

The Prologue of the Gospel of John

Edited by
JAN G. VAN DER WATT,
R. ALAN CULPEPPER,
and UDO SCHNELLE

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The Prologue of the Gospel of John

Its Literary, Theological, and
Philosophical Contexts. Papers read at the
Colloquium Ioanneum 2013

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Jan G. van der Watt, R. Alan Culpepper,
and Udo Schnelle

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Table of Contents

Foreword.....	VII
Abbreviations	XIX

Part 1

Confronting the Challenges of the Prologue

R. Alan Culpepper

The Prologue as Theological Prolegomenon to the Gospel of John	3
----------------------------------------------------------------------	---

John Ashton

Really a Prologue?.....	27
-------------------------	----

William R. G. Loader

The Significance of the Prologue for Understanding John's Soteriology.....	45
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Jan van der Watt

John 1:1 – A “Riddle”? Grammar and Syntax Considered	57
------------------------------------------------------------	----

Catrin H. Williams

(Not) Seeing God in the Prologue and Body of John's Gospel	79
------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Ruben Zimmermann

John (the Baptist) as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: The Narrative Strategy of a Witness Disappearing.....	99
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Michael Theobald

Eine Gemeinschaft von „Zeugen“ (von Joh 1:7, 15 bis 3 Joh 12): Beobachtungen zur Genese des <i>Corpus Iohanneum</i> auf der Basis des Prologs	117
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Christos Karakolis

The Logos-Concept and Dramatic Irony in the Johannine Prologue and Narrative	139
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Part 2

Reading the Language and Concepts of the Prologue in Their Philosophical Context

Udo Schnelle

Philosophische Interpretation des Johannesevangeliums: Voraussetzungen, Methoden und Perspektiven.....	159
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Jörg Frey

Between Torah and Stoa: How Could Readers Have Understood the Johannine Logos?.....	189
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Craig R. Koester

“Spirit” (<i>Pneuma</i>) in Greco-Roman Philosophy and the Gospel of John	235
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

George L. Parsenios

Confounding Foes and Counseling Friends: <i>Parrēsia</i> in the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman Philosophy	251
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Marianne Meye Thompson

“Light” (φῶς): The Philosophical Content of the Term and the Gospel of John	273
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Jean Zumstein

„Zeichen“ (σημεῖον): Philosophischer Inhalt und Gebrauch des Begriffs im Johannesevangelium	285
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

List of Contributors	303
----------------------------	-----

Bibliography	305
--------------------	-----

Index of Ancient Authors	329
--------------------------------	-----

Index of Modern Authors	337
-------------------------------	-----

The Logos-Concept and Dramatic Irony in the Johannine Prologue and Narrative

Christos Karakolis

“Dramatic irony” as a literary device is not identical with irony in general, and not necessarily connected with ancient Greek drama. In the Gospel of John it involves a deeper understanding of a situation shared by the implied author and the implied readers,¹ as well as a couple of characters (such as Jesus, his mother² or John the Baptist), but not shared by other characters (such as the disciples, the Jews, the Pharisees, and the chief priests). It also presupposes the existence of a story in the background of the narrative level, which is already known to the implied author and readers,³ but not to

¹ The implied readers are qualified and able to adequately understand how the implied author speaks and what he actually means on the level of the narrative, cf. P. D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 34–35. It goes without saying that these categories are not (necessarily) relevant for the true historical author and readership of the gospel.

² In the first sign at Cana Jesus’ mother betrays a deeper understanding of who Jesus actually is and what he can do, cf. C. K. Karakolis, *Ἡ θεολογικὴ σημασία τῶν θαυμάτων στὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην Εὐαγγέλιο* (Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 1997), 106.

³ Cf. D. W. Wead, *The Literary Devices in John’s Gospel* (Theologische Dissertationen 4; Basel: Reinhardt, 1970), 52. In our case this story is introduced to the implied readers right at the beginning, in order that even if they are not aware of the Logos concept and story they become familiarized with them in the story’s introduction, so that they are able to follow and understand it. In the Gospel of John there seem to be several categories of possible or probable implied readers (such as members of the Johannine community, members of different Christian communities, followers of John the Baptist, Jewish sympathizers and Jewish adversaries, as well as gentile-Christians or even gentiles). The prologue makes sure that all categories of implied readers share the knowledge that is necessary for following the Gospel’s narrative and for finally reaching its aim, which is believing in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God (20:31). Addressing multiple categories of recipients on different levels of understanding is a fundamental characteristic of dramatic irony, cf. P. Vellacott, *Ironic Drama: A Study of Euripides’ Method and Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 24. The problem of whether πιστεύετε or πιστεύσητε was the original writing (thus Wead, *Devices*, 52) is not important for deciding whether the implied readers are Christian or non-Christian, as the Fourth Gospel applies both usages to both believers and non-believers, see 1:7; 6:29–35; 9:36; 10:38; 11:15, 42; 12:36; 17:21; 19:35.

the characters of the narrative or at least not to all of them. What is more, occasionally the ignorant characters of the narrative unknowingly confirm the preexisting story and even serve the deeper understanding of the situation at hand through their actions and words,⁴ while on the conscious level they either genuinely do not understand (as is the case of the disciples and Nicodemus),⁵ or they refuse to believe in the truth of the story, and fight against the deeper understanding of their own situation that derives from it (as is the case of the Jewish authorities).⁶ J. Resseguie defines dramatic (also termed situational) irony as follows:

Situational irony depends for its success on an incongruity or contradiction between what a speaker says and what the author intends.⁷ Whereas in verbal irony a contradiction or incongruity – shared by both speaker and reader – exists between what is said and what is intended, in situational irony the speaker is naïve about the irony and unaware that he or she is being ironical. Only the author and reader share insight into the irony. ... In Sophocles' *Oedipus*, for instance, the audience knows something that Oedipus does not. Oedipus hunts for the person whose actions have caused a plague upon Thebes. Although the audience knows that Oedipus caused the plague by committing incest and patricide, Oedipus himself is unaware that the hunter is the hunted. This form of irony is also called *dramatic irony* because the audience or reader shares knowledge with the author about present or future circumstances of which the character is ignorant.⁸

Many of the ironic aspects of the Fourth Gospel have already been highlighted and elaborated in research.⁹ To our knowledge, however, the concept and the story of the Logos have not yet been examined from the concrete point of view of dramatic irony, although they are crucial for its function within the Johannine narrative due to the following reasons:

1. The concept of the Logos as a personal entity does not appear at all within the Johannine narrative, but is exclusively used in the prologue. This means that both the content and the story of Logos are only shared by the

⁴ The most characteristic example in this regard is the saying of Caiaphas in 11:49–52, cf. the relevant analyses by Wead, *Devices*, 53–54 (n. 3); J. L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 70–71; and Duke, *Irony*, 87–89 (n. 1).

