

Confrontations in John 18,1-27

All four Gospels are narratives, that is, they are basically stories⁽¹⁾. Stories always deal with persons, what they do and / or say, how they interact, where, when, etc. One cannot tell a story without at least personifying the chief actors. Their interaction determines the plot-line of the narrative and the meaning of the whole story. As a story moves to its climax, the author's presentation of its chief characters may be expected to prove critically important for the audience's perception of its relevance to themselves. Accordingly, one may expect a given Evangelist to disclose his theology in terms of his chosen medium, the story, particularly as he brings the narrative to its climax and more closely interrelates the actions of the chief character, Jesus, both with those of his disciples and with those of his adversaries⁽²⁾. Needless to say, the passion-resurrection narrative

(¹) The fact that the term "story" covers epics and dramas as well does not diminish its importance in the study of narrative. Nor should the further problem concerning "Gospel genre" distract one from the need to affirm that "story-form" is an issue central to literary criticism of the narrative-style Gospels. "Gospel" covers literary genres / forms other than narratives and so "Gospel genre" must be regarded as an analogous concept. For it can hardly exclude Paul's preaching, especially his speech in Rom 1,16-8,39, which is definitely not a narrative, but an argumentative exposition based on the attested fact of Jesus' death for us on the cross and his transforming bodily resurrection from the dead. That attested fact is what determines "the Gospel" — whatever literary forms the latter assumes. Even among the Four Gospels, its literary form (not to mention its literary structure) is analogous. Mark presents only its "beginning", and that as a kind of apocalyptic manifesto. Luke recasts it as a kind of religious history. John seems to present it as the attested eschatological theophany, the final and definitive manifestation of God as the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, who communicate the Spirit and provide everlasting life to believers.

(²) For treatment of this topic in Mark, cf. R. C. TANNEHILL, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role", *JR* 57 (1977) 386-405. Similar approaches should be worked out for the other three Gospels. In my opinion, Tannehill has put his finger on the major axis of any Christian,

functions as the lodestone of every one of the story-form Gospels; the passion in particular stands out as the climactic "conflict" or "confrontation" in the plot-line of the Gospels.

Consequently, a reading of the Fourth Evangelist's passion narrative (John 18,1-19,42) from the way he tells the story, rather than, let us say, from an analysis of his sources or of the formal structure of his narrative or of its historical probability⁽³⁾, may come as a refreshingly simple and rewarding experience, providing solid insights into John's understanding of how Jesus' "personal revelation"⁽⁴⁾ works out. The compass of this paper requires that only a portion of John's passion-story be explored. Moreover, prudence dictates that one begin at the beginning. If only on these scores, then, this essay in theological exegesis should be limited to John 18,1-27.

Further reasons for so delimiting the study while at the same time including two distinguishable components (18,1-11 and 18,12-27) find their grounds in the movement of the narrative. Careful attention to entrances and exits distinguishes the staging of the Jo-

evangelical (i.e., gospel-form) communication, namely, the relation of Jesus to his disciples as realized through the passion-resurrection.

The interrelationships of Jesus, his disciples, and adversaries of both becomes quite marked from John 11 onwards. Before that (except perhaps for John 6) it is much less pronounced than it is in the Synoptics' account of the public ministry (e.g., Mark 2,13-28 pars.).

⁽³⁾ For a judicious review of recent monographs on the topic, cf. D. MOODY SMITH, "John and the Synoptics", *Bib* 63 (1982) 102-113. The question of sources seems disproportionately to dominate discussion of the Fourth Gospel. Study of the formal structure of the text may result in a narrow, static view of the composition, at the expense of other lines of interpretation, e.g., as in A. JANSSENS DE VAREBEKE, "La structure des scènes du récit de la passion en Joh. XVIII-XIX", *ETL* 38 (1962) 504-522. A historically-oriented approach is even less rewarding, as in J. SCHNEIDER, "Zur Komposition von Jo 18,12-17: Kaiphas und Hannas", *ZNW* 48 (1957) 111-119.

In looking for the *causes* of the text, as the scientific aspect of the exegete's task requires (the rest is art!), attention must be paid not only to the matter used by the author, or to its form, but also to the movement of the passage and, above all, to the end or *purpose* of the communication, the *causa causarum*. The rationale for this approach is unabashedly Aristotelian.

⁽⁴⁾ Cf. I. DE LA POTTERIE, *La Vérité dans Saint Jean* (AnBib 73-74; Rome 1977) II, 1010-1019; "Le Christ comme figure de Révélation d'après Saint Jean", in *Révélation de Dieu et langage des hommes*, ed. J. AUDINET et al. (Paris 1972) 51-75.

hannine passion narrative⁽⁵⁾. John's use of them helps articulate a grouping of five scenes (18,1-11; 18,12-27; 18,28-19,16a; 19,16b-37; 19,38-42), notably the first three⁽⁶⁾. Each of these first three, however, is not equally set off from the others; the first two are more closely connected than is the second with the third. Even the pattern of exits and entrances differs, occurring near the opening of each of the first two passages (18,1.4; cp. *ἔρχεται ἐκεῖ*, 18,3; and 18,15.16) rather than as a constant feature of its development, as in the third (18,28-19,16a)⁽⁷⁾. More important, however, is the different handling of two transitions, vv. 12-13 and v. 28. *Ἄγειν* may be

(⁵) To some extent, this may be found in other Evangelists; cp. Matt 26,58 *εἰσελθὼν* and 26,75 *ἐξελθὼν* (altering the Marcan terminology in both cases, and consciously framing the whole hearing before Caiaphas by noting Peter's role). Luke regularly divides the passion scenes in such a way as to reflect his journey motif: Luke 22,39, "went out on his way"; but then: "they led him (away...)" in 22,54 (insistently); 22,66; 23,1.26.32 — with the intervening "sent" in 23,7.11.15 — until 23,33, the end of the way to the cross: *ὅτε ἦλθον ἐπὶ*...

(⁶) The last, introduced by *μετὰ ταῦτα* (19,38), which marks more significant divisions elsewhere in John (3,22; 5,1.14; 7,1; 21,8) in comparison with *μετὰ τοῦτο* (19,28; cf. 2,12; 11,7.11), may be classified as an "epilogue". The climactic moment of John's passion narrative is surely that of Jesus' death (19,30) as the moment of his communicating the Spirit, along with the attestation of the significance of his death (19,31-37).

