


The pragmatic nature of focalisation in John 4:1–42: Reading John as a performative text

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This article suggests that the process of crafting a narrative reflects the author's intentional introduction of bias to guide the reader towards taking specific actions based on their reading. The reader is intentionally steered towards a particular cognitive and pragmatic engagement with the text through the author's selection, organisation and presentation of narrative materials. This claim forms the impetus for the current exploration. The article explores the pragmatic nature and/or power of the author's selection of narrative material in John 4:1–42 on the reader. It seeks to demonstrate that the selection and presentation of narrative material are not neutral in their pragmatic intent. While acknowledging a few insightful contributions to this topic, this article contends that certain pragmatic dynamics related to narrative material selection have not been extensively explored by scholars, particularly in the context of utilising focalisation as an analytical tool.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary: The distinctive contribution of the article lies in its demonstration that focalisation, when employed as an analytical tool, particularly in the context of John 4:1–42, exerts pragmatic effects on the implied reader of the text.

Keywords: Fourth Gospel; performative; narrative analysis; focalisation; literary artistry; John 4:1–42.

Introduction and problem statement

According to John 20:30–31, the Fourth Gospel can be viewed as a purposeful literary artistry involving the selection of narrative material and information by the author. The aim is to encourage the *implied* reader to act on what is presented or made available to them (Van der Watt 2007:10). The author of the current article explored this phenomenon in his unpublished PhD thesis titled *The performative nature of literary devices in the Fourth Gospel* (Hobyane 2023) as well as in his article *Focalisation and its performative nature in John 3:1–21* (Hobyane in press). In this latter work, emphasis is placed on the pragmatic power and nature of focalisation in Jesus's dialogue with Nicodemus in John 3:1–21.

Therefore, the task of the current article is to extend the examination of the pragmatic nature of focalisation by analysing another section of the Johannine literature, namely Chapter 4, verses 1–42 – the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The selection of this narrative lacks predefined criteria, and it is based solely on the observation that it offers yet another distinctive perspective on how the narrator-focaliser focalises the story. Upon revisiting the text of the Fourth Gospel, this article anticipates different or unique findings compared to John 3:1–21. Hence, the task here is to demonstrate how focalisation heightens the implied reader's awareness and persuades them to respond to the Fourth Gospel's propositions about Jesus Christ. The article posits that the selection of narrative information in the Fourth Gospel is consistently applied to ensure that the purpose of the Gospel, as stated in 20:31, can be realised in the implied reader's life.

Methodological orientation

The article employs the narrative criticism technique known as focalisation as an analytical tool in its endeavour to explore the performative nature of John 4:1–42. The concept of 'focalisation' has garnered favourable attention from various scholars since its inception in the early 1980s (Hobyane 2023:230). In simple terms, focalisation, according to Genette (1988:34; cf. Tolmie 1991:276), is 'a selection of narrative information'. Therefore, this article represents a renewed effort to use this phenomenon to explore the performative nature of the text. The article does not aim to provide an exhaustive discussion of the entire focalisation framework. However, for the sake of clarity, the analysis will concentrate on key aspects of this methodology. Specifically, it will focus on

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determining the types of focalisation employed in this narrative (whether it is external or internal focalisation) and the discussion of the three facets of focalisation: the perceptual facet, psychological facet and ideological facet (see Hobyane 2022:2; Hobyane 2023:247; Lotman 1975:339–352; Rimmon-Kenan 1983:77–82; Tolmie 1991:272).

In addition to focalisation as an analytical tool, this article will also incorporate certain aspects of the speech act theory, specifically focusing on the performative nature of utterances in its discussion of the types and facets of focalisation in John 4:1–42.¹ The application of the speech act theory will be limited to the examination of utterances and their potential effect on the implied reader.²

Focalisation and its performative nature in John 4:1–42

Summary and commentary of the narrative

'[A]fter the profound encounter with Nicodemus (3:1–21)', as highlighted by Hobyane (2023:239), 'Jesus embarks on another significant meeting, this time with a Samaritan woman (4:1–42)'. In discussing the context and the narrative's significance, Wallace (2004) critically observes the following:

[W]hat took place between Jesus and the Samaritan woman contrast sharply with what we have just witnessed in the interview between Jesus and Nicodemus. The later, coming by night and wanting to be friendly, took the initiative and approached Jesus confidently. She on the other hand, coming to him in the blazing noon daylight, was at the beginning full of suspicion, even hostility. (p. 66; cf. Keener 2003: 584)

