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Narrative Approaches to Luke-Acts

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John Dominic Crossan has argued plausibly that contemporary biblical exegesis is undergoing a paradigm shift as revolutionary as the shift to historical criticism had been⁽¹⁾. This paradigm shift is toward multi-disciplinary and more holistic approaches that supplement the almost exclusive reliance on historical-critical methods in which most of us were trained. More and more scholars are finding historical-critical methods inadequate for addressing contemporary concerns like liberation or service of the Church, accounting for religious experience, or even dealing with the final state of the text. One aspect of this shift is toward treating the narrative biblical texts precisely as narratives.

The aim of this paper is to illustrate, with examples from Luke-Acts, how literary narrative criticism can enrich biblical criticism and interpretation and throw light on *cruces interpretum*. The introduction will suggest cautions in applying contemporary literary criticism to biblical texts and then mention a few ways in which literary criticism might balance historical criticism. Then the exposition will briefly explain what is meant by certain literary critical concepts and how they apply to biblical interpretation, with examples from Luke-Acts.

I. Cautions in Applying Contemporary Literary Criticism to Biblical Texts

Not all cross disciplinary approaches fit biblical texts. Most contemporary literary criticism focuses on contemporary fiction and poetry, which are often strongly individualistic and nihilistic. And

⁽¹⁾J. D. CROSSAN, "'Ruth Amid the Alien Corn': Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Biblical Criticism", *The Biblical Mosaic: Changing Perspectives* (ed. R. POLZIN and E. ROTHMAN) (Philadelphia and Chico, CA 1982) 199-210.

literary critics themselves are bitterly divided over the nihilism and skepticism behind most deconstructionism⁽²⁾. The Bible, on the other hand, attests to God's communication and revelation to humans.

Not all the categories and approaches of contemporary fiction are relevant to biblical narratives, especially to those with historical claims. For example, the Israeli critic Meir Sternberg has vigorously criticized Robert Alter for applying the term "fiction", in some sense, to most Hebrew biblical narratives⁽³⁾.

Narrative is the normal human means of describing existence in time, for human experience has a narrative quality, as Stephen Crites remarked in his seminal AAR presidential address⁽⁴⁾. Both principal types of narrative, historical and fictional, have fictive elements since they impose a beginning, middle, and the "sense of an ending" on the undifferentiated flow of phenomena. But all narrative refers to human experience, according to Ricoeur⁽⁵⁾. History refers to events that took place and fiction to what could or should happen; its credibility comes from the fund of human experience shared by the author (and I would add, the reader)⁽⁶⁾. Since our memory and imagination have to be active even in interpreting phenomena we sense, historical and fictional narrative interpenetrate each other and differ primarily by their referential claims⁽⁷⁾.

⁽²⁾ See the debate in *Critical Inquiry* 3 (1977), continued in 4 (1978). Cf. M. STERNBERG, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Indiana Literary Biblical Series; Bloomington 1985) 56-57, against importing literary models that do not fit the Bible.

⁽³⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 24-35 against R. ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York 1981) 23-25, who refers especially to Herbert Schneidau's term "historicized fiction" in *Sacred Discontent: The Bible and Western Tradition* (Berkeley 1977) 215.

⁽⁴⁾ S. CRITES, "The Narrative Quality of Experience", *JAAR* 39 (1971) 291-311. Paul Ricoeur refers to this, perhaps more accurately, as "a pre-narrative quality of experience", in his *Time and Narrative* (Chicago 1984) I, 74, cf. 74-75.

⁽⁵⁾ RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative* I, 77-82. Cf. his distinction between *sense* as immanent to discourse and *reference* as the claim of a proposition to reach reality, in "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation", *Philosophy Today* 17 (1973) 129-141, pp. 139-141.

⁽⁶⁾ RICOEUR, "Distanciation", 141, and "The Narrative Function", *Semeia* 13 (1978) 177-202.

⁽⁷⁾ RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative* I, 82 claims that the only ways to deny

If Ricoeur is correct, as I believe, then historical and literary critics' discovery of fictive elements in biblical narrative does not in itself justify their judgments whether a text is historical or fictional. Such fictive elements are part of the nature of narrative itself, and even of our interpretation of phenomena⁽⁸⁾.

Scholes and Kellogg have shown that all historical narrative written for a general audience, as was all ancient history, has to borrow from myth and fiction to sustain the necessary interest⁽⁹⁾. In other words, all ancient history as distinguished from dry chronicle combined art with the scientific reporting of facts.

The privatized, antireferential and nihilistic presuppositions of many literary critical approaches cannot but cause reductionism if applied without caution to texts from the biblical worldview. Walter Ong has shown that the structuralist and poststructuralist forms of criticism are too bound to printed texts and treat texts too much as closed systems. They take insufficient notice of the primacy of human communication and oral discourse over the secondary written and printed forms of discourse, especially in biblical revelation.

this are positivistic historicism, which looks solely to the *evidence* used in history, and antireferential theories of literature, that deny the metaphorical reference in all poetry. RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago 1985) II, 156-158, refers to commonalities in the configuration of historical and fictional narrative by emplotment. To encompass both history and fiction, he broadens the notion of emplotment to "the temporal synthesis of the heterogeneous", and "discordant concordance" (II, 157).

⁽⁸⁾ W. ONG, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction", *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca 1977), esp. 74-75 on history as selection and interpretation and therefore a making, and themes as ways to deal with events; RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative* I, 41-42; R. SCHOLES and R. KELLOGG, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York 1966) 151-152, 154 with Henry James on all knowing and telling as subject to the conventions of art, 161 on art as selection, to be typical and inclusive, 168-169 and 258 on autobiographers' selection of events. What bare chronicle lacks from true history is selectivity and movement (211). RICOEUR, "Distanciation", 134 lists the following characteristics of a discourse as a *work*: (1) it is to be understood as a totality (composition), (2) in a genre, (3) according to the individual's style. Spiritual works like discourse are as much a product of labor (*techne*) as material works; here labor organizes language into a literary work.

⁽⁹⁾ SCHOLES-KELLOGG, *Nature of Narrative*, 217, 232-233.

"There is no adequate model in the physical universe for this operation of consciousness, which is distinctively human and which signals the capacity of human beings to form true communities wherein person shares with person interiorly, intersubjectively"⁽¹⁰⁾.

Against structuralist and deconstructionist approaches, Ong has argued that in biblical times, even written narrative was usually read aloud to listeners⁽¹¹⁾. Those approaches are more applicable to the conundrums of James Joyce, for example, than to biblical narratives, which clearly intend communication. Ong's arguments tell equally against Werner Kelber's radical dichotomy between oral and written discourse, more closely attuned to deconstructionist views of contemporary privatized poetry than to public Gospel narratives read aloud to communities about events already common knowledge⁽¹²⁾. Far more helpful for biblical criticism than deconstruction are Wal-

⁽¹⁰⁾ W. ONG, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New Accents; New York 1982) 177; cf. 164, 166-170, 176-177. Ong calls deconstruction the most text-bound of all critical ideologies: their closed systems are an illusion oral cultures never had (169). Human communication is intersubjective and shaped both in form and content by anticipated response, e.g., from children (176-177).

