TOWARD AN INTERACTIONAL MODEL FOR THE ANALYSIS OF LETTERS

J N VORSTER

ABSTRACT
This article argues that an analysis of New Testament letters can no longer stop at a structural analysis, but has to take cognisance of aspects of conversational analysis and rhetoric. That an interactional model rather than a structural approach should be adopted in the analysis of letters, is required from the letter genre itself. Various aspects of conversational analysis as well as rhetoric, for example conversational principles and implicatures, the relationship between speech situation and rhetorical situation and the components of the rhetorical situation are discussed. The article is theoretical in character.

1 INTRODUCTION
This article has more than one objective. Firstly, it has the objective to introduce the mode of thought present in pragmatic approaches. The words pragmatic, rhetorical, functional, intentional are slowly but surely becoming common place among New Testament scholars, but are sometimes used in ways which are not in accordance with their points of reference. Secondly, I wish to indicate that an interactional model for the analysis of letters has now become a necessity. It is even more a necessity where a letter is studied as a text of persuasion. Within this context we should also ask ourselves whether we are prepared to move beyond a structural analysis into the misty and nebulous world of a pragmatic analysis, because a letter as a text of persuasion cannot be studied merely in terms of a structural analysis. My third objective is to indicate that pragmatics and rhetoric can, and in fact, should work together in the application of an interactional model. To put it more concretely: the rhetorical situation should be situated within the speech situation. Fourthly, I wish to illustrate that rhetorical analyses functioning as part of an interactional model should rather be concerned with the inventio phase of the rhetorical process. Although the notion of rhetorical situation has become a household term, important aspects of rhetorical situation are still ignored by most New Testament scholars, while others are consistently making their appearance.

Certain aspects are not dealt with in this article. I do not intend to present or pretend a 'model'; neither do I pretend to present various models or do I have the competence to provide a bird's eye view of either pragmatics or rhetoric. Furthermore, I do not have the objective to deal with all the various aspects of pragmatics or rhetoric which New Testament scholars have already studied. For example: in this article I do not intend to discuss 'rhetorical genres', although it could be argued that aspects of rhetorical genre pertain to inventio. The close relationship between the rhetorical genre and the dispositio would have taken me beyond
the scope of this article. Neither do I intend to present a survey or a criticism of the various views and/or attitudes of New Testament scholars regarding rhetoric. Although the paper is to a large extent theoretical, I have followed a pragmatic approach by making use of aspects from different models. Enkvist (1985:26) in summarising the overlapping and confusing interrelationships of stylistics, rhetoric and discourse linguistics once said:

But such discussions about territorial integrities will all too often degenerate into squabbles about terms rather than substance. The most important thing is that a job gets done. Under what label it gets done, is of less importance.

2 INFORMATIONAL VERSUS INTERACTIONAL

Views on language and approaches to languages have always played a major role in the scientific interpretation of the New Testament. Until recently, approaches which aided us in obtaining information from the text of the New Testament, dominated. During the period in which historical linguistics or comparative grammar dominated, New Testament studies were inclined to search for the meaning of a linguistic entity in its history or development. Consequently, the text of the New Testament became yet another source of information concerning the development of ideas as well as a source of information concerning the development of early Christianity. The posthumously published lectures of Ferdinand de Saussure signified a new direction in the approach to language - structuralism was born. The distinction between synchronic and diachronic analysis initiated by him was used in the seventies by New Testament scholars to study meaning in terms of the relationships of linguistic elements within the texts. As such the relationships between linguistic elements within the text, whether that be on word, sentence, or paragraph level or whether in a narratological sense, became the source of information. What the text says was the objective to be achieved. Therefore, corresponding to views on language, analyses of the New Testament inclined to be informational. To put it differently: analyses of the New Testament were inclined to be referential, either in an extralinguistic or in an autosemantic sense.

A presupposition of this type of analyses is that language can be isolated and studied in isolation because meaning lies in the relationship between linguistic entities. The problem is, however, that two sentences with two identical syntactical structures can have entirely different meanings. For example, the sentence 'Cold today, isn't it' could in one context mean that an observation about the weather is made. In another context, where a coughing student is sitting with his Professor in a draughty room with all the windows open, he is actually asking permission to close the windows. The same syntactical structure is applied but we somehow feel that these two sentences imply something different.

This indicates that meaning comprises more than the sum total of the meaning of words and more than syntactical structures. The same syntagmatic arrangement of lexical items can provide us with different meanings. However, I can already hear my imaginary interlocutor say: 'But this is nothing new! Johannes Louw (1976:75-99, 117-125) has already indicated that semantics comprises more than the meaning of words and more
than the meaning of sentences'. 'True', I would reply, and we should be more grateful for his guidance, but when analysing his words more carefully, one realises that they are now used in a new context and therefore also imply a new meaning. Louw (1976:76) writes: 'Hieruit blyk dan nou dat betekenis 'n saak is wat sowel in die woorde, hulle kombinaties en hulle grammatiese struktuur lê – en dat dit ook in die situasie gebed is.' These last words were added at that stage as an afterthought which has now become the criterion for the constitution of meaning. However, when Louw explains what he means by meaning's transcendence of word and sentence boundaries, it is clear that his concern lies with the propositional content of sentences and their relationships with one another. This is not to be discarded, but it needs elaboration and this elaboration lies in the notion of situation.

It is then also here where the basic distinction lies between a semantic approach and a pragmatic approach. Where the former searches for meaning in the relationships between linguistic elements, meaning is constituted by the context or the situation for the latter. Language is studied within the speech situation or within the situation of utterance. As such the 'use' of language or the performative aspect of language has become the object of study and not only the 'competence' or system component. Meaning does not reside, therefore, only in the relationships of linguistic elements to one another, but also and foremostly in the interaction of speech situation and linguistic elements. The question is no longer only 'what does this sentence mean or say', but rather 'why is this utterance appropriate to the context and not any other', or 'what does this utterance do within this context'.

