

A Paradigm Shift in Johannine Studies

A brief survey on the Johannine question establishes that a number of Johannine scholars are interested in the *diachronic*¹ way of looking at the Fourth Gospel. This approach involves a careful analysis of the various stages through which the text has presumably evolved in order to rediscover the original historical situation. The historical critical way of reading the Fourth Gospel has come under increasing attack from alternative voices emerging in the 1970s and early 1980s who looked for the *synchronic* stance of the Fourth Gospel. Within this paradigm shift in Johannine studies, the experience of how the narrative text affects its readers, is more important than understanding the history of its composition. Readers are invited to find the meaning by investigating the formal features of the narrative and the use of various literary devices, strategic concerns and aims, and intertextual references. These include point of view, voice, characterization, conflict, settings, irony, and symbolism, among many others. The result of this holistic approach reveals the evangelist as being a masterful storyteller in full command of his material.

The aim of this study is to show how this paradigm shift in Johannine studies has brought a change in a novel focus to the surface narrative of the text as a legitimate object of study. We will present the main proponents of the diachronic approach to the Fourth Gospel, followed by those scholars who manifest the

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¹ The term "diachronic" was first used by Ferdinand de Saussure to refer to the approach of linguistics theorists chiefly interested in the history of languages. See his *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (Paris: Payot, 1976) first edition 1916. The book has been translated by Wade Baskin, *Course in General Linguistics* (London: Peter Owen, 1960).

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validity, indeed the benefits, of applying literary methods to this gospel. We will follow this discussion by arguing whether the goal of bridging the historical critical method with the new literary methods is still possible.

The Diachronic Approach to the Fourth Gospel

The most detailed attempt to explain the origin of the Fourth Gospel goes back to Rudolf Bultmann's colossal commentary on this gospel which "has given a measure of unity to the subsequent discussion of the literary problem."² It is a curious fact that Bultmann does not pay attention to the question of the historical *milieu* of the Fourth Gospel within a Christian community, as much as he endeavours to explain its *religionsgeschichtliche* background.³ Instead of setting the composition of the Fourth Gospel and the redaction process within a Christian community, Bultmann proposes three sources involved in the composition of this gospel, namely, a signs source, a revelation-discourse (*Offenbarungsreden*) source, and a passion and resurrection narrative source.

Bultmann's source hypothesis stimulated discussion and the search for sources behind the Fourth Gospel has been actively pursued ever since.⁴ In particular, the

² See D. Moody Smith, *Johannine Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 39-40. For a systematic treatment of Bultmann's literary theory see also, Moody Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven: Yale University, 1965). For a summary see, Moody Smith, "The Sources of the Gospel of John: An Assessment of the Present State of the Problem," *New Testament Studies* 10 (1964): 336-351; Burton S. Easton, "Bultmann's RQ Source," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 65 (1946): 143-154.

³ In his Commentary on John's Gospel, Bultmann strongly argues for a Gnostic influence on this gospel. He refers to a Gnostic Redeemer myth which the Fourth Evangelist had taken over from a Gnostic source and adopted it to his Christian purposes. Bultmann's comparative material, however, has proved to be relatively later than the Fourth Gospel. For a good discussion on the chronology of the Mandaean texts used by Bultmann see, Alastair H.B. Logan, "The Significance of the Apocryphon of John for the Debate about the Origins of the Johannine Literature," in *The Johannine Writings*. The Biblical Seminar 32, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 109-137.

⁴ Only the Signs Source received further serious research, though its inclusion in the Fourth Gospel has given rise to broad disagreement among Johannine scholars. See Gilbert Van Belle, *The Signs Source in the Fourth Gospel: Historical Survey and Critical Evaluation of the Semeia Hypothesis*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 116 (Leuven: Peeters, 1994). Van Belle concludes this comprehensive survey on the theories of a signs source saying: "I am inclined to refuse the *semeia* hypothesis as a valid working hypothesis in the study of the Fourth Gospel" (p.376). Some Johannine scholars even question the very existence of the postulated source. See Robert Kysar, "The Source Analysis of the Fourth Gospel: A Growing

work of Robert Fortna has been influential⁵ and gained widespread acceptance among many scholars.⁶ Fortna's examination of the so-called Johannine *aporias* helped him to isolate and to reconstruct a detailed signs source. These *aporias* are usually marked by sudden changes in thought, theology, chronology, and other forms of narrative sequence which show that the narrative of the Fourth Gospel does not always proceed smoothly.⁷ Such is Jn 14:31 which presupposes that Jn 18:1 should follow immediately.⁸ There is the abrupt transition from Jn 5 to Jn 6.⁹ So also Jn 20:30-31 contains a clear conclusion to the Fourth Gospel but it is followed by another in Jn 21:24-25. The "first sign" at Cana in Jn 2:11 is followed by the "second sign" in Jn 4:54. Nevertheless, in between the two signs, the narrator informs the readers that "many believed in his name because they saw the signs he was doing" (Jn 2:23). There are also thematic discontinuities in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁰

Fortna, like other scholars, faced this challenge and tried to account for these puzzling literary features in the Fourth Gospel which seem to be tied up with

Consensus?," in *The Composition of John's Gospel: Selected Studies from Novum Testamentum*, ed. David E. Orten (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 129-147.

