Witnessing women of the fourth gospel: The centrality of marginality.

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"WITNESSING WOMEN OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL:
THE CENTRALITY OF MARGINALITY."

by

Ruth Elizabeth Lavery

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of
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ABSTRACT

WITNESSING WOMEN IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL: THE CENTRALITY OF MARGINALITY

by

Ruth Elizabeth Lavery

This is an examination of the stories of women in the Fourth Gospel to ascertain whether it is possible to make sociological statements based only on the received text. Part One surveys the research and compares the methodologies of various critics. One of the more important observations in this section is the apparent confusion between literary device and sociological reality.

Part Two is an analysis of the prologue (which sets the theological agenda), the women's stories, and those of the blindman and Nicodemus. These are examined by style characteristics, vocabulary and levels of meanings. The identification of the pre-Johannine and the Johannine material was attempted.

It was noted that the basic women's stories share the common theme of belief followed by witness whereas the themes of light/life, insider/outsider are Johannine. We concluded that the evangelist found a collection of women's witness accounts from which he chose his examples.

Part Three compares parallel communities, such as the ancient schools, to the Johannine group. The symbolic systems identified by Eliade and Douglas as well as the
insider/outsider imagery used by Meeks are examined and
Johannine similarities are identified.

We noted the manner in which John used the source
material in accordance with his symbolic plan. One example
is the light/life dichotomy (male/female). In the stories
where the theme mainly concerns light, sight, knowledge, the
evangelist uses a male character. But, when the theme is
about eternal life the character chosen is a woman.

The evangelist portrays the Johannine community as out­
siders to the world, while the Jews represent the insiders
in the author’s format. It seems easier for those on the
periphery of society to become part of the Johannine commun­
ity. Presumably foreigners, beggars and women believed more
readily.

Since the women’s stories matched Olrik’s characterist­
ics of oral genre it was concluded that they probably emerg­
ed from a women’s group. The pre-Johannine stress seems to
be on their missionary work. But, the Johannine level uses
them in the same category as blindmen and beggars (outsid­
ers). What seems to surface could be indicating changing
attitudes within the community with the passing of time.

Further research beyond the text is necessary in order
to develop these findings.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many times during the two years involved in this project I have had to answer the question "why are you doing this?". Often the only answer appeared to be, "for my own amazement", because I did not know where it was all leading.

I wish to express my grateful appreciation and humble thanks to all those who assisted me in this work. Although they are too numerous to mention individually, yet, there are a few whose efforts on my behalf must be cited.

First and foremost I wish to thank my thesis director, Dr. John Kloppenborg, whose exacting demands, limitless patience and fund of resources enabled me to complete this. Next, I thank my departmental second reader, Dr. Pam Milne, whose incisive criticism, keen interest and valuable advice gave me deeper perspectives to examine. Then, the willingness of Dr. Lois Smedick to become my third reader, with very little notice, demands special mention.

Another outstanding contribution to this project was the gift of a computer from my son-in-law Mr. David Cross. Thank you David. Thank you Elizabeth for marrying him. I must also thank the rest of the family, Bruce, Sandy, Lynne, Ron, June Scot for understanding when I seemed to be ignoring family while involved with my books and my studies.

Finally, none of it would have come together at all if my beloved roommate had not carefully and painstakingly done all my typing and computing. Thank you Lloyd.
In the past twenty-five years much effort has been expended reinterpreting the received text of the Bible with a feminist perspective. Often this has been done in an effort to justify the ordination of women, or to acknowledge women's rights as equals in today's church. Many of these studies reassessed the meanings of words and actions in biblical passages involving women. At times the definitions were stretched to the limit.

While I am in total agreement with these endeavors, this is not my area of interest. Rather, I wished to delve into the deeper levels of some particular texts to see if anything would give a clue as to what women were doing in the fledgling Christian communities. Since there is evidence of the activity of women in other ancient religions (witches, priestesses, etc.), it seemed likely that Christianity was no exception. Over the centuries there has been a concerted effort to expunge the evidence of women's leadership. However, I was searching for clues that would show any activity of women in the early years of the movement.

The Fourth Gospel was chosen because so many critics maintained that this gospel gave women a much higher profile than did the Synoptics. Therefore, it seemed important to find out why it was different, and whether there were items of significance pointing to women beyond the surface definitions of words. How any of this could be applied to the present church was not in my agenda.
In the world's broad field of battle,
   In the bivouac of life,
You will find the Christian soldier
   Represented by his wife.

Author Unknown
PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE QUESTION OF DISCIPLESHIP IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The distinctive profile of Jesus' disciples in the Fourth Gospel is an issue which has occupied the attention of recent NT scholarship. Within this group of disciples in John, women seem to have a higher position compared to that in the Synoptics. The Synoptics regularly use the terms "disciple", "apostle", and "The Twelve". The latter two have the effect of restricting the role of disciple to an easily definable, all-male group, who are named.

John uses the word *apostolos* only once and in a non-technical sense.¹ "The Twelve" are referred to four times in relatively minor positions,² and the designation of disciple appears to include many persons other than those mentioned in the Synoptics. This designation seems to include women. Because John's focus is not upon "The Twelve", there exists the possibility of a much broader concept of discipleship. The Fourth Gospel leaves the group undefined and unrestricted, thus providing options in the community which would be different than in strongly hierarchical groups.

Throughout the Fourth Gospel we are confronted by the marginalizing of the "The Twelve" tradition and the widen-
ing of the circle of Jesus' followers. There is no reference
to James and John, Bartholomew, Levi, Thaddeus. Yet, names
which are unknown in the Synoptics appear in high profile:
Nathaniel, Nicodemus, Lazarus. Nathaniel is important enough
that the story of his "call" is recorded, but oddly, he is
never mentioned outside of John. The Samaritan woman is an­
other whose missionary work is given prominence in the
Fourth Gospel but is not visible elsewhere.

It is not just the larger group of "The Twelve" whose
position is attenuated. In John there seems to be a deliber­
ate attempt to de-emphasize the role which Peter plays in
the Synoptic tradition. In the call story Mark (Mark 1:16)
mentions Simon Peter first and then Andrew, but John 1:40
has Andrew bringing Simon. This tends to make Simon's role
more passive. The contrast is even greater between Luke
5:1-11 where Peter assumes a central role and its apparent
parallel in John 21 which emphasizes the beloved disciple
at the expense of Peter.

In the Synoptics, Peter appears as spokesman for "The
Twelve" on various occasions and also assumes a leadership
role. In John this is not the case, even though he makes the
declaration of belief in John 6:68-69. It is apparent that
in the footwashing scene (13:6-9) Peter does not seem to
grasp the symbolism nor does he ask Jesus directly about the
betrayer (13:24-26). The Fourth Gospel is the only account
that identifies Peter as the misguided disciple who cut off
the soldier's ear (18:10). While all four gospels tell the
story of Peter's denial, the Synoptics indicate that he recognized his failure and wept. In the Johannine narrative (18:27), there is no hint of remorse, or that he noticed the crowning of the cock.

In chapter 20 Peter takes a secondary place even to the point of arriving at the tomb after the beloved disciple. He then fails to grasp the significance of the empty tomb. Considering the Johannine Jesus' statement, "My sheep know my voice..." (10:4), one could almost conclude in chapter 21 that Peter was less an intimate of Jesus than the beloved disciple who identifies the voice and tells Peter, "...it is the Lord!" (21:7).

If the function of a disciple in John is to follow Jesus (12:26), receive his teachings in more than an occasional fashion (5:24; 10:1-18), as well as participate in witnessing (3:28; 15:27) and missionary work (4:38; 17:18; 20:21), then the Fourth Gospel appears very inclusive. In John we find women, Samaritans, other non-Jews, and beggars filling this role. The chief prerequisite is that a person must "believe in Jesus' name" (John 1:12). Because of the openness of the above criteria for discipleship, an hierarchical system is precluded. Therefore, the exclusivity of "The Twelve" as recorded in the Synoptics does not appear to be a factor in the Fourth Gospel.

Recent scholarship has attempted, in a variety of ways, to discover the manner in which women functioned in the Johannine community. One means of doing this is by trying to
find evidence to support the theory that the author might be female. Because Martha is featured in John uttering the words ascribed to Peter in the Synoptics, "...yes Lord, ...you are the Christ, the Son of God" (John 11:27), Fiorenza (who refers to the writer of John as she/he) suggests that this might identify her with the writer of the book. If so, it might indicate some sort of equality in the group, but as she points out the identity of the author is unknowable. The only reference to it in the gospel is John 21:24 (redactional) where the writer is referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

R. E. Brown, Sandra Schneiders and others contend that stories of the Samaritan Woman (4:4-42), Mary/Martha (11:1-45) and Mary Magdalene (20:1-18) signify a community in which women took a part equal to that of men. This would imply, presumably, that there was no dominant male hierarchy.

John indeed appears to give special attention to female characters, but a number of explanations could be offered to explain this phenomenon. (1) The data may be a reflection of the social configuration of the community. Brown and Schneiders take this view arguing that John's church had a unique structural arrangement where women played a significant and central role. (2) The prominence of women may be a function of John's theology and operate on a primarily literary/theological level. (3) It is possible that an hierarchy legitimated by the "The Twelve" tradition
of the Synoptics was absent. The prominence of persons other than "The Twelve" (including women) may function on the literary/theological plane but this might serve as a subtle polemic against the overly hierarchical tradition of others. Each of these possibilities has already been explored by one or more scholars. We will examine some of these studies in more detail. However, there is a further possibility that none of the explanations is adequate and a new approach is necessary. Before opting for a new approach it is important to fully evaluate the directions already taken on this question.

Wayne Meeks states that it is difficult to make generalizations about the place of women in the hellenistic society of Imperial times. There was a heightened awareness of the differentiation of male and female, and traditional roles were no longer taken for granted. There were bitter reactions taking the form of misogyny. Philo was a blatant example of this, using the images of women to express weakness, deception etc. he placed them lower than men.

In the Pastoral Epistles woman is purported to be the cause of man's fall from grace since Genesis 2. Adam was formed first and was not deceived, whereas Eve was formed second and was deceived, and became a transgressor (1 Tim 2:13,14). Woman will be saved through bearing children if she acts in faith, love, holiness and modesty (1 Tim 2:15). Presumably woman in her natural state is equated with the
"Fall". Man, by comparison appears exemplary "because he was not deceived".

It is not necessary for a community to have equality in leadership in order to have an active women's group. Women could have been involved in the activities of witnessing and ministering and still be discriminated against in leadership. Their activities might have been restricted so that they worked only with other women. It is possible the closest first and second century women came to religious status elevation was through the denial of their femininity and not being denigrated. In much of the gnostic literature this was the way it appeared.

In the various studies and commentaries which assert the importance of the role of women in the Johannine Church, one of the main points which appears to have been overlooked is the distinction between literary roles and sociological reality. Many writers seem to assume that sociological data can be read from literary roles. Before any decisions can be made concerning the status of the community, the issue of the literary role versus sociological reality must be faced. While it is tempting to "read" twentieth century egalitarian ideas into these ancient texts, nevertheless there is a difference between the dramatic devices used, and real life. The stories of women may indicate a high status for women in the religious community, but it is equally possible that the women function merely as foils for John's theological views.
STATE OF THE PROBLEM

Three different approaches have been used to study the issue of women in John. One approach has been to draw conclusions from the Gospel text itself. A second is to compare John's community with parallel groups and situations, such as gnosticism, and the Synoptic communities. A third is to make assumptions based on sociographic information, historical data, and other non-biblical texts, and to infer that similar conditions existed in John. We will briefly examine the work of several critics who have approached the subject in each of these three ways.

I ARGUMENTS FROM JOHANNINE DATA

1. SANDRA SCHNEIDERS

In an article entitled "Women in the Fourth Gospel and the Role of Women in the Contemporary Church", Sandra Schneiders suggests that a male-oriented reading has obscured the high valuation placed on women in the Fourth Gospel. She contends that this can only be corrected by a deliberate and sustained effort to:

...revalorize that which has been ignored, to surface that which has been suppressed and to interpret correctly that which has been falsified.

Schneiders makes some observations to illustrate her point concerning women in the Gospel of John. First, they
are presented positively and in intimate relation to Jesus (4:7-41; 11:5-44; 12:2-8; 20:11-18). This is in sharp contrast to men (9:24-41; 12:4-6; 13:2-3, 37, 38). Secondly, the women appear as "strikingly individual and original characters" in contrast to the "shadowy figures" of the men who are close to them (p. 38). Compare Nicodemus with the Samaritan woman; Lazarus with Martha and Mary; the disciples with Mary Magdalene. Schneiders continues by saying that the author was certainly rich in depth and understanding of women. Her reasons for this observation are the "great detail" given, and the sensitivity in their stories compared to the men's. The third characteristic of the Johannine women is the unconventional roles they play. As an example, she points to the lack of embarrassment on the part of the Samaritan woman over her many husbands (4:16); Martha running the funeral of Lazarus (11:1-44), a role which would typically be done by a male; Mary of Bethany anointing the feet of Jesus over Judas' protests (12:1-7); Mary Magdalene roaming alone in a darkened cemetery. Further, "they do not appear dependent on husbands or other male legitimators, nor as seeking permission for their activities from male officials".

Another important feature is that they are the privileged recipients of two of Jesus' most important self-revelations: his messiahship (to the Samaritan woman, 4:25,26) and that he is the resurrection and the life (to Mary Magdalene, 11:25). She observes that two women hold the
place occupied by Peter in the Synoptics - Martha as "confessor of the faith" (11:27), and Mary Magdalene as recipient of the Easter protophany and commission (20:16). Thus women are the most important witnesses both during his public life and during his "hour". 14

For Schneiders these points lead to suggestions concerning the actual roles of women in the Johannine community. She argues that it is fair to assume that real women were behind these characters. Her conclusion is that the women in at least one of the earliest communities were fully participating and highly valued members, and notes two examples of Jesus effectively suppressing male objections concerning women (4:27-28; 12:7). In spite of her statement on p. 38, "...no claims are being made that the evangelist intended to present women in this way or even realized he was doing it.", she further asserts:

It suggests that the evangelist considered such feminine behaviour as fully according to the mind of Jesus...the text as it stands is significant for what it plainly says about the discipleship of Christian women regardless of time and place. 15

2. RAYMOND BROWN 16.

Like Schneiders, Raymond Brown is concerned with the problem of the applicability of New Testament data to contemporary theological and disciplinary matters (women's ordination). With this in mind, he too suggests various ways of approaching the study of the roles of women. The one that he prefers is to consider a general picture of women in the Gospel of John and in the Johannine community. Brown states,
...while maintaining that the evangelist has tradition about the ministry of Jesus, I take for granted that he reports the tradition through the optic of his own times, so that he tells us something about the role of women in his own community.

Brown bases his arguments on three axes. First, he makes the observation concerning equivalences in theological function. The Samaritan brings the villagers whom she convinces by her words (dia tou logou pisteuein). He points out that the same phrase is used in 4:39-42 and 17:20 in connection with male disciples. This indicates for Brown not only the importance of the women's role to the total mission in the Fourth Gospel, but the similarity to the men's role.

Secondly, he notes the linguistic usages which he compares to the Pauline and Post-Pauline churches. He points out that diakonein (12:2) is related to diakonos (deacon) and diakonia (service). Since John was writing in the 90's when the office of diakonos already existed, Brown says the word could have ecclesial significance.

Finally he mentions the writer's seeming lack of discrimination against women in his portraiture and literary function. The Fourth Gospel has women in the same relationship to Jesus as "The Twelve." If disciples are the sheep who know his voice (John 10:27), then women qualify. In 20:6 Mary Magdalene recognizes the risen Jesus by the sound of his voice; therefore Mary is one of his sheep. In spite of the fact that there are only a few incidents involving women, Brown concludes that they indicate a community in
which men and women were on an equal level, and in the "things that mattered" there was no difference between male and female. 

3. ELISABETH SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA

Elisabeth Schüessler Fiorenza begins with the theology of discipleship in John and draws social conclusions. A comparison is made between the churches of Mark and John who suffered persecution. Both groups are concerned about discipleship, but concentrate on different aspects. The focus is on suffering discipleship in Mark, but John's is on altruistic love and service. Disciples in John are called to give public witness to the life-giving power of God's love revealed in Jesus. This type of love will indict the hatred and death-dealing powers of this world.

Fiorenza points out that John grants all members of the community to have received the spirit (20:22); are born anew; and have received the power of the new creation (3:3-9). The resurrected Lord appears to all (20:24-30), and the mission is carried out by all (20:21). Further, the community understands itself primarily as a community of disciples whose leader is the beloved disciple. It is constituted as a community of equals who witness to this fact by the love that they have for each other. This discipleship is inclusive of men and women who function rather prominently.
According to Fiorenza, the shock of the disciples over Jesus' talk with the Samaritan woman indicates that other groups of Christians did not agree with the preeminence of women in the Johannine community. She asserts that his use of the word *gynai* (woman) to address all women, including his mother, was to distance himself from family connections. This would then place everyone on the same level. Finally she observes that the women always respond to Jesus in faith, and adduces a parallel between Andrew calling Peter, and Martha calling Mary.25

ASSESSMENT OF BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

The evidence that Schneiders, Brown, and Fiorenza muster clearly indicates that women are treated in a distinctive fashion. However it would be difficult to base sociological conclusions on this. Schneiders' statement, that women are presented positively and in close relation to Jesus, is also true in the Synoptics. The Syro-Phoenician (Mark 7:25-30) and the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34) are presented positively, with no intermediaries bringing them to Jesus. Her assertions that the women are "strikingly individual" could be said about Synoptic women. The Syro-Phoenician who brazens her way into the house; the woman with "the issue" who was ritually unclean but still appeared with the group; and the picture of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet as a disciple are not typical of the time. As for Mary Magdalene being recipient of the Easter protophany.
and commission, Matthew also records a protophany (Matt. 28:9-10). The Synoptics tell us that Mary Magdalene and the women were first to the tomb, which is similar to the story in John.

Brown's first observation concerning the usage of the words dia tou logou pisteuein is perhaps a significant point, but is weak by itself because there was more to discipleship than just witnessing. John the Baptist functioned as a witness to Jesus, but he was not a disciple. His second assertion concerning the word diakonos would also apply in Mark 1:31 and Luke 10:39-42. This raises two questions. When does diakonos imply an ecclesial function and not a daily chore? And, if it means the same in John and Luke, why is John singled out as special? His final point that the relationship of Jesus to women is the same as to "The Twelve" makes one wonder if Luke is also a community of equals. Nothing could be more explicit than Jesus' defense of Mary's right to discipleship (Luke 10:32). In spite of these references to an elevated status for Mary, her name does not appear amongst "The Twelve", nor is she included with the men. However, Paul speaks of a female apostle in Rom 16:7 which may indicate an earlier more inclusive convention in some of the communities making John not exceptional.

Fiorenza's reasons for maintaining an elevated status for women within the Johannine community apply as well to the Synoptics. Jesus stresses sacrificial service in Mark
(Mark 10:43); the risen Lord appears to several in the community in the Synoptics (Luke 24:36); Jesus stresses equality of relationships in Mark (Mark 3:31-35). Therefore, as with Brown's arguments, those presented by Fiorenza concerning John are not unique to that group.

Granted, there is something different about the women's stories in John. First, in each case, the narrative tends to be more developed than those found in the Synoptics. If we compare John 4:4-42 with Mark 7:25-30, both accounts record a dialogue and encounter of a foreign woman with Jesus. However, the evangelist in John has developed the story by including two discourses (on living water 4:10-15, and on mission 4:32-38). Second, there is a function of witness in each women's segment in John which is not present in either the men's stories or the Synoptic women's tales. It is important to investigate material other than the biblical text to see if analogies to the literature and historical data can be found.

II HISTORY OF RELIGION ANALOGIES

THE GNOSTIC CONNECTION

A second approach to the question of the position of women in John depends on comparing this Gospel with texts offering partial theological parallels. Since Rudolph Bultmann, the Fourth Gospel has been compared with gnostic or proto-gnostic documents. In his commentary on John, he
observed an early type of gnosticism in the Prologue. He claimed that 1:1-5, 9, 12b, 14, 16, was a gnostic hymn. His further contention is that a considerable part of the gospel was not originally Christian. Rather, it was documents and stories from the circle of John the Baptist.

Bultmann does not consider and specifically treat the question of women. However, he does say that Mary Magdalene, Martha/Mary and the Samaritan Woman are mediatrixes of revelation. The Samaritan woman was the means of revealing the reality of Jesus (the Revealer of God), Martha/Mary functions this way in the confession of belief; Mary Magdalene reveals the identity and reality of Jesus' glorification. Bultmann does not discuss the possibility that gnosticism was less concerned with male/female cultic differences which permitted female mediators. However, if indeed gnostic communities were less status conscious, and if indeed there is gnostic influence present in John, this would present a possible explanation for John's distinctive features. According to Robert Kysar the issue of gnostic influence is still ongoing, therefore the investigation of gnostic literature and society is important.

1. K. RUDOLPH

K. Rudolph assumes an important role for women in most gnostic communities and asserts that the "equal standing of women in cultic practice... appears to be widespread". Tertullian "waxed wroth" because both "laity" and "women"
were permitted to take leading positions. 31 Marcus the Valentinian leader, was said to be "devoted" to women. 32 The percentage of women in his group was evidently very high. Rudolph observes that this reveals gnosis offered prospects to women otherwise barred in the official church. 33

There is also evidence of the denigration of women. The example given is Gospel of Thomas Log. 114A which says "Let Mary go out from among us, because women are not worthy of life", and 114C, "...For every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven". The Gospel of Philip blamed the division of the sexes on woman (N.H.C. II:68[116] 22-26). However Rudolph claims this devaluation was compensated for by the activity of women in the life of the community, 34 and that the larger role ascribed to the female in gnostic mythology (such as Sophia) was significant. This meant, according to Rudolph, that women could hold high positions as teachers, prophetesses, missionaries, and in the cult. 35

The most important point in his study is the observation that there was no centralized authority and no system of hierarchies. 36 This meant that the possibility of equal participation by men and women existed.

2. E. PAGELS 37

E. Pagels uses most of the same data quoted by Rudolph to draw social inferences from literary works. In Dialogue of the Saviour, Mary Magdalene is included as one
of three disciples chosen to receive special teaching. She is praised above Thomas and Matthew, because "she spoke as one who knew the All" (Dial. Sav. 39:12-13). Rivalry between Mary and the male disciples is evident in the Gospel of Philip (63:32-64,65) where they question why Jesus loves her the most. In the Gospel of Mary, Peter demands to know why Jesus tells her the most, and he resents her speaking in Pistis Sophia. Jesus' reply is important to the gnostic picture, says Pagels. "...whoever the spirit inspires is divinely ordained to speak, whether man or woman". (Pistis Sophia 6.71).

Pagels argues that there is a correlation between religious theory and social practice. She suggests that the activity of the women in the gnostic communities challenged the leaders of the orthodox Christian communities and this is reflected in these gnostic texts. Orthodox groups retaliated with alleged "apostolic" letters and dialogues that make the opposite point (1st and 2nd Timothy, Colossians, Ephesians) which insist on the subordination of women.

Pagels also believes that the gnostics formulated their description of God in both masculine and feminine terms according to Gen. 1. This would translate into "androgy nous terms" in society. The orthodox pattern was taken from Genesis 2 which describes God in masculine images. This explains the male domination as being divinely ordained.

In the earliest years of the Christian movement she claims there was an openness to women which disappeared,
except in these gnostic communities. At a time when orthodox churches were discriminating between clergy and laity, male and female, the gnostic Christians refused to accept these discriminations. They followed a strict equality of all in cultic duties by casting lots to decide on roles of priest, bishop or prophet at each meeting. This removed the human element and left the choice to God. At the same time it would eliminate sexual discrimination.

3. ANOTHER VIEW OF GNOSTICISM

Pheme Perkins examines the gnostic literature, but comes to other conclusions. She is skeptical of those who use the antagonism between Mary Magdalene and Peter to uphold the idea of women's leadership. She refers specifically to E. Pagels' claim that it shows opposition to the male-dominated hierarchy. Mary Magdalene is the heroine of these writings because she is closely associated with Jesus, and not because she is a woman. The one thing that the gnostic writings share with other ancient ascetic writings is that femininity must be destroyed. Perkins sums it up by saying:

...that gnostics did not have the picture of the autonomous, differentiated creative self presupposed by Pagels. Such a view is largely the product of modern thought, and not second and third century people.

The male disciples as a group, except for James, are deficient and never come to gnosis. Peter's hostility, accord-
ing to Perkins, is simply because Mary was close to Jesus and he resented this.

J. R. Hoffman is also critical of Pagels and offers an alternate interpretation. The androgynous language is not a reflection of a particular social reality, but is a literary sign of the utter transcendence/remoteness of God. Whereas the human is either male or female, God is a dyad, and therefore "other." Salvation consists not in "sexual liberation", but repression. Since the division of the sexes represents part of the worldly allures, it must be obliterated. For Hoffman the feminine aspect of God (Sophia) functions in the cosmic realm much like Eve in the earthly realm. She is not the power of evil, but the occasion of evil. Eve was not herself the power of evil in the Genesis 2 account. However, in tempting the man to eat the fruit she is, in a certain sense, the "occasion of evil". She becomes the cause, or instigator of the rupture in the primal harmony.

Hoffman concludes that for these reasons, there is great doubt about Pagels' theories. He says it is extremely unlikely that gnostic imagery was a product of the concern to elevate the cultic status of women.

ASSESSMENT

The problems are many when the high profile of women in the Fourth Gospel is attributed to gnosticism. Because it is difficult to establish a strong strain of gnosticism in the
first century, one wonders whether second century gnostic practice could offer an historical insight into the Johannine Community. It is by no means certain that John is even incipiently gnostic. Moreover the examination of the gnostic record returns us to the original question: Is the prominence of women in John reflective of a unique social configuration, or only a literary device? Even if it indicates a social condition, it seems unlikely to be due to the influence of gnosticism where "femaleness" is to be crushed. Any evidence of an enhanced position for women in religious praxis in the gospel probably comes from other influences.

