

Andrzej M. Gieniusz CR, *"Inesperto nell'arte di parlare"? (2 Cor 11,6). Retorica al servizio del Vangelo* (Percorsi Culturali 25; Roma: Urbaniana University Press 2018). Pp. 264. € 18,70. ISBN 978-88-401-5047-5.

Rhetoric in the Service of the Gospel in *"Inesperto nell'arte di parlare"* (2 Cor 11,6) by A. M. Gieniusz, CR

MARCIN KOWALSKI

Institute of Biblical Studies, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland
 e-mail: xmkowal@gmail.com
 ORCID: 0000-0002-8732-6868

ABSTRACT: The article reviews the book by Andrzej M. Gieniusz, CR, *"Inesperto nell'arte di parlare"? (2 Cor 11, 6). Retorica al servizio del Vangelo* (Percorsi Culturali 25; Roma: Urbaniana University Press 2018). The author begins by discussing the publication in detail, and then proceeds to the specific issues related to it. These include Rom 7:1-6 read as *transitio*, Rom 8:12 as the test case of orality and literacy in Paul, the category of "religious experience" in Paul, the apocalyptic background of Paul's attitude toward work, and the role of 1 Cor 15:8 in constructing the apostle's *ethos*. The main characteristic of the book by Prof. Gieniusz is a creative combination of rhetoric and theology, discussed in the last part of the article. The book shows how to do theology focused on the newness of the Christian life, the primacy of grace and the uniqueness of Christ's way (*solus Christus*).

KEYWORDS: rhetoric, theology, Pauline letters, new life, work, religious experience, justification, New Perspective on Paul

Professor Andrzej Gieniusz is a New Testament lecturer at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, where he also headed the language department for many years. He collaborates actively with the Pontifical Biblical Institute and the *Biblica* magazine, serving as a New Testament editor. He is a specialist in the field of Pauline writings, and his publications on the Letter to the Romans have appeared in most prestigious series and international journals. The hallmark of Prof. Gieniusz is a solid philological analysis of Paul's texts, in which he uses the tools of rhetoric. The book, which the author offers to readers, bears all the features of Prof. Gieniusz's best publications. In this article, we shall start by discussing the content of the publication and then proceed to the analysis of selected issues that may inspire further research on Paul. We shall close stressing the author's fundamental contribution to the development of biblical studies, which is the relationship between rhetoric and theology in Pauline letters.

1. Discussion of the content of the book

The book in question is composed of a collection of articles previously published by the author in *Festschriften*, biblical periodicals and magazines such as *New Testament Studies* or *Biblica*. Some of them have been translated from English into Italian, which is the language of the publication in question. All texts have been reworked in terms of the current bibliography; the titles and fragments of the content have also been changed. Each essay has a similar structure with points announcing the content and summary in English at the end. The book consists of Foreword by Prof. Jean-Noël Aletti, Introduction and seven chapters with Bibliography, an index of names and a biblical index. From the Foreword by Prof. Aletti we can conclude that the book we have in our hands is truly a valuable item, the fruit of many years of Prof. Gieniusz's research. It is palpable proof of how useful rhetoric can be not only in literary studies but also in discovering the theology of Paul.

In Introduction (13-26), the author offers the reader a short outline of the history of rhetoric applied to Pauline letters. Statements in which the apostle seems to give up discursive tools, such as 2 Cor 11:6 or 1 Cor 2:4, according to the author, can be understood as rhetorical figures (*concessio*) and a reference to the topos *puer senex*. The persuasive character of Pauline writings is confirmed by the words of his opponents (2 Cor 10:10) and the testimony of the ancients, with Saint Augustine at the head. Also in the Renaissance, Paul's letters were read in the rhetorical key (Erasmus, Calvin, Melanchthon), the approach which was questioned only in the modern era. The author attributes the reluctance toward rhetoric to the Cartesian method, which in search of certainty rejected everything "probable", and such a category, according to Aristotle, is operated by rhetoric. It was only the second half of the 20th century along with the rise of the *New Rhetoric* that brought reopening to rhetorical studies on Paul. The author, by enumerating protagonists in this field, also points to their mistakes, such as excessive formalism and disregard for the originality of Paul's style. In his book, he does not focus attention on the defense of the rhetorical method as such, but wants to show its potential by analyzing selected fragments of Pauline letters.

Chapter 1 is entitled "Un difetto d'immaginazione (Rm 7:1-6)? L'arte di esemplificare l'irrepetibile" (27-51).¹ The author discusses the difficult passage of Rom 7:1-6, suspended between Romans 6, where the encouragement to live a life faithful to Christian vocation resounds, and Rom 7:7-25, where one listens to the cry of the desperate "ego" torn between desire and inability to fulfill the Law. Analyzing Rm 7:1-6, C. H. Dood accused the apostle of the lack of imagination in

¹ Cf. A. Gieniusz, "Rom 7,1-6: Lack of Imagination? Function of the Passage in the Argumentation of Rom 6,1-7,6," *Bib* 74/3 (1993) 389-400.

illustrating his thoughts with specific images. Disagreeing with his opinion, the author first illuminates the context of the fragment in question. It demonstrates that the text serves both as a summary (*peroratio*) of Romans 6 and as an introduction to Rom 7:7-25 and 8 (the author calls the fragment “an open conclusion”). Paul illustrates the consequences of freedom from the Law for the moral life of Christians. The matrimonial metaphor functions here as *exemplum* (*paradeigma*), illustration, not proof, and plays a number of important roles: it appeals to the Law, which testifies to its own limitation and simultaneously announces the new order of salvation; it brings to mind the new, indissoluble marriage with Christ; it underlines God’s gift and initiative in defining Christian freedom and appeals to the imagination of listeners. Romans 7:1-6 is not at all as abstracted from Paul’s argumentation as it is generally assumed. It testifies to the new life in Christ, which Paul will develop in Romans 8.