The epilogue also mentions some movement (*ἦλθεν* vv. 38 and 39) but, suggestively, not to another place (cf. vv. 41-42). The major movement of the passion story stops on Golgotha, with Jesus on the cross, in the "central position" (19,18b).

Except for what one finds in the commentaries and in A. J. de Vreke's study (cf. n. 3), no more recent structural studies of John's passion narrative have appeared. Cf. Jürgen BECKER, "Aus der Literatur zum Johannesevangelium (1978-1980)", *TRu* 47 (1982) 279-301 and 305-347, esp. 280-284, and Hartwig THYEN, "Aus der Literatur zum Johannesevangelium", *TRu* 39 (1974) 1-69, esp. 4-44; 222-252; 289-330; *TRu* 42 (1977) 211-270; *TRu* 43 (1978) 328-359; *TRu* 44 (1979) 97-134.

(⁷) To be noted in the development of 18,28-19,16a is not only the "outside / inside" pattern, but also the *over-all progression*: until 18,40, Pilate deals with Jesus and with the Jews separately, "and then" (19,1) he has Jesus scourged; with 19,4, Pilate, Jesus, and the Jews are all engaged within each of the three scenes, for even "inside", in 19,8-12, the Jews' voices are heard (v. 11), "and then", at the end of the two-stage progression in the whole passage, Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified (19,16a).

taken in 18,13 (with the preceding portion of the sentence, v. 12)⁽⁸⁾ as introducing the second scene, much as it introduces the third (v. 28). Nevertheless, a curious, disjunctive preterition stands between the second and third scenes, just before v. 28 (all the more curious because of *πρῶτον* in v. 13a). John does not mention what took place before Caiaphas. Furthermore, he makes no reference in the third scene to the presence of disciples (even 18,36 does not allude to them), whereas he repeatedly draws attention to their physical presence, notably that of Peter (18,10.11.15-18.25-27) in both of the preceding scenes. The insistence on specified, personal association of Jesus and his disciples arrests one's attention, especially when one compares John's account with those of the Synoptics, where the disciples flee (Mark; Matt) and even Peter follows "from afar" (Mark; Matt; Luke).

Although priority should be given to John's narrative considered as theological narrative, the much-discussed question of his sources cannot blithely be dismissed⁽⁹⁾. Scholars' attention to them commands respect, even though it does not determine the primary concern of exegesis. Moreover, the question of sources does bear on the "material cause" of the text and on the probable circumstances of its composition. The problem of sources, however, should not preoccupy the exegete's concerns. As D. Moody Smith has perspicaciously suggested⁽¹⁰⁾, the Fourth Evangelist, especially if he wrote at a late date in the first century, was probably not unaware of the Synoptics. He remarks that, at the outset, it may seem less difficult and, therefore, more reasonable, to explain the occasional similarities between John and the Synoptics by supposing that he did not know them, than to explain the wide divergences on the supposition that he did know them. Sidestepping this narrowly-focused explanation (which seems to be based on a text-critical mode of logic: *lectio difficilior potior*), Smith goes on to observe that, upon further reflection,

(8) The object after *ἡγάγον* is implied, so v. 13 must be taken as part of the sentence which begins with v. 12 (cp. 19,19.13).

(9) This is particularly true when the final structure gives clear signs of having resulted from alterations to a previously existing form of the text; cf. C. H. GIBLIN, "Two Complementary Literary Structures in John 1:1-18", *JBL* (forthcoming, 1984).

(10) D. M. SMITH, "John and the Synoptics: Some Dimensions of the Problem", *NTS* 26 (1979-80) 425-444, 443-444.

it was the life, interests, and controversies of the Johannine community itself which probably provided the primary material and inspiration for the author of the Fourth Gospel. Understandably, then, John wrote rather independently of those whose works he knew.

Even in the area of the closest similarity, the passion narrative, it is impossible to show direct dependence on any of the Synoptics as a literary source, sc., as documents or portions of them to be reworked into a new composition (as, for example, Luke reworked Mark and Q)⁽¹¹⁾. At best, we may find traces of an earlier but still distinctively Johannine tradition which had already been shaped with some knowledge of the Synoptics⁽¹²⁾. Whether or not there existed at an even earlier stage an independent literary source for the Johannine passion narrative which was reworked in Johannine circles may have to remain an unanswered question. John certainly writes in an original way, with a consciousness, endorsed by the final redactor, of being an independent and genuine witness to the meaning of Jesus, specifically, to *who* (not just *what*) *he is* (cf. John 19,35-37; 21,24). Is it unlikely that earlier, written "sources" — or retold, cohesive oral traditions — were again and again reshaped within the Johannine community, perhaps with an ear to details in stories told by visiting Christians from elsewhere? Surely, John's community did not exist in some social or cultural bayou, but more probably was situated in a significant urban center like Ephesus. Be that as it may, even if an earlier stage of the Johannine account could be set down with persuasive probability, the exegete would do well to resist the temptation to detect the final Johannine theology primarily in the material as he hypothesizes the Evangelist altered or developed it. Ultimately, he must find the norm for his interpretation in the final composition as a coherent, literary whole, with its own internal correspondences and developments, as the Evangelist's attentive reader would be expected to do. In short, he should look to the point of the story and to its purpose as disclosed in its telling⁽¹³⁾.

⁽¹¹⁾ Anton DAUER, *Die Passionsgeschichte im Johannesevangelium. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche und theologische Untersuchung zu Joh 18,1-19,30* (München 1972) 336.

⁽¹²⁾ R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* III (Freiburg i/B 1976) 274-275, 256. Cf. also DAUER, *Passionsgeschichte*, notwithstanding many weighty objections by M. SABBE, BETL 44 (1977) 203-234.

⁽¹³⁾ The exegete's function is not specifically to engage in speculative

It may prove most helpful, then, following the plot-line and structure of the texts, to attend to motifs which build upon earlier passages in the Fourth Gospel, and to analogical comparison with the Synoptics which may set in relief John's distinctiveness⁽¹⁴⁾. As every Irishman knows, the meaning of a story lies largely in the way it is told. For each storyteller wants himself to be understood appreciatively through his own way of telling the tale, whether that tale is not as yet known or, and indeed preferably, if it already is. That is how the storyteller functions as a teacher.

