Knowledge-making and myth-making in John 6: a narrative-psychological reading

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1.   A narrative-psychological approach

Preliminaries

The last decades have witnessed a considerable expansion of interest by the scientific community in story and narrative analysis. No longer is narrative analysis the provenance of literary critics, linguists, historians, biblical or feminist scholars. Behavioral and medical scientists have entered the stage and brought their own expectations and specific interests to the enterprise. As part of the ongoing refiguration of social thought and science, away from reliance on energy, spatial and mechanical metaphors to metaphors drawn from the humanities, such as narrative, dramaturgy, game playing or rhetoric,[1] sociologists and psychologists turned to the narrative approach for a contextually determined perspective on social and psychic reality, social and individual behavior, perception and learning processes.

Taking the lead, Theodore R. Sarbin argued that "human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures".[2] He therefore proposed narrative to be *the* organizing principle for human action. Meaning, self-perception and determination arise from historical acts that are performed in contexts, settings, time and place, and with individual or collective emplotments. Insights into the human condition are secondary to contextual interaction, since histori-

[1]   Geertz 1980.

[2]   Sarbin 1986, 8.

cal construction and truth are dependent on the narrative principle. Even theories of social behavior are primarily reflections of contemporary history.[3]

Meeting the mechanistic approach head on, Sarbin suggested that "psychology is narrative", and claimed that both novelists and historians are narrativists, albeit with different emphases. While aspiring to truth, both activities will always intertwine "facts" and "fiction", thus exposing the futility of categorical distinctions between story and history. "The novelist writes about fictive characters in a context of real world settings; the historian writes about presumably actual events, populated by reconstructed people, the reconstruction being carried out through the use of imagination."[4]

Regarding" John 6, most scholars would agree that the chapter has been inserted into an earlier version of the Gospel[5], and that it displays stages of composition that are typical for the Gospel as a whole.[6] For the purpose of this investigation, the five stages of composition suggested by R. Brown shall be perceived in terms of three major layers of text.[7] A second characteristic of the chapter that has often been noted lies in the shifting editing techniques of the composition agencies "evangelist" and "redactor". Whereas the evangelist is typified by additions and changes that are made to fit the narrative, the redactor is typified by disregard for narrative consistency.[8]

The narrative anatomy on which the psychological analysis will build contains three narrators. It will become apparent that the characteristics of the narrators parallel those of the three major text layers. Reminiscent of the literary characteristics assembled by Brown, the first layer may be typified by the label "composer," the second layer by the label "evangelist" and the third layer by the label "redactor". These literary characterizations of text layers must not eclipse the intricate oral and literary processes that generated the layers over long periods of time. It would seem wise, therefore, to refrain from identifying particular individuals and groups both regarding authorship and transmission agency and restrict the identifications to what, somewhat loosely, may be called *personae* with distinguishable characteristics.[9] If the composer persona represents the original historical context and the redactor persona the context of the final redaction, the evangelist persona may be situated in-between, symbolized by the 'beloved disciple' in the text, not as a historical figure, but as a symbol for an interpreting voice (19:35 and 21:24).[10]

In addition, the criteria for detection of stages given by Brown, i.e. "awkwardness of an intrusive passage in the sequence of the story", and "presence of variant duplicates of material already included"[11] are recognized for their compatibility with the narratological criteria: *author credibility*, *progression stability* and *audience distance* (see below).

Taking these particulars of the text together with Sardin's narrative principle, the narrative of John 6 shall be treated as a mixture of fact and

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[3]   Gergen 1973.

[4]   Sarbin 1986, 7–8, cf. also Sarbin 1993. Sarbin's lead has been picked up by psychologists with an interest in autobiography (cf. Mishler 1999, McAdams 2001, Belzen 2006) For a constructive appraisal of the ongoing debate concerning the value of narrative psychology, see Schiff 2006.

[5]   Cf. e.g. Lindars 1972, 46–54, esp. 50, Anderson 1997, 7–8.

[6]   Cf. Beutler 1997, 115: "The sixth chapter of John appears as a kind of summary of the Gospel of John and its riddles" and Anderson 1997, 1: "John 6 may well be called 'the Grand Central Station of Johannine Critical Issues' ... the *locus argumenti* for scholars to make a definite contribution to Johannine studies".

[7]   Brown 1966, xxxiv–xl. The first layer corresponds chronologically to Brown's first two stages (pre-Fourth Gospel phase where traditional Gospel material was molded into a Johannine pattern), the second layer to Brown's stages three and four (primary and secondary edition of the Gospel as a cohesive narrative) and the third layer to Brown's fifth stage (final redaction by somebody other than the evangelist).

[8]   Cf. Brown 1966, xxxvii: "The evangelist would have reworked the material into a consonant whole; but the redactor, not feeling free to rewrite the gospel as it came to him, simply inserted the duplicate discourses..."

[9]   Cf. Jung 1963, 397: "One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is."

[10]   In his recent book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Joseph Ratzinger claims that the entire Gospel "would be emptied of meaning" if the 'beloved disciple' were not what the narrative presents him to be, namely a living historical person who "intends to vouch for historical events as a witness" (Ratzinger 2007, 223). In addition, Ratzinger concurs with Stuhlmacher 1999, 206, that the "Presbyter John", transmitter and mouthpiece of the beloved disciple, was the final redactor, wherefore the Fourth Gospel has the validity of an eyewitness report (Ratzinger 2007, 227). However, Ratzinger goes on to assert that "[w]ith John, the subject who remembers is always the "we"—he remembers in and with the community of the disciples, in and with the Church. ... the personal recollection that provides the foundation of the Gospel is purified and deepened by being inserted into the memory of the Church, it does indeed transcend the banal recollection of facts. ...the Gospel takes the concept of memory to a new depth by conceiving it as the memory of the "we" of the disciples, of the Church" (Ratzinger 2007, 231, 234, cf. also 235). In effect, Ratzinger's theologically conditioned and synthetic view of the historical *validity* of the Fourth Gospel has no need for compositional distinctions.

[11]   Brown 1966, xxxvii.

fiction, and the constructions of characters, narrative situations and narrative progression, as reflections of psycho-social and religious persuasions, dispositions and preferences.

