

ANATOMIES OF NARRATIVE CRITICISM

The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature

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SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN JOHN AND HIS READER: THE GARDEN SYMBOLISM IN JOHN 19-20

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Within a narrative reading of the Gospel of John, the communication between the (implied) author and the (implied) reader may be highlighted. One aspect of this communication is the enigmatic and ambiguous quality of language. In chapter 6 of *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, Alan Culpepper focused on several forms of this so-called "silent communication" between author and reader. The reader should become aware of many overtones of the text's language, by which one is led to another level of understanding. Culpepper explicitly explored three forms of this reader-oriented dialogue—misunderstandings (1983, 152-65), irony (165-80), and symbolism (180-98)—but also noted that these three devices have only an exemplary character and stand for many more forms of implicit communication.

All these textual styles function, according to Culpepper, in the same way as an "implicit commentary" for the reader.

What seems clear and simple on the surface is never so simple for the perceptive reader because of the opacity and complexity of the gospel's subsurface signals. Various textual features, principally the misunderstandings, irony, and symbolism, constantly lead the reader to view the story from a higher vantage point and share the judgements which the "whispering wizard" conveys by means of various nods, winks, and gestures. It is the discovery of subsurface signals which had previously escaped the reader's notice that allows the gospel to be read again and again with pleasure and profit. (Culpepper 1983, 151)

Since the publication of *Anatomy*, the investigation of the enigmatic or figurative character of the language of John has gone further. Following various examinations of individual instances (see Schwankl 1995; van der Watt 1992; 1994; 1998; 2000; Busse 1997; 2002), first attempts are now being made to systematize the "imagery in the Gospel of John" (see Zimmermann 2006).

In addition to the metaphoric approaches, the paradigm of the "symbol" continues to play a central role. Admittedly, the understandings and uses of the term symbol within Johannine scholarship are as diverse as the efforts to reflect on the concept of the symbol in the many different academic disciplines.¹ Larry Jones offers the following, very elementary definition of "symbolism" in the Gospel of John: "A symbol stands for something other than, or at least more than, what it immediately is and also participates in that for which it stands" (1997, 14; see Wheelwright 1982, 6). On the other hand, Craig Koester, in his important *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, limits the manifestation of symbolism in the Gospel of John to three areas: "A symbol is an image, an action, or a person that is understood to have transcendent significance. In Johannine terms, symbols span the chasm between what is 'from above' and what is 'from below' without collapsing the distinction" (2003, 4 n. 9). Others bring the aspect of participation or representation to the fore and speak of the "sacramental character" of the Johannine symbols.² Wai-ye Ng differentiates the various positions into "metaphorical symbolism," "narrative symbolism," "double meaning," "misunderstanding and irony," "sacramental symbolism," "representational symbolism," "thematic symbolism," and "scriptural symbolism" (2001, 5–21). Dorothy Lee understands the Johannine narratives as "symbolic narratives" that, for the reader, fulfill a pragmatic function (Lee 1995, 24, 231; 2002). For the most part, these studies examine individual symbols such as "water" (Jones 1997; Ng 2001) or the "temple" (Rahner 1998; Coloe 2001; Kerr 2002).

In this essay I would like to go a step further down the path and, in addition, offer several fundamental remarks on the perception and analysis of symbols in the Gospel of John. For purposes of application, I will take a closer

1. An instructive introduction to the concept of "symbol" can be found in Meier-Oeser 1971–2007, 10:710–23. On the concept of symbol in Johannine research, see the overviews in Jones 1997, 14–28; Ng 2001, 5–43.

2. In this case, however, various problems must be discussed. First, was John the Evangelist familiar with the sacraments of "baptism" and "Eucharist," and is he referring to them in his use of "water" and "bread" or "wine"? Such knowledge is affirmed, for example, by Schnackenburg (1985, 83–86) and Frey (2000a), while Kysar (1975, 108) and Berger (1997, 208–17) challenge in particular John's familiarity with the Eucharist. Second, which (implicit) understanding of the sacraments does the Fourth Gospel betray? For example, is the washing of feet (John 13) to be understood as a sacrament? Niemand (1993) assumes here a "postbaptismalen Initiationsritus" (postbaptismal rite of initiation). Or does the entire Gospel have a "sacramental character" (see Kysar 1975, 259; Schneiders 1977; Paschal 1981)? For an initial orientation to the issues, see Brown 1962; Moloney 1982; for a reflection on the intersections with symbolism, see Koester 2003, 301–9; Jones 1997, 26–28; Ng 2001, 14–16.

look at a much-neglected symbolic domain in the Fourth Gospel, the "garden symbolism."

