THE FUNCTION OF FOCALISATION IN JOHN 13-17

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Abstract
This paper is presented from a narratological perspective and especially from a semio-structuralistic approach to narrative texts. For quite a long time 'point of view' was part of the traditional way of analysing narrative texts, but Genette indicated the inadequacy of this concept and substituted 'focalisation' for 'point of view'. Accordingly, the function of focalisation in John 13-17 is analysed by using the theoretical framework developed by Rimmon-Kenan, who largely follows Genette. Following this theoretical framework, the type of focalisation as well as the facets of focalisation in John 13-17 are analysed with the purpose of describing the function of focalisation.

1 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This paper is presented from a narratological perspective which implies that the Gospel of John is approached from a specific angle. This approach may be summarised by saying that the Gospel of John will be read as a 'story', or, in other words, it will be analysed by means of a theoretical framework which was developed for the analysis of narrative texts.

As you are all aware, this means that we have moved into the domain of another discipline, namely Theory of Literature, and specifically the discipline called narratology. In Theory of Literature a variety of different approaches to narrative texts exists, such as deconstructive readings of a text, feminist readings, psychological readings and marxist readings. This means that a choice should be made. In this paper I have opted for a semio-structuralistic approach to narrative texts along the lines formulated by narratologists such as Genette, Bal and Rimmon-Kenan.

I will be concentrating on one aspect of narrative texts, namely focalisation. The object of this paper will not only be to analyse focalisation in John 13-17 by means of an acceptable theoretical framework, but also to try to establish the effect that the focalisation method in these chapters has on the intended readers. The concept 'focalisation' was introduced by Gerard Genette (1980) in an attempt to distinguish it from what has traditionally become known as the 'point of view' of a narrative text (also known as 'vision', 'field' or 'perspective'). When Genette's Narrative Discourse was published, the analysis of point of view as
one of the facets of a narrative text had been part of the traditional approach to
texts for decades. In fact, Anna Barbauld had already emphasised as early as 1804
that ‘access of consciousness’ ought to be one of the essential concepts in the
classification of narrative (Martin 1986:131). During this century the discussion
of point of view had become part and parcel of nearly all the theories of narrative
formulated.\footnote{For more examples on the way in which point of view is used in narrative theory see
Macauley & Lanning (1964:99-111); Stanton (1965:26-9); Scholes & Kellogg (1966:240-
282); Boulton (1975:29-44); Kanzog (1976:26-9); Knott (1977:97-118) and Stanzel
(1979:21-24, 148-188).} Two outstanding examples may be cited:

In *A Poetics of Composition* Boris Uspensky (1973) renders a typology of
point of view in the artistic text by distinguishing the following five ‘semantic
spheres’ in which point of view may generally be manifested:

- **Ideological plane**, that is the point of view assumed by the narrator when he
evaluates and perceives the narrated world ideologically.
- **Phraseological plane**, that is the way in which diction is used, for example,
in the narrator’s description of the characters, or in the way speech is repre­
sented in the narrative.
- **Spatial and temporal planes**, that is, the position, defined in spatial and
temporal co-ordinates, from which the narration is conducted.
- **Psychological plane**, that is, the consciousness from which the events are
described. It may be narrated through a deliberately chosen subjective point
of view of some individual(s) or it may be described as objectively as possible
(Uspensky 1973:8-100).

Uspensky (1973:101-117) also discusses the way in which the different planes of
point of view are interrelated on different levels in the artistic text, using Tol­
stoy’s *War and Peace* as an illustration of the combination of the narrator’s point
of view with various other points of view.

For Susan Lanser (*The Narrative Act. Point of view in prose fiction.*) speech
act theory provides the necessary bridge between structural approaches to narra­
tive theory and the concept of a text as an ideological and aesthetic act (Lanser
1981:8). According to her the following three relationships are important in the
structuring of point of view in discourse:

- **Status**, that is the relationship between narrator and speech act.
- **Contact**, that is the relationship between narrator and audience.
- **Stance**, that is the narrator’s relation to its discourse content or ‘message’ or
narrated world.

