arguments for this hypothesis, it is indeed the right one and that the gospels are part of the genre of ancient βίος literature. Therefore, we must now turn our attention away from the negative task of assessing the work of others and background considerations, to the positive need to establish a case for this hypothesis which rests on the firm foundations of literary theory and classical biography which have been laid down so far.

PART TWO

THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

5

GENERIC FEATURES

> The best way to define a genre ... is to describe the common elements in a narrow group of texts.[1]
>
> Recognition of genre depends on associating a complex of elements.[2]

We have seen that genre functions by providing a set of expectations as a sort of contract between author and reader. It is constituted and mediated through a variety of different generic features, none of which need be peculiar to the genre; however, when they are taken all together, they reveal a particular pattern, which enables us to recognize the genre. Now we need to identify these 'generic features' as a list against which we can compare the gospels and Graeco-Roman βίοι, to see whether they exhibit the same pattern and family resemblance. There is good reason for making the list as comprehensive as possible.[3] As we have just shown, failure to recognize the diversity of the range of generic features has been a consistent problem of most treatments of the genre of the gospels, leading to their ultimate failure. Literary critics, however, tend to have much longer lists. Although there are differences, a recognizable overall grouping is clear, with many critics including some or most of the following: representation, structure, metre, size, scale, subject, values, mood, occasion, attitude, setting, characterization, purpose, formal units, use of sources, motifs and the like.[4] We will use all these features in our analysis, in order to be as wide-ranging and comprehensive as possible.

[1] Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 110. [2] Fowler, 'Life and Death', p. 80.
[3] See Hawthorn, *Unlocking the Text*, p. 47.
[4] See for instance, Wellek and Warren, *Theory*, p. 231; Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, chapter 4, pp. 55–74; Hawthorn, *Unlocking the Text*, p. 47; Doty, 'The Concept of Genre', p. 440; Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity*, pp. 54–65.

These features then have to be organized. They need to include elements concerned with the text's structure and form as well as its content and material – Wellek and Warren's 'outer form' and 'inner form'.[5] Often analogies in one or other of these areas are taken to establish a clear link on their own: thus Downing's identification of analogies of motifs did not take into account how these elements of similar content can appear in works of different formal structures.[6] Therefore, the following study must include both groups of features; as Strelka says: 'Outer *and* inner form of the literary work, its aesthetic literary (not merely linguistic) structure, *and* its thematics will provide elements for its special genre-form and genre-unity.'[7] However, the distinction is not always easy to maintain: thus 'characterization' is an 'outer form' in terms of the methods used by the author, whereas the quality of the characters seems more to do with content, i.e. 'inner form'.

David Hellholm and the SBL Apocalypse Group prefer a three-fold division into form, content and function, which is used by Collins, Hellholm and Aune to solve problems of apocalyptic genres.[8] Furthermore, Aune uses the same tripartite scheme for his generic analysis of the gospels and Acts in their literary environment.[9] However, the distinction does not always work; Hellholm notes that some 'characteristics could show up in one or even two more groups as well, depending on the perspective': thus a vision could be seen as both a formal characteristic and also to do with content.[10] The third division of 'function' may be a separate group when we have other evidence about the purpose of the work and its audience or social setting. However, with these works Aune has to 'attempt to infer function from the text', as Collins points out; indeed Aune quotes Collins saying 'our knowledge of function and setting is often extremely hypothetical and cannot provide a firm basis for generic classification'.[11] This must mean, therefore, that this category of function remains closely linked with content, and so one could be justified in continuing to consider it as an internal feature. Interestingly, Aune himself does not use form, content and

[5] Wellek and Warren, *Theory*, p. 231.
[6] Downing, 'Contemporary Analogies', see pp. 94–5 above.
[7] Strelka, *Theories of Literary Genre*, p. viii; his italics.
[8] *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting*, *Semeia* 36 (1986); see pp. 2–7 (Collins), pp. 17–18 (Hellholm) and pp. 65–96 (Aune).
[9] Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*; see esp. pp. 32–6, 47–63, 84–96 and 116–38.
[10] *Semeia* 36 (1986), p. 25. [11] *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7 and 68–9.

function for his analysis of Graeco-Roman epistles and their New Testament counterparts, preferring a more traditional form-critical analysis by formulas and types.[12]

Thus our study must include the whole list of generic features, beyond the limited range of Shuler's, Guelich's and Dihle's approaches to something wider than Aune's form, content and function. The problems of classifying the features into outer/inner or content/function could be avoided by analysing them as a whole, without any grouping; this is probably how genre is grasped by a reader encountering the text. For the convenience of a more clearly ordered analysis, however, we intend to consider them in the following sequence:

