

**Re-visioning stigma: A socio-rhetorical reading of
Luke 10:25-37 in the context of HIV/AIDS in South
Africa**



**Dissertation presented for the degree of D. Phil (Theology)
University of the Western Cape**

**Supervisor: Prof. Elna Mouton
Co-supervisor: Prof. Ernst Conradie**

February 2008

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

Re-visioning Stigma: A Socio-rhetorical reading of Luke 10:25-37 in the context of
HIV/AIDS in South Africa

Is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or assessment in any other university, and that all the sources I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature:

Date:

Miranda N. Pillay



ABSTRACT

Key words:

Socio-rhetorical Interpretation

Rhetorolects

Early Christian Discourse

Stigma

HIV/AIDS

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Church

Physiognomy

Luke 10: 25-37

Good Samaritan

HIV and AIDS present challenges to the well-being of individuals and to public health of proportions unprecedented in modern history, and stigma has been identified as the single most contributor to the spread of the HI-virus. While the challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic are scientific and medical, it also has a psychological, legal, economic, social, ethical and religious impact on those infected and affected. This calls for a multi-disciplinary approach involving all spheres of society, including the Christian church.

The underlying question in this dissertation is not whether the church should respond to this urgent societal challenge, but how it ought to respond. To explore this question, the dissertation investigates how a New Testament text (as primary resource), particularly Luke's Gospel could be a resource for shaping/sharpening the church's response to the pandemic. However, reading a first century document in the context of a twenty-first century societal challenge, poses serious hermeneutical questions. Besides the historical gap (with all its social and cultural ramifications), New Testament texts lend itself to diverse, contradictory and ambiguous interpretations. Therefore, an argument is made for a multi-dimensional interpretive framework, namely socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI).

Chapter one of the dissertation offers a description of SRI as an interpretive 'analytics' and it maps the development of SRI. Chapter two presents an excursion of the relevance of Luke's

Gospel over the centuries and a narrative reading of Luke 1-9 is set in the context of worship and healing, respectively. It also sets the scene for chapter three, which offers a socio-rhetorical analysis of Luke 10:25-37. Ultimately, chapter three determines (through the SRI strategy of blending) how Luke (10:25-37) interwove various (mainly pictorial) discourses from which new (Christian) ways of ‘seeing’, thinking, speaking, choosing and acting emerged within the broader Mediterranean context. A final chapter sketches the real life experiences of two Christian believers who are HIV positive, and the choices they are faced with. Being mindful of making ‘unaccounted-for’ links between the life-experiences of first century and twenty-first century Christians, the dissertation argues that the present day church, as worshipping community, could influence its members to make choices that are congruent with their Christian identity.

Miranda N. Pillay

Department of Religion and Theology

University of the Western Cape

February 2008



OPSOMMING

In die moderne geskiedenis hou HIV en VIGS uitdagings van ongekende proporsies in vir die welwees van individue en openbare gesondheid. Stigmatisering is geïdentifiseer as die grootste bydraende faktor tot die verspreiding van die HI-virus. Alhoewel die uitdagings van die VIGS pandemie wetenskaplik en medies is, het dit ook 'n psigologiese, wetlike, ekonomiese, sosiale, etiese en geestelike impak op almal wat geïnfekteer en geïmpak is. 'n Multi-dissiplinêre benadering word dus benodig wat alle gebiede van die samelewing betrek, insluitend die Christelike kerk.

Die onderliggende vraag van hierdie proefskrif is nie of die kerk moet reageer op hierdie dringende sosiale uitdaging nie, maar wat daardie reaksie moet wees. In die verkenning van hierdie vraag, ondersoek die proefskrif hoe 'n Nuwe Testament teks (as primêre bron), meer spesifiek die Lukas Evangelie, 'n bron kan wees wat die kerk se reaksie op die pandemie kan vorm en verskerp. Tog hou die lees van 'n eerste-eeuse dokument in die konteks van 'n twintigste-eeuse samelewingsuitdaging ernstige hermeneutiese vraagstukke in. Buiten die historiese gaping (in ag genome die sosiale en kulturele implikasies), verleen Nuwe Testament tekste hulself tot diverse teenstrydighede en dubbelsinnige interpretasies. Daarom word daar 'n saak gemaak vir 'n multi-dimensionele interpretasie/vertolkingsraamwerk, naamlik sosio-retoriese interpretasie (SRI).

Hoofstuk een van die proefskrif bied 'n beskrywing van SRI as 'n interpretasie/vertolkings-analise en dit stip die ontwikkeling van SRI uit. Hoofstuk twee bied 'n uiteensetting van die relevansie van die Lukas Evangelie oor die eeue heen, asook 'n narratiewe lees van Lukas 1-9 word gedoen in die konteks van aanbidding en genesing. Dit stel ook die toneel vir hoofstuk drie wat 'n sosio-retoriese analise van Lukas 10:25-37 maak. Uiteindelik bepaal die hoofstuk (deur die SRI strategie van “blending”) hoe Lukas (10:25-37) verskeie (veral beskrywende) diskoerse verweef om nuwe (Christelike) maniere van ‘sien’, dink, praat, kies en handelinge ‘onderhandel’ binne 'n breër Mediterreense konteks te verwesenlik. 'n Finale hoofstuk skets die regte lewenservarings van twee Christen gelowiges wat HIV positief is en die keuses wat hulle in die gesig staar. Hierdie proefskrif, alhoewel bewus daarvan om nie onbewysbare verbintenisse tussen lewenservarings van die eerste-eeuse en twintigste-eeuse Christene te maak nie, argumenteer dat die hedendaagse kerk as 'n aanbiddingsgemeenskap sy lede kan beïnvloed om keuses te maak wat ooreenstem met hulle Christelike identiteit.

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My love, thanks and gratitude to all colleagues, friends and family for encouraging, inspiring, and supporting me during this journey of my academic life. I remember with gratitude *everyone* who has influenced me along the road of life that has brought me to the start of this particular journey.

Professor Elna Mouton, who has acted as my supervisor during this project, and who has been my mentor since I first started tertiary education in 1993, I offer my heartfelt respect and appreciation for the encouraging, inspiring and welcoming spirit she embodies with such integrity and wisdom.

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Three months before her death she had (according to her) a 'near-death' experience. When she was discharged from hospital, she said to me, "My experience has made me think ... and now my concern is not about the church or its leaders." In her words, "Dit gaan nie oor watter kerk 'n mens aan behoort nie, en of die Apostoliese-geloof reg of verkeerd is nie - maar oor my siel. Ek bid dat God, deur sy genade, dit wat ek in glo en doen, my die ewige-lewe sal laat ingaan."

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INTRODUCTION

How do I introduce this research? This is the question I am confronted with after having written the thesis. Perhaps a good place to start is to pose another question: *Why this particular project at this time?* I shall attempt to answer this question by ‘putting my cards on the table’. I do this because as an African woman theologian my life-experiences are the basis from which I write. Also, through my interaction with socio-rhetorical interpretation and feminist interpretation/s of the Bible,¹ I have become acutely aware of how the ‘ideological texture’ of one’s own story influences one’s reading and writing.

1. MY SOCIAL LOCATION²

My immediate professional (scholarly) location is that of a doctoral student, who has to present a dissertation for examination. My socio-cultural location is that of a (coloured) Christian woman living in a (new) democratic, multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-religious South Africa – a country where the joy of freedom from the shackles of apartheid is overtaken by despair as stigma fuels the spread of HIV. As a sexually active married woman I am aware of my own vulnerability and therefore I go regularly for HIV-testing.³ As a mother of two young adult daughters I am aware of their vulnerability to getting infected.⁴ As a lecturer I am aware of the challenges that students face regarding their sexuality.⁵ The complexity of the nature of the disease and the extent of its impact on *all spheres of society* have made me, a student in Biblical Studies, realize the relevance of this research – both to the scholarly world and to the reality of life.

¹ See Oduyoye (1995) and Schüssler Fiorenza (1988).

² If I had to speak about ‘my location’ in apartheid South Africa, it would have ‘located’ me as a black person, since black people lived in locations, coloured people lived in townships and white people lived in suburbs.

³ I choose to be a faithful sexual partner and I do hope that my husband does too. However, one hears too often that a ‘faithful’ partner had become HIV-infected. That is the reality of life in an AIDS era.

⁴ I hope that they make responsible choices regarding their sexuality. Also, that they minimize occupational risks of getting infected, since they are both health professionals.

⁵ Given the high prevalence rate among the 15-49 age group, university students are part of this ‘at risk’ group - a group with hopes and aspirations for a ‘bright future’. Access to tertiary education is a ‘first’ for the majority of South African families and so the hope for a ‘bright future’ is also that of the family. Furthermore, the youth in general and particularly university students are also regarded as the ‘future leaders’ of the country. Thus, it is evident that the AIDS pandemic presents the youth, and particularly university students with challenges that are different to any other generation of youth. The situation is worse for the youth coming from poverty entrapped rural areas, when hopes for education, better living conditions and sustainable livelihoods are catapulted into despair when testing positive for the HI-virus. As the case studies in chapter four of the dissertation show, students grapple with issues relating to the expectations others have on them, their own aspirations, fear, shame, disappointment in self and others, alienation, belonging, honesty, health, sex, life, death.

My present social and cultural location gives me keen interest in a methodology that is multi-dimensional, non-exclusionary, welcoming, inviting, non-threatening, and continuously in search. At the moment, Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation (hereafter SRI) as espoused by Vernon Robbins⁶ (See 1996a; 1996b; 2007a) appeals to me to be a suitable tool with which to read multi-textured, multi-vocal first century texts in the context of multi-complex twenty-first century societal challenges. Moreover, my meetings with main proponent of SRI, Vernon Robbins,⁷ have revealed that he personally embodies the ‘full-bodied’, interactive, dialogical approach of which he speaks and writes.⁸ And, however I want to stereotype (and perhaps stigmatize) him as a North American white male, I cannot.

Why Luke’s Gospel? That is a long story that goes all the way back to my being a student at the then, University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) in the early to late 1990s.⁹ This was a time when South Africans (black, white, coloured, Indian, Chinese)¹⁰ were re-negotiating our identities in a post-apartheid South Africa. The prescribed texts then (e.g. Miroslav Volf’s *Exclusion and Embrace*) (1996) selected by my New Testament professor, Elna Mouton, and the theme of visiting (Lukan) scholar Beverly Gaventa’s lectures, *The Place of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, were not only relevant contextually in a scholarly way, but also profoundly encouraging in an environment where legitimizing traditions and master discourses of apartheid were no longer dominant culture rhetoric.

But neither were Christian discourses the dominant/legitimate religious language. The relevance of the Christian Bible became a topic of scholarly discussion (Smit 1991). Christians (like myself) became more aware that the Bible was the book of the Christian church. And that, in a democratic, pluralist society being Christian is not a given. It is now the responsibility of Christians to ‘choose’ how to *be* Christian within the broader South

⁶ Vernon K. Robbins is a Research Professor of New Testament and Comparative Sacred Texts in the Humanities, located in the Department and Graduate Division of Religion at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

⁷ As visiting professor to Stellenbosch University (South Africa) but particularly during my visit to Emory in March 2007.

⁸ During my ten-day visit to Emory I traveled with him to campus in the morning. As we exited the car-park he would stop to greet the attendant. He introduced me to her (by name). I have now forgotten her name or the African country where she’s from. As we walked away from her, he could tell me that she was knitting for the baby she was expecting. I have experienced his attitude as a professor (even with undergraduate students) as non-hierarchical, open, friendly, inviting.

⁹ UPE (now known as the Nelson Mandela Metropole University) opened its Centre for Continued Education (off main campus) for people of colour in the early 1980’s. My husband, Greg, made use of this opportunity and completed his first degree in 1987 (aged thirty-one). In 1995, at the age of forty, I was the first woman in our family to obtain a university qualification.

¹⁰ This was the categories of racial classification in apartheid South Africa.

African society. The Bible in general and the New Testament in particular is a primary resource that could influence the choices Christian believers make in the context of HIV and AIDS. Not disregarding that this requires serious hermeneutical reflection, the following questions come to mind: *Do Christians 'see' the Bible as a resource for shaping/influencing their choices? If so, Are they looking in the right direction? How can the church (as custodian of the Bible) be a conduit for (re)focusing their vision?*

So, while the dissertation is (I hope) a scholarly document for examination purposes, it is also imbued with ideological texture concerning my own social and cultural location.¹¹

2. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

HIV/AIDS¹² has now reached pandemic proportions in South Africa¹³ and other developing countries throughout the world. HIV and AIDS present challenges to the well-being of individuals and to public health of proportions unprecedented in modern history.¹⁴ While the challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic are scientific and medical, it also has a psychological, legal, economic, social, ethical and religious impact on those infected and affected.¹⁵ This calls for a multi-disciplinary approach involving all spheres of society¹⁶ to

¹¹ Hence the personal information, which to some may appear 'out of place' in a project of this nature.

¹² The separation of the terms: HIV and AIDS have emerged during a time when it was argued that HIV does not equal AIDS. While this discourse has its merits in the light of stigma against HIV-positive individuals and groups, it also carries a negative connotation which emerged during the debate (amongst certain South African parliamentarians, including the State President, Thabo Mbeki) that HIV does not cause AIDS. It is with a critical awareness of this anomaly that three terms (HIV/AIDS; HIV and AIDS; AIDS pandemic) are used (interactively) in this study. What these terms stand for medically is rather well known. Suffice to say that the acronyms HIV and AIDS stand for Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, respectively. Furthermore, it is not necessary to expound here on the nature of the complexities of HIV and AIDS, since there is a plethora of information in this regard, which the references in this thesis refer to.

¹³ UNAIDS estimates reveal that of the 47.4 million South Africans, 5.5 million are HIV positive and this number is growing by 1 800 new infections every day. The 2006 UNAIDS Global Report estimates that AIDS claimed the lives of 320 000 South Africans during 2005 – that's more than 800 a day (www.unaids.org/en/hiv_data/2006globalreport). Based on the South African National HIV Survey of 2005, researchers estimate that 10,8% of all South Africans over 2 years old were living with HIV in 2005. Among those between 15 and 49 years old, the estimated HIV prevalence was 16,2% in 2005. It is estimated that 30,2% of pregnant women were living with HIV in 2005. Worldwide, 40 million people are now living with the virus, and 12 million children are orphaned (Dube 2003:1).

¹⁴ Despite vigorous awareness campaigns the number of new HIV infections continues to spiral out of control. Limited access to medication and the affordability of such; poverty and economic vulnerability; gender power-relations and sexism; ABC response without an accompanying sexual ethic have been cited as exacerbating the spread of HIV. For an explanation of these terms, see Pillay (2003a), Church Discourse on HIV/AIDS: A Responsible Response to a Disaster?

¹⁵ Many of these issues are embedded in the hierarchies of power which shape our history, viz. colonialism and apartheid where structures of racism, classism and sexism developed and sustained political, economic and social marginalization. Patriarchal hierarchies of the Christian Church and African tradition further intensify social marginalization – particularly that of women. See for example Masenya (2003); Snidle (1997) Saayman (1991); Saayman & Kriel (1991); Pillay (2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2005); Phiri (2003).

explore unique and creative ways of responding by all sectors of society, including the church.¹⁷ In South Africa the Christian churches are an important factor in society.¹⁸ The church can therefore act as an agent of change, which was true for a number of churches during the struggle against apartheid.¹⁹

It is so that the present-day Christian churches face societal challenges that are very different to those of the first century Christians. Ancient first century texts cannot serve as a blueprint for guiding Christians about life and life-style choices in the twenty-first century. However, Scripture continues to function in Christian discourse as a source of insight and hope,²⁰ and thus has the potential to (among other influences) impact on the way Christians see/perceive reality, think, speak, make choices and act in different places and times. Pervasiveness

South Africans are generally quite familiar with the many challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.²¹ A common factor – of the multiple challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic,

¹⁶ All people cannot respond to all the challenges and, based on their life-experiences, interests and capabilities have to make choices about what angle to respond from, and what such a response would entail. Many people of course do not respond to any of the challenges posed by the AIDS pandemic, which also is a choice!

¹⁷ I am aware that 'church' has different meanings in different contexts. I return to this issue in chapter four of the dissertation. The church (in its rich variety of manifestations) has, in a variety of ways responded to the pandemic. For information on how the church has responded, and also some of the challenges it faces, see Greyling (2001); Methodist Church of Southern Africa (2001); Nicolson (1995); Ndungane, N (2004); Pick (2002); Pillay (2003a; 2003b). Also see the 'Special Issue' of JTSA (November 2006) on *Church, HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa*.

¹⁸ 80% of South Africans claim to be Christian, according to the population census of 1996 (www.gov.za/yearbook/rainbow.htm). Richard Elphick (1997:1) notes that the profile of Christian South Africans in 1990 was as follows: 76% of black South Africans, 86% of coloured South Africans, 13% of Indian South Africans and 92% of white South Africans call themselves "Christian".

¹⁹ Nicolson (1995:7) explains that the churches' slow response to HIV/AIDS is understandable if one considers that other problems in South Africa, especially the injustice, the violence and the political volatility during the apartheid era, seemed more immediately urgent. There are other reasons for the churches' slow response - and continued reluctance by some churches – such as the (previously held) view that AIDS is a homosexual disease or that AIDS is God's judgment on the sexual impurities of homosexuals and promiscuous people, who "deserve" it. Sam Pick (2002:17) reminds us that AIDS was first known as GRID (Gay Related Immune Deficiency).

²⁰ A number of articles have already been written, calling for the re-reading of Scripture in the context of HIV and AIDS. See for example, Akoto (2004); Ackermann (2001); Anderson (2003); Akintunde (2003); Boniface-Malle (2004); Byamugisha, Gideon B (1998b); Dube (2004b); Haddad (2003); Pillay (2004; 2005); Weissenrieder (2002). As a response to this challenge, sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 of this thesis is an attempt to offer a (imaginary) reading that evoke an awareness of the pervasiveness of stigma, based on the (othered) human body.

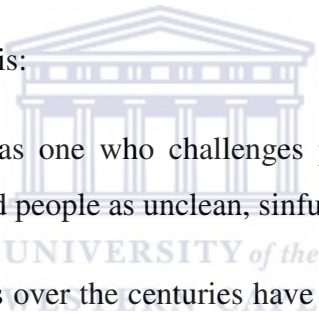
²¹ The list of these challenges is clear and stark: the need for a network of care-givers with various forms of expertise (medical, social, psychological, religious) that can cope with millions of infected and affected people, the quest for appropriate medical treatment and HIV-immunization, the availability of pharmaceutical drugs and the financing of such medical treatment (by the state and international donors), the immense economic impact of illness and death associated with HIV/AIDS, effective campaigns for moral formation and education to prevent the further spreading of the virus, the disruption of family and social life for decades to come. Also see Pillay, (2003b:160) for a concise recapitulation of some of the many challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic.

which include (among many other challenges) gender power-relations, poverty, healthcare, livelihood, etc. – is that of stigma.²²

3. THE THESIS

In essence, this study will involve a socio-rhetorical reading of Luke 10:25-37.²³ This analysis is based on a two-fold premise which underpins the main challenge for those who employ SRI. Firstly, it is based on the understanding that New Testament texts contain multiple and complex socio-linguistic patterns and images, which call for a multi-disciplinary interpretive programme, which will enable the interpreter to bring multiple textures of the text into view. Secondly, New Testament texts are multi-vocal because early Christians interwove various (argumentative and pictorial) conceptual frames as they ‘negotiated’ new (Christian) ways of ‘seeing’, thinking, speaking, choosing and acting during a time of (political and religious) transition within a broader Mediterranean context. Thus the challenge will be to identify different types of (persuasive) discourses present in a particular text.

The thesis of this research project is:

- 
- that Luke presents Jesus as one who challenges perceptions, attitudes and actions which stigmatize and brand people as unclean, sinful and ‘unholy’;
 - that Christian communities over the centuries have interpreted Lukan text in the light of their particular (and varied) societal challenges, and continue to do so;

²² There are numerous publications on HIV/AIDS and its complexities. And since these scholars in turn refer to, cite or challenge or build on the views of their sources, I think it reasonable to acknowledge this. Therefore, the sources referred to in this thesis very often have (in brackets) a ‘secondary’ source, indicating how the sources referred to, have engaged with their sources. While the full bibliographical details of these ‘secondary sources’ are not recorded in the bibliography of this thesis, the reader gets some indication where the ideas or information come from and how to locate it. This practice has itself been inspired by SRI, particularly by how Vernon Robbins acknowledges that the insights gained from other scholars (and methodologies) have contributed to the development of SRI. It thus comes as no surprise that some scholars, particularly those who see SRI as ‘competing’ with other methodologies, might think that proponents of SRI are stating ‘the obvious in more sophisticated terms’.

²³ The reason for choosing this particular periscope, and not for example a Lukan text which refers to leprosy, (which some readers might think more appropriate in this instance), is because the particular focus of this thesis is not the miracle healing of the body, but the miracle of *seeing* the stigmatized body differently. Furthermore, this uniquely Lukan text (Luke 10:25-37) brings to mind stigmatized (bloody and deceased) bodies and (unclean) Samaritan bodies. Also, the narrative *genre* of the periscope resonates with the narrative thrust of the thesis.

- that outcomes of interpretations of Lukan texts over the centuries had been influenced not only by particular societal challenges, but also by the particular modes of interpretation employed;
- that the Lukan text (like other New Testament texts) is multi-dimensional and if it is to serve as a (Christian) resource for a multi-dimensional social challenge such as HIV and AIDS, a multi-dimensional interpretive strategy is required;
- that a socio-rhetorical interpretation of Luke (10:25-37) will illuminate how Luke particularly reconfigured the conceptual frames such as ‘stigma’ and ‘holiness’ by blending certain discourses operative in the first century Mediterranean world, in an attempt to persuade his listeners/readers to ‘see differently’;
- that the insights into alternative ways of seeing and being could be a resource for the church ‘to see’ how its unique Christian response to stigma could contribute to addressing the varied and complex challenges posed by the AIDS pandemic.

Before I proceed with an outline of the investigation, I would like to contextualize ‘stigma’ which I believe is the ‘thread’ holding together the different aspects of the investigation. Stigmatization (or branding) of the human body was a reality in the lives of Christians in the first century Mediterranean world, and it is also a reality in the lives of Christians in the twenty-first century. This will become clear in chapters two, three and four of the dissertation. What follows is a cursory overview of an understanding of stigma in the era of AIDS.

4. STIGMA: A CHALLENGE TO SOCIETIES FOR OVER TWENTY-ONE CENTURIES

The term ‘stigma’ has its origin in classical Greek when it referred to a “branding mark” on a person’s body by which he or she would be identified as a blemished person, says Paterson (2005:34-36), citing Goffman.²⁴ Outwardly branded as someone who had done something wrong, contact with such a person was to be avoided. Back then, people were branded by signs either cut, or burnt onto their bodies.

²⁴ Paterson (2005:34-36) gives a concise overview and evaluation of “Goffman’s stigma”. Fife & Wright (2000:50) cites Goffman as having recognized that various types of illness are associated with stigma “or membership in a social category that results in a spoiled identity setting the individual apart from others”.

Today, the meaning of stigma is much more complex and varied than an outward branding mark.²⁵ Our understanding of stigma is shaped by our historical and cultural contexts, says South African feminist theologian Denise Ackermann (2005:388). South African High Court judge Edwin Cameron (2005:66) concurs when he states that the roots of stigma lie deeply within our own profound thoughts and feelings. These thoughts and feelings are influenced by social, cultural, ethnic, political, gender and religious factors.

Stigma, very broadly speaking, is a term that “marks and then excludes a person as being tainted or alien, or of less value, blameworthy, or to be feared as undesirably different” (Ackermann, 2005:388). “Victim-blaming” according to Minkler (1999:128) results in the fact that “being ill is redefined as being guilty”. In poetic genre Cameron, being HIV-positive himself, states:

AIDS is stigma disgrace hatred hardship abandonment isolation exclusion prohibition persecution poverty privation. AIDS is metaphor. It is a threat a tragedy a blight a blot a scar a stain a plague a scourge a pestilence a demon killer rampant rampaging murderer. It is made moral. It is condemnation deterrence retribution punishment, a sin a lesson a curse rebuke judgment (2005:42).

The above quote reflects societal perceptions, discourses, and responses to the AIDS pandemic. In a study that compares the effects of stigma associated with HIV and cancer, Fife and Wright (2000:53) note that “self-esteem, an individual’s sense of personal control, and body image are less severely affected” for those living with cancer than for those living with HIV and/or AIDS. Using four dimensions - social rejection, financial insecurity, internalized shame and social isolation - as stigma measures, their study shows that the impact of stigma on the “self” is without exception significantly higher for individuals with HIV/AIDS than for individuals with cancer (2000:58).

Fife and Wright (2000:63) conclude that being rejected by others and feeling socially isolated is instrumental in understanding self-esteem. They note that body-image was most heavily influenced by social isolation, while financial insecurity and social isolation were the dimensions of stigma most consequential for understanding the lack of a sense of personal control. A further observation of the impact of stigma on self-esteem reveals that internalization of stigma as shame was “predictive of greater self-deprecation as well as a lower sense of personal control”.

²⁵ Sandelowski, Lambe and Barroso (2004:122) note that Goffman’s classic work on stigma has been a major theme in empirical studies on stigma.

Louise Kretschmar (1998) distinguishes between external stigma and internal stigma. External stigmatization is an outcome of external oppression. According to Kretschmar (1998:173) external oppression manifests itself as laws, rules and perceptions that discriminate against marginalized groups. External stigma is the branding of those who are living with HIV and AIDS as sexually promiscuous and is reflected in the judgmental (and patronizing) way people speak of those who are HIV-positive or have AIDS. While social hostility towards sero-positive people may have declined, it certainly has not disappeared. A metathesis of qualitative findings on stigma in HIV-positive women (Sandelowski et.al. 2004:124)²⁶ reveals that 80% of the literature under scrutiny contained references to stigma. “For these woman”, the study reveals, “living with HIV infection meant living with fear and the hurtful effects of stigmatization, including social rejection, discrimination, and even violence, in relation with children, partners, relatives, friends and acquaintances, employers and co-workers, and health care providers” (2004:124). They continue:

Women anticipated being stigmatized, or felt stigmatized, even when they reported no specific stigmatizing act directed toward them. A factor likely accounting for the frequent blurring of perceived and actual stigma was the women’s internalization of negative cultural views of HIV infection that contributed to their feeling dirty, deadly, and deficient. (Sandelowski et.al. 2004:124)

Internal stigma, explains Cameron, is the “shame” one feels of having picked up an infection from a private, intimate, expressive, hopefully loving act” (Sunday Times, 17 April 2006:19). I think “internal stigma” is also feelings of guilt for having disappointed those who have certain expectations of you. As Kretschmar (1998:174) points out, “One consequence of [this] internalized oppression is the persistent and chronic feelings of guilt [...]”. She argues that “neurotic guilt” is a false guilt which is imposed upon certain people by those who wish to maintain control over them. The victims of oppression take on board a false and neurotic form of guilt (1998:174).

There are many horror stories in South Africa of individuals driven from their homes and communities because of their positive sero-status.²⁷ This is because the individuals are blamed for “getting the disease” and bringing it into the family or community. However, as a

²⁶ This study, focusing on the integration of qualitative studies with specific emphasis on “stigma on HIV-positive women”, found that the first qualitative “study of women with HIV infection” was published in 1991 and thus the period 1991-2002 was used to demarcate this study.

²⁷ This generally means that one has tested HIV-positive. Being sero-negative means that one does not have the HI-virus.

social collective, families and communities should consider how attitudes of prejudice and acts of discrimination impact on the choices individuals make.

Risking huge hermeneutical leaps, I want to suggest that Lukan texts - which present Jesus as one who challenges stigma based on codes which branded individuals and communities as 'sinners' - could be a resource for Christian churches to review attitudes that stigmatize as it contribute to the spread of the AIDS pandemic.

5. OUTLINE OF THE INVESTIGATION

Chapter one, *Socio-rhetorical interpretation: an interpretive framework*, describes, explains and maps socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI) as a methodological tool for reading the selected Lukan text. The mapping exercise benefits the researcher (and subsequent readers - albeit not the focus of this document) in gaining a grasp of the multi-dimensional nature of SRI. This chapter also presents SRI as a multi-disciplinary and dialogical interpretive framework. SRI is presented as a multi-dimensional interpretive programme suitable for reading New Testament texts which are multi-textured and multi-vocal in nature. Attempts are made to, as far as possible, foreground only those aspects of SRI which are used later in the 'reading' of the text. However, care is taken not to let the tool determine the interpretation, but that the text be the point of departure for interpretation.

Chapter two: *The Gospel of Luke: a resource for societal challenges of the 21st century?* The question mark reflects the caution which accompanies such a claim. The chapter wishes to explore the possibilities that the Gospel of Luke holds for shaping an ecclesial response to the challenges of stigma in the context of HIV and AIDS. In order to do this, the chapter sets out to describe how Luke has functioned as an ecclesial resource for addressing societal challenges over the centuries, followed by an overview of approaches to Lukan research since late 20th century. The chapter then offers a narrative exposition of Luke, Chapters 1 to 9. The intention behind this narrative reading is to illuminate patterns of stigma resulting from physical illness or social exclusion in Luke's Gospel. This exposition also serves to situate Luke 10:25-37, the passage selected for analysis in chapter three, in the broader Lukan context.

Chapter three: *Luke 10:25-37: The Turning Point*, offers a socio-rhetorical interpretation of Luke 10:25-37. This passage was selected because of its position in the Lukan narrative in general and the journey narrative in particular. The text functions as 'a turning point' in the

dissertation as, by applying the tools of SRI, the parable of *The Good Samaritan* becomes a beacon which allows listeners/hearers to ‘see’ the way (to inheriting eternal life). This is done by firstly exploring the different textures of the text which exhibit particular conceptual frames. Based on the images presented, modes of early Christian discourse (rhetorolects) are identified. By observing and analyzing how these rhetorolects interact with one another, one can identify how this process of *blending* reveals ‘what’ Luke wants his hearers/readers ‘to see’ in his appeal for a new Christian paideia.²⁸ The purpose of this exercise is to investigate how Luke engages existing/known frames of references in a first century Mediterranean context to appeal for alternative ways of being and acting. This chapter shows that, for Luke, it starts with ‘seeing’ differently.

Chapter four: *Reading Luke 10:25-37 in the context of HIV and AIDS in South Africa*, turns the lens from the picturesque journey mapping the Lukan presentation of Jesus as one who challenges stigma (based on Hebraic purity laws) toward the stories of two (Christian) individuals who experience stigma in the context of HIV/AIDS. These case studies, together with insights gained from the socio-rhetorical interpretation of Luke 10:25-37 are used (analogously) to make an argument for the possibilities of Luke (and by implication other New Testament texts) being a resource shaping/sharpening/reviewing the church’s response to stigma in the context of the AIDS pandemic. It is suggested that ‘the church’ as worshipping community has the capacity to “look” and that Luke’s Gospel in general, and the parable of *The Good Samaritan* in particular, provide the capability ‘to see’.

²⁸ Hester (2002:504) explains what is meant by the word “paideia”. He says the term is both definitional and contextual. Christian paideia means “that body of tradition, and the teaching that derives from it, that defines the topography of the world that Christians created from the experience of belief”. Robbins (2007a:16) also makes reference to Hester’s use of the term.

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIO-RHETORICAL INTERPRETATION: AN INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

A growing awareness of the multi-dimensional nature of textual communication during the second half of the twentieth century stimulated the urge for some kind of an integrating, organizing, comprehensive, all encompassing approach toward the biblical documents.

(Elna Mouton 2002:25)

The practitioner of interpretive analytics realized that he himself [or she herself] is produced by what he [or she] is studying: consequently he [or she] can never stand outside it.

(Vernon K. Robbins 1997:29)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

New Testament texts are rooted in the life-experiences of the first followers of Jesus in a first century Mediterranean social context. Thus, any attempt to interpret New Testament texts in response to 21st century societal problems calls for serious methodological considerations.²⁹ It was noted in the introduction that recent methodological developments in New Testament scholarship have been characterized by appeals for an interdisciplinary approach, using insights, methods and procedures derived from disciplines such as linguistics, literary theory, social sciences and philosophy (Botha 1994; Punt 1998; Combrink 1999; Mouton 1995). An approach which claims to offer an interpretive framework for such integration is ‘socio-rhetorical interpretation’ (hereafter SRI).³⁰

The overall purpose of this chapter is first to describe, explain and map SRI as a methodological tool for reading New Testament texts in general, and Luke 10:25-37 in particular.³¹ For the purpose of this dissertation, it is necessary to ‘map’ the development of

²⁹ This dissertation seeks to offer a reading of Luke (a first century text) as an ecclesial resource for responding to the challenges of stigma in the context of HIV/AIDS (a 21st century societal issue).

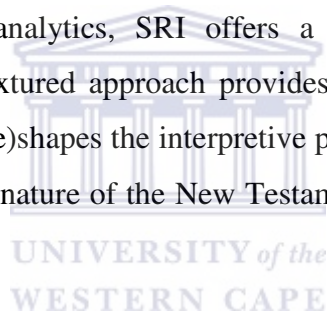
³⁰ South African Biblical scholar Jan Botha himself employs linguistics, literary studies, rhetoric and social science to interpret Romans 13:1-7 – as four approaches among many other possibilities, but points out that he does not attempt to “integrate the four methods as a comprehensive exegetical or hermeneutical model” for interpreting the selected text.

³¹ This is done in chapter three of the dissertation.

SRI as an interpretive tool.³² This mapping exercise benefits the researcher in gaining a grasp of the multi-dimensional nature of SRI. It also highlights the multi-disciplinary and dialogical manner in which SRI developed as an interpretive framework.³³

Secondly, this chapter explores SRI as an appropriate interpretive tool for this particular project. While it is not practical (or even possible) to utilize all the interpretive possibilities available through SRI in any one instance of interpretation, it was thought necessary to present all (at least to my present understanding) interpretive strategies available through SRI. However, some interpretive strategies will be foregrounded more than others.³⁴ My understanding is that, as an interpretive analytics, SRI presupposes an interaction between *text and tool*.³⁵ Therefore, guided by a preliminary reading of the selected text, it is possible to foreground some aspects of SRI. However, another reading of the text (at another time, in another place) may prompt a different selection of interpretive strategies from the range presented through SRI.

As an interactive interpretive analytics, SRI offers a multi-dimensional hermeneutical framework.³⁶ While the multi-textured approach provides multiple entry-points and angles into the text, it also guides and (re)shapes the interpretive process. This has led proponents of SRI to recognize the multi-vocal nature of the New Testament, which resulted in identifying



³² However, the nature of SRI lends itself to an “openness” to be shaped and sharpened and for its boundaries to be redrawn. Therefore there is always the possibility of an interpreter bringing new insights to enhance SRI as an interpretive tool, though it is not the purpose of this dissertation.

³³ While it may be argued that the mapping of the development of SRI and the detailed description of all the processes are not necessary for this project and that, rather, a selection of particular interpretive tools of SRI should have been made, it is my view that an understanding of the (dialogical) context from which SRI developed and its interdisciplinary nature necessitate ‘unpacking’ whatever is available through this interpretive framework. Furthermore, through this exercise I have gained a comprehensive overview of SRI, which will be of benefit in future projects.

³⁴ Robbins aptly reminds us that when certain strategies prove to be fruitful, the interpreter should programmatically develop them to produce a richly textured and deeply reconfigured interpretation for this moment in time and space in the known inhabited world. He also warns that by displaying the extensively full range of strategies in the interpretation of any one text, one runs the risk of burying the text in a morass of theory and method (1996a:3).

³⁵ By “interpretive analytic” I mean what Robbins describes as an interpretive practice that uses “strategies and insights from both theory and method but in such a manner that perpetually deconstructs its own boundaries and generates new ones in the ongoing process of interpretation (Robbins 1997:29). In this regard, he acknowledges that he had first encountered the term as used by Dreyfus and Rainbow (1983) to describe the interpretive practices of Michel Foucault (Robbins 1997:29).

³⁶ Mouton (1995: 26-28) notes that the need for some kind of an integrating, organizing, comprehensive, ‘all-encompassing’ approach toward biblical documents emerged from a growing awareness of the multi-dimensional nature of textual communication during the second half of the twentieth century. She does however note that ‘mere integration’ does not necessarily lead to a multi-dimensional methodology but believes there is merit in an inter-disciplinary approach in which multi-disciplines from different philosophical points of departures can be utilized effectively.

multiple discourses operative in early Christian writings.³⁷ Thus, as a third major part of this chapter it is necessary to give a description of the primary modes of early Christian discourse (rhetorolects) operative in first century Palestine; to discuss the rhetoric internal to each rhetorolect; and explore how they interact with one another to present new ways of seeing and thinking and talking and doing. In summary then, this chapter serves to substantiate that SRI (as a multi-dimensional, dialogical, interactive interpretive analytics) offers an interpretive framework suitable for analyzing New Testament texts (which are multi-dimensional and multi-vocal in nature) in the context of a multi-dimension, highly complex societal issue such as HIV/AIDS.

A few more introductory remarks are in order. This chapter on SRI focuses primarily on the work of Vernon K. Robbins. Some might regard this as too narrow a focus for a project of this nature. However, I would want to argue that Robbins, being the initiator and ‘developer’ of SRI, has from the very beginning acknowledged how the work of other researchers, colleagues and students from various disciplines and methodological persuasions has influenced, inspired, shaped, re-shaped and given impetus to his findings.³⁸ This is particularly evident in two articles of Robbins, *Beginnings and Developments in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (2004) and *Why Participate in African Biblical Interpretation* (2001) where he acknowledges not only how other scholars have influenced or shaped the direction of SRI, but also that he allows for the line of thought of “others” to “interfere” with his; causing him to review and reconsider his line of thought (2001:10).³⁹ As the initiator of SRI, Robbins also readily acknowledges researchers who have provided the precursors to SRI.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Robbins has also engaged voices that both affirm and critique SRI as a credible hermeneutic.⁴¹ I would thus want to argue that Robbins’ modus operandi in developing SRI as a methodological framework is in itself reflective of an interactive and dialogical approach. Gowler also refers to the “admirable capacity” of Robbins to incorporate

³⁷ The difference between ‘texts’ and ‘discourse’ is that “discourse is a social process in which texts are embedded while text is a concrete material object produced in discourse” (Robbins 1999a:298).

³⁸ I am not the first to note this. In the *Introduction of New Boundaries in Old Territory*, the editor of this volume of essays by Robbins, David B. Gowler (1994:1) notes that “socio-rhetoric criticism incorporates the accomplishments of past scholars”. This also indicates the dialogical nature of SRI itself.

³⁹ Of further significance here is that Robbins acknowledges Mikhail H. Epstein, a colleague at Emory for his concept of “interference”.

⁴⁰ Robbins (1996c) acknowledges that, together with insights gained from Greco-Roman rhetoric, key insights from the work of Mack (1988; 1995); Bakhtin and Medvedev (1978; 1986) and Geertz (1957) had given direction and impetus to this research on Early Christian Discourse.

⁴¹ See Maier (1984), *Review of Jesus the Teacher*, and Robbins’ response on the Paperback Edition of *Jesus the Teacher* (1992a:xxvii). Also see Schüssler Fiorenza (1996), *Challenging the Rhetorical Half-Turn: Turn: Feminist and Rhetorical Biblical Criticism*, and Robbins’ response, *The Rhetorical Full-Turn in Biblical Interpretation: Reconfiguring Rhetorical-Political Analysis* (2002a).

criticism and valuable insights from others (1994:13). Therefore, this study regards Robbins as a primary (re)source when exploring the nature and development of SRI in this chapter. However, where necessary and possible, Robbins's work will be referenced in ways that would reflect his engagement with various sources and insights from multiple disciplines, and give recognition to antecedents of SRI.

1.2 SOCIO-RHETORICAL INTERPRETATION: AN OVERVIEW

“Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation” – as a concept, interpretive analytics and methodological framework – has been developed gradually over the last three decades by Robbins in continual conversation with other researchers. This gradual development of SRI has been enhanced and guided by colleagues who have posed critical questions at critical times of its development (Bloomquist 2002c:61-62).⁴² Robbins (1996b:1) explains that the hyphenated prefix “socio-”, refers to the rich resources of modern anthropology and sociology that socio-rhetorical interpretation brings to the interpretation of texts. Mary Ann Tolbert (1993:270) affirms that social, sociological and anthropological investigations of early Christian history pose new questions and often open unexplored avenues of research. Robbins (1996b:1) notes the work of Malina and Elliott when he explains that approaches which study social class, social systems, personal and community status, people on the margins and people in positions of power have provided invaluable insights which socio-rhetorical interpretation brings to the interpretation of texts.

The suffix “rhetorical” – in the term “socio-rhetorical”, refers to the way language in the text is a means of communication among people (Robbins 1996b:1).⁴³ Referring to the contribution of Wuellner,⁴⁴ Robbins states that traditional rhetorical interpretation limits its focus to texts as speeches.⁴⁵ Drawing on insights from Mack, Robbins says that SRI regards rhetorical analysis and interpretation as giving special attention to the subjects and topics used in a text to present thought, speech, stories and arguments. These arguments are used by people to “establish friendships, to set certain people off as enemies, to negotiate with the

⁴² Bloomquist (2002:62) argues that in order for SRI to become “in itself an interpretive analytics”. It has to become more than “bringing together of a variety of existing models for a kind of ongoing dialogue”. To this end Bloomquist suggests that some “methodological work needs to be done with a view to allowing for an interpretive flow”.

⁴³ For a concise overview of the meaning of ‘rhetoric’ in its classical sense, see Lawrie (1996:2-12) who also sees ‘rhetoric’ as a discursive category rather than a textual category.

⁴⁴ See Wuellner’s “Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us” (1987).

⁴⁵ Thomas Olbricht has organized a series of international conferences on rhetorical criticism between 1992 and 2002 sponsored by Pepperdine University. For an overview of these conferences and particularly of how the focus on rhetorical studies have shifted, see Robbins (2005:335-377).

kinds-people among whom they live, to pursue their self-interest, and to create a view of the world that offers a sense of security and a vision of greater things to be achieved both in this life and after it” (Robbins 1996b:1). Interpretation is thus guided by the insight that language is a means of negotiating meanings in, and among the worlds in which people live.

In a similar vein, North American feminist biblical scholar, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues for an *ethics of inquiry* that would challenge interpretive methodologies that relegate rhetoric “to mere talk and to the dustbins of history” (2005:13).⁴⁶ She poses a challenge to those who engage rhetorical criticism on a textual level only, and reiterates that biblical scholars should become “engaged in an interdisciplinary rhetoric of inquiry” (2005:11). In Schüssler Fiorenza’s words:

[Instead] rhetoric as a field of study insists on bringing together textuality, society, religion, and politics, and is concerned with how knowledge is constructed, the ways individuals and groups wield power, and the values and visions biblical discourses engender (2005:14).⁴⁷

Schüssler Fiorenza’s view of what rhetoric in biblical studies ought to be, resonates to a large extent with what Robbins postulates when he states that socio-rhetorical interpretation integrates the “ways people use language with the ways they live in the world” (Robbins 1996b:1). Thus, proponents of SRI would argue that, as an interpretive analytics, it is underscored by an interdisciplinary approach, using various multidisciplinary insights - including analyses which interpret biblical texts as ‘social discourse’ and biblical hermeneutics as ‘political discourse’, of which ideology in the text and in the strategies of interpreters are key issues (see Robbins 1994c:171).

1.2.1 Socio-rhetorical interpretation (SRI): From a phrase in a book to a multi-disciplinary hermeneutical framework

An analysis and interpretation of social and cultural dynamics by Robbins, marked the beginning of SRI. A paper entitled, *The We-passages in Acts and Ancient Sea Voyages* published in 1975, was the first sustained socio-rhetorical study to show the connection

⁴⁶ However, Schüssler Fiorenza, argues that her approach, “rhetoric of inquiry” serves a different purpose as an interpretive strategy to SRI which she describes as a “relational approach” (2005:26-28).

⁴⁷ Schüssler Fiorenza is critical of interpretive methodologies that merely deal with rhetoric of the words in a text or with a past culture. She is critical of any approach that “limits itself to a literary analysis in terms of classical or modern rhetoric”. She insists a rhetoric of inquiry necessitates a critical assessment of the ethics and ethos of rhetoric as a field of study (2005:14-29). A brief feminist critique, from Schüssler Fiorenza’s point of view, is discussed later in this chapter.

between the way people use language and the way they live (Robbins 1992a:xix; 1999c:1).⁴⁸ Expounding this point, Robbins explains that traveling in a boat on the sea with other people created a social environment that made it natural for some authors in antiquity to use the first person plural ‘we’ for literary accounts of sea voyages (Robbins 1975:5-18; 1992a:xix). Gowler (1994:3) adds his voice by amplifying that the significance of this research is that it introduced the idea that “a well-known social convention could greatly influence the rhetoric of a literary narrative”. This insight began to grow and created a continuing process for SRI (Gowler 1994:3). But it was only later that the term “Socio-rhetorical interpretation” (SRI) gained prominence - after Robbins used the terms “socio-rhetorical interpretation” and “socio-rhetorical criticism” in the 1984 publication of, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark*.⁴⁹ In the 1992 “New Introduction” which appeared in the Paperback Edition of this pioneering work, Robbins explains that he was trying to work “toward a method that brought information about Mediterranean society and culture into interpretation of Gospels and Acts” (1992a:xix). In 1994 a volume of *Emory Studies in Early Christianity* presented a collage of essays (New Boundaries in old Territory: Form and Social Rhetoric in Mark) on the Gospel of Mark which Robbins authored between 1973 and 1990 (Gowler 1994:xv).⁵⁰

Convinced that any attempt to interpret New Testament texts would require confronting the reality that New Testament texts are foreign to present-day literature, society, economics, politics and culture, Robbins adopted the approach of a cultural anthropologist (1992a:xxi; Gowler 1994:2-3).⁵¹ Arguing that both the “formalist approach to the text and the use of sociology without the rich resources of social and cultural anthropology limit the studies to a conventional view of the historical and social nature of early Christianity”, Robbins presented a framework for developing SRI as a programmatic, comprehensive interpretive strategy within biblical studies (1992a; 1994c:171). Robbins’ paperback edition of *Jesus the Teacher*

⁴⁸ Robbins (1999c:1) states that Dennis R. MacDonald had shown how the cultural intertexture of the sea voyage in Acts goes back to Homer’s *Odyssey* - an illustration of how Acts reconfigures basic scenes known to that tradition.

⁴⁹ See Robbins (1984; 1992a; 1994c). Robbins (1999c:2) says that the works of Kenneth Burke had been helpful, particularly with regards to analysis of repetition and progression, while the work of Clifford Geertz, William Bascom, Roger D. Abrahams, Roger M. Keesing, Theodore R. Sarbin and Vernon L. Allen provided invaluable insights for social, cultural and social-psychological insights.

⁵⁰ David B. Gowler wrote the “Introduction” to this volume, giving a succinct overview and evaluation of Robbins’ journey in developing SRI, which creates a context for the essays.

⁵¹ Robbins notes that the work done in the 1980s by scholars like John H. Elliott, Bruce Malina, Philip Esler, Jerome Neyrey, Richard Rohrbaugh, Norman Petersen, Kenneth Burke, Clifford Geertz, Wilhelm Wuellner, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Burton Mack was key to the development of SRI as a comprehensive method within biblical studies (1994c:170-171).

