

New Rhetoric and the Socio-Rhetorical Method: As a Modern Approach to Biblical Literary Criticism

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ABSTRACT

The new rhetoric studies the discursive practices present in a text and tries to understand them as a literary method to persuade a specific audience to accept a new law or change their behavior, assuming a worthy moral, philosophical or religious truth. The new rhetoric covers the literary or rhetorical analysis of discourse while analyzing the elements proper to the social and cultural milieu of its intended audience. The aid of the human sciences, especially cultural anthropology and the sociology of religion, is necessary to capture better the world the *loci* of the speaker and the audience of the text. The method, which combines social and anthropological analysis with the new rhetorical analysis, is called social rhetoric. The social rhetoric analysis aims to hit the socio-cultural context in which the texts were conceived, especially when the text does not give any clues of it. In Biblical interpretation, these two forms of literary analysis will help to understand the relationships existent between the author of a discourse and its readers (the intended audience). Such an approach will not only study the social history and social aspects where the books of the Bible were born, but will also see the rhetoric of the texts as an essential component of the text's social, political, cultural, and ideological context. After all, the Word of God became flesh and dwelt in a particular culture, with a specific language and in a precise historical time.

Keywords: rhetoric, new rhetoric, socio-rhetoric, sociology, cultural anthropology, Biblical criticism, exegesis.

INTRODUCTION

Biblical scholars have used new methods of literary criticism, which has evolved considerably since the last century, in part due to their fascination with the Bible not only as a sacred text but as a work of literature. It is within this context of significant developments in the field of linguistic and literary studies that Biblical interpretation has moved one step forward from its historical-critical method into the area of persuasive language, one of them being rhetorical analysis¹. The Pontifical Biblical Commission document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the church* highlights the importance of this method of literary analysis, "The Bible is not simply a statement of truths. It is a message that carries within itself a function of communication within a particular context, a message which carries with it a certain power of argument and a rhetorical strategy" (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1994)².

With this analysis, the Biblical interpreter identifies and examines the proclamation of the Word of God in its rhetorical structure including not only its beginning, thesis, and conclusion, but also the rhetorical situation in which the original communication took place, the issue addressed in it, and the solution to solve it³. The same Pontifical Biblical Commission presents three layers of rhetorical analysis in the interpretation of the Bible, the classical rhetoric of the Greco-Roman period of the Bible, the Semitic literary style, and the new rhetoric that aim to penetrate the impact of the discourses in the social context of the original audiences. It is the latest that has emerged as one of the most recent rhetorical analysis, especially in one of its methods called socio-rhetorical approach and how to apply it in the interpretation of a Biblical discourse.

NEW RHETORIC AS METHOD OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Rhetoric, as the art of speaking in public to persuade an audience. However, in recent years, the popular concept of a rhetorical discourse as a weapon used by tricksters and demagogues who manipulated their audience with beautiful and flattering words⁴. Desiring to rescue the reputation of rhetoric, a good number of academics in the United States of America and Europe began, in the middle of the 20th century, to develop what they called "theory of argument." They discovered that contemporary informal speeches and discourses were more successful when they adopted the five canons of a Greco-Roman persuasive discourse (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio*)⁵. This style of analyzing non-formal discursive composition is known as "the new rhetoric." The new rhetoric is, then, a theory of argumentation that aims to study the discursive techniques used by a speaker to provoke or increase the adherence of its audience to specific predetermined values, previously accepted and now presented in the rhetorical speech⁶.

The new rhetoric starts precisely from the third category of Greco-Roman rhetoric (*elocutio*), focusing on the way the audience accepts the message. The speaker's *ethos* is verified in the ability to obtain a good response from the audience. In turn, the speaker's *logos* is not something inherent to him but comes from the assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs shared with the addressed audience. Finally, the audience does not have a mere passive function in its emotional reaction (*pathos*). Still, it offers the referential framework (rhetorical-situational context) that will give the absolute value to the message transmitted and for which the speaker chose and organized its arguments cleverly. Hence, the audience is the focus for the new rhetoric because it investigates those familiar and understandable elements for the listeners of a persuasive speech, and how the discourse uses them to induce their audience to accept its thesis. In this way, the new rhetoric demonstrates that the transmission of a doctrine is not unilaterally but reciprocally: the speaker uses examples, images, stories, poems, and any elements familiar to its listeners to ensure that its theory is understood and accepted⁷. According to Chaïm Perelman, new rhetoric takes into consideration the following steps in evaluating a speech⁸:

The audience

The speech must be adapted to the circumstances of the audience to be effective. The speaker takes into account the intended audience when preparing the argumentation of the discourse, to win their acceptance or reinforce the values of the thesis. It invites, therefore, to elaborate the discourse, keeping in mind two models of an audience: the specific audience and the universal audience. When it comes to the first, the speaker who presents a proposal or thesis to a group of listeners or readers of a specific place should build their arguments based on values already known and previously accepted by them. Thus, starting from a common consensus, it will elaborate arguments that invite

its private audience to rethink their present condition, to adhere to the proposed thesis and, if it is the case, reject any other proposal offered as contrary to their values. If, later on, a publisher desires to address the same speech to a broad audience, the discourse will transmit the necessary and fundamental values of the original author, avoiding the elements that characterized the first or particular audience. This revision is possible because both audiences share in common the authority given to the author, the value, and the doctrine of the discourse, even if they are very different from each other, depending on their own culture and history. Furthermore, in the general audience, some of its members may even reproduce many features of the historical situation of the original audience (i.e., the internal conflicts among members of the same church).

Shared values

The speaker must be clear about the values accepted in common by his audience before presenting his thesis and organizing the arguments. It must include those values rooted in the daily life of the intended audience. These values will be the starting point of the discourse and do not need to defend them in the argument. Then, the speaker must select and organize those values hierarchically because the most important of them may serve as a starting point for the discussion according to the goal conceived by the speaker. If the speaker wants to introduce a new thesis, the method used must criticize the old argument and replace it with an original dissertation and with new values (based on shared values) so that the audience accepts and adheres to this new proposal. The aim of the speech is for the audience to distinguish between those values accepting the true ones and rejecting the obvious ones. The former will have an ethical and moral weight in themselves, while the latter will be dismissed as worthless. The author could present these values in abstract or concrete forms (such as values), in a homogeneous or a heterogeneous form (in the case of their gradualness, honesty, and truth).

Prepare a thesis

For a speaker to succeed, even in an informal speech, he must offer an argument designed according to the values previously accepted by his audience. According to new rhetoric, the discourse should focus on reinforcing listeners' filial adherence to values accepted as "fundamental values" such as truth, reason, freedom, justice, humanity, etc. Thus, the speaker will achieve the adherence of his listeners to his proposed thesis. Otherwise, the audience would not have a solid basis to assess whether or not the arguments presented are good enough to motivate them to accept the objective proposed in the thesis⁹. The speaker should strive to define these values as clearly as possible and interpret them according to the author's purposes, as each listener may have a different or inaccurate notion of these shared values¹⁰.

The organization of the arguments

A good speech requires a hierarchical organization of selected arguments to persuade an audience. The choice of each one of them should follow these three steps: (1) Delimitation. The thesis of the speech shall be unpretentious and brief, making it more attractive and convincing. To expand or add more arguments may result in a misunderstanding of the thesis and will not convince the target audience. The audience's willingness and span of attention is limited. No one would listen to a ten-hour speech or read a thousand-page book while keeping track if the arguments presented in it are good or not. (2) Selection. Knowing the limitations of the audience, the speaker needs to choose which arguments to use, considering that not all the arguments have the same persuasive force on a particular or universal audience. If a speech presents weak arguments of which he has little

experience or does not know thoroughly, the audience's opinion of the author will be affected. (3) Orderly use. The topic should be of interest to an audience wanting to know the speaker's viewpoint. The speech loses its persuasive force if the author does not present the arguments that support the thesis in an orderly manner. The speaker shall use a solid argumentation that changes the opinion of the audience in his favor. Even if the first argument was strong but ineffective in persuading the audience (probably because they did not understand it), the speaker might use the same argumentation again, after having educated the listeners adequately with other explanatory arguments.

The sociological, cultural, and religious context

Besides analyzing the influence of the audience in the rhetorical discourse, the new rhetoric underlines the necessity to study the socio-cultural world of the speaker and the audience. While elaborating an argument, the speaker should keep in mind: (1) the different territories and cultures; (2) the idea of authority; (3) the different social statuses and the social role to be played by each person; (4) the various rituals and religious cults; (5) the different literary works, especially those that influence their society and culture; (6) the functions of certain social groups; (7) their concepts of reality thought as real¹¹.