Chapter 2, entitled “‘Debitori dello Spirito’ in Rm 8,12? Retorica del silenzio” (52-70) analyzes the anacoluthon that appears in Rom 8:12.² Some have qualified this verse as proof of Paul’s unacquaintance with the art of rhetoric. The author, confronting this opinion, begins by analyzing the vocabulary associated with debt and debtor in the Greco-Roman culture and in the Bible. It shows that the stem *ofeil-*, which in antiquity meant a judicial or economic-commercial commitment, basically does not describe the relationship between God and man in the Scripture and is never used to define the new status of believers in the New Testament. It is associated too much with the economic context and mentality *do ut des*, which is far from the biblical idea of relationship with God. Because of the semantic field of the stem, Paul, according to the author, could not finish v. 12 by saying that believers are “debtors of the Spirit.” Anacoluthon, which appears in Rom 8:12 and which in a spoken language would function as an error, is fully understandable and intentional in the context of written language. Citing examples from ancient rhetoric, the author claims that it serves to give the language a sincere and cordial character. In addition, the silence in v. 12 is to prepare the unexpected conclusion in vv. 13-14, where the apostle describes the new status of believers who become children of God. They are not the debtors of the body or the Spirit, being much more important – God’s sons and daughters. Once again, Paul’s rhetoric, even when using silence, serves to express the new life of believers in Christ.

Chapter 3 is entitled “‘La vita come sacrificio’ (Rm 12:1-8). Retorica dell’esorzare” (71-99).³ The author analyzes Rom 12:1-8, where Paul exhorts Christians to “present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to

² Cf. A. Gieniusz, “‘Debtors to the Spirit’ in Romans 8.12? Reasons for the Silence,” *NTS* 59/1 (2013) 61-72.

³ Cf. A. Gieniusz, “Boże miłosierdzie jako źródło chrześcijańskiego nonkonformizmu (Rz 12,1-2[8]),” *Verbum Vitae* 3 (2003) 139-161.

God, which is their reasonable service” (12:1). Referring to the rhetorical *dispositio*, Prof. Gieniusz first draws attention to the fact that in Rom 12:1, Paul brings to the sphere of everyday life the main thesis on the Gospel, which is the power of God for the salvation of all without exception, Jews and Gentiles alike (Rom 1:16-17). After having determined the limits and structure of the unit under examination, the author proceeds to analyze the most important points of Paul’s argumentation. The apostle begins by invoking God’s mercy as the motivating force of Christian sacrifice, thus pointing to the close relationship between theology (Rom 1–11) and moral life (Rom 12–14) in the Letter to the Romans. Christian life is not so much a response to the experience of God’s mercy as its first effect and manifestation; it is completely rooted in God’s love and provides eloquent proof for the transforming power of the Gospel. The living sacrifice, to which the believers are called, is an existence filled with the new life in Christ (Romans 6), and a reasonable service of God (worship), that is, the service performed according to the logic of God’s mercy (Rom 11:33-36), which transcends human ideas and boundaries. Paul urges Christians to accept the attitude of nonconformists toward the world and renew themselves in their thinking (12:2), explaining what it means in the subsequent vv. 3-8. Christian nonconformity primarily denotes taming purely human ambitions in favor of the mission entrusted to us by God (12:3). According to the author, the “measure of faith” (*metron pisteos*), which God has given to everybody, means the trust with which God puts his tasks in the hands of believers. This translates further into service toward the community (12:4-8). The author points out vv. 1-2 as the thesis of Paul’s rationale in Rom 12:1-8 and shows its development in the *probatio* of vv. 3-8, proving how much rhetoric helps to discover the organic bond between God’s action and the moral life of Christians. The latter is the result of the transforming grace of God and the answer to it.

Chapter 4, “Saldi nella fede in quanto memori. Anamnesi paolina oltre l’ethos e il pathos” (100-131) examines the vocabulary associated with memory and remembrance in Pauline letters.⁴ The apostle takes up this important theological topic of the Old Testament and modifies it. In Paul, the subject who remembers is not God (salvific memory), but Christians, while the apostle is the one who cultivates their memory. In 15:15, the apostle qualifies the entire Letter to the Romans as the anamnesis of the Gospel: instead of new things, he proposes to deepen and place in the life context what Christians have already heard. The objects, to which their memory continually turns, are: 1) the way of Christ, 2) the experience of Paul’s life, 3) the believers’ acceptance of the Gospel. The recollection of the way of Christ helps Christians to appreciate the Gospel they have received (Rom 1:1-7) and solve their own problems with divisions (1 Cor 1–4; 8–10), the Law (Gal

⁴ Cf. A. Gieniusz, “Saldi nella fede in quanto memori. L’anamnesi nelle lettere di Paolo,” *ZN KUL* 3 (2007) 1-20.

3:1-5) or the hope of resurrection (1 Corinthians 15). The memory of the apostle and his path, in turn, allows them to see how the power of God, the same which works in the Gospel proclaimed by Paul, transforms every single believer (Gal 1-2; 1 Cor 15:8-10; Phil 3:5-6) and works in the midst of human weakness (2 Cor 4:6; 11:23-28). Finally, Christians, remembering their own paths of faith, can realize the greatness of their calls, their freedom and the spiritual gifts in which they participate (1 Cor 12:1-3). Ultimately, memory does not only serve Paul as a discursive strategy involving the listeners and legitimizing his own authority. It is an essential element of his preaching and a tool through which he introduces believers to the experience of the Crucified and Resurrected, who changed his life giving him the new vision of God and the new way of understanding the world.

Chapter 5, “Lavorare con le proprie mani e compiere fatiche apstoliche. L’ethos al servizio del logos” (133-161), provides a look at Paul’s considerations regarding physical work.⁵ They are not many and are contextual in nature. Additionally, they contain an interesting difference in relation to the Old Testament tradition. The author begins with 1 Thess 4:9-12, where Paul encourages the community to work “with their own hands” (4:11). It is not a typical expression of Hellenic Greek and is rarely used in the Old Testament. It simply means one’s own work or independent maintenance. The Apostle calls the Thessalonians to work for their own support for two reasons: 1) this way they give good witness to the Gospel before the world (missionary motive, cf. 1 Cor 9:12) and 2) in the spirit of fraternal charity they do not become a burden for others. The motive for the call is not the Gnostic crisis, nor the expectation of the Lord’s second coming, the problem of the members who abused the community, or the Greco-Roman contempt for manual work. According to the author, Paul does not give a specific reason for his appeal, keeping the distance from current problems and trying to give his teaching a universal dimension. Next, the apostle, speaking of his own work, includes it in the *peristaseis* catalogs (1 Cor 4:11-13), interpreting it as a strenuous effort and toil. The author briefly sketches the working conditions and the workshop of ancient craftsmen, in which Paul could labor, indicating how far they correspond to the descriptions from 1 Cor 4:11, 1 Thess 2:9 or 2 Cor 11:27. The fact that the apostle places physical work in the catalogs describing trials and hardships suggests that he perceives them as a way to imitate the Crucified Lord.

