THE SELF-UNDERSTANDING OF THE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY

THE WORLD OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL IN THE PROLOGUE AND JOHN 17

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The World of the Fourth Gospel in the Prologue and John 17

by

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A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Religious Studies
Memorial University of Newfoundland

August 1994

St. John's Newfoundland

ISBN 0-315-96082-5

Abstract

The question this thesis seeks to answer is: How did the Johannine community view its κόσμος (world) and how, in turn, was this view shaped by the self-understanding of the community? It is argued that the answer to this question can be uncovered through a socio-literary analysis of the use of κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel. Such an analysis shows that whole thematic complexes -- for example, the Prologue and John 17 -- bear directly on the question of how the community understands itself and its κόσμος. Morevoer, an examination of how the narrative is developed in the Fourth Gospel indicates that it mirrors a social reality: the community has moved from a position of inclusion in the Hellenistic Jewish world to one of exclusion and alienation.

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Acknowledgements

Throughout the composition of this thesis I have received considerable support from many sources. Foremost, I wish to thank Dr. David J. Hawkin for his positive criticism and guidance during the entire M. A. Religious Studies program. Secondly, I am indebted to the assistance of Dr. Kim Parker and Dr. Sheldon Mackenzie for their advice and confidence.

I would also like to acknowledge the financial support provided to me through Graduate Studies, without which my completion of the M. A. would not have been possible.

Finally, I thank my family for their enduring love and support.

Abbreviations

CBD	*Community of the Beloved Disciple*
ET:	English Translation
Gr.:	Greek
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JournRel	*Journal of Religion*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
NJB	*The New Jerusalem Bible*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
SBL	*Society of Biblical Literature*

All biblical citations in Greek are from *The Greek New Testament*, edited by Kurt Aland *et. al.* (Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible society, 1975 [1966, 1968]). All English citations are from *The New Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985).

INTRODUCTION

The Johannine literature has long been recognised as distinctive and unlike the other literature of the New Testament. More recent Johannine studies have focused on the unique nature of the community which gave rise to these writings -- that is, the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles.[1] The focus of this particular discussion is the self-understanding and self-awareness of this Johannine community. The emphasis is on answering the question, How did the community perceive and evaluate its relative position in the Greco-Roman world of the New Testament era? To answer this

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[1] The existence of a community giving rise to the gospel implies that it was not the work of a single author. The discussion surrounding the question of authorship is not, however, the focus of this study. Suffice it to say that the probable existence of a community behind the gospel necessarily implies a communal contribution to the writing and editing process. For this reason our discussion will allude to **"authors"** rather than simply **"author"**. For sample explorations into the topic of authorship see Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 94-96, 102-103; Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, SBL Dissertation Series (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), pp.34ff; Oscar Cullmann, *Der johanneische Kreis, Sein Platz im Spätjudentum, in der Jüngerschaft Jesu und im Urchristentum* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1975), ET: *The Johannine Circle*, translated by SCM, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 1-5, 63-85; Norman Perrin and Dennis Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (New York, NY: HBJ, 1982), pp. 330f, 337f; Robert Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), pp. 38-54, 86-101.

question we must delve into the literary devices of the Fourth Gospel, particularly the symbolic use of κόσμος (world). The literary treatment of κόσμος in the gospel reflects and is influenced by the Johannine understanding of the community's relationship with a larger social environment. This relationship is revealed through the telling of the story of the Johannine Jesus.

The Fourth Gospel offers "a case of continual, harmonic reinforcement between social experience and ideology."[2] It is this dialectic feature of the gospel which prompts us to examine the social and cultural influences on the text's creation. Fundamental to this discussion is the argument that the authors' expectations, beliefs, and world-view represent the Johannine community's collective behaviour and traditions.

To begin with, we should address the nature of the community associated with the Fourth Gospel and what the notion of the Johannine community brings to our interpretation of the gospel. Raymond Brown's contribution to the discovery of the Johannine community is integral to this aspect of the discussion. Second, the contributions of a variety of biblical scholars on the interpretation of κόσμος will be presented in an effort to silhouette the trends of traditional biblical scholarship. Third, a detailed argument for the developmental characteristics of the Fourth Gospel will be presented. The development of the text highlights and mirrors the development of the Johannine community. The argument builds on the work of N. H. Cassem and Ernst Käsemann, -- but goes beyond them in articulating an original thesis of our own. The

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[2] Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 71.

conclusions will be based equally upon observed parallels between the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel and John 17, and the impact of the thematic treatment of κόσμος. Finally, an argument will be made for the placement of the Johannine community within a pluralistic Jewish setting.

Although the main area of concentration lies in the gospel itself, some discussion of the Johannine Epistles is necessary. Because they form part of the Johannine matrix and because argument has been made for their inclusion as part of the historical context for the Johannine community, they cannot be excluded. The common ground between the Fourth Gospel and the epistles can be characterized as a "theological world view."[3]

> Both speak of the world in negative terms, of being 'of the world', and its hatred for both Jesus and his followers. Both speak of the new commandment of love for one another, of Jesus laying down his life, of abiding in 'him' or Jesus, of 'we' who have seen and borne witness. Both speak of salvation in terms of knowledge and of eternal life, and see this salvation in largely present or realized terms; both stress Jesus as Son of God.[4]

The placement of the epistles after the gospel and consequently, at the end of the Johannine history is assumed in our discussion of Johannine self-awareness and self-understanding, in accordance with the overwhelming consensus of biblical scholarship.

We must recognize the **process** of self-definition and self-awareness. The Johannine community's understanding of itself evolved over time, beginning with the

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[3] Judith M. Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 100. Lieu does maintain, however, that the epistles maintain their own integrity by being separate from the gospel. Therefore it is possible to discuss the theology of 1 John, for example.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

witness to Jesus and ending with alienation from the synagogues of Palestine. Self-definition, by definition, includes "determining certain horizons, then achieving self-understanding, and finally the moment of self-shaping."[5] The process of coming into 'being' is mirrored by the process of writing and creating the Fourth Gospel. The stages of development are reflected in the text and enable us, the readers, to discover an unfolding history.

The Johannine presentation is rooted in its cosmic theology based on certain dualistic notions: Jesus and the Jewish authorities, the Johannine community and the larger Jewish community. These dualistic conflicts manifest themselves in the symbolism of the Fourth Gospel -- light and darkness, the believers and "the Jews", good and evil. The Johannine community and the κόσμος are set up in dualistic opposition to each other. This dualism is at the heart of Johannine self-understanding and is the foundation for its negative treatment of the κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel.

This thesis offers a greater understanding of and appreciation for the state of the Johannine community and for its perceived social situation. The dualistic symbolism of the Fourth Gospel is the backdrop for a community fuelled by the hopes of its Jewish messiah, namely to rid the world of evil and to bring about universal peace and harmony.

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[5] Wayne O. McCready, "Johannine Self-Understanding and the Synagogue Episode of John 9" in *Self-Definition and Self-Discovery in Early Christianity*, pp. 147-166, edited by David J. Hawkin and Tom Robinson (New York, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), p. 165.

CHAPTER 1

The Method of Discovery

A fascinating discussion in Johannine scholarship pertains to the "discovery" of the community that is probably responsible for the Johannine literature (the Fourth Gospel and the three epistles of John). Through redaction criticism and the pioneering efforts of Raymond E. Brown, the existence of a distinctive Johannine community, with its own unique history, has now been accepted by almost all biblical scholars. The community is thought to be a distinct group somehow separate from a standard urban lifestyle associated with Jerusalem Jews. Brown's text, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, is an historical endeavour, an effort to chart the progress of the Johannine community through four stages between ca. 50 C.E. to the second century. His prime concern is with the life of this community, not with the life of Jesus.

> 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 an insight into that community's life at the time when the Gospel was written. Secondarily ... 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 ... Thirdly, the Gospels offer limited means for reconstructing the ministry and message of the historical Jesus.[1]

The entire Fourth Gospel and the epistles associated with the same group (John 1, 2, 3) comprise a narrative record of the life of this community and its views on the teaching of Jesus.

Brown argues that this community was separate from the larger Jewish community and maintained a sectarian nature. He does conclude, however, that the Johannine community was not a sect in the true sense of the word but possessed qualities of a sectarian group.[2] His analysis of the life of the Johannine community assesses an increasing conflict between the Johannine Christians and other types of Christians and varying groups of Jews. The conflict is manifested in the "dialogues between Jesus and 'the Jews'" which are indicative of "the relationship between the Johannine community and the synagogue."[3]

Alan Culpepper has identified yet another group to add to Brown's initial presentation of the Johannine situation. Culpepper places a great deal of emphasis on a

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[1] Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[3] Raymond Brown, "'Other Sheep Not of This Fold': The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity in the Late First Century," *JBL* 97 (1978) 1:5-22, p. 7. Brown praises J. L. Martyn's "method of investigation" which is based on the premise that the Fourth Gospel's authors express their own experiences in the gospel through their interpretation of Jesus' actions.

Johannine school, which he argues existed within the larger Johannine community. Culpepper describes the Johannine setting in terms of a hierarchical structure with the Beloved Disciple as a leader and founding teacher.[4] A select group of students who were part of a larger Johannine community surrounded the Beloved Disciple. The Beloved Disciple acted as an authoritative teacher who had direct access to the ministry of Jesus. Culpepper argues that the "school" setting was extremely popular in the late first and early second centuries and is a more accurate description of Johannine activity than "sect".[5]

The theory of a Johannine school is supported by the Johannine Epistles. Culpepper argues that there is sufficient evidence there to suggest further development of the community as a whole. In addition, "satellite communities" emerged which "shared [the Johannine] influence, tradition and doctrine."[6] According to Culpepper, the teachings of the Johannine school, led by the Beloved Disciple, influenced the Johannine groups throughout their development.

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[4] Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, SBL Dissertation Series (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), p. 265. Although I have described Culpepper's analysis as a hierarchical reconstruction it is important to note, as Culpepper points out, that "no official titles are mentioned in the Gospel of John. Instead, one finds such titles as 'disciples', 'children', 'children of God', 'servants', 'friends', and 'brothers'." (p. 270) There does seem to be evidence, however, of an inner circle of followers within the larger familial setting of the community.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 259. In a "school" the emphasis lies in teaching and learning whereas in the "sect" the emphasis is on tradition and devotion. Culpepper argues that schools may be **part** of a sect. According to this theory, the Johannine community might constitute a sect while the inner circle is a school.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

The attempt to establish a specific identity for the group responsible for the composition of the Fourth Gospel is uncertain at best. Scholars are more assured in a discussion of communal authorship in general terms, an authorship supported by a following of like-minded individuals. Oscar Cullmann prefers to speak of a Johannine "circle" and shies away from identifying a "community" or "school".[7] Cullmann argues for a fluid interpretation of Jewish, Gentile, and Christian settings during the New Testament era which invites a multitude of interactions between all three. Each group felt differently about its circumstances and reacted in different ways based on its interpretation about what was truly relevant and important. A reorganization of priorities restructured first-century Judaism such that a plurality of "Judaisms" existed where once there was only one tradition. How this transition occurred is unclear; that it did happen is almost certain. A multiplicity of communities and social settings came into play in the Greco-Roman empire and became acute in the Judaism of the New Testament period. This leaves Cullmann's Johannine circle open rather than closed to surrounding influences, a characteristic not attributable to "church" or "sect" typologies.[8]

Interpretations of the Fourth Gospel have been fuelled by the discoveries of Brown and Culpepper and it is upon these discoveries that we wish to build. The Johannine tale

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[7] Oscar Cullmann, *Der johanneische Kreis, Sein Platz im Spätjudentum, in der Jüngerschaft Jesu und im Urchristentum* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1975), ET: *The Johannine Circle*, translated by SCM, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 40.

[8] Cullmann does admit to the eventual development of a Johannine community as the end result of a long line of development -- see *ibid.*, pp. 86f.

is an attempt, by a community, to justify and sustain its separate identity. Its separation from its Jewish heritage is critical to the community's self-understanding. The Johannine community's initial self-definition came from within the parameters of Judaism. However, the community remains Jewish because of its belief in the Jewish messiah but it is separate from those "Jews" who do not follow Christ. A Jewish heritage gives the community the foundation it needs to accept Jesus as the messiah yet hostility and rejection by "the Jews" cause the community to question its link with this larger religious group. "This stage of self-understanding included contrasting [a] current state of belief and practice with [the community's] inherited Judaism. Such self-reflection meant that there would be both continuity and discontinuity with the past."[9] The continuity lies in the belief that Jesus has fulfilled scriptural prophecy; the discontinuity lies with the severance from a Judaism that no longer holds any meaning for the Johannine group because of the rejection of Jesus.

There are two historical time frames concerning us here: the time Jesus spent with his disciples (ca. 6-40 C.E.) and the time of the Johannine community's existence (ca. 80-100 C.E.). The time in which Jesus was alive was a relatively peaceful period in that there were no major wars or rebellions. During the years following Jesus' death political unrest increased until the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. This approximate one

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[9] Wayne O. McCready, "Johannine Self-Understanding and the Synagogue Episode of John 9" in *Self-Definition and Self-Discovery in Early Christianity*, pp. 147-166, edited by David J. Hawkin and Tom Robinson (New York, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), p. 155.

hundred years marked a significant growth in unrest and increasing tension between urban dwellers and the Roman authorities. In particular, the authority of the High Priest was a constant irritation for many Jews who could not accept his alliance with Rome. A second concern for Jews, both urban and rural, was the interference of Hellenistic culture because it brought with it a different language, new customs, pagan religions and a rising importance in the use of money. A final issue related to the status of many Jews on a societal level. Especially in rural areas, Jews endured many hardships which made it difficult to focus one's devotion on God. In the cities, many temptations existed to influence the traditional Jewish lifestyle. John Riches, *The World of Jesus*, discusses the differences associated with the division between urban and rural dwellers in general and their effect on Jewish traditions in particular Jews were a minority in the cities of Palestine but were the majority in rural areas; Jerusalem did not hold the same prestige for all Jews.[10] "Palestine ... was a country where control of power was uneasily balanced between the traditional families and institutions of Judaism and the Roman governor."[11] The temple-state of Israel was at risk during this period not only through foreign interests but also from within.

It is extremely difficult to speak of a single Jewish reaction to the Hellenization process; it depended on the social, political and economic situation of groups of individuals. For this reason it is important to keep in mind the nature of Jewish pluralism

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[10] John Riches, *The World of Jesus* (Cambridge: CUP , 1990), cf. pp. 19ff.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

when discussing the interpretation of biblical texts produced in this time frame. Authors and redactors had to contend with different circumstances and their writing reflects their situations. Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, advocate an embracement of this "diversity" theory by pointing out the nature of the Hellenization process and

> its ability to embrace variety and encourage its incorporation into the new synthesis. To exist in the synthesis is, by definition, to be part of the synthesis. The varieties of Judaism in the Greco-Roman world are, in a very real sense, representatives of the Hellenistic synthesis. It is not helpful historically to protect "authentic Judaism" from "Hellenism" as though Judaism somehow presented a special case. What is needed is careful and consistent analysis of the relationship of Jews and Judaism(s) to other groups in that world.[12]

All social, religious, and cultural groups in Palestine and beyond would have been affected by the process of synthesis.

The Johannine community, then, should be seen within this wider historical context. It stands at a type of crossroads; it is intent on continuing Jesus' message but without its original link with the synagogue. This decision separates and distinguishes the Johannine community from its surroundings. Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism", has contributed enormously to the discussion of separation and uniqueness by focusing on the language of the Fourth Gospel. He maintains that the symbolic language of the Fourth gospel is indicative of the social circumstances of the Johannine community. Myth and symbol obviously serve a literary purpose but even

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[12] Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 23.

more intriguing is their "social function . . . which has been almost totally ignored."[13]

Meeks, in keeping with a new sensitivity to world-views, has developed a scheme for understanding the New Testament texts and their social setting by focusing on the language used by the authors. He argues that the language typifies the beliefs and assumptions of the narrative's participants. In other words, language is a link with the authors' real intentions and their of the language is an indicator of the situation they were in. An inter-dependent relationship between social situations and the function of language is evident in New Testament literature.

For many Jewish and emerging Christian groups the effect of Hellenism resulted in the canonical writings. A relationship between symbol, myth and cultural dimensions is evident in these texts which reflect social circumstances, conventions, and relationships. Symbols and myths are exactly this: reflections of concrete existence. They serve to support a reality, present, past, or future, which is shared by a group of individuals. From an ideological point of view, symbol and myth are products of specific environments that explain and support that environment. Specifically, Christian groups and Jewish factions created symbols and myths in support of their historical experiences. It is integral to this discussion that myths are creations, consciously or unconsciously generated, and used within the confines of distinctive societies. The myths particular to a community are essential "truths", so to speak, becau. they serve to reinforce and sustain the beliefs of

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[13] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972) 1:44-72, p. 49.

the members of that community.

There is an ongoing discussion about the relationship between "myth" and "history" in the world of biblical scholarship. It seems that many scholars dislike the use of the term "myth" because it carries with it a certain sense of ambiguity. Traditionally, "history" is associated with "truth" whereas "myth" is associated with "make-believe". This misconception leads to some dislike for the term "myth".

Myths are the explanations behind certain rituals and customs, peculiar to a society, such as the Jewish Passover and the Christian Eucharist. There are reasons why these rituals take place, why people participate in them; it is because of what stands behind them -- the myths which promote the action. The use of symbols is self-evident in this analysis. A symbol functions within the myth and may be a concrete representation of the larger picture. A word, an object, or one action may become representative of the entire ritual and the myth as well. The symbol has meaning for the community that uses it and for those people outside its boundaries the symbol usually has no meaning. This is why for many nineteenth and twentieth century scholars the significance of some New Testament references is lost. Biblical scholars are removed from the Greco-Roman world, not only in time, but in social understanding as well.

A prime example of symbolical representation is the figure of Jesus Christ. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to know what the historical Jesus was like. It is also doubtful that any of the gospel writers even knew Jesus personally. What we have revealed to us in the New Testament writings are particular presentations of Christ, not

factual accounts of Jesus, the man. Norman Perrin views the symbolic figure of Jesus Christ, not the historical Jesus, as the "unifying factor in the theology of the New Testament".[14] Christ, the symbol, is "the one constant in the diversity of the New Testament."[15] Scholars today cannot know who Jesus, the person, was. Instead we must wrestle with the images the New Testament writers leave us and construct a representation of those images. The same is true of other symbols used in New Testament texts in that it is often very difficult to know for certain to what a writer was actually referring.

Language is symbolic simply by virtue of its representative nature. Authors choose words to express existents in their environment and to express a point of view. The words they choose must represent as closely as they intend their interpretation of an event, a person, or a place. The written words on the page then serve a dual purpose: to represent a topic (person, place or event) and to represent an author's interpretation of that topic. The inherent symbolic nature of language demands heightened sensitivity to this dynamic function of written words.

Symbol, theme, and irony are relevant to the interpretation of gospel literature in that they are evoked by the context of an author's writing environment. Authors use material from their life setting, particularly in the recording of Jesus' teaching, to create a suitable context in which to place a narrative. In this sense a written story is not only

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[14] Norman Perrin, "Jesus and the Theology of the New Testament," *JournRel*, 64 (1984) 4:413-431, pp. 423f.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 423f.

the product of a writer's hand but is also generated out of a specific concept of language. Thus, the concept is a product of a specific social environment. The process is indicative of the social aspects of writing.

Language and writing are not merely products of an environment but also serve to sustain and support communities. Writers who are members of a community influence and are influenced by that community. The Jewish and Christian communities in which New Testament writers lived promoted a continuance of Jesus-stories. These stories serve to justify and explain the community's situation. How a community conceives of itself and its surrounding environment is a function of the language in such stories. The community's "world-maintenance" and "world-construction"[16] is guided by language.

Sacred literature sets up an interesting parallel between symbolically based world-construction and religiously based world-construction. The creation of a symbolic universe is integral to religious systems and to literary constructions. Peter Berger argues that what is accepted as "real" is definitive in group formation. Language defines what is "real" and can be used coercively to designate the parameters of a group. Once these parameters have been defined, language serves to control, sustain and support the group's environment. Religiously structured communities are based on faith constructs which may be defined precariously by literary symbols. Berger's entire argument is based on the congruence between language and religion: "Religion is a humanly constructed universe

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[16] Peter L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), pp. 3-52.

of meaning, and this construction is undertaken by linguistic means."[17] New Testament texts, especially the gospels, can be viewed as self-diagnostic tools for the communities which created those texts.

