


# The selection of narrative information in John 6:1–14 and 22–71: On focalisation

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**Dates:**

Received: 21 Feb. 2024

Accepted: 17 Apr. 2024

Published: 14 May 2024

**How to cite this article:**

Hobyane, R.S., 2024, 'The selection of narrative information in John 6:1–14 and 22–71: On focalisation', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 45(1), a3126. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v45i1.3126>

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The article is part of a series of investigations into the Johannine text, specifically focussing on the performative nature of focalisation. Previous contributions by the researcher posited and illustrated that the construction of a narrative involves a deliberate intention by the author to prompt the reader to take action based on their reading. The present article continues to explore the pragmatic power of the narrative of John 6:1–14 and 22–71, utilising focalisation as an analytical tool. The analysis underscores what the narrative strives to teach, revealing Jesus as the bread of life, crucial for satisfying the hunger of the soul, that is salvation leading to eternal life. The careful selection of narrative materials in this passage aligns with the overarching purpose of the Fourth Gospel, as outlined in 20:30–31, and is deemed to have a performative function towards the reader.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary:** The article's unique contribution lies in demonstrating that traditional exegetical methods, for example, grammatical-historical approach and others, can be supplemented by literary critical methods such as focalisation to expound or extract meaning from biblical narratives. In this article, the field of (traditional) hermeneutics is supplemented by a literary critical approach to get the better of what the text can offer to the reader.

**Keywords:** Fourth Gospel; performative; narrative analysis; focalisation; literary artistry.

## Introduction and problem statement

One of the most contested issues in the Fourth Gospel, particularly from the perspective of the Jewish opponents, revolves around the revelation of Jesus' origin and identity, highlighting his transcendent (he comes from God the Father) and divine nature (he is the Messiah – the Son of God, sent by the Father). The author of the Fourth Gospel, as stated in 20:30–31, carefully and deliberately gathered narrative material or information to convey to the reader<sup>1</sup> so that they may believe in Jesus Christ, and through that belief, may attain eternal life. The narrative of the feeding of the 5000 serves as a tributary to this main river of life in the Gospel. The author of this article explored the phenomenon of focalisation in his unpublished PhD thesis titled 'The performative nature of literary devices in the Fourth Gospel' (Hobyane 2023), and also in his article titled 'Focalisation and its performative nature in John 3:1–21' (Hobyane 2024).

The present article delves into the examination of the performative influence embedded in the narrative of the feeding of the 5000 found in John 6:1–14 and 22–71. The objective of this article is to illustrate the pragmatic power of focalisation by scrutinising a specific narrative within the Fourth Gospel, namely 6:1–14 and 22–71 where Jesus feeds 5000 people. The selection of this narrative is based not on predetermined criteria but solely on the observation that it offers unique or more extensive perspectives compared to those already explored by the author in John 3:1–21 and 4:1–42.

## Methodological orientation

This article utilises the narrative criticism technique known as *focalisation* as an analytical tool in its effort to investigate the performative aspects of John 6:1–14 and 22–71. The concept of 'focalisation' has garnered positive recognition from scholars since its inception in the early 1980s (Hobyane 2023). As such, this article is a renewed effort to employ this phenomenon to explore the performative nature of the text. While the article does not aim to delve into an exhaustive discussion of the framework of focalisation, it focusses on key aspects of this methodology.

1. In this article, the term 'reader' exclusively refers to the 'implied reader'. Consequently, the study will refrain from repeating the adjective 'implied' each time it alludes to the reader. According to Van der Watt (2009:88; cf. Jeong 2018:18–19), an implied reader can be defined as the inner-textual (personified) construction that systematically discovers what the implied author presents as the story unfolds to the end.

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The analysis zooms in on two primary areas: identifying the types of focalisation employed in the selected narratives and discussing the three facets of focalisation – namely, the *perceptual facet* (*space and time dimensions*), *psychological facet* (*cognitive and emotive components*) and *lastly, ideological facet* (*it focusses on the way in which the characters and events of the story are evaluated*) (cf. Hobyane 2022:2; 2023:247; Lotman 1975:339–352; Rimmon-Kenan 1983:77–82; Tolmie 1991:272).