III OTHER EARLY COMMUNITIES

1. PATRICIA WILSON-KASTNER

According to Patricia Wilson-Kastner the effect of Christianity on women in the Roman Empire is uncertain. However she states, "unquestionably it released previously untapped well-springs of energy among women to whom the Gospel was preached." For example, with the exception of the poetry of Sulpicia, all of the writings by women in antiquity which we possess, or even know about, are by Christian women. The writings of these Christian women represent a distinct achievement when seen in the context of the Roman World, with its male teachers and rulers who patronized them.
In a letter written to Trajan in 111 CE, mention is made of two Christian ministrae or deaconesses.\textsuperscript{53} Even though the terminology for various offices was not fixed firmly at this point, it still seems to represent a recognized function. The order of widows and virgins was mentioned by Polycarp and others.\textsuperscript{54} Even Tertullian insisted that women could be martyrs as well as men, and entitled to the rights, privileges and spiritual gifts of the martyr.\textsuperscript{55} However, in his attitude to the actual conduct of the women Tertullian is much more misogynist. His one exception is the ecstatic prophetess who appears in his work after he became acquainted with Montanism.\textsuperscript{56} Wilson-Kastner observes that in spite of this, Tertullian never includes women in an hierarchy of the church.

In the New Testament record we do find women in leadership roles,\textsuperscript{57} but there is very little other evidence of women until the third century. There are exhortations as to how to fulfill duties, and the statement of Clement of Rome, "...many women invested with power through the grace of God, have accomplished many a manly deed",\textsuperscript{58} which indicates they were active, but we are not given specifics.

Wilson-Kastner presents "the Martyrdom of Perpetua" as an important document to assess concerning the roles of women. While most other accounts of Christian martyrs are either wholly or partly fictional, she claims this is an exception. The basic sections were written by Perpetua (a woman) and Saturus, two of the martyrs, while a redactor

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supplied the introduction and conclusion. According to Wilson-Kastner it is one of the earliest portrayals of Christian martyrdom as, "a powerful symbol of human liberation and self-fulfillment". Further, it is the earliest extant Christian literature written from a "feminine viewpoint". Her observation is that it demonstrates a prophetic movement within the church, in which leadership roles indicate a degree of male/female equality.

In spite of pleading by her father, Perpetua chooses to die rather than recant. In so doing she is able to transcend not only her fear of death, but also her expected role in society (this means, as with all of these women such as Perpetua and Thecla, it is necessary to give up everything, even life).

2. ROSEMARY RUBERTHER

Rosemary Ruether draws inferences from the story of Thecla, a female disciple of Paul, in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Thecla belonged to a popular ascetic Christianity that began as early as the first century. It was not gnostic and was apparently accepted by mainstream Christianity. Its heroes and martyrs were honored as saints for hundreds of years. In this group, as with some gnostic communities, women became men's spiritual equals by giving up their feminine aspects. Through chastity they became "like men". Thecla adopted this life-style after her conversion by
Paul. As a result all males except Paul are her enemies (Acta Pauli 3:27), while all females espouse her cause, even the female lions to whom she is thrown (Acta Pauli 3:32-35). She baptizes herself, cuts her hair, and dresses like a male. (Acta Pauli 3:40). Eventually Paul commissions her as an apostle. According to Ruether, this bears witness to a female-identified early Christianity.62

3. STEVAN DAVIES63

Stevan Davies carries the implications of the Apocryphal Acts even farther. He contends that these texts derive from communities of continent Christian women.64 These women were widows of their church, who were adherents of apostles. They also participated in an established church structure. Davies says the Acts were written not for pagans, but the converted. They were for encouragement and celebration of their faith. Many of the heroes were women (Thecla, Maximilla who was healed by Andrew (Acts of Andrew Cod.Vat.7), Drusiana in the Acts of John (Acts of John 88-103]) who adopt a chaste life while the males are not as exemplary. Even the piety of the women far excels the men.65

Davies makes a further observation that these writings were likely used for recruitment and re-enforcement of the women's faith. Therefore the intended audience was female.66 They obviously urged other women to join their community where they would receive mutual support. He concludes that
many of the writers were probably women who had experienced the trials and problems themselves. 67

ASSESSMENT

The difficulty concerning a female-identified early Christianity has to do with the concept of "equal participation of men and women". In Wilson-Kastner's examples, the woman is either commended for performing in a "manly way" (Clement), or glories in transcending her limitations and femaleness (Perpetua) 68. Wilson-Kastner herself makes careful note that regardless of the veneration and respect given to the woman martyr, whether in North Africa, Antioch or Rome, the status of women in the church did not rise. 69

Rosemary Ruether's example of Thecla has her giving up her female image and role as wife and mother. Further, all males are identified as being enemies and non-accepting of her commitment. It is hardly an elevation of women if they are forced to give up their identity as women. Even then they are not accepted by the males. If we judge the activities of these women by second century traditions they are only able to function by adopting all-male characteristics. Moreover these women are forced to abide by rules which are much more stringent than for men.

Davies discussion of continent widow communities provokes similar arguments. A woman may be very active within an all-woman group, but if the responsibility is only within the orbit of the women, it is not an elevated position in
the total religious community. On the other hand, women, by espousing the ideals of asexuality, lack of passion, etc. (ancient virtues) were able to enjoy a certain special status as missionaries and teachers not otherwise available to them even though they were restricted by various social pressures. This is not equality with the men by twentieth century standards, but it does represent a significant second century status elevation.

IV EARLY SYNOPTIC CHRISTIANITY

1. LUISE SCHOTTROFF

Schottroff maintains that Mary Magdalene was just as important to the emergence of the Jesus movement in Palestine as Peter. One of the reasons that we know less about her is because first century sources were silent about the role of women in general. She points out that Mark only mentions the presence of women in 15:40-41, even though he implies that they were there from the beginning. Luke makes reference to women accompanying Jesus in 8:2-3, but intimates that they supported the men. Schottroff finds this picture of women carrying bags of money to look after the men incongruous. Nevertheless, it still puts them in the position of being witnesses to all of Jesus' work.

Schottroff uses the phrase diakonoun auto in Mark 1:31, to make the same point that Brown does concerning John 12:2. She too, asserts that there is a deeper significance than
just serving the meal, namely a specific function in the early Church. She points out the importance of the women at the cross and at the tomb, when they receive the resurrection proclamation. It indicates "courageous solidarity" about the beginning of the proclamation of the risen Jesus. However, her main idea seems to be to stress the living situation of the whole Jewish people at this time. The background is hunger, family break-down, exploitation of all, including women and children. In these circumstances the struggle to survive is such that the socially defined role of women is not an issue. For this reason, while there is no trace of a special role for women, neither is there any complaint concerning women's status in the Synoptics. Schottroff surmises that everyone was involved with the business of survival and therefore not concerned about a socially defined role. Because the priority was survival, women did what was necessary without reference to what society permitted.

2. CONSTANCE PARVEY

Constance Parvey concentrates on the Gospel of Luke in order to argue that there were large numbers of women in the early Christian communities. She takes note that Luke appears to be addressing female and male listeners. This is obvious from the "pairing parables" which tell a story first involving a man, and then one about a woman (healing of centurion's slave (Luke 7:2-10), healing of widow's son (Luke
7:11-12), Good Samaritan (10:29-37), Mary Martha (10:38-42). Luke also couples male and female illustrations (King in battle 14:31-33/Salt used in cooking as a female activity 14:34-35). Parvey reasons that there is no point in repetition except to make it understandable to different groups. Further, she asserts that these parables reflect real-life situations in the primitive churches, and reflect the differences in those who shaped these early congregations. She focuses on the Martha/Mary story (Luke 10:42) to show that the learning of scripture was open to women.

ASSESSMENT

While Schottroff stresses the fact that women were present as witnesses during Jesus' ministry, her assertion concerning their function is misleading. When does the word diakonoun mean serving the meal, and when ecclesial duty? What signals the difference? If Martha is performing a specific religious function why complain that Mary is sitting and learning and not helping? As for her argument concerning the economics of the time: subsistence economics does not necessarily foster an elevation of the status of women any more than an urban diversified economy would.

Parvey's remarks regarding the "pairing parables" would lead one to think in terms of separate groups, one entirely male and one all female. Perhaps the woman's story would be told to the gathered women, and then the same lesson would
be given to the men's group using male characters. This would be consistent with segregation within the synagogue, but it is not the picture of equal status for men and women in the community. Rather, it is catering to both groups on their own terms.

If each group must be taught by giving twin stories, the separateness, or difference is re-enforced. It would be more of an indication of mutual acceptance if the stories were sometimes about women, and sometimes about men. The repetition of the message in male terms, then female points up the necessity of approaching men and women with different imagery. But, at the same time, it does acknowledge women as persons of value.

**SUMMARY**

It would appear that in many of the analyses of the Fourth Gospel, the role of women is fabricated from fragile evidence. There is a confusion between two issues, making two basic modes to be considered, and these are at times apparently ignored. The analysts appear to move easily between the literary function and the actual social function of women in the community.

Sandra Schneiders mentions the "unconventional role" of women in John and translates this to mean that "real women" did these things. Her assertion that these were historical persons because the characters were "fleshed out" is problematic. The lack of characterization of Peter in the
Fourth Gospel is no more an indication that Peter was not an historical figure than is the greater characterization of the Samaritan woman an indication that she was historical. It is simply not correct to assume that all persons in the community are represented by their literary counterparts. Further, the Samaritan woman is not more "fleshed out" than the blindman. We are not told the age nor any other details, except what was necessary to the contact with Jesus. Both respond with intelligent dialogue and eventually faith, but beyond that, we know nothing of either of them. This is also the case with Martha/Mary. We cannot really say that women are in greater detail than the men. Perkins and Hoffman have rejected this type of data in gnostic studies as a secure basis on which to found social conclusions.

Raymond Brown analyzes words and phrases such as *diakonein* and *dia tou logou pisteuein* and compares them with usage in post-Pauline churches. On the basis of this word study he forms sociological conclusions. Schottroff uses some of the same words to make a similar claim for the Synoptics. We are left wondering, if *diakonein* always signifies ecclesial function, what verb would one use to mean "wait tables"?

Fiorenza uses the literary order of the stories in the Fourth Gospel as part of her proof. The author begins and ends Jesus' public ministry with a woman's story - "Mary the mother at Cana" and "Mary at Bethany". This, she contends is a sign of the importance of women. A further indication of
this is the juxtaposition of particular stories and events, (the Nicodemus story/Samaritan woman; christological confession of Peter/christological confession of Martha; plus the "four" women and the Beloved Disciple at the cross). All of these women's events point to exemplary discipleship. Parvey makes the same observations about Luke, based on the literary positioning of the "pairing" parables. If this argument is valid we must assume that women in Luke are also in a position of prominence. Again, this may be evidence of the prominence of women in many of the earliest Christian communities.

Fiorenza points to the fact that the disciples are shocked that Jesus is talking to the Samaritan woman. This is because she is a woman and not because she is a Samaritan. This supposedly indicates that other groups were not pleased with the equality of status in the Johannine community. Conversely, we could infer that there was a high degree of integration of Samaritans into the community itself, which meant that accepting non-Jews was no longer an issue worth mentioning. However, the woman's position was still a sensitive and controversial subject which made it a suitable point for indicating opposition to "the world's" standards.

Raymond Brown says that he takes for granted that the author "reports the tradition through the optic of his own time, so that he tells us something about the role of women in his own community". I would suggest that what is more specifically the case is that the author also reports
through the optic of his/her own theology and literary style. This may or may not give great insight into sociological reality. Since statements and writing are both sociologically and psychologically conditioned, the question is whether a given statement is a cipher for a social reality, or whether it functions in a more complex set of symbols. Also, one wonders what Brown means by "equality in things that mattered" (Community 198).

While the ideas of a society in John which permitted the leadership of women may be correct, I would suggest that it is not possible to justify the conclusion reached by these critics on the basis of the arguments which they present. Literary function is distinct from the actual social function in the community. It is necessary to examine in much more detail the literary functions of women in John in order to determine whether it is possible to draw conclusions about the Johannine community. After all, the position of women in John may simply be a product of his theology, and a vehicle for particular theological statements, just as is his use of non-"Twelve" disciples and "The Jews" as opponents. Or, the position of women may have no obvious role in his theology. If this is the case, the stories may indeed reflect the social experience of John's community. Or, women throughout most of the early communities may have had a significantly higher profile making John's community not unusual. On this basis women may indeed function in a distinctive theological/literary role, but
there is a residue of data not accounted for in this manner which invites social conclusions.

I propose to analyze some of the stories contained in the Fourth Gospel, as well as the prologue.
ENDNOTES

1 John 13:16. According to R. Brown, if it is translated as apostle and not messenger in this verse, it becomes a put-down of the apostles by Jesus. R. Brown, "Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel", TS 36 (1975) 688-99; reprinted as Appendix II in Community of the Beloved Disciple (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 81, n.150. (All references will be to reprint).

2 John 6:67, 70, 71 are all within the same story. The fourth reference to the Twelve is in 20:24. There are other references to individuals such as Simon, Thomas, Philip and Andrew, but not in association with the Twelve.

3 The one reference to James and John is in 21:2 as the sons of Zebedee. However most critics consider chap. 21 to be editorial addition at a later time, either by the evangelist or a redactor. Brown discusses this fully. R. Brown, Gospel of John (AB 29, Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1966). 1078-1082.

4 Brown, John, XLV. Although there may be evidence of common source material at times, nevertheless there is nothing to suggest that John knew the Synoptics as they stand. Brown comments on the possibility of a body of traditional material similar to the Synoptics but independent.


7 In view of the scene at the cross (John 19:26-27) where the beloved disciple is referred to as 'son', the identification of a female author with the beloved disciple would be difficult. But, as previously mentioned, and as Fiorenza herself recognizes, the reference to the author in chapter 21 is usually considered redactional. Therefore a female author is not precluded.


An example of Philo's attitude..."the proper relation of wife to husband is expressed by the verb doulein, to serve as slave" (Hyp 7.3).


11 Ibid., 36.

12 Ibid., 38.

13 Ibid., 38.

14 Ibid., 37.

15 Ibid., 38–39.

16 Brown, Community, 183-198.

17 Ibid., 185 n.328.

18 Ibid., 185.

19 Ibid., 187.

20 Ibid., 198.

21 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her (New York: Crossroad, 1983).

22 Ibid., 323 n.137.

23 Ibid., 325.

24 Ibid., 326.

25 Ibid., 326.


27 Ibid., 17-18 nn. 1, 2, 3.

28 Ibid., 185.


31 Ibid., 208.

32 Ibid., 211.

33 Ibid., 211.

34 Ibid., 271.

35 Ibid., 211.

36 Ibid., 216.


39 Ibid., 70. Pistis Sophia 36.71.

40 Ibid., 77-78.

41 Ibid., 67.

42 Ibid., 49-50.

43 Ibid., 49-50.


46 Ibid., 136.
47 Ibid., 205.
48 J. R. Hoffman, "De Statu Feminarum", Eglise et 
49 Ibid., 303.
50 Ibid., 304.
51 Patricia Wilson-Kastner, A Lost Tradition (New York: 
52 Ibid., viii n.3.
53 Ibid., ix n.7a.
54 Ibid., ix n.9.
55 Ibid., xi-xii n.17.
56 Ibid., xii.
57 Rom.16:1 (Phoebe); Rom 16:3 (Priscilla); Rom 16:7 
(Junia ), etc..
58 Ibid., ix n 7. Clement of Rome, Letter to the 
Corinthians, 55.
59 Ibid., 1.
60 Ibid., 2.
61 R. Ruether, Womanguides (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985) 
175-99.
62 Ibid., 179.
63 S. Davies, Revolt of the Widows (Carbondale: S. Illinois 
University Press, 1980).
64 Ibid., 62-63.
65 Ibid., 87.
66 Ibid., 50.
67 Ibid., 129.
68 Wilson-Kastner, Tradition, ix and xi.
69 Ibid., xi.
70 Luise Schottroff, "Women as Followers of Jesus". 
The Bible and Liberation, ed. N. K. Gottwald (Maryknoll: 
71 Ibid., 419.
72 Ibid., 420. Schottroff uses the imagery of "bags of 
money" to show what she terms a ridiculous idea. The 
thought of rich women carrying around bags of money, 
living an itinerant life, and paying the expenses of the 
Twelve, according to her reasoning, is nonsense.
73 Ibid., 421.
74 Ibid., 423.
75 C. Parvey, "The Theology and Leadership of Women". 
Religion and Sexism, ed. R. Ruether (New York: Simon & 
Schuster, 1974). 117-149.
76 Ibid., 139.
77 Ibid., 139.
PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

In his article, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," Wayne Meeks asserts that the Johannine Gospel is not a product of an individual, but of a group or community. This group not only had to distinguish itself over against the sect of John the Baptist, but even more strongly against a dominant Jewish community. It had suffered defections, conflicts of leadership, and schisms. Therefore, one of the functions of the "symbolic universe" projected in the Fourth Gospel was to help the community make sense out of its problems. Furthermore, there must have been a parallel between the group's historical experience and this symbolic world which helped to explain its experience and shape its response.

Meeks finds the ascent/descent motif to be central in the symbolism in John. The purpose of his analysis therefore is:

...to discern the function which the motif ascent/descent serves, first within the literary structure of the Fourth Gospel then by analogy, within the structure of the Johannine Community and its relationships to the environment.

He starts with 1:1-5, 10-14, which fixes the origin of Jesus as not of this world. The ascent/descent motif first occurs in 1:51 where Nathaniel is told that he will see angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. In
3:13 Jesus is described as the only one who has gone into heaven and came down from heaven. Each of these pericopes sets Jesus in the role of alien - not of this world.

Next Meeks compares the story of Nicodemus (3:1-13) who came in the darkness by night, with the blindman (9:1-39), who cannot see and is therefore in darkness. According to Meeks, Nicodemus never fully trusts. This is conveyed humorously when he buys "a hundred pounds" of embalming ointment to lay Jesus in the grave (19:39). On the other hand, the blindman has an imperfect understanding at first, but then believes. He observes that John 2:23 hints at Jews who cannot be trusted and interprets Nicodemus as their representative. These Jews who were "his own" did not receive him, but believed only in the signs.

The theme of belief is further developed in 8:31-59 along with the above/below dualism. Meeks asserts that the descent/ascent motif becomes the cipher for Jesus' unique self-knowledge as well as his foreignness to the people of this world. He is rejected which makes the group's own position as outsiders to the Jewish community more acceptable. Since Jesus was from a heavenly realm the community as his followers would have a sense of belonging to this other world, thus giving them hope to offset the rejection by "the Jews" of this world.

The mystery of "whence he comes" and "where he is going" is a recurring theme which gathers momentum from John chap. 8. Meeks points out that the "Jews" at first think
they know Jesus' origin (7:42-52). Since the birth place of the Messiah was supposed to be Bethlehem (7:42), this, in their view, eliminates Jesus who came from Galilee (7:41). Meeks makes note that in 9:29, contrary to what Jesus' opponents think they know (7:41), it is obvious they do not know whence he comes (there is confusion and misunderstanding because of two levels of thought, natural and spiritual). In 19:9, even Pilate poses the question, "where are you from?". This mystery becomes a means of revelation for those who understand the symbolism. Only the Johannine community grasps the significance: Jesus has descended from the Father and will eventually ascend to the Father. But, he is not of this world.

For Meeks, this symbolism provides an explanation for the term "the Jews" in John. This term is a cipher for the unbelieving world which does not respond to the Johannine group.

The factor that makes Meeks' analysis distinct from those of Brown, Schneiders, Schottroff and others is that it does not naively treat characters in the gospel as reflections of groups in the community. Instead, he states that the entire symbolic pattern is indicative of the self-understanding of the community. While this approach highlights the binary relationship of ascent/descent, it also opens the avenue to further analysis.

Exposing the idea of the "man from Heaven" who is "not of this world" creates the image of insider/outside. Jesus'
relationship to the world is one of not belonging, therefore an outsider. But, he belongs to the heavenly realm as an insider. It is possible to project this imagery onto the group. The community itself represents a heavenly realm for believers, as opposed to the world. These believers are insiders to this heavenly realm, but outsiders of the world (the Jewish community). The reverse is also true. The Jews are insiders of the world, but outsiders to the community, or heavenly realm.

While the ascent/descent motif is obviously integral to Johannine Christology, there are other roles to be interpreted, and theological functions to be explicated. It has already been observed that the Twelve play a less important role in John, and that women and persons not connected to the Twelve are more important. This imagery, no less than the prominence of the alien Christ and the opposing Jews, needs to be examined. Although the literary and social role of Johannine women is my interest, it is necessary to look at some texts which set the theological agenda for the gospel and others which treat males as disciples. Comparison of the female and male stories will help to highlight both similarities and differences. This should give insight into specific literary roles being played by the various characters so that we may differentiate between this and social reality.

In Part Two we will investigate the structure and the literary roles and functions filled by some of the
characters, especially women, in the Fourth Gospel. Until this is done it is not known whether social conclusions may be drawn from the text. The purpose of the following commentary is to deal with portions involving women as witnesses, and compare these with the portions involving men. The sections to be examined will be:

1. THE PROLOGUE (John 1:1-18). This has a programmatic function giving the agenda and the mind-set for the complete gospel. We are to understand that the leader (Logos/Jesus) is not of this world and neither are the followers. This establishes the theme of most of the theological assumptions that will follow.

2. THE WOMEN — The Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42), Martha/Mary (John 11:1-47; 12:1-8) and Mary Magdalene (John 20:1-31) will be analyzed. In these stories the response to Jesus is given in sufficient detail to permit interpretation. Indeed, in each the idea of discipleship is shown in operation. I exclude the story of the wedding at Cana and the scene at the cross because they appear dealing more with family relationships than discipleship. In the wedding scene there is a distancing between mother and son which is shown by Jesus’ use of the word gynai (woman) and the reply of Jesus to his mother, and little detail is given. The cross scene, as well, does not have enough detail about the individual women to warrant an analysis. The concern of Jesus is
that his mother, who was set aside in the Cana story, is now taken into the home of the beloved disciple.

3. THE MEN - Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and the blindman (John 9:1-38) are the two men's stories to be examined to ascertain any discernable differences in dealing with a male character compared to a female. The criteria for inclusion are that the response to Jesus is given in sufficient detail to allow interpretation, and that there seems to be an element of discipleship involved. In the case of Nicodemus, (John 3:1-21), the commitment is not sudden. Nevertheless, we see him defending Jesus in John 7:50, and with Joseph of Arimathea at the "burial" (John 19:38-42). This may indicate discipleship.

The blindman fulfills the role of disciple by witness and declaration of belief. One male story that is excluded, the paralytic, is not clear as to the nature of the man's reaction to Jesus. The "call" stories (John 1:35-51) are omitted because of lack of detail. Even Nathaniel is used as a foil for the dramatic articulation of belief without signs. John the Baptist serves as a means of identifying Jesus, but we do not have evidence that he became a disciple.⁹

In addition to the men who are main characters in an encounter with Jesus, the men in the stories about women (for example, the beloved disciple and Peter in the sequence at the tomb) are important to assess. The disciples are
vital in the Martha/Mary episode, as are the disciples in the story about the Samaritan woman.
PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

ENDNOTES

1 W. Meeks, "The Man From Heaven In Johannine Sectarianism", JBL 91 (1972) 44-72.
2 Ibid., 50.
3 Ibid., 50.
4 Ibid., 54-55.
5 Ibid., 55.
6 Ibid., 55.
7 Ibid., 60.
8 Ibid., 61.
9 Presumably John the Baptist continued his own ministry (1:19-29 and 3:22-30).
In the introduction we noted that the symbolic universe of John is important to the understanding of the Fourth Gospel. It is necessary first to identify the sources which John used to construct this "universe" and then to evaluate the manner in which John used them in constructing his gospel. This will expose the meanings that he assigns to his symbols. We begin with the prologue.

The insider/outsider imagery is first encountered in the prologue. Themes and vocabulary characteristic of Johannine theology are all present: his own, misunderstanding, witness, belief, insider/outsider, light, and the high christology. It is usually agreed that the prologue has a programmatic function and sets the model for the gospel.¹

Johannine scholarship has spent much of its time discerning the source materials which John used. Many critics agree that the prologue is a fusion of two pre-Johannine sources plus explanatory expansions. There is also considerable agreement that one of the sources used in 1:1-18 is a pre-Johannine hymn. This was employed by the evangelist to introduce the gospel and set the agenda for his presentation of Jesus. John presumably included the hymn because it coincided with his theological vision. It is also clear that he edited it, adding phrases of his own in order to emphasize those portions that he held to be important, and to qualify
ideas which needed qualification. Thus he brought the hymn into harmony with the rest of his composition. The immediate task is to determine the extent of this pre-Johannine hymn, and the nature of John's editing of it.

While Bultmann, Bernard, Brown and Schnackenburg all agree that there is a pre-Johannine hymn in John 1:1-18, they disagree on its provenance, exact content, and purpose. Bultmann sees it as an Aramaic composition, gnostic in origin, and part of a "revelation discourse source" which underlies the discourse material in the gospel as a whole. Bernard declares it to be the "philosophical rationale of the main thesis of the gospel" composed in Hebrew poetry. Schnackenburg speculates that it came from a Christian community who were heavily influenced by hellenistic Judaism, and it is anti-gnostic.

Käsemann attempts to reconstruct the original hymn on the basis of purely formal criteria. Whatever exhibits Semitic parallelism belongs to the hymn, what does not is Johannine. He rejects Bultmann's theory of Aramaic origin, and excludes v 9 and everything after v 12. Because the chainlike poetic form which is prominent in vv 1-5 and vv 10-12 is not present after v 12, he asserts that the latter did not belong to the original hymn. Therefore his reconstruction includes only v 1, vv 3-5, and vv 10-12.