Only in one context, 1 Cor 15:9-10, Paul speaks about his work positively and with enthusiasm. Recalling his past and calling himself “a miscarriage,” he points at the work that God’s grace has done in him and through him (he labored more than others). The apostolic work, which is nothing but the grace and power of God working in the apostle, is the source of his joy and the testimony of the Risen Lord who lives in him. Any other kind of work is put in a subordinate po-

⁵ Cf. A. Gieniusz, “Paolo: lavorare con le proprie mani e compiere fatiche apostoliche,” *Parola, Spirito e Vita* 2 (2005) 175-196.

sition, being at the service of the apostolate. Paul avoids calling work God's will and does not refer to the theology of work as the human participation in God's creation (Genesis 2). This way, he can help the contemporary *homo faber* free himself from the illusion of work which is the only purpose of human life.

Chapter 6, "Come un aborto (1 Cor 15.8). Proclamare la risurrezione parlando di sé" (163-185), treats the famous *crux interpretum* in 1 Cor 15:8, where Paul calls himself *ektroma*, "a miscarriage."⁶ The author begins from the Old Testament, in which the term in question appears in Num 12:12 and compares the Hebrew text with the Greek version (LXX) and Targumic traditions. In the interpretation of LXX, Miriam, disobeying Moses, is punished with leprosy and threatened to become like a dead fetus who devours its mother's body. This understanding of Num 12:12 (LXX) supports, according to the author, both the context and the ancient tradition of exegesis represented by Philo. Analyzing *Legum allegoriarum* 1:76, it can be noticed that the dead fetus is also described as lethal, carrying death, a threat to the mother's life. This meaning will become the starting point for the author to propose his own interpretation of miscarriage metaphor in 1 Corinthians 15. Professor Gieniusz argues against the proposals that explained the image in reference to Paul's vocation: called without preparation, taken out of his former life, born late to Christ. Others saw in 1 Corinthians 15 the accusations of Pauline opponents, the apostle's own remark on his past (spiritual death) and miraculous conversion, or on being rejected by other apostles. All these proposals neither fit well into the argumentative context of 1 Corinthians 15 nor explain satisfactorily why, instead of describing himself as spiritually dead (*nekros*), Paul speaks of himself as a "miscarriage" (*ektroma*). The Pauline choice is illuminated by the passage in Philo who draws attention to the threat to the mother's life posed by a dead fetus. Paul, calling himself as such, makes an allusion to his past as a persecutor of the Church who "devoured" the body of Christ. The miracle of resurrection which he experienced and which he recalls in the rhetorical *narratio* in 1 Cor 15:1-11 prepares his subsequent argumentation on resurrection. Bringing back to life the apostle who was like a "dead fetus" resembles the passage from death to life experienced by every believer through baptism (Rom 6:13) and announces the final act of God's grace – the resurrection of the faithful at the end of time.

Last Chapter 7, "Quale posta in gioco nella dottrina sulla giustificazione per fede in Paolo? Dalla retorica alla teologia" (187-226), deals with the issue of justification, still widely debated both among theologians and biblical scholars.⁷

6 Cf. A. Gieniusz, "Come a un aborto'. Significato e funzione della metafora in 1 Cor 15,1-11 alla luce di Nm 12,12 (LXX)," *Non mi vergogno del Vangelo, potenza di Dio. Studi in onore di Jean-Noël Aletti SJ, nel suo 70° compleanno* (eds. F. Bianchini – S. Romanello) (AnBib 200; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press 2012) 135-151; A. Gieniusz, "As a miscarriage'. The Meaning and Function of the Metaphor in 1 Cor 15:1-11 in Light of Num 12:12 (LXX)," *BibAn* 3/1 (2013) 93-107.

7 Cf. A. Gieniusz, "Identity markers' o 'solus Christus'. Quale posta in gioco nella dottrina della giustificazione per fede in Paolo?," *Euntes Docete* 53/3 (2000) 7-27.

The author departs from the traditional interpretation of Augustine and Luther and mentions the recent rapprochement between Catholic and Protestant positions, noting that it does not translate into biblical research, still deeply divided in this matter. Then, he discusses two main currents that questioned the traditional interpretation of justification: the so-called “covenantal nomism” and “Jewish particularism.” The first approach is represented by Ed Parish Sanders (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism*) who denied the legalistic understanding of Judaism as a religion of deeds, claiming that it perceived salvation as an act of God’s mercy taking place in the Covenant, to which good deeds were only an answer. Works of Law served staying in the Covenant and did not guarantee getting into it. According to Sanders, the Law in Paul’s theology became dispensable for two reasons: 1) salvation is now achieved only through participation in the death and resurrection of Christ; 2) salvation in Christ is open to everybody without exceptions, while the Law excluded the Gentiles. Sanders became a protagonist of the new look at the Judaism of Paul’s time (religion of grace) contributing to the creation of the so-called *New Perspective on Paul*.

The second current, which challenges the traditional paradigm and also belongs to the *New Perspective*, is represented by James D.G. Dunn. Following Ferdinand C. Baur, Krister Stendahl and Sanders, Dunn focuses on the issue of Jewish particularism, which would stand behind Paul’s critique of the Law. Like Sanders, Dunn reads the justification in the context of Covenant and mutual obligations that it carries. In contrast to Luther, he claims that not only does it mean an acquittal but also a change of the believer. Justification not only opens the Covenant with God but also works within the Covenant, constantly transforming a man who still remains a sinner (*simul iustus et peccator*). Finally, in Dunn’s interpretation, Paul does not reject the Law as such, but its socio-cultural components (“identity markers”) that construct the identity of Israel and exclude the pagans from salvation. The markers are the “deeds of the Law,” which include circumcision, laws of ritual purity and feasts.

