ABSTRACT

Exploring Johannine Ethics:
A Rhetorical Approach to Moral Efficacy in the Fourth Gospel Narrative

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Facilitating a fresh approach to the long-standing "problem" of Johannine ethics, this project utilizes rhetorical analysis to explore the ways of thinking and living that the Fourth Gospel narrative would likely have engendered. The study addresses the scarcity of explicit ethical material in John by demonstrating how participation in the *bios* genre suggests an implicit ethic. Attention to the Fourth Gospel's use of encomiastic topics reveals an elevated Christology that complicates simple approaches of imitation ethics, while analysis of its metaleptic elements presents Jesus's unity with God and response to God's mission for the world as the imitable elements of the narrative. Finally, examination of the Gospel's rhetorical structure demonstrates that the Gospel's one explicit ethical command, "love one another," does not promote an exclusive stance toward outsiders or a focus on spirituality to the neglect of material welfare. Rather, the macro-level narrative of the Gospel reveals that the goal of the prescribed mutual love is to extend the community to the world outside and thus join in God's mission for the world.

Our study found that Johannine ethics engages the audience in moral deliberation rather than delivering explicit ethical propositions. The Fourth Gospel presents an elevated hero whose direct actions may not be imitable, but who provides an example of unity with God that extends to believers; this unity becomes the foundational element of Johannine ethics. The macro-level narrative works to break down the dualistic framework in the Gospel and to build up a community that would bring God's love to the world. Herein lies the Johannine moral efficacy: through John's story, the Gospel audience is invited into unity with God and charged to complete God's mission. With this larger mission in mind, interpreters can articulate the ambiguous and implicit Johannine ethic. With its elevated Christology, the Fourth Gospel offers an identity-making narrative for a community in crisis. With its elusive ethics, the Fourth Gospel engages and empowers the struggling audience to join in a mission bigger than their own suffering.

Exploring Johannine Ethics:
A Rhetorical Approach to Moral Efficacy in the Fourth Gospel Narrative

by

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A Dissertation

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABR	*Australian Biblical Review*
AmJT	*American Journal of Theology*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AThR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BR	*Biblical Research*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BTZ	*Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research* (formerly *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*)

CurBS	*Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*
CV	*Communio Viatorum*
EBib	*Etudes bibliques*
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HThKNTSup2	Supplements to Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testatment, Series 2
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LTP	*Laval théologique et philosophique*
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*

NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PMLA	*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SymS	Symposium Series
TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TRu	*Theologische Rundschau*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VE	*Vox Evangelica*
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*

WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZEE	*Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik*
ZNT	*Zeitschrift für Neues Testament*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

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As I complete this portion of my academic journey, there are many people to thank. To my advisor, Lidija Novakovic, thank you for your thorough attention to this project at every stage. Thank you for constantly sharpening my ideas with your keen eye and for setting the bar high. My work is vastly improved because of your dedicated feedback, and I am grateful. To my committee: To Paul Martens and Darin Davis, thank you for your interest in my subject and for your helpful insights regarding ethics and philosophy. Bruce Longenecker, thank you for the contagious enthusiasm about your work in the field and for your eager support of students' ideas. Thank you for your thoughtful response to this project, which builds upon your own work. Mikeal Parsons, thank you for introducing me to rhetoric and for your constant support in navigating academic life. Thank you for being such an involved reader of this project, which would not exist if it weren't for your influence.

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Several crucial moments and key people have led me here, to 2016, sitting at a little desk in my living room, finishing my dissertation:

> It's 1989, and I'm sitting on a carpet square in a Florida panhandle Kindergarten classroom. I've got one eye on a spinning record and another on my mother, my teacher, who could not be more excited to introduce our class to the Letter People. Thank you, Mom, for being my first teacher and for awakening my life-long love of learning.
>
> It's 1993, and my sneakers are set on an imaginary free throw line in my front driveway. Three bounces and a slight turn of the ball, as I shoot I hear the soft swish of the net and my dad's voice: "Pistol Pete couldn't shoot it better." Thank you, Dad, for being my first coach and for instilling in me the knowledge that hard work is life-giving and the belief that I could achieve anything.
>
> It's 2004, and I'm in the front row of a small university classroom in southern California. I've got one hand holding John 2 in my study Bible and the other reading Amos 9, and I'm hooked on the Fourth Gospel. Thank you, Matt Williams, for introducing me to the beauty and depth of John's story, for showing me what good teaching looks like, and for seeing the teacher in me.
>
> It's 2009, and I've just been tagged out in a dodge ball war at a midweek youth gathering in LA. I give an exasperated look to the pastor who just targeted me, and I jog off to join another on the sideline. "I'll miss this place." Thank you, RO and Mindy Smith, for demonstrating what real ministry looks like, for encouraging me to find my own calling, and for continuing to be the truest of friends.
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> It's 2010, and I've just opened a letter from Baylor University. I'm astounded at the invitation to pursue a Ph.D. and the financial support to do so. My eyes meet my husband's: "I think we should go," he says. Thank you Mike, for leaving the comfort of the city you call home so that I could pursue my calling. Thank you for making things better everywhere you go and for believing in me. Thank you for bringing laughter and beauty to my life and for providing a much-needed and welcome distraction from the books and notes that consume the life of an academic. Thank you for keeping me grounded in the real world and the things that really matter. My life would be so much emptier without you.

As an extrovert in the field of academics, I am keenly aware that this accomplishment is not mine alone. Several support teams have walked with me on this journey. Many supported from a distance. Mom, Dad, and Brett, thank you for constantly inquiring as to my progress and consistently cheering me on along the way. My Houston family (more than "in-laws"), thank you for much needed times of rest and the happy distraction of a niece and four nephews and puppies and ball games. Ernie and Carolyn Trozzo, thank you for sharing good food and company when I needed a break and for making coffee and toast when I needed to read and write. To RO and Mindy, Cole and Jack, Mike and Kristin—thank you for your consistent encouragement, your many visits, and for being our constant friends.

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When friendship attends us, it brings pleasure and delight to our prosperity
no less than it takes away the griefs and the feeling of helplessness from adversity.

Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* 49, referencing Euripides, *Ion* 732

To Mike
Thank you for loving me.

θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται·
ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει
καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν τετελειωμένη ἐστιν.

1 John 4:12

No one has seen God at any time.
If we love one another, God abides in us,
and God's love is made complete among us.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Setting the Stage

The Fourth Gospel uniquely presents many of the most treasured images for understanding the figure of Jesus. In John we meet the Word who became flesh (John 1:14); the Lamb of God; the Bread of Life (6:35, 41, 48–51); the Good Shepherd (10:11, 14); the resurrection (11:25); the way, the truth, and the life (14:6); and the vine (15:1, 5). We are invited to listen in on extended conversations that Jesus has with a leader of Israel (Nicodemus) and an outcast (the Samaritan woman). We encounter Jesus raising his friend Lazarus from the dead, washing his disciples' feet, bidding his friends farewell, and praying in his final hours. Some of the most long-standing Christian teachings and sayings come from John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son in order that everyone who believes in him would not perish but would have eternal life" (3:16) and "Love one another as I have loved you" (15:12; cf. 13:34).

Famously described as "a book in which a child can wade and an elephant can swim," the Fourth Gospel is at the same time considered one of the most approachable gospels for those interested in the story of Jesus and one of the most perplexing presentations for those embarking on critical study.[1] One challenge that has haunted

[1] I first stumbled upon this famous line in Robert Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel: An Examination of Contemporary Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), 6. The earliest application to the Fourth Gospel appears to be in Paul F. Barackman, "The Gospel according to John," *Int* 6, no. 1 (1952): 63. Kysar calls it an anonymous statement, and Barackman simply mentions "someone" who describes the Fourth Gospel this way. Paul Anderson (*The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2011], 1, n.1) cites a similar phrase attributed to Pope Gregory the Great and Augustine before him, that has been used to describe Scripture as "a stream in which the elephant may swim and the lamb may wade."

scholarship for decades is the pursuit of Johannine ethics. Despite the assertion that the Fourth Evangelist is "perhaps the greatest theologian in the history of the church," scholars generally agree that "the Fourth Gospel contains no ethics."[2] This project suggests that this scholarly verdict is unwarranted and explores Johannine ethics via rhetorical analysis, facilitating a fresh approach to this long-standing "problem" in the history of Johannine scholarship.

Ethics, formally speaking, is the philosophical study of "morality as a universal ideal."[3] It is a branch of philosophy that reflects upon what constitutes good pursuits (in contrast to bad) and what constitutes right behavior (as opposed to wrong). It asks what actions a person should do and what they should not do, and it considers the reasons that guide these practical decisions.[4] An ethical theory suggests a set of standards that make up a universal moral ideal and offers a defense for these standards.[5] Overlapping with morality in general, ethics moves beyond the descriptive sciences of anthropology and

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[2] C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (New York: Macmillan, 1955). Barrett amended his strong statement with the phrase, "after Paul" in the second edition. Clement of Alexandria is credited with calling John "the spiritual Gospel," a sign of its theological leanings. Medieval theologians referred to the Fourth Evangelist as "the theologian" or even "the divine." For a thorough summary of the history of research on the pursuit of Johannine ethics, see Ruben Zimmermann, "Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?: Challenging an Outdated Consensus," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 44–80; quote on page 44. See also the history of research below.

[3] John Deigh, *An Introduction to Ethics*, Cambridge Introductions to Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 8.

[4] For this understanding of ethics as a philosophical pursuit, see ibid., especially the first chapter (1–24), "What is Ethics?"

[5] Suggestions for the moral ideal vary from egoism's happiness (e.g., Epicurus, Benedict de Spinoza), to Eudaimonism's well being/flourishing (Plato's rationalism, Aristotle's naturalism), to Utilitarianism's impartiality (Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick), or the deontological appeals to natural law (Cicero, Thomas Hobbes), divine command (like Mosaic law), or practical reason (Kant). Although an ethical theory could be used to defend a society's conventional morality, particular ethical theories often go against conventional morality, since they are guided by an external ideal rather than by common practice.

sociology, since it not only describes how a group behaves but also prescribes how a group *should* behave.[6] Ethics can be defined as "a discipline that focuses on behavior, virtues, values, judgments, structures, and so on, in an effort to understand their nature and function as it seeks to guide human beings to a well-formed, good life."[7] Thus ethics is often used to reference the moral system of a particular group (for example, "Christian ethics").[8]

In pursuing the ethics of the Fourth Gospel, we will narrow our conception further. The Fourth Gospel is not a philosophical treatise, so it does not invite discussion of ethics as a codified moral system. Thus, we join Wayne Meeks in exploring what we might say about the Fourth Gospel as "an instrument of moral formation."[9] To this end,

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[6] At times "ethics" is used broadly (almost synonymously with morality), but at other times it is used quite narrowly to indicate an explicit articulation of a moral system or explicit reflection on the rightness or wrongness of specific practices and thoughts. Nineteenth-century German scholarship restricted ethics to the social sphere, leaving morality to the personal sphere, but this distinction has largely fallen away with time. We are using the term ethics in its broadest sense, almost synonymous with morality, however, we include the implicit understanding that moral or ethical conduct includes a social component.

[7] Harry J. Huebner, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: History, Movements, People* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 25.

[8] "Biblical ethics" seeks to describe the character of ethics represented in the Christian canon (or in a part of the canon). Some approaches to biblical ethics seek to present a monolithic ethic, while others identify a variegated ethic consisting of the many ethical presentations from various parts of the canon. Some iterations of biblical ethics overlap with "Christian ethics," asking how Christians should relate to the ethic(s) presented in the Bible. "Christian ethics" describes and prescribes the actions that should flow from what the Bible says about humanity, the world, and God (ibid., 4). Though I am quite interested in this facet of ethics, the current project will not include "Christian ethics" in terms of asking how Christians today might relate to the ethic(s) (re)presented in the Bible. "Christian ethics" usually describes the pursuit of ethics from a Protestant perspective (e.g., Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983)]), while "moral theology" describes the pursuit of ethics within the framework of Catholic theology (James F. Keenan, *History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Consciences* (London: Continuum, 2010)]). See this distinction in Christoper W. Skinner, "(How) Can We Talk About Johannine Ethics: Looking Back and Moving Forward," in *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, ed. Sherri Brown and Christopher W. Skinner (Minneapolis: Fortress, forthcoming).

[9] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 317. Meeks adds that it is also impossible to assess the moral character of the Fourth Evangelist, since the author is unknown and we lack information about his public life.

our study will adopt the term moral efficacy to refer to the way an encounter with a narrative influences the thoughts and behaviors of audience members. Focusing on the person as a moral agent, the term moral efficacy is used in the field of psychology[10] to refer to

> one's belief (confidence) in his or her capabilities to organize and mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, means and courses of action needed to attain moral performance, within a given moral domain, while persisting in the face of moral adversity.[11]

Other times moral efficacy is used more broadly, synonymously with "moral causality" or "morality making," referring to the "moral change realized in and by the agent."[12] In this context, moral efficacy includes two elements of moral change—the action that causes the moral change and the moral agent that realizes this change.[13]

In this project, we use the term moral efficacy as a reference to the "moral change realized" in the audience's encounter with the Johannine narrative. Here the action that causes the moral change is not an event witnessed or experienced directly by the moral agent but a textual representation of such an event (i.e., Jesus's life, death, and

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[10] In this context, moral efficacy is one element of moral potency, or "an individual's ethical psychological resources." Moral potency also includes the components of moral ownership (the concept that it is one's place to act) and moral courage (perseverance to bring the actions to resolution). Thus, psychology views moral efficacy as one step in the bridge between moral thought and moral action. Sean T. Hannah and Bruce J. Avolio, "Moral Potency: Building the Capacity for Character-Based Leadership," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Defining and Measuring Character in Leadership 62 (2010): 291–93.

[11] Ibid., 297. "This definition recognizes that moral efficacy is dependent on both external sources of means efficacy (Eden, 2001) as well as internal aspects of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997)." See D. Eden, "Means Efficacy: External Sources of Heneral and Specific Subjective Efficacy," in *Work Motivation in the Context of a Globalizing Economy* (Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum Associates, 2001), 65–77; Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1997).

[12] John Haldane, "Gravitas, Moral Efficacy and Social Causes," *Analysis* 68, no. 297 (2008): 38. The change can be direct or derivative, that is, the act in question may immediately produce a result or it may create a series of reactions that lead to a final result.

[13] Haldane, "Gravitas, Moral Efficacy and Social Causes."

resurrection) that is accessible to the audience only through the text—the Johannine narrative. Rather than focusing exclusively on the mind of the audience-member, we turn instead to the communicative space in the encounter between the audience-member and the narrative. Thus, our rhetorical approach explores the ways of thinking and living that the experience of the Fourth Gospel narrative would engender. To this end, we will assess rhetorical clues or cues that would guide the audience to discover the moral efficacy implicit in the story. We will explore Johannine ethics by attending to four rhetorical elements of the Fourth Gospel: 1) participation in genre, 2) incorporation of encomiastic topics, 3) metaleptic extension of the topics to address the audience situation, and 4) the appropriation of structural devices as guides to the rhetorical trajectory of the narrative. In so doing, this project offers a framework for interpretation, setting appropriate expectations for the pursuit of Johannine ethics and directing attention to the encounter between the audience and the text.[14]

This introduction will review the literature relevant to the topic, examine the reasons behind the current consensus, outline the methodology, and provide an overview of the project. We will begin with the scholarly context, presenting conclusions from past pursuits of Johannine ethics, articulating the current state of the question, and situating this project among exciting advances in more recent scholarship.

[14] Later discussion will add more precision to important terms (ethics, rhetoric, and audience).

Johannine Ethics in the History of Scholarship

Broadly speaking, both New Testament and Johannine scholarship have neglected significant treatment of ethics in the Fourth Gospel.[15] New Testament scholars routinely give only sparse attention to the Fourth Gospel in their discussions of New Testament ethics,[16] preferring the more explicit hortatory material in Paul's epistles or the Synoptic sermons to what Heinz-Dietrich Wendland called "an enormous reduction of ethical questions and statements" in the Fourth Gospel.[17] Those who look to the Fourth Gospel for ethical content often limit their discussions to "the love command" and turn their attention to christological, soteriological, and ecclesial implications, neglecting the topic of ethics in its own right.[18] James Houlden, for example, claims that "[e]ven when he

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[15] This observation is true when viewing the history of scholarship generally, although the tide has changed in Johannine studies in recent years. See the literature review below, especially Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, "Preface," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), ix–xi. Theological approaches to ethics provide some key exceptions. Natural law ethics builds upon the Johannine prologue (e.g., Aquinas's understanding of the natural law as the expression of the eternal law in creation). The Alexandrians also utilized the logic of the *logos* in similar ways. The Fourth Gospel's dualistic language (light/dark, etc.) indirectly influenced the "two ways" language of both early (e.g., *Didache*) and later catechetical and ethical texts. The nineteenth/twentieth-century Protestant fixation on *agape* is indebted to the Fourth Gospel's flexible presentation of ethics (e.g., Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*, Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros*, and Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian realism).

[16] Heinz-Dietrich Wendland, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments: Eine Einführung*, 3rd ed., NTD 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); Willi Marxsen, *"Christliche" und christliche Ethik im Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1989); Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996). Richard B. Hays (*The Moral Vision of the New Testament* [San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996], 138–57) offers promising insights but discusses the Gospel and letters of John together in fewer than twenty pages.

[17] Wendland, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments*, 109. Cf. Zimmermann, "Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?," 61–62.

[18] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (New York: Seabury, 1973), 148–92; Eduard Lohse, *Theological Ethics of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 166–70; Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Horn and M. Eugene Boring (New York: Westminster John Knox, 2000); Russell Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good: Engaging New Testament Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008). For example, J. L. Houlden (*Ethics and the New Testament* [London: T&T Clark International, 2004], 35–40) suggests that the Fourth Gospel's contribution is solely christological, and Wolfgang Schrage (*The Ethics of the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 297), suggests that it belongs only to NT theology.

speaks of the command to love . . . John's *real* concern is not primarily ethical at all."[19] Some wonder whether the Fourth Gospel even deserves inclusion in a study on New Testament ethics, suggesting that its contribution might lie exclusively in the field of New Testament theology.[20] Until the end of the twentieth century, the vast majority of Johannine scholarship either neglected the topic of Johannine ethics (assuming the Fourth Gospel had little to contribute in this area) or found it to be problematic.[21] These scholars reduced Johannine ethics to the "new commandment" and deemed it a sectarian and/or docetic restriction of the Synoptic command to love one's neighbor.[22] Ruben Zimmerman recently offered a similar assessment of the history of scholarship. Despite the controversy typical in the field, he says, "New Testament scholarship appears to find

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[19] Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament*, 37 (emphasis mine).

[20] Schrage, The Ethics of the New Testament, 297.

[21] See Klaus Scholtissek, "Johannine Studies: A Survey of Recent Research with Special Regard to German Contributions," trans. K. Backhaus, *CurBS* 6 (1998): 227–59, and Klaus Scholtissek, "Johannine Studies: A Survey of Recent Research with Special Regard to German Contributions II," trans. Anne Gordon Keidel, *CurBS* 9 (2001): 277–305, which survey German commentaries including Schenke, Wilckens, and Schnelle and suggest that recent scholarship has focused on the relationship to the Synoptics, Christology, and eschatology. Aside from one reference to the foot washing, this extensive survey does not mention Johannine ethics. Zimmermann ("Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?," 45) examines recent commentaries—Wengst, Dietzfelbinger, Thyen, Theobald, Carson, Moloney, Keener, Köstenberger, and Lincoln—for which the subject of ethics is "of practically no importance." See also Udo Schnelle, "Ein neuer Blick: Tendenzen der gegenwärtigen Johannesforschung," *BTZ* 16 (1999): 29–40.; Paul N. Anderson, "Beyond the Shade of the Oak Tree: The Recent Growth of Johannine Studies," *ExpTim* 119 (2008): 365–73; Francis J. Moloney, "Recent Johannine Studies: Part One: Commentaries," *ExpTim* 123 (2012): 313–22; idem, "Recent Johannine Studies: Part Two: Monographs," *ExpTim* 123 (2012): 417–28.

[22] Ernst Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17, trans. Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); Jack T. Sanders, Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); Jürgen Becker, "Feindesliebe–Nächstenliebe–Bruderliebe: Exegetische Beobachtungen als Anfrage an ein ethisches Problemfeld," ZEE 25 (1981): 5–17; Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist." For a survey of this topic, see Hartwig Thyen, Studien Zum Corpus Iohanneum, WUNT 214 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 623–30; Michael Labahn, "'It's Only Love'—Is That All?," in Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 22–24.

consensus on one subject—there is general agreement that the Fourth Gospel contains no ethics."[23]

Against this current, scholarship has recently renewed its interest in articulating a Johannine ethic, calling for new methods and creative approaches to the issue.[24] Recognizing that the Fourth Gospel is "laden with ethical implications," scholars like Johannes Nissen and D. Moody Smith began to broaden earlier limitations on what could constitute ethics in the Gospel.[25] Jan van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann have attended to the images and metaphors of the Gospel as vehicles for Johannine ethics.[26] Others

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[23] Ruben Zimmermann, "Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?: Challenging an Outdated Consensus," in *Rethinking*, 44. See also the following reports: Walter Rebell, "Neutestamentliche Ethik—Anmerkungen zum gegenwärtigen Diskussionsstand," *ZEE* 32 (1988): 143–51; Petr Pokorný, "Neutestamentliche Ethik und die Probleme ihrer Darstellungen," *EvT* 50 (1990): 357–71; Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, "Ethik des Neuen Testaments 1982-1992," *TRu* 60 (1995): 32–86; Werner Zager, "Neutestamentliche Ethik im Spiegel der Forschung," *ZNT* 11 (2003): 3–13; Richard B. Hays, "Mapping the Field: Approaches to New Testament Ethics," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt, BZNW 141 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 3–19.

[24] Even in this resurgence, there are currently no English monographs dedicated to the ethics of the Fourth Gospel. The first to dedicate a monograph to this topic was Karl Weyer-Menkhoff, *Die Ethik des Johannesevangeliums im sprachlichen Feld des Handelns*, Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik / Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics, WUNT 359 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

[25] For example, Johannes Nissen ("Community and Ethics in the Gospel of John," in New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives; Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel in Aarhus 1997, ed. Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen, JSNTSup 182 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 199, 210) focuses on "mission;" D. Moody Smith ("Ethics and the Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel," in Word, Theology, and Community in John, ed. John Painter, R. Alan Culpepper, and Fernando F. Segovia [St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002], 109–22) focuses on the theme of faith in its connection with action. See also an article ahead of its time: Mary E. Clarkson, "Ethics of the Fourth Gospel," AThR 31 (1949): 112–15.

[26] Jan G. van der Watt, Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John, BibInt 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Jan G. van der Watt, "Ethics Alive in Imagery," in Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language, ed. Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 421–48; Ruben Zimmermann, "Metaphoric Networks as Hermeneutic Keys in the Gospel of John," in Repetitions and Variations in the Fourth Gospel: Style, Text, Interpretation, ed. Gilbert van Belle, Michael Labahn, and P. Maritz, BETL 223 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 381–402; Jan G. van der Watt, "Ethics through the Power of Language: Some Explorations in the Gospel according to John," in Moral Language in the New Testament: The Interrelatedness of Language and Ethics in Early Christian Writings, ed. Ruben Zimmermann and Jan G. van der Watt, vol. 2, WUNT 296 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 139–67; Jan G. van der Watt, "The Gospel of John's Perception of Ethical Behaviour," In Die Skriflig 45 (2011): 431–47. In Family of the King, van der Watt explores the importance of family ties and how those would affect behavior in the ancient world. In "Ethics Alive" he considers how these images are networked together for the overall

considered more specific elements like the Law, the Johannine opponents, divine love, or mission to interpret the internal focus and sharp dualisms present in the Gospel.[27] With this broader focus, the negative perception of the lack of ethics in the Fourth Gospel has turned to a positive identification of the various qualities of the Gospel's "implicit" ethics.[28] Richard Hays, Richard Burridge, and Christos Karakolis have articulated the

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rhetorical effect of the text. Several images are found to be "pregnant vehicles for ethical arguments" (447). The filial imagery in chapter 8 shows the link between identity and deeds. The proverbial imagery in chapter 12 reveals that self-denial is the center of ethical behavior toward others. The imagery of light illustrates the positive quality of ethical behavior, and the image of the vine expresses the importance of the intimate relation between Jesus and his followers for ethics. The function of these images is to communicate the essence of ethical behavior as defined by the Gospel.

[27] Jan G. van der Watt, "Radical Social Redefinition and Radical Love: Ethics and Ethos in the Gospel according to John," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, BZNW 141 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 107–33; Jey J. Kanagaraj, "The Implied Ethics of the Fourth Gospel: A Reinterpretation of the Decalogue," *TynBul* 52 (2001): 33–60; Jan G. van der Watt, "Ethics Of/and the Opponents of Jesus in John's Gospel," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 175–91; Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Piece in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Stephen C. Barton, "Johannine Dualism and Contemporary Pluralism," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 3–18; Miroslav Volf, "Johannine Dualism and Contemporary Pluralism," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 19–50. Ruben Zimmermann ("Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?: Challenging an Outdated Consensus," in *Rethinking*, 45) claims that the Bauckham and Mosser volume does not contain a single article on ethics. Barton and Volf, however, address the challenge of Johannine ethics as it relates specifically to the convergence of Johannine dualism with contemporary pluralism. They argue for a fundamental difference in Johannine dualism, in that the narrative also offers a solution to the problem. See also Kobus Kok, "As the Father Has Sent Me, I Send You: Towards a Missional-Incarnational Ethos in John 4," in *Moral Language in the New Testament: The Interrelatedness of Language and Ethics in Early Christian Writings*, ed. Ruben Zimmermann and Jan G. van der Watt, WUNT 296 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 168–93. Love remains central in these discussions, but instead of limiting the Gospel's ethics to one command or embracing a narrow view of Johannine love as sectarian or docetic, love is seen as the catalyst for ethical creativity and the relational foundation for ethical action. Labahn ("'It's Only Love'," 27) suggests that Johannine love is "a basic and valuable ethical principle that . . . cannot be reduced simply to the very few direct statements regarding love and the actions that proceed from it."

[28] See also Mira Stare, "Ethics of Life in the Gospel of John," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 213–28; William Loader, "The Law and Ethics in John's Gospel," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 143–58. J. Bolyki ("Ethics in the Gospel of John," *CV* 45 [2003]: 198–208) examines Johannine ethics through the lens of ancient drama, comparing the conflict of the FG to the ethical conflicts of ancient tragedies, arguing that the Fourth Gospel provides a moral story of origin in the classical Greek sense.

ethics of the Fourth Gospel in terms of imitation,[29] while Rudolf Schnackenberg, Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, and Hermut Löhr approach Johannine ethics in theological terms.[30] These new and creative approaches represent some promising advances in articulating Johannine ethics.

Challenges in the Pursuit of Johannine Ethics

The inattention to Johannine ethics for such a long period of scholarly history likely resulted from the narrative form of the Gospel and its clear christological agenda. While various kinds of narratives have the ability to carry moral efficacy, they most often do so in specific ways.[31] First, narratives can include explicit ethical content of various

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[29] Hays, *Moral Vision*; Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Richard A. Burridge, "Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to the Ethics of the Historical Jesus and John's Gospel," in *John, Jesus, and History*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher, ECL (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 281–90; Christos Karakolis, "Semeia Conveying Ethics in the Gospel according to John," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 192–212.

[30] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments: Die urchristlichen Verkündiger*, vol. 2, HThKNTSup 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1988); Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, "Prinzipiell-theologische Ethik in der johanneischen Literatur," in *Jenseits von Indikativ und Imperativ*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Horn and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 238 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 289–307; Hermut Löhr, "Ἔργον as an Element of Moral Language in John," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 229–49. In his recent commentary on the Johannine epistles, Schnelle speaks of an "ethical theology" developed by the Johannine community; Udo Schnelle, *Die Johannesbriefe*, THKNT 17 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2010). See also Sherri Brown and Christopher W. Skinner, eds., *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, forthcoming).

[31] For the implicit moral component in the pedagogy of composition, see Craig A. Gibson, "Better Living Through Prose Composition? Moral and Compositional Pedagogy in Ancient Greek and Roman Progymnasmata," *Rhetorica* 32 (2014): 1–30; Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 209; Todd Penner, "Reconfiguring the Rhetorical Study of Acts: Reflections on the Method in and Learning of Progymnastic Poetics," *PRSt* 30 (2003): 425–39; James Jerome Murphy, "The Key Role of Habit in Roman Writing Instruction," in *A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Modern America*, ed. James Jerome Murphy, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001), 35–78. The fact that the pedagogical exercises "implicitly convey moral and cultural values" to the students suggests also that these students would expect their writings to convey moral values to their audiences; M. Kraus, "Exercises for Text Composition (Exercitationes, Progymnasmata)," in *Rhetoric and Stylistics: An International Handbook of Historical and Systematic Research*, ed. U. Fix, A. Gardt, and J. Knape, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 1396–1405.

kinds (rules, maxims, paraenetic sections) within the story itself. This explicit ethical content sometimes reveals the ethics of the author. For example, Plutarch presents his moral views concerning personal and political virtue in *Cato Minor* (9.5; 44.7–8; 53.2).[32] The story can also include extended paraenetic sections (like Matthew's Sermon on the Mount [Matt 5–7]) or present shorter teachings and maxims (like didactic statements made by the Markan Jesus to the crowd or his disciples [Mark 7:14–23]).[33] Plutarch's *Demonax* and *Euripides* include significant amounts of didactic and philosophical material as well.[34] Narratives can also present a certain character (or characters) as a model (or models) of virtue or vice that suggests behaviors for the audience to appropriate or avoid.[35] Examples of narratives that overtly invite imitation of the main character include Xenophon's *Agesilaus* (10.2), Isocrates's *Evagoras* (73–81), Lucian's *Demonax* (2), and many of Plutarch's Lives (*Cato Minor* 24:1; 37:5, *Pericles* 1, *Aemilius Paulus* 1).[36] Further, narratives can include direct commentary that reflects on the value of certain virtues and the danger of certain vices. This ethical commentary can take the form of inserted comments in the author's own voice or of comments from the narrator or from characters in the story. For example, Plutarch often offers a *syncrisis* (or formal

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[32] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 28–29.

[33] A narrative can also affirm, refute, or otherwise comment on preexisting rules or laws (like the Synoptic stories of Jesus's actions on the Sabbath [Luke 6:1–10; Matt 12:1–14; Mark 2:22–3:6]). The Johannine Jesus does comment on the Law of Moses (e.g., John 7:23). As Hays points out, however, the Law of Moses does not seem to be a part of John's moral vision; rather, it prefigures Jesus, and "its meaning is seemingly absorbed into his person" (cf. John 9:15–16, 32, where discussions about Jesus observing the Sabbath center on christological questions); Hays, *Moral Vision*, 138.

[34] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 29.

[35] Burridge (Ibid., 62–79) suggests that it is, in fact, the imitative invitation of the Gospels that constitutes their ethical presentation. Jesus (as well as the disciples and other characters) functions this way in all four Gospels to an extent. We will discuss both the promise and the problems with imitation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel in Chapter Two below.

[36] These references were found in Burridge's introductory chapter; ibid., 29.

comparison) at the conclusion of a pair of *Lives* to guide the audience in recognizing and engaging the moral efficacy of the narrative.[37]

Narratives often exhibit moral efficacy in the ways described above. Such features, however, are either not as prevalent in the Fourth Gospel, or they are expressed in complex and problematic ways. For example, the Fourth Gospel includes very little explicit ethical content. Maxims, gnomes, paraenetic sections, practical sermons, or exhortation toward concrete actions are scarce. The few rules or commands given are vague, and the narrative does not translate these into practical behaviors.[38] The most explicit moral imperative, the love command, is not explained in terms of tangible actions.[39] Further, the characters in the Fourth Gospel appear inimitable, since the hero is presented in the most exalted terms and the narrative does not put him or the other characters in contexts for normal ethical decision-making.[40] The Gospel appears to

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[37] We will further engage Plutarch's *Lives* in the next chapter. Plutarch at times slips into his own direct commentary as he tells the story (e.g., *Cato Minor* 44.7–8 mentioned above). At other times, more subtle rhetoric is used, and narrative tensions lead the audience toward ethical reflection.

[38] E.g., John 5:15; 8:11, 31, 34; 13:14, 34; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:4, 10, 17. Other instances of ethical language include doing what is true or good (3:19; 5:29), disobeying or believing (3:35), mention of evil deeds or sin (8:34), doing even greater works than Jesus (14:12), and being given the authority to forgive or condemn (20:23). The content of Jesus's commandments is left largely unarticulated, and the actions unspecified. The love command and the command to imitate Jesus's act of service in the foot washing may be exceptions, but even these commands maintain a degree of ambiguity. For more on the ambiguity of Johannine ethics, see Hays, *Moral Vision*, 138; Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good*, 190–215. See more discussion on the commands in the Fourth Gospel below.

[39] The love command has also been criticized as being outside of the realm of social ethics, since it appears to be exclusively internally focused and even sectarian. Of course, many scholars disagree with this conclusion. Approaches that too hastily deem Johannine ethics sectarian or nonexistent "neglect both the specific historical circumstances of its origin and the more complex way in which the story frames the world in which its readers live and move"; Hays, *Moral Vision*, 140. Our rhetorical approach will attend precisely to this rhetorical communicative exchange between the Fourth Gospel and its audience.

[40] Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist." Though a reading of Johannine characters as "flat" was standard for some time (Raymond F. Collins, "The Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel," in *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 2 [Louvain: Peeters, 1990]; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987]), many scholars do not agree with Meeks on this point. Colleen Conway ("Speaking Through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel," *BibInt* 10

present a Jesus who is lofty and inaccessible and to portray the disciples as passive, flat characters.[41] Even the miracles are not presented as emerging from concern for the poor or needy; rather they are signs of Jesus's divine authority. The Johannine Christology, which presents Jesus as exalted above other human beings and as one with the Father, seems to leave little room for imitation.[42] Finally, neither the narrator nor the characters

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[2002]: 324–41) discusses how ambiguity in the portrayal of minor characters engages the reader and undercuts the Gospel's dualism. Susan Hylen (Susan E. Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009) similarly argues that the complex presentations shape the reader's own conception of belief in Jesus and complicate strict lines between those who are "in" and those who are "out." Cornelis Bennema (*Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* [Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009]) demonstrates that minor characters can display individuality; however, he maintains that they can still be classified into "types" for the audience to evaluate. For a helpful evaluation of these studies, see Alicia Myers ("The Ambiguous Character of Johannine Characterization: An Overview of Recent Contributions and a Proposal," *PRSt* 39 [2012]: 289–98), who demonstrates how Johannine characterization utilizes ancient rhetorical practices to construct fitting characters who nonetheless rhetorically engage the audience in their own response to the main character.

[41] Many have suggested that Johannine characters can be imitated. We will take up this suggestion in Chapter Four (Extension of the Encomiastic Topics) below. On imitation in the Fourth Gospel, see Burridge, "Imitating Jesus," (ed. Anderson, Just, and Thatcher); Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*; Cornelis Bennema, "A Theory of Character in the Fourth Gospel with Reference to Ancient and Modern Literature," *BibInt* 17 (2009): 375–421; Cornelis Bennema, "Mimesis in John 13: Cloning or Creative Articulation?," *NovT* 56 (2014): 261–74. These works will be considered in more detail in Chapter Four (Extension of the Encomiastic Topics). On ethics in terms of reaction or response rather than direct imitation, see Schnelle, "Ethical Theology in 1 John"; Karl Weyer-Menkhoff, "The Response of Jesus: Ethics in John by Considering Scripture as Work of God," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 159–74. On imitation or response ethics empowered by relational intimacy, see Glen Lund, "The Joys and Dangers of Ethics in John's Gospel," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 264–89. Although Jesus is the most obvious character that invites imitation, audience members could also identify with various characters throughout the story depending on their particular position (e.g., uncertain believers might identify with Nicodemus, Thomas, or Joseph of Arimathea; those who may have denied Jesus might identify with Peter and be comforted by his story arc; others might look to the unnamed "Beloved Disciple" as an ideal paradigm of discipleship). We focus on the character of Jesus, but much could be done with how identification with various characters could facilitate ethical reflection for audience members.

[42] The christological purpose of the Fourth Gospel and its "larger than life" characterization makes the Johannine Jesus difficult to imitate; Lund, "Joys and Dangers," 278. See also Hays, *Moral Vision*, 140: "It does look as though ethics has been crowded out by Christology." While it is clear that Johannine ethics is tied to identification with Jesus and taking up his mission, it is less clear how exactly a Johannine believer is to pattern their life after Jesus, since "Jesus in the Fourth Gospel does not actually do much of anything except make grandiloquent revelatory speeches" (ibid., 143).

in the story comment on the "rightness" or "wrongness" of specific behavior(s).[43] Rather, reflection seems almost exclusively geared toward christological interests and the realm of belief.

Progress in the Pursuit of Johannine Ethics

The features of the Gospel reviewed in the previous section make the lack of attention to Johannine ethics in the history of scholarship understandable. It could be argued that Johannine ethics has been "neglected" precisely because the Fourth Gospel has no interest in ethics. Several factors, however, suggest that the Fourth Gospel is, in fact, interested in ethics.

Although the Fourth Gospel rarely articulates imperatives in terms of specific behaviors, the narrative does include ethical topics such as sin, service, love, obedience, care for others, good/bad deeds, and forgiveness. It also employs moral language throughout. Characters are told not to sin any longer (John 5:15; 8:11). Jesus also tells the disciples to "continue in my word" (8:31), "keep my commandments" (14:15, 21; 15:10), "keep my word" (14:23), and "abide in me" (15:4). Peter is instructed to "feed my lambs . . . tend my sheep . . . feed my sheep" (21:15-17) as the result of his love for Jesus. Other references to right thinking or behavior include "doing what is true" (3:19), disobeying the Son or believing in him (3:35), doing good (5:29), committing "evil deeds" and

[43] See n.29 above on Hays, *Moral Vision*, 138. While moral discourse typically employs straightforward modes of communication, the enigmatic language and narrative style of the Fourth Gospel appears irrational (or even "antirational"), suggesting that its primary purpose is not direct instruction. Further, certain ideological emphases in the Fourth Gospel stand in tension with the nature of traditional ethical discourse. For example, the dualism of the Fourth Gospel seems resistant to the elements of change and development that are vital to traditional conceptions of ethics, and its predeterminative presentation seems to preclude independent agency, a necessity for moral development; see Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist," 318–19; Schnelle, "Ethical Theology in 1 John," 46–47; Labahn, "'It's Only Love,'" 15.

committing sin (8:34), doing even greater works than Jesus (14:12), and being given the authority to forgive the sins of others or to condemn them (20:23). The Fourth Gospel also includes the command to imitate Jesus's act of service in the foot washing (13:14). Even the stated purpose for the writing of the Gospel (20:31), though christological ("that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"), suggests an interest in ethics as it attempts to define what actions contribute to life ("that believing, you might have life in his name").[44] Most notably, the Gospel includes the famous command to "love one another" (13:34; 15:17). The actions that this love would entail are left unarticulated, and some have suggested an inward and impractical focus; however, the inclusion of the command reveals an interest in the social/ethical sphere. Here, the Fourth Gospel's command for mutual love is likely in line with the practice of the Synoptic writers, Paul, James, and many Jewish writers, who would sum up the requirements of portions of the Law by commanding love of God or love of one's neighbor.[45]

In addition to this primary source evidence, the recent advances in articulating Johannine ethics build quite a collective case arguing for John's ethical interest. Jan van

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[44] Patristic writers held the Fourth Gospel as an important inspiration toward proper Christian conduct; e.g., Augustine's 124 Homilies on St. John (Mark Edwards, *John*, Blackwell Bible Commentaries [Oxford: Blackwell, 2004]). Cf. Bernd Wannenwetsch, "Political Love: Why John's Gospel Is Not as Barren for Contemporary Ethics as It Might Appear," in *"You Have the Words of Eternal Life": Transformative Readings of the Gospel of John from a Lutheran Perspective*, ed. Kenneth Mtata (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2012), 93.

[45] Novakovic ("The Decalogue in the New Testament," *PRSt* 35 [2008]: 373-86) lists Mark 12:28-34; Matt 19:18-19; 22:34-40; Luke 10:25-28; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14; and James 2:8-11 as examples of this trend among New Testament authors. Cf. D. C. Allison, "Mark 12.28-31 and the Decalogue," in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. C. A. Evans and W. R. Stegner; JSNTSup 104; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 273. Novakovic also points to Philo's suggestion that the Decalogue could be summed up with the double command to love (*Decal*. 106-110, 154) and to other Jewish writers who followed this pattern (*Jub*. 20:2; 37:7-8; *T. Iss*. 5:2; 7:6; *T. Dan* 5:3; *Let Aris*. 22). For these references and a fuller discussion, see page 377. Cf. D Flusser, "The Ten Commandments and the New Testament," in *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition*, ed. Ben-Zion Segal and G Levi (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1990), 227. In addition to suggesting that each of the Decalogue's commandments are refelected in the Gospel, Kanagaraj ("The Implied Ethics of the Fourth Gospel") argues that the Johannine love command functions as a summary of the Decalogue.

der Watt suggests that the moral language in the Fourth Gospel presents a christological ethical system that takes belief and acceptance of Jesus as its starting point.[46] He and others have argued that Johannine ethics can be uncovered by exploring key themes and images like family, love, peacemaking, reconciliation, "work of God," mission, and law.[47] Scholars have begun to articulate Johannine ethics in terms of imitation, as a response to the Gospel's explicit theological realities, as an outgrowth of the believers' identity, or as an exemplary paradigm for a community in social transition.[48] Michael Labahn argues that the Fourth Gospel betrays a value system (e.g., concepts of law, sin, and faith) that might not seem ethically pragmatic at first but that calls the audience member to certain actions when viewed in context of the whole.[49]

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[46] van der Watt, "Ethics through the Power of Language."

[47] van der Watt, "Ethics Alive in Imagery"; van der Watt, *Family of the King*; van der Watt, "Radical Social Redefinition and Radical Love"; Udo Schnelle, "Johanneische Ethik," in *Eschatologie und Ethik im frühen Christentum: Festschrift für Günther*, ed. Christfried Böttrich (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006), 309–27; Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Piece in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Barton, "Johannine Dualism"; Volf, "Johannine Dualism"; Löhr, "Ἔργον"; Weyer-Menkhoff, "Response of Jesus"; Kok, "As the Father Sent Me." "The text carefully uses this term to link the sphere of God's action (and Jesus's action) with the actions of human beings, to combine the theological and moral discourses implied in the narrative" (Löhr, "Ἔργον," 249). "Jesus does not show what one should do exactly but that one has to respond to the works of God" (Weyer-Menkhoff, "Response of Jesus," 174). "John leads the implicit reader to understand that Jesus's mission. . . to the unloving . . . *world* . . . will by implication also be the mission of the followers of Jesus" (Kok, "As the Father Sent Me," 187). On the law, see van der Watt, "Ethics Of/and Opponents." Cf John 5:39–40; 7:24; 8:15. See also van der Watt, "Radical Social Redefinition and Radical Love"; Kanagaraj, "The Implied Ethics of the Fourth Gospel."

[48] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*; Karakolis, "Semeia Conveying Ethics"; Volker Rabens, "Johannine Perspectives on Ethical Enabling in the Context of Stoic and Philonic Ethics," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 114–39; Hirsch-Luipold, "Prinzipiell-theologische Ethik in der johanneischen Literatur"; Chrys C. Caragounis, "'Abide in Me': The New Mode of Relationship between Jesus and His Followers as a Basis for Christian Ethics (John 15)," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 250–63.

[49] Labahn, "'It's Only Love'," 33. Other topics like divine love and unity have been used to interpret the internal focus and sharply dualistic language present in the Gospel; Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*. See also Barton, "Johannine Dualism"; Volf, "Johannine Dualism." See also essays by Sherri Brown, Francis J. Moloney, Raymond F. Collins, Alan Culpepper, Jaime Clark-Soles, Adele Reinhartz, Michael Gorman, Alicia Myers, William D. Kurz, Toan Do, Christopher Skinner, Lindsey Trozzo, Dorothy

While this discussion does not *prove* that the Fourth Gospel is interested in ethics, the elements discussed *problematize* a history of research that has assumed John was not interested in ethics.[50] With Ruben Zimmermann, we might ask whether the problem with past research "lies not in the absence of ethical issues but rather in the one-sidedness of the search for a particular form of ethics."[51] As Glen Lund put it, "John's moral thinking is so unusual that none of the traditional approaches to biblical ethics adequately makes sense of it."[52] Simple answers to the question of Johannine ethics are simply inadequate. The field is calling for new approaches, and this project joins the recently vitalized discussion.[53]

Defining the Approach

These more recent developments in the pursuit of Johannine ethics attend to the idea that even without significant amounts of explicit ethical content or direct ethical commentary, an encounter with a narrative can influence the thoughts and behaviors of audience members. In these cases, a reader can best pursue ethics in terms of moral

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Lee, and Cornelis Bennema in Sherri Brown and Christopher W. Skinner, eds., *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, forthcoming).

[50] This project considers the Fourth Gospel's interest in ethics as a working assumption to be held for the sake of argument while the analysis unfolds. The cumulative effect of the study will itself be evidence for John's interest in ethics.

[51] Zimmermann, "Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?," 57. Cf. Hans Boersma, "A New Age Love Story: Worldview and Ethics in the Gospel of John," *CTJ* 38 (2003): 104–5; Wannenwetsch, "Political Love: Why John's Gospel Is Not as Barren for Contemporary Ethics as It Might Appear," 93–94.

[52] Lund, "Joys and Dangers," 266. Hence, the reason for this project and the analysis that follows below.

[53] Many of the studies listed in this section will be taken up in the chapters that follow. Here I simply emphasize the collective power of these arguments. That so many scholars are finding new methods fruitful for articulating Johannine ethics suggests that the Fourth Gospel may indicate ethical interest in ways previously overlooked. My project joins in this stream of scholarship and offers a unique contribution through the consideration of rhetoric.

efficacy, by examining the story and suggesting the types of conclusions and reactions it would likely elicit from the audience. Rhetorical analysis is just the tool for such a pursuit. This project, which attends to rhetorical elements in the narrative as a means to identifying its moral efficacy, adds to the recent trend in uncovering Johannine ethics. In outlining this methodology in detail, we should first establish some working assumptions and definitions for this study.

Ethics: What Are We Looking For?

We have seen that ethics focuses on behaviors and values, with the goal of guiding people toward a well-formed life.[54] When ethical ideals are conveyed through literature, we can speak about an ethical text. An ethical text is a text that offers reflective orientation toward one's way of life, defining how to behave according to a specific value system and in relation to a certain social group or society at large.[55] Scholarship presents a variety of perspectives on what exactly it means for a text to be "ethical." A search for ethical *content* implies looking for explicit statements in the form of direct imperatives or intentional reflections on the "rightness" or "wrongness" of specific actions—something the Fourth Gospel has very little of.[56] When explicit ethical content is lacking, we can approach implicit ethics by asking what influence the story would have had on the values and behaviors of those who were exposed to it, especially those who considered it an authoritative or foundational document for their religious community. This inquiry can be

[54] Huebner, Introduction to Christian Ethics, 25.

[55] Labahn, "'It's Only Love'," 7.

[56] The Gospel does contain some direct commands including the love command and others. See the discussion below on evidence for the Fourth Gospel's ethical interest. See also Lund, "Joys and Dangers"; Urban C. Von Wahlde, *The Johannine Commandments: 1 John and the Struggle for the Johannine Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990).

done, for example, by seeking to identify the value systems that undergird the happenings of the narrative or by examining the lived behavior that is reflective of such implicit value-systems embodied in the narrative.[57]

In pursuing Johannine ethics we look to the Fourth Gospel's description of humanity, the world, and God, and ask what influence the story would likely have had on the values and behaviors of its audience.[58] Our pursuit is descriptive, but we are interested in the prescriptive aspects of Johannine ethics from the perspective of the early audience. To that end, the following questions will guide our pursuit:[59]

- What does the narrative offer in terms of governing the people's everyday affairs?
- What language does the narrative present to help the audience give account of their identity, their goals, and their circumstances?
- What practices does the narrative prescribe to shape the audience's self-understanding?

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[57] A rhetorical approach to ethics is inclusive of both the conception of ethics as a value system and as lived behavior (ethos); see Jan G. van der Watt, "Ethics and Ethos in the Gospel according to John," *ZNW* 97 (2006): 147–76.

[58] This discussion raises extremely thorny issues about the locus of meaning. Since this question will be given more significant attention below in the section on narrative rhetoric, it will be sufficient at this point to say that instead of focusing squarely on one locus for meaning (author, text, or reader), this project emphasizes the relationship(s) among these elements, looking to narrow a range of meaning(s) conceivable when a reader analyzes textual features and the social/historical context while acknowledging the impossibility of pure objectivity. Without discounting reader-response approaches and multiple types of "meaning," this project is not interested in the limitless ways this text *could* be interpreted by various readers. Rather, this project is interested in an interpretive estimation that accounts for what can be known about the author, audience, and situation and what can be reasoned from the text itself. It looks particularly for a meaning that can be reasonably construed in the communicative space between the author and the audience from these pieces of evidence. See further James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology*, The Theory and Interpretation of Narrative Series (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), 19. Cf. Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). For a defense of the search for authorial intent from the perspective of cognitive science, see David Herman, *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013), 23–56.

[59] The main difference is that we will pose these questions to the Fourth Gospel rather than to the entire canon. The following questions were adapted from the list of questions for biblical ethics given in Huebner, *Introduction to Christian Ethics*, 25–26.

- What rationale does the narrative offer for these practices?
- How is God portrayed? How does God act, and what is the relationship between God's agency and that of the audience?

Rhetoric: How Will We Find It?

Defining a rhetorical approach.[60] What exactly do we mean when we speak of rhetoric or the rhetorical dimension of the text?[61] Carl Joachim Classen defines rhetoric as "the deliberate, calculated use of language for the sake of communicating . . . (and the theory of such a use)."[62] Though past instances of rhetorical analysis in biblical studies focused more narrowly on stylistic elements, devices, or forms of argumentation, the discipline recently has enjoyed a broadening of boundaries in which various disciplines

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[60] Since James Muilenberg's famous address ("Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 [1969]: 1–18), rhetorical criticism has experienced a renaissance in biblical studies. See George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979). For an overview, see Margaret D. Zulick, "The Recollection of Rhetoric: A Brief History," in *Words Well Spoken: George Kennedy's Rhetoric of the New Testament*, ed. C. Clifton Black and Duane F. Watson, Studies in Rhetoric and Religion 8 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 7–19.

[61] My study of Johannine ethics is grounded in the work of those who have established rhetorical analysis of the New Testament as a significant discipline. Under the direction of Mikeal Parsons, Baylor University has produced a number of projects utilizing ancient rhetoric to explore New Testament texts: Kathy Reiko Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Workers in Luke-Acts and Its Literary Milieu*, LNTS (New York: T&T Clark, 2010); Michael W. Martin, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison in the Fourth Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010); Keith A. Reich, *Figuring Jesus: The Power of Rhetorical Figures of Speech in the Gospel of Luke* (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 2011); 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); Brian C. Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, BibInt 128 (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Heather M. Gorman, *Interweaving Innocence: A Rhetorical Analysis of Luke's Passion Narrative (Luke 22:66–23:49)* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015). Alicia Myers's work has been particularly helpful since she also applies rhetorical analysis to the Fourth Gospel. See also Michael R. Whitenton, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship: A Cognitive and Rhetorical Approach to the Characterization of Mark's Jesus*, BibInt (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming); Justin King, "Speech-in-Character, Diatribe, and Romans 3:1–9: Who's Speaking When and Why It Matters" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2016).

[62] Carl Joachim Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*, WUNT 128 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 45–47.

are brought together for the interpretive task.[63] Our approach seeks an interpretation of the text guided by its rhetorical aspects such as genre, use of rhetorical topics, rhetorical situation, and structure.[64] It considers how these elements dynamically shape the communicative exchange between the audience and the text, setting boundaries for meaning-making.[65] Such an approach, because it attends to how a text affects an audience member's thoughts and actions, is particularly fitting for considering a text's moral efficacy. To speak of the moral efficacy of the Fourth Gospel seems to make the text itself an autonomous rhetorical agent. Any influence on the audience, however, is, as

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[63] On "New Rhetoric" see Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969); Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, "Introduction: Rhetorical Criticism and the Florence Conference," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible*, ed. Dennis L. Stamps and Stanley E. Porter, JSNTSup 195 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 17–21; Kenneth Burke, *Counter-Statement*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968). For non-classical rhetorical studies of biblical texts, see Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, GBS: New Testament Series (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, eds., *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*, JSNTSup 146 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Thomas H. Olbricht and Anders Eriksson, *Rhetoric, Ethic, and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse: Essays from the 2002 Heidelberg Conference*, Emory Studies in Early Christianity 11 (New York: T&T Clark, 2005); Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*. Modern rhetorical criticism uses other terms: "close reading," "emic criticism," or even "textual criticism." Michael Leff ("Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G. P. Mohrmann," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 [1986]: 380) describes "textual criticism" as "the close reading and rereading of the text, the analysis of the historical and biographical circumstances that generate and frame its composition, the recognition of basic conceptions that establish the co-ordinates of the text, and an appreciation of the way these conceptions interact within the text."

Rhetorical studies in the Fourth Gospel include classical and modern approaches like Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSup 69 (Sheffield: JSNT Press, 1992); Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004); William M. Wright, *Rhetoric and Theology: Figural Reading of John 9*, BZNW 165 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); Martin, *Judas and Rhetoric*; Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*; George L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif*, WUNT 258 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

[64] Without expecting every text to offer ethical content, we can insist that because these episodes stand within an overall rhetorical trajectory (that includes moral formation), they play a part in establishing the ethical force of the text. See van der Watt's comments in van der Watt, "Ethics through the Power of Language," 143.

[65] See, for example, Charles H. Talbert's *Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Decision Making in Matthew 5–7* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), which uses observations about the text's rhetorical nature, background, and narrative features to draw boundaries for interpretation. See also Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, which uses the Fourth Gospel's rhetorical features and socio-cultural background to illuminate Johannine texts.

described above, the result of the entire communicative exchange between audience members and the text (or as some might prefer, between the author and the audience through the text). Constant reference to "the communicative exchange" is cumbersome. In speaking of the Fourth Gospel's moral efficacy or suggesting that the Fourth Gospel "effects" certain ways of thinking or acting, we are referencing the intangible and experiential communicative exchange. This issue can be thorny. Rather than arguing that the "meaning" or rhetoric of the text lies exclusively with the audience member or is inherent in the text as a representation of authorial intent, this study suggests that a generalized sphere of meaning can be found in the space between the two and in the communicative exchange that happens there.

Narrative as rhetoric. James Phelan's concept of "narrative as rhetoric" will be helpful for articulating our approach.[66] He suggests that in addition to using rhetoric or having a rhetorical dimension, narrative itself *is* rhetoric.[67] He defines narrative as "the

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[66] Phelan (*Narrative as Rhetoric*, 14–18) helpfully situates his own approach between the two poles of deconstructionism and pragmatism. Though narratives and interpretations are open to deconstruction, Phelan suggests that deconstruction's logic is not as inevitable or as necessary as some (e.g., Paul de Man and J. Hillis Miller) suggest. He also responds to strict pragmatists (e.g., Stanley Fish), calling their either/or logic ("either language describes the world or language constructs the world") inadequate for "the complexity of the relationship between facts, hypotheses, . . . texts, interpretations, and approaches" (15). Agreeing that there are no facts outside of discourse (that is, a framework for describing them), he nonetheless maintains, "That our facts change as our discursive frameworks change does not prove that there are no facts; it proves rather than there are multiple facts and multiple ways of construing facts" (17). Even though any claim is open to criticism from other approaches and claims, nonetheless a certain approach can make a legitimate claim to propose how the story functions as a communication between author and reader. This reason is why Phelan cannot (with pragmatism) dismiss the techniques employed in the narrative—because those techniques influence the experience of the story, and attention to those techniques guides our interpretation of the rhetoric of the narrative.

[67] For the related concept of "narrative ethics," see Schnelle, "Ethical Theology in 1 John," 63–69; Michael Labahn, "Der Weg eines Namenlosen—Vom Hilflosen zum Vorbild (Joh 9): Ansätze zu einer narrativen Ethik der sozialen Verantwortung im vierten Evangelium," in *Die bleibende Gegenwart des Evangeliums: Festschrift für Otto Merk*, ed. Roland Gebauer and Martin Meiser (Marburg: Elwert, 2003), 63–80; Bolyki, "Ethics in the Gospel of John"; Schnelle, "Johanneische Ethik."

telling of the story by someone to someone on some occasion for some purpose."[68] With this rhetorical aspect of narrative in mind, it becomes clearer how elements like rhetorical techniques, audience, situation, and purpose work together to "help determine the shape and effect of the story."[69] Instead of focusing squarely on one locus for meaning, this approach emphasizes "the recursive relationships" among author, reader, and text, focusing primarily on textual features as a guide to understanding the dynamic communicative exchange.[70] Others refer to this exchange with terms such as interaction, transaction, or intercourse. With Phelan, we will use the term "rhetoric" as shorthand for "the complex, multilayered process of writing and reading [or hearing], processes that call upon our cognition, emotions, desires, hopes, values, and beliefs."[71]

Our rhetorical approach will examine the rhetorical elements within the narrative and explore how these elements would likely have affected the communicative exchange. Thus, our approach will include attention to the rhetorical conventions of the handbooks but will not be limited to or by those rhetorical models. Harold Attridge helpfully articulates this balance:

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[68] Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 4. See also Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*, 45–47, who includes the writer's frame of mind, cultural background, circumstances of the addressees, and the rhetorical situation as clues to the intended use of the narrative.