“coiently explains how this primarily intuitive approach” was made more programmatic (Gowler 1994:3).⁵²

Robbins acknowledges that socio-rhetorical interpretation has benefited and grown from the context that had resulted from the seven *Pepperdine Rhetoric Conferences* and subsequent publications, initiated and nurtured by Thomas H. Olbricht” (2004:3).⁵³ At the 1992 Heidelberg Conference, Robbins presented a paper, *Rhetoric and Culture: Exploring Types of Cultural Rhetoric in Texts* (1993:443-463), where he argued for what Wuellner refers to as “practical criticism”. This, in contrast to literary criticism is “rhetoric revalued, rhetoric reinvented” (Robbins 1993:443). He (Robbins) states that varieties of cultural rhetoric appear in New Testament texts, and that cultural rhetorical analysis and interpretation of early Christian texts as “practical criticism” will contribute to significant advances. This, according to Robbins, provides a “revalued” and “reinvented” rhetoric “that will lead us forward into regions of analysis we have not yet undertaken” (1993:459).⁵⁴ Using social and cultural texture and ideological texture, Robbins illustrates how identifying dominant culture rhetoric, subculture rhetoric, contraculture rhetoric and counterculture rhetoric work in the direction of “practical criticism” (1993:447-459).

According to Robbins (1992:xxiv), a particular goal of socio-rhetorical interpretation is to integrate rhetorical and anthropological modes of interpretation.⁵⁵ Thus, both the narrational and social dimensions of language in texts are important. Robbins, (1992a:xxiv) explains that:

⁵² In an interview with Robbins during my visit to Emory (5-11 March 2007) he admits that at first he was not sure where SRI was going. However, what was very clear to him during those early days, was that the various approaches to New Testament Studies provide important contributions to the discipline and that by bringing these approaches in biblical scholarship in conversation with each other, could move the discipline beyond its limitations without breaking radically from its previous achievements.

⁵³ See *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*; *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference*; *Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*; *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture: Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference*; *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible: Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference*; *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the 2000 Lund Conference*; *Rhetoric, Ethics and Moral persuasion in Biblical Discourse: Essays from the 2002 Heidelberg Conference*.

⁵⁴ Two essays on the challenges and benefits of writing a socio-rhetorical commentary were presented by Duane F. Watson (2002) and Bernard Combrink (2002), respectively. Robbins reports that current research on producing a series of socio-rhetorical commentaries entitled *Rhetoric and the Religious Antiquity* is progressing well (2004:6). He explains that his project benefited from the annual meetings held in different parts of the world between 1999 and 2003. *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* is acknowledged for providing the context for these annual seminars which took place in South Africa, Israel, Canada, Great Britain and Germany.

⁵⁵ An additional feature of socio-rhetorical interpretation is its “special interest in the orality of texts”. Here Robbins acknowledges the works of Bernard Brandon Scott and Margaret E. Dean as important. Relevant publications include, *A Sound Map of the Sermon on the Mount* and *A Sound Map of Mark 7:1-23* (Robbins 2004:3).

At present, interpreters are practicing many multiple approaches, but they are often practicing them either without knowledge of one another or in contexts where animosity is articulated with an absence of profound interrelation between the respective projects and their results.⁵⁶

Thus, the challenge for socio-rhetorical interpretation is to bring together the valuable contributions made by proponents of literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, rhetorical criticism, post-modern criticism and theological criticism.⁵⁷ Robbins (1996b:2) observes that when these methods are used individually, the results are limited, but when these methodologies are used interactively, the results are richer and reflective of a responsible reading.⁵⁸ Explaining the methodological rationale which underpins SRI, Robbins acknowledges insights gained from anthropologists and linguists⁵⁹. In a paper, *Beginnings and Developments in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (2003a:2), Robbins reiterates the point that SRI draws on “insights from sociolinguistics, semiotics, rhetoric, ethnography, literary studies, social sciences, and ideological studies” and thus offers an “interactive interpretive analytics”. He says that socio-rhetorical interpretation is grounded in the principles of multi-disciplinary approaches and trans-disciplinary approaches (1992a:xxv). Firstly, SRI functions within the “multi-disciplinary presuppositions of social semiotics”.⁶⁰ This concept, continues Robbins (1992a:xxv) resonates with the goal of socio-rhetorical interpretation because:

The primary interest is in “distinction” and not “opposition”. The bias is dialogical rather than dualistic as it seeks similarities and differences that both interrelate and differentiate phenomena.

The concept of “social semiotics” also presupposes that language is always already in dialogue with other socio-ideologically located voices. Thus, “the language a person uses

⁵⁶ Also see Punt’s (1998) article, “My Kingdom for a Method”.

⁵⁷ Combrink (1999:19) argues that the call by Robbins for dialogue between those focusing on literary and rhetorical phenomena, and those concentrating on historical, social, cultural and ideological issues, must be seen against the background of fragmentation and the call by Amos Wilder to recognize that “language should not be fragmented in such a manner”.

⁵⁸ Robbins (1997:24) argues for responsible action on the part of biblical interpreters as we become “more and more aware” of the importance of the use of language “for the lives of millions of people on this planet”.

⁵⁹ Here Robbins refers to Hodge and Kress (1988), *Social Semiotics*; Halliday (1978), *Language and Social Semiotics: The social interpretation of language and Meaning*; Bal (1988), *Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre and Scholarship on Sisera’s Death*; Bakhtin (1981), *The Dialogical Imagination*; Hayles (1990), *Chaos Bond: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science*; Tyler (1987), *The Unspeakable Discourse, Dialogue, and Rhetoric in the Postmodern world*; Ransom (1941), *The New Criticism*; Fishbane (1979), *Text and Texture*.

⁶⁰ Robbins notes that stories, sayings, and editorial comments that we read are the signifiers – the signs, symbols, or expressions (i.e., *semeia*) – of cultural understanding (1992a:5).

comes from previous or contemporary usage by people in various social environments” (Robbins 1992a:xxv).⁶¹

Secondly, socio-rhetorical interpretation is also grounded in a trans-disciplinary approach, particularly in the notion of thematic approaches because they “cross the boundaries of different disciplines unimpeded and without being excluded from the academic community”, says Robbins who continues:

The basic bias of thematic approaches is the postulate of unity. Socio-rhetorical criticism uses thematic approaches as it explores similarities among groups, traditions, and texts in Mediterranean society and culture. (1992a:xxv)

Furthermore, SRI presupposes that a text has different textures, resulting in a variegated surface.⁶² Like an intricately thickly woven tapestry, a text contains complex patterns and images resulting in multiple textures within a particular text (Robbins 1996a:18; 1996b:2; 1999b:95-96; Bloomquist 1999:185-186).⁶³ In two seminal works, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* (1996a), and *Exploring the Textures of Texts* (1996b), Robbins asserts that SRI is not a method but rather an interpretive programme. Reiterating that SRI is not another competing method, Robbins explains that SRI lends itself to tapping in on, and integrating grounds gained from the various competing methodologies. Gowler (see www.services.emory.edu/~dgowler/RobbinsFS) concurs with Robbins when he states that socio-rhetorical interpretation is a comprehensive attempt to provide a programmatic model in order to establish and facilitate an arena where the myriad of approaches currently found in New Testament studies can be in dialogue with each other. Bloomquist (1999:69) eloquently states that, “one of the elements of the genius of socio-rhetorical analysis is to point to various angles” from which a text can be approached. South African New Testament scholar Bernard Combrink also agrees that socio-rhetorical interpretation provides an inter-

⁶¹ Texts exist in the world, and interpreters/ readers/listeners exist in the world (Robbins, 1996a:19).

⁶² Robbins (1992a:xxviii) acknowledges Michael Fishbane’s use of the title, *Text and Texture* for a book in 1979, but argues that the way SRI uses the term “texture” is close to the socio-linguistic perception of Michael Halliday when he proposes that “in texts language is texture.” That in texts language exists in relation “to a wide range of environments”. Robbins also notes the use of the term “texture” by Crowe Ransom in 1941, but who “built his critical agenda on a differentiation between structure and texture”. Robbins says that his approach is most explicitly supported “by the method of interpretation of literature and culture” as formulated by Kenneth Burke and Clifford Geertz (1992a:4).

⁶³ Robbins (1999c:2) says that the work of Willi Braun and David B. Gowler were precursors to the organization of socio-rhetorical interpretation on the basis of multiple textures of signification, meanings and meaning effects in texts; and that Wesley H. Wachob and Russel B. Sisson were the first to produce Ph.D. dissertations on multi-textural socio-rhetorical analysis in 1993 and 1994 respectively. Robbins further notes that many insights from the work of Wachob had been incorporated into Luke Timothy Johnson’s commentary on the epistle of James.

disciplinary interpretive framework which brings together - in a complimentary manner - insights from competing methodologies (see especially Combrink 1999; 2002; 2003).⁶⁴

Proponents of SRI argue that the multi-dimensional nature of New Testament texts which have evolved from within the varied contexts, perspectives and life-situations of first century followers of Jesus Christ, presupposes a multi-dimensional reading strategy. Citing Edward Farley, Robbins reiterates that, “Anything that is actual, has different dimensions that call for different kinds of interpretive responses” (1998b:284). A conviction underlying a socio-rhetorical approach is that interpretation of texts has to do with capacities of responding to, and interpreting the complexities of the various dimensions of reality, which calls for broader, more flexible paradigms of interpretation”, continues Robbins (1998b:285). Thus, SRI offers an awareness of the rhetorical histories and provides thick descriptions of interpretive practices that are mindful of the “shifting political positions of those who engage in them”⁶⁵ (1998b:285). At this point, feminist scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s (1996) critique of interpretive strategies based on rhetoric “as merely words”, should be noted.

1.2.2 A Feminist Critique of SRI

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’s criticism of those who advocate rhetoric in biblical interpretation as being “stuck in a rhetorical half-turn” (1996:29) is based (among others) on two main arguments. In the first instance she observes that, despite her endeavour over the past twenty-odd years to contribute feminist theoretical insights to biblical studies, it is clearly noticeable that feminist critical models for literary-historical and political-rhetorical inquiry have yet to be taken seriously.⁶⁶ In fact, she argues vehemently that:

The stories of the regeneration and revival of rhetorical criticism in biblical studies which recount the work of seminal figures in the field seem not even to be aware of the contributions which feminist political rhetoric brings to the table (1996:37).

⁶⁴ Combrink has written a number of articles using insights from socio-rhetorical interpretation. His work in this regard also challenges the present climate of New Testament interpretation in post-apartheid South Africa while probing the value of using a socio-rhetorical hermeneutic, rather than an alternative hermeneutic (see Combrink 1992b; 1999; 2002; 2003). Socio-rhetorical interpretation, and particularly the work of Robbins has also been cited by other New Testament scholars in South Africa (Botha 1994; Punt 1998; Van den Heever 1999; 2002; Mouton 1999; 2004).

⁶⁵ Here Robbins refers to Mailloux and Leff .

⁶⁶ This observation and claim made by Schüssler Fiorenza is evident when one considers that the contributions made during the ten years of ‘Pepperdine Conferences’ were primarily that of male biblical scholars.

Schüssler Fiorenza also points out that, while reference has been made to some works published by women theologians, those publications which have the word “feminist” in the title have been ignored. According to her, the reason for this exclusion of feminist and liberationist scholarship is because interpreters - including proponents of SRI - “remain in the captivity to empiricist-positivist science” (1996:32-33).⁶⁷ Because Schüssler Fiorenza (1996:33) regards Robbins’ interpretive strategy (SRI) as ‘scientific’, she claims that his particular reading of *The Woman who anointed Jesus* (Mark 14:3-9; Matt 26:6-13; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8)⁶⁸ “postures as scientific” and thus reinforces the rhetoric of the text’s grammatical gender system. This, she argues, is because Robbins contextualizes the story within the framework of a particular construction of the Mediterranean socio-cultural sex/gender system (1996:33). Her second major criticism against SRI is that, according to her understanding, Robbins posits ideological criticism as one method among others rather than understanding it as a dimension of all interpretive methods and strategies (1996:33).⁶⁹ Thus, Schüssler Fiorenza calls for a *rhetoric of inquiry* in rhetoric as a field of study which, she argues, will necessitate a critical assessment of the ethics and ethos of the discipline (2005:14).⁷⁰

Robbins vehemently rebuts Schüssler Fiorenza’s accusation and denies that SRI operates within the confines of an empiricist-positivist science, or that SRI isolates ideology as an optional extra (2002a:48-52). Robbins has been calling for transcultural rhetorical criticism that addresses ethnocentrism as a major topic (Combrink 2002:114).⁷¹

Robbins points out that he understands ideological analysis as a strategy which facilitates a process whereby the interpreter analyzes both herself/himself as a reader and writer as well as the writer and reader of the text (1996a:24-27; 1996b:1-6;95; 2002a:48; Combrink 2002:115). This means that while there is particular focus on ideology as a particular texture in SRI, ideological texture is also interwoven in inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture

⁶⁷ Because Schüssler Fiorenza (1996:33) regards Robbins interpretive strategy (SRI) as ‘scientific’, she claims that his particular reading of the “Woman who anointed Jesus”.

⁶⁸ See Robbins (1992b)

⁶⁹ The latter concern has (in my view) adequately been addressed by Robbins, who explicitly claims in *The Tapestry of early Christian Discourse* (1996a:13) and *Exploring the Textures of Texts* (1996b:1-2) that SRI is an “interpretive programme” and not another “competing method”.

⁷⁰ Schüssler Fiorenza explains that by a rhetoric of inquiry she means “a second order reflection in the positivist practices, unacknowledged theoretical frameworks and socio-political interests of scholarship that undergird its self-understanding as value-detached, objectivist science” (1996:31).

⁷¹ Combrink notes that that our judgments are always ethnocentrically located and that transcultural rhetorical criticism involves a moving across boundaries. This is relevant in early Christian discourse, as well as the rhetoric of the modern interpreter (2002:114).

and sacred texture. Moreover, Robbins explains that, while socio-rhetorical interpretation invites detailed attention to the text itself, it also moves - in interactive ways - into the world of the people who wrote the text and into the present-day world (1996b:1).⁷² Thus, in response to Schüssler Fiorenza's criticism, Robbins (2002a:49) argues that while ideological texture features as a fourth texture in the sequence of analysis, it does not mean that the other textures are free from an ideological orientation. He reiterates that his position should not be described as scientific or scientistic, but rather interactionist (2002a:49). Robbins also purports to set "scientific and humanist procedures of analysis and interpretation into energetic, interactive dialogue on an equal playing field" (2002:49-50). He argues that, while SRI nurtures disciplined exploration; analysis and interpretation characteristic of *wissenschaftlich* research, the goal is to do so in a manner that maintains a "self-critical perspective on the data and strategies the interpreter uses to bring referents, meanings, beliefs, values, emotions and intentions to the signs in the text" (1994c:165). Furthermore, Robbins (1994c:172) points out that every reading of a particular text is guided by extrinsic interests even though an interpreter might claim a reading to be intrinsic to the text itself. Thus, SRI calls for a critical awareness of extrinsic dimensions which may be derived from disciplinary codes or subtexts when reading a text (Robbins, 1994c:172).⁷³

In a retort to Robbins' (2002a) response, Schüssler Fiorenza (2005) accuses him of discrediting feminist rhetoric of inquiry by stigmatizing it as 'oppositional rhetoric' (2005:25). She also feels that Robbins undermines *her* feminist ethos when he positively quotes two women scholars, Kathleen E. Corley and Gail R. O' Day – only because they agree with him (2005:27).⁷⁴

While Robbins (2002a:49-52; Combrink 1999:29) in my opinion, addresses Schüssler Fiorenza's concerns adequately, it is my view that a hermeneutic of suspicion – which according to Schüssler Fiorenza (2005:32) is the goal of a *rhetoric of inquiry* – has to be maintained to ensure what Robbins refers to as, "interactive dialogue on an equal playing

⁷² Ideological texture is dealt with in more detail later in the chapter when the multiple textures of texts are discussed.

⁷³ Robbins (1994c) explains that a disciplinary code is a master discourse informed by history, anthropology, or theology while a subtext is a "theory, an approach or other text that somehow helps to illuminate an aspect of the text a person is interpreting".

⁷⁴ Thus, it would appear that Schüssler Fiorenza does not regard women scholars who agree with what she refers to as "liberal methodological discourse on rhetorical criticism" – as opposed to her "feminist epistemological proposal" – as operating within a feminist ethos; or perhaps she regards her feminist ethos (2005:27) as being independent from any other feminist ethos?

field”.⁷⁵ I concur with Robbins (2002a:58) that we must engage in dialogical interpretation that includes disenfranchised voices, marginalized voices, recently liberated voices, and powerfully-located voices.⁷⁶ But I also concur with Schüssler Fiorenza who warns that we have to be mindful of power relations that determine which voices are heard and which voices are silenced (2005:29).⁷⁷ However, on the one hand I would be careful not to invert this warning – by being responsible for silencing voices that have the potential to challenge negative and skewed power relations,⁷⁸ while on the other hand I would be suspicious of voices that utilize dominant discourse and power structures to dominate, alienate, exclude and stigmatize the voices of women and other marginalized persons and groups.⁷⁹

Unlike Schüssler Fiorenza, I refuse to be *self-excluded* from the ‘we’ as used by Robbins (2002a:58).⁸⁰ While such self-exclusion could provide a sometimes necessary oppositional stance, it could also serve to affirm “elite (white) male scholars” (Schüssler Fiorenza 2005:33)⁸¹ as the powerfully voiced. Furthermore, I do not think that a critical feminist rhetoric should always be oppositional; neither do I think that it should never be adversarial.⁸² Thus, as a feminist/womanist/African woman biblical scholar in post-apartheid South Africa,⁸³ I accept Robbins’ invitation to enter into dialogue,⁸⁴ while heeding Schüssler

⁷⁵ It is in listening to “dissenting voices” that we are engaging with the ideological texture of texts, says Combrink (2002:114). To analyze the ideological texture of a text one has to pay attention to the social and cultural location of the implied author, the ideology of power in the text as well as the ideology of the mode of discourse in the text (Combrink 2002:116).

⁷⁶ Robbins, who is in agreement with Feminist theologian, Rebecca Chopp, says that a major goal of SRI is to offer interpretive strategies that are guided by discourses of emancipatory transformation. To this end it moves from highly intricate and detailed analysis of language in text to broad, complex and controversial issues concerning subjectivity and politics (1996a:11).

⁷⁷ I agree with Schüssler Fiorenza (1988:14-15) for whom the question of power is central to the interpretive task. Questions such as, “What kind of worlds does it envision? What roles, duties and values does it advocate?” require a “double ethics”, viz. “An ethics of historical reading asks what kind of reading can do justice to the text in its historical context” and, “An ethics of accountability holds the biblical scholar responsible not only for the choice of theoretical interpretive models but also for the ethical consequences of the biblical text and its meanings”.

⁷⁸ Of course, as Schüssler Fiorenza so eloquently warns, women – as minority speakers in biblical scholarship and aware of their marginal status- should refuse to revert to ventriloquism (2005:32). But on the other hand, Robbins (2005:26) also makes a valid point when he argues that while feminist hermeneutics is making great strides with a rhetorical full-turn, it could be enhanced by “moving forthrightly beyond one major political location and one primary discourse”.

⁷⁹ Schüssler Fiorenza refers to this view as the “othering rhetoric of malestream scholarship” (2005:31).

⁸⁰ I would argue that self-exclusion, like self-alienation could result in internalized stigma and thus contribute to and perpetuate exclusion, alienation and stigmatization.

⁸¹ Parenthesis MP.

⁸² However interesting, and important the debate between Schüssler Fiorenza and Robbins, the scope of this thesis does not allow for in-depth discussion - suffice to say that in my view, the methodologies advocated by these two scholars are not mutually exclusive.

⁸³ Here, I also ponder the question posed by Ursula King (2001:37) about the meaning of “post”. For all South Africans it primarily points to a sequence in time; but whether it points to “a substantive change, a qualitative difference that expresses greater inclusiveness, perfection or fullness” would depend on whether South

Fiorenza's warning against possible co-option in the interest of patriarchal or kyriarchal interests.⁸⁵ However, I also concur with Ursula King (2001:37) who asserts that, sometimes the language of struggle and resistance is too antagonistic in that it could disempower and "make dependent" rather than energize. I too would rather see myself working as a creative agent and thus I refuse to see myself "working as a victim" (King 2001:37). I think that, in order for dialogue to be liberative, marginalized voices and newly liberated voices should resist being co-opted but, without excluding themselves from the dialogue.⁸⁶ It is also imperative that we avoid becoming trapped in a monologue ourselves. Thus, as a feminist/womanist/African woman doing theology, my view is that we must resist without excluding.

While I agree with what Schüssler Fiorenza proposes: that a *rhetoric of enquiry* "must become central to the disciplinary professional discourses of biblical rhetorical criticism" (2005:32), I also agree with Robbins (2002a:58) that we should "explore with each other, debate with one another, and disagree with each other as equals, inviting other voices into the dialogue..."

Considering the above, it is obvious that the claim made by scholars advocating SRI as a multi-dimensional hermeneutic, may be considered by other scholars as apposing and undermining certain discipline-specific interpretive methodologies. Thus an invitation to engage in a programmatic, interactive and dialogical strategy of interpretation, which systematically brings together a variety of interpretive methodologies, may not be well received or accepted by some interpreters. While scholars who engage in SRI work from the premise that each of these methodologies has produced groundbreaking insights into the interpretation of texts - at specific points during the history of the science of interpretation - other scholars see SRI as a competing methodology. This is true in the case of a biblical

Africans have experienced apartheid as oppressive, or not; and whether they have experienced post-apartheid as liberative, or not.

⁸⁴ Of course, with a critical awareness of the power dynamic involved – even in an invitation to enter into dialogue. Here, one would have to analyze the ideological texture exhibited in such an invitation, viz. who is extending the invitation? For what purpose? What is the nature of the invitation of dialogue?

⁸⁵ Mary Ann Tolbert (1993:270) also warns that feminists must always be aware that presuppositions that promote the invisibility of women and advises that feminists insist that no study be considered adequate without an analysis of gender.

⁸⁶ As a woman - and a person of colour - in a 'new Democratic South Africa', I experience this dynamic tension in many social interaction. Am I being asked to participate because I am a woman or because as a person of colour, I would contribute towards 'a balanced representivity'? Or is there a genuine interest in listening and taking seriously the "other" voice I bring into the conversation? My dilemma, of course is: do I refuse to participate until there can be some certainty that 'newly liberated voices' will enjoy equality and be taken seriously, or do I participate and be a catalyst for that 'certainty'?

scholar such as Schüssler Fiorenza who, categorizing SRI as “liberal scholarship”, fears that liberal scholarship serves antifeminist ends by trivializing or erasing the new insights of feminist scholarship (2005:28). Of particular interest here, is what would appear to be ‘a renewed interest in biblical rhetorical criticism’ as exhibited by the significant number of papers in the published volumes of the seven *Pepperdine Conferences* from 1999-2002 (Robbins, 2005:373). Robbins observes:

This decade of conferences, then, has moved biblical rhetorical criticism decisively beyond the separation of dialectics from religious experience that set the stage for biblical interpretation from the 16th century onwards (2005:373).

The above quote reflects what Robbins has observed as “a move from text to discourse analysis in rhetorical criticism” (2005:373). This shift, according to Robbins, may be attributed to the decisive move of biblical rhetorical interpretation towards culture (2005:374).⁸⁷ It is in this context that the debate on ideology began to emerge as a significant issue in rhetorical criticism (Robbins, 2005:374).

Central to SRI is its refreshing approach of *invitation* which is a move away from the practice which requires one to disprove the credibility of other competing methodologies.⁸⁸ This is evident, not only because SRI is a multi-disciplinary and integrative approach, but also because insights from a variety of other modes of interpretation, disciplines and persons are readily acknowledged and given credit to by those engaging SRI. Moreover, it is an approach that is open to reviewing its strategies and realigning its boundaries.⁸⁹ Robbins sums it up well:

As the twentieth century ends and the third millennium begins, socio-rhetorical interpretation has become a multi-dimensional approach to texts guided by a multi-dimensional hermeneutic. Rather than being another method for interpreting texts, socio-rhetorical interpretation is an interpretive analytic approach that evaluates and reorients its strategies as it engages in multi-faceted dialogue with the texts and other phenomena that come within its purview (1999:1).

⁸⁷ The major topic of the 1995 London conference was “Rhetorical analysis and interpretation of biblical text and tradition as discourse” with specific emphasis on the relation of rhetorical criticism to discourse analysis (Robbins 2005:374).

⁸⁸ Bloomquist (1997:202) says that the multi-textural approach of SRI provides “an extremely valuable approach to the rhetorical nature of early Christian texts and practice”. Also see Punt (1998).

⁸⁹ During one of my discussions with Robbins (5-11 March) he expressed the need to explore the impact of auditory signals in a text. This would appear to be in line with what Margaret Dean’s call that the inner texture of a text should also be treated as auditory signals (Dean 1998:80).

It is obvious that Robbins' emphasis on multiple textures of texts has resulted in renewed interest - not only in inter-disciplinary approaches to reading NT texts, but also in acknowledging the importance and usefulness of insights from the various interpretive strategies which emerged from particular historical and ideological interests over space and time. It is also important to note that SRI does not merely offer a framework for bringing together various methodologies in an uncritical way, but rather that SRI practices "interdisciplinary exegesis that reinvents the traditional steps of analysis and redraws the traditional boundaries of interpretation" (1994c:164). Gowler (1994:1) aptly remarks that SRI is not a "methodology in the sense that it becomes an interpretive matrix imposed upon biblical texts like a strait-jacket". Accordingly, Gowler observes that SRI continues to open doors to other disciplines and approaches, while still demanding that readers/hearers be sensitive to the multiplicity of textures in texts (1994:1).

The next section deals with the multiple textures of texts and focuses on Robbins's five-textured approach, viz. inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture.

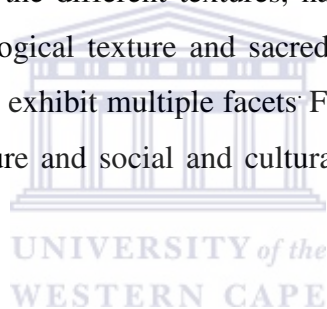
1.3 SRI: A MULTI-TEXTURED APPROACH

In the article, *Using a Socio-rhetorical Poetics to Develop a Unified Method: The woman who Anointed Jesus as a Test Case* (1992b; 1996b:89-91), Robbins brings the multiple interpretations of this Gospel story into conversation with one another. This was a first attempt at a multi-textured approach. Working from the premise that a text comprises complexly interwoven webs of signification (Robbins 1992a:xxi; 1992b:302), the analysis reveals how different interpretations are grounded by engaging inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture and ideological texture on an either/or, while ignoring insights from other textures which could otherwise illuminate other dimensions of the text. This paper, together with the introduction to the 1992 paperback edition of *Jesus the Teacher*, exhibit what Robbins then referred to as "the framework for developing socio-rhetorical criticism as a programmatic, comprehensive method within biblical studies" (1994c:171).

The first programmatic multi-textual study was presented by Robbins in the article, *Socio-Rhetorical Criticism: Mary, Elizabeth and the Magnificat as a Test Case* (1994c). In this essay, Robbins utilized 'the four textured approach', viz. inner texture, intertexture, social

and cultural texture and ideological texture, exhibiting them though an exegetical exercise (1994c:171).⁹⁰

The first presentation of SRI as an interpretive programme appeared in *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* (Robbins 1996a). In this book Robbins explores 1 Corinthians 9 from the angles of four textures, viz. inner texture, inter-texture, social and cultural texture and ideological texture. In a second 1996 publication, *Exploring the Textures of Texts* (1996b), Robbins includes a fifth texture namely, “sacred texture”. Throughout this work, he uses Mark 15 as a sample text to illustrate SRI as a multi-textured approach. Drawing on insights from various disciplines, each angle reveals different patterns and images in the text (Robbins 1996a:18; 1996b:2).⁹¹ Bloomquist (2002c:67) describes this as the first and ‘highly preliminary’ stage of SRI, which in essence entails the observation of encounters of language and language systems. The value in this step of SRI is that it slows down the interpretive process by “forcing one to walk around in the text and see the elements from various angles” (Bloomquist 2002c:67). Each of the different textures, namely, inner texture, inter-texture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture will now be discussed.⁹² The five textures themselves also exhibit multiple facets. For the purpose of this dissertation, some of the facets of inner texture and social and cultural texture will be foregrounded in more detail.



1.3.1 Inner texture

Inner textual analysis of a text operates on two levels. First, there is the inner texture of the unit of text itself and second, the participation of the particular of text in the overall written document in which it occurs (Robbins 1996b:38).

To analyze a text according to its inner texture means paying close attention to the features in the language of the text itself. To perform this analysis, the interpreter “looks at, and listens

⁹⁰ A fifth texture, sacred texture which emerged later, became part of the multi-textured approach espoused by Robbins.

⁹¹ David Gowler (www.services.emory.edu/~dgowler/RobbinsFS.htm) notes that these textures are continually in dialogue and “like the warp and woof of a tapestry, these textures are mutually dependent and inherently interwoven; they reinforce and build upon each other”.

⁹² The section dealing with the five-textured approach follows Robbins’s *Exploring the Textures of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (1996b). While any of the textures may be used as an entry point for the interpretive process; and while one will not employ all textures in the interpretive process, it is not possible to know at this stage of the dissertation which textures are to be employed in later chapters. Also, the dialogical nature of SRI lends itself to utilizing to insights from other textures for depth in analysis. Furthermore, the nature of the dissertation, particularly its focus on SRI as a reading strategy calls for a comprehensive presentation of SRI as an interpretive framework.

to the words themselves” and “the ways in which the text uses these words” (Robbins 1996b:7). Bloomquist (1997:202) notes that inner texture has to do with the rhetorical-literary features internal to the text, and as such is “geared to persuasive dimensions of the discourse”.⁹³

Giving the interpreter initial insight into the argumentation in the text, inner texture concerns features like: the repetition of particular words; the creation of beginnings and endings; alternation of speech and storytelling; particular ways in which words present arguments; or the particular “feel” or aesthetic of a text (Bloomquist 1997:202). Robbins argues that, while the different aspects of a text are often the focus of literary or rhetorical interpretation, socio-rhetorical interpretation brings both literary and rhetorical techniques together (Robbins 1996b:3).

Inner textual analysis focuses on words as tools for communication – prior to analysis of meaning. The interpreter would simply look at and listen to the ways the text makes use of words, e.g. repetition, of the same word many times, statement of almost the same thing in different ways, careful sequencing of new terms that build strong conclusions, etc.⁹⁴ (Robbins 1996b:7). The purpose of this analysis is to build an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices (present and absent), structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the context for meanings and meaning-effects that an interpreter analyses with other readings of the text (Robbins 1996b:7).

Robbins has identified six aspects of inner texture, namely, repetitive texture, progressive texture, open-middle-losing texture, argumentative texture and sensory-aesthetic texture (1996b:7).⁹⁵

1.3.1.1 Repetitive Texture and Pattern

Repetitive texture and pattern is exhibited when words or phrases occur more than once in a text and in the “multiple occurrences of many different kinds of grammatical, syntactical,

⁹³ Also see Robbins (1992a:xxiii,xxix)

⁹⁴ Robbins uses (etc.) indicating that the list is not concluded. I think it could be interpreted as invitation to other scholars to add to the list.

⁹⁵ While an interpreter may begin with any one of the six types of inner texture, Robbins recommends that interpreters analyze each aspect of inner texture in this particular order. The benefit of this particular sequence is demonstrated when Robbins, noting repetition of ‘narrative agents’ in Luke 1:26-56, illustrates how “on the basis of repetition and patterns of progression” one can raise questions about the “beginning, middle and end of a significant span of text” (1994c:172-173). It is also likely, as illustrated below that, by first noting repetition of certain words or “like-words” words, “progression” may be the next obvious observation.

verbal, or topical phenomena” (Robbins 1996b:8).⁹⁶ When the interpreter marks the repeated words, topics, characters, or phrases in the text itself, the patterns of repetition emerge clearly. The repetitive texture in a particular text gives one initial glimpses into the overall rhetorical movements in the discourse (Robbins 1996b:8).⁹⁷ Although analysis of repetitive texture does not exhibit “inner meanings in the sequences”, clusters of repetitive data do give initial insight into the overall picture of the discourse (Robbins, 1996b:8). Repetitive textual analysis also provides an overarching view of the texture of language, and “invites the interpreter to move yet closer to the details of the text” (Robbins 1996b:8).

1.3.1.2 Progressive Texture and Pattern

Progressive texture is exhibited when a (progressive) sequence of words is discernable throughout a unit (Robbins 1996b:9). When certain words – like “I...you”; “now...then”; “because...therefore”; “good...bad” – alternate with one another throughout a span of text, the patterns exhibit progressive texture. Progressive texture might also be displayed when words form a sequence of steps.⁹⁸ Progression emerges out of repetition and repetition itself is one kind of progression, since movement from the first occurrence of a word to another occurrence signifies a forward movement or progression in the discourse (Robbins 1996b:10). Robbins also points out that the focus on progression within repetition adds more dimension to the analysis, in that:

First, it may lead to observations about progressive texture in the entire work. Second, it may exhibit phenomena that function as stepping stones to other phenomena in the text. Third, it may exhibit a sequence of subunits throughout a span of text (1996b:10).

Robbins gives a very helpful hint to interpreters when he observes that all the words in a text present its progression therefore “it is good to build a progressive diagram on certain repeated items in the text” (1996b:10).⁹⁹ The focus on the repetition of certain words or phrases may give the interpreter insight into the “forward movement” of the discourse in a particular unit of text, and possibly point to patterns of progression throughout the text. This dimension of

⁹⁶ These “multiple occurrences” may exhibit itself in topics such as: resurrection, suffering, stigma, hope; or in pronouns like “I” , “you”, “we”, “they”; or sometimes in negatives like, “no”, “not”; or in conjunctions or adverbs such as: “then”, “but”, “because”, “therefore”, etc. says Robbins (1996b:8).

⁹⁷ For an illustration of repetitive texture exhibited in a systematic diagram, see Robbins (1996b:9).

⁹⁸ Like “I, I...they, they...we, we...us, us; or when words form a chain like “hope and righteousness... righteousness and God... God and people who believe” (Robbins 1996b:9).

⁹⁹ See how Robbins uses repetition in a systematic exhibition of characters in Luke 1:26-56 (1994c:173) and how progressive texture emerges when repetitive language about kinship is exhibited in Mark 15:1-16:8 (Robbins 1996b:9-14).

innertextual analysis could provide the impetus for the next dimension of inner texture, viz. narrational texture and pattern.

1.3.1.3 Narrational Texture and Pattern

Narrational texture resides in voices (often not identified with a specific character) through which the words in texts speak. The narrator may begin and continue simply with “narration”;¹⁰⁰ the narrator may introduce people (characters) who act (the narrator describes their action); the narrator may introduce people who speak (they themselves become ‘narrators’ or ‘speaking actors’); the narrator may introduce “written texts” that speak (like Old Testament scripture).

Usually the narrational texture reveals some kind of pattern that moves the discourse programmatically forward. Sometimes a pattern emerges when narration and attributed speech alternate with each other. Sometimes a particular type of speech like a question or a command occurs so frequently that it establishes a narrational pattern in the discourse (Robbins 1996b:15).¹⁰¹



¹⁰⁰ This, Robbins - referring to insights from Tolbert (1989) - explains, is the “first level of narration”. The “second level of narration” is “the level of voices of characters that are embedded in the (first level) voice of the narrator” (Robbins 1994c:174)

¹⁰¹ With reference to the inner texture of Luke 1:26-56 Robbins (1994c:174) illustrates how narrational voice differentiates narration from attributed speech and observes that “the voicing leads the interpreter to strategies of argumentation that occur throughout the unit”. The voice of the narrator (Lk 1:27) introduces Mary to the reader/hearer ‘within a narrative pattern that features an angel sent from God’ (Robbins 1994c:174). It is noted that this pattern begins when the narrator states (Lk 1:10-12) that an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah while he was praying inside the temple at the hour of incense; and that now the narrator says that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary at Nazareth in the sixth month of Elizabeth pregnancy (Robbins 1994c:174). Another example of a pattern emerging from the alternation of narration and attributed speech is where Robbins (1996b:15) observes that, of the seven scenes in Mark 15:1-16:8, only one scene (15:40-41) contains narration without attributed speech, while six scenes alternate narrational discourse with direct or reported speech. Narrational patterns regularly give the interpreter a closer look at the units or scenes in the discourse. Robbins also illustrates how a narrational pattern emerges in the first scene (Mark 15:1-15) where speech attributed to Pilate takes the form of questions. Robbins’s analysis also reveals that the sequence of questions introduces a “definition of Jesus as king that reverberates” throughout Mark 15:1-16:8. Thus, the alternation of narrational commentary and speech attributed to various characters in a story reveals some of the inner nuances of the story itself (Robbins 1996b:18). Again referring to Mark 15:1-16:8, Robbins argues that initially it may appear that the narrational voice is “simply presenting a straightforward account of the way things happened”. However, the dimension narrational texture reveals “that there is a considerable staging of events in the discourse”. Robbins notes that this discourse (Mark 15:1-16:8) allows a limited number of people on stage and that, only some “are allowed to speak”; that speech of certain people are presented as one voice and that while some people are not allowed to speak for themselves, others are not allowed a voice at all; that many people present are simply not ‘seen’ by the discourse (Robbins 1996b:18-19). Narrator is in control of what information is revealed to the reader/listener. Thus, the story represents a particular view, which is why one needs to look closely at the discourse. Robbins suggests that the opening-middle-closing are “natural parts of a dramatic presentation” (1996b:19).

By “giving voice to the signs in the text”, it leads the interpreter to locate the narrational boundaries of the beginning, middle and end of a unit (Robbins 1994c:174).

1.3.1.4 Opening-middle-closing Texture and Pattern

This dimension of inner texture can be very complex as interpreters often differ in their views about the exact demarcation of the opening, middle and closing of a text; or an interpreter may see parts of a complex pattern not evident in an initial analysis. Furthermore, the demarcated opening, middle and closing of a text may each have a beginning, middle and ending. To add to the complexity of opening-middle-closing texture and pattern, variations may occur because “openings, middles, and closings may have different kinds of textures” and “some endings are simply new beginnings” (Robbins 1996b:19).¹⁰²

1.3.1.5 Argumentative Texture and Pattern

Multiple kinds of inner reasoning in the discourse of a text provide the basis for the study of argumentative texture (Robbins 1996b:21). Some of this reasoning is logical, while other reasoning may be described as qualitative. In the first instance, the discourse presents assertions and supports them with reasons, clarifies them through opposites and contraries, and possibly presents short or elaborative counterarguments. In the second instance, the quality of images and descriptions encourages the reader to accept the portrayal as true and real by utilizing analogies, examples, and citations of ancient testimony in a persuasive manner (Robbins 1996b:21). Both ancient and modern rhetorical theories provide extensive analytical tools for analyzing the argumentative texture of texts (Robbins 1996b:21).¹⁰³

1.3.1.6 Sensory-aesthetic Texture and Pattern

Initial insight into sensory-aesthetic texture may be gained by identifying the literary types (epistle, historiography, etc.) and form/s (proverb, parable, hymn, etc.) of a particular text

¹⁰² Robbins, in reference to “a compelling reading of the inner texture of the Magnificat” by Robert Tannehill (1974; 1986) illustrates how Tannehill (using a code of literary criticism) by employing a Hebrew poetry as a subtext, demarcates the text as (a) Lk 1:46-50 and (b) Lk 1:51-55. Robbins then argues that while Tannehill’s analysis reveals the inner texture of ‘the hymn’ based on the presupposition about Hebrew poetry, another approach by Lucy Rose (1989) employing the subtext of Hellenistic-Roman rhetoric, reveals argumentative texture. While the point Robbins makes focuses on how the influence of different subtexts is an extrinsic impact on the intrinsic nature of the text, and yield different kinds of textures, one can also detect that the different approaches yield different demarcations of the text. One could argue that while Tannehill’s analysis shows that the text of the Magnificat has two distinct beginnings and endings (Lk 1:46 and 1:51; Lk 50 and 55), Rose’s analysis shows that the Magnificat has one beginning and one ending (Lk 1:46; Lk 1:55).

¹⁰³ Ancient rhetoricians in particular noted that stories as well as speeches used argumentative devices to persuade the reader/hearer to think and act in one way rather than another.

(Robbins 1996b:30). This is because sensory-aesthetic texture of a text primarily resides prominently in the range of senses the text evokes or embodies (thought, emotion, sight, sound, touch, smell) and the manner in which the text evokes or embodies them (reason, intuition, imagination, humour, etc.) In some instances the discourse (in parables, historiographies, etc.) may be so rich and vivid that it evokes images as full and dramatic as cinema. In other instances the discourse may work with images that evoke feelings of cold, hard fact or abstract logic, says Robbins (1996b:30). This is why a ‘full-body’ approach is advocated by Robbins (2007a).

By identifying and grouping every aspect of a text that refers to a part of the body - ears, eyes, hands, feet, stomach, etc., the text exhibits sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern.

This leads to noting actions or perceptions related to the body parts - seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, walking, etc. Another way to search for sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern is to identify body zones in the discourse. The focus on body and bodily enactment calls for interpretive strategies guided by a taxonomy of body zones, argues Robbins (2003b:7). Bruce Malina (1993:73-77) argues that descriptions of human behaviour in the New Testament depict persons and events concretely. To this end, he suggests a three-zone model that features dyadic personalities in Mediterranean antiquity (Robbins 2003b:7; Malina 1993:73-77).¹⁰⁴

Sensory-aesthetic texture may call attention to dimensions that give particular tone and colour to repetitive, progressive, narrational, or argumentative texture in the discourse and thus points to the integrative nature of innertextual analysis.

In summary, inner texture clearly lies in the words in the text itself. Some of the aspects of the inner textual analysis appear to be very simplistic, like tabulating repetitive words and phrases or distinguishing between narrative speech and attributed speech, etc. But how these words and phrases interact with other words and phrases in the text of a unit, and with the text in the overall unit becomes a more complex aspect of the analysis.¹⁰⁵ Robbins (1996b:36)

¹⁰⁴ The dyadic person is essentially a group-embedded and group oriented personality – even “collectivity oriented” (Malina 1993:67). “Such persons would conceive themselves as always interrelated with other persons while occupying a distinct social position”, Malina continues. Robbins (1996b:31-36) illustrates how the focus on the body zones exhibits the sensory-aesthetic texture of a narrative when he refers to the body of Jesus (and Joseph, Pilate, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus) in Mark 15:42-46. He also refers to the body of the injured traveler, the Samaritan, Priest and Levite when exploring the sensory-aesthetic texture of Luke 10 (2003b:12-16). Also see Robbins (1992a:xxiii,xxix)

¹⁰⁵ This is further complicated by the presuppositions with which the interpreter approaches the text.

warns that it might be tempting for interpreters to “favour” inner textual analysis since the emphasis is on the text itself and therefore they claim that meaning is derived from what the text itself says. However, we are reminded that the meanings of written texts are bound up in particular socio-cultural, socio-political, socio-economic and socio-historical contexts of which ideology is key (Robbins 1996a; 1996b; Schüssler Fiorenza 1996). This of course is true of the text being analyzed as well as the “subtext” or pretext of the interpreter. Thus, Robbins (1996b:36) rightfully argues that because a text is always interacting with phenomena outside itself, it is necessary to also analyze a particular text from other angles.

The next section will explore the arena intertexture, which concerns a text’s configuration of phenomena that lie outside the text.

1.3.2 Intertexture

Particular questions serve to guide strategies of intertextual analysis of a unit of text: From where has this unit adopted its language? What other texts does this unit stand in dialogue with? (Robbins 1994c:179). The intertexture of a text means the interaction of the language in a text with phenomena in the world outside the text, viz. material and physical objects, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions and systems (Robbins 1996b:40).

Analysis of intertexture involves: (a) Oral-scribal intertexture – which involves how a text uses language that exist in another text. This is done through recitation,¹⁰⁶ recontextualization,¹⁰⁷ reconfiguration,¹⁰⁸ narrative amplification¹⁰⁹ and thematic elaboration;¹¹⁰ (b) Cultural intertexture;¹¹¹ (c) Social intertexture¹¹² and (d) Historical intertexture.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Recitation includes rehearsal of attributed speech in exact, modified, or different words from other accounts of the attributed speech; and rehearsal of an episode or series of episodes, with or without using some words from another account of the story (Bloomquist 2002a:3; Robbins 1994c:179; 1996b:41-58).

¹⁰⁷ Recontextualization presents wording from biblical texts without explicitly stating or inferring such (1996b:48-50). Thus, it is the placing of attributed narration or speech in a new context without mentioning its previous attribution (Bloomquist 2002a:3).

¹⁰⁸ Reconfiguration is when a situation is recounted in such a manner that “makes the latter event new in relation to the previous event” (Robbins 1996b:50). It seeks to modify a word, phrase, topic or theme (Bloomquist 2002a:3).

¹⁰⁹ Narrative amplification in an extended composition containing aspects of recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration (Robbins 1996b:52).

¹¹⁰ Thematic elaboration is presented when a theme or issue emerges in the form of a thesis or chreia near the beginning of a unit; and as the unit progresses, meanings and meaning-effects of this theme or issue unfolds. Thus elaboration functions as a complete argument (Robbins 1996b 53-56).

¹¹¹ Cultural intertexture concerns modes of understanding and belief – such as ideas people have about their importance, their opportunities and their responsibilities in the world. Cultural texture appears in word and concept patterns reflecting values, myths, systems or codes, for example, purity codes, laws, covenant, etc. It refers to knowledge known only by people inside a particular culture (Robbins 1996b:58). New Testament

In summary, intertexture involves “rhetorical relationships of the text to other texts and resulting rhetorical and literary patterns” (Bloomquist 1997:202). Thus, a text emerges as a result of a rich configuration of texts, cultures, and social and historical phenomena. It moves beyond Israelite and Jewish traditions to include cultural intertexture, social intertexture and historical intertexture of the broader first century Mediterranean world.

Some aspects of intertextual analysis, especially oral-scribal present so many options, angles and possibilities, that one feels overwhelmed, even confused – how is one to implement all of this! But this is the nature of SRI – not to overwhelm or confuse, of course, but to open up the interpretive process. While an interpreter will only “discover” some dimensions of intertexture in the reading of a particular text at a particular time and place; given a different place, a different time, the same interpreter may discover other dimensions of intertexture in the same text.

Social and cultural texture, not to be confused with social intertexture and cultural intertexture discussed above, is another angle in the interpretive process which will illuminate yet another texture in the text.

1.3.3 Social and cultural texture

Social and cultural texture raises questions about the responses to the world, the social and cultural systems and institutions, and the cultural alliances and conflicts evoked by the text (Robbins 1994c:185). According to Bloomquist, social and cultural texture has to do with the socio-cultural setting in which texts, their authors, and their hearers and readers are embedded (1997:202). Analysis of social and cultural texture takes interpreters into sociological and cultural theory, says Robbins (1996b:71). Such analysis includes exploring the social and cultural “location of language and the type of social and cultural world the

discourse exhibit cultural references and cultural allusions pointing to people, gods, and traditions in Jewish and the broader Greco-Roman culture and cultural echo which the speaker may or may not have intended, is a word or phrase that evokes (or potentially evokes) a concept from cultural tradition (Robbins 1996b:60).