D. S. GREENWOOD, "Poststructuralism and Biblical Studies: Frank Kermode's, *The Genesis of Secrecy*", *Gospel Perspectives: Studies in Midrash and Historiography* III (ed. R. T. FRANCE and D. WENHAM) (Sheffield 1983) 263-288, attacks deconstructionist denials that signs refer to events as a total skepticism denying any metaphysics or God behind words. H. GARDNER, *In Defence of the Imagination* (Oxford 1982) ch. 5, "Narratives and Fictions", 111-137, refutes the "gnostic solipsism" of Kermode and his failure to see writing's oral links. She protests against having linguistics or sociology take over literary study (133). For philosophical contradictions of deconstruction, cf. V. POLYTHRESS, "Philosophical Roots of Phenomenological and Structuralist Literary Criticism", *WTJ* 41 (1978-79) 165-171, and T. K. SEUNG, *Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (New York 1982) against its relativism.

⁽¹¹⁾ ONG, *Orality*, 157-158; cf. W. NELSON, "From 'Listen, Lordings', to 'Dear Reader'", *University of Toronto Quarterly* 46 (1976-77) 110-124.

⁽¹²⁾ Cf. W. KELBER, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia 1983) ch. 3, esp. 91-105, and the telling critique of this chapter by Robert Karris in his book review in *Horizons* 12 (1985) 168-169. Karris faults Kelber's harnessing linguistic and literary phenomena to his old historical-critical hypothesis about Mark's rejection of the disciples, with which many critics disagree.

ter Ong's views of unity in alienation⁽¹³⁾ and Paul Ricoeur's of communication by distanciation⁽¹⁴⁾.

Ricoeur can value structure without seeing it as closed. Unlike language where words refer to other words in the endless round of the dictionary, discourse in propositions refers to the world. Referential discourse (where someone says something to someone about something) takes place by means of structure (Aristotle's *taxis*)⁽¹⁵⁾.

In reaction to the atomism of much source criticism, many literary critics of the Bible have gone to the opposite extreme and ignore sources. Sternberg insists on a balanced literary approach that takes account of the genesis of texts as well as their final shape. The statement that Saul began to reign when he was one year old (1 Sam 13,1) obviously requires some genetic criticism! Robert Alter has hit an exemplary mean in interpreting some biblical narratives as composite, which recognizes both their joining of sources and redactional unity⁽¹⁶⁾.

Sternberg has also argued for a special biblical poetics to account for the nature of the Bible as inspired and canonical Scripture, which affects the expectations that both its writers and its readers brought and bring to the text⁽¹⁷⁾.

Because many biblical texts were oral in their origin, contemporary literary criticism of the Bible has to take into account how oral

⁽¹³⁾ ONG, *Orality*, 178-179: the oral word first illuminates consciousness and unites humans in society. "Writing introduces alienation and division, but a higher unity as well. It intensifies the sense of self and fosters more conscious interaction between persons. Writing is consciousness-raising".

⁽¹⁴⁾ RICOEUR, "Distanciation", 130-134, 141. Ricoeur refuses Gadamer's disjunction between alienating distanciation and participation by belonging. Rather, the text reveals "communication within and by means of distance" (130). Writing distanciates the text from (1) the author, (2) the original situation of discourse, and (3) the original audience. It transcends its sociological conditions of production and is open to readings in different sociological contexts. Reading recontextualizes the text in new contexts (133-134). For Ricoeur, the final act of understanding is appropriation after distanciation (141).

⁽¹⁵⁾ RICOEUR, "Distanciation", 134-135, 139.

⁽¹⁶⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, "Source and Discourse", 13-23, ALTER, *Art*, ch. 7, "Composite Artistry", 131-154.

⁽¹⁷⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, *passim*, cf. 1-7 and ch. 3, "Ideology of Narration and Narration of Ideology", 84-128.

and written communication differ and are related. Biblicists had tended to neglect the crucial differences between oral and written narrative until Werner Kelber drew attention to Walter Ong's work. Ong's *Orality and Literacy* underlines these differences, but stresses that the primary mode of discourse is oral, which Kelber's dichotomies between written and oral gospel do not acknowledge sufficiently⁽¹⁸⁾. But Kelber rightly shows the failures of form and source criticism to see that the transition from oral to written narratives was a new step, not an automatic evolution. Therefore some exegetical questions have been misstated. For example, some quests for the original form of a saying of Jesus rely on a theory of memorization that better applies to literate than to oral settings. They fail to account for facts like transmission by repetition within formulaic patterns and the probability that Jesus himself repeated many of his sayings on different occasions in slightly varied forms⁽¹⁹⁾.

Perhaps some of the sharpness of Kelber's dichotomy between oral and written could be avoided by greater caution in applying studies of Homeric oral composition to biblical texts. There is a huge gap between the purely oral Homeric society, on the one hand, which had no writing to aid memory and was thus totally dependent on formulas, heroic characterization, and the like, and the Judaism and early church from which the NT sprang, on the other hand; the latter had sacred writings and lived in the writing cultures first of Aramaic Persia and then of Greco-Roman Hellenism⁽²⁰⁾.

For these reasons, biblical scholars should apply contemporary literary methods to Scripture cautiously.

⁽¹⁸⁾ ONG, *Orality*, and KELBER, *Oral and Written*, esp. ch. 3, "Mark as Textuality".

⁽¹⁹⁾ KELBER, *Oral and Written*, 30-31.

⁽²⁰⁾ On oral and Homeric studies, cf. ONG, *Orality*, ch. 2, "The modern discovery of primary oral cultures", and KELBER, *Oral and Written*, ch. 2, "Mark's Oral Legacy", and their bibliographies; M. PARRY, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (ed. A. PARRY) (Oxford 1971); A. B. LORD, *The Singer of Tales* (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24; Cambridge, MA 1960); E. A. HAVELOCK, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA 1963) and *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton Series of Collected Essays; Princeton, NJ 1982).

II. Literary Critical Correctives to Historical Criticism

Literary methods, rightly applied, can make important contributions to biblical exegesis. Ong's demonstration that the writer's audience is always a fiction, and the common literary-critical notions of the implied and the real reader, undercut many current reconstructions of the communities for whom NT narratives were written. Ong has shown the clear difference between speaking to someone present, with all the mutual and non-verbal communication that accompanies such speech, and writing to an absent audience that has to be created in the writer's imagination⁽²¹⁾. Corresponding to the different degrees to which a writer knows the actual state of his readers are the different extents to which his imagining them conforms to their reality. Therefore literary criticism speaks of implied readers created by the text itself, and not actual readers. Most contemporary reconstructions of the NT communities addressed by the Gospels and Acts actually reach only to the readers that the written narrative implies⁽²²⁾. The narrative alone cannot reveal its actual communities or readers, a fact that suggests caution in speculating about evangelists' actual communities.

