer also departed from Descartes's theory of knowledge, in which man as active subject looks out on the world as passive object. Gadamer focuses on the fact that the actual situation in which human understanding takes place is always an understanding through language within a tradition. Understanding for Gadamer, is not so much the action of one's subjectivity, but the placing of oneself within a process of tradition in which past and present are constantly fused. According to Gadamer, the interpreter must seek to be aware of his pre-judgements and control his own pre-understanding thereby avoiding naive objectivism. The consequence of this in Gadamer's (1975:263) own words is "that every age has to understand a transmitted text in its own way, for the text is part of the whole tradition in which the age ...seeks to understand itself". We cannot leave the present to go back into the past and to view the text solely on its own terms. The very meaning which the text has for us is partly shaped by our own place in a tradition which reaches the present.

These three scholars led the way from the Cartesian perspective according to which man, as active subject, scrutinizes the things around him as passive objects.

In "The Implied Reader" Iser (1974:xii) departed with these epistemological models at his disposal and made it clear that the term implied reader

...incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process<sup>5</sup>.

The implied reader relies on the prior concept of indeterminacy, for the concept allows Iser to cause a breach in the edge of the text, a bleeding off that does not destroy the text in favour of its readers, but allows for a degree of contamination by the reader. Iser (1971:42) also proclaims that "the repairs of indeterminacy gives rise to the generation of meaning".

The introduction of reception theories into New Testament studies also gave a new impetus to the analysis of texts and brought to fore the concept of the reader, and his creative contribution to the communication of text. Although one may have the impression of complete relativism due to the creative role attributed to the reader, it must be remembered that the author is actually a textual strategy and the model reader is in reality a set of felicity conditions (Eco 1979:11).

Although the role of the reader is to be textually defined, the extratextual context of a text is just as important. In the tradition of de Saussure we see the meaning of an autonomous text as the relation between the sign and reality (the so called pragmatics). Pragmatics, in the case of biblical texts, recognizes the texts were written with a view to a specific community in which faith played an important role, a community living in a specific time and setting, determined by specific religious and social sub-codes<sup>6</sup>.

This is exactly the point Stanley Fish tries to make in the reader power theory. According to Fish (1980:276-277) one can never be free of apriori assumptions<sup>7</sup>, which in turn entail the impossibility of objective knowledge:

Because we are never not in a situation, we are never not in the act of interpreting. Because we are never not in the act of interpreting, there is no possibility of reaching a level of meaning beyond or below interpretation. But in every situation some or other meaning will appear to us to be uninterpreted because it is isomorphic with the

interpretive structure the situation (and therefore our perception) already has.

Fish (1980:365) also turns the notion of truth around by suggesting that if truth is always dependent on its context, then that truth must be true in that context. The fact that a standard of truth is never available independently of a set of beliefs does not mean that we can never know for certain what is true because we are always in the grip of some belief or other.

By de-objectifying the word, Fish is not implying that there is no truth and that all ideas are equal. As a matter of fact, he restores truth to a position of ultimate authority without giving it back its objecthood, by means of the concept of the interpretive community.

...if the self is conceived of not as an independent entity but as a social construct whose operations are delimited by the systems of intelligibility that inform it, then the meanings it confers on texts are not its own but have their source in the interpretive community (or communities) of which it is a function.

(Fish 1980:335)

According to Fish (1980:14) an interpretive community is not objective because as a bundle of interests, of particular purpose and goals, its perspective is interested *rather than neutral: but by the very same reasoning, the meanings and texts produced by an interpretive community are not subjective because they do not proceed from an isolated individual but from a public and conventional point of view.*

*In summary, Fish objects to objectivism, as being a naive oversimplification. Interpretations can never be intrinsically valid, but they can be valid within an interpretive community, that is within a set of assumptions. An accepted interpretation is a valid interpretation, and acceptance entails ensuring that the interpretation and the assumptions of the interpretive community are congruent. Investigative study of how specific communities are constituted and how they operate, might have the effect of making critics aware of what they are doing when they interpret.*

### 2.1.3 Deconstruction and the meaning of a text

The shift from a historical approach to that of more text-oriented methodologies is

also evident in deconstruction. When we are dealing with deconstruction and reception theory and other related theories, we are moving beyond the historical-critical and structural approaches to that of the post-structural literary theory, where the act of reading that "creates a radically new text... becomes an active process of attributing meaning" (W.S. Vorster 1989:59).

Deconstruction started in the 1960's when a stir was caused in Anglo-American philosophy, the social sciences and humanities by a number of French thinkers. Their writings gave rise to the phenomenon of post-structuralism. Deconstruction represents a further and radical development of post-structuralism. Clearly Ferdinand de Saussure had been co-opted as a kind of forerunner because of his insistence on the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign<sup>8</sup>. Any examination of deconstruction must, however, begin with Jacques Derrida. In "Writing and Difference" (1978:292), Derrida confronts the notion of interpretation:

There are thus two interpretations of structure, of sign of play. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of sign, and which lives the necessity of interpretation as an exile. The other, which is no longer turned towards the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name of man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of onto theology - in other words throughout his entire history - has dreamed of full presence the reassuring foundation, the origin and end of play.

Language cannot be seen as a subservient, secondary scheme for the useful arrangement of reality. Instead, the text should be seen as self reflexive and self contained invoking only itself. Language is no longer a convenient window, opening onto a suitable arranged reality, or any reality at all, other than the "truth" that these marks on paper actually are.

In Derrida's strategy the term "presence" is of paramount importance. Structuralism erroneously elevates the word as a source of recoverable meaning. This causes the inflation of the sign itself (Derrida 1976:6), or the elevation of the sign to a state of absolute presence. According to Derrida this structuralist urge can be traced to a more basic urge, central to the entire Western tradition, to posit a central presence<sup>9</sup>. According to Derrida meaning cannot be enclosed within the sign. There is a breach in every such enclosure, since the enclosed per definition requires reference to that which is not enclosed. The centre thus relies on the non-central. Perhaps Vincent Leech (1983:38) provides the best account of what Derrida represents:



As prophet, Derrida presents to us deconstructive man - who accepts in joy, and affirmation the play of the world and the innocence of becoming, who affirms the world of signs and the activity of interpretation, who neither pesters the world for truth nor indulges the dream of origins, traces around the centre the free play of signifiers and the tendential productions of structure who writes off man and humanism, who denounces the old logocentric wizardry and passes joyously beyond.

The implications of text theory and literary studies are the following: the concept of the author-father in command of his progeny disappears. The author does not create meaning because a meaning is never present, and has to be sought beyond the text. The absence of the father-author, a controlled polysemy, or a means of suggesting that one text is separable from another, renders the text at least fluid:

There is no present text in general and there is not even a past present text, a text which is past as having been present. The text is not thinkable in an ordinary or modified form of the presence

(Derrida 1978:210)

This is not to say that the reader creates the text, (otherwise what functions do these marks on the page have?), but that he realizes it, or, rather that he realizes a multiplicity of texts as difference and starts its inevitable progress through the textual web. Reading is an interactive process: while the reader exercises his freedom, the text imposes its constraints. It follows that the text is incorrigibly plural, not unitary: "architectonic" to borrow a word from Barthes. The only manner in which literary study may have Derridean validity is via the study of intertextuality. Clear text and reader of text divisions become nonsensical, since if we are to approach a text, it must have an edge, which is impossible. According to Derrida (1979:83) a text is

...no longer a finished corpus of writing some concept enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity, but rather making them more complex, dividing and multiplying strokes and lines) - all the limits, everything that was to be set up in opposition to writing (speech, life, the world, the real, history and

what not, every field of reference - to body or mind conscious or unconscious, politics, economics and so forth).

Leitch (1983:118) also addresses the problems of how one should regard the text. According to him

...texts are strings of differential traces. Sequences of floating signifiers. Sets of infiltrated signs dragging along ultimately indecipherable intertextual elements. What about the truth of the text? The random flights of signifiers across the textual surface, the disseminations of meanings, offer truth under one condition: that the chaotic processes of textuality be willfully regulated, controlled or stopped... truth is not an entity or property of the text. No text utters its truth: the truth lies elsewhere - in a reading. Constitutionally, reading is misreading. Deconstruction works to deregulate controlled dissemination and celebrate misreading.

Since texts are texts about texts within a total network, the idea of the origin and the centre of texts, which are so important in predeconstructionalist thought, is totally undermined. Texts do not have meaning because they are structured, but because they are related to other texts and their meanings in a network of intertextuality. The meaning of a text is the result of similarities and differences between other texts. The source of the meaning of text is therefore not the mind of the author, the reality outside the text: texts are their own source of meaning. Deconstruction represents a new paradigm and a new epistemology of the phenomenon "text". All these considerations eventually lead to the notion of intertext. Derrida's notorious statement "there is nothing outside the text" (1976:158) does not imply that nothing exists except the text, but that everything is relevant to reading, to textual analysis, including the context, is contained within the intertext (or as he calls it "le texte generale"). The text is thus no longer regarded as an object, but as a process: it exists in the activity of production.

These considerations lead to another development concerning text theory: the so-called script or frame theory.

## 2.2 Frames of understanding

In recent years two developments in text theory have opened up the possibility of bridging the gap between synchronic semantics and what is usually called

'Traditions-Geschichte' (Breytenbach 1991:1). But what is the so-called script or frame theory?

According to Eco, Violi and Santambrogio (1988:12) frame theory originated on philosophical and psychological grounds and embody a view of how people understand and recognize word meanings and natural categories. The philosophy, according to Schank and Kass (1988:182), that has guided the investigation into frames or scripts can be summed up in the following propositions:

- i) The function of language is to communicate concepts between people,
- ii) therefore, in order to understand language one must be prepared to understand the underlying concepts represented by that language.

It is often also regarded as an extension of one of Gestalt theory's most fundamental insights, namely that perceptual recognition is the result of an interaction between environmental inputs and active principles in the mind that impose structure on them.

What is this so-called script or frame theory?

### **2.2.1 The role of scripts in understanding**

It is a well-known fact that people generally regards simple reading skills as commonplace and therefore unimpressive. It is much easier to be impressed by a skillfully played chess game since few people have a facility for chess. Researchers in natural language processing, however, have considerable respect for human cognition involved in language skills.

W.G. Lehnert (1980:79) has already stated:

At the present time there are no computer programs that can simulate the language abilities of a three-year-old. Furthermore, there is an excellent chance that we see a computerized conversationalist with the competence of a three-year-old<sup>10</sup>. The answer is simple: the cognition involved in language skills is inexorably bound up with the organisation of information in human memory and with human thought processes. The pervasiveness of the connection is by no means obvious or undisputed. A majority of linguists persist in denying any such connection for fear their discipline will fall into the clutches of cognitive psychology.

There is no way we can deny this connection between human memory and human thought. People use memory in order to make sense of each new sentence. In the following three sentences, for instance, we have three different senses of the word "seal"

1. John goes to the zoo because he is fond of the seal.
2. John opened his bottle of prunes soaked in port, but he noticed that the seal was broken.
3. The king sent for his seal at the end of the proclamation bill.

People are able to arrive effortlessly at the proper sense of words which are spontaneously ambiguous. The cognitive process which enables us to interpret this word in three different ways, in three different situations, is dependent on the previous context in each case. Finding the right word sense of "seal" in "the king sent for his seal at the end of the proclamation bill" relies on the knowledge about royal documents. Lehnert (1980:83) therefore draws the following logical conclusion:

...the key issue behind all these problems is one of epistemology. What kinds of knowledge do people have? How is this knowledge organized in memory? What are the memory process that access and manipulate this knowledge?

The answer to how the organization of human memory takes place, leads us directly to the notion of scripts.

The notion of a script was first introduced by Roger Schank and Roger Abelson at the Fourth International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in 1975. At the same time Marvin Minsky delivered a paper on 'A framework for representing knowledge' in which he explains how a system of frames can be used to encode necessary knowledge about the world of problems in artificial intelligence<sup>11</sup>. It is clear from this paper that Minsky is advocating a strategy for expectation - driven information processing in which particular situations are interpreted in terms of generalized expectation. On this level we can safely say that scripts are one type of frame: they are frames designed for specific task of natural language processing. But what is a script?

### 2.2.2 What is a script?

In each culture there are a number of stereotyped situations in which human behaviour is highly predictable and narrowly defined.

Behaviour in these situations is often described in terms of cultural conventions. These conventions are learned in childhood, adhered to throughout one's life and rarely questioned or analyzed. "Scripts describe those conventional situations that are defined by a highly stereotypic sequence of events" (Lehnert 1980:85).

South Africans, for instance, have a very simple script for a barbecue:

- 1) Stack your wood and paper meticulously.
- 2) Light the fire, and wait until there are only coals left.
- 3) Barbecue your meat.

Most people have never questioned this script or considered whether there might be a better way. In Argentina, people learn a slightly different script for preparing a barbecue:

- 1) Dig a hole in the ground and start a fire in it.
- 2) Remove all the coals from the hole and bury your meat which is covered by cloth.
- 3) Barbecue your meat.

People are usually unconscious of their conventions until they are confronted by different ones. Given these two different conventions, we can look for reasons why one is either superior or inferior to the other. But when we acquire a cultural script we rarely question it: it is merely the way the world works. Lehnert (1980:86) is quite correct in pointing out that

...most scripts are required in childhood either through direct experience or by vicarious observation. Many people have scripts for gunfights, bank robberies, and airplane hijackings, in spite of the fact that they have never been directly involved in such episodes. Movies, books and television have contributed significantly to vicarious script acquisition. These scripts are general in the sense that a large population share stereotypic knowledge of such situations.

The scripts that are important for natural language processing are those shaped by a large population as a cultural norm. When such a script is shared by many people,

that script can be referenced very efficiently. Lehnert (1980:86) illustrates this with the following example: If a friend mentions that he went out to a restaurant, you will not interpret this to mean that he simply moved himself into the proximity of a restaurant. His statement is normally interpreted to mean that the entire restaurant script was executed. That is, he went into a restaurant, decided what he wanted to eat, made his choice known to an appropriate employee, the order was conveyed to a cook, who prepared the meal, the meal was served, eaten, a check was received, paid, and he left the restaurant. This entire inference chain is conveyed by saying "I went to a restaurant."

Most important is that scripts are used by people both behaviourally and cognitively. The behavioural aspect of script application occur when people are actually in a scriptural situation and they behave in a manner appropriate to that script. The cognitive aspect of script application occurs when people are processing language, and must generate inferences about what is being said on the basis of their scriptural knowledge.

By this time it is clear that the text base is interpreted against the background of scripts. These scripts are stored in the longterm memory and are activated during the process of reading by the expressions in the text. Breytenbach (1990:257) points out that this is important for exegesis:

The way in which we frame the numerous details historical research has accumulated influences us when we read early Christian documents. How predominant such frames can be, is illustrated by the change in the way in which scholars tend to interpret soteriological texts since Colpe (1961) demolished the myth about the gnostic saviour myth or since Neusner (1971) and Saldarini (1988) destroyed the identification of pre-70 Pharisaism with later rabbinic Judaism.

The importance this has for exegesis is further illustrated by Breytenbach (1990:257) when he explains terminology as a window on tradition:

Theoretically I mean that the words, the expressions forming the explicit textbase are the window through which we have to look to recognize parts of those frames which suit the text. However, when we look further and discover the whole "frame", when we have an equivalent of that frame that the writer had in mind, only then can we hope to interpret the text adequately. But how are we to discover the

frame when only part of it is expressed in the text? Frames are not explicated in the text itself. They are presupposed. They were part of the common knowledge of ancient society. We store out knowledge about events like "going shopping" or "using the library", about places like "airports" and "lecture rooms" as structured "frames" or "scripts" in our LTM.

What we have in mind influences our process of understanding when reading about these events or situations. Writers normally presuppose this type of knowledge it forms part of the implicit text.

In summary, "script theory provides a classical illustration of how understanding can be achieved by accessing previously established knowledge. Text interpretation is a process in which the exegete reads the text in the light of what he or she has in mind. I am, however, not inferring that the explicit textbase could not control this process. But when reading texts which originated within first century hellenistic Judaism, the exegete must be familiar with the frames that were presupposed by the writer. If we want to read out texts synchronically, we must take up the task of historical research in order to find the right frame" (Breytenbach 1990:257-258).

Breytenbach (1990:258) is therefore quite correct when stating that text-imminent semantic approaches which interpret the text only in terms of the discourse world reconstructed on the basis of the explicit textbase may be a starting point. They are, however, inadequate in the sense that they are not synchronic but achronic.

### 2.3 Towards an Interactional Model

I have looked at a few developments concerning text theory. By way of summary one might characterize them as follows.

The first text linguists tried to describe the cohesive ties that cement sentences into texts, often by extending traditional grammatical methods. Enkvist (1985a:23) refers to this text theory as the **sentence-based theory**, because it could not manipulate or alter the sentence division of the text. Sentence-based text theorists thus accepted a text as it is, without tampering with its clauses and sentences, and then tried to reveal the features that linked clauses and sentences to each other.

Those with an inquisitive mind soon asked where sentences come from and why they are formed as they are, and not in some other way. They will not be satisfied with a

sentence-based text theory which fails to accommodate such questions. They will go on to build text models which start from some kind of text atoms, the basic text units which are then combined into texts according to definite, explicit strategies. Enkvist (1985a:23) refers to these theories as **predication text theory**.

The question, where do predications, and thus also texts and sentences come from could not, however, be answered with sentence-based or predication-based text models. For this, a third kind of theory, a cognitive one, was indicated by Minsky and Lehnert. They model information storage in the form of frames or scripts.

There is yet another question: Why does a certain person in a certain situation choose to extract certain definite predications for textualization? Why does a certain person in a certain situation choose to express himself or herself, in a certain way? In this textualization, what politeness devices does he or she opt for and why? Enkvist (1985b:263) pointed out that

...to answer questions of this type, the sentence-based, predication-based and cognitive models will not suffice. We shall need a fourth type of text model that we might call interactional. Interactional models show how people behave, and perhaps to some extent why. When a person has opted for a specific interactional strategy he can start extracting things to say from his cognitive store, as modelled by cognitive models; he can textualize his predications, as shown by the predication-based models; and he link his clauses and sentences to each other in ways suggested by sentence-based text models.

In the interactional model we are thus looking for a model that has to account for the historical, structural and theological or contextual aspects of the text. At the core of this model lies the presupposition that the understanding of a biblical text is essentially part of human communication in its widest sense. The interactional model, in which communication is said to occur whenever we create meaning from our interaction with the world draws all human activity into the sphere of human communication.

Within this proposed model the meaning of a sentence does not reside only in the relationships of linguistic elements to one another, but rather in the interaction of speech situation and linguistic elements<sup>12</sup>. The question on which this study is focused is not what a sentence means or says, but why a particular utterance is appropriate to the context and not any other, or what this utterance does within the context.



### 2.3.1 Basic Assumptions

If our focus is on why a particular utterance is appropriate to the context, or what this utterance does within the context, we clearly need a model that corresponds with this shift from viewing language as informational to viewing language as interactional. We also need a model that is conscious of the fact that the interaction between context and situation is influenced by various factors. An utterance is always uttered by a speaker and always addressed to someone, even if that be the 'self'. But the moment we introduce people as constituents of meaning, social values and psychological attitudes contribute to the creation of meaning. The model must therefore also be interdisciplinary and strategical.

#### 2.3.1.1 What is a model?

The concept of the model is an important instrument for procuring and processing research data in the social sciences. There are, however, different definitions of what is understood by a model. According to Carney (1975:9) the key characteristic of a model

...is that it is, before all else, a speculative instrument. It may take the form of a descriptive outline, or it may be an inductive - even deductive generalisation.

But whatever it is, it is first and foremost a framework of reference, consciously used as such, to enable us to cope with the complex data ...Each model presents an alternative view of reality. Indeed, the whole purpose of employing a model may be to check whether the novel view of reality which it provides adds to our understanding of that reality.

Malina (1983:231) has offered the following definition: "It is an abstract, simplified representation of some real world object, event, or interaction constructed for the purpose of understanding, control, or prediction". According to Gilbert (1981:3) a model is "a theory or set of hypotheses which attempts to explain the connections and interrelationships between social phenomena. Models are made up of concepts and relationships between concepts". Models are part of our everyday existence

...models themselves come in different sorts and sizes and dot the scenery of everyday life, from the maps in our glove compartment and globes in our studies, to the mannequins and toy trains in our department stores, to the scale model of art and architecture, to the

experimental and analytical models employed in the various fields of science.

Thus models can range in size, complexity, and degree of abstraction from concrete scale models to highly abstract conceptual or theoretical models.

(Elliot 1986:3-4)

For the purpose of this study, it is important to differentiate between models on the one hand, as well as theories and paradigms. A theory is based on axiomatic laws and general principals. According to Carney (1975:8) a theory

...is a basic proposition through which a variety of observations of statements become explicable. A model, by way of contrast, acts as a link between theories and observations.

A model will employ one or more theories to provide a simplified (or an experimental or a generalized or an explanatory) framework which can be brought to bear on some pertinent data. Models are thus stepping stones upon which theories are built.

According to Thomas Kuhn (1970:V111) paradigms "are universally recognised achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners". It is clear that paradigms refer to the presuppositions and methods and models underlining a discipline as a whole.

According to Elliot (1986:6) all human beings, on the basis of their personal experience and diverse sources of knowledge, have certain perceptions of and general theories concerning the nature, structure and meaning of social reality. The purpose of models in the social sciences is to explicitly express these theories and test their validity. Basic to all that has been said about models is thus the conception of a model as a tool or speculative instrument

...models are consciously structured and systematically arranged in order to serve as a speculative instrument for the purpose of organizing, profiling, and interpreting a complex welter of detail.

(Elliot 1986:5)

It should further be borne in mind that models are highly selective, obscuring the idiosyncratic peculiarities of the phenomenon under consideration and thereby highlighting its fundamental characteristics (Carney 1975:8-9). Because of this need to be selective, a model can be an approximation of reality, and needs to be

constantly modified by the very insight it generates. Gilbert (1981:4) explicitly warns against jumping to the conclusion that a model is a correct representation of the 'real world' on the basis of the discovery of structural correspondence between the relationship posited in the model and relationship discovered in the data. Gilbert is further convinced that a model can only provide a partial explanation of any data since every model is a simplified representation of the real world. Furthermore, Gilbert (1981:4) argues that once the researcher has constructed a suitable model it can be said that he locates it in an imaginary world. This world is identical in all respects to the general world except that the imaginary world includes the relationships specified in the model. Thus, the imaginary world is the world which would exist if the model were true. When the imaginary world is compared to the real world and the two are indistinguishable, there is more than enough reason for concluding that the model is correct and, if the two differ it proves that the model is incorrect (Gilbert 1981:5).

In itself that will be the test of the model whether it is indistinguishable from the real world.

#### **2.3.1.2 Why an interactional model?**

In this whole methodological issue and subsequently also in the shift from viewing language as informational to language as interactional, it is of great importance to stress again the frequently quoted words of de Saussure "Language is a social fact". It is also a well known fact that in the development of the child as a social being, language has the central role. Language is the main channel through which the patterns of living are transmitted to him, through which he learns to act as a member of a society<sup>13</sup>. This happens indirectly through the accumulated experience of numerous small events in which his behaviour is guided and controlled. All this takes place through the medium of language. It might seem that one could hardly begin to consider language at all without taking account of humans as social beings, since language is the means whereby people interact.

The renewed interest in language as a social fact and socio-linguistics go hand in hand with the shift that was indicated from viewing language in terms of processes and not only in terms of structure, but also from the shift from viewing language as informational to viewing language as interactional. In these shifts restore the performative and functional side of language. In putting language into the context of language and social man one is taking up all the options that are open for relating language to other fields of enquiry. One should recognize the fact that language and

society is a unified conception that needs to be understood and investigated as a whole<sup>14</sup>.

Neither of these exists without the other: there can be no social man without language, and no language without the social man.

(Halliday 1978:12)

This functional view of language further endorses the need for an interactional model. Once you are interested in what language can do or rather in what the speaker can do with it, in other words, you try to explain the nature of language and its internal organization the interactional model is of the essence. Biblical interpretation as interaction is indeed a mode of operation in which text and reader are in correlation and interact.

What are the implications for the underlying methodological question? The intention thus far in our study has been to motivate a switch from viewing language exclusively in terms of structure to viewing language as a process. I have also indicated the need for a similar switch from language as informational to viewing language as **FUNCTIONAL, PERFORMATIVE AND INTERACTIONAL**. In essence, I claim that grammar (formal system of language) and pragmatics are complementary domain within linguistics. We cannot understand the nature of language without studying both these domains, and the interaction between them. J.N. Vorster (1990:111) makes it clear that it is

...exactly at this point where exegetes of New Testament letters sin by analysing the letter of the New Testament only as sources of information. The letters of the New Testament are studied as sources which could provide us with information either concerning the historical reality from which it originated or with information concerning the 'theology' of an author. Either way a referential analysis dominates. When this happens the communicative force (illocutionary force) of the letter is overlooked.

Having sketched why we need an interactional model, we shall now present an outline of its basic assumptions.

### 2.3.2 Major Assumptions

When looking back at the reasons why an interactional model is needed it is clear that more clarity is needed concerning the distinction between semantics and

pragmatics. The old problem of distinguishing language (langue) and language usage (parole) has centered on a boundary dispute between semantics and pragmatics.

Although both fields are concerned with meaning, the difference between them can be traced to different uses of the verb to mean, namely (a) What does A mean? and (b) What did you mean by A? When following the distinction of traditionalists, semantics deals with meaning as in (a) and pragmatics deals with meaning as in (b). The consequence of such a distinction is obvious:

Thus meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language, whereas meaning in semantics is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers or hearers.

(Leech 1983:6)

This view that semantics and pragmatics are distinct leads in practice to views where one notices a preference of a semantic type to a pragmatic one, or vice versa. There are numerous examples. In the philosophy of language, for example, there are philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle, who have been sceptical of traditional approaches, and who have in some way or other assimilated semantics to pragmatics<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, there has been an effort in generative pragmatics to assimilate pragmatics to semantics. In this way the pragmatic force of an utterance is sublimated by its semantic structure. There is, of course, a way out of these two extremities, namely interaction and complementarism between pragmatics and semantics. Any account of meaning in language must be faithful to the fact as we observe them, and must be as simple as possible. If we approach meaning either from an exclusive pragmatic or semantic point of view, these requirements are not met. These requirements are, however, met in a model that was developed by Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) in "Strategies of Discourse Comprehension". Within this model the complementarism between semantics and pragmatics is achieved by recognizing that the social dimensions of discourse interact with the cognitive dimensions.

In the chosen model there are two major assumptions.

#### 2.3.2.1 Cognitive Assumptions

(1) Suppose someone witnesses a murder. Such a person will construct a mental representation of the murder. Let's suppose that another person hears a story about

the murder. "We might then presume that understanding such a story also involves the construction of a mental representation. Of course these representations will not be identical" (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:5). However, the common characteristic in both cognitive processes is that both these persons constructed a representation in memory on the basis of the visual and linguistic data. This constitutes the constructive assumption of the model.

(2) Our next assumption is that both these persons do not merely represent the visual and verbal data but an interpretation of the events. The events are interpreted as a murder, and a story about a murder. This constitutes the interpretive assumption of the model (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:5).

(3) we can also assume that persons who are able to construct a mental representation can do so only if they have more general knowledge about such events.

In order to interpret such an event as a murder, they must know something about murders and the events that surrounded them. In addition to this knowledge, the witness and the listener may have other cognitive information, such as beliefs, opinions or attitudes regarding such events. "One can therefore assume that understanding involves not only the processing and interpretation of data, but also the activation and use of internal, cognitive, information" (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:6). It is this internal, cognitive information that correspond with the notion of scripts that was introduced earlier. We will call this the presuppositional assumption of the model.

(4) Murders and stories cannot be observed and understood in a vacuum, but form part of a more complex situation and context. Understanding them also means that the person uses and constructs information about relationships between events and their situation. In other words, the understander now has three kinds of data, namely information from the events, information of the situation or context and information from the cognitive presuppositions. This information is then combined in an effective way to present a mental representation of the event as soon as possible and as well as possible. We will call this the strategic assumption of the model (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:6).

### 2.3.2.2 Contextual Assumptions

Since grammar and pragmatics are two complementary domains within linguistics, the first contextual assumption, which we will call the functional assumption, is that the social dimensions of discourse interact with the cognitive ones. In other words, the cognitive model should also provide for the fact that discourse, and hence the process of understanding a discourse, is functional in the social context. According to Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983:7) the cognitive implication of this assumption is that

language users construct a presentation not only of the text but also of the social context, and these two representations interact.

Secondly, we can also assume that intentions are involved in discourse. In discourse we deal not only with linguistic objects, but also with the result of some form of social action. When, for instance, a speaker is telling a story he or she will engage in a speech act. The form and interpretation of the story may be a function of the intended speech act. We will call this the pragmatic assumption of the model. The cognitive implication of this assumption is that a person who interprets a story will also construct a representation of the possible speech act involved, by assigning a specific function or action category to the discourse utterance, and hence to the speakers (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:7).

Our third assumption is that the interpretation of a discourse as a specific speech act is embedded within an interpretation of the whole interaction process taking place between the speech participants. We will call this the interactional assumption of our model. In other words we assume that language users construct a cognitive representation of the verbal and nonverbal interaction taking place in the situation. According to Dormeyer(1990:57) the individual readers, the discourse or text and the circle of readers are factors of a triangular relationship. None of the factors dominates as a subject. There is a constant change in the subject-object relationship, a permanent interaction. In other words either the text in its structure and intention rules the interpretation, or the individual reader and circle of readers function as subjects and find their experiences and intention back in the text.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that the interaction in which the processing of discourse is embedded is itself part of a social situation (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:7). The speech participants may have certain functions or roles; there may be differences in location or setting; there may be specific rules, conventions, rhetorical strategies governing possible interaction in such a situation. One cannot just say anything in a given situation. Possible actions and discourses are constrained by the various dimensions of the situation. The accident story may be told at a braai, or perhaps to a friend, but would not be a permissible speech during an exam. In other words, the function of the story will be determined by the situation. Hence we have a situational assumption.

In conclusion: These assumptions have proved beyond doubt that our model is capable of complying with the switch from language as informational to viewing language as functional, performative and interactional. Understanding is no longer

a mere passive construction of a representation of a verbal object, but part of an interactive process in which a listener interprets, actively the actions of a speaker.

## 2.4 An Overview of the Model

### 2.4.1 Introduction

Let it be said from the start that models of language and language use usually account for linguistic objects in terms of the levels of morphology syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The major assumption of this model is that the information of these different levels interacts in an intricate way. Our model

...is not level oriented but complexity oriented: We go from the understanding of words, to the understanding of clauses in which these words have various functions, and then to complex sentences, sequences of sentences and overall textual structures. This means that instead of a conventional structural model of processing, we operate with a strategic model.

(Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:10)

### Excursus:

Let me for a moment reflect on the phrase "our model". Of course the reference is made with regard to the model of Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983:10).

First of all our model is an **interactional** model. It was chosen as a model because of what Van Dijk and Kintsch called a complementarism and interaction between on the one hand semantics and pragmatics and on the other hand between the social and cognitive dimensions of discourse. The choice of an interactional were also made as a direct result of a paradigm shift that has taken place (cf p14). The shift in paradigm and my choice for an interactional model were in a sense the result of quantum theory, because quantum theory has shown that subatomic particles are not isolated grains of matter but are probability patterns, interconnections in an inseparable cosmic web. In modern physics the image of the universe as a machine has been transcended by a view of it as one indivisible dynamic whole whose parts are interrelated. This has given further impetus to the search for an interactional model.

Keep in mind, secondly, that this is a **interactional model** and that a model is a heuristic instrument which may even take the form of a descriptive outline. The ultimate aim of this model is to guide us in getting a grasp on text and context. Of course one must realize that every model needs to be constantly modified by the insight it generates.



This constant modification of the model also applies to the model of Van Dijk and Kintsch. Let it be said again that the major assumption of the model of Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983:10) is that the information in terms of the levels of morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics interacts in an intricate way. Now the original model were modified and broadened - even enriched with regard to the way in which the different levels interact. The interaction between syntax and semantics and especially the sentence strategies were modified through the use of speech acts and sentence pragmatics (cf. 2.4.2 and 3.1). Why? Because these two theories have opened the possibility of a more functional approach to sentences which in the end could enhance the communicative force of an argument.

Another adaption and broadening took place with regard to the interaction between semantics and pragmatics on discourse level. The intricate interaction between semantics and pragmatics (cf. 2.4.3 and 3.2) was enriched by means of the insights from classical rhetoric and the New Rhetoric. Why? Both these theories have succeeded in underlining the argumentative force of an utterance or argument which in the end could enhance the playful and powerful aspects of discourse.

These adaptations are reconcilable with the model of Van Dijk and Kintsch and will eventually illustrate the profound truth of the quantum world namely, a togetherness and inseparability which provides a powerful image of holistic solidarity between text and context.

This notion of strategy within the interactional model will need our attention.

Although the term has been borrowed from military science where it is used to denote the organization of military actions to reach a particular military goal, its concern is not merely with reaching a goal, but with reaching it in some optimal way, e.g. quickly, effectively, in the most cost effective way. According to Van Dijk (1983:62) strategy involves human action, that is goal-oriented, intentional, conscious and controlled behaviour. In terms of our study we could assume that Paul's strategy with regard to the Corinthians, is that there should be no divisions amongst them and that they should have only one thought and purpose. In a more detailed manner, it should be noted that:

#### 1) Strategies have consequences

Strategies bring about results. The aim of the strategy is to bring about some desired goal: a state or event that is a consequence of the strategy. The consequences of Paul's intended strategy are worked out with regard to the factions in the church, their so-called wisdom, sexual morality and family life, the relation

between christians and pagans, order within the church and community of believers, with regard to the women prophets as well as the offering for the christians in Judea.

2) Strategies are complex

In other words we do something, or a number of things in order to achieve a certain result. The complex nature of Paul's strategy in 1 Cor. is clearly reflected in research (See Chapter 1 in this regard).

3) There is a difference between a plan and a strategy

A plan is merely a global representation of an action, for example, travelling by car to Cape Town. "A strategy, however, is a global mental representation of a style. In other words it is a way of executing this global action in the most cost effective way" (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:65). If the plan consists of travelling by car to Cape Town, it could be part of an action for the most effective strategy of accomplishing the global action. A strategy is merely a global instruction for each necessary choice to be made along the path of action i.e. whatever happens, always choose the most effective and fastest option. If we assume that Paul's strategy is that the Corinthians should be one of thought and purpose, then 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 (considering the wisdom of God) could indeed be one action or plan within the global instruction or strategy.

4) Strategies are necessary

As soon as the end goals become extremely important, or the means very costly or risky, a definite strategy is necessary. Of course, the same rules apply to Paul's letters to the Corinthians. Paul visited the congregation on three occasions. There is further evidence that Paul sent four letters to the Corinthians. From this one could assume that the congregation failed to grasp the purpose of Paul's first letter (See 1 Cor. 5:9-11). In a way Paul's own apostolic ministry as well as the transforming power of the Kingdom of God is now at stake. Obviously a strategy is necessary.

5) Strategies are related to the notion of movement

Actions usually consist of different moves: a move, may be an action that is functional with a view to the final goal. Taking a bath may have as moves fetching your towel, sponge and soap and letting the water run into the bath. In other words, a move is any action that is accomplished with the intention of bringing about a state of affairs that directly or indirectly will lead to the desired global goal (Van Dijk and

Kintsch 1983:66). A move is thus not divorced from a strategy, but part of a global action that is dominated by a strategy.

A part of the global action in considering the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:18-2:5) could be the functional move to irony.

6) Strategies are related to the notion of tactics

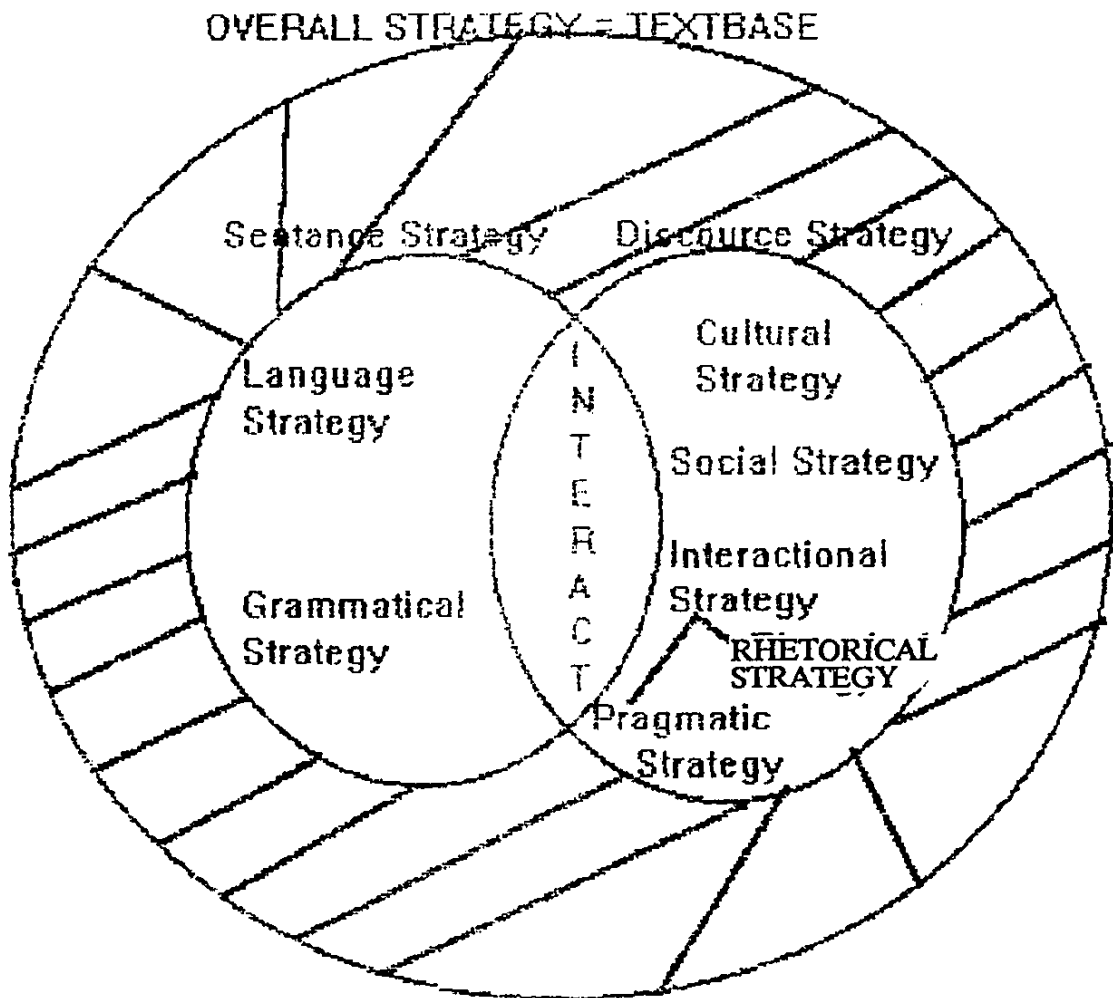
"Frequently tactics are considered to be a synonym for strategy. However, within this model tactics will refer to an organized system of strategies". (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:66). Studying theology, for instance, may involve a tactic that includes a strategy for studying hard as well as a strategy to make friends as well as a strategy to learn your Greek vocabulary. A tactic is not just any set of strategies, but a set that has organization. In other words, a number of organized strategies forms a tactic. With regard to 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 one could assume that Paul's tactics are to supply the Corinthians' with the right kind of information that could lead to a new self understanding and unity. In accordance with this tactic the macro strategy of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 reflects the use of epideictic discourse in order to evoke assent to certain values. The micro strategies of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 reflect the use of the strategies of non naming, comparison, rhetorical questions, irony, antithesis, and repetition.

7) Strategies are also related to rules

According to Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983:67), rules are more or less general convictions of a social community regulating behaviour in a standard way, whereas strategies are particular and often personal ways of using the rules to reach one's goals. Rules are norms for possible or correct actions. There are, for instance, definite rules for chess, tennis, football, etc. Rules define the possible moves. The execution of these moves takes place via strategies.

The rules that are executed via the micro and macro strategies of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 comply with the rules of quantity (making your contribution as informative as possible), quality (try to make your contribution one that is true), relation (be relevant), and manner (avoid ambiguity, be brief, be orderly).

In conclusion: The overall strategy of the interactional model, which consists of a series of more specific strategies, has as its goal the construction and understanding of the text base as we find it in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5. The following diagram gives a schematic representation of the model:



#### 2.4.2 Sentence/Language Strategies

In this section of the model the focus is on the **COMMUNICATIVE FORCE OF THE LETTER**. "In other words our focus is on strategies that are applied by language users in the production and comprehension of verbal utterances or speech acts. We speak of strategies although the strategies in most cases will not be preprogrammed, intended, conscious, or articulated by the language user. Rather, we should say, they are strategies of the cognitive system, usually beyond the conscious control of the language user" (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:70-71).

One of these strategies which needs further discussion is the theory of speech acts. Literary critics have been attracted to this theory for two primary reasons. Firstly this theory has opened the possibility of a functional approach to literature which is less encumbered with metaphysical presuppositions than previous strategies or theories<sup>17</sup>. In other words, speech act theory offers a theoretically effective framework for the functional analysis of language. This correlates with the switch I have indicated earlier from viewing language as informational to viewing language as performative and interactional, which is one of the basic presuppositions in the model. Wolfgang Iser (1978:6) says in support of a speech act approach to literature: "the time has surely come to cut the thread altogether and replace ontological arguments with functional arguments, for what is important to readers, critics, and authors alike, is what literature does, and not what it means".

Secondly, this theory makes it possible to shift the focus in literary and language studies away from various formalisms which detach the text from its historical and social matrix, to its concrete context without engulfing it once again in the psychological, social and historical conditions of its production<sup>18</sup>. This concern to relate the literary speech act with its context, and reintegrating it into the broader scheme of our verbal and social activities again supports the idea and basic presupposition of this interactional model.

What is a speech act? According to Pratt (1980:22) a speech act

...is an utterance produced by a speaker within the context and addressed to a hearer with an intended effect.

In other words, whereas sentences are the object of traditional semantics, speech act theory deals with utterances. This immediately accentuates the notion of strategies, because speech acts are not viewed divorced from the pragmatics of language. It is

therefore not strange that the concept of performatives is also crucial in speech act theory (J. Eugene Botha 1990:280).

Austin (1975:60) states that the "issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action, it is not normally thought of as just saying something".

This concept was introduced by Austin because not all utterances in language can be viewed in terms of what is true or false. Utterances are not mere statements or constatives. Performatives, however, are the real speech acts and are judged in terms of their function such as happy/unhappy, appropriate/inappropriate, effective/ineffective, successful/unsuccessful.

Speech Act Theory can be very helpful in the analysis of New Testament letters. According to J.N. Vorster (1990:113) it emphasizes the communicativeness of utterances

...Instead of merely searching for meaning in the relationships between linguistic entities, Speech Act Theory compels to search for the illocutionary force or point of an utterance. Searching for the illocutionary force of an utterance means that utterance cannot merely be taken at face-value. Instead, we shall have to look at that which underlies an utterance, namely its appropriate conditions. Secondly, because the communicativeness of utterances is taken seriously, the "utterers" and receivers of utterances are given a prominent position in the establishment of meaning. Because speakers and hearers cooperate in defining the meaning of an utterance, their respective circumstances are given an opportunity to play a role. This implies that aspects such as speaker and hearer's perceptions, speaker's point of view, social values and social relations of speaker and hearer determine meaning.

Speech Act Theory, nevertheless also poses a few problems<sup>19</sup>, such as the fact that argumentation has up to this point not been analysed as a speech act<sup>20</sup>, nor has it been established whether argumentation is actually like those speech acts for which analyses are already available.

What sort of speech is performed when argumentation is put forward?

A main feature of our approach to argumentation is the stress we place on argumentation as a **purposive activity with a social character**. Since argumentation

is a rational, verbal form of making statements, it follows that one should regard argumentation as a language use which is purposeful.

In other words it is a process which has run its proper course only if certain conditions have been met in the performance of the speech act of argumentation. What are those conditions?

According to Perelman (1982:21) it amounts essentially to the fact that the "speaker can choose as his points of departure only the theses accepted by those he addresses". In other words, if an argument runs counter to the convictions of the audience, the audience will probably reject it. The objective of argumentation, namely to intensify an adherence to premises or to persuade makes it a specific form of a speech act.

But argumentation also has a social character. Unfortunately many studies of argumentation have an abstract from the language users involved in the argumentation and hence from their communicative and interactional roles. Argumentation is then treated not as an attempt at convincing others of a particular standpoint, but as an autonomous and abstract pattern of depersonalized propositions. The various communicative and interactional roles that are presupposed in argumentation are thus ignored.

In this way argumentation is stripped of its social character which is not the case in studies on argumentation from a rhetorical perspective (for example the work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971).

The distinctive feature of argumentation is that it is a response to a situation in which one or other form of need exists. My hypothesis therefore corresponds to that of Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1982:29) in the sense that argumentation is a specific form of speech act

because in the communicative sense argumentation is a form of language use corresponding to the forms of language use characterized in the speech act theory as illocutionary acts and that as regards its interactional aspects argumentation is linked with the perlocutionary act of convincing.

In other words argumentation can be treated as a complex form of illocutionary utterance.

This constellation of illocutions constitutes the illocutionary act of argumentation. The illocutionary act of argumentation therefore does not stand in a one to one relation to individual sentences, but consists of a combination of sentences forming a sequence.

In conclusion: Speech Act Theory does not present a comprehensive view of communication<sup>21</sup>. However, it compels us to search for the illocutionary force of an utterance. Consequently Clark and Clark (1977:72) distinguished between two very basic principles, characterizing two kinds of strategies. One is called the reality principle or strategy and the other the cooperative principle or strategy.

The reality principle/strategy is concerned with the close relationship that exists between utterances, meaning, reference and our possible knowledge about affairs in the world. In this regard speech act theory provides us with a more than useful tool.

However, the reality principle needs to interact with the cooperative principle - as adopted by Grice - which assumes that speakers in general try to make sense, want to be cooperative, and do this by being truthful, being clear, saying no more nor less than what is meant, and trying to be relevant. Grice<sup>22</sup> (1975-45) explains this cooperative principle as follows:

The following may provide a first approximation to a general principle. Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected to observe, namely: make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. One might label this the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE.

The co-operative principle is motivated in terms of conversational goals and the focus is on the APPROPRIATENESS of an utterance and the formulation of principles underlying verbal interaction which must be satisfied for an utterance to be successful.



With this view of communication we have entered the area of **pragmatics**, because pragmatics (according to Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:84) can be loosely defined as the social action that is performed by a speaker when producing an utterance in some specific context<sup>23</sup>. In other words, whereas grammar provides an explanation why the object-utterance is acceptable, one of the tasks of pragmatics is to provide successful conditions for the utterance act, and explain in what respect such an act may be a component in the course of interaction in which it is either accepted or rejected.

Beside Speech Act Theory the appropriateness of an utterance as well as its communicativeness is enhanced by means of the politeness principle and questions as a form of speech act.

#### 2.4.2.1 Politeness Principle

The politeness principle is a strategic orientation towards the 'face' of participants in the communication process. According to Goody (1978:66) 'face' is:

- ...i) the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two-related aspects;
  - a) negative face: the basic aim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. freedom from imposition.
  - b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants.
- ii) certain rational capacities in particular consistent modes of reasoning from ends to means that will achieve those ends.

Thus face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people co-operate in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face. In other words, everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained, and since people can be expected to defend their faces if threatened, and in defending their own to threaten other's faces, it is general in every participant's best interest to maintain each other's face.

Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of the addressee (called H henceforth) the positive self-image that he/she claims for him herself. Positive politeness is approach-based; it anoints the face of the addressee. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying H's face.

his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Hence negative politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of H's self-image, centering on his want to be unimpeded.

All of these are merely an attempt at describing, in a very limited area, the principles that lie behind the construction of social behaviour. There can be no doubt that one reason that social theory has never come to ground level is the notable lack of a satisfactory theory of action that could adequately address the appropriateness of an utterance. The major social theories of Durkheim, Parsons and Weber have made only crude attempts at the analysis of the single act. More serious attention to strategies is needed. What Goody has claimed so far, and I agree with her, is that any rational person will tend to utilize the F.T.A. (face threatening act) strategies according to a rational assessment of the face risk to participants. One would thus behave by virtue of practical reasoning, the inference of the best means to satisfy stated ends<sup>24</sup>.

What does this mean? Goody (1978:96) explains:

We now claim that what links these strategies to their verbal expressions is exactly the same kind of means-end reasoning.

In other words, we ask how a normal rational person with certain wants which characterize face, would act in respect to such wants. Goody (1978:106) distinguishes three super strategies namely positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record. We will briefly consider these three strategies.

### **Positive Politeness Strategy**

According to Goody (1978:106) positive politeness

...is redress directed to the H's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. Redress consists in partially satisfying that desire by communicating that one's own wants (or some of them) are in some respects similar to the H's wants.

This strategy involves three broad mechanisms namely 1) claim common ground 2) convey that S and H are cooperators and 3) fulfill H's want. Each of these mechanisms is related to a number of strategies. In the process of claiming common

ground you will use strategies such as to notice and attend to H's interests and needs, exaggerate, use group identity markers (such as mate, buddy, pal, honey) seek agreement, avoid disagreement and assess common ground by making a joke.

In claiming that S and H are cooperators you will use strategies of cooperation, promises, optimism. In these strategies you will make frequent use of the inclusive *we* and you will assume reciprocity.

### Negative Politeness Strategy

According to Goody (1978:134) this second super strategy consists of

... the H's want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded. It is the heart of respect behaviour, just as positive politeness is the kernel of "familiar" and "joking" behaviour... Where positive politeness is free-ranging, negative politeness is specific and focused; it performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that F.T.A. unavoidably effects.