Brown sets forth his proposed arrangement as first strophe of the hymn vv 1-2; second strophe vv 3-5; third strophe vv 10, 12b; fourth strophe v 14, v 16. He surmises
two expansions, vv 12c-13, vv 17-18 and John the Baptist material (perhaps the original opening verses of the gospel) vv 6-9 and v 15. Brown does not try to fix the origin, but concentrates on theological themes as they relate to the gospel as a whole. 6

Contrary to Bultmann, Bernard, Brown, Käsemann and Schnackenburg, Barrett states that the prologue is a "solid piece of theological writing" by the evangelist. If the relationship of the prologue to the gospel is summarized, he says that the prologue tells the "that" and the gospel the "what" of the story of Jesus. They are necessary to each other. 7

These analysts raise three questions with which the following analysis will deal: 1) The extent of the pre-Johannine hymn, and the nature of John's editing of the hymn. Related to this is 2) the function of the redacted hymn as a prologue to the entire fourth gospel. 3) The third issue is the relation of the pre-Johannine hymn and the other pre-Johannine source material (the signs or witness materials) in Johannine editing.

1. The main reasons for thinking that the prologue makes use of a logos hymn are:

1) Portions of 1:1-18 are poetical and rhythmical sentences, verses and strophes, which are readily distinguishable from prose elements or additions. Vv 6-8 and perhaps 12, 13, 15, 17 lack poetic characteristics. Although it is not clear that the hymn exhibits poetic metre there is
a regular succession of groups of two lines, known as step parallelism. In this form of parallelism each line has two stressed words which dovetail regularly as complements, parallels or antitheses from one line to the next. This forms an intricate chainlike construction.8

ii) The structure and movement of thought and the content reveal breaks and sudden switches (aporiae). When we examine the text of the prologue, contrary to the assertion of Barrett concerning its unity, there are obvious aporiae between vv 5 and 6, v 8 and v 9, v 13 and v 14, v 14 and v 15, v 15 and v 16, v 17 and v 18. These would naturally suggest a joining of materials (e.g., vv 1-5 concern the pre-existent Logos, vv 6-8 John the Baptist, vv 9-11, Logos again).

iii) Analysis of the style would indicate that the Johannine characteristics such as tote oan, an/ean, and nouns used as attributives are absent in some verses but present in others.9

iv) Analysis of terminology and concepts used in the logos hymn reveals certain peculiarities of the prologue. For example: the word logos is used four times in v 1 and v 14 as a technical christological title. The term occurs only in the prologue, and never again in this way in the body of the gospel. The same is the case with "fulness", "his own" (idios), "will of the flesh".

A detailed reconstruction of the hymn depends, to a certain extent, on which method of analysis is being used.
The ideal would be to combine all methods, but even that results in ambiguities. Some verses would be included in the hymn by one criterion, but excluded by another.

The first five verses are almost universally accepted as belonging to the *logos* hymn, because of the step parallelism, and the poetic quality of the lines (length, number of accents, coordination). The only questionable parts in these first five verses are vv 2 and 5. Schnackenburg and Käsemann ascribe v 2 to secondary editing because it repeats v 1. Brown however regards it as an inclusion and treats vv 1 and 2 as the first strophe. Only Schnackenburg omits v 5.

Verse 2 is consistent with v 1 in vocabulary and repeats key words from v 1 ("beginning", "God") to form a similar chain-like parallelism. Therefore we accept it as part of the hymn.

Verse 5 on the other hand, introduces a new thought, darkness, which is a motif seen in John 3:2; 9 and various other places. It is not repeated in the prologue and this would lead one to conclude (as does Schnackenburg) that v 5 may indeed be a Johannine addition. However, since light is mentioned in v 4, the mention of darkness is not exactly unexpected. Also the poetic step parallelism is present, therefore we agree that it belongs to the hymn.

Verse 6 does not have a poetic format and is generally accepted by most critics, such as Brown, Schnackenburg, Käsemann, as prose. Further, the vocabulary is different.
than in vv 1 - 5, and there is a distinct break in thought. We must conclude that it did not belong originally with the first five verses. Verse 7a has a prose style and the vocabulary and thought coincide with v 6. We can see a similarity and continuity of thought between 7a and 7c as well (7a "he came for testimony... 7c "that all might believe through him"). On this basis we would classify 7ac as belonging with v 6. V 7b presupposes the term light from the hymn (vv 1-5) and uses the word "witness" which belongs to John the Baptist material in v 7a. Since it is prose it would be excluded from the hymn, however, the combination of themes would indicate redaction by the evangelist.

Verse 8 apparently belongs to Johannine redaction since it is not in poetic form. It does make reference to the light which is first mentioned in vv 1 - 5, but it has an explanatory function and was likely added in order to connect the hymn to the material in vv 6-7ac.

Verse 9 is included in the hymn by both Bultmann and Schnackenburg as a continuation of v 5. However Brown and Käsemann disagree. Brown says it doesn't have the conjunctive particle, kai which is common in other poetic parts of the prologue. Also, "light" is the subject of v 9 and it is coming into the world. Both v 5 and v 10 state that it was already in the world which presents an apparent contradiction. Another obvious point is the lack of step parallelism in v 9 which was one of the main characteristics
observed in vv 1 – 5. Therefore we would exclude v 9 from the hymn.

The next three verses (10, 11 and 12) bring varied opinions. Brown argues that the third strophe of the hymn consists of vv 10-12b, and Käsemann agrees.15 Schnackenburg and Bultmann see the section starting with v 9.16 Bultmann includes everything up to 12b,17 while Schnackenburg only goes to v 11.18 Brown states that if poetic format is the absolute guide then v 12 does not belong, but if content is a consideration then it would seem strange to end with the negativity in v 11.19

Verse 10ab has step parallelism and a poetic format. V 10c "yet the world knew him not" continues the parallelism and is related in thought to v 11 which furthers the idea of his own not knowing him. This is followed by the concept of a new group constituting his own in v 12a. There is step parallelism in the poetic format of vv 10, 11, 12a. Therefore we would include 10, 11, 12a in the hymn.

Verse 12b "believe in his name" is explanatory and consistent with Johannine style. This stock phrase is repeated in 2:23; 3:18 and is found in the Johannine epistles 1 John 3:23; 5:13. The phrase "in his name" or "in my name" occurs many more times in 5:43; 10:25; 12:13; 14:13, 26; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26; 20:31. Verse 12c involves another Johannine concept, becoming children of God or spiritual birth, as opposed to natural birth. This theme is reiterated in 3:3-8, 21; 8:41, 42; 11:52; 12:36 and also in
the Johannine epistles, 1 John 3:1-3, 9, 10; 5:18. We conclude that v 12b is not part of the hymn and belongs to Johannine redaction.

Verse 13 is considered, by Käsemann, Schnackenburg and Brown to be part of an editorial expansion. The style is prose and it has a strong apologetic motif. Apparently it is an explanation of the phrase "to become the children of God" in v 12a. The vocabulary is different with words such as "begotten", "blood", "will of flesh" appearing for the only time. We must assume redaction as the basis for this verse. However, as Schnackenburg points out, this usage of these words is not Johannine and may indicate an even later stage of redaction by disciples of the evangelist.

Brown's fourth strophe consists of vv 14 and 16. Bernard accepts only v 14 and Käsemann rejects everything after v 12. Brown notes that the conjunctive particle kai that begins many of the lines of the hymn appears in the first three lines and the last line of v 14 and is present in v 16. However the poetry of v 16, according to Brown, is not of the same quality as that of the rest of the hymn. He says it means two stages of editing if it is not included as part of the hymn, because v 15 and v 16 could not have been added at the same time. Therefore he decides that the steps involved were "not that complicated", and v 16 was probably part of the original hymn.

As pointed out, the word logos does belong to vv 1-5 and 14ac. Second, the kai pattern is present and the verse is

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poetic, and finally 14bde uses OT imagery with the terms "dwelt among us" and doxa in a way that is strongly reminiscent of Sirach 24:8 which is also a wisdom hymn. On this basis it is probable that all of v 14 belonged to the hymn. Verse 16 continues the thought of v 14 with the word "fulness" (pleroma) which appears to refer back to "full of grace and truth". Therefore we would ascribe v 14 and v 16 to the hymn. Verse 17 is considered to be Johannine redaction by all of the critics. It is prose and reflects John's theology of replacement. Verse 18 is included in the hymn by Bernard, De Ausejo and Green. But most others regard it as a Johannine editorial expansion because of the prose style and the highly developed theology. The same polemical assertion that no one has seen God but Jesus occurs in John 6:46 and in 1 John 4:12.

2. Having identified the verses which probably belonged to the hymn, it is necessary to explore the use which the evangelist made of this hymn in his prologue. In the hymn one of the main words is logos or the "word". It is present in v 1 and v 14. Brown asserts that the very title "Word" implies a revelation or divine communication. The prologue states that the "Word" was, and does not speculate on his origin, but rather describes his activity. This Word is identified as being with God and in fact was God which implies the pre-existence of the Logos. Logos is used in various forms throughout the Gospel, but only in the prologue is it used as a technical Christological title (1:1,
All other references mean the teaching or witness of Jesus or others and they are found in the discourse material.

In vv 1-5 the stress is also on the creative activity of the Word. Brown suggests that there has been a parallel between Genesis 1 and John 1 since they both deal with creation. Therefore, this carries into vv 4 and 5 with the mention of light and darkness, because light was God's first creation (Gen 1:3). Brown continues his comparison with life as another Genesis 1 theme (Gen 1:11). He says the difference between Genesis and John is that Genesis speaks of natural life and John is describing eternal life.

On the other hand, Barrett maintains that the words "light" and "life" were characteristic of hellenistic religion and philosophical thought. He points out that many of the mythologies deal with the conflict between light and darkness. Light was inevitably an element in both cosmogony and redemption. He quotes from the first and thirteenth Hermetic tractates to support this.

What is even more significant is the fact that Jesus had proved himself to be life and light in the world. He was also the agent by whom God bestowed these, and John proceeds to show this in a variety of ways (life 3:15; 4:14; 5:24-30; 6:35; 10:10; 17:3; and light 8:12; 12:35). Since life was the essential energy of the Word, the Word signified the communication of the knowledge of God. Therefore, Barrett
concludes that life was the light of men which gave them true knowledge and also submitted them to judgement.\textsuperscript{32}

If Brown is correct and the evangelist is trying to relate the theological information in terms of the OT, then he is using the hymn in the context of his theology of replacement. That is, the replacing of all Jewish institutions, including Moses and the law, with Jesus Christ. If Barrett is correct it fits into the hellenistic mythic imagery and John is employing it in his universalizing intent: Jesus came not just to the Jews but to the whole world.

The term "light" is first introduced in v 4, but it appears again in vv 7b, 8 and 9, and then recurs throughout the body of the gospel. In John 3 Nicodemus comes in the darkness and his dialogue with Jesus becomes a discourse in which Jesus says, "the light has come into the world" (3:19-21). Another discourse in John 8 begins with the pronouncement "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). The story of the blindman (9:1-41) centres around the theme of light, again highlighted with the statement "I am the light of the world" (9:5).

In v 9 the words, "true", "illuminate", "enlighten", "every man", seem to indicate a shift of meaning. In vv 1-5 light apparently signifies knowledge and understanding of the divine, but in v 9 it has to do with the person of Jesus and not just his activity. Further, the use of the word "true" adds a note of polemic against all others who claim
the status of "light". Thus if you are enlightened by the true light you could be called a true believer. This is evidenced by the use of the adjective "true" in reference to believers and witnesses throughout the gospel (John 4:23; 5:31, 32; 7:28; 8:14; 8:26). Vv 1-5 speak of the pre-existence of the Logos as the eternal light and vv 10-12 tell of its rejection. Only v 9 uses the metaphor of illumination. Although the verb photizo does not occur elsewhere in the gospel the illuminating activity of the light is implied in 3:19; 5:35. This theme is especially prominent in 8:12, 12:35-36 and throughout the entire story of the blindman, which concludes with his illumination (9:39). It is this activity which permits the understanding that leads to belief by means of the true witness (John 3; 4; 9).

The statement, "he was in the world" in vv 10-12 invites many opinions. Bernard suggests that it describes the activity of the divine word in the OT period, while Schnackenburg thinks it is the presence of wisdom in the world and in Israel. Barrett argues that cosmos is not the totality of creation but the world of men and human affairs. The word cosmos is sometimes defined as similar to the rabbinic "this age" which is then contrasted to a future world. Barrett theorizes that John combines these ideas deliberately to show Jesus as an envoy from the heavenly world who will be the means to anticipate an eschatological future.
The dualistic view of the world implicit in 1:10-11 is further developed throughout John's gospel, e.g. in 7:7; 14:17, 22, 27, 30; 15:18; 16:8, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14. The world hates and rejects Jesus and his disciples. But, the world is also the place of his saving mission. In spite of the rejection of Jesus by the world, 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:33; 12:46; and 18:37 indicate that salvation is possible "in the world" for those who believe. However, this salvation consists in returning with Jesus to their real home in the heavenly realm. Salvation is birth "from above" (anothen) or from the Spirit (3:3, 5). Its result is that a person becomes a stranger to the world (3:8-9).

The significance of the term "his own" is controverted with some interpreting it to mean the whole world, and some to mean only the Jewish people. Here it is important to distinguish that John may have used the term differently than his source. Brown interprets it in regard to the ministry of Jesus, asserting that "his own", for John, means the Jews (1:11). Jesus is rejected and then gathers a new group who are the Christian believers. We do find many examples of explanations for the edification of the Jewish believers.

Barrett thinks that "his own" more likely refers to the created world as the natural counterpart of the logos. If it belongs to the logos hymn, as is generally accepted, it would seem to mean "his own realm" in the same way that other wisdom hymns refer to the whole earth (Sirach 24:6).
However, the rest of the gospel suggests a parochial interpretation of the phrase. John 15:18 and 16:4a even uses the term "the world" to denote Jewish opponents (cf. the reference to "their law" in v 25). John in fact shows little interest in gentiles with the exception of Samaritans who were really "half-Jews". Therefore, John probably interpreted "his own" in the prologue with reference to Jewish opponents although in the original hymn it likely meant the total world.

V 14 introduces the duality of divinity versus humanity, a theme which permeates John's theology. This theme is articulated more fully in John 3:6 and 6:63. In both instances John uses the word "flesh" to indicate the utter impotence of humanity compared to God. Barrett states that it represents human nature as distinct from God in the "harshest" terms as contrasted with the more positive word anthropos (human being). In other words, we are shown dramatically by the use of the term "flesh" the tremendous difference between humankind and the total "otherness" of God.

The phrase "dwelt among us" (literally, pitched his tent eskenosan) appears to refer to the idea of the tabernacle or tent where God dwelt among his people (Exod 25:8-9) and thus serves to evoke John's characteristic theology of replacement. The hymn here draws on hellenized wisdom materials similar to Sirach 24 which not only portrays Wisdom as present with God in the beginning (Sir 24:3), but as coming
to dwell (kateskenoun) specifically with Israel. Sirach 24:8 also evokes the motifs of the Sinai story: "...he that made me caused my tabernacle to rest, and said, Let thy dwelling be in Jacob and thine inheritance in Israel." However, while Sirach 24:23 eventually identifies Sophia with the book of the Law, John, in 1:17, explicitly contrasts the Logos (Jesus Christ) with the Law. John 1:18 seems to polemicize against the view that Moses saw God at Sinai. In fact, John represents Jesus as the replacement for the Law.

Glory of God, doxa, implies a visible and powerful manifestation of God to the men in the OT. There is a connection between the glory of God and his presence in the tabernacle and temple. Exod 24:15-16 says that while Moses was on the mountain a cloud covered it, and the glory of God settled there. When the tabernacle was erected (Exod 11:34) a cloud covered it, and the glory of God filled it.

In Sir 24:1-3, we are reminded of the Exodus imagery as the glory of God covers the earth as a cloud (v 3). V 13 declares the exaltation of the Law in Zion and how it was seen in an honorable people. Again, replacement theology seems to be John's purpose in using this word. He elaborates on the theme of "glory" in 2:11; 9:3; 11:4; 12:23, 28; 13:31, 32; 17:1, 4, 5. The manifestation of God's glory is a major function of Jesus' works (2:11; 9:3; 11:4), but perception of this glory is the disciples task. This is not the glory of the Law, instead it is Jesus' glory which is perceived by his followers.
The theological themes which underlie all of John's gospel are insider/outside; Moses/Jesus; glory of the law/glory of Jesus; revelation of Jesus, the unknowable character of God; witness; birth (natural)/birth (spiritual); Jews as elect/all who believe, and high christology. What emerges is that John has availed himself of a *logos* hymn and other material which he has redacted, in order to set his theological agenda for the gospel.

3. While most agree that John used an early Christian hymn in his prologue, he undoubtedly used other source materials too. Bultmann suggests that John narrates a select number of Jesus' miracles and these constitute the main narrative sections in John chapters 1-12. He further proposes that these were excerpted from a larger collection of signs attributed to Jesus. There is evidence of this in the enumeration of the signs in 2:11 and 4:54, and in the mention of additional signs in 12:37 and 20:30.40

Following Bultmann's hypothesis Fortna attempts to reconstruct the beginning of this source. Pointing out that it has been universally agreed that John 1:6-8 are not part of the pre-Johannine hymn, he notes that these verses are usually attributed to John as commentary on the otherwise self-contained hymn.41 However, he agrees with Brown that v 6 would be suitable for an opening line of a gospel. Fortna therefore proposes that the narrative source did begin this way and that the *logos* hymn was inserted into the original beginning by the evangelist.42 In other words, instead of
interrupting the opening hymn with commentary, John has
added the hymn to the prose source. Therefore, Fortna
proposes vv 6, 7ac as the opening of the prose account which
was the formative literary stratum, or the proto-gospel. To
this John added the hymn (vv 1-5, 10-12ac, 14, 16) and his
own comments (7b, 8, 9).

Fortna's proposed proto-gospel began:

6 There was a man sent from God whose name
7 was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness
that all might believe through him.
19 And this is the testimony of John. He
20 did not deny but confessed I am not the
21 Christ. And they asked him, "what then? Are you
Elijah?" He said "I am not". "Are you the
prophet?" and he answered "no"
23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the
wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord' as
the prophet Isaiah said."
26 John answered them. "I baptize with water but
among you stands one whom you do
27 not know, even he who comes after me the thong
of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.
33 I myself did not know him; but he who sent me
to baptize with water said to me, He on whom you
see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who
baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
32 "...I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from
heaven, and it remained on him.
34b...This is the Son of God"

Thus reconstructed these verses resemble the beginning
of the gospel of Mark, and could indeed constitute the open-
ing of the proto-gospel. This conclusion was suggested
earlier by O. J. F. Seitz who compared the prologue of
John with that of Mark. His conclusion is that John 1:6-7b
is similar to the opening of the gospel of Mark. The first
three verses of Mark appear to be an introduction to help
establish the author's theological purpose. So in John, the
logos hymn, along with extra Johannine redaction, was likely
added to the original opening (John 1:6-7b). Thus there would be the proto-gospel and oral material, a second stage where the *logos* hymn is added with all of its imagery, and then a later time of redaction and theological development (which could have been in more than one stage).

Many critics (e.g. Schnackenburg) class vv 6-8 as Johannine redaction. Against this Fortna points out that most Johannine glosses tend to clarify some point which has already been presented (vv 17, 18; 4:9c etc.). This section, vv 6-7ac, however, is a complete change of thought which itself requires redactional phrases to connect it to the surrounding material. Vv 6-7ac have the character of narrative and as such are in sharp contrast with both the poetry of the hymn and the Johannine glosses such as vv 17 and 18.

Analyses of vocabulary also suggests that vv 6-7ac is not Johannine composition as we find vocabulary and style not attested elsewhere in John. In John the dominant use of the word "sent" is in reference to God sending Jesus. A minor usage appears in reference to John the Baptist (1:6, 33; 3:28) all ascribed to the source by Fortna. Moreover, this usage has closer affinities with non-Johannine materials than it does with John: Luke 1:26, Angel Gabriel sent from God; Luke 9:2, Jesus sent disciples to preach. John employs the term in the mundane sense, such as, the sisters sent for Jesus (11:3; 18:24), but both of these are usually ascribed to his source.
In verse 7 the word "witness" (martvrion) is used. It appears 21 times in John, as compared with 6 times in Matt, 8 times in Mark, and 4 times in Luke, always in reference to "bearing false witness" or a similar theme. It is an important Johannine motif. The Johannine meaning refers to telling about the individual encounter with Jesus. While it is a favorite redactional motif, I will show some pre-Johannine material also reflects this interest in witness (1:7c; 20:30-31).

If Fortna is correct, v 7b and v 8 belong to Johannine redaction. They do not belong to the hymn because they are in prose. Since the theology of the hymn is so highly developed it seems appropriate to assign it to a later stage than Baptist material. To bear witness to the light (7b) obviously draws on the imagery introduced in the first verses of the hymn (1-5). V 8, "he was not the light" appears to be a polemic aimed at an overestimation of John the Baptist. This statement finds a positive counterpart in v 9. Thus it seems best to conclude that v 7b and v 8 were editorial links used to connect the "light" imagery of the hymn with the mention of John's witness to Jesus. V 7b and 8 are also stressing the fact that John the Baptist is only a witness clarifying the introduction of the Baptist in 6-7ac.

"Believe" (v 7c) is used 51 times throughout the Fourth Gospel compared to 7 times in Matt, 11 in Mark, and 5 in Luke. It is one of the great Johannine themes and it begins in v 1:7c and v 12c. The motif is then a focus of attention.
in every chapter of John. Each story ends with the idea of belief or that the reader might believe. This theme is brought to a climax and conclusion in 20:30-31. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that for John the main purpose of each story that he tells is that the reader might believe simultaneously with the literary character. What is distinctive about "believe" in 1:7 is the use of the aorist - which is ingressive - "that you might come to believe". The aorist also appears in 4:41 (source), 4:48 (redaction), 4:53 (source), 9:18, 11:15 (redaction), 11:40, 11:42 (redaction), 14:24, 20:8 (redaction), 20:31 (varia lectio - source), 2:22 (source), 4:50, 6:30 (source), 12:38 (OT quote), 2:11 (source), 12:42 (source). In composition John seems to prefer the present tense which is stative and has the sense of "to be in the condition of belief." Although the dichotomy is not absolute the source seems to prefer the ingressive aorist (to come to believe: 1:7; 2:11; 9:41; 4:53; 17:42; and especially 20:31 (M4CDLKF¹f¹3 diff. P66 ¹80 0250).

After subtracting the logos hymn and the Johannine material, we are left with the possible beginning of the proto-gospel, which starts with the story of John the Baptist. If vv 6-7ac constitutes the beginning of a pre-Johannine source, this source was evidently interested in portraying a variety of witnesses to Jesus. It began with John the Baptist and showed the results of these witnesses, viz., belief (1:7c; 20:31). This indeed is precisely the
function which Bultmann proposed for his "signs source", a source consisting of miracle stories and ending in chapter 12. Similarly, Nicol, who isolated a pre-Johannine miracle collection by means of stylistic analysis, suggests a missionary propagandistic function of the source.  

Fortna includes much more than either Nicol or Bultmann in his "gospel of signs". Whereas Bultmann proposed three pre-Johannine sources, (signs source, revelatory discourse source and passion and resurrection source) Fortna argues that the "signs gospel" contained both miracle stories and the passion and resurrection material. Like Nicol he suggested a missionary Sitz for this document.  

Major efforts have been expended to isolate a collection of signs source material - miracle stories (or witness stories) from which John composed his extended miracle stories. While the hymn and the miracle material are both pre-Johannine, there is no indication that they formed a single pre-Johannine source. On the contrary, the theological profiles of these two bodies of material are quite distinct. A collection of witness accounts could involve not only healing stories that attested to the power of Jesus, but stories that tell of people encountering him, coming to belief and telling his identity.

The next task then, is to separate the original witness stories from the theological additions in the main gospel.
CHAPTER 2

ENDNOTES

3 J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of John. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928) cxxviii. "It is a summary restatement of the Christian gospel from the philosophical side. . .written after the narrative was complete."
6 Brown, John, 22, 23.
8 Brown, John, 19.
9 E. Ruckstuhl and V. Nicol have extensive lists of these characteristics. See V. Nicol, The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel (NovT Sup 32; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972) 16-24, for both lists.
10 Schnackenburg, John, 236. "autos at the beginning is a mark of the evangelist". Käsemann, "Prologue", 140, 151.
11 Brown, John, 22.
12 Schnackenburg, John, 245.
13 Bultmann, John, 52, 53; Schnackenburg, John, 253.
14 Brown, John 9; Käsemann, "Prologue", 151. They indicate that v 9 was added by the evangelist to link v 8 and v 10.
15 Brown, John, 28, 29; Käsemann, "Prologue", 151, 152.
16 Schnackenburg, John, 253. He states that this verse is a link to v 4 and explains "light of men".
17 Bultmann, John, 52.
18 Schnackenburg, John, 261. He claims that lambanein tina shows evidence of the evangelist.
19 Brown, John, 10.
20 Käsemann, "Prologue", 149; Schnackenburg, John, 263; Brown, John, 30.
21 Brown, John, 30, 31.
22 Bernard, John, 19, 28. He states that v 14 is the climax to the hymn, and therefore v 16 is explanatory; Käsemann, "Prologue", 151.
23 Brown, John, 13.
24 Ibid., 15.
25 Ibid., 13.
26 Ibid., 24.
27 Ibid., 19.
29 Brown, John, 23, 26.
30 Ibid., 26.

31 Hermetic Tractates. These are Greek texts from Egypt. They include astrological, magical, philosophical and religious writings. The first tractate, called Poimandres concerns the Redeemer myth.


33 Bernard, John, 14. He compares it to wisdom in the world.

34 Schnackenburg, John, 227, 228.

35 Barrett, John, 161.

36 Ibid., 161.

37 Brown, John, 29.

38 Barrett, John, 162.

39 Ibid., 162.

40 Signs Source is an aretalogy postulated by R. Bultmann and others as the principal source of John 1-12. It provides the source for the seven signs in the gospel and related material (e.g. Cana 2:1-2; Raising of Lazarus 11:1-46).