Prototypical narrative forms and dynamics

In an article on *Narrative Form and the Construction of Psychological Science*, Kenneth and Mary Gergen have suggested an analogy between descriptive accounting and psychological accounting, arguing that most descriptive accounts revolve around a root metaphor, as defined by Stephen Pepper, and that the choice of root metaphor "will largely determine the subsequent account of the work one is ostensibly attempting to depict."[12]

According to Pepper, human understanding of the world revolves around one of four world hypotheses: *formism, mechanism, contextualism* and *organicism*. Each world hypothesis contains a root metaphor. The root metaphor of formism is *similarity*, leading to analyses of the world on the basis of particularity and quality. The root metaphor of mechanism is the *machine*, perceived either as a clock, a dynamo, or a computer, and that of organicism is the *organism* which has an ideal and unchanging structure but is continuously going through stages of maturation. The root metaphor of contextualism is *the historical event*, not so much as a past event but as a present event that re-presents and brings to life the historical event.[13] According to Sarbin, the root metaphor *historical event* has approximately the same semantic structure as *narrative*[14] and Gergen and Gergen find, that an investigation of narrative construction can extend this line of thinking into the realm of knowledge-making in psychology. In fact, psychologists' attempts to account for peoples actions "will be importantly guided by the root metaphors they select."[15]

Regarding the actual composing of narratives, Gergen and Gergen have found that narration techniques and the function of different com-

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[12]   Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 24.
[13]   Pepper 1942, 143–46. Cf. Sarbin 1986, 4: "The root metaphor constrains the kinds of philosophical or scientific models to be applied either to the task of observing and classifying or to the task of interpreting and explaining."
[14]   Sarbin 1986, 7.
[15]   Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 24

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ponents may change over time,[16] but that, independent of time and cultural diversity, there are some basic components and rules that guide accounts of human actions. In order to succeed as a narrative, an account must first establish a *goal state*, then *select and arrange events* in such a way that the goal state is rendered more or less probable, and thirdly affirm *causal linkages* between the events.[17]

These basic rules constitute three prototypical or primitive narrative forms: *the progressive narrative, the regressive narrative* and *the stability narrative.* The progressive narrative moves steadily towards its goal state whereas the regressive narrative does the opposite. In both cases there is a directionality implied "with the former anticipating further increments and the latter further decrements". The stability narrative is characterized by the protagonist remaining "essentially unchanged with respect to evaluative position."[18] Such classifications are "ideal" in that they are rudimentary bases for more complex variants. A tragedy, for instance, that tells the downfall of someone in a high position may start with a progressive narrative that describes the rise of the person and then continue with a rapid regressive narrative. Vice versa, a comedy may start out regressively, turn progressive and include a "happily ever after" ending that communicates stability.

Within these prototypical forms, feelings of drama or emotional engagement are initiated with three decisive components: *segment relationship, slope alteration* and *suspense*. A single segment of a narrative may appear limited in its capacity to engage, the *relationship* among the events, however, may cause feelings of drama or emotion. An interesting instance of this phenomenon is found in John 6 as we shall see shortly. Similarly, *alterations* in the direction of narrative *slope* between segments, and the rate of change between moves toward or away from a valued state, achieve heightened dramatic engagement.[19] The third decisive

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[16]   Gergen & Gergen refer for instance to Genette's analysis of Proust and Joyce regarding their impact on contemporary conception of proper fictional narrative His conclusion was that the demand for arranging events in a temporal order relevant to goal attainment is far less powerful in this century than the last (Genette 1980, Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 26).
[17]   Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 26.
[18]   Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 27.
[19]   Of this the tragic narrative is typical. "It is when the individual who has attained high goals, has reached the apex of ecstasy, or has at last discovered that life's guiding principle is brought low that drama is created" (Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 30).

component of dramatic engagement is captured in the term *suspense*. It relates to expectations created by the narrative that involve the reader even though these expectations are not created by the story as such, but by a potential or anticipated series of events. Such expectation indicates awareness by the reader that the story line is unstable. Figure 1 attempts to graphically illustrate the narrative forms, their basic constituents and the dramatic components of narrative knowledge-making.
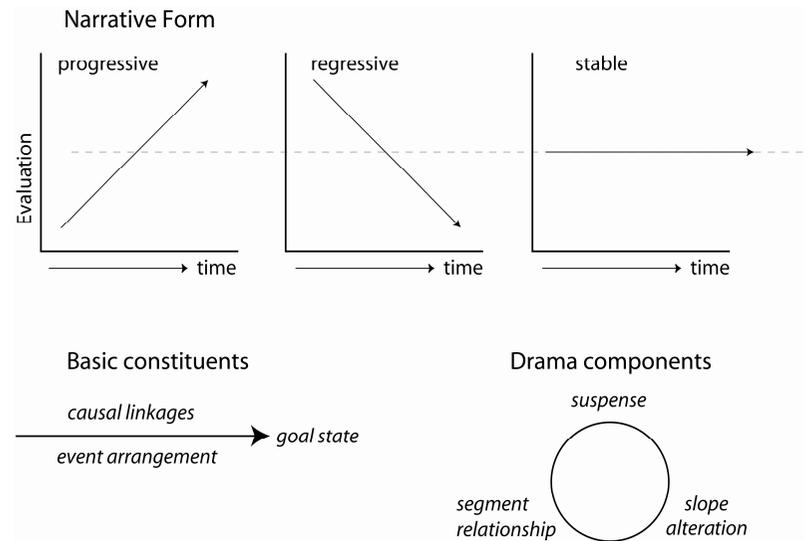

Figure 1: Forms, constituents and components of narrative knowledge-making

Application to psychological theory

As Gergen & Gergen apply the principles of narrative knowledge-making to psychological theories, they demonstrate how Learning theory, Piagetian theory, and Psychoanalytic theory each relate to a particular narrative form. Behaviorists may point to their focus on immediate effects of stimuli and argue that there is no developmental story to tell. However, on closer inspection, indebtedness to a Darwinian understanding of survival and adaptation and to a view of development that entails a posi-

tive endpoint becomes apparent.[20] In Piagetian genetic epistemology intelligence is considered "the most highly developed form of mental adaptation, that is to say, the indispensable instrument for interaction between the subject and the universe."[21] From this basic assertion a valuable endpoint is established and progressive steps in the direction of mature and fully adaptive thought are defined. Both behaviorist and Piagetian advance pays close attention to causal linkages.

Freudian theory stands in sharp contrast to the other two. It is in essential agreement with environmental adaptation as a proper endpoint for development, but pessimistic as to its success. People *only appear* to be adapted and whatever adaptation is achieved comes at the cost of psychic disturbance and the adoption of neurotic mechanisms of defense. "In effect, Freud thus offers not one but two competing narratives: the one largely ideal and the other actual; the one progressive and the other regressive in character."[22] While, for instance, the superego is a form of neurotic defense in the regressive tale, it is also a necessary part of social adaptation in the progressive narrative.