⁵ See for instance 3:4, 9–10; 4:31–34; 13:27–29; 14:8–9.

⁶ See for instance 2:18–21; 5:17–18; 7:33–36; 9:16, 24, 29. Characteristically, in 5:17–18 the Jewish authorities rightly perceive Jesus' claim, but they refuse to believe in him and instead they intend to kill him.

⁷ Situational or dramatic irony does not only function on the level of words, but also on the level of actions. Resseguie makes this clear in his further description of the function of this particular kind of irony using the example of Sophocles, *Oedipus tyrannus*.

⁸ Resseguie, *Criticism*, 68 (n. 4).

⁹ Cf. among others R. A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (FF; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 165–80; Wead, *Devices*, esp. 49–68 (n. 3); A. T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), esp. 33–35.

implied author and the implied readers, but not by the narrative's characters.¹⁰ Thus, the latter remain unaware that Jesus as the Logos is the world's co-creator, as well as that he is the one who reveals God to the world. The existence of such a concept and story known to the audience, but not to the narrative characters is the presupposition *per se* for the function of dramatic irony.¹¹

2. Within the Johannine prologue the Greek word *λόγος* bears a double meaning (*double entendre*).¹² Within the Johannine context it refers to the preexistent and only-begotten Son of God and thus to a divine and personal entity. However, there is also an implicit and at the same time self-evident meaning of the word that any Greek-speaking reader of the prologue would unavoidably gather, namely the one of the spoken word that is spoken by any individual, human or divine.¹³ A word and a notion that can be understood in a twofold way is an important tool for the shaping of irony, as well as of dramatic irony in particular,¹⁴ especially when the audience understands both meanings while the narrative characters' understanding is only limited to one of them. In the present paper I will firstly highlight those elements of the prologue's concept and story of the Logos that are instrumental in the function of dramatic irony within the Fourth Gospel. I will then attempt to demonstrate how these elements are interconnected with corresponding elements of the Johannine narrative on the level of dramatic irony using some examples from the story of the healing of the lame man (5:1–18). I will conclude my analysis with the formulation of

¹⁰ Even narrative characters who share a deeper understanding of Jesus' person and work, such as John the Baptist (cf. C. H. Williams, "John [the Baptist]: The Witness on the Threshold," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* [ed. S. A. Hunt, D. F. Tolmie, and R. Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013], 58–60), never use Logos as a title.

¹¹ Since the prologue's narrative is exclusively addressed to the implied readers of the Gospel (and not to its characters), it is one-dimensional, as opposed to the main gospel narrative that functions on (at least) two levels: the level of the narrative characters (lower level) and the level of the implied readers (upper level), cf. on this distinction D. C. Muecke, *The Compass of Irony* (London: Methuen, 1969), 19.

¹² On the use of double meaning as a literary device in John see Wead, *Devices*, 30–46 (n. 3). However, Wead fails to mention Logos as being one of the Johannine terms with a twofold meaning.

¹³ I will not enter here the discussion about the possible philosophical background of the term Logos. I am limiting myself to the narrative level of the Gospel, on which I fail to see any philosophical connotation of the word whatsoever, cf. C. Karakolis, "Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος ... Τό ἀποκλειστικά παλαιδιαθηκικό ὑπόβαθρο, ἡ μετεξέλιξη καί ἡ θεολογική σημασία τοῦ ὄρου 'Λόγος' στό κατά Ἰωάννην Εὐαγγέλιο," in *Ὁ Θεός τῆς Βίβλου καί ὁ Θεός τῶν φιλοσόφων* (ed. S. Zoumboulakis; Athens: Artos Zoes, 2012), 140–62. I also limit my implied readers to those who lack a philosophical background, and therefore read the Gospel exclusively through biblical lenses.

¹⁴ Cf. Wead, *Devices*, 52 (n. 3).

some thoughts concerning the function of dramatic irony within the Johannine narrative on the basis of the Logos-concept, as well as the possible rationale behind its application by the implied author.

I.

Perhaps the most important property of the Johannine Logos is his divinity (θεός ᾧν ὁ λόγος, 1:1).¹⁵ Judging from the position of this statement right at the beginning of the prologue, it is crucial for the understanding not only of the prologue as such, but also of the Gospel as a whole. The Logos' divinity explains his preexistence (ἐν ἀρχῇ ᾧν ὁ λόγος), as well as his unique relationship with God (ᾧν πρὸς τὸν θεόν).¹⁶ In this regard it is noteworthy that while for instance Matthew and Mark stress Jesus' messianic identity as the most important clue for understanding the true nature of his person and work right from their first verse,¹⁷ in John the messianic title χριστός only appears in 1:17, whereas the often synonymous title υἱός (τοῦ) θεοῦ is

¹⁵ Cf. also the *inclusio* in 1:18: μονογενῆς θεός ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, as well as the confession of Thomas in 20:28: ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου.

¹⁶ Apart from 1:1, in the Gospel of John there is no other case, in which πρὸς + accusative replaces παρά + dative in the sense of static local proximity, according to the interpretation of R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*, Vol. I (5th ed.; HTKNT IV/1; Freiburg etc.: Herder, 1981), 210–11; J. J. Kanagaraj, "Mysticism" in *the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into Its Background* (JSNTSup 158; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 291–92; U. Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (THKNT 4; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 31. On the contrary, there are nine cases in which the implied author indeed uses παρά + dative in the sense of local proximity (cf. esp. 8:38; 17:5), while there are also 91 verses in which he uses πρὸς + dative with a variety of other meanings (cf. LSJ, "πρὸς," 1497–99), but never with the meaning of static local proximity, a meaning that is indeed witnessed in the koine, although being stylistically clumsy in the light of classical Greek usage. On the basis of these observations the question arises why the implied author chooses only at this point to use the expression πρὸς + accusative instead of using παρά + dative. One of the effects this usage might have upon the implied readers would be to combine the meaning of a person's continuous movement towards another person in a living relationship (πρὸς + accusative) with the idea of static continuity (εἰμῆ). In the theological context of the prologue this would actually mean a combination of the Logos' eternal preexistence and his continuous movement towards God, cf. L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 67, n. 14; F. J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 42.

