

CURRENT SOURCE CRITICISM OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL: SOME METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

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TO SPEAK of the current source criticism of the fourth gospel is to raise questions in three interrelated but distinguishable areas: first, the relation between the fourth gospel and the synoptics; second, recent developmental theories concerning the construction of the fourth gospel, theories which postulate several layers of tradition developing as a process under the hands of a number of writers, from (perhaps) an apostle through an evangelist to final redactor(s); and third, recent attempts to identify and isolate concrete literary sources.

The method followed in this paper is: (1) to comment briefly on these three areas; (2) to survey rapidly the most important literary source theories; (3) to concentrate critical attention on the literary source theory of Fortna and his followers; and (4) to conclude with a gentle plea for probing agnosticism in this matter.

I

If the fourth gospel were demonstrably dependent in a literary way on one or more of the synoptic gospels, that would quite clearly be the place to start in any search for literary sources. A few scholars believe that John depends on Mark, Luke, or both;¹ but those who hold this position are forced to admit that John has treated these sources in such a way as to make their retrieval impossible if we did not already possess them. More commonly, scholars follow the line of P. Gardner-Smith² and deny any direct dependence of the fourth gospel on the synoptics; or, alternatively, they take a middle road and suggest that the fourth evangelist leans on pre-Markan and/or pre-Lucan

¹E.g. W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975) 200-204; M.-E. Boismard, "Saint Luc et la rédaction du quatrième évangile (Jn. iv, 46-54)," *RB* 69 (1962) 185-211; J. A. Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John* (Leiden: Brill, 1963); C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John* (London: SPCK, 1955) 14-16; idem, "John and the Synoptic Gospels," *Exp Tim* 85 (1974) 282-83. More restricted comparisons have also been made: for example, H. Klein ("Die lukanisch-johanneische Passionstradition," *ZNW* 67 [1976] 155-86), after comparing the passion material in Luke and John, advances a complex theory to account for the similarities and differences.

²*Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1938).

material which ultimately found its way into the second and third gospels.³ Günter Reim stands alone in his highly speculative suggestion that the fourth gospel is literarily dependent on a lost *fourth* synoptic gospel.⁴

In any discussion of the relation between the fourth gospel and the synoptics, at least we enjoy the advantage of literary controls (Reim's theory excepted); but the same cannot be said regarding the various developmental hypotheses concerning the fourth gospel's literary history. Robert Kysar's assessment of most of these theories is extremely negative: "If the gospel evolved in a manner comparable to that offered by Brown and Lindars, it is totally beyond the grasp of the johannine scholar and historian to produce even tentative proof that such was the case."⁵ The same charge could no doubt be levelled against the 1958 work by Wilkens,⁶ who has defended his original proposal more than once since that time.⁷

Perhaps Kysar's conclusion is too severe. The five stages proposed by R. E. Brown or the homily background advanced by B. Lindars⁸ have much to be said for them. In one sense they are testable against canons of self-consistency, against the historical probabilities involved in the reconstruction, and against competing proposals. But they are not testable in the same way that theories which purport to isolate concrete literary sources are testable; and therefore they need to be treated separately and assessed by somewhat different criteria. Going still further from concrete source criticism, it is clear that the form criticism of Dodd⁹ is less concerned with establishing the literary development of the fourth gospel than with the attempt to trace the preliterate tradition of johannine material; and so it is even less relevant to the subject at hand.

³E.g. B. Noack, *Zur johanneischen Tradition: Beiträge zur Kritik an der literarkritischen Analyse des vierten Evangeliums* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde, 1953); C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1963); idem, "The Portrait of Jesus in John and in the Synoptics," *Christian History and Interpretation* (ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1967) 183–98; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972) 47–48; R. P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations I: The Four Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 279–80; and many others; J. Blinzler (*Johannes und die Synoptikern* [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1965]) argues that the fourth evangelist cited the synoptics from memory. For further bibliography, see R. T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs* (SNTSMS 11; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1970) 9–10 n. 2; and for discussion, R. Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975) 54–66. As Kysar records, once the sphere of influence is pushed back to preliterate stages, scholars have arisen who have thought the influence has gone the other way, i.e., from pre-johannine to pre-lucan material. Such refinements do not concern us here.

⁴G. Reim, *Studien zum alttestamentlichen Hintergrund des Johannesevangeliums* (SNTSMS 22; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1974) esp. pp. 214–16, 233–46.

⁵R. Kysar, *Fourth Evangelist*, 53.

⁶W. Wilkens, *Die Entstehungsgeschichte des vierten Evangeliums* (Zollikon: Evangelischer, 1958).

⁷E.g. "Das Abendmahlszeugnis im vierten Evangelium," *EvT* 18 (1958) 354–70; "Evangelist und Tradition im Johannesevangelium," *TZ* 16 (1960) 81–90.

⁸R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1966); B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*.

⁹C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*.

It may similarly be argued that the redaction criticism of the gospel of John takes at least two very distinct forms. As a tool in the hands of a Brown,¹⁰ a Wilkens,¹¹ or a Schulz,¹² it becomes a method of identifying the traditions in a johannine pericope, the stages of development, a vaguely envisaged source, and/or the manner in which such materials are treated by the evangelist. By contrast, in the hands of a Fortna, redaction criticism is a tool by which one studies the evangelist's handling of a well-defined literary source, for the purpose of establishing his theological bent; but such redaction criticism cannot be utilized until the source has been determined with fine precision.¹³ One of Fortna's criticisms of Nicol's¹⁴ source analysis stems from this perspective: Fortna says that Nicol's sources are too vague, too imprecise, to be of great help in the redaction critical enterprise.¹⁵ Ironically, one of the main objections most commonly raised against Fortna's "Signs Gospel" is that in most places it is so precisely delineated as to evoke skepticism concerning at least its details.¹⁶ Fortna has attempted detailed redaction critical studies of the fourth gospel on the basis of his own reconstructed source,¹⁷ but the cogency of his redaction criticism rests entirely on the validity of his source criticism. In any case, his "redaction criticism" is as qualitatively different from the "redaction criticism" of Lindars,¹⁸ let us say, as the redaction criticism of Matthew, on the basis of the two-source hypothesis, differs from the redaction criticism of Mark—indeed, more so, since the form criticism of the fourth gospel is even more problematic than that of Mark. Concomitantly, the source criticism employed by Fortna is very different from that of Brown¹⁹ or even that of Schnackenburg.²⁰

It would be artificial to dichotomize the two approaches absolutely. They constitute a spectrum rather than entirely self-contained entities. At the extremes of the spectrum, the two methods are easily distinguished; and where the methods are easily distinguished, they need to be treated separately. This paper is primarily concerned with the "hard" source criticism which claims to

¹⁰R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*.

