Yes, the man blind from birth that Jesus heals is referred to in a variety of ways in the Greek text of Jn 9 (not that you would know that from translations into English).

- In v 7, there is no overt reference to him (represented as Ø): Θ ἀπήλθεν οὖν καὶ Θ ἐνίψατο καὶ Θ ἠλθεν βλέπων (‘he’—NRSV; ‘the man’—NIV).
- In v 9, he is referred to with the distal demonstrative ἐκείνος: ἐκείνος ἔλεγεν (‘he’—NRSV; ‘he himself’—NIV).
- In v 15, he is referred to with the articular pronoun ὁ: ὁ δὲ ἔλευσεν αὐτοῖς (‘he’—NRSV; ‘the man’—NIV).
- In v 30, he is referred to with an articular noun (phrase) (hereafter, abbreviated to NP): ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος (‘the man’—NRSV and NIV).
- In addition, he is referred to within a reported speech with the proximal demonstrative ὁς (e.g., in v 8). Since this paper concentrates on the way activated participants are referred to in narrative, though, I will instead use Jn 1:41 (εὐφρίσκει ὁς πρῶτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τὸν ἴδιον Σίμωνα) as a narrative example of ὁς (‘he’—NRSV; ‘Andrew’—NIV).
- The independent pronoun αὐτός is NOT used as an intensive pronoun to refer to the man blind from birth, so I will use Lk 22:41 (καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπεστάπη ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ὡσεὶ λίθῳ βολήν) as an illustration (‘he’—NRSV & NIV).

The above examples show that, once someone has been introduced to a Greek narrative,3 he or she may be referred to (‘encoded’) as subject in a number of ways.4 In ascending order of size, we have already met the following encodings: zero (complete ellipsis) – articular pronoun – independent pronoun – proximal demonstrative – distal demonstrative – articular NP. Combinations of these categories are also possible. For example, a noun can be preceded by an intensive pronoun or a proximal demonstrative or a distal demonstrative.

We have also seen that translations into English often leave us guessing as to which form of reference was used. For instance, the NRSV uses ‘he’ to render ellipsis and the articular pronoun and the intensive pronoun and the proximal demonstrative and the distal demonstrative! Either it is not important for exegetes to know how the Greek referred to a participant, or else we are missing part of the original author’s message when we rely on translations into English. One goal of this paper is to convince you that it is the latter which is true!

We begin by talking about the job that a system of reference to participants must accomplish.

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1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at a lunchtime seminar at Tyndale House, Cambridge, England, in November 2014.
3 For discussion of the different ways that participants are introduced to a story, see ibid., §8.1. For the significance of placing τις before versus after the noun it modifies when introducing participants, see Stephen H. Levinsohn and Anthony G. Pope, *Τις Noun Order as an Anchoring Device in Luke-Acts* (paper presented at the International Conference of the Society of Biblical Literature, Rome, Italy, July 2009; online at www.sil.org/~levinsohns/papers).
4 This paper only discusses different ways of referring to participants who are the subject of a clause or sentence.
1. The tasks of a system of participant reference

The way a participant is referred to is influenced by three ‘tasks’:5

- **semantic**: identify the referents unambiguously, distinguishing them from other possible ones;
- **pragmatic**: signal the activation status and prominence of the referents or of the actions they perform;
- **processing**: overcome disruptions in the flow of information.

We consider these three tasks in turn.

The **semantic** task: to identify the referents unambiguously, distinguishing them from other possible ones. Greek authors will only use ellipsis or a pronominal form if they believe that their readers will be able to work out who the intended referent is.

The **pragmatic** task: to signal the activation status and prominence of the referents or of the actions they perform. There are two parts to this task: activation status and prominence.

‘Activation status’6 refers to whether the referent is being introduced (activated) or reintroduced (reactivated), is currently on stage (active), or otherwise is accessible.7 Authors want their readers to know whether the participant to whom they are referring is one that they have met before. The presence versus absence of the article relates to this task.8 In addition, third person pronouns and ellipsis are not used unless the participant is currently on stage (active).

