

Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel

Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John

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Judas (the Betrayer): The Black Sheep of the Family

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Identity and Role of Judas

In the Gospel of John, the name of Judas appears in three forms: (i) "Judas" (13:29; 18:2-3, 5); (ii) "Judas (the) Iscariot" (12:4); (iii) "Judas, [son] of Simon Iscariot" (6:71; 13:2, 26). Judas, the Greek variant of the Hebrew Judah, one of the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel, was a popular name in first-century Palestine.¹ There is more uncertainty about the name "Iscariot." Most scholars hold that it refers to Judas's hometown Kerioth, presumably in southern Judea but some have suggested Moab.² A few have suggested that "Iscariot" indicates Judas was one of the Sicarii or "dagger-men" – urban assassins who attacked the Jewish aristocracy.³ However, the Sicarii only surfaced in the 50s and became prominent during the first Jewish war, too late for Judas to have belonged to this group. Others have argued that "Iscariot" is an Aramaic occupational surname, meaning "(red) dyer."⁴ This divergence of theories prevents us from inferring too much about Judas's name.⁵ In the character analysis that follows, I shall unpack other epithets given to Judas: "devil" (6:70), "betrayer" (literally, ὁ παραδιδούς [6:71; 12:4; 13:11; 18:2, 5]), "thief" (12:4), and "son of perdition" (17:12). Additional clues to Judas's identity show that he belonged to Jesus' inner group of disciples, called "the Twelve" (6:71; 12:4), and within this group, he was the treasurer (12:6; 13:29).

Judas has certainly made a mark in history. According to the Oxford English dictionary, a Judas is "a person who betrays a friend" – a traitor. Traditionally, Judas is infamous for having betrayed Jesus but William Klassen challenges this view.⁶ He argues that Judas's act of "handing over" was not one of

¹ William Klassen, *Judas: Betrayer or Friend of Jesus?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 29–30.

² R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 124; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 222. Cf. the scholars mentioned by Klassen, *Judas*, 32–33.

³ E. g., Oscar Cullmann, *Jesus and the Revolutionaries* (New York: Scribner's, 1970), 21–23.

⁴ Albert Ehrman, "Judas Iscariot and Abba Saqqara," *JBL* 97 (1978): 572–73; Yoel Arbeitman, "The Suffix of Iscariot," *JBL* 99 (1980): 122–24.

⁵ Klassen, *Judas*, 34.

⁶ Klassen, *Judas*, 34.

betrayal but of informing the temple authorities – an act authorized by Jesus in line with God's purposes.⁷ Central to Klassen's case is his discussion on the meaning of the verb παραδίδόμαι. According to him, παραδίδόμαι, which is virtually always translated "to betray" in connection with Judas's act, *never* connotes "betray" in Greek literature – whether in classical Greek, the Septuagint, Josephus, or the New Testament – but simply means "to hand over."⁸ A critique of Klassen's linguistic study of παραδίδόμαι in Greek literature is beyond the scope of this essay – and perhaps unnecessary; I only need to examine how the term is used in the Johannine narrative.⁹ Although the basic lexical sense of παραδίδόμαι is "to give over, to hand over," I must determine how *John* uses the term and whether it has connotations of betrayal.

The verb παραδίδόμαι occurs fifteen times in John's Gospel. It is used in a neutral sense only once – in 19:30, to refer to Jesus' handing over the Spirit as his life-force. Four times, there are negative implications for Jesus but no sense of betrayal (18:30, 35, 36; 19:16). The ten remaining occurrences, referring to Judas's act of handing Jesus over (6:64, 71; 12:4; 13:2, 11, 21; 18:2, 5; 19:11; 21:20), clearly have negative connotations with the force of "to betray." In 6:70–71, for example, Judas who will "hand Jesus over" is designated a devil, and, in contrast to true disciples, is juxtaposed with those who do not believe (6:64). Jesus identifies the one who will "hand him over" as unclean (13:11) and thinking of him causes agitation (13:21). Judas's act of handing Jesus over to the Jewish temple police and a Roman cohort of soldiers obviously has negative consequences since the Jewish authorities have already plotted Jesus' death (11:47–53). In 19:11, when Jesus declares to Pilate that the one who "handed him over" has a greater sin, Jesus probably means Judas.¹⁰ Thus, con-

⁶ Klassen, *Judas*, *passim*. The apocryphal *Gospel of Judas* seems to support Klassen's case. Wilhelm Pratscher, for example, claims that the *Gospel of Judas* enables a better understanding of the historical Judas ("Judas Iskariot im Neuen Testament und im Judasevangelium," *NovT* 52 [2010]: 1–23). For a more sober assessment of the use of the *Gospel of Judas* in relation to early Christianity, see Simon Gathercole, *The Gospel of Judas: Rewriting Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁷ Klassen, *Judas*, 62–74.