The relationship between context or situation and utterance is determined, however, by various factors and it is the interaction of all these factors which constitute meaning. An utterance is always uttered by a speaker and always addressed to someone, even if that be the 'self'. The moment people are introduced as constituents of meaning, social values and psychological attitudes contribute to the creation of meaning. A typical situation of utterance could be described as egocentric, because the speaker usually orientates the utterance. This implies that the utterance is 'anchored' to the speaker. As such he forms what can be called the 'deictic centre'. However, although he orientates the utterance, he may transfer his role to the addressee in order to avoid transgression of status relations (Lyons 1971:275). In the same vein lies the phenomenon of perception; what is the speaker's perception of his addressee? What is his perception of himself? Furthermore, spatial and temporal relations have to be taken into account. The utterance: 'Come and join me' has two completely different meanings when uttered by a convict when addressing his warden or by a lady seductively inviting a male companion for a quiet, perhaps better, romantic hour in a gondola somewhere in Venice.

From the perspective of science of communication, Webb (1986:37) illustrates by means of the following figure the various factors which contributes to the process of communication:
The symbols represent the following components in a situation of communication:

A: The physical situation or context, that is the time, place or event as well as the subject, that is the where, when and what. The 'subject' could be referred to as the subject of discourse, that is what the discourse is about.

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.

Although one need not necessarily agree with all the distinctions made and although the relationships between some of the categories mentioned are not clearly delineated, a few aspects must be recognised. Firstly, the model which has been proposed here in terms of communication, applies equally well to a speech situation. This implies, secondly, that meaning is constituted by various components. Meaning does not reside only in the linear, sequential relationships of linguistic entities to one another, but is to a large extent socially and psychologically determined. Thirdly, the various components active in the production of a meaningful utterance, should not be seen in a static relationship to one another. For example: a specific perception of the status relationship between speaker and hearer will lead to a specific behaviour resulting in an appropriate linguistic choice to produce an utterance suitable to that social relationship. However, depending on the objective to be achieved by the speech situation, the linguistic choice might violate the social relations. Depending on the need for immediate action, rigid social relations might be violated by linguistic choice. Fourthly, these components are simultaneously at work in their production of the meaning of an utterance. They belong to the multi-dimensional nature of an utterance. Fifthly, because these components function between, around and behind the lines of a text, they are often not 'visible' and should be inferred.

These few general observations with regard to meaning are very important for our understanding of letters. If meaning is constituted by the context, a letter should be studied in terms of its context and not primarily in terms of its structure. It is in this respect that the
observations of Violi (1985) become important. She has indicated that the genre - typical element of a letter is its own communicativeness. Although the propositional content of a letter can be zero, it can still communicate. A letter is never without its communicative function (Violi 1985:160). Thus, in the letter there is a balance between information and interaction, between propositional content and communicativeness. On the one end of the scale it will be possible to have letters which have a very low propositional content, but are still very communicative, as for example a ‘thank you letter’. On the other end there are also letters in which the communicativeness has been reduced to the frame of the letter, while at the same time giving full expression to the autoreferential capacity of the letter. Related to the communicativeness of the letter, is the tension in the letter between distance and presence, the persons in the communicative situation and the space and time relations. These can all be called ‘traces of the situation of utterance’ (Violi 1985:150) and if the utterances of the letter are to have meaning, they should be taken seriously.

It is at this point that exegetes of New Testament letters, by analysing the letters of the New Testament merely as sources of information, transgress. The letters of the New Testament are regarded as sources which could provide us with information either concerning the historical reality from which they have 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.

That the letters of the New Testament indeed wish to convey information cannot be denied. Their propositional content is definitely not on the level of a ‘thank you’ or ‘congratulatory’ letter. The fact is, however, that we have to look at the propositional content of the letter, its information in terms of its communicative objective.

For this reason I suggest we search for a model or aspects of models which enable us to analyse both the communicative as well as the argumentative. To my mind aspects within the sphere of general pragmatics, specifically conversational analysis, can help us with the analysis of the communicativeness of the Pauline letters. Deixis and the reception critical categories of encoded author and implied readers will have to be integrated. To study the argumentation of the letters we will turn to rhetoric.

It is against this background of interaction and not merely information that we can now turn to Speech Act Theory and Conversational Analysis.

3 SPEECH ACT THEORY AND CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS

I will mainly focus on Conversational Analysis, but because Conversational Analysis is built on Speech Act Theory, attention must first of all be paid to this aspect.

What is a speech act? A speech act is an utterance produced within a context by a speaker and addressed to a hearer for an intended effect (Traugott & Pratt 1980:229). A speech act consists simultaneously of a locutionary act and an illocutionary act and the performance of an illocutionary act could lead to a perlocutionary act. A locutionary act is the act of producing a recognisable grammatical utterance, whereas an
Illocutionary act refers to an attempt to achieve a communicative objective. Perlocutionary act refers to the actual effect achieved. Where the study of locutionary acts belongs to the sphere of 'grammar', illocutionary and perlocutionary acts belong to pragmatics. Perlocutionary acts are relevant for New Testament studies only in an intratextual conversational situation where the effect of an illocutionary act is given. For example: in Luke 5:4 Jesus commands Simon to let their nets down and he responds by submitting. It is the study of illocutionary acts, however, which has become important for a pragmatic analysis of the New Testament.

According to Searle (1969, 1971) illocutionary acts are performed according to specific rules. He writes:

speaking a language is performing acts according to rules....The semantic structure of a language may be regarded as a conventional realization of a series of sets of underlying constitutive rules, and that speech acts are acts characteristically performed by uttering expressions in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules.

(Searle 1969:37)

To understand his implication as well as the subsequent criticism which he received, brief attention must be given to the difference between 'regulative' and 'constitutive' rules, as well as to the relationship between these constitutive rules and illocutionary acts as such.

With 'regulative' rules he refers to rules which regulate existing forms of behaviour. They cannot create or modify behaviour. Activities exist, therefore, independent of these rules. They usually take the form of imperatives, for example, 'Do X' or 'If Y do X'. 'Constitutive' rules on the other hand constitute activities; the existence of certain activities is dependent on these rules. Searle uses the game of chess as an example where the 'checkmate' rule functions as a constitutive rule. It belongs to the essence of chess. These rules usually take the form: 'X counts as Y'. The point to emphasise is the fact that constitutive rules are part and parcel of an activity to such an extent that they essentially determine that activity.

