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“‘THE FIRST THING ANDREW DID’ [JOHN 1:41]:
READERS AS WITNESSES
IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL”

by

Mark L. Trump, B.A., M.A., M.A.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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ABSTRACT
“‘THE FIRST THING ANDREW DID’ [JOHN 1:41]:
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IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL”

Mark L. Trump, B.A., M.A., M.A.

Marquette University, 2017

In 1996, Robert F. Kysar identified one of the leading issues that would form scholarly debate regarding the Fourth Gospel for decades to come: whether the Fourth Gospel is designed to strengthen and affirm the faith of those inside a Johannine community (a sectarian document/community) or to bring to faith those who were not yet part of that community (an evangelistic tract/missionary community).

The sectarian position, often connected to the work of J. Louis Martyn, Raymond E. Brown, and Wayne A. Meeks, has become the received tradition in Johannine studies. Increasingly, others have called into question not only the results but also the working presuppositions of the sectarian position and the supposedly positivistic mirror reading of the text that posits a “Johannine community,” while giving detailed attention to the Gospel’s trans-sectarian elements. Yet neither position can be said to be superior, so far as satisfying exegesis is concerned: neither accounts for the existence of both sectarian and evangelistic elements.

As a means of rapprochement and a way forward in the debate, this work offers an authorial reading of the Fourth Gospel that suggests that the textual intention of the Gospel is to inculcate witnessing in its readers. By means of characterization, marked instances of narration, the employment and modification of recognition scenes, and other narrative elements, the implied author repeatedly returns to the motif of bearing witness in such a way that by the end of the narrative, the reader has learned to associate faith and discipleship with bearing witness and to understand that witnesses are themselves “signs.”

As scholars in the areas of evangelism and fundamental theology have articulated, bearing witness is a praxis of the Christian community that is both community forming (“sectarian”—directed to strengthening the faith of community members) and evangelistic (“trans-sectarian”—directed toward creating faith in hearers). A witness-bearing authorial audience, rather than a sectarian one, better accounts for known second-century, post-apostolic concerns and the narrative situation in which the last member of the apostolic generation is writing to the post-apostolic generation in an effort to continue the mission of Jesus to the world.

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Introduction

The Sectarian-Missional Debate and the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel

The realms of pastoral ministry and the academy have held differing views of the intended audience and purpose of the Fourth Gospel. In ecclesial praxis, the Fourth Gospel is routinely used as a missional document because of, among other things, the prevalence of “belief” language, its Christological claims, and its purpose statement (20:30-31). The purpose statement is assumed to be about generating faith in non-believers. Because of these things, Christians distribute the Fourth Gospel as a means of introducing non-Christians to the message of Christ. However, within the academy, the “received tradition” in Johannine studies is that the Fourth Gospel is a sectarian document that employs “insider” language and imagery and was written primarily to strengthen the faith of an early Johannine Community in the face of mounting opposition. It was not meant for, not could it be thoroughly understood by, outsiders.

This debate as to the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, between mission document (*Missionsschrift*) and community/theological treatise (*Gemeindeschrift*), has been at the center of Fourth Gospel scholarship for decades.¹ In 1996, in a panoramic survey of the state of the discussion on the Fourth Gospel, Robert F. Kysar identifies five scholarly proposals as to the author’s purpose and its intended audience.² The five proposals are

¹ Wally V. Cirafesi (“The Johannine Community Hypothesis [1968—Present]: Past and Present Approaches and a New Way Forward,” *Currents in Biblical Research*, 12 [2014]: 173-93) provides a detailed survey of this debate and the various approaches. So Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1-42* (WUNT 2/31; Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 1-34; Saeed Hamid-Khani, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ: A Theological Inquiry into the Elusive Language of the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT 2/120; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), esp. ch. 4.

² Kysar, “The Gospel of John in the Twenty-first Century,” in *Voyages with John: Charting the Fourth Gospel* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), 221-25; rev. and previously published as “Coming Hermeneutical Earthquake in Johannine Interpretation” in “*What is John?*” vol.1, *Readers and Readings of*

often placed on a continuum that has two poles: the Fourth Gospel was either designed to strengthen and affirm the faith of those inside the community or to bring to faith those who were not yet part of the Johannine community. Kysar insists that this debate—with attention directed toward the nature of the community and the function of the Gospel—will continue to be at the center of Johannine Studies into the twenty first century.³

As a minority opinion, scholars have proposed various non-Christian audiences and an evangelistic purpose for the Fourth Gospel. Proponents such as Karl Bornhäuser, John A. T. Robinson, and W. C. van Unnik posit a focused attention on a Jewish audience.⁴ Tacking in another direction, John Bowman and Edwin D. Freed maintain that the audience was Samaritan.⁵ Wilhelm Oehler envisions an even larger intended audience—the larger Hellenistic world.⁶ C. H. Dodd generalizes the missional audience, suggesting that “if we try to enter into the author’s intention, it must surely appear that he is thinking, in the first place...of non-Christians who are concerned about eternal life and

the Fourth Gospel (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; SBLSS 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996). Kysar also comments on this tension in *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975); *ibid.*, “Community and Gospel: Vectors in Fourth Gospel Criticism,” *Int* 31 (1977): 355-66. As it happens, Kysar’s list can be reduced to three views: 1) it was written as a missionary document to, or was the product of, a missionary endeavor to Diaspora Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles; 2) it was written as a polemical/apologetic piece for a Johannine Christian community and against, or in response to, Jews, other Christian communities, proto-gnostic groups, or docetic views of Christ; and 3) it was intended to be a timeless and universal appeal (apologetic) to various Christian communities.

³ Kysar, “Gospel,” 221-26.

⁴ Bornhäuser (*Das Johannesevangelium: Eine Missionsschrift für Israel* [BFCT 2/15; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928]) argues that the Fourth Gospel was a missionary document for those committed to the Jewish faith. Robinson (“The Destination and Purpose of St. John’s Gospel,” *NTS* 6 [1959-1960]: 117-31) holds that John’s Gospel was an appeal to the diaspora Jews in Ephesus who may have found of interest John’s claims that Christianity reflected the true Judaism and that Jesus was the Messiah. Van Unnik (“The Purpose of St. John’s Gospel” [*SE* I, TU 73; ed. Kurt Aland et al.; Berlin: Akademie, 1959], 382-411) proposes that the Gospel was directed to Jews and synagogue proselytes, which may also have included Greeks (ch. 12) as part of the “other sheep” (ch. 10).

⁵ Bowman, “The Fourth Gospel and the Samaritans,” *BJRL* 40 (1958): 298-308; Freed, “Did John Write His Gospel Partly to Win Samaritan Converts?” *NovT* 12 (1970): 241-56.

⁶ Oehler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Eine Missionsschrift für die Welt, der Gemeinde ausgelegt* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1936).

the way to it.”⁷ While such arguments are important, on account of drawing attention to the missional language and imagery in the Fourth Gospel, for reasons discussed below they are not convincing.

Until recently, the sectarian or edificatory argument for these readings have won the day. Typically these readings follow either J. Louis Martyn’s two-level reading or a variation on the redaction-critical approaches of Raymond E. Brown, Robert T. Fortna, or the socio-historical reading of Wayne A. Meeks.⁸ These works commonly hold that the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel’s audience can be detected by a mirror reading of the Fourth Gospel. This reading often offers a picture of a community at odds with the wider Jewish and Christian communities at the time of writing and a purpose determined to be apologetic, polemic, or edificatory in nature. Within this framework, both the community and the Fourth Gospel, as reflective of that community, receive the separatist or sectarian label because of various polemical elements in the Gospel.

The sectarian reconstructions of the Gospel and community continue as a strong influence on, or have become the presuppositions of, current scholarship. The enduring influence is evidenced in David K. Rensberger’s description of Martyn’s proposal as “widely accepted” while Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh implement Brown’s identification of John the Baptist’s followers and other “crypto-Christian” groups as the

⁷ Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953; repr., Newcastle: Athenaem, 1992), 9.

⁸ Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; AB 29-29A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966-1970); Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (1st ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1968; 3rd. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003); Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 11; London: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 44-72; Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979); Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

groups against which the Gospel employs its “antilanguage” and sets its “antisociety.”⁹

The influence also appears in D. Moody Smith’s estimation of Martyn’s “persuasive” premise: “it makes the narrative text of John understandable.”¹⁰

Several scholars have challenged the sectarian position on several fronts. Stephen Motyer questions whether the Fourth Gospel’s language and imagery should be viewed in such a polemical light, while Kåre Fuglseth asks whether or not a “sectarian” label accurately reflects the community when compared to other, known, sectarian communities in the first century.¹¹ Some have also questioned the historical accuracy of situating the *Birkhat ha-minim*, the centerpiece of Martyn’s argument, within the first century.¹² These historical challenges have resulted in a reconsideration of Martyn’s

⁹ Rensberger, “Sectarianism and Theological Interpretation,” in “*What is John?*” vol. 2, *Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (SBLSS 7; ed. Fernando F. Segovia; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 139-56; Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998). Similarly, Rensberger (“Spirituality and Christology in Johannine Sectarianism,” in *Word, Theology, and Community in John* [ed. John Painter, R. Alan Culpepper and Fernando F. Segovia; St. Louis: Chalice, 2002], 174-75) analyzes the theology of the God of dissenters and the “maverick spirituality” of both the gospel and the community that produced it. Jerome H. Neyrey (*The Gospel of John* [NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007]) begins with the “sectarian” label and argues that while Jesus is portrayed as a revealer of God, the Fourth Gospel’s “sociology of secrecy” evidences a sectarian community whose select members are privy to certain information.

¹⁰ Smith, introduction to Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*; 3rd ed.

¹¹ Motyer (*Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and “the Jews”* [Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997]) challenges the sectarian label as applied to the Gospel’s language, specifically Jesus’s reference to the devil as the father of the Jews. He maintains that the polemical language can reasonably be taken as a common rhetorical device used within other Jewish, intra-community dialogues. Fuglseth (*Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective: A Sociological, Historical, and Comparative Analysis of Temple and Social Relationships in the Gospel of John, Philo, and Qumran* [NovTSup 119; Leiden: Brill, 2005]) surveys the numerous inherent problems of previous sociological studies that compare contemporary analyses of modern sectarian communities with those of the first-century Johannine community. In his sociological study, he compares the Gospel to other known contemporary, sectarian communities (ex. the Essenes at Qumran) and concludes that the Fourth Gospel is not sectarian.

¹² Perhaps the most sustained critique yet to date of Martyn’s two level reading is Jonathan Bernier, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John* (Biblical Interpretation Series 122; Leiden: Brill; 2013). Bernier argues that the *apōsynagōgos* passages can reasonably be set within Jesus’s lifetime and reflect a severing of affiliation ties rather than religious ones. So Shaye Cohen, “The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism,” *HUCA* 55 (1984), 27-53; A. Schremer, *Brothers Estranged: Heresy, Christianity, and Jewish Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. 50-61; John S. Kloppenborg, “Disaffiliation in Associations and the ἀποσυναγωγός of John,” *HvTSt* 67 (2011), 8-15. Reuven Kimelman (“The Birkat ha-minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* [3 vols.; ed. E. P.

reconstruction of the expulsion of the Johannine community from the synagogue.

In another vein, Richard Bauckham and others challenge the working presuppositions of reconstructing communities from mirror reading texts and what he labels “the unquestioned assumption” that NT texts, especially the Gospels, were produced by or for particular communities and not for a wider Christian circulation.¹³ He refutes the claim that “sectarian” Christian communities ever existed in the first century, insisting instead that the evidence that we do have for first-century Christian communities reveals a matrix of interrelated groups dedicated to evangelistic efforts and to mutual edification.¹⁴

Hamid-Khani, in his examination of the language and imagery of the Fourth Gospel, questions the accuracy of a purely sectarian label:

It is difficult to imagine a document in which the mission of the Father, the Son and the disciples [and I would add the Holy Spirit and John the Baptist] in the world is seen to be a “foundation theme,” but which is also the product of an “introversionist sect” that does not wish to have anything to do with the world. This emphatic missionary theology in the Fourth Gospel diametrically opposes the opinion of those who depict John’s Gospel as a simply sectarian writing.¹⁵

Whatever the merits of the observations on either side of the debate, neither the

Sanders; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981], 2:226-440) questions the dating of the Eighteen Benedictions as do William Horbury, “The Benediction of the Minim and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy,” *JTS* 33 (1982): 16-91; P. W. van der Horst, “The Birkat ha-minim in Recent Research,” *ET* 105 (1993-1994): 363-68; Daniel Boyarin, “Justin Martyr Invents Judaism,” *CH* 70 (2001), 427-61; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 55-58.

¹³ Bauckham, “For Whom Were Gospels Written?” in *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking Gospel Audiences* (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9-48. So also Richard Burridge, “About People, by People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences,” in Bauckham, *The Gospels for all Christians*, 113-45.

¹⁴ Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1989), esp. 113-23. Andreas J. Köstenberger (*Theology*, 57-59 n. 88) also generally agrees with the arguments against a sectarian community, but he cautions that the epistles “clearly presuppose Johannine congregations that were the result of a prolonged, fruitful ministry in a certain locale.” While this is certainly true, the nature of the genres must also be considered.

¹⁵ Hamid-Khani, *Revelation*, 214.

sectarian nor evangelistic side has adequately explained the coexistence of both sectarian and trans-sectarian language and features in the Gospel.¹⁶ Those holding to a sectarian purpose have attributed the missional language to a redactional layer or have simply mollified their position to account for the missional elements.¹⁷ For example, in Brown's later work, while he continues to affirm that the Gospel was written with the primary intention to "intensify people's faith and make it more profound" in the face of opposition, he acknowledges that "some type of continued proclamation to the world seems envisioned" and that the Gospel's secondary goal is "bringing others to make an act of faith."¹⁸

Those who have sought to draw attention to the missional purpose of the Fourth Gospel have likewise encountered difficulties in trying to account for its

¹⁶ For example, the Gospel speaks of Jesus coming for the world and of eternal life for "whoever believes in him" (3:16). There is a stated missional purpose of the Gospel (20:30-31). There are noted emphases on the sending of the Son by the Father (17:21-25) as the light (1:1-8) as well as the sending of the disciples by the Son (20:21) to carry on the mission, and repeated attention is given to witnessing (e.g., 1:1-51; 4; 9). The Fourth Gospel accounts for 14 of the 18 occurrences of μαρτυρία in the Gospels and for 35 of the 37 occurrences of μαρτυρέω. Jesus's mission from the Father is cast as being "for the world" and anyone who believes (1:12-13; 3:16), and the Gospel portrays Jesus as being interested in the disciples bearing a fruitful harvest (4:34-38; 15:1-10) and in future generations of believers (17:20-26). However, there are also stringent and critical remarks coming from Jesus concerning the Jews (8:39) and the world (15:18-19). There are references to believers being thrown out of the synagogue (9:22; 12:42) and being hated and killed by the world (16:2-6). There are also passages that could lead one to hold that a tension existed between the followers of Jesus and John the Baptist (3:22-23) and the followers of Jesus and the Samaritans (4:1-43).

¹⁷ Brown's earlier work (*Community*) places the strongest missionary impetus of the Johannine community in the beginning stages of its formation, thus within the earliest redactional layer. He maintains that later redactors were more sectarian. Fortna (*Signs*) sets the missional elements in the original signs source as do those who follow him. William Dromeris ("Christology and Community: A Study of the Social Matrix of the Fourth Gospel," *JTSA* 64 [1988], 51) presupposes the historical-critical conclusions of the sectarian community and the text as a mirror of the that community. He suggests that the Fourth Gospel offers a viable religious alternative and appeal to groups who had either experienced marginalization within Judaism because of the *Birkhat ha-minim* or the economic and social changes brought about by Roman domination, or both.

¹⁸ Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ed. Francis J. Moloney; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 150-52, 172, 182-85. Brown admits that the author and/or editor were interested in witnessing, though he contends that the missionary efforts to the Jews had ended by the time of writing. He enumerates the presence of references to Jesus's message and mission to the world and the occurrences of varied inclusive statements. Brown also characterizes the tone of the Gospel as indicating that if believers maintain a requisite level of intensity, it would draw others to faith.

sectarian/edificatory language. Teresa Okure accepts the “missionary thrust,” yet remains hesitant to label the Fourth Gospel as a missionary document.¹⁹ In a similar vein, Köstenberger engages in a semantic field study of mission in the Fourth Gospel, specifically, how the missions of Jesus and the disciples are related and how that relationship might be informative for future generations of believers.²⁰ As a result of the survey, he acknowledges that “both a missional and an edificatory purpose are quite possible,” but he ultimately demurs, insisting that it may be that a “a missionary purpose best accommodates the findings of the present study, but certainly it remains elusive.”²¹

While the works of Brown, Okure, and Köstenberger, to cite a few, are significant in their contributions, each struggles with holding the edificatory and the missional themes together in a way that adequately addresses the Gospel’s purpose. As long as both sides continue to give detailed attention to either the missional or edificatory elements without a solution that adequately accounts for the existence of both, a stasis will continue.

A Way Forward: The “both/and” in the Communicative Praxis of the Early Christian Communities

That both purposes are present in the Fourth Gospel need not imply redactional layers, multiple authors or editors, or contradictions on the part of the author. Edmund Arens maintains that both edification and mission were part of the communicative praxis

¹⁹ Okure, *Mission*, 15-17. Okure (ibid., 1) argues that “mission itself is a leitmotif or ‘foundation theme’” of the Fourth Gospel.

²⁰ Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

²¹ Ibid., 209-10. Köstenberger does suggest that the “emphasis on the Johannine community [by the proponents of the Johannine community] does not seem to be supported by the Fourth Gospel’s teaching on mission.”

of the earliest Christian communities as “communities of communicative action.”²² In describing the communicative praxis, Arens identifies a twofold type of communication: witnessing and confessing.²³ He suggests that these types of communication have common structural features and elements while they vary in their respective audiences.²⁴ He describes the perlocutionary effect of witnessing as “persuading” and “reaching an understanding” with outsiders in order that it might “produce an agreement in a shared experience.”²⁵ He describes confessing as not having agreement as its *goal* but rather it “expresses agreement [within the community] and *completes* it.”²⁶

However, both testimony and confession have a collocation of terms, communicative intentions, and perlocutionary effects, as well as an overlap in the experience of agreement, especially in the first generations of believers. For example, Arens is correct that early Christian confessions included phrases such as “Jesus is Lord” and “Jesus is the Son of God,” yet variants of these phrases were also integral parts of early testimony as well (e.g., John 1:34, 49; 20:18, 25, 28, 31).²⁷ Arens does acknowledge this connection. For Arens, confession is a verbal expression of testimonies that becomes binding in form as it gives voice to the agreement of the faith of the community.²⁸ In this regard, bearing witness is a foundational act of faith and is “an

²² Arens, *Christopraxis: A Theology of Action* (trans. John F. Hoffmeyer; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 156.

²³ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁴ Arens (*ibid.*, 88) identifies five categories in light his communicative theory of action: the intersubjective, the propositional, the performative, the textual, and the situational. Regarding shared elements, Arens (89) notes that both are publicly constituted, structured communicatively, and refer to the same subject matter.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 89. So H. P. Siller, “Die Schar der Zeugen in unseren Unterricht!” in *Christ warden braucht Vorbilder* (eds. G. Biemer and A. Biesinger; Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1983), 124-35.

²⁶ Arens, *Christopraxis*, 89; emphasis added.

²⁷ In Peter’s address to the crowd in Acts 2:36, after rehearsing the salvation history of God’s activity with Israel and then Jesus, he ends with the confession: “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

²⁸ Arens, *Christopraxis*, 98.

action of Christians in which the communicative and practical structure of faith is realized in perspectives of kerygmatic mission.”²⁹ In the act of testifying there is at the same time both an invitation to outsiders and identity formation as well as shared expressions and content. Those who bear witness distinguish themselves from others (John 9:22) while seeking their agreement.

In light of Arens’s work on testimony and confession and their intended perlocutionary effects, a more profitable way to bridge the debate regarding John’s purpose is to give detailed attention to the narrative role that the activity of witnessing plays in the Gospel, since both confessional (edification) and missional elements are part of the perlocutionary effects of a witnessing community.

Thus a way out of the impasse which can account for both sectarian and missional language, which has not been exploited before, is to consider that the textual intention of the Fourth Gospel is the inculcation of witnessing. This entails both community formation (the authorial audience is Christian) and missional outreach.

Textual Intentions: Authorial Readings and Authorial Audiences

Peter J. Rabinowitz and Michael Kearns have proposed that what narrative communication and the reading process present are an actual audience (people who actually read the text), an authorial audience (the hypothetical audience whom the author had in mind and for whom the author is writing), and a narrative audience (the imaginary audience to whom the narrator is telling the story).³⁰ During the reading process, the

²⁹ Ibid., 143. Arens maintains that witnessing has an ecclesial function in that it “indicates the location of the church” and “points to Jesus Christ and makes him publicly present as the ground and goal of its existence.”

³⁰ Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 20-26, 95; Kearns, *Rhetorical Narratology* (Stages 16; Lincoln: University

actual audience is forced (by the text) to play the roles of both the narrative and authorial audience.³¹ To take on these roles, real readers must learn to “read authorially,” that is, to uncover and embrace the qualities and characteristics of the narrative/authorial audience.³²

For Kearns, an “authorial reading” is correlative with “the expectation of an audience that a narrative has been designed with some end in mind.” Readers discover this design, which evidences the end or goal of the text, in the reading process as the text persuades or moves its readers, producing its intended effect, termed its perlocutionary effect (or textual intention).³³ The narrative’s design becomes an avenue for understanding both the authorial audience that the author had in mind when writing and the author’s intentions in writing. Pursuing the author’s intentions is not to enter into the intentionalist fallacy, but takes seriously the underlying presupposition that a narrative has been designed with an end in mind, that it has a point or “constructive intention.”³⁴ Thus, in pursuing an authorial reading, the actual reader attempts to uncover the communicative intent of a work.³⁵

of Nebraska Press, 1999), 50-54, 116-17. Kearns modifies these categories slightly in name, but still maintains the same general categories. These categories are analogous to Chatman’s actual reader, implied reader, and narratee.

³¹ Rabinowitz, *Reading*, 95-96.

³² For Rabinowitz (*ibid.*, 96-97), this means that the actual reader must take the fictional work as real, that is, to lose herself in the narrative story and world and engage in a process of discovering what the intended reader’s “beliefs, engagements, commitments, prejudices, and stampings of pity and terror” are as revealed in the text. Kearns (*Narratology*, 51) describes the process as one in which the actual reader immerses herself in the world/narrative work she is presented with in the narrative.

³³ Kearns, *Narratology*, 12, 14, 43-45. However, Kearns quickly comments that this is not a pursuit of an “interpretation sanctioned or consciously designed by the actual person who authored the narrative.”

³⁴ Kearns, *ibid.*, 40-43, 52-54. Rabinowitz (*Reading*, 22-23) goes so far as to say that even the notion of the implied author and the implied reader are “variant formulations of the notion of authorial intention.” For Kearns, authorial reading and point go together in considerations of narrative. So Rabinowitz, *Reading*, 28-33.

³⁵ The communicative intention of a narrative is what Chatman (“*The ‘Rhetoric’ of ‘Fiction,’*” *Reading Narrative: Form, Ethics, Ideology* [ed. James Phelan; Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989], 55) refers to as a text’s “suasion” of readers, which is the point or goal toward which the text moves

Kearns and Rabinowitz give the “authorial reading” a primary status because an authorial reading both guides the actual reader to a correct interpretation and provides a norm by which to measure other readings.³⁶ As actual readers take on the role of the authorial audience, they “attempt[s] to read as the author intended,” and in this process, accept the author’s invitation “to read in a particular socially constituted way that is shared by the author and his or her expected readers.”³⁷ Accordingly, the success of any given work depends upon the correlation between the assumptions an author makes about an audience and the “degree to which the actual audience and authorial audience overlap.”³⁸

Implications for this present work

Rabinowitz’s and Kearns’s “authorial reading” (with the attendant endeavor to discover the communicative intention of the Fourth Gospel) and Arens’s work on the perlocutionary effects of witnessing within the first post-apostolic generation, serve as the methodological underpinning for this present work. Kearns’s and Rabinowitz’s concept

readers. So Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalist to Post-Structuralism*, [ed. Jane P. Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980], 52.

³⁶ For Kearns (*Narratology*, 52) the authorial reading is one of the “ur-conventions” of reading that he identifies as necessary for any successful communication to take place. Rabinowitz (*Reading*, 96) insists that if readers “do not pretend to be members of the narrative audience, or if we misapprehend the beliefs of that audience, we are apt to make invalid, even perverse, interpretations.”

³⁷ Rabinowitz (*Reading*, 22), however, is quick to distance this statement from the intentionalist fallacy. He sees the intention as embodied in the social conventions of communication and not as an issue of “individual psychology.”

³⁸ Rabinowitz, *ibid.*, 21-26. This overlap is essential for a reader who desires to experience the text as the author designed it, since the actual audience must come to share many of the characteristics of the authorial audience in order to appreciate the structures employed by the author and the commitments necessitated by the author’s choices of genre, stylistics, and other conventional features. Rabinowitz describes this reading process as asking not what a pure reading of a text would be but what sort of “corrupted reader” the author wrote for. He (32-36) also insists that it is typically not possible fully to engage as an authorial reader because historical and tradition differences would be prohibitive unless educational bridges could be built.

of an authorial reading is appealing because of their methodological commitments within Reader Response and Narrative Criticism to retain the importance of the author and to recognize the historical situatedness of narratives, authors, and authorial audiences in the reading process.

At least statistically, “witnessing” has an important place in the Fourth Gospel. This is indicated by the occurrence of the words often associated with or customarily translated “confessing” or “witnessing” when compared to the Synoptics.³⁹ The present work, however, is not a word or concept study, as in Johannes Beutler’s survey of the occurrences of *martyria* in the Jewish and Early Christian literature and in Köstenberger’s semantic domain work on mission, though it is in some ways related to the latter.⁴⁰ Nor is my argument an expansion of Jeffrey L. Staley’s work in which he identifies a patterned use of “intermediaries,” though it has influenced my work.⁴¹ This study, rather than a semantic analysis of the concept or theme of witnessing in the Fourth

³⁹ In the Synoptics, μαρτυρέω occurs in Matt 23:31 and Luke 4:22, and in both occurrences neither Jesus or the disciples are the subjects as in John. μαρτυρία occurs in Mark 14:55, 56, 59, and Luke 22:17 where it consistently refers to the false testimony offered at Jesus’s trial. μάρτυς occurs at Matt 18:16; 26:65; Mark 14:63; Luke 11:48; 24:48, but only in Luke 24:48 does it refer to the activity of the disciples after Jesus’s death. μαρτύριον occurs at Matt 8:4; 10:18; 24:14; Mark 1:44; 6:11; 13:9; Luke 5:14; 9:5; 21:13. However, the disciples are witnesses only in Matt 10:18; Mark 13:9; and Luke 21:13, which are all part of a common tradition in which Jesus tells the disciples that they will be witnesses at the end of the age. Of the 10 occurrences of ὁμολογέω, only at Matt 7:23; 10:32; and Luke 12:8 is it an action of Jesus and the disciples, but in these it is placed on the lips of Jesus, who claims that he will acknowledge before the Father anyone who confesses him before people.

In contrast to its infrequent occurrence in the Synoptics, testimony as a *topos* receives much wider ranging treatment in the Fourth Gospel. For example, among the 14 occurrences of μαρτυρία, the Baptist offers testimony about Jesus (1:7, 14), Jesus testifies concerning himself and his father (5:31, 36; 8:14, 18), and the author offers testimony to the reader (19:35; 20:24). μαρτυρέω occurs 19 times with the Baptist, Jesus, Jesus’s works, the disciples, and the Spirit testifying on behalf of Jesus. Similarly, ὁμολογέω has the Baptist as subject (1:20), and is the activity that characters are afraid to do (confessing that Jesus is the Messiah) for fear of recrimination from the Pharisees, Levites, and priests.

⁴⁰ Beutler, *MARTYRIA: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Zeugnisthema bei Johannes* (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1972); Köstenberger, *Missions*.

⁴¹ Staley (*The Print’s First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* [SBLDS 82; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988], 79-83) notes the importance of “intermediaries” in the Fourth Gospel, those who act as liaisons between other people and Jesus, especially Andrew and Philip.

Gospel, is instead an inquiry into the textual intention of the Fourth Gospel as expressed in the Gospel's narrative features, and how the reading process forms the reader to become a witness. The thematic development of witnessing is thus a part of the interest of the present work, but it is not limited to a semantic analysis.

Those who take a more linguistic approach caution against limiting the study of a concept or theme to the occurrences of a word(s) in a given text.⁴² In this regard, Grant R. Osborne warns that interpreters must not fail to consider the concept as well as the word, especially referring to “the other ways the biblical writers could say the same thing.”⁴³ These “other ways” are synonyms, other phrases an author variously employs to refer to the same concept, or even other conceptually related terms.⁴⁴ For example, Köstenberger takes a semantic field approach in his analysis of how the concept of mission is developed in John. In the process, he expands his investigation to include related “discourse concepts” and “clusters,” that is, words and phrases that refer to Jesus's and the disciples' movements of coming, going, and bringing, as well as being sent, so as to develop a picture of how the Fourth Gospel develops the theme of mission.⁴⁵

⁴² So James Barr (*The Semantics of Biblical Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961], esp. 114-60); Anthony Thiselton, “Semantics and New Testament Interpretation,” in *New Testament Interpretation* (ed. I Howard Marshall; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 75-79; Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 136-40; Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988-89), esp. 1:xvi; Peter Cotterell and Max Turner (*Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989], 106-28).

⁴³ Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 74.

⁴⁴ Cf. Hermanus Richard Lemmer, “A Possible Understanding by the Implied Reader, of Some of the *coming-going-being sent* Pronouncements, in the Johannine Farewell Discourses,” *Neot* 25 (1992): 289-310. Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament* [trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951-55], 2:35) urges that interpreters should proceed along conceptual lines rather than the tracing the occurrences and meaning of a particular word.

⁴⁵ Köstenberger, *Missions*, 27-41.

Chapters 5 and 6 of the present study at points reflect a discourse field approach, but I extend the concepts of “semantic” or “discourse” fields beyond verbally analogous or related terms and concepts. From a narrative-critical perspective, authors of narratives have recourse to other methods of referral and thematic development as reflective of the textual intention of a work. For example, Rabinowitz discusses the various ways a character’s actions demonstrate the textual intention of a work within his examination of the “Rules of Configuration,” which he takes up again under the rubric of repetition as one of the “Rules of Notice.”⁴⁶

Instead, my study is an attempt to engage in an authorial reading of the Fourth Gospel in an effort to elucidate one of its communicative intentions. Because the communicative intention of the text is embedded in its design, I will trace the narrative/rhetorical techniques and features of the Fourth Gospel as they pertain to bearing witness as an indication of the implied author’s desired perlocutionary effects on the implied reader as she engages the text.⁴⁷ I wish to argue that the author’s textual intention was to create not a *Missionsschrift* or *Gemeindeschrift* but a *zeugendes Handbuch* designed to inculcate witnessing in the reader and to equip the reader for the task of bearing witness.

I seek to demonstrate that the intended perlocutionary effect of the Fourth Gospel is the inculcation of witnessing in its readers, who are among the first post-apostolic generation of believers, and that it accomplishes this process through the cumulative effects the narrative has on a reader in the reading process. In conversation with the work of Arens, I will argue that the inculcation of witnessing is a viable means of bridging the

⁴⁶ Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 132-40.

⁴⁷ In the remainder of this work I am using “she” as the pronoun to refer to the reader.

gap in the sectarian/missional debate because it is an action that is both community forming (“sectarian”—in that bearing witness strengthens the beliefs of community members and defines the content) and missional (“trans-sectarian”—in that it is directed to moving those outside of the community into the community through conversion).

Placing the forgoing discussions within the context of reading the Fourth Gospel presents unique challenges. Within the Fourth Gospel, the actual reader encounters marked cases of narration in which the narrator shifts from third to first person, a technique that draws attention to the role of the narrator.⁴⁸ By means of this marking, the reader first learns that the narrator is a character within the story (1:14, 16; 3:11) and eventually discovers that the narrator is also the author of the story (19:35 and 21:24-25).⁴⁹ These narrative asides (marked cases) signal to the reader that the narrator/author was one of the disciples who, both within the story and in the tradition, was one of the eyewitnesses of the events the narrative relates, and that she is receiving the story as a recipient of witnessing. Thus, in contrast to Staley, the narrator does in fact designate himself by the use of the first person within the story and does so as a disciple who is also

⁴⁸ Kearns, *Narratology*, 96-99, 114-17.

⁴⁹ In Gérard Genette’s (*Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980], 227-29) description, the narrator/author of the Fourth Gospel is both intradiegetic (within the story), and extradiegetic (above the story), since the narrator is able to relate Jesus’s origins outside of time and space (1:1-18) as well as dialogues that took place in the narrator’s absence (ch. 4). The narrator/author is also both homodiegetic and heterodiegetic because, in regards to the former, the narrator is a character within the story, while in regards to the latter the narrator does intrude as an “I.” Contra Staley (*Kiss*, 39-41), who maintains that the narrator’s use of the first person plural in 21:24-25 can be explained as a rhetorical device commonly called within literary studies a “double reference” in which the narrator intentionally moves among narrative levels. He argues that the “narrator moves from his capacity as witness/agent (now disclosed for the first time as having been a character in the story), to an editorial ‘we,’ and finally to his role as restricted author-narrator (I suppose with accompanying hyperbole).” Staley holds that this double reference confuses most Johannine scholars because the implied author has not disclosed his relationship to the story or the narrator. However, I argue that the narrator’s presence within the narrative has been marked by other uses of the first person (“we”) long before the final scenes (19:35 and 21:24-25). It is experienced in 1:14, 16 where the implied reader is informed that “‘we’ have seen his glory” and “‘we’ have received one grace upon another.” A similar intrusion happens in 3:11 where Jesus unexpectedly shifts from the first person singular, “I tell you the truth,” to the first person plural, “we testify to what we have seen.”

an eyewitness.⁵⁰

Numerous examples occur in modern literature of unreliable or even deceiving narrators or implied authors that do not reflect the attitudes and values of the actual author. This is not the case in antiquity and is arguably not the case for the Fourth Gospel, as Francis J. Moloney rightly notes:

Differently from some contemporary narratives, it can generally be assumed (but never proved) that the real author *of* and the implied author *in* New Testament narratives speak with the same voice. It is difficult to imagine that such a passionate book as the Fourth Gospel is anything but the communication of a historical person's deeply held and passionate belief in what God has done in and through Jesus.⁵¹

Similar challenges occur when considering the relationship between the actual reader and the authorial/narrative reader (implied reader). I am persuaded by Fee and Carson that the present subjunctive, rather than the aorist, is the original reading, which indicates a Christian authorial audience and the desire to encourage them in their continued belief, rather than initially coming to faith.⁵² Since I also hold Bauckham to be substantially correct, that members of the authorial audience were Christians, and the Fourth Gospel was intended for a wider audience, the actual reader is, in many ways,

⁵⁰ Staley, *Kiss*, 39 n. 83.

⁵¹ Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 16; author's emphasis. In the case of the Fourth Gospel, I also would add the narrator. So also Cornelis Bennema, "A Comprehensive Approach to Understanding Character in the Gospel of John," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (ed. Christopher W. Skinner, LNTS 461; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 41-45.

⁵² Gordon D. Fee, "On the Text and Meaning of John 20:30-31," in *The Four Gospels 1992* (ed. F. van Segbroeck, C. M. Tuckett, et al.; 3 vols.; BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 3:2193-2205; D. A. Carson, "Syntactical and Text-Critical Observations on John 20:30-31: One More Round on the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 124/4 (2005): 693-714. I acknowledge the tentativeness of this conclusion in light of Bruce M. Metzger's (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [2d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002], 219-20) warning not to build a case on the text-critical reading.

already a part of the authorial audience.⁵³ Distinctions made, for historical or theoretical reasons, between the authorial audience and the subsequent flesh and blood readers (such as myself some two millennia later) are not as easily distinguishable because of communal diachronic faith commitments.⁵⁴ The reading community of the Fourth Gospel, at varying historical and cultural points, is a continuing community and shares various points of commitment to and contact with the authorial audience. When a reader engages the Fourth Gospel, the community to whom the author-narrator communicates is her community, especially in the case of the Fourth Gospel, which betrays so marked an interest in subsequent generations of believers (ch. 17).⁵⁵

The Aim and Plan of This Present Study

With these issues in mind, this work is organized into three larger sections that widen the lens as the work progresses. In section one (chs. 1 and 2), I will argue that John 1:35-51 plays a primary role in setting a reader's expectations. Ch. 1 provides a

⁵³ Contra David C. Sim, "The Gospels for All Christians? A Response to Richard Bauckham," *JSNT* 24 (2001): 3-27; Margaret M. Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim That 'The Gospels Were Written for All Christians,'" *NTS* 51 (2005): 36-79. To the extent that non-Christians would have encountered the message of the Fourth Gospel, they would have done this through Christians who had first read (or more probably heard) its message. Even if the actual readers do not share the faith commitments with the actual author, an authentic reading would entail that they place themselves in the role of a believer as a member of the authorial audience.

⁵⁴ While Willem S. Vorster ("The Reader in the Text: Narrative Material," *Semeia* 48 [1989]: 36 §3.2) maintains that it is "theoretically impossible to make inferences from the reader in the text about the actual readers of first-century Christian narratives," attempts at differentiating the actual reader from the implied reader can be constructive when considered within the conceptual framework of an authorial audience. Rabinowitz (*Reading*) maintains that one can reconstruct, albeit imperfectly, the authorial audience through the narrative's structure and presuppositions. For example, an actual reader knows that the reader in the text knew Greek, lived during the first century, and knew who Jesus was.

⁵⁵ To argue, as Vorster does ("Reader," 36 §3.3), that the implied reader is merely an intratextual construct or that attempts to reconstruct it are merely recreating "the image of an imaginary reader" misses the point of how the author constructed the text and the textual intent. Vorster's position would necessitate the questioning of any reconstruction from the text of the *Sitz im Leben* of the community or of any character within the text, including Jesus. Of course in the historical-critical reconstructions of situations, of occasions for writing, and of the authorial audience, care must be taken to avoid the unquestioned hermeneutical circle to which such reconstructions are liable.

survey of approaches to 1:35-51 and is intended to demonstrate that, while many studies identify witnessing as a theme of the section, few have traced what appear to be intentionally paralleled scenes whose core is the act of bearing witness. In ch. 2, I offer a detailed exegetical analysis of 1:35-51 in an effort to argue that the first scene in which readers encounter Jesus and the disciples is constructed from two witnessing sequences which intentionally parallel characters for comparative purposes and to draw attention to the activity of bearing witness. Because this pattern occurs in the opening scenes of the Gospel, and is the point at which the reader is introduced to the disciples, it creates expectations in the reader to notice this pattern in the narrative and understand that witnessing is definitive for discipleship.

In section 2 (chs. 3 and 4), I widen the lens to examine scenes in the rest of the Gospel that I argue replicate the patterns displayed in 1:35-51. In ch. 3, I offer analyses of paired scenes in John 1-9 that the reader has come to expect. I argue that the primary characters in those scenes, and the scenes themselves, have been paired for didactic purposes. The reader, who in light of 1:35-51 has been cultivated to notice the pairing of scenes, continues to increase her recognition that those who believe bear witness. Ch. 4 continues this analysis by looking at the pairing of scenes/characters in chs. 11-20 of the Gospel.

In section three (chs. 5 and 6), I widen the lens yet again to survey the narrative elements between the scenes that I argue further facilitate the narrative intentions of inculcating witnessing in the first post-apostolic generation. When I move to ch. 5, I return to the beginning of the Gospel and identify the other narrative elements that have been woven into the story between the scenes in chs. 1-12, all of which further reinforce,

in varied ways, the importance of witnessing. Ch. 6 continues the analysis begun in ch. 5 and traces those elements to the end of the Gospel.

In setting about this task, I will primarily engage the work of five scholars: 1) Rudolf Schnackenburg, whose work represents a classic literary approach to the Fourth Gospel; 2) Jerome H. Neyrey, whose Social Sciences approach to the Fourth Gospel and the NT world has been significant for scholars from that perspective; 3) Francis J. Moloney, who has extensively written on the Fourth Gospel from a narrative/literary approach; 4) Craig S. Keener, who has recently produced a socio-historical commentary on the Fourth Gospel with attention to literary/narrative considerations; and 5) Charles H. Talbert, whose commentary is methodologically dedicated to a literary/theological reading of the text. I have chosen these scholars because of their varying denominational and ecclesiastical associations as well as their varied methodological perspectives.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ As it happens, the scholars with whom I principally dialogue reflect a variety of denominational backgrounds. Rudolf Schnackenburg, Jerome H. Neyrey, and Francis J. Moloney are Roman Catholic. Craig S. Keener and Charles H. Talbert are Protestant, the former an Evangelical Protestant. The present author is an Evangelical Protestant persuaded of the value of historical- and literary-critical scholarship when undertaken reverently and in the service of God and church.

Chapter 1

John 1:40-42 and 1:44-47: A Survey of Analyses

Introduction

In many ways John 1:35-51 is an exegetical lacuna in the Fourth Gospel. Numerous treatments have taken up the Prologue (John 1:1-18), the Baptist narrative (John 1:19-34), and the miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11), but John 1:35-51 has rarely been the focus of detailed analysis. If attention is given to 1:35-51, frequently it is as a small part of a larger study dedicated to thematic developments within the Fourth Gospel (Christology, discipleship, faith) or is centered on historical-critically or pastorally driven *topoi*.¹ To these ends, topics such as the names and numbers of disciples, the concept of discipleship, the Christological and messianic titles, the source material or imagery used by the author, and a comparison with the Synoptic call narratives have all garnered concentrated interest. While these works have been incisive, few authors have dedicated

¹ Rekha M. Chennattu (*Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006], esp. pp. 22-50) is one example of studies dealing with John 1:35-51 within a larger analysis. Her study of John 1:35-51 is set within the context of a discussion of a proper understanding of Johannine discipleship. Charles B. Cousar ("John 1:29-42," *Int* 31 [1977], 401-8) covers topics raised by 1:35-51 (witness, revelation, discipleship) in an attempt to press the "more urgent questions of faith and life" rather than another "scholarly tome on Christology" (p. 405). Matthew Vellanickal ("Discipleship According to the Gospel of John," *Jeev* 10 [1980]: 131-47) begins with an analysis of 1:35-42 as part of a larger examination of the process of discipleship. Rodney A. Whitacre (*John* [InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary Series 4; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999], 73) notes that "many sermons on missions and evangelism have rightly been based on these passages."

I use the term "historical-critical" to refer to those methodological approaches that are primarily interested in using the text as a window to profile the situation(s) of the community at the various stages of writing, identify the traditions and sources from which the author might have drawn, or view the various proposed stages of the text's development. In these approaches focused attention is usually given to the aporias, the additions and seams in the text, the identity of the unnamed disciple, the geographical accuracy of place names and their variants, the importance of this particular set of disciples (the number or names of the disciples as compared to the Synoptic tradition), the relationship between the Baptist and Jesus or between their respective communities, the varying communities represented in the Gospel, the sources for the confessional statements (particularly the Baptist's "Lamb of God" or Nathanael's "Son of God" or "King of Israel"), and the traditions that underlie the text.

extended attention to 1:35-51 and its formation of the reader.²

In light of this lack of development a more detailed, narrative-centered analysis is warranted for at least five other reasons. There is a rhetorically formulaic, repeated structure in 1:40-42 and 1:44-47 that has not been fully analyzed as to its structure and this structure's relationship to the larger section (vv. 35-51). Second, opinions vary as to whether 1:35-51 constitutes two, three, or four narrative days as part of a larger four-, seven-, or eight-day structure (1:19-51[2:11]).³ Decisions regarding the structure of 1:35-

² The two most recent monograph-length works are Hans-Jürgen Kuhn, *Christologie und Wunder: Untersuchungen zu Joh 1,35-51* (Biblische Untersuchungen 18; Regensburg: Pustet, 1988) and the 120-page dissertation extract by John Francis, "The Vision of Discipleship According to John 1:35-51" (Ph.D. diss., Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1997). Kuhn dedicates pp. 3-270 to a history of the interpretation of the passage and an exegetical analysis en route to a discussion of the passage's Christology in pp. 270-551. More recently, Stefan Schreiber ("Die Jüngerberufungsszene Joh 1,43-51 als literarische Einheit," *NTSU* 23 [1998]: 5-28) identifies John 1:43-51 as a literary unit and discusses its structure in relation to the development of major Christological and discipleship themes. Ferdinand Hahn ("Jüngerberufung Joh 1,35-51" in *Neues Testament und Kirche: für Rudolf Schnackenburg* [ed. Joachim Gnllka; Freiburg: Herder, 1974], 172-90) gives detailed attention to John 1:35-51 and uses its structure as a guide to developing its implications for readers.

³ A detailed analysis of various approaches or even an extended summary is not possible in my present work, however the following structures are representative of analyses that propose breaks in addition to the obvious temporal marker (τῆ ἐπαύριον) at 1:29, 35, 43: 3 days: 1:35-39/1:40-42/1:43-51; 4 days: 1:35-39/1:40-42/1:43-44(45, 46)/1:45(46, 47)-1:51. For example, see Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (Reading the New Testament Series; New York: Crossroad, 1992). Talbert divides 1:35-51 into three days that are part of what he proposes as a larger seven- or eight-day scheme that also includes 2:1-2:12. Talbert proposes that this echoes the creation sequence in Genesis 1 and symbolizes a new creation inaugurated with the creation of the new community. Thomas Barrosse ("The Seven Days of the New Creation in St. John's Gospel," *CBQ* 21 [1959]: 507-16) and M.-É. Boismard (*Du Baptême à Cana (Jean 1,19-2,11)* [LD 18; Paris: Cerf, 1956]) divide 1:35-51 into a four-day sequence that serves as part of a larger seven-day structure which symbolically references the start of a new creation. Others divide 1:35-51 into two days (following the temporal marker τῆ ἐπαύριον). For example, C. K. Barrett (*The Gospel According to St. John* [2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978], 158) suggests the two days are part of a larger six-day structure that reflects the Passover week and culminates in the Passover mentioned in 2:13 (the seventh day). Moloney (*Gospel*, 49-51) follows the temporal markers and argues that 1:35-51 is part of a larger seven-day sequence (1:19-2:11) formulated according to the revelation of God's glory in the Sinai traditions. Still others downplay the importance of the temporal markers. Rudolf Schnackenburg (*The Gospel According to John* [trans. Kevin Smyth; 3 vols.; Freiberg: Herder, 1968; New York: Seabury, 1980], 1:297), while acknowledging the organization of the text into a week, holds that the temporal markers serve merely as textual links to what has come before and therefore hold no major symbolic or theological significance. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 54-63) treats 1:35-51 as an independent section and rejects the suggestion of others that a "cosmic week" is symbolized. Instead, he takes the temporal references to be symbolic language that marks a "time/season of testimony" (1:19-51) and distinguishes it from the "time/season of signs" that begins in 2:1. Thus he ignores τῆ ἐπαύριον as a structural marker because his divisions follow what he has defined as a series of four "gossip networks" (roughly matching the four-day division), which he also describes in terms of a repeated "catechetical process."

51, the placement of it as one of the opening scenes of the narrative, and the introduction of disciples within the section affects how one views the section's interpretive significance for the rest of the narrative. In this regard, the effects of John 1:35-51 on interpretation have been cursorily noticed but rarely explored in depth. Third, any of the above mentioned decisions will in turn influence evaluations of how 1:35-51 prepares a reader to read the rest of the Gospel. John 1:35-51 is part of what has traditionally been understood as the beginning of the narrative of the Fourth Gospel (1:19-51). As part of the narrative introduction, discussion about the affectual significance of John 1:35-51—that is, how it prepares the reader to read the text—is worthy of more consideration.⁴

Fourth, John 1:35-51 evidences a major confluence of themes and characters. As the narrative moves from John the Baptist (1:19-34) to the ministry of Jesus (1:35-51), it

⁴ I understand 1:19-51 to be the opening scenes of the narrative, while acknowledging the indecision in scholarship as to what constitutes the beginning of the narrative of the Fourth Gospel. I consider 1:1-18 as the introduction or Prologue to the Gospel, as does R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Interpreting Biblical Texts Series; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 120. Culpepper speaks of two beginnings, of which John 1:19-51 is the “narrative introduction” to the Gospel. Culpepper suggests that this reflects the Fourth Gospel's two endings in chs. 20 and 21. Staley (*Kiss*, 50) takes 1:1-18 as the beginning of the narrative. There is also a considerable difference of opinion as to where the beginning section ends (1:51 or 2:11).

Aristotle (*Rhet.* 3.14), though dealing primarily with the beginnings of speeches, mentions the importance of introductions to musical pieces and poetry. Several modern scholars have addressed the importance of the beginning of a narrative as an interpretive lens or preparation for reading the rest of the narrative. Culpepper (“The Theology of the Gospel of John,” *RevExp* 85 [1988]: 418) addresses the importance of the story line of the text, that is, the order or sequencing of the plot and how the plot of the Fourth Gospel “shapes the reader's responses” by the way in which the story is told and thus “passages must be considered in context, in sequence, and as facets of a narrative rhetoric.” See also Menakhem Perry, “Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meaning,” *Poetry Today* 1 (1979): 35-64; Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 33-85; Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 19; M. C. Parsons, “Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading: Tracing Literary Theory on Narrative Openings,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 11-31; Robert C. Tannehill, “Beginning to Study ‘How Gospels Begin,’” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 187-88. Staley (*Kiss*, esp. pp. 79-83, 92-94) dedicates a brief discussion to 1:35-51 within the larger context of a discussion of 1:19-3:36. He suggests that certain features of 1:35-51 that are intended to create a rhetorical effect in the implied reader (mediated experiences or witness and the journey of discipleship) are traceable throughout the rest of the narrative. Jan du Rand (“Reading the Fourth Gospel Like a Literary Symphony,” in “*What is John?*” vol. 2, *Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel* [ed. Fernando F. Segovia. SBLSS 7; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 5-18) compares the opening scenes of the Johannine narrative with the opening of a symphony. He describes the first chapter of John as written in a particular Johannine key that affects the reader and to which John will return throughout the remainder of the narrative.

marks a major narrative shift as it introduces Jesus and disciples to the reader and presents the initial formation of a community of belief around Jesus. This initially informs a reader's understanding of Jesus's identity and the role of disciples as they relate to Jesus.⁵ In this way, the entrance of Jesus and the disciples marks the first major narrative shift in the Fourth Gospel and acts as a bridge to the rest of the Gospel by introducing major themes and rhetorical patterns developed in the ensuing narrative. Finally, John 1:35-51 conspicuously differs from what is commonly assumed to be its counterpart in the Synoptics, especially regarding these characters and the process by which the new community of disciples is assembled.⁶ Over against what has been labeled variously as a "Call Narrative/Form/Tradition" in the Synoptics, John 1:35-51 has several distinctive features: Jesus is noticeably passive, disciples call other disciples, and witnessing activity is given prominence.

With the above issues in mind, in this chapter I will examine the structure and narrative elements of John 1:35-51, as well as develop suggestions as to their affective significance, that is, how 1:35-51 prepares the reader for reading the rest of the Gospel.

⁵ I point to the second half (1:35-51) of the four-day sequence (1:19-51) as it serves to introduce the characters of Jesus and the disciples. It is also a potential starting point because, as the end of the opening four-day sequence, it acts as a bridge between what has come before and after it. Because of this, it is an interpretive key for what comes before and after. I hold the organizational structure of four consecutive days (1:19-51) marked by the occurrence of τῆ ἐπαύριον at 1:29, 35, and 43, of which 1:35-51 constitutes two days.

⁶ Schnackenburg (*John*, 1:283) holds that the opening days of the Gospel are dedicated to the formation of a new believing community formed as a front against unbelief. The initial gathering of disciples is treated very differently from the Synoptics, where Jesus personally calls all of his initial disciples. In John, disciples call other disciples. Jesus only calls Philip. Additionally, the specific numerical designation of the disciples as the "twelve" is not as important to the Fourth Gospel, occurring only in two locations (6:67-71 and 20:24), as it appears to be in the Synoptics. John provides no list of names and gives Nathanael, who is not mentioned in any of the Synoptics, narrative prominence within the newly formed community. In contrast to John, Matthew refers to "the twelve" nine times, specifically names the disciples (10:2-4), and associates them with the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28). Mark uses "the twelve" eleven times and mentions specific names (3:16-19). In Luke "the twelve" occurs seven times. Luke provides a list of names (6:13-16), and infers a relationship between the twelve disciples and the tribes of Israel (22:30).

As Jan du Rand observes, by the time the reader reaches the end of the first chapter, she “already feels, in the sense of projected expectation, in what direction the story is determined to develop.”⁷ I would add that by the time the reader reaches the end of this initial section, he or she has been attuned to notice certain features and themes that will reappear in the subsequent narrative. In the course of this analysis, I will argue that these features are intended to inform the reader about his or her responsibilities as a disciple and to inculcate certain actions as intrinsic to those responsibilities.

Parallel Sequences and Formulaic Structure in 1:37-42 and 1:43-47

A surface survey of John 1:35-51 reveals a patterned encounter-reaction sequence that contains parallel scenes vv. 40-42 and 44-47. Craig S. Keener has recognized a general *intentional* paralleling of 1:(37) 40-42 and 44-47 (40-42: Andrew Calls Peter; 44-47: Philip Calls Nathanael), and in my judgment has correctly understood this to be indicative of an authorial or narrative emphasis on witnessing. He describes the two sequences as the author’s development of a “theology of witness” and observes that 1:43-51 is “directly parallel[ing] the Andrew and Simon account.”⁸ Others, such as George R. Beasley-Murray, describe John 1:35-51 as developing a chain or series of testimonies, while Jerome H. Neyrey refers to a repeated “catechetical” pattern which is also understood as a theme of “recruitment.”⁹ They are not alone in recognizing this general

⁷ Du Rand, “Symphony,” 10.

⁸ Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:465, 479. Keener references (ibid., 1:479-80) a direct parallel, but his evaluation is based on the overall structure, which he describes as “one disciple bringing a prospective disciple to Jesus, and Jesus revealing the newcomer’s heart.” He also comments that there are “significant contrasts” between the two. He does not trace the parallels in any detail.

⁹ Beasley-Murray (*John* [WBC 36; 2d ed.; Nashville: Nelson, 1999], 22) points to the influence of the Baptist’s witnessing as a unifying theme that began in the Prologue and extends throughout the opening section. He identifies the Baptist’s witness to Jewish leaders (vv. 19-28) and to those who come to him

pattern and theme of witnessing, but its specific details and the implications of this structure consistently remained undeveloped beyond similar summations of the importance of witnessing.¹⁰ I maintain that scholars have not given due structural or narrative weight to the intentionally paralleled sequences, and thus have not fully grasped their exegetical or affective significance for the reader.

In what follows, I will first briefly survey some of the major works on the relationship between 1:40-42 and 1:44-47. I will then more closely examine the parallels in 1:40-42 and 1:44-47 and argue that the author has intentionally paralleled two sequences, going beyond a series of shared elements, and that the author has placed them at the core of 1:35-51. These steps will be taken in an attempt to argue that correspondences between the two sequences facilitate several objectives: the paralleled sequences 1) point to a larger, intentional, detailed correlation of the two days of 1:35-42 and 1:43-51; 2) make explicit that the primary activity of a disciple is witnessing, and provides content and illustrations for any witnessing effort; and 3) prepare the reader to be attentive to the missional activities of characters throughout the subsequent narrative. I maintain that, by this structure, the author endeavors to inculcate the activity of witnessing in the reader and prepare her for that activity.