¹⁷ As a matter of fact all three Synoptic Gospels begin by presenting Jesus as the awaited Messiah (Matt 1:1; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:32–33), cf. M. D. Hooker, *Beginnings: Keys That Open the Gospels* (London: SCM, 1997), 9–10, 26, 49–50.

used for the first time *expressis verbis* in 1:34.¹⁸ Therefore, since the Johannine narrative begins with a reference to the preexistent and divine Logos, it is in the light of this concept that all christological titles applied to Jesus throughout the Johannine narrative,¹⁹ as well as any other information about him, should actually be understood.²⁰

The Logos is instrumental in creating the world. The prologue asserts that nothing exists, which has not been created through him (1:2). In the creation account of Gen 1, on which John 1:1–4 is some kind of a mid-rash,²¹ God practically creates everything through his spoken word: He speaks and thereupon his creation comes into being.²² The Johannine prologue interprets this account by clearly implying that God's spoken word is actually identical with the divine person of the Logos. In other words, the whole of creation should recognize as its creator, and therefore also as its proprietor, not only God, but also the divine Logos (1:10–11).

According to 1:4, in the Logos "there was life and this life was the light of the human beings." Hartmut Gese considers the categories of life and light as being identical not only in the Johannine prologue, but also in biblical thought as a whole.²³ On this basis, 1:9 should also be interpreted in the same sense. In 1:4 φῶς stands for the creational life specifically given to all human beings as a separate and valuable gift, in contrast to the creation of all other beings (cf. 1:3). In a similar way the word ζῶή is normally connected with human beings and never, explicitly at least, with

¹⁸ In 1:14 there is only an allusion to this title through the use of the word *μονογενής*, which clearly implies the word *υἶος* (cf. 1:18; 3:16, 18), cf. Schnackenburg, *Johannes-evangelium*, 1:246–47 (n. 16).

¹⁹ Ἀμὼς τοῦ θεοῦ (1:29, 36), υἶος τοῦ θεοῦ (explicitly in 1:34, 49; 3:18; 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31 and implicitly in 1:14, 18; 3:16–17, 35–36; 5:19–23, 26; 6:40; 8:35–36; 14:13; 17:1), *χριστός-μессίας* (1:17, 41; 3:28; 4:25–26, 29; 7:31, 41; 9:22; 10:24–25; 11:27; 17:3; 20:31), υἶος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (1:51; 3:13–14; 5:27; 6:27, 52, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23, 34; 13:31), βασιλεύς (1:49; 12:13, 15; 18:33–39; 19:3, 12, 14–15, 19, 21), κύριος (1:23; 6:23, 68; 9:38; 11:2, 27; 20:18, 20, 25, 28; 21:7, 12 among other references), θεός (1:1, 18; 20:28).

²⁰ Cf. Hooker, *Beginnings*, 74 (n. 17).

²¹ Cf. P. Borgen, "Observations on the Targumic Character of the Prologue of John," *NTS* 16 (1970): 288–95; cf. also D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 89–111.

²² See the analysis of K. Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 1 Teilband: *Kapitel 1–10* (TKNT 4/1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 43–44; J. A. Du Rand, "The Creation Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Perspectives on Its Narratological Function within a Jewish Background," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar* (ed. G. van Belle, J. G. van der Watt, and P. Maritz; BETL 184; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 39–40; Karakolis, "Ἐν ἀρχῇ," 143–46 (n. 13).

²³ H. Gese, "Der Johannesprolog," in idem, *Zur biblischen Theologie: Alttestamentliche Vorträge* (BEvT 78; Munich: Kaiser, 1977), 191.

the rest of creation.²⁴ Even in the cases that ζωή refers to the word κόσμος, it seems to be referring, at least primarily, to the human world and not to the created world as a whole.²⁵ According to the above mentioned, the light (= life) of the Logos becomes the life of all human beings. Thus, the Logos is instrumental not only in the creation of the world as a whole, but also of the human beings in particular.

The light of the Logos could not be overcome by the darkness,²⁶ which means that the Logos is actually invincible since the darkness has been the dominant element before, and metaphorically speaking even after, creation (cf. 3:19; 12:46). If darkness cannot defeat the light of the Logos, then there is nothing that could defeat him. On the contrary, he is the one being dominant upon the whole of creation, including human beings.

In 1:10–11 there is a noteworthy contrast between the verbs ἦν (1:10) and ἦλθεν (1:11). In the prologue whenever the verb ἦν (= εἶμι) in the imperfect signifying temporal duration²⁷ has or implies the λόγος as its subject it refers to the Logos as a preexistent and eternal being.²⁸ This even applies to 1:10. Although here ἦν could theoretically also be referring to the time after the incarnation,²⁹ in the light of Jesus' request in 17:5 it would rather seem that ἦν actually refers to the time after creation.³⁰ On the

²⁴ C. R. Koester, "What Does It Mean to Be Human? Imagery and the Human Condition in John's Gospel," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (ed. J. Frey, J. G. van der Watt, and R. Zimmermann; WUNT 200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 405–06.

²⁵ Cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 188. There is a similar idea of God taking special care for creating the human beings in Gen 2:7, as opposed to the rest of creation that only comes into being through God's spoken word.

²⁶ Cf. O. Hofius, "Struktur und Gedankengang des Logos-Hymnus in Joh 1,1–18," in idem and H.-Ch. Kammler, *Johannesstudien: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des vierten Evangeliums* (WUNT 88; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 17–18; du Rand, "Creation Motif," 40 (n. 22), who interpret κατέλαβεν as overcoming and not as perceiving, due to its immediate context that refers to the creation account of Gen 1; contra Resseguie, *Criticism*, 64–65 (n. 4); Duke, *Irony*, 144 (n. 1), who at this point see a *double entendre*.

²⁷ Cf. Morris, *John*, 65 (n. 16).

²⁸ 1:1–2, 9–10, 15. From a certain point of view, this even applies to the usage of ἦν in 1:8, 15. In 1:8 the clause οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς about John the Baptist implies that the Logos was the one who indeed ἦν τὸ φῶς. Furthermore, the first ἦν of 1:15 (οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον) would also seem to be allusively pointing at the Logos's preexistence, especially when combined with the second ἦν of the same verse (ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν).

²⁹ Cf. Hofius, "Struktur," 19, n. 116 (n. 26); A. T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John* (BNTC 4; London: Continuum, 2005), 101–02.