We may now proceed to examine the two first scenes of John's passion narrative⁽¹⁵⁾.

JOHN 18,1-11

The introductory verses (1-3) of this first major scene prepare for the main confrontation (vv. 4-9) within it. Jesus' exit with his disciples and his entrance into the garden tightly unify the opening verse. Judas then comes with a complement of the adversaries of Jesus (vv. 2-3). All the verbs describe only Jesus' action of going out and then going in with his disciples, his gathering there with them, and Judas's going there taking troops and servants from the Jewish authorities. V. 2b, again associating Jesus with his disciples (but not placed within v. 1, where it would more likely have suggested simply a custom on Jesus' part; cp. Luke 22,39), already hints that the betrayer is no longer numbered among that group. He is not presented as "one of the Twelve" who acts as a guide by identifying Jesus or by singling him out with a feigned greeting (Mark 14,43-45 pars.). A mob does not accompany him (Mark; Matt), nor does he lead a mob in which high priests, temple officers or other authorities appear in the same scene (Luke). The tribune mentioned

Church history (e.g., the reconstruction of the Johannine community and its "sectarian interests") but to investigate *all the causes* of the text. Reconstructions (e.g., of the Johannine community) may be useful, and at times necessary, in serving that end, but they should not dictate the interpretation of a text from which they have hypothetically been construed.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For an example of the method, cf. C. H. GIBLIN, "The Miraculous Crossing of the Sea (John 6. 16-21)", *NTS* 29 (1983) 96-103.

⁽¹⁵⁾ The text supposed is that of *UBSGNT*⁴ or *NA*²⁶.

subsequently (v. 12), when Judas is no longer of interest, does not appear here. Rather, Judas comes "taking" (λαμβάν) these troops and servants. *Pace* R. E. Brown⁽¹⁶⁾, Judas appears rather as the leader, not just a guide, of those about to arrest Jesus, although, as we shall see, his role as a leader seems symbolic; he certainly is not presented here (or elsewhere in John, for that matter), as "authorized" by the high priests or others.

The lineup of adversaries represents a wide spectrum of those who have been or will prove to be hostile to Jesus. The whole ministry of Jesus seems to find its most critical moment in the passion narrative, beginning with this initial scene of confrontation. Pharisees are nowhere mentioned in the passion narratives given by the Synoptics. Matthew alone, in his burial-resurrection narrative⁽¹⁷⁾, notes their role in arranging a guard at the tomb and in bribing them after the resurrection. He does so largely to integrate that narrative with Jesus' prophetic words to the Pharisees concerning his disappearance (the Sign of Jonah). Jesus' personal confrontation of them in his passion, however, does not figure among Matthew's concerns. John's notation of the Pharisees' agency here helps to integrate his own passion narrative with earlier portions of his Gospel, notably the decision taken by the Sanhedrin (11,47-53), which he says was convened by Pharisees as well as by high priests (11,47a). At the beginning of the next major scene, he will refer more clearly to the same meeting in recalling the counsel of the high priest Caiaphas (18,14). Perhaps by the time John's Gospel reached its final form, the distinction between Pharisees and Sadducees (the priestly class) was no longer operative and tended to become obscured (cp. John 1,19 and 1,24); both high priests and Pharisees soon appear simply as "the Jews" (18,12). Nevertheless, noting the agency of both groups here helps bring to bear on the passion narrative all the more strikingly the hostility of the Jewish leadership as a whole and their decision in 11,53.

Mention of Roman troops (in the forefront of the group led by

⁽¹⁶⁾ R. E. BROWN, *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)* (Garden City 1970) 807.

⁽¹⁷⁾ C. H. GIBLIN, "Structural and Thematic Correlations in the Matthean Burial-Resurrection Narrative (Matt. xxvii. 57-xxviii. 20)", *NTS* 21 (1974-75) 406-420, 413-419.

Judas) stands out even more surprisingly. I find it unlikely, especially if one foregoes attempts to harmonize John with the Synoptics, that the σπεῖρα (properly a "cohort" or a representative detachment of it) is intended to mean something other than or in addition to Roman troops. John repeats the term in v. 12 and adds the term for the military tribune (χιλίαρχος), again distinguishing these soldiers from the servants or police (ὑπηρέται) of the Jews. This appearance of Roman soldiers is unheralded by anything earlier in the Fourth Gospel. It is arguable that John relies on historical tradition here, or on the historical probability that ecclesiastical politicians fearful of the Romans' power to depose them (cf. 11,48) would have by some means obtained a Roman detachment to secure their own covert operation against Jesus. Considering historical probability, however, one would still judge that John exaggerates the size of the force, not to mention the rank he assigns its commanding officer. Exaggeration would not hurt, however, in making more perceptible a subtle theological suggestion. In line with Schnackenburg's comments⁽¹⁸⁾, one may best construe John's remarks about Roman troops in 18,3.12 as intended to place the focus of the passion narrative on a confrontation with the world which reaches its climax in the scene before Pilate (and is perhaps documented by the polyglot title on the cross)⁽¹⁹⁾.

Two circumstantial details, the designation of the place as a garden and the mention of the arrival of Jesus' adversaries with lanterns and torches as well as weapons, invite comment. In a writer as dramatic and sparingly selective of details as John, these features are hardly to be judged otiose, though the tone they impart to the narrative may not be helped by or even allow conceptualization. The double mention of instruments of light (φανοὶ καὶ λαμπάδες) may well be intended to help contrast this group with one who, throughout the Gospel, has appeared as the genuine light for the

⁽¹⁸⁾ *Johannesevangelium* III, 251.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Confrontation (e.g., with the world), need not imply the lack of an implicit "appeal", notably in Jesus' private dialogue with Pilate and in the official, secular and biblical testimonials to the scope and meaning of Jesus' death (19,19-22.28-30.31-37). A similar paradox occurs in the attitude towards the world in John 17. It is important to note this, as Prof. Freed did in his critique of an earlier version of this paper, given in the Seminar on the Fourth Gospel at the S.N.T.S. meeting in Rome, August, 1981.

world⁽²⁰⁾, and whose closing words to the crowd were that they should believe in the light while they had it (12,36, echoed in 12,46). It also accords with the dramatic notice that, when Judas went out from the supper scene, it was night (13,30b).