In summary, according to the new rhetoric, the form of discourse is subordinated to its content, especially the argumentation selected to persuade and convince a particular audience. Those arguments are, at the same time, influenced by the specific audience.

In the realm of Biblical interpretation, Wilhelm Wuellner, consider for many as the father of rhetorical criticism of the New Testament, invites rhetorical interpreters to view their texts as a new form of persuasive communication, where the focus is on the rhetorical, historical, and cultural situation of each particular audience in the New Testament (i.e., Jewish religious groups, gentiles, peasants, newly converted to Christianity, etc.). For this reason, Wuellner considers it necessary to know the author's strategies to adapt his style, diction, preparation, and argumentative organization, as well as his ingenious way of using metaphors, hyperbole, chiasm or rhetorical questions to persuade their listeners to accept the Christian values¹². And for this message to have the persuasive force sought by its author, the new rhetoric takes into account the words, examples, and images familiar to their implied audience social, religious, and cultural environment.

The texts of the New Testament were, indeed, written, proclaimed, and understood by the first Christians who lived in a particular social context, very different from the contemporary western world. They have to be interpreted in light of its original context, taking into account the anthropological, cultural, and religious framework of Mediterranean society in the first century, both in the Greco-Roman world and in Judaism. The new rhetoric "investigates what makes particular use of language effective and successful in the communication of conviction... It studies style and composition as a means of acting upon an audience. To this end, it benefits from contributions made of late in other areas of knowledge such as linguistics, semiotics, anthropology, and sociology" (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1994)¹³.

Moreover, in the New Testament studies, the reader has a place of particular interest as an interpreting agent. Indeed, today the concept of the audience in the Bible is double: on the one hand, each book of the New Testament books was directed from and to a particular audience (implicit).

The understanding of it has become an essential key of interpretation to decipher the authentic meaning of the transmitted message. On the other hand, the awareness that the Bible has a universal audience (explicit), a contemporary community of believers, to which the scholar must respond with his present interpretive work¹⁴. This consideration is necessary to study the discourses of the New Testament that come from another time and culture different from today's world. They determine what information in the final edition of the speech constitutes a concrete "fact" and a "logical feature" of the thesis presented in the discourse and that was accepted by a universal audience, leaving aside the details of the particular language and examples of a concrete culture of the original audience.

In summary, to thoroughly analyze a discourse or informal speech, such as the ones that appear in the New Testament, the interpreter shall investigate not only the rhetorical structure of a text but also studying the world where it occurred and the social groups that sought to have any impact. That is the goal of the method called socio-rhetoric analysis¹⁵. Although it began as analysis to some narrative-type passage in the Gospels¹⁶, I consider that socio-rhetoric, as part of the new rhetoric methodology, will serve as a guide to the broader interpretation of other discourses and speeches found in the New Testament, especially the epistles.

THE SOCIO-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS IN THE BIBLICAL

The new rhetoric is currently working in conjunction with other human sciences like linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and psychology when analyzing the context of a book namely the world behind the text, the world of the text, and the world in front of the text (the milieu of the contemporary reader)¹⁷. It is necessary to study the social system of each culture to reconstruct patterns (fundamental principles) that regulate the life of a society, as well as models that make these patterns explicit through categories, abstract representations, or some patterns of behavior within a social system¹⁸. The contribution of Sociology and Cultural Anthropology, both part of the human sciences, is of great importance for the social rhetoric analysis. Sociology focuses on the critical study of those cultural and social elements present in a historical document. Meanwhile, Cultural Anthropology is interested in how people lived in their social environment (language, art, clothing, etc.), the values recognized by them, their ideas about home, religion, state, social relations, etc. Thus, cultural anthropology extends the horizon of sociology to various aspects reflected in a personal and communal life establishing typologies or models common to a culture¹⁹

The combination of the new rhetoric with the human sciences offers a more detailed panorama of the world in which a specific discourse emerged. Not only the socio-cultural and religious situation of the particular audience of the text is taken into consideration, but also the importance of the examples of daily life, proverbial phrases, and images of the same society. American biblical scholar Vernon K. Robbins calls socio-rhetoric analysis the method that combines social, anthropological, and rhetorical analysis²⁰. The idea is to analyze what social impact the discourse had on its implied recipients²¹.

