READER 'ENTRAPMENT' AS LITERARY DEVICE IN JOHN 4:1-42

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ABSTRACT
The notion of literary entrapment has so far not been introduced comprehensively into the study of the communication of the Fourth Gospel. This paper is an argument for the inclusion of this strategy in the list of stylistic/literary devices in the Gospel of John. The presence of this device in John 4:1-42 is indicated, the dynamics of the device are elucidated, and the function in this specific pericope is discussed.

1 INTRODUCTION
Various literary devices, such as chiasm, epanalepsis, irony, misunderstanding, explanatory notes, repetition, and variation have already been identified and discussed in detail in the Fourth Gospel. However, the number and nature of these devices have remained virtually static for a considerable period of time, as a scrutiny of some of the more prominent commentaries (e.g. Haenchen 1980; Brown 1982; Barrett 1978; Schnackenburg 1968) and recent bibliographies (e.g. Van Belle 1988:120-128) reveal. Despite the development of and growing interest in narrative criticism, reception theory and other methods of literary analysis, no additional literary devices have been identified or discussed in connection with the Gospel of John in recent years, which is rather surprising.

In this article we will put forward the suggestion that a literary device which can be called 'reader manipulation' or 'reader entrapment' can be shown to exist in the pericope we are about to discuss - John 4:1-42. We will indicate here both the nature and function of this device in the dialogue of Jesus with the Samaritan woman, and put forward the suggestion that further analysis of the Gospel of John as a whole will reveal that this is a constant feature of the style of the Gospel, and a device which can be added to the existing list of stylistic features or devices present in the Fourth Gospel.

The credit for introducing the concept of entrapment in connection with the Fourth Gospel must go to Staley (1986:170-173). He follows McKee (1974), Fish (1980:147), O'Neill (1982:278-280) and others in this regard, but prefers to call this textual strategy 'reader victimisation'. According to Staley (1986:171) this strategy's purpose is to present the reader 'with the narrative "facts" in such a way that the reader is induced to commit the character's or narrator's errors, then it forces the reader to recognise his or her misjudgements by supplying or implying the corrective perspective.' Staley (1986:172) furthermore postulates that in the Fourth Gospel this technique may also help to understand some of the contradictions and tensions in the text in terms of their effects on the implied readers and not only to address these tensions and contradictions in terms of multiple editions or contradictions that need somehow to be
The subject of entrapment is, according to Veith (1982:228), not the invention of any one literary critic, but 'has been "in the air" at least since the dominance of the New Criticism has been successfully challenged in the mid-1960s.' The fact that New Testament studies in recent years started to focus on aspects such as reception theory and narratology enhances its applicability to the texts being studied. Furthermore, this notion of entrapment is very popular in literary analysis, since 'a peculiar virtue of the notion of entrapment is that it bridges the gap between the newer forms of reader-response criticism and older types of rhetorical analysis including the New Criticism' (Veith 1982:228). The advantages of this for New Testament analyses of texts are obvious.

As its title implies, this article deals with the concept of the reader. This does not refer to the real or flesh-and-blood readers of the Gospel, but the literary or narrative construct of the implied reader in the text as intratextual phenomenon (see Chatman 1978:267; Culpepper 1987:15; Heil 1989:272). The discussion will also be limited to only the concepts of implied author and implied readers, following Culpepper (1987:15-17), who argues that in the Gospel of John the implied author and narrator in the text cannot easily be distinguished. Although the critique of Staley (1986:36-89) on Culpepper's analysis and definitions of the implied author, narrator, narratee and so on, must be heeded and is valid for the Gospel as a whole, it seems that in this pericope the distinctions between implied author/narrator and implied readers/narratees are not so acute. Thus in references to implied author and implied readers the combination of implied author/narrator and implied readers/narratees is meant. Lategan (1985:70) explains the concept of the implied reader in this way:

The implied reader represents the response the author is aiming at or assuming on the part of his audience. In this sense it functions as a heuristic device to uncover the meaning of the text. It is a theoretical construct to gauge the intended effect of the text. The implied reader is on the receiving end of all the various indicators of the text. He experiences the full impact of all the strategies employed by the author, integrates the various elements, and projects the ideal response to the text, that is, a response congruent with the designs of the author as expressed in the text.

In addition to the level of communication between the implied author and readers, the communication between the characters on the story level must also be considered, because it is through the telling of the story and the interaction of the characters that the author communicates to the readers. Van Tilborg (1989:19-31) gives a very useful analysis of the different levels of communication in the text.