The other circumstantial detail, the "garden" (v. 1), occurs again at the end of the passion narrative (19,21) and apropos of Peter's third denial (18,26b: "Did I myself not see you in the garden with him?"). Obviously, the garden in 19,21 is a quite different place. The term apparently functions as a motif, suggesting a place apart and close association between Jesus and his disciples or between Jesus and those, like Nicodemus, who respect him. The motif recurs anew in 20,15, with the pregnant suggestion of "the one in charge" of the garden, and, again, in a context of close, personal association between Jesus and one who has been loyal to him. The slight inconsistency in the two opening scenes of the passion narrative, namely, that Jesus confronts his adversaries *outside* the garden (18,4) whereas Peter is addressed as having been seen *in* the garden, supports this interpretation. For it seems odd that a writer who makes so much of "ins" and "outs" in his concise narrative, as John does, would have been unaware of this discrepancy. Perhaps he let it stand or introduced it for its suggestive value. The emphasis in the question put to Peter falls on his personal, immediate association with Jesus: "*with him* in the garden". Thus, mention of the garden may have perceptible theological overtones not as vulnerable to sound exegetical criticism as is Hoskyns' Eden-typology⁽²¹⁾.

The chief confrontation (vv. 4-9) in this scene stresses Jesus' initiative in both of its two stages (vv. 4-6 and 7-9). He twice poses the same question to the entire group of his adversaries and twice identifies himself as Jesus the Nazorean by using the humanly unostentatious and divinely sovereign ἐγὼ εἶμι. The two stages of the confrontation serve not only to underscore the sovereign freedom of Jesus, but also vividly to contrast in relation to him two different groups. Jesus figures as the point of division and definition. Judas is aligned with the opposition (v. 5). Jesus' disciples, characterized as "those you have given me", which, in the light of 17,12 and 6,64-65, certainly excludes Judas, are mentioned only in the second stage

(20) Cf. R. E. BROWN, *Gospel of John II*, 817.

(21) Cf. DAUER, *Passionsgeschichte*, 28.

of the encounter (vv. 7-9). Jesus' power and freedom to defend himself, demonstrated by the dramatic action following his self-identification in v. 6, finds its explanation in the second stage as concern for the disciples in accordance with his own stated acknowledgment of the Father's gift (vv. 8b-9).

A number of scholars have adduced parallels in the psalms or even in apocalyptic literature to the "falling back" of the Lord's adversaries at his self-manifestation⁽²²⁾. Without denying the relevance of these references, I submit that the fulsome formulation of v. 6bc — especially εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω after a form of the second aorist of ἐρχεσθαι (ἀπῆλθον) — and the occurrence of the verse immediately following reference to Judas's standing with them (v. 5c), builds upon the only previous occurrence of this expression, John 6,66. At that point in the narrative, the major test for the disciples was a test of faith. Furthermore, "many of his disciples" were in question. The betrayer himself, described as an unbeliever (6,64-65), was not at that time one of those "who went backwards (ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω)" and no longer walked with Jesus. Judas remained an adversary within the group, a hidden unbeliever, and stayed on as one of the Twelve. With his actual defection, however, announced as "Satan's entering into him" (13,27), he no longer seems to be considered as "one of the Twelve" (6,71) or "one of the disciples" (12,4; cf. 13,1). He falls outside the pale of the command of love that radically governs Jesus' relationship to his disciples and their relationship to one another (13,31-35). The narrative of the passion, which follows as an exemplification of Jesus' farewell discourses to his disciples about their interrelationships and the antipathy of the world (cf. ταῦτα εἰπὼν, 18,1)⁽²³⁾, underscores in this opening scene the division between disciples and hostile non-disciples. The passion further actualizes the divided reactions to the Bread of Life discourse, at which time the link to Jesus' "ascension", that is, to his

(22) The verb ἀπελθεῖν does not occur in the Psalms usually cited: Pss 27(26),2, ἔπεσαν; 35(34),4, ἀποστραφῆτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω; 56(55),10, ἐπιστρέψουσιν... εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω. For the discussion, cf. BROWN, *Gospel of John II*, 818 and especially DAUER, *Passionsgeschichte*, 41-43.

(23) Cf. Felix PORSCHE, *Pneuma und Wort. Ein Exegetischer Beitrag zur Pneumatologie des Johannesevangeliums* (Frankfurt a/M 1974) 356, citing I. de la Potterie.

passion-glorification, was pointedly phrased (6,61-62). What then appeared as revulsion from Jesus' invitation and self-identification is here demonstrated as impotence before the Lord.

The first major scene closes (vv. 10-11) with another confrontation: Peter's belligerent action and Jesus' rebuke. Some, like Barrett⁽²⁴⁾, explain John's identification of the wielder of the sword and of his victim as an enrichment of earlier tradition with personal details. This kind of interpretation turns out to be short-sighted. It fails to perceive connections within this verse and with other texts in the narrative. John not only names the swordsman but also directs Jesus' reply specifically to the same person — whereas in Matthew and Luke Jesus directs his reply to the disciples generally, and in Mark Jesus seems to ignore the incident as he proceeds to address his captors. In John's account, then, Jesus confronts the swordsman. He rebukes Peter in a pointedly personal way (2nd sg. impv.) and demandingly, interrogatively challenges him to understand Jesus' own paradoxical "gift" from the Father. Peter's action (and perhaps his implied incomprehension of the rebuke) proves to have dire consequences for himself. The occasion for his third denial is provided by a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off (18,26). Interestingly, Peter does not seem to be in danger of personal assault for his bloody attack on the man's relative; he is confronted on the score of his immediate association with Jesus. Nevertheless, part of Peter's "being put personally on the spot" is the fact that the man who addresses him saw him first-hand (ἐγώ) and was a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off. The earlier notation of the victim's name serves to reenforce the personal thrust and impact of the final question put to Peter.