In addition to utilising focalisation as an analytical tool, this article will incorporate elements of the speech act theory, specifically addressing the performative nature of utterances in its exploration of the types and facets of focalisation in the selected narratives of the Fourth Gospel. The application of the speech act theory in this context will be confined to the examination of utterances and their potential effect on the reader.<sup>2</sup>

## Focalisation and its performative nature in John 6:1–14 and 22–71

### Summary of the story

John 6:1–14 and 22–71 recount yet another miraculous sign performed by Jesus – the feeding of a crowd of approximately 5000 men (besides women and children) with just five loaves and two fish (Barry et al. 2016; Richards & Richards 1987:720). Keener (1993:278; cf. Hakola 2005:158; Tasker 1999:93) observes that following his discussion about Moses (5:45–47), Jesus proceeds to enact a sign that might be expected of a new prophet such as Moses (Dt 18:15) – providing manna to the people (cf. Bruce 1983:139; Lindars 1972:234–235). As alluded to above, the signs performed by Jesus in the Fourth Gospel serve a specific purpose: to advance the discourse about Jesus' identity and origin. Each sign is designed to direct the audience's attention to a profound teaching about Jesus as the Son of God or the Messiah. As aptly pointed out by Guthrie (1994:1037), 'John calls them signs because they led people to seek for Jesus' (cf. Richards & Richards 1987:720). This particular sign unfolds during Jesus' public ministry, and is evident from the substantial crowds that gathered around him. In the context of John, those regarded as wonderworkers often attracted large followings in the ancient world. However, a distinctive feature sets Jesus apart – unlike many wonderworkers of his time, he placed a greater emphasis on teaching over miracles (Keener 1993:278).

According to Guthrie (1994:1037–1038), this miracle stands out as the only one recorded in all four Gospels (Mt 14:13–21; Mk 6:32–44; Lk 9:10–17). For this reason, only the special features of John's account will be mentioned here. John refers to the *Sea of Tiberias*<sup>3</sup> (v. 1), a term likely not used to describe the Sea of Galilee during Jesus' time but familiar at the time

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. Barry et al. (2016) mention, 'This alternative name for the Sea of Galilee also was the name of a city on its western shore. Tiberias was the largest and most important city in Galilee and was the regional capital for Herod Antipas' (see also Keener 1993:278 for further elucidation).

of writing (Guthrie 1994:1037–1038). The key figures in the narrative include Jesus, his disciples and the crowds who came looking for him because they saw the signs he performed on the diseased (v. 2). The story unfolds primarily through the voice of the narrator (e.g. vv. 1–5, etc.), dialogues (e.g. vv. 7–10, etc.) and asides (v. 6).

### Types of focalisation

When analysing the narrating voice in the passage, it can be suggested that the type of focalisation in John 6:1–14 and 22–71 may be characterised as both external and internal. In terms of external focalisation, the focaliser is external to the story. He is an 'onlooker' outside the space where the events are taking place but very close to the vehicle of focalisation (Tolmie 1991:279). This type of focalisation may be described as narrator-focalisation. On the other hand, concerning internal focalisation, the focaliser appears to possess the ability to access the minds of the characters. A few scenarios from John 6 can be cited here:

- In 6:2, the focaliser knows the reason why the crowd followed Jesus, that is 'because they saw his signs which he performed on those who were diseased' [ὅτι ἐθεώρουν τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενοῦντων]. Through internal focalisation, the implied reader has access to the minds of the crowd.
- In 6:5–6, the reader is assisted to gain access to Jesus' mind through internal focalisation. The text reports as follows: 'But this he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do' [τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν πειράζων αὐτόν· αὐτὸς γὰρ ᾔδει τί ἔμελλεν ποιεῖν]. The reader gets to know that Jesus was only testing Phillip because Jesus knew what he would do in terms of feeding the crowd.
- In 6:15, the narrator-focaliser leads the reader into Jesus' mind again. He knows the reason why Jesus departed to the mountain, that is 'Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he departed again to the mountain by himself alone' [Ἰησοῦς οὖν γνοὺς ὅτι μέλλουσιν ἔρχεσθαι καὶ ἀρπάξαι αὐτὸν ἵνα ποιήσωσιν βασιλέα, ἀνεχώρησεν πάλιν εἰς τὸ ὄρος αὐτὸς μόνος].
- In 6:61, the reader is led into the mind of Jesus once again. The passage states, 'When Jesus knew in himself that His disciples complained about this, he said to them: "Does this offend you?"' [εἰδὼς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὅτι γογγύζουσιν περὶ τούτου οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Τοῦτο ὑμᾶς σκανδαλίζει]. The narrator-focaliser aids the reader in understanding why Jesus posed the question to his disciples about his teaching – because the disciples were complaining about it.
- Lastly, in 6:64, the narrator-focaliser accesses Jesus' mind and divine knowledge regarding the person (or disciple) who did not believe and would eventually betray him. The narrator-focaliser reports as follows: 'For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him' [ᾔδει γὰρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὁ Ἰησοῦς τίνες εἰσιν οἱ μὴ πιστεύοντες καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ παραδώσων αὐτόν]. As already suggested and pointed out in the observations

mentioned, it may be concluded that this narrative is both externally and internally focalised. Besides being an 'onlooker' to the story, the narrator-focaliser also has the ability to focalise the characters internally.