The three psychological developmental theories thus correspond to narrative forms: learning theory to the melodramatic "happily ever after" type, Piagetian psychology to the progressive type, and psychoanalytical theory to a double regressive–progressive type.[23] In a heuristic case study, as it were, this narrative-psychological program shall be ap-

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[20] "In terms of narrative form we see … that the organism may demonstrate rapid acceleration in the acquisition of habits; however, as maturation is reached, the accretion of knowledge becomes less dramatic. The result is that in major respects learning theory accounts of development are generally committed to a narrative form of the 'happily ever after' type" (Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 33).

[21] Piaget 1968, 7.

[22] Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 35.

[23] Scientific narrative and religious narrative correlate 1) in the shared interest in telling not only a good but a "true" story; 2) in the dependence on previously established narrative structures in society at large or in a scientific/religious group. For instance, much of present day psychology assumes that adult maturity is more valuable than both childhood and old age maturity, But there is no way of determining scientifically whether or not this is true. It is valid only because contemporary society has accepted it as true. (cf. Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 37). Similarly, faith in Jesus as being the bread that has come down from heaven, the religious goal state propagated by the author of John 6, is not self-evident. It requires a committed audience, especially since the claim suggests and even supersedes messianic expectations; 3) in that the value of each system depends on the dedication, the number and the quality of its adherents. If threatened, an in-group narrative must be established that clarifies the boundaries.

plied to John 6. It latches on to a detailed analysis of the narrative anatomy of this complex text which needs to be outlined in brief.

2.   A narrative anatomy of John 6

Narrative segments, situations, agents and audiences

John 6 divides into six segments. From segment to segment a new set of characters interacts with Jesus and with every character shift, narrative situations and narrative audiences shift also.[24] Throughout the chapter there is a geographical movement from the other side of the lake to the synagogue at Capernaum. Except for the transition from segment two to three, the segment delimitations are easily determined.

The first segment (vv. 1–21) contains the feeding of the five thousand and the nightly crossing of the lake. The character-focus is on Jesus and his disciples. Except for the boy with the loaves and fishes, the crowd is either in the background or absent. The second segment (vv. 22–36) puts the spotlight on Jesus' discourse with the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the lake and then went to look for him. The disciples are mentioned only because of their absence. The third segment (vv. 38–50) contains a Jesus-monologue that is intersected by a complaint by a new character-set "the Jews". It is followed by the so called Eucharistic segment, which appears, at first sight, to be a continuation of the Jesus-monologue, again intersected by "the Jews" disputing among themselves (vv. 51–58). The chapter concludes with two segments where disciples resurface, first the many that complain about Jesus' teaching (vv. 60–66), then the few who confess him to be the holy one of God (vv. 67–70).

Three narrative situations transpire in the chapter, each with a distinct narrative agent.[25] The first narrative situation of John 6 is typified by a *reflector-narrator* who observes sense-impressions and narrates the comings and goings of the Jesus-character and all the other characters on the basis of what is considered normal inside the narrative world. The second narrative situation is typified by *the authorial narrator* who enhances the text with explanatory comments from outside the narrative world that concern Jesus' extraordinary qualities. The additions tend to be repetitious. The third narrative situation is typified by *the incredible authorial narrator* who arrives on the scene in vv. 51–58. This narrator intrudes into the narrative with no apparent concern for the cohesion of the narrative or the credibility of its characters. Eagerness to introduce a novel perception of Jesus overrides other concerns.

I prefer the rhetorical term "audience" over narratee or implied readers[26] and have distinguished four different audiences inside and outside of John 6: *a narrative audience* and *an ideal narrative audience*, both relating to the reflector-narrator, *an authorial audience* that relates to the authorial narrator and *an incredible authorial audience* that relates to the incredible authorial narrator. [27] The purpose of these distinctions will become evident as the analysis unfolds.

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[24]   In a forthcoming publication a detailed narrative analysis of John 6 will be available.

[25]   My theoretical frame of reference is F.K. Stanzel's typological circle of three narrative situations: the first person narrative situation, the authorial situation, and the figural narrative situation. Each narrative situation correlates to three constitutive elements: person, perspective and mode. The elements fluctuate between binary oppositions and combine to define the characteristics of particular mediators, i.e. distinctively typified narrative agents (Stanzel 1984, 46–78). For lack of theoretical backup, interpreters (except for Derek Tovey 1997) have treated the narrator in the Fourth Gospel as *one* agent throughout the gospel with both immanent and transcendent features (Culpepper 1983, 16, 47; Staley 1988, 39; Stibbe 1989, 28). This has led to contradictory assertions regarding the

relationship between implied author and narrator. For Culpepper "there is no real difference between the point of view of the narrator ... and the perspective of the implied author" (Culpepper 1983, 7) whereas Stibbe claims "a radical distinction between the narrator (storyteller) and the implied author (the BD)" (Stibbe 1989, 28, 77–78). The typological circle of F.K. Stanzel provides the theoretical framework that allows for a nuanced differentiation between different narrative agents within the same narrative construct.

[26]   Different studies apply different theoretical frameworks, but the basics remain in that the implied author is implied because "reconstructed by the reader from the narrative" (Chatman 1978, 149) as the one who designs the communication process as a whole and is its unifying agent. The implied reader in turn represents "the audience presupposed by the narrative itself" (Chatman 1978, 150). A text such as the Fourth Gospel must take into consideration that the implied author of the text is no independent agent, but makes use of an interpreted eye-witness account, as is apparent from 19:35 and 21:24.

[27]   For the identification of audiences inside and outside the text I follow Peter J. Rabinowitz's theory of four basic audiences: actual audience, authorial audience, narrative audience and ideal narrative audience. The *actual audience* is defined as the "flesh-and-blood people" who read the book. The *authorial audience* is a hypothetical construct of the author based on his "assumptions about his readers' beliefs, knowledge, and familiarity with conventions." (Rabinowitz 1977, 130). The *narrative audience* is the audience construct with which the narrator communicates within the story world and who, consequently, accepts the story on its own terms. The *ideal narrative audience* "relates to the narrative audience roughly analogous to the way that the authorial audience relates to the actual audience

Segment characteristics

In the first segment (vv. 1–21) all characters, including Jesus, comply with the first narrative situation. Jesus observes, realizes and asks for help. He is a miracle worker, but in any other respect, he shares the life conditions of the characters around him. Making sure for *his* audience that there is more than the eye can see, the authorial narrator intrudes with a comment on Jesus' foreknowledge and depth of insight ("He said this to test him, for he himself knew…" v. 6).[28] Through this insertion the reflector-narrator's observations in vv. 5 and 15 ("When he looked up and saw…"[29] and "When Jesus realized…") appear unexpected. Wouldn't Jesus also have known these things beforehand? Did he need to *see* and *realize* in "real-time", if he knew things beforehand? The narrative effect of the intrusion makes the reflector-narrator seem unreliable[30] and the authorial audience aware of the authorial narrator's superior insight.