Traditionally, the study of symbols and themes is categorized as literary analysis. Sociological exegesis, a relatively new method of interpretation, has expanded the boundaries of literary criticism to include a concern with the 'concrete situation' in which symbols and themes are developed. The recognition of the social and cultural aspects of language has helped further developments in many fields of biblical criticism. Authors need to ground abstract notions in some concrete situation in an effort to make their narratives relevant and meaningful to an audience. It is necessary to create a suitable context in which to situate a narrative to supply it with an intended meaning. This is not to suggest that an author deliberately conceals the meaning he or she is attempting to convey, but that the language being used is a product of the social environment of the author. To divorce the author's language from its cultural, political and religious environment is to strip the text of a crucial element contributing to its production.

Robin Scroggs argues that

> Language, including theological language, is never to be seen as independent of other social realities. Thus, theol gical language and the claims made therein can no longer be explained without taking into account socio-economic-cultural factors as essential ingredients in the production of that

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

language.[18]

The focus on language is based on the notion that language is an indicator of the social reality in which it is born and used. Language is readily identifiable in a community and serves to encode the community's existence.

An analysis of the characteristics of the Johannine Christians involves a study of their social and cultural environment as it is revealed by their gospel. Discussing literature as socially influenced and produced is crucial to reaching conclusions about community self-definition. It should be possible to gain a general understanding of how this group of individuals viewed themselves in the larger picture of Palestine (*i.e.*, which "type" of Christianity, if any, did this group associate itself with?). The Johannine community's indeterminate use of κόσμος (world) prompts a discussion of the use of such symbolic language from a literary perspective as well as a socially historical one.

Norman Perrin defines hermeneutics as "the art of understanding expressions of life fixed in writing".[19] This function of literary material cannot be stressed enough. It is equally important to recognize the cultural and social implications of "fixing" events, expressions, and people in a written form. Textual records leave an indelible interpretation of how or why things happen in a particular time and place. Once a textual record has been made the events and expressions are "fixed" in time. Any study of these records

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[18] Robin Scroggs, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research" in *Theology and Sociology*, pp. 254-275, edited by Robin Gill (London: Cassell Publishers, 1987), p. 265.

[19] Norman Perrin, "Eschatology and Hermeneutics," *JBL* 93 (1974) 11:3-14, p. 5

must entail these factors. No matter from what perspective readers view the text they are ultimately left with only the text,[20] a text that details people, places and events. These topics may or may not have existed as an author portrays them but they do comprise a particular view of human existence at a particular time and place. The task of the reader is to read and understand the text in light of its function for those who wrote it and those who first read it.

This task may be accomplished in several different ways, ways that have been mapped out by the multiplicity of fields associated with biblical scholarship. Traditionally, the sharpest division lies between literary interpretations and historical criticism. The former asks questions of the text without interest in its historical (hence, social and cultural) setting. Generally speaking, literary critics are concerned with the structural components of a text; point of view, character composition, mood, story- or narrative-line, theme and symbol are merely a few of the topics that fall under this category of interpretation. These critics examine the function of its components in an effort to know how and why a narrative works.

At the other end of this theoretical scale of interpretation lie the historical critics. In contrast to their literary colleagues these scholars ask questions about what is behind, or even in front of, the text in an attempt to find out what its history is. Historical

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[20] The starting point of any interpretive discussion is the text. This statement may seem trite but it is necessary to state the starting point of the argument explicitly. Assuming that a literary text is a **product** brings with it a host of consequences. Textual ideology is a product of social and historical circumstances. On this point see Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), pp. 27f.

analysis is aimed at uncovering the reasons why a text was produced in the first place, revealing the authorial intention. This type of criticism is interested in understanding the environments which influenced authors as they wrote. The focus shifts from the text itself to the text in a particular creative setting. It is this aspect of biblical interpretation that has received considerable attention from both literary and historical scholars.

A serious point of debate between these two poles over time has been the historical integrity of the text. Historical critics accuse literary critics of betraying the historical integrity of the text by refusing to include historical concerns in their interpretations. Literary critics retaliate with the argument that since the past is unrecoverable there is no point in trying to reconstruct it. Source or form critics do not concern themselves with the text **now**, but are interested in finding an accurate original. This has been a point of issue for many years. It would seem that excluding the historical circumstances under which a text was created is to ignore an important part of the text's inherent meaning. This is not to say that historical exegesis is the only means for deducing the meaning of the text but that including the historical situation which created the text in the method of interpretation may make the interpretation more pertinent.

Both categories, literary and historical, are interested in the author. To the literary critic, the view of the author is couched in the ideology of the implied author which is then vocalized by the narrator.[21] From this perspective the author of the text exists as a

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[21] This argument has been proposed by a number of biblical scholars. Alan Culpepper, *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), argues that the narrator simply voices the implied author's perspective and suggests that

voice, revealed only by literary devices. This view into the textual story-world serves to remind the astute historical reader of the precarious nature of reconstructing "real" (*i.e.*, historically accurate) worlds from a textual creation. Reconstructive (*e.g.*, source and form criticism) theorists must recognize this limitation in their field. Exclusive and radical use of either extreme end of the interpretive scale will result in severely biased and restricted exegesis.

The need for a more dialectic approach to biblical criticism has been fulfilled in a growing fluidness of interpretive scholarship. The two broad categories outlined above have been subdivided and subdivided again to encompass many approaches to studying and interpreting the Bible. Exegetical study no longer falls exclusively into one of these two categories but rather questions which are brought to the text are fine-tuned for a

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the narrator and the implied author are one and the same (pp. 7ff). Culpepper differentiates between narrator, implied author and real author but maintains that "there is no reason to suspect any difference in the ideological, spatial, temporal, or phraseological points of view of the [three]" (p. 43). The literary constructs, narrator and implied author, exist simply as devices, created by the real author.

Wolfgang Iser's argument, *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), concurs with Culpepper: "We should distinguish ... between the man who writes the book (author), the man whose attitudes shape the book (implied author), and the man who communicates directly with the reader (narrator)" (p. 103). A narrative addresses an historical social reality which is presented by the implied author and whose perspective is adjusted by the narrator (p. 144). Iser views these three as equally participatory in the unveiling of the narrative.

The narrator and implied author can be seen to be adhering to a set of norms governing the story-telling (Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* [Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961] pp. 74ff.). Because they are literary constructs they have their parameters pre-defined by the real author. "The implied author establishes the norms of the narrative" as they are defined by the real author (Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978] p. 149) and the narrator is the agent voice of the implied author.

variety of historical or literary interests. In addition, many biblical scholars have expanded on traditional types of exegesis to include models and theories from other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. There has been a marked trend towards bridging fields of interdisciplinary study to heighten awareness of biblical texts.

The questions posed by the interpreter determine the answers received. In this way one can approach the text either from the perspective of the author, the text, or the reader. Each perspective defines and limits the entire analysis and the subsequent results. Historical critics question the relationship between the author and his text and ask how the text came to exist and why the author wrote what he did. Literary critics examine the text in and of itself and limit their questions to answers revealed by the text and not from any extraneous material. Reader-response criticism, a possible subdivision within literary analysis, focuses entirely on the reader's (*i.e.*, interpreter's) response to the text. Questions in this type of criticism are related to the reader's actualization of the text. It is important to remember, however, that these divisions are not boldfaced and much overlapping between critical methods frequently occurs.

Some methods of biblical scholarship have advocated a 'borrowing policy' to facilitate the filling of gaps in an interpretation which cannot be filled adequately by a particular method of study. Unfortunately, this 'borrowing' technique does not promote critical analysis. In a more positive move, however, it seems that biblical criticism is heading in a direction of overlapping and intersecting methodologies and each step

requires revisions to clarify the questions being asked. In this way, biblical critics may not necessarily categorize themselves as one particular type of exegete. Instead, they carefully define their questions in such a manner as to exclude possible misunderstanding of their analysis.

Without renouncing literary criticism completely, certain structuralist and narrative theories will not be involved in this discussion simply because they are not helpful in an historically projected analysis. Although worthwhile information will be addressed in the field of literary theory, a thoroughgoing endeavour into the components of narrative structure will not prove fruitful. On the other hand, symbol, theme, and irony are relevant to the interpretation of gospel literature in that they are directly related to the context of the author's writing environment. An author will use material from his own life setting, especially in the case of recording the teachings of Jesus, to create a suitable context in which to place his narrative. It is necessary to qualify this use of literary application in an historical endeavour.

The assumption is that story creation is a social phenomenon. In this sense a written story is generated out of a specific concept of language which is a product of a specific social environment. The writer of a story is a member of a particular society that may or may not be actively involved in the generation of written texts but is influential, even indirectly, on the writing process simply by virtue of the writer's membership. This notion is particularly applicable in the case of the gospel writers in that they were members of Jewish and/or Christian communities. These communities promoted a

continuance of the Jesus stories and facilitated the fixation of these stories in writing.

An emphasis on social context has led to the emergence of liberation theology and sociological exegesis. Both methods have focused their attention on the social world of the first century Jews and Christians in an attempt to place accurately the New Testament writings in an appropriate environment. Christopher Rowland, Wayne Meeks and David Rensberger have made significant strides in these two areas. These men have assessed the New Testament situation from the perspective of the text and have successfully, for the most part, married literary criticism and social analysis in a way that permits new hypotheses to emerge related to the intent of the authors and their followers.

The marriage of these fields entails a dialectic approach involving redaction, composition and sociological exegesis. Redaction criticism is primarily interested in revealing the intent of an author based on attitudes and themes guiding a written text. Composition criticism is confined to the text itself by uncovering the components involved in the writing process. Sociological studies begin with a broader base which includes the intention of the author and the influences at work during the writing of a text. The possibility of a mutual interest in the author of a text brings all three methods to an agreeable conclusion: how writers feel about their subjects is directly influenced by the environment in which they compose. Obviously then, to know the writing environment can only aid in any discussion of literary compositions.

Christopher Rowland contends, through his exegetical work, that the social situations of Jesus, his followers, and the writers of the gospels, are entirely different from

the world of the twentieth century interpreters.[22] He argues that scholars must sensitize themselves to the differences in world-views so that a more accurate analysis of New Testament texts can occur. In keeping with this perspective, David Rensberger attempts the same sort of analysis in *Overcoming the World* where he discusses the symbols used by the authors of the Fourth gospel as directly related to their social setting.[23] He maintains, as does Meeks, that particular elements, such as symbols, used by an author represent the actual situation under which the writer was being influenced.

The obvious motif running through this select few scholars is that they are concerned with understanding what life was like for the gospel writers in order to understand better their literary creations. To do this Rowland, Meeks, and Rensberger assume a correlation between what is written and what occurred in the past. This is not necessarily a direct, one-to-one correspondence, but one that emerges and is encoded in the telling of a tale. None of these interpretations seeks to legitimize essential truths or uncover historical facts, but rather to understand the intentions of the authors in their best possible light. They argue that to achieve this they must reveal the situations in which the texts were written in an effort to understand better why they were written and to interpret accurately their meaning. The motivation for this type of approach lies in the argument that a relationship between text and community exists which supports the need

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[22] See his *Radical Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), pp. 116ff; 135. Rowland's interpretation of the intentions of gospel writers is couched in his liberation theology.

[23] David Rensberger, *Overcoming the World* (London: SPCK, 1988), pp. 28ff.

for sociological studies of biblical texts.

From a theoretical point of view, however, retrojecting modern-day sociological models into antiquity is a dangerous business. There is no way of proving that what we understand of society today is applicable to a society of two thousand years ago. A literary critic holds fast to this point and argues that a historical endeavour is a hopeless one because one can never be sure if the analysis is accurate. The text is all that remains so why not stick with what we have. The sociological and liberation exegetes, on the other hand, maintain that some models do illuminate the reality of the text in their emphasis on historical contexts. Ched Myers touches on this point when he argues that "historical criticism betrays the narrative integrity of the text and literary criticism betrays its historical integrity". This betrayal requires a synthesis between the two which he calls "literary sociology".[24]

Most biblical scholars will agree that it is extremely difficult to leave the historical perspective behind in the interpretation of New Testament texts simply because much of their content is so historically bound. There is an abundance of material available on the New Testament era from sources other than the New Testament canon (Josephus, in particular); the same cannot be said of much of the Old Testament period. It is in this latter canon the literary critics have flourished. Much of the content of the Old Testament writings is not regarded as 'factual' and many source critics maintain that the unreliability of oral traditions is heavily influential. Compared to the New Testament writings whose

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[24] Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, pp. 25-6.

oral communications are spread over a mere fifty to one hundred years, the separation of centuries in the literary fixation of Old Testament narratives plays havoc with reliability. The fact that more stories exist in the larger Hebrew canon makes for fruitful literary interpretations. Literary theorists have worked much better in these texts than in the New Testament gospels and letters of Paul.

So where does this array of interpretive scholarship leave us? We must define a question(s) which centers the discussion in a particular perspective that shows our concerns. For us, the intention of the authors and their choice of material and presentation is primary. To understand the motives for writing and to interpret as accurately as possible what the authors did write we must also endeavour to understand under what circumstances a text was composed.

> By examining a Gospel in terms of its general structure, thematic development, and literary style, and by distinguishing insofar as possible between traditional material and its reinterpretation at the hands of the final author or editor, redaction critics have sought to sketch a picture of beliefs and practices, the concerns and presuppositions that gave to each Gospel its final shape.[25]

Just as a student of literature is introduced to authors by discussing their lives, their education, or their environment, so must we become acquainted with the life of the gospel writer(s).

Robin Scroggs quotes a statement by Karl Marx: "It is not the consciousness of

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[25] John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975), p. 8. It is important to recognize the extent to which a text reflects and promotes the beliefs and thoughts of an author. Through this link it is possible to understand the circumstances under which a text was written.

men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness."[26] This statement supports the notion that written texts do not magically appear but rather they are generated out of the minds of people who are active in, and aware of, their social situation. Members of a society are then products of their environment and their literary creations reflect that environment. Language is a prime concern for a social analysis in that it is the mediator of thought, beliefs, assumptions and biases. Language is a code for a community as well as a unifying agent. Culture is intertwined with the production of language and its structuring of literary creations.

There appears to be two ways of "doing" historical exegesis: First, start with a geographical and physical view of what first century Jews, Christians, Romans, Hellenists were like (by inquiry into the other primary sources of the same period). This view allows a picture of the New Testament situation to be painted. New Testament literature can then be read and interpreted with this picture in mind such that a better understanding of why writers wrote what they did might be achieved. The problem with this approach is that it might offer no insight into the nature of texts created by distinctive or unique communities (such as the Johannine one).

Second, start with the New Testament literature as it is and through an analysis of the symbols and myths contained, and a little common sense, create a theory of how a particular author might have been involved in a Christian or Jewish community and how

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[26] Scroggs, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament" in *Theology and Sociology*, p. 266.

his or her social environment is reflected in what he or she wrote. The problem with this approach is that the text contains a certain amount of ambiguity thus leading one, as many literary critics can attest to, on an endless journey of meanings.

Ideally then, a biblical scholar is seeking a comfortable middle ground, a dialectic approach, on which to approach the gospels and other literature. Such a method would have to include enough historical background so as to facilitate an accurate analysis of symbol, myth and theme. The Johannine community's use of κόσμος in its gospel is indicative of the community's self-understanding. The question being asked is, What does this use tell us, the readers, about this unique community's self-definition and self-awareness? Because the question is ultimately historically slanted, a redactional approach is best suited for the task. Redaction criticism can be tempered with a sensitivity to social analysis to further the investigation of the Johannine community and its gospel.

Redaction criticism is useful in illuminating the beliefs and intentions of an author. The text, created by the author illuminates these beliefs and intentions through the medium of narration, implicitly and explicitly.[27] Because many authors are members of a community (as is the case for the Johannine community as outlined by Raymond Brown), the shared beliefs of the group are evident in the text and are determined by its social and historical circumstances. In essence then, the literary text is a product of the community's understanding of itself.

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[27] Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 26.

Brown's methodology for his stage theory and reconstruction of the Johannine community is one model for this discussion. His approach is historical and he analyses the stages of composition for the gospel. How the gospel portrays Jesus, the main character in all four gospels, is representative of how the authors saw Jesus (*i.e.*, the gospels' creators and adherents have different notions of whom Jesus was[28]). Brown deduces, although he admits his analysis is limited at best, a life situation of the community behind the Fourth Gospel based on what is said about Jesus.[29] This portrayal reflects the Johannine community's understanding of itself.

> The Johannine Jesus is a stranger who is not understood by his own people and is not even of this world ... Implicitly then, the Johannine Christians are those who understand Jesus best, for like him they are rejected, persecuted, and not of this world.[30]

From a social perspective the self-understanding of the Johannine community plays an important role in its literary expression; redaction criticism is thus expanded by sociological insight. The concern here is with both the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the Johannine community and the intentions of the authors of the Johannine literature. For each gospel a particular "setting-in-life" can be attributed to the differing views of Christian origins, namely the portrayal of Christ.[31] The social setting of a gospel is broadened by the

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[28] Brown, *CBD*, p. 18.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

[31] Cf. Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae, eds., *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 152: The meaning and purpose of a text are influenced by its social and historical context of creation.

scholarship of redaction criticism.

This modified socio-redactional method uses certain basic sociological assumptions that enhance the historical reconstruction of traditional redaction criticism. Because members of a community are products of their environment any social circumstances determine what type of people human beings become and what type of ideas they think. The link is then apparent: the texts of first century Christians and Jews are products of people who are products of their environments. Therefore, to know the environment is to know the people and the texts as we have them today are the remains of the first century Greco-Roman world.

We can identify a hermeneutical circle in the methodology of this discussion. Beginning with an exegesis of the text, a picture of the community behind it is formed. From this picture a clearer understanding of the creation of the literature and a greater appreciation for its intentions can be deduced. A better understanding of the text is complemented by a better understanding of the community behind it.

The redaction critic views the authors of a text as creative theologians with intellectual agendas to meet. Thus, it is possible to see a correlation between the views of the authors and the behaviour of the community, its beliefs, concerns, and concepts. The redaction critic asks historical questions about the cultural, sociological and political circumstances under which the text was created to appreciate fully the meaning being conveyed. An intersection between social analysis and redaction criticism thus proves very fruitful.

Brown's deductive method recreates the Johannine community behind the text. Characteristics of the community then point to unique features of the text which highlight the unique features of the community; thus, the hermeneutical circle. Bengt Holmberg offers this summary of the methodology being used here:

> First one reconstructs a specific social situation (about which nothing else is known) out of a religious, mainly theological or hortatory text, then one turns around and interprets the meaning of the text with the help of the situation that one now "knows".[32]

The emphasis in this discussion is on the Johannine use of κόσμος which is significant in the discussion of the community from a social analytical point of view. It is indicative of the Johannine community's self-understanding of alienation and separation. By focusing on how the social and historical circumstances of the Johannine community affected its understanding of "the world" an interpretation of its literary use is possible.

Brown and Meeks have shown that the Johannine community considered itself separate, differentiated from other religious traditions of the era. Its members considered themselves disciples of Jesus which somehow set them apart from "the Jews", Gentiles, Pharisees, and others. Our question is, how does the symbolic use of κόσμος further enlighten our understanding of the community's situation? What does "the world" mean to the Johannine community and how was it interpreted?

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[32] Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), p. 128.

CHAPTER 2

The Trends of Interpretation

It is necessary to lay a foundation for the investigation into the self-understanding of the Johannine community. This foundation consists of influential biblical scholars whose contributions to the study of the Fourth Gospel have been integral to the progress of biblical interpretation. A major focus for this chapter is on the influence of ancient or classical writers whose work has withstood time and has had an impact on modern exegetes. Three classical writers, Origen, Augustine, and Chrysostom, are primarily concerned with uncovering the 'life lessons' offered by biblical texts, particularly the gospels of the New Testament. These interpreters read the gospels as manuals containing instructions for daily living as commanded by Jesus. Many modern biblical scholars, on the other hand, are concerned more with the **history** of the texts, the context of their creation and the intentions of the authors. This focus is based on the premise, as we have already noted, that enhanced knowledge of the circumstances under which a text is written will heighten the level of understanding of the text itself. It is important to recognize

however, that historical understanding in and of itself does not complete a textual understanding; a hermeneutical focus does this.[1]

Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine are representative of three distinct types of theological interpretation: allegorical, literal and philosophical. Origen's focus is on the subtlety of the Fourth Gospel. This characteristic requires intuitive reading and strong symbolic analysis. Chrysostom views John's gospel in a completely different light, a world of black and white. His interpretation is simplified by terms of opposites -- something is defined by what it is not. Augustine's method, on the other hand, is not so easily defined. Although the term 'philosophical' might be applied to his work, his interpretation falls somewhere between Origen and Chrysostom because his focus lies in revealing what the gospels have to say about the human condition.

We begin the discussion in the third century with Origen and allegorical interpretation. Although Origen never finished a complete exegesis of the Fourth Gospel, he offers a detailed and complex set of interpretations on the first thirteen chapters of John's Gospel in approximately thirty-two books. It has been theorized, based mainly on what Origen himself says, that the composition of his commentary spanned several years, possibly 230-248 C.E. Much of the work is fragmented and several portions lost simply

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[1] On the relationship between historical/literary criticism and hermeneutics see Norman Perrin, "Eschatology and Hermeneutics" and his *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 1ff.

because the work was too lengthy to copy in its entirety.[2]

The focus of Book 6 of Origen's commentary is an analysis of the "sense of the word cosmos" in John 1:29.[3]

> Τῇ ἐπαύριον βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ λέγει, Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμον.

