

JOHN VERSUS JESUS? REVIEWS OF *THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND THE QUEST FOR JESUS* BY PAUL N. ANDERSON
AND THE AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

Jeffrey L. Staley, Matthew Forrest Lowe, Michael W. Pahl, Anne Moore and Paul N. Anderson

While the tensions within the Gospel of John contributed to the most intense theological debates in the first four centuries of the Christian movement, the differences between John and the Synoptics have contributed to one of the most extensive debates in the modern era: the Quest for the Historical Jesus. While the prevalent stance of critical scholarship over the last two centuries has been to pit John against the Jesus of history, this move also bears with it a new set of critical problems. In *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered* (LNTS, 321; Library of Historical Jesus Studies; London/New York: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2006, xx + 226 pp.; also released in paperback in September 2007), Paul N. Anderson addresses these and other issues. His book was reviewed in the New Testament and Hellenistic Religions Section of the May 2007 meetings of the Pacific Northwest Region of the Society of Biblical Literature. Jeff Staley introduced the session, Matthew Lowe, Michael Pahl and Anne Moore reviewed the central three of the book's five parts, and Anderson responded to the reviews. Following is a report of those engagements.

*On Gauntlets and Paradigm Shifts:
An Introduction to Anderson's New Book*

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Those who know Paul Anderson's book *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel* will not be surprised that his second Johannine monograph, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*, picks up where his earlier book

left off. Anderson's first book challenged the critical grounds upon which Fourth Gospel diachronic composition theories (e.g. Bultmann, Fortna, Teeple) and Markan-dependence theories (e.g. Barrett, Brodie, Neiryneck) were based. But in his new book Anderson proposes his own competing theory of composition. Here Anderson argues that the Fourth Gospel reflects a certain 'synchronicity' of authorship, some of which is rooted in an eyewitness source, and a 'diachronicity' of situation that reflects ongoing social and theological developments in the Johannine community.

Anderson begins with a two-edition theory of composition, arguing that the Fourth Gospel represents an autonomous Jesus tradition that develops its own peculiar trajectory. Here Anderson throws down the gauntlet and challenges modern scholarship's emphasis on Johannine theology at the expense of its historical contributions to the quest for Jesus. In so doing, he seeks to address Johannine contributions to several of the leading religious issues of the modern era, just as he earlier addressed Johannine contributions to theological issues of the patristic era. Rather than a 'Christ of faith', the targeted subject here is Johannine contributions to—or detractions from—the 'Jesus of history'.

Anderson's book has five parts to it, preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion. In addition, Robert Kysar has written an insightful Foreword that situates the book within the larger flow of Johannine and Jesus studies. There are also two appendices that lay out in more detail the outlines of Anderson's critical theories on important Johannine matters: 'A Two-Edition Theory of Johannine Composition' (pp. 193-95), and 'A Historical Outline of Johannine Christianity' (pp. 196-99). In the former, Anderson argues that a 'first edition' of John was finalized around 80–85 CE as the *second* written Gospel. Whereas Matthew and Luke built *upon* Mark, Anderson argues that John built *around* Mark, with Mark as a dialogical partner rather than a literary source. Anderson believes that the Johannine Epistles were then written by the Johannine Elder (85–95 CE), who finalized the Gospel after the death of the Beloved Disciple/Evangelist (100 CE), adding such components as the Prologue, chapters 6, 15–17, 21 and the Beloved Disciple/ eyewitness references.

In his 'Historical Outline of Johannine Christianity', Anderson lays out a theory of the history of the Johannine situation, including two crises in each of three phases, with a final crisis (a running set of dialogues with other gospel traditions) spanning all three periods.

Anderson's *Early Period* (30–70 CE) involves a northern Palestinian setting with two crises (North–South tensions between Galileans and Judeans; and competition between followers of Jesus and John the Baptist). Anderson's *Middle Period* (70–85 CE) envisions a move to Asia Minor leading to two further crises (local synagogue tensions over Johannine high Christology; and growing tensions with the local Roman presence over increased emperor-laud expectations under Domitian). Anderson's *Later Period* (85–100 CE) posits an expansion of dialogue partners to include other Christian communities and centers of the movement (Gentile Christian teachers who advocate assimilation on docetizing grounds; and institutionalizing responses to various threats, which evoke a Johannine corrective). Thus, Anderson proposes a new approach to the composition of the Fourth Gospel, while laying out his own solutions to some of the perplexing problems of Johannine historiography.

Parts II–IV of Anderson's monograph are treated in the reviews below; thus this introduction will simply sketch out the beginning and the ending of the book. In the introduction ('John versus Jesus—Modern Foundations of Biblical Scholarship') and in Part I ('Modern Foundations for the Critical Investigation of John, Jesus, and History'), Anderson treats the reader to the story of John's historical marginalization in the modern era, citing four chapters in the history of modern interpretation. He then assesses modern paradigms and their shortcomings, pointing out that neither traditionalistic nor modernistic approaches to Johannine traditions have been entirely suitable to the historical task.

From here, Anderson goes on to outline his own synthesis, which he calls 'The Dialogical Autonomy of John' (pp. 37-41). This synthesis builds upon his earlier 'Cognitive-Critical Analysis' of the development of the Johannine dialectical tradition, and it accentuates several forms of dialogical realities underlying the Fourth Gospel's origin and development. Some of these dialogical realities include the dialectical thinking of the Beloved Disciple/Evangelist; the Prophet-like-Moses agency motif (the source of the Fourth Gospel's revelatory rhetoric); certain dialogical engagements within the developing Johannine situation; and rhetorical devices used to provoke hearers and readers in an imaginary dialogue with Jesus. Anderson concludes that the Johannine narrative was a distinct tradition from that of the other canonical Gospels, and thoroughly dialogical from start to finish.

Parts II–IV are the heart of Anderson’s book, but Part V (‘Modern Foundations Reconsidered—Implications for the Critical Investigation of John, Jesus, and History’, pp. 175–90) and the Conclusion (‘John and the Quest for Jesus—A Nuanced View’, pp. 191–92) expand on the book’s central proposals and push them further. While expressing sympathy for the binary oppositions facing most Johannine scholars, Anderson nevertheless poses a dialectical way of approaching gospel-tradition historiography, citing Rudolf Bultmann, who put forward such a suggestion in 1927. Anderson notes that whereas the Church Fathers came to approach John’s *christological* tensions dialectically, restoring the tension to otherwise monological distortions, curiously, a dialectical approach to John’s *historiography* has never been critically explored. In contrast to the shopworn John-versus-Synoptics or Synoptics-versus-John triumphalism, Anderson thus poses what he calls a ‘nuanced [dialogical] approach’ to these enduring problems, one that eschews an either-or dichotomy.

Anderson’s book should challenge Johannine and Jesus scholars alike; but its primary value may lie in the way that it addresses the classical questions of Johannine scholarship. Here we have something different from a book that simply stirs up old discussions, for Anderson believes that his analysis of Johannine dialectic could provide ways forward in addressing some of the most divisive religious issues of our times. As Robert Kysar says in the Foreword,

Anderson’s suggestion of a two-way influence [is] very valuable with numerous implications, such as his theory of a ‘bi-optic [*sic*] perspective on Jesus’... This volume challenges biblical scholars to rethink the foundations of much of our study. It will...make readers assess their own methods and stimulate new discussions of John and the quest for Jesus (p. xx).

Building a Case for Deconstruction: A Review of Part II, ‘On Planks and Platforms—A Critical Assessment of John, Jesus, and History’

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When Paul Anderson published his first full monograph, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, D. Moody Smith’s Foreword predicted that the author would ‘set an agenda for his own career’ in

taking on ‘all the counterquestions his proposals will doubtless engender’.¹ The counterquestions have indeed been numerous; I have entertained several such questions myself since I read Anderson’s first volume a few days before participating in this panel.² About these questions, more will follow later.

Summary

Anderson sets out to assess two modern components of John’s historical validity with respect to the Synoptics: the interrelated and even codependent trends of the de-historicization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus. He adopts a helpful metaphor for his study, viewing these two trends as *platforms* for Johannine and Jesus-Quest scholarship. These platforms consist of six *planks* apiece, with each plank representing an oft-cited objection to John’s historicity and its inclusion in Quest studies. If Anderson can show faulty construction in the planks, he may not be able to say that ‘this property is condemned’, but he can certainly surmise that the platforms themselves may be unsafe to build upon. He takes care to demonstrate the need for this study, but further proof is readily found: I heard a paper given at the May 2007 Research in Religious Studies Conference at the University of Lethbridge that addressed John’s ahistoricity relative to the Synoptics with only a footnote, while importing frequent references from the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*.³ No slight is

1. D. Moody Smith, ‘Foreword’, in Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6* (WUNT, 2.78; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), p. iv. Later references to this volume in this portion of the review will appear in the body of the text, distinguished by the year of publication, while references to *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus* will have no date or its publication year, 2006.

2. I joined the panel at the last minute to replace someone who could not participate due to his mother’s sudden illness. I thank Paul for his guidance in helping to bring the collected reviews, especially my own, to a publishable form, and for his initial generosity in including me in the discussion of his book. I am also indebted to the audience of SBL regional conference participants, who supplied helpful comments in the ensuing conversation. My own comments here remain much the same in content as when I originally submitted them and are thus briefer than those on subsequent sections of the book.

3. Julie Chamberlain, ‘Female Asceticism in Early Christianity,’ presented in the panel ‘Forming Christian Communities in the Roman Empire’ at the Fifth Annual Research in Religious Studies Conference, May 3, 2007, immediately

intended against the paper; this merely confirms just how valid (even at the undergraduate level) are Anderson's observations on John's assumed ahistoricity.

