

“I Saw Satan Fall . . .”—The Rhetoric of Vision

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One classical theorist, in outlining the strategies available to the aspiring rhetorician, describes *demonstratio* as the expression of the matter at hand with words, so that it appears to be borne up “before the eyes” (*res ante oculos*) of the audience (*Ad Herennium* IV.55.68).¹ *Demonstratio* was part of the arsenal of the rhetorician, and might be used to set forth vividly the statement of the case (*narratio*) or to confirm dramatically an argument. Given the wide-spread awareness of rhetoric in the ancient world, and the commissive aspect of the gospel, one is not surprised to discover that *demonstratio* plays an important role in the rhetoric of at least some NT writers. In Gal. 3:1, Paul speaks about his practice of portraying (προεγράφη)² Jesus Christ as crucified “before the eyes” of his listeners. Moreover, in the rhetoric of those for whom divine revelation was an important and authoritative factor, *demonstratio* sometimes assumed a peculiar shape—that of the reported vision.

At first glance, vision falls neatly into the category of “non-technical or uninvented proofs.” However, Burton L. Mack assumes that such miraculous proofs “actually must have been invented,” so that their marshalling “must have been a challenging undertaking for early Christian authors.”³ In a less sceptical vein, I will suggest that even the

framing of the vision report as an integral part of argumentation had to be artfully performed in order to achieve its desired effect. At this point invention and nontechnical proof come together, since the vision would have its impact as a nontechnical proof, a fact of the case, whereas the report requires invention. So then, I am interested in the use of visionary narrative as a figure within an argument, rather than in the bare appeal to vision as an authoritative “trump-card.” This article will consider three units of rhetorical interest, one from the gospels (Luke 10:7-24), one from Acts (Acts 7:54-56) and one from Paul (2 Cor. 12:1-10). I assume that both Luke and Paul used rhetorical devices in a more-or-less self-conscious way.⁴ The observations made here, however, might be forwarded in terms of common rhetoric rather than competence in the classic conventions. It will become apparent how various types of arguments—epideictic, judicial and deliberative—are furthered and even informed by recourse to visionary experience.

Luke 10:17-24—An Epideictic Chreia?

Luke 10:17-24 is, in this gospel, a well-marked rhetorical unit. The setting is provided by the return of the disciples (vs. 17) from their successful mission; Jesus’ response (vss. 18-20) is firmly linked to the public “prayer” (vss. 21-22) and the private word (vss. 23-24) by time markers (*Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ*, vs. 21 and the aorist participle, vs. 23). The change of setting in vs. 25 delineates the end of the unit. Jesus’ words do not constitute a full-blown speech but may be seen naturally in terms of the elaborated chreia—that is, the exercise given to schoolboys in classical times in which a memorable saying by an authority was expanded according to various pre-set patterns. Comparison against the parts of the complete argument, or elaboration, is instructive:

Introduction (with a hint of encomium, “Lord”)	vs. 17
Chreia (“I saw Satan fall . . .”)	vs. 18
Rationale (“I have given you authority”)	vs. 19
Opposite (“Nevertheless, do not rejoice”)	vs. 20
Example (He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit . . .)	vs. 21
[no Analogy]	
Authority (“for so it seemed good in Your sight . . .”)	vs. 21b

("All things have been given . . .")	vs. 22
Conclusion ("Blessed are the eyes . . .")	vss. 23-24
[Contrast analogy included]	

All parts of the elaborated chreia are present, with only the analogy missing. However, example, analogy and authority all work toward the same end in an elaboration, and correspond to what might be called "the argument" in a full-blown speech. Since the example and the authority are well-developed, analogy is bypassed without weakening the argument. Further, a kind of contrast analogy is imported into the actual conclusion, where the disciples are favourably compared to great figures of the past. This displacement makes for an emotive and striking ending.

Consider the logic of the unit and how the vision works within it. The vision of vs. 18 is Jesus' chreia in its most succinct form. The reader has been made aware of the importance of the mission through an earlier extended dialogue; she or he is thus likely to enter into the joy of the disciples in vs. 17. Often the elaboration of the chreia began with an encomium of praise for the speaker of the authoritative word. In the context of the gospel, the encomium for Jesus is unnecessary; nonetheless, the disciples' introductory declaration sets up their master as an authority (*κύριε*) whose word has power (*ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου*). Jesus' response is arresting: "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven." Is this strange word to be understood as a vision, or as a description of the work of the seventy(two) in apocalyptic imagery? Although examples of other visions by Jesus are not given in this gospel, the concept of Jesus seeing ecstatically is not dissonant with the picture that Luke paints: a Jesus who is personally addressed at the baptism; a Jesus who prays prior to the Transfiguration and enters into conversation with the supernaturally present Moses and Elijah; a Jesus who knows that his lieutenant has been demanded for by the ArchEnemy; and (if we accept 22:43-44) a Jesus who is ministered to by an angel in Gethsemane.