(i) **Opening features:** The title, opening words, prologue or preface are considered first as the initial features to strike the reader and to begin conveying the genre of the work.
(ii) **Subject:** This is taken next since, as we shall see, it is determinative for βίοι.
(iii) **External features:** The mode of representation, metre, size or length, the structure or sequence, and scale all help to convey the formal, external appearance of the text. The use made of literary units, sources and methods of characterization communicate how the text was formed or composed.
(iv) **Internal features:** In addition to the subject and the opening features, the setting and topics describe the content of the work. The style, tone, mood, attitude, values and quality of the characterization all help to convey this content. Finally, we shall consider what the content reveals of the text's function within its social setting and occasion of writing, and of the author's intention or purpose.

How all these features are used and combined forms a conventional set of expectations – the contract, albeit unwritten or even unconscious, between author and reader. Thus, authorial intention and audience expectancy may be seen as a connection between internal and external features, as well as being the instrument whereby the author 'encodes' and the reader 'decodes' the communication, to use the language of Information Theory. These features will not all occur in exactly the same way in every example of the genre, but there must be enough similarity to communicate the family resemblance. Some features will be primary and necessary

[12] Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, pp. 158–225.

for the genre, whereas others may be secondary or optional.[13] Furthermore, some features may be very immediate and assist in 'signalling' the genre straightaway, whereas others play their part in confirming or correcting that initial impression.

A Opening features

1 Title

The first feature to signal genre is often the title itself. This may contain the name of a genre itself, e.g. *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*, or *A History of England*, or as a subtitle, e.g. *Which One's Cliff? – The Autobiography*. Conventions may operate, such as using the name of a chief character for Greek Tragedy, the *Agamemnon* or *Antigone*, or the name of the Chorus in Aristophanic Comedy, e.g. the *Frogs, Birds* or *Clouds*. In this way the title provides us immediately with a first impression about its genre, acting as the 'master word' to guide later interpretation, which will confirm or refute the genre.[14] As Fowler points out, conventions and fashions about titles vary in time; some ancient works were even known by their opening words, as are the books of the Pentateuch in Hebrew, e.g. *b^{e}reshith* 'in the beginning' for Genesis – compare the custom of calling sacred choral anthems by their opening words. The sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries saw widespread use of subtitles with clear generic clues, whereas often today this function is achieved by the publisher's 'blurb' on the cover.[15]

As Oliver has shown, the title of an ancient scroll was usually written on the outside, sometimes as a parchment label, to facilitate identification. In addition, the title might appear at the start of the text itself, as well as in a colophon at the end. Usually such headings or labels were 'of the simplest possible form', the author's name and a brief title.[16] One problem is that the titles of many ancient

[13] See Cairns, *Generic Composition*, p. 6.

[14] So called by Pleynet; for full quotation, see p. 35 (n. 42) above. Similarly, Peter Hellwig describes titles as a key (*Schlüssel* or *Interpretationshilfe*) for the reader; see his article, 'Titulus oder Über den Zusammenhang von Titeln und Texten', *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik* 12 (1984), pp. 1–20.

[15] See Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, pp. 92–8.

[16] Revilo P. Oliver, 'The First Medicean MS of Tacitus and the Titulature of Ancient Books', *TAPA* 82 (1951), pp. 232–61, see p. 243; for further discussion of ancient titles, see Henrik Zilliacus, 'Boktiteln i antik litteratur', *Eranos* 36 (1938), pp. 1–41.

works are not original, given by their authors; instead, they were added by librarians or grammarians. However, this need not mean that they are worthless as generic indicators, since they still tell us, in our literary milieu, how literary people in the ancient world saw these works, in their literary milieu.

2 Opening formulae/prologue/preface

The opening words also signal the genre: 'History, epideictic oratory, philosophical dialogue, political treatise or whatever, your first sentence had to announce what you were writing.'[17] *Arma virumque cano* alerts us to the epic nature of Vergil's *Aeneid* (I.1), whereas the formulaic opening 'Paul, an apostle, to the church (or saints) at . . . grace to you and peace' leads us to expect epistolary features. The lack of an expected opening questions the presumed genre of a work, e.g. the lack of any epistolary greeting at the beginning of the 'Letter' to the Hebrews causes some to see it as a treatise or sermon.[18] The opening sentence may open the work itself, or begin a formal preface by the author, in the first person, explaining his reason and purpose in writing and giving a clear indication of genre; this is particularly common in ancient historiography.[19] Alternatively, there may be a prologue, as in tragedy or comedy, setting the scene and explaining the background; again, clear generic expectations flow from this, which are then confirmed or corrected as the work proceeds and more features appear.

