REPETITION, PROGRESSION, AND PERSUASION IN SCRIPTURE

N R LEROUX

ABSTRACT
Rhetorical criticism that emphasises both how an artistic work was designed to be an author's fitting response to the exigencies of a situation and to the needs and interests of its audience legitimately attends to the text of scripture as it has come down to us. Realising that the beauty and poignancy as well as the informative and argumentative qualities of biblical discourse are all participants in a persuasive enterprise designed to elicit faith, an astute critic seeks to discover how readers might apprehend the meaning and action of a text. In seeking to demonstrate the pervasive presence and origins of rhetorical figures such as chiasmus, critical studies have often missed the functional aspects of these devices. Kenneth Burke's notion of rhetorical form provides a fundamental conceptual model for analysing how chiasmus works on readers and listeners to help them perceive meaning and feeling.

1 INTRODUCTION
The daunting task of keeping abreast of developments and refinements in biblical criticism—among them, a lot of attention to chiasmus (see bibliography in Welch 1982)—threatens at times to overwhelm even specialists; the 'generalist' is surely tempted to decry many scholarly studies as beyond one's grasp, or worse—irretrievably cryptic and irrelevant. Intellectually rigorous exegesis ought produce, one hopes, not only accurate, precise interpretations, but insightful and sharable ones too. Perhaps with those objectives in mind, many Bible students have in recent decades been making a more pronounced turn toward methods proceeding from literary and rhetorical criticism. As to what assets these perspectives offer, how they depart from or compare to earlier developments in the history of emergent historical-critical methods, and how these perspectives avoid atomistic and/or obscurantist results, space here forbids a thorough response (see Ryken 1990; cf Kugel 1981a; Vanhoozer 1987). Suffice it to say, however, that many contemporary scholars have found attractive and convincing the notion that they may now legitimately attend to the text as it has come down to us, that they can (and must) get beyond the preoccupations of form and redaction criticism. Literary criticism has stressed the beauty and artistic crafting of an author's work which addresses the human condition; rhetorical criticism has emphasised how the work was designed to be a rhetor's fitting response to a situation, to the needs and interests of its audience. However, as Amos Wilder reminds us, the Bible's
art is not elitist art, but rather, 'folk art' (Wilder 1971:28). Moreover, the rhetoric of scripture is not the 'mere rhetoric' of political posturing or hucksterism, but rather 'shaping the text to elicit faith' (Patrick & Scult 1990:19).

My goal in this essay is to attempt a closer alignment of two critical perspectives by stressing how artistic design in scriptural passages can be discovered, named, described, and understood, including how those phenomena can be critiqued for appropriateness and plausible impact. Although mine is a thoroughgoing rhetorical perspective, one that foregrounds the important role of the audience in governing what the author chose to say and how to say it, I shall not neglect aesthetics. Indeed, the linguistic strategies and devices deemed 'beautiful' or 'impressive' also work their aesthetic means for a functional purpose—put broadly, to 'persuade' the hearer/reader. As Aristotle conceived it in his Rhetoric (1.2, 1355b26ff), the work of rhetoric, its 'definition', is its 'ability [dynamis], in each case, to see [theorêsai] the available means of persuasion [pisteis]' (1991:36f). Although Aristotle strongly favored enthymemematic proof, he did not ignore ethos or pathos, and the history of rhetorical theory and practice has demonstrated that rhetors have used a wide variety of techniques to achieve their desired ends. So we see, for example, in his De doctrina Christiana (4.7.11ff) the theologian Augustine (1958:124f), trained in (and skilled at) Ciceronian rhetoric, discussing biblical authors such as Paul concerning their use of what may be called rhetorical devices. The effort here, then, will attempt to merge the roles of form and content, by showing form's more dynamic character/role, one certainly more a dynamic 'vehicle' (Exum 1981:3) by which meaning and impact are carried, rather than a static 'container' into which meaning is placed and out of which it can be extracted.

In what follows I show how persuasion can be effected along a variety of paths of reader attention; that to be drawn into and participate with an author's discourse—willingly and even unwillingly—is to accept an author's implicit invitation to take up an idea and 'try it on for size'. More specifically, our ultimate goal will be to learn how certain rhetorical strategies and devices in scripture, particularly chiasmus and its cousins, work to allow hearers/readers to contemplate ideas—in the study and from the pulpit. Before that, however, we must reckon with what chiasmus is and how it is situated among other related rhetorical devices. First, though, I must discuss the fundamental principles which are instantiated in chiasmus, indeed, in many if not most rhetorical devices we call figures of diction (rather than figures of thought, or 'tropes'). My hope is that we will see beyond nomenclature—to understand that the 'grammatical' is also rhetorical, so we can then expand our appreciation for the rhetorical nature of language.
2 REDISCOVERING RHETORICAL DIMENSIONS

Criticism employing a rhetorical perspective promotes a better understanding of scripture. However, making good on such a claim requires responsible sorting and selecting from representations of the rhetorical tradition. While the story of a rhetorical turn usually said to have started in the 1970s in Old Testament studies by James Muilenburg (1969) and in New Testament research by Hans-Dieter Betz (1975; 1979) has been variously told (Robbins & Patton 1980; Lambrecht 1989; Meynet 1990; Mack 1990:7-48; Classen 1991, 1992; Watson & Hauser 1994), what no doubt has provided the greatest momentum and clarity (for New Testament studies) was a work that outlines not only theory but a method—George Kennedy's New Testament interpretation through rhetorical criticism (1984; cf Watson 1991). But our purpose here cannot be to discuss the complete sort of sequential procedure that Kennedy lays out for those (1) rhetorical units comprising oral addresses which can then be analysed (2) according to rhetorical situation, (3) arrangement of the speech's parts, (4) identification of features of style, and finally, (5) assessment of the whole (1984:33-38). My immediate task is rather to comment on the enormous attention being paid to chiasmus—which, according to Kennedy, is a journey into matters of 'style'—to see how notions brought to our attention by contemporary rhetorical theorists can inform one's interpretation of chiasmus in Scripture. In order to proceed I will resist dwelling on the more traditional concepts from the classical Greek and Roman handbooks—matters such as the three species of rhetorical practice (forensic, deliberative, epideictic) or the five operations of the rhetorical art (invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery)—in order to recover the more fundamental and, I think, pervasive, concepts of how all artistic language use is rhetorical, of what allows auditors to participate in discourse, and what role figurative language tactics play in an 'argument'.