Even if the vision were intended as artificial (which seems unnecessarily subtle),⁵ the effect of Jesus' strange statement is to add to the ἡθος already established by the disciples. The very style of Jesus, "I saw" establishes his words as ones that must be carefully heeded. He is the prophet, not simply the teacher. And yet, he is also the teacher, responding to his disciples. Like the speech of the Cynic,⁶ Jesus' address

followers is friendly, though corrective—this in contrast to his debates with the Pharisees *et al.* Jesus has a word for them, a word that will both praise and redirect. The vision stands as an interpretation of their success—but it is an interpretation that itself needs interpreting, a vision to be revealed or unpacked in the following elaboration.

The high style of Jesus' vision is continued in the words that follow. The word *ἰδοὺ* (vs. 19) gives his bestowal of authority a performative ring; Jesus' public prayer in vs. 21 is declared "in the Holy Spirit;" his words in vs. 22 are so exalted that they have been called an "aerolite" from John's gospel; and his private word in vss. 23-24 extends the privilege of the seer to a group of initiates, through striking parallelism and contrast. Jesus' extended discourse, then, is framed so as to assure the seventy(two) that they, like Jesus, have had their *apokalypsis* (vs. 21) even though, or perhaps because, they are infants and not the wise. At vs. 18, Luke's Jesus turns from the role of seer to that of interpreter: it is their revelation, as well as his own, that he is explaining. From the viewpoint of a reader who considers himself or herself in solidarity with the seventy(two), what Jesus says to the disciples, he says to other infants whose names are written in heaven.

A question that arises is whether the argument redirects or furthers the vision. It has been seen that Jesus' response to the seventy(two) is a kind of apocalyptic redirecting of the disciples' words, while it picks up on the idea of demons who have been overpowered. Standing on its own, the vision has a polyvalent power, which is taken down only a few paths by the discussion that follows. This is the logic: the disciples rejoice that the demons have been subject to them in Jesus' name; Jesus' vision explains why; he goes on to assert that they have been given power over the enemy; however, they should not focus on this, but on their participation in heaven; Jesus rejoices, as an example to them of the correct perspective, while extending the idea of revelation to the simple and the Father's authority; the line of authority from Father to Son to recipient is traced; a word of blessing is conferred on the disciples' eyes and ears.

It appears that the visionary *chreia* has been somewhat tamed by its elaboration. If Jesus' word is meant in this setting to take the disciples' eyes off the wonder of their authority over demons, we should not be surprised to find that the mysteries of Satan's *Blitzkrieg* will not take centre-stage. P. Hoffmann argued that the point of the discourse as a whole was

to speak to a Church which no longer performed mighty deeds, but which still could rejoice in Jesus' main bequest—names written in heaven.⁷ To engage in such mirror-reading from the other side, the argument could just as easily be directed to those who set great stock by mighty deeds and visionary experiences, and to whom a relativizing word might be rather shocking. Those working on the unit from a rhetorical perspective might sense that a domestication has begun even in vs. 19. The “μητις-like response”⁸ of Jesus to his followers' words has been extended so as to limit its obscurity and direct the hearer along the well-channelled lines of the gospel's *apokalypsis*. The real mystery is that the casting down of the adversary means the vindication and establishment of those who work in Jesus' name and whose names are written down in heaven. However, in speaking of domestication, it must be recognized that the elaboration of the chreia has its own edge, with its emphasis on the infants, its criticism of the wise, and its foundation on a tantalizing (if unexplored) vision of the Lord himself.

Intertextual echoes of Jesus' vision such as Isaiah 14:12ff and especially Ezekiel 28:2ff add to this underlying *topos* of the downfall of the “wise.” So too does the recapitulation of contrast themes met earlier in the travel section of Luke. Jesus sent out the seventy(two) as lambs among wolves; they return as children victorious over scorpions. This creates the impression of an epideictic discourse with a twist: a speech that praises the simple, but only by virtue of their connection with Jesus and the Father. It is the Father to whom thanksgiving is rendered, leaving only a blessing and not a frank encomium for those whose eyes have seen and whose ears have heard. The chreia is epideictic in tendency, but speaks with a deliberative accent. Jesus is seer and interpreter: his vision confers a derivative authority on his followers, an authority that is put into perspective in the elaboration.