A Survey of Approaches

In 1956, M.-É. Boismard identified an intentional parallel structuring of John

(vv. 29-34). He takes vv. 35-50 as indicative of the author's interest in the ongoing effects of the Baptist's witness and the creation of a "chain of testimonies." Neyrey (*Gospel*, 55-56) describes the pattern as one of "'insiders' catechizing others," and as indicative of a pattern of recruiting that appears throughout the Gospel in "condensed and fragmentary form." Neyrey actually identifies four instances in 1:35-50: John to two disciples, Andrew to Peter, an unnamed person to Philip, and Philip to Nathanael.

¹⁰ Boismard (*Baptême*, 17) and Brown (*Gospel*, 1:84-85) provide tables. Their tables will be addressed below.

1:37-42 and 1:43-47 and set these into a tabulated form alongside one another to illustrate the parallels.¹¹ Boismard begins with the repeated ἀκολουθέω (1:37, 43) as the initial correlative element. He places Andrew and the unnamed disciple following Jesus (1:37) in correspondence to Jesus's exhortation to Philip (1:43) to follow him. Boismard then points to the remaining parallel features: in the two sequences Philip and Andrew follow Jesus; both sequences provide a connected background for the characters; Andrew and Philip then claim that they have found the Messiah; and both cause a meeting to take place between Jesus and the one to whom they give their testimony. Boismard also notes that in both sequences Jesus sees people who have been brought to him and speaks a word concerning their "spiritual value." After surveying these shared features, Boismard concludes that "the Evangelist has thus schematized the two episodes and adapted one to the other."¹²

Though Boismard traces these parallels in detail and suggests an intentional harmonization of the two episodes, he does not develop any thematically significant implications of this structuring, nor does the structuring guide his analysis of 1:35-51, though he affirms that the structure illustrates that following Jesus is the essential characteristic of discipleship.¹³ He also later acknowledges that Andrew and Philip play a similar role in leading people to Christ.¹⁴ Thus, he places his table and list of parallels

¹¹ For reasons of space, Boismard's diagram will not be reproduced here. See Boismard, *Du Baptême à Cana (Jean 1,19-2,11)* (LD 18; Paris: Cerf, 1956), 17. In the development of his diagram he was possibly following the earlier brief comments of Amos B. Hulén ("The Call of the Four Disciples in John 1," *JBL* 67 [1948]: 153-57), to whom he makes reference. Hulén makes only a passing note that the actions of Philip and Nathanael parallel one another. He remarks that "everything is similar," yet he identifies only two corresponding features: in both scenes each disciple brings another disciple to Jesus and Jesus, in turn, speaks with the one brought (155-56).

¹² Boismard, *Baptême*, 17.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90

within a discussion of the role such parallels serve in facilitating the oral transmission of the stories and their catechetical use.¹⁵

Boismard divides both sequences (1:37-42 and 1:43-47) by placing part of each into what he has identified as four separate days within 1:35-51, each “day” centered on the call of a different disciple.¹⁶ These are, in turn, part of a larger seven-day structure that runs from 1:19 to 2:11. This seven-day structure, he argues, was intentionally employed by the Evangelist to correlate the seven-day creational sequence of Genesis with the messianic new creation in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁷ Thus, while pointing out what he suggests is a deliberate schematization of the disciples’ encounters with Jesus, he does not advance the exegetical implications of the schematized encounters. In fact, the parallels are superfluous for Boismard, since they are not treated as structural indicators significant for interpretation but are simply part of the larger seven-day sequence that has no relation to the paralleled encounters with Jesus; they are simply part of Jesus’s creation of a new human community.¹⁸

In dialogue with Boismard’s work, yet without direct reference to Boismard’s comments regarding the intentionality of the parallels or his diagram, Raymond E. Brown provides a similar diagram, identifying “parallels” and a “balance of parts” between 1:35-42 and 1:43-51:¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid., 15-17.

¹⁶ Ibid., 15. Boismard divides 1:35-42 into day 1 (1:35-39) and day 2 (1:40-42), 1:43-51 into day 3 (1:43-46) and day 4 (1:47-51).

¹⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁸ Boismard places little importance on the intentional schematization in his analysis of the passage. For example, when Barrosse (“New Creation,” 511-12), who builds directly on Boismard’s work in the details of each of the seven days, gives specific attention to the ecclesiological significance of days 4 (1:40-42) and 5 (1:43-44), he makes no mention of any parallel features.

¹⁹ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:84-85.

<p>§4 (35-42)</p> <p>35-39 Jesus encounters two disciples They follow him “Come and see”</p> <p>40-42 One of the two, Andrew, finds Simon Andrew: “We have found the Messiah”</p> <p>Jesus looks at Simon Jesus greets Simon as Cephas</p>	<p>§5 (43-50)</p> <p>43-44 Jesus (?) finds Philip “Follow me”</p> <p>45-50 Philip finds Nathanael Philip: “We have found the one described...” “Come and see”</p> <p>Jesus sees Nathanael coming Jesus greets Nathanael as a genuine Israelite</p>
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While Boismard and Brown agree on many of the parallels, they disagree on the initiating elements and the overall structure. Brown locates the beginning of the parallels (§4 Jesus encounters two disciples/§5 Jesus finds Philip) with initiatory elements that emphasize the actions of Jesus.²⁰ While the two agree on a structural break between vv. 39 and 40, Brown chides Boismard for his temporal-structural division of 1:43-51 (between vv. 46 and 47), arguing that it is without warrant and “neglects the *obvious similarity* between 45 and 40-41.”²¹ Brown instead locates a break between vv. 44 and 45.

Brown also identifies several imbalances or “imperfections.”²² For example, he refers to the two interactions between Jesus and disciples, noting that one (between Jesus, Andrew, and the unnamed disciple [vv. 38-39]) occurs at the beginning of §4, while the other, between Jesus and Nathanael (vv. 47-50), occurs toward the end of §5. He also

²⁰ Their differences appear to be thematically and theologically driven. Boismard begins with ἀκολουθέω as part of his reference to the importance of discipleship, while Brown’s initial elements draw attention to Jesus’s actions in initiating the relationship with would-be disciples. A critique of the judgments of both will be developed below.

²¹ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:85; emphasis added. Brown provides more specific critiques of Boismard’s table and comments (*Baptême*, 95). One such critique is that Brown points to Boismard’s temporal division between vv. 46 and 47, but Boismard elsewhere (*Baptême*, 17) links vv. 43-47 in his analysis of the parallels between 1:37-42 and 1:43-47.

²² Brown, *Gospel*, 1:85. His identification of these unbalanced parts seems to indicate that he judges these parts to correspond to one another as parallel features but are misplaced.

surmises that Jesus’s invitation to Andrew and the unnamed disciple to “come and see” (v. 39), which he understands to correspond to Philip’s invitation to Nathanael (v. 46), suffers from a similar order-displacement. Finally, Brown points to an apparent temporal break within §4 (marked by the time notation of v. 39) that serves to divide 1:35-42 into two days (1:35-39/1:40-42), a temporal break he describes as “sharper” than any such potential division in §5.²³

While Brown’s summary statements within his table aid the reader in following the structural similarities, they create several identifiable tensions because they do not reflect actual translations of the Greek text.²⁴ Likewise, his labels are at points incongruous with his surrounding commentary. For instance, there is a discrepancy between Brown’s verse labels (§4 [35-42]/§ 5 [43-50]) and his identified parallel sequences. Brown’s first element, “Jesus encounters two disciples,” occurs well after his label would indicate (v. 35). In identifying this as the starting point, Brown has omitted 1:35-37, the initial part of §4.

To what is Brown referring with this first element? His surrounding commentary identifies this encounter —Jesus turning to the disciples and noticing that they are following him (v. 38a) — as the initiation of the discipleship relationship.²⁵ Yet this identification presents exegetical problems when considered in light of his second

²³ Ibid. Brown’s comments at this point are confusing. While he describes the division in §4 as “sharper,” he follows that by saying “there is no such break in §5” and holds that the translation of §5 has been placed in one paragraph because there is no such break. Both in his comments and in his outline (p. 1:41-42), he places a section break between vv. 44 and 45, an apparent incongruity that will be addressed below.

²⁴ I will refer to Brown’s brief identifiers of the text’s content as “summary statements.” I have chosen this label because what he provides in the table are not always a direct translation but often a mere summary of events. For example, he employs the summary statement “Jesus encounters two disciples” though this is ambiguous in relation to a particular point in the text.

²⁵ Ibid., 1:78.

identified element, “They follow him.” There are two occurrences of ἀκολουθέω (vv. 37, 38) in reference to the disciples following Jesus. The first of these (v. 37) is *before* Jesus turns to engage them, and is a main verb, while the second (v. 38a) is a present attributive participle modifying αὐτούς, the ones to whom Jesus speaks after turning.

Grammatically, αὐτοὺς ἀκολουθοῦντας is resumptive: it describes the disciples in terms of what they were doing in the previous verse (v. 37) after hearing *the Baptist’s witness to Jesus*. It is thus describing them in terms of what they had been doing *before* Jesus noticed them. While it could be inferred that “turning and seeing” implies encountering, both στραφεῖς and θεασάμενος are aorist circumstantial participles set in relation to Jesus speaking to the two, who by implication and grammar were already following him.

Of course, it may be that Brown’s statement, “they follow him,” is intended to refer to the disciples going and seeing where Jesus is staying (v. 39b), but this would mean that their following occurs after what Brown has unambiguously identified as the third parallel element, “Come and see.”²⁶ No matter at what point one tries to place “Jesus encounters two disciples,” it severs grammatical constructions or contradicts Brown’s order. Given the resumptive nature of αὐτοὺς ἀκολουθοῦντας, it is surely improper to infer a causal relationship between Jesus’s encounter with the disciples (an “initiator” action of Jesus) and their following him when their following occurs before Jesus takes any action. Given the construction, the cause of the two disciples following

²⁶ Brown may be referring to the aorist ἦλθαν (v. 39) by this label, in which case it is certainly misleading. His comments (ibid., 1:79) appear to point in this direction. He links the two disciples going to see where Jesus is staying with the beginning of the discipleship process and labels it “the anticipation” of 12:26, where Jesus speaks of those who serve him as following him and being where he is. Yet elsewhere in his commentary (1:78) he describes ἀκολουθέω as “more than walking in the same direction, for ‘follow’ is the term par excellence for the dedication of discipleship.” Brown refrains from identifying the use of the word at this point with the time at which they become disciples of Jesus.

Jesus is their reception of the Baptist's witness (vv. 35-37).

The discrepancy between Brown's first element and the identified beginning of the section (v. 35), creates a lacuna (1:35-?). This lacuna is further highlighted by the notable tension in Brown's commentary between his accentuation of what he describes as Jesus's initiatory actions and his affirmation of the Baptist's role in bringing disciples to Jesus. Brown insists that "it is Jesus who takes the initiative by turning and speaking."²⁷ Yet Brown also describes vv. 35-36 as a bridge from the previous section which concentrates on the activity of the Baptist (1:19-34). This bridge reveals that the Baptist "initiates a chain reaction which will bring John the Baptist's disciples to Jesus and make them Jesus' own disciples," so fulfilling the promised results of the Baptist's testimony: "through John the Baptist men have begun to believe (1:7)."²⁸ Brown's analysis appears at this point to be divided: on the one hand, he sees a chain reaction that begins with the Baptist and results in belief and, on the other, he credits Jesus with initiating the call of all of the disciples that will later (2:11) result in their belief.²⁹

The final correlative elements in Brown's table raise similar questions regarding the extent of the parallels and the structure of 1:43-51. While the end of §4 is obviously correct ("Jesus greets Simon as Cephas"), his final element in §5 ("Jesus greets Nathanael as a true Israelite") severs the narrative flow and leaves vv. 48-51, the dialogue between Jesus and Nathanael, unaccounted for. Brown accurately notes that this dialogue is

²⁷ Ibid., 1:78.

²⁸ Ibid., 1:76. Brown explains the joining of the testimony of the Baptist (1:19-34) with 1:35-50 by means of "the simple expedient of repeating John the Baptist's testimony to Jesus as the Lamb." He then comments that its revelatory value has disappeared, being replaced by the function of initiating this chain reaction of belief.

²⁹ Brown may desire to distinguish between belief and discipleship, but the text, one could argue, does not (see 4:1; 9:28; 19:38).

without parallel in Jesus's words to Peter (v. 42); however, he suggests that this structural imbalance is created because the dialogue between Nathanael and Jesus should correspond to the conversation between the Baptist's two disciples and Jesus. He does not consider that this imbalance in dialogue could, in fact, be an intentional attempt on the part of the implied author to draw attention to the absence of any response from Peter.

There are no identifiable seams in vv. 47-51a. Jesus's revelatory word concerning Nathanael's character (v. 47) naturally leads to Nathanael's question, "From where do you know me?" (v. 48). Jesus's response is similarly linked to the continuing dialogue in vv. 49-51a. Thus the continuity of the dialogue lacks an identifiable point to place a break or transition.

Additionally, Brown's parallels cross what he has identified as a narrative break between vv. 39 and 40 in §4. This break has forced Brown, rather unwillingly, to propose a similar break between vv. 44 and 45 in §5 for the sake of maintaining the parallels. Even though Brown has described the relationship between the two sequences (1:35-42/1:43-50) as "parallels," a "balance of parts," and as having "obvious similarities" that betray the intentionality of an editor's hand, he has in fact, like Boismard, chosen not to use these identified parallels as structural guides. He temporally breaks the first sequence (1:37-42) into a two-day structure (1:35-39/1:40-42), even while acknowledging a reticence to do so.³⁰ Furthermore, although he corrects what he describes as Boismard's unwarranted *temporal* division of 1:43-50, he himself has placed a break between vv. 44 and 45. The break separates what he perceives to be distinct and growing revelations of Jesus's identity and creates a structural parallel between the two

³⁰ Ibid., 1:79. His reticence can be seen in his acknowledgment that the author has not distinctly made a temporal division "lest the connection with the preceding scene be lost."

sequences. Thus Brown, similarly to Boismard yet for different reasons, places structural divisions within the sequences in order to follow a larger structural/thematic schema. In his exegesis, the parallel sequences do not act as structural or interpretive guides.

Brown's arrangement of the sequences in paired columns gives the impression that he considers the sequences to be paralleled. However, in his comments he acknowledges only parallel elements and does not make much of the exegetical significance of the intentionally paralleled elements.

Brown's organizational decisions are guided by what he takes to be a process of "gradual deepening insight and a profounder realization of who it is that the disciples are following." This deepening insight runs from 1:19 to 2:1, and is dedicated both to the growing revelation of Jesus's identity and glory and the growth of the disciples' faith, which he suggests reach their climax in 2:11.³¹ Brown is apparently attempting a structural analysis of 1:35-51 based on an exegetical/theological assessment of the thematic developments and characterization in 1:35-51. This is part of his broader plan, to develop the evangelist's integration of Christological confessions and titles, belief in Jesus, and the introduction of new characters.³² This effort, however, fails to consider adequately the syntactical and grammatical issues. Nor does it account for the identified

³¹ Ibid., 1:77. See also 1:88. This process of Jesus increasingly taking the initiative in an effort directed toward the revelation of his glory finds its climax, according to Brown, in 2:1-11, where the sign reveals his glory and the author provides the first statement of the disciples' belief. Brown's outline (1:41) of the passage is organized according to the developing revelation of Jesus (1:35-39—"Jesus acknowledged as rabbi"; 1:40-42—"Jesus as Messiah"; 1:43-44—"Jesus as fulfilment of law and prophets"; 1:45-50—"Jesus as Son of God and King of Israel.")

³² Brown (ibid., 1:41) desires to accentuate the confessions and titles through his placement of them in the outline structure. He (1:77-78) refers to the passage as presenting a "conspectus of Christian vocation," but this label is ambiguous. A reference to Christian vocation would seem to imply an activity that a disciple of Jesus is called to undertake; however, for Brown it is a reflection of testimonies that reveal a deep Christology which represents a "gradual increase of understanding" that summarizes "discipleship in its whole development."

parallels or what he has termed the “chain reaction” that begins with the Baptist and results in disciples having faith in Jesus.

I turn next to Ferdinand Hahn’s essay. Hahn, with reference to Boismard and Brown, provides an extended form- and tradition-critical examination of 1:35-51 in which he traces the parallel sequences. He describes the sequences of 1:41-42 and 45-48 as revealing “a very tight and uniform shape” and claims that, even with a modified confessional statement in 1:46, “it evidences a formal similarity between vv. 41-42a and vv. 45 ff.”³³ In contrast to Boismard and Brown, Hahn uses them both as the basis for a structural analysis and as the interpretive guide for his exegesis of 1:35-51.

Similarly to Brown and Boismard, Hahn identifies parallel features: the repetition of “he found” and “we have found”; the Messianic confessions; and a correspondence between the renaming of Peter and addressing Nathanael as an Israelite in whom there is no guile.³⁴ In contrast to Brown, Hahn correlates Philip’s invitation to “come and see” (v. 46) not with Jesus’s invitation to the two disciples who follow him (v. 39), but rather with the actions of Andrew in leading Peter to Jesus.³⁵ In making this correlation, his analysis creates a more extensive correspondence between the two sequences and is able to account for an element within the structure that Brown does not.

In distinction to Boismard and Brown, Hahn accounts for vv. 35-37 by suggesting that the Baptist is the “primary cause” for Andrew and the unnamed disciple becoming disciples of Jesus. The Baptist’s witness that causes two of his disciples to follow Jesus

³³ Hahn, “Jüngerberufung,” 178. Hahn’s identification of parallels is at a micro- and macro-level. His form-critical analysis identifies three elements of the call-story form: a situational indicator, a Messianic confession, and someone leading someone else to Jesus. He later incorporates v. 44 into the parallel sequences.

³⁴ Ibid., 178-80. Hahn argues that such commonalities should attract attention.

³⁵ Ibid., 178.

intentionally corresponds to Jesus's call of Philip.³⁶ Additionally, in contrast to Boismard and Brown, Hahn argues that positing a new day at the end of 1:39 contradicts the chronological schema of 1:29, 35, and 43. Hahn maintains that the timing of the disciples' stay in v. 39 ("they stayed with him that day") and the subsequent mention of the tenth hour (v. 39), which would place the time at four in the afternoon, allows sufficient time for Andrew to find Peter and for everyone then to gather for the evening meal.³⁷ He then argues that, rather than indicating a division or potential separation, the author actually strengthens the connection between 1:35-39 and 1:40-42 with these two elements. In doing this the author emphasizes that, in response to spending time with Jesus, Andrew immediately calls someone else.³⁸

According to Hahn, the author has patterned the two sequences to create a correspondence and thus a larger, shared structural pattern of two undivided parallel days.³⁹ He also suggests that the author has altered a recognizable disciple call-form for his own purposes. He does this by replacing Jesus's call to follow him with the Messianic confessions of disciples and their leading others to Jesus.⁴⁰

These alterations, Hahn maintains, and the intentional paralleling of the two days, allow the author to place the actions of disciples calling other disciples—and the accompanying Messianic confessions—in the foreground.⁴¹ In this regard, the sequences

³⁶ Ibid., 182. As will be discussed below, Hahn perceives this to be the author's intention to relate the experience of future disciples at the author's time of writing (post-Easter and thus indirect) with the experience of those who originally encountered Jesus.

³⁷ Ibid., 184.

³⁸ Ibid., 186. Hahn judges that the editor intended to create a close interlock between vv. 35-39 and vv. 40-42 with the use of *πρῶτον*, which indicates that Andrew immediately went out that evening and found his brother Peter.

³⁹ Ibid., 180.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 178.

⁴¹ Ibid., 190.

point to two parallel days, and this identified, intentional structure serves as a guide in Hahn's interpretation of 1:35-51.⁴² He concludes that the Evangelist had a fourfold intention in mind: 1) to parallel the indirect call through the Baptist with the direct call of Jesus; 2) to establish the precedent that disciples newly won in turn call people through a Messianic confession; 3) to demonstrate that these confession-calls also lead to a direct meeting with Jesus; and finally 4) to incorporate, within this structure, the "catalog" of Christological titles.⁴³ In paralleling the experiences of those who come to faith through the Baptist's witness and those who come to faith through Jesus's call, Hahn proposes that the author has brought together the direct call of the original disciples at the time of Jesus and a later generation of followers who have not been directly called by Jesus.⁴⁴ This structuring also serves the Evangelist's purpose of promoting, for all subsequent generations, the paradigmatic nature of a discipleship that bears witness and brings others to Jesus.

Hahn has brought together the intentional structuring, characterization, narrative flow, and Christological titles in a provocative way. Nevertheless, his arguments regarding the parallel structuring and its interpretive importance have gone largely unnoticed by subsequent scholars.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid., 182.

⁴³ Ibid. Hahn's development of these will be addressed below.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 190. The indirect call initiated by John the Baptist would *ex hypothesi* be important to this later group, who had not personally encountered Jesus.

⁴⁵ Hahn's article is absent from the bibliographies and comments on John 1:35-51 in many of the major commentaries. Herman N. Ridderbos (*The Gospel According to John* [trans. J. Vriend; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997]) makes two references to the article in his comments on John 1:35-51, but neither makes use of Hahn's conclusions about the parallels. Ernst Haenchen, (*A Commentary on the Gospel of John* [ed. R. W. Funk and U. Busse; trans. R. W. Funk; 2 vols.; Hermeneia; London: SCM; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984]) lists the article in the bibliography on the section but makes no mention of it in the comments. Others make no mention of the article: D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic,

One notable exception to the lack of interaction with Hahn's work is that of Francis J. Moloney. Moloney, in dialogue with Boismard, Brown, and Hahn, works within a six-day structural framework in which 1:35-42 is day three and 1:43-51 is day four.⁴⁶ In doing this, Moloney is guided, like Hahn, by the specific temporal marker (τῆ ἐπαύριον) of 1:35 and 43, rather than by a proposed temporal division at 1:40 (or anywhere else), a division that he calls "little more than speculation."⁴⁷

Although he suggests that 1:43-51 is an independent scene, Moloney identifies several shared features between 1:40-42 and 43-51. He points to what he terms a "deliberate repetition" of the actions of Andrew and Philip: both "find" someone else and repeat "we have found" in reporting their encounter with Jesus. Moloney also holds that the confessions of Andrew and Philip are similar because of a shared referent in OT messianic expectation.⁴⁸ For Moloney, in contrast to Boismard, Brown, and Hahn, this does not evidence two intentionally paralleled sequences, but indicates rhetorically that the "rhythm of the previous day is repeated."⁴⁹

Moloney's distinct interpretive direction lies in his understanding of the role these repetitions play. For Moloney, the claim "we have found," on the lips of Andrew (v. 41), is a "blatant untruth."⁵⁰ Likewise, the repetition of "we have found" by Philip (v. 45) indicates that the disciples are following Jesus "under their own terms" and further reveals Philip's intentional deception of Nathanael: "There is a deliberate repetition of the verb 'to find,' which leads Philip to tell a lie... Jesus found Philip (v. 43), but now Philip,

2004); John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1-4* (ICC; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009); Whitacre, *John*; Beasley-Murray, *John*; Keener, *Gospel*.

⁴⁶ Moloney, *Gospel*, 53-54.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, *Gospel*, 55; *idem*, *Belief*, 69, 71.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, *Belief*, 71.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, *Gospel*, 60 n. 41.

in repeating the words of Andrew (see v. 41), tells a lie.”⁵¹ According to Moloney, “the theological point that is made by this untruth is that true discipleship flows from the initiative of Jesus.”⁵²

Like Brown, Moloney judges that the narrative’s design emphasizes Jesus’s character and initiatory actions; however, he argues that the shift in emphasis does not occur until 1:43, with the temporal change (τῆ ἐπαύριον) and the calling of Philip.⁵³ For him, the temporal shift and direct call indicate that 1:43-51 “has a character of its own,” initiating a new movement in the narrative.⁵⁴ The emphasis on Jesus’s initiatory action, Moloney maintains, includes Nathanael’s discipleship: “Nathanael does not come to faith by seeing Jesus; Jesus has seen him first. The initiative lies with Jesus.”⁵⁵ But his argument that a marked shift to Jesus’s initiatory activity occurs at 1:43 contradicts his insistence that the narrator desires to draw attention to Jesus’s initiatory actions as well in Jesus’s encounter with Peter (v. 42), where Moloney likewise maintains that “the initiative is entirely with Jesus.”⁵⁶ This attention on Jesus’s initiatory actions in

⁵¹ Ibid., 70. Moloney then suggests that the “we have found” coupled with an OT messianic confession also reveals that the disciples “fall back into their own way of understanding Jesus” (see also *ibid.*, 55).

⁵² Ibid., 60 n. 41. Moloney states that this is the case across the Synoptic and Johannine traditions and further reveals both an incorrect knowledge of Jesus and the failure of the first disciples when measured against the Johannine understanding of true discipleship. See also *idem*, *Gospel*, 61 n. 45; *idem*, *Belief in the Word: Reading the Fourth Gospel, John 1-4* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 70.

⁵³ Ibid., *Belief*, 70; *idem*, *Gospel*, 55, 61 n. 43. Moloney notes that this is the first time in the narrative that someone becomes a disciple at the initiative of Jesus.

⁵⁴ Ibid., *Gospel*, 55. This thematic distinction may make positing a parallel between the days untenable, especially since he identifies the development of the narrative as a seven-day new creation process that results in the revelation of Jesus’s δόξα.

⁵⁵ Ibid., *Belief*, 71. I would suggest that simply seeing someone first does not qualify as an initiatory action. Certainly Jesus first “sees” Nathanael sitting under the fig tree (v. 48) and addresses Nathanael first (v. 47), but Philip’s invitation to Nathanael to “come and see” is the initiatory mechanism that draws Nathanael. The desire to emphasize Jesus’s initiatory role might be explained as a theological predilection. It may also reflect a reading of the Johannine text through the lens of the Synoptic call narratives rather than a conclusion from the Johannine narrative.

⁵⁶ Ibid., *Gospel*, 55. This contradiction is further evident in Moloney’s (*Belief*, 68) contention that in Jesus’s statement to Peter there is a hint “that true discipleship is not the result of the initiative of characters who find and follow Jesus. To show the primacy of Jesus’s seeking and finding disciples, the

Moloney's comments is not limited to the encounters with Philip, Nathanael, and Peter, but extends all the way back to Jesus's encounter with Andrew and the unnamed disciple (vv. 35-40), where "Jesus' initiative offers a hint of an answer to their hopes and questions."⁵⁷ However, Moloney's assertion about the shift at 1:43 to Jesus's initiatory actions turns out to be a chimera, possibly because he denies the adequacy of the faith of these first disciples, a faith which he argues begins to develop only once Jesus's glory is revealed (2:11) but does not come to fulfillment until after the resurrection.

Moloney's negative evaluation of the disciples' understanding and faith is further illustrated by his estimation that 1:35-51 contains a series of inadequate faith confessions that he maintains reveals an overtly wrong understanding of Jesus, an understanding that is limited to Jewish messianic expectations. He describes Andrew's confession (v. 41) as falling short of a "correct recognition of Jesus" when considered in light of the Prologue and the testimony of the Baptist.⁵⁸ Likewise, he deems Philip's testimony to Nathanael as "wrong" in its understanding of Jesus because the claim that Jesus is "from Nazareth" and the "son of Joseph" clearly contradicts the origins of Jesus as described in the Prologue, even though no character could possibly have this knowledge.⁵⁹ And while Moloney describes the confession of Nathanael ("Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You

initiative comes from Jesus in his recognition of Simon, the son of John, and the promise that he shall be called Cephas (v. 42)."

⁵⁷ Ibid., *Belief*, 66. Moloney's accentuation of Jesus's initiatory role with Andrew does not appear in his later commentary on John.

⁵⁸ Ibid., *Gospel*, 54-55. Moloney ties the inadequacy of Andrew's faith confession to the "lie" that he tells in claiming that he has found the Messiah. He also argues that Andrew's reference to Jesus as "Rabbi" (v. 38) after the Baptist's testimony of Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (v. 35) indicates a woefully inadequate understanding of who Jesus is. See also his comments in idem, *Belief*, 68-69.

⁵⁹ Ibid., *Belief*, 70. Moloney's (*Gospel*, 55) specific objections to these confessions are: 1) that they are rooted in "traditional hopes" of Jesus as a Jewish Messiah, and 2) that the disciples do not "fully understand their Johannine meaning" because a "proper understanding of Jesus as the fulfillment of OT expectation would eclipse the promises of the OT." He points to the more characteristically Johannine epithets "Son of God" and "Lamb of God" rather than "from Nazareth" or the "Son of Joseph" as examples of proper faith.

are the King of Israel” [v. 49]) as the “climax” of the series of confessions, he still holds that it “falls short of the mark” because “[e]xalted as these confessions may be, they are still bound by Nathanael’s own culture, religion, and history.”⁶⁰

Thus, even though Moloney acknowledges that the author of the narrative “is saying something to the reader about the mission of the disciple, calling other disciples,” a point that he recognizes is often made by other commentators, his evaluation of these characters’ deceptive claims and the inadequacy of their confessions, as well as his stress on Jesus’s initiatory actions, result in the conclusion that these disciples are, in fact, negative exemplars.⁶¹ In direct contrast to Hahn’s evaluation, Moloney claims that the actions of the disciples are *negatively* paradigmatic.⁶²

While I agree with Moloney that the narrative summons the reader “to a deeper response in faith to the coming of Jesus,” I will argue that the disciples are, in fact, paradigmatic as exemplars of faith. The evaluation of an adequacy of a character’s faith is not to be located primarily at the level of knowledge of Jesus’s identity or the content of his/her confession as a character. As I will endeavor to show, for the implied author of the Fourth Gospel, one—if not the primary—measure of faith is bearing witness. While the disciples in 1:35-51 admittedly have a great deal to learn about Jesus’s identity, these first followers of Jesus generate paradigms for the narrative and for the reader’s expectations of what discipleship entails. Additionally, Moloney’s position regarding an adequate Johannine faith, that it must be divorced from an OT matrix, creates an awkward tension with the implied author’s overt attempts to portray Jesus in terms of OT

⁶⁰ Ibid., *Gospel*, 56.

⁶¹ Ibid., *Belief*, 70.

⁶² Ibid., 76 n. 74. He makes pointed reference to his differing from Hahn’s positive evaluation of the actions of the disciples.

imagery and symbolism as part of his strategy to create belief in readers.⁶³ Any implied reader's reference frame necessarily includes these images, otherwise the communication between author and reader falters.⁶⁴ Finally, I will suggest that his position that true faith cannot be evidenced until after the resurrection leaves the implied reader without exemplar throughout the narrative, even the post-resurrection scenes. As many have concluded, the characters are presented as exemplars and are acknowledged as having faith by Jesus at various points in the narrative and through the various ways the implied author develops other characters.

More recently, Kasper Bro Larsen's work on the Greco-Roman recognition scene (*anagnōrīsis* scenes) identifies a fivefold patterned sequence in John 1:35-51 that he calls "a chain of recognition scenes." In these Jesus 1) moves toward an observer; 2) the observer recognizes him; 3) the observer goes to inform another potential observer; 4) the new observer goes to meet Jesus; and 5) as a result the new observer recognizes Jesus as well.⁶⁵ According to Larsen, these scenes operate in dichotomous relationship between "showing/seeing" and "telling/hearing."⁶⁶ He rightly claims that the author has transformed the ancient recognition scenes, especially the "move of attendant reactions," by having his observing characters move "toward mission and testimony addressed to

⁶³ The fulfillment of an image or that something "exceeds" its image does not mean that the image creates an inadequate understanding; but it may instead supply a foundation for understanding. Moloney himself uses OT creation imagery to describe what the author is doing in 1:19-2:11.

⁶⁴ Narratologists describe the shared knowledge, imagery, and language in varied ways. Kearns (*Narratology*, 56) refers to this as the element of "naturalization" that is needed for communication to take place. Lubomir Dolezal ("Fictional Worlds: Density, Gaps, and Inference," *Style* 29 [1995]: 201-15, esp. 204-8) uses the term "encyclopedia."

⁶⁵ Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John* (Biblical Interpretation Series 93; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 105-6. Larsen also calls Jesus's encounters with the initial disciples a "catena of minor encounter stories that are linked together by the spatial movement of Jesus and the disciples" (104-5).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

new, potential recognizers of Jesus.”⁶⁷

In his analysis of 1:35-51, Larsen marks a correspondence between Jesus going to the Baptist and Jesus going to find Philip as the first elements, while Jesus encountering the Baptist’s disciples and Jesus encountering Philip are the second, though primary, elements.⁶⁸ In doing this, he acknowledges the affinities between his analysis and Brown’s in regards to the structure and corresponding elements. He, also like Brown, gives primary attention to Jesus as the initiator of both sequences: Jesus moves toward the Baptist and Jesus moves towards Philip to start the “cognitive chain of reaction.”⁶⁹ Where Larsen differs with Brown is his separation of 1:35-42 and 1:43-51 into “doublets” of recognition scenes, thus totaling four scenes organized by character. He recognizes that the key to what he identifies as the first paired recognition scenes (Jesus and the two disciples/Jesus and Philip) is the “spreading of the message so that new recognizers may come into being.”⁷⁰ Yet for Larsen, the primary purpose of the first chapter of John is “to establish Jesus’ presence and bring him into sight.”⁷¹

The tension between what he perceives to be the purpose and the key to the scenes is evident when Larsen curiously tries to correlate the first recognition scenes. As the first element in his sequences, Larsen conflates the Baptist’s recognition of Jesus and Andrew and the unnamed disciple’s recognition of Jesus. Thus he correlates the response of the two disciples to Jesus’s invitation in v. 39 (following Jesus) with the response of Philip to Jesus’s call (v. 43). This causes him to pass over any clear identification of the

⁶⁷ Ibid., 220. This is a term borrowed from Larsen for whom the “move of attendant reactions” is descriptive of the recognizer’s actions in response to the recognition. See further Chapter 3.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 105.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 106. Elsewhere, Larsen acknowledges (104) that Jesus acts as both “actor and re-actor” in the scenes.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 107.

⁷¹ Ibid., 111.

move of attendant reaction in vv. 35-41. Though he elsewhere speaks of witnessing or mission as the move of attendant reaction, Larsen's readers are left to assume that following Jesus is the move of attendant reaction in these opening scenes. This is surmised when he comments that there is no marked cognitive or attendant reaction in Philip's recognition scene, apparently since the reader is not told that Philip followed Jesus.⁷² Thus Larsen can only surmise that Philip's recognition of Jesus has taken place by his subsequent witness.

Larsen goes on to identify "spreading the message" as the next element of the recognition scenes and acknowledges that the reaction of the disciples in witnessing matches that of the Baptist. He even evaluates the repetition of witnessing as a "model of reaction."⁷³ Yet witnessing is not what he identifies as the move of attendant reactions in these scenes. This may be why he gives only slight weight to the role witnessing plays throughout the rest of the Gospel as the marker of attendant reactions. I would suggest that in both sequences witnessing/confession is *the* move of attendant reactions as the indication that recognition, and thus conversion, has taken place.

Larsen also curiously presupposes that Peter's recognition of Jesus begins in 1:42, though none of the elements of a recognition scene exists, and Peter's encounter lacks the markers of what Larsen describes as a process of "mutual recognition" in the Peter and Nathanael scenes.⁷⁴ He takes the narrative silence of Peter (v. 42) as a prolonged recognition that develops throughout the course of the story, which leads him to a

⁷² Ibid., 106.

⁷³ Ibid., 107.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 108-9. For Larsen, that Peter's confession (mutual recognition) is delayed until 6:69 and Peter is portrayed as a significant disciple in the rest of the narrative "shows that Peter's process of recognition took its beginning" in 1:42.

positive portrayal of Peter rather than taking Peter's silence as an indication of his lack of faith, especially when considered within the sequencing of characters; Peter (and his lack of a confession) is set in correspondence to Nathanael and his strong confession (v. 49).

Larsen's undefined inclusion/exclusion of scenes as recognition scenes, such as Peter's encounter with Jesus, and his tension in identifying recognition, witnessing, and the move of attendant reactions is evident in Larsen's exegesis of other passages. In this regard, he inexplicably passes over other scenes that appear to fit the pattern, for example Martha's recognition of Jesus in John 11. This may be because the elements of the type scene, though present as Culpepper observes, are too disordered when compared to the typical type-scene. Additionally, while he acknowledges that witnessing is one of the attendant reactions of characters, Larsen overlooks their witnessing efforts as signs of their belief, as in his exegesis of John 9, where he takes the move of attendant reaction to be misplaced. Although I agree with much of Larsen's analysis, his lens (ancient *anagnōrisis* scenes) appears to have curtailed his investigation of how other similar scenes in the Fourth Gospel modify typical *anagnōrisis* scenes, while he accepts others (Peter) as recognition scenes even when they provide little evidence for doing so.

Conclusion

Several points of agreement and disagreement arise from this admittedly brief and selective survey of the treatments of John 1:35-51. While there is a general consensus regarding the intentionality of the parallels between 1:35-42 and 1:43-51, the number and extent of those parallels vary. Hahn speaks in terms of parallel days, while Brown and Moloney speak in terms of parallel elements. There is general agreement on a narrative break at v. 43 with the specific reference to "the next day" (see also 1:29, 35).

Nevertheless, for various reasons, there is disagreement as to whether other breaks occur between vv. 39 and 40 or in 1:43-51.

These structural disagreements are related to judgments regarding the exegetical and theological import of the passage, which is more generally a question of the relationship between form and function. If the passage is understood to be constructed to draw attention to the individual calls of disciples and a growing revelation of Jesus's identity, then the proposed narrative breaks that separate Jesus's call of, and exchange with, each individual disciple could be warranted. If the structural parallels between the two sequences mitigate against narrative breaks other than at 1:42, this would more readily draw attention to the witnessing activity of the disciples and their efforts to bring others to Jesus, depending upon the initial element in the sequences.

Additionally, disagreement exists as to whether Jesus's actions (as in the Synoptics) or the disciples' and the Baptist's witnessing efforts initiate disciples following him. If the structure is intended to give primacy to Jesus as the initiator, as Brown and Moloney insist, then the paradigmatic nature of the disciples' witnessing efforts is downplayed. However, if the implied author intended to give prominence to the initiatory actions of the disciples through the structuring of the sequences and days, as I am arguing, then explanations as to the Fourth Gospel's unique "call narrative" (where disciples witness to and call other disciples) warrants an investigation as to the possible reasons why the implied author has structured the narrative opening in this way. It also invites a pursuit of the implications such structuring has for the implied reader in the process of reading and her understanding of faith and discipleship in the Fourth Gospel.

Chapter 2

John 1:40-42 and 1:44-47: Parallels and Paradigms

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I surveyed several treatments of John 1:35-51. I concluded that scholarship readily acknowledges the existence of parallel elements in the two opening days (1:35-42/43-51), but it is reticent to describe them as fully paralleled sequences. Part of the reason for this is the perceived structural breaks and proposed misplacements of several of the elements. I also suggested that this reticence is attributable to an exegesis of the passage that draws attention to the unfolding revelation of Jesus's identity or a desire to attribute the call of all of the disciples, who are introduced in 1:35-51, to Jesus rather than to other disciples or to the Baptist.

In this chapter I will argue that the parallel sequences extend beyond the sequences themselves to incorporate their respective days. These intentionally paralleled days have been designed to lead the reader in a process of discovering the textual intention, that is, the didactic purpose, of the text. I maintain that this textual feature, as part of the initial scenes of the opening of the narrative portion of the Fourth Gospel, has been designed by the implied author to draw the authorial audience's (the implied reader's) attention to the activity of witnessing and not, as has been traditionally suggested, to the unfolding identity of Jesus or his initiatory actions in calling disciples. I will then suggest some implications of my analysis.

1:37-42 and 1:43-47: An Extended Analysis

These questions can fruitfully be answered by starting with an examination of the paralleled sequences of 1:40-42 and 1:44-47. I have tabulated the sequences in Greek to

exhibit more readily the extent of the parallel elements and structure and to illustrate that the parallels are far more significant than English translations indicate. The table will serve as the starting point for my analysis.¹

John 1:40-42

[40] Ἦν (Ἀνδρέας)
[ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος (Πέτρου) εἷς ἐκ
τῶν δύο τῶν ἀκουσάντων παρὰ
Ἰωάννου καὶ ἀκολουθησάντων αὐτῷ]
[41] εὕρισκει οὗτος πρῶτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τὸν
ἴδιον Σίμωνα καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ

[Εὐρήκαμεν (τὸν Μεσσίαν, ὃ ἐστὶν
μεθερμηνευόμενον Χριστός).]

[42] (ἤγαγεν αὐτὸν) πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν.
ἐμβλέψας (αὐτῷ) ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν

(Σὺ εἶ Σίμων ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννου, σὺ
κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς,)
ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος.

John 1:44-47

[44] ἦν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος
[ἀπὸ Βηθσαιδά, ἐκ τῆς πόλεως
(Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου).]
[45] εὕρισκει Φίλιππος τὸν Ναθαναὴλ
καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ

[[ὄν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ
καὶ οἱ προφήται] εὐρήκαμεν,
Ἰησοῦν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ
Ναζαρέτ. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ...]

[46] λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Φίλιππος· (ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε.)
[47] εἶδεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (τὸν Ναθαναήλ)
ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει (περὶ
αὐτοῦ),

(ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ.)

In both accounts, the reader is initially presented with the disciple's name and a brief description of him, both of which share the imperfect ἦν as part of a predicate construction followed by the descriptions, both of which mention Peter.² This is

¹ The spacing between lines is added for the ease of comparison and is not meant to relate to the discussion of structure. Offsets are used for ease of identification. Direct parallels are underlined while equivalencies are set in parentheses.

² Admittedly, the parallels do not extend to the details of the content. The description of Andrew addresses his relationship to Peter while the note about Philip is geographical. In commenting on 1:44, many give attention to Bethsaida and its location (Keener, *Gospel*, 1:481-82; Moloney, *Gospel*, 61; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:313; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:82) rather than the reference back to the characters in the previous scene. Those who address Andrew and Peter note that these are Greek names (Moloney, *Gospel*, 61; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:82), draw attention to the discrepancies between the Synoptics and John regarding Peter's residence (Keener, *Gospel*, 1:481-2; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:82), or cursorily note that the author has made a connection between Andrew, Peter, and Philip. Boismard (*Baptême*, 90) maintains that Andrew and Philip serve analogous roles. The intentionality of the parallels is suggested by the common reference to both Andrew and Peter (1:44). This serves a twofold purpose: 1) it creates a stronger interplay/parallel

followed, in both sequences, by accounts of disciples finding another person and speaking to him about Jesus. In both, the present tense εὐρίσκει and the phrase καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ appear.³ Both have εὐρήκαμεν as part of the announcement that Andrew and Philip make about whom they have found.⁴ The parallels continue with Jesus's actions. In both scenes, he looks upon the one who is led to him and speaks to him about his identity. The aorist participle ἐμβλέψας and the aorist indicative εἶπεν, to relate the actions of ὁ Ἰησοῦς, appear in the Andrew/Peter sequence in the same order as in the Philip chain, in which we find the aorist εἶδεν and the present λέγει. The former are semantic equivalents, while the latter differ merely by tense.

What I have termed equivalencies are also readily identifiable. As noted, 1:44-47 makes reference to both Andrew and Peter in providing the background for Philip's character, connecting 1:44-47 to the previous scene's opening.⁵ Likewise, Andrew's description of Jesus as "the Messiah," and the author's translation of the term into Greek, is equivalent to Philip's description of Jesus as "the one whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets wrote about."⁶ The two confessions are equivalent in content and set at

between the two days; and 2) reference to Andrew and Peter without the unnamed disciple raises the reader's expectations by drawing attention to Andrew's witness to Peter. This leads the reader to anticipate that something similar will take place with Nathanael; he will in turn find someone to whom he can bear witness or invite to meet Jesus.

³ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:482) observes the repeated use of εὐρίσκω in his comments on 1:45 but links this to 1:43 instead of 1:41.

⁴ Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:314) observes the parallel between Philip finding Nathanael and Andrew finding his brother, but simply passes over this (it is the first comparative remark he makes between the two scenes) to address more historically generated questions, such as the identity of Nathanael. Moloney (*Gospel*, 55, 61) acknowledges the parallels between the description/confession of Andrew and Philip as well.

⁵ The connection maintains the anonymity of the unnamed disciple, who is not mentioned in 1:44. This may be because the witnessing activities are in view, while the implied reader is herself experiencing the witness of the unnamed disciple. The connection between Andrew's and Philip's actions builds anticipation in the reader; what Andrew does to Peter (witness and bring), Philip will likewise do to someone else.

⁶ Hahn ("Jüngerberufung," 178) considers both to be messianic confessions. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:475) describes both as "testimonies about Jesus' messiahship," and later (1:482) describes Philip's testimony as "identical in sense to that of Andrew." Neyrey (*Gospel*, 55-56) sets the confessions in parallel

corresponding points in the sequence without exact repetition. Such variations in repetitions or patterns were accepted rhetorical devices employed in both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature and had been a hallmark of literary convention since Homer.⁷

Philip's invitation to Nathanael to "Come and see" (Ἐρχου καὶ ἴδε [1:46]) should be viewed as equivalent to Andrew leading Peter to Jesus (1:42a), rather than, as Brown has argued, as corresponding to Jesus's invitation to the two disciples who followed him (Ἐρχεσθε καὶ ὄψεσθε [v. 39]).⁸ In fact, in contrast to the call narratives in the Synoptics, Philip does not actually follow Jesus when called to do so. His first action is to go and find someone else, which creates a parallel to Andrew's actions. While Hahn suggests that the repetition of "come" and "see" in vv. 39, 42 might point to a developing theme and corresponding elements, the situational differences between the two are significant enough to warrant other considerations.⁹ The paralleled sequencing of elements both

as part of the catechetical process that begins with disciples naming Jesus and ascribing titles to him. He considers Philip's confession to be more significant. Moloney (*Gospel*, 54-55), while not describing them as equivalent messianic references, suggests that both Andrew's and Philip's inadequate confessions express similar "traditional hopes" about the coming messiah. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:315) does not acknowledge a direct parallel between Andrew's and Philip's confessions, but instead links them through cross references, and describes Philip, because of his confession, as one of the "questing men, well-schooled in Scripture, who awaited the Messiah." Brown (*Gospel*, 1:83) notes that Philip has not specifically told Nathanael that Jesus is the Messiah, though in his diagram he has set the two confessions in parallel. He elsewhere suggests (1:86) that two different people are referenced with the two descriptions: the one whom Moses wrote about in the law (the promised "Prophet-like-Moses") and the one described in the prophets, whom he believes is "much harder to identify" and could be the Messiah, the Son of Man from Daniel, or Elijah.

⁷ Charles H. Talbert ("Artistry and Theology: An Analysis of the Architecture of JN 1,19-5,47," *CBQ* 32 [1970]: 362) notes that perfect symmetry was to be avoided in Greco-Roman literature. Phyllis Tribble (*Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* [GBS; Old Testament Series; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994], 118-20) labels the use of variation in Hebrew literature "symmetrophobia." Samuel Eliot Bassett (*The Poetry of Homer* [new and rev. ed. Bruce Heiden; Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2003], 141) speaks of the freedom within the form as one of the things that marks Homer's poetry.

⁸ Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:309) likewise links Jesus's invitation to Andrew to Philip's invitation to Nathanael, viewing both as a "promise" that culminates in the assurance to Nathanael in 1:50 and all disciples in 1:51 about seeing greater things. Yet, as noted above, he does not argue for parallel sequences or days. Moloney (*Belief*, 71) claims that Philip repeats Jesus's invitation, thereby including him in the experience of the first two disciples.

⁹ Hahn, "Jüngerberufung," 182. In both instances the words are coming from one disciple who has encountered Jesus and are directed toward another, potential disciple. See also Hahn's description of

prior and subsequent to this point promote assessing Andrew's and Philip's invitations to another potential disciple as equivalent elements. This maintains their respective positions in the sequencing of events, after their confessions and before Jesus's revelation to the coming disciple.

Finally, Jesus's pronouncements to both Peter (v. 42b) and Nathanael (v. 47) should also be viewed as equivalent elements. Keener and others have described Peter's name change and Jesus's description of Nathanael as "parallel" and "analogous revelation[s]."¹⁰ On the other hand, Schnackenburg has chosen not to label them as parallels but rather as repeated instances of Jesus's demonstration of his "supernatural knowledge" and the power "to read hearts."¹¹ At a minimum, both record Jesus's words to a potential disciple who has been led to him by a new disciple, and both speak to the potential disciple's identity by reference to a name, whether that be the name of an individual or a group.

Given the shared order, equivalent elements, and corresponding details, my conclusion is that what the author has done is not fully described as simply a collection or series of parallel elements, but reveals an intentionality in the paralleled sequences. I

both as "leading them to Jesus" (ibid., 178). Hahn, like Schnackenburg, holds that "come and see" is the "guide-verse" (*Leitvers*) of the entire section (ibid., 182). Neyrey (*Gospel*, 55-56) considers both invitations as the "recruitment" in the catechetical pattern which is then followed, in both instances, by leading someone to Jesus.

Admittedly, there are differences. "Come and see" in 1:39a is on the lips of Jesus, while in 1:46b it comes from Philip, a difference not only of character but also of position in the sequence; the occurrence in v.39 occurs before the identified sequence. These differences are why Brown claims that the two occurrences of "come and see" have been intentionally misplaced in the editing process. Yet in seeking to account for a parallel, he sets Jesus's invitation to the two disciples (1:39a) in parallel to Jesus's call to Philip to follow him (1:43), which leaves the second occurrence (1:46b) without parallel in Brown's diagram of 1:40-42.

¹⁰ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:485. Boismard (*Baptême*, 17) considers both to be "a word that characterizes their religious value." Neyrey (*Gospel*, 55) labels the two as Jesus's "confirming word" to a newcomer.

¹¹ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:316. He does not suggest that the two sequences are parallel nor does he believe that the paralleling of the elements is of exegetical significance.

would extend this evaluation one step further: this structure is formulaic.¹² Both sequences portray new disciples (Andrew and Philip)—as evidenced by their respective testimonies regarding Jesus—whose first action upon encountering Jesus is to find another potential disciple, offer testimony about whom they have encountered, and invite (or lead) that person to an encounter with Jesus.

Placing the two sequences in such close proximity to each other and with extensive correlation in wording and structure in the opening scenes of the narrative, leads the reader to search beyond the sequences themselves for more extensive parallels within the narrative days and prepares the reader to identify more easily similar scenes in the rest of the Gospel. Additionally, the implied author has used this formulaic sequence to introduce the first disciples of Jesus, but has done so in a way discordant with the Synoptic tradition, with which readers were possibly familiar. Whether the scenes are taken as variations on call-forms (Hahn), or Greco-Roman recognition scenes (Larsen), the alterations remain the same. In the former, Jesus's initiatory call has been replaced with the witnessing activity of the disciples and the Baptist, while in the latter, the move of attendant reactions as the sign of recognition is evidenced in the witnessing activity and content of the disciples. In this way, the implied author has provided an interpretive lens through which to view not only the ensuing narrative but also the future activities of potential disciples.

1:37-42/1:43-47 and 1:35-51: Parallel Sequences and Parallel Days

Hahn has suggested, correctly I believe, that the sequencing points beyond the

¹² Culpepper (*Gospel*, 123) compares only vv. 41 and 45, and describes the two as sharing a "formula of discovery."

sequences themselves, indicating a larger parallel structure between the two days. In an examination of this proposal, the end of the sequences will serve as the starting point for the following discussion, as the end of at least the first sequence (1:42) is easily identified. A connection between Jesus's words to Peter (v. 42) and his words to Nathanael (v. 47) has been widely acknowledged and variously described.¹³ His words to Nathanael in v. 47 initiate an exchange that continues to at least v. 50. Nathanael's question, "From where do you know me?" (1:48) is in response to Jesus's revelatory statement to him, inquiring as to the origin of Jesus's knowledge of him as one who is "an Israelite in whom there is no guile." This abrogates a division between vv. 47 and 48, especially when there are no readily identifiable narrative shifts (temporal, geographical, socio-situational, character) to suggest such a division.¹⁴

There are also no suspected break-points in the remainder of the dialogue, as ἀπεκρίθη is repeatedly used to mark Jesus's words to Nathanael (1:48, 49, 50) and Nathanael's words to Jesus (v. 49). Even within Jesus's response to Nathanael's question (v. 48) there is a reference back to 1:44-46, the point at which Philip calls Nathanael ("Before Philip called you, I saw you ..."). This ties the dialogue back to the preceding material. In v. 49, Jesus's revelatory knowledge about the temporal and geographical

¹³ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:485) holds that Jesus's revelation to Nathanael "parallels his analogous revelation" to Peter. Moloney makes no connection between them. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:311) notes only a correspondence between the two as examples of Jesus as a "possessor of divine knowledge." Neyrey (*Gospel*, 55) sets the two in parallel within his table and labels them "Jesus' confirmation of the newcomer." He then describes the scenes as marking the transformation from recruit to disciple. As noted above, Brown sets the two as parallel elements but makes no further remarks about the parallels other than to identify them as examples of a revelatory formula. In doing this, he appears to be following Michel de Goedt ("Un schème de révélation dans le Quatrième Évangile," *NTS* 8 [1961-62]), 142-50.

¹⁴ Moloney (*Gospel*, 57) argues that 1:44-48 is part of the larger unit that includes the material that follows in vv. 49-51. He suggests that the dialogue between Jesus and Nathanael is unified around the question of origins, a discussion which moves from Philip's geographical origins and encompasses the references to Jesus's geographic and paternal origins as well as Nathanael's questions about the origins of Jesus's knowledge. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:313) considers 1:43-50 to be a unified scene. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:485-86) links vv. 47 and 48 as a subsection of 1:47-51.

details of the location where Philip called Nathanael elicits Nathanael's confessional response.¹⁵ Nathanael refers to Jesus as "Rabbi," "Son of God," and "King of Israel" and Jesus affirms Nathanael's belief (πιστεύεις) in light of these acclamations (v. 50), while promising even greater revelations of his identity to a wider audience.¹⁶ Though cast in the form of a question, Jesus does not question whether Nathanael's confession is a statement of faith, but rather informs Nathanael that what he has just seen (Jesus's knowledge) will be surpassed in the future by the sight of even greater things. The only possibly defensible break in the dialogue comes at 1:50.¹⁷ If a break is placed at v. 50, it would mark the shift away from the singular οὐτῷ to the plural ὑμῖν, as Jesus extends the promise made to Nathanael to all of those who are now following him. This would mark v. 51 as a transitional piece, a conclusion to both scenes (1:35-42; 1:43-50) that builds on Jesus's dialogues with the disciples and a bridge to the subsequent sign-filled narrative.¹⁸

A similar argument for narrative unity can be made for 1:43-50. Various breaks in 1:44-50 have been proposed, often tracing an organizational structure based on various

¹⁵ Contra Brown (*Gospel*, 1:86-87), the various confessions from 1:19-50 do not show "the theme of growing insight" building to Nathanael's "climactic" confession in the series. All of these confessions are embraced as valid confessions of faith throughout the Gospel. John 1:43-50 is not only climactic for both days (1:35-51) but is also the climax of Philip's witness to Nathanael: one who is an Israelite comes to faith and the confession indicates this. It may also be the fulfillment of the Baptist's witness to Israel (1:31).

¹⁶ Staley (*Kiss*, 80) describes Nathanael's confessions and his exchange with Jesus as "rash" and "border[ing] on the ludicrous—as Jesus's surprised question confirms (v. 50)." Those who hold a similar position to Staley point to the delayed affirmation of the disciples' belief after the miracle in Cana (2:11). Brown (*Gospel*, 1:88) suggests that 2:11 and the resurrection are the moments that signal adequate faith. Moloney (*Gospel*, 56), consistent with his position that the confessions reveal an inadequate faith, takes Jesus's reply as a challenge to the basis of Nathanael's faith. In contrast, Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:319) holds that "Jesus' answer to Nathanael is not to be taken as sceptical; it is a recognition and a promise, with no trace of doubt or reproach." Keener (*Gospel*, 1:488) likewise understands Jesus's statement to Nathanael as a commendation of his faith, though it will undergo further development as Jesus provides even more proof (v. 51) of the truthfulness of Nathanael's statement.