¹¹² In contrast to cultural knowledge (which is learnt in the context of a particular culture), social knowledge is accessible to all people through general interaction (Robbins 1999a:299). Thus, social knowledge is visible and commonly held by all persons in a region, irrespective of their particular cultural location. The interpreter explores the meanings of social roles, identities, institutions, codes and relationships outside the text being interpreted – with the aid of other texts, inscriptions, archaeological data, sculpture, paintings, etc. (Robbins 1996b:63).

¹¹³ Historical intertexture concerns events that occur outside the text – which then become historical accounts by means of narrative discourse. Thus, in SRI terms, ‘historical’ is used with reference to ‘event’. Interpreting a historical event requires knowledge of social, cultural and ideological phenomena operative in the event (Robbins 1996b:65).

language evokes or creates” (Robbins 1996b:71). The social and cultural texture of a text emerges in *specific social topics* which exhibit resources for changing people or social practices, for destroying and re-creating social order, for withdrawing from present society to create one’s own social world, or for coping with the world by transforming one’s own perception of it. The overall environment for specific social topics is provided by *common social and cultural topics*. Common social and cultural topics exhibit the manner in which people present their propositions, reasons and arguments - to themselves and to other people. These topics exhibit broad insights about systems of exchange and benefit. Final cultural categories in a text show the priorities in a text’s discourse among topics like what constitutes being lawful, expedient, holy, valiant, etc. (Robbins 1996b:71).

For the purpose of the dissertation it seems necessary to discuss specific social topics, common social and cultural topics, and final cultural categories in more detail.

1.3.3.1 Specific Social Topics

Discourse which exhibits specific social topics in a text reveals particular religious responses to the world. The topics of interest and concern in any particular religious text may establish a relation to the world that is different from any other texts. To this end, Bryan Wilson has organized data from a wide variety of religious groups in a taxonomy of seven kinds of responses to the world, says Robbins (1996b:72).¹¹⁴ Robbins reasons that when one applies Wilson’s taxonomy to New Testament literature, it “reveals the kinds of cultures earliest Christianity nurtured and maintained in the first-century Mediterranean world” (Robbins 1996b:72).

1.3.3.1.1 Conversionist response

A *conversionist* response is characterized by a view that the world is corrupt because people are corrupt. If people can be changed, the world will be changed. Salvation is considered to be available not through objective agencies but only by a profound and supernaturally wrought transformation of the self. The world itself will not change, but the presence of a new subjective orientation to it will itself be salvation.

¹¹⁴ Robbins uses wording verbatim from Wilson (1963, 1969 and 1973:22-26). Since these are concise and well formulated explanations, it is thought best to record them here verbatim too.

1.3.3.1.2 Revolutionist response

A *revolutionist* response declares that only the destruction of the world – the natural world but also, more specifically the social order – will save people. Supernatural powers must perform the destruction because people lack the power – if not to destroy the world, then certainly to re-create it.

1.3.3.1.3 Introversionist response

An *introversionist* response views the world as irredeemably evil and considers salvation to be attained only by the fullest possible withdrawal from it. The self may be purified by renouncing the world and leaving it. This might be an individual response, of course, but as the response of a social movement, it leads to the establishment of a separated community preoccupied with its own holiness and its means of insulation from the wider society.

1.3.3.1.4 Gnostic-Manipulationist response

A *gnostic-manipulationist* response seeks only a transformed set of relationships – a transformed method of coping with evil. The gnostic-manipulationist believes that salvation is possible in the world and that evil may be overcome if people learn the right means, and improve techniques to deal with their problems.

1.3.3.1.5 Thaumaturgical response

A *thaumaturgical* response focuses on the individual's concern for relief from present and specific ills by special dispensations. The request for supernatural help is personal and local, and its operation is magical. Salvation is immediate but has no general application beyond the given case and others like it. Salvation takes the form of healing, assuagement of grief, restoration of loss, reassurance, the foresight and avoidance of calamity, and the guarantee of eternal (or at least continuing) life after death.

1.3.3.1.6 Reformist response

A *reformist* response views the world as corrupt because its social structures are corrupt. If the structures can be changed, then salvation will be present in the world. This response, then, assumes that evil may be dealt with according to supernaturally given insights about the ways in which social organization should be amended. Investigation of ways of the world and

recommendations for amending it are the essential orientation. The specific alterations to be made are revealed to people whose hearts and minds are open to supernatural influence.

1.3.3.1.7 Utopian response

A *utopian response* seeks to reconstruct the entire social world according to divinely given principles, rather to simply amend it from a reformist position. The goal of a utopian response is to establish a new social organization that will eliminate evil. It is much more radical than the reformist response because it insists on complete replacement of the present social organization. The utopian response differs from the revolutionist response by insisting that people themselves remake the world and not a divine power that destroy this present world and re-create another. In turn, the utopian response is more active and constructive than an introversionist response of simply withdrawing from the world.

While the category of specific social topics in social and cultural texture exhibits different ways ‘people in a text’ respond to the world, the category “common social and cultural topics” exhibits the context in which people live in the world (Robbins 1996b:71). Thus, the overall environment for *specific social topics* is in essence provided by *common social and cultural topics*.

1.3.3.2 Common social and cultural topics

According to Robbins (1996b:75) knowing the common social and cultural topics in a text can help an interpreter to avoid ethnocentric and anachronistic interpretation.¹¹⁵ Of particular note here is the observation that first century Mediterranean society reflects a group-oriented, honour-shame values characteristic (Robbins 1996b:75). Eight facets of common social and cultural topics have to be taken into account when behaviour and understanding in first-century Mediterranean society are considered (Robbins 1996b:75). These facets are: honour, guilt and rights cultures; dyadic and individualist personalities; dyadic and legal contracts and agreements; challenge response (riposte); purity codes; agriculturally based, industrial and technological economic exchange systems; peasants, labourers, craftspeople and entrepreneurs; limited, sufficient and overabundant goods. For the purpose of this study, the first six facets will be discussed in more detail.

¹¹⁵ “Ethnocentrism”, Robbins explains, is when one bases interpretations on the values which “one’s own people consider central to life” and ‘anachronism’ refers to “presupposing something for one period of time that was present only during a different period of time” (1996b:75).

1.3.3.2.1 Honour, guilt and rights cultures¹¹⁶

Honour is basically a claim to worth that is socially acknowledged (Malina 1993:30) and stands for a person's rightful place in society (Robbins 1996b:76). Honour surfaces especially "where the three defining features called power, gender status and "religion" come together (Malina 1993:30). Viewed from a "male perspective that dominates first century Mediterranean discourse", the purpose of honour is to serve as a social rating that entitles a person to interact in specific ways with his or her equals, superiors, and subordinates (Robbins 1996b:76). Honour, like wealth, can be ascribed or acquired, says Malina (1993:33). Ascribed honour (like ascribed wealth) befalls a person passively through birth, family connections, or endowment by persons of notable power (Robbins 1996b:76; Malina, 1993:33).¹¹⁷ Acquired honour is honour actively sought in the social context of challenge and response. In a context where honour is the basis of one's reputation and one's social standing, "shame" is a positive symbol, says Malina (1993:50). However, in a context where honour is viewed as the exclusive prerogative of one of the genders, then honour is always male and shame always female (Malina 1993:50; Mouton 2007:44-46). Shame in this context refers to a person's sensitivity about what others think, say, and do regarding one's honour (Robbins 1996b:76; Malina 1993:50-53). Malina (1993:63) asks, "What sort of personality sees life nearly exclusively in terms of honour?"¹¹⁸

1.3.3.2.2 Dyadic and individualist personalities

A dyadic¹¹⁹ personality is one who understands that her/his identity depends on what others think and say about him/her. Dyadic personality is characteristic of individuals who perceive themselves and form their self-image in terms of what others perceive and feed back to them (Robbins 1996b:77; Malina 1993:63-67). Based on ideas from Malina (1993), Robbins states:

¹¹⁶ A chapter entitled, *Honor and Shame: Pivotal Values of the First-Century Mediterranean World*, in Malina (1993) provides insights, information and impetus for this section.

¹¹⁷ Malina (1993:33) notes that a major purpose of genealogies in the Bible is to make known a person's honour lines and "thus socially situate the person on the ladder of statuses".

¹¹⁸ Combrink points out that even though most people today may be living in individualistic societies, honour and shame discourse may still be relevant. The honour culture of today may be measured socio-economically, or with reference to physical strength, or even sexual conquest (2002:116).

¹¹⁹ The concept 'dyad' comes from the Greek word meaning "a pair, a twosome" (Malina 1993:67). Interesting though, is the point that Malina (1993:103) makes about 1 Cor.1:12 and Matt 23:8-10, where he asserts that these texts point out that "obligations owed to Jesus have to be paid back not to Jesus, but to others in dyadic relation with Jesus, that is, one's fellow Christians". This, continues Malina, is a kind of "polyadic relationship".

These persons conceive of themselves as always interrelated to other persons while occupying a distinct social position both horizontally (with others sharing the same status, moving from centre to periphery) and vertically (with others above and below in social rank). Such persons need to test this interrelatedness, with the focus of attention away from ego, on the demands and expectations of others who grant or withhold reputation (1996b:77-78).

Thus, the “dyadic” person is essentially a group-embedded and group oriented person, which is unlike the individualist person (Malina 1993:67). Modern individualism, says Robbins leads us to perceive ourselves as unique because we are “set apart from other unique and set-apart human beings” (1996b:78). In the first-century Mediterranean world, persons considered themselves in terms of the group or groups in which they experienced themselves as inextricably embedded.¹²⁰ What is the type of dyadic alliances used by people in first-century Mediterranean world? This question is explored in the next section.

1.3.3.2.3 Dyadic and legal contracts and agreements

The most significant form of social interaction in the limited-goods world of the first century is an informal principle of reciprocity – an implicit, non-legal contractual obligation which, according to Malina, George Foster calls the “dyadic contract” (1993:100). A dyadic contract then, is an implicit agreement, not enforceable by any authority apart from one’s sense of honour and shame. By means of this principle of reciprocity, “the honorable man selects (or is selected by) another for a series of ongoing unspecified acts of mutual support”¹²¹ (Malina 1993:100; Robbins 1996b:79). In a limited-goods world, such contracts can bind persons of equal status (colleague contracts) or persons of different statuses (patron-client contracts).¹²²

Both colleague contracts and patron-client contracts are initiated by means of positive challenges. A colleague contract is a type of reciprocity among equals. It is symmetrical reciprocity between closely located persons of the same social status.

A patron-client contract on the other hand, is also initiated by means of a positive challenge, a positive gift or request for aid, but ties persons of significantly different social statuses; hence the goods and services in the ongoing reciprocal relationship are different. This relationship is

¹²⁰ Of course, like individuals, groups may also perceive themselves unique and ‘set apart’.

¹²¹ It is this ‘mutuality’ that makes it a dyadic agreement.

¹²² The informal contracts function side by side with formal contracts of society – like buying and selling, marriage, and the natural covenant with God. However, the dyadic contract crosscuts the formal contracts of culture – providing social cohesion and enabling the social interdependence necessary for life (Robbins 1996b:79; Malina 1993:100).

asymmetrical since the partners are not social equals and make no pretense to equality (Malina 1993:101; Robbins 1996b:79). Another striking difference between colleague contracts and patron-client contracts is that with equals in colleague contracts, persons provide themselves with all they need – goods and services to which they themselves have access to. On the other hand, the patron-client contract provides things not normally available – things that at times are badly needed (Malina 1993:101-102).

Robbins (1996b:79) and Malina (1993:102) both suggest that “patron-client relationships are implied in the Gospels when people approach Jesus for mercy”.¹²³ Also, all positive relationships with God are rooted in the perception of patron-client contracts (Robbins 1996b:79; Malina 1993:102).¹²⁴ The fourth facet of common social and cultural topics is “challenge-response (riposte)”.

1.3.3.2.4 Challenge-Response (Riposte)

Challenge-response is a “sort of constant tug of war” and a game of “social push and shove” (Robbins 1996b:80; Malina 1993:34). It could be looked at:

[...] as a type of social communication, for any social interaction is a form of communication in which messages are transferred from source to receiver (Malina 1993:34).

The source is the challenger, while the message is “a symbolized thing, such as a word, a gift, an invitation; or the message could be an event (some action) – or both ‘symbolized thing’ and event” (Robbins 1996b:80; Malina 1993:34). In the words of both Robbins and Malina:

The channels are always public, and the publicity of the message guarantees that the receiving individual will react in some way, since even a non-reaction is publicly interpreted as a response (Robbins, 1996b:80; Malina, 1993:34).

Thus, Robbins (1996b:80) says that, within the context of honour, there are at least three phases in “challenge-response”: (i) the challenge in terms of some action on the part of the challenger;¹²⁵ (ii) the perception of the message by the individual to whom it is directed as

¹²³ Malina (1993:102) notes examples from Matthews Gospel - 9:27 and 20:30: blind men; 15:55: Canaanite woman; 17:15 father of an epileptic.

¹²⁴ For an in-depth reflection on dyadic contracts see, Malina (1993:99-103). For an exploration of patron-client contract in Mark 15, see Robbins (1996b:79-80).

¹²⁵ This could be a word, deed or both (Malina 1993:34; Robbins 1996b:80).

well as the public at large; (iii) the reaction of the receiving individual and the evaluation of the reaction on the part of the public¹²⁶ (Malina 1993:34-35).

Robbins explains that in first century Mediterranean world, every social interaction that took place outside one's family or outside one's circle of friends was perceived as a challenge to honour, or an attempt to acquire honour from one's social equal¹²⁷ (1996b:81).

1.3.3.2.5 Agriculturally based, industrial, and technological economic exchange systems

The context for statements and interactions in New Testament literature is the agrarian-based exchange system of first-century Mediterranean society (Moxnax 1988:66-68). Reciprocity was a clan-based system. *Full reciprocity* existed among members of a family - goods and services were freely given. *Weak reciprocity* happened among members of a cadet line within a clan when gifts were given but, "an eye was kept on the balanced return-flow of counter-gifts", says Robbins (1996b:83). *Balanced reciprocity* existed where distant tribal kin were involved, and "the element of a watchful eye calculation grew greater, and the time within which the counter-gift had to be made grew less" (1996b:83). Mutuality, like morality held good "only for tribesmen", says Robbins (1996b:83). Thus, *negative reciprocity* existed during exchange with outsiders who were considered fair game for clever dealing, and where one could haggle, cheat and lie (Robbins 1996b:83). The transition from tribalism to more centralized communities which were usually organized around a shrine or temple, was marked by *redistribution* in the context of the *central storehouse economy* (Robbins 1996b:83). Thus, accordingly, the first-century Mediterranean world might be characterized as "a peasant society – a society of pre-industrial cities along with surrounding villages over which the cities exercise control and influence" (Malina 1993:112).

Control and influence of the Judaic temple-cult with its nexus in Jerusalem were exercised by observance of Hebraic purity codes.

1.3.3.2.6 Purity codes


Purity is specifically about the general cultural map of social time and space, about the arrangements the space thus defined, and especially about the boundaries separating the

¹²⁶ See Malina (1993:36) for a diagrammatic presentation of the three phases of 'challenge-response'.

¹²⁷ Malina (1993:35) makes the point that the 'challenge-response game' can take place only between equals. Therefore, the receiver must judge "whether he is an equal to the challenger; whether the challenger honours him by regarding him as an equal as is implicit in the challenge; or whether the challenger dishonours him by implying equality when there is none, either because the receiver is a higher or lower status".

inside from the outside (Malina 1993:153; Robbins 1996b:85). These boundaries or ‘social lines’ are learnt through enculturation and “they provide us with a sort of socially shared map that helps and compels us to situate persons, things, events and places” (Malina 1993:152).

The unclean or impure does not fit - it belongs elsewhere because it causes confusion in the arrangement of the generally accepted social map, since it overruns boundaries (Robbins 1996b:85). At the time of Jesus, the Israelite community was highly stratified into categories of persons who received their place by birth (Malina 1993:159). A classification of the population in terms of degrees of purity was determined according to proximity from the Jerusalem temple. This temple with its large area of courts and buildings had as its central pivotal locus, the sanctuary – the holy of the holies. Thus, according to Malina (1993:159), genealogical purity – defined by one’s inherited status – was a major concern of the elites. Since the whole genealogical community is perceived as God-given, its genealogical purity lines are considered “to be God’s will for God’s people” (Malina 1993:159).¹²⁸ From an Israelite perspective then, the genealogical categories of persons one might find in Second Temple Israel included the following:¹²⁹

- 
- A 1. Priests
 - B 2. Levites
 - C 3. Full-blooded Israelites (“laymen”)
 - 4. Illegal children of Priests
 - D 5. Proselytes or Gentile converts to Judaism
 - 6. Proselytes who once were slaves, hence proselyte freedmen
 - 7. Bastards (those born of incestuous or adulterous unions)
 - 8. The “fatherless” (those born of prostitutes)
 - E 9. Foundlings
 - 10. Eunuchs made so by men

¹²⁸ This, one may argue, is also reminiscent of apartheid’s ‘separate development’ ideology.

¹²⁹ This list is verbatim from Malina (1993:160). Also see Robbins (1996b:85).

- 11. Eunuchs born that way
- F 12. Those of deformed sexual features
- 13. Hermaphrodites
- X 14. Persons of all other ethnic groups: non-Jews.¹³⁰

From these categories, an abstract conception of the purity lines of Second Temple Israel, a symbolic statement of “who is in the social body of Israel” may be drawn.¹³¹ At the time of Jesus, entrance into the house of Israel was by birth¹³² and circumcision marked the right to entry (Malina 1993:162).

The interaction between the human body and the social body is emphasized by Mary Douglas:

The Israelites were always in their history a hard-pressed minority... The threatened boundaries of their body politic would be well mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity, and purity of the physical body (1966:113).

Thus it stands to reason that the diseased (or impure) body threatens the integrity and purity of the social body; and the imperfect body is void of holiness. To be in the ‘holy’ presence, descendants of Aaron were to have no bodily defects (Lev 21:17). Those who are blind; the lame; the disfigured or deformed; the one with a crippled hand or foot; the hunchbacked or dwarfed; one who has an eye defect; those with festering sores; men with damaged testicles are all prohibited from approaching the altar (Lev 21:23). This leads Parsons (2006:41) to note that, “Holy and unblemished persons (and sacrifices) are external expressions of the requirements to be holy as God is holy”. He therefore draws the conclusion that “there may be a physiognomic correlation between the outward, unblemished physical attributes of the priest and the inner holiness or purity that the physical state manifests” (Parsons, 2006:41).

Physiognomy is the physical outward sign of one’s moral character, according to Parsons (2006), who explains that while existing studies devoted to the topic of physiognomy come

¹³⁰ Samaritans were regarded as non-Jews.

¹³¹ Therefore a ‘neighbour’ may have been understood only to be those – who like me – have been drawn together by boundaries of purity (see chapter three).

¹³² Of parents who have not defiled their purity by inter-marriage, as in the instance of the Samaritans. Potential marriage partners had to be members of the house of Israel by birth or by ritual birth (converts called “prostelyte”) and occupy a given status (Malina 1993:160). This was part of a ‘defensive strategy’ which guarded against defilement of God’s people.

from the third century BCE and later,¹³³ Antisthenes reportedly wrote a treatise of physiognomy already in the classical period. Drawing on the work of Elizabeth Evans (1996), Parsons (2006:17) notes that physiognomics was widely practiced in antiquity by philosophers, astrologers, and physicians.¹³⁴ The origin of the science of physiognomy is attributed to both philosopher (Phythagoras) and physician (Hippocrates), by Aulus Gellius (a second century CE writer) and Galen (a second century CE physician) respectively (Parsons 2006:18).¹³⁵ As a “quasi-science”, physiognomy always bore a close relationship to the science of medicine and as ‘an art’, it was closely related to the practice of rhetoric (Parsons 2006:36). “Physiognomy was especially useful in rhetorical invective, a speech of condemnation or blame”, explains Parsons (2006:27). Parsons illustrates the presence of physiognomic ideas in Jewish literature before he explores how early Christian writings (including non-canonocal writings) exhibit varying levels of interest in physiognomics. Parsons also shows how a number of texts from patristic writers physiognomic interests (2006:39-60).¹³⁶

According to Parsons (2006:22-26), there are three kinds of physiognomic analyses mentioned by pseudo-Aristotle.¹³⁷ The first is called the *anatomical method* where the physiognomist looks at a facial feature and identifies its corresponding emotion.¹³⁸ The second is the *zoological method* which seeks to determine a person’s character by observing similarities in appearance between the person and features of various kinds of animals.¹³⁹ The

¹³³ Among the best known are *Physiognomica*, a third-century BCE document inaccurately attributed to Aristotle; *On Physiognom*, a work by the second-century CE rhetorician, Polemo of Laodicea; *Physiognomonica* a fourth-century work by Adamantius; *De Physiognomonica*, an anonymous fourth-century Latin handbook (Parsons 2006:22).

¹³⁴ According to Parsons, Evans’ work shows that “physiognomic consciousness” prevailed in ancient drama, theater and art. Zopyrus (fifth century BCE) is said to be one of the first persons known to have been a practitioner of the art of physiognomy when he “purportedly diagnosed Socrates as stupid and fond of women”, based on bodily features (2006:17-18).

¹³⁵ Parsons (2006:19) reasons that because the honour of founding physiognomy is shared by a physician and philosopher, it is no surprise that the subject held a place n the repertoire of both. He says that Galen often drew on Aristotle’s writings for his understanding of physiognomic convention (Parsons 2006:20).

¹³⁶ The study of physiognomy in relation to the New Testament is in its infancy, says Parsons (2006:48). He notes the work of scholars such as Dale Martin (1995); J. Albert Harrill (2001); Sandnes (2002); Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey (1996); Robert Grant (1982); Abraham Malherbe (1986) on the writings of Paul. Writings such as Gal 4 13-14; 1 Cor.2:3; 2 Cor.10:1; 12:7 allude to some physical ailment or weakness that was a potential source of shame which rendered him (Paul) vulnerable to attacks from his opponents (Parsons 2006: 39-65).

¹³⁷ This is in reference to a third century BCE document, *Physiognomica* which, according to Parsons had inaccurately been attributed to Aristotle (2006:22).

¹³⁸ In the second half of the pseudo-Aristotelian tractate, the author “details aspects of the body, both whole and in its individual parts, and what these physical signs reveal about the inner character” (Parsons 2006:22).

¹³⁹ When a particular animal with peculiar features has certain character traits, the physionomist may infer that “persons with similar features share the inner nature of the corresponding animal” (Parsons 2006:23).

third kind of physiognomic analysis which is the *ethnographic method* is important for the purpose of this dissertation and calls for more elaboration.

The ethnographic model is also known as the racial model. Here, the physiognomist considers the collective behaviour of a particular group or race of people and links those behaviours to their distinctive physical features. The work of a second century CE rhetorician, Polemo of Laodicea reveals geographic stereotypes (Parsons 2006:23). Parsons cites Polemo (31:236) as saying:

It follows from the indices and signs of this discipline that as often as you judge any race or a people of the world on the basis of these indices, you will judge them correctly. However, you will find that some signs typical of people are negative and lead them to deviance, while others are positive, correcting the deviance. For example you will scarcely find keen insight and excellence in letters among Egyptians; on the other hand keen insight is widespread among the Macedonians; and you will find among the Phoenicians and Cilicians the pursuit of peace and pleasure; and finally you will be offended by Scythians, a treacherous and devious people (Parsons 2006:23).

The notion of geographic stereotypes also extends to the relationship of persons to their places of origin. Parsons (2006:24) quotes from Hippocrates (Aër. 24.1-40):

Inhabitants of a region which is mountainous, rugged, high and (not) watered, where the changes of season exhibit sharp contrasts are likely to be big of physique, with nature well adapted for endurance and courage, and such possess not little wildness and ferocity. The inhabitants of hollow regions that are meadowy, stifling, with more hot than cold winds, and where the water is hot, will be neither tall nor well made, but inclined to be broad, fleshy, and dark-haired; they are dark rather than fair; less subject to phlegm than to bile. Similarly bravery and endurance are not by nature part of their character. (Parsons 2006:24)

Parsons also notes that common examples from the ancient world would include the stereotypes of Cretans as liars and Corinthians as promiscuous (2006:24). There is also a kind of geocentrism expressed in antiquity which “is found in both pagan and Jewish sources” Parsons 2006:25).¹⁴⁰ To the Greeks, Delphi is the centre or navel of the universe. A similar claim is made for Jerusalem by Jews - Mount Zion was in the midst of the navel of the earth (Parsons 2006:25).

¹⁴⁰ According to Parsons (2006:24-25), “geocentrism is based on various forms of the ‘omphalos myth’ according to which one’s city or country of origin lay at the centre or navel (ὀμφαλος) of the universe”. Thus it was common practice to “vilify the barbarian races that lived at the edges” of the city (Parsons 2006:25).

Considering the above, I would want to argue that insights from physiognomy could enhance the interpretive process of New Testament texts. This is particularly true of the Lukan texts which feature the stigmatization of the bodies of people who are sick, blind, bleeding, robbed; and people who are ‘othered’ and stigmatized because of their perceived impurity based on their geocentric location.

In SRI terms, discourse about bodies (of individuals and communities) evoke particular pictures (rhetography). While physiognomy could be helpful in getting a focus on the picture emerging from the text, it could also prove particularly helpful in identifying rhetology in Lukan texts as it could give insight into the reversal that appears to be common in Lukan healing narrative. Thus, I want to suggest that Lukan discourses on healing exhibit certain intertextual “cultural allusions” and “echoes” that presuppose physiognomic ideas which existed (elsewhere) in textual form (Robbins 1996b:58; Parsons 2006:40); and that insights into ideas of physiognomic practices as social and cultural texture, illuminate Luke’s rhetorical strategy of subversion (Parsons 2006); bi-polar reversal (York 1990); or in SRI terms, reconfiguration. Leading from this, I want to suggest that insight into the physiognomic pervasiveness in Lukan texts may make valuable contributions to SRI - specifically in the areas of cultural inter-texture and social and cultural texture. Moreover, because of the vivid bodily imagery physiognomy evokes, insights gained could prove to be helpful when dealing with the rhetographies of early Christian discourses, particularly those relating to purity codes as a *common social and cultural topic*.

The priority certain people give to the “holy”, “honourable”, etc., pronounces a particular social and cultural location for them (Robbins 1996b:3). This is the topic of the last aspect of social and cultural texture, namely *final cultural categories*.

1.3.3.3 Final Cultural Categories

Final cultural categories are those topics that most decisively define one’s cultural location (Robbins 1996b:86; Bloomquist 1999:187). *Cultural location* concerns the manner in which people present their propositions, reasons, and arguments both to themselves and to other people (Robbins 1996b:86; Bloomquist 1999:187). Robbins identifies five final topics of cultural rhetoric:

- (i) Dominant culture rhetoric: is an “imperial rhetoric” that imposes itself broadly throughout space and time.¹⁴¹ Dominant culture rhetoric presents a system of attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms that the speaker either presupposes or asserts are supported by social structures vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial region (Robbins 1996b:86);
- (ii) Subculture rhetoric – is rhetoric that mirrors dominant culture rhetoric, but in subgroups¹⁴² who claim to enact them better than members of dominant status;
- (iii) Counterculture rhetoric – is rhetoric that proposes an alternative to the existing rhetorics;
- (iv) Contraculture – a rhetoric that opposes existing rhetorics, but with no clear alternative in mind; and
- (v) Liminal culture rhetoric – is rhetoric characteristic of moments of transition in individual or corporate lives (Robbins 1996b:88; Bloomquist 1999:187).

Social and cultural textual analysis of a text leads an interpreter to exploring the social and cultural location of the language and the type of social and cultural world the language evokes or creates.¹⁴³

In summarizing social and cultural texture, one notes that it concerns the capacities of the text to support social reform, withdrawal, or opposition and evoke cultural perceptions of dominance, subordinance, difference, or exclusion (Robbins 1996b:3). Interpreting the social and cultural texture of a text would require one to explore the social and cultural *location* of the language itself as well as the type of social and cultural world the language evokes or creates. Here, a guiding question would be, “What kind of a social and cultural person would anyone be who lives in the ‘world’ of a particular text?” (Robbins 1996b:71).

The life-situations and livelihoods of first-century Christians were embedded in pre-industrial, agrarian environment. Kinship relations (group-oriented) represented the basic

¹⁴¹ E.g. Roman empire in the first century C.E. or American culture in the twentieth century C.E. (Bloomquist 1999:187).

¹⁴² E.g. Military, the mafia, ethnic communities living in a setting of dominant culture imitating the attitudes, values, dispositions and norms of dominant culture rhetoric (Bloomquist 1999:187; Robbins 1996b:86).

¹⁴³ Bloomquist draws implications for present studies of the Jesus tradition from the social context of Cynic rhetorical practice, and points out that Cynic rhetorical practice was counter-culturally subversive of a dominant culture gone entropic and that “culture may be revitalized if ‘true’ values are restored” (1997:230).

networks; and honour and shame were dominant cultural values that governed people's lives. The honourable person was guided by clear rules of hospitality and strict rules of appropriate exchange were operative at all levels of society (Robbins 1996b:89). In a context where Christians were re-negotiating their identity (particularly regarding the purity codes associated with the temple cult) in relation to other first-century societal groups, the different forms of cultural rhetoric amplify the manner in which such negotiation takes place.

Analysis of social and cultural texture exhibits people's religious responses to the world within the overall context in which people live and interact in relation to other groups. Ideological texture on the other hand, concerns the biases, opinions, preferences, and stereotypes with which a particular writer present the text, as well as the biases, opinions, preferences, and stereotypes with which a particular reader approaches the text. These observation leads to questions about ideological texture.

1.3.4 Ideological texture

The beginning place for ideological analysis and interpretation is with people, and the best place to begin is with you, the reader of this sentence. (Robbins, 1996b:96)

Robbins suggests that interpreters themselves reflect on their own 'location' in terms of *Specific Social Topics* and *Final Cultural Categories* (1996b:96). He then enacts this himself by personally exploring the shifts in his own social and cultural location (1996a: 24-26; 1996b:96-98). He then points out how his personal location - his particular social and cultural experiences - have influenced his approach to the interpretive process (1996b:100).¹⁴⁴ Bloomquist (1997:202) concurs that ideological texture has to do with the biases - be it positive or negative, of the interpreter her/himself. It concerns the "opinions, preferences, and stereotypes of a particular writer and a particular reader" (Bloomquist 1999:188).

Ideological texture, explains Robbins, differs from social and cultural texture by the manner in which it extends beyond social and cultural location into particular ways in which people advance their own interests and well-being through action, emotion and thought (1996b:95). It concerns particular alliances and conflicts that the language in an interpretation evokes and

¹⁴⁴ Robbins remarks that some of his professional peers may argue that such personal observations should be left out of scholarly interpretation. But he argues that it is necessary for interpreters to be aware of their own social and cultural locations lest they "get caught in a split between body and mind", which according to him makes the scholarly analysis less rigorous, precise, and scientific (Robbins 1996b:100).

nurtures (Robbins 1996b:4). Thus, ideological texture has to do with the text itself and how interpreters of the text position themselves in relation to other individuals and groups.

Every particular mode of interpretation has its own range of ideological textures (Robbins 1996b:96). Thus, significantly different ideological ranges of texture exist in anthropological, feminist, theological, literary, or historical modes of interpretive discourse. Interpretive discourse itself, then, takes an interpreter into ideological issues concerning the nature of text itself; the manner in which the text may invoke different points of view; the nature of interpretation; and the nature of the relation of any one interpreter to other interpreters (Robbins 1996b:96). This brings the discussion to ideological texture as it relates to different groups.

Using insights gained from Bruce Malina and Bryan Wilson, Robbins (1996b:100-102) presents a revised version of Jeremy Boissevain's taxonomy for analysis of different kinds of groups. The groups are categorized as follows: clique; gang; action set; faction; corporate group; historic tradition; multiple historic traditions throughout the world.¹⁴⁵

Bloomquist (2002a:6) reasons that ideological texture concerns "more accurately the way belief systems and biases reflect rhetorical reconfiguration of existing social, cultural and sacred knowledge".¹⁴⁶ Bloomquist also reasons that when conflict over social and cultural status is in question, ideological texture moves us out of the static world of the text's world (2002a:6). This is in line with Robbins' view who, with insights gained from John Gager asserts that conflict reaches its most intense level when it involves competing ideologies or competing views of the same ideology (Robbins 1996b:109).¹⁴⁷ Under the rubric, *Modes of intellectual discourse*, Robbins explores how an interpreter's particular approach, embedded in a specific discipline is a particular mode of social production, and as such has a relation to "an ideological field in the modern/postmodern world in which we live" (1996b:106).

¹⁴⁵ Robbins gives a concise description of each group (1996b:100-102) and then proceeds with relevant contemporary examples of such groups within the arena of Biblical interpretation (102-105).

¹⁴⁶ In an article entitled *First Century models of bodily healing and their socio-rhetorical transformation on some New Testament Synoptic Traditions* (2002a)

¹⁴⁷ Such conflict presents three critical moments in the history of early Christianity, says Robbins (1996b:105), who cites John Gager in this regard. These moments are (a) conflict with Judaism over the claim to represent the true Israel; (b) Conflict with Paganism over the claim to possess true wisdom; conflict among Christian Groups over the claim to embody the authentic faith of Jesus and the apostles (Robbins 1996b:106). According to Robbins, Gager suggests that these struggles are intensified by two separate factors, viz. (i) the degree to which members considered themselves to be members of a group; and (ii) the role of intellectuals who transformed personal motivations into eternal truths (Robbins 1996b:106).

Considering the aforementioned, it is clear that ideology concerns not only people's relationships to other people, but also how these relationships are expressed. To this end, Robbins suggests two ways to analyze the ideological texture of a text (1996b:95). Firstly, it is necessary to analyze the spectrum of social and cultural data the implied author of the texts builds into the language of the text.¹⁴⁸ Secondly, the ideology of 'power' in the discourse of the text must be analyzed.¹⁴⁹

The remaining texture of the multi-textured approach is sacred texture, which will be discussed next.

1.3.5 Sacred texture

Sacred texture concerns experience of special forces - whether good or evil; experience of divine control; guidance in social or personal history; or experience of human behaviour that is shaped by encounters with the sacred (Robbins 1996b 120-131; Bloomquist 1999:188). Sacred texture exists in a text that somehow addresses the relation of humans to the divine. Sacred texture exists in communication about gods, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, human redemptions, human commitment, religious community, and ethics (Robbins 1996b:4;120; Bloomquist 1999:188). For the purpose of this project the facet of 'ethics' is foregrounded.

1.3.5.1 Ethics

In a technical sense, 'ethics' is a scientific discipline, the 'science of morals', the discipline dealing with processes of human decision-making on moral issues, says Mouton (Smit, 1991:52; Mouton, 2002:173). Ethics concerns "the responsibility of humans to think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances" (Robbins, 1996b:129). In the context of religious commitment, the special ways of thinking and acting are motivated by a commitment to God, says Robbins (1996b:129). With respect to Christian ethics, Birch

¹⁴⁸ A taxonomy of nine areas are proposed, which Robbins argues exhibit the social and cultural location of the implied author, viz. previous events; natural environment and resources; population structure; technology; socialization and personality; culture; foreign affairs; belief systems and ideologies; political-military-legal system.

¹⁴⁹ Robbins (1996b:113) provides the following guiding principles for analyzing power relations in a text: (a) Define the system of differentiations that allow dominant people to act upon the actions of people in a subordinate position; (b) Articulate the types of objectives held by those who act upon the actions of others; (c) Identify the means for bringing these relationships into being; (d) Identify the forms of institutionalization of power; (e) Analyze the degree of rationalization of power relations (Robbins 1996b:113, citing Elizabeth Castelli).

and Rasmussen (1989:39) say that Christian ethics is the “critical intellectual discipline in the service of the Christian moral life”.

In conclusion, sacred texture analysis is a way of systematically probing the dynamics of the relationship between the human and the divine. This analysis, says Robbins (1996b:130) is embedded in the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture and ideological texture of a text. While interpreters may want to begin and end an analysis with sacred texture, Robbins (1996:b130) warns that such an analysis result in a “disembodiment of the sacred texture from the realities of living in the world” (Robbins 1996b:130).

1.3.6 Conclusion: Textures of Texts

In socio-rhetorical terms, a text may be likened to a thickly woven tapestry, which when viewed from different angles, exhibits different configurations, patterns and images. With insights gained from various (often competing) modes of interpretation, proponents of SRI suggest five textures, viz. inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture, as different angles from which to approach the interpretive process.

By bringing into conversation practices of interpretation that are often separated from one another, SRI creates an environment of ‘invitation’, dialogue and interaction among interpreters and between the multiple textures of a particular text. In other words, one can conclude that when the various textures of a text are observed and examined in a programmatic way, it results in a rich environment of interpretation and dialogue. This interactive mode of reading has activated (over a period of thirty years) a wide range of literary, rhetorical, historical, social, cultural, ideological and religious webs of signification in texts. Thus, interpreters are challenged to explore human reality and religious belief and practice in texts, through multiple approaches in order to explore the significance of texts in their own human reality.¹⁵⁰

Inviting investigations that enact integrated, interdisciplinary analyses and interpretations, SRI is reflective of *transtextual* and *translocational* interpretive strategies. This in turn has

¹⁵⁰ My human reality is that of a woman whose life experiences call to mind the context which includes (a past?) patriarchy and apartheid with all its oppressive ramifications, as well as the (present) experiences of a ‘newly liberated voice’ able to engage and be engaged; to invite and be invited. As such, my voice is multi-vocal – politically (in the context of HIV/AIDS with a particular focus of gender), Ecclesiastically (as lay canon in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Diocese of Saldanha Bay) and professionally (as a woman doing theology in a male dominated environment).

led to identifying the *transdiscursive* nature of early Christian discourse, which reveals the variety of distinctive modes of early Christian discourse (Robbins 2005:21).¹⁵¹

This multi-vocal nature of first century Christian texts which, reveals uniquely different Christian echoes, is the subject of the next major section.

1.4 EARLY CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE: MULTI-VOCAL ECHOES OF FIRST-CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY

The previous section illustrated how the multi-textured approach of SRI reveals the multi-dimensional nature of New Testament texts. Following this multi-textured approach has led proponents of SRI to explore the multi-vocal nature of New Testament texts, which itself emerged from a multi-contextual first century environment.

In an article, *The Dialectical nature of Early Christian Discourse*, Robbins argues that the phenomenon which we today recognize as early Christian discourse is a result of a variety of modes of discourse being in dialogue with one another throughout the first century Mediterranean world (1999c:353). During the period 30-130CE, various groups of first century Messianites throughout the region (from eastern Mediterranean to Rome) lived in variegated Greco-Roman social contexts (Robbins 1999c:353).¹⁵² The life-situation and experiences of these different groups within the different “administrative and social structures of the Hellenistic-Roman world gave rise to a variety of valued social modes of discourse” which has resulted in a multiplicity in early Christian discourse (Robbins 1996c:353).

1.4.1 SRI recognizing the multiplicity in early Christian discourse: An excursive overview

In accordance with the nature of SRI, and typical of Robbins, he again acknowledges antecedents to his research when he traces analyses of the multiplicity in early Christian discourse back to the first half of the 19th century (Robbins 1996c:355; Combrink 1999:25). Here, he refers to the work of Ferdinand Christian Baur, who saw the oppositional view

¹⁵¹ Robbins (2005:19) explains that the “translocational covers a spectrum of social locations from the intersubjective body to households, village, city, kingdom, and empire”; the “transtextual weaves through” the different textures of texts; while the transdiscursive is reflective of interrelated and integrated ways in which early Christians used distinctive discourses. Robbins (2005:21) explains that transtextual socio-rhetorical analysis and interpretation yields six major modes of Christian discourse.

¹⁵² Robbins notes that rhetorical analysis of discourse in classical Greece yielded three major kinds of discourse, viz. judicial, deliberative and epideictic, which emerged from the courtrooms, political assemblies and civil ceremonies.

based on the polarity between Peter and Paul and the subsequent rapprochement and union of the two opposing parties” as key to understanding New Testament texts (Robbins, 1996c: 354).¹⁵³ An alternative to Baur’s approach only appeared in the 1960s when James Robinson and Helmut Koester posited a trajectory approach. According to Robbins, the distinction made by Koester and Robinson between orthodox and heretical trajectories is “like a distinction between different languages rather than different dialects of the same language” (1996c:355). If they were different dialects, argues Robbins, the trajectories “would continue to dialogue in a manner that enriched and enliven each other”. Instead, they “go off their own way into different streams of language”, continues Robbins (1996c:355). His argument against the “univocal” traditions of Koester and Robinson, is based on insights gained from Bakhtin and Medvedev (Robbins 1996c:355; Combrink 1999:25; Bloomquist 2002c:63). Of particular interest to Robbins is the multi-vocal nature of single texts in the work Bakhtin and Medvedev. In the words of Robbins:

One of the key insights to be gained from Bakhtin’s work is the dialogical nature of multiple voices in all literature, every society, and every culture. Language is not monological but multi-vocal (1996c:355).¹⁵⁴

It was Burton Mack who first described early Christianity through five major discourses, viz. teaching from the Jesus movements; fragments from the Christ cult; Paul and his gospel; Gospels of Jesus the Christ; visions of the cosmic world (Robbins 1996c:355). This categorization of early Christian discourse by Mack provided Robbins with the necessary impetus for exploring what rhetorical cultures would look like (Bloomquist 2002c:63). Robbins modified Mack’s work with insights gained from Greco-Roman rhetoric language development by Bakhtin and Medvedev, sociolinguistic theory and cultural anthropology (Bloomquist 2002c:63; Robbins 2006c:355). Insights gained from Bakhtin and Medvedev have created an environment for Robbins to adapt the vocabulary that sociolinguists use to describe language and dialects (Robbins 1996c:355). Robbins explains:

For sociolinguists, every language is a mixture of words and expressions from various cultures and regions, and it is always in a state of change. Given these dynamics, individuals and groups not only speak dialects, but they speak sociolects (1996c:355-356).

¹⁵³ Also see Kümmel (1972:127-143).

¹⁵⁴ Also see informative article by Juliana Claassens (2003), *Biblical Theology as Dialogue: Continuing the Conversation on Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Theology*.

A *sociolect* is language based on social groupings (such as a social community, or a social class) rather than geographical grouping (Robbins 1996c:356; Combrink 1999:25). In contradistinction to a *sociolect*, and following a suggestion of Benjamin H. Harry (a sociolinguist colleague at Emory), Robbins proposes the term, “rhetorolect” for rhetorical dialects in New Testament discourse (Robbins 1996c:356; Combrink 1999:25). Robbins has identified the five rhetorolects as major modes of early Christian discourse (see sections 1.4.3.1 to 1.4.3.6 below). This has led interpreters to analysis of how the authors of New Testament texts have (possibly) reconfigured existing ways of speaking and understanding in their attempts to bring their readers/listeners to new insights.

1.4.2 New Testament writings: Toward a distinctive Christian story

Robbins (2007a:27) reasons that early Christians created a distinctive mode of religious discourse through a “particular argumentative story” - in the midst of a variety of alternative religious discourses. Thus, Christian discourse emerged as a distinctive mode of discourse among various kinds of Greek and Roman religions¹⁵⁵ and an emergent Rabbinic Judaism.¹⁵⁶ Noteworthy is the observation made by Averil Cameron (cited by Robbins, 2007a:90) that, “Out of the framework of Judaism, and living as they did in the Roman Empire and in the context of Greek philosophy, pagan practice, and contemporary social idea, Christians built themselves a new world”. This *newness* emerged from “the procedure of working through the familiar, by appealing from the known to the unknown”, says Robbins (2007a:90). As the new, distinct Christian discourse emerged from within a multi-contextual environment, there were also variations among Christians as they “tell the Christian story-line” and introduce alternative kinds of argumentation in Christianity (Robbins 2007a:27).¹⁵⁷ This leads Robbins

¹⁵⁵ Greco-Roman religion exhibits the ability of various gods to manifest the attributes and deeds of other gods. One could argue that this has created a social context where the belief of Jesus manifesting the attributes of God was not a strange phenomenon.

¹⁵⁶ “Emergent Rabbinic Judaism” refers to Jewish rabbinic culture which emerged as a response to Christian culture. To this end, Rabbinic Judaism focuses not on the creation of the world, but rather on the “creation of a particular people” called to live “according to God’s ways in the world” (Robbins 2007a:36-38). Here, one could argue that Rabbinic Judaism emerged to counter the Christian picture of Jesus as saviour of all, by focusing on the lens on a particular people led by a person to whom God had given both the oral and written law.

¹⁵⁷ Robbins (2007a:23-36) illustrates this dynamic tension by referring to Christian texts which emerged during the third through the fifth centuries. In a skillful presentation Robbins shows how the Apostles’ Creed (Articles 1-8) exhibits a particular Christian story-line by moving directly from God’s creation of heaven and earth to “conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit and omitting reference to God’s activity with Israel”. There is also the notion that while many of the statements in the Apostles’ Creed reflect creedal statements in the New Testament, it developed out of a third century Roman baptismal creed. However, the creed itself, says Robbins (2007a:23-24) “appears to have developed out of a tradition of asking questions about the Trinity in the context of baptism”.

to observe that the two phenomena, viz. *various Christian story-lines in an overall Christian story-line* and *multiple kinds of Christian argumentation in an overall context of Christian belief argument* are interrelated in New Testament texts (2007a:23-33).¹⁵⁸ The various Christian story-lines create frames of understanding that are highly persuasive to the hearer or reader (2007:1). In Robbins's words:

Christians reconfigured multiple forms of preceding and contemporary discourse by blending pictorial narrative with argumentative assertions in ways that created distinctive social, cultural, ideological, and religious modes of understanding and belief in the Mediterranean world (2007b:5).¹⁵⁹

The above quote suggests that the New Testament is graphic and argumentative at the same time.¹⁶⁰ While Robbins agrees that rhetorical interpretation is the key to understanding the dynamic interrelation of picturing and argumentation in early Christian texts, he argues against the way rhetorical discourse had been re-introduced to New Testament interpretation during the latter half of the twentieth century (2007:1). This is particularly so, because interpreters traditionally focus on argumentative strategies (logos) as the only dimension in classical rhetoric.¹⁶¹ Besides, the three primary settings of classical rhetoric, viz. judicial rhetoric (picturing a law court);¹⁶² deliberative rhetoric (picturing the political assembly);¹⁶³ and epideictic rhetoric (picturing a civil ceremony)¹⁶⁴ form the basis of picturing the major rhetorical situations in the life of people on the basis of the city-state understood as city (Robbins 2007:1-3). This, argues Robbins, is not the primary basis for the conventional situations underlying the rhetoric in the New Testament (2007:2-3). He argues that the New Testament does not presuppose that the law court, political assembly, and civil ceremony

¹⁵⁸ By drawing a comparison between the Apostles Creed (from the perspective of the Twelve articles of faith) and the Nicene Creed, Robbins eloquently illustrates "specific issues at stake in the Christian story-line in the context of argumentation about Christian belief" (2007a:23-33). One also notes how specific issues impacts on the story-line and how the story-line illuminates specific issues.