SYMBOLISM IN JOHN

Figurative language is characterized by a surplus of sensation or, as Ricoeur said, a "surplus de sens."³ This means that a linguistic expression—a motif or a segment of text or, linguistically speaking, a *semanteme*, a symbol carrying meaning—represents something else. While the word "symbol" is sometimes employed in this way as a generic term that covers all figurative linguistic forms in the Fourth Gospel, I consider it useful at least to distinguish between "metaphor" and "symbol." Since the development of the interaction theory of Black and Richards, it has been recognized that a metaphor can never exist in only one word or lexeme but always includes a framework of text (see Richards 1936, 89–101, 115–37; Black 1954; 1977; Weinrich 1976, 295–316). Within this text framework a semantic tension is created between two parts. The so-called "impertinent predication" or "calculated absurdity" of the statement shows the reader that she has left the literal meaning and should now search for a figurative meaning (see Zimmermann 2000; 2003, 10–18). The term "symbol," however, is used to describe a different phenomenon of figurative language. Unlike the metaphor, the surplus of meaning of the symbolic image is not created through the interaction of two domains of meaning on the level of text. The symbol appears in the text as a single item (e.g., "water," "light," or the "cross"), and that for which it stands or what it indicates must be filled in or "thrown in" (thus, etymologically, the Greek *sym-ballein*) by the recipient, as Culpepper pointed out (1983, 182–83).

A motif, an action, or a person in a narrative can thus be understood as a symbol only by the reader. In cases where the actions and people in the Gospel of John obtain symbolic meaning through narrative elements, I prefer to speak of "narrative *Bildlichkeit*" ("narrative imagery"; see Zimmermann 2004a, 197–217). However, in the analysis of symbolism, the thematic symbolism of linguistic convention is at the forefront. This symbolism cannot really be taken out of its literary surroundings (e.g., the narrative and speeches of the Fourth Gospel) but can be dealt with separately in a heuristic sense.

3. Ricoeur defines "symbol" as "Region des Doppelsinns ... wo die Sprache Zeichen verschiedenen Grades produziert, in denen der Sinn sich nicht damit begnügt, etwas zu bezeichnen, sondern einen anderen Sinn bezeichnet, der nur in und mittels seiner Ausrichtung zu erreichen ist" (1988, 19, also 29). Ricoeur makes his definition of symbol more precise by distinguishing it from the "too broad" definition of E. Cassirer (as a symbolic form) and the "too narrow" one of Plato (as an analogy).

Because this point is important to my argument here, I will discuss the issue more precisely before proceeding.

In a successful communication, the reader already knows the symbolic codes in a text from the linguistic conventions held in common with the author and thus can understand the symbolism. However, problems may arise in the interpretation of "symbolic" passages of the text. In the particular case at hand, the symbolic conventions of the linguistic community of the author and addressee of the Fourth Gospel are only available in a limited way to present-day readers. How, then, can a modern reader know if a person, action, or motif should be given a symbolic meaning or not? For example, should the geographical detail that John was baptizing at Aenon (John 3:22) be understood symbolically? Is the miracle of the wine (2:1-11) a symbolic occurrence? Is the "bread of life" (John 6) a symbol for the eucharistic bread? Are even some characters, such as Jesus' mother (2:1-11; 6:42; 19:25-27), depicted symbolically? Many more examples could be given. The variety of interpretations of these texts and topics seems to demonstrate that it is nearly impossible to come to a consensus as to whether certain passages should be considered "symbolic" or not. In order not to leave the discovery of symbols completely to the arbitrary assessment of exegetes, interpretation should work toward greater methodical clarity in the description of symbols.

As a methodological stimulus toward symbolic analysis, I would like to suggest that the identification of symbols should follow two criteria. If it is correct that symbols are only defined by way of the conventions of a linguistic community, then a text must be connected back to this symbolic tradition in order to be understood in its deeper meaning. Whether a symbolic tradition really forms the background of a particular text, however, can only be recognized through evidence from the text itself. Thus, I consider the differentiation of two criteria to be helpful: (1) conventional plausibility; (2) textual plausibility. Both criteria will be briefly defined here.

With regard to the criterion of *conventional plausibility*, if a motif such as "light," "shepherd," and the like holds a great deal of religious meaning within a linguistic community due to a *Bildfeldtradition* (traditional semantic field) that can be substantiated by means of older and contemporary texts, then there exists a high level of plausibility that the motif is being used symbolically, in line with conventional usage (see Weinrich 1976, 276-90; Zimmermann 2004b, 97-99). Here we may speak of evidence for plausibility *outside* the text. The criterion of *textual plausibility* would hold that the way in which an author identifies a motif within a text as a symbol will be made clear by clues in the text. Thus I would speak here of evidence for plausibility *within* the text. The symbolism of a text can be identified from the specific interaction between social-traditional convention and the actual textual evi-

dence. In order to identify a certain portion of the text as "symbolic," one may apply the following rule: as the evidence from the perspective of convention increases, the need for textual evidence decreases, and vice versa. For example, because the term "grapevine" was understood symbolically in early Judaism, one may plausibly assume that the motif was taken up in the Gospel of John (15:1–8) as a symbol on the basis of this common convention, even if the text itself does not show any clear allusion to biblical tradition (see Zumstein 2006a).⁴ Similarly, John 6 links the "bread" to the biblical tradition of manna, appealing to conventional understanding (see Maritz and van Belle 2006).