[69] Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 8. For more on this definition, see ibid., 4; Barbara Hernstein Smith, "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 213–36; Seymour Chatman, "Response to Barbara Hernstein Smith," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1981): 802–9.

[70] Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 19. I acknowledge the degree of limited accessibility to each of these features, all the while maintaining that attention to these various features and how they interact can guide the interpretive pursuit of understanding the narrative. Cf. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*.

[71] Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 19. Phelan is dealing with texts that were predominantly engaged through reading. Since the Fourth Gospel was often presented in a public reading or performance, we might add performing, watching, or hearing to his list of processes. Though I do not find the terms communicative exchange or even rhetorical exchange problematic, I like the simplicity of using the single term "rhetoric."

> Rhetorical criticism may advance the discussion by concentrating on the argumentation within the discourse and by providing another tool to assess its unity. Yet caution is required. While rhetoric deals with persuasive speech, the Gospel's rhetoric has a narrative setting, in which the primary persuasive relationship is defined by the text and its reader [or hearer]. Yet the rhetoric of that encounter works through the rhetoric embedded in the narrative. A full analysis of the pericope's rhetoric must consider both contexts.[72]

Since the Fourth Gospel seems to utilize and at the same time subvert the rhetorical conventions outlined in the handbooks, these handbooks are helpful resources regardless of the extent of the relationship between the Johannine narrative and the rhetorical tradition.[73]

Our study will consider how the Fourth Gospel's use of these rhetorical features would guide the audience's encounter with the narrative and will suggest ways of thinking and acting this rhetoric might provoke.[74]

The audience.[75] So, what do we mean by audience? Some, like Phelan, use the term "implied audience" to refer to the audience that the author would have had in mind

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[72] Harold W. Attridge, "Argumentation in John 5," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference*, ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter G. Übelacker, Emory Studies in Early Christianity (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2002), 190.

[73] Ibid., 199. See also, Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 70–71., who argues that whether or not the author of the Fourth Gospel was rhetorically trained, "he has enough exposure to imitate standard forms found in his time." She points to Cicero's comments that "anyone hearing a speech could determine good rhetorical style (Orat. 3.50.195)."

[74] See also Attridge, "Argumentation in John 5," 190–99.

[75] As performed stories, the communicative exchange includes the lector/performer who mediates the relationship between the story and the audience. Although the performance of the text can influence how it affects the audience, this project focuses primarily on the textual features as guides to understanding the communicative exchange. Many have made a good case for considering the performance of Gospel texts. See, for example, Kelly R. Iverson, "Orality and the Gospels: A Survey of Recent Research," *CurBR* 8 (2009): 71–106; Kelly Iverson, "A Centurion's 'Confession': A Performance-Critical Analysis of Mark 15:39," *JBL* 130 (2011): 329–50; Wiliam D. Shiell, *Delivering from Memory: The Effect of Performance on the Early Christian Audience* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Whitney Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2003); Whitenton, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship*.

when writing, a hypothetical audience who would possess the requisite knowledge and interpretive skills to respond to the rhetorical elements of the text.[76] Alicia Myers defines "authorial audience" much the same as the "implied reader": a "construction . . . based on the historical and cultural context of the time period and location of the text."[77] Following Peter Rabinowitz, she advocates a two-pronged approach that pairs research concerning the historical and social context of the work (what Charles Talbert calls the audience's "most likely conceptual world") with the analysis of the text itself.[78] Myers helpfully concludes, "Rhetorical criticism offers one avenue into expectations governing literature and persuasion available to both authors and audiences in the Mediterranean world."[79]

Martin Culy cites the similar approach of Charles Talbert and Perry Stepp and suggests that the "authorial audience" differs from the "implied reader" in that the latter is constructed only from the text itself, while the former is an interpretive construct made by blending information outside of and within the text. By "authorial audience," he means "the hypothetical audience for whom the text was designed."[80] His approach

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[76] Phelan uses "implied audience" like Rabinowitz's "authorial audience"—the hypothetical audience that possesses the requisite knowledge and interpretive skills to respond to an author as intended; Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 28 n.1; cf. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*. Others have critiqued these terms since they focus too narrowly on the audience as a construction in the mind of the author; see Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 13–14. Cf. Whitenton, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship* (p. 28 in his dissertation).

[77] Myers, Characterizing Jesus, 18.

[78] Ibid., 18–19; Peter J. Rabinowitz, "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences," *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977): 126–29; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in Its Mediterranean Milieu*, NovTSup 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 16–17.

[79] Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 18. See also 19 n.56 for references to ancient rhetoricians on the importance of audience: Arist. *Rhet*. 1.2.2–8; 1.9.28–31; 3.14.7–11; *Rhet. Alex*. 29.17–40; Cic. *Orat*. 2.128, 178, 182–87; *Inv*. 1.16.22–23; 1.49.92; 2.75.304–306; *Part. Orat*. 8.28; *Rhet. Her*. 1.4.6–7.11; Quint. *Inst*. 3.7.23–25; 3.8.1–48; 6.1–24; 11.1.43–44.

[80] Martin M. Culy, *Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 15.

neither completely discards nor assumes knowledge of authorial intent but readdresses it in terms of a social convention rather than as a reconstruction of the personal psychology of an author. He writes, "The author's use of existing conventions to communicate with a specific, though hypothetical audience led to the creation of a particular text whose meaning was pre-structured by the knowledge shared by the author and authorial audience."[81]

The conception of audience we will adopt for this project could more accurately be termed the "hypothetical historical audience," because it brings alongside the evidence of the historical Johannine community and considers the rhetorical situation behind the Fourth Gospel in light of this evidence.[82] Since the Gospel names no specific addressees and offers no direct information about its first recipients, we must construct a plausible audience and situation from information in the story itself and from what we know about the sociocultural world in which the text was produced and distributed. This information includes rhetorical elements in the text, implied values that become apparent in the story, cultural customs that are described, or references in the narrative to real-world events.[83] Thus the text itself, its historical and socio cultural context, and the background knowledge that the target audience would presumably bring to the text—all of these

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[81] Ibid., 21, cf. 15. Charles H Talbert and Perry L. Stepp, "Succession in Mediterranean Antiquity, Part 2: Luke-Acts," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1998*, vol. 37 (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1998), 148–79.

[82] Kathy Reiko Maxwell ("The Role of the Audience in Ancient Narrative: Acts as a Case Study," *ResQ* 48 [2006]: 172) describes constructing a "plausible, if hypothetical, historical audience."

[83] Wayne Meeks advocates a move beyond vague generalities "to discern the texture of life in particular times and particular places." To this end he utilizes an eclectic approach constructing a social picture of the audience that informs the historical approach by an appeal to the social sciences; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 2. See also Peter Oakes's creative approach that roots the reconstruction of authorial audience in the first-century world and balances it with an appropriate consideration of diversity: Peter Oakes, *Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

factors contribute to the construction of our hypothetical historical audience.[84] Diversity of background and personal experience among audience members means that no audience was completely homogeneous.[85] By acknowledging this diversity, however, we can notice common traits shared by the audience as a collective unit, make informed assumptions about what the audience would know, and suggest how they would react to the narrative.[86]

In sum, this project explores the ways of thinking and living that the Fourth Gospel would likely have engendered, assessing rhetorical clues or cues that would guide the audience in deciphering the moral efficacy implicit in the story. These elements can reveal important information concerning the communicative exchange brought about by an encounter with the narrative since they guided audience members in their interpretive processes.[87] Before offering an overview of the project to illustrate how this method will work towards our aim of articulating Johannine ethics, we will first address some additional introductory issues: John's relationship to the Synoptics and the composition-history of the Gospel.

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[84] See also Culy's discussion (*Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John*, 15–19) of Rabinowitz, "Truth in Fiction," *Before Reading*, and "Whirl Without End," in *Contemporary Literary Theory*, ed. G. Douglas Atkins and Laura Morrow (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 81–100.

[85] Kelly R. Iverson, "'Wherever the Gospel Is Preached': The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christoper W. Skinner (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2011), 205–6. Cf. David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, LEC 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 60. See also Whitenton, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship* (pp. 28–31 in his dissertation).

[86] See the discussion of the audience and the rhetorical situation in Chapter Four below. For more on the role of the audience in the communicative exchange, see Kathy Reiko Maxwell, "The Role of the Audience in Ancient Narrative," 172. Cf. Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines*, 27–78.

[87] On textual or rhetorical features guiding the communicative exchange, see Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 22.

Additional Introductory Issues

The Fourth Gospel's relationship to the Synoptics. In this project we have chosen to treat the Fourth Gospel on its own terms without extensively exploring the possibilities of its relationship to Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Although many scholars in Johannine circles agree that the Fourth Gospel is literarily independent from its Synoptic predecessors,[88] others have suggested that it has some material in common with the Synoptic Gospels, builds upon them, or reacts to them in some way.[89] This view has its roots in the well-known quotation from Clement of Alexandria,

> John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospels, was urged on by his disciples, and, divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel. (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl*. 6.14.7 [Oulton, LCL]).

Similarly, Eusebius himself said that John knew the Synoptics and "welcomed them," supplementing them with his own narrative based on material concerning Jesus's activity before the Baptist was imprisoned (*Hist. Eccl*. 3.24.7-13 [Oulton, LCL]).

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[88] For a cogent articulation of this perspective and a comprehensive presentation of the history of scholarship, see D. Moody Smith, *John among the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001). Cf. Frans Neirynck, "The Question of John and the Synoptics: D. Moody Smith 1992-1999," *ETL* 76 (2000): 122–32; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003, 1:40. Others who take this view include Percival Gardner-Smith, *Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: University Press, 1938); Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium Des Johannes*, 12th ed., KEK 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952); C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); Ibid., *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1982); John A. T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*, ed. J. F. Coakley (Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1987); Oscar Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976).

[89] Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM Press, 1989); Frans Neirynck, "John and the Synoptics," in *L'Évangile de Jean: Sources, rédaction, théologie*, ed. M. de Jonge, BETL 44 (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1977), 73–106. See also, Frans Neirynck, "John and the Synoptics in Recent Commentaries," *ETL* 74 (1998): 386–97. Some suggest that only the final redaction of the Gospel was dependent on the Synoptics. E.g., M. E. Boismard and A. Lamouille, *Le'Evangile de Jean: Commentaire* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1977); Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

In time, various theories concerning John's relationship to the Synoptics emerged with more serious attention to how John utilized his sources.[90] A recent argument on this front is Richard Bauckham's suggestion that the author and audience of the Fourth Gospel knew Mark.[91] Wendy North argues even more strongly that John directly used Mark for his own purposes. Further, she suggests that the Johannine author frequently uses Synoptic material and that examining how he utilizes that material is exegetically fruitful.[92]

While it is not our intension to argue one way or the other here, we may suggest how a perspective allowing John's knowledge or use of Synoptic material could bear on our study. Perhaps most significantly, reading John against a Synoptic backdrop could fill in some gaps in the Johannine presentation of ethics. For example, Johannine references to "keeping" Jesus's word (John 8:37, 51, 55; 14:23-24) could be seen as references to more explicit ethical content from the Synoptics. An analysis of these passages, from this perspective, would enhance the Johannine ethic.

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[90] Some saw John reworking Synoptic material for his own particular purpose in writing a "spiritual" Gospel. B. H. Streeter (*The Four Gospels* [London: Macmillan and Co., 1924], 393–426) suggested that John certainly knew Mark and probably knew Luke, using the latter to help him reinterpret the former. See also the similar perspective outlined in greater detail by Benjamin W. Bacon (*The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate: A Series of Essays on Problems Concerning the Origin and Value of the Anonymous Writings Attributed to the Apostle John* [New York: Moffat, 1910], 368) and later by C. K. Barrett (*The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* [New York: Macmillan, 1955]). Others, like Hans Windisch (*Johannes und die Synoptiker: Wollte der vierte Evangelist die älteren Evangelien ergänzen oder erestzen?* [Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1926]) thought that John sought to displace the Synoptics.

[91] Richard Bauckham, "John for Readers of Mark," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 147–71. In some instances, like the temple cleansing, he sees attempts at correcting or improving upon Mark's version. Bauckham considers the relationship to Mark as an argument in support of reading the Fourth Gospel as intended for a broad Christian audience, not a smaller Johannine community. For a response, see Wendy E. S. North, "John for Readers of Mark?: A Response to Richard Bauckham's Proposal," *JSNT* 25 (2003): 449–68.

[92] See Ibid., *A Journey Round John: Tradition, Interpretation and Context in the Fourth Gospel*, LNTS 534 (NY: T&T Clark, 2015), especially chapters 6, 11, and 13.

At the same time, one might wonder why, if John knew the Synoptics, he did not retain the clarity of some of their ethical statements. Strikingly (as we will see in Chapter Five), the Johannine love command has been called a delimitation of the Synoptic command to love one's neighbor, a corrective that intentionally narrows the broader focus of the Synoptic Gospels. Especially given the Johannine context of conflict, it is difficult to imagine why John would not include the Synoptic command to love your neighbor and enemy. As we will see, however, leaving things implicit and unsaid is a rhetorical strategy often utilized when an author's message may otherwise meet with resistance. Further, we need not posit a dependence on the Synoptics to "fill in" these Johannine gaps; summarizing the requirements of portions of the Law by commanding love of God or love of one's neighbor was a common practice among Jewish writers.[93] Here, the Johannine author may fall in line with this practice, using his own love command to this end.

Thus, the argument in this project does not rise or fall with a certain theory regarding the relationship between John and the Synoptics. In taking Johannine independence as our working assumption, we side with D. Moody Smith:

> It is reasonable to take seriously the Gospel's claim to represent a separate and independent witness. . . . It is not possible to prove that John did not know any of the Synoptics, and improbable that his Gospel was published without cognizance of them (21:25). But the Gospel's independence is obvious, and is a better working hypothesis for exegesis than the assumption that the late-first-century author was writing with the Synoptic Gospels principally in view, whether to supplement, correct, or displace them. John does, in fact, interpret them, but whether that is by the intention of humankind or the providence of God is likely to remain a moot question.[94]

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[93] Novakovic, "The Decalogue in the New Testament." Cf. D. C. Allison, "Mark 12.28-31 and the Decalogue," 273; D Flusser, "The Ten Commandments and the New Testament," 227. See also note 45 above.

[94] Smith, John Among the Gospels, 241.

Here, we will provide a reading of John's Gospel on it's own terms, without suggesting direct use of Synoptic material.

Composition-history and redaction in the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel includes several features that suggest a revision process before it reached its canonical form: differences in Greek style and vocabulary (particularly in the Prologue), inconsistencies in sequence (e.g., in the material between 14:31 and 18:1 and the apparent conclusion to the Gospel in 20:30-31 before its final chapter), extensive repetitions (e.g., 5:19-25 and 5:26-30; 6:35-50 and 6:51-58; 14:1-31 and 16:4-33), and sections that do not match the narrative context (e.g., 3:31-36; 12:44-50). This has caused some scholars to suggest that the author/redactor must have accidentally displaced some passages and distorted the "original" order of the Gospel. These scholars attempt to rearrange those sections and recover the original order.[95] Such an approach is problematic since theories of how the displacement occurred are found wanting, rearrangements involve the danger of subjective interpretation without substantial footing in the text, and—perhaps most significantly—the suggestion that the Gospel is unintelligible in its present form has been debunked by many.[96] As Raymond Brown summarizes, "the theory of accidental displacement seems to create almost as many problems as it solves."[97]

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[95] Bultmann, Das Evangelium Des Johannes; Boismard, Le'Evangile de Jean: Commentaire.

[96] Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John;* Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*; Raymond Edward Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, vol. 2, 2 vols., The Anchor Bible 29A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970). Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1: 112-14.

[97] Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, XXVIII. See also XXIV-XXXIV for more on the various theories of the composition of the Fourth Gospel. Bultmann also proposed various sources to account for the layers of the Fourth Gospel, suggesting that the Evangelist weaved them together. In this theory, the Evangelist's work was found theologically and literarily lackig by an "Ecclesial Redactor" who tried to

More commonly, scholars suggest that a basic body of Gospel material underwent an editing process that led to what we now call the "final form."[98] For example, Brown posits a body of traditional material (similar to the Synoptic tradition but independent of it) that developed over several years or decades (still in oral form) until it had been molded into the distinctly Johannine tradition that formed the basic content of the Gospel. While various community leaders from the "Johannine School"[99] contributed to this developing material, one main teacher (the Evangelist) was responsible for the majority of the content, and he later organized it into the main body of the first edition of the Gospel. This first version was then edited (perhaps more than once) by this same author to address various problems in the diverse community.

Brown then suggests a final redaction by someone other than the Evangelist who was nonetheless from the Johannine School. This redactor, it is thought, inserted additional traditional material resulting in duplications and other apparent additions (e.g., John 11-12, 15-17), shifted some material (e.g., 2:13-25; 6:51-58), and added some new material (e.g., the Prologue and the Epilogue).[100] When it comes to discerning layers of

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correct and improve the Evangelist's work. Cf., Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, XXX. Bultmann's reconstruction is no longer held as tenable, so we will not include further discussion of it here.

[98] Some proponents, like Wilhelm Wilkens (*Die Entstehungsgeschichte Des Vierten Evangeliums* [Zollikon: Evangelischer verlag, 1958]), proposed an extensive rewrite (although he attributes this to the original author whom he sees as the Beloved Disciple). The vast majority of scholars now envision more limited editing.

[99] R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, SBLDS 26 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975).

[100] For another detailed reconstruction of the phases of development of the Johannine tradition, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010); Ibid., "Discernment-Oriented Leadership in the Johannine Situation," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 290–318. For the significance of this reconstruction for understanding the relationship between the Gospel and the Epistles, see the Conclusion.

redaction for the purpose of exegesis, Brown exercises restraint.[101] Though he outlines a hypothetical scenario for the various stages of redaction, he nonetheless approaches the Gospel as it now stands, given that reconstructions are uncertain and given the unity of the final form of the Gospel whose redactor seems to be a member of the Johannine School.

Although we too have chosen to treat the Gospel in its final form, here we will briefly mention a few ways that composition-history may bear on our approach. As we will see, the Prologue figures prominently as a rhetorical guide for understanding the implicit Johannine ethic. Might the suggestion that this section was not included in the original version of the Gospel be problematic for our argument? On the one hand, we might admit that the earliest version of John's Gospel would not have the same moral

[101] "We frankly admit that it is not always possible to distinguish between what belongs to the second editing of the Gospel and what belongs to the final redaction." Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, XXXVI. In his highly influential, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), he presents a reconstruction of the history of the Johannine Community in four phases that he links to the successive stages of development of the tradition. In phase one (mid- 50s to late 80s), pre-Gospel origins of the tradition, he sees a lower Christology linked to the teaching of the Twelve as preserved in the Synoptic tradition. Before the Gospel was written, a group of anti-Temple Jews joined, along with Samaritan converts. This blending of the original Davidic background for understanding Jesus with a Mosaic background elevated the christological conceptions of the group, which challenged the Jewish commitment to monotheism. Alienated from their Jewish community, this new group welcomed Gentile converts and perhaps moved from Palestine to the Diaspora. In phase two, the Gospel was written (ca, 90). In light of the high Christology and universalistic possibilities in its message, tensions rose. The Johannine community experienced persecution from synagogue Jews and conflict with Apostolic Christians. Eventually the Johannine community experienced a split. The separation of the Johannine community into two groups initiated phase 3 (ca. 100), in which the Epistles were written. The Epistles, in Brown's view, represent one interpretation of the Fourth Gospel that emphasized the proper teaching of confession of Jesus incarnate and ethical living within the community. The Letters speak to a secessionist group that began moving toward docetic conceptions of Jesus. Eventually, in phase four (2nd century), the Johannine secessionists took the Gospel with them and employed it in their movement from docetism toward Gnosticism. The Johannine group of the Epistles reconciled with the Apostolic Christians, assimilating to their leadership structure and eventually winning acceptance for their Gospel. For a summary of Brown's reconstruction, see the helpful chart in Brown, *Community*, 166-67. Although Brown points to certain texts as representative of certain phases, his reconstruction is one of community situation, not composition history. Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* 1: 105-108. For more on the relationship between John's Gospel and the Epistles, see the section on that topic in the Conclusion below.

efficacy as the more developed version that included the Prologue as a guide. This is not so troubling, for two reasons.

First, the entirety of the development of the Johannine tradition—from the earliest possible date for oral tradition to have begun forming (30's CE) to the latest possible date of the Gospel's final redaction (before 110CE), constitutes only a few decades. The time period between the *terminus post quem* for the first written version of this Gospel (ca. 70CE in even the earliest estimations) and the *terminus ante quem* for it's final form (110CE) is even shorter. Thus, were we to grant that our argument (based on the rhetorical significance of the Prologue) does not hold for the "original" version of the Johannine Gospel, the document in view would have been circulating for, at most, forty years before being redacted into its final form.[102]

Second, we could suggest that the Prologue was a necessary addition precisely because the earlier version of the Gospel was open to *misreading*. Perhaps the redactor added the Prologue later in order to guide *proper* interpretation of the narrative. Thus, for us to read the Gospel with this rhetorical guide in mind is not only acceptable, it is preferable.[103] Even if we grant the possibility that layers of redacted tradition may make up the Gospel's final form, the abundance of source theories demonstrates the exceeding difficulty of identifying these layers with precision. In describing Udo Schnelle's argument for approaching the final form of the Fourth Gospel as a unit, Jan van der Watt

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[102] Further, this earlier version of the Gospel would have served purposes of its own and need not necessarily present the same emphases as the final version. These apparent differences in content and rhetorical purpose, in fact, lead to the suggestion that the Gospel existed in an earlier version.

[103] See in the Conclusion, the discussion of Paul Anderson's suggestion (in "Discernment-Oriented Leadership in the Johannine Situation") that the final redaction of the Gospel (including the addition of the Prologue) served as a corrective to the misappropriation of the Gospel evidenced in the Epistles.

pronounces, "the text we have is the only text that we are sure really existed."[104] Joining many biblical scholars who see John as a "coherent text" with liteary unity, we approach the Fourth Gospel in its final form and look to the narrative as a whole to guide interpretation of its various parts.[105]

Outlining the Project

The introduction has articulated the principles of the approach and situated that approach in its scholarly context. The chapters that follow will utilize the approach, attending to rhetorical features as a guide for our pursuit of Johannine ethics. Each chapter focuses on one facet of this larger rhetorical approach. These facets are interrelated, and they work together to narrow the range of potential interpretations, moving us closer to answering our interpretive question. It will be helpful, then, to keep in mind that each chapter is not meant to stand alone. Each chapter builds upon the previous one(s), and it is the combined effect that will yield substantive progress in our journey toward articulating Johannine ethics.

In the chapters that follow we will consider four of the Fourth Gospel's rhetorical features: participation in genre, incorporation of encomiastic topics, metaleptic extension of those topics to address the audience's situation, and appropriation of structural devices as guides for interpreting the story's narrative trajectory. Each chapter will first define the

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[104] Jan van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 104.

[105] Udo Schnelle, *Das Evangelium Nach Johannes* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998). Cf., van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters*, 104. Also Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, XXXIV; Ibid., *Community*, 20, n. 25; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1: 112-14. In this discussion we have not included John 7:53-8:11 since it is not found in the earliest manuscripts and does not figure in the argument put forward in this project.

rhetorical feature in question, situating it in the ancient literary context and providing a theoretical framework for discussion. Then, we will turn our attention to the presence of this feature in the Fourth Gospel, offering an analysis of how that rhetorical element guides our pursuit of Johannine ethics.

In Chapter Two we will consider how genre affects the way a text engages the audience in the communicative process. As we will see, the Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre suggests that it engages its audience in the rhetorical process and that ethics will likely be located in the communicative space between the audience and the story. A comparison with Plutarch's *Lives* will be included as an example of one author who utilized narrative biography to engage his audience in ethical deliberation.

In Chapter Three we will show that the author of the Fourth Gospel uses the topics for a formal *encomium* to characterize its hero. Drawing upon rhetorical handbooks, various encomiastic narratives, and encomiastic speeches to illustrate the relevant topics, this chapter will trace each topic as it appears in the Fourth Gospel and will demonstrate how the use of those topics reveals Jesus's unity with the Father as the foundation for his exalted status. The exalted status of the Johannine Jesus complicates invitations for imitation ethics since Jesus's actions seem to flow from his unique identity. Thus, the rhetorical function of the encomiastic topics to establish an elevated Christology is only one part of a rhetorical trajectory that works in two steps. First, the topics establish Jesus's uniquely elevated status and reveal that his status is rooted in his unity with the Father. As we will see in the following chapter, these same rhetorical topics are extended to believers, inviting the disciples and audience members to share in

the unity between Jesus and the Father. It is this concept of unity that is determinative for the group's ethics.

In Chapter Four we will contend that the Fourth Gospel extends the encomiastic topics to demonstrate a rhetorical connection between John's more explicit Christology and his more implicit ethics. The Fourth Gospel engages the audience by incorporating metaleptic elements that pull the audience into the story and dissolve the boundaries between the narrative world and the world of the audience, paving the way for the type of communicative exchange necessary for implicit moral efficacy to be recognized. This metaleptic aspect of the Fourth Gospel makes the rhetorical situation of the audience a significant factor for interpretation. Thus, we will explore what we know about the rhetorical situation of the audience and examine how that knowledge affects our understanding of Johannine ethics. The situation of the Johannine community, its crisis of identity, and the threat of persecution provide an important interpretive backdrop for understanding the inward focus of the love command and the Gospel's emphasis on Jesus's victorious suffering. As we will see, the two-level narrative form and other instances of metalepsis powerfully disrupt the boundary between the narrative world and the world of the audience, drawing the audience to make inferences from the story and apply them to their own particular situation. Together with the Gospel's metaleptic engagement of the audience, the extension of the encomiastic topics leads the audience to connect the clear characterization of Jesus first to the disciples in the story and then to their own identity, behavior, and mission. We will see that, when viewed rhetorically, the christological emphasis of the Fourth Gospel becomes the vehicle for its implicit ethic rather than a competing element.

In Chapter Five we will investigate how the Fourth Gospel's appropriation of certain rhetorical structural devices as discussed by Quintilian, Lucian, and others guides the audience in the interpretive process. The macro-level trajectory of the story, presented in the prologue and the chain-link construction at the Gospel's midpoint, reveals key themes that affirm the moral efficacy of the text uncovered by the previous rhetorical analyses. By introducing guiding themes, these devices provide interpretive boundaries for understanding the concepts of identity and mission that are determinative for the community's ethics. These themes also serve as guidelines for deciphering how various scenes in the Gospel contribute to its macro-level narrative rhetorical trajectory. As we will see, the prologue sets the Johannine story within the larger interpretive context of God's commitment to restore the positive relationship between the created world and the Creator. Incarnation and reconciliation become guiding themes for interpretation. Further, the chain-link interlock provides a framework for understanding the Gospel's christological emphasis in light of Jesus's incarnational mission. It reinforces unity as a guiding theme for reading the two main sections of the Gospel. The first half of the narrative, focusing on Christology, establishes Jesus's unity with God. The second half of the narrative extends this unity to believers through Jesus's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and departure. Unity with God is revealed as the purpose of Jesus's incarnate work on earth and the power behind it. Jesus, in unity with God, came to earth to reveal God and to invite believers to participate in this unity. Further, those who believe are called to extend this unity to the world at large. Thus, unity with God is both

the enabling power for and the goal of Johannine ethics since joining God's mission determines believers' actions in the world.[106]

Taken together, these rhetorical features reveal a moral efficacy that revolves around the believers' incorporation into the unity shared between the Father and the Son. Chapter Six will rehearse the study's findings and will demonstrate that there is much we *can* say about Johannine ethics.

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[106] Although this project does not systematically go through the Fourth Gospel chapter by chapter or verse by verse, our attention to rhetorical elements yields quite comprehensive coverage of the Gospel including substantial treatment of chapters 1, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, as well as cursory treatment of other passages from throughout the Gospel.

CHAPTER TWO

Participation in the *Bios* Genre: Moral Efficacy and Audience Engagement in Narrative Biography

Exploring The Genre of the Fourth Gospel

Genre analysis is often seen as a foundational "first step" on which every other aspect of interpretation depends.[1] Generic categories imply certain purposes, and thus a text's participation in a genre shapes audience expectations and frames interpretation. As Heta Pyrhönen explains, "Genre directs the ways in which we write, read, and interpret texts. . . . A genre functions as a norm or an expectation guiding writers in their work and readers in the encounter with texts."[2] This chapter explores genre as a means to discover what expectations would have guided the early readers of the Fourth Gospel and thus, what they would have recognized in terms of Johannine ethics. As we will see, the Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre opens the possibility for ethical interests despite the lack of explicit ethical material in the Gospel. The chapter proceeds in two parts.

In the first section of this chapter, I will outline the state of the question on the genre of the Fourth Gospel. First, I will survey the history of Gospel genre research (with particular attention to the Fourth Gospel). Next, I will trace key developments in genre theory from the Aristotelian concept to modern genre theory. This exploration of genre theory provides a more flexible conception of genre, pushing away from the

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[1] E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, Studies in the Art of the Renaissance 2 (London: Phaidon, 1972), 121. See also Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*, JSNTSup 69 (Sheffield: JSNT Press, 1992), 67.

[2] Heta Pyrhönen, "Genre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman, Cambridge Companions to Literature and Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109. See similar comments in Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*, 67.

categorization of the Fourth Gospel into a single genre and moving toward consideration of the Fourth Gospel's *participation* in the genre of *bios*. The Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre suggests that the audience would likely have expected a moral or ethical function to be a part of the narrative.

In the second section of this chapter, I will explore how implicit ethics functions in a group of biographical texts that include an explicitly moral purpose—the *Lives* of Plutarch. Though the parallel is inexact, the *Lives* open up new possibilities to direct a more profitable search for Johannine ethics by facilitating new questions that can be applied to the Fourth Gospel.

Gospel Genre: The State of the Question

Many in the academy continue to hold the view that the four canonical Gospels share a single literary genre, whether a shared Jewish or Greco-Roman genre or a new genre entirely. Considering the four Gospels together, a sweep of the history of research presents us with the following picture.[3]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ernest Renan and Clyde Votaw noticed correspondences between the Gospel presentations of Jesus and other ancient presentations of the lives of great men, such as the presentation of Socrates by Xenophon, Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, or Arrian's collected *Discourses of*

[3] For more on the history of research on the genre of the Fourth Gospel, see D. Moody Smith, *The Fourth Gospel in Four Dimensions: Judaism and Jesus, the Gospels and Scripture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 144–55; Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Genre of the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman Literary Conventions," in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, TENTS 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 435–62.

Epictetus.[4] Votaw suggested that, like these authors, the Gospel writers composed their narratives in order to uplift their leader's reputation and carry on his teaching.[5] Votaw also saw a connection in the way the historical character could be pursued from within the writings. For example, comparing the quest for the historical Socrates and the quest for the historical Jesus, he writes:

> The fact which most impresses one is that revering, competent purposeful disciples of the two greatest teachers of the ancient world held tenaciously to the precious personality, example, and message of their heroes, perpetuated their memory and influence, developed and adapted their teaching for subsequent generations, and established what they had founded, conserved the moral values that Socrates and Jesus had created, and put into permanent motion their moral impulses and ideals.[6]

Similarly, Votaw noted Arrian's purpose to preserve a record of Epictetus's teachings in the *Discourses* and Philostratus's bringing together of different events to form a lasting picture of Apollonius's life. Votaw claimed that these "popular biographies" (Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus*, and Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*) were the best comparisons to the Gospels.[7]

The *bios* theory would later be refined, but before this suggestion became consensus, several other theories held significant scholarly ground. First, Schmidt argued for the uniqueness of the Gospels and proposed a "Gospel" genre, *sui generis*. His suggestion was rooted in the idea put forward by form critics like Martin Dibelius and

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[4] Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus*, trans. Charles E. Wilbour (New York: Carleton, 1863); Clyde Weber Votaw, *The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies in the Greco Roman World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970); originally published in *AmJT* (1915). The discussion of the particular similarities between the Gospels and Graeco-Roman *bioi* is included under Burridge's model below.

[5] Votaw, Gospels and Biographies, 33.

[6] Ibid., 62; cf. 36.

[7] See below for a discussion of how advances in scholarship (especially by Talbert and Burridge) extended the discussion to include different *bioi*.

Rudolf Bultmann that the Gospels cannot be classified according to the conventions of other literature because they are folk legends uniquely appropriated for religious community life.[8] In the 1960s, Moses Hadas and Morton Smith returned to the *bios* theory, drawing a direct comparison to ancient aretalogy (elevated hero biographies).[9] Charles Talbert also argued for the classification of the Gospels as *bioi* in the 1970s.[10] Accepting Bultmann's three-fold criteria for determining genre, Talbert illustrated the overlap between the Gospels and Greco-Roman *bioi* in form, function, and attitude. Tackling Bultmann's rejection of the *bios* hypothesis, Talbert demonstrated that each of these Gospel elements (the mythical structure, cultic function, and self-expressive attitude of world involvement) found parallels in Greco-Roman *bioi*.

Utilizing the categories of content, form, and function, Talbert distinguished between the genres of biography and history (adding romance as a third, less-discussed genre). He noted that history offered a detailed account with regard to cause and effect, focusing on the acts of great men within their social or political spheres, while biography gave a highly selective account with the narrower purpose of focusing on the character or essence of the individual.[11]

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[8] K. L. Schmidt, "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen," in *ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ: Studien zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, ed. Schmidt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923), 50–134; Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. Bertram Lee Woolf (New York: Scribner, 1935); Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

[9] Moses Hadas and Morton Smith, *Heroes and Gods: Spiritual Biographies in Antiquity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

[10] Charles H. Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?: The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). See also Charles H. Talbert, "Once Again: Gospel Genre," *Semeia* 43 (1988): 53–73, where Talbert responds to some of the objections raised by his original suggestion.

[11] For example, Sallust's *Cataline* and *Jurgutha* are categorized as historical monographs, not biographies, because they narrate political events in which a great man was involved rather than focusing on his essence; Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?*, 16.

Talbert thus located the Gospels within the *bios* genre, but, focusing on the function of the writings, he offered a corrective to the longstanding list of genre subtypes that came from Friedrich Leo's criteria of formal arrangement and degree of historical reliability.[12] He described Leo's classification system as "*ex post facto*," purely descriptive. He proposed a system of classification based instead on "*function(s)* of the writings in their social-intellectual-spiritual milieu."[13] So doing, he focused on the three didactic types of *bioi* (encomiastic, peripatetic, and popular), which he further divided into the following:

Type A biographies provided readers a pattern to copy (e.g., Lucian's *Demonax*,[14] Isocrates's *Evagoras*, Xenophon's *Agesilaus*, and many of Plutarch's *Lives*). Type B dispelled the false image of a leader or teacher and provided a true model to follow (e.g., Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Philodemus's *Life of Epicurus*, Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, and Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras*).[15] Type C discredited a teacher, usually via satire (e.g., Lucian, *Passing of Pereginus*, *Alexander the False Prophet*). Type D indicated where the "living voice" was to be found after the period of the founder (e.g., the third century BCE *Life of Aristotle*, "Successions" in Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*). Type E provided the hermeneutical key for the teacher's doctrine (e.g., Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*; *Secundus the Silent Philosopher*).

Concerning the Fourth Gospel, Talbert concluded:

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[12] Friedrich Leo, *Griechisch-Römische Biographie Nach Ihrer Litterarischen Form* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901); as cited in Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?*, 93, n.10. See also Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 10, 19–20, 45–46.

[13] Talbert, What Is a Gospel?, 93.

[14] See especially *Demonax* 2, where Lucian explains that the story of Demonax should function as a pattern for young philosophers to copy.

[15] See the explicit explanatory comments in Isocrates's *Busiris* 4–5.

> John . . . is a Type B Life of Jesus. It was written to defend against a misunderstanding of the savior and to present a true picture of him. The Fourth Gospel tells Jesus' story in terms of the myth of a descending-ascending redeemer figure. This is a creative adaptation of the biographical genre and is unlike anything else in the Graeco-Roman lives of founders.[16]

Though he classified the Fourth Gospel (and the other Gospels) within a sub-genre of *bios,* Talbert maintained that these were creative adaptations of their genres/sub-genres and still represented a distinctive proclamation.

Talbert's attention to how these writings functioned is helpful; however, his exclusive focus on *one* function of a text (the prominence of which is not always demonstrated) neglects the complexity of rhetorical purposes that may be a part of a given text. Thus, Talbert's analysis excludes some comparisons that might be helpful (e.g., the comparison with Plutarch's *Lives*, which he categorizes as a Type A Biography). As we will see below in the section on genre theory, a more flexible approach will prove profitable for our analysis of the Fourth Gospel and will allow us to focus on the rhetorical purposes and functions of the text that are most helpful for the pursuit of Johannine ethics.

Shortly after Talbert's work was published, Philip Shuler published the findings from his 1975 doctoral thesis, which noted how the Gospels corresponded to the rhetorical conventions of encomium. Thus, he suggested the category of "encomium biography" as a fitting genre for the Gospels.[17] His analysis focused on Matthew, but Johannine scholarship has successfully applied a similar framework to the Fourth Gospel.

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[16] Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?*, 135.

[17] Philip L. Shuler, "The Synoptic Gospels and the Problem of Genre" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1975). Philip L. Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). Shuler's dissertation treated all three Synoptic Gospels, while the later publication focused solely on Matthew. See also Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

Shuler's step is both problematic and promising. The conclusion is problematic because it blurs the lines between rhetorical tools or *topoi* utilized in a literary work and the generic form of that work. The designation is promising, however, because the focus on the rhetorical character of a Gospel allowed Shuler to say more about how that Gospel was unique among other works within the same genre. In this project, I will treat the rhetorical topics utilized by the Fourth Gospel below in a section of its own, applying a corrective to Shuler while exploring the promising aspects of his suggestion.

Just as Talbert and Shuler offered refined versions of the *bios* theory presented by Renan and Votaw, Richard Burridge used his training as a classicist to ground the suggestion more solidly in the primary sources of Greco-Roman literature.[18] His analysis most clearly describes the ways in which the Gospels correspond to Greco-Roman *bioi*. Burridge considers five texts from before the composition of the Gospels and five later texts. For the early examples, he includes two rhetorical texts in Isocrates's *Evagoras* (374-365 BCE) and Xenophon's *Agesilaus* (360 BCE), a Hellenistic literary *bios* in Satyrus's *Euripides* (third or fourth century BCE fragments), an example from Republican Rome in Nepos's *Atticus* (late first century BCE), and an example from Alexandrian Judaism in Philo's *Moses* (mid to late first century BCE). For his later examples, Burridge includes Tacitus's *Agricola* (98 CE), Plutarch's *Cato Minor* (late first century CE), Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* (especially Julius Caesar and Augustus, late first century to early second century CE), Lucian's *Demonax* (late second century CE), and Philostratus's *Apollonius of Tyana* (early third century CE).

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[18] Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, SNTSMS 70 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). This revised edition expanded upon the 1992 version, which was largely based on Burridge's doctoral thesis. Most significantly, the revision includes an additional essay in which the author interacts with reactions to the book.

For each example, Burridge analyzes the following categories: opening features, subject, external features, and internal features. He concludes that the Gospels, like other Greco-Roman *bioi*, are "medium length prose works, portraying the character of one subject through a mixture of similar literary units and topics."[19] Admitting the variety of date and setting, he argues that the Gospels exhibit a similar range of generic features within a flexible pattern. The strongest similarity is the focus on the account of one person (as demonstrated by the title or verbal analysis). While space allocation varies, similar subject matter flows from typical characterization topics and motifs. He writes, "Each author selects common literary units, such as anecdotes, stories, speeches, and quotations, drawn from a variety of oral and written sources to portray the subject's character through the indirect means of narrating his deeds and words."[20] Each *bios* thus exhibits deliberate focus on the main character, begins with a formal prologue to establish a relationship with the audience and introduce the subject, and concludes with an epilogue to recapitulate themes and appeal to the audience. Like these *bioi*, the Gospels vary in their arrangement, but rhetorical attention and intentionality with arrangement is clear. Like these *bioi*, the invention (or the rhetorical unfolding of the subject matter) is carried out utilizing a variety of rhetorical tools and set rhetorical *topoi*. Like many ancient *bioi*, the Gospels give more sustained attention to the death of the subject. Like these *bioi*, the Gospels vary their style to fit their audience/context and rhetorical agenda.[21]

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[19] Richard A. Burridge, "Biography," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.—A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 508.

[20] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 149–50.

[21] Burridge, "Biography," 527.

Largely due to Burridge's work,[22] a considerable number of scholars now agree that the Gospels correspond closely to the genre category of *bios*. Like every consensus, however, the *bios* theory has its detractors.[23] For example, Loveday Alexander finds the biographical story cycles of biblical heroes like Samson and Elijah, set as they are within a religious and ethical narrative, to be the strongest comparisons to the Gospels. She writes, "It is to the biblical tradition, surely, that we should look for the origins of the 'religious intensity' of the gospel narratives and their rich ideological intertextuality with the biblical themes."[24] Adela Collins similarly claims an "obvious conceptual and literary connection" between the Gospels and the character-focused historiography in Judges and the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.[25] She claims that Burridge's "very brief review of scholarship under the heading, 'The Jewish Background' . . . does not constitute a serious consideration of the relevant genres of Jewish literature" and suggests that the parallels from Jewish literature are just as important to consider as the parallels from the Greco-Roman world.[26] Rather than arguing that the Gospels are to be categorized within the genre of Jewish historiography, though, Collins challenges

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[22] Another doctoral dissertation aligned closely with Burridge's approach and came to similar conclusions: Dirk Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie: die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst* (Tübingen: Francke, 1997). Frickenschmidt, however, allows a bit more room for generic overlap—at least in the case of Luke-Acts, which he defines as a "biographisch-historiographisches Doppelwerk" (see pages 498–500 of the aforementioned work). Cf. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 285–86.

[23] See Dennis L. Stamps, "The Johannine Writings," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.—A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 615–20 for an outline of several genre suggestions for the Fourth Gospel including *bios*, Jewish theodicy, archetypal narrative, and sui generis.

[24] Loveday Alexander, "What Is a Gospel?," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 27.

[25] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Genre and the Gospels," *JR* 75 (1995): 239–46.

[26] Ibid., 241.

Burridge's exclusive categorization of the Gospels as *bioi* and wonders whether the Gospels might constitute a hybrid or mixed genre rather than fitting entirely in the *bios* genre.[27]

Scholars who focus exclusively on the Fourth Gospel have issued similar objections.[28] For instance, Margaret Davies claimed that the Fourth Gospel is best categorized as "theodicy," alongside similar narratives in the Hebrew Bible, and Andreas Köstenberger argued that the Fourth Gospel inherited its "theological and literary underpinnings" from the Hebrew Scriptures.[29] Like Loveday Alexander had suggested a few years prior, Köstenberger saw the external shape of the Fourth Gospel as strongly reminiscent of Greek *bios* but the narrative mode and theological framework as owing much more to what he calls Old Testament historical narrative.[30] Köstenberger presented the difference in terms of "a purpose to evoke a faith response rather than to entertain or inform." Designating the Fourth Gospel a Greco-Roman *bios*, he said, ignores the theological or kerygmatic aspects of the text. Additionally, he maintained that while a Greco-Roman *bios* would be expected to include a named author, a formal literary

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[27] See a similar argument that maintains the *bios* genre while admitting the strong correspondence to biblical narratives in Róbert Jáger, "Evanjelium ako anticky bios: Definovanie literárneho zánru," *Studia Biblica Slovaca* 1 (2009): 146–65.

[28] Several scholars, focusing on individual Gospels (rather than all four together), have argued that various generic categories might be more fitting for a particular Gospel. For example, David P. Moessner ("Re-Reading Talbert's Luke: The Bios of 'Balance' or the 'Bias' of History?," in *Cadbury, Knox, and Talbert: American Contributions to the Study of Acts*, ed. Mikeal C. Parsons and Joseph B. Tyson [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 203–28), designates Luke-Acts as historical narrative. See also the discussions on the genre of the Fourth Gospel below.

[29] Köstenberger, "The Genre of the Fourth Gospel."

[30] Alexander, "What Is a Gospel?," 17. Alexander intentionally treats the Gospels together, suggesting that "the fourfold gospel, recognized and valued by the church from early on, is a significant literary phenomenon in its own right." The canonical perspective is certainly an interesting and valid point of view; however, the focus of this project is on the rhetorical exchange between this text and its early readers. Thus, we consider the Fourth Gospel on its own terms.

preface, and a human hero, the Fourth Gospel is anonymous, lacks such a preface, and focuses on a main character who exceeds the "hero" category.

Still, as Köstenberger himself admits, the Fourth Gospel corresponds significantly to works categorized within the *bios* genre in narrative shape and style. Like other *bioi*, the Fourth Gospel includes a formal preface (though a unique one). Like the encomiastic narrative practice often used in *bioi*, the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus's "great deeds" to authenticate his status. Like other *bioi* (especially Philostratus's *Apollonius of Tyana* and Satyrus's *Euripides*), the Fourth Gospel varies continuous prose with extended dialogues and discourses. Also (like *Cato Minor* and especially *Apollonius of Tyana*), the Fourth Gospel devotes approximately one third of the space to the last week of the hero's life. Though none of these external features in and of themselves prove that the Fourth Gospel should be categorized within the *bios* genre, they suggest significant overlap with this genre.

Several other considerations further complicate outright dismissal of the Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre. First, as the previously mentioned aretalogy studies showed, ancient heroic conceptions could be extremely elevated. A supra-human hero was not outside the realm of possibility in ancient biography. Second, as we will discuss below, the purpose of Greco-Roman *bioi* also often extends beyond entertainment or information. Thus, the sophisticated purpose of the Fourth Gospel does not disqualify it from being associated with ancient biography.

A few points can be gained from this survey of the *status quaestionis* of Gospel genre and the genre of the Fourth Gospel. First, despite many worthy attempts to solidly classify the Fourth Gospel as belonging to one certain genre, the question is still

unresolved. Suggestions for generic categories are either criticized for being too broadly comparative, ignoring the uniqueness of the Fourth Gospel, or they are critiqued for being too narrow, aligning it with a specific literary category that doesn't correspond in every detail. I agree with Köstenberger and Alexander that we cannot hope to find a mold into which John poured his Jesus story.[31] Caution, however, must be exercised when deciding which correspondences are "merely surface affinities" and which carry theological or rhetorical weight.

Further, even among those who agree on the *bios* theory, a lack of clarity remains. The texts included in the *bios* genre are located within the broad span of almost a thousand years, and the narrative forms range from fragmentary anecdotes to gathered discourses to sophisticated narratives. Thus, a further narrowing of our comparative literary source pool will enhance analysis of the Fourth Gospel's overlap with the *bios* genre. Before moving on to literary comparison, a look at genre theory will demonstrate what we mean by genre and how we are approaching generic analysis.

Genre Theory: From Exclusive Categorization to Flexible Participation

Genre is conceived in various ways, but most conceptions include groups of texts divided into categories based on recognizable shared features of style, form, or content.[32] In some respects, readers and interpreters create these groups, and classification is a heuristic device externally applied to a text. In other respects, genre is intrinsic to a text—whether it be a generic convention adopted intentionally by an author or features within

[31] With the concession, they both choose Jewish historiography as the most helpful generic comparison for the Gospel literature.

[32] Pyrhönen, "Genre," 109.

the text itself that "place it" among other similar writings and therefore within a certain genre.[33]

Aristotelian views of genre strongly emphasize structure and the mimetic character of texts, seeing genre in terms of a fixed and exhaustive classification system.[34] In his *Poetics*, Aristotle himself speaks of differentiating poetic genres based on the medium (diction or lyric poetry), the object (actions of superior or inferior characters), and mode (narrative or dramatic) (Aristotle, *Poet*. 6-7).[35] Though Aristotle lists distinguishing features to which each of these genres should correspond and issues a qualitative judgment based on the extent to which they do so (Aristotle, *Poet*. 10), his system is clearly flexible. For example, he writes that "adherence to traditional plots of tragedy should not be sought at all costs. Indeed, to seek this is absurd" (Aristotle, *Poet*. 9 [Halliwell, LCL]). Later discussions, like that in *Ars poetica* attributed to Horace, even more strongly emphasize structural unity and *mimesis* in genre, with a fixed number of "kinds" that follow fixed rules (Horace, *Ars poetica* 73–98). This view of a static literary system extended into the neoclassical literary criticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to varying degrees in the thinking of French critics like René Bossu and Pierre

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[33] See, for example, Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, trans. Charles Segal, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 44 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). See also Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti, Theory and History of Literature 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

[34] Tom Thatcher ("The Gospel Genre: What Are We After?," *ResQ* 36 (1994): 135) helpfully describes how Aristotle is operating at a higher conceptual level than biblical scholars since biblical scholars work within the one medium of literature and look at genre within this context. Aristotle's framework, as we see, extends to other media as well.

[35] This structure leads him to at least three generic categories: tragedy (superior-dramatic), epic (superior-narrative), and comedy (inferior-dramatic). His extended discussion on the latter is missing and may have included a fourth category, parody (inferior-narrative). M. Cavitch, "Genre," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Stephen Cushman et al., 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 551–54.

Corneille and their English counterparts like John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and Samuel Johnson.[36] But this rigid and formalist system met resistance with the Romantics—from Victor Hugo, William Wordsworth, and Madame de Staël to Goethe and Schlegel.[37] Some even began to reject the notion of genre altogether, because it detracts attention from a text's singularity.[38] But for most, the emphasis on the freedom and original creating power of the artist (as opposed to mimetic power) and the tendency toward interdisciplinary methods expanded the limited mechanical approach to genre to include insights from philosophy and cultural psychology.[39]

Modern genre theory continued to push against Aristotelian and neoclassical concepts of genre but maintained that genre was still an invaluable concept for literary

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[36] For more on literary criticism in this period, see French writers René Le Bossu, *Traité du poème épique* (Paris: Chez Michel Le Petit, 1675); Nicolas Boileau Despréaux, *L'art Poétique* (Paris: Hachette, 1922); François Hédelin Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre* (Paris: Chez Antoine de Sommaville, 1657). Pierre Corneille, *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique: (texte de 1660)*, ed. Louis Forestier (Paris: Société d'Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1982), who paved a way for an Aristotelian approach that was a bit more flexible. English critics like Dryden and Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism* (London, 1711), and to a further extent Samuel Johnson, extended this way of thinking. Though Johnson's theory fit within neoclassicism, his bent for practicality made him less dogmatic than his predecessors, and so he acts as a transitional figure pointing to the age of the Romantics.

[37] Harold Bloom and Janyce Marson, eds., *William Wordsworth* (New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2009); Victor Hugo, *Cromwell* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968), esp. 107; William Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. 182; Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, ed. Simone Balayé (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968); Friedrich von Schleg, *Literary Notebooks 1797-1801*, ed. Hans Eichner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957); Friedrich von Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991). See the discussion of these figures in Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 17; Cyrus Hamlin, "The Origins of a Philosophical Genre Theory in German Romanticism," *European Romantic Review* 5 (1994): 9–11; Tilottama Rajan, "Theories of Genre," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. Marshall Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 226–49.

[38] Famously, Benedetto Croce, Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale: Teoria e storia (Ulan, 2012).

[39] See further discussion in Rajan, "Theories of Genre." See also Hamlin, "The Origins of a Philosophical Genre Theory in German Romanticism."

analysis.[40] This way of thinking conceived of a system that was open and flexible (not fixed) and descriptive (not prescriptive or evaluative). Modern genre theory, then, brought a reconfiguration of categories, in which a text could exhibit shifting combinations of features (formal, thematic, stylistic, or mimetic). Genre theory today notices that texts (or their authors) have the ability to deviate self-consciously from a generic form. This fact does not argue against generic classification per se; rather, it perceives that generic features form the stable norms by which a single text's uniqueness can be measured.[41] As Tzvetan Todorov writes, "The fact that a work 'disobeys' its genre does not mean that the genre does not exist. It is tempting to say 'quite the contrary' . . . because, in order to exist as such, the transgression requires a law—precisely the one that is to be violated."[42] In other words, for a text to be intelligible, it must have a set of conventions by which its novelty can be measured. Generic conventions make it possible to perceive innovation. So, without abandoning genre systems altogether, we might prefer to speak—with Derrida—of a text "participating in" a genre rather than "belonging to" a generic category.[43] A text's participation within a certain genre (or genres) can direct

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[40] See Cavitch, "Genre" for a brief survey of the various modern conceptions of genre. "Post-Crocean reassertions and refutations of the meaningfulness and utility of the concept of genre are extremely diverse, ranging from Crane's neo-Aristotelianism, to Jakobson's emphasis on ling. [sic.] structures and Bakhtin's on 'speech genres,' to Burke's posing of genres as frames of symbolic adjustment, to the competing anthropological structuralisms of Frye and Todorov, to Jauss's historical-systems model, to Miller's situational pragmatics, to Jameson's historical materialism, to Kristeva's intertextuality, to Nelson's psychoanalytic reflections on genre as repetition compulsion . . . to the reflexive questioning of critical genres in Stewart, Jackson, and Poovey" (554).

[41] Pyrhönen, "Genre," 112.

[42] Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14.

[43] Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," in *Signature Derrida*, ed. Jay Williams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 7.

audience interpretation since generic norms build expectations that guide encounters with the text.[44]

This concept of generic participation opens up the possibility that a text might participate in multiple genres to varying degrees. Thus, a text conceivably could participate in the *bios* genre to a significant degree while still exhibiting overlap with history, epic, or some other genre. Participation in multiple genres is not only a modern concept. As Alexander mentions, a "new biographical mood" was emerging near the time of the Fourth Gospel, where biographies like Tacitus's *Agricola* and Lucian's *Demonax* blended generic forms to present "affectionate portraits of well-loved individuals based on personal recollection, following a broadly narrative outline, and designated to foster imitation as well as memory."[45] Similarly, she offers the example of *De vita Mosis*, suggesting that biographical narrative provided a point of contact between Greco-Roman and Jewish culture.[46] So this period was one of literary transformation, experimentation, flexibility, combination, and at times the emergence of entirely new genres.[47]

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[44] David Duff, *Modern Genre Theory*, Longman Critical Readers (Harlow, England: Longman, 2000), 1–24.

[45] Alexander, "What Is a Gospel?," 27. For a discussion of how literary development might have paralleled or been influenced by political developments, see Simon Swain, "Biography and Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire," in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire*, ed. M. J. Edwards and Simon Swain (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 1–37; Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*. Both of these writers, seeing some distinction between biography and history, nevertheless allow for flexibility.

[46] Alexander ("What Is a Gospel?," 28) writes that these cross-cultural bio-historical narratives "reflect the ideology and cultural values of a particular ethical tradition."

[47] David E. Aune, "The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography," *Mosaic* 20 (1987): 2. See also John Fitzgerald, "The Ancient Lives of Aristotle and the Modern Debate about the Genre of the Gospels," *ResQ* 36 (1994): 210.

The comments of ancient authors further illustrate such generic overlap.[48] Ancient writers distinguished between history and biography at times, indicating that biography was more selective in its presentation, was more approachable to the general public (as opposed to history's lengthy accounts of deeds and events), and aimed at moral formation of the audience. For example, Cornelius Nepos writes in *On the Great Generals of Foreign Nations*:

> Pelopidas, the Theban, is better known to historians than to the general public. I am in doubt how to give an account of his merits; for I fear that if I undertake to tell of his deeds, I shall seem to be writing a history rather than a biography; but if I merely touch upon the high points, I am afraid that to those unfamiliar with Grecian literature it will not be perfectly clear how great a man he was. Therefore I shall meet both difficulties as well as I can, having regard both for the weariness and the lack of information of my readers (16.1. [Rolfe, LCL]).

And in his introduction to *Alexander* and *Caesar*, Plutarch writes:

> I do not tell of all the famous actions of these men, nor even speak exhaustively at all in each particular case. . . . In the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or the sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters get the likeness in their portraits from the face and the expression of the eyes, wherein the character shows itself, but make very little account of the other parts of the body, so I must be permitted to devote myself rather to the signs of the soul in men, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the description of their great contests (Plutarch, *Alex*. 1.1–3 [Perrin, LCL]).