¹⁵⁹ For a discussion and possible examples of the multiple discourses within which early Christian discourse emerged, see Robbins's reflection on Sayings of the Fathers in Pike Aboth; Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus; and Isidorus' Hymn to Isis (2007a:36-56).

¹⁶⁰ Robbins notes that terms such as 'parable'; 'metaphor'; and 'myth' are examples of attempts that had been made to develop modes of interpretation that would investigate and explain the function of 'this combination of the picturesque and persuasive' (2007a:1).

¹⁶¹ Characteristic of Robbins (and reflective of the interrelated and dialogical nature of SRI) the contribution of classical rhetoric is noted when he points to its helpfulness as a beginning point for thinking about rhetorology (picturing) as an important aspect of rhetoric (2007a:17).

¹⁶² A judge and jury make decisions about guilt or innocence of someone. This kind of rhetoric focuses on the past action of someone that caused damage or death with a counter claim that the 'improper' action was necessary or accidental (Robbins 2007a:2).

¹⁶³ Deliberative rhetoric is focused on the future. It envisions a political assembly being addressed by a leader in the city whose aim it is to persuade the audience to take a particular action; or not to take a particular action.

¹⁶⁴ Epideictic (demonstrative) rhetoric pictures a civil ceremony, where the goal is to "use praise and blame in a series of topics in a manner that will confirm and strengthen people's commitment to conventional values" (Robbins 2007a:3).

work positively for Christian belief and practice, because these conventional social institutions in cities “created problems, suffering, conflicts, persecution, imprisonment, and even death for early Christians”. Thus, it was necessary for Christians to develop picturing and argumentation that would “counter these institutions” (Robbins, 2007a:3).¹⁶⁵ This ‘counter argumentation’ happened in a context where there had already been a move from classical rhetoric set in three primary locations (the local courtrooms, political assemblies, and civil ceremonies) to Hellenistic-Roman rhetoric which expanded the conceptual location of social geography beyond these three primary categories (Robbins, 2007a:16).

Christians in the first century CE developed argumentation that used picturing based on broader social interactions (Robbins, 2007a:3). To this end, early Christians created a new *paideia* by shifting the topography of argumentation to include the broad conceptual contexts of intersubjective bodies, households, villages, synagogues, cities, temples, kingdoms, and empires in the inhabited human world.¹⁶⁶ Following Hester’s (2002:504) definition of the term *paideia*, my understanding of the term “*Christian paideia*” would include: varied ways of speaking, being and acting that are congruent with the ‘overall new Christian story’. I also concur with Robbins who concludes that for early Christians, the rhetorical commonplace was that which was old, but that “recontextualization, recombination, and reconfiguration of the old regularly created the new” (2007a:91).

Robbins introduced the term *rhetorlect* to describe the dialectical nature of early Christian discourse (1996c: 355). He understands this *dialectical nature* to be two-fold: On the one hand early Christians spoke in ways that were understandable among Greek speaking people

¹⁶⁵ Robbins (2007a:3) notes that when Christians began to envision Christianity as a city during the second century, they started to develop discourse of legal decision - judicial rhetoric based on law courts; Christian political action – based on deliberative rhetoric based on Christian assembly’ and Christian public display of honour and shame – epideictic rhetoric based on Christian public ceremonies. It would be appropriate to use the three categories of classical rhetoric for interpreting Christian discourse from the third and fourth centuries CE, and onwards. But then it would be necessary to blend these categories with the counter discourse developed by Christians during the first century.

¹⁶⁶ Following the explanation of Hester (2002:518) that “topography” refers to a particular New Testament texts as a regional development with a complex variety of features, Robbins (2007a:16) says that the phrase “topography of argument” builds on the insight that different early Christian discourses contain different configurations of locations of thought and action to negotiate the social, cultural and ideological contexts in which they function.

in the Mediterranean world; and on the other hand, their discourse was highly unusual in a manner in which a dialect is unusual (Robbins 2007b:1).¹⁶⁷

1.4.3 Rhetorolects: Presenting major categories of early Christian discourse

The ideas of ‘multiplicity’ in early Christian discourse has led Robbins to become interested in the way in which shifts in speaking allowed for an interaction between discourses and discursive cultures that eventually would produce a variety of literary cultures (Bloomquist 2002c:63; Robbins 1996c:355).¹⁶⁸ In line with the view held by proponents of SRI, this dissertation presupposes that six conventional modes of discourse (rhetorolects) contributed dynamically to the creativity in Early Christian speaking and writing (Robbins 2007a:6). Through a highly creative process of rhetorical invention during the first century, early Christians interwove Mediterranean wisdom, miracle, prophetic, priestly,¹⁶⁹ apocalyptic, and pre-creation discourse into the fabric of three basic literary forms: biographical history, epistle, and apocalypse (Robbins 2002c:28). While these three literary modes present an overall Christian story-line, they also exhibit a variety of discourses (rhetorolects) which echo the multi-vocal nature of early Christian writings.

A rhetorolect is a form of language variety or discourse identifiable on the basis of a distinctive configuration of themes, topics, reasonings and argumentation (Robbins 1996c:353). Robbins describes a *rhetorolect* as a “network of significations and meanings associated by social-cultural-ideological places and spaces familiar to people in a certain geographical area” (2007b:13-14). Based on this observation, proponents of SRI identify six *rhetorolects*, viz. wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, miracle, and priestly rhetorolect as major modes of early Christian discourse (Robbins 1996c:353). Each *rhetorolect* made vital contributions to a new culture of discourse that was emerging during the first century as they exhibit distinctive Christian argumentation based on specific social, cultural and ideological topics, says Robbins (1996c:353). By exploring how texts exhibit topics to evoke specific social, cultural and religious *topoi*, it is possible to identify the

¹⁶⁷ Citing Averil Cameron, Robbins (2007a:90) observes: “Out of the framework of Judaism, and living as they did in the Roman Empire and in the context of Greek philosophy, pagan practice, and contemporary social ideas, Christians built themselves a new world”.

¹⁶⁸ This is why Robbins (1998:103) calls for a move beyond discussion of literary genres into a discussion of rhetorical genres.

¹⁶⁹ Note that “suffering-death rhetorolect” has been redefined by Robbins as “priestly rhetorolect”. Also, that “oppositional discourse” as a discernable type of discourse has changed. Instead, Robbins argues that “opposition is characteristic of every kind of discourse, but that different strategies and dynamics of opposition exist in different discourses” (Beginnings SNTS, Pretoria 1999:4).

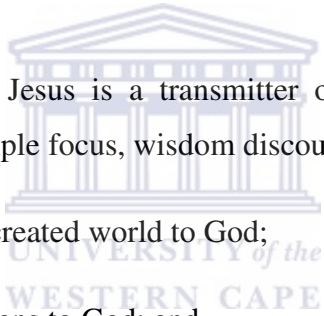
pictorial narration (rhetography) and enthymemic argumentation (rhetology) central to a particular rhetorlect, argues Robbins (1996c:353).¹⁷⁰

Put another way: When reading a text, one encounters any one or more of the six discourses (rhetorlects) operative in early Christianity. These rhetorlects (wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, miracle, and priestly) are identified on the basis of *topoi* which are exhibited through pictorial narration (rhetography) or/and enthymematic-syllogistic elaboration (rhetology).

Based on the premise of SRI (Robbins 2007a:7) that these six rhetorlects functioned as primary modes of discourse during early years of Christianity (30-100 CE), each of these rhetorlects is discussed followed by discussions of rhetography and rhetology as two distinct dimensions of rhetorlects; and finally '*topoi*' which function in both rhetography and rhetology.¹⁷¹

1.4.3.1 Wisdom rhetorlect

This discourse presupposes that Jesus is a transmitter of wisdom from God to humans (Robbins 1996c:357). Having a triple focus, wisdom discourse exhibits:

- 
- (i) the relation of the created world to God;
 - (ii) the relation of humans to God; and
 - (iii) the relation of humans to one another as a result of the relation of God to the created world and to humans (Robbins 2007a:33; Combrink 2002:112).

Robbins (2007a:33) argues that the socially experienced basis for wisdom rhetorlects, is a “blending of God’s heaven and earth with ‘household’, which is the place where God’s wisdom is taught to children on earth; God’s heaven and earth also blends with “people’s bodies, so these bodies are able to go forth and multiply the fruit of goodness and righteousness in the world” (2007a:33).

¹⁷⁰ With this information it is possible to recognize how the reasoning and/or picture central to a particular rhetorlect interact with that of another rhetorlect, as a rhetorical strategy to move readers/hearers to new insights. In SRI terms, this strategy is known as blending.

¹⁷¹ Of course, one is aware that *topoi* are exhibited by innertextual analyses; and that *topoi* function persuasively in descriptive (rhetography) and explanatory (rhetology) discourses on the basis of pattern recognition. Thus the challenge is to identify different types of discourses (rhetorlects) present in a particular text, in the light of typical features of a specific rhetorlect.

Robbins observes that in wisdom rhetorolect, God functions as Father, a term closely related to the head of a household who provides nurture, food, and wisdom to “children who are to become productive of ‘good’ like God produced a ‘good’ creation” (2007a:33).¹⁷² Because of its argumentative power, wisdom discourse thrives on inductive-deductive reasoning, offering generalized principles on the basis of one or more specific situations; but “on the basis of one or more generalized principle, it may offer any number of specific examples or analogies” (Robbins 2007a:33). The major forms of argument in wisdom discourse are: thesis, rationale, contrary, opposite, analogy, example and authoritative judgment.

Wisdom discourse is widespread in *Q material*, the epistle of James, the Sermon on the Mount, special Lukan material, and the Gospel of Thomas (Robbins 1996c:358). This discourse is both deliberative and epideictic.¹⁷³ From the perspective of Bryan Wilson’s sociology of different types of religious responses to the world, this discourse is Gnostic manipulationist (1996c:358; 1996b). It presupposes that proper insight into life can equip people to live satisfactorily in the world.

1.4.3.2 Prophetic rhetorolect

Prophetic rhetorolect: Early Christian prophetic discourse evokes the context of a kingdom of God on earth. The regional boundaries of God’s kingdom expand beyond the land of Israel to other areas. Thus, early Christian prophetic discourse reconfigures God’s promise of land to God’s promise of an inheritance (Robbins 2007b:6). Central to prophetic discourse is reasoning that people whom God has given a tradition of salvation in the past currently enact a misunderstanding of God’s saving action that must be attacked and replaced by an alternative system of belief and behaviour. It focuses on special people or groups whom God has chosen to take leadership in the production of righteousness within the human realm on earth. Prophetic discourse is underpinned by the notion of assertion that God had chosen certain people to be especially responsible for righteousness in the world, and if they fulfill their responsibility they will be especially blessed (Combrink 2002:112) but if they fail to

¹⁷² Of course, as a feminist/womanist/African woman biblical scholar I am aware that referring to God as “Father” gives leverage for hierarchies of power, especially sexism and ageism. However, it may have been a frame of reference for what was “good” back then; and as such could serve as an example of a “persuasive” metaphor”. Furthermore, in the lived-experiences of first century Christians, evoking God’s guidance of households, God’s feeding of villages, God’s redistribution of goods in cities, God’s establishment of new leadership in kingdoms and God’s establishment of a new empire, might have been a source of hope in a time of uncertainty and despair.

¹⁷³ Refer to categories of classical rhetoric, viz. judicial (forensic), deliberative (symbouletic) and epideictic (demonstrative).

fulfill their responsibility for righteousness, they will suffer negative consequences (Robbins 2007b:7).

The polarities in prophetic discourse are a combination of good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness; and of ailments and distress versus healing and restoration. In other words, this discourse is embedded in sharp disagreement with other kinds of Jews over the conditions and behaviour that enact walking in God's ways in the world. It presupposes that people on the earth can change the systems of behaviour by confronting it, attacking it, and enacting different behaviour that offers God's blessing to people (1996c:360). This discourse contains attacks on specific behaviour and beliefs. It presupposes an alignment of the speaker with God, against people who claim to understand God who really do not know the will and ways of God. The view is that Jesus's Messianism is a distinct alternative to other kinds of Judaism, and activities should be reformed according to new insights into the manner and conditions in which God offers eternal benefits to people on earth (Robbins 1996c:360; Bloomquist 2002a:21).

1.4.3.3 Miracle rhetorolect

Miracle rhetorolect: Here, the primary topics are human illness, and personal crises (Combrink 2002:112). 'Fear' and 'cowardice' are also common topics in this discourse and 'belief' is perceived to be the proper response, says Robbins (1996c:358; also see Bloomquist 2002a:21). Miracle discourse presupposes that God responds to humans in contexts of danger or disease and that Jesus is the mediator of these benefits to humans.

Miracle discourse of the Hellenistic period shows reasoning that, "If God brought order, well-being, and justice into existence at the beginning of time, then God can restore order in the human and cosmic realm when some kind of disorder emerges as a malfunction of those realms" (Robbins 1996c:358).¹⁷⁴ Central to this rhetorolect is the reasoning that all things are possible with God (Robbins 1996c:358; Combrink 2002:112). This is why "belief" becomes a common topic in miracle discourse. From this presupposition flows various conditions which people must fulfill in order to receive extraordinary benefits in times of crisis, special need, or affliction (Robbins 1996c:358).

¹⁷⁴ Robbins (2003a:38) observes that while miracle discourse in the Hebrew Bible exhibits a close relationship to prophetic discourse, during the Hellenistic period it "becomes a close ally of wisdom discourse".

Through praise and censure, the stories of Jesus' healing nurture a worldview in which God offers relief and restoration to people in the context of belief and prayer. People must follow certain guidelines for these special acts of benevolence to be granted.¹⁷⁵ In the context of the burdens of life, people turn to leaders who intercede to God for special help (1996c:359).

Miracle discourse in the New Testament exhibit inductive narration, which describes the circumstances in which Jesus (and subsequently his followers) miraculously heal people through direct encounter, through the power of their word, or through the power of their clothing or an object from them. The geophysical context for early Christian miracle discourse is the body itself in relation to the body of the healer (Robbins 2007b:7; Bloomquist 2002a:23).

1.4.3.4 Apocalyptic rhetorlect

Early Christian apocalyptic rhetorlect is dramatically focused on "God's transformation of special people like Jesus, of believers and unbelievers, of the world, and even of time itself" (Robbins 2007a:362). The implication of this is that God's activities of transformation are not limited to the abilities or efforts of humans to transform themselves through repentance and obedience, says Robbins (2007a:362). The special power of *apocalyptic rhetorlect* lies in its reconfiguration of all time (past, present and future) and all space (cosmic, earthly, and in personal bodies) in terms of holy and profane, or good and evil (Combrink 2002:112). Apocalyptic discourse allows for the "creation of new story-lines that presented the actions of personified agents of God's holiness and power who played a role in the past, present, and future to create well-being for believers", says Robbins (2007a:364).

The focus on 'the eye' in early Christian apocalyptic rhetorlect emphasizes 'seeing' beyond earthly realm into the mysteries of the heavens (Robbins 2007a:364). Whereas wisdom rhetorlect focuses on what is visible to the eye in the realm of earthly life, apocalyptic rhetorlect considers that in order to understand the nature of God, a person 'must gain vision into the heavens' (Robbins 2007a:364). In Robbins' words:

Only by seeing what is happening in the heavens can one see the ways in which God is transforming the world and its people at present, and will more dramatically transform the world and its people in the future (2007a:364).

¹⁷⁵ Moses and Elijah are precedents for Jesus in this discourse, and just as miracles from God attended their leadership, so miracles from God attend the leadership of Jesus (Bloomquist 2002a:22; Robbins 1996c:358).

The presupposition of apocalyptic rhetorlect is that “only perfect holiness and righteousness can bring a person into the presence of God, who destroys all evil and gathers all holiness together in God’s presence” (Robbins 2007c:8).

1.4.3.5 Priestly rhetorlect

The ‘socially experienced’ basis for priestly rhetorlect is the blending of God’s world with God’s Temple or ‘house of worship’ on earth and with people who offer sacrifices to God for the purpose of beneficial exchange between God and humans (Robbins 2007a:34).

The above quote forms the basis for Robbins’s view that, “[...] in the context of priestly rhetorlect, people’s bodies can be perceived to be temples of the Lord” (2003:40). The presupposition of priestly rhetorlect is that ritual action benefit God in a manner that activate divine benefits for humans on earth, says Robbins (2007c:9).

Early Christian priestly rhetorlect features thanksgiving, praise, prayer, and blessing in contexts regularly perceived to be sacrificial in intent and practice (Robbins 2007c:10). New Testament discourse that presents “forgiveness of sins” exhibit priestly rhetorlect, since it is the function of a priest as mediator between humans and God who in the context of the temple sacrifice (2007a:34).¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, Christ’s sacrifice produces holy bodily transformation in believers (2007a:34).

1.4.3.6 Pre-creation rhetorlect

In contrast to apocalyptic rhetorlect, which proceeds on a presupposition that God will act in a decisive way to destroy the evil in the world and preserve the righteous, pre-creation rhetorlect focuses particularly on what “God is doing through Christ” (Combrink 2002:112). Pre-creation rhetorlect puts the attributes and actions of Christ together with the attributes and actions of God with special focus on the relation of Christ to God prior to creation of the world.

The nature of pre-creation rhetorlect is to heighten the Christological reasoning in the other discourses, and is related to wisdom-, prophetic- and miracle discourse. Robbins explains that the socially experienced basis for precreation rhetorlect is a blending of God’s created world with the household of an emperor, since the emperor’s household ‘reigns over an empire’ (2007a:33). In Christian discourse, this “precreation household is characterized by a utopian,

¹⁷⁶ Social and cultural texture and sacred texture may be resources for identifying priestly rhetorlect.

intimate relation understood as ‘love’ (agapē) between emperor Father and his only Son” (Robbins 2007a:33).

Each *rhetorolect* exhibits a specific dominant social, cultural and ideological rhetoric. The following diagram presents a schematic analysis of the rhetoric internal to each *rhetorolect*:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Wisdom | God’s speech through Christ produces fruitfulness. |
| Prophetic | God and Christ Choose people to be a righteous kingdom. |
| Miracle | God’s power working in and/or through Christ <i>produces</i> bodily transformation. |
| Precreation | Christ’s Primordial divinity produces eternal life in believers. |
| Priestly | Christ’s sacrifice produces holy benefit for believers. |
| Apocalyptic | Christ’s initial coming produces a new beginning and Christ’s return will produce a new world. |

Figure 1: Rhetoric internal to each *rhetorolect* (Robbins, 2003:40)

The particular social, cultural and religious locations of each *rhetorolect* are exhibited through pictorial narration (rhetography) and reasoning (rhetology).

1.4.4 Rhetography: Expressible graphic images

Rhetography refers to features of spoken or written communication that evoke a mental picture (graphic image).¹⁷⁷ It is the means by which the speaker or writer communicates a context of meaning to the hearer or reader (2007b:1). This is possible because the speaker or writer - through statements or signs - conjure visual images in the mind which “evoke familiar contexts that provide meaning for the hearer or reader” (2007b:1). In a recent article,

¹⁷⁷ Robbins explains that a search for the word “rhetography” has yielded no results – except for the use by himself and his “Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity colleague” (2007b:1). But Combrink (2002:111) suggests that the term originates from Benjamin Harry.

*Rhetography: A New Way of Seeing the Familiar Text*¹⁷⁸ Robbins sees a relation between the term ‘rhetography’ and the ancient progymnastic rhetorical exercise of *ekphrasis*¹⁷⁹ in ancient Greek literature and he explains that the term ‘rhetography’ has direct relation to Erwin Panofsky’s *Iconography and Iconology* (Robbins 2007b:2).¹⁸⁰ Robbins also explains that, through extended analysis of classical rhetoric SRI had illuminated the importance of rhetography in rhetorical analysis:

A doorway into rhetography of texts begins to open when one focuses on the speakers, who evoke *ēthos*, and the audiences, who respond with *pathos*, in classical rhetoric. In the context of composing or analyzing a speech (*logos*), a speaker/writer or interpreter is asked to envision attributes of the speakers and characteristics of the audiences where the speech occurs. This “envisioning” introduces dynamics of rhetography into classical rhetoric (2007b:3).

This ‘envisioning’ occurs within specific cultural and social settings. Classical rhetoric developed its rhetorical system by picturing the rhetorical dynamics in three locations in the city-state viz. the court room, the political assembly, and the civil ceremony.¹⁸¹ While these locations are not the ideal categories for picturing the context from which New Testament texts emerged, it points to the fact that the picturing of the social and cultural context is an important feature of persuasive strategies. Robbins (2006:175) explains that, “In rhetography, rationales regularly function as ‘explanations’ rather than ‘arguments’”. Rhetography also invokes a social, cultural and/or ideological “location of thought” which is “intertwined with multiple networks of meaning” from which *topoi* may be identified (Robbins 2006:178).¹⁸² Early Christian modes of discourse (rhetorolects) are often embedded in rhetography (pictorial narrative), which features descriptive or explanatory rationales. In the context of verbal pictures, texts regularly contain assertions supported by reasons or rationales. These argumentative rationales are called “rhetology”.

¹⁷⁸ This paper dated 7 March 2007 is to appear in: Duane F Watson and Clifton Black (eds.), *The Legacy of George A. Kennedy’s Rhetorical Interpretation* (Provisional Title), forthcoming.

¹⁷⁹ This, explains Robbins, is “descriptive language, bringing what is known clearly before the eyes” (2007b:2).

¹⁸⁰ Robbins (2007b:2) also points out that there is a relation between “rhetography” and the “ancient progymnastic rhetorical exercise of *ekphrasis* in ancient Greek literature”, which is descriptive language. Roland Barthe’s *The Imagination of the Sign and Literature and Signification* are noted; and W.J.T. Mitchell’s *Picture Theory* which appeared in 1994 is noted as “a landmark moment” in the discussion on rhetography in communicating a context of meaning.

¹⁸¹ Classical rhetoricians pictured three different kinds of speakers and audiences: prosecutors and defenders in the context of judges and juries; political leaders in the context of a political assembly; and a civil orator in the context of a funeral or other public ceremony (Robbins 2007b:3).

¹⁸² This dissertation (in chapters two and three) explores “stigma” as a *topos* in the context of physiognomic consciousness.

1.4.5 Rhetology: Expressible reasoning

According to Robbins (2006:175) many sections of Christian writings simply do not have an assertion standing alongside other assertions. He explains that either rationales support an assertion, or it is followed by a conclusion which, in rhetorical terms, can be called ‘rhetology’ – the expressible (rhētos) reasoning (logos). The presence of rationales and conclusions in assertions indicates that the speaker/author is engaged in some kind of reasoning about the world and the things and processes in it (Robbins 2006:175).

This kind of reasoning was called ‘enthymeme’ by Aristotle, says Robbins (2006:175). The Greek noun ‘enthymeme’ has “substantive relation to thinking, reasoning, pondering, imagining, and holding a conviction” (Robbins 2006:176). “Enthymemic logia”, explains Robbins (2006:177), exhibits social, cultural, ideological, eschatological, Christological, and theological argumentation by early Christians.

New Testament texts often exhibit *enthymemic logia* based on positive or negative implication. In the realm of logic an ‘implication’ is a conclusion implied from premises, whereas in rhetorical terms, an ‘implication’ takes the form of exhortation toward a certain kind of action or an appeal not to engage in a certain kind of action.

Enthymemic formulations in the Gospels become “productive by means of interaction among deductive, inductive and abductive social, cultural and ideological reasoning” (Robbins 2006:180). The standard for deductive reasoning is that “an argument is good only if the conclusion follows necessarily from the premise” (Robbins 2006:180). In a deductive argument, the general premise (rule or warrant) contains (implicitly or explicitly) the assertions made by both the minor premise (case or grounds) and the conclusion (result or claim). Thus, argues Robbins, “deduction does not generate new information; it simply clarifies or helps one to find information accurately” (2006:180).

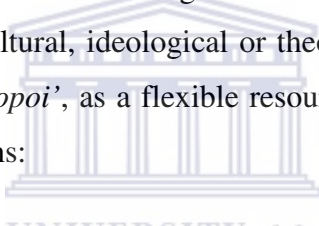
‘Inductive reasoning’ on the other hand, is a means by which we get new information (Robbins 2006:180). In induction, the reasoning has specific warrants and grounds that make it reasonable to think that the conclusion is probable. Robbins lists six kinds of inductive syllogisms, viz. prediction; argument from analogy; inductive generalization; argument from authority; argument based on signs; and causal inference (2006:181).

'Abductive reasoning' is another form of moving toward new knowledge. It is "that form of reasoning in which a recognizable similarity between A and B proposes the possibility of further similarity", continues Robbins (2006:181). Insight is drawn in the context of similarity a person observes among phenomena in different fields (Robbins 2006:181). Lanigan (as cited by Robbins 2006:181) states that the idea of "putting together what we had never dreamed of putting together" is in many ways a key to understanding abductive reasoning.

From the perspective of SRI, both rhetography and rhetology are important dimensions of the rhetorical discourse and the interpretive process. Each of the six rhetorolecs identified as early Christian discourse exhibit rhetography and/or rhetology - the basis for elaborating on *topoi*.

1.4.6 *Topoi*: exhibiting recognizable patterns in discourse

A *topos* (singular for *topoi*) is a location of thought that evokes a constellation of networks of meanings as a result of social, cultural, ideological or theological use (Robbins 1996c:356). According to Carey (1999:11), '*topoi*', as a flexible resource for persuasion, consist of both form and content. Robbins explains:



[T]opoi emerge from a variety of conceptual locations with richness and connectedness of knowledge available for recombination and function as a source of patterns and relationships within the habits of thought, value hierarchies, forms of knowledge, and cultural convention of the host society (1996c:356).

The above quote, based on insights from the work of Carolyn Miller, leads Robbins to observe that a *topos* functions persuasively in descriptive discourse (rhetography) and explanatory discourse (rhetology) on the basis of patterns of recognition (Robbins 2007a:93-94). Based on these assertions, one could say that a *topos* is a frame of understanding underpinned by cultural, social, ideological and theological presuppositions (Robbins 2007a:95).

Using insights gained from ancient rhetorical treatises, Robbins (2007a:70) asserts that people develop *topoi* in two ways: pictorial narrative elaboration (rhetography) and enthymematic-syllogistic elaboration (rhetology). Thus, it follows that rhetorolecs (as modes of early Christian discourse) are identified on the basis of *topoi*; and *topoi* are exhibited through rhetography and rhetology as the inner processes of the story-argument.

Elaboration of a *topos* creates spaces for bringing in other *topoi*, resulting in recontextualization and reconfiguration through the process of *blending* (Robbins 2007a:95)

1.5 BLENDING: CREATING NEW WAYS OF SEEING

The six rhetorolects (as discussed in section 1.4.3) interacted dynamically (through its rhetoric or rhetology) by the end of the first century (Robbins 2007a:134). Believers blended each rhetorolect dynamically with the other rhetorolects. This involved the mental process of *blending*, as explained by Turner (2002:39-57).¹⁸³ Robbins notes that:

The inclusion of conceptual blending theory and critical spatial theory in socio-rhetorical interpretation allows an interpreter to construct a topology of spaces in early Christian rhetorolects and to interpret the rhetorical power of the blending of spaces in these rhetorolects. Since each of the rhetorolects presents social, cultural, religious and ideological language, story-telling and argumentation that evoke specific pictures, emotions, cognitions, and reasonings, each rhetorolect made vital contributions in distinctive ways to a new culture of discourse that was emerging during the first century (2007a:134).

The interactive process of *blending* produced a continually increasing combination of cognitions, reasonings, picturing, and argumentation (Robbins 2007a:134). Robbins (2007a:137) argues that first century Christians created a system of discourse that was able to address “issues and topics concerning individual human bodies, households, villages, synagogues, cities, temples, kingdoms, empires, the created world and God’s uncreated realm”. Blending in early Christian discourse concerns the processes of blending in each rhetorolect and processes by which rhetorolects blend and compete with each other (Robbins 2007c:28). Figure 1 on page 77 of the thesis is a diagrammatic illustration of rhetoric internal to each rhetorolect. Figure 2 on the next page presents a diagram of blended spaces and locations in early Christian rhetorolects.

¹⁸³ The blend, which could produce the “Eureka!” or “aha!” effects, explains Turner (2002a:40-41) is one of four mental spaces or “conceptual packets which are constructed as we think and talk, for the purpose of local understanding and action”. It is not my intention (neither is it necessary) to explore the psycho-linguistic technicalities of blending.

| Cultural Frames (Rhetorolects) | Wisdom | Prophetic | Apocalyptic | Pre-creation | Miracle | Priestly |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| Social, Cultural, Physical Relia (1 st Space) | Household, Vegetation, Living Beings | Political Kingdom | Political Empire, Imperial Temple, Imperial Army | Political Empire & Emperor's Household | Human Body & Unexpected Phenomena & Transformations in the natural world | Altar, Temple & Temple City |
| Visualization, Conceptualization, & Imagination of God's World (2 nd Space) | God as Father-Creator (Progenitor), Wisdom (light) as Mediator, People as God's children, Jesus as God's Son | God as King, God on kingly throne in heavenly court, Selected humans as prophets and kings, Selected people as God's kingdom, Jesus as Prophet-Messiah selected and sent by God | God as Almighty (<i>Pantokratōr</i>), Jesus as Son of Man, King of Kings and Lord of Lords | God as Eternal Emperor-Father, Jesus as God's Eternal Son | God as Transforming Power, Selected humans as agents of God's transformation power, People as healed and transformed by God, Jesus as Healer & Miracle-Worker | God as Holy and Pure, God on priestly throne in heavenly temple, selected humans as priests, People as God's holy & pure priestly community (assembly, city, kingdom), Jesus as Priest-Messiah |
| Spaces of Mental Conception (Generic Spaces) | Cause effect, change, time, identity, intentionality, representation, part-whole Formal argumentative topics: opposites, grammatical forms of the same words, correlatives, more and less, time, turning back upon the opponent, definition, varied meanings, division, induction, previous judgment, parts, consequences, contrast, openly and secretly, analogy, same result, before and after, purpose as cause, for and against, implausible probabilities, contradictions, cause of false impression, cause and effect, better, doing contrary to what has been done, mistakes, meaning of a name. | | | | | |
| Ongoing Bodily Effects and Enactments: Blending in Religious Life (3 rd Space = Space of Blending) | Human body as Producer of Goodness & Righteousness | Human body as Distributor and Receiver of Justice (food, bodily, needs, honor) | Human body as Receiver of resurrection & eternal life in a "new" realm of well-being | Human body as receiver of eternal life through friendship (belief & loyalty) with God's eternal Son | Human body as healed and amazingly Transformed | Human body as Giver of sacrificial offerings and Receiver of beneficial exchange of holiness and purity between God and Humans |

Figure 2: A diagram of blended spaces and locations in early Christian rhetorolects

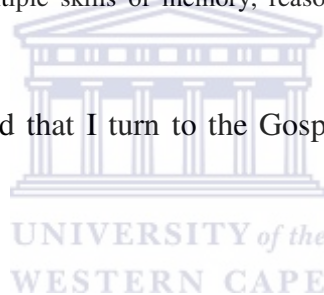
Recognizing the complex, multi-textual multi-vocal and diverse nature of New Testament discourse, leads to the realization that a multi-dimensional reading strategy is necessary in order to navigate the textures of texts into which the lived experiences of first century Christians were interwoven. My own life-experience has made me aware of the multiple interpretations one could derive from biblical texts. I have somewhat ascribed this anomaly to

ideology embedded in patriarchy, sexism, racism, apartheid, etc. While this certainly is the case, I have become aware (through SRI) how the text, in its socio-linguistic context, actually lends itself to multiple interpretations. And that when we ‘look’ at the thickly woven, multi-coloured, multi-textured text we (as Christian believers) have a responsibility to ‘see’ what God sees. This leads to questions such as: *How do we know what God sees? Are texts not ideological constructions? Are interpretations not simply ideology – and thus a site for struggle?*

These are not easy questions to answer. However, even though interpreters are deeply vested ideologically (Robbins 1996b:132), an interpretive programme which (continuously) brings together insights from different (competing) methodologies is in itself reflective of the tentativeness of any one particular interpretation at a given time and place. I also concur with Robbins who says:

Even though texts are ideological constructions, they are not “only” theological constructions. They are sites that invite us to use multiple skills of memory, reasoning, playing, working, hoping, feeling. (Robbins 1996b:132)

It is with this ‘invitation’ in mind that I turn to the Gospel of Luke in chapter two, and to Luke 10:25-37 in chapter three.



CHAPTER TWO

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: A RESOURCE FOR SOCIETAL CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY?

The choice to read Scripture as an invitation to love God and neighbour is a religious and ethical decision, as are other options for deciding what is central in Scripture.

(Tannehill 1998a:277)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The underlying thesis of this research project is that Scripture continues to function in Christian discourse as a source of insight and hope, and thus has the potential to influence the ethos of Christian communities in different places and times.¹⁸⁴ The overall purpose of this chapter is to present the gospel of Luke as an important biblical resource for exploring an appropriate ecclesial response to the challenges of stigma in the context of HIV and AIDS.¹⁸⁵ In order to do this, the chapter sets out to describe how Luke has functioned as an ecclesial resource for addressing societal challenges over the centuries; gives an overview of approaches to Lukan research since late 20th century and offers a narrative exposition of Luke Chapters 1 to 9. The intention behind this narrative reading is to illuminate patterns of stigma resulting from physical illness or social exclusion in Luke's Gospel.¹⁸⁶ It seems appropriate to start this chapter with some introductory remarks about the character of Luke.

2.2 THE CHARACTER OF LUKE

The nature of the Lukan corpus itself has provided impetus for Lukan studies. Questions about whether Luke was a theologian, historian or literary artist came from a panoply of

¹⁸⁴ It is obvious that there would be serious concerns for any indiscriminate appropriation of ancient texts in contexts that are very different to those of first century Christian contexts.

¹⁸⁵ It has been noted by many scholars that Luke pays special attention to those who are oppressed, excluded or otherwise at a disadvantage in society (Powell 1989:91; Bosch 1993; Moxnes 1998).

¹⁸⁶ This reading also serves to situate the passage selected for analysis (Lk 10:25-37) in the broader Lukan text and also to account for the choice of this text.

methodological approaches.¹⁸⁷ The outcome of which has no doubt impacted on how Luke was (or was not) to be appropriated in ecclesial responses to societal challenges.

2.2.1 Luke: historian or theologian?

[...] *Luke is less intellectual and theological than Matthew.*

(Manson 1930:xxvii)

The view that Luke's writing is of little theological worth, is buttressed by the notion that Luke was a historian.¹⁸⁸ This, according to Du Plessis (1992:14) is because Luke (1:1-4) indicates that he aims to proceed as a good historian.¹⁸⁹ Except for the Jewish historian Josephus, who makes mention of the people who follow the teachings of Jesus, the historical and philosophical writings of 1st Century Palestine are void of references to the Christians. Luke's writing-style, however, compares well with the literary styles of those historians considered to be his contemporaries (Du Plessis 1992:14). Johnson (1992:406) cites three of the obvious reasons why many scholars regard the author of Luke as an 'historian' of his time. Firstly, Luke's Gospel preface is an example of Greek historiography; secondly, the

¹⁸⁷ Another focus area of the historical literary approach was the unity of Luke and Acts. The double title *Luke-Acts* was coined by Cadbury who insisted early in the twentieth century that the two volumes, Luke's Gospel and Acts, are a single literary work. (Cadbury 1958; Maddox 1982:3; Du Plessis 1992:144; Johnson 1992:404). Johnson concludes that the continued use of the designation 'Luke-Acts' indicates that most contemporary scholars agree with Cadbury's assertion (1992:404). In contrast, Parsons and Pervo have argued that if the argument for generic unity between Luke and Acts is pressed vigorously, then Luke must be regarded as nothing more than half of a work rather than as a Gospel. Challenging views that favour the narrative unity of Luke and Acts, Parsons and Pervo argue that scholars who accept that Luke 1:1-4 serves as a preface to both volumes often cite Josephus' *Against Apion* as a two-volume work with primary and secondary prefaces similar to those of Luke and Acts (1993:43). Whilst these similarities are impressive, Parsons and Pervo argue that Josephus clearly anticipates a continuation of *Against Apion*, which is not the case with Luke. Instead "he rather goes to great lengths to provide a sense of closure to this story about Jesus" (Parsons and Pervo 1993:61-62). Their argument is in line with that of Conzelmann who asserts that "the two books of Luke both belong together and are separate, as a result on the one hand of the continuity of redemption history and on the other of its divisions" (Conzelmann 1960:17); Parsons and Pervo 1993:5). I am inclined to agree with Parsons and Pervo when they argue that continuity does not necessarily mean unity. Citing Dawsey (1989) they ask: "Is it right to move from an assumption of sequence to one of narrative unity" (1993:5).

¹⁸⁸ There is also the view that Luke was a painter and that he had painted portraits of 'the blessed virgin', the apostles and of Jesus (The Pulpit Commentary, 1913:xx). Then there's the view that Luke was a physician and companion of Paul. According to Balmforth, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, "who stands for the tradition of the church in Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul in the period 150-200, attributes the Gospel to Luke the physician and companion of Paul" (1953:15).

¹⁸⁹ Luke's preface (Lk 1:1-4) explicitly indicates the reason/s for his writing. It states that the author has carefully "investigated everything from the beginning and that he saw merit in writing an orderly account". He also deems it necessary to give an accurate account in order to give credit to, and affirm that which has already been taught: "... so that you may know the certainty of things you have been taught" (Lk 1:4). The preface consists of a single, carefully constructed sentence compressed in an unusual way. It is different in form, content and style when compared to the rest of the document. There is no hint as to who Theophilus was or why the writing had been directed to him; neither is there any indication as to who the author might be; and except for mentioning others who had written similar accounts, the date of his writing is not explicit.

story of Jesus is placed in the context of “world” history; and thirdly, Luke shows the historian’s instinct for causality when he draws connections between events.¹⁹⁰

While many scholars have debated Luke’s credibility as historian of his time, others have defended his credibility as a theologian. This is based on arguments that the word ‘certainty’ (*asphaleia*) in Luke 1:4 does not only mean ‘accuracy’ in the historical sense, but that it could also refer to the readers’ belief and faith in God’s salvific action through the life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ (Holladay 1988:1077; Wilcock 1979:31). Similarly, Johnson explains that Luke (1:1-4) writes to give his readers ‘security’ (*asphaleia*) in his knowledge of the things brought to fulfillment (1991:9). De Villiers (1992:174) concurs when he points out that a careful study of the prologue (Lk1:1-4) reveals that it contains not just history, but proclamation as well (Johnson 1991:6; Drury 1976:53). He suggests that when one goes back to the text and look at it afresh, without deliberately seeking a synthesis, “one’s esteem for Luke the author increases” (De Villiers 1992:174). Mark Powell refers to Luke’s Gospel as “a kerygmatic story” (1989:11).¹⁹¹

Minear (1973:135) offers a reason why it has been difficult for scholars to recover an agreed-upon understanding of Luke’s kerygmatic intention. He explains that, because Luke was responding to multiple problems, the Gospel of Luke reflects the author’s multiple intentions (Minear 1973:135). Marshall (1970:18) concurs when he says that Luke is both historian and theologian, and that he is best described as an ‘evangelist’ - a term which Marshall argues, reflects both titles. Accordingly, Marshall argues that the title ‘evangelist’ is meant to “indicate that Luke’s concern was to present the Christian message in such a way as to promote and confirm faith in Jesus Christ” (Marshall 1970:18). Marshall concludes that Luke certainly believed that salvation had been revealed in history, but his interest was not so much in recording the history for its own sake as in indicating its significance as the means for salvation (1970:19). Therefore Luke should be read as an “edifying narrative intended to inform, reinforce, and render more credible faith where it already exists and probably to create and instill faith where it does not exist” (Marshall 1970:19).

¹⁹⁰ For a detailed study of Luke’s preface in the context of historical prefaces, scientific prefaces and prefaces in Hellenistic Jewish literature, see Alexander (1993). There is general consensus among most contemporary biblical scholars that the preface to Luke’s Gospel serves as an introduction to both the Gospel and Acts. It is also generally agreed that the same author addresses the same person, Theophilus. Furthermore, it is also argued that the opening words of Acts refer explicitly to ‘the first volume’, Luke’s Gospel; and in many ways the “Greek diction of each shows close identity with the other” (Cadbury 1958:8).

¹⁹¹ The Gospel of Luke is story that intends to proclaim the good news about Jesus and the rule of God, says Powell (1989:11).

The Gospel of Luke is fulfillment of salvation promised to Israel, which has been realized through the birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But how has this story been interpreted and appropriated by Christian communities over the ages? This is the topic of the next section.

2.3 EXCURSION: LUKE-ACTS AN ECCLESIAL RESOURCE OVER CENTURIES

While Luke states that he is writing to give his reader/s certainty about the things in which they had been instructed (Lk 1:4), it is difficult for modern readers to know what Luke's readers already knew.¹⁹² This, says Buckwater (1996:1), makes it difficult to understand Luke the same way Luke's first readers would (possibly) have understood it.¹⁹³ The ways in which the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts were used by the Christian church throughout history are indicative rather of the uncertainty of what it was that Luke communicated to the Christians in the first century Palestine. A brief historical overview of how and why Luke was read follows under the sub-headings: Early Christianity, Medieval Christianity, Renaissance and Reformation; Enlightenment and Modern World. It follows the categorization made by Talbert, and is underpinned by the notion that interpretation "generally followed the cultural and religious currents of the time" (Talbert 2003:1).

2.3.1 Luke in early Christianity

There were two main reasons for interpretation during the period of the early church, says Talbert (2003:1).¹⁹⁴ The first was to build a defense against heresy within the church. Tertullian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Cyril of Alexandria were the proponents of interpretation along these lines. The second reason was because there was a need for "an apology directed towards the world outside the church" a stance in which Augustine took the lead (Talbert 2003:1).

Evans (1990:3) notes that Eusebius' writings of the fourth century make no mention of Luke's Gospel when in his *Church History* he reflects on statements about the gospels made by Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis. Whether Luke was ignored by Eusebius because Papias'

¹⁹² I assume that the author of Luke was a male. If not, I apologize to "her".

¹⁹³ Communication of the "original" event is further complicated by what Paul Ricoeur refers to as "distance" and "distanciation" (1976)

¹⁹⁴ Although Powell (1989:92) notes that already Luke had to find new ways avenues of appropriating Jesus' message because the socio-historical situation of Luke was vastly different from that of Jesus.

statements were hostile towards Luke cannot be determined. Whether Papias had not made mention of Luke's writing because he was not aware of its existence, cannot be determined either. On the other hand, Luke's Gospel enjoyed confirmation and affirmation through its association with Marcion, whose cannon included an abbreviated version of the Gospel of Luke.¹⁹⁵ Based entirely on Paul, Marcion's theology was a kind of ultra-Pauline dualism. Evans (1990:3) suggests that Marcion may have used Luke's Gospel as a representative of what Paul referred to as "the (my) gospel" in Gal 1:7-9. Although several possibilities exist,¹⁹⁶ the reason/s for Marcion's choice of Luke cannot be determined.

The first complete orthodox interpretation of Luke was written by the early third century anti-heretical Latin writer, Tertullian, to disprove Marcion's theology. What may be regarded as a commentary on Luke, Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* refutes Marcion's understanding of Christ "as the one who stood in antithesis to the creator God of the Jews" says Talbert (2003:2). Appealing to the very gospel which Marcion found plausible, Tertullian sets out to prove that Luke's Gospel reveals that Jesus is the Christ of the Creator.¹⁹⁷

Like Tertullian's early interpretation on Luke had an anti-heretical aim from the Latin church, so too was Cyril of Alexandria's work on Luke anti-heretical, but from the Greek church (Talbert 2003:2).¹⁹⁸ Cyril's commentary of Luke is a collection of 150 sermons which focuses on the Christological controversies of the time.

The focus of Augustine's *De Consensus Evangelistarum* (written around 400 CE) was to defend the gospels against the critical attacks from those outside the Christian church community who claimed that the gospels contradict each other; that they contradict the Hebrew Bible; and that they "add to Christ's teaching" (Talbert 2003:2-3). By employing a form of literary harmony, Augustine set out to demonstrate the perfect harmony between the gospels, by comparing the gospels of Mark, Luke and John to Matthew's Gospel. Thus, the aim of Augustine's interpretation of Luke was to exhibit the unity and harmony of "all Scripture" in order to disprove certain charges made by those critics outside the church (Talbert 2003:3).

¹⁹⁵ Marcion is believed to be the son of the bishop of Sinope in Pontus (Evans 1990:4).

¹⁹⁶ Whether Luke was chosen from among the already existing gospels – perhaps from the canonical four; or that it was already in use at Marcion's home church in Pontus; or that it had Luke's name attached to it; or Marcion was aware of a personal relationship between Paul and Luke, are all possibilities for the selection of Luke, none of which can be determined (Evans 1990:3).

¹⁹⁷ For an exposition on Luke's Christology and Jesus' lordship in relation the God (the Father), see Chapter 8 of Buckwater (1996:173-192).

¹⁹⁸ Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria from AD 412 to 444 (Talbert 2003:2).

From the excursion above, it is clear that the needs of the early Christian church were to defend Christianity as an authentic religion but moreover that the New Testament writings (particularly the Gospels) were reliable sources of God's continued revelation in the world.

2.3.2 Luke in Medieval Christianity

Here, interpretation on Luke was exhibited in two forms – the sermon and the commentary. Commentaries were read by monks as part of the austere discipline (Talbert 2003:3). The exegetical writings of eighth century monk, the Venerable Bede, were much in demand in later centuries. His authority grew as his work was copied and studied in monastic centres all over Europe. In his commentary on Luke, Bede devised a reference system, acknowledging his sources and indicating which passages he had 'borrowed' from Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome or Gregory the Great (Talbert 2003:4). Bede's work reflects what was considered to be typical scholarly at the time – digesting the learning of earlier thinkers and passing it down in a simpler, more understandable form. Talbert also notes that Bede, in his *Commentarius in Actus* wrote that the author is "Luke the physician and that all of his words are medicine for the ailing soul".¹⁹⁹ Bede's exegesis, says Talbert, is typical of monastic exegesis and tended to be "devotional, concerned with living the Christian life and attaining salvation" (2003:4).

2.3.3 Luke in the Renaissance and Reformation

The two main paradigms operative in this period were spearheaded by Erasmus and Calvin, respectively, says Rabil (1972:1).²⁰⁰ Erasmus produced the first printed Greek New Testament²⁰¹ and wrote paraphrases²⁰² and annotations on biblical books.²⁰³ Two principle features characterize Erasmus's annotations viz. textual criticism²⁰⁴ and consideration of the opinions of the early church fathers²⁰⁵ (Rabil 1972:115; Talbert 2003:4). Erasmus' interpreta-

¹⁹⁹ Apparently, Cadbury's doctoral dissertation argued against Luke being a physician. Hence, according to a famous aphorism, Cadbury got a doctorate by depriving Luke of his (Parsons 1993:126).

²⁰⁰ In 1501, Erasmus wrote his first work of theology, Handbook of a Christian Soldier – which was published in 1503 says Rabil (1972:1-2). The year 1501, says Rummel (1986:3) may also be marked as a date for Erasmus's 'conversion' from philologist to biblical scholar.