Acts 7:54-59—Luke Out-Perorates Stephen

Another example of Luke's rhetorical use of vision is found at the end of Stephen's speech. The speech itself (7:1-53) is a carefully worked out judicial argument that transforms apology into accusation. Various critics have discovered clear divisions of introduction or *exordium*, statement of the case or *narratio*, supporting arguments or *argumentatio*,

and conclusion or *peroratio*.⁹ On all accounts, by Acts 7:51, Stephen has come to his impassioned peroration. It is remarkable that so few scholars discuss the effect of Stephen's vision, even though one writer explains (if only in a footnote!) that "[t]his vision caps the speech, as the resurrection/ascension/sitting at God's right hand . . . capped the crucifixion."¹⁰

The vision is not simply a dramatic cap; it is the dramatic conclusion and final proof of Stephen's *ἦθος*. Dramatically, it extends the peroration, when the listeners would rather abort it. Stephen, a masterful orator, uses both action and words in the finale to his peroration. His calm gaze into heaven is in striking contrast with the fury of the listeners; his vision-report is a pointed continuation of the earlier interrupted reference to "the righteous one." The rhetorical unit for the entire speech, then, is not 7:1-53, but extends at least to vs. 57. As Max Turner observes, Stephen's vision is "a charisma specifically related to the content of the preaching" which "heightens the effect of that preaching."¹¹ Indeed, the vision not only heightens, it also extends the preaching at its critical point, at the peroration in which "the appropriate mode of persuasion was *πάθος*."¹² It is only after the vision-report that the hearers stop their ears, and pursue their own agenda; Stephen's final two words are directed towards Jesus rather than his audience, although of course they have a rhetorical effect upon the reader. The setting is re-established in 7:58-59 and the finale of the story is given. The narrator's argument continues, of course, in that Stephen's hearers re-enact the verdict of 7:51, adding a new martyrdom to those already mentioned. Depending on the perspective the rhetorical unit could be fruitfully marked off as either 7:1-57 or as 7:1-59.

What is particularly interesting is the way in which Stephen's argument in the concluding vision is pre-empted, or at least, contained, by the narrator's interpretation of it. The reader comes to the interpretation of Stephen's vision *prior* to the vision itself. This displacement of the interpretation could be understood theologically in terms of Luke's drive to safeguard the vision from error—it is the *δόξα* that is seen by Stephen, since no one can see God; it is Jesus, and none other who is the Son of Man. However, such observations only explain the content of the interpretation, not the phenomenon of reversal of interpretation and vision. The reversal has a dramatic effect, in that it gives an immediate identity to "the Righteous One" while allowing for a natural repetition of the

phrase “standing at the right hand of God.” Again, the reader comes to the actual vision-report with an interpretation at hand—the vision is encountered not so much as an intriguing mystery but as a satisfying conclusion to a lengthy judicial speech. Finally, Stephen’s vision is placed in a privileged position. It is Stephen who has the last coherent word—followed by the inchoate *φωνή* of the witnesses. In this way, the vision is both contained and highlighted, bringing the arguments of Stephen to a rhetorically satisfactory ending.

Luke has, so to speak, out-perorated Stephen. First, there is in vs. 54 the “intentional interruption,” designed to “heighten the drama of particular episodes.”¹³ Stephen has already aroused the pathos of his hearers—hearers both within the narrative, and outside of it. The narrator increases this arousal of emotion by providing an interruption that focuses upon the emotional states of those enacting the drama. As if this were not enough, when the speaker is re-introduced in vs. 56, his words assume the form of a vision-report, so that not simply the *ἦθος* of the speaker with the angel’s face lends the words authority, but the very form which his words assume. Finally, the actions which follow serve as dramatic confirmation of the truth of Stephen’s words: it is not he who is on trial, but the “stiff-necked” ones who always resist the Holy Spirit. In contrast, Stephen’s manner of death recalls the death of Jesus himself, and so reinforces the acquittal in a near-subliminal way. The speech of Stephen, artfully designed to hoist the accusers on their own petard, has been given an extended and delightfully dramatic conclusion, complete with the most authoritative utterance imaginable for its designed audience. The dovetailing of speech with narrative frame shows Luke to be a master of narrative as well as rhetorical techniques.