2.1 Figures are functional—Perelman

First, my thinking on the argumentative function of 'figures' has been profoundly influenced by the late Chaim Perelman, a Belgian logician whose intensive search for a legitimate way to argue about values, led him to a renewed study of Aristotle (see Leroux 1992; 1994). In his essay in Great ideas today (1970) he recounts for a general audience his own rediscovery of the ancient art of argumentation, how in the historic divorce between rhetoric and dialectics a wrong turn had been made. Perelman's (and his co-author, Olbrechts-Tyteca's) magisterial The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation (1969) has been a major force in the rhetorical turn in New Testament studies. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca per-

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1 See Classen (1992) and Wuehner (1987) for further suggestions about the use of contemporary rhetorical theory and for their cautionary statements about hasty application of classical rhetorical theory. In his article Wuehner tests Kennedy's method.
ceive argumentation as the attempt to gain ‘adherence to theses’ (1969:4) or to strengthen adherence. This is an important concept, one which focuses on discourse as communication, which emphasises the relationship between audience and message rather than focusing on arguments for their purely propositional content, irrespective of any audience to which they are directed for consideration. The sanction of the logician Perelman (whose dissertation was on Gottlob Frege) has been especially important for the contemporary renaissance in Euro-American rhetorical studies, similar to how argumentation study in the United States has drawn upon the work of another philosopher, Stephen Toulmin.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's concept of argumentation is centered around the principle that the purpose of persuasive discourse is that an audience grasp an idea or ‘thesis’. Hence, by pressing to ascertain what type of rhetorical advance is sought in a particular argumentative strategy, in service of that purpose, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca take great care to avoid discussing the ‘figures’ as ‘grammatical, rhetorical, or poetic’, or as ‘figures of thought’ and ‘figures of diction’. These traditional distinctions often contribute to bewilderment if not outright misconceptions—long lists of exotic names impossible to remember or separate and which seem to have little connection with ‘logical’ relations such as the syllogism (Perelman 1970:273; cf Wuellner 1987:462; Snyman & Cronje 1986). As it happens, and as George Caird reminds us, one does not even need to know the name of a thing in order to use it, nor does one need to be familiar with a distinction between ‘figurative’ and ‘literal’ to use words in a non-literal sense (1980:183f; Richards 1981:11f).

Therefore, applying these principles, an interpreter thus ought dwell on what is accomplished (or attempted) through words, not on what name is assigned to word manipulations; moreover, one should attend to the results sought, that is the argumentative function of figures, rather than—or at least, in addition to—their so-called ‘deviation’ from a ‘norm’ (whatever ‘norm’ means). Accordingly: ‘We refuse to separate the form of a discourse from its substance, to study stylistic structures and figures independently of the purpose they must achieve in the argumentation’ (1969:142; cf secs 36ff). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are sensitive to the function of argumentation as inextricably bound up in the way ideas are expressed, that is—chosen, arranged, presented—those familiar elements of style, the ‘means whereby a particular presentation of the data establishes agreement at a certain level, impresses it on the consciousness with a certain intensity and emphasizes certain aspects of it’ (1969:142). In short, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969:115-20; 171-79; 163-67) make a compelling case for considering the function of rhetorical devices, especially in determining whether a device works to achieve choice (directing attention to specific aspects of subject

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2 Snyman & Cronje (1986) propose four functional principles for categorising the figures.
matter), *presence* (making a subject more vivid), or *communion* (closer relations between speaker and audience). Their extensive discussion, drawing from a wide array of literary examples, demonstrates their thesis decisively. Figures are functional, as Andries Snyman (1988) has also argued in adapting Perelman's system to figures in the New Testament; when used effectively, their tasks are often accomplished with little fanfare.

2.2 Form as rhetorical action - Burke

But precisely (or even roughly) *how* do they work? Caird's argument—that figures are not peculiarly Greek but are universal—provokes us to wonder if Aristotle's assessment of rhetoric as persuasion is as provincial and limiting as many have charged. As it happens, the twentieth-century critic Kenneth Burke offered a compelling case for understanding how artistic discourse works in social interaction. Instead of insisting that interpreters keep trying to 'get inside' the mind or world of the artist, Burke maintained that we should be asking what the audience is thinking and feeling as they encounter the work of art. The key to understanding what makes discourse persuasive is, as Burke saw it, *form*—'an arousing and fulfillment of desires' (1968:124).

Burke's project in the 1920s was to challenge a dominant elitist aesthetic wherein a work of art is primarily the avenue by which an artist may *express* something—her or his own idea or emotion. Against this consensus, Burke offered his own 'counter-statement', in which he insisted that the essence or goal of an artistic work is to *evoke* something—in others, that is in audiences. Consequently, Burke saw discourse as communication, as rhetorical action, with *identification* between artist (speaker/poet, etc) and audience always at stake, the audience able to participate in the action, for the artist has deliberately chosen 'forms' in which to instantiate ('individuate' is Burke's term) her or his emotion or idea via an argument, plot, story, etc. An author fashions a work in which an audience can participate not only through the information presented but also through the forms into which the information is organised. Information can bring satisfaction through its newness, but form has the capability to *repeatedly* satisfy because of its power to elicit our recognition of its rightness. Furthermore, Burke argues that this rightness—our cooperation with and ability to apprehend, appreciate, and participate in form (whether by agreeing with it, rejoicing at it, mourning over it, or being terrified by it, etc)—is the work's *psychology*, that is the explanation of what makes it function. In Burke's system what makes audience identification happen is usually not information but *form*, 'the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite' (1968:31). Therefore, to dichotomise form and content—making content primary, form merely something later selected (as shape, container, or format)—is misguided. Rather than being irrelevant or in opposition to content, form and content are...
inseparable; form becomes part of, is the ‘body’ of the (dis- or pre-embodied?) content (see Sontag 1965).

Now, it may seem that, rather than offering a new concept of form, Burke is simply insisting the interpreter give greater priority to form; in arguing that form, not information, is what we might say ‘hooks and holds’ audiences, has not Burke merely taken the notion of shape and/or arrangement of information and given it greater importance than the information itself? Somewhat to the contrary, I believe, when Burke says that literary works of art normally should strive for some balance between form and information and that those works violating this principle are either bad or highly specialised art, he appears to have muted the objection. Moreover, if, as Leland Ryken insists, ‘everything that gets communicated does so through form’ (1984:28), our next question should be to ask how complex form is and from whence does it come?

Burke maintains that form is a natural ability to function in a certain way. Just as we possess heartbeats, we humans possess forms; thus, we can respond to or be aroused by (though we may not always ‘recognise’) form when it appears in artistic works: ‘An ability to function in a certain way implies gratification in so functioning. A capacity is not something which lies dormant until used—a capacity is a command to act in a certain way’ (1968: 142). And while Burke seems to describe form in psycho-physical terms like ‘muscular imagination’ (and many others), he is really interested only in form’s employment through our language systems (1968: 141). Two fundamental aspects of form, or patterns of order through which it seems to operate, are the most common in discourse, and both are at work in chiasmus; indeed, unless we understand these aspects, the figure remains mere decoration—a stylistic novelty.