Anderson's testing of the first platform, John's de-historicizing, begins with three related planks: John's differences from the Synoptics; Synoptic omissions in John; and Johannine omissions in the Synoptics. Anderson methodically checks the strengths and weaknesses of each, covering familiar ground here: John's differences in recording the geography of Jesus' movements and miracles, the disparities between the expressions voiced by his Jesus as opposed to those recorded in Mark and company, and John's lack of emphasis on Jesus' exorcisms (betraying the evangelist's discomfort with the subject?). But the three-to-one advantage held by the 'seemingly far more reliable guides' (p. 48) is not a real one: Markan dependence can be a liability to the over-all impression of a majority, while John's 'minority reports' (p. 55) may preserve more accurate accounts in some cases, as in recording Jesus' travels to Jerusalem. Anderson dispels some myths here, tracking agrarian images and aphorisms in John that match those of the other canonical evangelists, and showing that John's language, while less prone to explicit kingdom references, is more 'basileic' than normally thought (pp. 52-54).

In probing the second triad of planks (the Johannine Jesus speaks and acts in the mode of the Evangelist; the material is rendered in response to the history of the Johannine situation; and the Evangelist spiritualizes and theologizes according to his purposes), Anderson moves away from the Synoptics to consider the shaping of Jesus, who in John is 'clearly crafted in the image of the evangelist's own convictions' (p. 46). John's Jesus is a character in a narrative, and though he may have, as so many authors claim of their constructs, a 'life of his own', Jesus appears as John wants to portray him to his audience—and the result is a reflective and somewhat spiritualized portrait. But as Anderson points out, *every* character here 'talks' like the Johannine Evangelist does (p. 62); and when Anderson tears out some faulty reasoning, Jesus' speech becomes considerably more consistent with the Synoptic renderings than many scholars admit. Anderson devotes welcome attention to John's social setting, including a thorough sequence of crises stemming from intra-

preceding the SBL-PNW regional meeting; also see Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 1-2, where the author briefly spotlights James D. G. Dunn's similar assumptions on the apparent ahistoricity of John relative to the Synoptics.

Jewish and imperial pressures. Here, as elsewhere, Anderson's assessment of 'weaknesses' in previous arguments are not meant to invalidate them; he carefully indicates the danger of 'making too much of' an assumption (p. 50 and elsewhere). Weakness means simply that a plank should not be made to bear too much weight. John's 'spiritualization' of Jesus, for instance, is a valid theological observation, but hardly the 'heuristic key' that some have made it out to be (p. 68). To make categories out of Mark's 'objective fact' and John's 'spiritualizing fancy' is to construct only a false dichotomy, while the apparent processes of theologization and spiritualization do not necessarily require ahistoricity (p. 73).

Planks in the second platform (the de-Johannification of Jesus) are compelling in part because the assumptions involved seem so safe: the pre-existent *Logos* is so difficult to 'square' with the historical realities of the crucifixion that John's historicity, as Anderson begins, 'seems to have been subsumed into John's Christology' (p. 74). But is a christologized history necessarily completely invalid? Anderson responds by measuring John against the Synoptics, again, especially with regard to Mark. A 'declaration of *Markan* dependence' spotlights similarities (implying *some* form of contact) but makes too little of differences; John is much more than a spiritualized derivative of Mark. When considering John's coherence, Anderson questions Bultmann's diachronic reconstruction, based in part on his own previous (1996) disassembly of Bultmann's approach to John's Christology. Rather than proposing completely synchronic composition, however, Anderson prefers a two-edition theory, with the plausible compiling contribution of the author of the Johannine Epistles (p. 78). Anderson all but demolishes the third plank, that of John's lateness as diminishing historical validity; he offers ten elements of primitive tradition to support a view of John's material as only *relatively* late, not *exclusively* so (pp. 79-84).

The last three planks that support John's restriction from the 'database' of the 'historical' Jesus (p. 74) depend on criteria (including dissimilarity between primitive and later Jesus portraits, multiple attestations, coherence with other portraits, and naturalistic distinctions between fantastic and mundane) that are often self-reinforcing or prone to misuse. If the reasoning is circular, says Anderson, the resulting streams of research and consensus may need to be re-examined (p. 89). The author offers to rebuild what he has effectively undermined here, providing replacement criteria that take full-orbed account of

similarities and differences between portrayals of Jesus (p. 90). Those who use a history-of-religions approach can show strong connections between the Gospel and earlier mythic accounts from the Mediterranean world, but *impact* upon John does not mean there was not a singular historical origin (p. 91). Various emerging portraits of the Synoptic Jesus, summarized by Marcus Borg and Bart Ehrman, form the second platform's final plank. These renderings, while well-grounded in contemporary socio-religious models, are equally applicable to John's portrayal—and therefore inadequate as de-Johannifying restrictions.

Evaluation

Actually neither platform, Anderson concludes, is 'constructed of solid material'; if the individual planks are faulty, the platforms themselves are unstable. Anderson's metaphor is perhaps pushed beyond its own load-bearing limits here; the reader has heard about planks and platforms, but planks do not amount to a foundation. If we dig deeper, what are the planks themselves built upon? Are there deeper levels of faulty construction at work beneath the surface? Is there someone we can sue if the entire complex collapses? But these are only minor concerns, especially as Anderson never intends to level the structure and start over. The building materials might be of a sufficient grade to meet the author's building codes—but they must be augmented. Anderson wisely and repeatedly asserts his intention to rebuild Johannine historicity and validity as a source in the Quest as structures that complement the Quest's Synoptic emphases rather than supplanting or fusing with them. If his work is speculative, relying on the 'ifs' of authorial intent where proof cannot be definitive,⁴ it is because any effort to include John in historical-Jesus inquiry will only be as strong as the Synoptic scholarship with which it dovetails.

To his further credit, Anderson examines the planks at hand without letting his audience get 'board': his book even dares to be student-friendly. It offers helpful and readily accessible lists and tables, along with the occasional take-home expression. 'But these are written so that you may come to believe' (Jn 20.30-31, NRSV) is colloquially rendered as "'Yes, I *know* Mark is out there, and I *know* I'm leaving things out, so stop reminding me'" (p. 56); details exclusive to John and Mark are

4. As on p. 51 and elsewhere; the author reminds one that Part III attempts to show the 'evidence' behind his theories of composition and his equally plausible theories of John's engagement with Markan material.

explained via a shared, ‘interfluent’ tradition of ‘buzz words and images’ (p. 84). The visual illustrations offer students and scholars alike an immediate grasp of the intricacies of the intermingled Synoptic/Johannine source-histories.

While no further assembly is required, some might have been helpful in bolstering Anderson’s case; and here I present two of my ‘long-standing’ counterquestions. First: Regarding John’s *context*, I applaud Anderson’s continuing attention to the series of crises behind John’s composition; having said that, I had hoped he would flesh out what it meant for John’s community to be expected to ‘participate in emperor laud’ (1996: p. 246; repeated in 2006: p. 63 and elsewhere). I would commend Warren Carter to him as a resource when he delves into John’s Roman context and its theological impact, and especially so, given his attention to John’s ‘agency Christology’ (1996: pp. 260, 262; 2006: p. 59) as a response to charges of subordinationism. Agency is one of four central legitimating ideological claims in Carter’s analysis of Roman rule and Christian theological response.⁵ While Anderson’s studies are more literary-critical and rhetorical in focus than socio-political and ideological, his emphasis on the extent of John’s ‘basileic’ language would find further support and dialogical opportunities in Carter’s work.

Secondly, regarding *dialectic*: Anderson’s earlier work convinced me that dialectic was part of John’s structure, part of his Gospel, his Jesus and his Christology. He maintains in both books that John’s work contains ‘truth held in tension’ for its audience(s), or even a fully ‘dialectical approach to truth’ (1996: p. 136; 2006: p. 191). If (as I think Anderson correctly surmises) a dialectical character defines John and his theology, I would have liked to see this appear a little more explicitly and frequently earlier on, to see how it might affect discussions of historicity and Quest discussions as Anderson finishes his process of deconstruction. What further conclusions might a dialectic approach

5. See Warren Carter’s argument of Rome’s ‘claims of divine sovereignty, presence, agency, and societal well-being’, comprising ‘an imperial theology or ideology that legitimates Rome’s exercise of power’ in *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (JSNTSup, 204; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000; repr., Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), p. 40; repeated and expanded in *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001). The four claims above are those against which Matthew and other New Testament evangelists must make their ideological cases.

suggest here? Perhaps I am thinking too broadly, but I wonder if an approach might work here like the one Walter Brueggemann employs to evaluate *core* and *counter testimony* in the Old Testament, suggesting dialectic pairs (covenant/exile, hymn/lament, presence/theodicy, perhaps even presence/agency) as rubrics for further exploration.⁶ I bring this up because in choosing to ruminate not just on John's text but on his theology, Anderson may do well to bring in more of the dialectic approaches associated with biblical theology, and so address the implications of his own Johannine dialectics even more deeply in his future work. True, Part V begins to do precisely that. Though I understand that Anderson likely intends this volume to remain rooted in biblical studies (rather than wholeheartedly embracing an exclusively dialectical theology, usually more closely associated with systematic theology), I wish he would explain further the theological and historical *ramifications* of such statements as, 'Cognitive dialectic affects the very meaning of history itself' (p. 188). That said, what Anderson has done here is already a courageous undertaking, and I was glad to see him carry through his earlier approach to dialectic; I would have been still happier to see more in this early section.

Again, these are counterquestions and no more than that; having very much enjoyed what I first read in detail, I have since eagerly explored other parts of this book in depth. Anderson's concluding suggestions concerning the interdisciplinary and dialogical nature of dialectical hermeneutics, where tools from other fields are made more readily accessible while 'the life of the reader is drawn into the world of the text—calling back and forth from one reality to another' (p. 189), are considerations pivotal to my own emergent scholarship, and I await Anderson's continued advancement of this proposal for Jesus and Johannine studies with great anticipation.

6. Walter Brueggemann, 'Biblical Theology Appropriately Postmodern', in Alice Ogden Bellis and Joel S. Kaminsky (eds.), *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures* (SBL Symposium, 8; Atlanta: SBL, 2000), pp. 97-108 (101-103).