(Lanser 1981:9,149-225)

Lanser (1981:226-45) is of the opinion that point of view cannot be retrieved
from a text simply by means of a surface-structure analysis of these three relationships, as much of the information provided by narrators about themselves is communicated at deeper levels of the discourse. Accordingly, she adopts Fernando Ferrara’s model for the analysis of characters in fiction in such a way that it may be used for the analysis of the narrator’s speech act of narration in the text. This procedure consists of the separation of the different layers of voice within the text, the analysis of the degree of authority each level implies, as well as the narrator’s status, mode of contact and stance. Furthermore, the narrator’s speech acts are scrutinised for:

* the propositions made;
* the way these propositions are modalised;
* the syntax, vocabulary, register, and other linguistic elements of the utterance;
* the illocutionary acts; and
* the messages that are implicated.

By means of this procedure the narrative voices within the text are reconstructed and a profile of textual point of view is generated, which may then be measured against the extrafictional voice and the cultural ideology.

Both Lanser and Uspensky provide us with highly sophisticated theoretical frameworks for the analysis of point of view. However, in both cases, it seems as if point of view is analysed without an attempt at incorporating the concept within a comprehensive theory of narrative in which all the aspects of narrative discourse are incorporated. To my mind, Genette and those who followed his approach, have been more successful in this regard.

To understand the reason why Genette introduced the concept ‘focalisation’ we should have a look at his theoretical framework. From a theoretical point of view Genette (1980:26-30) distinguishes three aspects of narrative which are basic to all narratives:

* **Histoire**, the narrative content, abstracted from the text and reconstructed in a chronological order.
* **Récit**, the narrative text itself, and
* **Narration**, the narrative-producing action.

In Narrative Discourse revisited (Genette 1988:15) it is schematically presented as follows:

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narration ← histoire
            ↑ récit
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According to Genette (1980:29-32) the analysis of narrative discourse should be orientated towards a systematic study of the relationships between these three aspects. He distinguishes three basic classes of determinations, namely, the temporal relations between récit and histoire (discussed under the heading of tense); the forms and degrees of narrative representation (discussed under the heading of mood), and the way in which the narrating itself is implicated in the narrative (discussed under the heading of voice).

Genette's discussion of mood is important for this paper: Under this heading an analysis is made of the way in which the flow of information to the intended reader is regulated. According to Genette (1980:161-211) this may be done in two ways: Either the amount of information furnished to the reader or the point of view according to which the information is orientated may vary from one narrative text to another. In discussing ‘point of view’ as a narrative technique of regulating the flow of information to the intended readers, Genette (1980:186-9) analyses the way in which the concept point of view has been used in the theoretical works of Lubbock, Blin, Stendhal, Brooks and Warren, and Stanzel, and indicates a confusion between the question ‘who is the character whose point of view orientates the narrative perspective?’ and the question ‘who is the narrator?’. In other words, the questions ‘who sees?’ and ‘who speaks?’ are confused. As a result of this confusion the systems for the classification of narrative developed by all these theoreticians were proven to be inadequate. In order to distinguish between these two categories Genette substitutes the concept focalisation for point of view, restricting it to the question ‘who is the character (if any) whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?’. The question ‘who is the narrator?’ is discussed in the last section of his book, Voice. Focalisation is then defined by Genette as ‘a selection of narrative information’ supplied to the reader:

The instrument of this possible selection is a situated focus, a sort of information conveying pipe that allows passage only of information that is authorised by the situation. (Genette 1988:34).

Three types of focalisation may then be identified:

* **Zero focalisation** (variable focalisation) where the narrator says more than any of the characters know.

* **Internal focalisation** where the focus coincides with one (or more) of the characters who is used as a subject of perception within the narrative.