⁸ Klassen, *Judas*, 47–58. Cf. Klaus Beckmann, "Funktion und Gestalt des Judas Iskariot im Johannesevangelium," *BTZ* 11 (1994): 181–200 (he prefers the term "dahingeben" ["to give away"] for παραδίδόμαι); Anthony Cane, *The Place of Judas Iscariot in Christology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 19–24; Pratscher, "Judas," 11–12. Similarly, Martin Meiser claims that παραδίδόμαι acquired the sense "to betray" only after Judas's act (idem, *Judas Iskariot: Einer von uns* [Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004], 49). Examining various options, Meiser then remains agnostic about what Judas actually has done (Meiser, *Judas Iskariot*, 50–57).

⁹ In fact, F. A. Gosling evaluates Klassen's lexicographical study and observes that the rendering "to betray" for παραδίδόμαι is found in classical Greek, the Septuagint, Josephus, and the New Testament (idem, "O Judas! What Have You Done?," *EvQ* 71 [1999]: 117–25).

¹⁰ The majority of occurrences of παραδίδόμαι refer to Judas. Judas's sin is greater than Pilate's because unlike Pilate (19:11) Judas has no divine authority; rather, his "authority" to betray Jesus comes from the devil (cf. 13:2, 27). Alternatively, the reference may be to "the Jews" who hand Jesus over to Pilate (18:30, 35) (Jesus' use of the singular is perhaps generic).

tra Klassen, Judas's act of handing Jesus over to the Jewish and Roman authorities is depicted by John as a negative act – an act of betrayal. Even though παραδιδόναι does not mean “to betray,” John unmistakably attaches the nuance of betrayal to the verb when he uses it in connection with Judas's act.¹¹

Character Analysis of Judas

Method

I must explain my method of character analysis before reconstructing the character of Judas from the Johannine text. If John's Gospel is the story of Jesus Christ, it will consist of a plot, events, and characters. While much has been written on plot and events, character appears to be the neglected child. There is no comprehensive theory of character in either literary theory or biblical criticism, and therefore no consensus amongst scholars on how to analyze, classify, and evaluate characters.¹² Most scholars provide only a few theoretical considerations or describe most Johannine characters in reductionistic terms as simply “flat” or representative types.¹³ Using the comprehensive theory of character that I recently developed, I will (i) *analyze* the character of Judas along three dimensions (complexity, development, and inner life), (ii) *classify* the resulting character on a continuum of degree of characterization (from agent to type to personality to individuality), and (iii) *evaluate* the character according to John's point of view.¹⁴ This needs further clarification.

or to Caiaphas as the leader of “the Jews” (although “to hand over” is never used with reference to him, he is the leading voice in 11:47–53).

¹¹ Cf. Harry T. Fleddermann, “Review of W. Klassen, *Judas: Betrayer or Friend of Jesus?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996),” *CBQ* 59 (1997): 772; Lyle Eslinger, “Judas Game: The Biology of Combat in the Gospel of John,” *JSNT* 77 (2000): 45–73, here 57, fn. 34; William M. Wright, “Greco-Roman Character Typing and the Presentation of Judas in the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 544–59, here 551, fn. 22.

¹² Notable exceptions are, in literary and media theory, Fotis Jannidis, *Figur und Person: Beitrag zu einer historischen Narratologie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004); Jens Eder, *Die Figur im Film: Grundlagen der Figurenanalyse* (Marburg: Schüren, 2008), and in biblical criticism, Sönke Finnern, *Narratologie und biblische Exegese: Eine integrative Methode der Erzählanalyse und ihr Ertrag am Beispiel von Matthäus 28* (WUNT II/285; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 125–64. However, Finnern seems to provide more of a comprehensive overview of aspects of character (mainly relying on Jens Eder's work on character in film) than a coherent, robust theory.

¹³ See the overview of Johannine scholarship in Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 2–12. Cf. Jerome H. Neyrey, who still adheres to the Aristotelian view that the Johannine characters are types that represent a particular trait (idem, *The Gospel of John* [NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 5–6). Wright also analyzes Judas against the backdrop of Greco-Roman moral character typing, resulting in Judas being a one-dimensional character (Wright, “Character Typing,” 544–59). However, characterization in ancient Greco-Roman literature was more complex and varied – characters could be round and developing, albeit not to the extent that we see in modern literature (see my article in fn. 14 below).

¹⁴ Cornelis Bennema, “A Theory of Character in the Fourth Gospel with Reference to

Analysis. Instead of placing a character in fixed categories (flat/round, static/dynamic, simple/complex), I suggest that character moves along a continuum or various continua. Hence, it is better to speak of degrees of characterization. I analyze the Johannine characters, using the non-reductionist model of Jewish scholar Yosef Ewen. He advocates three continua or axes upon which a character may be situated:

- Complexity: characters range from those displaying a single trait to those displaying a complex web of traits, with varying degrees of complexity in between;
- Development: characters may vary from those who show no development to those who are fully developed;
- Penetration into the inner life: characters range from those who, via the narrator, allow us a peek inside their minds to those whose minds remain opaque.¹⁵