In this article it will also be argued that the strategy of entrapment of the implied reader includes reader victimisation and, in addition to inducing the reader to correct initial misjudgements, also serves the purpose of keeping the readers attentive and involving them in the narrative in a way ordinary narratives are unable to do. The analysis of Staley will thus be extended to include other aspects in addition to
reader victimisation, and the whole of this pericope will be analysed in these terms, which Staley (1986:177-189) did not attempt adequately. It will also be argued that reader victimisation involves not only the creation of values which later turn out to be wrong, but that aspects such as the creation of the anticipation of certain events which do not develop, devious use of an intertext, depicting characters and events in unexpected and impossible terms, attempting to catch the readers off guard, and so on, are also part of reader entrapment. Because the analysis is more comprehensive in nature than Staley's, the accepted literary term 'entrapment' is preferred in this regard.

2 ENTRAPMENT IN JOHN 4:1-42
For practical reasons the pericope 4:1-42 may be divided into the following subsections:

4:1-3: setting the scene in general
4:4-7a: setting the specifics of the scene
4:7b-15: first part of the dialogue of the woman
4:16-26: second part of the dialogue with the woman
4:27-30: transitional section
4:31-38: discussion with the disciples

2.1 John 4:1-3: General setting
In these opening verses the implied author immediately starts to create tension by indicating that Jesus left Judea because knowledge of his actions reached the Pharisees. While the author is carefully giving the reason for Jesus' leaving, he actually does not give enough information regarding this reason for leaving. It is only stated that when Jesus heard the Pharisees knew, he immediately left. This seems to suggest some negative attitude on the part of the Pharisees, but the readers do not know what that is, since so far in the narrative the Pharisees have not been depicted very negatively. The readers, who have had access to privileged knowledge right from the start of the narrative, are suddenly no longer insiders with adequate knowledge, and this creates tension. The function of this could be to induce the readers into a more attentive stance at the beginning of a new subsection of the narrative - a 'ministry tour' (Staley 1986:170) - or it could be to signal the beginnings of a negative portrayal of the group of the Pharisees that becomes more and more intense as the narrative develops.

2.2 John 4:4-7a: Detailed setting
The unease of the implied readers is intensified in this subsection. So far in the narrative the character Jesus has acted as one would expect of a Jewish rabbi, and has done nothing out of the ordinary - even the cleansing of the temple in 2:13-21 is an indication of his extreme zeal for proper religious conduct. Here we find that the so far traditional rabbi Jesus enters into a strange and religiously hostile land. Again a reason is given, but only just. It is stated that he had to (4:4) pass through Samaria, but no other reason is given by the author. Was it because of geographical/practical reasons (see Jos.Ant XX, 118; Vit 269;
Dalman 1924:22, 249-256; or because of divine compulsion? (see Brown 1982, 1:169; Morris 1981:225; Okure 1988:85)? No reason is given, and the readers are again unaccustomedly left on their own to make the necessary calculations as the story develops. Again their involvement is ensured, but they are also victimised to some extent by the unclear reasons given. Boers (1988:153) also confirms this in arguing regarding the edei, and asks: 'Or is edei meant, as it frequently does, in the sense of divine necessity? In due course it becomes clear that the entire story was heavily under the influence of the latter (divine necessity-JEB)...but it is important for the flow of the narrative to note that this is not clear in verse 4.'

The socio-cultural setting of the scene also facilitates this unease and indistinctness. The protagonist Jesus, a traditionally religious Jewish figure, now has to go through Samaria and goes to Sychar, which appears to have been a rather large town - most probably 'the Samaritan religious and national centre' (Olsson 1974:142). This is very strange behaviour indeed, especially because of the enmity between Jews and Samaritans which compelled them to avoid each other in general. Okure (1988:316-318) provides a very useful list of publications dealing with this aspect and Samaritanism in general. Suffice it to say here that the relationships between Samaritans and Jews were extremely strained. Into the territory of these hostile people and right to their centre of religion, Jesus, a Jew, now travels. The readers who already were supposed to feel the tension, when Jesus fled from the hostile Pharisees, are subjected to an even more problematised situation.

However, it seems that the implied author takes the initiative and apparently tries to reassure the readers. This is done by a detailed description of the location of the well in terms of the patriarchs Jacob and Joseph. These references would immediately produce images of patriarchal tradition, faith, and of orthodox Jewish religion. This invites the readers to judge Jesus' journey into Samaria in another light. Despite the fact that he is in a traditionally hostile country, it seems that his conduct is after all in line with the expected. He, as rabbi, decides to rest at the well of his and the implied reader's real and/or spiritual forebears. The readers are manipulated by this rather lengthy description of the location in Jewish terms and not Samaritan terms into a false sense of security to expect the normal from Jesus. In fact, that it is mentioned that he was tired and that it was twelve noon in 4:5 (see Boers 1988:159 and Louw 1989:13-18), further serves the purpose of assuring the readers that nothing out of the ordinary is happening.