As for prominence, this is where it gets interesting. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 will argue that each of the pronouns and demonstratives has a part to play in telling us who is ‘thematic’9 (i.e., the current centre of attention in the story), who is ‘athematic’ (other than the current centre of attention), and which actions or speeches performed by the participants are particularly noteworthy.

Finally, the **processing** task: to overcome disruptions in the flow of information. Remember the old school adage: don’t begin a new paragraph with a pronoun! The reason is this: when a sentence begins with a clause or phrase that indicates a change of time or place or theme, it marks what Givón calls a ‘discontinuity’ in the flow of the discourse.10 The same is true when writers interrupt their description of events to introduce some background information.11 Quite often, when such a discontinuity occurs, they make explicit reference to the participants, even when there has been no change in their roles.

This is illustrated in Jn 6:1 (Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀπῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πέραν τῆς βαλάσσης τῆς Γαλιλαίας τῆς Τιβεριάδος). The sentence begins with μετὰ ταῦτα to signal a change of time, then names Jesus, even though he was the reported speaker at the end of the previous chapter.

2. Default and Marked Encodings for Subjects

I now discuss how to analyse the system of reference to activated participants that languages employ. Initial efforts to do so involved statistical studies.12 However, it soon became apparent that ‘such studies only reveal tendencies’.13

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8 See Levinsohn, *Discourse Features*, §9.2.1.
9 ‘Prominence may be given to an entity after it has been introduced, to draw attention to it. “Pay attention to the person or object about which I’m speaking!” A thematically prominent entity will have a significant role to play in the subsequent discourse’ (Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis* (online at www.sil.org/~levinsohns, 2013), §4.6.1). Thematically prominent entities are also described ‘as salient (the centre of attention)’ (ibid., §9.1.1).
12 See, for example, the articles on different languages in Talmy Givón (ed.), *Topic Continuity in Discourse* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1983).
A more insightful analysis involves default and marked encoding.

- **Default** encoding values are identified for specific situations.
- **Marked** encoding values are those that are other than the default encoding for each situation.

I first discuss three specific situations for which it is useful to identify default encoding values. I then distinguish two types of marked encoding: over-encoding (using more coding material than the default value) and under-encoding (using less coding material than the default value).

### 2.1 Default encoding values for subjects

The following are three specific situations for which it is useful to identify default encoding values:

1. When the subject is the same as before;
2. When the new subject was the addressee of a speech reported in the previous clause or sentence;
3. other changes of subject.

1. When the subject is the same as before, then the default encoding value in all languages is the **minimum** that the syntax will allow. So, in most contexts in NT Greek, the default is simple ellipsis, as in Jn 9:7: ἀπῆλθεν οὖν καὶ Θεὸς ἐνίψατο καὶ ἦλθεν βλέπων.\(^{15}\)

2. When the subject was the addressee of a speech reported in the previous clause or sentence, then the default value in NT Greek is either ellipsis or an articular pronoun, depending on the author and other factors.\(^{16}\) In Jn 1:20b-23 (below), for instance, the reported conversation is between John the Baptist (singular) and a group of Jewish leaders (plural), so verb inflection is sufficient to ‘identify the referents unambiguously’ (the speech orienter is omitted in 21c).\(^{17}\)

καὶ ἠμολογήσαν ὅτι Ἔγω οὖν εἰμί ὁ Χριστός.
\(^{21}\) καὶ Θεὸς ἠρώτησαν ἀυτὸν, Τί οὖν; Σὺ Ἡλίας εἶ;
καὶ Θεὸς λέγει, Οὐκ εἰμί.
Ὁ προφήτης εἶ σὺ;
καὶ Θεὸς ἀπεκρίθη, ὦδ.

3. For most other changes of subject, the default encoding value is an articular NP. In Jn 9:1 (below), for instance, no reference is made to Jesus’ disciples, so they are reactivated in v 2 with the noun phrase oĩ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ.