After a concise presentation of Dunn’s position, the author criticizes it starting with his understanding of “the deeds of Law.” The Qumran texts (4QMMT) do not allow for the narrow interpretation of Dunn, qualifying “the deeds of Law” as the whole of precepts, whose observance leads to the remission of sins and salvation. Dunn also seems to overemphasize the particularism of Israel, which, as Terence Donaldson claimed, was also open to the salvation of the gentiles.⁸ To the pleas from the outside, the author also adds the evidence from Paul’s letters, specifically from the Letter to the Galatians and the Letter to the Romans. In the first one, it can be seen that Paul fights Judeo-Christians and Jews who impose the Law on pagans not as a socio-cultural element, but as the

⁸ See T.L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles. Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1997).

way of salvation equal or rival to Christ. Similarly, in the Letter to the Romans, the Law does not appear as an ethno-cultural factor, but as the direct adversary of Christ. The author focuses on Rom 1–4, introducing readers into the logic of the apostle’s argumentation on justification. Prof. Gieniusz rejects Luther’s classical interpretation, according to which the fulfillment of Law transforms into self-sufficiency and the reason for boasting before God, thus annihilating the grace of salvation. He also excludes the understanding of the Law as an “identity marker” in favor of its crucial role in the process of salvation in Paul. In the last paragraph, the author builds on Aletti’s and Romanello’s works, arguing for the drama of humanity without Christ described in Rom 7:7–25. Romans 7 shows the situation of those who live under the Law, in contrast to the believers described by the apostle in Romans 5–6 and 8. Ultimately, the core of the Pauline theology of justification is not so much the Law and how the apostle understands it, but the decisive primacy of Christ as the only way of salvation for mankind (*solus Christus*). At this point, the *New Perspective on Paul* shows its fundamental weakness, impoverishing Pauline Christology and replacing it with a discussion on socio-cultural topics.

2. Selected issues of the monograph

The chapters that make up the book under review cover a wide range of topics related to Paul’s rhetoric, the new status of Christians, moral life, the attitude to work and theology of justification. Each reader can find in the presented publication an issue that will attract his/her attention or inspire his/her research. The choice of issues that will appear below is dictated by the personal interests of the writer and inspirations drawn from the book.

2.1. Rom 7:1–6 and the role of *transitiones* in Paul’s argumentation

Let us begin with Rom 7:1–6, a fragment that at first glance destroys the argumentative order between chapter six and seven of the Letter to the Romans. After the call to be faithful to the new baptismal identity and to avoid sin (Romans 6), Paul suddenly introduces the theme of Law, accompanied by a conjugal metaphor. Clearly, there is a new semantic field that includes the subject of Law which will be dominant in Rom 7:7–25. At the same time, Rom 7:6–8 contains a reference to the vocabulary associated with sin and death, which so abundantly appeared in chapter six. Professor Gieniusz rightly argues that Rom 7:1–6 plays a pivotal role. He calls it *peroratio* and an “open conclusion” which turns not only to Romans 6 and 7:7–25 but also to chapter eight, announcing the theme of

the Spirit as the giver of new life (Rom 7:6) (39-42). In this context, the analyzed fragment can also be classified as *transitio*, a summary and transition to the next argument.⁹ In ancient rhetorical speeches, especially those of an epideictic nature, there can be many transitions, and they testify well to the rhetorical competence of the author, who thus smoothly guides his listeners towards the next stage of argumentation.¹⁰

Transitiones especially often appear in the Second Corinthians, where Paul develops the theme of his apostolate characterized by simplicity and sincerity toward God, not the wisdom of this world (*propositio* in 2 Cor 1:12-14).¹¹ *Transitiones* usually echo the main thesis of the letter. Paul willingly uses metaphors in them, as in 2 Cor 2:14-17, where he describes himself as being led in the triumphal procession of Christ.¹² By their very nature, *transitiones* fulfill an illustrative, non-evidential role, repeating the arguments of the previous units and smoothly leading to the next ones. Their important role in Paul's discursive strategy can be seen in 2 Cor 11:30-33, where Paul announces his boasting of weakness.¹³ The *transitio* in 2 Cor 11:30-33, describing the apostle's disgraceful escape from Damascus, prepares a paradigm shift which will take place in 2 Cor 12:7-10.¹⁴ Professor Gieniusz, by using the example of Rom 7:1-6, proves how important the "open conclusions" (*transitiones*) can be in Paul's rhetorical argumentation. This encourages a careful study of the passages which function as turning points in the apostle's rationale. Instead of treating them as a sudden, awkward change of subject, we should look, as the author does, at the metaphors present there and their links to the preceding and following arguments.

9 On *transitio* see [Cicero], *Rhet. Her.* 4.26.35. *Transitio* is the name given to the figure, which briefly recalls what has already been said, and announces what is to follow. According to H. Lausberg – D.E. Orton – R.D. Anderson, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric. A Foundation for Literary Study* (Leiden – Boston: Brill 1998) § 850, *transitio* can also have an emotive form. The author refers to Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.3.24-25.

10 Cf. L. Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain* (Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 137-138; Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 1993) I, 317-318.

11 See 2 Cor 2:14-17; 4:1-6; 4:16-18; 5:11-15; 6:1-2; 11:16-16; 11:30-33, 12:5-7a. Cf. M. Kowalski, "Sługa słowa i chluba Koryntu. Analiza literacko-retoryczna argumentacji Pawła w 2 Kor 1-7," *BibAn* 3/2 (2013) 327-337; M. Kowalski, *Transforming Boasting of Self into Boasting in the Lord. The Development of the Pauline Periautologia in 2 Cor 10-13* (Studies in Judaism; Lanham: University Press of America 2013) 106-107, 112-113, 118-120.

12 On the metaphor in 2 Cor 2,14-16, see S.J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit. Paul's Defence of His Ministry in 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3* (Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster 2000) 35-83.

13 On the pivotal character of 2 Cor 11:30-33, see V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians. Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 32A; New Haven – London: Yale University Press 2008) 539; M.E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians. Volume 2. Commentary on II Corinthians VIII-XIII* (ICC; London – New York: T&T Clark 2004) 733.