In the second segment (vv. 22–36) first and second narrative situation intertwine closely. With increasing forthrightness, the Jesus character utters assertions that make clear that he considers himself to be more than "just" a prophet who has come into the world (v. 14). At first he points the crowd to the "son of man" (v. 27 b) who will give them the food that endures for eternal life. Coming from the lips of Jesus, the ref-

erence to the "son of man" appears to apply to someone other than him, an impression that is confirmed by the third person sing pronouns in vv. 28 and 29. But then the claim level rises as Jesus speaks of God as *my* father (v. 32) and explains that the *true* bread from heaven does not just nourish the body (like the bread Moses gave their ancestors), but gives life to the world (33). Following this prelude, the assertion "I am the bread of life" (v. 35) takes on implications that go beyond the sapiential. But the crowd, despite its eagerness to learn, remains in the first narrative situation. It just cannot recognize the true significance of Jesus. The verdict of v. 36 ("you have seen me and yet you do not believe") aborts their quest and makes way for the new interlocutor: "the Jews".

The third segment (vv. 37–50) is structured around three statements about God the father's role in the ministry of Jesus. In no uncertain terms we learn that whoever comes to Jesus and believes in him has been given (v. 37), drawn (v. 44), or taught (v. 45) by the Father. V. 44 leaves no doubt that the causal attribution is exclusive ("no one can come to me unless…"). At this point a crucial transition takes place from knowledge-making to myth-making.[31] The authorial narrator takes over the narration and makes his concern for myth-making unmistakably clear as he repetitiously asserts Jesus' heavenly origin ("come down from heaven") and his promise that he will "raise up on the last day" all that are given to him. The new interlocutor "the Jews" seems strangely disconnected from the preceding interlocutor "the crowd". Immediately the Jews grasp the challenge the crowd had not been able to fathom. Their complaint is tied in with their acquaintance with Jesus' background ("the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know", v. 42) and communicates an impression of authenticity. All in all, the narrative progression seems credible and the authorial narrator successful in taking his audience through the transition from knowledge-making to myth-making.

As we get past the fourth segment (vv. 51–58) and into the fifth (vv. 60–66) the narrative suddenly looses credibility. Having asserted almost unbearable things about flesh-eating and blood-drinking, Jesus' response to the offended disciples is clearly misplaced. From the narrative audience's point of view the disciples would seem to struggle with questions

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(134). It is ideal from the narrator's point of view as it believes the narrator and accepts his judgments. Rabinowitz also notes that "more complex works – 'novels-within-novels', novels with frames, epistolary novels, novels addressed to internal characters, novels with multiple narrators, certain ironic novels – may appear to have more than four, but these are only variations of these basic forms" (126). In the case of John 6 the *incredible authorial audience* is a variation of the authorial audience.

28   According to Chatman 1978, 228, explicit commentaries include interpretation, judgment, generalization and 'self-conscious' narration. Of the five explanatory comments identified in John 6 by M.C. Tenney 1960, 350 (vv. 6, 23, 59, 64 and 71), vv. 6, 64 and 71 concern Jesus' foreknowledge and belong in this analysis to the authorial narrator. I leave the geographical comment in v. 59 undecided, but think that the comment in v. 23 seems strangely misplaced, not typical of the authorial narrator and definitely not of the reflector-narrator. The unclear geographical information and the absolute use of εὐχαριστῶ and the non-Johannine use of "the Lord" [=εὐχαριστήσαντος τοῦ κυρίου], not found in C. Bezae, Old Latin and Old Syriac, indicate a later insertion (cf. Brown 1966, 258). In terms of liturgical content the verse has affinities with the characteristics of the incredible authorial narrator.

29   Same phrase as in 4:35, where the notion of knowing through observation is prominent.

30   Note that the theory distinguishes between unreliable and incredible, see below.

31   I perceive "myth-making" as the proclamation of hidden insights that affect the perception of the world according to the three cognitive categories of myth, as defined by Gerd Theissen (cf. Theissen 2007, 254–57): substance perception through superhuman personification, causality perception by means of religious causality attribution and association of things and persons through claims of depth-correspondences.

such as: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" or: 'Isn't flesh-eating something the devil would do?'. But Jesus' reply does not connect and amounts rather to a response to the question of "the Jews" concerning his origin (vv. 41–42). Furthermore, the additional assertion concerning the opposition between the divine principle from above (Spirit) and the natural principle of man (flesh) contradicts the requirements stipulated so adamantly in vv. 53–57. In sum, Jesus' reply in vv. 61–62 fits well after v. 50 (as has been frequently noted), but is misplaced after v. 58. It fails to touch on the disciples' expected offense and the narrative's credibility crumbles. According to the narratological categories *audience distance* and *author credibility* the story breaks apart.[32]

This creates a dilemma to which the critical reader can respond in at least two ways. One is to conclude that the concern for narrative cohesion and narrative audiences, prevalent in the earlier layers, had somehow been abandoned or lost. The other more plausible conclusion is that segment four was not part of the narrative that was created for the authorial audience. A narratological idiosyncrasy thus fosters the strong suspicion that the text has been amended by an agency other than the one typified by the evangelist persona. Narrative critical analysis shakes hands with literary criticism and concurs that an incompatible intrusion into the evangelist layer must have occurred. The inference is further corroborated by shifts of vocabulary and emphases, new causal attributions and by the altered portrayal of the Jesus-character. Thus, both from a narratological and a composition historical perspective, segment four (vv. 51–58) appears foreign to the authorial composition and must be attributed to a different source. In this study "the intruder" is labeled *incredible authorial narrator.*

Having thus sketched in brief the basic narrative anatomy of John 6, time is ripe to turn to the narrative-psychological analysis proper. Applying Gergen and Gergen's forms, constituents and components of narrative knowledge-making to the three narrative agents and the sets of characters, the accounts will be assessed psychologically. In conclusion, the characteristics of the two personae behind the narrative as it stands, the implied author and the implied incredible author will be scrutinized.

3.   Knowledge-making and myth-making in John 6

Narrative progression and the Jesus character

At first sight, the reflector-narrator does not seem to have a *goal state*.[33] Committed to the observation of impressions as they come, he does *not* interfere or construct implications that cannot be registered by the senses. He belongs to the realm of the story, observes like a camera eye and presents Jesus as a miracle worker with otherwise normal human capacities. However, the goal state of the reflector-narrator expresses itself in matters of dramatic engagement. Even a camera eye presentation involves constructing sequences, selecting what to present and arranging the final product according to a plan.

