one

Point-of-View Crafting

An Untapped Source of Evaluative Guidance

You are proceeding through the book of Judges and, in chapter 6, you encounter a new character, Gideon. You see him being commissioned by an angel of the Lord to deliver the Israelites out of the hands of the Midianites. You sense a hero in the making as he follows the Lord's leading in destroying an altar of pagan worship and replacing it with an altar to the Lord. But, you also sense a tentativeness about him, for he is only willing to follow the Lord's leading during the night, when no one is watching.

At the end of the chapter, you see him using pieces of fleece as a means of determining from the Lord whether Israel will indeed prevail over the Midianites in battle, and you wonder about this. Are Gideon's actions with the fleece to be taken positively—as a model for discerning God's will—or are they to be taken negatively—as a show of distrust in God's original instructions? You glance over at the storyteller, but he's not telling.

This is a predicament faced countless times by readers of the Bible—the report of a character engaged in some action, but no explicit indication from the storyteller on how the action is to be evaluated. At first glance, it would appear the readers are being left to fend for themselves in making an evaluation. Fortunately, that is not the case, for though the readers are not receiving explicit evaluative guidance, they may be receiving guidance in a less-obvious fashion through the way in which *point of view* is being used in the passage.

Perspective Criticism

The present work sets out a new biblical methodology called *Perspective Criticism*, an approach designed to uncover evaluative guidance that may be encoded in the point-of-view crafting of biblical narratives.[1] This first chapter unpacks the literary concept of point of view—a concept that defies simple explanation—and also describes how point-of-view crafting can be used to provide evaluative guidance in a narrative text. This provides a foundation for the comprehensive look into the details of point-of-view crafting in the chapters that follow.

As you glance back at the storyteller, you notice that though he is not telling you whether or not you should be siding with Gideon, he is giving you a wink and a nod. He is indeed providing you with signals as to his evaluative intentions. It's just going to take some digging to learn how to interpret the signals.

Narrator as Story-World Tour Guide

Gaining a grasp of the literary concept of point of view requires first becoming acquainted with another concept foreign to the conventional historical approach to biblical studies, that is, the concept of a story's *narrator*. When conceptualizing readers reading a biblical story, it is most natural to envision them simply receiving the words of the story from the author. However, according to literary theory,[2] the words are not being communicated directly from author to reader. Rather, the author is understood as creating a voice that speaks the words of the story to the reader, and this voice is known as the narrator.

For the purposes of gaining a grasp of this concept, it is most helpful to turn to the genre of film. Consider the opening of the cult classic *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980). The first sixteen minutes of the movie set the stage for a story line involving Xi, a member of the Sho people indigenous to the Kalahari Desert of Botswana, and his dealings with a Coke bottle dropped by a passing aircraft. This opening portion of the movie first provides a brief introduction to the Kalahari Desert, then turns to life among

1. For a comprehensive treatment of the theoretical background to this methodology, see Yamasaki, *Watching*, 1–67.

2. It is important to make clear at the outset that the literary methodology developed in the present work belongs to the text-oriented approach to literary studies reflected in the New Criticism of the mid-twentieth century whose focus is the response of the reader *presupposed* by the text, and not the more recent reader-oriented post-structuralist approaches whose focus is the response of actual real-life readers.

the Sho people—contrasting it with life in urban South Africa—and then turns to Xi's discovery of the Coke bottle and the strife it causes within his family, leading him to conclude it is evil and should be thrown off the end of the earth.

What distinguishes these scenes from most other filmmaking is the presence of a male voice speaking over the images on the screen. This is a *narrator* providing commentary on what the audience is seeing. For example, in the section covering life in urban South Africa,[3] the camera gives a close-up of an old-style digital clock flipping from 7:29 to 7:30, and then cuts to a car pulling out of a driveway and starting down the street, as the voice-over reports, "If the day is called 'Monday' and the number 'seven-three-zero' comes up, you have to disadapt yourself from your domestic surroundings and readapt yourself to an entirely different environment." Then, after nine seconds of various shots of the morning rush hour, the camera settles on an outdoor digital clock switching from 7:59 to 8:00, and then cuts to a shot of office workers settling in for the day's work, as the voice-over says, "'Eight-double zero' means everybody has to look busy." There are then short shots of an executive sitting down at his desk and an auto worker plying his trade, followed by a longer thirteen-second shot of a journalist named Kate saying on the phone, "I've got a very good story here about handicapped children . . ." but then having to hold the receiver away from her ear because of yelling on the other end. Then she continues, "All right. Look, I'm sorry. I'll print only sweetness and light even if it bores the pants off people."