⁵ Robert T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel*. Society for the New Testament Studies Monograph Series 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

⁶ See Willem Nicol, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

⁷ Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM, 1989), 33, writes: "Eduard Schwartz, the great classical scholar, who in 1907/08 wrote four famous articles with the title, ('Aporiem im 4. Evangelium') was of the opinion that the gospel is a 'book made up of a variety of ingredients.' At least he hits the nail on the head in formulating his title: the gospel really is full of *aporias*, some of which cannot be resolved. The history of the scholarship of the last 150 years shows that it is easier to pile up such *aporias* than bring them to a satisfactory solution." On these *aporias* see, Gary Burge, "The Literary Seams in the Fourth Gospel," *Covenant Quarterly* 48, no.3 (1990): 15-23.

⁸ In Jn 14:31 Jesus says to the disciples: "Rise, let us go hence." Instead, the discourse continues for another three full chapters.

⁹ In Jn 5 we are informed that Jesus is in Jerusalem. Then, in Jn 6:1 we read that Jesus is in Galilee, and soon afterwards we are told that he comes to Capernaum (Jn 6:24:59). To add further to the apparent "logistic confusion," Jn 7:23 takes us back to the healing story of Jn 5:1-18, as if these two chapters have been switched around. If one reverses the order of Jn 5 and Jn 6, the chronological sequence would make more sense.

¹⁰ "The more important of these concern eschatology (present or realized alongside future apocalyptic); signs (faith based on signs alongside a critical attitude to signs); sacraments (a sacramental attitude alongside non-sacramental or even an anti-sacramental perspective)." Urban C. von Wahdle, *The Earliest Version of John's Gospel. Recovering the Gospel of Signs* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989), 17.

the literary origins of this gospel or what came to be known as the Johannine problem.¹¹ In 1988 Fortna published a second work¹² in which he discusses the redaction additions within the signs material. In doing so, Fortna claims to have reviewed the theology of the original document. He regards his reconstruction not just as a book of signs but as a full-fledged gospel, culminating in a passion and resurrection narrative. According to Fortna, two different strata have been joined together by the author of the Fourth Gospel. One stratum contains the signs source while the other is an expansion of this source into the present gospel. Fortna concludes that the *aporias* could therefore best be explained as indications of Johannine additions to a pre-Johannine source.

A great appreciation of the importance of Johannine *aporias* came from Barnabas Lindars whose proposals have been praised as “a genuinely modern approach to the gospel ... casting a flood of light on hitherto obscure parts and features of it.”¹³ Lindars suggests that the abrupt transitions and apparent dislocations in the Fourth Gospel “make it impossible to regard it as written all in one piece.”¹⁴ Lindars is convinced that the Fourth Gospel is built upon a *Grundschrift* (a basic document) which was then expanded, redacted, and edited. For this reason, Lindars is particularly critical of Fortna’s efforts, arguing that the Fourth Gospel’s use of sources is hardly discernible any longer. Lindars, therefore, denies the success of source analysis, saying that “the creative composition places the precise underlying traditions beyond recovery.”¹⁵ With such an interpretative

¹¹ Adolf Von Harnack, *History of Dogma* (London, 1905), 1:96, seems to be the first one to articulate this problem calling it “the most marvellous enigma which the early history of Christology presents.” A survey on Johannine scholarship on this subject has been performed by Robert Kysar in his lengthy study, *The Fourth Evangelist and his Gospel: An Examination of Contemporary Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1975).

¹² Robert T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and its Predecessors: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988). See also, Robert T. Fortna, “Source and Redaction in the Fourth Gospel’s Portrayal of Jesus’ Signs,” *New Testament Studies* 21 (1974-75): 489-504.

¹³ Nigel M. Watson, “Barnabas Lindars’ Approach to John,” *Australian Biblical Review* 20 (1972): 43.

¹⁴ Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*. The New Century Bible Commentary, 2nd ed. (London: Eerdmans, 1995), 46-54. See also, Barnabas Lindars, *Behind the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1971).

¹⁵ Lindars, *Behind the Fourth Gospel*, 54. He neatly sums up the importance of looking behind the Fourth Gospel in this way: “Our assessment of John is bound up with the theory we form about its origins. The effort to get behind the Fourth Gospel is not simply a literary-critical game, but an inescapable task in the process of discovering the real meaning of it in the form in which we know it.” *Ibid.*, 22.

framework, Lindars determined the debate on the genesis of the Fourth Gospel in this direction.

A Sophisticated Literary Theory

The most sophisticated literary theory about the origins of the Fourth Gospel is that of Raymond E. Brown.¹⁶ In his two-volume commentary on the Fourth Gospel, Brown opens the way for developments in the field of Johannine studies that must be viewed as truly epoch-making. He recognized the puzzle that the Fourth Gospel is a fractured text and editorial traces are abundantly evident. Then, he makes a strong case for the view that the marks of alterations, insertions, and other editorial activity in this gospel indicate that the Johannine tradition was understood, interpreted, and developed at different stages of its transmission, in line with the particular purposes and interests of the community behind this gospel.

Brown charts five layers of tradition in the Fourth Gospel. In the first stage, he suggests the existence of traditional material concerning the words and deeds of Jesus.¹⁷ According to Brown, this material existed independently from the Synoptic tradition. In the second stage, Brown presents the development of this material into Johannine style through preaching and teaching over several decades. Short dramas were worked up around Jesus' miracles. Members of a "school"¹⁸ that had one principal teacher revising lengthy discourses. In the third stage, Brown suggests that the material from stage two was woven in the first edition of a consecutive gospel, the work of a master teacher or theologian. The fourth stage saw the second edition of this gospel by this same evangelist. This was aimed to meet objections or difficulties of groups like followers of John the Baptist, believers in Jesus associated with the synagogue, and others. In the fifth stage, Brown claims that a redactor – who was not the evangelist – added older material which had not yet been used. This redactor is certainly not Bultmann's

¹⁶ See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*. Anchor Bible 29 (Garden City/New York: Doubleday, 1966), xxxiv-xxxix.