In other words one could conclude that this is the stuff that fills our etiquette books. Negative Politeness is used whenever a speaker wants to put a social brake on the course of this interaction. Negative politeness involves five broad mechanisms namely 1) be direct 2) don't presume/assume 3) don't coerce H., meaning that you either give H. the option not to perform an act, or you (S) minimize the F.T.A. 4) communicate S's wants to not impinge on H and 5) redress other wants of H's wants derivative from negative face. These five mechanisms are linked to ten strategies, including for example be conventionally indirect, question, be pessimistic, give deference, apologize, impersonalize both S. and H. and stating the F.T.A as a rule.

"Off record" is the third super strategy that is part of the politeness principle. According to Goody (1978:216)

...a communicative act is done off record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. In other words, the actor leaves himself an 'out' by providing himself with a number of defensible interpretations; he cannot be held to have committed himself to just one particular interpretation of his act.

Off record strategies are a violation of Grice's maxims. To this one must add (Goody 1978:217) that many of the classic off-record strategies such as metaphor, irony, rhetorical questions are very often actually on record in actual language usage, because the clues to their interpretation add up to only one really viable interpretation in the context. Off record involves two mechanisms namely 1) invite conversational implicature and 2) be vague. These are linked to strategies of hints, clues, presuppositions, understatements, overstatements, tautologies, contradictions, irony, metaphors, rhetorical questions.

The politeness principle, in summary, has enhanced the view that communicative intentions or acts have built-in social implications, often of a threatening nature. The interesting point is how such acts become constrained. The way in which messages are hedged, hinted and embedded in discourse structures then become crucial areas of study.

#### 2.4.2.2 Questions as Speech Acts

Two important features of speech acts are that they are rule governed and that they are produced with certain intentions in mind. In performing a speech act a person intends not only to communicate a referential meaning but also to influence actively the hearer in some way.

If one accepts that there is more than one kind of meaning conveyed by a speech act and that meaning is determined by some kind of rule system, but that verbal forms alone are not sufficient as a basis for determining meaning, it follows that the interpretation of meaning must depend in part on rules governing social relationships.

What does this have to do with questions? Recent work in social psychology has focussed on questioning as a technique affecting the efficiency with which information is secured and organized. This is also true with regard to developmental psychology. One of Piaget's great contributions is his insistence that children are constructive in their approach to life. Children do not receive information passively, but interact with their social and physical environment. With the experience and information gained a perception of reality is created. In this acquiring of information, questions play an important role. Viewed in this way, questioning has indeed to do with information rather than with relationships. By considering questions as speech acts the focus will be turned to the relational aspect of questions.

According to Searle (1969:31) there are two different types of questions. One type consists of questions which are answered simply with a 'yes' or 'no'. The others are called open questions. Open questions are incomplete propositions, for which the answer provides the missing clause. For example, 'How many people attended the service?'

Goody (1978:23) considers the consequences of the incomplete nature of questions for interrogative speech acts as follows:

An interesting problem in sociolinguistics is 'sequencing' - how conversation is managed so that people take turns, speaking in an orderly way. Schegloff and Sacks have isolated one class of utterance sequence which they call the adjacency pair. These consist of two utterances, spoken by two different people, one following directly on the others. ...adjacency pairs are highly significant for understanding linguistic behaviour in particular because they provide a way in which one person can compel another to speak to him and of a topic of his own choosing. The most general thing we can say of a question is that it compels, requires, may even demand, a response.

In other words, questioning binds two people in immediate reciprocity. Goody (1978:26-27) identified four main performative modes of questioning in the sense of a speech act, namely information, control, deference and rhetorical questions.

Each of these different these different modes of questioning will now be considered in more detail.

### The rhetorical mode

Although the standard definition of a rhetorical question is one which does not require an answer, Goody (1978:28) uses the term in a wider sense to "cover questions for whose answers the information channel is effectively empty - i.e. it carries 'noise' in the sense of non-significant information". The command channel of the rhetorical question, on the other hand, is employed to achieve a balanced relationship between the questioner and the respondent. According to Goody this can occur in several ways of which the most striking example is the joking challenge in the following examples for instance:

- i)           Where is my food then? Senior men don't eat in the courtyard.

ii) Have you prepared your trousseau yet? How can I? You haven't given me anything towards it.

Goody(1978:29),having experienced these joking - challenge questions in Gonja, found that" this was a very dependable way of establishing easy - going, positive relations with people I barely knew". It also provides a framework for bargaining where none of the bargaining parties gets alienated. If one man feels he is worsted both of them can joke about it, and in their next encounter they can bargain afresh without prejudice. In conclusion Goody (1978:30) maintains

...the joking-challenge question is about relationships, not information. In this it is the exact opposite of the pure information question where the command function is zero... All the rhetorical question forms minimize the emphasis on the informational channel (report function) and stress instead the social relationships involved in the exchange (command function). In this way they are opposite to the pure information questions which minimize the command function and stress the securing of information. I have assigned to rhetorical questions as a class an effective zero valence because they use the question-response form to achieve some kind of balance: neither party is systematically either 'one up' or 'one down' as result of the exchange.

In other words the rhetorical questions that Paul is using in 1 Cor 1:20 are performatives in the sense that they minimize information but stress the social relationships involved in the exchange. Through the use of these questions Paul wanted to achieve some kind of balance between himself and the different parties. The rhetorical question could indeed, in this way, function as a window on the social relations within the Corinthian community.

### The control mode

The control mode presupposes that the person who asks the question is in a dominant position, while being asked a control question puts a person at a disadvantage. Goody (1978:31) thus gives this mode a positive valence, because

...where control questions are strongly institutionalized, as in court hearings and the ordeal, there is a pattern of questioning by superiors. In these contexts there is a corresponding inhibition of, or even prohibition of, questions in the reverse direction, from status

subordinates to superiors. In these contexts, a question implies the authority to require an answer, based on the authority to hold the subordinate responsible for his actions.

### The deference mode

In many societies to possess knowledge is to have power. A question (asking for information) implies ignorance on the side of the questioner. If knowledge is power "then to admit to ignorance, by asking is to disclaim power" (Goody 1978:32). Goody (1978:33) further pointed out that she was first introduced to this deference question when her assistant would suddenly in the midst of an entirely unrelated activity ask "Are you going to greet so-and-so today?" When she reacted by saying 'no', he would repeat the question in a few moments. She then, realized that this was his way of telling her that she should greet the person concerned. In this so-called intention deference the subordinate is actually protected from the annoyance of his superior, since neither need acknowledge that the subordinate is actually taking the initiative.

Another interesting example of the deference question is what Goody (1978:34) calls a 'masking question'.

It is often used by parents to give the child a chance to make a decision when in fact the adult could easily simply give a command. In a sense they are really commands. Thus a mother often says something like "shall we put on your clothes so we can go to the market? Then why use the question mark? I think by deferring to the child's answer the parent does two things: first she masks her own power to control the child, possibly thereby avoiding a confrontation. Secondly, she engages the child in the enterprise: she makes the child responsible for the consequences of her reply, and thus makes her a partner rather than a passive member in the enterprise.

Of course this could have important implications for the interpretation of 1 Corinthians, especially if one considers the fact that Paul's relation to the Corinthians resembles that of a father towards his children (1 Cor. 1:14-15).

The masking question is of course based on the fact that in almost every community the hierarchy of status plays an important and sometimes decisive role. The hierarchy may be based on age, sex, wealth, political rank, literacy, etc. But typically every adult member knows those who must defer to him or her, and those who are senior to him or her, and to whom he or she must in turn defer. In seeking to extract

rules for the use of the different modes of questions the relative status is of paramount importance.

In terms of the relative status Goody (1978:36) has remarked

...that information is obtained from high-status persons by low-status persons only indirectly by the use of deference techniques, unless the high-status person is also a relative. Conversely, information is most readily obtained from persons in an equivalent status to oneself... people ask information most readily of those in similar status. Equals also are more likely to make use of forms which deny questions and the deference mode in its weaker forms as a way of masking any possible claims to superior status... Subordinates use mainly the deference mode.

To sum up: Questions are speech acts which place people in direct, immediate interaction<sup>25</sup>. In doing so they carry messages about relationships and about relative status as well as the appropriateness of an utterance<sup>26</sup>. As a result of the interaction between these strategies the communicative force of the letter and sentences is analysed and an adequate language and sentence strategy is found.

#### 2.4.3 Discourse Strategies

A further important aspect of the proposed interactional model is the **ARGUMENTATIVE FORCE OF THE LETTER**. In order to persuade people, language users manipulate surface structures, word, phrase, and clause meanings, pragmatic information from the context as well other interactional, social and cultural data.

One of the essential features of an effective discourse strategy is therefore the careful investigation of the situation in which an action or communicative event is performed. Keep in mind that 'meaning' is not a private, subjective matter, but that it is created by the use of expressions in social interaction: only an analysis of the discourse or context of human action can give insight into both its determinants and its meaning.

Discourse as such represents a fusion of the relevant segments of the reader's and the text's respective horizons, that is to say, a fusion of as much of the reader's intersubjective life world with as much of the text's intertextual context. This stance is not without consequences. In order to argue a case and convince people, the focus



should shift to the communication of which the discourse is part. This means that there is a focus on the people in, around, behind and created by the text.

It also implies the utilization of the concept interaction. To understand discourse strategically in terms of effective argumentation is to acknowledge it as a continual social interaction in which the hearer makes assumptions about the intentions, purposes, wishes, references, beliefs opinions, attitudes, ideology, emotions and personality of the speaker in order to persuade him/her. In other words, the reader or hearer of a discourse is not merely an observer of the social and cultural contexts but also a direct participant in the communicative relationship.

To conclude: to understand discourse as an effective way of argumentation we need a social strategy<sup>27</sup> in which "the hearer derives effective expectations from the global or local social context with respect to the interactive intentions, goals and motivations of the speaker as they relate to cognitive or actional changes of the hearer" (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:83).

That is, we must assume in understanding the argumentative force of discourse that it is produced and used within a larger social context.

#### **2.4.3.1 Social Strategies**

We have come to the realization that argumentation is to a large extent the selection, arrangement and representation of social values in various hierarchical structures. In order to understand and implement argumentation properly we need a social strategy.

In contrast to the social description for historical relevance<sup>28</sup> that resulted from earlier studies with a social interest in the biblical world, the purpose of social strategies would be to understand the discourse of the biblical text better. To take the large social context into consideration we must apply different strategies when understanding a discourse produced by a government, a judge in the courtroom, a student in class, a friend in the bar and a minister on a pulpit. From a government one does not expect stories but laws and reports - discourse types one in turn one does not expect from the minister or a student in normal everyday conversation.

"These examples show that a language understander has a strategy to limit the options in interpreting the many aspects of discourse. The strategy is based on assumptions made about the intended social function of the discourse, about possible speech acts, discourse types and so on" (Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:82).

These in turn may depend on assumptions about the member categories in these social contexts. That is, whether we are communicating with a man or a woman, a child or an adult, a friend or a stranger, a rich or a poor person, with people having more or less power or status, and so on. Different scholars have opted for different approaches and strategies in trying to uncover new information on the social background of the New Testament. The strategies forming part of our model function not on the level of mere description of the social background, but on the EXPLANATION of the social background. Best (1983:195) is correct in saying:

...For a truly sociological approach however, one must move to the second level, that of explanation. Here the tools and techniques of modern sociological study are used, not merely to describe but also to probe the inner dynamics of the early Christian movement, regarded not as a unique event but as an example of patterns of behaviour which may be widely observed and objectively studied.

This means that the question facing the interpreter changes from "What did the author mean?" to "Was there anything in the contemporary societal structure that could be a reflection of these utterances?" In other words, our social strategies are not aimed at merely accumulating data that may be relevant for the historical understanding of the background of the New Testament texts. Instead our social strategies abstract data<sup>29</sup> in the sense of unearthing, making explicit what is buried and implicit in the discourse. Methodologically speaking, the only direct and explicit information we have for the contextual history of the text is the literary work itself, constituting a social fact in itself. Translating such literary social data into social data fit for use within a historical reconstruction, is a complex procedure. Firstly, a thorough literary analysis of the text is needed, according to its type. On the macro-social level we have to look at the relationship between ideas and social reality. On the micro-social level of the relation between author and reader the text can be analysed in terms of communication theory. Finally, the results from both the literary and the macro analyses are used to interpret and explain not the historical world, but the narrative or referential world of the text. At this point the interpreter is still moving within the text. Only now can the narrative world, created by the text, be compared with the everyday historical world to which the text belongs. On this basis we begin to make inferences about the social setting for which the text is intended.

Different scholars use different methods in the process of determining the social situation in which argumentation or a communicative event took place. Of particular importance to the social strategy underlining this study are the

approaches of the following scholars:

#### 2.4.3.1a **Gerd Theissen**

Theissen concentrates on the accumulation of sociologically relevant material by means of an analysis of the text in the form-critical tradition, trying in the process to uncover the *Sitz im Leben* by a constructive, analytic or comparative approach (Theissen 1982:177). For him the importance of the text is not so much to be found in its literary structure as in its creative composition. In the text itself sociological statements and references, poetic, ecclesiastical and mythical statements are present (Theissen 1982:176). Underlying this view is an understanding of literature in which the creation of the discourse, its form, substance and message may all be regarded as social facts (Theissen 1982:183) or contradictions (Theissen 1982:181-182) or as symbols (Theissen 1982:187-188). His interest remains focused on the referential history as opposed to the contextual history of the text.

#### 2.4.3.1b **Wayne A. Meeks**

Meeks in his useful contribution on 'The first urban Christians: The social world of the apostle Paul' (1983) focuses on the social history of the early Christian communities. His aim is to ascertain "what it was like to become and be an ordinary Christian in the first century" (Meeks 1983:2). His work is more than a mere description, because he is quite aware of the problems surrounding the interpretation of historical texts.

In writing social history, then, we cannot afford to ignore the theories that guide social scientists. But which of the competing schools of sociology or anthropology or social psychology shall we heed?... There is no comprehensive theory of social movement so commanding that we would be prudent to commit our method to its care. Even if there were, we should be suspicious of it. Christianity, even at the earliest moment we can get any clear picture of it, was already a complex movement taking form within several complex societies. What social theory is adequate to grasp the whole?

(Meeks 1983:5)

Meeks defines his own approach as interpretive description. However, his application of the social sciences and his use of theory is eclectic (Meeks 1983:6). He refers to his own position as that of a "moderate functionalist" in the sense that "society is viewed as a process, in which personal identity and social forms are

mutually and continuously created by interactions that occur by means of symbols (1983:6)<sup>30</sup>.

#### 2.4.3.1c Bruce J. Malina

In 1981 Malina published his first major work entitled "The New Testament world: Insights from cultural anthropology". According to Malina (1981:v) "the purpose for using anthropological models in the New Testament study is precisely to get to hear the meaning of the texts in terms of the cultural contexts in which they were originally proclaimed".

Malina (1983:120) also distinguishes between reading the Bible "as a text containing communication from an author" and reading "it as a documentary source containing historical information". Malina then approaches the reading of the Bible not from a literary perspective but from a communications theory perspective in which the communicative possibilities of a text are linked to the considerateness of an author. "Should a writer depict scenarios that can in no way be rooted in his/her audience's social system, he or she can be fairly labelled an inconsiderate writer" (Malina 1983:122). This is so, because meaning can only be effectively communicated if both reader and writer share a common social system. Therefore, models of the social sciences, must be combined with models of history and models of linguistics to interpret biblical texts from the past (Malina 1982:233).

According to Malina there are three main models that might be used to understand social interaction, namely the structural functionalist model, the conflict model and the symbolic model. The structural functionalist model views society "as a relatively persistent, stable, well integrated structure of elements" (Malina 1982:234). In other words, all the elements in society function towards the maintenance of society as an integral system.

Adaptive change may occur over time, but non-adaptive change is regarded as a deviance (Malina 1982:234). From a cultural anthropological perspective Malina operates within this structural functionalist model. According to him (1989a:6) "our first century person would perceive himself as a distinctive whole set in relation to other such wholes and set within a given social and natural background, every individual is perceived as embedded in some other". The main features of religion in the world are constituted by a) the structure of the group, b) the prevailing social system and c) the way values and norms are controlled (1986:97).

With regard to the structure of the group Malina (1986:97) claims

...that religious groups were dependent on prior kinds of social relations. One did not adopt and live out a set of religious values and attitudes because of some individualistic conviction of the truth... Rather one's adherence to some "religion" was based on norms having to do with politics (and power) or leaderships and/or ethnicity (and solidarity), or some other more specific social institution other than religion (e.g. army, philosophical "school:). Thus people became Christians for reasons other than and/or along with religious ones e.g. to be healed, to share in power, to find patrons or clients, to have a proper funeral, to take part in weekly meals and the like.

The prevailing social system was one in which persons functioned in terms of a) certain archetypal sexual roles b) in terms of the group to whom they belonged and c) in terms of their constant desire to achieve honour (Malina 1989 b:127). The paternal system was still the most important group.

With regard to values and norms, Malina (1986:98) points out that the "first century Mediterranean world was based on community, i.e. shared values and norms. Community is a set of values shared by people who are set apart or set off from others on the basis of some shared quality resulting in a sense of oneness of brotherhood or of "fictive kinship". According to Malina (1981:25-50) two key norms and values within the first century world were honour and shame<sup>31</sup>.

Honour was related to social acceptance and worth whereas shame (a positive norm and value) was related to a person's sensitivity with regard to his or her social reputation. A person could receive honour by means of a) birth (birth for instance in an aristocratic or priestly family), b) by means of social interaction with others. According to Malina all forms of interpersonal contact were characterized by competition in order to achieve fame, and at the same time inflict shame on others.

A second model is that of conflict-theory, also known as coercion, power or interest-model (Malina 1982:234). This type of model presupposes that society and the elements of society are constantly changing, unless some force intervenes to prohibit the change. Gager's "Kingdom and community" (1975) is cited as an example of the application of the conflict-model (Malina 1982:235).

A third model focuses on the symbolic character of human interaction. According to this approach a social system is regarded as a "system of symbols that is meanings, values and feelings about the meanings and values that are attached and embodied

by persons, things and events" (Malina 1982:235). Malina himself uses the first and third model and he is essentially committed to working from the perspective of cultural anthropology.

Deserving special mention is Malina's distinction of four basic social institutions or structures in any society namely, kinship, economics, politics and religion (Malina 1986b:152-153). As a rule, one of these institutions maintains priority over the others in societal arrangements:

In Christendom in the past, and in Islamic republics in the present, kinship, economics, and politics are embedded in religion, i.e. the norms of kinship, economics, and politics are determined by the religious institution: representatives of the religious institution rule their societies in one way or another.

#### **2.4.3.1d Jerome H. Neyrey**

In an article on "Body language in 1 Corinthians: The Use of Anthropological Models of Understanding Paul and his Opponents" Neyrey (1986:129) used the macro intra cultural model of the British anthropologist Mary Douglas in order to determine the social strategy in the use of Paul's body language in 1 Corinthians.

Douglas offers a model for correlating attitudes to the physical body and corresponding structures in the social body. Douglas states that the body is a medium of expression - the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. In other words bodily technique is learned social behaviour; the social system determines how the body is used as a medium of expressions, norms and values. Strong pressure from the social group will be replicated in a strong control of the physical body. According to Douglas (1966:115) the body is a microcosm of the social body, a symbol of society in the sense that the ordering and structuring of the physical body is an exact replica of social structure and the control of the physical body is an expression of social control. According to Douglas (1973: 99)

...Bodily control is an expression of social control. Abandonment of bodily control in ritual responds to the requirements of social experience which is being expressed.

According to Neyrey (1986:132) Paul's observations on bodily control replicate his opinions on social control. Paul's body language is therefore a window on his cultural view of the way Christian groups should be structured. Neyrey then uses

Mary Douglas's model for assessing the degree of control or non-control over social body. Douglas identified two groups. A strong group indicates a high degree of pressure to conform to group norms as well as a pressure for order and control. Order and discipline are valued and group values are predominate (Neyrey 1986:132).

The weak group, on the other hand, indicates a low degree of pressure for order and control. Norms and discipline are not valued and personality is very individualistic.

Douglas then investigates six's aspects of cosmology, because social groups such as the strong and weak have different world views or cosmologies.

A cosmology of a controlled body (strong group) would then have the following features:

**1 Purity**

There is a strong concern for purity of the social and physical body. Purity refers to the ordering and structuring of the social world. Purity means an avoidance of all that violates the sense of order. In terms of the physical body it means a distancing of oneself from dirt which socially means concern over persons and events that do not fit the group's ideals and sense of order.

**2 Ritual**

There are fixed rituals for determining where the boundaries of the ordered system lie and who is properly within the body and who is not. Authority, status and roles are clear and clearly expressed.

**3 Personal Identity**

Identity is non-individualistic and group oriented. Your role and place in the group is assigned and learned.

**4 Body**

Bodies, both social and physical are tightly controlled. Purity and protection of the body from pollutions are of great importance.

## 5 Sin

Not a mere violation of rules but a pollution which invades the body and threatens it. Moral norms are well defined and are socio-centric, that is, learned from the group and measured in those terms.

Neyrey (1986:137) applies these social strategies of Douglas's to the situation in 1 Corinthians and concludes that there are two different views of physical and social body at Corinth. Paul's viewpoint is that the physical body is a highly controlled body which is pure and holy. Its concern for order and clarity makes it fear unconsciousness or loss of control - therefore it takes a negative view of spirit possession. The body is a harmonious body in which parts are clearly differentiated and coordinated for the good of the whole body. Individualism is subordinated for the good of the whole body. This view, according to Neyrey (1986:137) "replicates a view of the social body marked by strong "group" pressure, formality, smoothness and ritualism".

Paul's opponents see the body as an uncontrolled organism. Control is weak and there is a freedom of movement and spontaneity. Trances and spiritual possession are looked upon favourably.

According to Neyrey (1986:138) this view of the physical body "replicates the perception of the social body as marked by weak "group" pressures, informality, unstructured features: here effervescence flourishes". Neyrey (1986:138) also uses the contrasting attitudes to offer a clearer window onto the issues and arguments which divided Paul and his adversaries.

The essential feature of all these approaches is the careful investigation of the social situation in which argumentation took place. These approaches could indeed enhance our understanding of the argumentative force of Paul's discourse and make it possible to move beyond a mere description to explaining the way in which Paul argues.

### 2.4.3.2 Rhetoric

The second type of discourse strategy is rhetorical in nature. As Wuellner (1989:1) points out rhetorics is the practice of the art of communication as interaction. This art of communication as interaction emphasizes effectiveness.



The main concern in developing a rhetorical strategy is no longer exclusively on the social situation in which argumentation took place. The emphasis has shifted towards the effectiveness of an argument within a specific social context.

This effectiveness has several implications of which the most important is persuasion. A speaker, for instance, in parliament or in court, tries to convince the public or judge that he has a good case so that they will judge positively, believe him, and finally accept his arguments. This ultimate goal is to be achieved by specified good ways of speaking for which rhetorics has formulated rules and strategies (Lausberg 1960:14). Most of these apply to the local organization of discourse, for example, at the syntactic and semantic levels. It is here where such features as rhyme, alliteration, repetition, and figures of speech based on contrast, metaphor, or irony have been formulated.

These features have made rhetoric a concept in bad odour because:

...it has been equated with needless embellishment, empty verbiage, or, even worse, the kind of discourse produced by politicians from parties other than one's own. To others more innocently, it recalls mere elaboration of discourse.

(Enkvist 1985b:15)

Rhetoric became in disfavour according to Wuellner (1989:2-3) because of a split the rhetor's, or writer's intention (*dianoia/voluntas*) and the expressed polysemous meaning (*hyponoia/suspicio*). This led to a split between hermeneutics and rhetorics which in turn was highlighted by two further developments<sup>32</sup>

...on the one hand, the increasing prominence of stylistic matters and, on the other hand the changing trend in the stylistic strategies most in fashion. ...To ask for the motives of such fashions (e.g. fear of political reprisals in times of ideological conflict) leads us towards rhetorics as exercise in 'truth and power', to ask for the cognitive or aesthetic benefits of such exercises leads us toward hermeneutics as interpretive science, as exercise in 'truth and method'.

Although the early reformers<sup>33</sup> still distinguished between rhetorics and hermeneutics matters worsened to such an extent that

...with Schleiermacher we have indeed reached the point where hermeneutics no longer wants to remember its roots in rhetoric and

moves solely on the path which transcendental philosophy has pointed out to it. ...in the final analysis Schleiermacher considers the text independently of its truth claim, as a pure phenomenon of expression! (viz: reducing the text to its signified theme).

(Wuellner 1989:19)

This split led to a preoccupation with Truth and Method to such an extent that Truth and Power nearly disappeared. However, the attempt of a few scholars to include the social and ideological aspects of hermeneutics gave impetus to the rediscovering of rhetorics:

...With rhetorics recognized as the oldest form of 'literary criticism' in the world, it is rhetoric again which helps reconstitute literary theory as the theory of discursive practices in society as a whole (with special attention to) such practices as forms of power and performance.

(Wuellner 1989:23)

In other words rhetorical strategies will take us beyond viewing language as a reflection of reality, even ultimate reality as understood in terms of traditional metaphysical and idealist philosophy, to the social aspect of language which is an instrument of communication and influence on others<sup>34</sup>. That is, we not only have the capacity to understand the content of, or propositions of human signs and symbols (hermeneutics); we also have the capacity to respond and interact with them (rhetorics) (Wuellner 1989:38).

As soon as rhetoric is defined in this way, discourse is viewed in the light of a specific social interactional situation. In logic, propositions, which are true in their logical frame, remain true in that frame. Consequently grammar books usually assume that once a sentence is declared correct, it remains correct. With discourse the situation is much more complex, because

...discourse which is effective in one situation, may be completely out of place in another situation. One cannot therefore study the effectiveness of discourse without placing that discourse in a specific situation. And to view discourse against a situational background one must reckon with the people who communicate, the subject, the occasion, and the relevant cultural traditions, fashions as well as taboos. Thus rhetoric comes to emphasize the kind of appropriateness that the Greeks called *kairos* and the Romans *decorum* as well as the situation.

(Enkvist 1985b:16)

#### 2.4.3.2a Theories of Rhetorical Criticism

Wuellner (1987:453) is of the opinion that rhetorical criticism has brought us at a crossroad where one must choose between two versions of rhetorical criticism: On the one hand a more restrained form of rhetoric, on the other hand a form of rhetorical criticism which is identical with practical criticism. The latter strives for a re-invention of rhetoric, in which texts are read and reread, interpreted and re-interpreted, as forms of activity inseparable from the wider social relations between writers and readers.

This study will be based on the second form of rhetorical criticism. Discourse is performative and interactional and therefore we need rhetorical criticism of a pragmatic nature. As far as methodology is concerned I will make use of Kennedy's model because it includes the concerns of Muilenburg and the concerns of the socio-rhetorical method proposed by scholars such as V. Robbins and N.R. Peterson<sup>35</sup>. I will further attempt to bring some modifications to the model of Kennedy's by means of the views of Perelman.

In any discourse situation there are three factors involved: a speaker (or writer), an audience and a speech or a text. According to classical rhetoric three modes of persuasion enter the actual discourse, namely the authority of the speaker, the emotion of the audience and the argument of the speech (ἔθος, πάθος, λόγοι). In order to persuade a person, the quality and character of the speaker, the strength of his emotional appeal to the hearer, and the stringent logic of the discourse are all of the utmost importance. The rhetors thought of each of these three factors in the communication situation from the point of view of persuasion. The speakers had to be perceived as trustworthy just to get a hearing. Even if he was not well-known to an audience most rhetors believed that the mode of the address could establish an acceptable ethos. Ethos had to be established in the very first part of the speech. Pathos, on the other hand, was especially important toward the conclusion of the speech where an appeal to emotion and motivation were considered appropriate. Throughout the speech ethos and pathos had to be kept in mind. It was the content of the speech itself (logos) that received the greatest attention in the handbooks.

Life circumstances and distinctive audiences also have a marked influence on human speech. According to Kennedy (1984:19-20 and 36-37), classical rhetoric distinguished three genres<sup>36</sup>, namely judicial (which seeks to bring about a judgement about events past), deliberative (which aims at effecting a decision about future action) and epideictic (which celebrates or condemns someone or

something). Given the prominence of honour and shame in the Greco-Roman culture, the epideictic genre was of great importance. Its objective was to marshal examples from the life of an individual or the history of an institution that could demonstrate the person's virtues and establish the basis for honour or shame.

The Greco-Roman youth was also taught the way in which to hold or deliver such a speech. This process comprised five steps: the invention, the arrangement, the style, the memory, and the delivery. During the first stage or *inventio* one had to assemble the necessary material, data, evidence or propose the thesis one wished for. Standard techniques, basic types of argument, conventional figures of speech, stock images were types of material that the rhetors organized for discussion by creating various kinds of lists. The items in these lists were called *topoi*. Invention was thus imagined as a search for the right *topoi* or place from which to take a topic for a particular rhetorical purpose. The arrangement or *dispositio* was the second stage which referred to the ordering of this material in an outline, paying attention to such things as the best sequence to use, or whether one should expand upon this or that point, or how best to develop a sub theme. Arrangement was as important and creative as invention. *Elocutio* or style referred to the way in which one handled the material in the process of composition. Basic issues of grammar, syntax, and the selection of words with just the right denotation were treated as important matters. During the fourth stage (*memoria*) the structure, or even the text itself, had to be committed to memory. The final stage of delivery or *pronuntiatio* referred to the use of the voice, pauses and gestures appropriate to a particular speech occasion.

This is just a brief presentation of the most essential features of rhetorical criticism.

Kennedy (1984:341) proposes the following four stages of rhetorical criticism:

#### The definition of the Rhetorical Unit

The rhetorical unit must have some magnitude and impact. It has to have within itself a discernible beginning and an ending which are connected by some action or argument. That is, a rhetorical unit is either a convincing or persuasive unit.

#### The Identification of the Rhetorical Situation

The second stage is the most crucial in the sense that it forms the initial step of invention. The rhetorical situation differs from both the historical situation of a given author and reader and from the generic situation or conventions of the *Sitz im Leben*. The rhetorical situation, according to Kennedy (1983:38) is that situation

which invites utterance. In the rhetorical situation, the rhetorical critic looks foremost for the premises of a text as appeal or argument. Traditional rhetorics usually defines a text's rhetorical situation in three distinct ways: 1) in the notion of the text status; 2) in the notion of the text's underlying topoi; 3) in the notion of the text's rhetorical genre.

### The Status of the Rhetorical Situation

The classical doctrine of status has been the cornerstone of the classical rhetorical theory of argumentation<sup>37</sup>. Sadly Kennedy (1984:36) fails to grasp the importance of the doctrine of status and merely dismisses it with a reference to its complexity. J.N. Vorster (1990:119) claims that

...very little attention has been paid by New Testament scholars to this aspect (status) of rhetoric. This is even more strange when one considers the fact that the status of the rhetorical situation also determines the rhetorical genre and the rhetorical genre has played a dominant role in New Testament research in recent times.

It is therefore imperative that we take a closer look at the concept of status.

According to Braet (1988:83) and Vorster (1990:119) four types of status situations can be defined<sup>38</sup>.

The first type of status is called *status coniectura*.

This type of question concerns a factual question in which the judiciary has to decide whether the deed was in fact committed or if the issue concerns the future and whether the deed has still to be decided.

The second status is called *status definitionis*. The basic presupposition behind this second type of status question is to emphasize the deed and to appropriate the linguistic qualification of that deed (J.N. Vorster 1990:119).

The third type of status arises when it has been established that the subject has done the deed but doubt exists whether that deed was not justified or the need exists to indicate that it will be correct to follow a certain line of action. In this situation the quality of the deed is in focus and it is called the *status qualitatis* (J.N. Vorster 1990:119).

By this time it must be obvious that the status of the rhetorical situation of the New Testament is of great importance

...because this is the problem or question to which the letter is a response and without establishing the status of the rhetorical situation, coherency would be out of the question. It is in relation to the status of the rhetorical situation that the coherency between the various elements in the letter can be established.

(J.N. Vorster 1990:119)

The important conclusion is that a theory of argumentation in which the concept of status is central is the best suited to explain both the effectiveness and rationality of an argument. Without the focus on status, rhetorical strategies will only be interested in the effectiveness of an argument. On this point Kennedy's model needs adaptation.

How do we go about determining the status of the rhetorical situation in the New Testament, or as in this study, 1 Corinthians? The status of the rhetorical situation is not explicitly given in the text. What would be needed, therefore, is a comprehensive conversational analysis of the text, as will be demonstrated below.

### The Identification of the Rhetorical Disposition or Arrangement

According to Kennedy (1984:37), disposition refers to "what subdivision (a text) falls into, what the persuasive effect of these parts seems to be, and how they work together - or fail to do so - to some unified purpose in meeting the rhetorical situation"<sup>39</sup>.

A critical assessment of Kennedy's model will prepare the ground for certain modifications to Kennedy's model which I would like to propose.

Kennedy deviates very little from his model of rhetorical criticism derived from Roman antiquity and apparently does not take the contribution of the "New Rhetoric" into account. The "New Rhetoric" has introduced two important concepts, namely the argumentative and persuasive quality of language and the concept of the audience as an active participant in the argumentation process<sup>40</sup>. These concepts should form part of the rhetorical strategy to be followed for reasons which will be discussed below.

#### 2.4.3.2b Perelman's use of the term "Audience"

Perelman (1969:29) defines audience as "the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence"<sup>41</sup>. The audience's major function is to receive the argument of the speaker as present and react to it. Perelman therefore sees the audience as the place where the argument is formed and developed. It is the role of the speakers to formulate and direct his argument to the selected audience, but it is solely the function of the audience to receive, evaluate, and make final value judgement as to the acceptability of the argument. In this way Perelman sees the audience as more than an object to which an orator can address arguments. The audience becomes an active participant in the argumentation process. As part of his philosophic construction, Perelman sees the audience as selected by or through the speaker. It is the speaker who will determine during the course of his or her preparation what type of audience, particular or universal, he or she will address. It is the decision which will eventually determine the speaker's selection of materials and appeals. Thus Perelman develops the idea of the two major types of audiences: the universal and the particular which are dependent upon the type of appeal intended by the speaker.

##### The Particular Audience

The particular audience is composed of those people whom the speaker addresses directly on an experiential appeal basis. This audience has a value system which is strongly influenced by their experience and group affiliation. Speakers, as they select new material for presentation, will have their appeals upon the beliefs and value systems of that particular audience membership. Perelman uses the term particular audience in order to refer to those directly appealed to upon the basis of their value system. Perelman would define this act as persuasion because of the limited value system which is used in appealing to any particular audience.

##### The Universal Audience

The universal audience is, according to Perelman, a theoretical collection of thinking, rational people. It is not grounded in group affiliations as is the particular audience, but has a value system based upon rational thinking. This is the audience of the philosopher. It is based upon universal logical topoi rather than ethos or pathos. As such, the universal audience will take all of mankind's experiences into account and establish a universal system of values based upon rational thought and deliberation. Appeals to this audience will be philosophic in nature and will rise above the persuasive appeals of the particular audience (Perelman 1967:110).

The distinction between the particular and the universal audience is made by the speaker in his selection of appeals. Perelman, therefore, defines persuasion as appeals directed to the particular audience and conviction as appeals directed at the universal audience. In summary one could thus say:

- i) The audience is determined by the speaker and functions as the place where arguments are formulated.
- ii) The particular audience is the group selected by the speakers which is addressed in accordance with its experiential and group affiliation basis.
- iii) The universal audience is a theoretical construct which includes all rational people. It is appealed to through the use of universal rationality.
- iv) Persuasion is the appeal directed towards the particular audience.
- v) Conviction is the appeal directed towards the universal audience based upon reason and rational thought.

In what way does the concept of audience enhance Kennedy's model and attribute to a better rhetorical strategy? What is the significance of this concept for the present study?

Paul felt the need to interpret his audience so that the audience becomes "a construction of the speaker" (Perelman 1969:24). To see the audience as a construction of the speaker is to recognize in the case of 1 Corinthians, that one cannot conceive knowledge of the audience independently of the knowledge of how to influence it. The problem of the nature of the audience is indeed intimately connected with that of its conditioning. According to Perelman (1969:23):

Various conditioning agents are available to increase one's influence on an audience: music, lighting, crowd effects, scenery and various devices of stage management. Besides conditioning of this kind... there is the conditioning by the speech itself, which results in the audience no longer being exactly the same at the end of the speech as it was at the beginning. This form of conditioning can be brought about only if there is a continuous adaptation of the speaker to his audience.



In the case of 1 Corinthians, this conditioning and construction of the audience both precedes Paul's writing and it is achieved in the discourse by Paul's continuous adaptation to his audience. According to J.N. Vorster (1990:122) the rediscovery and refinement of the notion of audience also demand that we take the following matters into account in the forming of an adequate rhetorical strategy for the analysis of the New Testament letters:

Firstly, the intimate relationship between argumentation and the audience... means that the audience has to be constructed in order to understand the argumentation. Or to put it differently: to establish the audience within the rhetorical situation and its role in relation to the other roles means to gain access to the reason why an author has argued in the way he did. Secondly, audience has become a functional entity - it has become important to establish the role of the specific audience in a rhetorical situation. Thirdly, it has been emphasized that the audience/readers are constructs of the speaker/author. If this is true in the case of a face to face confrontation, then even more where a letter has been written. Fourthly, audience/readers as a construct of the speaker/author can be correlated to the notion of the implied readers: the implied reader is the image of the intended readers summoned by the sum total of all the textual indicators... fifthly, the audience as foremost constituent of argumentation has been sociologically and psychologically embedded. Argumentation has therefore been humanized. This again correlates with the notion of the implied readers which is always part and parcel of the socio-cultural code of the text.

#### **2.4.3.2c The Argumentative and Persuasive Quality of Language**

The second concept of Perelman's work that is important for our approach, is the focus on the persuasive and argumentative quality of language. The rediscovery of rhetoric as persuasion and of rhetorical criticism as the theory of argumentation represents a real breakthrough. In the Western tradition for many years rhetoric has been identified with verbalism and an empty, unnatural mode of expression<sup>42</sup>.

The "New Rhetoric" is a theory of argumentation, and according to Perelman (1979:10) argumentation.

...is always addressed by a person called the orator - whether by speech or in writing - to an audience of listeners or readers. It aims at

obtaining or reinforcing the adherence of the audience to some thesis, assent to which is hoped for. The new rhetoric, like the old, seeks to persuade or convince, to obtain an adherence which may be theoretical to start with, although it may eventually be manifested through a disposition to act, or practical, as provoking either immediate action, the making of a decision, or commitment to act.

The aim of argumentation is not, like demonstration, to prove the truth of the conclusion from premises, but to transfer to the conclusion the adherence accorded to the premises.

From these specifications it is apparent that the "New Rhetoric" does not operate within the more or less conventional, and even arbitrary limitations traditionally imposed upon ancient rhetoric.

That brings us to the important matter of the relation between argumentation and commitment as well as the object of agreement.

#### **2.4.3.2d Argumentation and Commitment**

With regard to the relation between argumentation and commitment Perelman (1969:49) claims:

The effectiveness of an exposition designed to secure a proper degree of adherence of an audience to the arguments presented to it can be assessed only in terms of the actual aim the speaker has set himself. The intensity of the adherence sought is not limited to obtaining purely intellectual results, to a declaration that a certain thesis seems more probable than another, but will very often be reinforced until the desired action is actually performed.

In other words the person who gives his adherence to conclusions of an argumentation does so by an act that commits him and for which he is responsible.

What forms the basis of the adherence and commitment, or, agreement? According to Perelman (1979:15) "the objects of agreement are various. On the one hand, there are facts, truths and presumptions; on the other, values, hierarchies, and loci of the preferable". Facts and truths, according to Perelman, are objects that are already agreed to by the universal audience. Usually there is no need to increase the intensity of adherence to them. Presumptions are opinions which need to be

proved. Of particular concern are values, because they are frequently appealed to in order to influence one's choice of action. According to Perelman (1979:15):

They supply reasons for preferring one type of behaviour to another, although not all would necessarily accept them as good reasons. Indeed, most values are particular in that they are accepted only by one particular group. For argumentation it is useful to distinguish concrete values, such as one's country from the abstract values, such as justice and truth. It is characteristic of values that they can become the center of conflict without thereby ceasing to be values. For this reason, the effect to reinforce adherence to values is never superfluous. Such an effort is undertaken in epideictic discourse, and in general, all education also endeavours to make certain values preferred to others.

In the case of 1 Corinthians, it would seem that Paul uses rhetorical questions in particular for evoking assent to certain values. One must, however, bear in mind the important distinction Perelman (1982:27-28) makes between abstract and concrete values. According to him concrete values belong to a specific being, object, group or institution, which is unique. On the other hand, abstract or universal values are valid for everyone and for all occasions, such as justice, truthfulness, love of humanity. Clearly then argumentation cannot do without either of these values but in a given situation a speaker will subordinate one to the other<sup>43</sup>.

The significance of the "New Rhetoric" for our purposes can be summarized as follows: It represents a rediscovery of rhetoric as persuasion and of rhetorical criticism as the theory of argumentation. Language is not merely information but is provocative, persuasive and apologetic - it is meant to be an instrument of influencing others. The "New Rhetoric" investigates why a specific instance of language usage is effective; it recognizes the argumentative situation; it studies style and composition as a means of creating effects on the audience.

With that all said, it is also clear that an effective rhetorical strategy would surely have to account for the different techniques of argumentation.

#### **2.4.3.2e The Techniques of Argumentation**

In establishing the structure of an argument, one must interpret the words of the speaker, apply the missing link, which is always a risky venture. Since argumentation is inter alia concerned with convictions to which different audiences

adhere with variable intensity, the status of elements which enter into argumentation cannot be fixed as it would be in a formal system: this status depends on the real or presumed adherence of the audience. The audience will subscribe to one or the other competing conviction, depending upon their appraisal of the arguments which are given pro and contra the value of the solution they offer to the problem under discussion.

When a speaker wants to establish a certain value he or she may, according to Perelman (1969:83) "resort to premises of a very general nature which we shall term *loci*. These are the *topoi* of Greek writers, from which come the topics, treatise, devoted to dialectical reasoning". In other words *topoi* are abstract and general categories which function during the creation of arguments<sup>44</sup>. Perelman (1969:83) calls these *topoi* a "storehouse for argumentation". According to J.N. Vorster (1990:124) *topoi* could therefore have three definite functions:

Firstly, they function in order to create arguments. Secondly, but related to the first function, is selective function of *topoi*. A *topos* has a selective function, because it specifies which premises can be used. This implies that a *topos* suggests which premises are appropriate to the rhetorical situation. Consequently there is a very close relationship between *topoi* used in the rhetorical situation. Thirdly, *topoi* also have a function to guarantee. They guarantee the "transition from the other premises to the conclusion." This function is made possible by the fundamental and general character of *topoi*.

Another benefit that flows from the identification of *topoi* is that one is now brought into the region of tactics as the author employs them. This, of course, means that one is not so much interested in as to what the author says but rather why he says that and why that statement is relevant and appropriate to the context. For the identification and analysis of the *topoi* of New Testament letters one should bear in mind that Perelman (1979:16) only focuses on that

...which we shall call *loci* of the preferable. They are very general propositions, which can serve, a need to justify values or hierarchies, but which also have as a special characteristic the ability to evaluate complementary aspects of reality. To *loci* of quantity, such as 'that which is more lasting is worth more than that which is less so' or 'a thing useful for a large number of persons is worth more than that one useful for a smaller number', we can oppose *loci* of quality, which set

value upon the unique, the irremediable, the opportune, the rare -  
that is - to what is exceptional instead of what is normal.

It is my supposition that Paul uses the *topoi* of the preferable to refer to a concrete value, but that he uses that in order to establish an abstract or universal value which of course corresponds with *topoi* of quality in the sense that it stresses the unique, the opportune, the rare. I will also argue that the status of the rhetorical situation in 1 Corinthians, which of course stands in close proximity to the *topoi*, seems best to be understood as a quality status, which in turn is characteristic of epideictic discourse and rhetoric.

Which technique of argumentation could best achieve this goal? To catalogue Paul's textual rhetoric in 1 Corinthians, I follow Perelman and Olbrechts - Tyteca's distinction of four kinds of arguments. Their classification rejects the traditional view that all arguments are either inductive or deductive. In place of deduction they speak of two kinds of argument, namely quasi-logical arguments and arguments based on the structure of reality. By quasi-logical they mean having the logic of common sense. The second, more general kind of deduction they call an argument from the structure of reality. These arguments appeal to relations of cause and effect and relations people have to their acts.

The third class of argument that seeks to establish the structure of reality does not deduce from common sense or from assumptions about how reality is structured but works to establish this structure. Here the argument moves from the particular to the general: examples as well as illustrations seek to prove a rule, and analogy and metaphor speak through particular images. The fourth and equally important type of argument is that of dissociation where structures of reality are broken apart to provoke a new understanding as when reality is dissociated from appearance, the concrete from the abstract, or the divine from the human. Perelman (1982:52) makes a rather interesting comment with regard to this type of argument.

The argumentative technique which has recourse to dissociation hardly attracted the attention of the theoreticians of ancient rhetoric. However, it is fundamental for every reflection which, seeking to resolve a difficulty raised by a common thought, is required to dissociate the elements of reality from each other and bring about a new organization of data.

Perelman (1969:412) recognizes that at the core of this technique lies the idea that dissociation brings about a more or less profound change in the conceptual data that

are used as the basis of an argument. One can therefore appreciate that this contribution on dissociation is very important for the analysis of religious material because

...religions usually propose an alternative reality because of incompatibilities experienced with the existent reality, but in order to do so we use traditional material. To put it differently: traditional material is modified, prompted by incompatibilities. Where this happens, dissociation has occurred.

(J.N. Vorster 1990:125)

This technique of dissociation, as well as the other three types of arguments form part of the rhetorical strategy of 1 Corinthians as will be shown in due course.

In conclusion: In an article "On Distinctions between Classical and Modern Rhetoric" (1984:37-49), Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede refer to Daniel Fogarty's important study on "Roots for a New Rhetoric" (1959) in which he argues that the New Rhetoric will need to broaden its aims until it is no longer confined to teaching the art of formal persuasion but includes formation in every kind of symbol using. It will also need to adjust itself to communication. That is, of course, what Chaim Perelman set out to do. The "New Rhetoric" underlined the importance of the context with regard to the speaker-listener situation.

Beyond the speaker (ethos), beyond the discourse (logos) and beyond the audience (pathos) there is always a milieu, a context. It is the context (social, cultural, rhetorical) which shapes the speakers, which determines the arrangement of the material and the use of rhetorical figures and which explains the reaction of the audience. Context is thus the common denominator: ethos, logos and pathos are determined by their contextual function.

(Snyman 1988:24)

In other words, the "New Rhetoric" and the way in which it has sharpened our rhetorical strategy provides us with yet another reason why an interactional model is essential for the interpretation of New Testament letters. In this regard one could say that the "New Rhetoric" confirms what Stowers (1986:15) writes concerning Greco-Roman letter-writing:

From the modern perspective, it is natural to think about letters in terms of the information they communicate. The interpreter however,

should resist the temptation to overlook the great multiplicity of functions that letters performed and to speak only of the communication of information. It is more helpful to think of letters in terms of the actions that people performed by means of them.

The goal of this study is to demonstrate that the nature of letters demands a communicative and interactional approach. Language usage involves a complex system which can only be considered holistically. My basic argument in the preceding chapters is that a holistic approach to language has been lost. Therefore the need of a new model - a model which concerns itself with the analysis of argumentation and which takes cognizance of the sentence strategies and discourse strategies and the way they interact. Rhetorics provides the basis for such an interactional model on the interpretation of New Testament letters.

In our analysis of linguistic structures, the focus will be on the strategies, processes and interaction which takes place in the text of 1 Corinthians in order to move the readers to specific insights and actions.

## NOTES:

1) The article by J.N. Vorster in *Neotestamentica* (1990:107-130) is of fundamental importance for any serious attempt to understand the letters of the New Testament. Also refer to his dissertation "The Rhetorical Situation of the Letter to the Romans - An Interactional Approach" (Pretoria: 1991).

2) See J.N. Vorster's article (1985:155-175) in "Paradigms and progress in theology".

He concludes that the "use of fundamentalism agrees with a mechanistic paradigm. The Bible is seen as a reservoir of facts, inerrant, written by reliable and inspired witnesses and in agreement with the common sense of man; as such an objective and true reflection of what really happened. The grammatical - historical method is empirical in intention. Presuppositional exegesis is vigorously denounced and inductive analysis wholeheartedly embraced. Induction is seen as neutral and critical of reasoning. The words and phrases of the Bible and their meanings form the point of departure. It is exactly these words and meaning which also provide the interpreter with the historical situation. The analysis could, therefore, also be seen as atomistic. Words and phrases are extrapolated from their literary and interactional context and as such analyzed" (1988:172).

3) See in this regard the work of Paul Ricoeur. He rejects the assumption that to understand a text is to understand the intention of the author, or alternatively, to grasp the text's meaning as it was first grasped by the first readers or hearers who shared the author's cultural tradition. This view, advocated in the nineteenth century by such writers as Schleiermacher and Dilthey, Ricoeur (1976a:92) calls "Romanticist hermeneutics". Ricoeur's criticism of this approach is based on its failure to distinguish between acts of consciousness and written texts.

4) See the useful contribution by Minsky on "A Framework for Representing Knowledge" in 'The Psychology of Computer Vision' (1975:211-280). It is to this frame theory that I will return when attempting to bridge the gap between synchronic semantics and "Traditionsgeschichte". I am particularly grateful to Cilliers Breytenbach for a paper delivered at the 1990 congress of the South African New Testament Society in which he paid attention to frames of understanding. See in this regard his article (1991:257-272).

5) It was John Paul Riquelme (1980:75-86) that spelled out the implications of Iser's fundamental concept: "The 'implied readers', then is a term that names the act of reading itself, that is, a process at once both textual and effective, linguistic and mental" (1980:78). Unfortunately, many text theorists were put off by Iser's ambiguous epistemology.

6) Van Wolde wrote an excellent article (1984:138-167) in which he argues that pragmatics deals not only with the specific denotations of the text, but also with the numerous possible connotations of a text to be realized according to the competence of the actual readers presupposed by



the author.