Here, the camera cuts to a digital clock displaying 10:30, and then provides short shots of the executive receiving a cup of coffee from his assistant and a group of auto workers guzzling soft drinks, with the voice-over saying, "'Ten-three-zero' says you can stop looking busy for fifteen minutes . . ." Then the clock is shown flipping from 10:44 to 10:45, and the voice-over continues ". . . and then you have to look busy again" with the camera cutting to a short shot of one of the auto workers with a welding torch, and then to a longer seventeen-second shot of Kate as she is approached by Pete, a co-worker, who hands her some papers and says, "Do you think you could use this? It's about the shortage of teachers in Botswana." She responds, "Good story?" and he says, "Yah, they're so short they'll take anyone who can read and write." After glancing over the sheets, she replies, "I don't know. I got bawled out for writing a story on mugging. He said my

3. At 6:40—8:13.

page should only have sweetness and light, like Liberace and Jackie Onassis . . . I'm sorry."

The camera then cuts to a digital clock displaying 1:00:00, followed by a short shot of two businessmen having lunch, as the voice-over comments, "And so your day is chopped up into little pieces, and in each segment of time, you have to adapt to a new set of circumstances," finishing just as Kate is shown in a cafeteria asking if she can share a table with a woman already seated. She sits down, with the voice-over continuing, "No wonder some people go off the rails a bit" and the scene continues with the other woman looking over at her, and saying, "Does the sound in my head bother you?" to which Kate gives a wary "No" and turns away. The camera then cuts to Kate back at the office seeking out Pete, and saying, "Have you still got that story about the teacher shortage in Botswana?" Pete replies, "Yah, you gonna use it?" to which Kate responds, "No, but maybe they could use me."

The camera then cuts to the Kalahari Desert to show Xi walking through the grasslands, and the voice-over says, "But in the Kalahari, it's always Tuesday or Thursday, if you like . . . or Sunday. No clocks or calendars to tell you to do this or that."[4]

The narrator voice heard over the video of this clip is not that of the author of the screenplay, Jamie Uys. Rather, it is a voice created by Uys for the purpose of conveying comments to the audience on what is being shown on the screen, and this illustrates what literary theory understands all written narratives to have: just such a voice making comments to readers. However, literary theory would understand the narrator of a written narrative as having a much more extensive role than the one this movie narrator plays. In the one-minute forty-three second clip covered above, the narrator is speaking for only thirty seconds, meaning the audience is receiving only a fraction of the cinematic data from this source, with the visual images and the audio sounds supplying the bulk of the data. In contrast, the narrator of a written narrative is involved during 100 percent of the story, as every word of every sentence in the whole story is spoken by the narrator to the readers. Further, a written narrative has no images on a screen and no audio soundtrack, and so, the readers receive 100 percent of the story data from the narrator's words.

The all-encompassing control of story data by narrators of written stories is better illustrated by the opening scene of *Stranger Than Fiction*

4. At 8:13—8:23.

(2006),[5] the story of a man who discovers he is a character in a novel-in-progress who is slated to be killed off by the end of the novel. The opening scene begins with a zooming in—from a point in outer space right down to a close-up of a wristwatch on a bedside table—at which point a woman's voice is heard, saying, "This is a story about a man named Harold Crick . . . and his wristwatch." The camera then cuts to a man lying in bed, as the voice-over continues, "Harold Crick was a man of infinite numbers, endless calculations, and remarkably few words . . ." And as the camera zooms in on his hand reaching to turn off the alarm on his watch, the voice-over adds, ". . . and his wristwatch said even less."