B Subject

Although genre is not determined by subject alone, subject and content are important generic features not to be underestimated. Within classical literary theory, the stress on 'appropriateness' (τό πρέπον, 'decorum') meant that certain subjects 'fitted' certain genres – and conversely, other subjects were *not* appropriate. Thus Aristophanes, in his comic literary contest between the two great

[17] Donald Earl, 'Prologue-Form in Ancient Historiography' in *ANRW* I.2 (1972), p. 856.

[18] See, e.g., Hugh Montefiore, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: A. & C. Black, 1964), p. 33; F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. xxiii.

[19] For examples of historiographical prefaces, see Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, I.1–23, esp. 21–22, or Livy's *Praefatio* to *Ab urbe condita*; see Earl's discussion 'Prologue-Form in Ancient Historiography', *ANRW* I.2, pp. 842–56, and Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, pp. 98–105 for further discussion.

Athenian tragedians, makes Aeschylus criticize Euripides for bringing onto the stage people and subjects quite inappropriate for tragedy, so lowering the tone.[20] Similarly, we expect epic to have great heroic figures, philosophical dialogues to be full of questions about truth, justice and beauty, and love elegy to have graphic descriptions of the poet's emotional state. There is, however, the problem of how the subject is to be defined. The following tools may assist us.

1 Analysis of the verbs' subjects

A first step in simple linguistic analysis of a sentence or clause is to consider the function and structure of the various parts of speech, to see what is the subject or object, how the verb is being used and so on. Louw argues that semantics is about more than the meaning of individual words or phrases, but includes the meaning of the sentence, paragraph, or even the whole work itself.[21] Since the subject of the verb dominates a sentence's surface structure, it ought to be possible to analyse all the verbs to ascertain the overall subject of the work. From the allocation of verbal subjects, it may be argued that if someone or something dominates the results, then the subject of the whole is clear. If, however, two or more subjects share the distribution, then we may talk of multiple subjects.

Since the subject dominates the surface structure of the sentence, some linguists prefer 'agent': thus Rudanko uses the terms 'Agent', 'Experiencer', 'Benefactive' and 'Object' in his analysis of case grammar.[22] The advantage of 'Agent' is clear in active/passive transformations, e.g. 'I hit the dog' and 'the dog is hit by me'; in both, 'I' am the agent, the subject of the deep structure, even though the grammatical subject of the surface structure changes between active and passive. However, there are problems with this nomenclature: Rudanko's study and terms relate to 'present-day English', a non-inflected language, and he admits to less uniformity of terminological practice among case grammarians.[23] Since we are

[20] Aristophanes, *Frogs* ll. 1010–98 – see Stanford's commentary (London: Macmillan, 1971) *ad.loc.*, pp. 161–7.
[21] J.P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* (Philadelphia: Fortress/SBL, 1982).
[22] Juhani Rudanko, *Complementation and Case Grammar: A Syntactic and Semantic Study of Selected Patterns of Complementation in Present-Day English* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 51–5.
[23] Rudanko, *Complementation and Case Grammar*, p. 54.

concerned with the inflected ancient languages of Latin and Greek, where cases are clearly marked by case endings and where terminology and usage are agreed by grammarians, we will remain with the traditional analysis by verbs and subjects, and the case endings of Nominatives, Accusatives, etc. Furthermore, the active/passive transformation does affect our concern for the overall subject of the work. As Louw says, 'the only thing changed is the focus. In the active construction the focus is on the agent, while in the passsive construction it is on the experiencer.'[24] There may be no difference between the deep structure of the sentences 'The Pharisees approached Jesus' and 'Jesus was approached by the Pharisees', but the change of subject in the surface structure is significant both for the focus of the sentence and ultimately for the overall subject of the still deeper structure of the work's total meaning and concern.

We intend, therefore, to analyse the verbal subjects in various works to see whether there is any similarity between the results obtained from Graeco-Roman βίοι and from the gospels themselves. This can be done in one of two ways. By far the most accurate is to undertake an individual analysis by hand of all the verbs and work out their subjects. This manual analysis has been done for the gospels and some of our important βίοι. However, since it is very time-consuming, it is not suitable for larger texts, such as Homer. The second method takes advantage of the inflected nature of Latin and Greek. Computer word searches can be undertaken on the frequency of various proper names in different case endings; in particular, the frequency of the name's occurrence in the *nominative case* indicates that the named person is the subject of a verb, clause or sentence. Clearly, this is a very blunt instrument which can only pick up a certain proportion of the verbal subjects – those expressed by a noun in the nominative. The computer will miss verbs where the subject is contained within the verb, or is understood from the previous verb or sentence. Nonetheless, after due allowances are made for these shortcomings, it is hoped that the computer method as well as the manual method may demonstrate its usefulness in our analysis in the following chapters.