¹¹W. Wilkens, *Entstehungsgeschichte*.

¹²S. Schulz, *Untersuchungen zur Menschensohn-Christologie im Johannesevangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1957); plus his commentary, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).

¹³This perspective underlies all of Fortna's book, *The Gospel of Signs*, as well as his subsequent redaction critical studies (infra).

¹⁴W. Nicol, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction* (NovTSup 32; Leiden: Brill, 1972).

¹⁵R. T. Fortna, review of Nicol, *Semeia*, in *JBL* 93 (1974) 119–21.

¹⁶Cf. discussion in the first chapter of R. Kysar, *Fourth Evangelist*.

¹⁷R. T. Fortna, "Source and Redaction in the Fourth Gospel's Portrayal of Jesus' Signs," *JBL* 89 (1970) 156–65; idem, "From Christology to Soteriology," *Int* 27 (1973) 31–47; idem, "Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Redaction-Critical Perspectives," *NTS* 21 (1974–75) 489–504; idem, "Theological Use of Locale in the Fourth Gospel," *ATR* Supplement 3 (1974) 58–94.

¹⁸*The Gospel of John*.

¹⁹*The Gospel according to John*.

²⁰*Das Johannesevangelium* (3 vols.; HTK; Freiburg: Herder, 1965, 1971, 1975).

isolate literary sources with some precision; another paper will be required to consider the developmental theories. But having adopted the distinction, it must be admitted that someone like Rudolf Schnackenburg is very hard to place on the spectrum, and could with profit be discussed under both methodological approaches.

Of course, how one labels his literary technique is not very important; what the technique is, what it produces, and how accurate it is, are questions of much more importance. But it is as well to point out that one johannine scholar's source criticism is not necessarily another johannine scholar's source criticism, whether their respective works be assessed methodologically or with respect to their results. This paper is little concerned with the divergent results; but the methodological disarray is more troubling because more fundamental.²¹ Indeed, even the theories which propose concrete and isolable literary sources make use of highly diverse methods. Variation in method is not necessarily bad, provided that: (a) the individual method is defensible, and defensibly utilized; (b) the methods are not mutually contradictory; and (c) the results converge. Where these conditions are not found, to speak of "variety of method" becomes a polite way of referring to methodological disarray.

II

Turning to the literary source theories *per se*, a rapid survey of the most important contributions will serve as the background for closer scrutiny of Fortna's work.

The seminal work behind all modern attempts to reconstruct a literary source, or literary sources, for the fourth gospel, is, of course, the *magnum opus* of the late Rudolf Bultmann.²² Scarcely less well known is the detailed description and eminently fair critique of Bultmann's reconstruction offered by D. Moody Smith.²³ Bultmann's work immediately gained a significant degree of scholarly assent;²⁴ but his real influence must be measured in far broader terms. In particular, every johannine scholar must respond in some way to this magisterial work; and the source critics who have not been convinced by Bultmann have been enticed into improving on him. Schweizer and Ruckstuhl responded with detailed stylistic criteria which, they contended, established the literary unity of the fourth gospel.²⁵ These

²¹Cf. R. Kysar, *Fourth Evangelist*, 24: ". . . it would seem fair to conclude that the method of source criticism of the fourth gospel is somewhat in shambles."

²²*The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971).

²³D. M. Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven/London: Yale University, 1965).

²⁴E.g. H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of New Testament Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969); R. Fuller, *Interpreting the Miracles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963).

²⁵E. Schweizer, *Ego Eimi* (FRLANT 38; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1939); E. Ruckstuhl, *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums* (Freiburg: Paulus, 1951). Between the two came contributions from J. Jeremias, "Johanneische Literarkritik," *TBI* 20 (1941) 33-46; and P.-H. Menoud, *L'évangile de Jean d'après les recherches récentes* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1943/7).

objections were somewhat weakened, but not totally set aside, by Hirsch.²⁶

In due course several major literary source theories were proposed. Perhaps the most significant ones are those by Becker, Schnackenburg, Nicol, Fortna, Teeple and Temple.²⁷ All six of these have been admirably discussed by Robert Kysar.²⁸

²⁶E. Hirsch, "Stilkritik und Literaranalyse im vierten Evangelium," *ZNW* 43 (1950-51) 129-43.

²⁷J. Becker, "Wunder und Christologie: zum literarkritischen und christologischen Problem der Wunder im Johannesevangelium," *NTS* 16 (1969-70) 130-48; R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*; W. Nicol, *Semeia*; R. T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs*; H. M. Teeple, *The Literary Origin of the Gospel of John* (Evanston: Religion and Ethics Institute, Inc., 1974); S. Temple, *The Core of the Fourth Gospel* (London/Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975).

²⁸*The Fourth Evangelist*, 14-37; and "Community and Gospel: Vectors in Fourth Gospel Criticism," *Int* 31 (1977) 355-66, esp. pp. 357-58.

	Bultmann	Becker	Schnackenburg
(1) Number and nature of sources.	Three sources: signs source, revelatory-discourse source, & passion and resurrection narrative; plus contributions of evangelist and later redactor.	Deals with signs source, as a modification of Bultmann's.	Holds to high probability of a written signs source.
(2) Nature of the the "Signs Source."	Collection of a large number of miracle stories, distinct from synoptic tradition; in Greek, but with semitic influences probably earlier than synoptic gospels; does <i>not</i> include passion narrative.	Collection of miracle stories which portray Jesus as <i>θεῖος ἀνὴρ</i> , in effort to evoke faith. The signs source itself probably divided into Judean & Galilean works of Jesus.	Collection of miracle stories, more than those preserved in John. No particular theological slant.
(3) Primary methodological tool.	Various methods; tendency towards stylistic analysis for the three sources; content criticism for the evangelist; content criticism for redactor.	Basically summarizes Bultmann's broad arguments re the signs source.	Methodologically unclear. Basically accepts the existence of a signs source as a highly probable datum, and adduces evidence. Often looks for tension between tradition and redaction in order to delineate boundaries of the source.
(4) Subsidiary methods.	Various.	Little; some emphasis on aporias.	Stresses similarities of both form and content in the passages he has isolated: i.e. stylistic and ideological criteria.
(5) Disallowed methodological tools, if any.	None; but form criticism scarcely used.	Stylistic criteria; concedes stylistic unity of the fourth gospel.	