The camera then cuts to Harold brushing his teeth, and the voice-over continues, "Every weekday for twelve years, Harold would brush each of his thirty-two teeth seventy-six times . . . thirty-eight times back and forth . . . thirty-eight times up and down." The camera then cuts to Harold tying his tie, and the voice-over continues, "Every weekday for twelve years, Harold would tie his tie in a single Windsor knot, instead of the double, thereby saving up to forty-three seconds. His wristwatch thought the single Windsor made his neck look fat . . . but said nothing." And the voice-over continues on for nearly two more minutes, making comments as the camera follows Harold going to work, engaging in his job at an IRS office, eating his lunch, taking a coffee break, walking from the bus stop to his home, eating supper, and going to bed.

The voice-over addresses practically everything the audience sees on the screen, providing so much information the audience could conceivably follow the story even without the benefit of the images on the screen. This clip from *Stranger Than Fiction* provides a closer analogy to a narrator's work in a written narrative, for similar to the voice-over in this clip, the narrator of a written narrative is constantly speaking,[6] conveying sentence after sentence of text to the readers.

In a sense, the narrator functions as a tour guide of the story world, with the words of the narrator serving up for the readers descriptions of characters engaged in actions within the confines of the story world. It is important to note, however, a narrator will not usually be a benign tour guide, simply passing on information to the readers in an objective manner.

5. At 0:40—3:44.

6 The analogy is not perfect; while the voice-over in the *Stranger Than Fiction* clip is very prominent, it does fall silent three times for periods of nine, sixteen, and nine seconds, whereas the narrator of a written narrative never falls silent.

Rather, a narrator is apt to steer the readers into having particular stances on the actions they witness while touring around in the story world.

This type of evaluative steering is evident in the clip from *The Gods Must Be Crazy* covered earlier. Though the narrator does not explicitly criticize the way in which members of urban South-African culture are bound by the clock and calendar, it is clear he is steering his audience to disapprove of such a lifestyle. So, here is another important component of the job of a narrator: to provide evaluative guidance for the readers.

This is true of all narrators, including biblical narrators. The narrators of the Bible narratives are not content if their readers simply gain awareness of the events recorded; rather, they want to ensure their readers come away from these stories with particular evaluative stances on the events experienced. The most obvious means for providing evaluative guidance is the inclusion of explicit evaluative comments on the events in the story world. An example of this can be found in 1 Kgs 11:6 where, in his coverage of Solomon's marriages to many foreign women, the narrator of the book of Kings notes, "So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord," a piece of commentary making clear to the readers how they are to evaluate Solomon's actions. And this is just one in a series of explicit evaluative comments made by the narrator of Kings on the kings of Judah and Israel.

It should be noted the work of the narrator of Kings is not indicative of the practices of biblical narrators in general, for explicit evaluative commentary like this is used only sparingly in the rest of the narrative books of the Bible. However, this paucity of explicit evaluative commentary does not mean readers of biblical texts are left without any guidance on how they are to evaluate the actions of biblical characters. Biblical storytellers do have at their disposal more subtle means for getting their evaluative stances across to their audiences, and these are the preferred means for most biblical narrators. Meir Sternberg provides a concise survey of the variety of ways biblical narrators exercise the art of persuasion on their audiences.[7] One of the fifteen techniques he treats is point-of-view manipulation but, unfortunately, he only addresses a fraction of the persuasive power inherent in point-of-view dynamics. The remainder of this chapter will demonstrate how point-of-view manipulation is perhaps a narrator's most powerful and most versatile tool for impacting an audience's evaluation of characters in a story.

7. Sternberg, *Poetics*, 475–81.

The Functioning of Point of View in a Narrative

Point of view is a literary concept developed in the study of the modern novel beginning in the late nineteenth century, and even held the distinction of being the most prominent topic of discussion in literary circles during the twentieth century. Outside literary circles, however, point of view is not well understood. Therefore, considerable space will be devoted to unpacking this literary concept.

In the field of literary criticism, the most often quoted definition of point of view is that of literary critic Percy Lubbock: "The whole intricate question of method, in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of the point of view—the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story."[8] This dictum clearly reflects the place of prominence held by the concept of point of view, but Lubbock's actual definition of point of view—"the relation in which the narrator stands to the story"—is anything but illuminating, and thus, requires further attention.