In his analysis Origen claims that "'world' is taken to mean the Church alone, it being the adornment of the world."[4] Origen argues, however, that limiting the meaning of 'world' to 'Church' may not capture its whole meaning -- because the Johannine Jesus offered salvation to all people, such an understanding of 'world' misconstrues Jesus' mission. In such an understanding he would have offered salvation to only a select few people; his message in John's Gospel, argues Origen, does not support this.

Origen's aim is to emphasize the universality of Jesus' message while still following the doctrines of the Church at the same time. Those who become saved through their acceptance of Jesus also become members of the Church. For Origen, then, 'world' connotes 'humanity' in general, Christians, Jews and Gentiles alike. It is the human element that makes the 'world' what it is.

The best example of a modern commentator who takes up Origen's question is Rudolf Bultmann. In his monumental commentary, *The Gospel of John*, he focuses on

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[2] Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*: Books 1-10, translated and introduced by Ronald E. Heine, edited by Thomas P. Halton, (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1989), p. 9.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 250-52.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

the very issue raised by Origen. The connection between these two scholars is their focus on the symbolic nature of much of the Fourth Gospel's narrative. Bultmann seeks a definition of κόσμος early in his commentary in the discussion of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. He discusses the relationship between πάντα and κόσμος and argues that in "v.10 both the πάντα of v.3 and the ἄνθρωποι of v.5 are taken up again in ὁ κόσμος, [which] shows that men are not just beings who like others happen to be found in the κόσμος, but that it is they who make the κόσμος a κόσμος."[5] Bultmann understands 'order' (*i.e.*, κόσμος) to be created by humanity. It is this order, independent of God, which makes the κόσμος a κόσμος.

Bultmann goes on to say that

> the κόσμος can be described both as the object of God's love (3.16) and receiver of the revelation (4.42; 6.33; 12.47), and also as the deceitful power which revolts against God (14.30; 16.11) and is rejected (12.31; 17.9). Both elements go to make up the concept of κόσμος and it is wrong to try to distinguish two separate concepts of κόσμος in John.[6]

Bultmann's definition identifies a distinct dualism revealed in the relationship between the realm of the disciples and the realm of Jesus. Bultmann interprets the Johannine Jesus

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[5] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, translated by G. R. Beasley-Murray, edited by R. W. N. Hoare and J. K. Riches (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 38.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 55. I think if we were to distinguish two 'orders' in John we would be following a more gnostic interpretation in keeping with a cosmic battle between good and evil. Bultmann does, however, interpret the attainment of peace as "freedom" from the κόσμος (John 14.27) (p. 628). Such an interpretation might itself be seen as gnostic. Because the 'world' is inherently evil the followers of the Johannine Jesus would desire escape from it.

as being in direct opposition to the 'world' based on his origins.[7]

Once the Johannine Jesus has established his ministry with a few faithful followers his attitude towards the 'world' becomes more and more negative and 'the Jews' are singled out as representatives of this negativity. Bultmann supports the notion that 'the Jews' represent the 'world'[8] through their unbelief. In keeping with this well-accepted notion 'the Jews' are portrayed as ignorant and deceitful. They do not accept Jesus and seek to destroy him and his mission. Bultmann indicates that 'the Jews' might be identified as an historical group but prefers to interpret their function in the Fourth Gospel from a symbolic standpoint.

Bultmann also raises some interesting points regarding Pilate, especially pertinent to our discussion of the κόσμος. Bultmann argues that Pilate does not represent "the world in the way as do the Jews and their ruler."[9] Bultmann appears almost sympathetic towards Pilate and blames 'the Jews' for putting him in such an awkward position. It seems to Bultmann that Pilate is ill-equipped to handle the situation since he does not understand its nature. He understands only the political nature of "king" and is amused and bewildered by the requests of 'the Jews' for a trial.

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[7] *Ibid.*, cf. p. 655: "The mythological ἐληλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον is paradoxically bound up with γεγ: the origin." He also argues that a parallel exists between 'here'/'there' and 'above'/'below' (cf. p. 654).

[8] *Ibid.*, cf. pp. 144f; 646ff.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 646ff.

Pilate asks politically based questions and expects politically based answers.[10] When Jesus does not comply he becomes increasingly agitated and frustrated. The Johannine Jesus has not amassed an army and thus poses no threat to Pilate or to the Roman authorities. In this way his kingship has no meaning for Pilate who wishes to release him. According to Bultmann, Jesus' βασιλεία is "superior to all worldly dominion (cf. 3.31)."[11]

Bultmann interprets 'world' in John's Gospel eschatologically in keeping with the theme that the purpose of Jesus' mission is the establishment of his βασιλεία. The 'world' is something which will pass away when God's kingdom comes. Kingdom, therefore, is a conclusion, an end result, to the existence of human life. Humans are 'of' the world in that they belong to the world. Once Jesus draws his disciples to him "however much they are still ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ (17.11), they are no longer ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, in the sense of essentially belonging to the world (17.14,16); they are no longer ἴδιον of the κόσμος (15.19), and therefore they stand, as he does, the other side of death (17.24)."[12] The fate of the Johannine community is that it is **in** the world but not **of** it; "it belongs to Jesus and no longer to the world".[13]

This implies that the Johannine community is challenged by its social situation.

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 653.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 654.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 431.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 578.

The hostility it receives from other groups around it presents a problem for the community which must decide how to deal with it. The response by the community is shaped by its commitment to Jesus and by the problems facing it. The irony of remaining in the world after Jesus has gone is two-fold: Jesus leaves but the Johannine community still faces adversity even though Jesus' mission was one of peace. It is possible to interpret Jesus' mission as a failure in its earlier stages because the 'world' does not listen and the Johannine community becomes severely alienated because of its fellowship with Jesus.

The Johannine community's opposition is hostile and acts independently of God. This theme, which is discussed in detail by Bultmann, is taken up again by Leon Morris in his own commentary, *The Gospel According to John*. Morris focuses on the irony of the Johannine situation in particular, and of the κόσμος in general. Morris, in agreement with Rudolf Bultmann, sees a contradiction in terms when one examines the nature of **this** world, that which God created. It is the wilful independence of humans which alienated them from God and changes the tendency of the 'world' from good (*i.e.*, order/creation) into evil (*i.e.*, chaos/destruction).[14] For Morris, the irony lies in this change of meaning: κόσμος was intended to stand for that which is good but in the Fourth Gospel it comes to mean, in a general sense, that which is evil.

Morris' *Gospel According to John* offers the reader three short appendices, one of

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[14] Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971 [1977]), p. 127. Cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1951), p. 27.

which is devoted to the use of κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel. It can be understood as "the universe at large" or, from a more anthropocentric view, as "this world, this earth".[15] These two definitions are strictly spatial and do not pertain to any symbolic interpretation of κόσμος. On this issue Morris argues that from the Johannine Jesus' point of view (as well as the implied author's point of view), "the world" is defined as those (*i.e.*, people) who oppose him.[16]

The double entendre in the Fourth Gospel's use of κόσμος is an interesting literary device. Morris has highlighted the irony in the change of meaning but a second irony lies in the function of the Johannine Jesus. He comes to a place and a people that do not accept him and eventually threaten him. His entire mission seems to have intended nothing but goodwill and the promotion of spiritual knowledge. His mission is rejected, for the most part, because the 'world' has changed.[17] Morris argues that the

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 127. Morris recognizes the potential for a metaphorical application of *kosmos* as a personification of "the great opponent of the Redeemer" (p. 127).

[17] The *kosmos*, in its genesis, contained an element of chaos. Water, wind and "darkness over the deep" (Genesis 1:2) were controlled by God in his creation of the universe. The Sea was conquered and tamed by Yahweh (Job 7:12) in an effort to maintain order . Leviathan is "a monster of primeval Ch[illegible] [that] symbolizes all powers hostile to God" (Job 40:25, *NJB*, n. j., p. 807). God must engage this monster in combat in an effort to tame or defeat it. Psalm 46 foretells of a "return to chaos. The earth rests on the waters of the nether ocean, Psalm 24:2, supported by pillars ... These columns totter and the waters are released and dash against the mountains" (Psalm 46:3, *NJB*, n. b., p. 861). The 'world' is small in comparison to the Sea. It is "the 'inhabited world' (*oikoumene*), *i.e.*, the Graeco-Roman world. All the Jews of the empire are destined to hear the good news before punishment comes to Israel" (Matthew 24:14, *NJB*, n. g., p. 1649). Punishment is impending because the "material world, created for humanity [is] cursed for [its] sin" (Romans 8:19, *NJB*, n. j., p. 1879). Καός and κόσμος, represented

creators of the Fourth Gospel were well-aware of the implications of using κόσμος and he recognizes a diversity of meanings in his analysis.[18]

A second ancient scholar, Saint John Chrysostom, has had a significant influence in the exegesis of the Fourth Gospel. He is representative of the literal kind of interpretation associated with the Antiochene school. Approximately 150 years after Origen, Chrysostom also turns to the Fourth Gospel as a source of inspiration. Chrysostom offers an extensive collection of homilies or sermons on the entire Gospel of John which were delivered orally c. 390 C.E. In true Antiochene style he supplies useful instruction for daily living based on a literal and historical interpretation of the text in eighty-eight concise homilies. Based on a strict premise of divine retribution, Chrysostom maintains that a reverence for spiritual things and a rejection of the earthly realm is the key to conquering the world.[19]

Chrysostom divides the secular realm from the spiritual realm along physical lines, advocating a division between heaven and earth. He interprets Jesus' assent during his resurrection as one **from** earth **to** heaven. In this interpretation earth is directly associated with 'below' and heaven with 'above'. Chrysostom understands this division in concrete

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by Leviathan and Yahweh, respectively, are pitted against each other in an attempt to control the universe.

[18] Morris, p. 128.

[19] Saint John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist*, cf. *Homily 38*, Vol. I, translated by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, S. C. H., edited by Roy Joseph Defarrari, (New York, NY: Fathers of the Church, 1957 [1960]), pp. 367-384. A life of imitation of Christ is the key to salvation and for preparation for the next world.

terms and explains it in this manner to his congregations. A further division is made between "this life" and "the next life" which is manifested in a distinction between "this world" and "the next world".[20] Chrysostom maintains that "clinging to the things of the present life"[21] traps one in 'this world'; only belief in Jesus' message and imitation of his life can make one free.

For Chrysostom the implications of divine retribution cannot be underestimated. In an effort to bring home the need to imitate Christ, Chrysostom instructs his parishioners to turn away from money, wealth, greed and power and embrace the spiritual guidance of the church as a link to salvation.[22] He argues that only those who have followed this path are worthy of salvation and will be assured reward in heaven. He defines 'the world' as "the multitude [that is] corrupt and engrossed by earthly things as it is -- the vulgar, confused, and senseless crowd."[23] The followers of Christ must separate themselves from 'the world', from those who are neither "upright and virtuous" nor "upright and exemplary".[24]

Chrysostom does not have a problem with a complete turning away from the evil

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[20] Chrysostom, cf. *Homily 8* (John 1.9-10), pp. 80-87.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

[22] Chrysostom, *Homily 22*, pp. 219-222 and *Homily 36*, p. 358. Chrysostom's argument rests on the premise that any reward you receive in Heaven (*i.e.*, the **next** world) is contingent upon what you do on earth (*i.e.*, **this** world). See also *Homily 8*, p. 87.

[23] Chrysostom, *Homily 8*, p. 82.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

of the world. Even though Jesus brought his Light to all people in the world, some are blind to it and some choose not to accept it.[25] In keeping with his concrete definitions Chrysostom draws distinct lines of separation: evil/righteousness, blindness/seeing, wicked/worthy, lesser/greater. He interprets Jesus' kingdom along these dualistic lines as well. It is greater than any kingdom on earth because it receives its authority from heaven. While Jesus' kingdom is **in** the world it does not originate there. Instead, it is "much greater and more brilliant than human power."[26]

According to Chrysostom, then, neither Jesus nor his kingdom has any human origin yet Jesus ministers to humans in 'this world'. The challenge for humans who are worthy enough is to become like Christ and leave 'this world' behind in anticipation of the 'next world'. Fulfilment of Jesus' commandments ensures membership in his heavenly kingdom. Those who remain in 'this world' are evil and wicked and will suffer for their blindness to the message of Jesus.

Of John 18:36 in particular, Chrysostom maintains that Jesus is still in fact a king, but not the type of king that Pilate would expect. Chrysostom ranks Jesus' kingship above that of Pilate's and argues that Jesus' is "much more illustrious".[27] At this point a paradox in Chrysostom's interpretation can be detected. He has advocated a turning away from wealth and power (the earthly realm) while at the same time he has described Jesus'

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[26] Chrysostom, *Homily 83*, p. 412. "His kingdom is not a human one, nor is it transient" (p. 412).

[27] Chrysostom, *Homily 84*, p. 417.

kingdom in a very similar manner. It is misleading to think of 'this world' and Jesus' 'world' in the same terms when the original premise is that they have nothing in common. Chrysostom's argument, if taken to its ultimate conclusion, says that no comparison can be made between 'this world' and 'the next' because they have no common ground on which to base the comparison.

Chrysostom's concrete separation of 'this world' from the spiritual realm of God is his attempt to explain the theological aspects of John's Gospel. He identifies two different sets of ideals operating in each realm; a life of imitation of Christ *vs.* a life independent of God. Faithful followers of Christ must realize that what might be considered good by earth's standards may not be good by heaven's standards. The difficult task then rests upon Jesus' disciples to live by heaven's standards while they remain on earth.

Chrysostom's understanding of 'the world' in the Fourth gospel is similar to that of the modern exegete Barnabas Lindars. In his commentary, *The Gospel of John*, Lindars defines 'the world' as "the world of men considered apart from God. It is evil in so far as it denotes men who refuse the response of saving belief."[28] For this reason the Johannine Jesus chooses his disciples **out** of the world, those who will accept salvation.. He identifies the acts of receiving and non-receiving as linked to belief and knowing

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[28] Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (Frome and London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1972), p. 320.

truth.[29] Without receiving Christ, seeing and knowing him is impossible. In keeping with Chrysostom's interpretation, Lindars identifies a paradox in the Johannine community's commitment to Jesus: they cannot accept Jesus without giving up the evil of 'the world'.

Lindars addresses the gnostic and radical dualistic interpretations of 'world' early in his commentary. In his discussion of John 8:23 Lindars makes the following accepted connections: "below" = "of this world" and "above" = "not of this world". He argues that "to a Hellenistic reader this would sound like a radical dualism" but in Johannine thought it is representative of a "flesh/spirit contrast" which can be expressed in "spatial terms".[30] In Lindars interpretation the Johannine Jesus comes to 'this world' in a geographical sense on a mission to convert 'the world'. The "flesh/spirit contrast" is simply one between the disciples, who are of 'flesh', and Jesus, who is of 'spirit'. This contrast is one which the Johannine Jesus emphasizes and strives to overcome.

From the Johannine Jesus' viewpoint the world hates him through its opposition to him and its non-response to him. Lindars' interpretation of John's Gospel emphasizes the importance of knowledge for the community of disciples. There is a defining line between those who "know" Jesus and those who do not. "The world of men apart from God and in opposition to him (cf. John 8:23) cannot receive him; it neither sees him ... nor knows him."[31] Of course, on the other hand, those who do not live "apart from God"

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 480.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 480.

receive Jesus, see him and know him.

The negative confrontation with the unbelief of the world sets up a defensive attitude towards the world in the Fourth Gospel. Although one solution is to reject the world as it has rejected Jesus and his disciples, they are to remain politically active. Lindars argues that "there is no warrant here for an 'other-worldly' outlook, as if the disciples are to contract out of involvement in the ordinary affairs of men. But by their incorporation into Christ they form a distinct category in society."[32] The real challenge is obvious: this group must venture into a world of opposition in order to carry out its missionary task.

Lindars argues that the crux of this irony lies in the fact that the disciples must remain **in** the world though they are no longer **of** the world. He implies that the disciples were once **of** the world but are no longer because of their confessed belief in Christ. Their responsibility is to the work of Jesus who is not **of** this world. "Their special relationship with God sets them apart from it."[33]

In keeping with his matter-of-fact approach, Lindars tries to simplify his interpretation of John 18:36 in an effort to bring home the Johannine understanding of κόσμος.

Jesus' kingdom is not to be understood in terms of the Present Age (hā-

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 493. The notion of a "distinct category in society" is integral to the larger issue of this discussion. It will be taken up in detail in the examination of sects. See below, chapter 4.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 527. Lindars' discussion of John 17:14-16 is applicable to this argument.

> 'ôlām haz-zeh) but belongs to the Coming Age (hā-'ôlām hab-bā'). But John thinks of it in terms of simultaneous orders of being (Gr. *kosmos* = world). But this is not to be taken in a metaphysical sense, but as spheres of relationship. Jesus' kingdom is not a kingdom of the world of men apart from God, but a kingdom of men in relation to God; not secular, but spiritual.[34]

Lindars is arguing that the purpose of Jesus' mission is to teach humanity to exist in relation to God, not independent of God. It is this independence from God which makes the κόσμος a κόσμος,[35] and it is why the κόσμος opposes Jesus.

Finally, Lindars does mention briefly the significance of 'the Jews'. Although a strong dualistic theme exists in the use of κόσμος, Lindars argues that κόσμος cannot be associated with 'the Jews'. Instead, 'the Jews' should be thought of as the historical 'Jews' and nothing more. They are simply "men apart from God", from John's point of view, who may or may not choose to be "of the truth".[36]

Charles H. Talbert, similarly echoes Chrysostom's literal interpretation of 'world'. For Talbert we can substitute the word 'earth' for 'world' throughout his commentary, *Reading John*. He discusses the concept only in geographical terms. On John 18:36, in particular, he argues that "the **origins** of Jesus' kingship are not of this world (3:31; 8:23;

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[34] *Ibid.*, p. 558-9. Lindars goes on to cite the story of the Shepherd (chapter 10) as an allegory for the kingship of Jesus. This story illustrates that membership in Christ (the sheep and the sheepfold) has its consequences (seclusion from the world, hatred and opposition from outsiders -- thieves) as well as its benefits (protection and leadership from Jesus).

[35] Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, pp. 38ff, 55ff.

[36] Lindars, p. 560.

16:28)".[37] For this reason Jesus is not a rebel to be fought with military weapons or by worldly means (cf. 18:10-11). Jesus' message should not be taken as a threat because there is no common ground of conflict on which a battle of 'worlds' can take place; the boundary between the two defies conflict.

Somewhere between the literal and allegorical understandings of Chrysostom and Origen, lies a third patristic contributor: St. Augustine. Augustine's interpretation of the Fourth Gospel is more systematically philosophical than those of Origen or Chrysostom. Augustine composed his *124 Tractates on the Gospel of John* during a time of great christological and trinitarian debate. It is generally accepted that the composition of Augustine's *Tractates* began after 416 C.E. although some may have been delivered orally prior to that date.[38] Although the exact dating is debated it is generally accepted as well that the tractates were composed in groups and are meant to be read as a composite whole.

In *Tractate 38* (John 8.21-25) Augustine gives his readers a brief look at his views on 'the world'. Those who are "of this world" are "sinners"; they are "wicked", "unbelieving" and they "savour earthly things".[39] Augustine tries to keep his definition simple and straightforward; he makes no exceptions regarding who is of 'this world' and

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[37] Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1992), p. 238. Emphasis is my own.

[38] St. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John: 28-54*, Vol. 3, translated and introduced by John W. Retting, edited by Thomas P. Halton, (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1993), p. 23.

[39] Augustine, *Tractate 38*, p. 108.

who is not. All people, by virtue of the fact that they are human, are of 'this world'. All people are born with sin[40] but Jesus can cleanse this sin which will in turn free humans from 'this world'. Augustine does not define 'this world' in a physical or concrete sense as Chrysostom does. Rather, being of 'this world' is a way of living and a way of existing for Augustine. It is an undesirable way of being and being cleansed of the evil of 'this world' is necessary.