The dramatic significance of *segment relationship* can be observed in vv. 22–24. Taken for themselves these verses have indeed little to offer and may be labeled a transitional passage (R. Brown). 'Some people who can't find Jesus take boats to the other side of the lake and there they find him.' However, in terms of segments relationship the dramatic value of the segment is immense. Without it the audience would not have known that some (not all!) of the crowd had stayed on the other side of the lake, spent the night away from home and in fact gone to some trouble just to make sure they would not miss a moment of Jesus and be there at the break of dawn. Moreover, as they learn that he had left secretly, they don't complain but immediately make for ways to get to where he is.

This little segment thus alerts the audience to the crowd's hunger and devotion and makes their failure to believe seem like a harsh blow. The reflector-narrator reports their increase and decrease of insights and one sincerely hopes that Jesus would give them the crucial clue. But instead the exchange is aborted (v. 36) which makes Jesus appear either callous or incapable. Wouldn't he or couldn't he help them? Most cunningly then

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[32]   Rabinowitz's distinction between audience distance and unreliable narrator almost coincides with Stanzel's distinction between unreliable and incredible author (see Rabinowitz 1977, 131–134, Stanzel 1984, 152). A reflector-narrator is *unreliable* by definition and functions as a narrative device of the author. An *incredible* narrator or author demands the outrageous from his audience and if the gap gets too wide, the novel becomes unconvincing (Rabinowitz 1977, 133).

[33]   A note of caution may be necessary at this point regarding the attribution of intentions and narrative strategies to the reflector-narrator. From a narratological point of view both the reflector-narrator and the authorial narrator are literary constructs of the author. Any assertion regarding intention choices made by the reflector-narrator is therefore nothing but an assertion regarding the author. The presence of a reflector-narrator is fully in compliance with an undivided literary construct. It is only as the narrative construct is mirrored against composition historical considerations that the existence of an earlier and separate narrative may be deduced. The situation with the incredible authorial narrator is different in that the narrative analysis itself brings about the suspicion of an intrusion.

the little transition segment is made to contribute to the drama of the narrative and the audience is torn between *alterations of slope.*

It was the plainness and limited perspective of the reflector-narrator that gave opportunity for drama and apparently at this point, the author decides to make an end to the appearance of struggle by having his authorial narrator expose the reflector-narrator's incomplete knowledge-making. So he starts lifting the veil and grants his audience a first peak into the hidden treasure chest of myth: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me" (v. 37). But the impression of tranquility that comes with the label "Father" is hollow. If it is the Father who makes some to believe, then it must be that same Father who makes others to not believe. Ironically, the crowd's failure seemed more bearable from the reflector-narrator's perspective than it does from the authorial narrator's.

The *goal state* the authorial narrator takes is first revealed in the third segment. Up to the end of segment two, the author had used the reflector-narrator to make limited assertions and then have the authorial narrator clarify them (v. 6). He had left it to the reader to question the reflector-narrator's insight (vv. 5, 15), or correct his external attributions of cause by finding out about the mythical implications (v. 37). From now on there is no doubt that Jesus attends to the will of the Father most perfectly, that he has come from heaven in order to gather those that the Father has given him and that he would keep them until the end of time and raise them up on the last day. The complaint by "the Jews" is not really rebutted, and no reaction to Jesus' reply is necessary. Their function is simply to reiterate the authorial narrator's entry statement and make certain that the audience will not miss it. As we get to segment five the goal state is further emphasized and pointed more clearly, as we shall see in a moment. Together with the two supplemental comments concerning Jesus' foreknowledge (v. 6, 64) the goal state of the authorial narrator seems clear.

Most prominent among the dramatic components is the moment of *suspense* between vv. 67 and 68, clearly the highpoint of the dramatic structure. Jesus has just told the disciples that some of them do not believe and we learn that many disciples take offense at his words and leave him. On top of that, the sole cause for faith is again attributed to the Father (v. 65). Ironically, as though the cause was in their hands after all, Jesus turns to the twelve and asks: "Do you also wish to go away?" The narrative audience holds its breath in suspense and maybe some in the authorial audience, who didn't catch the irony join in. How will the disciples respond? Will they join their friends and leave Jesus too? So far in the story, no one had actually believed Jesus.

Peter's reply releases the tension into an emotion of surrender and happiness: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" A *goal state* is reached of the "happy ever after" type, so it seems for a split second, but immediately a "Wermutstropfen" is poured into the cup of sweet joy as Jesus adds "One of you is a devil." Drastic *slope alterations* bring the dramatic engagement to a climax and then to its anticlimax. The audience is about to be torn between hope, fear and frustration, but before long the authorial narrator jumps in and soothes the anxiety, again with an ironic twist for those who can hear: 'Everything's under control, it is already decided who will betray him' (v. 71). Foreknowledge and destiny wrestle with anxiety and threat and if there is one emotion that imprints itself on the audience mind it must be that of fragility and a wish to join Peter's surrender: "Lord to whom shall we go?"

As we consider the incredible authorial narrator a different set of qualities stands out. First of all, the authorial narrator's metaphorical expressions for the mythical qualities of Jesus are "elevated" into a concern for the near-physical consummation of his flesh and blood. Second and most importantly, a new *causal linkage* is introduced for the appropriation of Jesus power, life and communion. The role of the father as the one who gives and draws and of Jesus who but executes the will of the father, is replaced by a plain linkage to the consumption of Jesus' flesh and blood: "The one who eats me will live because of me" (v. 57).

The interlocutor "the Jews" are re-used to make certain that the incredible authorial audience does not miss the point to be made ("How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"). But the complaint seems strangely analytic, as though "the Jews" were considering different alternatives *among themselves* of how this transfer of flesh actually could be done. In the setting of the narrative world one would have expected a joint outcry and not a fight (μάχομαι) among themselves. The impression lingers that both the incredible authorial narrator and his audience are at quite some distance from both the narrative world and the authorial context. This author simply overrides the authorial narrator's interest for the spiritual qualities of Jesus;[34] he replaces the Jesus who is depend-

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[34] Some have argued that the authorial narrator supports a physical appreciation of Jesus and R. Brown even asserted that "this chapter would be eucharistic if 51–58 were not part of it, and if 51–58 are a later addition, they were added not to introduce a eucharistic theme but to bring out more clearly the eucharistic elements that were already there". For evidence Brown points to additions to the synoptic accounts that are supposed to echo eucharistic liturgy. He also argues that vv. 35–50, alongside the primary sapiential theme, have a secondary sacramental

ent on the father with a Jesus who "dominates as the agent and source of salvation;"[35] (Brown, 284); and he exchanges submission and anxiety for authority and safety. Reassuring assertions in the indicative ("whoever eats *will live* forever", "those who eat and drink *have* eternal life / *abide* in me / *will live* / *will live* forever") suggest a transition from fragility to domestication of faith and salvation.