¹⁷ It is interesting to compare Brown's theory of composition with that of Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 72-74; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1978), 133-134; Ernst Haenchen, *The Gospel of John*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1:74-90; Hengel, *The Johannine Question*, 102-108.

¹⁸ For a comparable concept see, R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools*. Society of Biblical Literature. Dissertation Series 26 (Missoula/MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1975).

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“ecclesiastical redactor” whose outlook on church and sacraments is thought to be quite foreign to that of the evangelist.¹⁹

According to Brown, chapters 15-17 were added to Jesus’ Supper Discourse with Jn 16:4-33 as a variant duplication of chapter 15. The same can be said of the Lazarus story: chapters 11 and 12 were possibly added at stages four and five. This insertion could have caused the shift of the episode of the cleansing of the temple to chapter 2. The Eucharistic words of Jesus at the Supper were placed in chapter 6. Brown also considers chapter 21 as the work of the redactor. Brown offers this schema only as a tentative theory while he confessed that this presentation is not conclusively proven nor does it present itself without difficulties.²⁰

John Painter hails Brown’s basic hypothesis as one which “has become increasingly persuasive”²¹ and one that “has the power to solve many problems raised by the text of the gospel as it has come down to us.”²² On similar grounds, John Ashton’s evaluation of redaction that have left its mark in the Fourth Gospel’s narrative concludes that despite the variety in the proposals, these reconstructions remain “the right kind of solutions.”²³

A number of other Johannine scholars has built on this foundation and defend the thesis that the Fourth Gospel must have grown hand in hand with the history of the Johannine community. It was the changing situation in the life of the Johannine Christians which led to the Christological developments in the Fourth Gospel, and which accounts for the presence of so many *aporias*.²⁴ Behind the *einmalig* (events reported) level of the Fourth Gospel, there are the contemporary events experienced by the Fourth Evangelist and his community.

¹⁹ Bultmann’s central argument is that the Fourth Gospel was originally written as an anti-sacramental document. An “ecclesiastical redactor” then added some passages which have clear sacramental references to make the gospel conform to the life of the “greater Church.” See Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 138-140, 300, 324-325, 325-328, 677-678.

²⁰ Brown, *The Gospel of John*, 1:xxxiv-xxxix. “All that we pretend to have done is to have given a working hypothesis for the study of the gospel, a hypothesis that combines the best details of the various theories (for the composition of the gospel) ... and avoids the more obvious difficulties.” *Ibid.*, xxix.

²¹ John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah: The History, Literature and Theology of the Johannine Community*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 2.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 246.

²⁴ See for example, Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 423.

J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*,²⁵ which C.K. Barrett considers as "the best attempt to provide a specific *Sitz im Leben* for the gospel,"²⁶ suggests that the Fourth Gospel is a two-level drama. Martyn likens the Fourth Gospel to an archaeological "tell" and considers it as a source which provides some information on the social history of the Johannine community.

In three respects the Fourth Gospel is comparable to what archaeologists call a 'tell.' (a) First, there are numerous literary strata, and to some extent these strata may be differentiated from one another. (b) Second, much of the substance of the 'materials' in the strata is of such a character as to reflect communal interests, concerns, and experiences. (c) Third, considered as a whole, this literary 'tell' exhibits a remarkable degree of stylistic and conceptual homogeneity. Now, taking into account all three of these observations, one sees that we are dealing with a stratified literary deposit from what archaeologists would call a single, continuous occupation. In other words, the literary history behind the Fourth Gospel reflects to a large degree the history of a single community which maintained over a period of some duration its particular and rather peculiar identity.²⁷

Martyn's reconstruction of the Johannine community is a three-act drama: the early period, the middle period, and the later period. According to Martyn, the early period in the history of the Johannine community involved the concept of a messianic group within the community of the synagogue.²⁸ Then, there

²⁵ J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), first published in 1968. Martyn followed this seminal work by his, "Glimpses into the History of the Johannine Community," in *The Gospel of John in Christian History: Essays for Interpreters* (New York: Paulist, 1978), 90-121. See also, J. Louis Martyn, "Source Criticism and *Religionsgeschichte* in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. John Ashton, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 121-146.

²⁶ Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 93, no.1.

²⁷ Martyn, *The Gospel of John in Christian History*, 90-91. In this regard, Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York/London: Paulist, 1979), 17, tells us: "Wellhausen and Bultmann were pioneers in insisting that the gospels tell us primarily about the church situation in which they were written, and only secondarily about the situation of Jesus *prima facie* they describe. I would prefer to rephrase that insight as follows: *Primarily*, the gospels tell us how an evangelist conceived of and presented Jesus to a Christian community in the last third of the first century, a presentation that indirectly gives us insight into that community's life at the time when the gospel was written. *Secondarily*, through source analysis, the gospels reveal something about the pre-gospel history of the evangelist's Christological views; indirectly they also reveal something about the community's history earlier in the century, especially if the sources the evangelist used had already been part of the community's heritage."