* **External focalisation**, where the focus is situated outside every character. This means that nothing about any of the characters’ thoughts is narrated. (Genette 1980:189-94; 1988:72-8).
Following Genette, Mieke Bal (1985:104) defines focalisation as 'the relationship between the vision, the agent that sees and that which is seen'. This relationship is a component of the story part and may be summarised as follows:

A says that B sees what C is doing.

Although her concept of focalisation is based upon Genette's distinction between 'who sees?' and 'who is the narrator?' she parts company with him on several matters (cf Bal 1983:246-251). For example, she does not limit focalisation to a typology of narratives. Furthermore, she does not treat agents of focalisation and voice in isolation as, according to her, such a procedure conceals the parallelism of the organisation of these two concepts in narrative. Bal 1980:110-118) also distinguishes between focaliser and focalised object - a procedure for which she has subsequently been criticised by Genette (1988:76). Bal (1978:114-118; 1981:202-210) also distinguishes between different levels of focalisation within narratives.

Needless to say, much discussion was generated as different scholars grappled with Genette and Bal's new approach to point of view. It received favourable reaction from persons such as Martin (1986:145-147), Edminston (1989:730-735) and Fowler (1982:213) who adopted the basic distinctions and refined it in their own way. On the other hand, Jos Dembinski (1979:208-221) and Andreas Kablitz (1988:237-255) indicated problematic aspects in the concept focalisation. Bronzwaer (1981:193-201) criticised Bal's concept of focalisation as not powerful enough to account for all narratives. Chatman (1986:189-204) still prefers the use of 'point of view', suggesting new concepts such as 'filter' or 'slant' for describing different facets of point of view.

In the narrative analysis of biblical texts, scholars usually follow the traditional pattern by using the concept point of view. As examples of this approach the following works may be cited: Licht (1978:75-86), Rhoads and Michie (1982:43-44), Berlin (1983:42-82), Culpepper (1983:20-33), and Bar-Efrat (1989:14-17). However, two exceptions should be mentioned: Potgieter (1988:93-97) and Marais (1989:39-64) opted for focalisation in stead of point of view.

In this paper I opted for Rimmon-Kenan's approach to focalisation because she basically follows Genette in distinguishing between narration and focalisation, yet broadens the concept focalisation to incorporate cognitive, emotive and ideological orientation, that is, facets of 'point of view' distinguished by Uspensky. She defines focalisation as follows (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:71):

The story is presented in the text through the mediation of some 'prism', 'perspective', 'angle of vision' verbalised by the narrator though not necessarily his.
Following Rimmon-Kenan (1983:74-82) the following two aspects of focalisation are used as the framework for the analysis of focalisation in John 13-17.

1.1 Types of focalisation
Focalisation may be either external or internal to the story. In the case of external focalisation the locus of focalisation is outside the represented events, for example, in the case of a 'narrator-focaliser' (Bal 1977:37). In the case of internal focalisation the locus of focalisation is inside the represented events — in which case a character is frequently used as focaliser.

The contrast external/internal also applies to the focalised object. The focalised object may be presented either externally or internally.

A further important aspect of focalisation is the degree of persistence, as focalisation may either remain fixed throughout the narrative or it may alternate between two predominant focalisers.

1.2 Facets of focalisation
Rimmon-Kenan (1983:77-82) distinguishes the following three facets of focalisation:

Perceptual facet:
In this respect space and time are important. In spatial terms the focaliser's position may vary from a panoramic view to that of a limited observer. With regard to the temporal facet, the focaliser may have at his disposal all the temporal dimensions of the story (past, present and future) or it may be limited to the present and past experiences of the characters.

Psychological facet
The psychological facet concerns the cognitive and emotive components of focalisation. The cognitive component refers to the contrast between restricted and unrestricted knowledge of the focaliser. For example, whereas the narrator-focaliser knows everything about the narrated world, the internal focaliser is restricted in his knowledge.

In the case of the emotive component, the contrast between objective/neutral versus subjective/involved focalisation is important.

