Good News to the Rich

A Recharacterization of Rich Characters in Luke's Gospel

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Summary

Storytelling is a deeply human act through which possibilities are realized, and ways of living enabled or constrained. It matters which stories are told, and by whom. – Karen King[1]

This thesis will aim at shedding light on an often mistreated group of rich characters, by portraying them as characters with great depth, and as part of a drama, both worldly and soteriological. Luke's gospel, I will claim, is less interested in who the characters *are* and more focused on whom they can *become*. This statement is an attempt at concisely laying out the foundation for the proposed *change motif*, where the idea is that through a range of remissions, God works, and Jesus preaches salvation for the rich if they are willing to change. While poor characters receive salvation through God's mighty intervention and with no other qualification than being poor, the rich characters deal with a different concept of salvation.

Hence, I propose that Luke presents two channels of salvation, where salvation for the rich is intertwined with the poor, while the poor are saved by God's grace. Luke is consistently concerned with these themes, although Luke presents a wide range of diverse characters who balance these concepts of wealth and righteousness. Luke's gospel to the rich can be traced through the entire gospel, without necessarily always being the main track of the narrative. At the beginning of this process, I cling to the idea that following a subplot is rather about choosing a perspective knowing that it does not cover the whole authorship, but is important, nonetheless. I called this putting on conscious blinders, trusting that Luke, being such a remarkable piece of literature, withstands multiple readings. Even still, this is an important reminder of how to read with humility, but after digging further into Luke's stories, I cannot shake the impression that the gospel to the rich is indeed one of several main tracks in the authorship. Whether or not this can be true, I will leave the reader to decide, as I am suspicious of having a lack of clear-sight after reading with a specific purpose for a long time.

This thesis is a reading of salvation also as good news to the rich, rather than simply as a threat to the resourceful because they have a unique scope of action, the opportunity to change, share, redistribute, and be stewards and hosts in Luke-Acts' prolonged eschatological

[1] Karen King, "The Bits the Bible Left Out," *Harvard Magazine*, 6 January 2019, https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2018/11/karen-king-harvard

framework. Finally, this draws heavily on Luke's Greco-Roman context and the Jewish concepts of righteousness, and remission of sin, while also contesting the concurrent ideals of reciprocity in the Greco-Roman world. This converges with a range of recent scholarship dedicated to charity, almsgiving, possessions, stewardship, economy and social relations to name a selection.

While I recognize the influence of the extensive research on these Lukan topics, the limitations of this thesis, unfortunately, do not offer a comprehensive tour of recent scholarship. Instead, I will focus on some concepts from narrative and literary methodology, and key pericopae where rich characters play significant roles in Luke's gospel. My thesis contributes to scholarship in the field of New*[2] Testament and Early Christianity by providing a heuristic framework for reading the narratives involving wealth and rich characters in Luke's gospel.

Finally, with this reading, I will attempt to recreate the first rich readers of these texts. Recreating an ancient audience is an exercise in imagination. To inspire imagination, I will, amongst other sources, consider the pseudepigraphal text the Testament of Abraham, and Clement of Alexandria's *Who is the Rich Man That is Being Saved?* as conversation partners with Luke's gospel, to give a glimpse of the entangled landscape of second century Christianity.

[2] I place an asterisk next to "New* Testament" in order to avoid triumphalist Christian supersessionism that relegates the Hebrew Scriptures as the "Old Testament" and celebrates early "Christian" writings as the "New Testament." The asterisk is a small attempt at criticizing this tradition.

Preface

In the fall semester of 2017, I took a class on Luke and homiletics with professor emeritus at The University of Oslo Halvor Moxnes. In one of the introductory lectures, he described the travel narrative in Luke 9:51-19:47 as a story on how to be a follower of Jesus, and that the essence was not who you *are*, but whom you can *become*. This perspective on the distinctive Lukan travel narrative sparked an interest in the *change* these characters must go through in order to be followers of Jesus. When embarking upon a reading of Luke inspired by this perspective, I soon discovered what seemed to be a dissonance between the "change motif" and the widespread reading of the rich (doomed) and poor (saved) characters one meets if traveling through these ten chapters of Luke's gospel.

My experience was that many, not all, interpretations of pericopae from the travel narrative, used the methodology to reinforce a dichotomy of rich/doomed and poor/saved. Not only does such a reading paralyze me, a privileged white man, it also does little justice to the narrative interpretational snares of dooming what we dislike and adoring what we love. After continuous reading of the Lukan narratives and parables, the question of how a gospel to the rich could reveal insight into the recipient community of the gospel became increasingly relevant. Giving such space to rich characters in the narrative landscape seemed to me like something an author would do with a purpose. It has been an exciting journey following these traces in Luke's authorship, and still there is certainly a lot to be discovered.

I would also take this opportunity to thank my advisor Professor Marianne Bjelland Kartzow. Your creative intellect, unfailing encouragement and steady guidance has made this project a journey I will never forget. I am forever thankful for the clever ways in which you have dared me to seize opportunities and inspired my imagination. Thank you.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my co-advisor Professor Giovanni Battista Bazzana and the department of New Testament / Early Christianity at Harvard Divinity School. Inviting me to do research at this astonishing institution has provided me with resources and conversation partners that I could never have imagined being surrounded by. The time I have spent at HDS will forever be a part of me. For this I am truly grateful.

The reference style for this thesis follows *The SBL Handbook of Style (SBLHS)*, Second Edition.

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Methods of Characterization

I argue that characters, their speech, and silence, possibilities and limitations, desires and flaws, are key parts of how Luke constructs a narrative world of meaning.[3] Naturally, the characters unique to the gospel of Luke are most suitable to study what Luke might want us to learn from and about these characters.

Therefore, in this introduction, I will lay out the methodological and theoretical concepts that I will argue are most applicable to the rich characters in the gospel of Luke from selected narrative and literary approaches. Since I am interested in how the rich characters must change in Luke, I will focus on the *characterization* of the rich characters.[4]

Albeit, it is significant to note that characterizing the rich characters has to be done in multiple layers of the narrative/parable. Because, on the surface of the plot, they can be characterized as the antagonist of the story and end up dead, as the rich farmer in Luke 12 and the rich man in Luke 16. At the same time, I will argue that they are not condemned, or die, simply because they are rich, but because they have, each in their own way failed in the economy of salvation for the rich. In my reading of characters like Joseph from Arimathea, the rich men in Luke 16, and Zacchaeus, they are examples of changing characters who take part in this economy, although they might not simply fall into a strict category of rich, they surely take part in Luke's concept of change. I will, therefore, present some theoretical background for characterization, change and wealth.

Further, I will also apply the concept of *dialogism* and *polyphony* from Mikhail Bakhtin, and regard Wisdom traditions from the Jewish scriptures,[5] early Patristic sources and implications of the Roman Empire as context to the pericopae I have chosen. There is an

[3] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 112-14.

[4] In narrative theory, change is a key part of how events "transition from one state to another state, caused or experienced by the actors." Bal, *Narratology*, 190-91. Though I will not consider the narrative theoretical implications of change in this thesis, I recognize the fundamental part change plays in the building of all narrative constructions.

[5] I use this term instead of for example "Hebrew Bible" to point to how authors of the New Testament texts often read Greek texts (LXX) and not Hebrew. In this way, I argue that we can point to the same text without presupposing that the author read a text written in Hebrew. At the same time, this should not exclude what we today regard as "The New Testament" texts from also being considered within Judaism, as concepts of scripture, religion and tradition often cloud the ancient world with modern appropriations and anachronisms.

abundance of relevant perspectives that I could have considered for this thesis. Naturally, I will not have the opportunity to explore more than a selected few. This means that my approach to the themes of characters, characterization and change will not, unfortunately, be entertaining a range of central aspects, like the rich spectrum of genres (parables, example story, figurative story, speech from the mouth of Jesus, main narrative and commandment), material culture that could reflect on wealth in the first century, or more than a scarce selection of the vast amount of written sources available from the era.

Next, I will argue that some pericopae are particularly well suited for the study of rich characters in Luke. To study characterization and how this impact Luke's change motif for the rich characters in the gospel narratives, I have chosen to focus my thesis on Luke 16. I have chosen this chapter because I argue that it reaches thematically into the last part of the travel narrative. Further, the texts are often, as mentioned, considered bizarre, hence making them, I will argue, ideal for the consideration of the literary concepts of dialogism and polyphony.

Finally, they provide ample framework to consider the contextual material that I want to focus on, those being Wisdom tradition, socio-political discourse, and early New* Testament reception. Moreover, I am acknowledging that there are several other pericopae in which rich characters are presented, but that I, unfortunately, will not have the opportunity to consider in this thesis. Therefore, I have attempted to present the places where rich characters appear in Luke. I have done this so that I can establish a framework of pericopae that can function as conversation partners in this thesis, even though I will only dive into two of them.

Pericopae	*Description*	*Change Motif*
Luke 16: 1-9; 19-31	The Steward Parable The Rich Man and Lazarus	Debt-reduction Charity and Almsgiving, Abraham as an ideal rich man
Luke 12: 16-21 Luke 19: 1-10	The Rich Farmer Zacchaeus	(Re-)Distribution of wealth Abandonment of wealth
Luke 23: 50-54 Luke 23: 26	Joseph from Arimathea Simon of Cyrene	A synoptic account of a changed character Movement and sacrifice

Table 1: Pericopae containing rich characters

1.1.1 Luke's Gospel as Dialogic and Polyphonic Literature

First, I will now present two key literary concepts by Mikhail Bakhtin that I will later apply to my reading of the selected pericopae. These are the concepts of dialogism and polyphony. Bakhtin writes: "Truth is not born, nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction."[6] In other words, dialogism and polyphony is a way of reading texts were interacting, and manifold "voices" in the text are used to create meaning.

This aligns in some ways with Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory, but I have chosen Bakhtin because I argue that it gives a unique focus on how voices both in the text and different readers (actual or implied) come into play. Moreover, Iser's reader-response theory has met criticism for its notion of the implied reader, that can sometimes be conceived as abstract and disconnected from a living, flesh-and-blood reader.[7] Further, it seems to be popular among scholars to apply these concepts as an interpretational key to Luke's gospel, giving me some interesting conversation partners in this study of wealth and rich characters in the Lukan scholarship. Bakhtinian dialogism has been applied to Luke's gospel by Raj Nadella and C-S Abraham Cheong, two scholars to whom I owe gratitude.

Nadella argues that dialogism and polyphony "turns a perceived problem into an asset" as opposing voices transform into dialogue.[8] Bakhtin's theory, both polyphony, and dialogism, gives breathing room to the unexpected and bizarre in the Lukan composition. The theory breaks with Hegelian dialectic which seeks to create synthesis by assimilating thesis and antithesis. Instead, truth and meaning can be found when characters and dialogue contradict and challenge. I will argue that Luke 16 is an example of this. While other scholars often argue that this is simply a very confusing pericope, I argue that Bakhtin's theory grasps some of Luke's ambition with the rich characters.[9]

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[6] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 110.

[7] C-S Abraham Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading of the Steward Parable (Luke 16: 1-9)*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001), 1-2.

[8] Raj Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 48.

[9] For examples of regarding the Steward parable as perplexing and bizarre: see, e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 2 vols. AB 28A (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1985), 1095-99; L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, (Sacra Pagina 3, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 248; F. Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50. Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 474-78; Amy-Jill Levine and Ben Witherington III. *The Gospel of Luke: New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 8

They *are* strange, and they do contest the gospel to the poor. This I will argue, is a sign of the gospel to the rich, and a clue that they are equally significant in Luke's good news to the rich, or construction of the kingdom of God *ἐντὸς* ("within," or, "among you") (17:21). The rich man's steward is different in the way that he shows tension and brings to life the ambiguity and the "change motif" that characterizes the (sub)plot of the good news to the rich. Moreover, by virtue of standing out, he enriches the spectrum of characters by exposing the different limitations and possibilities that live within the narratives of the gospel.

At the same time, a steward is not a rich man. He could have been a slave, but it might be more likely that he is employed, as he does not fear being punished (16:3).[10] Further, when Jesus describes the faithful steward in Luke 12:42, he says "Who then is the faithful and prudent steward whom his master will put in charge of his slaves," showing how a steward's responsibility could be to manage slaves. Although, he could still be a slave himself. More interestingly he occupies the same role as Jesus wants his apostles to have, as Jesus is the real κύριος and the apostles are the οἰκονόμοι in the narratives and parables.

Bakhtin's theory of polyphony could here be applied to the reading of woman and slaves. Nadella argues that it "refers primarily to the presence of multiple, and often divergent, voices in a literary text."[11] Characters can disagree with the presented worldview of the author or narrator just as they disagree with other characters. According to Nadella the gospel of Luke is a polyphonic text filled with opposing voices. The gospel is both liberating and confining for different characters, including slaves and rich.

If dialogue and its use can characterize Luke 16, I will argue that the approach to reading the texts needs rethinking. When Mary worships the Lord in Luke 1:46-55, the perspective is from a marginalized woman placed in the periphery in every way, geographically, politically, through her gender, age and situation. Mary's voice thus sounds threatening to a rich person when she sings "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away" (1:53). When the master in Luke 16 "praised the unrighteous steward since he had worked wisely" (16:8), the gospel has a very different sounding voice. The gospel can sound both excluding and including from the perspective of the rich. How these polyphonic voices function in Luke's economy of salvation is a question I will return to later in chapter 3.

[10] Wilhelm Michaelis *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, (Hamburg: Furche Verlag, 1956), 14-15.

[11] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 13.

Luke seemingly portrays Jesus first as someone who tells a story that praises the steward for his economic decisions, and then right after tells the crowd that they cannot serve two masters, that they have to choose between God and mammon. By considering Nadella and Bakhtin, the opposing voices in the narrative are allowed to surface, as the polyphony of voices liberate the Lukan narrative from the confines of one meaning or universal truth and instead value it for its multiplicity.[12] I will return to the interpretation of this pericope in chapter 3.

Finally, considering C-S Abraham Cheong's book *A Dialogic Reading of the Steward Parable (Luke 16: 1-9)*, a dialogic reading challenges both the *implied* and the *actual* reader of the parable.[13] By considering both the first readers of Luke's gospel and our own bias when reading ancient literature, we can explore dialogism in the world in front of the text as well as in the world in the text. Further, imagining an ancient reader demands that we investigate the social implications of economic, political, gendered or any other relevant principles and customs from the world behind the text. Cheong calls this a "hermeneutic of mutual recognition and trust."[14] In other words, a reading that withstands the tendency to favorize any one voice, and instead view both reader and text like an unfinished being; they have to move and listen with an ever-changing and developing voice. As for my hermeneutical bias, I do not argue that it is possible to bracket my subjectivity and interpret ancient texts unbiased.