²⁸ Martyn, *The Gospel of John in Christian History*, 92, describes this period as a harmonious one that lasted for decades (ca. 46-85 CE). It involved the low-key message about Jesus as the

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came a second stage in which, according to Martyn, the messianic group became involved in a polemic with others in the synagogue.²⁹ Those representing the synagogue demanded an answer from the messianic group about the claims put forward on behalf of Jesus.³⁰ According to Martyn's reconstruction, the polemic of the Johannine community with the synagogue led to excommunication from the synagogue and martyrdom.³¹ Martyn focuses on Jn 9:22 where the parents of the man born blind refused to give testimony about how their son received sight "because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue."³² In view of this trauma, Martyn describes the later period in the history of the Johannine community as a time in which its members now become a separated community of Jewish Christians.³³

Messiah on traditional Jewish expectations. In his evaluation of Martyn's reconstruction, Ashton, *Understanding the Gospel of John*, 169, states that at this point the term "Messiah" could not be offensive to "the Jews," otherwise the Johannine group could not have formed part and lived within the synagogue.

²⁹ The title "Christ" formed the real issue in this debate as here would have been a gradual refinement of the Messianic terminology in a way that can no longer be expressed in the traditional messianic categories and far exceeds them in content. Jesus is *the Messiah/the Christ*, but the Christ who is the Son of God; the one who came from God to make God known. See Jn 11:27 and Jn 20:31.

³⁰ Ashton, *Understanding the Gospel of John*, 171, states: "There were then two distinct impulses towards a fresh and creative formulation of the traditions concerning Jesus: first the need to defend the faith against challenges from within the synagogue; secondly the growing awareness that Jesus was in his own person the fulfilment of much more than the messianic claims that had originally been made on his behalf."

³¹ Martyn builds up this argument on three Johannine texts: Jn 9:22; 12:42; 16:2 and strongly argues that the language concerning the expulsion from the synagogue mentioned in these texts is anachronistic and does not reflect a situation in Jesus' time.

³² Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 37, reconstructs the miracle story in Jn 9. He believes that "presented as a formal drama, and allowed to mount its actors, so to speak, on a two-level stage so that each is actually a pair of actors playing two parts simultaneously, John 9 impresses upon us its immediacy in such a way as strongly to suggest that some of its elements reflect actual experiences of the Johannine community ... It does not strike one as artificially contrived, nor does it appear to be composed merely in order to dramatize a theological point of view. At least in part, it seems to reflect experiences in the dramatic interaction between the synagogue and the Johannine church. To observe these reflections one needs only to be aware of the two-level stage."

³³ Martyn, *The Gospel of John in Christian History*, 106-107. According to Martyn, the concern of this community was now not so much with those who had not believed in Jesus, as with those who had believed but had hidden belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God and remained part of the synagogue.

David Rensberger is among a number of Johannine scholars who undertakes the task to show how Martyn's study of the Fourth Gospel has brought about a revolutionary change in understanding this gospel. He is convinced that "by revealing as never before the social and historical setting in which the gospel was written, and the conflicts in which the Johannine community was involved," a number of Johannine scholars "have opened up new possibilities in the interpretation of John."³⁴

On the other hand, a number of other Johannine scholars voiced their complaint on the recognition that there is a compositional history behind the Fourth Gospel developed in line with the history of the Johannine community. Adele Reinhartz, for example, remarks: "Indeed, because the Fourth Gospel makes no explicit reference to the Johannine community at all, one might question the possibility of deriving any socio historical information whatsoever from this gospel."³⁵

This brief survey established that a number of Johannine scholars are interested in the diachronic way of reading the Fourth Gospel, even though "the compositional methods of the evangelist have made this too uncertain to be practicable."³⁶ One of the difficulties in separating different layers of tradition

³⁴ David Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 15. See also, Martinus C. de Boer, "Narrative Criticism, Historical Criticism, and the Gospel of John," in *The Johannine Writings: A Sheffield Reader*. The Biblical Seminar 32, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 103; Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 69.

³⁵ Adele Reinhartz, "Woman in the Johannine Community: An Exercise in Historical Imagination," in *A Feminist Companion to John*, II, eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (Cleveland/OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2003), 14. For a similar statement see also, Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1999), 388; Judith M. Lieu, *The Second and Third Epistles of John* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 214; Judith M. Lieu, "Temple and Synagogue," *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 51-69.

³⁶ Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 28. This is due to the fact that the "clues that seem to indicate the use of sources and a process of redaction have led to no certain conclusions." Ibid., 61. Haward Marshall, "Historical Criticism," in *New Testament Interpretation. Essays in Principles and Methods*, ed. Haward Marshall (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), 127 offers a strong case in the same direction: "It will be clear that many factors enter into the historian's reconstruction of the past, and that he cannot always arrive at absolute certainty. Too often the sources are fragmentary and opaque, too often the original events are too complex for any source to reproduce them fully, too often several reconstructions of what happened are possible. The historian is frequently reduced to reasoned conjectures and assessments of comparative probabilities."

behind the Fourth Gospel lies in the fact that this gospel has a very unified style and language.³⁷

Competing Paradigms

The way that the historical-critical method had determined Johannine scholarship no longer has the explanatory power it once had. The emergence and development of a number of competing paradigms,³⁸ such as, narrative criticism, rhetorical criticism, psycho-analytical criticism, structural criticism, and reader-response criticism helped to undermine the authority of the historical-critical method and its results which lead the reader back into the world of reconstruction.³⁹ The first serious attack on the historical-critical method applied to the Fourth Gospel appeared in Alan Culpepper's seminar work, *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*.⁴⁰ At the outset, Culpepper harshly criticises the historical approach saying: "In the majority of studies the gospel has been used as a source for evidence of the process by which it was composed, the theology of the evangelist, or the character and circumstances of the Johannine community."⁴¹

Culpepper describes former research as using the model in the form of a "tell" in which archaeologists are able to unearth strata which derive from different historical periods."⁴² Instead of sorting out tradition and redaction, or engaging in historical reconstruction, Culpepper proposes a complete mental realignment that interprets the gospel as literature. His aim is to give value to the inherent

³⁷ See Giuseppe Segalla, *Giovanni* (Rome: Pauline, 1976), 74-85.