*Expanded Interfluentiality: A Review of Part III:
Paul Anderson's Theory of Gospel Inter-Relationships*

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In *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*, Paul Anderson has provided a fresh way of looking at the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Synoptic Gospels. As with all aspects of the book, this theory reflects careful scholarship that mixes both 'big picture' ideas and detailed analysis into a helpful blend of conclusions. In reviewing this theory, I will first summarize its key features and some of its foundational assumptions. Then my evaluation of the theory will focus on some of these assumptions, questioning these in certain respects, intensifying them in others. Given the constraints of this review and my own limitations as a Johannine non-expert, the resulting conclusions will themselves necessarily be general and tentative. Nevertheless, it is my hope that this review will provide a helpful contribution to the discussion of Anderson's valuable and stimulating book.

The Theory: 'Interfluential, Formative, and Dialectical'

Any good theory of literary relationships must account for all the specific phenomena one encounters in the writings under examination. This is where many theories of John–Synoptic relationships fall short, accounting for some phenomena (usually the differences) but not others (often the similarities). Thus, in addition to the well-known aporias of John (Anderson, pp. 32-33), Anderson is careful to note the full range of similarities and differences one encounters between John and the Synoptic Gospels. For example:

(1) There are at least 31 *distinctive accounts common to all four canonical Gospels*, essentially tracing a common narrative of Jesus' career from John the Baptist, through a Galilean ministry, to Jerusalem with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection appearances. However, these parallels are far from identical in wording and style (pp. 128-30).

(2) There are at least 40 *memorable sayings common to John and Mark*, though none are extensive or precise verbal parallels (pp. 130-33).

(3) There are at least 21 *points of similarity between John 6 and Mark 8* and 24 *points of similarity between John 6 and Mark 6*, but none of these are identical contacts (pp. 28-29, 104-105).

(4) At least three dozen times *Luke's rendering of events departs from Mark's and instead bears striking similarity to John's version*, though again the similarities are not identical (pp. 112-14).

(5) The '*Johannine thunderbolt*' found in the *Synoptic double tradition* material has clear parallels with distinctive Johannine themes and at least half a dozen specific passages in John, though again the similarities are not in extensive or precise verbal parallels (pp. 117-18).

Anderson proposes that the kind and degree of these similarities and differences between John and the Synoptics necessitates envisioning a process of bi-directional influences—an 'interfluentiality'—that could not be directly literary but must have occurred during the oral phases of the development of the Gospels. Anderson's theory thus essentially presents a four-stage process leading to the final forms of the canonical Gospels:⁷

(1) *A pre-Gospel stage*. The Johannine tradition developed as an independent stream in distinctive ways (e.g. distinctive passion narrative, signs stories, etc.). There was some interfluentiality between the pre-Markan and early Johannine streams, and the Johannine oral traditional material from this period eventually became a source for Luke-Acts and possibly Q.

(2) *An early Gospel stage*. The Gospel of Mark was written (c. 70 CE), and an early edition of the Gospel of John was written (c. 80-85 CE) at least in part to respond to Mark. This early edition of John was a narrative from the ministry of John the Baptist to Jesus' resurrection, distinguished by non-Markan 'signs' and dialogues and culminating in the conclusion of Jn 20.30-31.

(3) *A later Gospel stage*. The Gospels of Luke (c. 85 CE) and Matthew (c. 90 CE) were written, employing Mark, Q and other distinctive traditions. There was some interfluentiality between the Matthean and Johannine streams around the time of the writing of Matthew and between the two editions of John.

(4) *A final Gospel stage*. A final edition of the Gospel of John was written, incorporating the prologue of chapter 1, the material of chapters 6 and 15-17, the epilogue of chapter 21 and some other material (e.g. the 'beloved disciple' and eyewitness references).

One of the key distinguishing features of Anderson's theory is his characterization of the ways in which the Johannine stream of tradition

7. This four-stage schema is my own summary. For Anderson's summaries, see Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 126, 193-99.

interacted with each of the Synoptic streams, and distinctively so. He proposes that these Gospel inter-relationships followed discernible patterns from the perspective of the Gospel of John and the Johannine community:

(1) *John's relationship with Mark* was interfluent, augmentive and corrective: John influenced and was influenced by the Markan tradition, and the first edition of John was written both to augment and to correct Mark in its order and theological stance (pp. 104-112).

(2) *John's relationship with Q* is more speculative, but the early Johannine tradition may have influenced this Gospel source (pp. 117-19).

(3) *John's relationship with Luke* was formative, 'orderly' and theological: the early Johannine oral tradition influenced Luke in terms of content, and quite possibly in terms of order and theological outlook (pp. 112-17).

(4) Finally, *John's relationship with Matthew* was reinforcing, dialectical and corrective: the Johannine and Matthean streams mutually reinforced one another in their basic stances within their Jewish settings, while John was written in part to correct rising institutionalism reflected in the Matthean tradition (pp. 119-25).

Just as any good theory must account for the observable phenomena, so also any theory is only as good as its assumptions. Most of Anderson's assumptions are directly stated and defended in his work, while some are dependent upon the work of others, and some even remain unstated and implicit. While several of these assumptions could be mentioned, the following are worth considering in a review such as this, since each of them has been questioned to some extent by recent scholarship:

(1) The Gospels of Matthew and John reflect distinctive Christian sectors or versions of Christianity, with distinctive formative histories and historical concerns.

(2) The theory of Markan Priority certainly, and the Two-Source Theory most likely, is the best explanation of the literary inter-relationships among the Synoptic Gospels. Matthean and Lukan traditions are also acknowledged as independent sources, in support of Four-Source constructs.

(3) The 'standard' dates for the final forms of the canonical Gospels are correct: Mark finalized around 70 CE, Matthew and Luke between 70 and 100 CE and John around 100 CE.

(4) Extracanonical Gospels such as *Thomas* are largely dependent upon the canonical Gospels and are thus relatively insignificant for consideration of first-century inter-Gospel relationships.

Evaluating the Theory: Questioning and Intensifying Assumptions

Within the framework of these and other foundational assumptions, Anderson's theory of Gospel relationships works very well indeed. It explains the phenomena one encounters in the canonical Gospels in a coherent and compelling way, particularly the perplexing aporias of John and the strikingly similar yet frustratingly imprecise parallels between John and the Synoptics. Thus, Anderson's theory of interfluentiality deserves much careful reflection well beyond the scope of this review.

My own purpose in the rest of this review is to 'kick the tires' of the above assumptions, particularly the first two, to explore what such a theory of interfluentiality might look like if these assumptions were somewhat different than they are in Anderson's presentation. I agree to a fair extent with the last two of these assumptions, so I will only give a few brief comments at this point. Although I agree that the *Gospel of Thomas* postdates the canonical Gospels, I think it possible that some of the uniquely Thomasine sayings have roots back to the first century, roots that may have some points of contact with the Johannine tradition. I also think it worthwhile to explore the possibility that Johannine and proto-Thomasine communities had some degree of interaction, though perhaps not until after the finalization of the Gospel of John. As for the dates of the final forms of the canonical Gospels, although I agree as to the relative dates of the Gospels, I would push one or two of them slightly earlier. If Matthew in particular is earlier than Anderson's assumption, it could have some impact on his ideas regarding the relationship between the Johannine and Matthean streams of tradition.

Although these are fruitful areas to explore, I wish to engage in detail the first two assumptions noted above, beginning with the second: that the Two-Source Theory is perhaps the best explanation of the literary inter-relationships of the Synoptic Gospels. To be fair, Anderson is cautious in his reference to Q, and it is undoubtedly true that Q remains the dominant theory in the academy. Nevertheless, there seems to be a growing scepticism regarding Q, varying from a settled uneasiness with detailed hypothetical reconstructions of its text and community, to an

outright denial of its existence.⁸ My own scepticism regarding Q leads me to ask the following question: what if the Matthean–Lukan double tradition does not reflect a distinctive written source used independently by both Matthew and Luke, but rather is part of common oral traditional material incorporated into the Gospel of Matthew alongside Mark and subsequently taken over by Luke via Matthew?

It has long been recognized that the Synoptic double-tradition material is attested in the earliest Christian writings outside the Gospels. As early as the 50s CE, Paul refers to traditional teaching from the Matthean–Lukan mission discourse (1 Cor. 9.14), along with other distinctively Synoptic material (e.g. 1 Cor. 7.10-11; 11.23-25; 1 Thess. 4.16-17a). Other possibly pre-70 CE references to distinctively Synoptic or even specifically double-tradition material are found in Hebrews and James (e.g. Heb. 5.7; Jas 2.5; 5.1-3, 12), and the late first-century *Didache* and *1 Clement* contain similar material, much of it paralleled in the Synoptics as double-tradition material (e.g. *Did.* 8.3-10; 16.1-8; *1 Clem.* 13.1-3). Several of these references are even explicitly acknowledged in some way as traditional material believed to originate with Jesus of Nazareth (1 Cor. 7.10-11; 9.14; 11.23-25; Heb. 5.7-9; *Did.* 8.3-10; *1 Clem.* 13.1-3), virtually the only such early material explicitly described as Jesus tradition outside the Gospels. Thus, one could say that every explicit citation of Jesus tradition pre-dating or contemporaneous with the Gospels is ‘Synoptic-like’,⁹ at least half of it even specifically double-tradition material. Furthermore, this non-Gospel, Synoptic or double-tradition material is found in a wide variety of sources and settings, from Palestinian Jewish Christianity to Diaspora Jewish or Gentile Christianity, and from Jacobean to Pauline communities.

Q theorists have typically explained these phenomena as further evidence of Q’s existence, and even its widespread early use. However, in addition to better arguments against the existence of Q, if one wants to acknowledge such a widespread influence for Q, it becomes even

8. For a significant critique of Q which nevertheless maintains Markan priority, see Mark S. Goodacre, *The Case against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002); Mark S. Goodacre and Nicholas Perrin, eds., *Questioning Q: A Multidimensional Critique* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004).