¹⁷ So Schreiber, "Jüngerberufungsszene," 19-24.

¹⁸ Schreiber (*ibid.*, 25) describes v. 51 as a "stylistic-grammatical 'break.'" He suggests that it creates a "place of openness" that extends outward from Nathanael to the readers, and causes them to question, as they continue to read, how the promise of seeing greater things will be fulfilled.

scenes that either point to an increasing level of revelation or are associated with the calls of individual disciples. Neyrey, for example, describes 1:35-51 as a series of catechetical scenes that reveals a “progressive revelation and membership,” while Schnackenburg describes them simply as “several closely linked scenes.”¹⁹ Keener, while accepting the unity of the passage, holds to a differentiation of scenes based on a character’s conversation with Jesus. He distinguishes Jesus’s encounter with Philip (vv. 43-44), Philip’s encounter with Nathanael (vv. 45-46), and Nathanael’s exchange with Jesus (vv. 47-51).²⁰ In contrast to these, Moloney takes the temporal marker τῆ ἐπαύριον (1:29, 35, 43) to be the sole marker of the narrative breaks in 1:19-51, thus equating narrative days with scenes.²¹

While Brown criticizes Boismard’s separation of 1:43-51 into two days (1:43-46; 47-51), as having no textual justification, he proposes an equally unjustifiable break between vv. 44 and 45 for the same reason, to separate the calling of Philip (1:43-44) from the calling of Nathanael (1:45-50). Brown argues for this break because of what he perceives to be a corresponding (parallel) break between vv. 39 and 40 and the parallelism between vv. 45 and 40-41 “indicates that the division should come before 45 just as it comes before 40.”²² However, a break after v. 44 clearly contradicts his own argument against Boismard’s division after v. 46 and falls prey to similar objections since he charges that Boismard’s break between vv. 46 and 47 “neglects the obvious similarity

¹⁹ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 55. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 307) proposes three scenes (vv. 35-39, vv. 40-42; vv. 43-50, 51) while also acknowledging the literary unity of the passage.

²⁰ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:479-91. In proposing some of these breaks he follows Schreiber, “Jüngerberufungsszene,” 18-28.

²¹ Moloney, *Gospel*, 49, 55-56.

²² Brown, *Gospel*, 1:85. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:480-82) also breaks his commentary into two sections: 1:43-44 “Jesus seeks Philip” and 1:44-45 “Philip Seeks Nathanael.” Neyrey (*Gospel*, 55) treats 1:45-50 as a repetition of his alleged catechetical cycle.

between vv. 45 and 40-41.”²³ Obvious similarities in the Greek text occur between vv. 40 and 44, as well as between vv. 41 and 45. Thus, Brown’s proposal ultimately succumbs to the same criticism that he leveled against Boismard; it neglects what I take to be the even more obvious similarities between 1:44(43) and 40, and cuts across paralleled sequences (1:40-42) with no justifiable corresponding break.

Admittedly, a break between vv. 44 and 45, such as Brown and others propose, has more warrant; it views the description of Philip in 1:44 as part of the introduction of his character in 1:43 and marks a narrative shift from the call of Philip to the call of Nathanael. But this division cuts across the sequence of 1:44-47 and gives inadequate weight to Philip as the primary character, who retains the narrator’s attention from v. 43 to v.46.

These structural observations in turn raise questions about 1:43 and the relationship between v. 43 and v. 44 and ultimately to 1:45-51. There is ambiguity as to who is the subject of the first two singular verbs of v. 43; grammatically, it could be Peter, Andrew, or Jesus.²⁴ J. Ramsey Michaels, because of what he takes to be a balance between vv. 40-42 and vv. 43-51, suggests that Philip is the subject.²⁵ While the appearance of *πρῶτον* in v. 41 could be taken as marking Peter as the first person Andrew

²³ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:85.

²⁴ Jesus is understood as the subject by Keener (*Gospel*, 1:480), Talbert (*John*, 83), and Moloney (*Belief*, 70). Brown (*Gospel*, 1:81, 85) acknowledges that Peter might be a better choice grammatically, and that Andrew may have been the subject at an earlier stage of the narrative’s development, but he agrees that Jesus is probably the subject given the ordering of the text as we have it. In contrast, Neyrey (*Gospel*, 54-55) uniquely makes Jesus the one who decides to go to Galilee but he leaves open the question as to who finds Philip. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:313) discusses the ambiguity of the subjects of the verbs and the possible redactional addition of v. 43, but concludes that the marking of another day and Jesus’s desire to set out for Galilee “are not important for the context.”

²⁵ Michaels, *John* (Good News Commentaries; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 21. He understands the parallel to begin with Jesus’s initiatory actions in both sequences (1:40-42; 1:43-47), though vv. 40-42 begins with Andrew.

finds, Philip being the second, this resolution had limited appeal. Though Peter is the last named person, Jesus is the subject of the main clause of the immediately preceding sentence (αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν). Thus Jesus is best understood as the subject of these verbs.

The relationship between vv. 43 and 44 is also important to the present analysis. They are grammatically linked, δέ in v. 44 being a marker connecting the naming of Philip with the description of who he is.²⁶ What follows in the subject-predicate construction is an explanatory note regarding Philip's identity, added because Philip has been newly introduced to the reader in v. 43.²⁷ Thus 1:43-51 provides a unified account of an entire day; the sequence of 1:44-47 is the core of the structure.

I agree with Moloney that the author's temporal marker τῆ ἐπαύριον (v. 43) proves to be *the* structural marker, setting off 1:43-50 as a complete day, and v. 51 transitions to ch. 2 and the first sign. Indeed, there is a chain reaction related to witnessing, but it is only the first link that has been initiated by Jesus since the process of Nathanael's coming to encounter Jesus and ultimately coming to faith is initiated by Philip's invitation.²⁸ While Jesus's revelatory words to Nathanael (vv. 47-48) and to others (v. 51) are important for the reader's understanding of Jesus's identity, Philip's

²⁶ BDAG, s.v. "δέ," 1.a (p. 213).

²⁷ Brown (*Gospel*, 1:82) suggests that δέ could be translated "now," or, if 1:44 is taken to be supplying the reason why Jesus calls him, "for." The latter is less likely. The reference to Andrew and Peter ties Philip's actions back to Andrew's in light of the sequence of 1:35-41.

²⁸ Contra Moloney, *Gospel*, 55-56; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:309. Schreiber ("Jüngerberufungsszene," 21) speaks of a witnessing chain, but suggests the chain runs in a circular motion which begins and ends with Jesus. Brown emphasizes Jesus's initiatory role in the call of Andrew, the unnamed disciple and Philip, but is silent about Nathanael's call. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:487), seeking to balance what he holds to be the narrator's desire to highlight Jesus's initiatory actions and promote what he perceives as the narrative's thematic development of witnessing, parenthetically notes that Jesus calls Nathanael "through Philip" in 1:48. To argue for the primacy of Jesus's actions in 1:35-51 in this way is questionable on two counts: 1) Jesus directly calls only one disciple; and 2) attributing there is no warrant for a causal differentiation between disciples bringing people to Jesus and the character's resulting encounter with him.

actions, as a paralleled repetition of Andrew's on the previous day, play a more prominent role than is often acknowledged.

Looking to 1:35-42 (Day 3), the temporal marker (τῆ ἐπαύριον) at v. 35 sets 1:35-42 off from the surrounding material. But an internal break, between vv. 39 and 40, would also seem warranted because of the textually questionable πρῶτον in v. 41 and the temporal reference to “the tenth hour” (ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη) in v. 39. When these are considered alongside the proposed scene shifts (away from the Baptist to Jesus's place of residence and then to wherever Peter may be) and the change of character (away from John the Baptist, Andrew and the unnamed disciple to Andrew and Peter) the substantiation for this proposed break is even greater.

Boismard prefers the textual variant πρῶϊ in v. 41, suggesting that its appearance indicates that past readers understood it to indicate that Andrew went “early the next morning” to find Peter.²⁹ While this reading smooths out the temporal indeterminacy of the length of the disciples' stay with Jesus, the textual evidence for this reading is weak.³⁰ This proposal also suffers from potential grammatical objections in light of the occurrences of πρῶϊ elsewhere.³¹ The other variant reading, πρῶτος, could be rendered “Andrew was the first to find,” which could either refer to Andrew being the first disciple to bring another to Jesus, or to Andrew finding his brother before the unnamed disciple

²⁹ Boismard, *Baptême*, 82-85.

³⁰ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:310-11. See further Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 172; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:75.

³¹ πρῶϊ typically occurs before the main verb either standing on its own or as part of a temporal phrase or clause (Matt 21:18; Mark 11:20; 15:1; 16:2, 9). On one occasion in the NT it occurs at the end of the sentence as part of a prepositional phrase temporally situating the other main verbs (Acts 28:23). In the Fourth Gospel it occurs as part of a predicate construction at the beginning of a sentence (John 18:28). In its only independent, adverbial use (John 20:1), it is placed directly after the verb it is modifying. Thus one would expect its placement at the beginning of v. 41, as the first word in 1:41 (and typically within some sort of phrase), or immediately after the verb in 1:41, without the intervening subject.

found his. This likewise suffers from a lack of text-critical evidence.

The preferred reading, *πρῶτον*, indicates that finding Peter was the first thing Andrew did, whether that means the first person he found or his first action as a disciple.³² I would argue that it also implies at least immediacy if not intentionality rather than an ordinal in a succession of events. Certainly one would expect an infinitive of *εὕρισκω* or a *ἵνα* construction to warrant the evaluation of intentionality in Andrew's actions, that is, that he intentionally went to find his brother Peter. While in a strictly denotive sense, *πρῶτον* does not carry the weight of intentionality, nevertheless in a connotative sense, that Andrew went, as the very first thing he did after his encounter with Jesus, certainly can be understood as an action that was the most prominent or the foremost thing he could do. It could also be indicative that it was of primary importance that he find his brother.³³ In this, intentionality does not seem to be an unreasonable inference. His action is the result of his encounter with Jesus and he immediately went, as a response to this revelation of Jesus as the Messiah, to find his brother and tell him about what he has found.

While Schnackenburg struggles with seeing this as “the first thing Andrew did” because the text mentions no subsequent action of Andrew, Brown translates it “the first thing he did,” while Moloney translates “he first found.”³⁴ “He first found” leaves

³² Keener (*Gospel*, 1:475) accepts either reading as adequate for the section's paradigmatic development of the theme of witnessing. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:311) offers a survey of the possibilities, but concludes that “all solutions are uncertain” because of the variant readings and v. 43 could be a later addition.

³³ BDAG, s.v. “*πρῶτος*,” 1. a. b; 2. a, b (pp. 892-94); LSJ, s.v. “*πρότερος*,” B.3 (p. 1535). This implication could be behind the Father's instructions to his son at Tobit 4:12. The father instructs his son: “Above all else, marry a woman among the descendants of your ancestors (*γυναῖκα πρῶτον λαβὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος τῶν πατέρων σοῦ*), not a foreign woman because she is not of your father's tribe and we are the sons of the prophets (translation mine).” The NRSV translates the *πρῶτον* as “First of all” though there is no subsequent list of instructions.

³⁴ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:311; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:75; Moloney, *Gospel*, 60.

residual questions about subsequent actions, which could be remedied by taking him to be the subject of the verbs in v. 43: Andrew, after finding Peter, then finds Philip. An easier solution, and one that I argue better fits the structural parallels of the actions of Andrew and Philip, is to be found in Brown's translation.

In light of the foregoing, I propose that the use of *πρῶτον* is significant both as a comment about discipleship and as a comment about witnessing.³⁵ Its emphasis lies in pointing out that the first thing Andrew did *as a result of encountering Jesus and becoming a disciple* (before he did anything else) was to find his brother and witness to him about Jesus. This further marks witnessing as constitutive of discipleship, placing testifying and bringing others to Jesus as the move of attendant reactions. It thus signifies to the reader that these actions are the primary activity for any who would follow Jesus. It also explains, and corresponds to, the immediacy of Philip's first action after being called by Jesus.³⁶

The reference in v. 39 to the two disciples staying with Jesus until "the tenth hour" (*ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη*) is often taken to infer that the disciples spend the night with Jesus, and that at least one additional day transpires when this reference to the tenth hour is considered in light of *πρῶτον* in v. 41. Schnackenburg, for instance, suggests that the phrase indicates that the "length and fruitfulness of the conversation went on all the

³⁵ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:465; Hahn, "Jüngerberufung," 186. I note as of particular importance the following: 1) Brown's translation of *πρῶτον* as "The first thing he did"; 2) Keener's (and others') thematic observations about the importance of witnessing in 1:35-51; and, 3) Hahn's rhetorical suggestions.

³⁶ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:475) comments on the paradigmatic nature of the characters in the Fourth Gospel in light of ancient drama's use of characters as "types." For Keener this applies to people coming to Jesus and to those who become a conduit to Jesus of people and resources. Staley (*Kiss*, 78-81) develops more extensively the importance of "intermediaries" in John 1:35-51. I am considering bringing people to Jesus and bearing witness to be equivalent, since the success that Andrew and Nathanael experience will not be the same for other characters, nor will the methodology. Other characters' attempts at witnessing and inviting others to meet Jesus will achieve varied, even unsuccessful, results.

evening,” and holds that the reference to the hour points to the time at which those two who followed Jesus became disciples.³⁷ Keener supports this reading of the lateness of the hour, pointing to the fact that a walk home would have taken them well past dusk and thus placed them in danger, and that hospitality customs would mandate that Jesus provide lodging for them overnight.³⁸

Given what has been said above about Andrew immediately, as his first act in response to encountering Jesus, going out and finding his brother, the lateness of the hour could intensify *πρῶτον* in 1:41. If by “the tenth hour” the implied author means four in the afternoon then there were potentially several hours before the evening meal. This is certainly enough time for Andrew to find his brother and invite him back to meet Jesus before the end of the day on which Andrew himself had spent time with Jesus.³⁹ With these considerations in mind, I offer the following interpretive translation of v. 41:

“Though it was late, Andrew immediately went out and found his brother.”

³⁷ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:309. Schnackenburg identifies the concluding statement of 1:39 (“They stayed with him that day”) as an indication that “that day” summarizes the entire day on which 1:35-39 occurs. Moloney (*Gospel*, 54) also holds that the disciples spend an entire day with Jesus, and similarly argues that the reference to the “tenth hour” indicates the time at which the disciples begin to follow Jesus.

³⁸ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:470. See also Boismard, *Baptême*, 73-74. For Boismard, this break marks the shift between days 3 and 4 of a seven-day sequence, while Moloney (*Gospel*, 54) understands this as indicating that they remain with him from four in the afternoon until the next morning.

³⁹ There is disagreement as to the reckoning of time in the Fourth Gospel. Hahn (“Jüngerberufung,” 184) describes the reference to the tenth hour as “less mysterious than what one often assumes. It allows sufficient time for the call and for enough time for the common evening meal.” In contrast, Keener (*Gospel*, 1:470) argues that the distance between the towns would not allow sufficient time to find Peter and return to Jesus, thereby necessitating staying with Jesus overnight. However, the author does not tell us Peter’s location, only his hometown. Those who take the “tenth hour” as meaning four in the afternoon maintain that the author is reckoning time according to Hebrew standards; so Brown, *Gospel*, 1:75; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary Gospel* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1971), 100. Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 219) argues, for narrative reasons, that the author reckons time by Roman standards, and that the reference to the tenth hour more likely refers to ten in the morning; thus the disciples stayed with Jesus the rest of “that day.” So N. Walker, “The Reckoning of Time in the Fourth Gospel,” *NovT* (1960): 69-73. Even if this is the case, my understanding of *πρῶτον* is not substantially affected, only my argument regarding the organizational structure.

Though the arguments for a temporal break between vv. 39 and 40 can be refuted on rhetorical grounds, the shift in characters (Baptist/Jesus/two disciples to Andrew/Peter/Jesus) would appear to strengthen the argument for a separate day.⁴⁰ Schnackenburg affirms that the larger section (1:35-51) encompasses all of the first disciples coming to Jesus, but breaks 1:35-51 into distinct though “closely-linked” scenes, of which 1:35-39 and 1:40-42 are the first two.⁴¹ Keener, though insisting that 1:35-42 is a larger unit that follows the effects of the Baptist’s witness, likewise breaks 1:35-42 into two sections; the first (1:35-39) he labels “Following Jesus Home,” the second (1:40-42) “Andrew and Simon.”⁴² One result of this is that such breaks have resulted in 1:40-42 being described as “a footnote to the preceding scene” because the narrative attention shifts to Peter and away from either the continuation of the witnessing chain, the primary focus being Andrew’s actions, or the second element of a parallel sequence.⁴³

Andrew’s character is a continuing element; the narrator’s attention follows Andrew throughout the passage. Thus there are substantial reasons for not placing a break after v. 39—aside from considerations of the definite temporal breaks supplied by the author at 1:35 and 43. Even Brown, who proposes a break at this point, acknowledges the tension that this creates. Indeed, it leads him to make the following comments on Andrew’s call of Peter: “Even though this may have taken place on another day, John does not mention another day lest the connection with the preceding scene be

⁴⁰ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 55. While Neyrey does not make this argument specifically, he does appear to make this break not because of a temporal shift but because of his catechetical understanding of the passage; it is the point at which a second cycle begins, with a new set of characters.

⁴¹ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:306-7.

⁴² Keener, *Gospel*, 1:465. For his section labels see 1:xiii. So Brown, *Gospel*, 1:71-80.

⁴³ McHugh, *John*, 154.

lost.”⁴⁴ And Moloney, although he concedes that the disciples stayed for at least one evening, follows the more obvious temporal structuring and narrative progression that the author has used to mark narrative sections.⁴⁵

Setting 1:35-42 and 1:43-51 side by side by characterization as witnesses (my proposed witnessing chains) results in Andrew’s call of Peter and Philip’s call of Nathanael being comparable as follows:

John 1:40-42 Andrew → Peter

John 1:44-50 Philip → Nathanael

This pattern is similar to what Neyrey has identified in two of his catechetical patterns. However, I have also suggested, as have Boismard and Brown, that an analysis of 1:44-50 results in the conclusion that v. 43 is closely tied to the narrative. Philip is introduced as a character and his encounter with Jesus leads him to witness to Nathanael. There is no internal break within 1:43-50. This would extend the diagram one step further and results in the following unbalanced parallel:

John 1:35-42 ? → Andrew → Peter

John 1:43-50 Jesus → Philip → Nathanael

Schnackenburg and Brown, who follows Boismard, propose that Jesus is the initiator of the first series and parallels Jesus’s initiatory actions in 1:37. The following illustrates

⁴⁴ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:79. Brown’s strongest argument (1:75) for understanding the time notation is that it was the beginning of the Sabbath, and therefore that the disciples had to stay with Jesus until the following day.

⁴⁵ Moloney, *Gospel*, 54.

Brown's and Boismard's proposal:

John 1:37-42 Jesus → Andrew → Peter

John 1:43-50 Jesus → Philip → Nathanael

While this offers an aesthetic balance and reflects what Brown and others argue is the author's desire to give attention to Jesus's initiatory actions, the proposal neglects the beginning of the first day (vv. 35-36). Brown and Boismard support their analyses by noting words attributed to Jesus later in the Gospel: the disciples do not choose him, but he has chosen them (John 15:16).⁴⁶ While this ties a later assertion of Jesus into the narrative beginning, it lacks a structural correspondence with the ordering of the days by ignoring vv. 35-36, and it fails to account sufficiently for the theme of witnessing and the parallel sequences. In the case of Boismard and Brown, the parallels play little role in their analyses of the passage, it conflicts with their proposed breaks, and does not account for the material in 1:35-36, which is after the temporal marker in v. 35 and thus part of the narrative day (1:35-42). These verses are not simply a bridge from the previous day.

If we begin with the grammar of v. 40, the description of Andrew as "one of the two who heard from John and who followed him [Jesus]" links 1:40 with 1:35-39 by ascribing the initiatory action of Andrew following Jesus to the Baptist's witness.⁴⁷ It is a bridge between 1:35-39 and 1:41-42. This narrative aside does not describe Andrew as "one of the two who had spent the day with Jesus," or even as "one of the two whom Jesus invited to stay with him," or "who met Jesus." The time spent with Jesus is not

⁴⁶ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:78; Francis, "Vision," 59-60.

⁴⁷ In this regard, it plays a role similar to the description of Philip (1:44).

important to the narrator; the description jumps over this meeting (1:38-39) and goes back to describe Andrew in a way that echoes v. 37: εἶς ἐκ τῶν δύο τῶν ἀκουσάντων παρὰ Ἰωάννου καὶ ἀκολουθησάντων αὐτῷ (1:40).⁴⁸ This points to the correctness of Hahn's evaluation of the day spent with Jesus. It is not reflective or anticipatory of later connections between "remaining" and discipleship, as many have supposed.⁴⁹ This may be why, as Schnackenburg observes, the details of the day and the encounter with Jesus are apparently unimportant to the narrator.⁵⁰

The reader is given no warrant for Andrew's claims of having found the Messiah other than the Baptist's witness (1:40). Hearing the Baptist is, in fact, twice repeated as the reason for their following Jesus (1:37, 39).⁵¹ The narrator portrays Andrew's bearing witness to Peter as the end result of his first having heard the Baptist's witness, which causes him to follow Jesus and encounter Jesus for himself, and this, in turn, results in his

⁴⁸ Cf. 1:37 καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ δύο μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος καὶ ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ.

⁴⁹ Brown (*Gospel*, 1:75, 79) suggests that "remaining" at this point has theological overtones. Chennattu (*Discipleship*, 32) also maintains it is yet another step, that the followers of the Baptist are becoming disciples of Jesus. Contra Keener (*Gospel*, 1:472 esp. n. 410), this is not anticipating the later teaching of Jesus where he speaks of himself and the Father making a home with the believer (14:23, 26), nor is it representative of disciples dwelling in Jesus's presence in any way other than staying in someone's home. Hahn's observations ("Jüngerberufung," 183-84) on this point are constructive. Hahn argues that "remained *with him*" (παρ' αὐτῷ ἔμειναν) does not necessarily presuppose the later "remain *in him*" (μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί) that is so strongly connected to discipleship in 15:1-8. Moloney (*Gospel*, 54) concludes that "nothing is reported of what was shared and there is no evidence for a symbolic reading of Jesus's invitation and the time they spend with him."

⁵⁰ While Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:309) describes it in terms of a "veil of silence over the subsequent conversation," he maintains that Jesus's initiatory acts or the "majesty of Jesus' own person" is the point the author seeks to convey by his portrayal of the meeting.

⁵¹ This silence is also evident in 1:42, where we are not told of Peter's reaction to Jesus. Craig R. Koester ("Hearing, Seeing and Believing in the Gospel of John," *Bib* 70 [1989], 329-30) emphasizes that the Baptist's two disciples follow Jesus in response to the Baptist's witness, yet notes that Andrew's messianic confession comes in response to his remaining with Jesus. He also acknowledges that the narrator is silent about the details of that encounter. Francis ("Vision," 13) suggests that "hearing" is theologically significant in the Fourth Gospel and is a first step in a faith experience which "evoke[s] an initial response of faith or trusting obedience which was confirmed by a sign." However, he later denies that the status of "disciple" is to be attributed to the two disciples of the Baptist even after spending time with Jesus (v. 38). In contrast, Chennattu (*Discipleship*, 28-29) speaks of the "revelatory nature of this testimony" that is confirmed by the immediate response of the Baptist's disciples.

bearing witness to Peter. Thus the causation of their following is attributed by the author to what the Baptist said about Jesus.⁵² Further, the occurrence of ἀκολουθέω at 1:37 (ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ), before Andrew's encounter with Jesus, also substantiates this understanding. Schnackenburg describes v. 37 as "the first step to faith," while Keener refers to it as "the precursor of real discipleship," even while acknowledging that the "language of following represents standard Jewish language for discipleship."⁵³ All of this creates ambiguity as to when Andrew and the unnamed disciples become disciples of Jesus, especially since the appearance of ἀκολουθέω at 1:43 would lead one to believe that Philip, at that point, has become a disciple of Jesus.⁵⁴ The narrative aside in v. 37 describing Andrew ascribes the initiatory act to the testimony of John the Baptist in a way that calls into question Brown's, Moloney's, and Schnackenburg's insistence that Jesus is the initiator of the discipleship process.

This would address Brown's struggle regarding the roles of the Baptist and Jesus in this section. For Brown, Andrew's stay with Jesus is the basis for his faith confession, while at the same time he acknowledges ἀκολουθέω in 1:37 as "mean[ing] more than walking in the same direction" and as "the term par excellence for the dedication of discipleship."⁵⁵ Brown also offers the following assessment of the Baptist's testimony:

⁵² Contra Chennattu (*Discipleship*, 28-29), who differentiates between the revelatory nature of the Baptist's witness and the call to discipleship which she insists is "a gift from heaven, directly from God" as evidenced at 3:27.

⁵³ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:308; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:467-68. Chennattu (*Discipleship*, 29) tries to maintain both a literal and figurative meaning in v. 37 since the disciples follow Jesus after hearing the Baptist, which she takes as a "genuine expression of faith," and are "now open to enter the process of becoming disciples of Jesus."

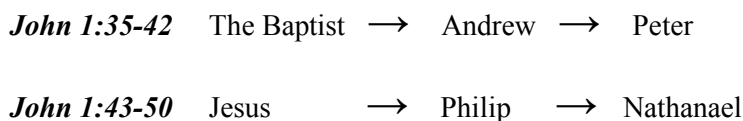
⁵⁴ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 123.

⁵⁵ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:78-79. Brown describes this as an authorial "hint" that the disciples of the Baptist are *about* to become the disciples of Jesus. Yet he continues by insisting that Jesus takes the initiative when he turns and talks to them, which Brown connects to Jesus's later insistence that he has chosen the disciples (15:16). Brown also holds μένω at 1:39 to have larger theological significance throughout the Gospel. However, this theological significance has not yet been created, since the only prior occurrence is a description of the activity of the Spirit "remaining" upon Jesus (1:32, 33). According to

“As 1:7 promised, through John the Baptist men have begun to believe.”⁵⁶

Some summarizing statements regarding 1:35-42 are in order. John 1:40-42 and 1:44-47 constitute unitive cores around which their respective narrative days are built. As with Philip, so in 1:35-42 Andrew is the unifying character: he hears the Baptist’s testimony (v. 35-37), encounters Jesus (v. 38-39), and immediately finds his brother, Peter (v. 41). Yet again, while the testimonies further fill out the identity of Jesus, they are significant only in relation to the actions of Andrew, as the sequence illustrates. The description of Andrew “immediately” going out and finding Peter also points in this direction, as does the constant description of Andrew as one “who had heard the Baptist’s testimony” and “who was following Jesus.” By grammar and sequencing, their following is a result of the Baptist’s testimony. In contrast to 1:43-50, where Jesus’s call initiates the action of one disciple finding another potential disciple and bearing witness to him, in 1:35-42 it is the Baptist’s witness that initiates the chain reaction.

This proposal results in the following diagram of the two days:



Conclusion

First, the two parallel sequences that draw attention to the actions of Andrew and Philip are the defining character of these scenes. By this formulaic repetition, the author

Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:309), the “brief report [in v. 39] is meant to give the impression that the two seekers are won over by Jesus himself and that John was merely an intermediary.”

⁵⁶ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:76. Brown precedes this with a similar statement regarding the significance of the Baptist’s testimony: “[I]ts purpose is to initiate a chain reaction which will bring John the Baptist’s disciples to Jesus and make them Jesus’ own disciples.”

draws the reader's attention to the actions constitutive of discipleship: disciples bear witness to others in an effort to bring them to Jesus. As Culpepper has observed, the similarities between the two formulas of discovery invite a comparison between the days, and the "role of the disciples is defined at this early stage by the pattern of each one bringing another to Jesus."⁵⁷ In this regard, at the point at which the reader sees Jesus calling a disciple (Philip) there is no record of his following Jesus, as is common in the Synoptic tradition.⁵⁸ Instead, the reader is left to surmise Philip's commitment to Jesus by what he does: he finds someone else. This substitution of Philip finding and witnessing to Nathanael for any narrator comments regarding Philip following Jesus parallels Philip's and Andrew's actions and again draws attention to Andrew's first action after meeting Jesus. The reader is invited to insert the implied immediacy of Andrew's finding of his brother (v. 41) into Philip's response to Jesus's call to follow him (v. 45), and to re-read Andrew's actions as the appropriate move of attendant reactions as a follower of Jesus.

It is not simply an encounter with Jesus that is the goal of this narrative, nor is it the unfolding of Jesus's identity or glory. Talbert describes what has been deemed to be "the Johannine Call Narrative" as "less a call story than a narrative in which the accent is on the initiative of the disciples in bearing witness to Jesus."⁵⁹ While both days reveal quite a bit about the actions and identity of Jesus, the actions of Andrew are the hinge in

⁵⁷ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 123.

⁵⁸ Matthew 4:20, 22; Mark 1:18, 20; 2:14; Luke 5:11, 28. Schreiber ("Jüngerberufungsszene," 22) comments that readers can only assume Philip's affiliation with Jesus by his actions in response to Jesus's call.

⁵⁹ Talbert, "Artistry," 342-43. However, contra Talbert, the purpose of the unit is not only "to deploy a number of testimonies which assign various titles to Jesus" but also to prepare the reader to see this pattern of witnessing throughout the narrative. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:487) describes the encounter that these disciples have with Jesus as "the ideal apologetic for those with open hearts."

1:35-42, as are the actions of Philip in 1:43-50.⁶⁰ The characters of Andrew and Philip are the constants throughout their respective days. They are the link between the initiation of the chain and its end. Thus I agree with Hahn, who sees the intended link between the two scenes as a disciple who has encountered Jesus immediately carrying out the effects of that call; that disciple, in turn, calls another.⁶¹ Since these are the actions of the first disciples of Jesus a reader encounters in the narrative, and since these actions are repeated in subsequent days of the opening scenes, the implied author is drawing attention to the role of future potential disciples: it is missional—to bring others to Jesus.

Second, the unity of the formulaic sequence at the heart of each of the days calls for a consideration of the larger unity of the passages. The shared elements within the paralleled sequences point beyond themselves to the wider day in which each is embedded. Even as a reader compares the shared parallel structures at the core of day three and day four, she is also invited to see the two days in light of each other, not only at the level of the parallel sequences but also in terms of the larger witnessing chain to which each points.

Third, this invitation to the reader to set the chains beside one another in order to consider correlations results in the following observations: 1) the Baptist and Jesus are each responsible for initiating a chain, and thus a testimony (the Baptist's) and a direct call (Jesus') are set side by side; 2) Peter, a disciple well known in the tradition, is a silent character and is placed at the end of a chain that began with the Baptist, in contrast to

⁶⁰While Jesus's identity is an intended focus, this identity is only fully effectuated through the confessions of Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael.

⁶¹Hahn, "Jüngerberufung," 187. So Schreiber, "Jüngerberufungsszene," 21. Contra Moloney, *Gospel*, 51, 55. Moloney similarly unpacks the dialogue between Jesus and Nathanael, linking it to Jesus's revelation about Nathanael's identity. He ultimately argues that 1:43-51 "has a character of its own" that serves to develop the theme of Jesus's initiatory actions with both Philip and Nathanael.

Nathanael, certainly a lesser-known disciple, who offers a substantive confession and concludes a chain started by Jesus's direct call of Philip (v. 43); 3) the formulaic sequences are the structural backbone of their respective days and are linked to the larger structure of two parallel days that set the parameters for how a reader will understand discipleship; and 4) the sequences draw attention to the immediate responses of Andrew and Philip, portraying their witnessing actions as paradigmatic of would-be disciples.

Since these chains begin differently—the testimony of a witness (the Baptist) starts the first chain, the direct call of Jesus the second—there are some potential implications for a comparison between the Baptist and Jesus and the chains they initiate. Rather than making the scene of Jesus's call of Philip the first day in which disciples of Jesus are generated, which might reflect known Synoptic tradition, the author has instead given primacy of place to the scene in which disciples come to encounter and to follow Jesus as a result of someone else's witness (the Baptist). Yet, whether someone comes to Jesus as the result of the witness of another, or as the result of someone who is directly called by Jesus, the outcome is the same: the disciple who comes to faith bears witness.

A difference in the method of coming to Jesus does not result in a difference in expected activity. This may, as Hahn suggests, imply a comparison of the faith or the mission between the second generation of believers, who have not encountered Jesus, and those who are the first generation of believers who did encounter Jesus. This distinction between generations of believers and the inclusion of later generations will play an important role later in the Gospel.⁶² I suggest that the disciples following Jesus as a result of the Baptist's witness is intended to represent a second generation of believers

⁶² Hahn, "Jüngerberufung," 189-90. See John 17:20; 20:29.

who will become disciples as a result of the witness of a follower of Jesus and not as the result of a first-generation personal encounter with Jesus. I also argue that this is not a negative comparison between the Baptist and Jesus or their supposed communities. The Baptist is a witness sent by God (1:6) and specifically commissioned to identify Jesus to Israel; without his testimony, the reader would not be able adequately to identify Jesus. The fulfillment of the Baptist's witness is displayed in 1:35-42 and 1:43-50; it has achieved its intended results.

A similar comparison can be made between Peter and Nathanael. Peter, the better known of the two disciples in the tradition and the one who will play a more prominent role in the subsequent narrative, has been placed in narrative silence at the end of the sequence initiated by the witness of the Baptist. Nathanael, who is not even numbered among the twelve disciples in the Synoptics, provides a climactic confession and is the last link in a chain initiated by Jesus.⁶³ In this regard, it is also interesting that Peter offers no testimony or confession; he is the only named character in these scenes who is silent. The status of his faith, as witness or confessor, is left in an ambiguous silence. The nature of his faith is even undetermined by the promise of his *future* name change, while Nathanael, who appears comparatively fewer times, offers a substantive confession.⁶⁴

⁶³ Peter is the first disciple mentioned in the call narratives (Matt 4:18; Luke 5:8-10), is the first named disciple in all of the lists of the Twelve (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14), and is consistently portrayed as the disciple who makes the substantive confession of Jesus's identity (Matt 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). Peter also holds prominence in the tradition that Paul received (1 Cor 15:3-5). In contrast, Nathanael is never mentioned in the Synoptics. The narrative silence of the Synoptics in contrast to John has led Keener (*Gospel*, 1:482), who provides a thorough discussion regarding the identity of Nathanael and his associations with the Twelve, to conclude that Nathanael is actually Bartholomew because "[h]is role in the Gospel makes it likely that he was one of the Twelve." So Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:314.

⁶⁴ The lack of testimony from Peter may be a rhetorical means of developing the reader's anticipation of future actions, especially if witnessing is the mark of a disciple. The reader thus is left to ponder the status of Peter's faith until his future confession (6:68-69). Yet even this confession and thus

Some of the questions with which this chapter began are the topics of later chapters. To this point, I have argued for a link between the internal structuring in the sequences and the larger structure of the days, and for some of the exegetical significance of allowing these structures to be the guide. In subsequent chapters I will pursue how this initial structural analysis informs (and forms) the reader in her approach to the rest of the Gospel.

positive evaluation of Peter's faith will be called into question by Peter's later denial (13:36-38; 18:15-27). J. Daryl Charles ("Will the Court Please Call in the Prime Witness?: John 1:29-34 and the 'Witness'-Motif," *TJ* 10 [1989]: 71-83) suggests that Peter bears one of the two instances of *pseudomartyria* (the other is Judas) in the Fourth Gospel. With these things in mind, a positive evaluation of Peter's faith at this point, or the importance of the name change, is too dependent on the Synoptic scenes in which the name change is associated with Peter's confession. In the Fourth Gospel, the positive evaluation is lacking and the name change is pushed into the future. This is even more the point, I believe, because Nathanael's confession takes center stage.

Chapter 3 Paired and Patterned Witnesses in John 1-9

Introduction

Intrinsic to narrative is the sequential ordering of events, which is intended to produce if not always verisimilitude then an order by which an implied author has chosen to communicate a certain series of events—the plot of a narrative. At the core of that order lies a causative set of relationships that connects the various elements and ordered scenes. These connections reflect the narrative’s conceptual presuppositions that the implied author and implied reader (narrative/authorial audience) share as well as the narrative’s didactic purpose or authorial intention.¹ When an author sets these various elements within a communication situation, they become a contract between the author and reader that allows for communication and understanding. This ordering forms the implied reader in the reading process and instructs her in the didactic purpose (textual intention) of the text.² The formation of the implied reader—moving her to various responses—is what Culpepper refers to as the “affective power” of a plot and Larsen terms the Gospel’s “epistemological plot.”³ Culpepper calls this “the power to move readers to various responses.”⁴

¹ Louis O. Mink, “Narrative Form as Cognitive Instrument,” in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (ed. Robert J. Canary and Henry Kozicki; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 132-33. Mink uses the concept of “fate” in Greek tragedy as an example of a conceptual presupposition. Nowhere is it explicated in the text; it is only understood through the reading process. Narratives embody the conceptual scheme necessary to understand the story and this, as well as the stylistics of the genre, is part of the presupposition pool shared by author and reader. Mink describes (133) these as “general level conceptual presuppositions of the very idea of the narrative form itself.” Further, Mink labels (130) the narrative genre or form a “contract” between author and reader, since the reader makes certain assumptions once the author provides genre signals, that allows for understanding.

² *Ibid.*, 130; Larsen, *Stranger*, 15-17.

³ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 67; Larsen, *Stranger*, 17.

⁴ Culpepper (*Gospel*, 67) identifies four characteristics of plot: sequence, causality, unity, and affective power. Sequence is the way events are ordered. Causality describes the relationships which lead

As part of the contract, the beginning scenes set the expectations and provide apprehension of the narrative's presuppositions and interpretive framework, often revealing the bonds that will tie the narrative together. The opening scenes embody the conceptual scheme necessary to understand the story, enabling the implied author to establish the implied reader's expectations. The implied author achieves this effect by introducing particular thematic elements, structuring the narrative elements and opening plotment, as well as developing characters.

According to Carl Joachim Classen, the opening of a narrative serves to "arouse their [the readers'] interest in the particular aspects he [the author] wants to lay emphasis on."⁵ After building the reader's expectations by means of the opening scenes, the implied author guides the reader through the story by these narrative elements as each scene causally unfolds and moves into the next, achieving a particular effect and creating expectations in the implied reader.⁶ Jan du Rand has likened this patterned structuring to the opening of a symphony. He describes the first chapter of John as written in a particular Johannine key that affects the reader and establishes themes in the beginning of the work to which the implied author will return throughout the remainder of the narrative.⁷

from one story to another. Unity is a result of a plot that is coherent and creates a sense of fulfillment and completion.

⁵ Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament* (WUNT 1/128; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 97-98. Classen describes (94) the Johannine Prologue's role in this as accentuating that Jesus is the Son of God the Father, who was sent into the world to bear witness to the truth. Classen considers the Prologue's elucidation of particular concepts about Jesus as of supreme importance.

⁶ Iser, "Reading Process," 52-57; Jan A. du Rand, "The Creation Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Perspectives on its Narratological Function Within a Judaistic Background," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar* (ed. Gilbert van Belle, J. G. Van der Watt, and P. J. Maritz; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 22; Mink, "Narrative," 130-33.

⁷ Du Rand, "Symphony," 5-11. Du Rand (*ibid.*, 12) illustrates this in the following way: "A very interesting feature in music is when the composer creates a sense of unity and variety by returning from

While a full discussion of the plot of narratives and characterization is beyond the scope of my present study, I wish to show how the author of the Fourth Gospel structures the narrative and uses characters to create the narrative's affective power and to reveal the textual intention to the authorial audience. The author intentionally constructs paralleled days in 1:35-51, I have argued, to draw the reader's attention to the actions of witnessing and to communicate the expectations for potential disciples. I also have proposed that this is an intentionally employed formulaic structure, placed within the opening *narrative* section of the Gospel (1:19-51), a section in which the implied reader initially encounters the disciples.⁸ These opening scenes provide an interpretive lens through which a reader is to read the subsequent narrative.⁹

In the present chapter, I will argue that with the opening paired witnessing scenes, the author has provided a framework that enables the reader to adjudge proper responses of disciples-as-witnesses in subsequent scenes, which have also been intentionally paired and follow the sequencing of 1:35-51. I have already argued that the first two sequences (1:35-42/1:43-51) establish the expectation that bearing witness is definitive of discipleship. In chs. 3 and 4, I will give detailed attention to the pairing of characters and scenes and how the repetition of the pattern displays the witnessing efforts of potential disciples, as each pairing provides negative and positive exemplars of reactions to Jesus.

time to time to the opening musical material. The opening section then functions as a unifying factor in bringing about a coherent structure.”

⁸ The Prologue of Greek drama typically introduces themes formed later in the work. The Fourth Gospel's Prologue plays a similar role. The Prologue's role and its relationship to John 1:35-51 will be discussed in Chapter 5.

⁹ On the reader's interactions with literature, see Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman, eds., *The Reader in the Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Donald M. Michie and David Rhoads, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2012); Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 205-27; James L. Resseguie, “Reader-Response Criticism and the Synoptic Gospels,” *JAAR* 52 (1984): 307-24; Staley, *Kiss*, 6-20, 50-69.

I maintain that a character's *response* to Jesus, that is, bearing witness or bringing others to Jesus, is a better measure for evaluating whether a character believes or does not believe, which is also indicative of the author's stated purpose: to elicit a faith response in readers.¹⁰

This juxtaposition, with variation, of negative and positive examples was a common literary technique in antiquity.¹¹ I will suggest that by means of this framework, the text causes the reader to respond in a particular way (by witnessing), and that this is at the core of what Larsen terms the epistemological plot of the Fourth Gospel and what Rabinowitz and Kearns have called the textual intention.¹²

Regarding their narrative purpose, scholars have variously construed the scenes in which Jesus encounters potential disciples. They have examined them through characterization, characters being deemed exemplary or non-exemplary as models of faith.¹³ But this approach to the Gospel has been questioned recently.¹⁴ The scenes have also received attention regarding how the author employs the Greco-Roman recognition scene.¹⁵ While these studies have fostered analyses of the role that characters and scenes

¹⁰ So Bennema, "Comprehensive Approach", 51-53.

¹¹ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:584.

¹² This is one of the core tenets of Larsen's argument. Larsen (*Stranger*, 17) argues that recognition scenes are part of an epistemological plot whereby "instead of moving the story, the recognition scenes move the reader."

¹³ Raymond F. Collins's essay on characterization in *These Things Have Been Written. Studies on the Fourth Gospel* [Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 1-45) is a prime example of this approach. Collins surveys all of the characters in the Fourth Gospel and evaluates them as "types of individuals" in their responses to Jesus. He justifies this methodology because he sees precedent in the "ancient tradition of the Church."

¹⁴ Jo-Ann Brandt (*Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004], esp. 50-57) critiques this methodology. She suggests that the failure of certain characters truly to recognize Jesus and come to faith is not necessarily a failure of character but must be understood in terms of the plot of the Fourth Gospel, as it would have been in the Greek tragic tradition.

¹⁵ F. R. M. Hitchcock, "Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama?" *Theology* 7 (1923): 307-17; Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John's Gospel* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 30-36, 60-68; Culpepper, *Gospel*, 67-86; Brandt, *Dialogue*, 50-57; Stan Harstine, "Undoubting Thomas: Recognition Scenes in the Ancient World,"

play as part of the formation of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel and a proper faith response, rarely have they treated them in terms of their interconnectedness as part of a thematic pattern of *witnessing*.

This is not to suggest that the recognition of Jesus's identity is not significant for Johannine belief and witnessing, or that these themes are mutually exclusive. I affirm that the author is motivated by a desire to join the themes of Jesus's identity and belief (20:30-31). Jesus's encounters with characters move the Fourth Gospel's plot forward as the implied author juxtaposes characters as believing and nonbelieving, thereby creating a growing tension that builds to Jesus's crucifixion.¹⁶ However, I hold that the connection between Jesus's identity and belief is to be found in disciples' activity of bearing witness.

Defining proper Johannine faith has proven problematic in light of the Gospel's tension between knowledge, belief, and signs, as well as the recognized complexity of the Gospel's characterization techniques. Signs do not necessarily engender proper belief within the Fourth Gospel, though they do, in some episodes, create belief responses. Substantive confessions or adequate knowledge of Jesus's identity likewise yield varied estimations as measures of adequate Johannine faith. It is difficult to determine which characters are exemplary believers, or at what point they become believers, if measured by the proper knowledge of Jesus's identity, the nature of a character's dialogues with Jesus, the content of their reported speech or confessions, and their knowledge of the resurrection.

I will argue that the narrative establishes a clearer path to understanding proper

PRSt 33 (2006): 435-47; R Alan Culpepper, "Cognition in John: The Johannine Signs as Recognition Scenes," *PRSt* 35 (2008): 251-60.

¹⁶ So Culpepper, *Gospel*, 67-69.

Johannine faith by means of the paired witnessing scenes that thematically return to the paired sequences in 1:35-51. The scenes in which characters encounter Jesus have received more direct attention as variations on the Greco-Roman *anagnōrīsis* type-scene in the work of Culpepper and Larsen. Their studies have examined the multiple occurrences of recognition scenes, the role they play in the formation of the themes of belief and knowledge, the effects on the reader, and their importance for the Gospel's plot development. A recognition scene (*anagnōrīsis*), as defined by Culpepper, "narrates a character's discovery of the true identity of another principle figure in the narrative."¹⁷

In ancient literature, these scenes functioned as plot pivots in which the unknown character becomes known or the recognition creates a changed relationship between the characters, both of which determines the futures of those involved.¹⁸ As Culpepper and Larsen describe their use in the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel employs them in a quite different way. The author scatters them throughout the narrative as *repeated* microcosms of the larger plot structure and as exemplars of its themes.

Recognition scenes in the work of R. Alan Culpepper and Kasper Bro Larsen

Three early studies stimulated further examination of the Gospel's use of the recognition scene. F. R. M. Hitchcock's article, "Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama?" served as the impetus for an analysis of the Gospel's plot development in light of Greco-Roman *anagnōrīsis* type-scenes.¹⁹ He argues that the Gospel ends with *anagnōrīsis*, like other

¹⁷ Ibid., 72. Culpepper additionally comments: "The discovery typically occurs in the denouement and resolves the dramatic irony that has built as the reader or audience watches the character act in ignorance of the other figure's identity."

¹⁸ Ibid., 72. Contemporary discussions of recognition scenes continue to rely on Aristotle's (*Poetics* 1452-1455) original explication of them as narrative features that enhance or further a plot.

¹⁹ Hitchcock, "Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama," *Theology* 7 (1923): 307-17.

ancient literature, as a key pivotal element in Act 4 (12:1-19:42), in which the soldiers and Pilate attempt to uncover the identity of Jesus. He additionally argues that this theme of discovery carries over into Act 5 and the epilogue (21:1-25), where Mary, Thomas, and the disciples come to discover Jesus's true identity.²⁰

Hitchcock's work initiated inquiries into the occurrence of the type-scenes, what role they play in the author's purpose, and their importance for the advancement of John's narrative and theological themes. C. H. Dodd, in his form-critical analysis of resurrection narratives, identifies the employment of *anagnōrisis* scenes in the Gospels. His study of the form/pattern of the scenes marks the employment of the Greco-Roman recognition scene as one of the earliest and consistent elements of the kerygmatic traditions of the early church.²¹ Rudolf Bultmann, while not specifically identifying recognition scenes, notes that each character who encounters Jesus must answer "the decisive question whether he will accept or reject him" even though his true identity is hidden throughout the Gospel.²² Bultmann suggests that in these encounters the plot plays on the tension between the antitheses of knowing/not knowing Jesus's identity and belief/unbelief. His connection of pattern and theme brought these encounters and their relationship to the plot squarely to the forefront of Johannine studies.

Culpepper and Larsen argue that the Fourth Gospel extensively employs Greco-Roman recognition (*anagnōrisis*) scenes and that these scenes are directly related to the Gospel's plot, the author's overtly stated goal (20:31), and the motif of knowing/seeing

²⁰ Ibid., 313-17. A more recent work on the type-scene in Greek literature is Peter Gainsford, "Formal Analysis of the Recognition Scenes in the Odyssey," *JHS* 123 (2003): 41-59.

²¹ Dodd, "The Appearances of the Risen Christ: A Study in Form-criticism of the Gospels" in *More New Testament Studies* (ed. C. H. Dodd; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 102-33. Dodd notes the repeated use of the recognition type scene in John 20:11-17; 19-21, 26-29; 21:1-14.

²² Bultmann, *Gospel*, 66.

Jesus. They have also surveyed how the use of the type-scene plays a significant role in the thematic progression of recognizing and believing in Jesus. According to Culpepper, the Fourth Gospel “is constructed around a series of recognition (or non-recognition) scenes,” and these scenes, when viewed through the themes of belief and unbelief and recognition or non-recognition of Jesus, are “the fundamental opposition on which the plot is developed.”²³ The characters in the scenes present a catena of potential faith-responses for readers who are called to examine their own responses, engender proper responses, and “move on to an authentic level of faith.”²⁴ The responses of characters in the successful and failed recognition scenes serve the affective purposes of the plot as each scene is designed to “allow us as readers to consider the responses to Jesus that we might make.”²⁵ According to Culpepper, this culminates in the Fourth Gospel’s stated purpose of creating faith in readers (20:31), as each scene repeats the overarching plot of the Gospel and the question: Will this character recognize Jesus and receive eternal life?²⁶

The link between the reactions of character and reader is part of what Culpepper describes as the 3-level complexity of the scenes. The second level is the moment “when the recognizer also recognizes the implication of the recognition,” while at the third level “the reader or audience recognizes the implied author’s implicit purpose, aim, or intent in the recognition scene.”²⁷ These levels follow a movement from character to reader as the

²³ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 71. Culpepper acknowledges (69-70) that many have recognized that conflict propels the plot, but he draws attention to how the conflict between the opposing forces of belief and unbelief is evident in each episode of the Gospel. This is part of what Culpepper identifies as the “affective power” of the plot.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, *Anatomy*, 88-89.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

scene evinces a change in both the recognizer (level 2) and the reader (level 3) as she observes the character's reactions to the recognition.²⁸

Culpepper discusses characters' reactions to Jesus as part of advancing his analysis of "The Nature of Faith" in the Fourth Gospel.²⁹ He suggests that in the Fourth Gospel faith is not a static, content-driven exercise, or the result of dependence upon signs; rather, the highest level of faith "is illustrated by those who know, love, *and bear witness*."³⁰ For Culpepper, knowing, loving, and bearing witness tie believers to the mission of Jesus:

Believers are also sent to bear witness to the truth in Jesus Christ, just as Jesus himself was sent by the Father (20:21). The goal of their mission is that "the world may know" (17:23). From John the Baptist (1:19ff.) and the first two disciples of Jesus to the Beloved Disciple (19:3; 21:24), the Gospel emphasizes the importance of confessing, or bearing witness.³¹

However, his advancement of witnessing as indicative of faith fades into the background in Culpepper's actual analysis of the characters and narrative. He observes that in John 1:35-51 John the Baptist and disciples recognize Jesus, offer substantive confessions, and even witness to others. Yet when discussing the disciples' actions in the Cana Scene, he comments on the disciples' lack of a confession. He maintains that "their confessions are reserved for later in the story" because the remainder of the Gospel illustrates that, while the disciples believe, they still have much to learn about who Jesus is.³² He similarly concludes that even though the Samaritan woman shares her recognition in witness and the townspeople believe in Jesus and confess him as the Savior of the world (4:42), her

²⁸ Culpepper (*Gospel*, 73) describes the reader as a "metanarrative recognizer" who "may or may not then recognize the implication of his or her recognition."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 97-100.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 100; emphasis added.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

³² *Ibid.*, 78.

recognition of Jesus is only a “recognition of a kind.”³³ Curiously, though characters bear witness, and Culpepper holds witnessing to be a key to the highest level of faith, he argues that none of the characters who bears witness in the Gospel has an adequate knowledge of Jesus, or even faith, until after the resurrection.³⁴

Culpepper, in answering the question “What constitutes an acceptable response or adequate faith?” principally links faith to the adequate content of a character’s recognition/knowledge of Jesus, and not to witnessing, since he concludes that in the first twelve chapters of the Gospel, “No declaration of Jesus’s identity prior to his being lifted up, the death and resurrection, could be a full *anagnōrisis*.”³⁵ Culpepper describes Mary’s post-resurrection recognition of Jesus as still clinging to a former way of understanding when she exclaims, “*Rabbouni*” (20:16).³⁶ He describes Thomas’s confession (20:28) as standing in a climactic position because it recognizes both Jesus’s lordship and his divinity.³⁷ But Jesus commissions his disciples, they receive the Spirit, and they bear witness (20:20-22) to Thomas before they evince any proper knowledge, and Mary is commissioned as a witness *before* any significant understanding of Jesus is evidenced (20:17). The Gospel even ends with the disciples not recognizing Jesus (21:1-

³³ Ibid., 80.

³⁴ These positions are understandable given the narrator’s asides about the disciples’ lack of understanding what Jesus said prior to his death (12:16; 20:9) or Jesus’s own intimations that the disciples would only understand later (13:7). These verses refer to Jesus’s death and would not necessarily preclude an adequate faith. I maintain that adequate faith is possible in characters before the resurrection, otherwise consistency would dictate that no character is an exemplar of faith, since they are all temporally set in the story before the resurrection. Curiously, of those who maintain that a character’s knowledge of Jesus’s resurrection is a prerequisite for having a proper Johannine faith, some struggle to identify a point when characters come to faith, others incongruently attribute proper faith to some characters and not to others, and others appear to be inconsistent because they appeal to other factors.

³⁵ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 83.

³⁶ Ibid., 241. Culpepper proposes (243) that Mary needed to understand that Jesus was going to the Father before she could come to proper faith.

³⁷ Ibid., 85.

8), or at least having an ambiguously defined knowledge that is couched in trepidation.³⁸

Culpepper's commitment to content may be why he does not expand upon the relationship between recognition and witnessing (his level 2), even though he places witnessing among the descriptors of those who have the "highest faith." For Culpepper, the Beloved Disciple is the "prime exemplar" of faith as witness, while the disciples in John 1:35-51 are enumerated as characters who draw attention to the importance of witnessing in the Fourth Gospel, though they have an inadequate faith.³⁹ I argue that the indication of faith is their action: they bear witness.

Larsen's *Recognizing the Stranger*, in dialogue with Culpepper, offers an abbreviated list of recognition scenes, those that more closely adhere to the form of the Greco-Roman type-scenes. According to Larsen, the competing claims introduced at the end of the Prologue ("no one has ever seen God" [v. 18a] and "the one who is at the side of the Father has made him known" [v. 18b]) create a tension of knowing and revealing while laying the foundation for the employment of the recognition scenes. This tension and the employment of the type-scene play a defining role in what Larsen identifies as the "epistemological plot," which seeks to move the reader to a place of faith rather than simply advancing the story (plot).⁴⁰

Larsen identifies five "basic, constant moves" that categorize the type-scene, the fifth of which is the most important for this study: "the move of attendant reaction and

³⁸ Ibid., 85. Moloney (*Gospel*, 551) sees a transformation from v. 4 where the disciples do not recognize Jesus to now recognizing him, thus they do not ask who he is. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 3:359) finds in this a "peculiar tension" between Jesus and the disciples, with v. 13 providing the answer to the question the disciples do not dare to ask. Brown (*Gospel*, 2:1077) explains their reticence by proposing that v. 12 was originally part of a different recognition scene in which Jesus was not originally recognized.

³⁹ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 100.