Reader-response criticism shows the importance of *gaps* in all artful narratives and challenges biblical approaches that jump too quickly from so-called "seams" to sources. A narrative that has too few gaps is boringly obvious. Gaps, deliberate ambiguity and reticence invite readers to fill in the narrative with their imagination, according to expectations fostered by literary conventions⁽²³⁾. Gaps

⁽²¹⁾ ONG, "Writer's Audience".

⁽²²⁾ Cf. R. A. FOWLER, *Loaves and Fishes: The Function of the Feeding Stories in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 54; Chico, CA 1981) 149-153, esp. 152. Fowler, 228 n. 16, cautions particularly against equating the implied reader with real communities: "However, what often passes for reflections of a palpable, historical, flesh-and-blood audience, is in fact an aspect of the fictionalized audience created in the evangelist's imagination". Cf. the explanation of implied reader in A. CULPEPPER, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (NT Foundations and Facets; Philadelphia 1983) 7-8 and ch. 7.

⁽²³⁾ W. ISER, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach", *New Literary History* 3 (1972) 279-299, esp. 285-288, also in his *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore 1974). Cf. W. ISER, "Interaction between Text and Read-

are not necessarily seams indicating redactional joints between different sources, but are often deliberately created by the implied author. Explaining gaps first as literary devices, and not resorting immediately to theories of multiple sources, seems especially relevant to the Fourth Gospel, which is filled with puns, riddles, gaps, and redundancies⁽²⁴⁾. Nor is an author's reticence about some fact sufficient evidence for saying, as historical critics routinely do, that "Mark or Luke knows nothing about X, Y, or Z". Narration never says all the real author knows, and there are many reasons besides ignorance for not mentioning a fact.

Nor can variations in temporal and geographical plotting be used as evidence of source dislocations as often and quickly as they are. Variations in temporal plotting, with prospection and retrospection, are a common, deliberate narrative ploy. Luke-Acts exemplifies this in its tendency to finish one character or story line before going on to the next, as in the mention of the Baptist's imprisonment before describing Jesus' baptism. Even more important in narrative plotting and more likely to be mistaken by historical critics for evidence of different sources is deliberate redundancy and repetitions with variations, as in much of the dialogue in the Fourth Gospel and the two versions of the ascension in Luke-Acts. Ring composition or intercalations are also popular forms of plotting in narratives that are influenced by oral techniques, and are not *prima facie* evidence for interpolations by later authors or redactors. Thus, Sternberg criticizes source critics who destroy the art of many biblical narratives by imposing a foreign logic on them and then chopping them in pieces according to this logic⁽²⁵⁾.

Literary critical treatments of narrative *points of view* are helpful for biblical exegesis. They distinguish the narrator as *histor* sorting strands of evidence, as in the Lucan prologues, the narrator as om-

er", *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (ed. S. R. SULEIMAN) (Princeton 1980) 106-119, esp. 109-112, cf. 114-115 and summary 118-119. RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative I*, 76-77, talks about how a genre is actualized by reading. On filling gaps in the Bible, see STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 186-190, 528 n. 22, 230-237, 258-263.

⁽²⁴⁾ Cf. W. A. MEEKS, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism", *JBL* 91 (1972) 44-72.

⁽²⁵⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, cf. 258-263, esp. 235-237, 516-517 n. 9, 523 n. 7.

niscient, using the showing point of view, (as in most of Luke-Acts and biblical narratives), and the intrusive narrator using the telling point of view (as in the "We" passages of Luke-Acts or in asides to the readers)⁽²⁶⁾.

Point of view provides a way to apply sea voyage conventions to Lucan "We" passages less mechanistically than Vernon Robbins does⁽²⁷⁾. The very nature of art involves use, non-use and variations of convention, according to the vision and purposes of the artist. Combined with this literary insight on the functions of conventions in art, we shall see that point of view supplies a rationale for why Acts sometimes uses and other times avoids "We" for sea-voyages (as in Acts 18,18-22).

Study of narrative plotting accounts for the sudden endings of Mark and Acts and the roles that the gaps caused by such abrupt endings play in involving the readers and listeners in the narrative.

Examples of narrative approaches to interpreting Luke-Acts

Let us illustrate some advantages of these narrative and literary approaches by applying them to difficult questions about Luke-Acts, especially the prologue and narrative transition in Luke 1, the plot ending of Acts, and the "We" passages.

Point of view in literary criticism is often spoken of as the filter through which the narrator presents his narration; it is like the place of the camera which determines the angle from which a viewer sees an object. Those who hear or read a narrative depend on the narrator's viewpoint for how they perceive the story⁽²⁸⁾.

⁽²⁶⁾ W. C. BOOTH, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago 1961) ch. 1 "Telling and Showing", 3-20. Cf. SCHOLÉS-KELLOGG, *Nature of Narrative*, 242. STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 123-124, remarks that in contrast to the prophets and autobiographers like Nehemiah, almost all narrators of the Hebrew Bible efface their identities, the only exceptions being "sworn to their fathers to give us" (Josh 5,6) and "feast... before the Lord our God" (1 Kgs 8,65).

⁽²⁷⁾ V. ROBBINS, "By Land and by Sea: The We-Passages and Ancient Sea Voyages", *Perspectives in Luke-Acts*, (ed. C. H. TALBERT) (Special Studies Series, 5; Danville, VA 1978) 215-242.

⁽²⁸⁾ J. M. LOTMAN, "Point of View in a Text", *New Literary History* 6 (1975) 339-352; SCHOLÉS-KELLOGG, *Nature of Narrative*, 280.

Biblical criticism does not need all the subtleties of contemporary theories of points of view, for biblical narratives use fewer variations than many contemporary narratives do. For our purposes, the simple literary distinction between telling and showing points of view will usually suffice. The *telling* point of view draws attention to the narrator; the readers are aware of his or her presence as the one telling the narrative. In biblical narrative, obtrusive telling points of view are much less common than unobtrusive *showing* points of view, where the readers are usually conscious only of the events in the story, not of who is telling the story⁽²⁹⁾.

Point of view gives a helpful perspective on the Lucan prologue and transition to the main narrative.

The Lucan prologue and transition to a narrative imitating the LXX

The prologues of Luke and Acts clearly indicate a self-conscious writer. Although he claims a basis in oral traditions, the narrator is clearly operating within the world of writing, not orality⁽³⁰⁾. In the prologue, this writer takes the telling point of view of a *histor* sorting strands of evidence.