42 Ibid., 163, 165.

43 Ibid., 166, 178.


45 Fortna, Signs, 162-164.

46 Nicol, Semeia, 6.

47 Fortna, Signs, 225.
Having delineated possible sources used in the prologue, and identified the typical Johannine imagery that is present, we now turn to the individual stories. Again, we must attempt to separate the source which John has used from his theological and explanatory additions.

There are four main features of John’s gospel which strongly suggest that the redactor has used a source composed of short, simple narratives, editing these stories in accord with his stylistic preferences and his theological agenda. Deriving from these four factors are four criteria commonly used to distinguish John from his sources.

The principal purpose of John is to depict Jesus as an otherworldly revealer and redeemer whose identity and mission is not immediately evident. He discloses himself by means of dialogue replete with double entendre, irony and ambiguity. Both the woman and the disciples are exposed to deliberately misleading statements. John uses natural occurrences to point to deeper theological agenda already introduced in the Prologue. For example the woman quite naturally interprets the phrase “living water” in its ordinary sense of “running water”. She assumes that Jesus’ promise of water is tantamount to a claim to be on a par with Jacob. The disciples in the same way understand the “food” mentioned in 4:32 to be ordinary food. This
deliberate use of ambiguity and misunderstanding serves to underscore the extent to which the redeemer is a stranger from heaven whose identity and mission is quite unintelligible to ordinary empirical observation and inference.

Second, John draws on sapiential imagery, especially "wisdom's banquet", to supply him with metaphors for salvation. Just as elsewhere he depicts salvation as eating the bread of life (6:31-33 cf. Sirach 24:21), here he uses the image of drinking (Sir 24:21).

Third, he compares Jesus to Jacob, and Jerusalem and Gerizim to the real "place" of worship in an effort to explicate his theology of replacement, according to which all existing Jewish institutions (Mosaic laws, Temple, etc.) will be replaced by Jesus.

Fourth, John uses dramatic technique, dividing a lengthy unit (42 verses) into a number of interconnected scenes, and employs the motif of "chain reaction" witnessing similar in structure to 1:29-51 and 20:1-29. That is, as the Father has sent Jesus as a witness, so Jesus sends his followers to witness to others.

The four criteria which are used to distinguish John from his sources are form critical, stylistic, aporiae and ideological.

A) Form-Critical observations: Johannine narrative style is dramatic and the editor has created relatively lengthy episodes consisting of several powerful dialogue scenes. For
example, the trial before Pilate, which in the Synoptics comprises only one or two scenes, is related by John in eight. In Johannine dialogues three or more persons often take part. This is seen in 9:1-42. First the disciples ask a question, then the neighbours, Pharisees, parents followed by the blindman's comments.

By contrast, Synoptic stories are usually brief, involve a limited cast, and are restricted to one, or at most two, exchanges of dialogue. However, despite the differences in narrative, it is clear that John presupposes several brief stories either already known from the Synoptics (4:46-54 cf. Luke 7:1-10; Matt 6:5-13; 6:1-13 cf Mark 6:30-44; 12:1-8 cf. Mark 14:1-9) or of Synoptic type, such as the healing of a lame man (5:1-18 cf Mark 2:1-12) and blindman (9:1-8 cf. Mark 8:22-26). This suggests that John received these pericopes from the same general stream of tradition as the Synoptics. Unlike the Synoptic writers, John chose to present these stories in an elaborate and dramatic form. It is apparent that this is an important device in the presentation of his gospel.

John uses the different actors or characters in a "statement, question, statement" formula as a means of exposing his theological assumptions. This format can be discerned in 13:31 - 14:31. It begins with a puzzling statement by Jesus which prompts a question from Simon Peter, "Lord where are you going?" (13:36). The answer is equally ambiguous, "where I am going you cannot follow me
now; but you shall follow afterward." This elicits a further query from Peter (13:37), answered by a question from Jesus (13:38). A lengthy statement by Jesus (14:1-4) prefaces an inquiry from Thomas (14:5) which is really a repetition of Peter's question (13:36). Jesus gives another ambiguous statement (14:6-7) which evokes Philip's request (14:8), "show us the Father". This permits Jesus' explanation of his connection to the Father (14:9-14).

The typical Synoptic miracle story conforms clearly to the standard form of all hellenistic miracle narrations. It contains 1) a description of the seriousness of the illness or problem, 2) a thaumaturgic device, or word or command given by the miracle worker, 3) confirmation of the miracle (an exclamation of the healed person, independent confirmation by others, etc.) and 4) often an acclamation. This pattern can be seen clearly in Johannine accounts such as 6:1-8, and 4:46-54, and even in much longer narratives in 9:1-42 and 11:1-52 the basic schema of the miracle story can be discerned. On the assumption that John's miracle source related its stories in the typical Synoptic or hellenistic form, we may isolate the source from the Johannine elaboration by attending to form-critical observations.

B) Stylistic Characteristics: Ruckstuhl listed several Johannine style characteristics with frequency of use in order to prove John did not use sources. However, Nicol expanded this list and applied these as a criterion throughout the Gospel in an attempt to discern the presence
of material which did come from outside sources. He showed that these characteristics appear over twice as many times in the speech and dialogue passages than in the short miracle stories (e.g. 

Thus the speech components of John have vocabulary and stylistic profiles distinct from that of the miracle stories. This suggests that John did indeed use source material which he adapted to his own purpose. When the vocabulary and style are frequent in monologue and dialogue portions (portions regularly thought to be John's) such vocabulary and style are considered to be Johannine.

C) Aporiae: In addition to those aporiae indicating the semeia source there are numerous others. There is an aporia between 20:29 and 20:30-31. V 29 suggests that "seeing signs" is an inferior means by which to acquire faith, but v 30 proposes precisely that means. Chapter 21 follows after what appears to be one conclusion of the Gospel in 20:30. The farewell discourse which ends at 14:31 "Arise let us go forth" is continued not by 15:1 but 18:1. Three entire chapters intervene between the announcement of Jesus' intention to depart and his actual departure. In addition, 16:4b-33 is a doublet of 13:31-14:31. Mary is identified in 11:2 as the one who anointed Jesus' feet, an event which does not occur until Chapter 12. These factors, and many more like them, suggest that this gospel has undergone a series of expansions and dislocations. For example, the numbering of the signs in 2:11 and 4:54 as the first and
second of Jesus' signs conflicts with 2:23-25 and 3:2 which mentions intervening signs (plural!). This aporia is best explained by assuming, as Fortna and Nicol do, that 2:11 and 4:54 belonged to John's source to which he added the extra material with its references to signs.

Fortna includes the Johannine parenthetical comments as a type of aporia and another contextual indication of a use of sources. (1:8; 4:2; 11:2, etc.).

D) Ideological tensions: The semeia traditions seem to regard miracles as a legitimate basis for faith (2:11; 4:53; 6:13; 20:30). But John was critical of the faith that was based only on miracles (2:23; 4:48; 6:26; 20:29) and regarded the testimony of the miracles as an inferior road to faith (14:11; 10:38; 4:48). By positing a semeia source which John has edited and glossed, these seeming inconsistencies can be explained as the product of two discrete theological orientations, one from John's source, and the other his critical comments on the source. When ideological conflicts exist in a pericope, the material which takes the more naive view is grouped with source, whereas the more complicated christological statements are assigned to the evangelist and later redaction.

Bultmann concentrated on the first twelve chapters of John in an effort to locate a narrative source which he called a Signs Source. He appears to have used contextual evidence and Gattungskritik. Gattungskritik was a type of literary criticism for which Bultmann distinguished four
criteria: 1) the Semitic character of the Greek text; 2) the
enumeration of the signs (2:11; 4:54); 3) the divine man
( theios aner) Christology; and 4) the literary aporiae.

More recently Fortna identified a similar pre-Johannine
narrative source, The Gospel of Signs, by examining internal
content. He notes three special kinds of contextual evidence
which he employs in his analysis. 1) The parenthetical
comments and explanations which interrupt the narrative
(e.g. 1:41; 2:9). Bultmann attributed these to John's
additions to a source, but Ruckstuhl insisted they were
John's comments on his own work. However, Fortna states only
redaction of a source will account for them. 2) The
repetition of a catch-word or phrase is another indication
of an editorial insertion (cf 11:33, 38 embrymastes he; 20:14,
16 strephein). 3) Aporiae which could attest to alterations
of a source. The more difficult reading would be considered
as the earlier portion. 6

Nicol separates the semeia from the Johannine material
by 1) form: 2) style: (he extended Ruckstuhl's list of
style characteristics noting the frequency of use in the
discourse material compared to the Synoptic-like stories);
3) aporiae: 4) ideological tensions. 7

John 4 raises an important historical question. There is
no record of a mission to the Samaritans by the historical
Jesus. If Matt 10:5-6 and Acts 8:4-13 reflects historical
tradition, a mission to the Samaritans occurred only after
Easter, and at the instigation of hellenistic Christians.
John 4 then projects somewhat anachronistically, a post-Easter Samaritan mission into the lifetime of Jesus, and by its cryptic saying in 4:38, tacitly acknowledges the work of the hellenists, Stephen and Philip, in first missionizing the Samaritans.

John's seeming interest in the Samaritans may derive from the presence of Samaritans in his community — a thesis propounded by Cullmann and Brown. It is probably not possible to decide the issue, but it is a fact that John, like the Samaritans, gravitates toward the "prophet-like-Moses" christology of Deut 18:15 and avoids Davidic christology. His criticism of the Jerusalem temple is compatible with the Samaritan views, though John goes significantly beyond the eschatology of Samaritan theology, and its expectation of Ta'eb who would disclose all secrets.

Both traditions included this type of figure in their teaching. One of the prophetic eschatological figures in Jewish tradition was the prophet-like-Moses in Deut. 18:15, not to be confused with the Messiah, but like Moses, a wonder-worker. He was sometimes associated with the return of Elijah, who was also one of the wonder-workers of the OT (1 Kings 17). The Samaritans using Deut 18, expected Moses to return, or someone like him, whom they called Ta'eb. He would be recognized through his repeating Moses' great signs and wonders.

It is rather unlikely that John has composed the conversation with the Samaritan woman ex nihilo, despite the
fact that no other gospel attests to this incident. On the one hand, John seems to be describing an historic happening, while on the other, the contents appear to be an interpretation of the teaching of Jesus. Further, while superficially it is an encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan, at another level it apparently concerns the developing church. The only comparable Synoptic accounts would be a brief conversation between Jesus and a Gentile (Syro-Phoenician) woman (Mark 7:24-30), and a passing exchange with a woman in a state of ritual impurity (Mark 5:22-43).

John's purpose for this particular narrative is multifaceted. His replacement theology can be seen in Jesus' discussion with the woman concerning who is greater, Jacob or Jesus (4:12-15). It develops further as they talk about Jerusalem and Gerizim both being replaced by true worship in spirit 4:21:24.

The self-revelation of Jesus is apparent in the conversation as to whether he was a prophet (v 19) or even the Messiah (v 25). Jesus makes a definite disclosure that he is indeed the promised one (v 26). Oddly enough the woman asks the villagers (whom she brings) whether he could be the Christ (v 29). Finally the villagers declare that Jesus is the saviour of the world (v 42). John seems to portray in most of his stories a similar progression of the growing awareness of Jesus' true identity (cf. blindman chap 9,
Also, the evangelist apparently is concerned to promote a strong sense of realized eschatology with statements such as "...the hour is coming and now is..." (v 23). In v 26 Jesus answers "I am he" in reply to the woman's statement "...Messiah is coming...".

Despite the evangelist's theological interests he doubtlessly received his story from a source. This pre-Johannine source, according to Fortna, includes vv 4, 7, 9, 16-19, 25-26, and 29-30. By comparison Nicol classifies vv 5-9, 16-19, 26-30, as belonging to the source, and 1-3, 10-15, 20-24, 31-39, and 41-42 as Johannine. Thus for both, the source story depicted at least a meeting between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at Sychar in which Jesus requested water from the woman who expresses surprise at the request. Jesus then exhibits his supernatural knowledge of her marital status to which she responds by declaring him a prophet (v 19). She then returns to her villagers to tell of the event and to bring them to Jesus.

Fortna also includes Jesus' christological disclosure in vv 25-26 because it continues the basic story. He points out that the reference to Jesus' fore-knowledge is usually a Johannine theme but in this case it might be part of the story. Nicol maintains that the verses are based on traditional material but nevertheless Johannine.
Brown states that the woman's choice of time to draw water was unusual since drawing of water was done in the cool of the early morning or evening. However, Bultmann points out it is a reasonable time of day for Jesus to be hot, tired and thirsty even though a most unreasonable time for the woman to be drawing water in the intense heat at noon. We conclude that it was part of the source.

It would seem likely that all of v 7 is part of the original story since without it the narrative could progress no further. Although the dialogue concerning "living water" is initiated by Jesus' request for a drink, it is only in v 10 that the restated request acquires characteristically Johannine theological significance.

Verse 8, according to Fortna, is John's addition which sets the stage for the eventual dialogue between Jesus and the disciples concerning food (v 31-38). It also explains Jesus' private encounter with the woman which reflects a Johannine narrative preference. The Johannine Jesus seems to prefer individual encounters (cf. successive individual encounters with disciples in 1:39-51; the private conversations with Nicodemus, Martha, Mary, Pilate, Mary Magdalene and Thomas).

Verse 9ab has the woman responding to Jesus' request with wonder at the source of the petition. We agree with Fortna and Nicol that this is part of the basic story. However v 9c appears to be an editorial explanation concerning the antagonism between Jews and Samaritans. This
would have been necessary for a later community if it was no longer germane, or for an audience which was not fully acquainted with Samaritan-Jewish history.

Verses 10-15 must be included in the Johannine material according to thematic criteria (life/eternal life; high christology; replacement theology - Jesus/Jacob). V 10 sets the agenda for the discussion in v 14 concerning the gift of God, and the one in v 26 regarding the identity of Jesus. Vv 10 and 11 have a misunderstanding over the difference between ordinary water and living water. The word "living" fits into the Johannine vocabulary because of the reference to life which was identified in the prologue and is repeated in both verses. Misunderstanding over the difference between Jacob and Jesus follows in v 12 (replacement theology). A continuation of the explanation of "living water" and the theme of "eternal life" is found in vv 13-15.

Verses 16-19 have no obvious words or themes typical of Johannine phraseology. On the other hand, they are continuing the action of the woman's encounter with Jesus. Many critics have attempted to find symbolic meaning in the woman's five husbands. However, if there is special meaning John does not develop the theme. It is more than likely simply part of the original story indicating Jesus' ability to know in the same way that he knew when the woman touched him in Mark 5:25-34. The reference to "prophet" would have
been consistent with the Samaritan idea of Ta'eb who would be a prophet-like-Moses.

Fortna omits vv 20-24 from his source. We agree on the basis of the presence of typically Johannine words and themes, such as the theology of replacement, "hour", "Father", "spirit" and "truth". We would include v 25 in the original story. A conclusion such as verse 26 is logically required, but the "I am" phrase is suspicious because of the conspicuous theological use to which John puts "I am" statements. If this phrase coincides in significance with the "I am" disclosure of John 6:35; 8:12; 8:58; 9:5; 10:14; 11:25; 15:1, etc. then it would be difficult to avoid the conclusion that it too is Johannine. In fact, in each of these ego eimi disclosures the "I am" formula is followed by a predicate complement (bread, light shepherd, resurrection and life, vine). In this particular verse it seems to mean simply "yes", since Greek lacks a word for "yes". "I am" is the usual response to the question "Are you...".

V 27 interrupts the story of Jesus and the woman and logically belongs to vv 31-38. Fortna indicates that v 27 prepares for the Johannine dialogue in vv 31-38. However, Nicol states that v 27 is relating an historical situation (men did not normally converse with unrelated women) and should therefore be considered as traditional material, although not from his S source.
In v 27 and vv 31-38 the Johannine characteristics of vocabulary (e.g., \textit{mentoi}, v 27; \textit{oun}); style (e.g., comparing food to doing "the will of him who sent me", v 34; eternal life, v 36); misunderstanding (exhibited by the disciples and the ambiguity of Jesus' answer in vv 31-33) are all present. The format of the portion is typical of the Johannine discourse pattern. It begins with the statement in v 31 followed by an ambiguous statement by Jesus in v 32. Then there is misunderstanding by the disciples which prompts another question in v 33. This is followed by another ambiguous answer by Jesus which introduces a short discourse. If all of these Johannine characteristics are removed, virtually nothing remains which could be identified as source.

The addition of v 27 creates an aporia, since v 28 seems to follow immediately on v 26. However, vv 28-30 also create an aporia between v 27 and v 31 which seem to have been connected originally. But v 30 does not complete the original story of the encounter of Jesus and the woman. It raises expectations which are fulfilled only in v 40-41 which gives a positive response and achieves narrative closure.

If we treat v 39 as the ending of the source there is a difficulty with the fact that it seems to ignore v 30. Fortna cites Johannine style characteristics which are present and states that belief on someone's word (cf 4:50b) and the device of quotation are Johannine. But, it uses
the aorist episteusan as does v 41, and the two verses complement each other in thought as well. Therefore we classify it with source.

V 40 would seem to follow v 30 and make a logical conclusion. However John uses the word menein ("abide") 40 times compared with 12 times in the Synoptics. According to Brown it is used to express the permanency of relationship between Father and Son and between the Son and Christians. There are many references in John that indicate abiding in the Father, and the believer is to abide in Christ (John 14:10-11; 17:21, 23). While this particular verse at first glance seems to reflect Johannine vocabulary, there are reasons to suspect that it reflects not John's stylistic preferences, but those of his source. Verse 40 might be suggesting that just as they would ask the earthly Jesus to abide with the Samaritans, for a later Christian community, it is the risen Lord who is invited to stay. Thus the Spirit of the risen Lord is asked to abide with them. However, one must ask, why would it be for only two days? Bultmann maintains that this is part of a simple narrative and not symbolic. We concur that v 40 is source.

Fortna includes v 41 which relates to v 7c in the prologue and has the terminology associated with John the Baptist (testimony). As noted in the prologue material, the theme of belief appears at the end of each story in John. In these story endings pisteuo is in the aorist, implying a non-continuous action, which is not consistent with
Johannine thought that stresses an abiding or on-going belief. If a proto-gospel did exist containing John the Baptist material and other witness stories, this would make sense as a formulaic ending. The person or persons came to belief. Therefore we include it in the basic story. V 42 according to Fortna may contain an original confession of Jesus, but there is Johannine terminology such as "because of your words", "Savior of the world". For this reason I would not include V 42.

I would present the witness account in the following arrangement: 4:4-6, 7ac, 9ab, 16-19, 25-26, 28-30, and 39-41.

In the prologue, the story that remained after subtracting the hymn and Johannine material, introduces John the Baptist, who came as a witness. After our subtraction in John Chap. 4 we are left with the story of a non-Jewish woman encountering Jesus, and coming to belief.

This story has not only the element of belief and witness but also a missionary thrust. This is a function which is not present even in the continuation of the John the Baptist story (1:19-37). While he baptizes for repentance before he meets Jesus and identifies him, we are not told exactly what happens after concerning his witness. We do know that some of John's disciples go with Jesus (John 1:35-51). But, in John 3:25-30 we learn of a dispute between the disciples of John and a Jew concerning purifying and baptism. It would seem likely that John the Baptist...
continues in his own direction even though he states that Jesus will increase while he decreases (3:27-30).

By comparison, the Samaritan woman not only comes to belief but brings her village thereby exhibiting a missionary function. The woman, as Samaritan, would be classified as an outsider in two categories. Thus we have two important points concerning her literary character: 1) she comes to belief, and acts as a witness and missionary; 2) she is in the classification of outsider to Jewish society, that is, to those whom John defines as the opponents to Jesus and his mission.

In chapter 4 we will examine the story of Martha/Mary/Lazarus in this same manner.
CHAPTER 3

ENDNOTES

1 Nicol, Semeia, 15.
2 R. Ruckstuhl, Die Literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums (1951) 218f, as cited by Nicol, Semeia, 22-25.
3 Nicol, Semeia, 23, 24.
4 Fortna, Signs, 20-21.
5 Bultmann, John, 4. Gattungskritik is analysis by literary species or type.
6 Fortna, Signs, 21.
7 Nicol, Semeia, 15-30.
9 Moses' signs included water from the rock (Num 20:11), manna in the wilderness (Exod 16:15), parting of the waters (Exod 10:12).
10 Fortna, Signs, 193, 194.
11 Nicol, Semeia, 40.
12 Fortna, Signs, 190-191.
13 Nicol, Semeia, 40.
14 Brown, John, 169.
15 Bultmann, John, 178.
16 Fortna, Signs, 190.
17 Ibid., 191.
18 Nicol, Semeia, 61.
19 Fortna, Signs, 192.
20 Brown, John, 510.
21 Ibid., 510.
22 Bultmann, John, 201.
Presumably John has used a source or sources for this important chapter 11. It not only tells the story of the raising of a dead man, but according to Bultmann, Brown, Fortna, Nicol and others, it also provides the outward occasion for the crisis of the passion. Jesus' hour is fast approaching and the evangelist begins to prepare the reader for this. Since "glorification" is one of John's terms for Jesus' death and exaltation on the cross, Jesus' comment in v 11:4, "...this illness is not unto death, it is... so the Son of God, may be glorified by means of it", really states John's purpose. Thus the evangelist begins to connect this miracle to the coming events. The statements of the disciples in v 11:8 and 16 indicate their foreboding that this journey will lead to death.

One of the questions that arises with this pericope concerns the importance which John gives to the raising of Lazarus as the main reason for Jesus' crucifixion (11:47-53). In the Synoptics his death is due to the accumulation of his works and whole career, with particular emphasis on the temple incident (Mark 11:15-19). The evangelist apparently shifted the temple narrative from this location, just prior to the passion (where it is in the Synoptics) to chapter two, and then inserted the Lazarus
material. Brown attributes this shift to a later redactor who had particular theological purposes.1

John takes this one miracle, which involves the giving of physical life to Lazarus, and makes it the representation or sign of Jesus' essence and his gift of eternal life. This pericope is so important to John's theological agenda that reference is made to it in the story of the anointing by Mary (12:1, 2) and in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19). There is much mystery concerning this narrative in view of the fact that the Synoptics make no mention of the raising of Lazarus. Also the sequence of travel from Transjordan - Bethany - Ephraim - Bethany and back into hiding is most awkward (10:40-41; 11:17, 54).

There is an important association between the healing of the blindman (chapter 9) which dramatizes Jesus as the light, and the Lazarus story which portrays him as the life (11:25). The reader is also shown that the glorification of Jesus is not just the performing of miracles. Jesus' ultimate glorification will be accomplished through his death on the cross.

Further, there appears to be a connection to the Samaritan woman story which dealt with the theme of natural life/eternal life. The well water which Jesus requested from the woman was shown as inadequate compared to the "living water" (eternal life) which Jesus offered. In the Lazarus pericope Jesus restores Lazarus' physical life as a symbol of the giving of eternal life. This eternal life will be
accomplished through Jesus' death, which is a result of this resuscitation, according to John (11:53).

The stress in the Fourth Gospel is on the glory of God which will be perceived in and through Jesus. It is only at the transfiguration in the Synoptics that God's glory is seen shining in Jesus (Mark 9:2-8). As the book of signs draws to a close, with this story of the raising of Lazarus, the intensity of the theme of glorification and self-revelation increases. In 11:4 we are told that the illness is not unto death but for God's glory. V 40 reiterates this with Jesus' statement "...if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

In John, the high christology, which includes his preexistence and his unique sonship with the Father, are all part of the revelation of God's glory. This self-revelation is apparent in the ego eimi statements which remind us of the "I am" in Exodus 3:14. The christology focuses around v 25 with Jesus' statement, "I am the resurrection and the life." This is an example of the formulaic use of ego eimi, since "resurrection and life" are predicates. In the Samaritan woman story Jesus is portrayed as giving life. Here he is represented as being life. Martha's confession (v 27), "Yes Lord,...you are the Christ, the Son of God..." echoes the Petrine confession in Matt 16:16. In Matthew Jesus' commends Peter for his declaration and states that it was revealed to Peter by the heavenly Father. This is followed by a prediction concerning the church. In John,
Martha's proclamation follows the self-revelation of Jesus, which is really the core of the message of the Johannine Jesus (vv 25, 26).

Brown points out Jesus' attitude in this pericope is "strangely lacking in human sympathy". We are not sure why he is angry (v 33) nor whether his own weeping (v 35) is from sorrow or over their unbelief. Even his prayer stresses the fact that Jesus is one with the Father. Therefore, the prayer vv 41, 42 is not a request but is explaining his relationship with God to the bystanders. By comparison, the Synoptics have Jesus praying in Gethsemane for God to change his mind, but Jesus is nevertheless willing to submit (Mark 14:36; Matt 26:39; Luke 22:42). All of this indicates further how important 5:11-29, which explains the unity of the Father and Son is as a key motif in John.

Another important theme throughout the gospel is a sense of realized eschatology. Since eschatology concerns the "end times", all of the gospels, to a certain extent, dealt with it. They proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand (Mark 1:15), but they also believed that Jesus would come a second time (parousia) and bring about the triumph predicted by the Law and prophets (Matt 24:44; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Acts 3:20, 21). Johannine christology stated that Jesus had already come down from God to serve as a judgment (3:13; 6:62; 16:28). Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is already condemned (3:17-21).
In the Synoptics eternal life is a gift given at the final judgment, or in a future age (Mark 10:30; Matt 18:8-9). John portrays it as a present possibility. In 5:24 Jesus states, "the one who hears my word and has faith in Him who sent me possesses eternal life." Further, the Johannine Jesus promises, "everyone who is alive and believes in me shall never die" (11:26). This represents something that is already accomplished or realized. The believers are already judged favorably and possess eternal life. They will, at death, pass from this world, to which they never belonged, into the mansions which Jesus has prepared for them (14:2-3). In 11:24 Martha's statement represents the Synoptic attitude or future eschatology, whereas Jesus' answer reflects the Johannine realized eschatology.