7) According to Fish (1980:360) it is impossible to have objective knowledge - "This infinite regress could only be halted if one could stand free of any ground whatsoever, if the mind could divest itself of all prejudices and pre-suppositions and start, in the cartesian manner, from scratch; but then, of course, you would have nothing to start with and anything with which you do start (even "I think, therefore I am") would be either prejudice or a pre-supposition".

8) De Saussure maintained that the linguistic sign relates a signifier and a signified (a concept or meaning). Three features of this relationship are, to my mind, crucial to the shift from semantic monism to semantic pluralism. Firstly, the relationship between word and concept is arbitrary and conventional and not casual and necessary. In other words there is a cleavage or bar between the signifier and signified. Secondly, the sign relates a word to a concept, not to external reality. Presumably the so-called real world of object and event stands in some kind of genetic relationship to the semantic system, but the linguistic sign does not incorporate this relationship. Thirdly, both the signifiers and the signifieds are identifiable only through differences, not as metaphysical essences or presence. As de Saussure (1960:120) puts it "a linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas".

9) Presence assumes that in the encounter between the text and the reader, meaning is fully intelligible without any recourse to the text or idea and without reference to any other signs than those presented. The metaphysics of presence assumes that the object examined contains, or consists of a presumed unity, which implies either a center, or an enclosed circumference. For, Derrida, this is hopelessly incorrect.

10) I am particular indebted to Lehnert (1980:79-93) for his valuable contribution on the role of scripts in understanding. His views merit greater attention by text theorists.

11) See the thought-provoking article by Minsky (1975:211-277). On the subject of expectation driven information, Minsky holds the opinion that as people read a text, they generate expectations about what is going to happen next and what they are likely to hear about next. The process of understanding is thus largely a process of generating such expectations and recognizing when an expectation has been substantiated or violated.

12) This fact was pointed out by Louw (1976:76). According to him it is clear that "betekenis 'n saak is wat sowel in die woorde, hulle kombinasie en hulle grammatiese strukture lê en dat dit ook in die situasie gebed is".

13) For a particular useful contribution on Language: Understanding and Using see the study in "Developmental Psychology Today" (1975:223-241). Cf also the work of Piaget, a psychologist who

has studied children's cognitive growth and abilities. He views persons as active and adaptive. By adaptive Piaget means that each individual constantly seeks to understand the environment so that he/she can live effectively within it. Consequently language is of great importance. Piaget and other structuralists have also pointed out that changes in a child's cognitive structures (inner mental muscle, if you will) cannot on their own account for mental growth. The shift to sociocentrism requires in addition relationships with adults and other children. These relationships will force the child to develop new mental abilities and adjust reasoning and communication in order to function effectively in a social environment. Once again the language skill is of paramount importance according to Piaget. See also Klausmeier and Allen (1978:16-24) and Piaget (1976).

14) This holistic conception of language and society is of great importance for theology. Once we are committed to viewing humankind as a unity (by that I mean that we reflect it in our studies) theology will be restored to its rightful place in the scientific community. Although we like to refer to the old distinction of Plato that man consists of body and soul as if it were past tense, this distinction, although buried by the scientific community, is still alive and well within the circles of theology. With the shift in paradigm it is remarkable how often theology, and in this age New Testament studies, impinge on other disciplines and thereby admitting that soul cannot be studied without body.

15) Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle all argue for an approach which views the theory of meaning and the whole of language as a sub-part of a theory of action; thus meaning is defined in terms of what speech acts speakers perform relative to hearers. In one of his most important similes Wittgenstein (1969:17) writes: "Think of tools in a toolbox; there are a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw - driver, a ruler, a glue pot, nails and screws. The function of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects. The error is to look for something in common to the entities which we commonly subsume under a general term".

Wittgenstein introduced his language-game term to call attention to the fact that language-uses are grounded in the particular surroundings of situations in human life. Thus, comparing language with a game he writes "instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all - but they are related to one another in many different ways". He admits that there are similarities, but he believes that these are best described as family resemblances. Thiselton (1980:274-275) draws attention to the fact that there is a second main point behind Wittgenstein's notion of language-games. According to Thiselton "it calls attention to the close connection between language and life: to speaking as an activity or a form of life. The key point is therefore, that when language-games change, there is a change in concepts, and with the concepts the meanings of words change. Indeed what speaking is, and what meaning is, depend on the surroundings in which language is being spoken".

16) Strategies not only depend on textual characteristics, but also on characteristics of the language user, such as his or her goals or world knowledge. This may mean that a reader of a text will try to reconstruct not only the intended meaning of the text as signaled by the writer in various ways in

the text or context - but also as a meaning that is most relevant to his or her own interests and goals.

17) This has been the challenge to historical biblical criticism, because in a way the audience-oriented theories and strategies, such as speech act theory, amount to a much delayed replay within biblical studies of Kant's epochal deflection of critical attention from the object of knowledge to the partly constitutive activity of the knower to give that object its appearance. To me it signifies the awakening of biblical scholarship from its "dogmatic slumber" (as Kant termed his own awakening ).

18) In this respect one should take note of White's article in *Semeia* 41 (1988:1-23). Recently J.E. Botha also published two articles on speech act theory (1991:275-293).

19) Another problem in this regard can be traced to the theory of Searle's. Although he identifies five basic functions of language (1971:47), he deals exclusively with the communicative aspects of language. I believe that it is necessary to analyse speech act argumentation both as to its communicative and to its interactional aspects. It is therefore not strange that Searle paid no attention to perlocution.

20) Language users that argue, as Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1982:31) pointed out, "will not as a rule introduce their argumentation with the phrases 'I argue', but one cannot deduce that arguing is not an illocutionary act from the circumstances that 'I argue' is not a practical performative formula".

21) In an excellent article Dorothea Franck (1981:225-236) underlines the following sin of the speech act theory: "even if we concede that speech act theory gives a rational reconstruction of some crucial types of verbal act, this does not entitle us to consider it as an adequate theory of interaction. Human communication is interactional in a more fundamental way than is represented in the view that two or more speakers mutually address some speech acts to each other, speech acts which are defined entirely in terms of speakers' intentions. The analysis of 'real life-communication' shows - even if cases of misunderstanding are excluded - that the interactional meaning of contributions to the conversation is to some extent subject to mutual negotiation. A considerable degree of indetermination and vagueness leaves room for subsequent precision and also for co-existing interpretations. This indetermination is not just an imperfection of natural communication but more often than not an essential prerequisite for smooth interaction. It is necessary for tact and politeness, for all the face work done in communication - which, in fact, is not marginal but overall and crucial aspect of practically all natural conversations". This article needs the attention of all scholars who are concerned with the study of speech act and conversational analysis.

22) In addition, Grice (1975:45) has proposed four maxims, namely: Quantity (information should be economical), Quality (be sincere), Relation (be relevant), Manner (be perspicuous).

23) See in this regard the remark by Van Dijk (1977:167): "by speaking we DO something, that is, something more than merely speaking, is a simple but important insight from the philosophy of language. It should be added that the use of language is not only some specific act, but an integral part of social INTERACTION. Language systems are CONVENTIONAL systems. Not only do they regulate interaction, but their categories and rules have developed under the influence of the structure of interaction in society. This functional view of language, both as a system and historical product, in which the predominant SOCIAL ROLE of language in interaction is stressed, is a necessary corrective to a 'psychological' view of language and language use, where our competence in speaking is essential an object for the philosophy of mind".

24) One notable exception is the cognitive psychologists and workers in artificial intelligence (Schank and Colby as well as Minsky). They have looked at actions in the context of hierarchical plans which may specify sequences of actions.

25) That this is not a new perspective is evident from the role assigned to questioning in the Socratic dialogues. Especially in 'Euthyphro' and 'Apology' Socrates used the method of engaging the hearer in a dialogue based on the question and answer form, the explicit purpose of which was to demonstrate to his pupils his ignorance in order to be able to start afresh in seeking the real truth. Although Socrates, throughout the dialogues, maintains that he doesn't know the answer that is being sought, it is quite clear from the way in which the dialogues unfold that this is not the case. This type of questioning is, of course, pure information questioning which is control seeking, and Socrates himself admitted that this was partly responsible for his eventual trial and sentence to death.

This method of Socrates's can be illustrated by means of 'Apology'. In his apology Socrates is defending himself against Meletus, who is implying that Socrates corrupts the youth. Socrates responds by asking him point blank in what respect he is corrupting the youth.

Meletus answers that he (Socrates) is a complete atheist. From that point onwards Socrates demonstrates by means of question and answer the ignorance of Meletus, which in turn carries a message about the relationship and status between them. The debate as to whether Socrates is a complete atheist unfolds as follows:

(S) "What an extraordinary statement! Why do you think so, Meletus? Do you mean that I do not believe in the god, head of the sun or moon, like the rest of mankind?

(M) I assure you, judges, that he does not: for he says that the sun is stone, and the moon earth.

(S) Friend, Meletus, do you think that you are accusing Anaxagoras? Have you such a low opinion of the judges, that you fancy them so illiterate as not to know that these doctrines are found in the books of Anaxagoras the Clazomenian, which are full of them? And so, forsooth, the youth are said to be thought them by Socrates, when they can be bought in the book market for one drachma at most; and they might pay their money, and laugh at Socrates if he pretends to father these extraordinary views. And so, Meletus, you really think that I do not believe in any god?

(M) I swear by Zeus that you verily believe in none at all.

(S) Nobody will believe you, Meletus, and I am pretty sure that you do not believe yourself. I cannot help think, men of Athens, that Meletus is reckless and impudent, and that he has brought this indictment in a spirit of wantonness and youthful bravado. Has he not compounded a riddle, thinking to try me? He said to himself: I shall see whether the wise Socrates will discover my facetious self contradiction or whether I shall be able to deceive him and the rest of them. For he certainly does not appear to me to contradict himself in the indictment as much as if he said that Socrates is guilty of not believing in the gods, and yet of believing in them - but this is not like a person in earnest" (Allen 1966:84).

See in this regard also Bultmann (1910) as well as Betz (1971).

26) The fact that questions carry messages about relationships and relative status as well as appropriateness means that there is a shift away from the information function of questions to the command function of questions. Goody (1978:40) has convincingly argued that the "securing of information becomes secondary to considerations of status relations whether the questioning is being used to defer to a superior to challenge an equal, or to fix responsibility on a subordinate. The pure information question hasn't got a chance".

27) Although I have mentioned both cultural and social strategies they could, of course, be considered part of the whole social-scientific study of the New Testament. This study presupposes a relationship between the text and the socio-historical environment from which it originated.

28) It is a well known fact that the so-called form-critical school had an inquiry into the socio-historical-cultural background of a text as early as the beginning of the century. Although Hermann Gunkel is acknowledged as the father of the form-critical method, the New Testament strand of form-criticism originated from Martin Dibelius. Dibelius (in Hahn: 1985:23-24) formulated the task of form criticism as follows: "Die Formgeschichte hat es bekanntlich nicht mit den abgeschlossen literarischen Werken zu tun, sondern mit den kleinen Einheiten, die in mündlicher oder schriftlicher Überlieferung weitergegeben werden, deren Kenntniss wir aber freilich aus Büchern schöpfen, in die sie Aufnahme gefunden haben... Die Formgeschichte stellt sich vielmehr die grössere und schwierigere Aufgabe, Entstehung und Geschichte dieser Einzelstücke zu rekonstruieren, somit die Geschichte der vorliterarischen Überlieferung aufzuhellen, und im der Synoptiker - eine art Paläontologie der Evangelien zu schaffen". In other words the basic assumption is that a segment of traditional material can be identified first of all by its form. This form is associated with a specific situation, as a result of its repeated use in that situation. By analyzing both form and content of such traditional material one could reconstruct the situation that gave birth to it.

The question that needs to be answered is in what way the social scientific study of the New Testament is related or indebted to the Sitz im Leben approach. Is Schutz (1982:10) correct when he says that "the sociological interest latent in form criticism makes it apparent that current attention to social questions is but continuous with the recent past of biblical scholarship?" What is after all the benefit of this mode? Couldn't the present study be done in terms and with the strategies of the Form

Criticism and wouldn't the result be the same?

These are probing questions. Theissen's (1982:186) approach, which will form part and parcel of the social strategy, sees in the sociological approach a continuance of the form critical *Sitz im Leben* investigations. The *Sitz im Leben*, however, was concerned with collecting explicit evidence as to the social and historical context and used the data for a social description of the presumed reconstructed socio historical background of the texts (Elliot 1981:3).

To my mind the interest was primarily historical and nothing can be found in these publications that can really be considered to be on social-scientific theory. As a matter of fact, this earlier approach was a naive description of the social setting, whereby social information was used to undergird and supplement historical supposition. There exists a continuity and a discontinuity between the current social-scientific approach and earlier socio-historical investigations (See Schutz 1982:3). The continuity goes so far as it both values the knowledge of the social setting of the text as well as the frame of reference within which to understand the text.

The current approach represents a discontinuity in that it is not primarily interested in reconstructing history or even theology, but it is eminently interested in interpreting the content of texts that relate sociology, anthropology or psychology. It is in the last resort also a discontinuity in so far as it is an interactional approach and therefore endeavours not to be reductionistic - a charge that some of the earlier approaches could not escape.

29) See in this regard the useful contribution by Van Staden (1991:26-35). According to him there is a definite difference between a social and sociological approach. He prefers the term social-scientific analysis to sociological approach because such an approach is not intent on accumulating data. That corresponds with the strategy of our model.

30) The fact that Meeks avoids reductionism resulted in an unwillingness to explicate his theoretical presuppositions. Elliot (1985:332) amongst others criticized him severely because he "is reluctant to explicate his sociological theory and models and to spell out more adequately the implications of his moderate functionalist perspective on the Pauline social world. Consequently, it is often unclear how his "piecemeal theory" informs and shapes his conclusions". However Harris (1984:110) commends Meeks' approach as a "balanced use of historical-critical and sociological-anthropological methods and theories". Even Elliot (1985:333) recommends it as the "best single volume on the Pauline social world" (1983:7).

31) In the Greco-Roman world the group was more important than the individual. The individual received status from the group. Therefore, recognition and approval from others were important. Interaction was characterized by the competition for recognition and the defense of one's own status and honour. To refuse a person's claim for honour was to put the person to shame. The basic notion behind all studies of honour and shame is that they represent the value of a person in his or her own eyes but also in the eyes of his or her society.

Pitt-Rivers (1968:503-504) gives an excellent summary of the multifaceted concept of

honour: "It is a sentiment, a manifestation of this sentiment in conduct, and the evaluation of this conduct by others, that is to say, reputation. It stands as a mediator between individual aspiration and the judgement of society. It can, therefore, be seen to reflect the values of a group with which a person identifies himself. But honor as a fact, rather than a sentiment, refers not merely to the judgement of others but to their behavior. The facets of honor may be viewed as related in the following way: Honor felt becomes honor claimed, and honor claimed becomes honor paid. The same principles that govern the transactions of honor are present in those of dishonor though in reverse: the withdrawal of respect dishonors, since it implies a rejection of the claim to honor and this implies the sentiment of shame. To be put to shame is to be denied honor, and it follows that this can only be done to those who have some pretension to it. Honor and dishonor, therefore provide the currency in which people compete for a reputation and the means whereby their appraisal of themselves can be validated and integrated into the social system".

See in this regard the useful contributions by Halvor Moxnes (1988a) and (1988b: 207-218).

In the South African context, the work of Joubert has to be noted. See in this regard the following articles (1990:335-349), (1991:39-54) and (1992:55-65).

32) This article by Wuellner (1989) is of fundamental importance to all working in this field. It lies beyond the scope of this study to dwell on the separate ways hermeneutics and rhetorics went in the Twelfth Century, but surely one must learn from the fault and inadequacies of our past.

33) Concerning the Reformers, Wuellner (1989:6) pointed out that their basic presupposition, namely that scripture interprets itself, is political and not hermeneutic. According to him "the failure of admitting that all biblical scholarship is political is due not so much to the inability to see these realities as to explore their implications and face up their consequences. This does not mean that scholarship on biblical hermeneutics and rhetoric is either reducible to politics, or that it is 'only political' but it does mean that questions of power are (still, as they have been) an inextricable element in the story of biblical interpretation". We can thus safely conclude that without rhetorical strategies the theology of the Reformation cannot be understood.

34) I believe that once the importance of rhetoric is fully acknowledged, we will move away from the idealistic nature of New Testament scholarship. In a recent publication of Bauckham's (1989:14) he writes: "It's (a biblical text's) meaning for us depends, then, on its wider literary contexts in the canon (so far as we take these into account), on traditional context (such as its interpretation in a particular theological tradition or its traditional place in the liturgy) which may influence our understanding of it, and on the contemporary context within which we read. What this contemporary context amounts to depends, of course, on the interpreter's particular relationship to the world in which he lives".

35) The most successful exponents of the socio-rhetorical method are V Robbins (1984) and



N.R. Petersen (1985).

36) See also Hughes's article (1989:30-32) in which he emphasizes that in Aristotle's rhetorical system the genres are "linked and differentiated by the phenomenon of time". Aristotle notes that although the proper time for the epideictic genre is the present, the epideictic speakers may also recall the past and anticipate the future.

37) That the concept of status forms the cornerstone of the classical rhetorical theory is mainly due to the work of Hermagoras. According to Braet (1987:79) it is to him that we owe the development of the doctrine of status as a closed procedure of invention. In Hermagoras the concept of stasis was linked with the so-called *krinomenon* schema, of which the purpose was to steer the *inventio* of the prosecutor and the defendant in legal proceedings. In a later development in Quintilian we find the most logical interpretation of the status in the sense that it "is the genus *quaestionis*, the sort of questioning to which a particular concrete *quaestio* from the schema belongs" (Braet 1987:82).

38) J.N. Vorster (1990:119) claims that "although the identification and explanation of these status situations occur within a judicial situation or courtroom these questions with slight alternations, could apply to any rhetorical situation".

39) In this regard there is some contention as to whether epistolography as well as *ethos* and *pathos* are part of the literary structure or whether they are part of the rhetorical structure. With regard to the issue, both Kennedy (1984:31), Watson (1988:104) and Bouman (1980:272) argued that rhetorical theory and epistolary theory were not integrated and matters which concerned letter writing were not discussed systematically by rhetors. The mere fact, according to Bouman (1980:272) "dat men het schrijven van een brief op elk willekeurige moment kan onderbreken maakt het verschil tussen een brief en een redevoering levensgroot".

I, however, disagree with these findings. Recently Hughes (1989:19-30) wrote an article in which he convincingly argued that ancient letters did in fact employ rhetorical style. This view is substantiated by two earlier articles by A.J. Malherbe (1977:3-77) and White (1982: 1730-1756). See in this regard also Wuellner (1979:177) and the warning by Black (1988\9: 257) when he said "the interconnections among oratory, dialectic, drama and the epistolography are genuine, albeit hazy". The adequacy of strictly rhetorical canons for interpreting all texts of all genres with persuasive intent is a debatable premise, which rhetorical critics need to think through".

40) In this regard there is the excellent "La Nouvelle Rhetorique. The New Rhetoric. Essays en hommage a Chaim Perelman" (1979 ) in which various articles emphasized the contributions made by Perelman. See also Anderson's (1979:39-50) as well as Perelman's (1967:110) and (1979:1-42).

41) It is important to note the difference between the old and the new rhetoric. The old rhetoric can be regarded as the theory of literary prose, or a theory of expression. Perelman's 'New



Rhetoric' constitutes a break with the concept of reason and reasoning due to Descartes's famous words "Cogito ergo sum", which of course, had an enormous influence on Western thought over the last three centuries. Although it would hardly occur to anyone to deny (I think, therefore I am) that the power of deliberation and argumentation is a distinctive sign of reasonable being, the study of the methods of proof used to secure adherence has been completely neglected by logicians and epistemologists for the last three centuries.

Perelman's rediscovery of rhetoric evolved from his concern over the finding he reached about values in his first essay on justice, namely, that there was no basis of logical necessity or experiential universality for judgements of values. According to Perelman (1979:8) this study on value led inevitably "to the conclusion that if justice consists in the systematic implementation of certain value judgements it does not rest on any rational foundation. As for the value, that is the foundation of the normative system, we cannot subject it to any rational criterion: it is utterly arbitrary and logically indeterminate. The idea of value is, in effect incomparable both with formed necessity and experiential universality. There is no value which is not logically arbitrary".

From the above mentioned point Perelman's inquiry went to the construction of the new rhetoric as the modern theory of argumentation. It is Perelman's contention that it is not viable to treat argumentation as a loose approximation of strict logic in the way Aristotle centers his rhetoric on the enthymeme and example as loose deduction and induction. Eventually Perelman and Madam Olbrecht-Tyteca rediscovered a part of Aristotelian logic that had long been forgotten or at any rate, ignored and despised. It was the part dealing with dialectical reasoning which was rediscovered.

Perelman, however, prefers the term rhetoric to dialectic although the term dialectic served for centuries to designate logic itself. However, since the time of Hegel, it has acquired a meaning which is very remote from its original one. It is clear that the "New Rhetoric" will go beyond the bounds of ancient rhetoric.

The ancient rhetoric was primarily the art of public speaking in a persuasive way: it was therefore concerned with the use of the spoken word, with discourse to a crowd gathered in a public square, with a view to securing its adherence to the thesis presented. The "New Rhetoric" is concerned with the structure of argumentation; it is a theory of argumentation. Perelman makes argumentation the complement of a formal logic. The special mark of rhetoric contributes to its value and the process of justifying and judging amounts to stating one's position - a behavioural matter. The role of the mind thus moves from the subjective-objective distinction, to a role that is evident in argumentation processes of criticizing and justifying, namely persuading, convincing and so on. Perhaps it is best to compare the new rhetoric with the thought of Satre, Dewey and the later Wittgenstein, which in this respect is closest to Perelman. For Satre one discovers one's own standards after one has chosen and acted. Perelman believes that the prior argumentation enables us to underscore decisions. Dewey, like Perelman, does not make his logic prior to action (1938:26). For Dewey action is an empirical verification of the inquiry. For Perelman, on the other hand, the reasoning has an integrity of its own and its durability is tested by action. For Wittgenstein language use has a logic of its own, but each use is so particularized in meaning as to have its own unique logic. Perelman also stresses the specializations of logic but this does not eliminate general logic. For Wittgenstein action and the use of

language result in a purgation of fundamental philosophy. Perelman seeks to restore language and action which would eventually lead to the liberating of philosophy instead of the purging of philosophy.

42) This view of rhetoric as declamation is not a new one. Perelman (1979:5) indicated that the same view was taken of the Roman Empire and "once serious matters, both political and judiciary, had been withdrawn from its influence, rhetoric became perforce limited to school exercises, to set speeches treating either a theme of the past or an imaginary situation, but, in any case, one without any real bearing. Serious people... made fun of it. Thus Epictetus declares: 'But this faculty of speaking and of our naming words, if there is indeed any such peculiar faculty, what else does it do, when there happens to be discourse about a thing, than to ornament the words and arrange them as hairdressers do the hair'".

43) According to Patte (1983:340) Paul reveals an ambivalent attitude towards values. To me it would rather seem that the apostle frequently refers to a concrete value as a means to stabilize a universal value or abstract value which according to Perelman (1982:25) serves as "a basis for critiques of society, and can be tied to a justification for change to a revolutionary spirit".

44) See in this regard Corbett's (1965:96) formulation of topoi when he said: "Perhaps the student will gain a clearer notion of the function of the topics as 'suggesters', as 'prompters', as 'inisiaters' as a checklist of ideas on some subject. Being general heads or categories, the topics 'prime the pump', as it were, by suggesting general strategies development". See also the article by Wuellner (1978:463:483) in which he argues on topos as a rhetorical rather than literary issue. Wuellner (1978:466) argues that Toposforschung gehört zur Rhetorik als Teil der Literaturwissenschaft. Als Forschung wird sie aber auch von anderen Wissenschaftszweigen betrieben". According to him (1978:467) "hat der Topos eine zweifache Funktion: eine argumentative-enthymematische und eine amplifikatorisch-darstellerische Funktion. Der doppel Funktion des Topos in der Antike entspricht die Doppelbedeutung des lateinische argumentum: ein Argument ist sowohl 'rhetorischer Beweisgrund' als auch 'Erzählung, Stoff, Inhalt, Gehalt'".

Another article that needs mentioning is that by Brunt (1985:495-500) in which he indicates that topoi do not give general advice but are rather referring to a specific situation. This is also a fitting response to Perelman's idea.

## CHAPTER THREE

### AN INTERACTIONAL MODEL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF 1 CORINTHIANS

What ever we know is mediated by a language in which we know it. And if language is the sine qua non instrument of knowing, the knowledge seeker had better be in control of the instrument. Bad language generates bad thinking; and bad thinking is bad for whatever the knowledge-seeker does next.

(Sartorini 1984:15)

The struggle for a clearer conceptualization of the constant interaction of the static and dynamic elements in the communication process is but one aspect of the quest for an adequate paradigm for the interpretation of biblical texts.

(Lategan 1988:72)

**T**he purpose of this study is to develop an interactional model for the analysis of New Testament letters and so as to shed light on the issue of wisdom and foolishness. I believe that the discussions up to this point have succeeded in substantiating the claim of Umberto Eco (1979:38) that as far as the problem of textual levels is concerned there are more things in a text than one dreamt of in one's text theories.

I believe that this study has confirmed that texts are multidimensional phenomena. Therefore the uncovering of the deficiencies of our one dimensional approaches to the Bible in the past has been inevitable. It is in this regard that an interactional model is proposed to address these deficiencies by taking the communication process in its totality into account. But, let me immediately add that I admit to the provisional and imperfect nature of this model.

Nonetheless, as the following chapters will hopefully illustrate, this model has an important contribution to make<sup>1</sup>.

In the previous chapter I indicated that the proposed model consists of a series of strategies, because language communication is not level oriented but holistic in its orientation. In the following sections these different strategies will be applied to 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5.

### 3.1 SENTENCE STRATEGY

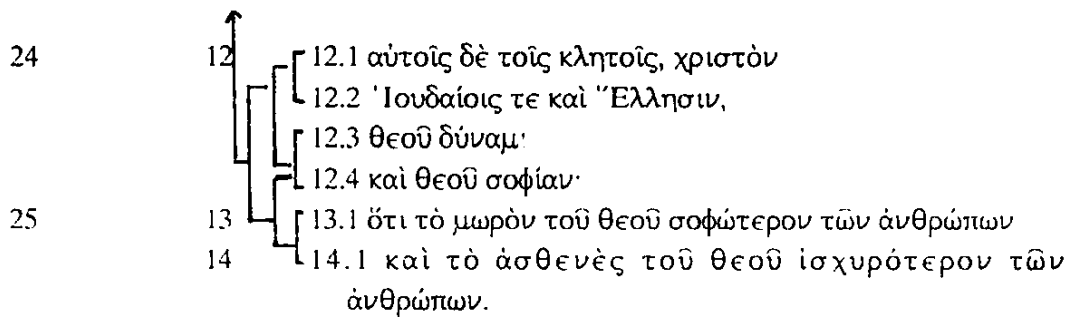
The sentence strategy refers to the way in which Paul produced and formulated the verbal utterances of this pericope. In most cases these strategies will not be preprogrammed, intended or conscious. Rather, we should say, they are strategies of the cognitive system, usually beyond the conscious control of the language user.

#### 3.1.1 Sentence structure

On the level of sentence structure, the text of 1 Corinthians 1:18 and further reveals the following strategies:

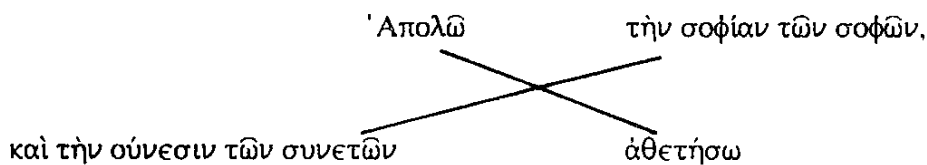
#### PERICOPE 1: THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD\FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS (1:18-25)

Verse	Colon	
18	1	1.1 ῥό τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς
		1.2 μέν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν,
	2	2.1 τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν.
19	3	3.1 γέγραπται γάρ,
		3.2 Ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν,
		3.3 καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω.
20	4	4.1 ποῦ σοφός (ἐστίν);
	5	5.1 ποῦ γραμματεὺς; (ἐστίν);
	6	6.1 ποῦ συζητητὴς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (ἐστίν);
	7	7.1 οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου;
21	8	8.1 ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ
		οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν θεόν,
		8.2 εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς σῶσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας.
		8.3 διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος
22	9	9.1 ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν
	10	10.1 καὶ Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν,
23	11	11.1 ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον.
		11.2 Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον
		11.3 ἔθνεσιν δὲ μωρίαν,



Cola 1 and 2 are expanded in much the same way. Colon 1.1 indicates in whose eyes ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ is μωρία. Colon 2.1 refers to those in whose eyes it is δύναμις θεοῦ. The two datives in 1.1 and 2.1 are both *dativi commodi*.

Colon 3 might also be divided into three colons (γέγραπται...γὰρ ἀπολῶ..σοφῶν, καὶ..ἀθετήσω). However, in terms of the entire statement the quoted statement functions as the direct object of content of the verb γέγραπται and consequently 3, 13.2 and 3.3 serve as expansions of the matrix 3.1. One should also take note of the chiasmic structure of colon three:



Cola 4-7 and 9, 10, 12, 13 are simple statements without expansion, while colons 8 and 11 are more complex.

In colon 8 the main noun is ὁ θεὸς while the main verb is εὐδόκησεν. Colon 8.1 serves as the protasis of a causal statement in which the matrix serves as apodosis. Colon 8.2 complement εὐδοκῆσαι and it is expanded by colon 8.3, which in turn identifies the instrument of εὐδοκῆσαι.

In colon 11, cola 11.2-11.3 modify the direct object Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον. The accusatives σκάνδαλον, μωρίαν are in apposition to the Χριστὸν of 11.1.

Our next step will be to indicate the relationship of each colon to the other. In order to achieve that, our strategy will focus on the syntactic and paradigmatic connections as well as the semantic relations between the different cola. Paradigmatic connections will refer to significant terms and concepts while semantic relations<sup>2</sup> will refer to additive relations, dyadic relations, qualificational relations and logical relations.

Colon 1 and 2 are connected by the combination of μέν ..δέ, while the semantic relationship between the two colons is dyadic constrative (for some the message is nonsense, for others it is God's power).

In the second cluster of cola 3-8 the only syntactic connector is γάρ in colon 8. Cola 4-7 are asyndetic, while the paradigmatic connection centers around the recurrence of the σοφία\μωρία motif. Semantically the rhetorical questions specify the generic expression in colon 3 and serve as the ground of the implication in colon 7. Colon 8 is related to colon 7 as the means for which it constitutes the result.

In the third cluster cola 9-10 are connected by καί to form an additive-different (parallel) semantic relation (the Jews want miracles for proof and the Greeks look for wisdom). Colon 11 is connected to 9-10 by δέ and forms a dyadic-constrative relation, (as for us we proclaim the crucified Christ, a message that is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles). Colon 12 and 13 are connected to each other to form an additive-different (parallel) semantic relation (God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength). Within this third cluster there are three paradigmatic connections: power/weakness, wisdom/foolishness, Jew/Gentile.

In order to discern the semantic relationship between the clusters we could reduce them to three single sentences, namely:

- a. The message of the cross is weak and foolish to those who are perishing, but it is God's power to us that are saved.
- b. God has fooled the wisdom of the world by saving believers through the foolishness of the kerygma.
- c. God is wiser and stronger than humans. Therefore we preach Christ.

These three sentences constitute three themes that in turn form a concentric pattern:

- A** wise versus foolish (1:18-20)
- B** preaching saves believers (1:21),
- C** Jews demand signs and Greeks wisdom - we preach Christ crucified (1:22-23)
- C** To Jews a stumbling block, to Greeks folly 1:23)
- B** Christ is power\wisdom to those called (1:24)
- A** wise\weak versus the foolish\strong (1:25)

The material following continues to develop the same motifs, but, since it introduces the topic of the Corinthians' own experiences, it should be treated as a separate paragraph.

### Exegetical Excursus:

Verse 18 starts with the γάρ which links verses 17 to 18.

According to Weiss (1910:55) the γάρ introduce the whole paragraph rather than v.18 alone. There is also a number of verbal links between v.18 and the preceding material (σταυρός, λόγος, μωρία which is identical to the σοφία λόγου in verse 17. The message that belongs to the Cross, as distinct from the message that belongs to wisdom or the message that is skillfully expressed, produces a division among men.

Ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ puts the cross in the center (Weiss 1910:55). The omission of Christ is deliberative - all the weight is laid on the Cross. The Corinthians would be happy to speak of the message of Christ, but they would interpret it as a message expressed through wisdom. In other word λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ expands the εὐαγγελίεσθαι from verse 17. It is difficult to distinguish adequately here between objective and subjective genitive, because it is both a message which is about the Cross and one which in a way is given by the Cross. It is important to stress that λόγος is the subject of both verbs (ἐστίν-ἐστιν) in verse 18. It is not simply the Cross which is a folly, but the λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ.

When this Cross is preached men react in different ways and are judged differently by God. The present tense of the two participles ἀπολλυμένοις and σωζομένοις must be given its full significance. They are eschatological terms which is already manifest in the present.

Μερία comes in as a natural correlate to σοφία λόγοῦ (verse 17) but it is important to recognize that it must be defined in terms of the relationship that it has to those who 'are being destroyed'. In the Classical Greek with reference to men the use is predominantly psychological. It implies a weakness that may be due to a specific failure in judgement or decision.

Louw and Nida (1988:380) relates μωρία to the domain of understanding and in particular to the subdomain of a lack of capacity of understanding. In other words those that are lost or destroyed lack understanding.

What ultimately saves is not σοφία but the δύναμις. The addition of Θεοῦ with δύναμις is necessary, even though it weakens the contrast with folly. The Cross is not some vague power as human power, as folly was human folly, but the power of God.

Verse 19 is proof of what is stated in verse 18. γέγραπται refers to the Old Testament Scriptures and in particular to Isa. 29:14. Paul uses Isa. 29:14 (LXX) with the alteration of κρύψω into ἀθετήσω. Paul's variation, according to Weiss (1910:57) and Barrett (1968:52) may be due to Psalm 32:10 (LXX). In any case, he has made the quotation more suitable to the context in which he uses it. It is evident that the wisdom spoken of here is a wisdom of this world (verse 20), a wisdom that leaves God out of the account and is man-centered. The sense of the word wisdom has already changed from 1:17, for it is no longer a way of speaking but a way of thinking. Nonetheless, not only is the wisdom of this world mentioned in the Old Testament, the Old Testament predicts its overthrow.

Verse 20 is characterized by three difficult terms σοφός, γραμματεὺς, συζητητής. According to Weiss (1910:57) their use has been occasioned by Paul's use of a *florilegium*. Birger Pearson (1975:45) has revived and extended a previous suggestion that Paul is indebted to sermons based on Bar 3.9-4.4 which he had heard in the synagogue on the 9th Ab. On that occasion the Haphtorah text for the day was Jer. 8:13-9:24. If so, Paul uses his knowledge of Jewish Wisdom teaching in order to correct the wisdom of the Corinthians. According to Weiss (1910:57) the form of the question reminds one of Bar 3.16. Of the terms the most striking is γραμματεὺς. How are we to understand the three terms?

1. Perhaps the Corinthians had ascribed the terms to the so called three party heroes. Paul could certainly be the scribe, Apollos could either be the scribe or the wise man, but one cannot attach any of the descriptions easily to Peter.
2. They may be a categorization of learned men as understood by the culture generally. The first would then be the Greek philosopher, the second the Jewish scribe and the third might be the sophist. Alternatively the first term might be generic, the second refer to the Jewish wise man and the third to the wise man of the Gentile world. (See Wilckens 1957:27).
3. It is also probable that we have a repetition of terms about learned men in order to show



that all forms of human learning are included when God is said to 'reject wisdom and understanding' (Schrage 1991:176, Best 1980:21, Grosheide 1957:60).

4. Until v.22 very little is said about the Jews. In all probability verse 20 sheds light on the spiritual milieu of the Pharisaic school which Paul himself experienced. In Acts 22:3, Luke indicates a second stage of education, that must be clearly distinguished from childhood. This stage began at the age of fifteen at the feet of Gamaliel. In other words these terms are designations from the Pharisaic *bet midrash*. The Corinthians understood these otherwise uncomprehensible terms, because during his eighteen-month stay there Paul will have told them of his former study of the law. In other words, verse 20 has an autobiographical background. What was formerly the aim of his own profession here becomes the embodiment of the wisdom of this world, because Paul once himself took offense at the cross as his contemporary representatives did and still do.

Louw and Nida (1988:328) classifies the first of these terms under the domain of learn. γραμματεὺς refers to the acquisition of information - in other words a person who has acquired a high level of education. σοφός on the other hand belongs to the semantic domain of understanding and specifically the subdomain of capacity for understanding.

Louw and Nida (1988:380) nevertheless underlines the fact that both these domains are overlapping and involve either the acquisition of information as in γραμματεὺς, or the process by which information is used in order to arrive at a correct evaluation or comprehension as in σοφός. συζητητής again implies strong emotional involvement over information which could cause differences of opinion. This noun remains unattested elsewhere in Greek. The verb συζητεῖν can mean 'to examine together' especially in regard to philosophical speculation, or, more forcefully 'to strive'. Also keep in mind that τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου is not an objective genitive after συζητητής. The genitive indeed qualifies all three terms: all three categories belong to the world (Weiss 1910:57, Lightfoot 1895:159). This is confirmed by the rest of the argument wherein only a two part distinction is made, between Greek and Jew (1:22-24). Thus the anomalous term may be seen as another reference to the behaviour of the factionalists within the community.

Τοῦ κόσμου is here equivalent to τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. In other words, the three personal references are combined and explained in the phrase τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ κόσμου. The genitive is a subjective genitive. The wisdom of the world - meaning the values of the world (the content rather than the form of wisdom is here at stake) is destroyed and completed. Note the difference between the future tense in verse 19, and the praesens in cola 4.1-6.1 and the aorist in colon 7.1.

To conclude: Paul refers to a wisdom in a generic sense. Not only do the three terms of verse 20 reflect this generic use - verse 22 also refers to Jews and Greeks as representatives of the world and its wisdom. The generic sense in which the wisdom of the world is destroyed is also evident in the use of the genitive of attribute in the phrase τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (Schrage 1991:177).

The γάρ of verse 21 indicates that this v. 21 provides the basis for the latter half of verse 20. ἐπεὶ γάρ has a causal meaning (Blass-Debrunner 1961:455). In other words this verse introduces as the main thought God's refutation of the world's wisdom by means of what the world holds to be folly.

The phrase ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ is somewhat controversial. Exegetes in Britain, from Lightfoot to Barrett (1968:53), have tended to argue that in the first phrase σοφία refers to a scheme, or plan, prepared and enacted by God for the salvation of mankind and that in the second phrase it refers to the σοφία τοῦ κόσμου of the preceding verse. Weiss (1910:60) protests that the meaning of ἐπεὶ and εὐδόκησεν is thus weakened: 'wenn schon jenes Nichterkennen eine gottliche Fügung ist, so ist nicht einzusehen, wie Gott dadurch zu einem neuen Entschluss veranlasst werden konnte'. In other words, to use the language of later theology, Paul is here concerned not with the antecedent but with the consequent will of God, not with a prelapsarian but with a postlapsarian decree. God's wisdom is, so to speak, there from the beginning - from the creation. ἐν must therefore not be understood in a temporal sense but rather in a local sense. There is then at least an indirect reference here to the wisdom of God in creation portrayed in differing ways in Job 28; Prov. 8; Sir 1, 24; Baruch 3-4. But wisdom is often being hypostatized here. The question of hypostatization is in any case a difficult one and it has to be affirmed that Paul does not make the sharp distinction between God's purpose in creation and his purpose in history which most exegetes nowadays make. Thus if the wisdom of God in 1:21 can indeed be said to refer to God's purpose or plan in or for history that does not rule out a reference to the wisdom which was with him in the beginning, but it remains true that the reference here is to the consequent will of God in the first instance. From within the foolishness of the kerygma, and only from there, can we see what God's wisdom in creation is really like.

To summarize: Paul's immediate target is the false view of wisdom held by the Corinthians; but his proclamation of the power of the gospel in its foolishness goes much further than that. God's wisdom is that he has shut up all wisdom. Everything seems to be overthrown here, including that wisdom which was associated with the Torah and, by implication if not explicitly, the whole 'tremendous scheme of the world history and saving history which was bound up with that Jewish theology of wisdom' (Von Rad 1962:445). That also explains the relation between ἐν and διὰ. God is wisdom - the wisdom is his alone. τὸν Θεόν is therefore emphatic by position (Schrage 1991:179).

εὐδόκησεν connects directly with γάρ and indicates God's gracious act of initiative. The precise reference of the aorist is not clear; that of σωσαι is the cross. The phrase that follows cannot be divided μωρία τοῦ κηρύγματος. The subject of the verb is now God. God has saved men by his folly. As in v. 18, Paul might have said that God was pleased to save through the word of the Cross, but his choice of μωρία, which continues the theme of verse 20, brings out the antithesis to the διὰ τῆς σοφίας of the earlier part of verse 21. The aorist εὐδόκησεν is a punctual aorist which denotes the action, not in process, but completed, or viewed as a whole. In other words, it does not refer to the thing that is preached but to the proclamation itself. The result of the proclamation of foolishness is not the communication of knowledge about God, but the act of salvation. πιστεύοντες is a present participle

that refers to those who are in the state of believing.

**Verse 22-24** 2vv.22-24 furnishes the ground for v. 21. ἐπεὶδὴ, while causal has according to Blass-Debrunner (1961:456.3) only a loose connecting affect.

ὁ κόσμος is now explained as consisting of Jews and Greeks. Thus the cosmos is not the totality of mankind but the totality which does not go God's way. Paul's division of cosmos into Jews and Greeks is therefore an attempt to create comprehensiveness, here with totality of humanity. Weiss (1910:62) suggests that the Jews are introduced because the party of Apollos drew on the Jewish Wisdom tradition, in particular by supplying elegant scriptural proofs for the necessity of the Cross and he takes signs with the sense it has in the Fourth Gospel. Clearly the signs which are given and explained in that Gospel are not those for which the Jews ask. Based on this supposes that the Corinthians' conception of wisdom is derived from hellenistic Judaism, this statement does not explain the reference to signs at this point. Many commentators have also attempted to find in the two clauses of v. 22 some unifying idea which could be set against the approach of verse 23. Since Jews and Greeks make up the totality of mankind Conzelmann speaks of the demand for a proof of the divine truth as common to both - both expect God to submit himself to their criteria and prove himself. Barrett (1968:54) thinks of the two clauses as giving us the two expressions, religious and unreligious of the man in the world who is alienated from God and manifesting his rebellion in anthropocentric existence. To my mind, we should not think of these attitudes as provoked by the preaching of the Gospel which would make v. 23 the basis for v. 22. The σημεῖα and σοφία are characteristic of the way these people live and characteristic of their approach to God.

Verse 23 stands in antithetical parallelism to v. 22. Jew and Greek may be different in their approaches to God, but they form a unit when compared with Paul's approach - we preach Christ crucified. ἡμεῖς is emphatic. Christ is used here as a name and not as a title so that the emphasis lies not on it but on ἐσταυρωμένον - we preach a crucified man. Schrage (1988:309) takes ἐσταυρωμένος as a participium perfectum "mit resultativer Funktion ist und also das Gekreuzigtsein nicht in die Vergangenheit abschiebt".

Louw and Nida (1988:309) classifies ἐκάνδρα under the semantic domain of attitudes and emotions and specifically under the sub domain of offend be offended. It is appropriate that Paul should use this word for the Jew and not for the Greek. The Jew sees redemptive value in many things: the law, circumcision, the prophets, his descent from Abraham. To accept redemptive value in a crucified man would mean for him his rejection of the redemptive value of these other privileges. The Greek, however, seeks wisdom, and for him the Cross is folly. In other words, when Paul speaks of the crucified Christ as a stumbling block to the Jews, he is describing not only his present experience of mission but the personal offence which he had taken to the message of the crucified Messiah as a Pharisaic scribe on the basis of his understanding of the Torah, when he still knew Christ 'after the flesh'. Paul's interpretation of Gal. 3:13 can best be explained against this background.

In vv. 22 and 23 the antithesis is drawn between the attitude of the Jew and the Greek in their approach to God and God's own approach to man through Christ. In verse 24 the antithesis is now redrawn between Jew and Greek on the one hand, and the called on the other hand. The antithesis remains whether we take *χριστόν* as the direct object repeated from verse 23 or, preferably, as the beginning of an independent clause - 'but to the called, Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power'. The use of the dative reflects the unity between what is said and, the reflected reality (see v.30).

The question that remains is why Christ is called the power and wisdom of God? If the wisdom is a reference to the Greeks, then surely *dynamis* should make way for *σημεῖον* because it is a more appropriate referral to the Jews. No one can doubt the fact that wisdom was indeed a very popular word within the community, whereas in another situation the gospel is called the *dynamis* of God (Rom 1:16). Also keep in mind that the connection between these two words goes back a long way - especially to the wisdom traditions (Bar. 3:14; Josas 13,14). Even in the prophetic utterances concerning the son of Man reference is made to power and wisdom (Is.11:2). Of special importance is the connection between wisdom and power in Prov. 8:14 where *ἰσχύς* is a personal attribute of wisdom. It is therefore more than a mere two words to describe God's way of acting. Instead it is a comprehensive way of focusing on the salvation that is given in Christ as well as the proclamation thereof. The attributes of Christ, namely his *δύναμις* and *σοφία* stand in close proximity to the genitive *θεοῦ*. Actually it is a genitive of origin.

**Verse 25** gives a reason for what has preceded, but it is not clear whether Paul does so by setting forth a general rule for the way God behaves, of which the Cross is a particular example, or by reinforcing what he has already said by means of an additional reason. In the two clauses Paul uses neuter adjectives instead of substantives. Since the abstract nouns are available (as in v. 18,21,23) and have not been used we may suspect that when he uses the neuter adjectives he is thinking of the particular action of God in the Cross (Weiss 1910:34, Schrage 1991:189). In favour of seeing v. 25 as a general rule is the easy transition it provides to v. 26 where it is again exemplified in the kind of people whom God has chosen to compose the Corinthian church.

The paradoxical nature of this verse is further illustrated by the phrase *καὶ τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ θεοῦ ἰσχυρότερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων*. Of particular importance is the diction of *ἀσθένεια*. Not only would it include various physical afflictions along with constraints of judgement and insight; but in a figurative sense it signifies features of insignificance and ignobility. Within this range of meaning Paul commonly associates *ἀσθενεῖα* and powerlessness (Keep in mind the distinction between language (*ἀσθενεῖα*) and metalanguage (powerlessness)). Note the frequent number of times this *asthen* word group is interpreted through the language of power (1:25-27, 2:3, 15:43, 2 Cor. 2:9-10, 13:3-4). In this verse Paul proceeds accordingly. He asserts that to those who are called, Christ manifests the power and wisdom of God and then qualifies that claim in chiasmic fashion by pointing to the paradox upon which it rests. Christ can be perceived as the power of God only 'through the paradoxical lens which refracts its

definition at some distance from the human formulation of power. Shaped by the paradox in which it occurs, τὸ ἀσθενές moves to its correlation with the power of God by first signifying the powerlessness which opposes human power.

## PERICOPE 2: THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD THE CALLING OF THE CONGREGATION (1:26-31)

Verse	Colon,	
26	1	<div> <div>1.1</div> <div>1.2</div> <div>1.3</div> <div>1.4</div> </div> <div> <div>Βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί,</div> <div>ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα,</div> <div>οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί,</div> <div>οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς·</div> </div>
27	2	<div> <div>2.1</div> <div>2.2</div> </div> <div> <div>ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός</div> <div>ἵνα καταισχύνη τοὺς σοφοὺς,</div> </div>
28	3	<div> <div>3.1</div> <div>3.2</div> </div> <div> <div>καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός</div> <div>ἵνα καταισχύνη τὰ ἰσχυρά,</div> </div>
29	4	<div> <div>4.1</div> <div>4.2</div> <div>4.3</div> <div>4.4</div> <div>4.5</div> <div>4.6</div> </div> <div> <div>καὶ τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου</div> <div>καὶ τὰ ἐξουθενημένα</div> <div>ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός,</div> <div>τὰ μὴ ὄντα,</div> <div>ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ,</div> <div>ὥπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.</div> </div>
30	5	<div> <div>5.1</div> <div>5.2</div> <div>5.3</div> <div>5.4</div> <div>5.5</div> <div>5.6</div> </div> <div> <div>ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,</div> <div>ὃς ἐγενήθη ἡμῖν</div> <div>σοφία ἀπὸ θεοῦ,</div> <div>δικαιοσύνη</div> <div>τε καὶ ἁγιασμός</div> <div>καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις,</div> </div>
31	6	<div> <div>6.1</div> <div>6.2</div> </div> <div> <div>ἵνα καθὼς γέγραπται,</div> <div>Ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω.</div> </div>

In verse 26, colon 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5 are syntactical parallel, and stand in apposition to the direct object, namely τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν. Colon 1.2 is expanded by 1.3 which represents a qualification of σοφία.

Cola 2 and 3 are parallel. In each case the expanding represents the purpose clauses which in turn modify the main verb which in both cases is ἐξελέξατο. Colon 4 follows in much the same pattern. Again the verb is the same. Colon 5.1 identifies the one who is responsible for the reality of being in Christ Jesus. Colon 5.2 introduces the second expansion in the sense that it functions as a relative clause which modifies Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The predicative nominative of the relative clause, σοφία is expanded by 5.4 - 5.6 (which serve as predicate nominatives). Colon 6.2 indicates the content of what is written in colon 6.1.

The theme of pericope two could be stated as follows: "Your own experience illustrates that being in Christ is due not to human wisdom but to divine wisdom".

As was noted pericope two started with the introduction of the readers' own experience. Their own experience is linked to that of pericope one, namely that the christian message does not concern human power and wisdom but God's power and wisdom. The material that follows in 1 Corinthians 2 introduces another new theme, namely the experience and behaviour of the author in this regard.