³⁰ Contra Schnackenburg, *Johannesevangelium*, 1:232–33 (n. 16). John 17:5 clearly signifies a change in the status of the Logos after creation and not after incarnation, as D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Pillar New Testament Commentary; Leicester/Grand Rapids: InterVarsity/Eerdmans, 1991), 557, concludes based on E. Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (ed. U. Busse; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980), 502. According

contrary, whenever in the prologue a verb in the aorist is used having λόγος as its subject (1:11, 14, 18) it clearly refers to the Logos' relation with the world after his incarnation. According to the above the Logos never actually left the world after its creation (cf. 5:17).³¹ However, although the Logos remained uninterruptedly in the world – even during the time between creation and incarnation – and the world had been created through him, the world as a whole did not recognize him. It is then obvious that even the *asarkos* Logos provided human beings with the possibility of recognizing him, but they did not make use of this offer.³² Thus, the Logos gives his creation a second chance by paradoxically³³ becoming part of it through his incarnation.

John 1:11 refers to the Logos's incarnation (cf. 1:14).³⁴ Being the co-creator, the Logos is at the same time also the proprietor of the world,

to my reading this can only mean that the Logos's sending by the Father to the world occurred right after (or even during) creation, see on this also n. 46. Incarnation is the culmination of this mission, which will end with the incarnate Logos's exaltation and return to his heavenly throne and glory. The divine presence will then continue in the world through the Paraclete, cf. 14:16, 26; 16:7.

³¹ In order to refer to the incarnation in 1:10a the evangelist would have to use an expression such as εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἦλθεν instead of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν. In every case, he would have to use the aorist instead of the imperfect in order to signify a concrete historical moment in history instead of a temporal period of indefinite duration, a problem that R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, Vol. 1: I–XII (AB 29; New York: Doubleday, 1966), 28–29, does not take into consideration in his relevant analysis.

³² There is more than one way for people to know the Logos. The advantage of using such a polyvalent word means here that whenever God speaks in the Old Testament the Logos is present. God's word is articulated by himself, by the prophets, and by the Torah (in a written form). Apart from this, creation speaks about God all by itself (cf. Ps 19:2), and consequently also about the Logos, through whom (according to Johannine understanding) it has been created. Last but not least, even in the Old Testament epiphanies the Logos is the one who reveals God the Father, as is evident in John 12:41–42, cf. M. Hengel, "Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums auf dem Hintergrund der urchristlichen Exegese," *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie* 4 (1989): 249–88, here 265–66 = idem, *Jesus und die Evangelien: Kleine Schriften V* (WUNT 211; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 601–43, here 619; Carson, *John*, 449–50 (n. 30); Kanagaraj, "Mysticism," 225–26 (n. 16); F. D. Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 736–37; J. Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar* (Freiburg etc.: Herder, 2013), 370. Cf. however also C. H. Williams, "'He Saw His Glory and Spoke about Him': The Testimony of Isaiah and Johannine Christology," in *Honouring the Past and Shaping the Future: Religious and Biblical Studies in Wales; Essays in Honour of Gareth Lloyd Jones* (ed. R. Pope; Leominster: Gracewing, 2003), 65–75, who interprets 12:41 as referring to Isaiah's proleptic vision of the incarnate Logos' glory.

³³ Cf. Morris, *John*, 82 (n. 16).

³⁴ Contra M. Hengel, "The Prologue of the Gospel of John as the Gateway to Christological Truth," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (ed. R. Bauckham and C. Mosser; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 279 = idem, *Theologische, historische und*

which therefore belongs to him (τὰ ἴδια). However, although he came to his own, his own did not receive him.³⁵ The challenge for the implied readers is here to accept the paradox of the creator identifying himself with creation. If they do, then everything that happens in the narrative is unveiled as easily understandable and even potentially or possibly acceptable.³⁶

In the expression ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός (1:14) it is the first time in John that the christological title “Son of God” implicitly appears. As both λόγος and μονογενῆς παρὰ πατρός are used in the same sentence referring to Jesus’ person, their conceptual connection seems to be crucial not only for the understanding of the prologue, but also of the Johannine narrative as a whole, in which on the one hand υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ is continually used as one of its most significant theological terms, while on the other hand λόγος is never again used after the prologue in the sense of a christological title.³⁷ Since the title “Son of God” normally bears a Jewish-messianic meaning for the characters of the narrative (cf. 1:49), its narrow connection, and perhaps even actual identification, with the Logos-concept provides it with a significant semantic depth. Again, this particular connection is only known to the implied readers of the prologue and not to the characters of the gospel narrative.

The combined use of the terms χάρις and ἀλήθεια in 1:16–17 is of particular interest. On the narrative level, a simple definition of χάρις would be that it is a gift (a favour) not connected with any expectations for a return on the part of the doer.³⁸ Throughout John the gift of the Logos to the world is life (ζωή).³⁹ On the other hand, on the narrative surface ἀλήθεια

biographische Skizzen: Kleine Schriften VII (WUNT 253; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 34–61, here 48–49; P. M. Phillips, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel: A Sequential Reading* (JSNTSup 294; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 188. On the other hand, most commentators refer both 1:10 and 11 to the incarnation.

³⁵ This is a paradox, upon which the two parallel statements of verbal irony in vv. 10 and 11 are based. Ironic statements are often based upon a paradox or a hyperbole; cf. in the case of John 1:10–11 Morris, *John*, 82 (n. 16); M. W. G. Stibbe, *John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 30. The fact that 1:10–11 are an exaggeration (nobody has accepted the Logos!) compared with the real situation heightens the irony, which is immediately abrogated in 1:12–13.

³⁶ Cf. Duke, *Irony*, 111 (n. 1).

³⁷ On the contrary, λόγος in the sense of the spoken word is continually used throughout the narrative, a total of 36 times excluding the 4 references to the Logos in the prologue (1:1, 14). It would then seem that starting with 1:14b the implicit υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ replaces λόγος as a title for the rest of the Gospel. The two terms refer to the same divine person, while belonging to two initially different imageries.

³⁸ See H. Conzelmann, “χάρις κτλ.,” *TWNT* 9:365–66; cf. Moloney, *John*, 45 (n. 16).