Nevertheless, I will argue that my conscious and subconscious presuppositions can be fruitful and not necessarily limiting. The reader plays an essential role in actualizing characters as readerly mental constructs.[15] In a dialogic reading, I am, as a reader, also invited to change and be challenged by a bizarre and polyphonic reading of Luke. How does being male and privileged affect a reading of privileged male characters? In what way does Luke's gospel communicate to me, living in a society with an increasing disparity between rich and poor? It is clear that a lot of such presuppositions have inspired and provoked my reading, and I will try to be aware of them, while also bringing them into dialogue with the texts. In this way, I argue that the dialogism can function both in the text and with the implied and actual reader of the text.

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[12] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 11-14.

[13] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 16-24.

[14] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 17.

[15] David Herman (ed.), "Character." (Pages 66–79 in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 67; 76.

1.1.2 Flat and Round Characters

I will now argue that the narrative voice of the gospel is often intended for those it challenges (round/ deep characters) rather than those it saves without further drama (flat characters). E.M Forster introduced the term *flat character* in 1927 as a description of characters with no depth or hidden agenda, and a minimal scope of predictable behavior. *Round characters* have complexity, depth and cannot be summarized in one sentence.[16] Though seemingly obvious, these basic narrative concepts strike the heart of what has been overlooked in the reading of the rich characters in Luke.

The rich characters are essential to the plot development in major Lukan narratives because of the tension created by the difficulty of their task, which I will argue can be a call to change. They create tension because they often fail to do what is supposedly demanded of them. In the characterization of the rich as round characters, I argue that Luke deploys a "dialogic relationship towards his characters at every moment of the creative process,"[17] meaning that their voice is relevant in the narrative world whether they "agree" with the voice of the narrator or not. In other words, Luke, as a polyphonic author, writes *with* his characters and not *about* them.[18]

The rich farmer in chapter 12 stores his possessions – instead of sharing them – and dies the same night. In the same way, the rich man overlooks Lazarus and ends up being condemned in ᾅδης. The Beatitudes are an excellent example of how the poor are "blessed" (saved) without doing anything apart from being in a state of poverty. Jesus pronounces divine judgment on the farmer in 12:16-21, not because he is rich, but because he keeps his riches.[19]

In my reading of these Lukan pericopae, the poor play supporting roles, as they are already saved, hence building no suspense to the plot development of the stories. The tendency of misreading the narratives falls to this narrative snare: That Jesus has come to save the poor because they are marginalized, hence all other characters are superfluous.

Poverty is a must to set the stage of the gospel story (4:18), and a lot of the character

[16] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 126-127.

[17] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 63.

[18] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 24.

[19] Joel B. Green, *Methods for Luke*, (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010), 105.

development of Jesus is about depicting him as poor. The stable, his apostles and preaching period in Galilee, and his death. Although this cannot be overlooked, the multiplicity of the stories that make Luke such a great storyteller relies on other characters. Without the ambiguity of the drama surrounding the rich, we are looking at narratives composed of flat characters playing the main parts of key stories, and a plot without any suspense or uncertainties. This is not in compliance with the quality of Luke's stories.

Hence, round characters are crucial to understanding Luke's principal "theological" paradigm. As Guy Nave pointed out in his study on the role and function of repentance in Luke-Acts, Luke-Acts accounts for 25 occurrences, or 45 % of all occurrences of μετάνοια in the New* Testament, the principal Greek word for "repent" and "repentance."[20] He argues that Luke's theological paradigm is characterized by sinners who repent in order to achieve salvation through their encounter with Jesus. This movement from sinner to saved presupposes a change and a depth in the characters who encounter Jesus.

Therefore, the reader should not be too eager to deal out judgment or jump to conclusions on who is a protagonist or antagonist in the story. This has, unfortunately, often been the case in the scholarly work on characterizing Luke's rich characters.[21] Being a troubled and diverse character is rather a sign of depth. These wealthy and deep characters should instead be read as markers of communication. By their characterization as bizarre and often unlucky, they are inviting both the reader and other characters into dialogue with their most profound concern. This could be, how wealth should be distributed, how rich people can be saved, and how change is necessary in order to be a true disciple or steward in the kingdom of God.[22]

[20] Guy Nave, *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill / (Academia Biblica (Series) (Brill Academic Publishers); no. 4.), 2002), 3.

[21] See, e.g., Cornelis Bennema, "The Rich are the Bad Guys". In *Characters and Characterization in Luke-Acts*, ed. Frank Dicken and Julia Snyder (Library of New Testament Studies 548, London; N.Y: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 95-108.

[22] James A. Metzger, *Consumption and Wealth Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 2.

1.2 Identifying the Context of Luke's Rich Characters: Jewish Wisdom Literature, the Roman Empire, and Ancient Reception

1.2.1 Luke's Rich Characters in Relation to Wisdom Tradition in Jewish Scriptures.

In the following sub-chapter, I will consider three key tropes to focus our conversation on the contexts for Luke's gospel to the rich. These are Jewish Wisdom literature, Roman Empire and early patristics.

Anthony Giambrone argues that Proverbs 10:2 "Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death" is a good example of the Jewish Wisdom literature as a context for Luke's concepts of charity and almsgiving.[23] When applying this perspective to the pericopae in Luke 16, Giambrone concludes that "friends in heaven gained by the use of *mammon* are an image of the participation in the life to come made possible through the giving of alms."[24] Applied to the rich man in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31) I argue that this means he could have been saved if he had given charity to Lazarus while they were both still alive. Another interesting example is when Joseph from Arimathea is described as πλούσιος (rich) in Matt 27:57, but as ἀγαθὸς (good) and δίκαιος (righteous) in Luke, though neither one in Mark, where he is described as εὐσχήμων (respected). Matthew and Luke have done two individual redactions of the Marcan story, and I argue that this can be used to investigate Luke's intention with the character Joseph. The addition of "a good and upright man" is a redactional addition to the modest Marcan description of Joseph.[25]

Giambrone argues that texts from Deutero-Isaiah (Joseph as the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9) and Wisdom sources point to a concurrent understanding of eschatology.[26] Now, if the

[23] Anthony Giambrone, *Sacramental Charity, Creditor Christology, and the Economy of Salvation in Luke's Gospel*, (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe (439). Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2017), 210-211.

[24] Giambrone, *Sacramental Charity*, 279.

[25] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, *x-xxiv*:1524-26.

[26] Giambrone, *Sacramental Charity*, 16-21.

gates of salvation are open also for the rich, then a reading that does not appreciate the economic implications in the end-time division and focuses too narrowly on the poor, miss out on a key interpretational scope. Luke's relation to the Wisdom literature is also dialogical, as Wisdom texts demand the opportunity for different voices to be raised within the text, a resisting reader, who actively engages in the ambiguity, tension, and multiplicity of the text. In other words, the inconsistency of the world challenges Wisdom. Hence, Wisdom tradition is less static, a more open context that appreciates the situation.

Further, speech in Wisdom literature should be beautiful, trustworthy, soothing, constrained, and justifiable in order to enable life[27], while silence should be adequate, respectful, and timely[28], according to the esteemed work of Walter Bülhemann. I will apply the perspectives on speech and silence especially when interpreting the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Concerning salvation, I argue that imagining that either a typical Law or Wisdom tradition presents itself as authoritative in Luke's gospel, would be arguing a false and constructed binary. Nevertheless, I argue that the Wisdom tradition offers a unique opportunity to appreciate the ambiguity and difficulty of the rich characters.

Last, this delineates the scope of this thesis, as I will try to open up space for the dialogical and polyphonic potential *in* the text. Naturally, a narrative reading of for example the Pharisees cannot adequately describe their role in Luke's concept of the rich, fully place them in an ancient social-setting, nor be satisfactorily used to describe a rich group of first readers and hearers of the gospel. At the same time, I argue that regarding the world in *front* of, and at least to some extent *behind* the text, this reading of the rich provides a unique perspective on the text itself. Halvor Moxnes points out the social conflicts concerning the Pharisees and wealth in his book *The Economy of the Gospel* when he connects the historical and social implications to the gospel narratives.[29]

My intention is another, as I wish to investigate how the rich characters play out the drama of salvation in dialogue with other characters and with an imagined rich reader. In this way, I will be able to study how these narrative relations to Wisdom traditions in the Jewish scriptures affect Luke's concepts of salvation and almsgiving, and how we can imagine the rich first recipients of the gospel through a re-characterization of the rich. Reciprocity of the

[27] Walter Bühlmann, *Vom Rechten Reden und Schweigen: Studien zu Proverbien 10-31*, (Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag / (Orbis biblicus et orientalis; 12.), 1976), 315.

[28] Bühlmann, *Vom Rechten Reden*, 256-57; 327.

[29] Halvor Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 1-9.

sin of misusing riches is how God rewards salvation for the rich. Righteous distribution and just acts of almsgiving and charity is the change necessary for the rich characters.

Death is the consequence of unrighteousness. Salvation is the reward for righteousness. I argue that this can ultimately be boiled down to a call to change in order to be workers for God's kingdom and citizens in the first communities of Jesus-followers. All this draw on inherent Wisdom traditions in Luke and is key when considering Luke within Judaism.

1.2.2 Socio-Political Discourse

I will consider a brief socio-political discourse of Jesus in the Roman Empire, and what it could mean to be rich and wealthy in the first and second century.

John K. Goodrich considers early Roman leasing contracts and refers to Roman landowners like Pliny the Younger and Cicero, arguing that debt-reduction by rich proprietors were regularly enforced in order that people should be able and motivated to pay their debt. Goodrich is arguing this to point to vast insecurity for landowners in the early imperial period.[30] He uses this in a reading of the steward parable in Luke 16:1-9, which makes for an interesting perspective on some of the socio-political implications on wealth, land and debt in the context of Luke's gospel. This provides relevant background information about the economic and social setting of the gospel texts. It seems as though it was a common problem that debtors failed to pay their proprietors and that debt-reduction was practiced as a way to solve this problem.

Further, in his dissertation, *Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative* (2007), James A. Metzger argues two things (1) that Jesus calls for complete elimination of personal wealth and, (2) that "Luke's story of Jesus is set against the backdrop of a highly stratified, advanced agrarian society in which a very small percentage of the population [he imagines this minority to be comprised of an imperial and civic elite] owned and managed almost all of the land and capital. The majority, consisting of small landowners, tenant farmers, and laborers, engaged in subsistence-level farming and, as a rule, were barely able to fulfill basic needs."[31]

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[30] John K. Goodrich, "Voluntary Debt Remission and the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13)," JBL 131.1 (2012): 547-66 (553).

[31] Metzger, *Consumption and Wealth*, 190-91. The arguments on material culture and socio-economic differences draw on the article by Gildas Hamel, "Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries

This view is thoroughly challenged in a more recent study on material culture in Galilee, that was published in JBL by Mordechai Aviam in 2013. In his article, "People, Land, Economy, and Belief in First-Century Galilee and Its Origins: A Comprehensive Archaeological Synthesis," he points to newly excavated areas in Yodefat and Gamla to argue that villages in Galilee were, indeed, not poor at all.[32] I argue that this shows how the first century society around Galilee was not necessarily dependent on a rich governing elite but could sustain themselves through sophisticated agriculture. Lately, there has been a disagreement between archaeologists, considering material culture, and biblical scholars, often leaning on socio-scientific methods as anthropological and cultural models.[33] I argue that material culture should be considered with the utmost importance, though at the same time recognizing how sociological methods are essential for the larger picture.

David A. Fiensy considers eight excavation sites from Galilee in his book *Christian Origins and the Ancient Economy*, where he argues that farmers in Galilee in the first century were living a good, self-sustaining life, while they were, at the same time, under increasing pressure from urbanization and a critical economic condition.[34] He bases his argument on a range of material findings like luxury items, coins, houses, and industrial tools. The socio-scientific models function as a heuristic to the study of antiquity, in order that we do not presuppose our modern economic system on the first century, and the material culture provides a diverse representation of the economic situation in antiquity.

Finally, Amy-Jill Levine reads Fiensy's considerations of class issues and the economy as a sign of Luke's connection to rabbinic Jewish sources, not as rhetoric connected to the gentile Roman code.[35] She argues, based on Fiensy's work, that rabbinic sources praise manual labor in a way that was uncommon in Roman sources. I find it interesting for my consideration of empire and Jewish sources as two separate perspectives on Luke and wealth,

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C.E," (Near Eastern Studies 23; University of California Press, 1989), 142; cf. Dennis E. Oakman, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 72.

[32] Mordechai Aviam, "People, Land, Economy, and Belief in First-Century Galilee and Its Origins: A Comprehensive Archaeological Synthesis," in *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus*, ed. David A. Fiensy and Ralph K. Hawkins. (Society of Biblical Literature, III. Series: Early Christianity and Its Literature, Number 11. Atlanta: 2013), 43-44.

[33] David A. Fiensy, *Christian Origins and the Ancient Economy*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 81.

[34] Fiensy, *Christian Origins*, 91; 96-97.

[35] Levine, *Gospel of Luke*, 8.

that these factors can converge. On the one hand, the presence of the Roman Empire has an inevitable impact on how wealth and poverty looked in the first century. On the other hand, I argue that this defining, sometimes suppressing condition, can have a galvanizing effect on Jewish identity marking. Being faced with an outside force that could, as I have argued, provide both prosperity and oppression, I argue that Luke incorporates these factors into a current Jewish world view. This allows the author to apply concepts of salvation and righteousness to the concurrent situation of debt, distribution, and remission of wealth.

Now, I argue that there is a gap, both geographically and in time between the historical Jesus and the writing of Luke's gospel.[36] The socio-political implications would vary from the Jesus movement to the writing of Luke's gospel, meaning that the gospel in many ways is describing an environment more in line with the time of its writing. Following my proposed dating in a diaspora setting, Luke's familiarity with Greco-Roman rhetorical and historiographical conventions (preface, native speaker of Greek), the lack of Hebrew and Aramaic except the word "amen," and the mentioned unfamiliarity with the land, could point to a somewhat different setting than the discoveries of material culture from the land of Israel. At the same time, I argue that this should not be used to argue that Luke is a gentile.

Extensive knowledge of Greek among Jewish authors is self-evident from for example Philo and 2 Maccabees and lacking geographical knowledge of the land of Israel occurs in Josephus. I, therefore, disagree with Fitzmyer, who argues a gentile context for Luke based heavily on language and geographical knowledge.[37] Still, much of the possessions and wealth in Luke's concern has to do with agriculture, and I argue that the social structures of the empire affected the population quite consistently throughout. Persecution of Jesus-followers, for example, was sporadic and localized until the reign of Decian and his campaign in 250.[38]

Therefore, I argue that Aviam's discoveries from first century Galilee can reflect the social-setting of both the writing of the gospel and the world it describes. I argue that his descriptions of a self-sustaining society where debt-reduction and distribution of wealth were very real, not only for the imperial elite but for the local society. Nevertheless, the socio-

[36] I consider the author of Luke to be a diaspora Jew. Hence, I do not support the argument that the author was Paul's physician, as some scholars argue. I argue that the author's lack of knowledge, or mistakes concerning Galilean and Judean geography, could point to a diaspora setting. Finally, I will use the term "Luke" for convenience but avoid "him" as I will not presuppose a male author when woman would often write under male pseudonyms in antiquity. See: Levine, *The Gospel of Luke*, 6-7.