This type of focalisation is not neutral in its pragmatic power; it possesses the potential to influence and persuade the reader. The reader is prompted and confronted with the challenge of trusting the narrator-focaliser, as the narrative demonstrates that this form of focalisation is expansive and, to some extent, reliable. This becomes crucial for the reader as the narrative aims to achieve specific goals in the life of the reader in relation to Christ (cf. 6:51 and 20:30–31).

## Facets of focalisation and their performative nature

### The perceptual facet in John 6

The spatial facet of focalisation in this narrative can be characterised as fixed or limited to specific scenes of miracles and the subsequent movements of the Protagonist, as well as the places of his teachings. For example, scenes include the mountainside (vv.1–15), the Sea of Galilee (referred to as the Sea of Tiberias) (vv.16–21) and the Synagogue in Capernaum (v.24). The reader is not presented with a simultaneous focalisation of events in the story. For instance, when Jesus retreats to the mountainside (v.15), the narrator-focaliser remains with the disciples (vv.16–19) until Jesus rejoins them in verse 20. When Jesus and the disciples are already in Capernaum (vv.22–24), no activity is reported taking place there until the crowds find him (v.25) and begin to engage with him. This type of focalisation notably contrasts with the reader's experience in John 4:1–42. In this narrative, the narrator-focaliser remained exclusively with Jesus and his disciples, focussing on the message they conveyed to the crowds. The people had to actively seek Jesus or go to his location for the narrative to progress.

From a performative point of view, it becomes evident that the narrative is focalised in a manner that the reader's view of the Protagonist and his ideological stance is not distracted by any other event occurring elsewhere. This may serve to underscore how critically important the ideological facet of the Protagonist is valued in the narrative. The ideology of the Protagonist is presented and communicated to the reader without interruptions, reflecting its significance to the author's intent. This performative aspect invites and actively persuades the implied reader to concentrate solely on the Protagonist, urging them to focus on no other events but to fix their attention on the central figure.

The temporal dimension of focalisation is to a large extent similar to the spatial facet here. The temporal dimension of the narrator-focaliser is generally restricted to the present events. Nevertheless, at least two exceptions can be identified. Firstly, as previously emphasised, the narrator-focaliser exhibits awareness of the impending miracle (v.6) before it transpires. In this instance, the narrator-focaliser

demonstrates possessing knowledge about 'near-future events' that the disciples and the reader are not privy to. Only the narrator-focaliser and the Protagonist are aware of these events. This aside serves to alleviate tension for the reader, aiding in a clearer understanding and smoother navigation of the narrative. In this way, the narrator-focaliser ensures that the reader remains closely connected to the narrative and the ideology of Jesus in the text, as this alignment with the main purpose of the Fourth Gospel is paramount.

Secondly, the narrator-focaliser possesses knowledge about Judas and his future actions towards the Lord (vv.64, 71). Once more, only the narrator-focaliser and the Protagonist share this insight into future events. This proves invaluable for the reader, providing them with advanced information about the future and sparing them from unexpected surprises.

In summary, the temporal dimension of focalisation, in this context, can be considered performative in nature. The narrator-focaliser's insights and asides in verse 6 (that Jesus knew what he was about to do) as well as in verses 64 and 71 (regarding Judas) play a crucial role in shaping the reader's understanding of the content of Jesus' utterance and the future events.

Through internal focalisation, the narrator-focaliser exhibits a caring and guiding presence towards the reader, aiming to facilitate a proper understanding of the unfolding narrative. The reader gains valuable insight from this support, being placed in a position even more insightful than that of Philip or the other disciples themselves. With the narrator-focaliser's meticulous descriptions and insider knowledge of the characters, the reader engages with the story of Jesus with heightened interest and clarity. Such attentive care in the narrative process empowers the reader to make personal decisions and fosters a deeper connection with the unfolding story. As the reader is guided through this experience, they may find themselves at the point of making decisions while immersed in the story. This aligns with the Gospel's overarching purpose (John 20:30–31) and is thus performative in nature.