Ideological facet:
This facet refers to the way in which the characters and events of the story are evaluated. The ideological facet may be presented through a single dominant perspective or it may be that a plurality of ideological positions exist, striving amongst each other to become the dominant perspective (cf Lotman 1975:339-52).
2 FOCALISATION IN JOHN 13-17

Before analysing focalisation in John 13-17, a short summary of these five chapters will be given.

In John 13:1-20 the foot-washing (13:2-5) is narrated, followed by two interpretations, namely the foot-washing as symbolic of Jesus’ death (13:6-11) and the foot-washing as a moral example to the disciples (13:12-20). From a narrative perspective this section is presented by means of a mixture of descriptive pauses (13:1,3,11), scenic representation (e.g. 13:6-10) and summaries (e.g. 13:2).

In John 13:21-30 the betrayal is predicted, presented by means of descriptive pauses (e.g. 13:23) as well as scenic representation (13:25-6).

John 13:31-38 serves as the introduction to the First Farewell Discourse. Jesus’ departure is announced, the new commandment is given, and Peter’s denial is predicted. The whole section is presented by means of scenic representation.

The First Farewell Discourse (14:1-31) is also presented almost totally by means of scenic representation as the narrator’s words are restricted to introductory words such as λέγει αὐτῷ ἵνα ὁ Θεός and λέγει αὐτῷ Φίλαι πατέρες. Three sections may be distinguished, namely the presentation of Jesus as the way to the Father (14:1-14), the promise that Jesus, the Father and the Paraclete will come to those who love Jesus and keep his commandments (14:15-24), and the conclusion of the discourse (14:26-31) in which various themes which have been scattered throughout the discourse, are collected.

The Further Farewell Discourses (15:1-16:33) are also represented almost exclusively by means of scenic representation. Once again the narrator’s presence is restricted to introductory words such as εἶπαν οὖν ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἀλλήλους. Three sections may be distinguished: John 15:1-17 has as its theme bearing fruit and staying in love. In the second section (15:18-16:4a) the hatred which the disciples will have to endure is described, followed by an admonition to keep on witnessing through the Paraclete. In the third section (16:4b-33) Jesus’ departure and return are described as a time when the disciples will endure special privileges such as receiving the Paraclete, joy, understanding and having their requests granted.

In John 17, which is also presented by means of scenic representation, Jesus’ prayer is narrated. It consists of three sections: His prayer for his own glorification (17:1-5), his prayer for his disciples (17:6-19) and his prayer for those who will come to believe in him through the words of the disciples.

2.1 Type of focalisation

From a more technical perspective, the type of focalisation found in John 13-17
The function of focalisation may be described as external focalisation as the focaliser is external to the story. It may furthermore be described as narrator-focalisation as the vehicle of focalisation is obviously very close to the narrating agent. John 13:2-5 may be cited as an example:

\[\text{καὶ δεῖπνον γινομένου, τοῦ διαβόλου ἦδη βεβληκότος ἐλαὶ τὴν καρδίαν ἑνα παραδότων οὖν τὰς Σιμώνους ὑποκαριώτων, ἐξὼς ὅτι πάντα ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ παρήρ ἐλαὶ τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἑξῆλθεν καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν θεὸν ὑπάγει, ἐξείρηται ἐκ τοῦ δείπνου καὶ πάντων τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ λαβὼν λείτους διέξωσεν ἐαυτὸν ἐκ τὰς βάλλει ὑδρὸς ἐλαὶ τὸν κατῆρα καὶ ἔξεκα ὑπελεῖ τοὺς πόδας τῶν μαθητῶν καὶ ἐκμᾶσθεν τὰ ἱμάτια ὃ ἦν διέξωσεν.}\]

It is obvious that the events are focalised in such a way that the narrator-focaliser functions as an ‘onlooker’.