[37] Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, *i-ix*:35-62; Bovon, *Luke*, 1:8-10.

[38] Levine, *Gospel of Luke*, 9.

political implications of the empire had a significant impact on the people, often in the form of taxes.

In his book, *Luke's Jesus in the Roman Empire and the Emperor in the Gospel of Luke*, Pyong Soo Seo argues that "we need to look into the seriousness of tax burden in the first century from the perspective of the oppressed, not from the rulers."[39] He presents a strong bond between the state of oppression and the two taxes, *tributum agri* (property tax) and *tributum capitis* (head tax) enforced by the Roman Empire. Seo gives Luke a Palestinian context but states that tax collection was widespread in all provinces of the empire, making tax collection a relevant in a social-setting without necessarily agreeing on the geographical location of the Lukan community.

Further, Seo argues that Luke uses Jesus as in implicit critique of the emperor, for example in 22:24-27, where he is saying to the apostles that the leader shall be as a servant. He also makes it clear that Luke's attitude towards reciprocity is utilizing the benefactor-client system in the Roman Empire. The followers of Jesus should be benefactors and serve others. Selfish rulers fail this economy because they neglect an unselfish approach. For example, they could imply that taxes are necessary to provide safety, while often using the accumulated wealth on themselves. Luke's Jesus advocates a different, more altruistic economy, though at the same time alluding to the imperial structures of a benefactor-client relation in the economy of the gospel.[40] Finally, the socio-political discourse of Luke's gospel touches on issues of the connection between gender and wealth. I hypothesize that wealth and masculinity have some thought-provoking relations that I will explore in chapter 3.

[39] Pyung Soo Seo, *Luke's Jesus in the Roman Empire and the Emperor in the Gospel of Luke*, (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 64.

[40] Seo, *Luke's Jesus in the Roman Empire*, 114-115.

1.2.3 Early Patristic Reception: Clement of Alexandria

Finally, I will consider a case study of an early Christ-following, second century figure to demonstrate the fundamental concern for ethical discourse concerning issues of wealth and poverty.

I could have explored the early patristic reception in a broader scope, but I choose to take a closer look at one particular text to be able to engage substantially with an example of wealth ethics in the early church. Further, I will argue why this particular interest applies to the social and cultural context of the Greco-Roman world. This is important because when considering "Christian" texts from this period, we can get a unique glimpse of how some rich people reflected upon questions of wealth from not too long after the gospel was written. *Who is the Rich Man That is Being Saved?* is written as a homily, though it seems too long to actually being held as one, by Clement of Alexandria sometime in the late second, early third century. I argue that his work can help us unfold what it could mean to be a wealthy Christ-follower quarreling with questions of salvation and community not long after Luke's gospel was written.[41]

Clement was situated in Alexandria, a midpoint of both Greek philosophy and Christ-followers at the time. As both a prominent converted Christian and an author thoroughly schooled in Greek philosophy, he, as did Philo, sought to merge Athens and Jerusalem. Eric Osborne points to how Clement applied "his Greek learnings and kerygmatic zeal to declare a true philosophy of Christ,"[42] with a subsequent fundamental impact on western culture. Clement, in *Who is the Rich Man That is Being Saved?*, uses the synoptic pericope of the camel and the needle's eye to argue against a literal reading of the text. Clement writes:

> It may be that the reason why salvation seems more difficult for rich men than for those without means, is not a simple one, but complicated. For some, understanding in

[41] For the debate on dating Luke, see: Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, *i-ix*: 35-37. Scholarship has, since Fitzmyer, seemed in relative consensus on dating Luke in the 80s, hence, after Mark (before 70), concurrent with Matthew and before John (90s). Considering Luke-Acts as potentially a continuum from the same time-period and especially Acts as connected to the Second Sophistic period, I want to distance myself to some extent from this dating tradition and suggest maybe a later date for the authorship and community of Luke-Acts. This would have implications on Matthew, Q, and John, but I would argue that it is possible to date them one or two decades later. The Second Sophistic period can, of course, not be given a definite starting point in the second century, although other sources from this period usually date from this period and onwards. Based on these arguments I date Luke-Acts as a continuum somewhere in the late 90s early 100s.

[42] Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 103-105.

> a literal and off-hand way the Saviour's saying, that a camel shall more easily slip through a needle's eye, than a rich man into the kingdom of heaven (Mark X. 25), have despaired of themselves as being destined not to live; giving everything up to this world, (…) Others again have understood this in a proper and fitting manner but have given no attention to the works that lead up to salvation, and so have failed to make the preparation which is necessary for attaining the objects of their hopes. Both these refer to such rich men as having perceived the power of the Saviour and His manifest salvation: with those who are uninitiated in the mysteries of the truth, I am little concerned.[43]

Clement seems occupied by this dilemma of how to bridge a rich elite with a Christ-following community. His argument appears to renounce a literal interpretation of the needle's eye, and instead, urge rich people to contribute to the community. Thus, Clement reconcile economic wealth with a Christ-following community,[44] reflecting how the early Christ-following communities did not neglect property and wealth but instead utilized it in the building of what was to become the early Christ-following community. I argue that this is closely linked to Luke's vision of a "kingdom of God among you," and also how his unique texts often seem to contradict the Markan or Q traditions of radical abandonment. Elizabeth Clark frames it in this way: "Clement gladly widens the needle's eye to welcome the rich who generously give."[45]

I argue that Clement is an example of an early Christ-follower and reader, who is processing the meaning of these texts, their ethics on wealth and possessions, and salvation in the social setting of the second century. He abandons a literal reading in favor of an allegorical and metaphorical one. To Clement, Jesus wants the rich man to unburden himself of everything that makes him cherish his possessions.[46] Although, he is not consistent with

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[43] Clement of Alexandria, *Who is the Rich Man That is Being Saved?*, (Edited and translated by Rev. P. Mordaunt Barnard. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1901), §2.

[44] Annewies Van Den Hoek, "Widening the Eye of the Needle: Wealth and Poverty in the Works of Clement of Alexandria", In *Wealth and Poverty in the Early Church and Society*, ed. Susan R. Holman. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 74-75.

[45] Elizabeth A. Clarke, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 173.

[46] Clement, *Who is the Rich Man That is Being Saved?*, §11: It bids him banish from his soul his opinions concerning wealth, the feeling for it, the excessive desire, the passionate and diseased excitement concerning it, the cares, the thorns of earthly life, which choke the seed of true life. For it is no great or enviable thing to be without wealth for any other purpose, except on the score of life."

this reading as he later shifts to focus on how rich men should share their wealth with their community: "And how much more profitable is the opposite course – that a man should have sufficient, and himself be in no distress concerning his property, and also help those he ought to. For what charitable fellowship would be left among men if no one possessed anything?"[47] Hence, the New* Testament texts both challenges, but more importantly calls upon the rich members of society to change. Change their attitude towards their riches and change how they distribute and spend their wealth. Both the texts and the social setting requires more of the rich men. The rich man leaves the story with a heavy heart but resurfaces in the rich reader's attempt to process meaning. This is a good example of a purposeful reading of a troubling narrative, by a Christ-follower in the second century.

Finally, Clement seems to care less about idealizing poverty as exemplary discipleship. The poor are saved by God because they are unable to participate in their own salvation. "The poor who are cast along the sides of the roads, "ignorant" of God and "of God's righteousness" (Rom, 10:3) – these would be most blessed, and most dear to God, and alone possessors of life eternal, solely on account of their being utterly without means and resources of livelihood."[48] Hence, Clements reading of Luke's gospel to the rich fits well within a second century Greco-Roman/ "Christian" context. Being a follower of Christ while at the same time being a rich man, is more about distributing wealth and resources in such a way that a benevolent community can be established. Ultimately, the need for wealth in order to constitute such communities becomes apparent through the words of Clement.

[47] Clement, *Who is the Rich Man That is Being Saved?*, §13.

[48] Clement, *Who is the Rich Man That is Being Saved?*, §11.

1.3 Theory of Change

Much has been written on the theme of conversion in Luke. Under the umbrella term of conversion discourse, a seemingly endless array of approaches and definitions has emerged. From minimalist attempts to define conversion simply as "change" or "transformation" in *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*[49] to interesting discussions with cognitive science,[50] and pretty much everything in between. I have chosen not to use conversion theory in my approach to the rich characters in Luke. I do this mainly for two reasons.

First, much of the literature seems to steer clear of Luke 16, which is a chapter I argue is key in understanding Luke's characterization of the rich.[51]

Secondly, I argue that the way in which conversion is applied to Lukan parables, like the prodigal son in chapter 15, is quite different from my intention with the rich characters. The prevalent reading seems to be that the parable wants its reader to convert and repent as the lost son and that the father mirrors God's forgiveness.[52]

Considering the two parables that come before – the lost sheep, and the lost coin – I argue that the third parable as well is less concerned with metanoia and rather about counting. There is no metanoia of sheep. Interpreters tend to forget that "a man had *two* sons" (ἄνθρωπός τις εἶχεν δύο υἱούς) and that the threefold of parables might seek to focus our attention on that which is "lost," the son who is not notified before the party has started, as Levine argues.[53] Therefore, when exploring change in the wealthy characters in Luke, I will apply the Theory of Change (ToC) as a new way of looking at the author's ambition with these complex characters. In this thesis, I argue that instead of condemning the rich in Luke's gospel, another reading is possible where the rich are called to change in order to fulfill Jesus'

[49] Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian ed. "Introduction." (*The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 9.

[50] Joel B. Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 19-21.

[51] Green, *Conversion*, 103-4. Green barely mentions the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 and seems to define those who are like the rich man as not being children of Abraham. For the absence of Luke 16 in the discourse of conversion, see also: Fernando Méndez-Moratalla, *The Paradigm of Conversion in Luke*, (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), and David S. Morlan, *Conversion in Luke and Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Exploration*, (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

[52] Morlan, *Conversion*, 69-79.

[53] Levine, *Gospel of Luke*, 425.

proclamation of the gospel to the poor and the kingdom of God among his followers. ToC exists as a model in philanthropy, not-for-profit and government sectors to promote social change. On their website, the "Center for Theory of Change" describes the theory with these words:

> Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why the desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or "filling in" what has been described as the "missing middle" between what a program or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.[54]

Transporting ToC from a framework of non-profit institutions and implementing it as a theory for literature is not self-evident. Nevertheless, I will argue that this theory could be implemented in reading the rich characters of Luke's gospel. The rich characters fill in several "missing middle's" as they both allow us to imagine the early rich readers of the gospel and their quarrels with distributing wealth and dealing with the poor in their society. Further, the rich characters allow for a hidden drama to unfold in the gospel narratives, as almsgiving and charitable acts are key parts of completing the change necessary for them to be saved, and for the kingdom of God to arise within the early ekklēsia.[55] When applying ToC, social change is reached through achieving distinct outcomes that are mapped out by looking backward from the desired result to every step necessary for the people involved in order to reach that result.

The relationship of these steps to the outcome can be confusing and may be clarified with an example: "I'll know [outcome reached] when I see [indicator]." Implemented on Luke's gospel it could look something like this: "I'll know the kingdom of God among you when I see the rich giving alms and sustaining the life of the poor in the ekklēsia."

The value of ToC is the opportunity to investigate the different steps necessary to take in order to achieve an outcome. It is also interesting that the applied model is led in the best way by a trained, external facilitator to reach consensus and specificity in the process. Jesus is

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[54] Center for Theory of Change, 16 January 2019: https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/

[55] I subscribe to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), *ix*, and her definition of ekklēsia: "Originally a Greek term denoting the democratic assembly or congress of full citizens. In the Christian Testament, ekklēsia is the name of the church. With ekklēsia I intend to signify the radical equality that characterizes the "already and not yet" of religious community and democratic society."

a good example of such a facilitator from the perspective of the recipient community of Luke's gospel. They never knew the historical Jesus in person, but they are eager to follow his word. Utilizing this, Luke can lay out several narratives and parables that urge them to change in order to realize the kingdom of God and achieve salvation in a prolonged eschatological frame.

Further, Luke's redactional style and the way the author characterizes Jesus shows clear signs of Luke's gospel to the rich, and how this characterization of Jesus urges a change motif. Choosing to be exposed as narrator, Luke addresses Theophilus (1:3) by calling this mysterious figure honorable (κράτιστε Θεόφιλε). Even though we cannot know the identity of this implied recipient, it could suggest a literate, honorable person or patron as the intended or ideal reader of the text. At the same time, a name should not encourage us to construct the Lukan community, remembering that "a text is not a community."[56]

Not long after, in chapter 4, Jesus is also presented as literate when reciting Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth. Literacy does not necessarily presuppose a resourceful person, as slaves could very well be trained to read and write. Albeit, I would argue that Luke uses literacy to characterize Jesus as someone who could resonate with a resourceful reader. After being tempted he returns to his mission filled with the δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος (4:14), and he spoke as one with authority (4:32). During his travels (9:51-19:47) I will argue that he functions as a kind of creditor when he meets rich people, laying out what they need to do in order to enter into the kingdom of God. Luke's Jesus also functions as the κύριος in various settings, whose stewards are to prepare meals and banquets or to take care of household management. Both traveling and hosting characterize resourceful bodies.

When comparing what I have discovered about the good news to the rich in the exegetical work to the theoretical concepts of change in chapter 3, I will build the argument using some methodological concepts from ToC. They are applied by Mary Kay Gugerty and Dean Karlan in their recent study, *The Goldilocks Challenge: Right-Fit Evidence for the Social Sector*: (1) *Needs assessment*, (2) *Activities*, (3) *Outputs*, and (4) *Outcomes*.[57] Moreover, in a 2011 study on using ToC to drive human resource development Janet S.

[56] Levine, *The Gospel of Luke*, 9.

[57] Mary Kay Gugerty and Dean Karlan, *The Goldilocks Challenge: Right-Fit Evidence for the Social Sector*, (Oxford Scholarship Online, May 2018), http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/99153691915103941/catalog, 38-39.

Walker and Marlene Matarese argued that the causality between practices and outcomes are well mapped out when using ToC. They summarize:

> Many researchers have noted that thinking through the lens of a program theory or "theory of change" is an extremely useful tool in helping staff develop a common understanding of their work and how components of practice are linked to outcomes (Frechtling 2007; Rogers 2000; Savaya and Waysman 2005).[58]

The model that I will extract from this theory will allow me to trace the different steps necessary to take in order for the characters to change. It also provides a framework for describing the ideal outcome (4), by carefully considering the original problem (1), what must be done (2) by the characters in order to solve this problem, and the effect of these activities (3). I argue that one of the strengths of this theory is that it gives me a chance to compare different situations in the texts using the same methodological concepts. Luke's rich characters are all in different situations, their wealth is varying and uncertain, and they are not necessarily expected to change in the same way. As previously mentioned, change can be studied from a narratological perspective, focusing on how characters transition from one state to another.[59] Nevertheless, I argue that the strength of ToC compared to this approach is the opportunity to consider the different processes of change, with a model that can map out these processes in defined steps. This is effective because Luke has a consistent focus on the rich characters need to change but does not focus on wealth and change consistently. Therefore, I argue that ToC can be helpful to trace the change motif through the different pericopae without having to force them into a static theoretical framework.