As mentioned earlier, the function of a narrator is to act as something akin to a tour guide, and this involves positioning the readers at various vantage points within the story world of a narrative. To visualize this dynamic, it is helpful to think of how a film director uses the positioning of a movie camera to set the viewers at a certain vantage point in the film's story world;[9] to put it another way, the director gives the audience the illusion of standing in the exact spot occupied by the movie camera, having the audience view the rest of the story world from that spot.

Particularly instructive in this regard is a sequence from the movie *The Truman Show* (1998), the account of a man who, unbeknownst to him, has been the subject of a television show his entire life, his every move being captured by hundreds of cameras hidden throughout his hometown, which is actually nothing more than an elaborate filming set. The sequence is from a part of the storyline where Truman is becoming obsessed with the possibility that things are not what they seem,[10] precipitated by him catching a glimpse of a man whom Truman thinks is his long-dead father. Christof, the show's creator and director, wants to distract Truman from

8. Lubbock, *Craft of Fiction*, 251.

9. The first biblical scholar to appeal to the analogy of the use of movie cameras to explain the workings of point of view was Adele Berlin, "Point of View," 71–73.

10. At 58:39—1:00:23.

this obsession, and so, orchestrates a meeting between him and the actor who had been written out of the script twenty-three years earlier.

Leading up to the sequence in question, Truman and his best friend Marlon are shown sitting at the end of an unfinished bridge talking about Truman's growing suspicions there is something going on. During the conversation, Truman's attention is drawn to a shadowy figure approaching along the bridge deck. As Truman starts toward the figure, the camera cuts to Christof in his control center, which is equipped with a number of video monitors, each connected to a different camera planted in various places on, and around, the bridge. Christof is shown calling for the "CraneCam," at which point there appears on the monitor in front of him a high angle shot from behind Truman. As the two men are about to meet, Christof calls for "ButtonCam 3" at which point the monitor shows a frontal shot of Truman from just a few feet away, but shooting up from waist height. Then Christof calls for "CurbCam 8" at which point there appears on the monitor a shot showing the two men in profile from about fifteen feet away. And, as the two men embrace, Christof says, ". . . and now, go in close . . ." at which point the image on the monitor switches to a high-angle medium shot, with the camera slowly zooming in on Truman's face.

For each segment of this sequence, Christof dictates which camera feed is to be used, and in so doing, he dictates the particular angle from which the members of his audience view the segment. He is, in essence, placing them in various positions within his story world—vantage points from which they watch the action: first, high up and behind Truman, and then, at waist level looking up at his face, and then, at curb height fifteen feet away, and then, up and off to the side, but slowing descending upon Truman.

This provides an apt illustration of what is at the root of point of view in written narratives. In the same way a filmmaker determines the angle from which the audience is to view any particular segment of a scene, so also, a narrator in a written narrative places the readers in a specific position within the story world to facilitate their watching the action of a given segment of the narrative from a particular angle.

This assertion raises two issues. First, how is it possible to conceive of readers as *watching* the action of a story? Unlike moviegoers who are presented with images on a screen, readers have only words on a page at which to look. Therefore, how is it possible to conceive of readers being engaged in the act of *watching*? The answer to this question is to be found

in another look at the activity of the narrator. Earlier, a narrator was likened to a tour guide leading readers through a story world. To expand upon this, part of a narrator's guidance is the provision of descriptions of elements of the story world—descriptions of people, events, and places—and these descriptions create *images* for the readers to view. Of course, the readers have no screen on which to view these images. Rather, they view them in their *mind's eye*; the act of reading involves something akin to watching a movie unfold inside one's head. So, it is indeed conceivable that readers *watch* the action of a written narrative.

There is still, however, a second issue. Even if it is conceded that readers do *watch* the action of a story, is it really possible readers can be positioned, simply by words in a text, to watch the action *from a particular angle*? This issue is best addressed by means of an exercise in visualization. First, read the following account of Jesus' ascension from Luke 24:51, visualizing in your mind these events as you read: "And while Jesus was blessing them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven."[11] Now, compare what you have visualized with the way in which the *Jesus Film* (1979) portrays these events.[12] It starts with a close-up of Jesus in semi-profile speaking words of blessing, and with his voice continuing, the camera cuts to a shot of his followers looking off-camera to the left, then kneeling and raising their arms, with their gaze shifting upward toward the sky. Then the camera cuts to an aerial shot looking down on the followers with the camera rising, resulting in the followers on the ground looking smaller and smaller.