At this point, a brief look at the results obtained in other narrative genres will provide some 'control' with which to compare our results. In such works, two or three subjects, at least, tend to share the limelight. In Homer's *Iliad*, for instance, Achilles and

[24] Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek*, p. 67.

Hector, as the main characters, share the honours, but with very small percentages: the name 'Achilles' features in 4.3% of the sentences or major clauses of the whole *Iliad* and occurs in the nominative in 2.0%, whereas his foe scores 5.4% and 2.4%, with the other heroes and gods close behind (see Figure 2, Appendix, p. 261). The *Odyssey*, however, shows the effect of a pseudo-biographical concentration on one figure, as Odysseus has almost twice the score of anyone else (8.8% and 4.8%) (see Figure 3, Appendix, p. 262). This same technique may help us to distinguish between a work of historiography (a book of Thucydides for example, or a monograph) and a βίος of a general or statesman. Thus, in two books of Herodotus' *Histories* dealing with Darius' subjugation of Ionia and Xerxes' invasion of Greece down to his victory at Thermopylae (Books VI and VII), the Persian kings can only manage to be in a few of the sentences, 3.5% and 6.6% respectively, with 0.9% and 3.7% in the nominative, while all the other individual subjects are spread out behind. Even if one attempts to analyse 'corporate' subjects, such as a town or race and all its members, none of them score highly: a computer search for all words beginning with 'Athen-' reveals that all the mentions of Athens and Athenians occur in only 8.4% of the sentences, with Persia and the Persians in 7.6%; the other collective subjects feature even less significantly (see Figure 4, Appendix, p. 263). On a slightly larger scale, analysis of the whole of Xerxes' campaign (Books VI–IX) shows Xerxes to be in 6% of the sentences, with 2.9% in the nominative; these figures are similar to those for Xerxes in Books VI and VII alone. Over all nine books of the *Histories*, Xerxes occurs in 2.4% and Darius in 2.9%; both of them are the subject of just 1% of the sentences, revealing little overall control of the entire work.

It is against such figures that the results for Graeco-Roman βίοι and the gospels will be compared. All the computer analysis figures are derived from computer searches of texts from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, originally undertaken at the Oxford University Computing Service and repeated on an IBYCUS computer for a check. The results are fully displayed in the Appendix.

2 Allocation of space

If analysis of verb subjects can tell us about the overall subject of the work, analysis of the allocation of space will make it clear how this subject is being treated. All aspects of the subject may be given

similar amounts of attention, or one particular element may occupy the greater part of the text. In this case, we have more evidence for deciding what the real subject of the work actually is.

C External features

By now, a reasonably clear initial picture of a work's genre should have emerged, to be confirmed or corrected by other features.

1 Mode of representation

The work can be mediated to us in various ways, each of which leads on to other alternatives. Thus we need to ask whether the work was designed for oral presentation, such as a speech, or as a written text, even allowing for the fact that written texts were often received by being read aloud in the ancient world. Next, we notice whether it is in prose or verse and how it is constructed – through dialogue, drama, disconnected units, or continuous narrative. Finally, the speaker must be considered: whether the work is all in one voice, in the first or third person, or through several voices or participants, as in drama.

2 Metre

For the wide range of ancient genres in verse, the type of metre chosen is also an important generic feature. The ancient theorists and critics were clear that certain metres were fitting for certain genres. Even if it is the case that such theories were not always observed in practice, nonetheless, metre did play a role in indicating genre: thus Aristophanes will often make comic capital out of using high-flown tragic metre and rhythms in his plays, only to undercut them with a joke, indicated by suddenly changing the metre, or using a variation of metre only allowed in comedy.[25]

3 Size and length

Aristotle refers to size as a generic feature for tragedy, with each subject ἐχούσης τι μέγεθος.[26] Often this feature has been ignored

[25] See A.M. Dale, 'Old Comedy: The "Acharnians" of Aristophanes' in *Collected Papers* (CUP, 1969), p. 284; see also, Horace on proper metres for genres in *Ars Poetica*, lines 73–92, p. 28 above.