### Exegetical Excursus:

This whole section can be called an *exemplum*. According to Quintilian Inst. Orat. 5,11,6 an *exemplum* is a *commemoratio* or commemoration of something that has changed the course of history. For Paul it functions in much the same manner as a proof (Lausberg 1960:227-230; Schrage 1991:204). It is also a quite artistic section full of rhetorical features such as the anamorphism in verse 26b, the parallelism in verse v. 27a, b 28 and the climax in 28b. Blass-Debrunner (1961:490) refers to it as a 'Musterbeispiel eines Parallelismus'.

Another significant feature is the use of the ἵνα (four times), and the conjunctive mood and ὅπως to illustrate that God's way of acting surpasses everything.

**Verse 26** is part and parcel of the diatribe style. The verb is imperative and not indicative and it governs the τὴν κλήσιν directly (Schrage 1991:207). Critics have disagreed over the meaning of "calling". Some have argued extensively that the calling refers only to God's call to salvation. Some others like Barrett (1968:57) and Theissen (1974:232) reason that it refers to the circumstances in which one is called and it therefore reflects notions of status in life. Conzelmann (1975:127) accepts the possibility of both meanings, but applies the former to 1:26 and the latter to 7:20. Lexically the standard lexica of Liddell-Scott-Jones, Lampe and Moulton supports the notion of summons or invitation. Nevertheless the reading of 1:26 should include the circumstantial reading, because as Theissen (1974:232) pointed out the triadic qualification of κλήσις, especially in terms of εὐαγγέλιον and

its correlated opposites (τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου and τὰ ἐξουθενημένα), has a clear socio - economic tone and ties the notion of calling to a sense of circumstances or situation.

It is not at all clear that the two readings should be taken in such a way as to exclude each other. Rather, in his use of the word, Paul seems intent on bringing together precisely God's call to salvation and the life circumstances of the one called. On the one hand the Corinthians' calling is not a life circumstance as such, but a sphere of life claimed by God to oppose the human boasting (1:29) and thereby effect the salvation which is to be in Christ (1:30). On the other hand the calling and the indicative passes to imperative: Those who cannot of their own power boast before God are forbidden to do so (1:29); those who live in Christ must boast in the Lord (1:31).

σοφοί, δυνατοί and εὐγενεῖς are sociological terms and categories and stand in close proximity to σάρξ. σάρξ is according to Louw and Nida (1988:322) not necessarily a reference to a person's lower nature. It is rather a reference to human thought and reasoning as opposed to spiritual life. In other words it refers to one's psychological categories, which is the semantic domain to which σάρξ belongs.

The social status of the Corinthian's and the implications of their calling will be discussed under the section of discourse strategies (3.2).

**Verse 27-29** continues with the three sociological terms and categories of v. 26 in the following manner:

οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ --- τὰ μωρὰ ... τοὺς σοφοὺς

δυνατοί --- τὰ ἀσθενῆ ... τὰ ἰσχυρά

εὐγενεῖς ..... τὰ ἀγενῆ

The terms τὰ ἐξουθενημένα, τὰ μὴ ὄντα, τὰ ὄντα (neuter) has the effect of broadening the scope (Blass, Debrunner 1961:138).

The neuter τὰ μωρὰ is significant. It is distinguished from the masculine τοὺς σοφοὺς used both here and in the preceding verse. This neuter serves to emphasize the quality of those whom God chooses. Once again Paul relates τὰ ἀσθενῆ to power (1:26) and strength (1:27). The correlation of weakness with the relative absence of power among the Corinthians and the divine claim upon it to oppose τὰ ἰσχυρά attest its meaning as powerlessness. V. 28 continues along the same line - God chose καὶ τὰ ἀγενῆ. God chose those pertaining to being obscure or insignificant in the eyes of the world. 'Ἐξουθενημένα is a passive perfect participle, used not only to denote quality, but also, to indicate that which once is despised will continue to be despised. The ἵνα and subjunctive phrase explains the purpose of God's choice namely καταργήση - to abolish, to cause not to function. Clearly it is a reference to τὰ ὄντα, and in this context the contrast between it and τὰ μὴ ὄντα may be best expressed as those things that are not regarded as important in order to abolish those that are regarded as important. This word belongs to the semantic domain of power and force.

At this stage a certain pattern with regard to the issue of power becomes clear. Keep in mind that Paul's defense of his apostleship is an imperative matter. Also bear in mind that authority presupposes power and is indeed a consequence and expression of power. What is the source of power for Paul and what could enhance his own authority? The source of his power relates to v. 18: ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ, because it is the power of God. As the source of Paul's power, the dynamis of God, is a performative word: it destroys the sage's wisdom and thwarts the cleverness of the clever which in the end enhances Paul's authority.

The same pattern can be traced in vv. 27-29. The source of Paul's power, in this section, relates to God's choice and as the source of power it is performative: those things that are regarded as important are abolished. In other words the word of the Cross, God's choice, the Corinthians' calling and also Paul's speech reflects a fundamental backing in the power of God and in doing so attests to Paul's own authority.

The phrase ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε in verse 30 is a description of the Corinthians' calling. In other words, it also elucidates what was said in the preceding verse. ἐξ αὐτοῦ is not a reference to the creation history - 'gemeint ist vielmehr: ihm verdankt ihr euer Christsein, euer Sein in Jesus Christus' (Schrage 1991:213).

Also keep in mind that when Paul speaks of Christ Jesus he establishes the fact that only this Jesus is the redeemer promised. According to Hengel (1983:72) it is precisely as proper name that expresses the uniqueness of Jesus as eschatological bringer of salvation.

The four terms (σοφία, δικαιοσύνη, ἁγιασμός, ἀπολύτρωσις) do not stand in apposition to τὰ μυστήρια, τὰ ἀσθενή, τὰ ἄγευή and τὰ μὴ ὄντα of vv. 27-28 (Weiss 1910:41; Schrage 1991:215).

δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ... ἀπολύτρωσις are linked into one group by the conjunctions and are in apposition to σοφία and define it. σοφία stands in close relation to ἡμῖν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ. ἡμῖν is a *dativus commodi*. Christ is not the means nor the mediator of the wisdom - He personifies wisdom (ὅς). Wisdom which we have already encountered in more senses than one (17,19,21,24) appears now with a new meaning. Christ crucified becomes the personal figure of wisdom but especially God's means of restoring men to himself.

The three terms δικαιοσύνη, ἁγιασμός, ἀπολύτρωσις are not co-ordinate. These three terms also stand in close approximation to ἡμῖν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ. Paul concludes by quoting what we may possibly regard as the text preached on Ab.9 on the Haphtorah for the day (Jer. 9:23). Since God is the logical subject, of vv. 26-30, κυρίως is a reference to God himself (Weiss 1910:43).

In conclusion - At this stage and by way of conclusion some remarks with regard to the way wisdom is used. There is a definite reference to **wisdom of the world** and the **wisdom of God**.



Paul frequently refers to the **wisdom of the world**. (σοφία τοῦ κοσμοῦ, σοφία τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, σοφία ἀνθρώπων). In 1:20 the wisdom of the world is explained by means of three personal terms. It not only refers to the wisdom of the world in a generic sense but focuses attention on the accomplishments of wisdom.

In 1:17 another aspect of the wisdom of the world is focused upon, namely the spoken word - the language of human wisdom and the communicability of wisdom (Von Lips 1990: 321).

There are, however, also three references to the **wisdom of God**. In 1:21 the wisdom of God refers to Christ. In 1:24 and in delimitation of the wisdom of the world Christ is called the θεοῦ σοφία. For those that believe and for those who are called Christ is the σοφία ἀπὸ θεοῦ in v. 30. The contents thereof is explicated by means of the δικαιοσύνη, ἁγιασμός, ἀπολύτρωση.

### PERICOPHE 3: PAUL'S MESSAGE ABOUT THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST: (1 COR. 2:1-5)

Verse      Colon

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 1.1 { Κάγω ἦλθον καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν<br>1.2 { ἔλθων πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί,<br>1.3 { οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας<br>1.4 { τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ.   |
| 2 | 2 | 2.1 { οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά<br>2.2 { τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν<br>2.3 { ἵνα μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν<br>2.4 { καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον.  |
| 3 | 3 | 3.1 { κάγω ἐγενόμην πρὸς ἡμᾶς<br>3.2 { ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ<br>3.3 { καὶ ἐν φόβῳ<br>3.4 { καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ   |
| 4 | 4 | 4.1 { καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου (ἦσαν)<br>4.2 { οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας (λόγοις)<br>4.4 { ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως.<br>4.5 { ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων<br>4.6 { ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ. |

Colons 1 and 2 are connected syntactically by γὰρ to form a logical semantic

relation .

Colon 2.2 indicates the sphere in which the action of εἶδεναι occurs. Colon 2.3 indicates an exception to the object of εἶδέναι.

In colon 3 ἐγενόμην is modified in terms of manner

In colon 4 the two nominal elements form a hendiatresis. Both the verbal elements relate to the single referent of the nominal elements. Colon 4.5 functions as a purpose clause, while cola 4.6 provides an adversative parallel to ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων.

Cola one and two form a logical semantic relation while cola three and four form an additive different (parallel) relation. The paradigmatic connections border around the motifs of wisdom\foolishness and power\weakness. The author states that his proclamation was not characterized by wisdom but by weakness, fear and trembling. Both the ideas reoccur in colon four and are followed by a purpose clause.

Since the material that follows addresses a different theme, colon four marks the end of the paragraph.

### Exegetical Excursus:

The emphatic κἀγώ of verse 2:1 reaches back not only to Paul's instruction in 1:26 (βλέπετε τὴν κλήσιν ὑμῶν ἀδελφοί) but to 1:17-25 as well. οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας (2:1) corresponds with 1:17b whilst καταγγέλλων (2:1) stands in close approximation to λόγος of 1:18 and ἐστρωμένον (2:2) corresponds with 1:18 and 1:23. Paul's own weakness (2:3) corresponds to the weakness of God (1:25) and traces of the λόγος .. κήρυγμα (2:4) can be found in 1:24. This whole section resembles a rhetorical strategy through which Paul attempts to disarm his audience (Dio Or. 212.15 ;42.2f ).

Not only does the word of the Cross (1:18), and the Corinthians' calling (1:26) and God's choice (1:26-27) reveal God's power - Paul's own preaching and teaching are a flesh and blood example of God's power amidst his own weakness. God's power enhances Paul's own authority in the sense that his own life and conduct correspond to that of the word.

The aorist participle ἐλθὼν precedes the aorist indicative ἦλθον and refers to the time of Paul's arrival at Corinth. In any case Paul's arrival did not reveal his high sounding words of wisdom. ὑπεροχὴν belongs to the semantic domain of status and especially the subdomain of high status or rank. Schrage (1991:225) and Lim (1987:148) consider ὑπεροχὴν and the opposition against it as a means of curbing

the practice of the Corinthian preachers to employ human wisdom of words in preaching. In verse 2:4 this issue will again demand our attention.

On a text critical note: μαρτύριον is the reading of many important, MSS, but others have μυστήριον. It is not easy to decide which Paul wrote - I prefer testimony because it is more suitable to the initial proclamation of the Gospel whereas mystery suggests the wisdom Paul was able to speak among mature christians (2:6-8). τοῦ θεοῦ is an objective genitive to μαρτύρια meaning my testimony about God.

2:2 gives the positive reason of what Paul wrote in v.1. There is a difference of opinion as to whether οὐ belongs to ἔκριναι, or to the infinitive εἰδέναι. The latter seems to be the case: 'for I made up my mind to know nothing while I was with you'.

εἰ μὴ may be followed by something which is included in the preceding negation or by something not previously referred to. The context argues in favour of the first possibility. καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον describe in an exegetical way 'Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν'.

Paul is further disarming his audience and restoring his own authority by indicating in 2:3-5 that his own weakness is similar to τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ and τὸ ἄσθενές τοῦ θεοῦ of v.25.

Again, Paul interprets his own image through the language of power: his own weakness does not demonstrate wisdom, but the power of the Spirit in order that the Corinthians' faith might be rooted in the power of God. The critical force of Paul's use of weakness suggests that were he to fulfill the Corinthian expectation, he would imperil faith in the power of God and threaten it with the selfboasting that displaces God's claim of the foolish and weak and despised to bring life in Christ Jesus (1:26-31). In other words, the disarming of his audience takes place in the sense that Paul's claim to authority has no backing and collapses with the admission of his own weakness. Yet this concession is double edged: if it places the perception of Paul's authority in some danger, it simultaneously calls into question the very formulation of power that would warrant the indictment against him.

The text in 2:4 needs clarification - in particular the phrase ἐν [πειθοῖς] σοφίας [λόγοις]. All in all there are eleven variants, of this phrase which cannot easily be explained. According to Metzger (1971:546) the variants occurring with ἀνθρωπίνης before or after σοφίας are most likely to be copyists' additions, explaining more clearly the nuance of σοφία. λόγοις should probably be included as part of the original reading, although there are a number of manuscripts (p.46, G35\*) which omit this word. πειθοῖς, a *hapax legomenon* in all of Greek literature was probably coined by Paul, a dative case of an adjective derived from the noun πειθῶ (Arndt & Gingrich 1979:639).

πειθῶ, is a term which refers to the studied art of persuasive speech as was practiced by the orators and rhetoricians of the Greco-Roman world and at least some of the Corinthian preachers (Lim 1987:146).

According to Bunker (in Von Lips 1990:334) *πειθώ* refers to 'die Gewinnung des Publik für die Entscheidung über eine in Frage stehende Sache im Sinne des Redners'. In other words, it refers to persuasion through 'den Aspekten des docere (intellektuelle persuasio), des delectare (Sympathiegewinnung) und des movere (Pathoserregung zur Parteinahme für die vom Redner vertretene Sache)' (Von Lips 1990:334). What is even more significant according to Von Lips, (1990:334) is the fact that *πειθώ* in earlier times was honoured as a "Liebesgottin und dann als Personifikation der allmächtigen und vielseitigen Gewalt der Rede".

Paul's argument is further supported by *ἀποδείξις* which is also a *hapaxgomenon* in the New Testament (Lim 1987:147 noted its occurrence in 3 Macc. 4:20 and 4 Macc. 3:19). It, however, occurs frequently as a technical term in rhetoric where it refers to a demonstration or cogent proof of argument from commonly agreed premises (Von Lips 1990:334, Schrage 1991:232).

Paul, however, uses this word in a different way and counter to the rhetorical meaning of the term. He asserts that this word and his preaching are based upon a demonstration, not of the rhetorical kind, but of the Spirit and of power.

The genitives *πνεύματος* and *δυνάμεως* are not mere additions to *ἀποδείξει* (contra Bunker 1984:39) but either subjective demonstration proceeding from and brought about by the power and Spirit of God) or qualifying demonstration consisting in the Spirit and power of God.

The *ἵνα* clause of 2:5 expresses the purpose of God in so ordering Paul's preaching. *πίστις* is a substantive for *πιστεύειν* (Wilckens 1979:506). The genitive *ἀνθρώπων* points a finger at the different parties in Corinth (see 3:3) indicating that faith is not the result of human wisdom but ultimately of God's power. In this Paul's authority is attested. The association of Paul's speech and weakness with the dynamis of God allows him to assert that what is true in the pneumatic experience - the presence of divine activity and the backing of God's dynamis - is no less true in his frail words and subjection to affliction.

At this stage we must consciously remind ourselves of two facts namely:

- i That in this section of the model we focus on strategies that are applied by language users in the production and comprehension of verbal utterances or speech acts.
- ii That our model is not oriented towards the different levels of the text, but follows a holistic approach in which all the facets of the text is integrated.

It is therefore necessary, as part of our sentence strategy, to move to the participants, relations, situations and rules, for conversation in 1 Corinthians 1.

### **3.1.2 The participants, relations, situations and rules for conversation in 1 Corinthians 1.**

If we agree that a speech act is a response to a social situation it follows that a speaker does not perform an act of communication but rather participates in the communication. In other words the speaker and the hearer is part of that communication. It is therefore of great importance to establish the nature of the speech acts in terms of the participants, their relationships within the text and context in which the whole of the communication takes place, because all of these relations will eventually contribute to establishing the rules of the communication.

There are two levels to be analyzed in 1 Corinthians 1 namely the conversation between the characters in the discourse and the conversation between the implied author and the implied reader.

#### **3.1.2.1 The character level**

The characters in the discourse and letter, although they represent real world characters, are still creations of the author. What we know of these characters and their personalities is deduced purely from the text.

The first character that needs our attention is Christ exalted Lord. According to the letter

- \* He is to be worshipped as Lord and Christ (1:2)
- \* He has apostles-of which another character Paul is one (1:1)
- \* He has got holy people which belong to him and which forms a church (1:2)
- \* He is able to give grace and peace to those that belong to him (1:3)
- \* He is the origin of all riches-including speech and knowledge (1:6)
- \* He is the one that will keep his followers firm to the end (1:8)
- \* He is to be trusted (1:9)
- \* His death on a cross are nonsense to those who are lost, but to those who are saved it is God's power (1:18)
- \* His death is offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Gentiles, but for those whom God has called it is the power and wisdom of God (1:22-23)
- \* God has made Him to be our wisdom (1:30)
- \* Through Him the relationship with God is rectified (1:30), and we become God's holy people and are set free (1:30).

It is clear that Jesus with his life, ministry and message stands at the core of this passage. He is trustworthy and his message proves the power and wisdom of God.

Another character is **PAUL**. He is an apostle of Christ and stands in a special relation to the Corinthians. According to the discourse

- \* Paul is an apostle of Christ through the will of God (1:1)
- \* He appeals to his readers as brothers to agree on what is said and to be united with one thought and purpose (1:10)
- \* He has followers (1:12)
- \* He baptized Crispus and Gaius and Stephanas and his extended family (1:13)
- \* He was not sent to baptize people, but to preach the Cross (1:17)
- \* He preached the message of Christ without words of human wisdom in order to make sure that Christ's death on the cross is not robbed of its power (1:17)
- \* He visited the congregation (2:1)
- \* In his preaching he did not use big words and great learning (2:1)
- \* While he was with them he made up his mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ the crucified (2:2)
- \* When he visited the people of Corinth he was weak and trembled all over with fear (2:3)
- \* His teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom but in the power of God's spirit (2:4).

It is clear that there is a special relationship between Jesus and Paul. Paul is an apostle and as such he has a certain authority. On the basis of this relationship and authority Paul made certain appeals to his readers. He also explains his own way of preaching and relates that to what he believes is the quintessence of Christ's message.

There is, however, another corporate character that needs our attention namely **the church in Corinth**. According to these pericopes,

- \* Paul and the members of the church meet as no strangers. On occasion Paul has met and visited them and he is indeed founder of the church
- \* Paul is kept well informed on matters in the congregation (1:11)
- \* Certain shared knowledge existed between them (1:6-7)
- \* There are definite followers of Paul in the church, but also followers of other leaders and between them there are divisions (1:12)

- \* There are also wise scholars and skillful debaters amongst the members of the congregation (1:20)
- \* The members of the church were Jews as well as Greeks (1:22)
- \* The occurrence of concepts such as wisdom, foolishness, power, weakness, and boasting indicates that these were central issues in the debate between Paul and the congregation in Corinth (1:21-25)
- \* There is a definite social stratification within the congregation. Some of the members were of high social standing and others not (1:26)
- \* Values such as honour and shame were of importance in the congregation (1:27).

The following appropriateness conditions must be kept in mind if we were to analyze the language strategy of this passage, dealing with a meeting of minds between people that know, each other. Accordingly the Cooperation Principle is observed and the maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner are well at work within the passage. These appropriate conditions must be analysed so that the illocutionary acts can be differentiated.

Before we proceed to the differentiating of the illocutionary acts, we must, however, consider the second level of conversation, between the implied author and the reader.

### **3.1.2.2 Conversation on the level of the implied author and reader**

It must be kept in mind that the discourse took place with a specific strategy or purpose in mind. In order to follow the strategy employed in 1 Corinthians 1:18- 2:5 the relationship between the implied author and the reader must be examined in order to illustrate the rules of the conversation.

In the past certain features of the author's writing have suggested to some scholars a lack of careful construction and weak connections between the subsections of the different pericopes. Some even claim that there is evidence of hasty composition and that the author dictated without bothering to correct (Gooch 1987:165). Conzelmann (1975:30) even thinks that in the passage of 1:20-4:21 there is neither unity in style nor substantive content.

Our analysis indicates that the reverse is true. The author is intrusive and very aware that he is dealing with an audience - a very specific audience in the sense that he is their father. He takes the audience and his obligations to his audience seriously.

The role of the reader in a literary situation is very much like that of an audience (Pratt 1977:114). The readers expect from the author to reward them with a worthwhile presentation, and the author is aware of this. It is clear that both reader and author are aware that there are specific commitments which they have towards each other. The reader in this case being the implied reader which,

...represents the response the author is aiming at or assuming on the part of the audience. In this sense it functions as a heuristic device to uncover the meaning of the text. The implied reader is on the receiving end of all the various indicators of the text. He experiences the full impact of all the strategies employed by the author, integrates the various elements, and projects the ideal response to the text.

(Lategan 1985:70)

It inevitably follows that the knowledge the readers and authors have of each other as well as their commitments shape the way in which they communicate. An interesting point in this regard is the way in which the introduction was described in the past. Most scholars focus on the theological terms and structure of the introduction. Very seldomly the introduction is considered as an act of communication or human interaction.

When considering the introduction of Corinthians and especially 1:10-16 from a communicative perspective, the abrupt start and strong appeal for unity have often been noticed. In verses 14-16 Paul stumbles over his words a little, but in the following section which is the focal area of this present study he proceeds to a general questioning of all human wisdom. In v. 26 he becomes specific, applying what he has said to the Corinthians without urgency or anger. He continues to speak in specific terms about his own relationship to them in 2:1-5.

All this indicates that we are dealing with a letter of admonition (cf. also 4:14). Paul's strategy is one of *νουθεσία* or admonition. Contra the opinion of scholars that he wanted to shame the congregation (see 1:17) Paul emphasizes his role and relationship as that of a father (4:15) in which admonition coupled with instruction were an established paternal function. Paul's discussion in 1 Cor. 1:10-4:21 therefore begins and ends with a reference to his establishment of the church in Corinth. It is this image of father or parent that reoccurs in the discussion of 3:1-4 where he mentions the fact-albeit in maternal imagery- that he served the Corinthians with milk in stead of solid food. A number of important observations



can be made concerning the language strategy of this section, namely:

- \* Foremost is the simple but important observation that public speaking was at the core of Paul's ministry<sup>3</sup>. The implication in terms of language strategy is that we are dealing here with a goal-oriented speech situation. It further means that the author had time to plan his writing and that the finished product was the best possible in the given situation. The author knew that the readers placed a premium on the presentation and content of the communication - and in particular was this the case in the current letter.
- \* Secondly it must be realized that the author wants his strategy to succeed, and in order to succeed he must cooperate with his readers. He consequently adheres to the Cooperation Principle. For instance, the very brief introduction of the issue regarding the divisions in the congregation can be explained by means of the maxim of quantity which states that one does not make one's contribution more informative than is required for the current purpose of exchange. Added to this is the whole question of implicature which comes into play for instance in the rhetorical questions of 1:20.
- \* Thirdly one can observe that because of his indebtedness to the readers, the author tries to establish trust, attention, sympathy and goodwill. In other words, the author is constantly intent on persuading the readers, which is of course, part and parcel of a perlocutionary act. We have already seen that the perlocutionary act is closely aligned to traditional rhetoric. This causes the question whether or not the classical rhetorical features such as *attentio*, *docilitas* and *benevolentio* were used by the implied author. It certainly seems that the author had the feature of *docilitas* in mind when he declared in the introduction (1:5) that those unified with Christ have become rich in all things, including all speech and knowledge. The effect is *attentio* because in the section that follows (1:18-2:5) the essence of considering the power and wisdom of God is made clear. The readers' faith does not rest on human belief but on God's power. The effect of *benevolentio* is also achieved. Keep in mind that benevolence can be established in different ways. The author can make it clear that he is on the side of the readers opposing the enemy, or the author can try to gain sympathy for him\herself. Otherwise he can try to create antipathy against the opposition or try to influence the readers by stressing the important aspects of their choices. The widespread view that the introduction is merely an apology is therefore unconvincing (Dahl 1977:61 n.50, Bjerkelund 1967:142)<sup>3</sup>. The *benevolentio* is part and parcel of the *parakalo* in the sense that 1:10 and 4:16 form an *inclusio* which

makes the entire intervening section a *parakalo* section in which the author presents himself as a model worthy of imitation, as a good father who would rear his children to follow him as he follows his Lord.

The introduction of this letter is therefore of extreme importance in establishing the speech situation and the relationship between the author and his readers. The introduction also poses two problems. Why does Paul take so long to clarify his relationship with the readers? The introduction comprises almost a fourth of the letter. This is considerably more than one would expect of two correspondents who enjoy the good relationship that Paul's cordial opening implies. Secondly, it is not clear why he launches an attack on worldly wisdom and then defends his own different wisdom in the middle of his discussions of Corinth's leaders. Digressions such as this, have an important rhetorical function. This issue will be discussed in due course.

To return to the first issue: Why did Paul take so long to clarify his relationship with his readers?

The kind of information the introduction provides about the Corinthians is both restricted and expanded. It is restricted in the sense that Paul is not doing a comprehensive descriptive, comparison of their views with his own. It is expanded by means of the indirect way in which he tries to persuade his readers.

The way in which Paul tries to persuade his readers becomes clearer in the following two sections of the introduction. 1 Cor. 1:1-9 refers to **Paul the witness to God's gifts and the Corinthians' speech and knowledge**. Before mentioning the divisions, Paul makes his position towards them clear. He presents himself as a praising witness to God's work in them and in response he expects them to be open to him. The perlocutionary intent of this section is that the readers identify with the author as a reliable witness. The author tries to establish some kind of bond between himself and the readers.

The second section (1:10-13) refers to **Paul the champion of unity amidst the Corinthian factions**. Interestingly enough, the author alludes to information he received from Chloe's people - a group associated with a woman's name. Obviously she was known to his readers. More importantly this woman takes the initiative in voicing concern about the divisions in Corinth. It is important that the author chooses to name Chloe.

The author's initial strategy is non naming (5:1, 11:18, 15:1). The naming of Chloe

is an exception. The only reasonable conclusion is that the author did so to add to the credibility of the facts they already know and to enhance his own credibility. Her name may also be an indication that someone of significance shares the author's response to the divisions. In adding the name of Chloe the author presents himself as the champion of unity.

In this way he lifts himself above the conflict and associates him/herself with the higher authority of Christ and God, and finally claims their obedience as their father in Christ. This shows that the intended readers share a common commitment to Christ to which the author appeals. The readers, however, do not understand loyalty to Christ in an exclusive way - that is, a loyalty that excludes loyalty to separate leaders. As a matter of fact, the author's unmediated subordination to a single divine hierarchy suggests that the readers experience Christ as God's power and wisdom fully mediated and present in human beings (Wire 1990:43). The author clearly assumes that because he is their father he can expect obedience. God is to be trusted and if so, the author as spiritual father as well. The perlocutionary aim would therefore be to induce trust in the reader for the author who is their spiritual father. Once this is achieved, the author leads them to a new self understanding through admonition.

To conclude: The introduction is of extreme importance because it establishes the speech situation and the relationship between the author and his readers. The expectations which govern the speech situation can be summarized as follow:

- \* The author identifies with the readers.
- \* The author appears as an authoritative person who is an apostle of Christ Jesus and spiritual father of the readers.
- \* The author is to be trusted.
- \* The author obeys the rules of a normal speech situation and the readers can therefore expect the cooperation principle to be observed.
- \* The author is intent on persuading his readers.
- \* The author also shares some knowledge about religious writings with the readers since a number of Old Testament images are introduced in the text.
- \* The author is a witness to God's gifts and the readers' speech and knowledge.
- \* The author considers himself a champion of unity.
- \* The author is intent on preaching Christ crucified.

In utilizing the text to consider the implied reader it seems that:

- \* The readers know the author.
- \* The readers comprise both Jews and Greeks.
- \* The readers are recipients of various blessings from Christ, including speech and knowledge.
- \* The readers are divided on certain issues with the result that there are quarrels amongst them.
- \* The readers are expected to interpret the language of the letter correctly.

This presupposed relationship between implied author and reader is crucial because it determines the nature of the communication process and establishes the conditions in which this communication can function successfully.

### 3.1.3 Conversation on Script level

In chapter two we discussed the notion of scripts and how they function in depth. Most important is that they are used by people both behaviourally and cognitively. The behavioral aspect of script application occurs when people are actually in a scriptural situation and they behave in a manner appropriate to that script. The cognitive aspect occurs when people are processing language, and must generate inference about what is being said on the basis of their scriptural knowledge. In the process of analyzing natural language and by determining a sentence strategy we have to consider that a process is going on in the mind of the reader. Conversation on script level will assist us in determining how the information the reader has in mind influences his/her understanding of the words he/she reads in the text.

#### 3.1.3.1 Christ the Power and Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:18-2:5)

##### 3.1.3.1a The problem

Let us once more consider the structure of this passage in a rather different way. Suppose we ask, not about the tone or level of Paul's language, but instead about its vocabulary, in order to discover the key concepts with which he works. It seems that a cluster of concepts are closely related in this passage. Let us assume that **F** represents foolishness, and **W** wisdom (*sophia, logos, gignoskein, eidenai, phronimos*). Let us also assume that **O** represents weakness but also lack of ability or status (*asthenai, ta me onta, katargestai, ou dunami mataios*) and **B** represents boasting and being puffed up (*kauchaomai phusaomai*). Power or strength will be represented with **P**.

## Excursus:

Keep in mind that this is not a full blown exercise in semantic analysis. What this exercise amply illustrates is the pervasiveness of the themes and their interrelatedness to each other. Because of the interrelatedness between these five concepts one might presuppose a frame that were part of the common knowledge of the Hellenistic world.

When linking these concepts to the text of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 the following picture emerges:

1:17	<b>W</b>
18	<b>W F P</b>
19	<b>W</b>
20	<b>W F</b>
21	<b>W F</b>
22	<b>W</b>
23	<b>F</b>
24	<b>W P</b>
25	<b>W F P O</b>
26	<b>W P</b>
27	<b>W F P O</b>
28	<b>O</b>
29	<b>B</b>
30	<b>W</b>
31	<b>B</b>
2:1	<b>W</b>
2	<b>W</b>
3	<b>O</b>
4	<b>W P</b>
5	<b>W P</b>

This diagram demonstrates the pervasiveness of the themes and their inter-relatedness to each other. The inter-relatedness is also among five concepts rather than the two themes of wisdom and division. The diagram thus reflects the more restricted perceptions of the passage.

These restricted perceptions of the passage bring us to the core problem of this passage. If one focuses on wisdom without taking its associated concepts into account, one could conclude that Paul was subordinating reason to revelation, and in general, denigrating the value of human reasoning and rationality. Calvin, just to

mention one influential commentator, used 1 Corinthians 1-2 to depict humans as beings with severe damage to their capacities for knowledge due to the Fall. On the other hand, Ulrich Wilckens proposed that Paul was in a christological controversy with Jewish-Christian Gnosticism who identified the risen Christ as God's wisdom personified and experienced through baptismal initiation as a spiritual identity with Christ. According to Wilckens (1959:68) Sophia must have been a christological title of the exalted Christ. Schmithals, on the other hand, proposed the presence of a Jewish-Christian Gnosticism which combined the myth of the Iranian primal man with the Messiah figure. According to him "some in Corinth were putting in the place of the cross a doctrine of wisdom; they were not preaching the crucified Christ merely with special Sophia" (1971:138). According to Schmithals these gnostics<sup>4</sup> regarded Christ in a dualistic way.

Much of Pauline scholarship on 1 Corinthians seems to disregard Paul's own concern in this passage. The focus remains on the question of wisdom or the divisions, trying to establish the identities of factions or the lack of factions, and their possible relationship to Paul's possible opposition in Corinth. These are historically interesting, if not difficult issues<sup>5</sup>. If capable of solution, they could help in the understanding of the text; but the history of research shows that they detract from more central concerns. It is therefore not strange that there is no clear consensus among the modern commentators about what Paul is trying to achieve in 1 Corinthians 1-4.

This is largely due to the common approach, by taking as starting point highly speculative questions about who the opponents were or what the theology was of the different parties, and then proceed to construct a reading based on a reversal of this image. Such mirror reading<sup>6</sup> not only begs all kinds of questions but also achieves little.

I believe it is possible to find a script which could account for and adequately explain the inter-relatedness of these themes in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5. Recently John T. Fitzgerald has shown that the theme of foolishness and wisdom in 1 Cor. 1-4 reflects the influence of Hellenistic philosophy at various points. Of particular importance is the use of the well known figure of the sage.

### **3.1.3.1b The use of the sage or wise man as script**

In describing this script special emphasis must be placed on the vitality of Stoicism during the first century C.E. and the great influence it exerted on Hellenistic culture in general. Since the study of Sevenster (1961) on 'Paul and Seneca', it is commonly

accepted that certain similarities between their thought and forms of expression exist. Not only were they contemporaries, but the sage and his suffering are central themes in Seneca's philosophy as a whole.

Philosophy played a crucial role in equipping and enabling the wise man. According to Fitzgerald (1988:103) "the Stoic assumption is that the soul has in it the power of living the noblest of lives but as long as the correct judgment about good and evil is not formed it is impossible to act correctly". It therefore remains the task of philosophy<sup>7</sup> to inform the mind about the true nature of things and once that is done a person is enabled to do his duty in all circumstances of life.

The philosophically informed mind, says Marcus Aurelius "is a very citadel, for a man has no fortress more impregnable wherein to find refuge and be taken for ever" (*Med* 8.48, cf. also *Sen Const* 6.8; *Ep.* 74.19; *Ps-Plut, Mor.* 5E). Again nothing can "thwart the inner purposes of the mind. For it no fire can touch, nor steel, nor tyrant, nor obloquy, nor anything whatsoever". Since he has no Achilles heel where he is vulnerable (*Sen. Const.* 8.3) "the wise man is fortified against all inroads; he will not retreat before the attack of poverty, or of sorrow, or of disgrace, or of pain. He will walk undaunted both against them and among them (*Sen. Ep.* 59.8)".

(Fitzgerald 1988:54)

In other words the person who availed himself of philosophy's precepts and protective power became known as the sage or wise man. On this point there was, however, some difference of opinion between the Cynics and the Stoics. The Cynics believed that the ideal of a wise man could be realized as it had been by the ancients. The Stoics, on the other hand, defined the ideal in such a way that it was a mere abstract possibility. According to Seneca, the rare individual who achieves this status does so by winning the battle between reason and the passions. To the extent that reason triumphs over passions a person is making progress towards being a sage and if once the reason in him triumphs over the passions and their vices the victory is total and permanent.

The sage is also serene and steadfast in the sense that he not only endures adversity in a commendable way but he is also relatively unaffected by it (Fitzgerald 1988:59). According to Fitzgerald (1988:63) the Senecan sage is not harmed by poverty or by pain or by any of life's storms, nor by any injury or insult.

Although injuries and insults are offered, the sage does not receive them as such.

But - and it must be stressed - Seneca's sage is still a man. He is still able to shed tears and he is not insensible to adversity but rather overcomes it. In his own words the sage has "the weakness of a man and the serenity of a God" (Fitzgerald 1988:69).

The opposite is also true, namely that the fool is constantly caught off guard by the adversities. Because he is unprepared, the novelty of his hardship adds to its crushing weight. But there is also another catalogue, namely **the righteous sufferer as the foolish wise man**.

In this catalogue one has to distinguish carefully between two traditions-namely that of Glaucon in Plato's 'Republic' book two and that of Socrates towards the end of book ten of the same 'Republic'. According to Glaucon the foolish wise man is just, but to all concern he seems unjust. As a consequence he suffers all the penalties that the unjust man deserves, yet he enjoys none of the blessings that are reserved for the just man. According to Glaucon the foolish wise man,

Since he is so disposed, the just man will be scourged,  
he will be racked,  
he will be bound in chains,  
he will have both eyes burned out,  
and finally, after suffering every kind of evil,  
he will be crucified,  
and he will know that one ought to wish, not to be just, but only seem  
so (361E -362A).

(Glaucon in Fitzgerald 1988:101)

Socrates'(Plato) on the other hand, believed that the wise man whether he is overcome by poverty or disease or any other supposed evil, for him all these things will finally prove good, both in life and in death. Despite these differences Fitzgerald concludes that the tradition of Glaucon's foolish wise man became extremely popular in the Greco-Roman period. It was this tradition that gave rise to Cicero's 'De Republica' in which the righteous sufferer is dealt with extensively. In the third book of 'De Republica' Philus demonstrates that justice is equivalent to folly in the following manner

I put the question to you: Let us suppose that there are two men, one of whom is thoroughly upright and honorable, a man of consummate justice and unique integrity, while the other is a man of extraordinary depravity and shamelessness. And let us assume that the state in which they live is so misguided as to believe the good man a monster



of unspeakable criminality, while on the other hand, it considers the scoundrel to be a model of uprightness and good faith. Let us suppose further that, in conformity, with this error on the part of all citizens, the good man is persecuted, harassed, has his hands cut off and his eyes gouged out, is condemned, cast into chains, tortured by fire, exiled and reduced to destitution. Finally, let us assume that he is universally regarded as justly meriting his wretched condition. On the other hand, let us suppose that the evil man is praised, honored, and esteemed by all; that all sorts of offices, civil and military, and every form of influence and wealth are conferred upon him; and that he is universally held to be an excellent man, fully deserving the best gifts fortune can bestow. I ask you then; Who under these circumstances will be so mad as to doubt which of the two lots he would prefer?

(Fitzgerald 1988:102-103)

Obviously how the just man appears to the world is one of the hardships that he suffers and from this perspective the righteous sufferer is a fool and not a sage.

This catalogue of the wise man and the foolish wise man provides a frame for the interpretation of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5. The folly and madness of the crucifixion can be illustrated from the earliest pagan judgement on Christians. Hengel (1977:95-96) documented several cases in which christians are blamed for a sick delusion and a senseless and crazy superstition, which leads to an old womanly superstition and the destruction of all true religion. Not least among the monstrosities of their faith is the fact that they worship one who has been crucified. Interestingly enough Hengel (1977:97) whilst admitting that the 'word of the cross' ran counter not only to Roman political thinking, but to the whole ethos of religion in ancient times, nevertheless also acknowledges that "the Hellenistic world was familiar with the death and apotheosis of some heroes of primeval times". Hengel then proceeds to mention the death of Heracles, the son of Zeus, as an example of this kind of death

...See now my father calls me and opens the skies; Father, I come... He displays his *maiestas* in dying without any sign of pain (1745f)... The whole crowd stands in speechless wonder, scarcely able to believe the flames, so calm the brow, so majestic the hero... The heavenly voice of the exalted Heracles speaks to Alcemene (1966ff): Whatever in me was mortal and of you has felt the flames and been vanquished: my father's part has been given to heaven, yours to the flames.

(Seneca on *Hercules Oetaeus* in Hengel 1977:97-98 footnote 6)

Hengel admits that there may be parallels between this portrayal of the son of Zeus and the passion in the gospel of John and even refers to a comment of a colleague that from its beginnings down to Roman times the theme of the suffering of heroes were very popular (Hengel 1977:98 note 6). However, he does not expand on any relation it might have with the well known catalogue of the wise man and specifically the foolish wise man. To me this presents a perfect frame that was presupposed<sup>8</sup> and that was part of the common knowledge of ancient society.

The reason for this view is as follows: first and foremost - five times in the Corinthian correspondence Paul compiles a catalogue of his suffering. One such catalogue is found in 1 Cor. 4:9-13 which together with 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 forms part of the section 1 Cor 1-4. Given the inter-relatedness of 1 Cor. 1-4 as well as the hortatory character of both 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 and the whole of 1 Cor. 1-4 it blends in well with the general *functions* of exemplification and admonition that were found in the hardship catalogues. Keep in mind that the Hellenistic moralists made constant use of the figure of the foolish wise man as a pedagogical and paraenetic device for depicting the ideal and to exhort and admonish<sup>9</sup> their hearers. Paul's use of this catalogue of the foolish wise man conforms to this admonitory function - 'for the message about Christ's death on the cross is foolish to those who are being lost: for us who are being saved it is God's power' (verse 18); 'God has shown the world's wisdom is foolishness' (verse 20); 'for what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and what seems to be God's weakness is stronger than human strength' (verse 25); 'God purposely chose what the world considers foolishness in order to shame the wise, and he chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful' (verse 27).

Another feature of this catalogue is the way in which both Christ and Paul reveal God and in a way then function as models. According to Fitzgerald (1988:145), the use of the catalogue of hardships to depict the way in which God uses someone as a model can also be found in Epictetus, who depicts God as revealing the sage in and through his hardships and contends that the service which the sage renders to God is intimately connected with the hardship that he suffers. It is through poverty, death, hardships, foolishness that God exhibits the sage's virtue in a more brilliant way than he could otherwise, so that the sage becomes a spectacle.

That is exactly what happened on the Cross. The Cross and Jesus on the Cross became a spectacle<sup>10</sup> - demonstrating that this crucified Jew, Jesus Christ, could truly be a divine being sent to earth, God's Son. To any educated man this must have been utter madness and foolishness. Yet through this foolishness God reveals

the foolish wise man as His wisdom-as His sage! God has made this Christ to be our wisdom.

It is rather remarkable to see how in 1 Cor. 1:18-31 the reference is solely to God's exhibition of wisdom through the foolishness of Christ crucified (see God's power, God has shown, for God in his wisdom, God's foolishness, God's weakness, God chose, God has made).

In much the same manner Paul in 1 Cor. 2:1-5 identifies himself as the preacher of God's secret truth, as one who made up his mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. He continues with this thought throughout the entire 1 and 2 Corinthians, making it clear that he is a servant ὑπηρέτης of God (4:1); being made a spectacle for the whole world of angels and mankind (4:9); being made a fool for Christ's sake (4:10); being despised, hungry, beaten, cursed, persecuted, insulted, being the scum of the earth (4:10-13). Even in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16a, as Breytenbach (1990:269) pointed out, the triumphal procession is a metaphor for Paul's apostolic activity

the focus thus is not on Paul as participant in the triumphal procession, but on the fact that Paul the apostle spreads the knowledge of Christ whilst God is celebrating his preceding victory over Paul... Through Paul's proclamation of Christ, God, the victorious general, always celebrates his victory over Paul. He conquered Paul and now Paul spreads his fame.

(Breytenbach 1990:269)

In much the same way as the ideal Cynic, Paul became a spectacle - a foolish wise man who speaks without arrogance of his hardships in life and the service that he renders in so doing. He is not recognized by the words that he speaks (1 Cor 2:1-5), but by his actions which are in conformity to the witness of the foolish wise man.

It is thus the figure of the foolish wise man that provides the ideal frame for the exhibition of God's wisdom in the spectacle on the cross as well as being the scum of the earth. Of course Paul's use of this catalogue is clearly fraught with irony, which is in keeping with the depiction of the Corinthians as σοφοί as well as the claim of 1 Cor 1:5 that the Corinthians have an abundance of every form of knowledge and eloquence. Such a claim became morally and religiously offensive<sup>11</sup> since a "broad cultural consensus should be assumed to have existed by the time of Paul, saying that only philosophical and religious frauds could in their vanity claim to know

everything" (Betz 1986:27-28 note 57). As a matter of fact Paul uses irony in a similar manner to Lucian who

...uses irony to depict the Stoic novice who thinks that if he learns his tenants properly "there will be nothing to stop me being the only rich man, the only king, and the rest slaves and scum compared to me" (*Hermot* .81).

(Fitzgerald 1988:148)

According to Fitzgerald (1988:104) "the only difference between these two uses of irony is that Paul as a foolish wise man moves beyond Lucian in assuming to be the scum and treating the Corinthians as *sophia* in order to admonish them and rid them of their pretensions".

It is, however, not only the function of the catalogue which is identical but also the **situation** in which it was used. According to Fitzgerald (1988:147), Epictetus used this catalogue in much the same way when he was dealing with those who foolishly thought that they were already wise. Whether derided as a fool or acknowledged as a sage the wise man reveals his sagacity in the way that he responds to his adversaries. Injury and insult provide the perfect situation for the demonstration of the foolish wise man "for the power of wisdom is better shown by a display of calmness in the midst of provocation" (Seneca *Const* 4.3 in Fitzgerald 1988:103). Best of all Seneca advises that if some one strikes you, you step back; for by striking back you will give him both the opportunity and the excuse to repeat his blow. Besides vengeance is foolish. How much better it is to heal than to avenge an injury (Fitzgerald 1988:104).

This could perhaps explain why Paul despite the strife and internal divisions and rifts in the Corinth congregation only allots eight verses (1:10-17) to this party strife and does not return to speak about the unrest until 3:3 when he openly scolded them for their party strife. Yes, a wise man will at times respond more actively to insult and injury to the benefit of those who maltreat him:

And so the wise man not improperly considers insult from such men as a farce, and sometimes, just as if they were children, he will admonish them and inflict suffering and punishment, not because he has received injury, but because they have committed one, and in order that they may desist from so doing... For he is not avenging himself, but correcting them.

(Seneca in Fitzgerald 1988:104)

To conclude - the Corinthians' self-esteem was related to the Stoic-Cynic ideal of the wise man. Unfortunately many scholars have not fully appreciated the extent to which this ideal permeated Corinthian thought. Contrary to what has been widely accepted, Murphy-O'Connor (1991:5) points out that the dominant mythical figure at Corinth was not Aphrodite but Sisyphus. Described by Homer as the craftiest of men, he was one of the legendary kings of Corinth. On his return to Hades, after having tricked the lord of the underworld into letting him return to earth, he was condemned for ever to roll a rock to the top of a hill. As he neared the summit it would slip from his hands and he would have to begin all over again. For the Corinthians his task symbolized the futility of existence. The most that could be hoped for was the temporary success of the trickster or flatterer. In order to escape the futility of existence the Corinthians started to model their life on the ideal of the wise man and they became critical of the trickster and the flatterer.

The reason for this is that almost every virtue was ascribed to the wise man, who alone led his life in accordance with reason. He was not deceived; he did all things well; he was happy, rich handsome, free, the only true king. Certain Corinthian Christians believed they belonged to the select group of wise men, and since they were wise they were rich (4:9); they were wise; they were perfect (2:6); powerful (1:26); well-born (1:26); prudent (4:10); and held in honor (4:10). They have also regarded themselves as proficient in rhetoric because of their wisdom (1:20). The wise man will also live in accordance with nature and therefore it is not strange that certain Corinthians argued that since "meat is for the belly, and the belly for meats" any sexual relationship which seemed natural was permissible (6:13). These Corinthians could say, "Everything is permissible for me", just as a Stoic wise man could say it.

In modelling their life on this ideal of the wise man the Corinthians became critical of the trickster or flatterer which reminded them of the futility of existence<sup>12</sup>. The Corinthians saw in Paul's multiple changes of character and the deliberate surrender of his freedom to all kinds of people (1 Cor. 9:19-23) and in the message he proclaimed (Christ crucified) the futility of existence and the temporary success of the trickster and flatterer - the exact opposite of that on which they sought to model their life and conduct.

In other words, we are dealing with two definite contrasting scripts. On the one hand, there is the script of the wise man which symbolizes the highest good and which attributed to the self esteem of the Corinthians. According to them this was a script for life through which an individual could escape from the futility of existence.

This ideal of the wise man permeated their thought to such an extent that Paul, his conduct and message were labeled as foolish, as that of a trickster, a flatterer.

On the other hand Paul used the script of the foolish wise man. It is this script that corresponds with the life and gospel of Jesus and which attributed to his self awareness and self esteem and functions as a paradigm for his own behaviour. In stead of being a foolish message it is the power, and wisdom of God.

### 3.1.4 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 as a Speech Act

We now analyse this pericope as a speech act.

#### 3.1.4.1 Units of Analysis

I have already indicated that this text could be divided in three paragraphs: namely 1:18-25; 1:26-31 and 2:1-5.

These units consist of the various colons and semantic relations that were discussed in 3.1 and which together with the script reading and speech act reading form the **sentence strategy**.

In analysing this pericope as a speech act the classification of such acts becomes an important concern. Since the original classification of Austin (1975:151) and Searle (1975:218), there have been a number of subsequent attempts.

The one that will be implemented here is that of Bach and Harnish (1979:41-42) who distinguishes four main kinds of illocutionary acts, namely, **constatives, directives, commissives, acknowledgements**.

- \* Constatives express the speaker's intention and belief or desire. These constatives can either be assertive, predicative, descriptive, ascriptive, informative, conformative, concessive, retractive, assentive, dissentive, disputative, responsive, suggestive or suppositive.
- \* Directives are the speaker's attitude toward some prospective action by the hearer.
- \* Commissives express the speaker's intention and belief that his utterance obligates him to do something.

- \* Acknowledgements express feelings regarding the hearer or, in cases where the utterance is clearly perfunctionary or formal, the speaker's intention that this utterance satisfies a social expectation to express certain feelings and his belief that it does. Acknowledgements can either be apologizing, condoling, congratulating, greeting, thanking, bidding, accepting or rejecting.

### 3.1.4.2 An analysis 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5

Before we begin the analysis it should be noted that whenever there is reference to the author or reader the implied author and reader are meant.

Our text opens in 1:18 with a statement regarding the message, about Christ. The type of illocution is a constative which confirms the author's claim that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the Gospel. This gospel message brings with itself a division amongst people - "to those who are being lost it is nonsense, but for us who are being saved it is God's power". It is obvious that the author uses the technique of no naming and in a very subtle way identifies himself with those who are saved. This in turn may lead to co-operation and affection between author and reader which could result in the author motivating the reader. Through the use of the inclusive we (ἡμῖν), which suggests empathy and solidarity and interaction with the readers, the author could indeed motivate his readers to change their behaviour.

Pronouns can be employed very effectively to demarcate textual space and to enable the author to manoeuvre within the space created. According to Lategan (1987:51), textual distance can also become associated with specific values - or rather, certain positions are marked as being preferable to others. Preference is usually expressed in terms of proximity. An increase in distance between the author and readers serves as a negative sign, while a decrease (as with the use of the inclusive "us") marks a preferred position - culminating in solidarity or identification between author and reader.