The implied reader cannot overlook the importance of this encounter and the identity of the individual with whom Jesus engages. Jesus crosses the boundaries of prejudice by engaging in conversation with both a woman and a Samaritan (cf. Barrett 1978:228; Brown 1975:175). When discussing the role of this character in the Fourth Gospel, Van der Watt (2007) describes her introduction as follows:

Then there is the problem woman. She is a nameless Samaritan woman who was married five times and is not married to the man she currently lives with. She is also at the well at the wrong time of the day, which implies that she did not come with the other women, for obvious reasons, not much of a letter of recommendation. (p. 14)

This summary, derived from the text itself, provides significant insights into the credentials of the Samaritan woman. Alongside her, the story introduces other characters, namely Jesus and his disciples. Notably, both temporal (ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη – *it was about the sixth hour*) and spatial aspects (in a Samaritan city, Sychar – at the well of Jacob) are explicitly mentioned in the story. The story is reported by the narrator (hereafter referred to as the narrator-focaliser, vv. 1,

1.The article acknowledges that the relationship between Perlocutionary act and ideological perspective of John is not obvious. Hence, the article will make effort, in its analysis, to demonstrate how the implied reader is persuaded to adopt or reject the ideological perspective of the Gospel as stated in 20:31.

2.For a detailed discussion of this methodology, see Tovey (1997:68); Briggs (2001:4); Botha (2009:486); Van der Watt (2010:144) and Hobyane (2022:147–150).

3–6). It is observed that the narrator-focaliser employs asides (v. 2) to aid the implied reader and interpreter in understanding the dialogue between the characters (e.g. vv. 7–26ff.). Similar to the account of Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, too, is in need of one thing: eternal life, and Jesus precisely offers her that. The narrative implies that Jesus shows no partiality; the life he brings is for everybody (Van der Watt 2007:14).

Types of focalisation in John 4:1–42

It appears that the type of focalisation exhibited in this narrative is both external and internal. Regarding *external focalisation*, the story is clearly a report by the narrator-focaliser to the implied reader, recounting Jesus' journey from Judea to Galilee through Samaria (Bal 1977:37). As noted above, the central focus of the story is the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The narrator-focaliser maintains a minimal presence, affording the characters the opportunity to articulate more. Edminston (1989:749) highlights that in external focalisation, the narrator-focaliser discloses less information than the character knows.

In terms of *internal focalisation*, the narrator-focaliser's view is not completely restricted. In contrast to the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus, where no aside is issued, the narrator-focaliser demonstrates the ability to delve into the characters' internal worlds, accessing their thoughts and emotions, and subsequently conveying this insight to the implied reader. By doing so, the narrator-focaliser provides a more profound understanding of the characters' viewpoints and experiences. For example, in 4:1–6, the narrator-focaliser reports on Jesus' foreknowledge (Ὦς οὖν ἔγνω – *when Jesus knew*) of how the Pharisees perceive the growth of his ministry (Tasker 1999:74–75). This demonstrates the narrator-focaliser's proficiency in conveying what Jesus himself knew, providing insights into his awareness and understanding of the situation. As a result, the implied reader learns that this is the reason why Jesus left Judea and journeyed to Galilee through Samaria.

Furthermore, the study notes that there might be another occurrence of internal focalisation in verse 27 (regarding the feelings of the disciples) when they returned and found Jesus talking to a woman. The narrator-focaliser reports that 'ἐθαύμαζον' [*they marvelled – yet none of them said anything*]. This description is more of what they felt about the situation than just reporting the occurrence of the event. Yet another internal focalisation occurs in verse 41. The narrator-focaliser gives us a glimpse into the minds of the Samaritans, that is, the Samaritans believed because of the words of Jesus.

Nonetheless, it is observed that external focalisation predominantly shapes the narrative, particularly in the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well (Barrett 1978:228). Jesus is focalised, initiating the dialogue in verse 4 by requesting water from the Samaritan woman.

In verse 10, Jesus advances the conversation, signalling to the woman that:

εἰ ᾔδεις τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ λέγων σοι· δός μοι πειν, σὺ ἂν ᾔτησας αὐτὸν καὶ ἔδωκεν ἄν σοι ὕδωρ ζῶν [If you knew the gift and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water].