In keeping with this interpretation Augustine defines "above" as the "Father".[41] Jesus is from "above" but his disciples are from "below". Augustine chooses to interpret this distinction as one of origin and of character not one of place. He argues that we must "understand Christ from above that in [our] thoughts [we] go out beyond all that was made, out totally beyond the whole of creation, out beyond every body, every created spirit, every thing in any way changeable; go out beyond everything."[42]

Augustine seems to have a better grasp of the interpretive process than Chrysostom in that he recognizes the problems of comparing 'this world' with that which is beyond. For Augustine there is no line of division drawn between the two worlds; there is no boundary which can be crossed. Instead, he interprets 'of' as a kind of 'being' based on one's origins. He goes further to say that

> all who are of the world are after the world, because the world is first; and so man is of the world. But first there was Christ, then the world, because

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[42] *Ibid.*

Christ was before the world, before Christ was nothing.[43]

The main concern of the patristic fathers, whether they wrote from an allegorical or literal viewpoint, was to offer reflection and instruction for daily living. The premise for their arguments lies in the notion that the gospels were a source of guidance for living a Christian life. For this reason Augustine, Chrysostom and Origen sought to emphasize the moral benefits of atoning for one's sins through a strict adherence to Christian guidelines. For these men 'the world' was a place and a time to be endured equally by all. Release from 'this world' depended on one's performance in it.

In the contemporary era, George W. MacRae has adopted, to a certain extent, the philosophical approach of Augustine in his *Invitation to John*. He concerns himself with the moral issues he sees being addressed in the Fourth Gospel. For him, the difference between 'this world' and what is beyond is a difference in 'being'. Jesus is not a member of humanity and is therefore not of 'this world'. MacRae argues that the Johannine definition for 'world' is given in John 15:18-19 and means "mankind".[44] In this interpretation Jesus comes to 'mankind' but is not a part of it. In the same way 'mankind' can come to Jesus but it is not 'of' Jesus. The task of Jesus' followers is to become 'like' Jesus through imitation.

'World', when it is used in a pejorative sense, "is dominated by Satan ... and Jesus

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[43] *Ibid.*

[44] George W. MacRae, *Invitation to John* (Garden City NY: Image Books, 1978), p. 187.

must conquer it (John 16:33)."[45] The majority of occurrences of 'world' which MacRae discusses are negative and thus a conflict is detected in the Fourth Gospel between good and evil. This conflict originates between God and the world and manifests itself in the conflict between the disciples and "the Jews" (who represent 'the world').[46] Jesus' mission is to confront the world with the revealing word of God and thus bring "mankind" (*i.e.*, the world) to faithfulness.[47] The entire mission is centred around Jesus coming from the Father and his return to the Father.[48] This mission entails a message of truth which is brought to the world, a message of God's kingdom of truth.[49]

Another modern biblical scholar who has taken his cue from Augustine is Rudolf Schnackenburg. He recognizes the need to identify a definition of 'world' early in his commentary (on John 1:10). He defines it not simply as the earthly, physical realm of humans but also as the origin and nature of humans; the human element constitutes the nature of 'the world'. According to Schnackenburg 'the world' is "humanity in its earthly, historical home."[50] In this sense, 'the world' provides humanity with a geographical

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[45] *Ibid.*

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*, cf. pp. 179-180.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 209. This conclusion is made regarding John 18:36. MacRae argues that Jesus' kingdom "is not a kingdom of this world but a kingdom of truth."

[50] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*: I Teil, (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1979), ET: *The Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. I, (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1982), p. 255.

context which in turn influences its nature.

Schnackenburg argues for three possible interpretations of 'world': (1) "spatially" as a realm apart from that of God; (2) as that which God "created"; (3) "mankind which rejects the Logos".[51] All three are evident in the Fourth Gospel. Schnackenburg maintains that generally 'the world' connotes "something negative; a realm of evil which encompasses and influences man."[52] Humanity is not inherently evil yet it is acted upon by evil forces outside of itself which dwell in 'the world'.

For those who have been chosen out of 'the world' the Johannine Jesus promises a Paraclete. Schnackenburg interprets this promise as a direct confrontation between the "spirit of truth" and "the world".[53] The Paraclete reinforces the disciples' separation from the world. They are left behind, as is the Johannine community, in what is now a hostile and unbelieving environment (cf. John 8:23; 12:25, 31; 13:1). "The Jews" in the Fourth Gospel, because of their distrust and misunderstanding, "represent the κόσμος".[54]

The dualistic themes associated with the use of κόσμος are most apparent in the farewell discourses of Chapters 15 and 17.[55] To begin with, Schnackenburg focuses on

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[51] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[53] Schnackenburg, Vol. III, p. 75.

[54] Schnackenburg, Vol. I, p. 258. The representation is purely literary, a device used in the Fourth Gospel to illustrate the forces against which Jesus and his disciples must unite. Schnackenburg makes no argument for 'the Jews' as evil. The term is used only in a symbolic sense and is not to be interpreted as an intended antisemitism.

[55] Schnackenburg, Vol. III, p. 113.

John 15:18-25. Here Jesus explains why he must battle the hostility and hatred of the world and why his disciples must not despair in the face of this conflict. Unfortunately this proves confusing for the disciples since they must show compassion for the world which hates them and mocks their teacher. Schnackenburg argues that it is because of the hostility facing them that the disciples would rather retreat **from** the world than go out **into** the world to face evil.[56]

The command to "separate" should not be interpreted as a forced "retreat" from the world. Schnackenburg argues that this type of gnostic interpretation of the concept cannot be substantiated in the Fourth Gospel. However, "a dialectic tension in the concept of 'world'" exists in the Gospel between the world's need to be saved and its hatred.[57] A clear distinction exists between discipleship and 'the world', between that which sides with God and that which is against him.[58]

The second pericope which details this dualistic use of κόσμος is John 17:14-15. The Johannine Jesus, in requesting that his disciples remain in the world, emphasizes the importance of mission. The challenge for the disciples is to remain **in** the world while

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[56] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 114-5. Cf. N. H. Cassem's "Grammatical and Contextual Inventory of the Use of κόσμος in the Johannine Corpus with some Implications for a Johannine Cosmic Theology," *NTS* 19 (1973) 81-91.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 115. We can identify two levels of dualistic themes now. The first is in relation to Jesus: Jesus' followers are **in** the 'world' but once they come to believe in him they are no longer **of** the 'world'; Jesus is never **of** the 'world' and his followers must strive to imitate him The second dualism is in relation to discipleship: Jesus' disciples are now separated from the non-believers who are **of** the 'world'. The disciples, as representatives of Christ stand in opposition to the 'world'.

not being **of** it. How the Johannine community responded to this challenge is revealed in its gospel as represented by Jesus' disciples. Schnackenburg offers cautionary remarks about the discussion of the Johannine use of κόσμος.

> The formula 'in the world but not of the world' should not be regarded as the absolute expression of the Christian understanding of 'world'. It has its origin in a fundamentally dualistic way of thinking and in the situation in which an oppressed and inward-looking community was placed.[59]

This formula focuses directly on the self-understanding of the Johannine community which was isolated and alienated by its obligation to Christ. As a direct representative of Jesus, the Johannine community is charged with promoting his mission in a hostile environment. The community looked within itself for support and reassurance because of the challenges it faced. The Fourth Gospel is a literary expression of the community's needs and reflects its introspective nature.

Jesus' obligation is to his βασιλεία which has "an unworldly nature but is not shut off from the world ... 'this world' ... only sets off the sphere of earthly existence from the transcendent world."[60] The Fourth Gospel promotes two types of existence for the Johannine Jesus: one earthly and the other transcendent. For the followers of Jesus there is only the earthly existence which they must try to live without influence from the κόσμος.

Augustine's influence can clearly be seen in the magisterial contributions of

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[59] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

Raymond E. Brown. His work is specifically relevant to this discussion of Johannine self-understanding. *The Gospel According to John* represents Brown's initial investigation into an historical reconstruction of the development of the community behind the Fourth Gospel. These initial discussions in his two-volume commentary have borne fruit in his *Community of the Beloved Disciple*.

In *Appendix I* of the commentary, Brown discusses many uses of significant words in the Johannine vocabulary, one of which is κόσμος.[61] Brown offers several applications for the term: the "physical universe"; the "universe inasmuch as it is related to man"; "a creation capable of response"; "the society of men".[62] Again, as in many aforementioned commentaries, a number of interpretations for 'world' exist.

Brown notes how κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel generally has a negative connotation. The reason for this negative attitude lies in the notion that although "the world has not become evil in itself, [it] is evilly oriented and dominated ... under the leadership of Satan."[63] Implicitly, then, the purpose of Jesus' mission is to challenge and defeat that which controls the world -- the power of evil. Brown equates this picture of 'the world' with "darkness"[64] and maintains that this association heightens the level of

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[61] R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Vol. I, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 508ff.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 508.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 509.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 516. The "darkness" of Genesis 1:2 is associated with evil, a huge watery void that harbours chaos. This element is still a problem for God (God has attempted many times to rid the world of this evil) and he has now sent Jesus to deal with it.

conflict in the Fourth Gospel to a cosmological level. The 'literal' conflict originates with Jesus vs. "the Jews" -- Johannine community vs. Judaism. The cosmological conflict escalates into a battle of good *vs.* evil; heaven *vs.* earth; God *vs.* Satan. Jesus, as God's representative (intermediary?), must fight for goodness and justice in the world. The Johannine community enters into this cosmological battle once it believes and supports Jesus.

The negative characteristics of 'the world' lie in its association with "the Jews". Brown argues that "although they are an historical group in the ministry of Jesus, 'the Jews' are also the spokesmen of a wider opposition on the part of the world, an opposition quite evident in the evangelist's time."[65] Both "the Jews" and 'the world' are spoken of in general terms -- they are both characterized by unbelief and hatred while evil is distributed equally and globally throughout all members of the world.[66] "The Jews" are singled out as representative of all who oppose Jesus.

The association of evil with 'the world' is more explicitly highlighted in "the contrast between the world and the Father ... between what is below and what is above."[67] One cannot overlook the spatial orientation of the 'above'/'below' metaphors. This orientation provides the readers with a concrete frame of reference in which to place the

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 307. It is this negativism towards 'the Jews' that supports the argument that the Fourth Gospel is antisemitic. It is more likely, however, that 'the Jews' are simply a literary device used symbolically to represent all those who oppose Jesus. See Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 125-131.

[66] Brown, cf. Vol. II, pp. 692ff, 872.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 550.

conflict between Jesus and 'the world', between the Johannine community and 'the world'. The frame of reference, in turn, provides a helpful guideline in organizing the followers of Jesus; the followers are those who are "begotten from above [and who are] chosen out of the world".[68]

Based mainly on Brown's stage reconstruction of the Johannine community, it is generally accepted that the community's experiences are reflected in the story-line of Jesus and his disciples. The notion that the narrative reveals the development of the Johannine community has had a significant impact on the course of Johannine scholarship. There is a direct connection made in the Fourth Gospel between the experiences of Jesus and the Johannine community out of which the Gospel comes. Both Jesus and his followers are faced with the hatred and hostility of 'the world'; Jesus for claiming to be equal to God and his followers for believing in him.

By the end of John 15 it is certain that the disciples are to continue with the Johannine Jesus' mission. Because they are challenged to do this, they are destined to endure the same hardships. Brown argues that the disciples were not told to withdraw from the world but to separate themselves from the **nature** of the world. Thus they "stand

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[68] *Ibid.*, p. 761. Brown translates ἐκ as "of" which he interprets to mean "belong to" which is meant to indicate not only the origin but also the nature of the subject(s) in question. Brown does recognize the difficulty in correctly interpreting ἐκ but maintains that using "from" as the translation will give important texts different meanings. The dual allusions of "belong to" imply a "membership in a certain group" which supports his theory regarding the Johannine community. See especially Vol. II, pp. 686, 761, 852f.

in dualistic opposition to the world."[69] Politically, according to Brown's exegesis of John 17, the disciples are meant to be **active** in the world by following Jesus' example.

> The disciples are to be left in the world; but they do not belong to the world, anymore than their master's kingdom belongs to the world, their presence provokes trouble. Jesus has given them God's word.[70]

The Johannine Jesus, by his own admission, has come "not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47b) and he challenges his faithful followers to continue his mission after his return to the Father.

Brown's discussion of John 18:36 is especially pertinent to our concerns. Previously Brown stated that the disciples were to continue with Jesus mission, "to challenge the world."[71] His exegesis of 18:36 focuses again on the problem of translating ἐκ. Brown discusses several options ("in" *vs.* "of"; "belong to" *vs.* "to be of") which he considers appropriate for characterizing not only the origin but also the nature of Jesus' kingdom. Unfortunately Brown concludes this debate by reminding his readers that "we must not forget that in Johannine thought the ultimate goal of the disciples is to be withdrawn from the world."[72] This conclusion seems somewhat at odds with Brown's preceding arguments.

Apart from this discrepancy, Brown's emphasis on the community's involvement

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[69] *Ibid.*, p. 696.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 763.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 764.

[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 852f.

as the followers of Jesus' disciples has had a significant impact on the course of Fourth Gospel scholarship. Consequently, many scholars have taken their cue from Raymond Brown. David Rensberger, in *Overcoming the World*, argues that

> It is the Johannine alienation from the world that ought to make John's refusal of allegiance to the world's political orders somewhat less than surprising. It was an alienation of consciousness as much as an overtly social one, to be sure, yet precisely as such it could be expected to be realized 'in the world' as well.[73]

Wayne Meeks' insightful article, "The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," summarizes succinctly the Johannine situation:

> Thus we have in the Johannine literature a thoroughly dualistic picture: a small group of believers isolated over against 'the world' that belongs to 'the things below', *i.e.*, to darkness and the devil.[74]

Alstrup Dahl, "The Johannine Church and History," focuses as well on the hostility facing the Fourth Gospel's community. Dahl identifies "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel as an homogeneous group which represents "the world in its hostility to God".[75] In this way 'world' is an allusion to an historical reality in which the Johannine Christians were separated from 'the world' (*i.e.*, "the Jews"). Robert Kysar, *John, The Maverick Gospel*, has chosen to follow a similar route and addresses the nature of the Johannine community as revealed by its Gospel.

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[73] David Rensberger, *Overcoming the World*, p. 99; cf. pp. 96-100.

[74] Meeks, "The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," pp. 68ff.

[75] Alstrup Dahl, "The Johannine Church and History" in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, pp. 124-142, edited by William Klassen and Graydon F. Synder (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 129; cf. pp. 128-30.

> We have in the fourth gospel two kinds of dualism both represented in the use of the word, world. A human dualism -- two ways of self-understanding -- and a cosmic dualism -- two realms of being.[76]

The Fourth Gospel, then, has generated ambiguous and diverse notions of 'world'. The movement towards identifying 'the world' strictly with "the Jews" has left many scholars feeling very uncomfortable as well as dissatisfied since such a pat answer really does not contribute to an understanding of the Johannine community's self-perception and self-awareness. More gain has been made in the discussion of the community's sectarian nature and in the historical reconstruction of its development. A sensitive interpretation of the Fourth Gospel's use of κόσμος is integral to an understanding of how and why this group set itself apart from the rest of 'the world'.

It is important for us, as interpreters in the twentieth century, to keep in mind the different perspectives of biblical scholars over the years. The ancient or classical writers, Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine and others, discussed the New Testament texts during a time when they were concerned with the origin and formation of their religion and the direction in which it was heading. Later generations of biblical scholars did interpret and are interpreting from a more distanced retrospective view.

It has been shown that many different opinions regarding the correct interpretation of κόσμος have developed over time. The discussion of the scholars cited above reflects their general similarities in the exegesis of the Fourth Gospel. The most recent

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[76] Robert Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), p. 52; cf. pp. 49ff.

developments in Johannine scholarship come not only from the history of interpretation but also from the 'greying' of interpretative methods. This is particularly true in the case of the Fourth Gospel because of its ambiguous nature. If any generalization can be made thus far regarding the function of ὁ κόσμος it is only that it reflects the transition in the Johannine community from a missionary role to one of alienation. This transition is the subject to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 3

The Evolution of Johannine Self-Understanding

> Εἰσῆλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον ὁ Πιλᾶτος καὶ ἐφώνησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ σὺ τοῦτο λέγεις ἢ ἄλλοι εἶπόν σοι περὶ ἐμοῦ; ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Πιλᾶτος, Μήτι ἐγὼ Ἰουδαῖός εἰμι; τὸ ἔθνος τὸ σὸν καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς παρέδωκάν σε ἐμοί· τί ἐποίησας; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου· εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἦν ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ, οἱ ὑπηρέται οἱ ἐμοὶ ἠγωνίζοντο [ἄν], ἵνα μὴ παραδοθῶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις· νῦν δὲ ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐτεῦθεν· (John 18:33-36)

The Johannine Jesus' statements during his interview with Pilate prior to his crucifixion paint a picture of ambiguity and secrecy. 'This world' is set up in opposition to some 'other' world (though Jesus never identifies it here) by virtue of Jesus' declaration of non-membership with 'this world'. This conflict alludes, in turn, to a greater battle; a fight between God and ὁ κόσμος.

There are three distinct terms meaning 'world' used in the New Testament: κόσμος meaning "world"; γῆ meaning "earth"; αἰών meaning "age", "world", and "in

this world or in the world to come".[1] Of the three γῆ is the most concrete whereas the other two interpretations imply definitions which are much more abstract. The Fourth Gospel implies two 'worlds' of existence.[2] The Johannine picture of Jesus and the Fourth Gospel's treatment of κόσμος are intertwined because Jesus' other-worldliness is the focus of Johannine christology.

The christology is based in the "communal and individual *imitatio Christi*"[3] which is a source of purpose in the writing of the gospel. The Johannine community is comprised of members who view Jesus as a model of perfection, one to be imitated. The christology of the Fourth Gospel upholds this picture of perfection and other-worldliness and promotes the notion that ὁ κόσμος is unsuitable for Jesus and his followers. A key result in understanding the connection in this manner is the uncovering of the horizon of the gospel and its community.

It is the treatment of κόσμος in particular that is a source for uncovering the

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[1] Howard Clarke Kee, *Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), p. 25. From a different perspective Adele Reinhartz identifies five metaphorical interpretations of 'world': (i) as a "spatial entity" (ii) as a reference to "the human inhabitants of the world" (iii) as a reference to those who oppose Jesus' message (iv) as that which is separate from Jesus' followers (v) as something associated with sin -- "an antithetical relationship between being in the world (a negative condition) and not being in the world (a positive condition). See her *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 38ff.

[2] D. Moody Smith, "Judaism and the Gospel of John" in *Jews and Christians*, pp. 76-96, edited by James H. Charlesworth (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1990) postulates a "distinction between two modes of existence, the believing and authentic over against unbelieving and unauthentic" (p. 77). The distinction is between a **way** of being and a **place** of being. See also Robert Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), pp. 49ff.

[3] David Edward Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), p. 78.

self-understanding of the Johannine community. As we have seen (see above pp. 12-18) the community's treatment of language is essential to understanding its self-perception and self-awareness. Focusing on the language that is used in the Fourth Gospel is a means to reconstruct the environment in which the Gospel was produced. This approach is justified by the premise that all language is a source of communication and that communication, in turn, is indicative of an environment.[4] Language provides a social function in an environment, facilitates the growth and shapes the horizon of communities.

In particular, Wayne Meeks addresses the "social function of myths"[5] in an effort to illuminate how language can be employed to legitimate belonging to a closed community. He understands myths as social phenomena which can signal a particular sort of social context. This social context is exhibited in the writings of the

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[4] Cf. Robin Scroggs, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament," in *Theology and Sociology*, p. 265. Language is a product of its environment, its social, economic and cultural influences.

[5] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," p. 49. See also definitions of myth by Rudolf Bultmann who argues that a myth is "the objectivation of the religious person's sense of his relationship to self and world" (Meeks, "Man From Heaven," p. 47); John Middleton says it is "a statement about society and man's place in it and in the surrounding universe" (Middleton, *Myth and Cosmos*, [Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press, 1967], p. x); Edmund Leach maintains that a "myth loses all its meaning when taken out of context" (M. I. Steblin-Kamenshij, *Myth*, [Ann Arbour: Karoma, 1982], p. 6); Ched Myers defines myth as "kind of meaningful symbolic discourse within a given cultural and political system" (Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, p. 16).

Of these select examples one can conclude that they bear a striking similarity, namely the emphasis on environment. This aspect of myth was highlighted in Chapter 1 (see above pp. 13ff). The importance of language as a self-defining agent cannot be overemphasized. The concepts of myths and their vocalization through literary means is directly related to the social circumstances under which the concepts first evolved.

community. In essence, Meeks claims that the writings of the Johannine community give us insight into the life of a unique community in first century Christianity. Through an analysis of the language used by the community, Meeks reconstructs the social reality of the community.

Meeks ultimately argues that a conflict-ridden environment produced the paradoxical language of the Fourth Gospel. The community was alienated and rejected by the synagogue and these circumstances are reflected in the text. Meeks' underlying assumption is that the community was made sectarian in nature by the alienation[6] and rejection to which it was subjected. Meeks understands sect pejoratively, a condition which is brought about by adverse conditions and elicits a negative social identity. A community that was distinctly separate yet connected to its surroundings would quite likely produce its own myths, myths which support the separation.