At first sight the incredible authorial narrator seems utterly provocative, moving towards a *goal state* of "crisis". But then, there is no crisis. Narrative expectations, created by segment five, are not followed up, *suspense* and *goal state* evaporate, and the fifth segment does not connect to the sixth. From the perspectives of both the reflector-narrator and the authorial narrator, and in terms of narrative progression, the incredible authorial narrator corrupts the narrative structure.

The narrative agents and the character sets

Besides the Jesus-character, two character sets are introduced in the beginning of the chapter: "a [large] crowd"[36] and "his disciples". The sets as wholes remain flat, but become partially active in sub-sets. Sub-sets of the large crowd are "a boy", "the crowd that had stayed", and of his disciples Philip, Andrew, "many of his disciples", "the twelve", Peter and Judas Iscariot ("one of you", "one of the twelve"). A third character-set, "the Jews", is introduced in v. 41. It has affinities to the crowd (cf. the references to their fathers and the manna in vv. 31 and 49), but differs from the crowd in that it responds to a concern of the authorial narrator. Because of its narrative flatness no special treatment of the set is required. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of characters in John 6.

The crowd that had stayed and many of his disciples

The subgroups "the crowd that had stayed" (v. 22) and "many of his disciples" (v. 60) represent the perspective of the reflector-narrator. The crowd-subgroup agrees on Jesus being a prophet who is to come into the world (v. 14). They respect him as a wise man, have seen him at work.

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theme. But in the end he has to admit that all he has gathered is "respectable evidence" (Brown 1966, 274), i.e. evidence that is far from conclusive. I remain convinced that the suggestion of a physical appropriation of Christ is the provenance of the incredible authorial narrator.

[35]   Brown 1966, 284.

[36]   The designations "so many people" (v. 9) and "the people" (vv. 10 and 14) are variants of "a large crowd".

They accept that he is chosen by God for a special task, endowed with miracle working abilities (v. 2), and want to experience more of his signs (v. 30).

The disciples-subgroup too lacks faith and the cause attributed to it in segment five corresponds to the cause attributed to the crowd-subgroup in segment two. Both sub-sets start out well, but deteriorate as they listen to Jesus' words. The causal attribution makes clear that both incapacities (v. 37, repeated in the negative in vv. 44 and 65) are matters of divine design. Accordingly, "the crowd that had stayed" is dismissed from the scene (v. 36) and "many of his disciples" stop following Jesus, unconvinced and unbelieving (vv. 63–64a).
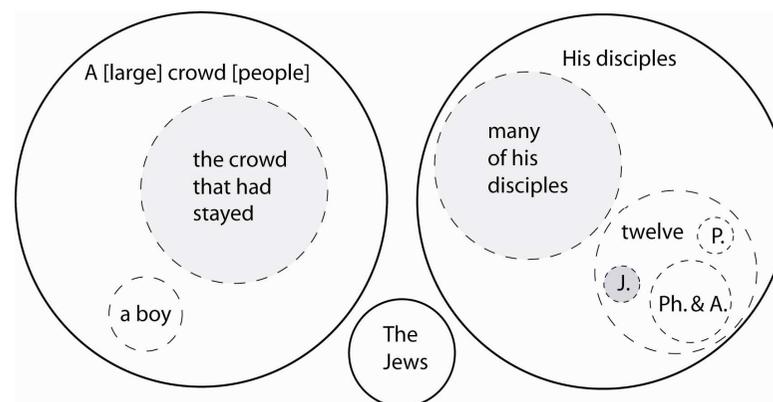

Figure 2: Illustration of the distribution of characters in John 6. J.=Judas, P.=Peter, Ph.=Phillip, A.=Andrew.

Psychological accounting

Despite the regressive end, the account of the crowd-subgroup's quest for faith in segment two (vv. 22–36) invites a psychological analysis through the lenses of cognitively modified learning theory.[37] The narra-

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[37]   Obviously, no claim whatsoever is made regarding the author(s)'s awareness of such a theoretical framework. Moreover, this analysis is not concerned with intentional strategies but with affinities between descriptive accounting and conscious or unconscious commitments to world views and root metaphors that de-

tive communicates a series of both real and symbolic requests for sensory input. The crowd seems set for advance through responses to stimuli, models and reinforcers, but is presented as a failure because of unfitting associations, lack of benefit-experiences and aborted imitation-effects.

To begin with an emotional attachment to Jesus arises from an association of the neutral stimulus A (='eating their fill of the loaves') with stimulus B (=the active involvement of Jesus in the multiplication of the loaves). But Jesus censures the association because it does not include an appreciation for his religious significance.[38] In other words, the *associative learning process* of the crowd is put down because it fails to connect to the inherited significance of internal images such as "imperishable food" and "son of man"[39], and stops short at the external association of Jesus with "food multiplication".[40]

But the crowd seems puzzled and perplexed as to what signs (σημεῖα) it had not responded to (v. 26). What should they do to "work the work of God" (ἐργαζώμεθα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ, v. 28), they seem to wonder.[41] In reply Jesus suggests that they should "believe in him whom God has sent" (v. 29). Being thus directed to respond to the *person* rather than the *gift*, the crowd searches its religious heritage for symbolic models and connects to their fathers in the desert for themselves and to Moses the manna-provider for Jesus. According to learning theory this model-quest resembles *imitative learning*.[42] But again, Jesus censures the learning proc-

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termine "the subsequent account of the work one is ostensibly attempting to depict" (Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 24).

[38] Cf. the following example given by Gerd Theissen: "We almost always hear organ music, for example, in connection with liturgies. It is therefore understandable that emotional reactions to liturgies are also transferred to organ music – whether they are feelings of familiarity or repugnance. In itself, organ music is something neutral." (Theissen 1987, 6).

[39] Cf. *Qoh. Rab.* 1.9.28: "As the First Saviour [i.e. Moses] caused the manna to descend, as it is written 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you' (Exod. 16.4), so also the Last Saviour will cause the manna to descend, as it is written "There shall be bread of wheat upon the earth' (Ps 72.16)". Quoted from Lindars 1972, 255.

[40] On inner representations and "hidden behavior" as aspects of learning theory cf. Theissen 1987, 5–7, and Mahoney 1974. 61–122; 169–193.

[41] "having faith is a work; indeed, it is the all important work of God" (Brown 1966, 265)

[42] On the issue of the cognitive shift in neo-behaviorism and learning from models see Bandura 1986. For a description of associative, operant and imitative learning in religion, see Theissen 1987, 5–10.