Classification. After analyzing the character along these three continua, I plot the resulting character on a continuum of degree of characterization as (i) an agent, actant, or walk-on; (ii) a type, stock, or flat character; (iii) a character with personality; or (iv) an individual or person.¹⁶

Evaluation. Besides analyzing and classifying a character, I also evaluate it from the author's ideological point of view. Any meaningful communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, has a particular purpose – a message that the sender wants to get across to the receiver. In line with its salvific purpose (20:30–31), John tells his story from a particular perspective called “point of view.”¹⁷ Stephen Moore defines point of view as “the rhetorical activity of an author as he or she attempts, from a position within some socially shared system of assumptions and convictions, to impose a story-world upon an audience by the manipulation of narrative perspective.”¹⁸ James Resseguie states that point of view is “the *mode or angle of vision* from which characters, dialo-

Ancient and Modern Literature,” *BibInt* 17 (2009): 375–421. I have recently sharpened my theory further in Cornelis Bennema, “A Comprehensive Approach to Understanding Character in the Gospel of John,” in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (ed. Christopher W. Skinner; LNTS 461; New York: T&T Clark, 2013), 36–58.

¹⁵ Ewen's works are only available in Hebrew but his theory is summarized in Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (New York: Methuen, 1983), 41–42.

¹⁶ The categories “personality” and “individual/person” to classify ancient characters refer to a “collectivist identity” or “group-oriented personality,” where the person's identity is embedded in a larger group or community, rather than to a modern autonomous individual (cf. Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* [3d ed.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 60–67).

¹⁷ Others prefer the term “focalization” (Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 72; D. Francois Tolmie, *Jesus' Farewell to the Disciples: John 13:1–17:26 in Narratological Perspective* [BIS 12; Leiden: Brill, 1995], 170).

¹⁸ Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 181.

gue, actions, setting, and events are considered or observed. But also point of view is the narrator's *attitude towards or evaluation of* characters, dialogue, actions, setting and events."¹⁹ The implication is that a narrative is not neutral since it has an inbuilt perspective that is communicated to the reader, and hence we must evaluate Judas's character in the light of John's evaluative point of view.

In the remainder of this section, I will carry out the character analysis of Judas along the three dimensions that I just outlined, while the classification and evaluation of Judas's character occur in the final section.

Character Complexity

The degree of a character's complexity has to do with its traits. As Seymour Chatman asserts, we reconstruct character by inferring traits from the information in the text, in which trait is a "relatively stable or abiding personal quality."²⁰ The character traits of Judas are revealed both by "showing" and "telling," i. e., they are inferred from Judas's interaction with other characters and from the information mentioned by the narrator.²¹ In the following analysis, I will demonstrate that Judas is a complex character whose dominant traits are betrayal and apostasy, but who also shows secondary traits of indifference, hypocrisy, unreliability, dishonesty, and disloyalty.

Betrayal. John's primary characterization of Judas as "the one who betrays him [Jesus]" indicates Judas's main trait. Judas's betrayal of Jesus is foretold on numerous occasions by both Jesus (6:64; 13:21) and the narrator (6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 11; 18:2, 5), while 18:1–12 describes Judas's concrete act of betrayal, precipitating Jesus' arrest. I observe that his act is clearly premeditated. First, Judas uses his inside knowledge of Jesus' habits to reveal his whereabouts (18:2). Second, he brings with him a cohort of Roman soldiers and the temple police of the Jewish religious authorities to arrest Jesus (18:3).²² Judas thus aligns himself

¹⁹ James L. Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (BIS 56; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1 (original emphasis).

²⁰ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 119, 126 (quotation from p. 126). Elsewhere, Chatman defines trait more extensively as "a narrative adjective out of the vernacular labeling a personal quality of a character, as it persists over part or whole of the story" (Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 125). When we infer a character's traits from the deep structure of an ancient text, it is inevitable that we use trait-names that are familiar to our modern world. Using modern terminology to analyze and describe characters in ancient literature is acceptable provided that we remember that we use categories unknown to the ancient authors and audiences (Bennema, "Theory of Character," 394, fn. 86, 396–97).

²¹ Cf. James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 126–28.

²² The failed attempts of the temple police to arrest Jesus (7:32, 44–45; cf. 7:30; 8:20, 59; 10:39) may explain why Judas brought an unusually large number of soldiers and police to arrest a single man.

with "the Jews" (Jesus' main opponents) and the Roman oppressors.²³ The narrator's telling that Judas "stood with them" (18:5) also indicates that he no longer was with Jesus, in contrast to those who "stood with Jesus" (3:29; 19:25). In fact, Judas and "the Jews" are linked in that they are both controlled by the devil (8:44; 13:2, 27). In the final section, I will show that betrayal is Judas's overarching trait rather than one in isolation of his other traits.²⁴