2.2.1 Form as progression
First, progressive form occurs in its most straightforward manner—what Burke calls syllogistic progression—as linear or temporal advance: whenever one element leads to another element, not of the same but a different kind; as when A leads to (suggests, requires, permits, causes) B; an argument advances step by step, a plot scene by scene, premises force a conclusion, a cause results in effects, effects cry out for causes. For instance, when a theatrical audience learns the discovery of a murder, they anticipate (desire) the apprehension of the villain. This ‘requirement’, as Burke puts it, for the apprehension exists because similar phenomena have already been experienced by persons alert to their own worlds (empirical and artistic). We ‘expect’ certain outcomes, whether we call them logic, justice, ‘just desserts’, or ‘the breaks’. Since we have previously experienced it, forward movement of some pace and magnitude is something we have come to expect, recognise, and desire (or dread). Consequently, an artist sensitive to these existential recurrences can play on our human psychological expectations, install-
ing syllogistically-linked episodes within the work. As it happens, the fascinating introduction to Burke's essay 'Psychology and form' is itself a demonstration of how syllogistic progression works, describing how the audience has long expected the ghost's arrival in the fourth scene of the first act of Hamlet: 'This ghost ... is the rich fulfilment of a promise. Yet this satisfaction in turn becomes an allurement, an itch for further developments' (1968:30).

So this development illustrates first of all what Burke means by form itself, and since the satisfaction provided, despite its expectedness (which has been cleverly enhanced by delay and diversion), is a desired outcome, a payoff, the version of form is syllogistic progression. To be sure, this progressive form is behind the 'logic' of story, and we are all well aware of some contributions that narrative insights have brought to interpretation and preaching. Eugene Lowry says stories 'move' and succeed in their ability to address both 'itch' and 'scratch' (1980:15, 21). Hence, we now realise that the ordering of sequences in a story—what Latin rhetorical handbooks call arrangement [dispositio]—'works' because of progressive form. It works for us primarily because we encounter progression in the inartistic world ('nature', e.g. the progressive cycle of the seasons; the sense, during an oppressive hot spell, of an impending storm; a naughty child's dread that there will be 'hell to pay when dad gets home') even before we come to experience it in artistic creations (e.g. expecting 'happy endings' or anticipating a character's being startled when the camera lets us watch her or him gradually retreating backwards on stage). Before these became established literary or cinematic codes and stereotypes ('conventions'), our experiences allowed these patterns to 'ring true'. So, at the level of larger units—parts sequenced to fit into a whole—progressive form is at work when an artistic 'tale' advances in an acceptable fashion for us; it possesses what Walter Fisher (1987) calls narrative probability—the story coheres—and narrative fidelity—the story is somehow congruent with lived experience. And even when fidelity is in question and still we willingly suspend belief, we are consenting to the continued telling of the story because the progressive essence of the endeavor has us in its grip.

Furthermore, as Burke admits, it is a simple matter to perceive progression at more minute linguistic levels; for example, even the syntax of a verbal language (subject, verb, complement) reflects this progression:³ 'A naming must be completed by a doing, either explicit or implicit. The subject demands a predicate as resolutely as the antecedent of a musical phrase in Mozart calls for its consequent' (1968:140). Yet, in a matter as small as a single sentence, the formal satisfaction may go unappreciated, except where lacking, for we are 'spoiled' (ac-

³ This matter of expectation through progression still holds in inflected languages, where 'grammatical meaning' is not dependent upon word order, as in English, contra Norrman (1986:2); however, emphasis (certainly an important component of rhetorical force or impact) is an essential of meaning.
customed to satisfaction). Burke asserts, 'it can be better revealed by our dissatisfaction with an uncompleted thought than by our satisfaction with a completed one' (1968:140). So when, in our act of critical reflection, we 'turn aside to see this thing which has come to pass', forcing form and content to 'go to their separate corners', we are better able to detect form at work. All other times, however, content cannot be experienced apart from form.

An alternate variation of progressive form is qualitative progression. Here I find Burke to be far less clear and the construct not nearly so easy to understand as syllogistic progression. Nonetheless, as I follow him, the link between episodes is still one of before/after, but the 'after' episode is not expected (demanded, desired, dreaded, etc); however, it is still 'fitting', though in less predictable ways, for the presence of a quality or mood 'prepares' the audience for the introduction of another, different mood. I say 'prepares' since the audience is oblivious to the outcome (and its fittingness) until later, often much later than would be the case with syllogistic progression. Sheron Pattison (1977) argues that qualitative progression is distinguished from syllogistic progression precisely in that subsequent developments are unexpected rather than demanded. Vernon Robbins (1984:9), drawing upon insights from Robert Tannehill (1977, 1980), finds qualitative progression in the Gospel of Mark to be those 'unexpected developments' or 'reversals of expectations', primarily when some occurrence (e.g. the disciples' reaction to Jesus's pronouncements) is different than the one expected by the reader, yet one which the reader eventually comes to accept as having been previously prepared for since the proper state of mind for it was created. So, syllogistic progression always looks forward, qualitative progression reflects back; one is surprising and discernible only in retrospect (qualitative), while the other is expected, desired, and immediately recognisable (syllogistic). For both types of progressive form, however, there is audience satisfaction at finding a contrast, a difference in kind between subsequent developments as they are encountered in a work of art.

### 2.2.2 Form as repetition

Second, even as audience expectations respond to linear movement among contrasting, complementary episodes, so we respond to discursive developments which continue the same unit (topic, claim, attribute, theme, or characteristic). Indeed, were it not for repetitive form all would be in flux, a perpetual grasping for change. Of necessity, then, there must be some 'sameness', and what Burke presents as examples of this type of form come from music and drama. Repetitive form develops through the consistent maintaining of a principle under new guises, the restatement of the same thing in different ways. Sometimes the repetition is sustained and immediate, or it may be scattered throughout a piece. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony clearly develops many rich variations of its thematic
paean; a dramatic villain manifests many behaviors and characteristics consonant with what we come to expect from such a person. Surely the idea of thematic and verbal repetition/variation needs little explication or defense; or does it?

In the discursive arts we come to recognise, laud, and practice good repetition, while trying to avoid, even loathe, 'bad' repetition. Wherein lies the difference? Is it in some magic number of repeatings and no more (few or many?) or in their nature (verbatim or variation)? We all have our preferences; surely more votes would be cast for variety and the number three. So we see that, for example, Mark's Gospel prefers verbatim patterns—particularly threes—while Greco-Roman rhetorical manuals advocate minor variations (Robbins 1984:64; cf Alter 1981:88-113); for example, see the Rhetorica ad Herennium: 'We shall not repeat the same thing precisely—for that, to be sure, would weary the hearer and not refine the idea—but with changes' (1964:4.42.54). Bruce Kawin, who obviously shares a Burkean perspective (but never mentions him), argues that the difference between instances of bad and good—that is repetitious and repetitive—is not in their design but in their reception, which is surely what the rhetorical manuals also sought: 'Repetitious: when a word, percept, or experience is repeated with less impact at each recurrence; repeated to no particular end, out of a failure of invention or sloppiness of thought. Repetitive: when a word, percept, or experience is repeated with equal or greater force at each occurrence. Successful repetition depends both on the inherent interest of the recurring unit and on its context' (Kawin 1972:4).