If we turn our attention to the object of focalisation — in other words, the focalised — it seems as if the focalised is viewed continually from without. However, there are some exceptions where the object of focalisation is focalised internally. In the Gospel of John these examples are usually limited in depth as they do not provide the intended readers with ‘profound or prolonged plunges into any of the characters’ (Culpepper 1983:24) as is the case in some modern narratives. Nevertheless, whenever the usual pattern of external focalisation of the focalised is changed to internal focalisation, it is usually significant.

In the case of the protagonist three ‘inside views’ are given. In John 13:1 it is said that Jesus knew beforehand that his hour had come to depart to the Father. In John 13:3 it is emphasised that Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and in John 13:11 it is said that Jesus knew who his traitor would be.

The 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 as that held by the narrator-focaliser, namely that Jesus was not taken by surprise by the events which happened to him during his hour, but that He, being the Son of God, had actually known beforehand everything that would happen to Him. In other words, the use of internal focalisation of the focalised in this case serves to communicate the ideological perspective\(^2\) to the intended readers.

The character Judas is also focalised internally on two occasions. In John 13:2

\(^2\) The ideological facet of the focalisation will be discussed in more detail in 2.2.3.
the narrator-focaliser informs the intended readers that Judas had already decided to betray Jesus. In John 13:27a internal focalisation is used very vividly:

καὶ μετὰ τὸ ψωμίον τότε ἐλεηθεὶς εἰς ἐκεῖνον ὁ σατανᾶς. λέγει οὖν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ πολεῖς ποίησον τάχιον.

The use of internal focalisation in this case serves a specific purpose as Judas’ act of betrayal is linked directly to the Satan, the ruler of this world, thus placing the events in Jesus’ hour of glorification in the right perspective: It is an attempt at annihilating Jesus — not only by the Jewish religious leaders, but also by Satan.

The other disciples are usually focalised externally with John 13:28-29 as the only exception. In this case the inside view of the disciples’ minds serves as a confirmation of the ignorance of the disciples — a characteristic which manifests itself throughout these five chapters.

2.2 Facets of focalisation

2.2.1 The perceptual facet:
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 (Culpepper 1983:26-8).

One would suspect that the same type of focalisation would be found in John 13-17. However, it is interesting that the ability of the narrator-focaliser to focus simultaneously on events at different places is never used in these five chapters. Instead, one gets the impression that the narrator-focaliser is limited to the place (let us call it a room) where the foot-washing and farewell discourses are taking place. This impression is strengthened by the way in which the departure of Judas is focalised: λαξίων οὖν τὸ ψωμίον ἐκεῖνος ἐξῆλθεν εὐθὺς. ἤν δὲ νῦξ.

In this statement Judas’ departure is focalised as a moving out (ἐξερχόμαι) from the focalised space (the room where the foot-washing and farewell discourses are taking place) to the outside. Once again the question should be asked: What is the effect of this technique? To my mind, by limiting the focalised space to the room where the farewell discourses are taking place, the narrator-focaliser succeeds in conveying the intimate atmosphere between Jesus and his φίλοι to the intended readers. Furthermore, the words ἤν δὲ νῦξ which have symbolic overtones (Schnackenburg 1982:32; Brown 1984:579), add a further dimension to this inside/outside tension: By leaving this intimate atmosphere Judas disappears into the night, symbolic of the κόσμος, the realm of darkness, of which he has become a definite part, and which is planning to kill the One sent by the
With regard to the temporal facet of focalisation, the narrator-focaliser restricts himself in these five chapters to the ‘present’ of the events narrated in spite of the fact that it is clear from the rest of the Gospel that he has at his disposal all the temporal dimensions of the story (Culpepper 1983:28-32). What is interesting, however, is that the narrator-focaliser makes use of the protagonist to focalise the future. For example, the betrayal by Judas, the denial by Peter, the crucifixion and resurrection — all events lying on the story level in the near future — are all focalised through the protagonist. Even the distant future (on story level) is focalised through the protagonist. See John 14:15-24, 15:18-16:4a; 16:16-33.