Apostasy. In the Johannine context, apostasy is the defection from Jesus to the opposition – the devil. Judas is characterized by apostasy both in his being identified as a "devil" (6:71) and "son of perdition" (17:12), as well as in his behavior (13:1–30). I start with the epithet "devil" to describe Judas. At a crucial time when many of his disciples start defecting, Jesus challenges "the Twelve" on their loyalty to him and Peter assures him that they will stick with him (6:60–69).²⁵ What Peter does not know, and Jesus reveals, is that even among "the Twelve" there is a devil (6:70) – Judas, who will betray Jesus, as the narrator clarifies (6:71).²⁶ The reference to Judas as a devil probably implies that he will side with the devil or that his behavior resembles that of the devil. The devil's main occupation is to lie and kill (8:44). Similarly, Judas lies (12:5–6) and, through his betrayal, abets the killing of Jesus (John 18–19). The devil, who plants the idea of betraying Jesus, uses Judas as his instrument (13:2, 27).²⁷

²³ Cf. Beckmann, who sees Judas as a representative of "the Jews," albeit not in a negative sense ("Funktion und Gestalt des Judas," 198–200).

²⁴ Steven Hunt helpfully points out that even though Judas only betrays Jesus once and hence one could object that this constitutes a trait, it probably does because the narrator keeps referring to it.

²⁵ Seeing a parallel with Jesus' rebuke of Peter in Mark 8:33, some suggest that John seeks to improve on Peter by putting an anti-Judas spin on this story (Klassen, *Judas*, 140; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Judas: Ein Jünger des Herrn* [QD 111; Freiburg: Herder, 1987], 74–75). However, I have rejected such an interpretation (Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 55).

²⁶ Klassen's interpretation of 6:70–71 that Judas is an adversary in the legal sense at Jesus' right hand to present evidence, just as the διάβολος did in Job 1, Zechariah 3:1, and Psalm 108:6 (LXX) (Klassen, *Judas*, 141), seems far-fetched. Considering 6:64, James V. Brownson argues that Judas is even characterized as an unbelieving insider who rejects the christological claims regarding Jesus' divine identity and origin (idem, "Neutralizing the Intimate Enemy: The Portrayal of Judas in the Fourth Gospel," *SBLSP* 31 [1992]: 50–51). Although 6:64 may simply indicate that Jesus knew those who did not believe and the one who was going to betray him, the juxtaposition of unbelief and betrayal suggests a relation between the two. Besides, if Jesus' reply in 6:70 implicitly corrects the "we know" in Peter's confession in 6:69, then Judas is marked by unbelief (cf. Dongsue Kim, *An Exegesis of Apostasy Embedded in John's Narratives of Peter and Judas against the Synoptic Parallels* [SBEC 61; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2004], 154–55, 159; Klauck, *Judas*, 72, 74).

²⁷ Klauck's remark that Judas harbored his criminal plans from the beginning (i. e., when he joined Jesus) is unwarranted (Klauck, *Judas*, 73). Similarly, Margaret Davies contends that Jesus knew whom he had chosen (13:18) and, by implication, that he chose Judas so that Jesus knew whom he had chosen (13:18) and, by implication, that he chose Judas so that Scripture might be fulfilled (idem, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel* [JSNTSup 69; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 331). However, I prefer to distinguish between Jesus' foreknowledge of Judas's inclination and actions, and Judas's own development in this role. Although

Regarding the epithet "son of destruction" for Judas (17:12), I believe James Brownson is correct in understanding the term as a genitive of origin rather than a genitive of purpose ("son destined for destruction") or an adjectival genitive ("destroying son").²⁸ Brownson thus argues that the Greek term ἀπώλεια ("destruction") probably stands for the Hebrew *Abaddon*, a term used for hell (Prov 15:11; 27:20; 1QH 3:16, 19, 32) or hell personified, the devil (Job 28:22). And this reference to Judas as "son of hell" is in keeping with similar phrases in Jewish apocalyptic and early Christian literature.²⁹ Indeed, the reference to Judas as "son of destruction/hell" corresponds to the earlier description of Judas as "devil" (6:71). The epithet may also evoke the image of the thief who comes to destroy in 10:10 since the word for "thief" occurs only in 10:1, 8, 10 and then again in 12:6 specifically with reference to Judas.³⁰ Thus, Jesus' reference to Judas in 17:12 as "son of destruction" implies that Judas is an agent of the devil, in that he belongs to the devil and acts like him.

Judas's apostate behavior is tragically described in John 13. The narrator clearly informs the reader in 13:2 that Judas is going to betray Jesus. What is less clear is whose "heart" is in view in 13:2 – whether the devil had already decided in *his* heart that Judas should betray Jesus or that the devil had put it in *Judas's* heart to betray Jesus. I favor the latter interpretation because Jesus' comment to his disciples, "And you are clean, but not all of you," should be understood in the light of Judas's betrayal – it suggests that Judas is not clean (13:10b–11).³¹

not impossible, I consider it unlikely that Judas joined Jesus' group as a thief and devil, with the premeditated plan to betray Jesus.