³⁹ In John there are 36 occurrences of the noun ζωή and 17 occurrences of the verb ζῆν.

refers to the content of the words (λόγοι) of the Logos.⁴⁰ In 1:17 both χάρις and ἀλήθεια are connected with the verb ἐγένετο, which is the verb that expresses the coming-into-being of the world due to God's word both in the Septuagint Genesis creation account⁴¹ and in its Johannine reception (1:3). In this sense, these two terms refer respectively to the new creation, or rather recreation of the world, as well as to the transfer of God's authentic word to the world, or in other words to the recreative and salvific deeds and words of the Logos on behalf of God, his heavenly originator.⁴² Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the *passivum divinum* ἐδόθη, with Moses as its mediator, to the middle voice ἐγένετο in connection with Jesus Christ, namely the incarnate Logos, implies a qualitative shift both on the grammatical and the theological level.⁴³

John 1:18 is crucial for conceiving the status of the Logos both on earth and in heaven. Despite the Old Testament epiphanies (cf. 12:41), according to 1:18 no one has ever seen God (cf. 3:13). If read along with 1:10 (ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν)⁴⁴ this statement seems to imply that even the Old Testament epiphanies have actually been manifestations of the *asarkos* Logos.⁴⁵ This means that the Logos has been explaining (ἐξηγήσατο) God to the people throughout history, even before his incarnation, by speaking through the prophets and revealing himself in the Old Testament epiphanies. The verb ἐξηγέομαι is used in the aorist in order to denote that God's revelation through the Logos has come to an end after the latter's return to the Father.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Cf. esp. 8:40, 44–46; 16:7; 17:17. Ἀλήθεια can also signify the person of Jesus, as well as the existential origin, position, or situation of those who believe in Jesus. However, these elaborate semantic and theological extensions of the word's meaning originate from its initial sense as verbal truth, cf. LSJ, “ἀλήθεια,” 63.

⁴¹ Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 15, 20, 24, 30.

⁴² Throughout the Fourth Gospel Jesus presents himself as performing God's works (4:34; 5:20, 36; 9:3–4; 10:25, 32, 37–38; 14:10–12; 15:24; 17:4) and speaking God's words (3:11, 34; 7:17–18; 8:26, 28, 38, 40; 12:49–50; 14:10).

⁴³ Cf. M. Theobald, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos: Studien zum Verhältnis des Johannesprologs zum Corpus des Evangeliums und zu 1 Joh* (NTA NF 20; Aschendorff: Münster, 1988), 258; A. J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 47–48.

⁴⁴ It is characteristic that in both 1:10 and 17:5 the noun κόσμος is used.

⁴⁵ Cf. the relevant analysis in C. Karakolis, “Jesus as Yahweh of the Old Testament Epiphanies,” *Delio Biblikon Meleton* 21/22 (2002/2003): 55–65; cf. also Williams, “He Saw His Glory,” 56 (n. 32).

⁴⁶ The Logos is again in the Father's bosom, like he used to be before the creation of the world. In this regard it is of significance that in 17:5 Jesus asks the Father to glorify him with the glory that he had before the creation of the world (πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί), and *not* just before the incarnation, cf. n. 30 of the present study.

II.

According to the above analysis, in the prologue the implied readers of the Fourth Gospel receive a plethora of detailed information about the Logos that no character of the Johannine narrative possesses, at least not in this fullness.⁴⁷ On the contrary, almost all of the narrative characters, even including Jesus' disciples, are presented as being ignorant about the true nature of the person and work of Jesus Christ, even if they have already reached a certain level of faith in him.⁴⁸

As already mentioned, the Logos-concept itself plays a crucial role in the unfolding of dramatic irony within the Johannine narrative, since it has a double meaning.⁴⁹ Every time Jesus, the incarnate Logos speaks, his words are as authoritative and true as the words of God himself (cf. 8:38; 15:15). The divine λόγος speaks the divine λόγους, i.e. the Word of God speaks the words of God. It is dramatically ironical that while on the one hand the implied readers know the real identity of Jesus as the Logos, and are in a position to understand the absolute authority and significance of his words, on the other hand the characters of the narrative are not able and/or willing to do so (cf. for instance 12:37–43). Quite on the contrary, some of them even reach the point of charging Jesus with blasphemy and attempting to seize or/and to kill him.⁵⁰

This may also be an explanation for the omission of the title Logos from the gospel narrative altogether. As we have already seen, this title is a very important key for understanding the Johannine narrative as a whole. If the implied author had given his narrative characters access to this key-term, many aspects of dramatic irony that are based on it would have been immediately resolved. Now, as it is, the mystery of the person, the work and the words of Jesus remain such that, while on the low level of the narrative (downstairs) the characters are unable to grasp them, on the higher level of the narrative (upstairs) the implied readers have only to apply the Logos-

⁴⁷ This stage of dramatic irony, in which information is provided to the audience of the narrative in advance, of which the narrative characters are unaware is called "preparation," see W. C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), 63–64. While John the Baptist certainly knows a great deal about Jesus' identity, he does not betray any knowledge of the Logos-concept whatsoever, which is a crucial key-term for identifying the earthly Jesus with the preexistent Son of God (1:14). This is also the case with Jesus' mother who seems to understand him more than any of the other people around him (2:5; cf. Karakolis, *Σημασία*, 105–06 [n. 2]).

⁴⁸ Cf. the relevant analysis in C. R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 173–76.

⁴⁹ Cf. Stibbe, *John*, 16 (n. 35), especially on "paradigmatic readers." Cf. also Wead, *Devices*, 50 (n. 3).

⁵⁰ 5:18; 7:1, 19, 20, 25, 30, 32, 44; 8:37, 40, 59; 10:31–33, 36, 39; 11:8, 53, 57.

concept as a hermeneutical key, so as to be able to perceive the true meaning of Jesus' words and works.⁵¹

As a test-case for the function of dramatic irony within the Johannine narrative on the basis of the Logos-concept, I will now highlight some characteristic narrative elements from the story of the healing of the lame man (5:1–18).

In 5:7 the lame man tells Jesus that he has no one (*ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω*) to get him into the pool when the water is troubled. While the lame man does not have a clue about who Jesus actually is, and seems to just be complaining about his personal situation, the implied readers know from the prologue that Jesus is not simply an *ἄνθρωπος* but the incarnate Logos.⁵² This means that being the co-creator of the whole world the Logos can surely save the desperate lame man.⁵³ The continuation of the story proves this very fact. The lame man also ignores that Jesus, being the creator of all things – including the water of the pool and himself –, will not have to wait there in order to push him into the water at the right moment to have him healed.⁵⁴ Being the Logos he can heal him right now by his powerful and creative word, a conclusion that the implied reader can easily draw based on the prologue, but which the lame man ignores.

In 5:10 the Jews⁵⁵ admonish the healed man because he is carrying his bed on a Sabbath. The implied readers are informed by the prologue that

⁵¹ Cf. G. W. MacRae, "Theology and Irony in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of 20th Century Perspectives* (ed. M. W. G. Stibbe; NTTs 17; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 113.