9. Although it is an agraphon, the saying of Acts 20.35 is no exception in that it is a pithy aphorism in the character and style of the Synoptic tradition, known and used by one of the Synoptic Evangelists.

more difficult to explain the fact that we have no external attestation to such a prevalent and important document. It is also somewhat difficult to explain the fact that most of these references are paraphrases without precise verbal parallels in the Synoptics or a reconstructed Q. If one dispenses with Q, one possible explanation is that there was a widespread common fund of oral Jesus tradition that came to be expressed primarily in the Synoptics as triple and double tradition. This oral triple-tradition material is that which was incorporated into Mark and subsequently into Matthew and Luke, and this oral double-tradition material is that which was incorporated into Matthew's Gospel alongside Mark, and subsequently incorporated by Luke alongside Mark, with each stage tempered by continued interaction with this ongoing oral tradition.

So how might this suggestion affect Anderson's theory of John-Synoptic relationships? Before I answer this question, I must address the first assumption of Anderson's theory listed above: that the Gospels of Matthew and John reflect distinctive sectors or versions of Christianity in which and for which the Gospel was written. This assumption has come under fire recently, particularly through the work of Richard Bauckham.¹⁰ To be fair, Anderson's work reflects a relatively mild form of this assumption: Anderson does not propose a distinctive Matthean *community* but only a distinctive Matthean version of Christianity, he does see some significant interaction between these communities or groups, and his specific approach to multiple editions of John within the Johannine community is not unduly complex. Nevertheless, I wish to poke and prod this assumption a little, to see how it might stand up to some critical modification.

First, I must say that, at least with regard to the concept of a Johannine community, Anderson has the better of the argument against Bauckham. Various indications within the Gospel, particularly the well-known aporias, point to some sort of theory of multiple written editions. Other factors point to this editing taking place within a distinctive community over some period of time. The 'he' and 'we' of Jn 21.24, in spite of Bauckham's recent arguments for a "we" of authoritative

10. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

testimony',¹¹ still seem to me to make the best sense as a distinction between the beloved disciple as the 'he' who witnessed and authored, and a community as the 'we' who subsequently witnessed and wrote. Furthermore, the prior reference to the rumours surrounding the beloved disciple's death vis-à-vis Christ's return (Jn 21.21-23) seem most likely to reflect concerns immediately following the beloved disciple's death. Other external factors point to a Johannine community with a hand in the Gospel's formation, including the stylistically and thematically similar Johannine epistles (two from 'the elder') with their clear community focus and distinctive concerns, along with later patristic tradition that acknowledged Johannine influence and disciples in Asia Minor (e.g. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.22.5). Taken together, these and other factors point to an early Johannine community that remained noticeably distinct in its patterns of practice and expression even as it interacted with other Christian groups.

However, there are two factors, both aspects of Anderson's own theory, which combine to suggest that the degree of personal interaction among these early Christian communities was perhaps even greater than that suggested by Anderson. The first factor is the degree of interfluentiality proposed by Anderson. I think he is correct in his assessment that the kind and degree of similarities and differences between John and the Synoptics necessitate a significant, ongoing process of bi-directional influences at the level of orality, whether that is first-level orality (oral communication deriving from personal experience or an oral source) or second-level orality (oral communication deriving from a written source). I would push this even further to say that the kind and degree of similarities and differences *among all the canonical Gospels* necessitates a significant, ongoing process of *multi-directional influences* at the level of orality. If this is so, it makes a second observation of Anderson's all the more significant: that when we speak of traditions, particularly oral traditions, we are necessarily speaking of *people*: tradents and transmitters of tradition.¹²

When these observations are combined, they suggest that the kind and degree of interfluentiality described by Anderson necessitates a corresponding kind and degree of personal interaction among the various early Christian communities. The logical conclusion is that there was a considerable degree of personal interaction—a 'personal

11. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, pp. 369-83.

12. E.g. Anderson, *Fourth Gospel*, p. 106.

interfluentiality’, if you will—among the earliest Christians across whatever distinctive communities may have been present. And here is where Bauckham can contribute more positively to the discussion, for he has rightly highlighted the intentional and extensive social networking of the early Christians across geographical and ‘denominational’ boundaries.¹³

In light of this proposed high degree of personal interfluentiality among the earliest Christians, my previous suggestion finds a sharper focus, that there was a widespread *common fund of oral Jesus tradition* that came to be expressed primarily in the Synoptics as triple and double tradition. This intentional and extensive social networking among early Christians, both tradents and transmitters of tradition, across geographical and community boundaries was inevitably reflected in the wide distribution of a common fund of oral Jesus tradition, a fund that was Synoptic-like or even somewhat double traditional in terms of form and content. As each of the Gospels was written, and particularly Mark as the earliest and most influential, a second-level orality came into play as the written Gospel reinforced and informed the widespread common fund of oral Jesus tradition.

How might these modified assumptions and my tentative suggestions affect Anderson’s theory of John–Synoptic relationships? In general terms, these modifications could muddy the waters somewhat in terms of the precise nature of the early Christian communities and distinctive streams of tradition. Anderson’s Johannine community remains intact, along with its interfluential engagement with other Christian communities and traditions. However, the internal and external evidence for an autonomous Matthean community is much less compelling than for a Johannine community, most of the evidence being of the notoriously difficult ‘mirror-reading’ variety. If there were no such autonomous Matthean community, then perhaps the Johannine engagement with the Matthean tradition is not the interaction of two communities or even sectors of Christianity, but rather simply the reaction of the Johannine community to some known interpretations of the common Jesus tradition that were ‘in the air’, interpretations that made their way into Matthew’s Gospel.

13. Richard Bauckham, ‘For Whom Were the Gospels Written?’ in *The Gospels for All Christians*, pp. 30-44. See also the chapter in the same volume by Michael B. Thompson, ‘The Holy Internet: Communication between Churches in the First Christian Generation’, pp. 49-70.

Indeed, this could be the case to a great extent across the other lines of interfluentiality Anderson describes. What Anderson describes as distinctive bi-directional interactions with distinctive Markan, Q, Lukan and Matthean streams of tradition, could simply be the Johannine community's use and interpretation of, and contribution and reaction to, the common fund of oral Jesus tradition in the variegated (but not necessarily community-distinctive) forms and interpretations in which it was found at the end of the first century CE, whether accessed through first- or second-level orality. This suggestion would necessitate a re-working of Anderson's patterns of interfluentiality noted above, along something like the following lines:

(1) With the widespread Jesus traditions or interpretations that cohered generally with the Johannine outlook, the Johannine engagement was interfluential, reinforcing and augmentive. The Johannine community influenced and was influenced by this common fund of oral Jesus tradition and its most common interpretations, and the first edition of John was written in part to reinforce and augment this widespread form and interpretation of Jesus tradition. This finds expression in the common narrative thread running through all the canonical Gospels, and in the commonalities in teaching material among them.

(2) With particular Jesus traditions or interpretations that cohered partially with the Johannine outlook, the Johannine engagement was dialectical and corrective. The Johannine community responded to these particular Jesus traditions or interpretations in dialectical fashion, and both editions of John were written in part to correct these particular forms and interpretations of Jesus tradition. This finds expression particularly in differences of order and theological stance between John and each of the Synoptics.

In more specific terms, one could still note more particular connections such as that between Luke and John, with Luke informed at a second-level orality by a first edition of John's Gospel (is this one of the 'many' Luke mentions at the beginning of his Gospel?). Other particular connections between Gospels by second-level orality may be possible. However, such distinctive connections would be set within a much broader framework that defies any attempt at a complex, comprehensive theory of Gospel relationships.

Conclusion: Expanded Interfluentiality

Paul Anderson's theory of the relationship between John and the Synoptics is a valuable and stimulating contribution to the discussion of this perplexing issue. In my evaluation I have probed two assumptions that underlie Anderson's theory, assumptions that, when modified, have some important implications for the theory as it stands. In a way these modifications expand Anderson's own concept of interfluentiality toward the idea of a widespread common fund of oral Jesus tradition and interpretation that intersected with each Gospel's prehistory even as each tradent or community had some distinctive traditions and interpretations. However, one should not consider this a complete denial of Anderson's theory. I would continue to affirm the core concept behind his theory: that of a distinctive Johannine community engaging in variegated ways with the earliest Jesus traditions and their interpretations, an engagement that spanned an extended period of time and produced an initial and a final edition of John's Gospel.

*A Paradigm Shift for How Jesus Scholars Work? A Review of Part IV,
'Jesus in Bi-Optic Perspective—A Nuanced Appraisal'*

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Paul Anderson's *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus* is, in my opinion, one of those monographs that advocate a shift of perspective in scholarship. It is concerned with the assumptions that guide 'how scholars work'. In the *Introduction*, Anderson refers to Thomas Kuhn and the idea of paradigm shifts in scholarship (p. 4). Anderson's book proposes a paradigm shift in reference to the placement or consideration of the Gospel of John within New Testament scholarship, specifically Christian origins and historical Jesus research. Through a re-evaluation of the previous scholarly views of the Gospel of John, a description of the shared material between John and the Synoptic sources, and the proposal of an 'on-going dialogue' between the Johannine and Synoptic communities that explains the confluences and divergences in the Gospel narratives, Anderson re-categorizes the Gospel of John and repositions it alongside the Synoptics as a potential source for the reconstruction of the historical Jesus.