14 Cf. Kowalski, *Transforming Boasting of Self into Boasting in the Lord*, 190.

2.2. Rom 8:12: an example of orality and literacy in Paul

When analyzing Rom 8:12, Prof. Gieniusz makes a remark on the rhetorical meaning of anacoluthon present there, which manifests its role when we take into account the written nature of Paul's correspondence. According to the author, in the oral transmission, anacoluthon can be qualified as a communicative error, a lapsus in the art of rhetoric. Some interpreters, representing quite distant past, qualified in this manner Rom 8:12, denying its rhetorical value.¹⁵ Professor Gieniusz claims that the vision of Paul's letters filled with flaws is impossible, if we take into account the way in which epistles were composed in antiquity and the multitude of corrections they could undergo before reaching their final stage. The author refers to the publications by E. Randolph Richards¹⁶ and Tiziano Dorandi¹⁷. Considering the stages of text production reconstructed by them, one should assume that the anacolutha we find in Paul's letters are simply intentional (65).

The author makes an interesting incursion into the highly popular research field regarding the oral and written nature of Paul's correspondence. These topics, discussed intensively since the second half of the twentieth century, have already received many critical elaborations.¹⁸ Their authors departed from a monolithic understanding of orality and literacy as two mutually exclusive phenomena, which characterized the first studies on the subject. Ancient texts, including Pauline letters, contain a whole spectrum of interacting oral and literary markers.¹⁹ The features of the spoken language seem to prevail in the apostle's correspondence, which was composed through dictation and intended for the ear of his audience. Assonances, repetitions, chiasms, direct appeals to audience and agonistic tone testify to the oral-aural character of Pauline letters.²⁰ At the same time, they include the advanced literary markers like quotations, scriptural allu-

15 See F.W. Farrar, "The Rhetoric of Saint Paul," *Expositor* 10 (1879) 1-27, esp. 26.

16 See E.R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 2/42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1991).

17 See T. Dorandi, *Nell'officina dei classici. Come lavoravano gli autori antichi* (Freccce 45; Roma: Carocci 2007).

18 See R.C. Culley, "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies," *Oral Tradition* 1/1 (1986) 30-65; T.C. Mournet, *Oral Tradition and Literary Dependency. Variability and Stability in the Synoptic Tradition and Q* (WUNT 2/195; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2005) 54-99; Kowalski, *Transforming Boasting of Self into Boasting in the Lord*, 14-21. On Paul, see J. Dewey, "Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions," *Semeia* 65 (1994) 37-66; J.A. Loubser, "Orality and Pauline 'Christology'. Some Hermeneutical Implications," *Scriptura* 47 (1993) 25-51; J.A. Loubser, "Orality and Literacy in the Pauline Epistles," *Neot.* 29/1 (1995) 61-74; J.D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text. Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters* (ETS studies 1; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 1998).

19 Cf. Kowalski, *Transforming Boasting of Self into Boasting in the Lord*, 18-21.

20 Cf. W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word* (New accents; London – New York: Methuen 1982) 36-57; C.W. Davis, *Oral Biblical Criticism. The Influence of the Principles of Orality on the Literary Structure of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (JSNTSup 172; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1999) 16-20.

sions, *gezerah shawah* and complicated subordinate sentences.²¹ In a letter such as Romans, for which Paul had a relatively long time to write, and which was not forced by any urgent pastoral problem, we can also expect a greater percentage of literary features.

One should absolutely agree with the author who claims that the anacoluthon in Rom 8:12 was intended by Paul. Professor Gieniusz in a superb way analyzes its literary function and theological meaning. Although ancient culture knows the notion of debt which cannot be formally repaid and combines it with reciprocity and grace, the author emphasizes the radiant diversity of Christian thought.²² Paul is silent on the subject of Christian debt to the Spirit, pointing out to the newness characterizing the status of God's children. What is arguable, however, is the author's statement that the anacoluthon in Rom 8:12 is a problem more for a spoken language than a written one. The written style is by nature characterized by precision, *akribeia*, which seems to be lacking in Rom 8:12.²³ The anacoluthon, on the other hand, can be well included among the oral features of Rom 8:12-14, evidenced by the chiasm aptly recognized by the author (66-68).²⁴ In spoken language, anacoluthon can be interpreted as a part of the communicative strategy (a sign of honest, heartfelt speech), but also a rhetorical figure, *aposiopesis*. Romans 8:12 reveals the complementarity of orality and literacy in Paul in a splendid way. The product of the spoken language, the anacoluthon in v. 12, has been preserved in the written document because, as Prof. Gieniusz rightly argues, it was a hundred percent intentional. A small note on this subject made by the author in the essay on Rom 8:12 inspires us to study the creative interface between orality and literacy in the writings of the apostle.

2.3. Religious experience as a theological category in the letters of Paul

Another interesting issue arises at the end of the fourth essay, which the author devotes to Pauline anamnesis. Professor Gieniusz argues that the apostle's theology is a theology of experience. Memory plays not only the role of communicative factor in it but also belongs strictly to the nature of Paul's preaching. The author refers to the classic position of Jürgen Becker *Paulus. Der Apos-*

²¹ Cf. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 36-46, 49-57.

²² See Seneca the Younger, *Ben.*, 2.35.3-5; 5.4.1; 6.29.2; 7.15.3-5; idem, *Ep.*, 73.9-10.

²³ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.12.2; Alkidamas, *On Those Who Write Written Speeches, or on the Sophists*, 13. Quoted after M. Gagarin, "The Orality of Greek Oratory," *Signs of Orality. The Oral Tradition and Its Influence in the Greek and Roman World* (ed. E.A. Mackay) (Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava. Supplementum 188; Boston: Brill 1999) 166.