The alienation was traumatic enough that the Johannine community was cut off physically and spiritually from the Jews of the synagogue. Meeks explains that

> The christological claims of the Johannine Christians resulted in their becoming alienated, and finally expelled, from the synagogue; that alienation in turn 'explained' by a further development of the christological motifs (*i.e.*, the fate of the community projected onto the story of Jesus); these developed christological motifs in turn drive the group into further isolation.[7]

Simply put, the community identifies itself with the 'Son of Man' who is not of this world, in an effort to rationalize its own dislocation from the fold of Jewish tradition.

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[6] Meeks, "Man From Heaven," p. 55.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

The dislocation of the community leaves its members with a sense of despair and disillusionment due to a paradoxical situation: they cannot go where Jesus has gone nor can they return to the synagogue. These feelings are vocalized in the Fourth Gospel. Meeks focuses on the language of the gospel in an attempt to understand the internal conflict of the Johannine community and to explain its social situation and crisis. This reconstruction theory is fraught with difficulties, however, and Meeks' probing analysis has left many avenues to be explored and much work to be done.

One avenue of exploration looks into the relationship between the literary record of a social group and its environment. The task is to discover the link between the development of the text, the Fourth Gospel, and the development of the Johannine community. In viewing the gospel holistically we can discern a pattern of development between the Prologue and John 17 thus revealing a distinct direction of movement in the community from its beginning with John the Baptist and the disciples' resulting witness to Jesus' departure. The Prologue provides the readers with a testament of the Johannine community and John 17, a testament of Jesus to that community.

Raymond Brown is one scholar who has taken his cue from Meeks. He has provided a precise and concrete description of the development of a community behind the Johannine text. His book, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, not only identifies each stage but in it he also discusses the influences on this community during its formative years. Brown's contribution to the discovery of the Johannine community has been significant and has laid the groundwork for much of Johannine scholarship. His basic premise, to which we have already alluded, is that the tale in

the Fourth Gospel reflects the situation of the Johannine community responsible for its creation.

Brown charts a negative progression of development due mainly to feelings of alienation and rejection on the part of the community. The promotion of an extremely high christology is to blame for the alienation of a community which, otherwise, "was not distinguishable from other Jewish Christianity" in its genesis.[8] Brown disagrees with those who think that the Johannine community was a sect. Because it was 'indistinguishable' in the beginning it retained much of its grassroots tradition with the synagogue. Furthermore, the eventual acceptance of its gospel into the New Testament canon attests to a legitimate membership in the larger Christian community.

Brown's view of the New Testament world presupposes a homogeneity that probably did not exist in reality. While Brown does identify several different groups of Jewish and Christian traditions he maintains that a consistent link with Jewish heritage underlies the formation of such groups. He postulates six religious groupings outside the Johannine community: the World, "the Jews", the adherents of John the Baptist, the Crypto-Christians, the Jewish Christians, and the Christians of Apostolic Churches.[9] Because traces of these groups can be found in the Fourth Gospel they are

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[8] Raymond Brown, *CBD*, n. 31 pp. 22-3. While Brown does not wish to identify the Johannine community as sectarian he does argue that separatist characteristics can be applied to the community. It is possible to discuss the uniqueness of the Johannine community in terms of these separatist characteristics.

[9] Cf. Brown, *CBD*, pp. 59-91;168-169. The World constitutes "those who prefer darkness to the light of Jesus because their deeds are evil ... 'the world' is a wider conception than 'the Jews' ... but includes them. 'The Jews' are those within the synagogues who did not believe in Jesus and had decided that anybody who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah would be put out of the synagogue" (p. 168). The adherents of John the Baptist maintain that "John and not Jesus was God's prime

credited with having some impact on the formation of the Johannine cr :munity.

It is the formation of the community with which Brown is primarily concerned. His premise for this investigation is that an accurate description of the Johannine community will enhance the scholarly understanding of the New Testament world. Using the Jewish traditions as a starting point he traces the progress of the community through four stages between ca. 50 C.E. to the early second century. The first two stages, while applied specifically to the Johannine community, seem to be general observations which might be applied to any of the peripheral groups Brown has identified.

In the first stage, Brown argues that little can be differentiated between the various groups. Because of close links with their Jewish heritage, the aforementioned groups displayed similar characteristics. Brown maintains

> that in the very early days Johannine Christianity was not really distinguishable from other Jewish Christianity, and that what gave it its peculiar cast and direction was the catalyst offered by the entrance into the community of a group of Jewish Christians of anti-Temple views and their Samaritan converts.[10]

Brown argues that the influx of Samaritan converts gave the synagogue officials reason enough to reject the Johannine group. The Samaritans, whose emphasis was

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emissary" (p.168). Crypto-Christians are the people who claim to believe that Jesus is the Messiah but refuse to admit to this belief in public and remain as members of the synagogue, "disciples of Moses rather than disciples of Jesus" (p. 169). The Jewish Christians "had left the synagogues but [their] faith in Jesus was inadequate by Johannine standards" (p. 169). Brown groups the remaining "mixed communities of Jews and Gentiles" together to form the Christians of Apostolic Churches, separate from the synagogues and the Johannine community (p. 169). See also Brown, "'Other Sheep Not of This Fold': The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity in the Late First Century," pp. 10-22.

[10] Brown, *CBD*, n. 31, pp. 22-23.

on Moses rather than the Temple, interpreted Jesus in elevated anti-Davidic terms which upset the traditional, monotheistic views of the Temple Jews.[11]

The second stage is the most fruitful of the four stages. It is during this stage that the community begins to establish its own set of beliefs and defines its parameters as a community, separate and distinct from other communities of Jewish descent. Brown theorizes that it was during this stage that the main writing of the Fourth Gospel was completed.[12] This formative period allowed the high christology of the Johannine group to come to the fore. This particular christological conception enabled the community to understand itself in relation to "the Jews" and the world.

The last two stages are specific theories regarding the finalization of the Johannine community. Stage three sees a community divided by its own conception of Jesus as was recorded in its own gospel. Brown argues that evidence for this conflict comes from the Epistles which were written ca. 100 C.E.[13] The Epistles contain information pertinent to the members of the Johannine community, to the insiders. There is little or no discussion of involvements outside the community. The author of the first epistle, in particular, is concerned with a growing schism within the community over "christological and ethical errors".[14] The last stage details a tragic ending for the turbulent birth and development of the Johannine community; the schismatics go one way (towards Gnosticism, it is argued by some) and the more

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-47.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-96.

conservative element joins the "Great Church".

Brown's stage reconstruction for the development of the Johannine community is based on a redactional interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. His argument is based on the premise that the Gospel functioned as a reinforcement for the self-understanding of the community. Because the community was facing hostility and alienation, the Fourth Gospel served to support and sustain its perceived situation. The text thus reveals the self-understanding of the community through its record of Jesus' time spent on earth.

The Johannine community has imparted to readers of its gospel its perception of Jesus and consequently, its own self-perception. An extremely high christology, as compared to the other gospels, is to blame for rejection by the synagogues in Jerusalem.

> A belief in the pre-existence of God's Son was the key to the Johannine contention that the believer possessed God's own life; and the Fourth Gospel had been written to bolster the faith of Johannine Christians on that very point (20:31).[15]

Taken to its ultimate conclusion, Jesus is portrayed as superior to all other prophets and messengers. The Johannine community was alienated for supporting Jesus' superiority. The alienation, in turn, reinforced the notions of superior position which became the theme of defense for the community. Therefore, all of his followers had to be superior as well.

In all probability the community intended to build on its Jewish heritage and remain very much a part of the synagogue. Because initial reinterpretation of Jesus'

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[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

messiahship was rejected, followed by persecution, the community found it necessary to build its own belief structure. The high christology evident in the Fourth Gospel gives us insight into that belief structure.[16] Based on this premise it is possible to answer the question, What exactly was the impact of this high christology on the self-understanding of the Johannine community and how did it shape its perception of its relationship to 'the world'?

The high christology is based first and foremost on Jesus' own claim of separateness and distinction: Ὑμεῖς ἐκ τῶν κάτω ἐστέ, ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί· ὑμεῖς ἐκ τούτου τοῦ κόσμου ἐστέ, ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. (John 8:23) The contrast between "above/below" is the strongest indicator of the gospel's high christology. Jesus is elevated to a point far beyond the reach of humanity and his instructions to his disciples are quite plainly delineated along these lines. In I John 4 a follower of Jesus (and possible leader of the Johannine community) makes a most notable demand of the community, to combat the world in an effort to sustain the message of Jesus and to fortify the ascent of the faithful.

> Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε, ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν, ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξεληύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον. (I John 4:1)

The issue of separateness confirms the self-understanding of the community based on its christological assumptions.

The christology of the Fourth Gospel, then, is the result of a perceived situation

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[16] Cf. Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity* : "The christology of the Fourth Gospel is the primary means of expressing religious needs, values, and ideals of the Johannine community [which] ... is primarily determined by the soteriological interests of the ecclesiology of that community" (p. 76).

being projected onto the person, Jesus. In this sense the purpose of the christology is to subject Jesus to the experiences of the community in such a way that he represents that reality.

> The Johannine Jesus becomes comprehensible as a projection (or retrojection) of the religious needs and experiences of the Johannine community ... The actual experience of the Johannine community is grounded on the actuality of the historical experience of Jesus; the reality of the former is a vindication of the reality of the latter.[17]

The Fourth Gospel writers interpret the life and ministry of Jesus in light of their situation. Therefore, it is possible to understand the circumstances under which Johannine Christians evolved based on the circumstances surrounding the Johannine Jesus' time with them.

A high christology is promoted in the beginning of the Fourth Gospel. The Prologue, John 1:1-18, initiates the portrayal of an other-worldly Jesus; τὸ φῶς ... ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. (1:9) The Johannine Jesus is most certainly not of τοῦ **κόσμου** (cf. 8:23; 17:16; 18:36). The Prologue harkens back to the familiar use of Wisdom material in much of Jewish literature. Wisdom is frequently associated with creation and is characteristically pre-existent. The Johannine Jesus is attributed with these same characteristics, solidifying his other-worldly or un-worldly and pre-existent nature. John 1:1-18 summarizes the story of the Fourth Gospel and places the

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 77. It is important to realize that the four gospels portray different pictures of Jesus, otherwise there would only be one gospel. For this reason a Markan, a Matthean, and a Lukan Jesus co-exist in the New Testament canon along with the Johannine one. In the case of John's Gospel a mirror of experience is set up between the Johannine Jesus and his followers who are charged with his mission following his departure from this world. They become "not of this world" (8:23; 17:14) once Jesus has chosen them and they become open to persecution and hatred (15:18, 20; 16:1-2, 33; 17:14) by this world. Cf. pp. 80-81.

emphasis on Jesus' arrival in a world which did not accept him and his eventual return to the Father. These two themes, Jesus' non-acceptance in the world and his ascent to the Father, are prevalent in the gospel. The themes are highlighted by frequent references to the κόσμος of which Jesus is not a part.

We have already referred to the theme of dualism which is rooted, for the most part, in the treatment of κόσμος. In her *Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, Judith M. Lieu examines in detail the subject of dualism in the Johannine corpus. She identifies three specific types of dualism:[18]

(1) ethical dualism (two contrasting patterns of behaviour divide humankind)
(2) cosmic dualism (two opposing camps of supernatural powers)
(3) metaphysical dualism (two absolutely opposed divine principles)
(4) eschatological dualism (a contrast between the present age and the age to come)

In general, the dualistic attitude of the Johannine corpus reflects an understanding of the κόσμος which is based on definitions of what the κόσμος is or is not. The experiences of the community are interpreted in light of this understanding. With regards to the κόσμος, the Johannine Gospel sets God up in opposition to it (in most instances), symbolizing everything which is against God. (The eventual separation of the Johannine community from the synagogue reinforces this dualism.[19])

In John 15 Jesus relates to the disciples the main thrust of his message and

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[18] Judith M. Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, pp. 80-87, esp. pp. 80ff. Lieu focuses specifically on the contrast between "light" and "darkness" as a duality which encompasses all four elements listed above. The contrast highlights the conflict between God and the world. Lieu maintains that the Fourth Gospel's author "uses dualism to express a conviction of the election of the community of believers and to interpret their actual experience" (p. 83).

[19] Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel*, pp. 63f.

commissions them to continue with his message despite hardship. The central hardship of which the Johannine Jesus speaks is the hatred from the world. John 15:18-19 attests to this hatred and rejection:

> Εἰ ὁ κόσμος ὑμᾶς μισεῖ, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐμὲ πρῶτον ὑμῶν μεμίσηκεν. εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἦτε, ὁ κόσμος ἂν τὸ ἴδιον ἐφίλει· ὅτι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ ἐστέ, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, διὰ τοῦτο μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος.

Because Jesus is rejected, so will his followers also be rejected. The source of the rejection is ignorance and misunderstanding. The opening of John 16 predicts an expulsion from the synagogues by Jewish members who do not understand the meaning of Jesus' message and seek to persecute his disciples (16:1-3).

John 3:17 (οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτου), 9:39a (Εἰς κρίμα ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον ἦλθον), and 12:47b (ἐγὼ οὐ κρίνω αὐτόν, οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον ἵνα κρίνω τὸν κόσμον ἀλλ' ἵνα σώσω τὸν κόσμον) give some indication of ambivalence towards the world. A serious question is alluded to here when these verses are viewed in light of Jesus' later (cf. John 15-17) statements to his disciples: Is the world to be damned or saved?[20] For the most part the Johannine Jesus expresses disdain for the world; it is a victim of its own demise through its ignorance of him. The disciples, on the other hand, are not sure of their reaction.

Jesus describes two ways of living: **with** the Father or **in** the world. He makes

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[20] David J. Hawkin, "Johannine Christianity and Ideological Commitment," *The Expository Times* 102 (1990) 3:74-77, argues that there is "at the heart of Johannine theology a profound paradox: Christ is both the judge of this world and its saviour, both the agent of its creation and a stranger to it" (p. 76). See also Leiu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, pp. 83ff.

his own choice clear when he reminds the disciples of his impending departure (John 16:28):

> ἐξῆλθον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον·
> πάλιν ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

Jesus constantly reminds his disciples that he is only in the world for a short time and will depart their company soon. This reinforces his lack of membership with the world. Jesus is **in** the world but he is not **of** the world. For this reason his disciples are forced to adopt the same distance from the world once they choose to follow Jesus. The choice sets up an ultimate paradox: if the disciples choose to follow Jesus and accept his message they are forced to remain in a world which does not approve of their choice.

The long monologue or prayer which takes up all of John 17 is the personal expression of Jesus which reminds the reader of the summary in the gospel's Prologue. In this prayer Jesus speaks of all that he has been sent to earth to do and all that has been accomplished; he looks forward anxiously to his departure from this world. In an effort to understand fully the significance of this tract, placing it side by side with the opening statements of the Fourth Gospel should prove illuminating. Similarities in vocabulary are the most explicit indicators of repetition:

John 1:1-18	John 17:1-26
The Word was **with God** and the Word was God. (vs.1)/It is the only Son, who is **close to the Father's heart**. (vs.18a)	Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be **one** like us. (vs.11b)/May they all be **one**, just as you are **in me** and I am **in you**, so that they also may be **in us**, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you gave to me that they may be **one** as we are **one**. With

	me **in them** and you **in me**, may they be so perfected in unity. (vss.21-23a)
He was with God **in the beginning**. (vs.2)	Now, Father, glorify me with that glory I had with you **before the world ever existed**. (vs.5)/ you loved me **before the foundation of the world**. (vs.24b)
What has come into being in him was **life**, **life** that was the light of men. (vs.4)	[I] may give **eternal life** to all those you have entrusted to him. (vs.2b)
He was coming into the world. He was in the world that had come into being through him, and **the world did not recognise him**. (vs.9b-10)	Now at last they have **recognised** that all you have given me comes from you for I have given them the teaching you gave to me and they have indeed **accepted** it. (vss.7-8a)
And we saw his **glory**, the **glory** that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of **grace and truth**. (vs.14b)	Father ... **glorify** your Son so that your Son may **glorify** you. (vs.1b)/Now, Father, **glorify** me with that **glory** I had with you. (vs.5a)/Consecrate them in **truth**; your word is **truth**. (vs.17)/I have given them the **glory** you gave to me. (vs.22a)

Placing similar statements side by side in this manner is not intended to portray a perfect mirror image. One obvious difference is the eloquence with which the Johannine Jesus speaks as compared to the voice of the narrator in the Prologue. The main themes are the same in both tracts, however. It is important for us as readers to understand the significance of chapter 17 as a turning point or climax for the whole of the Fourth Gospel.

That chapter 17 is the main focus of the gospel is not a new idea. Ernst Käsemann proposed this in 1968 in *The Testament of Jesus*. Käsemann was mainly interested in the historical circumstances in which the gospel was written and he

concluded that the Johannine community was part of an extremely diverse New Testament world. His *Testament* focuses on John 17 as a means of interpreting the gospel as a whole. Käsemann argues that "it is unmistakable that this chapter is a summary of the Johannine discourses and in this respect is a counterpart to the prologue."[21]

Käsemann chooses not to perform an explicit exegesis of John 17 but rather provides a thematic overview of "certain key words from the context" such as "the glory of Christ, the community under the Word, and Christian unity."[22] He argues that these foundational themes are all present in the farewell discourse of John 17 and accurately reflect the entire message of the Fourth Gospel. Because this chapter occurs late in the gospel and displays counterpart similarities with the opening Prologue, it should be recognized as the cumulative point of the gospel as a whole.

Once the Fourth Gospel is viewed holistically in literary perspective it becomes quite clear how chapter 17 fits the climactic role. The following structure highlights this prayer as the center of the gospel:

1:1-18	Prologue
1:19 - 12:50	Miracles/Conversations/Narratives: Jesus' revelation to the **world**
13:1 - **17:26**	Upper Room/Long Discourses: Jesus' revelation to the **disciples**
18:1 - 20:31	Passion and Resurrection
21	Postscript

The above outline is an adaptation of one proposed by C. K. Barrett in *The Gospel According to St. John*. He argues that "the structure of the gospel is simple in outline,

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[21] Ernst Käsemanr *The Testament of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1968), p. 3. Käsemann does not, however, compare the Prologue and chapter 17 in the way we have done.

[22] *Ibid.*

complicated in detail. The book falls into four clear parts, with an appendix, as follows:"[23]

(a) 1.1-18	Prologue
(b) 1.19 - 12.50	Narratives, Conversations, and Discourses
(c) 13.1 - 17.26	Jesus alone with his Disciples
(d) 18.1 - 20.31	the Passion and Resurrection
(e) 21.1-25	an Appendix

We have followed Barrett in discerning "four clear parts", but feel that his own description of those parts misses the fact that in 1:19-12:50 Jesus is revealing himself to the world, and in 13:1-17:26 he is revealing himself to "his own" (the disciples).

Some scholars may choose the Passion and Resurrection as the focal point of the gospel. However, this portion of the narrative is not unexpected (Jesus has been talking about his impending departure in John 13-17) and is not the focus of the Johannine Jesus' message. Of course he mentions his return to the Father on numerous occasions but his emphasis in this prayer is on the message he delivers and the work of the disciples yet to come.

> Jesus prays (vss. 6-19) for the disciples who are gathered about him. They have been drawn together out of the world and they will be exposed to its attacks. Hitherto Jesus has himself preserved and enlightened them; he prays that in his absence they may be kept in the truth of God. They are to be kept in unity, with each other, in himself and in God, and there is committed to them a mission to the world in which they continue to live.[24]

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[23] C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1970 [1955]), p. 11.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 417. Barrett argues for a more sensitive reading and understanding of John's gospel which reveals a "primarily theological" text. For this reason "the climax of Jesus' speech is found in a prayer" (p. 14). The function of the Johannine Jesus, albeit historical in nature, is to express the theological concerns of the Johannine community.

The death and ascension are merely predicted conclusions to Jesus' work.

N. H. Cassem, in "A Grammatical and Contextual Inventory of the Use of κόσμος in the Johannine Corpus with Some Implications for a Johannine Cosmic Theology,"[25] supports the theory pioneered by Käsemann that certain key words reflect the structural thematic framework of the gospel as a whole. Cassem's survey explores the grammatical and thematic variations associated with the uses of κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel. The grammatical variations include "unmodified uses", "uses modified by prepositions" (εἰς, ἐκ, ἐν), and "modification by οὗτος and ὅλος".[26] The thematic variations include such key ideas as "saving", "judgement", "overcoming the world", "life", and "sin".[27]

The unmodified uses of κόσμος in the nominative and accusative cases are generally negative. There is some evidence, however, that when the world is the object of God's action it is in a positive action even though the world does not respond positively in all cases. The modified uses entail prepositions which are signallers of technical phrases which are neither consistently positive nor negative. Modifications of κόσμος by οὗτος and ὅλος, on the other hand, "connote an undesirable aspect of the world".[28] It seems obvious that when 'world' is paired with the specific connotation 'this' an allusion to a 'world' other than 'this world' is made.