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ess and dissociates himself from the supposed model similarity: "It was not Moses... ", and makes the crowd even more perplexed as he asserts: "It is *my* father, who gives you the *true* bread from heaven" (v. 32). Jesus not only rejects the model comparison, but also redirects the focus back to the gift.

An emotion of anguish transpires as the crowd bluntly demands a taste of this true heavenly bread: "Sir, give us this bread always" (v 34). Unless they get a taste of the benefits of what they are to adjust to, they are at a loss. Unintentionally to be sure, yet learning theory's third inroad to human experience and behavior – *operant learning* through reinforcements – is exemplified quite poignantly. But of course Jesus again points at himself and says: "I *am* the bread of life". The air seems vibrant with symbolic association, but the crowd is unable to appreciate either the uniqueness of Jesus or the identification of the giver with the gift. Thus the quest is aborted with the verdict: "You have seen me, yet you do not believe" (v. 36). We shall see in a moment that the ideal of the reflector-narrator is the appreciation of the uniqueness of Jesus in this world, whereas the authorial narrator propagated his absolute uniqueness.

This brings us to the account of "many of his disciples" (segment four, vv. 60–66). A shift of focus clarifies that the disciples are struggling with faith in the unique origin of Jesus. The "bread of life" metaphor disappears from the discussion and "the son of man" returns. Whereas the concern of "the Jews" in v. 42 may still have fumbled in the twilight zone between a Matthean and a Lucan understanding of the virgin birth, the disciples are now challenged to believe in Jesus' preexistence beyond figurative allusions. The cognitive dissonance is made razor sharp as Jesus adds the additional question: "Then what if you were to see the son of man ascending to where he was before (v. 62). While the objective of "the son of man" reference was somewhat ambiguous in v. 27, now there is no mistaking it for anything but a reference to Jesus; and while "coming from heaven" may have been taken metaphorically earlier, "ascending to where he was before" (ὅπου ἦν τὸ πρότερον), can no longer refer to anything but preexistence.

As if offering a key to the magic door, Jesus adds: "it is the spirit that makes alive; the flesh is of no use. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (v. 63). Evidently the disciples are now put to the test by a challenge to verify "in the flesh" (audible words), that which can *only* be "heard" in the spirit. But they were not ready to disregard facts and traditions and decide, therefore, to do the reasonable, i.e. to refuse

to acknowledge and confess what is foreign to the narrative world and for which there was no precedent.[43]

In conclusion, the crowd required similarities to their traditional belief system and wanted Jesus to be consistent with history. But the more impulses they gather the less they understand. From the perspective of world hypotheses and root metaphors the crowd's demand epitomizes truth "as the degree of similarity which a description has to its object of reference."[44] Unless the root metaphor *similarity* is satisfied there is no truth. The "many disciples" on the other hand were open to changes of perspective and to re-enactments of history that might be dissimilar in some respect to what had gone before. But their primary perception was still oriented at synthesis. They could accept changing conditions *within* history, but not that which was completely *outside* of history. Again, from the perspective of world hypotheses and root metaphors one is reminded of the contextualists with their root metaphor *historical event*. Their characteristic feature is adaptability but they depend for their recognition of reality on authentic correspondence.

Thus, "the crowd that had stayed", enthused at first with expectation, foundered in blindness and the "many disciples", followers at first, stumbled at the challenge of unconditional commitment to the testimony of the spirit. The sequence of high hopes, initial progress, promising struggle, but ultimate malfunction and failure make the two processes resemble the narrative genre tragedy. Clearly the author has something else in mind in terms of an ideal learning experience.

The named and the twelve minus one

Opposed to the many who wanted to but failed to believe, stand the few who have been touched by the words of eternal life (v. 68). They are typified in the narrative by the names Philip, Andrew, Simon Peter, Judas and the numbers twelve and one. These characters are committed to Jesus, even though their understanding is limited (cf. Philip's and Andrew's replies, vv. 7 and 9). In terms of narrative progression, the twelve progress successfully up to the very end of the chapter, but the very moment when all appears to conclude in harmony, a repressive twist is added and the narrative as a whole ends with a double *goal state*. A successful pro-

gression represented most explicitly by Simon Peter is counteracted by a regression represented by "the one".

Peter's question: "Lord, to whom can we go?" may seem rhetorical at first, but as it becomes clear that even one of the twelve would not just fail, but fail on purpose, the question assumes unforeseen realism, except for Jesus, of course, who had foreseen it. The pending betrayal of the one thus exemplifies the fragility of the group as a whole. With a devil among the chosen ones, uncertainty of outcome and prospect of active revolt could never be written off. Being drawn by the Father was no *carte blanche*. Instead, there would be an unremitting need to partake of the bread that *keeps coming* from heaven (v. 50). The authorial narrator makes clear that destiny of "the one" is specific, but he cannot completely alleviate the threat to others, especially since Peter's confession marks not only the peak of the progression of the few, but also their vulnerability.

Although the authorial narrator has left no doubt that his ideal confession was faith in the pre-existent Jesus, he has Peter "simply" confess Jesus to be "the holy one of God" (σὺ εἶ ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ). The confession attains to the level of the reflector-narrator's ideal narrative audience as it supersedes the comparison with Moses.[45] But it is no climax for the authorial narrator, whose main ambition had been to proliferate faith in the preexistence of Jesus.[46] To be sure, from the semantic field purported by the unclean Spirit in Mark 1:24, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ seems to denote an early messianic title. But it falls short of preexistence.

We are bound to ask, how the author could restrain himself from having his authorial narrator intrude into the text and explain the shortcoming to his audience. What, in the end, was the difference between the failure of "many of the disciples" and the deficient confession of Peter, the authorial audience may have wondered?

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43 According to religion-historical derivation theory, one needs to be able to locate a precedent from which to derive a claim (cf. Theissen 1987, 14–16).

44 Pepper 1942, 181.

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45 As in v. 15 the verb used for knowing is γινώσκω and not οἶδα as in all the instances where reference is made to Jesus' knowing. Cf. C.K. Barrett who translates: "We have recognized..." (Barrett 1978, 306)

46 Even the textual variants indicate the dissatisfaction. One textual tradition has replaced the phrase with ὁ Χριστός, another has prefixed it with ὁ Χριστός, and a third tradition has replaced ὁ ἅγιος with ὁ υἱός and suffixed ζῶντος to the phrase (ὁ υἱός τοῦ θεοῦ ζῶντος).