Of course, there is also a conventional symbolic tradition in motifs such as "garden" or "lamb," but in an agricultural society not every example of these lexemes must be symbolically loaded. Therefore, clues in the text are required in order to clarify whether the term is being used symbolically. In this way, a symbolic meaning for "lamb" can be demonstrated through clear textual signals (such as the quotation from the Passover lamb tradition in John 19:36), which, regardless of which traditional parallels are being considered, is not disputed in the research on John. On the other hand, symbolic references to the "garden" in John 19 and 20, taking up the tradition of the garden of paradise (see Elsen-Novák and Novák 2005), or to the "fishing" in John 21, taking up the early Christian fish symbolism (see Culpepper 2006a), are generally not perceived. Even if the act of clearly defining the symbolic content of a Johannine text stands in opposition to the recipient-oriented understanding of the symbol, it is necessary within exegetical research to identify plausibilities.⁵

A further differentiation on the level of the content of the text helps to clarify the perception of symbols in the Gospel of John. To simplify, we can distinguish two relevant domains of symbolism in the Gospel of John. First, there are basic symbols of human life, such as light, water, and birth, which were prominent throughout the ancient world. Borrowing from Jung's terminology, one could call these "archetypal symbols." Second, there are specific

4. "Wir können weder ein Zitat aus einem alttestamentlichen Buch noch einen Verweis oder eine unbestreitbare Andeutung auf eine bestimmte Passage aufweisen" (Zumstein 2006a, 154). Zumstein considers it probable, however, that this particular text is a reference—in the sense of (in Genette's terminology) "hypertextuality"—to Old Testament symbolic traditions.

5. Another approach is taken by Paul N. Anderson, who defines different "gradations of symbolization" and examines them in terms of historical and theological function. Anderson differentiates four levels of symbolization: explicit, implicit, correlative, and innocent (2006b, 157–58).

symbols from the Jewish tradition, such as temple, grapevine, and heaven. These might be called "religious symbols."

The actual use of both types of symbols demonstrates a principal characteristic of symbolic language, which can be defined by the terms *traditio* and *innovatio*. This characteristic applies not only to Johannine symbolic imagery but also to imagery in general: the Johannine images are linked to existing *Bildfeldtraditionen*, while at the same time they renew, sharpen, and go beyond these traditional images. Johannine symbols provide especially clear indications of the way figurative speech (*Bildrede*) depends on tradition (note the bread speech of John 6 or the "shepherds" discourse in John 10). In many cases in the Fourth Gospel, symbolic traditions have been renewed and revised by being applied to Jesus. This "Christologizing of symbols" takes place when, for example, the deeper meaning of Jewish temple celebrations is transferred to Jesus or is surpassed by him, as in the promise of water at the Sukkot celebration (John 7:37; see Zimmermann 2004a, 149–53). Harold Attridge calls this way of overdetermining the significance of recognized symbols and reinterpreting an image from different symbolic angles the "Cubist Principle in Johannine Imagery" (2006). Of special importance is the manner in which symbols that were traditionally reserved for God are employed for Jesus, such as "walking on water" (John 6:16–21) or the claim to be "owner of the flock" (10:1–18).⁶

GARDEN SYMBOLISM

I would now like to look at a specific domain of the symbolic language of the Fourth Evangelist that is usually neglected but that at the same time brings to light the problems of symbolic communication: garden symbolism (see also Zimmermann 2004a, 154–63).

Gardens are often spoken of in the final chapters of the Gospel of John. After his farewell speeches, Jesus goes to a garden across the Kidron (John 18:1: ὅπου ἦν κήπος, εἰς ὃν εἰσῆλθεν αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ), where he will not only be arrested but also will identify himself with three ἐγὼ εἰμι sayings (18:5, 6, 8).⁷ Not until after the crucifixion does the garden motif appear

6. In the symbol tradition, the title "shepherd" was granted only to YHWH himself as the "owner of his flock." See here Hunziker-Rodewald 2001, 15 *et passim*; Zimmermann 2004b, 110–16.

7. 18:5:	λέγει αὐτοῖς	ἐγὼ εἰμι
18:6:	εἶπεν αὐτοῖς	ἐγὼ εἰμι
18:8:	ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· εἶπον ὑμῖν ὅτι	ἐγὼ εἰμι

again. Jesus' tomb is located in a garden near the site of crucifixion (19:41),⁸ and the first narrative of the resurrection in the Gospel of John also occurs in this garden. Mary (Magdalene; 20:1) is crying in front of the tomb when she sees two angels sitting in the tomb. She tells them that she believes that Jesus' body has been stolen. Without waiting for a reaction from them, she turns around and sees Jesus, whom at first she does not recognize but rather takes to be the gardener: ἐκείνη δοκοῦσα ὅτι ὁ κηπουρός ἐστίν (20:15).