### Psychological facet in John 6

The cognitive component of focalisation can be described as both restricted and unrestricted knowledge of the narrator-focaliser. On the one hand, it is restricted in the sense that the narrator-focaliser does not, at all times, possess the knowledge of why some utterances and actions are done in the manner they are done for example in verse 12, the narrator-focaliser does not provide an aside to inform the reader why Jesus directed the disciples to gather up the fragments that remained after eating. The reader is left to make their own conclusion that this utterance was meant to underscore the magnitude of the miracle because the gathered fragments after eating could still fill up 12 baskets (v.13). However, it is noticed, on the other hand, that the narrator-focaliser does prove to have the ability to access the minds of the characters, as discussed as

discussed under internal focalisation. Furthermore, it is noted that a large amount of information is conveyed by the Protagonist (Jesus), as he responds to the Jewish opponents (vv.43–51, 53–58, and 61–63). Here, Jesus is focalised as possessing profound knowledge about his oneness with the Father and its significance for those who place their belief in him. The cognitive component of the narrator-focaliser is confined to this specific knowledge, with the Protagonist assuming the responsibility of directly imparting it to the reader. This has the potential to captivate the reader's focus on Jesus, as he personally addresses them, ensuring that the invitation to believe in him is vividly presented. The reader experiences a direct invitation to initiate or enhance their relationship with Jesus. The depiction of the ideological aspect of the Protagonist, from the standpoint of this study, is remarkably clear and direct, compelling the reader to make a choice rather than remaining on neutral ground. The outcome of the direct appeal is evident in verse 66, where many abandoned him and walked away, but some, like Peter, chose to remain. Peter's confession, 'κύριε, πρὸς τίνα ἀπελευσόμεθα; ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις' (*Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*), underscores the profound impact of the Protagonist's message.

Moreover, it can be demonstrated, as alluded to in the discussion of the perceptual facet that the cognitive component is also unrestricted in some parts of the narrative. It has been indicated that the narrator-focaliser seems to possess some knowledge about the miracle itself (v.6) and the future of Judas Iscariot (vv.64, 71).

The performative nature of the psychological facet mirrors that of the perceptual facet discussed above. In this context, the narrator-focaliser seizes the opportunity to establish a relationship of trust between themselves and the reader. This relationship is pivotal as it has the potential to sustain the reader's interest in the text and the revelation of who Jesus is, along with the expectations regarding the reader's response to the material.

The emotive component of the Protagonist is focalised as neutral. The reader would expect the Protagonist to show a possible emotional change on three occasions, but this is not the case. Firstly, in the actual event of multiplying the bread and feeding the 5000 people in verses:5–14, Jesus reveals no emotion of joy or satisfaction. The Protagonist is focalised as 'neutral' in showing emotions, but very much in control of the situation. Jesus was more focussed on the purpose, meaning and implication of the sign than the sign itself.

Secondly, the Protagonist shows no emotions when talking about Judas as the one who did not believe and would subsequently betray him (vv.64, 71). The Protagonist is focalised as calm in this potentially emotion-provoking situation, maintaining composure to the reader.

Lastly, a significant number of his disciples, likely the new converts, abandon him, complaining that his teachings are

hard (v.60). In a normal situation, or the world of both the implied and real reader, this would be a considerable setback and a distressing moment for any leader of a ministry. However, Jesus remains emotionally calm. Instead of mourning the loss, he goes to enquire from the remaining 12 if they also plan to depart.

It can be illustrated here that the calmness of the Protagonist is primarily rooted in his teaching in verse 65, which asserts that those who departed never truly belonged to him, as the text reports:

διὰ τοῦτο εἶρηκα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς δύναται ἔλθειν πρὸς με εἰ μὴ ἢ δεδομένον αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς (therefore I have said to you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him by my Father).

In this context, the Protagonist is focalised as totally in control of the situation and emotionally calm. Unless the interpreter of the text opts to overlook this clear textual evidence, the demonstration of Jesus' power and control over the situation becomes performative for the reader. It overtly invites them to believe in Jesus. The reader undergoes an encounter with a composed and measured approach to a situation, providing an opportunity to further connect with the Protagonist's teachings.