²⁰¹ For a detailed explanation of Erasmus's interest in theology and the development of his interest in Greek, see Rabil (1972:1-35). For an exposition and evaluation of Erasmus's interaction with Latin and Greek see Krans (2004:925).

²⁰² Rabil (1972:134) quotes from a letter written by Erasmus in 1522, explaining what he (Erasmus) means by 'paraphrase': "For a paraphrase is not a translation but a certain freer kind of continuous commentary with the integrity of the persons speaking maintained".

²⁰³ For an exposition and evaluation of Erasmus's interaction with Latin and Greek see Krans (2004:9-25).

²⁰⁴ See Chapter 2 of Krans (2004) for Erasmus's text critical approach.

²⁰⁵ Including Jerome, Origen, Augustine and Aquinas. Rabil (1972:116-121) discusses the ways in which Erasmus used the work of the "fathers".

tion focuses on the moral meaning of Scripture. He used Luke and other Scripture to “expose the folly and corruption of the church”²⁰⁶ (Talbert 2003:5). Rabil notes the order in which Erasmus’s paraphrases of the New Testament appeared (1972:128). The first to appear was the paraphrase of Romans in 1517.²⁰⁷ Paraphrases of Mark, Luke, John and Acts were written last, in 1523 (Rabil 1972:128).

Calvin employed Scripture as a theological weapon and Luke served as tool for his aim of the theological reformation of the church (Talbert 2003:5). Calvin’s reference to Luke reflected his view on its inter-connectedness with the other Gospels. Calvin’s arguments were directed at both those who read “justification by faith” into certain Scriptural passages and at those Roman Catholics who claimed “to be justified by works” (Talbert 2003:5).

2.3.4 Luke in the Enlightenment

The relationship between revelation and reason was the focus of research during the period of enlightenment. Wolff, a leading German philosopher of the time, held that “revelation may be above reason but not contrary to reason”, and also that “reason establishes the criteria by which revelation may be judged”, notes Talbert (2003:6). This means that any alleged revelation must prove to be free from contradiction. It is this “criteria of reason” that was applied by Reimarus to the four gospels to undermine the claims of the alleged Christian revelation, argues Talbert (2003:7)²⁰⁸. The differences between the gospels were seen as contradictions. Thus, according to Talbert (2003:7), Reimarus used Luke only to illustrate what he believed to prove the “falsity of the alleged Christian revelation”.

Talbert (2003:7) lists some differences/discrepancies/contradictions pointed out by Reimarus:

Luke 24:13-32: Matthew and John do not mention the appearance on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:36-49: There’s nothing in Matthew about the appearances in Jerusalem.

Luke 24:51 John and Matthew do not report Jesus’ ascension as Luke does.

²⁰⁶ In *The Praise of Folly* (written 1509-1511), Erasmus calls attention to corruption in the church, says Rabil (1972:78).

²⁰⁷ Rabil (1972:129) attributes Erasmus’s choice of Paul as a starting point to the influence of John Colet.

²⁰⁸ Also see Talbert, 1970.

Women buy spices the evening before the feast day while according to Mark (16:1) women buy spices when the feast day has past.

Luke reports two angels at the tomb while Matthew and Mark mention the presence of one angel.

It is clear that Reimarus' interpretation of Luke against the other gospels set out to disprove their essential historicity and exposed these writings as having been created by Jesus' disciples after his death. In essence, Reimarus sought to disprove Christianity's claims to have received truth through revelation, and his interpretation of Luke against the other Gospels was aimed at disproving its essential historicity. Reimarus' work has given impetus to the subsequent interpretation of Luke (and the other gospels) which, says Talbert (2003:7), is what makes Reimarus so important for biblical interpretation.²⁰⁹

2.3.5 Luke in the Modern world

The two main research foci of this period hinged on responses to Reimarus' claims against the essential historicity of the Gospel accounts on the one hand, and on the search for the theological thrust of the gospels, on the other. In the first instance there has been a drive to establish the historical basis of Christianity by means of source analysis and appeals to authorship and archaeology. In the second instance, the quest for the evangelists' theology focused on interpreting the meaning of the Gospels as presented in their final form. How Luke and Acts have been interpreted since the 1800s depends on which of these two approaches had been applied to them at any given time (Talbert 2003:8).

Research to prove that the author of the Third Gospel was a fellow worker of Paul was aimed at re-establishing the historical plausibility of Lukan writings. This is reflected in the work of Von Harnack (1907)²¹⁰ who had set out to prove that the Lukan writings were the work of Luke, the physician and companion of Paul. It was Von Harnack who reconstructed the source 'Q' from the gospels of Matthew and Luke.²¹¹ The claim by Von Harnack that 'Q' was a document (composed in Palestine during the apostolic period) more ancient than Mark, in opposition to Reimarus' assertion that Luke constructed his own picture of Jesus after the

²⁰⁹ For a detailed exposition of Reimarus' work, see Talbert (1970).

²¹⁰ See translation by Wilkinson (1907), *Luke the Physician: The Author of the Third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles*.

²¹¹ 'Q' is understood to be a common source of reference for Matthew and Luke of information not found in Mark. See also Streeter (1924:291) for a list of passages assigned to Q.

death of Jesus. Ramsay (1908:5) notes that Von Harnack speaks favourably about the trustworthiness and credibility of Luke's Gospel. Ramsay himself set out to prove the essential historicity of Luke 2:1-4 on the basis of discoveries in Egypt that seemed to indicate a system of periodic enrollments in Syria specifically, and the East, generally (Ramsay 1908:5).

Continuing the cause of Luke's credibility and trustworthiness based on the historicity of the writings, Streeter (1924), assuming the two-source theory, adds two additional sources to account for material unique to Matthew (M) and Luke (L), respectively.²¹² Suggesting a four-source hypothesis, Streeter argues for the existence of Proto-Luke, a synthesis of 'Q' and 'L' (1924:150-334). Streeter is convinced that 'Q' and 'L' were combined into one document by Luke himself before he came across Mark (1924:290). Accounting for Luke's omission of material found in Mark, Streeter argues that Proto-Luke was a document independent of Mark and approximately of the same date. Thus, Streeter concludes that in the composition of the Third Gospel, Mark was regarded as a source of subordinate authority, in comparison to Proto-Luke (1924:330).

While many scholars have debated Luke's credibility and accuracy as historian of his time, others have debated his credibility as theologian. Manson (1930:xxvii) said that, "Luke is less intellectual and theological than Matthew". This view, others would argue, is "tunnel vision" created by the notion that Luke is univocal with a single purpose in mind (Cadbury 1958: 49; Minear 1973:135).

This cursory overview of historical paradigms in Lukan research reveals a common thread - that the various interpretations of Luke are in response to the societal needs of particular communities in particular periods of time. Moreover, it reflects the multi-vocal nature of Lukan discourse and thus responds to the question, "What are the reasons/motives for interpreting biblical texts in a particular way?" Whether the reasons for interpretation were to counteract heretics within the early church or critics outside the early church; to prove that Christianity was a 'true' religion by showing that it complies with the notion of 'reason' as truth during the enlightenment; or to prove the authenticity of one gospel over another, it appears that for the Bible to have remained relevant throughout the ages, it had to address

²¹² This hypothesis argues that Mark was the earliest written Gospel and that Matthew and Luke drew on another source "Q" for the non-Markan material they share.

what was relevant at that time. It also appears that the methodological tool employed depended on the reasons why texts were interpreted in a particular context.

In socio-rhetorical terms, the above excursion is a reminder that the ideological texture of both the text being interpreted, as well as previous interpretations of such texts are important angles from which to approach the interpretive process. It also points to the importance of intertexture as the studies on the Synoptics reveal. Also, a study by Robert Tannehill (1986) illustrates various internal connections in the Lukan narrative. It could be argued that the idea of Luke being a physician emanated from focusing on the innertexture of the Luke's Gospel as repetitive texture revealed frequent reference to body, illness and healing.

SRI reveals that societal contexts call for a need to reflect only on what biblical texts (as authoritative texts) mean. It is this renewed reflection that calls for continually rethinking how first century Christian texts are interpreted and appropriated.

2.4 SOME METHODS AND APPROACHES TO LUKAN RESEARCH SINCE THE 20TH CENTURY

By the end of the twentieth century, multiple approaches had emerged for reading Luke (and other New Testament documents).²¹³ Talbert (2003:11-14) identifies recent approaches to Lukan research, three of which will be foregrounded in this study, viz. literary Mediterranean parallels, pre-canonical literary criticism, anthropological and sociological models (2003:11-14).²¹⁴ They reflect the thrust of current Lukan research, and also serve to further account for the choice of the interpretive framework for this research project. Therefore it is necessary to give a brief synopsis of these interpretive options which have emerged as theoretical frameworks for interpreting the gospel of Luke.

²¹³ These include source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, literary criticism with shifts in concepts such as: the world behind the text; the world of the text; the world in front of the text; the world beneath the text. These shifts were underpinned by various theoretical frameworks such as: linguistics, hermeneutics, reader-response theories, liberation theories, feminist theories, rhetoric, etc. (See Conradie and Jonker 2000:39-73).

²¹⁴ The other two models are "ancient liturgical practices" and "context of canon". The primary focus of the first being that Lukan texts have to be interpreted in the context of ancient liturgical practices and in the second instance, Luke, in order to be read canonically means to interpret it in relation to the other three gospels (Talbert 2003:13-14).

2.4.1 Literary Mediterranean parallels

Cadbury's *The making of Luke Acts* (1958, first published in 1927) became a focal point for Lukan research under the auspices of the Society of Biblical Literature.²¹⁵ During the period 1973 to 1983 the Society of Biblical literature's (SBL) Luke-Acts Groups "broke with the construct of Conzelmann and developed an approach more akin to that of Cadbury" (Talbert 2003:11). Conzelmann focused on the possibility of detecting a single dominating purpose for Luke's gospel²¹⁶ while Cadbury was interested in Luke's literary techniques and his theology in relation to parallels from the Mediterranean world. Cadbury (1958:49) recognized that there were a variety of motives operative in the course of tradition. He concludes that since the motives for transmission of Luke's Gospel were various, the (literary) forms of transmission were various too.²¹⁷ To this end, Minear (1973:135) also argues that the reason why it has been difficult for scholars to recover an agreed-upon understanding of Luke's kerygmatic intention is because Luke was responding to multiple problems. Thus, Luke reflects the author's multiple intentions.

Parallels from the Mediterranean world, particularly literary parallels,²¹⁸ provided a research framework for the SBL's Luke-Acts Group (Talbert 2003:13).²¹⁹ This thrust of Lukan research reflects an approach which regards insight into the immediate context of Mediterranean antiquity as the principle criteria for interpreting Luke. Johnson (1986:6) explicitly states that all New Testament writings 'must' be understood within their first century Mediterranean setting in general and within the matrix of first century Judaism, in particular. This view is based on the notion that insight into the life-situation of the first century Mediterranean milieu "allows one to determine how Luke would have been heard" in his time and context (Talbert 2003:12).²²⁰

For Cadbury, the multiplicity exhibited in Luke is a reflection that first century literary models were used by those who wrote about Jesus. This was not done merely as a mode of imitating literary models, but as rhetorical strategies "following the natural trend of motives and purposes" (1958:49). The refocus on Cadbury's work by the SBL in the late 1900s, and

²¹⁵ See *Society of Biblical Literature, Monograph Series Vol 20* (1974).

²¹⁶ See Conzelmann's *The Theology of St Luke* (1960: translation of second German edition).

²¹⁷ More about the literary variation in Luke follows elsewhere in this chapter.

²¹⁸ See Alexander (1993) for an example of how the method of literary parallels enhances the interpretive process.

²¹⁹ See Luke-Acts: New perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature seminar (1984).

²²⁰ See Garrett (1989) and Talbert (1982) for examples of research emanating from this approach.

particularly the study of literary Mediterranean parallels had given impetus to the development of SRI as an interpretive framework for reading early Christian texts.

2.4.2 Pre-canonical literary criticism

Modes of reading that focus (primarily) on the final form of the text, do not take into account the Mediterranean environment within which the text emerged, says Talbert (2003:12). Talbert regards Narrative Criticism as an example of such a model. This model of reading, argues Talbert, concentrates on matters such as plot, characters, and type of narration by an implied author²²¹ and regards texts as “mirrors rather than windows”. Talbert’s criticism is based on the argument that, because Narrative Criticism does not take into account the Mediterranean environment in which the narrative emerged, the narrative world of the Gospel text is “abstracted from its time and place” (Talbert 2003:12).

Gaventa (1988:150) makes reference to the ‘renewed’ interest in literary theory among biblical scholars which, according to her, has given new direction in addressing the narrative character of New Testament documents, and in particular, the Book of Acts. She further points out that the more ‘new’ work in narratology rejects the earlier claim made that, “the historian records whereas the novelist must create” (Gaventa 1988:150). Holladay (1988:1077) says that reading Luke as a narrative confirms what is stated at the beginning of the Gospel, that the story is told to strengthen faith.

Johnson (1991; 1996), like Talbert (1974; 2002), adopts a literary-critical approach to the study of Luke. But Johnson (1991:1-10) is also adamant that any discussion of Luke’s purpose and the development of themes, must take into account the entire two-volume work — as narrative. To make his point he argues that, “The interpretation of *what* Luke says on any subject must take into account *where* in the story he says it.” Elsewhere, Johnson (1986:6) acknowledges the importance of the prehistory of texts and the usefulness of the distinction between tradition and redaction for exegesis, and reiterates the importance of giving attention to the literary conventions of the age of composition. However, he reiterates that it is the complete and finished literary form of a writing that demands interpretation.

Following arguments made by Robbins for a dialogical approach to biblical interpretation, I would conclude that the views of Talbert, Johnson and Gaventa all hold true and contribute to

²²¹ Commentaries written from this perspective include Tannehill (1986) and Green (1997), says Talbert.

the task of responsible biblical interpretation. Furthermore, one could conclude that what Gaventa is arguing for, is in SRI terms a “pictorial-narrative” approach (rhetography); and that Talbert’s concern is that such a focus does not necessarily take into account information available through studying the Mediterranean environment in which the narrative emerged, which could result in a skewed picture. From a SRI perspective, both arguments hold; but the two approaches are not mutually exclusive. In fact, proponents of SRI would argue that rhetoric operative in the Gospels, evoke “picturing” and that the particular detail of a picture is shaped and sharpened by whatever subtexts and discipline codes a text is approached with.

2.4.3 Anthropological and sociological models

This approach sets out to explore how social and cultural dimensions of Luke’s texts and context shape the author’s “perspective, compositional strategy and message” (Neyrey 1991:xi). Features which include economic relations, basic social patterns (such as patron-client relations); institutions (especially the kinship group); first century personality; peasant society; rituals and ceremonies; conflict and values such as honour and shame are examined. The idea is to seek what is typical in Luke’s society in order to illuminate the particular and distinctive. This focus on general patterns of perception and behaviour, rather than on the unique and particular events and persons, is the point of departure of the social sciences, says Neyrey (1991:xii).

Therefore anthropological-sociological approaches to reading Luke go beyond reflecting on the available information of the text as the author’s construction of his/her world. It implies that in order to understand an ancient (or foreign) text, it is important to explore the social system/s and social relationships within which such language had meaning.

A linguistic analysis, says Mouton (1995:32), reflects on the available information of the text, as the author’s construction of his/her world, whereas a socio-linguistic analysis explores the question, “who says what to whom, about what, in what setting, and for what purpose” (Malina 1993:18). Robbins (1991:305) warns that while such explicit enquiry contributes to our understanding of Luke and Acts in the milieu of first century Mediterranean Christianity, it should not be assumed that such knowledge would lead to a simple task of tracing between that context and an author’s thoughts. Susan Garrett asserts that:

Interpreters of biblical texts cannot question their authors. Further, because very little is known about the social setting in which some of the biblical documents were produced, interpreters often do not know for certain which culture or cultures are relevant to a given text (1989:12).

Responding to critics such as Garrett, Robbins (1991:306) concludes that, although we (actual audience) can never assume that all persons in a given context thought alike, or that there is any necessary causality linking context and ideas, exercises that would show that Luke's ideas are plausible in a particular context, could prove to be useful to biblical interpreters. Mouton aptly reminds us that while Scripture does not supply direct, simple answers to questions raised in contemporary society, "[...] we (Christians) have the obligation (and responsibility) to involve ourselves in the creative tension of the liminal space between the dynamics of the Biblical texts and the needs of contemporary society" (1995:188).²²²

From an SRI perspective, the three approaches discussed above all bring valuable insights to the interpretive process. In a discussion I had with Vernon Robbins during March 2007, he said when he listened to the various insights from both the 'literary camps' and the 'social-anthropological camps' of biblical scholarship his reaction was: If these different groups enter into dialogue it would enrich the enterprise of biblical scholarship. This perspective says Robbins derives from the notion that the New Testament texts themselves reveal different textures – depending on the angle of interpretation from which one approaches it. This is when he presented "textures of texts" as an interpretive analytics which calls for dialogue amongst the multiple approaches to texts.

At this point, reference made by L. Juliana M. Claassens (2003:140-142) to the work of Bakhtin is in order. On the 'open-endedness of dialogue' and the risk that 'plurality of interpretations' of a text could lead to "relativism", Claassens notes that relativity should not be confused with relativism; and that Bakhtin's devotion at "playing the many textual clues" is not an invitation to "reading that is arbitrary or irresponsible" (2003:140-142). Claassens concludes that a dialogical model has potential to bring together diverse and even contradictory voices in the Bible. It is this approach to intertextuality of Biblical texts by Bakhtin that has alerted Vernon Robbins to the multi-vocal nature of first century Christian texts, and the subsequent discovery of major modes of discourses (rhetorolects), viz. wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, precreation, miracle, and priestly rhetorolect (Robbins 1996c:353).

²²² Also see Mouton (1994; 2003). Parenthesis MP.

2.4.4 Challenges for reading Luke in the context of a twenty-first century societal problem

There is nothing new under the sun

Vernon Robbins (2007b:1)

Every ‘new’ paradigm of biblical interpretation is either sparked by a response to a previous model or it is a ‘new’ reconfiguration of that which is old and commonplace. Also, it is biblical scholars’ openness to currents in fields outside biblical studies that has contributed to the diversity of methods proposed for interpreting Biblical texts today. A brief overview of the outcomes of Lukan research over the centuries has revealed that methods of interpretation are chosen (or developed) in order to answer the questions which emerge from within the community of the interpreter.²²³

Any attempt to appeal to first century Christian texts in response to the complexities of the challenges posed by stigma in the context of HIV and AIDS, necessitates a multi-disciplinary approach. The reality of stigma is experienced by people in different spheres of their (real) lives and relationships with others.²²⁴ It affects their bodies, their minds, their spirituality, their livelihoods, their belonging and acceptance. As such, stigma related to HIV and AIDS, presents multiple challenges in multiple spheres of South African society.

SRI has revealed that “a major characteristic of early Christian discourse is its pictorial and enthymematic argumentative patterns related to people’s bodies, households, villages, synagogues, cities, temples, kingdoms, and empires” (Robbins 2007a:100). Thus, understanding and reasoning “were emerging from people’s lived experiences in specific places in the first century Mediterranean world” (Robbins 2007a:100). Robbins refers to the dynamic, dialogical interaction between rhetology and rhetography inherent in the major discourses of New Testament texts. He argues that whatever rhetology the Gospels contain is embedded in their rhetography. Put differently, the effectiveness of the argumentation exhibited in the text depends on the effects (and affects) of the picture/s that the text calls to mind.

²²³ It is so however that, for many biblical scholars, “their community” means the academy and the needs of this “community” is often determined by competition influenced by prescribed research “niche” areas and research grants. This argument underpins the conversation between Shüssler-Fiorenza and Robbins as described in chapter one of this dissertation.

²²⁴ See case studies in chapter four of the dissertation.

The focus of this research project is exploring the possibilities of Luke's Gospel as a resource for an ecclesial response to stigma in the context of HIV and AIDS. While there is nothing about HIV and AIDS in the Gospel of Luke (or any New Testament document), the Gospel of Luke "reflects a time when Christians were going through a crisis" (Bosch 1993:1).²²⁵ But it was also a time for Christians to negotiate a new *paideia*. Luke uses this opportunity to present Jesus as one who brings hope. Luke does this by placing certain stigmatized people in the foreground. In this regard, Bosch notes:

Right at the top of the list are the poor. We can also refer to Jesus' association with women, tax collectors and Samaritans – all stories without real parallels in the other gospels (1993:10).

In Luke, Jesus' earthly ministry was always aimed at people in need. To this end, Luke describes "Jesus' entire earthly ministry as a reaction to human suffering" says Bosch (1993:12). Luke did to persuade his listeners/readers *to do likewise* (Bosch 1993:12).²²⁶ Through this story of Jesus, Christian believers today 'claim' to be followers of Jesus in continuity with first century Christians. However, contemporary Christian believers are confronted with totally different societal challenges, choices and historical forces than Christian communities in the first century Mediterranean world (Mouton 2002:178). Nevertheless, the continuity between Christian believers of first century followers of Jesus and twenty-first century followers of Jesus is rooted in the possibility to make analogous observations.

Following this presupposition, the next section offers a re-reading of the Gospel of Luke, calling to mind (picturing) Jesus' interaction with women and other people, who through illness and disease, were marginalized by the dominant culture for whom "purity" was a prerequisite for, and a reflection of God's blessing.

²²⁵ Bosch (1993:2-10) explains that the context is probably after the Jewish-Roman war of 66-70CE. Citing Bosch, (1993), Mouton (2007:41) also points out that the Pharisees seem to have been the only Jewish religious group who had been able to regroup after the destruction of the temple. Evidently, greater emphasis was put on the observance of their interpretation of the Torah than before, explains Mouton.

²²⁶ Bosch (1993:12) suggests that Luke presented Jesus as one who had a deep concern for those banished to the fringes of humanity, confronting his readers with the question, "Can our ministry be different?"

2.5 RE-READING LUKE THROUGH STIGMATIZED EYES²²⁷

This section offers a re-reading of the Gospel of Luke, set in two acts. Both acts centre round what may be referred to as “The Galilean Ministry” (Balmforth 1953:109). Act one is set around the scene in the synagogue in Capernaum (Luke 4:14-30), giving Mary, the mother of Jesus,²²⁸ centre stage. The purpose is to picture (and imagine) the experiences of Mary and her carpenter son, who challenge the prejudice scribal elite. It serves to set “stigma” as a theme, but it also serves as an illustration of how Lukan discourse challenges perceptions and practices that perpetuate stigmatization.

Act two pictures Jesus’ interaction with the diseased, deceased, and demon possessed before he sets his sight on Jerusalem. The opening scene is the house of Simon (Luke 4:31) where Simon’s (unnamed) mother-in-law takes centre stage. The Lukan story is retold with the aim to “hear” voices that are marginalized in the text and in interpretations of the text. It also serves to foreground stigma as a “*topos*” known and experienced by Luke’s audience while exploring how Luke portrays two particular marginalized groups, viz. women and those who suffer ill health. The re-reading in the following two sections are ‘imaginary’ re-telling of Lukan stories as one could ‘imagine’ the experiences being related by Mary and Simon’s mother-in-law.²²⁹ To this end, the *genre* parallels that of the personal stories of two HIV-positive individuals in chapter four of the thesis. Furthermore, it also resonates the ‘imagined story *genre*’ of parable, as Jesus tells the story of ‘The Good Samaritan’ (Lk 10:25-37).

2.5.1 Through the eyes of a carpenter’s mother

Her son, Jesus, enters the synagogue and Mary swallows hard at the knob in her throat. It is good to have him home. Jesus looks up, and his eye catches hers. Her reassuring smile fills the distance between them. All eyes are on him as he makes his way to the front of the packed synagogue.

When Jesus and those who had followed him from Capernaum arrived in Nazareth the day before the Sabbath, Mary had gone to tell an elder of the synagogue that he was there. But

²²⁷ The re-reading ‘through stigmatized eyes’ serves to explore creative ways of re-telling the story as (possibly) experienced by people on the margins in Luke’s community, in an attempt to draw attention to the ‘realities’ in people’s everyday lives.

²²⁸ Mary’s role in the Gospel story is primarily that of “the mother of Jesus”. She is also called the mother of James and Joseph, or Joses, and has some daughters (Clark Kroeger & Evans 2002: 567).

²²⁹ This re-reading ‘through stigmatized eyes’ serves to explore creative ways of re-telling the story as (possibly) experienced by people on the margins in Lukan society as an attempt to focus on the embodied reality of people’s real-life experiences.

news about his teaching had already reached Nazareth and the elder invited Jesus to read from the prophets and preach the next day.

Worship begins and Mary is aware of a presence The Holy Spirit? It reminds her of that night when the angel had said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most high will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” (Lk 1:35). Mary’s hand slides over her abdomen and she instinctively caresses it. Thank goodness she had decided to wear this long veil today. It covers her hand and stomach. Then she becomes aware that they had started singing a song of praise.

Mary thinks about another song. The one she had sung when her cousin Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, had pronounced a priestly blessing upon her and her child. And Elizabeth’s blessing rested upon them! And her song of praise had been a source of inspiration and encouragement, then – and even now.

Then, she was also thankful for long veils. It concealed her pregnancy when she returned home after her visit with Elizabeth. She had a lot of explaining to do: Why she had run off without telling anyone; what was happening inside her body! And outside - her stomach was getting bigger and her breasts larger. She had noticed how some of the older women in the village would stop talking when she approached. And Joseph? Some time after she had returned from Elizabeth, he disappeared. Then one day, she heard him talking to her father and mother. “No, I will not leave until we’ve set the day for my wedding to your daughter.” That’s when she first felt him move inside her.

And now, she looks at him and hopes that he will stay home for a while. He has lost so much weight after going without food for forty days. Her hand tightens on her stomach – a little higher this time. She’s had an anxious feeling on the pit of her stomach since she heard how Jesus, hungry and tired, had struggled to keep his balance on top of the temple in Jerusalem. Thank God he kept his wits against the devil. She has no doubt that God is always with(in) him. That is a reassuring thought whenever she feels anxious about his safety.

The temple in Jerusalem! For three days she and Joseph had searched for him – and that’s where they found him. A twelve-year old boy, sitting amongst teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone was amazed at his understanding and his answers. She was anxious then, too. No! She was worried sick and angry that he showed no regard for their concern. But with a reassuring tone in his voice, he had asked, “Why were you searching for

me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" She and Joseph looked at each other – both with the same question in their eyes: Were we supposed to know? What were they suppose to know? They talked about it for a while and then it struck her! She reminded Joseph of the day they had presented Jesus to the Lord – offering a sacrifice. They remembered the old man, Simeon's praises to God. But he had also addressed her directly:

This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.

She was still wondering what this meant, when the prophetess, Anna stood in front of them, raised her hands in praise to God. Mary, standing there with Jesus in her arms, heard Anna speak about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Mary senses that something is about to happen. An expectant silence fills the air. All eyes are on him as the scroll of the prophet Isaiah is handed to him. Unrolling it, his eyes search and find the text:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Lk 4:18-19).

Mary follows Jesus' body movements as he hands the scroll back to the attendant and sits down. He addresses the congregation directly and says, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." He says it with such conviction, that Mary knew it! He is the "anointed one" to do the things the Prophet had spoken about. Of course - she has known it all along, since she treasured all that had happened in her heart. Everyone in the synagogue listens attentively as he continues to speak. But there is whispering which turns into disturbing murmuring. Then someone shouts, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" Those who were whispering start speaking louder. Though everyone is talking at once, Mary hears someone say, "Who does he think he is, speaking like that?" Another quips, "He has no right!"

Then she hears Jesus's voice, "I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his hometown!"

"Prophet?" Someone asks. "No!" another exclaims "What does he know? He's a carpenter's son!"

Mary closes her eyes and she hears his voice above everyone else's. Jesus, although not a scribal elite, speaks clearly about things that had happened during the time of the great prophet Elijah. He reminds them of the time that Elijah did the unexpected - when he provided food and healing for those outside of Israel. What he says infuriates the people. Mary hears his voice, but cannot see him anymore. People are moving forward. Confronting him, their arms are in the air as they speak to shut him up. The crowd now moves towards the door and Mary pushes her way through. The synagogue congregation had turned into an angry mob, chasing Jesus up the hill.

Mary reaches the top of the hill – grasping for breath. She hears chanting, “Push him! Push him!” She feels that familiar anxious knot in her stomach and fears the worse. Then she sees him – walking right through the crowd! She opens her arms and he walks into her embrace. Holding on to her tightly, they walk away.

2.5.2 Re-visioning stigma: Touching the (no) body²³⁰

The woman²³¹ senses a familiar warm feeling rushing from her breast, up her neck, onto her cheeks. It's been years since she has experienced these flushes. But it lingers longer than what she had been used to. Then she feels cold and starts shivering. She certainly is not experiencing ordinary hot flushes. She really feels sick, but she has to stay on her feet to welcome the visitors. She is expecting her son-in-law, Simon, his brother Andrew, his fishing partners, James and John (sons of Zebedee) and Jesus (the new teacher) for lunch.

She had been thinking about this man, Jesus. Many people are talking about the miracles he had performed when he had visited this town before. And just a while ago she heard people passing by the house say that Jesus had driven out the evil spirit that had possessed old Shaman²³² for many years. Over the years she has witnessed how desperate people were to be healed. Right now, she also feels anxious and desperate, as the fever overwhelms her.

She nearly collapses as she puts the water-jug next to the foot-basin. She tries to splash some cold water onto her face, but she's shivering uncontrollably.

²³⁰ The use of the term “(no) body” suggests that a socially marginalized body is brought to the centre in order to heal the body of the individual and the community as social body. After using this term I note that Andries van Aarde (2002:66) also refers to the marginalized as “nobodies”. This, he does in the context of questioning the value of the birth recording of a perceived (fatherless) “nobody” like Jesus.

²³¹ Simon's mother-in-law appears to have provided significant assistance about the house (The IVP Women's Bible Commentary, 2002:569)

²³² For an explanation of “Shaman” as “spirit possessed” see Pilch (2002:106-108).

She must have fainted because now she is lying down. She becomes aware of someone bending over her and she feels the fever disappearing. She manages a whisper: “Jesus?” He brushes away the grey curl that clings to her damp face. She still feels wobbly when he helps her up. Finding her balance, she clasps his strong hand between both her aging hands and looks at him. She hesitates and he gently pushes her forward saying, “Go inside”. She enters the room and Simon hurriedly pulls a chair closer for her to sit. But she has to keep moving – has to be active, lest her body fails her. She insists on serving them lunch.

As evening falls, many people are arriving at the house. They must have heard what had happened at the synagogue and at the house earlier that day. Now they are bringing to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness. Each one is healed as Jesus, lays his hands on them.

The next morning she gets up early to prepare breakfast for the guests. She hears her son-in-law say to the others, “He’s not here! Has he left without us?” She takes the warm bread to them. Everyone is there, except Jesus. “He’s gone to pray”, says Andrew. “Let’s go find him”. She walks out after them. It’s just about daybreak and already there are people outside waiting to see Jesus. The early morning walk is good for her aging limbs. She stops for a while to catch her breath and considers turning back - when she sees him. The first rays of the morning sun fall on his dark hair. She watches as he slowly turns around and walks towards them. Only now does she realize that a crowd has gathered around them. They want him to stay. But he says that he has to preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why he was sent. Whatever does that mean? She wonders. When he reaches her, he puts his hand on her shoulder, looks into her face before continuing down the hill. By the time she gets home they are ready to leave – her son-in-law too.

Now, a few weeks later they are back – more of them this time. Earlier today Simon had brought some fish and she prepared it for them. She listens as they discuss what had happened during their visits to synagogues in other town and villages. Andrew says how surprised he was to see a leper in one of the towns. Lepers are not allowed contact with other people – it is against the law! “But there the man was,” explains Andrew “with his face near Jesus’s feet”. Then John continues the story: We all stood back, except for Jesus who bent down towards the leper. We heard the leper say, “Lord if you are willing, you can make me clean.” John carries on eating and she looks at Simon with questioning eyes. Then Simon explains, “Jesus reached out and touched the man. Immediately the leprosy left him.” He says

that the man wanted to show himself off to everybody around, but Jesus told him to go show himself to the priests.

By now the house is full of people who have come to be healed. She hears something on the roof and looks up. Then she sees the hole in the roof. She wants to go outside to see what was happening when Simon tugs on her shawl and points to the man being lowered into the middle of the crowd - right in front of Jesus, who reaches out to help steady the mat. Having tied ropes to the mat of the paralyzed man, the men on the roof have found a way to get their friend to Jesus. She cannot see what is happening, but she hears Jesus say something about 'forgiveness of sins'. Then she hears him clearly, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Everyone is amazed when the paralytic immediately stands up in front of them, takes what he has been lying on and goes home praising God. She doesn't know his name. But Jesus had called him "friend".

Her son-in-law is now one of the twelve apostles. They had been gone for a long time. But this morning she received word that Jesus and his disciples are on their way. She goes down to the lake to meet them. Simon spots her. She moves closer but just then a man falls at Jesus' feet. She recognizes Jarius, the ruler of the synagogue. He pleads with Jesus to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of twelve, was dying.

They all follow Jesus to Jarius's house. Along the way Simon introduces her to Mary Magdalene, one of the women who had arrived with them. She listens with great awe as Mary Magdalene tells her about their visits to the synagogues in other towns and villages. She hears how the Pharisees had accused Jesus of doing what is unlawful on a Sabbath. Mary tells her how Jesus had healed a man whose right hand was deformed and shriveled when Jesus suddenly stops and asks, "Who touched me?" She wonders why he would be concerned about someone touching him. There are so many people walking close to him. Besides, he always touches people. "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me", says Jesus to her amazement. Now everyone slowly backs away from Jesus, except for the woman who falls at his feet. The woman says, "I touched you. I touched the hem of your cloak and I'm healed. I have been bleeding for twelve years and no one could heal me. But the moment I touched you I was instantly healed." By now Jesus had bent down and is helping the woman to her feet. "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace", he says.

She was still wondering why Jesus would call a woman older than him “daughter” when someone shouted at Jarius, “Your daughter is dead. Don’t bother the teacher anymore.” Jesus says to Jarius, “Don’t be afraid; just believe and she will be healed.” She turns to Mary Magdalene saying, “No one can argue with that. That woman who had been bleeding for twelve years believed and she was healed. And did you hear about the man who had built our synagogue? She asks Mary. He believed that Jesus could heal his servant by just saying the word. And it happened!”

She struggles to keep up with the group, because Jarius is now running ahead. Mary Magdalene hooks her arm into hers and helps her along. When they arrive at the house, Jarius joins his wife inside. Jesus tells Peter, John and James to go inside the house with him. She and Mary move closer to Simon and the others. After a while they come out and Simon asks, “What happened?” James says, “Jesus took the girl by the hand and told her to get up. Her spirit returned and she stood up.” Mary Magdalene asks, “And how is she?” James replies, “Well, she’s eating now.” Mary Magdalene is not surprised by what had happened. She tells the older woman how Jesus had raised the only son of a widow when they had visited a town called Nain.

Soon afterwards Jesus and the disciples left again. She really enjoyed Mary Magdalene’s company. From time to time she hears news from the other towns and villages about Jesus and the disciples. She hears many stories of how Jesus heals the sick, the blind, the deaf, the lame and releases people from evil spirits. People are talking about his teaching. Sometimes they do not understand his teaching, especially the parables. Some are questioning his teaching. It is different. He urges people to love their enemies; to be merciful and not to judge and condemn others. He forgives sins and speaks about the Kingdom of God. He blesses the poor and the hungry. And now everyone is talking about him feeding so many people with five loaves of bread and two fish. They had only counted the men – five thousand! She does not know when they’ll be back again. Last she heard they were near a Samaritan village on their way to Jerusalem – to preach the good news of the kingdom of God.

2.5.3 Luke embracing women?

The retelling of the Lukan story (Lk 1-9:51) above gives voice to women in the gospel story. Such re-telling is reflective of the premise which underpins this research project – the transformative potential of the Lukan story, in the light of stigma which seems to paralyze all

efforts against the spread of the HI-virus.²³³ The first part foregrounds the realities of Mary as the mother of one whose wisdom is rejected because he is “the carpenter’s son” and excluded from the scribal elite. The second scene gives voice to the “unnamed” mother-in-law of Simon.

This, of course is contrary to the view of some scholars who argue that it’s not Luke’s intension to further the cause of women.²³⁴ South African Feminist scholar, Christina Landman (2001) is emphatic that women in the Bible can only be used today “as negative sources to demonstrate the lack of human dignity and visibility with which these women have been treated in their societies”. I agree with Landman that “a universally shared women’s experience does not exist”; that “women in the Bible are from foreign contexts” and that fourth century church fathers were the men “who eventually determined the contents of the Bible”. I also echo her appeal to “extra canonical” sources such as *The Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)* and the *Acts of Thecla*. However, I do not share her view that “women were not conscious of their oppression” and that the women mentioned in the Bible are all an “excellent example of negative influence religion can exercise on women’s lives and the miseries patriarchal religion can cause”. While this assertion of Landman may be true of some biblical texts,²³⁵ I want to argue that it is not true of all biblical texts – and specifically not of Luke.²³⁶ If not, the bible is obsolete! What then do we (theologians) have to offer the millions of Christians who believe in God – other than prove the bible’s irrelevance in academic discourse?

However, it is also true that very often women (and other marginalized groups) feel disillusioned and deceived by the many “successful” ways in which Scripture is used to

²³³ The higher HIV-prevalence rate among women, has led to women being branded as the ‘carriers’ of the virus. Women in Sub-Saharan Africa are now the worst affected by the AIDS pandemic and as infections rise in women, so do infections in the infants born to them (see Pillay 2003a:118). Thus, as a result of mother-to-child-transmission, women are stigmatized as the ones responsible for the trans-generational nature of the disease.

²³⁴ In a publication, *What are they saying about Luke?*, Mark Powell (1989) gives a succinct account of such views. Powell notes that Elizabeth Tetlow argues that Luke is acting negatively to the active roles of women. Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza (1983) has also argued that Luke’s treatment of women is not favourable. Similarly, Jane Schaberg argues that, even though Luke’s Gospel highlights women as included among the followers of Jesus, “it deftly portrays them as models of subordinate service” (1992:275). In fact, Schaberg warns that the Gospel of Luke is perhaps the most dangerous text in the Bible since it claims the authority of Jesus as an attempt to legitimate male dominance in the Christianity of the author’s time.

²³⁵ And here I would even dare to say that it is not the negative influence of religion per se, but rather the lenses of ideology behind social and cultural texture which interpret any religion.

²³⁶ But at the same time, I agree with scholars who see the potential danger of androcentric interpretations that affirms patriarchy in an attempt to perpetuate the subjugation of women.

justify and solidify gender discrimination and other forms of exclusion. South African New Testament scholar, Elna Mouton explains:

Through a lack of credibility on the side of preachers and theological institutions, mainly because of repressive ways in which the Bible has been used in the past, many people seem to have lost their trust and confidence in the liberating power of the Word of God. For such people to be surprised (again) by Scripture's transformative and liberative power, and to be persuaded by virtues such as truthfulness, authenticity and integrity (while lacking appropriate role-models), have indeed become an enormous theological challenge to Christian theology (2003:5-6).

Scripture, however, continues to function in Christian discourse as a source of insight and hope, and thus has the potential to influence the ethos of Christian communities in South Africa. This, says Smit (1991:57), is because once Texts “penetrate deeply into the psyche, especially the collective psyche, they cease to be primarily objects of study and rather come to supply the conceptual and imaginative vocabularies, as well as the grammar and syntax with which we construe and construct reality”. Thus, women-unfriendly biblical interpretations which sustain the subjugation of women are to be challenged, and modes of interpretation that affirm the equality of women must be explored. Instead of androcentric interpretation that illuminate (albeit unintentionally) the supposed “inferior nature of women”, the challenge should be to address and transform oppressive interpretations, traditions and doctrines.

The above argument shows that the multi-dimensional nature of biblical texts often results in multiple views. Thus, while the reading above (of Luke Chapter 1 to Chapter 9) illustrates that it is possible to illuminate the experiences and roles of women (other than being a man's mother or mother-in-law), there are other possible ways of reading the text.²³⁷

2.5.3.1 Women in the Gospel of Luke

Right at the beginning Luke tells of Elizabeth, who was shamed into silence by a society that sanctioned motherhood as the primary source of honour for her. Luke gives her a public voice through the ‘shame’ of Zechariah's disbelief. Luke ‘moves’ Elizabeth into the public space by silencing the priest and father of their child - whom *she* gets to name (Lk 1:59). The husband's voice returns only after he acknowledges publicly that he is in agreement with his wife's decision.

²³⁷ Schaberg of course warns that the fact that Luke makes more mention of more women than the other Gospels, does not mean that he views them in a positive lights (1992:275).

Unlike Matthew, for whom the male figure (of consent) in Joseph takes centre stage during the visit of “an angel of the Lord” (Matt 1:20), Luke has the angel visit Mary - not only as a (unwed) woman who has to deal with pregnancy and birth, but also as a woman who consents to the event (Lk 1:38). The young pregnant Mary ignores the social conventions of her time and travels alone to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, “in the hill country of Judea” (Lk 1:39).

Then there’s Mary Magdalene and Joanna, Susanna and many other women who followed Jesus (Lk 8:2-3). In Luke (10:38-42) we read about Martha, and her sister Mary who joined the other disciples in learning from Jesus – in a culture that did not permit women to study with men. Luke also mentions women whom he does not name:²³⁸ Simon’s mother-in-law (Lk 4:38-39); the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11-17); the woman who anoints Jesus’s feet (Lk 7:36-50); a woman’s bleeding stopped after twelve years of suffering physically and socially (Lk 8:44). She, who is considered to be “unclean” dared touch Jesus (Lk 8:47) who calls her “daughter” (Lk 8:48);²³⁹ the daughter of Jarius is raised in a culture that valued boy children more (Lk 8:54); the crippled woman whom Jesus healed on a Sabbath, much to the dismay of the synagogue ruler (Lk 13:10-17); the humble contribution of the poor widow valued (Lk 21:1-4); the parable of a woman who invites neighbours to celebrate her finding the lost coin (Lk 15:8-10); of the persistent widow who moves the unjust judge to action (Lk 18:1-5). Luke acknowledges the presence of women among those who mourn for Jesus on His way to the cross (Lk 23:27). Luke chooses women to bear witness to Jesus’s dead body (Lk 23:55) and also to witness the empty tomb (Lk 24:1-3). The women who told the “Eleven and all the others” are named (Lk 24:9-10). Luke shows how the apostles (eleven men?) doubt the women (Lk 24:11).

It may be concluded that Luke presents women as a group of people who, in exceptional ways combine social insecurity and exclusion with autonomous energy and resources. He depicts a movement from social marginalization and impurity to social integration. Luke also presents Jesus as one who makes women visible to others by publicly affirming their credi-

²³⁸ There are various possible reasons for the women not being named. To simply accord it to Luke’s disregard for women might be short-sighted.

²³⁹ This reference to “kin” is important – especially from the perspective that “family is a group to which one is irrevocably assigned” (Crossan 1995:59). Also noteworthy is that Luke 8:19-21 extends family to “those who hears God’s word and put it into practice” and again Luke 11:27-28. Crossan (1995:99) says that the latter text “declares Mary blessed because she mothered a famous son”. However, this Mediterranean perception, embossed in patriarchy “is negated by Jesus in favour of a blessedness open to anyone who wants it, without distinction of sex, race, infertility or maternity”.

bility and dignity.²⁴⁰ Luke particularly challenges the way men “see women” and the way women “see themselves”.²⁴¹ Thus, Luke presents Jesus as being a conduit of change in the lives of women (and men) by challenging boundaries which had been created by notions of “impurity” of the body of a woman. Likewise, Luke challenges negative attitudes towards diseased bodies and deceased bodies.

2.5.4 In Luke Jesus challenges stigma through healing

Not only does Jesus preach the good news to people in towns and villages, but people also experience the good news, as many are healed. The beneficiaries of Jesus’ healing themselves become bearers of “good news” as their healed bodies give them access to life in the community.

Craffert (1999:98) observes that in a cultural system where “sickness is expected to result from sin, absolution or forgiveness will be effective in bringing relief”. The temple priesthood had the monopoly on such a system, since the normal prescription for forgiveness included the offering of a sacrifice (Lev 14:10) and it was the priest who pronounced a person who had “an infectious skin disease” clean (Lev 14:19). This is the context within which Jesus performed miraculous healing rituals²⁴² which challenged dominant attitudes and practices aimed at maintaining a discriminatory purity system.

Jesus’ healing frequently involved persons who, in terms of the purity rules were blemished and incapable of social relations “with the rest of the holy people of Israel” (Malina 1993:172). The ceremonially unclean is so categorized based on a bodily sign, such as the menstruating woman; the woman who bleeds after giving birth; leprosy.²⁴³ Sickness is also linked to disobedience (Craffert 1999:97).²⁴⁴ Stories about illness and healing in Luke reflect a cultural system where sickness is expected to result from sin. Thus, Jesus’ healing acts involve declaring people clean and forgiving their sins which result in them being ‘reinstated’

²⁴⁰ As noted though, Schaberg argues that Luke may have more references to women but they are not necessarily portrayed in a positive light (1992:279). It is true that the “feisty Syrophenician woman (Mk 7:24-30) is not included by Luke, but one can hardly assume that the primary reason for such exclusion is to silence women, or as Schaberg argues “an attempt to legitimate male dominance” (1992:275). Besides, there is the parable of the “persistent widow” in Luke 18:1-5.

²⁴¹ See article by Pillay in Scriptura (2005), See this woman? Toward a Theology of Gender equality in the context of HIV and AIDS. Some scholars have noted Luke’s affinity for parallel references to men and women (Powell, 1989:94; Schaberg, 1992:278; Seim: 1994).

²⁴² For the different categories of health care practices in the New Testament world, see Craffert (1999).

²⁴³ See Leviticus 13-15.

²⁴⁴ See Deuteronomy 18:15;20.

into the community from which they have been alienated. By touching the bodies of the diseased and deceased, Jesus is the first to demonstrate the person's 'clean' status. By doing this, he risks being stigmatized as being 'unclean' himself.²⁴⁵

2.5.4.1 Healing in Luke's Gospel

The bulk of Jesus' healing ministry is in the section that tells of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Here Jesus challenges the 'purity of time' when he heals on a Sabbath (Craffert 1999:97; Malina, 1993:173). Jesus also reiterates that withholding the benefit of healing (or nourishment) for the sake of keeping the Sabbath is a bad reflection on the one who withholds such benefits and perpetuate suffering.

Jesus' healing ministry in Galilea which starts in Luke 4:33, ends with the healing of the epileptic boy (Lk 9:38-42), during which Luke exhibits Jesus' impatience with the disciples' inability to heal: "How long shall I stay and put up with you?" The disciples' inability to understand Jesus' teaching about the Son of man's suffering and death is accompanied by their failure to understand the Kingdom and their position in it. Jesus corrects them by telling them that humility and service of others is true greatness (Lk 9:48), "not the pomp and circumstances of rank" (Balmforth 1953:125).²⁴⁶

The first person to be healed by Jesus as he journeys to Jerusalem, is the bent woman, whom he heals during a teaching in a synagogue (Lk 13:10-13). In response to objections from the synagogue ruler, Jesus again teaches about 'attitudes' of caring. And again, challenging the withholding of healing acts on a Sabbath, Jesus heals a man suffering from dropsy in the house of a prominent Pharisee (Lk 14:1-4).²⁴⁷ Luke then takes his readers to the border between Samaria and Galilee where ten men who had leprosy met Jesus. The only one who came back to thank Jesus was a Samaritan (Lk 17:11-19). This is followed by the last episode of healing, when Jesus heals a man (the servant of the high priest who had come to arrest Jesus) whose ear was cut off by one of Jesus' followers.