The text segment 20:11–17 is, in any case, a passage that is complicated in several aspects,⁹ so that the confusion with the gardener is generally not given any consideration in exegetical discussion. Because of the location of the scene, Mary sees in the unknown person the gardener belonging to the garden (Dietzfelbinger 2001, 331).¹⁰ This simple explanation for the mention of the gardener may at first seem plausible within the narrative world of the Fourth Gospel. However, the question remains, on the level of the Evangelist's conscious narrative composition of the resurrection scene, whether the mention of the garden really can be understood only as a historical or novelistic detail. It is striking that the Synoptic reports of the passion and resurrection, which show, in the location of the tomb, a relatively close parallel to John, do not mention anything about a garden.¹¹ Could, then, the garden and the

8. John 19:41: ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κήπος, καὶ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μνημεῖον καὶνὸν ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἦν τεθειμένος ("Now at the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, not yet used for burial").

9. The judgement of Dietzfelbinger is typical: "es handelt sich um einen in mehrfacher Hinsicht komplizierten Text" (2001, 333). The following should be mentioned as concrete problems: the differentiation, suggested in 20:17, in the process of glorification between "resurrection" and "ascension to the Father"; the fact that Mary "turns around" twice (20:14, 16); the prohibition to touch the resurrected one (in contrast to John 20:27; see Matt 28:9; Luke 24:39). See the analysis in Ruschmann 2002, 64–95.

10. See without any discussion Wengst 2001, 283–84. Ruschmann asserts that "Das Motiv des Gärtners kann nur damit erklärt werden, dass sich nach joh Überlieferung das Grab, in welches Joseph von Arimathäa und Nikodemus Jesus legten, in einem Garten befand (19,41)" (2002, 88).

11. See Mark 15:46 (tomb cut out of the rock); Matt 27:60 (in his own new tomb, the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea); Luke 23:53 (in a tomb cut out of the rock, in which no one had been laid before). John thus shares—although with a different syntax (Matthew) or choice of words (Luke: ἐν μνήματι λαξευτῷ οὐ οὐκ ἦν οὐδεὶς οὕτω κείμενος)—with Matthew the "new tomb" (μνημεῖον καὶνόν) and with Luke the relative clause "in which no one had been laid before" (ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἦν τεθειμένος). Mark 14:32 (cf. Matt 26:36) mentions the so-called "Garden of Gethsemane" (ἐρχονται εἰς χωρίον οὗ τὸ ὄνομα Γεθσημανί), but the Greek word used here, χωρίον, is not a *terminus technicus* for a "garden" in the biblical tradition, but rather a general designation for a field or piece of land (see 1 Chr 27:27; 2 Macc 12:21; Acts 1:18–19; 4:34; 5:3, 8; 28:7; John 4:5), or even a

scene with the gardener have been consciously added by John in order to make use of the (Jewish) garden symbolism for his report on the resurrection? Following this, one could reason that, because John had an interest in bringing in the confusion with the gardener, the mention of the garden had been important to him previously (19:41; see 18:1). Symbols understood in this sense are already shaped by linguistic convention and can be recognized and interpreted by participants in the communication who participate in the same current of tradition. In order to verify whether the mention of the garden and gardener in John 19 is pursuing a symbolic meaning, it is first necessary to outline the symbolic tradition of the garden in order to ascertain its "conventional plausibility."

SYMBOLIC TRADITION OF THE GARDEN

In Greek, three terms are used for "garden." Κήπος is the most common word for an unspecified garden; ἔρκος (literally, "the enclosure") is used for a enclosed garden; a word borrowed from ancient Iranian, παράδεισος, describes a large, park-like garden in the Persian style (see Schneider 1972, 8:1048–50; Bremmer 1999, 17–19; Jeremias 1964–76, 5:765–73). In Eccl 2:5, however, the terms κήπος and παράδεισος are used synonymously.¹² Both terms are also used in Canticles (παράδεισος here as a metaphor for the lover; Cant 4:13). Looking at John 19, it should be noted that the garden was a customary burial site (2 Kgs 20:2; Neh 3:16; 2 Chr 33:20; Josephus, A.J. 10.46). Within John's symbolic tradition, then, it is necessary to differentiate two fundamental areas: (1) the garden as a symbol of love (Canticles); (2) God's garden of paradise. In view of the interests of the present study, I will limit my remarks to the second of these.¹³

Within the Jewish tradition, "Eden," the garden of paradise as described in Gen 2–3, is of central importance. God planted it himself (Gen 2:8: ἐφύτευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον) and, as the gardener, cultivated it (2:9). He put animals and people in it and took walks in it (2:15). In other texts in the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish tradition, one finds the expression "God's garden" (ὁ παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ; Gen 13:10 LXX; Ezek 28:10; 31:8) and

part of a city (2 Macc 12:7). The Christian history and linguistic convention may have been determined by John, who designated the piece of land in Gethsemane as a "garden" (κήπος) across the Kidron Valley (see John 18:1).