In addition the Johannine device of misunderstanding is also present. Bultmann defines this Johannine misunderstanding as a confusion between the heavenly and earthly, and is usually related to Jesus' self-revelation. On this basis Bultmann does not classify the disciples' confusion about "sleep" and "death" in vv 12 and 13 as belonging in this category. Since this same imagery for death is used in the Synoptics (Mark 5:39) this is probably a remnant of a source. However v 23 has an ambiguous statement by Jesus, "Your brother will rise again", which is misinterpreted by Martha. This does follow the Johannine pattern of self-disclosure through misunderstanding.
With both 11:1-52 and 12:1-8 the task of reconstruction is so complex and fraught with imponderables that it cannot be undertaken here in detail. Indeed the extent of Johannine editing is so great that a convincing reconstruction is next to impossible. Nevertheless there still remains evidence that this was not written ex nihilo by John. Various points would indicate that there was at least one basic story, and perhaps more, besides the Johannine additions.

Certain elements seem redundant, and there are several breaks in continuity. First, John introduces the three main characters, Mary, Martha and Lazarus three times, 11:1, 2 and 5. In v 1 the patient, Lazarus, is identified by his relation to Mary and Martha's village; in v 2 Mary is described in relation to the incident in chap 12 and Lazarus is described as her brother; but, in v 5 it is Martha and Lazarus who are named, not Mary, who is only identified as "her sister". Bethany is mentioned twice (vv 1, 18). Second, v 17 presupposes that Jesus is at the tomb, but v 34 has him asking where the tomb is and the Jews showing him. Then in v 38 we are told that "Jesus was deeply moved again and came to the tomb".

There are Johannine features, such as personalities like Thomas, Philip and Andrew; ego eimi in 11:25; and misunderstanding in 11:11-14. However, the use of the term "the Jews" differs noticeably from what is seen in chapters 1 to 10. In John 11:19, 31, 33, 36, 45; 12:9, 11, the Jews are not the hostile authorities, but the ordinary people of
Judea and Jerusalem who are frequently receptive toward Jesus. But in 11:8, 54 the term seems to revert to the more usual usage in John.

Brown speculates that at one stage in the formation of the Fourth Gospel the public ministry ended with what is now 10:40-42, and chapters 11 and 12 were a later addition. Brown further indicates there could be a connection between the Lukan story about the sisters (Luke 10:38) and this Johannine one. If so, it would appear that the sisters were expected to be familiar to the reader of John.

Fortna's reconstruction of Chapter 11 is helpful in separating the basic story from Johannine material, therefore we shall use it for comparison.

1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha
2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair whose brother Lazarus was ill
3 So the sisters sent to him saying, Lord he whom you love is ill.
4 But when Jesus heard it
7 He said to his disciples
11 Our friend Lazarus is asleep
15 but let us go to him.
17 When Jesus came he found Lazarus in the tomb four days
18 Bethany was near Jerusalem about four miles off
19 And many Jews from Jerusalem had come to Mary and Martha to console them concerning their brother
20 When Martha heard Jesus was coming she went and met him while Mary sat in the house
28 When she had said this she went and called her sister Mary saying quietly the Teacher is here and calling for you
32 Then Mary when she came where Jesus was and saw him fell at his feet
33 When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled
34 And he said where have you laid him. They said Lord come and see.
38 Then Jesus came to the tomb, it was a cave and a stone lay upon it
39 Jesus said take away the stone
41 So they took away the stone and Jesus lifted up his eyes
43 He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come out
44 The dead man came out bound hand and foot.
45 Those who came with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

Nicol indicates many difficulties in separating the source from Johannine material. He claims no significant style differences, and tries to identify "conscious Johannine additions". The result of his analysis leaves a source that probably contains vv 1-3 (there is some doubt about 2 and 3), v 6, v 11b, vv 33-39.

The first three verses, as previously stated, leave Nicol undecided as to whether they are source or Johannine. He points out that the name "Mary" is mentioned individually as it is in v 45 and argues that this may indicate source.

Fortna maintains that John probably found v 1 and v 2 in the pre-Johannine source. He says that even the use of the word "Lord", which only appears here before the resurrection, could be pre-Johannine editorial usage. Because there is no obvious Johannine vocabulary, and the women's names do seem to be connected to Luke 10:36-42, we would ascribe vv 1-3 to source.

Verse 4 "glory of God", and "Son of God may be glorified" connects us with both the Prologue (1:14) and John's passion story. The term doxa is a Johannine theme and therefore v 4 would be attributed to John. While v 5 is part of the story it presents an inconsistency with v 1. In v 5

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it is Martha and her sister, while v 1 says Mary and her sister. In v 5 Martha is the central figure, just as she is in vv 20-27. This may indicate two different perspectives.

Verse 6 has Jesus arranging the miracle and apparently waiting for Lazarus to die. While there is some similarity to the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:21-24; Matt 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56), there are notable differences. Jairus made the request and Jesus set out immediately to go with him. The news of the death came to them enroute. We are left with the impression that this delay in John is part of the evangelist's strategy for emphasizing the reality of Lazarus' death. Therefore we would eliminate v 6b from source.

V 7a would belong to the source because it continues the basic action, but v 7b is not part of the original narrative because it refers to the delay in v 6b. V 8 is redaction since the Jews in this chapter are not hostile except here and in v 54 (which is outside of the basic story). Because hostility is indicated, one must assume that the circumstances of the author's community are showing and not the situation of the original healing story.

Verses 9 and 10 display Johannine vocabulary and refer us back to Nicodemus who came in the darkness by night (3:2). The discourse is short, but it serves to remind us of the connection between "life" and "light".

Verse 11a is labelled as an editorial seam by both Nicol and Fortna. However v 11b is in dispute, with Nicol
identifying it as source, because he says it follows v 7. 10 Fortna assigns it to Johannine redaction in order to set the stage for the disciples misunderstanding in vv 12-15. 11

Verse 11b, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep" is similar to the Synoptic story of resurrection. The phrase is used, in Matt 9:24, Mark 5:39 and Luke 8:52, in connection with someone who has died. We would include 11b in the original story. Bultmann also connects "asleep" with Synoptic imagery. V 11ac is explanatory and not consistent with the manner in which Jesus answered in the Synoptic accounts and is therefore Johannine.

Verses 12-13 are explanatory to 11b and this explanation continues with theological overtones in vv 14 and 15. The word "believe" is Johannine, and confirms the necessity of this section (vv 12-16) to show the evangelist's purpose, and also clarify the disciples' misunderstanding. Therefore this section is excluded from source.

Verses 17-20 continue the story and do not contain Johannine material, thus they probably belong to the source. V 21 is similar in thought to Mark 5:23 and Luke 8:41, 42 where the belief focuses on the healing of the sick. V 22 implies what the Matthean ruler states in Matt 9:18 "My daughter is dead...lay your hand on her and she will live." Even though the similarity in belief exists, Nicol notes that these verses (21-27) contain eight Johannine style characteristics and a number of concepts that are obviously Johannine. 12 The Jewish idea of future resurrection on the
last day (v 24) which is evident in Synoptic eschatology is corrected by the evangelist in v 25 with Jesus' self-disclosure (I am the resurrection). Also, v 27 makes it clear that the Son of God is in the world and not a future event (parousia). The Johannine realized eschatology compells us to classify vv 21-27 as Johannine.

Verses 28 and 29 fit into the original story and contain no Johannine terminology. The next two verses (30, 31) are explanatory and therefore Johannine. Verse 32abc is consistent with the Lukan story (Luke 10:38-42) where Mary sat at Jesus' feet, but v 32de is probably redactional because it repeats Martha's question and is ignored by Jesus as the story continues.

The phrase in v 33, he was "troubled in spirit", is included in the basic source by Fortna. We would compare it with 12:27 and 13:21 which also use the phrase "troubled in spirit". In 11:33 Jesus is about to demonstrate his power over death, and raise Lazarus. In some sense it is the beginning of his own passion and is the first time the phrase is used. In 12:27 Jesus announces that "his hour" has come, and at this key point it is repeated. The third instance (13:21) is Jesus' statement about his betrayer. We must conclude that v 33 is Johannine and not part of the source.

Verse 34 does belong to the source because it is necessary to the plot. Vv 35-37 must be classified as Johannine material because of the criticism of the Jews.
which is a Johannine device, and the reference to the blindman. V 38, with the exception of the phrase "deeply moved", belongs to the source as does v 39a.

Verse 41ab may be traditional. The gesture of raising ones eyes prior to the miracle appears also in Mark 7:34. However, a short discourse in the form of a prayer is seen in vv 41c-43a, with the Johannine theme of the unity of the Father and the Son, and the sending of the Son. The miracle story ends with vv 43b-44a. Fortna notes the similarity to Synoptic exorcisms (Mark 1:25; 5:7; Luke 4:41 etc.) with the cry to Lazarus "come out" (v 43b). While this may be, it is also closely related to the format of the "raisings" in Mark 5:41, Luke 8:54, and Acts 9:40 wherein the person is addressed and then given a short command to arise. In this story the command "come forth" or "come out" is more suitable, but the format appears to be the same. Matt 9:25 uses a different pattern because Jesus simply took the girl by the hand without speaking.

The end of the basic story is v 44a which constitutes the proof of the healing. Therefore we include vv 43b-44a in the source. Vv 44b-46 have to be considered Johannine material because of the detail in v 44bc which closely resembles the description of Jesus' burial clothes (20:7). The phrase in v 45, "believed in him" may also be a remnant from the source. Since the miracle or witness accounts apparently end with someone coming to belief, this is probably the ending of a witness account.
The story in chapter 11, even apart from Johannine redaction, is likely the result of the coalescing of various separate traditions: the raising of a dead person (cf. Mark 5:41, Luke 7:11-17); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Luke 16:19-31); a story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42) and the anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3-9). This might have taken place in the oral stage. Fortna maintains that originally the story was about Jesus and Lazarus alone, then Lazarus and "the" sisters, finally Lazarus and "his" sisters.  

If the additions of "the" sisters and "his" sisters were editorial at later stages, it seems strange that Lazarus is introduced by means of Mary in verse 2. Granted the scene of the anointing in 12:1 was important, but it could not possibly compare with a dead man being brought back to life. Yet, the reader is introduced to the characters in chapter 11 by means of Mary and the anointing which is to follow in chapter 12:1-8. As an oral story, it is hardly imaginable that it would be Lazarus and not Mary whose name would be recalled, unless there was another reason for remembering her. I would suggest that Mary had become so important in John's community that her name continued to be foremost in the mind of those who told the story. Perhaps she was especially important to the women of the community.

Another way to explain this feature and many of the other inconsistencies which have been noted is to suppose that we are dealing not with one miracle story, but a
conflation of two. The combining of the two may have been accomplished by John, or the two may have already been conflated when he found them. The overlapping and differences in perspective in vv 1 and 5 are not consistent with merely the addition of extra characters to the story, as Fortna believes. Or again, one may note that in v 17 "Jesus came and found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days." But in v 20 we read "when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him." This seems to be not merely a matter of adding another character, but rather the conflation of one story with another. There is further evidence in vv 34, 35, and 36 where upon Jesus' request (v 34) he went to the tomb and wept (v 35 & v 36). But v 38 makes it appear that Jesus has only then arrived at the tomb. Whereas vv 34, 35 and 36 seem to involve Mary, vv 38 and 39 center on Martha.

If there was more than one miracle story involved, one was conceivably about the raising of a man named Lazarus, similar in structure to the Tabitha story (Acts 9:36-43) in which the patient is named. The other tale, then, would have involved two sisters whose brother (unnamed) was ill. This story would resemble the Synoptic story (Mark 5:22-24, 35-43) in which the patient is unnamed. Or there was originally two separate accounts featuring Mary and Lazarus in the one and Martha and an unnamed brother in the other. Each would have represented a different perspective and
would account for the inconsistencies of v 1 in relation to v 5 and vv 34, 35 and 36 compared to v 38.

Brown and others have commented on the difference in the treatment of the "Jews" in chapter 11 compared with other parts of the gospel. This is easily explained if one realizes that they are simply included as close friends of the sisters in the witness story. They are not a later addition as foils who play a designated role in the Johannine theological script. Although, "the Jews" in 11:8 is understandably Johannine redaction.

The pre-Johannine story of the sisters, as with the story of the Samaritan woman, involves the encounter of Jesus with women, their confession and witness, and the belief that results from this (v 45). In Chapter four, it is the people who accompany the women who come to believe in Jesus, so in this story, Mary's friends come to belief. The central theme of this segment is life/eternal life.

THE ANOINTING JOHN 12:1-8

Unlike the Synoptics, which treat the anointing as an isolated event, John attaches it to the raising of Lazarus, by placing the raised Lazarus at the meal, and by identifying Mary as the anointing woman. Moreover, 12:1-11 continues the theme of the plot of the Jews, extending the plot to include even Lazarus! This reinforces the connection between the raising of Lazarus and Jesus' own death and resurrection.
This anointing story centers around Mary's encounter with Jesus. Her action, according to Jesus, is a sign: she anoints him for burial (12:7). Again, we have a woman as a main character when the theme has to do with life and death. As with John's other narratives, the evangelist adapted source material for theological purposes.

The narrative is directed toward the burial of Jesus (John 12:7) and constitutes a predictive action, the anointing of Jesus' body. Mary gives an example of service to her Lord and the fragrance (or effects) fills the house. This is a further example of unsolicited witnessing by a woman.

Another intention of this narrative may have been to prepare the reader for the treachery of Judas which is not mentioned in the Synoptic account. By introducing the flaw in his character at the beginning of the passion story we are given reasons for his actions and his concern for money. We are prepared for his betrayal of Jesus. According to Brown, "Judas was painted in darker and darker tones as the story was retold". In this Johannine account he is called a thief, and accused of stealing the money from the common purse of the group. In addition, John's insertion of Judas and Lazarus in the same story exposes the dialectics of life/death, love/rejection.

There is much speculation concerning the significance of the anointing of Jesus' feet. Barrett suggests that it is a royal anointing and that John put it before Jesus' entry to
symbolize Jesus as king. Hoskyns theorizes that on the contrary it was to avoid the regal connotation that both Luke and John had the feet anointed. Bultmann maintains that anointing the feet of a guest is attested to in rabbinic literature, but it could also be due to the influence of the Lukan story (Luke 7:38).

Legault examines various explanations which have been given to justify the anointing of feet. He states emphatically that anointing feet is not, and never was customary. The quotes from Genesis (18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24) which have been used refer to foot-washing and not anointing. On the other hand, the custom of anointing the head is vouched for in the OT (Ps 23:5; Eccl 9:7-8) and still exists in the Middle East, verified by Legault's own experience.

Legault and Brown both examine the theory of P. Benoit that posits the idea of two basic incidents which were similar.

1) An incident in Galilee at the house of a Pharisee, where a penitent sinner weeps in Jesus' presence, with her tears falling on his feet. She wipes them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50).

2) An incident in Bethany at the home of Simon the Leper, where a woman anoints Jesus' head with expensive perfume, as an expression of love (Mark 14:3-9).

Luke, according to Legault, presents the first incident, but adds material from the second. The anointing belongs to
the second story and is introduced into the Lukan one, but in association with the feet. It makes no sense, states Legault, unless one realizes the natural setting of the penitent woman weeping on Jesus' feet. She wipes the moisture of her tears from his feet with her hair, then according to Luke, anoints them. Legault theorizes that the name Simon was likewise added due to the influence of the Markan story.

He then postulates that the Johannine account, which represents a form of the second incident, had details from the Lukan version incorporated into it. However, the action of anointing the feet becomes most extraordinary without the wiping away of the tears preceding it. Further, the letting down of Mary's hair is totally out of character for the virtuous Mary of Bethany, since it is an action taken only by prostitutes. Moreover the action of wiping away the perfume, which was just applied, is strange to say the least.

Brown develops the theory further by stating that John, in spite of the seeming confusion, still had a theological purpose in retaining the feet as the object of anointing. Mary was performing an action which foreshadowed the anointing of Jesus' body for burial. Even though one does not anoint the feet of a living person, it is part of the ritual of preparation of a dead body. Therefore, this action is another indication of Jesus' death just as was the raising of Lazarus.
By comparing the Synoptic accounts Matt 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9; and Luke 7:36–50, and using Fortna’s source reconstruction as a starting point, we next examine the words and phrases for the various strata of source material. Fortna’s reconstruction is as follows: 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.25

It is difficult to decide how much of v 1 is pre-Johannine. If a conflation of stories occurred in the pre-literary stage, then it may have been after the conflation in chapter 11. Otherwise, there would be no need to connect this event to Lazarus, Martha and Mary. However, since the event took place in Bethany it is linked to chapter 11 and the location (Bethany) coincides with Matt 26:6 and Mark 14:3. This would suggest that perhaps it was the mention of Bethany that made possible the connection to Lazarus, Martha and Mary, and not the reverse. On the other hand, if the women’s names were also in the source, then John may have connected the story to chapter 11 automatically.

The mention of exact time, “six days before Passover” is probably part of the story, although Mark says two days. The phrase “where Lazarus was” is similar to other passages which are Johannine explanatory insertions beginning with ἐκ τῆς ἁπάντησις. 26

Verse 2 was probably, “There they made him a supper”. Verse 2b appears to have a connection to Luke 10:38–41 in which Martha also “served”. Therefore Martha’s name may been in the source. Verse 3ab continues the basic story, but
there are varied opinions concerning the name of Mary, and the reason why John would have felt obliged to add it, or whether it was already in the original story. The type of ointment is only mentioned in Mark 14:3 and in John. Matthew and Luke simply describe it as costly. Anointing the feet, and wiping them with hair occurs in both Luke and John. We would include 3abc in the source and at the same time retain Mary's name. If this was an original witness story concerning one of the early Christian women, it is possible that Mary of Bethany (who sat at Jesus' feet in the manner of a disciple) was the person associated with it. It would make no sense to identify her in relation to this event unless the name was already there in very early tradition.

Only John mentions the "fragrance in the house" in v 3d. Mark includes the statement "wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world what she has done will be told in memory of her" (Mark 14:9). It is possible that John intends v 3d to be understood symbolically, conveying what Mark states explicitly. A glance at the way in which John uses the word "house" confirms this.

The word "house" is used 35 times in Matt, 30 times in Mark and 55 times in Luke, the meaning being, in most instances, residence. In John it is used only 8 times. John 2:16,17 has Jesus speaking of "my Father's house" i.e. the Temple. In 4:53 his reference is to the people within a family group. In 8:35 Jesus uses the word to mean "the house of Israel" or the Jews, and in 14:2 in reference to the
heavenly realm of God. It is used to mean only a domicile in 11:20,31 in the Martha/Mary/Lazarus narrative. I would suggest that it is being used in 12:3 to mean not only the building, but symbolically "the world". This would make a progression: the Temple (2:16); the official's household (4:53); the Jews (8:35); the world (12:3); heaven (14:2). V 3d then may be a Johannine device.

Verses 1b,2a,3abc would be a possible basic witness story with the addition of the criticism by someone (Matt 26:8 the disciples; Mark 14:4 some; Luke 7:39 the Pharisee) over the expense. This would create the setting for Jesus' saying, "the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

The evangelist literally creates a story within a story by naming the critic, Judas (12:4). He then proceeds to give information about the approaching betrayal. After the question in v 5, which belongs to the original story, we are given more description of Judas (v 6). V 7 echoes the idea of Matt 26:12; Mark 14:8.

MY RECONSTRUCTION OF THE STORY WOULD THEREFORE BE:

12:1 Jesus came to Bethany
12:2ab There they made him a supper. Martha also served.
12:3abc Mary took costly ointment (of spikenard) and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.
12:4b one of the disciples said
12:5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii?"
12:7 Jesus said,"let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial".
12:8 "The poor you always have with you but you do not always have me".

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Originally, the story was the testimony borne to Jesus by a woman in the form of symbolic action, and the response which this testimony elicited. It is noteworthy that the unbelief of the male disciples comes to the fore here. John, however, has used this basic tale to conclude the signs source and introduce the passion account. While his story informs the followers concerning the approaching end of Jesus' earthly ministry, the evangelist enhances the theological dimension. By connecting it to chapter 11, it introduces the idea of Jesus' death and resurrection. By naming Judas we are prepared for his betrayal, and of course Mary anoints Jesus for burial which is an act of witness. This witness of the believer will fill the house (world).

In a sense, this section (12:1-8) is the prologue for the passion narrative, because it sets a theological agenda; preparation, betrayal, burial, resurrection. At the same time it stresses the importance of showing, not only in word but by example, the true witness. Just as the light shone in the world, so the fragrance of Mary's act will fill the world.

The theme of witness is dramatically portrayed in this story in the same manner that the motif of eternal life is enacted in the Samaritan pericope and the Martha/Mary story. The idea of death/life is again featured in a segment in which the main character is a woman. More importantly it sharply contrasts Mary to Judas and also Peter (13:6-8). Peter is apparently unable to grasp or accept the necessity.
of Jesus' death and its soteriological significance which Mary symbolically announces.
1 Brown, John, 427.
2 Ibid., 429.
3 Bultmann, John, 399 n.6.
4 Brown, John, 427.
5 Ibid., 427.
6 Fortna, Signs, 85-86.
7 Nicol, Semeia, 37.
8 Ibid., 37.
9 Fortna, Signs, 76.
10 Nicol, Semeia, 37.
11 Fortna, Signs, 79.
12 Nicol, Semeia, 38.
13 Fortna, Signs, 83.
14 Ibid., 86.
15 Ibid., 80.
16 Brown, John, 453.
17 Barrett, John, 341.
19 Bultmann, John, 415.
20 A. Legault, "An Application of Form-Critique Method to the Anointings in Galilee (Lk 7:36-50) and Bethany (Mt 26:6-13 Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-8)", CBQ 16 (1954) 131-41.
21 Ibid., 138.
22 Ibid., 136.
24 Brown, John, 454.
25 Fortna, Signs, 151.
26 hopou usually signals an explanatory insertion by the evangelist. cf. 4:46.
CHAPTER 5

THE RESURRECTION 20:1-31

If the purpose of the prologue is to set the theological agenda for the Gospel the purpose of chapter 20:1-31 is to bring it to a conclusion. The images and themes which are introduced in John 1:1-18 must now be explicated and resolved. The "Word" which comes to the world in the prologue must return from whence he came. The themes of "life" and "light" finally come together, and true believers are identified.

Several important theological purposes can be discerned from the manner in which the evangelist utilized the resurrection stories. First, he clarifies the identity and work of Jesus. In the prologue the incarnate Word was introduced, and the reader told that he was from above and not of this world (1:1-5, 10-11, 14). As the gospel progresses, this theme is developed and the prediction concerning his "lifting up" and return to the Father is added (3:13, 14; 8:28; 12:32-34). Gradually the dual meaning of the verb hypsoun is unfolded - the physical lifting up will also be Jesus' glorification.

In the Synoptics, especially Luke, Jesus' resurrection is associated with his ascension to God's presence and exaltation at His right hand. In John, Jesus' exaltation and glorification begins on the cross. The "lifting up" according to John in 12:32-33, was the beginning. While the
Synoptic Jesus foretells his death and resurrection three times (Mark 8:31-32; 9:31-32; 10:32-34) the Johannine predictions speak of "going to the Father" (14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 28).

Brown states that the "lifting up" was one continuous action of ascent which began with 12:1 (the anointing) the beginning of the passion narrative. The first step was the actual crucifixion, the second was Jesus raising up from death, and finally the lifting up to heaven. Brown speculates that this concept of "lifting up" may be more ancient than the Synoptic imagery, because of its relationship to Isa 52:13 (suffering servant) and Isa 52:53, plus the original reference to Num 21:8-9.

John also appears to be making a clear distinction between the earthly Jesus and the risen Lord. Mary's first reaction after recognizing Jesus is that in some miraculous way he has returned just as he was before the crucifixion. This is evident by her use of the word Rabbuni. The evangelist is most emphatic that this is not so. He has Jesus say, "do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended..." (V 17). Plainly the relationship between the risen Lord and his followers will be experienced as a spiritual fellowship and not as the former earthly association. The Word has returned to the Father from whence he came.

The delayed recognition of Jesus by Magdalene would further underline the difference, although delayed
recognition is also a characteristic of the Synoptic appearance narrative (the disciples on the Emmaus road Luke 24:31-35). There may be an apologetic purpose showing that the disciples were not really expecting to see the risen Jesus. However, the Markan appendix 16:12 states that Jesus appeared to the two disciples in another form (morphe). Therefore the purpose of the delayed recognition probably involved the explanation of this change of form.

A second purpose of the evangelist concerns the motif of signs faith versus true belief, which has been evident throughout the gospel. This theme appears in Jesus' statement to Thomas v 29, "...have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and believed." However, throughout the chapter the idea of seeing and then believing is apparently acceptable. The beloved disciple steps into the tomb, sees and believes (v 8). The disciples in the room are shown Jesus' hands and side and then believed. Yet when Thomas courageously and pragmatically states that he must have proof (which the others tacitly demanded) he is used as an example of one with inferior faith.

This is not really contradictory if the doubt of certain disciples, which is reported in the Synoptics (Matt 28:17; Luke 24:11, 21ff, 37, 41; Luke 24:39-41), was evident in the Johannine group as well. If so, the necessity of showing the empty tomb with the grave clothes, and the wounds was for the benefit of the reader. At the same time the basic
message of true belief (belief in his name) was reiterated through the pericope involving Thomas. It is further reinforced by the reaction of Magdalene who sees the risen Lord, and doesn't recognize him. However, just as Jesus had said in John 10:34 "My sheep know my voice...", Magdalene, as his true follower, recognizes his voice. This results in belief that is evidenced by her exclamation, "I have seen the Lord" (20:18).