³⁸ While referring to the work of Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago 1962), Elisabeth S. Fiorenza in her book, *Rhetoric and Ethic: The Politics of Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 38, articulates a scientific paradigm as a common ethos that "constitutes a community of scholars formed by its institutions and systems of knowledge. However, a shift in scientific paradigm can take place only if and when the institutional conditions of knowledge production change."

³⁹ This trend is perhaps best evidenced by the collection of essays in *Semeia* 53, entitled *The Fourth Gospel from a Literary Perspective*, eds. R. Alan Culpepper and Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1991). In this issue of *Semeia*, six scholars investigate the Fourth Gospel using the above mentioned variety of literary methods.

⁴⁰ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). For contemporary reflections on Culpepper's achievement after Culpepper's publication, see *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present, and Futures of the Fourth Gospel as Literature*. Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study 55, eds. Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴² *Ibid.*

compositional unity of the Fourth Gospel's narrative in its final form, and thus to study "the gospel as it stands" and "how it works."⁴³ To use Paul Ricoeur's distinction from a historical process that may lie "behind" the text, Culpepper looks at what occurs "in front"⁴⁴ of the text.

Following the new literary methodologies of narratology, especially that of Gerard Genette,⁴⁵ and reader reception theory proposed by Wolfgang Iser,⁴⁶ Culpepper considers the Fourth Gospel as a "mirror" rather than a "window."⁴⁷ Through a window one can describe the history of the Johannine community. "This means that the meaning of the text is situated on the other side of the window. Consequently, the reader must search for the meaning of the text in its history."⁴⁸

This approach privileges the author and his intention as the proper hermeneutical key to what makes a valid reading.⁴⁹ But once the historical critic establishes the "original" meaning of a text, he has little else to do. A number of scholars, however, have become conscious of how difficult it is to establish the

⁴³ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁴ Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 142-144.

⁴⁵ See Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca/NY: Cornell University Press, 1980); Stephen Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 71-107 names this new breed of schools and examines their work up through 1988.

⁴⁶ See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reader: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁴⁷ This is a metaphor used by Murray Krieger, *A Window to Criticism: Shakespeare's Sonnets and Modern Poetics* (Princeton/NY: Princeton University Press, 1964), 3. Here Krieger considers the pre-new criticism approach as one which views language as a window with meaning coming through it. See also, Stephen Moore, "Mirror, Mirror ...' Lacanian Reflections on Malbon's Mark," in *Textual Determination (Part One)*, *Semeia* 62, eds. R.C. Culley and R.B. Robinson (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993): 168; Norman R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (Philadelphia: 1978), 19.

⁴⁸ Jan A. DuRand, "Plot and Point of View in the Gospel of John," in *A South African Perspective on the New Testament. Essays by South African New Testament Scholars Presented to Bruce Manning Metzger during his Visit to South Africa in 1985*, eds. Jacobus H. Petzer and Patrick J. Hartin (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 150.

⁴⁹ See Eric D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Eric D. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). While noting the varieties of new formalist, text-centered criticism, Frederic V. Bogel, *New Formalist Criticism: Theory and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9, states that "it rethinks the nature and significance of textual tensions, contradictions, and disharmonies; it displays a new concern for issues of power and politics, and it focuses energetically on cultural and political significances of form."

original meaning. They doubt that one can really get back behind the text, to look through the “window” onto that which lies beyond, such as the author or the historical circumstances in which the gospels were written.

Culpepper ranks among these scholars. He is convinced that historical criticism, even if useful and important in its own day, rests on a series of mistakes. In trying to avoid the traps which historical critics fell into, Culpepper recovers an appreciation of the text as an autonomous literary product. The text is understood as a holistic work and the interpreter can focus on how the text reveals itself in a variety of ways.⁵⁰ In his collection of essays on the Fourth Gospel, de Jonge signals this new direction which greatly influenced Johannine studies:

Behind the present study lies the assumption that the Fourth Gospel is a meaningful whole, highly complicated in structure, with many paradoxes and many tensions in thought and syntax, but yet asking to be taken seriously as a (more or less finished) literary product in which consistent lines of thought can be detected.⁵¹

On the same lines, H. Frei claims that in such an approach: “There is neither need for nor use in looking for meaning in a more profound stratum underneath the structure (a separable ‘subject matter’) or in a separable author’s ‘intention,’ or in a combination of such behind-the-scenes projections.”⁵²

Gulf Between the Different Approaches and Methods

Culpepper’s *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* has been praised as a path breaking in Johannine literary studies and was soon followed by many other Johannine scholars who looked for the synchronic stance of the Fourth Gospel.⁵³ Newer

⁵⁰ “The gospel achieves its most subtle effects, however, through its implicit commentary, that is, the devices and passages in which the author communicates with the reader by implication and indirection. Here the gospel says more than it ever makes explicit.” Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 233.