Luke's healing episodes serve to reinstate people into the community. So, while Jesus heals individual bodies, there is an anticipated healing of the social body. However, those who

²⁴⁵ See Leviticus chapters 13-15.

²⁴⁶ This sets the scene for Jesus' story about 'healing acts' of mercy in the parable of the Good Samaritan. While this is not an occasion where Jesus (or anyone) heals somebody, it is an example par excellence of how discriminatory attitudes perpetuate suffering and how stigmatizing blinds one to the recognizing the humanity of 'others'.

²⁴⁷ This is the last of five Sabbath healings recorded by Luke. The others are 4:35; 4:39; 6:8; 13:13.

guard the cultural boundaries are not happy that the established boundaries are challenged and shifted; or that their authority - in their maintaining such boundaries are challenged.

Boundaries of purity pertaining to both - the individual body and the social body are challenged in the parable of *The Good Samaritan*.



CHAPTER THREE

Luke 10:25-37: The Turning Point

Then he turned to his disciples and said privately,

“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see”

(Luke 10:23)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Luke’s Gospel, the journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51) may be seen as a “turning point” towards Jesus fulfilling his mission of dying on a cross for the sake of all humankind. Chapter two of the dissertation shows how, up to this point, Jesus’ followers have witnessed and experienced how he, through the Holy Spirit (Lk 3:22), revealed God’s impartial love (Lk 4:18-27). The aim of this chapter is to re-read Luke 10:25-37, using SRI as an interpretive framework. The main idea is to investigate the emergence of (unique) Christian discourse in the passage – given that at least six types of early Christian discourses (rhetorolects) were utilized by Christians in a first century Palestinian context.

Rhetorolects contain both pictorial narration (rhetography) and argumentative enthymeme (rhetology).²⁴⁸ *Topoi* are exhibited through the rhetography or rhetology (or both). Guided by the *topoi*, particular modes of early Christian discourse (rhetorolects) operative in a particular unit of text are revealed. Using the SRI tool of conceptual *blending*, it then becomes possible to illuminate new (Christian) insights which emerge in the discourse.

The underlying premise of this chapter is that early Christians *blended* different modes of early Christian discourse (rhetorolects) operative in first century Mediterranean world.

²⁴⁸ Rhetography is the expressible graphic images exhibited through pictorial narration in a discourse, while rhetology is the expressible reasoning exhibited through argumentative discourse. See section 1.4.4 in chapter one.

This *blending* resulted in new (Christian) ways of seeing/perceiving/understanding relationships with God and with God's created world.

In chapter one of this dissertation it was argued that first century Christians were not oblivious to the pervasive physiognomic consciousness operative in the broader first century Mediterranean context.²⁴⁹ This observation leads to the conclusion that Luke was not only subverting, but also reconfiguring perceptions which judged a person according to the outward features of the body. Chapter two of the dissertation illuminated Luke's (reconfigured) interest in the human body by presenting Jesus as one who is concerned about the well-being of socially marginalized bodies.

This chapter explores how Luke (10:25-37) reconfigures stigmatization of the body (individual and social body), which is sustained by purity codes of 'holiness'. To this end, it is envisaged that the SRI tool of *blending* will reveal how 'particular ways of thinking and acting' were reconfigured by early Christians. The results exhibited hope to illuminate 'what' new insights Luke wanted listeners/readers to 'see' in his appeal for a new Christian paideia. To create the context for this exercise it is necessary to situate the selected text (Luke 10:25-37) within the so-called Lukan journey narrative, and also to explore the different textures which make up the tapestry of this particular text, and reveal the different angles from which the text may be read.²⁵⁰

3.2 ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem (Lk 9:51).

From this point on, Luke arranges his gospel material to exhibit a two-fold purpose of Jesus' journey. Firstly, the journey metaphor offers teaching opportunities as followers are eager to find out more about 'Jesus' way'; and secondly, "the way" leads to a

²⁴⁹ Physiognomy is the idea that one's body reveals one's character or inner being (See section 1.3.3.9 in chapter one).

²⁵⁰ I do not provide a systematic analysis based on the textures of texts which, I believe could result in the tool (SRI) being read into the text. Rather, the text is approached with the presupposition that it is a thickly woven literary composition, with multiple threads that weave together innertexture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture and sacred texture.

destination ... salvation. But then of course, Jesus had been traveling before – to ‘other towns and villages’ where he preached the good news of the kingdom of God (Lk 4:43-44; Lk 4:18-27). This time however, the purpose of his journey is to bring the good news to fruition. It also appears that the Jesus’ followers are led ‘to see’ what it means to be on this journey, as they are sent ahead (Lk 9:52).

Luke uses the language of salvation more than any of the other evangelists (Wenham & Walton 2001:235).²⁵¹ The idea of salvation, through Jesus, in Luke’s gospel is encapsulated in Luke 4:18-27. Early in Jesus’ ministry (Lk 4:25-27) it becomes evident that God’s salvation does not favour a particular people, nor is it confined to a particular region. Moreover, salvation for Luke is not only some (faraway) prospect, but something which manifests itself in the reality of people’s earthly lives.²⁵² Just before Jesus sets out for Jerusalem for the ultimate act of salvation, the disciples argued about who would be the greatest. Taking a little child (who has no social rank) Jesus says, “... he who is least among you – he is the greatest” (Lk 9:48; Lk 10:21; Lk 13:30; 14:11).

From the above, one may conclude that, firstly, salvation is not the privilege of those who consider themselves ‘the elect’; and secondly, through Jesus, salvation is a reality and a healing balm for all to receive (Lk 4:24-27). Right at the beginning, Luke has already set the stage for God’s saving acts through Jesus Christ by indicating that God’s salvific love extends beyond the confines of the temple in Jerusalem. God is present in the temple (Lk 1:19); and in the home of Mary (Lk 1:29-32); and in the open field (Lk 2:8-11); and in a manger (Lk 2:11-12). Also, God’s salvation through Jesus is for all people, including Gentiles (Lk 2:30-32). Luke’s idea of God’s inclusivity is also noted when, after the Holy Spirit has descended on Jesus and a voice from heaven declared, “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well-pleased” (Lk 3:22), Luke traces Jesus’s genealogy back

²⁵¹ The noun ‘salvation’ (σωτηρία/σωτήριον) does not appear in either Mark or Matthew, but is used seven times by Luke (Wenham & Walton 2001:235).

²⁵² Jesus reminds the people at the synagogue in Nazareth that while there were many widows in Israel who were in need at the time of famine, God had sent Elijah to the widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon (Lk 4:25-26). Not only was the widow given enough provisions of flour and oil to last throughout the drought, (1 Kings 17:16), but when her son died, Elijah interceded and asked God to “let the boy’s life return to him” (1 Kings 17:21). The Nazareth crowd was also reminded that in the time of Elisha there were many people in Israel who had leprosy, yet none of them were cleansed, except Naaman, the Syrian (Lk 4:27; 2 Kings 5:1-19). Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth (Lk 4:17-21) and his parable of The Great Banquet (Lk 14:15-24) are examples of the concreteness evident in Luke’s Gospel.

to Adam, as the son of God (Lk 3:38)²⁵³. Thus, according to Luke, the journey towards salvation is for all humankind...even Samaritans are saved (Lk 9:52-56).²⁵⁴

3.2.1 Saving acts of mercy continues on the journey

At this turning point of the Lukan narrative (9:51), a Samaritan village is the first place Jesus sends messengers to “to get things ready for him” (Lk 9:52). When Jesus and his followers are refused entry, he is expected to act revengeful against the Samaritans. However, Jesus rebukes the disciples who want to “call fire down from heaven to destroy them” (Lk 9:54).²⁵⁵ Instead, Jesus goes to another (Samaritan?) village. According to York (1990:128), this scene serves to introduce the Samaritans as a character group “who will later appear with greater clarity and precision in the narrative”.²⁵⁶

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus sends (seventy/seventy-two?) followers “ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go” (Lk 10:1). He gives them instructions to eat what is set before them; to heal the sick and tell them, “The kingdom of God is near you” (10:9). And again he reminds those who are sent out ahead, “Yet be sure of this: “The kingdom of God is near” (10:11). In Luke 10:37 Jesus says, “Go and do” (be the kingdom). However, the kingdom of God does not come with careful observation (of the law?) because the kingdom of God “is within you” (17:21).

Early in the journey (Lk 10:38-42), Jesus welcomes Mary’s decision to be a disciple, challenging socially constructed gender stereotypes. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray (11:1-4) and to do it persistently (11:5-13). He drives out a (mute) demon by the spirit of

²⁵³ Compare with Matthew (1:1) who traces Jesus genealogy to Abraham, father and representative of the covenantal people.

²⁵⁴ Luke particularly emphasizes that salvation is ‘for all’, notably on his focus on Gentiles, Samaritans and marginalized people within Israel (Wenham & Walton 2001:23).

²⁵⁵ This lesson points out how his followers are not to abuse their power; or not be vengeful towards their enemies? Perhaps Jesus points out an alternative to Deuteronomy 7 where it is reported that gave instructions to God’s people to destroy all foreigners; to make no covenant with them; to have no mercy; and not to enter into marriage with them (Deut 7:1-4). Ford (1984:88) notes that Hycranus, who destroyed Samaria, and the Jews who took vengeance on the Samaritans at Ginea conducted themselves according to the Deuteronomic ethos.

²⁵⁶ York (1990:125) notes that this literary strategy of Luke (to introduce characters who then re-enters the stage with more clarity) is evident in Acts, viz. Barnabas (Acts 4:36); Stephen (6:5); Saul (8:1) and John Mark (12:12). Other references to Samaritans in the Gospel are in 10:33 and 17:16. In Acts (1:8; 8:4-25) the Samaritans are viewed positively and serve as a bridge between the mission to the Jews and the mission to the Gentiles (York 1990:128).

God, giving the marginalized man voice (11:14-20). He pronounces a blessing on all those “who hear the word of God and obey it” (11:28). This would include his mother who heard the word of God and obeyed it. Thus, she is blessed - not because of her womanhood and childbearing capacity, but because she was willing to hear, and do God’s will. He heals a crippled woman who, despite her infirmity, has remained a daughter of Abraham (13:16). Jesus again, by touching a diseased woman (13:13), ignores the “purity of the body” boundaries; and by doing so on a Sabbath, he ignores the purity of time boundaries. In response to criticism from the Pharisees Jesus says that they too contravene the laws of the Sabbath when they untie/release an ox or donkey to give it water. Why then do they not want the crippled woman released from perceptions which deny her fullness of life? On another occasion, Jesus says that there is no doubt that they (Pharisees) would save someone (a son) or something valuable (an ox), even on a Sabbath (Lk 14:5). Therefore, according to Jesus, it was not against the law to “take hold of the man” on a Sabbath and heal him from dropsy (Lk 14:4).

Jesus’ followers are reminded of the joy when something or someone which had been lost is found (Lk 15:3-7; 15:8-10; 15:11-31). So too, Jesus seeks the lost (Lk 19:10) when, on his way to Jerusalem, he stays at the house of a sinner (Zacchaeus) in Jericho (Lk 19:1-10).

Earlier on the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus met ten men who had leprosy (17:12). “When he saw them, he said, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests’.”²⁵⁷ As they went, they were cleansed. Only one, who happened to be a *Samaritan*, came back praising God (Lk 17:15-16). This Lukan account marks Jesus’ last act of healing on the way to Jerusalem.²⁵⁸ In this last act of bodily healing, Luke also presents a *Samaritan* as the only one who acknowledges God’s act of mercy.

Bloomquist (2002a:23) observes that, towards the end of the journey section in Luke (9:51-19:44), words dealing with healing disappear with the exception of the $\sigma\upsilon\zeta\omega$ (to

²⁵⁷ Intertexture reveals that, according to Leviticus 13, it is the priest who pronounces a person “with flesh that appears raw” unclean and isolates such a person - until the priest, upon examining the person again after isolation, pronounces that person clean.

²⁵⁸ It is during his arrest in Jerusalem that Jesus heals the ear of the servant of the high priest, which had been cut off by one of Jesus’ followers (22:51).

save) word group. Thus, while healing (of bodies) appears to burst on the Lukan scene in Jesus' ministry in Galilee, it slowly evolves to 'deliverance of the world' (Bloomquist, 2002a:23).

3.2.2 Jesus points the way to eternal life

As mentioned earlier, the "way" has two connotations. Firstly, Jesus is on his way to fulfilling his mission of salvation (according to Lk 4: 16-21); and secondly, as Jesus continues on the way he gives directions to those following him along that way. In the first part of Luke's narrative (Luke 1:1-9:50), the disciples have seen that Jesus heals; Jesus cares; Jesus restores individuals and communities; Jesus shows love; demonstrates compassion and mercy. As he journeys to Jerusalem (and the cross), Jesus says to his disciples, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see" (Lk 10:23). Jesus now prepares those who follow to "do likewise". However, doing what Jesus had done would entail some 're-visioning'. Beliefs and practices that are known to be normative have to be reviewed. Jesus himself had contravened every perception and practice which seemingly guaranteed a 'good standing' with God. And now he even instructs his disciples to ignore rules relating to "unclean" food! They are told to "eat what is set before you" (10:7-8). No wonder that Spense & Exell say:

St Luke's Gospel has been charged by some critics with teaching certain doctrines alien to the teaching of primitive Christianity, in some respects differing from the teaching in St. Matthew or St John. These critics complain that St. Luke, different to the older apostles, teaches in the third Gospel "a universalism" – a breaking-down of all legal privileges and class distinction, a free admission of all sinners alike to the mercy of God (1913:xiii).

From the above comment it is clear that Luke sets the stage for what has been termed "the reversal" (York 1990:14; Danker 1987).²⁵⁹ As noted in chapter two of the dissertation, the theme of "reversal" is already set in chapter one of Luke's gospel when he has the angel appearing to Mary;²⁶⁰ and has Elizabeth²⁶¹ pronouncing a priestly

²⁵⁹ Crossan (1973:53-75) defines six Lukan parables, viz. The Good Samaritan (30-37); The Rich Fool (12:16-21); The Rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31); Pharisee and Publican (18:10-14); The Wedding Guest (14:7-11); The Proper Guest (14:12-14) and The Prodigal Son (15:11-32) as "parables of reversal". See also York (1990:126).

²⁶⁰ As apposed to Joseph (Matt 1:20).

blessing on Mary. And when Jesus' parents bring him to the temple for the ritual dedication and purification, Simeon announces that salvation through Jesus has been prepared "in the sight of all people, (Lk 2:31). Thus, Gentiles are mentioned first, and along with Israel as recipients of God's salvation. Jesus also reminds the people of Nazareth of Elijah's beneficial visit to the widow of Zarephath in Sidon (Lk 4:25-26) and Elisha's cleansing of the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian (Lk 4:27).²⁶² Here the notion that salvation is exclusively for Jewry is subverted. Salvation is not restricted to the "sons of Abraham" but available for every son and daughter of Adam.²⁶³ Furthermore, according to God's covenant with Abram/Abraham, "all peoples on the earth will be blessed through you" (Gen 12:3b). Thus, there is no partiality with God (Lk 20:21) which, according to Mouton (2002:72) literary means that "God does not esteem anyone according to face value".²⁶⁴ God's favour is not confined to a particular region, because God can 'raise up' descendants for Abraham out of every stone (Lk 3:9). Thus, Luke's vision of the eschatological community is grounded on the Abrahamic covenant and established around the person of Jesus Christ (Parsons 2006:15).²⁶⁵

Jesus addresses the woman who had "been subject to bleeding for twelve years" (Lk 8:43-48) as "daughter" – daughter of Abraham?²⁶⁶ Love (2002:98) states that the endearing word "daughter" is a tender form of recognition and also a "social metaphor that particularizes Israel". Noteworthy also, is the public healing of this woman, which is the only Lukan account of healing of a woman outside the private domain of the house. Citing Pilch, Love (2002:95) notes that "men usually are healed in open space". So, not

²⁶¹ And not her priest-husband Zechariah.

²⁶² While there were many needy widows and lepers in Israel, the prophets reached out to "foreigners". Also see chapter two of the dissertation.

²⁶³ By tracing Jesus's ancestry back to Adam (Lk 3:38) and not to Abraham (Matt 1:1) Luke already sets the stage for what has been termed "the reversal" of God's perceived partiality (Danker 1987:50-55).

²⁶⁴ This remark is pertinent to the argument posited against judging the appearance of the 'body' in this dissertation.

²⁶⁵ Jesus pronounces 'salvation' for Zacchaeus, because he too, is a son of Abraham (Lk 19:9).

²⁶⁶ In spite of her bodily impurity she is a child of Abraham. She is not "daughter" because she is now healed. Parsons (2006: 83-96) eloquently argues this point in reference to the healing of the "bent woman" in Luke 13.

only does Jesus condone the “unclean” woman’s touch in public, he also declares her “healed” in public.²⁶⁷

Jesus, on a number of occasions, defies the Jewish purity laws by healing on a Sabbath (purity of time); forgiving sins (purity of place – away from temple rituals) and touching the diseased and deceased (purity of body).²⁶⁸ And now, as he journeys to Jerusalem, he tells his followers: “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you; heal the sick who are there; and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you’” (Lk 10:8-9). This “new teaching” requires a re-visioning of culturally-coded perceptions of the ritually impure. The parable of the Good Samaritan may be seen as an appeal for the reversal of culturally-coded perceptions which stigmatize persons as ritually impure.²⁶⁹

The parable of the “good” Samaritan is a story unique to Luke’s Gospel and, is considered to “approximate it’s original form” (Crossan 1973:57).²⁷⁰ It is also the first of what has been referred to as Lukan ‘exemplary stories’ (Verhey 1984:47; York 1991:126; Crossan 1973:55-56).²⁷¹ However, I agree with the view that, as a parable, the story of *The Good Samaritan* should not be regarded merely as pointing to an example to be followed, but rather it calls the reader/hearer to a particular response.²⁷²

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²⁶⁷ Considering the purity codes pertaining to the bodies of women, Love (2002:98) says that ordinarily such a woman remains at home. She may prepare meals and perform her household chores, but the family has to avoid lying in her bed, sitting in her chair, or touching her. He concludes that the woman’s blood flow may have “cut her off from her blood ties” but that her healing means that no longer will she be avoided, and that her “good fortune would spread to her family and to other members of her community”. Weissenrieder (2002:216) on the other hand, argues that because Luke does not employ the terms “plague” and “fountain of her blood” as is the case in Mark, the Lukan account does not refer to the Purity Code of Leviticus 12-15, but “concentrates solely on the issue of blood as an indicator of illness and the social consequences that accompany it”. Accordingly, for Weissenrieder, the Lukan Jesus removes “the ‘plague’ of illness rather than the Plague of uncleanness” (2002:217). I would argue that these two views are not mutually exclusive, and since scholars on both sides make eloquent arguments, these different exegetical approaches should be seen rather as complimentary and not as oppositional.

²⁶⁸ See section 2.3.3.9.6 of chapter two.

²⁶⁹ The parable of The Rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) and the parable of The Lost Son (Lk 15:11-31) are other examples where the shamed is honoured.

²⁷⁰ In terms of form criticism “original” could mean the way it had circulated orally; and in terms of source criticism it could refer to an original source only Luke had access to.

²⁷¹ The other five “exemplary stories” are The Rich Fool (Lk 12:16-21); Choice Seats at the Banquet (Lk 14:7-11); The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) and The Pharisee and the Publican (Lk 18:10-14).

²⁷² The interlocking theological themes in a parable call for a new understanding of the rule of God in the world and/or for a decision to act in a particular way (Bailey 1976:40).

3.3 REVIEWING THE PARABLE OF *The Good Samaritan*: Luke 10:25-37

3.3.1 Toward a definition of parable

Luke's narrative is filled with short, sharply defined, vignettes which often draw readers into an imaginative world (Johnson 1991:3). This is evident in the number of parables, many which are unique to Luke. The parable of *The Good Samaritan* is a story within a story within the larger Lukan journey narrative. Itself a journey narrative, this parable is only found in the Gospel of Luke.

A parable (as extended metaphor) is a literary device for the re-description of reality or lived experience. It challenges inadequate interpretations of the world and opens a 'new way' to "more adequate interpretations" (Mouton 2002:37; 2007:40; Boucher 1981:29).²⁷³ Moreover, parables do not reflect a simple, single truth, says Long (1989:88). The nature of a parable is such that it invokes a variety of possible meanings, provoking in the reader a more complex process of discovery than merely "comprehending a single aptly illustrated idea" (Long 1989:88). Bailey, however, points out that while a parable may have a number of symbols with corresponding referents in the life of the listener, a parable calls for a single response "that is usually informed by a cluster of theological themes" (1976:41). Bailey argues that the different theological themes together, through the artistry of the parable, press the listener to make a single response. Citing Manson, Bailey states:

Depending on the nature of the parable, the response of the listener may be a decision to act in a particular way or to accept a new understanding of the nature of God's way with men (sic) in the world (1976:40).

Bailey points out that some parables involve both – a new understanding of 'the rule of God in the world' and, a 'decision to act in a particular fashion'. The listener's response involves one or both of these calls, depending on the parable (Bailey 1976:40). Perrin (1976:110) says that, "Without doubt Jesus' parables summon to decision."

²⁷³ Crossan (1973:13) says that when a metaphor contains a radically new vision, of the world, "it gives absolutely no information until after the hearer has entered into it and experienced it from inside itself".

As a particular literary form the ‘parable’ itself display a diversity of (other) literary forms which Long lists: maxims, ethical sayings, allegories, folk narrative, moral illustrations and exemplary persons (1989:89-90). While these diverse literary forms demand a flexible reading strategy, there is one common characteristic which defines them as ‘parable’, says Long (1989:91). Parables have a common capacity to generate two satisfactory levels of interpretation: the literal and the symbolic.²⁷⁴

Mouton states that parables function as metaphors in the New Testament (2002:37; McFague 1982:42-54). She explains that a metaphor creates a relation of meaning between two things. This comparison is done in such a surprising way that “something new comes to the fore” (Mouton 2002:38; 2007:40). Because a metaphor (and as such, a parable) re-describes reality, it brings about “a better understanding of our knowledge and experience of reality” (Mouton, 2002:38).²⁷⁵

In a very insightful publication, *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (2003:144) argue along the same lines when they state that the power of metaphor lies in creating a reality rather than simply giving us a way of conceptualizing a pre-existing reality. To this end, they argue against the classical held theory of metaphor, namely, the *comparison theory*, because “the only similarities relevant to metaphor are similarities as experienced by people” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:153-154). Accordingly, metaphors are conceptual in nature and are grounded in correlations within our experience (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:155). For this reason proponents of SRI move beyond the traditional form and genre criticism²⁷⁶ into *frame* and *prototype* criticism (Robbins 2007a:113). This call has as its basis empirical evidence that human cognition presupposes at its most basic levels the transporting of aspects of one conceptual domain to another conceptual

²⁷⁴ The special features in parables guide the reader towards reading a parable as a code, vessel or object of art. In the code parable there is usually at least one detail which does not comfortably fit the flow of the narrative. In the vessel parable, several devices are used to highlight the central truth being taught. Here, a series of events occur and the rhetorical spotlight falls only in the final episode when something different happens. The ‘object-of-art’ parable depends on the capacity to draw the reader into the world of the parable through a powerful set of images, which present a character in an open-ended way.

²⁷⁵ Citing Eta Linneman, Bailey (1976:20) notes that as a literary device, the parable functions not only to create new possibilities for understanding, but also forces the listener to a decision.

²⁷⁶ Questions were raised about whether a form and genre approach that presupposes that the different thought worlds of each genre naturally separate them from one another is the best way to approach the vigorous disputes about the relation of one genre to another.

domain. A *frame* is any system of concepts related in such a way that, to understand any one concept, it is necessary to understand the entire system and, introducing any one concept results in all of them becoming available (Robbins 2007a:114, citing Charles Fillmore).

This means that human cognition is metaphorical. Throughout the millennia, humans have continually used forms, which cognitive scientists now call *frames*, in one conceptual domain to understand and interpret forms in another domain. This view of *semantic frames* underlies the argument that early Christian rhetorolects are cultural-religious frames that introduce multiple networks of thinking, reasoning and acting that were alive and dynamic in early Christian thought, language and practice. In *frame semantics*, a word represents a category of experience. One of the most important aspects of frame semantics for the SRI approach to early Christian rhetorolects is the concept of *prototype*. This refers to a fairly large slice of the surrounding culture against which the meaning of a word (frame) is defined.

Based on the idea that humans think prototypically, Robbins argues that first century Christian discourse energetically reconfigured (at least six) prototypical networks of reasoning and acting in the Mediterranean world. First century Christians have done this by reconfiguring people's perspective on what was typical and what was atypical in at least six conceptual domains. Early Christians reconfigured what large numbers of Mediterranean people considered to be 'typical' wisdom, prophetic, apocalyptic, pre-creation, miracle and priestly conceptuality. This reconfiguration happened as early Christians correlated cognitive frames and prototypes as they were thinking in the context of their bodies in particular places and spaces in the Mediterranean world. Society, culture, ideology, religion, and politics and many other endeavors are constructed and nurtured through an interaction between frames and prototypes as people experience the places and spaces in which they live.

As the interpretive analysis of Luke 10:25-37 will reveal later in this chapter, the parable of *The Good Samaritan* functions beyond metaphor and analogy, by becoming a "tensive pictorial narration of the substance of a new reality" (Robbins 2004c:264).

3.3.2 Re-reading the parable of *The Good Samaritan*

I discovered that the Oriental storyteller has a “grand Piano” on which he plays. The piano is built of attitudes, relationships, responses, and value judgments that are known and stylized in Middle Eastern peasant society. Everybody knows how everybody is expected to act in a given situation. The storyteller interrupts the established pattern of behaviour to introduce his irony, his surprises, his humor, and his climaxes. With parables, the music of this “piano” contains significant aspects of theology that called the story itself into being.

(Kenneth E. Bailey 1976:35)

The story of the parable of *The Good Samaritan* reads as follows:²⁷⁷

- 25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus: “Teacher”, he asked, “*what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*”
- 26 “*What is written in the law?*” he replied. “How **do** you read it?”
- 27 He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, “Love your neighbour as yourself.”²⁷⁸
- 28 “You have answered correctly”; Jesus replied. “**Do** this and you will live.”
- 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “*And who is my neighbour?*”
- 30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead.”
- 31 A priest happened to be *going down the road*, and when he **saw** the man, he passed by on the other side.
- 32 So too, a Levite, when he *came to the place* and **saw** him, passed by on the other side.

²⁷⁷ New International Version (NIV).

²⁷⁸ The lawyer first quotes Deut 6:5 (note Luke adds “and with all your mind”); and then Lev. 19:18b (Fitzmyer, 1985:880). This intertextual analysis reflects ‘recitation’ from Hebrew texts.

- 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, *came where the man was*; and when he **saw** him, he took pity on him.
- 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.
- 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’²⁷⁹
- 36 *Which of these three do you think (δοκεῖ σοι - seems to you) was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”*
- 37 The expert in the law replied’ “The one who had mercy on him.” (ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος μετ’ αὐτοῦ - *the one doing the mercy*) Jesus told him, “Go and **do** likewise”.

The adjective ‘good’ (ἀγαθός or καλός) does not appear either in the parable or the interchange between Jesus and the lawyer (Robbins 2004:248). Jesus does describe the Samaritan as compassionate (ἐσπλαγγνίσθη: Lk 10:33), and responding to a question from Jesus, the lawyer describes the Samaritan as performing acts of mercy (Robbins 2004:248). These attributes are, of course, contrary to how the lawyer and fellow Jews picture Samaritans, which makes the parable more than just an example to be followed.²⁸⁰ In “tune” with the Bailey’s view (above), this thesis follows the premise that certain significant aspects of theology called the parable of *The Good Samaritan* into being. It is argued here, the story (within a story) seeks to ‘reconfigure’ the stereotypical picture of ‘the other’ based on socially constructed rules. This is in agreement with Thielicke (1970:xl) who reiterates that the Christian message does not call for a faithfulness forcefully maintained by a moral code, but “it changes the perspective in which the other person appears to me”.

²⁷⁹ Not only does the Samaritan take care of the man’s immediate needs, but he also take ‘prospective care’. The Samaritan’s care is both ‘reactive’ and ‘proactive’ (Pillay 2003a:110).

²⁸⁰ For Jews do not associate with Samaritans (or do not use dishes Samaritans have used, according to John 4:9).

Is the parable of *The Good Samaritan* perhaps aimed towards a “new understanding” of God’s impartial love, anticipated by Jesus’ journey towards salvation for all? Is this parable re-describing the ‘reality’ of eternal life? Is it aimed at challenging the hearers/readers to ‘see’ the injured man as one who needs ‘concrete acts of love’ rather than one who has to be avoided? In exploring these questions, the immediate context in which Jesus tells the parable, is an integral part of the parable itself.

I agree with scholars who see Luke 10:25-30a and Luke 10: 36-37 as integral parts of the parable (Lk 10:30b-35) told by Jesus, and that these units together form a meaningful unity in Luke (Robbins 2004:250; Esler 2002:188; York 1990:127; Bailey 1980: 33).²⁸¹ Bailey points out that because the parable of The Good Samaritan is fairly long in relation to the dialogue surrounding it, there is a natural tendency for the reader to ignore the dialogue (Bailey 1980: 33).

As mentioned earlier, a parable re-describes reality, and the lawyer’s dilemma (concern about inheriting eternal life) is his reality. Another reality (explicit throughout Luke) is that interpretation of the law regarding purity (related to the body, temple and Sabbath) results in the suffering of marginalized bodies.²⁸² Therefore, the parable may be an attempt at re-describing the lawyer’s (and listeners’) reality. It may be argued that while the parable itself (Lk 10:30b-35) comprises a complete episode with different scenes; it also is a part (a scene) of a larger episode (of an even larger Lukan narrative) which includes the reality of the lawyer, the unidentified man, the robbers, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan; and Jesus – as well as the reality of those who (continue to) hear and read the text. Therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation, the entire text of Luke 10:25-37 is regarded as a complete episode. Although, later in this chapter, verses 30 to 37 is the basis for analyzing early Christian discourse operative in the parable itself, such analysis is understood in the context of the dialogue surrounding it. This discussion necessitates a closer reading involving particular aspects of innertextual analysis.

²⁸¹ Crossan (1973:59) limits his discussion on the parable of The Good Samaritan to Lk 10: 30-36, while in his commentary Fitzmyer (1985:876-888) deals separately with verses 25-28, and verses 29-30.

²⁸² The Pharisees expected Jesus to withhold healing acts on a Sabbath (Lk 6:7-9; 13:14-16). Luke’s Jesus also defies purity related to the body when he touches the diseased and deceased (e.g. Lk 7: 14; 8:40-56); when he publicly interacts with social outcasts (e.g. Lk 7:36-50; 19:1-9). When Jesus forgives people’s sins he also violates the ritual purity related to sacrifice (by priests) within the holy confines of the temple.

3.3.2.1 An innertextual analysis of Luke 10:25-37

The innertextual analysis is guided by the parable itself in relation to the particular episode in the Lukan journey narrative. One also becomes aware of the inter-relatedness of the different innertextual strategies.²⁸³ It is the importance of the surrounding literary context of the parable that has prompted me to use *opening-middle-closing texture* as a basis from which to do an innertextual analysis. Needless to say that in the end is repetitive texture (of words, phrases and questions) and progressive texture that helped to determine opening-middle-closing texture.

Opening-middle-closing texture is prominent in Luke 10:25-37 (Robbins 2004:250), but in my opinion not obvious in its demarcation. Opening-middle-closing texture resides in the nature of beginning, body and conclusion as a section of discourse (Robbins 1996a:50-53; 70-72; 1996b:19; 19-21). It is helpful to view Luke 10:25-37 as a particular episode in the Lukan story. The episode comprises three scenes. Each scene is prompted and shaped by a question.

As the opening-middle-closing texture reveals, the final sentence in this text (v37b) is the ‘closing’ to both the last scene and the complete episode.

Scene one: Pharisee stood up to test Jesus and asked him, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus responds with a counter-question, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” (v25-26: opening/beginning).

The lawyer wants to know what must be *done* to “inherit eternal life”. Jesus does not offer an explanation of what must be done, neither does he give an exposition of the law of love as recorded by Mark (12:29-31) and also Matthew (22:37-39). Instead, a question from Jesus has the lawyer answer, “Love the lord your God with all your heart and with

²⁸³ See section 1.3.1 of chapter one.

all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” (v27: middle/body).²⁸⁴

“You have answered correctly”, Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live” (v28: closing/conclusion).

This could have been the end of the episode. The theological exposition is clear for Luke’s audience: To inherit eternal life one must keep God’s command to love. Furthermore one’s love for one’s neighbour is as important as one’s love for God. But, as the curtain closes on this scene, the narrator’s voice is heard ‘back-stage’, “But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus ...”

Scene two: “And who is my neighbour?” (v29: opening/beginning)

Unlike Mark and Matthew where the two laws from Deuteronomy 6:5 (love for God) and Leviticus 19:18 (love for neighbour) are placed in a hierarchy of first and second, Luke records “love for neighbour” the same as “love for God”.²⁸⁵

The middle/body of scene two comprises the narrational comment (v30a) and the narrative-parable (v30b-35). In reply to the (opening) question, Jesus says that a (certain) man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers.²⁸⁶ They left him naked and half-dead on the side of the road.²⁸⁷ Two men, identified as a priest and a Levite (one after the other) happened to be going down the same road, and when they saw the man they both passed by on the other side.²⁸⁸ But a Samaritan, as he

²⁸⁴ Intertextual analysis reveals that, unlike Mark (12:28-31) and Matthew (22:35-40), Jesus does not recite the two great commandments himself (York 1990:129). There is also no hierarchy (first and second) of the commandments to love God and neighbour.

²⁸⁵ It is evident that Luke reconfigures the ‘love command’. Here the horizontal relationship between self and others is as important as the vertical relationship between self and God.

²⁸⁶ There is no announcement that a parable is to be told by Jesus (Lk 12:16; 15:3; 18:1; 18:9; 19:11; 20:9).

²⁸⁷ He must have been lying on one side of the road, since passersby could continue their journey uninterrupted on the other side.

²⁸⁸ It has often been inferred that the unidentified man is a Jew since he was probably on his way home from the temple in Jerusalem. This probability becomes plausible when the priest is followed by a Levite on the same road. However, Esler (2002:191) notes that the fact that the man is described as one “going down from Jerusalem to Jericho” does not imply that he was an Israelite, since “people of all types frequented Jerusalem”. Also, the Samaritan also traveled the same road, although it is not clear from the text whether he too was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, or the other way round. I would argue that,

traveled, came to where the man was; and when he *saw* him, he took pity on him. This sequence exhibit both repetitive texture and progressive texture.

Repetitive texture reveals that the word ‘do’ appears throughout the dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisee before, and after the parable:

Lawyer: What shall I **do** to inherit eternal life?

Jesus: How **do** you read it (the law?)

*The lawyer then himself explains what the law says he must **do**.*

Jesus: **Do** this and you will live.

*Jesus explains what had been **done** for the injured man to live. He then asks who (seems to you) has become a neighbour?*

Lawyer: The one **doing** the mercy

Jesus: Go and **do** likewise

It is the repetition of the word ‘do’ that also reveals progression from “what must I do?” to “Go and do likewise.” Between the question (What must I do?) and the answer (Go and do likewise) lies the tension of “How I must do?” The ‘why’ question is implicit in the question, “What must I do *to inherit eternal life?*”

Repetitive texture reveals that three different men traveled the same road as the man who had been robbed and beaten. This repetition also reveals progression. Firstly, a priest “happened to be going down the same road” (v31); secondly, a Levite “came to the place” (v32); and thirdly, a Samaritan “came where the man was” (v33).

Repetitive texture also reveals ‘see’ as key (theological) theme for understanding the responses from the three men. The question is: What did the Samaritan see that the priest and Levite did not see?

since Jesus is addressing a Pharisee, the story would be framed in a way that the Pharisee would be interested in listening to it.

As the bodies of the three persons come into focus, progressive texture observed as the *topos* of ‘holiness’, is first noted when Jerusalem (holy city representing the temple) is mentioned; the idea of ‘holiness’ continues when the priest and then the Levite (both representing the temple cult) appears on the scene. But the Samaritan enacts ‘holiness’ when he performs ‘acts of mercy’. A series of caring actions result in further progression as the story moves from a problem - an injured man left naked and half-dead, to a solution, viz. the eventual well-being of a ‘neighbour’.

Another question (v36) prompts the closing (end) of this second scene in the Lukan episode: Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? This question, together with the lawyer’s answer, “The one who had mercy on him” (v37a)²⁸⁹ provides conclusion to scene two, but it does not bring the episode to a conclusion.

The opening question in scene one is, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (v25). It is also the beginning of this particular Lukan episode. Thus, “Go and do likewise.” (v37b) is also the closing/ending of the entire episode. In other words: Do what the Samaritan has done - do acts of mercy and you will have eternal life.

This is the ‘shock element’ in the parable: Go and do likewise. How odd for a Jew to expect this of another Jew! No Jew wants to be like a Samaritan.²⁹⁰

However, it appears that it is a Samaritan who knows how ‘to read’ and ‘live’ (do) the Law. Unlike the priest and Levite, the Samaritan knows that ‘loving God and neighbour’ means having to do “acts of mercy” with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength and with all his mind (Robbins 2004:260-261). It is the Samaritan who ‘knows’ that caring for the unrecognizable, naked, half-dead man is “loving his neighbour as himself”. These observations pose question related to the social and cultural texture of the text.

²⁸⁹ Such a statement (of acknowledgement) has at least two major implications for the lawyer. Firstly, it is a despised Samaritan (and not the priest or Levite) who performs acts of mercy. Secondly, the lawyer must follow the example of the “impure” foreigner.

²⁹⁰ Samaritans were stigmatized by Judeans at least since the eighth century B.C.E. as “impure and unacceptable as co-religionists” (Ford 1984:80). See section 3.3.3 of this chapter.

3.3.2.2 A Social and cultural textual analysis of Luke 10:25-37

The command to “Go and do likewise” also suggests a public challenge amongst equals (Linnemann 1966:51).²⁹¹ The lawyer now has no choice but to accept the Samaritan as equal, since he himself responded that “the one who showed mercy” knows God’s law of love.²⁹² In terms of the ‘challenge-response’ facet of social and cultural texture²⁹³ Jesus (in the challenge-response exchange) does not dishonour the lawyer because he (the lawyer) “is of a higher level” than the Samaritan (Robbins 1996b:81).²⁹⁴ When Jesus challenges the lawyer to “Go and do likewise”, the lawyer had already admitted that it was ‘the one who had mercy’ who proved to love his neighbour.

In an honour-shame culture, it is the lawyer’s honour that is at stake.²⁹⁵ While as a Jew and ‘an expert in the law’ the lawyer has enjoyed ascribed honour, it is now being challenged - since those like him (priest and Levite) did not enact God’s love command. And now, for him to acquire honour publicly, he (the expert in the law) must accept the public challenge to follow the example of the Samaritan, who proved to be a neighbour!²⁹⁶

As noted above, this Lukan text is marked by a number of strategic narrational questions which provide structural progression in the narration:

(v25) Lawyer: What must I do to inherit eternal life? (initial challenge).

²⁹¹ The “challenge” as understood in the honour-shame culture of the first century Mediterranean culture presents an attempt to enter the social space of one’s equal, with the aim of winning honour from the audience through success in the exchange that ensues (Esler 2002:188). See chapter one of this dissertation.

²⁹² One could also argue that the lawyer could not say that it was “The Samaritan” who was a neighbour. On the other hand, by saying “the one who had mercy” was a neighbour to the man in need, could mean that anyone who is willing to “see” and “have pity” and is moved to perform “acts of mercy” in response to another’s needs, could be a neighbour.

²⁹³ See section 1.3.3 of this dissertation and Robbins (1996b:80-82).

²⁹⁴ Equally, the lawyer addressed Jesus as “Teacher”, implying that he challenges Jesus as an equal. For Jesus to defend his honour as “teacher” he accepts the lawyer’s challenge by posing a counter-challenge (Esler 2002:188).

²⁹⁵ See Malina (1993:28-59).

²⁹⁶ Esler (2002:188) notes that the lawyer “testing” (evkpeira,zwn) Jesus with the question, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” is an “opening gambit in the social dynamics of challenge-and-response”.

- (v26) Jesus: What is written in the law? How do you read it? (counter challenge).
- (v27) Lawyer: Recites law: Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18. (response to challenge).
- (v 28) Jesus: Do this and you will live (response to initial challenge/new challenge).
- (v 29) Lawyer: And who is my neighbour? (counter challenge).
- (v30-36) Jesus: Tells a parable and asks, “Who was a neighbour to the injured man?” (response to challenge/new challenge challenge).
- (v37a) Lawyer: The one who had mercy on him (response to challenge).
- (v37b) Jesus: Go and do likewise (Jesus’ final challenge to initial challenge from lawyer).

According to the challenge-response facet of social and cultural texture, the lawyer’s questions (v25; v29) could be seen within the context of publicly challenging Jesus’ honour; and that Jesus responds with counter challenges (v26; v36).²⁹⁷

The lawyer responds to Jesus’ counter challenge (v26) with an intertextual recitation of Deut. 6:6 and Lev. 19:18 respectively: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbour as yourself (v27).²⁹⁸

The lawyer’s second question, “And who is my neighbour?” may be a sincere enquiry, debate or challenge. It may be that the lawyer wishes to shape the (love) commandment of God into a programme capable of performance, so that at some point he can stand back and say, “I have accomplished the commandment of God” (Lk 18:11-12). Thus, it is necessary for him to know the parametres within which to practice the commandment

²⁹⁷ See section 2.2.3.2.4 of chapter two.

²⁹⁸ By reciting the Hebrew Scripture, the lawyer exhibits the characteristics of a Jew who has learnt the first verse of the Shema and the essential related passages (Robbins 2004:251).

(Johnson 1981:104); and therefore he seeks greater specificity regarding the identity of those whom he is called to love (York 1990:130).

Robbins (2004:255-256) points out that the narrational comment “that the lawyer wanted to justify [δικαιῶσαι] himself” (Lk 10:29) is not clear. He suggests that perhaps the lawyer is seeking guidelines from Jesus (after they had established a rapport of respect?) so that he can adopt practices that will keep him “from being guilty of wrong action in the future” (Robbins, 2004:256). It may also be possible that the lawyer had heard Jesus’ teaching that, by loving one’s enemies “you will be sons of the Most High” (Lk 6:35). Thus he wants to know what to do to inherit eternal life.²⁹⁹

These views regarding the reasons for the lawyer’s questions exhibit social and cultural texture and are reflective of the dyadic personality of the first century Mediterranean world. Essentially a group-oriented person, a dyadic personality is one who simply needs another to affirm (and negotiate) who he or she really is (Malina 1993:67; Rohrbaugh 2002:32; Robbins 1996b:77).³⁰⁰

In contrast, some interpreters (Thielicke 1960:159) assign negative motives to the lawyer, suggesting that he ‘is trying to save face’; or that the wording simply introduce a ‘combative ethos’; or it may be that the lawyer has a ‘false concern for his own position’ or ‘is suspicious or unreceptive’, says Robbins (2004:256). This attitude of the lawyer would display what Rohrbaugh (2002:33) refers to as “narcissistic, and hedonistic behaviour of the urban elite”. Making an argument for “individualism in vertical collectivist societies”, Rohrbaugh (2002:32-33) argues that while Mediterranean societies of antiquity denote a predominantly collectivist character it did not exclude individualistic behaviour.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ This is quite possible in the context of ‘uncertainty’ which prevailed after the Roman-Jewish war and the destruction of the temple in the late first century (Bosch 1993:10). This is of course assuming a late first century dating for Luke’s Gospel.

³⁰⁰ See section 1.3.3.9.2 of chapter one.

³⁰¹ Two types of individualistic behaviour existed in Mediterranean societies of antiquity, according to Rohrbaugh (2002:33). First, there was the “vertical, narcissistic, and hedonistic behaviour” derived from privilege and choice, and second, there was the “horizontal, solitary behaviour of the marginalized and degraded”, which derived from isolation and despair (Rohrbaugh 2002:33).

What is clear is that there was a debate among Jews concerning the precise meaning of ‘neighbour’ toward which one must show love ‘as yourself’. The Greek word for neighbour [ὁ πλησίον] means ‘one who is near’ (Robbins 2004:257). The precept ‘love your neighbour’ was generally understood to “refer first and foremost to fellow Israelites, with an extension to loving the sojourner in the land as yourself” (Robbins 2004:257; Fitzmyer 1985:881).³⁰²

Instead of giving the ‘expert in the law’ a list of those who would ‘qualify’ to be neighbours to Jews, Jesus responds with a story in which a Samaritan performs acts of mercy which involves his whole body (Robbins 2004:261). Mary Douglas (1970:xiv) reminds us:

The human body is common to us all. Only our social condition varies. The symbols based on the human body are used to express different social experiences. (Mary Douglas 1970:xiv)

I want to suggest that a person’s ethnography and geocentric location are determinants of one’s social experiences. This brings me to the idea that social and cultural textual analysis of Luke 25-37 reveals that Luke is possibly aware of the physiognomic ideas in the wider Mediterranean context. This is the perception that one’s body reflects one’s moral character.³⁰³ However, the pervasive physiognomic consciousness does not go unchallenged in Luke. In fact, I want to argue that Luke not only subverts these perceptions (Parsons 2006), but that he also reconfigures them, as he brings his readers/listeners to new insights about the individual body and the social body.

3.3.3 Body and character: Judging a book by its cover and its author?³⁰⁴

Jesus not only challenges discrimination based on a person’s ethnography and geocentric location, but he also reveals an alternative way of responding. Luke does this by making effective rhetorical use of physiognomy in order to challenge stigmatization based on the

³⁰² In Leviticus “neighbour” stands parallel with “the children of your own people (Fitzmyer 1985:881). The Essenes of Qumran, says Fitzmyer (1985) were to “love all the sons of light ... and hate all the sons of darkness”. He explains that for the Essenes “sons of lights” were members of their own community.

³⁰³ Find a description of cultural intertexture and social and cultural texture in chapter one.

³⁰⁴ Here I mean what it looks like on the outside, and where it comes from – who is the author; or in where has it been published; or in which journal is it published?

concept of the ritually unclean body (Samaritan) and on a geographical place (e.g. Samaria).³⁰⁵

Based on the physiognomic practice of ethnography, a person's character is determined by observing similarities in appearance among people from a particular region. Also known as "the racial method", the ethnographical method employs geographical stereotyping (Parsons 2006:23). Thus, there is a relationship between a person's character and place of origin. For example, people from Samaria are an impure, unholy people who worship(ed) in a temple outside 'holy Jerusalem' and violated a host of purity codes.³⁰⁶ Geocentrism, the idea that one's city or country lay at the centre or "navel" [ὀμφαλός] is related to geographical stereotyping (Parsons 2006:24-25).³⁰⁷

Given the pervasive physiognomic consciousness of the Greco-Roman world, it would stand to reason that both Luke and his audience were familiar with attempts to link a person's body, and place of origin with inner moral character (Parsons 2006:85). "Isn't this Joseph's (the carpenter from Nazareth) son?" (Lk 4:22). Here, recognizing Jesus as the son of a carpenter presupposes that Jesus does not have the stature to "speak such gracious words" (Lk 4:22). Thus, the body that performs a particular task, exhibits a particular character. Therefore there was a daring challenge for Jesus to perform acts of healing in order to reveal his character (Lk 4:23).