While incorporating the perspectives, presuppositions, practices, models, theories, and investigations of sociology, socio-rhetoric has developed its proper principles, methods, and techniques in the world of rhetorical methodology.

This analysis, then, studies a rhetorical discourse or speech as if it was a tapestry made up of various textures of all kinds with complex models, images, and literary figures that must be analyzed one by one, to discover their importance in the final work²². By viewing the text as a complex tapestry made up of various textures, socio-rhetoric introduces a series of new ways of reading the text that allows capturing better the network of connections between the author and the respective audiences:

A linguistic texture

A discourse reveals a sequence of linguistic categories (religion and rituals, popular wisdom, spirituality) that are joined together during the composition of the discourse. Moreover, the text may manifest the use of languages proper of the physical place where it is delivered (a city or a countryside, a temple, a place of work, etc.), the titles of honor given to some members of the society and their actions (ruler, priests, prophets, divinity, etc.).

An internal texture

The interpretation focuses on the different structural, literary, rhetorical, and narrative strategies that the author used when composing the discourse. The interpreter is attentive to specific repetitions of words or phrases that frame a section in the text (inclusions) or point to an essential idea in the author's strategy to give a new perception of the socio-cultural and religious world that his audience has (enthymemes or maxims).

An intertextual texture

The interpreter compares and contrasts the text studied with other texts from the same period. The language, style, and thesis could be the same in other documents that share the same values or not (race, religion, colonialism, migration, etc.). The interpreter shall recognize how the author of the discourse gives a new interpretation or reinforces the central thesis or the message conveyed in the speech. Furthermore, the interpreter must take into account the linguistic phenomena referred to in the text (images, languages, and expressions used by ordinary people, as well as the literary models used in other books).

A socio-cultural and religious texture

The analysis moves from the world of the text into the world of the author and his audience. It asks how do the author and audience locate themselves in their complex cultural environment? A rhetorical text can support a social reform, offer an escape or opposition to the social life in which it arises, or if publicly denounce the abuse, domination, subordination, division, or exclusion of some members of social groups. If so, then an analyst may ask if the author shares the ethical or moral values of other groups of that society, or rejects them.

An ideological texture

The text is not only a vehicle for communicating ideas but rather a way with which the author hopes to achieve a specific goal. What is such a goal? How does the author use the text to reach this goal? It also allows the speaker to suggest alternatives or solutions to a problem present in his audience and thus more easily gain adherence to his proposal. An analysis of the author's ideological texture requires the integration of the knowledge obtained in the use of the other linguistic tools such as the repetition of words or phrases, the selection of arguments, and the use of other texts or social relations.

A sacred texture.

Socio-rhetoric recognizes the importance of the religious dimension of the text studied and how it can contribute to the experience of the divine beings in human history (communication with the heavenly world, the mystical origin of the world, the meaning of humanity, and their final destiny). All this may appear in the interpreter's ethical reflection suggested in the speech.

Human language, by its very nature, is a social phenomenon. The communication between those who speak the same language implies a social agreement on the meaning of words. Furthermore, there is a dialectical relationship between language and the social system because humans are, necessarily, social beings, and their actions are motivated and charged with some social meaning. In summary, the socio-rhetoric analysis applies a multidimensional approach to texts. Its focus is to unravel a document as a linguistic representation of a concrete historical and cultural situation, with a genuine interest in the historical and cultural contexts of the communities behind any discourse, myth, or rhetorical narratives.

About Biblical studies, the emergence of the new rhetoric encouraged scholars to revise the classical definition of rhetoric as a mere instrument of argument. A proper analysis shall review the rhetorical formation of discourses, their social framework, and their usefulness in the construction of a society. In this context, social-rhetoric desires to unite, in a harmonious way, the rhetorical and the social analysis of the New Testament texts. The Sacred Texts used the language of communication with the particular purpose of persuasion. A good socio-rhetorical reading of the Bible must consider the following aspects from the social sciences²³:

1. To understand any scripture in the Bible, we must first become familiar with the culture and social dynamics of those who produced each text, that is, the social system of the first recipients of the New Testament.
2. If a language is the reflection of a social network, it is of great importance to understand the social and cultural meaning of those words. Knowing the culture and the social system in which the text was born, to seek what the author wanted to communicate to a particular audience is the way to unravel the meaning of the words of a New Testament text.
3. Cultural Anthropology science teaches that the exercise of reading the Bible should be twofold. First, a deductive reading in which the reader could not assume that the Bible knows the contemporary set of values of today's world. To do an intelligent reading of the text, the reader should take into consideration the social system of the author and the audience of a biblical text. Second, an interactive reading in which the reader projects him or herself in the book, entering virtually in the world behind the text, so to react if he or she was part of the intended audience. Then, the reader could confirm or modifies his or her contemporary schemes, presumptions, and representations of what the Bible wanted to transmit.
4. To avoid some mistakes in applying this approach to a Biblical analysis: reducing the Biblical message to mere social categories of the past, having little data to reconstruct the social system due to the lack of social models close to the text, or to fall into a vicious circle explaining the book from a social model and vice versa without applying external corrective elements.

Socio-rhetoric rediscovers that many texts of the New Testament were oral texts, that is, a speech, a story, or a letter, was composed to be proclaimed orally to an audience that shared the same values, customs, and aspirations. It studies New Testament narratives, speeches, and discourses

found in the epistolary body as if they were a tapestry made up of various textures of all kinds with complex models, images, and literary figures. Those textures shall be analyzed one by one, to discover their importance in the final work for the early Christian communities²⁴. Vernon K. Robbins has developed six steps to analyze and comment on a Biblical text that incorporates the values, convictions, and beliefs found in the different textures that make up a persuasive Christian discourse²⁵:

1. The linguistic texture reveals that a Biblical discourse contains sequences of prophetic, apocalyptic, wisdom, spiritual, priestly, and miraculous linguistic categories joined together during the composition of the speech. Moreover, New Testament discourse manifests the use of social and cultural images of physical places like city, temple, synagogue, mountain, sea, etc., people with social functions like kings, prophets, priests, etc., divine titles of honor like Lord, messiah, "son of God," "son of David," High Priest, etc., and their actions of prayers, miracles, and sacrifices.
2. The internal texture is attentive to a peculiar repetition of words or phrases that frame a section in the text (inclusions), to point an essential idea in the author's strategy, to give a new perception of the socio-cultural and religious world of his audience. The author may indicate these crucial points in the discourse, pointing out to different senses or areas of the body to emphasize the reception of the speech, for example: Be awake! Stay alert! Do not fool yourself! Look at the sign of the times! Imitate me as I imitate Christ! Walk in faith! Let's join together, etc.
3. The intertextual texture compares and contrasts the literary world of the Bible and how their language may have influenced the biblical text, helping to its impact and reception by the intended audience. The early church and its leaders, for example, were as many members of Greco-Roman culture as they were of Jewish and Christian culture. Furthermore, the interpreter not only identifies possible citations and allusions to the Jewish Scriptures, to the apocryphal literature of the early Christian teachings but must recognize how the author of the speech gives a new interpretation in applying to those texts in his narrative or discourse. When comparing the texts, many languages and cultural expressions may appear revealing the importance given to the audience (i.e., people's clothing, social roles of as patron-client, family structure, the laws of purity, codes of honor and shame, the military environment, the political administration and distribution of food, money and public services. All this confirms that it is impossible to separate a Biblical text from its cultural environment in which emerged.
4. The socio-cultural and religious texture studies the world of the text, the author, and the audience. The ancient Mediterranean world was composed of a complex matrix of divergent and varied groups, each with its own set of values and plans for how those values should be enacted. The interpreter should ask if the biblical author share the ethical or moral values of other groups from that time, or perhaps rejects them and propose different values that identify the Christian way of life. A Sacred Text can support social reform, offer an escape or opposition to the social life in which it arises, and even publicly denounce the abuse, domination, subordination, division, and exclusion of specific members or social groups.

5. Finally, the ideological texture seeks to explore how the biblical author hopes to achieve that his thesis is accepted. Here the Biblical interpreter looks for those linguistic tools used in a text that presents the author's ideology. In the New Testament, for example, Christian preachers and some philosophical schools denounced the corruption of the Greco-Roman society by the unjust and immoral actions of those with power. Christian communities offered an alternative way of life in which reconciliation and harmony between people of diverse origins and status. Hence, the expressions used among many Christian communities was the language of new birth, new creation, justification, salvation, and forgiveness.