²⁸ Brownson, "Enemy," 52. Cf. Klassen, *Judas*, 152. Contra those who interpret the term as Judas being (pre)destined for destruction (Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* [AB 29; London: Chapman, 1971], 2:760; C. Kingsley Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* [2d ed.; London: SPCK, 1978], 508; Kim, *Exegesis of Apostasy*, 152, 178). Whether Judas was (pre)destined for destruction was probably not an issue for John. See also the discussion in Wolfgang Fenske, *Brauchte Gott den Verräter? Die Gestalt des Judas in Theologie, Unterricht und Gottesdienst* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 69–72.

²⁹ Brownson, "Enemy," 52. Cf. Klassen, *Judas*, 152–53, 158, fn. 53; Klauck, *Judas*, 87–88; Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 563.

³⁰ For a detailed analysis of "thieves" in John 10, see Ruben Zimmermann, *Christologie der Bilder im Johannesevangelium: Die Christopoetik des vierten Evangelium unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Joh 10* (WUNT 171; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 259–65, 312–16, 340–44.

³¹ Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 464, fn. 2. Amongst those who favor the former interpretation, are Brownson, "Enemy," 52; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 378; Kim, *Exegesis of Apostasy*, 190–91. There is no suggestion that Judas was excluded from the footwashing – it simply did not benefit him. Klassen deals poorly with Judas's uncleanness, arguing that John, like the Essenes, views purity in broad terms as including financial matters and ritual purity (Klassen, *Judas*, 151–52). The footwashing clearly has salvific overtones – it foreshadows Jesus' death on the cross and the completion of the disciples' spiritual cleansing. Judas, however, is not clean and will not partake in Jesus' salvific death. Although Cane perceptively raises the issue of how it is that Jesus' foot-

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But even if Judas was unaware of the devil's plan in 13:2, he quickly learned of it because his sudden departure in 13:30 indicates that he understood Jesus' gesture and comment in 13:26–27. In 13:18, Jesus refers again to Judas's imminent betrayal, using the phrase "The one who eats my bread has lifted his heel against me," which is better translated as "The one with whom I shared a close relationship has opposed me." Jesus speaks of this event as a fulfilment of Psalm 41:9, where David speaks of being betrayed by an intimate friend whom he trusted and had table-fellowship with.³² In 13:21–30, a similar scene is played out between Jesus and Judas. Besides serving to identify Judas as the betrayer, Jesus' gesture of sharing bread in 13:26 may also represent a last effort to restore fellowship.³³ In 13:1, John states that Jesus loves people to the end, and here we see Jesus showing his love for Judas until the very "end," when Satan enters into Judas after he takes the piece of bread (13:27).³⁴ Judas's "end" is then secured: not only does the devil prompt Judas (13:2), he also indwells him (13:27).³⁵ Judas, indwelled by the devil, stands in sharp contrast to the disciples, who are indwelled by the Father and Son (14:23; cf. 17:21–23). Judas has become a devil or his embodiment (cf. 6:70–71), a defector and apostate, switching his allegiance from Jesus to Satan. After receiving the piece of bread from Jesus, Judas leaves immediately – literally, but also symbolically, leaving the fellowship of Jesus (13:30). The dramatic, abrupt sentence, "And it was night," in 13:30 reinforces the solemnity: besides being a literal reference to late evening, it also refers to a spiritual reality, namely, the darkness caused by Satan in driving Judas to his act of betrayal.³⁶ Judas's being indwelled by the devil and leaving

washing is unable to cleanse Judas from the devil's influence, his conclusion that Judas is either treated unjustly or is evidence of a salvific failure (Cane, *Judas*, 36–37) seems unwarranted. Cf. Culpepper, who remarks with reference to 13:11 and 17:12 that Judas's loss was Jesus' failure (Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 125). Others, however, claim that Judas's loss was not due to any deficiency on the part of Jesus (Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to John* [BNTC; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005], 437; Nicolas Farelly, *The Disciples in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of Their Faith and Understanding* [WUNT II 290; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010], 114).

³² Kim contends that John might have had in mind Ahithophel's betrayal of David, and he also sees an allusion to the "heel" motif of Genesis 3:15 which prophesies the cosmic conflict between Satan and the Son of God (Kim, *Exegesis of Apostasy*, 183–88).

³³ Cf. Beckmann, who states that, against the backdrop of 6:1–15, Jesus is in 13:26 "unmittelbar als Geber des Brotes präsent" (Beckmann, "Funktion und Gestalt des Judas," 187–88). Referring to ancient seating arrangements, Craig S. Keener suggests that the Beloved Disciple and Judas held the honored positions on either side of Jesus (idem, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [2 vols.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003], 915–16).

³⁴ Cf. Eva Krafft, who states that Judas has twice witnessed acts of love – Mary's devotion of Jesus in John 12 and Jesus' footwashing in John 13 – but also twice closed himself from them (idem, "Die Personen des Johannesevangeliums," *EvT* 16 [1956]: 29–30).

³⁵ Contra Kim, who contends that Judas is not so much influenced by the devil to betray Jesus as he wilfully hardens his heart and invites the devil to work through him (Kim, *Exegesis of Apostasy*, 191–92).