12. Eccl 2:5: ἐποίησά μοι κήπους καὶ παραδείσους καὶ ἐφύτευσα ἐν αὐτοῖς ξύλον πάντων καρπῶν ("I made myself gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them").

13. See Jeremias 1964–76, 5:763–71; Schneider 1972, 8:1048–61; see also Morris and Sawyer 1992; Luttikhuisen (1999).

"garden of the Lord" (παράδεισος κυρίου; LXX Isa 51:3; Pss. Sol. 14:3), and God is explicitly described as a "gardener" (Num 24:6; 4 Macc 1:29).

In early Judaism, based on the sacredness of the garden of Eden (Jub. 3:12; 4:26; 8:19¹⁴), the garden of paradise was used as a symbol of the temple and the sanctum of the temple (Jubilees; Qumran).¹⁵ According to the Jewish halakah, entrance into the garden (Gen 2:15¹⁶) is particularly connected to the motif of birth. Both Jubilees and the Qumran texts deal with the impurity of a woman after the birth of a boy or girl (T. Levi 12); this state of impurity is connected to a period of waiting before she may again enter the sanctuary, that is, the temple.¹⁷ It was once assumed that the imagery of the correlation of Eden and the temple even found expression in Jewish iconography, for in the Herodian temple the walls were decorated with motifs of paradise. Most of the texts that connect Eden with the temple, however, deal with a future temple.¹⁸ Reflected in this is the early Jewish anticipation, above and beyond the temple, of the return of the garden at the end of time. Before and around the time of the exile, the hope for historical times of blessing was repeatedly enhanced with motifs from the paradise narratives.¹⁹ Ezekiel compares, *expressis verbis*, the anticipated apocalypse with the paradise of the beginning (Ezek 36:35) and takes up the motif of the torrents of paradise in his vision of the new (eschatological) temple (Ezek 47). Definitive for the eschatological paradise are the removal of the death penalty and the giving

14. "For this (garden of Eden) is holy in all the land" (Jub. 3:12); see also Teez Sanb 38:25; T. Levi 18:6–10. See Ego 1997, 211–15.

15. Thus in Jub. 3:27, Adam is described as the self-sacrificing priest. On Jub. 3, see particularly van Ruiten 1999a; on the Qumran texts, see Tigchelaar 1999; García Martínez 1999. On the relationship between Eden and the temple, van Ruiten says that the "Garden of Eden is not seen as identical with the temple ... [but] as a sort of symbolic representation of one by the other" (1999a, 76).

16. Jub. 3:8–14 interprets Gen 2:15 in such a way that man and woman were created outside the garden and then find entrance into the garden or "sanctuary." See van Ruiten 1999a, 75.

17. See, e.g., 4Q265; also Jub. 3:10, 13: "She shall not touch anything sacred, nor shall she enter the sanctuary until the days for a male or female are completed" (trans. Berger 1981). According to Jubilees, the waiting period after the birth of a girl is two weeks (for a boy only one) because Eve was created in the second week of creation (see Baumgarten 1994; García Martínez 1999; van Ruiten 1999a, 77).

18. Thus 1 En. 24–27; T. Levi 18:6; T. Dan 5:12; Apoc. Mos. 29:1–6; 4Q174 III; 4Q265 frag. 7.2 11–17. See van Ruiten 1999b.

19. The blessings include, e.g., fertility (Isa 51:3), abundance of water (Isa 35:1–7; Ezek 47:1–12; Ps 46:5), no death (Isa 25:8; 26:19), and fellowship with God (Hos 2:21–22; Jer 31:31–34).

of knowledge through God.²⁰ According to T. Levi 18:10–11, the Messiah opens the sealed gates to paradise: “He himself [the priestly Messiah] will open the gates of paradise, remove the sword that threatened Adam and give the saints to eat of the tree of life; then the Holy Spirit will rest on them.” The idea that the Messiah will re-create the original paradisaical state is also reflected in the Adam-Messiah typology, which originated in early Jewish and rabbinical writings²¹ and was then taken up into the Pauline tradition of the New Testament as an Adam-Jesus typology (1 Cor 15:22, 45; Rom 5:12–21).