The rebuke to Peter serves to bring out not only Jesus' acceptance of the cup given him (a fulfillment of Jesus' freedom rather than a limitation of it, cp. 10,18), but also Peter's lack of understanding regarding Jesus' messianic destiny. With the exception of 13,36-37, which discloses Peter's assumption that Jesus' journey may entail danger, but not Jesus' proximate death, no serious misunderstanding has appeared (notably none apropos of Peter's confession in 6,68-69). Nor does 13,36-37 itself enable us to infer that Peter mis-

(²⁴) C. K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to John* (Philadelphia ²1978) 516, 521.

understood Jesus' destiny precisely as that of the Son or of the Son of Man. Peter's incomprehension of the journey of the Son of Man figures prominently in the rebuke directed to him in the Marcan and Matthean accounts of the first passion prediction (Mark 8,31-33 and par.). Even Luke, without singling out Peter's incomprehension (except regarding Jesus' ἔξοδος and his transcendence of Moses and Elijah, Luke 9,33) speaks early of the disciples' lack of understanding of the way of the Son of Man (Luke 9,45; 18,34). Jesus' remark concerning his passion (here, the "cup") as the freely accepted gift from the Father recalls the third Johannine prediction of the passion (12,23-33), which was made in the presence of disciples as well as before the Greeks and the crowds (12,20-29). In that prediction, Jesus spoke of himself as the Son of Man (12,23), but the incomprehension noted (12,29,34) was not attributed to disciples. In 18,11, no indication is given of a response on Peter's part. John seems to leave his reader as well as Peter with the need to ponder Jesus' arresting question. Thus, John repeats an outstanding theme of the synoptic tradition, but in his own way. For disciples, the test of understanding occurs within the passion itself, and the issue of the destiny of the Son of Man focuses on acceptance of the Father's gift by the Son. The *messianic imperative* in John is not precisely that the Messiah must suffer as (or to become effectively) the Son of Man, but that Jesus has come freely to achieve his Father's gracious will.

That this lesson is made clear particularly to Peter may make it carry special weight for the disciples in general (*see below*). The lesson, in any event, is brought to bear on "disciples" in an individual, personal way. Do they really understand what Jesus is about by perceiving who he is? He can be "defined" only relationally, i.e., in relation to his Father, through the way he acts: as the Son, the one who receives from the Father what he is to do.

JOHN 18,12-27(28a)

The second major scene opens with a remarkably lengthy introduction describing the reason for the hearing before Annas and the circumstances of Peter's entry (18,12-14.15-16). It helps us answer two salient questions about this passage even as it requires that we pose them. First, why does John recount the hearing before Annas

and apparently suppress or pass over the hearing before Caiaphas? Second, why is some "other disciple" mentioned — and with considerable attention — along with Peter, but is not here designated as the Beloved Disciple or even specifically as "the other disciple", which would render easier his identification⁽²⁵⁾?

As R. E. Brown has argued against Bultmann⁽²⁶⁾, the interrogation before Annas does not reproduce a tradition similar to that behind the synoptic interrogation before the Sanhedrin but stands as one shaped in a different way. It may be compared to a kind of police interrogation of a newly arrested criminal before any trial procedures are begun. The scope of this hearing, as suggested by Jeremias, Meeks, and Brown, was most likely to get evidence for Jesus' being a false prophet, a charge which would have had political as well as religious implications⁽²⁷⁾. This hearing transpires, without any apparent effect, in the vague charges initially made before Pilate (19,29-30). The scope of this hearing, however, as one attentively reads the story itself, is to highlight Jesus' final, personal declaration to the Jewish authorities (cf. ἐγώ, *ter*: vv. 20-21).

John certainly knew of an additional hearing before Caiaphas⁽²⁸⁾. For he mentions Jesus' being brought before Annas as an event which occurred "first" (v. 13, even acknowledging that πρῶτον in this context may mean "especially", i.e., "first and foremost"). He later adds that Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas (v. 24), and notes in the transitional verse (v. 28a) that they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the pretorium early in the morning. Even his notation of time⁽²⁹⁾ suggests an interval sufficient for a second hearing. If John had a literary source containing the substance of the latter hearing, he seems completely to have suppressed it. On the other hand,

(25) The article appears, for instance, in 20,2, even when this other disciple is first introduced in that scene. On the other hand, John may prefer to leave a disciple anonymous — even the one who becomes later the Beloved Disciple — if he has no distinctively personal role to execute in regard to another, as is the case with the unnamed of "the two disciples" in 1,35-40.

(26) BROWN, *Gospel of John* II, 834-835.

(27) BROWN, *Gospel of John* II, 835.

(28) BARRETT, *Gospel According to John*, 524.

(29) Cf. ARNDT-GINGRICH, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago 21979) 724, on πρῶτ.

some elements may have survived elsewhere. Where else but before Caiaphas would have been a more likely place for grounding in a tradition known to John the distorted charge that Jesus "made himself *king*" (19,12c) as a *development* of "made himself God's Son" (19,7c — which, admittedly, could *by itself* be taken only as echoing the distorted judgments in 5,18; 8,53; 10,33)? For the substance of the hearing before Caiaphas, to judge by the remarkably consistent testimony of the Synoptics, was Jesus' declaration of transcendent royal messiahship, entailing a fusion of Dan. 7,13 and Ps 110,1. It can hardly be assumed that John transposed the substance of the hearing before Caiaphas to 11,47-53. The latter scene may partly account for John's dropping the hearing before Caiaphas, but in itself it resembles a situation like that in Mark 14,1 pars., not Mark 14,53-56. There is, after all, no hearing whatsoever in 11,47-53, but only a decision to do away with Jesus, and probably, too, deliberation regarding the means (aor. mid., ἐβουλεύσαντο — though with ἵνα, not πῶς).

According to Schnackenburg⁽³⁰⁾, John's source (presumably his written source) spoke of only *one* high priest. Schnackenburg argues this point largely from the use of the definite article in vv. 24 and 15. He holds that the source spoke of the hearing before Annas, and that John, by adding v. 13, made the link with the official, functioning (*amtierend*) high priest. Even in this hypothesis, John knew of a different hearing, the one before Caiaphas. Again, however, he can hardly have been ignorant of its substance.