[26] Aristotle, *Poetics* VI.1450b.25.

by scholars, with the consequence that works of quite differing sizes, and therefore possibly different genres, are grouped together with the gospels. Fowler, however, is quite unequivocal about the importance of this feature: 'A genre not characterized by any definite size is not a kind.'[27] We can distinguish size by the very approximate groupings of long, medium-length and short, defined by scrolls and 'sittings'. Much classical literature was read aloud at a social gathering, perhaps after dinner. Longer genres tend to be in several books, requiring several scrolls, and not intended to be read at one sitting. Shorter genres, on the other hand, fit several complete works to a scroll, and several could be read at one time. Medium-length genres are those in between, i.e. works to be read at one sitting and usually one to a scroll, or with one or at the most two partners.[28] The average length of a scroll may be gauged by the divisions of the major works into 'Books': thus the average length of a book of Herodotus is 21,000 words, and of Thucydides, 19,150. After the Alexandrian Library reforms, an average scroll's contents would be about 10,000–25,000 words, allowing for different sizes of handwriting.[29] Thus we might define shorter genres as those below 10,000 words, medium-length as those between 10,000 and 25,000, and longer ones as above 25,000; obviously there is overlap at the boundaries, such as an unusually long example of a short genre, or a shorter version of a long genre, both appearing, therefore, in the medium category.

There are three main types of longer genres: historiography ranges from the enormous length of Herodotus (189,489 words), Thucydides (153,260), and Pausanias (224,602) to the relatively smaller *Anabasis* of Xenophon (58,285). Epic is also large, e.g. Homer's *Iliad* (115,478) and *Odyssey* (87,824). Thirdly, we have Plato's major philosophical works (*Republic*, 89,358 and *Laws*, 106,297) and Aristotle (*Physics*, 57,056 and *Nicomachean Ethics*, 58,063). All these large works require several scrolls or books. However, smaller genres will fit several to a scroll: the orations of Demosthenes and Isaeus range from 1,000 to 5,000 words; most

[27] Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 64; see also Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos*, pp. 26–9 for Aristotle's μέγεθος applied to political biography.

[28] See Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, p. 63 on 'sittings', and Oliver, 'The First Medicean MS of Tacitus', *TAPA* (1951), pp. 246–8 on books and scrolls.

[29] Scrolls tended to be 8–12 inches high and 30–35 feet long; columns were 2–4 inches wide, with 18–25 letters per line and 25–45 lines per column; see F.G. Kenyon and C.H. Roberts, 'Books, Greek and Latin', in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd edn (OUP, 1970), pp. 172–5.

ancient hymns and epigrams are below 100; the Idylls of Theocritus average below 1,000. At the longer end, ancient tragedy and comedy usually fit two or three plays of 5,000–10,000 words to one scroll; the latter may also be seen as shorter medium-length.

Works in the medium-range category include historical monographs and romance, e.g. Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* (20,929) and some longer speeches, e.g. Demosthenes' *De corona* (22,893), *In Aristocratem* (15,704), *In Timocratem* (14,896). Some philosophical treatises may be included, e.g. Aristotle's *De generatione et corruptione* (16,836) or *Athenaiōn Politeia* (16,830), although most treatises are below 10,000 and thus 'smaller', whereas the major philosophical works are in the longer category. Plato's *Dialogues* tend to be between 5,000 and 25,000 and thus also of medium length; his *Apology for Socrates* is 8,854. Xenophon's *Apology* is smaller (2,027), but he did write medium-length works such as the *Symposium* (9,655) and *Oeconomicus* (18,123). Significantly, the other genre of medium length is βίος, as we will see.

For this generic feature, therefore, we need to measure the length of the gospels. The search for their genre should then be conducted among works of a similar size – and this raises questions about notions such as Kelber's 'extended parable' or Guelich's comparison with a brief sermon in Acts 10.[30]

4 Structure or sequence

This concerns how the work develops and is organized. For instance, the structure may be a sequence of scenes, interspersed with passages of choral lyric, as in classical drama; it may follow the flow of a conversation or argument, with questions and answers, speeches and replies, as in philosophical dialogue. Various rhetorical genres, speeches and letters follow a conventional sequence of elements. The material may be organized chronologically, topically, geographically, etc., and the text in a continuously unfolding sequence, or a series of disparate, unconnected elements. If it is narrative, this may be continuous or disjointed, following the passage of time, or a certain person, event or place. From this variety, it is clear that some structures indicate specific genres, such as the conventional structure of Greek Tragedy. Other structures may be common to various genres, e.g. continuous

[30] See above, p. 14 (Kelber) and p. 91 (Guelich), and pp. 199–200 below for a discussion of these related to the size of the gospels.

chronological narrative features in epic, historiography and story. Thus structure does not determine genre, but works of the same genre will exhibit similar structures.