Repetition, then, is an attempt to make manifest an experience, for the purpose of evoking audience response to that experience; if the experience is inherently interesting and intense, an author may in places resort to repetition to inculcate—nay, to enact—those qualities. The reader whose own experience coalesces to some degree with the experience being described will have no trouble feeling the intensity; the repetition will not be repetitious. Says Kawin: '...nor do I scold Lear that he has made his point, [or that] the last four nevers are unnecessary. On the contrary, Lear's cries attain an intensity possible only in unremitting repetition; it is the power of his howl that is under discussion here, and its tendency... to open on areas of experience generally considered inaccessible to language' (1972:5). Accordingly, parents encountering David's repetitive 'my son', as he reels from hearing about the death of his Absalom (2 Samuel 18:33), come to feel what Robert Alter calls the 'stammer of anguish' (1983:117; cf 1976); and should they ever themselves have to endure that kind of pain (and there are few things like it), they can lend their testimony to what other readers, spared the actual experience, have perceived in the text as virtual experience. Hence, as the 'key to our experience' (Kawin 1972:7), repetitions (one's heartbeat, a ticking watch, a horse's hoofbeats, a flashing semaphore, a daily habit) become the 'key to our expression of experience' (Kawin 1972:8, emphasis added). Whereas Plato be-
lieved the Forms derive from the heavens, Burke is only interested in their omnipresence in nature, particularly in our human capacity, as unique among the natural creatures, to know and use them. David Buttrick (1976) points to the uniqueness of Jesus's resurrection—its lack of both precedent and repetition—as an important dimension of its difficulty for believing: ‘Repeated events are credible—what does happen is likely to have happened—and singular events are incredible’ (1976:279). Repetitive form is therefore basic to any work of art or any kind of orientation; it is ‘our only method of talking on the subject’ (Burke 1968: 125). Buttrick's own compositional style reveals a mastery of alliteration (rhyme through initial consonantal repetition), which is consistent with his commitment to careful selection of ‘appropriate’ poetic language to convey the good news (Buttrick 1976:291). But using rhyme well, not with ‘superficial arbitrariness’, as Geoffrey Leech (1969:92) puts it, is certainly a challenge for one who employs it.

2.2.3 Form in combination

Both repetitive and progressive form can (and often do) work in combination; for example, in the two repetitive series in Romans 8:35-39 we may notice one formal artistry—polysyndeton. We also intuitively sense these series working on our emotions, the former series (‘shall tribulation or distress or persecution...?’) building expectation and anxiety through carefully contemplating—via the conjunctions—manifestations of trouble; the latter series (‘neither death nor life nor angels...’) matches in-kind the anxiety by providing its solution—thus, progression. Moreover, uncomplicated instances of form are easy for students to locate in literature (especially poetry) and in music, and they can also find them quickly and accurately in drama and prose. I have yet to find a student who could not easily grasp, especially when demonstrated orally (in song) and/or visually (on overheads), the progression and repetition of nursery rhymes:

Three blind mice,
Three blind mice.
See how they run,
See how they run.
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
She cut off their tails with a carving knife.
Did you ever see such a sight in your life
As three blind mice.

Without recounting the most obvious repetitive elements, both of sight and sound (including musical pitch), the progression is also manifest in moving from cause in the first quatrain to effect in the second. Children are thus invited to follow these patterns, as they psychologically initiate and agitate their expectations
through repeating words, images, and *rhymes*—‘any chiming of the sounds of words’ (Rickert 1978:35); they are drawn along in a delightful, easily followed narrative. Though here a satisfaction felt mostly by the resolution of tension produced by the sustained, repetitively generated crescendo of lines 5 through 7, assent seems granted by virtue of a collaboration by audience and author, who in this case is not even needed but would be in other cases where we are not so willing to suspend disbelief or judgment. Despite how the decades have dimmed my memory, I was able to reconstruct this verse by recollection simply by singing it to myself; by next adding punctuation, I managed to document more of the cognitive sense of the narrative, that is progressive, flow which I had already felt as my recitation transpired. Small wonder, then, that recitation and song have always been powerful pedagogical devices, or that ‘rap’ music is so infectious among its youthful cultures.

We can now legitimately attest to the power of these two types of form, in such ‘pure’ states as they are here, to promote consideration of discourse by participants. As would-be ‘reflection’ of raw emotion (the case of David) and playful deployment of progression/repetition in children’s literature, form directs audience thought-feelings. And in addition, these strategies even reflect upon their maker (author). Thomas Conley (1985) shows how the argumentative function of things like Philo’s repetitive ‘lists’ employs a logic that accounts for participation of his readers’ emotions: ‘Chains of epithets and lists of persons and things...tend to generate expectations of consistency and direction. By the time Philo has accumulated half a dozen epithets for the wicked man ... his audience anticipates consistency as he adds more....’ The effect is that the auditor ‘must begin to marvel both at the profundity of wickedness and at the resourcefulness of anyone who can so thoroughly exhaust the available vocabulary of wickedness’ (1985:101, emphasis added; cf 1984). James Muilenburg (1953) has convincingly shown all three of the above results of repetitive form; what is less accurate, however, is his claim that the repetitive tendencies found in the Hebrew Bible give us an ‘open avenue to the character of biblical thinking’ (1953:99). That view of style as if it were a ‘window to the soul’, whether of an individual artist or of a culture, was long a prevalent concept which I cannot here discuss (see Leroux 1990). My argument in this paper, however, is more interested in the fact that form is present (to what extent, of what type, to what ends) than with precise processes by which form gets into the text.