Anderson's issue with the previous categorization of the Gospel of John is expressed in various ways, such as the classification of John as the *pneumatic* Gospel in contrast to the *somatic* Synoptics, and the problem of the de-historicization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus. His shift in the categorization of John is not merely a concern over nomenclature, however; it aims to change 'how scholars work'. As Jonathan Z. Smith indicated in *Drudgery Divine*, categories in the field of religious studies take the place of theories or hypotheses in the natural sciences.¹⁴ A shift in categories implies the presentation of a new theory or hypothesis; therefore, shifting the categorization of the Gospel of John presents a new theory or hypothesis about Christian origins. Specifically, Anderson's new theory includes the Gospel of John within a milieu of interfluent relations, or an environment of confluences and divergences of traditions that operated synchronically and diachronically in the formation of the various Gospels. This milieu of confluences and divergences has two major implications for New Testament scholarship: (1) an awareness that only with detailed critical analysis may scholars select elements from the gospel material as potential sources for reconstruction of the historical Jesus, and (2) the Gospel texts were responses not only to the specific contexts of specific communities; they were part of a very fluid tradition in which various texts were composed in response to texts of other communities.

The first chapters of Anderson's book review the history of the classification of John, challenge the previous classification of John, and propose an alternative understanding of the influences between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John. Part IV, 'Jesus in Bi-Optic Perspective—Contributions to the Jesus Quest from the Synoptic and Johannine Sources', has three objectives: (1) it outlines the multiple attestations between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics and the inferences of multiple attestations for the reconstruction of the ministry of the historical Jesus; (2) it provides a brief discussion of the Synoptic contribution to the quest of the historical Jesus; and (3) it examines the contribution of the Gospel of John to the historical Jesus Quest. In this review, I shall briefly discuss these three objectives in terms of their contribution to the book as a whole, that is, the paradigm shift, and I shall contextualize the objectives in terms of developing trends or

14. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianity and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1990).

issues within contemporary scholarship. In other words, I shall be examining Part IV in terms of its contribution to the assumptions that guide ‘how scholars work’.

The multiple attestations between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John serve to demonstrate that ‘John is more like the Synoptics than Hebrew Scripture, Gnostic, and contemporary religious mythic parallels, including other ancient literature such as the Hermetic corpus and stories of such figures as Apollonius of Tyana’ (p. 128). The references, in this quote, to literature associated with Gnosticism, Hermetic sects and Hellenistic *theioi Andres*, such as Apollonius of Tyana, indicate the significance of the shift Anderson is proposing. As Anderson discusses earlier in his book, Rudolf Bultmann’s work has dominated studies on the Gospel of John; it is largely due to Bultmann’s synthesis that the Gospel of John was categorized in terms of a Gnostic redeemer-myth. This classification of the Gospel of John associated the text with Gnostic, Hermetic and Hellenistic mythic literature. The implications of this classification are elucidated if this discussion is placed within Smith’s critique of New Testament scholarship. In *Drudgery Divine*, Smith reveals how New Testament scholarship maintained an anti-paganism bias that was part of a strategy evoked to protect the uniqueness of Christianity from its Greco-Roman background. Obviously, if the Gospel of John is categorized as a Gnostic redeemer-myth that draws upon developments from the Greco-Roman culture, it is marginalized in the discussions of New Testament scholarship. In other words, Anderson’s discussion about the classification of John provides another example in support of Smith’s contention that New Testament scholarship has functioned with a bias designed to preserve the unique claims of a Protestant version of Pauline Christianity. The Gospel of John is a ‘victim’ of this previous pattern of scholarship. This miscategorization of the Gospel of John, and, consequentially, the inappropriate exclusion of the Gospel from historical consideration, are clearly evident in the first section of Part IV.

The focus of the first section of Part IV on the issue of multiple attestations relates John to the body of literature that is traditionally accepted as part of the appropriate database for Christian origins and historical Jesus scholarship. Anderson’s detailed tables do affirm several points of correspondence between John’s Gospel and the ‘Synoptic’ material (pp. 131-32; 134-35). There is a body of shared material that is ‘Synoptic’ in terms of style, content and nearly verbatim

phrasing that occurs in different spheres of tradition including the Gospels of John, Thomas and Q. As Anderson notes several times, the different image of Christ created by John is a result of a specific Johannine tradition; however, this Johannine tradition had access to, or was familiar with, 'Synoptic' material. Most of this 'Synoptic' or 'Synoptic-like' material is associated with accounts of John the Baptist, the Passion narrative and some sayings material (Jn 2.19 = Mk. 14.58; Jn 3.3 = Mt. 18.3; Jn 4.4 = Mk. 6.4; Jn 13.20 = Lk. 10.16; Jn 13.16 and 15.20 = Mt. 10.24; Jn 15.7b = Mk. 11.24; Jn 16.23 = Mk. 14.27; Jn 18.11 = Mk. 14.36; Jn 20.23 = Mt. 18.18), along with some narrative correspondences (i.e. calling disciples, etc.). There is sufficient evidence to advocate a reclassification of the Gospel of John, and therefore, drawing again from Smith's observation about the function of categories in religious studies, there is sufficient justification to propose a new theory for Christian origins that emphasizes the existence of various overlapping streams of traditions. Furthermore these streams of traditions not only exhibit signs of influences, as with the Synoptic Gospels; there are points of confluence and divergence. This new theory repositions the Gospel of John as part of the dynamic of formative Christianity, and as a potential source for historical Jesus research. In other words, Anderson has established the Gospel of John within the database for the reconstruction of the historical Jesus and early Jesus/Christian communities, rather than the Gospel's previous categorization as being only a later text. This, in my opinion, is the strength of the book.

Both on the basis of multiple attestations and of the discussions about the Gospel of John as a historical source, it becomes very evident that the Gospel of John is an important source for the historical Jesus in reference to:

(1) The interaction and relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus, and the disciples of John and Jesus (Jn 1.35-36).

(2) The association of Peter, Andrew and Philip with Bethsaida (Jn 1.44).

(3) The political expectations connected with Jesus' ministry, and the political motives that resulted in his execution (Jn 6.15; 11.47-53; 19.12).

(4) The depiction of the trial process in which Jesus is first presented to the Sanhedrin before to Pilate (Jn 18.19-20).

(5) Other chronological issues in the passion, such as Jesus' death before Passover (Jn 18.28; 19.31).

And there are other points of consideration. In other words, on a theoretical level and in terms of 'how scholars work', various elements of the Gospel of John must be part of the database. While elements of the Gospel of John should be evaluated and possibly included as part of the reconstruction of the historical Jesus, Anderson does not advocate the prioritization of the Johannine material over the Synoptic texts. The synoptic material remains the major sources for the historical Jesus; however, Anderson has shown the need to include for consideration elements from the Gospel of John.

The detailed exploration into the significance of the Gospel of John in terms of the dynamic of formative Christianity and as a potential source for historical Jesus research justifies revisions to 'how scholars work'. Therefore, most of the book focuses on establishing or justifying a shift in categories. The establishment and justification of categories continues with a discussion on the inferences of multiple attestations. This section illustrates the points of convergence or confluence between all four canonical gospel traditions and the implications of these points of confluence for eight major features of Jesus' ministry.

Following this discussion on the shift of categories, Anderson presents two further examinations, on the 'Synoptic Contributions to the Quest for the Jesus of History' (pp. 145-54) and the Johannine contributions (pp. 154-73). The purpose of these examinations is to illustrate the distinctive Synoptic and Johannine presentations of the ministry of the historical Jesus, and to demonstrate that these distinctive contributions cannot be simply resolved by establishing a 'history' based on the multiple attestations of all four gospel traditions. The Synoptic and Johannine traditions supply unique data in terms of 'the quest for historicity regarding the ministry of Jesus and the developing memory of those events' (p. 172). The scholarly approach to the Gospel of John should proceed in a similar-yet-different fashion to the current approaches employed with the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. Because the Gospel of John, unlike the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, which built *upon* Mark, is a narrative composed

around Mark, some of John's distinctive presentations can be seen to have intentionally been aimed at filling out the picture (early material and southern material), and also at setting the record straight here and there. Matthew and Luke do something similar, but the fact of John's

dialogical autonomy provided a greater resource of independent tradition as well as a more autonomous and individuated perspective from the earliest stages of traditional development to the last (p. 172).

These brief analyses do present a justification for a more thorough examination of the Gospel of John in terms of its contribution to the quest for the historical Jesus.

These examinations, like the remainder of the book, validate a shift in categories and 'how scholars work'. Therefore, a shift in theory has been proposed, and this theory now requires a full exploration, in which the contribution of the Johannine tradition to Christian origins and the *interfluentiality* between the gospel traditions is examined in more detail. This would be my suggestion to the author. The current volume presents an argument for a shift in nomenclature or theory; however, it does not fully present or explore this theory. Another monograph is required for a more complete rendering of Anderson's proposal.

As noted, I have accepted that this monograph is about 'how scholars work'. Returning to this, let me discuss some of what I think to be the consequences of Anderson's reclassification of the Gospel of John.

First, we are reminded as scholars that the reconsideration of the historical figure of Jesus involves the initial establishment of historical data that must be excavated from narratives that are the products of influences, confluences and divergences within a fluidity of earlier traditions, and are the results of centuries of transmission, re-workings, reinterpretations and copying. Therefore, one of the initial tasks is the separation of the 'historical chronicle' from the narrative of interpretation. As Hayden White has demonstrated in reference to the discipline of history, historians must first assemble data such as dates, names, places and events.¹⁵ This is the 'historical chronicle'; it is a listing according to date with no indication of causality or explanation. This data is 'almost' meaningless until it is placed into an interpretative framework that in most historical studies takes the form of a narrative. Therefore, in historical Jesus research, we encounter the issue that our data is already 'locked' inside various interpretative narratives. Further, these narratives have a different sensitivity from our modern quest for history. So the first task is the reconstruction of the 'historical chronicle'. Within this first task, no narrative section of any Gospel should be

15. Hayden V. White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

accepted uncritically, and no narrative should be given preference over another without full examination and justification. Anderson captures some of White's ideas in Part V: 'Modern Foundations Reconsidered—Implications for the Critical Investigation of John, Jesus, and History'. Anderson notes: 'All historiography is subjective, in that humans are centrally involved in the making of meaning from first impressions to the last ones. Therefore, recency and primary effects must be considered as factors of historical memory and its development' (p. 184). So elements of the Gospel of John and non-canonical material should be evaluated critically for their 'data' contributions to the historical Jesus.