[58] J.S Walker, and M. J Matarese, Child Fam Stud (2011) 20: 791. https://doi-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1007/s10826-011-9532-6

[59] Bal, *Narratology*, 190-91.

2 Etymology and Semantics of πλοῦτος.

I will now provide some brief insight into the origins and different usages of the word πλοῦτος, which is Luke's preferred word when characterizing rich characters as rich in the gospel narratives.

Hence, I argue that there are also rich characters who are not explicitly characterized with a word for being rich, but when they are, this is the word exclusively applied by the author of Luke. The Greek word seems to stem from the Indo-European root *pel-*, meaning both *to flow* and *to fill*.[60] Hence, all the Greek words derive from a common root meaning *to be filled* and the content meaning *a fulness of goods*. According to BDAG the adverbial use of πλούσιος can be traced to the sixth century BCE, to Hesiod, Herodotus and others.[61] This is the word most applied by Luke (11 occurrences, Mark 2, Matt 3), while Paul prefers the noun πλοῦτος or a verb (πλουτέω or πλουτίζω), the former tracing back to Homer and the eight century BCE. The meaning of πλούσιος is described as having an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds the average experience. To be rich, wealthy, and live in opulence.

Friedrich Hauck and Wilhelm Kasch argue that neither Luke nor Paul discuss *wealth* from a traditional standpoint, but that the word is used to describe *being rich*, rather than for example measuring riches.[62] Further, Hauck and Kasch claim that it is essential to distinguish between the economic and religious connotations that lay within the meaning of the word. From early antiquity, πλοῦτος could mean "a reviving breath of blessing which heaven and earth grant to the human power of action, of the blessing which the ancient Hellene describes by the single untranslatable word πλοῦτος."[63] It seems as though in its origin the word could describe wealth or a state of fullness that was somehow both economic and religious, but in biblical times this double meaning is split into two separate uses. πλοῦτος then refers to material wealth, while the spiritual meaning is often described with a genitive or as a verb.

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[60] Hauck/Kasch, "πλοῦτος," in *Theological dictionary of the New Testament VI*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1968), 318-32.

[61] Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition (BDAG), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 831.

[62] Hauck/Kasch, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament VI*, 328-29.

[63] Hauck/Kasch, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament VI*, 320-21, Cf. E. Schwartz, *Charakterköpfe aus d. Antike*, ed. J. Stroux (1950), 23, on πλοῦτος.

This distinction seems to be visible within the different traditions of the Septuagint. There is less focus on material riches in the early traditions, where wealth seems to be connected with spoils of war or God's blessing (Gen 29-31, Deut 28). In later traditions, mostly found in the Wisdom literature, wealth has a different, double meaning. On one side, wealth can provide friends (Prv 14:20), security (Prv 10:15), a happy life (Sir 44:1-8), and the chance to give alms (Tob 12:8). On the other, it can lead to self-importance (Prv 28:11) and sleeplessness (Sir 31:1) which are burdens unknown to the poor.[64]

I argue that it is this latter tradition from Wisdom literature that Luke draws on in his characterization of the rich. They have many opportunities to use their wealth to gain righteousness and through that salvation, but if spoiled or unjustly gained these riches lead to nothing, as referred to earlier in Proverbs 10:2. This opens new perspectives on Luke's rich characters, as the focus is on what to do with the privilege of being rich. The theme seems to be how you handle your wealth, and eschatology in Luke seems to have both a worldly and an eternal scope. What you do with the resources that are given to you, will impact both how you fare in this life, and your course on the road to salvation, "For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you" (17:21).

So far, a change motif seems highly applicable to Luke's discussion of *wealth*, but surprisingly Hauck/Kasch go on to argue that "the rich in these [Luke's] passages are the Jewish opponents of Jesus," and that "wealth is a negative good" in Luke.[65] This is troubling in several ways. First, as shown above, the Wisdom literature from the Jewish scriptures carries a double meaning, as wealth can be both an opportunity and a snare.

Secondly, the authors seemingly set out to show how wealth was an important concept in ancient literature because it touches on themes such as morality, distribution, and economy. Having laid out substantial sources showing how first century writers were quarreling with questions of wealth, the reading of the same tensions in the New* Testament text suddenly seems forgetful. To go on and claim so blatantly that the rich in Luke's gospel are the bad guys, highlights the missing connection between the Wisdom traditions in the Jewish scripture and how to consider Luke within Judaism, and neglects the context of other ancient literature. Contrary to the reading that portrays the rich as enemies, the rich fit well within a reading of the wisdom tradition in the Jewish scriptures where the rich have the opportunity or obligation to give alms, act charitably or redistribute wealth.

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[64] Hauck/Kasch, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament VI*, 323-24.

[65] Hauck/Kasch, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament VI*, 328.

This shows how Luke can be identified within Judaism, drawing heavily on the concepts of almsgiving and charity in Wisdom traditions. To leave this perspective out is to miss some of the brilliance of Luke's narration. Why is it that when applied to a historical reading of The New* Testament texts these possibilities are suddenly lost?

The narratives suffer from a superficial reading, where the poor are to be saved and the rest is uninteresting. The characters lose their potential and ambiguity, and the implied reader loses her identity to an abstract discussion of Jesus' implied enemy. Because, when Luke chooses to give rich characters prodigious narrative attention, I argue that the author does so with intention. Interest in how meaning is shaped for the ancient reader requires us to ask who they were, and some of them were rich. I am therefore interested in how Luke wants to create meaning in communicating with his audience and readers. When Luke allows for so much multiplicity and tension within these stories, as the composition of chapter 16, the author must have meant something more with these characters than merely condemning them as the opponents of Jesus.

This, in turn, must be applied to those who heard and read the texts in the early ekklēsia, as they created meaning within their contemporary context. When describing "The Play of Perspectives" as part of understanding the poetics of biblical narratives, Meir Sternberg argues that the reader has a wide range of possibilities when extracting meaning from a narrative. He says:

> Though the Bible may in practice balance matters, the characters' data and interpretive operations are essentially all available to the reader, but not vice versa. And if meaning turns on choice, then the meaning reserved for the reader's viewpoint has an extension as wide as the range of choice marking biblical poetics.[66]

Even though his focus is the Jewish Scriptures, I argue that this offers key insight as to how meaning is created in the reader of the text. Just as the etymology of πλοῦτος allows for a manifold reading of rich characters, asking what happened in the ancient world gives more than one answer. Hence, we can open up and welcome a multiplicity of readings and perspectives on the rich characters, as well as the rich reader. Simply condemning the rich would indeed suffocate this opportunity. Instead, why not praise the opportunity to use wealth to fulfill Luke 4:18-19 and be saved. The rich man who overlooks Lazarus is a fitting example

[66] Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narratives: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading.* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1985), 163.

of this because of his incognito state. While scholars have focused on the value and meaning of having or being given a name, which interestingly characterizes him in the same category as Moses and Abraham, a category from which the rich man is excluded. Nevertheless, I argue that the key here is the opportunity to associate with the nameless.

Luke leaves a void in the characterization of the rich man that can be filled by the reader. In this way the story makes sense, as poor Lazarus spends his time almost in complete paralysis and silence, the rich man moves and talks throughout the story. The moral of the story speaks to the rich reader of the Lukan community, as he, or she, must understand the urgency to fulfill the preparation of the kingdom through charitable deeds. This liminal phase in Luke is evident through the necessity to change in preparation of the earthly kingdom of God amongst the living. This fits well within the prolonged framework of Lukan eschatology as distinct from especially Mark and also to some extent Matthew.

At the same time, Luke's gospel circulates as the nascent ekklēsia is constituted within the houses of the early Christ-believers. The first readers of these texts were therefore in a unique situation when receiving them. Though a text does not constitute a community, I will later try to imagine a first rich reader of the gospel of Luke.

Though not a gospel reader, Philo of Alexandria was a Hellenistic Jew who lived at the time of Jesus. His writings can provide a fascinating insight into the concurrent ideas of rich people and their relationships and responsibilities to the poor. Philo himself was indisputably very wealthy. Josephus claims that he was "foremost among his contemporaries at Alexandria both for his family and his wealth."[67] In *On the Virtues* Philo writes the following about having riches and a high degree of honor and reputation:

> "If thy fortunes are thriving and lusty, if thou hast received and gained possession of strength, which perhaps thou didst not expect, make power." What this signifies must be clearly explained to those who fail to discern the full meaning. Many persons try to do to others the opposite of the good which they have experienced. They become rich and make others poor, or having received a great measure of glory and honor they bring about ingloriousness and dishonor to others.[68]

[67] Josephus, *Antiquities* 20. 5. 2 (100). Cited by David L. Mealand, "Philo of Alexandria's Attitude to Riches," (Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche; Berlin Vol. 69, Iss. 3, 1978), 258.

[68] Philo, *On the Virtues*, (vol. VIII Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), 267.

It seems that the virtue of charitable acts for the rich was very much alive in the first century. Philo also uses the aorist form πλουτήσαντες similar to how Paul uses this variant of πλουτέω in first and second Corinthians, and which is not found other places in the New* Testament. Josephus, as another unparalleled source to first century Judaism, describes the relationship between creditors and Gods mercy to the poor in *Jewish Antiquities* 4:26:

> And if he that gave the pledge be rich, let the creditor retain it till what he lent be paid him again; but if he be poor, let him that takes it, return it before the going down of the sun, especially if the pledge be a garment, that the debtor may have it for a covering in his sleep, God himself naturally showing mercy to the poor.[69]

Evidently, Luke is not unique in describing how the poor are saved by God's mercy, while the rich seemingly rely on charitable acts. If a rich person owns a pledge, a creditor should not be afraid to pressure that person until what is owed is paid. Though if the person is poor, the pressure is on the creditor to reciprocate the pledge as a sign of the mercy God naturally shows the poor. Further, it becomes clear that it is a matter of health, bodies, and security. The poor are in danger of being without resources essential for his or her well-being. This mirrors Luke's agenda with the rich and poor characters beautifully. Had the rich man given Lazarus a garment or in some other way used his resources to sustain his life, then his fate could have had a different outcome. Bodies, meals, and health are of paramount importance to Luke, as is shown in many of his unique stories of meals, stewardship, and almsgiving.

On the other hand, to someone like Origen, our worldly bodies and earthly preoccupations with meals and relationships are insignificant. They play no part in the heavenly Jerusalem, which, for Origen, will not be built by man but revealed by God. As an example of Origen's consideration of wealth in the context of salvation, consider this extract from *On First Principles*:

> Now some men, who reject the labor of thinking and seek after (…) their own desires and lusts, (…) consider that the promises of the future are to be looked for in the form of pleasure and bodily luxury. And chiefly on this account they desire after the

[69] Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities IV*, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926), 488.

> resurrection (…) they will never lack the power to eat and drink and do all things that pertain to flesh and blood. (…) And, to speak briefly, they desire that all things which they look for in the promises should correspond in every detail with the course of this life, that is, that what exists now should exist again.[70]

Origen criticizes what he calls a Judaistic understanding of the New* Testament and argues that the resurrected state is diametral to the earthly. A student of Clement, he articulates a view on wealth and possessions divorced from the ideas of his teacher. As previously shown, Clement was eager to create space for a change and redistribution of wealth, in order to facilitate the coming kingdom. Salvation is available to the rich, and a community where they potentially play a significant role dovetails with Luke's stories. Again, practical implications of such things as bodies and meals are key in Luke's view of the kingdom of God.

Finally, Tatian, the Syrian second century Christian writer offers another perspective on wealth and ethics in *Oratio Ad Graecos*. Interestingly, he admits that he has had "a good birth" but is eager to justify how this privileged background has not made him "thirst for fame" and further, he calls himself "a slave."[71] I argue that this is an interesting example of idealizing poverty which separates him from for example Clement. Instead, Tatian argues that the rich "lack many things" and goes on writing:

> The poor man and he who has very moderate desires, seeking as he does only the things suited to his lot, more easily obtain his purpose. How is it that you are fated to be sleepless through avarice? Why are you fated to grasp at things often, and often to die? Die to the world, repudiating the madness that is in it. Live to God, and by apprehending Him lay aside your old nature. We were not created to die, but we die by our own fault. Our free-will has destroyed us; we who were free have become slaves; we have been sold through sin.[72]

[70] Origen, *On First Principles*, Book 2, 11:2, ed. Tania M. Geist, trans. G.W. Butterworth. (Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2013), 184-85.

[71] Tatian, *Oratio Ad Graecos*, ed. and trans. Molly Whittaker. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 21-23.

[72] Tatian, *Oratio Ad Graecos*, 23.

Consequently, wealth is a part of the "old nature" that one must depart from in order to obtain salvation. Tatian presents a soteriology where one must depart from riches and die to the world in order to be bought from the chains of sin. This gives a different perspective on what poverty can be. This concept of poverty has influenced another kind of ideal Christian ethics, traceable in for example in the early Christian monastic tradition and St Francis of Assisi. To Francis, poverty was about giving up on worldly possessions in order to get closer to God. The Franciscan poet, Jacopone of Todi wrote: "Poverty is to have nothing, and desire nothing; And yet to possess everything, in the spirit of liberty."[73]

In this chapter, I have presented a brief outline of the origins and contemporary use of the Greek word describing wealth in the ancient world. By considering how prominent authors thought with and applied this word to their writing, my goal has been to outline a contextual literary environment in which Luke can be considered as well. Even though I have simply scratched the surface of the ethics and implications of wealth in antiquity, I hypothesize a wide-spread interest in wealth ethics existed among Luke's contemporaries. I will later tie this notion to an idealizing of the masculine as wealthy, as "hegemonic masculinities define successful ways of being a man."[74] In this discourse, Luke proposes a different ideal. The ideal wealthy man is someone who shares. From this outline, I will now move to investigate how Luke constructs and characterizes the rich characters in the gospel narratives.

[73] Richard Harries, *Is there a Gospel to the Rich? The Christian in a Capitalist World*, (London/New York: Mowbray, 1992), 18-20.

[74] Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, "Matthew and Masculinity," in *New Testament Masculinities*, ed. Anderson & Moore (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 68.