Still, the distinction between history and biography is vague and sometimes seems arbitrary. For example, it is unclear in some of Plutarch's remarks (for example, *Demosthenes* 2.1-3–3.1-2) whether he distinguishes his *bioi* from history altogether, or whether he is merely noticing that his *bioi* fit the category of history though they are unique in some aspects (namely, they may be seen as deficient due to his small city's lack of resources). In fact, Plutarch indicates some overlap in the two terms in his introduction

[48] For these references, I am indebted to Thatcher, "The Gospel Genre," 132–35.

to *Timoleon*, when he speaks of this *bios* as a history (ἱστορία) and calls the main characters the subjects of each history (*Tim*. 1.1–2). The overlap of the two categories—in terms of form and function—is also evident in other writings. Discussing Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* and Polybius's *Histories*, Thatcher further explains:

> These authors illustrate the close similarity between "historical" and "biographical" genres in the period of the Gospels. In **form**, both genres may appear as a time-plotted narrative of historical events, which **functions** to provide the reader with models for personal reflection and emulation. Plutarch's testimony is notable, as he seems to use the terms βίος and ἱστορία interchangeably to describe the same literary activity.[49]

Thatcher admits that histories and biographies often differ in content; as Talbert famously noted in his discussion of Plutarch's introduction to *Alexander* (1.1–2), biographies focus on character, histories on great exploits. But, as the above discussion of *Timoleon* suggests, this distinction was not clear. What some have mistaken as a sharp divide between history and biography was actually a distinction between history and encomium. See, for example, Lucian's account of the sub-genre "narrative encomium," which offered falsely elevated historical narratives in order to praise the hero. He writes:

> [S]uch writers (of narrative ἐγκώμιον) seem unaware that history has aims and rules different from poetry and poems. In the case of the latter, liberty is absolute and there is one law—the will of the poet. Inspired and possessed by the Muses as he is, even if he wants to harness winged horses to a chariot, even if he sets others to run over water or the top of the corn, nobody gets annoyed; not even when their Zeus swings land and sea together suspended from a single cord are they afraid it will break and everything fall and smash. . . . But if history introduces flattery of that sort, what else does it become but a sort of prose-poetry, lacking indeed the high style of poetry, but showing the rest of poetry's sorcery without metre, and for that reason in a more conspicuous way? So it is a great deal—all too great a fault—not to know how to keep the attributes of history and poetry separate, and to bring poetry's embellishments into history—myth and eulogy and the exaggeration of both: it is as if you were to dress one of our tough, rugged athletes in a purple dress and the rest of the paraphernalia of a pretty light-o'-love and

[49] Ibid., 133 (emphasis original to the author).

> daub and paint his face. Heavens! (Lucian, *How to Write History* 7–8 [Kilburn, LCL]).

Lucian suggested that the sub-genre encomium offered a degree of poetic license not allowed in traditional historical work. This distinction, however, does not necessarily eliminate the overlap between history and biography, both of which take narrative form and may function to laud the main character. Instead, the distinction was drawn between history and encomium (ἐγκώμιον), and the "great wall" dividing these two was the poetic form of the latter.[50] Biographies did not take on poetic form; rather, the biographical genre maintained a good deal of overlap with both the historical genre and encomium.

In his piece on "Genre Bending," Harold Attridge shows that the Fourth Gospel takes a "playful" approach to genre, creatively utilizing, blending, and bending generic conventions.[51] He suggests that Virgil and Diogenes the Cynic utilized similar strategies, though for different reasons. David Aune presented similar ideas (focusing on the genre/genres of Matthew and Mark), suggesting that while genres are made up of a "hard core" of prototypical members exhibiting a high degree of "family resemblance" to one another, they also include other, less typical, marginal members (we might say texts or discourses that are *participating* in the said genre rather than belonging wholly to or being a prototype of it).[52] Johannine scholars have recently taken up this approach to

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[50] Lucian's examples are references to Homer's famous epic poem, the *Iliad* (ii.478; viii.18; xx.226).

[51] Harold W. Attridge, *Essays on John and Hebrews*, WUNT 264 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 61–78. His analysis, primarily focused on the micro-level genres of various episodes, is nonetheless helpful (when he ventures to discuss macro-level genre, his conclusions are a bit more abstract or theological rather than literary and rhetorical).

[52] David Edward Aune, ed., Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity: Collected Essays II, WUNT 303 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 25–56.

genre criticism in the impressive volume, *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic*, edited by Kasper Bro Larsen.[53] In his contribution to this volume, Attridge develops his notion of genre bending and tasks interpreters to "trace the arc of the bending," a suggestion which he and other contributors (George Parsenios and Jo-Ann Brant) take up in their essays.[54] Other contributors (Colleen Conway and Ole Davidsen) suggest that the Gospel participates in multiple genres including *bios*, romance, and prototypical tragicomedy.

What does it mean for a text to participate in a genre? Within biblical studies, David Hellholm's three-fold paradigm set a standard for genre studies—a standard upon which many of the genre studies above are based. He suggested that texts sharing similarities in content, form, and function were considered ripe for comparison.[55] Improving upon Hellholm's model, Tom Thatcher suggested that form and function are the most significant aspects for generic classification. In his explanation, genre becomes a functional category when the interpreter acknowledges the relevance of the intended purpose of the text for its audience and how significantly the worldview of the author and audience shapes the composition.[56] His definition is helpful: "A genre is a certain group of writings sharing a certain set of conventions recognizable in a certain social matrix."[57]

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[53] Kasper Bro Larsen, ed., *Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

[54] Harold W. Attridge, "The Gospel of John: Genre Matters?," in *Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic*, ed. Kasper Bro Larsen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 27–46.

[55] David Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John," *Semeia* 36 (1986): 13–64.

[56] For more on the relationship between genre and the rhetorical effects of a text, see Robert Hurley, "Le genre 'évangile' en fonction des effets produits par la mise en intrigue de Jésus," *LTP* 58 (2002): 243–57.

[57] Thatcher, "The Gospel Genre," 137. His definition builds upon the outer form/inner form paradigm presented by René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963).

Thus, genre participation is evident wherever one writing displays similar conventions and/or similar purposes with another writing or group of writings. Aune suggests that individual texts signal affiliation with a genre (or genres) through textual clues (like corresponding to a known narrative mode or an expected list of topics).[58] These clues, according to Aune, set audience expectation, influencing them to hear or read the text within a certain interpretive schema. Thus, participation in a genre (whether straightforward correspondence, genre-bending, or playful affiliation) presents a norm or an expectation to guide the encounter with the text. By participating in a genre, a text presents a set of "rules" that affects the relationship between the author and the reader (or hearer) by establishing expectations or boundaries for meaning.[59] Thus, genre is central to the discursive process of communication that takes place in the dynamic relationship among author, text, and audience.[60]

If participation in generic categories is one means by which an author can communicate meaning to his audience, then an analysis of the Fourth Gospel's participation in one or more generic categories should influence interpretation of the text.[61] When coming to any interpretive question, consideration of generic participation would be one way to narrow the range of possible meanings available to readers/hearers.

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[58] Aune, Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul, 33.

[59] Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 76–109, discusses this in terms of "the horizon of expectations of a genre system that pre-constituted the intention of the works as well as the understanding of the audience" (108).

[60] Pyrhönen, "Genre." See also Sean Freyne, "Mark's Gospel and Ancient Biography," in *The Limits of Ancient Biography*, ed. Brian C. McGing and Judith Mossman (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 72.

[61] For a discussion of genre in terms of "use value," where generic classification determines meaning and exposes ideology, see Thomas O. Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 1–24.

As Carolyn Miller suggests, "A genre is a rhetorical means for mediating private intentions and social exigence."[62] Generic categories imply certain purposes, and thus a text's participation in a genre forms audience expectations and frames interpretation.[63] These implications come from generic correspondences (that is, features that the text has in common with representatives of a certain genre) and from generic tensions (that is, places where the text resists conformity, strays from convention, or uniquely applies or combines conventional features).[64]

The Fourth Gospel's participation in any of a number of genres, both Jewish and Greco-Roman, can assist readers with particular interpretive questions. Since my current interest lies in the rhetorical dynamics of genre, I will focus on the relationship between generic features and the action(s) that the text is used to accomplish (or the rhetorical effect of the text), specifically in regard to the moral efficacy of the text.[65] This rhetorically focused study will consider genre as a dynamic category, where participation in a genre might inform our interest in the rhetorical effect of the text.[66] As Heta

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[62] Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 163.

[63] For example, we could ask what expectations a reader/hearer of a text participating in the "history" genre might bring with them and how those would differ from expectations brought to a text participating in the "epic" genre.

[64] For an extended discussion of genre criticism within the context of rhetorical criticism, see Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction," in *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action* (Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association, 1978).

[65] The subject matter and the form of discourse may help in weighing those potential rhetorical purposes, but they are not my primary interest.

[66] See also the discussion of the interpretive significance of genre in E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 68–126.

Pyrhönen explains, examination of generic participation will offer tools "to decode a narrative, co-creating the story as a meaningful and coherent whole."[67]

Clearly, genre participation has significant implications for interpretation. In the section that follows, I examine the rhetorical implications of the Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre (I will also consider the rhetorical form of encomium in the next chapter). Why this focus on the *bios* genre? Comparisons that feature explicitly ethical non-narrative texts or that focus on explicitly ethical material within narrative contexts have proven less helpful for the pursuit of Johannine ethics, since the Fourth Gospel contains little-to-no *explicit* ethical material. Therefore, a comparison with a text or group of texts that matches the Fourth Gospel's form of chronological narrative, focuses on one main character, and exhibits evidence of *implicit* ethics will be more helpful for the particular aims of this project.

Greco-Roman *bioi* match these criteria rather well, and the Fourth Gospel's overlap with this genre is established quite strongly in the scholarly tradition. Whether or not we agree that the Fourth Gospel belongs exclusively to the *bios* genre (as Talbert,[68] Burridge,[69] and others have suggested), the correspondences between ancient *bioi* and the Fourth Gospel suggest strongly that the Fourth Gospel participates in the *bios* genre.[70] So without aiming to *prove* that the Gospel *belongs to* a certain genre, I accept the evidence

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[67] Pyrhönen, "Genre," 109.

[68] Charles H. Talbert, *What Is a Gospel?: The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), 134–35.

[69] Burridge, What Are the Gospels?

[70] The flexibility of *bios* as a genre makes it open to influence from neighboring literary forms, especially history and encomium. Hellenistic biographies were not largely uniform, and one should allow for overlap given this variety. See Burridge, "Biography," 373–74; Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 114–15.

from the studies above and, with much of the scholarly community, propose that the Fourth Gospel exhibits a significant degree of overlap with the *bios* genre. Utilizing the theory of genre participation, I can embrace the Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre without taking on the burden of arguing for its exclusive classification within that genre. I will, however, offer an alternative to the idea that the overlap between the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman *bioi* is merely a surface level affinity put in place to make the Gospel palatable to its audience. The next section of this chapter explores whether there might be more significant implications of this overlap particularly for the question of Johannine ethics. Might generic participation in *bios* reveal something about the text's rhetorical purpose?

To approach this question, I will consider a literary comparison that exhibits similar participation in the *bios* genre and implicit ethical presentation. The suggested biographical literary comparisons from the history of scholarship (Votaw, Talbert, Burridge, Shuler, Alexander, and others discussed above) offers the following list of possible comparisons: Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus*, Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Xenophon's *Agesilaus*, Isocrates's *Evagoras*, Philo's *Life of Moses*, Tacitus's *Agricola*, Lucian's *Demonax*, Philodemus, *Life of Epicurus*, Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras*, Isocrates's *Busiris*, Nicolaus of Damascus's *Life of Augustus*, Satyrus's *Euripides*, Nepos's *Atticus*, Plutarch's *Cato Minor,* Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars*.

Many of these biographical texts do not exhibit the features that will be most helpful for our comparison, namely chronological proximity to the Fourth Gospel, correspondence in chronological narrative form, and interest in ethics. As already

mentioned, a comparison with a text or group of texts that matches the Fourth Gospel's form of chronological biographical narrative and exhibits evidence of implicit ethics will be more helpful for the particular aims of this project. Furthermore, the *bios* genre underwent significant development after the turn of the first century CE,[71] making the time of the Gospels a time of a new biographical mood[72] or "new atmosphere."[73] So, while a text may draw upon or mimic texts from much earlier time periods, and while comparisons with later texts might prove heuristically profitable for other endeavors, comparisons from a time closer to the Gospels will be more indicative of what an audience would expect of a biographical text in this transitional era.[74] With this concern in mind, I have established three criteria for my literary comparison: 1) proximity to this transitional time-period of the first century CE, 2) correspondence in chronological narrative form, and 3) evidence that the text is interested in ethics.

The first criterion, chronological proximity, moves the focus away from those *bioi* composed earlier than the end of the first century BCE (Xenophon, Isocrates, and

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[71] See below the fuller discussion of Alexander, "What Is a Gospel?". See also Swain, "Biography and Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire"; Aune, "The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography," 2; Fitzgerald, "The Ancient Lives of Aristotle and the Modern Debate about the Genre of the Gospels," 210.

[72] Alexander, "What Is a Gospel?," 26.

[73] Momigliano, The Development of Greek Biography, 104.

[74] A significant feature of the *bios* genre during this time period was its flexibility. Thus, it was not easily defined or boxed in. Audiences and authors from decades earlier or later would have perhaps had different and more concrete constraints in mind. One aim in limiting my study to those in close chronological proximity to the Fourth Gospel is to resist the precise genre delineation that is less appropriate for this particular era. See Alexander, "What Is a Gospel?," 27, 38 and 39. Cf. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 104; M. J. Edwards and Simon Swain, eds., *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 27–28. See also the discussion above.

Satyrus) and those later than the middle of the second century CE (Philostratus and Porphyry).[75]

The second criterion, the presence of a narrative framework, also moves several of these examples out of our purview. Xenophon's *Memorabilia* consists of a systematic defense of Socrates from the author followed by a succession of dialogues that portray how Socrates benefitted his family, friends, and students. No narrative arc weaves the discourses together like what we see in the Gospels. Similarly, the *Discourses of Epictetus* consists of a collection of sayings with no narrative framework. Indeed, Arrian claims simply to have written down whatever he heard Epictetus say in order to preserve a record of his words. Containing no biographical data and no setting, arranged topically in gnomic form, Arrian's *Discourses* contain little that is echoed in the Gospels on a broad scale. Some of the teachings resemble the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels (at least in style), but on a macro-level, Arrian's record of transcribed teachings bears little resemblance to the Gospels, which weave Jesus's teaching into a complete narrative framework.

Though the *Life of Apollonius* does unfold within a broad narrative framework, Votaw himself says that Philostratus "did little more than conjoin narratives of the several portions of Apollonius' life."[76] In addition, the fragmentary nature of the so-called

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[75] Xenophon composed his work in the fourth century BCE, leaving an interval of over four hundred years before the Gospels would be written. While it is not impossible that the Gospel writers might have drawn upon the form of this writing, the connection is by no means clear. Further, Arrian produced his collection of transcriptions in the middle of the second century, and Philostratus composed his *Life of Apollonius* at the beginning of the third century CE, more than a century after the Gospel writings. Thus, it can neither be argued that the Gospels knew of the *Discourses* to draw upon them nor that they are indicative of the time period in which the Gospels were written. Votaw admits that the similarities are "general and limited." He notes especially "there was nothing corresponding to the Gospel of John among Philostratus' documents"; Votaw, *Gospels and Biographies*, 21–22.

[76] Ibid., 22.

bioi of Philodemus, Porphyry, and Satyrus make them problematic comparisons, and they also seem to lack narrative framework, appearing to be compilations of citations. Isocrates's *Busiris* is a formal "speech of defense" (see *Busiris* 9), not a chronological narrative, and *Evagoras* takes the form of funeral eulogy rather than biography. Similarly, *Agesilaus* is a systematic review of virtues, not a narrative biography with an overarching plot. Nepos's *Atticus*, perhaps the first surviving example of a Roman biography, is clearly influenced by the laudations given at funerals, and it is considered a forerunner of Plutarch, Tacitus, and Suetonius.[77] Like *Evagoras* and *Agesilaus*, this text reads like a list of virtues elaborated by short interaction between the main character and another. No flowing narrative ties the anecdotes together; rather, the presentation is a disconnected description of virtues with examples to support the claims. Though Lucian's *Demonax* is called a "life," only the first several pages are biographical, and these portions offer only a cursory coverage of his origin, upbringing, training, and the nature of his philosophy. The vast majority of the text consists of entertaining, pithy sayings.

After applying the criterion of narrative framework, coupled with the criterion of proximity, five *bioi* remain: 1) Philo's *Life of Moses* (mid to late first century BCE), 2) Nicolaus of Damascus's *Life of Augustus* (beginning of the first century CE), 3) Tacitus's *Agricola* (98 CE), 4) Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* (late first century/early second century CE), 5) Plutarch's *Cato Minor* (late first century CE). To these texts, the criteria of evidence for ethical interests should be applied.

[77] Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 127–28.

An Alexandrian Jewish text, Philo's *Life of Moses* offers a life history of this Jewish leader in order to make the hero known to a Gentile audience.[78] In the introduction to the *Life*, Philo writes,

> I hope to bring the story of this greatest and most perfect of men to the knowledge of such as deserve not to remain in ignorance of it; for, while the fame of the laws which he left behind him has travelled throughout the civilized world and reached the ends of the earth, the man himself as he really was is known to few (Philo, *Moses* 1.1 [Colson, LCL]).

Though Book I follows the chronological sequence of Moses's life, Book II is topically organized to present Moses as the ideal king, lawgiver, priest, and prophet. Though the virtues praised may indicate some underlying value system, the text does not indicate an interest in the moral formation of its audience. Rather, the purpose seems to be an informative one, making the character of Moses known and translating the segment of Jewish history with which he is associated into Greco-Roman philosophical terms.[79] Philo discusses a further purpose for the *Life* in the introduction to Book II:

> The present treatise is concerned with matters allied and consequent to these. For it has been said, not without good reason, that states can only make progress in well-being if either kings are philosophers or philosophers are kings. But Moses will be found to have displayed, and more than displayed, combined in his single person, not only these two faculties—the kingly and the philosophical—but also three others, one of which is concerned with law-giving, the second with the high priest's office, and the last with prophecy (*Moses* 2.2; cf. 2.7 [Colson, LCL]).

Rather than submitting Moses's virtues for the benefit of the moral formation of the audience, Philo explains that this biography presents what is necessary for progress of the

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[78] James R. Royse, "The Works of Philo," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, ed. Adam Kamesar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 32–64.

[79] Philo explicitly states that he aims to inform (*Moses* 1.1). The rhetorical aims beyond offering information are first of all geared at the level of the state rather than the moral formation of the audience and secondly apologetic in response to the rhetorical situation. This analysis is further affirmed when one considers the rhetorical situation behind Philo's writing, that is, the clash between Jews and Gentiles. While it is not outside of the realm of possibility that Philo could have been interested in the moral formation of his audience-members, this interest is not readily apparent based on his comments about the work.

state.[80] The *Life of Moses* also serves as an apologetic for the hero, defending his status to a Gentile audience, in light of clashes between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria at the time.[81]

Nicolaus of Damascus's *Life of Augustus* tells of Octavian's youth, the events surrounding the fall of Caesar, and the rise of Augustus. Unfortunately, we have only a fragmentary text.[82] The extant text does not give the impression that the *Life* focuses fully on the main character, Augustus. Rather, as is customary of ancient historiography, this text narrates a broader range of events within which Augustus was not always a direct participant. Thus, Nicolaus provided a text that, participating in history and biography, functioned to recount the events of a certain period of time rather than following the life of one character.

Tacitus's *Agricola* is described in many different ways. Some call it *laudatio funebris*, others suggest it served as a political pamphlet, a *panegyric*, or a belated funerary encomium.[83] Though Tacitus references the virtue of his subject, the focus sits squarely on his military movements, placing the concept of virtue within the context of a political commentary. In many ways, *Agricola* is an *apologia* for those serving under Rome.[84] Stylistically, it resembles the military history of Livy and Sallust more than the

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[80] This broader, political focus was characteristic of biographical writings of this time, earlier in the Principate. The focus shifted to the individuals within the community as time went on; see Swain, "Biography and Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire."

[81] Royse, "The Works of Philo," 34, 47, 51.

[82] The Greek text is found in Felix Jacoby's Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, A. Universal- und Zeitgeschichte, #90, F 125-130 (Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum F 116-127).

[83] A. R. Birley, "The Agricola," in *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*, ed. A. J. Woodman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 47–58; Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 151–52, n.6.

[84] Birley, "The Agricola," 49.

character-focused biographies emerging in the middle and late Principate.[85] *Agricola* is unique in its inclusion of an extended historical section on Britain, with attention to non-biographical elements like geography and ethnography.[86]

Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* is a group of twelve lives, but of these, the more sophisticated accounts of Julius Caesar and of Augustus have been compared to the Gospels.[87] The series has been classified as biographical in the Alexandrian type, that is, with a technical focus on chronological history.[88] As classicist Andrew Wallace-Hadrill explains, "it is biography, written by a scholar in the Hellenistic tradition, composed neither to instruct nor to titillate but to inform."[89] Indeed, the author gives no indication of being motivated by ethical interests.[90]

Plutarch's *Cato Minor*, paired with *Phocion*, follows the normal rhetorical *topoi* to praise the virtue of the main character while telling of his upbringing, life accomplishments, and death. It maintains focus on Cato for the duration of the text. *Cato Minor* is one among many of Plutarch's *Lives*, which are said to "exemplify the flexible

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[85] Tacitus would develop his unique style of historiography more fully in the *Annals*; see H. Furneaux and F. Haverfield, eds., *Cornelii Taciti: De Vita Agricolae*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon, 1961), lxxx–lxxxvii. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 175.

[86] This has caused some scholars to rule out classification of *Agricola* as *bios*; see Furneaux and Haverfield, *Cornelii Taciti*, xxiii–xxviii.

[87] Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 154.

[88] Even so, Suetonius did not employ a strictly chronological method. Rather, in the way of earlier Greek and Latin biographers, he included a great deal of thematic material, which quite frequently interrupted the narrative flow with systematic discussions and classifications. Michael Grant, "Introduction," in *Suetonius: The Twelve Caesars*, trans. Robert Graves, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 2007), vii–xi. See also A. J. Gossage, "Plutarch," in *Latin Biography*, ed. T. A. Dorey (New York: Basic Books, 1967), 47.

[89] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius*, 2nd ed. (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1995), 25.

[90] Furthermore, Suetonius abandoned the more rhetorical and eulogistic approaches and was known instead for his objective representation of events. His writing is marked by a tone of disinterest and seemingly intentional lack of personal judgment or moralization. Grant, "Introduction," viii–ix. See the comments in the Introduction to Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars, Volume I*, (Rolfe, LCL), 16.

nature of this genre, nestling between history, rhetoric, and moral philosophy."[91] The *Parallel Lives* were written during the latter years of the author's life, in the late first to early second century.[92] Plutarch's *Lives* meet both the criteria of narrative framework and chronological proximity. Plutarch's other writings attest to his interest in ethics, and the explicit statements in the front matter or summaries of his *Lives* disclose that these biographical narratives include a moral purpose. Thus, Plutarch's *Lives* clearly meet the three criteria outlined for this study. Because he was so prolific (he wrote over fifty *Lives*, most in pairs), Plutarch is also a central figure representative of a particular brand of the biographical tradition.

Rhetoric and Ethics in Plutarch's Lives

An analysis of the way Plutarch rhetorically embeds implicit ethics into his narrative presents a new possibility for approaching the ethics of the Fourth Gospel. With the presentation of an exemplary or cautionary main character, Plutarch engages his reader in a deliberative process. Rather than dismissing John as entirely void of ethical content, as I will demonstrate, this contemporary analogue opens the possibility for finding ethics emerging in a different way than the modern reader might have originally expected.

Plutarch presents his *Lives* so that the reader will draw moral conclusions from those examples. This purpose can be found in Plutarch's own hand in the introduction to *Aemilius*:

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[91] Burridge, What Are the Gospels?, 153.

[92] C. J. Gianakaris, *Plutarch* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), 18.

> I treat the narrative as a kind of mirror and try to find a way to arrange my life and assimilate it to the virtues of my subjects. The experience is like nothing so much as spending time in their company and living with them: I receive and welcome each of them in turn as my guest, so to speak, observe his stature and his qualities, and choose from his achievements those which it is particularly important and valuable for me to know. And oh, what greater delight could one find than this? And could one find a more effective means of moral improvement either? (*Aem*. 1 [Perrin, LCL])

Here Plutarch shows that he offers each *bios* as a personal vision of moral behavior. In his analysis of the programmatic statements of the *Lives*, Tim Duff suggests two purposes for Plutarch's writings.[93] First, one should "come to an understanding of the subject." Second, and most important to Plutarch, one should "both imitate the good and abhor the bad."[94] Plutarch presents the *Lives* of his subjects as paradigms for virtue and vice that one can either appropriate or avoid for moral growth.[95] For example, the Lives of Pericles and Aemilius (a statesman and a general) are put forward as exemplary, Demetrios and Antony (also political figures) as negative examples. Pyrrhos and Marius are also presented as negative examples, a caution to the reader against the perils of discontent. Coriolanus and Alkibiades are examples of the consequences that follow from a lack of

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[93] See the discussion of *praxeis* and *ethos* in Plutarch's *Lives* in Patricia Cox Miller, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 9–15.

[94] Tim Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 50.

[95] For more explanations of how *mimesis* might have worked, see Lund, "The Joys and Dangers of Ethics in John's Gospel," 264–89. For a thorough discussion of how *mimesis* worked in the context of John 13, see Cornelis Bennema, "Mimesis in John 13: Cloning or Creative Articulation?," *NovT* 56 (2014): 261–74. See also Bennema's forthcoming essay ("Mimetic Ethics in the Gospel of John," in *Metapher-Narratio-Mimesis-Doxologie: Begründungsformen Frühchristlicher Und Antiker Ethik*, ed. F. W. Horn, U. Volp, and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016], 205–17) and monograph on a similar topic (WUNT, forthcoming 2017).

education and the value of a good education, respectively. These *Lives* leave readers with an invitation to walk away from the story better for the telling.[96]

One could question the comparison of Plutarch's *Lives* to the Fourth Gospel because John's life of Jesus is not paired with another *bios*, nor does it include the formal *syncrisis* that clarifies the ethical import of the pair. However, not all of Plutarch's *bioi* were written in pairs. Furthermore, much of Plutarchan ethics are implicit, not involving narratorial intervention. Plutarch's ethics emerge in various forms ranging from the explicit summaries that follow some pairs of *Lives* to the implicit features that engage the reader in the ethical discourse. Thus, Plutarch's presentation of the "signs of the (hero's) soul" (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα) (Plutarch, *Alex*. 1.3)[97] is more complex than it might first appear.

At the most basic level, the differences between the hero and the audience-members demanded that Plutarch's audience interpret the virtues and vices presented and translate them into their own context. Since the majority of Plutarch's readers were not statesmen or generals, literal imitation of the hero's specific actions was not intended. As A. J. Gossage explains, however,

> "Imitation" in another sense was possible: a man might learn from great examples of the past the way in which to order his life, and thus, without necessarily performing the same actions, he might emulate the virtues of great men, by carefully observing their actions and using them as a pattern for building up his own moral principles.[98]

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[96] Though this categorization into "good lives and bad" generally holds true, we must also realize that such stark classification neglects the complexity of the *Lives* and of the various actions depicted within them. As we will see, the reader was expected to be involved in navigating these complexities and determining how to appropriate the morality presented within the narrative; see Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 55.

[97] The Fourth Gospel uses the same word—σημεῖον—throughout its narrative to describe the miraculous works that reveal the identity and character of its hero, Jesus. See John 2:11, 18, 23; 3:2; 4:48, 54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30.

[98] Gossage, "Plutarch," 49.

Because the historical setting of the *Lives* was not immediately relevant for the contemporary situation, Plutarch's readers would have to connect the moral principles demonstrated in one context and translate them into their own contemporary situation.

Furthermore, at times, moral efficacy of an individual *Life* was not explicit.[99] Even the formal *syncrisis* that often followed a pair of *Lives* included ambiguous and implicit elements, provoking the reader to explore the issues raised by the *Lives*, pointing the reader back to the narrative. The "closural dissonance" between the content of the *Lives* themselves and that of the formal *syncrisis* that followed invited the reader to reconsider judgment on the *Lives* in question. Compare, for example, the description of Antony's death within the narrative and the description of his death in the closing *synkrisis*. Plutarch concludes his narrative presentation saying that Antony died "not ignobly" (οὐκ ἀγεννῶς, *Antony* 77.7). The concluding comparison, however, describes it in almost opposite terms: "Antony took himself off,—in a cowardly, pitiful, and ignoble (ἀτίμως) way" (*Demetrios and Antony* 6). The presented comparison, where it stands in tension with the narrative content, has a destabilizing effect, which encourages the audience to reevaluate simple, moral assumptions about noble death.

Discussing several examples of this dissonance within the *Lives*,[100] Duff concludes that it has an important function in the moral *programme,* forcing the reader to reassess the implicit moral principles and paradigms in the text. "Where questions of

[99] See my discussion of explicit and implicit ethics in Chapter One.

[100] Examples from Philopoimen and Flamininus, Nikias and Crassus, Agesilaos and Pompey, Demetrios and Antony, and Coriolanus and Alkibiades are also included. See Duff, Plutarch's Lives, 265–86.

ethics are concerned," he writes, "Plutarch is more ready to ask questions than to provide simple answers."[101] Duff continues,

> A number of factors stand in the way of an approach to the *Parallel Lives* which looks for the kind of easily extractable moral lessons that Plutarch seems to promise. First, most *Lives* provide very little explicit guidance as to how to understand the moral position of their subjects or of the actions narrated. Plutarch rarely intervenes into the narrative to point out where right and wrong lie. . . on the whole moral judgments are left implicit.[102]

The fact that the *Lives* are complex narratives without explicit ethical content does not mean they have nothing to offer in terms of ethics or moral efficacy. Rather, their challenging complexity invites the audience to engage in ethical discourse.[103] Such an ethical presentation fits what Christopher Pelling calls descriptive or exploratory moralism. While protreptic or expository moralism carries an explicit injunction for the reader to put into effect, descriptive or exploratory moralism raises moral issues without attempting to guide conduct directly.[104] This second category opens up possibilities to explore a text for moral efficacy that might be missed if expository moralism alone is pursued. Though Plutarch at times presents explicit moralism in the introductory prologue or the concluding *syncrisis*, he only rarely breaks into the narrative to make an explicit moral comment (e.g., *Arist*. 6.1–5; *Dem*. 42.8–11; *Lys*. 23.3; *Aem*. 5.10).[105]

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[101] Ibid., 286.

[102] Ibid., 54–55.

[103] Ibid., 309.

[104] Christopher B. R. Pelling, "The Moralism of Plutarch's Lives," in *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russell on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. D. Innes, H. Hine, and C. B. R. Pelling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 343–61. Cf. Duff, 68-69.

[105] This implicit approach fits with the compositional and rhetorical pedagogy of the day which suggested that the addition of explicit ethical material (such as moralizing maxims) would mar the quality of the narrative. See Theon 91.25-27 as cited in Craig A. Gibson, "Better Living Through Prose Composition? Moral and Compositional Pedagogy in Ancient Greek and Roman Progymnasmata," *Rhetorica* 32 (2014): 18.

Instead, his descriptive or exploratory moralism relies on the reader to negotiate the ethics embedded within the story. In Duff's words, "Plutarch expects his reader to recognize, and to question, where an action is to be commended, and where blamed."[106] Plutarch has chosen to involve his readers in the deliberative ethical process rather than to present an ethical system wholesale. Thus, the onus is on the reader to identify the moral categories being employed, to discern the extent to which those categories should extend into his or her situation, and to put the principles into practice appropriately.[107] Plutarch's *Lives*, delivering complex and implicit moralism, engage the reader in ethical discourse rather than simply offering explicit advice about moral conduct. These narrative presentations engage the reader, demanding deliberation to connect the implicit ethics in the narrative to the contemporary situation.[108]

These complexities provide an interesting corollary for some of the difficulties that are related to the pursuit of Johannine ethics. The Fourth Gospel reveals an interest in ethics, yet it contains limited explicit ethical material.[109] Clearly, Plutarch's *Lives* differ

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[106] Duff, Plutarch's Lives, 55.

[107] Ibid. Plutarch likely intended his readers to engage in this deliberation within the boundaries of his philosophical system based largely in his own interpretation of Platonism. Simply put, Plutarch's reading of Plato understood reason as a guide to which the non-rational aspects of the soul responds. His complex presentations in the *Lives* demonstrate the value of education or training, which can help the soul respond to reason and produce virtue. His paradigm presented a middle way between the ethical ideals of Stoicism (focus on reason alone) and Epicureanism (pleasure as the ultimate goal), which he saw as misguided. His interpretation of Plato included open dialectical inquiry but also maintained the possibility of reaching firm conclusions. Such an emphasis on dialectic in the process is evident in the complex ethical presentation within his *Lives*. See, for example, George Karamanolis, "Plutarch," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2014; Timothy E. Duff, "Models of Education in Plutarch," *JHS* 128 (2008): 1–26.

[108] The idea that the past offered moral knowledge that was applicable to contemporary life was central for Plutarch. Specifically, his heroes illustrated the virtue of political cooperation that his readers would need to thrive in the Roman Empire. See more on how Plutarch's narratives resisted escapism and moved readers to bridge the gap between the heroes of the past and the contemporary situation in Alan Wardman, *Plutarch's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 100–104.

[109] See Chapter One, above.

here[110] since they include a good deal of explicit ethical material and call for a reevaluation of presumed moral principles that is less radical than the Fourth Gospel.[111] The way Plutarch includes implicit ethics and engages the audience in ethical discourse, however, opens up new possibilities and facilitates questions that may prove helpful for the pursuit of Johannine ethics. As with the *Lives*, a number of factors stand in the way of an approach to the Fourth Gospel that looks for the kind of easily extractable moral lessons offered in the ethical discourses of the other Gospels or elsewhere within the canon.[112] Thus, in light of our literary comparison with Plutarch's *Lives*, we are encouraged to press on in our rhetorical investigation of implicit ethics in the Fourth Gospel.[113]

Summary and Transition

As we have seen, genre is one of the most important factors in the communicative exchange between a text and its audience. Texts can participate in multiple genres, and this participation reveals much about the rhetoric of that text. Our analysis demonstrated that the Fourth Gospel shares significant overlap with the genre of ancient narrative biography. Plutarch's *Lives* emerged as a fruitful comparison to the Fourth Gospel,

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[110] Plutarch's invitation for his audience to imitate the exemplars is also different than the Fourth Gospel's presentation of a hero in divine and suprahuman terms. This topic will be explored more in the next chapter.

[111] As we will see in Chapter Four, the Fourth Gospel's emphasis on "oneness with God" offers the person of Jesus as the authoritative foundation for ethics rather than the Torah. Belief becomes the ultimate ethical action since belief in Jesus brings a person into unity with God, a transformative process that results in proper living. Such a perspective radically challenged the thinking of first century Judaism.

[112] See Duff's comments on the lack of guidance for understanding Plutarch's ethics above. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 54–55. Explicit forms of moral instruction found elsewhere in the canon include maxims, paraenetic sections, sermons, letters with practical instructions, etc.

[113] Ibid.

sharing its chronological narrative form, emerging during the same time period, and exhibiting an interest in ethics. Our examination of the rhetoric of Plutarch's *Lives* illustrated that narrative biographies are often rich in moral efficacy, rhetorically engaging the audience and challenging them to consider how the hero ordered his life and how that orientation might translate to their own context.

With these things in mind, we should not overlook that the early audience of the Fourth Gospel likely would have expected the narrative to include a moral/ethical purpose. As with Plutarch's *Lives*, however, we will miss the full ethical dynamic of the text if we overlook the moral efficacy that can be discovered in the rhetorical exchange between author and reader.[114] The exploration of the rhetoric employed in Plutarch's *Lives* leads us to ask what elements in the Fourth Gospel engage the audience in ethical discourse. As we have seen, the Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre opens the possibility for ethical interests, despite the lack of explicit ethical material. The following chapter will explore what rhetorical tools facilitate the communication of this ethical dimension between author and audience in the Fourth Gospel.

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[114] See also Davies, Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel, 367.

CHAPTER THREE

Incorporation of Encomiastic Topics: Unity with God as the Foundation for Elevated Christology

Examining the Rhetorical Forms of the Fourth Gospel

This chapter extends beyond broad genre considerations to focus on the particular rhetorical forms incorporated by the Fourth Gospel. While Plutarch often relies on *syncrisis* (the rhetorical form of comparison) to engage his audience in ethical discourse, the Fourth Gospel utilizes the topics of *encomium* (the rhetorical form of praise). This chapter will demonstrate how the Fourth Gospel takes up each encomiastic topic to show how Jesus's exalted status comes from his connection to God, his Father. This unity will prove to be an invaluable concept for understanding John's theological ethic. The Fourth Gospel's incorporation of the encomiastic topics focuses the audience's attention on Jesus's status, which results from his unity with the Father, suggesting that the ethics implicit in this biographical narrative will be closely connected to the exalted identity of the main character.

How, exactly, does the Fourth Gospel facilitate the communication of its ethical dimension to its audience? Such a question, concerning the communicative exchange at the intersection of author, text, and audience, calls for a rhetorical examination. In his comments about the rhetorical dimension of the *bios* genre, Burridge says,

> What is clear is that rhetoric had a tremendous influence throughout the whole of the Graeco-Roman world and culture. Modern rhetorical criticism is a means of analysing texts to discover, if possible, something of the author's original intention, but certainly how the text affects readers, especially how it would have been heard by the original audience. It can be applied particularly to speeches and other texts intended to persuade an audience. However, the broader sense of

> rhetoric means that we can also use it to consider the argument and style, form and content of other texts, such as ancient biography.[1]

Because biography was not discussed in rhetorical handbooks or in the treatment of genres according to Aristotle or Quintilian, it developed by drawing on other genres and utilizing rhetorical topics toward a specific end.[2] Rhetorical topics were especially important for the *bios* genre, since, as Burridge points out, it was influenced by a number of *genera proxima* (philosophical writings, political polemic, religious discourse, history), especially encomium.[3] He writes, "Rhetoric in the narrower sense of persuasion was clearly vital to encomium, as oratory designed to persuade the audience of the praiseworthy nature of the subject. . . . Since *bios* is a flexible genre, influenced by both historiography and encomium, we may expect to find rhetoric affecting it."[4]

This influence is precisely the case with the Fourth Gospel, which incorporates the encomiastic topics listed in the *Progymnasmata* for a formal speech of praise.[5]

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[1] Richard A. Burridge, "Biography," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.—A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 371–72. Burridge qualifies his statements on rhetoric perhaps too cautiously: "While the primary purpose of *bioi* may not have been rhetorical in the strict sense of persuasion, it is inevitable that there will be rhetorical influence" (374).

[2] Ibid., 373.

[3] Ibid., 373–74. Cf. Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 114–15.

[4] Burridge, "Biography," 374. See also Jerome H. Neyrey, "Encomium Versus Vituperation: Contrasting Portraits of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 126 (2007): 530, n.5; Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography*, 17; David E. Aune, ed., *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, SBLSBS 21 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 109–10; C. B. R. Pelling, *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* (New York: Clarendon, 1990).

[5] The encomiastic topics can also be seen to some extent in the Synoptic Gospels, at least Matthew and Luke. See, for example, Philip L. Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); Philip L. Shuler, "The Rhetorical Character of Luke 1–2," in *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson*, ed. Richard P. Thompson and Thomas E. Phillips (Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1998), 173–90; Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, Paideia (Baker Academic, 2010). Without suggesting that only the Fourth Gospel utilizes these rhetorical topics, I focus on the way the incorporation of the topics functions rhetorically in this text.

The Encomiastic Topics in their Rhetorical Context

The *Progymnasmata*, or "preliminary exercises" that formed the curriculum for Greek rhetorical training,[6] provide a relevant rubric for the Gospel writings because presumably every person who learned to write, that is anyone receiving an education higher than that of a slave or other "lowly" person, would have been trained in them.[7] Four extant *Progymnasmata* are available: Theon (first century CE),[8] Ps-Hermogenes (c. third or fourth century CE), Aphthonius (fourth century CE), and Nicolaus (fifth century CE), and all arguably preserve curricula originating from no later than the first century BCE. Though the examples in these texts come in the context of strict exercises, the principles they teach can be applied to many literary forms, including the narrative of the Fourth Gospel.[9]

Encomium is one of the three types of epideictic rhetoric[10] and is defined by Theon as "language revealing the greatness of virtuous actions and other good qualities

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[6] George Alexander Kennedy, Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric, WGRW (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), x.

[7] In the introduction to his translation of the *Progymnasmata*, Kennedy explicitly cites the Gospel writings as examples of literature that would have been "molded by the habits of thinking and writing learned in schools" (ibid., ix).

[8] The first century date for Theon is not uncontested. Malcolm Heath, "Theon and the History of the Progymnasmata," *GRBS* 43 (2003): 129–60, dates it to the fifth century, largely based upon its prominence in late antiquity. Many who continue to apply the study of the Progymnasmata to Gospel texts, however, reject this late date. See especially Mikeal C. Parsons, "Luke and the Progymnasmata: A Preliminary Investigation into the Preliminary Exercises," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, SBL SymS 20 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2004), 43–63; Michael W. Martin, "Progymnastic Topic Lists: A Compositional Template for Luke and Other Bioi?," *NTS* 54 (2008): 18–41; Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

[9] Michael W. Martin, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison in the Fourth Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 37: "Though only Theon's work dates from the first century, chreia studies have shown the relevance of the later curricula, because they are traditional, for the study of first-century writings." See also Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, x.

[10] David Edward Aune, "Encomium," The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 146–47.

belonging to a particular person" (Theon, *Progymnasmata* 109 [Kennedy, 50]). Aristotle (*Rhet*. 1.3) discusses epideictic rhetoric in terms of praise or blame, and Quintilian (*Inst*. 3.7.6–22) comments that these assessments can be directed to gods, human beings, animals, or even inanimate objects.[11] Encomium is carried out by the discussion of certain topics, which Theon divides into three broad categories based on relation to (1) mind and character, (2) body, and (3) external things (Theon 109 [Kennedy, 50]; cf. Cicero, *Inv*. 2.59.177).[12] The first two of these categories find correspondence to the categories laid out by Plato (*Phaedr*. 270b; cf. Nicolaus the Sophist 50 [Kennedy, 156]), and all three correspond to Cicero's traditional "goods of mind, body, and estate" (Cicero, *Tusc*. 5.85; cf. Arist., *Rhet*. 1.9.33).[13] A similar presentation is also given in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (3.7.13—3.8.15).

The Fourth Gospel is not a formal encomium since, as Theon explains, a formal encomium should be arranged according to virtues, "not listing them as though we were giving a narrative" (Theon 112 [Kennedy, 52]).[14] The *Progymnasmata*, however, indicate a great deal of flexibility within narrative and encomiastic discourse. For example, in his discussion of encomium, Nicolaus the Sophist contends that this species is "complicated, no longer limited to a single form (like descriptions of earlier exercises), and divided

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[11] See also Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen, and David E. Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1998), §243.

[12] For various articulations of the topic lists, see Martin, "Progymnastic Topic Lists."

[13] For a very thorough presentation of the various forms of encomiastic topic lists, see Brian C. Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, BibInt 128 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 108–29.

[14] The distinction between narrative history and encomium is even clearer in the Armenian tradition, which is included in Patillon's text: "La narration en effet est le proper des historiens" (Theon, *Prog*. 112 [Patillon, 77]); Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata*, trans. Michel Patillon and Giancarlo Bolognesi (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 2002). English translations are taken from Kennedy, *Progymnasmata* unless otherwise noted.

among many kinds" (Nicolaus the Sophist 47 [Kennedy, 154]). He goes on to explain how encomiastic material is used in various types of discourse. Isocrates's *Panegyricus* utilized the topics in service of deliberative discourse, while Demosthenes's *On the Crown* utilized encomium in service of judicial discourse. He explains,

> There are as many kinds of speeches as there are human affairs . . . all speeches concerning such things can be classed under the three species of rhetoric, if one wants to force them (into these categories) and not accept cutting them up into a larger number of sub-genres but accepts interweaving of the materials from which they are constructed. . . . What prevents the same mixtures and interweavings from occurring in other species, with the result that the speech has some other goal, found by considering the supposed audience, and is constructed from different material? (Nicolaus the Sophist 48, 54–57 [Kennedy, 155, 159–60]).

The commentary on the *Progymnasmata* attributed to John of Sardis includes a similar statement indicating that the encomiastic topics are often used in service of different species of discourse. Much like the epicheirematic topics make up formal argumentation, the encomiastic topics can contribute to various forms of persuasive discourse (John of Sardis 117 [Kennedy, 207]).[15] The next section seems to contradict the more flexible definition of encomium, claiming that it is "a self-contained and complete logos" that stands apart from narration, since the two have different purposes—to celebrate and to persuade, respectively (John of Sardis 118 [Kennedy, 207]). Kennedy concludes that the author's thinking has become muddled as he draws upon two different sources for his definition. It seems more plausible, however, that encomium may be used in different ways, at times being a stand-alone, formal discourse in its own right and at other times being utilized under another larger heading. Kennedy hints at the probability of this explanation: "Some of the problem results from using encomium to mean both an

[15] For more on *epicheireme*, see *Rhet. Her*. 2.18.27–28; Cicero. *Inv*. 1.30.50–37.67; Quintilian, *Inst*. 5.5–13.

epideictic oration and a progymnasma." This dual usage is why both statements—that encomium is not a complete hypothesis and that it is a self-contained and complete logos—can stand only a few lines apart.[16]

The Encomiastic Topics in the Fourth Gospel

Though the Fourth Gospel is not a formal encomium, the appearance of the encomiastic topics amounts to a set of "textual clues" that guide interpretation.[17] Below, encomiastic topics from the *Progymnasmata* have been considered and synthesized with a view to their appearance throughout the Fourth Gospel.[18]

Origin. The *Progymnasmata* describe origin in terms of "good birth," including the topics of geography and family ancestry.[19] For example, Aphthonius's encomium of Thucydides says, "Now Thucydides came from a land which provided him both life and artistry. . . . And by having Athens as the mother of his life, he enjoyed kings for

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[16] This discussion also suggests that *encomia* might allow the orator or author more creative liberties since "they are concerned with what is believable, not with the truth," utilizing opinions that are sincere and persuasive, regardless of their certainty or accuracy (John of Sardis 123 [Kennedy, 209]). *Rhetorica ad Herennium* also suggests flexibility in the arrangement of these topics: "His commutationibus et translationibus saepe uti necesse est cum ipsa res artificiosam dispositionem artificiose commutare cogit" (*Rhet. Her*. 3.9.17 [Caplan, LCL].

[17] Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 3; Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels*, 108. The latter work uses this definition for the Gospel of Matthew, but Shuler's argument would apply to the Fourth Gospel as well.

[18] These categories and their descriptions follow the entries on encomium from the four *Progymnasmata*: Theon 109–12 (Kennedy 50–52), Ps-Hermogenes 15–18 (Kennedy 81–83), Aphthonius 36–40 (Kennedy, 108–11), Nicolaus 47–58 (Kennedy, 154–62), and the commentary by John of Sardis 116–42 (Kennedy, 206–10). For analysis and synthesis of these categories and for many of the Johannine references and ancient parallels, I am indebted to a few scholars in particular: Martin, "Progymnastic Topic Lists"; Martin, *Judas and Rhetoric*, 92–106; Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 7–28; Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 43-47. As Brian Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, 108–29, has shown, the ancient topic lists took on various forms; however, many of the topics or themes consistently appeared in many lists. In what follows, I have synthesized a list based on this consistency and with a view to which topics seem to appear in the Fourth Gospel. The *Progymnasmata* are supplemented, where appropriate, with examples from other rhetorical handbooks. Examples of each of these categories throughout the Fourth Gospel will be mentioned briefly, and corresponding ancient sources will be contained in the notes.

[19] See, for example, the beginning of the Life of Alcibiades (Plutarch, *Alc*. 1.1a–b).

ancestors and the stronger part of his good fortune came to him from his earlier ancestry" (Aphthonius 36–37 [22R–23R] [Kennedy, 108–9]). While the Fourth Gospel does not begin with Jesus's geographical or ancestral origin (a formal genealogy like that of Matthew or Luke is not present), it approaches the discussion in its own unique way—with a *prooemion* describing Jesus as the pre-existent Word.[20] The "good birth" of the Johannine Jesus is presented in his being from the beginning with God (John 1:1), begotten from the Father (μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, 1:14, 18), the Son of God (1:34, 49).[21]

In his discussion of encomium, Menander Rhetor (2.369.18–370.5) explains that the author of an encomium should be strategic in presenting the origin of the hero, emphasizing the elements—whether country or city or family or race—that convey the most honor. Theon adds that if the subject has none of the previously mentioned goods, one should show how he overcame his misfortunes or handled them in an exemplary manner (Theon 111 [Kennedy 52]). John 6:42 presents an objection concerning Jesus's origin: "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How now does he say 'I have come down from heaven'?" The emphasis on Jesus's preexistence and divine origin in the prologue counters the potential invective that would accompany such rejection. Coinciding with Aristotle's teaching that it is honorable to be ancient

[20] *Bioi* typically present the ancestral lineage of the hero and/or the noteworthy place of his birth. The Fourth Gospel's use of this topic is unique. Rather than a typical origin story, the hero is presented as the preexistent *Logos*. "In the beginning" and other allusions to the Genesis story maintain the theme of "origin," but the presentation is more elevated than typical uses of this topic. See the discussion in Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 61–75.

[21] Michael Theobald, *Im Anfang War Das Wort: Textlinguistische Studie Zum Johannesprolog*, SBS 106 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983).This praiseworthy origin also creates a new family line, extending to those who are born again/from above (3:3, 7), born of the Spirit (3:8; 10:36–38), born of God: "But to those who received him, he gave them power to become children of God, to those believing in his name, who were born not from blood nor from fleshly desire nor from the will of a man, but of God" (1:12–13).

(Aristotle, *Rhet*. 1.5.5), the Fourth Gospel claims that Jesus is from "the beginning" and presents Jesus in close connection with God (1:1), combining these two elements emphatically (1:2). Jesus's ancient origin and his connection with God counteract his lackluster human ancestry and birthplace. The world's rejection was even anticipated in the prologue: "He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came into what was his own, but the ones who were his did not receive him" (1:10–11). Presenting Jesus's heavenly preexistence and divine family heritage, the Fourth Gospel takes up the topic of Jesus's origin and casts its subject in a thoroughly encomiastic light, emphasizing his connection with the Father.

Nurture and training. The topic of nurture/training includes the subject's upbringing and education (Ps-Hermogenes 16 [Kennedy, 82]).[22] Nicolaus the Sophist addresses this topic with an example of the tradition concerning Achilles: "that he was fed on the marrow of deer and taught by Cheiron and all the things told him in turn" (Nicolaus the Sophist 52 [Kennedy, 157]; cf. Homer, *Il*. 11.832 and Plato, *Rep*. 3.391c). Similarly, the nursing imagery from the phrase in the Johannine prologue, "ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός" (1:18), informs the audience that Jesus received nourishment, knowledge, and authority from his connection to his Father.[23] Though the author of the Fourth Gospel does not discuss Jesus's younger years, the topic of training is addressed nonetheless. Cicero suggested that discussions of training should include "in what tradition and under whose direction" the subject was reared (Cicero, *Inv*. 1.24.35). Again, the Fourth Gospel transcends the traditional category, focusing on Jesus's heavenly

[22] See an example of this topic in Philo, *Mos*. 1.18–23.

[23] Myers, Characterizing Jesus, 66.

"training" that flowed from his connection with his Father. By showing that Jesus received testimony or knowledge from the Father (3:31–35; 7:16–18; 12:47–50), followed the Father's example, was granted authority from the Father (5:19–24), came from the Father and learned from him (6:45–46; 8:26–28), the Fourth Gospel presents the unique nurture and training of its subject.

Pursuits, deeds, and other external goods. The topic of external goods includes the "official position" and reputation of the subject, that is, what the subject set out to accomplish and for what accomplishments he was known (Theon 110 [Kennedy, 50]).[24] Deeds, which Pseudo-Hermogenes and Aphthonius call the "most important" and the "greatest heading" of the encomiastic topics, are also included here (Ps-Hermogenes 16 [Kennedy, 82]; Aphthonius 36 [Kennedy, 108]). Theon calls them "fine actions," and these deeds correspond to the Johannine signs that show who Jesus is and elicit the response of believing in him (10:36–38; 20:30–31).[25] These signs include the changing of the water into wine at the Cana wedding in chapter two, the healing of the Cana boy in chapter four, the healing of the man who couldn't walk in chapter five, the feeding the five thousand and walking on water in chapter six, the healing of the man who was blind in chapter nine, and the raising of Lazarus in chapter eleven. While some of Jesus's deeds

[24] See, for example, Philo, *Mos*. 1.32–50.

[25] Most commentators number seven signs from the first half of the Fourth Gospel. With Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, HNT 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 342–43, however, I prefer to view the walking on water as a secondary element linked with the sign of the Feeding. Jesus's walking on water is not performed to the unbelieving public and thus does not match the rest of the signs. This exclusion leaves six signs in the first half of the narrative, with the seventh (perfect) sign being Jesus's death and resurrection recounted in the second half of the Gospel. See also Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 376. Jesus's death and resurrection fit more appropriately into the topics of Noble Death and Events After Death, so they will be treated in those sections below.

bring accusations against him, the narrative presents witnesses that testify to Jesus's obedience and sinlessness: John the Baptist (5:33–36; cf. 1:32–34), Jesus's actions themselves (5:36; cf. 3:2; 9:31–33), the Father (5:37–38), Israel's Scripture (5:39), and Moses (5:46–47).[26]

"Deeds" can also include "Deeds of Fortune" or other external goods not involving fine actions but rather consisting of one's power, friends, and fame. An encomium can thus convey honor by including "the judgment of the famous" (Theon 110 [Kennedy, 51]). The Fourth Gospel conveys honor in this way in John 5:19–24 and 8:54 when Jesus says that the Father has given him authority or power, as well as when powerful characters like Pilate, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea (18:38; 19:4, 19-22, 38-41) speak favorably of him or act on his behalf.

Theon suggests drawing topics of praise from names and nicknames as well (Theon 111 [Kennedy, 51]). Similarly, the Fourth Gospel's use of titles for Jesus along with more general designations convey honor.[27] References to Jesus as the one "sent"

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[26] See the expanded discussion in Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 175–78.

[27] E.g., "Son of God" in John 1:34, 49 and 11:27, "Messiah" in 1:41; 7:41; 11:27; 20:31, "King of Israel" in 1:49 and 12:13, "King of the Jews" in 18:39 and 19:19; teacher in John 1:38; 3:2; 11:28; 13:13; 20:16; savior in 4:42; prophet in 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17). For more on the significance of the titles in the Fourth Gospel, see the following resources: H. C. Kee, "Christology and Ecclesiology: Titles of Christ and Models of Community," *Semeia* 30 (1984): 171–92; Martin Karrer, *Der Gesalbte: die Grundlagen des Christustitels*, FRLANT 151 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991); Yolanda Dreyer, *Institutionalization of Authority and the Naming of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012); John M. McDermott, "Jesus and the Son of God Title," *Gregorianum* 62 (1981): 277–318; R. Leivestad and D. E. Aune, *Jesus in His Own Perspective: An Examination of His Sayings, Actions, and Eschatological Titles* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987); Otto Betz, "The Names and Titles of Jesus: Themes of Biblical Theology," *TLZ* 94 (1969): 202–3; J. Harold Ellens, *The Son of Man in the Gospel of John*, New Testament Monographs 28 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010); Delbert Royce Burkett, *The Son of the Man in the Gospel of John*, JSNTSup 56 (Sheffield: JSNT Press, 1991); Van Shore, "The Titles of Jesus," in *Content and Setting of the Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 417–36; Ferdinand Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity* (London: Lutterworth, 1969); Francis J. Moloney, *The Johannine Son of Man*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007).

from the Father are quite prominent in the Gospel, occurring in forty different verses.[28] Jesus's mission and status are based on his having come from the Father. Thus, his deeds flow out of his connection with the Father. Notice his own words concerning his deeds: "My food is that I would do the will of the one who sent me and that I would finish his work" (4:34). "The works that the Father has given me to finish, the very works which I do, testify concerning me, that the Father has sent me" (5:36). "Because I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of the one who sent me" (6:38). John 5:19–20 perhaps presents the link between Jesus's noble deeds and his unity with the Father most clearly:

> Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son is able to do nothing by himself, except what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, the Son also does these things likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished.

Death. For an encomium, it is important that the subject's honor continue through his death (Theon 110 [Kennedy, 50]). The *Progymnasmata* attributed to Hermogenes suggests that an encomium should outline how the subject died, whether fighting in battle or in the midst of other significant events (Ps-Hermogenes 16 [Kennedy, 82]). The traditional "noble death" is seen, for example, in Isocrates, who writes, "death is the sentence of all mankind, but to die nobly is the special honor which nature has reserved for the good" (*Demonicus* 43 [Norlin and Van Hook, LCL]). The designation "noble death," usually used in reference to Greek funeral orations and reserved for heroes slain in battle, was granted if the death met certain criteria. In his discussion of the commonplace of noble death found in Greek rhetoric, Jerome Neyrey outlines seven

[28] John 3:34; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 36, 37, 38; 6:29, 38, 39, 44, 57; 7:16, 18, 28, 29, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44, 45, 49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21.

distinct characteristics of noble death: 1) it benefited others, 2) it demonstrated justice or served the cause of justice (i.e. democracy), 3) it was done voluntarily, 4) it was somehow victorious (even though the subject died, his death procured some triumph), 5) it was unique (in that the cause was more noble, the challenge more demanding, or the strength and courage unparalleled by the responses of others), 6) it was later celebrated with posthumous honors such as games or monuments, 7) it led to immortal glory.[29] These seven characteristics come from the presentations of noble death in funeral orations as outlined in Demosthenes (*Epitaph*.), Thucydides (*History* 2.42–44), and Plato (*Menex*. 237, 240e–249c). They correspond closely with the discussions of noble death in the *Progymnasmata* attributed to Hermogenes (16), as well as with the criteria for noble deeds in life as presented in Aristotle (*Rhet*. 1.9.16–25) and Theon (*Prog*. 110).[30]

John's passion narrative (18:1–19:42), with its trial, beating, and cross carries a shameful tenor that is anything but encomiastic on the surface. This episode invited descriptors like "folly," "madness," and "the worst death."[31] In the ancient world, the shameful tenor of death by crucifixion was inescapable. Josephus (*B.J*. 7.203 [Thackeray, LCL]) calls it "the most wretched of deaths." Historians like Tacitus (*Hist*. 2.72, 4.11) record that it was reserved for the lowly—robbers, traitors, and slaves. In short, there was nothing honorable about it. Bringing shame to the convict was as important as inflicting physical suffering and death.