Secondly, as historians, having excavated the narratives, we then place the data of this 'historical chronicle' into our own constructed narrative, which is based on specific assumptions about the society of first-century Palestine, the evolution of the Jesus movement, Second Temple Judaism, etc. Thus, our interpretative narratives will change as our information about this period changes, and our scholarly assumptions and categories shift. Anderson notes some of these shifts in Part V in his discussion about the recent reappraisal and view of the supernatural in the Gospel, which has moved from a strict interpretation of scientific law to a more social-sciences interpretation of miracles and healings (pp. 177-79).

In reference to our understanding of first-century Palestine, one of the issues raised by Anderson's book is our comprehension of how the early Jesus movement/Christian communities thought about the traditions associated with the historical life of Jesus. One of Anderson's key ideas is that John 'wrote around' Mark (p. 172). John's community responded to Mark's presentation of Jesus and the implications of Mark's version of Jesus for social identity and ethos. Anderson is envisioning a more dynamic exchange between the texts and the various communities that included more than a diachronic pattern of borrowing; the exchange involved both a synchronic and diachronic conversation that included a range of responses from borrowing to interfluentiality to convergence to divergence.

Anderson's suggestion that sections of the Gospel of John function as responses to or engagements with the Gospel of Mark presents an early history that features more confluence and divergence between the communities. There is more engagement than once was theorized. The previous depictions of limited contact that tended to present the gospel traditions as separate streams in which only the Synoptics demonstrated

any influence on one another is now replaced with a more complex map. With this shift, Anderson's chart of the five traditions (Early Matthean, Q, Pre-Markan, Early Lukan, Early Johannine) on page 126 may not be 'messy' enough. The arrows indicate a specific level of interaction between the traditions and their respective communities that may not quite capture the full sense of interplay and dynamics that would be part of a process in which diverse communities are struggling, debating and conversing over the formulation and authorization of various traditions as part of their work towards self-identity—a formulation and authorization that is both synchronic and diachronic. For example, what happens if the *Egerton Gospel* is included in this discussion of early traditions? Here is a Gospel that does contain both Johannine material (the dispute between Jesus and the experts on the law and leaders of the people about a transgression of the law), and Synoptic material (healing of the leper and a question about taxes). If scholarship has been biased by the Synoptic-versus-Johannine dichotomy, it still remains fixed in a canonical versus non-canonical set of assumptions.

In summation, Anderson's book, through a re-examination of the scholarly assumptions about the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics, actually begins a dialogue on our conceptions about the connection between communities and the Jesus traditions. What were the conceptual frameworks used in the selection, preservation and transmission of material? How much exchange and conversation existed between the communities? Do the ideas of multidirectional rather than unidirectional influence or confluences assist in understanding the relationships between the texts? In other words, Anderson's recategorization of the Gospel of John is also a challenge to 'how scholars work'. He presents a new vision of a more dynamic exchange between all the diverse communities represented by the varying texts.

Honest to John! A Response to Reviews of The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus

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It is with great appreciation to the reviewers that I respond to their thoughtful engagements of my book on the Gospel of John and the

Jesus of history. As they all acknowledge, the disjunction of these two subjects has been the prevalent modern paradigm for conducting both Johannine and Jesus studies in recent decades, but such a move has its own sets of new critical problems. While this book calls attention to those new problems, it also seeks to find solutions to the original issues that modern critical theories have tried to address. In doing so, it seeks to build on the most plausible of literary and tradition-development theories, even if new approaches and syntheses are required. In taking seriously the character and claims of the Johannine tradition, however, this approach attempts to be *honest to John*. On that score, critical and traditional approaches alike have too often fallen dismally short.

Jeff Staley has done an excellent job of describing the overall thrust of the book. He rightly notes the importance of the literary theories the book advances, including their implications for a plausible view of the development of the Johannine tradition. His introduction also points helpfully to the connections between the historical subject of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus and the unfolding history of the Johannine situation. As one who has appreciated Staley's literary-rhetorical analyses of John over the last two decades or more, I hope to benefit from the best of reader-response and new literary-critical approaches to John while not assuming that fictive literary function implies a fictional character and origin of the narrative. In that sense, historical narrative functions in many ways *similar* to fictive narrative. And, one literary characteristic claimed by the Johannine narrator is that at least some of the origin of John's tradition is rooted in first-hand encounter with the ministry of Jesus.

While it is impossible to prove that any or all of John's material goes back to an independent Jesus tradition, just as it is impossible to prove that none of it does, the overlooked reference to the apostle John's making a statement with an undeniably Johannine ring to it in Acts 4.20 (cf. 1 Jn 1.3) makes this a critically plausible consideration. 'We cannot help but testify to what we have seen and heard!' could not have been crafted as a more characteristically Johannine utterance, and while it may be misguided or wrong, it was written by Luke *a full century before* Irenaeus. Since the writing of the book, I have found another three dozen ways in which Luke departs from Mark and sides with John, doubling the evidence for Luke's dependence on the Johannine tradition in its oral stages, as argued in Part III. The point is that the

Johannine claim to forwarding an autonomous witness to the ministry of Jesus is also corroborated by a parallel tradition, perhaps even alluded to in Lk. 1.2, regarding indebtedness to ‘eyewitnesses and servants of the Logos’. Given also the fact that neither Bultmann’s source-critical hypothesis nor Markan-dependence theories stand up to critical scrutiny (see *Christology*, 1-136), alternative theories of John’s origin and development are required.

This is where John’s ‘dialogical autonomy’ poses a suitable way forward. While John’s tradition is not dependent on Mark or alien sources (and in that sense is *autonomous*), neither does it exhibit a disengaged or isolated form of independence. Rather, it reflects several levels and types of ‘dialogue’: a presentation of the divine–human dialogue wherein the ‘Word’ of God is sent to humanity inviting a response to the divine initiative; there is an earlier-later form of dialectic within the Johannine tradition itself, wherein earlier understandings are countered with emerging ones; dialogical interactions with parallel traditions (especially Mark) seem apparent; the dialectical Johannine situation is addressed by the narrator, as later hearers and readers are engaged in an imaginary dialogue with Jesus by means of the Johannine narrative; and the evangelist himself works dialectically with his theological content—and his historiographic work—producing a narrative contributing to dialectical theological and historical perspectives. While the Johannine Prologue leads off with a confession: ‘In the beginning was the Word’, an adequate appraisal of the Johannine tradition’s origin and development leads to a conclusion: ‘In the beginning was...the *dialogue*’.

Staley’s introduction sets the stage well for the following reviews.

Matthew Lowe’s engagement with Part II of the book covers the material well, and with notable insight and refreshing wit. I appreciate Lowe’s willingness to step in at the last moment, and I am all the more impressed that he took the time to read my first book also, as it lays the groundwork for the present volume. Indeed, the counterquestions predicted by Moody Smith have followed both books, and it is a pleasure to respond to the new ones raised by Lowe. First, though, I appreciate his exceptionally clear description of each of the twelve planks within the two platforms. Especially his comment on the third plank of Platform B is notable; indeed, ten categories elucidating hundreds of non-symbolic, illustrative details suggest particular aspects of historicity in

the Fourth Gospel, and despite its lateness, these features must still be dealt with if one is to place John off limits for historicity and Jesus studies. I also like Lowe's playful engagement with the plank-platform metaphors, although I don't intend to extend them into a full-blown allegory. Nonetheless, if 'foundations' were considered, they would involve the disciplinary tools we bring to the enterprise; 'constructions' upon the platforms would involve our impressions of the Fourth Gospel and the Jesus of history. The goal of Part II is a bit more modest than that: simply to test the soundness of the inferences made by modern critical scholars about John's ahistoricity and its implications, which have come to function in ways mythic as well as scholarly. What I mean here by the word 'mythic' is that these two modernistic platforms replace one set of mythic inferences with another. As features of modern myth, they (1) disambiguate the complex set of issues related to Johannine, Johannine-Synoptic and Jesus studies, oversimplifying the facts, (2) pose an alternative explanation to traditional views claiming the authoritative mantles of 'critical' and 'scientific' as bases for their authority and (3) imbue the results with transcendental associations, attributing religious meaning to a monological impression of Jesus and a marginalizing domestication of the enigmatic Johannine witness. Their legendary perpetuation, then, continues among modern scholars, who pass on 'what they have heard from the beginning', as the 'assured results of biblical critical scholarship' despite their critical weaknesses. As critical claims also require critical assessments if they are to endure the test of time, this book endeavors to inspect the materials used for further constructs, at least acknowledging strengths and weaknesses, hoping to amend what is lacking and to strengthen that which remains (Rev. 3.2).¹⁶

In addition to his noting the dialogical character of John's narrative and its implications for systematic theology, Lowe's counterquestions

16. This chapter was first presented in 2003 at the John, Jesus, and History Consultation under the title, 'Why this Study is Needed, and Why it is Needed Now', and it is now published in Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just and Tom Thatcher (eds.), *John, Jesus, and History*. I. *Critical Assessments of Critical Views* (Symposium Series, 44; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2007), pp. 13-70. The John, Jesus, and History Project is scheduled to go from 2002-2010 at the national SBL meetings, involving three triennia covering (1) literature reviews and introductory matters, (2) aspects of historicity in John and (3) Johannine contributions to Jesus research. Attendance at the sessions has ranged from 100 to 300, suggesting the interest in the project.