3 Rethinking the Rich Characters in Luke's Gospel

3.1 "Relax, eat, drink, celebrate …"

… is the perfect example of how to fail the economy of salvation as a rich person in Luke's gospel. The quote is taken from the rich farmer or the rich fool as he is sometimes called, in chapter 12. The story of the rich farmer is also often called a parable. Since many of the texts, in which we meet rich characters, are described as a parable, I argue that this word deserves some attention. Parables were a well-known genre in a first century Jewish context, and the synoptic gospel writers[75] characterize Jesus as someone who utilizes this recognized genre to a great extent. Although parables are used distinctively by each author, a common marker seems to be that the parables use everyday stories to convey a comforting or afflicting message to "convince and persuade" its recipient.[76] "They tell us what we already know but refuse to acknowledge," as Amy Jill Levine describes one of the characteristics of the parable genre.[77]

The seemingly tragic story of the rich farmer and every other parable for that matter deserves to be read against the grain. It is not only a descriptive story of what dire ends await a selfish farmer who is fortunate to have a plentiful harvest, only to keep all for himself. It is probably trying to tell the reader something more. Finally, it is interesting to me that all of Luke's fourteen unique parables (out of the thirty-seven synoptic) are concerned with themes of either wealth/money or food, and, except from "The Two Debtors" in 7:41-43, they all

[75] When I use words like "writer" or "author" I want to take a step back and recognize that these descriptive terms carry a vast amount of appropriation. In our modern concept of the word "author" we may imagine about an individual, copyright, or the hand behind a "frozen" text, confined by two book covers. When discussing ancient texts, I want to acknowledge that none of these concepts are applicable, and rather that we are talking about a dynamic exchange of oral and written traditions, produced by and/or circulating in a community, often put to paper by a slave or a freed person. The word "Luke," whom Irenaeus associated with Paul's companion, could instead be associated with a late first, or early second century community of Christ-believing Jews.

[76] Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent – A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, 2 ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018), 9.

[77] Amy-Jill Levine, *Jesus in Text and Context* - 03/31/15, speech given in Westminster Town Hall Forum, Minneapolis.

occur within the travel-narrative (9:51-19:47). I propose that this shows how Luke redacts the gospel in order that the central themes and genres occur within the framework of these unique ten chapters.

To relax, eat, drink, and be marry strikes a nerve in my reading of Luke 16. The steward in the first part of chapter 16 is accused of squandering, and indeed the rich man in the last part of the chapter seems to be partying away his wealth, rather than being charitable towards Lazarus. Luke 16 contains several rich characters and exposes the importance of ambitious stewardship. The two parables (16:1-9; 19-31) can be seen in connection to other paragraphs in Luke's Travel-Narrative, which introduce a rich person and where wealth is an important theme:

• The Parable of the Rich Farmer/Fool (12:16-21) – "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully..." (12:16)
• The Steward Parable (16:1-9) – "A rich man, who had a steward..." (16:1)
• The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) – "There was a certain rich man …" (16:19)
• The Rich Ruler (18:18-39) – "But when he heard this, he became sad, for he was very rich." (18:23)
• Zacchaeus (19:1-10) – "he was a chief tax collector, and rich."

In each pericope, wealth poses an opportunity, often disguised as a problem, expressed in parable or narrative form. In the following exegesis, I will weave my way through the pericopae from chapter 16, allowing the methodological and theoretical grounds presented in chapter one to present itself whenever it is actualized. Especially the layers of polyphonic and dialogic voices and readers must be allowed to surface. At the same time, I want to recognize a fundamental acknowledgment of exegesis; that every translation is an act of interpretation. I argue that Eugene Nida points to this in his article "Principles of Correspondence" from 2012, with reference to D. G. Rossetti: "One must not imagine that the process of translation can avoid a certain degree of interpretation by the translator. In fact, as D. G. Rossetti stated in 1874 (Fang 1953), "A translation remains perhaps the most direct form of commentary."[78]

This goes back to how I earlier in this thesis have imagined "Luke's authorship" and how I in the following will present the good news of change to the rich through these Lukan pericopae. By using this kind of language, my aim is not to describe what the author of Luke

[78] Eugene Nida, "Principles of Correspondence," in *The Translation Studies Reader* ed. Lawrence Venuti (3rd edition, London/New York: Routledge, 2012), 141.

meant, as this would be impossible for several reasons. The time between me and the texts carries inevitable appropriations and anachronisms that can both limit and expand our perspectives on these ancient texts. Further, when doing exegesis, one always makes choices. These choices do not only impact the interpretation, but as Rosetti claimed, it is in itself may be the most direct form of interpretation.

On Character Building, the 1992 book by John A. Darr gives some interesting perspectives on what constitutes a "competent reader."[79] Even though I would argue that his attempt to recreate the original conventions of the text contradicts some of the inevitable interpretation done by the interpreter, Darr provides some useful concepts through what he calls "the extratextual repertoire," describing the "cultural environment of the reader and the critic."[80] Therefore, I will not use his set of concepts to recreate an "ideal audience," but I still argue that they are good tools to study the stories. He argues that the reader must comprehend *language, social norms and cultural scripts, classical or canonical literature, literary conventions* (genres, type scenes, standard plots, stock characters), and *reading rules* (a heuristic for categorizing, ranking, and processing various kinds of textual data), and *historical and material sources*.[81] Just as Cheong points to, these concepts should be used with care in an attempt to imagine a hypothetical reader, and rather function as tools with which we can be aware of our critical intention when interpreting the text.[82] Darr summarizes: "While building Luke's characters, the audience experiences a certain character building of its own!"[83]

My exegetical work for studying wealth, characterization, and change in Luke will be centered on chapter 16, moving to some extent the other, previously mentioned, pericopae out of the spotlight. I mentioned them in the introduction because they are all key pericopae where Luke's unique rich characters surface, but for my exegetical work, I argue that chapter 16 provides an adequate framework for considering especially the literary concepts and ToC. This narrowing is partly due to the limitations of this thesis and partly because of the structure of chapter 16, where several pericopae on the same themes are compiled next to each other.

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[79] John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts. Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation Series*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 22-29.

[80] Darr, *On Character Building*, 176.

[81] Darr, *On Character Building*, 22.

[82] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 2-3.

[83] Darr, *On Character Building*, 59.

Hence, there are many reasons why I argue that chapter 16 is a suitable text for examining these themes. First, it appeals to the curious reader because of its tangled rhetoric and bizarre stories. Because of this, I find it to be especially apt to the literary concepts of dialogism and polyphony. How do we make meaning of that which is often conceived as contradictory?[84] Or, what is the author communicating through a rhetoric of debt-reduction? These are questions that puzzle many scholars, but which I will argue can be keys to understanding Luke's good news to the rich. Secondly, this chapter situates the reader in many exciting contexts. We are closing in on the end of Luke's travel-narrative (9:51-19:47), a segment of the gospel where the author's redactional process is flourishing because of its blown-up proportion compared to the other Synoptics. Within the travel-narrative, we find many of the stories unique to Luke.

Also, in the nearer context of chapter 16, we find many short parables and speeches that might give us hints as to how we can understand these crucial texts (18:9-14, 18-30; 19: 1-10, 11-27). I argue that a number of the themes that are brought up in chapter 16 resonates with a subsequent thematical focus in the immediate context following chapter 16.

Thirdly, chapter 16 offers a wide range of characters, layers of narrative, parable, story, and Jesus talking to and about many of those who are listening to him. The reader is thrown into different scenes and plots. Over a short period of 31 verses, we hear multiple voices and are subjected to sudden changes of focus, which present the different pericopae as small vignettes, challenging the reader to be active and concentrated throughout the entire travel narrative. This combination of a relevant Lukan context, a controversial body of literature, and a rich gallery of themes and characters make chapter 16 ideal for exploring how wealth, characterization and change are working in Luke's gospel.

[84] For an example of scholarship that tends to downplay the contradicting voices in Luke, see: Joel B. Green, *Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 128.

3.2 Luke 16:1-9 “The Steward Parable”

3.2.1 Translation

1: And he said to his disciples[85]: A rich man, who had a steward, received accusations[86] that[87] this man was wasting his possessions.
2: And shouting at him he said: What [is] this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be a steward.
3: Then the steward said to himself: “What will I do, now that my master is taking the management of the household away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, to beg makes me ashamed.
4: I know what to do, so that, when I am removed as the manager, people may receive me into their homes.”
5: And, calling in his master’s debtors, one after the other, he said to the first: “How much [do you] owe my master?”[88]
6: And he said: “Hundred measures of olive oil.” And he [the steward] said to him: “Take your promissory note[89] and sit down, quickly write fifty!”[90]
7: Then he said to another: “And how much do you owe?” And he said: “Hundred measures of grain.” He said to him: “Receive your document and write eighty.”

[85] One minuscule (579) has “παραβολήν,” which begs the question of how this pericope might be considered a parable. I am not including the word in my translation because the vast majority of manuscripts do not have παραβολεν and argue that a pericope can be a parable without being explicitly called a parable.

[86] From διαβάλλω, which can mean both a true and a false accusation. Furthermore, it is often used in malicious stories, which is why I argue that the accusations against the steward are as much about disgracing him, being odious, or even deceitful (as Satan can be translated with “accuser” (שטן) in Job), as they are about informing the master of something that happened. Further, in the Greek comedy, a steward is often at risk of squandering his master's treasures when given responsibility for it.

[87] ὅς: used for an alleged accusation, hence the accusation is in itself enough to deprive him of his stewardship, regardless of whether the accusation is true or not. BDAG, ὅς, 726.

[88] I have translated προσκαλεσάμενος with “summoning”, signifying a legal setting.

[89] BDAG, γράμματα, 205, 2b.

[90] The imperative to write quickly signifies the illegal nature of the business.

8: And the master praised the unjust steward since he had worked wisely; because the children of this age are wiser than the children of light in dealing with their own generation than the children of light.
9: And I tell you, make yourselves friends from the unrighteous mammon so that when it is gone, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

3.2.2 Exegesis

I choose to interpret verse 1-9 as an independent pericope and to call this first pericope of chapter 16 the steward parable. Later, this pericope will naturally be considered in the larger body of the entire chapter, as the parable in verse 8-9 almost reaches out of the confines of parable and into the words of Jesus to his audience.[91] Consequently, this goes to show how a rigid confining of a pericope to certain verses or parts can indeed limit our perspectives on the text. This must also be considered for the beginning of verse one, as the chapter does not start within the universe of the parable, but with an introduction of the storyteller, Jesus, and some, or all, of his audience.

In the opening verse of the chapter, the audience is introduced. The different crowds listening to Jesus in the travel narrative are varying and diverse. This begs the question: Is Jesus targeting his disciples in chapter 16 a change of the crowd found in 15:1 when we the narrator introduces the tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes?[92] This would mean that Luke would change the audience several times without any other indication of movements such as traveling or the passing of time, as the narrator targets the Pharisees again in 16:14. I, therefore, propose that Jesus is indeed talking to a larger, diverse crowd, in order to convey his message both to his contesters and his followers.

Further, it is interesting that Luke 16 is being described by many as a set of parables. According to the critical apparatus in NA28, there is a minuscule (579) which reads "And he told his disciples [παραβολήν]" in verse 1, while no other sources support this addition. Evidently, there have to be other clues to why these pericopae could be described as parables.

[91] Some argue verse 1 through 8 as the "parable proper," pointing to how Luke as a narrator breaks into the parable through the voice of Jesus in verse 9. Though I subscribe to this division, I will include verse 9 to consider how different voices breaks into the text. See: Dalbert Burkett "The Parable of the Unrighteous Steward (Luke 16.1–9): A Prudent Use of Mammon," (New Test. Stud. (2018), Cambridge University Press, 2018), 326-342.

[92] J. Lyle Story, *Twin Parables of Stewardship in Luke 16*, (American Theological Inquiry, 2 no 1, 2009), 107.

Again, going back to 15:3 Luke uses παραβολήν when introducing the threefold parables of the sheep, the coin and the two sons. 16:1 starting with καί could indicate that it is written as a longer speech, supported by the argument of the crowd being the same one in chapter 15 and 16. Moreover, it becomes clear in 16:8-9 when the speech changes from the master praising the steward, to Jesus talking to the crowd. The story is meant to say something about how the people in the audience should conduct their business. The ὑμῖν remains unspecified until Jesus directs his speech against the money-loving Pharisees in 16:14 and then seemingly speaks directly to them in 16:15-18.

As I touched upon earlier, the audience of Jesus in the travel-narrative can vary from a range of characters and is a dynamic mass of people that can seemingly grow or shrink without much warning to the reader. As I have argued, I see the crowd as connected to chapter 15, hence remaining unchanged as we enter this chapter. Nevertheless, taking the time to consider who the people in the audience are is essential, because the audience can provide clues as to whom the parable or story is directed and intended. It also allows us to reflect upon an *inscribed* versus the *actual* audience. The only audience we learn about from the text is the inscribed audience, meaning the audience as the author constructs it. Imagining an actual audience is challenging in terms of historicity and data. Nevertheless, one should ask who the text might have been intended for, and how different readers may have perceived the text. Were they male? Female? Rich? Poor? These are just some of the questions one could raise when imagining an audience.

For the purpose of this thesis, I find it interesting that money, distribution and wealth seem to be on the agenda of Luke's character Jesus when he speaks to the inscribed audience in these chapters. Moreover, even though Luke has many female characters throughout the gospel, the pericopae in the context of wealth are comprised almost exclusively of male characters. Is wealth or household management an exclusively male concept? Why do we never hear the words "rich" and "woman" together in Luke?

Again, these are questions that are hard to answer from a textual perspective, but I argue that it shows some thought-provoking seams in key Lukan passages. When Luke writes parables or is interested in wealth and management, the author generally applies a male perspective. Acts 6:1 is a noteworthy exception from this tendency, where the Greek χῆραι (widows) are complaining about being neglected in the daily διακονία. If we translate this word meaning something like service or ministry, it could indicate charitable acts to the poor, or distribution of food, hence making it an example of women interacting with the theme of

wealth. The same perspective could be implemented on Lydia in Acts 16, the women who provide for the apostles in Luke 8:3, and the woman in Luke 15 searching for her lost coin.

Nevertheless, I argue that a connection between wealth and masculinity permeates Luke's narrative world concerning rich characters. When women are placed in the context of wealth, they seem to be either unmarked as rich, as the women in Acts, or poor, like the widow in Luke 21. This is interesting because it gives the vast majority of the rich characters an additional characteristic: They are male. The mutual exclusivity of masculinity and wealth could very well be the topic of a thesis of its own; hence I will not explore this theme in depth here. Let me just briefly point to Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's feminist rhetorical criticism and recognize how this theory help emphasize how the Bible is a political text, and how its interpretation shapes public opinions and policy.[93] Kyriarchal[94] structures are self-evident in the social context of the gospel, but their presence has shaped Biblical reception up until our time.

