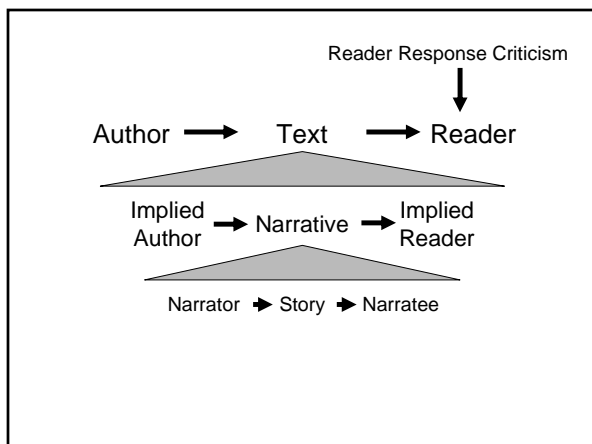
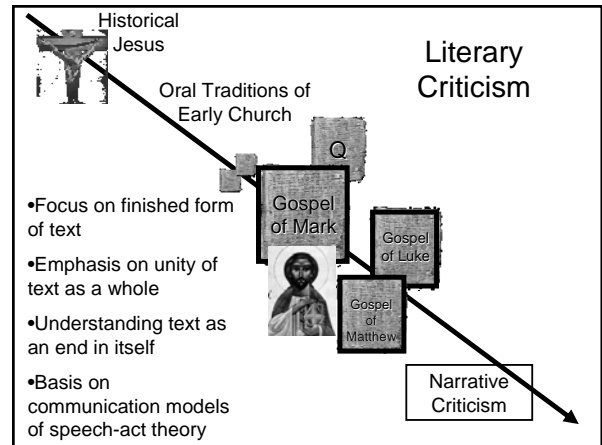
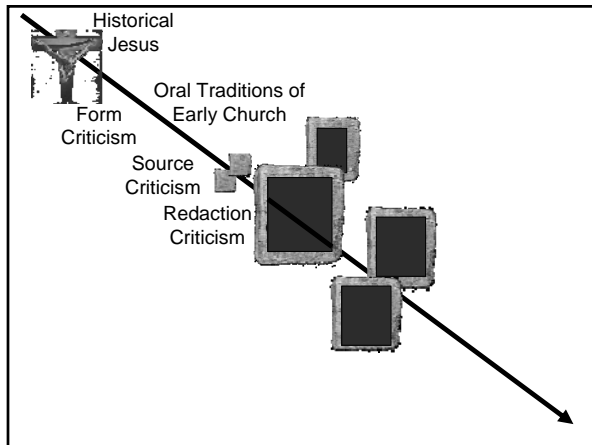
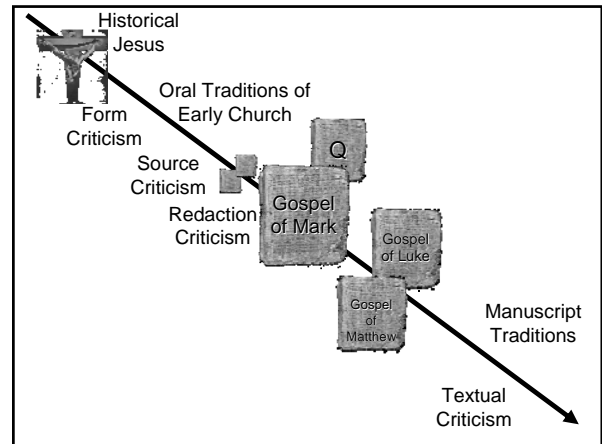


Narrative Criticism

see
Mark Allan Powell
What Is Narrative Criticism?



Narrative Criticism

Point of View

- One way implied author influences reader's apprehension of text is by insisting that the reader adopt a point of view consistent with the narrative
- God's or Satan's (or thinking "human things")
- God's point of view can be expressed reliably through angels, prophets, miracles, dreams, and Scripture
- The creation of a narrative world in which God's evaluative point of view can be determined and must be accepted as normative is a powerful rhetorical device.

Narrative Criticism

Narration

- First or third person
 - How knowledgeable
 - How reliable
 - How intrusive
-
- Third person, omniscient narration creates a “God perspective” of the story

Narrative Criticism

Symbolism

- Implies a recognition that something means more than it initially appears to mean
- Archetypal symbols (light/dark)
- Symbols of ancestral vitality (#12)
- Symbols created by implied author (fig tree)
- Symbols of cultural range (fox...)

Luke 13:31-33 ³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." ³² He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.' ³³ Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem."

Narrative Criticism

Irony

- Implies that true interpretation is actually contrary to the apparent meaning
- Verbal Irony or Situational (Dramatic) Irony

Narrative Criticism

Symbolism and Irony

- Reader rejects literal meaning in response to internal/external clues.
- Tries out alternative explanations
- Evaluates these in terms of beliefs about author
- Makes a decision based on assumed intentions of author

Narrative Criticism

Narrative Patterns

- Repetition, contrast, comparison, causation, climax, interrogation, inclusio, interchange, interchange, chiasm, intercalation
- For example:
- Two feeding of the multitude stories
 - Mark 5.21-43 – Jairus' daughter and woman with flow of blood
 - Mark 11.13-25 – Fig tree and cleansing of Temple

Narrative Criticism

Events and Plot

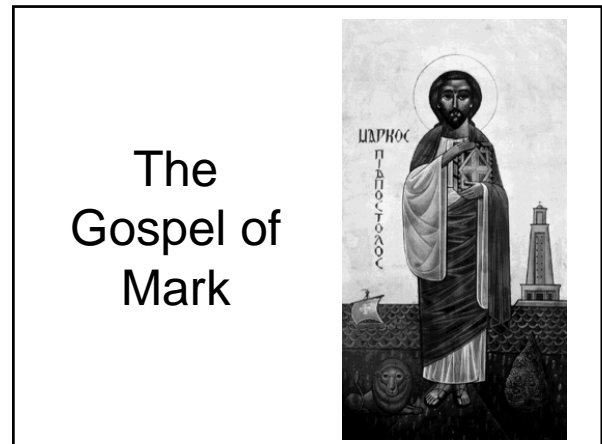
Characters

Settings

The author makes decisions about how each of these will be presented.