are well worth engaging. The first, regarding John's *context*, raises the question as to what it might have meant for Johannine Christians to have been confronted with expectations of emperor laud in the Greco-Roman world. His steering the reader toward Warren Carter's work is well taken, and although I have not built upon it in the present work, I intend to engage it in further works as I develop a more extended theory of the Johannine situation.¹⁷ Here, J. Louis Martyn's two levels of history apply to the Roman backdrop just as easily as they apply to the Jewish backdrop. While things did indeed get difficult for Christians and Jews under the reign of Domitian, that was not the first epoch of strident relations with the Roman occupiers. I would like to see a historical investigation of what things were like in Palestine under Tiberius, connected specifically with the Johannine presentation of the Roman presence in Jerusalem. I also wonder *how* Roman officials in the Tiberian era might have responded to messianic pretenders; Pilate certainly was removed from his position based upon the violent way he responded to the threat of 'the Samaritan' and his followers on Mount Gerizim in 36 CE, and Josephus indeed describes harsh treatment of Palestinians by Roman armies during the Jewish wars. As the Johannine leadership moved to one of the mission churches (no site fits the evidence better than the traditional memory of Ephesus—including Alexandria), emperor laud would have taken a number of forms. From lesser to greater degrees of explicitness in Asia Minor and elsewhere within the Empire, (1) subjects would have been expected to show respect for the occupying Roman forces by showing up for civic festivals; (2) subjects would have been expected to honor the emperor during imperial visits and in festivals (sometimes lasting for days) honoring his birthday and other Roman celebrations by their participation; (3) subjects would have been expected to offer sacrifices to the Emperor (ranging from incense to a bull) as signs of public veneration and support; (4) subjects would have been expected to make declarations of Caesar's lordship, and if questioned as subversives, to deny their allegiance to Christ and his followers. While Roman officials might have pressed the latter two

17. See also Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006); and Warren Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006). In addition, the appendix in Carter's newest book, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2008) features early Johannine christological developments under Caligula (pp. 343-84).

if someone seemed questionable, fellow citizens would have pressed Christians on the former two. After all, if diminishing support for Rome might have threatened *neokoros* status ('temple-keeper' privileges resulting in major civic gifts from Rome) for Ephesus in its competition with Smyrna and Pergamum for Roman favors, this would have raised concern among local merchants and civic officials, not just the occupying forces. While Jews in Ephesus had enjoyed dispensation for over two centuries to practice their own religious observances legally (hence also being excused from pagan religious rites and celebrations), it was the growth of the Jesus movement among the Gentile residents that was especially threatening to local leaders. Therefore, contextual pressures would have come from several directions, not just one.

Here I find Lowe's introduction of the agency motif an incisive suggestion, causing me to think about the connections between Jewish and Roman agency schemas. In addition to references to Jewish authority in a Palestinian context and an Asia Minor context, the agency motif may have been used in more than one direction. Just as Thomas's declaration of Jesus as 'My Lord and my God!' would have borne associative challenges to emperor worship under Domitian (81–96 CE; Domitian even required his associates to refer to him as 'lord and god'), so the basileic authority of Jesus' reign is presented as a contrast to Pilate's. Agency here roots in authenticity, and truth alone is liberating.

I also appreciate Lowe's questions about dialectical historiography in the light of the dialectical theologizing of the Evangelist. Indeed, the failure to interpret John's theological themes—replete with their inherent tensions—dialectically is to fail to appreciate the character of the material being considered. The same applies to John's historiography, yet modern historians have failed to apply such methodologies to the critical analysis of the origin and development of Gospel traditions. This book begins such an investigation (suggesting such in Part V), but further work is yet to be done. I like Lowe's bringing in Brueggemann's work as a model for Johannine–Synoptic dialogical relations; the idea that the Johannine Evangelist engaged other traditions dialectically *because* of having an alternative historical perspective seems more realistic to me than assuming that all purveyors of gospel traditions agreed on all points, both major and minor. My point is that this is exactly what 'historical' contributions do. They affirm some aspects of parallel renderings, while introducing alternative perspectives and distinctive interpretations. Especially important is cognitive-critical work on the

formation and development of memory as related to historiography, replete with its adaptive and rhetorical features. I am grateful to Matt for raising these points, and I hope to draw them into my future work.

Michael Pahl in his analysis of Part III likewise does a fine job of describing the territory covered by this chapter. As a student of Mark Goodacre's, he is well aware of the plethora of issues surrounding Gospel-relations studies, and he picks up well on the particular aspects comprising my new synthesis regarding John's relations to particular traditions. Pahl summarizes clearly three sets of data that he has effectively garnered from different parts of the book: the literary similarities and differences between John and the Synoptics, the basic structure of my two-edition theory of composition, and the main elements of John's distinctive relations with each of the four (including Q) Synoptic traditions. Impressively, Pahl goes beyond summarizing the book's arguments; he has also synthesized them in the light of their implications for Gospel tradition-development studies, raising questions about the larger issues regarding consonant and dissonant engagements between the Johannine tradition and alternative ones. Speaking of scholarly foundations, in 'kicking the tires', Pahl not only engages my theory of Johannine-Synoptic relations, he also questions the Synoptic Hypothesis foundations far more extensively than I do.

At this point, allow me to clarify which modern foundations I *do* believe are solid and worthy of building upon. In order of descending plausibility, the evidence seems strongest for: (1) Markan priority, as shorter, rougher texts seem to be followed by longer, more refined ones; (2) Matthean incorporation of nearly all of Mark, probably having had access to Mark in written form, to which Matthean material was added; (3) Lukan incorporation of most of Mark, while adding material from various sources—not necessarily a unified, early Lukan source; and (4) Matthean and Lukan uses of common tradition, arguably involving something like a Q source, although this may have involved more than one source, and the 'minor agreements' between Matthew and Luke call for further considerations. Of course, written finalizations of the three Synoptic Gospels to which we have access were built upon oral traditions and developing written ones, and at this point I have not chosen to make specific references to those variegated stages and forms of Synoptic traditions. Neither have I sought to engage the Jesus-sayings material clearly found in the letters of Paul, Peter and James, or even in

the *Didache* and the *Gospel of Thomas*. Some of this Jesus tradition antedated even Mark, but I have not included it in my Johannine–Synoptic relations theory because of its non-narrative form and uncertain relation to gospel traditions. Pahl’s exhortation to extend the analysis to ‘a common fund of oral Jesus traditions’ is thus worth considering, and it lifts the investigation beyond narrative literary analyses alone.

The first of Pahl’s two questions pushes for a consideration of the Johannine tradition’s dialectical engagement with other traditions if something more fluid than the Two- or Four-Source Hypotheses might have been the case. What if the Matthean tradition were earlier than assumed, and what if a ‘common oral fund’ of Jesus-sayings material accounts better for the distinctively Matthean and Lukan contacts than an inferred Q source? Certainly the minor agreements between Matthew and Luke (often a one-word or a two-word departure from a passage otherwise included in Mark, found distinctively in Matthew and Luke) call for an alternative explanation to a Q document that was devoid of Markan material. Might Q have also included parts of Mark? How do we know it did not? While I do think the case can be made for something like Q, the Goulder and Goodacre hypothesis that Luke may have been familiar with an earlier form of Matthew might account for some of these features better than the Q hypothesis, although these two theories are not mutually exclusive. If the ‘bolt out of the Johannine blue’ were a feature of Luke’s borrowing a theme from Matthew—a theme sounding *very* Johannine—my guess would be similar to my inference regarding Q: the early Matthean tradition may have borrowed from the early Johannine tradition. Of course, such a theme regarding the Father’s relation to the Son could have gone back to Jesus, and if that *were* the case, it would simply point to John’s historicity. On the idea of a ‘widespread common fund of oral Jesus tradition’, an expanded approach to interfluentiality would indeed be well advised. It would account for Johannine contacts with not only the pre-Markan and hypothetical Q traditions, but would also extend to those underlying the Pauline and Thomasine writings as well. It could be that the Johannine Evangelist and final editor might not have always known the source of a Jesus-tradition idea or motif that they were engaging dialectically. On Luke’s employment of the Johannine oral tradition, however, his borrowing seems knowing and intentional.

Pahl's second question challenges the supposition that Gospel traditions were written for particular communities, reflecting individuated versions of Christianity. While I agree with some of Bauckham's thesis that Gospels were written for more general audiences than for local communities only, I would put it this way: John and Matthew were not written *for* particular communities or sectors of Christianity, as much as *from* them. Mark and Luke appear to have been more generalized from the start. At this point I agree with Pahl, that there is more evidence to support community-related theories for John because of the clearly community-oriented thrust of the Johannine Epistles. That is why I refer to Matthew's situation as a Jewish-Christian 'sector' of early Christianity rather than a single community, proper. Ignatius, however, clearly sought to export a Matthean monepiscopal approach to local leadership among the churches of Asia Minor, and it was likely an early form of this development that the author of 3 John, as the final compiler of the Gospel, was addressing.

Beyond these qualifications, I want to affirm Pahl's picking up on the personal character of Gospel traditions. Indeed we are speaking of *people*, who are the effectual 'tradents and transmitters of tradition', and considering how to investigate critically 'a personal interfluentiality' may pose an important step forward. As I developed in chapter 7 of *Christology*, one of the key reasons for the differences between the pre-Markan and the early Johannine traditions may have been the individuated ministries and personalities of the two personal sources of these traditions. Whether they were the tradition-attested Peter and John, or whether they were other known or unknown figures, the likelihood of differing gifts, inclinations and ministries between the pre-Markan and early Johannine preachers would have affected what they taught and how they emphasized interpretive points along the way. Those differences may have gone back to the earliest stages of Gospel traditions, and they would have continued to impact their developments at every stage along the way.