Psychological assessment

The manner in which the account of the twelve's knowledge-making is thus presented may begin to make psychological sense if compared to a cognitively oriented process of learning. Such a process progresses in stages of maturation and can be likened to the maturing of a flower. Each stage of cognitive development is an essential prerequisite to the ultimate "stage of formal operations", i.e. the crowning achievement of the child's capacity to "think in abstract terms, perform experiments, develop a belief system, and think reflexively about self."[47]

From this perspective, the confession of the twelve can be perceived as a prerequisite stage for a goal state that is not yet reached but is anticipated as its organic continuation. Intense interaction had brought about a mental adaptation that resulted in a confession within the realm of conscious accommodations and unyielding commitment: "Lord to whom shall we go?" The experience of the spirit in the words of Jesus ("You have the words of eternal life") had not yet produced faith in the preexistence of Jesus, but it had staked out a path: they would follow the holy one of God no matter what.

From the point of view of the world hypothesis, *organicism* and the root metaphor *organism* fit the view applied to the knowledge-making process attributed to the twelve. They had gone through stages of cognitive development and had reached the formal operational summit, which was characterized among other things by the development of an independent belief system.[48] They had reached a valuational endpoint and had ordered relevant events in an organic way. Contrary to "many of his disciples" (whom we have compared to *contextualism*) the twelve had moved beyond the requirement of historical precedence and confessed Jesus as *the* uniquely sanctified agent of God. They attributed to him profounder qualities than to Moses and all the rest of his predecessors and called him the holy one of God. They had embraced both progression and ideal, and integrated it into their world view, even though it threatened fundamental aspects of the historical event, even to the point where succession in time would not have to be an indispensable prerequisite for reality. The authorial narrator presented their lack of comprehension as a lack of maturation and their struggle for integration as an acceptable cognitive stage. They had accepted the possibility of God's unique inter-

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[47]   Cf. Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 34.

[48]   Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 34.

vention and had thus managed to synthesize their experience into an organic whole. The author, of course, reserved for himself, by means of his authorial narrator, the prerogative of providing *his* audience with deeper insights about Jesus. To him it is now time to turn.

The author persona and the incredible author persona

The authorial narrator's function has been to make the authorial audience recognize and believe in the mythical Jesus. With the relative failure of Peter's confession it has become apparent that none of the characters in the narrative responded to the myth-making effort. It is as though the message never really arrives in the narrative world. But the authorial narrator does not lament this and even allows Peter's "limited" confession to stand out as a success. The goal state of the narrative as a whole is that of the reflector-narrator.

It is now time to step outside the literary-narratological perspective and consider the results from a composition theoretical perspective. First of all, the characteristics of the narrator-reflector can be easily transferred to the composer persona of the first text layer referred to in the beginning. In similar fashion, the characteristics of the authorial narrator can be transferred to the evangelist persona of the second layer. Concerning author characteristics the composition preferences indicate respect for the partial maturity of the faith and the insight of the first generation disciples, combined with a conviction that revelation has progressed. Regard for the authority of the real-life counterpart of his character "Peter" may have kept the author from interfering and correcting. But as he praises the twelve for their commitment, he retains for himself a deeper knowledge and a deeper experience of Jesus.

The relative open-endedness of the account compares to Stephen Pepper's world hypothesis organicism. In a constant struggle with the dichotomy of appearance and reality, one tries to make the least one can of appearances and reckons with an ideal goal state to be the inevitable consequence of maturation whether clearly apparent or not at a certain point in time.[49] Including the expectation of continuing integration and synthesis into the narrative, the author persona "retro-predicted" into the narrative world that with time the true successors of the twelve would respond to the mythical impact of the words of eternal life. They had taken the decisive steps towards recognizing Jesus' uniqueness, their

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[49]   Pepper 1942, 146.

resonance had begun and the rest would follow as a matter of cause, especially since ultimately it is predetermined for those that are drawn by the Father.

In terms of the author persona's myth-making ambition, one may rephrase the theological assertions psychologically from the stand point of a hermeneutical modification of the doctrine of archetypes. This has been presented by G. Theissen as the most plausible currently available solution to the historical problem of faith in Christ as a preexistent being.

> What appears in learning theory as a model of human experience and behavior becomes here a symbol of an archetypical reality. Christ does not simply have effects as a vicarious symbolic model– because it is reinforced in our place. Rather, the Christ symbol undergoes inner reinforcements by a preprogrammed human tendency. A preexistent tendency toward self-realization incarnates itself in Christ... Archetypical structures of experience and behavior that are innate in human existence are of themselves open. They are modified and formed in a historical learning process. They do not exist in themselves but always only in historically variable interpretation.[50]

Finally, the incredible author persona tells two opposing but interdependent tales, a progressive tale and a regressive tale. The progressive tale asserts the advancement of Jesus to a self-sufficient source of life: "just as ... so whoever eats me will live because of me" (ζήσει δι' ἐμέ v. 57). The progression of Jesus to an independent provider of salvation is accompanied by his regression from a living and acting person who is dependent on the father in this world, for either success or failure to a body that is offered for consummation. In the world of the incredible author persona, the challenging and interacting Jesus of the narrative world who provides and refuses, has become an ever present and available substance. The bread that comes (καταβαίνων, pres) down from heaven (v. 50) has become the bread that came down (καταβάς, aor) (v. 51).

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[50]   Theissen 1987, 15, 17. Cf. also Jung 1970 ("Answer to Job") 713: "Christ would never have made the impression he did on his followers if he had not expressed something that was alive and at work in their unconscious. Christianity itself would never have spread through the pagan world with such astonishing rapidity hade its ideas not found an analogue psychic readiness to receive them." I thank Wayne Rollins for pointing out this passage to me.

This time the opposing tales of success and regress are interdependent and the account correlates psychologically to the Freudian principle of psychosexual development. Progressive development requires a parallel regressive development, such as when libidinal desires for the parent are buttressed by the development of the superego.[51] Finally, the determinative undertone of the substitution of a dynamic environment for a domesticated environment may suggest a mechanistic world view with the root metaphor *machine* guiding the outlook of the incredible author persona on both Jesus and on communion with him.

It would appear that Early Christian knowledge-making and myth-making was no one way street. Integrative processes encountered competitive processes, expectations of organic maturation competed with domesticating guardianship. The author persona's strong affirmation of pre-existence ruled out knowledge-barriers that demanded similarity or historical precedent as prerequisites for faith, but it was able to appreciate organic maturation processes and stages of development as desirable prerequisites to the ultimate "stage of formal operations".

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[51]   "In fact the superego (or individual's sets of goals, values, or morals) becomes an added form of neurotic defense in the regressive tale, but a necessary part of social adaptation in the progressive narrative" (Gergen/ Gergen 1986, 35).

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