²⁴ On the anacoluthon witnessing to the oral composition of Pauline letters, see M.L. Stirewalt, *Paul, the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2003) 20-23.

tel der Völker (1998), where the qualification of *Erfahrungstheologie* appears in the chapter analyzing the structure of Paul's thought. Becker speaks of the apostle who develops his theology starting from the experience of his vocation and, above all, the experience of the Gospel in the missionary field.²⁵ Similarly to Becker, for Prof. Gieniusz experience is both the point of reference and the goal of Paul's theology, which leads to immersion in the life of the Crucified and Risen One. In the same way, the Damascus event changed the whole life of Paul, it can also transform the existence of believers (129).²⁶

Together with the concept of *Erfahrungstheologie*, undertaken by the author, we enter again the popular field of study which emphasizes the importance of religious experience in the early Christian period. The first Christians did not reason out of doctrine but out of the experience of Christ and his Spirit.²⁷ As a theological category, experience already appears in the monograph by James D.G. Dunn, who also analyzes it in the context of Pentecostal movements.²⁸ The deficiency in treating the religious experience in the New Testament studies was then criticized by Luke Timothy Johnson, who examined this category in Paul, postulating a broad, phenomenological-cultural approach.²⁹ Larry Hurtado, in turn, saw in the powerful revelatory experiences that took place in the first weeks after the resurrection, the basis for the development of the divine worship of Christ and the factor that radically modified the Jewish monotheistic paradigm.³⁰ Finally, religious experience is being systematically examined by the SBL Section for Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Early Christianity, which has already devoted to it two edited volumes.³¹

25 See J. Becker, *Paulus, der Apostel der Völker* (Uni-Taschenbücher Theologie 2014; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 31998) 395-402.

26 On the Damascus experience as the source of Pauline theology, see S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (WUNT 2/4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1984).

27 Cf. E. Schweizer, "πνεῦμα", *TDNT* VI, 396.

28 See J.D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit. A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1970); idem, *Jesus and the Spirit. A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (New Testament Library; London: SCM 1975).

29 See L.T. Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity. A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress 1998).

30 See L.W. Hurtado, "Religious Experience and Religious Innovation in the New Testament," *JR* 80/2 (2000) 183-205; idem, "Revelatory Experiences and Religious Innovation in Earliest Christianity," *ExpTim* 125/10 (2014) 469-486.

31 See F. Flannery – C. Shantz – R.A. Werline (eds.), *Experientia, Volume 1. Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Society of Biblical Literature symposium series 40; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature 2008); C. Shantz – R.A. Werline (eds.), *Experientia, Volume 2. Linking Text and Experience* (EJL 35; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature 2012). See esp. T. Engberg-Pedersen, "The construction of Religious Experience in Paul," *Experientia, Volume 1. Inquiry into Religious Experience in Early Judaism and Christianity* (eds. F. Flannery – C. Shantz – R.A. Werline) (Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 40; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature 2008) 147-157.

The essay on Pauline anamnesis by Prof. Gieniusz refers first and foremost to the way of Christ as the object of Christian memory (110-116). It is the foundation of the Gospel of Paul, but also of the kerygma and traditions of the entire original Church. In this sense, the experience of Christ in Christians is mediated through the proclamation of the Gospel, becoming also the norm for any individual. Additionally, the way of Christ becomes accessible to the community when it enters into the life of the apostle, in which the image of the Crucified (1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:7-12; 6:3-10; 11:23-29) and Risen Lord (2 Cor 13:4) is reflected (116-121). Finally, the key moments of Christian life (conversion, baptism, acceptance of the Gospel), which can also be extended to a wide spectrum of existential situations, become the place of the re-experienced event of Christ (122-127). What gives the Christian experience objectivity is the way of Christ imprinted in the Gospel, which is repeated in the apostle and believers. "The powerful revelatory experiences", as Hurtado puts it, to live on and influence others must be cultivated by Paul.³² This experience, which is repeated, does not lose anything of its originality in the life of the individual.³³ It also motivates one's moral life.³⁴ Prof. Gieniusz's essay is a valuable contribution to the phenomenology of the New Testament religious experience and an encouragement to deepen this aspect of Pauline theology. The author shows the dimension of experience which goes beyond the dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity, is both deeply original and repetitive, and strongly rooted in the Gospel, which introduces Christians to the life of the Crucified and Risen Christ.

2.4. Greco-Roman and apocalyptic vision of work in Paul

The subject of work discussed in the fifth essay of Prof. Gieniusz may not be the most important, but certainly one of the most interesting topics in Pauline letters. It allows us to get closer to the reality of Paul's life and life of people of his time. Certainly, when talking about his hard work, Paul does not exaggerate, as evidenced by contemporary studies on the economic and living conditions of craftsmen in antiquity. The author refers to the well-known publications by

³² See Hurtado, "Religious Experience and Religious Innovation in the New Testament," 204.

³³ On the religious experience which goes beyond the empirical world and at the same time is rooted in everyday life, transforming individuals, see M. Wreford, "Diagnosing Religious Experience in Romans 8," *TynBul* 68/2 (2017) 221.

³⁴ Cf. V. Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul. Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life* (WUNT 2/283; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2010) 131-132.

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor,³⁵ Ronald F. Hock³⁶ and Wayne A. Meeks.³⁷ Murphy-O'Connor claims that Paul did not learn his profession of tentmaker following the rabbinical tradition, which recommended the adepts of scriptural studies having a manual job by which they could support themselves. Paul worked out of necessity, when, after his conversion to Christianity, he lost the support of his Jewish family and fellow believers.³⁸ This may explain his attitude to physical work, which the apostle describes as a burden and toil. Is this judgment also a mark of his former life and his belonging to the relatively well-to-do strata of ancient society?

One should agree with the author's conclusion that Paul's placing of work in the *peristaseis* catalog suggests that by his manual labor and toil the apostle imitates the Crucified Christ. For the Corinthians, the physical work of their apostle was a dishonor and proof of his weakness.³⁹ However, this way Paul clearly demonstrates through his own example the radical overturn of values which took place in the Cross of Christ: what was dishonorable and weak became the revelation of the new ethos of love and service. Paul also presents himself in Corinth as a loving father, who does not want to burden his community with his maintenance (2 Cor 12:14-15). Professor Gieniusz rightly points out that there is only one work to which Paul devotes all his energies freely and with enthusiasm, that is, the preaching of the Gospel (1 Cor 15:10) (158). One can ask at this point, what were the motivations of this preference? Perhaps it was the apocalyptic frame of Paul's thinking, which he presents concisely in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31.⁴⁰ In view of the passing reality of this world, the family and closely related physical work are simply falling into the background. Paul prefers celibacy and the proclamation of the Gospel because they give an opportunity to work for the Kingdom of God in the condensed time of grace that manifested itself in Christ.⁴¹ Perhaps this apostle-specific life attitude observed by the community in Thessalonica was the cause of their later dilemmas related to work (1 Thes 4:11). The inspirational

35 See J. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth. Texts and Archaeology* (GNS 6; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier 1983); J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life* (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press 1997).