This sense of security is immediately shattered by the appearance of the woman on the scene (4:7a) to draw water. The addition of the woman at the well immediately conjures up images of an intertext which can be relevant here. The fact that the scene at the well is reminiscent of Old Testament betrothal scenes has been noted by Bligh (1962), Olsson (1974:162-173), Cahill (1982:41-48), Eslinger (1987), Boers (1988:154-60), and others. According to Alter (1981:51), there are a number of scenes in the Old Testament which have fixed components, and that occur repeatedly and which are called type-scenes. One such scene is a betrothal type-scene where there is an encounter at a well between two individuals who are to
be betrothed. Staley (1986:179-181) has convincingly indicated the parallels between John 4:1-42 and the betrothal type-scene. This creates enormous problems for the readers, and their perception of the scene is radically changed.

Instead of the rabbi Jesus resting peacefully at the site of a well of the Jewish patriarchs, he is now confronted by a situation which in the past led to a marriage between a man and a woman. What makes this situation even more problematic is the fact that the woman involved is a Samaritan. The fact that the Samaritan-Jewish schism is indeed relevant here is stressed by the unnecessary repetition of 'Samaritan' in 4:4, 5, 7a.

The readers were unsettled when Jesus entered Samaria, but were falsely reassured by his visiting a well which also was the property of his ancestors. The reassurances the narrative conveyed are shattered, however, by the introduction of the Samaritan woman. The intertext of the betrothal type-scene creates enormous difficulties for the readers, since the intertext predicts some kind of union between the male and female figures, which is impossible here, since Jesus, in addition to being Jewish, is also depicted as a religious figure, a rabbi. The woman is not only female, which creates problems, since rabbis were expected to avoid conversations with females (see Pirque Aboth 1:5; Babylonian Talmud 536; Brown 1982, 1:173; Okure 1988:133-134), but she is also Samaritan, which is an indication of a religious anathema!

2.3 John 4:7b-15: Discussion on living water

The dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman gets underway in this section. The socially unacceptable conduct of the main figure with whom the readers have identified so far continues, and even deteriorates. He does the unthinkable and asks for a drink of water. The readers know it is strange and unacceptable behaviour, the woman also criticises him for asking and even the implied author validates the critique against Jesus in the aside in 4:9b. This creates a big dilemma for the readers - how are they to judge the actions of the protagonist? Furthermore, the readers know the criticism of Jesus is valid. There are so many voices against him! The readers are also victimised in the sense that even the type-scene is not enacted along the usual lines. Even though the male figure acts along the expected lines of the intertext and asks for water, his request is denied, which is unthinkable in the type-scene. On the level of the characters, the intertext and the expectations about Jesus, the critique of his actions and the refusal of the woman in these opening verses indicate that the dialogue so far is disastrous.

Despite the severe criticism by the implied social context, the woman, and the implied author, Jesus continues and switches topics from his need to that of the woman's in 4:10 and refers to the 'gift of God', 'adequate knowledge' and 'living water'. This serves to elevate the dialogue from the level of everyday experience to that of the metaphysical and religious plane. This now challenges the readers' previous observations about Jesus' 'misconduct' and forces them into an evaluative stance. They are able to interpret Jesus' words correctly, because of their preknowledge about him and this forces a decision on them: is Jesus correct in disregarding social and religious customs, or are the traditionally accepted norms to be observed? By constantly catching the readers by surprise or unawares,
the implied author involves them in the narrative like no ordinary statement could. They are forced to make decisions.

Jesus’ reference to the woman’s lack of knowledge and the implication that the criticism of his conduct is perhaps due to inadequate understanding now serves to align the readers with him and not against him anymore. The very effective use of irony and misunderstanding in 4:11f, in the woman’s reply, strengthens this alignment of the readers with Jesus. Regarding the function of irony, Booth (1961:28) states that ‘the building of amiable communities is often far more important than the exclusion of naive victims. Often the predominant emotion when reading stable ironies is that of joining, of finding and communing with kindred spirits.’