Nicol	Fortna	Teepie	Temple
Separates out signs traditions used by the evangelist, but holds that detailed source reconstruction is implausible.	Detailed signs source.	Four source proposal: "S" = signs document; "G" = collection of documents expounding semi-Gnostic Christian theology of Hellenistic mysticism; "E" = editor, earlier than "R" = redactor.	Narrative/Discourse source, which includes some narrative and some discourse of the fourth gospel; plus evangelist's enlargements; plus other shorter sources.
A tradition of miracles later than that behind the synoptics; <i>not θεῖος ἀνὴρ</i> concepts, but Jesus as mosaic prophet expected by the Jews—this is the christological emphasis of source. Includes some material which is now nonmiraculous in John, though in source, it was.	Reconstruction of entire source, from Jewish-Christian milieu, designed to show that Jesus was Messiah; from a tradition with close links to synoptic tradition. Really a "narrow Gospel," since it includes passion narrative and resurrection narrative.	Jewish-Christian background of the tradition, but the author of "S" was not a Jew. Written after A.D. 75 in semitized Greek, probably after Jamnia. Includes passion narrative but <i>not</i> any resurrection account.	Mixture of signs and discourse; but downplays the miraculous and, thus shorn, this "core" can be accepted as first-hand report. Large teaching blocks also omitted, including John 15–17.
Heavily dependent on form criticism to describe the character of the signs tradition he has isolated from the work of the evangelist. Then begins redaction critical work. Cautious but quite circular. Results, he says, must be supported by historical plausibility.	Depends above all on aporias (= Fortna's "contextual criteria").	Stylistic variations, often of the most minute variety—e.g. use of <i>τε</i> , or of the article with <i>Ἰησοῦς</i> ; sometimes of a syntactical nature.	Ideological criteria predominate—i.e., content criticism.
Accepts a supporting role for stylistic and ideological criteria, and the importance of aporias.	Stylistic and ideological criteria, but <i>only</i> in a supporting role.	Aporias play a minor part.	Some stylistic criteria and aporias.
	None; but does not resort to form criticism.	Ideological criteria excluded; form criticism not used.	

The accompanying chart provides lists of characteristics of the seven dominant literary source theories from Bultmann to Temple. Detailed comment on the chart is impractical, but it deserves close scrutiny. The following remarks draw attention to obvious trends reflected in the chart:

Number and Nature of Sources

Only Bultmann, Teeple and Temple offer a multiplicity of sources. All accept a signs source, although that of Temple is truncated by the reduction of the supernatural and the elimination of the first two signs, even though it is bolstered by the inclusion of considerable discourse material. Nicol simply separates out signs traditions, but he is reluctant to delineate a precise source.

Nature of the "Signs Source"

Fortna's source is a "narrow gospel" in that it includes an introduction, a passion narrative and some resurrection accounts—even though this "gospel" reports none of Jesus' teaching. Teeple's source is also more than a collection of stories, even if it is an even narrower "gospel," not having any resurrection account. Fortna, and apparently Temple, attempt to reconstruct the entire source; the others suggest that much of the source was not included in the FG and is therefore beyond recovery. On the whole, a Jewish-Christian milieu is envisaged; but Becker sees a *θεῖος ἀνὴρ* concept and it is unclear what effect this has on the total *Sitz* he envisages. Schnackenburg is remarkably vague. Bultmann thinks the source is earlier than the synoptics, Temple that it comes from an eyewitness; while Teeple puts it after Jamnia, and Nicol insists that its tradition is later than that behind the synoptics. All but Temple stress that this is primarily a source with *miracle* stories, and Nicol even includes some johannine material which in its present context is non-miraculous in nature, but which was once miraculous when it lay in the source traditions. By contrast, Temple attempts to minimize the supernatural.

Primary Methodological Tool

This part of the chart is in some ways the most thought provoking. Bultmann used various methods, but primarily stylistic ones, to establish his signs source. Teeple likewise resorts to stylistic criteria; but, because he is writing after the work of Schweizer and Ruckstuhl, his stylistic criteria differ greatly from those of Bultmann. Becker follows Bultmann's general arguments, but, writing in the shadow of Schweizer and Ruckstuhl, virtually discounts stylistic arguments. Nicol and Fortna do not lean on stylistic criteria as their *prime* method; but they do not agree beyond that. Nicol is a practitioner of form criticism; Fortna of context criticism. Meanwhile Temple is an advocate of content criticism, while Schnackenburg, generally vague, looks for tensions between the alleged source and the work of the redactor—a mid-point between Fortna's hunt for aporias and Temple's search for diverse ideologies. In other words, not one of these methods is substantially similar to any other. Methodologically speaking, the closest two are perhaps those of Bultmann and Teeple, who represent two of the three multiple source theories in the chart. However, not only are their results quite dissimilar, but the apparent methodological similarity (*viz.*, the primary appeal to stylistic criteria) is a superficial one, since Teeple's contention is that studies previous to his own, including Bultmann's, have chosen the wrong stylistic criteria.

Subsidiary Methods

This needs to be studied along with the material before it and the material after it. Perhaps the main point to observe is that most of the authors listed defend their use of a particular primary method, and overtly relegate other methods to a subsidiary position.