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[29] Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 282–312.

[30] Neyrey also demonstrates that this rhetorical tradition can be found in the literature of Israel, namely in the books of Maccabees; see esp. 1 Macc 4 and 9; 2 Mac 6–7; 4 Macc 5–11; and Josephus, *A.J*. 17.152-154 (ibid., 295–300).

[31] Saint Augustine, *City of God*, trans. David S. Wiesen, LCL 411–417 (London: W. Heinemann, 1960), 19.23; Martin Hengel, *The Cross of the Son of God* (London: SCM, 1986), 94–96. Cf. 1 Cor 1:18 and Justin, *1 Apol*. 13.4.

In the passion narrative, however, where the Fourth Gospel might be expected to depart from its otherwise encomiastic structure, it does not. Though the typical noble death included fighting courageously in the face of death (see in Plutarch, *Caes*. 66.4–7, how Caesar fought bravely and wounded many of his murderers as they attacked), the hero in the Fourth Gospel does just the opposite. Still, the Johannine passion narrative significantly corresponds to several details outlined in the discussion of encomiastic topics in the Greek rhetorical tradition on noble deeds and noble death. Thus, the Johannine presentation unexpectedly glorifies and honors the subject, Jesus, even in his darkest hour. As Neyrey puts it, the Fourth Gospel transforms the traditional "status degradation ritual" of crucifixion into a "status elevation ritual."[32] What follows will demonstrate how the Fourth Gospel accomplishes this "alchemy" (Theon 111 [Kennedy, 52]).[33]

First, Theon describes encomiastic "fine actions" as those "done for others rather than ourselves." He says, "the toil is that of the doer but the benefit is common," and states that actions are specifically to be praised if they are done "alone" (Theon 110 [Kennedy, 51]). Theon also points out that prudence is to be praised and defines prudence as the exercise of one's own volition rather than simply following what comes by chance (Theon 111 [Kennedy, 52]). These characteristics are seen in the Johannine portrayal of Jesus heading toward his death. Before the passion narrative, the Fourth Gospel shows Jesus accepting his impending death as an action done for others (John 10:11; 12:27ff). Within the passion narrative, Jesus is seen as taking this "fine action" alone (John 18:8;

[32] Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 413–14.

[33] Ibid., 418.

19:17) and willfully (John 10:18; 18:4, 11; 19:17). This unique outlook of the Johannine Jesus, that he is in control even of his own arrest and death, has often been noted.[34]

In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus has full knowledge of his future and is the initiator of his fate. The statement in John 18:4, εἰδὼς πάντα τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν, sets the stage for the passion narrative (cf., John 12:27; 13:1), which goes on to demonstrate Jesus's initiative.[35] This initiative makes an interesting comparison to the Synoptic Jesus's outlook.[36] The Johannine narrative lacks the famous Gethsemane scene from the Synoptics (Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46). Though a garden is mentioned, no account is given of Jesus's anguish or plea to escape his fate. Though willing to suffer, the Synoptic Jesus requests an alternative, supremely distressed at the thought of what he may have to endure. John 12:27 contains the only hint of torment in the Johannine narrative: "now my soul is troubled." Though he is realistic, the Johannine Jesus knows his purpose and would not dare ask to escape the suffering. Compare the Synoptic Jesus's request:

> And he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here, and be alert." And going out a little ways, he fell upon the ground and prayed, "If it is possible, let the hour pass me by." And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you; remove this cup from me; but, not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14:34–36; cf. Matt 26:36–46 and Luke 23:39–46).

to the Johannine Jesus's earlier response:

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[34] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 637.

[35] Neyrey, The Gospel of John, 419.

[36] The productivity of such a comparison stands regardless of the Fourth Gospel's literary dependence upon one or all of the Synoptics because it nonetheless illustrates the unique features of John's narrative—without supposing intentional changes to a preexisting written text. Also, it is likely that the Gospel authors utilized a similar passion tradition, and this tradition makes the comparison appropriate. See Bultmann, *John*, 637–38.

> And what should I say—"Father, save me from this hour"? But because of this I have come to this hour" (John 12:27b–c).

and his resolve to the end:

> Then Jesus, knowing all the things coming upon him, came out and spoke to them, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered him, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus said to them, "I am he (Ἐγώ εἰμι)." . . . Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. . . . Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. The cup which the Father has given to me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:4–5a, 10–11).

Such a perspective coheres well with the description in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*:

> Again, from an honourable act no peril or toil, however great, should divert us; death ought to be preferred to disgrace; no pain should force an abandonment of duty; no man's enmity should be feared in defense of truth; for country, for parents, guest-friends, intimates, and for the things justice commands us to respect, it behoves us to brave any peril and endure any toil (3.3.5 [Caplan]; cf. 3.5.9).

In contrast to the Synoptic Jesus, anguishing over his fate but ultimately surrendering to God's will, the Fourth Gospel portrays Jesus as an eager and victorious martyr whose consideration for the Father's glory overshadows his brief emotional struggle.

Rather than a troubled man suddenly approached by a threatening mob, the Fourth Gospel shows a levelheaded and determined hero, knowingly approaching his destiny. The absence of Judas's kiss portrays Jesus as a willing martyr, in control of the situation, even approaching the arresting party himself (18:4). In addition, the Johannine Jesus's response to the mob in 18:5, "ἐγώ εἰμι,"[37] not only has theological implications (based on the response of the crowd who draw back and fall to the ground) but also shows Jesus's initiative to give himself over willingly of his own accord. The posturing in the episode

[37] The Markan/Lukan Jesus made this claim during Jesus's trial (Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70).

also conveys honor, which is pertinent to the Fourth Gospel's encomiastic tenor.[38] Jesus's control of the situation is further demonstrated as he commands his followers not to resist (18:10–11) and his captors to let his disciples go (18:8). Stepping into the passion by his own initiative and controlling the entire episode, Jesus appropriates the ultimate "fine action," a noble death fitting of an encomiastic narrative.

Once again, the Fourth Gospel links these characteristics (Jesus's foreknowledge, his initiative, and his volition) to his unity with the Father. The comment "Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God" (13:3) signals the narrative turn from the extended section on Jesus's signs (chapters 1–12) to the extended section on Jesus's passion and glory (chapters 13 and on). Thus, the Fourth Gospel's presentation of Jesus's passion, with its emphasis on Jesus's personal volition, again brings focus to his unity with the Father (cf. 3:35, "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hands").

As the narrative turns to the trial of Jesus, further comments from the *Progymnasmata* are apropos. Theon explains that in an encomium, any statement said against the subject should be left unmentioned or should be disguised or hidden. He warns that including charges against the subject invites blame and is destructive to an encomium, turning it rather into an apology (Theon 112). Interestingly, in the Johannine portrayal of the high priest's questioning of Jesus, no formal invective is included. The charges are only implicit and assumed (18:19). As Bultmann writes,

> No witnesses appear, and no definite accusations are lodged; the saying of Jesus about the temple plays no role. In particular, the question of the High Priest about

[38] Ignace de La Potterie, *The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus according to John: Text and Spirit*, trans. Gregory Murray (Middlegreen, Slough, Eng.: St Paul Publications, 1989), 29; Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 419. Cf. Ezek 1:28; 44:4; Dan 2:46; Rev 1:17.

> the Messianic claim of Jesus and Jesus' answer to it are lacking. Consequently there is not a word about the results of the session, or of the death sentence.[39]

This omission is striking considering that the other passion accounts treat this element of the narrative as an official court session illustrating the charges levied against Jesus (Matt 26:61–65; Mark 14:58–63; Luke 22:66–71). The shameful elements in this scene—that Jesus is subjected to questioning and even slapped in the face—are counterbalanced by Jesus's honorable responses: "I have spoken openly to the world. . . . I have said nothing in secret" (18:20), and "If I have spoken wrongly, testify concerning the wrong. But if well, why do you strike me?" (18:23).

Similarly, Jesus's response to Pilate denotes his honor. Rather than remaining in the position of the one being questioned, the Johannine Jesus responds to Pilate with a question of his own, taking an authoritative rhetorical posture and challenging Pilate's authority: "Are you saying this from yourself, or did others tell you about me?" (18:34). Jesus also implicitly (18:36) and explicitly (18:37) affirms his authority and status using Pilate's own words. He also clarifies that his is not an empty claim to earthly kingship but a divine claim to heavenly kingship (18:36–37).[40]

Further, in the Johannine presentation of the exchange with Pilate, the Jewish leaders initially avoid issuing a formal accusation (18:30). Only after Pilate has affirmed Jesus's innocence no less than three times (18:38; 19:4, 6) do the leaders state a formal accusation against him: "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he made himself the Son of God" (19:7). This accusation is reminiscent of the narrative's first indication that there is a threat against Jesus's life. After Jesus had healed

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[39] Bultmann, *John*, 642.

[40] Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 424–25.

a man on the Sabbath, responding to the hostile reaction of the Jewish leaders, Jesus said, "My Father is working until now, and I am working" (5:17). The narrative continues, "Because of this then, the Jews were seeking to kill him even more, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God" (5:18).[41] Thus, the very reason for Jesus's arrest and crucifixion centers on his unity with the Father.

Further solidifying the encomiastic presentation, the accusation levied against Jesus is not inherently negative. A claim to be the Son of God is only negative if the claim is false. From the point of view of the author or an informed audience member, Jesus does nothing wrong in claiming to be the Son of God since the narrative presents him as such. Jesus refuses to answer Pilate's questions and directly challenges Pilate's authority: "You have no power over me at all except what was given to you from above" (19:11–12). Pilate affirms Jesus's innocence and continually attempts to release him, and only when the religious leaders bring a political threat does Pilate resign to allow an innocent man to be crucified (19:12–16).

The encomiastic presentation of Jesus continues through even the crucifixion, where Jesus honorably carries the cross by himself (19:17) and his title "King of the Jews" is affirmed. The interaction at this point between Pilate and the Jewish leaders is a key illustration of the attempt to shame Jesus—they asked that Pilate not write, "The King of the Jews," but rather "*This man said*, 'I am King of the Jews.'"[42]—and the victorious attribution of honor from Pilate—"What I have written I have written"

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[41] Cf. John 10:33 where the Jewish leaders explain why they attempt to stone Jesus: "because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God."

[42] Emphasis mine.

(namely, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"). While some have emphasized that the competitive element here is between Pilate and the religious leaders, it is the Gospel writer who has the last word and Jesus who receives honor in the affirmation of the title (19:19, 21–22).[43]

Jesus's exaltation is also seen in the wordplay describing his placement on the cross; he is "lifted up" (ὑψόω) as if enthroned, an image foreshadowed in John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32–34.[44] An additional encomiastic feature can be found at the moment of Jesus's death. In the accounts of Mark and Matthew, Jesus cries with a loud voice and dies with one last exhale (Mark 15:37; Matt 27:50). This manner of death communicates no volition on the part of Jesus; he is but a victim. Luke, retaining the manner of death in Mark and Matthew, adds words to Jesus's cry, "Father, into your hands I place my spirit" (Luke 23:46). The Johannine Jesus also gives up his spirit but goes beyond his Synoptic counterparts, declaring, "It is finished." Jesus's action in giving up his spirit is reminiscent of his words from John 10:18, "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord (ἐγὼ τίθημι αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ)." Again, Jesus's volition is linked to his unity with the Father. He continues, "I have received this command from my Father" (10:18b). Here, Jesus's exercise of his own will and his connection to his Father is made explicit even at the moment of his death.[45]

That Jesus's noble death is on behalf of others can be seen in the context of John 10 as well. Jesus claims,

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[43] Neyrey (*The Gospel of John*, 432) argues that competition is between Pilate and the religious leaders, and he deems that "Pilate has the last word."

[44] Joel Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," *JBL* 125 (2006): 74. Cf. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 427. See also the language of "glorification" in John 12:23; 13:31–32; 17:1, 5.

[45] Neyrey, The Gospel of John, 433.

> I am the gate. Whoever would enter through me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief does not come except that he might steal and kill and destroy. I came in order that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:9–11).

These words again emphasize Jesus's unity with the Father. The image of the Good Shepherd recalls Num 27:16–17, where Moses prays for YHWH to send someone "who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep without a shepherd."[46] Thus, the shepherd imagery here reveals Jesus as a leader and caretaker, much like Moses or Joshua. Another important image is found in Ezek 34, arguably the most significant passage in the background of John 10.[47] With this background in mind, John 10 sets up a contrast between Jesus and "false shepherds" who do not care for or feed the flock (Ezek 34:1–6).[48] The Johannine discourse sets up Jesus as the genuine caretaker, whereas the thieves, bandits, and hired hands do not protect the sheep but allow them to be scattered and destroyed.[49]

The shepherd imagery goes further still. Not only is Jesus *a* "good shepherd" like Moses and Joshua before him; he is *the* good shepherd portrayed as the awaited Davidic

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[46] D. Moody Smith, *John*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 204–9. The verbal links are quite strong. In Num 27:17 YHWH replies that Moses should select Joshua (Ἰησοῦς in the LXX). In addition to the reference to sheep, the link between Jesus and Joshua is clear, and the description of Joshua in LXX 27:18 (ὃς ἔχει πνεῦμα ἐν ἑαυτῷ) is very nearly replicated in John the Baptist's description of Jesus: "τεθέαμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν" (John 1:32; cf. 33). Three verbs from this Johannine section (ἐξελεύσεται, εἰσελεύσεται, and ἐξάξει in 10:3, 9) are also found in the description of the leader Moses requests: ὅστις ἐξελεύσεται πρὸ προσώπου αὐτῶν καὶ ὅστις εἰσελεύσεται πρὸ προσώπου αὐτῶν καὶ ὅστις ἐξάξει αὐτοὺς καὶ ὅστις εἰσάξει αὐτούς, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ἡ συναγωγὴ κυρίου ὡσεὶ πρόβατα, οἷς οὐκ ἔστιν ποιμήν" (LXX Num 27:17).

[47] Thyen, Das Johannesevangelium, 486; Bruner, The Gospel of John, 629.

[48] C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 358–61.

[49] In the literary context, the allusion to bad shepherds almost certainly comments on the Pharisees who, as was shown in chapter 9, did not care for the blind man but rather drove him out.

Messiah. This is clear in Ezek 34:23 where YHWH promises, "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them, and be their shepherd." This image of the awaited shepherd, a branch of David, resounds throughout the Hebrew Bible in the Psalms and the Prophets (Ps 78:70–72; Jer 23:4–6; Mic 5:2–4).[50]

Further still, in Ezek 34 YHWH promises to seek Israel out himself, to gather Israel and provide for them (Ezek 34:13–14). The claim is most forceful in verses 11 and 15: "For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. . . . I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep." God is invoked as shepherd especially in the Psalms, when Israel is called his flock (Pss 79:13; 80:2; 95:7; 100:3). With this background in mind, Jesus's claim, "I am the Good Shepherd," shows that his life and death will be for the benefit of the sheep, that he is a good shepherd in the tradition of leaders like Moses and Joshua, that he is the awaited shepherd from the line of David—but it also establishes and emphasizes his unity with the God who claims that he himself will act on behalf of his sheep.[51]

What is remarkable about Jesus as Good Shepherd is that he embodies all three senses of the image of the good shepherd: he is sent by God to lead (like Moses and Joshua), he is the long-awaited Messiah from the line of David who establishes God's reign for Israel, and he is the manifest presence of YHWH himself who promises in Ezek 34:30: "They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are my people." It is almost as if, in Jesus's good shepherd discourse, believers can hear him saying, "You are my sheep . . . and I am your God" (Ezek 34:31). This

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[50] Cf. Lidija Novakovic, Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew, WUNT 2/170 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 13-19, 131-32.

[51] See Smith, *John*, 207.

interpretation, lest it should seem too far-reaching, is supported by Jesus's unequivocal claim, "The Father and I are one" in the same context (John 10:30). The Gospel anticipates this shocking statement already, since it has already named Jesus the Word who both was with God and who was God (1:1). Jesus is certainly distinguishable from God, but he is also in unity with God and thus able to manifest God's presence in a way that God's people had never experienced.[52]

That the suffering of the passion narrative was for the benefit of others can also be seen in John the Baptist's foreshadowing statement at the beginning of the Fourth Gospel where Jesus is called "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). While many theories have been proposed as a background for this imagery,[53] its extension into the passion narrative indicates that the Passover Lamb is a promising proposal. The Passover imagery is also recalled in the Fourth Gospel's chronology. In contrast to the Synoptic chronology, the Fourth Gospel reports that Jesus's crucifixion coincided with the slaughter of the paschal lambs.[54] John 19:14 indicates that Jesus was

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[52] Ibid., 211; Bruner, *The Gospel of John*, 630; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991), 381–82; Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 486.

[53] For a survey of other suggestions for the Lamb of God imagery, see Jesper Tang Nielsen, "The Lamb of God: The Cognitive Structure of a Johannine Metaphor," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language*, ed. Jörg Frey, Ruben Zimmermann, and Jan G. van der Watt, WUNT 200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 225–26. Nielsen actually settles on a combined metaphor for the image—the Passover Lamb and the suffering servant in Isa 53. This suggestion even further emphasizes the point that Jesus's death was for the benefit of others.

[54] John 18:28 also shows that the Jewish leaders had not yet eaten the Passover meal. Exod 12:6 and Lev 23:5 explain that the slaying of the Lamb occurs on the afternoon of Nisan 14. The eating of the paschal meal would take place later that night, which can be considered the fourteenth or fifteenth depending on whether the day is reckoned from sunrise to sunrise or from sunset to sunset. An apparent chronological discord exists with the Synoptic chronology, which reports that before Jesus's arrest, he and his disciples shared what appears to be the Passover meal. Some scholars suggest that the presentation of the Synoptic Last Supper as a paschal meal is theologically rather than historically motivated. See Raymond Edward Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, a Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:1371-72; R. T. France, "Chronological Aspects of Gospel Harmony," *VE* 16 (1986): 33–60. The same can be said of the Fourth Gospel's chronological link between the crucifixion and the slaying of the paschal lambs. See, for

taken before Pilate and crucified on Passover Eve or the Friday of Passover. On this day, the afternoon of the Day of Preparation, the temple priests would begin slaughtering the paschal animals. Symbolic details in the crucifixion scene such as the mention of the hyssop branch and that none of Jesus's bones are broken also serve to support this connection (John 19:29, 36; Exod 12:46).[55] As the Lamb of God, Jesus's noble death transforms the negative situation of humanity into a positive one.[56] In the words of Raymond Brown:

> The time when this fatal renunciation of the Messiah takes place is noon on Passover Eve, the very hour when the priests have begun to slaughter the paschal lambs in the temple precincts. . . . At the beginning of the Gospel John the Baptist had pointed Jesus out as the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin (i 29). By way of inclusion this prophecy is now fulfilled; for at the moment when the Passover lambs are being slaughtered, Jesus' trial comes to an end, and he sets out for Golgotha to pour forth the blood that will cleanse men from sin (I John i 7). Truly, as John sees it, God has planned "the hour" carefully.[57]

The imagery of the Passover Lamb reveals that Jesus's death is to be understood in relation to its benefit for others. The imagery of the Good Shepherd emphasizes this element and extends the metaphor so that Jesus is not only the sacrificial lamb but also the shepherd who himself acts on behalf of his sheep. Thus, Jesus's noble death also emphasizes his unity with the Father.

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example, Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1966); Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 2:1102. For an alternative reading of the Johannine chronology considering the complexity of the ancient Jewish calendar, see Annie Jaubert, *La Date de la Cène: Calendrier biblique et Liturgie chrétienne* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1957); Eugen Ruckstuhl, *Chronology of the Last Days of Jesus: A Critical Study* (New York: Desclee Co., 1965), 50–55, 136–39. Regardless of which report may be more historical, the Johannine presentation clearly indicates a correspondence of Jesus's death with the slaughter of the paschal lambs.

[55] Neyrey, The Gospel of John, 434.

[56] Nielsen, "Lamb of God," 256.

[57] Brown, The Death of the Messiah, 2:895-96.

The Fourth Gospel takes the unmistakably shameful nature of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion and uses it to honor the subject, practicing the "alchemy" described by Theon, causing virtue to shine forth especially in misfortune (Theon 111 [Kennedy, 52]).[58] Illustrating Jesus's prudence and volition, making the accusations against Jesus implicit, couching the formal accusations within the context of an authoritative figure confirming Jesus's innocence, and emphasizing the benefit his death had for others, the Fourth Gospel maintains its encomiastic tone as the narrative brings the hero to his noble death. In this way, the Fourth Gospel characterizes Jesus's lasting significance and honor by showing the glory of his death.[59] This glory is linked to Jesus's unity with the Father, since his authority is based on the fact that he came from the Father, his unity with the Father incited the hostility that led to his death, the charge against him is his claim to be one with the Father, and his claim to be the Good Shepherd mirrors YHWH's promise to act on behalf of his sheep.

Events after death. According to the *Progymnasmata*, the encomiastic presentation of the hero should also include events after death: a proper burial, games held in the hero's honor or oracles about his death, vindication of wrongful death through the words of respected men, deeds of retribution, or supernatural phenomena (Ps-Hermogenes 16–17 [Kennedy, 82]). For example, Plutarch records the elaborate burial of the beloved Timoleon:

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[58] Neyrey, The Gospel of John, 418.

[59] Jurgen Zangenberg, "'Buried According to the Customs of the Jews': John 19,40 in Its Material and Literary Context," in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Gilbert van Belle, BETL 200 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 874.

> A number of days having been allowed in which the Syracusans might prepare for his funeral, while the country folk and strangers came together, the whole ceremony was conducted with great magnificence, and besides, young men selected by lot carried his bier with all its decorations through the precinct where the palace of Dionysius had stood before Timoleon destroyed it. The bier was escorted, too, by thousands of men and women, whose appearance was one that became festival, since all were crowned with garlands and wore white raiment; while cries and tears, mingled with benedictions upon the dead, betokened, not a formal tribute of respect, nor a service performed in obedience to public decree, but a just sorrow and a thankfulness arising from genuine good will. And finally, when the bier had been placed upon the funeral pyre, Demetrius, who had the loudest voice of any herald of the time, read from manuscript the following decree:—"By the people of Syracuse, Timoleon, son of Timodemus, from Corinth, is here buried at a public cost of two hundred minas, and is honoured for all time with annual contests, musical, equestrian, and gymnastic, because he overthrew the tyrants, subdued the Barbarians, re-peopled the largest of the devastated cities, and then restored their laws to the Greeks of Sicily." Furthermore, they buried his ashes in the market place, and afterwards, when they had surrounded it with porticoes and built palaestras in it, they set it apart as a gymnasium for their young men, and named it Timoleonteum. And they themselves, using the civil polity and the laws which he had ordained, enjoyed a long course of unbroken prosperity and happiness (Plutarch, *Tim*. 39 [Perrin, LCL, 353-355]).

Similarly, women observed Demosthenes's death by fasting in the temple and erecting his statue in bronze, decreeing that the eldest of his house should have public maintenance in the prytaneium (Plutarch, *Dem*. 30.4–5 [Perrin, LCL, 77]).

Plutarch also writes of Cicero's post-mortem vindication:

> I learned that Caesar, a long time after this [Cicero's murder], paid a visit to one of his daughter's sons; and the boy, since he had in his hands a book of Cicero's, was terrified and sought to hide it in his gown; but Caesar saw it, and took the book, and read a great part of it as he stood, and then gave it back to the youth, saying: "A learned man, my child, a learned man and a lover of his country." Moreover, as soon as he had finally defeated Antony, and when he himself was consul, he chose Cicero's son as his colleague in the office . . . (Plutarch, *Cic*. 49.3–4 [Perrin, LCL, 209]).

Plutarch's account shows that the wrongful murder of Cicero by Antony was vindicated through the words and actions of Caesar.

Plutarch also records that after Caesar himself was murdered, the senate voted to give him divine honors and to retain the majority of the policies he had instilled during his rule. Further, the will of Caesar was an ongoing testament to his generosity, demonstrating his honorable character even post mortem. In response to this generosity, the crowds could no longer contain their grief that their revered Caesar had been murdered. Their actions—including building a bonfire to burn the body and seeking out the murderers to avenge this wrongful death—conveyed honor and pursued vindication for the hero (Plutarch, *Caes*. 68.1).

The account goes on to show how Caesar's own spirit continued to work toward his ultimate vindication, that the glory he had earned during his life might be given after his death:

> At the time of his death Caesar was fully fifty-six years old . . . while of the power and dominion which he had sought all his life at so great risks, and barely achieved at last, of this he had reaped no fruit but the name of it only, and a glory which had awakened envy on the part of his fellow citizens. However, the great guardian-genius (δαίμων) of the man, whose help he had enjoyed through life, followed upon him even after death as an avenger of his murder, driving and tracking down his slayers over every land and sea until not one of them was left, but even those who in any way soever either put hand to the deed or took part in the plot were punished (Plutarch, *Caes*. 69.1–2 [Perrin, LCL, 605]).

Adding even more honor to the presentation, Plutarch records how both natural and supernatural events surrounding Caesar's murder further vindicated and glorified him. The death of Cassius ironically vindicated Caesar's death, and divine phenomena disrupted the natural order following the murder:

> Among events of man's ordering, the most amazing was that which befell Cassius; for after his defeat at Philippi he slew himself with that very dagger which he had used against Caesar; and among events of divine ordering, there was the great comet, which showed itself in great splendour for seven nights after Caesar's murder, and then disappeared; also, the obscuration of the sun's rays.

> For during all that year its orb rose pale and without radiance (Plutarch, *Caes*. 69.3 [Perrin, LCL, 605–7]).

A vision further demonstrated that the gods saw Caesar's murder as an unjust tragedy:

> But more than anything else the phantom that appeared to Brutus showed that the murder of Caesar was not pleasing to the gods. . . . As he was about to take his army across from Abydos to the other continent, he was lying down at night, as his custom was, in his tent, not sleeping, but thinking of the future . . . And now he thought he heard a noise at the door, and looking towards the light of the lamp, which was slowly going out, he saw a fearful vision of a man of unnatural size and harsh aspect. At first he was terrified, but when he saw that the visitor neither did nor said anything, but stood in silence by his couch, he asked him who he was. Then the phantom answered him, "I am thy evil genius, Brutus, and thou shalt see me at Philippi." At that time, then, Brutus said courageously: "I shall see thee;" and the heavenly visitor went away. Subsequently, however, when arrayed against Antony and Caesar at Philippi . . . as he was about to fight the second battle, the same phantom visited him again at night, and though it said nothing to him, Brutus understood his fate, and plunged headlong into danger. He did not fall in battle, however, but after the rout retired to a crest of ground, put his naked sword to his breast (while a certain friend, as they say, helped to drive the blow home), and so died (Plutarch, *Caes*. 69.5–8 [Perrin, LCL, 607–9]; cf. *Brutus*, 36; 52).

The events after Jesus's death in the Fourth Gospel lend a similar encomiastic tenor to the closing chapter of the hero's story. The expected "burial" for the hero in the Fourth Gospel, a victim of crucifixion, was the antithesis of honorable or praiseworthy. At best the bodies of convicts would be buried together indiscriminately and in an unmarked grave;[60] at worst, they would have been tossed in a pit for scavengers.[61] The statement in John 19:40 that Jesus's body was handled "according to the burial customs of the Jews" makes a striking contrast to this dishonorable expectation. Two men are responsible for this intervention, Joseph of Arimathea, who requests Jesus's body from Pilate, and Nicodemus. Both of these men were of considerable importance. The

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[60] Ibid., 876.

[61] Neyrey, The Gospel of John, 434.

narrative had already described the latter as a Pharisee and leader of the Jews, and the former is now described as one in high enough position to have access to Pilate—and to have his request granted.[62] This initiative for Jesus on the part of reputable men (Theon 110; John of Sardis 123) brings the encomiastic tenor even to the events after the hero's death. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is given not only a "proper" Jewish burial but also an overtly honorable one with a large amount of spices and a brand new tomb (19:39–41).

In the conclusion to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is raised from death to greet and comfort his followers. His actions after death include miraculous appearances (20:19, 26), commissioning the disciples and giving the Holy Spirit (20:21–23), facilitating a miraculous catch of fish (21:4–8, 10–11), preparing a meal for his disciples (21:9, 12–14), and reinstating Peter (21:15–19). The resurrection vindicates Jesus, showing that he overcame death and validating his predictions from earlier in the narrative. In John 2:19, Jesus says to the Pharisees, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The narrator clarifies that Jesus was not speaking of the Jerusalem temple; rather, he was using "the temple" as a metaphor for his body. The additional explanation links this prediction with Jesus's resurrection: "When, therefore, he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this" (2:22).[63] This mention again recalls Jesus words in John 10:17–18: "I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one has taken it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." And again, Jesus's honorable prudence and volition is

[62] Zangenberg, "'Buried According to the Customs of the Jews,'" 877–78.

[63] Cf. Lidija Novakovic, Raised from the Dead According to Scripture: The Role of Israel's Scripture in the Early Christian Interpretations of Jesus' Resurrection, JCT 12 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2012), 184–95.

linked to his unity with the Father: "I have received this command from my Father" (10:18b).

Jesus's resurrection shows that his predictions were fulfilled and continues to emphasize his unity with the Father. Appearing first to Mary Magdalene, the resurrected Jesus tells her, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (20:18). Appearing to the disciples, he says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (20:21). In a unique twist, the encomiastic presentation of the events after the hero's death have the hero, raised from the dead, continue to act for the benefit of others and to emphasize his unity with the Father.

In striking resemblance to the conclusion of Aphthonius's encomium of Thucydides—"Many other things could be said about Thucydides, if the mass of his praises did not fall short of telling everything" (Aphthonius the Sophist 38 [Kennedy, 110])—the Fourth Gospel concludes with the statement, "But there is more that Jesus did; if every one of these events was recorded, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (21:25). Like the encomium of Thucydides, the Fourth Gospel's encomiastic presentation of the origin, training, noble deeds, noble death, and post-mortem vindication of Jesus presents a hero whose honor cannot be contained in one narrative account.

Summary and Transition

The Fourth Gospel's use of the rhetorical topics for encomium gives the audience more information about the genre of the story they encounter. As Alicia Myers writes, "by incorporating standard *topoi* and techniques in his characterization of Jesus, [the evangelist] also shows an expectation that his audience will recognize common elements

of *bioi* from his time period."[64] But beyond this expectation, the evangelist participates in genre-bending to show that the hero of the Fourth Gospel surpasses the expectations of first-century rhetoric.[65] With the incorporation of each topic, the evangelist rhetorically brings attention to Jesus's unity with the Father as foundational for his exalted status and as an indispensable concept for understanding Jesus's life orientation. Thus, this concept would have been essential for the audience—and is essential for us—in the pursuit of Johannine ethics. The encomiastic topics focus the audience's attention on Jesus's status, which results from his unity with the Father.

An important question remains: How does the exalted presentation of the hero relate to the ethics of the text? Quintilian specifically mentions the implicit moral component in the exercise of encomium, explaining that in the praise of the hero, the mind is molded by the contemplation of right and wrong (*Inst. Orat.* 2.4.20). In the previous chapter we saw this element at work in Plutarch's *Lives*. Though an audience member may have found herself or himself in a role, status, or context different than the hero's, each reader was invited to imitate the hero's virtues and to translate them into his or her own setting. For the Fourth Gospel the distance is greater, since Jesus is presented as a divine figure acting in his capacity as the Sent One of the Father. Because of the exalted status of the Johannine Jesus, imitation does not seem to be the central, guiding concept. Rather, the theme of unity seems operative for John's narrative. Thus, the rhetorical function of the encomiastic topics to establish the exalted status of Jesus is only one step in a two-step rhetorical trajectory. First, the narrative establishes the exalted

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[64] Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 20; cf. 70-71.

[65] Ibid., 20.

status of Jesus and shows it to be rooted in his unity with the Father. Second, the unity between Jesus and the Father is extended to Jesus's followers. It is this concept of unity that is determinative for the group's ethics.

In the chapters that follow I will give significant attention to the theme of unity, demonstrating how, after establishing Jesus's unity with his Father as the defining feature of his character, the rhetorical trajectory of the Gospel works to incorporate Jesus's followers into this unity, inviting them to participate in this identity-forming relationship.

CHAPTER FOUR

Metaleptic Extension of Encomiastic Topics: Elevated Christology, Elusive Ethics, and the Situation of the Johannine Community

Christology and Ethics in the Fourth Gospel

In this chapter I will demonstrate how the encomiastic topics are extended to the followers of Jesus and the Johannine audience, revealing the theme of unity as a bridge between the elevated Christology and elusive ethics in the Fourth Gospel. In Chapter Three we saw how the Fourth Gospel incorporates the rhetorical topics for encomium to show that Jesus exceeds the expectations for an honorable hero in the ancient world. Importantly, the analysis also revealed that Jesus's exalted status is grounded in his connection with God. Unity with God was the determining factor for Jesus's identity, his authority, and his actions in the world.

As we will see, the two-level narrative form and other metaleptic elements disrupt the boundary between the narrative world and the world of the audience, drawing the audience to make inferences from the story and apply them to their own particular situation. Just as Jesus's connection with the Father determines his actions, the believers' connection to God through Jesus involves a transformational shift in identity for the believers that will determine their actions. Further, the metaleptic character of the Fourth Gospel's two-level drama makes the rhetorical situation of the audience a significant factor for understanding how they would engage and be engaged by the narrative. Thus, we will also explore how the situation of the audience, a community in crisis, affects our understanding of Johannine ethics. While elevated Christology may at first seem to

overshadow ethics in the Fourth Gospel, Johannine Christology reveals the determining factor for Jesus's actions and for Johannine ethics: unity with God. Together with the Gospel's metaleptic engagement of the audience, the extension of the encomiastic topics leads the audience to connect the clear characterization of Jesus to the disciples in the story and then to their own identity, behavior, and mission.

Elevated Christology in the Fourth Gospel

We need not look far for signs of elevated Christology in the Fourth Gospel.[1] The narrator introduces Jesus as the Word who was God and was with God in the beginning, the creative agent through whom all things came into being. Though this Word became flesh and came to dwell on earth, the Johannine narrative certainly does not present Jesus as an average human being.[2] He knows things impossible for a human to know (John 1:48), performs miraculous signs, and teaches with divine authority. Not only did he claim to do the Father's work and have knowledge from the Father, he explicitly

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[1] Studies describing the Johannine Jesus's elevated status include Raymond Edward Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 36, 109; J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed., NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003); Boy Hinrichs, *"Ich bin": die Konsistenz des Johannes-Evangeliums in der Konzentration auf das Wort Jesu*, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 133 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988); Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007). See also Alicia D. Myers (*Characterizing Jesus*, 63-64) on how the prologue builds audience expectation by which they interpret Jesus through the rest of the story: "Jesus's unique status as μονογενὴς also sets him apart by enabling him to be the embodiment of the Father on earth. . . . These unique origins establish Jesus's relationship with the Father as well as his superiority over humanity." The Johannine Jesus also meets the three common characterizations of divinity in Hellenistic philosophy: being eternal, ungenerated, and uncreated (440). Cf. Theophilus, *Autol*. 1.3; Diod. S., *Hist*. 1.12.10; 6.1.2; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv*. *Phy*. 1.45; Diog. Laert., 7.137; Philo, *Leg*. *All*. 1.51; *Cher*. 86; *Spec*. *Leg*. 2.166; Josephus, *Ag*. *Ap*. 2.167. Jerome H. Neyrey, "'Without Beginning of Days or End of Life' (Hebrews 7:3): Topos for a True Deity," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 439–55.

[2] The Fourth Gospel presumes Jesus's humanity and includes human aspects in his characterization; see Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988). Johannine Christology can also be seen to fit within the context of first century Jewish monotheism, maintaining Jesus's subordination to God; see James F. McGrath, *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in Its Jewish Context* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 55–77.

proclaimed, "I and the Father are one" (10:30); "the Father is in me and I in the Father" (10:38); "The one who sees me sees the One who sent me" (12:45); "The one who receives me receives the One who sent me" (13:20). Because of his words and actions, he was accused of making himself to be equal with God—the charge that would ultimately lead to his execution (5:18; 19:7). These elements have led to an impression of elevated Christology in the Fourth Gospel, perhaps most famously expressed in Käsemann's description of the Johannine Jesus as "God going about on earth."[3] Though Johannine scholarship has since come to recognize the tensions that keep the Fourth Gospel's elevated Christology from rising to the point of Käsemann's "naïve docetism,"[4] we cannot help but notice that the Johannine presentation of Jesus appears much more elevated than does the Synoptic Jesus. As James Dunn says, "[I]t is abundantly apparent

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[3] Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*, trans. Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 9. Cf. "Der auf Erden wandelnde Gottes Sohn oder Gott," from Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 159.

[4] For a helpful and thorough discussion of the tensions in Johannine Christology, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), which approaches the issue from the viewpoint of developmental psychology to explain the christological tension as emerging from the dialectical thinking of the evangelist. Cf. James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981); James E. Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998). Anderson helpfully outlines the major approaches to Johannine Christology in the history of scholarship: Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007); Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971); C. K. Barrett, "'The Father Is Greater than I' (John 14:28): Subordinate Christology in the New Testament," in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 19–36; C. K. Barrett, "Christocentric or Theocentric? Observations on the Theological Method of the Fourth Gospel," in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 1–18; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (New York: Macmillan, 1955); Raymond Edward Brown, "The Theology of the Incarnation in John," in *New Testament Essays* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 132–37; Raymond Edward Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966); Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1982); Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Oliphants, 1972). He also gives significant attention to three interpretations of John 6: Robert Kysar, "The Source Analysis of the Fourth Gospel: A Growing Consensus?," *NovT* 15 (1973): 134–52; Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*, NovTSup 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1965); C. K. Barrett, "The Dialectical Theology of St. John," in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 49–69.

that most of the Johannine distinctives come to clearest expression in John's Christology."[5] Because of these features, many scholars have spoken of a "high" Christology or a "Christology from above" in the Fourth Gospel.[6]

The Tension Between Johannine Christology and Johannine Ethics

Imitation ethics. It is precisely this elevated Christology that some have found troublesome for the pursuit of Johannine ethics.[7] As we saw in the Introduction, the Fourth Gospel lacks the expected forms of moral instruction (gnomes, maxims, paraenetic sections). Thus, many have looked instead to imitation ethics, that is, to the presentation of Jesus's life as a model for behavior. Imitation ethics recognizes that the source material for Johannine ethics need not be limited to Jesus's teachings. Richard Burridge presented a notable contribution on this subject in which he builds upon his

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[5] James D. G. Dunn, "Let John Be John: A Gospel for Its Time," in *The Gospel and the Gospels*, ed. Peter Stuhlmacher (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 301. While Jesus's humanity was an important factor for early church doctrine, the Johannine Jesus (especially in discussion of his role as Logos) is clearly located within the sphere of the divine. See T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, SNTSMS 13 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 92. "The importance of the Logos-concept, which St John uses in the Prologue of his Gospel (i. 1-18), for later christological formulation can hardly be over-estimated" (ibid., 6).

[6] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels: A Biblical Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 219. The idea that the Fourth Gospel presented an elevated Christology, especially in comparison with the Synoptic Jesus is long standing. See Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider, *Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistuarum Joannis, Apostoli, Indole et Origine* (Leipzig: Jo. Ambros. Barth, 1820); G. P. Wetter, *"Der Sohn Gottes": eine Untersuchung über den Charakter und die Tendenz des Johannes Evangeliums, zugleich ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Heilandsgestalten der Antike*, FRLANT 26 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1916); Emanuel Hirsch, *Das vierte Evangelium in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt verdeutscht und erklärt* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1936).

[7] Many scholars have helpfully pointed out that the Fourth Gospel balances its presentation of Jesus. See, for example, Barrett, "Christocentric or Theocentric"; A. Feuillet, *Le Mystère de l'amour divin dans la théologie johannique*, *EBib* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1972); Pamela Elizabeth Kinlaw, "The Christ Is Jesus: Metamorphosis, Possession, and Johannine Christology" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2003); William Loader, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structure and Issues*, BBET (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1989). Although the Johannine presentation is not exclusively elevated, the Fourth Gospel's emphasis on Jesus's elevated status might make the audience less likely to see the Johannine Jesus as an imitable model for human behavior.

earlier work of seeing the Gospels in terms of Graeco-Roman *bioi* and offers "imitating Jesus" as a guiding concept for New Testament ethics.[8] He argues that the primary purpose of an ancient *bios* is to describe a person's life and death according to a particular understanding of the author. Though these are not ethical treatises, he suggests that ethical instruction is included in the mimetic purpose of the text, which invites the reader to imitate the central character.

Though he eventually takes each Gospel in turn (after treating ethics in Paul), Burridge begins with the "historical Jesus." He presents the historical Jesus as an itinerant teacher of Jewish background with a mixed following and eschatological outlook, influenced by John the Baptist's message of repentance, and whom many viewed as a prophet. He taught and healed and accepted outsiders, provoked debate among other Jewish leaders (especially regarding the temple), and he was finally crucified on charges both political and religious. His life and death birthed a worldwide inclusive Christian community based on claims that he had risen from the dead. While Burridge offers a general discussion of the criteria for the historical Jesus, the emerging picture is a synthesis of these basic facts that emerge from the canonical Gospels.[9] This approach is

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[8] Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 19–32, 330–46.

[9] In *Imitating Jesus* (34–9), Burridge offers a simplified outline that synthesizes conclusions from historical Jesus scholarship, especially E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 326–27; E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993), 10–14; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 569–72. Burridge suggests that the basic facts that emerge from these studies "are also those found in the canonical gospels." For his own extended thoughts on the historical Jesus, see Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus?: A Symbolic Reading*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

perhaps fitting for his goal of articulating New Testament ethics; however, in this context, some of the Johannine distinctives fade into the background.[10]

For example, Burridge claims that "John, in his own way and style, . . . agrees with the same combination of words and deeds, rigorous teaching and inclusive acceptance which we have found in Paul and the Synoptists."[11] In fact, key elements that make up Burridge's "ethics of the historical Jesus" are strikingly absent in the Fourth Gospel. Burridge outlines the ethics of the historical Jesus in two main components: the words of Jesus, which Burridge calls "ethical teaching," and the deeds of Jesus, which he calls an "ethical example." He presents the central theme of Jesus's ethical teaching as the kingdom of God. References to the kingdom of God in the Fourth Gospel are scant, however, and the concept is not discussed in detail (3:3, 5; 18:36). In Burridge's presentation, Jesus's ethical teaching also emphasizes repentance, a concept almost entirely absent in the Fourth Gospel (5:14; 8:11). Further, the radicalization of the command to love one's neighbor, which extends love even to enemies, is said to be central to the ethics of the historical Jesus.[12] This version of the command, however, is notably absent in the Fourth Gospel.[13]

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[10] References to the Fourth Gospel appear on only six pages in the section. In the first (47), John 1:37–43 is cited as a parallel reference for Mark's calling of Levi to illustrate that Jesus calls for immediate response. In the context, Burridge argues that Jesus's demand, "Follow me," and the Synoptic command, "Repent and believe the gospels," reveal an "ethic of response." The second oddly cites John 18:22–23 as an example where Jesus (in John) does not follow his own instructions (in Matthew) to "turn the other cheek." The third mentions the healings of the lame and blind men and the story of the woman caught in adultery as examples of Jesus's inclusive ministry. References to the Synoptic Gospels are peppered throughout and really form the basis of the presentation. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*.

[11] Ibid., 286.

[12] Other emphases include an ethic of response, the context of community, the eschatological setting for the kingdom (that it is both realized and future), and the role of the Law. The Fourth Gospel is distinct in its presentation of a more realized eschatology and in its treatment of the Law.

[13] We will discuss the scope of the Johannine love command in Chapter Five.

Burridge does draw on the Johannine Jesus to demonstrate the universal scope of Jesus's mission as an essential element of Jesus's ethic. He offers the interactions with the woman in Samaria (John 4), the man who was paralyzed (John 5), the woman caught in adultery (John 8), and the man who was blind (John 9) as examples of Jesus's ministry across social barriers. Burridge extends this ethical example to include Jesus's healing ministry, his humble service in washing his disciples' feet, and his sacrificial death as a paradigm for engaging the world with compassion and responding to the needs of others.[14] His attention to the Johannine Jesus's example of breaking social boundaries, his description of Jesus's death as an example of self-sacrifice, and his conclusions about the scope of the new commandment contribute to the pursuit of Johannine ethics. Indeed, the most promising avenues for exploring Johannine ethics are built on the foundation of his observations about the *bios* genre and his recognition that ethics are implicitly embedded in biographical presentations rather than explicitly laid out in a moral system.

Still, more should be said about imitation as the proposed solution for recognizing and articulating Johannine ethics. In John, Jesus's injunctions to do as he does (13:14–15; 15:10) and to love as he loved (15:12) support the idea that imitation ethics might be straightforward in the Fourth Gospel. The emphasis on elevated Christology and the "larger than life" characterization, however, present a lofty Jesus who is not a readily

[14] Cornelis Bennema ("Mimesis in John 13: Cloning or Creative Articulation?," *NovT* 56 [2014]: 261–74) argues that the mimesis called for in John 13 would include acts of humble service beyond just foot washing. His insights are helpful in promoting a more nuanced approach to mimesis. In terms of our discussion here, however, problems would remain. Namely, the exclusive focus of the footwashing command mirrors that of the love command. It is still unclear whether any acts of service would be expected outside of the community boundaries. For more on inward focused ethics, see the discussion of the love command in the following chapter.

accessible example for moral living.[15] Jesus's inclusive interactions with people in his healing ministry are intended to elicit belief rather than to extend compassion or meet a physical need. "Signs" as they are called in the Fourth Gospel function to reveal the truth of who Jesus is and to incite spiritual decisions of faith.[16] Like Burridge, and building upon his work, we will begin with the Fourth Gospel's Christology. We will look, however, to rhetorical features in the text to navigate the complexities that John's elevated Christology brings to the pursuit of Johannine ethics. To this end, we will now examine one Johannine episode, an episode that will highlight the complexities of imitation ethics and will present a rhetorical foothold for moving forward.

John 6. In some ways the episode in John 6, where Jesus feeds a crowd of hungry people, is an expected target for discussions of ethics in the Fourth Gospel. Miroslav Volf contends, "Jesus embodied God's love for the world by feeding the hungry."[17] Since Jesus cares that people eat, the implication would seem to be that believers should take up

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[15] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 317–26, esp. 318. Cf. Lund, "The Joys and Dangers of Ethics in John's Gospel," 278. In comparison to other divine figures like Yahweh or Sophia, however, Jesus is more imitable, since he has a body and lives on earth as a human man; see William Loader, "The Law and Ethics in John's Gospel," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 101.

[16] This topic will be discussed further in the analysis of John 6. For one suggestion that Jesus's signs indicate his care for the physical welfare of people, see Christos Karakolis, "Semeia Conveying Ethics in the Gospel according to John," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), especially 212. See also Culpepper ("John 5:1-18: A Sample of Narrative Critical Commentary," in *The Gospel of John As Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspectives*, ed. Mark W. G. Stibbe [Leiden: Brill, 1993], 193–207), who says that Jesus shows care for the man's physical wellbeing as well as his spiritual wellbeing.

[17] Volf, "Johannine Dualism," 41.

this ethical principle and imitate his physical work to care for physical needs.[18] But the Johannine version of this miraculous feeding complicates such a reading. Compassion, a significant element in the Markan and Matthean versions of this story (Mark 6:34; Matt 14:14) and elsewhere in Synoptic healing stories (Luke 7:13; 13:34; cf. Matt 23:37–39), is completely absent from the Johannine episode. Schnackenburg describes the difference in emphasis between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel: "With the synoptists we have the warm, compassionate devotion of Jesus to the people. The characteristic semantic fields of 'mercy' and 'pity' are found in all three synoptists but are missing entirely in John."[19] Stern responses often accompany Johannine signs—"what concern is that to you and me?" in John 2:4; "unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe" in John 4:48; "do not sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to you" in John 5:14. Even when the Johannine Jesus is not reluctant with his signs or when they are not coupled with rebuke, his purpose is explicit—to reveal God and to elicit belief (9:3; 11:15).[20]

The episode in John 6 comes on the heels of a discourse where Jesus has just outlined his credentials for his opponents, stating that John the Baptist, the Father, and Moses (through the Scriptures) testify on his behalf. Beyond these personal testimonies,

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[18] Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 366. See also Karakolis ("Semeia Conveying Ethics," 212) who calls Johannine signs "concrete examples of Jesus's loving care for the people of the world." While some of Karakolis's macro-level insights are helpful in understanding Johannine ethics, such an approach does not admit the complications that come along with the striking lack of ordinary compassion shown by the Johannine Jesus. Nowhere does the Fourth Gospel make Jesus's care for physical welfare explicit, though it may appear implicitly in some of his signs.

[19] Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 241. Cf. D. Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity: Essays on Its Setting, Sources, and Theology* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), 179.

[20] Even Jesus's display of grief in John 11:33-35 is accompanied by an explanation in 11:40 that all was done for the glory of God.

Jesus's works also testify to his identity and authority (5:31–46).[21] In fact, each sign concludes with a reference to belief, which is often accompanied by an explicit clarification of Jesus's identity.[22] Here in John 6, Jesus rebukes the crowd for whom he had just miraculously supplied a meal: "You are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled" (6:26). Instead of offering more bread to the hungry people, Jesus declares that he is the Bread of Life and offers himself as food.

Jesus's response complicates imitation ethics. Rather than enacting a compassionate response, Jesus calls attention to his own identity. While it is true that Jesus provides food for hungry people, he chastises them: "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you" (6:27). Statements like this one give the impression that the Johannine Jesus who cares for the spiritual realm is uninterested in the physical aspects of life. Such statements seem to suggest that the narrative is interested in Christology with little concern for ethics.[23] If the narrative does offer Jesus's actions as an example for imitation, what might such imitation look like? As scholars have sought to answer that question, some troubling pictures have emerged.

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[21] Harold W. Attridge, "Argumentation in John 5," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference*, ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter G. Übelacker, Emory Studies in Early Christianity (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2002), 188–99.

[22] The signs include changing water to wine, healing the official's son, healing the lame man by the pool, feeding the five thousand, healing the blind man, and raising Lazarus. For references to belief, see John 2:11; 4:48, 53–54; 5:36; 6:29; 9:35–38; 11:15, 25. For explicit clarifications of Jesus's identity, see John 5:18; 6:14, 48–51; 9:3, 33; 11:27.

[23] See, for example, Robert H. Gundry, *Jesus the Word according to John the Sectarian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

For Robert H. Gundry, the elevated status of Jesus should have profound implications for Jesus's followers.[24] "The elect," as he calls them, should draw the same sharp boundary lines that Jesus himself drew. In a Gospel where so many of Jesus's words and actions function to establish his elevated identity, this direct imitation results in behavior that would not be considered "ethical" even by the loosest standards. For example, Gundry claims that the high Christology of John and its resulting sectarianism "has sharpened rather than dulled the evangelistic thrust and usefulness—even today—of the Fourth Gospel."[25] Applying his reading to contemporary evangelical Christianity, Gundry chastises this group of today's Jesus-followers for such worldly behaviors as "curtailment of the doctrine of eternal punishment," "migration from exclusivism to inclusivism," and "hope for universal salvation."[26] He goes so far as to call for a "reinstatement of John's sectarianism with its masterly, totalizing, but divisive Christology of the Word that speaks truth so incisively."[27] While his reading is extreme, it provides a vivid example of the dangerous complexities that go along with imitation ethics for a Gospel with such an elevated Christology.

Jack Sanders's chapter on the Johannine literature in his *Ethics in the New Testament* provides a less extreme but no less vivid example.[28] He suggests that those who turn to the Fourth Gospel for ethics emerge with a narrow focus on conversion, love and service exclusive to an in-group, and disdain for the actual physical needs of the

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 69.

[26] Ibid., 76–77.

[27] Ibid., 71.

[28] Jack T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).

world.[29] Sanders critiques the Fourth Gospel, claiming that such readings reveal "the weakness and moral bankruptcy of the Johannine ethics."[30]

Glen Lund summarizes these perceptions of Jesus as "nothing more than self-promotional, inimitable, hateful and divisive."[31] While these extremely negative conclusions about Johannine ethics are unpalatable, they do illustrate significant problems that accompany this pursuit. The Johannine Jesus does not seem to offer an example for ethical living; rather, his words and actions reveal the Gospel's elevated Christology. Imitation ethics must not rush past a thorough conception of Christology. Indeed several aspects of this episode in John 6 focus on clarifying Jesus's identity. The crowd responds to Jesus's actions by commenting, "This is truly the prophet who is coming into the world" (6:14). This description is likely a reference to the promised prophet like Moses from Deut 18:15–19.[32] Like God had put his words into this prophet's mouth, so Jesus claims to speak as the Father instructed him (3:34; 8:28; 12:49–50; 14:10). Several elements in John 6 parallel the narrative in Num 11 where a complaining crowd (John 6:41–43; Num 11:1) receives a miraculous provision of bread (John 6:11–12, 31; Num 11:7–9; cf. Exod 16:4; Neh 9:15).[33] Jesus's identity, however, cannot be summed up in the comparisons to the prophet like Moses; his identity must be clarified

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[29] Ibid., 99.

[30] Ibid., 100.

[31] Lund, "Joys and Dangers," 265.

[32] For a detailed discussion, see Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 174–79. For references to the hope of a coming prophet, a second exodus, a coming redeemer, and manna once again coming from heaven in other Jewish literature, see Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 265.

[33] Brown, The Gospel According to John, 233.

further. In response to Jesus's actions, the crowd rushes to make him king. Jesus's response of withdrawing confirms that the crowd has indeed misunderstood (6:15).[34]

Instead of accepting the crowd's interpretation of his identity, Jesus clarifies his identity in the walking on water episode that follows his escape to the mountain (6:16–21). As Jesus miraculously approaches the ship on the sea, he claims, "ἐγώ εἰμι."[35] On the most basic level, the phrase reads, "It's me," and identifies that Jesus is the figure approaching the ship. Use of this phrase elsewhere in the Gospel, however, shows that it has a more significant implication.[36] With this claim, Jesus has already told the Samaritan woman that he is the Messiah (4:26). He will soon tell the Pharisees that when they lift him up they will realize his identity as "ἐγώ εἰμι," who existed even before the patriarchs (8:23–28). The disciples will also be invited to believe this claim (13:19), and Jesus will use these same words to turn himself over to his arresting party, who subsequently fall to the ground in response (18:5, 8).[37]

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[34] Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 117–18. D. Moody Smith, *John*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 149: "Here, as in chapter 5, and indeed chapter 4, Jesus's miraculous deed leads to recognition of him, but recognition that is at best partial or inadequate."

[35] Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 254–55; Bruner, *The Gospel of John*, 378. Cf. Mark 6:50 and Matt 14:27.

[36] Smith, *John*, 150. Paul Anderson (*The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 180) calls this image "starkly theophanic." Cf. Bultmann, *John*, 216. J. Ramsey Michaels (*The Gospel of John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 357) agrees with Barrett (*The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 281) that this phrase is purely self-identification. In the context of divine imagery, however, a double-meaning is likely.

[37] The Johannine Jesus also uses εἰμι with several objects to make other christological assertions: "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51); "I am the light of the world" (8:12; 9:4); "I am the good shepherd" (10:12); "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25); "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); "I am the vine" (John 15:1, 5).

The words themselves recall the name by which YHWH identified himself to Israel (Exod 3:14).[38] The action of moving across the water also draws upon images of God/Wisdom from the Hebrew Bible. As Jo-Ann Brant writes, "Walking on water in Jewish and Greco-Roman tradition is unambiguously a divine act."[39] Especially poignant is the reference to Job 9:8, which describes God as "the one who walks upon the sea as if upon the ground" (περιπατῶν ὡς ἐπ᾽ ἐδάφους ἐπὶ θαλάσσης). In this context, the claim, "ἐγώ εἰμι," shows Jesus's connection to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who commissioned Moses, who freed Israel from slavery in Egypt, and who promised her future deliverance (Exod 3:14). This connection is even more probable in light of the exodus imagery in the surrounding context and in light of the fact that this theme is emphasized elsewhere in the Gospel. The narrative introduced the exodus context with mention of the Passover (6:4) and the escape to the mountaintop (6:15), and the imagery of Jesus's passage to the disciples on the sea recalls Moses's journey through the sea in the escape from Egypt.[40] Though the narrative plays on the crowd's association with

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[38] The full phrase reads Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν in the LXX (in the Hebrew text: אהיה אשר אהיה). Though Barrett (*The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*) reads the claim as pure identification, and Brown (*The Gospel According to John*) sees it as borderline, others (Neyrey, *The Gospel of John in Cultural and Rhetorical Perspective*, 119; Catrin H. Williams, "'I Am' or 'I Am He'? Self-Declamatory Pronouncements in the Fourth Gospel and in Rabinnic Tradition," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition,* ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 343–52; David M. Ball, *"I Am" in John's Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications,* JSNTSup 124 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield, 1996]) favor the double-meaning interpretation. For an example of a "model disciple" also taking up the phrase as "an extraordinary confession of self-identity which is grounded on a thoroughly christological basis," see Robert Bryan Sloan and Mikeal C. Parsons, eds., "A Neglected ΕΓΩ EIMI Saying in the Fourth Gospel? Another Look at John 9:9," in *Perspectives on John: Method and Interpretation in the Fourth Gospel*, NABPR 11 (Lewiston: Mellen, 1993), 145–80 (quotation found on page 80).