What is the effect of this technique? It may be twofold: On the one hand, it serves as a further characterisation of the protagonist as being an exceptional person who has full knowledge of the future, near or distant. On the other hand, it serves the purpose of reassuring the intended readers (who are living in the ‘distant future’ of the story) that the things experienced by them in that situation were actually foreseen by the protagonist. The fact that these events were happening to them could thus be interpreted by them as a confirmation of the identity of Jesus. Furthermore, this may serve as an inspiration to them to view their current situation in the same light as it was focalised by Jesus, namely as an opportunity to witness under the guidance of the Paraclete (Jn 15:26-7; 16:7-10). In particular the focalisation in John 17:20-23 must have had a powerful effect: The narrator-focaliser focalises on the protagonist who is focalising in his prayer on the intended readers!

2.2.2 Psychological facet
With regard to the cognitive component of focalisation the most interesting aspect is the contrast between the narrator-focaliser and the protagonist, on the one hand, who know everything, and the disciples, on the other hand, who only have limited knowledge and who do not understand at all what is going to happen to Jesus. This is demonstrated regularly, for example, at the announcement of the betrayal (Jn 13:21-30), the announcement of Peter’s denial (Jn 13:36-8), the scene between Philip and Jesus (Jn 14:8-11) and the discussion of the ‘little while’ (Jn 16:16-24). This contrast is used by the narrator-focaliser to emphasise the protagonist’s identity.

With regard to the emotive facet it is virtually impossible to detect any emotional involvement of the narrator-focaliser with regard to the events narrated and therefore the emotional facet of focalisation may be described as ‘neutral’ or ‘uninvolved’. This may seem strange, especially if one compares this ‘neutrality’ in the emotive facet of focalisation with the way the ideological facet of focalisation is dominated totally by a specific view of Jesus. However, one may speculate
that this supposed neutrality on the emotional level may in fact serve the purpose of underscoring the ideological facet of focalisation, as the supposed emotional ‘neutrality’ of the narrator-focaliser may be interpreted by the intended readers as a sign of the reliability of the narrator-focaliser.

With regard to the focalised the situation is different. The protagonist is focalised in such a way that it is clear that, with the exception of John 13:21, he is emotionally calm. In fact the picture portrayed during the Farewell Discourses and Last Prayer is that of someone who is in complete control of the situation.

It is surprising, that although Judas is the only disciple in the Gospel who is focalised internally (Jn 12:4,6, 13:2; 13:27; 18:2) nothing is mentioned about his emotional state. This may be because it would have been of no relevancy to the ideological facet of focalisation. He is primarily viewed not as a character in his own right, but as an instrument used by the κόσμος in its struggle against the light.

Thus, the psychological facet of focalisation is manipulated in such a way that the reliability of the narrator-focaliser is underscored and the protagonist’s identity is emphasised.

2.2.3 Ideological facet:
Before the ideological facet of focalisation in John 13-17 is analysed, the ideological orientation of the Gospel as a whole will be summarised. The ideological orientation of the Gospel of John is largely related to the question of Jesus’ identity. The narrative is focalised in such a way that it becomes clear that the protagonist is to be viewed as a unique character. As the Son of God, he is sent by the Father to the κόσμος where he reveals his σωτηρία to mankind through various signs. The revelation of his σωτηρία comes to a climax during his ‘hour’, that is his crucifixion and resurrection. Furthermore, it is stressed throughout the Gospel that mankind’s reaction to the protagonist is twofold: On the one hand there are those who accept his identity (this process is described as belief, knowledge or sight) and receive eternal life. On the other hand there are those who reject his identity and deliberately choose to remain a part of the κόσμος.

The ideological orientation of John 13-17 agrees to a large extent with that of the Gospel as a whole. For example, in John 13:1 and 13:11 descriptive pauses are used by the narrator to emphasise Jesus’ foreknowledge of events which still lie in the future. Both statements portray Jesus as being in full control of the situation — thus underscoring his identity as the Son of God.