Disallowed Methodological Tools

By and large form criticism receives short shrift. Methodologically speaking, Becker disallows the primary method of Bultmann and Teeple; Teeple disallows several others, since he explicitly eliminates ideological criteria (thus wiping out Temple) and has already disallowed stylistic criteria earlier than his own.²⁹

²⁹In passing, it is perhaps worth reflecting on the fact that the authors of these seven source critical theories appear, in general, to be convinced of the correctness of their own theory in

An optimist might argue at this point that the simple fact that all seven scholars, despite profoundly divergent and even mutually exclusive methods, discern a signs source, is notable evidence for the existence of such a source. But it is difficult to see why this should be so. Indeed, it might be supposed, *a priori*, that if a scholar wanted to practice the art of source criticism on the fourth gospel, some sort of *signs* source theory would necessarily be among the first prospects to emerge. Granted that supposition, what is remarkable about the theories of the seven scholars surveyed is the extent to which they disagree both in their methods and their conclusions.³⁰

Despite the fact that Bultmann's source theory can be seen as the progenitor of the others, it is no longer widely accepted.³¹ Of the remaining six, the work of Becker is too short to be very influential. Schnackenburg's reputation will rest on his contribution as a commentator rather than on his success as a source critic, primarily because his source criticism is sufficiently innocuous that it can be discounted by the unconvinced without serious loss. Nicol's form critical approach is praised by Kysar as the most promising;³² a little more will be said about that at the end of this paper. The book by Temple is so recent that it has only been reviewed in a handful of journals; but initial reactions will in this case turn out as accurate forecasts of mature judgment: i.e., Temple's work depends too much on highly subjective ideological criteria. The Teepale reconstruction will not find wide favor either. It shares

proportion to the degree of specificity they attach to their theory. On a scale of one to ten, the higher number reflecting the greater degree of certainty evidenced by the scholar, perhaps Bultmann would earn a 9, Becker a 7 or 8, Schnackenburg a 4 or 5, Nicol a 3, Fortna a 9, Teepale a 9.5, and Temple an 8 or a 9. Obviously, such figures are rough approximations, both because they spring from subjective evaluation, and because the different works vary greatly in character and length. Nevertheless, not only is the spread remarkable, but the highest degree of certainty is claimed by Teepale, Bultmann, Fortna and Temple, three of whom offer unconvincing (and mutually exclusive) *multiple* source theories. The fourth, Fortna, is criticized most strongly in reviews precisely because he claims to delineate with some precision the entire source document: see, for example, the reviews of Fortna by D. M. Smith (*JBL* 89 [1970] 498–501) and J. M. Robinson ("The Johannine Trajectory," *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* [ed. J. M. Robinson and H. Koester; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971] 247–49).

³⁰In an article which antedates his book, R. Kysar ("The Source Analysis of the Fourth Gospel: A Growing Consensus?" *NovT* 15 [1973] 134–52) anticipates a converging of source critical results on the basis of several treatments of John 6. Despite similar optimism in his book (*Fourth Evangelist*, 28–29), the divergence of source critical theories is in reality far more striking. Once it is observed that they are all talking about a *signs* source, one wonders how the overlap of theories could be any less. It is worth comparing the precise delimitations of the sources advanced by these seven. They are most conveniently tabulated as follows: Bultmann's source is put together by D. M. Smith (*Composition*); the sources advocated by Becker, Schnackenburg, Nicol, Fortna and Teepale are listed in R. Kysar (*Fourth Evangelist* 23–24); and Temple's source must be studied in his own work (*Core*). The diversity of inclusions and exclusions from theory to theory is somewhat staggering.

³¹This is made clear in study after study. To cite but one example, cf. M. L. Appold, *The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT 1; Tübingen: Mohr, 1976).

³²*Fourth Evangelist*, 37. Kysar admits, however, that Nicol's work "has been only marginally effective"; but he contends that form criticism "is perhaps the [method] which is least successfully employed yet most seductive in its possibilities." The use of such methods is "a fascinating and promising enterprise."

most of Fortna's weaknesses, and few of Fortna's strengths. The stylistic criteria are often singularly ill chosen,³³ and in any case they neither guarantee the objectivity of his study (as he seems to think) nor constitute a sufficient basis for source criticism.

III

That leaves Fortna, whose work now enjoys the premier sphere in influence among those involved in johannine source criticism. The recent articles whose aim it is to engage in this work tend to accept Fortna's reconstruction as a basic starting point,³⁴ however much they may disagree with its details. Therefore, it may be worthwhile summarizing some of the objections raised against his work, and offering a few additional ones.

Fortna's most perceptive critic is Barnabas Lindars. In his little book, *Behind the Fourth Gospel*,³⁵ he faults Fortna for supposing that there could have existed a complete gospel (even if it be a "narrow" gospel) which did not contain any teaching of Jesus; for this stands over against all the evidence that we actually possess. He questions, too, whether a signs source of miracle traditions would be likely to include the call of the disciples at the beginning or the conversation with the Samaritan woman in the middle. Again, Lindars contends that it is highly unlikely that the evangelist incorporated the entire signs source, making it retrievable by simply stripping off the johannine elements. He continues:

Such a wholesale takeover of previous work is not impossible in principle, and indeed Matthew does just this with Mark. But John is on any showing a highly creative writer, so that such an idea is intrinsically improbable from the start.³⁶

Indeed, even Matthew is no scissors-and-paste man, as redaction criticism has amply demonstrated; and the place where he seems to exercise most freedom

³³A notorious example is his differentiation between Ἰησοῦς material and ὁ Ἰησοῦς material. In his bibliography, Teeple includes the comprehensive study by G. D. Fee ("The Use of the Definite Article with Personal Names in the Gospel of John," *NTS* 17 [1970-71] 168-83); but he never makes use of it in this regard.

³⁴E.g. E. D. Freed and R. B. Hunt, "Fortna's Signs-Source in John," *JBL* 94 (1975) 563-79. R. Kysar ("Community and Gospel," *Int* 31 [1977] 359 n. 13) adduces, as additional support for Fortna's source, a recent article by John J. O'Rourke ("The Historic Present in the Gospel of John," *JBL* 93 [1974] 585-90); but in fact O'Rourke in his article insists that the historic present *cannot* justify the source theories of either Bultmann or Fortna. Used as a stylistic criterion, the historic present witnesses to stylistic unity in neither the gospel of John nor in Fortna's signs source; and his observation prompts O'Rourke to suggest that "rather fine points of style do not provide reliable criteria in any attempt to discern sources. One can go further and state that the presence or absence of certain fine points of style is not a criterion for determining authorship or literary unity" (p. 588).

³⁵B. Lindars, *Behind the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1971), especially the second chapter, pp. 27-42.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 33.

is, ironically, in the miracle stories.³⁷ What Lindars regards as the *coup de grâce* against the idea that the source is recoverable in its entirety from the fourth gospel, is Fortna's decision to include the miraculous catch of fish as the third entry in the signs source; for on any showing, John 21, where the story occurs, was written after the completion of the rest of the gospel, and most likely rests outside the original plan of the gospel. This argument is not quite as conclusive as Lindars thinks: for example, Fortna could hypothesize that John 21 is a designed epilogue to match the prologue, and get around the problem quite neatly. But otherwise the argument will bear some weight.