³⁶ Hence, Raymond F. Collins calls Judas "a figure of the night" (idem, "Representative

the presence of Jesus heralds the approaching darkness precipitated by the devil. So, this passage records the tragic defection and apostasy of Judas in a context that promotes discipleship. While Jesus exhorts his disciples to emulate him and to exemplify humility and service (13:1–20), the devil prompts Judas to defect and negate discipleship. The character of Judas embodies the most negative of all responses to Jesus: defection, apostasy, and betrayal.

Indifference, Unreliability, Hypocrisy, Dishonesty, Disloyalty. During a dinner given in Lazarus's home in honor of Jesus, Mary's devotion is contrasted by the early stages of Judas's defection (12:1–8). Although we have known since 6:70–71 that Judas will betray Jesus, it is only in John 12–13 that the character and role of Judas emerge. After reminding his readers that Judas will betray Jesus (12:4), John says that Judas is a thief (12:6).³⁷ As the treasurer of the group, Judas would have preferred to receive the large sum of money that the perfume could fetch, so he could keep a part for himself (12:6). Learning that Judas *as the treasurer* is a thief highlights his dishonesty and disloyalty to the group – he betrays their trust. The word for “thief” occurs only here and in 10:1, 8, 10, and perhaps John deliberately portrays Judas as a false shepherd whose intention is to steal, kill, and destroy. It is unlikely, however, that Judas illegitimately found his way into Jesus' group of disciples and joined Jesus *as a thief*; he probably became one along the way. The point of comparison between the thief in John 10 and Judas in John 12 is probably the thief's *behavior* of stealing, killing, and destroying rather than his entry into the sheepfold.³⁸ Besides, Judas is a liar or hypocrite – his question in 12:5 feigns a concern for the poor, which the narrator quickly falsifies.³⁹ In this, Judas emulates the devil who is characterized as a liar (8:44). Jesus' reprimand in 12:7–8 reveals that Judas does not recognize Jesus' uniqueness and instead believes that Mary showed excessive devotion to Jesus.⁴⁰

Character Development

Character development is not simply the addition of a trait that the reader infers further along the text continuum or a character's progress in his or her

Figures,” in *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel* [LTPM 2; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990], 1–45, here 30).

³⁷ Klassen cannot accept John's allegation that Judas is a thief (Klassen, *Judas*, 146; cf. Pratscher, “Judas,” 12). However, the Synoptics also hint at Judas's greed for money in Matthew 26:14–15; 27:3–10; Mark 14:10–11; Luke 22:3–5 (Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John* [3 vols; London: Burns & Oates, 1968–1982], 2:368; Kim, *Exegesis of Apostasy*, 171–72).

³⁸ Gail R. O'Day also notes that Judas exhibits a lack of care – whether for the poor (12:6) or the sheep (10:13) (idem, *The Gospel of John* [NIB 9; Nashville: Abingdon, 1995], 702).

³⁹ Farely aptly remarks that “on the only occasion when Judas speaks, he cannot be trusted” (Farely, *Disciples in the Fourth Gospel*, 116).

⁴⁰ Cf. Brownson, “Enemy,” 51; Kim, *Exegesis of Apostasy*, 168.

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understanding of Jesus.⁴¹ Development is revealed in a character's ability to surprise the reader, when a newly found trait replaces another or does not fit neatly into the existing set of traits, implying that the character has changed.⁴² Judas shows significant development in that his behavior shocks the reader and new traits replace old ones.⁴³ The revelation in 6:70–71 should shock the reader because it indicates that Judas will develop from being one of Jesus' intimate friends to a betrayer. When Jesus repeats this information in 13:21, the disciples are shocked, indicating that Judas has shown unexpected development.⁴⁴ Even when Jesus provides a clue to the identity of the betrayer in 13:26–27, the disciples are too stunned to grasp it (13:28–29).

When the narrator mentions in 12:6 that Judas is a thief, I suggested that he became a thief somewhere *along the way* rather than that he joined Jesus as a thief. A chapter later, we are privy to Judas's rapid development from one being influenced by the devil (13:2) to one being indwelt by the devil (13:27); from one leaving the fellowship of Jesus and entering into the darkness (13:30) to one eventually arranging Jesus' arrest – in short, the catastrophic development from being a disciple of Jesus to becoming a disciple of Satan. This negative development reveals that Judas was unreliable – he was a thief, a defector, a betrayer, and a disciple of the devil. The reader should thus notice the replacement of traits signifying the change in Judas. Since 12:6 mentions that Judas was a thief while being the treasurer of the group (a position of trust), traits of honesty and reliability are being replaced by dishonesty and unreliability. Then, with the switch of allegiance from Jesus to Satan, traits of intimacy and following Jesus disappear, and alienation and defection emerge.

Inner Life

The inner life of a character gives the reader insight into the character's thoughts, emotions, and motivations, and is conveyed usually by the narrator and sometimes by the characters themselves.⁴⁵ In John's Gospel, however,

⁴¹ Contra Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 153.