The way in which Jesus is focalised in the rest of John 13-17 emphasises this ideological orientation. It is only at the announcement of the betrayal (13:21) that Jesus becomes ‘deeply troubled’. In the rest of these chapters He is focalised as being in complete control of the situation: He encourages the disciples. He explains the coming events. He admonishes them to keep his commandments. He
promises the coming of the Paraclete. He prays for them. In short, he is focalised throughout as the central figure, confident and in charge of future events.

On the other hand, the disciples are focalised in such a way that exactly the opposite is true in their case: They do not understand the footwashing (13:7). They are dumbfounded at the announcement of a traitor in their midst (13:22). They do not recognise Judas as the traitor when he leaves (13:28). They are distressed at Jesus' announcement of his departure (14:1). They do not understand his words. At the end of the discourse, it seems as if a positive development has taken place as they declare confidently that they understand Jesus' plain speaking (Jn 16:29). However, the events in chapters 18-19 reveal that they have not fully understood Jesus.

The way in which Jesus' disciples is focalised, functions as a contrast to the focalisation of the protagonist, thus underscoring the narrator-focaliser’s effort to answer the question 'who is Jesus?' by showing the reader that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In accepting this ideological facet of the focalisation, the intended reader will receive true life, a meaningful existence — even in times of persecution.

It is also important to investigate those facets of focalisation that do not necessarily coincide with the ideological orientation of the Gospel as a whole, but which are important in these five chapters. In this respect special attention should be given to the fact that the narrator uses the protagonist as a focaliser on the events which form the distant future at story level, but which are, in fact, the present for the intended readers. From the Farewell Discourses it may be deduced that the intended readers are portrayed as living under severe stress due to the hostility of the world. The ideological facet of focalisation has been orientated to their needs in two ways:

On the one hand they would receive comfort from the fact that the things happening to them were actually foreseen by Jesus (Jn 15:18-16:4a). This would serve to strengthen their faith in the protagonist.

On the other hand, they are summoned to demonstrate their relationship to the protagonist by means of their style of living — even under such circumstances. Amongst other things, this includes the following: Obeying the new commandment (Jn 13:31-8); living under the guidance of the Paraclete (Jn 14:15-31); abiding in Jesus as the true vine (Jn 15:1-17); being aware of the danger of falling away from Jesus (Jn 16:1-4a); being sanctified in his word (Jn 7:17-19) and striving for unity (Jn 17:20-23).

3 CONCLUSION

The object of this paper was to present an analysis of the focalisation in John 13-17 in an effort to establish the effect this would have had on the intended readers.
From a more technical perspective, the type of focalisation found in John 13-17 may be described as external narrator-focalisation where the narrator-focaliser functions as an ‘onlooker’. With a few exceptions the object of focalisation is viewed continually from without. It was argued that these examples of external focalisation being changed into internal focalisation are significant in that they serve as a very effective way of conveying an ideological orientation to the reader.

With regard to the perceptual facet, the most important observation was the fact that the narrator-focaliser restricts himself spatially and temporally in these five chapters and, instead, uses the protagonist for focalising the the future. It was argued that the limiting of the focalised space to the ‘room’ where the events are taking place is an effective way of conveying the intimate atmosphere to the intended readers. Furthermore, it was argued that the technique of focalising the future through the protagonist serves an ideological purpose.

With regard to the psychological facet, it became clear that the cognitive component is manipulated in such a way that the intended reader must reach the conclusion that the protagonist was a unique person. Emotionally, the narrator-focaliser remains neutral or uninvolved — something which may be interpreted by the intended readers as a sign of reliability. With regard to the focalised, it is important that the protagonist is focalised as emotionally calm, whereas the opposite is true of the disciples.

With regard to the third facet of focalisation — the ideological facet — it was argued that the ideological orientation of John 13-17 largely agrees with that of the Gospel as a whole, but that in these five chapters several important additional ideological facets are added to the general ideological orientation of the Gospel of John.

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