These constitutive rules are the rules underlying illocutionary acts. By means of convention these constitutive rules are realised in a specific language, which means that different languages would have 'different conventional realisations of the same underlying rules' (Searle 1969:39). Searle (1971:52) has also indicated what he regarded as a set of underlying rules and these pertain to the propositional content rule, the sincerity, preparatory and essential rule. The various categories refer to the circumstances in which the illocutionary force of the illocutionary act would be a success. Put differently, within a specific context various conditions exist which make that specific illocutionary act appropriate to that specific context. These conditions, which are the same as Searle's rules, are sometimes appropriately called 'appropriate conditions'.

An illocutionary act like 'May we come in?' will entail the following rules or conditions:
Propositional content rule: Question (referring term: we; predication: come in).

Preparatory rule:
1 S is spatially removed from H; not in enclosure.
2 S assigns H with authority to answer.
3 S is more than one.

Sincerity rule:
1 S wants to enter enclosure.
2 S believes H is inside.
3 S believes that H has the authority to grant permission.

Essential rule: 'Counts' as a request in which S seeks permission from H to be included.

The illocutionary force of an utterance is usually located in the essential rule, because it specifies the specific communicative act. Given a context in which the hearer finds himself in an enclosure and a speaker and his/her companion(s) is/are excluded, but wish to enter, although not having the authority to enter, an utterance like 'May we come in' would be appropriate.

A presupposition of this theory is that there is a fairly direct relationship between appropriate conditions and utterance. Suppose however, a situation occurs where a group of people are waiting on the fourth level of a skyscraper for a lift to arrive. When the door slides open it is packed to its full capacity. One of the people waiting, jokingly asks: 'May we come in?' If we again look at the appropriate conditions for this utterance we will find that some of the rules for this utterance do not apply. In this case the speaker does not seriously assign authority to the hearers (preparatory rule), neither does he and others really wish to enter (sincerity rule). The utterance cannot be described as a permission-seeking utterance, because neither the preparatory nor the sincerity rules for a permission-seeking utterance apply. Therefore, the permission-seeking utterance 'May we come in?' has been used to elicit a different action.

To account for utterances which have an additional meaning Searle created the category of indirect speech acts. An indirect speech act concerns an utterance by means of which a speaker simultaneously performs two speech acts – the one indirectly by means of the other. The primary act in this case will be the act appropriate to the context. The illocutionary point or force should consequently also be sought in terms of this primary illocutionary act. It can as such be described as the 'ulterior primary illocutionary point' (Searle 1979:32-37). It is then also within the sphere of indirect speech acts that metaphoric and/or ironical utterances should be analysed (Searle 1979:112-116).

To what extent can Speech Act Theory be helpful in an analysis of New Testament letters? Firstly, Speech Act Theory emphasises 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 utterances 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.

However, Speech Act Theory as advocated by Searle and his school, also poses a few problems. Firstly, Searle's theoretical observations, despite the importance of context, do not go beyond the sentence level. It is, however, an entirely different ball game when speech acts occur in a sequence, because a pragmatic relationship exists not only between speaker and hearer, but also between the various speech acts of a discourse. Large sections of the letters of the New Testament consist of argumentative text and argumentation always consists of more than one speech act.

The model of Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) attempts to solve the problem of sequential speech acts in argumentation by introducing the notions of an illocutionary act complex and expressed opinion. Thus, the illocutionary act complex is a sequence of speech acts and the expressed opinion is that opinion to which the complex is subservient (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1982:5; 1984:39-45), that is the 'Sache' which is the concern of the argument. However, although this model also highlights the need to move beyond the sentence level, its prescriptive and normative objective (cf also Van Berkel 1985:734), its lack of interpersonal emphasis and consequently the absence of any integration of sociological or psychological aspects, make it unsuitable for an analysis of New Testament letters.

A more successful beginning for the study of speech acts in sequence has been made by A Ferrara (1985). According to him, pragmatics is the field of study which should look at the contribution of speech acts in their 'sequential environment' (1985:139). How speech acts establish coherence is the objective of pragmatics. He consequently formulates three principles by means of which the hierarchical organisation of speech acts within a text can be detected. He illustrates that speech acts do not all function on the same level, but can function to explain one another, comment on a previous speech act or function to justify a specific speech act (1985:146-148). A text of which the coherence lies in the contribution of its various speech acts, should therefore not be seen in a one-dimensional sense as if all propositions are suppose to occupy an equally important position. It stands to reason that Ferrara's suggestions must be kept in mind in the analysis of New Testament letters. On the other hand, although the need to go beyond the sentence level is recognised by Ferrara, his work is still in its initial stages. Furthermore, although he repeatedly emphasises Pragmatics as the field of study in which an oscillation between linguistic properties and social properties exist, very little of the social aspects receive attention.

There is a second problem with Searle's proposals and that concerns, what Leech (1983:23) calls, a rather 'regimented view of human communication.' Although Leech is specifically referring in this instance to Searle's notion of 'rules' it entails other aspects such as 'convention' and 'inference' as well. According to Searle there are various rules
which underlie each speech act. If these rules apply within a specific speech situation, a certain speech act is bound to follow. Language as a form of social behaviour is rule-governed. Although it cannot be denied that language is indeed rule-governed, these rules do not 'govern' in a totalitarian manner! I will attempt to illustrate this problem with an example from the letter to the Romans, specifically Romans 1:8.

The rules for an utterance of thanksgiving, according to the proposals of Searle, would probably be the following:

**Propositional-content rule:** Reference to speaker; predication concerns event to the benefit of someone.

**Preparatory rule:** A transaction between H and S in which something must have happened or will happen for which H can be thanked. H must have potential to cause situation of interest to X (who could be S, formalised: X(S)). S's must have positive psychological attitude towards H.