## Ideological facet in John 6

The narrative's ideological facet is conveyed primarily through a singular dominant perspective – that of Jesus Christ, the Protagonist. It is crucial to acknowledge that this perspective gains particular prominence when the crowds pose inquiries in search of clarity and understanding (vv.30–31). These questions are innocently intended for seeking clarity, rather than representing an alternative ideology vying for acknowledgment or dominance within the narrative. The miracle is presented in a way that directs the reader's attention to the teaching or ideology of the Protagonist. Jesus is depicted as overseeing the proceedings and showcasing his power throughout the entire narrative. Keener (1993:279; cf. Lindars 1972:244) makes a critical ideological observation when he says that the story reveals Jesus as 'the New Passover, New Manna and one greater than Moses'. This observation is invaluable as it recognises that everything that is happening in the narrative points to Jesus and his sovereignty. A few examples from the passage in John 6 may be cited to illustrate this point:

- In verses:5–6, Jesus and his disciples encounter a challenging situation with a vast multitude following them, seemingly facing a shortage of food from the disciples' perspective. Nevertheless, Jesus manifests his divine power by orchestrating a miracle and miraculously feeding the entire crowd. Through this miracle, Jesus offers a 'new manna' to Israel, underscoring his superiority to Moses. Consequently, there is no necessity to cling to what God the Father accomplished through Moses when Jesus is bringing about an even more significant fulfilment through his person and ministry (cf. Morris 1971:363–364).

- In verse 20, when Jesus reunites with the disciples after they saw him walking on the water, he reassures them with the words: 'ἐγὼ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε' (*It is I or I am, do not be afraid*). Barry et al. (2016) observe that the Greek phrase used here, ἐγὼ εἰμι, translated literally as 'I am', echoes the motif of Jesus' 'I am' sayings, reflecting the nuanced expression of deity found in 'I am' in Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 41:4; 43:10, 13 (Keener 1993:279; cf. Barrett 1978:281). However, Guthrie (1994:1038) cautions that 'the words "It is I, don't be afraid" (v.20) are not to be invested with the aura which other great "I am" sayings in John convey. The message here is that fear was banished in the presence of Jesus'.
- In verse 23, at least from the textual evidence at our disposal, the narrator-focaliser calls the Protagonist 'the Lord', revealing his own submission to the Lordship (κυριός) of Jesus Christ in the text.
- In verse 29, Jesus explicitly calls people to believe in him whom God the Father has sent *into the world*.
- In verses 32, 38 and 41, Jesus reveals himself as the bread that came down from heaven. This was an immediate and more pragmatic application of the miracle he had just performed. Through these utterances, the Protagonist shifts the focus from the physical bread which he has just provided to them, to his physical body that will be pierced for the sins of the world (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown 1997:138).
- In verses 40, 44, Jesus confronts the audience (Galilean Jews) by affirming that he has come from heaven, sent by the Father (Kanagaraj 2005:211). This affirmation is a direct response to their earthly understanding of Jesus when they said, 'οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ, οὗ ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα; πῶς νῦν λέγει ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβῆκα' (*Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says, 'I have come down from heaven'?*). The reader should be in a better position to evaluate their misunderstanding because they have already read the prologue of the Gospel. Jesus is focalised as the one who came from heaven to fulfil the Father's will (cf. Culpepper 1998:116; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:34; Painter 2007:328; and see Culpepper [2016:3] for insightful commentary on the prologues and coming of Jesus into the world).
- In verses 27, 53 and 62, the Protagonist explicitly calls himself the Son of Man upon whom God the Father has placed his seal (Harris 2015:130; cf. Brown 1975:261). Painter (1986:34) highlights that 'The understanding of the Son of Man as a figure to be worshipped is distinctively Johannine' (cf. Freeman & Chadwick 1998:514).
- Lastly, in 6:32, 39 and 65, Jesus speaks of God the Father as 'my Father' [ὁ πατήρ μου], thereby sharply contrasting the phrase 'οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν' (*your fathers*) in reference to the Jewish opponents in the narrative (cf. v.58) and distinguishing himself as unique and having a special relationship with God the Father, even better than that of Moses (cf. Lindars 1972:258; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:133).

Based on the above textual references, it is comprehensible that Jesus is consistently focalised as the central figure in the narrative, displaying confidence in his ability to perform signs that beckon people, including the reader, to believe in him. His composure remains steadfast, unaffected by the knowledge of one disciple's betrayal or the departure of many others. He maintains complete control, and this revelation is transparent before the eyes of the reader.

From the pragmatic point of view, it becomes evident that the ideological facet revolves around Jesus and his teachings, presenting a convincingly plausible and dominant perspective that the reader cannot overlook while engaging with the text. The reader is guided towards accepting the Protagonist (Jesus) as the Son of God, who came for the redemption of people, including the reader. As Tolmie (1991:284; Van der Watt 2007:15) highlights, embracing this ideological facet of focalisation ensures that the intended reader attains eternal life.