The quoted verse above is an introductory utterance by Jesus to the woman. The ensuing dialogue revolves around the woman's need for salvation; a concept she currently does not grasp as her focus remains on the physical water in the well. As mentioned earlier, the nature of focalisation allows the characters to interact, providing the implied reader with new information directly from the characters as they are focalised. In this context, external focalisation enables the implied reader to be directly exposed to the direct speeches of the characters. This form of focalisation enhances the vividness and appeal of the story, making it inherently non-neutral in its performative power. For instance, in verses 13–14, the Protagonist further expounds on the significance of drinking or possessing living water in one's life. This address or invitation is also extended to the implied reader.

In summary, the narrative in John 4:1–42 unfolds through the perspective of an 'onlooker' providing external focalisation, reporting events from an observer's standpoint. Furthermore, this narrator has the ability to internally focalise the characters, granting the implied reader insights into their thoughts and emotions. Concerning the performative nature of internal focalisation, Tolmie (1991) exclaims:

[T]he question which should be asked is whether the change from external focalisation of the focalised to internal focalisation of the focalised serves any purpose. To my mind, this procedure is effective as it serves to convey an ideological orientation to the intended readers. By giving the intended readers a 'glimpse into' the protagonist's mind, information is passed on to them which would help them to come to the same ideological perspective on Jesus. In other words, the use of internal focalisation of the focalised in this case serves to communicate the ideological perspective to the intended readers. (p. 280)

Hence, the observed focalisation in this narrative is intentional and designed to impart specific effects to the implied reader.

Facets of focalisation and their performative nature in John 4:1–42

Perceptual facet

Tolmie (1991:281) provides invaluable insight on the overall perceptual facet of focalisation in the Fourth Gospel. He remarks that:

In the Gospel of John, the spatial facet of focalisation is located in the typical position of a narrator-focaliser, capable of yielding 'simultaneous' focalisation of events happening at different places. For example, in John 4:27–42 the focalisation alternates between events happening in the town and events between Jesus and his disciples. (cf. Culpepper 1983:26–28)

As astutely observed by Tolmie (1991:281), the perceptual facet of focalisation in this story allows the narrator-focaliser

to simultaneously direct attention to the events occurring at the well (between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, 4:7–27) and the events unfolding in the town (4:28–30). Evidently, the narrator-focaliser operates without restrictions in this regard. This focalisation of the spatial dynamics of the story proves to be highly advantageous for the implied reader, as it creates an engaging and appealing narrative that captures their undivided attention. The text strategically places the implied reader in a viewing position, enabling them to follow the developments of the story both at the well and in the city, ensuring they are not excluded from any crucial scenes.

Without this engaged involvement of the implied reader, the Gospel might fail to fulfil its overarching purpose. Consequently, the deliberate choice of narrative material emphasising spatial dynamics takes on a performative nature. It ensures the sustained engagement of the implied reader, keeping them informed about the story's progression in all its scenes. This has the potential to guide them to the point where they can make decisions as they continue to navigate through the unfolding narrative.

Concerning the temporal facet, the narrator-focaliser appears to grasp all temporal dimensions of the story. The inclusion of the specific time reference, ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη [it was about the sixth hour], when the woman arrives at the well holds significance in this context. This temporal dimension is somewhat surprising to the implied reader who has some knowledge of Jewish cultural dynamics. Following Jesus' conversation with the woman about her marital life, the implied reader gains insight into why the woman is at the well during an unconventional time – the hottest hour of the day – distinct from the usual gathering of other women (cf. Schnackenburg 1968:424; Van der Watt 2007:14). It is worth noting that the narrator-focaliser's capacity to seamlessly shift from one event at the well to the event in the city (including their respective times) shows that their perceptual facet, in terms of time, is not restricted.

Hence, the contention is that the comprehensive perceptual facet of focalisation proves advantageous for the implied reader and, consequently, performative in nature. The story is skilfully focalised in a manner that allows the implied reader to textually witness the unfolding of the story with remarkable ease, both in terms of scenes and the times involved. As the implied reader reflects on the profound conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well, the narrator-focaliser delivers a positive report from the city. The genuine intrigue and eagerness of the people to witness the person identified as possibly the Christ, based on the woman's testimony, become apparent. This report, or type of focalisation, holds the potential to captivate the implied reader and draw them towards the message of Christ. The narrator-focaliser reports the following in 4:30:

Ἐξῆλθον ἐκ τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἦρχοντο πρὸς αὐτόν [Then they went out of the city and came to him].