Lindars offers a few other quite telling criticisms; but these are the most important. The following list offers a number of others, of greater or lesser significance, and not in any particular order. Some, but not all, of these criticisms could be levelled against other source-critical theories as well.

(1) The standard starting point for discovering a signs source in the fourth gospel is the numbering of the first two miracles. This fact, it is thought, indicates that they must have come from a numbered collection of such stories. That is possible, but not demonstrable; for when we inquire why John did not continue his numbering, the reasons are always less than convincing. Fortna, for example, says that John let the numbers stand in the first two cases because the miracle stories occurred at the end of a section; but in all other cases he had to drop the device because the miracle leads into a discourse.³⁸ Lindars points out that this explanation is scarcely convincing, because "John is quite capable of introducing a parenthetical note between sign and discourse when he wants to (e.g. the notes in 5:9b and 9:14 that the cures were performed on the sabbath, neither of which is assigned to the source by Fortna)."³⁹ It is even conceivable that there is some simple explanation for the abandonment of the numbering scheme, such as that there was an unconscious trailing off of the numbers, not unlike the preacher who scruples to warn his audience of his "first" and "second" points, but who is soon expounding his third and fourth without consistently notifying his hearers. Alternatively, if one judges the evangelist to be extremely subtle and concerned to draw gentle attention to the fact that there are seven signs, he may have dropped the hint, and let it go at that for fear of becoming mechanical. Or again, the most recent source critical theory, that of Sidney Temple, uses the same data, the numbering of the first two signs, to argue that these two signs spring from a source *separate* from the source to which other signs belong.⁴⁰

This variety of explanation goes to show that the raw datum, the numbering of the first two signs, may be patient of Fortna's theory, but by no means demands it nor even suggests it particularly strongly.

³⁷Cf. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held, *Tradition & Interpretation in Matthew* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963); cited also by B. Lindars (*Behind the Fourth Gospel*, 33).

³⁸R. T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs*, 104-5.

³⁹B. Lindars, *Behind the Fourth Gospel*, 29.

⁴⁰*Core*, esp. pp. 41-44.

(2) Fortna, following Spitta and Schnackenburg, introduces a further problem to the numbering scheme, when he places the miraculous catch of fish as the third sign in the source because it is explicitly referred to as the *third* resurrection appearance.⁴¹ This reasoning is not convincing. A moment's glance reveals that in fact this is indeed the *third* resurrection appearance to the disciples, recorded by John.⁴² The inclusion of the number *may* be happenstance; or it may be designed to prove that the resurrected Jesus appeared more than once or twice; or, more plausibly, it may be designed to tie John 21 in a literary way to the previous chapter where the first two resurrection appearances to the disciples are recorded.

(3) In the one case where we do have reasonably unambiguous evidence for the way John handles his sources—viz. his use of OT quotations—Goodwin has shown how freely he has handled them.⁴³ We would not be able to reconstruct the OT passages in question from the fourth gospel, if we did not already possess them. If this is the way the fourth evangelist demonstrably handles known sources, what solid counter-evidence do we have to foster the belief that he has handled hypothetical sources in a different fashion? Or, to put the question another way, on what basis do we suppose that we are able to isolate hypothetical sources, when we must admit we could not isolate the demonstrable ones?

(4) A large emphasis is placed by the source critics on the need for consistency in their reconstructions; but it is usually not long before a later critic points out that the resolution of one difficulty has led to the introduction of another. Thus, Schnackenburg faults Wikenhauser's transpositions,⁴⁴

⁴¹R. T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs*, 95; cf. F. Spitta, *Das Johannesevangelium als Quelle der Geschichte Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910); R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to John*.

⁴²R. T. Fortna (*The Gospel of Signs*) rightly points out that the miraculous catch of fish is actually the *fourth* resurrection appearance of Jesus; but, as he himself concedes, it is the *third* appearance to his disciples. Fortna attempts to reduce the significance of this observation, when he says (p. 95 n. 3): "Mary Magdalene is not strictly a disciple, but there is no reason to distinguish so sharply between appearances to disciples and to others, as John apparently does; from the reader's standpoint, this is Jesus' *fourth* appearance. The word 'third' is hard to account for if created for the present context." However, although from the reader's standpoint this is indeed Jesus' *fourth* resurrection appearance, John 21:14 explicitly adopts for the reader a slightly different viewpoint, viz., this miracle is the occasion for Jesus' *third* resurrection appearance to his disciples.

⁴³C. Goodwin, "How Did John Treat His Sources?" *JBL* 73 (1954) 61–75. R. T. Fortna (*The Gospel of Signs*, 12) tries to neutralize Goodwin's argument by saying that the OT is not a source "in any sense analogous to a lost document which John might have followed." True, there are some differences; but to see the OT and the source as not *in any sense* analogous to one another is surely an overstatement. At least both (if the signs source *per se* ever existed) are *literary* sources. Is John *a priori* more likely or less likely to treat a longer source as loosely as he does the OT? It is difficult to make an intelligent guess; but at least the OT quotations constitute hard *literary* evidence for what John does, and there is no *literary* evidence to the contrary, viz. that John on occasion copies extensive passages virtually verbatim from some source.

⁴⁴A. Wikenhauser, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1957), especially on John 3; and R. Schnackenburg, "Die 'situationsgelösten' Redestücke in Joh. 3," *ZNW* 49 (1958) 88–99; idem, *The Gospel according to John*, 360–63.

J. M. Robinson criticizes Wilkens,⁴⁵ D. M. Smith undermines Bultmann,⁴⁶ and so on. Even the rearranging of John 5, 6 and 7 is not without its problems. Now, as we have seen, Lindars criticizes Fortna. Part of this process, of course, is nothing more than ongoing scholarly endeavor. But this search for rigid consistency is turning out to be problematic. If the proposed resolutions to the inconsistencies in the gospel of John invariably (at least to this point) invent a new batch of inconsistencies, how much further ahead are we? Would it transgress critical orthodoxy to suggest that rigid consistency is not only illusory, but in danger of destroying the known masterpiece (the gospel of John) for a speculative and disputed source?

This is not to deny the legitimacy of source-critical questions, nor to demean the attempted solutions. However, if a weary sense of *déjà-vu* accompanies the reading of each new source-critical theory, especially when each such theory insists it is appealing to consistency, one begins to wonder if the right questions are being asked. Indeed, unasked questions spring to mind. Did the author(s) of the fourth gospel aim at consistency and miss it? Is apparent inconsistency a sufficient criterion for discerning a source? How many different phenomena could we reasonably expect to produce an aporia? How can we distinguish among them? Precisely how is it possible to distinguish between a formal inconsistency of terminology, included for whatever reason by one author, and a seam accidentally overlooked by an editor?