Keep in mind that the social world of the author reader can be characterized as a honour oriented society. In other words a person's worth is measured in terms of the honour bestowed upon him by the group. Moxnes (1988b:63-64) also indicated that the honour\shame oriented value system is often expressed in the use of words such as δόναμις. In using μωρία in association with both δόναμις and θεοῦ, the author indicates to the implied readers to what extent he is willing to confirm the good news. The honour which the author assigns to the good news is exceptionally high.

Why does the author claim such a status and so high a degree of honour for the



message about the cross? The answer to this question lies in the word σωζόμενοι. Not simply God's power, but God's power that saves, conveys status on the λόγος that is told and rightly justifies the author's appraisal. This verse can therefore be seen as a pragmatic argument. According to Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:267-270) a pragmatic argument is a manifestation of sequential argumentation, in which an event or fact is favourable or discoverable appraised in terms of its consequences.

In this case the message about Christ's death on the cross is favourably appraised in terms of its consequences, namely that it is God's power for those that are saved. What becomes clear in such a pragmatic argument is that the values associated with the 'end', in other words, the consequences, are normally transposed onto the 'means'. The value of the means is relative to the value of the end. In this speech act the 'means' or message about Christ's death on the cross is positively rated in terms of the end. Albeit it a message that is foolish (means), the end is to the advantage of the readers because they are saved and God's power is proved.

The intended perlocution would be to create a certain amount of suspense amongst the readers and getting them involved. Note in this regard the breaking of the clarity principle (Leech 1983:66). The utterance is not so clear as one would expect which means the readers must use implicature and assume that the author is observing the co-operation principle and still wants to communicate.

**V 19:** This verse provides an excellent example of how relevant the cooperation principle, especially the manner maxim, really is. According to this maxim on how what is said is to be said one must:

1. avoid obscurity of expression;
2. avoid ambiguity;
3. be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity);
4. be orderly.

After the breaking of the clarity principle, the author uses the co-operation principle to motivate certain statements he made. He anticipates certain questions on behalf of his readers. The readers, as I have previously indicated, have extensive knowledge of the Old Testament and Jewish religious traditions. In quoting Isa. xxix.14, the author claims common ground between himself and the readers and in the process motivates his previous statement. The importance of motivation for the author is evident from the frequent use of the casual conjunction γάρ which occurs three times in 1:18-31 and twenty four times in the section 1 Cor. 1-4.



The quotation from Isa. xxix:14 has an authoritative<sup>13</sup> function, with regard to the implied readers, but it is subordinate to the preceding utterance as its motivation. This quotation is in fact a comment on the preceding verse. According to Ferrara (1985:147) a comment is an utterance in which the speaker expresses his\her attitude, feeling or opinion concerning another speech act. In referring the implied readers to the scriptures the impression is thus created that the comment is not that of the implied author, but of scripture itself. The scriptures thus function as a mutual symbol of authority and indicate the author's orientation to the value system of the Jews. It also indicates that the author's preceding redefining of power and wisdom can be authoritatively validated in terms of the Jewish value system. But even here we find a gap in the text! In the previous statement it was rather surprising to find that the counterpart of foolishness is not true wisdom or God's wisdom, but God's power. In motivating that sentence the author now chooses a tradition that focuses on God's power to overturn the wisdom of the wise. The reader is thus left with the unanswered question why the author moved from power to the wisdom of the wise. What is the function of such a gap? Iser (1980:111) describes the function of the gap in literary communication as a

process set in motion and regulated, not by a given code, but by a mutually restrictive and magnifying interaction between the explicit and the implicit, between revelation and concealment. What is concealed spurs the reader into action, but this action is also controlled by what is revealed; the explicit in its turn is transformed when the implicit has been brought to light. Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves.

The reader is thus forced to calculate what meaning can be construed from the text. However, in the conversational structure, the language use of the author have some perlocutionary effect on the readers. Up to this point σοφία was only mentioned once, but here we have the beginning of a definite contrast between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. The illocutionary force of this utterance is to assert that there is tension between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. The perlocutionary effect is a deepening feeling of suspense and suspicion against the wisdom of the world.

**V. 20:** The speech act appears in the form of a question. In the case of such question statements "neem die spreker aan dat die hoorder sal aanvaar dat hy binne die situasie van uiting nie inligting verlang nie, maar eerder inligting wil oordra (Van Jaarsveld 1982:280). According to Snyman (1983:324) this type of question is

found in verse 20. An important aspect of this type of question is that it produces a softening. Goody (1978:34) calls it a "masking question":

It is often used by parents to give the child a chance to make a decision when in fact the adult could easily simply give a command... In a sense they are really commands. Thus a mother often says something like "Shall we put on your clothes so we can go to the market?" Then why use the question form? I think that by deferring to the child's answer the parent does two things: First, she masks her own power to control the child, possibly thereby avoiding a confrontation. Secondly, she engages the child in the enterprise; she makes the child responsible for the consequences of her reply, and thus makes her a partner rather than a passive member in the enterprise.

This is exactly what the author does. On the one hand he is in the position which Goody describes; although not a mother, the author nevertheless claims to be the spiritual father of the readers. He could have given a command, but instead he masks his power and engages the readers and thereby makes them responsible for the consequences of their reply. In this way - gentle as a nurse to coin a phrase of Abraham Malherbe's - the author seeks to bring about a modification and correction in the thoughts and minds of the readers. This type of illocution is constative and specifically assertive, for in the process the author also answers the questions raised by declaring that God made foolish the wisdom of the world. The perlocutionary effect is to declare the superiority of God's wisdom over the wisdom of the world.

Although the exact nature of God's wisdom is still not known, the author nevertheless wants his readers to understand the previous statement and its implications. The result is positive feelings towards God's wisdom and negative feelings towards the wisdom of the world.

**V. 21:** This verse constitutes the result of verse 20. The author, wants to promote a positive feeling towards God's wisdom. He uses the word wisdom to refer to a scheme or plan, prepared and enacted by God for the salvation of mankind. It is a plan no human being could ever have thought out, because it operates through the so called foolish message of the Cross. The type of illocution is constative and specifically confirmative in the sense that it confirms the positive feelings towards God's wisdom and substantiates the negative feelings towards the wisdom of the world. The speech act makes it clear that it is impossible for people to know God by

means of their own wisdom (21a) and God instead chooses to save those that believe the foolish message (21b).

Of particular importance is the phrase ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. According to Wedderburn (1973:132-134) this phrase could be explained in one of the following five ways,

1. kausales ἐν: "durch die Weisheit Gottes "(Schlatter) bzw. "aufgrund der weisen Fügung Gottes" (Lightfoot);
2. ἐν als Einführung des Erkenntnismittels: Gott an der in der Welt präsenten Weisheit Gottes erkennen (Kümmel);
3. temporales ἐν: in (der Periode der Offenbarung ) der Weisheit Gottes (Leitzmann; Conzelmann; enthistorisiert);
4. räumliches ἐν: in mitten der Weisheit Gottes (Bornkamm; ähnlich Wilckens)
5. adverbial (oder modales?) ἐν zur Bezeichnung der Begeleitumstände, mit ähnlichem Sinn wie εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός in 21b (Barrett und Robertson -Plummer).

Both Von Lips (1990:331) and Schrage (1991:180) choose the second option, namely that God's wisdom is reflected in his creation and by means of his creation He is known. In this sense ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ and εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεός both point to the sovereign wisdom of God which so orders things that the wisdom of the world is reduced to ultimate futility.

The perlocutionary effect of this speech act is to once again declare the superiority of God's wisdom. This constative not only confirms but also motivates. The author purposely avoids ambiguity by motivating his statements. This corresponds with the quality maxim of Grice's co-operative principle (Grice 1975:45). The motivation of statements is evident from the frequent use of the casual conjunction γάρ which occurs three times in 1 Cor. 1:18-31. The author not only tries to convince the readers, but enhances his credibility in the process by supplying his readers with information and statements for which ample evidence is given.

At this point, communication between the author and readers has now started in all seriousness. I have previously referred to the 'gap' in the communication when the author moved from the power to the wisdom of the wise. We have also seen that whenever the reader bridges those gaps communication starts. The reader is forced to construe meaning from the text - and at this point what was said implicitly has now become explicit, namely

1. God's wisdom = foolishness = preach > > > saved

2. World's wisdom = foolishness > > > > > > destroyed

**God's power that was implicit is now explicit in statement 1.**

One must also note the frequent use of the word  $\mu\omega\pi\acute{\iota}\alpha$ . Of particular importance is the way in which the author uses it as a transvaluation of current values in the society.

The author invites conversational implicature through the use of contradictions, which is a violation of the Gricean maxim of quality. This corresponds with what Goody (1978:216) calls the "off record strategy" that is part of the politeness principle. Off record utterances are essentially indirect use of language; one says something that is either more general or actually different from what one means. This is how the author refers here to the foolish message that is preached. The message is all but 'foolish' - rather it saves. It stands diametrically opposed to the foolishness of the world's wisdom. By calling the message that is preached foolish, the author invites conversational implicature and softens the face threatening act on the readers.

**V. 22-24:** These verses are interconnected to form an additive-different (parallel) semantic relation (God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength). Within this cluster there are three paradigmatic connections:

power \ weakness  
wisdom \ foolishness  
Jew \ Gentile.

The illocutionary act in verse 22 is a constative which confirms the 'foolish message'.  $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$  indicates the purpose of the statement, which is to confirm the foolish message because the Jews want miracles and the Greeks wisdom. Once again what was implicit now becomes explicit. The foolishness of the message is explicit in terms of the expectations of Jews and Greeks alike.

By referring to the Jews and Greeks the author does two things. Firstly he creates textual distance. By the formal and general distinction, the author distances himself from the Jews and Greeks. Closely coupled with that is the technique of non naming. By using this technique the author keeps the attention of his readers

because they are not implicated. Instead of overtly naming the opponent who is in search of miracles or wisdom which could jeopardize his status and dignity and which would have been understood as a declaration of an open feud, the author refers in general to Jews and Greeks as a group. In so doing the author employs another off record strategy which is a violation of the Gricean maxim of manner.

The perlocutionary effect of this speech act is to affirm the foolishness of the kerygma when compared with the wisdom of the world.

Another constative follows immediately: "as for us we proclaim the crucified Christ". The constative is confirmative of what the author originally said in v. 18. The intended perlocutionary effect of the speech act is co-operation between author and reader. The co-operation is achieved by means of positive politeness, which

...is redress directed to the H's positive face, his perennial desire (or the actions acquisitions values resulting from them ) should be thought of as desirable. Redress consists in partially satisfying that desire by communicating that one's own wants (or some of them) are in some respects similar to the H's wants.

(Goody 1978:106)

This positive politeness strategy involves three broad mechanisms, namely: 1) claim common ground 2) convey that S and H are cooperators and 3) fulfill H's wants. What needs our attention at this particular verse is the common ground that the author claims between himself and the readers. In this speech act the use of the inclusive 'we' is to be noted. It differs sharply from the way in which textual distance was created by referring to 'Jews' and 'Greeks'. 'Ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν' illustrates the way pronouns function in a speech act. By using them to diminish the textual distance, pronouns perform the function of motivation by suggesting empathy and solidarity and interaction with the readers- 'as for us we proclaim the crucified Christ'.

Over against the 'us' and the inclusive 'we' stand the Jews, for whom this message is a σκάνδαλον and the Gentiles for whom it is a μωρία. Once again textual distance is created by the author with the perlocutionary effect of affirming the foolishness of the kerygma when measured against the wisdom of the world. Through the effective use of pronouns and the co-operation principle the readers are included in the 'us' and 'we' over against the 'those'.

V. 24 is another confirmative constative concerning the message of Christ. The

message of Christ is not only offensive and nonsense - it is also a message that saves and calls both Jews and Gentiles. In 1:18-31 there are indications that this message runs counter to the notion expressed by the following verbs ἀπολλύναι (1:18,19), ἄθετεῖν (1:19), μωραίνειν (1:20), καταισχύνειν (1:27), καταργεῖν (1:28), but also that it saves and calls εὐδοκεῖν (1:18,21), (1:21), καλεῖν (1:26), ἐκλέγεσθαι (1:27,28). The message which the author confirms is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

**V. 25** is a constative that affirms and strengthens the message, about Christ's death on the cross. We have seen that this message is the focal point of this passage.

Only now, after arriving at what is in total opposition to the expectations of the readers, are the Greeks granted what they originally expected: wisdom, but a wisdom totally different from what they have imagined. The statement is rather paradoxically and could be regarded as an argument of incompatibility (Perelman 1982:54). In other words a choice must be made between two incompatible phenomena namely God's foolishness or human wisdom and God's weakness or human strength.

Furthermore: Argumentation will initially always be concerned with one or other form of incompatibility because such an argument concerns the conflicting values of a society. The conflicting values, in this case, are between reality and apparent reality. What is **apparent** real to the αὐτοῖς are their wisdom and strength. What is **real**, however, is their foolishness in terms of Christ's death on the cross - God's foolishness<sup>14</sup>.

**V. 26** marks a transition in the sense that the reader's own experience of God's foolishness is now discussed. The author applies this new principle of God's action in the world to the social relations of the readers. So far the power of the author in guiding his readers has been very prominent. However, the author does not wield all the power and his arguments are also influenced by the presuppositions of the readers.

Recent studies have underlined the fact that an argument requires a basis of shared presuppositions or values (Kennedy 1984:17). Perelman (1982:17) puts it bluntly that a speaker can choose as his points of departure only the theses accepted by those he addresses.

In this letter the author shares a set of beliefs and values which he labels as the message of Christ's death on the Cross. The author also shares, in the widest sense,

with his readers the world views and values that were typical of the first-century Greek-Roman culture. The drastic measures (to which I will turn in due course) that the author has to embark on to save the face of his audience shows what force the presuppositions of his audience have on the shaping of the argument.

The speech act is an informative constative that informs the readers about their status when they were called. The textual distance between author and reader is now diminished through the use of an in-group identity marker namely ἀδελφοί. This is part of the positive politeness strategy in which common ground is claimed between author and reader. The object of the speech act is to move the readers from a position of exclusion (allied with his opponents) to one of inclusion (allied with the author). The author does this by subtly diminishing the textual distance. By combining the possessive pronoun with the personal pronoun, the gravitatorial force of the own group is increased. The reader is also engaged through the clever use of **litotes**<sup>15</sup>.

According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:292) litotes is a form of the argument of direction, because the readers are led in a certain direction only to be tugged away in an opposite direction owing to the negation.

According to J.N. Vorster (1991:157), the correct understanding of litotes presupposes a shared attitude towards a value system and the competency to recognize the ironical and appreciate the emphatic.

According to Leech (1983:147) litotes, in terms of a conversational perspective, can be seen as a salutary tactic to restore credibility by using descriptions which so obviously fall short of what could be truthfully asserted that they cannot be supposed as exaggerated. In other words it can be used as a means of restoring credibility. Leech (1983:148) also mentions another aspect of litotes, namely that it can be used to minimize negative connotations because 'litotes is a way of underplaying aspects of meaning which are pragmatically disfavored'.

Both these uses of litotes are applicable to the speech act. First the author sets out to confirm the credibility of the word about the cross for the implied readers. In terms of their own calling God has shown that the worldly wisdom is foolishness and God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength, for when God called them few of them were wise or powerful or of high social standing. The author wants to stress that few of the readers were of a high social status. οὐ πολλοί is a negation that is syntactically and semantically coupled with the adjectives.



Besides credibility litotes also serves to minimize negative connotations with regard to the power of the message that is preached. The social position of the readers was not strong but the litotes turns out to be significant not only for revealing the many who were without advantages when called, but also for showing that most hearers have left behind their earlier social position. Simultaneously the litotes devalues the element of shame because the reader's status is that of 'brothers who are called'.

Verse 26 is thus a pragmatic argument in which an event is favourable or disfavourable appraised in terms of its consequences (Perelman 1982:82-83). In this case the so called foolishness of God (means) is positively evaluated in terms of the calling *κλησις* (end) of the implied readers. The foolishness of God is to their advantage for many of them were without advantages when called and have since relinquished their earlier social position.

The author's use of litotes also contains an element of irony. According to Roy (1981:409-410) 'irony is a linguistic technique which can be used either as an individual strategy for immediate attention and control or as a strategy to build or display group solidarity'. Duke (1984:56) also points out that irony as an appeal has the following effect:

**Firstly** it is gratifying in the sense that readers are delighted to discover that they have been trusted with the task of rising above a rejected surface of meaning in search for a better one (Duke 1984:56).

**Secondly** it initiates a deeper insight into certain facts and truths. According to Duke (1984:57) there is a gentle beckoning and powerful persuasion in the indirect whispering way of irony because 'it is in irony's silence that the power resides. Precisely in presenting a literal meaning to its readers, irony activates their minds to an intensively active state and engages them in an open search for solid ground that will make them grateful when they find it'.

**Thirdly** it is highly effective when readers get the intended meaning and to some extent agree with it. According to Duke (1984:59) irony will only have a limited effect when its message is in stark contradiction to the experience of the reader's. However, if the irony is 'purposeful, it will achieve more success than any literal statement' (Duke 1984:59).

**Fourthly** irony achieves a sense of community amongst the readers. According to Duke (1984:60) they feel that they are insiders in a situation where only insiders



have the knowledge to discover the actual truths and implications of the text.

The strategy of the author through both the use of in group identity markers and irony is to build group solidarity. In claiming common ground and through the use of irony the intended perlocution is to seek adherence to the comprehensive principle of verse 25.

**V. 27-28** form a parallel construction and are connected to one another by καί. The conjunctive ἀλλά links them to the previous verse to form a dyadic: contrastive relation. The re-occurrence of the terms σοφοί, δυνατοί and εὐγενεῖς in these verses affirms the fundamental truth that what seems to be the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, just as God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Not only through the calling of the readers, but also in the way God has chosen is the truth proved that what seems to be the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom. The speech act is therefore an assertive constative.

**V. 27-28** represents a pragmatic argument in the sense that Christ as the power and wisdom of God is favourably appraised in terms of its consequence. The 'means' (Christ as the power and wisdom of God and its preaching) is very positively rated in terms of the end, namely the calling of the readers. The calling of the readers reflects God's choice - He chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise and the weak things to shame the strong and the low and contemptible things of the world that are nothing to bring to nothing things that are something. Note the use of the neuter adjectives in order to generalize and to soften the face threatening effect on the readers reflecting an off record strategy. The obvious violation of the manner maxim by the author invites conversational implicatures on the part of the readers. What is implicit and implicated in the way God chose is the complete reorientation of the reader's lifestyle and value system. The intended perlocution is to confirm God's reversing patterns of preference and precedence. The readers are still being made uneasy by the constant reversal of values.

**V. 29** is connected syntactically to what precedes it by the conjunction ὅπως to complete a logical relation: v. 29 is the purpose for which verses 27-28 serve as a means. Once again a pragmatic argument is used in which the 'means', namely God's reversing patterns of preference and precedence, serves the end, namely the recognition that no one can boast in God's presence. Note the use of the words πᾶσα σὰρξ which indicates what force the presuppositions of the audience have on the argument. In using this phrase the author both includes and excludes. He excludes any boasting on the part of the readers but also includes himself from boasting.

In other words, it is an all inclusive argument that saves face. The issue is sensitive because the author is consciously trying to soften the face threatening act. The sensitivity of the issue is further illustrated by the use of dissociation. I have indicated that v. 29 is syntactically related to what precedes it and is therefore an explanatory expansion that functions to generalise the preceding statement. In this way the author redefines justification. According to Wendland this is a negative expression of what justification positively states. This implies that dissociation is at work here.

According to Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:411-450) dissociation must be distinguished from incompatibility because it is not aimed at severing connecting links between concepts. Dissociation consents to the unity of elements which serves as basis for argumentation, but it nevertheless aims at a profound change and modification of the reality structure. In other words where separation signals incompatibility, dissociation signals modification. Because dissociation concerns the structuring of realities, it has important sociological dimensions - it could even be considered a modification within a value system. Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:415) for example refer to the quarrels and solutions of the early church which often necessitated adjustments in value systems. Nonetheless it must be kept in mind that dissociation occurs in conjunction with incompatibilities because dissociation can only take shape after an incompatibility has been exposed.

Let us for a while transgress on the incompatibilities in v. 26-28. The readers were called although few of them were wise and powerful or of high social standing. In other words, there is a basic incompatibility between the calling of the readers and their status. But then the incompatibility extends to God's way of choosing (v. 27-28). This opens the way for the modification of justification which is typical of dissociation. In its new modified sense justification means that no one can boast in God's presence. As in the case of Christ, who appeared weak and foolish to the world, so in regard to the non-elite at Corinth God reverses the expected reality based on honour. This incompatibility between the expected reality and God's reversal opens the way for the author to modify the value system which results in a new way, of looking at justification.

The speech act is therefore a confirmative constative that testifies to the incompatibility between the reality and God's reversal and which opens the way for the author to modify the value system of his readers. The intended perlocution is to seek the adherence of the readers to the value that no one can boast in God's presence.

V. 30-31 constitute the logical implication of the content of verses 26-29. What was said implicitly is now explicit. What was a negative expression of what justification positively means is now stated in a positive form. At first textual distance between the author and readers is created through the use of the pronoun which is emphatic.

The use of textual distance is part of the author's persuasive strategy. The second person pronoun can either be grouped with the author's opponents or with the author's own group. In this case it is a reference to the opponents because the author through the diminishing of textual distance and positive politeness includes him herself with the ἡμῖν. The final stage of inclusion, which expresses solidarity and reinforces the argument, is reached when the second person pronoun is subsumed under the first and any textual distance between the author and his\her followers is eliminated: God has made Christ to be *our* wisdom - by him *we* are justified, *we* became God's holy people and are set free.

All in all it is another pragmatic argument where the 'means' (you are related to God) is very positively rated in terms of the end (righteousness, holy, free). This is due to the fact that God has made Christ to be our wisdom. That is the fundamental issue to which justification and boasting is related. **Christ the power and wisdom of God includes justification and excludes boasting. The implication being that what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom.**

The *καθώς* points deictically to what is written in the shared world of implied author and readers. The author clearly assumes that the readers know what is referred to and that they and he share the same attitude towards what is written, since no further qualification is given. Neither the specific location of the quotation nor the agent of the passive is given. The implication is that the information is not as important as the fact of what has been written.

The presupposition is that the readers know and share adherence to what is written and what is written is not questioned or doubted. According to Plett (1986:304) this is an authoritative quotation, because its claim to authority is accepted. Little doubt is left to the reader as to the position which the author expects him to assume.

2:1 As was stated earlier this verse introduces a shift in the theme from the experience of the readers to the behaviour of the author. The behaviour of the author follows the principles and facts laid down in the previous section.

The author, through the use of positive politeness, claims common ground between

himself and the readers. Note the use of the in group identity marker ἀδελφοί to diminish textual distance which indicates a preferred position culminating in solidarity or identification with his own position.

At this stage a digression is needed in order to focus on the role of the author as person. Although more persons than Paul were involved in the writing of the letter (see 1 Cor. 16:21), only Paul was mentioned. In other words the maxim of quantity is exploited, with the implication that Paul as encoded author is in the focus and that this letter is of specific concern for the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. According to Perelman (1982:94) and Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:293-300) the topos of constructing a person is associated with co-existential argumentation. This is argumentation in which two phenomena on unequal levels are associated namely the person Paul and his actions. The notion of **person** is related to stability and this stability is created by means of acts past and present. These **actions** on the other hand construct a certain image of a person and this image influences the interpretation of further actions performed by the specific person.

According to Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:306-307), the argument of authority as well as the phenomenon of prestige is related to this topos.

Let us for a moment focus the attention on the **role of the person Paul**. J.N. Vorster (1991:95) refers to a strange paradox in the presentation of his position.

Despite the fact that he remains the focal point, a higher authority appears behind Paul. He was called by the will of God (1:1), he is an apostle of Christ Jesus (1:1). Paul assumes the readers know that an apostle is called and appointed by God. By the authority of the Jesus he appeals to his readers (1:10). The content of his preaching is God's truth (2:1). While his authority is emphasised-even as their father - the focus is simultaneously moved away from Paul to either God or Christ. Placing himself on the receiving end and putting himself under an obligation mean that the responsibility has been shifted from Paul to God. This shift in responsibilities has important consequences for the **actions of the apostle Paul**.

Actions create a certain image of a person and this image influences the interpretation of further actions. Paul's actions throughout the letter is in accordance with the role that is constructed of him as a person. His actions illustrate the truth that he is on the receiving end and that God or Christ is the sole inspiration and agenda of his actions. In other words, his actions are modelled on the actions of God and Christ.

To sum up: This verse is an excellent example of co-existential argumentation in which the phenomena of the person Paul and his actions are associated. With regard to his person - he preached God's truth shifting the authority from himself to God. With regard to his actions - he did not use preeminent eloquence or wisdom. The speech act is an assertive constative which affirms the principle of 1:31. What the author intends to affirm is his own credibility in terms of adhering to the same principle of 1:31 and thereby indicating his own stability. The author's own life and actions become a paradigm of boasting in the Lord.

2.2 expands the topos of constructing Paul. This verse is syntactically connected to the previous verse by means of the γάρ in order to form a logical semantic relation.

The argument from authority and the phenomenon of prestige are used in constructing the image of the author. According to Perelman (1969:305) the prestige argument appears in its most characteristic form in the argument from authority. It uses the acts or opinions of a person as a means of proof in support of a thesis. The thesis could be stated as follows: My proclamation among you was not characterized by eloquence or human power, that your faith might not be in human wisdom but in divine power in order to enable you to boast of what the Lord has done. The author supports this thesis by means of his acts - while I was with you I made up my mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. The whole significance of the argument is based on honour. A man's word of honour, given by him as the sole proof of an assertion, will depend on the opinion held of that man as a man of honour. The respect inspired by the author forms the chief basis of his argumentation.

2:3-4 are connected to the preceding verses by καί to form additive different (parallel) relations. The author's proclamation was not characterized by σοφία but was accompanied by ἀσθένεια, φόβος, and τρόμος. Both ideas are restated in verse 4 - the second in terms of its opposite, divine power πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμει.

Whereas the previous argument focused on the argument from authority and the phenomenon of prestige and the acts of the author, we must now consider the **interaction of act and person.**

According to Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:296) the effect of the act on the agent is that the concept of the person, is constantly modified, regardless of whether one is dealing with new acts or old acts to which reference is made. In our usual perception, an act is not so much an indicator as an element which makes it possible

to construct and reconstruct our image of the person and to classify him or her in certain categories.

On the other hand, it is also true that an act prompts us to attribute a certain value to the person. This is not a random assignment of value. If an act brings about a transfer of value, this transfer according to Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:297), is correlative to a modification of our perception of the person, to whom one shall explicitly or implicitly attribute certain new tendencies, aptitudes, instincts or feelings.

What is an act? According to Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:296) an act is everything that can be considered an emanation of the person, be it an action, a mode of expression, an emotional reaction, an involuntary twitch or a judgement. Of particular importance are past acts, because the author in 2:3 refers to the past. Past acts can assume a kind of consistency. They can either be extremely harmful liabilities or highly useful credits. Being careful of one's good reputation in the past is a guarantee that one will do nothing that might cause one to lose it. "Former acts, and the good reputation resulting from them, become a sort of capital incorporated in the person, an asset which one can rightfully invoke in one's defense" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:299).

Applied to the speech act of 2:3-4, it is indeed an argument in which there is interaction between act and person. The author as person was weak and trembled with fear when he came to them (v. 3). Coupled with this are his actions, namely that his teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom but in the power of God's spirit. The image that flows from this interaction between act and person and which influences the interpretation of further actions is one of a foolish wise man.

The author deliberately in his person and through his actions pictures himself as the 'worse' man. He boasts of all the wrong things. This must, however, be seen against the backdrop of the relation between self-praise, rhetoric and autobiography. When an individual writes autobiographically the topics he/she covers include such as (a) the privileges that were his by birth; (b) choices revealing his character; (c) actions illustrating his ethos and life's purpose and (d) an appeal to imitate his virtues.

Paul is very sensitive to the potential offensiveness of autobiographical remarks. He excludes every human self-claim before God as improper and inadmissible. His actions and person illustrate his ethos and life's purpose - to forget everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. Lyons (1985:226-277) therefore concludes that Paul highlights his autobiography in the interest of the gospel and his readers.

He is concerned that by imitating him, they should incarnate the gospel. Paul presents Jesus Christ as the paradigm of the foolish wise man which he supports by means of a blood and flesh illustration.

It is difficult, however, not to recognize that a sociological interpretation is also needed, for Paul in this passage employs terminology which traditionally belongs to rhetoric. In due course we will turn to this interpretation in order to enhance our understanding of this speech act.

2:5 is a confirmative constative which concludes the author's thought. The conclusion once again underlines that the reader's faith is the net result of the power of God. The contrast is again between the power of God and human wisdom. The author and readers share a common commitment to Christ and faith and it is to this commitment that he refers.

The perlocutionary effect of all these utterances is to get the readers to adhere to God's foolishness because in the end the net result of their faith proves that God's power is stronger than human strength. It also serves to establish Paul's position in the eyes of the readers. According to the reader's perceptions and self esteem his message and conduct (weak with fear and not with skillful words of human wisdom) symbolize the futility of existence and the temporary success of the flatterer and trickster. The result of their faith, however, indicates the exact opposite. Their faith is proof of God's power and in itself it reflects the dictum that whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done. The intended perlocution of all this is that the reader recognises the true identity of Paul - not a flatterer or trickster but someone whose very existence is a blood and flesh example of the foolish wise man **JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED**.

### 3.2 Discourse Strategies

Discourse strategies involve at least the following principles:

1. "Both the references and information needed in the interpretation of a sentence may be found in the representation of one or more of the previous sentences.
2. Part of the information for the interpretation must be sought for or inferred from general world knowledge"

(Van Dijk and Kintsch 1983:78-79).



In other words, the reader or hearer of a discourse is not merely an observer of the social and cultural contexts but also a direct participant in the communicative relationship.

The communicative process is a form of social interaction and at the same time a coherent part of larger interaction sequences. That is, discourse as an act is meant to affect further verbal or nonverbal actions such as beliefs, knowledge, motivations and opinions.

Discourse strategies acknowledge the fact that language users always manipulate surface structure, word, phrase and clause meanings, as well as other interactional, social and cultural data.

It also accepts that argumentation is to a large extent the selection, arrangement and representation of social values in various hierarchical structures and hence that knowledge concerning the structuring of the value system has become necessary. In the case of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5, the text is produced and used within the larger social context of the first century. Therefore we need to look at the social strategy underpinning Paul's thought.

### 3.2.1 Social strategies

Let me once again reiterate that social strategies in this analysis does not refer to a mere accumulation of data that are relevant in order to contribute to the historical understanding of the background of our text. Instead, the aim of the strategies employed is to abstract data in the sense of unearthing, making explicit what is buried and implicit in the discourse.

Our text is first and foremost an ancient letter.

According to Stowers (1988:78) two handbooks on letter writing survived from antiquity namely *Typoi Epistolikoi* which discusses twenty one types of letters and *Epistolimainoi Characteres* which discusses forty one types.

These handbooks do not specify formal rhetorical-literary features or stylistic traits but picture a typical social interaction that could be transacted through letters<sup>16</sup>.

The ancient letter was a genre that strongly typified the interaction between persons, precisely because it fictionalized personal presence.



Writing does differ from speech in at least two ways. Firstly, it tends to eliminate guarantees to privacy. It becomes permanent and public in a way that speech usually does not. Secondly, there are aspects such as inflection, tone, gesture and overt emotional behaviour that are not part of writing. The letter has no guarantee of privacy or secrecy, and does not have the advantage of personal presence to help determine the meaning. And yet, unlike most literature, it is written in the form of a direct address. Ancient theorists of letter writing denied that the letter was a type of literature and asserted that it was instead a substitute for personal presence (cf Malherbe 1988:15).

The handbooks follow this notion of personal presence in their specification of letter types. They describe each type of letter by sketching a social situation with its characteristic action and social relationships.

Letters thus have a strong interest in depicting social situations. What is the social situation depicted by this letter of Paul's to the Corinthians?

### 3.2.1.1 Paul's role as apostle

The social situation is partly revealed by means of the role played by Paul. He presents himself to his audience as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. His recipients are addressed as the church of God which is in Corinth, to all who are called to be God's holy people, who belong to him in union with Christ Jesus, together with all people everywhere who worship Jesus Christ as Lord (1:2).

This formal role which he as well as the recipients play reflects and determines their social status and positions in the discourse.

Paul figures as the superior person with the highest status and power since he has direct access to the revelations of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10-16). He has legitimate power (Rebel 1986:98). Coupled with that is the fact that he is a mediator of God's secret truth (2:1) and that he acts in complete obedience to God's commands (4:1-5). He therefore expects complete and total obedience to his commands (7:8, 1:10). The social situation reflects a certain type of role relationship, involving praise and blame. The writer in a letter of praise or blame is a benefactor who expects honour from the recipient in turn for benefactions. In 1 Cor. honour is due to Paul because of his social role as apostle. In essence it is a relationship of superordinate (writer) to subordinate (recipient).

Several specific social roles would fit this type of relationship, for example patron-client, friendship, parent - child. In our letter the social roles exhibit the parent - child relationship. Paul presents himself as the father figure and his intended readers as his children (4:4-15). This father\child image is applied metaphorically to the relationship between him and his audience.

This image and relationship between a father and child imply certain role expectations and modes of conduct on behalf of the readers and the author. As father Paul expects a certain code of behaviour from his children. They must not cause him any grief (2 Cor. 2:1), they must trust him (2 Cor. 12:11) and above all they must obey him (2 Cor. 2:9). As father he is also a servant of his children and therefore they must realise that as children they are not in a position to judge his actions (1 Cor. 4:1-5).

They should also imitate him as an example (1 Cor. 4:6 and 11:1).

Paul as father is entitled to admonish them (2 Cor. 2:8), to instruct them (1 Cor. 4:17), to appeal to them (1 Cor. 1:10) and to regulate their general conduct (2 Cor. 13:11). As spiritual father he is also in the position to be proud of them (1 Cor. 1:4, 2 Cor. 2:9), to love them (1 Cor. 16:24) and to scold and blame them (1 Cor. 3:1, 1 Cor. 4:21) and to even curse them (1 Cor. 16:22). The letter is clearly epideictic in the sense that the following elements can be traced: blaming (*memptikos*), commending (*systatikos*), ironic (*eironikos*), censorious (*epitimetikos*), admonishing (*nouthetetikos*), thanking (*eucharistikos*), invective (*psektikos*), friendly (*philikos*), praying (*euktikos*), threatening (*apeiletikos*), reproaching (*oneidistikos*), insulting (*hubristikos*), praising (*epainetikos*), diplomatic (*presbeutikos*).

In this type of letter the writer is a benefactor who expects honour from his recipients. By adopting the role of father figure, Paul does, however, break through the very strict hierarchical relationship between benefactor and recipient. The pressure is much more implicit on the readers to conform with their father's wishes. According to Holmberg (Joubert 1992:103) the notion of the father image is milder and both more demanding and caring as a list of rights and obligations. It signifies an affectionate relation, but it is also demanding in the sense that you are never really free from the obligation of respecting and obeying your father.

### 3.2.1.2 Paul as window unto the social world of the first century

It was Krister Stendahl (1976:83) who cautioned that modern readers examine Paul as though he belonged to our modern culture. We frequently run the risk of being

ethnocentric readers who cast Paul in terms of our culture, rather than in terms of a totally different cultural world. We speak of Paul in terms of our words, not the other words of another cultural world (cf Neyrey 1990:13).

Paul lived in the first century in a group centered society which for most of us is difficult to understand. It is therefore necessary to examine how he and others viewed their world and the predominant values of their time because this will enhance our understanding of the argumentative force of this letter.

### 5.2 1.2a Symbolic Universe

A symbolic universe is a broad concept<sup>17</sup> that can be specified by examining six specific areas in a given culture, namely purity, rites, body, sin, cosmology and evil and misfortune (Neyrey 1990:15).

Let us start by examining the area of **order and purity**. Purity according to this model refers to an impulse to perceive order in the world and to find a place for everything. Purity is the term used to describe the patterns of order and the system of labelling and classification. In most of the instances an action or object is labelled pure or holy when it conforms with the cultural norms that are part of a specific cultural group .

Paul was socialized to perceive the world as a Jew (Gal. 1:14, Phil.3:6). The Jewish God is a holy God who created a world. According to Neyrey (1990:26) the holy God expressed holiness by creating a holy and orderly world. The creation story is therefore an excellent example of how the world is ordered by the mapping of places, persons, times and roles. God separated day and night, He created different classes of animals, He created place for each and every creature whether dry or wet, He assigned a proper diet for every creature as well as a proper role or status to everyone. The heavens rule over the night and the sun rules over the day. Among the creatures of the dry land He gave Adam the dominion and He himself reigned over Adam. The temple reflects this orderly creation and its maps of things, persons and places became the concrete structural expression of the core value of God's holiness.

Paul grew up in a highly structured world that had a place for everything and everything had its place. Yet the picture has to be expanded, because

...(1) in general observant Jews in the time of Paul typically valued a highly ordered world, a cosmos. (2) But the exact shape of that

system was a matter of ongoing debate and reform. Many reformers, Jesus and Paul for example, challenged certain maps and values on which maps were drawn.

(Neyrey 1990:30)

1 Corinthians does indeed provide us with a rich illustration of Paul's perception of order. Especially in his consideration of people or as Neyrey would call it "maps of people", there is a definite structured relationship, both in heaven and earth. Yet as Neyrey (1990:33) points, out Paul's interest in them is not an abstract passion for neatness but functions in regard to the pervasive and ever present conflicts in the Pauline churches over authority and rank and status.

Let us for a moment examine some of these maps of order.

### 3.2.1.2b **Maps of Order**

The first map of order is the **cosmic hierarchy** that is mentioned in 1 Cor. 11:3. The function of this map is to assert that Christ stands in a hierarchical relationship to God who is his head. The application of this map with regard to the situation among the members of the community is obvious. In heaven even Christ, despite having maximum freedom remains in a structured relationship with God.

Even in heaven there exists authority and there is a differentiation of role and status. This map is followed by the map of an extended heavenly hierarchy in 1 Cor. 15:27-28. Once again the application is clear. We already know that certain members claimed to share in the power of Jesus' resurrection and by implication they were no longer subject to the ordinary laws and structures of this earthly reality. Paul nips this so-called realized eschatology in the bud when he maps out a scenario which precludes the social disorder that would follow if group members thought of themselves as independent of group norms because of their present sharing in Christ's resurrection. The principle is once again the same: persons and even heavenly figures are ordered and structured (cf Neyrey 1990:34).

Another structured map of order concerns the **people within the church** and especially those (1 Cor. 15:5-41) to whom Jesus has appeared.

Cephas is listed first, for obvious reasons, but Paul stands last because he is the least of the apostles that persecuted the church. The strategy behind it is that Paul is at least listed and as such he is to receive legitimate authority. In a situation where his authority was constantly challenged and he seemed unwise, not eloquent, not strong,

not pneumatic, Paul describes himself as gifted by God and as such he has authority. The same principle applies to 1 Cor. 12:28-30. This list occurs in the midst of a discussion of persons and their gifts. At first glance an order of time seems to be indicated 'first, second, third'. In a world where the dominant temporal pattern was "earlier is better and later is weaker" (Neyrey 1990:39) the claim to be first in time implies a claim to higher role and status. At the beginning are the most important persons and their gifts (apostles, prophet, teacher) and at the end are the gifts that seem to be causing the most divisions. The gifts are also not equal because there are higher gifts to which the members should aspire. The same principle is at work, namely that in an orderly cosmos there is a clear and structured hierarchy of roles and status.

It seems that when Paul faces rivalry and schisms he carefully articulates these maps as a way and means to diffuse the problems. These maps and structures of order serve to support the weak and to correct the elite.

Interestingly enough Paul also provides a **map of the church and of members and non-members**. The members are either saints (1 Cor. 6:1) and the non-members non saints, or the members are saints and the non members the world (1 Cor. 1:20-28). Along the same line we find dualistic expressions to distinguish members of the church in terms of status and power. The members are mapped out as strong vs. weak, as wise vs. foolish, as superior vs. inferior, as adults vs. babes. Once again this map forms part of Paul's social order and strategy in as much as they make clear that the Christians have a unique identity and status. To conclude: all these maps of order are part of Paul's social strategy in the sense that they serve a specific rhetorical function.

### 3.2.1.2c Maps of Disorder

Gerd Theissen (1978:14) pointed out that Paul was also a reformer of the system into which he was socialized. Despite the traditional portrait of God as the creative orderer of the universe, Paul likewise perceives God as acting in ways that upset traditional patterns of order. Instead of just being socialized by sacred scripture (e.g. Genesis) and by religious practice (e.g. the temple), Paul was socialized as a follower of Jesus and therefore came to see God acting in different ways. Paul provides us in the words of Neyrey (1990:59) not with new maps but with a map of seemingly disorder.

An example of such a map of disorder is the way in which Paul redefines God's inclusivity. In Galatians 3:6-12 he argues that God does not have two principles of

justification, one for the Jews and another one for the Gentiles. God acts only on the principle of faith. Paul therefore asks whether God is only the God of the Jews or whether he is also the God of the Gentiles. According to traditional theology and the map of order God is one and this confession is used to distinguish Jew from Gentile. Paul cites this map to argue the exact opposite, namely that God does not distinguish between Jew and Gentile.

We call this an example of divine disorder for as Paul understands and uses this theological confession, God is not preferring one people over another but showing impartiality to all. This, however, clearly contradicts the *old map of persons* fundamental to Jewish self understanding. Order in the cosmos meant that Israel alone was chosen. According to his new axiom, Paul reforms that traditional map of persons, which exalted the chosen people and excluded all others.

(Neyrey 1990:59-60)

Of particular importance for this study is another map of disorder, namely **God's reversals**. The greatest example of this reversal is found in 1 Cor. 1:23. According to the map of honourable persons shared by both Jew and Greek, Christ has no place there; he is a stumbling block to Jews and nonsense to the Greeks. However, according to God's new map of persons he is the power and wisdom of God. In citing Isaiah 29:14 Paul appeals to God's word as the source of divine reversals: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and cleverness of the clever I will thwart'(1:19 ). Once again a pattern is turned around. God has other ideas of wisdom and honour.

This map of disorder is immediately applied to the social relations in Corinth in 1 Cor. 1:18-25. In a world where status is based on honour Paul describes God's new map of persons in which status is reversed. God chooses what is foolish and low (1 Cor. 1:27-28).

As in the case of Christ, who appeared weak and foolish to the world, so in regard to the non-elite at Corinth God reverses the expected map of persons based on honor. One might apply the same principle in regard to Paul himself in 2:1-16 where his honor and status are challenged.

(Neyrey 1990:62)

These assertions of reversals are not without rhetorical and polemical function in the argumentation of 1 Corinthians, but that is a matter to which I will attend in due

course. The issue which interests us here is: What is the implication of these maps of order and disorder for the social strategy? When and in what circumstances does Paul argue for order and system and in what circumstances does he favour reversals and disorder?

At this stage it is still impossible to answer these questions. What we know for certain is that Paul viewed the world as a highly organized cosmos, where every person, thing, space and time has its proper place. Yet he is also a reformer. Although his instincts to classify all persons and things remain, as a disciple of Jesus he develops new systems of classifications. Throughout his attention is focused on the boundaries of the social group called the Corinthians. This group of people or social body is of paramount importance in determining the use or non use of the different maps of order and disorder. Let us therefore turn to Paul's view of the body in a quest to determine the use of different maps.

#### **3.2.1.2d Paul's view on the body**

Paul views the physical body in the same way he views the social body<sup>18</sup>. It is an orderly organism that is subject to the same discipline and control that governs the social body. Paul's reference to the body is therefore a window on his cultural view of the way Christian groups should be structured.

According to Neyrey (1986:132) there are two groups - a strong group and a weak group. A strong group is indicative of a high degree of pressure to conform to group norms as well as a pressure for order and control. Order and discipline are valued and group values are predominate. The weak group, on the other hand, reflects a low degree of pressure for control and order. Norms and discipline are not valued and personality is perceived in a very individualistic way.

The world view, or, symbolic universe of these two groups could be summarized as follows (Isenberg & Owen 1977:7-8 and Malina 1978:102-103):

## **STRONG GROUP.**

**PURITY** - Strong concern for purity; purity rules define and maintain social order.

**PERSONAL IDENTITY** - A matter of internalizing clearly articulated social roles. The individual is servient to society.

**RITUAL** - A society of fixed rituals expressing the internal system of classification in the group.

**BODY** - Tightly controlled: a spiritual.

**SIN** - A pollution which invades the body and pollutes the insides of the body. Moral norms are well defined. and is learned from the group and is socio-centric.

## **WEAK GROUP**

Anti-purity posture.

No antagonism between society and the self but the old society is seen as oppressive.

Self control is low. Highly individualistic.

Anti-ritual and spontaneous.

Irrelevant - life is symbol of life.

The concern for purity is absent and the body may be freely used or rejected

It is a matter of personal ethical decision.

In relation to the social structure of Corinth which is reflected in the use of the body metaphor, I believe that Paul moves toward a strong group\high grid classification, while the majority of his opponent's function in the weak group\low grid position. This position of both Paul and his opponents is confirmed by Neyrey (1990:128).

It thus seems as if Paul, in view of the social situation and in the light of his opponents predominant world view, affirms traditional orderly maps of persons, places and things. Yet he also reverses those maps under certain circumstances.



He is consistent in his tendency to perceive and impose order on the world, but inconsistent in the specific maps he puts forth. His inconsistency is not the mark of a fickle person or a religious fake. His inconsistency is related to the specific historical and sociological nature of the group or body to which he is writing.

Viewed against the dominant world view of his opponents and the historical situation of the community, Paul settles for a pattern of order. He expresses his sense of order in the customary terminology of purity or pollution. Social purity as Neyrey (1986:163) argues comprises a unity and cohesion with clear roles and status and classification.

Physical holiness comprises a wholeness and bodily integrity. Social pollution came to the fore in factions and divisions, confused roles and weakened authority, whilst physical pollution consisted in weak bodily discipline.

In conclusion:

...he is best identified as a type of reformer, for he maintains his loyalty to the essentials of Jewish faith: the belief in the one true God and acceptance of God's sacred writings. Yet he is no longer Paul the Pharisee; nor does he worship any more in synagogue or temple. Hence his instincts to classify all persons and things remain, as a follower of Jesus he develops new systems of classification, different boundary lines and structures to express the order of the cosmos - in Christ.

(Neyrey 1990:219-220)

### 3.2.1.3 The social context of Paul and his readers

If Paul's social strategy is to be understood we need more information about social structure in the first century. For instance: kinship patterns that made up the basic social institution of the family, the economics of kinship groups, their form of reciprocity, and their patron-client relations (Elliot 1987, Malina 1988). In the scope of this study these matters cannot be discussed in great detail.

What is important, however, is the way in which Paul perceived his fellow first century citizens. Wuellner (1973:666) pointed out that no other verse in the entire New Testament was more influential in shaping popular opinion than the earlier Christians were of low proletarian origin than 1 Cor. 1:26.

Recent research is, however, characterized by a reaction against this opinion. In various articles and books E. A. Judge (1960:4-15), (1984:3-24) has developed a picture of Paul's congregation in the context of client systems and voluntary associations and the social positions of the literate Roman East. Because Paul's associates show a frequency of Latin names ten times higher than in public inscriptions Judge suggested that many came from freedmen's and veterans' families. Moreover, having the rank of Roman citizenship did not give them the status of well-established local families, and this may be what they were seeking when they joined the house churches in Corinth (1983:17). When Paul deliberately abandoned his social status for tentmaking and a harsh itinerant life style his associates did not follow suit.

Also of importance is Judge's provocative statement in his study on 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community' (1961:125) in which he suggests that the issue between Paul and his rivals involved academic belief rather than religious practice. According to Judge Paul could not have been trained in rhetoric. To the contrary, Paul was a reluctant and unwelcome competitor in the field of sophistry (1983:11). This has certain sociological implications because rhetoric was learned only at a tertiary stage of education and it formed a peculiar social dividing line between the those who belonged to the leisured circles for whom such education was possible and those who could only afford the common literacy necessary to earning one's living (Judge 1968:44). Thus Paul could not speak and he had to work.

I do not entirely agree with Judge. In Forbes's study (1986:23) the exact opposite view is argued. According to Forbes Paul's rhetoric suggests a mastery and assurance unlikely to have been gained without long practice and long study. Malherbe (1977:56) also responded with some reservations to Judge's proposals<sup>19</sup>.

What then of 1 Cor. 1:26 and the statement that 'few of you were wise or powerful or of high social standing'? Wuellner (1973:668) argues in favour of interpreting the ὅτι clause interrogatively, 'Are not many wise...? Wuellner's use of this grammatical form of question is, however, less common in Paul and does not make good sense of the phrase "according to the flesh", nor does it fit in with the rest of the paragraph. Another proposal of Wuellner (1970:200-201) is that the triad wise-powerful-noble forms part of a haggadic homily of which the central theme is divine and sovereign judgment over all wisdom. However, in his 1982 study Wuellner (1982:562) states that such a set formula for divine judgment and favour cannot be confirmed for this period. Wuellner's conclusion (1973:672) however, remains that there is no evidence that the Corinthians belonged to proletarian circles.

Gerd Theissen (1982:57) is satisfied that the Corinthian parties were members of the upper classes<sup>20</sup>. His study of those in the community who are named as leaders, homeowners, providers of hospitality, or travelers confirms that

...of the seventeen persons listed nine belong to the upper classes.  
...The result is clear. The great majority of the Corinthians known to us by name probably enjoyed high social status.

(Theissen 1982:95)

This view is shared by scholars such as Malherbe (1977:76)<sup>21</sup> and Meeks (1982:270)<sup>22</sup>. Malherbe's study of the social level of Paul's churches emphasizes the apostle's writing style as a key indication of his considerable culture and that of his intended audience. Accepting this new consensus and the corresponding fact that 1 Cor 1:26 does indeed indicate that some members were wise, noble and powerful, one must proceed with caution. In the words of Meeks (1982:26) we should not too quickly assign the Christians to some general middle class. It could be very misleading because it assumes that there was something in the ancient Greek city corresponding with the middle class in modern industrial society.