As observed, this report of the people's movement towards Jesus serves as a persuasive element for the implied reader. It not only sparks the curiosity of the unbelieving reader but also prompts them to contemplate following suit and approaching Jesus. The narrator-focaliser additionally reports that many Samaritans in the city believed in Jesus, influenced by the compelling testimony of the woman, as detailed in John 4:39:

Ἐκ δὲ τῆς πόλεως ἐκείνης πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτὸν τῶν Σαμαριτῶν διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς γυναικὸς μαρτυρούσης ὅτι εἶπέν μοι πάντα ἃ ἐποίησα [And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did"].

The favourable interest of the people in seeing the man who could potentially be the Christ, coupled with their subsequent belief in Jesus, forms a positive and encouraging story for the implied reader. Through an unrestricted perceptual focalisation, the reader's interest is sensitised towards the person of Jesus. The reported response of the people serves as an invitation to the unbelieving reader and, simultaneously, as an uplifting story for the believer. Consequently, it can be asserted that the perceptual facet of focalisation holds the power to engage the implied reader to participate in the text, whether by rejecting Jesus or accepting him, akin to the Samaritan woman and her community members who chose to believe.

Psychological facet

As highlighted above, the psychological facet encompasses the cognitive and emotive components of focalisation. Concerning the cognitive facet, it becomes apparent that the narrator-focaliser has limited insight into the characters, especially the protagonist. Throughout the passage, with the exception of 4:1–4, there are no asides or notes suggesting that the narrator-focaliser is cognisant of the underlying reasons behind specific utterances and actions in the story. Moreover, in addition to the restricted knowledge, the understanding of the narrator-focaliser is constrained in comparison to that of the disciples. There is no indication of possessing superior knowledge beyond what the disciples themselves know about the unfolding events.

On the contrary, in certain narratives of the Fourth Gospel, his knowledge is not restricted. A prime example of this is found in 18:9. Here, the narrator-focaliser knows why Jesus responds to those who came to arrest him in the way he did (cf. 18:32). In this example, the narrator-focaliser takes the implied reader by hand, guiding them through the narrative and providing explanations for why statements are uttered in a specific manner. This differs from the narrative in John 4.

The narrator-focaliser only proved to have knowledge regarding the reason why Jesus moved from Judaea to Galilee (4:1) and the necessity of passing through Samaria (4:4). Furthermore, the narrator-focaliser is aware that Jesus did not baptise new converts but that his disciples did (4:2). Furthermore, he gives a cursory comment on why the woman is surprised at Jesus' request for water in 4:9.

There he mentions that 'οὐ γὰρ συγγρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαριταῖς' [for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans] (cf. Brown 1975:175; Wallace 2004:67). Importantly, this comment introduces tension and anticipation of impending drama for the implied reader.

The narrator-focaliser directs attention to the Protagonist as he assumes a leading role in the salvation discourse during the dialogue. Remarkably, the Protagonist exhibits an intimate knowledge of the woman's deep marital secrets (4:17–18). From a performative point of view, as will also be argued in the discussion of the ideological facet, Jesus' profound knowledge about salvation and his ability to discern hidden truths in people's lives challenges the implied reader's neutrality as they read the story. The implied reader is highly likely to identify with a character possessing such knowledge and demonstrating power over people's lives. This aligns with the intended purpose of the implied author – to guide the implied reader to encounter Christ and establish a relationship with him (20:30–31).

Regarding the emotional facet of focalisation, the Protagonist is revealed as calm (not angry or agitated) but joyfully taking his time to teach and explain everything to the woman. Perhaps the study, in this regard, should make an exception of 4:6 where it is reported that Jesus was tired (κεκοπιακῶς) because of the journey. Otherwise, Jesus is focalised as completely calm and in charge.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the psychological facet of focalisation is crafted in a manner that allows the implied reader to perceive and experience the Protagonist's dominance, particularly in terms of knowledge, in the story. This strategic presentation aims to persuade the implied reader to place trust in the Protagonist's teachings as they progress through the text. In contrast, concerning the other characters, especially the Samaritan woman, she lacks essential elements that could sway or persuade the implied reader towards her own ideological stance. In fact, the woman's knowledge of Jesus grows (Kanagaraj 2005:147). It can be pointed out that the identity of Jesus is accentuated in the narrative. From a performative point of view, the story is focalised in such a way that the implied reader is persuaded to remain close to the Protagonist. Thus, the role of the narrator-focaliser is commendable as they maintain focus on the Protagonist, encouraging the implied reader to place their faith in him.