A final word regarding the interplay of the rhetoric of narrative and speech is perhaps in order. Stephen’s vision-report is introduced by the *ἰδοὺ* of the seer. However, this word may be indicative of a change of direction in the overall argumentation of the narrative, which has been forensic. With this word and the remarkable example of the first Christian martyr, the reader is perhaps directed towards an action other than that of assessing accusation and defence. The return to the narrative frame indicates a return to an implicit mode of the deliberative. Christian readers are directed towards the open heaven, the Son of Man standing for them, their inevitable conflict with those who refuse to hear, and the

example of the faithful who have gone before. A frankly judicial situation is afforded the hint of the deliberative, as might be expected in a sacred writing. Here, as in the Luke 10:18, the question of authority comes firmly to the fore: the wonder of the vision at hand is not allowed to predominate, since it is the “apocalypse” of the Jesus-event that must remain authoritative. The identity of ὁ δίκαιος, the Son of Man, and the paradigmatic importance of his words and death overshadow the innocence and rhetorical flair of Stephen.

2 Cor. 12:1-10—Having Your Cake and Eating it Too

2 Cor. 12:1-10 is already a closely-debated section. Whatever one’s view of the unity of the letter, the closure at the end of chapter nine and the new invocation at 10:1 render 2 Cor. 10:1-13:10 a major rhetorical unit in which Paul’s authority as an apostle is at stake. However, this unit also exhibits Paul’s concern for the well-being of the Corinthians:

Πάλαι δοκέιτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἀπολογούμεθα. κατέναντι θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἀγαπητοὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς. (2 Cor. 12:19)

“Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking for Christ, all for your upbuilding, beloved” (RSV). The same debate that has raged over Galatians (that is, whether it is to be characterized as apologetic or as deliberative) could be duplicated in a discussion of this passage. It may be helpful to distinguish between the form and the actual direction of argument in a speech. From the aspect of form, there is little doubt that 2 Cor. 10-13 is apologetic. Moreover, the apology is offered in the form of a “foolish speech” (as has been accounted for in the readings of Betz and others), and therefore cannot be taken at face-value. That is to say, the apology is not made for its own sake, but is subordinated to a greater cause. Paul’s words at 12:11 directly address the Corinthians, marking a departure from irony and a turn to the paraenetic. The apology is therefore placed within a larger context of edification made explicit at

12:19. Paul's major concern is to direct his hearers towards attitudes and actions for the future—clearly a deliberative stance.¹⁴

Paul's vision-report and its *sequelae* (12:1-10) come at the climax of the *argumentatio* section,¹⁵ after the *exordium* of 10:1-6 and the statement of the case in 10:7-18. This is the case: self-evaluation and self-commendation are not seemly; rather, the Lord's commendation is valuable, and boasting in the Lord is fruitful. The proofs begin at 11:1, where Paul introduces his own self-evaluation and commendation as "foolishness," going on to his past experience with the Corinthians, his pedigree, his experiences of humility and (probably) a parody of the *corona muralis*. Paul, the first down the wall of the earthly city, goes on in 12:1-10 to describe one who surpassed others in ascending to the heavenly realm—only to learn that there is no human glory in such experiences! So then, the impassioned arguments of his human pedigree and exploits are capped by reference to his otherworldly experiences and resultant identity as one who is "weak, and therefore strong." This clinching argument is followed by the conclusion at 12:11-13:10, in which Paul comments on the methods that he has used during his "apology" and goes on to address his audience directly. So then, the vision-report functions as a non-technical, authoritative proof. Yet, the grounds of that proof are continually undermined by the ironic stance of Paul who places the vision within the context of a fool's boasting.

It is the direction in which the irony moves that bears consideration. Is Paul's irony directed against ecstatic experiences *per se*? Against this view are the persuasive arguments of James Tabor who suggests that Paul refrains from divulging the essence of his vision because of its sacredness, rather than because he considered this unimportant.¹⁶ If Paul is not implying that visions and the like are irrelevant, why the irony? The answer lies in the use to which he puts the report: such experiences are not appropriately mustered as "nontechnical proofs" in an apology, although his audience may well expect such argumentation. He has been "impelled" by the expectations of his hearers to refer to such experiences as evidence, but will only do so in an ironic mode. After all, the signs of apostleship can only really be displayed by one who is "nothing," since they point outside the authority of the speaker to the gospel itself.