A third Johannine theme which is completed in this section is that of "witness". It too began in the prologue 1:7, "...he came to bear witness that all might believe." This emphasis on witness is evident with the first testimony to Jesus’ identity by John the Baptist (1:34). We encounter the concept of bearing witness in the Samaritan story (4:39). The discourse in 5:19-47 deals with the Son bearing witness to the Father and the Father bearing witness to the Son. We see Martha making a declaration of identity (11:27) similar to John the Baptist (1:34). This is different than Peter's in 6:69 which simply says "Holy one of God", (this could mean merely an ascetic of some type, or a holy man).

Mary is credited with bringing "many Jews who believed" in 11:45, which constitutes an act of witness. Here in chapter 20 Magdalene is sent to bear witness to the brethren that Jesus is "ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God" (20:17). It would appear that v 21 is finally summarizing the teaching for all disciples. Since, through Jesus’ salvific action it is now not only "my God
and Father" but also "your God and Father"; you are sent to bear witness in the same manner as Jesus. Therefore there is to be this chain of witness, the Father sends the Son, who sends his disciples.

One of the questions that arises with this particular narrative is the purpose of some of the characters. Since women were not considered legal witnesses, what function does Mary have in the role of first witness to the Easter protophany? In later tradition Peter is credited with this, (in Luke 24:12, a relatively late addition, only Peter is mentioned) but all gospels give this role to women, and in particular to Mary Magdalene.

The story itself has several aporiae. V 2 uses the pronoun "we" but only Mary is mentioned. V 3b "with the other disciple" appears to be an intrusion that belongs to v 4, because 3a and 3c seem to follow the narrative of v 2 making "they" in v 3c refer to Magdalene and Peter. This would eliminate the mystery of how Magdalene got back to the tomb. However v 4 has the Beloved Disciple (BD) and Peter running to the tomb. Mary is not included in this race, but is back at the tomb in v 11. There is an obvious break and awkwardness caused by the inclusion of the BD in 3b.

Vv 5-8 have duplications of the actions of Peter and the BD. In v 5 the BD saw the linen cloths lying there, but did not enter the tomb. However when he went into the tomb he "saw and believed" (v 8). First, one wonders what he saw in v 8 that was different than in v 5. Second, one wonders what
he believed, because v 9 states ". . . for as yet they did not
know the scripture that he must rise from the dead."

V 11 has Mary weeping, and then stooping for the first
time to look into the tomb. This raises two questions: 1) how she knew Jesus was not there in vv 1 and 2, since at
that time she had only noticed that the stone had been
rolled away from the entrance to the tomb; 2) how and when
did she get back? In v 12 Mary saw two angels, one sitting
where his head had been and one at the feet. Again, one
wonders why Peter and the BD missed seeing them, observing
only the grave cloths.

V 13 duplicates the question which Jesus will ask in v
15. This question receives no reply. V 14a has Mary turning
to Jesus, and V 16b has her turning to him again, in spite
of the ongoing conversation. Brown also notes the fact of
Mary lingering after Peter and the BD have gone home. This
is not an aporia, but it is unusual that a lone woman would
stay after the others had departed. ²

Some critics see this as one basic underlying story
(Bultmann, Hartmann) with several later additions and
redactions. ³ Bultmann maintains that Mark 16:1-8 is the
original story and the Johannine account is an apologetic
legend to prove the reality of the resurrection. ⁴

Brown analyzes the result of the evangelist's writing by
dividing it into three basic narratives.
1) The story of several women visiting the tomb and finding it empty — later they talk to the angel (vv 1-2, vv 11-13).

2) Several disciples visited the tomb.

3) Story of the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene. According to Fortna, because of the many aporiae and style differences encountered in the narrative, it is apparently a combination of various traditions concerning the resurrection. For example, verse 1 is full of Synoptic phrases whereas v 2 is probably pre-Johannine with the beloved disciple added by John. There is a suggestion by the use of "we" that originally Mary was not alone.

Fortna sees the duplication of Peter's and the beloved disciple's actions as entirely Johannine (vv 4,5,6). He continues by saying there is a collision of two strata in vv 8-10. Originally both Peter and Mary (no beloved disciple) were perplexed and returned home.

While v 1 contains some Synoptic material as Fortna suggests, there is a discrepancy about the actual time. Mark 16:2 states "...very early...when the sun had risen"; Matt 28:1 "...toward the dawn"; Luke 24:1 "...at deepest dawn" which are all taken to mean that it was becoming (Matt & Luke) or already was light (Mark). Only John emphatically says it was still dark. While this could simply be a discrepancy in sources, on the other hand it could also involve the theological motif of the contrast between light and dark. Magdalene, like Nicodemus (3:1) came in the
darkness. Neither understood the meaning of what was to happen. Nicodemus did not understand Jesus' words, and Magdalene thought the empty tomb meant that the body had been stolen.

Verse 2 features Simon Peter and the beloved disciple. This nameless disciple is not mentioned in any of the Synoptic accounts and only in the last half of John. If we omit the references to the beloved disciple in v 2cd, it is consistent with Synoptic accounts. There is a difference, in that the women have an encounter with angels in Matt 28:5-8 and Luke 24:5-8 before running to tell the disciples. There is some evidence from the use of the word "we" (οἰδαμέν) that Mary was not alone in the early source, which coheres with Synoptic versions. However, John seems to prefer individual encounters, therefore he would change the number. This may also indicate John's source was written; an oral story would be more easily adjusted.

Presumably v 3ac had 3b added to the basic story by the evangelist. The "race" between the BD and Peter in v 4 is typical of the Johannine tendency to downplay the leadership of the "Twelve". Fortna disagrees with those who assign the running to the tomb in v 4 to Synoptic or pre-Synoptic influence (Luke 24:12). He states that both Luke and John have the disciples imitating Mary's haste. However Luke 24:12 "Peter ran to the tomb..." is a Western non-interpolation (i.e., omitted in Codex Bezae).
V 5a probably originally referred to Peter but with the Johannine addition of the BD, it was necessary to deal with the extra character (beloved disciple). V 6 in the basic story would have consisted of phrase acd (6b refers to the BD). Probably v 7 is source material because it is necessary to the basic story, even though the description of the arrangement of the linen clothes is not found elsewhere, and could be symbolic (The clothes are mentioned in the Western non-interpolation which is cited above).

Verse 8 is Johannine, since it deals with the seeing and believing of the beloved disciple. We refer back to the prologue where the theme of "belief" is first introduced (1:7), and the idea of "light" in order to see God (1:5; 1:18) is initiated. The motif of seeing recurs throughout the gospel in 1:33, 39, 51; 3:3, 36; 4:48; 6:30, 62; 9:39; 11:40; 14:19; 16:10-22. Therefore it is being shown as a completed motif in the action of the beloved disciple. Peter on the other hand sees, but we are not told that he believes. Again, the downplaying of the "Twelve". This would appear to be in direct conflict with 20:29.

Verse 9 presents many difficulties. If "they" includes the beloved disciple it is hard to reconcile it with v 8 where he sees and believes. One wonders what it is that he believes. If the verse is out of order, why would only one verse be changed when it adds to the confusion? On the other hand, if it refers to Mary and Peter why doesn't the BD enlighten them if he is indeed the model of discipleship?
The more obvious solution would seem to be that it does refer to Mary and Peter and is the original continuation of v 7, before the addition of the BD material. Therefore it belongs to the source.

The final verse in this section is v 10. We are told that the disciples go back home. This does resemble the synoptic accounts. Luke 24:12 has Peter returning home wondering what happened, and in Mark the women returned home with fear and trembling, and said nothing. On this basis I would suggest that v 10 belongs to John's source. This probably concludes the short story of the first discovery of the empty tomb. It would seem that John is combining and rearranging several different stories and not redacting one, therefore making it difficult to isolate a specific source.

One of the main motifs in the prologue is the descent of the Logos (Christ) to this world. The world does not know whence he comes or where he goes. As previously explained this is developed in 7:40-52; 9:29; 19:9. This next section deals with this theme in order to bring it to a suitable conclusion.

Not only is the protophany given to Mary Magdalene, but also Jesus' declaration of ascent, or return to the Father from whence he came. In the prologue, as Meeks stated, the ascent/descent theme was established.10 Throughout the gospel the importance of Jesus' return to the Father has been explicated (e.g. chap. 14:2-7, 12, 25-29). Now, Mary
Magdalene is witness to that cosmic moment when he is, so to speak, suspended between earth and heaven. The mystery is being solved.

The first phrase, v 11a "but Mary stood weeping" we would classify as source material because it lacks Johannine imagery. Verse 11bc has Mary duplicating the action of the BD in v 5. While it is a repetition it serves as a beginning for the encounter with the Risen Lord. Only in John does Mary "stoop and look into the tomb". In Mark and Luke the women enter it. We would have to omit this part of the verse from the source.

Verse 12 features two angels, as does Luke, but John has the added description of the precise location, "one at the head, one at the feet". This verse may have been located directly following v 1 originally, which would be closer to Synoptic accounts. On this basis, we would include 12abc in the original story. The question in v 13 would be part of the Synoptic-like story, if v 12 did follow v 1 originally. The repetition of this question in v 15, rather than indicating that one was Johannine addition, as Fortna claims, would seem to signify the coming together of two independent resurrection stories. One resembled the Synoptics, with the angels asking the question, the other similar to the scene of the Emmaus journey. Therefore it constitutes source.

Verses 14 and 15 are typical examples of Johannine "misunderstanding". However, the phrase "she turned around
and saw Jesus standing” could have some relationship to Matt 27:9, where the women met him as they were leaving. V 14bc probably qualifies as source material. The theme of not recognizing Jesus began in v 1:10, it is being concluded with Mary’s final recognition in v 16. This comes about because she “knows his voice”. The statement “my sheep hear my voice” is given as a clue in 10:27, as is the discourse on the good shepherd 10:1-6. Now in 20:16 we have the completion of this important motif. If this was another post resurrection appearance story, John has shaped it to fit his theological needs, and therefore the original is difficult to identify. We would classify it as Johannine.

Verse 17 is also typically Johannine since it brings us to the climax of the ascent/descent motif. The man from heaven is now beginning his ascent back to the Father, and for this moment is not of the world, or of heaven. The commission given to Mary, “go tell the bethren”, could be source because this is a normal feature of resurrection stories. The phrase “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” has caused some confusion. Possibly there is an indication of the vast difference between Jesus and the believers. However, in view of the statement in the prologue that belief in Jesus’ name enabled people to become children of God (1:12), it is more likely an assertion that the believers now belong to this heavenly family. Therefore it is Johannine. Verse 18 apparently has some shared material with Matt 27:10 and could therefore be
from the source. This source material would be reconstructed as 11a, 12abc, 13, 14bc, 17b, 18.

We are left with questions. Why is this crucial moment given to a woman in John, and not to the beloved disciple? At the time it was written, especially if it comes from an original ancient account, as Brown thinks, who would find it meaningful? It would not likely be met with enthusiasm if it were a group of males listening. On the other hand, a group of women could derive great comfort from it.

Another point about which we cannot help but speculate is that the imagery of "seeing" is in relationship to male characters (the BD sees and believes), which John considers to be inferior faith. But the imagery of "life" and belief in Jesus' words centers around females. As with other witness stories (the Samaritan 4:39-41; the blindman 9:38; the first section of chapter 20 ends with the BD coming to belief 20:8), this section ends with Magdalene coming to belief in the risen Lord. Indeed she is the first to hear his voice and recognize him, which was how Jesus said it should be. But, Magdalene's belief is followed by her going and telling others, as did the Samaritan and Mary of Bethany. The BD on the other hand, like the blindman, believes and goes home.

This story is a crucial literary moment with a definite relationship to the prologue. If the original source was a witness account involving a woman, there are questions, as stated above, concerning its purpose in the gospel, aside
from its original witness function. It also suggests that John, finding his source with the woman in an important role had no great urgency to diminish the woman’s position.

John continues his resurrection account with the stories of the appearance of the Risen Jesus to the eleven minus Thomas, and the appearance to Thomas. The latter is usually regarded as a Johannine creation. However, John 20:19-23 resembles Luke 24:36-43 closely enough to suggest that it was based on a traditional resurrection appearance.

John connects the story of the appearance of the Lord to the ten and the witness that this produces (v 25) with the story of Thomas, thus continuing the chain-like series of witnesses. For our purposes, however, it is noteworthy that the pre-Johannine story of Mary and the Risen Lord ended with her witness (leading to belief of others). This is a pattern which John exploited, although the theology of the source has apparently exerted influence on John’s redaction.
CHAPTER 5

ENDNOTES

1 Brown, John, 478.
2 Ibid., 981.
3 Bultmann, John, 682, 683; G. Hartmann, "Die Vorlage der Osterberichte in John 20" cited by Brown, John, 997.
4 Bultmann, John, 681-683.
5 Brown, John, 996.
6 Fortna, Signs, 134, 135.
7 Ibid., 137.
8 Brown, John, 999-1000.
9 Western non-interpolation - This designation is given to verses or phrases which are absent from Western witnesses which normally contain additions rather than deletions (e.g. Codex Bezae).
10 Weeks, "Man from Heaven", 50.
11 Fortna, Signs, 139-140.
NICODEMUS  JOHN 3:1-21

In order to compare the format of the stories which feature a male character rather than a female one, we will first examine the Nicodemus account in Chapter 3.

The Nicodemus story introduces the first major Johannine discourse. It is a discourse on the revelation brought by Jesus, and most of the principal Johannine themes are present. John's replacement theology is evident in the contrast between Nicodemus, the representative of the Law and the old order, and Jesus who supercedes it. The reference to the serpent in the wilderness (v 14) further promotes the evangelist's intention of showing that the whole Mosaic tradition will be replaced. Just as the brazen serpent brought life to all who gazed on it, so Jesus brings eternal life when he is lifted up. Moreover, Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, has inferior spiritual knowledge and understanding compared to Jesus.

A second theme is Jesus' self-revelation. Nicodemus addresses Jesus as rabbi, and as a man come from God (a man approved by God). However, Jesus makes it clear that he has not come from God in the manner that Nicodemus infers, but rather he has descended from heaven and God's presence (v 13). Further, the relationship of Jesus as Son of God is explained (v 16), and his purpose on earth is stated (vv 17-18). A noteworthy point in the pericope is that Jesus
only speaks of himself in the third person, unlike other places in which ego eimi statements are involved in his self disclosure. It is usually assumed that vv 1-12 form a dialogic section which was joined to a monologue (vv 13-21). In this monologue Nicodemus no longer plays a part, and v 13 onward is written in the third person.

The third motif involves realized eschatology. For John, rebirth happens in the present instead of in some distant future time. It is the condition for entering the kingdom of God (or eternal life) here. The descent of the Logos (Son of Man or heavenly Man) into the world, and ascent back to heaven makes it a present actuality for those who have faith (vv 17, 18). Judgment, which for the Synoptics will happen in the future, occurs in the present according to John 3:18.

Another Johannine device which is in evidence is misunderstanding. The Johannine Jesus makes deliberately ambiguous statements which naturally lead to misunderstanding. For example, the word anothen in v 3 means "again", "from above" or "from the beginning". Nicodemus takes it to mean "again", but v 5 makes it clear that "from above" is intended. According to Bultmann, John's technique does not consist only in one word having two meanings, but rather concepts and statements which seem to refer to earthly matters, really refer to divine matters. The misunderstanding results when someone sees the right meaning of the word, but mistakenly imagines that its only reference is to earthly things.¹ Thus Jesus speaks of rebirth, which Nicodemus
interprets as natural, earthly birth (3:3). As in the other
Johannine narratives his confusion presents the opportunity
for Jesus' discourse.

Many of the typical Johannine dichotomies are present:
birth/rebirth; light/darkness; light/life; signs faith/true
belief; flesh/spirit; ascent/descent. This may indicate a
close relationship to the prologue. Although the conversa-
sation with Jesus is about eternal life, the fundamental
motif is that of light/darkness. Because the man comes in
darkness, in spite of his great learning, he cannot under-
stand. He is, so to speak, a symbol of those in spiritual
darkness, who cannot see.

Whether or not the Nicodemus section is historical, or a
construct by the evangelist, as Bultmann suggests, it does
provide a contrast to the Samaritan woman in chapter 4. The
woman represents an undesirable person, being Samaritan and
woman. Nicodemus stands for everything that is desirable,
males, Jewish, a ruler and a member of the Pharisees, who
were the elite "separated ones". Also, his previous enlight-
enment is a contrast to his being in darkness as far as the
community is concerned. In the imagery of insider/outside,
Nicodemus was an insider of the earthly realm, while the
Samaritan woman was an outsider. Perhaps the reason he found
it so difficult to actually follow Jesus was having to give
up this insider status in order to become an outsider.

Brown states that John obviously wanted to use Nicodemus
to illustrate a partial faith in Jesus on the basis of
signs. Thus it is placed after examples of more satisfactory faith (disciples of Cana), and lack of faith (the Jews at the temple).\textsuperscript{2} Meeks, however, sees Nicodemus as the model of Jews who are not to be trusted in 2:23 because they never come to true belief.\textsuperscript{3}

Although the Nicodemus story ends inconclusively in chapter 3 it continues in 7:50. There he is seen offering legal defence of Jesus, with a resulting question concerning his own status, (v 52) "are you from Galilee too?". Finally in 19:39 we find him in company of Joseph of Arimathea at the burial of Jesus. It is difficult to understand why John mentions Nicodemus bringing one hundred pounds of spices for the burial. The quantity is excessive. It could mean that he did not understand about Jesus’ approaching resurrection. On the other hand, perhaps the amount of costly spices was intended to show how great was his devotion to Jesus at the time of the crucifixion. Although Mary doesn’t use a large quantity of ointment in 12:3 it is expensive, and therefore the two actions seem comparable.

As with the other stories examined, it is likely that John relied on an earlier story of Jesus and Nicodemus. If we eliminate the Johannine imagery we are left with a story which is similar to the Synoptic narrative of an unnamed rich young Jew (Matt 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-27) who asks about eternal life. There would seem to be knowledge of a Synoptic-like story. Jesus’ answer in John
appears to be the answer to the question which was asked in
the Synoptics.

Although John doesn't necessarily know the Synoptic
story there is evidence that he does draw on a catalogue of
stock-beginnings. Pap. Egerton 2 (late first century CE)
contains fragments of four pericopes. The first exhibits
Johannine elements, two and three show parallels to the
Synoptics, while the fourth describes an apocryphal miracle
of Jesus. The importance of this document is the fact that
it displays similarities to all four gospels. The Johannine
material has some Synoptic phrases and the reverse. This
permits the conjecture that the author knew all four but had
no written text, and the result is an instance of the
overlapping of written and oral tradition. Or it represents
a very early combination of elements which also found their
way into other gospels. Nicodemus never does ask a question,
but there could be either a coalescing of material, or a
missing dialogue, as Pap. Egerton 2 (11.43-59) would
indicate to account for this. However, if they are related,
in John 3:1 the man is named, whereas the Synoptics leave
him nameless.

Only v 1a has any likelihood of deriving from John's
source. V 1bc establishes Nicodemus as a Jewish leader in
order to stress the characteristic Johannine antagonism
between the community and the Jews.

Most of v 2 is essential to the pre-Johannine story
since it is here that Nicodemus' opening comment appears. It
bears similarity to the opening of both the Synoptic story ("Good Teacher..." Mark 10:17) and P. Egerton 2 II.45 which has "Master Jesus, we know that thou art come from God...". Nicodemus' statement that Jesus is "come from God" is the equivalent of the Synoptic address "good teacher".

However, John's express mention of a nocturnal visit (reiterated in 19:39) seems designed to invoke the redactional themes of "light" and "darkness", a motif already prominent in the prologue. The mention of signs (2c) seems also to relate most directly to the specifically Johannine theme of criticism of "signs faith" (2:23-15; 4:48; 20:28-29).

At v 3 there is an aporia. Nicodemus has only given a greeting to Jesus then suddenly Jesus is answering appropriately the question posed by the young man in the Synoptic story: "what must I do to obtain eternal life?". However, no question has been asked in John, and yet the answer is given, "ye must be born again". We assume that the Synoptic story was well known, so that the question was understood. Nevertheless, the answer is completely different than that given in the Synoptics. It involves the Johannine motif of birth/rebirth (spiritual) which occurs in the prologue (1:13), and is now developed in this discourse. V 4 continues this Johannine theme.

In the section vv 3-12, Johannine language takes over completely. This is apparent with phrases such as "born of water and the spirit" (v 5), "what belongs to spirit is
spirit" (v 6). There is typical Johannine misunderstanding in vv 3-5, with double entendre in v 3 and v 8. As with the Hebrew ruah (wind, breath, spirit) pneuma means both "wind" and "spirit" (v 8). In v 9 it is ironic that the learned leader of the Jews comes to Jesus for information. Jesus comments on this in v 10. We see the typical spirit/flesh (vv 5-6), earthly/heavenly, and insider/outsider contrasts. Finally, the use of "whence" in reference to the pneuma reminds us of John's motif concerning the "whence" of Jesus himself, which will be climaxed in John chap. 9.

It would appear that while Jesus' discourse is on eternal life, Nicodemus symbolizes a person in spiritual darkness. The problem is that he cannot understand eternal life because he cannot see. In spite of, or perhaps because he was an insider of this world and a Jew, John shows how difficult it was for Nicodemus to gain spiritual sight.

The Nicodemus story is used to fill the role of learned insider of this world, who had much to lose if his commitment to Jesus became public. This is another example of how the evangelist used his sources to fill the needed roles in his theological narrative. However, by means of word and theme analysis the only original source material which we were able to expose is 3:1a and 2acdc. It is possible that the story of the rich young ruler of the Synoptics, being well known by the community and by John, has been completely retold for theological purposes, making it impossible to separate source from redaction. The Synoptics have the man
turning away unable to renounce his wealth. John has him unable to come out of the darkness, perhaps because of his position.

When you remove the Johannine imagery and phrases, we are still left with the remnant 3:1a and 2cd. John later extends the story by showing Nicodemus' eventual, or tentative commitment. Thus, he becomes an example of the rulers mentioned in chapter 12. There is no evidence that John's source ended as did the women's stories, with Nicodemus becoming a witness. Even at the level of Johannine redaction, Nicodemus remains only a "secret Christian" prevented from full acknowledgment by "fear of the Jews".

THE BLINDMAN JOHN 9:1-38

In the other stories we have examined, it has been observed that John chooses the characters to represent particular concepts. It is appropriate to the theme of light/darkness that a story of physical blindness would be used as a cipher for spiritual blindness.

The following Johannine devices are present: 1) misunderstanding: the neighbors don't think it is him (9:9); parents don't know (9:21) the blindman doesn't know; 2) irony: Is Jesus from God or a sinner? (9:16); The blindman wonders if Pharisees want to become disciples (9:27); and 3) antagonism between the community and the Jews, and the fear of expulsion from the synagogue (9:22).
John's replacement theology is evidenced as we follow the fundamental conflict between the community and the Synagogue, from which they were expelled. It is introduced by the antagonism over the Sabbath healing (v 14). One of the main disputes, was between loyalty to Mosaic Laws or to Jesus who appeared to break them. John in effect asserts that Jesus replaces all of the existing Mosaic tradition vv 28-29.

It would seem that chapters 1-9 contain, among other things, a series of discourses dealing with individual elements of this conflict. Chapter 1:17 states that Moses gave the Law, but 7:19-23 argues that it is "broken" in order to keep it". Chapter 1 points out in v 45 that Jesus was foretold by Moses and the prophets, but in 9:29 the Jews do not know from whence this man comes, therefore do not recognize that he was the messiah.

Chapter 3:14 compares the lifting up of the serpent by Moses with the lifting up of Jesus. Chapter 5:45,46 accuses the Jews of not even believing Moses, as they claim. The development of the apologetic continues with the explanation that it was not Moses who gave bread from heaven in the wilderness, rather the heavenly Father. The Father also gave it in Jesus, the Bread of Life. In 9:29 the "Jews" are not swayed from their obdurate stance.

Replacement theology appears to be a theme which is part of the evangelist's basic structure in the first nine chapters. Therefore, part of the purpose of this episode is
precisely contained in 9:29. While marginal persons were able to believe on Jesus' name, the "Jews" remained blind and cannot see. They are deeply involved in the Mosaic Law, which as Jesus points out, they do not understand. Like the blindman, they are born in darkness.

In the prologue it was stated that "we beheld his glory" (1:14). This is reiterated at the wedding at Cana (2:11), in the Lazarus story (11:4) and in 13:31 and 15:8. This is also implied in 9:3 "...works of God might be manifest." This theme of showing God's glory seems to be a factor whenever someone comes to belief. In 2:11 the disciples believed, in chapter 11 Martha, Mary and her friends believed. Here, in this chapter, it is the blindman who eventually comes to belief. The evangelist illustrates that seeing God's glory leads to belief.

Jesus' self-revelation is another strand that is developed in this pericope. In v 5 Jesus identifies himself as "the light of the world" (this same ego eimi statement appears in 8:12). In v 11 the blindman's statements about Jesus begin with the simple comment that the man restored his sight. There is a progression in thought as Jesus is referred to as a prophet (v 17), that he comes from God (31) and finally, Son of Man (v 37). Coincident with this is a progression of hostility toward Jesus as the blindman's statements became more intense. After some initial debate and uncertainty (vv14-17) the Pharisees assert that he is
not from God (v 16); then he is called a sinner (v 24) and his divine origin completely ignored.

Realized eschatology is in evidence in vv 35-38 with Jesus' comments concerning the Son of Man. This is not the future expectation of a savior-figure who was to come on the clouds of heaven, but the present person who had just healed the man.

While we do not have the obvious aporiae as in the other sections, nevertheless there are repetitions (healing repeated three times) and obvious insertions of discourse etc. which would indicate several sources. Characteristic of this story are the many anachronisms which make it impossible to read as a story about the historical Jesus. The exclusion from the synagogue, the Benediction against Heretics and the judicial authority exercised by the Pharisees were unthinkable in ca 30. The duel between disciples of Jesus/disciples of Moses would be another improbability while the earthly Jesus was present.