Let's keep in mind that, when working on the ideological texture, the interpreter must also consider the contributions and interpretations made to the text by other scholars on the subject. Any analysis is colored and outlined by the experience, social status, and religious or ideological ideals of the commentator. No interpretation of a text is pure. An interpreter will find something in the document that supports or endorses his or her vision.

6. The sacred texture can help bridge the gap between biblical studies and theology, exegesis, and hermeneutics. Indeed, biblical texts are Sacred Texts *par excellence* that, in turn, are part of a collection of sacred literature found among different people and cultures. With their particular originality, the Christian Sacred Texts deal with topics on communication with God through Jesus Christ, the divine origins of creation, in particular of human beings, their redemption and justification, the invitation to enter in a covenant to God, their worship, and the practice of the virtues. The multiplicity of the first Christian discourses resulted in a wealth of terms and concepts that conferred a very new identity on the history of Christianity.

In summary, socio-rhetoric is an approach that aims to enrich the first historical-critical study with an in-depth analysis of the text, at the rhetorical level, and of its historical-social context. Consequently, the socio-rhetoric analysis seeks to reconstruct the possible acceptance or rejection caused by a speech or discourse on the intended audience²⁷. It is in this sense that I consider the socio-rhetorical analysis as an excellent service to the interpretation of the Bible because this methodology does not conform to its mere literary analysis. Still, it measures the impact of the language of revelation in the social context of communication²⁸.

CONCLUSION

I have presented in this article the progress of the new rhetoric as a further analysis besides the Greco-Roman and Semitic rhetoric. Its contribution highlights the importance of knowing the audience address in a narrative, a speech, or a discourse. Once the audience becomes the focus of attention, there is a necessity to investigate the social, cultural, and religious values shared by them and the author of the text. The human sciences, especially sociology and cultural anthropology, provide multiple data to the reader when entering the field of social communication, providing relevant and significant elements for the interpretation of texts. There is no doubt that the data provided by these sciences can clarify, in many aspects and at different levels, the relations that an author maintained with the audience, allowing a modern interpreter to understand better the thesis transmitted. Here it is when the socio-rhetoric method comes into play, studying every layer or texture that composes the text, so the final product can be perceived and value higher than before. The Bible is filled with narratives, speeches, or discourses preserved by those communities of

believers because they contained a message that speaks to us in modern times, inviting us to evaluate our hierarchy of values and highlight those great achievements that will make an impact in our future.

References

1. Cf. David Jasper (2010), *Lecturas literarias de la Biblia*, in John BARTON (ed.), *La Interpretación bíblica hoy*. Maliaño, Sal Terrae, pp. 38-52.
2. Joseph A. Fitzmyer (1995), *The Biblical Commission's Document "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church"*. Text and Commentary, *Subsidia Biblica* 18. Roma, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico.
3. Cf. Paul E. Koptak (August 1996), *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Resource for Preaching*, in *The Covenant Quarterly* (Vol. LIV, No. 3), pp. 26-37.
4. Cf. Wayne Booth (1971), *The scope of rhetoric today: A polemical excursion*, in Lloyd F. Bitzer y Edwin Black (eds.), *The Prospect of Rhetoric Today*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, pp. 93-114.
5. The adjective "new" is due to its application to all those speeches not included in the classic Aristotelian classification of discourses (judicial, deliberative, and epideictic). The audience of these less formal and modern discourses extremely varied and different. Cf. Terry Eagleton (1983), *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 205-206.
6. Cf. George Pullman (2007), *Rhetorically Speaking, What's New?*, in George Pullman (ed.), *What is the New Rhetoric?* Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 16-28.
7. The new rhetoric opens and emphasizes a different perspective within the broad epistemological tradition by re-evaluating the concepts of audience (or reader if the discourse is in a book) and concentrating more on the technique of persuasion as an instruments in communication practice. Cf. Chaïm Perelman (1970), *The New Rhetoric: a Theory of Practical Reasoning*, in *The Great Ideas Today*. Chicago, Encyclopedia Britannica, pp. 1390-1401.
8. These steps are taking from the book of Chaïm Perelman, o.p.
9. For example, the need for conversion, the improvement of his spiritual life, the achievement of his own well-being and that of his family, the use of modern technology to make daily life easier, etc., are based on the fundamental values of life, health, happiness, love, well-being, etc. This style is found within the epideictic discourse, since in it the values shared in the thesis are reinforced with literary figures and examples that help to strengthen a disposition to action by increasing adherence to the values it exalts.
10. Cf. Chaïm Perelman and Lucía Olbrechts-Tyteca (1989), *Tratado de la argumentación: la nueva retórica*. Madrid, Editorial Gredos, pp. 98-99.
11. Cf. Howard Kee (1989), *Knowing the Truth: A sociological approach to New Testament interpretation*. Minneapolis, Fortress press, pp. 65-69.
12. Cf. Wilhelm Wuellner (1993), *Rhetorical Criticism*, in George Aichele, et al., *The Postmodern Bible: The Bible and Culture Collective*, Yale, Yale University, 1995, 162-167; Walter Hansen, *Rhetorical Criticism*, in Gerald Hawthorne et al. (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, pp. 822-824.
13. John Elliot understands social analysis as the critical study of biblical texts through the contribution that human sciences, its principles, theories, and techniques offer to biblical exegesis. Cf. John Elliott (1993), *A Home for the Homeless: A sociological exegesis of 1 Peter, its situation and strategy*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1981, 68; *What is Social Scientific Criticism?* Minneapolis, Fortress Press, pp. 7-8.
14. Cf. Hans Robert Jauss (1987), *El lector como instancia de una nueva historia de la literatura*, in José Antonio Mayoral (ed.), *Estética de la recepción*. Madrid, Arco Libros, pp. 9-85.
15. Cf. David B. Gowler (December 2010), *Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Textures of a Text and its Reception*, in *JSNT* (vol. 33 no. 2), pp. 191-206.