No one would visualize this when reading Luke 24:51. Rather, a person engaging in this exercise will typically visualize a shot from the ground looking up at the ascending Jesus. For what reason? The linguistics of this verse dictate a viewing angle from the ground looking up, with a viewing angle from the sky looking down requiring different linguistics.

Linguistics can play a significant role in dictating the angle from which readers view a particular scene in their mind's eye. This being the case, it is often possible to determine from a linguistic analysis of a narrative passage that the readers are intended to view the action described from one angle as opposed to another. Having said that, it is important to point out linguistics do not have the capacity to dictate viewing angles with the fine gradations possible with the adjustments to the positioning of a movie camera. Nevertheless, linguistics do have the capacity to dictate viewing

11. All translations are the author's own, unless otherwise indicated.

12. At 1:53:29—1:54:00.

angles to a degree sufficient to make significant differences to the readers' experience of a narrative.

The discussion of point of view to this point has relied heavily on the analogy of how the positioning of a movie camera dictates the angles from which an audience views the action of a movie. However, this analogy needs to be supplemented, for when it comes to point of view in a written narrative, talk of the spatial positioning of readers in a narrative's story world only scratches the surface of the full extent of the narrative's point-of-view dynamics. We will be exploring the components contributing to this full extent of point-of-view dynamics in the following several chapters. However, it is helpful at this point to take a step back and have a look at the big picture of point-of-view crafting, that is, the end toward which the various components of point-of-view manipulation work. Put simply, that end is providing the readers with either a *subjective* or *objective* experience of particular elements of a story. In other words, the point-of-view crafting of a narrative text is analyzed to determine if the readers are being led to merge with a given character, thus experiencing the action subjectively along with the character, or if they are being held at arm's length from the character, thus experiencing the character's participation in the action as mere objective bystanders.

Analysis of point of view to the degree being suggested here constitutes uncharted territory in the field of biblical studies. However, it remains to be determined whether or not it is territory worth charting. Until recently, scholarship on point of view had failed to uncover any way in which awareness of the point-of-view crafting in a biblical narrative makes a significant impact on how the narrative is interpreted. However, the uncovering of a relatively obscure aspect of the point-of-view theory developed in the study of the modern novel provides the key for developing a methodology for analyzing point of view that does indeed impact biblical interpretation. It is to this aspect of point-of-view theory that we now turn.

The Exegetical Significance of Point of View

The bulk of the efforts by biblical scholars in working with point of view has focused on a few standard works of literary criticism known for their treatments of this literary concept.[13] Unfortunately, none of these

13. For an assessment of these efforts by New Testament and Old Testament narrative critics, see Yamasaki, *Watching,* 68–151.

standard works address how being aware of the point-of-view dynamics in a narrative text can actually impact the interpretation of the text, with the one point-of-view dynamic that does prove significant in this regard laying hidden away in a prominent literary-critical work of the early-1960s not ordinarily associated with the concept of point of view.

The work in question is *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, written by American literary critic Wayne Booth,[14] and his contribution to point-of-view theory is found in a provocative analysis of Jane Austen's *Emma*.[15] The title character of this novel is a young woman who is intelligent, witty, beautiful, and wealthy. However, she also cannot keep herself from meddling in the affairs of others, often to their extreme detriment. Booth discerns that Austen's composing of this story is governed by two basic interests. On the one hand, she wants the story to be a comedy, and on the other, she wants the audience to wish for Emma's happiness in the end. Further, Booth notes these two interests are at odds with each other, for while Emma's ill-informed meddling is essential as the source of much of the comedy of the story, its devastating results for those around her have the natural effect of turning the readers against her as opposed to having them wish for her happiness. Therefore, Austen's challenge is to retain the meddling, but in such a way as to keep the audience from becoming distanced from Emma.