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[25] N. H. Cassem, "A Grammatical and Contextual Inventory of the Use of κόσμος in the Johannine Corpus with Some Implications for a Johannine Cosmic Theology," *NTS* 19 (1973) pp. 81-91.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 82-85.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

The 'world' other than 'this world' is the one to which Jesus belongs.

In his analysis of the thematic variations of 'world' Cassem concludes that the positive references outweigh the negative ones. He summarizes his findings in a table format[29]:

Topic or Theme	Total	Positive	Negative
Soteriology	13	13	0
Love-hatred	11	3	8
Faith acts	9	3	6
Judgement	6	2	4
Light	6	5	0
Overcome	4	0	4
Sin	3	2	1
Life	3	2	1
	55	30	24

The above themes are the result of Cassem's attempt to categorize associations of κόσμος with particular terms. That the number of positive references outweigh the negative references is not completely conclusive in the analysis of the treatment of κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel; rather, the treatment is ambivalent. Further, Cassem concludes that "the author(s) use(s) κόσμος in a more favourable context during the first half of the gospel and in a more ambivalent or hostile context in the second half and in 1 and 2 John."[30]

What is most interesting about Cassem's article is his presentation of the treatment of κόσμος throughout the Fourth Gospel in a graph.[31] Graphically, the negative use of κόσμος peaks in John 17. This is preceded by a rising pessimism

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[31] *Ibid.*

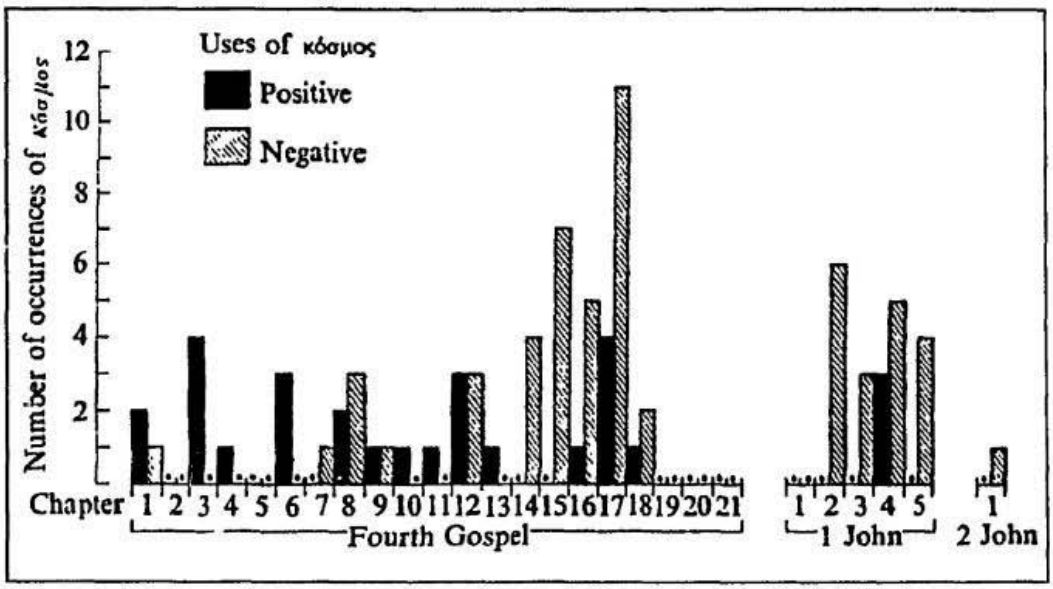

Fig. 1. Positive and negative uses of κόσμος in the Johannine corpus.

towards the term in chapters twelve through sixteen and followed by overwhelming rejection of the world on the part of the community in 1 John. It is a logical conclusion to consider the significance of this graph (Fig. 1).

It is extremely illuminating to superimpose the graph on a typical plot triangle (Fig. 2). A plot triangle is a device used to isolate the structural features of a narrative: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution (if one is possible or required). From Cassem's graph it can be deduced, based on the increase of negativity towards the κόσμος, that chapter one is the exposition, chapters two through sixteen contain the rising action with the climax occurring in the seventeenth chapter. Chapter twenty-one, which has long been accepted as an editorial addition to the text, contains a concise account of the fate of the community. However, once 1 John is placed on the graph immediately following the gospel it is compelling to

conclude that the falling action is contained there as well, a final comment on the crisis[32] of the community.

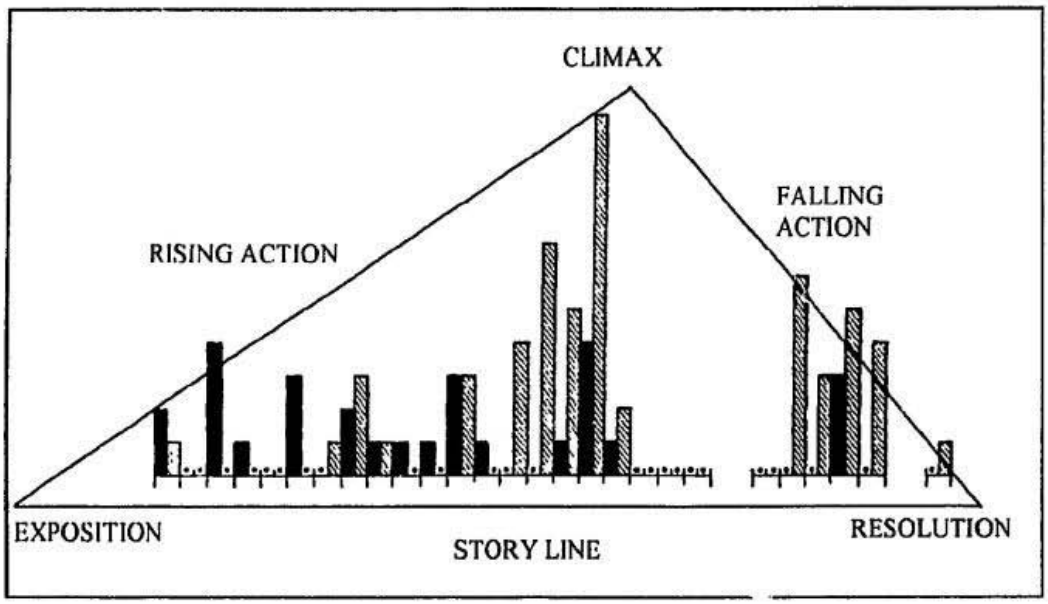

Fig. 2. Literary structure of the Fourth Gospel's thematic treatment of κόσμος.

It is now possible to compare our theory with the aforementioned structural divisions for the Fourth Gospel. It is quite clear that the development of the narrative follows a plot triangle fairly closely. Jesus' revelation to the world and to the disciples in 1:19-13:30 constitutes the bulk of the rising action. The Farewell discourses of the next four chapters represent the growing introspective nature of the Fourth Gospel.

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[32] Kevin Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., 1989) argues that the crisis in the Johannine community is over the action of the members. The community is called to mission and to unity. The unity is one of believers only which sets up a conflict with the κόσμος because it includes non-believers. Quast focuses on John 21 as a source for discovering the crisis of the Johannine community, pp. 125-156. He argues that "a number of scholars have suggested that the major purpose of this chapter in its present form is to explain and illustrate the nature of true Christian discipleship" (p. 134). The crisis for the Johannine community becomes one of identity and self-understanding.

The Johannine Jesus has now confined his conversations to the disciples. This move represents a 'turn' inwards on the part of the Johannine community in the late stages of its development. These discourses contain Jesus' instructions for his disciples and his final thoughts on his time spent with them.

The change in attitude towards the κόσμος as reflected in the rising action is very significant. In John 1:19-12:50 the Johannine Jesus is concerned with his acceptance into the world and his mission in it. His concentration shifts in 13:1-16:33 in that he gives explicit instructions to only a few chosen men, not the entire world. Instead the world is a source of hatred (15:18-27) and the disciples will eventually need the guidance and protection of a Paraclete (14:16, 25-26; 16:5-15) since Jesus is leaving and the disciples are remaining in the world (14:2b; 16:10b).

The shift in emphasis, which climaxes in John 17, we would argue, is deliberate. Because the Fourth Gospel reflects the inner and outer struggles of a community in crisis the text itself reflects these struggles. The progression, or might we say descent, of the community from a position of semi-inclusion in the larger Greco-Roman world to an object of rejection and persecution is portrayed in the Johannine Jesus' life story in the gospel. The shift in attitude towards the world is fraught with ambivalence because the Johannine community struggled with its self-perception relative to its environment.

How the Johannine community developed over time is thus revealed in the thematic changes in the Fourth Gospel. A change in attitude is evident in the treatment of key thematic issues such as christology and 'world'-perception. Our argument receives indirect support from Jerome Neyrey who proposes an investigation

of John's gospel with an examination of revolt and rebellion and attempts to understand which term is more applicable to the concepts and movements recorded there. He argues that the "development of the Johannine community entails a progression ... from initial faction formation to a program of reform of the system and finally to a revolt against the system."[33] In Neyrey's analysis rebellion is associated with positive action whereas revolt is characteristically negative. This is evident in the link between rebellion and reform, an attempt to change an existing system for the better. He interchanges these two terms, rebellion and reform, on occasion. Revolt, on the other hand, involves a disassociation with an existing system.

Neyrey utilizes and supports an anthropological model proposed by Mary Douglas in an effort to discuss "the abstract cosmology of a group, that is, its perception of the world."[34] How a group perceives the world is an indicator of how it perceives itself which is in turn revealed by a written text. In particular, the self-understanding of the Johannine community as expressed in its treatment of κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel.

Neyrey uses Douglas' "group/grid model"[35] to characterize a four-stage theory of the development of the Johannine community. Neyrey's stage theory is similar to Raymond Brown's stage analysis. However, the group/grid model for social analysis offers significant insights on the original charting of the community in that it allows

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[33] Jerome H. Neyrey, *An Ideology of Revolt: John's Christology in Social-Science Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p. 149.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 210.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

the stages to be compared using a social-science methodology.

In stage one, "missionary propaganda",[36] Jesus was in two places at once -- within accepted Jewish parameters yet outside all rules and regulations. Neyrey argues that at this stage of development a "situation of challenge and reform"[37] existed. The world was a place of fair existence, in which the Johannine group worked to convince people to come to know Jesus. The members "engaged in enthusiastic missionary preaching, which was aimed at all peoples: Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles."[38] During this early stage of development the community was not yet self-aware as a distinct and separate group but rather was very much a part of the Jewish tradition since the Scriptures predicted the arrival of Jesus as messiah.

In stage two, however, the world quickly became a source of conflict for Jesus and his disciples, a place of adverse conditions where good battled evil. It was during this "replacement"[39] stage that the Johannine community adopted a more elitist attitude which coincided with an exclusiveness of membership. Community members were accepted based on 'true' belief, an acceptance of very specific features of Jesus', the Christ's, definition.

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[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-130. Judaism represents a "strong group" while Jesus' position relative to that group indicates a "low grid" (p. 130).

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[38] Jerome H. Neyrey, *Christ is Community* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990 [Wilmington, DE: W. Glazier, 1985]), p. 146. The mission aspect is aimed at the 'rest' of Jewish people who have not yet heard of the appointed messiah. The Johannine group is doing what it would be expected to do, namely to share the message of the Jewish messiah with the rest of the faithful.

[39] Neyrey, *Ideology of Revolt*, pp. 130-141. Using Mary Douglas' model, Neyrey maintains that the community is now "rising" in grid (pp. 137ff).

What had become very specific was Jesus' superior nature.[40] Neyrey focuses on the replacement of Old Testament values, beliefs, and practices with the revelation of Jesus as an indicator of this superiority. At the wedding in Cana Jesus replaces the water with sweet wine; his activity in the temple symbolically replaces the building with his body; the abundance of "I AM" sayings implies that he is "equal to God" and "not of this world". The tendency to replace is a "radical devaluation of the Old Testament as a source of authentic revelation. Whatever its past value, it is replaced by new revelation in Jesus."[41]

The second stage is monumental in forming the foundation of the Johannine community. It is at this point that the group attains self-awareness, a sense of distinctness, separate from the traditional Jewish rites and practices.[42] The change in behaviour is from reaction to a specific situation (stage one) to controlling and shaping a future (stage two).[43] The superiority of Christ is taken to its ultimate conclusion in the extension to church exclusivity as a source of defense against the world.

By stage three the Johannine group has been expelled from the synagogue and

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[40] Neyrey, *Christ is Community*, pp. 152ff. See also *Ideology of Revolt*, pp. 142-148.

[41] Neyrey, *Christ is Community*, p. 154.

[42] On the issue of self-awareness see Gerd Theissen, *Soziologie der Jesusbewegung* (Müchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1977), ET: *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*, translated by John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

[43] Neyrey, *Christ is Community*, p. 158. Jacob Neusner offers an overview on how groups achieve this self-definition and begin to control their futures. He argues that it is when a group defines itself **against** other groups within a larger classification that the work of imagination can truly be seen and the level of abstraction increases. Cf. his *Judaism and Its Social Metaphors* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), p. 12f.

its membership is declining. Missionary work is no longer an issue as the community becomes more and more defensive. The spiralling trend of the community results in an intense turning away from the world, away from the rites and definitions of stage two in favour of the "spirit [and] personal access to God".[44] At this point the community has extended the meaning of κόσμος from the "world" to all that is "from below". Essentially, the community has secured its fierce sense of superiority.[45]

Membership in the Johannine community can now be graded along degrees of belief. Neyrey's classifications of believers is reminiscent of Raymond Brown's divisions in *The Community of the Beloved Disciple.* The 'true' believers are "aliens in an alien world. And this colors their assessment of Jesus himself as an alien figure."[46] Other types of believers included those who would not publically declare their faith in Jesus because of the threat of expulsion from the synagogue, and those who did not agree with the 'heavenly' attributes which the Johannine Christians were using to characterize Jesus.[47]

Neyrey's description of stage four is a little vague but does highlight a certain sense of positive movement through a reevaluation of the community by its members (1 John) after a schism within the group. The community is in need of further self-definition following the crisis of its formative period. Neyrey charts the self-

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[44] Neyrey, *Ideology of Revolt*, p. 148. Cf. *Christ is Community*, pp. 167-169.

[45] Neyrey, *Ideology of Revolt*, pp. 146ff.

[46] Neyrey, *Christ is Community*, p. 175.

[47] *Ibid.*, cf. pp. 167-169 and Brown, *CBD*, pp. 63-88; 168-169.

understanding of the Johannine community through the first three stages:[48]

Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
still in the synagogue, claiming to be the realization of the synagogue's scriptures	radical challenge to the synagogue; claims to replace old and inauthentic traditions with new and true rites, feasts and revelation	excommunication from synagogue; dualistic view of church and world; church alone is God's vine and kingdom -- all else is Satan's realm

Neyrey's proposal for the existence of two christologies in the Fourth Gospel is of particular interest. John 2-12 exhibit a low christology while the remaining chapters, as well as the epistles, switch to a much higher christology. That both christologies appear together is significant but the change itself warrants exploration. The christologies of the Fourth Gospel are indicative of the circumstances under which the text was written. Neyrey suggests that

> the diverse portraits of Jesus ... are both shaped by and articulated so as to match the experience of the group being addressed ... the portrait of Jesus may be tailored to match the experience of a given group, so that the group's story of Jesus adequately reflects the lived experience of a Christian group.[49]

The conclusion of Neyrey's concurs with our central argument that the changes in attitude, particularly signified in the treatment of christology and of κόσμος, in John's gospel are deliberate and reflect a change in the community which developed the text. The progression of attitude marks the evolvement of the community through critical and formative stages; the thematic development of the text reflects the development of the community. Our three major contributors in this central argument,

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[48] Neyrey, *Christ is Community*, pp. 181-183.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Brown, Neyrey, and Cassem, bear striking similarities in their discussions of possible stages of development.

R. Brown	J. Neyrey	N. H. Cassem
	The community is missionary in purpose and exhibits a positive universalism.	The Fourth Gospel exhibits a positive universalism towards 'the world' in John 1:19 - 12:50
The community develops a high christology.	The community develops a high christology after originally beginning with a low one.	A high christology is evident in the gospel.
The community is expelled from the synagogues as a result of this high christology.	The community is expelled from the synagogues as a result of this high christology.	
After the expulsion, the community develops a positive universalism towards 'the world' through contact with the Greeks.	After the expulsion and as a direct result of it, the community develops a negative universalism towards 'the world'.	The latter half of the gospel (John 13 - 21) and the epistles exhibit a negative universalism towards 'the world'.
The community splits in two because of christology debates.	The community splits after reevaluating its position.	

The literary analysis by Cassem, as well as the original comments by Käsemann, support the social analysis of Neyrey. Neyrey's work emulate, to an extent, the pioneering efforts of Raymond Brown. The negative treatment of κόσμος, however, goes unnoticed by Brown. The shift in christology highlights the

negative universalism in the latter half of the Fourth Gospel and mirrors Neyrey's social reconstruction of the community. We can conclude that the negative outlook on 'the world' is a direct result of the Johannine community's efforts to reevaluate its position in a larger Jewish context based entirely on its rejection by Jewish authorities.

The efforts of redaction critics have revealed the community behind the Fourth Gospel. This discovery has aided biblical scholars in their search for meaning for the gospel's unique vocabulary and elusive themes. Describing the community as alienated, persecuted, and rejected[50], as well as marginal and peripheral to Judaism[51] has aided in the discussion of the literary style of the Fourth Gospel. Examining the text with its community's background in mind offers insights for the field of biblical interpretation.

The high christology and the ambiguous state of the κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel supports a unique self-understanding for the Johannine community. Its members adopted an ethereal view of Jesus and a belief that they comprised the 'true Israel' because of their faith in Christ. The high christology precipitated the

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[50] Cf. Brown, *CBD*, pp. 89ff.; ____, "'Other Sheep Not of This Fold': The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity in the Late First Century," pp. 7f., 19ff.; David Rensberger, *Overcoming The World*, p. 99; Wayne A. Meeks, "Man From Heaven," pp. 65-71; John T. Townsend, "The Gospel of John and the Jews: The Story of a Religious Divorce," in *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, pp. 72-97, edited by Alan Davies, (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 74, 84f.

[51] Cf. Roger B. Bertschausen, "Turning the World Upside Down," *Unitarian Universalist Christian*, 46 (1991) 3-4:49-59, pp. 57ff.; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*: III Teil., ET: *The Gospel According to St. John*, Vol. III, pp. 209-213; Oscar Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, pp. 30-62; Robert Kysar, "Community and Gospel: Vectors in Fourth Gospel Criticism," *Interpretation* 31 (1977) pp. 355-366, p. 366; D. Bruce Woll, *Johannine Christianity in Conflict* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), p. 117.

community's expulsion from the synagogue which, in turn, supported the negative treatment of the κόσμος.

Jerome Neyrey focuses directly on this correlation when he argues that the statements "equal to God" and "not of this world" are indicative of the function of the high christology for the Johannine community. These expressions precipitate

> a divorce between heaven and earth or between spirit and flesh, that is, ... social alienation. This in turn implies that the high christology functions as an ideology for some Johannine Christians, encoding and replicating their world view, in particular their estranged position relative to the synagogue and other apostolic Christians.[52]

To conclude: the Fourth Gospel is a literary representation of the feelings and experiences of the Johannine community projected onto the Johannine Jesus. This equation is directly reflected in the gospel's treatment of the κόσμος. The Fourth Gospel story is the tale of the Johannine community as it moves from a position of semi-inclusion in the Jewish social and religious structure to a position of alienation and rejection. The Johannine Jesus begins his mission within this original Jewish circle (John 1:19-12:50) and gradually moves outside it while gathering a few close disciples (John 13:1-17:26). This portrayal of Christ is a literary picture which reflects the social situation of the Johannine community and the gospel, and can be seen as a source of support for the community. More now needs to be said, however, about the world-view of this community, its self-understanding, and its place within the context of the Greco-Roman empire. How accurate, for example, is it to describe the Johannine community which we have constructed in this chapter as a 'sect'? It is to a discussion of such issues that we now turn.

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[52] Neyrey, *Ideology of Revolt*, p. 115.

CHAPTER 4

The Johannine World-View

The entire issue of self-understanding and self-definition entails an inquiry into characteristics such as separateness, distinctness, sectarian attitudes, boundaries and labels. What a community of people considers itself to be is dependent upon all of these characteristics which are, in turn, influenced by social, cultural, economic, and political conditions. For example, a community that speaks French, lives in a northern, heavily wooded mountainous area and whose main source of income is tourism will think and behave differently from a community that speaks Spanish, practices Buddhism and makes its living growing cotton on far-reaching plains. In a modern sense it is not difficult to recognize different ethnic groups with different religious, economic and geographical backgrounds. Without sounding too simplistic and without merely imposing modern social models onto ancient communities, it is possible to consider first century society in these terms. It is quite probable that during the rise of Hellenism and the decline of the Roman empire a great number of societies and culturally defined groups existed.