To conclude: The considerations discussed above gave rise to the view that the divisions amongst the Corinthians were amongst other reasons caused by internal social stratification which is why Paul argues the way he does in 1:18-2:5. This hypothesis will be tested against the backdrop of the social structure of Corinth and the social status of both the women prophets and the men in Corinth.

### 3.2.1.3a The social structure of Corinth

It is a well known fact that in the year 146 B.C. the city of Corinth suffered disaster. By way of reprisal for the leading part it had played in the revolt of the Achaian League against the authority of Rome, a Roman army led by Lucius Mummius razed the city to the ground, sold its population into slavery and confiscated its territory to the Roman state (Breytenbach 1987:48).

The prime economic position of Corinth led to its refounding by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. Corinth quickly reclaimed much of its Greek identity, becoming once more, as Favorinus put it "thoroughly Hellenized". Yet the Roman influence in Corinth remained important, shaping everything from the layout of the city to the civil and legal systems. According to Theissen (1982:99) the dominance of Roman influence is reflected in the eight surviving names of the Corinthian Christians. The Jews constituted a third group of people alongside the Romans and Greeks.

According to Murphy O'Connor (1991:5) the ethos of Corinth is best illustrated by the proverb 'Not for everyone is the voyage to Corinth'. It meant that only the strong and the ruthless could survive the intense competitiveness of a wide open boom town. Corinth had no hereditary patrician class to give it a stately standing such as Athens. Its prominent citizens were all *nouveaux riches*. What was important in this modern type of industrial city was commercial success. It was everyone for himself and the weak went to the wall.

An even more important statement by Theissen (1982:99-100) claims that this city had no continuity in its tradition. The dominant mythical figure in Corinth was not Aphrodite but Sisyphus, one of the craftiest according to Homer (*Iliad* 16:154). The story of his futile rock rolling in Hades formed the background to the Corinthian's existence and together with their lack of tradition symbolized the futility of existence. The most that could be hoped for was the temporary success of the trickster. The future in any case was uncertain. It makes it all the more easy to comprehend a statement from the rhetor Alciphron in the 2 B.C. when he wrote

ουκετι εισηλθον εις την Κορινθου εγνων γαρ εν βραχει την  
βδελυριαν των εκεισε πλουσιων και την πενητων αθλιότητα.

I did not go further into Corinth having learned in short order the  
sordidness of the rich and the misery of the poor.

(Theissen 1982:102)

I have already mentioned the efforts that were made by various scholars to determine the status of the individuals in order to get some idea of the social stratification of the Corinthian church.

Many factors contribute to the determining of status. People of the first century were not highly individualistic Westerners. According to Malina (1989a:6) the first century person "would perceive himself as a distinctive whole set in relation to other such wholes and set within a given social and natural background, every individual is perceived as embedded in some other".

The religious structure of first century Corinth was constituted by a) the structure of the group, b) the prevailing social system and c) the way values and norms are controlled (Malina 1986:97). The group structure was dependent on other kinds of social relations. Adherence to the religious group was based on politics and power or leadership. Thus the people of Corinth became Christians for reasons other than and/or along with religious ones, for example to share in power, to have a proper

funeral and even to partake of weekly meals and even to share in power.

Many factors played a role in determining status for example racial origins, legal status, personal status, occupation, religion, sex, wealth, etc. Some indicators carry more weight than others, depending on the social context, and in addition are conditioned by the attitude of the person judging. Many members of the Corinthian community rate high on one or more scales but low on others. Aquila, for example, rates high in terms of wealth and gender, because he was a Jew who worked with his hands and was only a resident alien at Corinth. Phoebe was patroness of the church at Cenchreae, which would give her a rank equal to Gaius who hosted the whole church. But he was a man and she a woman, and that made a significant difference as I will prove in due course.

Unlike our world ancient Mediterranean culture was strongly structured around the pivotal values of honour and shame. Honour according to Pitt-Rivers (1968:503-504)

...is a sentiment, a manifestation of this sentiment in conduct, and the evaluation of this conduct by others, that is to say, reputation. It stands as a mediator between individual aspiration and the judgment of society. It can, therefore be seen to reflect the values of a group with which a person identifies himself. But honour as a fact, rather than a sentiment, refers not merely to the judgment of others but to their behaviour.

The facets of honour may be viewed as related in the following way: honour felt becomes honour claimed, and honour claimed becomes honour paid. The same principles that govern the transactions of honour are present in those of dishonour though in reverse: the withdrawal of respect dishonours, since it implies a rejection of the claim to honour, and thus implies shame. To be put to shame is to be denied honour, and it follows that this can only be done to those who have some pretensions to it. Honour and dishonour, therefore provide the currency whereby their appraisal of themselves can be validated and integrated into the social system - or rejected, thus obliging them to revise it.

That honour and shame play an important role in Corinthians is partly conveyed in the vocabulary with words such as "power" and "shame", "to put to shame", "weakness", "boast" and σκαυδαλον. It is also not only a matter of individual words, but the general tenor of Paul's words and argument. It is not God's wisdom that is

the main theme in Corinthians but rather the **power** of God which has been revealed as God's wisdom.

Did Paul share the values of honour and shame that were at large in the Corinthian society? Two areas were of great importance in this regard: power structures and sex roles<sup>23</sup>. Let us start with the **power structures**.

Many of the connotations of honour in the definition given by Pitt-Rivers are present in the text of Corinthians. First of all, **honour** is linked to **power**. The frequent use of the term power (1:18,24,28, 2:4-5) is significant. In itself the term already suggests something of an order and since the power is connected to two specific groups it also implies a conflict of interests.

Paul presupposes a society with a given order, and he demands that the individual Christians recognize that order. The society he describes is stratified, and he is clearly addressing all the parties. They are subordinates and the relationship between them and the Lord is best understood in term of a patron - client relationship, that is, a relationship between unequals but with a common bond in the quest for honour (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984:50-51).

The presence of these different social classes within the church provides fertile soil for factions. Tensions between classes make conflict seem inevitable<sup>24</sup>. One can therefore agree with Theissen who believes that virtually all the problems can be attributed to this kind of conflict. On the basis of a pattern common in Greek cities of the period, it would appear that certain wealthy members of the community exploited the dependence of the poor believers to carve out for themselves power bases within the church. According to Welborn<sup>25</sup> the divisions in Corinth and the term *σχίσμα* and its associates make it clear that "it is neither a religious heresy nor a harmless clique that the author has in mind, but factions engaged in a struggle for power" (Welborn 1987:56).

Although Paul's informants, Chloe's people (1:11) were probably slaves (Theissen 1982:92-93), Paul cannot be said to take the side of those members of the community who come from the lower strata. Judge (1960:131), Theissen (1982:57) and Schüssler Fiorenza (1987:393) amongst others all point to the fact that Paul's supporters were also people of wealth and status, namely Crispus, Gaius and Stephanas<sup>26</sup>. Evidently the leaders of the opposing factions were also men of substance, for the terms that Paul uses to characterize those who could examine his apostolic credentials in 1 Cor. 4:10 are mere euphemisms for the rich. In other words

...Paul appeals to those who, like himself, were of higher social and educational status. They should make the ecclesial decisions which are necessary in Corinth. ...If, as Hock and Bunker have argued, Paul himself was of relatively high social and educational status, then his experience of becoming a follower of Jesus Christ was quite different from that of the majority of the Corinthians. While for them their call meant freedom and new possibilities not open to them as poor and slaves, for Paul and those of equal social status, their call implied relinquishment of authority and status, it entailed hardship, powerlessness and foolishness in the eyes of the world.

(Fiorenza 1987:399-400)

Let me summarize: Due to the fact that our social strategies has succeeded in making explicit what is buried and implicit in the discourse of this section we are now in a position to understand why Paul argued in the way he did. The social strategies has provided the necessary backdrop as to why Paul sees the calling of the Corinthians as God's way of contradicting the values of those who excel in what the world values.

This reversal is limited to two phenomena. Firstly, a change of values with the consequent loss of social standing among those like Paul who choose with God to take a loss (2:2). The second phenomenon is the embodiment of God's values in the Corinthians themselves (1:26). Since the social standing remains dominated by the worldly values of the wise and the strong, the social standing of those already foolish and weak does not change.

The Corinthians on the other hand see themselves blessed and moving up on the ladder of social importance. They do not receive this wisdom and power as a confirmation that God has chosen foolishness but as the ultimate demonstration that all can receive the surpassing value of God's wisdom so long beyond reach but not fully attainable (Wire 1990:61). In other words what Paul sees as a reversal of values intended by God's choice of people who are not wise, powerful or honoured has been experienced by these Corinthians as a timely reversal of their fortunes and social situation. With regard to themselves, they have become wise, powerful and honoured. Paul therefore argues that they are subverting God's reversal of all values to their own advantage.

The Corinthians, on the other hand, think that Paul is the culprit who is subverting God's reversal of the social values to legitimate his own losses and to keep the status



quo in check. Their calling in the eyes of Paul demonstrates God's exclusive right to glory and his exclusive power and on the other hand the subordination of the world's wise to the glory of God. The Corinthians see their calling as the demonstration of God's glory - not simply its preservation but its extension - through the radical changed reality of the once foolish of the world.

Thanks to the social strategies we are now also in a position to explain Paul's use of honour and shame language. Paul uses **shame** language in combination with the honour language. Paul uses δόξα exclusively for God - in other words honour is not a civic virtue but something that is reserved exclusively for God. Paul's perspective is that there is an order to be observed: it is the duty of humanity to recognize God, to render the honour due to God (1:18,26,31, 2:5). Humanity, however, refuses to grant God this honour. The Corinthians claimed wisdom; that is they boasted of a wisdom they did not possess (1:20). This was the ultimate sin: mere humans not only refused to give due honour to God but even claimed this honour for themselves. Such ὑβρις is not only typical of human beings vis-a-vis God but also characterizes them in their social life as the rest of the letter clearly indicates.

God cannot not let this claim go unchallenged. Refusing to grant them this honour, God instead puts them to shame: 'God has shown that this world's wisdom is foolishness. For God in his wisdom has made it impossible for people to know him by means of their own wisdom. ...For what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and what seems to be God's weakness is stronger than human strength' (1:20-25). This shame results in a break with the order of the world which becomes visible in the social life of the so called wise.

In view of the fact that shame is "an experience-near concept" (Moxnes 1988:213) it is noteworthy that Paul takes his examples of shame from the private lives of the Corinthians in order to shame them. He starts off by referring to the divisions and different parties (1:10-17) and then moves on to their calling (1:26ff). In quick succession he then refers to examples of sexual immorality (5:1ff) and disputes before heathen judges (6:1ff) and even marriages (7:1ff). Paul uses a similar argument based on gender roles in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 where differences in hair styles<sup>27</sup> between men and woman are seen as integral to their given gender roles and a break with these roles incurs shame (11:4-5). Apparently it is within the area of lifestyle that Paul wants to establish the distinctive character of a specific christian identity, and it is within these spheres, including the experience of women and slaves, that he uses shame as an experience-near concept.



To conclude: In examining the power structures it becomes clear that unlike our world, the ancient Mediterranean world and in this case Corinth, was strongly structured around the pivotal values of honour and shame. One can thus conclude that the social stratification amongst other factors gave rise to the conflict in Corinth and forms the backdrop for the argumentative force of Paul's writing. This will become even more evident when one considers the social status of women and men.

### 3.2.1.3b Social status of Women and Women prophets<sup>28</sup>

Although women are often hidden within a generic address, as in Corinthians, only occasionally spoken and even less spoken to, their repeated appearance shows that they are not without a role. I believe that by determining the place these women have in the social context of Corinth and the status that is bestowed on them we might come even closer to understanding the social fabric behind the text\strategy of Paul.

It is generally accepted that women prophets existed in the New Testament era (Acts 21:8-9, Rev. 2:18-29). Even Irenaeus in his 'Against Heresies' iii 11.9<sup>25</sup> admits that in "his Epistle to the Corinthians he (Paul) speaks expressly of the prophetic gifts and recognizes men and women prophesying in the church". Priscilla's teaching role, though attested several decades later than Paul's letters, is to my mind a significant parallel to Chloe's role of informant to Paul and Phoebe's role of deacon and defender of the church in Corinth. These are individual pictures of the variety of leadership roles carried out by believing women in and near Corinth. Schüssler Fioranza (1987:395) claims that if the delegation that was sent to Paul travelled under the name of a woman, (with reference to 'those of Chloe' in 1:11), women must have had influence and leadership in the Corinthian church not only in worship meetings but also in everyday life and decision-making processes of the community. One cannot refute this assumption by arguing that Paul uses only 'brothers' to address the members of the community, for androcentric language functioned in antiquity just as today. What was the position of the women? It is unlikely that the women prophets belong to the few who arrived with some power and status in Corinth's community. A society where women were not found in schools, courts or councils could not produce many learned or politically powerful women for religious recruitment. With regard to their family rank, it is to be noted that Paul's letters mention occasional women with homes large enough for church gatherings or with resources to help others (1 Cor. 16:19, Romans 16:2,5). Most of the data, however, suggests that they are more likely artisans or traders than people from prominent families.

On the positive side these women could have had a positive social status in the sense that they were free. Although we have no statistics on the number of free people, the general determination of a mixed community is approximately half slave and half free.

But women have another major disadvantage - their gender is by definition female. According to Wire (1991:64) literary sources show that girls married at the age of twelve to fourteen and men not before they were twenty. Burial suggests the life expectancy of females were roughly seven years shorter than that of males. Coupled with that, one must bear in mind that the exposure of infants was the primary method of birth control. As Wire (1991:64) points out, the decision of the father usually was to expose girls because of the dowry system and the economic advantage of sons. Some of these girls were found and raised as slaves. Many others died, contributing to the severe depopulation problem in Greece during this period.

In conclusion: the social status of the women prophets at the time of their calling seems to be very low. They were not wise, without power, rank and status. One can assume with Wire (1991:64) that most of them were married, bearing children regularly and keeping the hearth either for their husbands or their masters' households.

However, their position at the time Paul is writing has changed dramatically. In terms of 1 Cor. 4:10 they are strong, and honoured and full of insight. What brought about these changes? Apart from the acclaimed wisdom (1:5-7, 13-18), their prophecy and tongues would also give them significant power in a community where prophecy seems to have shaped future goals. Paul ranks prophets second only to apostles (12:28).

Added to this the women prophets and women socialized and identified with other believers, demonstrated by their eating and drinking together. It could well be that the prophets or women were still slaves, but the status of those slaves would differ considerably in a community where slaves and free persons were baptized in one spirit into one body and where Paul can argue for stable slave/free roles only by conceding that an opportunity to gain one's freedom must not be wasted (7:22).

Although they would remain women, the boundaries were getting very vague, since it is also evident that women were choosing to refrain from sexual relations. This rise in status also lies at the core of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and in particular the word *exousia* which has traditionally been translated as a covering, but in its ordinary sense in Greek means power or authority. Interpret in such a way a woman's *exousia*

involves her ability to choose between alternatives.

Thus

...the woman prophet has experienced a surge of status in wisdom, power and honour and has reshaped her ethnic identity, caste and gender in ways that give her more scope...

The dominant event is the great change upward in the social status of all women prophets, especially as it effects relations to others whose status has been constant or declining.

(Wire 1990(a):65-66)

### 3.2.1.3c The social status of men and of Paul in Corinth

It is noteworthy that no men are amongst those Paul is trying to persuade to limit their use of authority or to respect their co-workers. According to the evidence they are reliable sources (1:11), his converts (1:14-16), his helpers (16:17-18) and co-workers (3:5-6, 16:3-5). But according to Wire (1991:66) their status has decreased. These men are associated with Gentiles and women and slaves which is a definite shame. Crispus forfeits a position as head of a synagogue and Timothy is without the respect he should have received.

The best possible example of status loss is Paul himself. According to Judge (1960:56) and Wire (1991:66) Paul came from the upper strata. He too was an artisan who travelled extensively and he was a Roman citizen, a fact that conferred on him some privileges and dignity.

Cloth workers such as Paul did not enjoy privileges, but Paul's family achieved the right to full citizenship in the city. This placed Paul on the same footing as those who enjoyed privileged status in Corinth.

Paul could be considered as a wise man. His wisdom is attributed by Luke to his teacher Gamaliel. Paul himself complied with the traditions of the fathers with a zeal beyond all peers (Acts 22:3, Gal. 1:14). With regard to his rank - he was a Hebrew of Hebrews and according to the law a Pharisee (Acts 16:37-38, 22:25-29, 2 Cor. 11:22). All this evidence illustrates Paul's power in the sense that he came from a Jewish family with the wealth to foster a son's education and with political influence used in Rome's favour to win citizenship. In another sense it demonstrates his power because he is given the authority to persecute the church (Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-2). In the words of Wire (1991:67) "in wisdom, power, rank, ethnic, caste and sex, Saul - to use Luke's name for him at this stage - has status".

His calling, however, changes this dramatically. In ending his career as Pharisee he is left without a power base in the Greek speaking world. He also sacrifices his wisdom and even concedes to the Corinthians that he has not spoken with wisdom, arguing that God prefers the foolishness of the cross and that the Corinthians are too immature to be addressed with wisdom. But Paul also knows that this kind of argument does not cancel out their judgment of him by normal standards. He, however, uses that in order to gain their sympathy: "We are fools on Christ's account but you have insight in Christ, we are weak but you are strong, you honoured but we shamed" (4:10).

To conclude:

...Paul remains in a society at large a Jew, free and a male. There is no way that this status can fall even to equal the level to which the Gentile slave woman's status has risen in the Corinthian church. Yet the privileges of his Jewish status have been severely compromised, his rights as a free person have been limited by the Christian slave's freedom in Christ, and his position as a male is now being lived out in the same world with the Corinthian women prophets. Paul unquestionably sees himself having lost status.

(Wire 1990(a):67)

### 3.2.1.3d **The social location of the Corinthian parties**<sup>29</sup>

The identity of the different parties is a matter that has been debated for many centuries.

A summary of the different hypotheses will suffice: It started with the well known claim of Ferdinand Christian Bauer in 1831 that Paul in Corinth found himself opposed by the Judaizing party headed by Cephas. Bauer and his followers soon reduced the four parties to which Paul refers to two: the Pauline party and the Petrine party (cf the subtitle of Bauer's work "der Gegensatz der petrinischen und paulinischen Christenthums in der ältesten Kirche").

Lütgert on the other hand argues that Paul's opponents are enthusiasts who have distorted Paul's doctrine of freedom. Although they are closely related to the Christ party and embrace sexual license and inflate the value of visions and revelations they should be distinguished from the Judaizers or Petrine party as well as the wisdom loving group from Apollos. They are gnostics that are opposed to the law as

well as "libertinische Pneumatik" (Lütgert 1908:46).

In more recent times<sup>30</sup> Schmithals has presented Lütgert's idea in a different form. He (1971:286-287) defines the opponents as Jewish gnostics. Within the Corinthian church Paul therefore faces only one front of opposition namely, the Christ party - that is the gnostics. Schmithals provides a sweeping solution to the problems, comparable to that of F.C. Baur. The only difference between them is that Schmithals replaces the Judaizers with gnostics, a variant that Lütgert in any case proposed half a century ago.

Not everyone is convinced. Some scholars such as McL Wilson (1973:68) speaks of a German plot. Francis Watson (1986:81) has concluded from a sociological approach that the problems Paul has to deal with at Corinth are unrelated to his controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity.

More significant is the development of a homogeneous front of opposition against Paul in Corinth. In essence Schmithals argues that the time is too short for more than one heresy to have arisen and secondly the Corinthian correspondence affords no evidence that Paul's polemic is directed against more than one front (Schmithals 1971:113-114).

The latter point is supported by Fee<sup>31</sup> (1987:14) who notes that the letter is addressed to the whole church and that the style throughout is combative. The conclusion is that "1 Corinthians was addressed by Paul to a single, more or less unified, opposing point of view" (Hurd 1965:96).

Beyond this view there lurks the well-known dialectical interpretation of history of which F.C. Baur was a forerunner<sup>32</sup>. According to this view history progresses through a series of conflicts. This view is at core of the thinking of Hurd (1965:35) who pays no or little attention to the religious backgrounds or sociological stratification of the community, but reconstructs the parties and situation in Corinth in terms of confrontational exchanges between Paul and the church. When Paul first came to town he was, according to Hurd, an ardent liberal who claimed all things are lawful (6:12; 10:23). After he had received a copy of the apostolic decree (Acts 15:23-29) he reversed his preaching and thoughts and became a conservative. When the Corinthians heard of this sudden transformation they wrote to Paul (7:1) in disbelief, hurling his own slogans back to his face. Paul then in response wrote 1 Corinthians getting at his opponents who were the whole church of Corinth.

This kind of dialectical thinking has given rise to the hypothesis that Paul is only facing one front of opposition. However, it has brought us no closer to solving the problem. In view of the variety of social and religious backgrounds of the Corinthians, this kind of attempt to pour all the problems into one mold seems duly irresponsible. Even Schmithals has difficulty fitting everything into his pattern (Schmithals 1971:222,287).

Another methodological problem that needs our attention is the procedure used for identifying the opponents. Schmithals (1971:179) identifies literary and stylistic features that betray Paul's concern with the opponents, such as the use of *καὶ γὰρ* (7:40) and the non Pauline terms such as *γνωστὸς* (1971:146).

Hurd (1965:120-21) on the other hand demarcates two criteria in the light of which the slogans of the opponents can be traced, namely grammatical or stylistic indications such as the repetition of the "we" in 8:1, and forms of argumentation such as the qualification of statement in 8:1 and 8:6. Lüdemann (1983:108) again believes that the statements and utterances of the opponents can best be identified if it is assumed that Paul directly quotes their statements and indicates that they are directed against him. To this criterium, somewhat as an afterthought, he adds that those passages where Paul employs a polemic style in answer to an attack can also be used with caution. These can be placed into three categories: a) statements of a negative nature and intention, b) statements that appear to counter doctrines that are attacked in other texts and c) statements whereby the opponents' thunder is stolen.

To conclude: Even these criteria suggest that the methods used in identifying the opponents are less than satisfactory. The principle of mirror reading frequently intrudes and the grammatical and stylistic indications are more often than not convincing. In trying to identify the opponents, more attention needs to be given to the religious and social background of the converts.

What is necessary at this point is to get greater clarity on the issue of whether the parties arose out of theological disputes<sup>33</sup> or whether they arose out of the social stratification<sup>34</sup> present in Corinth or a combination of factors<sup>35</sup>. The latter, indicating that theological as well as social matters influenced the forming of the parties seems the best possible assumption.

In this section I will, however, turn the rest of my attention to the **social** matters that could contribute to the formation of the different parties. The theological matters will receive attention in due course.

Let us start with the comments of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyceta (1969:323) that the formation of groups is closely tied to situations of argumentation because "it is the needs of argument which explain the tendency to form into a group and so band together all those who are seen to share the same attitudes, the supporters and opponents of a certain viewpoint, a certain person, or a certain way of acting".

Viewed against the wealth of information on the social stratification of Corinth it is normal that there were numerous dissensions and arguments about the social status of individuals. Several of the conflicts that occurred in the Pauline communities have economic and social dimensions, related to differences in social levels. But not only was there a mixture of social levels, but in each individual and party there is evidence of divergent rankings in the different status - dimensions. We find wealthy artisans and traders, high in income, low in occupational prestige. We find wealthy, independent women. We find wealthy Jews. If one is able to generalize, then it could be stated that the most prominent members of Paul's circle are people of high status. In other words they are upwardly mobile: their achieved status is higher than their attributed status.

The conclusion is that the traditional antithesis of honour and shame that is present in the whole 1 Cor. 1:10-4:21 also refers to social status, and indicates amongst other things the attitudes of certain upper class Christians toward Paul and those Corinthians of low status.

Attention is therefore needed for the notion of *hybris* and the way it functions as a script or frame that refers to social status. It is in this regard that the study of Marshall and Mitchell is of great importance. According to Marshall (1987:182) *hybris* is a complex notion which denotes a wide range of "activities, the state of mind of the agent, and the effects of shame on the victim and his feeling of outrage". The effect of *hybris* upon the victim is to cause him dishonour and shame. The idea of superiority or over-confidence is associated with the hybriatic behaviour of the wealthy<sup>36</sup> and the powerful (Marshall 1987:185). *Hybris* also manifests itself in the form of excessive sexual activity which is a fitting response to the situation in Corinth (5:1-13). With this kind of conduct and attitude it is, easy to see why the most common characteristics of *hybris* are described in terms such as discord, divisions and disorder<sup>37</sup>.

To conclude: *hybris* is never essentially a religious term, it occurs in moral and social contexts and is regarded as behaviour which oversteps the bounds or limits and is



therefore frequently opposed to words such as soundness of mind (MacDowell 1976:22-23).

Mitchell (1991:81) in her study has made a survey of the political terminology and *topoi* that is related to factionalism. The potent term ἐριδες (1:11) is a reference to political or domestic discord. In the argument of 3:1-4 the terms ἐρις and ζῆλος, according to Mitchell (1991:81) amount to walking in a human way, i.e. subscribing to earthly and secular values of political glory and strength. Mitchell's (1991:86) interpretation of the party slogans in 1:12 as a rhetorical figure of impersonation is indicative, not of political sophistication, but of childishness amongst the Corinthians.

In view of the fact that the whole 1 Cor 1-4 is a letter of admonition<sup>38</sup> it is notable in how many ways Paul admonishes his readers to refrain from being hybrists (1:10, 1:29, 1:31, 3:1-4, 3:21, 4:6-7).

Of particular importance is the passage in 4:6. In order to place the passage in the context of 1 Cor. 1-4 as a whole, one should of course, remember that Paul's discussion begins and ends with a reference to his founding of the church at Corinth, a fact that he understands as "fathering". The issue of fathering is again discussed in 3:1-4, but here he shifts to maternal imagery, affirming that he fed them with milk and not with solid food, because they were babies. Thus the repetition of the slogans "I follow Paul and I follow Apollos" in 1:12 and 3:4 is deliberative, for it provides a link between the image of the admonishing parent, and the issue raised at the beginning of the chapter.

In 4:6 Paul once again confirms the Corinthian lack of self knowledge and implies that they are hybrists. Without going into the rhetorical use of the term μετασχηματίζειν in 4:6 it should be noted that "Ps-Demetrius observes that this device is an effective way in which to chide a king or any overbearing person for his haughty pride (*Eloc* 289 in Fitzgerald 1988:120)". This is exactly what Paul does. In addressing the powerful kings (4:8-10) and those who display the typical royal vice of arrogant pride (4:6, 18-19; 5:2) he uses the typical components of covert speeches.

These are exemplification (ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε) and admonition in regard to haughty pride (μὴ φουσιωσθε) in 4:6. The ταῦτα in 4:6 is therefore retrospective to 3:5-4:5. That Paul has 3:5-4:5 in mind seems clear not only from the covert allusion which he uses but also from the way in which he commences to treat himself and Apollos by name in 3:5.



1 Cor. 1:18-3:4 lays the foundation for "these things" to which Paul refers in 3:5-4:5. 1 Cor 1:18-31 deals with the initial phase of missionary activity, where the topics of the kerygma (1:21,23) and call (1:26) are addressed. 2:6-16 takes up the second phase, or the post conversion period of teaching and its concern for maturation and maturity (2:13; 2:6). The repetition of the slogans of 1:12 at 3:4 signals the way in which Paul will begin to rehearse the subject matter of 1:12-3:3 with particular reference to himself and Apollos.

In which way does 4:6 support the theory that social factors contributed to the forming of the Corinthian parties? For many years *ha gegraftai* has been seen as some proverb dealing with moderation<sup>39</sup>. There is, of course, an even more compelling alternative in which the background of the proverb is found in the instructions given to young children on how to write.

According to Fitzgerald (1988:124)

...Protagoras in Plato *Prt* 326d, notes that writing masters first draw letters in faint outline with the pen for their less advanced pupils, and then give them the copy - book and make them write according to the guidance of their lines. ...Seneca (*Ep.* 94.51) for example notes "Boys study according to direction. Their fingers are held and guided by other so that they may follow the outlines of the letters; next they are ordered to imitate a copy and base theirs on a style of penmanship". The point of having a model is naturally that one should follow it, making the letters neither too small nor too large, so that one neither falls short of the model nor exceeds it.

The appropriateness of the proverb is even more clearly seen when the contexts of the passages in Plato and Seneca are examined as Fitzgerald (1988:125) has done. According to Fitzgerald (1988:125) Protagoras argues that children are taught by the nurse, the pedagogue and the father. However, when they are under the supervision of a teacher, the children read and memorize works that will provide them with many admonitions and examples which can serve as models for them. The purpose is that the children may imitate them and yearn to become like them. Protagoras then proceeds to the copying of their ABC's:

And when they are released from their schooling the city next compels them to learn the laws and to live according to them as after a pattern, that their conduct may not be swayed by their own light fancies, but just as writing masters first draw letters in faint outline with the pen

for their less advanced pupils, and then give them the copy book and make them write according to the guidance of their lines, so the city sketches out for them the laws devised by good lawgivers of yore, and constrains them to govern and be governed according to these (326d).  
(Fitzgerald 1988:125)

Surely it is no coincidence that Paul admonishes his readers as mother-nurse (3:1-2) as father (4:14-15) and as pedagogue (4:15). Here too, the oblique reference to children learning to draw their letters (4:6) occurs in conjunction with the depiction of a moral model.

Also keep in mind that Paul is modelling his life on the foolish wise man while the Corinthians on the other hand think they are wise and perfect and have already attained the goal of their journey. Just as Seneca argues that the mind, like the boys, learn by prescription, so Paul alludes to this schoolboy practice precisely before he begins to prescribe certain kinds of proper behaviour. As boys are to imitate the written model, so are the Corinthians to imitate the model provided by Paul and Apollos.

Within such a context the proverb of 4:6 takes on a vital and quite clear meaning. "By our example in attitude and action Apollos and I provide you with a model for your imitation. Copy us, learn how to write 'not over the lines'. By so doing you will cease being puffed up, either attributing to us an importance in excess of what is proper nor denying us our due as faithful servants and stewards of God".  
(Fitzgerald 1988:127)

This, according to my mind, is a more adequate explanation of the proverb in 4:6 and it indicates that social factors contributed to the forming of the parties.

### **3.2.1.3e 1 Cor. 1:5 - A part of the social reality?**

It was Hans-Dieter Betz (1986:24 n48) who heavily criticized the sociological approach of Meeks for his lack of realizing that the cultural and intellectual aspirations of the Corinthians which came to the fore in the formula in 1:5 were part of their social reality. According to Betz (1986:25) the Corinthians in addition to their wealth were also proud of their spiritual wealth which manifested in their religious experiences.

I have previously indicated that the Corinthians' self esteem was related to the Stoic-Cynic ideal of the wise man. This is the source of many of the problems within the Corinthian community. Even this claim to eloquence and knowledge must be understood in this light. Almost every virtue was ascribed to the wise man. He was not deceived; he did all things well; he was happy, rich, handsome, free, the only true king. Certain Corinthians believed they belonged to this group of wise men, and since they were wise they were rich (4:9); they were wise and perfect (2:6); powerful (1:26); well-born (1:26) and had an abundance of eloquence and knowledge (1:5).

Commentators quickly turn to 1 Cor 8 and 1 Cor 12:8 for parallel references to the *gnosis* in 1:5 and then debate whether or not to assume a gnostic background for the Corinthians. For Paul the main problem with *gnosis* is the straightforward claim to possess it and then only its content, although the two are, of course, related. The problem with the many studies done on gnosticism in Corinth is that the possible connections of the Corinthian gnostics with Greek philosophy are ignored as if a clear distinction between *gnosis* and philosophy was ever made in antiquity<sup>40</sup>. The formula in 1:5 can best be understood along the lines of Hellenistic philosophy.

According to Betz (1986:28) the formula in 1:5 corresponds with the philosophical program of the great Athenian teacher of rhetoric Isocrates. Convinced of the inadequacy of sophistic rhetoric Isocrates proposes as a remedy the study of philosophy with the intention of bringing into harmony eloquence, knowledge and deeds. Only then can rhetoric be persuasive. By the study of both rhetoric and philosophy the good orator, according to Isocrates, is able to speak well and think well. As a result the rhetor possesses virtue and favour with the audience, instead of the suspicion of greed with which the sophist must contend.

There can be no doubt that the influences of Isocrates extended to well beyond his students and that even Cicero the great Roman orator implemented his thoughts and ideas (cf Betz 1986:30). Even Hellenistic Judaism, if we keep in mind Hengel's conclusion in his study on "Judaism and Hellenism" that a rigid distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism cannot be maintained, was to some extent familiar with the discussions about rhetoric. Although the formula *logos kai gnosis* does not occur in the LXX, the section on wisdom in Sirach has close parallels. Sirach 39. 1-11 is a key text in terms of the role and work of the sage<sup>41</sup>. Even Philo of Alexandria pursued the harmony between eloquence, mind and deed (Betz 1986:32 n 87).

To summarize: When Paul used the formula of λόγος καὶ γνώσις in 1:5 he must

have known its nature and origin. The wisdom or rather false wisdom is that which is characterized by and through the wise man. Both Paul and certain traditions in Greek philosophy<sup>42</sup> addresses these vices of conceit, arrogance and contentiousness which were part of the perfect orator and wise man\sage. It was Plutarch, amongst others in Greek philosophy, who warned against these typical problems that obstructed the way to true wisdom:

Most of all must we consider whether the spirit of contention and quarreling over debatable questions has been put down, and whether we have ceased to equip ourselves with arguments as boxing gloves or brass knuckles, with which to contend against one another, and to take more delight in scoring a hit or a knockout than in learning and imparting something. For reasonableness and mildness in such matters, and the ability to join in discussions without wrangling, and to close them without anger, and to avoid a sort of arrogance over success in argument and exasperation over defeat, are the marks of a man who is making adequate progress.

(Plutarch in Stowers 1990:260)

Not only do Paul and Plutarch share a similar association of conceit, false wisdom and contentiousness, but they also associate these with a lack of progress. The Corinthians are babies who have to be fed with milk in stead of solid food (3:2) and their lack of progress is manifested in jealousy and strife. For this very reason Paul (2:14-3:3) can only give them basic instruction and nothing more.

Even 1 Cor 2:1-5 has hitherto been mostly interpreted either as Paul's refusal to engage in some form of charismatic utterance of the gnostic mystery religions or as a personal manifestation of his 'theology of the Cross'. But a sociological approach is called for in which due recognition is given to rhetoric.

Paul, as we have seen, employs terminology which traditionally belongs to rhetoric and seems to distinguish himself from those persuasive speech as was practiced by orators and rhetoricians of the Greco-Roman world. Lim (1987:146) in using a sociological approach has succeeded in proving that 1 Cor. 2:4, in particular is full of references to rhetoric. For instance *πειθώ* in 2:4 is a term, according to Lim (1987:146), which occurs frequently in 'Philostratus' *Lives* to describe the powers of the rhetoricians and sophists. For example, the Siren speaks of Isocrates' persuasive charm (*πειθώ*), and Dio of Prusa is described as a man whose persuasive power was such that he could captivate men who were not versed in Greek letters (*πειθώ*). Taken together as a phrase *οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις* (2:4) explicitly means the

setting aside of the art of persuasive speech which was one of the characteristics of the sage. Paul on the other hand models his life on the script of the foolish wise man. Is Paul therefore opposing all knowledge and eloquence and rhetoric?<sup>43</sup> Is the social strategy one of shaming the conventions of rhetoric? Is the observation of Betz (1986:21) true that Paul seems to be bothered by rhetoric, as if it or rather certain kinds of rhetoric pose a fundamental threat to his proclamation?

I believe so - let me explain. According to Patte (1983:340) 1 Cor. 1:5 is part of Paul's ambivalent attitude towards values. The opposite seems to be the case - Paul refers to a concrete value in 1:5 as a means to stabilize an abstract value. According to Perelman (1982:27-28) one must distinguish in any kind of argumentation between abstract and concrete values. Concrete values

...belong to a specific being, object, group or institution, in its uniqueness. To emphasize the uniqueness of a being is to emphasize its value: everything that is interchangeable is devalued. ...Abstract or universal values are instruments of persuasion. ...they are valid for everyone and for all occasions such as justice, truthfulness, love of humanity. ...Reasoning that is based on concrete values seems characteristic of conservative societies. Abstract values, in contrast, serve more easily as a basis for critique of society and can be tied to a justification for change, to a revolutionary spirit.

(Perelman 1982:27-28)

My supposition is confirmed by looking at 1 Cor. 11:22: "Haven't you got your own homes in which to eat and drink? Or would you rather despise the church of God and put to shame the people who are in need? What do you expect me to say to you about this? Shall I praise you? Of course, I don't!". In this verse Paul is in the first instance referring to a remarkably concrete value namely the ownership of private homes. Of course ownership of private homes gave rise to certain expectations and is indeed a concrete value which opens a window onto the social world of the Mediterranean society. But one must remember that the "rhetorical critic is not interested in social description as an end in itself, valuable as such effort is; instead he is interested in how, and to what ends, such norms as a social code gets used in social interaction" (Wuellner 1986:65).

How does Paul use this reference to the concrete value of ownership of private homes? He uses it to admonish the community of believers in order to move them to an abstract or universal value. Through a series of questions Paul wants to force his readers to accept certain unacceptable inferences from their own behaviour.

The response in 11:22a serves as a basis for three rhetorical questions, all evoking negative shaming effects (Wuellner 1986:65).

In much the same manner Paul affirms a concrete value in 1:5 in order to stabilize a universal value. If the concrete value stresses λόγος καὶ γνῶσις, then surely the Corinthians have a right to be proud of themselves. But it was already pointed out that Paul is affirming this concrete value in order to stabilize a universal value.

If it is true that universal values can be used to effect change one must surely see Paul moving in that direction. That is exactly the case in 1 Cor. 15:58 when he summons his readers to stand firm and steady in the work of the Lord since nothing is ever useless. What the Corinthians lack is not eloquence and knowledge but maturity in their practical conduct of their faith. One should also keep in mind that the Corinthians had debates and discussions as to how their new self-understanding should be realized. In moving from a concrete value (λόγος καὶ γνῶσις) to an abstract value, Paul argues that their new self-understanding should be visible in their practice and daily conduct. Betz's (1986:33) comment, that Paul's letter and his advice on the practical matters in the church are designed to bring the Corinthian praxis up to the same standards as their eloquence and knowledge, serves to illustrate the point.

To my mind this proves the hypothesis that Paul does (not only) move from the concrete value of speech and eloquence to the abstract value of appropriate conduct and practice. On the same level he moves from speech and eloquence as concrete values to the kerygma as abstract value. Once again it must be kept in mind that "abstract values are instruments of persuasion" (Perelman 1982:27-28), and isn't that the main task of Paul's strategy?

To conclude: 1:5 confirms that certain Corinthians believed that they belonged to the select group of wise men full of λόγος καὶ γνῶσις. It also confirms the diverse stratification of the community, because these wise men did not only regard themselves as proficient in rhetoric. Added to that is the fact that wise men live in accordance with nature and stress the irrelevance of license. The exhortations of the body of the letter (chapters 5-15) are intended to facilitate a growing abundance in what Paul calls ἔργον. In the area of practice and deeds the Corinthians have great deficiencies to make up. The claim to λόγος καὶ γνῶσις is also at stake. If this claim is not an empty promise and if they did really receive an abundance of eloquence and knowledge the challenge is to achieve an equilibrium between this on the one side and practice on the other side. Paul therefore does not attempt to talk the Corinthians out of eloquence and knowledge. His goal is to enable the

readers to prove that claim by the practical life of the church and thereby following the script of the foolish wise man.

Paul employs human eloquence and rhetoric as concrete values, as long as they remain subservient<sup>44</sup> to the abstract value, namely the Kingdom of God, which is not manifested in words but in the power of God.

### 3.2.2 Rhetorical strategies

The second type of discourse strategy are rhetorical strategies. Already in the third century Methodius<sup>45</sup>, Bishop of Olympus hinted at the art of communication as interaction when he referred to Paul's harmonious pattern and style. In his dissertation<sup>46</sup> on 'Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe' (1910) Bultmann also made an important contribution in this regard.

Unfortunately rhetoric has not received the attention it deserves. Sadly some modern exegetes<sup>47</sup> still follow this pattern and have by and large ignored or thought to have refuted the idea that Paul's letters reflect any degree of rhetorical skill. For many scholars rhetoric is a mere form of ornamentation. As Perelman (1971:507) points out:

the quest for a single, objective, natural method is almost always found to go hand in hand with a conception that regards rhetoric as a mere technique of ornamentation. For the natural method leaves the form of the discourse undecided; all the variable elements, that is, all those elements not imposed by the natural order, appear as external; in this area no attempt is made to justify the form by the substance.

Having already established that Paul was familiar with the basic tactics of persuasion as was widely practiced in his day, the next logical step will be to explore the way in which the rhetorical principles function in Paul's rhetorical strategy.

#### 3.2.2.1 The function of the rhetorical principles in 1 Cor.

In chapter two we have seen that rhetorical criticism focuses on the persuasive power of a text and its literary strategies which have a communicative function in a concrete historical situation. Rhetorical discourse is therefore generated by a specific condition or situation inviting a response. Rhetoric seeks to instigate a change of motivations, it strives to persuade, to teach and to engage the hearer\reader by eliciting reactions, emotions, convictions and identifications. The



aim of rhetoric are not, as has been so frequently pointed out, aesthetics but praxis. According to Fiorenza (1987:388) the rhetorical act seeks to convey an image of the speakers\writer as well as to define the rhetorical problem and situation in such a way that both fit each other so that the audience\reader will be moved to their standpoint by participating in their construction of the world.

In order to perform this function rhetorical critical analysis has to move through four stages:

It begins by identifying the rhetorical interests and models of contemporary interpretation; then moves to delineate the rhetorical arrangement, interests and modifications introduced by the author in order to elucidate and establish in a third step the rhetorical situation of the letter. Finally, it seeks to reconstruct the common historical situation and symbolic universe of the writer\speaker and the recipients\audience.

(Fiorenza 1987:388)

I will, in turn, discuss these stages.

### 3.2.2.1a Contemporary interpretations

In rhetoric a distinction is usually made between the actual reader\author and the implied reader\author. The actual reader is involved in apprehending and building up the picture of the implied author and implied reader. The implied author is not the real author, but the image which the reader will eventually construct of the author in the process of reading.

This notion corresponds with the concept of the audience as Perelman constructed it. According to him (1969:19) the audience is the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation. The audience is therefore of crucial importance because the essential consideration for the speaker who has set himself the task of persuading individuals is that his construction of the audience should be adequate to the occasion. As Perelman (1969:20) points out: "in real argumentation, care must be taken to form a concept of the anticipated audience as close as possible to reality". Accordingly one could say that knowledge of those one wishes to persuade is a preliminary condition to all effectual argumentation<sup>48</sup>.

Who are the audience in the case of Paul? To my mind we are dealing with the following readers:



i           **The universal audience<sup>49</sup>**

This type of reader is envisioned by Paul whenever he addresses explicitly or implicitly all believers, or the church at large or when he implies or openly appeals to the conventional *consensus omnium*. This type of reader is also addressed in texts with third person singular or plural referents and frequently also in texts with "we" referents.

This reference to the universal audience transcends the confines of a specific historical setting and assumes a certain timeless quality. This is evident from 1 Cor. 1:2 where Paul is greeting the Christians in Corinth together with the those holy people everywhere. Even 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 could surface as a reference to the universal audience, but as I will indicate not only the universal audience. Through the clever use of rhetorical devices he is also addressing the Corinthian audience and - by accident or design - also the contemporary readers of the letter.

ii           **The particular audience**

This audience is composed of those people whom the speaker addresses directly on an experimental appeal basis. This audience has a value system which is strongly influenced by their experience and group affiliation.

The switch to the individual reader occurs when a single "you" is addressed in dialogue form. Such a change of addressee from plural to singular is occasionally noted as the rhetorical figure of *apostrophe*. According to Kennedy (1984:42) it was a regular feature of public address. Once an audience heard it - as was the case of the letter to the Corinthians - they recognized those changes in addressee, and they would have felt them as part of the internal dynamics of Paul's argumentation.

But who is this individual reader? Scholars have constructed a number of frameworks in an attempt to explain the source and nature of these individual readers and their opposition to Paul. We already know that social factors contributed to their existence. We know that they consisted of Jews and Greeks, men and women of different status and gender. We also know that they consisted of two definite groups, namely a strong group and a weak group which perceived their symbolic universe in totally different ways, which of course gave rise to different factions. We also know that they were socially very mobile. We also know that they belonged to a society which were perceived in terms of the values of honour and shame. We also know that some of them were wise and powerful and of high social

standing and were educated in the conventions of self praise and rhetoric and philosophy and that they were rich in speech and knowledge. Their self-understanding was profoundly influenced by the script of the sage or wise man.

But as I have indicated earlier, theological matters also played a part in determining the audience. The issue is, however, not whether the conflict is caused by theological or social factors. I agree with Wire (1990:189) that the faith of the individual reader and Paul's put each other through the social change that leads to conflict between them. In other words the theological factor that contributed the most in determining the audience was faith. This will become even more clearer when we perceive the rhetorical arrangement of 1 Cor. as well as the rhetorical situation.

### 3.2.2.1b The rhetorical arrangement of 1 Corinthians

On the surface the rhetorical strategies and situation of 1 Cor. seem to be clear. The Corinthians had written to Paul about certain issues and 1 Cor. represents a response to their inquiries. However, the specific situation and the life circumstances of the audience do to a large extent determine the kind of rhetorical genre the author would choose. Classical rhetoric therefore distinguished between three genres of oratory: judicial, deliberative and epideictic.

#### Excursus: The rhetorical genre of 1 Cor.

The rhetorical genre of 1 Cor. is a matter of great controversy. This ongoing debate received new impetus with the publication of Mitchell (1991) on 'Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation'. According to Mitchell (1991:33) the rhetorical genre of 1 Cor. is deliberative. She is, of course, in good company. Of those who have previously identified 1 Cor. as deliberative rhetoric none has provided such a comprehensive proof as Mitchell. Kennedy (1984:87) merely remarked in passing that 1 Cor. is largely deliberative. Fiorenza (1987:390-93) adds to her case by dismantling the arguments of Wuellner and Bunker for epideictic and forensic genres, but devotes less than one page to her constructive for 1 Cor. as deliberative.

Mitchell (1991:20-46) demonstrates that this genre did exist and had certain definable characteristics (*lex operis*) and that according to her the text in question shares them.<sup>1</sup> In other words Mitchell's designation of the rhetorical genre is demonstrated and supported before she starts with a compositional analysis.

On the basis of her resources Mitchell (1991:23) demonstrates that deliberative argumentation was characterized by four things:

- 1) a focus on future times as the subject of deliberation;
- 2) employment of a determined set of appeals or ends;
- 3) proof by example;
- 4) appropriate subjects for deliberation, of which factionalism and concord are especially common.

Mitchell (1991:24) proceeds to prove that 1 Cor. is deliberative by claiming amongst others that "if we look at the beginning and end of the letter body in 1 Corinthians we see clearly future directed statements" and "the overwhelming future emphasis in the letter, because it is, appropriately, a letter which gives advice about behavioral changes in community life, indicates that of the three rhetorical species, only the deliberative fits 1 Corinthians" (1991:25).

I am afraid that this hypothesis is not true. Deliberative argumentation might be characterized by a focus on future times, but this is not true of 1 Cor. - especially not with regard to its beginning. In the whole of 1 Cor. 1:1-2:5 the future tense is used three times, the perfect tense eight times, the present tense four times and the aorist tense twenty two times. I am afraid I have not been able to trace the overwhelming future emphasis.

I am also afraid that another one of Mitchell's (1991:41-2) criteria for deliberative argumentation, namely the use of examples, is also applicable to other forms of argumentation as she herself remarks "the use of examples *per se* does not prove that 1 Corinthians is deliberative, since examples are used throughout a wide variety of literary genres".

I believe that 1 Cor. represents epideictic discourse. Keep in mind that epideictic is the most difficult to define of the three universal species of rhetoric. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (1.3.1358a) sought to make a basic distinction between situations in which the audience are judges and those in which they are only spectators or observers. In a sense, epideictic is thus everything that does not fall clearly into the category of judicial or deliberative. According to sources, these epideictic speeches were a central attraction at festivals and their most visible result was to shed luster on their authors. In other words, they were regarded in the same light as a dramatic spectacle or an athletic contest, the purpose of which seemed to be displaying the performers. It resulted in the Roman rhetoricians abandoning its study to the grammarians, while they trained their pupils in the two other kinds of oratory which were deemed relevant to practical eloquence. According to Perelman (1969:49-50) the epideictic genre thus seemed to have more of a connection with literature than with argumentation - the net result being that the judicial and the deliberative rhetoric were appropriated by philosophy and dialectics while the epideictic was included in literary prose.

I believe that Mitchell's (1991:213) lack of coming to terms with the epideictic nature of rhetoric (she only admits to some epideictic elements in the deliberative genre of 1 Cor.) goes hand in hand with her critical assessment of the "New Rhetoric". According to Mitchell, (1991:7) the "New Rhetoric" is a

synchronic investigation of human communication and argumentation. In itself the "New Rhetoric" according to Mitchell (1991:7) is an important philosophical work that aims at a revision of the epistemological nature of rhetoric and whose intention "is expanding the realm of argumentation rather than classifying particular texts according to genre or arrangement". The basic supposition of Mitchell (1991:7) lurks behind her statement that "appeals to modern philosophical examinations of the rhetorical force of all texts should not be put at the service of historical arguments". It would seem that Mitchell follows in the tradition of the Kantian opposition of faith and reason and as a result thereof prefers to operate within the historical critical paradigm (see 1991:6 n17).