⁵² Cf. 19:5 and the comment of MacRae, "Theology," 111–12 (n. 51).

⁵³ In fact all signs performed by Jesus symbolically point to the creative and life-giving power of the Logos according to the prologue's witness addressed to the implied readers. Concretely, the transformation of water into wine (2:7–11), as well as the multiplication of the loaves and the fish (6:11–13), are demonstrations of his abundant gift (*χάρις*) (1:16–17) and divine glory (*δόξα*) (1:14). The healing of the royal's dying son (4:51–54) and Lazarus' resurrection (11:39–44) are signs of the Logos' life-giving power (1:4). Jesus' walking upon the Sea of Galilee (6:19) reveals his divine power and authority over creation (1:3, 10–11). Lastly, the healings of the lame man (5:8–9) and of the man born blind (9:6–7) are actually life-giving acts to hopeless human beings by regenerating dead parts of their bodies. As opposed to the implied readers, the Jews are not able to correctly interpret these signs, partly also because they are not aware of the Logos-concept of the Gospel's prologue.

⁵⁴ Cf. R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*, Vol. 2 (2d ed.; HTKNT IV/2; Freiburg etc.: Herder, 1977), 121.

⁵⁵ Most probably this is a reference to the Jewish authorities and not to the Jews as a whole, cf. M. Theobald, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes: Kapitel 1–12* (RNT; Regensburg: Pustet, 2009), 378. On the Jews at this point as a narrative character cf. T. Nicklas, *Ablösung und Verstrickung: "Juden" und Jünergestalten als Charaktere der erzählten Welt des Johannesevangeliums und ihre Wirkung auf den impliziten Leser* (RST 60; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), esp. 249–303. Also generally in the present paper I

this admonition is totally out of place. Being the creator of the world along with the Father, the Logos has the self-evident right and power to define whether and in what way the Sabbath should or should not be observed (5:8; cf. 5:17). Moreover, the implied reader knows that there is now a qualitative shift from the law that was given by God through Moses to the grace and truth that became reality through Jesus Christ (1:17), which potentially implies a reinterpretation of the Mosaic law. The lame man indeed participates in this new reality, while the Jews remain blind to it.⁵⁶

In 5:11 the healed man underlines the fact of his healing rather than the violation of the Sabbath-rest. In this way he gives witness to the profound truth that Jesus as the divine Logos has the power to give life even on the Sabbath,⁵⁷ which should already be clear for the implied readers of the prologue (1:4; cf. 5:16–17).⁵⁸ However, the healed man does not perceive the full meaning of his “confession,” as is evident from the fact that he does not know the identity of his healer (5:13).

On the contrary, in 5:12 the Jews focus upon Jesus’ breaking of the Sabbath-rest. In accordance with 5:16 the “Jews,” and especially the Jewish authorities, think that they have the power to judge and even condemn Jesus to death (cf. also 5:18; 7:32, 52; 11:53).⁵⁹ However, they themselves are actually being tested, judged, and condemned for not believing in the Logos (cf. 3:18; 12:48). In a certain sense, their stance seems to be a verification of the prologue’s statement, according to which the Logos has

understand the Jews of the Johannine narrative not as an historical entity, but as a collective narrative character, cf. R. Zimmermann, “‘The Jews’: Unreliable Figures or Unreliable Narration?,” in Hunt, Tolmie, and Zimmermann, *Character Studies*, 71–109 (n. 10).

⁵⁶ Metaphorical blindness on the part of the characters of a story as opposed to its audience is always implied when dramatic irony is at play, cf. D. C. Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic* (2d ed.; The Critical Idiom 13; London: Methuen, 1982), 66–67. Seeing the light as opposed to blindness or, else, being in the darkness is a recurring theme in John, starting with the prologue (1:4, 7–9) and continuing throughout the Johannine narrative (cf. most characteristically 3:19–21; 6:17–19; 8:12; 9:1–41; 10:21; 11:9–10, 37; 12:35–43, 46).

⁵⁷ Cf. Haenchen, *Johannesevangelium*, 271 (n. 30).

⁵⁸ As I have already argued above, according to the prologue the Logos is uninterruptedly present in his creation (1:10) and continues his creative work throughout history, for instance by “being the light that gives light” to all human beings who come into the world (1:9; cf. 5:17). Cf. Hengel, “Prologue,” 282 (n. 34); Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 91 (n. 32).

⁵⁹ Accordingly, in the parallel narrative of the healing of the blind man (cf. on the parallelism of the two narratives H. Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* [HNT 6; 2d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015], 301) the Jewish authorities expressly claim that Jesus cannot possibly be from God because he does not observe the Sabbath-rest, and consequently attribute the blind man’s healing directly to God (9:16, 24), cf. Duke, *Irony*, 77 (n. 1).

come to his own people, but his own people did not receive him (1:11). In our story, they refuse to believe in the unprecedented sign that just occurred and focus exclusively upon the breaking of the Sabbath-law without realizing that in this way they actually break the most fundamental article of faith, namely the faith in the one and only true God (Deut 6:4; cf. John 5:18; 8:41). According to the prologue the Logos is God (1:1) or else the “only begotten God” (1:18), which means that the Jews should encounter him with the faith they address to Yahweh in order to observe the law’s highest commandment (Exod 20:2–4). Furthermore, the Jews state that the law-breaker is an *ἄνθρωπος* (5:12), while the implied readers of the prologue know that Jesus is not just a human being, but the preexistent and divine Logos who became a human being (1:14), without of course ceasing to be divine.⁶⁰

In 5:18 the Jews are presented as intending to kill Jesus not only because he broke the Sabbath, but also because he called God his own father, thus making himself equal to God. At this point there is a culmination of dramatic irony: The Jews who belong to the *πάντα* created by the Father through the Logos (1:3), and who as human beings draw their life from the Logos (1:4), intend to actually kill their creator!⁶¹ While they think that they remain faithful to the law that was given through Moses (1:17a), they actually act against the grace and truth that became reality through Jesus Christ (1:17b), and thus also against the spirit of the law (cf. 5:45–47).⁶² In other words, by “not receiving” Jesus (cf. 1:11) the Jews abandon their only possibility to have God revealed – or rather explained⁶³ – to them

⁶⁰ It is characteristic that when Jesus uses the absolute *ἐγώ εἰμι*-sayings in 8:24, 28 (i.e., without a predicate; cf. also 6:20; 13:19; 18:6) the Jews do not realize the implication of such usage. They keep trying to understand Jesus strictly on earthly terms (8:25, 48, 57), while these particular *ἐγώ εἰμι*-sayings actually refer to his divine identity as the eternal Logos (1:1); see for instance the relevant analysis in Brown, *John*, 1:533–38 (n. 31); Duke, *Irony*, 71, 106–07 (n. 1); cf. also C. H. Williams, *I Am He: The Interpretation of 'anî hû' in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (WUNT 2/113; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 255–303. Apart from the probable intertextual allusion to the supposed etymology of Yahweh’s name (cf. Exod 3:14 and D. E. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of a Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994], 84–85), the implied reader could very well add the predicate *ὁ λόγος* to the expression *ἐγώ εἰμι*, since in the prologue *λόγος* is repeatedly connected with the verb *εἶμι* (1:1–2, 4, 9–10, 18), an information that is not accessible to Jesus’ audience.