Such questions assume an overwhelming importance when one assesses Fortna's work. Fortna's principal approach is to search out aporias and resolve the alleged difficulties. Contextual criticism takes the major role in Fortna's work, but aporias are very tricky things. Indeed, some of them may only be in the mind of the beholder. Much more important, even when a real one exists, it does not necessarily follow that its presence is a sure sign of a source, much less of a recoverable source. This is the same sort of error that J. C. O'Neill, for example, makes in his works on Galatians and Romans.⁴⁷

There are at least two reasons why aporias must not be *presumed* to indicate a seam. First of all, an aporia may be unwitting. The number of times a paper such as this is re-read by its author in order to polish it might prove embarrassing; but it would not be surprising if it still contained the odd aporia. Readers of *JBL* have read enough dissertations to know that even scholars engaged in explicitly structured argument are not exempt from the sin of constructing aporias.⁴⁸ An aporia may develop because of a mental lapse; or because the mind races ahead of the pen; or because of a less than logical step, taken quite unwittingly; or because the writer is disturbed at his

⁴⁵J. M. Robinson, "Recent Research in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 78 (1959) 242-52.

⁴⁶D. M. Smith, *Composition*.

⁴⁷J. C. O'Neill, *The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1972); idem, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975).

⁴⁸Engaged as I am in the process of revising my own, I have sad to tell come across one or two aporias of my own devising.

work. We should not suppose that first century writers were exempt from such contingencies. Fortna is pressing the fourth gospel into an overly consistent mold, especially in this case in which the book is meditative and warmly impressive, not your average doctoral dissertation. Of course, an *aporia* may indicate a seam: that must not be denied, but it must not be *assumed* to do so.

The second reason why such an assumption must not be made is because even where an *aporia* is not unwitting, there *may* be some factor, other than a source, which has generated it. Of course, Fortna recognizes this. For example, the *aporia* around the famous conundrum at 4:44 he never entertains as an indication of a source. Instead, he adopts the theory which says that for the evangelist Jesus' *πάτρις* was Jerusalem.⁴⁹ In fact, there are at least eight or nine other major explanations of this passage.⁵⁰ One must ask,

⁴⁹R. T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs*, 185.

⁵⁰Fortna's approach, first advocated by Origen, is adopted by several other modern scholars, including B. F. Westcott (*The Gospel according to St. John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, repr. 1971, originally 1880] 77–78); Sir E. Hoskyns (*The Fourth Gospel* [London: Faber and Faber, 1947] 252); C. K. Barrett (*The Gospel according to Saint John*, 206); C. H. Dodd (*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1953] 352); W. A. Meeks (*The Prophet-King* [NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967] 313–14); and B. Lindars (*The Gospel of John*, 200–201) who nevertheless says that 4:44 was an isolated logion that was inserted here. Other significant attempts to resolve the anomalous sequence in John 4:43–45 are listed for convenience, and without any attempt to probe their merits or demerits:

(1) Some, e.g. J. H. Bernard (*The Gospel according to St. John* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928] 1. 164–65), simply dismiss 4:44 as a gloss. (2) Others, including C. J. Wright (*Jesus the Revelation of God* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1950] 152), L. Morris (*Commentary on the Gospel of John* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977] 285–87), and R. E. Brown (*Gospel*, 187)—who also thinks 4:44 is a gloss—suggest that Jesus went to Galilee knowing full well that he would be poorly received (cf. 2:23–25); but he went anyway, knowing that this was the Father's will. In this view, 4:45 is ironical. (3) R. H. Lightfoot (*St. John's Gospel* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1956] 34–36) is among those who argue forcefully that Jesus' real *Heimat* is none other than heaven itself. (4) Many older scholars, including David Brown (*The Four Gospels* [London: Banner of Truth, repr. 1969] 377) and J. A. Bengel (*Gnomon of the New Testament* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1858] 2.299), hold that Nazareth, or Lower Galilee, is in view, as opposed to the rest of Galilee, or Upper Galilee. (5) M.-J. Lagrange (*Évangile selon Saint Jean* [Paris: J. Gabalda, 1936] 124) finds the passage so difficult that he suggests the only way out of the problem is to assume that the scene has shifted from Samaria to Nazareth. The *γάρ* he takes to mean "*car c'est la (à Nazareth) qu'il a prononcé cette parole.*" (6) Still others, including W. Hendriksen (*The Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1954] 1. 179–80) and M. Dods (*The Gospel of John* [New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1903] 1. 164–65), suggest that Jesus purposely went into Galilee because there he would not need to fear the honor that could bring him into premature collision with the Pharisees. John 4:45 is again taken ironically. (7) G. Reim ("John iv. 44—Crux or Clue?" *NTS* 22 [1975–76] 476–80) has recently advocated a developmental theory. He argues that John had a story before him like the one in Mark 6:1–6, and this story became the prototype for *all* the rejections of Jesus effected by different audiences, a motif already foreshadowed in John 1:11. The evangelist, however, added elements, usually at the end of speeches, often to provide a *Sitz im Leben*; and this is a "compositional device of the greatest importance," even if it became in this setting the "notorious crux" of John 4:44. (8) U. C. von Wahlde ("A Redactional Technique in the Fourth Gospel," *CBQ* 38 [1976] 520–33) detects in the combination of *δτε οδν* (4:45) plus the *aporia* a sure sign of a redactional technique which, in turn, covers up a seam. Von Wahlde, however, is unsure of the *reason* for the insertion (p. 529).

however, on what basis this particular aporia is not treated as an indication of a source, and on what basis some other explanation suffices; and again, one must ask how many alternative explanations could be offered for those aporias which, according to Fortna, do indicate a seam.