The reason these matters are significant for Jesus studies is that the alternative presentation of Jesus and his ministry in the Johannine tradition, if understood within a more plausible theory of development and inter-traditional dialogue, may serve better as a source for Jesus research than has been recently granted. If I were to try to assimilate Pahl's final suggestion regarding Johannine consonant and dissonant engagements within my inferences of the first and the final editions of

the Johannine Gospel, I might put it this way: the first edition appears to have engaged the Markan Gospel and a few other traditional themes augmentively and correctively; the final edition appears to have engaged primarily the direct or indirect influence of Matthew dialectically and correctively, although other Markan, or more generally Synoptic, presentations may have been considered, as well. This approach does not work so well, however, with the Lukan and hypothetical Q traditions, as they seemed to have borrowed from the Johannine oral tradition. I could go with some measure of Q–Johannine interfluentiality in addition, although the double-tradition and Johannine contacts could also be a factor of secondary orality or general interfluentiality between multiple traditions. On this matter, an expanded theory of interfluentiality is a worthy consideration, although hypotheses in these directions must be considered extended, and thus tentatively held. The value, however, lies in keeping in mind that the ‘reality’ being described will always be more complex and multivarious than even the best of tradition-history theories.

Anne Moore’s critique of Part IV, like the above essays, is more than simply a review. It engages the larger set of issues, ranging from the book’s implications for how Jesus scholars work to the dialectical character of historiography itself, introducing new resources that will inform my own studies and those of others as well. In picking up on the call for a paradigm shift as to how scholars work, Moore infers correctly the larger thrust of the book. Within scientific research, critical investigations proceed with established sets of assumptions and by means of agreed-upon procedures. And they rightly retain their authority as long as they tend to be functional and reliable. When a valid tenet gets pressed beyond its breaking point, however, or when too many exceptions to a generalization get noticed, alternative explanations and approaches are required. That is how paradigm shifts happen within science, and also within other critical fields of inquiry—what modern biblical studies claim to be. In that sense, while this book challenges modern foundations for Johannine and Jesus studies, it attempts to do so on the basis of plausible evidence and rational analysis—the very stuff of scientific critical analysis. It therefore challenges modernistic platforms on their own modern terms, while introducing fresh perspectives and analyses, calling for at least a more nuanced view of John, Jesus and history. Whether it succeeds, of course, depends on

what other interpreters do with the suggestions, and here Moore's contribution is extremely helpful.

In bringing in the work of Jonathan Smith, Moore rightly calls attention to the connections between ways scholars have categorized this material and their own rhetorical interests, often influencing their judgments on John's historicity with greater and lesser degrees of confidence. Indeed, the very typological associations of Jesus with Jewish and Hellenistic redeemer figures in John, designed to be compelling for first-century audiences, became a liability for some modernist audiences, especially European ones, in their attempts to distinguish Christianity from paganism and Judaism. Put otherwise, Bultmann and others were willing to sacrifice the historicity of all gospel traditions, especially John, in deference to the existential call to faith so clearly put in the Johannine evangel. However, the category mistake is to infer an ahistorical origin from the final theological packaging of John's material, especially when there are so many exceptions to Bultmann's own evidence claims, and when so much mundane, archaeological, topographical and chronological material in John is hard to explain otherwise.

With Moore's comments on the 31 points of similarity between *all four canonical Gospels*, if John is patently nonhistorical, one must be willing to assert that if John is not historical, none of these elements can be considered historical in any of the other three Gospels, either. Scholars do not make that move, however, and this is grossly inconsistent. Neither are any of the contacts between John and the Synoptics on these points identical, so theories of derivative influence or literary dependence are scant in terms of critical plausibility. These are just some of the reasons why a new theory is required. Despite John's theological character, there are too many exceptions to its purported ahistoricity for such a claim to stand the test of time.

With allowances for John's rhetorical interests and the Evangelist's employment of theological crafting of his story of Jesus, Moore rightly distills five major ways in which John contributes to the quest for the Jesus of history. Her incorporation of multiple-attestation material along with distinctively Johannine material makes for suitable bases for Jesus research rooted in the Johannine witness. In addition to appreciating how they point the way forward, I might recommend these five points as an outline that other Jesus scholars might build upon in seeking to explore how John's witness might yet contribute to scholarly

Jesus research. I also appreciate Moore's affirmation of the interfluent character of emerging Jesus material in the first century CE, and I agree with her critique that my table of Johannine–Synoptic relations (Table 3.3) *might not be messy enough!* Her and Pahl's judgments along these lines counter effectively the tendency of some scholars to resist complexification, or to try to explain the entire Johannine–Synoptic problem on the basis of a single theory: 'John was dependent', or 'John was independent', when histories of development and dialectical engagement over seven decades were inevitably more complex than a simplistic theory can muster. Her introduction of the Thomas tradition and the *Egerton Gospel* should be added to the 'fund of Jesus tradition' material suggested by Pahl, and further work deserves at least some consideration as I develop 'A Bi-Optic Hypothesis: A Theory of Interfluentiality between the Johannine and Markan Traditions'.¹⁸

Professor Moore goes on to make two critical suggestions as to what the paradigm shift might look like, both of which I agree with. The first points out that while the present book does call for a change in how scholars work, it does not go far enough in fully developing what the Jesus of history in Johannine perspective might look like. Agreed! That will be the thrust of my next book, currently under contract with Eerdmans.¹⁹ While the present book has sought to engage critically the foundations for the relations between the Fourth Gospel and Jesus research, the eight ways that John might contribute to Jesus quests do outline the parameters of such a study. I might also note, though, that John's contributions to Jesus quests are not argued as overturning Synoptic bases for Jesus studies but as augmenting them. Therefore, the eight ways (among others) in which I still believe the Synoptics pose a fuller glimpse at the Jesus of history (over John's) should still be kept in mind. Rather, a bi-optic approach to the Jesus of history poses a more nuanced corrective to the imbalanced modernistic excluding of John from the table. That being the case, the twenty-four elements of the three categories in Part IV should be considered suggestive rather than

18. This is the title of the presidential address I delivered at the Pacific Northwest AAR/SBL/ASOR meetings at George Fox University in May 2008. Alan Culpepper has encouraged me to expand the theory into a full-fledged monograph, which I also hope to attempt in the near future.

19. Scheduled for 2009 or 2010, the working title for that book is *Jesus in Johannine Perspective: A Fourth Quest for Jesus*

exhaustive. If Part III suggests new blueprints for determining the foundations of Jesus and Johannine research, Part IV suggests some of the building material that might be useful in constructing further understandings of the historical Jesus.

In service to this end, Moore's two final points are especially welcome. First, adequate Jesus research is to be based upon the most inclusive and serviceable database of plausible material, and the data within John and in non-canonical traditions deserve consideration in their own right. I could not agree more! I also like her bringing Hayden White's insights into the mix; attention given to the 'historical chronicle' at hand, complete with its accompanying detail, can and should be investigated alongside the rhetorical and interpretive interests of the narrator. In that sense, history is rhetorical as well as fiction; the question is how this might be so with respect to the origin and development of Jesus traditions in general, and John's in particular. Moore's second point is also well taken, about finding new ways of analyzing how the 'historical chronicle' of the Johannine Evangelist connects with our own 'interpretive narratives' in the twenty-first century. Here I believe the challenge of the Johannine Jesus to political and religious authorities of his day in the name of the liberating power of truth has great potential for meaningful interpretation in later settings, and prophetically so.

As a dialectical exploration of the truth, however, the Johannine narrative not only exposes the foibles and conventionalities of its first-century settings and contexts, but also challenges subsequent audiences: Christian and otherwise. Wrong is the modernist notion that meaningful historiography must be neutral and disengaged. While we might argue that good history-writing will necessarily be fair and objective, interpreting the significance of historical events in terms of their earlier meanings and later implications will always be a subjective endeavor. Hence, the rhetoric of history deserves critical consideration every bit as much as the rhetoric of fiction.²⁰ In the analysis of Marianne Meye

20. In appreciation for ways that Jeff Staley and others have made good use of Wayne Booth's books, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 1983) and *The Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), we might also investigate critically 'the rhetoric of history' as a critical consideration. See Marianne Meye Thompson's call for fresh approaches to Johannine historiography by means of incorporating new analyses of historiography by such historical-critical scholars as Michel de Certeau, Paul Veyne, Hayden

Thompson, the ‘Spiritual Gospel’ is the way ‘John the Theologian’ writes history.²¹ Coming to terms with the dialectical character of John’s historiography may help us deal with one of the greatest controversies of the modern era, just as coming to terms with the dialectical character of John’s theology helped Christian leaders deal with the greatest of controversies in the patristic era. This was the counsel of the Master from Marburg in his 1927 Eisenach address (p. 175), but modern interpreters have yet to consider what dialectical historiography might entail. Given the fact of multiple types and levels of dialogue within any historiographic project, and the Johannine witness in particular, an interdisciplinary approach to these classic debates must be attempted. In service to that goal, fresh literary, historical and theological analyses deserve consideration in respect to the origin and development of the Johannine tradition and the quest for Jesus. Whether such an endeavor, of course, is successful will be the true test of whether a paradigm shift takes root among Jesus and Johannine scholars, and on that score, only time will tell.

In conclusion, I want to thank my colleagues for a really fine engagement of *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*. Not only has each of the reviews commented instructively upon some of the key points the book argues, but each has also raised a new set of issues that move the scholarly quest forward into further investigations and analysis. In that sense, not only is a book project reviewed well, but more importantly, scaffolding is set up in service to further work ongoing and serviceable constructs. When Clement of Alexandria referred to the Synoptics and John as the ‘somatic’ and the ‘pneumatic’ Gospels, in no way was he making a factuality-versus-spirituality distinction. Upon such a flawed conception have many false assumptions been wrongly based. Rather than a John-versus-Jesus dichotomy, a fresh interdisciplinary approach might yet help critical and traditional scholars alike be more *honest to John*, and therefore more fully *honest to Jesus*.

White, Brian Stock, Albert Cook, and David Lowenthal, in her essay, ‘The “Spiritual Gospel”: How John the Theologian Writes History’, in *John, Jesus, and History*, p. 104.

21. As a response to Robert Kysar’s literature review regarding the de-historicizing of John, Meye Thompson argues that history and theology are false dichotomies in ‘Spiritual Gospel’, pp. 103-107.