[39] Brant, *John*, 118. She also cites and Ps 77:19 and Dio Chrysostom, *3 Regn* 3.30–31 as well as material evidence from Trajan's column.

[40] Susan Hylen, *Allusion and Meaning in John 6*, BZNW 137 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 131–34. Cf. Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 105–6.

Jesus as a prophet like Moses, it emphasizes Jesus's unity with God as the reason for his exalted status.[41]

This scene, where Jesus walks on the water, disrupts the natural transition from the feeding of the multitude to the Bread of Life Discourse. The interruption focuses the audience's attention on the theme of Jesus's identity. As Alicia Myers has shown, the emphasis on Jesus's elevated status is clear throughout this section of the Gospel. Jesus's statements in chapter 5 already poignantly clarified that Jesus is greater than Moses. In fact, though Jesus's opponents think their hope is in Moses, Jesus claims that Moses testifies about *him* and thus moves from being their hope to being their accuser. Jesus claims that he is from the Father, the only one uniquely connected to the Father, the embodiment of the Father's glory (5:44).[42] Jesus's opponents interpreted his actions and claims as "making himself equal to God" (5:18). Each episode in John 6 (the feeding, the walking on water, and the discourse) further affirms this point. Jesus is in full control of the miracle and fully aware of what he is doing (6:6). He directs attention away from the comparison between himself and Moses and toward a connection between himself and YHWH. The crowd, demanding a sign, approaches Jesus like the people of Israel had approached Moses. Their expectation is for something akin to the manna given to the children of Israel in the wilderness. Rather than providing them a sign, Jesus draws a comparison between himself and the manna, since he originates from the Father and comes from heaven for the benefit of the people (6:32–35). Implicit in Jesus's claim, though, is again the focus on Jesus's unity with the Father. Jesus draws an important

[41] See Chapter Three above for how this unity is affirmed in the encomiastic topics and in several explicit statements within the Gospel: John 1:1; 5:18–23; 10:30; 17:11, 21.

[42] Myers, Characterizing Jesus, 102–4.

distinction: "Moses has not given you the bread from heaven, but my Father is giving you the true bread from heaven" (6:32). It was YHWH, not Moses, who provided bread in the wilderness. The people's expectation of a sign is linked to their misunderstanding of Jesus's identity. The prophet like Moses would not be giving them bread; rather the Father had already sent Jesus as the Bread of Life. The mystery of Johannine Christology, though, is that while Jesus is the one sent from the Father, he is also one with the Father. Here the action of providing bread to a hungry crowd, his walking on water, his words, "I am," and his offering of his own flesh as the Bread of Life—all of these things enact the words that he will later speak: "I and the Father are one" (10:30).[43]

Belief as an ethical act. What does this elevated Christology have to offer for the pursuit of ethics? Interestingly, the Bread of Life Discourse also includes a discussion of an explicitly ethical question.[44] The crowd asks, "What should we do in order that we may work the works of God?" (John 6:28). Jesus, recognizing their real intention to acquire bread for their stomachs (6:26–27), directs their attention to himself, rather than to a sign or to the bread resulting from the sign. He answers, "This is the work of God, that you would believe in the one whom he sent" (6:29). The requirement here is the one act of belief—no virtue list, no Law, no best practices. The simple yet paradoxical requirement of doing the work of God is to let God work and to respond in faith. The Fourth Gospel provides a strikingly impractical answer to this overtly ethical question.

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[43] Again, the responses to Jesus's claims are enlightening. Myers comments, "Jesus's words are difficult to swallow for the Jews in particular because they think they know Jesus's origins; 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven?!" (Jn 6.41) and his humanity; 'How can this one give us his flesh to eat?' (Jn 6.53)." Ibid., 110. For a full discussion of the syncrises between Jesus and Moses, Jesus and manna, and Moses and the Father, with special attention to the Fourth Gospel's appeal to Scripture, see ibid., 104–12.

[44] Meeks ("The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist," 321) calls it "the fundamental ethical question."

Rather than offering an outline of appropriate behavior, the Fourth Gospel speaks of belief. Taking on the voice of the Johannine Jesus, Frederick Bruner elaborates on Jesus's response:

> Out of this fundamental trust (belief) will come whatever other good works I will from time to time command you to do. But square one, *the will and the work of God that you want to fulfill is simply to trust me as the One God Sent*. This is the root out of which all other fruit naturally grows.[45]

In Johannine terms, then, proper ethical perspective only becomes possible after and indeed because of proper response to Jesus through belief. When we consider the purpose of the Gospel—"that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" (20:31)—in light of John's connection between belief and ethics, our pursuit of Johannine ethics begins to look more hopeful. Indeed, the emphasis is surely christological. This episode reveals Jesus's identity as the Sent One, clarifies misconceptions of his identity, and works to elicit the appropriate response—not wonder at the sign, not pursuit of the physical result of the sign, but belief in the one who performed it. But by deeming the episode devoid of ethics or rushing to simple and direct imitation of Jesus's actions, interpreters miss the episode's place in emphasizing belief as an essential element for Johannine ethics. John gives a christological answer to the ethical question, but this does not mean that the Fourth Gospel is interested in Christology to the exclusion of ethics. Rather, this episode demonstrates that Christology is essential for Johannine ethics.[46] Christology elicits belief, and belief is the bridge to proper ethical perspective and thus proper behavior in the world.

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[45] Bruner, The Gospel of John, 388.

[46] Jan G. van der Watt, "Ethics through the Power of Language: Some Explorations in the Gospel according to John," in *Moral Language in the New Testament: The Interrelatedness of Language and Ethics in Early Christian Writings*, ed. Ruben Zimmermann and Jan G. van der Watt, WUNT 296 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 139–67.

In his *Moral Vision of the New Testament*, Richard Hays admits that the implications for John's moral vision are "not very fully worked out in the Fourth Gospel," but he maintains, "Both the warrants and the norms for ethics are to be located almost exclusively within conformity to the person of Jesus."[47] He continues, "The specific behavior that issues from union with Jesus need not be spelled out in detail, for those who abide in Jesus will intuitively know what is right and do it."[48] While I agree with Hays on this point, I suggest that we can provide a missing link that connects belief to moral action through imitation. While many of Jesus's words and deeds in the Fourth Gospel are not imitable for believers, one central action invites imitation: the way Jesus responds to the Father.

Unity with the Father as the motivation for Jesus's actions. The theme of unity, which grounds Jesus's exalted status, is also explicitly linked to Jesus's actions in the Fourth Gospel. Karl Weyer-Menkhoff analyzes the concepts of the work of God and the work of Jesus in the Gospel, concluding that the two are closely connected. Jesus repeatedly refers to his connection with the Father when he is asked about what he does or why he does it (5:19, 36; cf. 3:35; 4:34; 10:18, 32, 37–38; 14:10–11; 17:4).[49] This approach has been described as an ethic of responsitivity. Rather than a certain goal, creed, or set of rules, Jesus's actions are a response to the works of God, which the Father

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[47] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996), 153.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Karl Weyer-Menkhoff, "The Response of Jesus: Ethics in John by Considering Scripture as Work of God," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 160.

has shared with the Son.[50] Weyer-Menkhoff concludes, "Jesus does not show what one should do exactly but *that* one has to respond to the works of God."[51]

Thus, in addition to forming the basis of Jesus's exalted status in the Fourth Gospel, unity with God is also determinative for Jesus's actions and his mission.[52] Jesus acts in response to God because he is from God. This pattern suggests that those who will follow Jesus must have a transformation in identity that allows for a similar reaction of response. Once they become "born from above" or "children of God," they too will do the work of God. This transformation is how "believing in Jesus becomes the major ethical action persons can perform."[53] Jan van der Watt has explained that since belief "forms the central thrust of all ethical action" in the Gospel, ethics is elevated to "a relational phenomenon" in which the existential acceptance of the person of Jesus is transformative, leading to an obedient life.[54] In his analysis, van der Watt concludes that the argumentative structure reveals two central ethical truths: 1) identity and behavior are integrally interrelated, and 2) Jesus is set forth as an example to follow.[55]

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[50] See Bernhard Waldenfels (*Das leibliche Selbst: Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des Leibes*, Erstausgabe [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000], 365–70), who contrasts the paradigm of responsitivity with Aristotle's τέλος and Kant's categorical imperative. Cf. Weyer-Menkhoff, "Response of Jesus," 162–63.

[51] Weyer-Menkhoff, "Response of Jesus," 174. Emphasis mine.

[52] Ruben Zimmermann, "Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?: Challenging an Outdated Consensus," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 70–74. Ruben Zimmermann, "Metaphoric Networks as Hermeneutic Keys in the Gospel of John," in *Repetitions and Variations in the Fourth Gospel: Style, Text, Interpretation*, ed. Gilbert van Belle, Michael Labahn, and P. Maritz, BETL 223 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), which makes this argument based on the metaphor complex of mission in the Gospel.

[53] Jan G. van der Watt, "Ethics and Ethos in the Gospel according to John," *ZNW* 97 (2006): 158, n.2.

[54] van der Watt, "Ethics through the Power of Language," 140.

[55] For van der Watt, the ethical nature of the text is strengthened by the use of vocabulary from the semantic field of behavior (do, follow, walk, keep, kill, lie, believe, love). Furthermore, although many of

When we bring these two emphases together—specifically the attempt to imitate Jesus and the focus on Jesus's unity with God—we find an inroad for imitation ethics. Our analysis of John 6 encouraged a linking of ethical questions with christological answers. Though a simple mimetic approach to this text (e.g., "Jesus fed hungry people, so believers should as well") is inappropriate, the Fourth Gospel does present Jesus's response to God as an imitable element in its presentation of Jesus. It is not Jesus's direct actions in the Gospel that serve as an ethical example. Rather, the audience is called to imitate Jesus's unity with God and his response to God. I propose that the theme of unity not only theologically grounds the heightened presentation of the Johannine Jesus, it also grounds Johannine ethics since it engages the audience in the identity-transformation which makes proper behavior possible.

Narratologically, this engagement is accomplished when the boundary between the audience and the story is dissolved. This boundary-breaking is best understood in the context of metalepsis. As we will see below, the Fourth Gospel includes numerous metaleptic elements, which invite the audience into the story and open space for the audience to interpret their own circumstances in light of the narrative. We will focus particularly on two metaleptic strategies apparent in the Fourth Gospel: the narrative form of the Gospel that has been called "the two-level drama" and the extension of the encomiastic topics, which were first used to characterize Jesus. As we will see, the extension of the encomiastic topics, in light of the other metaleptic elements in the narrative, connects Christology to ethics by inviting believers to share in the unity with God that established Jesus's identity and determined his actions in the world.

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the literary features (irony, forensic speech, dialogue, etc.) are not ethical in-and-of themselves, they have functional value and represent a strategy for presenting the ethical material implicit in the Gospel.

Defining Metalepsis

The notion of metalepsis has been articulated in a variety of ways. In ancient rhetorical tradition, metalepsis is used in its most general sense of "transferring" one word or idea to another context. From at least the first century (CE) onwards, the term was used as a title for one of the elements of court argumentation. Quintilian spends all of chapter 6 in Book 3 of *Institutio Oratoria* discussing the various presentations of "issues" (*status*) for argumentation. He views metalepsis as synonymous with "transference" (*translatio*, *Inst*. 3.6.46), a topic that he discusses at length in the rest of the chapter. In 3.6.64–91 he gives his own thoughts and lengthy examples of how transference, along with other issues, comes into play in the courtroom. Generally, metalepsis or transference was considered the stage of prosecution in which the notion of context was examined, determining whether details of a certain alleged crime (place, time, special circumstance) made certain laws binding for the case.[56] It could also be a strategy employed by the defense to examine whether the law being invoked was actually relevant given the context of the action or whether some other law would permit the action.

In Book 8, Quintilian describes metalepsis in his discussion of various literary strategies (*Inst*. 8.6.37–38; cf. Cicero, *Inv*. 1.16, 2.57–61; *Rhet. ad Her*. 2.12.18 and perhaps 1.12.22). In its literary context, he sees metalepsis as a form of transumption, in which one word is substituted for another word, resulting in a sort of embedded

[56] This legal practice seems to be a very early one, discussed even in Aristotle, though not named (*Rhet*. 3.1416a and b). Sulpicius Victor discusses this strategy by name in his preservation of the system attributed to the second-century theorist Zeno of Athens. See Karl Felix von Halm, *Rhetores Latini Minores* (Dubuque, IA: W. C. Brown, 1964), 313.2-4; 339.6-340.13.

metaphorical rhetoric. He denigrates this practice, except in comedy. He writes of the absurdity, for example, of calling Verres (whose name can mean "boar") "*suem*," which is a rough term for "pig." This illustration exemplifies the essence of the more narrow sense of metalepsis, when a term acts as a bridge by which another term can be used in a new context.[57] In our example, an author can use the term *verres* (meaning boar) as a bridge from the name Verres to the synonymous but crude term *suem,* arriving at a cheeky nickname for a ruler known for grossly mishandling his authority. Unfortunately, Quintilian offers no further discussion of the term. What we see, however, is that the narrow senses of metalepsis in the courtroom and in comedy give evidence of a broader rhetorical idea—that the use of a word, theme, or idea in one context can affect the meaning of that word, theme, or idea in another context.

This usage is the general idea behind Gérard Gennette's reappropriation of the term metalepsis for modern narratology. In narratology, the context for metalepsis is the narrative itself, made up of multiple levels. Level 1 is the extradiegetical level in which the narrator communicates with the audience.[58] Level 2 is the diegetical or intradiegetical level in which characters interact with one another and the plot advances.[59] Genette defines metalepsis as a transgression of the boundaries between these levels. Specifically, he identifies metalepsis as an "intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator . . . into the diegetic

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[57] Est enim haec in metalempsi natura, ut inter id quod transfertur <et id quo transfertur> sit medius quidam gradus, nihil ipse significans sed praebens transitum.

[58] Neither the author (actual or otherwise) nor the flesh and blood readers are in view for Gennette. Rather, these are "textually encoded positions," that is, they are constructs that exist only as a part of the narrative world. See the Introduction for our working definition of audience.

[59] Genette includes further levels of embedded narratives ("hypodiegesis"), but these levels are functionally similar to Level 2. Cf. Ute E. Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John: Narration Situation and 'Beloved Disciple' in New Perspective," in *Über Die Grenze, Metalepse in Text—und Bildmedien Des Altertums*, ed. Ute E. Eisen and Peter von Möllendorff (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 320.

universe . . . (or by diegetic character into a metadiegetic universe)."[60] Most discussions of metalepsis in this sense have centered on recent art forms that contain overt metaleptic elements.[61] There is evidence, however, of this type of metaleptic boundary-breaking in ancient literature, even if ancient authors did not describe it in technical narratological terms.[62]

Irene de Jong identifies four types of metalepsis used with some regularity in ancient literature. First, a narrator may transgress the boundaries of the narrative by speaking directly to a character in the story. She calls this "apostrophe" and offers the example of the Homeric narrator talking to Patroclus in *Il*. 16.692–93.[63] Second, a character might transgress the boundaries of the story by entering into the world of narration, showing awareness that they are a part of a story that is being told. For example, in the *Iliad*, Helen tells Hector to fight because, at a later time, "we will become subjects of song for men yet to come." This line suggests that Helen knows that she and Hector are the subjects of a "song" (*Il*. 6.357–58, cf. 22.304–5).[64] Rather than

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[60] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 234; Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 318. For more on the definition and function of metalepsis in terms of literary theory, see the Introduction and other articles in Ute E. Eisen and Peter von Möllendorff, eds., *Über die Grenze, Metalepse in Text—und Bildmedien des Altertums* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013).

[61] E.g., Robbe-Grillet's Dans le labyrinthe, J. Cortazar's Continuity of Parks (Continuidad de los Parques), Woody Allen's Purple Rose of Cairo. See Irene de Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature," in Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature, ed. Jonas Grethlein and Antonios Rengakos (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 92.

[62] Although Genette focused on later art forms, he does mention the possibility of metalepsis in ancient literature, citing the *Iliad* 18 in one of his examples; Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 235. Cf. de Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature," 92.

[63] de Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature," 94.

[64] ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ᾽ ἀοίδιμοι ἐσσομένοισι. Translation mine. LSJ offers "yet to come" as a definition of ὀπίσσω in reference to time and defines ἀοίδιμος as someone "sung of" or "famous in song or story." See also Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 2:27 where Pan "predicts" that Love will make a story out of Chloe (ibid., 99).

destabilizing the story or disrupting the telling, de Jong argues that these metaleptic moments enhance the status and authority of the story.[65] Third, the primary narrator's voice can blend with the voice of a reported narrator. The result is that the audience no longer distinguishes between the primary narrator and the reported narrator. The effect is to increase the authority of the author and of the story.[66] A subset of this type is an instance in which a character's direct speech does not have a clear conclusion, but subtly, the voice of the narrator seems to take over (e.g. Pindar *Olympian* 7.34). This merging of primary and secondary narrators lends authority in both directions—the one telling the story speaks with the authority of a direct witness, and the witness speaks with the authority and perspective of an extra/metadiegetic narrator.[67] Finally, the narrated world and the world of the narrator sometimes merge. Because this merging often happens at the end of narrative, de Jong calls it a "fade-out."[68] As an example she gives the ending of the *Homeric hymn to Apollo* (146-76). The hymn narrates the birth of Apollo and describes his habit of visiting places all over the world. It then describes the god on a visit to Delos for the annual festival in his honor, and the description begins from Apollo's own perspective. Eventually, however, the perspective changes to an "anonymous

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[65] Ibid., 98; Irene de Jong, "The Homeric Narrator and His Own Kleos," *Mnemosyne* 59 (n.d.): 195–98.

[66] This effect also happens with "slippage" where the primary narrator subtly moves from indirect speech to the more fluid direct speech perhaps only out of a tendency to prefer simpler sentence construction; e.g., Pindar, *Nemean* 5.25-39.

[67] de Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature," 106; R. Führer, *Formproblem-Untersuchungen Zu Den Reden in Der Frühgriechischen Lyrik* (Munich: Beck, 1967), 59–60; I. L. Pfeijffer, "Pindar and Bacchylides," in *Narrators, Narratees and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature*, ed. Irene de Jong, R. Nünlist, and A. Bowie, Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 231–32.

[68] de Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature," 106.

witness" who adds a sort of objective authority to the account.[69] As the narrator again takes over, he finds himself in the very story that he has been telling. He speaks directly to characters in the story and experiences the festival first-hand. The result of the "metaleptic blurring" is that "[t]he worlds of narrated and narrator merge, the metalepsis serving to bring together past and present and to show the continuity between myth and actuality."[70]

Given our attention to the communicative exchange between the audience and the text, we will now consider several metaleptic elements in the Fourth Gospel with a focus on how they would affect the audience. We will adopt the broader definition offered by David Herman: "metalepsis stems from disrespecting (or actively abolishing) the distinction between a storyworld and the world(s) from which the addressees or recipients relocate in order to engage . . . the storyworld."[71] This definition approaches metalepsis in functional terms, assessing how certain narrative features can call attention to and challenge the distance between an audience and the story presented to them. In some instances, metalepsis has an ironic or comedic effect resulting in a more vibrant sense of disconnection between the audience and the story. As we saw above, however, metalepsis

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[69] Ibid., 110.

[70] de Ibid., 107; B. Snell, "Das Bruchstück Eines Paians von Bakchylides," *Hermes* 67 (1932): 10–11; L. Käppel, *Paian. Studien Zur Geschichte Einer Gattung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992), 177; B. Zimmermann, *Dithyrambos. Geschichte Einer Gattung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 85.

[71] David Herman, "Toward a Formal Description of Narrative Metalepsis," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 26 (1997): 134; David P. Moessner, "Diegetic Breach or Metaleptic Interruption? Acts 1:4b–5 as the Collapse Between the Worlds of 'All That Jesus Began to Enact and to Teach' (Acts 1:1) and the 'Acts of the Apostles,'" *BR* 56 (2011): 30–31. Modern literary critics have employed the term metalepsis to refer to "transumption," where narrative boundaries are crossed when an author references one text in another in order to draw a connection between that text and her own text (e.g., John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984]). The function of such an authorial strategy is to guide a reader to interpret some aspect of the later text in light of the former. See also Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Alec J. Lucas, "Assessing Stanley E. Porter's Objections to Richard B. Hays's Notion of Metalepsis," *CBQ* 76 (2014): 95.

has more serious rhetorical implications in ancient literature, often strengthening a sense of realism for the narrative and a sense of authority for the narrator.[72]

We will use the term "metaleptic" generally, to refer to any place where the narrative boundary is blurred, at any diegetic level, with varying degrees of subtlety. Because of our interest in the communicative exchange between the audience and narrative, we will consider elements of the Fourth Gospel that challenge the distance between the audience's world and the world of the story. That is, we will explore how the audience would see their own situation narrated in the story of Jesus.

Metaleptic Elements in the Fourth Gospel

The Fourth Gospel includes several metaleptic elements.[73] It opens with a self-aware narrator who describes himself and the audience as belonging to a shared group (1:14, 16; 21:24), and the story is interrupted with hindsight comments that disrupt narrative time (2:22; 12:16). The narrative includes anachronistic language and themes that move the audience's mind to their contemporary situation (9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Also, much of the narrative takes the form of direct discourse, which would be performed as if

[72] Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature," 115.

[73] Herman ("Narrative Metalepsis," 139–46) suggests specific textual clues that indicate metaleptic breaches, including lexical ambiguation and register manipulation. Lexical ambiguation occurs when reiterated verbal items cue an "expectation of sameness." Register manipulation occurs when similar language is used in different contexts to control and challenge meaning. Descriptions of persecution, especially characters being put out of the synagogue, are examples of "lexical ambiguation" in the Fourth Gospel. Further, an example of register manipulation is found as the theme of rejection is presented from various perspectives and in various contexts in the Fourth Gospel. The Narrator gnomically speaks of the rejection of the Word in the prologue (1:10–11), the narrative relays the rejection of the character Jesus throughout the story, and Jesus tells his disciples directly that they will be rejected/hated as he was (15:18–21; 16:1–2, 33). The change in register gradually pushes the boundary, closing the distance between the rejection recounted in the text and the experience of the audience outside of the narrative. This closing of distnace accomplishes "de-differentiation" of the narrative frames, which brings the audience to an understanding that together, these episodes carry a collective message about the theme of rejection and their own experience.

to the audience in direct address. Further, the Beloved Disciple is presented as an "ideal character" that invites the audience to identify with his actions in the story.[74] In what follows we discuss each of these features in turn.

A self-aware narrator who references himself and the audience in the first person plural. Immediately in the prologue, the narrator's use of the first person plural breaks down the barrier between the narrative world and the world of the audience.[75] Hearing between the lines, the audience would understand that they are connected to the story through the narrator, because as the narrator says, "the Word became flesh and resided among *us* (ἡμῖν), and *we* saw (ἐθεασάμεθα) his glory" (1:14) and "from his fullness *we all* receive (ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν) grace upon grace" (1:16). This pronoun usage is one way the Fourth Gospel exhibits "self-conscious narration" or metanarration.[76] Not only does the narrator tell the story, he comments on it *as a narrative*, conscious of the

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[74] While we will focus on the beloved disciple as the ideal model, the narrative also presents other model characters. For example, as Mikeal Parsons has argued (Sloan and Parsons, "A Neglected ΕΓΩ EIMI Saying in the Fourth Gospel? Another Look at John 9:9"), the man born blind in John 9 becomes a model disciple in making the ultimate christological confession. Parsons' observations are poignant to our argument, since the man also appropriates the same self-identifying words as Jesus—ἐγώ εἰμι. See also Douglas Estes (*The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel: A Theory of Hermeneutical Relativity in the Gospel of John*, BibInt 92 [Leiden: Brill, 2008]), who discusses metalepsis as one feature of the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel. He lists five types of metaleptic blending: statements with indefinite temporalities, temporally-indefinite stage directions, omniscient and external perspectives, repetition of lexical particulars across worlds, and definite articles of familiarity.

[75] Michael Theobald, *Im Anfang War Das Wort: Textlinguistische Studie Zum Johannesprolog*, SBS 106 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983).

[76] Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 323; Birgit u. Neumann and Ansgar Nünning, "Metanarration and Metafiction," in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn et al., n.d., http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/metanarration-and-metafiction; Ansgar Nünning, "Mimesis des Erzählens. Prolegomena zu einer Wirkästhetik, Typologie und Funktionsgeschichte des Aktes des Erzählens und der Metanarration," in *Erzählen und Erzähltheorie im 20. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Wilhelm Füger*, ed. Jörg Helbig (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Heidelberg, 2001), 13–48. See also Wayne C. Booth ("The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction Before Tristram Shandy," *PMLA* 67 [1952]: 163–85) on self-conscious narration and Monka Fludernik ("Metanarrative and Metafictional Commentary: From Metadiscursivity and Metafiction," *Poetica* 35 [2003]: 1–39) on propio-metanarration.

audience and referencing his own act of narrating.[77] This tendency is most clearly presented in John 20:31: "Now these things have been written in order that you might believe . . ." At the close of the story, the narrator takes himself out of the narrative world to join the audience in reflecting on the story that was told. Describing the disciple who testified concerning these things and who wrote these things, the narrator comments, "*we* know that his testimony is true" (21:24).

Here it becomes clear that another narrator is present. After the prologue, the first-person narration shifts to a third-person narrator who tells the story like an omniscient observer, sharing his insights with the audience.[78] This narrator of the Fourth Gospel belongs to and speaks into two worlds: the world of the Johannine Jesus and the world of the early Christian community for whom the story of Jesus is foundational. Douglas Estes explains that the narrator thus acts as a bridge between these two worlds but is also responsible for the conflation of the two.[79] This narrator addresses the audience through numerous interpretive asides, which function rhetorically to guide interpretation of the story and response to it. Tom Thatcher identifies almost two hundred asides in the Fourth Gospel and categorizes them according to four functions: to stage an event, to define or specify some element in the narrative, to explain discourse, or to explain actions.[80] Each

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[77] This type of metanarration can be seen also in Mark's "let the reader understand," in which the voice of Jesus blends with the voice of the narrator to address the audience; see Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 324.

[78] This shift corresponds to de Jong's description of the extradiegetic narrator blending with the intradiegetic narrator, since the "evangelist" outside of the story world and the Beloved Disciple inside the story world share the role of narrator; cf. de Jong, "Metalepsis in Ancient Greek Literature," 99–106. Further, the "slippage" where direct speech from characters seems to be taken over by the narrator (e.g., at the end of Jesus's discourse in John 3) further disrupts the boundaries of narrative world, since the narrator takes over the voice of a character.

[79] Estes, The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel, 243.

[80] Tom Thatcher, "A New Look at Asides in the Fourth Gospel," *BSac* 151 (1994): 430–31.

of these functions metaleptically to an extent, since at each point the narrator transgresses the narrative boundaries of the story world and engages the world of the audience. Asides are a necessary element of any narrated story; however, the metaleptic significance for the asides in the Fourth Gospel is heightened when we remember that the narrator is presented both as a member of the story world and as a member of the audience's world.

Hindsight comments that disrupt narrative time. Further, several of these asides not only interrupt the plot, they disrupt narrative time, making hindsight comments that reflect the post-resurrection perspective of the audience. In the second chapter, the narrator interrupts a conversation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders (2:18–22). The first aside clarifies that when Jesus spoke of the temple, he really meant his body (2:21). The second aside, however, jumps ahead in time and looks back on the narrative from that later perspective: "Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples were reminded that he said this, and they believed the scripture and the word Jesus was saying" (2:23). A similar metaleptic dynamic occurs when the narrator breaks into the account of the triumphal entry. First, the narrator inserts an intertext (Zech 9:9) as an interpretive companion to Jesus's action of sitting on a donkey (John 12:14–15).[81] Then, the narrator offers a narrative aside to the audience: "His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they were reminded that these things were written about him and that they did these things to him" (12:16). In both of these instances, the narrator's statements subtly disrupt the barrier between the audience and the narrative. The narrator pulls the disciples out of narrative time. The disciples, like the

[81] For a full discussion of how the narrator's insertion affects the audience's perception of Jesus vs. the perception of the characters in the story, see Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 159–61.

narrator and the audience members, are looking at the Jesus story from a post-resurrection perspective. The audience then is being called to understand and believe the story in light of that perspective.

Anachronistic language and themes. In addition to speaking explicitly in hindsight perspective, the narrative asides also include anachronistic language and themes that move the audience's mind to their contemporary time as they encounter the Jesus story.[82] To explain the fear experienced by the parents of the blind man whom Jesus healed in chapter 9, the narrator explains that the Jewish leaders "had already agreed that if anyone would confess him (Jesus) as Messiah, he/she would be put out of the synagogue" (9:22).[83] The use of the pluperfect tense (συνετέθειντο), paired with "already" (ἤδη), emphasizes the ongoing result of an action that had already been completed at some point in the past. As we will see below, the description of people being "put out of the synagogue" is reflective of a later time in the Johannine community. The description of widespread confession of Jesus as Messiah and a formal decision to ostracize those who made this confession brings the audience's current situation into the Jesus story. The term ἀποσυνάγωγος is used in another narrative aside in John 12:42 with the same connotation, that is, to describe an outcome feared by characters in the

[82] Estes (*The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel*, 244) calls these instances of "trans-world lexical repetition" that "sharply intermingles the adjacent textual and temporal worlds. The greater the semantic value of the repetition, the stronger the pull between the worlds."

[83] The term ἀποσυνάγωγος appears only in the Fourth Gospel or in literature referring to these texts. The adjective most literally means "from-synagogue" with the connotation of distance rather than origin; see Jonathan Bernier, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John: Rethinking the Historicity of the Johannine Expulsion Passages* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 2. The majority of modern translations (NRSV, ESV, NASB, ASV, and KJV) agree on the translation "put out of the synagogue."

story. Although these descriptions are narrated as if they describe the time of Jesus, they in fact reflect the situation of the audience.

Extended discourses performed as if directed to the audience. In John 16:2, this term is again used, but this time on the lips of Jesus. With it, he speaks of a future time when the disciples will be put out of the synagogues and even killed. The words of the Johannine Jesus would have resonated significantly with the Johannine community who lived after the time of Jesus's departure: "But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes, you will remember that I myself told you about them" (16:4). Within the narrative, Jesus is addressing his disciples, consoling them in light of his impending death and departure. Here, however, we see another metaleptic element at work.[84] Not only does the anachronistic description lead the audience to connect their own situation with the story being told (as in chapters 9 and 12), the extended and largely uninterrupted discourse creates the impression that Jesus himself is speaking directly to the audience: "I *myself* told you" (ἐγὼ εἶπον ὑμῖν). This effect is especially the case when we consider that performance was the means by which the majority of first-century Mediterranean communities would have experienced written texts.[85] The emphasis on the enduring

[84] This time is only one of many that the audience is addressed by direct speech in the Fourth Gospel. See Thomas E. Boomershine, "The Medium and Message of John: Audience Address and Audience Identity in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Fourth Gospel in First-Century Media Culture*, ed. Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher, LNTS 426 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 92–120.

[85] David M. Rhoads, "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies—Part II," *BTB* 36 (2006): 164–84. See also Wiliam D. Shiell, *Delivering from Memory: The Effect of Performance on the Early Christian Audience* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Kelly R. Iverson, "Orality and the Gospels: A Survey of Recent Research," *CurBR* 8 (2009): 71–106; Kelly R. Iverson, ed., *From Text to Performance: Narrative and Performance Criticisms in Dialogue and Debate* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014). Also Eisen ("Metalepsis in the Gospel of John") describes how Jesus's discourses often shift so that the narrator seems to become the speaker, and the audience would feel addressed directly. Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), esp. 31. See also Whitney Taylor Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003); Kelly R. Iverson, "Incongruity, Humor, and

presence of Jesus after his physical departure makes the Farewell Discourse directly applicable to the audience.[86] As John Ashton demonstrates, "It is not just Jesus' own disciples who are being assured that he will not leave them bereft."[87] The discourse rhetorically speaks to the members of the Johannine community, comforting a group facing similar persecution, who are faltering without the assurance of Jesus's flesh and blood presence with them.[88]

We could mark the beginning of this discourse as early as 13:31, after the episode where Jesus washes the disciples' feet and identifies his betrayer. It is here that Jesus begins a thread that will run throughout this extended section—his imminent departure. Tracing the discourse from this point to the end of chapter 17, we can notice a trajectory within which the metaleptic force becomes incrementally stronger. The discourse begins in the setting of the upper room and includes some interruption from dialogue with the

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Mark: Performance and the Use of Laughter in the Second Gospel (Mark 8.14–21)," *NTS* 59 (2013): 2-19; Boomershine, "The Medium and Message of John: Audience Address and Audience Identity in the Fourth Gospel." Boomershine suggests that considering performance should significantly affect how we interpret the Fourth Gospel and how we conceive of the audience. He makes the case that the audience would hear more than half of the story as Jesus speaking. His data concerning Jesus's speeches and their addressees open up a wealth of opportunities to explore how the audience would have identified with various characters. I am less convinced of his conclusions that the Gospel was geared exclusively toward Jews who were not following Jesus as Messiah. It seems that such a suggestion names just one of the many potential addressees of the text. Characters like Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea would invite identification with Jesus-following audience members who were struggling with their allegiance, while characters like the Samaritan woman might indicate an audience that extended beyond the traditional Jewish community. Regardless, his demonstration of how the audience is invited by the story to enter into a relationship with the character Jesus and his demonstration of how that relationship develops until the audience is included in the inner circle of disciples was extremely enlightening.

[86] John Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014), 81.

[87] Ashton, Understanding the Fourth Gospel, 452.

[88] Martyn (*History and Theology*, 92) took this parallel a step further, suggesting that Jesus represented a latter-day Johannine prophet who had either recently died or was facing imminent death. Ashton (*Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 419) had earlier made a similar argument—that the Farewell Discourse "was occasioned by a profound sense of loss, as the community contemplated a future without their leader and mentor, the Johannine prophet"—but he moves away from that specific parallel in his later work; see Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 85–95.

disciples. The dialogue centers on a time in the future, when Jesus's followers will experience persecution and lack confidence given Jesus's absence. Jesus announces, "Little children, still a little while I am with you . . . . You will seek me. . . . Where I am going, you are not able to come" (13:33). Peter asks "where are you going" (13:36), and Thomas similarly says, "we don't know where you are going" (14:5). As the discourse continues, Jesus explains that he is going to the Father (14:12), and he promises to send the "spirit of truth," which will be with them forever (14:16–17) to teach them in his absence (14:26).[89]

Once the narrative leaves that upper room setting (14:31), the first-person discourse remains uninterrupted by any dialogue, narrator intervention, or even description of narrative movement all the way through 16:16 (a monologue consisting of over forty verses!). Chapter 15 is a completely uninterrupted discourse that the audience would experience, in performance of the Gospel, as Jesus speaking directly to them.[90] The theme about which he is speaking, that is, his physical absence from the world, would be particularly relevant to an audience living after the time when Jesus had left the world.[91] This direct discourse facilitates the experience of a personal appeal from Jesus for the audience to remain in him, with reassurances that he is with them and shares in solidarity with their sufferings (15:20).

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[89] See Brant (*John*, 199–230) for a discussion of the Farewell Discourse in its ancient rhetorical and dramatic context.

[90] "In view of the basic metalpetic structure of the story and narration . . . we may suppose that Jesus' speeches are frequently conceived in such a way as to apostrophize the readers directly" (Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 340–42).

[91] Ibid., 340.

As the discourse continues, Jesus's words point to a later time: "they will cast you out of the synagogues" (16:2), "an hour is coming" (16:2, 25, 32), "when their hour comes" (16:4), "a little while" (16:16–19), "on that day" (16:26). These words predict the disciples' impending trouble in the narrative, but they also speak to the situation of the audience, with profound rhetorical effect. For the Johannine community, the hour of persecution has come, and the time of Jesus's absence is a reality, yet they are called to believe.[92] The audience would be challenged and strengthened as Jesus's words of peace and the promise of his enduring presence in the Paraclete transcend the story and speak to their current situation: "I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling. They will put you out of the synagogues. . . . But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them" (16:1–4).[93] The lengthy monologue is interrupted (at 16:16) because the disciples don't understand. Jesus speaks of a later "hour" when he will no longer speak in figures (16:25). This later hour is realized already by the audience. The privileged position of the audience over and above the characters in the narrative is emphasized, since they can see in hindsight while the characters are confused.[94] As the audience observes the disciples claiming to understand and promising to believe, they are challenged not to abandon Jesus as the characters in the story will do.

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[92] We will discuss the situation of the Johannine community more thoroughly below. At this point, however, we notice that these references to a later time when Jesus would have already departed break down the barrier between the narrative world and the world of the audience.

[93] Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 248–81.

[94] Myers (*Characterizing Jesus*) demonstrates throughout her work that the audience is given privileged information and thus is able better to understand Jesus's identity. See esp. 23, 41, 97, 105, 112, 132–33, and 158.

Jesus's final words in the chapter encourage the audience to this end: "I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!" (16:33). Throughout the Fourth Gospel, but especially here in the Farewell Discourse, Jesus's first person monologue, delivered as if directly to the audience and focusing on the audience's context, disrupts the boundary between the story of Jesus and the story of the audience. Here we can see the metalepsis working in two directions. Not only is the situation of the audience reflected in the narrative world, Jesus's words are spoken as if directly to the audience, bringing the story world into the world of the audience.

The character of the Beloved Disciple with whom audiences would identify. We have already recognized that the Fourth Gospel begins with a self-conscious narrator who identifies as a part of the audience by utilizing the first person plural. We have also noticed a shift into third person narration after the prologue. The Epilogue identifies this narrator as the Beloved Disciple, "who testified concerning these things and who wrote these things" (21:24). Through his interpretive narrative asides, this narrator acts extradiegetically; however, he also acts intradiegetically as a character in the story.[95] In the narrative immediately preceding this aside from the first-person narrator, the Beloved Disciple had identified the risen Jesus (21:7), and the narrator tells the audience that the Beloved Disciple was the one who had reclined beside Jesus at the supper and asked for the identity of the betrayer (21:20; cf. 13:23). This one is likely the same unnamed disciple who followed Jesus after his arrest, since the Beloved Disciple again appears at

[95] Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 327. Eisen also sees a third narrator in the use of the first person singular (21:25), whom he suggests represents a publisher conceived by the narrative.

the cross (19:25–27) and runs to the empty tomb. The first-person narrator interrupts the crucifixion scene to remind the audience that they have a trustworthy witness who testified to these events (19:35). This reference is almost certainly to the Beloved Disciple who, as the narrator will explain later, "testified concerning these things" and wrote an account of them (21:24).

Ute Eisen argues that the Beloved Disciple has a significant rhetorical function as the ideal disciple, providing a point of identity and a model for the audience. This rhetorical function can be seen in each episode where the Beloved Disciple is present. At the Last Supper, the Beloved Disciple—and none other—receives hidden knowledge (regarding the identity of Jesus's betrayer), just as the audience has been offered privileged information (6:64, 70, 71). The audience stands with the Beloved Disciple in an informed position, in contrast to Jesus's other followers. The Beloved Disciple also acts as the ideal model of discipleship when he follows Jesus to the cross as the others scatter. At the cross, this disciple is initiated into the family of Jesus, a model for the audience who are elsewhere invited to become children of God (1:12). Racing to the tomb together, both the Beloved Disciple and Peter saw that it was empty, but only the Beloved Disciple believed (20:1–6).[96] With this same charge—to believe—being issued to the audience (19:35; 20:31), we can see how they would identify with this ideal disciple. In the Gospel's final scene, the Beloved Disciple is "the witness *par excellence*" who identifies the risen Lord and follows him.[97] Thus, the Beloved Disciple—who stands

[96] The Beloved Disciple acts as the model "believer" regardless of where one may fall in the debate about what he believed in this instance (e.g., that Jesus had risen or that Mary Magdalene was telling the truth).

[97] Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 330, 337, 339. Eisen also extends his understanding of the Beloved Disciple in seeing him merge with the metadiegetic narrator. This understanding seems to stand in some tension with his earlier observation that the metadiegetic narrator was a different figure,

within the story as a character and outside the story to recount it—is an inherently metaleptic figure who acts as a bridge between the audience and the story world.

Summary. As we have seen, at least five elements in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel disrupt the boundary between the story world and the world of the audience: a self-aware narrator who includes himself as a part of the audience (1:14, 16; 21:24), hindsight comments that disrupt narrative time (2:22; 12:16), anachronistic language and themes that move the audience's mind to their contemporary time (9:22; 12:42; 16:2), extended discourse material that would be performed as if directed to the audience in direct address, and the character of the Beloved Disciple with whom the audience is invited to identify. This collection of metaleptic elements "dissolves the border not just between diegetic levels, but also between the actual and the non-actual—or rather between the two different systems of actuality."[98] Douglas Estes calls this dynamic "a mixing of ontologies," and he vividly describes the phenomenon:

> Any of the multiple worlds of entangled metaleptic narratives can carry-over, affecting and infecting the worlds around them. . . . As a result of these conflations, the two temporal worlds of the Fourth Gospel are inexorably and inextricably fused—it is impossible to divorce the witness and the epic in the Johannine text.[99]

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passing on the testimony of the Beloved Disciple. The character of the Beloved Disciple can be seen to function metaleptically regardless of whether the narrative portrayal is based on a historical person. For the history of scholarship on the Beloved Disciple as a symbolic figure, see James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 134–41. Cf. Bernier, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John*, 147.

[98] Herman, "Narrative Metalepsis," 134. While Herman's approach to these elements within postmodern (anti)narrative focuses on metaleptic layers within the narrative world, our application of these ideas to the Fourth Gospel extends to the world outside the narrative.

[99] Estes, *The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel*, 241–43, 246. This conflation also explains the many textual discontinuities, aporias, and conundrums in the Fourth Gospel, which are the result of metalepsis.

To explore further how this metaleptic engagement of the audience functions rhetorically, we will examine two features of the Johannine narrative: the Fourth Gospel as two-level drama and the extension of the encomiastic topics. As we will see, the two-level narrative form of the Gospel ("two-level drama") brings the world of the audience into the narrative world, while the extension of the encomiastic topics facilitates the extension of meaning from the narrative world to the world of the audience.

The Two-Level Drama

"The origin of the Johannine Gospel is the greatest riddle presented to us by the earliest history of Christianity."[100] This statement made by Adolf von Harnack may now seem a bit hyperbolic given the surge of interest in the "Johannine Community" and the situation behind the Fourth Gospel in recent decades.[101] Though the basic theory can be traced back as far as the early nineteenth century, in the 1960s and 1970s two innovative presentations of the Johannine situation changed the face of Johannine studies.[102] J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* presented the concept of the "two-

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[100] Martyn, *History and Theology*, 28 n.2. Martyn is quoting von Harnack's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (1931), 1:108.

[101] For example, J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972): 44–72; D. Moody Smith, "Johannine Christianity: Some Reflections on Its Character and Delineation," *NTS* 21 (1975): 222–48; R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, SBLDS 26 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); Brown, *Community*.

[102] In his recent work, John Ashton calls attention to the earliest reflection on the situation of the Fourth Gospel, from Karl Bretschneider. The early nineteenth-century German scholar suggested that the Fourth Gospel is better categorized as an *apologia* than a work of history, since the controversies therein reflect the conflict "not between Jesus and the Pharisees, but between Christians and Jews of the second century"; see Bretschneider, *Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistuarum Joannis, Apostoli, Indole et Origine*, 118–19; Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 86. C. K. Barrett also saw this theory anticipated by Bultmann, who says that chapters 5 and 9 of the Fourth Gospel "reflect the relation of early Christianity to the surrounding hostile (in the first place Jewish) world" (Bultmann, *John*, 239). Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1978), 250; Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 89–90.

level drama," and Raymond E. Brown's *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* supplied a similar paradigm for the background of the Fourth Gospel.[103] The theory suggests that the Fourth Gospel "tells the story both of Jesus and of the community that believed in him."[104] Brown clarifies, "*Primarily,* the Gospels tell us how an evangelist conceived of and presented Jesus to a Christian community in the last third of the first century, a presentation that indirectly gives us an insight into that community's life at the time when the Gospel was written."[105] Martyn notes that the two-level drama becomes apparent through signs of the evangelist's concern to illustrate the essential unity of the *einmalig*[106] drama (of Jesus's earthly life) and the contemporary drama (the experience of the Johannine community).[107] This concern is not necessarily the case with every Johannine episode. It is important to notice, then, that the "level" of the Johannine community does not compete with the "level" of the *einmalig*. The former becomes the vehicle for the latter, and the integrated narrative attests to the unity of the two. In Martyn's terms, the

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[103] Martyn, *History and Theology*; Brown, *Community*. Brown had given brief attention to a similar understanding of the Johannine community in his Anchor Bible Commentary on the Gospel, which was published just before Martyn's work.

[104] Brown, *Community*, 17. In Bultmannian terms, the Fourth Gospel is primarily about the early church situation within which it was composed, and the story of Jesus is of only secondary focus; see Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 5. Bultmann speaks, of course, more of the earliest church as it had developed at the time of the Johannine writings. Still, he comments that the Fourth Evangelist takes traditional material and gives it allegorical or symbolic meaning. This focus is likely what Brown (*Community*, 6–7) means when he says that the story of Jesus is not the primary focus for Bultmann.

[105] Brown, *Community*, 17 (emphasis original). Our summary of the two-level drama will focus on Martyn's work, which preceded Brown's monograph on the subject. Martyn does not emphasize Johannine Christology to the extent that Brown does. Since the synagogue-church conflict is seen to center on Jesus's status, however, the two presentations are not so different.

[106] *Einmalig*, meaning "unique" or "first," is often used in reference to an initial read-through. Martyn (*History and Theology*, 40) retains the term in this sense and suggests such glosses as "once upon a time" or "back there" referring to the furthest level back in the narrative past.

[107] Martyn, *History and Theology*, 40. See also D. Moody Smith, "The Problem of History in John," in *What We Have Heard from the Beginning: The Past, Present, and Future of Johannine Studies*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2007), 312.

Fourth Gospel did not merely repeat past tradition, rather, it connected tradition to contemporary concerns.[108]

Martyn's claim for the integration of the two narrative levels rests on both literary and historical observations. He matches literary elements, which stand in tension with the *einmalig* of Jesus's life, with historical data from the community's time period. His argument is strongest in John 9, the story of the blind beggar. According to Martyn, the evangelist rehearses a traditional miracle story in John 9:1–7, a story he expands in John 9:8–41. He chooses this passage because its form as a traditional miracle story makes the uniquely Johannine interpretation stand out.[109] The first section (vv.1–7) testifies to a traditional event in the life of Jesus, while the second (vv.8–41) integrates current events in the Johannine church into the expanded narrative. Martyn takes the references to expulsion from the synagogue based on confession of Jesus as Messiah in 9:22 as a reference to formal separation of the Johannine Jesus-followers from the synagogue.[110] He argues that the phrase συνετέθειντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι indicates a formal agreement before the time of John's writing. The anachronistic usage of ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται in response to a messianic confession of Jesus further supports Martyn's contention that elements of this narrative depict the time of the Johannine community, as neither formal

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[108] Martyn, History and Theology, 27–32.

[109] Ibid., 35. He compares it to other traditional miracle stories such as Mark 8:22–26; 10:46–52; Matt 9:27–31; 20:29–34; Luke 18:35–43.

[110] Ibid., 46–47. This theory takes into account the *Birkath ha-Minim*, which was circulated near the end of the first or beginning of the second century CE. Martyn's dating of *the Birkat ha-Minim* at 85 CE has been challenged since his initial publication, and he extended the range to between 85 and 115 CE, though he still thinks an earlier date is more likely. For a thorough presentation on the dating, concluding with a later date, see Bernier, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John*, 31–76. For a defense of Martyn's general reconstruction and a discussion of these dates, see Joel Marcus, "Birkat Ha-Minim Revisited," *NTS* 55 (2009): 523–51. Further, precise dating of the *Birkat-ha-Minim* is unnecessary for the general theory; cf. Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 94–95.

expulsion from the synagogue nor widespread formal messianic claims about Jesus can be appropriately attributed to the time of Jesus's earthly life.[111] This interpretation is reinforced by the reappearance of ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται (in various forms) in 12:42 (in reference to fear of the Pharisees) and 16:2 (in the context of Jesus comforting his disciples who will face persecution after he is gone). Taking these references together, Martyn sees in the Fourth Gospel's presentation of the man born blind a reflection of the Johannine community's situation.

In general defense for this two-level reading, Martyn presents indications in the text that Jesus's works are continued in the work of the community. For example, he takes 14:12 ("the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works that these, because I am going to the Father") to help explain 9:4 ("We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day"). Martyn suggests that these references illustrate that Jesus's departure troubled the community, and his absence constituted a significant problem within their group. The evangelist addresses the problem of Jesus's absence by affirming (14:12) and illustrating (via the two-level reading) that Jesus has an enduring presence with the audience.[112]

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[111] Discussing Martyn's theory in his most recent work, Ashton (*The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 77) writes, "There is not the slightest likelihood that the expulsion of Jesus' disciples from the synagogue began during his lifetime. . . . How could a few dozen followers of Jesus, all good Jews, ever have been thought to present a challenge to the religious beliefs of the whole Jewish nation?" Here he is refuting Edward Klink's challenges to the theory: Edward W. Klink, *The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John*, SNTSMS 141 (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2007); Edward W. Klink, "Expulsion from the Synagogue? Rethinking a Johannine Anachronism," *TynBul* 59 (2008): 99–118; Edward W. Klink, *The Audience of the Gospels: The Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity* (London: T&T Clark, 2010). For a recent attempt to show that the events depicted in the Gospel could have taken place during Jesus's earthly life, see Bernier, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John*.

[112] Martyn, *History and Theology*, 29. He takes his arguments a step further, suggesting that the Johannine Jesus's consolation concerning his own departure reflected the community's grief in the recent or imminent death of their own community prophet. Ashton refutes this claim.

Martyn's contribution was a "sea change in Johannine Studies," and since the time of its writing, many Johannine scholars have found some form of this basic thesis convincing.[113] The analysis of Wayne Meeks rings true: "Louis Martyn's ingenious 'two-level' reading . . . has been widely accepted in its general outline if not in all its details."[114] D. Moody Smith noted, "(this) vehicle may not have been perfect, but it has proven good enough to maintain itself and to stand correction."[115] The general import for understanding the Johannine community is this: as Jews who consider Jesus Messiah, the Johannine community had been shaken by developing tensions that eventually led to the separation from the synagogue and the experience of hostility and persecution.[116]

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[113] D. Moody Smith, "The Contribution of J. Louis Martyn to the Understanding of the Gospel of John," in *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed., NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 20. For example, Ashton admits that we must infer information about the Johannine community from its writings and that this process involves conjecture. He affirms, however, the "surprising amount of positive data" in the Gospel and reminds us that without a hypothesis on the Johannine community, the text would be unintelligible (*Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 100). Like Ashton (*The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 93), I am not persuaded that Martyn is right in every detail, but I am nonetheless convinced of the "general argument that most of the story is directly relevant to the controversies between two groups in the synagogue toward the end of the first century." For a fuller discussion, see Martyn, *History and Theology*, 56–66, esp. 61–62 n.75 and 109.

[114] Smith, "Contribution," 7–8; Wayne A. Meeks, "Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities," in *"To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Caroline McCracken-Flesher, Studies in the Humanities 9 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 95. Numerous scholars adopted the two-level drama approach, although many felt the need to qualify some of the specifics given by Martyn and/or Brown. Wayne Meeks exemplified such an approach when he called the Twelfth Benediction a "red herring" and questioned Martyn's chronology. He nonetheless considered much of Martyn's theory valid. Scholars who accepted and built upon this approach include Klaus Wengst, Alan Culpepper, Jerome Neyrey, David Rensberger, and John Ashton, to name a few. For examples of works that utilize parts of Martyn's thesis to some extent see Smith, "Contribution," 12–18; Klaus Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde Und Verherrlichte Christus*, 4th ed., Kaiser Taschenbücher 114 (München: Christian-Kaiser, 1992); Culpepper, *The Johannine School*; Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*; Jerome H. Neyrey, *An Ideology of Revolt: John's Christology in Social-Science Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); David K. Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*; Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*.

[115] Smith, "Contribution," 6.

[116] Martyn's suggestion that John's Gospel—or at least certain conflict stories—should be read on two levels was widely accepted. Key among the theory's adherents were Raymond Brown (mentioned above) and C. K. Barrett, whose revised commentary followed closely on the heels of Martyn's *History and Theology*. Brown and Barrett had mentioned the link between the Fourth Gospel and the *Birkath ha-Minim*

Focusing primarily on readership and purpose, studies that have come out of the two-level drama theory consider these contemporary events and issues that have shaped the Johannine story.[117] James Dunn strongly emphasizes the vital role historical context plays in the interpretive process, "with John in particular," because "only by uncovering its historical context can we hope to hear it as the first readers were intended to hear it."[118]

Thus, moving on to examine the exchange between the audience and the text, we will do well to keep in mind that the experience of the audience was fraught with

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independently of Martyn. Martyn, however, is credited with this theory because he developed and defended it to an unprecedented extent. Barrett clearly affirmed Martyn's approach, listing it in the forefront of his discussion on recent advances in Johannine research.

[117] The theory does, of course, have its detractors. Most popularly, Richard Bauckham (*The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]) has argued for a more widespread and general intended audience for all of the Gospels, John included. Though his suggestion has gained significant acceptance among New Testament scholars, several noteworthy critiques have been levied: Philip Francis Esler, "Community and Gospel in Early Christianity: A Response to Richard Bauckham's *Gospels for All Christians*," *SJT* 51 (1998): 235–48; Thomas Kazen, "Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians? Intention and Mirror Reading in Light of Extra-Canonical Texts," *NTS* 51 (2005): 561–78; Margaret M. Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim That 'The Gospels Were Written for All Christians,'" *NTS* 51 (2005): 36–79; David C. Sim, "The Gospels for All Christians? A Response to Richard Bauckham," *JSNT* 24, no. 84 (2001): 3–27. The aforementioned work of Edward Klink (*The Sheep of the Fold*; "Expulsion from the Synagogue?"; *The Audience of the Gospels*) built on Bauckham's work to argue that the Fourth Gospel is intelligible when read exclusively on the level of Jesus's life. For a rebuttal to Klink's work, see Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 75–78. Tobias Hägerland ("John's Gospel: A Two-Level Drama?," *JSNT* 25 [2003]: 309–22) argued that the narrative format of the two-level drama is without a literary parallel. I argue, in a project currently being prepared for publication, that Virgil's *Aeneid*, which, in the telling of Rome's founding, offers a commentary on how to live in the Augustan Age, serves as a parallel. Douglas Estes (*The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel*, 242) also names the *Aeneid* as an example of "metaleptic conflation" in ancient literature. A number of scholars have also opted for a "Neo-Martynian" position, which accepts the two-level drama but sees the second level as narrating perceptions (suggested or actual) about the community rather than reflecting historical events in the life of the community. Cf. Bernier (*Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John*, 11–13), who cites Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008); Raimo Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews and Jewishness*, NovTSup 118 (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Raimo Hakola and Adele Reinhartz, "John's Pharisees," in *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 131–47; Adele Reinhartz, "Reading History in the Fourth Gospel," in *What We Have Heard from the Beginning: The Past, Present, and Future of Johannine Studies*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 191–94; Tom Thatcher, *Greater than Caesar?: Christology and Empire in the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009); Tom Thatcher, *Why John Wrote a Gospel: Jesus-Memory-History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

[118] Dunn's summary ("Let John Be John," 295) adopts much of the portrait presented by Martyn's thesis.

conflict—division and schisms from within, rivalry and hostility from without.[119] The Johannine believers saw themselves as threatened by the Jewish synagogue leaders and ostracized from their religious community.[120] This perspective is evident in the Gospel regardless of the precise reconstruction of the historical situation. The evidence demonstrates that the Johannine believers perceived themselves under threat of social and religious persecution in light of their beliefs about Jesus. The evidence is not determinative for the specifics of the situation; rather, it necessitates informed conjecture, which should allow space for varied conclusions in the details. Whether one sees the crisis as the result of a decisive expulsion from the synagogue at a specific time or as a more gradually building tension with a variety of expressions at various times, the evidence in the Gospel points to a community in conflict, either threatened by or already experiencing "social ostracism" and "religious dislocation."[121]

Considering that the Fourth Gospel was likely written to a community facing opposition and in need of a firm identity, attention to the rhetorical situation illuminates the Gospel's emphasis on mutual love and its bleak picture of the outside world. Not only does this understanding of the Johannine situation make us as readers more adept

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[119] Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 66. Talbert admits that exclusion from the synagogue is the "dominant current construct" for the occasion of the Fourth Gospel. He suggests that if the Epistles are seen as before or concurrent with the Gospel, struggles within the community over orthodox Christology and correct behavior should also be considered.