Meir Sternberg has accused Luke-Acts of an unbiblical inconsistency in point of view. He argues that Hebrew Bible narratives consistently have a third person *omniscient* and *showing* point of view. Ezra and Nehemiah are late autobiographical exceptions; but they too remain consistent when using the *telling* first-person point of view. Their narrating "I" has only the limited knowledge of a participant in events, not the usual biblical narrator's omniscience. But Luke-Acts combines the participatory I/we point of view with the omniscience of the usually anonymous biblical narrator⁽³¹⁾.

(29) Cf. BOOTH, *Fiction*, 3-20.

(30) Cf. ONG, *Orality*, 147-148. Homer's narrator is lost in oral community and never appears as "I" the way Vergil ("I sing of arms") and Luke ("to me also") do (159).

(31) STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 86-87. Contrary to Sternberg's sweeping criticism of Luke, A. J. WALWORTH, "The Narrator of Acts" (Ph. D. Dissertation: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985) 11 and 40, remarks that the "We" narrator in Acts generally remains within the limits of the story world. However, the "We" narrator in Acts 28 does sound omniscient when

But his practice flatly contradicts his empirical undertaking and terms of reference [in the prologue]. The angel's apparition to Zechariah, the interior monologues of various characters, Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives while the disciples are asleep: all these form events accessible only by the privilege of omniscience which Luke virtually disclaims⁽³²⁾.

However, both the Hebrew Ezra and LXX deuterocanonical 1 Esdras provide precedents for Luke's *switching* between the omniscient *showing* biblical narrator and the limited *telling* first-person narrator⁽³³⁾. The examples Sternberg cites are all taken from the showing omniscient sections of Luke's Gospel.

Tobit provides another possible LXX narrative precedent for Luke-Acts, for like Acts, the book of Tobit switches between third person and first person narration, although only with the first person singular "I", not the plural "We" as in Acts⁽³⁴⁾.

Though he fails to mention LXX precedents for it, Sternberg is correct about Luke's shift from telling to showing points of view after the prologue. The narrator acts as a self-conscious *histor* in the prologue, weighing alternative pieces of evidence and revealing himself in the first person pronouns "I" and "We". His point of view

relating barbarians' thoughts and foreign language statements. Yet retrospective evaluation of what the "We" narrator experienced could produce such judgments with the help of later information. Before readers fill gaps, observers who are narrators also of necessity fill in gaps of what they observe as they narrate.

⁽³²⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 86.

⁽³³⁾ The omniscient third person narrator in Ezra 1-6 continues in the history of Ezra himself by introducing Ezra in 7,1-26 in the third person, along with his genealogy. Ezra's prayer of thanksgiving begins the first person "I", which continues until "we" journey to Jerusalem in 8,31 (by land, not sea — contrast Robbins). At Jerusalem, the solo "I" returns to narrate from Ezra 9,1 to the end of his prayer. Then third person narration resumes with "While Ezra prayed and made confession..." and continues from 10,1 to the end of the book in 10,44, with Ezra introduced as "Ezra the priest" (10,10) and the like.

⁽³⁴⁾ The λόγοι of Tobit begin his first person narration thus: "I, Tobit, walked in the ways of truth..." (RSV) "Ἐγὼ Τωβιτ ὁδοῖς ἀληθείας ἐπορεύομην..." (Tob 1,3). In Tobit 3,7, when the plot switches to Sarah in a city far from Tobit, the narration appropriately switches to third person, and, perhaps less appropriately than in Acts, remains third person for the rest of the book.

is that of telling; his own presence is obtrusive. Immediately after the prologue, the point of view switches to showing, as the narrator recedes behind the characters and events being narrated. In other words, Luke's point of view switches from the telling *histor* to the showing omniscient narrator characteristic of biblical narratives.

In 2 Maccabees the first-person narrator also disappears after the preface. He reappears in the final paragraph, unlike the anonymous omniscient narrator of Luke who finishes the rest of the Gospel. The Lucan first-person *histor* returns in the prologue of Acts, but almost imperceptibly recedes behind the usual omniscient narrator even during the Acts prologue. Then the first person narrator unexpectedly reappears at Acts 16,10, this time not acting as a *histor* weighing alternate versions of events, but acting in some of the events of Paul's later journeys as a marginal participant and observer.

Except for these prologues and "We" passages, the normal point of view in Luke-Acts is *showing*, as in the Hebrew Bible. But like the Hebrew Bible, the omniscient narrator in Luke-Acts does give normal asides to the implied reader, which are momentary reversions to the *telling* point of view, as Sternberg notes⁽³⁵⁾. An early example of such an aside appears in Luke 1,9, "according to the custom of the priesthood". These bits of information give clues to the kind of reader that the narrative implies, and reveal what the reader is expected to know or not to know. By observing what names and terms the narrator explains and what he presupposes, literary critics draw a portrait of this reader. This is not the same as a portrait of the real communities for whom the real author wrote, though the implied reader may provide evidence for such a reconstruction⁽³⁶⁾.

The notion of *implied author* enlightens the shift in style as well as in point of view between Luke's prologue and infancy narrative. The implied author usually refers to the qualities about himself or herself that the real author chooses to reveal in the narrative⁽³⁷⁾. It

⁽³⁵⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 525 n. 5.

⁽³⁶⁾ W. ISER, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore 1978) 27-28, 34-38; CULPEPPER, *Anatomy*, 7-8, 206-207; ONG, "Writer's Audience a Fiction".

⁽³⁷⁾ BOOTH, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 71-76; ONG, "Audience a Fiction", 57-60; FOWLER, *Loaves*, 149-153, 228 n. 12; CULPEPPER, *Anatomy*, 6-7; STERN-

is not uncommon for contemporary narrative writers to use different implied authors in their narratives.

The abrupt shift in Lucan style after the prologue makes a *claim* about the implied author of the Gospel. For it is obviously deliberate. The prologue is one lengthy sentence in cultivated Attic Greek with several subordinate clauses. The next sentence, which begins the narrative about Zechariah, switches to a Septuagintal introduction, Ἐγένετο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου βασιλέως τῆς Ἰουδαίας... Instead of the stylistic subordinate clauses of the prologue, this sentence shows the biblical paratactic style of coordinate clauses using "and... and" (καί... καί), with the verb "to be" only implied: "There was in the days of Herod, king of Judea, a certain priest by the name of Zechariah of the priestly course of Abijah, and a wife to him of the daughters of Aaron, and her name Elisabeth". The shift from elegant Greek to the barbaric sounding Semitic style could hardly be more obvious. These two opening sentences of the Gospel portray the implied author as master of two distinct Greek styles that he can imitate and use: that of Greek literature and that of the Greek Bible. The polished Attic prologue permits the implied author to switch to imitating the Greek Bible, whose Greek sounded barbarous by Hellenistic standards, without danger of his own style being considered barbarous, as that of Mark's Gospel was⁽³⁸⁾.