⁶¹ Whenever Jesus refers directly or indirectly to his preexistence and/or divinity, the Jews think that he is blasphemous and act accordingly by plotting against him (7:1), trying to seize him (7:32, 44; 10:39) or even attempting to stone him (10:31–33).

⁶² In the following discourse it becomes evident that Moses speaks in his law about Jesus (5:45–47). Had the Jews really understood the law, they would have believed in Jesus (5:46).

⁶³ Cf. the use of *ἐξηγήσατο* in 1:18 and the relevant comment of J. Zumstein, *L’Évangile selon Saint Jean (1–12)* (CNT 4/1; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2014), 68.

(1:18), thus also missing the opportunity to believe and consequently to become real children of God (1:12). Having already read the prologue, the implied readers of the Gospel are at this point expected to be able to fully grasp the dramatic irony of the Jews' situation.

III.

On the basis of the above analysis, we can conclude the following with regard to the function of the Logos-concept as a significant constituent of dramatic irony in the Fourth Gospel.

By presenting the implied readers with the Logos-concept right at the beginning of the Gospel and just before the start of the actual narrative (1:19), the implied author challenges them to at least initially accept his claims about the Logos in order for them to be able to decode what will follow in the book (preparation).⁶⁴ By reading the prologue the implied readers enter the world, the imagery, and the language of the implied author. They have either to accept them, at least temporarily and to a certain degree, or otherwise abandon reading the book. In a way, they have to allow themselves to be convinced, if not that the content of the prologue is true, at least that they have to follow the implied author's thinking and reasoning by at least temporarily accepting his presuppositions and claims, his point of view. For a non-believing (or not yet fully believing) implied reader, especially a Jewish one⁶⁵ – according to 20:31 the Gospel seems to be also addressed to readers who do not yet (or not yet fully) believe⁶⁶ – the Johannine Logos-concept contains some elements, which would in

⁶⁴ Cf. Phillips, *Prologue*, 54 (n. 34).

⁶⁵ On the contrary there could be gentile implied readers who would be able to accept the idea of a dying God in an analogy for instance to the Isis and Osiris story, cf. Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 13–18. Perhaps the main difficulty for gentile readers would be the monotheism of the prologue and the understanding of two divine personal entities as one and the same God (cf. in combination with one another 1:1, 18; 10:30; 17:21; 20:28).

⁶⁶ Cf. for the relevant discussion Lincoln, *Truth*, 178–82, esp. nn. 69 and 70 (n. 9). Should we decide in favour of πιστεύσητε over against πιστεύετε in 20:31, then the epilogue of 20:30–31 would seem to be clearly referring to a rather broad spectrum of implied readers, even including non or at least not yet (fully) believing ones, who are urged to believe in order to obtain eternal life, cf. D. A. Carson, "The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered," *JBL* 106 (1987): 639–51; contra among others R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*, Vol. 3 (HTKNT IV/3; Freiburg etc.: Herder, 1975, 403–04; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, Vol. 2 (AB 29A; New York: Doubleday, 1970), 1059–61; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 773–74 (n. 59). Cf. on this problem, however, also my observation in n. 3.

principle be problematic or even unacceptable.⁶⁷ However, the introduction of a new understanding of λόγος expressed in a mythical and symbolic language, as well as the overall new and radical ideas of the prologue being conveyed by an omniscient narrator raise the odds of the concept's acceptance even by non-believing implied readers. In this regard the application of dramatic irony throughout the Johannine narrative on the basis of the Logos-concept has a highly persuasive power.⁶⁸ Throughout the narrative the implied readers are not expected to identify themselves with the ignorant characters of the narrative, since they already know the truth about the *asarkos* and the incarnate Logos. Quite on the contrary, they are urged to identify themselves with the narrator and the members of his community who received the Logos (1:12), saw his glory (1:14), and eventually became children of God (1:13; 20:17).⁶⁹

Under the aforementioned presupposition that the implied readers accept the Logos-concept, and as a second step at least partially identify themselves with the narrator and his community, they are now in a position to sympathize with the ignorant characters of the narrative who fail to reach their own superior insight.

Sympathy on the part of the audience (observer) towards characters who are trapped within their own ignorance (victims) is an important effect of dramatic irony.⁷⁰ In the case of the Fourth Gospel, sympathy on the part of the implied readers should initially concern those narrative characters who in principle have a positive attitude toward Jesus, although they fail to fully understand him, such as Nicodemus.⁷¹ On the contrary, the response

⁶⁷ Especially so the Logos' consideration as a real person, as well as his incarnation, cf. R. Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel* (3d ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 40–41; T. R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Ada: Baker, 2008), 256–58.

⁶⁸ Cf. Duke, *Irony*, 29–31 (n. 1).

⁶⁹ Cf. Phillips, *Prologue*, 52–54 (n. 34). This concerns also those implied readers who being already members of the narrator's community are urged to keep believing in the Logos and his salvific work or even to let their faith grow stronger, cf. N. Farely, *The Disciples in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of Their Faith and Understanding* (WUNT 2/290; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 195; Duke, *Irony*, 38–39 (n. 1).

⁷⁰ Cf. the case of Oedipus in Sophocles, *Oedipus tyrannus*, and the relevant analysis on sympathy in Greek drama in F. Will, *The Generic Demands of Greek Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1976), 39–47; cf. also Duke, *Irony*, 41 (n. 1).