Booth convincingly argues that Austen meets this challenge through an ingenious use of point of view, specifically, "showing most of the story through Emma's eyes,"[16] that is, through Emma's point of view. According to Booth, this dynamic creates within the readers a sense of *empathy* for Emma despite all her misdeeds, and this feeling of empathy results in the readers pulling for her in the end.

This finding by Booth has made virtually no impact on the study of point of view in biblical narratives; the only biblical scholar to note this dynamic has been Janice Capel Anderson, and she only mentions it in passing.[17] This lack of attention from biblical narrative critics is unfortunate, for Booth's discovery has profound significance for the analysis of biblical narratives. As mentioned earlier, biblical narrators use evaluative commentary

14. Booth, *Rhetoric*; the first edition was published in 1961, but all page references are to the second edition (1983).

15. Ibid., 243–66.

16. Ibid., 245.

17. Anderson, *Narrative Web,* 67, bringing up a point she made in an unpublished paper from 1981.

only sparingly, thus leaving their readers without explicit guidance on whether they are to approve or disapprove of the vast majority of actions they witness. However, Booth's discovery means even in a narrative text containing no explicit evaluative commentary, *evaluative guidance may still be present in the point-of-view crafting of the text*. Specifically, filtering the events of the story line through a particular character's point of view creates within the readers a sense of empathy for the character and, as a result, the readers will be inclined to side with the character in whatever he or she does; in other words, the readers are led to evaluate the character's actions positively.

The idea that readers should feel empathy for a character through whose point of view they are experiencing a story is nothing new. It has long been recognized that characters functioning as first-person narrators draw the empathy of their readers. First-person narration involves every aspect of a story coming to the readers through the point of view of the narrator-character, a dynamic resulting in an intimacy between readers and character as the readers' experience of the story comes to merge with that character's experience. And the natural outcome of such a merging is the readers develop a sense of empathy with the character.

What is ground-breaking about Booth's finding is that this sense of empathy could occur where the narration is not being presented with the intimacy of a first-person narrator, but rather, with the distance of a third-person narrator—a narrator who is not involved as a character in the story, but rather, is relating the story as an uninvolved bystander. However, despite the fact the readers feel a sense of distance from the narrator, a sense of intimacy can still be created *with one of the characters*. This can occur when the aspects of the story are relayed to the readers *through the point of view of that character,* such that the readers' experience of the events merges with the character's experience, with this merging producing within the readers a sense of empathy with the character.

Therefore, taking the scenario that opened this chapter—a reader, with no explicit evaluative commentary on which to rely, wondering whether to approve or disapprove of Gideon's actions with the fleece—a perspective-critical analysis would examine this passage from Judges for the point-of-view moves used in its crafting to determine whether they serve to lead the readers to experience the events of the story line through Gideon's point of view. If so, the resulting merging of the readers with Gideon has the effect of having them empathize with him, and thus approve of his actions.

The Hebrew Scriptures are replete with situations such as this—passages involving dubious actions, but lacking explicit evaluative commentary—constituting a sizeable corpus ripe for the investigative power of perspective criticism. Further, this methodology should be equally helpful in discerning evaluative guidance in biblical stories involving controversies between characters where, again, the narrator does not explicitly indicate with which of the characters the readers are to side.

For example, in Acts 15:36–40, Paul and Barnabas are about to embark on a second missionary journey, but they end up in a sharp disagreement over whether or not to take John Mark along, with Barnabas thinking they should, but Paul insisting they do not. In fact, their disagreement becomes so sharp they end up splitting as a team. Obviously, one of them is missing the mark here, but the narrator does not indicate explicitly which one that is. However, if a perspective-critical analysis of the point-of-view dynamics of this passage reveals the report of this event is being filtered through the point of view of one of these characters, it can be concluded the readers are intended to side with that character.