Furthermore, it might be argued better that, even if only one hearing is to be assumed in John's literary source, it was that before Caiaphas. The placing of the words "Annas first" (v. 13a) suggests an insertion. Vv. 13-14 prepare for what follows both by alerting the reader to the course of events that has already been decided and by suggesting that the following hearing (before Annas) is not an official process but a *private* interrogation. The remarks both in v. 24 and in v. 28a likewise suggest an insertion of this hearing before Annas into the course of a known literary narrative rather than merely a nod to the role of the functioning high priest. V. 24 concludes the hearing before Annas by picking up from v. 13a the word "bound". Had the hearing before Annas been originally the sole

(30) SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* III, 265.

hearing in the account, would this detail have been noted at all at this point, or would it not rather have appeared in connection with v. 28a? Schnackenburg's admission of only one literary source — and that before Annas — also presents us with the serious problem of supposing that John's source contained no account of a Jewish trial or *Prozess* — even a rigged one — and makes more mystifying the strategy of going to Pilate with any charges at all. On the other hand, the vocabulary, structural arrangement (twofold introduction, somewhat as in 18,1-4, and ABA' schema for the scene proper, vv. 17-27), and the evident concern with the role of another disciple arc characteristically Johannine⁽³¹⁾. More likely, if there was only one hearing in John's source, it was the one before Caiaphas.

In any case, the hearing before Caiaphas was deliberately subordinated because of its theologically irrelevant content in the Johannine passion narrative as integrated into the entire Gospel. For the Jews (as leaders, people, and even representatives of the world at large), what Jesus has already said requires no further disclosure on his part. For a person like Pilate, the situation is singularly different, and so Jesus gives information to him privately. John prefers to present the question of Jesus' sovereign kingship not initially as a charge that comes from without, much less as one that arises directly from a Jewish legal process.

The principal reason John passed over the events which transpired before Caiaphas is not difficult to detect from this scene as examined in the context of the foregoing Gospel narrative. Inferences may be based both on the essential element of the omitted "trial" and on what John offers his reader in vv. 13-14 and 19-21. Jesus' presentation of himself as a royal Messiah empowered with the divine prerogative of judgment⁽³²⁾, the salient element in the hearing before the Sanhedrin as recounted by the Synoptics, would

(31) An insertion by John in view of some kind of interrogation of Jesus during which Peter's denials took place (at night) would parallel somewhat the Lucan reworking of the Marcan trial scene. It seems that Luke's version of events can be explained without recourse to the supposition that he followed a different literary source for the passion narrative.

(32) Cf. P. LAMARCHE, "Le 'blasphème' de Jésus devant le Sanhédrin", *RSR* 50 (1962) 74-85. Lamarche's ill-advised arguments for the priority of the Matthean tradition do not impair his solid exegesis of the point of Jesus' reply to the high priest.

be anticlimactic, even out of place, in John's Gospel. From the call of the first disciples (1,35-2,12) through the great controversies of the feasts of Sabbath, Tabernacles, and the Dedication (chaps. 5 and 7-10 and, more subtly, in the intervening chap. 6), John's narrative has, stage by stage (1,19-4,54; 5,1-10,42; 11,1 to this point) made ever clearer Jesus' transcendent messiahship⁽³³⁾. The time for Jesus' own testimony to the world at large, in terms of the ministry among his own people, found its solemn conclusion in 12,36-50. In the scene in which he confronts Annas, Jesus eloquently appeals to what he has already said to the world, that is, "to the Jews", who typify it⁽³⁴⁾. Moreover, as John reminds us in v. 14, the decision to do away with Jesus has already been made (11,53). The current situation⁽³⁵⁾ calls for no further testimony from Jesus himself "to the Jews". Rather, it serves as the *moment of truth* for accepting the public declarations he has made.

The scene before Annas may be regarded as John's Christological substitution (and thus his "reworking") of the scene before Caiaphas⁽³⁶⁾, intended to represent Jesus' final appeal to his own people, but through one of their influential representatives. The non-official, relatively "private" quality of the interrogation ironically sets in relief Jesus' statement about his own openly-given revelation (v. 20). Furthermore, this private scene enables John to highlight the direct, personally challenging aspect of Jesus' way of addressing people. In confronting Annas, Jesus twice uses the 2nd sg. (v. 21: interrog.; inv.). Even in replying to the Jewish servant (τῶν ὑπηρέτων) who struck him, Jesus puts the burden of responding on that particular person (v. 23).

⁽³³⁾ SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium* III, 269-270.

⁽³⁴⁾ BARRETT, *Gospel According to John*, 528.

⁽³⁵⁾ One must recognize, of course, that "the current situation" as the "moment of truth" consists of the *whole* passion narrative, not merely of this particular scene; a storyteller cannot express everything in a single, short portion of his well-knit account.

⁽³⁶⁾ Omission of other elements of the hearing before Caiaphas as recounted in any of the Synoptics can be explained easily enough. Had John known of false witnesses, he could readily have omitted them (as Luke did) in favor of Jesus' own statements. The physical abuse of Jesus is sufficiently noted in John 18,22, given especially John's reticence concerning brutal details (cp. John 19,1-3 with Mark 15,16-20 par.), like Luke's.

Dramatically — I hesitate to overuse the word, but it does seem to be the only apposite one — John encloses Jesus' being interrogated within the framework of Peter's denials (vv. 17-18 and 25-27). This does not detract from the central importance of the encounter with Annas and one of the servants, if only because, in an ABA' structure, B usually comprises the heart of the matter. That B should be judged as relatively the most important section should be clear from the subordination of the disciples' entries and of Peter's denials of discipleship to the statements of Jesus before the high priest, Annas. Like other scenes in the passion narrative, this one centers the reader's attention on what Jesus himself says. The narrative *engagement* (the putting into play) of this whole structure is provided by vv. 12-13a and 24.28.