Concerning Jesus' disciples, they are focalised differently from that of the Protagonist. They are positioned as objects, with Jesus being the subject. The narrator-focaliser focalises the disciples as entirely reliant on Jesus for various provisions, such as food (v.6), security (v.20), eternal life (v.68) and more. This type of focalisation can be interpreted as a deliberate invitation extended to the reader as well. In one way or another, readers, whether implied or real, are cognisant of these social needs in their lives. The revelation that they can depend on Jesus for these needs is alluring to them.

## Summary of findings

The goal of this article was to investigate the performative nature of focalisation in the text of John 6:1–14 and 22–71. Employing the analytical approach, the focalisation in this narrative was characterised as both external and internal. External focalisation, executed by the narrator-focaliser, played a crucial role in assisting the reader's cognitive level with regard to the content of the narrative. Additionally, the dialogue between the characters emerged as a pivotal aspect of the external focalisation in the narrative. The Protagonist seizes the opportunity to promote his ideological facet in the story (John 6:32–33, 35–40). This type of focalisation directly engages the implied reader, possessing the potential to influence their decisions – whether to accept or reject Jesus. It is noteworthy that the believing reader is consistently bolstered in their faith through this focalisation.

Based on the observations and analysis of the story, certain parts of the narrative have been described as internally focalised. In this type of focalisation, the Protagonist or a character is focalised internally, with notes or asides that provide insight into their thoughts and/or feelings (v.6).

The spatial facet of focalisation was identified as fixed or limited to the specific scene of the miracle and the subsequent movements and teachings of the Protagonist, such as those occurring in the Synagogue in Capernaum (v.24). It was

suggested that the reader does not have the opportunity to experience simultaneous focalisation, as discussed. The intentional exclusivity of the narrative's focus, deemed deliberative on the part of the author, ensures that the reader is not diverted by events elsewhere. The reader's thoughts are consistently directed towards the identity, work and values represented by the Protagonist in the story. This deliberate focus is seen as an effective means to persuade the reader to believe in Christ.

The temporal dimension of focalisation was largely likened to the spatial facet. In terms of the psychological facet, specifically the cognitive component, the article characterised it as involving both restricted and unrestricted knowledge on the part of the focaliser. In its restricted form, the narrative utilises the Protagonist himself, rather than the narrator-focaliser, to convey new information. However, it was observed that certain crucial information is internally focalised in John 6 through the narrator-focaliser's ability to access the minds of the characters in the story, exemplified in passages such as verses 2, 5–6, 15, 61 and 64.

The ideological facet in the narrative is presented through a solitary dominant perspective in favour of the Protagonist. The narrative is focalised in a way that the reader realises that Jesus is in control of everything from the beginning to the end of the narrative. Based on the textual references made, a conclusive argument was presented that Jesus is focalised as a central figure, displaying unwavering confidence in his power to perform miracles and remaining unfazed by the prospect of betrayal by one of his disciples or the departure of many others. The ideological facet of focalisation was aptly described as performative, given its primary aim to persuade the reader to accept Jesus, the Protagonist, as the Son of God.

Concerning Jesus' disciples, the study proposed that they are focalised as entirely reliant on Jesus, as seen in aspects such as food (v.6), security (v.20) and eternal life (v.68). This was also characterised as a purposeful invitation to the reader, as it entices both implied and real readers to believe in Jesus, ensuring that their needs can also be attended to and fulfilled in their lives.

The examination of focalisation and its facets in this article compellingly aligns, to a considerable degree, with the hypothesis presented in the article. It posits that focalisation can play a pragmatic or performative role for the reader as they engage with the text and concurrently contribute synergistically to enhancing and reinforcing the fulfilment of the central purpose of the Fourth Gospel, as stated in John 20:30–31.

## Acknowledgements

This article forms part of a series of contributions on the theme of focalisation by the researcher and is an expanded version of Chapter 6 of R.S.H.'s recently completed PhD thesis in 2023 at the Northwest University (Potchefstroom Campus) with supervisor Prof Jan G. van der Watt.

## Competing interests

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.

## Author's contributions

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

## Ethical considerations

An application for full ethical approval was made to the North-West University Theology Research Ethics Committee and ethics consent was received on 27 November 2023. The ethics approval number is NWU-00888-23-A6.

## Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

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