JESUS THE GARDENER AND THE GARDEN IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Greek symbolic term *παράδεισος*, customary in Jewish tradition, is found in the Johannine Literature only in Rev 2:7 and otherwise only in two other places in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4). At the same time, John consistently uses the word *κῆπος*, consistent with the fact that the frequent reference in ancient Christian writing to the stories of paradise is not tied to the term *παράδεισος* (see Jeremias 1964–76, 5:766). Viewed within this general framework, two aspects of the “garden” terminology in John 20 are particularly striking.

First, it is striking that John—if one assumes a familiarity with the Synoptic passion tradition (as with Lang 1999; Frey 2003)—consciously introduces the motif of the garden and then centers it in the narrative of the revelation to Mary. Within the horizon of the otherwise subtle composition of the Fourth Gospel, it seems improbable that this is simply a novelistic detail or a mere reminiscence of historical information. Certainly the nonrecognition of the resurrected one is a repeated motif in narratives of resurrection appearances, which one sees also in John 21:4.²² However, in the Gospel of John, the motif of nonrecognition frequently introduces a step-by-step process of recognition (see John 4; 6), in which images and symbols can become decisive keys.

20. 4 Ezra 7:36: “And the furnace of hell will be revealed and opposite it the paradise of delight”; 4 Ezra 7:123–124: “and that a paradise shall be revealed, whose fruit remains unspoiled and in which are abundance and healing, but we shall not enter it, because we have lived in unseemly places.” See Tigchelaar 1999, 56–57: “It is remarkable that several texts referring to the Eden narrative state that God gave knowledge and insight to Adam (4Q 305 2; 4Q 504 8 recto 5).”

21. Thus the opinion of Jeremias (1964–76, 1:141–43) with regard to Life of Adam and Eve and 2 Enoch.

22. See Luke 24:13–35 (the Emmaus disciples), particularly 24:16: *μὴ ἐπιγινῶναι αὐτόν* (“he was not known to them”).

Following this pattern, could the garden motif in John 20 give an indication of Christological meaning? Remaining for the moment on the level of the narrative itself (20:14–17), can we recognize clues in the text that would make it seem plausible that John wants to call into consciousness, for his readers, symbolic traditions of the garden, or at least relations to Gen 2–3?

The entire garden scene in John 20 is dominated by the problematic of knowledge. The motif of knowledge also plays a central role in the paradise narratives in Gen 2–3. The fruits of the tree of knowledge should not be eaten under punishment of death (2:17; 3:3), and in Gen 3:5, 6, 7 even the metaphor of the “opening of the eyes” is used for knowledge (διανοιχθήσονται ὕμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί). Mary recognizes Jesus only after he calls her by name (John 20:16). Thus the close relation to John 10:3, 27, where the followers identify themselves by “listening to the voice” of the shepherd, is often perceived (see Wengst 2001, 284; Dietzfelbinger 2001, 332). Also in Gen 3:8 (LXX), the “listening to the voice” of the Lord (καὶ ἤκουσαν τὴν φωνὴν κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ) plays a decisive role in the process of recognition (above all of the sin) of the first people. He whose voice is heard is either God, who in Gen 3:8 is walking in the garden (περιπατοῦντος), or Jesus, who in John 10:23 is walking in the temple (περιεπάτει).²³

The second striking feature of John 20 is the prohibition to touch the resurrected one. Although deliberations up to now have been limited to the possibility that the Evangelist is making a subtle scripture reference, the symbolic tradition of the garden of Eden could here indeed fill a prohibition that is so difficult to understand with a deeper meaning. In Gen 3:3 it was forbidden to touch the fruit of the tree of knowledge (οὐδὲ μὴ ἅψησθε αὐτοῦ ἵνα μὴ ἀποθάνητε), and the prohibition against touch was transferred in the symbolic tradition to the new mother who is impure because of the curse of birth.²⁴ Thus, in Jub. 3:10 and 13, “she shall touch nothing sacred. She shall not enter the sanctuary.” But is Mary Magdalene in childbed? Who has just been born? In what way is the resurrected one holy, so that he may not be touched?

Depending on the reader’s knowledge of the symbolic tradition and his or her willingness, the meager facts of the text leave much open that can be pulled together. In any case, the introduction of the garden in John 18:1

23. In view of other occurrences of περιπατέω in John (5:9; 6:66; 7:1; 11:54; 21:18— with Jesus as the subject only in 7:1 and 11:54), one should not overrate this detail.

24. Various commentators have suggested the translation, “Halte mich nicht fest”/“Do not hold on to me” (e.g., Barrett 1990, 542; Dietzfelbinger 2001, 332, 334; Schnackenburg 2001, 371, 375–79; Wengst 2001, 286). This reading, however, is scarcely covered semantically by the verb ἅπτω.

makes it clear that cross-references from the garden scene to the remainder of the Gospel may have been consciously intended by the Evangelist. In the following, I would like to demonstrate the possible—and certainly bold—lines of connection that could be drawn without the symbolic exegesis laying claim to internal necessity. Even though concrete allusions to garden symbolism remain meager in John 20, we can recognize throughout the Gospel various references to the narrative of creation and thus to the garden scenario in Gen 2–3.