Well aware that the readers will be able to grasp the ironies, the author puts ironical statements in the woman’s mouth, which serves to force the readers as ‘insiders’ closer to Jesus while the woman, because of her lack of insight, now becomes an ‘outsider’ (see also O’Day 1986:57-65; Duke 1984:60). In 4:7b-9 the readers had no choice but to agree with the criticism of Jesus. The text of 4:10-14 leaves the readers no choice but to become ‘insiders’ with Jesus, while the woman as the victim of the irony and misunderstanding becomes an ‘outsider’. Especially the fact that the reader is able to understand the full implications of 4:13f strengthens the feeling of being in line with Jesus. The readers now have to discover that they unintentionally have been changing positions.

However, just when it seems as if all things were being cleared up for the reader, the woman answers in 4:15, and gives a clear indication that she is completely on the wrong track. She did not understand Jesus at all. The conversation, which started badly in 4:7bff, also fails in the end because Jesus fails to make himself clear. The woman’s failure to understand now forces the readers to clarify her mistakes for themselves. Because they are aware that she is wrong, they are manipulated into formulating the correct attitude and understanding for themselves. It is nevertheless clear that the conversation on the story level failed dismally, and this also induces the readers to again take stock of Jesus’ position. So far Jesus’ conversations were very successful, but now it fails. In this way the author provides a good incentive for readers to continue reading and finding out if the failure does indeed continue. The readers were also forced and manipulated by the implied author to distance themselves from Jesus at the outset, to switch position closer to Jesus, and again to distance themselves a little. They are on the wrong foot all the time.

2.4 John 4:16-26: True and false worship
Just as in the previous section, the readers have no choice but to forfeit their alliance with Jesus somewhat in the opening verses of this section. Again the intertext is used for this purpose. Although the betrothal type-scene was altered slightly, the basic lines were still followed – there was an offer of water (4:13f) and the offer was eventually accepted (4:15). The readers can still expect the basics of the betrothal type-scene. However, their expectations are immediately shattered by 4:16 when Jesus asks the woman to call her husband – indicating that she is married. In the betrothal type-scene the female figure is always unattached. She denies that she has a husband (4:17), thus confirming that
Jesus is wrong and the type-scene is still intact. To the continued perplexity of the readers, Jesus agrees with her, thus in fact invalidating his utterance in 4:16. Only in 4:18 is the reason for all this given and her unsavoury past is revealed. O'Day (1986:67) comments on this scene and the effect on the reader:

In vv 16-19 the reader is the one who is on the outside while Jesus and the woman are the insiders who possess the true information about her marital status. Both the reader and the woman are surprised by Jesus’ revelation...the woman is surprised because Jesus has seen through her while the reader is surprised both because of Jesus’ ability to discern the truth and because of the truth itself. The reader is made to feel the impact of Jesus’ omniscience in a way a declarative statement could not.

All this manipulates the reader from doubting Jesus in 4:16-18 to again aligning very closely with Jesus (4:18), which makes the second alliance with Jesus very strong. In the light of Jesus’ subsequent utterance, which could possibly be of a problematic nature for the implied readers, this is very necessary. In 4:19-26, the topics of true and false worship and the Jewish-Samaritan religious schism are discussed and recast in a new perspective, and this calls for identification with the character Jesus, which makes this manipulation of the readers to identify with Jesus pressing.

The implied readers are now made aware of the fact that true worship is not dependent on a specific shrine, but on worshipping in spirit and in truth (see Okure 1988:115-116; Brown 1982, 1:180-181; Barrett 1978: 237-239). In these verses we find a remarkable switch between tenses - both future and present. Schriffin (1984:324) argues that ‘temporal ordering has a role of transforming an audience from a passive recipient of information to a vicarious participant in an experience.’

It does indeed seem that the readers are manipulated by this technique to identify with the words spoken and to apply the situation sketched there to themselves. However, the tension felt since the beginning of the dialogue as to the success of the conversation is not yet resolved, as the woman does not react at all to Jesus’ self-revelation in 4:26. Her reaction is not recorded, and to find out what her actual reaction is, the readers are forced to read on.