The style of the vision-report also bears consideration. Part of its strength lies in the use to which certain conventions are put, for example the conventions of the apocalypse. 1 Cor. 12:1-10 contains all the major features of an apocalypse, including narrative framework, “pseudonymity,”¹⁷ an otherworldly journey with references to different parts of the heavenly realm, an undisclosed audition and vision, and even (perhaps) an *angelus interpres*—although of the Satanic variety. These formal features, plus the esoteric language (“paradise,” “third heaven”) from which Paul distances himself (whether “in the body or out of the body”) evoke a whole corpus of visionary and mystical literature which serve to further his ironic purpose. Paul sets up expectations in order to frustrate them: readers do not receive much more than the “apparatus” of a revelation, and are given, actually, an “un-vision,” an “un-audition” and an “un-interpretation.” Those conversant with the formal features expect an interpretation—the surprising one given through Paul’s inverse angel is that these experiences are not meant to elate, and that weakness means strength. Whatever the identity of the *σκόλοψ*, it serves as a memorial to the visions, a kind of inverse stigmata, over against the resultant “glory” of seers like Moses (2 Cor. 3:7, 13), and is permanent rather than fading.

Despite the irony, or rather because of it, Paul’s proof does establish a kind of authority. The argument works on several levels: if the listeners require this kind of proof, he could give it, but he won’t; Paul’s very reticence should be an indication to them of his real motives and trustworthiness. Paul has his cake, and eats it too in that he has claimed the *fact* of his heavenly journey without inviting his listeners to enter into its intricacies, all the while insisting that such talk is futile. Further, their very accusation of weakness is turned around to have a positive value: the only enduring lesson to be learned is that of human weakness and divine grace.¹⁸

Interestingly, the double-edged sword of irony may assume its own unruly life. Contrary to Paul’s stated intent, the hearer may be tantalized by the brevity of his vision account. It leads one to muse about whether or not Paul hints at the contents of the vision (could *ἀποκαλύψεις κυρίου* possibly be subjective genitive?); whether there is a two-stage journey from third heaven to paradise, or not; what it was that Paul heard; and what exactly is the difference between an in-the-body and out-of-the-body experience. Within the context of Paul’s argument, such

speculative details are quickly abandoned, but they are nonetheless raised in the encounter of this report that refuses to report. Paul's reader is at liberty to pause at the forbidden points and so enter a provisional part of the world evoked by the text, rather than going on to see the entire horizon.

Assessing the Cost of Authority

I have noted the remarkable diversity in the function of the visions contained in these passages. The first vision was used at the head of an argument in order to be explored in a modified epideictic discourse; the second vision was placed in the critical point of the peroration, extending the arguments of an apologetic speech; the third vision was brought forward in the full heat of the argument, but ironically, so as to transmute its apologetic effect into the deliberative mode. Despite the variation, each of the visions and each of the discourses is directly concerned with the issue of authority.

The way in which each of the visions works internally to the arguments at hand should show the insufficiency of George A. Kennedy's suggestion that "radical rhetoric"—that is, prophetic or absolute assertions—be separated from "enthymeme" or carefully contrived logic.¹⁹ In these vision-reports the coming together of the non-technical (the vision) and the invented (the report) can be seen. Those analyzing the New Testament no doubt have been comfortable to bracket radical rhetoric because of its strangeness and the fear that it might subsume the arguments altogether. However, the use of rhetoric in these passages does not demonstrate a strong-arming rhetor or a hopelessly naive ideal reader. Even in the Corinthian correspondence, where one might most have expected this rhetoric to steal the stage as non-technical proof, Paul's irony disassociates vision from authority.²⁰ It is not, as might have been implied in a full-blown apocalypse, that visions are the final authoritative argument to stop the mouth of Paul's detractors. Paul's aim really may be a gentler one. Such an assessment depends largely upon whether there is evidence of playfulness in the text, evidence that Paul expects his hearers to enter freely into the irony, and laugh at themselves, as he laughs at himself.