For my argument, the characterization of wealth as a masculine trait is interesting because I argue that it suggests change and certain characteristics as ideal masculinity. Re-distribution and debt-reduction are examples of this from the steward parable, where I have argued that such activities are key parts of the change the rich master must undergo. The gender perspective presented above can be used to explore how this change can also be viewed as a characterization of masculinity. I argue that this change signifies Luke's ideal rich *man*: a man who is generous, sharing and righteous. Identifying the masculine language of wealth is also important in the discourse of ethos in biblical studies. Although this was not a primary concern when I first started this work, the gender perspectives on wealth in Luke has emerged as a theme that deserves recognition. I argue in line with Schüssler Fiorenza shifting this ethos from a scientific-positive approach to a rhetorical-ethical one, asking questions that de-stabilize established hegemonies of interpretation, while, at the same time, taking the historical and social context of the gospel seriously.[95]

Finally, in this argument, I want to avoid a constructed binary of rich or poor, righteous or unrighteous when characterizing these passages. Luke Timothy Johnson

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[93] Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 90-98. Also, "A Republic of Many Voices, Biblical Scholarship in the Twenty-First Century," in *Foster Biblical Scholarship: Essays in Honor of Kent Harold Richards*, ed. Frank Ritchel Ames and Charles William Miller (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 137-160.

[94] Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 5. Fiorenza seeks to complexify the dualistic gender binaries suggested by "patriarchal," emphasizing that terms of gender alone do not adequately describe the situation for woman in the ancient world.

[95] Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 22-30.

eloquently argued in his dissertation that, "Luke consistently speaks about possessions… [but] does not speak about possessions consistently."[96]

A good example of what he is going at in this line of argument is how the rich man in the synoptic account in Luke 18:18 (Mark 10:25) is asked to give all his possessions to the poor, while Zacchaeus, a unique Lukan character is only asked to give half. Jesus seems to be satisfied with Zacchaeus' efforts and proclaims salvation on his house, while the rich man in the previous chapter walks away in despair. This shows how the characters quarreling with the distribution should not feed into a constructed binary of righteous or unrighteous, or even rich or poor, as they vary both in how their wealth is described or measured, and what is at stake in each pericope. Considering the steward parable in Luke 16, distribution seems more principal than the amount of wealth in the character's possession. Both the steward and other significant characters in Luke, as the good Samaritan, give exciting perspectives on wealth without necessarily being wealthy themselves.

There are implied rich characters that do not appear in Luke's parables or stories. In Luke 14:12, when Jesus is dining in the house of the Pharisee on the Sabbath, he tells the host about specific categories of people that should not be invited to breakfasts/lunches (ἄριστον) and dinners/banquets (δεῖπνον). These are your friends/loved ones (φίλους), your siblings (ἀδελφούς), your family/relatives (συγγενεῖς), or your rich neighbors (γείτονας πλουσίους). Furthermore, in Mary's worship we hear of some unidentified rich people who "he has sent empty away" (Luke 1:53). These pericopae are good examples of what separates the economy of salvation for the rich from that of the poor in Luke's gospel. Though the rich should worry to a great extent about the well-being of the poor, the rich do not need anyone to worry about them.

Finally, as Moxnes argues in *The Economy of the Kingdom*, there is no self-evident connection between the social setting in antiquity and Luke's depicting of a certain character, like the Pharisees, as lovers of money.[97] I argue this point because I want to destabilize categories and avoid false dichotomies of, for example, patron-client or rich-poor. Within the gospel of Luke, there is a diverse crowd of characters that move on a spectrum of such categories. They can all be interesting, though they are all different.

[96] Luke T. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (SBL Dissertation Series 39; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 13.

[97] Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 1-9.

Furthermore, the first verse introduces us to the main characters of the parable. The lord of the household, who is, later, in verse 8, described as the κύριος, is described as rich. It is interesting how Luke first introduces a setting where Jesus is talking to his disciples and then has Jesus' first words be "A rich man." I find this interesting because it later becomes clear that the κύριος in the parable is likened with Jesus, demanding an account from his disciples. Luke's first characterization of the master (Jesus) in this chapter is that he is rich. Hence, the theme of wealth is introduced immediately.

Even more, Jesus is connected to wealth, as Lord who will demand an account of his disciples' management. Finally, the use of κύριος can be read here as without a reference to Jesus, God, or theological connotations.[98] Even though scholars have argued both this and the opposite – that "every debt owed is a debt to God"[99] – I argue that a third middle is possible. That the κύριος of the household is referring to Jesus, but that Jesus as κύριος fills the role of a creditor or household lord in Luke's characterization of Jesus, rather than having him be theological or "Christological" in narratives such as this. Luke's Christology is unique when presenting Jesus as a creditor. This "creditor Christology" can be found several places in Luke (4:16-30; 12:57-59; 16:1-8) and is closely connected to Jesus' demand to do acts of charity in order to make up your debt.[100] Here, I argue that it would be a simplification of Lukan eschatology to separate the very immanent connotations of the household κύριος and Jesus' theological κύριος, as I would argue that these are intertwined in Luke's vision of a "kingdom of God among you" and a prolonged eschatological frame.

I translated φωνήσας to *shouting* instead of for example *summoned* or *called*. This removes some of the formal connotations that the other possibilities offered by various lexica, and I do this with intent. Luke often uses καλέω when describing a "calling" or an invitation in Luke-Acts, similar to Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians. I argue that *shouting* provides a more acute and everyday language that seems suitable for the parable genre and the plot in the story. The way I read it, some malicious rumors are going around concerning the steward, and I argue that the master intervening vocally fits the scene of different voices being raised against the steward, instead of placing the master outside the scene and having the steward summoned to his presence. The clue is in the next sentence, "What is it I *hear* about you?"

[98] Levine, *The Gospel of Luke*, 438, c.f, Michal Beth Dinkler, "The Thoughts of Many Hearts Shall Be Revealed: Listening in on Interior Lukan Monologues," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134.2 (2015), 373-99.

[99] Levine, *The Gospel of Luke*, 438, cf: L. John Topel, "On the Injustice of the Unjust Steward: Lk 16:1-13" (CBQ 37.2, 1975), 216-27.

[100] Giambrone, *Sacramental Charity*, 95-98.

The master is referring to alleged accusations that have been brought to his attention through speech, hence not referring to a written document as we see the steward dealing with later in the parable. We are introduced to writing right after when the master demands that he presents a λόγον, which in this setting signifies a formal account.[101]

In verse three and four, the steward is given a voice. The reader is invited to listen in on what is going on inside the mind of the accused. He is no longer "the accused" but has become the main character. The master, who up until this point, had been the central character is moved out of focus, making room for the steward, who from here on takes the lead as the protagonist. All within these four verses, we have heard the gossipy accusations of the people around our main characters, the unsatisfied words of the κύριος, and the inner monologue of the steward. Cheong argues that this parable fits what he calls a triple characterization. He applies Bakhtin's language of *adventure plot*, where a character does not have safe structures like a community or companions around him but is left to face the unexpected alone.[102] Cheong argues that just like Dostoevsky tells his stories through both himself and Raskolnikov, or Myshkin, or Karamazov, a polyphonic reading of the steward parable invites us to characterize a quadruple interaction: Luke the author, Jesus the narrator, the character as agent, and the reader trying to extract a purpose from the text.[103]

I interpret "Receive your document and write" as signifying that they are overwriting on papyri, as you could not easily erase writing on papyri. It is interesting to me that the exchange of the document seems to indicate that the steward holds a formal document and is asking the debtors to sign off and overwrite their previous agreement. It seems like these legal documents worked in such a way that the debtor wrote down the loan and that the steward held on to it as an insurance. Now, going back to the steward's inner conversation with himself earlier, it may seem like he has several possible motifs for the debt-reduction at this point. Either, he is interested in a job at one of the debtors' households, or he hopes that he can somehow please him by securing some income.

At this point, we cannot presuppose the master's positive response. Going back to verse four it seems like the steward is expecting to lose his job before he starts the debt-reduction, hence "making friends through the unrighteous mammon," as Jesus in verse nine

[101] BDAG, λόγον, 599: "A formal accounting, esp. of one's actions, and freq. with fig. extension of commercial terminology."

[102] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 206-207. cf. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 104.

[103] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 207. Cheong argues a triple interaction where the character as agent is not considered.

urges his followers to do. At the same time, this seems controversial when reading verse 14 where he states that you can only serve one master. Remembering that this verse is, according to my earlier proposed division of pericopae (16:1-9; 10-18 (with possibilities of internal division); 19-31), part of a synoptic account (Q?) and the first part is a Lukan source, it still begs a redactional question. Why build the first parable on the theme of serving a master through mammon/wealth, then to claim so explicitly that it is not possible to serve mammon shortly after? I argue that the key is to separate the means from the ends. In verse 14 Jesus argues that wealth can lead a person to view mammon as a master, also showing how true stewardship includes some "love" for the master. I suggest that mammon is the means by which God can be served in this parable.

The rich man finds himself in a tricky situation. He does not have the original bills, and hence he cannot prove the size of the debts. Levine suggests that the steward cheats him because of his inability to determine precisely what has happened without the necessary paperwork.[104] In this situation it almost seems like the rich man fakes a praising attitude towards the steward, knowing that any other response would make him seem either wrong about the size of the debt, or unwise for hiring the steward in the first place. Just like the father of the prodigal son celebrates upon his return, even though half of his riches has been squandered, the rich man praises the steward in order to gain the admiration of his debtors. Here we arrive at the essence of my reading of the parable.

The rich man embraces debt-reduction in order to restore, or at least avoid the destruction of the three relationships. By caring less about his wealth and more about the relationship he has to his employee and his debtors, he shows the audience how the true κύριος (Jesus) will praise them if they act alike. Hence, this parable is apt for the Bakhtinian concepts of polyphony and dialogism. A part of what makes it so captivating is all the different and strange voices being raised over such a short pericope. Further, these voices utter bizarre statements, hiding their intention behind clever rhetoric and acting in a way that strikes the reader as dishonest. A good example is the rich man's apparent praise, hiding a charitable act of debt-reduction. Though invisible on the lines of the text, this perspective can be seen through a dialogic reading, as dialogism seeks to create meaning through the interaction of different, often contradicting voices.

Tat-Siong Benny Liew writes about the importance of "the unsaid" in his fascinating study of bodies in Corinth: "Both feminist hermeneutics and ideological criticism have taught

[104] Levine, *The Gospel of Luke*, 442.

us that what is assumed is as important as or perhaps even more important than what is said since what is said needs to be read in the context of the unsaid."[105] To conclude, I argue that this consideration of the importance of the unsaid is accurate also for the master's statement in verse 8. It might demand a slow and resistant reading of the text to notice the ambivalence in the master's response. Hence, the master's praise is cleverly deployed by Luke to convey the message of how debt-reduction is a way of partaking in the economy of salvation for the rich.[106] In other words, the reader should imitate the rich master; embracing debt-reduction and caring less about holding on to their possessions.

[105] Liew, *What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics?,* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), *79*.

[106] Burkett argues along the same lines concerning how this parable is often written off as "the most perplexing of the parables". Burkett, "A Prudent Use of Mammon," 326. Although I share the argument that this parable should not be disregarded, I do not agree with Burkett when he goes on to argue that Luke is pointing to rich people outside the ekklēsia reducing the debt of Christ followers. Burkett, "A Prudent Use of Mammon," 335. Rather, I suggest that the ekklēsia are called to "a prudent use of mammon."

3.3 Luke 16:19-31 "The Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus"[107]

3.3.1 Translation

19: There was a certain rich man, and he wore purple and fine linen, and he celebrated sumptuously every day.
20: And a poor one, named Lazarus, laid at his gate, covered with sores.
21: And he desired to be fed from what fell from the rich one's table, but the dogs came and licked his sores.
22: And the poor [man] came to die, and he was carried by angels to the breast pocket[108] of Abraham, and the rich [man] also died and was buried.
23: And in Hades he lifted his eyes, being in torment, he saw Abraham from afar and Lazarus in his fold.
24: And he shouted saying: "Ancestor[109] Abraham, show me mercy and send Lazarus so that he can dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in this flame."
25: But Abraham said: "Child! Remember that you received good things[110] in your life, and Lazarus equally bad, but now he is being comforted, and you are in torment."
26: And in [addition] to all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who want to cross over to you from this place will not be able, nor cross over from that place to us.
27: And he said: "Thus, I beg you, Ancestor, in order that you send him to my father's house,

[107] I have chosen not to include verse 10-18 in this thesis and focus on the two pericopae that make up the rest of the chapter. This part of chapter 16 seems to be a Q-text, redacted in between two central and unique Lukan pericopae. Matthew has parts of this pericope (Luke 16:15,17-18) spread out in entirely different parts of his gospel (23:28; 5:18; 5:31(19:3)). Thus, we might suggest that Luke has gathered material from Q and dovetailed this with his unique project of proclaiming debt-reduction as a kind of faithfulness in this world.

[108] κόλπος referring to the place in the middle of the chest created by the two crossing folds in the garment.

[109] To promote a gender-inclusive language and since Abraham is not Lazarus' biological father, I use "Ancestor" instead of "For/father." BDAG, πάτερ, 786.

[110] Being rich is considered among the "good things" in this life, according to Luke's characterization of Abraham.

28: For I have five siblings,[111] so that he can testify to them, in order that they may not come into this place of torment."
29: Abraham said: "They have Moses and the prophets, listen to them!"
30: And he said: "No, ancestor Abraham, but if a certain one goes to them from the dead, they will repent."
31: He said to him: "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if a certain one rises from the dead."

3.3.2 Exegesis

The text-critical apparatus notes that similarly to the preceding steward parable, this pericope is introduced with "παραβολήν" in certain manuscripts. Different from the first pericope in the chapter is that here the text-critical insertion is supported by a codex, Codex Bezae (D, 5th-7th century), and an earlier patristic, the Curetonian Syriac. Codex Bezae is a majuscule (uncial), thus generally considered a stronger and earlier witness than a minuscule, the kind of witness that had the "παραβολήν" insertion in the steward parable. In this instance I would agree with the NA-28 text and argue a *lectio brevior potior*, meaning that the shorter reading often reflects a more original translation. This reflects one of the main principles in textual criticism, where the argument, based among other factors on comparing all the New* Testament Greek manuscripts, is that scribes would more often add to a text than shorten it.

Another significant principle from textual criticism is relevant for the other text-critical mark in verse 19 concerning the identity of the rich man. In an all extant papyrus (P75) the rich man is given the name "Νευης." Papyri are often considered the earliest and most reliable witnesses to The New* Testament. P75, often dated in the late second to early third century, contains most of the gospel including almost the entire travel narrative. Even though this is a great witness to the pericope, I chose to follow the majority reading here as well. I would partly argue this on the same grounds as the former insertion in verse 19, seeing as the name would be an addition.

Further, I argue a *lectio difficilior potior*, meaning that the more difficult reading would be preferred. I argue that naming the rich man would be an easy way out of a complex problem. Naming the poor Lazarus gives him a unique characteristic. At the same time, it

[111] Since the Greek plural can include all genders, I propose "siblings" instead of "brothers," to promote a gender-inclusive language.

makes him an independent entity of identification. Remaining incognito, the rich man achieves a similar but opposite double characterization.