It has been mentioned several times that the narrative structure and many individual features of the Gospel of John (e.g., the programmatic beginning ἐν ἀρχῇ, the counting of days) can be understood as conscious allusions to the creation narrative (see Trudinger 1972; Carmichael 1980; 1996; Frey 1998, 192–96). Furthermore, there is no doubt about the importance of the temple metaphor in the Gospel of John, in which Jesus is characterized as the new eschatological temple (see Zimmermann 2004a, 355–71; more extensively, Rahner 1998; Kerr 2002). In 2:19–22 the appearance of the new temple is expressly connected with Jesus' resurrected body. Because the anticipation of the eschatological temple was, in early Judaism, explicitly connected to garden symbolism (see above), one can conclude that the Evangelist in John 20 has created a conscious connection between the garden symbolism and temple metaphor. From 2:21, it becomes clear that Christ is the new eschatological temple, and this understanding must inform the scene of the first meeting with the resurrected one in the garden (John 20).

In view of this connection, the question noted above may be restated: Why is Mary not permitted to touch the sanctum of this bodily temple? A certain tradition of exegesis on the paradise garden (Jub. 3; 4Q265) could be linked here to the metaphor of birth, which is decisive for John (see van der Watt 2000, 166–67). In Gen 3:16 the pain of birth is identified as a punishment for women—a motif that without doubt has been taken up in John 16:21.²⁵ The analogy in 16:21, however, promises joy after the labor of birth as soon as the child is born, which, in the context of the farewell speech, refers to a reunion with Jesus after he departs (see Frey 2000b, 215–18). Exactly this departure, the ascendance to the Father, is still to come, according to John 20:17. The birth from above (John 3:3) has been completed, but the afterbirth pains are clearly not over. Thus Mary could not throw off the chains of the

25. The painful aspect is emphasized by the characteristic use of λύπη in the context of childbearing. See Gen 3:16: καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ εἶπεν πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὰς λύπας σου καὶ τὸν στεναγμὸν σου ἐν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα; John 16:21: ἡ γυνὴ ὅταν τίκῃ λύπην ἔχει ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα αὐτῆς. A connection between John 16:21 and Gen 3:16 is also recognized by Feuillet 1966, 171–73.

curse of paradise (16:21) and enter into the sanctuary. The symbolic tradition of the garden-temple (Jub. 3), above all, claims different times of purity for men and women, which may help to explain why Mary, in contrast to Peter and the favorite disciple (20:6, 8), does not enter the tomb or why Thomas, as a man, is permitted to touch Jesus—after fulfilling the week's waiting period (John 20:26–27).

These proposals gain plausibility when one considers how allusions to the motifs of paradise are otherwise handled in the Fourth Gospel. Abundance of water was always emphasized in the symbolic tradition of the garden of paradise, and, in this way, the paradise motif could also play a role within the water symbolism in the Gospel of John (see above).²⁶ In John 7:37–38, the water of life promised by Jesus is explicitly connected to the motif of the torrents of paradise (Gen 2:10–14), which in tradition was additionally linked to the anticipation of the eschatological temple (Ezek 47).

A further parallel of motifs can be seen in the close relationship between eating bread and dying. The punishment by death announced in Gen 2:17 and 3:3 is explicitly connected, in Gen 3:19, to the eating of bread: ἐν ἰδρωτί τοῦ προσώπου σου φάγη τὸν ἄρτον σου ἕως τοῦ ἀποστρέψαι σε εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐξ ἧς ἐλήμφθης ὅτι γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύση ("You shall gain your bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground; for from it you were taken. Dust you are, to dust you shall return"). The eating of earthly bread is a meaningful image of earthly life that inevitably leads to death (back to the earth). In John 6:58 (cf. 6:50), exactly the opposite is stated analogously: the eating of heavenly bread leads to life. Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, οὐ καθὼς ἔφαγον οἱ πατέρες καὶ ἀπέθανον· ὁ τρώγων τοῦτον τὸν ἄρτον ζήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ("This is the bread that came down from heaven, and it is not like the bread that our fathers ate: they are dead, but whoever eats this bread shall live for ever"; 6:58). If it is correct that the curse of the woman (Eve) from Gen 3:16 has been adopted and overcome in John 16:21, then it seems probable that the punishment of the man (Adam) from Gen 3:19 has also been consciously taken up and, in the person and promise of Jesus, annulled.