This shift in styles is a strong indication of the implied author's purpose and the genre in which he he wrote. First he imitates the style of Hellenistic historical prologues, then the style of the historical books of the Greek Bible. Josephus' *Antiquities* do not so imitate biblical style, but rewrite biblical stories in better Greek style. For example, Josephus avoids Semitisms and Hellenizes proper names, so that his genealogies are quite different from Luke's list of

BERG, *Poetics*, 69-83, remarks how the *persona* of the biblical writer is present, and in the OT is often merged with the *persona* of other writers, but the historical *person* is often lost beyond recovery. Cf. ISER, "Reading Process", 298: "This process gives rise to a form of communication which, however, according to Poulet, is dependent on two conditions: the life-story of the author must be shut out of the work, and the individual disposition of the reader must be shut out of the act of reading. Only then can the thoughts of the author take place subjectively in the reader, who thinks what he is not".

⁽³⁸⁾ Cf. CADBURY, *Making*, 194-198, on beginning non-literary works with literary prefaces in Hellenism.

Semitic names in ch. 3⁽³⁹⁾. Josephus uses subordinate clauses and complex sentences, instead of the monotonous paratactic style of Mark's Gospel and this beginning to Luke. Josephus' style is evidence of an implied author of *Hellenistic* history. By contrast, at least at the transition to the Gospel narrative, Luke is imitating *biblical* historiography. Later in Acts, his style, especially in the "We" passages, becomes much more cultivated, approaching that in the prologue, with many more genitive absolutes and subordinate clauses⁽⁴⁰⁾.

*Plotting a narrative according to Luke's prologue:
Ordering a narrative about events known among us*

Aristotle describes plotting a narrative as providing it with a beginning, a middle and an ending, and his discussion of plot is still a common starting point⁽⁴¹⁾. The plot becomes the skeleton of the narrative, filled out by the narration of incidents⁽⁴²⁾. Some popular genres have fairly standard and therefore predictable kinds of plots, such as ancient romances or modern mysteries. Others, such as the lives of well-known people like Alexander, presume acquaintance with many of the events but focus on better emplotment of them.

Our implied author, traditionally called Luke, is plotting a narrative around events of which most are already known to the implied readers, since they concern deeds that were accomplished "among us". Who are the "us"? The easiest reading of "us" would include both the implied author and readers within the same set, not to exclude from "us" Theophilus and other implied readers.

⁽³⁹⁾ W. S. KURZ, "Luke 3:23-38 and Greco-Roman and Biblical Genealogies", *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, (ed. C. H. TALBERT) (New York 1984) 169-187, 170.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Cf. also A. HARNACK, *Date of the Acts and the Synoptic Gospels* (New Testament Studies IV; New York 1911) 1-4, and his references to his other works, on the similarity of style between the "We" passages and rest of Acts.

⁽⁴¹⁾ E.g., Paul Ricoeur's discussion of plotting in *Time and Narrative* I, ch. 2 is based on Aristotle and appropriately entitled, "Emplotment: A Reading of Aristotle's *Poetics*".

⁽⁴²⁾ SCHOLES-KELLOGG, *Nature of Narrative*, 239.

If the "us" includes the implied readers, the events to be narrated are in the public domain shared by Luke and Theophilus.

Luke admits from the outset that others have written narratives about these same events. At least the early events told in the Gospel and beginning of Acts are not primarily little known facts that Luke the *histor* discovered by his own investigations. Rather they are "deeds accomplished among us, as the eyewitnesses from the beginning and the ministers of the word handed them down to us" (Luke 1,1-2). What is original is Luke's plotting of these πράγματα. Others have tried to put in order a narrative, ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν. Now Luke will try to write a careful account in order, ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι. By using technical terms for narrative plotting, especially for historiography, Luke is stressing his function as *histor*, sorting and ordering many pieces of evidence and short accounts into one continuous narrative. He is implying selectivity in what he narrates and order in how he narrates it⁽⁴³⁾.

As scholars agree, this order is not necessarily chronological. Many have noted how Luke finishes a plot line with one character by either describing his end or placing him in the locale in which he next rejoins the main plot, before going on to the next chronological event. Thus between the Baptist's naming and Jesus' birth six months later, Luke 1,80 narrates John's growth and separation in the desert until his manifestation to Israel in Luke 3. Between John's preaching and Jesus' baptism, Luke 3,19-20 inserts a note how Herod threw John in prison, where he is at the next allusion to him in Luke 5,33-35, the discussion about fasting by John's disciples in his absence. The next mention of John is his question from prison in Luke 7,18-35 about whether Jesus is the one John predicted⁽⁴⁴⁾.

Up to the phrase, "It seemed good to me" (ἔδοξε κάμοί), the prologue had stressed the implied author's solidarity with the "us" among whom these events had been handed down. This phrase

⁽⁴³⁾ SCHOLES-KELLOGG, *Nature of Narrative*, 265-266 on the *histor* as a *persona* and projection of the author's empirical values.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Similarly, after Philip baptizes the eunuch, Acts 8,40 follows him to Caesarea, where he will meet the "we" party and Paul in Acts 21. And Acts 12 disposes of Herod after his last appearance by narrating his move to Caesarea and later death from blasphemy (12,19-23), before summing up Peter's escape from Herod by the transition, "But the word of God grew and multiplied" (12,24).

emphasizes the implied author's individuality. Luke distinguishes his individual contribution from those of his predecessors, in the moment of alienation to which critics refer⁽⁴⁵⁾. The phrase, ἔδοξε κάμοί, expresses individual achievement, probably in two areas: primarily the gathering and plotting of traditional facts, and perhaps secondarily in original gathering of some facts in which he personally participated, according to one interpretation of the expression "following, παρηκολουθηκότι, all things closely" (1,3)⁽⁴⁶⁾. This interpretation would correspond to the way Hellenistic authors like Josephus, after describing earlier events from tradition, update their narratives with recent events in which they claim participation.

All literary critics whose treatment of the Acts "We" passages I have discovered interpret them as a claim of the implied author's presence in those Acts events. Whether or not this claim is verified historically for the real author as distinct from the implied author, literary criticism clearly establishes the fact that the implied author is making such a claim and not automatically using a sea voyage convention forced on him by his environment⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Many authors suggest an implied relationship between the "We" of the prologue and the "We" in Acts, though I do not see this as an exact correspondence. In the prologue, the implied author writes as an individual in service of his Christian community about events that pertain to them all. The "We" in Acts is not that same Christian community for whom the Gospel is written. It is the group of people including the implied author who sometimes accompany, sometimes set out to meet Paul on several of his later journeys. In Acts, the "I" never sets himself apart or distinguishes himself from the "We" to act or react individually, as he does in the prologue in describing his personal writing on behalf of the "We".

⁽⁴⁵⁾ ONG, *Orality*, 178-179. Cf. RICOEUR, "Distanciation".