The proposal presented here—that something as seemingly innocuous as point-of-view crafting has the capacity to dictate the characters with whom the readers are to empathize—is radical indeed. And it may be objected that perhaps too much is being made of Booth's study of *Emma*. However, the "anti-hero" genre of literature and film stands as corroborating evidence of the veracity of this empathy dynamic. Stories of this genre utilize protagonists who exhibit characteristics traditionally associated with villains rather than heroes. While such characterizations would ordinarily function to distance audiences from such characters, no such distance arises in the case of anti-heroes. In fact, the opposite occurs; audiences find themselves siding with such characters, pulling for them in whatever they do. And this sense of empathy for anti-heroes results from point-of-view manipulation designed to have the events of the story filtered through the point of view of such characters—establishing them as the "point-of-view characters" of their respective stories—resulting in audiences coming to side with them.

A clip from the classic anti-hero film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) demonstrates this empathy dynamic in action. The title characters are members of a gang of outlaws in the Wild West of the 1890s, and during the first thirty-five minutes of the movie, they are depicted as being of corrupt character—planning a bank job, cheating at cards, pulling

off train robberies—behavior not surprising for the outlaws they are. At around the thirty-five minute mark, one of their train robberies is interrupted by the arrival of a posse, initiating a chase sequence that goes on for the next twenty-five minutes. Space does not permit coverage of the whole chase sequence, but examination of a representative clip of the sequence should suffice for our purposes.[18]

The clip opens with a short shot of Butch and Sundance on a horse at full gallop, traversing a wide-open area of desert conditions, and then cuts to Butch letting himself flop into a pool of water on a rocky plateau. As he cools off in the pool, he calls out to an off-camera Sundance, "Ah, you're wasting your time . . ." The camera then pulls back to focus on Sundance in the foreground kneeling by the edge of the plateau, as Butch continues talking in the background, ". . . can't track us over rock." Sundance, apparently spotting something in the distance, leans forward and says, "Tell *them* that."

Butch, stunned at the implications of what Sundance has just said, clambers out of the pool, and sloshes over toward Sundance, coming to settle in beside him, peering off in the same direction. The camera then cuts to a shot of the posse members in the distance on a rocky expanse below, and then returns to Butch and Sundance still staring in their direction. Butch then says, "They're beginning to get on my nerves . . . who are those guys?" In response, Sundance recounts an incident years earlier where they were told of "a full-blooded Indian, except he called himself with an English name, 'Sir . . . somebody . . .'" Butch interjects, "Lord Baltimore?" and then Sundance says, "Lord Baltimore, that's right. And he could track anybody, over anything, day or night." Butch, not catching the significance, simply replies, "So?" Sundance continues, "The guy on the ground . . . I think it's him." The camera cuts back to the posse in the distance, five of the riders still mounted, and one off his horse and examining something on the ground. The camera then cuts back to Butch and Sundance, Butch saying, "No, Baltimore works out of Oklahoma . . . he's strictly an Oklahoma man," and after glancing around, adds, "I don't know where we are, but it sure as hell isn't Oklahoma." Then, after a few moments of exchanging reassurances—reassurances that ring hollow under these new circumstances—Sundance gets up to depart, leaving Butch with his eyes still fixed on the posse. The camera then cuts back to the posse in the distance for a few more seconds.

18. At 51:02—58:12.

The next scene opens with a couple of shots of Butch and Sundance riding down the middle of a creek, and then veering out of the water, dismounting, and starting up the base of a mountain, with their horse in tow. The camera then cuts to a high-angle shot down on the creek below, capturing Butch in the foreground stopping, looking back, and exclaiming, "Damn it!" As Butch continues his climb, he mutters, "Don't they get tired? Don't they get hungry? Why don't they slow up? Hell, they could even go faster . . . at least that would be a change!" Butch glances back again, and continues, "They don't even break formation . . . do something!" at which point Butch moves out of the shot, leaving the camera to come to rest on the posse members far off in the distance, in full gallop toward the camera.

A couple of short shots of Butch, Sundance, and the horse continuing to scramble up the mountainside act as a transition to the next scene, which opens with the three of them coming to a stop for a rest on the side of the mountain. As they rest, Butch and Sundance have the following exchange:

> *Butch*: "Kid . . ."
>
> *Sundance*: "What?"
>
> *Butch*: "Who's the best lawman?"
>
> *Sundance*: "'Best'? How? Do you mean toughest . . . or easiest to bribe?"
>
> *Butch*: "Toughest."
>
> *Sundance*: "Joe Lefors."
>
> *Butch* (throwing his head back): "Gotta be."
>
> *Sundance*: "Lefors never leaves Wyoming . . . *never*. You know that."
>
> *Butch*: "He always wears a white skipper; that's how you tell it's Joe Lefors, because he wears a white straw hat."