**Sincerity rule:** S believes event to be to the benefit of X(S). S believes H to be cause of event.

**Essential rule:** 'Counts' as acknowledgement that event caused or to be caused by H is/was to the benefit of X(S).

The abovementioned rules could apply to a relatively uncomplicated utterance such as: 'I thank you for X'. However the moment a more complex sentence is introduced these rules are considerably relativised. In the case of Romans 1:8 there is little doubt that a speech act is being performed as can be seen by the performative ἐρχάμενος. However, in this sentence the 'Hearer' is not the hearer and the speaker is not expressing his thanks for something which is or was to his benefit. Nearly every 'rule' proposed by Searle is either violated or modified. As far as the preparatory rule is concerned, S is not thanking H or granting H potentiality for causing a situation which is to the benefit of X(S). Thanks is here expressed to a third party. In this case the hearer is not the 'cause of the event', which means that a sincerity rule has been violated. The notion of 'acknowledgement' which I have proposed as an essential rule is still applicable, the difference being that acknowledgement here, is made on behalf of the hearers by the speaker. This brings us to the heart of the problem. Despite the fact that we have here a speech act which could be classified as an 'expressive' in which the speaker expresses his acknowledgement, the intention is not acknowledgement towards the hearers, but rather identification with the hearers. The intention is not thanksgiving, but rather to express the notion that what is of interest to the hearers is also of interest to him, the speaker. Consequently, common ground exists between them. In an attempt to identify with his audience, Romans 1:8 should rather be regarded as politeness strategy than as a notion of thanksgiving.
However, by introducing politeness strategies into our analysis we have introduced the principles of conversational analysis. This is then also exactly what Leech (1983) proposes, namely that Speech Act Theory should be complemented by Conversational Analysis. In the production of utterances, rules do play a part, but they have to be complemented by and integrated within the conversational principles proposed by people like Grice (e.g. 1975). Thus, in the analysis of a speech situation, principles determining utterances should be the focus, and not rules underlying utterances. Complementing Speech Act Theory with Conversational Analysis has far-reaching consequences concerning aspects such as convention, meaning, indirect speech acts, etcetera (cf. Leech 1983:19-46, 174-229).

Grice (1975:45) formulates as a general principle for conversational behaviour the following principle:

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.

From this principle which he calls the cooperative principle (CP), four further principles (categories) are derived. The first concerns the quantity of information used by participants in the conversation. The second concerns the quality of the information, which comprises the requirement that the information given must be worthy of credence. With this maxim, values are introduced into the arena in which meaning must be determined. The third principle concerns relation and its specific concern is the relevancy of the information given. A fourth principle at work in conversational interaction refers to the manner in which information is conveyed. These principles usually apply to any conversation and when the violation of some or all of these principles occur, nonconventional conversational implicatures arise.

Romans 1:8 can again serve as an example. The reference to the faith of the Romans which is proclaimed throughout the whole world is obvious a case where the S does not have adequate evidence. Flouting of this maxim means an exploitation of the principle of quality (cf. also Grice 1975:49). However, there is no reason to suppose that Paul is deliberately being false, that is, that he does not adhere to the CP. As such the speech situation gives rise to a conversational implicature. To put it differently: Paul relies on the reader's competence to grasp his intention. What exactly is implicated has to be inferred from the context. The readers could argue: 1. There is no reason to believe that Paul does not want to adhere to the CP. 2. While he obviously could not have the evidence to assert that their faith is proclaimed over the whole world, he does not wish to mislead. 3. Since he wants to maintain the principle of quality, his assertion must be an exaggeration. 4. Exaggerating concerning their faith indicates that their faith is admired by Paul as well. 5. Paul must deem them (the readers) competent to make this inference. As such, Paul implicates that there is common ground between them.

Operating alongside the CP is also the politeness principle (PP), which can likewise be subdivided into various types of politeness strategies (cf. Brown & Levinson 1978:99-233; Leech 1983:79-151). The positive politeness principles comprise a balance between realising a certain intention with
an utterance and imposing or threatening the 'face' of the addressee. This balance is highly influenced by the social relations existing between speaker and hearer and the intensity to realise the intention. Depending on social relations and urgency to realise intention, strategies vary from a 'bald-on' or direct approach where the principles of Grice would apply to an indirect or neutral approach where the hearer is left the option to infer whatever suits him. None of these factors which have an influence on this balance should however be seen as rigid rules as the following examples prove:

The status relations between the Head of Department and staff-members in an academic department could, from a certain perspective, be described as that of 'superior' to 'subordinate'. The conversational transactions here could sometimes be straightforward or to put it differently, businesslike. Suppose, however, that the Head of Department somehow does not find the time to mark his assignments, he could ask a staff-member: 'Colleague, you don't suppose you would be able to help me out with a few assignments?' ('Colleague' could even be replaced by 'my friend'). In this case the urgency of the situation effects sacrificing the status relations and causes a politeness despite the superior-subordinate relationship. However, if the situation was to be reversed and a staff-member somehow does not finish the marking of his assignments in time and the Head of the Department passes him in the corridor, the utterance could probably be something like: 'Those assignments, John'. A final example: if a situation arises where a staff-member wishes to use the departmental computer located in the office of the Head of Department, the utterances could be the following: 'Sir, will you be needing the computer today?' or 'Sir, what is your programme for today?' or 'Sir, I need to finish the minutes of our last meeting - you do not perhaps know where I would be able to find a computer?' or 'Sir, I have to complete a chapter of my book today - I wish the University could provide us all with computers in our offices?'

A final principle which deserves our attention is the principle of irony. The Irony Principle (IP) operates just as the PP in conjunction with the CP. This can be illustrated by Galatians 1:6. If we apply Grice's principles to this utterance, a conversational implicature arises because the principle of sincerity has been exploited. That Paul does not express his amazement and that he knows that he does not marvel at the lifestyle of the Galatians, can clearly be inferred from \( \text{μετατιθέναι} \). Therefore if the CP is maintained — and there is no reason why it should not be maintained — a clash between \( \text{θαυμάζειν} \) and \( \text{μετατιθέναι} \) will occur. This leads to the implicature that the illocutionary force of \( \text{θαυμάζειν} \) has to be inferred from \( \text{μετατιθέναι} \). Because of \( \text{μετατιθέναι} \) the readers can infer that \( \text{θαυμάζειν} \) has been ironically intended.