καὶ συνέλαβον καὶ ἠνθρώπων τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετής.

καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες...

### 2.2 Marked encodings for subjects

As noted above, marked encodings are of two types:

- **over-encoding** (using more encoding material than the default value); and
- **under-encoding** (using less encoding material than the default value).

**Over-encoding** is most common when the default encoding value is the minimum that the language allows. This is the case in Greek when the subject remains the same or when the new subject was the addressee of a speech reported in the previous clause or sentence (see sec. 2.1). In most such situations, any overt reference to the subject constitutes over-encoding.

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\(^{14}\) In more detailed discussions of participant reference, the norm is to set up a separate category for occasions when ‘a non-subject in one clause becomes the subject of the next’ (Levinsohn, *Discourse Features*, §8.2).

\(^{15}\) The default encoding when the subject remains the same is an independent pronoun in genitives absolute and when a clause needs to begin with an overt subject (*ibid*).

\(^{16}\) See sec. 3.5 for further discussion of the use of an articular pronoun.

\(^{17}\) See also Jn 9:12.
So the reference to the man in Jn 9:30 (ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἤνθρωπος) constitutes over-encoding, as he was replying to something that the religious authorities had said to him (vv 28-29) and the default encoding for such a situation in John’s Gospel is complete ellipsis.

Section 3 discusses five types of over-encoding.

First, though, some comments about **under-encoding**. Under-encoding can only be discerned when the default encoding value is an articular NP; i.e., for changes of subject unless the new subject was the addressee of a speech reported in the previous clause or sentence. In such situations, anything less than an articular NP constitutes under-encoding.

So the absence of reference to Jesus in Mt 4:12 (Θ Ἀκούσας δὲ ὦτι Ἰωάννης παρεδόθη ἄνεχώρησεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν) constitutes under-encoding, as the subject of the previous verse was the angels (καὶ ἵδον ἄγγελοι προσήλθουν καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ) and the default encoding for such a situation is an articular NP.

Under-encoding typically occurs when the referent is the centre of attention for part or all of the narrative. Such a referent is sometimes called the ‘VIP’ or the ‘central character’. I note elsewhere that, ‘Typically, less coding material is used to refer to the VIP than to other participants’, and cite examples from African languages.

In the Gospels, the VIP is usually Jesus and, at the beginning of new narrative units, the norm is not to name him (except in genitives absolute, where an independent pronoun is used), even when he was not the subject of the previous clause. This explains the absence of overt reference to Jesus, not only at Mt 4:12, but also, with various degrees of MS support, at Mt 4:18, 4:23 and 5:1.

‘Since the default encoding for the global VIP as subject is no overt reference, then any overt reference to Jesus as subject once he has been activated is marked encoding. Overt reference (typically, naming him) is indicative of one of two situations in the Synoptic Gospels:

- a major break in the story (e.g., because of a significant change of theme or situation)
- a key speech or action.

In the first part of Mark’s Gospel, for instance, Jesus is named at 1:14 (Μετὰ δὲ τὸ παραδόθην τὸν Ἰωάννην ἤλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ) and 3:7 (Καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἄνεχώρησεν πρὸς τὴν βάλασσαν), but not at the beginning of any other generally recognised pericope. This distribution is consistent with Lane’s claim that ‘The first major section of Mark’s Gospel extends from Ch. 1:14 to Ch. 3:6’.

In the same section of Mark’s Gospel, Jesus is named (most of which are instances of over-encoding, anyhow—see sec. 3) when key speeches are introduced at 1:17, 1:25, 2:5, 2:8, 2:17 and 2:19. E.g. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοίς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Δεῦτε ὁπίσω μου, καὶ ποιήσω υἱὰς γενέσθαι ἁλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (1:17). The rhetorical effect is to highlight the content of the speeches.

### 3. Specific types of over-encoding

This section discusses the following types of over-encoding: articular NPs, intensive pronouns, proximal demonstratives and distal demonstratives. It also includes some remarks about when articular pronouns are used.