### 2.2.4 Form as convention

Both progressive (syllogistic and qualitative types) and repetitive form are patterns of order and, as arranged by the author, often work their wonders without audience awareness of their nature. Burke also identifies another aspect of form that is a phenomenon quite different from these: when auditors expect a work to
acquiesce to some prior notion of appropriateness, they display a categorical ex-
pectancy wherein form which appeals as form occurs. For example, consider: we
require that a work begin with a sense of beginning and end with a feel of clo-
sure; the word order and inflections of a particular language; or the constraints of
a fourteen-line sonnet. These conventions, Burke argues, are not requirements
learned but regularities experienced in works of art. Moreover, intricacies of con-
vention may ultimately become fitted for occasions and fixed by consensus.
However, conventions do shift and change, and artists have always toyed with
them; jurisdiction over conventions is negotiable. Yet, this does not negate the
power of conventional form; indeed, the fact that conventions are ‘noticed’ with
such vigor, even controversy, attests to their potency to involve and satisfy audi-
ences. Robert Alter refers to conventions as ‘tacit contracts’ authors have worked
out with their contemporary audiences (1978:357). But the matter of whether or
when to ‘violate’ them is difficult. Burke says (1968:204):

...his [a reader’s] expectancy may be so imperious that he will condemn the slighting
of this form even in an author who is aiming at different effects. Yet in violating a
convention, an author is undeniably violating a major tenet of form. For he is disap-
pointing the expectations of his audience; and form, by our definition, resides in the
fulfillment of an audience’s expectations. The only justification which an author may
have for thus breaking faith with his audience is the fact that categorical expectations
are very unstable and that the artist can, if his use of the repetitive and progressive
principles is authoritative enough, succeed in bringing his audience to a sufficient ac-
ceptance of his methods. And as the history of art fully testifies, if the changes in con-
ventional form are introduced to obtain a new stressing, to produce a kind of effect
which the violated convention was not well able to produce, but which happens to be
more apropos to the contemporary scene, the changes may very rapidly become
‘canonized’ in popular acceptance and the earlier convention may seem the violator of
categorical expectancy.

2.2.5 Summary

Finally, small, individual instantiations of form within a work, which, by repeti-
tion, progression, or convention, contribute to the development of the whole but
which also have their own ‘episodic distinctness’ worthy of consideration apart
from their context—things such as metaphor, paradox, disclosure, reversal, con-
traction, expansion, bathos, apostrophe, series, chiasmus—can be more or less
present in a work, as minor forms. Form crafted by an artist helps an audience to
‘dream’ the dream that led to the creation of the artistic work. According to
Burke, ‘It is, rather, the audience which dreams, while the artist oversees the
conditions which determine the dream’ (1968:36). However, just as art is not the
weak representation of some actual experience, neither is the arousing of emotion
per se the goal of art. The goal, the essence, of art is eloquence, and the emotions
which we experience in life are the material on which eloquence feeds: 'Eloquence is not showiness; it is, rather the result of that desire in the artist to make a work perfect by adapting it in every minute detail to the racial appetites' (1968: 40f). In sober acknowledgement of the longstanding struggle between Wisdom and Eloquence, then, should we not consider adapting Burke's notion, and come to critically appreciate even more the eloquent truth of biblical passages or, as Eugene Nida (1973) says it, 'God's Word in man's language?'

3 FORM IN FIGURES LIKE CHIASMUS

Before we can fully understand the formal intricacies and richness of chiasmus, we can profit from considering a related phenomenon which employs progressive and repetitive form in such ways and to so great an extent as to be considered by several scholars as a dominant feature of the Hebrew Bible—'parallelism' (see Baker 1973). Parallel structure, specifically, semantic parallelism, is what Alter calls the chief organising principle of the system of biblical poetry. Indeed, the principle of parallelism virtually underlies the 'satisfying shape' (1985:10) of all literary creations (cf Jakobson 1966). A brief look into poetic parallelism in scripture will inform our critical sensitivities.

3.1 Parallelism

Even the casual reader of an English Bible cannot help but notice a style that tends to establish, in James Kugel's words (1981:2), a 'feeling of correspondence' between many pairs of statements. This tendency is not—as in Greek and Latin poetry—effected by means of metre, but rather by syntax, morphology, and meaning. Hans Kosmala (1964) explains what he first identified in Isaiah, that he was struck by two things:

1) the regularity of the number of words or rather word-units of a sentence forming a complete and self-contained line...and

2) that a line within a composition corresponded to another line of equal length also with regard to its content, that is, a sentence of a certain length was paralleled by another sentence of the same length, so that the whole composition turned out to be one of perfect beauty and strict correspondence between outward form and inner structure (1964:424).

Put more simply, the basic element of ancient Hebrew poetry is the word- or thought-unit irrespective of beats and stresses. However, we should not expect correspondence whereby each word of the first clause is matched by a word in the second; that is relatively rare. Consider Kugel's cautionary note about the degree to which the terms of a couplet of clauses will 'match up'. He argues
(1981:2) that there is an orderly balance within the verse, due to a compositional technique that combines, most commonly, two brief clauses. In the eighteenth century Robert Lowth gave the name *parallelismus membriorum* to this phenomenon, and his early attempt to categorise the nature of this balance into three types—synonymous, antithetic, synthetic—has had lasting impact (Boling: 1960). However, as we have begun to learn more recently from Kugel and others, the precise nature of what is happening in instances of parallelism is crucial for interpretation of these passages. For example, what does ‘synonymous’ entail? or what have we accomplished by labelling a catch-all category ‘synthetic’?

We have learned from Burke that rhetorical form works most often by progression and/or repetition, and we have hopefully come to appreciate the variety of ways that those forms can work. The proviso of Meir Sternberg is useful as a starting point: ‘In the absence of an overall binding norm, then, not even a single case of biblical repetition is self-explanatory’ (1985:387). In biblical parallelism what we want to avoid, I think, is oversimplifying the variety and denying the possibility of synonymity (for we know that verbatim repetition is sometimes useful). What we most desire is to determine the goal, the purpose for which the writer established his parallelistic connections. Further, in the case of suspected similarity in meaning—Lowth’s notion of synonymous—Kugel argues (1981:7) that ‘the intensity of the semantic parallelism established between clauses might be said to range from “zero perceivable correspondence” to “near-zero perceivable differentiation.” ’ Kugel charges that our contemporary tendency has been to read right through the medial pause (comma between clause A and clause B) as though it represents a kind of ‘equals’ sign. Instead, ‘sometimes B is clearly a continuation of A, or a going beyond A in force or specificity’ (1981:8), both of which, according to Kugel, were well within the capability and experience of ancient Hebrew listeners to grasp and appreciate: this two-part form was ubiquitous: ‘commoners and kings, rumors and facts, cures, rules of conduct, rules of thumb, things one heard...all were framed in parallelisms’ (1981:3). So, heeding this reasoning, the parallelistic line might not be ‘belaboring the obvious’, and for us to cry ‘mere repetition!’ is to miss the point; for the Hebrew listener was attuned to hearing ‘“A is so, and what’s more, B is so.” That is, B was connected to A, had something in common with it, but was not expected to be (nor regarded as) mere restatement’ (1981:8). We also ought be alert, says Alter, to ‘small wedges of difference between closely akin terms’ (1981:10).