At the one hand, it is harder to relate or feel compassion for the unnamed. At the other hand, the rich man is an available identification marker to all other names. A wealthy reader, actual or implied, can read their situation into his tragic fate without regarding him as a specific character. He can be anyone. Identifying with pitiable Lazarus has marked the reception history of this story. Identifying him as the resurrected Lazarus from John 11 and interpreting his wounds as a sign of leprosy has given a name to the "leper-house" or hospital in many languages (*Lazaretto* in English).[112] Finally, Bovon has pointed to the fact that the rich man and Lazarus are characterized as opposites in every way up until they both die. "They have nothing in common" before they both die.[113] I would argue that they do not have a lot in common after death either. In other words, death itself is maybe the only thing the two characters have in common.

I argue that Luke characterizes the rich man antithetical to Lazarus to signify the two different economies of salvation. They both fulfill all the characterizations I argue that Luke applies to the rich and poor characters. Lazarus is unable to move, poor, silent, lying down, hungry, surrounded by dogs, and wounded, hence uncapable of doing almost anything. He is utterly dependent on Gods merciful intervention, which he receives in due time. The rich man is wealthy, moves, talks (in the afterlife), has clothes, food, property, and is healthy.

In her published dissertation, *The Afterlife Imagery in Luke's Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus*, Outi Lehtipuu provides a substantial review of how this story fits within well-known imagery that was used "all over the ancient Mediterranean world."[114] Luke's story stands out from Egyptian and Jewish stories for example with the description of fire (verse 24), connecting the fire to torture, even though fire was widespread in other ancient eschatology. Lehtipuu argues that since the model-story is so widespread in concurrent literature, Luke uses it as a means to say something else. Further, Lehtipuu downplays eschatology and claims that Luke has more practical aims since the parable does not seem to have a coherent theology concerning the dead. It wants to call the wealthy (reader) to atone.[115]

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[112] Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery in Luke's Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus*, (Leiden: Brill, Supplements to Novum Testamentum, Volume 123, 2007), 1-2.

[113] Bovon, *Luke*, 2:474.

[114] Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery*, 41.

[115] Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery*, 42.

Lehtipuu argues that "eschatological expectations do not form a central theme in Luke-Acts and do not explain the purpose for writing the work. [It] is used to serve more practical aims. In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, this aim is to exhort people to repentance, which ought to be shown by proper behavior, especially by the right use of possessions."[116]

Thus, the proper distribution of wealth and reciprocity must happen in this life. Lehtipuu shows how afterlife imagery is influenced by a Hellenistic matrix. Her detailed account makes it abundantly clear that the story draws heavily on a rich tradition of concurrent afterlife imagery. She further shows that while the context of other Hellenistic and Jewish literature is influencing Luke's afterlife imagery, one should be aware of the "parallelomania," as described by Samuel Sandmel (in his Presidential Address to the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in 1962).[117]

The way I interpret the story, Abraham functions as an example of a rich character who does not end up in Hades. Instead, he is on the other side from where the rich man wakes up. I argue that Luke is characterizing Abraham, not as the old patriarch who is barely mentioned in the Jewish scriptures. Instead, he is being used as an accessible, more spiritual figure, which is placed in a narrative with connotations to both Greco-Roman, Egyptian, and other after-life imagery of the time. Thus, giving Abraham a new life. Not only is the story unique for its parallels in other ancient cultures, but it is also unique in a New* Testament context as Lazarus and Abraham are the only named characters in the Jesus parables.[118]

To substantiate this argument, I will consider the late first to early second century text the Testament of Abraham. Here, Abraham is portrayed as a Hellenistic Jewish character, and the text is permeated with themes of death, characterization, and possessions. Therefore, I argue that it is an appropriate comparative text to the gospel of Luke.[119] Abraham is characterized as wealthy; both in the Hebrew Scriptures accounts in Genesis and the Greek source the Testament of Abraham, concurrent with Luke's gospel.

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[116] Lehtipuu, *The Afterlife Imagery*, 303.

[117] The address was published in JBL 81 (1962), 1-13.

[118] Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 17.

[119] Matthew S. Rindge, *Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool: Luke 12:13-34 among Ancient Conversations on Death and Possessions*, (Society of Biblical Literature, Early Christianity and Its Literature, Number 6: Atlanta, 2011), 102-103.

Most scholars date the testament of Abraham late in the first, or early in the second century, either around the year 100 or before the reign of Trajan in 117.[120] The central part of the plot surrounds Abraham attempting to avoid his inevitable death, which is being proclaimed to him by the archangel Michael on God's command (1:3-7). Abraham refuses to follow Michael out of the realm of the living seven times, even to the point where he asks to be taken on a roundtrip around the world to see the whole of God's creation (9:6). He hopes that he will somehow manage to escape death during this tour.

Possessions and wealth are, second to the theme of death, the most prominent theme in the Testament of Abraham. As mentioned, Abraham's riches are continually mentioned, and interestingly he is characterized in many ways in the same way as the rich man in Luke 16:19-31. In chapter 4 his possessions are described as luxurious clothes and items, like incense, purple cloth, and linen. Also, in chapter 1, Abraham's wealth is described as a gift of God, thus characterizing a rich Abraham not as an antagonistic figure, but with great potential in the narrative. Further, Abraham displays characteristics as both righteous and hospitable in the very opening verses of the text, welcoming both the poor and the rich, neighbors, cripples, rulers, friends, and strangers. Matthew S. Rindge argues that the theme of possessions and wealth stresses the loss of control when confronted by death and sees interesting parallels to the works of Greco-Roman authors Lucian and Seneca.[121] Wealth cannot be brought over from life to death and must, therefore, be used righteously in life to assure control "over and through death."[122]

Furthermore, there are other interesting parallels between the Testament of Abraham and Luke's story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The concept of ᾅδης as the location for the afterlife imagery in Luke 16:23 and onwards, appears three times in the pseudepigraphal text, twice in verse 8 and once in verse 19. First, it is God telling the archangel Michael to explain to Abraham how no man can escape ᾅδης, not even kings or his ancestors. Later, it is Death who is telling Abraham that "For seven ages I destroy the world, and bring everyone—kings and rulers, rich and poor, slave and free—down to Hades" (1:19).[123]

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[120] For the scholarly debate on the dating the Testament of Abraham, see Dale C. Allison, *Testament of Abraham* (CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 38-39. There are two recensions of the texts, one long (A) and a second, shorter one (B). The long recession is the one dated concomitantly with Luke, with comparable humoristic and satirical language to that of for example Lucian, and therefore the one I consider in this thesis.

[121] Rindge, *Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool*, 119-121.

[122] Rindge, *Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool*, 120.

[123] Translated by Lawrence M. Wills, Testament of Abraham, in *Ancient Jewish Novels: An Anthology*, chapter 13, (Oxford Scholarship Online: November 2003), 291.

Moreover, Abraham's κόλπος appears twice, in verse 6 and 20, and is described as the place where, first, Abraham hides the precious stones formed from Michael's tears as they fell into the water basin Abraham used to wash his feet, and then, later, to describe where Isaac and Jacob will dwell in paradise. The parallel to the Lukan text, where Lazarus dwells in the very same κόλπος is intriguing. I argue that precious stones made from angelic tears and Abraham's very own son and grandson signifies a place of great importance. I further argue that the κόλπος can be a reference to clothing; the space created between the two folds of garments on the chest, i.e., a breast pocket.[124] Or, it could signify the place on the chest of the host, where the honorary guest would lay their head during a feast or a banquet.[125]

Considering how their beautiful clothing characterizes both the rich man in Luke and Abraham in the pseudepigraphal text, suggests that garments are significant both in this life and in the afterlife. It is a sign of wealth in a worldly context, used to describe both Abraham and the rich man, and a dwelling place for the righteous in paradise (Isaac and Jacob, and Lazarus). In the Testament of Abraham, when Abraham finally is tricked into dying by Death himself, he is wrapped in "divinely woven linen" by Michael and a host of angels (1:20).

I argue that the Testament of Abraham should be considered when imagining the literary landscape in which Luke characterizes the rich man and Abraham in the gospel. The rich man in Luke is characterized as wealthy, much in the same way as Abraham is in the testament. Their use of wealth, though, is quite the opposite in the two texts. In the testament, we learn how Abraham invites people from all walks of life to share in his abundance (1:1), while, in Luke's story, the rich man fails to share with Lazarus. Moreover, this shows how the importance of wealth distribution, charity, and hospitality were widely used themes in the first century, and the range of literature, from gospels to Apocrypha and also Greco-Roman authors like Lucian and Seneca, suggests both Jewish and Hellenistic interest in these themes.

Therefore, I argue that Luke's story can be placed within the context of the first-second century Jewish and Greco-Roman literature, because of the previously mentioned argument situating Luke embedded deeply within this context. The Lukan story draws on familiar themes of death, wealth and charity. At the same time, Luke does something completely different with his story. While the rich man has the same potential for righteousness and hospitality when facing the poor Lazarus, he does the exact opposite. Then

[124] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott (LSJ), *A Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), κόλπος.

[125] BDAG, κόλπος, 556-57.

later, when the story is played out, we meet Abraham, an equally rich character in the opposite afterlife scenario. Seeing as the story very well could strike familiarity in a first-second century audience, I argue that Luke's characterization of the rich man is meant to inspire change. If the reader recognizes themes or characters in the story, there is a reason to believe that the reader would expect the story to take a different direction. Thus, when acknowledging the consequences of the unrighteous distribution of wealth, the story would urge its reader to do the opposite. Because of this, I argue that Luke's characterization of the rich man is based on a call to change, not to show what happens to all the rich people when they die.

Further, I argue that Luke is very deliberate in characterizing the rich man as nameless and speaking, and Lazarus as named and silent. In her dissertation, *Silent Statements*, Michal Beth Dinkler states that: "A character's patterns of speech and silence are key aspects of the narrator's rhetorical strategies—not incidental instances of language, but integral tools in the narrator's persuasive arsenal."[126] As previously argued, the rich man's characterization as nameless opens him up to universal identification. Further, when being characterized by speech, he is given the majority of the spotlight on the stage of the story. Then, in the afterlife imagery, the rich man is standing on one side of a chasm in torment, talking to Abraham, another rich man, on the other side. Luke sets the stage in a way that reveals a dichotomy to the reader. Distribution of wealth in this life is essential for where one will end up in the afterlife.

In *The Role of the Reader*, Umberto Eco explores similar functions of metanarrative interpretation: "Since its fortune has been carefully planned, [it] does not represent a textual failure: it represents a metatextual achievement. It must be read twice: it asks for both a naïve and critical reading, the latter being the interpretation of the former."[127] Hence, metatext functions on three levels (i) the story of what happens to its *dramatis personae*; (ii) the story of what happens to the naïve reader; (iii) the story of what happens to itself (this third story potentially being the same as the story of what happens to the critical reader). I argue that this applies to Luke's story. Much like the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism, the fact that so much remains unsaid, or rather, said on a metatextual level, invites the reader to look for meaning on multiple layers of the story.

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[126] Michal Beth Dinkler, *Silent Statements: Narrative Representations of Speech and Silence in the Gospel of Luke*, (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 262.

[127] Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 204-205.

In this subchapter, I have drawn on the Testament of Abraham to consider how Luke characterizes both the rich man and Abraham in the gospel story. I argue that the nameless characterization of the rich man opens him to identification with the rich reader. Finally, Abraham can be read as a role model for the first rich reader of Luke's gospel in the early ekklēsia.

4 The Good News of Change

In the previous chapter, I presented the exegetical work on the pericopae chosen to interpret Luke's rich characters. In this chapter, I will attempt to let the exegesis enter into dialogue with the theory and methodological concepts that I laid out in chapter 1. First, in chapter 1 I asked how different literary concepts, like dialogism, polyphony, and characterization, could help us understand Luke's ambitions concerning the rich characters in the gospel. In *Rethinking Bakhtin*, Paul De Man describes Bakhtin's theory of dialogism by comparing him to Leo Strauss's *Persecution and the Art of Writing* in his essay "Dialogue and Dialogism":

> The process of understanding becomes constitutively linked to the elaboration of, and the life of a society, fact and fiction are brought together by the mediation of shared communal labor. The possibility of this mediation is built within the production of the text itself: since it does not mean to say what it actually says, it is a fiction, but a fiction that, in the hands of the right community of readers, will become fact.[128]

This way of approaching a text, playing with imagination to understand how readers create meaning by applying the fictional nature of the text to their community and situation, has inspired my reading of Luke. I argue that all the ambivalence and tragedy surrounding the rich and wealthy seek to rattle the reader. Even more, Luke wants to urge the rich reader to change, in order that they do not succumb to the fate of the fictional character. Before I present examples from the different pericopae I want to appreciate this meta-textual space that I argue is created by a dialogic and polyphonic reading. This space is characterized by allowing the imagination to appreciate different voices within the text, thus letting the gospel to the rich sound where it has so often been silenced. It welcomes the bizarre and challenging reading because these are just the factors that make a story worth reading and listening to. Also, at the same time, it invites you and me, the world in front of the text, to participate in the making of meaning. I argue that these features are crucial when imagining a first rich reader, as well as trying to decipher Luke's good news to the rich.

Michael Holquist captures the value of dialogism and the value it puts on the individual voice and character in literature: "Dialogism is a philosophy of the trees as opposed

[128] Paul De Man, "Dialogue and Dialogism," in Morson, Gary Saul, and Caryl Emerson, *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 107.

to a philosophy of the forest: it conceives society as a simultaneity of uniqueness."[129] In other words, I want to apply the concepts of dialogism and polyphony as tools to help us approach each character and voice in the text and let any cacophony that may occur be the source of interest and not prejudice, generalization, or stereotypes.

The exegetical work has focused on two pericopae from Luke 16: "The Steward Parable," and "The Rich Man and Lazarus." With this narrowing of the focus area, I have chosen to leave out several key texts where rich characters come into play, and I have argued why chapter 16 can function as emblematic of Luke's gospel to the rich. I will now consider Luke's characterization of the rich characters in these two pericopae using ToC, and the literary methods presented in the first chapter.

First, I have attempted to place the parable and the story within the suggested framework from the theory of change, applying *needs assessment*, *activities*, *outputs*, and *outcomes*. I wanted to use this model to explore how wealth functions in the stories, and to trace any change in the characters. As this attempt clearly shows, a change motif looks quite different in the two example texts. Later, I will argue that this has to do with Luke's attempt to disrupt the reader and urge us to read with different approaches.