⁽⁴⁶⁾ This interpretation, that sees an allusion to the implied author's presence and participation in some later Acts events in which "we" is used, is gaining adherents, such as J. A. FITZMYER, S. J., *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)* (AB 28; Garden City, NY 1981); WALWORTH, "Narrator of Acts", *DAI* 46/02A p. 447.; and S. PRAEDER, "The Narrative Voyage: An Analysis and Interpretation of Acts 27-28", (Ph. D. Dissertation GTU, 1980) *DAI* 41/09A p. 4074.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ As promised in the introduction, we will deal with this later, tracing the reactions of narrative critics like Praeder and Walworth to Robbins.

This communal sense of "We" behind Luke's self-assertion in the prologue is a far cry from the deeper alienation of more privatized authorship, especially of fiction since Rousseau, in which deconstructionist critics specialize. Nor is Luke's ἔδοξε κἀμοί primarily an exercise in self-expression, as in Romantic and contemporary writing. The outward extent of self-expression the prologue claims is Luke's personal plotting of, and possibly participation in, some events he narrates. The implied author obviously is aiming to communicate with his implied reader Theophilus. This communication concerns events "among us". Thus the preface makes definite referential claims of history as distinguished from fiction by Ricoeur, history that can be verified or falsified because it refers to events that have happened "among us". The Lucan prologue makes the same kinds of referential — and therefore historical as opposed to fictional — claims that Sternberg demonstrates for most Hebrew biblical narratives⁽⁴⁸⁾.

The foundation of narrative in oral, not written, communication also applies to this prologue. It claims a base in oral traditions and eyewitness experience, which purely textual, nonreferential approaches like structuralism and deconstructionism neglect. But the writing gives assurance to the oral words Theophilus has heard. Thus the prologue steers between an oral culture's preference for oral over written evidence (as in some traditions evident in Papias) and the tendency of later historiography to rely almost exclusively on documents⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Walter Ong's work also sheds light on the function of Theophilus in the prologue. Ong's demonstration that "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction" provides a new approach to the question whether Theophilus is a real person or a symbolic "lover of God". In oral communication, speaker and listener interact directly. But in written communication the writer must imagine his absent reader, even when he writes a letter. Ong remarks that the author's need to fictionalize the absent recipient is why writing is so much harder than speaking. In this sense, Theophilus is a fiction like any addressee of a letter: he is the implied reader created by the text itself. It is also obvious that the real author expected more readers

⁽⁴⁸⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 23-35, 76-83.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ ONG, *Orality*, 139, esp. 147-155.

than Theophilus to read his narrative. In this respect, Theophilus symbolizes a wider audience: and this is true even if Theophilus is a historical person, as I believe.

Plotting, sense of an ending, and the end of Luke-Acts

Plotting a narrative, according to Aristotle's *Poetics*, determines its beginning, middle and ending. Bland as this may sound, literary critics and philosophers like Ricoeur have found profound implications in it⁽⁵⁰⁾. Selecting one plot line out of the continuum of life's experiences involves the free choices of determining the narrative's beginning through its intermediate steps to its ending. Even when referring to real events, authors are free to choose to begin the narrative at any one point. Likewise, the choice of an ending is quite free. Luke could end Acts where he does or after Paul's death or anywhere up to his time of writing. Mark can freely choose to end before narrating resurrection appearances, whereas Matthew and Luke include some. There is even some choice as to the middle, that is, the connecting plot line from the beginning to the ending, since narrators have to decide which events and aspects of events they will mention and which they will leave to the reader's imagination.

This necessarily free selection in any narrative of beginning, middle and ending implies creative and in some sense fictive aspects in *any* narrative. For example, even people narrating a personal event like their conversion experience have to select a point at which to begin their narrative. How much of their sinful past should they mention and in what detail? Which aspects of their conversion will they highlight, which pass over as irrelevant? This varies with each time and audience for which they narrate their conversion, and usually is done according to the expectations of their hearers. Thus with Pentecostals they may stress gifts of the Holy Spirit, with Evangelicals, forgiveness of sins, and with Catholics the relationship of the experience to confirmation or retreats. The same real event in a person's life can generate quite a variety of narratives, all of them "true", yet all of them also somewhat artificial,

(50) RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative I*, ch. 2.

depending on the choices made. This explains why so many different people's conversion stories sound so similar: they are narrated according to patterns of such stories in that community or in Scripture, and the idiosyncratic details are usually left out. NT narratives are similarly patterned on other Christian and OT precedents⁽⁵¹⁾.

One of the most significant decisions in any narrative is on where to *end* it. The end of the narrative, especially of written narrative that has been reworked before presentation to readers, decisively influences the interpretation of what has gone before⁽⁵²⁾. The word *end* for narrative implies both its ordinary meanings: the *end* is both the *finish* of the narrative and its *goal*, that to which the rest of the plot leads. Therefore an unexpected ending of a narrative is usually quite significant, and source explanations like a lost page of Mark's Gospel should only be the last desperate resort. The reason we even search for such explanations is the basic expectation that most pre-modern narrative will make sense. Contemporary literature that deliberately frustrates readers' search for meaning can only have its effect because of this ingrained expectation that we usually are not dealing with a story that has no intelligible ending.

The basic reader-response insight — that is, that *gaps* in narrative stimulate readers to fill them from their own imagination — is especially relevant for the abrupt endings of both Acts and Mark. Both end in ways that tantalize the reader to fill in what happened afterwards⁽⁵³⁾. Mark does so much more strongly than Acts; the manuscript tradition shows dissatisfaction with his ending and attempts to bring his narrative to a more conventional ending. A 1984 Emory dissertation under Robert Detweiler has the intriguing title, "Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of

(51) Present results of past events also influence their narration. E.g., which aspects of people's conversions are having a greater contemporary impact in their lives? This too is a clear pattern in NT narratives, which look back on events in the lives of Jesus and the early Church in the light of what has proven important in the intervening years.

(52) Cf. M. MANDELBAUM, "A Note on History as Narrative", *History and Theory* 6 (1967) 413-419, esp. 414-415: In any writing the end tropistically or teleologically selects the relevant material and excludes the non-relevant. Therefore he argues that a teleological factor in a writing does not in itself mean it is fiction.

(53) Cf. ISER, "Interaction", 112: broken and unexpected plot threads are a tacit invitation to readers to find the missing link.

the Gospel of Mark" (54). The author, James Magness, shows how deliberate silence about foreshadowed outcomes was commonly practiced in Greco-Roman writing, so that contemporary literary theories of open-endedness are indeed quite relevant to Mark's Gospel. Mark's Gospel rightly has inspired such critical titles as Petersen's "When Is the End Not the End?" (55).