⁴⁰ Larsen, *Stranger*, 17.

physical (re)union.”⁴¹ In contrast to Culpepper, Larsen connects recognition scene reactions with witnessing when he concludes that the Gospel has transformed the type-scene’s “move of attendant reaction.” Within the Fourth Gospel, it is now “directed toward mission and testimony, addressed to new, potential recognizers of Jesus.”⁴² The five moves bring about the integration of the recognizer into a new social reality or social group, in which “the proper way for believers to perform ‘the move of attendant reactions’ is to participate in the dissemination of the rumor of Christ.”⁴³

While I agree with much of Larsen’s analysis, and with his connection between a character’s attendant reactions (move 5) and witnessing, his identification of scenes and his proposed pattern of moves remain wanting in several respects. Larsen struggles to incorporate the results of failed witnessing attempts (John 9), and the ordering of his moves (with the attendant reactions coming as the last element) does not always fit the movement of the scenes he identifies as recognition scenes. For example, in John 9 Larsen acknowledges that the blind man’s witnessing in 9:8-34 (move of attendant reactions) takes place before what he identifies as the moment of recognition (vv. 35-38). In an analogous manner, as I will argue below, Martha’s invitation to Mary (11:28) takes place before the token (the raising of Lazarus) is presented, even though Martha gives voice to her proper recognition of Jesus much earlier (11:27), and the narrator records no statement or reaction after Lazarus emerges from the tomb. This may be why Larsen

⁴¹ Ibid., 220. Larsen offers (63-72) a list of shared elements consists of 1) the meeting between two characters; 2) the move of cognitive resistance where an observer struggles with the identity of the observed; 3) the display of a token which proves identity and aids in recognition; 4) the moment when recognition occurs; and 5) the move of attendant reactions.

⁴² Ibid., 220. Larsen observes that the move of attendant reactions in the ancient scenes could be demonstrated by a display of a physical embrace, reactions of astonishment, and surprise on the part of the recognizer.

⁴³ Ibid., 223. Larsen’s evaluation is based primarily on what happens in the scenes in chs. 20-21.

inexplicably does not treat John 11 as a recognition scene, even though commentators regularly classify this as a recognition scene and emphasize the vital role that John 11 plays in the developing plot of the narrative, especially what Larsen would identify as the epistemological plot.

What I will argue in the following analysis of paired scenes is that subsequent scenes return to the sequencing and theme of bearing witness as established in the first scenes (1:35-51), thereby reinforcing in the reader the connection between discipleship and bearing witness. Additionally, the scenes consistently employ the act of bearing witness as the move of attendant reactions.

Paired Scenes/Characters

Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman

Nicodemus is one of the most enigmatic characters of the Fourth Gospel. At his first appearance, the narrator refers to him as an ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων and an ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων (3:1-3). Both groups have previously questioned the Baptist about his identity (1:19-28) and had confronted Jesus at the temple (2:12-25), demanding that he prove his authority (2:18) by means of a sign. The narrator links Nicodemus to those who have seen the miraculous signs Jesus has done in Jerusalem (2:23; 3:2) and who initially believe in him because of his signs.⁴⁴ He comes to Jesus at *night*, which commonly symbolizes spiritual darkness in John (9:4; 11:10; 13:30).⁴⁵ However, this ruling Pharisee's series of affirmations of Jesus's identity in 3:2 echoes previous

⁴⁴ So Talbert, *Gospel*, 98; Culpepper, *Gospel*, 134.

⁴⁵ The use of "night" is often contrasted with the light (1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46) and should also be included within the semantic domain of "darkness," which is routinely employed in the Fourth Gospel as symbolic of antagonism to Jesus. It also is associated with sin or a lack of faith (1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35; 12:46).

statements about Jesus.⁴⁶ Nicodemus, as Israel's teacher, claims to be one among those who "know" who Jesus is (οἶδαμεν v. 3), yet he is left in narrative silence (3:9) with a question ("How can this be?) that betrays his failure to understand.

This dichotomous characterization sends "mixed signals" (3:1-9) to the reader and has led to a division of opinion as to whether Nicodemus in ch. 3 is a character who has come to faith.⁴⁷ If he believes as a result of the encounter, the scene can be construed as an evangelistic appeal to outsiders. If he does not believe the scene reinforces insider/outsider distinctions and maintains the sectarian boundaries of a putative Johannine Community.⁴⁸ Striking a balance between belief and unbelief, Culpepper describes Nicodemus as a character "partially defined" and open enough to enable readers to interpret him in myriad ways when it comes to faith.⁴⁹ However, in light of the opening scenes (1:35-51) and of the expectations of witnessing the scenes create, these ambiguities stand as part of the narrative tension the reader experiences as she waits to see if a proper knowledge of Jesus (3:2) results in witness.⁵⁰

The reader first encounters Nicodemus in 3:1. The narrator informs the reader that Nicodemus meets with Jesus at night (3:1-15). There are various perspectives

⁴⁶ Rabbi (cf. 1:38, 49), one who has "come from God" (cf. 1:9, 15, 27), one who performs miraculous signs (cf. 2:11, 18, 23), one whom God is with (cf. 1:4, 18, 34).

⁴⁷ Jouette M. Bassler, "Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 108 (1989): 635-46; Culpepper, *Gospel*, 135-37; Gabi Renz, "Nicodemus: An Ambiguous Disciple? A Narrative Sensitive Investigation," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John* (ed. John Lierman; WUNT 2/219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 255-83; Craig R. Koester, "Theological Complexity and the Characterization of Nicodemus in John's Gospel," in Skinner, *Characters and Characterization*, 165-81.

⁴⁸ David Rensberger's work (*Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1989], 54-58) is an example of the evangelistic position. An example of the sectarian position is Richard L. Rohrbaugh's, "What's the Matter with Nicodemus? A Social-Science Perspective on John 3:1-21," in *Distant Voices Drawing Near: Essays in Honor of Antionette Clark Wire* (ed. Holly E. Hearon; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), 145-58.

⁴⁹ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 135. So Renz, "Nicodemus."

⁵⁰ So Neyrey, *Gospel*, 76.

regarding the significance of the timing of the meeting.⁵¹ Because the narrator has already established a contrast between light and darkness by describing Jesus as the light (1:4, 5) and by referring to the darkness's inability to comprehend it (1:5), the reader is prepared to offer an initial negative evaluation of Nicodemus's faith. Even so, this characterization takes time to be affirmed, since Nicodemus's first words appear to indicate a comprehension of Jesus's identity that reflects insider knowledge.⁵²

Curiously, Nicodemus approaches Jesus alone yet he speaks as a representative of a group (οἴδαμεν), most likely a reference to those who had seen Jesus's miraculous signs in Jerusalem (2:23) and had believed, but they are characterized as a group to whom Jesus could not entrust himself (2:24-25).⁵³ If this is correct, Nicodemus identifies himself as one who believes because of signs. He acknowledges Jesus as a Rabbi (v. 2) as did Andrew, the unnamed disciple (1:38), and Nathanael in his climactic confession (1:49). Nicodemus's greeting is followed with a series of statements that have previously

⁵¹ There are three typical positions: 1) there is no significance to the detail that he comes at night; 2) Nicodemus comes at night because he did not want the other Pharisees to know of his meeting with Jesus; and 3) it symbolizes Nicodemus's lack of faith. Koester ("Complexity," 170) holds the second position. Koester recognizes that Nicodemus's fear has both positive and negative implications because, while Nicodemus separates himself from his fellow Pharisees, he is also secretive about his belief, a secrecy later implicitly condemned by the narrator of the Fourth Gospel (9:22). So Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (BNTC 4; Ada: Baker Academic 2013), 149. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:132) balances the symbolic and the literal. He agrees that darkness is symbolic, and suggests (as reasons for the time of the meeting) that Nicodemus was afraid of the Jews, or that in rabbinic tradition, teachers stayed up at night to study. Brown (*ibid.*, 1:138) also discusses the possibility that at least according to P. Egerton 2, Nicodemus tries to trick Jesus. Moloney (*Gospel*, 90-91) holds that Nicodemus, though in the dark, has come to the one who has been described as "the true light" (1:9), which can be construed as an initial step in faith. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:533-36) maintains that Nicodemus's coming at night is due to his fear of being seen, which would make him a secret believer.

⁵² Koester, "Complexity," 170.

⁵³ Nicodemus is linked with those in Jerusalem who have seen his signs and have come to faith (2:23) by the quick repetition of ἀνθρώπος (the last word in 2:25 and the third word in 3:1). Nicodemus also references the signs Jesus was doing (3:3), a phrase used to describe the crowd in Jerusalem who have put their faith in Jesus (2:23). This connection also has negative connotations, since Jesus could not entrust himself to that crowd (2:24) nor, by implication, to Nicodemus. So Keener, *Gospel*, 1:535; Moloney, *Gospel*, 91. Koester ("Complexity," 170-72) proposes that Nicodemus represents those with a signs-faith (and hence incomplete) as well as humanity in need of rebirth.

indicated a proper knowledge of Jesus's identity. He affirms Jesus's origin from and connection to God (v. 2), a connection only the Baptist ("Lamb of God" and "Son of God," 1:29-34) and Nathanael ("Son of God," 1:49) have made. In light of the opening sequences, this leads the reader to assume that Nicodemus believes and to look for an attempt at witnessing.⁵⁴

Jesus's retort (v. 3) to Nicodemus's claims of knowledge creates a quick narrative turn that opens the ensuing dialogue. Jesus ignores what Nicodemus says and instead insists that only those who have been born from above can see the kingdom of God (v. 5). He links the activity of the Spirit with those who have been born of the Spirit (v. 6-9). Nicodemus's lack of understanding shows through a series of challenges and ripostes as he fails to comprehend the rebirth that Jesus is talking about (v. 4). The character who has started the scene with an apparently strong confession through a series of affirmations is reduced to questioning and ultimately silence. Nicodemus's last response to Jesus evinces a complete lack of comprehension: "How can this be?" Jesus responds to Nicodemus's incredulity by playing on Nicodemus's misunderstanding. It is inexcusable that Nicodemus, as "Israel's teacher," does not understand what Jesus is talking about (v. 10), while Jesus, the teacher who has God with him and has come from God, does (v.1).

I argue that although Nicodemus serves as a literary foil within the scene, this does not preclude him from serving as a representative figure when set in contrast to the Samaritan woman.⁵⁵ The reader now understands that knowledge of who Jesus is does

⁵⁴ Contra Neyrey (*Gospel*, 77), who surmises from the statements that "Nicodemus knows little when he arrives and has learned nothing when he leaves."

⁵⁵ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:539, 545-46) maintains that taking Nicodemus as one with whom the audience might identify as a representative figure fails to understand the role of an interlocutor in ancient literature. He argues that Nicodemus's role as a misunderstanding foil allows Jesus to delineate his teaching. While he is set as a foil within this scene that allows Jesus to discourse on matters important to the reader, he is also paradigmatic when set within the larger context of the Gospel's paired scenes.

not necessarily result in faith or in bearing witness. At best, Nicodemus is a secret believer who comes to Jesus at night so as not to be seen.⁵⁶ If, however, the narrative progression regarding the activities of disciples is taken into account, then the measure of discipleship is bearing witness or inviting others to encounter Jesus. Nicodemus has failed on both counts and remains among those who do not accept the testimony of Jesus and his community.⁵⁷ Jesus insists that he and others have been witnessing to Nicodemus's group (v. 11), and yet they still do not receive the testimony (ὁ λαλοῦμεν καὶ ὁ ἐωράκαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν οὐ λαμβάνετε).⁵⁸

The narrator pairs Jesus's nighttime encounter with Nicodemus with his daytime encounter with the Samaritan woman. Nicodemus is a named character, who is a ruling member of the Jews, a Pharisee, and Israel's teacher. The Samaritan woman is an anonymous female outsider with a questionable reputation, who meets Jesus during the day. He is portrayed as not comprehending, confessing, or bearing witness. She bears witness and invites others to their own encounter with Jesus.

The scene of Jesus's deliberation with the Samaritan woman has a long history of interpretation.⁵⁹ She is often taken to be representative of a Samaritan mission or as symbolically fulfilling the promise of reuniting the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel at the eschaton.⁶⁰ Since readers are not given any narrative insights into the

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1:536.

⁵⁷ While Keener (ibid., 1:560) has described Nicodemus as a secret believer elsewhere, at this point in his commentary he takes him as "a representative of the world that fails to receive Jesus's witness."

⁵⁸ Koester, "Complexity," 167. Koester takes this to be a reference to Johannine Christians.

⁵⁹ Janeth Norfleete Day provides a summary of the various ways in which this scene has been interpreted in *The Woman at the Well: Interpretation of John 4:1-42 in Retrospect and Prospect* (BIS 41; Leiden: Brill, 2002). See also Okure, *Mission*, esp. 58-78; Andrea Link, *Was redest du mit ihr? Eine Studie zur Exegese-, Redktions-, und Theologiegeschichte von Joh 4,1-42* (BU 24; Regensburg: Pustet, 1992).

⁶⁰ Mary L. Coloe, "The Woman of Samaria: Her Characterization, Narrative, and Theological Significance," in Skinner, *Characters and Characterization*, 182-96. Coloe maintains that the scene

internal thinking of the woman or townspeople, which has only served to increase the variety of interpretations, they are left to surmise her faith through the actions and words of characters in the scene and by the narrator's clues in relating the story.⁶¹

After a lengthy panoramic dialogue that surveys their theological and cultural differences, Jesus successfully turns the conversation with the Samaritan woman to the issue of the identity of the Messiah. She has grown in her understanding of who Jesus is throughout her dialogue with him, moving from addressing him as "a Jew" (v. 9), to "Sir" (v. 11), to "a prophet." Jesus finally discloses to her that he is the long-awaited Messiah (4:26).⁶² With this revelation, no immediate action is recorded, as a reader might expect from the initial witnessing patterns established in 1:35-51. Instead, the author pauses the narrative to introduce the disciples into the scene and provide their response to the encounter (4:27). The narrative structure leaves the reader to anticipate the Samaritan woman's response to this revelation. In this narrative pause, the narrator reminds the implied reader of the boundary-crossing nature of the encounter through the disciples' two unvoiced questions, one directed toward the woman and the other toward Jesus.⁶³

When the reader sees the woman's response to Jesus's revelation, the reader recognizes that she is amazed by Jesus's miraculous knowledge (as Nathanael was in 1:47-49), and in a way reflective of Andrew and Philip (1:41, 45), the first thing she

symbolically portrays the fulfillment of Ezek 37:16-22 and the reunification of the two kingdoms, while at the same time intimating the marriage symbolism of the OT.

⁶¹ Day (*Woman*, 165) makes special note of the inferences that must be made by a reader because of the scene's lack of details. Day also observes how these inferences result in varied interpretations.

⁶² Keener, *Gospel*, 1:620; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:441-42. Both propose that the implied author is potentially alluding to the concept of the Samaritan *Taheb*, and is probably claiming more, given the use of ἐγώ εἰμι elsewhere in the Gospel, since it appears in the context of talking about belief (6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5).

⁶³ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:596-98; 620-21) provides a survey of the social and moral objections to a woman talking with a male who was not her husband. The first question echoes Jesus's question to Andrew (1:38).

does—leaving her jug behind—is to testify to her neighbors, inviting them to “come and see.”⁶⁴ If the detail about the jug implies the haste with which she left, this story does indeed echo Andrew’s and Philip’s hasty departures (1:41, 43), at which each immediately goes and finds someone else to whom they could testify and could invite to “Come and see” (1:46).⁶⁵

The reader’s first indication that the Samaritan woman has come to faith is the record of her witness to Jesus’s potential fulfillment of messianic expectations (μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός;).⁶⁶ However, her exact words elicit confusion in the reader, since μήτι typically expresses the speaker’s doubt or the speaker’s assumption that the answer is unlikely.⁶⁷ Because of this, positions vary regarding the woman’s faith. Moloney argues that the particle evidences that she is neither a true believer nor a missionary, while Keener and Brown conclude that the Samaritan woman has an adequate, if not exemplary, belief in Jesus.⁶⁸ If one takes the expression as indicative of a lack of faith,

⁶⁴ Whether she leaves her jug behind as a symbolic gesture of having found living water, and thus having no further need of the water from the well (signaling her conversion), or the jug is simply a marker of the haste with which she leaves, both interpretations comport with the present argument. Susan Hulen, (*Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009], 50) holds that the jug symbolizes the haste with which she left. Brown (*Gospel* 1:173 n. 28) supposes that the jug is significant, but he leaves the interpretation open. For Moloney (*Gospel*, 134-35 n. 28), the jug foreshadows the woman’s return to the story. The jug should be given greater narrative import because of the prior dialogue. Possession of a vessel as a means of procuring the water in the well and its potential contents (vv. 9-15), in contrast to the vessel, source, and nature of the water that Jesus provides, is the crux of the discussion between Jesus and the woman.

⁶⁵ Andrew does not invite Peter, yet he immediately leads him to Jesus. Likewise, the Samaritan woman will bring the townspeople.

⁶⁶ Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 137) describes the link between these invitations as an “apostolic role” that the Samaritan woman is given in light of the earlier invitations. So Brown, *Community*, 187-88. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:622) notes that the invitation differs from earlier invitations, a difference possibly due to the value placed on variation in Greco-Roman literature. Nevertheless, the meaning remains consistent.

⁶⁷ BDAG, s.v. “μήτι” (p. 649); LSJ, s.v. “μήτις” 2 (p. 1130). The adverb can also indicate fear in asking a question. So Keener, *Gospel*, 1:622 n. 396. Brown (*Gospel* 1:173 n. 29) acknowledges the usual implication of doubt that the particle brings. He describes the woman’s faith as not being complete but expressing “a shade of hope.” Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:444) observes that the particle does not demand a negative answer but can express a tentative or cautious question or assertion.

⁶⁸ Moloney, *Gospel*, 135 n. 29. Moloney vaguely acknowledges a tension when he describes the response of the townspeople as one of “alacrity” to her words. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:584, 622) holds the

an odd juxtaposition is created by the way the question is phrased, the response of the townspeople to her testimony (v. 30), and their later affirmation of faith precisely because of her *testimony* (v. 39).⁶⁹ The particle probably indicates a timidity based on her reputation among the townspeople and their potential reactions to her report. It may also indicate that she has asked the question in a way that draws the townspeople out to investigate, knowing that they might not respond to any positive claims she makes.⁷⁰

I hold that the contextual considerations are crucial to any evaluation of the woman's faith. After informing the reader that the townspeople have responded to her words and are making their way to Jesus (4:30), the narrator turns the reader's attention to Jesus's dialogue with his disciples (vs. 31-38). Jesus's references to sowers, reapers, and an eternal harvest are to be understood contextually as references to the work of the woman, Jesus, the disciples, and the approaching Samaritans.⁷¹ The author has structured the story by placing the content of the Samaritan woman's witness on either side (vv. 29,

veracity of her statement and her faith as one who believes. Brown's (*Gospel*, 1:181) summary of the first scene is that "Jesus came to the woman and led her to faith."

⁶⁹ The townspeople affirm her activity as testimony and their belief because of her witness, but they suggest that their belief has been further enhanced by meeting the Messiah in person ("We believe *not only* because of your words..."). Some have noted the distinction between "your words" (τὴν σὴν λαλίαν) in v. 42 and "his word" (τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ) in v. 41. They take this to be an indication that the townspeople did not take her words seriously. This may simply be a stylistic change or a connection to the next scene in which the official is noted to believe Jesus's word (4:50 ἐπίστευσεν τῷ λόγῳ). The narrator will later describe the woman's testimony as τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναίκος (4:39). λαλία occurs one other time in the Fourth Gospel (8:43), and there it refers to not being able to hear or understand Jesus's words.

⁷⁰ Hyley (*Imperfect Believers*, 51) enumerates her potential history, reputation, and the narrative context as indicators that the question indicates belief. She notes that her positive affirmation of Jesus as a prophet is significant and that the testimony of her experience, combined with reference to Jesus as the Messiah, is what constitutes her complete testimony. Bultmann (*Gospel*, 193) suggests that the question has the point of view of the townspeople in mind, which may be closer to what the woman was rhetorically seeking to accomplish. Harold W. Attridge ("The Samaritan Woman: A Woman Transformed," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel. Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* [ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013], 278-79) interprets her question as reflective of faith. See also James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 283; Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956; repr. and rev. Gordon M. Messing; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) §1772 (p. 401), §1773 (p. 402), §2651 (p. 598-99).

⁷¹ An analysis of this scene will be offered in ch. 5.

39a) of the narrative aside in which Jesus dialogues with his disciples about the ripened harvest for eternal life (vv. 31-38). In addition to this, the narrator not only speaks of the woman's activity as testimony (v. 39a) but also causatively attributes the townspeople's belief to her testimony (πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν...διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς μαρτυροῦσης ὅτι Ἐἶπέν μοι πάντα ἃ ἐποίησα). Her testimony, and its effects, are emphasized by a third reference to it: the townspeople attest: "No longer do we believe because of your word." They themselves have come to believe that Jesus "truly is the savior of the world (v. 42) in part, at least, because of the woman's testimony."⁷²

Still, evaluations of the Samaritan woman's faith are varied. For some, she is ambiguously responsive, while for others she is a model of faith. Hulen describes her as an "example of faithful discipleship" because she presses to understand more, while at the same time Hulen affirms that she lacks an informed understanding of who Jesus is and that her testimony to the townspeople is tentative and lacking a clear belief statement.⁷³ But the narrative context and connections to other parts of the Fourth Gospel lead to a different evaluation. This scene is a narrative return to opening themes in 1:35-51. The reader, having encountered the first disciples' witnessing efforts after their encounter with Jesus, has been prepared to evaluate the actions of the Samaritan as a believer and faithful disciple. Moloney is incorrect in maintaining that she, as well as the villagers, has a "partial faith" until the villagers encounter Jesus and hear Jesus's words

⁷² The townspeople's affirmation of her words indicates that she has accurately spoken of Jesus and that their understanding was correct. So Hulen, *Imperfect Believers*, 50.

⁷³ Hulen, *Imperfect Believers*, 42, 55. Hulen's position is open to criticism. She maintains that any estimation of the woman's faith by the content of her witness must reach the conclusion that she is little different from Nicodemus. Yet she also maintains that the Samaritan woman "can teach the reader something further about what it means to be a disciple. She witnesses, not to perfect faith in Jesus, but to her experience of him." This witness encourages others to have their own experience.

for themselves.⁷⁴ This distinction between partial and full faith is not warranted. The narrator attests (v. 39) that the villagers believe in Jesus because of her testimony (ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν...διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς μαρτυροῦσης). The townspeople simply have the added benefit of encountering Jesus themselves, a benefit Jesus will later relativize (20:29). Additionally, although the author seems to imply the need to encounter Jesus for complete faith, the purpose statements in 19:35 and 20:30-31 would mitigate this, since the reception of the author's testimony is to be accounted as a means for creating sufficient belief.

Given these contextual clues and the conformity to the paralleled sequences in 1:35-51, it is more likely that she is a paradigmatic example of belief. She is both a “model of the female disciple” and a representative outsider whose gender, ethnic origins, and questionable past do not deter her from engaging in the missional activity of testifying, the activity of which delineates her as a representative disciple.⁷⁵ In this light, she is aptly ascribed an “apostolic” role as a co-laborer in the harvest.⁷⁶ In doing all of this, she joins the group of disciples, as Attridge expresses it, “in a successful apostolic

⁷⁴ Moloney (*Gospel*, 146) argues that it is “partial” because it comes as a result of the woman’s testimony. However, he further comments that they are the first characters to present true faith since (unlike the disciples) they themselves have heard Jesus’s words and believe because of him. In Moloney’s estimation of faith in the Gospel, believing in Jesus because of his words is a superior form of faith. He maintains that a clear contrast in motivations for belief has been advanced by the author, who contrasts those who come to believe because of the woman’s testimony and the “many others” who believe because of Jesus’s words. For the latter, “they have made a major step toward true faith: they have believed because of the word of Jesus.” Moloney suggests (147) that the townspeople “disassociate themselves with their initial belief (v. 39),” but once they encounter Jesus, their knowledge is “based entirely on the logos of Jesus.” Brown (*Gospel* 1:173-75 n. 39) evaluates the woman’s faith and that of the townspeople as “not complete” until the townspeople come to faith on the basis of Jesus’s words rather than hers.

⁷⁵ The details of her gender and the repetition of her witnessing activity would be superfluous to the story were they not also important. So Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 137.

⁷⁶ Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 137) describes the link between these invitations as an “apostolic role” that the Samaritan woman is given in light of the earlier invitations. So already Brown, *Community*, 187-88.

outreach.”⁷⁷

The narrative pairing of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman informs the reader in various ways. Nicodemus comes at night, is a named character, and is a Jewish male who is an insider as a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish council. The implied author portrays the Samaritan woman as an anonymous outsider, in particular a Samaritan, as a woman who has had a series of husbands (4:17-18), and as encountering Jesus while coming to get water in the middle of the day (4:6).⁷⁸ Nicodemus, as part of a conversation between a Pharisaic ruler dialoguing with a Rabbi, freely comes to talk to Jesus and appears to know who Jesus is, calling him “Rabbi” and a “teacher who has come from God” (3:2). The Samaritan woman does not know who Jesus is, referring to him as “sir” (4:11, 15, 19) and as a “prophet” (4:19) in an awkwardly started and boundary-crossing conversation (4:7-9) about proper worship.⁷⁹ Nicodemus is “Israel’s teacher” (3:10); the Samaritan woman is someone whose worship practices are questioned by Jews (4:19-24). The final word of Nicodemus is a question of incredulity

⁷⁷ Attridge, “Samaritan Woman,” 268. Similarly, Keener (*Gospel*, 1:586, 622) describes her role as foundational for a new community of faith and obedience and as a model witness and disciple.

⁷⁸ The anonymity of the Samaritan woman draws the implied reader’s attention to her ethnic identity, gender, and her questionable living arrangements. Many have taken the reference to “five husbands” as a mark of sinfulness on her part (e.g., Moloney, *Gospel*, 127), yet it may be that the woman has simply been divorced four times for various reasons, not necessarily infidelity. This is the position of Attridge (“Samaritan Woman,” 277), who surmises that she may have been married to significantly older husbands who had died. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:585, 595, 606-8) surveys various potential reasons for her marital history (death, divorce) and ultimately concludes that, given the number of husbands and her solitude at the well, the original audience would have inferred social ostracism and negative moral connotations. The author may also be contrasting the outcomes of the stories through the temporal contrasts of the meetings. In contrast, Mark F. Whitters (“Discipleship in John: Four Profiles,” *WW* 18 [1988]: 424) understands both Nicodemus’s nighttime encounter and the Samaritan woman’s noon encounter as negative indicators of their reputation and faith. Hulen (*Imperfect Believers*, 43) contends that the woman’s noon visit to the well is symbolic more of her reputation than of her coming to faith. Given John’s symbolic use of light/dark imagery prior to these scenes (1:4-6; 3:19), the contrast between the two characters probably plays on that symbolism. This is not to deny that the noon meeting at the well is also an indication of the woman’s social ostracism because of her marital situation.

⁷⁹ Doubtless the ambiguity of κύριος is recognized by the author, given the author’s penchant for irony.

(“How can this be?” 3:9), while her last words are an act of bearing witness (4:29, 39).

The dialogue with Nicodemus ends in his narrative silence while the Samaritan scene ends with the townspeople’s affirmation of their belief because of her testimony (v. 42).

This scene is not simply about the acceptance of the Samaritans into the Johannine community, nor should it be understood as a didactic mirror-read of a commission to a Samaritan mission.⁸⁰ This position, brought to prominence in Brown’s *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, does not adequately account for the details of the narrative and the ways in which she differs from Nicodemus.⁸¹ It also does not account for *her* witness to *her* people.

Finally, these scenes lead the implied reader to the conclusion that faith is not simply attaining a proper knowledge of Jesus. Nicodemus came with a correct “knowledge,” as evidenced in the various ascriptions that he attributed to Jesus that were reiterations of previously expressed statements made about Jesus by the narrator in the Prologue and by the disciples. The implied author is didactically addressing larger issues about who can and should work for the harvest and the potential harvest field outside of Jewish circles. Paradigmatic witnesses need not be typical insiders or have a properly pedigreed knowledge, nor should witnessing efforts stay within preconceived social or gender boundaries. Effective witness may arise from the least likely of sources. Comparable to the way in which the implied author ends the witnessing activity in ch. 1

⁸⁰ Moloney (*Gospel*, 140) understands it as either a mandate to reach out to the Samaritans or that it provides a justification for continuing the mission, especially if Samaritans were already present within the community. Others who hold the mission theory include Brown, *Gospel*, 1:175-76; Okure, *Mission*, 188-91.

⁸¹ A desire to draw attention to a Samaritan mission could have taken narrative shape by Jesus’s encounter with the Samaritan woman, and her positive response, without the other narrative elements. Rather than simply showing Jesus reaching out to Samaritans, the author has cast the woman in the role of a model disciple whose actions imitate those of first disciples.

with Nathanael's confession that drew that section to a close, this scene reaches a similar climax as it too closes with the confession of the recipients of the witnessing efforts:

Jesus is "the savior of the world" (v. 42).⁸²

The Invalid and the Blind Man

The invalid's encounter with Jesus (John 5:1-15) marks a transitional phase in the Gospel; the opposition to Jesus increases and even envelops those who encounter him, to the extent that the Jewish leadership makes plans to take Jesus's life (5:18; 7:19-25; 8:37-40; 12:10). In the midst of this growing opposition, the invalid is the first of two paired characters (the other being the blind man in ch. 9) to be questioned by the Jews about Jesus and his Sabbath law violations.⁸³ Like the Samaritan woman, the invalid is an anonymous character. Unlike her, he fails to bear witness or to invite other characters to an encounter with Jesus. Even more conspicuously, he is the first character to experience personally one of the Johannine signs and yet he fails to believe.

The scene begins with a description of the dire circumstances of people gathered around the Pool of Bethzatha, who are waiting for an opportunity to be healed (5:1-2): in the invalid's case, he has waited thirty-eight years (v. 5). Upon learning of the man's condition, Jesus simply asks him, "Do you want to become well?" The man falsely assumes Jesus is critiquing his condition and his failure to make it into the pool ahead of the others. Jesus responds by directing his attention away from the pool and by telling

⁸² This scene follows the pattern of 1:43-51 and 20:24-31. They close with comparable confessions and dialogue.

⁸³ A similar method of interrogation will be directed against the blind man in ch. 9. The healing of the invalid in John 5 marks a shift in the Gospel as characters, and Jesus himself, face confrontational interrogations by the Jews. This opposition to Jesus increases after this scene and ultimately results in Jesus's death. So Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 91; Stibbe, *John*, 75.

him to get up, pick up his pallet, and walk (v. 8). The man obediently responds by doing the very thing that Jesus instructs him to do, an action some have labeled as a sign of faith.⁸⁴ Ambivalent about the invalid's faith at this point, the reader is left with high expectations that this man, as was the case with Andrew, Philip, and the Samaritan woman, will go to seek out others and tell them about Jesus.

Rather than immediately engaging in witnessing or finding someone to bring to Jesus as the reader would expect, the narrator informs the reader that the Jews *find him* and ask why he is violating the Sabbath by carrying his pallet. Trying to avoid blame, the man reports, “The man who made me well (ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ), that one (ἐκεῖνος) told me to pick it up and walk.”⁸⁵ Rather than offering a confession or a testimony, the man accounts for his violation by attributing it to a nameless and title-less Jesus, who fades into the narrative background. The Jews' subsequent question shows no interest in the sign; in fact, in contrast to the narrator, none of the characters shows interest in the sign.⁸⁶ When the Jews press him further about the identity of the man who told him to carry his pallet, the invalid tells them that he has no idea who healed him—another sharp contrast to the characters who have encountered Jesus prior to this. Moloney comments that his inability to understand who Jesus is (beyond a mere man from the crowd) is astonishing.⁸⁷ Given the pattern established in the narrative, the reader is able to

⁸⁴ Moloney, *Gospel*, 168-69. Moloney proposes that the invalid initially acts in faith when responding obediently to Jesus's words, but never moves beyond his initial understanding of Jesus.

⁸⁵ J. Ramsey Michaels, “The Invalid at the Pool: The Man Who Merely Got Well,” in Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman eds., *Character Studies*, 341. Larsen (*Stranger*, 146-47) takes the man to be accusatory in his testimony, blaming Jesus as responsible for commanding him to break the law.

⁸⁶ The narrator initially refers to the invalid by reference to his illness (e.g., v. 7 ὁ ἀσθενῶν). Following his healing, the narrator refers to him in terms of his healing (v. 10 τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ, v. 13 ὁ ἰαθεὶς).

⁸⁷ Moloney, *Gospel*, 173.

determine, at this juncture, that the man who has been healed is not a believer, since he has no attributable witness nor does he offer an invitation to encounter Jesus. He is an illustration that a personal encounter with Jesus and the experience of a sign may not result in faith or in bearing witness. The invalid's passive presence throughout the process and his lack of knowledge, interest, and witness, are astonishing given that the narrator describes him as having been healed after a thirty-eight-year struggle.⁸⁸

Curiously, after the questioning, there is no account that *he* initiates a search to identify Jesus, no attempt to offer a testimony as to what has happened to him, and no answer to the Jews' question. The question of Jesus's identity is left unanswered, an emptiness antithetical to previous scenes. The reader waits to see if the man will inquire regarding Jesus's identity, thereby seeking an answer to the question, or if he will find anyone to whom he can speak about what has happened.

The identity of the man who has healed him would have remained unknown if Jesus does not find him (v. 14 εὐρίσκει αὐτόν), a possible alert to the reader that something more is about to take place since Jesus had "found" Philip (1:43) who in turn "found" (1:45) Nathanael, and Andrew "found" (41) Peter. Instead, Jesus exhorts him, "Stop sinning!" and then warns him that if he does continue to sin, something worse will happen to him (v. 14). Jesus may very well have been "inviting the man to change his

⁸⁸ So Culpepper, *Gospel*, 150. Culpepper describes the man as not requesting healing, not showing any desire to want to be made well, and as someone who blames his condition on others. Brown (*Gospel* 1:209) describes the man's lack of interest as "real dullness." Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 2:98) evaluates his actions more positively. He credits the man with searching for Jesus's identity. I disagree, since Jesus finds him and the reader is given no details as to how the man discovers who heals him. The invalid obviously knows details about how the healings at the pool take place, and he takes the time to tell Jesus about that, but when he is healed without getting into the pool after lying there for thirty-eight years, he amazingly knows no details about the one who has healed him.

lifestyle” and to come to faith as Keener suggests.⁸⁹ With this warning about sin and the man’s apparent inability to leave sin even after he is healed, the reader is enabled to place him among unbelievers who reject Jesus, and whom the Fourth Gospel later describes as enslaved by sin (8:34; 9:41).

At last, the former invalid goes to the Jews to report who it is that healed him. Michaels suggests that his response to Jesus is “the most important clue to his character.”⁹⁰ The man returns to the Jews to “proclaim” (ἀνήγγειλεν) that “Jesus is the one who made him well” (v. 15). The reader, having heard all of the titles ascribed to Jesus before this scene, is immediately able to evaluate his response in light of the tension created between the verb (ἀνήγγειλεν) and the content of the message. What he proclaims falls far short of what the reader has been formed to expect, knowing the events and acclamations in the previous scenes. In fact, the man’s return and message could be viewed as a parody of prior testimony.⁹¹

While Culpepper raises the question as to whether the invalid’s statement to the Jews can be counted as bearing witness, I would argue that it should not, given the

⁸⁹ Keener, *Gospel* 1:643. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 104) proposes that the sin to which Jesus refers is the man’s lack of faith and his testimony against Jesus. Michaels (“Invalid,” 342) comments that a reader would expect Jesus to offer the man the opportunity to follow him or to believe in him after the healing, but this is not the case.

⁹⁰ Michaels, “Invalid,” 344. Michaels proposes that the man’s response could have been one of repentance or a discussion about Jesus’s identity in the face of this warning of impending death. Rather than do any of these, the man simply departs to inform the authorities.

⁹¹ The occurrence of κύριε (5:7) may be an ironic play on Jesus’s identity, as in 4:11, however, there is no advancement in his acclamations of Jesus. In fact, there is an apparent regression from κύριε, to his lack of knowledge (vv. 11, 13), to simply Jesus (v. 15). This is in stark contrast to Andrew, who calls Jesus the Messiah (1:41), Nathanael who proclaims him to be “Rabbi,” “Son of God,” and “King of Israel” (1:49), and the Samaritan woman who moved from “Jew” (4:9), to “Sir” (4:11), to “prophet” (4:19), and finally to believing that he was the “Christ” (4:29). Even Nicodemus, who is negatively evaluated because of his lack of witness, addresses Jesus as “Rabbi” (3:2), as one who “has come from God” (3:2), and one whom God is with (3:2), as evidenced by the miracles he was doing. Michaels (“Invalid,” 344-45) notes that the man had no reason to return to the authorities, since he had been cleared of wrong-doing, and they are after Jesus. His report instigates the ensuing confrontation between Jesus and the Jews.

pattern and elements that were set out in the prior scenes.⁹² The invalid alone, among the characters introduced so far, refers to Jesus simply as “Jesus.” Proper-name recognition is not sufficient as a confession, testimony, or even as a first indication of faith in the Fourth Gospel.⁹³ He is not seeking to recruit or bring anyone to Jesus as much as he is affixing blame for his violation of Sabbath regulations.⁹⁴ In this regard, any comparisons created by the narrator between the invalid and prior characters imply a negative evaluation regarding the invalid.⁹⁵ In the narrative context, the invalid’s report might even be considered a false or pseudo-testimony.⁹⁶ As the reader moves on through what I have argued is a section of increased tensions (chs. 5-12), she gets a sense of just how deficient the invalid’s reaction is, especially when contrasted with the actions of the blind man (ch. 9).

For the reader observing the contrasting reactions of people who encounter Jesus, the narrative importance of the invalid goes beyond the negative example of the insufficiency of signs to produce faith; it pushes the reader to acknowledge that a personal sign encounter is insufficient for producing an adequate basis for knowledge of Jesus or for testimony.⁹⁷ Michaels tries to rescue the invalid from being portrayed as a negative character who “has not thrown in his lot with Jesus’s enemies” but instead has

⁹² Culpepper, *Gospel*, 151. While Culpepper acknowledges (150-51) the invalid’s response is open to debate, he concludes there is nothing in the scene that indicates belief.

⁹³ This is the first instance of a character using only the proper-name rather than a title. Even Philip, who refers to him as Jesus (1:45) also includes a messianic description. According to Larsen (*Stranger*, 147), the author has played on the type-scene in creating a failed recognition scene that would have been consonant with success in other Greco-Roman recognition scenes, where proper name recognition is full recognition. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 104) describes the invalid’s knowledge of Jesus as “minimal and material; it contains no faith in Jesus’s role, nor does it lead to a relationship with him.”

⁹⁴ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 104. Michaels (“Invalid,” 344-45) describes him as an informant.

⁹⁵ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 105; Culpepper, *Gospel*, 151; Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 194.

⁹⁶ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 104.

⁹⁷ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 138.

“gotten well” and is “potentially a disciple,” as does Beck, who argues that the invalid’s anonymity draws the reader to him and facilitates reader identification.⁹⁸ Both arguments are weak, though, in light of the larger narrative context.⁹⁹ In contrast, Keener concludes that the invalid’s actions are comparable to those of Judas; they are an act of betrayal.¹⁰⁰

In summation, Keener suggests that the man represents members of the community who were touched by Jesus but who have fallen away, comparable to those mentioned in John 6:66 and 1 John 2:19.¹⁰¹ Rather than a mirror reading comparable to those of Martyn and Brown, in which characters reflect members of the community, I would argue that the authorial readers (or actual readers), who do not have access to Jesus, see that in this instance a miraculous personal encounter with Jesus does not engender proper faith, that is, it does not result in bearing witness. Faith and witness are not dependent on such an encounter or on the personal experience of signs (20:29). On this hypothesis, for a post-apostolic audience, which does not have access to personal encounters with Jesus, such negative examples would have been encouraging in the face of potentially failed results in bearing witness, or as evidence that bearing witness is not dependent upon personal encounters. Additionally, a reader recognizes that this is the

⁹⁸ David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (BIS 27; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1997). Beck’s premise that readers identify with anonymous characters does not take into consideration other narrative features.

⁹⁹ Michaels, “Invalid,” 343. Michaels ultimately refrains from drawing any conclusions. He observes that the narrative provides no indicators of the man’s ultimate faith stance, but his “prospects do not look promising.” So David R. Beck, “The Narrative Function of Anonymity in the Fourth Gospel Characterization,” *Semeia* 63 (1993): 143-58.

¹⁰⁰ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:644. So Larsen, *Stranger*, 147. Evaluations of the man’s report are diverse. Brown (*Gospel* 1:209) does not consider this to be an ominous action but an example of his naïveté. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 2:98) finds it impossible to believe that the man would denounce the one who healed him. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 104) describes the man’s testimony as, at the least, aiding and abetting Jesus’s enemies.

¹⁰¹ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:644.

first instance in which sin is attributed to a character in the Gospel.¹⁰² I suggest that a reader is to infer the implication that a continued engagement with sin eliminates the chance for any effective witness.¹⁰³ Finally, as a negative example, the man, confronted by the authorities, should have been ready to bear witness (15:18-16:4).

A negative evaluation of the invalid's faith is not only occasioned by the details within the scene and the preceding narrative, it is also a reasonable conclusion when contrasted with the next character with whom the invalid has been intentionally paired, as indicated by the common elements in both scenes.¹⁰⁴

Culpepper regards John 9:1-49 as a window not only into the Gospel and its major themes but also into the community that produced the Gospel.¹⁰⁵ Moloney refers to it as the apex of Johannine narrative writing.¹⁰⁶ This scene so closely parallels that of the invalid in ch. 5 that Keener considers the two to be paradigmatic as a representative contrast between belief and unbelief.¹⁰⁷ While valuing these estimations, I would also suggest that the narrator has again paired scenes to contrast characters, one who does and one who does not *bear witness*.

¹⁰² The noun (ἁμαρτία) occurs prior to this only in relation to what the Lamb of God takes away (1:29). This is the first occurrence of the verb (ἁμαρτάνω 5:14; 8:11; 9:2, 3) in the Gospel.

¹⁰³ μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε is a negative of the present imperative and when combined with the adverb ἔτι, likely implies that the man has continued in his sin, which may also have been the reason for his original impairment. This is in contrast to the blind man.

¹⁰⁴ The scenes have common elements: the geographic location, the mention of sin, witnessing/reporting to the Jewish authorities, the Sabbath violation and interrogation concerning the violation, and Jesus's absence from and return to the one healed. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:639) describes ch. 5 as a "foil for the miracle story in 9:1-14, together coupling a positive and negative example of response to Jesus." See also Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 139; Dorothy A. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel* (JSNTSS 95; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 105-6.

¹⁰⁵ Culpepper, *Gospel*, 54-61, 174-75.

¹⁰⁶ Moloney, *Gospel*, 290; Brown, *Gospel* 1:376-77.

¹⁰⁷ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:639. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 168-70) provides a table comparing the two scenes. He observes that both men experience status-transformation to whole people, but he suggests that only the blind man becomes an "insider." So Jeffrey L. Staley, "Stumbling in the Dark, Reaching for the Light: Reading Character in John 5 and 9," *Semeia* 53 (1991), 64-65.

The scene opens with Jesus and the disciples encountering a blind man and discussing the reason for his blindness, which the disciples erroneously attribute to sin.¹⁰⁸ Jesus instead insists that this has happened to him “so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (v. 3).¹⁰⁹ The man remains silent during their conversation, a narrative point of interest as he does not see Jesus to recognize who he is, and he is not healed until after he obediently departs (as did the invalid) and washes in the pool of Siloam.¹¹⁰ The implied reader is informed that Siloam means “sent” (ὁ ἐρμηνεύεται ἀπεσταλμένος), a word closely associated with the missional witnessing of the Baptist (1:6, 33; 3:28), Jesus (3:34; 4:34; 5:24; 5:36-38; 6:29-57; 8:18, 26), and the disciples (4:38) before this scene.¹¹¹

While the blind man, like the invalid, has given no specific indication of faith other than his obedience, the reader, who has been conditioned to look for testimony arising from analogous encounters with Jesus, waits to see if he bears witness or invites others to a messianic encounter. The now-seeing man returns to his community, where his neighbors see him and begin to question his identity (9:8-12), which occasions the opportunity to bear witness. The man immediately reports how his eyes were opened, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes” (v. 11). This conversation, in contrast to the conversation with the invalid, concerns the healing. His

¹⁰⁸ In apparent contrast to the invalid who struggles with sin (5:14), the blind man’s infirmity is not attributable to sin.

¹⁰⁹ This display of God’s glory will occur through the man’s witness to the townspeople, to his parents, and to the Jewish authorities.

¹¹⁰ By implication, the blind man is hearing the discussion between Jesus and the disciples as Jesus identifies himself as the light of the world (9:5). This would make witnessing difficult. This is in contrast to the blind man, who sees Jesus and has an opening exchange with him.

¹¹¹ So Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 175. Since the blind man becomes a witness, in contrast to his parents, this might refer to his missional activity, foreshadowing Jesus’s sending of disciples (20:21). Moloney (*Gospel*, 292, 297 n. 7) understands the play to be about being in close proximity to Jesus, the one sent by the Father, and not about the man being sent.

testimony begins where the previous scene concluded; he identifies his healer as “Jesus.” His testifying about his healing differentiates him from the invalid in ch. 5, and readers wait to see if his speaking goes beyond that of the invalid.

As with the invalid, he initially does not know where Jesus is (v. 12). After being questioned by the townspeople and offering testimony about how he was healed, he is taken to the Pharisees. At this point, the reader is informed in an aside that, like the invalid, the blind man was healed on the Sabbath, and so a congruous interrogation ensues regarding Jesus’s violation of Sabbath regulations.¹¹² This interrogation goes in a quite different direction, as the man gives the second account of his experience to the Pharisees (v. 15), which turns the interrogation into a discussion about Jesus’s identity. This in turn (v. 17) animates the Pharisees’ next question, “What do you have to say about him?” In contrast to his parents, who are afraid to say anything (vv. 20-22), the blind man responds, “He is a prophet.” Like the Samaritan woman (4:1-42), the man’s descriptors of Jesus are taking on greater theological significance, moving from “Jesus” to “a prophet” (v. 17), as his opportunities to testify multiply. While his knowledge is yet incomplete, he has not missed an opportunity to bear witness in regards to his encounter with Jesus. Because of his actions, a reader understands that he is a believer.

The scene now turns to the parents of the blind man, who apparently believe that Jesus is the Christ but do not want to answer the interrogators’ questions (bear witness) for fear that they will be removed from participation in the synagogue.¹¹³ Their fear leads

¹¹² There are differences. The invalid is questioned by “the Jews” (5:10), while the blind man is questioned by the Pharisees (9:13). Additionally, the invalid is questioned about why he is working on the Sabbath and who told him to do carry his pallet (5:9-13), while the blind man is questioned about Jesus making mud on the Sabbath (9:16).

¹¹³ The narrator’s explanatory note is quite telling. The parents are only asked how it is that their son is now able to see, but the implied reader is told that their fear in answering that question actually results from their not wanting to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:788) suggests that

them to refuse to testify as to who Jesus is or what he has done, in stark contrast to their son, who already twice has testified about what had happened to him. Their deference to their son causes the Pharisees to question the blind man for a second time (his third opportunity for testimony in the scene). Rather than asking a question, they charge the man to give glory to God and then make a statement about Jesus's state of sinfulness.¹¹⁴ The man disclaims knowledge of Jesus having sinned and continues to account for his healing, and by implication Jesus, even when his parents will not.

The Pharisees again ask what has happened to him (v. 26), and in response the blind man goes so far as to turn the direction of the interrogation when he begins asking the Pharisees questions.¹¹⁵ After condemning them for not listening to his previous testimony, he asks them why they want to hear the story (testimony) of his healing again (v. 27). He follows this question with a second, that both confirms his faith as a disciple and serves as an invitation to become a disciple of Jesus: "You do not want to become one of his disciples as well do you (v. 27)?"¹¹⁶ With this question, the blind man associates discipleship and hearing/offering testimony and places himself squarely among the disciples of Jesus.¹¹⁷ The blind man, like the disciples in 1:35-51, is witnessing and inviting others to become a disciple, even though he does not fully understand who Jesus

their lack of confirmation might be due to their absence at the time of the healing; therefore, they have no knowledge of the event. However, they have understood that confirming how the healing took place would be akin to claiming faith in Jesus, which indicates they knew how the healing took place.

¹¹⁴ Brown (*Gospel*, 1:374) holds this charge to be part of an oath formula given before hearing someone's testimony. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:790) likewise recognizes the legal setting, specifically interrogation. The references to sin and giving God glory recall references in 9:3.

¹¹⁵ Culpepper (*Gospel*, 177) describes his actions as taunting them. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:792) sees the man moving from a defensive to an offensive position in the argument.

¹¹⁶ Moloney (*Gospel*, 294) surmises that the question is sincere; the man is not mocking them, as some have suggested.

¹¹⁷ So Talbert, *John*, 160. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:377) describes the man at this point as having become "an ardent defender of Jesus's cause."

is. The Pharisees confirm the reader's positive evaluation of his witnessing faith when they respond with astonishment that the blind man would consider himself to be one of Jesus's disciples (v. 28), since they, in contrast, are disciples of Moses.

Even in the face of the Pharisees' insults (v. 28), the man continues his obdurate witness. He criticizes them for their lack of knowledge (v. 31) by instructing them on the law (v. 31-33), quite possibly in hopes of persuading them.¹¹⁸ The blind man revisits the topic of Jesus's sinfulness in v. 31 ("We know that God does not listen to sinners") with a plural reference (οἴδαμεν) that includes him among the Pharisees in their knowledge of the law. This plural may signify more, potentially placing him as a member of the disciples or those in the story who believe, which may also include the readers who likewise "know" Jesus.¹¹⁹ The blind man has proclaimed Jesus to be a prophet, but his belief and understanding of Jesus continue to be revealed as he further testifies that Jesus is a "devout" man who is heard by God because he does God's will (v. 31) and is "from God" (v. 33).¹²⁰

In response to this exchange, the Pharisees "throw him out" (v. 34 ἐξέβαλον). For his witness, he has suffered the very consequences that his silent parents feared.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ So Keener, *Gospel*, 1:789.

¹¹⁹ The plural, already encountered in 3:2, possibly includes the man with the Jews in their knowledge of Torah traditions. Schnackenburg (*Gospel* 2:252) posits that this may be an inclusive statement that reflects the language of Christians at the time of writing, and a typical argument used in response to Jewish arguments against Jesus being the Messiah. The use of plurals is another prime feature in the concept of testimony in the Fourth Gospel. It will be discussed in a later chapter.

¹²⁰ What the blind man asserts of Jesus is an echo of what Nicodemus asserts of Jesus (3:2).

¹²¹ Scholars differ in regards to their evaluations. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 168) calls him an "elite disciple" because he has been "thrown out" for his testimony. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:795) acknowledges that formal excommunication might not be the reason, but maintains that there is certainly a link to 9:22, in that it fulfills the known threat. Culpepper (*Gospel*, 178), following Martyn, connects his being thrown out with an anachronistic reference to the experience of the community at the time of writing. In contrast to these, Moloney (*Gospel*, 295) is unwilling to link this directly to any formal expulsion. Instead, he understands the reference to being thrown out to refer simply to being thrown out from their presence. Bernier (*Aposynagōgos*) argues that expulsion from the synagogue is not necessarily a later development;

Contra Moloney and others who downplay the role or significance of faith apart from a full knowledge of Jesus's identity, the Gospel clearly and regularly confirms the faith of characters as adequate before acquisition of a full knowledge, even before Jesus's resurrection.¹²² Certainly the man and the Pharisees thought that he had gone beyond accepted Jewish beliefs of the time to become a disciple of Jesus.¹²³

Larsen acknowledges that what he has identified as the move of attendant reactions (witnessing) in prior scenes takes place before what he points to as the true moment of recognition in this scene (v. 38).¹²⁴ Because of this change in order, he refers to the blind man's testimony as a "kind of testimony" and "not a proper move of attendant reaction" because it has taken place prior to vv. 35-37, which he identifies as the moment of recognition. He maintains that the "more conventional form" of attendant reaction is the man's worship of Jesus (v. 38) in response to Jesus's revelation to him that he is the Son of Man (vv. 35-37).

Larsen appears to assume that since there is no positive reaction to the man's testimony, as in previous recognition scenes, it does not count as proper testimony because "there is no 'come and see'" and the Pharisees "do not follow the first observer; but they meet Jesus in a manner less carefully arranged by the narrator."¹²⁵ Yet the blind

rather, it can be placed during the ministry of Jesus if the social function of the synagogue in Jerusalem is considered.

¹²² Moloney (*Gospel*, 295) claims that the man has only begun the journey of faith and does not come to full-faith until the last scene, yet this is in contrast to his comments on the faith statements of the earliest disciples in John 1:35-51. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 2:247) sees his lack of knowledge regarding Jesus's whereabouts as an indication of the distance between him and Jesus until he is able to take the "last step towards faith" in v. 38. However, unlike the invalid, the man could not see Jesus and is told to go and wash before the miracle takes place. A lack of knowledge regarding Jesus's whereabouts is reasonable.

¹²³ Talbert (*John*, 161-62) holds this to be a sign that he has become a disciple of Christ, but he will later say that he does not complete the process of conversion until his act of worship.

¹²⁴ Larsen, *Stranger*, 159.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

man has repeatedly borne witness to the sign/healing that he has experienced and even inquires as to the Pharisees' desire to become disciples of Jesus as well (v. 27). His testimony and invitation would be the proximate narrative cause for some of the Pharisees being with the blind man and Jesus (v. 40) and hearing the exchange between them (ἤκουσαν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων ταῦτα οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ ὄντες) after throwing him out. Larsen suggests that this indicates they were merely standing beside the man and not that he has brought them with him.¹²⁶ While Larsen is correct that there is no recorded invitation to "come and see," a reader can infer that witnessing and an invitation have taken place. Without taking the man's actions as the cause of the Pharisees' presence, a reader would be hard pressed to account for their presence with the one they had officially expelled from their midst (thrown out of the synagogue?).

Larsen's unwillingness to take the man's witnessing as an attendant reaction in this scene is based upon his identification of when the blind man comes to faith (v. 38). If one considers his repeated witness and affirmation of his discipleship, the speech of other characters (v. 28) who confirm his discipleship, and the actions of other characters (v. 34), then he has come to faith before v. 38 and his witness remains an attendant reaction. Additionally, if the narrator has told the reader that the blind man's parents fear being thrown out of the synagogue if they confess Jesus to be the Christ (v. 22), and the blind man is himself thrown out, then by implication within the narrative context the Pharisees understood him to have made that confession. The narrative aside in 9:22 serves as a prolepsis to his removal from the synagogue and heightens the contrast between the parents' fear and the son's witnessing faith.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 159 n. 36.

In the way the author has constructed the scene, the reader sees that the man has consistently borne witness in the face of staunch opposition. Even in the face of being expelled from the synagogue, the man invites the Pharisees to become disciples (brought them to Jesus?). Thus he has been confirmed as one of Jesus's disciples *before* what others have identified as the moment of receiving adequate knowledge of Jesus's identity. As in 1:35-51 and 4:1-42, witnessing as evidence of faith occurs early in the scene, and the climactic confession is the last element, which draws the scene to a close. Bearing witness, not faith as a purely cognitive event, may be better described as the narrator's locus of attention and the move of attendant reactions.

As a means of tracing the textual intention while considering the authorial audience, I offer the following reading.¹²⁷ The blind man's consistent testimony, even in the face of insults and the threat of being removed from the synagogue community, is edifying to an authorial audience potentially facing similar situations (16:2-4).¹²⁸ When the reader encounters the scene in which the blind man bears witness in the face of such opposition, she realizes that she must overcome the fear which has prevented the man's parents from bearing witness. She is also encouraged that her witness must continue in the face of opposition if she is to follow in the steps of the blind man, whom Neyrey

¹²⁷ I develop a yet more nuanced picture of the authorial audience in the conclusion.