⁵¹ Marinus De Jonge, *Jesus, Stranger from Heaven and Son of God: Jesus Christ and the Christians in Johannine* (Missoula: Perspective Scholars, 1977), vii.

⁵² Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 281. Other fine studies on this subject include, Mark A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism? A New Approach to the Bible* (London: SPCK, 1993); Mark A. Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Michigan/MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 239-255; David Rhodes, “Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects,” in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism*. Journal for Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 184, eds. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 264-285.

⁵³ See the *Literary Approaches to John: A Bibliography* given by Mark W.G. Stibbe at the end of *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Perspective*, ed. Mark W.G.

ways of reading the Johannine text slowly moved in from the peripheries of scholarship. Mention must be made of a number of Commentaries on the Fourth Gospel, such as the one by Mark W.G. Stibbe which takes this approach to the Johannine text.⁵⁴ Thomas L. Brodie's⁵⁵ work may be considered as one of the first full-scale Commentary on the Fourth Gospel in English to adopt a sustained literary approach to the work. A number of publications on Johannine characters gave fresh insights to promote a comprehensive theory on how these characters function within this Johannine narrative.⁵⁶ In these and other works, one can see how such a different interpretative framework directly and severely affects the established practice of the historical-critical method.

Painter mentions that the study of the Fourth Gospel as literature "is the fruit of our time."⁵⁷ He quotes David F. Strauss' famous saying referring to this gospel as "a seamless robe,"⁵⁸ a description "intended to draw attention to the uniform wholeness of the gospel."⁵⁹ Painter, however, immediately reminds us of the exceptions to this impression taking notice of the various *aporias* in the text

Stibbe (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 249-254. In addition, see Dorothy A. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 95 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

⁵⁴ Mark W.G. Stibbe, *John, Readings: A New Biblical Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993). See also, Mark W.G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel*. Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series 73 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), in which he shows the different elements that literary criticism, in this particular case narrative criticism, might be used in the examination of the Fourth Gospel.

⁵⁵ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel according to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁵⁶ See for example, Stan Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 229 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); James M. Howard, "The Significance of Minor Characters in the Gospel of John," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163 (2006): 63-78; Cornelis Bennema, "The Character of John in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52 (2009): 271-284; Philip Esler and Ronald Piper, *Lazarus, Mary and Martha: A Social-Scientific and Theological Reading of John* (London: SCM, 2006); Susan Hylén, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009); *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*. Library of New Testament Studies 461, ed. Christopher W. Skinner (London: New Delhi: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

⁵⁷ Painter, *The Quest of the Messiah*, 4.

⁵⁸ "Might not this very gospel itself be said to be that seamless robe of which it tells us, about which one may draw lots but which one may not divide?" Wilbert F. Howard, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation* (London: Epworth, 1931), 258.

⁵⁹ Painter, *The Quest of the Messiah*, 4.

of the Fourth Gospel, which for him are “evidence of a process of composition in a series of editions.”⁶⁰ Thus, he complains that narrative critics ignore or too easily dismiss these inconsistencies that can shed light on the textual pre-history of this gospel. In his *Studying John*, Ashton launches similar attacks on literary approaches.⁶¹ He claims that the apparent breaks in the Fourth Gospel must be accounted for by source-critical means and not by interpretations based on “a priori principles” about the textual unity of this gospel.

Scholars who attempt any close and detailed analysis of the gospel’s structure or its plot ... find themselves in a trackless waste, and seem condemned to trudge doggedly through its shifting sands, covering a lot of ground but getting nowhere. This pathetic vision of the aimlessly wandering exegete is no doubt more likely to elicit scorn than sympathy; but in fact narrative critics see themselves in a very different light: not as victims but as heroes, champions of a new and noble cause. Undaunted by the so-called *aporias* of the Fourth Gospel, and throwing a pair of enormous brackets around the historical hypotheses of their colleagues, they possess as *if* the gospel was designed from the outset in its present form.⁶²

Modern literary critics, however, come to just the opposite conclusion as they are calling into question at a very fundamental level this traditional line of argumentation. Given the shift away from textual disruption to textual smoothness, scholars are recognizing that the Fourth Evangelist may have deliberately inserted passages that we find difficult.⁶³ New approaches and methods, then, propose a coherent reading of the text as it presently stands is quite possible where every detail of the text plays a significant part in the narrator’s rhetorical strategy.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ John Ashton, “Narrative Criticism,” in *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon: 1994), 144.

⁶² Ibid., 144-145.

⁶³ On this point see, Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 143-155. See also, Werner Kelber, “Narrative as Interpretation and Interpretation as Narrative: Hermeneutical Reflections on the Gospels,” *Semeia* 39 (1987): 107-133.