Pericopae	*Needs assessment*	*Activities*	*Outputs*	*Outcomes*
Luke 16:1-9 "The Steward Parable"	Wasted possessions, steward out of work, rumors, and accusations.	Meet with debtors, conduct debt-reduction, engage in dishonest labor.	Debts reduced; bills are overwritten.	Master perceived as generous; Steward can get a new job, fortune reduced, new friends made.
Luke 16:19-31 "The Rich Man and Lazarus"	Lazarus in need of help (charity), the rich man in need of proper distribution of wealth to be saved/righteous.	The rich man is using his wealth on luxury. They both die.	The rich man goes to Hades, Lazarus goes to Abraham in paradise.	The rich man's brothers foreshadowed to repeat the mistake and not believe in the resurrection.

Table 2: ToC Table

[129] Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world* (London; New York: Routledge, 1990), 153.

When reading the pericopae as dialogic and polyphonic literature, I argue that several points can be made. First, they both have a rich repertoire of speech and silence. The voices that are heard in the story are essential to how the story is told. In the steward parable, the steward's voice takes up a lot of the narrative. After the master has told him of the rumors and that he is now unfit to work as a steward, he engages first in an inner monologue. Subsequently, he engages in conversations with the debtors and reduces their debt to the master's surprising praise. Other voices in the story are that of the narrator (Luke), and Jesus telling the parable to his disciples. The most noticeable silence is that of the master between the beginning of the parable, and then when he re-enters the stage again towards the end.

I argue that these examples of speech and silence are good examples of dialogism in the text. Casting a glance back at my introductory notions of Bakhtin, I argue that his literary concepts fit well within this reading of Luke 16. As previously mentioned, Bakhtin makes this argument when describing the fundamentals of dialogism in *Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics*: "Truth is not born, nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction."[130]

As my reading of the steward parable argued, the master embraces debt-reduction in order to restore, or at least avoid the destruction of, his relationship to his debtors and the steward. His embrace, though, is covered by a layer of undertaken gratitude towards the steward. I argue that his apparent praise is indeed a result of acknowledging the need to reduce the debts. Hence, this parable is apt for the Bakhtinian concepts of polyphony and dialogism. A part of what makes it so captivating is all the different and strange voices being raised over such a short pericope.

Further, these voices utter bizarre statements, hiding their intention behind clever rhetoric and acting in a way that strikes the reader as dishonest. The rich man's apparent praise is indeed covering for a charitable act of debt-reduction. Though invisible on the lines of the text, this perspective can be seen through dialogic reading. I argue that this shows how dialogism can help us create meaning by considering the interaction of different, often contradicting voices.

Remembering also Liew's notion of "the unsaid" and Dinkler's consideration of silence as crucial to understanding Luke's narrative world, I argue that considering the importance of the unsaid is key to reveal the full narrative potential in the steward parable.[131]

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[130] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 110.

[131] Liew, *What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics?*, 79; Dinkler, *Silent Statements*, 262.

It might demand a slow and resistant reading of the text to notice the ambivalence in the master's response. I argue that this is what Nadella wants to underline when stating that dialogism and polyphony "turns a perceived problem into an asset" as opposing voices transform into dialogue.[132] Hence, Bakhtin's theories of polyphony and dialogism give breathing room to the unexpected and bizarre in the Lukan composition. Conclusively, I argue that this reading shows how change is the fundamental task at hand for the rich man. As Jesus tells his audience after the parable, they too should act as the master, though be careful not to become servants of wealth, and only use it to make friends.

Finally, I wanted to consider Cheong's contribution to this reading and how he uses a dialogic reading to challenge both the *implied* and the *actual* reader of the parable.[133] By considering both the first readers of Luke's gospel and our own bias when reading ancient literature, I wanted to explore dialogism in the world in front of the text as well as in the world in the text. As mentioned, Cheong calls this a "hermeneutic of mutual recognition and trust."[134] In other words, a reading that withstands the tendency to favorize any one voice, and instead view both reader and text like an unfinished being; they have to move and listen with an ever-changing and developing voice. As for my hermeneutical bias, I do not argue that it is possible to bracket my subjectivity and interpret ancient texts unbiased.

Nevertheless, I have tried to show interest in how my conscious and subconscious emphasis can be fruitful and not necessarily limiting. As a modern reader, I am invited to change and be challenged by a bizarre and polyphonic reading of Luke. I previously asked how being male and privileged would affect a reading of privileged male characters. Moreover, in what way would Luke's gospel communicate to me, living in a society with increasing disparity between rich and poor?

Trying to answer some of these questions in light of the perspectives I wanted to bring into my reading of Luke's good news to the rich has been a curious exercise. At this point, I will also consider the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, because together they illuminate the broader landscape of Luke's gospel to the rich. I argue that the ToC table shows how the two texts function as narratives and communicate change in very different ways. In the steward parable Luke tells a story of how distribution, abandonment, and debt-reduction are means for a rich man to engage in the economy of salvation. The voices are polyphonic as the master

[132] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 48.

[133] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 16-24.

[134] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 17.

first expresses dismay and then, after a long silence, turns his suspicion to praise. Alternatively, as the steward's voice moves from the setting of a clandestine activity to becoming a role model for the disciples.[135] I argue that a reading that applies concepts of literary criticism to ToC invites both the text, the reader, and the world behind the text into dialogue.[136]

Now, in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus Luke delivers his good news through different rhetoric. Looking at the ToC table, it becomes clear that the story is told as an example of what not to do, and then follows all the consequences of the rich man's failure to contribute in the economy of salvation for the rich. I argue that the dialogue between reader, text, and the world behind the text is intended to urge a rich reader to change in the way that the rich man was unable to, drawing on well-known imagery of wealth and poverty, afterlife and punishment, righteousness and salvation, as shown by considering Lehtipuu's work alongside the Testament of Abraham.

Engaging in a study of the word πλοῦτος, its origins and use in the first and second century, has, I argue, substantiated my hypothesis that wealth plays a significant role in the ancient worldview of ethics, community and eschatology, and that this perspective deserves more attention. Further, I asked these questions about my own bias when encountering this project of re-characterization. After a closer reading of Luke and considering wisdom literature, a brief socio-political discourse, early patristics and a word study of "wealth" as selected contextual perspectives on the gospel, it is interesting to now try to compare some of these concepts to my discoveries. As a comparative observation, it is interesting that all the rich characters are men. Moreover, the early reception and contemporary literature generally depict wealth as a masculine issue. The themes of wealth and masculinity have certainly sparked interest for further research. The rich men in the gospel narratives, the character Abraham in the pseudepigraphal text, and the patristic account of Clement, all constitute a discourse of wealth, ethics and masculinity.

Furthermore, exploring some of the ramifications of the economic system of the Roman Empire and how this power affected communities under their rule in the first century, has made me realize some of the power structures implied by wealth, debt, and distribution of possessions. Realizing that the gospel narratives are thoroughly concerned with questions of

[135] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 173.

[136] Cheong, *A Dialogic Reading*, 33-35.

wealth, I hypothesize that the ramifications of the "economy" of power, as Foucault describes it, manifests itself in the self-awareness and identity of the subjected communities.[137]

In other words, power does not only repress, but can stimulate identity through the social body, the forming of behavior, and I would argue, the interpretation of rituals and sacred scripture. This argument relies on a reading of Foucault that can transcend time, as he is occupied with the monarchies of the Classical period and interpreting the concurrent society and politics of the twentieth century. I argue that his ideas have this potential, and that power relations in antiquity can be placed under the same lens because the implications of power relations touch on fundamental human concerns. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues along the same lines in her study of scripture and the rhetoric of Empire:

> In recent years, New Testament or Christian Testament (CT) scholarship has rediscovered and re-emphasized as an important field of study the power of the Roman Empire and its shaping of early Christian life and literature. (…) The intellectual context of such studies, moreover, has not just been the renewed popular and academic interest in empire but also the arrival of postcolonial criticism in religious, the*logical and biblical studies.[138]

Moreover, Wisdom tradition from the Jewish scriptures has opened the possibility of considering the implications of Luke within Judaism when exploring issues of charitable acts as profoundly embedded in Luke's worldly vision of a kingdom of God "among you." Righteous deeds, like those done by master in the steward parable, and those not done by the rich man in the later story, play a crucial part in the economy of salvation for the rich. Furthermore, it is a way that Jesus proclaims salvation to the rich. The master's debt-reduction mirror's God's debt-reduction of the sin of dishonest wealth management. Further, the lack of charitable acts towards Lazarus becomes the quintessential reminder of the proverbial saying: "Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death" (Prv 10:2).[139]

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[137] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in James D. Faubion (ed.), *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 vol.3 (Power)*, (New York, NY: The New Press, 2000), 120.

[138] Fiorenza, *Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire*, (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007), 1.

[139] Giambrone, *Sacramental Charity*, 210.

Finally, I argue that the consideration of the pseudepigraphal text the Testament of Abraham can substantiate my claim that Abraham is the epitome of a rich and righteous man. Therefore, he stands on the other side of the chasm in the afterlife imagery as an example of everything the rich man failed to do. The fact that Luke characterizes the rich man as nameless makes him an ideal identity-marker for the rich reader, and Abraham functions as a role model in what I argue is a Jewish diaspora community.

5 Conclusion

This thesis has explored Luke's gospel to the rich by proposing a recharacterization of rich characters in chapter 16. I have argued that the rich characters are called to change on a spectrum suitable to their preconditions. By introducing a change motif as a way to read Lukan narratives, I have sought to challenge a dichotomic understanding of the gospel message as threatening to the rich and comforting to the poor.

By identifying how the wealthy characters possess depth, I have argued that Luke calls on them to change because they play a crucial part in the establishment of the emerging kingdom of God; in the world of the text, and also of the early ekklēsia, in the context of the recipient community. I hypothesize that this is manifested in Luke's prolonged eschatological framework: The rich must change to be saved, and the kingdom of God is a worldly possibility. In other words, Lukan soteriology is about acknowledging the obligation to change. By understanding how to use wealth for the kingdom of God, the doors of salvation open for the rich. Not in the afterlife, but the present. Entering into the kingdom of God as a rich character depends on how the character responds to the proclamation of the gospel. Re-distribution, almsgiving, and debt-reduction are examples of how change is identified. Hence, the good news to the rich is the proclamation of a call to change. It is less concerned with who they *are*, and more interested in what they can *become*.

I argue that Luke is not criticizing wealth. Being rich has vast potential in the economy of the actual and implied community and should be read as empowering for the rich reader. Insight into how round characters look and function points to the rich characters as driving forces in Luke's narrative world. Considering how Luke's characterization of the rich characters gives them depth, I argue that they should be read as characters to identify with, urging the rich to change in order to take part in the economy of salvation.[140] Or, in other words, the manifestation of the first Christ-following communities as the kingdom of God.[141]

A reading of Luke that recognizes this potential, and a recharacterization of the gospel's rich characters, challenges the reader to create meaning in dialogue with the text.

[140] Giambrone, *Sacramental Charity*, 15.

[141] Metzger, *Consumption and Wealth*, 2.

I argue this because the rich characters and Lukan wealth rhetoric is not merely meant as narrative tropes that, for example, idealize the poor. On the contrary, the distribution of wealth, debts, and charity was part of everyday life for the early Christ-following communities.[142] The rich readers and hearers of these texts would identify with the Lukan rhetoric of change, because it concerned them fundamentally. They embodied these stories and had to struggle with the responsibility that follows wealth and possessions.[143] In this way, I argue with recent philosophers like Martha Nussbaum that literature says something pivotal about our lives, and "offers ethical education."[144]

The binary between the economy for the rich and the one concerning the poor shows how the poor are saved regardless of the rich. Nevertheless, my argument is that this binary is not in line with the scholarly view that Luke portrays wealth as a disadvantage. This reading falls into an interpretational snare, deliberately designed by Luke, to reveal the negligent reader. Luke characterizes the rich as bizarre and challenging on purpose, to challenge the rich reader to be changed. Therefore, I argue that there is more to be discovered when the other rich characters are taken into account.

Consequently, my contribution to scholarship is to present a new heuristic for reading the narratives and parables where rich characters surface in Luke. The metatextual potential that empowers the rich reader is available through the application of dialogism. Considering the dialogue *in* the text and *with* the text can equip the reader with interpretational tools necessary to overcome the interpretational snares of condemning a story's potential based on surface plot and stereotyping.

Further, in dialogue with the reader, the text, and the world behind the text, I have hypothesized how the first rich reader would conceptualize Luke's rhetoric on wealth and the potential "good news" to the rich. Acknowledging that every attempt of describing the ancient reader of the New* Testament texts is an act of imagination, I have sought to emphasize a reading of Luke from the perspective of a rich person, most often a man, who is called to change. Imagining the first rich reader of Luke's gospel I ask how a rich person would read

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[142] Moving from an understanding of stories with rich characters mainly as narrative figures, to an understanding where life stories and cultural settings are imagined, is informed by the intersectional work on the slave metaphor and gender in early Christian discourse by Marianne Bjelland Kartzow. Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor and Gendered Enslavement in Early Christian Discourse*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 2-4; 62-63.

[143] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 129-30.

[144] Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 38.

the different stories. From the story of the rich man and Lazarus, I have found that charity must happen now, and hence that charitable acts in this life have the gravest of consequences in an eschatological perspective. Further, I argue that Abraham can be read as an ideal rich character, and the rich man as someone who invites the reader to identify with him because he is nameless.

In the steward parable, the practical aspect of Luke's gospel to the rich is presented as the ideal discipleship when Jesus tells the parable. Giving up on, or re-distributing wealth is proclaimed as an essential means to true discipleship. Though, wealth, or mammon, must never be served, but only used as a means in the building of a just and righteous community of disciples. Debt-reduction is, in other words, a clever way of abandonment of riches. Finally, the master and the steward partake in intricate dialogism through speech and silence.

I argue that the surrounding context of Luke's gospel further substantiates that debt-reduction, almsgiving, reciprocity, and charity, is embedded in the context of Jewish literature, the Roman empire, and early patristics. Further, I hypothesize that Luke alludes to all of these, and more, in order to convey his message to the first rich reader. The gospel message is, in this way, directed at the *sitz im leben* of the Lukan community. In other words, I argue that the gospel seeks to influence the socio-economic setting of the community, rather than being dictated by it.[145] This perspective on the third gospel has received little attention, as the wide-spread understanding of Lukan ethics and recipient community has been focused on the poor. This reversal, asking what the gospel message could mean to a rich reader or hearer, directs attention at an often misread group of characters, by looking at how Luke characterizes them to convey a gospel to the rich.

Conclusively, I argue that this is how Luke uses dialogism; to communicate with reader, text, and context in which the author is writing, that there is good news to the rich if they allow themselves to be changed in dialogue with the gospel message.

I began this thesis by quoting Karen King from a recent interview where she said: "Storytelling is a deeply human act through which possibilities are realized, and ways of living enabled or constrained. It matters which stories are told, and by whom." A reading of Luke as good news to the rich has been an attempt at taking this seriously. Allowing voices to be heard that have often been silenced, can enable new ways of approaching the texts and help to appreciate the magnificence of Luke's storytelling.

[145] Nadella, *Dialogue Not Dogma*, 125.

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