¹²⁸ The particular situation facing the blind man and his parents was probably not the later threat of synagogue removal, as Martyn argues that 9:22 represents. The author uses λοιδορέω to describe the attacks of the Pharisees in 9:28. This is a *hapax* in John. It is consistent with other early Christian writings that appear to reflect the tensions of opposition and social ostracism. Elsewhere in the NT it refers to opposition that Paul and his companions faced (1 Cor 4:12), and Peter's church as well (1 Pet 2:23). In both instances it is an encouragement to readers. It more likely reflects the fear of hostility and conflict that many Christians faced much earlier in the first century as they bore witness to Jesus. So Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (trans. R. McL. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 294. Likewise, Moloney (*Gospel*, 294) does not link this scene with the specific removal of Christians from the synagogue as Martyn and others do, but with a more general tension that Christians would have felt as they developed their Christology in the face of opposition to their beliefs. So Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*.

describes as “Jesus’s expert witness” and an “ideal insider who sees, knows, and publicly confesses Jesus.”¹²⁹ She is also informed as to the intended recipients of her witnessing efforts. The townspeople and those who threaten to expel them from the synagogue are not beyond the reach of her witness.

The previous point can be expanded: Jesus is conspicuously absent in both chs. 5 and 9, when the characters are facing the interrogation of the leaders. The blind man is doubted by friends and neighbors who bring him to the Jewish leaders. He is abandoned and betrayed by parents, and insulted and condemned by the leaders of his people because of what he is saying, all without having seen Jesus, who is absent during this entire series of events. Observing a blind man tenaciously cling to his testimony, even when he has not seen Jesus, spurs the authorial audience to courage in the face of opposition when they themselves have no direct contact with Jesus.¹³⁰ Neyrey correctly suggests that the blind man “matures into an insightful, courageous person who boldly and publically speaks about Jesus and even suffers public humiliation because of him,” thereby becoming “an ideal hero for the group, both in growth of knowledge and public witnessing.”¹³¹

When considered in light of the direct comparisons with the blind man whose illness is not the result of sin, and whose healing results in witness in the face of Jewish opposition, it is also informative that a proper witness will not arise from one who remains in perpetual sin.

¹²⁹ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 168, 175.

¹³⁰ Jesus later speaks to his disciples about his departure and their commission to continue testifying during his absence (15:18-16:16). He also blesses those who believe without seeing (20:29). Keener (*Gospel*, 1:790), after surveying many other possible explanations, concludes that the blind man is an example of courage for the Johannine Christians.

¹³¹ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 174-75. So Keener, *Gospel*, 1:790.

Conclusion

The implied author has paired witnesses or witnessing sequences that return, in structure, to the opening scene in which the reader encounters the original disciples. This comparative approach presents the reader with characters (corresponding and contrasting) by which to evaluate their own witnessing response to faith. Through the first two sets of characters, an alternation takes place; the first character presents a failure to witness while the second character becomes an exemplary witness. In the comparative structure, the reader also experiences how the narrative begins with the disciples and moves to a contrast between a male insider (Nicodemus, ch. 3) and a female outsider (Samaritan woman, ch. 4), the former a teacher with impeccable credentials, the latter a woman with a questionable past.

As the narrative progresses into a period in which Jesus faces increasing opposition, the implied author provides two examples of those who personally experience one of Jesus's signs (chs. 5, 9) and face severe opposition from Jewish leaders. The former potential witness, the invalid, is steeped in sin and fails to bear witness. The blind man, who is free from sin, bears witness to friends and to the Jewish authorities, and invites them to become disciples, even in the face of expulsion from the synagogue. Given that there is no narrator's comment on God's actions within the scene, I suggest that his witnessing is given directed attention when Jesus comments that this has happened to him so that the "the work of God might be displayed in his life" (9:2).

Larsen struggles to identify with consistency the move of attendant reactions as witnessing, while other scholars struggle to identify who are, and who are not, believers. For Larsen, this happens because he does not consider witnessing to be indicative of faith

as the move of attendant reactions. He is looking elsewhere for a narrative signal, whether that be a confession a character offers or an action in which a character engages, that would indicate that a character has come to true faith. Others attempt to identify true faith by the content of a testimony. Neither approach satisfactorily accounts for the narrative details provided by the author. When attention is given to witnessing as the primary indication of faith, it has great explanatory power as the move of attendant reactions and also for the affective significance of the Gospel.

As I will attempt to demonstrate in the next chapter, this argument has explanatory power for the remaining scenes that follow a recognition scene pattern. It also enables a reader to account for the curious absence of characters when Jesus does, in fact, appear.

Chapter 4
Paired and Patterned Witnesses and Absent Characters in John 11-20

Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the author of the Fourth Gospel has paired characters and scenes as negative and positive exemplars of witnessing and returns to the opening sequences like a symphony returning to its opening exposition. The reader, as she encounters these positive and negative exemplars, increasingly develops an understanding of the authorial intention by the way that the implied author has constructed the text. Part of that understanding is that discipleship, and thus true belief, is only partially defined in the Fourth Gospel by cognitive content. The implied author, I have argued, is displaying that the *sine qua non* of discipleship is action, that is, bearing witness.

As the reader moves through the rest of the narrative she encounters two more sections (11:1-12:11; 20:10-29) that the implied author has structured in a way similar to the previous recognition scenes. The final scenes share a distinctive feature: absent characters.

When she encounters the next occurrence of the pattern (11:1-12:11), the reader also encounters a variation on the scene structure. The interchange between Mary and Martha in ch. 11 is less well integrated into the established pattern; the implied author has placed two characters into the same scene and the delineation between believing and nonbelieving characters is subtler. However, I suggest that the reader expects (through the repetition of the pattern before ch. 11) for one character who has come to faith to go and find another character(s), who are not yet believers, and invite them to their own

encounter with Jesus.¹ The author enables the reader to make comparisons by the intercalation of scenes dedicated to each character's exchange with Jesus, thereby enabling her to recognize the pattern and discern contrasts.

Regarding the first scene, I will argue that the implied author has, in fact, structured 11:1-12:11 in such a way that one character is conspicuously absent when the first character encounters Jesus, in an effort to continue the pattern in which one character (Martha) encounters Jesus and goes to find another character (Mary), then bears witness/invites her to her own encounter with Jesus. This proposal, I will suggest, bears the fullest explanatory power with regard to features in 11:1-12:11 that often present areas of exegetical difficulty or disagreement.

In the final occurrence of the pattern (20:10-29), the implied author returns to a two-sequence structure that mirrors 1:35-51 while also presenting the reader with two more instances in which characters are conspicuously absent. In the first sequence, Mary encounters Jesus (20:10-16) and comes to faith. She goes to bear witness to the disciples (20:18), two of whom are absent when Mary encounters Jesus, because they have left to return to their homes, even though they have seen the empty tomb (20:10). In the second sequence (20:19-29), just before the implied author's purpose statement, the disciples encounter Jesus (20:19-23) and come to faith. They then bear witness to Thomas (20:24-25), who is absent when the rest of the disciples encounter Jesus.

Paired Scenes/Characters

Mary and Martha

¹ Rabinowitz (*Before Reading*), discusses the expectations built in a reader regarding the use of repetition (53-56) and of "the other-shoe rule" (133-35), whereby a reader "learns to predict what sorts of things are likely to follow from what is first presented."

In the Lazarus story in 11:1-44, the author moves from paired scenes and their respective characters to a single scene with paired characters. This scene is a hinge in the plot of the Fourth Gospel: the raising of Lazarus is the last in a series of signs. It foreshadows what is going to happen to Jesus, and the author has causally tied this sign to Jesus's death and resurrection (11:45-57) while, at the same time, repeating the pattern established in 1:35-51. Additionally, the scenes consistently employ the act of bearing witness as the move of attendant reactions.

It is the most complex scene of the Gospel, and presents interpreters with some of the greatest challenges regarding characterization in the Fourth Gospel. What appears at first glance to be a simple miracle story is not so simple: the structure alternates between characters' encounters with Jesus, the problem (Lazarus's death) is separated from the solution without any record of the observers' responses to the miracle, and the material leading up to the miracle is extended in such a way that "leads the reader to suspect that this is more than just a miracle story."² Even the stated purpose of the miracle (11:15), that the disciples might believe, is never recorded as being fulfilled within the initial frame of 11:1-44. While a reader might expect the miracle to take center stage, the characters of Mary, Martha, and Jesus occupy the narrator's attention. The structure of the passage interpretively ties them together as it alternates between their scenes, and the reader has been given a guide as to how to approach this scene: the paired characters (Nicodemus/Samaritan woman; invalid/blind man) before this scene invite the reader to make comparisons between the two sisters regarding faith, invitation, and confession.

² Ruben Zimmerman, "Narrative Hermeneutics of John 11. Learning with Lazarus how to Understand Death, Life, and Resurrection," in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (ed. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer; WUNT 1/222; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 77.

Lazarus, Mary, and Martha open the narrative (11:1-6). The narrator then provides a note about Mary: she was “the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair” (11:2). Moloney argues that the narrator’s placement of Mary as the first-named sister (11:1), followed by the narrative aside that describes her worship at the feet of Jesus (v. 2), is meant to portray her character and her faith in a more positive light than Martha’s.³ However, by the time the reader gets to v. 5, Martha is given prominence, as Jesus is said to have loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. Mary goes unnamed.

The interpretive preference for Mary’s character in this scene—scholars reading the aside as positively evaluating Mary—may be due to the uniqueness of John’s story and the tendency to read it in light of the Lukan account, in which Mary’s faith and actions are praised while Martha’s are chided (Luke 10:38-42).⁴ Additionally, while the narrative aside in v. 2 could refer to a known story that helps the reader clarify which Mary from the traditions surrounding Jesus is being referred to (and thus be an attempt to recall the Lukan story), I suggest its narrative function is as a prolepsis.⁵ The story has

³ Moloney (*Gospel*, 329) argues that naming Mary first (1:1) and then returning to her character with the aside of 11:2 places Mary (and her faith) in a positive light, or “points to the fact that she is the special sister.” This positive evaluation of Mary’s character does not necessarily follow. The narrator later informs the reader that “the sisters” send a message to Jesus about Lazarus’s illness (11:3), and then switches the order of the names. He drops Mary’s name in 11:5 when speaking of Jesus’s love for “Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” So, Martha moves from being placed second in the list (11:1) to being one of “the sisters” to finally being listed first (11:5), even before the two characters enter the scene.

⁴ While comparative readings with the Synoptics can prove informative, I argue that it is problematic when reading John’s narrative and characterizations of Martha and Mary. The settings are quite different as are the characterizations of the sisters. The Lukan scene produces a positive evaluation of Mary’s faith but downplays that of Martha, whom Luke records as being chastised by Jesus. That this has tended to be the case can be seen, for example, in the comments of Brown (*Gospel*, 1:433): “Taking the Martha and Mary incidents as they now appear in the Gospel (John), we find that the two women are true to the portrait painted of them in Luke 10:38-42.”

⁵ Contra Bultmann (*Gospel*, 302), who understands 11:2 to be a later editorial insertion. The narrator speaks of this detail as though it has happened but the reader knows that she has not yet encountered this event in the narrative. It is anticipating a future event, but which future event it refers to is a matter of debate, as will be discussed below.

not occurred yet in the Fourth Gospel. It is a rhetorical marker pointing to Mary's final scene, which, I will argue, signals her coming to faith (12:1-11), a more negative evaluation of Mary's character than has been traditionally understood.⁶

By the time Jesus approaches the city, Lazarus has died and many Jews have come (apparently from Jerusalem) to comfort Martha and Mary (11:19). It is at this point that the actions of the two sisters begin to be contrasted in alternating scenes devoted to Martha and Mary [Martha (11:21-27); Mary (11:28-37); Martha (11:38-44); Mary?].⁷ A final scene concerning Mary is missing in the immediate structure. The final scene in which Mary appears is 12:1-11, which is the fulfillment of the prolepsis (11:2), when Mary anoints Jesus's feet.

The reader learns that Martha, upon hearing of Jesus's arrival, goes to meet him, "but Mary sat in the house" (11:20).⁸ This note is unexpected. A reader might have expected that Mary would be the first to go in light of her noted devotion to Jesus (11:2), or that both sisters will respond to the news, especially if Mary is the special sister or the one whose faith is more paradigmatic. Interpreters ascribe Mary's remaining in the house to mourning rituals or the custom of receiving visitors.⁹ While Brown acknowledges the

⁶ Contra Francis J. Moloney, "Can Everyone be Wrong? A Reading of John 11:1-12:8," *NTS* 49 (2003), 510. Moloney contends that the author has thrown a narrative spotlight on Mary to "instruct the reader on the importance of Mary for the story that is being introduced. The reader must keep an attentive eye on Mary. She is an important character."

⁷ The parallels in the opening verses invite a comparison between them as have the opening scenes in 1:35-51. Both sisters, originally in the house, leave it to meet Jesus upon news of his arrival, fall at his feet when they meet him, and utter repeated phrases. The discrepancy between Martha's continued confession and dialogue with Jesus contrasts with Mary's subsequent silence.

⁸ The reader ponders whether Mary also hears the announcement of Jesus's arrival. While the third person singular ἤκουσεν has Martha as its subject, the insertion of the contrastive statement about Mary implies a contrast between their actions is an intended feature. The implied reader is left to assume, by this contrast, that they both hear of Jesus's arrival.

⁹ So Keener, *Gospel*, 2:843; Susan Miller, "Mary (of Bethany): The Anointer of the Suffering Messiah," in Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman eds., *Character Studies*, 476. Miller cites Dwight Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 221.

traditional mourning rituals, he also suggests that she has not heard about Jesus's arrival and that the author's portrayal of her as remaining in the house is a reflection of the Lukan account.¹⁰ If ritual mourning were the issue, both sisters (especially the elder) would have remained in the house to receive any visitors as well as host the mourners.

Culpepper, I think, is closer to the mark when he describes Mary's absence as a rhetorical device to allow individual characters to have conversations with Jesus.¹¹ However, Mary's absence when Martha encounters Jesus may be accounted for by structural similarities with the other scenes, given the witnessing patterns the reader has encountered prior to this scene. With Martha on her way to meet Jesus, a reader waits to see if Martha's encounter will result in Martha offering an invitation to encounter Jesus to another character or group or if witnessing will take place.

The dialogue between Jesus and Martha reveals an increasing knowledge, as in the previous recognition scenes. Upon meeting Jesus, Martha asserts that if he had been present when Lazarus was sick, her brother would not have died (v. 21). She initially signals her faith: "Even now I know that whatever you ask from God he will give it to you" (v. 22). Yet the reader has learned that proper knowledge is not necessarily a sign of faith (Nicodemus in ch. 3), and so waits to see if she bears witness. In response, Jesus tells her that Lazarus will rise again. She agrees, thinking he is talking about the future resurrection (v. 24). Jesus calls her to a deeper faith by telling her that he is speaking of himself in the present, and he informs her that the one who believes in him will never die. He then pointedly asks her, "Do you believe this?" Martha responds with the confession,

¹⁰ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:424, 432-33. Moloney (*Gospel*, 327-29) also suggests that she has not heard of Jesus arrival, though both sisters sent word about Lazarus's illness.

¹¹ Culpepper (*Gospel*, 187) surmises this because the reason for Mary staying behind, or for Martha not telling her, is not information the narrator felt it necessary to provide.

“Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world” (v. 27).

Opinions vary as to the significance or adequacy of this confession as it relates to Johannine expectations of true faith, and as an adequate, paradigmatic response to Jesus’s question concerning belief.¹² Contra Moloney, who sees Martha’s use of “Christ,” “Son of God,” and “coming into the world” as phrases used previously by others who had what Moloney describes as a limited faith, these phrases are consequential for Johannine theology and are paramount throughout the narrative.¹³ While “Christ” (c.f. 1:20, 41; 3:28; 4:25-29; 7:41) and “Son of God” (1:29, 49), and even “the one coming into the world” (1:9-10) have been used before in the Gospel as parts of confessions (even potentially inadequate ones), the collocation of these elements directly reflects the confession of faith the author is seeking to elicit in his authorial audience:¹⁴

¹² Moloney (*Signs and Shadows. Reading John 5-12* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], 162) notes the lack of correspondence between her confession and Jesus’s question. Elsewhere Moloney (“Everyone,” 514) describes Martha’s response as arrogant because he understands the perfect tense as implying that she has “always believed” that Jesus was the Christ. He further comments that this, as well as her use of “I know,” indicates an attitude that “she knows these truths, and needs no further clarification.” Additionally, Moloney holds that “she is replying in categories that may sound Johannine but do not respond to the question Jesus asked her.” In his commentary, Moloney (*Gospel*, 328) describes Martha’s confession as a continuation of her arrogance, and as having elements in common with others in the Gospel who “fell short of true faith” and have a “limited faith,” though he does acknowledge that she is on the way to a proper faith. Likewise, Zimmerman (“Narrative,” 93) concludes that Martha’s confession, especially when considered in light of her other actions (her objections to rolling away the stone or her vocalized confession in contrast to Mary’s simple gesture of adoration) betrays a deficiency of faith. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:434-35) paints Martha in the same light as the Samaritan woman, as someone who simply does not understand what Jesus is saying. The evaluation of her faith as inadequate might arise from an unstated presupposition that any confession prior to knowledge of Jesus’s death and resurrection is an inadequate confession or from a comparison with Luke’s account.

¹³ Moloney, “Everyone,” 514. In support of his contention that these statements reflect earlier confessions that betray an inadequate belief, Moloney marshals two verses: 1:49 and 6:14. In doing so, he maintains that Nathanael’s confession is inadequate (1:49) because Jesus informs him that he will see greater things (v. 51). He makes a connection to 6:14 by the phrase “coming into the world,” which the townspeople associate with someone who was only “the Prophet.”

¹⁴The delineation of the Greek is for clarity of comparison. Jesus’s statement prior to asking Martha about her belief comprises the second part of the author’s stated purpose for writing in 20:31: that by believing the reader might have life. The purpose statement and Martha’s confession employ similar words and even order, yet Moloney (“Everyone,” 509) holds that ultimately Martha’s confession and faith fail to meet the Johannine understanding of adequate faith. He also proposes (514 n. 35), in comparing

John 11:27

Ναὶ κύριε, ἐγὼ πεπίστευκα ὅτι
σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ
ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος.

John 20:31

ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύητε
ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,
καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε
ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.

Though her confession matches the implied author's intentions in writing, an estimation of her faith, from a narrational perspective, cannot appeal to 20:30-31 since the reader does not yet know this passage, even though the reader will recognize it retrospectively. What the reader has encountered, though, is that "Christ" and "Son of God" are the chosen self-designations of Jesus and are consistently at the center of discussions surrounding his identity. This is not a confession that characters in the narrative would lightly make (9:22). Keener considers Martha's words to be a "theological climax" to ch. 11.¹⁵ Neyrey concludes that Martha is one of the insiders, one who has accurate information about Jesus's identity.¹⁶ The reader has heard Martha's adequate, if not exemplary, confession of faith and awaits the final element of the patterned actions of believers developed in prior scenes.

20:31 with 11:27, that because her response does not match Jesus's inquiry (she begins with a perfect tense) and the tense of the verbs in 20:31, it should be understood as presumptuous on Martha's part and thus a failed confession.

¹⁵ Keener, *Gospel*, 2:844-45. "Christ" occurs 19 times in the Gospel. It is the title that describes Jesus in 1:17 and that John denies being in response to the questions of the priests and Levites (1:20) and his own disciples (1:28). It is the confession of Andrew to Peter (1:41). It reappears as the central topic both in Jesus's conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:25), as Jesus reveals himself as "the Christ" (4:25-26), and in her confessional question (4:29). The people debate the title as applying to Jesus in a series of questions (7:26, 31, 41) regarding Jesus's compliance with the description of the one who would be the Messiah. It is also the confession that results in expulsion from the synagogue (9:22). It is the core of the pointed question to Jesus from "the Jews": "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly" (10:22). Thus Martha's confession reflects proper Johannine faith. "Son of God" is the self-chosen designation of Jesus (e.g., 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4) and is at the center of controversy regarding his identity (10:33-42; 19:7). Similarly, Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 2:238; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972), 396; Michael Labahn, *Jesus als Lebensspender: Untersuchungen zu einer Geschichte der johanneischen Tradition anhand ihrer Wundergeschichte* (BZNW 98; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 420-22.

¹⁶ Neyrey (*Gospel*, 196) describes her as having high status and as among the elite disciples such as the author/narrator and the Baptist.

The first thing Martha does after this confession is to go and call her sister (v. 28), just as Andrew went to Peter (1:41), Philip went to Nathanael (1:44), and the Samaritan woman went to the townspeople (4:28-30). Martha privately calls Mary (ἐφώνησεν) and informs her that Jesus is calling (φωνεῖ) for her, information kept from the implied reader by the narrator.¹⁷

This report, as well as Martha's subsequent words, have been used to call Martha's faith into question. Moloney describes ὁ διδάσκαλος from her mouth as indicative of a "limited expression of faith," which fits within traditional messianic expectations, expectations that fall far short of a true understanding of Jesus.¹⁸ Neyrey, though positively evaluating Martha's faith, arrives at a similar evaluation of Martha's call to Mary. He maintains that she is not commissioned to any apostolic role, and therefore, her actions are not exemplary because her communication is informational and not evangelistic.¹⁹ Yet within the narrative context, her actions follow the pattern the reader has been led to expect of one who has encountered Jesus and comes to faith, and may even be termed "testimony."²⁰

While at first glance Martha's "teacher" might have the appearance of lacking substance as witness or confession, her reference to Jesus as ὁ διδάσκαλος is far more significant within the Johannine narrative than Moloney affirms.²¹ The term occurs several times in the Gospel, either as the Aramaic *rabbi* or as the Greek διδάσκαλος. The

¹⁷ φωνέω occurs in 1:48 (Philip called Nathanael to meet Jesus) and in 10:3 (the shepherd calls the sheep). Keener (*Gospel*, 2:845), for whom the narrative is more or less a historical report, understands comments that the call may have been private to protect Jesus's safety. He suggests that Jesus may have remained outside the city for this reason. So Brown, *Gospel*, 1:425 n. 30.

¹⁸ Moloney, *Gospel*, 328-29.

¹⁹ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 197.

²⁰ So already Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 268.

²¹ A similar conclusion is often drawn as to Mary's exclamation "Rabbouni" in 20:16.

Fourth Gospel repeatedly portrays Jesus, through his teaching, as the source of truth in contrast to Israel's famous instructor Moses (1:17). Jesus is also portrayed as a true teacher in contrast to Israel's teachers (3:1-13), as one instructing others on what he has seen and heard (8:38), as one who faithfully communicates what his Father has instructed him to say (12:50), and as the shepherd whose sheep listen to his voice (10:1-18).²² "Teacher" is a designation that Jesus embraces and affirms (in conjunction with the title "Lord") when it is ascribed to him by the disciples (13:12-17). Köstenberger, in my estimation of the occurrences of the title, is correct in his evaluation that one of the primary portrayals of Jesus's messianic role in the Fourth Gospel is that of the eschatological shepherd/teacher.²³ Finally, *rabbi/rabbouni* is one of the few titles with which the Gospel opens (1:38, 49) and closes (20:16).

When Mary, who has remained in the house, receives the message from Martha that the Teacher has arrived and is asking for her, she quickly goes out to meet him accompanied by the group of Jews, which has come from Jerusalem (v. 31). The narrator invites comparisons between the two sisters, as he notes that Mary goes to the same place that Martha had met Jesus (v. 30). Both sisters, upon meeting Jesus, utter parallel confessions (Martha: v. 21; Mary: v. 32), but Mary, in contrast to Martha, makes no further statements that reflect a developing faith, and she is the character who is associated with the mourners from Jerusalem.²⁴ Mary responds quite differently. Upon

²² In John 3 the term should be taken as a correct designation, not because of Nicodemus's address, but because ch. 3 is a linguistic and epistemological dual between two teachers, one from Israel and the other from heaven. So Alicia D Myers, *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis on the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in its Presentation of Jesus* (LNTS 458; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 78-79.

²³ Köstenberger, *Missions*, 130-40.

²⁴ So also Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 268. While it could be argued that this is simply an omission to avoid repetition, I suggest that the importance of the omitted portion as a confession of faith, would not be the part that was omitted if the importance of Mary's faith or character is a central component.

seeing Jesus, Mary “fell at his feet” (ἔπεσεν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς πόδας) weeping. Zimmerman proposes that this action reveals that Mary is a believer, if not a superior believer, in contrast to Martha.²⁵ Likewise, Talbert also holds that Mary’s faith is superior, but he argues that this is evidenced by her kneeling at Jesus’s feet, a sign that she has added action to confession.²⁶ If Mary’s actions were done in worship, a reader might expect προσεκύνησεν. Instead, the narrator describes Mary’s actions as ἔπεσεν and not προσεκύνησεν, even though the narrator has described the blind man’s worshipful kneeling before Jesus in these terms (11:32). Furthermore, within the narrative context, when Mary falls at Jesus’s feet the reader expects the fulfillment of the prolepsis (11:2), yet the details in 11:32 do not warrant this. Attempts to read 11:32 in light of 12:1-3, where the prolepsis is fulfilled, are unconvincing because the hearer/reader has not encountered that scene. Likewise, an approach that collapses the three scenes, so that 11:32 is interpreted in light of both 11:2 and 12:1-4, fails to sufficiently consider the differences in details and the rhetorical features. I suggest that this discrepancy propels the narrative forward and elicits in the reader a heightened search for its fulfillment.

Rather than fulfilling the prolepsis of 11:2, Mary, while weeping, simply utters

²⁵ Zimmerman (“Narrative,” 93) understands Mary’s action to be an act of adoration and that “Mary expresses here trust and faith in Jesus.”

²⁶ Talbert, *Gospel*, 172. Miller (“Mary,” 485-86) appears to read the anointing scene back into the narrative in ch. 11, and thus argues that Mary is a believer. Moloney (*Gospel*, 330) contrasts the sisters’ actions and statements and concludes that Mary’s falling down before Jesus is a signal to the reader of Mary’s superior faith. Peter Dschulnigg (*Jesus begegnen: Personen und ihre Bedeutung im Johannesevangelium* [Theologie 30; Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002], 201-3) also considers this an act of devotion. Those who understand Mary to be a believer or her falling down to be an act of faith base their conclusions on one of several of the following reasons: 1) an interpretation of the action in light of Jewish custom; 2) a later narrative event (12:1-11); 3) an assumed faith commitment because of the aside at 11:2; or 4) a Lukan comparison. In contrast, Keener (*Gospel*, 2:845) places both women on the same level of faith because of their comparable confessions. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:435) does not find Mary falling at Jesus’s feet as a sign of her superior faith.

the same words as Martha but without the added affirmation of confidence or confession (vv. 32-33).²⁷ A more satisfactory proposal, in light of the patterned scenes, is that the prolepsis (11:2) signals to the reader that she should be looking for Mary's transformation. When Mary falls at Jesus's feet in 11:32, the reader knows (because of the prolepsis) that this is not an act of worship, and, given the similarities to prior scenes and her association with the Jews from Jerusalem who are not yet believers (11:45; 12:11), that Mary is not a believer before her encounter with Jesus.²⁸

I suggest that accepting that Mary is not a believer better accounts for the other narrative details. Mary's wailing—and perhaps her challenge to Jesus—receives an agitated response (ἐνεβριμήσατο) from him.²⁹ Mary is also consistently associated with the Jews (vv. 29-37, 45; 12:3-11), some of whom are not believers and may even be in league with the Pharisees (11:45-46).³⁰ Even Moloney, who holds an otherwise positive

²⁷ Martha: Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὃδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου; Mary: Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὃδε οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός. At least one witness does not have Κύριε at 11:21, but the weight of evidence is in favor of its inclusion.

²⁸ Admittedly, my interpretation of the scene depends on filling in narrative gaps and developing conclusions in light of the prior employment of witnessing in the narrative and the details presented in the scene. Rabinowitz (*Before Reading*, 150-53), maintains that a reader is warranted in assuming that “events in the blank spots continue along the same path as the events preceding them” and that narrative gaps or ambiguities will be filled by the authorial audience by the expectations developed in the course of reading. So already Chatman (“Towards a Theory of Narrative,” *New Literary History* 6 (1975), 304; *ibid.*, *Story and Discourse*, 28-29), who refers to this activity on the part of the reader as making “interpretive inferences.”

²⁹ I maintain that this response should be understood negatively, given the linguistic differentiation between her and Jesus's weeping. Curiously, Zimmerman (“Narrative,” 94) understands Mary's falling at Jesus's feet as an act of adoration more valued than Martha's confession, while he describes Jesus's reaction to Mary's weeping as “react[ing] ‘angrily’ to Mary's emotional state.” He also contrasts Jesus's reaction with Mary's weeping as a difference between “emotional disturbance and debilitating sadness.” Keener (*Gospel*, 2:846) proposes that the anger is directed toward the lack of faith exhibited by Mary and the Jews. Moloney (“Everyone,” 518) surveys the other occurrences of the verb in the NT (Mark 1:43; 14:5; Matt 9:30) and concludes that this word carries with it the concept of emotion aroused by anger or hostility. Bultmann (*Gospel*, 405-6) distinguishes between Martha and Mary's faith and comments that Jesus finally gets angered at the Jews' and Mary's lack of faith. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:435) acknowledges that anger at the lack of faith is not an implausible evaluation of v. 38; however, he instead proposes that Jesus is angered in his confrontation with death.

³⁰ Miller (“Mary,” 478) agrees that the narrative moves the reader to associate the mourners more with Mary. Udo Schnelle (*Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* [trans. L. Moloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 124-27) also

evaluation of Mary's faith, concedes that Mary "falters as she joins 'the Jews' in their weeping and false understanding of Jesus."³¹

When narrating the response to Jesus's question about where Lazarus's body has been placed, the narrator employs a third person plural verb (λέγουσιν), in effect placing Mary among the Jews (11:37) again. The Jews even echo her statement to Jesus: "Could not this one who opened the eyes of the blind man have acted so that this man would not have died?" Like Nicodemus, Mary fades into the background after a question. She is consumed into the third person plural with the Jews. The one to whom the reader's attention is initially directed (vv. 1-2) quickly disappears from narrative view. She apparently remains with the Jews who were mourning (11:33). The ambiguity creates an interesting tension because Mary does not reappear in ch. 11, even when her brother is raised from the dead.

Because Mary does not appear again as a character, I maintain that she should continue to be associated with the Jews in 11:45, where the narrator informs the reader that many of the Jews have come to faith because of the miracle. This prepares the reader for Mary's similar transformation, signaled by her return to the narrative in 12:1-11,

holds a negative view. Brown demurs (*Gospel*, 1:428), noting that since a noticeable shift takes place in the author's use of the term "the Jews" in chs. 11-13, the Jews here are not those hostile to Jesus; they are simply the people of Judea and Jerusalem, many of whom come to believe in him. Alain-Lazare Marchadour (*Histoire d'un récit, récit d'un histoire* [LD 132; Paris: Cerf, 1988], 116-17) holds a similar positive evaluation of the Jews. Proposing that a transformation in belief takes place during the scene points to a more promising way forward. The group that surrounds Mary is "the Jews." In 11:8 the Jews in Judea are described as wanting to stone Jesus. Mary remains at home with "many of the Jews who had come to Martha and Mary in order to console them" (11:19). The narrator later specifically links them to Mary when he describes them as "the Jews who were with her in the house and comforting her" (11:31), apparently continuing to accompany her to her meeting with Jesus, and therefore maybe not professional mourners. Jesus's angry reaction is directed to her as she weeps along with the Jews "who had come with her" (11:33). However, the narrator's characterization of some of them changes in 11:45, when he informs the reader that some of the Jews become believers on the basis of the miracle, while others inform the Pharisees (11:46). I suggest that the transformation of both these Jews and Mary takes place soon after the miracle and as a result of it.

³¹ Moloney, *Gospel*, 324. So also Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 268.

when she anoints Jesus's feet with perfume and fulfills the prolepsis of 11:2. For these reasons, I suggest that Mary is not a believer when Martha comes to invite her to meet Jesus, but once the narrator's prolepsis is complete, along with the intercalation of the sisters' stories, she can be described as having come to faith as a result of encountering Jesus at Martha's invitation.³²

As already noted, John 11 is conspicuously absent from Larsen's treatment of recognition scenes even though Jesus's identity is more fully revealed (v. 25) and a token is presented (11:43-44). These elements are characteristics of the recognition scene and would seem to warrant the inclusion of ch. 11 in Larsen's analysis, since ch. 11 is such an integral part of the epistemological plot.³³ In contrast to Larsen, Culpepper maintains that this scene becomes pivotal for the narrative as a recognition scene when Martha affirms Jesus's revelatory statement about his status as the resurrection and life (11:25-27). It may be that Larsen, as others, gives particular attention to Mary's primacy as a character, even though the narrator's attention is on Martha, or that the scene does not fit the order of a recognition scene as prescribed by him. I maintain that the scene fits the pattern in which one character who encounters Jesus, and understands who he is, goes to a second character or group, speaks to the character(s), and draws the character(s) to Jesus. The move of attendant reactions is Martha's invitation to Mary, a response to her recognition of Jesus.

³² This would then fulfill what Jesus says about the sign, Mary and the Jews come to faith. Though it is not one of the disciples as named, it is certainly someone closely associated with Jesus.

³³ Because Larsen does not comment on ch.11 (no reference to the chapter appears in his entire list of references at the end of the book), one can only surmise that it does not fit the classic recognition sequencing that he identifies. It may be because what Larsen typically treats as the token (the miracle/sign) appears at the end of the sequence and the move of attendant reactions (in the traditional order or Larsen's understanding of what the token should be) is not recorded within the chapter. I argue that Martha's move of attendant reaction comes when she invites Mary to Jesus.

Admittedly, Martha's dialogue with her sister differs substantially, since it appears to be without theological significance and thus potentially not an act of witnessing, even though her going to Mary and telling her (v. 28) that Jesus is calling her (ὁ διδάσκαλος πάρεστιν καὶ φωνεῖ σε) draws Mary to meet Jesus and results in Mary's coming to faith. Yet, in contrast to the public proclamation of the blind man, Martha's private efforts have more clearly positive results and may be informative for readers who regard testimony as a more public matter. In both stories, if I am correct in my evaluation of the effects of the blind man's witnessing efforts, their respective invitations to others to meet Jesus have successful results.

In 12:1-13 the intercalation of the sisters' stories is complete. Martha has succeeded in drawing her unbelieving sister to encounter Jesus and see the sign. She goes and finds Mary as the attendant reaction to her confession, even though she herself has not seen the sign but believes Jesus's word and is confident in Jesus's ability. Mary herself becomes a believer, as evidenced through her actions of fulfilling the prolepsis of 11:2, when she uses the nard to anoint Jesus's feet and wipe them with her hair, an action that followers of Jesus will echo when they come with an abundance of spices for his burial (20:38-42). Mary's action, the narrator relates, fills the room with fragrance and draws out an angry response (12:4-6).³⁴ Judas challenges her in ways similar to the opposition that the blind man faced, as Jesus's rebuke of Judas to "leave her alone" (12:7) indicates. Within the web of relationships that the passage introduces, believers bear witness to or invite family members to encounters with Jesus.

Mary and the Disciples

³⁴ Given the reaction of Judas, who has been portrayed as a devil (6:60-71), Mary's actions can be considered a witnessing activity as well, both to Jesus's identity and his death (12:7).

The pattern that I have identified continues in the post-resurrection scenes (ch. 20), in which the author returns to the structure of two paralleled sequences (1:35-51). In this return, the implied author creates an inclusion.³⁵ The thematic development of witnessing is so prevalent in 20:10-31 that Johnson has described the chapter as a “chain” of testimonies.³⁶

The implied author creates the witnessing sequences by having characters conspicuously absent, similar to Mary staying at home (11:20-37). The disciples, who investigate the empty tomb (20:5-7), return to their homes (20:10), which necessitates Mary going to bear witness after her encounter with Jesus. Thomas is likewise notably absent (20:24) in the second sequence when the other disciples gather behind locked doors and encounter Jesus. By now, a reader can quickly fill in such encounters and absences according to the implied reader’s expectations generated by the witnessing pattern.

Mary comes early in the morning, while it is still dark, to find that the tomb has been opened (20:1). She reports to the disciples that Jesus’s body is missing. In response, two disciples (Peter and the Beloved Disciple) race to check the veracity of her report (v. 2). While both of them see the empty tomb, the narrator informs the reader that only the Beloved Disciple believes, even though he has not understood from the Scriptures that Jesus had to rise from the dead (v. 9).³⁷ The narrator makes no note of

³⁵ So already Thomas Matus, “First and Last Encounter,” *TBT* 42 (1969): 2893-97; Collins, *These Things*, 36; Brian D. Johnson, “Thomas and *martyria*: John 20:24-31” (Proceedings: Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies 25; Buffalo: Canisius College Press, 2005), 170; Larsen, *Stranger*, 188-89.

³⁶ Johnson, “Thomas,” 169-78.

³⁷ Keener (*Gospel*, 2:1184) suggests that the Beloved Disciple becomes a paradigmatic believer for future generations since he comes to faith without seeing the risen Jesus. So Talbert, *Gospel*, 250; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:314. In the present context, and given the pattern, Mary is to be commended since there is no record of the Beloved Disciple as a character in the narrative witnessing to anyone. Mary

Peter's belief, which parallels his silence in 1:41-42.

The implied reader expects the Beloved Disciple to bear witness, since he is the one recorded as believing, which intimates that the other disciples do not believe. However, he has not encountered Jesus, as an adherence to the pattern would necessitate. Rather than the Beloved Disciple going and finding others to whom he can witness, he and Peter simply return to their homes.³⁸ This narrative absence sets the stage for Mary's encounter and her missional commission to bear witness to the disciples.

Mary does not initially recognize Jesus (vv. 10-15), but she soon comes to the realization that it is Jesus talking to her. It is at this point that Mary comes to faith and in response exclaims *rabbouni*, which is not indicative of a lack of understanding or a lack of faith.³⁹ As a reader has been conditioned to expect, after her encounter with Jesus Mary goes to the other unbelieving disciples and bears witness regarding what she has seen. However, this scene is quite different because Jesus commissions her to do this as the first post-resurrection witness.⁴⁰ The believing Mary becomes an "apostle" to the

is the one sent by the risen Christ to tell what she has seen. The Beloved Disciple does bear witness (20:30-31), but not as a character in the narrative. The reader will retrospectively find out that the Beloved Disciple has, in fact, been bearing witness the entire time as the narrator (author).

³⁸ The unnamed disciple "believes" after seeing the burial clothes (20:8); however, it is unclear what he believes since the author immediately tells the reader that the disciples did not understand (v. 9) that Jesus was to rise from the dead (v. 10), another problematic detail for those who hold the knowledge/faith paradigm. Additionally, they are negatively associated with the blind man's parents (9:22), because they too fear the Jews.

³⁹ That she is not yet a believer is signaled by her appearance at the tomb "at night" (20:1). Moloney (*Gospel*, 519) maintains that Mary is a non-believer at this point in the story. He describes (526) *rabbouni* coming from her as an indicator that she has a partial faith in Jesus since she is trying to "hold on to the past" in her understanding and use a term that applied before the resurrection. According to Moloney, she does not come to "perfect belief" until she refers to Jesus as "the Lord" in her witness to the other disciples (527). Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 144) also sees Mary's exclamation as reflecting a limited understanding of Jesus, as her earthly friend and teacher.

⁴⁰ The implied author, by means of Mary's commissioning, has created another *inclusio* with the Gospel's opening: as John the Baptist was sent by God to bear witness (1:6-7), so here Mary is sent by Jesus. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 318) describes Mary at the end of this encounter as having moved from not knowing to knowing, as "the first insider," and as one who "enjoys high status as an intimate and informed disciple." He further proposes (324) that Mary has the highest status in the Gospel next to the Beloved Disciple. However, Neyrey argues (324-25) against Mary being counted as an apostle based on his

disciples and a paradigmatic witness for the community, commissioned to bear witness by Jesus as the Baptist had been commissioned by God.⁴¹ She goes to the disciples who, at best, have a woefully inadequate faith and might even be considered nonbelievers since the narrator descriptively links them to the parents of the blind man (9:22), who also fear the Jews (20:19).⁴² With Mary's witness to the disciples, the first witnessing sequence is complete (Jesus-Mary-disciples), but the narrator has left the results of Mary's witness in a state of ambiguity (20:18), since Jesus is not physically present for the disciples to encounter and there is no mention of them coming to faith.

The Disciples and Thomas

The second witnessing sequence begins with Jesus, who appears to the disciples, who are behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. He shows them signs of his crucifixion so that they will clearly know that it is he. After addressing their fears with a blessing of

understanding of the formal role of an apostle: one who is sent to various towns and cities beyond Jerusalem to speak to strangers. He summarily states: "The Gospel does not envision her continually catechizing the disciples nor forming part of a missionary team."

⁴¹ So already Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 188-90. Sandra M. Schneiders ("Because of the Woman's Testimony...": Reexamining the Issue of Authorship in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 44 [1998]: 517-18) describes Mary as the "official witness" of the resurrection. In my judgment, Culpepper's analysis is confusing and ambiguous on this issue. Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 144) criticizes Mary's lack of understanding and faith because she recognizes Jesus *through his words* (calling her by name) and continues in the lack of understanding after *hearing his words* because she refers to him as *rabbouni* and seeks to "hold on to Jesus." Culpepper maintains that Mary was not enlightened by the empty tomb or by Jesus's appearance, but only *by his words* that he is ascending to the Father (20:17). Culpepper's position, that her cry (*rabbouni*) and Jesus's corrective ("Do not hold on to me") signify a wrong understanding, is tenuous. Her coming to faith, according to Culpepper, immediately follows Jesus's corrective and comes with the words of Jesus's commission of her. But the commission then logically comes before what Culpepper considers to be the sign of her adequate faith: her confession "I have seen the Lord." This would mean that her coming to faith ambiguously happens between two commands of Jesus in v. 17. I counter that she is, at the least, to be numbered as a paradigmatic witness at this point. So Keener, *Gospel*, 2:1185.

⁴² So Moloney, *Gospel*, 518. This is a reference back to the similar fear that the blind man and his parents must overcome (9:22) in order to give testimony. It is most recently used to describe Joseph of Arimathea (19:38), whom the author describes as a "secret disciple." Earlier in the narrative those who fear the Jews do so because they are afraid of the consequences if their commitment to Jesus is discovered (7:13; 9:22; 12:42; 19:38).

peace (20:19-22), the second post-resurrection commissioning of witnesses in the Gospel takes place as Jesus tells them; “Just as the Father has sent me, likewise I am sending you.”⁴³ Jesus breathes on them to receive the Spirit (v. 22), one of the proleptically awaited signs of the narrative (7:39) and the necessary requirement for future effective witnessing in Jesus’s absence (15:26-27; 16:13-14).⁴⁴ The disciples, as Spirit-empowered witnesses, bear witness to Thomas about what they have seen, thus confirming their belief (v. 25).

The recurring pattern holds explanatory power as to the absent characters: Mary’s remaining at home (11:20), Peter and John returning to their homes without any indication that they have borne witness to anyone (20:10), and Thomas’s absence (20:24-25). In each scene, the move of attendant reactions is witnessing to the absent character(s). Just as Andrew’s and Philip’s actions and words were paralleled, so also are the actions and words of Mary and the disciples who both report, “We have seen the Lord” (vv. 18, 25). The immediacy of these characters coming to faith and witnessing (Mary to the disciples, the disciples to Thomas) is evident in the narrator’s time notations. All of the witnessing in these post-resurrection scenes takes place on the same narrative day (20:1, 19). Even Thomas’s skeptical response is similar to Nathanael’s in 1:43-51 (both of which bring their respective second sequences to a close), as is his relative

⁴³ The commission echoes the Father’s sending of the Baptist (1:6-8). It is a commission for the disciples to take over the witnessing and revealing ministry of Jesus, a process that Jesus has already prayed for (17:20-26). Though the implied author employs two different words for “sending” in v. 21 (Jesus is sent [ἀποστέλλω] by the Father and he is now sending [πέμπω] the disciples), there is no differentiation between the two missions, since the words occur interchangeably in the Fourth Gospel (compare 4:34; 5:23; 6:38 with 5:36; 6:29; 8:42).

⁴⁴ The role of the Spirit will be developed in Chapter 6.

anonymity in the tradition when compared to the Synoptics.⁴⁵ Thomas insists that he will only be convinced by his own encounter with Jesus (20:25b), indicating that he has not responded positively to their witness. Thomas's statement causes the reader to pause, as she waits to see what will become of Thomas's faith.

A week passes (20:26) and the disciples continue to meet in the house with the doors locked, but fear is apparently no longer a motivating factor. The reader can infer their bearing witness has had its effect, since Thomas has responded positively to their testimony and is present with them in the room where they have encountered Jesus the previous week (v. 26). Jesus again appears in their midst, again proclaims peace to them, and continues by inviting Thomas to experience the proof that he has demanded as a condition for faith (vv. 26-27). Jesus chastises Thomas for his lack of faith, telling him to stop being faith-less and be faith-filled. In a Gospel filled with calls to come to faith, this is the first instance where someone is chastised as “unbelieving” (μη γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός).⁴⁶ Thomas's skepticism and refusal to believe those who have borne witness to him reflects Nathanael's skepticism regarding Jesus (1:46). Both offer climactic confessions in their respective scenes. It is Thomas's confession—“My Lord and my God!”—that provides what some have considered to be the climax of the faith motif, identity questions, and Christology of the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁷

Jesus responds to Thomas's confession with the final challenge of faith, which is

⁴⁵ Nathanael is not mentioned in the Synoptics, while Thomas is only mentioned in the common list of the twelve disciples (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). He plays little role as a character in the other Gospels.

⁴⁶ Harstine (“Thomas,” 444-45) argues that ἄπιστος does not have the connotations of doubting or even of a lack of faith. Instead, he proposes “disloyal” or “untrustworthy” in light of his survey of its occurrences in Greco-Roman literature. Thus Harstine (*ibid.*, 447) describes Thomas as a “loyal and faithful servant, . . . who is waiting for a sign of recognition that only his true master can provide.”

⁴⁷ Keener, *Gospel*, 2:1196. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 328) surmises that Thomas is a newly converted believer at this point.

a direct address to second generation believers and readers of the Gospel. After providing Thomas with the opportunity to see and touch his wounds, Jesus says to him, “Because you have seen (ἐώρακα), you have believed (πεπίστευκας)? Blessed are the ones who, though they have not seen (οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες), they believed (πιστεύσαντες)” (20:29).

Into this blessing, the implied author, via the narrator, has incorporated the authorial audience (the second generation of Christians) as well as the actual reader, since they no longer have access to an encounter with Jesus and still must carry on these witnessing efforts. This statement also implicitly endorses what the author has been seeking to inculcate all along: witnessing. The only way for those who have not seen Jesus to come to faith is for the authorial audience (and the actual reader), who has now consistently observed followers of Jesus bearing witness, to bear witness also. The reader herself has experienced the testifying activity of the author’s (not just the narrator’s) testimony (1:14; 20:31).

A female who is not numbered among the followers of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is the first commissioned witness of the post-resurrection Jesus to a group of fear-filled, potentially unbelieving disciples. A female is again given prominence as a paradigmatic witness. Yet the importance of Mary’s character (as a female) is enhanced: the author has placed her as a divinely commissioned witness to the disciples, in effect numbering her among them. She symbolizes that at times bearing witness is strengthening the faith of those who are hiding in fear. Mary, along with the disciples (20:21-23) also represents those who are commissioned by God to do the work of the Father in a post-resurrection setting, just as Jesus was sent by the Father to witness on his behalf and to make him

known (1:18). In turn, the disciples become paradigmatic witnesses as well: they must overcome fear, and even the rebuff of those to whom they bear witness, as commissioned witnesses of Jesus (20:21).

In all of these post-resurrection encounters, in contrast to the prior encounters with Jesus, those who bear witness do not lead those to whom they have borne witness to their own encounter with Jesus. In ch. 1 the one who witnesses can bring the auditor to Jesus whereas, in the final chapter, that is not possible. Larsen suggests, I believe correctly, that this difference contrasts encounters that occur within the story-world (where access to Jesus is still possible) with those in a post-resurrection context in which access to Jesus is no longer possible.⁴⁸ He describes this as a move of “genre-modulation” since recognizers are unable to encounter Jesus. However, an additional consideration is necessary. It may be that in these scenes the fulfillment of the promised Paraclete has taken place, and that the author has turned his attention more fully to the narrative audience, as Jesus breathes the witness-enabling Spirit into the disciples.⁴⁹ They become the Spirit-enabled witnesses to whom Jesus comes in much the same way that future generations, who have the Spirit’s presence, will also be empowered by the Spirit (14:15-27).

Neyrey evaluates these post-resurrection appearances as “Call Narratives,” or “Commissioning Stories,” observing that these resurrection appearances closely follow

⁴⁸ Larsen, *Stranger*, 189-90. For Larsen, the pattern of those early encounters (seeing, telling, hearing, seeing) matches that of the first scene in ch. 20, in which Mary sees the empty tomb and tells Peter and the Beloved Disciple, both of whom hear her message and come to see the empty grave for themselves.

⁴⁹ The connection of these scenes to chs. 14-16 has been recognized as the fulfillment of the promise made to the disciples about the Spirit by, among others, Talbert (*Gospel*, 253) and Keener (*Gospel*, 2:1196), who describes Jesus’s appearances as the “pneumatological climax to the Gospel” and the “fulfillment of the Paraclete sayings.”

the traditional call narrative pattern in which Jesus commissions disciples as “apostles.”⁵⁰ If Neyrey is right in this identification, the author has placed these at the end of the narrative as the goal toward which the catena of witnessing scenes scattered throughout the Gospel has been directed. These commissions come at the end, once the implied reader has been called to witnessing by seeing that witnessing is inherently a part of belief and is the sign of discipleship as the proper attendant reaction (Larsen), and as the reader grasps the affective significance (Culpepper) of the narrative. Again, the reader, who has seen witnessing repeatedly embodied within the narrative, now encounters disciples even more akin to her own experience: disciples who are divinely commissioned and empowered by the Spirit as they bear witness.

Conclusion

In all of the scenes surveyed in the previous two chapters, characters are exemplary not only as positive examples of faith, which is the way they have typically been understood, but as examples of witnessing, which reveals their faith. They also serve didactic purposes, informing future generations (the authorial audience) about those who are able to be witnesses (a woman, non-original disciples, disciples who have lost faith), those to whom witnessing efforts must extend (unbelieving people, disenchanted former followers, close family), and even the circumstances under which witnessing must continue (fear and opposition of authorities or in the midst of severe doubt).

Larsen comments that in these final scenes the proper attendant reaction is “to participate in the dissemination of the rumor of Christ.”⁵¹ Similarly, Staley observes that

⁵⁰ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 326. Curiously, Neyrey understands these scenes to be commission scenes where the disciples become “apostles,” apparently concluding that Mary was not part of this group.

⁵¹ Larsen, *Stranger*, 223.

disciples (for him the original disciples in 1:35-51) “come to Jesus through intermediaries.”⁵² This instills the necessity to bear witness in that post-resurrection, second generation of believers. But in contrast to Larsen, I argue that this has been the expected attendant reaction. Characters in the Fourth Gospel are often considered as paradigmatic figures in relation to their levels of faith. Rarely, if ever, is witnessing considered as the only *decisive* evidence of faith in the Fourth Gospel.⁵³

Approaches that categorize characters as believing/unbelieving as evidenced by the cognitive content of faith fall short in their explanatory power. If knowledge of the resurrection is the prerequisite for having a full Johannine faith, or even a full knowledge of his identity, then consistency would dictate a negative evaluation of every character’s faith. This cannot be the proper evaluative measure, since Jesus affirms the faith of various characters (1:50; 9:35-38; 16:30-32), or they confirm their faith (4:42; 6:69; 11:26-27; 16:30), before a full knowledge of Jesus and his resurrection has been developed. A more consistent measure in the Fourth Gospel is observing characters’ actions in response to their encounters with Jesus, witnessing even before they come to a full recognition or understanding of Jesus’s identity.

I have argued that witnessing is the move of attendant reactions of the characters and that this standardized move in the text displays the intended outcome that the implied author desired to create in the authorial audience. In observing this repeated process, the actual reader herself, in the third level of complexity (Culpepper), has also come to understand the implied author’s purpose in repeatedly using bearing witness as part of

⁵² Staley, *Kiss*, 80.

⁵³ Collins (*These Things*, 35) does not mention Mary’s commissioning or witness, simply that she “represents the believer whose response to Jesus’s call is faith in Jesus as the ascending one.”

creating the affective meaning of the narrative. The repetition has formed readers while at the same time providing noetic information regarding the identity of Jesus, thereby providing the content for testimony.⁵⁴

When compared to the Synoptic tradition, the Fourth Gospel lacks what many have termed the “Great Commission” (Matt 28:18-20, Luke 24:45-49, the longer recension of Mark 16:15-18; cf. Acts 10:40-43).⁵⁵ Neyrey attributes the absence of a commission, and what he suggests is the distancing of the disciples from the role of commissioned witnesses, to the implied author’s understanding that Jesus is God’s unique witnessing agent and apostle in the Fourth Gospel.⁵⁶ I would counter that the absence of such a commission is because the entirety of the Fourth Gospel is designed with this purpose. In its intended effect, the author has issued a “Great Commission” to readers by introducing the reader to the desired attendant reactions of disciples by means of the repeated scenes.

The reader encounters paradigmatic characters who exhibit an expansive list of characteristics: 1) those with various levels of understanding and from different socio-economic classes, different genders, and various ethnicities; 2) those who are insiders and outsiders (especially in light of those who were traditionally understood to be disciples);

⁵⁴ Norman Holland (“Unity Identity Text Self,” in *Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* [ed. Jane P. Thompkins; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980], 124-33) draws specific attention to how readers re-create themselves in the reading process. See also Marshall W. Alcorn and Mark Bracher, “Literature, Psychoanalysis and the Re-Formation of the Self: A New Direction for Reader-Response Theory,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 100 (1985): 342-54.

⁵⁵ By “Great Commission,” I am referring to Jesus’s commission (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18) of the disciples to go out and make disciples or his instructions concerning their efforts (Luke 24:45-49) after he departs. These texts refer to the witnessing and disciple-making activity of the disciples among the nations. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus’s words to his disciples concern the forgiveness of sin (20:23) and not specifically a ministry of preaching and disciple making among the nations.

⁵⁶ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 324.

3) those with questionable backgrounds and impeccable Jewish credentials; 4) those who have encountered Jesus and seen signs and those who have not seen signs or personally encountered Jesus; and, 5) even those who were previously disciples but who have ceased believing. All of these either become witnesses, are the intended auditors of the witnessing activity, or engage in witnessing activity themselves.

It is not only the repeated scenes that the implied author has used to fulfill the role of inculcating witnessing in future generations of believers. The material surrounding the scenes provides further evidence that the “textual intention” (as Kearns and Rabinowitz have termed it) of the Fourth Gospel is the inculcation of witnessing. In Chapters 5 and 6, I survey the material surrounding the scenes.

Chapter 5

Witnessing Elements in John 1-11

Introduction

In the previous four chapters I sought to show that the opening scenes in which the disciples are introduced set a reader's expectations, thereby providing an initiation into the affective meaning (Culpepper) of the narrative as well as the attendant reactions (Larsen). I argued that the opening paralleled sequences (1:35-51) enable the reader to recognize that the author has organized the subsequent paired scenes in an attempt to provide positive and negative examples of bearing witness and in the process demonstrate that bearing witness is definitive of discipleship. The implied author also informs the reader about the content, circumstances, and potential audiences for their witnessing efforts. This use of modified *anagnōrisis* scenes, I argued, is a consistent narrative device ultimately designed to inculcate witnessing in the reader.

In this chapter I hope to show further that it is not only the pairing of scenes that forms the reader. In other varied ways the implied author has developed the theme of witnessing between the scenes by weaving a continuous thread that reinforces his efforts to inculcate witnessing in subsequent generations of believers and extend those effects to future generations. It is to a survey of these elements in John 1-11 that this chapter turns in an effort to trace the various means, outside of the paralleled scenes, that the author has employed.