Mark's abrupt ending may well have inspired the abrupt ending of Acts. Acts scholarship has been battling for even centuries over what was supposed to have happened after the two years of Paul's imprisonment and why Acts stopped before Paul's death. The awareness of gaps to be filled in by readers is attested as early as St. John Chrysostom: "At this point the historian stops his account and leaves the reader thirsting so that thereafter he guesses for himself. This also non-Christian writers (οἱ ἕξω) do. For to know everything makes one sluggish and dull" (56). Luke-Acts has foreshadowed all the major events between Paul's imprisonment and the time of writing. Jesus' predictions in Luke 21 and Paul's farewell address in Acts 20 have prepared the readers for Paul's death, the destruction of Jerusalem, and times of persecution and abandonment of the apostolic teachings.

Both ancient and modern writers often deliberately establish expectations in the text that they leave unfulfilled at the end, as both Cadbury and recently Magness have shown (57). The fulfillment of

(54) J. L. MAGNESS, "Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of the Gospel of Mark" (Ph. D. Dissertation Emory Univ., 1984) *DAI* 46/02A p. 447; now available as *Sense and Absence* (Semeia Studies; Atlanta 1986).

(55) N. R. PETERSEN, "When Is the End Not the End?", *Int* 34 (1980) 38-51.

(56) St. John CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Acts*, 55 [cf. 1] (Migne: PG 60, col. 15, 382) cited in CADBURY, *Making*, 322. This ancient quotation from Chrysostom sounds as if it came from contemporary reader-response criticism.

(57) CADBURY, *Making*, 322-323, cites ancient parallels to Acts' ending before the hero's death like 2 Maccabees' ending with Judas' success, not his defeat and death; Philostratus' leaving his readers in uncertainty about the fate of Apollonius of Tyana; Luke's silence about the deaths of the Baptist, Peter and James of Jerusalem; and division of books of biblical histories before rather than after the main figure's death (David's lament over Saul in 2 Samuel 1, not 1 Samuel, Elijah's assumption in 2 Kings 2, not 1 Kings, and Jesus' definitive ascension in Acts 1).

so many prophecies in Mark and Luke-Acts stimulates readers to ask about others that are not. The only prophecies in Luke-Acts that are not fulfilled by the time of their composition are those pertaining to the cosmic signs and second coming of Jesus. Events after the ends of both Mark and Acts were commonly known by the Christians for whom they were written. Even if Mark did not mention resurrection appearances, the real readers knew that Peter and other apostles had seen the risen Lord, for their preaching was responsible for the Christian movement of which they were a part, as 1 Corinthians 15 attests. In publicly known stories like the resurrection, writers have even more than the usual freedom to end their narratives before all the plot strands have been tied together, leaving that for the readers to do.

If we look at the ending of Acts as its *goal*, we see Acts leading up to the unhindered and open preaching of God's word in Rome, even though Paul himself is a prisoner. Jesus' prediction to Paul from Acts 23,11, "You shall witness to me at Rome", has come to fulfillment. Throughout Acts, the plot had led up to this ending, especially with the refrain that the word of God spread (Acts 6,7; 12,24; 13,49; 19,20). This spread of the word occurred often in the wake of resistance to the word and persecution of Christians. Once Paul has preached God's Kingdom and the Lord Jesus Christ at Rome, most of the expectations generated by Luke-Acts have been fulfilled. Other predictions like the death of Paul and fall of Jerusalem have also come to fulfillment after the end of the narrative but before Luke wrote it. The readers have only the cosmic signs and second coming of Jesus still to await. They can wait for this second coming on the triumphant note of unhindered preaching of God's word with which Luke-Acts ends.

Literary usage of "we" conventions for changing point of view

Since the usual biblical point of view is showing, where the narrator recedes and the readers are conscious only of the characters and actions of the story, Luke's switch to the telling point of view which reveals the narrator's presence in the Acts "We" passages cries out for an explanation.

Despite recent scholarly acclaim of Vernon Robbins' treatment of sea voyage conventions as an explanation of the Acts "We" pas-

sages, it is still inadequate from a literary perspective⁽⁵⁸⁾. As Robert Alter well stated, prebiblical origins of a form or convention do not yet explain its literary use in a narrative. "And, in any case, as is true of all original art, what is really interesting is not the schema of convention but what is done in each individual application of the schema to give it a sudden tilt of innovation or even to refashion it radically for the imaginative purposes at hand"⁽⁵⁹⁾.

Meir Sternberg insists that the Bible uses convention in varying ways to accommodate its new poetics. He calls this the "Proteus Principle: the resistance to any automatic linkage of form and function"⁽⁶⁰⁾.

Robbins' argument cannot account for this basic literary principle. It is not enough to argue that Luke uses "We" in some passages in Acts because there was a literary convention that required the first person for narrating sea voyages. Such a convention would certainly influence Luke's usage, but it does not explain it. For one thing, there is a factual problem: Robbins overstates his case. Others like Susan Praeder have shown many instances of sea voyage narratives comparable to the ones cited by Robbins which use the usual third person. After treating the ancient evidence fully, she judges somewhat harshly that Robbins has not only overlooked third person voyages in Acts and other contemporary literature, as well as "the context of first person sea voyages in first person autobiographies, novels, testaments, direct quotation of stories-within-stories, and letters". He also "ignores the specificity of the first person plurals in Acts and sea voyages in ancient literature", as between first and third person plurals in Acts 27,1-28,16 which distinguish the "We" party from sailors, soldiers and other passengers. Praeder concludes,

Thus 'the sea voyage genre' did not compel the real author of Acts to create a first person narrator for Acts 16.10-17, 20.5-15, 21.1-18, and 27.1-28.16. First person narration... reflects the intention of the real author to imply his peripheral participation in the events of Paul's mission to Philippi, journey to Jerusalem, and voyage to Rome. By

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Cf. PRAEDER, "Narrative Voyage", 213 on the praise of Robbins, "By Land and by Sea", and 212-227 on her refutation of Robbins based on ancient texts.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ ALTER, *Art*, 52.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ STERNBERG, *Poetics*, 437.

textual implication the author of Acts, the "I" who expresses himself as such in Lk 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1, is an anonymous companion of Paul⁽⁶¹⁾.

Robbins himself has to explain away Luke's use of third person sea voyages in Acts 13-16 as insignificant sea voyages from before the turning point of the Council of Jerusalem, trips that do not really get out into the open Mediterranean. But he does not mention a major sea voyage after that council in 18,18-22, a 600-mile voyage in the open Mediterranean as long and as perilous as some of the later ones he does narrate with "We"⁽⁶²⁾.

Robbins also fails to account for how Luke subordinated any sea voyage "We" convention to the exigencies of his plot. Thus the "We" ends and resumes at Philippi. The "We" is not mentioned after Paul and Silas' arrest over the slave girl in Philippi in 16,17, until it reappears again in 20,5 at Philippi, four chapters later and after much land and sea travel. The obvious literary implications of this disappearance and reappearance of the "We" at Philippi are the narrative claim that the narrator was personally present with Paul until Philippi, but did not accompany Paul beyond Philippi on his sea travels back to Palestine. Rather the narrator is still at Philippi when Paul gets near on his next journey, and goes from there with unspecified others of the "We" party to meet Paul at Troas⁽⁶³⁾.