Luke frequently identifies characters by reference to some location (Parsons 2006:68).³⁰⁸ It is highly possible that some of these places held symbolic meaning for Luke's audience

³⁰⁵ Much of the prejudice and bias of Luke's day were grounded in a pervasive physiognomic consciousness that presumed one's outer appearance determined one's moral character (Parsons 2006:15).

³⁰⁶ See section 3.4.2 below.

³⁰⁷ Parsons (2006:25) notes that both "pagan and Jewish sources" reveal geocentrism and explains that Delphi was the centre or navel of the universe, according to the Greeks. This commonly held view is recounted by Strabo when he writes, "Delphi was the centre of the inhabited world, and people called it the navel of the earth" (Parsons 2006:25). A similar claim is made for Jerusalem by the author of Jubilees (Jub.8:12), "Mount Zion was in the midst of the navel of the earth"; and by Philo of Alexandria, who argued that Jerusalem is the mother city "not of one country, Judea, but of most of the others..." (Parsons 2006:25).

³⁰⁸ Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 10:38); Jesus the Nazarean (Lk 18:37; Acts 2:22); Peter the Galilean (Lk 22:59); Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37); Disciples called Galileans (Acts 1:11; 2:7); Saul/Paul of Tarsus (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 22:3); Simon of Cyrene (Lk 23:26); Corinthians (Acts 18:8); Romans (Acts 2:10; 16:21, 37; 28:17); Samaritans (Lk 17:16); Aquila the Judean, native of Pontus (Acts 18:2); and Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:14) See Parsons (2006:68) and Malina and Neyrey (1996:114).

(Parsons 2006:68). Samaria (or Samaritan) is a case in point where geographical stereotyping is evident; and the enmity between the Samaritans and Jews are well known.³⁰⁹ It is explicitly stated in John (4:9) that, “Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans”. Parsons notes that an audience already accustomed to this kind of geographical stereotyping “could easily accept the stereotyping of groups new to them” (2006:68).³¹⁰ Therefore Parsons argues that “Gentile readers who previously had no knowledge of the Samaritans could readily adopt the ethnic stereotyping assumed by the Jewish milieu that underlies the Gospels” (2006:68).³¹¹

Based on insights gained from Parsons (2006), it is my contention that Luke reconfigures such presumptions, which calls for a re-visioning of stigma leveled at Samaritans as an out-group. He moves his audience to see differently – by moving from a rhetoric of ridicule of Samaritans, to a rhetoric of re-visioning. Luke wants his audience to ‘see’ Samaritans in a different light. The ‘non-ridicule’ of Samaritans is seen earlier in Luke (9:52-56); and the parable of *The Good Samaritan* sets the stage for the Samaritan – a foreigner who returned to “give praise to God” for the merciful act of healing (Lk 17:11-19).

Social and cultural texture exhibits final cultural categories, which most decisively define one’s cultural location.³¹² The assumed ethnic stereotyping by Luke’s authorial audience against Samaritans would be a subculture rhetorical response in a dominant Jewish culture.³¹³ Subculture rhetoric imitates the attitudes, values, disposition, and norms of dominant culture rhetoric, and it claims to enact them better than members of dominant status (Robbins, 1996b:86). In the parable of *The Good Samaritan* Jesus suggests counterculture rhetoric which “evokes the creation of a better society but not by legislative reform or by violent opposition to the dominant culture” (Robbins 1996b:87).

³⁰⁹ An overview of the animosity between Jews and Samaritans is given later in this chapter (see Ford (1984:79-95). For a recent detailed history of Judean disdain for Samaritans as a despised outgroup, see Esler (2002:185-195).

³¹⁰ All Samaritans are insincere traitors (Ford 1984:80).

³¹¹ See 1.3.3.9.0 in chapter one on dominant- and subculture identity.

³¹² Cultural location concerns the manner in which people present their propositions, reasons, and arguments (Robbins 1996b:86). See 1.3.4 of chapter one. See ‘geocentric location’ and ‘ethnic stereotyping’ in 3.4 below.

³¹³ Assuming of course, that Luke’s audience was primarily Gentile-Christian.

This Lukan counterculture rhetoric provides an alternative and “hopes that the dominant society will see the light” and change their ways (Robbins 1996b:87). It provides an alternative based on a plausible, authentic and authoritative belief system – the laws of loving God (Deut 6:4) and neighbour (Lev 19:18). However, the alternative is presented by the lawyer himself having to choose which of the three persons who, “saw” the naked, half-dead man “was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers” (Lk 10:36).

The ‘man stripped of his clothing’, presents liminal culture rhetoric, because in his naked, half-dead state his social and cultural identity cannot be established.³¹⁴ So, besides his ‘half-dead’ bloody body posing the risk of impurity to the priest and Levite, his naked body rendered him invisible as a neighbour (fellow Jew).³¹⁵

The argument for Luke’s interest in the human body is clear.³¹⁶ Robbins observes that God’s enactment of unusual power in the Synoptic Gospels focuses “almost exclusively on personal bodies of individual people” (2007a:2). While persons often are not named, attention is given to the body – often by seeing the body (looking/gazing) and touching the body. In the parable of *The Good Samaritan*, it is the Samaritan who performs acts of mercy with his whole body, which are initiated by ‘seeing’ the needs of the injured man.³¹⁷

3.3.4 Seeing the (some)body

Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.

(Luke 10:23)

³¹⁴ Was he a Jew or Samaritan? Perhaps a fellow priest; or a fellow Levite to the first two men who “passed by on the other side”; or perhaps another lawyer?

³¹⁵ While all textures of texts are imbued in ideological texture of the author, first readers, subsequent interpretations and present-day readers, social and cultural texture is where ideology is most clearly exhibited.

³¹⁶ Regardless of whether Luke was “the beloved physician” or not.

³¹⁷ In Luke 7:36-50 Jesus says to Simon, “See this woman?” Jesus draws attention to the woman who had seen his needs and who performed acts of hospitality with her eyes (tears); her hands (wiping and pouring); her hair (drying); her lips (kissing).

Luke uses “seeing” as a metaphor for perceiving the word of God. In Luke (11:34-36), Jesus speaks of the relationship of the eye to the whole body. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, it is ‘seeing’ that results in the Samaritan doing what is written in the Law.

Referring to Dirk J. Smit’s³¹⁸ approach of ‘seeing with reverence’ as a ‘hermeneutic of seeing’, Elna Mouton (2007:13) argues that such an approach implies the “willingness to perceive (the word of God) with openness and receptivity”.³¹⁹ Mouton concludes:

Ultimately, a hermeneutic of seeing gives priority to the imaginative possibilities of God’s radical, liberating, healing love over the broken realities of our lives and the world. In this way it allows for moral confidence and hope instead of (absolute) certainty (2007:13).

The first two passersby see the man and walk by on the other side. But a Samaritan, when he sees the man, takes pity on him”. Robbins notes that Luke’s description of the Samaritan’s response presents a lengthy, “detailed progression of concrete compassionate moments” (2004:260). This is because in contrast to Isaiah (6:9), and unlike the priest and Levite, the Samaritan does “perceive what he sees” (Robbins 2004:260). At the end of the parable, Jesus asks the lawyer, “Which of these three ... seems to you?” (τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν δοκεῖ σοι; - 10:36). In other words, “How do you perceive what you have seen in the picture (story)?” And the lawyer responds with perceptive judgment, “The one who had mercy on him” (Lk 10:37). “Go and do likewise”, Jesus commands. Thus in Luke, Jesus speaks of the relationship of the eyes to the whole body. This is explicit in Luke 11:34-36: “Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness. Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays.”

Parsons argues that ‘the eye’ is central in physiognomic thinking (2006:77). He cites pseudo-Aristotle as saying that, “The most favourable part of examination is the region

³¹⁸ Smit is a South African systematic theologian and ethicist whose contribution during the processes of political and academic transformation in South Africa represent “a particularly sensitive, timely and nuanced prophetic voice” (Mouton 2007:3)

³¹⁹ Parenthesis MP.

around the eyes, forehead, head and face”; and notes that pseudo-Aristotle cites the eyes (ὄμματα) “as a distinguishing mark of various character types eighteen times in his treatise” (Parsons 2006:77). Citing Cicero, Parsons states, “Everything depends upon the countenance, while the countenance itself is entirely dominated by the eyes...” and; “For every action derives from the soul, and the countenance is the image of the soul, the eyes its chief indicators” (Parsons 2006:77). Parsons concludes that, according to Cicero’s writing “the eyes declare with exceeding clearness the innermost feelings of our heart” (2006:77). He also shows how Jewish literature exhibits a connection between the eyes and inner character:

[The person with] a good eye will be blessed, for he shared his bread with the poor (Prov. 22:9), whereas Sirach claims: he is hard who has an evil eye who turns his back on need and looks the other way (2006:77-78).³²⁰

Early Christian literature, says Parsons, also expresses a connection through a linking of ‘eyes’ and ‘heart’ (2006:78). This is congruent with the view of Robbins when he sees a connection between ‘eyes’ and ‘heart’ in the parable of *The Good Samaritan* (2004:254). The phrases “when he saw him” and “he took pity on him” (Lk 10: 33) refers to ‘eyes’ and ‘heart’ respectively.

Luke’s understanding of the connection between the eyes and a person’s inner light or moral character, illuminates the text of *The Good Samaritan*. In this parable the focus moves to and fro like a searchlight – from the injured person to those who saw him.³²¹ Robbins says that both the priest and Levite passed by on the ‘opposite side’ (ἀντιπαρῆλθεν) which could mean that they passed by at a distance so as to keep “the information about the wounded man from becoming more fully present and vivid to their hearts through their eyes” (Robbins 2004:259).

The parable emphasizes a sequence of “seeing” and “passing by on the other side” (Robbins 2004:259). The story about the wounded man may “presuppose that, if Leviticus 19:18 were present in the hearts of the priest and Levite in a mode of

³²⁰ Parsons (2006:78).

³²¹ See 1.3.1.1 in chapter one on “repetitive texture” as a facet of inner texture.

‘remembrance of Torah’, their hearts would move them towards merciful action”, says Robbins (2004:259). I want to argue that both the priest’s and Levite’s characters were congruent with their ethnographical location. Luke’s authorial audience was not surprised that the priest and Levite “saw” and “passed by on the other side”. By avoiding contact with the bloodied body of an unknown man, they upheld the law of purity.

The priest and Levite saw an unknown, half-dead man who was a threat to their ‘purity’ and ‘holiness’, therefore they passed by on the other (opposite) side. The Samaritan, because he came where the man was, saw a person in need of concrete life-giving care. It is the Samaritan who knows how to enact God’s love command. This is what must have shocked and surprised Luke’s audience. Thus Luke challenges the prevailing ethnic stereotyping of Samaritans. I return to this topic of ‘ethnographical location’ and ‘ethnic stereotyping’ in section 3.4.2 below.

3.3.5 Touching the (some)body

Through the parable of *The Good Samaritan* Luke wants to show that love is no mere sentiment, but a readiness for concrete action, involving one’s heart, soul, strength and mind.³²² The parable also breaks through conventional limits on those to be loved and “the limits prudently placed on the obligation to help” (Verhey 1984:47).

The commandment to love God and neighbour are separate quotations of the Torah (Deut 6:4 and Lev 19:18). As already noted, intertextual analysis reveals that the lawyer recites both commands as one; and unlike Mark (12:29-31) and Matthew 22:37-39, Luke does not place the two love commandments in a hierarchy: love for God above love for neighbour.³²³ Earlier in Luke (6:27; 35; Matt 5:44) Jesus says, “But I tell you who hear

³²² Johnson (1981:104-105) interprets the Samaritan’s concrete acts of love as: demonstrating compassion; interrupting his journey and suspending his own plans to attend to the injured man; risking his own life on a road where robbers might be lurking. The Samaritan responded practically to the injured man’s needs by sharing his possessions of oil and wine and putting the man “on his own donkey”. Furthermore, there is also an open-endedness to the Samaritan’s caring as he “brought the man to an inn and took care of him”. Before continuing his journey the following morning, the Samaritan gives the innkeeper two silver coins to take (prospective) care of the man and offers to reimburse the innkeeper for whatever extra expenses he may have.

³²³ This is confirmed by Esler (2002:189) who, citing Salo (1991), also notes that “Discussion of the greatest command does not exist in the Third Gospel”. He (Esler) further observes that, while the Lukan

me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...” and again in verse 35, “But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.” Love is not mere observance of the law; rather it is a response “to the coming kingdom of God” and a preparedness to be part of God’s kingdom. In SRI terms, the Lukan challenge ‘to love’ requires a ‘full-bodied’ response (Robbins 2004:253-263).

In the parable of *The Good Samaritan*, the element of shock/surprise (a characteristic of parables), comes from invoking a picture of the Samaritan as the one who knows how to embody God’s commandment to love, and who knows that enacting acts of mercy involves one’s whole being. This unexpected turn of events is spelt out in explicit and lengthy detail.³²⁴

Describing the response of the Samaritan to the wounded man is rather lengthy compared to the combined responses of the priest and Levite. This says Robbins, is because it presents a detailed progression of concrete compassionate moments, showing that the Samaritan responds “with his entire body” (2004:260; Tannehill 1989:184).³²⁵ Robbins shows how the Samaritan’s response results in eight progressive acts of compassion (2004:261), involving the three symbolic body zones.³²⁶ The Samaritan’s response is described graphically, as Robbins notes: That the first act of the Samaritan involved ‘seeing’ and “when his eyes really ‘saw’ *the person* they took the pitiful sight into his heart, which moved him to compassion” (2004:261). Reference to ‘eyes’ (when he saw him) and ‘heart’ (he took pity on him) in Luke (10:33) refers to the body-zone of

Jesus “sometimes respects, sometimes transcends, and sometimes challenges the law”, Luke-Acts is void of “detailed merits of one part of the Mosaic code over another” (2002:189).

³²⁴ The narrational length of the description of scene prior to the arrival of the Samaritan equals forty-six (Greek) words. In contrast, sixty words are devoted to the arrival of the Samaritan, reaction and actions (Robbins 2004:260).

³²⁵ With reference to body parts (heart, soul, might, mind) in Luke (10:27) Fitzmyer says that, “As a group, they sum up the totality of personal life”. But as intertextual recitation of Deuteronomy (6:5) Fitzmyer points out that the phrase “and with all your mind” is not part of the original Hebrew text, and it is not quite clear where it comes from.

³²⁶ See the section on sensory-aesthetic texture in chapter one of this dissertation. A three-zone model for human beings interacting with others and the environment have been introduced by Malina as: (i) Zone of emotion-fused thought; (ii) Zone of self-expressive speech; (iii) Zone for purposeful action (1993:74-75; Robbins 2004:254). This ‘full-bodied’ approach is appropriate for interpreting texts featuring dyadic personalities in Mediterranean antiquity (Robbins 2004:253; 65-74).

‘emotion-fused thought’ (Robbins 2004:254).³²⁷ Robbins continues to recount the Samaritan’s purposeful actions (body-zone three) and self-expressive speech (body-zone two), as involving the man’s whole being.³²⁸

The second act of the Samaritan was to turn toward a new form of purposive action with his feet. He turns away from his “journeying” and “go toward” the wounded man (Lk 10:34). The third and fourth acts of compassion occur when the Samaritan puts his hands, the other agency of purposive action, to work. Pouring on oil and wine, he binds up the wounds of the man (Lk 10:34). The fifth act of compassion occurs when he lifts the man onto his own beast of burden, not only using his hands with skill but also with “all his strength” (Lk 10:27). Once the wounded man is on the beast of burden, the Samaritan enacts the sixth act of compassion by turning his feet toward an inn, taking the man there, and caring for him (Lk 10:34). With these actions he continues to use his hands and feet “with all their functions” for the sake of the wounded man. The seventh act of compassion occurs when the Samaritan takes out two denarii on the next day and gives them to the innkeeper (Lk 10:35). With this action, he is not only loving the wounded man with his hands but also with his soul (ψυχή) - Lk 10:27), his very being and livelihood (Lk 21:40). The eighth act of compassion occurs when the Samaritan uses his self-expressive speech, telling the innkeeper to take care of the wounded man, and promising that he will return to pay whatever additional expense is owed (Lk 10:35).

The narration in Luke 10:33-35 presents an eight-fold progression, which describes the Samaritan as loving his neighbour with all his heart, all his soul, all his strength, and with all his mind. Since these actions are in accordance with “the law” (Lk 10:27), they “exhibit the Samaritan’s complete love for God and all that God has created” (Robbins 2004:262).

Many interpretations of ‘love of neighbour’ or ‘love of enemy’ proceed from the position that the term ‘love’ (ἀγάπη) means affectionate, emotional inclination toward some

³²⁷ Also see Malina (1993:74) for a list of nouns, adjectives and verbs which refers to ‘emotion-fused thought’ (Robbins 2004:254).

³²⁸ For fear of losing the intensity of the progression in purposive action, should I rephrase the text from Robbins (2004:261), I choose to use the text verbatim.

person (Stegemann 2002:57). This presupposition has resulted in Jesus' command to love one's enemies to be regarded as offensive to some interpreters, says Stegemann (2002:57). In particular, Stegemann refers to Freud's view on Jesus' command to love one's enemies, which he argues is erroneously based on the "misunderstanding of the words ἀγαπάω/φιλέω in the ancient Mediterranean and in the Bible". Freud's criticism is based on the view that love of one's enemy requires "feelings or behaviours that, generally speaking, were expected in the social institution of partnership (marriage), in the family or kinship, or in friendship" (Stegemann 2002:57, citing Freud). However, Stegemann argues that while the verbs (ἀγαπάω/φιλέω) can refer to emotional ties, "their main meaning is social, that is, in referring to social relationships between individuals and groups" (2002:57). Stegemann continues:

Ancient love of neighbour or love of enemies related to social practices that we today would sooner place in the economy. More specifically, such practices concern the most elementary exchange of goods and services, or reciprocity (2002:58).

However, it appears that in Luke (6:32) there is a turning from the conventional patterns of reciprocity, of loving those who show kindness to us; and of seeking the limit of lawful revenge against those who do us harm (Lk 6:29-30). The disposition to love the enemy makes us ready to do good to them; to pray for them; to bless them (Lk 6:27-28). It sometimes means not returning a blow (Lk 6:29) and lending with expecting repayment (Lk 6:34).

In reference to the same Lukan text (6:32-34) Stegemann (2002:58) concludes that Jesus' requirement to love one's enemies is to be understood in the context of 'love' referring to social praxis – a group attachment – and this in the context of reciprocal relations among neighbours. However, in contrast to the way reciprocity was normally practiced among equals in antiquity, the love of enemies requires two changes in behaviour.

On the one hand, it extends reciprocal relations to social enemies, a feature that stands in the foreground of the discussion. The communicative significance of this requirement is to restore communal relationships; one might say it concerns the reattachment of social enemies to the group. On the other hand, love of enemies requires giving without the hope of getting anything in return. Here it might involve giving to the economically weaker partner (Stegemann 2002:58).

The power of the convention of reciprocity is broken by trust in the coming rule of God,³²⁹ but also by imminence of the kingdom of God – the kingdom of God is near (Lk 10); and the kingdom of God is within (among) you (Lk 17). This is illustrated by the Samaritan who exhibits love for neighbour (or enemy?) through acts of mercy – without considering reciprocity.³³⁰ For me, the power of this unique Lukan story lies, not so much in the surprise element of the Samaritan’s response, as it does in the lawyer’s ability to see the Samaritan “as a neighbour”.

3.4 FROM A RHETORIC OF RIDICULE...TO A RHETORIC OF RE-VISIONING

The revelation that a Samaritan knows how to enact God’s love command, challenges the lawyer and Luke’s authorial audience to “see” differently. This is done by Luke challenging the ethnic stereotyping of Samaritans. By contrasting the Samaritan’s response (upon seeing the injured man) to that of the priest’s and Levite’s responses, Luke’s audience is invited to “revise” perceived stigma of Samaritans based on ritual purity (of the body) and geocentric location (purity of place). I say ‘invited’ because the narrative picture (rhetography) created by Luke, was an invitation to the lawyer to see (for himself) the Samaritan as a neighbour. Before expanding on Luke’s “re-visioning” of the lawyer’s picture of Samaritans, it is necessary to illuminate the beliefs and practices which resulted in a rhetoric of ridicule towards Samaritans. This is done by contrasting the priest’s and Levite’s responses with that of the Samaritan’s response.

3.4.1 Geocentric location of the priest and Levite

Guided by a social and cultural textual reading, the social and cultural location of characters becomes an important factor. All the characters in the parable (Lk 10:30b-35)

³²⁹ See Verhey (1984:25).

³³⁰ Acts of love and mercy – even towards those who are not expected to reciprocate occurs throughout Luke’s travel narrative, exhibiting material found only in Luke. Material in this section unique to Luke: “The Good Samaritan” – which explicates the love command in terms of mercy shown towards an unrecognizable man; “The Rich Fool” – with its judgment on the wealthy’s concern for their own ease (12:13-21); “The Great Supper” – a reminder of God’s blessing on the marginalized (14:12-24); “The Unrighteous Steward”- with its exhortation to generosity (16:1-13); “The Rich Man and Lazarus” – a parabolic announcement with its blessings on poor and woes on the unrighteous rich (16:19-31); Zacchaeus – who chooses to do justice (19:1-10).

are introduced according to their social roles, except for ‘the man’. The other characters are: robbers, a priest, a Levite, a Samaritan, an innkeeper. The priest and Levite are both representatives of the temple cult in Jerusalem. Thus, geocentrically, they are representative of that which is “holy”. In a purity system³³¹ the physical body manifests concerns of the social body (Love 2002:97). It is also possible that the priest would have avoided contact with the half-dead man because of the risk of breaking the law relating to the impurity of corpses. It is understandable that the priest did not want to run the risk of uncleanness as specified in Leviticus 21:1-4.³³² The Levite, while not bound by the law in Leviticus 21:1-4, may have been acting in accordance with Numbers 19:11 (Esler 2002:193). As part of a hierarchical religious system, the social world of these two individuals includes an ‘ideological geography’ (Love 2002:97) which extends from the temple cult in Jerusalem.³³³ Thus, it stands to reason why the priest and Levite would act according to the expectations of the socio-religious domains. This would be reflective of, and in line with the behaviour of the dyadic personality: to live out the expectations of others (Robbins, 1996b:77).

However, in the light of their socio-religious domain, it was also expected of the priest and Levite to adhere to the law pertaining to love for neighbour (Lev 19:18). But as argued earlier, love for neighbour was interpreted as “love for fellow Israelite”. And since the identity of the half-dead man could not be established, perhaps they were justified in “passing by on the other side”, lest they risk being defiled by the blood from the wounded man; or by touching a corpse. Accordingly, the picture of the priest and Levite who saw the injured man, yet passed by on the other side (Lk 10:30-32), is congruent with the lawyer’s frame of reference. He may have been considering that the priest’s and Levite’s association with the cult which accords them a higher legal status, justify them not treating the man as a neighbour (Esler 2002:193). Considering the

³³¹ See section 1.3.3.9.6 in chapter one.

³³² It would be sinful for the priest to infringe Lev 21:1-4, “even if the ensuing impurity were ritually removed” (Esler 2002:192). While the priest could rely on the rituals of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16) to cleanse his sin, one could imagine that a priest might not want to run the risk of uncleanness as specified in God’s law, even if purification were possible later (2002:192).

³³³ Purity rules pointed to the categories of persons and things and their proper condition and location for taking part in the interaction between God and humankind – in the Temple, in the holy land, and in the world at large (Malina 1993:168).

lawyers frame of reference (Mosaic Law), he may have been getting a picture of “who is *not* my neighbour” from a fellow Jew (Jesus), when Jesus interferes with his ‘thinking’. The *interference* is the arrival of a Samaritan.³³⁴

3.4.2 Ethnographical stereotyping of Samaritan

While the arrival of the Samaritan means that “we are no longer dealing with an Israelite in-group legal discussion” it is also clear that by introducing a “hated out-group” Jesus challenges the structure of group differentiation, which the law maintained (Esler 2002:193). Esler’s exposition of social-identity is helpful in understanding how stereotypical attitudes operate within an in-group/out-group conceptual framework. From this one can infer that the social identity of the Israelites had become salient and that their self-perception and conduct were stereotypical of the in-group, and that Samaritans had become out-group stereotypical. While social identity theory (as implied by Esler 2002) describes out-group stereotyping toward Samaritans, I want to suggest that such ethnic stereotyping has its roots in the physiognomic consciousness prevailing in first century Mediterranean world.

As mentioned before, physiognomy is the study of the relationship between the physical and the moral (Parsons 2006:12). Based on the writings of pseudo-Aristotle, Parsons identifies types of physiognomic analyses, viz. anatomical method; zoological method; and ethnographical method. Of interest here, is the ethnographical method, where the collective behaviours of a particular race of people are observed and linked to their distinctive physical features (Parsons 2006:23).³³⁵ Geocentrism, which is a feature of the ethnographical method, implies that a moral link is made between a group of people and the region where they’re from. With this in mind, a brief overview of the conflict between the Jews and Samaritans is in order at this point.

Samaritans were stigmatized by Judeans at least since the eighth century B.C.E. when the Jews in the Southern Kingdom regarded the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom as

³³⁴ This is also an interference with the expected story-line of Priest-Levite-layman. Bailey (1980:47) says not only is this a natural sequence, but these three classes all officiated at the temple.

³³⁵ Common examples from the ancient world would include stereotypes of “Cretans as liars and Corinthians as promiscuous” (Parsons, 2006:24).

“impure and unacceptable as co-religionists” (Ford 1984:80).³³⁶ Furthermore, when the Jews returned from exile seventy years after the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., they would not allow the Samaritans to help with the reconstruction of the temple, because they considered the Samaritans impure (Ford 1984:80). Further animosity between Jews and Samaritans was sparked when the latter courted the favour of Alexander The Great who allowed the Samaritans to build their own temple on Mount Gerizem. Contrary to Jewish law, which forbade a temple outside of Jerusalem, the Samaritan temple was built on the model of the one in Jerusalem.³³⁷ This increased the bitterness and rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans (Ford 1984:80). In the second century B.C.E. the Jewish leader, Hyrcanus captured the city of Samaria and completely destroyed the city (and their temple).³³⁸ In the first century B.C.E. Samaria was rebuilt under the Roman rule of Pompey (Ford 1984:82).

Two more incidents from the first century C.E. are notable. According to Esler (2002:187; Ford, 1984:83) Josephus reports that around 6-9 C.E. some Samaritans secretly entered Jerusalem by night and scattered bones around the temple, thereby grossly defiling it. The second incident is regarded as ‘more serious’ and ‘more volatile’ (Esler 2002:187; Ford 1984:84). In 52 C.E., a large number of Judeans were traveling to Jerusalem for a festival when one of them, a Galilean, was murdered in the Samaritan village of Gema (Esler 2002:187; Ford 1984:84). Enraged by this incident, a crowd of Judeans abandoned the festival and rushed to Samaria, where they indiscriminately killed the inhabitants of Gema and burnt down their village.³³⁹

There is no doubt that the Jews regarded Samaritans as defiled outcasts. They contravened the purity code of body by intermarrying; and the purity code of space by building a temple outside of Jerusalem. Therefore, all Samaritans were enemies of the Jews (God’s holy people). Bailey (1980:48; Linnemann 1966:54) notes:

³³⁶ This was because of the syncretism and inter-marriage which followed when the Northern Kingdom (later Samaria) was subjugated by the Assyrians.

³³⁷ Hence, we read about the over the two temples in John (4:19-26).

³³⁸ This is in accordance with Deut 7, where God gives instructions to destroy all foreigners.

³³⁹ According to Deut 7:2-5 God’s holy people are to show no mercy to foreigners and make no treaty with them but “destroy them totally”.

The Samaritans were publicly cursed in the synagogues; and a petition was daily offered up praying God that the Samaritans might not be partakers of eternal life.

The above quote also reflects what the *Mishna* declares: He that eats the bread of the Samaritans is like to one that eats the flesh of swine (Bailey 1980: 48). Thus the notion that the Samaritans are unclean (as swine) was part of the Jewish psyche. These observations echo Linnemann (1966:54) who Jews prayed to God that “they would not believe the testimony of a Samaritan nor accept a service from one.

This conflict between Jews and Samaritans is also reflected in the New Testament when the Matthean Jesus says to the crowd, “Do not go into the way of Gentiles, nor enter a Samaritan town” (Matt 10:5). Similarly in John (4:9) the Samaritan woman asks Jesus, How is it that you, a Judean, ask me, a Samaritan woman, to give you a drink, for Judeans have no dealings with Samaritans?”³⁴⁰ But Luke (10:25-37) illustrates vividly how a Samaritan responds according to God’s law of love toward a person in need of a neighbour!³⁴¹

3.4.3 And who is my neighbour? A dilemma

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body is full of light (Lk 11:34)

As mentioned earlier, the lawyer’s question, “And who is my neighbour?” has been answered (graphically) by Jesus’ telling of a parable. Esler (2002:190) reiterates that the precise way in which Jesus begins the parable is crucial: “A certain man (ἄνθρωπος τις) was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and made off leaving him half-dead” (Lk 10:30).

Does the lawyer see the injured man as a neighbour? Not if it is expected of the lawyer to follow the example of his fellow Israelites who are the “custodians” of God’s law. Since

³⁴⁰ No wonder that the disciples want Jesus to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans when they are refused entry into a Samaritan village (Lk 9:54). Elijah called down fire three times upon the Samaritans (2 Kings 1:2-16). Noteworthy also, of all the gospels it is only Luke who records that Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem took him via Samaria.

³⁴¹ Jesus’ geniality toward Samaritans must have been surprising to his Jewish contemporaries and challenging to the Christians in Lukan communities (Ford 1984:90).

the Samaritan has proven to be a neighbour by acting mercifully towards the injured man, one could thus ask the question, “Does the Samaritan recognize the injured man as a neighbour?” If so, then the priest’s and Levite’s actions – to pass by on the other side – are correct because a neighbour of a Samaritan certainly is not a neighbour of a Jew!

Upon seeing the injured man, the priest and Levite passed by on the other side. But when a Samaritan came to where the man was; and when he ‘saw the man’ he took pity on him. This feeling of compassion resulted in the Samaritan performing (graphically described) acts of mercy with his ‘whole body’. This, argues Robbins (2004) is because the Samaritan’s heart was ‘moved’ by what his eyes had seen, which then set his body in motion. One could thus argue that because the Samaritan’s eyes were good (lamp of the body) his body was ‘full of light’ (Lk 11:34).

The question is: “What did the Samaritan see that resulted in him treating the injured man as a neighbour – with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength and with all his mind?”³⁴² And another question: “What did the priest and Levite see, that resulted in them treating the man as one who does not deserve neighbourly-love according to God’s command?”

All three men were aware of the command to love one’s neighbour (Lev 19:18),³⁴³ yet the Samaritan clearly “saw” the man differently. If the man had not been circumcised, he would not have been a Jew, neither a Samaritan.³⁴⁴ Also, because of the man’s nakedness, there is no reference to clothes (social intertexture) for any one of them to decide on the man’s ethnicity.³⁴⁵ This is probably why the priest and Levite did not see the need “to see the man’s needs”. And in keeping within the Mosaic law, the priest would not subject himself to sin by touching a bloodied body or a corpse - except in the case of his immediate family. But how could the priest or Levite tell that the injured man was not a

³⁴² Robbins (2004:260) eloquently argues that the Samaritan responds with his entire body and with reference to progressive texture illustrates how when the Samaritan “saw” he took the pitiful sight into his heart which resulted in purposeful action with his feet and hands; also lifting the man onto his donkey “with all his strength”; and applying his mind (discerning) to provide for future care.

³⁴³ Esler (2002:193) notes that Samaritans also acknowledged the Law of Moses as torah.

³⁴⁴ If uncircumcised, the man was a Greek or Roman and certainly nor a neighbour to the priest, Levite or Samaritan (Esler 2002:191).

³⁴⁵ It seems probable that one could distinguish between Judean and non-Judean inhabitants of first century Palestine by their clothing (Bailey 1980: 42-43; Esler 2002:191).

fellow- Jew or even a family member? Is Luke bringing the *topos* of stigma and the *topos* of vulnerability into creative tension?³⁴⁶ This question is explored below.

3.4.4 Luke 10:25-37: Challenging purity laws that stigmatize

In chapter two of this dissertation, it is noted that Jesus, particularly in his healing ministry, challenged purity rules which result in care being withheld from those in need.³⁴⁷ It is obvious that the priest and Levite in Luke (10:31-32) follow purity rules that would ensure their holiness and righteousness. These lines of purity can only be maintained if the profane is avoided – unclean bodies and unclean nations. I want to argue that throughout Luke, the pattern of stigmatization of both the (impure) diseased/bloody body of the injured; and the (impure) non-Jewish body of foreigners exhibit a *topos* of stigma. The Lukan Jesus is presented as one who challenges stigma based on purity codes as understood by his fellow Israelites. Now, as Jesus travels to Jerusalem to fulfill the act of salvation for all his followers are challenged to participate in the act of salvation.

In Luke 10:25-37 the diseased/deceased body of an individual and the (social) body of the Samaritan exhibit a *topos* of stigma. I want to suggest that Luke challenges stigma, leveled against ‘imperfect bodies’. The *topos* of stigma toward Samaritans was sustained by Jewish purity lines. Israel believed that these purity lines were God-given; and that these boundaries ensured their ‘holiness’ as God’s chosen people. But as pointed out earlier, the social body (Israel) is a macrocosm of the individual body. Thus the purity lines are drawn to prevent ‘unclean’ bodies from contaminating ‘clean/holy’ bodies. Those who are unclean must withdraw from social relations with their fellows. According to Malina:

These include persons suffering from skin disorders or unusual, abnormal bodily flows such as menstruation, seminal emission and suppuration. In these instances the personal boundaries of the individual prove to be porous; the individual is not whole. The same holds for contact with a cadaver (1993:166).

³⁴⁶ A *topos* is a semantic space (or located perspective) from which one searches.

³⁴⁷ On numerous occasions in Luke (1-9) Jesus challenges the negative reaction of those who are the custodians of the purity laws, by pointing out that withholding the benefit of healing is a bad reflection on those who withhold such benefits.

These are the very persons touched by the Lukan Jesus, as chapter two of this dissertation reveals. Luke reconfigured these known perceptions and practices that stigmatize the diseased and deceased as unclean, by presenting Jesus as one who more concerned about elevating suffering, than maintaining purity laws. In Luke 10:25-37, Lukan readers/hearers are encouraged to ‘see’ that purity laws that stigmatize the body result in failure to love God and neighbour.

3.4.5 Re-visioning Stigma: Seeing the neighbour

As discussed in chapter one of the thesis, Vernon K. Robbins suggests that early Christians *blended* six major ‘rhetorical dialects’ (rhetorolects) namely, wisdom, miracle, prophetic, apocalyptic, priestly, pre-creation rhetorolect (1996c:353-362).³⁴⁸ Underlying each rhetorolect is a selective pictorial narration from the story world of the Hebrew Bible. A new Christian ‘picture’ emerges, as biblical pictorial narration (overall biblical story-line) blends into the ongoing pictorial narration of the (particular) Christian story-line. For example, the pictorial narration (rhetography) of the command to love (Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18), is from the story world of the Hebrew Bible and it blends into the rhetography in the story of Jesus’ command to love (Lk 6:27-36; 10:25-37). The new picture which emerges is the context for (new) belief arguments. Already, by the time the parable of the Good Samaritan is told, Luke has raised a series of belief arguments related to purity/ holiness of the (individual and social) body in relation to purity of time (Sabbath) and purity of place (Temple).³⁴⁹

The lawyer had confronted Jesus with two questions: firstly, *What must I do to inherit eternal life?* (v25); to which Jesus responds with a counter-question: *How do you read what is written in the law?* (v26). The lawyer’s second question: *And who is my*

³⁴⁸ See Fig.1 in chapter one of the thesis for a schematic presentation of the ‘conceptually blended’ rhetorolects exhibited in early Christian discourse.

³⁴⁹ (Lk 4:25-27; 4:31-35; 5:12-14; 5:18-25; 5:33; 6:1-6; 6:18-19; 6:27-36; 7:1-9; 7:12-15; 7:21-22; 7:44-50; 8:27-36; 8:43-48; 8:49-55; 9:52-56)

neighbour? (v29) refers to the lawyer wanting to know exactly what to *do to inherit eternal life* (v25).³⁵⁰

With this in mind, the analysis starts with Jesus telling the narrative-parable which is part of another narrative and also a journey narrative within the larger Lukan journey narrative. Guided by the pictorial narration (rhetography) which is the dominant ‘vehicle of persuasion’ in Luke 10:25-37 (Robbins 2004:253),³⁵¹ the following analysis seeks to, on the basis of the *topoi* exhibited, identify the rhetorolects utilized in this Lukan text.³⁵²

Verse 30: In reply Jesus said: “A (certain) man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers.³⁵³ They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead.

From the picture sketched here, the (certain) man is framed by the direction of his journey, viz. ‘from Jerusalem to Jericho’.³⁵⁴ This may be the case, since all the other characters in the story are ‘socially’ identified.³⁵⁵ The place (Jerusalem) is also a semantic frame which presents the conceptual domain of ‘holiness’ as it relates to the (holy) temple in Jerusalem. Both the explicit reference to Jerusalem and the implicit inference to the temple and the benefits of sacrificial rituals exhibit a *topos of holiness*. Thus, **priestly rhetololect** is presented rhetographically.

³⁵⁰ This question, says Bailey (1980:35) appears to be pointless, since one cannot ‘do’ anything to inherit something. However, in the Old Testament the idea of inheritance was primarily applied to Israel’s privilege of inheriting the land of promise. This inheritance, continues Bailey, is understood as a gift from God and Israel does nothing to either deserve, or earn it. But after the Old Testament period the phrase “inherit the earth/land” is applied to salvation which God extends to God’s people. Thus, ‘inheritance’ becomes ‘eternal life’, and the way to achieve it is to keep the law (Bailey 1980:35).

³⁵¹ In contrast to Luke 10:25-37, which is primarily rhetographical, Luke 15:1-32 although also highly pictorial, contains explicitly argumentative constituents in the form of rhetorical questions, (15:4, 8), rationales (15:6, 9, 24, 27, 32), analogies (15:7, 10), contraries (15:28-30), and a conclusion (15:32). In comparison, says Robbins (2004:253), Luke 10:25-37 contains only two implicit conclusions in Lk 10:28 and Lk 10:37.

³⁵² The analysis is underpinned by the premise that Luke reconfigures perceptions of stigmatization, which had been configured by notions of purity.

³⁵³ The New International Version text states “A man...” whereas the Interlinear Greek-English translation states, “A certain man ...”

³⁵⁴ While in the larger Lukan narrative Jesus is traveling towards Jerusalem, ‘the man’ the priest and the Levite in the parable are traveling from Jerusalem, while it is not clear whether the Samaritan was traveling to or from Jerusalem.

³⁵⁵ Because the persuasive strategy is highly rhetographical (Robbins 2004:253), one could argue that the social identities of the characters presuppose their social roles.

The man who was traveling from Jerusalem ‘fell into the hands of robbers’. It appears that such attacks were not unusual; and it seems that the audience was aware of the dangers that could befall a traveler on this twenty-seven kilometer descending road through the desert. (Bailey 1980:41)³⁵⁶ The man suffers at the hands of robbers who perform unjust social actions. This picture exhibits a *topos of vulnerability*. Through pictorial narration, the actions of the robbers are sketched. With their hands, the robbers strip the man of his clothes and beat him up. With their feet, they move away from his half-dead body, leaving him to die. The picture which is sketched is one of a man left unrecognizable as his naked, bloody body is abandoned. Again, the *topos of vulnerability* is repeated through the images of acts of injustice. This pictorial narration is presented through **prophetic discourse**. Although the discourse in verse 30b does not present explicit woes as words from God, *the topos of vulnerability* (as a result of acts of social injustice) underpins God’s call to prophets who were to confront leaders and people when they were not living according to God’s covenantal guidelines (Robbins, 2004:104). Besides, it is my opinion that Jesus, telling the story, himself presents a prophetic voice. Moreover, Luke presents Jesus’ stature in ‘a-more-than-prophet-like’ role over against the Temple and civil structures (Bloomquist 2002a:22).

Verse 31: A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

First to pass by is a priest, who on his journey from Jerusalem represents the temple cult (of purity). The pictorial narration (rhetography) repeats the *topos of holiness* but transfers it from (Jerusalem and temple) to the body of the priest. Thus, the rhetography is presented through **priestly discourse**.

When the priest, who happened to be going down the same road *saw the man*, he passed by on the other side. By passing by on the other side, the priest sustains his purity, while the injured man is left to die of his wounds. Again, a *topos of vulnerability* is exhibited as the injured man’s need for care is ignored. Here, rhetography contains **prophetic discourse**. One can almost preempt Luke 11:42: But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe

³⁵⁶ Linnemann (1966:53) pictures the road as leading through “uninhabited rocky wilderness”.

mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.

Verse.32: So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

A second man who enters the story, is a Levite. Like the priest before him, he too, by virtue of his social role represents the temple cult. Thus, the *topos of holiness* moves to the body of the Levite. One notes a movement of the *topos of holiness* - from the temple in Jerusalem, to the body of the priest, to the body of the Levite. Pictorial narration frames the Levite as following the (hierarchical) example of the priest. The Levite too, as a representative of the temple cult, presents **priestly rhetorolect**.

So too, the Levite, in order to sustain the ‘holiness’ of his own body, avoids contact with the injured man. Whereas the priest kept a safe distance as he traveled down the same road, the Levite ‘came to the place’. This could mean that the Levite came to the actual place where the man was. By ignoring the injured man’s need for help, the Levite too left the man to die of his wounds. Again, a *topos of vulnerability* is exhibited through the rhetography which is contained in **prophetic discourse**.

Verse 33: But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

Through the word ‘but’ two unexpected images of interruption are presented. Firstly, it is a Samaritan who appears on the scene, and not a Jew (coming from the temple) who follows after the Levite.³⁵⁷ Secondly, instead of passing by on the other side as the priest and Levite did, the Samaritan ‘took pity’. The Samaritan ‘saw’ the man and had compassion. Like the priest and the Levite before him, the Samaritan also traveled the same road although it is not evident that he too was traveling from Jerusalem. Whatever the case, the Samaritan “came where the man was”. One could argue that it is this action - of “coming to where the man was” that resulted in him ‘seeing’ the man’s need for help.

³⁵⁷ The natural sequence, says Bailey (1980:47) would present priest-Levite-layman as the three classes who officiated at the temple.

The priest and Levite saw a (stigmatized) body that posed a threat to *their* purity and ‘holiness’ while the Samaritan saw another person in need of help and ‘took pity on him’.

The picture of *compassion* towards one in need brings forth the *topos of mercy*, which is an attribute of God. As such, the picture which emerges is contained in **wisdom rhetorolect**. The Samaritan’s ‘eye was the lamp of his body’ (Lk 11:34) which is why “when he saw him (the man), he took pity on him” (Lk 10:33). It is God who provides light as a means of productivity in God’s creation (Robbins 2007a:106). The light of God is God’s wisdom which guides people to live generously and harmoniously with their neighbours, explains Robbins (2007a:107). A conceptual frame for wisdom is ‘light’ and, when your ‘eyes are good your whole body is full of light’ (Lk 11:34).

From the above exposition, two observations are made. Firstly, one observes a rhetorical movement as the *topos of holiness* is transferred from Jerusalem (Temple) to the body of the priest, to the body of the Levite and finally to the body of the Samaritan. Secondly, one observes how in the case of the priest and Levite ‘holiness’ results in ignoring the man in need and abandoning him, while the Samaritan who ‘takes pity’ displays true holiness. Here Luke *reconfigures* the *topos* of ‘holiness’. A new understanding of ‘holiness’ emerges - from selfish self-preservation (of purity and status) which is blind to the needs of others; to a ‘holiness’ that enables one to *see* the need of others and respond with compassion.

Thus, the typical thinking about ‘priestly discourse’ has been reconfigured by the picture Jesus is presenting in this parable. This is done through conceptual blending which has as its goal “to create people who are willing to give up things they highly value in exchange for special divine benefits that come to them, because these sacrifices are perceived to benefit God as well as humans” (Robbins 2007a:128). In the *blended space* sacrifices like food, possessions and money are given to God by giving them to other people on earth. This stands to reason that “sacrificial actions by humans create an environment in which God acts redemptively among humans in the world” (Robbins 2007a:128). This concept of priestly rhetorolect became ‘prototypical’ in first century Christian discourse. As a result, (Hebraic) priestly discourse that exhibited purity laws which resulted in benefits

being withheld from people in need, became “atypical” in early Christian discourse (Robbins 2004:118). The rhetoric internal to early Christian priestly rhetorolect is: *The human body as giver of sacrificial offerings and receiver of beneficial exchange of holiness and purity between God and humans* (Robbins 2007a:125).

One notes how concepts relating to prophetic discourse, viz. the (implicit) call for compassion that benefit others (God’s created world) interacts with priestly discourse. Thus the rhetoric internal to priestly discourse blends with the rhetoric internal to prophetic discourse. This *blending* results in rhetoric internal to **wisdom rhetorolect**.

The *topoi of holiness* and *vulnerability* are repeated in verses 30-33 and reflect an established pattern of recognition. This frame of understanding is reconfigured as Luke *blends* the rhetography of priestly rhetorolect with the rhetography of prophetic rhetorolect which results in the emergence of **wisdom rhetorolect**. As we will see in verse 34, the *topos of mercy* which has been introduced by the Samaritan showing *compassion* (prophetic rhetorolect) produces fruitfulness through concrete acts of mercy. While reference to ‘the acts of mercy’ resonates prophetic discourse, it may be argued that these acts of mercy emanate from **knowledge** on how to be a neighbour. If this is the case, then one may imply that ‘acts of mercy’ in this periscope are a result of **wisdom**.³⁵⁸

Verse 34: He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then He put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.

The Samaritan’s actions are described in detailed concrete ‘compassionate moments’ indicating that he responds with his entire body. (Robbins 2004:260). The man’s wounds are first cleaned and softened with oil, then disinfected with wine, and finally they are bound (Bailey 1980:49). This would be the usual order in which first aid is administered. However, this is not what the Samaritan does. It appears that he is either doing the bandaging and pouring simultaneously, which of course is not possible. Or, he first

³⁵⁸ It would also appear that the entire pericope (Lk 10:25-37) is framed by wisdom discourse, since it involves questions, answers and instruction.

bandages the wound and afterwards pours on the oil and wine, which of course makes no sense!