5 Scale

Scale is the feature which assesses how broad a canvas the author feels free to paint on. The scale may be wide, as in some historiography, particularly Annals, when all the various events of a year are recorded. Alternatively, it may be narrow, with a particular focus on one individual subject, place or event. Thus we need to consider that which is *omitted* as well as that which is included, and whether the reason for the omission was merely for economy of size, or rather because of limitations of scale and focus.

6 Literary units

A text is made up from various literary units, including prologue, preface, speeches, dialogue, anecdotes, maxims, discourses, catalogues, stories, songs, choral interludes, physical or geographical descriptions and the like. These units may be carefully linked together and interwoven so much that it is difficult to distinguish them; other works may be little more than a stringing together of unconnected units. Obviously, the same units will appear in various different genres and cannot be determinative; nonetheless, we may expect to find similar selections and patterns of units in works of similar genres.

7 Use of sources

Many possible sources were used by ancient writers in composing their works, as we know from their own descriptions of their work, as well as from direct source analysis and criticism. Written sources include historical documents, archives, letters, treatises, histories, biographies, inscriptions, collections of sayings or anecdotes, philosophical writings, dialogues, discourses, speeches, memoirs and so on. Oral traditions were highly respected within a less literate society and could include family memories and precedents, stories, eye-witness accounts, personal memories, the tradition of a school or group, anecdotes and so on. Sources cannot be determinative for genre, for the same source may be used by different

writers (or even the same writer) to write totally different genres. However, within a genre we may expect to find similar sorts of sources being used in a similar sort of way; thus the bard's use of oral formulae and units previously composed is a typical feature of Homeric epic and quite different from the balance of sources found in some forms of historiography.

8 Methods of characterization

Characterization is an important feature for our study, if only because the absence of character analysis was one reason why form critics denied the link of the gospels with biography.[31] Here we are concerned with the external feature of the formal techniques whereby the author builds up his picture of the characters in his work, rather than the quality of that picture, which is an internal feature relating to content. The methods of ancient characterization were much more indirect than their modern counterparts. Detailed character analysis and psychological assessment are lacking, not just in the gospels, but in the bulk of ancient literature. Instead, character is revealed by the person's words and deeds, especially the latter: as Aristotle put it, 'actions are signs of character' (*Rhetoric* I.ix.33, 1367b). So we find anecdotes revealing how the person behaved in a difficult situation, facing a certain decision or responding to a crisis. Sometimes direct analysis is given after or alongside the story, to make the point clear in case anyone missed it. These techniques of characterization are not confined to any one genre, but the methods selected and used within any one genre should be similar.

9 Summary

Through the analysis of all these external features, a clear pattern will emerge. Some features may be required by convention, such as mode of representation, metre and size. Other features may be common to a number of genres, but help to put together a family resemblance between works of the same genre, confirming the initial generic indication gained from the opening features. Similar works of the same genre exhibit a certain structure, on a broad or narrow scale, using certain sorts of literary units and sources, and displaying character by certain methods.

[31] Bultmann, *History*, p. 372; see pp. 9–10 above.

D Internal features

1 Setting

Setting can be a clear mediator of genre; for example, if at the start we find ourselves under a shady tree, with a hot sun, a gently lapping brook and some flocks for company, as with many of Theocritus' *Idylls* or Vergil's *Eclogues*, this indicates the pastoral genre, leading us to expect a bucolic singing contest to follow. However, if the backdrop is a burning city, with armed men on the rampage, we are probably in epic or perhaps tragedy, e.g. Euripides' *Trojan Women*. Other genres do not have such clear geographical settings; historiography tends to range widely, for instance. Questions about the dramatic setting, such as how the scenes are structured, who is centre stage or in the spotlight, what kind of action takes place, all apply more widely than drama itself and can be asked about any narrative sequence.

2 Topics/τοποι/motifs

Certain *topoi* or motifs occur in, and indicate, specific genres. For instance, the motif of the child, usually from a rich family, abandoned at birth but preserved by a kindly yokel along with various tokens which later help him or her to discover their true identity in the nick of time and marry their noble lover, or enter into their inheritance, is fairly standard in much New Comedy, such as Menander, e.g. *Epitrepontes*, or even the later Euripides, e.g. *Ion*. Within various poetic genres, several set *topoi* feature: the excluded lover late at night at the beloved's door in the *paraclausithyron* (or *komos*), or the farewell speech to someone departing for foreign parts in the *propemptikon*. Cairns argues that the use of a standard *topos* at the start is intended as 'a clear generic announcement'. However, he warns about making *topoi* determinative of genre, because 'the ability of many topoi to move from one genre to another is central to generic originality'; they are secondary elements and 'no quantity of secondary elements makes an example of a genre, although their presence is a welcome confirmation of an assignment based on primary elements.'[32] This is a warning to those like Shuler and Downing[33] not to over-