I believe that 1 Cor. 1-4 is a classic example of epideictic rhetoric because it strengthens the disposition toward action by increasing adherence to certain values. The epideictic speech, therefore, has an important part to play, for without such common values, upon what foundation could deliberative and legal speeches rest? Whereas these two kinds of speeches make use of dispositions already present in the audience, and values are for them means that make it possible to induce action, in epideictic speech, on the other hand, the sharing of values is an end pursued independently of the precise circumstances in which this communion will be put to the test. In other words, epideictic discourse is less directed toward changing beliefs than to strengthening the adherence to what is already accepted. It is therefore not strange that any society or community which prizes its own values will at any cost promote opportunities for epideictic speeches because the more the leaders of the group seek to increase their hold over its members' thought, the more numerous will be the opportunities for epideictic speeches. In this sense most modern preaching is epideictic, for it usually aims to strengthen Christian belief and induce a congregation to lead the Christian life. Only when some very definite action is required does the sermon become deliberative.

In this regard one could indeed, in conjunction with Mitchell (1991:185) argue that 1 Cor. 5:1 - 15:57 is part of a **deliberative argument** that consists of **three proofs**. The first proof (5:1-11:1) for the seeking and maintaining of concord in the church will be the integrity of the community against outside defilement. The second proof (11:2-14:40) is the manifestation of factionalism when coming together and the third (15:1-57) the Resurrection and final goal, namely unity in the *παροδοσεις*.

The foundation for this deliberative argument, however, is found in the **epideictic speeches** of 1 Cor. 1:10 - 4:21. It consists of **two arguments**:

1. **The call to unity (1:10-2:5).**

Introduction: 1:10.

Narration: 1:11-17.

- Achievements:** Introducing the example of Christ the Power and Wisdom of God.
- a) Deeds - Wisdom is powerful. It destroyed the wisdom of the wise and set aside the understanding of the scholars and saved others.
  - b) Virtues - The power and wisdom of God were offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Greeks. It is foolish - yet it saves. It is wiser than human wisdom and its weakness is stronger than human strength.
  - c) Blessings - Thanks to the wisdom and power of God you are called - consider your calling! You are brought into union with God. You are righteous, God's holy people who are free.
- Conclusion:** **Contributing shame** - whoever wants to boast must boast in the Lord and His power and wisdom.  
**Contributing honour** - faith is not the result of human words or skillful words of human wisdom but of God's power and wisdom.

## **2. The call to unity - accepting Paul as servant of God (2:6 - 4: 21).**

**Introduction:** 2:6-7.

**Narration:** 2:8-15.

- Achievements:** Introducing the example and status of the servants of God (3:1-23).
- a) Pursuits - I could not talk to you as spiritual people. You are acting as worldly people - your quarrels and jealousies and factions illustrate your non acceptance of God's wisdom and God's servant.
  - b) Virtues - Paul and Apollos are simply God's servants, by whom you were led to believe.
  - c) Deeds - Paul sowed the seeds, Apollos watered and God gave growth. The implication being - servants are partners. Paul laid the foundation and another is building upon it.
  - d) Blessings - No one should then boast because Paul, Apollos and Peter belong to God.

Conclusion:                    **Contributing honour** - Paul is Christ's servant and as such he is faithful to his master.  
                                       **Contributing shame** - Observe the proper rules.  
                                       Irony - you are rich but the servants are fools.  
                                       Even amidst ten thousand guardians Paul is father of the congregation.

Given the fact that the community in Corinth, as part of the Greco - Roman culture, was oriented to honour and shame, one would expect that the author will choose the epideictic genre. Is this indeed the appropriate genre for Paul's rhetorical arrangement in 1 Cor?

Yes. I have already indicated that the interpretation of 1 Cor. 1-4 as apology cannot be sustained (see footnote 38). 1 Cor. 1:10 and 4:16 forms an *inclusio* which makes the entire section one of *parakalo*. Paul addresses this issue so early because he wants to settle his relationship with the Corinthians before he turns to particular issues. He does this by trying to create a sense of communion around the value of honour and shame. He therefore introduces Christ as the power and wisdom of God. Note the link between παρακαλῶ, adherence to certain values and Christ as the power of God. According to Schütz (1979:21) power is the source of authority, and authority is a version of power as it interprets power and makes it accessible. In Schütz's view (1979:18) power is a source prior to and creative of social relationships. Holmberg (1978:8) adds to this that "power is an actor's ability to induce or influence another actor to carry out his directives or any other norms he supports". Both these scholars emphasize that authority to promote change or influence the actions of people, as epideictic rhetoric aims to do, is not a free standing act. Authority presupposes power and authority is a consequence of and expression of power. It is therefore no coincidence that Paul as part of his epideictic discourse introduces Christ as the power and wisdom of God. It is this power that gave Paul the authority - "By the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. ...I appeal to you to agree in what you say, so that there will be no divisions among you. Be completely united with only one thought and purpose" (1:10). It is this power that will account for changes in the social system of the Corinthian community. According to Arendt (1958:200) "power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities". In a telling example of this power in operation and the effectiveness of epideictic rhetoric Paul introduces Christ as the power and wisdom of God. The third step in our analysis of the rhetorical arrangement is to show that the delineation of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 as epideictic rhetoric is a fitting response to the rhetorical situation.

### 3.2.2.1c The rhetorical situation

The rhetorical situation differs from both the historical situation of a given author and reader and from the generic situation or conventions of the *Sitz im Leben*. The rhetorical situation, according to Kennedy (1983:38) is that situation which invites utterance. In the rhetorical situation the critic looks foremost for the premises of a text as appeal or argument. Having already established the rhetorical genre of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 we will define the rhetorical situation by determining the text status and the underlying *topoi*.

The **status of the rhetorical situation** is of great importance. The question of the status belongs to the *intellectio* phase of the rhetorical process which functions as the presuppositional phase of the *inventio*. Both Wuellner (1986:60) and Kennedy (1984:18-19) argues that in this section of 1 Cor. we have the status *qualitatis* because the "mandate facing all believers, leaders and led alike is to adhere and to increase adherence to what is already accepted" (Wuellner 1986:60). In other words the need exists to indicate that it will be correct to follow a certain line of action which blends in perfectly well with the *parakalo* of the whole 1 Cor. 1-4.

The rhetorical situation and the status of rhetorical situation is determined by the **conduct and function of the Corinthian men and women as well as their and Paul's social status and theological claims.**

To start with the latter: It must be clear that there is a close parallel between Paul's view of status loss and his view of what God has done in Christ. God, according to Paul, did not become known through wisdom, but through the foolish message of Christ crucified (1:20). In other words he relates in terms of wisdom, what he said in Phil. 2:5-11 in terms of honour. For Paul these two statements on the original wisdom on the one hand, and on the pre-existence of Christ on the other hand, provide the framework for the voluntary loss of status on God's part and on his part. That is, the content of Paul's message causes Paul's loss of status and Paul's loss of status makes him interpret Christ in this way. To Paul the core of his preaching and gospel as well as his own status is bound to the concrete event of the word of the cross. This speech act of announcing the gospel contains simultaneously the core reality of the insane weakness of the cross in the proclaimer's life and God's wisdom and power for all who believe. Three times in 1 Cor. 1-4 Paul distinguishes God's power and wisdom from the way other Christians are teaching Christ.

First, he insists that it is Christ who sent him to tell the good news without the

wisdom of words (1:17). Then he claims that he decided to know nothing in Corinth except Christ crucified, rather than to undo God's mystery with an overflow of wisdom (2:1-2). Thirdly, their fighting and divisions force him to inflict a loss on them by confronting them with the basics of the cross (1:26; 3:1-3). For Paul, history is concentrated in this one saving event and his own loss of status is a visible example of God's wit, God's way, God's wisdom, God's foolishness and ultimately God's power.

On the other hand it is also true that the status gain of the women in particular seems to mirror their view of God's wisdom. The statements in 1:5 and 4:6-8 show that there is no need to convince the Corinthians to understand Christ as the reason for their rise in status. In Christ they have found a new identity, not of shame but of self expression and honour. Paul even describes the women as "consecrated in body and spirit" (7:34). The fact that they have authority over their own heads as well as the prophecy and prayer without head coverings (11:13-16), indicates that their position is no longer determined by shame through sexual subordination. To the contrary, they are now defined in terms of honour through the Spirit as persons who have put on Christ and God's image, and who are no longer determined by sexual roles and the status of being male or female.

The theological basis for this change in status is clear. Through the resurrection of Christ, God has recreated humanity so that those who put on God's image are no longer male or female, free or slave, Jew or Greek. In a sense the whole of 1 Cor. is a struggle on the part of the readers to come to grips with their new self understanding. The tension between Paul and the Corinthians could therefore also be explained in terms of different interpretations of this basic theological premise.

This seems to have its origins in a difference between Paul and the Corinthians with regard to the **resurrection**. They both share the view that God has raised the crucified Christ from death (15:12-19) and that it was an act of violence by the world leaders who did not know God's intention (2:8). But Paul refuses to accept that believers have passed from death to life. In a world where the apostle suffers losses and his work threatens to be in vain (15:2, 10, 14, 17, 30-31) he cannot believe that death has been overcome. Christ is well and truly the first fruit of the resurrection but this resurrection is restricted to the dead - to those who have fallen asleep (15:18, 20). A partial exception is made with regard to the believers who will survive until the future time when Christ will appear and triumph over the powers of which the last is the death.

On the other side are certain Corinthians which, as a direct result of a rise in status,



claim direct access to the resurrected life in Christ through God's Spirit. They are rich and have everything they need, they partake in Christ's joyful meal and God's word goes forth from them to each other (14:36).

There also appears to be a difference with regard to the **new humanity** God created. According to the baptismal formula in Galatians 3:28 people in Christ no longer knew each other in terms of the old social order of Jews and Greeks or free and slave or for that matter men or women. In Corinth the understanding of the quality tradition was highly problematic. In the midst of the passage on sex and marriage Paul enunciates on three occasions the rule "Let each remain the same as he was when he was called" (7:17, 20, 24). What is rather conspicuous in this explicit repetition of the rule is that Paul draws on two of the three pairs to which Galatians 3:28 refers. In 1 Cor. 7:18-20 he refers to the Jew\Greek distinction as *peritetemenos\akrobystia*. In 1 Cor. 7:21-23 he refers to the slave\free distinction *doulos\eleutheros*.

The Corinthians on the other hand stress that an erstwhile privilege of male over against female is supplanted by a single identity in Christ. No one has dominance over another. The positions of shame and domination based on old roles are gone and a new reality has dawned in Christ.

The third bone of contention is **God's spirit of wisdom and power being poured out on the foolish**. Paul is so offended by the Corinthian's so-called wisdom that he introduces internal checks and injunctions to self discipline. Sacrificed food may be eaten, but only when taking into consideration the brother that may be offended (8:9-13). They may partake of the passover but whoever does not "recognize the meaning of the Lord's body when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgment on himself as he eats and drinks" (11:29). Christ is the power and wisdom of God, but only as the crucified and not the resurrected one (cf Wire 1990:186). This is illustrated in the sending of the trembling apostle and the calling the powerless and the foolish (1:26 -2:6). This stands in stark contrast with the Corinthians who were once ignorant and weak and foolish and who have now become wise and strong. Once dependent on the powerful and controlled by fear, they are now nourished continually with spiritual food and drink and have become filled, rich and ruling (1:26, 4:10, 10:3, 4:8). God's own spirit has been given to them so that they are able to understand God as from within, to discern God's gifts and to exercise them in a fitting way (2:6-16). They have become mediators to others of what God gives in ways of healing and helping, believing and teaching or by speaking in tongues (12:8-11, 28-30).

To summarize: In view of the preceding evidence, it can be concluded that the status of the rhetorical situation is that of *qualitatis*. The rhetorical situation is also determined by the underlying *topoi*. When a speaker wants to establish certain values (which is the case with epideictic rhetoric) he may according to Perelman (1969:83) "resort to premises of a very general nature which we shall term *loci*". These are *topoi* which function as general categories during the creation of arguments. With them arguments are formulated in terms of various *topoi*.

According to Vorster (1990:124) *topoi* have three functions. First they function in order to create arguments. Secondly they have a selective function because they specify which premises can be used with particular reference to the rhetorical situation. Lastly they have a guarantee function in the sense that they guarantee the transition from the other premises to the conclusion. In terms of the three *loci/topoi* which Perelman (1979:16) has identified, I believe that Paul uses the *topoi* of the preferable. These are propositions which serve the need to justify values and to evaluate complementary aspects of reality. One such *topos* is Christ as the power and wisdom of God, which could justify the value of being completely united with one thought and purpose and of true self knowledge and constraint. It is this *topoi* which could in the end justify the value of one's calling and of one's righteousness and freedom and faith. Note for example the following issues and the way Paul responds to them:

- a) 1:18 - 2:5, 3:11 - 23 (Christ Crucified as God's wisdom and power over against the strife and boasting and internal divisions and so called wisdom of the Corinthians).
- b) 5:7 (Christ our passover has been sacrificed over against the community's complacent attitude towards incest).
- c) 6:11 (Such were some of you: but you were washed, sanctified, justified through Christ over against the church's failure to arbitrate between two brothers).
- d) 6:20 (You were brought at a price over against some men going to prostitutes).
- e) 11:23 - 25, 26 (The bread and wine proclaiming Christ's death until He comes over against the schisms between rich and poor).

What strategy of argumentation could best achieve the goal of epideictic rhetoric?

### **3.2.1.1d Rhetorical strategy and characteristics**

According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's four types of arguments can be distinguished. Examples of all four these types can be found in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5.

#### **Quasi-Logical Arguments:**

1 Cor. 1:18: 'For the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but for us who are being saved it is God's power'.

This argument used by Paul's opponents, is an argument from definition which according to Wire (1990:23) depends less on correspondence with the empirical reality than on its own claim of being something logical or of an universal nature. In other words it has a logic of common sense.

Indeed, as Hengel (1986:111) points out "the enemies of Christianity always referred to the disgracefulness of the death of Jesus with great emphasis and malicious pleasure. A god or son of god dying on the cross! That was enough to put paid to the new religion". Indeed the folly and madness of the crucifixion can be illustrated from the earliest pagan judgments on Christians<sup>50</sup>. Definition is a powerful rhetorical tool because it gives universal warrant to affirmative claims such as this one in 1:18.

#### **Arguments Based on the Structure of Reality:**

1:30-31: 'But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made you Christ to be our wisdom. By him we are put right with God; we become God's holy people and are set free. So then, as the scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done'.

This is an argument from what is written, with a quotation forming part of the argument.

In 1:19: 'the scripture says: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and set aside the understanding of the scholars, we also encounter an argument from what is written, but here the quotation is used to confirm an argument already stated. Quotations are less frequent in 1 Cor. than in other letters, but Paul nonetheless appeals to them as written authority. He is, of course, referring to the Jewish law and writings which he then quotes on matters concerning the moral, financial and worship

practices of the community. Paul uses these quotations to warn and educate his readers on relevant matters. Although the focus is on warning, the goal is to educate.

In 1:22-24, 26-27, 29 we have another argument based on the structure of reality, but this time it is an argument from God's calling. In his salutation and opening prayer Paul establishes the rhetorical situation in terms of God's call as he has done on so many occasions, but then immediately goes on to stress the general or communal nature of this call. This serves as a reminder to the readers of the broad base of his authority and prepares the stage for his admonitions. He then proceeds to illustrate that God's call reverses all peoples' desires and values but not their concrete social status. The Jews and the Greeks both found when they were called that the crucified Christ is God's power and wisdom. Not many of them were wise, powerful or privileged, but God chose the foolish to shame the wise and silence their boasting before God. He does not say that the foolish do this by becoming wiser. Rather, they shame the wise by sharing in God's own foolishness which is wiser than human wisdom.

This argument implies two fundamental aspects of the Corinthian's social status. They were largely uneducated and without honour when called, but they did not stay in this state. They have experienced a rise in status ever since their calling. In other words they are called out of lowness and not into it.

### **Arguments Establishing the Structure of Reality:**

These are arguments where one moves from the particular to the general. Examples and illustrations seek to prove a rule.

2:2-4: 'For while I was with you, I made up my mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. So when I came to you, I was weak and trembled all over with fear, and my message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with the convincing proof of the power of God's Spirit'.

In various ways Paul appeals to the structure of reality in order to establish himself as an example for the Corinthians - he is their father in Christ. As father Paul expects a specific code of behaviour from his children. They must obey him, and trust in him (2 Cor. 12:11, 2 Cor. 2:9) and not cause him any grief (2 Cor. 2:1). Furthermore they must realise that they are not in a position to judge his actions (1 Cor. 4:5) and, in view of their ignorance with regards to the correct Christian conduct (1 Cor. 3:1-2), should imitate him as the ideal example in this regard (1 Cor.

11:1). In other words Paul establishes himself as a new structure of reality from which generalizations can be drawn. The rule that Paul establishes in 1 Cor. 2:2-4 is one of enhancing and following through example, based on the dictum that Christ is the power and wisdom of God. Power is actualized where word and deed have not parted and where words are not empty and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities.

There are numerous other instances in the letter to the Corinthians where Paul presents himself as a model. In some instances he requires his readers to give up the conduct in question, but in most instances, as in 1 Cor. 2:2-4, he draws them in that direction by presenting himself as a model. He personifies hardship, foolishness, shame, celibacy, not eating meat, not using apostolic rights and freedom, nor persuading people through skillful words and human wisdom. His arguments suggest that those whom he addresses are wise, confident and of different status.

#### **Arguments by Dissociation of Concepts:**

**1:27-29:** 'God purposefully chose what the world consider nonsense in order to shame the wise, and he chose what the world consider weak in order to shame the powerful. He chose what the world looks down on and despises, and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important'. In this argument Paul is dissociating shame from honour.

In 1:25 we have an argument dissociating thought from reality. Those who think they are wise are challenged to become fools. It is repeated in 3:18: 'If any among you in this age think they are wise, let them become fools that they may become wise'. The parallel between 1:25 and 3:18 according to Lampe (1990:125) demonstrates "that the theology of the Corinthians, being so enthusiastic and so proud of possessing wisdom about God, stands on the same level as the wisdom of the rest of the world". In this dissociation of thought from reality both Fitzgerald (1988:119), Lampe (1990:128) and Fiore (1985:94-95) indicate that Paul was using a covert allusion or *schema*.

Let us first consider this rhetorical device and its use and then its application. According to Fitzgerald (1988:120) the Hellenistic rhetoricians used *schema* in particular if a speech was made before a king. In such a situation it was impolite and even dangerous to rebuke the king openly, so that the safest and most appropriate form in which to offer counsel was that of a covert allusion. It is therefore not strange that Ps-Demetrius observed that this is a device to chide a

king or any overbearing person for his haughty pride (Fitzgerald 1988:120). According to Fitzgerald *schema* is a figure whereby we excite some suspicion to indicate that our meaning is other than our words seem to imply; but our meaning is not in this case contrary to that which we express, as in the case of irony, but rather a hidden meaning which is left to the hearer to discover. The advantage of this *schema* is that

...the hearer accept what they think they have found out for themselves, whereas they might not accept it as true if it were told them directly. It is helpful indeed, for the speaker's purpose that the readers take pleasure in detecting the concealed meaning, applauding their own cleverness, and regarding the speaker's eloquence as a compliment for themselves.

(Fitzgerald 1988:120)

Why and when is this rhetorical device used? According to Fiore (1985:92) Quintilian recommends its use in instances and situations where the speaker is hampered by the existence of influential persons whose feelings he/she does not want to hurt by a message that is directly conveyed. With *personae potestas* in the way, the speaker is confronted with a *silentii necessitas*. In other words this rhetorical device corresponds with my earlier statements regarding the politeness principle. *Schema* corresponds rather well with the third super strategy, namely off-record. According to Goody (1978:210) this is an act done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear intention to the act. Surely this information must be relevant with regard to 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5. The social stratification within the Corinthian community suggests two definite groups and a lot of social volatility. Judge's description of the early Christians as a scholastic community also suggests the interest of at least the Christian patrons to resemble those of other groups around sophists and professional rhetoricians. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 represents a fortunate rhetorical choice on the part of Paul, because in the background disguised by the *schema*, Paul argues against the Corinthian parties and those who were guilty of lionizing one teacher over another (1:10, 3:4), of vaunting their own knowledge, of making distinctions in the community rooted in pride. Paul would have to proceed with caution, both for the good of the church and for the improvement of those at fault. For is it not precisely highly placed persons like these that Ps.-Demetrius and Quintilian are concerned to avoid offending?

It is therefore not strange to find the rhetorical device of *logos eschematizmenos* in 1 Cor. 4:6. What is strange is the fact that Paul's procedure is not entirely covert. In revealing this device Paul contradicts Quintilian (9-2-69) who thought that if a figure

is perfectly obvious it ceases to be a figure. The fact that it is used in a letter is also unusual according to Malherbe (1988:40).

On the other hand it is ironical, because he is so highly critical of rhetorical devices and the influence of philosophy (1:17-2:5). That is part of the *schema* because Paul, in addition, has used several rhetorical devices such as anthropomorphism (3:6-7), metaphor and allegory (3:6-17), contrast (3:14-15), hyperbole (3:22) and simile (4:1). Paul thus has been debunking rhetorical eloquence with the devices of that eloquence itself! If anything Paul, is exciting some suspicion to indicate that his meaning is other than his words would seem to imply. He debunks these devices not because he is incapable of using them, but because it leads to faith in men rather than in the power of God (2:5). In applying the *schema* to himself and Apollos, Paul provides the Corinthians with a model of imitation of how not to write over the lines and by so doing cease to be puffed up against each other. The *schema* is thus a way of dissociating thought from reality. Through its use Paul is once again confronting the faulty pretensions to wisdom in the community. Real divine power has nothing to do with human wisdom, but undergirds preaching and living through self-effacement, the word of the cross (1:18), and that of Christ crucified (1:23-24; 2:2-5). This contrast between human and divine wisdom strikes at the heart of the community's problem. Paul offers his own example, not as a threat, but as help for them to see things for what they are and not take them as they seem to the world.

To summarize: through the clever use of the *schema* Paul is dissociating the Corinthians thought from reality. They think of themselves as wise and powerful, but in reality their strife and factionalism is a proof of the exact opposite<sup>51</sup>.

Those who think that they are wise are challenged to become fools, and those who are strong and powerful are challenged to become weak. The basic argument remains the same each time it is used and it indicates not separate and unrelated problems, but one problem: a wisdom and freedom that threatens God's power and Paul's gospel.

### 3.2.1.1e Rhetorical Features

Taking Paul's disavowal of rhetoric in 1 Cor. 2:1-5 at face value, one should expect to find no evidence of it being used in his letters. The exact opposite is to be found. There are a number of rhetorical features which he used and that form part of his rhetorical strategy.



## Non-naming

Peter Marshall (1987:342) has alerted us to this striking feature. Although Paul mentions a few friends and close associates, he refrains from naming an enemy. According to Marshall (1981:344) non-naming or *periphrasis* exhibits several characteristics:

- a) It takes the place of a name of a person who is well known to the readers;
- b) It makes the person available for caricature;
- c) It is an exercise in comparison, usually according to the conventions of praise and blame;
- d) it is always used pejoratively;
- e) The intention is to shame the enemy.

One should bear in mind that in the Mediterranean culture honour and shame were fundamental values. It was the aspiration of a person of rank and honour that his name, words and deeds should live on after him. In this sense non naming has the exact opposite effect. This rhetorical feature condemns a person to anonymity and allows for the disparagement of his accomplishments.

However, at the same time the denigrator enhances his own reputation and honour. Paul enhances his own honour by proclaiming to be the champion of unity in 1:10-13.

First he refers to the people of Chloe. We learn that this woman takes a lead in spreading what might be called an alarmist view of the divisions in Corinth. It is significant that Paul, against his usual practice (5:1, 11:18, 15:12,35) cites his source, because it might add to his own honour. This woman must add in some way to the credibility of his description and to the credibility of his attitude. According to Wire (1990:42) "her name says that someone of significance shares his response to their divisions. She may model the kind of alarm about divisions in Corinth that Paul thinks could prepare others - perhaps the women - to seek a solution from him".

Secondly Paul refrains from naming the leaders but simply quotes their leaders in assertive first person claims. In other words, the enemies are simply hidden behind



the names of Paul, Apollos and Peter. Added to this Paul quotes his group first and immediately berates them. Like the mother who breaks up a children's fight by admonishing her own child, Paul adds credibility to his own cause. In the end Paul's position is clear and his honour is intact, because against all the partisanship he claims ownership for Christ alone.

Thirdly, the same kind of thought underlies 1:20. Paul refrains from naming the wise, the skillful debaters and scholars. Instead of naming them and engaging in judicial or forensic discourse, Paul sticks to no-naming which suits the nature of his epideictic rhetoric.

To conclude: Paul's positive strategy in using non-naming is to present himself as the champion of unity. He not only refrains from naming his opponents, but quotes the name of Chloe and ridicules the claim to be Paul's or Apollos's by making the single statement that they all belong to Christ who belongs to God. In this way he lifts his own reputation and honour, because he associates himself with those like Chloe, who is concerned about the strife, and with the higher authority of Christ and God and finally claims 'their obedience as their father in Christ.

## Comparison

Comparison is used by Paul enemies to praise themselves as ideal products of education and beauty and to portray Paul as socially and intellectually unacceptable. Comparison

...is an exercise in amplification and depreciation; b) it uses the traditional topics comprising the virtues, physical qualities and social excellence and their contraries; c) it compares persons or things which are similar on a one to one basis; d) it attempts to demonstrate equality, superiority or inferiority by i) praising both, thus showing that they are equal in all respects ii) praising both but placing one ahead, or praising the inferior so that the superior will seem to be even greater; iii) praising one and utterly blaming the other; e) in general, selection is from the finest deeds which were done freely and without coercion and are unique and difficult; f) the intention is to praise and blame to persuade the hearers to favour one and to disapprove of the other.

(Marshall 1987:348)

Although 2 Corinthians reflects this rhetorical device in an exemplary way, the

indications that Paul embarks on this route is more than evident in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Cor. 1:26, 29, 31 Paul reiterates his claim that whoever wants to boast must boast in the Lord and his power and wisdom. The boaster is regarded as a fool, but he is nevertheless not to be confused with the truly ignorant person who is uneducated. The boaster is a person who has lost the awareness of his own limitations and indulges in self-praise and excessive forms of behaviour. In comparison Paul deliberately pictures himself as a fool. He boasts of all the wrong things, a pattern that frequently reoccurs in 2 Corinthians 11 and 12.

Closely associated with comparison is self-praise. Although it was always regarded as odious or offensive self-praise nevertheless existed. In a recent study of Lyons (1985:59) new light was shed on the relation between self-praise, rhetoric and autobiography. According to him autobiography refers to a piece of literature whose explicit purpose is to narrate the author's past life. When an author writes autobiographically the topics include the privileges that were his by birth, the choice revealing his character and his actions which illustrate his ethos and life's purpose as well as an appeal to imitate his virtues (Lyons 1985:60).

Despite the fact that autobiography is not so much used to add to the hearers' information as to improve their moral behaviour (Lyons 1985:27-28), Paul is very sensitive to the potential offensiveness of autobiographical remarks. He appears to reject the use of autobiographical comparison as a technique of self-praise. He excludes every human self-claim before God as improper and inadmissible (1:29) and in the process aligns himself with the foolishness of God, thereby reflecting his character and illustrating his ethos and life's purpose ('I made up my mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ and especially his death on the cross'). His apparent self-praise and autobiographical remarks are always inoffensive. Rather than praising his own wisdom he praises the power of the gospel and his apostolic work and ministry (1:31, 2:3, 9:16-18). He also refers to his suffering, humiliations, fears, failures rather than to his personal strength and successes. Lyons (1985:226-227) is correct in concluding that Paul "highlights his autobiography in the interests of the gospel and his readers. He is concerned that, by imitating him, they should incarnate the gospel. ...Paul does not present himself as a paradigm of virtue in general. ...he presents himself in such a way as to assign credit to God and/or Christ". Ultimately his self-comparison is to the figure of the foolish wise man. By doing this he establishes and confirms his epideictic rhetorical strategy: 'Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord'. It is the application of this rule, which Betz (1978:379) correctly assumes as the basis for all Pauline theology, even if it be his rhetorical principles or techniques.

## Metaphors

There are a number of figures which are associated with the rhetorical feature called *logos eschematismetos* or covert allusion. The abundance of metaphors, similes (the crucified Christ as folly, power and wisdom 1:24; the members are absurd, weak, low born, despised, nothing 1:26-28; Christ is our wisdom, justice, sanctification, redemption 1:30) are particularly important in the whole of 1 Cor. 1-4, where Paul is intent on awakening his audience's attention to the fact that things are not what they seem to be.

I in particular want to turn the attention to the use of the therapeutic metaphor in *astheneia*. Again, a context for understanding the "weak" can be found in the Hellenistic philosophies<sup>53</sup>. The word *astheneia* not only means weak but it also signifies sickness, disease, or other forms of physical weakness. It and its noun form are the most common New Testament words for illness. For the Stoics one of the most important characteristics of weak or sick people is their inability to make consistent judgments.

Precisely as in a diseased body, suffering from a flux, the flux inclines now in this direction and now in that. Such is also the sick mind; it is uncertain which way it is inclined, but when vehemence also is added to this inclination and drift, then the evil gets past help and past cure (Epictetus *Diss* 12.15.20).

The inability to make consistent judgments resembles the Corinthian community. Even the way in which the Stoics discuss the different degrees of illness and disease have a remarkable resemblance to the situation Paul encounters in Corinth. According to the Stoics one first developed a predisposition to illness. Some people are prone to anger and others to fear and lust. Then follows the illness. The third stage is disease. Here the false beliefs establish themselves in the soul as habits. The fourth stage is sickness, defined as disease and accompanied by weakness. As a matter of fact weakness occurs as the distinguishing mark of sickness (Stowers 1990:279-280).

This theory of sickness coincides well with Paul's description of the weak. It is a disease or impulse carried to excess. This condition occurs when people value something as highly desirable when it should not be so valued. The Stoic examples of such diseases are love of woman, wine, money, and gluttony. In Paul's case in 1 Cor. 1:18-31 it is wisdom. The Stoics and Paul agree that the problem of weakness results from false beliefs and inadequate knowledge. Paul has to remind the wise

that they are sick, that they lack knowledge, that they are weak and therefore subject to damaging conflicts and aversions. How fitting this metaphor of *astheneia* really is in depicting the wise Corinthians is evident in a handbook 'On Frank Criticism' by Philodemus of Gadara. According to Stowers (1990:282) he describes the weak as people who are unable to be healed by constructive criticism of their false beliefs and bad habits.

To conclude: The weak and weakness were well known concepts in the Mediterranean society. The weak were people inconsistent and insecure in what they confessed. From the perspective of the therapeutic metaphor, they were people who brought very deep entrenched false beliefs and emotions and were in danger of succumbing to these diseases. Some of the Corinthians believed that they could, like the Stoic and Epicurean sage become wise through their right reasoning and rise above human weakness. To complete this argument, Paul develops the metaphor of weakness as part of his rhetorical strategy. God chose the weak to shame the wise and strong (1:27).

### **Rhetorical Questions**

That questions could play a remarkable role within Paul's rhetorical strategy, is pointed out by Wuellner (1986:60). According to him Paul uses rhetorical questions for evoking assent to certain codes. It is through the use of rhetorical questions that Paul highlights the two 'Leitaffekte' which Lausberg (1973:131) considers to be part of the epideictic rhetoric, namely praise and shame.

According to Goody (1978:39) questions are speech acts which places two people in direct interaction. Questions carry messages concerning relations about relative status and challenges to status. In 1:20 the status of the wise and the scholars is challenged. Note Paul's strategy - in 1:19 he makes use of a scripture citation to simplify the statement that the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are lost, but for those who are saved, it is the power of God. He then follows this simplification by anticipating a question on behalf of his readers - but in effect this question challenges the status of the so called wise. By means of the questions and subsequent challenge of their status Paul amplifies the conventional value of wisdom and eloquence through the use of an abstract value namely the kerygma. The same happens in 1:26 - the status of the readers is challenged and their values are amplified, because God chooses what the world considers weak and foolish. Both these questions in 1:20 and 1:26 also serve the purpose of shaming which is an integral part of Paul's epideictic rhetoric. To conclude: Paul makes effective use of rhetorical questions as powerful tools with

which to choose the battleground, to identify the issues and to frame them in such a way that only one response is possible.

## Irony

Irony is the use of words or phrases to mean the opposite of what they normally mean. According to Roy (1981:409-410) irony is a linguistic technique which can be used either as an individual strategy for immediate attention and control or as a strategy to build or display group solidarity.

I have argued that the rhetorical situation reflects different systems of values through which Paul and the Corinthians perceive their worlds and which reflect their fundamental convictions. Paul participates in this interchange through the careful use of irony. While irony hits out at specific objects, it can never do so simply, for its character is to communicate in any given instance something of the nature of reality. According to Booth (1974:138-139) the ironist does not simply say something about his subject, he says something about himself and the world.

Irony occurs through an indirect use of language in which a covert meaning is expressed (see covert allusion). Such use of language is not straightforward nor is its meaning self-evident as I have indicated with regard to the covert allusion in 4:6. Secondly, the indirect use of language reflects a contrast between appearance and reality. In the ironic text or situation things are not as simple as they appear to be. Third, irony works through the mechanism of the second perspective from which the obvious meaning of the text can be reinterpreted. According to Plank (1983:139) this second perspective functions as an experience of alternation<sup>54</sup> in which one's world-view and sense of social reality are revealed in their artificial character, thus becoming subject to criticism and change.

How does one detect the irony? There are numerous clues to this kind of second perspective. Paul's style reveals a number of these literary and rhetorical devices. The use of non-naming, covert allusion, antithesis, parallelism, metaphor, litotes, and repetition all indicate that Paul is using a style in which the reader must be cautious, if not expect irony. Even the great number of ambiguities, if not conflicts in 1 Cor. 1-4 indicates that irony is used. Already in 1:7 Paul notes that the Corinthians do not lack any spiritual gift, and that they are rich in every way (1:5). At the same time they are not ready to partake of solid food (4:7). They are wise, where he is a fool, they are strong, where he is weak, and where his reputation is tarnished (*atimoi*) they are held in honour (*endoxoi*).

Two kinds of irony in particular can be detected in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5, namely irony of **dissimulation** and irony of **paradox**. Irony of dissimulation reflects a technique by which something appears to be other than it really is, a type of concealment or disguise (cf Plank 1983:141).

Two prominent features of this type of irony is exaggeration, overstatement and understatement. A certain feature or person or situation is blown out of proportion. The classic example is Socrates the true philosopher being portrayed as lacking knowledge. The second feature of dissimulative irony is the frequent use of pretense. According to Plank (1983:143) "the *ieron's* lack of discernment or capability is a disguise, a feigned posture of ignorance designed to disarm the boastful *alazon*"! It is, however, important to note that the ironic effect on the reader is not deception but a perception of what is the reality, of what is actually the true state of affairs. In this way dissimulation is a lie, but with irony, a lie that enables a reality to be seen. This is, of course, a well known feature of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5. For instance, that which is great, namely wisdom, power and Christ Crucified is understated to the point of weakness and foolishness. On the other hand, that which is small is overstated to the point of greatness.

Paul utilizes **dissimulative irony** in 2:1-4 and in 1:26. In 2:1-4 we encounter a text which supports the picture of Paul's weakness and the Corinthians' strength. The exaggeration appears to be a simple overstatement, highlighting the contrast between the apostle and the Corinthians. Dissimulative irony, calls into question the literal dimensions of a text (Plank 1983:170). In 1:26 dissimulative irony is enhanced by means of **litotes**. According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:292) litotes is a form of the argument of direction, because the readers are led in one direction only to be tugged away in an opposite direction to perceive the reality as it is. Through the use of litotes in 1:26 Paul first sets out to confirm the credibility of the word about the cross for the implied readers. In terms of their own calling God has shown that the world's wisdom is foolishness and God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God's weakness is stronger than human strength for when God calls them, few of them are wise or powerful or of high social standing.

Besides credibility, litotes also functions to minimize negative connotations with regard to the power of the message that is preached. The social position of the readers is likely to be unstable but the litotes turns out to be significant not only for revealing the many who are without advantages when called, but also for showing that most hearers have left behind their earlier social station so that the author is stirred up to evoke their calling. Simultaneously the litotes devalues the element of

shame because the readers' status is that of 'brothers' of 'being called'.

In 1 Cor. 1:18-31 Paul utilizes the **irony of paradox**.

Paradoxical irony, through its seeming confusion, generates in the reader a deep suspicion of the literal, the apparent, and occasions the reconsideration of the text's portrayal of reality. Detecting paradox in a given feature of the text, the reader is invited to seek its presence elsewhere in the text, suspicious that such irony is not simply descriptive of one peculiar instance, but is embedded in the way things really are. To this extent the reader effect of the irony of paradox resembles that of dissimulative irony: both promote a suspicion of the literal and lead the reader to reinterpretation.

The effect of the irony of paradox on the readers differs sharply from that of dissimulative irony. According to Plank (1983:151) the latter alerts the reader to the implications of opposites and suggests that reality can be discerned through the augmentation of things small and the diminution of things great. Irony of the paradox, however, emphasizes the coexistence of contraries and prompts the perception of reality in the actual identification of opposites.

...it threatens with instability any attempt of the reader to build a world of meaning from the text. Here reality itself feels the blows of irony. No matter how the readers construe the meaning of "great" (for instance) it will be perpetually reformulated by its necessary co-existence with the corresponding "small". At a deep level of the text, the very categories through which the reader would reconstruct the textual world of meaning have become unstable, providing no firm foundation for the act of interpretation. ...This does not mean that the paradoxical text has no world of meaning, is unreadable, or disintegrates into absurdity. On the contrary, like any other text, the paradoxical text projects a world of meaning but only constructs it in quicksand.

(Plank 1983:152)

In other words the irony of paradox brings together the expression of one meaning with the communication of its opposite. It suggests that the expressed meaning is what it appears to be, but what appears to be is not all that it is.

In the section of 1 Cor. 1:18-31 we encounter the **irony of paradox**. For Paul the cross is a pervasive paradox that reverses not only the destiny of humans, but



transvalues the very categories by which the reader perceives and understands that destiny.

At the very outset Paul identifies the word of the cross in paradoxical terms or contraries: it is the foolishness and power of God (1:18). The word of the cross is seen as foolishness from the perspective and vantage point of the perishing, while it is the divine power from the perspective of those who are saved. Despite that a coincidence occurs which makes of the word of the Cross something other than a word that is simply heard with opposite meaning in different circumstances. In 1:21 the coincidence of foolishness and salvation comes to the fore. The salvation of the faithful does not occur apart from the foolishness of the kerygma. In other words what separates the perishing from the saved is not that these groups confront different realities. What separates them is that in confronting the same reality of the cross, the perishing find only foolishness, whereas those being saved perceive the paradox that this same foolishness is the power of God. Thus for Paul to proclaim that the folly of the cross manifests God's power to save (1:18) refracts the definition of 'folly' not to signify the absence of power, but to include within its bounds the presence of power. The paradox then being that 'folly' expresses in its powerlessness the value of power. In 1:26-28 the categories of 'wisdom', 'power' and 'high social standing' do not cease to be categories of power, but precisely the power which they signify expresses the value of powerlessness. In other words foolishness, weakness and low status retain their integrity as categories of powerlessness, but the paradox lies in the fact that in their powerlessness they express power!

In this way Paul's discourse calls into question the manner of perceiving reality. Thus the reader's most basic expectations of power, strength and wisdom are challenged. Strength is not strength, but weakness; weakness is not weakness but strength; wisdom is not wise but foolish and foolish is not foolish but wise. In other words what was perceived as mutually exclusive is now intricately bound to each other. Strength and weakness cannot longer be separated, because strength is always qualified by a certain weakness. Wisdom and foolishness cannot be separated, because wisdom is always qualified by a certain foolishness.

To summarize: Paradoxical irony promotes a new way of perceiving reality. In doing so it also challenges current systems of values. The description of Paul's own weakness and strength loses its sense of contradiction and undergoes a reinterpretation which enhances the value of strength and weakness beyond the scope of what the reader normally would expect from these categories. The same holds true for the terms foolishness\wisdom\power. Paul's weakness (2:3) and lack of wisdom (2:4) insofar as it manifests the powerlessness which God uses to shame



the world, is at once the strength which issues from God's saving activity. The foolishness of the message about the cross is actually pure wisdom and the wisdom of the world is nothing else than folly. The same reversal of values is found in the calling of the Corinthians. In 1:26 their powerlessness manifests the power of God to save in and through their human condition of weakness and low status. In the end as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca have argued, the changes which a speaker or writer effect on the audience at any given moment of the discourse become part of the rhetorical situation.

In this way the discourse of 1:18-2:5 promotes a change in Paul's readers, calling into question their system of values.

### **Textual space and Pronomina**

Already Dionysos Thrax according to Lategan (1987:51) distinguished between three forms of personal pronouns. The first is the one from whom the word comes, the second the one to whom the word is directed and the third person is the one about whom the utterance is made. It is logical that in terms of textual space the first and second persons are closer than the second and third persons. Furthermore preference is usually expressed in terms of proximity. The moment the distance between author and reader increases the relationship is much more formal and in a sense negative, while a decrease in distance between author and reader indicates a certain amount of identification and solidarity.

In 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 Paul uses textual distance and proximity as part of his persuasive strategy. He uses the second person pronoun 'you' to increase textual distance (1:13, 1:26, 2:1-4). On the other hand Paul also uses the inclusive 'we' and 'us' to diminish textual distance. In combining the personal pronoun with the possessive, the force of the own group is increased as in 1:26 'remember what you were, my brothers, when God called you'. At the same time the kinship connection (my brothers) and the explicit expression of solidarity reinforces the argument.

The final step in the diminishing of the textual distance is reached when the second person pronoun is subsumed under the first as in 1:30 'But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be *our* wisdom. By Him *we* are put right with God; *we* become God's holy people'.

### **Antithesis**

Already Weiss and Bultmann identified the use of antithesis as a prominent

retorical feature of Paul's letters. However, they focus primarily on the historical background and neglected the rhetorical function and effect created by Paul's antitheses. According to Tannehill (1975:54) in antithesis

...the prevailing perspective is allowed expression so that it can be challenged, and the new perspective appears over against it. Thus hearer is prevented from subsuming the new perspective under the old. It is this clash of perspectives that is revelatory.

Thus, the antithetical form of 1:18-2:5 brings into opposition various features. Paul paints the portraits of apostolic life and of the Corinthian sensibility in part through the clustered associations of parallel terms (foolishness, weakness, dishonour). However, he also creates these portraits through the opposition of terms which allows the reader to envisage what something is in relief to what it is not.

- \* The wisdom of God is not foolishness - rather it is the power of God.
- \* The weakness of God is not weak but it is stronger than human strength.
- \* God chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise.
- \* God chose what the world despises in order to destroy what the world thinks is important.

Where drawn sharply, the mutually interpretive relation can take the form of mutual exclusion (cf Plank 1983:253). To interpret God's weakness antithetically in relation to what it is not is to exclude from its domain the antithetical complement, namely the Corinthians' strength. The same can be said with regard to God's foolishness which excludes the Corinthians' wisdom.

In addition the antithesis of the Corinthians' calling (1:26) leads the readers to affirm the distance between their apparent self perception and the portrayed reality of their own calling.

To conclude: The use of antithesis has several reader effects. It brings the contrast between Paul, his message and the Corinthians' into the textual foreground and provides it with increased emphasis. It also places God's weakness and foolishness and the Corinthians wisdom and their strength in a mutually interpretive pattern

that prevents the reader's from subordinating the former to the controlling perspective of the latter. In other words, this pattern of antithesis prevents the readers from receiving the text passively or with neutrality, but it engages them. At the point where the readers would retreat from the text to construe it as mere information, the antithesis in actual sense forces them to engage with the text. Precisely because of its antithesis the text will not allow the reader the possibility of reading without expectation or involvement. Due to the pattern of antithesis which is so prominent the readers cannot ignore the passage nor can they read it without also giving assent to its completion.

## **Repetition**

Repetition has the potential to either increase the forcefulness of a text or to diminish whatever force it may otherwise have expressed.

If combined with sensitivity and playfulness repetition can allow a text to become more engaging and to increase its effectiveness. For instance, when used in poetic texts repetition can be a means to achieve emphasis. On the other hand, when repetition is carried to great length and expressed without variety, it becomes monotonous and in actual fact dulls the sensitivity of the reader.

Paul does not engage in this monotonous repetition. The repetition in 1:18-2:5 is rather poetic<sup>55</sup>. According to Bailey (1974:294) the repetitions are construed by means of correspondences or parallelism and exhibit the following poetic structure:

- a The wisdom of the world-the power of God and the cross.
- b The power of God -the wisdom of the world.
- c The wisdom of the world.
- d The wisdom of God - the wisdom of the world.
- e The wisdom of God.
- f The power of the world (signs) and the wisdom of the world (wisdom).
- g The cross.

f' (The power of) the cross - a stumbling block. (The wisdom of) the cross - folly.

e' The power of God - the wisdom of God.

d' The wisdom of God - the power of God.

c' The wisdom of the world - the power of the world

b' The wisdom of God.

a' The wisdom of the world - the cross.

The impact of Paul's proclamation of Christ as the power and wisdom of God are made much more powerful by the use of repetition fostering a sense of persuasive expectation in the reader.

In 1:18-2:5 Paul amplifies the meaning wisdom through the interplay of the various instances of its manifestation in accord with foolishness, worldliness, power and weakness. The dispersion of the term wisdom through various repetitions not only engages the readers but also qualifies wisdom. Without ever saying so, Paul makes clear that wisdom permeates God's activity and his own apostolic existence, recurring in various, but different ways.

One cannot escape the conclusion that Paul does not dash off quick letters to meet sudden emergencies in the church. He is a skilled pastor, educator and rhetor.

To conclude: An interactional model designed for the analysis of argumentation must take cognizance of the processes involved in the inventio phase of the rhetorical process. This entails a look at the argumentative situation, the rhetorical situation, the corresponding status, the role of persons within the rhetorical situation as well as the social context of the readers. This is no easy process - it more than resembles the frustration of trying to solve the Rubic cube. Yet I have tried to solve the puzzle of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 by moving the different blocks (in this study - strategies) in a specific order illustrating the multidimensional nature of the biblical text. The challenge was not to overexpose one dimension at the expense of another.

## NOTES:

1) See in this regard the article by Robert M. Fowler (1989:3-28). Fowler refrains from a definite explication of the term 'postmodern', but he nevertheless refers (1989:3 n2) to Ihab Hassan who contrasts in two parallel columns the modern with the post-modern. A few of the contrasts need to be mentioned:

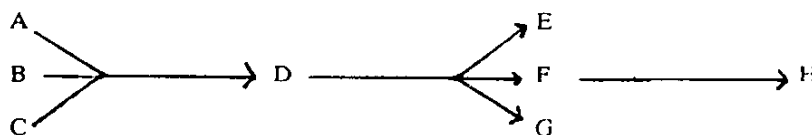
MODERNISM	POST MODERNISM
Form	Anti form
Purpose	Play
Art\Object\Finished Work	Process\Performance\
Distance	Participation
Genre\Boundary	Text\Intertext
Semantics	Rhetoric

In this regard one could say that the interactional model indicates that New Testament science is on its way to post modernism.

This would, of course, mean that I have shifted the focus of my historical inquiries dramatically - rather than continuing to seek out what one might call the history lying behind the biblical text, I am more concerned to examine which lies in front of the text. Edgar McKnight (1985:xviii) also states this goal when he says "our goal is no longer a meaning behind the text which creates distance but rather a meaning in front of the text which demands involvement". This has, of course, a major influence on meaning.

Post modernism and the interactional model indicate a shift from meaning in a content to meaning as event or interaction. According to Fowler (1989:13) this shift can be explained by the fact that "most modern biblical criticism, has been chiefly concerned with the referential axis of language. Post modern literary criticism ...swings the focus over to the rhetorical acts". This, I believe, confirms yet again the necessity of the interactional model.

2) The interactional model I propose enables us to analyze both the communicative as well as argumentative situation of a letter. In this respect the model of Webb (1986:37) could serve us well.



The different symbols represent the following components of communication:

A The physical situation or context and the subject of the discourse. The physical situation refers to the where, when and what.

B The intention of the speaker, that is, the psychological context.

C The participants in the process, that is, the social context.

D The behavioural code appropriate to the context, that is, rules or norms which are to be followed in a specific context.

E The linguistic code chosen in which to transmit the message.

F The rhetorical code, that is, rhetorical techniques which could enhance the impact of the message.

G The genre chosen in which to present the message.

H The text\sermon

This model must be viewed against the background of Latagan's model (1988:76) of interaction between the world of the author and the world of the reader. By focusing on the author and the reader's world I am reminded of the drawing made famous by Wittgenstein.

Whereas I once saw the rabbit as I read 1 Cor., I now see the duck. It's still the same letter to the Corinthians, but one's perspective has changed radically. According to Latagan (1988:72) "the interaction of these two worlds is the challenge of the fusion of horizons as envisaged by Gadamer". That is exactly the purpose of the interactional model - a fusion of horizons. The way in which this takes place is outlined by Webb's model which implies that meaning is constituted by various components and which further enables us to analyze both the communicative and argumentative aspects of the text.

There are of course many other models which are commendable. To mention a few, Hernadi's model (1976:383) and the model of Rousseau (1988:410) which can be called the umbrella approach in communication science, in which communication is said to occur whenever we create meaning from our interaction with the world.

Although Rousseau's model opens up new possibilities to explore, the relationship between static and dynamic elements needs to be clarified more carefully. It is furthermore not so down to earth and accessible to the student and the man on the street.

3) The interpretation of 1 Cor. 1-4 as an apology cannot be sustained. The main problem Paul is addressing is intra-communal strife and not tension between himself and the community. Even Dahl (1977:61 n.50) only admits to apologetic elements. Again the procedure and terminology found in early apologetic letters (Galatians and 2 Cor. 10-13) are quite different from 1 Cor. 1-4.

4) All the speculation on whether Paul was in a controversy with the Gnostics has been dealt with quite adequately in the publications of Hengel and more recently Von Lips and Stowers. Hengel (1977:110) in explaining how the cross of Jesus was not a didactic, symbolic or speculative element, but instead a very specific and highly offensive matter which imposed a burden on the earliest christian missionary preaching made the following comment: "It is time to stop talking about gnosticism in Corinth. What happened in the community does not need to be explained in terms of utterly misleading presuppositions of a competing gnostic mission. This never existed except in the mind of some interpreters. What happened in Corinth can easily be explained in terms of the Hellenistic (and Jewish) milieu of this Greek port and metropolis".