Our emphasis here is on how the Johannine community defined itself relative to its social, cultural and religious environment. This is not an attempt to define a "hole" into which the community can be slotted but rather a dialectic approach aimed at understanding the community on its own terms, namely *via* its gospel. The picture being painted, then comes from **within** the community through its story of the Johannine Jesus. The premise for this argument lies in the notion that the Fourth Gospel contains features which reflect the self-definition of the Johannine community. The discussion in the previous chapter pertained to those literary aspects which gave us insight in that self-definition. Our attention now turns to the wider questions evoked by our conclusions about the self-definition of the Johannine community.

Much of the discussion of distinct groups and societies has centred on the negative aspects of communal self-definition and particularly in conflict-generated societies. In other words, the focus is on those controversies and disagreements which separate groups and communities. A shift in emphasis is now warranted: not the source of dispute but rather what motivates and sustains a group once it has defined itself as separate. "Counter-cultures"[1] are, for example, in essence separatist by

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[1] Christopher Rowland, *Radical Christianity*, p. 50. It seems that there are as many terms as there are debates with respect to any group that is distinct and each one is limited by its own definition. 'Counter-culture' implies a sense of radicalism or rebellion against some standard; 'sub-culture' implies inferiority to a 'higher' standard; sect is usually associated with a negative movement; and defining a 'normative' group implies that anything that is not 'normative' is abnormal. It is important to recognize the significance of these labels and how they affect perceptions about communities titles as such. Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century" in *Israel: Its Role in Civilization*, pp. 67-81, edited by Moshe Davis (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1956), offers the only appeal I have discovered to discuss the average Jew, "the 'am ha-ares", as the neglected majority and argues that the sectarian groups receiving all the attention were actually the minority (p. 79).

definition; what keeps them separate is a self-defining quest for their own unique identity.

There are many uses of the word 'sect' for distinctive religious groups. The definitions alone, which have been the source of battles back and forth for several years, are wide-spread and cover an assortment of issues. Whether a particular group of people constitutes a sect or not is dependent upon what definition is being used. This creates certain discrepancies within scholarly debate in that no one definition is uniform among participants in the discussion.

One of the most in depth evaluations of sect definition is put forth by Robin Scroggs who utilizes the Weberian concept of sect as an "ideal-type".[2] Scroggs recognizes the need for strict definition boundaries and outlines his understanding of what exactly is characteristic of a sect:[3]

i. The sect begins as a protest
ii. The sect rejects the view of reality taken for granted by the establishment.
iii. The sect is a counter-culture, not a sub-culture.
iv. The sect is egalitarian.
v. The sect offers love and acceptance within the community.
vi. The sect is a voluntary association.
vii. The sect commands a total commitment from its members.
viii. Some sects are adventist.

True to a social-science methodology Scroggs proceeds to compare what is known about New Testament Greco-Roman groups with his sharply defined characteristics to determine whether a specific group is sectarian or not.

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[2] Robin Scroggs, "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement" in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, Part 2, pp. 1-23, edited by Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), p. 2 n. 4.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

Scroggs argues that the sect is built on a foundation of negativism, discord and disharmony. Because the sect begins as a protest it must be at odds with some thing or some one. It does not seem structurally sound to base a community on discord; discord will eventually destroy a community, not support it. The Johannine community eventually suffered this fate (according to Raymond Brown the community spilt in two) because of its traumatic beginning and its conflict with synagogue authorities. However, because factions of the original community did survive the conflict[4] they had to have received positive reinforcement from somewhere. Scroggs' theory does not include many constructive elements.

Another problem in Scroggs' theory is his majority-minority assumption. People with power and control usually constitute a minority; those without, are the masses -- the majority. But it would be foolish for example, to characterize the rich and powerful as a sect. Moreover, once a sect becomes formalized, "established" if you will, it becomes the "establishment" for its members. Scroggs would like to place the "establishment" on one side of the fence and "sect" on the other. Unfortunately these terms are relative to which side of the fence one is standing on.

Social structures are often not so clearly defined, and this makes identifying groups as sectarian or non-sectarian very difficult. This is especially so in the first century. It seems that there are two ways of addressing this problem in biblical scholarship: either ignore the definition problem altogether or attack it head on and

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[4] Brown, *CBD*, pp. 165-166.

work from one's own definitions. Scroggs chooses the latter, as have others.[5]

In an insightful discussion John T. Townsend, on the other hand, highlights the defining features of Judaism and Christianity as they are portrayed in the Fourth Gospel without addressing the problems of sect. Townsend focuses on the 'Jewishness' of the Fourth Gospel in an effort to understand what exactly is meant by 'Jewish' in the New Testament world. Because of the ambivalent treatment of "the Jews" by the Johannine writers Townsend concludes that the development of the community was fraught with inconsistency. "The result became a gospel containing a strange mixture of some of the most anti-Jewish parts of the New Testament resting upon a relatively pro-Jewish Johannine tradition"[6] by virtue of the notion that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecies of a Jewish messiah.

The same argument is proposed by D. Moody Smith, "Judaism and the Gospel

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[5] Cf. James D. G. Dunn, "Pharisees, Sinners and Jesus" in *The Social World of Formative Christianity*, pp. 264-289, edited by Jacob Neusner *et. al.* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century" in *Israel: Its Role in Civilization*; Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Wayne A. Meeks, "'Am I A Jew?' -- Johannine Christianity and Judaism" in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, Part 1, pp. 163-186, edited by Jacob Neusner (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975); John Stambaugh and David Balch, *The Social World of the First Christians* (London: SPCK, 1986); Raymond Brown, "'Other Sheep Not of This Fold': The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity"; Jerome Neyrey, *An Ideology of Revolt*; Peter L. Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," *Social Research* 21 (1954) pp. 467-485.

[6] John T. Townsend, "The Gospel of John and the Jews: A Story of Religious Divorce" in *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, p. 84. Whether the Johannine community thought of itself as Jewish is an insightful discussion. Certainly its roots are Jewish -- Jesus is the Jewish messiah. The entire issue of self-understanding is coloured with confusion, as it must have been for this community. This confusion is reflected literarily in the symbolic uses of 'world' and 'the Jews'.

of John",[7] who also does not address the nature of sect. Instead, Smith highlights the larger parameters of distinction in the New Testament world, those of Judaism and Christianity. In the Fourth Gospel in particular,

> *John* ... mythologizes the distinction between two modes of existence, the believing and authentic over against unbelieving and unauthentic, by identifying them with two historically and empirically distinct communities, the Christian and the Jewish.[8]

Smith's premise while very reasonable, delineates the boundaries of Christianity and Judaism too sharply. The Johannine community was Christian in the modern sense of the term because of its belief in Christ. However, it is important to realize that this community initially understood itself as truly Jewish because of its belief that Jesus was the Jewish messiah. Labelling the community as Christian or Jewish colours our perception of it to suit a preconceived modern definition and limits the discussion by retrojecting modern interpretations of 'Jewishness' back onto various groups in the New Testament era.

Contrary to his initial argument Smith concludes that

> the tensions between Pharisaic Judaism and Johannine Christianity are, phenomenologically speaking, not tensions proper to Judaism and Christianity as separate religions, but tensions that arise almost inevitably **within** a religion.[9]

This tension can be characterized as an intra-religious conflict, a term appropriate to the fluid flux of religious thought and practices during the first century. There has

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[7] D. Moody Smith, "Judaism and the Gospel of John" in *Jews and Christians*, pp. 77ff.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

been a growing acceptance of a pluralistic setting for much of the Greco-Roman empire. One of the most perceptive discussions of this issue is put fo ..: by Robert A. Kraft and George W. E. Nickelsburg. These scholars begin with the assumption that in "Judaism" boundaries cannot be drawn which cut off one group from another.

> The study of Judaism in the past three decades has created serious difficulties for any attempt to distil an essence of early Judaism, normative or otherwise. In a multitude of ways we have come to find a previously unsuspected religious, cultural, and social diversity among the Jewish people of the Greco-Roman period. Judaism during this period was dynamic rather than static, pluralistic rather than homogeneous. It was transitional between what went before in the Persian period and what would follow with the rabbis, and was itself in transition, often in different ways at different times and places. Surely there were norms and boundaries, but they differed from time to time and place to place and among groups that were contemporaneous and contiguous.[10]

Kraft and Nickelsburg would rather speak of "Judaisms"[11] than try to define what was normative for Judaism as a whole. Plurality becomes the norm set up against a Hellenistic backdrop. The nature of Hellenism[12] itself allows for the flowering of diversity and promotes individuality.

It is from this vantage point of plurality that the question of how a community defines itself relative to others has become a key issue for many biblical scholars. Moreover, it is not simply a matter of defining the pigeon-holes into which each group

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[10] Kraft and Nickelsburg, *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, p. 20.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[12] Kraft and Nickelsburg argue that Hellenism was able "to embrace variety and encourage its incorporation into the new synthesis. To exist in the synthesis is, by definition, to be part of the synthesis. The varieties of Judaism in the Greco-Roman world are, in a very real sense, representative of the Hellenistic synthesis" (*ibid.*, p. 23).

can be slotted but rather an in depth study of how a distinct group expresses itself and its concerns through its written texts. In the case of New Testament texts, the picture of Jesus painted in each of the gospels and the letters of Paul reveals, although obscurely in some instances, each author's interpretation of Jesus' message which, in turn, tells the reader something about the author's own self-understanding.

For the Johannine community identity was a critical issue. Wayne Meeks addresses the crisis of self-discovery within this group:

> The myth of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is still Jewish in its roots, distinctively Christian in its form and function, and on the threshold of becoming gnostic in the sense used by the second century heresiologists. And it was all these things at once.[13]

The significance of being "all these things at once" lies in the diverse nature of Hellenistic culture and its power to influence. The Johannine community was bombarded by outside variables; Hellenistic culture, synagogue officials, Roman authorities were all part of the Johannine experience. To have emerged as a self-reliant group is an achievement which makes the Johannine community distinctive[14]: it existed amidst a plurality of religious, political, and ethnic identities. The formation of distinct communities during this time was influenced by Hellenistic trends of

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[13] Wayne A. Meeks, "'Am I A Jew?' -- Johannine Christianity and Judaism" in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, p. 171.

[14] Wayne O. McCready, "Johannine Self-Understanding and the Synagogue Episode of John 9" in *Self-Definition and Self-Discovery in Early Christianity*, raises this exact question and examines whether other communities may have endured the same hardships that the Fourth Gospel portrays. He inquires about the impact of expulsion from the synagogue on the group and wonders why it is "attested in only one source -- the Gospel of John. The term ἀποσυνάγωγος meaning 'to be expelled from as synagogue' appears nowhere else in Christian literature and it has no precise parallel in rabbinic terminology" (p. 158).

change. In this sea of change efforts at self-definition and self-awareness are crucial in the formative stages of distinct societies.

These efforts are manifested in the written records of New Testament writers. Beginning with the assumption that written material is meant to be read we must understand the agendas of those who are responsible for the texts. Such agendas lie at the heart of self-definition and self-understanding. Literary records related to cultural existents are useful in understanding the drive towards self-definition as well as the society to which an author might belong.[15] Simply put, the written texts may be seen as ideologies[16] revealing a great deal about the self-understanding of groups or communities represented by the texts.

Social conditions and circumstances dictate the manner in which literary records of communities are kept. Reading and interpreting these records with this premise in mind extends the horizon of the text. Because New Testament writers chose to tell different stories in different ways and present Jesus in particular ways, their view of the world is revealed through the writing process. And here we come across an important point: it is the variety of experiences recorded in the New Testament that highlights the importance of community self-definition during that era. The gospels, for example, are not only summaries of Jesus' life but also reflect the

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[15] On the relationship between symbolic and social structures see Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, pp. 118-144.

[16] The reality of a writer's situation plays a determinate role in the writing process. Emphasizing the gospels as social products promotes a socio-structural methodology which goes to the heart of writer's experiences. Liberation theologians have focused on this particular method as a means to understanding the texts in a specific social environment. Cf. Christopher Rowland, *Radical Christianity*, pp 116-137.

beliefs and world-views of the writers and their communities. A socially-conscious reading of these texts allows us to ask: What brought the members of these communities together and what sustained them?

The wider culture in which first century groups and communities defined themselves was the Greco-Roman empire, which was far from homogeneous. Because many different types of people with many different ways of living existed within this empire, social conflict, in many instances, served as a boundary builder. Within first-century Judaism itself, many different types of people practiced the Jewish faith and fine-tuned it to suit particular social situations. It is possible to see Jesus' actions, and subsequent interpretations of those actions, as one of "a number of first-century Jewish responses to the prolonged political and cultural pressures to which [Jews] had been subjected."[17]

A major source of these pressures was the political tension between the Roman governor, Jewish synagogue officials, and the Jewish household.[18] From the time of Pompey to the First Jewish War more and more divisions crept into the Jewish structure; geographical divisions and social divisions separated practicing Jews (*eg.*, Temple Jews *vs.* Samaritans, urban Jews *vs.* rural Jews, authority of Jerusalem priests, domination by a patriarchal minority). Boundaries between Jews became more concrete as the political infighting rose and the need to define oneself increased.

Jesus' presence among Jews prompted many reactions and interactions. *John*, *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and Paul recorded their views of Jesus' work. Their writing

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[17] John Riches, *The World of Jesus*, p. 7.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-29.

contributed to the formation and perpetuation of distinc social groups. Common beliefs acted as a cohesive force in bringing these social groups together[19] and subsequently, as a self-defining force. Originally, for the followers of Christ, this would have been a belief that Jesus was the prophesied Jewish messiah. His presence in the towns and on the roads, alone, would attract a group of people. It is necessary to understand a link between statements of belief and the meaning potential of language in order to fully comprehend the significance of written words within a given social system. The actual act of stating beliefs is indicative of self-definition; one is what one thinks one is.

A growing confusion over the belief in divine retribution was a point of departure for many Jewish groups. Because much of their experience did not coincide with the belief in God's reward for the righteous, many Jews had to rethink their situation and decide how to react to God's perplexing behaviour.[20] The Zealots, who emphasized God as king, decided to strike out by force of arms against the enemies of God while the Essenes and the Qumran group retreated from an evil world which was quickly declining and would soon end. The Sadducees decided existence was possible in their newly Hellenized Roman world so long as they remained true to the temple-state of Judaism and maintained the essence of their Jewish heritage. The

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[19] Cf. Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "'Social Location of Thought' as a Heuristic Construct in New Testament Study," *JSNT* 30 (1987) pp. 103-119.

[20] Two good books which outline the variety of reactions to Roman influence during the New Testament period are John Riches, *The World of Jesus* and Hayim Goren Perelmeter, *Siblings: Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity at Their Beginnings* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1989). See also Gary G. Porton, "Diversity in Postbiblical Judaism" in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, pp. 57-80.

Pharisees believed that the temple-state could not exist within the confines of foreign rule and removed the temple worship to the privacy of individual homes in small gatherings on a communal level in an effort to save the Law. Adherence to the Law seems to be of crucial importance; interpretation of the Law separated the groups of Jewish believers. A reinterpretation of authority in Judaism gave each group a source of validation in the ever-expanding practices of Jewish Law and custom. In general, political influence, *via* Hellenism, played havoc with Jewish concerns. Maintaining control was an issue that affected all factions of Jewish origin. It is possible to speak in terms of Jewish 'origin' or Jewish 'descent' by virtue of the fact that these emerging groups claimed Jewish heritage for themselves; each community claimed to be the 'true Israel'.

The Johannine community sought to control its situation and define itself within this large Hellenistic-Jewish environment. A multiplicity of responses to the social conditions of the New Testament era supports the notion that no one "single group of authorities or any one official body would have controlled all synagogues in antiquity."[21] Many groups and communities struggled for control; their struggle was extremely influential in the process of self-definition and as a source of cohesion, especially in intra-community conflict; "it is the brother who threatens identity most."[22]

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[21] Wayne D. McCready, "Johannine Self-Understanding and the Synagogue Episode of John 9" in *Self-Definition and Self-Discovery in Early Christianity*, pp. 161-162.

[22] James, D. G. Dunn, "Pharisees, Sinners and Jesus" in *The Social World of Formative Christianity*, p. 275. Taking this metaphor to its extreme it is possible to interpret formal Christianity and Judaism (*i.e.*, Rabbinic Judaism and legalized, third-century Christianity) as siblings, products of the conflict between Rome and Jerusalem authorities. Cf. Perelmeter, *Siblings*.

The group which threatened the Johannine Jesus and his disciples most frequently in the Fourth Gospel was "the Jews". The influence of this group for the creators of the Fourth Gospel is undeniably important due to its powerful negative influence, not unlike the portrayal of the κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel. It is over against this group in particular that the Johannine community seems to be defining itself. Thus there has been much speculation as to the significance of "the Jews", both from a symbolic viewpoint as well as an historical one.

Historical interpreters concern themselves with the identity of "the Jews" and ask, Who are "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel? The answer to this question could be that "the Jews" are limited to only the temple officials in Jerusalem, those who are responsible for sending Jesus to Pilate (John 18:28). Prior to his encounter with Pilate in the Praetorium, Jesus is questioned by Annas and Caiaphas (John 18:12-27) and the title "high priest" is mentioned several times. In this interpretation, the Pharisees, as an historical group, become the object of the Johannine community's scorn. In several other instances throughout the Fourth Gospel the Pharisees and "the Jews" are mentioned together and are portrayed as a threat to Jesus and his followers.

Beginning in John 1:19-24, "the Jews" send the Pharisees to question John the Baptist to determine who he is and what he is doing. Soon after (John 3), Nicodemus, a Pharisee and leader of "the Jews" approaches Jesus to investigate his actions. Upset over Jesus' growing popularity, the Pharisees send the Temple guards to the Feast of Shelters (John 7:32) to arrest Jesus while "the Jews" are looking for him as well (John 7:35ff). Later, the Pharisees charge Jesus with false testimony (John 8:13); "the Jews" get involved in this conversation (John 8:22) and become increasingly hostile towards

Jesus as they find his answers to their questions frustrating. The Pharisees question the man born blind whom Jesus has healed (John 9:13-17) but "the Jews" do not believe the now-seeing man's answers (John 9:18-34). Finally, it is decided by the Pharisees, the high priest, and "the Jews" that Jesus should die for the good of the whole Jewish nation (John 11:45-54); they turn all their attention towards achieving this goal.

It is impossible to conclude for certain that "the Jews" are the Pharisees but both groups represent a threat to the Johannine Jesus and consequently, to the followers of Christ as well. The point being made here is that the Johannine community, as a faithful entourage of Jesus, defines itself against this backdrop of hostility. Therefore, its predominant characteristic is one of defence as a means to maintaining control over its situation.

The majority of scholars have not concerned themselves with the historical identity of "the Jews", but rather have focused on the symbolic meaning of the group within the literary confines of the Fourth Gospel. This focus allows for an interpretation of the Johannine self-understanding based on the symbolic meaning attached to groups of people with which the community may have had relationships. It is possible to discuss the different groups identified in many biblical texts, "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel being one example, as symbolic in the sense that authors chose to generalize about groups based on geographical, historical, and religious information regarding these groups. Historically, we have already discussed the pluralistic society in which the Johannine community developed indicating the difficulty of speaking of the Jews as one homogeneous, orthodox group..

In the Fourth Gospel "the Jews" are disdainful in their treatment of Jesus. This is not unlike the authors' negative treatment of κόσμος. The κόσμος represents that which is opposite to all that Jesus represents. Because of this similarity between the two, Alstrup Dahl identifies "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel as a homogeneous group which represents "the world in its hostility to God".[23] It is difficult to define a general symbolic meaning of "the Jews" because at some points the authors depict them as humble and simply ignorant to the meaning of Jesus' message (John 3:4, 9; 7:35, 40ff; 8:3-11, 22); moreover, some "Jews" come to believe in him (John 8:30). But generally, "the Jews" represent, as one specific group, the animosity which faced the Johannine community.