The ABA' structure, to which "rearrangement theories"⁽³⁷⁾ have been blind, stands out because of the repetition of the end of v. 18 at the beginning of v. 25, the very phrasing of the question in v. 17b (beginning of A) as reappearing in v. 25c (beginning of A'), and Peter's two concisely quoted denials (vv. 18a and 25c). Both of the first two questions, introduced by μή, can, as elsewhere in John and in other writers, expect a negative answer. Both, however, may in this context reflect the "μή of cautious assertions"⁽³⁸⁾. The Samaritan woman, for instance, who surely accepted Jesus as the Messiah, defensively phrased her conclusion as a cautious question (4,29: μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός;). In 4,29, however, the overtone seemed to be: "Isn't it too good to be true?" whereas in 18,17b, on the lips of the maid tending the door, it is rather: "Not another one?!" — a remark befitting an inconvenienced concierge. The second question, differing only in that it is posed by a group, and refers to Jesus less immediately (cp. αὐτοῦ, v. 25 with τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου, v. 17), may connote merely the cautious gambit in a conversation with one who is a stranger to a definable gathering (cp. v. 18). Neither of the first two questions exerts pressure on Peter. Even the third question, which expects an affirmative answer (οὐκ, v. 26), does not threaten personal assault, for all its personal thrust and impact. Nevertheless, Peter succumbs readily in every instance. No progressive emphasis can be discerned in his denials, as in Mark and Mat-

⁽³⁷⁾ For the variety, cf. SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium*, III, 261.

⁽³⁸⁾ BARRETT, *Gospel According to John*, 526.

thew, nor the reverse, as in Luke. He does not take evasive action (as in Mark; Matt) but stands in one place, by the charcoal fire, with the slaves and servants (vv. 18,25). The Evangelist does not note at any point in the scene, particularly at its close, Peter's emotional reactions; he does not even suggest (as Luke does, 22,56) attention to Peter's face in firelight. John fastens his reader's attention solely on what Peter denies: that he, *too*, is a disciple, and that he was closely, *personally associated* with Jesus in the garden, the place where (as the reader has been told), Jesus gathered "often" with his disciples.

If there is a climax to John's account of Peter's denials, it occurs by reason of the escalation of interrogation. Nothing like the Marcan touch of "ganging-up" against Peter is perceptible. Rather, the escalation in John's story moves in the direction of "man-to-man" confrontation. Although Peter's third denial is not quoted, ἡρνῆσατο in v. 27 picks up ἡρνῆσατο of v. 25 (as, earlier, ἐκεῖνος of v. 25 picked up ἐκεῖνος of v. 17), and here his name figures as the subject of the sentence. Thus, Peter ultimately denies he was a personal associate of Jesus (the poignancy of which is brought out later, 21,15-17). Of equal concern to the Evangelist, however, is that Peter reaches this point even as he has denied that he, too, is a disciple; the gradation in the denials does not prevent their being a continuum.

In discerning the importance of the adverbial καί ("too") in the first two questions posed to Peter, Brown admits that, in the synoptic accounts of the accusation of Peter (Mark 14,67 pars.), there is no question of comparison with another disciple; rather, the "too" in the synoptic parallels implicitly refers to the disciples who were with Jesus when he was arrested⁽³⁹⁾. Brown infers: "Thus, in John as well the idea may be: 'Are you, *like those others* [emphasis mine], a disciple?'" Brown's inference seems vaguely inconsistent and ambiguous; it is certainly unwarranted. The emphasis in John falls heavily on *Peter himself*. For only John's account has drawn attention, and no little attention, to another *individual* disciple who is also present, arranges Peter's entry, and directly sets the stage for the opening question put to Peter and its repetition. This particular disciple does not merely "enable Peter to enter", but "leads Peter in-

(³⁹) BROWN, *Gospel of John* II, 284.

side". Such phraseology excludes physically distancing one from the other. Indeed, this other disciple has virtually no other function in the narrative but to lead Peter inside. His only special qualification is that he can enter because he is known, and is known well enough to gain entry for still another⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Although unnamed, the "other disciple" who speaks to the concierge and leads Peter inside is most probably the Beloved Disciple. Given the clarified references to "the other disciple" elsewhere in John (20,2-10) and his close personal association both with Jesus and with Peter (13,24-25; 21,10), it seems impossible to presume that John's reader is expected to assume that this one "who entered with Jesus" and "led Peter inside" was not a known, special disciple, the Beloved Disciple. Nevertheless, he remains unidentified in this text.

Schnackenburg, therefore, draws an opposite conclusion. He finds it inconceivable why the Evangelist would not actually speak here of "the disciple whom Jesus loved" *if* [emphasis his] that other disciple *were* indeed "the other disciple"⁽⁴¹⁾. He also draws attention to the further anonymity caused by the anarthrous ἄλλος μαθητής in v. 15.

Why this disciple is not here designated as "the disciple whom Jesus loved", even why he is initially introduced without the article, and why "another disciple" is even mentioned at all find a ready explanation in the focal point of Peter's denials, for which this "other disciple" sets the stage. This "other disciple" is not designated in terms of his personal identity or his distinctive relationship to Jesus, but in terms of his *function in the narrative*. In John's story, Peter is not necessarily in danger on the score of being a disciple of Jesus. John did not say that the disciples had fled. On the contrary, he implied that they were indeed protected by Jesus' actions and words before Jesus was led to Annas. The "other disciple" in this scene helps recall that situation; quite evidently, he himself faces no dangers, even though "he entered with Jesus" (18,15). Nothing in vv. 15-16 suggests that he endangers his associate by enabling him to

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Nothing in this text suggests this disciple's superiority or deference in relation to Peter. For a contrary view, cf. R. E. BROWN, K. P. DONFRIED, and John REUMANN, eds., *Peter in the New Testament* (New York 1973) 136.

⁽⁴¹⁾ SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium*, III, 266.

enter the palace courtyard, much less that he tests him by leading him in. If anything, the contrary is true; *he facilitates his co-disciple's contact with Jesus*. What ensues is not his doing, but Peter's. His function in the narrative is to help set in relief, for the reader's benefit, the way in which Peter denies Jesus, namely, by denying that he, *too*, is a disciple.

Peter's personal denials may take on a certain typological cast in accordance with ecclesiological concerns of the Johannine community. For that community, denial of discipleship constitutes a personal denial of Jesus himself. Their bond with Jesus, who, of course, provides the reason for their unity and cohesion, finds expression in their bond with one another (cf. John 13,31-17,26). To deny the latter equivalently denies the former, and vice-versa.