The Baptist

The Prologue, the Baptist, and Witnessing

The Johannine Prologue is unique as an introduction among the Gospels. The Synoptics begin with historical introductions rather than something resembling a

theologically oriented “wisdom hymn,” “Christ-hymn,” or “theological discourse” that extends the narrative to the recesses of time.¹ As with the opening scenes of the narrative in which the disciples are introduced, the unique Johannine Prologue (1:1-18) plays a role in shaping the reader’s expectations, as in the beginnings of Greco-Roman genres: the *prooimion* in tragedies, the *diēgēma* in Greek rhetoric, and the introduction to Greco-Roman *bioi*.² In this regard, Keener describes the Prologue as “a presupposition for the rest of the Gospel” and as a debut of the general themes.³ Neyrey likewise describes the Prologue as the “topic sentence” of the Fourth Gospel and as an “overture” to what follows.⁴

However, this theo-hymnic structure and atemporal setting are “interrupted” (1:6-8, 15) with historically rooted asides that introduce the reader to the first human character, John the Baptist, whose primary characterization in both interruptions is not baptizing but witnessing (1:6-8, 15).⁵ This amalgamation of historical and “hymnic” elements has resulted in debate among scholars in light of the Prologue’s role in

¹ My use of “Christ-hymn” and Baptist “insertions” is meant simply to reflect the literature and not any proposed redactional or form history. Kysar (“Christology and Controversy: The Contributions of the Prologue of the Gospel of John to New Testament Christology and Their Historical Setting,” *CurTM* 5 [1978]: 356) finds it very odd that a gospel that is purported by some to be so interested in history should begin with a hymn and not an introduction, as in the Synoptics. He concludes (357-58) that the use of a hymn connects the original author with later readers and “signals that the Christ story he narrates is one that continues beyond the resurrection right up to the reader’s own time.” Morna D. Hooker (“John the Baptist and the Johannine Prologue,” *NTS* 16 [1970]: 355) refers to the Prologue as a “theological discourse.” Elizabeth Harris (*Prologue and Gospel: The Theology of the Fourth Evangelist* [JSNTSS 107; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], esp. pp. 9-26) provides a survey of approaches to the Prologue.

² Werner H. Kelber, “The Birth of a Beginning: John 1:1-18,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 121-44; Morna D. Hooker, “A Glorious Key: John 1.1-18,” in *Beginnings: Keys That Open the Gospels* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 64-83.

³ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:333; Culpepper, *Gospel*, 109-11.

⁴ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 41, 42-46. So Vernon K. Robbins, “Prefaces in Greco-Roman Biography and Luke-Acts,” *PRSt* 6 (1979): 94-108; Ralph Brucker, ‘*Christushymnen*’ oder ‘*epideiktische Passagen*’? *Studien zum Stilwechsel im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 1-17. So already Bultmann, *Gospel*, 13-14.

⁵ I take the Baptist’s witness as ending at v. 15, contra Harris, *Prologue*, 31-37.

introducing the reader to later developed themes.⁶ The themes most often offered as significant to the Prologue are Christology, the role of faith/believing, the reception or rejection of Jesus, and Jesus's mission for the world on behalf of the Father.⁷ These themes are proposed because of the way in which material surrounds the Baptist sections. Analyses have given detailed attention to, among other things, the role intrusions play in establishing an organizing chiasmic structure (vv. 6-8 and 15 serving as corresponding sections), the center of which is the rejection of Jesus by his own (v. 11), the concept of belief (v. 12), and the filial gift of life (v. 12).⁸ For example, Moloney holds that the Baptist insertions serve the rhetorical function of creating a transitional bridge between sections of the Prologue's poetic structure.⁹

The primary theme of witnessing, as evidenced by the repetition of the language of "witness" (μαρτυρία 1:7; μαρτυρέω 1:7, 8, 15) and the recorded content of the Baptist's witness (v.15), pervades the insertions, and it is this theme that introduces (v. 19 καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰωάννου) the later sections dedicated to the Baptist (1:19-34) as the narrative shifts to give detailed attention to the Baptist's witness.

⁶For example, Talbert (*Gospel*, 67), in aligning the Baptist insertions with his understanding of the development of the Prologue, says that "John's witness seems out of sequence" at v. 15, and that if one locates the incarnation in v. 14, it makes the "problem of sequencing more complex." Moloney (*Gospel*, 37), in contrast to many others, describes the "insertions" as "essential to its structure and message."

⁷Keener, *Gospel*, 1:333-34, 338-39. Keener refers to the inclusio of 1:1, 18 as proof of its Christological interests. Kysar ("Christology," 355) gives attention to its characterization of Jesus: "It is the soteriological results, the effect of the presence of the logos among humans, which is the principal theme of this hymn." Culpepper (*Gospel*, 119-20) directs attention entirely to the Prologue's introduction of Christology, as it provides "the lens through which the reader views Jesus."

⁸Boismard, *Le Prologue de Saint Jean* (LD 11; Paris: Cerf, 1953); Culpepper, "The Pivot of John's Prologue," *NTS* 27 (1980): 1-31; *ibid.*, *Gospel*, 113-16; Talbert, *Gospel*, 66; Neyrey, *Gospel*, 38-40.

⁹Moloney (*Gospel*, 34, 37) takes the Baptist sections to be transitional and emphasizes John's unique role, but holds to a contrastive relationship between the characters of John and Jesus. He also claims that the introduction of a human character firmly anchors the Prologue in history. Talbert (*Gospel*, 67) likewise suggests that the insertions move the reader from eternity to history in preparation for reading about Jesus who has entered history, as does Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:249), who maintains that the introduction of the Baptist is a move into historical material.

In connection to the Prologue, when specific attention is given to the Baptist's role as witness, it is often described as part of a polemical defense of the community's belief in Jesus's deity as a means of distinguishing between Jesus and a proposed community or group of followers who elevated John the Baptist to a messianic role.¹⁰ In this appraisal, the implied author is endeavoring to show that the Baptist is *merely* a witness and not the messiah.

Bultmann was highly influential in establishing the position that the Gospel reveals a polemic against the followers of John the Baptist. In comments on the Baptist insertions, he recognizes the theme of witnessing in the sections and even notes that this theme is revisited later, but he ultimately concludes that they have a "clearly polemical purpose" to ensure that the Baptist is portrayed as merely the witness to Jesus and thus refute the claims of the Baptist's disciples that he, rather than Jesus, is the revealer/*logos*.¹¹

The polemical interpretation has retained prominence especially in light of Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* and Brown's *Community of the Beloved Disciple*. Both linked the polemics to the historical development of the Johannine community. Many continue the polemical refrain while noting the importance of witnessing. However, they maintain that the Baptist's role as "witness" was meant to

¹⁰ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:364, 388) describes its objective as promoting the community's belief in Jesus's deity and supremacy in clear distinction from John the Baptist. So Bultmann, *Gospel*, 49; Brown, *Gospel*, 1:28; *ibid.*, *Community*, 69-71; Schnackenburg, *Gospel* 1:251. Culpepper (*Gospel*, 111-12) takes this as indicating the existence of a dual polemic: against the followers of John the Baptist as well as against the followers of Moses. In his comments (117-19) regarding the Baptist's presence in the Prologue, he makes no significant reference to the Baptist's character being used as an introduction to the theme of witnessing. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:223), who agrees with the polemical nature of the material, still takes the insertions in vv. 6-8 as so closely tied to their surroundings that they "cannot be simply an apologetical interpolation" as is the insertion of the Baptist's witness in v. 15.

¹¹ Bultmann, *Gospel*, 15-18, 48-49. Bultmann takes 1:35-42 as further proof of the polemical intent, because the Baptist's disciples are portrayed as becoming followers of Jesus.

be derogatory or polemical as a means of exalting Jesus's status, rather than taking the designation as exemplary within the narrative context. I argue that they miss the implications of the Baptist's witness for the narrative's affective significance. For example, Keener describes the Prologue as "emphatic in its contrast between John and Jesus," while allowing that the Baptist serves symbolically as a witness.¹²

While not denying the Prologue's attention to Jesus's identity, work, or relationship to the Father, the polemical lens is problematic when applied to the Baptist material. The unstated assumption is either that a primary group of readers of the Fourth Gospel were followers of John the Baptist or that the readers were in need of more adequate instruction regarding the Baptist's identity in relation to Jesus for apologetic or evangelistic reasons. However, a community of Baptist followers sizeable enough to warrant the commitment of such a large amount of material (especially in Ephesus as the proposed location of writing), in such an important section of the Gospel, is historically questionable.¹³ Additionally, it does not account for the Baptist's positive portrayal both within these sections and in relation to the subsequent narrative. The Baptist is the first person in the Fourth Gospel with the appellation "sent from God" (v. 6 ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ), an ascription primarily attributed to Jesus (3:17, 34; 5:36, 38; 6:29, 57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21), and the only one other than Jesus to be divinely commissioned until the disciples are sent by him (4:38; 20:21). The Baptist's mission is described as having a universal appeal (v. 7 ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν), his

¹² Keener, *Gospel*, 1:388-93; Neyrey, *Gospel*, 41-43.

¹³ The Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* speak of the Baptist's followers, but the NT (and other Christian literature) gives little if any evidence that a group of the Baptist's disciples caused problems for the early Christian community. When the Baptist's followers are mentioned (Acts 18:24-19:7), they are portrayed either as potential followers who simply needed more or proper instruction about "the way of God" (Apollos) or as very open to the gospel about Christ. I discuss the Ephesian provenance of the Gospel in the Conclusion (n. 550).

testimony (as the first recorded speech in the Gospel [v. 15]) is set amidst the author's own testimony (plural "we" in vv. 14, 16), and his testimony provides the entire content of the second day (1:29-34) of the opening four-day sequence in 1:19-51. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated, the Baptist is a returning positive witness for much of the rest of the Gospel (3:22-36; 5:33-35; 10:41). Finally, it appears odd to describe a character as a polemical symbol when, as Catrin H. Williams observes, the Baptist's direct speech is recorded more than that of any other characters in the Gospel.¹⁴ The purpose the Baptist plays in the narrative, as a central character, lies beyond polemics.

Within the Prologue, the Baptist's introduction marks a sudden shift from the eternal *logos* and light of 1:1-5 to the simple, generic, and contrastive "there was a man" (ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος), the first mention of a human in the Gospel.¹⁵ The description of the Baptist as being sent by God (v. 6) ties John's witnessing activity to God's missional sending, thereby giving it primacy for and developing trust in the reader.¹⁶ The author follows the Baptist's commission with the reason for his being sent, repeated in consecutive clauses: he was sent (v. 7) for giving testimony (εἰς μαρτυρίαν) to witness (ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ), a pleonastic means of accentuating bearing witness. This is followed with a third purpose statement, set in another ἵνα clause. The purpose of his witness is

¹⁴ Williams, "John (the Baptist): The Witness on the Threshold," in Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman eds., *Character Studies*, 46.

¹⁵ This places the Baptist's ministry in the past of the author/narrator in contrast to the present tenses used to refer to his testimony.

¹⁶ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:250. Schnackenburg also notes that the author, by attributing this mission to the Baptist, distances his aims from the denigration of the Baptist that is seen in the *Recognitions* and that it links the Baptist to the prophetic tradition. Sherri Brown ("John the Baptist: Witness and Embodiment of the Prologue in the Gospel of John," in Skinner, *Characters and Characterization*, 150) also questions the denigration of the Baptist as a character. In reference to Christ as the sent one, ἀποστέλλω occurs 17 times while πέμπω occurs 25 times. For the Fourth Gospel "the sent one" is indicative of Jesus's unique identity and is a part of the required content of belief in him (5:24; 15:21). Both occur in reference to the Baptist being sent by God (1:6; 1:33) and in reference to the disciples being sent by Jesus (13:20; 17:18; 20:21).

universal belief: “that all people might believe” (v. 7 ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν). This broadened scope of witness to “all people” takes the Baptist’s witness beyond the confines of the story, since within the story-world he will witness only to the Jewish leaders (1:19-28), his own disciples (1:35-36), and apparently the Jewish people who come to hear him (10:41). Schnackenburg summarizes the role of the Baptist in light of the occurrence of πάντες: “John first performs his task of witnessing before the ancient community of salvation, Israel, to whom he presents the Messiah, but to the mind of the evangelist his testimony persists as a clarion call for all time, for the whole world, to which he announces its savior.”¹⁷ By means of the stated purpose of the Baptist’s testimony, the implied author links testimony with belief, a connection that will be revisited.¹⁸ The author closes the first Baptist section (vv. 6-8) with another purpose clause in v. 8 (ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ), again summarily stating that John came to testify.¹⁹

The narrator returns to the Baptist (v. 15), repeating what he has said before about John’s activity (Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ) and providing the reader with the first recorded speech in the Gospel: the content of the Baptist’s witness. The speaking/testifying verbs in the first insertion are repeated in this section, as the narrator has three verbal forms in rapid succession that draw the reader’s attention to the continuing effects of the Baptist’s witnessing efforts.²⁰

¹⁷ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:252. This is in contrast to Keener (*Gospel*, 1:393), who maintains that πάντες is to be limited by the context of 3:26. While the whole world is in view, it belies the continual chain of witnesses that can be traced from John, to Andrew and the disciples, and to the reader (17:20-21).

¹⁸ The two are linked in 3:11, 32-33; 4:39; 5:31-40; 10:25; 19:35; 21:24.

¹⁹ It is these references that many take as the sign of the polemical purpose of the Baptist insertion. So Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:252. However, this verse could be understood as a simple summary statement to clarify roles, which need not imply a polemical stance against a Baptist community.

²⁰ Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:173) suggests that these verbal forms reflect an effort to accentuate the continuing effects of John’s testimony, which includes the reader’s time. Likewise, Williams (“John,” 49) notes the contrast of the present tense in v. 15 and the aorists in vv. 6-8. She suggests that this change

The second appearance of the Baptist is often taken as a primary locus for the polemical position because the Baptist's testimony refers to the temporal priority of Jesus. Thus, rather than giving attention to the direct speech as testimony, Brown maintains that the temporal reference is part of the "obvious polemic against any suggestion that John the Baptist might be greater than Jesus because he began his ministry first."²¹ But this explanation is inadequate on several counts. First, the narrator has intentionally set the Baptist's testimony (v. 15) in the midst of his own (vv. 14 and 16), the first authorial intrusion, marking another departure from the hymn and joining the Baptist's witness with his own.²² In v. 14 the author enters the narrative by means of the plural (*ἔθεασάμεθα*) to address the reader directly and inform her that he and others have seen Jesus's glory. Then, after the Baptist's testimony (v. 15), the author returns to the plural verb forms (v. 16), insisting that he and others have received grace through their encounter with Jesus that, in many ways, fulfills the grace received through Moses's mediation of the law (*ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος*).²³ Placing the Baptist's testimony here, in the midst of the author's own, marks it as a preeminent witness to Jesus among the narrator's group. Second, claiming the Baptist as part of the

happens because of the emphasis on the testimony of the community at vv. 14, 16, as evidenced by the occurrence of "we."

²¹ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:35. Brown describes (1:15) v. 15 as "awkwardly breaking up vss. 14 and 16," yet offers no explanation as to its contextual fit. While Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:223) supposes v. 15 to be a later polemical interpolation, he also acknowledges that its placement here serves as a message to later believers that the glory of the *logos* is still visible to them through the witness of those who saw him for themselves.

²² Contra Harris (*Prologue*, 30-34) and others who take vv. 16-18 as a continuation of the Baptist's testimony. The narrator, when entering the narrative, consistently uses the occasions to reference witnessing (1:14, 16; 3:11; 19:35; 21:24). This will be developed in the next chapter.

²³ As a means of reflecting that larger theological purpose, I have chosen to translate "fulfills the grace." The textual witnesses are divided regarding *ὅτι* versus *καί*. *ὅτι* could either place v. 16 on the lips of the Baptist or continue the thought of v. 14, providing further comment on how the author, who has beheld the glory of the incarnated *logos*, has received this grace. Probably to be preferred is *καί*, which would continue the author's testimony and divide it by placing the Baptist's testimony between the author's own testimony.

group (community) also joins the implied author's intentions in testifying with the Baptist's, so that all people (ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν) might believe (v. 7). The Baptist, in essence, is tasked with the same mission as the author (20:31), and their efforts are continued in the present community, as other narrator interjections, (as I will call them), also indicate.

The Baptist's continuing witness and its effects

The Baptist's witness in the Prologue provides a basis for the narrative attention given him in 1:19-36, which begins with a discussion about the Baptist's identity but is described as part of his continuing testimony (v. 19).²⁴ When the Jewish leaders question him about his identity, he is adamant that he is not the Christ nor any of the figures related to the coming of the Messiah.²⁵ In contrast to the Synoptic tradition, in which the Baptist is portrayed as Elijah, in John he divests himself of association with any of the messianic expectations of Elijah or the coming prophet. Instead, he responds positively by describing himself simply as a voice (again emphasizing the actions of speaking/witnessing or mission) who proclaims the Lord's approach (Isa 40:3).²⁶ When

²⁴ Hooker, "Baptist and Prologue," 356-57. Hooker has noted that the ordering of the insertions in the Prologue matches the ordering of material in 1:19-34, leading the reader through the following narrative.

²⁵ ὁμολογέω is repeated as a confessional marker set within identified testimony. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:188) takes this as another example of the Johannine polemic against the followers of the Baptist. Moloney's position (*Gospel*, 52), that this is a narrative indication of the right confession of messiahship that will follow, is overstated, but John's witness is the central feature at the very beginning of the section.

²⁶ The author's attention is on the role of the witnessing voice, as all elements of judgment have been eliminated from the quotation. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:291-92) describes this quotation as indicating the Baptist's "one desire" to be the voice giving witness to Jesus rather than preaching repentance. Harris (*Prologue*, 27) takes John's claim to be "the voice" as though assigning a special authoritative role to himself that is different from his continual self-effacing portrayal. His proposal, however, lacks substance because the definite article does not appear in the Greek of the NT, the LXX, or in the Hebrew. Given his disavowal of any special eschatological or messianic role (1:19-22; 3:27-31) elsewhere, I take the reference to "voice" to be more directed toward the activity or mission. So Hooker, "Baptist and Prologue," 357. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:438) also hints at this.

queried further about his identity and reasons for baptizing (1:24-28), he continues his testimony by directing their attention to the one who is already among them (vv. 26-27), whom they do not know. With this response to his interrogators and what follows (1:29-34), the Baptist's "baptism fades into insignificance beside his testimony."²⁷

Upon noting a temporal change (v. 29), the narrator continues to draw the reader's attention to the Baptist's testifying activity. The entire second day of ch. 1 (1:29-34), aside from two brief narrative insertions, is indirect speech recorded as testimony. In fact, only a short four-word interlude breaks the recorded testimony that stretches from v. 29 to v. 34. It informs the reader that John is still providing testimony regarding Jesus (καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης λέγων). While the reader is told that the Baptist sees Jesus approaching, and he announces Jesus's presence by drawing the reader's attention with ἴδε (1:29), Jesus remains absent from the narrative while the Baptist continues to testify until the next narrative day (v. 35). Even on the next day (the third in narrative time), the Baptist continues his testimony by introducing Jesus as "the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (v. 29). The Baptist inaugurates a catena of messianic acclamations that come from disciples and are set within direct speech in these opening scenes (vv. 34, 36, 41, 45, 49). The Baptist reminds his audience (the implied reader) of his previous testimony (cf. vv. 15 and 30), which forms a continual bridge of testimony from the Prologue up to this point.²⁸ The way has been prepared for Jesus's entrance into the narrative by the witness-bearing voice.

²⁷ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:294.

²⁸ While Brown (*Gospel*, 1:35) proposes that v. 15 was copied from v. 30 and placed there by a later redactor, since it might have been deemed useful to emphasize Jesus's preexistence, Hooker's comments (previously noted) seem more apropos; she understands it to be an intentional linking device. This scene is also tied to v. 15, since both potentially have the reader as the intended audience.

The Baptist continues by informing the reader that he did not know who Jesus was but that he came baptizing so that Jesus might be revealed to Israel (v. 31), thereby adding Israel to his list of those to whom he is witnessing (v. 7 “the world”). Even the Baptist’s knowledge of Jesus’s identity is mediated through the testimony of the Father (v. 33). Unlike the Synoptic accounts of Jesus’s baptism, in which the narrator informs the reader of what has taken place, the reader finds out about Jesus’s identity as a character and about the descent of the Spirit only through the Baptist’s testimony.²⁹ The Baptist concludes this day of testimony with a summary statement that repeats the thematic development of his testimony that began in vv. 6-8 and 15 and echoes the familial language of 1:18.³⁰ The Baptist can unequivocally tell the reader that what he has seen (ἑώρακα) is what he has testified to (μεμαρτύρηκα): this one is the Son of God (v. 34).³¹ Even the declaration of Jesus’s sonship, which incidentally in the Synoptic tradition comes from heaven (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22), is placed on the lips of the Baptist as part of his testimony.

The Baptist’s testimony continues into the third day in the four-day sequence (v. 35) when Jesus finally makes an appearance in the narrative, but this time his testimony achieves its desired effect as two of his own disciples respond positively and follow Jesus (v. 36). The reader, who has heard the same testimony on the previous day (and all of John’s testimony leading up to this point), sees the appropriate response to that testimony through the actions of Andrew and the unnamed disciple. They follow Jesus and, as their

²⁹ Matt 3:1-17; Mark 1:1-13; Luke 3:1-22.

³⁰ This is the case especially if the reading ὁ υἱός is preferred, since it echoes Jesus’s filial relationship with the Father (1:18). Bruce M. Metzger (*Commentary*, 172) accepts the reading ὁ υἱός.

³¹ Williams (“John,” 54) alludes to the reappearance of the perfect as a marker of the “enduring significance of John’s testimony.”

next action, testify to someone else. Once the Baptist's testimony is effective, he disappears from the scene after having borne testimony to Jewish leaders from Jerusalem (1:19-28), to anyone listening (including the reader in 1:29-34), and finally to two of his own followers, who respond by following Jesus (1:35-42).

The reader, who is already attuned to testimony because of the Baptist's introduction in the Prologue (1:6-8, 15), repeatedly hears about Jesus through the Baptist's continued testimony before Jesus is introduced as a character in the narrative. Once Jesus is introduced, the reader sees that the Baptist's testimony is not only effective (disciples follow Jesus in vv. 35-37), but, as one who has been attuned to hearing testimony, hears it again as disciples encounter Jesus and go and find someone else to whom they can testify and invite to Jesus. In this way the Baptist's testimony also forms the reader and sets expectations.

The Baptist's characterization is positive; he is a paradigmatic witness. The Prologue gives primacy to witnessing in relationship to Jesus's mission for the world and sets the theme of witnessing clearly in the reader's view as the activity of the first named character in the Gospel. The Prologue also associates witnessing with the Baptist's divine commission. In making this association, it establishes the Baptist's activity as the actions of the prototypical disciple, who has been sent by God and directed by the Spirit.³² The Baptist has also told the reader that he is the recipient of God's and the Spirit's leading/testimony (v. 32), a prelude to the ministry of the Spirit, who will teach the disciples what they will say as they testify (16:12-16). The Baptist's paradigmatic representation for later believers, who will also testify by the Spirit's leading in the

³² So Mathias Rissi, "John 1:1-18 (The Eternal Word)," *Int* 31 (1977): 398.

absence of Jesus (20:19), may account for the twice-repeated affirmation of a lack of knowledge on the lips of the Baptist (καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν vv. 31, 33). Additionally, the implied author does not provide any narrative encounter between Jesus and the Baptist. The authorial audience (and actual future readers) are included in this since they, as readers, have not seen and still believe and bear witness (20:29).

What the author says of the Baptist can and should be said of every believer as well: they are sent as Spirit-directed (1:33) witnesses to testify concerning the light with the intention that all people might believe (1:7).³³ In this continual flood of testimony covering the Prologue and the first three days of the narrative, Schnackenburg holds that the Baptist “lays the foundation for the believing community.”³⁴ Yet his evaluation is based upon the content of what is said, the Baptist’s provision of significant titles and the identification of Jesus as the Messiah. While I agree with Schnackenburg’s proposal, I argue that the foundation for the community is likewise evidenced by the implied author’s continued efforts to portray missional witnessing as a primary characteristic. Portrayed in this way, the community clearly understands its foundational activity to include the necessity of actively testifying.

Placed within the Prologue and extending over the first three narrative days, not only does the Baptist’s testimony “provide readers with the grounds from which to form decisions about the characters in the narrative, and about their belief in the word,” the Baptist’s testimony also initiates a chain reaction of testimonies that reinforces the proper

³³ This may be why the Baptist disavows any special role in relation to Jesus, in contrast to the Synoptics. The implied author desires to paint the Baptist simply as a voice/witness, possibly to leave his role open is explanatory for future generations.

³⁴ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:283.

activity of one who is sent by God (cf. 15:26-27).³⁵ By the time the reader encounters the first disciples, she is attuned to the importance of witnessing, and understands the intended move of attendant reactions of one who encounters Jesus and desires to be a disciple. She (like the Baptist, Andrew, and Philip) is taking part in God's missional sending by bearing witness to Jesus. The portrayal of events in this opening section is interested in the nature of witnessing and disciple-making, and the Baptist's portrayal in this section is clearly as "paradigmatic for others' witnessing."³⁶

Having directed the reader's attention toward witnessing, the author begins a new section (2:1-4:54). The wedding at Cana (2:1-11) and the healing of the official's son (4:43-54) mark the beginning and end of the section, as indicated by the *inclusio* created by the numbered signs and common geographic location.³⁷ Within this new section lies the first of the paired witnessing scenes (Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman), which further draws attention to the activities of the Samaritan woman and continues the identification of witnessing as the primary activity of believers.

John 3 and the Return of the Baptist as Witness

The reader, who is now accustomed to seeing disciples bear witness and offer significant confessions, first encounters Nicodemus, whose confession appears to reflect belief in Jesus (3:13) but who is left in narrative silence. In light of the lack of witness on the part of Nicodemus, and before the entrance of the positive witness of the Samaritan woman, the narrator returns to the testimony of John the Baptist (3:1-21).

The Baptist's reappearance has caused some interpreters to propose a

³⁵ Sherri Brown, "John," 154.

³⁶ So Keener, *Gospel*, 1:429-30.

³⁷ The author locates both signs in Galilee (2:1; 4:43-45), and numbers both signs (2:11; 4:54).

displacement from the beginning of the Gospel.³⁸ It may be that the author reintroduces John the Baptist as a counterpoint to a failed witness within Israel and as an introduction to representatives from the wider world coming to faith. As the Baptist was sent so that all might believe (1:7), and as one whose goal was the revelation of Jesus to Israel (1:31), representatives from Israel have both come to faith (Nathanael the true Israelite in 1:43-51) and have failed to come to faith (Nicodemus). Now before two representatives of the world come to faith and bear witness (the Samaritan woman in 4:1-42 and the Royal Official in 4:46-54), the narrator returns to the Baptist.

Both the Baptist's and Jesus's followers were baptizing (v. 22-24), and the Baptist's disciples find themselves in an argument with a Jew over ceremonial washing (v. 25).³⁹ His disciples refer to Jesus as the one about whom he has testified (ὃ ὅτι μμαρτύρηκας), thus restating his role and drawing the reader's attention back to his earlier testimony with this analepsis. The Baptist also speaks of accepting the testimony of the one who testifies (vv. 32-33), thereby keeping testimony before the reader. Thus, while some have taken this scene to be another instance of polemics against the Baptist, its primary purpose need not be seen in that light.⁴⁰

The Baptist, rather than entering into a discussion about baptism, disparages his disciples' envy by offering still another testimony about Jesus, which quickly dispenses

³⁸ For example, Brown (*Gospel*, 1:153-55) maintains that 3:22-30 has been displaced from its original position at the beginning of the Gospel, possibly to bring out the baptismal motif in 3:1-21.

³⁹ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:575) suggests that the entire scene addresses ceremonial washing and baptism, and that the references to ceremonial washing link this scene to 2:1-22 and 4:1-3. Nevertheless, the arguments about baptism and washing serve only as the entree into the Baptist's testimony and quickly disappear as *topoi*. Given the content of the Baptist's testimony, he may be more accurately described as a bridge between Nicodemus (the one who failed to give witness) and the Samaritan woman (a paradigmatic witness).

⁴⁰ Keener (*ibid.*, 1:575) proposes a dual polemic, against followers of the Baptist but also against the synagogue community, which rejects Jesus's divine status but accepts the Baptist as a prophet.

with baptism as a theme. After he asks his followers (and the reader) to recall his former testimony (v. 28 αὐτοὶ ὑμεῖς μοι μαρτυρεῖτε), he reiterates his prior testimony (1:19-28), something narratively superfluous if the author's interest is not bearing witness. While Brown considers v. 28 to be an insertion and oddly placed, the Baptist's challenge to remember his testimony serves well as a further restatement of his role as witness to Jesus and as a call to the reader to remember what he has said, in effect keeping the reader's attention on testimony and its veracity.⁴¹

After the close of the bridegroom illustration, a shift occurs (v. 31). Some have taken it to be a continuation of the Baptist's testimony (Harris) while others have argued that it should be understood as Jesus's words (Brown), the author's words (Schnackenburg), or even the narrator's words.⁴² By structure, the words of vv. 31-36 are to be understood as a continuation of the Baptist's testimony, but they move far beyond anything that he has said up to this point, reflecting what Keener has called "consummate Johannine Christology" that even surpasses the themes introduced in the Prologue.⁴³

The Baptist begins by contrasting the one from above (Jesus) with the one from the earth (himself? Nicodemus?) and their modes of speech (vv. 31-32), something that

⁴¹ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:155.

⁴² Brown (*ibid.*, 1:159-60) holds that the stronger case is taking Jesus as the speaker. Bultmann (*Gospel*, 160 n. 2) and others maintain that vv. 31-36 are the words of Jesus, but that they originally came before or after 3:22-30. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:380-92; *ibid.*, "Die 'situationsgelösten' Redestücke in Jon 3," *ZNW* 49 [1958], 88-99) actually places them before 3:13-21 as part of Jesus's dialogue with Nicodemus, but considers them to be the author's reflections in the narrative guise of Jesus's words. So Moloney *Gospel*, 106-7; Talbert, *Gospel*, 105-9. Others, such as Harris (*Prologue*, 67-60), argue that John's witness is continued. Keener (*Gospel*, 1:581) suggests that it should be taken as John's explanation as to why he must become less. So Williams, "John," 56; Jeffrey Wilson, "The Integrity of John 3:22-36," *JSNT* 10 (1981): 37-38.

⁴³ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:575, 581. The words reflect Jesus's testimony to Nicodemus (though the Baptist was not privy to this exchange) and anticipate much of what Jesus and the narrator will say later.

echoes what he has previously said (1:15, 30; 3:27-30).⁴⁴ He next (v. 32) references the continuing testimony of what the one who testifies has seen and heard (ὁ εἶδεν καὶ ἤκουσεν τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ) and the general rejection of that testimony (καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτοῦ οὐδεὶς λαμβάνει), which appears to be a reference to Jesus's unfathomable words to Nicodemus (v. 12), but also mirrors the rejected testimony as to what the community refers to in v. 11 (ὁ εἶδόμεν μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν οὐ λαμβάνετε).⁴⁵

The confusion continues into v. 34, as reference is made to the words of the one who has been sent: they are the very words of God (v. 34a) because God's giving of the Spirit is unlimited (v. 34b). The speaker subsequently addresses the love of the Father for the Son and the placement of everything into the hands of the Son (v. 35). The testimony concludes with a summative statement about the one who believes in the Son having life and the one who rejects the Son not seeing life because God's wrath remains on him (v. 36). What is said in vv. 34-36 is thus a reiteration of Jesus's concluding words to Nicodemus in 3:18-21. Nonetheless, the words of 3:31-36, in their present position, are the Baptist's even though he is not present to hear Jesus's words to Nicodemus. Additionally, they reflect the earlier words of the Baptist regarding the filial relationship with the Father (v. 34), which is something only the narrator has developed (1:1-18).⁴⁶

The testimony operates on two temporal levels as the narrator blends three

⁴⁴ Keener (*ibid.*, 1:581-82) understands the contrast to be between Jesus and Nicodemus, on the one hand, and the Baptist, and Moses, on the other hand, as a general statement of human versus divine origins.

⁴⁵ The use of the first person plural in narrator insertions will be discussed more fully below. Jesus speaks in the plural in 3:11 as though speaking on behalf of himself and his followers or on behalf of the community of believers.

⁴⁶ Bultmann (*Gospel*, 157-60) considers the words to be displaced from 3:1-21. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:159-60) refers to determining who the speaker is as the "most prominent problem" of vv. 31-36. There are repeated references to receiving the Spirit (vv. 5-8, 34), the Father, the Son, and love (vv. 16-17, 35), belief in the Son and eternal life (vv. 16-18, 36), and truth (vv. 21 and 33). Brown provides (1:159-60) an exhaustive list of parallels. So Neyrey, *Gospel*, 87.

testimonies.⁴⁷ The language reflects the time of writing and the story time, and it blends the Baptist's witness as to what he has seen (1:34 *ἑώρακα καὶ μεμαρτύρακα*), what the narrator (community) has seen (3:11 *ὁ ἑώρακαμεν μαρτυροῦμεν*), and what Jesus has just said to Nicodemus (3:10-12).⁴⁸ The implied author's purpose in blending speakers may be both synthetic and didactic, since "the one who accepts his testimony" (v. 33 *ὁ λαβὼν αὐτοῦ τὴν μαρτυρίαν*) confirms its truth (*ἔσφράγισεν*), probably by bearing witness.⁴⁹ This synthesis could also be behind the reference to the unlimited giving of the Spirit (v. 34) to the one who has been sent by God (*ὃν ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεός*) and who speaks God's words (*τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖ*). Schnackenburg takes this to be a reference to Jesus; God has entrusted his "envoy," who is inspired by the Spirit with his words.⁵⁰ But within the narrative, the original "envoy" is John (1:6, 32), it becomes Jesus (1:32; 3:17), and will become the disciples (17:20-22; 14:26-27; 16:26-27; 20:20-21), who will speak the words of God as they too are led by the Spirit. The plural creates an unbroken string of testimony that harmonizes the words of the Baptist, the narrator (disciple), and Jesus. In effect, it illustrates for the reader the continuation of consistent witness. The Baptist's last recorded speech as the role of a model disciple and witness is a blend of his

⁴⁷ Contra Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 41-42), who understands the narrator and the Baptist to be united. Seymour Chatman (*Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978], 207-8) suggests that the blending of character and narrator can be an intentional promotion of the ideals of a group, what he labels as "a kind of 'in'-group psychology."

⁴⁸ Brown (*Gospel*, 160) maintains that "no close parallels can be advanced between vv. 31-36 and the words of John the Baptist." Nevertheless, his position should be modified when considered in light of all of the Baptist material. Parallels can be made to the contrasts he makes between himself and Jesus (cf. 1:15, 19-28; 3:31), to his description as the one whom God has sent (cf. 1:6; 3:34), to his testimony about Jesus's status as the Son of God (cf. 1:34; 3:35), and the purpose of the Baptist's witness as offered by the narrator (cf., 1:7; 3:36).

⁴⁹ Confirmation by the testimony of witnesses takes place continually: Jesus bears witness to the Father, the Baptist bears witness to Jesus, and the implied author bears witness to both. So Keener, *Gospel*, 1:582. Keener maintains that further witnessing is to be taken as a confirming testimony. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:385) understands proper belief in the Gospel and letters "is to make the divine testimony one's own."

⁵⁰ Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 1:386-87.

testimony with Jesus's and the author's/community's words, and refers to the missional activity that has been transitioned from the Baptist, to Jesus, and ultimately will continue with the evangelistic sending of the disciples.

In the next scene (Samaritan woman), for which the Baptist's return acts as a bridge, a similar assimilation takes place as Jesus's and the Samaritan woman's words and works are combined. The belief of the townspeople rests on a combination of her testimony (3:32-33; 4:39, 42) and Jesus's words (4:42), and their combined labor results in the harvest (4:38) that the disciples help to reap. The bridge between the scenes is further demonstrated by the shared references to the Spirit (3:34; 4:23), eternal life (3:36; 4:14), belief (3:36; 4:39, 41, 42), and testimony (3:28, 32, 33; 4:39). The reiteration of the Baptist's testimony (3:27-36) frames the Samaritan scene for the reader, who recognizes in the Samaritan woman the continuation of the missional activity of John the Baptist and is enabled to set witnessing within the framework of the Spirit and the reception of eternal life for those who believe.

An Agricultural Metaphor

The narrator inserts a "narratological interlude" (4:27-38) into the Samaritan scene, in which Jesus dialogues with his disciples about his access to sustaining food, and a fruitful harvest.⁵¹ In this conversation the referents quickly evolve from merely physical food to a spiritual food which Jesus explicates as doing the will of the one who sent him and finishing his work (v. 34). The conversation concludes with agricultural metaphors regarding sowers and reapers of a harvest, on the one hand, and the missional activity of the disciples and their work, on the other (vv. 37-38).

⁵¹ Moloney, *Gospel*, 137.

Jesus informs his disciples that the delay between sowing and harvesting has disappeared and that the fields have ripened and are ready for harvest, a conflation of time indicated by Jesus's use of the present tense within the illustration.⁵² His repeated use of the present tense in reference to the harvest can be contextually understood as a reference to the approaching Samaritans (v. 30) to which the narrator refers just prior to the interlude, and the "harvest" as symbolically indicating their coming to faith, since the crop is one that is εἰς ζῶην αἰώνιον (v. 36). Thus, when Jesus distinguishes between the harvesters (disciples), who are now reaping the benefits, and *others* (ἄλλοι), who have done the difficult work of sowing to create this immanent harvest, he is referring to himself and the Samaritan woman's efforts and not, as Moloney and others suggest, the work of Jesus and the disciples or Jesus and John the Baptist.⁵³ However, Moloney is correct that this interlude (v. 31-38) serves as a commentary on the scene involving the Samaritan woman. He surmises that the implied readers are to be included with the disciples in Jesus's use of the plural "you" in 4:35-38. According to Moloney, it is a rhetorical means of inviting both the reader and the disciples to "accept the challenge of

⁵² Brown (*Gospel*, 1:182-83) understands the harvest imagery to be indicative of a realized Johannine eschatology, in which the harvest that was typically associated with a future event was currently happening. Brown may be right when he associates the conflation of time as the fulfillment of prophetic oracles in which the one who plows overtakes the one who reaps (Lev 26:5; Amos 9:13), especially if the author is referring to the Isaianic eschatological conversion of the nations, as I contend below. This tradition might also lie behind the Synoptic development of the eschatological harvest (Matt 9:36-38; 13:24-30; 21:33-46; Mark 4:26-29).

⁵³ Moloney (*Gospel*, 140) understands the referents in the proverb to be Jesus and the disciples, yet he (*ibid.*, 141, 145 n. 38) acknowledges that the plural (others) might refer to Jesus and John the Baptist, as both have been described as being sent. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:183-84) notes that a singular reference to a worker would refer to Jesus, but the plural raises difficulties. He surveys the various possibilities and ultimately decides that Jesus and the Baptist would be the best interpretive choice since the Baptist has been baptizing in the area. Nevertheless, the narrator's attention is directed toward the proximate cause of the townspeople's faith: the Samaritan woman's testifying and, by implication, Jesus. This would be consonant with the position I have argued previously, that the narrator is interested in placing others in the role of initiating sowing and harvesting activity (witnessing and inviting others to their own experience of Jesus).

mission” and thus see the harvest for eternal life and work to bring it in.⁵⁴

When the Samaritans approach another witnessing chain is complete, one that moves from Jesus to the Samaritan woman, and finishes with the townspeople’s declaration of faith. Set within the scene in which the Samaritan woman bears witness to her fellow-townspeople, invites them to their own encounter with Jesus, and they come to faith because of both, the references to the ripe fields, the harvest workers, and the immanent harvest for eternal life assume the activity of bearing witness.

A further nuance is added to the reader’s understanding of discipleship and bearing witness. The Samaritan woman, as an outsider female with a questionable past, becomes a co-laborer with Jesus in the Father’s work (4:34). Additionally, the reader now also understands that bearing witness is part of the mission of Jesus and is participating in the eschatological harvest. The implied author has thus further defined the missional activity of disciples: they are those who are finishing the work and doing the will of the Father by joining Jesus as one of the “others” who are laboring (v. 37) for the eschatological harvest.

The collocation of witnessing, the Spirit, and fruit (καρπός 4:36; 15:2-16) will happen again in reference to the disciples (John 14:15-16:16) as the extension of Jesus’s mission to the world (3:16). John 4 sets the framework for understanding the later occurrence of agricultural symbolism (12:24; 15:1-17).

The Royal Official and the Creation of Faith by Testimony

As a conclusion to this section (2:1-4:54) of the narrative, the author inserts a

⁵⁴ Moloney, *Gospel*, 137. The plurals read as follows: v 35: “I tell you (ὐμῖν) open your (ὀμῶν) eyes;” v. 38: “I sent you (ὐμᾶς) to reap.”

comparatively small scene (4:43-54) with close parallels to 2:1-11 that brings together the themes of signs, belief, and witnessing.⁵⁵ Jesus stays with the Samaritans for two days and later finishes his trip from Jerusalem to Galilee (4:3, 43). The Galileans warmly welcome him because they had seen “everything he did in Jerusalem,” an ironic twist since those in Jerusalem had yet to receive him.⁵⁶ He returns to Cana, which the author specifically notes (v. 46) was the site of his first miracle at the wedding (2:1).

Upon reaching Cana, an anonymous royal official (τις βασιλικός), who has heard that Jesus is in that area, comes to see him because his son is sick. The official’s anonymity includes both name and ethnicity, a narrative gap which has resulted in prodigious efforts to fill it, often as an example of a Gentile acceptance of Jesus.⁵⁷ For example, Moloney argues that the official is a Gentile because he is from Capernaum, a location known for its contingents of Gentile soldiers, and that this is the “final example of the reception of the word of Jesus from the non-Jewish world.”⁵⁸ Attempts like this misplace the narrative emphasis since the author has already proven himself adept at creating anonymous characters while using ethnic and gender traits as narratively and

⁵⁵ Both are numbered signs, take place in the same geographic region, and result in coming to faith. Likewise, in both scenes the reader learns about the sign through characters. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:194-95) discusses other parallels in detail.

⁵⁶ The signs that the reader knows of have been performed in Galilee and not in Jerusalem. The reader is told that Jesus did signs in Jerusalem (2:23), and Nicodemus refers to signs done there (3:2). This also paints a picture of those in Galilee who believe only because of signs as people not to be trusted (2:24-25).

⁵⁷ Whether the official is Jewish or Gentile has garnered a great deal of discussion. Talbert (*John*, 119) argues that the official is a Gentile and that the scene is the fulfillment of Jesus being received in Gentile lands as the Samaritan-proclaimed savior of the world. Uwe Wegner (*Der Hauptmann von Kafarnaum [Mt 7:28a; 8:5-10:13 par Lk 7:1-10]: Ein Beitrag zur Q-Forschung* [WUNT 2/14; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985], 57-72) concludes that the official could be either Jewish or Gentile. John P. Meier (*A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 2: *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* [ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994], 722) argues that the official is Jewish because the Gentiles coming to Jesus does not happen until 12:20-26. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:190) suggests that the official is a servant of Herod.

⁵⁸ Moloney, *Gospel*, 153. Contra Moloney, I argue that another Johannine inclusio has been created with the arrival of the Greeks to see Jesus (12:20), an event that triggers the arrival of the hour, though admittedly the narrator does not tell the reader what was said.

theologically important parts of the story (the Samaritan woman). The ethnicity of the official could have been ambiguous even to most of the original audience and may well be intentional.⁵⁹ Just as I argued that the Samaritan woman was valued as a character because of her noted ethnicity and gender, so here the narrator leads the reader to notice what he has identified: the social status of this character, probably a courtier or family member of Herod, and because of his association with the household of Herod thus either wealthy or powerful and, at least, of some status.

Because the official's son is ill enough that the father fears death (vv. 46-47), he begs Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son (v. 47). Jesus chastises him and those around him for their need to see signs as a prerequisite for faith (v 48); yet the man, undeterred by Jesus's reproof, repeats his request for Jesus to come (v. 49). Jesus does not go with him; instead he responds to the official's request by telling him he can go and that his son will live (v. 50). With this instruction, the official "believed the word that Jesus spoke to him" (ἐπίστευσεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς) and departs for home.

The official's obedient, believing response to Jesus's word has engendered a great deal of comment about the man's faith, especially because, while the man believes Jesus's words in v. 50, the author later tells the reader (v. 53) that the official and his household believe because of the shared report of his son's healing (ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη). The tension lies in the repetition of ἐπίστευσεν. To address this,

⁵⁹ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:631) suggests that the official could have been a pagan Gentile or a Herodian Jew. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:192, 196), in a comparison of John with the Synoptic tradition regarding the official, holds that the Synoptic account (Matt 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10) of an official requesting aid from Jesus is more theologically developed than the Johannine account since the Synoptics intentionally develop the theme of people having faith outside of Israel. While he does not take this to be John's point, he does maintain that the official was a Gentile.

Moloney inquires as to the moment when the official comes to faith and what authentic Johannine faith is, since in his estimation v. 50 portrays “authentic Johannine belief in the word.”⁶⁰ He suggests that the account of the official and his household coming to faith (v. 53) has been placed here by the implied author to create a structural parallel to 2:11, where the disciples come to faith because of the miracle, and that ἐπίστευσεν in v. 53 should not be taken as an ingressive aorist but as a complexive aorist, summarizing the official’s entire experience and the confirmation of his faith by the servants.⁶¹ In slightly differing approaches, Keener describes v. 53 as certainly a signs-faith, but one that confirms the official’s original trust in Jesus, while Talbert understands the reference to faith in v. 53 as indicative of the process of the official’s growth in faith.⁶²

The double use of ἐπίστευσεν might be addressed through a different approach in light of the connections with other scenes in 2:1-4:54 and the development of the tension between signs faith and faith based on Jesus’s word, or faith based on testimony.⁶³ Nicodemus comes to Jesus because of the signs he has done in Jerusalem (3:2) and affirms Jesus’s connection with God because of the signs (οὐδεὶς γὰρ δύναται ταῦτα τὰ σημεῖα ποιεῖν ἂν σὺ ποιεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ ἦ ὁ θεὸς μετ’ αὐτοῦ). In 2:11, the disciples believe because of the sign Jesus performs at the wedding. Like Nathanael in 1:43-51, the

⁶⁰ Moloney, *Gospel*, 154. Moloney describes (162 n. 53) the aorist in v. 53 as “clumsy” and as potentially indicative of an earlier version of the miracle story. Talbert (*John*, 119-29) suggests that the official is the foreshadowing representative of those who believe without having seen a sign, whom Jesus blesses in 20:29. In this, he more closely follows the details of the story. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:195) maintains that the official does not come to complete faith based on Jesus’s word but only after getting word of the sign.

⁶¹ Moloney, *Gospel*, 155, 162 n. 53.

⁶² Keener, *Gospel*, 1:632-33; Talbert, *John*, 120. Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 137) describes the official as one who “exemplifies those who believe because of the signs but show themselves ready to believe the words of Jesus.” Peter J. Judge (“The Royal Official: Not so Officious,” in Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman, *Character Studies*, 313) concludes the first occurrence refers to belief in Jesus while the second confirms what the official knows.

⁶³ Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading John 1-4* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 178-79. Moloney connects the scenes between 2:1 and 4:43 as illustrations of what is genuine faith and what is not.

official is initially drawn to Jesus because he has heard the testimony (v. 47 οὗτος ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἦκει ἐκ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν) about Jesus. The Royal Official probably has heard of the miracles from the Galileans who are described as having witnessed Jesus's miracles in Jerusalem (v. 45).

Contextually, faith as a result of what one hears has been displayed as well. The last scenes of the Samaritan encounter have the villagers telling the woman that they now believe not only because of her testimony but because they have heard Jesus's words (ἐπίστευσαν διὰ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ) for themselves (v. 41), something that is reiterated in the next verse when they insist that they believe not only because of her testimony but they have *heard* Jesus. Likewise, the official believes (v. 50b) what Jesus says to him.

While the second occurrence of ἐπίστευσεν is often linked to signs faith, it distinctly echoes 2:1-11, where the disciples and the reader learn of the miracle because of what the banquet master says (2:9-11), not because they have seen the sign or have tasted the wine for themselves. Likewise, the official and his entire household believe because of what they hear about the sign from one another (4:51-54). As a summary scene for the section, the two instances of the official coming to faith (4:50, 53) echo the reasons for faith in previous episodes and draw them together in the last scene of the section. This combination follows the more Johannine understanding, since Jesus actually performs the sign and the Gospel's stated purpose is the creation of faith (20:30-31), which is created through a Gospel that relates Jesus's signs. In this episode the instruction on faith does not stop there.

The double use of ἐπίστευσεν directs attention to the importance of witnessing and connects the actions of witnessing to faith. Faith is engendered in this scene by what

characters hear, not just from Jesus but from other characters, thus faith derives from testimony. The official comes to Jesus because he has heard that Jesus is in the area from the Galileans who have seen Jesus's signs (v. 47).⁶⁴ Jesus himself assumes this as he chides both the Galileans and the royal official for basing their faith on signs and wonders (v. 48). Likewise, the official's faith in what Jesus says to him about his son's healing (v. 50) is predicated upon the reception of information about Jesus's works (testimony/witness): he believes what Jesus says to him (v. 50) because of what he has heard about Jesus's miracles.

In the second occurrence of *ἐπίστευσεν*, the connection between faith and witness is secured. Before arriving at his house and seeing the truth of Jesus's words (the sign), the official encounters his servants on the way back to his home (v. 51). They inform him that his son is alive (*λέγοντες ὅτι ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ζῆ*).⁶⁵ The official queries them about the timing of his son's healing, and the narrator provides the direct testimony about what has happened: the servants inform him that "the fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour" (v. 52). The servants' testimony to the son's recovery produces an interchange between the official and his servants about the timing of the boy's healing. The official realizes that it has happened at the same time that Jesus had spoken to him (v. 53) on the previous day. With this knowledge gained through sharing information about their respective experiences (v. 53), and without the official seeing the sign (or his servants encountering Jesus) but only hearing about it, the narrator informs the reader that "he

⁶⁴ The narrator informs the implied readers that the Galileans welcome him because they have seen the miracles he has performed during the feast in Jerusalem (v. 45), and immediately notes that Galilee is also the place where Jesus had turned the water into wine (v. 46a). The narrator then informs the reader that the official's son is sick (46b) and that the official has heard that Jesus is in Galilee. This progression makes the inference quite reasonable.

⁶⁵ Some manuscripts understand *ὅτι* as *recitativum* and therefore change *αὐτοῦ* into *σοῦ*, as the direct testimony of the servants.

himself and his whole household believed” (ἐπίστευσεν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτοῦ ὅλη). The official believes because of the servants’ witness, and the servants believe through the testimony of the official; the former never sees the miracle and the latter never personally encounter Jesus. The reader is able to cast herself in the place of the servants as someone who has no personal encounter with Jesus, but who comes to faith because of the witness of someone who did. Signs and witnessing are brought together to produce faith, and in many respects those who witness become the sign or stand in place of the sign.

A survey of the analyses of this scene reveals a lack of attention given to the link between witnessing and faith and the importance of witnessing, even though the narrator gives little attention to the miracle itself and he continually draws the reader’s attention not to what is seen but to what is heard. Scholars give detailed attention to the scene’s implications for the differences between signs faith and what is understood to be a purer (more Johannine) faith which is based on Jesus’s words.⁶⁶ For example, Keener concludes that the point of the scene is that “even a royal official in Galilee could respond to Jesus, though in this case only with signs-faith.”⁶⁷ Yet the official never sees the sign or his son. Keener’s point would be accurate if the official had seen the sign, since seeing is what Jesus condemns (v. 48 ἐὰν μὴ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἴδητε, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε). The narrator could easily have reported that the man reached his residence and saw his son. Moloney more accurately describes the events surrounding the official and his

⁶⁶ For example, Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 137) holds that the scene’s significance lies in a Herodian official coming to faith because of one of the signs, the healing of his son.

⁶⁷ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:633) oddly connects this miracle with what he deems to be the signs-faith of the Samaritan woman, though he offers no explanation as to what he understands a sign to be since only one of the encounters has been traditionally understood as a Johannine sign and is labeled a sign by the narrator.

household coming to faith as indicative of someone's faith generating faith in others and producing belief and knowledge in others.⁶⁸ I would nuance Moloney's conclusion to observe that what generates faith in others in this scene is not faith itself but bearing witness.

Finally, the author has incorporated yet another social group. The Samaritan woman (ethnic, gender) was an outsider with a presumably questionable past. Nathanael was an Israelite, Nicodemus a representative of the Jewish religious elite, and now the official represents someone of a high social status, most probably within the Herodian ruling class under Antipas or Agrippa II. The Jewish religious leader is the only one who does not come to faith or bear witness, and this anticipates the antagonistic relationship between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in 5:1-12:50, which will define what I have identified as the next section.

In 5:1 the geographical setting switches to Jerusalem as the narrator begins with a scene that offers the first sign that is performed in Jerusalem/Judea as well as the next failure to bear witness. The invalid's failure to bear witness is unique in the Gospel for several reasons: it is the first time that someone who receives a sign fails to come to faith or bear witness; it is the first time in the narrative that a character fails to acknowledge the full identity of Jesus; and it is the first character who is trapped in sin.⁶⁹ By the time the reader reaches ch. 5, the only two characters who fail to bear witness are the member of the Jewish leadership and the man who continues living in sin.

The Return of the Baptist as Faithful Witness

⁶⁸ Moloney, *Gospel*, 155.

⁶⁹ Jesus was introduced as the "Lamb of God who takes away sin" (1:29), but the man continues in sin (5:14). The discussion of sin was absent from 2:1-4:54 but becomes an often revisited theme (5:14; 8:7, 11, 21, 34, 46; 9:2, 3, 41) throughout what I delineate as the next section of the Gospel (5:1-12:50).

John the Baptist is brought back to the reader's attention in 5:33 as part of Jesus's affirmation of the veracity of the Baptist's witness. Just as the Baptist is reintroduced after a character fails to bear witness (Nicodemus), so too here the narrator returns to the Baptist's witness after the second failed witness (the invalid). In the process of Jesus's response to the Jews (vv. 16-47) regarding his authority to break Sabbath regulations by healing the invalid (5:1-18), Jesus enumerates a list of witnesses on his behalf (vv. 31-32). After informing the Jews that there is another who testifies on his behalf (v. 32), Jesus reminds them (1:19-35) that the Baptist has testified to the truth (μεμαρτύρηκεν τῆ ἀληθείᾳ). At this, the reader returns to the theme of witnessing, specifically to the preeminent witness of the Fourth Gospel. Jesus continues by observing that they refuse to believe him even though he is greater than the Baptist and offers greater testimony.⁷⁰ Jesus's list of witnesses begins with the Baptist (v. 33). He then adds his own works (v.36), the Father who testifies on his behalf (v. 37), the scriptures (v. 39), and even Moses (v. 46). Implicit in this is a critique of those who have not listened to the Baptist's testimony.⁷¹ Again the implied reader is challenged to remember the testimony of the Baptist after a character fails to bear witness.

Nicodemus as Witness

Before introducing the next positive example (the blind man in ch. 9), the narrator returns to another recurring character, Nicodemus. He is reintroduced (7:45-52) to the reader after the invalid's failure and the reminder of the Baptist's witness, both piquing

⁷⁰ When Jesus speaks of the other testifying on his behalf and the Baptist's testimony (v. 32-34), μαρτυρέω or μαρτυρία occurs 5 times.

⁷¹ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:657.

the reader's interest in successful and failed witnessing as she encounters Nicodemus again.