William Wimsatt (1941:20ff) even argues that, in English prose style, there can be one or more of four expressive purposes at work when a writer employs a pair of words having an equal relation to their context: (1) to give range or scope, that is to name the number of objects necessary to the whole meaning of the context, either completely or illustratively; for example ‘prince and princess’ (exact range), ‘pickles and conserves’ (illustrative examples of homely concerns); (2) to
refer to the object under two ideas or aspects, both of which have relevance to the whole meaning of the context; (3) a pair of abstract terms, where it could be two objects or simply two aspects of one object; (4) pairs for emphasis, where the closer the two terms come to being synonymous, the greater the emphasis. However, Kugel derives more from the order of the A, B parallelistic couplet than does Wimsatt, in his probing of the part-part, part-whole relations of the so-called synonymous word pair. Kugel makes an insightful contribution to the notion of emphatic synonymous parallelism, and he does so by referring again to the medial pause:

Indeed, its true character might be more graphically symbolized by a double arrow [than by an ‘equals’ sign]...for it is the dual nature of B both to come after A and thus add to it. often particularizing, defining, or expanding the meaning, and yet also to harken back to A and in an obvious way connect to it. One might say that B has both retrospective (looking back to A) and prospective (looking beyond it) qualities. Now, by its very afterwardness. B will have an emphatic character: even when it uses the most conventional synonyms or formulae, its very reassertion is a kind of strengthening and reinforcing. But often this feature (found in all apposition) is exploited: the meaning of B is indeed more extreme than A, a definite ‘going one better’ (Kugel 1981:8, emphasis original).

Both progressive and repetitive form are at work here, then, and both are laboring to the same end. But due to the Hebrew language’s preference for paratactic connections, the critic must strive to analyse what is the biblical author’s specific rhetorical purpose which is at work (see Gruber 1993).

When considering distinctions rather than emphasis—what Kugel argues has been oversimplified and confused in the popularisation of Lowth’s so-called antithetical parallelism—Wimsatt (1941:22-40) alerts us to the possibilities in English: Every antithesis is either (1) one affirmation and one negation or (2) two affirmations. The former (1) makes a distinction in order to affirm one part and deny the other; it is simplest to see when two single words are placed close together in opposition, the one idea negated, the other affirmed. The latter (2) works as follows: in pointing out opposite notions, it either affirms or denies both in the same respect. For example, ‘Not only A, but B’ (where A and B are opposites but are both affirmed in respect to a third component). English also provides many ways of antithetical joining—in addition to the common negators ‘not’ or ‘but’ (and helpers such as ‘only’ and ‘also’), one can use comparatives (‘Willing rather to transmit than examine’), relatives or conditionals (‘Which, if obtained, you could scarcely have enjoyed’), and prepositions (‘To conquer without a contract’). Kugel stresses the likelihood of our encountering more of Wimsatt’s second type of antithesis and the importance of understanding the Hebrew version of it. He argues that in many examples A and B are not ‘merely antithetical’, inde-
pendent (opposite) versions of 'the same idea' but are often *a single statement*. 'Hebrew is fond of using negatives to reinforce', Kugel maintains, 'the negation does not create contrast but agreement' (1981:14). What is important to keep in mind with antithesis, I think, is how it is simply another tool an author has at hand for affirmation and celebration, for negation and condemnation. The fact that emphasis can be accomplished through progression and repetition, via the techniques of 'synonymous' and 'antithetic' parallelism, means that the thoughtful interpreter will carefully sort through the conventional forms, asking what the author is getting at, what am I driven to feel and believe?

3.2 Chiasmus

Since, in order to sharpen our sensitivities to rhetorical action, we have been working on a deeper understanding of form's functional operations, let us now briefly zoom in on the one figure currently receiving far more critical attention in biblical studies than any figure—except for parable and perhaps metaphor: chiasmus. I have not selected this particular phenomenon merely because studies of it have recently been in vogue, but more importantly due to the extensiveness of some claims on its behalf: (1) its apparent ubiquity in every genre of both Testaments (see Di Marco 1975; 1976; 1976a; 1979), as well as other Northwest Semitic (Ceresko 1975) and Greco-Roman literature; and (2) its richness in varying degrees of verbal and thematic precision and complexity. Now, I cannot even begin to explore—let alone, examine and test—these claims, and there is certainly not space nor need here to try to trace the figure's history, for others have done that (Lund 1942; Welch 1982), nor will I discuss the literature on chiasmus in classical literature, whether in its simple forms (see Steele 1981) or complex designs (see Duckworth 1960; Whitman 1958:249-284). What S E Bassett warned of seventy-five years ago still needs heeding: 'If chiasmus is to be more than a scholastic legacy of doubtful value, its function and significance should be explained' (1920:59). What I hope to show here is (1) how formal principles are at work in chiasmus; and (2) some of the rhetorical functions it can have in scripture. Putting it plainly, chiasmus offers us clear instances of progressive and repetitive form at work on argumentative tasks.

3.2.1 Simple chiasmus

Chiasmus is somewhat of a mystery for us today, since the word itself does not appear in medieval rhetorical or grammatical handbooks, but mention of its close relatives (epanados, palindrome, antimetabole) is not hard to find. The term *chiasmos* was, however, used by the Hellenistic rhetorician Hermogenes (b. 161 CE), in his *De inventione*, not his *On types of style* (1987), but it was not transmitted into the Latin rhetorical manuals (Tate 1978:116; Steele 1891:3). 'Chiasmus', or chiasm, is said to derive from the Greek letter *chi* (a cross or cross-over)
and the verb *chiazein* ('to mark with two lines crossing'). Dahood defines chiasmus as 'a rhetorical term designating a reversal of the order of words in two otherwise parallel clauses...' (1976:145). A simple, 'pure' verbal manifestation of it in the form of AB:BA represents this 'reversal' or inversion (in the second clause) of word order established in the previous clause. Thus—and this is perhaps an important feature distinguishing Hebrew usage from that in Greek and Latin literature—chiasmus is, as Kugel argues, 'a decision not to parallel' (1981:19, emphasis original). When the two clauses (here, mirror images) are placed one directly under the other, and when lines are then drawn connecting the corresponding 'elements', which are indicated by the letters A, B, etc (and for now, let elements mean the key words), it graphically produces an 'X'; for example, Mk 2:27, which illustrates the AB:BA order (what I will call a two-element chiasmus): καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἀνθρωπὸν ἐγένετο καὶ οὐχ ὁ ἀνθρωπὸς διὰ τὸ σάββατον:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{The } \text{sabbath was made because of } \text{man } \text{and not }
\\
\text{man } \text{because of the } \text{sabbath}_1
\end{array}
\]

At the linguistic level of the sentence (verse), then, chiasmus is essentially inverted parallelism (see Snyman & Cronje 1986:116); there will always be repetition present, and an inversion of word order initiates the repetition. When we ask why this author uses inversion here, we should look to the antithesis: to abruptly shove two identical terms between two others—a reversal—places the negation precisely where it is needed. Wimsatt's counsel on the inversion is useful here, for he avers that it maneuvers a given element 'to the fore' in a sentence, thereby giving it emphasis (1941:70). 'Man' has thus been thrust between the two 'sabbaths' so as not only to deny but to refute via emphatic denial (repetition); this chiasmus is not a *cul de sac*, for the concept of sabbath one started with (the prevailing assumption) has been stood on its head.