[120] The conflict most likely centered on the christological confession of the community which affirmed Jesus's unity with God and its inclusion of questionable people and/or groups. Both Martyn and Brown suggest that the Johannine group may have included some members that the Jewish authorities of the day did not approve, like Gentiles or Samaritans. Martyn, Brown, and others have offered various schema for series of crises within the community; see, for example, Loader, "Law and Ethics." It is enough, however, for us to say here that the situation was one of crisis, suffering, and a sense of social persecution.

[121] Rensberger, Johannine Faith and Liberating Community, 26–27. Cf. Hays, Moral Vision, 146–47.

interpreters, it also allows us to see how the story itself pulls its audience into the rhetorical communicative exchange. Because the drama unfolds in two levels, the Gospel has an implicitly metaleptic undertone in which the boundary between the narrative world and the world of the audience becomes blurred (or in some cases, explicitly broken). The two-level drama, taken together with the other metaleptic elements discussed above, affects the way we understand the rhetoric of the story. In terms of our pursuit of Johannine ethics, the metaleptic boundary-blurring between the narrative world and the world of the audience suggests that we extend our search for Johannine ethics outside of the narrative world. Rather than expecting the Fourth Gospel to offer direct moral teaching within the narrative, we can look for where and how the narrative engages the audience by using the story to create space for ethical deliberation. As Kobus Kok explains,

> Moral language entails a particular ordering of beliefs, norms and behaviour in terms of a particular constructed reality which is related to but in reality removed from actual reality. . . . In the telling of the story, the ethical basis and motivation of particular behaviour (ethos) becomes clear, against the background of the macro-narrative of the Gospel.[122]

For the Fourth Gospel, the particular constructed reality is the narrative world, which corresponds to the real world and creates a point of entry for the audience. The unique aspects of the narrative then challenge norms (values, identity, implied rules or principles) and direct behavior (*ethos*, practical life-style, *Lebensstil*) for the particular socio-historical and cultural context of the Johannine community.[123]

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[122] Kobus Kok, "As the Father Has Sent Me, I Send You: Towards a Missional-Incarnational Ethos in John 4," in *Moral Language in the New Testament: The Interrelatedness of Language and Ethics in Early Christian Writings*, ed. Ruben Zimmermann and Jan G. van der Watt, WUNT 296 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 169.

[123] Leander E. Keck, "Das Ethos Frühen Christen," in *Zur Soziologie Des Urchristentums: Ausgew. Beitrage Zum Fruhchristlichen Gemeinschaftsleben in Seiner Gesellschaftlichen Umwelt*, ed.

So, the rhetorical dynamic of the Fourth Gospel is one that draws the audience *into* the story rather than simply doling *out* information. As Michael Labahn suggests, the Gospel leaves "gaps" for the audience to fulfill creatively.[124] Jan van der Watt similarly suggests that to understand Johannine ethics, one must first recognize the rhetorical power of the narrative, which he describes in terms of "performative power" that "implies a radical involvement" on the part of the audience and a "radical challenge" offered by the story.[125] He suggests that the performative nature of the text completes the rhetorical process, inviting the audience to a decision of belief that is construed as the basic ethical action by the Gospel's standards. Thus, though the form of the text may in most cases not be considered ethical, the message is decidedly so, since it leads the reader to further ethical actions. His essay invites "increased attention" "to how these features of religious discourse work as well as the manner in which they possess rhetorical power" and mentions the need for examination in connection with ancient rhetorical theory as well.[126] This study focuses on precisely this element of the narrative. Like van der Watt, we began with genre, which he calls "the most determinative aspect in the process of communication,"[127] an essential element that stands in symbiotic relationship with the text's rhetorical strategy. We have also followed his lead in taking cues from the text to

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Wayne A. Meeks (München: Kaiser, 1979), 13–36; Kok, "As the Father Sent Me," 169; Jan G. van der Watt, ed., *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, trans. F. S. Malan, BZNW 141 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), v–ix.

[124] Michael Labahn, "'It's Only Love'—Is That All?," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 26. He suggests that the audience would draw upon "real knowledge outside the textual world," like other oral or written sources about Jesus, to fill in these gaps.

[125] van der Watt, "Ethics through the Power of Language," 143.

[126] Ibid., 144.

[127] Ibid., 146.

determine "the direction the text encourages the reader to take."[128] To see one important example of how this works in the Fourth Gospel, we will consider how extension of the encomiastic topics draws the audience in, facilitating identification with Jesus and guiding the audience in their ethical deliberation.

Extension of the Encomiastic Topics

Having used the encomiastic topics to present unity with God as the basis for Jesus's status and for his actions, the Fourth Gospel extends these encomiastic topics to include Jesus's followers. The extension of these topics to believers establishes unity with God as the determinative factor for their identity and actions.[129] Not only do the topics extend to Jesus's followers in the narrative world, but they also extend beyond the narrative into the sphere of the audience. Thus, the topics reach into the arena within which Johannine ethics can be found—the rhetorical exchange that takes place between the story and the audience member. Each of the encomiastic topics will be revisited below with a view to how they are extended to Jesus's followers both within the narrative and among the audience.

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[128] Ibid., 148.

[129] Zimmermann ("Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?" 70–74) makes a similar argument demonstrating that the christological figures and titles in the Fourth Gospel also extend to Jesus's followers. This extension makes it possible, he says, to extract these terms "from a position of exclusivity and to turn them into interpretive concepts or life coping mechanisms for the Johannine Christians. . . . [T]he categorical structure valid for the relationship between Jesus and God is transferred to the relationship between Jesus and his disciples (see 15:9; 17:20–23; 20:21)." He also discusses numerous places where christological titles and images used to describe Jesus are extended to include his followers. These instances will be referenced throughout our discussion of the encomiastic topics below. Those instances lying outside of the scope of the encomiastic topics include the image of the source of living water (4:14; 7:27), the temple, the concept of being "holy" (17:17; 6:69; 10:36), and even the claim "I am" (9:9). Cf. Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 3, 220–21; Klaus Scholtissek, *In ihm sein und bleiben: die Sprache der Immanenz in den Johanneischen Schriften*, Herders biblische Studien (Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 372.

Origin. The Johannine prologue, which introduced the unity of Jesus with God, also extends this topic to Jesus's followers. The Word who was with God in the beginning gives those who believe in him the power "to become children of God." Though these believers come from different earthly and physical family lines, the Fourth Gospel introduces a new family "not of blood or the will of the flesh or of the will of a man, but of God" (1:13). In his conversation with Nicodemus, the Johannine Jesus calls this new relationship being born again, from above (3:3, 7), or being born "of the Spirit" (3:5). As the narrative unfolds, Jesus, who is presented as the unique "Son of God" (1:34, 49; 3:18; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31), institutes a new extended family. Those who believe become children of God (1:12), are received into the house of the Father (14:1–2), and call God Father (20:17).

In his final moments, Jesus sees his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing at the foot of the cross. Famously, he tells them, "Here is your son," and, "Here is your mother" (19:26–27). Though there are many ways to understand the nuanced symbolic significance of both figures, the scene introduces a new family that is not based on natural relation.[130] This image of new family is reinforced elsewhere in the narrative as well. While his earthly brothers did not believe in him (7:5), the risen Jesus calls his disciples "my brothers" and refers to God as "my Father and your Father" (20:17). Since the Beloved Disciple is representative of ideal discipleship for the audience, this scene also extends this new family to include the Johannine community.[131] The institution of a

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[130] Raymond Edward Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, a Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1023–25; Veronica Koperski, "The Mother of Jesus and Mary Magdelene: Looking Back and Forward from the Foot of the Cross in John 19, 25–27," in *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Gilbert van Belle, BETL 200 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 25–57; Coloe, *God Dwells With Us*, 185–90.

[131] Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 333–34.

new family would resonate particularly with the audience given their experience of isolation from their current religious community. The scene recalls Jesus's words from the Farewell Discourse, "I will not leave you orphaned" (14:8). In the context of an extended first-person discourse, the audience would experience these words spoken directly to them as if from Jesus himself. Just as the characters in the story are offered a new family, the audience is assured that they too are a part of this family—the same family to which Jesus himself belongs. Here at the cross, Jesus delivers on his promise, establishing a family community for his followers before he departs from the world. Jesus's action in the narrative would be poignant for the Johannine audience, a group ostracized from its religious and cultural community. Since they identify with the Beloved Disciple, they are also assured that they have a place of belonging in this new family.

Nurture and training. The Fourth Gospel also presents Jesus as a teacher with credentialed authority, whose words came from the knowledge he received from the Father (3:31–35; 5:19–24; 6:45–46; 7:16–18; 8:26–28; 12:47–50). The presentation of Jesus as the link to God's authority and wisdom makes him a challenger to the Torah, the God-given source for wisdom and salvation.[132] As Andrew Glicksman has argued, the Fourth Gospel presents the Word as greater than Sophia, taking the place of Torah as the source for wisdom.[133] Further, the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as the new and

[132] Schnackenburg (*Jesus in the Gospels*, 285) argues that the Logos concept reflects the Jewish idea of Wisdom, who was the sibling of the Torah (Wis 8:7; 2 Bar. 54:12–14; Ps 119).

[133] Andrew T. Glicksman, "Beyond Sophia: The Sapiential Portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel and Its Implications for the Johannine Community," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 83–101.

authoritative interpreter of the Law, making him a rival of Moses.[134] Jesus then extends this credential to his followers, saying that those who have come to him have learned from the Father (6:45). The Spirit will also facilitate teaching from the Father in Jesus's absence (14:25–26). Knowledge from the Father, given to Jesus, is declared again through the Spirit and passed on to his followers (16:13–15). Thus Jesus's followers are credentialed because, like Jesus, their unity with God (facilitated through Jesus and the Spirit) ensures their proper training.

In fact, Jesus says it is better for his followers for him to go away so that the "Advocate" will come (16:7). John Ashton suggests that the profound sense of loss so pervasive here in the Farewell Discourse is indicative of the community situation. As we discussed above, the passage describes the departure of Jesus from his disciples, but on another level, it encourages the Johannine community who had lost their own community leader.[135] Through this discourse (again part of an extended first-person address which would have been performed directly to the audience), the Fourth Gospel assures its audience of sustained authority and leadership through the Advocate, the Spirit, whose role is to teach and remind them of Jesus's teaching (14:16, 26). Testifying on Jesus's

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[134] Ashton (*The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*, 9, 141) suggests that the opposition between Moses and Jesus was at the heart of the conflict between the Johannine community and the synagogue since promoting Jesus's new revelation was a deliberate repudiation of traditional Judaism. As evidence, he cites the explicit "Moses passages" as well as the Johannine treatement of the most valued traditions of ancient Judaism (ancestry, sacred space, feasts and festivals, and the Law). As the Gospel reiterates in various ways, though direct vision of God the Father was impossible (even for Moses!), seeing Jesus is equivalent to seeing the Father. Even further, the evangelist suggests that his Gospel is a means to believe in Jesus and have the life that God wants to offer, despite the fact that they did not see Jesus. Ashton also provides an extensive review of the Essenes via examination of several texts from the DSS. Like Christian texts, many of these (*hodayot*, *pesharim*, and *The Damascus Document*) emphasize the need for new revelation (replacing Moses) to interpret the meaning of the law.

[135] Ashton, Understanding the Fourth Gospel, 418–53.

behalf (15:26), the Advocate ensures the Johannine community's connection to Jesus and to the authority of his Father even in his absence.

In the prologue Jesus was described as "the one who is in the bosom of the Father (εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός, in 1:18). As Alicia Myers points out, this same imagery is used (only one other time in the Gospel) to describe the Beloved Disciple who is "in the bosom of Jesus" (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, in 13:23). She writes, "The image again stresses the closeness between this particular disciple and Jesus, while also encouraging the audience to recall its parallel from 1:18."[136] The extension of this imagery to the Beloved Disciple affirms his authority as one who has also been taught and nurtured by Jesus. Nurture and training for Jesus's followers similarly flows from their unity with Jesus, mirroring Jesus's unity with God.

Pursuits, deeds, and other external goods. While the Fourth Gospel focuses on the "fine actions" of Jesus rather than prescribing deeds for his followers, the Johannine Jesus does predict that his followers will perform comparable and even greater deeds than he himself performed (14:12). The believers are told to do several things in the Fourth Gospel. The love command (13:34 and 15:12) and the instruction to follow Jesus's example in the foot washing (13:14–15) dictate the believers' ethical imperative toward one another; the command to keep Jesus's word (14:23) and his commandments (14:15; 15:10) dictates the believers' ethical imperative toward God, and the commissioning of believers dictates the ethical imperative toward "the world," which is not yet a part of the

[136] Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 66–67. Cf. Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 331–33. See also Alicia D. Myers, "'In the Father's Bosom': Breastfeeding and Identity Formation in John's Gospel," *CBQ* 76 (2014): 481–97, which further considers the ancient Mediterranean milieu of the breastfeeding imagery and its role in forming the identity of the Johannine community.

group (15:27; 17:18; 20:21). The instructions to believe in Jesus (14:11–12, 29), to abide in him (15:4 and 15:7), and to abide in his love (15:9–10), speak to the means of "bearing fruit" in these other areas.[137] In our analysis of John 6 above, we have already seen that the Johannine conception of ethics includes belief as an ethical action.[138] This inclusion makes sense considering that proper actions in the world are a result of unity with God. Jesus's work in the world was to lead the way to God, to show the world the God they had not been able to see—a mission that was only possible because of Jesus's complex and mystical unity with God (1:18).[139] Since belief is the means by which Jesus's followers are brought into unity with God, belief is the fundamental ethical action.

Karl Weyer-Menkhoff's discussion of this dynamic is helpful: "Not even Jesus accomplishes the works of God autonomously but rather responsively. . . . Believing could be defined as a mode that enables humans to act in such a way that God becomes co-actor."[140] Believing in Jesus is the gateway for Jesus's followers to share in the unity he has with the Father.[141] Thus, the Fourth Gospel focuses not on the specific ethical actions that will result from this proper relationship but on the *necessary first action* of believing. Though anyone could see and attempt to imitate Jesus's specific actions, it is

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[137] Lund, "Joys and Dangers." See also Urban C. Von Wahlde, *The Johannine Commandments: 1 John and the Struggle for the Johannine Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990).

[138] On the importance of believing in John, see Brian K. Blount, *Then the Whisper Put on Flesh: New Testament Ethics in an African American Context* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 98–99.

[139] Definitions of ἐξηγέομαι in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* include "to lead," "to show the way to," "to expound," "to tell at length, relate in full." Various interpretations have been suggested for the complex phrase μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς. However it is interpreted (even readings that take υἱὸς), this description emphasizes Jesus's unity with God as the reason he could be the revealer of God. Bultmann, *John*, 81–83; Bruner, *The Gospel of John*, 40–41.

[140] Weyer-Menkhoff, "Response of Jesus," 164.

[141] Peder Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. John Ashton (London: SPCK, 1986), 67–78.

only those who believe in Jesus who also take part in the unity with God that enables them to act in accordance with their new identity and mission.[142] As Frank Matera says, "Faith is an ethical action, then, because it requires those who believe to alter the fundamental way in which they know and understand themselves."[143] The simple yet paradoxical requirement of doing the work of God is to believe. The whole goal of the gospel is that the audience might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, they might have life in his name (20:31). The act of believing establishes the community's identity and verifies the community's authority (the first two encomiastic topics). The support of a new family and the confidence inspired by confirmation of their proper training will result in (the third encomiastic topic) noble deeds.[144]

Extension of this topic to the audience is again facilitated in the narrative through the Beloved Disciple. Showing him as a witness to much of Jesus's ministry, as one of the only disciples to witness his death and the empty tomb, the Beloved Disciple is the ideal disciple who sees and believes (20:8). Not only that, but he has passed on his testimony so that the audience may believe: "He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe" (19:35).[145]

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[142] Volker Rabens, "Johannine Perspectives on Ethical Enabling in the Context of Stoic and Philonic Ethics," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 122.

[143] Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 103.

[144] See the analysis of the Johannine opponents, which demonstrates that response to Jesus (instead of heritage or any other factor) determines ethics, in Jan G. van der Watt, "Ethics Of/and the Opponents of Jesus in John's Gospel," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 175–91.

[145] Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 334–36.

The Johannine Jesus prayed for this group earlier in the narrative: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word" (17:20). His request is that the future believers would be one with each another, one with him, and one with the Father—for the benefit of the world. In the performance of this text, the audience would hear Jesus pray directly for them. The resurrected Jesus also references the audience when he says, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (20:29). As Brian Blount has pointed out, ethics has not been *reduced* to mere belief; rather, "ethics has been integrally connected with belief. . . . Johannine belief, by its very nature, must bear behavioral fruit. The new life it conjures will be lived concretely. It will be lived in love."[146] Thus, the audience is challenged to believe in Jesus and, experiencing the unity brought about by belief, to join God's mission for the world. It is this unity and mission that should drive the audience member's actions in the world.

Twice in the Fourth Gospel, the Johannine Jesus speaks directly in terms of imitating specific actions. The first instance comes in the upper room where Jesus washes his disciples' feet. Jesus says, "you also ought to wash one another's feet . . . you also should do as I have done to you" (13:14–15). The symbolic act, however, does more than set an example to be imitated.[147] This episode depicts the trajectory of Jesus's disciples being brought into the unity that Jesus shares with the Father. Initially, Peter resists Jesus's act. In response to Peter's resistance, Jesus says, "unless I wash you, you have no

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[146] Blount, *Then the Whisper Put on Flesh*, 99. See further, Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community*. His closing thoughts, where he explains how 1 John 3:16–17 interprets the love command in terms of meeting concrete physical needs, are especially poignant (128–32).

[147] For a thorough treatment of the concept of mimesis in the Fourth Gospel, see Bennema, "Mimesis in John 13." He suggests that mimesis primarily involves "the creative truthful, bodily articulation of the idea and attitude that lie behind the original act" rather than exact replication. We see here how the idea behind the act of foot washing includes the theme of unity, which is meant to empower acts of service.

share with me" (13:8). These words show that the foot washing had a unifying relational effect, initiating the disciples into the family or "household" of God.[148] The act of foot washing, seen in its ancient context, symbolized not only humility but also hospitality.[149] In this way, the narrative nods to the practical result of the internal unity of the community—that it is opened to the world at large inviting them to share in the unity.[150] Further elaborating, Jesus explains, "Do you know what I have done to you? . . . Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. . . . Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me" (13:13, 16, 20).

The "sent" language here shows that the foot washing also brings the disciples into Jesus's mission. As we saw above, Jesus's deeds flow out of his mission as the "sent one" of the Father. Utilizing harvest imagery, Jesus says that his "food" is to do the will of the one who sent him, and he sends his followers "to reap that for which you did not labor" (John 4:37–38). Later in the narrative, Jesus says in a prayer to the Father, "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (17:18). And he tells his followers directly, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (20:21). In this way, Jesus's mission to the world becomes the mission of his followers.[151] Thus, shared mission extends the encomiastic topic of pursuits and deeds to Jesus's followers. Just as

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[148] On foot washing as a welcome into God's household, see Mary Coloe, "Welcome into the Household of God: The Footwashing in John 13," *CBQ* 66 (2004): 414.

[149] Brant, *John*, 205–8.

[150] As Alan Culpepper and others have pointed out, the episode also directs the audience's attention forward to Jesus's death, another example of service to the point of extreme sacrifice; see R. Alan Culpepper, "The Johannine Hypodeigma: A Reading of John 13," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 133–52. See also, Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 551, on the parallel "taking off" and "taking up" from John 10 that connects the foot washing to Jesus's death.

[151] Zimmermann, "Metaphoric Networks," 70–74; Kok, "As the Father Sent Me."

Jesus's pursuits and deeds flowed from his connection with the one who sent him, so his followers' pursuits and deeds should flow from their shared unity with God.

The mission is to extend the unity with God to include the world (cf. John 17:11b, 20–23).[152] As John 3:16 states plainly, it was God's love for the world (at large) that prompted his sending of Jesus. Throughout the Johannine narrative, the inclusiveness of this mission—for the world—is reiterated.[153] Jesus was sent to enlighten *the world*, to take away the sin of *the world* (1:29), to give life to *the world* (3:16–17; 6:33, 51), to save *the world* (4:42; 12:47), to show *the world* the love he shares with the Father (14:31; 17:23). Jesus asks in his last prayer, "I in them and you and me, that they may become completely one, so that *the world* may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (17:23).[154] Through the disciples, the world has the chance to receive the one who sent them (Jesus), and thus the one who sent him (God).[155] Unity with Jesus not only enlists the disciples in the mission but also enables them to complete

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[152] The import is encapsulated in John 17:23, "I in them (unity between Jesus and the believers) and you in me (unity between the Father and the Son), that they may become completely one (unity among the believers), so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (extension of love to the world)." Scholarly opinion (though split) may tip in favor of seeing αὐτοὺς as referring to believers, and thus the verse only suggests that the world sees that he loves the believers (not that he loves the world at large) (e.g., Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 771; Christian Dietzfelbinger, *Evangelium nach Johannes*, ed. Hans Heinrich Schmid, 2 vols., ZBK: NT 4 [Zürich: Theologischer, 2001], 321; Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, HNT 6 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 699). Dietzfelbinger admits that there is some support for taking αὐτοὺς (them) as the world, and this support should be considered strongly given the other emphases on God's love and mission for the world in the narrative. Whether κόσμος is taken as a collective noun and the referent of αὐτοὺς or if αὐτοὺς refers to the believers, the extension of God's love to the world is a viable reading. In the latter case, the extension of God's love to the world would be indirect. Yes, the world would be seeing that God loves believers, but the sight of the believers who are in unity with Jesus and with one another (in love) would invite those who make up the κόσμος to believe and be transferred into the community of love.

[153] Mira Stare, "Ethics of Life in the Gospel of John," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 213–28.

[154] For further discussion on how the command for mutual love extends beyond the community's boundaries, see Chapter Five, below.

[155] Smith, Johannine Christianity, 216–20.

it. Volker Rabens demonstrates this dynamic in the context of the first love command. Citing John 13:34 he writes, "Jesus's love for them is not only the model but also the enabling force of their love."[156] The enabling effect of unity with Jesus is made explicit in the image of the vine and the branches: "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (15:4–5).[157]

A life-orientation in which unity with the Father determines action would stand in stark opposition to another determinative moral force: the Torah. The Torah was seen as the God-given source for wisdom and salvation, but the Fourth Gospel presents the Word as greater than Sophia, taking the place of the Torah as the source for wisdom.[158] Though many of the values of the Torah would by default stay imbedded within the community, the basis for right living becomes unity with God and his mission for the world rather than the Torah.[159] Like Jesus justified his own actions based not on the Law but on his union with the Father, the Johannine community is offered an ethic based on their transformed identity in unity with God, the well-being of the community, and the mission

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[156] Rabens, "Ethical Enabling," 120.

[157] This vineyard imagery stands at the center of the Farewell Discourse, offering a guide to the disciples for Jesus's impending departure. Jesus had challenged the institution of Judaism during his time on earth, and the disciples were to stay rooted in Jesus, the new vineyard, as the determining factor for "bearing fruit." See Chrys C. Caragounis, "'Abide in Me': The New Mode of Relationship between Jesus and His Followers as a Basis for Christian Ethics (John 15)," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 250–63.

[158] "The Logos . . . assumes the salvation-bringing functions that were ascribed to the Torah in Judaism" (Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels*, 285). Cf. Glicksman, "Beyond Sophia," 83–101.

[159] Loader, "Law and Ethics"; Lund, "Joys and Dangers," 283.

for the world.[160] This observation does not, however, imply that Johannine ethics leaves the sphere of concrete actions in the real world.[161] The examples of love provided (the foot washing and Jesus's sacrificial death) were concrete, lowly, and gruesome physical acts. John's presentation of a real material incarnation, a physical life, and a visible human death suggests that imitation of Jesus's love would similarly take place in the material, physical world—in the realm of social ethics.[162]

Suffering and death. While the Fourth Gospel vividly depicts Jesus's noble death within the narrative, the suffering and death of his followers is not recounted. The Fourth Gospel does address this topic, however, in reference to those who follow Jesus. Addressing his disciples, the Johannine Jesus says,

> Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. The one who loves his/her life loses it, and the one who hates his/her life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever would serve me must follow me, and where I am, there also will the one who serves me be. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor him/her (John 12:24–26).

Using the image of wheat, which must die in order to bear fruit, the Fourth Gospel puts the suffering of Jesus's followers in the same sphere of Jesus's "noble death," which

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[160] Johannine discipleship (understood in terms of covenant) depicts a transformative identity-shift for a community in a socio- and theological identity crisis. See Rekha M. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006).

[161] As Andrew T. Lincoln (*The Gospel according to Saint John*, BNTC 4 [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005], 227) explains, this episode demonstrates that "[b]elief in Jesus as God's authoritative agent rather than adherence to the Torah is now the central criterion for pleasing God."

[162] Blount (*Then the Whisper Put on Flesh*, 101–3) put it another way: "The ethical appeal to love one another has as many expressions as there are needs and challenges in the larger Johannine situation." Cf. Paul N. Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership in the Johannine Situation," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), esp. 290 and 304–8. Anderson's examination of the epistles further demonstrates how such a shift would necessitate dialectical engagement on the part of the community.

would benefit others and would have lasting value over and above the cost.[163] Jesus's death functions to open the community to include the world at large, as his earlier words remind us, "I, when I am lifted up . . . will draw all people to myself" (12:32). Through his death, Jesus reveals the extreme sacrificial service to be practiced outside of the community in order to fulfill the mission of bringing the world back into unity with God.

The narrative presents the expectation that like Jesus suffered a noble death, his followers will also. Though differing in degree, Jesus tells his followers that their suffering will also benefit the world. As Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and you will lament, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will become joy" (16:20). Jesus specifically links the suffering of his followers to their connection with him: "If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. . . . If they persecuted me, they will persecute you" (15:18–20).[164] Jesus's followers are thus united with him in suffering and—like Jesus—they are "with God" (16:32b).

Further, the Johannine narrative specifically addresses the deaths of two of its main characters. The risen Jesus describes the death by which Peter "would glorify God" (21:18–20). When Peter asked if the Beloved Disciple would suffer the same fate, Jesus responded with the enigmatic statement, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" (21:22). Though this response led to a rumor that this disciple would not die, the narrator clarifies that Jesus did not actually say he would not

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[163] Zimmermann, "Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?," 70–74. On "noble death," see Neyrey, *The Gospel of John*, 282–312. See also Demosthenes (*Epitaph*.), Thucydides (*History* 2.42–44), Plato (*Menex*. 237, 240e–249c), the *Progymnasmata* attributed to Hermogenes (16) and Theon (*Prog*. 110), and Aristotle (*Rhet*. 1.9.16–25). Neyrey also locates these themes in 1 Macc 4 and 9, 2 Mac 6–7, 4 Macc. 5–11, and Josephus, *A.J*. 17.152–54.

[164] The Johannine Jesus's prediction "they will put you out of the synagogues" (16:2) would have had significance for the situation of the early readers of the Fourth Gospel (as we have discussed above).

die. This episode, like Jesus's Farewell Discourse, is indicative of the sense of loss experienced by the Johannine community. Jesus's words that this disciple might remain seem strange at first since the community appears to be dealing with the reality that they have lost or will soon lose their leader. Use of the word "remain" (here the infinitive form of μένω), however, resonates with other significant uses of this word in the narrative.[165]

Forms of μένω are used to describe the relational dynamic between the Spirit, Jesus, and the Father[166] as well as the relational dynamic between Jesus, his followers, and the Sprit.[167] Significantly for the discussion of the topic of death, earlier in the narrative the crowd issued a challenge: "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?" (12:34). Though it is a difficult concept, according to the Fourth Gospel, "remaining" can include suffering, departure, and even death. Jesus died, yet he remains in the Spirit. The Beloved Disciple presumably died, but he lives on in the testimony to the Johannine community. Despite the possibility of suffering, the Beloved Disciple exhibits the behavior of the

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[165] Admittedly, recognition of such verbal resonances would vary within a diverse audience. First-time hearers or less attentive listeners would perhaps not immediately make the connections that could be apparent to repeat-listeners, those with keen understanding, or those (like the lector her/himself) who would have occasion for extended reflection on the Gospel. For more on sensitivity to the complexity of performance and diverse audience reception, see Kelly R. Iverson, "An Enemy of the Gospel? Anti-Paulinisms and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera*, ed. Christoper W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 7–32; Whitenton, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship*.

[166] The Spirit remains on Jesus at his baptism (John 1:32); Jesus claims "the Father remains in me" (14:10) and that he remains in the Father's love (15:9).

[167] Jesus asks or declares that his followers remain in him (John 6:56) and in his word (8:31), tells his followers that the Spirit remains with them, and says that he has appointed them so that they might go and bear fruit and that their fruit might "remain" (15:16). The key to this fruitfulness is remaining in him as he remains in the Father (15:4–9).

disciple *par excellence*, following Jesus to the end.[168] The Johannine audience is called to do the same. Struggling to believe in the generations after Jesus's departure, facing the death of their own leader, and battling conflict and hostility in the religious community, they too can bear fruit that remains.[169]

The emphasis on Jesus's noble suffering and death would have been significant to the community, who felt ostracized and persecuted.[170] In the face of crisis, the Johannine community could find solidarity in the noble death of their hero, Jesus, and their community leader. The Gospel narrative ascribes meaning to their suffering, showing how the persecution and suffering of Jesus were a part of bringing about God's mission to the world. Practically speaking, the extension of this topic challenges the Johannine community to resist capitulating or otherwise compromising in order to avoiding suffering. Rather, if they endure as Jesus did, they will fulfill their role in continuing God's mission to reconcile the world to himself. At this juncture the relationship among the encomiastic topics becomes clearer. Given such a challenge, a foundation of identity and community belonging would be essential, lest the community falter in order to regain the comfort from their previous group. Affirmation that they had belonged to a new family and that they had the proper teaching would give confidence to the Johannine community to stand firm in their confession of Jesus. The vision of sharing with Jesus in

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[168] Grounded in his unity with Jesus (depicted in his closeness to Jesus in the upper room), he persevered even when there could have been dire consequences (following Jesus to the cross). He believed when he saw the empty tomb and was the first to recognize Jesus as the risen Lord (21:17). See Eisen, "Metalepsis in the Gospel of John," 336–39.

[169] See Patrick Hartin ("Remain in Me [John 15:5]: The Foundation of the Ethical and Its Consequences in the Farewell Discourses," *Neotestamentica* 25 [1991]: 341–56), who examines the Farewell Discourse and suggests that Jesus's death as the model of self-sacrificial love is the foundation for Johannine ethics. Thus Johannine believers are to live according to a relationship-response with Jesus and in the community.

[170] Blount, Then the Whisper Put on Flesh, 104–7.

God's mission would motivate bold and compassionate behavior even in the face of suffering.

Summary. The rhetoric of the Johannine narrative suggests an ethic based on participation in the relational unity shared between the Father and the Son rather than imitation of specific actions or correspondence to a set moral code. The extension of the encomiastic topics demonstrates that those who believe in Jesus (both within the narrative and among the audience) are brought into the unity with God that formed the basis for Jesus's identity and his actions. A new family with a new credential for authoritative training, a new mission to determine deeds and pursuits, and a shared suffering for the benefit of the world—the particular Johannine use of these topics and the metaleptic force of the narrative reveals a rhetorical trajectory that demonstrates unity with God through belief in Jesus as the basis for both the elevated Christology and the implicit ethics in the Fourth Gospel.[171]

Lingering Questions

Some questions remain as we move towards the final stage in articulating Johannine ethics in light of our rhetorical analysis. These questions have long-plagued the search for Johannine ethics: Is the love command exclusive? Was the Johannine community a sectarian group? How do we explain the combative and hostile stance against those who do not believe? Is the Fourth Gospel solely interested in the spiritual dimension to the neglect of attention to physical welfare? In the following chapter, we will see how the Gospel's rhetorical structure reveals a macro-level rhetorical trajectory

[171] Zimmermann ("Is There Ethics in the Gospel of John?," 80) calls it "responsive, reactive ethics."

that offers key themes to guide reading and interpretation of such issues. As we will see, not only do the members of the Johannine community see their own story within the story of Jesus, but the Fourth Gospel also tells the story of God's mission for the world. In Johannine terms, the key to ethics is understanding one's place within the larger story of God's mission for the world. As Kobus Kok explained, behavior is rooted in "the Universal Godly Narrative" or "a particular understanding of God and his story with the world."[172] Thus in the next chapter we will examine the Gospel's rhetorical structure and what it reveals about the larger story of the Gospel and God's mission for the world. This analysis will affirm many of the suggestions made in our previous rhetorical analyses and will provide space for addressing these lingering questions concerning Johannine ethics.

[172] Kok, "As the Father Sent Me," 171.

CHAPTER FIVE

Appropriation of Structural Devices: Prologue, Chain-link, and Themes for Interpreting the Macro-level Rhetorical Trajectory

Introduction

We have seen that the Fourth Gospel, which participates to a significant extent in an encomiastic form of the *bios* genre, engages its audience through a variety of metaleptic elements, which imbue the elevated Christology of John's narrative with a rhetorical, moral function. Not only does the Gospel present Jesus in the most ideal terms, it also extends these terms to believers in the narrative and to the audience outside of the text. While the exalted status of Jesus resists simple imitation, the narrative presents Jesus's unity with the Father as the imitative element of the encomiastic presentation. The audience is invited to share in the unity that Jesus shares with the Father—a unity that includes a new identity and a new mission that determines how a believer should act in the world. Rather than articulating specific ethical rules, the Fourth Gospel offers a flexible approach to ethics, a morality that flows from identity and mission. This approach would have been particularly fitting for the Johannine group that experienced separation from its religious and cultural community and was struggling to establish a firm identity while maintaining christological commitments.

As the members of the Johannine community find their own story within the story of Jesus, they also find the story of God's mission for the world. In Johannine terms, understanding one's place within the larger story of God's mission for the world is the key to ethics. Thus, in this chapter, we will examine the Gospel's rhetorical structure and

what it reveals about "the Universal Godly Narrative" or its "particular understanding of God and his story with the world."[1] Specifically, in the first half of this chapter we will attend to the rhetorical function of the prologue and the transitional chain-link device as guides to the Gospel's macro-level narrative. This analysis will confirm many of the suggestions made in our previous rhetorical analyses and will provide space for addressing lingering questions concerning Johannine ethics. In the second half of this chapter, we will attend to one of the most pressing lingering questions—the scope and meaning of the love command.

Part 1: Rhetorical Structure as a Guide to Interpretation

In the ancient world, structure was one of the most significant rhetorical features of a text or discourse,[2] especially given the oral/aural culture for which these texts were composed and within which they were delivered.[3] The context of aurality/orality resulted

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[1] Kobus Kok, "As the Father Has Sent Me, I Send You: Towards a Missional-Incarnational Ethos in John 4," in *Moral Language in the New Testament: The Interrelatedness of Language and Ethics in Early Christian Writings*, ed. Ruben Zimmermann and Jan G. van der Watt, WUNT 296 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 171.

[2] For a fuller demonstration of how New Testament writers conformed to ancient rhetorical patterns, see the History of Research in the Introduction. See also a particular example in Frank Forrester Church, "Rhetorical Structure and Design in Paul's Letter to Philemon," *HTR* 71 (1978): 17–33.

[3] For more on oral/aural context, see William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); M. Man-Ilan, "Illiteracy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries CE," in *Essays in the Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society*, ed. Simcha Fishbane, Jack N. Lightstone, and Victor Levin (Montréal: Concordia University Press, 1990), 46–61. See also Walter J. Ong, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 114; Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 7, 70; Richard A. Burridge, "The Gospels and Acts," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.—A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 528–530; Whitney Taylor Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 109–16. Cf. Bruce W. Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of New Testament Chain-Link Transitions* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), 49–55.

in a heightened importance on recollection.[4] In this setting, rhetorical structure aided communication and facilitated memorization/delivery for the performer and interpretation/understanding for the audience. Take, for example, Quintilian's explanation:

> But it is Division and Composition which are important factors . . . in helping to retain what we compose mentally. . . . This is because what comes first, second, and so on, not only in the original layout of the Questions but in their development, provides fixed points (if, of course, our speech follows the straightforward order), and the entire structure thus hangs together so that nothing can be removed or inserted without this becoming obvious (*Inst*. 11.2.36–38 Russell, LCL]).[5]

Quintilian's comments concern outlining formal oratory; however, the principle behind his rhetorical procedure can also be applied to other forms of discourse. Because the Gospels were likely disseminated via public reading, attention to their rhetorical structure can aid interpretation.[6]

Rhetorical analysis, applied in the field of biblical studies, has illustrated that structural elements can reveal much about how a text communicates. At times, analysis concentrated on a specific structural device used in a single text-unit. At other times, structure was analyzed more broadly; multiple devices were recognized, and attention

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[4] "Second orality" refers to a written text that is known through an oral performance. This designation is fitting for New Testament texts within their early contexts since these texts were read by only a select few and heard by the vast majority; see James D. G. Dunn, "Altering the Default Setting: Re-Envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition," *NTS* 49 (2003): 139–75, esp. 150–56. See further Kenneth Bailey, who describes the traditional Middle Eastern evening gathering of *haflat samar* as extending back to the early practice (even before the first century) of communal listening. Cf. Kenneth E. Bailey, "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *Themelios* 20 (1995): 4–11; Kenneth E. Bailey, "Middle Eastern Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *ExpTim* 106 (1995): 363–67.

[5] See also *Inst*. 11.2.34–35 for Quintilian on memory from the point of view of the hearer. This example does not imply that all performance was done from memory. Many public performances were read aloud. See, for example, Dan Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscripts, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1–4* (Leiden: Brill, 2015). For more on performance, see Whitenton, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship*.

[6] For more on the application of ancient rhetorical analysis to the Gospels, see the Introduction.

was given to the structure of an entire book or letter. Early on, the use of chiastic structures, which emphasized the main point and assisted in memory, received much attention.[7] Further, the history of New Testament scholarship demonstrates how focusing on formal elements can highlight the sense of the text, illuminate the rhetorical situation, correct mistakes within the history of interpretation, and generally clarify meaning.[8] "To the biblical authors, artistry in the use of structure was not an end in itself," Ronald Man concludes; "it was a means toward more effective communication of their messages."[9] Surely, attention to rhetorical structure of biblical texts has yielded worthwhile interpretive results.

Among a text's most important structural features are its prologue and its transitions. As we will demonstrate below, prologues provide a starting point for the ancient reader to understand what they are about to encounter. Quintilian explains that the prologue aims to prepare the audience so that they will be attentive and favorable to what

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[7] According to Jerome Neyrey (*The Gospel of John* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 38), this common form "was anticipated by audiences to aid in following the argument or narrative." Cf. M. E. Snodderly, "A Socio-Rhetorical Investigation of the Johannine Understanding of 'the Works of the Devil' in 1 John 3:8" (Doctor of Literature and Philosophy, Universiteit van Pretoria, 2014), 50. See also Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in Formgeschichte* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1942); Ronald E. Man, "The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation," *BSac* 141 (1984): 146–57.

[8] Charles J. Robbins, "Rhetorical Structure of Philippians 2:6–11," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 73–82; Barnard Lindars, "The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews," *NTS* 35 (1989): 382–406; Duane F. Watson, "1 John 2:12–14 as Distributio, Conduplicatio, and Expolitio: A Rhetorical Understanding," *JSNT* 35 (1989): 97–110; Duane F. Watson, "A Rhetorical Analysis of 2 John According to Greco-Roman Convention," *NTS* 35 (1989): 104–30; Duane F. Watson, "A Rhetorical Analysis of 3 John: A Study in Epistolary Rhetoric," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 479–501; Duane F. Watson, "Amplification Techniques in 1 John: The Interaction of Rhetorical Style and Invention," *JSNT* 51 (1993): 99–123; David A. Black, "The Pauline Love Command: Structure, Style, and Ethics in Romans 12:9–21," *Filología Neotestamentaria* 2 (1989): 3–22; Gareth Lee Cockerill, "The Better Resurrection (Heb 11:35): A Key to the Structure and Rhetorical Purpose of Hebrews 11," *TynBul* 51 (2000): 215–34; Robert L. Humphrey, *Narrative Structure and Message in Mark: A Rhetorical Analysis*, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 60 (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2003); Nicholas Lunn, "Parables of the Lost? Rhetorical Structure and the Section Headings of Luke 15," *BT* 60 (2009): 158–64.

[9] Man, "The Value of Chiasm," 148.

follows (Quintilian, *Inst*. 4.1).[10] David Moessner suggests that ancient prologues would lead readers to anticipate "the distinctive scope and sequence" of the narrative.[11]

Similarly, transitions guide the reader to follow a new train of thought and to understand how this new thought relates to the overall text or discourse. "A well-constructed transition," according to Bruce Longenecker, "oils the machinery of rhetorical persuasion."[12] In this way, transitions are the interpreter's keys to the communicative process that takes place between author and audience.[13] So, Longenecker concludes, "transitional links enhance the audience's chance of assimilating an author's meaning in an oral/aural culture."[14] In what follows, we will consider the rhetorical function of two structural elements that will prove significant for our interpretation of the Fourth Gospel—the prologue and the particular transition device of chain-link interlock.

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[10] Here, Quintilian discusses *prooemia* in the context of a court. The various types of prologues and their functions will be discussed in more detail below.

[11] David P. Moessner, "The Lukan Prologues in the Light of Ancient Narrative Hermeneutics," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. J. Verheyden (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 399. Moessner's argument concerns how Luke's prologue establishes the writer's credentials as "one who has followed" from the beginning (408). It builds on other ancient prologues that link credentialed writing to appropriate or accurate reading (e.g., Polybius, *The Histories* I.1–15; Theophrastus, *Char*., Prooemium; Strabo, *Geogr*. 1.1.14–15, 22–23, 1.2.1; Apollonius of Citium, *Commentary on the "De Articulis" of Hippocrates I;* Josephus, *Ag*. *Ap*. I.53–56; 213–18).

[12] Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*, 2. See also H. Van Dyke Parunak, "Transitional Techniques in the Bible," *JBL* 102 (1983): 525–48.

[13] Parunak, "Transitional Techniques in the Bible," 546. Cf. Snodderly, "Works of the Devil," 60.

[14] Longenecker, Rhetoric at the Boundaries, 52.

Introduction to Ancient Prologues

Ancient narrative beginnings came in various forms. These forms can be broadly categorized into three groups: the incipit, the preface, and the dramatic prologue. Lucian's category of "virtual preface" could be counted as a fourth, though informal, category. An incipit was little more than a title or phrase describing the contents of what followed.[15] More pertinent to our interest in the rhetorical function of narrative beginnings are the categories of preface and dramatic prologue.

Quintilian describes the preface as winning the "goodwill" of the audience, making them "attentive" and "ready to learn" (*Inst*. 4.1 [Russell, LCL]). A formal preface would follow the convention for the genre of literature that it introduced, whether historical writings, rhetoric, or other prose.[16] Though the form might shift for a different genre, the rhetorical aim remained the same.[17] In his description of prefaces used by historians like Herodotus and Thucydides, Lucian explains that the author uses the preface to show that "what he is going to say will be important, essential, personal, or useful. He will make what is to come easy to understand and quite clear, if he sets forth

[15] A ready example is the beginning of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas: "These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down." Though some have compared the openings of Matthew and Mark to the form of incipit, the rhetorical function of these narrative beginnings seems to push in the direction of other categories; see Dennis E. Smith, "Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 4–5.

[16] Ibid., 1.

[17] A formal preface often included a dedication, a reference to the request for the work, a protest from the author, and finally a statement of willingness to write. Cf. Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions*, Studia Latina Stockholmiensia 13 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964), 27–29; Smith, "Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory," 2. The feigned unwillingness to write was more common among Roman writers, whereas Greek authors and historians often omitted this portion. See also Lucian, *How to Write History* 53.

the causes and outlines the main events" (Lucian, *How to Write History* 53 [Kilburn, LCL]).[18] Thus, a preface had two aims: to win over the audience at the outset and to prepare them to understand and accept what would follow.[19]

Much like the formal preface, the dramatic prologue provided space for the author to address the audience directly to explain his purpose and garner their favor. Beyond that, the dramatic prologue set the stage for the drama. Aristotle writes that the *exordia* "puts the beginning, so to say, in the hearer's hand (and) enables them, if they hold fast to it, to follow the story" (*Rhet*. 3.14.6 [translation adapted from Freese, LCL]).[20] Dramatic prologues could be simple, stating the situation or setting just before the monologue or dialogue was to commence.[21] The dramatic prologue could also offer information to the audience that would be unknown to the characters within the story,[22] and some have found this category fitting for John's opening verses.[23] Rhetorically speaking, dramatic

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[18] According to David Aune (*The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, LEC 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 120–21), historians often adopted an alternate set of statements including praise of history, the reason for writing, critical mention of predecessors, and the claim to appropriate method. Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: S.P.C.K, 1958), 194–204; Loveday Alexander, "Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing," *NovT* 28 (1986): 48–74.

[19] Smith, "Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory," 3.

[20] Cited in Ibid., 4.

[21] E.g., "Before the skene, representing the palace of the Egyptian king Theoclymenus, is the tomb of his father Proteus. When the action begins, Helen is sitting at the tomb as a suppliant" (Euripides, *Helen* [Kovacs, LCL]).

[22] The beginning of Mark's Gospel has been said to function this way, since only the readers and the narrator know from the beginning that Jesus is the "son of God." See Charles B. Puskas, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 128; Smith, "Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory," 4.

[23] As Smith points out, although Bultmann's category of "cultic-liturgical poetry" functioning as an overture has some merit, it is not grounded in ancient literary forms; see Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 13–14.

prologue seems a fitting designation, especially considering the special knowledge offered to the audience in John's prologue that facilitates the famous Johannine irony.[24]

Ancient categories for prefatory material were not comprehensive. Lucian develops a "catch-all" category of the "virtual preface" (προοιμίου οννάμει) for narrative beginnings that did not match a particular form but rhetorically functioned to introduce the rest of the discourse. The works included in this category most often began the narrative without any explicit introduction (e.g., Xenophon's *The Cavalry Commander*). This category, however, could also include unconventional openings like the thematic essay with which Xenophon opens his fictional biography of Cyrus the Great (*Cyropaedia* 1.1–3). Such a category shows the flexibility of formal narrative beginnings in ancient literature. The Johannine prologue overlaps with these three categories in various ways. It functions as a formal preface by which the author directly prepares the audience for what follows. It also functions as a dramatic prologue, albeit an unconventional one, which sets the stage for the narrative and offers a privileged vantage point to the audience. And like the "virtual preface," its poetic structure defies the boundaries for formal categorization. With this in mind, we turn to examine the rhetorical function of the prologue as discussed in literary theory.

The Rhetorical Function of Narrative Beginnings

The beginning of a text is an essential element in the communicative exchange between the author and audience. Gérard Genette describes these formal beginnings as

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[24] Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 41, 61; Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 23–42. Cf. Clayton R. Bowen, "The Fourth Gospel Dramatic Material," *JBL* 49 (1930): 298; Puskas, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 135; Werner H. Kelber, "The Birth of a Beginning: John 1:1–18," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 121–44; Smith, "Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory," 4.

introductory texts that comment on the main text and function "to get the (text) read properly."[25] As Peter Phillips explains, the beginning of a text settles the "reading contract" that guides the exchange.[26] Phillips sees the Johannine prologue as a part of the narrative frame as opposed to others, like Elizabeth Harris, who view the prologue as a metatext operating outside the narrative frame.[27] In some ways, the Johannine prologue resists inclusion in the narrative frame, and in other ways it participates in it. For example, the poetic form suggests that it stands separate from the main text. The introduction of main characters and the inclusion of temporal narrative elements, however, suggest that it is part of the narrative itself. This unique liminal location may be due to the fact that the prologue seems to be a composite of an existing poetic source, laced with narrative elements, precisely in order to link it more closely to the main narrative.[28] Whether one views the prologue as separate from the narrative and commenting on it or as an integral part of the narrative, the rhetorical function remains the same—this narrative beginning prepared the audience to understand correctly what followed.

Contributors to the 1990 *Semeia* volume devoted to narrative beginnings describe the functions of the prefatory sections of the Gospels in similar ways. Mikeal Parsons's survey of narrative beginnings in critical theory further elaborates on the possibilities for

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[25] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 197; cf. 161ff.

[26] Peter M. Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel: A Sequential Reading*, LNTS 294 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 4.

[27] Elizabeth Harris, *Prologue and Gospel: The Theology of the Fourth Evangelist*, JSNTSup 107 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1994).

[28] Bultmann, *John*, 15–17; Raymond Edward Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 23–39.

their rhetorical function. His discussion of text-oriented and reader-oriented approaches to narrative beginnings is particularly helpful, and I have included some of the most pertinent notes here.[29] For example, Boris Uspensky presented beginnings and endings together in terms of the literary frame, describing the frame's role in assisting the shift from external to internal point of view to aid the reader's transition into the narrative world.[30] Robert Funk discussed narrative beginnings as one type of "focalizer," which directs the reader's focus as they enter into the narrative.[31] Others, such as Stanley Fish, give more power to the reader in the exchange.[32] Nonetheless, as Meir Sternberg, Menakhem Perry, and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan have described, the author can manipulate the reader's response. These scholars discuss a concept known as the "primacy effect" by which a reader's first impressions shape their understanding of the unfolding narrative.[33] These impressions are either affirmed or subverted as the narrative moves on.

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[29] Mikeal C. Parsons, "Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading: Tracing Literary Theory on Narrative Openings," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 11–31. Parsons also covers poststructuralist perspectives, which remind interpreters that narrative beginnings might just as easily be unrelated to what follows or fail to guide the narrative (25).

[30] Boris A. Uspenskiĭ, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*, trans. Valentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 149; Parsons, "Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading," 15.

[31] Robert W. Funk, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1988), 102; Parsons, "Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading," 16.

[32] Stanley E. Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 145; Parsons, "Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading," 19. In his earlier work, Fish allowed for more manipulation of the reader by the text; see Stanley E. Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

[33] Meir Sternberg, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 96; Menakhem Perry, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings," *Poetics Today* 1 (1979): 35–64; Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983), 120–21; Parsons, "Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading," 19–21.

In the same volume, Bernard Scott's essay suggests that Matthew's opening sections provide the reader an ideological orientation that reveals the narrative's fundamental values, by which it organizes its narrative world. Scott compares this orientation to Genette's concept of "focalization," a process whereby the narrator provides a conceptual system for viewing the world or norms by which to understand the narrative world.[34] He goes on to show how several elements of Matthew's infancy narrative introduce a paradoxical ideology that guides the interpretation of the rest of the narrative. Particularly, the paradox presented in the preface "constructs an ideological map" by which the audience can understand complex elements of the story, such as how Jesus both fulfills and challenges the Law.[35] More generally, Eugene Boring shows how Mark 1:1–15 prepares the audience by introducing the main characters and themes for the narrative.[36] Joseph Tyson compares Luke's beginning to ancient dramatic prologues and describes how Luke uses parallelism to introduce characters and themes that will appear later.[37]

What these approaches have in common is the link between narrative beginnings and the rest of the narrative. As Robert Tannehill's response to the essays states, beginnings "establish a hermeneutical frame that will influence the interpretation of what follows."[38] More than telling the audience what will happen, narrative beginnings prepare

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[34] Bernard Brandon Scott, "The Birth of the Reader," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 83–102. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 189–94.

[35] Scott, "The Birth of the Reader," 97.

[36] M. Eugene Boring, "Mark 1:1–15 and the Beginning of the Gospel," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 43–81.

[37] Joseph B. Tyson, "The Birth Narrative and the Beginning of Luke's Gospel," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 103–20.

[38] Robert C. Tannehill, "Beginning to Study 'How Gospels Begin,'" *Semeia* 52 (1990): 188.

the audience to understand the complexities, disappointments, and tensions within the narrative in light of what they already know. In her summary essay, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon describes this process as the "interactional function" by which a narrative beginning establishes the norms for reading and shapes the perspective by which the text should be viewed.[39] She points also to the intertextual and intratextual functions of narrative beginnings, as they often provide parallels or themes to guide interpretation by allusion or reference to other texts or other parts of the narrative itself. Further, she insists that narrative beginnings "introduce the rhetoric of texts," even if those writing about narrative beginnings do not explicitly discuss their function in rhetorical terms.[40]

Similarly, Morna Hooker describes the rhetorical role of narrative beginnings using the image of a key by which the reader can unlock the purpose and meaning of the text that follows.[41] Peter Phillips perhaps states it most strongly when he says that prologues set boundaries for the communicative exchange in an effort to ensure correct interpretation.[42] Opening with a complex poetic prelude and laden with ambiguity and

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[39] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Ending at the Beginning: A Response," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 175–84.

[40] Ibid., 180.

[41] Morna D. Hooker, *Beginnings: Keys That Open the Gospels* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

[42] Phillips advocates for a sequential reading of the text and against paragrammatic approaches, which take a bird's-eye view of the text as a whole and relate the various parts of the text to one another (and to intertexts). In his view a paragrammatic approach does not accurately represent the intended rhetorical flow given the oral/aural transmission of the narrative. He warns about the danger of reading from above ("metatextuality"), since the interpreter can too easily slip from analyzing the effects of the text on members of the early audience to analyzing the effects of the text on readers in general. Others would argue that some texts—especially those whose narrative utilizes ambiguity, veiled meaning, and poetic devices—require a metatextual perspective in order for the audience to make sense of the complex meaning. See, for example, Michael Riffaterre, *La production du texte*, Poétique (Paris: Seuil, 1979). The Fourth Gospel is not so easily categorized in Phillips's simple distinction between "the assumed reality of narrative," which is to be read sequentially, and "the essential artifice of poetic literary discourse," which is to be read paragrammatically; cf. Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel*, 6, 28.

irony throughout, the Fourth Gospel is anything but a simple, linear narrative. As Jeffrey Staley explains, portions of the narrative that may seem mundane or ambiguous on a strictly sequential reading are later recognized as theologically significant when the rhetorical structure or key words lead the audience to revisit and reevaluate these aspects of the narrative in light of the larger picture.[43] By presenting a macro-level narrative and guiding themes at the outset—and reinforcing those themes at its midpoint—the Fourth Gospel guides its audience to approach the narrative with a more complex perspective than a straightforward sequential reading.

Given the important rhetorical role of narrative beginnings, we now turn to the Johannine prologue itself to see where it might direct interpretation of the narrative. We particularly have in mind how the prologue might affect the moral efficacy of the narrative, that is, the way in which the interactional function of the beginning would guide the audience's understanding of the narrative's ethical implications.

The Johannine Prologue and its Rhetorical Function[44]

> Any reader going through the prologue to St. John's Gospel will easily notice its imposing majesty, its balanced proportions, the harmony of its moulding. Its thought goes forward in successive stages, conforming to rules that may escape us at first glance but of which we get a presentiment, more or less consciously. Taking up our stand in God, with the Word (v. 1), we are led progressively down

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[43] Jeffrey Lloyd Staley, *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel*, SBLDS 82 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 70. Staley's understanding of "key words" comes from Robert Alter (*The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, 1981], 93), who draws upon Buber's concept of *Leitwörter*—"a word or word-root that recurs significantly in a text . . . by following these repetitions, one is able to decipher or grasp a meaning of the text, or at any rate, the meaning will be revealed more strikingly"; cf. Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 52.

[44] For much of the research in this section, I am indebted to Stan Harstine, who generously shared his thorough work in this area in advance of its publication. For an impressively concise and comprehensive treatment of the history of research on this topic, see Stan Harstine, *A History of the Two-Hundred-Year Scholarly Debate About the Purpose of the Prologue to the Gospel of John: How Does Our Understanding of the Prologue Affect Our Interpretation of the Subsequent Text?* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2015).

> to earth, into vistas of the Incarnation (v. 14), but only so as to mount up again towards God in one boundless flight and to regain the bosom of the Father, with the only begotten Son (v. 18).[45]

Questions of prehistory and development have long dominated critical study of the Johannine prologue, resulting in a vast array of theories.[46] A major fault-line in the massive discussion is whether the prologue (or the majority of it) was a preexistent hymn later incorporated as an introduction to John's Gospel[47] or whether the evangelist may have composed the poetic prelude himself.[48] These discussions also include attention to possible redaction by the author or editor(s) of the Gospel and intricate representations of the complex structure of this poetic preface.[49] It is not our purpose here to argue for one

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[45] M. E. Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, trans. Carisbrooke Dominicans (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1957), 73.

[46] For a succinct and helpful description of the history of scholarship with thorough bibliography, see Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 39–42. See also Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 9–25; Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading the Fourth Gospel, John 1–4* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 23 n.1; Martinus C. de Boer, "The Original Prologue to the Gospel of John," *NTS* 61 (2015): 448–67; Stephen Patterson, "The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel and the World of Speculative Jewish Theology," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition*, ed. Robert Tomson Fortna and Tom Thatcher (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 323–32; P. J. Williams, "Not the Prologue of John," *JSNT* 33 (2011): 375–86. For more sustained treatments of the various issues, see the notes included below and Gilbert van Belle, *Johannine Bibliography 1966–1985: A Cumulative Bibliography on the Fourth Gospel*, BETL 82 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1988), 167–88.

[47] For a chart of theories of an original hymn that includes J. H. Bernard, S. de Ausejo, Gaechter, H. C. Green, Haenchen, Käsemann, and Schnackenburg, see Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 18–23.

[48] C. K. Barrett, *The Prologue of St. John's Gospel*, Ethel M. Wood Lecture 1970 (London: Athlone Press, 1971); J. A. T. Robinson, "The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St John," *NTS* 9 (1963): 120–29; C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 292; Morna D. Hooker, "The Johannine Prologue and the Messianic Secret," *NTS* 21 (1974): 40–58.