[32] Cairns, *Generic Composition*, pp. 6, 25, 99–100; see pp. 59–61 above.
[33] Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels*, pp. 52–7, see pp. 87–9 above; Downing, 'Contemporary Analogies', see pp. 94–5 above.

emphasize *topoi*, especially in isolation. However, within our approach using a wide range of generic features, *topoi* can be very helpful in confirming a generic link between works, if they all make use of similar examples.

3 Style

Style often appears to be subjective, but may be divided into three rough categories, high, middle and low, or by using terms like high-brow, moderately educated and popular.[34] The level of style may be shown by vocabulary: compare Aeschylus' haughty language with Aristophanes' use of slang, and notice all the comic possibilities caused by mixing the two. Alternatively, characters can be indicators of differing levels, such as the tragic hero and the comic buffoon. This feature may vary within genres: much of the debate in the literary contest of the *Frogs* between Aeschylus and Euripides turns on the question of what is or is not the appropriate level, style, vocabulary, language, heroes, and subjects for tragedy.[35] Thus style, taken with other features, does have a part to play in determining genre.

4 Tone/mood/attitude/values

These four features taken together combine to give a distinctive atmosphere to a work. Although appreciation and analysis of these features can be subjective, the overall impression of the atmosphere of satire, history and encomium, mediated through them, will be quite different. Tone refers to the impression or importance suggested; for instance, the tone may be serious or light-hearted, sarcastic or marvelling. The mood may vary according to the action, joyful or sorrowful, triumphant or depressive; often it will be connected with the subject and reflect his or her mood, or perhaps the mood of the author. The attitude to the subject may be reverential, mocking, (dis)approving or despairing, while the attitude towards the reader or audience is hectoring, pleading, disdaining, informing or just plain neutral. Values are connected with the world-view being described or mediated; this may be one shared by the author and which he wishes to impart to the reader or audience, or it may be one internal to the work, which is merely being

[34] See Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, pp. 70–2.
[35] Aristophanes, *Frogs*, ll. 905–1481.

described. As a generic feature, however, it can be useful: compare the moral world of the heroes of Homeric epic with Tacitus' view of Nero's court, or the values of pastoral.[36] Works of the same genre will often breathe a similar atmosphere.

5 Quality of characterization

If the method of characterization is an external feature, its quality is clearly internal, including the sort of picture which emerges of the characters, the types chosen and how well or thinly drawn they are. Modern scholars, especially non-specialists in classical literature, must avoid confusing modern notions of character and development with ancient concepts of ἦθος. Within modern literature, especially biography, there is great interest in the psychological development of character and personality. Such ideas cannot be transferred wholesale into ancient literature.[37] It used to be argued that the ancients viewed character as fixed from birth and immutable, with no notion of development.[38] If there seems to be a character change, as with Tiberius in his later years for instance, this is explained as the revelation of his true nature concealed by his hypocrisy in earlier years, see Tacitus' *Annals*, 1.4.3 or 6.51.3. Recently, classical scholars have been reassessing the whole question of character in ancient literature.[39] Thucydides asserts that his history has lasting value, κτῆμά ἐς αἰεί, because the same sorts of characters will recur and do the same sorts of actions, and therefore future generations should be able to learn something from the cataclysms of the past.[40] Equally, the great emphasis on the exemplary and moral purpose of much ancient historiography and biography does not fit in with the supposed lack of interest in the development of character. Gill makes use of a distinction between 'character' and 'personality'. Interest in personality is an attempt to understand or explain a person psychologically, and this is the predominantly modern concept, brought in with Lytton Strachey and Erikson. On the other hand, the ancients were often concerned

[36] See Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (University of California Press, 1969) for the values and qualities of the pastoral genre.

[37] Momigliano, *Development*, p. 17.

[38] Dihle, *Studien*, pp. 76ff.

[39] See *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, ed. C.B.R. Pelling, (OUP, 1990) for discussion across many Greek genres.