Martyn pursues a "two level" theory in this pericope. He compares it to a number of healing stories in the synoptics because of the basic format which he perceives, in spite of expansion:

1) Description of sickness
2) Person is healed
3) Miracle confirmed - demonstration of health and amazement of onlookers
Martyn looks for specific reasons beyond basic literary purposes that the author may have had for the embellishment. He suggests that the story reflects an incident in the life of the present community. He refers to John 14:12 which promises that the disciples will do greater works than Jesus after he returns to the Father. Thus the activity of the Risen Lord will continue through the community of Christian witnesses. Therefore in John's view, Jesus' activities continue, and were not terminated with his earthly death.  

Further, even though for John Jesus was the light of the world while he was on earth, his presence is still powerfully present as light in the ministry of witnesses. The two levels that are present are: 1) The einmalig event during Jesus earthly life; 2) the powerful presence in actual events in the "here and now" of the community. Martyn asserts that in this particular story the second level is the more prominent.

Martyn equates this blindman with one of the Jews in Jerusalem, healed by Jesus, but also one member of the separated church. His mother and father, if they knew the identity of the healer, were afraid to confess to it. The Jews doing the interrogation are equivalent to the synagogue hierarchy who were central in working out the details of the Benediction against Heretics.

Fortna surmises a conflation of a healing episode (Mark 8:22-26 for example) and a pronouncement story such as Luke 13:4 -- "the question of sin as the cause of misfortune". 

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He formulates the following as the basic source story in chapter 9:10

1 As he passed by he saw a man blind from birth
2 And his disciples asked him, Rabbi who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind
3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned or his parents"
6 As he said this he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay
7 Saying to him, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam". So he went and washed and came back seeing
8 The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar said "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?"

Verse 1 is logically part of the source because it lacks Johannine phraseology. V 2 is part of the original account since the question seems irrelevant to the subsequent Johannine dialogue. The question revolves around conventional views of sin and punishment. Exodus 20:5 states that the "iniquities of the father would be visited on the children". However, the Johannine theology is based on "rebirth as children of God" (1:12; 3:3). On such a view the sins of the earthly fathers no longer mattered to the later community, who were born again to a heavenly Father.

Verse 3abc continues the narrative, but 3de has the Johannine idea of God being glorified through his works. V 4 is Johannine with the "work of Him who sent Me", "day/night". These were first introduced in the prologue 1:5, 11. Likewise, v 5 continues the Johannine motif (light of the world).

Vv 6,7 belongs to the source, because it contains no specific Johannine vocabulary nor imagery.
V 8, according to Fortna is the end of the story. Thus it fits Martyn's format for a healing story. We agree that it is source material. Vv 9-12 contain repetitions, misunderstanding, and the idea of not knowing where Jesus is and are likely Johannine.

As previously stated it is difficult to separate the different sources, therefore the only verses we would identify as being part of a short healing story are: vv 1, 2, 3abc, 6, 7, 8.

The development of the Johannine christology and theology, as pointed out, appears to be central in this story. Yet there are important role functions. A male is again the key figure in a discussion about "light", which is understanding and knowledge. In fact there is no mention of the topic of "life" in this narrative.

This is a prime example of an outsider of this world becoming transformed into an insider of the heavenly realm. This outsider not only believed, but without yet giving a commitment defended his healer. In the end, in spite of threats by the leaders, and possible rejection by his parents, he openly came to physical and spiritual sight as well. This is indicated by his declaration of belief. However, we have no evidence of witness. When confronted, he hedged his answers and engaged in typical Johannine ambiguity and irony.

Parallels and contrasts can be observed between Nicodemus and the blindman. Nicodemus was a member of the
elite "separated ones" who functioned as the insiders of this world in the Fourth Gospel. He was a man learned in theological matters and yet still in spiritual darkness because of his lack of understanding. In spite of his discussion with Jesus, and probably in spite of his learning, we are not sure about total commitment and discipleship. The blindman was walking in darkness because he was born without sight. Even though he was a Jew, he was an outsider by virtue of being a beggar. However after his encounter with Jesus he was given natural sight. It was by means of a second encounter that he declared belief, or spiritual insight (this pericope and the Markan story, Mark 8:22-26, of the second touch are somewhat parallel in this respect).

Having analyzed and compared the individual stories in order to separate sources from Johannine theological additions, it is evident that the characteristics of the women's stories are somewhat different than the men's. When form-critical analysis exposes characteristics which are apparent in some stories but not in others, it is probable that those stories containing the similarities belong together. This opens the possibility of an independent, separate corpus of women's stories. These stories have the shared characteristics of an individual woman encountering Jesus, moving from hostility to belief, then going and bringing others (witness). If a women's collection existed it would have been from this that John drew his examples for
his gospel. We also observe that the evangelist’s purpose in using a story was not the same as the original intent of the tale. John used the stories symbolically to accomplish his theological objectives (replacement theology, eschatology, belief in signs/belief in his name). The original purpose was likely encouragement and spiritual support of the women in the community.

If this is so, we must look for evidence that would point to the existence of such a collection of stories in other literature and other communities. If there were indeed active women, who not only worked for the fledgeling community, but also developed their own oral traditions, such evidence is difficult to find. In fact it is apparent that a concerted effort was made to suppress all signs of women functioning in the role of apostles. Phoebe, although called diakone, like Paul and Apollos, was often interpreted as being merely deaconess or helper by later writers (Rom 16:1). Junia (Rom 16:7) was mistakenly thought to be male by later church authorities. Hebrews 11 makes note of all the male heroes of faith, but mentions briefly only one woman, Rahab. With this and other evidence of the deemphasizing of women’s roles, it is amazing that anything concerning women’s activity survived. Therefore, it is most unusual to find what appears to be examples of women’s activity from an earlier community.

In Part Three we will examine the symbolism and compare the Johannine situation with other groups. Finally, these
women's stories will be compared to some literature that is known to have been produced by women.
1 Bultmann, John, 633.
2 Brown, John, 135.
3 Weeks, "Man from Heaven", 55.
5 In the late 80's the synagogue authorities introduced the reworded Birkat ha Minim (curse on the deviators) into the liturgical service in order to be able to identify and eject those who confessed Jesus as Messiah. Once these persons are expelled they become identified as Jewish Christians, no longer Christian Jews. R. Brown, Community of the Beloved Disciple (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 172.
6 The conflict between disciples of Moses/disciples of Jesus developed after the expulsion.
8 Ibid., 27, 28.
9 Ibid., 87.
10 Fortna, Signs, 74.
PART THREE

CHAPTER 7

Analyzing the functions, roles and plots of the Johannine women's stories is important in order to discover the underlying purpose of the writer in using them. Since every writer has a format into which his/her characters fit, analyzing the meaning of the roles and functions in John will help to discern the evangelist's purpose. It is also necessary to decide the range of the conclusions that can be made from this information.

I LITERARY FUNCTION

Culpepper observes that the writer of the Fourth Gospel is not concerned with the full-blown development of characters. They appear only long enough to fulfill their role in the "representation" of Jesus and their responses to him. Therefore, one is forced to consider the characters in terms of their commission, plot functions and representational value. In John the individuality of all characters is determined by their encounter with Jesus, and they are a continuum of responses to him. These represent the same attitudes that the reader might have.

Culpepper views the disciples in the Gospel of John, as models or representatives with whom readers may identify, and not exemplars of perfect faith. They respond and
therefore serve as surrogates for the Church. "The faith of the disciples is at first a faith based on signs (2:11) and their believing is based on seeing (1:36, 39, 46, 51). Others "believe in his name" because they see the signs, but Jesus does not entrust himself to them (2:23-24; cf. 1:12 and 2:11). As the gospel continues, their understanding progresses. Not only do they show a willingness to follow, but eventually their faith leads to abiding "in his word" (8:31). Culpeppper sees a progression up to the crisis in 6:60, and speculates that because the Twelve are first mentioned in 6:67 they constitute the remnant of Jesus' followers after that crisis. Since John is silent about them for the chapters following 7:3, Culpepper says their time for confrontation has not come. In the one place they are mentioned (9:2), he views them as foils for Jesus' response to the blindman.  

The difficulty with Culpepper's analysis is that the Johannine disciples, unlike the Synoptic ones, are not the main characters in the book of signs. (They appear more prominently in chapters 13-17). Culpepper appears to interpret John in Synoptic terms. The Synoptic disciples are the principal responders to Jesus, and in Mark they are even represented in rather negative terms. In Mark 8:18, they are unable to see and hear, and this is expanded by means of 7:31-37; 8:22-26. In John, however, the main function of the disciples is to pose suitable questions for Jesus' ambiguous
answers and discourses. Their personal development is not a general subject for concern.

Robert Tannehill argues that for Mark the reader is expected to evaluate the disciples in light of the works and actions of Jesus. "Thus, you follow the shifting relationship with Jesus as it moves through the gospel of Mark." At the same time, one can discern important interaction between these disciples and other characters in the gospel. In interpreting the Johannine disciples similarly, Culpepper seems to be borrowing from Tannehill's model.

However, there is an important difference between the Markan disciples and the Johannine ones which Culpepper has apparently overlooked. In the Markan accounts Jesus is leading and instructing the Twelve. We have their reactions recorded, for example, in the account of the storm (Mark 4:35-41). In Mark 6:6-13, they are sent out on a teaching mission as apostles. We see them with Jesus serving the five thousand under his direct order (Mark 6:30-44). Always they are portrayed as reactors and responders to Jesus and his miracles (6:45-52). They react as a reader might react. At the transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8) and the discussion that followed (9:9-13) Mark constructs this story so as to allow an easy identification of the disciples with the audience. Peter's suggestion to erect tabernacles is depicted by Mark as a serious misunderstanding of the event. Thus the reader who has identified sympathetically with Peter is counselled...
to think otherwise, and the reader who perceives this as a misapprehension is confirmed in her/his suspicion. Likewise, Mark depicts some of the twelve in an argument about who will sit on Jesus' right hand in the kingdom, and thereby also engages the natural rivalries and grandiose aspirations of his audience.

By contrast, in the Fourth Gospel the disciples are not really responders. A dominant concern of John is the acceptance or rejection of Jesus as God's envoy. Since the disciples (and presumably the Johannine community they represent) have already responded by following Jesus, any further response they might have is of marginal interest. The disciples are represented as developing and learning, as evidenced by the discourses (13-17), but there are no details concerning their progress. Rather than being responders, in a sense they are initiators, in that they pose appropriate questions often unknowingly (4:27; 11:7-16) or act as foils and provide the setting for Jesus' discourses (13-17). There is no follow-up noted. For example, we are not told what happened to the Samaritan, the blindman, the sisters, or Nicodemus after their encounter. We know only that the disciples (whoever that may include) were together in 20:19.

John says very little about the continuing personal relationship between Jesus and his disciples although there are instances of intimacy (1:29-51; 13:1-12). The "Twelve" of Synoptic tradition are briefly mentioned only four times,
and discipleship in this gospel is determined by "belief in Jesus name" (1:12; 3:16) and abiding (8:31). Whenever a particular person is mentioned, it is as a foil for Jesus' actions or words, and not in a specific community role.

Culpepper perceives varying degrees of achievement, from signs faith (2:11) to abiding (8:31). However, in my view, John does not depict these as progressive stages. Rather, John implies that there are those who believe only in signs (John 2:23), and on the other hand, there are those who believe in his name (1:12; 3:16). In 20:29 the Risen Lord tells Thomas "blessed are they who have not seen, but believed". It is not so much a progressive view of faith as an either/or dichotomy.

Culpepper outlines seven different responses to Jesus that are seen in the Fourth Gospel: rejection; acceptance without commitment; acceptance of wonder-worker; belief in his words; commitment with misunderstanding; paradigmatic discipleship; defection. While these may be types of responses, the individual involved in each story functions in a symbolic manner to make a theological assertion. Characters in John become ciphers for Johannine theological topics. They lack (for the most part) credible motivations for their actions and words, and hence the audience is not able to identify easily with the characters. For example, the Samaritan woman who draws water is the character chosen to be the key figure in the lesson on natural water (life) as compared to living water (eternal life) but her
conversation with Jesus is highly contrived. The Jewish blindman is the means of articulating spiritual blindness and the near impossibility of a "Jew" coming to belief in Jesus which is comparable to the "born blind" receiving sight. Neither the man's reaction to Jesus - issuing in a progressive series of christological acclamations (Jesus is a prophet 9:17; comes from God 9:31; son of man 9:37) nor the Pharisees' increasing opposition to Jesus and the man, is explained to the reader in credible narrative steps. Instead, the opposing positions seem to be impelled by a supernatural theological agenda. This differs markedly from the Synoptics. In this manner each character, including the disciples, functions as part of the symbolic system portraying important concepts within the story by virtue of who and what he/she is.

It would appear that Culpepper ascribes a greater importance to the twelve disciples in John merely because they were actual historical personages. At the same time, he seems to marginalize the role of those that he considers "merely literary" or symbolic figures. This type of thinking overlooks the basic character and format of this gospel, which is highly symbolic.

We would suggest that the author of the Fourth Gospel had a specific theological agenda with a specific symbolic universe. He then proceeded to work his available material and characters into this format. Narrative importance depends upon which literary functions are ascribed to each
character, not on whether he/she was also an historical personage.

In discussing the importance of the plot function in John, Culpepper says, "the plot is actually controlled by thematic development and a strategy for wooing readers to accept its interpretation of Jesus."\textsuperscript{10} Culpepper further notes that the gospel begins with an introduction of Jesus and the plot clearly revolves around him.\textsuperscript{11} The conflict between believing and unbelieving responses to Jesus pushes the plot forward. Culpepper maintains that the variety of individuals confronted by Jesus dramatizes the "Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us".\textsuperscript{12}

While Jesus is introduced in the beginning, it is not so much his person as the alien and other-worldly aspect of his being that is in focus. The belief/unbelief conflict is also a dichotomy which emphasizes the outsider or alien character of the community to the world. This is probably not narrative strategy which would have much impact on unbelievers. Since the material in the gospel is written in a symbolic and esoteric format, only the initiated would understand. On this basis it is unlikely that it was written to "woo" the unbelieving reader to accept Jesus. It would seem more probable that it was a means of edifying those who understood the motifs.

There are other themes that contribute to the plot. The conflict between the community and the Jewish group, with Jesus as the main character and catalyst, is also integral

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to John's story. The material for the most part seems to be for encouragement and comfort. This might indicate that the main purpose was to examine the meaning of the rejection of the community by the Synagogue. The message would compare their situation to that of Jesus. Even though they were rejected by this world, as he was, they were accepted as insiders of a heavenly realm. Just as their leader, they are God's children and members of a heavenly family whose true home is in this heavenly abode. Each character represents a particular aspect of whatever theological assertion John is presenting (life, light, blindness, acceptance, steadfastness, faith).

II MYTHIC IMAGERY

Wayne Meeks directs our investigation to mythic imagery. He says:

...one's world in the sociology of knowledge is understood as the symbolic universe within which one functions, which has "objectivity" because it is constantly reinforced by the structures of the society to which it is specific.

Meek's insight can be illustrated by looking briefly at cosmogonic myths.

According to Mircea Eliade, "...the creation of the world becomes the archetype of every creative human gesture, whatever its plane of reference may be." A creation myth functions as an exemplary model or paradigm. It reveals and describes not only the structure of the cosmos as it was in the beginning, but also its structure as it is experienced
in the here and now. The cosmos and its structures are understood as a living world inhabited by creatures of flesh and blood. The cosmos requires a periodical repairing, renewing and strengthening, and if this is not done, the structures dissolve and everything returns to primordial chaos.  

Eliade points out that one of the outstanding characteristics of traditional societies is the opposition assumed between their inhabited territory, and the unknown and indeterminate space that surrounds it. The inhabited territory is the world (our world), the cosmos. Everything outside of this constitutes a sort of "other world" which is chaotic, and peopled by ghosts, demons, and foreigners. At first sight the division seems to be between civilized (cosmicized) territory and unknown space – cosmos/chaos. However, it is really between the sacred and the profane. Inhabited territory is sacred in one way or another, and therefore our world is a universe within which the sacred has already manifested itself. From time to time the gods break-through from plane to plane, and this sacred moment becomes repeatable in ritual. The religious moment then implies the reenactment of these sacred break-throughs. These sacred moments reveal absolute reality and make orientation possible. Therefore Eliade says, "...the sacred founds the world in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world."
Mary Douglas identifies a three-fold classification scheme (earth, water, firmament) in Genesis, which is reflected even in animal taxonomy. Any class of creatures which was not properly equipped for its element was declared unclean, as Lev 11:1-47 suggests. For example (Lev 11:3) "whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud...". Hence the pig, which does not chew the cud, does not fully adhere to a single taxonomic category, and it is this which makes it impure. A fish without scales (catfish, shellfish) is also classed as impure.

For this reason, according to Douglas, it was the farmer's duty to preserve the order of creation. This was done by keeping strict boundaries and classifications, and in Judaism carefully managing the pure and impure animals according to Levitical laws.

Johnathan Z. Smith says the cosmogonic myth is:

That which gives shape to the whole, which provides the boundaries within which a person or thing obtains its class, as well as providing a map for those who would venture outside their station.

In archaic cultures there is a profound faith in the cosmos as ordered in the beginning. Because of this, there is a joyous celebration of the primordial act of ordering and reordering at regular times. There is also a sense of responsibility for the maintenance of the order through this repetition of the myth in ritual and in conduct.
When social or historical factors begin to disconfirm the trust placed in the order and structure that the gods ordained, a radical reversal and inversion may occur. Creation itself may be discovered to be evil and oppressive. In these circumstances an appropriate strategy is rebellion against the paradigms, and the attempt to reverse their power. Frequently this rebellion employs the same ritual techniques which were supposed to maintain the original order, but reverses or inverts those rituals.  

Smith uses as an example the upside-down crucifixion of Peter referred to by Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 3.1.2) and the Acts of Peter. In the latter, Peter is led to the cross and utters a prayer which ends with an exhortation to those who possess gnosis. They are invited to close their outward ears and listen with their inward ones. Then Peter says that he is surrendering his body to those who take it, but requests that he be crucified head downwards. From this position, while hanging, Peter gives a discourse on the fact that birth is in this position for human beings. He declares that this established the whole cosmic system as an image of man's creation, and therefore everything is upside down, left is right and right left. What is good becomes evil and visa versa. He then states that his hanging is a representation of the birth of the first man.

Smith suggests that the action of Peter is not, as it is often interpreted, an exercise in humility. On the contrary, it is an act of cosmic audacity. The meaning of being
upside-down in its most basic sense is to be non-human, or "other". It means "to be alien" and may be expressed in a variety of ways. In this example, Peter was violating a perverse order. Therefore his death was an act of rebellion against the cosmos. Paradoxically it also symbolized birth in the correct position.  

If Smith is correct, we can certainly see a reflection of the same thinking in the Johannine community. The cultic practises in Judaism and the ruling hierarchy (the Jews) were deemed evil and corrupt. To the Johannine group, the only truth and order was to be found in their own little community. Therefore the cosmos was upside-down. The insiders of this world (Jews) had rejected Jesus and the Johannine community (John 1:10-12). Jesus was not of this world, and therefore he was in the wrong place. Instead, of being spirit, he became flesh. The struggle throughout the Fourth Gospel is to turn the cosmos up the proper way. This involves having Jesus return to his heavenly realm, and in some mysterious way take the Johannine community with him. The dramatic scene in chapter 20 with Jesus and Mary Magdalene is a crisis point where Jesus is no longer of this world, but is "not yet ascended to his Father".

On this basis Meeks' assessment of the "Man from Heaven", who is not of this world, has merit. Throughout the gospel we see examples of Jesus hinting at his origin, which was not of this world (3:13; 3:31; 6:33ff; 9:5; 9:39; 11:41; and 20:17). It is stated in the prologue that he came from
above, to his own (the Jews 1:11) who did not receive him. Therefore he is an outsider to this earthly realm. Anyone who believes in his name (1:12) becomes a child of God, and therefore one of his own (new group established on the basis of belief). The members of this new group, are outsiders to this world and are rejected just as is their Lord. As the gospel progresses we are told that when Jesus returns to the Father, he will prepare a place for this group (chap 14), because they no longer belong to the kingdom of this world. In the meantime they are to abide in him (chap 15), but they will be rejected by the Jews, as was their Lord.

The thrust of the narrative is to stress the "other-worldliness" of the community and its Lord. While the Synoptics stress the humanity of Jesus (especially Matthew and Luke with the birth narratives), John emphasizes the cosmic, alien, and spiritual dimension. Indeed, salvation in John entails being removed from this world. With all of this "other-worldliness" in mind, the evangelist had no reason to follow the development of a particular disciple.

Because both John's christology and soteriology are defined by the motif of "outsider" or "alien", the most appropriate models of discipleship are the marginalized and those on the peripheries of "the world" or society. Therefore, it is the Samaritan woman (John 4), the blind beggar (John 9), other women (John 11, 12 and 20) and non-Jews who become the examples in the encounters with Jesus. These encounters do illustrate particular types of
believing responses to Jesus, even though they are not narrated in a mode which allows the reader to identify sympathetically with the character.

As is widely recognized, the Jewish wisdom myth exerted considerable influence on John. Wisdom seeks a home among people only to be rejected. This provides the basis of the ascent/descent imagery and is commonly recognized in John 1:10 and 11. The background of this is found in 1 Enoch 42:1-2b.

Wisdom found not a place on earth where she could inhabit; her dwelling therefore is in heaven. Wisdom went forth to dwell among the sons of man, but she obtained not an habitation. Wisdom returned to her place, seated herself in the midst of the angels...

The hymn in Sir 24:1-34 provides an important point of comparison with John 1:1-18. Wisdom is female and in v 3 she states "I came out of the mouth of the most high" (RSV). V 4 indicates her dwelling place was in high places. John 1:1 has the Logos (word) portrayed as male and he was with God. In Sir 24:8 the creator of all things sent her to make her dwelling in Jacob (Israel). She was established in Zion and served in the holy tabernacle. In John 1:3 and 10, by contrast, the Word is the creator and he came to his own, who rejected him (v 11). We are told of the chosen people in Sir 24:12, while John 1:12, 13 tells of a new chosen people. Sirach identifies wisdom as "The book of the covenant of the most high God, the law which Moses commanded unto the congregation of Jacob" (v 23). John 1:14 declares that the word became flesh and "dwelt among us". In Sir 24:27 the
doctrine of knowledge appears as the light, "and send her light afar off" (v 32). John 1:4 says "his life is the light of men."

Since the original writing of Sirach was approximately 190 BCE, with the grandson's translation 132 BCE it is possible that this book was known by the writer of the hymn in the prologue of John. The prologue hymn would seem to be an adaptation and inversion of this Jewish wisdom material to relate to Jesus rather than the law. If this was the case, the masculinization of wisdom was probably necessary to equate Jesus with the Logos.

A Johannine mythic image which has received little notice is that of zoe. Much has been written about the logos in John 1:1, 14. The concept of zoe which begins in 1:4 needs similar attention. The word appears 44 times in the gospel compared with 23 times for "light" and 4 times for "word" (logos).

The feminine character of life (zoe) is clear not only from the fact that it is a feminine noun in Greek, but more importantly, it is the Septuagint translation of the name "Eve" and is comparable to the teutonic all-mother "Lif". Gnostic documents from the early 2nd century developed this identification. Zoe was a daughter or emanation of the gnostic goddess Sophia, and gave Adam his soul (Hyp. Arch 95.5-13). She also threw the unjust creator, Ialdabaoth, down to the Abyss (Hyp. Arch 95.5-13). She elevated the Lord of Hosts to the seventh heaven, and there undertook to

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instruct him about the eighth (the Great Mother's dwelling). Gnostic gospels claim that Zoe's power animated the first clay man, after various lesser gods had failed. Therefore, man called her mother of all living.28

In the gospel of Thomas, a document probably contemporary with John's gospel, the "Place of Life" is a synonym for the "Kingdom of the Father" (log. 4 "The man old in days will not hesitate to ask... about the place of Life and he will live. For many who are first will be last...", Log. 58 "...he has found life."). However in spite of the female imagery in the word zoe, the Gos Thom (114) excludes women from the Place of Life. "...women are not worthy of Life. Jesus said: See I shall lead her, so that I will make her male that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males."

It would be a mistake to attribute John's use of "life" to gnostic influence, since John was earlier, or at least no later, than the earliest gnostic literature that we presently possess.29 However the female imagery surrounding the word zoe is an important clue to the light/life dichotomy. In the prologue we are told, concerning the Logos, that "in him was life and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4). This would indicate that life and light belong together inseparably as part of the divine character of the Logos.

Throughout the gospel the duality of life/light governs the thematic structures. The discourses and stories all fit
into one or the other. In most cases, there will be a main theme with the other half of the pair appearing as a secondary motif: for example chap. 3 is on "light" but the discourse talks of "life"; Chap. 11 is about "life" but there is a short discourse on "light".

There appears to be a relationship between the theological purpose of a segment and the choice of male or female character. It is difficult to ascertain whether it was a conscious device or not, but the stories that focus on "light" have a male as the main character. On the other hand, those featuring "life" have a woman in the key role. It would seem to indicate that John chose his stories not only for the content, but also in order to symbolize the main theme by means of the personality. While it is true that ζωή is, a feminine noun making a word gender relationship to women, the noun φῶς is neuter. This may indicate that the author associated the life-giving function of women with eternal life and the idea of enlightenment or knowledge with men. The gender of the word was of no significance.

If it is unintentional, then we must assume that it was so much part of the cultural thought that it happened subconsciously. Nevertheless, whether intentional or not, on this basis it seems clear that one purpose of the author was to bring together both parts of the dichotomy in Jesus. In fact, this could even indicate a tendency to encourage male
III SOCIOLOGICAL COMPARISONS

Analyzing the literary roles, plot development and explicit Johannine redaction does produce some evidence of a community in which women functioned in significantly greater roles. Further, there is evidence from John to suggest that the community operated like an ancient school, that is, in a small group in which some measure of religious status equality might be expected to exist. Culpepper observes that the term "school" has been used widely, but rather loosely in connection with the Johannine community. By comparing the group with the ancient schools of philosophy Culpepper argues that it shared many characteristics with these schools.