⁴² Cf. Edward M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Penguin, 1976; orig. publ. 1927), 73–81; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 39.

⁴³ Contra Klauck, who contends that the character of Judas does not show development since he harbored evil plans from the beginning (Klauck, *Judas*, 73). However, even though Judas is characterized by negative traits already at his first appearance in the narrative (6:70–71), this should nevertheless shock the reader because such characterization of one in Jesus' inner circle is not expected.

⁴⁴ Contra Klassen's view that "the disciples are not bewildered by the announcement that someone will hand him over. They take it in stride ... when Judas acted, he acted for everyone" (Klassen, *Judas*, 150). John 13:22 indicates that the disciples were clearly "at a loss" or "in consternation" (cf. 13:28).

⁴⁵ Cf. Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), 38.

Jesus also reveals the inner life of some characters, which should not surprise us since he is the revealer *par excellence*, who knows all people and what is in them (2:24–25; cf. 6:64; 13:11; 16:30; 21:17). Indeed, both the narrator and Jesus disclose many aspects of Judas's inner life. The narrator reveals that Judas is indifferent, hypocritical, and dishonest (12:6), influenced in his mind by the devil (13:2), and that he is going to betray Jesus (6:71; 12:4), by virtue of the fact that he knows where Jesus normally goes (18:3). Additionally, Jesus reveals that Judas is a devil (6:70), unclean (13:10), and will betray him (13:21). Thus, John clearly informs the reader about Judas's motives and rationale for his actions by consistently revealing aspects of his inner life.⁴⁶ This aids the reader in evaluating Judas.

Characterization and Evaluation of Judas

After this character analysis, we can classify the character of Judas by positioning him on the characterization continuum. Considering his location on the axes of complexity (complex, multiple traits), development (some), and inner life (much), I suggest to identify the character of Judas as an individual. Since individuals in antiquity were not autonomous persons (as in modernity) but embedded in a group (see fn. 16), Judas was first embedded in Jesus' inner group of disciples ("the Twelve"), which in turn was embedded in the family of God, but with his apostasy, Judas became embedded in the family of the devil. Many scholars perceive Judas as a flat, one-dimensional character who shows no development,⁴⁷ but this is simplistic. Judas is a complex character whose dominant traits are betrayal and apostasy, but he also has secondary traits such as indifference, hypocrisy, unreliability, dishonesty, and disloyalty.

From John's evaluative point of view, which is informed by his overall purpose of eliciting and increasing faith in the life-giving Jesus amongst his readers (20:31), Judas must be evaluated negatively.⁴⁸ Judas's defection is permanent and a case of apostasy – he ceases to be a disciple of Jesus and joins the opposition, becoming a disciple of the devil. Judas mimics the characteristics

⁴⁶ Cf. Tom Thatcher, "Jesus, Judas, and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel," *BSac* 153 (1996): 435–48, here 448.

⁴⁷ E. g., Tolmie, *Jesus' Farewell*, 142; Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 332; Eslinger, "Judas Game," 72; Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 159, 164; Wright, "Character Typing," 559. Similarly, Kim Paffenroth's assertion that "[a]ll attempt to understand him [Judas] as a human character has dropped out, and he becomes merely an illustration of John's ideas about evil" is too reductionistic (idem, *Judas: Images of the Lost Disciple* [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 36). Farely thus correctly critiques Paffenroth, stating that "the narrator does take time to present Judas as a real human" (Farely, *Disciples in the Fourth Gospel*, 108).

⁴⁸ Contra Moloney, who claims that John makes no final judgment upon Judas. Moloney contends that "son of perdition" in 17:12 is Satan, not Judas, and that Judas is included in the "I did not lose one" in 17:12 and 18:9 (Moloney, *John*, 483–85).

and actions of the devil: he lies about his concern for the poor (12:5-6); he steals money from the treasury (12:6); he plays an important role in the killing of Jesus by precipitating Jesus' arrest. Judas is an instrument and embodiment of the devil, in that the devil uses him for his evil purposes and indwells him. Judas's apostasy was the climax of a gradual, negative development rather than an abrupt turnaround, so he had opportunities to choose to do otherwise.⁴⁹

Judas's betrayal is not limited to the premeditated act of handing Jesus over to the judicial authorities at his arrest but is a behavioral pattern that emerged over time. As a thief and then as a defector and apostate, he betrays the trust of both Jesus and his fellow disciples. He belonged to Jesus' inner circle of disciples, had an intimate relationship with Jesus, but eventually chose to join the opposition. Judas's betrayal therefore includes deceiving Jesus and his fellow disciples, being disloyal and letting down his master, and finally handing him over to the opposition. It is as thief, apostate, and the one who hands Jesus over to his enemies that Judas is the betrayer. At the heart of betrayal is relationship; you can only betray someone with whom you share a relationship. Since betrayal presupposes belonging, Judas is the betrayer *as an intimate friend and disciple of Jesus*.⁵⁰ Since his betrayal and apostasy result in a transfer of allegiance from the family of God to the family of the devil, Judas is the black sheep of the family.⁵¹