Jesus not only gives the bread of life but also breathes the spirit of life into it. In this way, the "breathing on" (ἐνεφύσησεν) by which the resurrected

26. Gen 13:10 (LXX): "well-watered ... like the garden of the Lord" (ὅτι πᾶσα ἦν ποτιζομένη ... ὡς ὁ παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ); according to Num 24:6 (MT) it is YHWH who plants the gardens by a river (ὡσεὶ παράδεισοι ἐπὶ ποταμῶν); Isa 1:30: "like a garden without water" (which is clearly a *contradictio in adjecto*). In Sir 24:30 (LXX), the proverb characterizes itself as a torrent from paradise: κἀγὼ ὡς διώρυξ ἀπὸ ποταμοῦ καὶ ὡς ὕδραγωγὸς ἐξῆλθον εἰς παράδεισον ("I am like ... a torrent that comes out of the garden of paradise").

one gives his disciples the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 can be regarded as an allusion to the giving of the breath of life, just as the creator gave life to the first person (Gen 2:7 LXX: ἐνεφύσησεν) before setting him in the garden of Eden.²⁷ Further, the motifs of "path" and, above all, "door" from John 10:7, 10 could allude to the opening of the gates of paradise that, according to 4 Ezra 8:52 and T. Levi 18:10–11, characterizes the end of time and even the age of the Messiah (see above).²⁸ According to b. Sanh. 59b and L.A.E. 4, meals were prepared for Adam in paradise by angels, evocative of the secret meals of Jesus in John 4:32–34 ("I have food to eat of which you know nothing"). Further, even if the serpent mentioned in John 3:14 is a direct reference to the tradition of Moses (see Frey 1994), a connection to the serpent in Gen 3:1–8, 10 should be considered as well, especially against the backdrop of the many references to Gen 2–3 and the frequent accumulation of motifs in John. As it is, the serpent who promises knowledge without being able to fulfill this promise in Gen 3 is also the "glorified serpent," Jesus, who, according to John, truly brought knowledge (John 17:7–8).

CONCLUSION

In closing, some fundamental observations arising from the use of garden symbolism in John are in order. Certainly, it cannot be denied that allusions to the creation narrative and thus especially to the garden of paradise can be found in the Gospel of John. However, how compelling and illuminative are these allusions? The problems that the language of symbolism lay before exegetes who aim at clarity and compelling derivations are not only characteristic, but in fact the very strength, of this form of theological discourse. That which is expressed symbolically cannot simply be accepted without question or passively received. The discovery of the meaning of the symbolic requires the active involvement of the reader from the beginning. It is only through symbolic communication between John or the text of the Gospel and a reader that meaning can be discovered through subtle and implicit clues.

In this way, a reader can notice, especially if one is familiar with the symbolic code of the tradition of Israel, that Jesus is shown in the Gospel of John

27. A tradition that was also carried on in early Judaism. See 4 Ezra 3:5–6: "and you breathed into him the breath of life, and he was made living before you. And you led him into paradise, which was planted by your right hand before ever the earth came forward."

28. 4 Ezra 8:52: "For unto you is paradise opened, the tree of life is planted, the time to come is prepared, plenteousness is made ready, a city is builded, and rest is allowed, yea, perfect goodness and wisdom." See also T. Levi 18:10–11: "He himself [the priestly Messiah] will open the gates of Paradise."

in the image of the Messiah, who, according to symbolic tradition, opens the sealed gates to the apocalyptic paradise (T. Levi 18:10–11) and pours out the water of the torrent of life. However, Jesus does not just open the gates; John also names him the “door” (John 10:7, 9). Jesus not only gives the bread of life just like the fruit of the tree of paradise. Even that does not go far enough: as has been shown above, Jesus has traits of the new Adam, fulfills the promise of the serpent, is identified, in the form of the new temple, with the entire garden of paradise; ultimately, he is seen as the gardener (20:17)—just as God was portrayed in the symbolic tradition—who lifts the curse of the exile of man and woman and, in the act of re-creation, breathes the breath of life into his disciples (20:22).

However, a critical exegete might ask: Are these connections truly compelling? Precisely because the oldest meaning of the word *σύμβολον* indicates that the missing part of the meaning must be provided by the reader, the identification and interpretation of symbols cannot be finally verified. The reader cannot expect to find any clear correlations in the text, nor will one be handed a linear/logical reading manual by the Evangelist. Accordingly, no final judgment can be made as to whether the Evangelist intended for the reader of the gardener scene to see an allusion to the symbolism of the garden of paradise. Instead, a reader can detect only latent references to the paradise tradition, which one can then assemble in various combinations into a symbolic theological statement. How faithful this reader's imagination is to the text and subject can only be examined through the demonstration of probability.

Mary's meeting with the risen Jesus may do credit to the symbol of the boundaries of interpretation: Mary thinks she sees the gardener, which is neither affirmed nor denied in the text. More decisive, however, is the fact that the presumed gardener calls her by name and thus identifies himself as the resurrected one. However, she is not allowed to touch him, just as symbols cannot be tied down. Modern interpreters will have to live with this openness (see Culpepper 2006a, 394, 402).