⁶⁴ The interpreter must, therefore, attempt to read the Fourth Gospel’s narrative in the light of this possibility as Egger’s comment shows: “With ancient texts ... the coherence factors that we apply to modern texts are not unconditionally valid. The kind of argumentation used by the author can differ from what modern logic expects, just as the intended effect of a text can be achieved through different strategies from those of modern texts. Under certain circumstances stylistic breaks and rapid semantic transitions can correspond to an author’s or an editor’s specific intention.” Wilhem Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1996), 20. For an overview of

Due to the different points of departure and because they move towards sometimes rival aims, these new methods and approaches may seem at times to rest uncomfortably next to the historical approach. More than this, the new literary methodologies seem simply tempted to substitute narrative for history. They tend to bypass “excavative concerns”⁶⁵ and come very close at times to an explicit rejection of the need for such concerns. An extract from Godfrey C. Nicholson’s statement speaks for itself. He starts by accepting “that the text [of the Fourth Gospel] appears to have had a long prehistory.” Then, he immediately highlights that the meaning of the text as it stands is not dependent upon the recovery of the sources behind this text. His conclusion runs as follows: “It does not matter where this earlier material came from ... Even if the sources were recovered, focusing attention on them would only serve to distract us from our task of reading the Evangelist’s text.”⁶⁶ On similar grounds, Fernando F. Segovia raises the question whether literary criticism undermines the very presuppositions of source criticism.

There can be little doubt that the gulf between the more traditional approach and the newer approaches becomes increasingly wide and extremely difficult to negotiate: the more any text is shown to be meaningful and coherent as it stands, the more difficult it becomes to accept the presence of *aporias* as traditionally conceived and defined, to argue for substantial reconstructions of underlying sources and subsequent redactions, and to begin with the prehistory of the text in the search for meaning.⁶⁷

Walter Wink has gone as far as to assess the historical-critical method as “bankrupt,” arguing that this “critical method has reduced the Bible to a dead letter.”⁶⁸ The 1993 Document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on Biblical Interpretation, though it uses the historical-critical method as a control on the other biblical approaches, it accepts a two-fold reaction against this approach. Besides the criticism coming from the recent synchronic approaches which look

methodological developments from the historical-critical method to newer methods, see Francis J. Moloney, *The Living Voice of the Gospels* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 309-342.

⁶⁵ Fernando F. Segovia, “The Journey(s) of the Word of God: A Reading of the Plot of the Fourth Gospel,” in *The Fourth Gospel from a Literary Perspective*, *Semeia* 53 (1991):24.

⁶⁶ Godfrey C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Schema*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 63 (Chico/CA: Scholars, 1983), 15-16.

⁶⁷ Fernando F. Segovia, “Towards a New Direction in Johannine Scholarship: The Fourth Gospel from a Literary Perspective,” in *The Fourth Gospel from a Literary Perspective*, *Semeia* 53 (1991): 14.

⁶⁸ Walter Wink, *Transformation: Toward a New Paradigm for Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 1, 4.

at the texts primarily as finished units, this Document includes also the criticism of many members of the faithful:

Scientific exegesis, they claim, is notable for its sterility in what concerns progress in the Christian life. Instead of making for easier and more access to the living sources of God's Word, it makes the Bible a closed book. Interpretation may always have been something of a problem, but now it requires such technical refinements as to render it a domain reserved for a few specialists alone.⁶⁹

In his evaluation of this Document, J. Holman writes that "the community of faithful has clearly indicated that it cannot bake bread to feed its soul from the material which historical criticism offers."⁷⁰ Such comments help us to pause and reflect. Asking new questions and areas of analysis of the text by shifting the focus from the world outside the gospel to the world of the story itself is not only illuminating in the field of Johannine literary research. It also shed new light on the meaning of the Fourth Gospel in ways that the historical-critical method would find less easy to substantiate.

This criticism, however, does not suggest that "historical critics are an endangered species; nor does it present any good reasons why they should be regarded by proponents of new paradigms as lost souls beyond redemption."⁷¹ The historical-critical method that has dominated biblical scholarship for a long time remains legitimate, and will continue to orchestrate some of its tasks. But in spite of its validity, this method cannot claim to enjoy a monopoly as it did in the past.

This is one of the most important conclusions reached by Anthony C. Thiselton whose observations make it very clear that "a hermeneutics preoccupied only with what lies 'behind the text' is not enough."⁷² Robert Morgan reaches a

⁶⁹ *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 31. https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/catholic/pbcinterpretation.htm (accessed 10th May, 2022). A number of scholars have noted how these new approaches could bridge the gap between specialists and other people who want to read the text as Sacred Scripture. See Ben F. Meyer, "The Challenges of Text and Reader to the Historical-Critical Method," in *The Bible and Its Readers*, eds., Wim Beuken, Sean Freyne and Aton Weiler (London: SCM, 1991), 3-12; Leland White, "Historical and Literary Criticism: A Theological Response," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 13 (1983): 32-34.

⁷⁰ J. Holman, "A Dutch Catholic Perspective," in *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, ed. J.L. Houlden (London: SCM, 1995), 131.

⁷¹ John Barton, "Historical-Critical Approaches," in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18.

⁷² Anthony C. Thiselton, "New Testament Interpretation in Historical Perspective," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids/MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 27.

similar: “The step from using historical *methods* to defending the *aims* of biblical scholarship in exclusively historical terms sets it at odds with the interests of most other readers and students of the Bible.”⁷³

Bridging the Methods and Approaches

Culpepper calls for a “dialogue” between the narrative and the historical approaches.⁷⁴ The plea to build a bridge between these two approaches is voiced also by Meir Sternberg who writes that both the diachronic and the synchronic methods of biblical interpretation “must join forces with each other.”⁷⁵ Similarly, Adelo Y. Collins calls the two approaches “complementary” as she writes that we:

Give more weight to the original historical context of the text. This context cannot and should not totally determine all subsequent meaning and use of the text. But if, as I am convinced, all meaning is context bound, the original context and meaning have a certain normative character. I suggest that Biblical theologians are not only mediators between genres. They are also mediators between historical periods ... Whatever tension there may be between literary and historical-critical methods, the two approaches are complementary.⁷⁶

More recently, Jaime Clark-Soles provides a bridge between historical-critical approaches and literary ones to the Fourth Gospel’s use of Scripture for socio-historical purposes.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the application of rhetorical critical approaches both to the world of John’s text and the world in front of this text has

⁷³ Robert Morgan, *Biblical Interpretation*. The Oxford Bible Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 171.