⁷¹ On the rather complex narrative character of Nicodemus see R. A. Culpepper, "Nicodemus: The Travail of New Birth," in Hunt, Tolmie, and Zimmermann, *Character Studies*, 249–59 (n. 10).

of the implied readers towards Jews as Jesus' narrative adversaries who are responsible for his death should in principle be enmity.⁷²

However, it seems at least plausible, if not probable, that the narrative as a whole has in view also a particular category of implied readers of Jewish identity who have either already converted to Christianity or are considering conversion while reading the Gospel. The response of such implied readers to the unbelief of the narrative Jews could well be sympathy instead of enmity because it should remind them of their own previous unbelief or perhaps current disbelief.⁷³

Furthermore, although Jesus' narrative opponents are accused of not believing,⁷⁴ on the other hand the narrator also clearly states that from a certain point of view they were not even in a position to do so in the first place, because God himself prevented them from believing.⁷⁵ However, from a narrative-critical point of view, non-believing and therefore rejected Jews are not necessarily definitively lost cases.⁷⁶ Their rejection could well be considered as a temporary situation, and therefore one with a still open ending.⁷⁷ According to such a reading of John's Gospel dramatic

⁷² Cf. A. Reinhartz, "Jews' and Jews in the Fourth Gospel," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (ed. R. Bieringer, D. Pollefeyt and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 213–27.

⁷³ As Will, *Demands*, 40 (n. 70), puts it, "... our sympathy with many ancient tragic heroes involves a love which is deepened by our ignorance and uncertainty of their destiny." There are even instances in the narrative when the Jews do believe in Jesus (2:23; 7:31; 8:30–31; 10:42; 11:45; 12:11, 42), albeit their faith is based on his signs, it is temporary or it is not to be altogether trusted (2:24–25). There are also cases, in which certain Jews seem to be very near to acknowledging his messiahship (7:31, 41; cf. 9:22; 12:42). These are instances, in which sympathy towards them on the part of the implied readers could grow even stronger.

⁷⁴ 3:12, 18; 5:38, 44, 46–47; 6:36; 8:45–46; 10:25–26; 12:37; 16:9.

⁷⁵ Cf. especially 12:39: διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἠδύναντο πιστεῦειν.

⁷⁶ See on the so-called Johannine determinism among others R. Bergmeier, *Glaube als Gabe: Religions- und theologieggeschichtliche Studien zum prädestinarianischen Dualismus im vierten Evangelium* (BWANT 112; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980), 213–73; O. Hofius, "Erwählung und Bewahrung: Zur Auslegung von Joh 6,37," in *Johannesstudien*, 81–86 (n. 26).

⁷⁷ The Hebrew rendering of the inscription on the cross is an ongoing call to the Jews to believe, cf. C. Karakolis, "Χριστός καί 'Ελληνες' στό κατά 'Ιωάννην εὐαγγέλιο: Ἐρμηνευτικές-θεολογικές ἀπόψεις," in idem, *Θέματα ἔρμηνείας καί θεολογίας τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης* (Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 2002), 215–19. The Pauline predestination model of Rom 9–11, according to which the Jews are only temporarily rejected until all gentiles come to faith (see the relevant discussion in M. Levering, *Predestination: Biblical and Theological Paths* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 25–35), would be a precedent in this regard. Furthermore, the commission of the disciples to the world (17:18–23) does not exclude the Jews who definitely remain an organic part of it, cf. the analysis of J. Frey, "Die 'Juden' im Johannesevangelium und die 'Trennung der Wege' zwischen der johanneischen Gemeinde und der Synagoge," in idem, *Studien zu den Johanneischen Schriften*,

irony does indeed have the potential to create sympathy in favour of those narrative characters who – at least presently – do not have any alternative whatsoever, but to remain in their unbelief.

As already mentioned, dramatic irony emphasizes the tension between on the one hand the superior understanding of reality on the part of the implied author, and consequently the implied readers (upstairs), and on the other hand the lack of understanding on the part of the narrative characters (downstairs). This tension can only be resolved by the latter's elevation onto the former's level of understanding. As a rule, in the Johannine narrative the Jews stay out of this process, since they ultimately fail to recognize and follow the "King of Israel" (cf. 1:29; 19:15). In other words, catharsis with regard to the collective narrative character of the Jews does not take place within the narrative world of the Fourth Gospel itself.⁷⁸ However, since the call to faith is continually addressed through the gospel narrative toward the world outside of the narrative, the implied readers could still expect that the Jewish people will finally join the community of believers, even if at present they are still opposing it. If ignorant or even opposing implied readers can read the book at hand that leads to eternal life considering conversion or even finally converting (cf. 20:31), then there is also hope for all their contemporaries to believe and consequently to be granted eternal life. Thus the conversion-perspective and/or the conversion of those implied readers who have not yet embraced faith, would be a model for everyone who follows the call of the glorified Son of God and his community.

According to Resseguie's formulation, an important function of irony, also including dramatic irony, is to "heighten narrative claims in ways that straightforward discourse cannot accomplish."⁷⁹ In the above analysis we explored some of the ways, in which knowledge of the prologue's Logos-concept is presupposed in the Johannine narrative, although it is never clearly mentioned *per se*. By providing the implied readers with this crucial hermeneutical key the implied author opens up further possibilities of understanding the narrative in a more complete and multidimensional way. Through the use of dramatic irony, narrative details become significant, convincing, and revealing in a way that would not have been possible without knowledge of the Logos-concept on the part of the implied readers.⁸⁰

Vol. 1: *Die Herrlichkeit des Gekreuzigten* (ed. J. Schlegel; WUNT 307; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 339–77.

⁷⁸ This kind of catharsis, in which the narrative characters finally reach the level of knowledge that already the author and the audience share is also called "resolution," cf. G. M. Kirkwood, *A Study of Sophoclean Drama* (2d ed.; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 39, 248, 261.

⁷⁹ Resseguie, *Criticism*, 74 (n. 4).

⁸⁰ Cf. on this function of dramatic irony Duke, *Irony*, 37 (n. 1).

However, while in the Easter-stories Jesus' disciples seem to be at last able to understand the real identity of Jesus, dramatic irony does not reach its final stage (resolution) with regard to Jesus' opponents, who in spite of their continuing ignorance and opposition are still invited to believe in him.⁸¹ This means that their story is expected to continue and eventually reach its final conclusion outside of the narrative, namely within the world of the implied readers themselves.⁸² Thus, even if Jesus' narrative opponents do not understand the truth about Jesus, it is still possible for their implied counterparts to do so now by listening to the Gospel's call to faith and believing in its Christological witness (20:31).

⁸¹ Cf. n. 78.

⁸² Cf. MacRae, "Theology," 108 (n. 51).