In conclusion: If letters intend to 'do', rather than to 'say', and if this doing concerns communication and if this communication occurs within a speech situation, conversational analysis seems to provide tools which could be handy in the analysis of letters. In the interaction between author and readers the principles of conversational analysis provide us with at least a guideline as to the social relations and the psychological attitudes. Furthermore, deictics as well as the conversational implicatures can help us in the construction of the 'implied readers'. Finally, it must be borne in mind that once the speech situation determines
meaning, inference plays a major role. Leech (1983:30) is quite right when he asserts that 'We cannot be ultimately certain of what a speaker means by an utterance.'

4 ARGUMENTATION AND INTERACTION
Argumentation can be seen as a rational, verbal form of social interaction, which usually has a definite beginning and cause and which has the purpose to persuade. By defining argumentation as a rational, verbal form of social interaction we have located argumentation within the speech situation. What is valid for the speech situation is valid therefore, also for the situation of argumentation. The objective of argumentation, namely to intensify an adherence to premisses or to persuade, makes it a specific form of speech situation. Its distinctive feature lies in its being a response to a situation in which one or the other form of need exists. Although the need to argue may have arisen because of doubt, the need may also exist to increase belief in that which is certain. Thus, argumentation located within the speech situation is the discursive response with the objective to change the situation of need by responding to that need.

With this view on argumentation we have entered the area of the rhetorical situation. Because argumentation is always there to address a situation in which a specific form of need exists, it always functions within the rhetorical situation. That does not mean that the rhetorical situation should be identified with argumentation because the rhetorical situation could also sometimes make use of other forms of communication.

4.1 The rhetorical situation
Bitzer (1968:6) defines the rhetorical situation as follows:

Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.

Although Bitzer has defined rhetorical situation here in terms of a real life situation that is, the persons he refers us to, the objects and events are all part and parcel of everyday life. However, the rhetorical situation is epistemologically only possible through perception. Whether I am a participant in the rhetorical situation or whether an outsider analysing the rhetorical situation, I have to rely on perspectivistic interpretation — I have to infer in order to construct what I consider the exigence of that situation is, the role-players, their attitude towards each other, and, most important, what seems to be an appropriate (aptum) response.

4.2 The status of the rhetorical situation
The 'need' or the 'exigence' of a situation concretises in the quaestio\textsuperscript{16} or the question of the situation. This question dominates the rhetorical situation and therefore determines the status of the rhetorical situation (Braet 1987:82). The question of the status of the rhetorical situation
belongs to the intellectio phase of the rhetorical process which functions as the presuppositional phase for the inventio (Lausberg 1960:70; contra Braet 1987:79). Although this question plays the determinative role in the rhetorical situation, this may change during the course of the rhetorical process, depending on whether a decision or a fictive decision has been reached. If the quaestio changes, the status of the rhetorical situation changes. Although the doctrine of status can correctly be seen as 'the cornerstone of the classical rhetorical theory of argumentation', very little attention has been paid by New Testament scholars to this aspect 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 rhetorical genre has played a dominant role in New Testament research in recent times. We must therefore take a closer look at the doctrine of status.

Four types of status situations can be identified, depending on the type of question the controller of the situation puts to himself. Although the identification and explanation of these status situations occur within a judicial situation or court room situation, these questions, with slight alterations, could apply to any rhetorical situation. The first type concerns a factual question in which the krites has to decide whether the deed was in fact committed or, if the issue concerns the future, whether the deed has still to be committed. The questions which have to be decided is, therefore, an fecerit or, if more general, an sit. If a person is involved in this situation, the emphasis is on the subject of the deed. This type of status is called the status coniecturae. The other types of status situations are all relative to the status coniecturae. Suppose a person has committed a deed, but uncertainty exists as to the precise definition or naming of that deed, a status definitionis or finctionis arises. The emphasis here is on the deed and the appropriateness of the linguistic qualification of that deed. The questions which have to be decided therefore are quid fecerit or quid sit. A third type of status situation arises when it has been established that the subject has committed the deed and the nomenclature has been established, but doubt exists whether that deed was not justified, or the need exists to indicate that a certain line of action will be the correct to follow. In this situation the quality of the deed is the focus and is consequently called status qualitatis. The questions which have to be decided in this case are then an iure (recte) fecerit or quale sit. A final status situation which has to be considered is the status translationis. This happens when the whole process is questioned and could therefore pertain to various aspects of the situation (Lausberg 1960:64-85; Corbett 1965:35).

To establish the status of the rhetorical situation of the New Testament, letters we read is of the utmost importance, because this is the problem or the 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 coherency between the various elements in a letter can be established.

Because we, as New Testament rhetorical critics, are dealing with discourse responding to the need of the situation, it is often very difficult to determine the status of a rhetorical situation. To put it
differently: the *status* of a rhetorical situation is not something which is explicitly given within the text. For that reason it often has to be inferred. We have to read between the lines to find the status of the rhetorical situation as seen by the author of the letter. It is again in this respect that conversational analysis proves fruitful. Because, if we accept that the utterances that were made were appropriate to at least the author's perspective on the rhetorical situation, the principles and conditions underlying these utterances could guide us in the direction of the author's view of the rhetorical situation. Furthermore, both structural rhetoric (cf Brandt 1970:51) as well as epistolography has indicated that the beginning and the end of discourse, or a letter, has the function of defining or stating or at least suggesting what the problem is. The framework of the letter is therefore very important for establishing the *status* of the rhetorical situation. Finally, especially spatial and temporal indexical elements can guide us in the search for the *status* of a rhetorical situation. Deictics 'anchor' the text of the letter to the situation of utterance. If the past, for example, plays an important role especially in the framework of a letter, it could be an indication of a defense against allegations concerning the past (*status concincturae*). Likewise, if the future plays an important role it could be an indication of a justification of a certain line of action which are to be followed (*status qualitatis*).

### 4.3 Roles of persons within the rhetorical situation

Various persons can participate in the rhetorical situation but a basic distinction can be made between persons who have an interest in the situation and those who do not only have an interest in the situation but who control the situation. The latter is responsible for the rhetorical process. The distinction between those who have an interest in the rhetorical situation and those who control the situation can perhaps be best explained by taking our point of departure in the judicial process.