⁷⁴ Culpepper, *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, 5. Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 5, also tried to take up the challenge to design a constructive collaboration of diachronic and synchronic reading of the biblical text. He is conscious of how “some recent literary studies celebrate the passing of historical critical methods and the use of two new paradigms, ‘literary criticism and social world criticism.’” He claims that “this comment is made, not from a perspective that rejects insights from a literary perspective, but with the insistence that the new should be joined with the old in a critical way.” Ibid.

⁷⁵ Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative. Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 25.

⁷⁶ Adelo Y. Collins, “Narrative, History and Gospel,” *Semeia* 43 (1988): 150, 153. See also, Thomas R. Hatina, “Memory and Method: Theorizing John’s Mnemonic Use of Scripture,” in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: volume 4 – The Gospel of John*. Library of New Testament Studies 613, ed. Thomas R. Hatina (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2020), 232, who argues: “Diachronic inquiry still remains necessary for a fuller contribution to exegesis, but it does so in the service of the synchronic.”

⁷⁷ Jaime Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Social Function of the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). For a literary concern about Clark-Soles work see, Ruth

been used also by those scholars who appeal to intertextuality, that is the use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁸

Nicholas Lash argues for a dialectical process back and forth across the bridge, rather than the model of “passing on the relay race baton.” “We do not *first* understand the past and *then* proceed to understand the present. The relationship between these two dimensions of our quest of meaning and truth is dialectical: they mutually inform, enable, correct and enlighten each other.”⁷⁹

Such statements are the result of the confidence that no single interpretation of the Fourth Gospel has the final word. “The meaning of a text is inexhaustible because no context can provide all the keys to all of its possibilities.”⁸⁰ Many scholars, however, see the goal of bridging the historical-critical method with the new literary methods as highly optimistic, and thus, whether a diachronic and synchronic approach can be orchestrated is still an open question. Whatever the outcome, a synchronic approach should not be regarded as an alternative but as a supplement to a diachronic approach. The exegetical benefits of all these approaches and methods are numerous making it very likely that both the historical-critical method and the literary studies will continue to be important components of Johannine research.

This is Beutler’s view in his evaluation of a collection of essays on the study of the Fourth Gospel from a literary perspective.⁸¹ Beutler provides a very cautious position as he acknowledges the great contribution to our insight into New Testament texts brought about by the shift from diachronic to synchronic methods of interpretation. At the same time, he also points out that despite its many shortcomings, the historical-critical method has proved to be of immense value in many ways. For this reason, Beutler claims that it would be a mistake if

Sheridan, *Retelling Scripture: “The Jews” and the Scriptural Citations in John 1:19-12:15*. Biblical Interpretation Series 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 34.

⁷⁸ See for example, Catrin H. Williams, “Isaiah in John’s Gospel,” in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, eds. Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2007); Gary T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet: The Use of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John and in the Literature of the Second Temple Period*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 270 (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

⁷⁹ Nicholas Lash, “Interpretation and Imagination,” in *Incarnation and Myth: The Debate Continued*, ed. Michael D. Gouder (London: SCM, 1979), 25.

⁸⁰ Edgar V. McKnight, *Post-Modern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader-Oriented Criticism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 241.

⁸¹ See Johannes Beutler, “Response from a European Perspective,” in *The Fourth Gospel from a Literary Perspective*, *Semeia* 53 (1991): 191-202.

one considers the literary approach as the only applicable method in Johannine research; a historical approach remains indispensable.

Each of these methods and approaches grew up in their respective periods and have their justification, and their importance too, in their own particular contexts. If today we may question these methods, this is mainly because the study of the Fourth Gospel is still on the move hermeneutically and theologically. The exchange of methods, therefore, may be also considered as a sign of life. Even though the lack of a clear or unified approach to Johannine scholarship has demonstrated a situation of frustration,⁸² “Regardless of the differences, ongoing research has both refined previous approaches and pioneered new ones, producing divergent conclusions from previously established ones.”⁸³

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⁸² This is how M. Kessler introduces his article on rhetorical criticism: “Discussions dealing with biblical methods of interpretations have become a veritable confusion of tongues.” M. Kessler, “A Methodological Setting for Rhetoric Criticism,” in *Art and Meaning Rhetoric in Biblical Literature*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 19, eds. D.J.A. Clines, D.M.Gunn, Alan J.Hauser (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 1. Similarly, John Ashton, “John and Johannine Literature: The Woman at the Well,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 26, rightly points out: “There are probably as many methods of biblical criticism as there are kinds of music, and as many new methods as there are kinds of pop music. The champions of the new methods are likely to dismiss the censures of old-fashioned historical critics just as abruptly as admirers of, say, heavy metal tradition. The result is a *dialogue de sourds*, with each side convinced of the deafness of the other.”

⁸³ Kyle R.L. Parsons, “Search the Scriptures: A Survey of Approaches to the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels*, 25.