Ideological facet

The ideological facet of focalisation concerns the manner in which the characters and events of the story are evaluated (Bal 2009:5; Marguerat & Bourquin 1999:7; Phelan 1996:8; Tolmie 1999:4). As suggested here, concerning the ideological orientation of the entire Fourth Gospel, the ideological facet of 4:1–42 conveys a single dominant perspective, that of the Protagonist. It is noted that the Samaritan woman attempted to bring two of her own ideologies into the dialogue, but they were not successful. Firstly, in verse 9, she is focalised as

holding to the system of social segregation between the Jews and the Samaritans, when she says (John 4:9):

πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ' ἐμοῦ πίνει αἰτεῖς γυναικὸς Σαμαριτίδος οὕσης; οὐ γὰρ συγγρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις [How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me a Samaritan woman, because Jews have no dealings with Samaritans?].

In response, Jesus highlights that the woman clings to this ideology because of her lack of awareness about the gift of God.³ The phrase 'εἰ ᾔδεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ θεοῦ' [if you knew the gift of God] suggests that had the woman been acquainted with the gift of God, she would no longer adhere to this ideology. Through this response, the implied reader is effectively cautioned to steer clear of similar ideological positions.

Secondly, the woman asserts that she recognises no one, including Jesus, as greater than her venerated father Jacob, who provided the well (τὸ φρέαρ) for her and her people to drink from. Jesus persistently challenges and undermines her ideology by emphasising the limitations of what Jacob had provided. He clarifies that the water from Jacob's well can only offer temporary relief for thirst. In stark contrast, the waters he offers possess the capacity to permanently quench thirst. Here, it is essential for the implied reader to discern the contrast between Jesus' spiritual language and the woman's more earthly understanding. This invitation is also extended to the implied reader for consideration. Additionally, the woman's adherence to a system of worship, as highlighted by the Protagonist (Jesus), is portrayed as outdated and transient. Jesus suggests that the current system of worship is either losing its relevance or will soon fade away (4:20). On the contrary, the ideological facet of focalisation emphasises the dominance of Jesus' teachings. His identity and the essence of his teachings in this narrative align significantly with the gospel as a whole, as observed earlier. A few examples can be drawn from the passage:

- In his *responsive speech act* in 4:10, Jesus reveals himself as the gift of God. The revelation of the identity of Jesus begins to come out explicitly in the story. The phrase '... δωρεὰν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τίς ἐστιν ὁ λέγων σοι' [the gift of God and who it is who says to you] clearly emphasises the identity of Jesus in the passage. He is the very gift that comes from God who is talking to the Samaritan woman and the implied reader (through reading the text).
- In 4:26, Jesus explicitly introduces himself to the Samaritan woman as the Messiah, when he says: 'ἐγὼ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι' [I who speak to you am he]. In the Fourth Gospel, the expression 'ἐγὼ εἰμι' [I am] is consistently declarative, emphatic and holds a distinctive reference to the deity of Christ (cf. Barrett 1978:239).
- In 4:34, Jesus further identifies himself as 'the one who has been sent' (τοῦ πέμψαντός) to come and fulfil the work of the sender. Consequently, doing the will of the one who sent him is likened to his sustenance or nourishment

3. Bruce (1983:103; Schnackenburg 1968:426) helpfully points out that 'Jesus does not pursue the subject of the Jewish-Samaritan cleavage which she had introduced but lifts the topic of conversation to another plane'.

(Barrett 1978:240; Schnackenburg 1968:444).⁴ Through this statement, Jesus unveils the transcendent nature of his origin (cf. 1:1–18), affirming that he was with God the Father from the very beginning (1:1).

- John 4:42 represents the most explicit and dominant ideological facet of Jesus in the passage. The Samaritans play a crucial role as evaluators of the Protagonist and his actions in the story. They express their belief by stating to the woman: 'οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν λαλίαν πιστεύομεν, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου' [Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world]. In this utterance, the implied reader comes to realise that the narrative is focalised in a manner that presents the Protagonist as a distinctive character, separate from what the woman knew, such as her revered Father Jacob (cf. Schnackenburg 1968:456–457).

From a performative point of view, it can be noted, based on the outlined ideological dimensions above, that this type of focalisation strongly encourages the implied reader to concentrate solely on the Protagonist and his ideology or teachings. This aligns fundamentally with the overarching goal of the entire Gospel in the life of the implied reader. The Gospel aims to acquaint the implied reader with Christ and extend an invitation to have faith in him, thereby securing eternal life (20:30–31).