About this simple form of chiasmus we can learn more by considering John F Kennedy's well-known inaugural antithesis, 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country', which is almost the same species as our first example; it is still AB:BA, but in the opposite order. Whereas Mark 2:27 is 'affirm, deny' (AB: not BA), JFK's is 'deny, affirm' (not AB: but BA). However, a familiar Chesterton one-liner is slightly different: 'Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, but found difficult and not tried.' The similar antithetical goal of 'deny, affirm' is presented but with a twist; why?—because
the nature of the content resists refutation via total denial. That is, Chesterton cannot—or will not—reverse the assumption openly; rather, he chooses to overturn the assumption by staying with it, by granting the component of ‘found’-ness and then recasting it. His strategy here is one of redefinition, and hence the format is not two elements but now four: AB:B'A'; *both* elements of the second (affirming) clause are altered. A (‘tried’) becomes A' (‘not tried’), and it looks as if rote rejection has been successfully pulled off. However, the reversal in the center is more subtle; B (‘found wanting’) is replaced by B' (‘found difficult’), a much more acceptable, easier to persuade, claim—indeed, the switch is bold; and once made, the denial can be established. Bassett’s remarks are apt here, for he points to the ‘element of surprise which sharpens the attention of the listener’ as well as ‘the psychological factor, the advantage of using one idea to suggest another, and thus to make the thought continuous’ (1920:59).

The intersection of the ‘X’ (or point at which the lines cross) is thus our reminder that reversal occurs; when that reversal is a negation, we have *antithetic parallelism*. Of course, in a simple phrase containing no predicate but having a pair of grammatically parallel terms one can still find *inverted parallelism* without antithesis, by simply repeating the elements: ‘they searched high and low, low and high’—the resulting effect is one of completion, coherence, and closure for the entire utterance. The reversal simply marks a turn, and we derive no special emphasis from the center pair, nor do we attribute any precise significance to the order of the terms, for my example is one of pure synonymous parallelism in chiastic order. The reversal is much more crucial to the meaning in chiasms that involve predicates invoking functional—that is *progressive relationships*—between the elements on either side of the medial pause. In Mk 2:27 the relationship between A and B is causal; in Chesterton’s remark the relationship is resultant.

Before moving on to more complex chiasms, consider one final example of another saying of Jesus commonly claimed to be chiastic, apparently a four-element (AB:B'A') chiasmus. In Mt 7:6 (Μη δώτε το άγιον τοίς κυσίν μηδε βάλητε τούς μαργαρίτας υμών έμπροσθεν τῶν χοίρων, μήποτε καταπατήσουσιν αύτώς εν τοίς ποσίν αύτών καί στραφέντες δήξουσιν ύμας) it appears that, by showing their results (in reversed order), Jesus warns against two actions. Since, on the ‘resultant’ end of the verse the Greek grammar elides the subjects, knowing about chiasmus aids us in supplying the missing subjects; we attribute the B' (the inside or first verb, ‘trample’) to its closest noun B (‘swine’) and the A' (the outside or second verb, ‘attack’) to the other noun A (‘dogs’). Hence, we seem to be able to bolster our grammatical exegesis by applying chiastic principles as a sort of ruler. But there is ample material here for caution about this ruler—against using a measure as if it were a mold, or a clamp. For example, in wrestling with the thrust of this verse, especially in view of its subsequent tradition in the *Didache* and in Tertullian, William Barclay (1975) applies the principle of Hebrew
parallelism to the AB end of the chiasm, for he (rightly, no doubt) wants to understand (and then apply) the entire verse as a holistic principle. He dissects both A and B to draw out their own parallelisms: 'give'/cast'; 'dogs'/swine'; 'holy'/pearls' and it is this third match that bothers him, for he finds that here 'the parallelism breaks down' (1975:267). Subsequently, he finds an alternative Aramaic word that more smoothly fits as underlying the Greek substantive 'holy', and he has thus effectively emended the text.

Now, my objective here is not primarily Barclay's method or result in this verse. I simply use this as illustrative for making a couple salient points regarding the sort of 'simple', fairly precise chiasmus we have been examining: (1) there may or may not be identity between elements on opposite sides of the reversal (strict ABBA chiasmus is fairly rare, ABB'A' seems much more common, so the 'parallel' nature of members contains flexibility—they can be identical, synonymous, contrasting, antithetical, etc); (2) exactly what constitutes an 'element' is not a given (a single word? a phrase?), and the matter of 'punctuation'—that is, establishing the boundaries of each element, which will affect how many elements there are (which is not nearly as important as is how each element matches its parallel companion)—is by no means always straightforward. For example, Snyman and Cronje (1986:116) give Mk 2:27 an ABCBBA structure, but they locate the point of reversal accurately, and their parallel elements still 'match' one another, so the differences are trivial.

3.2.2 Complex chiasmus

The main reason, of course, that detecting simple chiasmus is quite straightforward is because the symmetry is precise and verbal—that is, one is simply reacting directly to the sights and sounds that she encounters in the text as it is. This allows the critic to survey and analyse the nature of the parallel couplings (as well as the relationships among elements within the same chiastic half). Chiastic structure can occur at many linguistic levels: 'lower' levels of letter-sounds, syllables, and words; or 'higher' levels of phrases, sentences, even larger units such as what we today often set off as paragraphs and chapters. Fokkelman (1975:11-45) makes a fascinating case for appreciating the chiastic workings in Gn 11:1-9, the tower of Babel story, of what he calls a sound-chiasmus (l-b-n:n-b-l). The case is complicated by several factors that show how the chiasmus working here is far different from the simple examples seen thus far, not the least of which is the fact that said sound-chiasmus cannot be precisely pointed out in the text but is rather a construct of the critic! However, the same principles of repetition and progression are in place, and the irony at work in the various puns, paronomasias, etc (including six repetitions of the combination of the sounds l, b, n), produces strong support for Fokkelman's claims about 'concentric structure' which is strongly buttressed by various repetitive tactics in the text.
I call this type of chiasmus *thematic chiasmus*. The passage here (Gn 11:1-9) presents human actions and motives in verses 1-4, God's actions and purposes in vv5-9: God destroys (reverses) what humankind has schemed to build. While the text's own wording—as it lineally (temporally) unfolds to strike the reader's eyes and ears—does not self-evidently instantiate a chiastic structure, it is the conviction of the critic (and here I am generalising beyond Fokkelman's study, to speak to the broad issue of thematic chiasmus) that the author intended to *design a larger block of material* according to a chiastic plan, but not necessarily in a verbally precise parallel manner. Now, after the New Criticism, the only way one can legitimately try to construe an author's intention is to present *internal* textual evidence in support of such a thesis. And the usual method of demonstrating a thematic chiasm is (1) to attempt to *paraphrase the textual content*, to convert the author's words into thematic claims (themes, assertions, propositions, etc); (2) to present the paraphrased statements as chiastic elements in a diagram, using a lettering scheme (ABC, etc) to label the elements and an indentation format to show the progression and reversal, and especially to aid in visually locating the parallels between opposing elements.