Bailey (1980:49) notes that the Samaritan responds to the injured man's needs by performing 'saving acts' the same way God does in the case of Ephraim's wounds (Hosea 6; Jeremiah 30:17). He says that the bounding up of wounds is "imagery of God as He acts to save people". Moreover, the oil and wine were not only standard first-aid remedies, but they were also sacrificial elements of temple worship. So too, the verb 'pour' is from the language of worship (Bailey 1980:50).

It is the hated Samaritan who pours out the libation on the altar of the man's wounds, says Bailey (1980:50).³⁵⁹ Thus one could argue that the Samaritan's response to the man's needs is a profound expression of the steadfast love for which the prophets were calling. This involves concrete acts of compassion by the Samaritan who embodies both reactive care and proactive care.³⁶⁰ Unlike the robbers, priest and Levite who move away - abandoning the man, the Samaritan treats the man's wounds and ensures that no further harm befalls him. He puts the injured man on his own donkey, and brings him to an inn where he takes care of him through the night.

It is the Samaritan who performs (reconfigured) holy, healing acts because he loves steadfastly with his whole being (**priestly rhetorlect**). It is the Samaritan who through sacrificial elements of oil and wine enacts a healing ritual. These 'saving acts' continue as the Samaritan ensures that the man is taken to safety and, at the inn, he continues to care for the injured man. This picture brings to mind a household where nurturing takes place and where one is protected from danger (**wisdom rhetorlect**).

³⁵⁹ Bailey notes that if the injured man was a Jew, he or his family may insult the Samaritan since oil and wine are forbidden objects if they emanate from a Samaritan (1980:50). Furthermore, besides coming from an 'unclean' Samaritan, the tithe has not been paid and by accepting them the wounded man incurs an obligation to pay tithes for them, continues Bailey. Refusing help from a person who is considered to be of lower status is not unthinkable. In the late 1970s a victim in a motorcycle accident refused the help of my husband, Greg, who was a 'coloured ambulance man'. Being a white male in apartheid South Africa, the injured man insisted on waiting for a 'white ambulance' staffed by white ambulance men to take him to a white hospital.

³⁶⁰ See Pillay, 2003b for reactive and proactive responses to a disaster.

The rhetography of priestly rhetorlect is *blended* with the rhetography of wisdom rhetorlect which moves the discourse towards a *topos of healing*. This narrational picture is contained in **miracle rhetorlect** as the injured man's body is the 'location' where suffering and death is removed and well-being and life are restored. (Robbins 2007a:18). Miracle discourse presupposes that God responds to humans in the contexts of danger or disease and that people turn to leaders who intercede to God for special help (Robbins 1996c:358-359).

Verse 35: The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him" he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."

Not only does the Samaritan take care of the injured man's immediate needs, he also pledges to pay any future debt the injured man may incur. It is obvious that the injured man has no money. And, if upon recovery he owes the innkeeper and cannot pay his debt, he will be arrested (Bailey 1980:53).³⁶¹ Thus the Samaritan not only performs concrete acts of mercy, but also performs acts of grace to ensure the man's future freedom.³⁶² After the Samaritan had taken care of the man's injuries on the road, he brought him to safety and anticipates that the man might need further care for which he will not be able to pay himself. Thus, he takes prospective care to ensure the man is not evicted by the innkeeper or arrested for not being able to pay his bill.

The Samaritan's range of actions is one of restoration (prophetic rhetorlect). The robbers have taken the man's money and stripped him not only of his clothes, leaving him naked, unrecognizable and unable to speak. Through the eyes of the priest and Levite, this naked, bloody, half-dead body is branded 'unclean' and has to be avoided, lest they risk their purity (priestly rhetorlect). It is a Samaritan who risks his own

³⁶¹ From another parable told by Jesus we learn that people were imprisoned for bad debts (Matt 18:23-35). Jesus also told parables where people's debt was cancelled (Lk 7:41-43) and where debts were (justly?) adjusted (Lk 16:1-14).

³⁶² Pillay (2003b:112) argues that a responsible response to any disaster requires more than simply caring in reaction to the disaster. While this kind of care (*Fürsorge*) is important, there is a need for prospective care (*Vorsorge*) which implies the human capacity to anticipate the future (Huber 1993:582). In this case, 'acts of mercy' refers to attitudes and actions that address the immediate needs, whereas the term 'acts of grace' reaches further into the future, signifying hope.

safety,³⁶³ risks being insulted³⁶⁴ and now pays for the prospective care of the injured man, risking not getting his money back. As Bailey (1980:53) points out, the story (within a story) has come full circle.

Having made up for the failures of the priest and Levite, the Samaritan compensates even for the robbers. The robbers take the man's possessions and money; leave him dying; and abandon him while the Samaritan shares his possessions with the injured man; pays for him to be taken care of; leaves him taken care of; and promises to return.

The image here is of someone who pledges to cancel the future debt of someone else, so that person can be free to continue his/her life. Is this also not the imagery of Jesus who is on his way to Jerusalem to perform the ultimate saving act by paying with his life the debt and future debt of all believers so that they might be free and have eternal life? Thus, the future saving acts of God (through Christ) becomes imminent as 'life on earth' and is as important as 'eternal life' in Lukan salvation history. Fitzmyer (1981:21) argues against the notion that Luke's salvation-history³⁶⁵ is 'a replacement for *Apokalyptik*'. He notes that it is so only because 'we have come to realize better what this literary form is and have learnt to distinguish it more properly from the eschatological content which it normally invests' (Fitzmyer, 1981:21).³⁶⁶

As noted above, proponents of SRI argues against a form and *genre* approach which presupposes that the different thought worlds of each *genre* naturally separates them from one another. Thus, in SRI terms, frame and prototype criticism present apocalyptic rhetorolect as a category of experiences. As a conceptual domain 'eschatology' would be considered 'typical' of **apocalyptic rhetorolect**. In Luke 10:35 apocalyptic discourse is reconfigured as the human body becomes the locus of restored life and future well-being is ensured through the actions of one who loves God with all his heart and with al his soul and with all his strength and with all his mind and, he loves his neighbour as himself.

³⁶³ It is obvious that he has possessions which the robbers might attack him for.

³⁶⁴ By the injured man or his family (who most probably was Jewish) for subjecting him to be 'associated' with a Samaritan.

³⁶⁵ 'Salvation history' refers to the way of interpreting the history of humankind as the "scene of God's saving activity" (Ralphs 2002:109).

³⁶⁶ 'Eschatology' refers to discourse about 'the end times' and the inauguration and future consummation of the kingdom (or reign) of God (Ralphs 2002:72).

Thus, to ‘inherit eternal life’ one must do acts of mercy that will restore, enhance and ensure ‘earthly life’. The *topos* of ‘eternal life’ comes from a reconfiguration of **apocalyptic rhetorlect** in the context of **priestly, prophetic** and **wisdom rhetorlects** present in the story.

Verse 36: Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?

Verse 37: The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Both these verses (Lk 10:36; 37) are responses to two questions posed earlier by the lawyer: *Who is my neighbour?* (10:29); and the opening verse of this Lukan episode, *What must I do to inherit eternal life?* (10:25).

The questions and responses are indicative of a quest for knowledge. This would then present **wisdom rhetorlect**. It has become more convincing that the lawyer’s questions are not confrontational, but rather that Luke exhibits the authority of Jesus as one who has insight to God’s wisdom and power. The entire encounter between Jesus and the lawyer takes place in the context of teaching, which results in direct instruction: *Do this and you will live*; and, *Do likewise*.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? (Lk 10:25) is followed by a counter question from Jesus, which presents the known semantic frame on ‘God’s law of love’. “Do this and you will live” is Jesus’ command. The lawyer’s inquiry, “And who is my neighbour?” results in the parable of *The Good Samaritan*. This story within a story becomes a pictorial narration which addresses both questions posed by the lawyer. The Samaritan embodies God’s law of love by being a neighbour to the man in need. Now it remains for the lawyer to follow Jesus’ command to ‘do likewise’.

From this rhetorical analysis that **priestly rhetorlect** presents a *topos of holiness* which interacts with a *topos of vulnerability*, presented through **prophetic rhetorlect**. The pattern of this conceptual frame is interrupted by a *topos of mercy* presented through **prophetic rhetorlect** but underpinned by **wisdom rhetorlect**. The human body is the

focal and pivotal point in the parable as Luke reconfigures stigmatization of the injured (impure) body and the (impure) Samaritan:

- a) The Samaritan intercedes through the imagery of sacrificial offerings, and as such exhibits a *topos of holiness and purity*; and the injured man is the ‘receiver of holy benefits’ (priestly rhetorlect).
- b) The Samaritan is the ‘producer of goodness and righteousness’, which involves his body which is full of (God’s) light. The ‘acts of mercy’ are in response to the concrete needs of another (prophetic rhetorlect) and they are a result of the Samaritan ‘knowing how to be a neighbour’ (wisdom rhetorlect).
- c) The Samaritan is a ‘distributor of justice’ as he uses his heart, soul, strength and mind to perform acts of love (reactively and pro-actively) towards a neighbour; and the injured man is the receiver of justice (prophetic rhetorlect).
- d) The entire encounter (Lk 10:25-37) is framed by questions and plays off in the context of ‘teaching’. Thus, nestled in wisdom rhetorlect, priestly, prophetic and apocalyptic rhetorlects reconfigures perceptions of stigma on three levels. Firstly, the injured man’s body is transformed from one who is stigmatized because of bodily impurity to one ‘who is treated as a neighbour’. Secondly, the Samaritan is transformed from socially stigmatized to ‘one who performs acts of mercy’. Thirdly, the lawyer is transformed from seeing the Samaritan as an enemy, to one who sees the Samaritan as a neighbour.
- e) Finally, a ‘new realm of well-being’ is inferred on three levels. Firstly, the injured man’s recovery and well-being are ensured as his future debt is paid. Secondly, the Samaritan too will inherit eternal life since he knows how to be a neighbour. Thirdly, the lawyer ‘will live’ if he follows Jesus’ command to “go and do likewise”.

3.4.6 Blending in Socio-rhetorical Interpretation: Illuminating new ways of seeing my neighbour

The socio-rhetorical analysis and interpretation of rhetorolects proceeded on the presupposition that places and spaces dynamically inform conceptual blending through the presence of cultural frames inherent in rhetorolects (Robbins, 2007a:123). The analysis revealed that Jesus (according to Luke) reconfigured the conventionally organized mental network operative in **priestly rhetorolect**.

The perception of ‘the body’ (of the priest in relation to God others) and social place (Jerusalem Temple) presented a ‘conventional’ understanding of *holiness (topos)* which, because of conventional cultural, religious and ideological understanding was ensured through laws of purity. Stigmatization of ‘impure’ bodies resulted in ‘holy benefits of mercy’ being withheld. This avoidance resulted in *vulnerability (topos)* exhibited in rhetoric of prophetic rhetorolect) which moved into (implied) ‘debate’ and reasoning (rhetology) that people to whom God has given tradition of salvation in the past currently enact a misunderstanding of God’s saving action (Robbins 1996c:360). This cultural-religious frame presents **prophetic rhetorolect**.

This interaction between priestly rhetorolect and prophetic rhetorolect is repeated twice through the pictorial narration of the actions of both, the priest and Levite. At first I thought that *blending* might not be describing what appears to be confrontational or challenging. It appears as if priestly rhetorolect is ‘challenged’ by prophetic rhetorolect. *Blending* sounds rather reconciliatory. But then perhaps that is exactly what is happening – that priestly rhetorolect is being ‘challenged’ to reconcile to the emerging Christian story. But for this to happen ‘new ways of seeing’ (understanding) God’s law is required. Guided by insight into God’s law of love the Samaritan enacts holy acts of mercy.

While there is no evidence in the text that the injured man is healed, the actions of the Samaritan (in contrast to that of the priest and Levite) implies that the man is being saved from dying, and as such (perhaps?) this hints at **miracle rhetorolect**. It is, however, the *blending* of priestly and prophetic that ‘allows’ one ‘to see’ God’s wisdom revealed in the Samaritan’s actions. Thus, one can conclude the interaction of priestly, prophetic, and

wisdom rhetorolects result in a reconfiguration of the *topos of holiness* which results in the *topos of eternal life*. The ‘mental networks’ of purity of body (priest) and place (Temple) which through stigmatization prevents ‘fruit of goodness and righteousness in the world’ (Robbins 2007a:33) are reconfigured. This interaction ultimately bridges into **apocalyptic discourse** as restorative actions ensure future well-being and life.

From this particular Socio-rhetorical interpretation one may conclude that the ‘parable’ does not merely present the Samaritan as an example to be followed, but that Luke (10:25-37) exhibits the multi-vocal nature of first century Mediterranean discourse in general and the dynamic interaction of Christian rhetorolects in particular. Early Christians utilized six rhetorolects to address particular social issues in a way that was congruent with their new Christian identity. Luke 10:25-37 should be seen in the context of the broader Lukan narrative. As an evangelist who writes to ‘give certainty’ during a time of great socio-political and socio-religious uncertainty, Luke gives shape to particular Christian belief arguments. This particular analysis reveals that ‘holiness’ sustained by purity laws - which resulted in perceptions and practices that stigmatized on the basis of the appearance of the body - is atypical to Christian belief. The Samaritan’s response (acts of mercy) and the Samaritan himself (the one) emerged as prototypical because as a neighbour, he performed concrete acts of mercy that ensured the safety and well-being of another.

Furthermore, having employed some of the multi-dimensional interpretive analytics of SRI and, given that this interpretation is done from a particular social and cultural location, I want to conclude that this analysis presents a tentative interpretation of the text. In the same way that one cannot utilize and incorporate all dimensions of SRI, one cannot reach an ultimate interpretation of a biblical text, since it too is multi-dimensional in nature. This brings me to the question of appropriation, which is the subject of chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

READING LUKE 10:25-37 IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV AND AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

*AIDS is a medical problem with social ramifications. Do you intend giving it a theological twist?*³⁶⁷

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Can there be a theological response to AIDS? The answer, says David Yeoman (1997:27) depends to a certain extent on how we perceive theology. If theology is seen only as a metaphysical enquiry into the personhood of God or as an ontological enquiry into the nature of God's Being, then one could argue that there cannot be a theology of AIDS. But, I concur with Yeoman that if there cannot be a theology of AIDS there "cannot be a meaningful theology of anything" (Yeoman 1997:27) because if God cannot be perceived in human reality, we are left with an "abstracted view of God" that would be meaningless and irrelevant to most human beings. If theology is to connect with the reality of life, then theology has to be perceived as the discovery of God, not just in God's Person or Being, but also in God's relationship with the world. AIDS is about relationships. It is about intimacy, sexuality, vulnerability, pain, suffering, death, prejudice, bigotry, stigma, etc. And as Yeoman points out, if theology has nothing to say about these human conditions it has nothing to say about anything (1997:27).³⁶⁸

Stigmatization has been identified as a major issue in addressing the multiple and complex challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic. This has already been stated in the introduction of the dissertation. Chapters two and three of the dissertation showed how Luke presents Jesus as one who challenges perceptions, attitudes and actions which

³⁶⁷ A question asked by a priest who was part of a group responding to a proposal of this research project in 2003.

³⁶⁸ This stands to reason that theology is about the God-centeredness of the human subject in all her/his reality. This sensitivity for the reality of human experience does not address a mere practical need to cope, but in some sense it reflects our responsibility to and for God (Huber 1993).

stigmatized particular individuals and communities based on purity of the body. This was done by employing the multi-dimensional interpretive tool of SRI to illuminate how Luke reconfigures the *topos of holiness*. This was necessary since the ‘old’ understanding of *holiness* resulted in being blind to one in need. Lawrie (1996:34) reminds us that the introduction of ‘the new’ in terms of ‘the old’ is not simply an addition to ‘the order of things’ rather, “a whole map is redrawn to accommodate the new”. I want to suggest that the reconfigured *topos of holiness* in Luke 10:25-37 is a marker/beacon which maps Jesus’s journey of ‘salvation’.³⁶⁹ If this is the case then, as pointed out in chapter three, the question about ‘earthly life’ is as important as the question about ‘eternal life’ for the Lukan audience. I now turn to the life experiences of two young adults who are HIV-positive.³⁷⁰

Why these particular case studies? The experiences of both Beulah and John are representative of the dilemma which many people living in an era of AIDS are faced with. The real-life experiences of many people in South Africa, who are HIV-positive or who are living with AIDS have to make life-affirming or life-threatening choices. However, the choices an individual makes are influenced by the social context in which they are made.

Like many South Africans, HIV-positive and HIV-negative,³⁷¹ both Beulah and John are ‘church-going’ Christian believers. In fact, John is studying theology and he wants to be a pastor in his church. Since the choices people make (or do not make) are influenced by

³⁶⁹ This beacon allows one to look back ... and forward. Looking back, “...a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord” (Lk 2:8); Simeon looked at the Christ child and said praises God, “For my eyes have seen your salvation” (Lk 2:30); John prepared the way for Jesus through who “all mankind will see salvation” (3:6). From the Nazareth episode (Lk 4:16-21) which was Jesus’ first public speech in Luke, Jesus performs saving acts by preaching good news to the poor, declaring forgiveness, healing the sick, raising the dead and feeding the hungry. Now, as Jesus sets forth to Jerusalem where, while dying on a cross, he pronounces forgiveness of sins (Lk 23:34) and promises another dying man (Lk 23:42) place in paradise (salvation), Jesus’ followers are guided ‘to see’ the way to salvation.

³⁷⁰ In 2003, I was approached by the director of the AIDS Unit at the University of the Western Cape, Dr Tanya Vergnani, who had become aware of the need for spiritual counseling for students who were HIV-positive (See www.uwc.ac.za/AIDS). While there were services for the mandatory pre- and post-test counseling, some students were concerned about being punished by God. They asked questions about dying, being judged, rejected, branded a ‘bad person’, and stigmatized as promiscuous.

³⁷¹ Of course many people, particularly those who consider themselves ‘good Christians’ assume they are HIV-negative, so they do not see it necessary to test for the HIV-virus. Therefore I do not think that people who do not know their sero-status should be referred to as HIV-negative.

‘who they are’ and even ‘whose they are’ (Mouton 2002). Thus the question is: How can the church create ways of ‘seeing’ that would affirm ‘whose they are’ which will enable them to make choices which are congruent with ‘who they are’?³⁷²

4.2 STIGMA: FUELING THE FLAMES WHICH SPREAD THE HI-VIRUS

Both university students, Beulah and John were (and still are) regular ‘churchgoers’.³⁷³ In fact, John was studying to become a pastor in his church. For both, speaking to their church leaders about their HIV-status was not an option - for fear of being judged.

During my interaction with Beulah and John I have sensed how they moved on a continuum between hope and despair, and particularly how stigma – external and internalized – operates as a leverage to move in either direction of the continuum.³⁷⁴

While internalized stigma manifested itself as shame and guilt, the fear of rejection by family members, partners and the community influenced the choices they made.

4.2.1 Case study: Beulah’s story of stigma and body-image

Beulah is a 26-year old woman who came to know her sero-positive status during the year she turned twenty-one. I met Beulah as a student in the first year of her undergraduate studies and then later in that year as a member of the support-group on campus when I was invited to address the group. When Beulah first found out that she was pregnant, she stopped attending support-group meetings. Later she explained that she “felt bad” because she had acted contrary to the principles of the support-group who had encouraged its members not to have unprotected sex.

As a member of a HIV/AIDS support-group on campus, Beulah was fully aware of the health risks of unprotected sex for herself and her partner. Despite this knowledge, she risked her and her partner’s health. When asked to what extent the health of her sexual partner was an issue in her decision to have unprotected sex, Beulah said that it was not

³⁷² The ‘they’ referring to all Christian believers – whether HIV-positive or negative.

³⁷³ These students were in the final year of their undergraduate studies in 2005 and have agreed to have their stories used as case studies in this research. Their names have been changed.

³⁷⁴ Section 4 in the introduction of this dissertation deals with the topic of stigma.

her intention to have unprotected sex, and that when her partner refused to use a condom, she accepted that he was prepared to take the risk, since he did not know what her sero-status was. Besides, she says, she was not ready to disclose her “positive status” to her partner for fear of “finger pointing” and also, “he may also have been positive himself – who knows?”³⁷⁵

When asked about her pregnancy, Beulah said that she was dreading the day her baby was to be tested but that she does not regret having the baby. Her experience as a mother and the possibility of her baby being HIV-positive made her wish that she had not engaged in unprotected sex – no, not the sexual encounter that led to her pregnancy, but that which led to her becoming HIV-positive.³⁷⁶ But reality is, she is a HIV-positive mother with a baby to take care of, and as such has to live positively, she says.³⁷⁷

Beulah’s story reveals the complexities of human sexuality in general, and for sero-positive women in particular. Campbell (1994:88) notes that AIDS presents some “extremely complex fertility and reproductive decisions for women”.³⁷⁸

Because HIV is primarily a sexually transmitted disease, it reveals something about one’s sexual health. Thus, in the context of HIV/AIDS and in terms of reproductive health, it appears that being pregnant may be an outward sign that a woman is in good health. However, in Beulah’s case, being pregnant was an outward sign of having had unprotected sex. It is this ‘outward sign’ of pregnancy that stigmatizes women – and not men – as having had unprotected sex. There is no obvious indication that a sero-positive man has had unprotected sex. To this end I would argue that the complexities of human sexuality in general and reproductive health of sero-positive women in particular need much more than the simplistic “don’t have unprotected sex” response.

³⁷⁵ On probing Beulah’s motives, she indicated that she had been aware that “girls were dumped” by their boyfriends after having disclosed their status, despite the fact that many of them “got the disease from these boys”. She also pointed out that ‘boys are suspicious of girls who want them to use condoms’ ... they also say ‘if you love me, you’ll trust me’.

³⁷⁶ She also says that when she realized she was pregnant, she had discussed abortion as an option with the sister at the Campus health Clinic but decided to risk (her health) being pregnant and risk the possibility of her baby being HIV-positive.

³⁷⁷ In a subsequent discussion, “a positively smiling” Beulah announced that her eighteen-month old baby boy had tested negative for the HI-virus.

³⁷⁸ This has resulted in a ‘new’ focus on the reproductive rights of women, the central issue being “the right of a HIV-positive woman to be pregnant” (Campbell 1994:89).

Listening to Beulah's experience, it would appear that it's not simply a matter of "choosing to become pregnant" or "choosing not to protect a sexual partner" but that it is also about "choosing not to be suspect" by not insisting on using a condom when suggesting its use is rejected; and it's also about "choosing not to be rejected or dumped" by not disclosing one's sero-positive status. While it is about "making choices" it is also about evaluating norms and criteria which underpin the decision-making process.³⁷⁹

Since HIV/AIDS has been identified as a behavioural disease, the issue of "making choices" is important when considering the challenges that human sexuality present in the context of HIV/AIDS. The issue of decision-making and the "ranking" of choices have to do with 'seeing the problem' (Mouton 2002:245). As also pointed out in chapter three of this dissertation, "seeing" determines how one responds to a given situation. I return to this topic later in the chapter.

The next case study, like the first one, illustrates how the fear of stigma impacts on choices made by individuals and how economic vulnerability is a deciding factor.

4.2.2 Case study: John's story of stigma and economic vulnerability³⁸⁰

Encouraged by the *Know Your Status Campaign* on campus John went for voluntary testing and counseling. Testing positive for the HI-Virus just before going home for the winter vacation had been a great shock. John says that he was scared, yet glad to be at home - somehow he felt safe. He considered disclosing his HIV-status to his brother who was the one paying for his studies. He decided to "test the water first" and started a conversation about the disease. During this conversation John said to his brother, "What would you say if I had to tell you that I am HIV-positive?" His brother said, "Then I'll

³⁷⁹ A detailed discussion on the process of moral decision-making and the aspect of evaluating norms and criteria follow later in this chapter. See Mouton (1995:236-240) and article by De Villiers and Smit (1996:31-47).

³⁸⁰ In what is considered to be "a type of manifesto" for the ministry of Jesus (Luke 4:18-19) the 'poor' is mentioned first. It is from this basis that Luke presents Jesus as one who shows concern for the poor in concrete ways. In Luke the poor are often those who are left economically vulnerable because of illness. In the parable of The Good Samaritan, the injured man is left 'economically' vulnerable after he had been robbed. Though there was no guarantee that the Samaritan would be repaid, he provided concretely to one who was in need of goods and services.

say that I'm a fool for wasting money on you." They both laughed - and that's where the conversation ended.

Back at university John wanted to speak to someone "in private". At our first meeting, John reasoned convincingly why he could not disclose to his brother. "My brother can't know that I'm HIV-positive. It will be the end of my studies - and I'm in my final year. I want to finish my studies... I want to be a pastor", he said. "Besides, my brother will be very disappointed in me". After discussing the reasons for his reluctance to disclose his sero-status to his brother, and after considering his options and their foreseeable consequences, John was "at ease". He reasoned that, since he depended on his brother's financial support to complete his final year of studies, and since he could not bear to disappoint his brother, it was in his interest and the interest of their relationship not to disclose (yet) his status to his brother. He would wait until such time he feels his brother knows more about HIV and AIDS, so as not to see his financial investment and confidence in John as a "waste of money and time". John said that it was easier "to keep it secret" when on campus than when he was away from home. At least his girlfriend was with him.³⁸¹

No! he did not disclose his HIV-positive status to his girlfriend. No! He did not use condoms because his girlfriend was on oral contraceptives. Yes! He had been 'faithful' since he had started going out with her. Exploring these questions brought back the anxiety and disease.

"Problem is", said John, "I have not disclosed my status to my girlfriend. We are from the same area in the Eastern Cape and I am scared that my brother will find out - and what if my girlfriend leaves me? We plan to get married the end of next year." Yes! He realized that she might be positive too. John covers his face with his hands, "I don't know what to do. I feel terrible. I feel ashamed! I have disappointed so many people! It's better if they don't know." Silence! The secret was a heavy burden to carry and John did not pass all his subjects in 2005.

³⁸¹ His girlfriend was also a final-year student at UWC.

4.2.3 Reflecting on the case studies in the light of insights gained from SRI

Aware that the (multi-dimensional) gap between the Lukan story of the ‘good’ Samaritan and the stories of Beulah and John cannot be bridged all too easily, I nevertheless see some analogies between the first century and twenty-first century stories. I also make inferences to SRI (albeit preliminary)³⁸² when reflecting on the stories of John and Beulah.

Obviously, we cannot draw general conclusions from only two case studies. However, it is evident that in both cases, these individuals experienced internalized stigma, emanating from what they perceived others expected of them as “good” individuals. In Beulah’s case, her being pregnant was ‘proof’ to the support group that she had done something wrong, namely ‘unprotected sex’. In John’s case, being HIV-positive meant being economically vulnerable, as his brother threatened to withdraw his financial support. In both cases, being HIV-positive is evidence of having ‘done something wrong’.

In the Lukan context, people whose bodies ‘were impure’ (skin diseases, blood) or imperfect’ (lame, blind, deformed) were also branded (sinners) ‘bad’. This was a sign of the absence of God’s blessings because of some wrongdoing either by the person her/himself or the person’s forebears. These (branded) people had to be avoided at all cost lest the one who makes contact becomes defiled. The conceptual frame from which such an understanding developed involved adherence.

In an analogous way, people who are HIV-positive are stigmatized as being promiscuous or sexually perverse – thus guilty of having done something wrong. There appears to be more understanding for (and compassion towards) the ‘innocent’ who contract the disease. Invariably ‘innocent’ refers to (not sexually active) children.

Beulah did not feel welcome in the support-group because her being pregnant revealed that she had (was having) unprotected sex. In this sense she was identified with the “out-group”. Again, her body was an outward sign of her ‘having done something’ contrary to what the group believed. No longer part of dominant cultural rhetoric of ‘safe sex’,

³⁸² I would like to pursue this further sometime in the future.

Beulah alienated herself to counterculture rhetoric by adopting a ‘live positively’ approach.

Being pregnant was also part of an emerging “in-group” of women who being HIV-positive lived “positively” through the visible signs of motherhood - thus ironically reflecting a positive body-image. Of note here is Weeks’ (1995:165) warning that the “pathologization of certain types of behaviour in the name of individual health actually creates new categories of outsiders, which leads to new categories of stigmatization”.

John felt ashamed because his sero-positive status meant that he had been a “bad” person and he feared “punishment” from his brother. John was sure that his brother would withdraw his financial support. He also felt “like a fraud” because, as a theology student he wanted to become a pastor and “preach good news to sinners” and now he was sinning by “lying” to his brother and girlfriend. His brother had already initiated wedding arrangements with his girlfriend’s family. For John to disappoint all these people would be a “bad” thing to do. It is obvious that John wrestled about making choices. The discourses which emerged are multi-vocal, driven by *topoi* such as stigma and success. It is also evident, that ‘being a Christian’ influenced his choices, according to what he ‘saw’ the problem was.

The “choice” of both individuals to risk infecting (and/or re-infecting) their sexual partners, and in the case of the woman risking the health of her child cannot be condoned regardless of whatever forms of stigma these individuals might have experienced. However, it is clear that individual/personal choices cannot be understood or challenged outside of the realities of life which give rise to them – and in this instance the realities of ‘stigma’ are stark.

As the case studies reveal, stigma fuels the flames responsible for the spread of the HIV-virus, as persons who are HIV positive are reluctant to disclose their status to their sexual partners. While such choices cannot be condoned, neither should attitudes which stigmatize and alienate. If we allow the fire to rage out of control ... it will ravage generation after generation ... until we are no more! And *we* will be remembered and branded, “a

loveless, uncaring species, responsible for ‘their’ own extinction”. Now that is a reality to consider!

4.3 LUKAN DISCOURSE: CONNECTING WITH THE REALITIES OF LIFE

In general terms one may summarize the implied moral effect of the biblical writings as the radical re-visioning of life from within a faith relationship with a living God

(Mouton 2007:39)

The New Testament is a multi-vocal account of the continuation of God’s involvement in the realities of the lives of people on earth. It is the story of God’s continued providence. In this sense, the Gospel of Luke – the old-old story of Jesus Christ provided and, continues to provide hope in times of despair (Mouton 2002:168). As noted in chapter two of this dissertation, the Gospel of Luke has been a resource not only for shaping Christian responses to particular societal issues, but also for shaping the story of Christianity over the centuries. But how do Christians continue to draw hope from this age-old text? Moreover, how do I account for such a claim?

As a ‘story’ or ‘narrative’, the Gospel of Luke “gives form to experience in ways which tie the past to the present and anticipate the future” (Mouton 2002:168). The re-reading of the Gospel of Luke in chapter two of this dissertation has somehow made me aware of the analogies (similarities and differences) between the experiences of women (as a marginalized group) and other stigmatized groups in the Lukan community and my experience as a Christian woman in post-apartheid South Africa, seeking hope in the context of HIV and AIDS. A socio-rhetorical interpretation of Luke 10:25-37 in chapter three of this dissertation presented a case study of the liberative potential of Luke’s Gospel. This particular Lukan episode where Jesus is approached by ‘an expert in the law’ results in him telling the story of the ‘good’ Samaritan. By presenting the Samaritan as one who ‘sees’ the injured man, not as a risk of defilement but rather, as one in need of life-saving acts, the story “re-describes and reshapes reality, presents alternative worlds, and opens new ways of seeing and being” (Mouton 2002:168; McFague 1982:31-54).³⁸³ In SRI

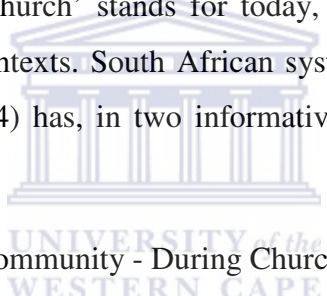
³⁸³ For more on ‘metaphor’, see chapter three of this dissertation.

terms, 'to see' relates to the *zone of emotion-fused thought*³⁸⁴ (See Malina 1993:74; Robbins 1996b:30). The inmost expression of 'eyes-heart' is a conceptual frame for: see, know, understand, think, remember, choose, feel, consider, look at (Malina 1993:74).

Thus, the Gospel of Luke in general, and the parable of *The Good Samaritan* in particular, has the potential to function (in Christian discourse) as a source of insight and hope. In particular, it has the potential to open new ways of 'seeing' stigma in the context of HIV and AIDS in South Africa. It has already been pointed out (in chapter three of this dissertation) that 'seeing' is a key theological term in Luke's Gospel. I now turn to the possibility of 'seeing' in the context of worship in the church.

4.3.1 The church's response to stigma in the context of HIV and AIDS

The rich variety of manifestations of 'church' today would be unfamiliar to a first century Lukan audience. Also, what 'church' stands for today, could mean different things to different people in different contexts. South African systematic theologian, Dirkie Smit (1996a:119-129; 1996b:190-204) has, in two informative articles, described six 'manifestation' of the church as:

- 
- a) A worshipping community - During Church on Sunday (worship service).
 - b) Local Church - Congregation/Parish.
 - c) Denomination - Institutional Church (DRC, CPSA, etc).³⁸⁵
 - d) Ecumenical Church – Representing different denominations (WPCC, SACC, WCC).³⁸⁶
 - e) Volunteer organisations, civil initiatives, e.g. CBCOs and FBOs.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ This is the first of the three-model body zone taxonomy.

³⁸⁵ Dutch Reformed Church; Church of the Province of Southern Africa.

³⁸⁶ Western Cape Council of Churches, South African Council of Churches and World Council of Churches.

³⁸⁷ Church based community organizations and faith-based organizations.

- f) Individual members – Living their (everyday) lives according to the values of Christianity.

Many church denominations are responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic from one or more of these six operational concepts of “church”, of which many are doing a lot of “caring” work. Some have “awareness” campaigns and workshops to address the issues of stigma that surround HIV/AIDS and the impact it has on the lives of those affected and infected. Public pronouncements about what the church ought to be doing also reflect some churches’ response to the challenges around HIV and AIDS. Some church leaders’ profiles afford them an international platform from where the church’s voice is heard.

At grassroots level, the churches’ response of care, compassion, embrace and service is vital in terms of reacting appropriately to the pandemic and is indeed part of what the church ought to do. Physical, emotional and spiritual care for persons infected together with awareness campaigns and workshops have contributed toward ‘breaking the silence’ around the disease.³⁸⁸ How churches respond from whatever form of manifestation, depends on how representatives ‘see’ the challenges posed by the AIDS pandemic. There is of course no doubt that the complex nature of the AIDS pandemic calls for intervention from all ‘levels’ of being church.³⁸⁹ For the purpose of this study, a discussion on the church ‘as worshipping community’ follows.

4.3.1.1 The church as worshipping community

Worship is the locus of theology. In Luke (4:16-27) Jesus’ first public speech is in the context of worship. Local congregations are communities of people who come together to worship in fellowship. During worship, Christians remember God’s great act of love and because of this remembrance of God’s salvific love, there is hope. This hope is drawn from the story of God’s love through Jesus Christ.

³⁸⁸ There is, however, still a deafening silence from some church groups who believe the disease is “out there” while others adopt a judgmental approach believing that HIV/AIDS is God’s punishment for sinful behaviour.

³⁸⁹ This includes intervention on policy level (church and governmental), concrete intervention strategies, rethinking theologies around human sexuality, gender, death, etc.

It is from that very first worship service (Lk 4:16-27) that the Lukan community was persuaded to “look in the right direction” (Smit’s phrase with reference to worship). Jesus’s actions and words effectively meant that the whole frame of reference, the whole theology of everything that was *holy* to the synagogue goers was ‘reviewed’.

While Christian worship provides creative opportunities for affirming how “we see” God, ourselves, others and the environment, in which and with which we interact, it also provides unique opportunities to help us “look in the right direction” (Smit 1997:272).³⁹⁰ It is within the “space” created during worship that the opportunity exists for the changing of the hearts and minds of Christians. As Elna Mouton puts it:

The worship service as the central point of all ecclesial activities and experiences, is essentially rhetorical in nature. It is the primary context where believers are continuously constituted and affirmed as a community of believers, as the ‘household of God’. It is the primary location where a collective identity is assigned to them, where they learn to know who they are and “Whose” they are. This is where they learn to dream about God’s future which has already become a reality in Christ, and from where they are being sent out to care for one another and the world. From here God’s household (as a social, communicative, domestic, economic entity) moves into society to proclaim God’s presence in the liturgy of everyday life (2003:16).

A study document of the World Council of Churches (1997:78) describes worship as “a special moment for celebration – an attempt to place daily life on the stage”. It further states that:

Worship can help churches to remove the barriers we create in the everyday life of our human communities by opening our eyes, our ears and all our senses to the extraordinary significance of the ‘ordinary’ experiences and to ways of expressing God’s presence amidst the people and creation (1997:78-79).

Christian worship has ethical implications for public life because worshippers learn to see the world in a certain way, says Smit (1997:261). In the worship service the Spirit moulds and refines the Christian believers’ senses – were they learn to listen anew to God’s word, to each other and to the needs of society. We learn to look and see in new ways. In

³⁹⁰ Smit (1997:272) warns, though, that Christian worship is an ambivalent phenomenon – while it has the potential to change the way we see things, it can (and has been) used to avoid what we should see and thus it can entrench the status quo.

reference to the Reformed tendency to link worship with transformation, justice and ethics, Smit (1997:270) observes that the worship service leads to a second form of service – “The believers accept mutual responsibility for each other in their spiritual and physical needs”.

I agree with Smit (1997) and Mouton (2002) that it is during worship that the space is created for opportunities to *look in the right direction* in order to (re)shape the worshipping community’s thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and actions. I want to suggest that the worship service creates an enabling moment for Christians to ‘see’ stigma for what it is. Thus, Christian clergy – men and women - are challenged to reflect on “the will to look and see differently”.³⁹¹

The parable of The Good Samaritan shows that those in leadership (priest and Levite) “saw” but looked the other way!

For the church to respond to the theological challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic, it has to respond from the basis of its unique nature and identity as “community”. In this regard, I make two observations. The first is that the present response of the church misses unique opportunities – to be the church in an era of HIV/AIDS. Presently, the church’s (albeit very important) response of care for the infected, awareness workshops, seminars and special “AIDS church services”, are addenda to the church.³⁹² It is my opinion that by responding from its unique nature, which includes the church as worshipping community, will enable the church to ensure that its response to HIV and AIDS does not remain broad public statements, that its response is not buried in official church documents, and that its response does not only include the rendering of services that are no different to that of the many NGOs³⁹³ who are also responding to the AIDS pandemic.

³⁹¹ A very practical example is the use of gender-inclusive language during worship. (See Pillay 2005:445-448).

³⁹² The way the AIDS message has been presented in “tedious campaigns that have served to alienate rather than inspire, and the dullness of the message underpinned by a false and naïve morality” has also resulted in boredom with the issue (Crewe 2000:11).

³⁹³ Non-governmental organization – many of whom, because they respond from a position of faith – are now called FBOs (Faith Based Organizations).

The second observation is that many clergy persons do not regard addressing challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic as part of their pastoral duties. Instead, they opt to invite people from AIDS NGOs to address their congregations. Furthermore, for many congregations a response to AIDS entails lighting an AIDS candle once a year to remember those who have died of AIDS; donating products towards the care of poor AIDS orphans.³⁹⁴ Once, I heard a lay minister praying for people ‘who bring illnesses upon themselves’. Does this not question the theological basis for responding to HIV and AIDS? But, how *does* one speak (and preach) about human sexuality, life, death, power, stigma, community, care, respect, love etc. in the context of HIV and AIDS? How can Christian individuals and communities be moved from fear and despair to hope and joyful living? How can Scripture, as a focal point in liturgy, be used to transform hearts and minds? These are the questions that men and women; clergy and laity in the church should explore together, but it should also be (certainly for now at least) an integral part of theological training.

The socio-rhetorical reading of Luke 10:25-37 in chapter three of this dissertation is one example of how Scripture could be a resource for addressing stigma leveled at individuals and groups who are perceived to ‘have done something wrong’.

To create the relevant space to speak about stigmatization as a challenge presented by the AIDS pandemic in itself often creates new categories of exclusion when members of a particular congregation continue to see AIDS as a problem ‘out there’. Those who think it cannot happen to them: The young man who thinks it’s socially acceptable for him to “sow his wild oats”; the young woman who thinks that she “has to please a man” if she wants to keep him; the middle-aged man for whom an extra-marital affair is the cure to his looming impotence; the older man who lures young girls with gifts and money; the faithful wife/husband who thinks it cannot happen to her/him; the white woman who thinks it happens to black women; the heterosexual who thinks it happens to homosexuals; the economically affluent who thinks it only happens to the poor. These attitudes, of many churchgoing Christians, contribute to the perception that AIDS is a disease of sexually promiscuous individuals from particular ‘at risk’ communities, such

³⁹⁴ These of course are very necessary responses of care.

as homosexuals and black people. Unless we see our vulnerability in the possibility either of being infected or affected, stigma remains a major challenge.

I have argued that during worship Christian believers have the opportunity ‘to see’ differently. The importance of ‘eyes’ and ‘seeing’ in Luke was noted. A (particular) socio-rhetorical reading of Luke 10:25-37 has revealed that ‘seeing’ affected the way the priest, Levite and Samaritan had responded to the injured man. It is also evident that both Beulah and John made decisions based on what *they* ‘saw’.

4.4 SEEING, ACCEPTING AND DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM: KEY TO THE PROCESS OF DECISION-MAKING

The processes of seeing, accepting and describing a problem play a key role in the entire process of decision-making says Mouton (2002:245), who refers to the seminal work of German social ethicist, Heinz Eduard Tödt. The entire process of decision-making hinges on this aspect, whether it be “an unresolved past conflict, an anticipated problem in the future, or a personal, church or societal challenge” (Mouton 2002:245).³⁹⁵

Mouton gives a comprehensive overview of the six aspects of Tödt’s theory, which she says is “an ideal-typical analysis of opinion forming and decision-making” (Mouton 2002:245).³⁹⁶ I will only refer to the first aspect which involves the three facets of seeing, accepting and describing the problem. I will discuss these three facets using (where possible) examples to illustrate what is meant.³⁹⁷

4.4.1 Seeing the problem

To *see* a problem is the first step in forming an opinion about it. To *see* a problem, is to identify a problem. Different people can look at the same problem and see different things.

³⁹⁵ As the case of The Good Samaritan (in chapter two of the dissertation) illustrated, what one ‘sees’ determines one’s actions. This leads to another question: What determines what one sees? or; Who determines what one sees? Answers to these questions are questions of identity. How would Christian believers answer these questions?

³⁹⁶ For a concise excursion of the entire process of decision-making, see Mouton (2002:244-250).

³⁹⁷ Except for examples used to illustrate meaning, the theoretical aspects are taken (mostly) verbatim from Mouton (2002:244-246).

As a social-rhetorical reading of the Good Samaritan revealed, it is highly likely that the priest and Levite *saw* a bloody, half-dead body which posed a threat to *their* bodily purity, while the Samaritan *saw* an injured (some)body in need of care. In case study one, Beulah saw her pregnancy as a positive body-image, in a context where reproductive health defines womanhood, while members of the AIDS support-group saw her pregnancy as having had unprotected sex.

4.4.2 Accepting the problem

A problem has to be *accepted as one's own problem*. Often people consider family, social, global, and other challenges to be the responsibility of 'others'. Even if they consider a problem to be theirs as well, it is often viewed as a mere technical, administrative, political or economic problem, and "not necessarily as something which has to do with their Christianity, their morality, identity, character and integrity as human beings" (Mouton 2002:245).

With reference to analysis of the parable of *The Good Samaritan* in chapter three, both the priest and Levite did not accept the needs of the injured man as their problem. It was more a 'technical' problem of safeguarding their 'holiness'.

Both Beulah and John did *not accept* that, them having unprotected sex as an ethical problem. Beulah believed it was her partner's responsibility to protect himself, while John 'blamed' his economic circumstances.

Obviously, all people cannot accept all problems as their own. As human beings people are constrained by numerous factors. Therefore, people have to make selections. For instance, we note that John was facing more than one problem: The possibility of him not completing his studies and the problem of disclosing his sero-positive status to his girlfriend.³⁹⁸ One also notes 'the element of guilt' involved by choosing to accept one rather than the other, as a problem which needs action.

³⁹⁸ Granted that these two problems are really interrelated and ultimately parts of the problem of being dishonest, I think they do serve as an example to illustrate the point of "choosing" what is to be accepted as a problem.

4.4.3 Describing the problem

This involves coming to terms with ‘the precise nature of the problem’. Because people often look at the same problem and see different things, a common description of the particular issue is needed. This happens through dialogue. For example, a common description of the problem of HIV-positive women becoming pregnant, would require dialogue between Beulah and the support-group since they perceive the issue from totally different view points. Perhaps if John and his brother enter into dialogue, they could come to a common understanding. Of course, it is my opinion that the possibility of dialogue in both cases is hampered by stigma.

As noted in footnote eleven in the introduction of the dissertation, there has been (still is?) a controversy over whether HIV causes AIDS. This results in diverse responses to the pandemic. On the one hand it encouraged people who were HIV-positive to ‘live positively’ as HIV was not a death sentence, while on the other hand it resulted in the disease not being taken seriously ... not even by high-ranking government officials! Then there are those who believe antiretroviral medication is toxic (South Africa’s Minister of Health)³⁹⁹ while other (like Treatment Action Campaign’s Zackie Achmat) are ‘prepared to die’ so that others could have access to life-giving antiretroviral medication.⁴⁰⁰

4.4.4 Describing the precise nature: challenges for the church

While the challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic are scientific and medical, it also has psychological, legal, economic, social, ethical and religious ramifications. The present reality of poverty, sexism, gender power-relations, death, exclusion, scape-goating, and particularly stigma intensifies the complexity of the challenges presented by the AIDS pandemic.

³⁹⁹ Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang also advocates the use of garlic, lemon juice, beetroot and olive oil as alternatives to medication. Of course, these (natural remedies) are important for boosting the immune system, but is of no use to someone who has developed AIDS. Besides, most South Africans (myself included) find the price of olive oil and garlic exorbitant.

⁴⁰⁰ Zackie Achmat, himself HIV-positive, is a pioneer in advocating access to healthcare, particularly (though not exclusively) for people living with the AIDS. Here one notes the multi-textures and multi-vocal nature of the discourses on HIV and AIDS.

The church, as custodian of the Christian faith has the responsibility to, in accordance with the Scriptures,⁴⁰¹ create opportunities for Christian believers ‘to look in the right direction’ amidst the many things there are to see.

This means ‘the church’ leaders and membership are to be aware of the multi-vocal nature of the discourses around HIV and AIDS. Discourses that alienate, exclude, stigmatize, but also discourses that affirm solidarity, show care, concern – and love. The challenge then, is for the church to use these conceptual frames in the context of worship, where believers are reminded of their identity in Christ.

It is during public worship that Christians in the twenty-first century become part of the story of the first century Christians via rituals such as baptism, hymns, confessions, prayers (Mouton 1995:245). This is how Christians over the centuries have continuously been reminded of, and encouraged by what God through love for them has done in the past, while they hopefully anticipate future redemption. Then, there is the present question of ‘how are Christians responding to God’s love.

Members of the worshipping community explicitly acknowledge the presence of God as they gather in communion with other Christian believers (past and present). It is in this context that they are reminded (and invited) to, *see* the neighbour; be a neighbour; feel compassion; smell the wine; drink the wine; share the bread; feel the soothing oil; lift the wounded; and be lifted.

So that when Mass has ended, the service continues...

⁴⁰¹ Now I hear bells ringing – not church bells, but warning bells. But I think I have accounted for the reading of an ancient document in the dissertation.

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