Conclusion and summary of findings

The goal of the article was to investigate how the implied author chose and presented narrative material to the implied reader, particularly through focalisation, and to delve into the pragmatic power inherent in this phenomenon. The exploration suggested that the type of focalisation manifested in the story encompassed both external and internal perspectives. In terms of its external nature, the narrative unfolds through a report provided by the narrator (narrator-focaliser) to the implied reader. This type of focalisation is considered to have the potential to enhance the relationship between the narrator-focaliser and the implied reader, thus reflecting a performative intent.

Regarding the internal focalisation of the story, the narrator-focaliser internally directs attention to specific characters, including the Protagonist, the disciples and the Samaritans (e.g. 4:1–2). Through this internal focalisation, the narrator-focaliser guides the implied reader into the mind of the characters. This is perceived as having the potential to persuade the implied reader's decisions based on the information presented.

In the discussion of the three facets of focalisation, it was initially determined that the perceptual facet of focalisation in this story allows the narrator-focaliser to have a comprehensive perspective. The narrator is not confined to a

4. Bruce (1983:113–114; cf. Lindars 1972:194) says: 'Part of the work which the Father gave him to do was to communicate his blessing to the woman of Synchar and through her to the other inhabitants of the place; the satisfaction which he now experienced through doing the Father's will in this respect was greater than any satisfaction which bread could give'.

single viewpoint but can simultaneously focus on events occurring both at the well (between Jesus and the woman, 4:7–27) and in the city (4:28–30). This type of focalisation provides the implied reader with a complete textual view of how people are responding to the call of the Protagonist to believe in him. Recognised as performative, it not only informs the implied reader but also encourages them to make a decision or respond to Jesus' call to believe in him or strengthen their relationship with him.

The temporal dimension of the narrative reveals that the narrator-focaliser is not restricted to describing only present and past events involving Jesus and his disciples but extends to future events as well. In relation to the past and present, the narrator-focaliser possesses knowledge about the complaint of the Jewish opponents regarding Jesus making and baptising more disciples than John, which is the reason for Jesus leaving Judaea (internal focalisation). The narrator-focaliser's awareness of past and present events involving Jesus and his disciples is performative in nature, serving as informative content for the implied reader. Background notes play a crucial role for the implied reader, providing a broader perspective and essential information about the characters. This information is significant as the implied reader cannot make any decision or choice without it.

The psychological facet revealed that the narrator-focaliser appears to have limited knowledge of the Protagonist. Throughout the narrative, except for 4:1–4, there are no asides or notes indicating that the narrator-focaliser possesses additional insights into the reasons behind certain utterances or their specific nuances. Furthermore, the narrator-focaliser's knowledge is not superior to that of the disciples, indicating a restriction in his understanding in this regard.

It was noted that this is not the case in some narratives of the Fourth Gospel, such as 18:9 and 18:32. In these instances, the narrator-focaliser includes notes to assist the implied reader in comprehending the reasons behind the productions of specific utterances. It was posited that whenever the narrator-focaliser's knowledge is restricted, the narrative transitions into dialogue mode between the Protagonist and other characters. The Protagonist is focalised as the producer and distributor of knowledge regarding his ideological position. Jesus possesses all knowledge about salvation. He extends invitations for people to believe in him and demonstrates the ability to unveil the personal secrets of the Samaritan woman. This portrayal is considered performative as it does not leave the implied reader in a neutral position. The implied reader is invited to make a decision – either to align themselves with the Protagonist or to reject him.

Regarding the emotional facet of focalisation, it was determined that Jesus is focalised as calm, with the exception of 4:6 where the text reports that Jesus was tired because of the journey. Throughout the rest of the story, the Protagonist remains calm, taking his time to teach and elaborate on matters of salvation to the Samaritan woman. Jesus is focalised as calm and in total control of the dialogue

proceedings. The implied reader is invited to experience this calm approach by Jesus, potentially persuading them to make decisions as they participate in the dialogue by listening as they read the story.

From a performative point of view, the narrative is focalised in such a way that the implied reader is persuaded to associate themselves with the teachings of the Protagonist. The fact that he is calm and has everything under control is both encouraging and enticing to the implied reader.

The ideological facet of focalisation emphasises the dominance of the Protagonist's ideological position and teachings. The matter of Jesus' identity, for example, holds significant prominence in the dialogue, as he seeks to persuade the woman to believe in him.

The dominance of Jesus' ideological teachings proves that the story is focalised with the aim to invite the implied reader to focus only on the Protagonist and what he represents. The implied reader is coaxed to believe in the Protagonist. This manner of focalisation leaves the implied reader with little or no choice but to decide either to accept or reject him.

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Author's contribution

R.S.H. is the sole author of this research article.

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