These decisions do make a difference in how the reader perceives the narrative.

Story	Discourse
•What is said	• <i>How</i> the story is told
•Characters, events, places	• <i>How</i> it affects the hearer
•Attention to how story turns out	•Attention to temporal experience of reading



The Gospel of Mark

Mark 10:17-22

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Mark 10:17-22

¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."

Mark 10:17-22

¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."
¹⁹You know the commandments:
 'You shall not murder;
 You shall not commit adultery;
 You shall not steal;
 You shall not bear false witness;
 You shall not defraud;
 Honor your father and mother.'"

Mark 10:17-22

²⁰ He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth."

Mark 10:17-22

²¹ Jesus, looking at him,

Mark 10:17-22

²¹ Jesus, looking at him,
loved him and said,

Mark 10:17-22

²¹ Jesus, looking at him,
loved him and said,
"You lack one thing;
go, sell what you own,
and give the money to the poor,
and you will have treasure in heaven;
then come, follow me."

Mark 10:17-22

²² When he heard this,
he ... was shocked and went away grieving,
for he had many possessions.

Mark 10:17-22

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In the Gospel of Mark

The rhetorical / persuasive techniques
of the narrative creates opportunities for
the reader to 'invest' in the story

That is, the reader is being persuaded
to believe that the story is true

Mark 4.11

"To you has been given
the secret of the dominion of God,
but for those outside,
everything comes in parables;

*Who do you now understand the "you" to be?
How do you know if you are in or out?
What is the appeal of knowing the secret?*

In the Gospel of Mark

Point of view of Narrator (Mark)
= Point of view of Jesus
= Point of view of Reader

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

³³ Then they came to Capernaum;
and when he was in the house he asked them,
"What were you arguing about on the way?"

³⁴ But they were silent,
for on the way they had argued with one
another who was the greatest.

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve,
and said to them,
"Whoever wants to be first must be last of all
and servant of all."

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

³⁶Then he took a little child
and put it among them;
and taking it in his arms,
he said to them,
³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one such child
in my name welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes not me
but the one who sent me."

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

¹³ People were bringing little children to him
in order that he might touch them;
and the disciples

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

¹³ People were bringing little children to him
in order that he might touch them;
and the disciples
spoke sternly to them.

Mark 9.35-37 and 10.13-16

¹⁴ But when Jesus saw this,
he was indignant and said to them,
"Let the little children come to me;
do not stop them;
for it is to such as these
that the kingdom of God belongs.
¹⁵ Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive
the kingdom of God as a little child
will never enter it."
¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, laid his
hands on them, and blessed them.

In the Gospel of Mark

REPETITION
provides the reader additional
perspective that brings the
Narrator, Jesus, and the Reader
into even closer relationship

Mark 6.34
As he went ashore, he saw a great
crowd; and he had compassion for
them, because they were like
sheep without a shepherd; and he
began to teach them many things.

Mark 6.35-44

When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; ³⁶ send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." ³⁷ But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?"
>>> 5000 men fed

Mark 8.1-10

In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, ² "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way--and some of them have come from a great distance." ⁴ His disciples replied,

Mark 8.1-10

In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, ² "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way--and some of them have come from a great distance." ⁴ His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?"
>>> 4000 people fed

How do these two accounts of the feeding function in the *story*?

How do these two accounts of a miraculous feeding function in the *discourse*?

In the Gospel of Mark

The use of
NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE
brings the
Narrator, Jesus, and the Reader
into even closer relationship

Mark 14:32-37

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."
³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated.
³⁴ And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."
³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Mark 14:32-37

³⁷ He came and found them sleeping;
and he said to Peter,
"Simon, are you asleep?
Could you not keep awake one hour?"

In the Gospel of Mark

The use of
IRONY and RIDDLES
brings the
Narrator, Jesus, and the Reader
into even closer relationship

Mark 15:16-18

¹⁶ Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

In the Gospel of Mark

The use of
NARRATIVE INFORMATION
brings the
Narrator, Jesus, and the Reader
into even closer relationship

Mark 15:33-35

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.
³⁴ At three o'clock
Jesus cried out with a loud voice,
"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"

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When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.
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Jesus cried out with a loud voice,
"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"
which means,
"My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?"
³⁵ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah."

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Mark 1.1

¹The beginning
of the good news
of Jesus
Christ,
the Son of God.

What do these verses presume about its reader?

How much does the reader know?

For whom was this Gospel written and why?

The Gospel of Mark

... "does not claim to be history. It is not even referentially oriented. Rather, it is pragmatically or rhetorically oriented. It is not 'about' its characters; it is 'about' its reader. The Gospel writer's chief concern is not the fate of either Jesus or the Twelve in the story but the fate of the reader outside the story."

Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, page 50

Narrative Criticism
Reader Response Criticism

Let the reader understand...

Is this author
trustworthy?