(1) It was a fellowship of disciples who first followed Jesus Christ. But, the members at the time of the Gospel were students of the beloved disciple who taught and interpreted Jesus' tradition (terms such as adelphoi [brothers], mathetai [disciples], koinonia [communion], indicate this).

(2) The community gathered around and traced its origins to the beloved disciple.

(3) Community valued teachings of its founder and traditions about him.
(4) Members of the community were disciples or students of the beloved disciple.

(5) Teaching, writing, studying and learning were common activities in the community.

(6) The community observed a communal meal (13:1-17).

(7) The community had rules or practices relating to admission and retention of membership (John 3:5, 20:21).

(8) The community maintained distance from the rest of society. 31

This list can be compared with the lists of characteristics of other ancient schools:

(1) The idea of friendship or fellowship.

(2) The role of tradition and memory of the founder.

(3) The relationship of the disciples to the founder and participation in teachings.

(4) Some type of control over organization and duties.

(5) Teaching, learning, studying and writing.

(6) Impulse to withdraw from society. 32

If this community did indeed function as a school there is at least the possibility of women being members and sharing in significant roles. At least some women are known to have participated in Plato's Academy and in the epicurean schools. 33 In John 11:28 Martha tells Mary, "The teacher is here" and Mary falls at his feet in the manner of a disciple. The fact that believers are referred to as children of God (tekna theon John 1:12) may be significant.
However, there are also the references to the brothers (John 20:17; 21:23) which may indicate something special about the male members unless *adelphoi* is used inclusively to mean both men and women (20:17 Mary Magdalene is told by Jesus to go to the brethren). No clear signal is given that would indicate which way the term *adelphoi* is being used. One positive indication of women's activity in ecclesial areas is the missionary function which would indicate significant activity by the women at some period in the life of the community. But there are also the signs (the masculinization of wisdom and association of women with "life") which tend to show a difference in attitude toward men and women.

**ASSESSMENT**

In summarizing and assessing our findings in this study, we recall the introductory chapter. We suggested that there were a number of possibilities to explain John's special attention to the female characters: (1) it was a reflection of the social configuration of the community (Brown, Schneiders); (2) it may be a function of John's theology, operating primarily on a literary/theological level; (3) no male hierarchical system was active in the community; or (4) it was something else not yet identified.

We also suggested (p 5) that it is possible to have an active women's group within the church, but still have women excluded from specific leadership roles. History has borne
witness to the fact that whenever women begin to participate and become successful in an activity, men tend to label it as being "women's work", abandon it, and lower its status (primary teaching, nursing, clerical work). So, too, the church has seen the same kinds of shifts in attitudes concerning what is permissible for women, and what is for men.

Our findings regarding the women in John are many. We noted that all women react positively toward Jesus, but so do the men. Even the paralytic, whom we excluded from our analysis for lack of detail, was receptive toward him. One important point is the ability of the women in the Fourth Gospel to act on their own without an agent (man, angel) who told them what to do. By comparison, in the Synoptics the women are told either by Jesus, or the disciples, or an angel. This Johannine quality may be indicative of a society which allowed women the freedom to act on their own behalf.

Another characteristic of Johannine women that we have noted, contrary to the finding of Schneiders, is the fact that they are always engaged in typical women's activities. The Samaritan was going to draw water, Martha was tending to family matters in the absence of a dominant male, Mary was in the house as a mourner and later anointed the guest. None of these is a male role. It may have been unusual for Mary to go to a cemetery alone, but in the Synoptics the women also go to anoint the body. There is evidence in the "we" in 20:4 that Magdalene was not alone in the original story used
by John, making this action not so uncommon. Therefore, the women are not really seen functioning as males in the community activities.

Schneiders also maintains that the female characters in John are more interesting and more "fleshed out". As previously pointed out in chapter one, the women were no more "fleshed out" than were the men such as the blindman and the paralytic. In fact, John's stress is not so much on the natural as the supernatural or spiritual dimension of every character. Promoting the social or religious position of women, or even elevating their status does not appear to be one of his purposes. At the same time he does nothing which would deny their important activities in the community (witnessing), nor does he eliminate evidence of their high position found in his source.

Brown's assertion that the use of the word diakonein in regard to Martha (John 12:2) implies an ecclesial act is really an unverifiable assumption. When is "serve" not "serve" but an ecclesial act? The word diakonein is used in association with serving food or a meal (Matt 8:15; Mark 1:31; Luke 12:37; 7:8; 22:25). Whenever service to God is intended the verb latreusein is normally used (Matt 4:10; Luke 1:74; 4:8; 2:37; John 16:2). The word which indicates service to other persons is douleuein. In each place that diakonein appears, whether it refers to a man or a woman, the reference involves food (except for Matt 8:15; John 12:26 and references in John 13 which involve men and women
and are clearly merging the ecclesial and food service). If diakonein sometimes means an ecclesial function and other times simply serving table, it would be difficult to decide on what basis this distinction is recognized. Serving tables has only one verb diakonein, but service to God or others has a variety of words. Therefore it is necessary, whether it concerns a man or a woman, to signal in some way the particular meaning that is intended when the word diakonein is used. Most references in John, other than chapter 12 and 13 do not do this.

The analyses of the mythic and historical evidence along with the literary roles and functions were no more promising. The mythic tended to explain the literary symbolism, but if these findings were carried into the social aspect "light" was masculinized and associated with males while "life" belonged to females. Historically it was noted that in certain early communities such as those represented by the Apocryphal Acts there were groups of continent widows and virgins who seemed to attend to the needs of women. In order to attain this important position it was necessary to obey certain stringent rules, all tending to de-emphasize femininity, and make women more like men. Gnosticism shared this same tendency. Even the pairing parables in Luke reinforce the separateness of the women's group from the men.

In the Fourth Gospel there is apparently a basic witness story at the center of each narrative, which was likely a
product of the earliest community. In adapting these stories to his theological format, John did not bother to change the individual activities of the women. His major theological concerns resided not in such activities, but in his replacement theology; realized eschatology; Jesus' glorification; pre-existence and high christology. He probably saw no reason to change the activities from the accepted social roles. However, we note that at this pre-Johannine source level the differences between men and women are considerable.

The content of the women's stories is such that it is possible they may have been, at some time, for the encouragement of a group of women. Further, women unlike men do appear as active participants in witnessing, which is a function of discipleship. This raises a question as to why this activity is not also occurring with the male characters. Only two men, Andrew and Philip, go and bring someone to Jesus (John 1:42, 46), but the Samaritan Woman, Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene each leave what they are doing and bring others. The Samaritan woman brings the villagers; Martha declares belief and calls Mary; Mary brings her friends and anoints Jesus with ointment for burial and the "house was filled with the fragrance"; Mary Magdalene tells the disciples of the risen Lord.

It has been suggested that this indicates that women were more exemplary as disciples. However it is generally agreed by Brown, Bultmann, and Schnackenburg that it is the
beloved disciple who is given this distinction, and he is not depicted as witnessing at the level of Johannine narration. The beloved disciple's witness is mentioned only in 19:35, but here it takes the form of an editor's aside to his readers, not the beloved disciple to other narrative characters. Another explanation could be that in the evangelist's community, the missionary role was reserved for women. Even though we agree with Schneiders that such feminine behaviour was "fully according to the mind of Jesus", we are dealing with the thinking of the evangelist. There are several possibilities. He may have thought that it was women's work, but not necessarily men's. Or, the men may have witnessed routinely and therefore this activity was not noteworthy, whereas it was most unusual for women. John 1:6-8, 15 would however, seem to belie both possibilities; John thinks it worthwhile to mention John the Baptist's witness. Because the women's stories share this factor of witness, whereas similar stories involving men terminate when the person comes to the point of healing, or belief, or decision, it would appear that they belong together as a distinctive form of story.

The individual stories in John are used to make christological disclosures: Jesus is living water, light, resurrection, etc.. In each story the characters, situations and plots function symbolically to portray the theological premises of the evangelist. Therefore there is always a two-level meaning in operation, the worldly and the
heavenly. Through the dual level the stories also illustrate the inability of the world to grasp the real meaning of the message, and therefore the Jews fail to recognize the identity of Jesus.

Both male and female literary characters are used to personify a particular aspect of John's theology. The Samaritan drawing water is the personification of a natural life-giver (woman) getting natural water, while Jesus himself portrays the divine life-giver offering "running water" (eternal life). In the same manner the blind man personifies spiritual blindness from birth (like the Jews) which can be healed through belief. Nicodemus is the example of the Jewish leader who appears to remain in the dark in chapter 3. Thus each character helps to accomplish John's theological agenda.

The women do appear to function in a literary way in the same role as beggars, blind men, and foreigners in their society. The literary role is that of outsider. Since they all function as outcasts, it is an easy step for them to belong to the Johannine community, who are also outsiders to the Jewish society. This does not suggest that the marginalized are spiritually superior, rather, they find it easier to become a spiritual outcast, because this is already their social position. We cannot assume that women were given leadership positions any more than beggars and blind men.
Promoting the social equality of women, or even elevating their ecclesial status does not appear to be one of John's purposes. Although at the level of Johannine editing, men and women function analogously, John does little to underline the distinctiveness of women. In spite of this it must be stressed that he does nothing which would deliberately diminish their important activities of witnessing, as it was expressed in the pre-Johannine cycle of stories. Nevertheless, his promotion of the beloved disciple may have had that effect. By consciously placing the BD as a counterbalance to Peter, the evangelist causes the overshadowing of Peter and "the Twelve". The BD sits closer to Jesus at the last supper 13:23; the BD is first to the tomb and first to believe 20:8.

In the same way the BD is a counterbalance to the women. The Samaritan woman receives the self-revelation of Jesus' messiahship; Martha makes the christological acclamation which is attributed to Peter in the Synoptics; Mary of Bethany performs the anointing which points to his death and Mary Magdalene is first to see the risen Lord. But, the BD is closest to Jesus at the last supper and therefore is the one with whom Jesus shares the identity of the betrayer (13:26). The BD is present with the women at the foot of the cross and is given authority over Jesus' mother (19:26, 27). More importantly despite the presence of women at the cross he also officially witnesses Jesus' death, and he becomes "adopted" as Jesus' brother. In spite of Mary Magdalene
finding the empty tomb it is the BD who is the first to believe (20:8). Finally we are told in 21:24 that this gospel is the witness of the BD and his testimony is true. This statement appears to strengthen the importance of the witness of the BD compared to that of the women.

To sum up these finding when we isolate the strata dealing with women in the Fourth Gospel:

(1) The literary function of women, at the level of Johannine editing, is the same as other marginalized persons (blind, cripples, foreigners). They function as outsiders to the Jewish Synagogue. Because of this, they, as the others, appear to be more receptive to the message of the Man from Heaven.

(2) The women's stories are key points in the overall narrative. It is the Samaritan woman who initiates the Jewish ministry of Jesus to the Samaritans (4:4-42); Martha who makes the declaration of belief (11:27); Mary who is witness to the transformation of the return to the heavenly realm (20:17).

(3) It is also clear either by action or comment that the women are well aware of their subject status in society (4:9; 11:20c, 31; 20:2).

(4) Women, while active in the community, do women's work (drawing water, serving meals).

(5) Women actively witness to both men and women in the pre-Johannine stories utilized by John.
While these women's stories have become popular narratives for both men and women over the centuries, we should ask who would have wanted to hear these women's witness accounts in the early Christian communities. The answer appears to be—other women. If they were indeed oral stories told by women to encourage other women, one might expect to find some evidence of this.

Dennis MacDonald writes,

"when we read the Acts of Paul we recognize that not all Christians in the Pauline circle would have silenced women from teaching, trimmed the order of widows, exhorted slaves to continued servitude, and commanded obedience to Roman authority."

MacDonald cites Tertullian's complaint at the end of the second century concerning the use of the Thecla story to legitimate women preaching and baptizing. Tertullian was wrong in thinking that these stories were concocted from fantasies. It is clear from the fact that they were known by Origen and Jerome that there is some basis of truth, and they probably extended back into the first century.

MacDonald concentrates on three stories from the Acts of Paul to show oral form and structure and the conventions of oral narrative. The Thecla story especially seems to indicate oral tradition and folkloric ideas. Furthermore the prominence of women and the antagonism for men may indicate that it was told primarily by women for women.

He continues by quoting Olrik's conventions that distinguish between oral and written transmission of the folk story.
(1) The law of opening is that oral narrative never begins with sudden action. The sequence of movement would be from hospitality to hostility, or from calm to excitement and finally to divine intervention. All of the women's stories in John begin casually; the Samaritan woman is met by chance; Martha/Mary send for Jesus; Mary Magdalene goes to check the grave.

(2) The law of concentration on a leading character. If there are two (male and female) the man is most important, but the actual interest lies with the woman (also our sympathy). This is true in each of the stories, Jesus is central but the interest is in what the women are doing.

(3) The law of contrast. Even though there is a leading character the development of the story depends on a conflict between the hero and at least one foe. In the Samaritan sequence Jesus and the woman are friendly antagonists, then Jesus and the disciples have a dispute (also friendly).

(3a) An alternative is that beings of subordinate rank appear in duplicate (law of twins). This is seen in Martha/Mary/Lazarus.

(4) The law of the single-stranded plot. There are back references to supply necessary information from the past. This is the case with the Samaritan, Martha/Mary and Mary Magdalene.

(5) The law of repetition is necessary to build tension. Every important point or striking scene is repeated. This happens in all three stories.
(6) Narratives rise to peaks in the form of tableaux. There is always a scene in which all characters are "on stage" together in a picture grouping. (Samaritan - John 4:41 all the villagers; Martha/Mary 11:38-44 scene at tomb; Mary Magdalene 20, scene at tomb).

(7) After the concluding event in which the principal character has a catastrophe, the story ends by moving from excitement to calm. In each of our stories a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

MacDonald adds a further convention of oral narrative and that is inconsistency. He explains that in written narrative these inconsistencies are corrected because writers re-read the stories and edit them. However storytellers are not able to do this. He cites as examples the repetitions in the Thecla story and the double baptism.

...and she threw herself in saying: "in the name of Jesus Christ I baptize myself on the last day!" And when they saw it, the women and all the people wept saying: "Cast not thyself into the water!"... So, then she threw herself into the water in the name of Jesus Christ (AP 3:34).

We can see the same inconsistencies in the Johannine women's stories which we pinpointed in the analysis of John 11 and 20 in Part Two.

Oral narrative is a phenomenon unlike most written narrative because it requires "active channels" for transmission (story tellers) as well as "passive channels" (listeners). Therefore we must ask: who told the stories? To whom were they told? When, where and why were they told? MacDonald concludes that the three stories which he analyzes...
were probably told by celibate women. The sensitivity to women in them gives strong external and internal evidence suggesting this.

The expectation of some churches in Asia Minor was that the members remain celibate. This is found repeatedly in the legends: "There is no resurrection for you, except you remain chaste and do not defile the flesh" (AP 3:12). This of course, created problems in the home and in turn caused some ancient cities to ban celibacy. Nevertheless, within the groups of Christian women celibacy continued to be important. This is evidenced with Thecla who refuses to marry her lover, and Perpetua who leaves her husband and young baby.

These groups eventually became organized into an order of widows and virgins. Becoming a member meant a radical reordering of the life of a woman by the adherence to a set code of behaviour. The Pastoral Epistles give evidence of this code in the attempts to stop it. "If any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents (1 Tim 5:4); "a woman will be saved through child bearing" (1 Tim 2:15). It seems that celibacy rendered woman, who were striving for religious freedom, untouched by the curses given to Eve. The passage "she shall bear children in sorrows" does not apply to those who live as virgins. Therefore, celibacy was an important part of being spiritually equal with the men in Asia Minor Communities.
The Theclla story apparently had the purpose of legitimating women teachers. In the women's stories used by John there would seem to be a legitimizing of the role of women as witnesses. However they are not used by the evangelist in that particular manner. Rather, as previously observed, they are used symbolically for literary purposes.

In our three stories, just as in the Acts of Paul, we can notice a sensitivity to the woman's situation which would not probably be consistent with a male storyteller. For example, in 4:11 and 15 the Samaritan answers Jesus from the viewpoint of a person who knows the drudgery of drawing and carrying water. Women do this, not men. In John 11:2 Lazarus is introduced as the brother of Mary. Men usually introduce a person in relation to other men, whereas women relate to other women. This is especially important when one considers the magnitude of Lazarus' raising. Surely he would have been more famous, unless Mary was well-known and loved by the community of women. The timidity of Mary Magdalene about looking into the tomb in 20:11 and her conversation with Jesus in vv 13-16 shows great sensitivity to a woman's reactions. This type of treatment would suggest whoever told the story understood a woman's emotions which hovered between the sorrow and loss, and the anger and hostility over Jesus' disappearance. Is this evidence of a woman storyteller?

MacDonald states the stories of Theclla not only have women predominating, but they treat all men contemptuously.
The perspective of the storyteller is of someone deeply resentful of the male sex and sensitive to women's difficulties. In the Samaritan story the woman is contemptuous of Jesus at first, and also of the disciples (4:9, 11). Martha/Mary greet Jesus with anger that Lazarus died and Jesus took his time in getting there (11:21, 32). Mary Magdalene is annoyed at the gardener (20:13 and 15).

MacDonald locates his storytellers somewhere in Asia Minor on the basis of internal geographical and historical references. As late as the sixth century Christians in south central Asia Minor venerated Theclla as a saint.

"As far as we can tell, women exercised more leadership on the subcontinent than anywhere else in the early church". MacDonald lists several active women associated with the Ephesian church; Junia (Rom 16:7) Priscilla, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis (Rom 16:3, 6, 12), Nereus and Julia (Rom 16:13, 15). He also mentions Priscilla and Apphia and Nympha (MacDonald assumes the Rom 16 is originally directed to Ephesus rather than Rome).

References to women in ecclesiastical leadership are also a matter of record in second century sources other than the New Testament. The prophesying daughters of Philip are spoken of in Acts 21:8 and by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, and Clement of Alexandria. There was a book of Norea "the revealer", valued in Ephesus and Pergamum. Also the Ophites on Phrygia claimed to have received their doctrine from Marianne, the sister of Philip the apostle. Many of these
women, like Thecla, were celibate. The order of widows in the late first and second century was even subsidized in Asia Minor.\textsuperscript{46}

According to R. E. Brown the most likely location of the composition of the Fourth Gospel is Ephesus. He says that the anti-synagogue motif in the gospel makes sense in the Ephesus region. Moreover, Ephesus was the only place mentioned by the New Testament where the disciples of John the Baptist baptized outside of Palestine (Acts 19:1-7).\textsuperscript{47}

This location would make sense in relation to the women's stories. They do indeed share similarities with the stories told of Thecla, and other women. If the women in Asia Minor did have an active and powerful community, and shared the missionary activities, it is reasonable to conjecture a cycle of oral stories used to sustain this group. This would have included women's missionary, healing and martyrdom stories.

MacDonald explains that no vehicle is more effective for the transmission of social values than the folk story. It provides popular sanctions for religious, social and political institutions. Cultural subgroups use oral folk narrative to establish the boundaries between the ingroup and outsiders.\textsuperscript{48} If this is so, it may further indicate that these women's stories in John were part of a corpus of women's material which emerged from an organized powerful group.
From a brief analysis it would appear that these stories contain most of the characteristics of this genre. If so, we must ask, why would John make use of women's tales? The most obvious answer is that this large collection was available and gave him good examples of marginals who were believers. It is unlikely that there was a comparable corpus about blindmen and beggars. However, if the women's group was sufficiently organized and powerful that they produced this corpus of material, then the stories were no doubt meaningful to the whole Johannine community. John then modified them to fit his theological needs.

It is possible that the evangelist chose women's stories to fit the theme of "life" and men's stories to fit the motif of "light". As previously stated, whether consciously or unconsciously it would still indicate a definite cultural difference between men's and women's roles. Even though men and women function as marginals, within that category there is a stereotypical classing of men with "light" (wisdom), and women with "life" (lifegiver). Our conclusion, therefore, is that the Gospel of John uses women and their stories in a symbolic system with definite theological purpose. However, there is no clear indication that men and women disciples had identical ecclesial functions in the community, at least in John's day. Nevertheless some of his stories derive from earlier circles in which women were active as missionaries.
On the basis of our study, it would seem likely that women were permitted to witness, at least at some time, in a missionary role to both men and women (4:39; 20:18). Since John does not diminish this action in any way, they were probably still active. Unlike the Pastoral Epistles there is no polemic against their activities outside of the home. At a later period we know that at least one of the Johannine house churches was led by a lady (III John, "to the beloved lady"). But, the necessity to provide a male exemplar (beloved disciple) of the faith superceding the witness of the women may indicate a moderating trend. Perhaps the intertwining of the life/light (female/male) dichotomy was a subtle way to indicate that both were necessary to the community.

Evidence of women as leaders in worship is not present but John does not deal with men in this capacity either. Therefore we conclude that on the basis of available data, there is no clear indication that men and women function in interchangeable ecclesial roles. If women were active in missionary work, the men may have purposely reserved that activity for women, and thus it is not mentioned in connection with the men. Or, this activity may have been part of the early community, but no longer an important function for an introverted, later community. Or, the stories may have been intended to legitimate women missionaries and may indicate highly organized women's groups with important influence in the community. These and
other possibilities would require further investigation apart from the Fourth Gospel itself.
PART THREE

ENDNOTES

2 Ibid., 104.
3 Ibid., 116.
4 Ibid., 117.
6 Ibid., 391.
7 Culpepper, Anatomy, 116.
8 Ibid., 145-148.
9 Ibid., 145.
10 Ibid., 98.
11 Ibid., 97.
12 Ibid., 97.
13 Wayne A. Meeks, "Man from Heaven", JBL 91 (1972) 70.
15 Ibid., 45.
17 Ibid., 30.
20 Ibid., 150.
21 Ibid., 151.
23 Ibid., 334.
24 Smith, "Birth", 156-159.
25 Ibid., 159.
26 Meeks, "Man", 61.
28 Schnackenburg, John, Vol. 2, 353. Schnackenburg says there are some surprises in the new texts from Nag Hammadi. He points out that Zoe is only an inferior emanation in the Gnosis of Valentinus. But, in the Apocryphon of John and the Being of the Archons she is an emanation of imperishability and the daughter of Sophia.
Life is mentioned in the Qumran texts as well, but according to Schnackenburg it is mostly life on earth. The only relevant passage would be I QH 8:4-16, which talks about "trees of life" (lines 5, 6) "the water of life" (line 7), a "fountain of life" (line 12), "a fountain of living water" (line 16). According to Schnackenburg the worshipper is looking back on the history of the community in allegorical terms. It is a reference back to Is 41:18-19 and has nothing to do with the community's future salvation.


In a brief survey of three of the main schools we find that there is evidence of 2 women belonging to Plato's academy and several in the Epicurean Garden. We do not really know their exact status.


He uses the Thecla story, the Ephesus story and the martyrdom story.

Ibid., 17.

Ibid., 17.

Ibid., 18, 19.

Ibid., 20.


MacDonald, *Legend* 33.

Ibid., 34-35.

Ibid., 37.

Ibid., 37.

Ibid., 37.

Ibid., 39.


APPENDIX

ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S STORIES BY OLRIK'S PRINCIPLES

The story of the Samaritan begins with hospitality at the well (4:17). (1) It moves into a certain hostility from the woman who wonders why a Jew would ask for a drink (4:9). (2) The two leading characters, male and female, are in the proper relationship for an oral story. The male is dominant but the female is more interesting. (3) The hostility is resolved but it shows the contrast and conflict between the two main characters (4:9, 15). (4) The plot is simple but there are back-references to the woman’s past (4:18) and indeed Jesus’ past (Who I am) (4:10, 25, 26). (5) Repetition is present when the disciples wonder about the same thing that the woman asked (4:27). (6) The tableau - [a] Jesus, disciples and woman at the well (4:27). [b] Jesus, the villagers and the woman at the well (4:40). (7) While there is no catastrophe it does peak with the excitement of “witness” in the same way that the death of a martyr is the “witness” in other stories. It then moves to a calm with Jesus leaving.

THE MARTHA/MARY STORY

(1) It opens with the invitation from the sisters to go to Lazarus, which is the calmness in the beginning (11:3).
(2) Martha/Mary function as one character (twinning) and the central focus is on Jesus (11:1).

(3) There is a conflict between Jesus and the sisters because he was "too late". (11:21, 32).

(4) There is some back-referencing to introduce the sisters (11:5, 18).

(5) The law of repetition is very plain with the duplication of Martha and Mary enacting the same scene with Jesus (20:20, 21, 32).

(6) The tableau scene is at the tomb (20:38-44).

(7) Actually instead of a catastrophe there is divine intervention. Then witness to the power of Jesus and his identity. The calm is temporarily restored with Jesus leaving.

ANOINTING

(1) It opens with hospitality in the form of a meal (12:2).

(2) The focus is on Jesus and Mary has the secondary role which provides the centre of interest.

(3) There is great contrast as she anoints his feet (12:3).

(4) The plot is simple: setting; woman's action; objection; Jesus' defense.

(5) There is hostility and conflict with Judas complaining of waste (12:4).
(6) It is a tableau setting to begin with at the meal table.

(7) Jesus defends Mary (divine intervention) and then calm is restored (4:7).

MARY MAGDALENE

(1) One could classify Mary going to check the tomb as a loving act and therefore provides the calmness that eventually leads to excitement instead of hospitality. This is an alternative suggested by Olrik.

(2) The focus is really on the Risen Lord and Mary is secondary.

(3) There are several examples of twinning (2 angels 20:12) (2 questions) etc.

(4) There is misapprehension by Mary concerning Jesus/garden.

(5) It is really a single stranded plot – attempt to visit tomb; discovering empty tomb; seeking body; appearance of Jesus.

(6) The whole story is obviously supernatural.

(7) Calm is restored as Mary goes to tell others (20:18).


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