2.5 John 4:27-30: Transitional section
In this transitional section the reader is still kept in the dark on several counts. The disciples return and react with perplexity, but do not ask any questions, as one could reasonably have expected them to do. It could be that they are showing reverence towards their master (Morris 1981:274; Schnackenburg 1968:443) or they are being depicted slightly negatively in anticipation of their very negative depiction later in 4:31-38. Verse 4:28 very covertly gives an indication of the woman’s reaction. It could be interpreted that she left her water jar because she found the real water (Boers 1988:182-183) or only because of practical reasons (O'Day 1986:75; Morris 1981:275). However, the readers are not really informed at this stage as to the real reason and are manipulated
into making a decision which may or may not later be rectified - that is, something like Staley's victimisation. Even her conversation with the townspeople in 4:29 is so vague that no clear conclusion can be reached. The utterance in 4:30, where it is stated that the people of the village are coming towards Jesus, also creates a sense of expectancy and tension, because their intentions are not clear. The Samaritans were usually hostile towards Jews - what is the purpose of their coming? This is not revealed immediately, but the intertext of the betrothal type-scene could indicate a favourable reaction. However, the readers, who in most instances so far were well versed with what is going on, are left in the dark in this section. This can serve two purposes. The obvious one is that it keeps them attentive and involved in the narrative. Another reason could be to force the readers into a re-evaluation of the events so far described. They are forced to judge these unclear utterances in terms of what had previously occurred and to interpret these events. They are also manipulated into an anticipatory stance as the arrival of both disciples and townspeople necessitates further dialogue.

2.6 John 4:31-38: Discussion with the disciples
In the discussion with the disciples we find that the same manipulation and practice of catching the readers off guard takes place as in 4:16-26. In 4:16-26 the readers were distanced from Jesus only to discover that they were subtly forced to align closely with him again. This switch from a position against Jesus to one of identification with him, enabled the author to communicate problematic material to the readers in such a way that they have no choice but to accept it. Here we find a similar situation - the disciples are cast somewhat negatively. They urge Jesus to trivialities (to eat) in 4:31, while the readers and Jesus know something of significance is about to happen. They do not ask questions out loud (4:33) and Jesus challenges a traditionally accepted proverb to which they also subscribe in 4:35. This is, however, immediately followed by a much more positive statement in 4:36-38 where they are actually again depicted positively in the sense that their work is aligned with Jesus' own which is actually doing the Father's will (4:34). It is also clearly stated that the disciples were appointed by Jesus. The implied readers are forced to re-evaluate their previous perceptions of the disciples, and to identify much more strongly with them. This facilitates the acceptance of the situation reflected in these verses where one sows and another reaps. (See also Okure 1988 for the missionary character of John 4.)

2.7 John 4:38-42: Conclusion of the story
In the conclusion of the story the readers are witness to both a satisfactory conclusion to the story and a practical illustration of 4:16-26 and 4:31-38. For the first time in the whole narrative we find positive reactions and a re-enactment of the intertext along the expected lines.

The readers are now moved from tension/apprehension to satisfaction and positive responses. It is clear that the woman did indeed grasp Jesus' self-revelation, and that the Samaritans' intention is positive in approaching Jesus. As in the betrothal scenes, Jesus is invited to stay over and reacts favourably, despite the fact that Jews and Samaritans do
not mix - a clear indication that the words uttered in 4:16-26 and 4:31-38 have become reality. The tension of the betrothal scene is also resolved. Staley (1986:183) comments that 'in the Fourth Gospel, the emphasis in the type-scene will be upon the ensuing spiritual relationship which is established - not only between Jesus and the woman - but also between Jesus and the entire town.'

All this forces the readers to re-examine their attitudes and beliefs held from the start of the pericope, while the whole relationship between opposing parties and religious groups and the approach to mission are cast in a different and fresh light for the implied readers.

3 CONCLUSION

We have tried to indicate that the implied readers are manipulated and entrapped mercilessly by the implied author. They are subjected to tension, apprehension and suspense. They are cast now as outsiders now as insiders, and caught wrong-footed time and again. Their beliefs regarding their chief figure of identification is seriously challenged, just as their perceptions regarding the validity of traditional social and religious schisms are challenged. They are forced to associate with and dissociate from characters in the story, to take decisions and even to evaluate their present position with respect to missionary work.

All these manipulations are very functional, however, since they are designed to enhance the communication between author and reader. In some instances the manipulation is designed to keep the story interesting and the readers involved and attentive. In other instances they are manipulated in order to show that traditional values can be challenged. The manipulation serves in some instances to align the readers with certain characters and to prepare fertile ground for somewhat difficult messages. This also ensures that these difficult truths will be accepted as intended. It must be stressed, however, that this literary device of reader manipulation or entrapment of the reader must always be studied in conjunction with other literary devices and text strategies, such as irony and misunderstanding.

The above discussion would indicate that reader entrapment or manipulation is a valid literary device which greatly enhances the effective communication of the text and which should be included in a list of literary devices in the Fourth Gospel. The results of Staley's (1986) study seem to indicate that entrapment could be a valid feature of the communication of the Gospel, but only further study into this neglected (in Johannine studies) feature can prove this conclusively.

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