[49] J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols., ICC 29 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 1:cxlv–8; Kelber, "The Birth of a Beginning: John 1:1–18"; Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Jean*, EBib (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1936), 1; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 82; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 1:223-24; D. Moody Smith, *John*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 55; Mary Coloe, "The Structure of the Johannine Prologue and Genesis 1," *ABR* 45 (1997): 40–55; Masanobu Endo, *Creation and Christology: A Study on the Johannine Prologue in the Light of Early Jewish Creation Accounts*, WUNT 2, Reihe 149 (Tübingen: Mohr Seibeck, 2001), 187–205; Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 53–57; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*, Reading the New Testament Series

or more source theories; rather, we will examine the prologue as it stands within the final form of the Gospel. Regardless of source theories, the language and style of the prologue are thoroughly Johannine.[50]

Many have identified the prologue's general role as a prefatory introduction to the Gospel's narrative. Particular attention has been paid to how the prologue provides an elevated vantage point for the audience by introducing characters, anticipating the plot, and setting the stage for the Gospel's use of irony and conflict.[51] What interests us here is the way the prologue functioned rhetorically in its place in the final form of the Gospel. That is, we will describe how the prologue sets the norms for reading or the perspective by which the text should be viewed.[52] Keener begins his commentary on John, "If any given passage in the Gospel is of special import, it is the prologue. As the introduction to the whole work, it shapes the expectations with which the reader will approach the

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(Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 69–70; Michael Theobald, *Das Evangelium Nach Johannes*, RNT (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2009), 1:104-105; Michael Theobald, *Im Anfang War Das Wort: Textlinguistische Studie Zum Johannesprolog*, SBS 106 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983), 15–17, 34. As cited in Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 40, n.60–61.

[50] Brant, *John*, 23. Smith, *John*, 64, 21–22; Robinson, "The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St John," 120. Cf. Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:333. Robinson's theory that the prologue was written last is probable, but this fact should not dissuade a sequential reading of the Gospel in light of the prologue.

[51] "In the Fourth Gospel the prologue is verbal scenery, giving information about the coming action, introducing the main characters, stating the subject as a whole and so preparing the recipients for a true understanding of the state of affairs, which is ordained from heaven, concerning the relationship of humankind to heaven" (Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 16). Cf. Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, esp. 41 and 61, especially her focus on the elevated vantage point of the audience. Likewise, Bultmann, *John*, 13; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 19; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 107–8, 213; Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 140–41; Smith, *John*, 63–64; Theobald, *Im Anfang War Das Wort*, 129–30. Cf. Kelber, "The Birth of a Beginning: John 1:1–18," 223; Adele Reinhartz, *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel*, SBLMS 45 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 16–28; Fernando F. Segovia, "John 1:1–18 as Entrée into Johannine Reality: Representation and Ramifications," in *Word, Theology, and Community in John*, ed. John Painter, R. Alan Culpepper, and Fernando F. Segovia (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002), 33–34; Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 47–50. See also Harstine, *A History*, 74–86.

[52] Malbon, "Ending at the Beginning: A Response."

Gospel as a whole."[53] We will see that the prologue, which guides interpretation of the whole, also provides the means to navigate particularly difficult or ambiguous aspects of the narrative, such as its moral efficacy.

Utilizing the philosophically and theologically laden term *Logos*, the prologue tells the story of God, the world, and God's work for the world.[54] So doing it presents the macro-level narrative of the Gospel as a whole. Adele Reinhartz calls this narrative the "cosmological tale," and Jan van der Watt describes it as "the story behind the story," the "dynamic story of salvation through Jesus."[55] This macro-level narrative is not bound by chronology or particularity in the same way as the earthly story of Jesus. Rather, the transcendent tale moves from "the beginning" where the *Logos* is with God and in unity with God (1:1–2), through the action of creation where the *Logos* reaches from this unity to bring life and light (1:3–4), and eventually to the incarnation where this light and life extends to all people (1:4–5). It begins with limited relational scope and expansive chronological scope, focusing on the relationship between the *Logos* and God outside the realm of time. As it moves forward, the transcendent tale narrows to tell the earthly story of Jesus. Jo-Ann Brant describes the narrative dynamics:

> The prologue mirrors the incarnation by beginning with abstract language to signify the divine realm before the creation of the world and moves toward more-lucid language: the *Logos* becomes light and then descends into the course of human history. Moreover, as the prologue moves through time from the primordial past to the present narrative action, its audience is transported from

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[53] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:331.

[54] For a thorough treatment of various proposed backgrounds and nuances for the *Logos* including Gnosticism, Hellenistic philosophy, Philonic thought, and Palestinian Judaism (especially word, Wisdom, and Torah), see Ibid., 1:339-63. I am also indebted to Keener's commentary for many of the references to ancient literature in this section.

[55] Reinhartz, *The Word in the World*; Jan G. van der Watt, "The Composition of the Prologue of John's Gospel: The Historical Jesus Introducing Divine Grace," *WTJ* 57 (1995): 331.

> their own time back to the narrative present, in which they become witnesses to the action as it unfolds.[56]

This macro-level narrative expresses a set of themes that can guide interpretation of the earthly narrative.[57] Four themes will prove helpful to our pursuit of Johannine ethics: 1) elevated Christology grounded in unity with God, 2) God's mission for the world, 3) rejection of the *Logos*, and 4) the positive result for those who accept the *Logos*: life, light, and a share in unity with God.[58]

Elevated Christology grounded in unity with God. Perhaps the most overt function of the prologue is to establish at the outset of the Johannine narrative an explicitly elevated Christology. Like the narrative that follows, the prologue utilizes encomiastic categories for its characterization of Jesus and surpasses the expectations for these topics.[59]

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[56] Brant, *John*, 27.

[57] Keener points out that this practice was common in ancient writing. E.g., Virgil, *Aen*. 1.1–6; Jospehus, *B.J*. 1.17–30; Polybius 3.1.3–3.5.9; 4 Mac. 1:1–12. Cf. Hans-Josef Klauck, "Hellenistische Rhetorik im Diasporajudentum Das Exordium des Vierten Makkabäerbuchs (4 Makk 1.1–12)," *NTS* 35 (1989): 451–465; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:334. Cf. Harstine, *A History*, 84–98. He finds eight key words as themes to explore throughout the text (world, receive, word, testify, light, truth, life, and believe). See also his section on the history of research on the prologue's guiding themes on pp. 71-78, which covers guiding themes in a number of authors. E.g., Robinson, "The Relation of the Prologue to the Gospel of St John"; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (New York: Macmillan, 1955); Brown, *The Gospel According to John*; Warren Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel: Function, Symbol and the Definitive Word," *JSNT* 39 (1990): 35–58; Smith, *John*; Hooker, "The Johannine Prologue and the Messianic Secret"; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to Saint John*, BNTC 4 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005); van der Watt, "The Composition of the Prologue of John's Gospel."

[58] See similar themes identified in Reinhartz, *The Word in the World*, 16–28; Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel." Carter suggests four themes that guide our understanding of the function of the prologue: the origin and destiny of Jesus the *Logos*, Jesus's role as the revealer, responses to Jesus, and the relationship of Jesus the *Logos* to other figures.

[59] Myers, Characterizing Jesus, 61–71.

> In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him not one thing came to be (1:1–3a).[60]

Rather than offering a birth narrative, the prologue presents a story of divine origin. Being with God and, in fact, being God, no further credential or special training is needed.[61] The *Logos*, Jesus, simply acts out of his own "fullness" (1:16) to benefit all people (1:4b, 9). Beyond ordinary noble deeds, Jesus worked at the beginning as the agent of creation (1:3–4a). He works in the world to bring life and to restore people to the family of God (1:4–5), despite suffering rejection (1:9–10).[62]

The imagery in the prologue suggests another comparison: Jesus as greater than divine Wisdom as revealed in the Torah. Having begun with the opening lines of Genesis (LXX Gen 1:1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ), the prologue sets its Christology within the context of Jewish literature.[63] These words also evoke parallels with Wisdom, who is described as being with God "in the beginning" (LXX Prov 8:23 ἐν ἀρχῇ), working alongside God as the agent of creation (Prov 8:30), bringing life (LXX Prov 8:35 ζωῆς) and favor to those

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[60] The syntax between verses 3 and 4 is debated. Here I have sided with Brown, who himself sides with Boismard, De la Potterie, and most modern commentators; see Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:6; Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*. Though the interpretation of this clause has been given theological weight, I agree with Keener that the syntax is not so important for the Johannine sense. Read either way, these verses reveal the *Logos* as the Creator, bringer of life, who offers light and is even identified with light. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:381-82.

[61] Cf. 1:18 as well as 3:31–35; 5:19–24; 6:45–46; 7:16–18; 8:26–28; 12:47–50.

[62] Brant (*John*, 25–36) notes that the prologue corresponds to encomiastic patterning by summarizing the claims in an epilogue (1:14) and bridging to the narrative that follows with a concluding *syncrisis* and accolade from John (1:15–18). It is unclear whether all of 15–18 comes directly from John or if the narrator's voice takes over at 16. The rhetorical force is the same regardless, and this style is used elsewhere in the Gospel (e.g., John 3:10–21). For more on the evangelist's use of the encomiastic *topoi*, especially for explanations of Jesus's characterization through use of Scripture and how the prologue elevates the audience, see Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 71.

[63] John Painter, "Earth Made Whole: John's Rereading of Genesis," in *Word, Theology, and Community in John*, ed. John Painter, R. Alan Culpepper, and Fernando F. Segovia (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002), 67–75; Craig A Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue*, JSNTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 77–78.

who follow her. The *Logos* imagery goes further than the Wisdom imagery, since there is no indication that the *Logos* was created.[64] The powerful image of the *Logos* establishes Jesus as preexistent co-creator with God, sharing in fact God's very essence (John 1:1–4).

Further, the characterization of the *Logos* is reminiscent of the way Wisdom is personified: she is in close relation to God, she existed before or as the first creation, she was involved in the creative process, she was sent to dwell on earth, and she brings prosperity along with her.[65] Torah was described as the source of Wisdom and was equated with Wisdom as well.[66] Like Wisdom/Torah, the *Logos* was also thought of as preexistent, called light and life, considered the expression of the character of God, said to come to earth to make a dwelling and to experience opposition, and explicitly described with the terms "grace" and "truth" (cf. 1:14).[67]

As we have seen above, the imagery of tabernacling surely recalls Wisdom's journey to earth, but it also recalls the Temple. The presentation of Jesus as Temple and Torah is especially poignant for the Johannine milieu in the wake of the Jewish War. While the religious leaders were at this time advancing the Torah to fulfill the role of the

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[64] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:368-69.

[65] Sir 24:5–27; Wis 9:9–12; Prov 8:22–25. Cf. Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, 74–76; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:337; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:520, 523; Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 274–75, 335; Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 43.

[66] Prologue to Sirach; Sir 15:1; 19:20; 24:22–23; 34:8; 39:1; Wis 6:17–18; Bar 3:29–4:1; 4 Macc 1:16–17. The identification of Wisdom with Torah is apparent in Amoraic and some Tannaitic literature and is common practice in rabbinic texts. Keener gives *Sipre Deut*. 37.1.3, *Lev. Rab*. 11:3; 19:1; *Gen. Rab*. 17:5; 31:5; 44:17; *Pesiq Rab*. 20:1. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:354-55. For full documentation on these associations in Jewish literature, see Eldon Jay Epp, "Wisdom, Torah, Word: The Johannine Prologue and the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel," in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. Merrill Chapin Tenney and Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 128–46. For a method to evaluate the potential relevance of later rabbinic sources for the Fourth Gospel, see Evans, *Word and Glory*, 18–20. See also John Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014).

[67] Smith, *John*, 51; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, SBT (Naperville, IL: A. R. Allenson, 1970), 146. Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:354, n.246.

Temple after its destruction, John suggests that Jesus himself acts as Temple and Torah.[68] In light of the charge that following Jesus constituted infidelity to the Law, Keener sums up John's response: "It is rejecting Jesus rather than obeying him, that constitutes rejection of the Torah" since "following Jesus not only entails true observance of Torah; Jesus himself is God's Word, and thus no one can genuinely observe Torah without following Jesus."[69] As we will explore further below, the Gospel presents Jesus as the full revelation of grace and truth. Not only is Jesus presented as the embodiment of the Torah, the conflict in John revolves almost exclusively around Moses and the Law.[70] The result of the comparison is to show that Jesus fulfills the function of the Torah as the full revelation of God to God's people.

Torah was of utmost significance in Judaism, and it represented a personal revelation of God's self more than simply "commandment, code, or custom."[71] According to some groups, like the Qumran community, such divine revelation could also be experienced beyond the Torah through visions or visits from revealer figures (1QM 10.8–11; 1QS 11.6–9).[72] John's presentation of the divine *Logos* coming to earth to reveal God reverses the expected pattern. As Warren Carter explains,

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[68] Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

[69] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:360, 364.

[70] John 1:45; 2:22; 5:39, 45–47; 6:32; 7:19, 22–28; 8:17; 9:28–29; 10:34–35; 12:34; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36–37; 20:9; cf. 1:17; 3:14; 7:38, 42, 51; 12:14.

[71] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:356, 360–61.

[72] Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 115–20; Alan F. Segal, "Ruler of This World: Attitudes about Mediator Figures and the Importance of Sociology for Self-Definition," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. E. P. Sanders and Alan F. Segal, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 248–55. Cf. Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 44, nn.68-69.

> In replacing the ascent-descent pattern with a descent-ascent schema, the Prologue and Gospel radically shift the emphasis—a starting point of heaven not earth, a divine not angelic or human figure, earth not heaven as the visited sphere, a revealer who has intimately known and seen God, and in whom God is manifested. The Prologue's (and Gospel's) claim is that only in and through this person, Jesus the Christ, God is encountered.[73]

The presentation of Jesus as the sole revealer of the divine, as greater than Wisdom and fulfilling the roles of both Temple and Torah—taken together these issue quite a challenge to other attempts to reestablish Jewish religious life after 70 CE.[74] Carter sums it up well: "The effect . . . is to deny any validity to the other claims of revelation in early Judaism."[75]

God's mission for the world. The christological message in the prologue includes not only the substance of the *Logos* but also his action in the world. As the prologue describes the *Logos* as the agent of creation, the relational scope gradually broadens to include the world:

> What has come to be in him was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not apprehend it (1:3b–4).[76]

The chronological scope, however, quickly narrows as the jarring entrance of John (the Baptist) dramatically pulls the audience's attention from the transcendent cosmic tale to the particular earthly one:

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[73] Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 45. He goes on to explore the comparison of Jesus to three revealer figures from Israel's history: Abraham, Isaiah, and Moses.

[74] Jacob Neusner, "Judiasm in a Time of Crisis: Four Respnoses to the Destruction of the Second Temple," *Judaism* 21 (1972): 313–27. Cf. Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 57, n.80. See also Ashton, *The Gospel of John and Christian Origins*.

[75] Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 45.

[76] On the syntax for John 1:3–4, see note 60 above. Here, "apprehend" best maintains the Johannine propensity for wordplay—the darkness neither understands nor overcomes the light. Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:387.

> There was a man, sent from God, his name was John. He came as a witness so that he might testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. That one was not the light, but [he came] so that he might testify about the light. The true light, which illuminates all people, was coming into the world (1:6–9).

In typical syncritic pattern, the prologue presents the *Logos* as greater than John (1:6–8, 15) and indirectly introduces the *Logos* as the true light. Like a stair-step toward the particular story of Jesus, the prologue describes this movement as it continues: "the true light, which illuminates all people, is coming into the world" (1:9). The prologue's macro-level narrative presents qualitative information concerning God's work to extend the unity shared with the *Logos* to the world. The work of the *Logos* is to restore the unity that existed between God and creation before its disruption (Gen 1:26–27, 31). Encountering the prologue at the outset, the Johannine audience is invited to understand the story of Jesus as the acting-out of this divine cosmic agenda.

Rejection of the Logos. Before explaining just how the *Logos*/light entered the world, the prologue introduces the story's conflict:

> He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, but his own did not accept him (1:10–11).

The world, which came into being through the *Logos*/light, does not know him nor accept him. These verses maintain the perspective of the cosmic tale, but the theme of rejection in the prologue hints at what is to come in the narrative. Mention of Jesus's coming into the world to be rejected by those he considered "his own" foreshadows the opposition that Jesus will face from the Jewish religious leaders and the ignorance or ambivalence from most of the crowds.[77] Further, as the narrative will show, Jesus's followers should

[77] For example, 5:16–46; 6:26, 60–66; 7:12, 32, 43–44; 8:6, 48; 10:31–39; 11:53, 56; chapters 18 and 19. Cf. Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 39; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:398; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:10.

anticipate rejection (15:8–16:4, 32–33). Suffering is part and parcel for joining Jesus's mission (12:24–26).

The positive result for those who accept the Logos. Though some will refuse and even oppose the *Logos*, the cosmic mission is not entirely thwarted. Some, who received him and believed, were brought into the fold of the family of God (1:12–13):

> But to as many as received him, he gave them power to become children of God—those born not from blood, nor from fleshly desire, nor from a man's will, but from God (1:12–13).

The benefits for those who accept the *Logos* are described in various ways. Particularly, the prologue presents these benefits as life, light, and unity with God. Life and light are often identified together in the Gospel. Not only does Jesus bring life and light,[78] he claims, "I am the light of the world;" "I am the resurrection and the life;" "I am the way, the truth, and the life."[79] "Life" in the Gospel refers to eternal life, but John links this life to belief and brings it into the present rather than seeing it as a future experience as was common in Judaism. These motifs further emphasize the comparison of Jesus with Torah, which was said to provide or personify life:[80]

> She [Wisdom] is the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures forever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die. Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of her light (Bar 4:1–2).

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[78] John 1:4; 3:15–16, 36; 4:14; 5:21–29, 39-40; 6:27–68; 10:10, 28; 17:2; 20:31.

[79] John 8:12; 11:25; 14:6.

[80] Cf. Lev 18:5; Deut 30:6, 19; Bar 3:9; 4:1–2; Pss. Sol. 14:1–2; LAB 23:10; 2 Bar. 38:2; Wisdom in Prov 3:18; 13:14; Wis 6:18–20; 8:13, 17; Sir 4:11–13; 17:11. For further discussion on these references and those listed below, see Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 38, n.32; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:381-87.

Jewish texts use the image of light in reference to truth or enlightenment, sometimes calling important figures "light," even using the term to reference God.[81] Thus, presenting Jesus as light emphasizes his divinity and unity with God. The image of light reiterates the comparison with Wisdom who reflects the light of God and enlightens humans on earth.[82] Further, the Temple is light, and the Torah is light.[83] These images are especially recalled in Jewish expectations of the messianic era or the time when God would restore Israel.[84] Thus John's usage reiterates Jesus's unity with God and his fulfillment of important institutions, and it signals the coming of Israel's eschatological hope.[85] Light and life both point to unity with God (17:2), which John describes here in terms of becoming children of God by means of God's work in the *Logos* (1:12–13). The unity with God, once enjoyed only by the *Logos* (1:1), now extends to the world.

The remainder of the prologue summarizes the transcendent tale of the first thirteen verses:

> And the *Logos* became flesh and set up his dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as the unique one from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . Because from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. Because the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (1:14, 16–17).[86]

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[81] Isa 60:19; 4 Bar. 9:3; LAB 12:9.

[82] Sir 1:10; 24.8, 10–12; 50.27–29; Wis 7.26; 9:10, 17; Prov 8:31. Cf. Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 38, n.31.

[83] Gen. Rab. 2:5; Ps 19:9; 119:105, 130; Prov 4:18–19; 6:23; Eccl 2:13; 4Q511 frg. 1, lines 7-8; frg. 18, lines 7-8.

[84] 1 En. 48:4; Isa 60:1–3.

[85] Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text, 157; Boismard, St. John's Prologue, 114; Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, 84; Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:384-85.

[86] As the prologue draws to a close, another intrusion from the Baptist issues a reminder of Jesus's elevated status and preexistence (1:15). The interjection of John's testimony that Jesus was before him has been removed here so that the flow of the summary is uninterrupted.

With verse 14, the audience now becomes conscious of the narrator, who explains how this mission was achieved. "Full of grace and truth" and emanating glory, the *Logos* is so unified with the Father that his fleshly appearance makes God known to the world. The cosmic agenda was achieved through the incarnation, where the *Logos* appeared as the man Jesus in a particular time and place in history. As Keener explains,

> The use of an image with which Jewish readers would be somewhat familiar—an image whose nuances included those of Wisdom, the Word, and Torah—allows John to communicate his conception of the divine, eternal revelation of the Father, but it is ultimately Jesus's identity as a human being (John 1:14) that concretizes the abstract personification as a person in history.[87]

Jesus, grounded in his unity with God, embraced his work in the world to bring light and life to all humanity. John's audience is described as taking part in that unity, and they are thus implicitly invited to join in that divine mission.

Several aspects of 1:14–18 echo the giving of the Law at Sinai in Exod 33–34.[88] Moses's request to see God's glory (Exod 33:18) is echoed in the narrator's declaration, "we have seen his glory" (John 1:14). The comparison is implicitly drawn between Moses and the Johannine audience, since they have seen God in their encounter with Jesus (cf. 14:9).[89] According to the narrator, the result of the incarnation and tabernacling of the *Logos* in the world is that the members of the audience ("we") have seen the glory of the *Logos*. This glory could only be given expression by the *Logos*, who is unique in

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[87] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:360.

[88] Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, 135–45; Hooker, "The Johannine Prologue and the Messianic Secret"; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:36; H. Mowvley, "John 1.14–18 in the Light of Exod. 33.7–34.35," *ExpT* 95 (1983): 135–37. Cf. Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 40, n.45; Evans, *Word and Glory*, 79–81; Craig R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the Old Testament*, CBQMS 22 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989), 104.

[89] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:412.

his relationship with the Father and "full of grace and truth" (1:14b). The phrase recalls Exod 34:5–6, which describes God's revelation of God's self to Moses as exceedingly merciful and true.[90] The narrator continues that the "fullness" of the *Logos* results in an abundance of grace for the audience.[91] The narrator then compares Moses, who mediated the law, and Jesus Christ, who mediated grace and truth. Jesus is shown to be greater than Moses, who could not look on the face of God (Exod 33:20).[92]

Summary. In its final verse, the prologue gives the elevated Christology a final, emphatic push:

> No one has seen God at any time; the unique God who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained/interpreted God (1:18).[93]

Even Moses was only allowed a glimpse of God's back (Exod 33:23),[94] while Jesus was with or "facing" (πρὸς) God (1:1) and is in the intimate position in the Father's bosom

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[90] The Hebrew terms for exceeding in mercy (ורב-חסד) and truth (ואמת) are rendered in the LXX: πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς. Nonetheless, the correspondence with the Johannine phrase πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας is clear. Cf. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 167; Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, 54–56; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:416.

[91] The force of ἀντί is debated. Some see one grace replacing or superseding the previous grace (Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, 60–62; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:16; Moloney, *Belief in the Word*, 46–47; Evans, *Word and Glory*, 80), while others prefer accumulation of grace "on top of" grace (Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 56). More likely the phrase is an emphatic expression describing an "inexhaustible supply" (Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:420–21).

[92] Evans, Word and Glory, 80–81. See also, Stan Harstine, Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques, JSNTSup 229 (London: Sheffield, 2002).

[93] Though the manuscript evidence leaves room for debate, the theologically more difficult reading "μονογενὴς θεὸς" is preferable. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity*, 137. This reading is the more difficult and is attested by the early witnesses P^{66}, P^{75}, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus. For more on the discussion, see Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:425-26.

[94] Although Moses was said to speak with God "face to face" (Exod 33:11), this should probably be understood as an anthropomorphic euphemism for intimacy.

(1:18).[95] Though God was not perfectly revealed in the Law nor fully experienced in the Temple, Jesus, the one who is in unique unity with the Father, unfolds God for the world. Not only that, the revelation of God through Jesus facilitates the reconciliation of God with the world so that humanity can be brought into the unity that was shared between God and the *Logos* before the beginning of time.

Rhetorically, this christological presentation guides the reader with an understanding of the complex relationship between Jesus and God when the narrative, recounting the *Logos* in his human form on earth, might otherwise be ambiguous. Though distinct from the Father, the *Logos* shares in his deity.[96] This emphasis is important to keep in mind when approaching the topic of ethics, especially imitation ethics, which understands Jesus as a model for the audience. Interpreters do well to keep in mind that much of the Gospel's characterization of Jesus works to establish this elevated Christology rather than presenting the imitable aspects of Jesus's character. The presentation of Jesus as Torah provides an alternative way to consider how the Gospel might affect the morality of the audience. Rather than looking to Jesus's deeds to imitate them, John's audience is directed to see Jesus as the representation of God's character (as the Torah was) and his life as the working out of the divine agenda—to bring light and salvation to the world.[97]

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[95] Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 65–67; Myers, "'In the Father's Bosom'," *CBQ* 76 (2014): 481–97; Evans, *Word and Glory*, 81; Carter, "The Prologue and John's Gospel," 38, n.24. Carter gives the following examples to show that εἰς τὸν κόλπον indicates intimacy: Gen 16:5; Deut 13:6; 1 Kgs 3:20; 17:19; Num 11:12; Luke 16:22.

[96] So the NEB translation: "What God was, the Word was." Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:374, n.104.

[97] The image of Jesus's oneness with God, so emphasized throughout the Gospel, is established already in its opening lines; see Mark L. Appold, *The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Motif Analysis*

As we have seen, the prologue presents a macro-level narrative that reveals the transcendent tale behind the Gospel narrative. As the tale unfolds, it suggests a set of guiding themes: 1) elevated Christology grounded in unity with God, 2) God's mission for the world, 3) rejection of the light, and 4) the positive result for those who accept the *Logos*: life, light, and a share in unity with God. Given pride of place, this information in the prologue can then be used as a steady guide for the audience when other aspects of the narrative might be ambiguous. Especially in regard to the topic of ethics, important questions arise from the narrative: Does this Johannine presentation call for an exclusive, hostile stance towards outsiders? Is the Fourth Gospel interested in the spiritual dimension and belief to the neglect of attention to physical welfare and ethical actions? Since the prologue functions as an interpretive guide for the audience, various potential answers to these questions should be evaluated based on the degree to which they are coherent with the macro-level narrative and guiding themes presented at the Gospel's beginning. Before addressing these questions directly, we will discuss another interpretive guide that affirms these guiding themes—the chain-link interlock.

The Chain-Link Interlock (John 12:20–50)

Introduction to Chain-Link Interlock

Quintilian (*Inst*.9.4.129) and Lucian of Samosota (*How to Write History* 55) describe a chain-link interlock as a two-part overlapping transition-device.[98] Lucian uses

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and Exegetical Probe into the Theology of John, WUNT II 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Seibeck, 1976), 34. Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:370.

[98] For much of the following material on chain-link interlock, I am indebted to Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*. For a full treatment of chain-link interlock as defined in the rhetoricians, see pp. 11–20.

the image of a chain to describe this A-b-a-B pattern,[99] and Quintilian uses the image of linked hands.[100] Both rhetoricians suggest that this inter-unit connection (in which two distinct text units are connected) increases the rhetorical power of the discourse as a whole.[101] Quintilian utilizes the articulated chain-link himself; he explicitly concludes Book 9 by introducing the topics to be covered in Book 10, and he begins Book 10 with a summary of the topics covered in Book 9. Figure 1 below is an enhanced version of the diagram presented by Bruce Longenecker in his *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*.[102] It depicts the concept of chain-link and includes examples from Quintilian and the Fourth Gospel. In a chain-link construction, text-unit A concludes with an anticipatory transition (*b*) that introduces text unit B and a retrospective transition (*a*) that rehearses or summarizes text unit A.[103] Longenecker demonstrates that this rhetorical construction can be found in numerous ancient works like the Pentateuch (Gen 50:22–Exod 1:7), Philo (*Vita* 1.334–

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[99] ἀπόλυτα γὰρ καὶ ἐντελῆ πάντα ποιήσει, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἐξεργασάμενος ἐπάξει τὸ δεύτερον ἐχόμενον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἁλύσεως τρόπον συνηρμοσμένον ὡς μὴ διακεκόφθαι μηδὲ διηγήσεις πολλὰς εἶναι ἀλλήλαις παρακειμένας, ἀλλ᾽ ἀεὶ τῷ πρώτῳ τὸ δεύτερον μὴ γειτνιᾶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ κοινωνεῖν καὶ ἀνακεκρᾶσθαι κατὰ τὰ ἄκρα (Lucian, *How to Write History* 55). "For he will make everything distinct and complete, and when he has finished the first topic he will introduce the second, fastened to it and linked with it like a chain, to avoid breaks and a multiplicity of disjointed narratives; no, always the first and second topics must not merely be neighbours but have common matter and overlap" (Kilburn, LCL).

[100] Historia non tam finitos numeros quam orbem quendam contextumque desiderat. Namque omnia eius membra conexa sunt, [et quoniam lubrica est ac fluit] ut homines, qui manibus invicem adprehensis gradum firmant, continent et continentur (*Inst*. 9.4.129). "History requires not so much definite rhythms as a certain cyclical structure, for its Cola are all connected with one another [and because it is fluid and flows easily], in the way that men who join hands to steady their steps lend mutual support to one another" (Russell, LCL).

[101] Here both authors are talking specifically about writing in the genre of history. Given the flexibility of genre (looking for participation rather than categorization) and the overlap between history and *bios* during the time of John's writing, these sources still provide helpful comparisons.

[102] Longenecker, Rhetoric at the Boundaries, 18, 123.

[103] For more on "The Anatomy of the Chain-Link Interlock," see ibid., 43–57.

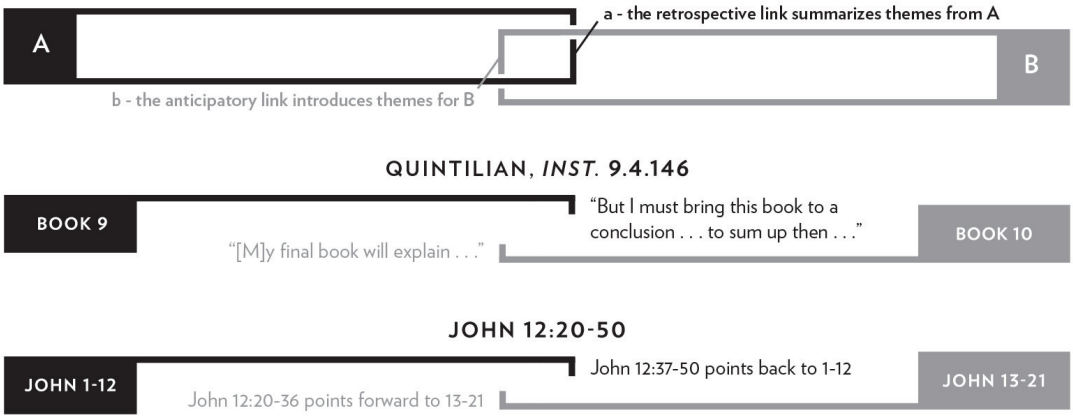

Figure 1. Chain-link Interlock

2.2), Plutarch (*Adulator* 25–26 [from *Moralia* Book I]), Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 1.320–2.1-2, 4 Ezra (5:14–22; 6:30–34; 13:56–58), Isaiah (48:16b–22; 53:4), Daniel (6:26–7:1), and the Apocalypse of Abraham (7:10–8:1).[104] Chain-link interlocks appear in various sizes and in various genres, so their presence was widespread in the texts and discourses of antiquity. That this device was so widespread is further supported by the fact that Quintilian and Lucian assumed basic knowledge of it on the part of their readers.[105] Often appearing at macro-level transition points, these constructions are helpful informants regarding rhetorical structure and flow.

The Rhetorical Function of the Chain-Link

Longenecker's analysis of this technique shows how the rhetorical structure of a text can aid interpretation. "Chain-link interlock," he writes, "frequently plays a key role

[104] For more on "Ancient Examples of Chain-Link Interlock," see ibid., 59–83. For a summary, see 81–82.

[105] Ibid., 46–47, 51–53.

in an author's attempt to demarcate his theological itinerary."[106] The rhetorical structure aids interpretation first at the macro-level; the various themes emerging in the anticipatory and retrospective parts of the chain-link reveal different overarching emphases for the two main text unit sections of the Fourth Gospel. The chain-link also aids in interpretation of specific passages since the themes, as Longenecker puts it, "can provide parameters for interpretation, precluding certain readings and enhancing others."[107] The rhetorical force works in both directions. On the one hand, these themes serve as guidelines, showing what ideas deserve prominence in the process of interpretation. In this way, the chain-link facilitates *Sachkritik* grounded in the rhetorical structure of the text itself.[108] On the other hand, the corresponding text-units give narrative expression to the themes by illustrating, elaborating on, or further explaining

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[106] Ibid., 7.

[107] Ibid.

[108] This term, derived from the German *Sache* (the thing or the subject matter) and *Kritik* (critique/criticism) indicates not "criticism *of* the *Sache*," but "criticism (of a text) in the light of the *Sache*, its intended subject matter" (Robert Morgan, *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, SBT [London: SCM Press, 1973], 177). See also the short entry in Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 166. *Sachkritik* thus maintains "a tension between subject matter and means of expression . . . making it necessary for the interpreter to keep asking on the basis of the means of expression whether the subject matter was accurately discerned" (Hendrikus Boers, *What Is New Testament Theology?: The Rise of Criticism and the Problem of a Theology of the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 76). This method was most famously taken up by Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of a Theological Exegesis of the New Testament," in *The Beginnings of Dialectic Theology*, ed. James M. Robinson (Richmond: John Knox, 1968), 236–56. He and other early *Sache*-critics of the New Testament (most famously Karl Barth) are open to the criticism that they presumed to know the *intended* subject matter by which to critique the text itself. That is, they began with their own Christian account of the gospel or *kerygma* and then critiqued the text in light of that understanding. As Morgan points out, however, Bultmann's *Sachkritik* "depends on the text for identifying the *Sache* but can then go on to criticize particular formulations in the light of that." This type of *Sachkritik* should not be confused with a later form in which a theological *judgment* (not theological *interpretation*) is "made in the light of an understanding of the Christian *Sache* which inevitably derives partly from the Bible, partly from subsequent tradition, and partly from contemporary experience . . . [and which] allows for some other biblical texts to be read as a *source* to inform and stimulate faith, but suggests which texts should not be so used" (Morgan, *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, 180, 185). Here we are using the term generally to indicate features by which the text itself is guiding the interpretation of the *Sache*, specifically the rhetorical structure outlining the intended subject matter that can then be used to guide or critique interpretation of other parts of the text.

them. As we will see, the themes from the Johannine chain-link echo the themes introduced in the prologue. These themes taken from the Gospel's two main structural elements will guide our interpretation of lingering issues with Johannine ethics.

The Johannine Chain-Link

Two text units converge at the boundary between chapters 12 and 13 of the Fourth Gospel, forming a chain-link in John 12:20–50.[109] Within the chain-link construction, verses 37–50 form the "retrospective link" that looks back to John 1–12, and verses 20–36 form the "anticipatory link" that looks forward from John 13 onward. This chain-link presents a collection of themes that provide the interpretive lens/lenses for the text units on either side.[110]

The retrospective link (12:37–50) that looks back to John 1–12 reinforces several of the guiding themes introduced in the prologue. This link begins by recounting the theme of rejection and offering a prophetic explanation for it: "Though he did a great number of signs before them, they did not believe in him." Jesus's own words recount two more themes—elevated Christology grounded in unity with God:

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[109] Nils A. Dahl, "The Johannine Church and History," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Otto A. Piper*, ed. William Klassen and Graydon F. Snyder (New York: Harper, 1962), 187; Talbert, *Reading John*, 179–80; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:871; Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*, 122–23. As Longenecker points out, few disagree with this text unit division: Mathias Rissi, "Der Aufbau des vierten Evangeliums," *NTS* 29 (1983): 48–54; Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 67; C. H. Giblin, "The Tripartite Narrative Structure of John's Gospel," *Biblica* 71 (1990): 449–67; Fernando F. Segovia, "The Journey(s) of the Word of God: A Reading of the Plot of the Fourth Gospel," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 23–54.

[110] For the retrospective link, looking back to John 1–12, Longenecker (*Rhetoric at the Boundaries*, 124–134) identifies the following themes: 1) Belief and unbelief in Jesus's signs, 2) God as "the one who sent" Jesus, 3) Jesus as the light, 4) judgment/salvation, 5) the last day, 6) eternal life. For the anticipatory link, looking forward to John 13–21, Longenecker identifies the following themes: 1) the arrival of Jesus's "hour," 2) the "lifting up" of Jesus as his departure and glorification, 3) Jesus's passion as divine victory over the "ruler of this world" that draws in all people and bears fruit, 4) the cruciform pattern for Jesus's followers. I have synthesized Longenecker's material into my own broader categories and focused on those that will help our pursuit of Johannine ethics.

> "The one who believes in me believes not in my but in the one who sent me. And the one who sees me sees the one who sent me" (12:44–45),

and the positive result for those who accept the *Logos*:

> "I have come as light into the world, so that the one who believes in me might not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him/her, for I did not come in order to judge the world, but in order to save the world" (12:44–47).

Jesus's unity with the Father who sent him is again reiterated:

> "For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me, he himself has given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I am saying, then, just as the Father has told me, so I speak" (12:49–50).

In this way, the chain-link rehearses the christological focus from the Book of Signs that was already anticipated in the prologue. Jesus's signs and discourses revealed his identity as the sent one in unity with the Father.[111] Belief in Jesus also figures prominently in the Book of Signs as Jesus's words and actions elicit a response of belief or unbelief from those around him.[112] These episodes often included reflection upon the results of belief—life and salvation.[113]

The anticipatory link (12:20–36) that looks forward to John 13–21 emphasizes the scope of God's mission for the world (12:20–22, 32), the arrival of Jesus's hour of suffering (12:23–24, 27–30), and the result of the suffering—unity with Jesus (12:25–26), life (12:25), glory (12:28), victory (12:31), light (12:34–35), and being brought into

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[111] See John 3:17, 34; 4:34; 5:23, 30, 36–38; 6:38–39, 44; 7:16–18, 28–29; 8:16–19, 26–30; 9:4, 33.

[112] See John 1:7, 12, 50; 2:11, 22–23; 3:12, 15–18, 36; 4:21, 39–42, 48–50, 53; 5:24, 38, 44–46; 6:29, 35–36, 47, 64, 69; 7:5, 31, 37–38, 48; 8:24, 30–31, 45; 9:18, 35–38; 10:25, 37, 42; 11:15, 25–27, 40, 42, 45, 48.

[113] See John 1:12; 3:15–18a, 36a; 4:14; 5:24; 6:33–40, 47, 51, 54, 57–58, 68–69; 7:37–39; 10:9–10, 28; 11:25–26, 40.

God's family (12:36). These emphases also reinforce several of the guiding themes introduced in the prologue: God's mission for the world, rejection of the Light, and the positive result for those who accept the *Logos*: life, light, and a share in unity with God.

The chain-link begins with an echo of the inclusivity of the mission for which Jesus was sent as the narrator depicts "some Greeks" approaching Jesus (12:20–21). While Jesus does not respond directly to the seekers, he does not resist or refute them; rather, he responds to their inquiry by outlining the arrival and significance of his hour. Likewise, the narrative mentions the details that the Greeks approached Philip, a disciple who was from the Gentile region of Bethsaida in Galilee (12:21). At this point the universal scope of God's mission is presented in ethnic terms. But, rhetorically speaking, the inclusion of Gentiles is just one step toward an absolutely inclusive mission that defied the Jew/Gentile barrier. The text testifies to this connection in 12:19: "the *world* has gone after him."

The "world" has many connotations in the Fourth Gospel.[114] In a neutral sense, the term can refer to the universe,[115] nations who are not Israel,[116] all people,[117] or the general public.[118] More negatively, the term can designate a group or arena that is in darkness or ruled by demonic powers,[119] alienated from God,[120] or opposed to light.[121]

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[114] For these connotations see Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:329-30.

[115] See John 21:25.

[116] See John 1:10, 11; 12:19; 8:12 with Isa 42:6; 49:6.

[117] See John 1:7, 9 cf. 5:34, 41; 18:20.

[118] See John 7:4; 12:19; 18:20.

[119] See John 1:10; 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

[120] See John 14:17, 19; 17:9, 25.

[121] See John 7:7; 15:18–19; 16:20; 17:14.

Positively, the "world" is described as "the object of God's saving love and enlightenment in Jesus . . . and the goal of Jesus's agents' witness. The world is thus the arena of the light's salvific invasion of darkness."[122]

The phrase "so that the world may know"[123] is linked to Jesus's mission and actions throughout the Gospel. In 14:31, Jesus does as the Father has commanded so that the world might know that he loves the Father. In 17:23, Jesus prays for unity among his followers so that the world might know that God has sent Jesus and has loved them even as God has loved Jesus (17:23). John 17:3 employs a similar phrase, although the universal referent is less clear. John 17:2 mentions that God has given Jesus authority over all people (πάσης σαρκός) so that, regarding all those given to him, he might give them eternal life.[124] Verse three goes on to define eternal life: "that they might know[125] you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent." The question is whether πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ refers to a more limited group from within the universal group encompassed with the phrase πάσης σαρκός. John 17:14–17 does distinguish between a more select group and the world at large. Beginning with verse18, however, the scope broadens once again. In fact, the prayer for unity and protection for the select group has a more universal purpose. Jesus's words in17:20–21 clarify, "I am asking not only on behalf of these, but indeed on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,

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[122] For the world a the object of God's saving love, see John 1:29; 3:16, 17, 19; 4:42; 6:51; 8:12; 9:5, 39; 12:46–47. For the world as the goal of Jesus's agents' witness, see John 14:31; 16:8; 17:21, 23. For the world as the arena of light's salvific invasion of darkness, see John 6:14; cf. the wordplay in 16:21. See Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:329-30.

[123] ἵνα γνῷ ὁ κόσμος (3rd pers sing aor act subj) in 14:31 and ἵνα γινώσκῃ (3rd pers sing pres act subj) ὁ κόσμος in 17:23.

[124] Difficult English syntax has been retained here to express more clearly the phrasing in Greek: ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

[125] ἵνα γινώσκωσιν (3rd pers pl pres act subj).

that they all may be one *so that the world may believe* that you have sent me."[126] This explanation culminates in 17:23, which repeats the purpose for the world at large. Later in the chain-link, Jesus mentions that by his death, he will draw "*all* people" to himself (12:32–33)—his is an inclusive mission.

The chain-link reinforces the inclusive scope of God's mission already attested in the prologue (1:4, 7b, 9a). John 1:12–13 suggests that Jesus's coming redefines the parameters for the family of God.[127] These ideas are reinforced elsewhere in the Book of Signs. In chapter 2, the miracle at Cana recalls the imagery of including nations in Amos 9, and the discourse with the Samaritan woman in chapter 4 presents an "outsider" who believes in contrast to the "leader of the Jews" in chapter 3 who does not understand. John says that Jesus's purpose is to take away the sin of the world, and Jesus himself says he came to offer salvation and life to any who would believe.[128]

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[126] Emphasis mine.

[127] See Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:401–2, nn.351–66. As his comments on 1:12 show, the Johannine usage overlaps to an extent with the concept of various segments of the Mediterranean world. Greco-Roman philosophy saw God as the father of all humanity and moral people in particular as "the offspring of God" (Diogenes Laertius 7.147; Seneca *Dial*. 1.1.5; cf. Epictetus *Diatr*. 1.3.1; 1.6.40; 1.9.4–7; 1.13.3–4; 1.19.9, 12; 3.22, 82). Classical Greek literature also saw God as the father of creation (Homer *Il*. 2.371; 3.276, 320, 350, 365; 16.458; *Od*. 14.440; Hesiod *Theog*. 457, 468, 542. Philo agrees, adding that those who know God are his children (Philo *Confusion* 145; *Alleg*. *Interp*. 3.219; cf. Dodd 60). The Johannine concept is more in line with that found in Palestinian Jewish texts where the Jewish people (Jub. 1:25; Pss. Sol. 17:27; Sir 18:13; Wis 11:10) or the righteous remnant (1QH 9.35–36; 4Q418 frg. 81, line 5; Sir 2:18; Wis 2:13, 16, 18; 5:5) are God's children. For John, however, it is those who believe in Jesus (Jewish or otherwise) who constitute the family of God.

[128] See John 1:29; 3:15–17; 5:24; 6:37–40, 47, 51; 10:9–10. The presence of these themes in the first half of the narrative does not threaten our understanding of the chain-link: "On occasion the transitional material at the centre *[sic]* of a chain-link interlock is not quite as cleanly demarcated as the theoretical pattern 'b-a' might indicate. This is especially the case in those narratives (e.g., the Johannine Gospel) where themes and motifs are tightly interwoven throughout the whole narrative. . . . [I]t is nonetheless clear in which direction the transitional sections have their respective 'centres *[sic]* of gravity'" (Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*, 48). Cf. George Mlakuzhyil, *The Christocentric Literary Structure of the Fourth Gospel*, AnBib 117 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1987), 103.

The means to fulfilling this mission is Jesus's "hour."[129] This theme reinforces the prologue's emphasis on the rejection of the *Logos*. What had for the first half of the narrative been an impending reality of the future, Jesus's "hour" has now arrived (12:23).[130] Using the image of a grain of wheat, which must fall to the earth and die in order to bear fruit (12:24), Jesus explains that this "hour" is necessary. He will embrace his suffering rather than attempting to escape it since it is the means to fulfill his mission (12:27). His death is his hour of glorification. The narrative recalls this theme as the story marches onward, and Jesus's hour is compared to a woman in labor, since the joy of adding children to God's family outweighs the suffering that brings about this result.[131]

This theme of rejection is also extended as Jesus predicts an hour that is approaching for the disciples—where they will experience suffering like his own suffering (16:1–4). This suffering is in fact necessary. In 12:26 the Johannine Jesus says, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also." This somewhat ambiguous concept of Jesus "being with" his followers also results in them receiving honor from the Father and, in relational terms, in them being brought into the family of God as "children of light."

As we have already seen in Chapter Four, the theme of unity is essential for understanding the moral efficacy of this narrative.[132] While the "Book of Signs" (John 1–

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[129] It will result in both "judgment for the world" (12:31, a concept further clarified in 12:47 as intending to result in salvation) and victory since "the ruler of the world will be driven out" (12:31); see Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 372. "The central point is the complete obedience of Jesus to the Father . . . (which) makes possible the revealing of God" (Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 421).

[130] John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20.

[131] John 16:21; cf. 13:1l; 17:1.

[132] The hour of Jesus's passion is foreshadowed in 2:4; 7:30; and 8:20. Other mentions of the hour include its significance for believers, both in the coming of life (cf. 3:14; 5:25–28), true worship (4:23),

12) emphasizes the unity that is shared between the Father and the Son whom He sent,[133] the "Book of Glory" (John 13–20) emphasizes the unity shared between Jesus and those who follow him. This section focuses on Jesus's followers being united with Jesus and brought into the mission for which the Father sent him. Thus, those who believe in Jesus will do even greater works than Jesus himself did (14:11–12), and they will be sent into the world with the same mission for which He came (17:18; 20:21).

Summary to Part 1

As we have seen, the prologue outlines the "story behind the story" and presents themes to guide the audience in their reading of the narrative. These themes—1) elevated Christology grounded in unity with God, 2) God's mission for the world, 3) rejection of the Light, and 4) the positive result for those who accept the *Logos*: life, light, and a share in unity with God—are reinforced with the Gospel's second significant structural guide, the chain-link interlock. Having established these consistent guiding themes, we will now move on to particular lingering questions for our pursuit of Johannine ethics.

Our study thus far has addressed the absence of explicit ethical material in John and demonstrated how the Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre prompts us to look for a more implicit ethic (Chapter Two). Our attention to the Fourth Gospel's use of encomiastic topics revealed an elevated Christology that complicates simple approaches

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clarity of Jesus's identity (16:25; cf. 8:28), and the establishment of a new family community (19:27). Hour imagery is also used to indicate a future hour of persecution for Jesus's followers (16:2–4) after his departure and the result of that hour, which will be joy (16:16–24).

[133] Thus, this section bears a more explicit christological focus, which elicits or encourages continued belief in Jesus. Naturally, this focus would create tension with certain readings/expectations of 1–12 in regard to ethics (see more below). The theme of Jesus's unity with the Father is evident in 3:34; 4:34; 5:30, 36–38; 6:38; 7:16; 8:29 and in the retrospective link, when Jesus repeatedly refers to God the Father as "the one who sent me" and insists that the one who believes/sees him, believes/sees the Father (12:44–45, 49–50).

of imitation ethics (Chapter Three), while analysis of metaleptic elements in the Gospel presents the theme of unity as key for understanding the Gospel's moral efficacy (Chapter Four). Now, our examination of the Gospel's rhetorical structure will guide our response to lingering questions vis-à-vis the one explicitly ethical command in the Gospel: love one another (Chapter Five). Is the love command issued within the context of a sectarian community and thus pertaining only to an exclusive, predetermined group? And if a broader scope can be established, is the Fourth Gospel interested in the spiritual dimension to the neglect of attention to physical welfare? To navigate these questions, we will compare potential answers to the macro-level narrative and guiding themes that emerged from our analysis of the Gospel's rhetorical structure.

Part 2: Love One Another

Most approaches to the love command focus on the question of whether the target of the command is restricted to the believing community and whether the command entails attention to belief and spiritual matters to the exclusion of actions normally associated with ethical conduct (giving food, clothing, shelter, etc.). We will begin by examining whether the Johannine community itself was a sectarian group. Then, we will move into the narrative to ask whether the Gospel's dualism, which draws a sharp dividing line between those who believe and those who do not, precludes an inclusive reading of the love command. As we will see, the themes from the prologue and chain-link help us distinguish between interpretive options in favor of a more inclusive reading.

Was the Johannine Community a Sectarian Group?

The notion of the Fourth Gospel as sectarian literature rose to prominence after Wayne Meeks, in a 1972 article, called the Johannine community a "sect" and suggested that the exclusive, esoteric insider language of the Gospel reinforced the "group's actual isolation from the larger society."[134] At the heart of the suggestion that the Johannine community was sectarian is the dualistic language for which the Fourth Gospel is well known.[135] Most prominent are the dualisms between the world above and the world below

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[134] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972): 70–71. For a thorough history of research on this question, see Kåre 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), 15–28. Fuglseth also highlights contributions to this perspective from Ernst Käsemann, *Jesu letzter Wille nach Johannes 17* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), 130; Herbert Leroy, *Ratsel und Missverstandnis: Ein Beitrag zur Formgeschichte des Johannesevangeliums*, BBB 30 (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1968). Among its many adherents are Fernando F. Segovia, "The Love and Hatred of Jesus and Johannine Sectarianism," *CBQ* 43 (1981): 258–72; D. Moody Smith, "Johannine Christianity: Some Reflections on Its Character and Delineation," *NTS* 21 (1975): 222–48; David K. Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); Oscar Cullmann, *Der Johanneische Kreis: Sein Platz Im Spätjudentum, in Der Jüngerschaft Jesu Und Im Urchristentum. Zum Ursprung Des Johannesevangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1975), 89; Raymond Edward Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 7, 90; R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, SBLDS 26 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); C. K. Barrett, "School, Conventicle, and Church in the New Testament," in *Wissenschaft und Kirche: Festschrift für Eduard Lohse*, ed. Siegfried Meurer and Kurt Aland, Texte und Arbeiten zur Bibel 4 (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1989), 96–110; Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM Press, 1989); Martin Hengel, *Die Johanneische Frage: Ein Lösungsversuch*, WUNT 67 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1993); Stephen C. Barton, "Early Christianity and the Sociology of the Sect," in *The Open Text: New Directions for Biblical Studies?*, ed. Francis Watson (London: SCM, 1993), 140–62; Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

[135] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 2:15–32; James H. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 76–106; C. K. Barrett, *Essays on John*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 98–115; John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 387–417; Stephen C. Barton, "Johannine Dualism and Contemporary Pluralism," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 6–7. Much has been written to distinguish various types of "dualism," but to do so is not our purpose here. Instead, we accept the wider net provided by Jörg Frey, "Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library: Reflections on Their Background and History," in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge, 1995*, ed. John. Kampen, Florentino. García Martínez, and Moshe J. Bernstein, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1997). See also John G. Gammie, "Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature," *JBL* 93 (1974): 356–85; James H. Charlesworth, "A Study in Shared Symbolism and Language: The Qumran Community and the Johannine Community,"

(8:23; 17:16; 18:36) and between light and darkness (1:5, 9; 12:35–36).[136] These images also demarcate an "in group" of those who are born from above or who are in/of the light and an "out group" of those born from below who are in/of darkness.[137] As many scholars have noted since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this language is reminiscent of sectarian language used by the Qumran community who seemed to have ties with the Essenes.[138] These Johannine motifs share similar language with the *Community Rule*, suggesting that John may have borrowed his terminology and mythology from 1QS 3.13–4.26.[139] John Ashton wonders whether the evangelist might have converted from Essenism and states that he "had dualism in his bones."[140]

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in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, The Scrolls and Christian Origins 3 (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 106–20.

[136] "The term 'dualism' refers to a pattern of thought, an antithesis, which is bifurcated into two mutually exclusive categories . . . each of which is qualified by a set of properties and ethical characteristics which are contrary to those under the other antithetic category." See Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," 76.

[137] See John 3:18–21, 36; 5:24, 29; 8:23–24, 47; 12:35–36; 14:17; 15:19; 17:9, 14, 16, 25.

[138] For more on the history of the DSS and the study of the New Testament, see George J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), esp. Ch.1; David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988); James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Mary L. Coloe and Tom Thatcher, eds., *John, Qumran, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Sixty Years of Discovery and Debate*, Society of Biblical Literature: Early Judaism and its Literature 32 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*, 3 vols. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006).

[139] Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John"; Harold W. Attridge, "The Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity: Proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, ed. Ruth Clements and Daniel R. Schwartz, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 111; David E. Aune, "Dualism in the Fourth Gospel and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Reassessment of the Problem," in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen*, ed. David E. Aune, Torrey Seland, and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen, NovTSup 106 (Boston: Brill, 2003), 281–303. Charlesworth goes further in his later publication "Shared Symbolism."

[140] John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 237. The language is toned down in his second edition. Cf. Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, 198. He points to the prominence of the Essenes as reflected in Josephus, *B.J.* 2.124.

Many, especially in more recent scholarship, are skeptical that such connections can be proven.[141] Regardless of the particulars regarding the connection, the extensive parallels can be illuminating.[142] James Charlesworth has outlined these parallels in four linguistic formulae and seven literary expressions that are shared by 1QS and the Fourth Gospel:[143]

1) Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1QS 3.18–19; 4.21, 23)

2) the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 20:22; 1QS 4.21)

3) the sons of light (John 12:36; 1QS 3.13, 24, 25)

4) eternal/perpetual life (John 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3; 1QS 4.7)

5) the light of life (John 8:12; 1QS 3.7)

6) walking in darkness (John 12:35; 1QS 3.21; 4.11)

7) wrath of God (John 3:36; 1QS 4.12)

8) blind eyes (John 10:21; 9; 11:37; 1QS 4.11)

9) full of grace (John 1:14; 1QS 4.4, 5)

10) works of God (John 6:28; 9:3; 1QS 4.4)

11) evil works of people (John 3:19; 1QS 4:10, 20)

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[141] E.g., Attridge, "The Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls."

[142] Ibid., 113.

[143] Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," 101–2. See also Herbert Braun, *Qumran Und Das Neue Testament*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1966).

He goes on to explain the ethical implications of this paradigm: "We learn that there are two distinct and mutually exclusive groups of men, respectively characterized not only by light and darkness but also by virtues and vices."[144]

The ethical dualism of 1QS implies a determinism wherein roles and tasks are appointed by God's design.[145] Belonging to one side or the other is predetermined, not a free act of choice (1QS 3.15, 18, 24). Here we ask, with Stephen Barton, "Does the impressive deployment of the light/darkness dualism by the sectarian community at Qumran allow us to posit a similar milieu for the Gospel of John?"[146] Particularly, we are asking if John's Gospel portrays a sectarian community whose deterministic framework sees the boundary between themselves and the outside world as absolute, mirroring the lines between the world above and the world below, the light and the darkness, the powers of good and the powers of evil.

Carsten Claussen investigates this very question in light of Bryan Wilson's sociological typology of sects, and this approach is helpful in refining what exactly we mean when we use the terms "sect" or "sectarian."[147] Wilson defines a sect as a voluntary association that conceives of its members as "elect," whose membership is determined by

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[144] Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," 79.

[145] Raymond E. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. Krister Stendahl (New York: Harper, 1957), 190. Even more firmly, see Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran & Modern Biblical Studies*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961), 93; Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 53–54. For a more nuanced discussion, see Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," 79–86.

[146] Barton, "Johannine Dualism," 13.