16. Cf. Vernon K. Robbins (1992), *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press.
17. Cf. Keith W. Whitelam (2001), *El mundo social de la Biblia*, in John Barton (ed.), *La interpretación bíblica, hoy*. Santander, Sal Terrae, pp. 53-69.
18. According to Esther Miquel, a historian of the ancient world must distinguish the following three social-scientific types: 1) the social sciences whose analyzes presuppose the structures and cultural context of industrial and post-industrial societies. 2) Those disciplines focused on the study of current, low-industrialized societies with some traditional pre-industrial institutions. 3) The social sciences that investigate the relationships between subject and society that can be adapted to any human group. Cf. Esther Miquel (2011), *El Nuevo Testamento desde las ciencias sociales*, Estella, EVD. pp. 34-38.
19. Bengt Holmberg (1995), *Historia del cristianismo primitivo. La sociología y el Nuevo Testamento*. Córdoba, El Almendro, p. 12.
20. Vernon K. Robbins (2010), *Socio-rhetorical Interpretation*, in Aune, David (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, pp. 192-219.
21. Cf. Stephen Barton (1995), *Historical Criticism and Social-Scientific Perspectives*, in Joel Green (ed.), *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for interpretation*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing, p. 68.
22. Cf. Vernon K. Robbins (1996), *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide of Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation*. Harrisburg, Trinity Press, pp. 21-24, 52-58, and 120-130; David DeSilva (2000), *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, pp. xii-xiii.
23. When applying social sciences, the reader (1) needs to select the appropriate social and cultural frame of reference to place in it the meaning of the words that the text communicates; (2) establishes comparisons and carry out intercultural studies to avoid reading the texts anachronistically and ethno-centristically; (3) takes into account the contributions of anthropological studies of those pre-industrial societies closer to the culture of the early Christians but without romanticizing the lifestyle of those “early societies,” but rather highlight their “traditional and authentic values” that may have been lost in the contemporary culture. Cf. Rafael Aguirre (1994), *La mesa compartida. Estudios del Nuevo Testamento desde las ciencias sociales*. Santander, Sal Terrae, p. 15.
24. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson, ed (2003) , *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins*. Harrisburg, Trinity Press International, pp. 242-263.
25. After step 1, commentators can continue with steps 2-5 in any order they choose. The important thing is that there is an explicit analysis and interpretation of the six textures of the text.
26. Cf. Vernon K. Robbins (1996), *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. London, Routledge, pp. 108-118.
27. Pedro Cabello Morales (2011), “Tened cuidado y guardaos de toda codicia”. *Hacia una interpretación conciliadora del tema riqueza-pobreza en Lc-Hch a partir del análisis socio-retórico de Lc 12,13-34*. Estella, EVD, pp. 80-81.