The narrator also frequently distinguishes between "we" and "they", which indicates careful application and variation, not automatic use of convention. Thus, Acts 20,4-6 names Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus as accompanying Paul and waiting for "us" at Troas. This obviously distinguishes the narrator and at least one other from that list of names. The narrator and party sailed from Philippi and met the other group with Paul at Troas. In the voyage to Rome, sometimes the "We" is distinguished from the sailors, sometimes it includes all on board, as

⁽⁶¹⁾ PRAEDER, "Narrative Voyage", 226-227. In 216-217 she lists ancient third and first person sea voyage narratives which she examines. My similar criticisms of Robbins were arrived at independently before I gained access to Praeder's dissertation at the US Library of Congress. Cf. also WALWORTH, "Narrator of Acts", 35, n. 35.

⁽⁶²⁾ ROBBINS, "By Land and by Sea".

⁽⁶³⁾ Cf. PRAEDER, "Narrative Voyage", 209.

in the statement "we gave way to it [the wind] and were driven" (Acts 27,15 RSV)⁽⁶⁴⁾.

Without the historical critical identification of ancient conventions, literary criticism would have a hard time saying what was convention and what was original in a narrative. But too often historical criticism stops when it has identified the conventions used, as important and difficult an accomplishment as this is. Literary criticism must then show how the author uses this convention, including how careful or inconsistent he or she may be. For the most part, Acts shows great care and nuance in its variations on "We", including its preparation for the disappearance of "We" in 16,17 and 21,18 by the distinction, "Paul and us"⁽⁶⁵⁾. However, there is some confusion about the alternation between *we* and *they* in Acts 27⁽⁶⁶⁾, and the abruptness of the reappearance of "We" in Acts 27,1 does look more conventional than artistic⁽⁶⁷⁾.

Walworth does not see enough thematic significance in those passages that employ "we" to suggest deliberate plotting with "we" for effect. Because the "we" passages are so often insignificant to the main plot, he believes their explanation has to rest more on the historical level than the literary. This places him very near Fitz-

(64) Cf. also the expanding/contracting "We" in Acts 21,5-6, which sometimes has a *we/they* distinction, sometimes includes all, as in "we prayed and bade one another farewell" (21,5), before reverting to *we/they* in "Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home" (21,6). The frequent alternation between *we/they* in Acts 27 has confused copyists, causing variants in 27,17.19.29 (NESTLE 26th ed.). Confusion also comes from the juxtaposition of Acts 27,36, "they were all encouraged and ate", and 27,37, "We were in all 276 persons": were not the "We" also encouraged to eat?

(65) ROBBINS, "By Land and by Sea", 231; WALWORTH, "Narrator of Acts", 35-36.

(66) Cf. WALWORTH, "Narrator of Acts", 34, who finds the sudden *we*-shifts a flaw in Acts.

(67) Most of the commentaries notice the awkwardness here, as did some manuscript copyists who substituted "those around Paul" for "we." (Cf. NESTLE 26th ed., 402: "P 6. 326. 2495* *pc.*"). One would expect a clause like, "And when it was decided that they should take Paul to Italy". Unless the narrator wanted to imply he was Paul's fellow prisoner or one of his Roman guards, the "We" is awkward and intrusive. The dynamics of the narrative suggest that the decision only concerned the prisoners and their guard, not any companions of the prisoners that might choose to come along on the same ship, which the narrator would appear to be.

myer's thesis that such passages are evidence for the real author being with Paul on some later journeys⁽⁶⁸⁾.

Apart from historical questions, I see more of a literary significance in the use and avoidance of "we" passages than Walworth does. The "We" accompanies Paul on three journeys leading to arrests, first to Philippi, then to Jerusalem, finally to his house arrest at Rome. But just as Jesus had to undergo his arrest and trials without the support of Peter and the Twelve who accompanied him on his journey to Jerusalem, so Paul faced his trials without the support of his traveling companions named by the "We". The facts of history forced the narrator to mention the one exception, that Silas went to prison with Paul in Philippi. Even then, the "We" did not go to prison with Paul and Silas. In terms of the plot, the narrator's presence on some of Paul's journeys and absence in his trials is much like Peter's presence and absence during Jesus' journeys and trials. As Peter went to the place of Jesus' trial and observed at a distance, but was not present with Jesus at the trial itself, so the "We" party were silent observers on the same ship and party with Paul by sea and land to Rome until Paul's house arrest.

Jesus' and Paul's deeply personal farewell addresses to their followers were also not appropriate for inclusion of the "We" in Acts 20,17-38. But the presence and witness of the narrator among the "We" on Paul's sea voyage to Rome provides an extra evidential warrant for Paul's providential rescue from sea and serpent to fulfill his mission as promised. The presence of the narrator in Rome near and perhaps to the end of the narrative plot line gives added ἀσφάλειαν to the final statement that Paul preached in Rome itself with open *παρρησία* and unhindered despite house arrest for two years.

Conclusion

We began by citing the value of supplementing historical- with literary-critical approaches, after warning that some forms of literary criticism are less appropriate for the Bible than others. We then

⁽⁶⁸⁾ WALWORTH, "Narrator of Acts", 176-177, cf. 56-58, 64; FITZMYER, *Luke I-IX*, 47-51, esp. 48.

tried to illustrate with examples from Luke-Acts how helpful literary criticism can be in dealing with problems in the text that remain after applying historical criticism, such as shifts in point of view and style after Luke's prologue, the gaps left by the abrupt endings of Acts and Mark, and literary applications of "We" conventions for changing point of view and claiming presence with Paul on some of his journeys. To use narrative approaches to supplement historical criticism in interpreting Luke-Acts is to be like the good steward, who brings from the storehouse both the old historical criticism and the new narrative approaches.

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SOMMAIRE

L'usage d'approches narratives est un aspect d'un glissement courant de paradigme dans des études bibliques. Cet article montre comment l'étude littéraire de critique narrative peut compléter l'historico-critique et éclairer des difficultés en Luc et Actes.

La première partie met en garde contre certaines approches d'étude littéraire critique qui, telles les «déconstructions», sont inadéquates pour la Bible. La seconde partie montre des correctifs critico-littéraires à l'historico-critique, comme une attitude de prudence quant à la reconstruction de communautés réelles ou la conclusion selon laquelle des "vides" sont des jointures indiquant des sources multiples.

La section principale applique au prologue de Luc des approches narratives telles que le point de vue, l'auteur impliqué, l'intrigue et l'«oralité». Elle étudie la fin des Actes à la lumière de fins d'intrigues et de réponse du lecteur à des vides, ainsi que les passages en «nous» par application littéraire de conventions pour les récits de voyage en mer.