(5) The stylistic criteria Fortna advances, both the *characteristica* of the evangelist and the features found only in the source, fail to provide the strength he ascribes to them. First, as Kümmel notes,⁵¹ the occurrence of an occasional word proves nothing. The sample is too small. Second, some of the words or expressions Fortna adduces are qualified by a particular context.⁵² Third, Fortna never checks out the opposite argument, viz. how many unlikely words *are* found in both the source and in the evangelist's contributions. The *pro* and *con* probabilities need to be set over against each other, and tend to cancel each other out. Fourth, the experience of writing teaches one that sometimes particular words and even certain syntactical arrangements congregate in clusters, and part of the polishing job is to thin them out. Fifth, most source critics have never integrated into their work the findings of those who have demonstrated that the fourth evangelist was given to repetitions *and variations*.⁵³ A variant form of expression *may* therefore not have any significance for sources whatsoever. Sixth, it must be asked to what extent any stylistic unity found in the seven signs might be attributable to the artistry of the evangelist himself; and the fact that this question is extremely difficult to answer does not diminish its importance.

In 1975, E. D. Freed and R. B. Hunt published an article⁵⁴ designed to plug one of these gaps. They too point out that source critics of the fourth gospel have failed to integrate into their work the findings of those who have demonstrated that John is replete with variations. They argue that close study of Fortna's source reveals very few such variations, while the work of the evangelist takes up most of them; and they contend that this observation tends to confirm Fortna's basic hypothesis. Against the contention of Freed and Hunt, attention may be drawn to the following: (a) Methodologically speaking, one must ask if the material admitted to Fortna's source has enough common subject matter to make stylistic variations likely, or even possible; and the answer is certainly negative. The repetitions and variations occur with highest frequency in the discourse material, virtually all of which has already been excluded from the source. Thus, when Freed and Hunt say, "T. F. Glasson⁵⁵ has listed fifteen sayings which are repeated and varied in the Gospel, and all of these appear in JM [=johannine material]. This fact

⁵¹ *Introduction*, 214 n. 78.

⁵² E.g., words such as *κολυμβήθρα*, *ὕδρια*, *κῆπος*, *βάπτισμα*, *ὀψάρια* and so forth.

⁵³ Cf. E. D. Freed, "Variations in the Language and Thought of John," *ZNW* 55 (1964) 167-97; L. Morris, "Variation—A Feature of the Johannine Style," chapter 5 of his *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969); P. S.-C. Chang, *Repetitions and Variations in the Gospel of John* (doctoral dissertation, Strasbourg, 1975).

⁵⁴ E. D. Freed and R. B. Hunt, "Fortna's Signs-Source."

⁵⁵ T. F. Glasson, "Inaccurate Repetition in the Fourth Gospel," *Exp Tim* 57 (1945-46) 111-12.

provides additional confirmation of Fortna's thesis"⁵⁶—in fact, it does nothing of the kind, for all the sayings occur in didactic material which is repeated again and again with slight variation to provide cumulative effect. The nature of the material in Fortna's source does not offer the same opportunity. (b) Where it *does* offer the same opportunity, as in the case of the introductory formulae to OT quotations, half of which occur in the source and half of which appear outside it, then the same degree of variation occurs in the two sets of places—a fact which Freed and Hunt are forced to assess as “a bit more puzzling.”⁵⁷ In fact, on this basis they feel it advisable to whittle down Fortna's source.⁵⁸ (c) Freed and Hunt note that Bultmann's signs source plus his passion source which, taken together, embrace roughly the same material as Fortna's source, have as few variations as Fortna's source. However, they point out that Bultmann's *Offenbarungsreden*, his revelatory-discourse source, has variations distributed throughout it, in the same way that the material peculiar to the evangelist does.⁵⁹ This they take to be evidence that the *Offenbarungsreden* is not differentiable from the evangelist's material. But surely one stylistic criterion does not provide an adequate basis for such differentiation. More to the point, most of the material peculiar to the evangelist, in Bultmann's reconstruction, is the evangelist's further didactic exposition of teaching elsewhere put on the lips of the johannine Jesus. In fact, at several points in the fourth gospel it is unclear where the one ends and the other begins.⁶⁰ It is therefore only to be expected that the repeated recycling of a handful of themes in both the words on Jesus' lips and in the exposition of the evangelist himself generates stylistic variations in both. (d) Intriguingly, the one extended passage in Fortna's source where there is not simple narrative but some teaching, albeit in quasi-conversational form, is the story of the Samaritan woman. As it turns out, this passage, as we might have expected, presents quite a list of variations; and therefore Freed and Hunt eliminate that too from Fortna's source!⁶¹ The same treatment, for similar reasons, is accorded the story of the miraculous catch of fish.⁶² Heads I win, tails you lose! (e) Freed and Hunt point out that between 54% and 59% of John's *hapax legomena* occur in the source, even though that source is only one-fifth the length of the gospel. They contend that this is valuable confirmation of the integrity of the source. Again, it must be insisted that there is an eminently simpler explanation. The didactic material runs over the same subject matter again and again, while the narrative material (i.e. the source) does not enjoy that freedom; and meanwhile only the narrative material needs to concern itself with place names or features essential to the

⁵⁶E. D. Freed and R. B. Hunt, “Fortna's Signs-Source,” 556.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 565.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 567.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 567.

⁶⁰The classic example, of course, is in John 3.

⁶¹E. D. Freed and R. B. Hunt, “Fortna's Signs-Source,” 568.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 568–69.

narrative setting, such as *ἀλιεύειν*, *ἀνθρακιά*, *ἀντλεῖν*, *ἐμπόριον*, *θήκη*, *κέρμα*, *κολυμβήθραι*, *ὀψάριον*, *πενθερός*, *προσαίτης*, *σκέλος*, *τίτλος*, *φραγγέλλιον*, and others. (f) Similarly, when Freed and Hunt insist on the basis of their findings that the author of 1 John could not have been the author of Fortna's signs source, even if he could presumably be identified with the evangelist, they fail to reckon with the implications of the fact that 1 John contains no narrative material.

Urban C. von Wahlde recently published an article which claims to have detected what he calls a "repetitive resumptive," a redactional technique which resumes the narrative after an insertion.⁶³ The technique is indicated by *ὅτε οὖν* or *ὡς οὖν* followed by the verb which occurred just before the insertion. These are alleged to be especially significant when they are found in conjunction with obvious aporias. He offers three passages as the clearest manifestations of this technique: viz. John 6:22–24; 4:43–45; 4:30–40. The second of these three, John 4:43–45, has already been discussed in this article: there are eight or nine alternative explanations. Moreover this is one of the aporias where Fortna does *not* detect a source. The first case of the three requires an emendation of the text,⁶⁴ a procedure that is often legitimate but much less often convincing. The third would demand too detailed a response for this paper. The point in any case is simple: stylistic criteria for identifying sources, or, in von Wahlde's case, for identifying redactional seams from which sources may be deduced, are slippery things. And if Alistair Cooke, both in his writings and in his oral comments, may be permitted to use repetitive resumptive techniques at every turn, complete with aporias, perhaps the fourth evangelist may be forgiven the odd one as well. Von Wahlde may indeed have discovered a resumptive technique; but it does not follow that he has uncovered literary sources.