After the list of witnesses (5:31-33), several scenes trace the increasing tensions between the Jews and Jesus and Jesus and many of his followers. This tension culminates in discussions of Jesus's identity (7:25-44). The Jewish leaders of Judea desire to arrest him (7:30) and take his life (7:1). Many conclude that he is the Christ (7:25, 31, 41) and put their faith in him (7:31). Yet the debate continues and the people remain divided (7:43) to such a great extent that the Pharisees hear about what is happening and send temple guards to arrest Jesus (7:32). In an ironic twist, even the temple guards fail in their mission to arrest Jesus (v. 45) after hearing his teaching (v. 46) and the debate between the factions. When questioned by the Pharisees and the chief priests about their failure, the guards inform them that they have never *heard* anyone speak like him (v. 46). The leaders assume that the guards have become Jesus's followers after hearing him, since they lambast the guards for being deceived by Jesus like the crowds (v. 47). The Pharisees and chief priests continue their denunciation by asking if one of the rulers (τις ἐκ τῶν ἀρχόντων) or the Pharisees (ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων) believes in him (v. 48), to which they emphatically answer, "No!"

It is into this atmosphere, charged with debate about Jesus's identity, the people's belief, opposition of the Pharisees and chief priests, and the guards' reception of Jesus after having heard him, that Nicodemus is reintroduced. The question as to who has believed in Jesus still hangs in the air. Their attestation that none of the rulers (ἀρχόντων) and Pharisees (Φαρισαίων) has been deceived by Jesus (or believes in him) echoes the earlier description of Nicodemus, who was described as both a ruling member

of the Jews (3:1 ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων) and one of the Pharisees (3:1 ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων). The narrator reminds the reader that Nicodemus came to Jesus at night (v. 50), recalling his prior encounter with Jesus, his affirmation of Jesus's identity, but also his failure to bear witness. Now, in the midst of his fellow Pharisees and rulers, Nicodemus asks if "our" law condemns (κρίνει) someone before hearing (ἀκούσῃ) him to understand (γνῶ) what he is doing (τί ποιεῖ).⁷² This is not just a reminder about the law, it is also an invitation to hear Jesus and know his claims so that they might understand what Jesus is doing (and listen/believe, like the guards?). Given Moloney's observation that the law *did not* require that the accused be given a hearing, the best matrix for understanding what Nicodemus says is that he is inviting the other Pharisees and leaders to their own encounter with Jesus.⁷³ Nicodemus is inviting them to "Come and see," just as Philip and the Samaritan woman had done.

Because of the lack of information regarding Nicodemus's faith, the reader is left to examine other characters' reactions to him. It would appear that, at the very least, Nicodemus is speaking in defense of Jesus.⁷⁴ Even more, I suggest that he is being seen as a follower of Jesus, given the original question about whether one from their group has believed in him (μὴ...ἐπίστευσεν εἰς αὐτὸν) and their present question.⁷⁵ The Pharisees

⁷² Each of these verbs has been identified as significant by scholars in debates about Jesus's identity and in the witnesses that speak prior to and after this scene. I am indebted to Gabi Renz ("Nicodemus," 265-66) for drawing attention to some of these verbal nuances. Koester ("Nicodemus," 176) takes this as a play on the concept that those who hear Jesus should/will listen to what he says (10:3, 16, 27). Keener (*Gospel*, 1:734) notes that the leaders will soon (8:14, 19, 43, 47) be portrayed as failing to see and hear Jesus.

⁷³ Moloney, *Gospel*, 255. Contra Bennema (*Encountering Jesus*, 153), who maintains that Nicodemus "starts out well but fails to follow through and vanishes."

⁷⁴ Brown (*Gospel*, 1:325) considers v. 50 to be ironic, and that one of their members does believe in him, which he suggests is confirmed by the author in 12:42. For Nicodemus as a defender of Jesus see Keener, *Gospel*, 1:734; Moloney, *Gospel*, 255.

⁷⁵ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:330. Brown also closely ties this scene to Nathanael's encounter with Jesus as a contrast between the leaders who refuse to come and see, and Nathanael, who had a similar reaction but at least came to hear Jesus for himself. So Koester, "Nicodemus," 177. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 150)

criticize him, asking in disbelief if he is also from Galilee (μη̄ καῑ σῡ εκ̄ τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶ;). While Neyrey argues that Nicodemus does not testify on behalf of Jesus, their response leads the reader to believe that they do indeed consider him to be a disciple and that he is inviting them to encounter Jesus, since they link Nicodemus to Galilee, which is the center of Jesus's popularity and consistently portrayed as a place where people welcome him (4:45) and believe in him.⁷⁶ Accordingly, Moloney is closer to what is happening in the passage when he suggests that "Nicodemus challenges the Pharisees by informing them that the only ones able to make a right judgment of Jesus are those who believe in him."⁷⁷

When considered in the narrative context, Nicodemus is a believer because he is portrayed as inviting others to encounter Jesus, and the reader encounters the first negative response to an invitation.⁷⁸ As someone whose invitation is rejected, he will be like the next character (the blind man), who meets resistance from the Jewish leadership for a similar offer. This scene shows the implied reader that while the tensions with Jewish leaders are increasing, there are followers of Jesus taking missional steps toward the Jewish leaders, even those who are numbered among the leaders themselves. In light of the actions of Nicodemus, the very people who are opposing believers are objects of witness, and are not portrayed only as objects of sectarian opposition. When Nicodemus invites the leaders to hear and understand what Jesus is doing, and receives their rebuff,

considers both to be defenders of Jesus, though he suggests that Nicodemus does so by questioning the legality of their efforts, and so "might be considered heroic" and thus "win him a place in the inner circle of disciples." Contra Renz ("Nicodemus," 269-70), who maintains that Nicodemus does not understand the theological implications of his words.

⁷⁶ Keener (*Gospel*, 1:731) describes Nicodemus as a believer at this point in the narrative. So Brown, *Gospel*, 1:330.

⁷⁷ Moloney, *Gospel*, 255. Koester ("Nicodemus," 177) takes Nicodemus's statement to indicate that he is exposing his peers' lack of knowledge as the light exposes the darkness.

⁷⁸ Contra Bennema (*Encountering Jesus*, 153, 155), who describes Nicodemus as remaining "ambiguous."

the community has evidence that their witness is effective even among the leaders (12:42), even in the face of great opposition from those same leaders.⁷⁹

The Final Appearance of the Baptist as Witness

The Baptist's witness is brought before the reader a final time in 10:42, just before the final pairing of believing and unbelieving characters (11:1-44) and the climactic end to Jesus's ministry (ch. 11-12). Jesus returns to the place where the Baptist was baptizing, possibly an indication that his testimony is so effective that it has created a safe haven for Jesus.⁸⁰ While the Jews and leaders are initially described as obstinate in their unbelief (10:22-39), the narrator informs the reader that many of the people have willingly accepted the Baptist's testimony and are drawn to Jesus in response to it (10:41 πολλοὶ ἤλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι...). The reader sees that crowds are coming to Jesus because of their positive evaluation of the Baptist's testimony: "Everything that John said concerning this one (Jesus) was true" (v. 41). Yet again the efficaciousness of testimony is given pointed attention as the author informs the reader that "many believed in him there."⁸¹

Evaluations of the Baptist's character are often incongruent since he is considered both a "type" (whether for the believer, the preacher, or the Christian witness) while also part of the Johannine community's polemical rhetoric against his followers. Keener suggests that these two approaches may not be mutually exclusive, since the positive portrayal of the Baptist establishes witnessing for the community while at the same time

⁷⁹ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:731-32.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:831. Keener observes that the appearance in the narrative is that belief is moving closer to Jerusalem from Galilee.

⁸¹ This calls to mind the Samaritan villagers, who trust the woman's testimony and what they had heard and seen from Jesus, which results in their coming to faith (4:39-42).

addresses a low Christology that the putative opponents shared.⁸² Keener's modified position is more effective because it traces the Gospel's clear emphasis on Christology while also recognizing the significance of the Baptist's positive characterization as a paradigmatic witness, rather than portraying the Baptist as inferior to Jesus.⁸³ One wonders if the Baptist's preeminence among characters has been given enough emphasis: he is the only one aside from Jesus to be divinely commissioned and "sent by God"; his testimony is the first testimony (and in direct speech); his direct speech is the most recorded (covering the first three narrative days); and his testimony is blended with that of the narrator and thus verifies the narrator's witness for the readers. Additionally, as Williams has pointed out, the Baptist "betrays certain affinities with the Beloved Disciple," since no other follower of Jesus displays the knowledge of Jesus's identity and no other witness has a record of so many coming to faith because of what he or she has said.⁸⁴

The Baptist, as witness, provides a unifying substructure that resurfaces throughout chs. 1-12. His witness is consistently portrayed as bringing disciples and crowds to faith.⁸⁵ These consistent witnessing efforts of the Baptist take place even

⁸² Keener, *Gospel*, 1:388-92.

⁸³ For example, Talbert (*Gospel*, 108-10) surveys the appearances of the Baptist and concludes that in the Prologue the author seeks "to define a qualitative difference between the Word and John" since he is only a witness to the light. He also maintains in chapter 1 that "John is not Elijah; he is only the voice crying out in the wilderness of Isaiah 40:3," and is thus only a witness. In ch. 3 "he is a self-effacing witness to the bridegroom" and in ch. 5 his witness is insignificant when compared to the divine witnesses. While declaring that the Baptist is "only" a witness, he curiously concludes (109), "The dominant description of the Baptist from start to finish is: John is the ideal witness to Jesus" and that "[t]here is no polemic; there is no pressing problem with a Baptist community in the present; the Baptist's disciples have followed the witness of their original leader and have found the light." While I agree with this conclusion, his comments on the other appearances of the Baptist appear to downplay his importance and favor the traditional interpretation that sees in this a polemic.

⁸⁴ Williams, "John," 59.

⁸⁵ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 132-33. So also Josef Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer: Interpretation—Geschichte—Wirkungsgeschichte* (BZNW 53; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), esp. 186-214 where he traces the Baptist's appearances in the Fourth Gospel.

though he is the only primary character who has no narrated dialogue or encounter with Jesus.⁸⁶ Being portrayed as the paradigmatic witness who has no direct encounter with Jesus, but only the testimony of the Father and Spirit, would be paramount for the authorial audience. This could be why, as Keener notes, the Gospel begins with the witness of John the Baptist and ends with the author's (purportedly John in the tradition) witness as well (19:35; 21:24), which serves to "underline the importance of witness for the Johannine community."⁸⁷

Conclusion

Throughout the section of the narrative dedicated to the public ministry of Jesus (John 1-11), the implied author consistently keeps missional witnessing in the mind of his authorial audience. By means of the narrative structure in the Prologue, the implied author draws attention to the Baptist's role as witness as the reader encounters these contrasted narrative insertions that have been juxtaposed with the hymnic images of the word/light entering the world.

Within the Prologue, the reader encounters the first human character, John the Baptist, who is portrayed as a divinely commissioned witness (1:6-8). In the second insertion, his testimony (v. 15) is the first direct speech of any character in the Gospel and the narrator marks the narrative by joining the Baptist's witness to his own witness, to that of the implied author, and to that of his community (1:14,16). By means of the

⁸⁶ The Baptist sees Jesus "walking" towards him (1:29), or "passing by" (1:35), and even sees the Spirit descend upon him (1:33), but readers are given no information as to when the Spirit's descent actually occurs. Even when he and Jesus are baptizing at the same time, their geographical locations are kept apart (3:22-26). The Baptist and Jesus are kept separated throughout the Gospel, there being no dialogue between them as in Matthew (Matt 3:13-15), and no direct confirmation that the Baptist baptized Jesus as in all three Synoptics (Matt 3:14-16; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21).

⁸⁷ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:393.

structure of the Prologue, the implied author has created a text in which missional witnessing is intertwined with the entrance of Jesus into the world, a divine commission to bear witness, a paradigmatic witness, and the community's witness. Because of these elements, the reader has encountered a witness, has received witnessing efforts, and is invited, by the use of the first person plural, to become a witness herself. In light of a prologue's role in introducing thematic elements, by the time the reader reaches the end of the Prologue, the presuppositions for the rest of the Gospel have been established. The reader is trained to look for witnessing in the narrative and will notice that disciples, in response to encounters with Jesus, bear witness (1:35-51).

When the historical material commences in 1:19, the reader is informed by the narrator that what follows is a record of the Baptist's witness. In fact, the Baptist's witness occupies the first three narrative days, in essence filling the narrative space that has been created as the reader waits for the entrance of Jesus. Even before Jesus makes his entrance (1:38), the effects of the Baptist's witness are shown, as those to whom he has witnessed follow Jesus and, in turn, soon find another and bear witness to him (1:35-37).

Throughout the public ministry of Jesus, the narrator returns the attention of the implied reader to the Baptist's paradigmatic witness (3:22-36; 5:33-36; 10:40-41) as a counterpoint to those characters who have failed to bear witnesses. As the reader encounters this testimony, she is reminded of the success of the witnessing efforts of the Fourth Gospel's exemplary witness, and the need to bear witness is further established. She may even identify with the Baptist, who has no recorded encounter with Jesus but is led by the Spirit in offering witness.

Before the opposition to Jesus builds (chs. 5-12), the reader is informed that those who bear witness are co-workers with Christ in bringing about the eschatological harvest (4:34-38), and that those who join Christ in harvesting need not be numbered among the disciples. The reader is also presented with a scene (the royal official in 4:43-54) which, though a miracle story, has been told in a way that imbues the entire scene with the concept of hearing and witnessing. Characters approach Jesus and even come to faith without seeing the results of a sign because of the testimony of others.

The reader also encounters the witnessing transformation of a character in Nicodemus. Though portrayed as someone who has knowledge of Jesus's identity (3:1-3) and who has even acknowledged Jesus's signs, he is left in dark narrative silence. By means of this silence, the reader's understanding of faith is challenged, since neither knowledge nor the experience of a sign engenders proper faith. The silence of Nicodemus is ended only when, in his next appearance, the reader is able to judge properly his faith as a result of what she has been led to understand as the narrative's didactic purpose regarding faith. It is only in Nicodemus's second appearance, one in which he invites his fellow Pharisees and rulers to encounter Jesus, that a reader, who has been sensitized by the narrative structure to look for witnessing, sees his attempts to invite others to their own encounter with Jesus and can conclude that Nicodemus has now joined the community of those who believe.

In varied ways, the reader is continually returned to the importance of witnessing between the primary paired witnessing scenes. The structure, the use of characterization, the marked instances of narration, and the scene which develops the imagery of an eschatological harvest are designed in such a way as to display the authorial intention to

inculcate witnessing in the authorial audience.

Chapter 6 **Witnessing Elements in John 13-21**

Introduction

Though there is a movement of the narrative away from the public ministry of Jesus among the crowds in Jerusalem and Judea (chs. 1-12) to Jesus's final instructions to his disciples before his death (ch. 13-17) and finally to his death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances (chs. 18-21), witnessing continues to play a prominent role, albeit in a modified form. The shift in the narrative (ch. 18) away from discourse marks a theological shift as well: a transition from the ministry of Jesus to that of the disciples who will continue that ministry.

Bearing witness is brought to the reader's attention in various ways. The narrator indicates the movement of ministry and witness from Jesus to future generations by the structure of Jesus's prayer. The prayer moves from Jesus (17:1-5), to the disciples (17:6-19), to the next generation (17:20-26), thereby creating a chain of witnesses that includes subsequent generations of believers, a unique topos of interest for the narrator of the Fourth Gospel when compared to the Synoptic tradition. Even these future generations are included as agents in witnessing.

The disciples' witnessing is again portrayed by means of agricultural imagery (ch. 15). Likewise, the Spirit's role in witnessing, a role that is attributed to the Spirit in the Baptist's witness (1:32, 33) and later directly related by the Baptist to the ability to speak God's words (3:34), is now more fully articulated for all subsequent disciples. Additionally, through the means of more marked instances in which the narrator interjects himself, the implied reader also comes to the full realization of what had only

been hinted at before; the narrative that she is reading is not just a testimony from an implied author and his community, but is the testimony of the Beloved Disciple, someone who is at the same time a character in the narrative. The authorial audience and the actual reader therefore converge and find themselves included together in the midst of the story, and as the objects of Jesus's prayer.

The Spirit and the Vine

By means of the switch in the narrative away from Jesus's ministry (chs. 1-12) to his last words to his disciples (chs. 13-17), the implied author creates an intimate scene in which Jesus gives final instructions to his disciples regarding how to continue his evangelistic ministry after his departure. What is unique about these instructions is that future generations of believers, as recipients of the disciples' missional efforts, are incorporated, which implies the successful witnessing efforts of Jesus's followers. There are also repeated references to the role of the Spirit and the second use of an agricultural metaphor within this context.

As part of comforting his disciples after telling them of his impending return to the Father (13:33-14:4), Jesus promises that the Father will give another *paraklētos* (ἄλλον παράκλητον) to the disciples (14:15). Given that the narrator has previously stated that entrance into God's family comes by a birth that is not the result of human will (1:12-13), but is brought about by the Spirit (3:3-8), and that the Spirit had not yet been given (7:39), Jesus's promise fulfills the reader's expectations. The Spirit's role, as the *paraklētos*, will be to mediate the Father's and Jesus's continuing presence (14:23-26) to the disciples by reminding them of what Jesus said, teaching them "all things" (v. 26), and ultimately enabling them to bear witness (15:16-27).

In maintaining this continuity between the Father, the Son, and the disciples, the implied author aligns the actions of the Spirit and Jesus with those of the disciples.¹ The Spirit will continue the work of Jesus in the evangelistic ministry of the disciples, and by implication in future generations of believers (14:5-27; 15:26-16:15; 17:20-26) as they continue to make Jesus and the Father known and bring them glory.² In explicating the actions of the Spirit, Jesus informs the disciples that the Spirit will be with them in his absence (14:15-21) and will teach them (14:26) as the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; 16:13), who both reminds the disciples of what Jesus has said (14:26; 16:14) and aids them in their witness to the world on behalf of him and the Father (15:18-27; 16:12-15). As Andrew T. Lincoln has described these actions, “The Spirit not only witnesses through the disciples but also witnesses to them.”³

In this witness, the Spirit is portrayed as the mission-bridge to future generations, which includes the reader, as Jesus’s promise of the eternal abiding presence of the Spirit indicates (14:16-17 ἵνα μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ᾤῃ), since εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα extends beyond the time of the disciples. As the trans-temporal bridge, the Spirit not only imitates the ministry of Jesus as the second *paraklētos* sent from the Father (14:16) to the disciples, the Spirit also continues the relationship between the Father, Jesus, and future generations

¹ Both Gary M. Burge (*The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986] 30, 49, 142) and Keener (*Gospel*, 2:964-74) conclude that the author of the Fourth Gospel creates a correspondence between the actions of Jesus and the actions of the Spirit, in effect, equating the work of the two.

² So Walter Grundmann, *Der Zeuge der Wahrheit: Grundzüge der Christologie des Johannesevangeliums* (ed. W. Wiefel; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1985). Moloney (*Gospel*, 477) likewise extends the missional call to future generations. He concludes that Jesus “prays that all who believe in Jesus as the Sent One of God might make God known.” This call extends until believers see Jesus’s glory.

³ Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 252.

of anyone who loves and obeys him, including the actual reader.⁴ This openness to future believers is also indicated by: 1) the general substantive participles: “the one who obeys” Jesus’s commands and keeps them (14:21 ὁ ἔχων τὰς ἐντολάς...τηρῶν); and 2) the appearance of the indefinite pronoun in a conditional clause (14:23 ἐάν τις), including anyone in the future who loves and obeys him.⁵ By means of these, the reader is part of “the whole community [that] shares [the] parallels with the Paraclete and Jesus, as agents of the Father and Jesus.”⁶

In 16:13-27 Jesus reiterates what he has said of the Spirit’s role in 14:15-17, 25-26, but now he specifically ties it to bearing witness. The activity of the Spirit in the disciples and community enables them to remember and continue Jesus’s teachings (14:26), which furnishes the content of their (and future generations’) witness (15:26-27; 16:12-15) to the world.⁷ The Spirit’s participation in the disciples’ bearing witness includes guiding them into truth (16:13a), speaking what the Spirit hears from the Father and Jesus (v. 13b), and making known to the disciples the things that belong to Jesus and the Father (vv. 14-15). In all of these ways, “[t]he Spirit thus was also equipping the Johannine community for the situation that lay before them, enabling them to witness in the context of grave opposition.”⁸

John’s unique use of παράκλητος and the Spirit’s involvement in witnessing has been understood by many interpreters as part of a juridical framework because of the trial

⁴ So Keener, *Gospel*, 2:975.

⁵ So Keener, *ibid.*, 2:981.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:979, though Keener understands the link primarily as one of prophetic activity.

⁷ So Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1142; L. T. Witkamp, *Jesus van Nazareth in de gemeente van Johannes: Over de interactie van traditie en ervaring* (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1986), 324-37.

⁸ Keener, *Gospel*, 2:982.

motif in 16:7-11 rather than the religious domain that I am proposing.⁹ For example, Lincoln develops an extensive argument for the forensic role that the Spirit plays in John's Gospel, though he acknowledges that a fuller understanding of the actions of the Spirit must consider the roles of “helper and teacher.”¹⁰ He argues that a forensic motif drives the entire Gospel, incorporating the witnessing activities of the characters, especially the disciples, and even future generations as part of God's cosmic trial against the world in which the disciples and the Spirit (through them) act as the prosecutors.¹¹ In carrying on this trial, Lincoln maintains that the Spirit also acts as the advocate who supports the defendants (disciples) against the attacks of the nonbelieving world.¹² Even the reader is included, since “the narrative sequence enables readers to see Jesus under interrogation and on trial as a paradigm for believers in similar situations.”¹³

Lincoln holds that the forensic theme of the Fourth Gospel arises out of the

⁹ Lincoln (*Trial*, 27) maintains that “[j]ust as Jesus has been the Father's authorized agent as witness in the trial, so now the disciples are to be Jesus's authorized agents as they bear witness in the trial of truth that is still taking place.” So already N. A. Dahl, “The Johannine Church and History,” in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (ed. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder; London: SCM, 1962). Keener (*Gospel*, 2:961, 979, 981-82) agrees that the trial motif “is clearly present” in 16:7-11 and can be more accurately described as having judicial connotations. Keener also links the trial motif to chs. 9-10, in which he understands Jesus's role to be prosecuting his opponents for breach of covenant and 14:26, in which he takes the Spirit's role to be one of continuing the defending and prosecuting role of Jesus against the Jewish authorities. So Marin Hasitschka, “Die Parakletenworte im Johannesevangelium: Versuch einer Auslegung in synchroner Textbetrachtung” (SNTSU; *PzB* 1 [1992]: 97-112; Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament Church and Today* (rev. ed.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998), 85-87. Lincoln, *Trial*, 27, 111-15.

¹⁰ Lincoln, *Trial*, 114. Keener (*Gospel*, 2:955-61) surveys the various interpretations and concludes that while the forensic domain is not exhaustive of all of the activities of the Spirit, it is a dominant one when considered in light of the larger trial motif of the Fourth Gospel.

¹¹ Lincoln (*Trial*, 113) comments regarding παράκλητος: “It is significant that παράκλητος has a clear primary meaning in Greek—advocate in a legal context—and that it became a loanword in Hebrew and Aramaic with precisely this meaning.” So Keener (*Gospel*, 2:956-57). However, cf. BDAG, s.v. “παράκλητος” (p. 766), which notes that “the technical meaning of ‘lawyer’ or ‘attorney’ is rare” and that the more common usage in Greek is that of “mediator, intercessor, or helper.” Keener (*Gospel*, 2:956 n. 237) acknowledges that the concepts of helper, mediator, and intercessor apply, but maintains that they might assume a legal image for intercession. LSJ (s.v. “παράκλητος” 1.a [p. 1313]) provides the legal domain first and then the intercessory.

¹² Lincoln, *Trial*, 27-33.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 28, 35.

lawsuit motif in Isa 40-55, in which Yahweh is portrayed as presenting his cases against the nations and against Israel because of their sins.¹⁴ Lincoln's work is of enduring value for drawing attention to the role of the Spirit, the Fourth Gospel's connections to the eschatological language of Isaiah, the thematic development of witness, and the varied ties to trial language, however, it is debatable whether the forensic semantic domain/motif can be applied to the actions of all of the characters who bear witness in the Fourth Gospel, or even if the juridical theme plays the metanarrative role that Lincoln proposes.

In contrast, James P. Ware, in his examination of the forensic motif in Isa 40-55, observes that one of the key interests of Isaiah's oracles is a mission to the Gentiles as part of the eschatological expectation of an ingathering of the nations.¹⁵ In Isaiah the salvation of the nations is a priority for the author; God's servant (Israel) is created to be a light to the nations (42:1; 49:1-6; 51:4-5; 55:4-6), yet it is Israel's failure to bear witness to the nations that is a substantive part of God's accusations (Isa 26:18) in his charges against Israel. As a reflection of the interest in the mission to the nations, the witnessing motif of the Fourth Gospel includes a harvest among the Samaritans and Roman officials, and portrays them as joining in the work of Jesus. Jesus realizes that his hour has come when some Greeks ("Ἕλληνές τινες could be Greek speaking Jews or Gentiles, whatever their religious affiliations might be), come to seek him (12:20-28),

¹⁴ Ibid, 37-50. Lincoln acknowledges (40-41) that Israel is called to be a witness to the nations in Isa 43:10; 43:12 and that there is an offer of salvation to the nations in 45:22, but his analysis appears to give greater attention to the lawsuit motif itself and not the eschatological ingathering that was expected of Israel and promised by God.

¹⁵ Ware, *The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism* (NovTSup 120; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), 57-92. Ware questions (79-80) the validity of interpretations of Isa 40-55 that place what he understands as an undue stress upon God's verdict against the nations.

again a reiteration of the mission-to-the-nations motif in Isaiah. Finally, the scene in which these Greeks seek audience with Jesus is immediately followed by a quotation from Isa 53, which questions who has received the message concerning the Lord (12:38).

A further objection to Lincoln's argument is that he collapses semantic domains. Bob Plant, in a more general work on testifying, observes that too often the juridical and religious semantic lines are blurred because of an assumed unanimity of meaning.¹⁶ The distinction between the forensic and religious semantic domains, which are admittedly closely related, is often one of communicative intention or context. For example, the martyr dies for the beliefs to which she bears witness, as though she becomes the evidence of that for which she is martyred. In many ways both their lives and their testimonies stand for the realities which they both believe and are intended to convince others of the truth of that reality.¹⁷ This is different from the judicial, in that the witness on the stand is reporting events to reflect a reality that allows for conviction or defense rather than to convince the hearers.

The forensic domain is informative rather than performative. In the latter, the martyr stakes his life on the content of his testimony, while in the former the stakes are not necessarily as high.¹⁸ While a witness seeks to communicate truth in both settings,

¹⁶ Plant, "On Testimony, Sincerity and Truth," *Paragraph 30* (2007): 31-33. Describing the necessary distinction between the juridical and religious domains in a slightly different way, C. A. J. Coady (*Testimony: A Philosophical Study* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1992], 52) comments, "I am not sure how this employment [within a religious domain] of the term should be analysed but it seems plausible to suppose that we still have our definition at work here, although in a more heightened, dramatic, and mysterious form." I maintain that the religious domain is distinct from the juridical, and that the latter ought not to supervene on the former.

¹⁷ So Coady, *Testimony*, 52.

¹⁸ Coady (*ibid.*, 52-53) struggles to identify the differences between the two. He can say that there are "important differences" between the two situations of judicial and religious testimony, yet can also "venture the opinion that the differences are not significant enough to yield different senses of 'testify.'" He demurs from making any final decisions since the religious sense may also have a different understanding of what is "true." In a similar manner, Pui Shum Ip ("Wolffhart Pannenberg's Concept of Testimony as Natural Knowledge," *EJT* 22 [2013]: 125) describes the two domains as overlapping yet

the intended outcome is far different. I suggest that what is primarily at stake in 15:8-16:4 is not the passing on of accurate information, or even building a case, which would be the situation in a forensic understanding, but the performative activity of witnessing with the associated threat of punishment, expulsion from the synagogue, and dying for being witnesses (15:8-16:4). Even in the opening sequences (1:35-51), the informative (confessional) aspect of the titles is directed toward eliciting belief.

The primary impetus which finds scholars speaking of a forensic motif comes from the Spirit's activity of what has been traditionally taken to be "convicting" (ἐλέγχω) the world in 16:8-11. Yet nowhere in John is the Spirit operating directly among or upon the inhabitants of the world. Rather, the Spirit's locus of operation is within believers and among the community as the Spirit interacts with the world. This leads some, for example Neyrey, to argue that the Spirit's actions regarding ἐλέγχω in 16:8 are better understood as "convincing" or "exposing" the world's actions through the disciples and community as they bear witness to, and engage, those in the world.¹⁹

There is also a distinct sense in which the Spirit's actions may be better understood within the domain of a patronage relationship, in which a broker acts on behalf of a client (believers).²⁰ This does not negate forensic connotations, as the role of a broker extends to supporting someone on trial, but it is not necessarily as prosecutor or

having different working definitions and evaluative measures of content. The differences can also be construed from Aleida Assmann's comments ("History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony," *Poetics Today* 27 [2006]: 261-73) when she distinguishes between testimony as an account of what happened and testimony as an account of what was experienced. She also elaborates (268-69) the differences between the judicial and religious sense in terms of the relationship between the person bearing witness and the one receiving the witness, the importance of the performative act itself, and the various connections between the experience and bearing witness.

¹⁹ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 268.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 244-46, 260-61. So Kenneth Grayston, "The Meaning of PARAKLETOS," *JSNT* 13 (1981): 67-82; T. G. Brown, *Spirit in the Writings of John: Johannine Pneumatology in Social-Scientific Perspective* (JSNTS 253; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 170-86.

defendant but as encourager. In this sense, the Spirit, as the benefactor/broker, maintains the benefaction to the disciples as Jesus's designated successors in his mission.²¹

My argument for the primacy of the religious domain is also dependent upon the larger rhetorical structure that the implied author has created as part of relating the workings of the Spirit. The implied author has placed the material about the Spirit on either side of the vine metaphor in 15:1-8.

An Agricultural Metaphor Revisited

What I have identified as two sections on the Paraclete (14:15-27; 15:26-16:15) surround Jesus's second major employment of the agricultural metaphor of bearing fruit (15:1-17), which is juxtaposed with his discourse on the disciples' relationship with the world (15:18-25):²²

- A. Jesus speaks to his disciples about the Paraclete (14:15-58)
- B. Jesus speaks to his disciples about their relationships with him and one another (15:1-17)
- B'. Jesus warns his disciples about their relationship with the world (15:18-25)
- A'. Jesus speaks to his disciples about the Paraclete (15:26-16:16).

The agricultural metaphor in John 15:1-17 is a continuation of the relational theme of the disciples with the Father, Jesus, the disciples, and the Spirit begun in 14:6 and carried into ch. 16. The primary feature of this metaphor is the concept of bearing fruit.²³ I

²¹ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 249.

²² Moloney (*Gospel*, 416-18) identifies the command to love (15:12-17) as the center of a chiasmic structure that contrasts 15:1-11 ("to abide in Jesus") with 15:18-16:3 ("to be hated by the world"). Moloney does this because he juxtaposes the theme of "remaining," which dominates 15:1-11, and the hatred and rejection of the world in 15:18-16:3. I have chosen to combine 15:1-11 and 12-17 because the narrator returns to the theme of bearing fruit in v. 17, which marks the end of the section.

²³ So Brown, *Gospel* 2:680. Contra Moloney (*Gospel*, 419), who identifies the concept of abiding as the most prominent feature. While I agree that abiding is structurally important, I understand the results of abiding (that is, producing fruit) as equally, if not more, important.

maintain that fruit-bearing, in light of the original use of the agricultural metaphor in 4:32-38, is to be understood in terms of bearing witness (15:26-27) and thus “convincing” the world (ἐλέγχω 16:8).

Jesus opens with another “I am” statement, followed by a predicate, in which he refers to himself as the “true vine” and the Father as the gardener (15:1), but he leaves the referent of “the branches” undefined. Instead, he informs his disciples of two different types of branches that exist in him (ἐν ἐμοί) and what the gardener does to each: those who do not bear fruit (μὴ φέρον καρπὸν) get cut off, while every fruit bearing branch (πᾶν τὸ καρπὸν φέρον) is pruned (v. 2). The intention in pruning is to enable the branches that are bearing fruit to be even more fruitful (ἵνα καρπὸν πλείονα φέρῃ).

After informing the disciples that they are already pruned and ready to bear fruit (v. 3), Jesus continues to address his role as the vine (v. 4) and the necessity of branches remaining in him (μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί) to produce an abundant harvest. The language of remaining (μένω) continues Jesus’s prior use of the relational language of 14:10, 17, 25, which is set within the context of the discussion of the Spirit. Regarding his own role, Jesus explicitly tells the disciples to remain in him, which results in his remaining in them (μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί, κἀγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν). Jesus then reiterates the language of his command to his disciples to remain in him. In this instance he uses it to speak of the necessity of branches remaining in the vine in order to bear fruit, because a branch is unable to bear fruit by itself (v. 4a τὸ κλῆμα οὐ δύναται καρπὸν φέρειν ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ ἐὰν μὴ μένη ἐν τῇ ἀμπέλῳ). Jesus compares the process of the disciples bearing fruit to that of the branches: just as the branch cannot bear fruit apart from the vine neither can his disciples unless they remain in him (v. 4b οὕτως οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἐὰν μὴ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένητε).

The repetition of bearing fruit commends it as the central concept of this extended metaphor (15:2, 4, 5, 8, 16). This continues into vv. 5-17 where, after a short discourse on remaining and love (vv. 9-15), Jesus tells the disciples that he has chosen and appointed them for the purpose of bearing lasting fruit (5:16 ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένη). As Schnackenburg describes it, bearing fruit is “the objective” of the discourse, and, I argue, definitive of discipleship.²⁴

Given the repetition of the necessity of remaining and of the Father’s pruning for increased fruit (v. 2 καρπὸν πλείονα φέρη), Jesus describes in greater detail what it means to remain in the vine (vv. 5-8). He informs the disciples that they are the branches (v. 5) and then turns the previous finite forms of μένω into a substantive participle (ὁ μένων), defining the person (branch) by reciprocated remaining, a relationship which results in much fruit (v. 5 φέρει καρπὸν πολύν). Jesus reminds them that branches can do nothing apart from him (and by implication cannot bear fruit). He then warns them that branches that do not remain in him or bear fruit, having been pruned by the Father because of a lack of fruit (v. 2), are cast away, wither (v. 6a), and ultimately are gathered and thrown into the fire.²⁵

Jesus modifies the relationship he has just addressed in v. 5 by advancing that his words remaining in the disciples is conditionally linked to their remaining in him (v. 7a ἐὰν μέινετε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μένῃ). When he and his words remain in the disciples (branches), they will be able to receive whatever they ask for (v. 7b). He

²⁴ Schnackenburg, *Gospel* 3:95. Contra Moloney (*Gospel*, 420-21), who nevertheless acknowledges that remaining in Jesus necessitates doing something.

²⁵ This could be another instance of future generations being included. Moloney (*Gospel*, 421) proposes that the aorists should be understood as gnomic aorists.

concludes the discourse on the vine with the attestation that abundant fruit bearing (καρπὸν πολὺν φέρητε) both brings glory to the Father and reveals that they are his disciples (v. 8).²⁶

Jesus extends the language of “remaining” from 15:1-8 into his discourse on the love expressed between the Father, the Son, and the disciples. He has previously expressed the importance of remaining in various ways: followers are to “remain in him” (v. 4), a branch must remain in the vine to avoid destruction (v. 4-6), and his words must remain in his followers (v. 7). He maintains that his followers must remain in his love (v. 9 μείνατε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐμῇ), language that echoes what he has said in describing his relationship with the Father (vv. 9-10; cf. 14:15-24). When Jesus employs together the language of remaining in him, his commandments remaining in his disciples, and his disciples remaining in his love (vv. 10-17), it is to elaborate upon how one maintains relationship (remains in him), a reflection of his continual relationship with the Father who loves him (3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 14:21, 23; 16:27). The language presumes what Jesus has previously prescribed as the secret to remaining in the Father’s love: they will remain in the Father’s love if they love Jesus (14:21, 23; 16:27). In the discourse, love is not the fruit that branches should produce (vv. 1-8); it is part of a continuing relationship; love is the foundation for bearing fruit. It is the means to remain in him.²⁷

²⁶ The implied author associates signs with bringing glory to the Father (2:11; 9:24; 11:4, 40). Signs and glory, in turn, are the fulfillment of the mission of the Father (5:44; 7:18; 8:54; 12:28; 13:31-32; 14:13; 17:4). Glory may also be linked with answered prayer (15:7-8), though it is understood grammatically as the result of bearing fruit.

²⁷ Contra Brown, *Gospel*, 2:680-81. While Brown speaks about fruit bearing as “possessing divine life” and “communicating that life to others,” and even takes the references to bringing the Father glory as continuing the mission of Jesus and completing the work the Father has given the disciples to do, he concludes that the fruit is love. Likewise, Moloney (*Gospel*, 421) holds that abiding in Jesus is what makes the glory of the Father visible. He holds this position because he maintains that abiding produces the fruit, which is love.

Jesus then adds to his discourse on relationships the language of obedience and imitation. In order to remain in his love, and by implication remain in him, the disciples must obey his commands (ἐντολάς) just as (καθώς) Jesus has obeyed his Father's commands (ἐντολάς) and now remains in his love (v. 10).²⁸ Jesus illustrates one of his commandments (v. 12 ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ ἐμὴ) that, when obeyed, will relationally unite the relationships the disciples have with one another, with Jesus, and with the Father: his disciples must love one another just as he has loved them. He follows his command that his disciples love one another with the prime example of the expression of such love: the one who loves lays down his life for his friends (v. 13). Just as the kernel of wheat must die to bear much fruit (12:25), so also laying down one's life is not the fruit but is intended to bear fruit.²⁹

Laying down your life for your friend, whom Jesus has defined as the disciples, and loving one another (a mandate for communal relationship and connection to the vine), are distinguished from being chosen (ἐξελεξάμην) and appointed (ἔθηκα) by Jesus to go out and bear fruit (v. 16 ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένη). Fruit is produced as a result of evangelistic sending.³⁰ Both loving and abiding are associated with loyalty and faithfulness, which create group cohesion and, as Jesus later prays, are the means of bearing fruit in the world (17:20-23).³¹

²⁸ Obeying Jesus's commands is a rephrasing of "his words remaining in the disciples (v. 7)." Again, the locus of attention is the means by which a believer remains in relationship with Jesus and the Father. Jesus portrays himself as the example of how to remain in relationship with the Father. Jesus's works arise out of that relationship. Love is not the fruit of the relationship between the Father and Son. Thus Brown's (*Gospel*, 2:682) position, that the "chain of love" from the Father to the Son and on to the disciples has reality only if it continues to produce love (fruit), is not persuasive in my estimation. In the relationship between the Father and Son (and the disciples as well), love produces fruit.

²⁹ So Neyrey, *Gospel*, 254-55. καρπός in 12:25 is the most recent of two other occurrences.

³⁰ So Brown, *Gospel*, 2:683. Brown notes that this concept is consistently used in the OT of commissioning and ordination.

³¹ Neyrey, *Gospel*, 259.

Because of Jesus's transition away from fruit bearing and remaining in the vine (15:1-8) to remaining in his love and obedience to his commandments (15:9-17), some have argued that the abundant fruit that is called for in 15:1-8 is in fact the obedient, sacrificial love Jesus refers to in vv. 8-13.³² While Keener acknowledges that an interpreter might presuppose that the fruit of 15:1-17 is witnessing, because witnessing is evidenced in the agricultural/harvest imagery in 4:36, he curiously rejects this in favor of what he understands to be the passage's more immediate context. This leads him to propose that καρπός refers to "moral fruit," which was a popular topos in the Greco-Roman world.³³ However, in support of his interpretation, Keener does not employ the prior consistent occurrences of καρπός in the Fourth Gospel as a guide. Instead he appeals to the Synoptics, Paul, and other Jewish and Greek traditions that vary widely depending on the human quality considered in each.

Within the Fourth Gospel, καρπός is consistent in regards to context and meaning. John 15:2-16 accounts for eight of ten occurrences of καρπός in the Gospel. The other two are within contexts of witnessing or producing other believers. In 4:36 the Samaritan townspeople are likened to fields ripe for harvest (4:34-38) and the reaper (probably the Samaritan woman) is harvesting the crop (καρπών) for eternal life (εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον). In 12:20-28 some Greeks have come to Jerusalem and request an audience with Jesus. In response, Jesus informs his disciples that the hour for his glorification has come, and, as a further explanation of the Greeks seeking him and his hour arriving, he informs Philip and Andrew that when a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies it will produce a

³² Brown, *Gospel*, 2:680. Brown elsewhere speaks of the mission as an outward directed activity.

³³ Keener, *Gospel*, 2:997. Keener takes it as moral fruit because that is the "most common sense of the metaphor in other traditions" of the Gospels and is also a central concept in Paul's letters. Elsewhere he links (2:999) the fruit of the disciples to the fruit of Jesus's character.

great amount of fruit (12:24 *πολὸν καρπὸν φέρει*). A reader, in the reading process, understands John's imagery in ch. 15 in light of the two previous occurrences of *καρπός* as a reference to producing other believers, and will expect something similar in 15:1-17.

Keener's argument is amiss, I think, for a second reason. He identifies what he takes to be a reference to moral fruit as love, which he describes as both the fruit of remaining in Jesus and also the command that is the condition for remaining.³⁴ He argues, because of the shift from fruit to love, that Jesus brings glory to the Father (v. 8) by his "fruit-bearing sacrifice" of love (v. 13) and by the disciples bearing the fruit of love and laying down their lives as well.³⁵ Yet neither the logic of the passage nor his own logic follows his argument, since love compels (or is) the sacrifice which *produces* fruit (Keener's "fruit-bearing sacrifice of love").³⁶ Additionally, the topos of moral fruit is not as important for John's Gospel as it is in the Synoptic tradition (Matt 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-36) and in Paul's writings (Gal 5:22-25). That bearing witness is to be understood in both uses of the agricultural metaphor may be argued satisfactorily from the immediate context of the metaphor (chs. 14-16) and the context of the Fourth Gospel, without appeal to meanings outside of the Fourth Gospel that are not evident within it.

Within the immediate context, loving obedience and sacrificial community (15:9-17) are set in contrast to the world's antipathy towards (and rejection of) the disciples and Jesus (vv. 18-19). They will face the coming persecution (v. 20b) by displaying loving obedience (v. 10), an obedience which the world does not have (v. 20c) because the world neither listens to Jesus's words (v. 22) nor believes on account of his miracles (v.

³⁴ Ibid., 2:1002.

³⁵ Ibid., 2:1003.

³⁶ For Keener's point to follow his argument, he would have to say that this fruit-bearing sacrifice produces love as its fruit, but this is not what he argues since he identifies love with the sacrifice.

24). It is as if the world rejects the signs of Jesus with the result that, in response, Jesus will appoint his witnesses to be signs. Jesus has previously said that he has chosen (ἐξελεξάμην) the disciples to bear fruit (v. 16), a concept to which he returns when he tells them that they have been chosen (ἐξελεξάμην) out of the world (v. 19). In the same way that Jesus ends what I have identified as the three previous sections (15:1-4; 15:5-8; 15:9-16) of this teaching by informing the disciples that they have been chosen for bearing fruit and must remain in Jesus to do that, Jesus ends his subsequent discourse on the world's opposition to the disciples (15:18-27) with a reference to Spirit-enabled witnessing on his behalf (15:26-27).

Additionally, Jesus's comments on the Spirit bracket the juxtaposed discourses on the branches remaining in the vine through love (15:1-17) and the world's rejection and hatred of the disciples who will bear witness (15:18-16:4). Just before Jesus introduces himself as "the true vine" in 15:1, he tells his disciples that the Spirit is coming in his absence to teach the disciples and remind them of what Jesus has said (14:25-26). In 15:26 the Spirit is described as testifying about Jesus, which seems to reflect what Jesus has said in 14:25-26 and echoes what is said of the Spirit in 16:12-15. There, the Spirit speaks what is heard from the Father (16:13) and makes known to the disciples what Jesus and the Father know (16:14). I conclude that the Spirit is the agent of fruit-bearing through enabling and equipping the disciples to speak to the world and carry on Jesus's mission (14:15-26; 16:5-11).

Jesus's prayer

For the implied reader, the narrator continues the development of the concept of witnessing in Jesus's prayer in 17:1-26, where Jesus again speaks of his disciples, future

generations, and the world. In vv. 6-19 Jesus prays for his disciples. He confirms that he has revealed the Father to them and has given them the Father's words. He acknowledges that his disciples have brought him glory (v. 10), and he prays for their protection while they remain in a world that hates them (vv. 11-16)—a reference back to 15:18-16:11, where they are called to bear witness to this world (15:27). He prays these things because he desires that they remain in the world (v. 15). This mission is dependent upon remaining in the world because Jesus is sending them into it just as the Father has sent Jesus into the world (v. 18 καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, κἀγὼ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον).³⁷ Sanctification is a prerequisite for being set apart for this mission, a concept that is discussed on either side of the reference to their being sent and may reflect the work of the Spirit.³⁸ In myriad ways, Jesus (and the narrator/implicit author) has linked his mission with theirs, portraying the mission of the disciples in terms of his own mission and as a continuation of his mission in and for the world on behalf of the Father.³⁹

In the next section of the prayer (17:20-26), Jesus prays for those who believe the disciples' message (περὶ τῶν πιστευόντων διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν εἰς ἐμὲ) as a result of their bearing witness. This prayer, in the narrative sequence, takes place in the presence of his disciples, which reiterates that others have come to faith or will come to faith

³⁷ The aorist ἀπέστειλα is odd because the narrator has not told the reader about Jesus sending the disciples as Jesus does in the Synoptics. There is textual variation: $\mathfrak{B}^{66\text{vid}}$ has an aorist, which appears to indicate that Jesus has sent them prior to this prayer, while \mathcal{L}^{13} has a present. Several occurrences of the aorist may be taken as a gnomic or a proleptic/future aorist. For this, see Smyth, *Grammar*, §1931, §1934. Similar instances appear in 4:38 regarding Jesus's sending of the disciples and in 13:31 regarding the moment of Jesus's glorification.

³⁸ The semantic field of holiness (ἅγιος/ἀγιάζω) in the Fourth Gospel rarely occurs. ἅγιος refers to the Spirit (1:33; 14:26; 20:22), Jesus (6:69), and the Father (17:11), while ἀγιάζω occurs only in reference to Jesus (10:36) and the disciples (17:17, 19) being set apart.

³⁹ So Moloney, *Gospel*, 469.

because of their evangelistic actions. The present participle τῶν πιστευόντων can be taken to imply that there were believers other than the disciples at the time of Jesus's prayer (the disciples already had missional fruit from the unrecorded ministry referred to in v. 18) or that there are believers at the time of writing as a result of the disciples' ministry. Brown suggests that it could also be taken as having a proleptic sense, with future generations in mind.⁴⁰ While Moloney contends that "readers across generations rightly read themselves into Jesus's words" as the fruit of the disciples who were part of the story, I argue that the actual readers do not just see themselves as the fruitful result of the disciples, but that they sense the call to the authorial audience to participate in the witnessing mission themselves.⁴¹ With both instances, bearing witness is presumed.

This evangelistic activity may find further evidence by word and phrase order. The prepositional phrase εἰς ἐμέ, the final phrase after διὰ τοῦ λόγου αὐτῶν, might better be understood as referring to those who believe through the disciples' words *about Jesus* and not as modifying the substantive participle τῶν πιστευόντων, thereby referring to those who believe in Jesus.⁴² Finally, the reader herself, in the reading process, is actively involved in the reception of the words about Jesus (as a recipient of testimony specified at 1:14; 20:30-31; 21:24) and, this being the case, is able to understand herself

⁴⁰ Moloney (*Gospel*, 473) observes that according to the story-time of the passage, Jesus appears to be praying for the disciples who are present with Jesus at the meal and also for those who believe but are not at the meal. So already Brown, *Gospel*, 2:769.

⁴¹ Moloney (*Gospel*, 473) also understands Jesus's words as represented in the text to be addressing future generations of believers. He describes Jesus's intention as "passing on this task [making God known] to his disciples and subsequent generations who come to believe in him because of their word." He suggests that "readers across generations rightly read themselves into Jesus's words." Brown (*Gospel*, 2:773) holds that in the third section, "Jesus turns his attention directly to the future, foreseeing the success of the mission of the disciples mentioned in v. 18."

⁴² BDAG s.v. "εἰς" 5 (p. 291). Brown (*Gospel*, 2:774) describes vv. 20-23 as indicating that "it is taken for granted that the disciples...were commissioned to preach and that faith came through hearing them."

as the subject of Jesus's prayer. She, and future believers, are semantically included in the expressed intention of the mission, which extends beyond them to include the entire *kosmos* (v. 21 ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύῃ ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας; v. 23 ἵνα γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας).

This mission is realized through the unity of future believers with one another and with previous generations (v. 21 ἵνα πάντες ἐν ᾧσιν; v. 22. ἵνα ᾧσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἐν). The desired unity with the believers, Jesus, and the Father is not only relational (v. 21 καθὼς σὺ, πᾶτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐν σοί), but is functional as well. Jesus's earlier reference to the unity he and the Father share was a unity of purpose (10:30 ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἔσμεν), which, in the context of the Fourth Gospel, expresses the unity of mission and work, and Jesus's faithful adherence to the intentions and purposes of the Father in reaching the world.⁴³

This unity also incorporates Jesus, the Father, and believers in the goal of bearing fruit (15:1-17). This happens when the disciples are the recipients of the same treatment that Jesus receives (15:18-16:4), and when he commissions them with the Spirit (as Jesus was), whose role is to carry on the missional activity in future believers (17:18; 20:21). The disciples experience the Father's ministry through them just as Jesus has given expression to it (14:10-13, 20, 23) and they imitate Jesus's obedience to the Father (15:9-10) with the result that both the Father and Jesus will make their dwelling with them (14:23). This relational unity between the Father, the Son, and the believer results in a unity of mission (14:6-13, 20-24; 16:27; 17:21-23) with the disciples and future

⁴³ Brown (*Gospel*, 1:407) provides a summary of the expressions of this unity in chs. 1-10, concluding that "all these relationships between the Father and the Son are described in function of the Son's dealings with men." Keener (*Gospel*, 1:825-26) also understands the neuter ἐν as expressing a functional unity, or a unity of purpose.

generations of believers, who likewise bring glory to the Father (15:8) and make Jesus and the Father known (17:23). This results in the world coming to faith (17:21).⁴⁴

Nicodemus's final return

The reader encounters Nicodemus a final time in 19:38-42, as one who accompanies Joseph of Arimathea to claim Jesus's body and bury him. I suggest that Nicodemus's return to the narrative completes a developmental trajectory of his character.⁴⁵ Jesus has died and the Jews have asked Pilate to have the bodies removed (19:31-37) to avoid violating the Sabbath. Joseph of Arimathea later asks Pilate for Jesus's body (19:38). In an aside, the narrator pauses to inform the reader that Joseph "was a disciple of Jesus" (ὢν μαθητῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), but secretly because of "the fear of the Jews" (διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων). This associates him with those who were afraid to bear witness (9:22, [12:42] ἐφοβοῦντο τοὺς Ἰουδαίους). His request is public, takes place during the day, and is in the absence of any of the disciples, even the Beloved Disciple, who is made the primary witness to the crucifixion.⁴⁶ A public request will have put Joseph's reputation in danger and may signal, as Keener suggests, that he has now rejected secrecy to become a public disciple.⁴⁷ The same could be said for Nicodemus,

⁴⁴ The purpose is expressed in the ἵνα clauses in v. 21, in which the first two occurrences express the content or explanation of what he is praying for while the third indicates the intended goal or result of the preceding prayer. The goal is that the world believes that the Father sent the Son. The Father as sender of the Son permeates the Fourth Gospel (8:42; 10:36; 12:49). This includes the Father testifying on behalf of the Son as proof of his being sent from the Father (5:37; 8:18), and the work that Jesus does testifying that the Father has sent him (5:36). This is expressive of the revelation of the Father in the Son, since the one who knows Jesus and what he does also knows the Father (8:19; 10:38; 14:9-11).

⁴⁵ So Koester, "Nicodemus," 178.

⁴⁶ Koester ("Nicodemus," 180) takes these as indicators that Joseph and Nicodemus do not fit the earlier characterizations of secret believers.

⁴⁷ Keener, *Gospel*, 2:1160-61. So Renz, "Nicodemus," 275-77; Talbert, *John*, 246. Contra Bassler, "Signals," 646, and William John Lyons, "Joseph of Arimathea: One of the Jews but with a Fearful Secret!," in Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmerman eds., *Character Studies*, 646-57. Lyons (ibid., 653) proposes that the key issue when it comes to making decisions as to the faith of the two is what their fellow Jewish leaders (rather than Pilate) would have thought of their actions.

whom the reader is unexpectedly informed is with Joseph (v. 39), and in another aside is reminded that Nicodemus is the one who came to Jesus at night, in contrast to this diurnal setting.⁴⁸ Nicodemus, the reader is also informed, brings an inordinate amount of spices, an amount reserved only for royalty.⁴⁹

While Keener sees the narrative role of Joseph and Nicodemus appearing together as an invitation to secret believers to go public with their faith, there may be another explanation. In the tradition (Mark 15:43; Matt 27:57; Luke 23:51), Joseph was well known as a member of the Sanhedrin and one of the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem. While John is silent as to this identification, Joseph's appearance with Nicodemus, who is alone in his earlier visitation of Jesus and in his defense of Jesus, may signal to the reader that Nicodemus's earlier attempts at witnessing have proven successful. Nicodemus, as a member of the Pharisees and the ruling council in Jerusalem, has invited other members of the council to hear Jesus (3:1; 7:50).⁵⁰

Narrator as witness

At several points in the narrative, the implied author inserts first person plural testimony (1:14, 16; 3:11; 19:35; 21:24), which marks the narrative because there is a

⁴⁸ Conclusions regarding Joseph and Nicodemus being believers are divided: Keener (*Gospel*, 2:1159-62) considers both to be positive models of discipleship, especially for secret Jewish believers. His evaluation depends upon the personal danger both faced in publicly asking for the body even when the disciples do not. Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 3:297) takes the appearance of both to indicate a "breakthrough of a more decisive attitude about faith." Brown (*Gospel*, 2:960) evaluates Nicodemus as a secret believer, though he is more tentative about Joseph being a disciple (*ibid.*, *The Death of the Messiah—from Gethsemane to Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* [2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1994], 2:1218). Moloney (*Gospel*, 510) takes the public nature of their request as indicative of faith. Neyrey (*Gospel*, 314-15) is reluctant to describe either as a believer, since the narrator specifically describes Joseph as one who is afraid, and continues to identify Nicodemus as a nighttime visitor.

⁴⁹ Koester ("Nicodemus," 178-79) holds this to be indicative of Nicodemus's belief from prior conversations with Jesus and his acknowledgment of Jesus's kingship.

⁵⁰ Lyons ("Joseph," 656-57), following Bauckham ("Written," 24-25), contends that John's account of Joseph is to be considered in light of Mark's portrayal of Joseph, since he holds that John's implied audience probably had at least some knowledge of Mark.

shift from the expected third person omniscient narrator. These insertions have engendered a great deal of comment as to their purpose, specifically whether they are authorial or editorial insertions or evidence of a redactional layer.⁵¹ Kearns suggests that this type of insertion is a means of “marking” in narrative, a device that creates an effect on the reader as “implicating the intention of the author,” and as a result it sends her on a search for what there is “to be discovered.”⁵² Scholars have variously identified those to whom the plural refers as various characters, the narrator himself as well as the character in the context (often Jesus), and the implied author and his community. What the insertions have in common, on even a surface survey, is the motif of testimony.