John T. Townsend focuses on the function of "the Jews" in the Fourth Gospel and interprets this term as "a symbol for the evil hostility of the world to God's

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[23] Alstrup Dahl, "The Johannine Church and History" in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, pp. 124-142, edited by William Klassen and Graydon F. Synder, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 129. Dahl explains his reasoning behind this statement: "John does not make use of the traditional distinction between the people of God (*ha laos*) and the Gentile nations (*ta ethnē*). But his point of view is based upon the Jewish idea, that Israel is the center of the world. This conception is, however, interpreted in a new and revolutionary way in the Fourth Gospel. Positively, it implies that the mission of Jesus in Israel is a mission to the world and that he fulfilled his ministry to the world within Israel. Negatively, it means that the world's enmity and opposition to God gets its concentrated expression through the Jews"(p. 129). See also Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, pp. 144-145, 646-647. D. Moody Smith disagrees on this point, as do I. He cautions against the association of "the Jews" with the "world" in the Fourth Gospel as they do not necessarily refer to the same thing. Some Jews are enemies of Jesus while others are not. The "world", on the other hand, represents all that is completely opposite to Jesus' message. See Smith's "Judaism and the Gospel of John" in *Jews and Christians*, pp. 82f, 90f. The reluctance to identify an underlying anitsemitism in the Fourth Gospel is obvious.

revelation. 'The Jews' oppose Jesus and persecute him throughout his ministry."[24] Townsend proposes two answers to the question, Who do "the Jews" represent?: "the sinful world as a whole" or "a limited group within Israel such as the authorities, those Jews who oppose Jesus, Jewish non-believers, Judeans, etc."[25] He concludes that John's anti-Jewish bias is certainly ambivalent though definitely real. As the Johannine community matured and gained independence the initial rejection by the world is projected onto a single group, "the Jews". "The Jews" become the enemy which the community can stand up and face.

John Ashton argues from a similar perspective to that of Townsend and proposes that Jesus, as representative of all Christians, stands in opposition to the Jewish tradition rather than the Jewish people.[26] Ashton elevates the symbolism of the Fourth Gospel story to a cosmological level and interprets the relevant symbols in that manner. Jesus becomes the representative of the Johannine Christians' experience in particular; the rejection of Jesus by "the Jews" parallels the rejection of the Johannine Christians by "the world". Ashton maps out the relationship between "the world" and "the Jews":

> In the Prologue, a general observation about the world's unreceptivity to the light (1:10) has been narrowed down to focus on a single state (τὰ ἴδια) and a single nation (οἱ ἴδιοι) soon to be specified as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. In the body of the Gospel, where the sullen hostility of these same Ἰουδαῖοι is a major theme, the movement of the

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[24] John T. Townsend, "The Gospel of John and the Jews: The Story of a Religious Divorce" in *Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, p. 74.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[26] John Ashton, "The Identity and Function of the 'IOYΔAIOI in the Fourth Gospel," *Novum Testamentum* XXVII (1985) 1:40-75, p. 60.

> Prologue is reversed, and after Jesus' retirement from the public scene the narrator's record of the unreceptivity of the Jews is followed by Jesus' own prophetic warning of the active hostility of the world.[27]

Based on our previous discussion of Cassem and Käsemann and the above argument proposed by Ashton, the thesis that real insight into Johannine self-understanding lies in the Fourth Gospel's use of κόσμος is made more probable. It is likely that the community's interpretation of Jesus' interaction with Jewish authorities laid the foundation for its perceived hostility from the κόσμος. The general concerns voiced by the narrator in the Prologue are reiterated by the Johannine Jesus in John 17 thus bringing home to the reader the negative effects of interference from the κόσμος as a whole.

The effort to interpret the symbolic meaning of "the Jews" and κόσμος is a means to discovering the self-understanding of the community which developed these terms and themes in its gospel. Because κόσμος is used more and more negatively as the Fourth Gospel's tale progresses (some of the most blatantly negative treatments are in the Epistles, presumably written after the Gospel) and "the Jews" emerge as a dangerous adversary, it is possible to understand their use in terms of the stages of development of the Johannine community.

> The community maintained some distance from the rest of society. Although this withdrawal from "the world" became more pronounced during the period in which I John was written, the gospel (15:18; 16:2; 17:9) also reflects the community's awareness of its separation from the rest of society.[28]

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 66. Ashton does concede, however, that no explicit connection is drawn in the Fourth Gospel between "the world" and "the Jews" although many implicit inferences are evident.

[28] Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School*, p. 289.

The negative effect of the increased rejection and eventual expulsion of the Johannine community manifests itself in the community's attitude towards "the Jews" and the κόσμος. As the separation between the community and its surroundings grows, it gains in self-awareness and this in turn supports the tendency towards self-definition against the backdrop of "the Jews" and the κόσμος.

This increase in self-awareness of the Johannine community can be tied to the thematic development of κόσμος in the Fourth Gospel, as we have argued in Chapter 3. We have shown that the use of κόσμος can be tied to several different topics or themes. The only consistently negative use is in the references to "overcoming the world" (John 17:33; 1 John 5:4, 4, 5), "where 'the world' is viewed as a salvific obstacle."[29] It is no coincidence that these negative occurrences of κόσμος are in the final farewell discourse of the Johannine Jesus and in the most vocal epistle of the Johannine community. The division between the Johannine Jesus' revelation to 'the world' (John 1:19-12:50) and his revelation to the disciples (John 13:1-17:26) reflects the growing alienation of the Johannine community. The increase in negativity towards the κόσμος is directly related to that alienation. The Fourth Gospel focuses on the κόσμος as its source of hostility which fuels the development of the community's self-definition.

This literary focus can be understood as a model for universe construction. The Fourth Gospel can be viewed as the result of the community's cosmic self-definition. The writing process of this gospel would have aided the formalization of

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[29] Cassem, "A Grammatical and Contextual Inventory of the Use of κόσμος in the Johannine Corpus with Some Implications for a Johannine Cosmic Theology," p. 87.

established traditions and solidified the "corporate identity"[30] of the Johannine community. Simply put, the purpose of cosmic self-definition is to create a symbolic world in which one can live. On a cosmological level, a group of people will define a world which fits their understanding of themselves. It would not make much sense to exist inside boundaries with which one is not comfortable.

The Johannine community existed within a religious social system that began "with concrete events selected by some means to be representative, hence symbolic, for the group."[31] This point can not be stressed enough: each New Testament writer selected events from that era, specifically the time of Jesus, which reflected his/her attitudes and feelings toward his/her own situation. That is why there are four gospels in the canon along with a host of letters which display a wide variety of responses to individual situations. The Johannine writers chose to focus on "the Jews" as the symbolic representation of their rejection and their adversary; Jesus is the representative for all 'true Christians' in the eyes of the Johannine writers. The Fourth

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[30] Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John As Storyteller* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. 54. Stibbe borrows from Peter L. Berger's sociology of knowledge to support his argument that "narrative is a crucial medium in [the] objectivation of shared knowledge and maintenance of [a] symbolic universe ... once a community has established a sense of tradition and a sense of corporate identity, the most common way of articulating those things is through narrative forms such a myth, legend, saga, history" (pp. 53-54).

[31] David M. Bossman, "Canon and Culture: A Call for Biblical Theology in Context," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 23 (1993) 1:4-13, p. 4. Bossman praises Mary Douglas' contributions to the field of belief structures and summarizes her argument in this article: "Rather than the group's determining its social world by means of its symbol world and tradition of symbolic signification, the more likely pattern is for the social world to shape the group's use of symbols: their literary creation, selection, signification, and canonical mediation ... it is not Israel that invents a view of history that is subjective, timeless, and absolute in its authority structure. It is the social world that engenders this range of perceptions" (p. 10).

Gospel is the only gospel in the New Testament canon that portrays this severe a conflict between Jews and Christians and which sets up the conflict in these symbolic terms. If the premise that Jesus is a representative figure in an historical setting is correct then it is probable that the Johannine community of 'true Christians'[32] felt threatened by some outside group; that it was the Jewish authorities in actuality is possible.

Based on what we now know about the attitudes and beliefs of the Johannine community, it is possible to paint a picture of the world it created and sustained. It is important to realize, however, that a straight-line correspondence is difficult to map out because we can never know all there is to know about the Johannine writers, the community or the historical Jesus. What we can hope to achieve rather, is a modest theoretical summary based on the evidence which we have so far addressed. It is also wise to keep in mind that the Fourth Gospel, while a final piece of the Johannine community's history, is not final in thematic terms. Chapter 21 leaves the reader with a feeling of unresolved issues and the Epistles highlight even more the difficulties associated with the formalization of the community.

Richard Rohrbaugh has designed a model for mapping the correlation between thought structures and social structures, what he has termed "social locations of

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[32] Previously (cf. chapter 3, p. 89) we characterized the Johannine self-understanding as 'true Israel'. The difficulties in attaching descriptive titles to this community are obvious. Calling it 'true Israel' roots it in Judaism; calling it 'true Christians' roots it in Christianity. The operative word, however, is 'true'. It is clear that this community thought of itself as the 'true believers' in Christ. Whether that makes it Christian or Jewish is debatable. In its own terms, namely that of the Fourth Gospel, it is likely that the community thought of itself as Jewish even though it had broken ties with the Jewish authorities. "The Jews" represent those who do not possess knowledge of Christ and therefore do not believe.

thought".[33] He defines a social location of thought as "a mental construct, a socially produced and maintained picture of the world."[34] Once a group has been identified, as Meeks identifies the Pauline Christians as a 'group', one can proceed to construct a social location of thought based on literary texts; the correlation between written texts (authorial records) and thought structures is a one-to-one correspondence.[35]

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[33] See his article "'Social Location of Thought' as a Heuristic Construct in New Testament Study," p. 104. Rohrbaugh is concerned with the socio-scientific approach to New Testament studies. He focuses on Meeks' *The First Urban Christians* as a good model to emulate.

[34] Rohrbaugh, pp. 113-114. Because of the abstract nature of this theory Rohrbaugh cautions against construing historically accurate results though his analysis: "social locations are heuristic constructs, not explanatory ones" (p. 114).

[35] Much has been explored in the field of socio-literary analysis of biblical literature. This type of exegesis shifts the emphasis away from source reconstruction and historical accuracy to the function of the text for those who created it. The premise for this type of study lies in the communicative nature of language and the significance of recording thoughts, beliefs, opinions, and events in literary form. The consideration of literature as a source of communication allows the social aspects of literature to enter into scholarly discussion of New Testament texts and opens avenues of discussion left untravelled in the past. The discussion of biblical literature now takes "into account the intentions of those involved, [and] we may suppose that the connection between social reality and spiritual phenomenon is to be seen not only as the effect of a situation on the movement but also as the response of the movement to that situation." (Gerd Theissen, *Soziologie der Jesusbewegung*, ET: *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*, p. 32) Several key contributors have facilitated this exploration.

As we have already seen, Wayne A. Meeks, in his ground-breaking article, "Man From Heaven," addressed the then unexplored function of socially generated myths in sacred literature. He argued that the Johannine literature in particular, "is the product not of a lone genius but of a community or group of communities that evidently persisted with some consistent identity over a considerable span of time" (p. 49). The Johannine [illegible]unity's legacy is its gospel; its language is readily accessible and is key to the so[illegible]ntity of the community. In a much more recent article, "Breaking Away" (in *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict*, pp. 89-113, edited by Jeremy Cohen [New York and London: New York University Press, 1991]), Meeks pursues a picture of the New Testament social world based on communally produced documents.

It is perhaps unavoidable in today's historical exegesis of biblical literature to

Rohrbaugh argues, however, that a single author, in Meeks' case, Paul, is unlikely to be representative of a larger community. Communal authorship, as is generally accepted to be the case in the composition of the Fourth Gospel, gives a more accurate social location construct.

In the case of New Testament texts, the context of social locations of thought is belief structures. It is **belief** that separated social groups and facilitated self-definition in the sea of change associated with the New Testament period. Rohrbaugh recognizes this aspect of the biblical texts and attempts to clarify the functionality of

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chart social and political influences on the composition of texts. The recognition of reading and writing sites (cf. Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*) has awakened interest in discovering the link between socio-political settings and the texts they produce. In the case of sacred literature the emphasis is on the interpretation of myths and symbols as socially generated constructs which reflect the self-understanding of a community. Symbolic representations captured in the literature of a community are influenced and created by factors affecting that community. (Cf. Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament*, pp. 118-144.)

The intertwining of sociology of knowledge and sacred texts is quickly becoming common-place in academic circles. Much is rooted in the origins of redaction criticism but with the emphasis on function rather than intention, the question for socio-literary scholars becomes: What was occurring at the time a text was written to make authors choose to say what they said and what does it mean for them? Good introductions to the type of answers being given and the methodology being used are provided by Gerd Theissen, "The Sociological Interpretation of Religious Traditions" in *Bible and Liberation*, pp. 38-60, edited by Norman K. Gottwald (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983); ____, *Urchistliche Wundergeschichten: Ein Beitrag zur formgeschichtlichen Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelian* (Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlaghaus Gerd Mohn, 1974), ET: *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, translated by Francis McDonagh, edited by John Riches (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Bruce Malina, "The Social Sciences and Biblical Interpretation" in *Bible and Liberation*, pp. 11-25; Stephen D. Moore's discussion of narrative criticism in *Literary Criticism and the Gospels*; John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, pp. 10f; John Riches, "Parables and the Search for a New Community" in *The Social World of Formative Christianity*, pp. 235-263, edited by Jacob Neusner *et. al.*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Peter L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, pp. 3-28; Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John As Storyteller* , pp. 50-66, 148-167; Jerome H. Neyrey, *An Ideology of Revolt*, pp. 96-100.

belief within his social location theory.

> It is not that certain experiences produce certain beliefs, but that given certain experiences a limited range of beliefs should be plausible options for most of those who share the social location. Even if rejected for other alternatives, a given belief within that range should be understood by those who share the common location. And for our purposes, description of such limited ranges of experience should help us understand the way a set of beliefs were taken by those who adopted them.[36]

Given that the Johannine community was 'outside' the Jewish and Roman social structures against which it defined itself, any belief structures would be set up in opposition to and in defence of these larger social constructs. The Johannine Jesus is rejected and is eventually confined to a small group of followers, a chosen few. Adherence to belief in this type of christology reflects a communal self-understanding of opposition and defence.

The Johannine community existed, as far as it was concerned, in a world which did not understand -- a world which eventually did not deserve to understand nor be invited to join the fellowship. This is the underlying story, the meta-story, of the Fourth Gospel. The division within the gospel between Jesus' revelation to the **world** and his revelation to the **disciples** supports the increased negativity towards the non-believers. The Johannine community closes off its fellowship to any people without faith in Christ (John 1:12-13; 15:18-19; 16:8-9; 17:2b, 6-8, 12, 16; I John 2:15; 3:10; 4:6; 5:1-4, 19). The rise in separation is evident in the rise in negative thematic

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[36] Rohrbaugh, p. 114-115. See also David M. Bossman's argument for the same in "Canon and Culture: A Call for Biblical Theology in Context". He maintains that "rather than the group's determining its social world by means of its symbol world and tradition of symbolic signification, the more likely pattern is for the social world to shape the group's use of symbols: their literary creation, selection, signification, and canonical mediation" (p. 10).

treatment of κόσμος.[37]

It is the underlying universal interpretation of the Johannine Jesus' purpose that is the constant for the Johannine community and which facilitates its particular world-view. Throughout the Fourth Gospel the Johannine Jesus remains the strength of the community of followers and the source of conflict for those who oppose his work. These two defining features of the Johannine Jesus' character are what distinguish the boundaries of the Johannine community's social location.[38] However universally based the Johannine christological theme may be, the community sets its own social, political, and cultural limits through its use of the theme. This is the case for any community; the essence of self-understanding and self-definition is separation and boundary adherence.

It is now clear that the Johannine community was separated and did separate itself from the larger Jewish circle. Its high christology made its understanding of Jesus distinct and fuelled the separation. It had sectarian characteristics by its creation

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[37] The details of Jesus' mission and the actions of his friends and foes serve as examples for the underlying theme and to provide it with a temporal and geographical framework. This particular aspect of the Johannine Gospel has been thoroughly discussed by Adele Reinhartz, *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel*, who argues that this cosmological tale serves as the foundation of the Fourth Gospel and allows it to transgress time and spatial boundaries. "The cosmological tale serves to de-historize the gospel so that it is seen as ever applicable and relevant" (p. 101). Reinhartz' exegesis of John 10:1-5 is a succinct application of her literary approach to the Gospel. The 'sheep' are identified metaphorically with the 'world'; the 'sheepfold' is the 'world' spatially; Jesus is the 'shepherd' symbolically because "the activity of the shepherd with respect to the sheepfold in the *paroimia* parallels that of Jesus with respect to the world in the cosmological tale of the gospel narrative" (p. 79).

[38] Cf. Gerd Theissen, "The Sociological Interpretation of Religious Traditions" in *Bible and Liberation*, pp. 38-58, p. 47f.

of boundaries between believers and non-believers whose labels divided the groups they characterized. The self-evaluation by the Johannine community is revealed in its evaluation of the κόσμος.

CONCLUSION

The Johannine community elevated itself to a level near the Johannine Jesus through its theology of *imitatio Christi*. The view of Christ left the community with a negative outlook on its place in 'this world' and precipitated its alienation from it. The elitist attitude of the community determined who could be included and who could not. A predominantly high christology combined with exclusive tendencies makes the Johannine community unique.

The two-fold mission of the Johannine Jesus -- revelation to the world and revelation to the disciples -- reveals two major themes of the Fourth Gospel and the crisis of the Johannine community. The community is forced to debate its purpose ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ while not being ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου.

> Being in the world (ἐν) is a neutral location that can be positive or negative depending on further circumstances. Being of the world (ἐκ) seems to refer definitely to an undesirable state opposed to discipleship. However, God is portrayed as having a strong rescue intention, and the reader is often reminded that Jesus is coming or has come or is sent into (εἰς) the world. Despite the specificity of these phrases the

Johannine ambivalence to 'the world' remains.[1]

The crisis of self-discovery is fraught with ambivalence because the task of going out into a world of hatred is undesirable.[2]

It is difficult to characterize the Johannine community as either Jewish or Christian because each title brings with it a presumed interpretation of what it means to be either one. The attempt here has been to understand the Johannine self-awareness and self-definition from **within** the community as revealed by its gospel.[3] It seems reasonable to conclude that the community thought of itself as "true believers" and because their belief was founded on a belief in the Jewish messiah, the community constituted a "true Israel". Modern interpretations of Judaism and Christianity place the two religions opposite one another; the above interpretation of

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[1] Cassem, "A Grammatical and Contextual Inventory of the Use of κόσμος in the Johannine Corpus with Some Implications for a Johannine Cosmic Theology," pp. 84-85.

[2] This particular view of the world is at odds with more traditional interpretations of discipleship. Bengt Holmberg, for example, argues that "one should also keep in mind that, while the Christian groups separated themselves from the larger, Jewish context and thus became more sectarian in relation to this background, their relation to the even larger society outside Judaism underwent the opposite change: they transformed their rather exclusive connections with the Jewish communities and became an open, outreaching, and strongly integrating religious movement, which was not 'sectarian' at all!" (*Sociology and the New Testament*, p. 104) Perhaps Holmberg is referring to the Pauline movement here. The Johannine movement retained much of its exclusive tendencies carried over from the rejection by the Jewish communities. In this sense it transgressed the definitions of discipleship and mission. This conflict fuelled the ambivalence towards the larger κόσμος as a whole.

[3] Methodologically, the attempt has been made in this argument to discuss one symbol, κόσμος, as a component of the Johannine community and show how this reflects the attitude of that community. We have also outlined the function of this symbol in the process. Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Its Social Metaphors* also uses this type of approach. Cf. pp. 12ff, 210.

the Johannine community contradicts this opposition. From a twentieth-century point of view, the Johannine community could be characterized as both Christian and Jewish.

It is hoped that these findings have shed new light on the understanding of the Johannine community as well as contributed to debates on heterodoxy and diversity in the New Testament era. The field of socio-literary exegesis, promoted particularly by Wayne Meeks, is still in its formative stages but its influence on redaction-critical studies is notable. The concept of correlating texts with communal beliefs and traditions is a further step in the progression of historical interpretation. This step makes it possible to discover the self-understanding of the community as revealed by the Fourth Gospel and to further our own understanding of the general Palestinian milieu during the first century.

The picture we have created of the Johannine community is of one which is not altogether peaceful. This particular community endured much hardship, some of which was brought on by itself. Its unique view of the Johannine Jesus left it with little choice but to emulate and imitate the Christ figure even to its eventual physical and spiritual alienation from its Jewish roots. The fact that it did survive, even if for only a short time, (as John 21 and the epistles indicate) is remarkable in itself. The commandment of Jesus is the community's stronghold:

> αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ ἐμή, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς. (John 15:12)

The second half of the Fourth Gospel reiterates to the disciples only this theme of love and unity. This is juxtaposed with the preceding twelve chapters of attempted missionary work to "the Jews". The hostility of the κόσμος is the framework in

which the Johannine Jesus explained to the disciples how to continue his work and remain faithful to the Father. In this setting the Johannine community remained "true" to Christ and to each other. Thus did the Johannine community define itself and its presence; the pages of the Fourth Gospel is its legacy and lasting memorial.

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