The difficulties in validating the chiastic structure a critic believes to have found are several, but they are not necessarily insurmountable. Perhaps the biggest obstacle is the lack of clear markers which one can then use to separate the elements of the structure. Of course, narrators do provide markers for indicating changes such as scene, time, entrance and exit of characters, but didactic and poetic passages may not provide ready clues for subdividing a pericope into chiastic stages. David Clark (1975) has offered suggestions on criteria for identifying chiastic structure in a literary unit (he was working with early chapters in Mark) that provide multiple types of evidence: (1) content—the theme or themes of each pericope; (2) form or structure—the type of narrative and/or dialogue of which the pericope is composed; (3) language—primarily the occurrence of catchwords; (4) setting; (5) theology. While his system is certainly helpful, it also leads to one of the frustrations in this type of work—namely, that identifying chiasmus in one size literary unit affects how that unit fits with other units within that work; that is, my chiastic diagram may later be subsumed by someone else's. One response to this dilemma is to try to identify a chiastic structure for a work as a whole. Ellis (1984) has recently attempted this for the Fourth Gospel, presenting it as a series of five-element (ABCB'A') chiasms: twenty-one ‘sequences’ (not synonymous with the twenty-one chapters) comprising five ‘parts’, each part (except for part three, the center) consisting of five sequences. Ellis, who relies on key words as his most dependable indicator for detecting chiastic design, sees the Prologue (1:1-18) as separate from the overall structure, but it also employs its own five-element chiastic structure. Charles Talbert (1970) had previously shown the chiastic design or ‘architecture’, as he calls it, of John 1:19-5:47, and
what makes his analysis compelling is that he shows the arrangement at work in both smaller and larger units. The smaller chiastic units (for example, 1:1-3; 1:16-18; 1:29-30) are much more verbally precise and noticeable (self-evident?); therefore, since they occur early in the work, they may then alert readers to the idea of chiasmus and to the possibility of its also later being at work in larger units of material—an expectation established early on that drives readers to desire, or at least be prepared for, satisfaction later on (see also Boismard 1957:73-81; Borgen 1972; Culpepper 1980). Moreover, in recent decades ample evidence has already been gathered establishing strong hypotheses for the likelihood that even minimally educated readers would have been able to follow chiasmus or even recognise it (Talbert 1970:63; Stock 1984). In fact, in his work on an overall 'architectonic structure' in Luke-Acts, Talbert even mentions Kenneth Burke—as support for how readers might be able to process the thematic, largely 'geographical' chiasmus (Talbert 1967; 1974:80; cf Goulder 1964). 4

3.3 Conclusion—function of chiastic form

In summary, a lot of work has been done on chiasmus, and what has been particularly helpful, it seems to me, are the efforts to demonstrate that chiasmus is present in its precise verbal forms in many places in the Old Testament and in New Testament adaptations of Hebrew scripture. What has not been adequately explored, and what I have tried to suggest briefly here, is the function of chiasmus. I have argued regarding the plausible uses chiasmus might play, and I have demonstrated the specific features within chiastic and other parallel structures that work on audience attention, feelings, and thoughts. Let me now list some of those effects again, taking a list from Welch, whose work has thoroughly updated the pioneering efforts of Lund and others since. In classical Greek and Latin, then, chiasmus seems to have: (1) aided in metrical composition; (2) added variety in expression; (3) placed emphasis on particular words; (4) juxtaposed contrasting terms; (5) brought corresponding thoughts closer together; (6) gave simple prose a rhetorical twinge; (7) created passages which were aesthetically pleasing (Welch 1982:258).

With the exception of the first, many of those same effects other scholars and I have already suggested for chiasmus in scripture (see Lund 1943; Man 1984; Breck 1987), and we can add to the list even more. For example, by virtue of its balance and repetition, simple chiasmus may also expedite teaching and may have been useful in liturgy. Further, as Charles Myers (1993) has very recently

4 After this article was accepted there appeared in NTS a study by Luter and Lee (1995) on 'Philippians as chiasmus', which relies heavily on a work I had not been aware of, Craig Blomberg's 'The structure of 2 Corinthians 1' (Criswell Theological Review 4.1 (1989). In this latter work are promulgated nine criteria which hypotheses of 'extended chiasmus' must meet. Blomberg's work is a significant advance in the criticism of chiasmus and should not be ignored.
shown, by appreciating chiasm's tendency to reflect back upon its own items, we may learn more about Paul's so-called 'style' of arguing, when he seems to 'distract' more often than we find appropriate. Finally, Welch fails to mention climactic centrality, whereby the point of reversal (whether as a medial pause between the center pair, or as a single center element) demonstrates the peak of a developing crescendo or the 'mountaintop' from which descent begins. Climactic centrality may not always be present (and for that reason, Welch does not count it as an essential of chiasmus), but when it is, it is always significant. If Talbert is right about the geographic chiasmus of Luke-Acts, the apparently spatial progression that emerges from discerning that chiastic structure helps readers perceive the purpose of Luke-Acts, for we recall that the 'journey' portrayed in Lk 9:50-19:40 is not as much a travel itinerary as it is Jesus's preparation of himself and the disciples mentally and spiritually, in anticipation of the cross. Once readers observe that because the cross (and what followed) were Jesus' objectives, and they see that the disciples took their mission's inaugural event to be the same (particularly, as crystalised for them at his ascension), such strategic authorial design cannot help but strike readers as significant (Wolfe 1980). One can then expect to find that significance confirmed in more careful scrutiny of subsequent events and teachings of the early Church's mission, as well as Jesus's prior episodic advance toward Jerusalem. The obvious reason for attaching such significance to the ascension is its place as the center, the chiastic reversal. That position, as the outcome of one progression (the ministry of Jesus) and the start of another (the ministry of the Church), is given further presence by the repetitive form of each, now newly discovered, complementary pair of chiastic elements leading up to and away from it. In other words, for Luke, the historian and evangelist—and for the Church—'climax' is not only culmination but impetus, and the thrust of the closing words in both Luke and Acts bears witness to the apostles' continued 'praising God' (eulogountes ton theon) and Paul's 'unhindered' (akolutos) preaching and teaching of Jesus and the Kingdom. When rhetorical criticism that investigates the intricacies of style observes and participates in a work's form, particularly through the way its many figures direct one's attention to ideas and their Author, then an interpreter has had a richer experience in the study.

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Prof Dr N R Leroux, Assistant Professor of Speech Communication, Division of the Humanities, University of Minnesota, MORRIS Mn 56267, United States of America.