If "plot" is the logical and causal sequence of events, the plot of John's Gospel relates to the revelation of the Father and Son in terms of their identity, character, mission, and relationship, and people's response to this revelation.⁵² The Gospel's plot is affected by John's strategy to persuade the reader to

⁴⁹ Cf. Craig R. Koester, who remarks that the narrator "holds Judas accountable to accepted standards for human conduct" (idem, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* [2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 73). See also Eslinger, "Judas Game," 59-60. Contra Klassen's evaluation that "Judas appears more like an automaton than a free, willing person" (Klassen, *Judas*, 153). Resseguie also reduces Judas's responsibility, asserting that he is passive and "little more than a pawn in a cosmic chess match [between God and Satan]" (Resseguie, *Strange Gospel*, 165-66; cf. idem, *Narrative Criticism*, 163).

⁵⁰ Cf. Brownson, "Enemy," 50. See also Wright, who views Judas's betrayal in the context of ancient Greco-Roman teacher-student relationship and friendship where loyalty or fidelity was the most important component (Wright, "Character Typing," 552-53). Contra Paffenroth, who claims that Judas never belonged to Jesus since Jesus cannot lose his own (Paffenroth, *Judas*, 35). Similarly, Hans-Josef Klauck also denies that Judas ever belonged to Jesus because from the beginning Judas belonged to those who did not believe (6:64) (idem, "Judas der Verräter? Eine exegetische und wirkungsgeschichtliche Studie," *ANRW II* 26.1 [1992]: 728-29). However, the εἰ μὴ ("except") clause in Jesus' statements regarding Judas (13:10; 17:12) shows that Judas did belong prior to his apostasy - Jesus' claims that all are clean and all are kept *except* Judas actually demonstrates that he was included in the "all" before he defected.

⁵¹ Contra Klassen, who asserts that "it may be time to ... bury once and for all the belief that Judas was a thief or was motivated by demonic forces. Not for a moment does it seem credible that the Johannine portrait of Judas could be authentic" (Klassen, *Judas*, 146).

⁵² Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 79-98; Lincoln, *John*, 11-12; Farelly, *Disciples in the Fourth Gospel*, 168-69.

believe that Jesus is the Christ and the source of everlasting life or salvation (20:31).⁵³ Judas significantly advances the plot in that his betrayal of Jesus sets in motion the plan of the chief priests and "the Jews" to kill Jesus. Jesus' death is climactic to the plot because the cross is where (i) Jesus is exalted and finishes his salvific mission (3:14; 12:32; 19:30); (ii) Jesus ultimately provides life for the life of the world (6:51); and (iii) God ultimately reveals his love for the world in the giving of his son (3:16). Thus, in the process from being Jesus' friend to becoming his foe, Judas propels the plot to its climax and resolution.⁵⁴

Having evaluated Judas in terms of his response to Jesus and his role in the plot, we must determine his significance for today. Since John seeks to win his readers over to his point of view using a broad array of characters that interact with Jesus, we must reflect on how these characters and their responses have representative value for readers in other contexts. The Johannine characters are therefore representative figures in that they have a symbolic or illustrative value beyond the narrative but not in a reductionist, "typical" sense. I contend that the representative value across cultures and time lies in the *totality* of each character – traits, development, *and* response. The reader is thus invited to identify with (aspects of) one or more of the characters, learn from them and then make his or her own response to Jesus – preferably one that the author approves of. Conversely, the reader may already have made a response to Jesus and can now evaluate that response against those of the characters. When it comes to Judas, he represents those who belonged to Jesus but have defected and joined the opposition – the devil – and thus serves as a negative example.⁵⁵

⁵³ Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 98.

⁵⁴ Cf. Lincoln, *John*, 11–12.

⁵⁵ Many scholars have also considered Judas's representative value for John's own time. For example, in view of the many antichrists who left the Johannine community and went out into the dark world (1 John 2:18–19; 4:1), Culpepper characterizes Judas as "the representative defector" (Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 124–25; cf. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 165). Referring to the ancient rhetorical device of "syncrisis," Michael W. Martin presents a similar case, arguing that Judas as the consummate defector is a representative of the schismatics described in 1–3 John who broke away from the Johannine community (idem, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison in the Fourth Gospel* [NTM 25; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010]). See also Peter Dschulnigg, *Jesus begegnen: Personen und ihre Bedeutung im Johannevangelium* (Münster: LIT, 2002), 179. Kim's contention that "John deliberately alludes to the historical situation of the church in which apostate-disciples become henchmen of Satan in delivering Christian brothers into the hands of Synagogue authorities and think that they are offering a service to God (16:2)" is perhaps overstated (Kim, *Exegesis of Apostasy*, 211). For Judas's representation throughout history, see Meiser, *Judas Iskariot*, 112–87.