[40] *History of the Peloponnesian War*, I.22.4; see the way Gomme writing in 1945 relates this to the recent experience of world war in his commentary, *ad. loc.* (OUP, 1945).

about a person's character from the moral point of view, for praise or blame.[41] There is some evidence of an interest in personality in ancient biography; however, as Pelling argues, often any development which appears is actually for literary purposes, rather than true psychological development. Furthermore, characterization is genre-related in that different genres have slightly different expectations about characterization.[42]

Thus, the generic feature of characterization and, in particular, the types and quality of characterization in ancient literature is quite complex. Rather than dismissing the gospels' characterization because of modern expectations, we must compare them with ancient βίοι to ascertain whether they exhibit similar approaches and attitudes to characterization.

6 Social setting and occasion

This feature concerns what the text may reveal about its function and production. Thus classical drama shows that the plays took place at Athenian religious festivals, and much Latin poetry appears suitable for readings after dinner at parties. Other genres were produced for a specific occasion, such as a funeral laudation or a panegyric on a new emperor. Therefore, the text must be examined for internal clues to its social setting, the kinds of social grouping presumed for the audience, and the situation or occasion within which it was read. Similar hints about setting and occasion may be found within works of one genre.

7 Authorial intention and purpose

Although we must be cautious in the reconstruction of an author's intention(s) and not make this as determinative for genre as Shuler and Dihle did, nonetheless, the purpose of the author is essential to any concept of genre as a set of expectations or contract between the author and the reader or audience. The author may choose his genre specifically to suit his purpose; some genres have a single purpose, such as the intent to praise in encomium. The purpose

[41] Christopher Gill, 'The Character–Personality Distinction', in *Characterization and Individuality*, pp. 1–31; also 'The Question of Character-Development: Plutarch and Tacitus', *CQ* 33 (1983), pp. 469–87.

[42] Pelling, *Characterization and Individuality*, pp. vi–vii, 226–36 and 261–2; see also his 'Aspects of Plutarch's Characterisation', *Illinois Classical Studies*, 13.2 (1988), pp. 257–74.

may be expressed explicitly in a preface or prologue; however, textual analysis is still necessary, since the author's expressed desires and purposes are not always a reliable guide to his actual practice. In other genres, however, it may be the case that there is no one purpose which is essential to the nature of the genre and its examples. Often, the author may have a number of different purposes, some applying to various members of his envisaged audience, while others reflect his purely literary concerns. However, we may expect that there will be a similarity of purposes between similar works of the same genre.

8 Summary

Few of these internal features determine the genre of a work. Many occur in a similar fashion in a number of differing genres, and so caution must be exercised in deducing generic relationships between works on the grounds of such shared features. However, in our wide-ranging approach, these features can play a part in helping identify genre if considered all together. Thus, no one or two features establish the genre, but the content of the work and its internal features play their part in building up and confirming the genre indicated by all the other features.

Conclusion

We have now set out a clear methodology of genre analysis to study Graeco-Roman βίοι and the gospels. Genre is identified through a wide-ranging variety of different internal and external features, including both content and structure. The first suggestion of genre will be recognized through the opening features of a text and its title. The subject will be identified by analysis of verb subjects, as well as through the allocation of space. An initial expectation of genre will then begin to emerge, which is confirmed or corrected by further analysis, first of the external features of representation, size, structure and so forth, and finally by the internal features of further aspects of content.

This is a formidable list and contrasts with the limited range of generic features used in previous attempts to discover the genre of the gospels. However, the list must not be used mechanically, as Fowler says: 'Recognition of genre depends on associating a complex of elements, which need not all appear in one work . . .

Usually, there are so many indicators, organized into so familiar a unity, that we recognize the generic complex instantly.'[43] Thus we do not expect total congruity for works to belong together, but rather an overall pattern which emerges when a text is analysed by these features. There are bound to be differences and divergences arising from the flexible nature of genres. To ascertain whether the gospels belong to a certain genre, we need to analyse a number of works belonging to that genre in order to build up this common pattern and to ascertain how far texts may diverge from it, yet still remain within the genre. Then, and only then, can we analyse the gospels against the same list of features; if they display a similar pattern and diverge from it no more than any other examples, then we are justified in claiming that they belong to the same genre. If, on the other hand, they diverge significantly from the established pattern, then they may not be considered members of the genre. We turn now therefore to our analysis of Graeco-Roman βίοι and the gospels.

[43] Fowler, 'Life and Death', pp. 80–1; see also Todorov, p. 44 above.

What are the Gospels?

A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography

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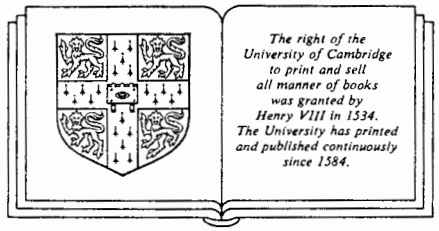

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