A Collision of Modes of Expression

Finally, even though the visions function within the logic of the various arguments in a remarkable manner, it should be noted that each of the vision-reports has the potential to take on a life of its own. Here are three unusual cases of the collision of polyvalent and deductive speech, of symbolism and argumentation. The potential for polyvalence is least likely in the Stephen episode where the vision has been so carefully introduced and circumscribed by a prevenient interpretation. It is perhaps the most possible in the Lukan chreia, which still seems to sit uneasily in its context, and cries out for further exploration. Despite Paul's best efforts, the suggestiveness of his journey to paradise may continue to tantalize the reader who refuses to follow the direction of the text towards grace and weakness. Wilhelm Wuellner has pointed out the potential of rhetorical criticism to disclose the rational, cognitive, emotive and imaginative dimensions of the text.²¹ Further investigation of the rhetorical use of visions in the New Testament is bound to uncover the intriguing ways in which these dimensions reinforce each other, or even conflict.

Endnotes

1. The technique is also described by other rhetoricians under other labels (see Quintilian's discussion of *visio* [9.2.40] and Cicero's treatment of the figure in which the matter is placed "sub oculos" [*De orat.* 3.202]).
2. See H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia Commentary (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 131, n. 33. Betz argues for this reading and against the translation "proclaim publicly" from the perspective of rhetorical practice. While he assumes that Paul is exaggerating his practice by ironic reference to the rhetorical topos, it is worth considering what Paul's rhetorical strategies might have been in such portrayals of Christ crucified! I am indebted to my colleague Ian Henderson for this suggestion.
3. *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 40. Mack does not mention visions explicitly, but it is certain that he would classify these along with miracles, oaths, prophetic predictions "and the like."

4. For the likelihood of Luke's currency with these techniques, see W. Kurz, "Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 171-195. The case with Paul is even stronger (see specifically Christopher Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Irony," *New Testament Studies* 32 [1986]: 1-30).
5. Max Turner, "The Spirit of Prophecy and the Power of Authoritative Preaching in Luke-Acts: A Question of Origins," *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992): 71. Turner insists that the verse is much more easily interpreted as the use of apocalyptic *metaphor* to describe the disciples' success than as a literal description of a vision.
6. Burton L. Mack, "Elaboration of the Chreia in the Hellenistic School," in *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels*, by Mack and Vernon K. Robbins (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1989), 48.
7. *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1972), 248ff.
8. Mack, "Elaboration of the Chreia," 66.
9. For one such scheme, see Jacques Dupont, "La structure oratoire du discours d'Etienne (Actes 7)," *Biblica* 66 (1985): 153-167.
10. John J. Kilgallen, "The Function of Stephen's Speech (Acts 7:2-53)," *Biblica* 70 (1989): 186.
11. Max Turner, "The Spirit of Prophecy," *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992): 69.
12. Mack, "Elaboration of the Chreia," 55.
13. David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 127.
14. Note also that Wilhelm Wuellner considers an analogous argument, 1 Cor. 1:9ff, to be a "mixed" speech, an "epideictic apology" in "Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987): 460. See also the composition analysis of Max-Alain Chevallier which demonstrates the pastoral nature of the unit ("L'argumentation de Paul dans II Corinthiens 10 A 13," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 70 [1990]: 3-15).
15. The interesting treatment of Frances Young and David F. Ford sees the vision-report as part of the emotional peroration of the entire letter (*Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987], 39). While a case can certainly be made for looking at the letter as it stands, the obvious signals at the end of chapter nine and the beginning of ten make

- unavoidable the consideration of chapters 10-13 as a unit. Moreover, it seems more natural to view the peroration as beginning at the point where Paul distances himself from the foolish discourse (i.e., at 12:11) and appeals directly to the Corinthians.
16. *Things Unutterable; Paul's Ascent to Paradise in its Greco-Roman, Judaic, and Early Christian Contexts* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986).
 17. This is not to say that the third-person does not also evoke other conventions, such as the boasting of the ἄφρω̄ν, as argued by Jerry W. McCant in "Paul's Thorn of Rejected Apostleship," *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 559.
 18. For a similar reading of another "boasting" passage, see Karl A. Plunk, *Paul and the Irony of Affliction* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987). He concludes that Paul's argument works by "compelling his audience to reinterpret the very categories through which they have challenged his authority." Hence, "[i]n the very world which Paul's text discloses, weakness no longer signifies simply powerlessness or the absence of God, but the presence of divine power" (1987, 92).
 19. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 22.
 20. Perhaps Graham Shaw is too hasty in asserting that rhetorical manipulation renders "the Christian Paul . . . not perhaps so different from the persecuting Saul" (see his *The Cost of Authority: Manipulation and Freedom in the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983], 125).
 21. Wuellner, "Where is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" 461.