(6) Quite another aspect of the consistency argument is the appeal to the credibility of cumulative evidence. In other words, under this argument it is not the consistency of the flow of the text that is being sought, but the consistency of the direction of the strands of evidence. Cumulative evidence can engender substantial conviction, for it cannot be overthrown by the "weakest link in the chain" argument.

Unfortunately, however, it is open to two attacks. First, wittingly or not, it can be abused by the selection of material which goes into the cumulation. And second, it must be set over against the cumulative counter evidence. An acquaintance, an OT scholar in a British university, wrote and read for a party lark a paper offering a detailed source and redaction critical study of *Winnie the Pooh*. He built up quite an array of cumulative evidence. The intriguing thing about this exercise was his confession that, after he had read the paper at several parties, and polished it a little, he was tempted to believe it himself. Fortna, quite rightly, appeals from time to time to the cumulative force of his

⁶³"Redactional Technique."

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 526.

arguments. Equally rightly, a critic of Fortna may appeal to the cumulative force of his counter-arguments. But in all source critical studies in which there is no *literary* evidence to justify the results, the burden of proof must rest with the source critic, not with the source critic's critic.⁶⁵

(7) There is a larger question that is much more difficult to assess, but which deserves some mention, however brief. W. Kaufmann contends that pentateuchal criticism rests on both false premises and bad arguments, that it is guilty of misunderstanding the processes of artistic creation. He says that if the methods applied to pentateuchal criticism were applied to the works of Goethe or Shakespeare, the results would be absurd.⁶⁶ Some scholars, not all of them conservative, entertain a deeply rooted suspicion that the same thing could be said about the source criticism of the fourth gospel. The results of such criticism are sometimes brilliant, usually stimulating, and often imaginative; but it is doubtful if they are demonstrable, even in the limited sense of commanding sustained assent to their probability.⁶⁷

IV

In brief, this paper is an appeal for probing agnosticism in these matters. This is not to say that the fourth evangelist used no sources; it is *a priori* not unlikely that he did. But it may be doubted that this has been *demonstrated* to any significant degree of probability; and it is certain that if they exist, these sources have not yet been isolated in a way which permits precise redaction criticism of the sort in which Fortna wishes to engage.

Kysar feels that the future hope of source criticism of the fourth gospel is form criticism.⁶⁸ However, the most serious works in this area, those by Dodd

⁶⁵Thus, the cumulative evidence for stylistic unity results in conclusions like that frequently cited from P. Parker ("Two Editions of John," *JBL* 75 [1956] 304): "It looks as though, if the fourth gospel used documentary sources, he wrote them all himself!" This has most recently been cited by J. A. T. Robinson (*Redating the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976] 297 n. 180).

⁶⁶W. Kaufmann, *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (London: Faber, 1959) 266–73. In arguing the point, he says: "Nowhere else do we find a comparable example of the mechanistic outlook which Bergson criticized: these men literally believed that artistic creation could be explained in terms of a purely spatial construction out of separate particles. We know of no major work of literature that originated in any such fashion, even if we waive the requirement that the artist who put the work together must have been an idiot."

⁶⁷Cf. the penetrating essay by C. S. Lewis, "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," published in several places, most recently in *Fern-seed and Elephants* (London: Collins [Fontana], 1975). Cf. also the review of this book, by S. Prickett (*Theology* 79 [1976] 111–13), who calls to mind "that in modern cases where we know that there are 'unassimilated' borrowings from other writers (such as Coleridge's plagiarisms from Schelling in Chapter XII of *Biographia Literaria*) it has not proved easy to isolate them simply from sudden transitions in style or vocabulary." J. M. Ross ("The Use of Evidence in New Testament Studies," *Theology* 79 [1976] 214–21) reminds us to make distinctions among the categories *conclusive* evidence, *persuasive* evidence, *suggestive* evidence, *neutral* evidence, and *irrelevant* evidence. Aporias, in particular, must not be thought, in themselves, to constitute more than neutral evidence.

⁶⁸R. Kysar, *Fourth Evangelist*, 37, as already noted. There is a rare and unfortunate lapse in the quality of Kysar's work at this point. For example, on p. 33, he states that "the rich results of

and Nicol, do not encourage the conclusion that they will produce any more satisfying information regarding *literary sources*. Indeed, if we try to use form criticism in this way, we may become guilty of what Morna D. Hooker calls “using the wrong tool.”⁶⁹

Efforts at source criticism need not be abandoned. However, if they are to command sustained assent, then they must do at least two things which have been largely overlooked. First, they must utilize highly diverse methods and seek the truth in converging results. Second, source critics must be far more self-critical than they have been to date, for it begins to appear that few areas of biblical scholarly endeavor embrace a greater danger that the scholar will convince himself prematurely of the correctness of his reconstruction, than in the area of source criticism. And if such massive and self-critical effort is put forth, and the results turn out to be equivocal, we will just have to live with them. Who knows? Such effort may in the long run prove definitive. But until it does, a probing agnosticism is the best position to maintain.

the pursuit of the source hypotheses are encouraging. That is, the early efforts at redaction criticism on the basis of the signs source hypothesis demonstrate, at least to my satisfaction, that source analysis may provide keys to a number of the forbidden chambers of johannine thought and history.” But he says this while demonstrating that there is little consensus in method (methods are in a “shambles,” he says) or in content (except for the existence of a signs source); and so the “rich results” found in the redaction criticism of so uncertain a document strike one as in the highest degree ephemeral. “In a word,” Kysar goes on to say, “the simpler solutions offered by some may be appealing but they may also be easy detours around the hard and admittedly dangerous work of source analysis.” For “admittedly dangerous work,” should we rather read “highly speculative enterprise”? Thus, when a few pages later (p. 37), Kysar praises form criticism as the most promising method for delineating the source, a method notoriously slippery when used for such purposes, one can only marvel at his optimism.

⁶⁹M. D. Hooker, “On Using the Wrong Tool,” *Theology* 75 (1972) 570–81.