In a legal dispute a party A1 opposes a party B1. Party A1 is represented by A2 and party B1 by B2. The judge who has to make the decision, functions as C. The various persons of a rhetorical situation may occupy more than one role, for example party A1 and its representative A2 may be exactly the same person and party B1 could be identified by C. It would be possible for example to equate Philemon as 'opponent' in Paul's letter addressed to him, with Philemon as 'adjudicator' or 'judge'. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul again functions as 'proponent', representing the apostolic tradition, the deniers of the resurrection as the 'opponent' and the readers of 1 Corinthians as the 'adjudicator'.

In the interaction of these roles, the 'judge' functions as the most important, because it is he who has to be persuaded. It is in this respect that the work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) has become important. They have indicated that the audience decisively constitutes the argumentation of a discourse. Argumentation never exists on its own but always interactionally. Because argumentation functions interactionally, a mutual frame of reference for speaker/writer and audience/readers is a presupposition for effective argumentation. An intellectual meeting of minds cannot be accomplished without this mutual frame of reference. To achieve this 'intellectual meeting of minds' the
speaker/author should not only have a very good idea of his audience/readers, but he should also adapt himself to his audience. Identification with the audience becomes of paramount importance for achieving consensus between speaker/author and audience/readers.

Because of widespread confusion, criticism and praise which Perelman's notion of audience, especially universal audience, has created, we will have to digress to understand what he means by audience and to what extent his view of audience can be fruitful in an analysis of letters.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:19) define audience as 'the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation.' According to Perelman various types of audiences exist. The following are distinguished, namely a particular and an universal audience, a composite audience or single person, the deliberating self and an elite audience. However, a basic distinction exists between universal and particular audiences and all other types could be manifestations of these two. Of these two the universal audience is the centre of Perelman's treatment of audience.

These two audiences (universal and particular) are respectively associated with the following concepts: universal with conviction as the objective; facts and truths as objects of consensus (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:65-68; 1982:21-32), rationality and reflection, intellectual assent. Particular with persuasion as the objective; values divided into concrete, abstract and loci, and hierarchically arranged originating from that which is preferable for a specific group function as objects of consensus (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:74,76,80,81,85-99, 1982:26-32), the experiential, actional and manipulative.

The associative notions with which these 'audiences' are used, should already indicate that Perelman does not use 'audience' in the ordinary manner. With universal audience he does not refer to the entire human race or a large body of people, nor does he refer to all the rational people in the world or for that matter any physical group of people (cf also Anderson 1972:50). Universal audience is constrained by three factors, namely the speaker, the type of argumentation and the objective. Firstly the relationship to the speaker. The universal audience is a hypothetical construction of the speaker of a group of rational people having consensus on what pertains to the real, to that which constitutes reality for them (Perelman 1984:191). Although the universal audience is brought into relationship with the factual, with the real, what is fact is fact for the audience from the perspective of the speaker. According to the speaker, therefore, certain facts are regarded by the audience as objective. Because the universal audience is a hypothetical construction of the speaker and because the audience has not objective status as such, each time and each culture could have its own view of what the universal audience constitutes (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:33). Our second and third constraints have to be treated together. These concern the relationships to argumentation and the epistemological objective. Such a close relationship exists between argumentation and audience that it would not be too far from the truth to state that audience for Perelman is a type of argumentation. It is a means, a tool with which to create rationally. For that reason Scult (1976:177) describes Perelman's universal audience as follows:
It is my contention that his universal audience is best viewed as a metaphor which functions as an invention tool. Its value lies not in what it says about the problems of invention, but rather in how it be used to deal with them. It is not a logical or strictly philosophical construct and is therefore not rigorously defined by Perelman.

It is clear that Perelman's view on the universal audience is that it is something to create rationally with. In the conflict between subjectivity and objectivity between argumentation and demonstration, Perelman creates the notion of universal audience to enable him to move from subjectivity to that which is considered by the audience as objective (cf also Karon 1976:103).

The notion of particular audience is nowhere particularly discussed although it often appears in asides. A particular audience is an audience which, according to the speaker, shares the same values, and these values are based on the experiences of the group and are orientated to the group. Although group-orientated it should again not be seen in quantitative terms because it could number from a single person to a very large group (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:66). Just as the universal audience, the notion of particular audience is constrained by the perception of the speaker, the argumentation and the effect. The argumentation is persuasive, even manipulative in character and it also has the intention to persuade or even to move to action (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:47; 1982:13; Perelman 1984:193).

Despite the clamour which has resounded (also in New Testament circles) concerning Perelman's distinction between universal and particular audiences, this distinction seems to me of little relevance for the analysis of New Testament letters. One has to understand this distinction in terms of Perelman's epistemology in which he searches for a way in which value judgements can play a role in argumentation. With this distinction he tries to solve an epistemological problem. Whether it can be used as an analytical tool is to my mind disputable. Furthermore, I think even within epistemology the total onslaught of relativism prevents one from searching for the safe haven of a corpus of more objective knowledge established by a consensus criterion. Finally it has become clear that the notion of universal audience is everything but clearly delineated.

However, Perelman's rediscovery and refinement of the notion of audience demands that the following be taken into account in an analysis of letters. Firstly, the intimate relationship between argumentation and the audience. The fact that audience forms a constituent factor in the formation of argumentation 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 been located within the rhetorical situation. This means that 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 emphasised that the audience/readers is a construct 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. Whether this construct corresponds to the real flesh and blood audience/readers, is a further question which has to be asked. However, rhetorical criticism does not provide us with the tools to answer that question. 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 reader summoned by the sumtotal of all the textual indicators (Van Luxemburg 1981:88). All textual indicators directed to the reader constraining the reading process could be seen as the implied reader (Segers 1980:22). Just as the audience of Perelman it does not really exist, but should be seen as a personified, interpretive construct. However, because of the interrelationship between argumentation and audience, the identification of the 'implied readers' and their function within the rhetorical situation is of paramount importance. Various criteria can be applied to establish the 'implied readers' namely conversational implicatures, conversational principles and strategies, deictics, attempts to resolve the tension of distance versus presence, that which is assumed to be shared knowledge and therefore selfevident or factual and reader description. Fifthly, the audience as foremost constituent of argumentation has been sociologically and psychologically embedded. Argumentation has therefore been humanised. This again correlates with the notion of the implied reader which is always part and parcel of the socio-cultural code of the text.