Von Lips (1990:319) is also critical of the results from the history of religions approach: "Hatte dan die religionsgeschichtliche Schule in 2. 6ff gnostische Terminologie festgestellt, so sieht Wilkens (in seiner Dissertation) darin Aufnahme von Terminologie der gnostischen Gegner des Pls in Korinth. Nachdem Wilkens selbst in zwischen davon abgerückt ist (aber nicht Schmitals u.a) zeigt die neuere Auslegung wiederum eine ziemlich eindeutige Tendenz: Paulus setzt sich mit Vertretern jüdisch-hellenistischer Weisheitsspekulation auseinander, wobei der Name Apollos noch einen persönliche Beleg dafür bieten kann. Doch es fragt sich: Ist damit wirklich das Wesentliche geklärt?"

According to Von Lips 'analysis of the text in 1 Cor. 1-2 there is no trace of a wisdom christology. The term 'wisdom of God' "betont mehr die Wirkmächtigkeit des Handelns Gottes... Für den Text 1 Kor. 1-2 insgesamt ist bemerkenswert die Vielfalt von Motiven der Weisheitstradition, die Paulus hier aufgreift, die nur teilweise genuin sind, teilweise aber apokalyptisch, oder hellenistisch transformiert" (1990:355).

Stowers' (1990:258) reaction to the endless speculation on Gnostic influence, Jewish wisdom teachings and sophistic rhetoric is that it is extremely difficult to detect a criticism of a particular kind of wisdom. "In fact, Paul seems to have no concern about the content of any particular teaching. Rather, his focus is entirely on wrong attitudes and behaviour in relation to the pursuit of wisdom. This is perhaps why he uses such a vague and general term as wisdom". See also ch. Watson's (1986:83) sociological approach in which he proved that 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 is not directed against Judaizers but against the claim (possibly from Apollos) that the gospel is compatible with the wisdom of the world. Betz (1986:27 n. 56) also claims that all attempts to a solution of the gnostic problem failed mainly because most studies ignored the possible connections of the Corinthian gnostics with Greek philosophy, as if a clear distinction between gnosis and philosophy was ever made in antiquity. Thus the entire phenomenon of gnosticism should be discussed not only apart from Greco - Roman philosophy but also as a part of it.

When done in such a way as Pearson (1983:75-77) it once again becomes clear that the kind of

gnosis which pervades biblical and post-biblical Jewish thought has nothing to do with Gnosticism. What Pearson traces is a Christianized Hellenistic Jewish wisdom, which is of course the conclusion that Von Lips came to. According to Pearson (1983:77) "a highly developed wisdom speculation in Corinth can be attributed to the teaching of Apollos. If we recall that Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew and a learned and eloquent teacher of scripture (Acts 18:24-26) we have a very plausible link between the religiosity of the Corinthians and that of Alexandrian Judaism as represented by Philo". See also ch. Good (1987:57-60) and Sellin (1982:69-96) that no Gnostic texts reflect the Corinthian religious perspectives.

5) Scholars have constructed a number of frameworks in an attempt to explain the source and nature of these individual readers and their opposition to Paul. Baur thought they were emissaries from Jerusalem. Schmitals identified them as Gnostics. Barrett (1971:108-109) and Conzelmann (1975:87-88) portrayed them as religious enthusiasts and proponents of a realized eschatology. They were later followed by Wilckens (1959:11), Shires (1966:53-54) and Thiselton (1978:514-515). Wuellner (1970:203) and Davis (1982:67) saw in the opponents evidence of a Torah - centric wisdom.

I believe that social and theological factors contributed to the opposing parties in Corinth - a claim that will be substantiated in due course.

6) Keep in mind that Barclay (1987:79-84) has also warned about the dangerous pitfalls of mirror reading. According to Barclay an appropriate form of mirror reading must keep the following criteria in mind: 1. each type of statement (assertion, denial, demand etc.) is to be open to a range of interpretations. 2. a statement with emphasis and urgency may indicate a real bone of contention. 3. Repetition may suggest an important issue. 4. An ambiguous word or phrase is a shaky foundation on which to build. 5. An unfamiliar motive may reflect a particular feature in the situation responded to. 6. Consistency is to be maintained in drawing a picture of the opponents. 7. The results are to be historically plausible.

7) See in this regard Plato, Republic, book v (Allen 1966:184-188) where philosophy and the philosopher are defined. According to Plato the genuine philosopher is "those whose passion it is to see the truth" (1966:185), and "to know the truth about reality" (1966:187). In conclusion Plato adds: "The name of philosopher, then, will be reserved for those whose affections are set, in every case, on the reality" (1966:190).

8) Schank and Kass (1988:191) have pointed out that scripts are useful for language generation since they provide structure to a series of events. For example when paraphrasing a story about a restaurant it would be necessary to indicate that the diner was seated if one assumes that the reader of the paraphrase will have a restaurant script and will therefore assume as much.

9) Pseudo-Demetrius wrote in his 'Epistolary Types' Introduction no. 5.5-8 that there are twenty - one letter styles - one of which is the admonishing type. According to him admonition is the instilling



of sense in the person who is being admonished and teaching him what should not be done. See also Malherbe (1986:80-81).

10) See in this regard Origin 'Contra Celsum' 6.34 how Celsus combines in a contemptuous way the nailing of Jesus to the cross with his lowly trade as carpenter and mocks christian talk of the "tree of life" and the "resurrection of the flesh through the wood of the cross" in the following manner: What drunken old woman telling stories to lull a small child to sleep would not be ashamed of muttering such preposterous things? See Hengel (1977:100).

11) See in this regard Kirk and Raven (1981:204-205) for Heraclitus's claim that 'God with his synoptic view, is thus the only thing that is completely wise' and also his further claim that 'the wisest of human beings, held against the deity will appear like a monkey in wisdom, in beauty and in everything else'.

12) The flatterer is the figure which is an epitome of the futility of existence. The character who corresponds with the flatterer or trickster is the parasite, who as the analogy suggests, draws nutriment from others and engage in all kinds of futile things to hang on to his source of life.

The flatterer is strongly and vehemently censured and always with an array of denigrating terms. Sweetness leads to flattery which is anathema to the Cynic ideal of the wise man who claims to speak the truth in all circumstances.

In contrast to the harm caused by the flattery, the wise man seeks to teach and educate. See the study by Marshall (1987:70-78) on the figure and character of the flatterer.

Part of the problem Paul encountered in Corinth was that his opponents, who labelled themselves as wise men, made numerous and serious charges against him. Their accusations appear to take two forms: a) of inconsistency in his conduct and relations and b) of unfavourable comparisons according to accepted social and cultural values. These charges as Marshall (1987:28) has proved are drawn from the familiar character of the flatterer. Not only is his message foolish - expressing the futility of existence, but also his own conduct. In 1 Cor. 9:9-23 the diversity of his behaviour is underlined by the four distinct categories of people whom he accommodates. They represent a vast range of social and religious customs. he became a Jew to the Jews, as if under the law to those who are under the law, as if outside the law to those who were outside the law, and weak to the weak. Clearly adding insult to injury and proving the foolishness of existence from which the Corinthians wanted dearly to escape.

13) gegraptai functions deictically, pointing to what is written in the shared world of encoded author and implied readers. The implied readers clearly know what is written and they and the implied author share the same attitude towards what is written since no further qualification is given. As such the maxim of manner is exploited, the implication being that it is not as important as the fact of what has been written. Furthermore this kind of quotation can be called authoritative because its claim to authority is not doubted but accepted. See J.J. Vorster (1991:161) and Plett (1986:304).

14) What has now become clear is that the parallel discussion in Romans 1:18-25 interprets this passage to some extent. The knowledge about God inherent in people (Rom. 1:19-21a) is distorted by them when they do not gratefully praise the living God (1:21;23) but rather worship images of people or animals. They confuse the creature with the Creator considering themselves "wise "but in God's eyes becoming fools (1:22).

According to J.N. Vorster (1991:134-135) Romans 1:18-25 is therefore also an argument of incompatibility between knowing God and resisting God. Romans 1:18-32 also reflects that the reality has been traded for an apparent reality by the autoi. Vorster (1991:135) notes the difference between the reality and apparent reality as follows:

Apparently real	The real
know God	resistance to truth
	adhere to lies
God	idols
Creator	creature
worship	idolatry
wisdom	foolish

That we are on the right track with this borrowing from Romans is demonstrated in 1 Cor. 1:21 and the phrase οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος which does not aim at knowledge alone but at obedient acknowledgement of God as Lord. Clearer still is 1 Cor. 1:22 and 1:18 which denounce a sinful illusionary way of speaking about God that degrades the Creator to a manageable creature.

15) See W.S. Vorster's dissertation (1979:219-225) where a whole discussion is devoted to litotes in the Corpus Paulinum.

According to him this verse definitely belongs to the group of litotes in the Corpus Paulinum.

16) I agree with Stowers (1988:78) that these socially oriented perspective of the handbooks under discussion can provide a healthy corrective to the narrowly form-critical approach to letters that has been so dominant in New Testament studies. Social structure and the recurrent patterns of interaction established by means of them are essential elements of the reality of everyday and as such they are reflected in letters.

17) Neyrey in explaining this concept of a symbolic universe rely on the macro intra cultural model of the British anthropologist Mary Douglas. Her two books on 'Purity and Danger' (1966) and 'Natural Symbols' (1982) have introduced us to new and crucial ways of analyzing cultures ancient and contemporary.

18) See in this regard the work of Neyrey (1986:128-170) in which he uses Douglas's ideas on bodily control to develop a cross-cultural model for appreciating Paul's strong sense of custom, structure and order. According to Douglas (1966:115) the body is a microcosm of the social body, a symbol of society in the sense that the ordering and structuring of the physical body is an exact replica of the social structure and the control of the physical body is an expression of social control.

19) Note the way in which Malherbe (1977:56) responds with reservation on the proposals of Judge. According to Malherbe "it is not certain that rhetoric was learnt only in the third educational stage ...Furthermore if Paul could have acquired the art without having been formally schooled in it, as Judge argues, then perhaps rhetorical facility did not form a conspicuous social dividing line... We should also be careful not to presume, on the basis of Paul's rhetoric, the level of rhetorical sophistication of the churches to which he wrote. We should at least consider the possibility that Paul's rhetorical or literary ability distinguished him from most of his converts. At most rhetorical ability or interest in the practice may be taken as part of the cumulative evidence showing that the Pauline churches included some educated people".

20) Theissen (1982:55) gave five reasons for this conclusion of his. In short he based his findings on 1) the fact that those people who were baptized by Paul were not poor people e.g. Crispus 2) Gaius was a home owner and his home could host the entire congregation 3) if the conflict among followers is a struggle for position within the congregation, carried on by those of high social standing the train and thought from 1:10-17 and 1:18 ff become comprehensible.

21) See in this regard Malherbe's (1982:76) comment about the social structure in Corinth, namely that "the Roman element was strong in this Greek city, and it is interesting to know that of the seventeen names of christians eight are Latin names. Other cults besides the Jews were established there, the best known being that of Isis, which illustrates that the Corinthians were open to new religious traditions. The social mobility of the Corinthian society further contributed to the heterogeneous character of the city. In addition, Corinth was a centre of commerce, industry and banking: the location of the Isthmian games; and the capitol of the province Achaia. The social stratification of the city is known to be pronounced with sharp contrasts between rich and poor".

22) According to Meeks (1982:270) the social structure of Corinth is one in which people of several social levels are brought together, although the apex and the very bottom of the Greco-Roman social pyramid is missing. According to Meeks "the congregation seems to reflect a pretty fair cross-section of urban society of its time. The persons prominent enough in the mission or in the local groups for their names to be mentioned or for them to be identifiable in some other way usually exhibits signs of high rank. ...We may venture the generalization that the most active and prominent members of Paul's circle are people of high status inconsistency. They are upwardly mobile; their achieved status is higher than their attributed status".

23) Malina (1981b:26-27) points out how honour in the first century world was located at the intersection of power, sex roles and religion.

24) With his customary insight Aristotle points out that "party strife is always due to inequality" (Politics, 5.1.6). Even Xenophon who recorded the civil strife in Corinth in the fourth century made it clear that enmity between rich and poor was the root of strife. According to him a massacre occurred in 393 when a group of men whom Xenophon tendentiously calls *oi pleistoi kai beltistoi* sought an alliance with Sparta (Hell. 4-4-1-5). Even Thucydides, in reflecting upon the civil strife to which Corcyron fell prey in 427 concluded that "the cause of all these evils was the desire to rule which greed and ambition inspire, and springing from them, that party spirit which belongs to men once they have become involved in factious rivalry" (Welborn 1987:95).

25) Welborn's article (1987:85-111) is rather suggestive and influential. In analyzing the terms *schismata* (1:10), *erides* (1:11) and *memeristai* (1:13) he comes to the conclusion that scholars of the New Testament fail to recognize "how much Paul's advice in 1 Cor. 1-4 has in common with the speeches on concord by the ancient politicians and rhetoricians, such as Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides. It is our contention that Paul's goal in 1 Cor. 1-4 is not refutation of heresy but what Plutarch describes as the object of the arts of politics - the prevention of discord" (Welborn 1987:89-90).

Welborn even reflects on the well known Corinthian parties and according to him the principle at work in the creation of ancient political parties is personal adherence. On the other hand personal enmity is the social reality behind the opposing faction. According to him archaeological findings support that one spoke 'of the faction of Marius' and the 'party of Pompey'. As a matter of fact "a declaration of allegiance to a party so personal in organization could take no form other than that which is given in 1 Cor. 1:12 - I am of Paul, I am of Apollos" (Welborn 1987:90-91).

Although I fully agree with Welborn and Theissen one should refrain from thinking that Paul is fighting on one front.

The conflict arises out of a variety of situations. Social stratification and power struggles certainly contribute, but there are, as Malherbe indicates, (1977:84) also theological issues at stake.

26) One must remember that the household of Stephanas and that of Crispus no doubt included slaves and freemen. All the evidence suggests that their power was based on material wealth and the dependence it induced. Welborn (1987:100) is therefore quite right in stating "slaves, freemen, hired labourers, business associates - the whole clientele - furnished not only an army of political supporters for the wealthy christian who sought to exert control over the new movement but also, more importantly, the experience of social distance by virtue of which he felt himself to be a person of higher rank, worthy of ruling the community".

27) See in this regard the two excellent articles by O'Conner on 'Sex and Logic in 1 Cor. 11:2-16' (1980:482-500) and Thompson's 'Hairstyles, Head-coverings and St. Paul' (1988:99-115).

28) In the following section I make use of the excellent work of Fiorenza on 'Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians' (1987:386-403) as well as 'Women in the Pre Pauline and Pauline Churches' (1978:153-166). More recently another study on the Corinthian women emerged namely that of Wire on 'The Corinthian Women Prophets'(1990). I am also indebted to her for excellent and probing work.

29) In scrutinizing the social location of the Corinthian parties I am in no way suggesting that the conflict could only be attributed to by the social stratification. I am only suggesting that it is one of the factors that could have contributed to the internal divisions.

30) Since Lütgert, some exegetes have considered the problem in a more traditional fashion. Lietzmann (1969:6-9) and Wendland (1954:6-26) identify four parties. Sellin (1982:60-96), however, concentrates on the followers of Apollos and he is followed by Dahl (1967:313-335), Merklein (1991:42-151). The Cephas party is emphasized by T.W. Manson (1962:190-209), Barrett (1982:28-39), Vielhauer (1975:341-352) and lately by Goulder (1991:516-534).

Goulder's view needs to be discussed. His view is a continuation of the Tübingen view of 1 Cor. made famous by F.C. Baur, and originally stated according to Goulder (1991:516) by J.E.C. Schmidt in 1797. Schmidt suggested that the converts of Paul and Apollos were effectively one group, and that the second group, which had Peter as leader expressed their ultimate allegiance as that of Christ. Of course Baur developed this hypothesis further but it was exposed by Lütgert in 1908 on the grounds of the apparent absence of Judaizers and the law in 1 Corinthians.

Goulder in attempting to answer Lütgert made some fundamental errors: 1) he explained *sophia* as a way of life in accordance with the torah. According to him (1991:522) in Antioch, Asia Minor and Rome the torah was thought of as law, whereas in European cities like Corinth, where there were fewer Jews, the law was presented as *sophia*; 2) He explained *scisma* as a result of the struggle between Paul and Peter which also occurs in Gal. 2 and 3) he explained the key verse of 4:6 and in particular the phrase *gegraptai* as a referral to the law and scripture.

Sadly Goulder made no use of the social sciences or even of attempting to understand the social world in which Paul lived. An excellent example is his explanation of 4:6 (*metaschematizein*) in which no mention is made of the use of a rhetorical device. In short Goulder's article is a sad reflection of scholars who simply ignore the change in paradigms.

31) Fee (1987:169-70) argues that although Paul is describing a conflict amongst the Corinthians', he is in actual fact referring to the Corinthians' arrogance which pits Paul against Apollos. His conclusion (1987:6) is that the historical situation in Corinth was one of conflict between the church and its founder. In any case, according to Fee, the majority of the church boasts of a special spirituality related to an over realized eschatology. Once again no mention is made of possible social factors that could enhance the conflict.

32) Although it is usually accepted Baur developed his dialectical approach to Christian beginnings under the sway of Hegalian philosophy, Peter Hodgson (1968:23-24) has shown that Baur had in fact not read Hegel before 1833 which was well after the time he wrote his now famous essay on the parties in Corinth. According to Colin Brown (1985:19-83) Baur had been influenced by the dialectical understanding of Fichte.

33) For a considerable number of years numerous articles have given staunch support to the hypothesis that the parties arose out of theological considerations. The father of this being F.C. Baur. He was followed by a host of scholars including Dahl (1967:313-335), who claimed that Apollos's enthusiasm gave rise to the parties. See in this regard the following exponents of this view: Sellin (1982:69-96), Merklein (1991:142-151).

34) Exponents of these views are amongst others Marshall (1987:264) who said that the parties "indicate primarily a social rather than a theological bond" and Theissen (1982:121-140).

35) A combination of factors influencing the forming of the parties is of lately propagated in an excellent article by William Beard (1991:116-136). See also in this regard Malherbe on 'The Social Aspects of Early Christianity' (1983:84) in which he explicitly claims that social as well as theological matters were involved in the grouping of the parties.

36) Wealthy people, according to Aristotle (in Marshall 1987:185), are especially susceptible to *hybris*. Unlike the great souled man who can act with restraint, the vain man cannot control his good fortune or position of superiority and becomes *hybristes*. Within a situation of social mobility this kind of behaviour would occur naturally in Corinth.

37) In the Greek-English lexicon of Louw and Nida which is based on semantic domains *hybris* is treated as part of domain 88 that deals with moral and ethical qualities and related behaviour. It is part of the sub domain 'treat badly' (1988:756).

38) The indication that this is a letter of admonition occurs in 4:14 where Paul purposely says that his intention is that of admonition. The *tauta* is therefore retrospective, and although it refers specifically to 4:6-13 it also points beyond the section to the previous admonitions already found in 1:10. It should further also be noted that the two instances of *parakalo* (1:10; 4:16) serve as a frame for the whole discussion in chapters 1-4. See in this regard Fitzgerald (1988:117).

39) Various scholars have adopted this view in the past. See in this regard Robertson & Plummer (1914:81). The notion of excess suggested by *theûpēr* of the quotation, and the language of satiety in 4:8 may of course lend support to this suggestion. In recent years two scholars have made a contribution to this hypothesis namely Marshall (1987:197-202) and H.D. Betz (1970:465-484). According to Marshall (1987:198) *gegraptai* denotes a scripture quotation through which Paul is simply

telling the Corinthians that they should learn not to be unscriptural. How is one unscriptural? In the light of two passages in 2 Cor. 10:12-13 and Rom. 12:3 Marshall (1987:200) suggests that unscriptural is the exact opposite of moderation (metron). Betz in his article opens a window on self knowledge with the aid of two proverbs "Nothing overmuch", "Know yourself" which were inscribed on the walls of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Betz explains the different ways in which scholars thought about self knowledge. Epictetus, according to Betz (1970:476) thought that you should first learn who you are and then in the light of that knowledge adorn yourself - especially your reason. Philo on the other hand, couples self knowledge for instance with Jacob's flight to Laban in Haran. The Lord's advice to him (Jacob) "to make your home with him for a few days" is nothing other than what the Delphic maxim demands: 'Learn well the country of the senses; know thyself and the parts of which thou dost consist, what each is, and for what it was made, and how it is meant to work' (Betz 1970:478).

This coming to self knowledge, according to Philo, proceeds in three steps: 1) turn away from astrology, 2) examination of the body, including perception and speech, 3) consideration of the nous in man (Betz 1970:479). Another great example which illustrates the fruit of self knowledge is Abraham.

40) An excellent example is the study of Good (1986:57) where Sophia is treated without any significance or even reference to philosophy. Even Birger Pearson (1983:73-89) sadly admits that although there is no full blown gnosticism in Corinth (1983:74) "virtually everything in 1 Cor. can be explained on the basis of Hellenistic Jewish speculative wisdom such as that encountered in Philo (1983:77). Even Robert Grant in his article on 'Early Christians and Gnostics in Graeco-Roman Society' (1983:194-218) sadly does not relate gnosis to the philosophy in the Greco - Roman society.

41) In Sirach 39.1-11 the relationship between wisdom and knowledge is touched upon: "1) He who seeks out wisdom will be concerned with prophecies; 2) he will preserve the discourse of notable men and penetrate the subtleties of parables; 3) he will seek out the hidden meanings of proverbs and be at home with the obscurities of parables; 4) he will serve among great men and appear before rulers, he will travel through the lands of foreign nations, for he tests the good and evil among men... 8) he will reveal instruction in his teaching, and will glory in the law of the Lord's covenant; 9) many will praise his understanding and it will never be blotted out, his memory will not disappear, and his name will live through all generations; 10) nations will declare his wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim his praise; 11) if he lives long, he will leave a name greater than a thousand, and if he goes to rest, it is enough for him" (Davies 1982:11).

42) Keep in mind that the Stoics found reason as a fortress to be an apt metaphor in their descriptions of the wise man who had logos kai gnosis. According to Seneca "the wise man full of virtues human and divine, can lose nothing. His goods are girt about by strong and insurmountable defenses. Not Babylon's walls, which an Alexander entered, are to be compared with these, not the ramparts of Carthago or Numantia, both captured by one man's hand, not the capitol or citadel of Rome - upon them the enemy has left his marks.

The walls which guard the wise man are safe from both flame and assault, they provide no



means of entrance - are lofty, impregnable, god-like" (Stowers 1990:268).

Even for Marcus Aurelius the mind "is a very citadel for a man has no fortress more impregnable wherein to find refuge and be untaken forever" (Stowers 1990:269).

43) This is a question that was and is still debated. On the one hand there are those who agree that Paul is opposed to rhetoric and eloquence and that he himself did not receive any formal schooling in the art of rhetoric. There are numerous examples of scholars that would ascribe to this. Kümmel (1975:199) and Conzelmann (1969:19) believed that Paul used rhetoric as mere ornamentation. Kennedy (1980:131) believes that Paul in 1 Cor. 2:6-31 rejected the whole of classical philosophy and rhetoric. Marshall (1987:400) while raving about the commendable rhetorical qualities of Paul's also believe that he "deliberately abandoned rhetoric in his preaching".

On the other hand there are also a number of scholars who believe the exact opposite. Wilckens (1975:522), Liftin (1983:346), Norden (1909:493), Betz (1986:22-23) believe that Paul's rhetoric is that of the true friend, while Malherbe (1990:203-217) believes his rhetoric is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Scroggs (1976:273) Church (1978:21) Wuellner (1986:77) and Fiorenza (1987:386-403) all believe Paul to be a rhetorician. See in this regard the study of Liftin (1983:279-353). His emphasis is somewhat strong and unbalanced when he remarks "Paul conceives of these two persuasive dynamics - that of the rhetor and that of the Cross - as mutually exclusive. To utilize the one was to abandon the other" (1983:280). The study of Lim (1987:148) is more balanced in remarking "that this does not mean that devices and strategies of rhetoric are not to be used in preaching, but that they should be confined to their proper limits".

All in all one must note that the discussion about Paul's relationship to rhetoric is experiencing a boom. One could indeed say that this very important issue has gone the full circle. At the turn of the century the rhetoric of Paul was appreciated by scholars of the likes of Johannes Weiss, Friederich Blass and the young Rudolf Bultmann. This appreciation made way for suspicion and the idea of Paul as the careful pastor who is highly critical of speech and eloquence and rhetoric were the order of the day. Recently scholars working within the SBL such as Malherbe, Betz and Judge completed the circle. In the words of one of these scholars who assisted in turning the tide: "Paul the pastor is Paul the educator, is Paul the rhetorician" (Wuellner 1979:177).

44) See in this regard the study of Liftin (1983:279-353). His emphasis is somewhat strong and unbalanced because he is of the opinion that Paul conceives the two dynamics (that of rhetor and that of the Cross) as mutually exclusive (1983:280). The study of Lim (1987:148) is much more balanced. According to Lim Paul does use devices and strategies of rhetoric but they are confined to their proper limits.

45) Methodius had the following to say with regard to Paul's style: "the sudden shifts in Paul's discussions which give one the impressions that he is confusing the issue or bringing in irrelevant material or wandering from the point at issue are part of Paul's most varied style. Yet in all these transitions he never introduces anything that would be irrelevant to his doctrine, but gathering up his



ideas into a wonderfully harmonious pattern he makes them all tell on the single point at issue which he has proposed" (Wuellner 1979:177).

46) Bultmann in his dissertation examined the diatribe as a style of moral exhortation. The ancients only very rarely used the word to describe exhortation, but when they did, they had in mind the educational activity of teacher and student, not a literary genre. See Malherbe (1986:129).

The diatribe as Bultmann discovered was essentially a popular philosophical treatment of an ethical topic and had the practical aim of moving people to action rather than reflection. The earlier diatribes seem to have been lively, even entertaining with a pronounced use of a dialogue with a fictive opponent lending spice to the whole. The later diatribes were calmer in tone, more didactic and more systematically arranged. They were used in different situations of communication - for example in letters (Seneca and Paul) as well as in discourse to the public (Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom) and in instruction in schools (Epictetus). The diatribe is peppered with rhetorical questions, frequently used for emphasis or to point to common assumption. Among the literal and rhetorical conventions, lists of vices and virtues and hardships were especially popular.

47) To prove the point I would like to refer to four, otherwise useful commentaries on Corinthians. Grosheide (1953:16) only mentions that 1 Cor. seems to discuss a series of points without any coherence. No mention is made of rhetoric. Barrett (1971:13) refers to the work of Weiss and even urges one to read it in its entirety, but his own work lacks the insight gained from rhetorics. The same can be said of Pop's commentary as well as that of Conzelmann. Conzelmann's argumentation (1969:19-22) for the unity of 1 Cor. rests solely on theological considerations. By further considering the form and substance of Paul's argumentation separately he restricts rhetoric to the level of ornamentation.

This misrepresentation of rhetoric may be due to the lingering effects of a Ramist view of rhetoric in Western thought. See in this regard the work of Russell on 'Criticism in Antiquity' (1981:119) in which he states that rhetoric was always a rigorous discipline, which encouraged hard thinking, verbal and logical ingenuity and shrewd psychological observation.

See in this regard also the article by Culpepper (1989:87-102) in which he makes it clear that a commentary responds to and reflects the commentator's understanding of the nature of the text (or medium) being interpreted. It follows that the commentator's understanding of the nature of the text determines his or her concept of what a commentary must do to make the meaning of the text explicit. Sadly, the above mentioned commentaries still function within a very inadequate view or paradigm of what a text is.

48) That most contemporary scholars did not follow the directives of the audience to understand the Corinthian Christians becomes obvious when one reads through the different articles and books on the opponents of Paul. His opponents are explained either with reference to the symbolic universe of contemporary Judaism, a pagan religion, especially the mystery cults and of course developed gnosticism. In this regard the article by Barclay (1987:74) on the pitfalls of mirror reading is

imperative. See also Betz (1979:56 n.115) as well as Lyons (1985:96) on mirror reading.

49) The universal audience is of paramount importance because it provides a norm for objective argumentation, since the other party to a dialogue and the person deliberating with himself can never amount to more than floating incarnations of this universal audience. See Perelman (1969:31-32). Also remember that this is the audience of the philosopher, because it has a value system based on rational thinking. According to Perelman (1967:110) appeals to the universal audience will be philosophical in nature and rise above the persuasive appeals of the particular audience.

50) Hengel (1986:94-102) states several instances in which reference is made to the folly of the Cross. Pliny for example said 'I discovered nothing but a perverse and extravagant superstition'. Tacitus saw the cross as a 'pernicious superstition'. Augustine preserved an oracle of Apollo which speaks of a 'god who died in delusions, who was condemned by judges whose verdict was just, and executed in the prime of life'. According to Celsus the Cross can be compared to a drunken old woman, telling stories to lull a small child to sleep.

51) According to Lampe (190:124) the justification for applying the text of 1:18-25 to the Corinthian party strife and as part of the rhetorical schema is found in 1 Cor. 3 where the parties are openly targeted - "in 1:18-25 and 3:18-19 Paul uses the same terminology, which shows how much 1:18-25 in fact, may be read with the Corinthians and their parties in mind. 3:18-19 makes the general theological reflections of 1:18-2:16 clear in regard to the party situation .

In other words and this is the finesse, the Corinthians at first, can accept the fundamental theological text of 1:18-2:5 as agreeable and even enjoyable, for the text in its foreground does not criticize them but the world. They can enjoy the "we" who are being saved (1:18), at least initially, until suddenly, from 3:1 on, the implications are shockingly turned against themselves. In the words of Lampe - "1:18-2:5 is a 'Trojan horse' with which Paul thrusts himself into the middle of the Corinthian party situation".

52) In 4:8-10 Paul again refers to and compares himself to the ἑσχατοί, the least important, the most insignificant of all. The word indicates the lowness of the apostle's worldly rank and status, in contrast to the exalted spiritual status of the Corinthians as affluent kings. Although first in the church (12:28) God reveals them to the world as last. The last are typically those who are wronged, insulted, suffer drunken abuse, have their property confiscated, and in short are treated as fools (Dio Chrys. Or. 38.36-37). See also Fitzgerald (1988:136).

53) In both the study of Black (1984:15-17) and Stahlin (1979:490-493) no mention is made of the use of this term within the Greco-Roman philosophy.

54) Plank (1983:139) finds a parallel to this second perspective as an experience of alternation in the work of the sociologist Peter Berger. According to Berger "as children we used to be given a

curious kind of puzzle to play with. It was paper with a tangle of very thin blue and red lines. If you just looked at it you couldn't make out anything. But if you covered it with a piece of transparent red tissue paper, the red lines of the drawing disappeared and the blue lines formed a picture - it was a clown in a circus holding a hoop and a little dog jumping through it. And if you covered the same drawing with a blue tissue paper, a roaring lion appeared chasing the clown across the ring. You can do the same thing with every mortal, living or dead. You can look at him through Sonia's tissue paper and write a biography of Napoleon in terms of his pituitary gland as has been done: The fact that he incidentally conquered Europe will appear as a mere symptom of the activities of those two tiny lobes the size of a pea. You can explain the message of the Prophets as epileptical foam and the Sistine Madonna as the projection of an incestuous dream. The method is correct and the picture in itself complete. But beware of the arrogant error of believing that it is the only one. The picture you get through the blue tissue paper will be no less true and complete. The clown and the lion are both there, interwoven in the same pattern" (Berger in Plank 1983:139).

Obviously irony functions in much the same way as tissue paper. When placed over the text, the picture is altered so that the hidden features come into play.

55) See in this regard the study of Bailey (1975:265-296). According to him (1975:266) the key to biblical poetry is parallelism. These parallelisms can best be understood as correspondences and fall into three categories, namely standard parallelism (aa, bb, cc), step parallelism abc, abc) and inverted parallelism (abc, cba).

If the reader of the New Testament judges the letters by modern poetic standards, or by OT.Psalms, he/she might gain the impression of a very poor poetry, characterized by irregular metre, rather weak use of parallelism and a frequent and monotonous repetitions of words and the absence of any firm principle of construction. The study of Bailey corrects such impressions and underlines the fact that even New Testament letters are written according to strong principles of form, and are in fact more formally constructed than most of OT. poetry.

At the second conference of Rhetoric and Religion held at the University of South Africa Pieter Botha in a illuminating paper on the 'Magical power of words' shed some light on how this type of rythm and repetition enhances the power of words and ultimate the power of speech which is of course the aim of rhetoric.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

Texts are the human way to reduce the world to a manageable format, open to an intersubjective interpretive discourse. Which means that, when symbols are inserted into a text, there is, perhaps, no way to decide which interpretation is the "good" one, but it is still possible to decide, on the basis of the context, which one is due, not to an effort of understanding "that" text, but rather to a hallucinatory response on the part of the addressee (Eco 1990:21).

In the postmodern era, I daresay we shall see much less in the way of exegesis, and much more in the way of poetics, rhetoric, politics and ethics.

(Fowler 1989:27 n 39).

#### 4.1 General Remarks

**T**he single most pressing challenge of this study has been to find ways of understanding and studying human communication as a highly complex interactional process.

What this study in a theoretical sense does confirm, in the first place, is that writing and reading are activities full of risk. Inasmuch as the meaning of a text evolves from the interaction between author, text and reader, neither the creator nor the recipient of that text has the capacity to control its interpretation. Secondly, and related to the first, this study confirms the profound truth regarding communication and knowledge that flows from Einstein's theory of relativity<sup>1</sup>, namely "that reality is always encased in a communicative matrix" (P. Botha 1993:40). The implication of confirming this truth is not without consequences - it implies that the focus of the text is no longer on the text itself, but rather on the communicative event of which the text is part. In other words, the focus is on the subject in, around, behind and

created by the text. Thirdly, this study also confirms that an adequate theory of communication has to be pragmatic<sup>2</sup> and functional. The interactional model utilizes the concept of interaction: human behaviour is a continual interaction of activities; it involves divisions of labour and functions within a vast complex.

It is in and through communication that human societies are created and maintained. In other words, "communication and the processing of information are not merely aspects of human societies; rather, societies would be totally impossible without communication in one form or another" (P. Botha 1993:41).

The interactional model also confirms that outside a communicative event a text is a mere artifact. Any adequate text theory must, therefore, consider a text as a communicative interaction between its producers and its consumers within relevant social and institutional contexts.

Finally the interactional model provides an appropriate tool for the construction of a context. One cannot oppose text to context, or reduce text to a mere function of context. The application of this model has made it clear that the relationship between text and context is one of equivalence (P. Botha 1993:45) because it is their interrelatedness which unites them and which constitutes both text and context.

On a more practical level we have seen that if wisdom and foolishness in Paul's letter to the Corinthians are our concern, their contexts have to be constructed. We have also seen that the contexts which were created by different New Testament scholars for the interpretation of wisdom and foolishness in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5, are based on a problematic approach to language. The interactional model, on the other hand, alerts one to the collective or holistic dimensions of language by virtue of its concern both for the kinds of effects which discourse produces and for how discourse produces those effects. One of the greatest assets of the interactional model according to my reasoning is that it transcends the dichotomy between a diachronic reading and a synchronic reading and makes a more holistic approach possible, in which the pragmatic effect of the text is taken fully into account. In doing so the practical, the powerful and political aspects of the text are taken seriously. In the words of Lentricchia (1983:147) "to write is to know is to dominate".

I also believe that the interactional model is able to accommodate and implement Fiorenza's plea (1988:17) for a new paradigm which situates "biblical scholarship in such a way that its public character and political responsibility become an integral part of our literary readings and historical reconstructions of the biblical world".

This model prohibits one from a radical detachment, emotional, intellectual and political that leads one to non-involvement and presupposition - free exegesis. Rather, it increases an awareness of the determinate role of the society in the interpretive task and of the social dimension of literature.

In conclusion: The interactional model is able to deal with the quest for double ethics (Fiorenza 1988:14), namely that of an ethics of historical reading which deals with the question of what kind of reading can do justice to the text in its historical context, and an ethics of accountability which takes responsibility not only for the choice of an interpretive model, but for the ethical consequences of the biblical text and its meaning.

Finally, in arguing for an interactional model, a way has been opened out of the powerless pre-occupation with the aesthetic traits of biblical language and style, which has rendered our discipline functionless, contextless and irrelevant to the burning issues of our society.

## **4.2 Ethics of Historical Reading**

The various strategies which could contribute to a historical reading of the text (cf Fiorenza 1988:14) can be summarized as follows:

### **4.2.1 Sentence strategies**

The two most important sentence strategies are firstly the way, in which the characters of the discourse are constructed and, secondly the identification with the implied readers.

Paul's person is constructed by means of various strategies. The picture that gradually develops of Paul is one in which:

- \* Paul is father of the community and has the right to admonition. His person is thus constructed by means of paternal and maternal imagery.
- \* By adopting the role of father figure Paul breaks through the very strict hierarchical relationship that should have existed between him as apostle and the congregation. Paul masks his own authority.
- \* Paul identifies with the readers by demarcating textual space. He tries to establish trust, attention, sympathy and goodwill in his attempt to persuade.

- \* Paul obeys the rules of a normal speech situation and the readers can therefore expect the cooperation principle to be observed.
- \* Paul considers himself a champion of unity.
- \* Paul identifies his preaching and work with the example of Jesus Christ.
- \* Paul is also a witness to God's gifts and the readers' speech, and knowledge.
- \* Paul's person is created by means of co-existential argumentation in which the person of Paul and his actions are interrelated. With regard to his person - he preaches God's secret truth shifting the authority from himself to God. With regard to his actions - he does not use preeminent eloquence or wisdom. In other words Paul's own life becomes a paradigm of boasting in the Lord (1:31, 2:3-4).

The **implied readers** are constructed by means of in group identity markers, creating textual distance, claiming common ground and dissociation in conjunction with incompatibilities (1:26-28). As we have seen in the exegetical excursus on pericope one, one should throughout the above mentioned section (18-25) pay close attention to the explanatory conjunctions: γάρ (18,19,21), ἐπειδή (22), ὅτι (25) because the connection of the successive clauses may be fairly plain by following it in the order of thought. The γάρ, ὅτι and ἐπειδή, going from effect to cause, present the sequence in reverse order as follows: What seems to be God's foolishness and weakness are in fact wisdom and power (v. 25); for this reason (v. 22-24) the message of the crucified man - a foolish thing in the eyes of Jews and Greeks - is to those who know it the power and wisdom of God. This exemplifies (v. 21) the truth underlying the history of the world, that man's wisdom is convicted of failure by the simplicity of the truth as declared by God. For this reason God has destroyed in a generic way the wisdom of the world (v. 20) and turned to folly the wisdom of the wise (v. 19), a principle which explains the opposite look which the word of the Cross has to the ἀπολλύμενοι and the σωζόμενοι. That is why Paul's mission is to preach οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου (v. 17).

Dissociation is of particular importance in this regard, especially concerning the incompatibilities. The readers were called although few of them are wise and powerful or of high social standing, causing a basic incompatibility between the calling of the readers and their status. This incompatibility extends to God's way of choosing. As in the case of Christ who appeared weak and foolish to the world, so

in regard to the non-elite at Corinth, God reverses the expected reality based on honour.

This prominent incompatibility between the expected reality (wisdom, strength and honour) and God's reversal (foolishness, weakness, shame) opens the way for Paul to modify the value system of his readers.

A further technique to identify with the implied readers is to distance them from another group. The other group is vilified in order to strengthen inner group ties. An excellent example is found in 1:22. In referring to the Jews and Greeks alike Paul does two things. He creates textual distance by means of the very formal distinction and in so doing he distances himself from the Jews and the Greeks. He follows that up with non naming, keeping the attention of his readers, because they are not implicated. He then immediately follows that with a personal pronoun *ἡμεῖς*, diminishing textual space and suggesting empathy and solidarity and interaction with the readers. Over against the 'us' and inclusive 'we' stand the Jews and Gentiles. Other strategies, such as politeness, hedging indirectness and litotes all contribute towards retaining the power of the implied readers.

#### 4.2.2 Discourse Strategies

A historical reading that would do justice to 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 should in the first instance survey the social situation depicted by this letter by Paul.

##### 4.2.2.1 Social strategies

Part of Paul's social strategy is revealed in the role he assigns to himself. He is **apostle**, that of the superior person with the highest status and power since he has direct access to the revelations of the Holy Spirit. Since he has legitimate power he not only acts in obedience to God's demands, but he also demands obedience to his commands (1:10).

As we have already seen he fulfills the role of **father** - a strategy that enables him to break through the very strict hierarchical relationship that should have existed between him and the readers. It is a strategy which is more demanding in the sense that you are never really free from the obligation of respecting and obeying your father. Being a father, Paul is also able to educate. He therefore is able to blame, commend, censure, admonish, thank, pray, threaten, reproach, insult, praise as well as to be ironic and friendly.



By means of the text of 1 Corinthians, Paul also functions as, a **window** unto the social world of his readers. Paul, as well as his readers, shares the view that there is a definite **order** in the world. This order can be perceived in the cosmic hierarchy (11:3, 15:27-28), in the way the church is structured in terms of members and nonmembers (6:1, 1:20-28). Some are strong and others weak, some are wise, others foolish, some superior, others inferior, some are adults and others are babes. There is also a definite order among the people in the church (15:5-41, 12:28-30), some are first, others like Paul is last. To be first in time implies a higher role and status.

Yet there is also **disorder**, and Paul uses this strategy to upset the traditional patterns of order. Of particular importance is the way in which God's reversals function as a strategy of disorder. According to the map of honourable persons shared by both Greek and Jew in 1:23, Christ has no place there; he is a stumbling block to Jews and nonsense to Greeks. However, according to God's reversal he is the power and wisdom of God. With the aid of this strategy a pattern of social value is turned around. God views wisdom and honour differently.

This strategy is also applied to the social relations in Corinth. In a world where status is based on honour, God chooses what is foolish and low (1:26-28).

Paul himself became the victim of God's reversals. Paul was by normal standards a wise man. Not only was he a student of Gamaliel, but he also complied with the traditions of the fathers with zeal. The authority given him to persecute the church, as well as his wisdom, power, rank, ethnic, caste and sex, reflects a high degree of status. His calling, however, changed this dramatically. In ending his career as Pharisee he is left without a power base. His privileges and status have been severely compromised, his rights as a free person is now limited to 'being in Christ' and his position as a male is now being lived out in the same world with the Corinthian women and slaves. On the other hand, women and slaves experienced a rise in status. In a society where women are not found to be religious or politically powerful, Paul mentions women with homes large enough for church gatherings.

Chloe plays an important role and the way in which Paul respects her views concerning the divisions in Corinth indicates that women had influence and exercised leadership in the church. This rise in status is also evident from the fact that women are choosing to refrain from sexual relations as well as the fact that they have *exousia* power to choose between alternatives (11:2-16). In this sense 1:26 could indeed reflect the status of the women at the time of their calling. They were not wise or powerful nor of high social standing. This choice signifies that God took

a loss, not the Corinthians. Paul sees their calling as God's way of contradicting and reversing the values of those who excel in what the world values. The calling of the Corinthians in the eyes of God demonstrates not only God's reversals but his exclusive right to glory and power. The Corinthians, and in particular the women and slaves, see their calling as the demonstration of God's glory - not simply its preservation but its extension through the radically changed reality of the once foolishness of the world.

#### 4.2.2.2 Rhetorical strategies

By integrating the results of the different rhetorical strategies we are now in a position to answer several questions that could contribute to a historical reading of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 and in particular the terms wisdom and foolishness.

Our study has confirmed that 1 Cor. 1-4 consists of two epideictic arguments. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 forms part of the first argument and especially that part of the *encomium* which focussed on achievements and which made use of examples as primary form of rhetorical proof.

First of all, Paul's use of wisdom and foolishness creates an ironic **system of values that serves his apologetic intention**. Paul's use of paradoxical irony brings about a reinterpretation not only of the cross but also of Paul's authority. Paul's reinterpretation of the cross by means of wisdom and foolishness refracts the definition of folly not to signify the absence of power. The paradox then being that foolishness expresses in its powerlessness the value of power and God's wisdom. In other words the paradox between the categories wisdom and foolishness signifies God's power. What was perceived as mutually exclusive is now firmly bound together. Wisdom and foolishness cannot be separated, because wisdom is always qualified by a certain foolishness. The same holds true for weakness and strength.

Paul's paradoxical irony also brings about a **reinterpretation of his own authority**. His weakness no longer signifies an unqualified powerlessness, but becomes a powerful category in that it is a sign of God's own approval. Paul's forceful concession of his weakness at the same time exposes his source of power. His lack of wisdom and eloquence, therefore, not only exposes his foolishness but his source of power. As a result, the one who takes seriously this concession must also be prepared to accept Paul's authority, recognizing God's power in the apostle's foolishness and weakness.

Wisdom and foolishness are two strategic values through which, the Cross is depicted in a paradoxical way. It also enhances Paul's own authority and plays an important role in constructing his person, which in the end contributes towards the establishment of an *ethos* (in this case unity), prompting further interaction from the readers.

**Secondly** the transformation of value serves to fulfill Paul's **epideictic goal**. Paul's reinterpretation of wisdom and foolishness plays an important role in persuading the readers to perceive reality in a new way. This reinterpretation enlarges the value of strength and weakness beyond the scope of what the reader normally would expect from these categories.

The same holds true for the terms foolishness and wisdom. Paul's weakness (2:3) and lack of wisdom and eloquence (2:4) insomuch as they manifest the powerlessness which God uses to shame the world, are at once the strength and wisdom which stem from God's saving activity. The foolishness of the message about the cross is actually pure wisdom and the wisdom of the world is nothing else than foolishness.

The same reversal of values is found in the calling of the Corinthians. In 1:26 their powerlessness manifests the power of God to save in and through their human condition of weakness and low status. God's wisdom, foolishness and power therefore promotes a change in Paul's readers, calling into question their system of values. For Paul the cross event furnishes the essential paradigm of God's paradoxical acts. Moreover, it provides the basic pattern according which Paul interprets life, notably his own existence and the calling of the Corinthians.

**Thirdly** one can now conclude that 1:18-2:5 is not an example of impaired speech on Paul's behalf, neither is it a digression. It is not strange that Paul allots just a few verses to party strife. Party strife as such presupposes a number of things, inter alia that Paul's authority is under fire. It also indicates that there is a difference of opinion amongst his readers as to how they should interpret their calling and its consequences. In a community centered around the pivotal values of honour and shame Paul then uses the terms wisdom and foolishness, weakness and power as a means to:

- \* illustrate the paradoxical and ironic value of the cross.
- \* illustrate Christ crucified in similar terms as the foolish wise man.
- \* illustrate that God's foolishness is wisdom.
- \* illustrate with regard to his own behaviour, that his weakness and lack of

wisdom and eloquence add to his status as being a follower and apostle of Jesus Christ. His own behaviour becomes a flesh and blood example of the paradoxical value of the gospel.

To conclude: In a historical reading of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5 wisdom and foolishness bring to the surface Paul's ironic system of values and reveals the veins of his subsequent argumentation. He highlights weakness and folly, wisdom and strength and commandeers them for his own use by infusing them with paradoxical value. Paul cannot begin to discuss the issue of his weakness and lack of eloquence prior to establishing its paradoxical dimensions, for to do so would lead to misunderstanding. Before constructing his image as apostle he must first bring into play the cruciform world of meaning in which foolishness and weakness express positive value and status (1:26).

That foolishness and weakness do indeed express positive values is further illustrated in 2:1-5 by means of the concrete, example of Paul's own apostolic existence. Had Paul conceded this prior to 1:18-31 the effect would have been only to confirm his audience's judgment that his apostleship lacked power and that it was inadequate. However, when this statement follows on 1:18-31 Paul's weakness and folly attest to the power and wisdom of God. The juxtaposition and parallel terminology of 1:18-2:5 make it impossible for Paul's readers to dismiss him as a trickster or fickle person. His readers have to consider it in relation to Paul's unsettling system of values and thus on his terms. Whether or not they accept his irony, they cannot dismiss its force which calls into question their own system of values.

**In the final analysis**, this study and its proposed model of interpretation has resulted in an interpretation of 1 Cor. 1 (and in particular through the terms of wisdom and foolishness) which has highlighted the extent to which Paul combats Corinthian factionalism. Seen in this way new light is shed on certain terms, while new directions are opened up for the exegesis of specific problematic sections.

## NOTES:

1) Einstein's theory of relativity has demonstrated the interactive effects between the observer and the observed making final measurements problematic. In this way Einstein opened the way to a theory of intersubjective constitution of time consciousness. See the article by P. Botha (1993:40).

2) See in this regard the remark by van Dijk (1977:167) "that by speaking we DO something, that is, something more than merely speaking, is a simple but important insight from the philosophy of language. It should be added that the use of language is not one specific act, but an integral part of social INTERACTION. Language systems are CONVENTIONAL systems. Not only do they regulate, but their categories and rules have developed under the influence of the structure of interaction in society. This functional view of language, both as a system and as a historical product, in which the predominant SOCIAL role of language in interaction is stressed, is a necessary corrective to a psychological view of language and language use, where our competence in speaking is essentially an object for the philosophy of mind." Also keep in mind that Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle all argue for an approach which views the theory of meaning and the whole of language as a sub-part of a theory of action.

3) See in this regard Hamerton - Kelly (1985:65-81) who utilizes the hermeneutics of Rene Girard in an attempt to prove that by respecting the cross, the Corinthians had no means of transforming community strife and violence. It is rather noteworthy that Paul on numerous occasions reinstated the cross and its ironic value system as a means to end violence and misconduct.

Note, for example, the following issues and the way Paul responded to them:

a) 1:18 - 4:21: Christ crucified as God's wisdom and power to strife both internal and over against Paul, carried out in the name of wisdom.

b) 5:7: Christ our passover has been sacrificed - to the community's complacent attitude towards incest.

c) 6:11: Through Christ you were washed, sanctified, justified to the church's failure to arbitrate between two brothers.

d) 6:20: You were brought at a price - to some men going to prostitutes.

e) 11:23-26: The proclaiming of Christ's death through bread and wine to the schism between rich and poor.

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