36 See R.F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry. Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1980)

37 See W.A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1983)

38 See Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul. A Critical Life*, 85-90.

39 Cf. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of the Corinthians*, 683-684.

40 On the apocalyptic reading of 1 Cor 7:29-31, see W. Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy. The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 22004) 174.

41 On the meaning of the expression ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν, see K.H. Rengstorf, "συστέλλω", *TDNT* VII, 597; H. Balz, "συστέλλω", *EDNT* III, 313; G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1987) 338-339; D.E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2003) 328; Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 179-180.

essay by Prof. Gieniusz, in which the author points to the relativized value of physical work in Paul, begs new questions and new explorations.

2.5. The ethos of the apostle in 1 Cor 15:8

The last specific point picked up in the review is the rhetorical role of the metaphor in 1 Cor 15:8 discussed by Prof. Gieniusz. The author in a concise and well-substantiated manner dismantles the hypotheses which read the metaphor as a reference to the criticism of Pauline opponents, the apostle's own opinion about himself or a hint at his marginalization among other apostles. The interpretation proposed by Prof. Gieniusz is based on solid philology, with reference to Philo and the description of dead fetus as devouring the body of his mother. According to the author, this way the apostle would make an allusion to his past as a persecutor of the Church. The crucial question is why Paul placed this element of his biography in the introduction to chapter fifteen, where he deals with the problem of resurrection. Professor Gieniusz qualifies 1 Cor 15:8 as a part of *narratio*, in which the problem is introduced and the seeds of argumentation (*semina probationis*) are placed. Based on such a rhetorical qualification, Paul's transformation (from the dead fetus to the apostle, in which God's grace works more than in others) announces the way to follow and ultimately foreshadows the final resurrection.

This interpretation is well embedded both in the rhetorical structure of the text and its argumentative context. *Narratio*, by nature, refers to the facts that have occurred and which are important to the case.⁴² According to Quintilian, it can also introduce the thesis of the speech.⁴³ In turn, Aristotle sees in *narratio* a place for reference to the *ethos* of the speaker that supports his argumentation.⁴⁴ Based on this last remark, in 1 Cor 15:8, where Paul calls himself a "miscarriage," one can see the *ethos* of the apostle which works for the Gospel proclaimed by him. The change that took place in the life of the persecutor of the Church confirms the truth and validity of the Gospel of believers' resurrection, which is questioned in Corinth. At the same time, the metaphor announces, as rightly argued by Prof. Gieniusz, the resurrection scenario itself, which Paul will be developing in chapter fifteen. *Narratio* works for both the *ethos* and the *logos* of the Pauline Gospel. The sixth essay proves eloquently how a proper reading of

⁴² On *narratio* in ancient rhetoric, see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.13.3-5; 16.1-11; [Cicero], *Rhet. Her.* 1.8.12-9.16; Cicero, *Inv.* 1.19.27-22.31; Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2; Lausberg – Orton – Anderson, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, § 289.

⁴³ See Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2.21, 54.

⁴⁴ See Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.16. See also Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2.111-115.

the rhetorical *dispositio* determines our proper understanding of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15.

3. The Relationship between Paul's theology and rhetoric

Returning to the original thought of Prof. Aletti expressed in the Foreword, the book which Prof. Gieniusz offers to readers confirms that rhetoric rightly enjoys its strong position in the study of Pauline letters. It has also been proved by the multiplicity of publications in this field, which among others emphasize the bond existing between the art of speech and the art of letter writing.⁴⁵ While the rhetorical methodology shows its usefulness in analyzing Paul's arguments, sometimes it seems to have difficulties in getting to the core of Paul's message, that is, the theology of the apostle. The relationship between rhetoric and theology in Paul can be understood in many ways, as Johan S. Vos points out.⁴⁶ A number of contemporary biblical scholars, like Joseph A. Fitzmyer, James D.G. Dunn or N.T. Wright, read Pauline letters without rhetoric. Others, like Johannes Weiss⁴⁷ or Eduard Lohse,⁴⁸ limited the rhetorical approach to the analysis of style, practically separating it from theology. Other advocates of the trend, which Vos calls coherent-contingent (Jürgen Becker,⁴⁹ J. Christiaan Beker,⁵⁰ Lauri Thurén⁵¹), perceive rhetoric as a polemical tool for communication and problem solving, serving theology that hides somewhere behind Paul's arguments. Hans Hübner, also belonging to this current, agrees with the fact that theologizing is the process of developing convincing arguments in a given rhetorical situation, but ultimately separates rhetoric from Paul's thought, his theology of justification from the preaching of justification.⁵² In his opinion, theology cannot reach the essence of the apostle's thinking with the help of argumentative tools. Theology can be called rhetorical because it is contextual and historical, but its source is inaccessible to human argumentation and preaching

⁴⁵ See e.g. J.P. Sampley – P. Lampe (eds.), *Paul and Rhetoric* (T & T Clark Biblical Studies; New York – London: T & T Clark 2010); S.E. Porter – S.A. Adams (eds.), *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form* (Pauline Studies 6; Leiden – Boston: Brill 2010).

⁴⁶ See J.S. Vos, "Rhetoric and Theology in the Letters of Paul," *Paul and Rhetoric* (eds. J.P. Sampley – P. Lampe) (T & T Clark Biblical Studies; New York – London: T & T Clark 2010) 161-179.

⁴⁷ See J. Weiss, *Urchristentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1917).

⁴⁸ See E. Lohse, *Paulus. Eine Biographie* (München: C.H. Beck 1996).

⁴⁹ See Becker, *Paulus, der Apostel der Völker*.

⁵⁰ See J.C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1980).

⁵¹ See L. Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul. A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law* (WUNT 2/124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2000).