4.4 The techniques of argumentation

Besides the status of the rhetorical situation and the persons or roles within the rhetorical situation, the identification of topoi, also belongs to the inventio phase of the rhetorical process. The term topos could be misleading because it is reminiscent of a topic, a general idea or theme, as for example 'faith' or 'law'. Wuellner (1978:466-470), Brunt (1985:495-500) and Aune (1987:173) indicated that a distinction should be made between a 'form-critical' or 'thematic' notion of topos and topos in its association with argumentation. That a misunderstanding could arise is likely, because topos function on different levels, as we will soon see. However, a topos is rather a tactical aid or a move (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1987:65), used by the persons in the rhetorical situation. From the designation topos we can infer that these were the places or the locations where a line of argument was suggested. Corbett (1965:96) formulates as follows:

Perhaps the student will gain a clearer notion of the function of the topics if he will think of the topics as 'suggesters,' as 'prompters,' as 'initiators,' 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 of development, they help to overcome inertia.

Lausberg (1960:201) is then also correct when he describes topoi as 'Suchformeln', but his formulation is problematic when he identifies the totality of topoi as 'ein Gedanken-Reservoir' from which arguments could
be extracted. Topoi are then abstract and general categories which function during the creation of arguments. Determined by the rhetorical situation, topoi are selected and with these topical categories argumentation takes place; arguments are 'slotted' into various appropriate topoi. The topoi of classical rhetoric can be likened to the argumentative schemata presented by Perelman. These argumentative schemata occupy the larger portion of their work and can be fruitfully used in the analysis of New Testament letters. Not only are they the response to the rhetorical situation, but because they exist in such a close relationship with the values of a particular society they help us with the construction of the symbolic universe in which the letter functioned.

If topoi are seen as tactical aids or moves used in the rhetorical situation, they must be orientated to the social values underlying the meeting between the 'persons', especially those of the audience. Because of their orientation towards the audience, various levels of specificity can be discerned, although in principle, general, fundamental and abstract, each culture, generation, scientific discipline, profession or group will have its own specific topoi which are acceptable to the members of that group. Because topoi are generated by the rhetorical situation, one should be careful when making the distinction between general and specific topoi - a distinction coming from classical rhetoric. To a certain extent topoi are simultaneously general and specific. They are general because they function as the axiomata of a social group - from them inferences are made; they are specific because they can only be seen as tactical moves if orientated to a specific audience.

Bearing the abovementioned in mind, topoi could be seen as having three functions. Firstly, they function in order to create arguments. Depending on the situation, the topos 'what is scarce is greater than what is abundant' - which is a subtopic of the topos of comparison by degree (Corbett 1965:109) - can be the underlying or major premiss for a multitude of arguments. Secondly, but related to the first function, is the selective function of topoi. A topos has a selective function, because it specifies which premisses can be used. This implies that a topos suggests which premisses are appropriate to the rhetorical situation. Consequently there is a very close relationship between topoi used in the rhetorical process and the status of the rhetorical situation. Thirdly, topoi also have a function to guarantee. They guarantee the 'transition from the other premisses to the conclusion' (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1987:65). This function is made possible by the fundamental and general character of topoi.

In our study of the letters of the New Testament, the identification and analysis of topoi firstly helps us to locate the positions from which the argumentation takes place. Searching for topoi means moving beyond the separate arguments which we encounter on the 'surface level' of the text and bringing us in contact with the fundamental categories underlying the arguments. Often these are given explicitly but often they are not and have to be explicitised. Secondly, because we are brought into contact with the 'tactical moves' of the author and because these moves should be appropriate to the components of the rhetorical situation we have been brought closer to the identification of the 'need' of the situation. The
focus is then on the relationship between topos and status (a relationship often neglected by analyses of New Testament letters). This relationship is, with the results of a conversational analysis, extremely important for answering the question why an author argues in the way he does. Thirdly, by means of the topos of argumentation we are given a glimpse into the social world of the letters we study, because topos represent that which is regarded as self-evident and not in need of argumentation. These are the underlying values of the participants in the rhetorical situation. The analysis of the topos of the New Testament letters could and should be integrated into a more comprehensive analysis of topos underlying ancient religious texts. We have seen that different levels of specificity exist. Religious groups are very specific groups and undoubtedly have their own topos. Siegert (1985:206) for example illustrates (although not in a comprehensive or systematic manner) that in the tension between causal and final thinking, the latter dominates in New Testament texts. Early Christianity was less concerned with a chain of causality than with 'Wohin-Erklärungen' (Siegert 1985:207). As very little research on the tactical moves of New Testament letters has been done, this field really begs for our attention.

For the identification and analysis of the topos of New Testament letters, the study of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca could become very useful indeed. Its value lies in its comprehensiveness and in the fact that it provides us with a point of departure. It is quite true that neither a precise distinction between the various argumentative schemata proposed by them, nor a philosophical basis which systematically undergirds these schemata, is given (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1987:254). It is then also equally true that this could indeed lead to two different designations assigned to the same topical phenomenon and that overlapping of schemata might occur. However, Perelman's work provides us with useful insight into the structure of topos or argumentative schemata which enhance our identification capabilities. Their primary objective was to provide an insight into the mechanisms of these argumentative schemata, that is the components and the processes involved within a topos. It is then also in this respect that the social psychological dynamics, the way in which values are associated and exchanged between components in the structure of an argumentative scheme, become important. In this analysis the schemata used in classical rhetoric have been integrated. Furthermore a good deal of how these argumentative schemata function within a rhetorical situation could be discerned. Although their purpose was rather to extrapolate and isolate argumentative schemata for purposes of analysis, sufficient prompters for possible effects on an audience are given throughout their discussion. Finally, for any analysis which concerns itself with religious material, their contribution on dissociation is very important. Religions usually propose an alternative view on reality because of incompatibilities experienced with the existent reality, but in order to do so use traditional material. To put it differently: traditional material is modified, prompted by incompatibilities. Where this happens, dissociation has occurred (see Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:411-413).
CONCLUSION

Concerning Greco-Roman letter-writing, Stowers writes:

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.