At the first two interjections, near the end of the Prologue (1:14, 16), the narrator informs the reader that the *logos* has become flesh and has “dwelt among us” (v. 14 ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν), and then adds that “we have seen his glory” (ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ). The reader realizes, given the repetition of “testimony” in the opening verses, that not only is the implied author thematically interested in testimony, but that the first character in the narrative has been identified as a witness, and now she herself is receiving witness from an authorial community that at least includes the implied author.

The second interjection (v. 16) follows a return to the Baptist in v. 15. The reference to the Baptist draws attention to his speaking (μαρτυρεῖ...κέκγραγεν λέγων), supplies the first recorded speech of the Gospel as testimony, and casts the Baptist’s actions as witnessing (μαρτυρεῖ). Additionally, by means of the first person plural, the

⁵¹ The position taken here is that they do reflect, at certain points, a community affirmation of the witness of the Beloved Disciple, who is the source of the original testimony and probably the original author.

⁵² Kearns, *Narratology*, 24. Kearns (43, 49-51) elsewhere speaks of the narrator directly addressing the narratee and the reader’s choice to identify with the narratee as part of determining the work’s “constructive intention.”

implied author informs the reader that the group of which he is a member has received grace in place of grace in its encounter with Jesus.⁵³ Both instances of marking bracket the Baptist's recorded testimony, melding the witness of the Baptist with that of the community. This "we" is inclusive of the narrator, the implied author, and his community, and paints the entire narrative as the testimony of a group of witnesses to the implied reader, who is drawn into receiving this grace and as a receiver of testimony, while at the same time becoming cognizant that there is a community bearing witness to her.⁵⁴

That the testimony of the narrator happens within the Prologue on either side of the recorded testimony of the Baptist, whose consistent characterization is as a faithful witness, orients the implied reader to the process of giving and receiving testimony. This alternation between the community's and the Baptist's witness joins past witness with that of future generations of believers.⁵⁵ The implied reader is alerted to the motif and, as a result, is able to recognize the first two witnessing sequences (1:35-51) as well as subsequent characters bearing witness to others. The narrator's insertions at 1:14, 16 also form an *inclusio* with the final narrator insertion in 21:24 that contextualizes what the reader has encountered.

The third instance of marking occurs in John 3:11. The narrator relates Jesus's speech to Nicodemus in v. 10, as indicated by the singulars λέγω and σοί. What follows is a switch to a series of plurals that again employ the language of testimony: οἶδαμεν,

⁵³ On the peculiarity of the phrase ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος (1:17) see Keener, *Gospel*, 1:420-22).

⁵⁴ Moloney (*Gospel*, 39) describes the insertion as "drawing the world of the reader into the hymn." Moloney also understands the reference to the incarnation (v. 14 a), which announces the entrance of the *logos* into the world of flesh, as fulfilling a similar purpose. Brown (*Gospel*, 1:12, 34-35) limits the reference to the apostolic witness, which he takes to be a remnant of the Synoptic transfiguration account.

⁵⁵ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:412.

λαλοῦμεν, ἐωράκαμεν, μαρτυροῦμεν, and τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν.⁵⁶ Brown maintains that Jesus is reflecting the plural Nicodemus has used in v. 2.⁵⁷ Moloney describes 3:11-12 as a “bridge passage,” since the plurals only occur in v. 11 and, as he contends, mark a transition to the characters becoming representatives of groups: the followers of Jesus and unbelieving Israel.⁵⁸ For Keener, Jesus’s “we” reflects Jesus speaking on behalf of himself and the Father, while Nicodemus represents the unbelieving world.⁵⁹ While Keener’s proposal is theologically appealing, it does not fit the narrative context. The Father has not made an appearance in the narrative since 1:14, and will not make an appearance as one who joins in testimony until 8:18, yet there it is different testimony about Jesus’s identity. Brown’s proposal is also unconvincing. It would be stronger if this were the lone instance of a plural insertion in the Gospel, rather than the third in a sequence that appears to be a repeated rhetorical feature. Moloney’s understanding of v. 11 as a bridge passage also warrants consideration, yet his explanation in terms of representative figures is also wanting, since the disciples know (οἶδαμεν) and have seen (ἐωράκαμεν) very little and the narrator has not related to the reader that they have spoken to anyone other than one another.

What this testimony is about is unspecified; it only refers to “what we know” and “what we have seen.” It may include what Jesus refers to as his own speaking of “heavenly things” (τὰ ἐπουράνια) in contrast to “earthly things” (τὰ ἐπίγεια) in v. 12. But these heavenly things must be something more than what Jesus alone has seen in heaven (v. 13). The testimony may reflect the full scope of what Jesus has spoken and revealed,

⁵⁶ Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:375-77) provides a brief survey of the interpretational possibilities.

⁵⁷ Brown, *Gospel*, 1:132.

⁵⁸ Moloney, *Gospel*, 94. So Keener, *Gospel*, 1:558-59.

⁵⁹ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:560.

what the disciples have experienced in the new birth in a post-resurrection setting, or may represent the view of the community. If the latter two explanations are acceptable, then this is another instance of the blending of testifying voices and temporal settings, and may indicate, as Moloney understands it, that this acts as a bridge to the content of 3:13-21, which he describes as a “synthesis of the Gospel message.”⁶⁰

I suggest that the narrator has, in fact, reappeared within the narrative, again blending voices to unite around a common testimony. The connection between (we) speaking (λαλοῦμεν) of what we know (οἶδαμεν) and testifying (μαρτυροῦμεν) regarding what we have seen (έωράκαμεν) forms the basis of “our testimony” (τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν). Before this the narrator and his community (1:14), Jesus (1:18), the Baptist (1:33-34), and possibly the disciples (1:50-51), have seen things about which to testify, which indicates that at this occurrence all of them are to be included in the “we” of 3:11.⁶¹ Jesus, speaking with the narrator and the community of witnesses, echoes what the narrator has said in 1:14, where what follows in the narrative was what the community reports it “has seen.”⁶² The reference to “you who do not receive testimony” (τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἡμῶν οὐ λαμβάνετε) includes Nicodemus, and possibly challenges the reader to see how she will accept this developing testimony (and join in offering it) that started in 1:14.

⁶⁰ This would include, as Moloney (*Gospel*, 94) indicates, the message that follows.

⁶¹ οἶδα, μαρτυρέω, ὁράω, and λαλέω have occurred prior to 3:11 in reference to the Baptist’s actions as they pertain to Jesus. The narrator/implicit author has seen Jesus’s glory (1:14) and is in the process of testifying.

⁶² Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 1:376) surveys the possible referents of the plural and concludes that Jesus is speaking on behalf of himself and the disciples, who will carry on his mission and testify to what they have seen since what Jesus and the Father know has been entrusted to them. It may be that the narrator is speaking for those who have been reborn by the Spirit (3:3-7), in contrast to Nicodemus, who has not, and fails to grasp the significance of such a rebirth. The contrast is then not between the Jews and followers of Jesus but between those who have been born of the Spirit and those who have not.

Regarding the plot, this reference to testimony, and what may viably be considered its content (vv. 13-21), is placed after the first failed encounter with Jesus. Nicodemus is someone who has knowledge, but he has failed to accept the testimony and so fails to come to faith, that is, to bear witness.⁶³ At the same time, John 3:11-21 enjoins the implied reader to move in the direction of the willing acceptance of the Samaritan woman's move of attendant reaction in testifying, and segues into the Baptist's testimony (3:22-36). The Baptist's testimony reiterates the gospel Jesus has just summarized (vv. 13-21), and so supplies confessional content to witnessing and places the narrator's testimony in proximity to that of the Baptist once again.

The narrator enters the narrative for the fourth time in 19:35. In this instance the narrator informs the reader that he has been the recipient of the testimony of the Beloved Disciple (implied author and/or real author) and affirms for the reader that the testimony that he has received is true (καὶ ὁ ἑωρακὸς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία). Additionally, the narrator expresses his intention in relating the testimony: it is intended to generate continuing belief (ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε).⁶⁴ However, a noticeable shift takes place in the assertion, since the reader is no longer dependent upon a first person account of what was seen ("we") and, instead, is presented with the second-generation affirmation of the testimony of the original witness.

Interpretations vary as to the purpose of the insertion and as to who was bearing witness, though it appears that it serves a greater purpose than apologetically affirming

⁶³ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:559. Keener suggests that the words "clearly" and "directly" address the reader.

⁶⁴ I take the present to be the original.

that Jesus is actually dead.⁶⁵ Brown understands it as revealing that the giving of the Spirit was proleptically fulfilled, as symbolized by the streams of living water (7:38) that flow from Jesus's side.⁶⁶ In contrast, Keener holds that the affirmation displays the fulfillment of the aforementioned prophecies (19:24, 36).⁶⁷

Both Keener's and Brown's understanding of the present fulfillment of prophecies have much to commend them. The content of what is seen by the witness and what is witnessed to is unspecified. This lack of specificity draws greater attention not to what is actually seen but to the relationship between seeing and testifying and the continuing affirmation of the truth of the original testimony.⁶⁸ Given the combination of the perfect *μεμαρτύρηκεν*, which includes the continuing effects of the witness, and the present *ἔστιν*, which draws attention to the testimony's continuing truthfulness, a past reception of testimony is given present significance.

This present significance signals to the implied reader the necessity of a witnessing chain that now involves her. She too has received a past testimony (from the

⁶⁵ Sister Thomas More Bertels (*His Witness is True: John and His Interpreters* [American University Studies 7; Theology and Religion 42; Bern: Lang, 1988]) provides a survey of potential interpretations. Her entire work traces the interpretational history of John 19:32-35 and 1 John 5:6-8. While Schnackenburg (*Gospel*, 3:291) finds possibilities in a docetic apologetic, he rejects this for contextual reasons. Keener (*Gospel*, 2:1154-55) notes a lack of evidence for docetic teaching at the time that the Gospel was written. He also suggests that the one who bears witness and the one who affirms the truth of that witness need not be different persons. He holds the narrator to be the Beloved Disciple, though the present *λέγει* seems to imply that the narrator is different from the one who bears witness. Talbert (*Gospel*, 246) understands this to be a refutation of those who deny that Christ has come in the flesh (2 John 9). He takes the witness to be the Beloved Disciple and the one who affirms the witness to be the leaders of the community.

⁶⁶ Brown (*Gospel*, 2:952) explicates what he takes to be a connection between the Spirit, water, and blood in 19:30-35 with a similar combination in 1 John 5:6-8 which includes testimony as well. He understands the same association with testimony to be happening here, though rather than the Spirit testifying, it is the Beloved Disciple. Brown sees an additional connection between the disciples' testimony and the work of the Spirit in 15:26-27.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:950; Schnackenburg, *Gospel*, 3:291; Keener, *Gospel*, 2:1155-56.

⁶⁸ The testimony may go beyond the blood and water and may include everything from 18:15 to 19:35, since the Beloved Disciple is the only one admitted to the trial proceedings and the only one that the narrator places at the crucifixion.

narrator) and is to continue to witness in her own time. In this regard, Moloney's position, that v. 35 is the "passionate intervention" of the narrator to ensure the validity of the testimony and the continuing baptismal and Eucharistic presence of Jesus in the post-apostolic communities, has special merit when modified to include the continuation of testimony in those communities as well.⁶⁹

If the unnamed disciple in 1:35-42 is in fact the Beloved Disciple, as many accept, he is the only one, other than Peter, without a recorded testimony. Quite possibly the narrator inserting himself in 19:35 provides a testimonial voice for the Beloved Disciple. This contrasts with Peter's *pseudomartyria* (18:15-27), which may cause the reader to anticipate what will happen with his character. The shift from first person witnessing ("we") in 1:14, 16, and 3:11, to the subsequent generation's affirmation of that witness (19:24, 36), is informative for the reader, especially as it appears at this climactic point in the narrative, the moment of Jesus's glorification.

The final insertion occurs at the conclusion of the Gospel (21:24). The narrator testifies that the disciple whom Peter has inquired about (21:20-23) is the one who has given the testimony upon which the Fourth Gospel is based (v. 24 οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα). In addition to the Gospel being the written testimony of the Beloved Disciple, a second layer of testimony is again added: the community of that disciple who verifies that his testimony is true (καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν).⁷⁰ Here again a subsequent group is bearing witness to the

⁶⁹ Moloney, *Gospel*, 506.

⁷⁰ I intentionally refer generally to "the community" since the identification of that community and its location have been a matter of debate as indeed has the very existence of the Johannine Community. I understand the first person plural references and the affirmation of the disciple's testimony to refer to a group of people who knew the disciple (first generation believers or early second generation) and could verify, in person, that what the implied reader encounters is the testimony of that disciple. In this I follow Bultmann, *Gospel*, 717-18; Moloney, *Gospel*, 561; Keener, *Gospel*, 2:1241. Stephen S. Smalley (*John*:

veracity of original testimony and carrying on those witnessing efforts. However, as Moloney suspects, there is more intended by the “we” than the mere certification of the testimony by the disciple’s original community. By the time the reader reaches the end of the Gospel, she too is able to certify the validity of the testimony and “can give witness to [her] own belief that the truth sets people free.”⁷¹

It may be that the occasion for this testimony, and the prior discussion (21:20-23), reveal a concern about the impending death of the Beloved Disciple, or even that the death has already occurred, in which case the editor/author is interested in recording his testimony and adding to it, thus creating a continuing community of or chain of testimony in the post-apostolic community.⁷² If this is the case, with the death of the last member of original witnesses, the narrator and community are interested not only in the preservation of that testimony but also in ensuring that the act of testifying continues into subsequent generations. In adding the new testimony to that of the original author, the community’s efforts accentuate the desired narrative affect, the inculcation of witnessing in subsequent generations of believers. By drawing the narrative to a close with the author’s/narrator’s testimony, an inclusio of witnessing is formed that marks the start and end of the offered testimony and indicates that its purpose is the continuation of faith (1:14, 16; 19:35), while also marking a shift from original witnesses (1:14, 16; 3:11) to subsequent generations, who continue the mission and affirmation of the original witnesses (19:35; 21:24).

Conclusion

Evangelist and Interpreter [Exeter: Paternoster, 1978], esp. pp. 78-83) and Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 45-49) provide brief surveys of the issues involved in identifying the community and author.

⁷¹ Moloney, *Gospel*, 562.

⁷² So Keener, *Gospel*, 2:1240.

John 13-21 moves from Jesus's voiced expectations that believers will bear fruit (witness) or be severed from the vine (15:1-7), to the incorporation of future generations of believers (17:20-26), and finally to the last direct address that affirms the veracity of the testimony the reader has encountered (21:24). As in John 1-11, the reader is continually attuned to notice witnessing as the prescribed move of attendant reactions (Larsen) or the affective significance (Culpepper) of the narrative, but at the end of the Gospel witnessing becomes the expected actions of those who are Spirit-empowered disciples continuing the mission of Jesus to the world.

The agricultural metaphors (4:31-38; 15:1-17) communicate that missional witnessing is what produces the expected fruit (conversions) of any authentic relationship with Jesus and the Father. This is part of the work that the Father sent Jesus to do (4:34) in the midst of a world that, while hostile to Spirit-empowered witnessing efforts (15:18-16:4), is loved by the Father (3:16) and is ripe for harvesting (4:35).

The reader encounters Nicodemus for a third time and hence the effect his witnessing efforts have had in the actions of Joseph of Arimathea (19:38-42), who, in the tradition, is a member of the ruling council like Nicodemus. In Nicodemus, the reader is presented with a recurring character who, like a thread woven through the narrative, exemplifies the transition from unbelief to witnessing belief. The implied author portrays Nicodemus as the micronarrative protagonist that displays the larger affective significance at the macro-narrative level.

The implied author employs Jesus, who prays for the fruit of future generations, as his last words before his crucifixion and as a conclusion to his instructions about bearing fruit and witnessing to the world. By ordering the narrative in this way, the

implied author draws attention to the missional need and expectations of successful witnessing efforts. In his moment of glorification, Jesus is praying for the future effect of his ministry, that is, his mission carried to future generations by his disciples. This missional motif is evidenced even in the structure of the prayer.

In John 1-11, the Baptist and the instances of marked narration return the reader to the motif of witnessing. When the Baptist no longer returns to the narrative stage, it is the implied author's interjections that continue to signal the reader that she is receiving witnessing efforts. The reader is presented with multiple layers of witnessing through a reading process that merges the witness of narrator, characters, the narrator's community, and Jesus. This mixing also provides a temporal-generational bridge that illustrates the importance of the continuation of witnessing into future generations. In this effort, narrator and community form a narrative that begins with the narrator's witness (1:14, 16) and ends with the believing community's affirmation of that witness (21:24), a transition that illustrates the movement from those who first saw and believed to those who believe because of testimony (20:29).

In the process of reading, the reader is continually reminded both of the original witnessing of the narrator and of the continuation of that mission in the efforts of characters (ch. 20), as well as the community's continuing witnessing efforts (19:35; 21:24). All of this redefines what it means to believe (19:35; 20:30-31) in the Fourth Gospel. Belief in the Fourth Gospel is identified by witnessing, thereby continuing belief in future generations. By the time the reader reaches the final paired witnessing scenes, in which Jesus commissions the disciples with the Spirit (ch. 20) and blesses those who will not see and yet believe, the reader has come to an understanding that the commission

and blessing applies to her and will only be continued as she carries on the witnessing efforts. The material surrounding the paired scenes amplifies, for the implied reader, the expectations that disciples bear witness, and it assists in the narrative's affective intentions to inculcate witnessing in an authorial audience who were, more than likely, the post-apostolic generation believers.

Conclusions

Introduction

Gordon D. Fee has mused, “It is of more than passing interest that the one Gospel which has an explicit statement of purpose should also be the one Gospel for which there has been such little agreement within scholarship as to its purpose.”¹ The purpose of the Fourth Gospel has traditionally been portrayed as either sustaining sectarian boundaries or as making an evangelistic appeal for faith in Christ. I have offered another avenue for identifying the purpose of the Fourth Gospel: that the *textual intention* (an authorial reading), to repeat the term used by Kearns, is to inculcate witnessing by establishing that bearing witness is definitive of discipleship and the marker of an adequate Johannine faith. This proposal joins the sectarian and evangelistic positions and may thus provide a way forward in discussions regarding the Gospel’s purpose that is able to account for both elements.

After a review of the significant findings, I will offer a concluding synthesis of what I take to be the five contributions this study offers, especially as these pertain to the Fourth Gospel’s understanding of faith, discipleship, textual intention, and what I hold to be a more adequate picture of the Gospel’s authorial audience. I will also offer some thoughts as to how bearing witness and the inculcation of witnessing account for both sectarian and evangelistic language and thus bridges the divide that Kysar identified some two decades ago. I will end with suggestions for future research.

Review of Significant Findings

¹ Fee, “On the Text and Meaning of John 20:30-31,” in *The Four Gospels 1992* (ed. F. van Segbroeck et al.; 3 vols.; BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 3:2193.

In Chapter 1, I open with a detailed analysis of two sequences: John 1:40-42 and 1:44-47. I survey several scholars' analyses of the sequences, concluding that their approaches evidence a general acknowledgement of several parallel elements and even a shared structure. Yet the general acknowledgment of these parallels leads some to maintain that the sequences are oriented toward the revelation of Jesus's identity, rather than, as I maintain, witnessing. Others recognize that the reader's attention is being directed toward witnessing; nevertheless, an acknowledgment of the thematic development of witnessing does not account for the extent (and thus, I argue, intentionality) of the parallels. As a result, I suggest that the extent of the parallels and the implications this intentional structure through which the reader is introduced to the disciples remain underdeveloped. This is especially the case as it pertains to the relationship of the sequences to the subsequent narrative, the Johannine conception of faith, bearing witness, and discipleship, as well as the role that these opening sequences play in developing reader expectations.

In Chapter 2, I offer a detailed analysis of the sequences as they are placed within two larger narrative days (1:35-42 and 1:43-51) to demonstrate the extent of the parallels and the unity of the scenes in which they occur. Many of the approaches that I survey in Chapter 1 hold that each narrative day is comprised of two separate call scenes (of which vv. 40-42 and 44-47 are two of the four scenes) that are divisible by breaks within each scene that separate Jesus's encounters with potential disciples. Such divisions, however, appear to be made more for theological than for grammatical or rhetorical reasons. Divisions into separate encounters typically result in the conclusion that the scenes are designed to draw the reader's attention to the initiatory actions of Jesus in calling

individual disciples and to structurally develop a growing revelation of Jesus's identity. When Christology is understood as the primary textual intention, Jesus's initial encounters with the disciples differ little from those found in the Synoptic tradition, even though what some term the "call narratives" in John differ significantly.

As I demonstrate, the parallels in the sequences are extensive and "formulaic," which I suggest indicates an intentionality on the part of the implied author. The centerpieces of these sequences are the actions of Andrew (v. 41) and Philip (v. 45), who, as their first action after encountering Jesus, find someone and bear witness to him.² The paralleled sequences also provide the structural skeleton upon which two parallel narrative days (1:35-42 and 1:43-51) are constructed. I maintain that these narrative days do not evidence justifiable breaks. As a result, I conclude that the implied author has created two parallel days, each with a witnessing sequence, that draw the reader's attention to the initiatory actions of *disciples* rather than Jesus.

As a result of these conclusions, I argue that the textual intention of the opening formulaic scenes in which the reader first encounters the disciples is to establish the witnessing actions of Andrew and Philip as paradigmatic, as well as to form in the reader the understanding that discipleship and faith in the Fourth Gospel are identified by bearing witness. Thus the reader is led to associate belief, discipleship, and witnessing. In light of this association, the opening scenes also provide a paradigm by which the reader evaluates subsequent paired scenes and characters.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I widen the lens to examine how the opening paired scenes prepare the reader to interpret subsequent paired scenes and characters. In Chapter 3, I

² The first chain (1:35-51) moves from the Baptist to Andrew and ends with Peter. The second (1:43-51) moves from Jesus to Philip and ends with Nathanael's confession.

survey the paired characters/scenes in John 1-9 (Nicodemus/Samaritan Woman and Invalid/Blind Man). Following the work of Dodd, Culpepper, and Larsen, I suggest that the scenes are part of the implied author's repeated employment of the ancient *anagnōrisis* type scene, first evidenced in 1:35-42; 1:43-51. However, I maintain that the author has transformed the type-scene by recasting the recognizer bearing witness as, in Larsen's terminology, "the move of attendant reactions." Likewise, what Culpepper identifies as the "affective significance" of the scenes is not only to enable the recognition of Jesus but also to display for the reader that bearing witness is definitive of her discipleship. Though Larsen acknowledges the "dissemination of the rumor of Christ" as part of the attendant reaction in one of the scenes, and Culpepper identifies witnessing as of supreme importance for faith, neither of them adequately develops the theme of bearing witness as constitutive of the move of attendant reactions or as the textual intention of the scenes; thus, the implications for the authorial audience are not addressed.

The paired scenes and characters are far more didactic than merely providing simple positive and negative exemplars; they call into question any assumptions an authorial audience might have had regarding paradigmatic witnesses in the post-apostolic generation. In the first pairing (Nicodemus/Samaritan Woman), the implied author offers a minority woman with a questionable past (the Samaritan woman) as an exemplar who has labored for the eschatological harvest alongside Jesus, thereby portraying a female outsider and outcast as a model witness. She is contrasted with Nicodemus, the consummate Jewish insider and one of "Israel's teachers" who is left in silence after his encounter with Jesus, even though he demonstrates accurate knowledge regarding Jesus's

identity. The implied reader comes to the realization that a proper reaction to Jesus is not reliant upon knowledge as such (3:2) and that the evaluation of what constitutes an exemplary witness, and thus a disciple, is not dependent upon ethnicity, gender, social status, or reputation.

In the next pairing (Invalid/Blind Man), the author employs characters who have direct encounters with signs and face opposition from the religious authorities. The invalid is contrasted with the blind man, who never sees Jesus, who faces the opposition of Jewish leadership, and who experiences the betrayal of his family and finally expulsion from the synagogue, all the while faithfully bearing witness. Regarding the invalid, the reader observes that active sin disrupts her witness (in contrast to the blind man, whose circumstances, Jesus clarifies, are not attributable to sin) and a personal encounter with one of Jesus's signs does not necessarily engender a substantive witness. In the case of the blind man, the reader encounters an exemplar who maintains his witness while facing opposition and familial denial, tensions that the authorial audience may have been facing as well. Both are informative for a post-apostolic generation of believers, who do not have access to Jesus or experience his signs, yet who may be facing opposition and who are being informed about the power of sin to disrupt witnessing.

In Chapter 4, I survey the scenes in John 11-21. These scenes (Mary/Martha; Mary/Disciples; Disciples/Thomas) share structural characteristics: characters are not separated into individual scenes, and each scene has absent characters that aid in the continuation of the witnessing pattern. Regarding Mary and Martha (11:1-12:11), the author has intercalated their characters in such a way that the reader is able to identify the pattern and interpret the scene in light of previous scenes. Martha's knowledge and faith

increase and her belief is marked by going to find her sister (11:28), which allows the pattern of bearing witness to continue, as she invites Mary to her own encounter with Jesus. Mary—whose lack of faith is signaled by the unfulfilled prolepsis (11:2), her remaining in the house (11:20), her abbreviated address to Jesus (11:32), and her consistent association with the Jews who come to faith after Lazarus is raised (12:45)—also comes to faith, as evidenced by the fulfillment of the prolepsis (11:2) in 12:1-11. Martha is paradigmatic as one who bears witness to her family members before seeing a sign.

Similar features occur in the final paired scenes (ch. 20). In the first scene (20:1-23), though the Beloved Disciple sees the empty tomb and believes (v. 8), he and Peter return to their homes in silence (v. 10), a continuation of the absent character motif, and are later described as hiding in fear (v. 19). This allows Mary to encounter Jesus and become the paradigmatic, commissioned (apostolic) witness to the disciples. In the second sequence, the disciples bear witness to Thomas (v. 25), who is also absent when they encounter Jesus (20:19-22). In the former scene, Mary, a woman commissioned as an apostle to the apostles, is sent to bear witness to the disciples who are hiding in fear, thereby signaling to the reader that gender is not a barrier to bearing witness nor is there a prerequisite of being numbered among the original disciples. The disciples who bear witness to Thomas inform the reader that bearing witness means overcoming the skepticism and lack of faith, and even rebuff, of those to whom she bears witness.

In Chapter 5, I widen the interpretive lens again by surveying various other elements in John 1-11 that contribute to the development of the textual intention of bearing witness. Bearing witness is a recurrent element in the Prologue: the Baptist

appears and the first direct speech in the Gospel (v. 15) as well as in the marked instances of narration (vv. 14, 16). The Baptist (and his witness) continues to receive the narrator's attention throughout the first three narrative days (1:19-28; 29-34; 35-42) until Jesus finally appears. Not only is the Baptist described as "sent by God" (1:6) and as one whose witness is motivated by the Spirit (1:32-34), his speech also accounts for the greatest quantity of direct speech of any character other than Jesus. Additionally, the Baptist reappears after failed examples of witnessing. All of these features portray the Baptist's role as a consistent paradigmatic witness rather than a foil that represents a polemic against a purported group of followers.

Nicodemus is also a recurring character. He undergoes a transformation from a nonbeliever (ch. 3) to one who attempts to bear witness to the Jewish leadership (7:45-52) and, I maintain, is finally portrayed as one whose witness has a measure of success (19:38-42). Because of this transformation, he becomes a singular example of the transformation the implied author is seeking to demonstrate to the authorial audience, especially as one among the Jewish leadership. Additionally, the author reshapes a traditional miracle story (4:43-54), in which a royal official and his family come to faith without ever seeing the sign but because of one another's witness. They display for the reader the positive effects of witnessing in another socio-economic stratum and provide an exemplar of someone who only hears of the sign and yet becomes a witness. Finally, I discuss the agricultural metaphor at 4:31-38 through which καρπός becomes synonymous for the reader with those who bear witness, whereby she participates in the eschatological fruitful harvest.

In Chapter 6, I finish my survey of the additional elements by turning to John 12-

21. In 14:14-16:16 the narrator returns to the agricultural metaphor, combining Jesus's teaching on the necessity of the branches bearing fruit (15:1-17) with his instructions regarding the activity of the Spirit as the second comforter who, among other things, empowers witnesses (15:26-16:16). I suggest that the fruit which the branches are pruned to produce is to be associated with bearing witness and bringing others to their own encounter with Jesus in this harvest. By placing Jesus's teaching regarding the Spirit (14:15-31; 15:26-16:16) on either side of the discourse regarding the vine and the branches, the narrator leads the reader to understand the importance of the Spirit for producing fruit. The Spirit carries on Jesus's ministry on behalf of the Father in future generations of disciples as the Spirit directs them toward the activity of bearing truthful witness and providing the content of witness (15:26-27; 16:12-15)

The fruitfulness of the disciples' witnessing is at the same time the object and the subject of Jesus's prayer (ch.17). Jesus prays for the disciples who are in the world (vv. 6-19) as well as for those who will believe because of the disciples' message (v. 20), which includes the reader among the future generations of believers. Finally, the entrance of the narrator (1:14, 16; 3:11; 19:35-37; 21:24-25), in marked instances of narration and direct address to the reader (20:30-31), merges the narrator's own voice with that of witnessing characters and the implied author, thereby offering direct witness to the reader as she discovers the relationship between the narrator and implied author and that the entire Fourth Gospel is an act of bearing witness to her.

Contributions to the discussion of the Fourth Gospel

In light of this study, I offer the following five contributions to the discussion.

1. Discipleship Identified by Bearing Witness

The reader observes that the role of “disciple” is open to anyone, and that bearing witness is the marker of anyone who is a disciple. Regarding this first observation, the Fourth Gospel does not hold the role of “The Twelve” to be as important as in the Synoptic tradition. When the disciples are first introduced (1:35-51), Nathanael is mentioned as one of the initial disciples who comes to faith, yet he appears nowhere in the Synoptic tradition. The introduction of a character unknown in the Synoptic tradition into the opening scenes, which establish the reader’s understanding of discipleship, opens up the role of a disciple beyond the Twelve. Additionally, the title *ἀπόστολος*, while important in the Synoptic tradition to refer to a group of disciples designated by Jesus for mission (Matt 10:2; Mark 6:30; Luke 6:13; 9:10; 17:5; 22:14; 24:10), does not have this connotation in the Fourth Gospel in its only appearance (13:16). Instead, the Samaritan woman and Mary are offered to the reader as primary disciples, and Mary’s characterization as an apostle is further enhanced. The openness of the group, as indicated by casting unknown and female characters in these roles, invites the reader to identify herself with the disciples. Likewise, for the Fourth Gospel outsiders and outcasts become insiders and model disciples as each bears witness.

Regarding the second observation, the narrator associates discipleship with bearing witness in the scenes in which the disciples are introduced (1:35-51). The paired sequences within these opening narrative days portray the first action that Andrew and Philip take, after their initial encounter with Jesus, as bearing witness. Especially noticeable is that Peter, a prominent disciple in the Synoptic tradition, is brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew (1:41) as his first action after encountering Jesus and Philip’s

response to Jesus's call to follow him (1:43), to which Philip responds by going and finding Nathanael. By means of the opening scenes in which disciples are introduced, the reader is taught to associate discipleship with bearing witness, and this becomes the filter through which other scenes and characters are evaluated. This leads to what I offer as the second contribution to the discussion.

2. Faith is Identified by Bearing Witness

In the Fourth Gospel, whether or not a character believes is determined not by the content of any given character's knowledge or acclamations about Jesus but by whether or not that character bears witness. By means of the concentration of witnessing language, the occurrence of direct speech in the Prologue and opening narrative days (1:19-34), and the introduction of the first named character in the Gospel as a witness (1:6), the narrator establishes witnessing as the primary narrative theme in the Fourth Gospel. Every character that is a recurring character either is or becomes a paradigmatic witness (the Baptist, Nicodemus) and represents a group of characters (the royal official, the blind man, the Samaritan woman) that are not among those who closely follow Jesus from the beginning and lay outside the expectations for disciples that a reader might have developed from the Synoptic tradition. The Spirit empowers witnessing and continues Jesus's ministry on behalf of the Father in the disciples, a ministry which extends to all believers (ch. 17). By making witnessing the first action of the disciples after encountering Jesus, and continuing that pattern by placing bearing witness as the move of attendant reactions in the recognition scenes, the implied author associates belief, discipleship, and bearing witness.

This is not to say that the Fourth Gospel is not interested in proper knowledge of

Jesus's identity—the purpose statement identifies the proper content as believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (20:30-31)—but to observe that studies that attempt to identify characters as exemplars of belief by the content of a character's confession or even knowledge of Jesus vary widely and offer little consensus.³ If knowledge of the resurrection is the litmus test, every character is disqualified as an exemplar for faith until chs. 20, 21. Yet this evaluation does not reflect the text, since characters are affirmed by Jesus and by the narrator as having faith prior to acquiring knowledge of the resurrection. The author's stated purpose indicates that the textual intention of the Fourth Gospel is a believing *response* to Jesus.⁴

In John's Gospel, bearing witness is uniquely portrayed as the continuation of Jesus's witnessing activity and ministry. Jesus commissions his disciples so that they may also testify concerning him, echoing the activities of the Father, the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit (15:27). Jesus links himself with the disciples and the community in offering testimony in the switch to the plural "we" in John 3:11, and the narrator and author are joined with the characters and the reader in the marked instances of narration. The reader is thereby informed that believing necessitates bearing witness, and in coming to faith she is joining a community of testimony that originated with Jesus's ministry in the world and extends through her to future generations of believers.

3. *Johannine Signs Revisited*

³ Bennema ("Comprehensive Approach," 47-54) questions the evaluation of characters by means of their understanding of Jesus because of ambiguities within the Gospel itself regarding the levels of understanding and an imprecise concept of the quantity or quality of understanding needed to be deemed "adequate."

⁴ So Bennema, *ibid.*, 52. Bennema suggests that the evaluation of any character as believing or unbelieving should proceed along the lines of an analysis of a character's response and the author's evaluation of the response.

Third, if I am substantially correct in my previous two proposals, a reconsideration of what constitutes a Johannine “sign” is warranted. While a great deal of scholarly attention has been dedicated to the signs in the Fourth Gospel and the implications of those signs for generating what has been identified as a “proper” or “adequate” Johannine faith, I suggest that the implied author of the Fourth Gospel understands that people, not simply miracles, are also to be identified as signs.

Typically defined, a sign in the Fourth Gospel is a supernatural activity of Jesus by which his glory is revealed, which in turn reveals the Father. The signs are often enumerated as seven or eight, depending on whether the catch of fish (ch. 21) and/or walking on the water (ch. 6) is included. But characters who bear witness and invite others to their own encounters with Jesus accomplish similar goals in directing others to Jesus, and in revealing his glory they can display God’s work (9:3). As an authorial audience in a post-apostolic generation, which no longer has direct appeal to the signs of Jesus, the members of the audience understand that they themselves become the signs that lead others to faith in Christ.

4. A Reconsideration of the Authorial Audience

Fourth, I hold that a reconsideration of the authorial audience of the Fourth Gospel is warranted in light of the authorial reading offered in this project. An author constructs an authorial audience from the culture in which he is immersed, since in any communicative action both author and reader must share certain assumptions, an overlapping presupposition pool, and what Rabinowitz and others have termed “literary

conventions.”⁵ The author of the Fourth Gospel will have constructed his authorial audience from his surrounding milieu, yet this does not mean that his community was the dominant influence in creating the authorial audience.⁶

The goal of an authorial reading, on the other hand, is to position oneself (the actual reader) within the prejudices, commitments, knowledge, and beliefs of the authorial audience—to the extent that these can be determined—by using cultural information and textual clues.⁷ At the same time, the actual reader must undertake a concerted effort to avoid the circularity of mirror reading or its potential positivistic/functionalist weaknesses.⁸ Rabinowitz grants that reading authorially might be difficult when information is lacking or is incorrect regarding the historical setting, when the actual reader is not temporally part of the community of the authorial audience, and when the beliefs of the actual reader do not overlap with those of the authorial

⁵ Full discussion in Rabinowitz, *Reading*, 22-27. Rabinowitz describes (27) these literary conventions as preceding the text and making reading possible. Similarly, Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory*, 202-4.

⁶ If the author was an eyewitness and wrote from a different location than the setting of the story, he likely would have knowledge of other Christian communities and the issues they faced.

⁷ Rabinowitz, *Reading*, 26-27. An authorial audience is not an imaginative construct divorced from reality, nor is it necessarily liable to the criticism offered by Kirsten Nielsen (“Old Testament Imagery in John,” in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives: Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel Århus 1997* [ed. Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen; JSNTSS 182; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 68) when she maintains that a modern reader, when offering an authorial reading, is simply reading herself (with her attendant prejudices, understandings, and scholarship) into the text.

⁸ Stephen C. Barton, “Can We Identify the Gospel Audiences?” in *The Gospels for All Christians* (ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 175-78. Barton critiques sociological mirror readings of the Fourth Gospel such as those offered by Meeks and Brown as evidencing a “crude functionalism” and as “drawing attention away from the original participants’ ways of seeing things.” So also Bengt Holmberg (*Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990] 124-25, 139), who describes a direct correlation between text and community as “implausible,” especially when texts can be positively or negatively related to their audience. However, Bauckham (*Testimony*, 115) pushes this argument too far when he maintains that “if a Gospel was not addressed to a particular community, we cannot expect to learn much from it about the evangelist’s own community, even if there was only one such and even if it did influence his thinking and writing.”

audience.⁹ But the difficulties regarding information and mirror reading can be overcome with knowledge available from documents external to the Fourth Gospel, while the difficulty regarding familiarity is remediated, to a certain extent, by the shared theological commitments of the original audience, the authorial audience, and the actual reader (as a Christian).

I maintain that the authorial reading and textual intention for which I have argued—the inculcation of witnessing—more appropriately reflect the cultural milieu from which the author has drawn in creating the authorial audience than the sectarian one described by Martyn, Brown, Meeks, and others. It also more adequately corresponds with my analysis of the characterization in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁰ Space constraints allow only a brief sketch of the authorial audience proposed in this work.¹¹

I am persuaded by Fee and Carson that the present subjunctive is the original reading of John 20:30-31, which indicates a Christian authorial audience, as Bauckham and others maintain.¹² Additionally, I hold that the Gospel was produced in Ephesus sometime between 80 and 95 C.E, and that given that the provenance of the earliest fragment (P⁵²) is Egypt (ca. 125 C.E.), the Fourth Gospel appears to have circulated quickly, a circulation more likely indicative of a wider Christian readership than a

⁹ Rabinowitz (*Reading*, 27-28) observes that a successful authorial reading is more likely to occur when the author and readers are members of the same community.

¹⁰ Bennema (“Comprehensive Approach,” 43-46; *ibid.*, *A Theory of Character in New Testament Narrative* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014], 63-65). Bennema maintains that character analysis and reconstruction in the Fourth Gospel necessitates considerations of the socio-historical context of the first-century Mediterranean world because the Fourth Gospel claims to be a non-fictional narrative, and thus, characters have historical referents, even if the character is a composite sketch of referents.

¹¹ Attempting specific reconstructions from the details provided in the Gospel assumes that a purported community of the Fourth Gospel had experiences that were unique to it and, as Luke Timothy Johnson (“On Finding the Lukan Community: A Cautious Cautionary Essay,” in *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament Collected Essays* [NovTSup 146; Leiden: Brill, 2013], 129) suggests, reduces the Gospels “to the level of cryptograms, and the evangelists to the level of tractarians.”

¹² Fee, “Text and Meaning”; D. A. Carson, “Syntactical and Text-Critical Observations on John 20:30-31: One More Round on the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 124 (2005): 693-714.

sectarian document of a particular Christian community which was at odds with a larger Christian community in Ephesus.¹³ If Ephesus was the city of origination, Christianity will have had numerous opportunities to make steady inroads, offering solutions to various needs within a Greco-Roman metropolitan area, whether by message or by actions.¹⁴

The missionary emphasis of the early Christian communities was rooted in their conscious fulfillment of the OT portrayal of God's eschatological outreach to the nations originally expected of Israel and promised to Abraham, and was a continuation of the proselytizing interests in the Jewish communities from which they grew.¹⁵ Within the Judaism of the time, the interest in proselytizing, since there is scant evidence for organized evangelistic or mission work in the extant literature, may best be attributed to the widespread appropriation of Israel's role in the eschatological ingathering of the nations.¹⁶ As James P. Ware has demonstrated from evidence external to the Fourth

¹³ So Brown, *Gospel*, 1:LXXXV, CIII-CIV; Moloney, *John*, 4-7; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:146-49; Thompson, *John*, 17-23.

¹⁴ So also Keener, *Gospel*, 1:150. Rodney Stark (*The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996], 147-62) specifically addresses Christianity's appeal within the Greco-Roman urban center of Antioch, but his analysis could be applied to many other major cities given the topics he raises.

¹⁵ So James P. Ware, *The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism* (SNT 120; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 23-51, 88-91, 282-84, 287-92. Ware (55) maintains that Jewish interest in conversion "has no parallel in the hellenistic world" except within Christianity. So already Scot McKnight, *A Light among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); J. Julius Scott, *Customs and Controversies: Intertestamental Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 335-52; Clifford H. Bedell, "Mission in Intertestamental Judaism," in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach* (eds. William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams; American Society of Missiology Series 27; Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 24-27. Contra Köstenberger, *Salvation*, 55-71.

¹⁶ Ware (*Mission*, 157-59) acknowledges the tension between the widespread willingness to embrace and instruct converts and the lack of references to active mission, yet he maintains that his survey "reveals an intense interest in conversion of gentiles" not as part of a mission to gentiles but as part of the eschatological ingathering of the nations. Similarly, Bedell, "Mission," notes the numbers of proselytes and Godfearers recorded in both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. For example, Josephus, *Ant.* 18:81-84; 20:34-48; *J.W.* 2:463, 559-61; Philo, *Moses* 2:36, 44; Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 57.18.5; Valerius Maximus *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.3.3. Contra Köstenberger (*Salvation*, 64-71), who argues that

Gospel, the conversion of the gentiles was of “widespread and intense interest” to various Jewish groups within the Second Temple period, as reflected in the appropriation of OT texts and imagery associated with the ingathering of the nations and messianic expectations.¹⁷

Though Paul, the missionary of record for the earliest Christian communities, never overtly instructs his readers to engage in missionary activity, the earliest churches he formed had a strong self-understanding that was rooted in mission.¹⁸ Decades later, the Synoptics and Acts more overtly develop the importance of mission for the early Christian communities.¹⁹

David P. Seemuth describes the extent of the evangelistic activity of the earliest Christian communities and their self-understanding as reflective of “God’s own missionary zeal” as they fulfilled God’s call to the nations as reflected in OT texts.²⁰ Likewise, Donald Senior observes the value of missionary outreach for all of the Christian communities of the first century:

The mission concerns of the [early Christian] community and their impact on the NT writings must be given their due. Mission must be considered a potential part of the “horizon” that shaped the aim of the biblical authors.

mission “represents a significant element of discontinuity” between Second Temple Judaism and Christianity and that Judaism of the time was not evangelistic but apologetic. As partial evidence of this general reluctance, Köstenberger (ibid., 68-69) offers Peter’s reluctance to include gentiles and Jesus’s mission to Israel.

¹⁷ Ware (*Mission*, 93-162) provides a survey of texts from the Second Temple period that demonstrate an interest in the texts of Isaiah which exhibit an interest in the conversion, or eschatological ingathering, of the nations (Isa 26:17-18; 42:1-6; 49:6; 52:15; 55:1-4; 56:4-8; 65:1; 66:19-21); *1 En.* 10:21; 48:4; 90:30-33; 91:14; *4 Ezra* 6:26; *2 Bar.* 72:1-5; *T. Levi* 2:11; 4:4; 14:4; *T. Naph.* 8:4-6; *T. Jud.* 24:6; 25:5; *T. Ash.* 7:3.

¹⁸ So Ware, ibid., 290. John P. Dickson (*Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent, and Background of Early Christian Mission* [WUNT 159, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003], 133-52) maintains that Paul’s churches had local missionaries operating out of the churches.

¹⁹ Matt 9:35-10:42; 24:14; 26:13; 28:18-20; Mark 3:13-19; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-20; 24:46-49; Acts 1:7-8; 2:14-21, 32.

²⁰ Seemuth, “Mission in the Early Church,” in Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, 56.

The NT writings served a variety of community needs, among which was the perspective on the church's universal mission.²¹

In light of the forgoing, a sectarian community is not a likely authorial audience, especially one that distanced itself from the mainstream of early Christianity.²² Within the first century, there is at best meager evidence for Christian communities that distanced themselves from one another. The textual intention of bearing witness is more consistent with the available evidence external to the Fourth Gospel.

5. *A Way Forward in the Sectarian/Evangelistic Debate*

I now turn to what I perceive to be the fifth contribution to the discussion. What I have proposed as the textual intention of the Fourth Gospel offers a way forward in the sectarian/evangelistic debate regarding the Gospel's *purpose*.

Among the evidence marshaled for the sectarian reading of the Fourth Gospel are the ἀποσυνάγωγος passages, yet a different reading of these passages, and one that is not unique to the Fourth Gospel in the waning decades of the first century, is available from texts outside of the Gospel.²³ Acts develops a pattern of Paul's (and others') missionary endeavors: each time he enters a new city, he begins by preaching to "both Jews and Greeks" (18:4 τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἑλληνας) in the synagogue, which is described as his customary process.²⁴ According to Acts and Paul's own writings, this resulted in opposition both within and outside of the synagogue, often to the point of impending

²¹ Senior, "The Struggle to Be Universal: Mission as Vantage Point for New Testament Investigation," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 66.

²² Beasley-Murray, *John*, xlv-xlv; Keener, *Gospel*, 1:149-52.

²³ So Bernier, *Aposynagōgos*, esp. 69-76, 86-93, 132-34.

²⁴ Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1-2; 17:10; 18:1-3, 24-26; 19:8. The author of Acts describes this as Paul's typical activity at 14:1 (κατὰ τὸ αὐτό) and 17:2 (κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθός).

death.²⁵ This may be the setting out of which the “sectarian” ἀποσυνάγωγος passages in John arose (9:22; 12:42; 16:2), especially if Luke-Acts predates the Fourth Gospel (certainly Paul’s own testimony does) and accurately reflects tensions within the synagogues between Christians and Jewish synagogue leadership soon after Jesus’s death.²⁶

Neither is Johannine dualism a uniquely distinguishing feature of the Fourth Gospel’s sectarianism. Other Christian communities (as well as Judaism) of which we have knowledge also held a dualistic perspective in relation to the world and were “marginalized minority” communities within the wider Greco-Roman culture.²⁷

Additionally, both tension and dualism are to be anticipated where bearing witness is a defining feature of a community. Bearing witness brings about a differentiation (“sectarianism”), as the one who bears witness distinguishes himself from those to whom he is witnessing, thus creating tension and eliciting ostracism, whether that is at the familial or the social level. Bearing witness aids the community in maintaining its identity and collective consciousness, since, by its nature, bearing witness

²⁵ Acts 6:9-11; 9:1-3; 13:14-52; 14:1-7; 17:1-10a; 18:1-8; 19:8-10; 22:3-5; 26:10-11; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13, 23.

²⁶ Matthew likewise places synagogue opposition within the ministry of Jesus (10:17-20) rather than as part of the apocalyptic predictions as in Mark (13:9). Regarding the ἀποσυνάγωγος passages in the Fourth Gospel, Marianne Meye Thompson (*John*, 213-15, 276, 336) makes no mention of the Martyr Hypothesis. Instead, she attributes the passages to a change in kinship or a social ostracism that has roots in the OT and other Jewish literature. She is also willing to acknowledge that a localized action against Jewish Christians might be the generative experience. She concludes (215): “What is in view is not so much ‘excommunication,’ being put outside the bounds of the recognized and defined institutional expression of a religion, but exclusion from the community of family and friends in which one has lived, learned, and worshipped.”

²⁷ Keener, *Gospel*, 1:151. Fuglseth (*Sectarianism*) elucidates the numerous problems that previous sociological studies of the Johannine community had: they attempted to compare modern analyses of sectarian communities with those of the first-century Johannine community. He concludes that an accurate sociological study requires the analysis of other communities known from the time of the Johannine community. After such comparisons, he concludes that when one compares the Fourth Gospel to literature from other *known* co-temporal, sectarian communities (e.g., the Essenes at Qumran), one can reasonably conclude that the language of the Fourth Gospel is not “sectarian.”

both defines and reinforces community beliefs and individual identification with the religion. It does this by serving to “concretize the group’s teachings and apply them to a specific situation and series of events” even while the members of the community engage in attempts at convincing others of their message.²⁸ The intended perlocutionary effect is to create a shared experience or commitment, that is, to persuade the recipient to believe or accept the message that is being shared.²⁹

Bearing witness accounts for the evangelistic and the sectarian elements, as Arens observes:

The early Christian missionaries’ gospel of Jesus Christ continues to aim at reaching an understanding and retains the gospel’s inviting character, now with a kerygmatic-missionary edge. This is increasingly combined, though, with the identity- and community-forming aspect, the expression of a shared conviction that both asserts itself and delineates its particular contours in critical engagement with others [and] soon articulates itself in confessional formulas and formulations, whose primary foci are the confessors’ attainment of self-understanding among themselves and their community with each other.³⁰

The Fourth Gospel, as a text with the intentions of inculcating witnessing, especially continues to represent a combined effort in the “missionary, parenetic, the pastoral, and the antiheretical” efforts of the disciples.³¹

Bearing witness as the textual intention also accounts for the implied author’s spectrum of characters. In Ingram’s studies on testimony, he notes that a community is attracted to testifiers who are of a high social status or who have a social stigma.³² High social status witnesses provide the hearer with the opportunity to reinforce their

²⁸ Ingram, “Testimony,” 305, 307. While Ingram is describing what takes place at the level of the individual, the same could be transferred to the level of the community. As it engages in continuing witness, it further defines the identity of the group while solidifying that identity in contrast to other groups.

²⁹ So Arens, *Christopraxis*, 88-89.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 53.

³² Ingram, “Testimony,” 298.

identification, since someone of high social status holds similar beliefs (Nicodemus, Royal Official). Witnesses of a lower social status or who are socially stigmatized engender sympathy in the hearer and erases any ideological barriers, since anyone is liable to such limitations or stigmas or can be challenged by the faith of the one who has them. Sympathy is also generated when identification takes place with those who share a common experience. A similar situation or difficulty enables the hearer (reader) to identify with the one who is testifying, for example, in the case of a former disciple who has lost faith (Thomas), a person who has lost familial and synagogue (community) connections (the blind man), and a person whose social and moral status would render him or her an outsider (Samaritan woman, Mary).³³

In all such cases, “the unity is affirmed because each member (or several members) is able to identify in himself/herself the capacity to ‘live out’ the script of the testifier.”³⁴ Ingram also notes that in the process of testifying, identification of the one giving testimony is transferred to Christ, which reflects the process that the implied author of the Fourth Gospel envisions in creating an authorial audience comprised of those who bear witness and continue the mission of Christ to the world as presented to them through the witness of the earliest followers of Jesus.³⁵

Areas for Further Study

The scope of any project such as this is limited. There are two other areas of further study that I have identified as worthy of further pursuit in relation to the textual

³³ Ibid., 299-300.

³⁴ Ibid., 302. While Ingram describes this ability to identify with the testifier as an ability to identify with him or her coming to faith, I suggest that the same identification is true for the actions of the testifier, which would account for John’s use of paradigmatic witnesses.

³⁵ So Ingram, *ibid.*, 298.

intention of the Fourth Gospel and its features.

As Ingram indicates, bearing witness develops a distinctive identity which implies that those who bear witness have a particular set of beliefs, that their witness has a particular content. Arens similarly identifies confession as the other communicative praxis of the early Christian communities. If I am correct in my identification of the communicative intention of the Fourth Gospel, and, as Arens proposes, that there is an overlap in the content of witnessing and confession, a further fruitful avenue for study would be an investigation into the ways in which the Gospel supplies content to those who bear witness, since the Fourth Gospel is also interested in the content of proper belief (20:30-31).

A discussion of the textual intention of the Fourth Gospel would also benefit from further research into the relationship between my proposed textual intention and the genre of the Fourth Gospel as an exemplar of the Greco-Roman βίος.³⁶ BurrIDGE describes the milieu of βίοι as groups of people accounting for their formation “around a certain charismatic teacher or leader, seeking to follow after him” and proposes that they arose in the “context of didactic or philosophical polemic and conflict.”³⁷ He maintains that the Gospels reflect these concepts and thus lists several possibilities as to what he labels as the “authorial intention and purpose”: encomiastic, exemplary, informative, entertainment, mnemonic, didactic, apologetic, and polemic.³⁸ Regarding the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, BurrIDGE suggests that it exhibits apologetic and polemical purposes, while directed toward an evangelistic and didactic aim. However, he assumes the

³⁶ So Richard BurrIDGE, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 145-47. So also Culpepper, *Gospel*, 67.

³⁷ BurrIDGE, *Gospels*, 76-77.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 145-47.

sectarian model of the Johannine community.³⁹

Though he dismisses it as irrelevant to a discussion of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, Burrige's "exemplary" purpose would, I believe, be fruitful for future investigation given the results of this present study, as would a further consideration of the didactic purpose. Burrige describes the exemplary purpose of βίοι as providing "an example for others to emulate."⁴⁰ He goes on to say, "This intention can become almost *evangelistic* in calling the readers to follow the hero."⁴¹ While the Fourth Gospel is a βίος Ἰησοῦ, Jesus is not the only exemplary witness. Neyrey argues that characters in ancient βίοι, histories, and encomia were praised or denigrated according to fixed values, and because of this, such characterizations, especially in regard to their actions, were excellent sources for discovering what is honorable.⁴² This is even more so the case when the other characters within the story are emulating the actions of the hero.

Conclusion

The Fourth Gospel is the "textualization" of one of the fundamental components of the praxis of the earliest Christian communities: bearing witness. As the Gospel's textual intention, it has the dual outcome of establishing the activity of bearing witness (evangelistic) in the reader while at the same time offering definitional differentiation (sectarian) for the community. Those who continue this praxis "follow the biblical witnesses into the life of following Jesus," and in doing so "they point to Jesus in their

³⁹ Ibid., 229-30. In his discussion of the purpose of the Fourth Gospel, Burrige lists the conflict between John the Baptist's followers and Jesus's disciples, the polemic against the Jews, and potential heretical attacks as his reasons for judging the apologetic or polemic purpose to be primary.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 145.

⁴¹ Ibid., 146. Emphasis added.

⁴² Neyrey, *Gospel*, 6.

own christopraxis as its ground, content, and goal.” Arens posits that the goal of what he calls the “kerygmatic-missionary witnessing activity” is to bring the recipients into a relationship with Christ in which they can then engage in witnessing, so that “in their own christopraxis they can pass on Jesus’s action [and I would add that of the disciples] and carry it forward, pointing to Jesus in their own action.”⁴³

The early Christians had lost most of the first generation of disciples by the time the Fourth Gospel was written, and by the time of its publication its own author may have died as well.⁴⁴ For the author of the Fourth Gospel, as a bridge to a new era, bearing witness was the eschatological fulfillment of God’s plan, the continuation of Jesus’s mission, and was necessary for the advancement and growth of the new movement. The continuation of the movement was dependent upon the post-apostolic generation of believers—as well as subsequent generations—continuing the mission of those who were original eyewitnesses. It is in the continuation of this chain that the Fourth Gospel is interested. The Fourth Gospel is neither a sectarian document nor an evangelistic document alone; it is necessarily both in its attempts to inculcate and inform the witnessing activity of a post-apostolic generation.

⁴³ Arens, *Christopraxis*, 92.

⁴⁴ So Brown, *Gospel*, 2:1110; Moloney, *Gospel*, 8.

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