⁵² See H. Hübner, "Die Rhetorik und die Theologie," *Die Macht des Wortes. Aspekte gegenwärtiger Rhetorikforschung* (eds. C.J. Classen – H.-J. Müllenbrock) (Ars Rhetorica 4; Marburg: Hitzeroth 1992) 165-179.

the Gospel goes beyond the realm of rhetoric.⁵³ In a similar vein, Paul W. Meyer states that there is no clear and straight line between Paul's rhetoric and theology. The only sure ground, the transcendent guarantor for both, is God's action and the inspiration of the Spirit.⁵⁴

Apart from this approach, there is another one that sees in rhetoric a broader strategy of the construction of a symbolic universe, to which theology belongs.⁵⁵ Rhetoric is also deeply appreciated in the studies of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who postulates a re-conceptualization of biblical theology in rhetorical terms.⁵⁶ Here we find a claim exactly opposite to what Thurén proposes, speaking of "derhetorizing" Paul to get to the core of his message. According to Schüssler Fiorenza, such an operation cannot be executed because rhetoric and language in general are not the ordinary media of communication. Language is by nature performative. It shapes reality, and therefore has a rhetorical, political and ideological dimension. It is hard not to see that in the proposed approach rhetoric actually grows into the primary research tool for reading Paul's letters. It happens, however, at the expense of theology, which is reduced to a socio-cultural, historical and ideological element that has less and less to do with revelation.

Are we doomed to choose, as Vos puts it, between the platonic and neo-sophistic approach to Paul's rhetoric and theology?⁵⁷ The book by Prof. Gieniusz provides a refreshing answer: fortunately, no, we are not. There is a third way, an approach not mentioned by Vos, embodied by the Roman rhetorical school, whose representatives are J.-N. Aletti and A. Gieniusz.⁵⁸ In their research, rhetoric, understood primarily with reference to *dispositio*, the construction of speech, is closely related to theology. It is not only the language (*verba*), which is the carrier of the idea (*res*), but the structure on which the thoughts are situated. In this sense, rhetoric functions in the book of Gieniusz as *inventio*. It consists in discovering the internal logic of Paul's argumentation and the entire repository

⁵³ Cf. Vos, "Rhetoric and Theology in the Letters of Paul," 166-168.

⁵⁴ See P.W. Meyer, "Pauline Theology," *Pauline Theology Volume IV. Looking Back, Pressing On* (ed. E.E. Johnson) (Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series; Atlanta: Scholars Press 1997) 140-160.

⁵⁵ See A.T. Lincoln – A.J.M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* (New Testament theology; Cambridge England – New York: Cambridge University Press 1993).

⁵⁶ See E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic. The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1999).

⁵⁷ Cf. Vos, "Rhetoric and Theology in the Letters of Paul," 172-179.

⁵⁸ See esp. J.-N. Aletti, *Justification by Faith in the Letters of Saint Paul. Keys to Interpretation* (Analecta Biblica. Studia 5; Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press 2015); J.-N. Aletti, *God's Justice in Romans. Keys for Interpreting the Epistle to the Romans* (SubBi 37; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press 2010); J.-N. Aletti, *Essai sur l'ecclésiologie des lettres de saint-Paul* (Études Bibliques; Pendé: J. Gabalda 2009); J.-N. Aletti, "La rhétorique paulinienne. Construction et communication d'une pensée," *Paul, une théologie en construction* (eds. J.-N. Aletti – A. Dettwiler – J.-D. Kaestli – D. Marguerat) (Le Monde de la Bible 51; Genève: Labor et Fides 2004); A. Gieniusz, *Romans 8,18-30. Suffering Does Not Thwart the Future Glory* (USFSJH 9; Atlanta, GA: Scholars 1999).

of arguments that the apostle employs, including *pathos*, *ethos*, arguments from the Scriptures and other logical devices (*logos*). They find their place and proper function in the discursive structure of Pauline letters, which can be compared to the riverbed. It gives an idea of where the thought is going, but to understand it, one has to immerse himself/herself in it. A careful philological analysis serves precisely this purpose, and it is the true forte of Prof. Gieniusz's book. This way, the rhetorical *inventio* and *dispositio* are filled with their living content, leading readers to the discovery of Pauline theology.

The rhetoric of Paul obviously has a performative character, but it is subordinated to the Gospel whose exposition is the main task and function of Paul's letters (Rom 1:16-17, Gal 1:11-12; 1 Cor 1:18). As Prof. Gieniusz genuinely demonstrates in his book, rhetoric is organically connected with theology and leads to it. Without rhetoric, it is difficult to understand the uniqueness of the way of justification described in Rom 1–4 or the newness of the status of Christians who are freed from the Law to enter the indissoluble marriage with Christ (Rom 7:1-6). They do not suffer from the terrible frustration depicted in Romans 7:7-25 and are not debtors of sin or Spirit (Rom 8:12), being children of God and coheirs with Christ. We are not a generation that understands mystics and do not read many poets today.⁵⁹ It is a disadvantage because theology is a discipline which has to do with the mystical experiences of revelation and to express them one has to operate with the language of poetry. By applying our analytical tools to it, we risk stripping theology of its beauty, richness, mystical and poetic depth. Professor Gieniusz managed to avoid these dangers, which is a rare and laudable achievement. His rhetorical analysis of Paul opens before readers the theology of the apostle in its most beautiful and deepest dimension, without exhausting it, but inviting to explore ever anew.

4. Conclusion

The scholarly achievements of Prof. Gieniusz, with which we can get acquainted in the book *Inesperto nell'arte di parlare*, undoubtedly deserve to be brought closer and reminded to readers. They are an example of an outstanding exegesis based on a thorough philological analysis and creative use of rhetorical tools. The author's approach emphasizes the originality of Paul's thoughts, without forcing it into the artificial rhetorical corset. His research is characterized by theological sensitivity, which is indeed rare in today's specialized biblical scholarship. The closing essay of the publication, which is a critical analysis of *the New Perspective on Paul*, is a perfect example of the theological sense of the author. What else

⁵⁹ Contrary to the generation of Albert Schweitzer, who described Paul as a mystic. See A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Seabury Press 1968).

could be more important in good exegesis if not bringing to light the uniqueness of the Gospel message? Is it not the reason for which Pauline letters have been read and reread for centuries guiding Christians to discover the ever-fascinating and appealing mystery of Christ? In the last essay, Prof. Gieniusz summarizes his understanding of biblical theology. *Solus Christus*, the uniqueness of his way and life which opens before believers, is the goal toward which the author wants to lead his readers.

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