(1986:15)

Although Stowers's work mainly concerns the functions of certain types of letters, the abovementioned remark shows a desire to take seriously into account the functions of a letter. I have indicated that a letter's communicativeness makes an interactional approach a necessity. However, because an interactional approach views the situation or context as determinative for meaning, the speech situation becomes important. If the speech situation comes into focus, conversational principles should form our point of departure. Within a letter these principles have to be studied in their relationship to encoded author and implied readers.

The argumentation in the letters of the New Testament located within the speech situation, is narrowed down to the rhetorical situation. Rhetorical situation forms therefore part of speech situation. If argumentation is to be studied within the rhetorical situation, aspects pertaining to the neglected rhetorical phase of the inventio should seriously be considered. An interactional model concerning itself with the analysis of argumentation should take cognisance of the processes involved in the inventio-phase of the rhetorical process, namely the determination of the 'need' of the rhetorical situation, the corresponding status, the roles of persons within the rhetorical situation as well as the identification of topoi and their relationship to the status of the rhetorical situation, because these are all aspects pertaining to the persuasive force of a letter. Unfortunately they are often neglected in an analysis of New Testament letters.

NOTES

1 In my doctoral thesis entitled 'The letter to the Romans as a text of persuasion' which are to be completed in 1990 under the supervision of Prof A B du Toit, I have paid attention to this aspect. This aspect is important to study because it also entails the problem of the relationship between epistolography and rhetoric.

2 Influenced by the grammar of the day, the linguistic entity was usually the 'word'.

3 With 'text' Webb refers to a sermon. It would have been less confusing and more appropriate to his own argument if he used the word 'sermon' or oral discourse, especially since he does not give any indications of the processes at work when oral language is transformed into written language. This could have been done either under the headings of linguistic or rhetorical aids (cf Webb 1986:39).

4 Propositional content is here used in a pragmatic sense and does not refer to theological propositions.
Leech (1983:12,58) classifies phonology, syntax and semantics as 'grammar'.

'Illlocutionary force' refers to the communicative goal or objective of the utterance.

I have borrowed this sentence from Fillmore's Santa Cruz lectures on deixis, although he uses it in a different sense (see Fillmore 1971).

It is possible to speak of an additional meaning because the propositional content rule still applies.

Van Eemeren & Grootendorst have as objective a code of conduct in argumentation and not primarily an analysis.

Van Eemeren & Grootendorst's model is not concerned with everyday argumentation, but prescribes a form of argumentation in a highly idealistic situation.

See his 'Pragmatics' in Handbook of Discourse Analysis, vol 2.

His three principles are briefly the following:

1. 'For each hypothetically identified speech act to be confirmed as a single and distinct act, we must find at least one goal, besides its illocutionary point, that can conceivably motivate its performance.'

2. 'The hierarchic status of a speech act in a sequence corresponds to the hierarchic status of the extra-illocutionary goal that it is meant to achieve.'

3. 'The goals that, relative to a given context, require fewer other goals to be intended for the speaker's plan to be acceptable or simply understandable, rank highest.'

(1985:143-144)

Leech (1983:19-46, 174-198) proposes a number of 'postulates' in which he contrasts his position with that of Searle and mainstream Speech Act Theorists. To my mind Leech is right on target with his criticisms and the more flexible model he proposes is better suited to an analysis of New Testament letters.

According to Leech (1983:21-24) 'rules' do not belong to the sphere of pragmatics but rather to the study field of 'grammar', and he proves that the work of Searle, although indispensable, belongs to a greater extent to the sphere of semantic analyses than to the field of pragmatics. This insight, which has far-reaching consequences, makes his work especially fruitful for New Testament studies.

This maxim also correlates with the 'sincerity conditions' of Searle.

Lausberg (1960:63) distinguishes between a quaestio infinita and a quaestio finita. Although the former was identified to a greater extent with philosophy than with rhetoric, the distinction seems to be one of the abortive children of an illegitimate distinction made between philosophy and rhetoric (cf Grassi 1987:68-87). The quaestio finita was later also called causa. I will use the terms quaestio and causa indiscriminately.

Even the classical rhetorical critic par excellence, namely George Kennedy, in his otherwise very useful New Testament interpretation through rhetorical criticism, dismisses the doctrine of status with a reference to its complexity (cf also Snyman 1986:4).
Compare the excellent and detailed work of Schnider & Stenger (1987) for the suggestion of the problem in the beginning and endings of the individual New Testament letters.

For the terms 'proponent', 'opponent', and 'adjudator' see Braet (1987:90).

Anderson (1972:41,42) is of the opinion that three basic types of audiences exist, namely a particular, universal and philosophical audience. Although he is quite correct that all the audiences distinguished by Perelman could come to their own in the basic distinction between the universal and the particular audience, his 'creation' of a philosophical audience seems to be lip-service towards philosophy and an attempt to create an escape route for philosophy from its social anchorage (see also Perelman 1984:194).

Aune (1987:173) refers to the argumentative use of the term *topos*, but does not provide any further explanation regarding the difference in meaning.

Examples of scholars using *topos* in a form-critical sense are Betz (1975:372), Mullins (1980), and Schnider & Stenger (1987:55-59,78-83). In his epoch making article of 1976, Wuellner also seems to use *topos* in a form-critical rather than argumentative sense.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca treat *loci* or *topoi* separate from argumentative schemata (cf 1969:83-99). However, they concede that their argumentative schemata can also be seen as *loci* of argumentation, because they can be used only in an argumentative situation if agreement exists on their validity (cf Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969:190; cf also Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1987:227).

The close correspondence between *topoi* and *status* is helpful to the rhetorical critic, because identifying *topoi* can lead us closer to the exigence of the rhetorical situation.

He also focuses our attention to the *topos* of 'gemeinsamen Nutzens', which he finds not only in the Hellenistic world as such, but also frequently in the Septuagint (Siegert 1985:37).

The study of Corbett (1965) and especially the part dealing with the 'common topics' provides a more elementary, but really elucidating introduction to the phenomenon of *topoi* and should not be underestimated.

**WORKS CONSULTED**


---

J N Vorster, Department of New Testament, University of South Africa, P O Box 392, Pretoria, 0001, Republic of South Africa.