The "representative role" of Peter has already been noted and so tagged by Dauer⁽⁴²⁾. I prefer the adjective "typological", if only to preserve more clearly the personal specificity of Peter's predicted denials. What is said of Peter proves to be true "proportionately" of those who deny Jesus by denying that they, too, are disciples. In characteristically low-keyed Johannine style, the stark denials correspond quite closely with Jesus' prediction (13,38b): οὐ μὴ ἀλέκτωρ φωνήσῃ ἕως οὗ ἀπαρνῆσῃ με τρίς). One may contrast the more vivid style of the Synoptic predictions and their corresponding fulfillment (Mark 14,30.66-72 and par.; Luke 22,34.57-62). What is more, the personal focus seems in John to be sharpened⁽⁴³⁾: "you / me", as also, in predicting the denials, Jesus adverted to Peter's attestation of ongoing personal devotion (John 13,37-38)⁽⁴⁴⁾. The fulfillment of the prediction is developed by John precisely as a denial of discipleship, which, apparently, is not the case in the Syn-

⁽⁴²⁾ DAUER, *Passionsgeschichte*, 315-316.

⁽⁴³⁾ This emerges largely through John's economy of detail. In Mark, the point is the immediacy ("today, this very night") and the *rapidity* of the denial (note the relative celerity: before X happens two times, Y will be done three times), Mark 14,30; 14,70 (μετὰ μικρόν) and 72. Matthew retains the element of immediacy (Matt 26,34). Luke highlights the denial of previous, personal knowledge (Luke 22,33.57) and association (22,59).

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Not quite, as in Luke, his protested *readiness for the journey ahead* (22,33), or, as in Mark and Matthew, his boastful self-assertion in relation to his co-disciples, which is focused on immunity from scandal, whether as an immunity which is personally unique (Mark 14,29, "... not I!") or permanent (Matt 26,33, "never").

optics, at least not prominently in Mark or in Matthew, and not noticeably in Luke.

If the denials are viewed in typological perspective in the Fourth Gospel, their placement framing Jesus' reply to Annas may more sensitively be appreciated. Jesus appeals to the testimony of those who heard what he said to them (v. 21). Certainly he is not calling directly for the testimony of Peter or of any of the disciples. For as yet they are not empowered to give it, since they require his departure and the sending of the Paraclete. Moreover, Jesus refers expressly to his public statements to the world (v. 20). Is it unlikely, however, that the reader is supposed to catch the irony of this situation? For instance, should he not reflect twice (as ironical statements are intended to make him do)⁽⁴⁵⁾, that those who were in the best position to hear what Jesus said and to testify to it were disciples? Should he not also, perhaps, as Grundmann has remarked⁽⁴⁶⁾, perceive irony in the way in which Peter's bald οὐκ εἶμι stands in contrast with Jesus' earlier self-declaration as he defends the disciples, an outstanding one of whom fails him even when he faces no real danger?

CONCLUSION

Johannine Christological and ecclesiological concerns can be detected as dictating in very large measure the composition of the Johannine passion narrative in these opening scenes. These episodes suggest that John perceives Jesus' passion as the moment of truth which builds upon and even gives further coherence to Jesus' previous contacts with adversaries and with disciples. John's passion narrative is by no means a portion of the Gospel loosely connected

(45) Perhaps a major reason for John's use of irony lies in his desire to provoke further, deeper reflection concerning what is really being done or said, so that his reader will really perceive, not superficially notice or blandly accept. To interpret ironical statements or situations, one must *look beyond yet through* such things. In this way, too, the interpretation of John's text seems to involve the reader's entering into the thought processes of its author and of Jesus himself as John presents him.

(46) W. GRUNDMANN, "Das Wort von Jesu Freunden (Joh. XV, 13-16) und das Herrenmahl", *NT* 3 (1959) 62-69, 65 n. 1.

with the course of Jesus' public ministry. Nor is it concerned with sectarian polemics. Study of its opening scenes helps point out how it heightens the Johannine challenge to personal, reflective understanding of Jesus through all that he did and said. If only by looking to the way in which John presents in both these scenes the relationship between Peter and Jesus, one can become aware of the Fourth Evangelist's concern with the issue of any disciple's personal understanding of Jesus and fidelity to him.

I have not tried to determine the precise circumstances that prompted John's final formulation of his tradition(s) concerning the passion. Suffice it to regard his community's interests as not being markedly polemical, but dominantly theological and pastoral, in line with the statement of purpose which closes the Gospel proper and is remarkably not delimited by the production-context of the work (since the audience it addresses still exists): "... that you may believe that Jesus is the messianic Son of God, and believing have life in his name" (20,31).

In the context of ongoing, story-form theology in Christian circles towards the end of the first century, the attempt better to understand Jesus and being disciples of Jesus may well have sought expression in freer, ever more independent narration and recasting of the narration. Considerable freedom in recasting a familiar story may even have served as a "conservative antidote" to forms of abstract speculation, if only by preserving concern for concrete interrelationships among persons. The community's interests centered on key persons in its tradition, and it expressed its mind and concerns in the story it produced, or, much more exactly, in the story the Evangelist produced for it.

The exegete's main task is to read the story aright. Occasionally, he may need to remind himself that reconstructing sources and determining sociological circumstances of composition lie on a quite secondary level, although he must reckon with these enterprises in accounting for all the causes of the text. The foregoing reading of the two opening scenes of John's passion narrative may help put into sharper perspective the vital and fruitful concern for what the Fourth Evangelist wants to communicate by the way *he tells his own story* about Jesus.

SOMMAIRE

L'exégète doit s'intéresser à la question des sources dans la mesure où elles font partie des causes du texte qu'il étudie. Mais c'est à la structure formelle du texte, son mouvement et son intention qu'il lui faut d'abord se consacrer.

Une étude narrative montre que la composition des deux scènes qui ouvrent le récit de la passion selon s. Jean a été dictée par des préoccupations christologiques et ecclésiologiques.

Pour Jean, la passion est le moment de vérité qui renforce et donne plus ample cohésion aux précédents contacts de Jésus avec ses adversaires et ses disciples. L'Évangéliste a probablement connu la (les) tradition(s) synoptique(s), mais il a en tout cas élaboré une composition qui lui est propre. En particulier, il a supprimé le procès devant Caïphe parce que, christologiquement, il n'allait pas dans le sens de l'ensemble de son récit. De même, il a mentionné «un autre disciple», qui est probablement le disciple bien-aimé mais dont l'identité n'importe pas dans le contexte, afin de mettre en relief la manière dont Pierre renie personnellement Jésus: en reniant sa propre identité de disciple.



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