The camera here cuts to the posse members at a full gallop, still far in the distance, but close enough to discern the lead rider is wearing a white hat. The camera returns to a shot of Sundance gazing in the direction of the posse, interrupted just briefly with another shot of the posse. As they get up to continue their ascent of the mountain, Sundance mutters, "Jesus, who are those guys?"

The next scene begins with shots from various angles of Butch and Sundance trying to coax their horse up a steeper grade, but then, the camera abruptly cuts to a distance shot of a large clearing down below the

steeper grade, just as the posse members crest a hill at the far end to come into view, and the focus remains on them for nearly ten seconds as they gallop across the clearing, gaining more ground on the struggling Butch and Sundance. The camera then zooms all the way in from this distance shot until it is framing what is in the foreground, mere feet away: Butch, Sundance, and the horse. As the camera follows their progress, it pans upward just enough over Sundance's shoulder to catch the posse continuing their progress across the clearing. The camera then gives a close-up of Sundance looking back over his shoulder, and then cuts to another distance shot of the posse galloping across the clearing.

Butch and Sundance ditch the horse as they approach a rocky portion of the mountain, and the camera follows them as they make their way over and around the boulders making up the face of the mountain. As they are nearing the top, the camera cuts to a high-angle shot down on Butch and Sundance as they stop and look back down, just as the posse members ride into view, a mere thirty feet below them. There is then a cut to a shot across the flattened top of the mountain, with Butch and Sundance emerging into sight over the far edge. They stagger across the top, looking in all directions, and then continue over to the opposite edge, at which point the camera cuts to a low-angle shot capturing them coming over the edge, and sliding down a gravel slope. At the bottom of the slope, the gravel gives way to rock again, and the camera provides a medium shot of Butch and Sundance as they proceed along a rocky plateau, but then pulls back to a position fifty yards away to reveal they are trapped on a rock ledge with a sheer drop-off to a river a hundred feet below.

"How are they possibly going to escape?" That is clearly the reaction to which the audience has been led through the crafting of this segment of the movie. Despite the fact Butch and Sundance are outlaws—the "bad guys"—and those who have managed to corner them are law enforcement officers—the "good guys"—the audience is pulling for Butch and Sundance to prevail. Why? The answer is, "point of view." This entire segment has employed a variety of point-of-view moves designed to have the audience experience all these events through the point of view of Butch and Sundance. These moves establish them as point-of-view characters resulting in the audience feeling empathy for them, thus wishing for a miraculous escape here.

What exactly are the point-of-view moves employed in this segment? It would be wise to reserve a discussion of these moves until after

an enumeration of the full range of point-of-view techniques has been provided, and just such an enumeration will be the focus of the next several chapters. Point-of-view dynamics can be conceptualized as operating on six distinct planes,[19] and the particular point-of-view techniques related to each of these planes will be covered in chapters 2–7. Further, discussions of these techniques will be supplemented wherever possible with detailed descriptions of movie scenes employing these techniques, to illustrate what each technique looks like when used in cinematic storytelling—a *moving* picture being worth a thousand words. Then, following a chapter exploring the interaction of point-of-view dynamics on the various planes, chapter 9 will revisit this clip from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, this time flagging the specific point-of-view moves utilized in the crafting of these scenes, moves designed specifically to impact the viewers in such a way as to have them empathizing with Butch and Sundance. After this examination of point of view operating in cinematic storytelling, chapters 10–11 will examine point of view operating in *biblical* storytelling, with a narrative text from each of the testaments being subjected to a full perspective-critical analysis. It is hoped that this combination of descriptive and demonstrative treatments of point of view will provide the biblical interpreter with sufficient equipping to be able to access this deeper level of evaluative guidance present in the point-of-view crafting of biblical narratives.

19. Five of these planes are derived from the point-of-view typology of Uspensky, *Poetics*, 8–100; the sixth is derived from Sternberg, *Poetics*, 129–52.