[147] Carsten Claussen, "John, Qumran, and the Question of Sectarianism," *PRSt* 37 (2010): 421–40.

some merit, and within which "exclusiveness is emphasized and expulsion exercised."[148] In his later work, Wilson develops a sevenfold typology for how a group may respond to the outside world. Claussen summarizes these helpfully:

> 1) conversionist: humans must be changed and thus acquire "a new subjective orientation;"
> 2) revolutionist: the social order of the world must be destroyed by supernatural means;
> 3) introversionist: humans must withdraw from the world which is "irredeemably evil;"
> 4) manipulationist: humans must "see the world differently;"
> 5) thaumaturgical: humans must call on "miracles and oracles;"
> 6) reformist: the world can be reformed "according to supernaturally-given insights;"
> 7) utopian: the world can and must be reconstructed "according to some divinely given principles."[149]

The sectarianism of Qumran as described in 1QS fits Wilson's "introversionist" category of response, which insists that the group must withdraw from the "irredeemably evil" world. According to Wilson's definition of "sect," this response to the world typifies sectarian communities. Other types of responses may be exhibited in a sectarian community as well, especially revolutionist and utopian responses.[150] Conversionist and reformist responses, however, would be antithetical to a strict sectarian identity, since these responses imply some openness to the world outside. As Claussen demonstrates, the Qumran community withdrew from the religious and cultural life around them. Their

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[148] Bryan R. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," *American Sociological Review* 24 (1959): 4. Much of Wilson's work studies modern sectarianism, but his categories can be applied more broadly. His predecessors—Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch—certainly developed their church/sect typology from their experiences with Western Christianity, but Wilson deliberately distinguishes his paradigm from theirs; cf. Claussen, "John, Qumran, and the Question of Sectarianism," 423.

[149] Bryan R. Wilson, "A Typology of Sects," in Sociology of Religion: Selected Readings, ed. Roland Robertson (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), 361–83. Cf. Bryan R. Wilson, Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements of Protest Among Tribal and Third-World Peoples (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 22–26; Claussen, "John, Qumran, and the Question of Sectarianism," 424.

[150] Revolutionary and utopian responses are particularly evident in the *War Rule* (1QM). Claussen, "John, Qumran, and the Question of Sectarianism," 439.

strict initiation process shows elitism, exclusivity, and exclusion, and as we saw above, their self-referential "in group" language affirms these dynamics.[151]

While the Fourth Gospel does utilize some introversionist language, it sees the world as redeemable. Although the world is presented as hostile, it is not to be abandoned or destroyed. Rather, as Claussen concludes, "For the author of the Fourth Gospel, the 'world' with all its negative connotations is still the object of God's love (3:16)." A paradigm where group members are sent to the world (17:18) most clearly aligns with Wilson's "conversionist" or "reformist" categories wherein salvation is for those who appropriate "a new subjective orientation" through belief in Jesus.[152] Adopting the category of "cult," Kåre Fuglseth argues, "The sectarian way of characterising the background of the Gospel of John that points towards a totally exclusive and segregated community cannot be upheld." Like the reformist and conversionist categories, "cult" allows for serious conflict with and isolation from the "parent body" while exhibiting openness to various "others"—Samaritans, Greeks and Romans, and, I would add, converts from the parent group itself.[153]

Wilson's nuanced understanding of various types of sects is helpful. While we may notice significant similarities between John's Gospel and sectarian literature, we should also notice that there are important differences between the Johannine dualism and that of the *Community Rule*. John's dualism is not so thoroughgoing.[154] As Attridge notes,

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[151] Ibid., 427–39.

[152] Wilson, "A Typology of Sects," 364–70.

[153] Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective*, esp. 360–74. He locates John between two extremes of Qumran and Philo.

[154] Barton, "Johannine Dualism," 11.

in John, "the mapping of these oppositions does not form a stable or absolute grid;" rather, the "potentially universal scope of the revealing light bumps up against a resistant, hostile darkness" and challenges it.[155] The Word/Jesus comes from above and bridges the gap to the world below, bringing light into the realm of darkness. This bridging results in what Bultmann calls a "dualism of decision" or a "soteriological dualism" wherein a line is drawn between those who believe and those who reject the *Logos*.[156] The horizontal dualism between believers and unbelievers, however, experiences the same dynamic as the vertical dualism. Stephen Barton describes this dynamic as "soteriological and christological *movement*" achieved by the incarnation.[157] He goes on,

> The ethical dualism which divides humankind into two camps—the "sons of light" and "sons of darkness"—whose existence and fate are predetermined is modified radically by the revelation of the love of God for "the world" and the offer of "eternal life" to all who believe (3:16).[158]

That is, the story of the Gospel reveals that the division between the believers and the world is a reality that the work of the incarnate *Logos* is seeking to break down. Further, although the Fourth Gospel retains some deterministic language, it also insists on the opportunity for decision to leave the realm of outsiders to join the community.[159] This decision, in fact, is the purpose of the Gospel (20:31), and this dynamic is narrated

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[155] Attridge, "The Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 116–17.

[156] Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2:21. Cf. Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," 92.

[157] Barton, "Johannine Dualism," 13.

[158] Barton goes on to explain that the dualism between good and evil is similarly subordinated to the power of God in Jesus (12:31; 14:30; cf. 16:11), and the dualistic, future-oriented eschatology is largely "demythologized" and brought into the present (ibid., 14–15).

[159] See John 6:37–45; 12:32. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," 191: "There is no hint, however, of anyone's being determined to evil without choice." See also Takashi Onuki, *Gemeinde Und Welt Im Johannesevangelium: Ein Beitrag Zur Frage Nach Der Theologischen Und Pragmatischen Funktion Des Johanneischen "Dualismus,"* WMANT 56 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1984), 218, on the dynamic mission to the world.

throughout the story as people who encounter Jesus are invited to believe and exchange the realm of darkness for the realm of light.[160]

Furthermore, the *Community Rule* explicitly commands, "[H]ate everything that (God) rejects; in order to keep oneself at a distance from all evil" (1QS 1.4) and "detest all the sons of darkness, each one in accordance with his guilt" (1QS 1.10).[161] The Fourth Gospel does not mirror the Scrolls' injunctions to hate outsiders, even though the community experiences hostility from the world.[162] As Attridge explains,

> [H]atred, at an explicit level, only flows in one direction in the Gospel, from "the World" toward the members of the community. . . . [W]hat undergirds the gospel's attitude toward "the World" is the stance ascribed to God, whose self-giving love did not spare his own son."[163]

Indeed, Jesus spoke of "sheep that do not belong to this fold" that he would bring in by laying down his life (10:16–17). In his final prayer, Jesus also prayed for those not yet included in the group but who will believe and join the community (17:20–21).

Summary. Can a group with such a philosophy accurately be described as "sectarian"? A simple designation of "sectarian" will not do. While sectarian (or better "introversionist") language is present in John, a comparison with more exclusionary sectarian groups reveals that the Johannine group was open to the world outside.[164] While

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[160] See John 12:46; cf. 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:35; 8:12. So argues Charlesworth, "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Gospel of John," 95.

[161] Translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 71.

[162] See, for example, John 15:18–25; cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 1:330.

[163] Attridge, "The Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 118.

[164] John's narrative does develop a "sharp social exclusivism based on one's response to the revelation that comes through Jesus." At the same time, the Gospel develops a counter-cultural inclusivism. The narrative particularly subverts social boundaries of male/female and Jew/Samaritan/Gentile (R. Alan Culpepper, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," in *Word, Theology, and Community in*

seeing itself as a distinct group with clear boundaries between themselves and outsiders, this community still allowed and even worked toward the inclusion of those outsiders. We should understand those statements that may seem to describe a closed group and predetermined fate in light of the macro-level narrative and guiding themes, which insist that God's sending of Jesus was to draw all people to God's self (1:9; 12:32).

As we have already seen, the macro-level narrative and guiding themes show that the Johannine community inherited God's mission for the world at large. Interpreted in this context, the Johannine dualism reflects the situation of a struggling community, but it does not describe the preferred stance towards this group. Attridge explains that the Johannine dualism "is not a rigid framework for reflection on metaphysical, social, or psychological realities, but rather a more supple conceptual tool . . . used to think about the relationships within and among religious communities."[165] The strong emphasis on internal love and care was necessary to offer a secure identity and empower love for the outside world.

Is the Johannine Love Command Exclusive?

With this nuanced understanding of the sectarian and dualistic character of the Fourth Gospel, how do we read the Johannine Love Command? Unlike the Synoptics, the

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John, ed. John Painter, R. Alan Culpepper, and Fernando F. Segovia (St. Louis: Chalice, 2002), 90). For one example, the story shows a Samaritan woman who believes and becomes a spokesperson for Jesus's message, while a male "leader of the Jews" hides in the shadows and cannot understand what Jesus is saying (ibid., 86–90). In fact, some have hypothesized that the openness to Samaritans, Gentiles, or other outsiders may have contributed to the hostility the Johannine community received from the synagogue. See, e..g, Robert J. Karris, "Luke 23:47 and the Lucan View of Jesus's Death," *JBL* 105 (1986): 105, 108. Cf. Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 111.

[165] Attridge, "The Gospel of John and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 119.

Fourth Gospel does not explicitly command love for one's neighbor or enemy.[166] Rather it simply commands, "Love one another." Some read the command to "love one another" as an intentional delimitation of the Synoptic "love your neighbor," one that narrows the scope and makes the command ethically impotent—at least for outsiders.[167] Ernst Käsemann claims that there is "no indication" that love for one another would include love for a neighbor outside the group.[168] We will argue here that the guiding theme of God's mission for the world, revealed in the Gospel's macro-level narrative and structural devices, actually suggests that this inward-focused command should be understood in light of the larger mission.

God's mission for the world, revealed in the prologue and reinforced in the chain link, was inclusive; its aim was the world at large.[169] As we have seen in Chapter Four, Jesus was sent to enlighten *the world*, to take away the sin of *the world* (1:29), to give life to *the world* (3:16–17; 6:33, 51), to save *the world* (4:42; 12:47), to show *the world* the love he shares with the Father (14:31; 17:23). For some interpreters, the Fourth Gospel's sharp distinction between those who believe and those who do not argues against such an inclusive approach.[170] Though we must certainly contend with the Fourth Gospel's

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[166] Cf. Mark 12:31; Matt 5:43–44; 19:19; 22:39; Luke 6:27, 35.

[167] Jack T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 91.

[168] Ernst Käsemann, The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17, trans. Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 59.

[169] Mira Stare, "Ethics of Life in the Gospel of John," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 213–28.

[170] Robert Horton Gundry, Jesus the Word According to John the Sectarian: A Paleofundamentalist Manifesto for Contemporary Evangelicalism, Especially Its Elites, in North America (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2002), 56–59. Those who protest, citing the warning in 1 John 2:15 ("Do not love the world..."), oversimplify the Johannine language. As Rudolf Schnackenburg (The Moral Teaching of the New Testament (New York: Seabury, 1973), 322, 327) explains, "In reality, this text . . . is

dualistic presentation that often views the world in a negative and oppositional light, a one-dimensional view of the "world" is insufficient.

We have already seen that, in its most general Johannine sense, κόσμος refers to the realm of human life.[171] In John, sometimes the world is a positive entity (as the world created by God in 1:10b), or a neutral one (as the general public in 7:4 and 12:19). But other times, the world is described in distinctly negative terms as the realm of human life that still stands apart from God or opposed to his Son. The world does not know the *Logos* (1:10c) and hates Jesus because he testifies against it, that its works are evil (7:7). The world is the realm of the non-believing religious leaders as distinct from the heavenly realm of Jesus (8:23). The world is the realm opposed to the eternal realm (12:25), the realm in which judgment takes place (12:31). The world does not receive the Spirit of truth because it cannot see the truth (14:17–19). Just as the world hated Jesus, it will hate the disciples (15:18–19).

This range of meaning is not utilized haphazardly in the Fourth Gospel. Rather, the Fourth Gospel presents its concept of the world in the context of a rhetorical trajectory, in line with the macro-level narrative revealed in the prologue. The world that was positive in relation to God as his creation becomes a hostile entity opposed to God when Jesus presents himself on earth and encounters rejection. But, as the Gospel shows, God is working to break down the duality presented by this opposition. The world is the

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a dualistically coloured warning against toying with the world . . . John remains faithful to his single-minded and urgent call to . . . love." See also Richard Vo¨lkl, Christ und Welt nach dem Neuen Testament (Wurzburg: Echter, 1961), 409–39.

[171] For more on the various connotations for the term "world," see the discussion above, esp. nn.113–23.

realm into which Jesus has come as the light,[172] the savior (4:42), the prophet (6:14), the one sent from the Father (10:36) to bring a message of revelation (8:26), the realm into which the Messiah, the Son of God is coming (11:27)—and the realm from which he will depart (13:1). Granted, Jesus's coming into the world results in judgment or salvation; the individuals who make up the world are each able to respond to God's initiative and so determine whether the intended trajectory comes to be.[173] The world, nevertheless, is the object of forgiveness, love, and life.[174]

In this light, the negative view of the world does not pose a problem for the inclusive nature of God's mission. Rather, it is the impetus for the mission; the goal is to break down the duality. As the Johannine Jesus explains, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (12:47). Although he appears unconcerned with the world at times (17:9), he does pray for the world (17:20–21), and he will drive none away (6:37–40). Though he acknowledges the distinction between his disciples and the world (17:16), he sends the disciples into the world (17:15, 18) so that the world may believe and be included (17:21, 23).[175]

How is God's mission —to break down these dualities —accomplished? Miroslav Volf suggests that "duality between God and world is transformed into communion between God and Jesus' disciples. . . . John's accounts of creation and redemption together undercut dualistic modes of thought."[176] The command toward mutual love

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[172] See John 1:9; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 12:46.

[173] See John 3:19; 9:39; 12:48; 14:22–24.

[174] See John 1:29; 3:16; 6:33, 52.

[175] Kok, "As the Father Sent Me."

[176] Volf, "Johannine Dualism, 24.

offers the means by which the believers can take up Jesus's mission to overcome the oppositional duality between God and the world. The theme of unity, revealed in the prologue and the chain-link, is key for understanding how this mission works. To rehearse the findings from earlier in this chapter and in Chapter Four, the Book of Signs emphasizes Jesus's unity with the Father, as the retrospective chain-link reveals in John 12:44–45. The Book of Glory emphasizes the unity between Jesus and those who believe in him.

Since the Son's unity with the Father brings him into the Father's mission (12:29–50), it follows that the unity between the believers and Jesus brings the believers into the Father's mission as well. As the Father sent Jesus into the world, so Jesus sends his followers (17:18; 20:21).[177] Not only does the Father accomplish his works through Jesus, but Jesus says, "[T]he one who believes in me will also do the works that I do, in fact, will do greater works than these" (14:12). Thus, the question of the target of the love command should be answered in light of God's mission for the world, the mission for which he sent the Son, and the mission which believers are also called to join.[178] Jesus asks in his last prayer, "I in them and you and me, that they may become completely one, so that *the world* may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (17:23). Through the disciples, the world has the chance to receive the one who sent them (Jesus), and thus the one who sent him (God).[179]

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[177] Kok, "As the Father Sent Me."

[178] Culpepper, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," 92–95.

[179] D. Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity: Essays on Its Setting, Sources, and Theology* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), 216–20. See above, Chapter Four, n.149.

Some have suggested that even if the Gospel does show that God loves the world, it would be unrealistic for this community, experiencing extreme opposition from the outside world, to maintain this inclusive perspective.[180] But according to Ntumba Kapambu, it is precisely this irrational love that is both an identity marker for the believers and a testament to unbelievers.[181] This mission, in fact, explains the Fourth Gospel's overwhelming emphasis on mutual love. This internal love prescribed in John 13 and 15 is essential for the believers to be capable of fulfilling this mission to the outside world.[182] This theme of unity expressed first between Father and Son, then between the Son and the believers, and finally among the believers is then extended to offer inclusion to the world. Volf again:

> John's portrayal of the relation between the Father, the Son, and the believers makes the simultaneous affirmation of God's love for the world and the denial of Jesus' and the believers' love for the world virtually impossible. . . . The Father dwells in the Son, and the Son dwells in the believers (17:21) . . . (therefore) we cannot plausibly read John as ascribing love of the world to the Father but denying it to the Son and the believers . . . Clearly, then, John has expressed the Synoptics' 'love of one's neighbor' as 'love of the brethren,' and hence he cannot be using this in any exclusive sense.[183]

While the Johannine love command clearly functions as the community's identity marker (13:34-35), the moral efficacy of this text goes beyond that level of meaning. That is, the

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[180] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 317–26.

[181] Ntumba V. Kapambu, "L'amour fraternel: Testament, don, statut et signe d'identité: Une lecture de Jn 13, 34-35," *Telema* 127 (2006): 53–65.

[182] D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 148. Cf. Richard A. Burridge, "Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to the Ethics of the Historical Jesus and John's Gospel," in *John, Jesus, and History*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher, Early Christianity and its Literature (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 281–90. Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996), 140.

[183] "It is self-evident . . . that he did not mean to forbid Christians to play the part of the Good Samaritan." Volf, "Johannine Dualism," 42–43.

implications of the command in the context of the whole Gospel are much broader. The mutual love prescribed is an extension of the unity shared between the Father and the Son into which the believers are incorporated, and it is a vital part of the mission for the world, not a competing element.[184]

The rhetorical trajectory of unity works in this way: the unity shared by the Father and the Son is expressed in their mutual love for one another and in the extension of this love from the Son to the believers. The unity shared by the Son and the believers is expressed in their mutual love for one another and in the extension of this love from the believers in two different directions. First, it is expressed in the mutual love within the community. But beyond that, the members of the community are to extend this love to the outside world. Mutual love, as prescribed in John 13 and 15, is the foundation for an inclusive mission of love that extends universally and breaks down exclusive boundaries: "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they might also be in us, in order that the world might believe that you have sent me" (17:21; cf., 17:11b, 20).[185]

As illustrated in Figure 2 below, all of these dimensions—the unity between the Father and the Son, the extension to establish unity between the Son and the believers, the expression of this unity in the mutual love shared among believers, and the extension

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[184] John Painter, *John, Witness and Theologian* (London: S.P.C.K., 1975), 94. Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2:926; Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2:614; Jörg Frey, "Love-Relations in the Fourth Gospel: Establishing a Semantic Network," in *Repetitions and Variations in the Fourth Gospel: Style, Text, Interpretation*, ed. Gilbert van Belle, Michael Labahn, and Peter Maritz, BETL 223 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 171–98; Christopher W. Skinner, "Virtue in the New Testament: The Legacies of Paul and John in Comparative Perspective," in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson, SBLECL 7 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2012), 313–15; Francis J. Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013).

[185] Culpepper, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," 92–95.

	PROLOGUE [1:1-18]	BOOK OF SIGNS [Chs 1-12]	CHAIN-LINK [12:20-50]	BOOK OF GLORY [Chs 13-21]
The Father-Son unity (Christology)	1:1,18	3:31-35 (cf. 1, 13) 5:18 (cf. 19-30) 6:20 (cf. 6:27, 32) 8:19 (cf. 7:16, 28-29; 8:13-18, 26-29, 38, 42, 54; 9:33) 8:58 10:30 (cf. 10:11, 15, 25) 10:33 10:38	12:44-45 12:49-50	13:20b 14:7, 9-11a 14:20-21 15:9a, 10b, 23 16:15, 27-30 17: 11b, 21-24 18:5-8
Unity between Jesus and his followers (through belief)	1:12-13	6:56-57 10:14-15, 27	12:26	13:8, 15-16 13:20a; 34b 14:3-12 14:20-21 15:4-5 15:9b-10a 15:15, 18, 20 16:15, 27 17:8, 12 17:21-24 17:26 18:8-9
Unity among those who believe (mutual love)	1:12b-13	10:16	12:36	13:34 15:12, 17 17:11b 17:21-23 17:26 19:25-27
The world invited into the unity (reconciliation)	1:4, 9	3:15-17 4:42 5:23-24 6:33 8:12 11:50-52 (cf. 10:16; 12:19)	12:32,47	13:35 14:31 15:26-27 17:18 17:20-21 17:23 20:21 (cf. 18:14; 21:11)

Figure 2. Unity in the Fourth Gospel

of this love to the world[186]—were introduced in the prologue, emphasized in the chain-link, and expressed in the context of both occurrences of the love command. This theme of unity is reiterated throughout the Gospel in the accounts of Jesus's signs, in his discourses, his prayer for his disciples, and in other narrative material.

The first half of the Gospel emphasizes Jesus's unity with the Father and establishes belief in the Sent One as the foundational element for proper ethics. The

[186] See the discussion in Chapter Four, above.

second half of the Gospel emphasizes the result and implications of that belief—that believers, being unified with the Father, take up the mission for which Jesus was sent. As the Feeding of the Five Thousand reframed the criterion for pleasing God, emphasizing belief in Jesus, the Love Command continues this trajectory to show that the unity with Jesus established by belief, coupled with mutual love within the community, results in taking up God's mission for the world.[187] The sending of the disciples into the world, anticipated in John 15:27 and 17:18, is seen as an extension of Jesus's own mission: "as the Father has sent me, so I send you," words recalled in John 20:21.[188] It is in this sphere, the sphere between the believers and the world, that the moral efficacy of the text is most felt. The rhetorical trajectory of unity shows how God's mission to reconcile the world to himself becomes the standard for the audience's interaction with the outside world (even though it is hostile) and the basis for behavior within the Johannine group.

Ancient rhetorical theory offers an additional compelling reason for the internal focus of the Johannine Love Command, which does not explicitly say, "Love those who hate you; bless those who persecute you," or even "love your neighbor as yourself." Demetrius, among others, suggests that leaving things unmentioned or inexplicit leads the audience to make conclusions on their own and thus engenders audience allegiance.[189] In his *On Style*, Demetrius suggests that a writer "should omit some points for the listener to infer and work out for himself. For when he infers what you have omitted, he is not just

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[187] Brant, *John*, 229; Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Incarnate Word: Perspectives on Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 103; Hays, *Moral Vision*, 150–51.

[188] Kok, "As the Father Sent Me."

[189] For more on "gap theory" as it is called in modern literary theory, see Whitenton, *Hearing Kyriotic Sonship*, and Kathy Reiko Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Workers in Luke-Acts and Its Literary Milieu*, LNTS (New York: T&T Clark, 2010).

listening to you but he becomes your witness and reacts more favourably to you" (*On Style* 222 [Innes, LCL]). Such implicit rhetoric might elicit a more generous reception from a community in crisis, avoiding strong negative reactions that might come from a less-sensitive presentation of ethical obligations. Pragmatically, the Fourth Gospel establishes the community identity necessary for proper ethical practice first so that the group might have the capacity to take up their difficult mission.

Is John Interested in the Spiritual Dimension to the Neglect of Physical Welfare?

Even if the love command is not exclusive in scope, what sorts of actions does it entail? Jack Sanders contends that "this mission of love involves *only* the carrying of the gospel to the world, *not* unlimited care exercised toward one's fellow man" and concludes that, from the Johannine perspective, "the supreme and only good that one can do for one's fellow man is to witness to him so that he may believe and in believing have life."[190] Is the Fourth Gospel solely interested in the spiritual dimension to the neglect of attention to physical welfare?

As we have already discussed in Chapter Four, the Fourth Gospel lacks direct statement that Jesus performed signs out of concern for the physical welfare of people. For example, rather than having compassion on the hungry crowds, the Johannine Jesus chastises them and instructs, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you" (6:27). This episode does, in fact, portray belief as the "work of God," the fundamental ethical action in Johannine terms. Sanders may be right that bringing someone to believe is, in Johannine terms, the "supreme" good that a follower of Jesus can do for another person. But it is

[190] Sanders, *Ethics in the NT*, 95, 97 (original emphasis).

surely overstatement to say that this is the "only" good to be done. Offering a "Johannine version" of the Good Samaritan parable, he boldly claims,

> Johannine Christianity is interested *only* in whether he [the injured man] believes. "Are you saved, brother?" the Johannine Christian asks the man bleeding to death on the side of the road. "Are you concerned about your soul?" "Do you believe that Jesus is the one who came down from God?" "If you believe you will have eternal life," promises the Johannine Christian, while the dying man's blood stains the ground.[191]

Is it fair to assume that the Fourth Gospel's attention to belief and other spiritual matters in fact suggests that the Johannine community should show disdain for physical needs? To answer this question, we will consider one passage in which Jesus directly speaks about charitable giving to the poor—the beginning of John 12 when Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with costly ointment—looking to the macro-level narrative, themes, and other narrative links to guide our inquiry.

Judas protests that the money could have been used for the poor, and Jesus responds, "The poor you always have with you, but you will not always have me" (12:8). While this reply may seem at first like a deprecation of charitable deeds, several details about the narrative point in a different direction. As Jo-Ann Brant explains, the rhetorical aim of the passage is to point forward to Jesus's death and to emphasize the elevated christological focus of the Book of Signs, not to make a statement about the ethics of charitable donations.[192] Still, the story actually implies that the Jesus group *was* consistently giving to the poor. Judas, as the treasurer, assumed that such an extravagant donation would be taken into their common funds, at least some of which would be used

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[191] Ibid., 100 (emphasis mine).

[192] Brant, John, 180. Cf. Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 2:865; Brown, The Gospel According to John, 1:454.

for charity.[193] Such a practice by this group is confirmed in the following chapter wherein some of the disciples thought that Jesus had sent Judas away from the upper room either to purchase supplies for the festival or to "give something to the poor" (13:29).[194] Further, the statement echoes Deut 15:11, which pairs the reality that "there will never cease to be some in need on earth" with the command, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."[195] Such charitable giving was often frowned upon in John's day,[196] but the Johannine presentation of the Jesus group puts this practice in a positive light. This interpretation fits with the thoroughgoing invective against Judas in the narrative. Judas's disingenuous question and the derogatory statement that he was unconcerned for the poor only make sense in a context where Jesus and his followers consistently participated in care for the poor.

The description of Judas recalls John 10, where the "other shepherds" are called thieves and are described as not being concerned for the sheep.[197] This episode stands in contrast to the model of discipleship presented in the final conversation between Jesus and Peter in John 21:15–17. Asking three times whether Peter loves him, Jesus tells Peter to "feed my lambs," "tend my sheep," "feed my sheep." The conversation takes place in the context of Jesus's third resurrection appearance to the disciples where he calls to them

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[193] The price of the ointment would have been considerably more than the yearly wages for a laborer; see Brant, *John*, 180. Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2:862, 864.

[194] Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2:863-64; Robert J. Karris, *Jesus and the Marginalized in John's Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 105, 108. Cf. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:449.

[195] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 2:865.

[196] See Brant, *John*, 165.

[197] κλέπτης in 10:1, 8, 10 and 12:5. οὐχ ὅτι περὶ τῶν πτωχῶν ἔμελεν in 12:6 and οὐ μέλει αὐτῷ περὶ τῶν προβάτων in 10:13. See the discussion in Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:448; Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2:864.

from the beach, guides them to a miraculous catch of fish, and cooks them a meal. Details within this narration connect the episode to previous episodes in the narrative.[198] In particular, several features recall the episode in John 6 where Jesus feeds a hungry multitude with a small offering of bread and fish. The setting for the resurrection appearance is described as "beside the sea of Tiberias" (21:1), the same phrase used (ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης) when Jesus walked upon the sea of Tiberias to meet the disciples after the miraculous feeding (6:19; cf. 6:1). Here again, Jesus inquires about the disciples' resources to meet the need at hand (21:5; 6:5–6). Other verbal resonances include the description of Peter girding up his cloak to swim (21:7 διαζώννυμι) as Jesus had done before washing the disciples' feet (13:4). Beyond these verbal connections, the scene places Jesus in the context of a meal, providing an *inclusio* with Jesus's first public appearance at the Cana wedding. Here Jesus provides the food; there he provided the wine.

These lexical and narrative links, together with the setting of a meal, provide an important interpretative context for Jesus's conversation with Peter. The instructions for Peter to feed and tend the sheep clarify the Johannine call to discipleship and Jesus's earlier command to love one another as he loved them. While there are surely other connotations for the shepherd imagery on the metaphorical level,[199] the connection with the feeding of the multitude and Jesus's service in washing his disciples' feet reveal an implicit understanding that discipleship in John's Gospel means caring for physical

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[198] For more on the parallels described below, see Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2:1225-39.

[199] For example, the shepherding metaphor could suggest spiritual or pastoral care and foreshadow that Peter will sacrifice his life (10:11), an idea also reinforced by the girding imagery (21:18–19); see ibid., 2:1237.

needs.[200] As Jesus provided wine, fed the multitude, washed his disciples' feet, and as the Jesus group saved money to facilitate charitable giving, the mission of Johannine discipleship cannot be limited to evangelism or spiritual needs.[201] An understanding of Johannine discipleship that includes care for the physical needs of others and charity for the poor is consistent with the description of the Jesus group's charitable giving implicit in John 12 and with the macro-level narrative of the Gospel.

With these implications in mind, we return to the larger question: Is John interested in the spiritual dimension to the neglect of physical, material welfare? As the macro-level narrative revealed, the believers are included in God's mission to love the world. Thus, that mission and the way God accomplishes it can illuminate the types of concerns and actions that should be taken up by the believers. As we pursue this question, it is essential to remember the centrality of the incarnation for Johannine theology.[202] The prologue (esp. John 1:14, 16, 18) emphasizes the importance of the incarnation for understanding John's version of how God accomplished God's work in the world. In order to bring life to the world, God sent the *Logos* who "became flesh" and made his dwelling in the physical, human realm. As Gail O'Day helpfully clarifies, "for John the incarnation is not an emptying; it is a moment of fullness" in which "God is made known in the enfleshed life of the Word in the world."[203] She points out that the Johannine use of "flesh" indicates the realm of ordinary human life, not the realm of human brokenness or

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[200] Brant, *John*, 287–88.

[201] Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2:1231. On Jesus caring about earthly needs see George Raymond Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Themes (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 399.

[202] Gail R. O'Day, "The Love of God Incarnate: The Life of Jesus in the Gospel of John," in *Life in Abundance: Studies of John's Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown*, ed. John R. Donahue (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 159.

[203] Ibid.

sin. Through the incarnation, the realm of the flesh becomes "the habitation of the holy. Human flesh is now the embodiment of God in the world. . . . The incarnation places the most positive value on human life."[204]

God's work was to reveal God's self by joining the human realm, and the incarnation demonstrates that the material world is itself valuable. The incarnate *Logos*, Jesus, was the embodiment of God in the world. At his death, which John presents as a departure from the material realm, Jesus in the flesh is no longer in the world. His followers, however, become his "ongoing bodily presence," and they are called to do his works and even greater works (14:12).[205] The Johannine focus on the incarnation suggests that God values the physical and material aspects of human life. Further, Jesus's followers are called to continue his mission within and to the material world. Since God's own work in the world affirmed and embraced the physical realm, attention to the "spiritual need" of belief does not negate attention to physical care. Loving one another is the means of joining God's mission, a mission that includes extension of care to the realm of physical needs in earthly life.

Summary to Part 2

As we saw in Chapter Four, the identity found in unity with Jesus and the Father, expressed in the mutual love within the community, and accompanied by the guidance of the Holy Spirit empowers the believers to fulfill God's mission. Further, the Fourth Gospel does not solicit imitation of particular actions; rather it calls believers to match

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[204] Ibid., 160.

[205] Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Resurrection (of the Body) in the Fourth Gospel," in *Life in Abundance: Studies of John's Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown*, ed. John R. Donahue (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 187.

Jesus's response to the Father, that is, the extent of Jesus's obedience to give tangibly and sacrificially (to the point of persecution and death) that God's mission—to open God's family to the outside world—might be fulfilled.[206] We have seen above that the prologue and the chain-link interlock reinforce this perspective, emphasizing and elevating Jesus's unity with God and his mission for the world at large. Where the Gospel narrative leaves ambiguity regarding the nature of the Johannine group, the scope of the love command, and its practical ethical implications, these structural devices function as rhetorical guides. Held up against the main themes of the macro-level narrative, the Gospel's dualistic language, which first seems to hint at exclusivity and a disregard for the physical well-being of others, points instead to a mission for the hostile world outside and an incarnational emphasis that insists on physical care. The Johannine dualism that resembles the language of sectarian communities reflects the hostility of the community's present situation, but it does not prescribe the way that community ought to approach the outside world. The strong insider/outsider language and the command for mutual love was a necessary reinforcement for a group in need of a community identity. The emphasis on spiritual matters, particularly belief in Jesus, reflects the hallmark of this community's identity and the means to their unification with Jesus, his Father, and his mission for the world.

It is true that the Fourth Gospel does not address many topics that we expect to be treated in an ethical text (appropriate standards for marriage, sexual practices, etc.).[207] But

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[206] Lund ("The Joys and Dangers of Ethics in John's Gospel," 283) also shows how Jesus justifies his own actions based not on the Law but on his union with the Father. He describes Jesus's ethics as "relational, not informational."

[207] Lund helpfully suggests that a number of moral imperatives in the Fourth Gospel itself, paired with corporate memory of Jesus, values from the Torah, community deliberation, and guidance from the

acknowledging the unconventional character of the Fourth Gospel is far from deeming it morally bankrupt. Viewed in light of the Gospel's rhetorical and structural guides, "Love one another" is a call to build mutual love for the purpose of an inclusive mission that seeks to meet the world's spiritual and physical needs. The rhetorical trajectory of the Fourth Gospel guides us to look for an unconventional ethical system that revolves around participation in the mystical unity shared between the Father and the Son, which empowers a community to love one another in the face of hostility. Unity with Jesus and mutual love in the group empower the Johannine believers to take up the radical mission, initiated by God through the *Logos*, to bring the world into unity with God. The intended result of "love *one another*" is that *all* might receive light, life, and grace upon grace.

Holy Spirit, would mitigate the dangers of this unconventional ethic. He offers 1 John as one example of a later community taking up this Fourth Gospel's ethics and amending them to their own situation (ibid.)

CHAPTER SIX

Articulating Johannine Ethics: Findings and Conclusions

Concluding Summary

What, then, *can* we say about Johannine ethics? To answer this question we will rehearse the various facets of our rhetorical analysis and the findings from along the way. This rhetorical approach sought to understand the moral efficacy of the Fourth Gospel, that is, the effect the story would have had on the thinking and behavior of its audience. After an introduction to the problem and a look at the history of scholarship on Johannine ethics, this study explored four rhetorical elements of the Fourth Gospel: its engagement of the audience through participation in the *bios* genre, its emphasis on unity through the incorporation of encomiastic topics, its extension of the encomiastic topics through the presence of metaleptic elements, and its appropriation of structural devices that revealed a macro-level rhetorical trajectory and guiding themes.

Rather than working systematically through the chapters of the Fourth Gospel, the study is organized around these four rhetorical analyses, tracing important devices or themes through the Gospel as a whole (the encomiastic topics, elevated Christology, metaleptic elements, the theme of unity, the concept of the "world"). In this way, the study gives sustained attention to nearly every chapter of the Fourth Gospel.[1] Furthermore, by attending to the Gospel's rhetorical elements, this study addresses the following criticisms of Johannine ethics from the history of research: a lack of explicit

[1] Space constraints excluded significant treatment of John 2–5 and 7–8.

ethical material, an elevated Christology that presents an inimitable hero, a dualistic framework that emphasizes belief and the spiritual life above or against attention to physical and moral issues, and an inward focus that advocates a sectarian and exclusive posture to the world outside.

This study addressed the scarcity of explicit ethical material in John by demonstrating how the Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre prompts us to look for a more implicit ethic (Chapter Two). Attention to the Fourth Gospel's use of encomiastic topics revealed an elevated Christology that complicates simple approaches of imitation ethics (Chapter Three), while analysis of its metaleptic elements presented Jesus's unity with God and response to God's mission for the world as the imitable element of the encomiastic narrative (Chapter Four). Finally, examination of the Gospel's rhetorical structure demonstrated that the Gospel's one explicit ethical command, "love one another," does not promote an exclusive stance toward outsiders or a focus on spirituality to the neglect of material welfare. Rather, the macro-level narrative of the Gospel presented in the prologue and the guiding themes emphasized in the chain-link reveal that the goal of the in-focused mutual love is to extend the community to the world outside and thus join in God's mission for the world, a mission that includes physical care (Chapter Five).

Our study found that Johannine ethics engages the audience in moral deliberation rather than delivering explicit ethical propositions. The Fourth Gospel presents an elevated hero whose direct actions may not imitable, but who provides an example of unity with God that extends to believers; this unity becomes the foundational element of Johannine ethics. The macro-level narrative of the Gospel works to break down the

dualistic framework for which the Fourth Gospel is so famous, and the sectarian sensibilities sought to build up a community that would bring God's love to the world, not turn away from it.

As I explained in Chapter One, moral efficacy is a way of describing how an encounter with a narrative could influence the thoughts and behaviors of readers or audience members. My approach was to assess rhetorical clues or cues that could guide the audience in discovering the ethical principles implicit in the story as a means to explore the ways of thinking and living that the story would likely have engendered. Pushing against the stream of scholarship that has declared the Fourth Gospel ethically bankrupt, this study joins a current in Johannine scholarship that uses unconventional methods to discover the implicit ethics in the Fourth Gospel. My contribution is unique in offering sustained treatment of the Gospel as a whole and using a rhetorical lens to pursue Johannine ethics.

I first examined how genre affects the way a text engages the audience in the communicative process (in Chapter Two). I began by outlining the state of the question on the genre of the Fourth Gospel, surveying the history of Gospel genre research (with particular attention to the Fourth Gospel), and tracing key developments in genre theory from Aristotle to today. This exploration provided a more flexible conception of genre, pushing away from the *categorization* of the Fourth Gospel into a single genre and moving toward consideration of the Fourth Gospel's *participation* in the genre of *bios*. As we saw, the Fourth Gospel's participation in the *bios* genre suggests that the audience would likely have expected the narrative to act as a moral or ethical guide.

Noting that Johannine ethics is almost entirely implicit, I then explored how implicit ethics functioned in a group of biographical texts that included an explicitly moral purpose—the *Lives* of Plutarch. Several elements of the comparison were fruitful. We found that for both the Fourth Gospel and the *Lives*, a number of factors stand in the way of an approach that looks for easily extractable moral lessons like those offered in ethical discourses or narratives with more explicit ethical content. As the *Lives* of Plutarch illustrated, an ancient narrative biography can engage the audience and challenge them to consider how the hero ordered his life and how that orientation might translate to their own context. We determined that the audience of the Fourth Gospel likely expected the narrative to include a moral/ethical purpose. As with Plutarch's *Lives*, we would miss Johannine ethics if we overlooked the implicit moral guidance in the rhetorical exchange between author and reader. Thus, in light of our literary comparison with Plutarch's *Lives*, we pressed on in our rhetorical investigation of implicit ethics in the Fourth Gospel.

The exploration of the rhetoric of *synkrisis* employed in Plutarch's *Lives* led us to explore what rhetorical tools might facilitate the communication of the ethical dimensions of the text between author and audience. Chapter Three explored the Fourth Gospel's use of the topics for a formal encomium to characterize its hero. Drawing upon rhetorical handbooks, various encomiastic narratives, and encomiastic speeches to illustrate the relevant topics, this chapter traced each topic (origin, training, noble deeds, noble death, and events after death) through the Fourth Gospel, demonstrating how the use of these topics reveals Jesus's unity with the Father as the foundation for his exalted status. Since the exalted status of the Johannine Jesus complicates invitations for

imitation ethics, the rhetorical function of the encomiastic topics to establish an elevated Christology was found to be only one part of a rhetorical trajectory that works in two steps.

In the first step, the topics establish Jesus's uniquely elevated status and reveal that his status is rooted in his unity with the Father. Chapter Four took up the second step, showing that the narrative extends these same rhetorical topics to believers, inviting the disciples and audience members to share in the unity between Jesus and the Father. This chapter also examined the challenges that arise when viewing the highly exalted Johannine Jesus as an exemplary character. Taking John 6 as a case study, we observed that unlike the Synoptic miracles, the Johannine signs were not motivated by compassion for the needy; rather, they functioned to establish elevated Christology and elicit belief in Jesus. As the discourse following the miraculous feeding indicates, however, John presents belief as the fundamental ethical action: "This is the work of God, that you would believe in the one whom he sent" (6:29).

This episode demonstrates that Christology is essential for Johannine ethics. Christology elicits belief, and belief is the bridge to proper ethical perspective and thus proper behavior in the world. Jesus repeatedly points to his connection with the Father to explain his actions. Thus, in addition to forming the basis of Jesus's exalted status in the Fourth Gospel, unity with God is also determinative for Jesus's actions and his mission. While many of Jesus's words and deeds in the Fourth Gospel are not imitable for believers, one central action invites imitation: the way Jesus responds to the Father. The theme of unity not only theologically grounds the heightened presentation of the

Johannine Jesus, it also grounds Johannine ethics since it engages the audience in the identity-transformation which makes proper behavior possible.

Narratologically, this engagement is accomplished when metaleptic elements disrupt the boundary between the audience and the story world. The Fourth Gospel opens with a self-aware narrator who describes himself and the audience as belonging to a shared group (1:14, 16; 21:24), and the story is interrupted with hindsight comments that disrupt narrative time (2:22; 12:16). The narrative includes anachronistic language and themes that call the audience's attention to their contemporary situation (9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Also, much of the narrative takes the form of direct discourse. This medium in which the words would be performed in direct address makes the audience feel as if the words exchanged between characters in the story are addressed to the audience members directly. Further, the Beloved Disciple is presented in ideal terms that invite the audience to identify with his actions in the story.

These metaleptic elements pull the audience into the story and dissolve the boundaries between the narrative world and the world of the audience. So doing, the Fourth Gospel connects explicit Christology to implicit ethics by inviting believers to share in the unity with God that established Jesus's identity and determined his actions in the world. Together with the Gospel's metaleptic engagement of the audience, the extension of the encomiastic topics leads the audience to connect the clear characterization of Jesus first to the disciples in the story and then to their own identity, behavior, and mission. The situation of the Johannine community—its crisis of identity and the threat of persecution—provide an important interpretive backdrop for understanding the inward focus of the love command and the Gospel's emphasis on

Jesus's victorious suffering. In this light, the christological emphasis of the Fourth Gospel becomes the vehicle for its implicit ethic rather than a competing element. Rather than articulating specific ethical principles, the Fourth Gospel invites the audience to share in the unity that Jesus shares with the Father. This new identity and mission determines how the audience should act in the world.

Chapter Five investigated how the Fourth Gospel's appropriation of certain structural devices guides the interpretive process of the audience. This analysis showed that the macro-level trajectory of the story, presented in the prologue, reveals key themes that guide interpretation of the narrative: 1) elevated Christology grounded in unity with God, 2) God's mission for the world, 3) rejection of the *Logos*, and 4) life, light, and a share in unity with God for those who accept the *Logos*. The prologue sets the Johannine story within the larger interpretive context of God's commitment to restore the positive relationship between the created world and the Creator. Incarnation and reconciliation become guiding themes for interpretation.

Further, the chain-link interlock at the Gospel's midpoint provides a framework for understanding the Gospel's christological emphasis in light of Jesus's incarnational mission. It reinforces unity as a guiding theme for reading the two main sections of the Gospel and reiterates that God's mission is to reconcile the world to God's self. The retrospective link (12:37–50) looks back at the first half of the narrative and shows that this section focuses on Christology, establishing Jesus's unity with God. The anticipatory link (12:20–36) looks forward to the second half of the narrative and extends this unity to believers through Jesus's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and departure. Unity with God is revealed as the purpose of Jesus's work on earth and the power behind it. Jesus, in

unity with God, came to earth to reveal God and to invite believers to participate in this unity. Further, those who believe are called to extend this unity to the world at large. Thus, unity with God is both the enabling power for and the goal of Johannine ethics.

By introducing guiding themes, these structural devices provide interpretive boundaries for understanding the concepts of identity and mission that are determinative for the community's ethics. To conclude the chapter, we utilized these themes as guidelines to answer two lingering questions regarding ethics in the Fourth Gospel in light of its macro-level narrative rhetorical trajectory: 1) Is the love command issued within the context of a sectarian community that is an exclusive group? And 2) If a broader scope can be established, is the Fourth Gospel interested in the spiritual dimension to the neglect of attention to physical welfare? By clarifying the various types of sectarian communities and their posture toward the outside world and comparing the sectarian language found in the *Community Rule* to that in the Fourth Gospel, we found that the Gospel's dualistic language, which seems to hint at exclusivity, rather points to a mission for the hostile world outside. While the Johannine dualism resembles the language of sectarian communities and reflects the hostility of the community's present situation, it does not prescribe the way that community ought to approach the outside world. The strong insider/outsider language and the command for mutual love was a necessary reinforcement for a group in need of a community identity.

Despite the emphasis on mutual love within community boundaries, the Johannine community should not be considered a closed sectarian group. Although the love command explicitly directs mutual love within the group, the rhetorical trajectory of the Gospel as a whole reveals in-group love as a means to fulfil God's mission for the

whole world. Thus, while the narrative shows awareness of hostility from the outside, it nonetheless works to break down the sharp "us and them" distinction.

Further, the prologue's emphasis on the incarnate *Logos* establishes the significance of the physical world. Just as mutual love within the community would have entailed physical acts of service and attention to the physical welfare of group members (exemplified in Jesus's physical service in washing the disciples' feet and sacrificing his very life), so the larger mission for the world calls for such care for outsiders as well. The emphasis on spiritual matters, particularly belief in Jesus, reflects the hallmark of this community's identity and the means of their unity with Jesus, his Father, and his mission for the world. Thus, the main themes of the macro-level narrative affirm the moral efficacy of the Fourth Gospel uncovered by the previous rhetorical analyses.

The Gospel's Relationship with the Johannine Epistles

Although we have treated the Gospel of John on its own terms, we will briefly address another important literary relationship: the relationship between the Gospel and the Johannine Epistles. The majority of Johannine scholarship sees the Epistles as emerging from the same Johannine group as the Gospel, even if they do not share the same author.[2] Theories about how the texts are related, however, vary greatly. Because 1 John is more substantial in size, it has received the most attention among the letters. Theories on how 2 and 3 John relate to 1 John also vary.[3]

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[2] Some, like Judith Lieu (*I, II, and III John: A Commentary*, NTL [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008]), prefer to view the Epistles independently, suggesting that the letters draw on similar tradition as the Gospel but are not directly related to it.

[3] For an extremely thorough and helpful summary of the history of scholarship on the relationship between the Gospel and 1 John, see R. Alan Culpepper, "The Relationship between the Gospel of John and 1 John," in *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper

Perhaps most popular is Brown's view that the Elder wrote his letter after the Gospel was largely completed. Thus, the letters assume and build upon the theological tradition from the Gospel, and at times they respond to interpretations of the Gospel.[4] If this is the case, the Letter in some ways affirms the reading of the Gospel's implicit ethics that we have presented here. For example, where the Gospel leaves the specific actions required by the love command implicit, 1 John 3:16-18 clarifies:

> By this we know love—that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. Whoever has the world's (resources for) life and sees his or her brother or sister having need and closes his or her heart to them—how does the love of God remain in them? Little children, let us not love with word or tongue, but with work and faithfulness.[5]

This letter describes a community who fleshed out the abstract idea of "love one another" in terms of tangible ethical care. Emphasizing Christology, 1 John suggests that proper behavior flows from proper belief in Jesus Christ (1 John 2:3-6, 29).

At the same time, however, 1 John more strongly emphasizes that the love command is focused on those within the community (1 John 2:9-11), even going so far as to command *not* to love the ignorant world that doesn't know the children of God because it did not know God (1 John 2:15; 3:1; 4:5-6). The writer speaks of another

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and Paul N. Anderson, SBL: Early Christianity and its Literature 13 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014), 95–121, especially the chart on pp. 117-19.

[4] Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, vol. 30, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 30-35; R. Alan Culpepper, "Setting the Stage: The Context for the Conversation," in *Communities in Dispute*, 3–17; Urban C. von Wahlde, "Raymond Brown's View of the Crisis of 1 John: In the Light of Some Peculiar Features of the Johannine Gospel," in *Communities in Dispute*, 19–46; Lund, "Joys and Dangers"; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Der erste Johannesbrief*, EKK 23.1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991); Horst Hahn, *Tradition und Neuinterpretation im ersten Johannesbrief* (Zurich: TVZ, 2009).

[5] The contrast between λόγῳ/γλώσσῃ and ἔργῳ/ἀληθείᾳ highlights the difference between speech, which has no direct tangible effect, and deeds, which are directly tangible. Thus, I prefer "faithfulness" for ἀληθείᾳ since "truth" or "sincerity" seems to reference a philosophical dimension rather than a tangible one. "Faithfulness" carries with it the idea of an appropriate action that follows from a certain relationship or promise.

group that has gone out from the community. This group appears to have denied that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:18-22). The members of this group are called "children of the devil;" they do not do right nor do they love their brothers and sisters (1 John 3:10). Their lack of love reveals that they do not know God, they were not born of God, and they do not love God (1 John 4:7-8, 20).[6] Thus, it appears that the letters do not continue the inclusive trajectory that we have presented here, rather, they draw even sharper boundaries between community insiders and outsiders.

If our reading of the Gospel's implicit inclusive ethic is right, how do we explain this departure by the Letters? On the one hand, we can recognize that the Johannine Letters respond to a different situation than does the Gospel. As we have seen, the Gospel addresses the need for mutual love within the community because of hostility from an outside group, namely the synagogue leaders. The Letters, on the other hand, address the problem of a schism from within the group.[7] The emphasis on fighting the schism and keeping the group together leads to harsh language concerning those who have left the community (1 John 2:18-19, 22) and to strong caution against love of "the world" (1 John 2:15-17). As Craig Keener argues in the introduction to his commentary, the "different *Sitz im Leben* alone would be sufficient to account for the differences between the Gospel and the Epistles."[8]

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[6] 2 John also cautions against welcoming any member of this group, whom he calls "the deceiver and the antichrist" (2 John 7).

[7] Keener, The Gospel of John: A Commentary, 1:126.

[8] Ibid. For more on the particular crises reflected in the Epistles see Anderson, "Antichristic Erros" and "Antichristic Crises" in vol. 1 of *Text and Community: Essays in Commemeration of Bruce M. Metzger* (ed. J. Harold Ellens; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 196-216 and 217-240.

Paul Anderson's suggestion that the Epistles were written after the first edition of the Gospel but before the final version can also be helpful here.[9] In Anderson's reconstruction, key elements of the Gospel's rhetorical emphasis on the inclusive mission (particularly the Prologue and the Farewell Address) were only introduced after the writing of the Epistles.[10] Thus, the Epistles reflect a reading of the Fourth Gospel *not* guided by those key rhetorical points. On this reading, the addition of these rhetorical guides in the later redaction of the Gospel can be seen as a corrective to the misreading of the Gospel.

Further, many scholars have found the implicit ethical insights in the Gospel to be reflected in 1 John. Jan van der Watt, for example describes 1 John's presentation of ethics in terms of fellowship, presenting the family as a social basis for motivating ethics, and following the example of Jesus as the guiding principle for ethics.[11] All of these are themes that emerge in rhetorically sensitive readings of the Gospel. In his reading, William Loader emphasizes 1 John's interest to address the ethical concern of care for the poor and to promote practical ethics that work to meet the needs of others.[12] Such an emphasis may be understood as a response to the Gospel's unarticulated love command. David Rensberger's reading summarizes the Epistle's ethical theology with the idea that

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[9] Paul N. Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership in the Johannine Situation," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 290–318.

[10] Ibid., 296.

[11] Jan G. van der Watt, "On Ethics in 1 John," in *Communities in Dispute*, 197–222.

[12] William Loader, "The Significance of 2:15-17 for Understanding the Ethics of 1 John," in *Communities in Dispute*, 223–36.

by loving one another, the community members continue God's work in the world.[13] Such an emphasis falls squarely in line with the macro-level narrative of the Gospel that invites believers into unity with God to join him in his mission for the world.

Some scholars contend that the Gospel was written after the Epistles or roughly simultaneously to them.[14] In this scenario, the Gospel might assume, expand upon, and clarify the Epistles. Thus, the inclusive mission emphasized by the Gospel's rhetoric might offer a corrective response to the harsh boundaries drawn in the Epistle. Further, the background of the Epistles would make the unarticulated love command easier to understand, since the practical ethical implications of the command had already been clearly explained in the letter. Further, the Gospel can be seen to respond to the Christological debate represented in the Letters. On this reading, the Gospel explicitly emphasizes Jesus's elevated Christology at every turn because it was essential to clarify the Christology presented in the Letters.[15]

The various proposals for the relationship between the Gospel and the Letters bring forward different affirmations and challenges to our reading. Nevertheless, our reading of the Fourth Gospel's implicit ethics exhibits the necessary tenacity to stand amongst the various formulations.

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[13] David K. Rensberger, "Completed Love: 1 John 4:11-18 and the Mission of the New Testament Church," in *Communities in Dispute*, 237–74.

[14] One argument for this scenario comes from Udo Schnelle (*Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 228) who notices that the Gospel offers a more fully developed response to the antidocetic response of 1 John.

[15] Ibid., "Ethical Theology in 1 John," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John*, 321-39.

What Can We Say About Johannine Ethics?

Taken together, these rhetorical features reveal a code of conduct that revolves around the believers' incorporation into the unity shared between the Father and the Son. This analysis has demonstrated that there is much we *can* say about Johannine ethics. Though it does not specify many particular behaviors, the Fourth Gospel narrative provides a standard by which the community should assess its practices. Because the Fourth Gospel does not present a fixed code or system of rules, ethical living does not entail adherence to a set of clearly defined principles. When we explore the Johannine narrative, we discover a morality established and enlivened through participation in mystical union with God, an ethic that invites the community into God's mission of reconciliation for the world.

Consequently, the Fourth Gospel presents a flexible approach to ethics for a struggling community. The story sets the stage for the community to do this work and establishes the necessary understanding of identity so that they can do it well. Even where the Fourth Gospel gives specific practical ethical instructions (e.g., the foot washing and the love command), it emphasizes relational unity with Jesus. Central to the Johannine presentation of ethics is the idea that Jesus's unity with the Father is extended to the believers. This unity offers the believers a new identity and mission that determines their actions in the world.

To articulate Johannine ethics, we must move beyond the narrative world of the Fourth Gospel to explore how the audience might have appropriated the ethical principles embedded in the story. Given the rhetorical situation, fraught with conflict, the Johannine community needed confirmation of their identity and a framework within which to

understand their suffering. The narrative shows that unity with Jesus and mutual love within the community empowers the audience to join Jesus in fulfilling God's mission for the world even in their difficult circumstances. The rhetorical trajectory of the Gospel moves the audience to continue believing, to embrace their identity in unity with Jesus, to act in ways that build a mutually-supportive community, and finally to extend that inner-community love to the world outside in pursuit of God's mission to reconcile the world to God's self.

Practically, this implicit ethic would lead the community to engage collectively in discerning ethical parameters guided by this identity and mission.[16] That there is risk involved in such implicit ethics cannot be denied. However, a few mitigating factors can be mentioned briefly here. First of all, this process would likely begin with the long-held values of the Torah as a foundation.[17] The implicit ethics of John's Gospel would also necessitate a catechetical dimension wherein informed teachers would pass along correct interpretation to the larger community. Through the guidance of the Spirit, the community's ethics would develop as they considered the corporate memory of Jesus, the welfare of the community, and the mission to open the community to a diverse world.[18] Beyond this, community practices would affirm and consistently establish proper boundaries of understanding and properly applying the Gospel message. Foot washing, a distinct practice of the Johannine community, would thus ground the implicit ethics

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[16] Paul N. Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership in the Johannine Situation," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann, WUNT 291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 307.

[17] Lund, "Joys and Dangers," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John*, 264-89.

[18] See Lund, "Joys and Dangers," 280-81 and Paul N. Anderson, "Discernment-Oriented Leadership in the Johannine Situation."

delivered in the Gospel, serving as a tangible reminder to the community of the importance of unity, the mission for the world, and humble service or sacrifice as a means to that end.

Rhetorically speaking, the narrative has an engaging effect for the audience that engenders allegiance and is itself empowering, even when the message would have been a challenging one given their experience of persecution. Thus, the Johannine narrative responds to the audience's unique experience of being ostracized and persecuted by emphasizing an ethic rooted in identity, reaffirming community, and incorporating suffering and costly service as a means to fulfil their community mission.

Indeed, the Fourth Gospel is not an ethical treatise, but careful analysis of the narrative reveals a distinct, if implicit, ethic. Participating in the *bios* genre and taking the form of an encomiastic narrative, the story grounds the hero's exalted status in his connection with God, his Father. Through metaleptic elements in the narrative, the story extends the encomiastic topics, which established Jesus's exalted identity, to the followers of Jesus and to the Johannine audience. Thus, as Jesus's connection with the Father forms the basis of his actions, the believers' connection to God and his mission for the world becomes the basis for living properly. It can be therefore said that the believers' union with God via their union with Jesus represents the center of Johannine ethics. Johannine Christology is essential to Johannine ethics. More than a simple invitation to imitation, the audience is invited to share in the unity that Jesus shares with the Father and to share in Jesus's identity and mission. The christological emphasis elicits belief, which establishes a new identity for the believers and brings them into an imitable mission.

As the Fourth Gospel emphasizes Jesus's identity for the purpose of bringing people into unity with God, it also emphasizes the community's new identity for the purpose of extending that unity to the world. The focus on identity was necessary given the situation of persecution, which otherwise would lead to an internal focus for survival. Analysis of the prologue and the chain-link interlock reveals an implicit ethic rooted in the Gospel's macro-level narrative of God's love for the world and commitment to reconcile the world to God's self. The narrative, which begins by describing the unity between God and the *Logos*, continues on a trajectory where that unity is extended to Jesus's followers and to the world at large.

Herein lies the Johannine moral efficacy: through John's narrative, the Gospel audience is invited into unity with God and charged to complete God's mission. With this larger mission in mind, interpreters can articulate the implicit Johannine ethic. With its elevated Christology, the Fourth Gospel offers an identity-making narrative for a community in crisis. With its elusive ethics, the Fourth Gospel engages and empowers the struggling audience to join in a mission bigger than their own suffering.

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