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18 See Levinsohn, *Discourse Features*, §8.3.
21 See also the following places in Mk 1 where the subject changes to Jesus but no overt reference is made to him: vv 13, 19, 20, 21, 22b, 29 and 34.
22 Naming Jesus at the beginning of pericopes is much more frequent in John’s Gospel.
3.1 Articular NPs

We noted in sec. 1 that writers tend to make explicit reference to the participants in a narrative when a discontinuity of time, place or theme occurs, even when there has been no change in their roles.\(^{25}\) Jn 6:1 (Μετὰ ταύτα ἀπῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πέραν τῆς βαλάνσιας τῆς Γαλιλαίας τῆς Τιβερίας) was cited as an illustration. Jesus was the subject of the previous speech (5:19-47), so naming him constitutes over-encoding. The initial time expression (Μετὰ ταύτα) provides the motivation for such encoding, as it signals a discontinuity involving a switch to a later time.

Contrast Jn 9:1 (Καὶ Ο Παράγων ἔδειν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετήρι). The encoding is default (the subject remains the same) and the absence of an initial expression of time or place implies that there is no discontinuity with the scene described in the previous sentence (Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἔκρυβη καὶ ἔξηλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ—8:59).

Over-encoding may also be employed as a device to mark the beginning of a new narrative unit when no discontinuity is indicated. So, in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, the beginning of each round is marked by an explicit reference to the devil, even though he was the addressee of Jesus’ previous speech (Τότε περιλαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος εἰς τὴν ἀγίαν πόλιν—4:5; Πάλιν περιλαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος εἰς ὀρος ψηλόν λιαν—ν 8).\(^{26}\)

One aspect of the pragmatic task of a system of participant reference was to signal the prominence of the referents or of the actions they perform, and over-encoding often has such an effect, as the overt reference to a participant when none was necessary can function as a slowing down device that creates the expectation that something important is about to be described.\(^{27}\) This is illustrated in Jn 9:30 (ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἐπεν αὐτοῖς). Both the apparently redundant speech orienter (ἀπεκρίθη ... καὶ ἐπεν)\(^{28}\) and the overt reference to the speaker (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) create the expectation that what the man has to say (νν 30-33) will be important.

Whereas over-encoding by means of an articular NP either marks the beginning of a new narrative unit or gives prominence to the following speech or action, intensive pronouns and demonstratives help to identify who is currently thematic (the centre of attention). The following sub-sections discuss the specific function of each category.

3.2 The intensive pronoun

According to Dana and Mantey, the independent pronoun αὐτός is used as an intensive ‘to emphasize identity’.\(^{29}\) Typically, when αὐτός is the subject of a narrative sentence, its referent is thematic.

Consider the use of αὐτός in Lk 22:41 (below). The subject is the same as that of ν 40, so we might have expected it to be elided. However, when a speaker instructs the addressees to do something, the norm is for attention to switch to the addresses as they respond to the instruction, so the presence of αὐτός ensures that attention remains on Jesus.

The subject of Jn 2:24 (αὐτός δὲ Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔπιστευν αὐτῶν αὐτοῖς) is different from that of the previous sentence, so default encoding would have been an articular noun. Adding αὐτός ‘intensifies the subject’,\(^{30}\) with the pragmatic effect of highlighting what is said about Jesus in νν 24-25.

Lk 3:23 (Καὶ αὐτός ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἀρχόμενος ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάχοντο) illustrates the combination of αὐτός and additional over-encoding (the naming of Jesus) in connection with a discontinuity—in this case, because Luke interrupts his description of events involving Jesus to introduce some background

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25 See Lk 3:23 (discussed in sec. 3.2) for over-encoding in connection with a different type of discontinuity.
26 Contrast Luke’s account; he makes no reference to the devil at the beginning of either the second or the third round.
27 Levinsohn, Discourse Features, §12.1.
28 ‘[T]he long orienter ἀπεκρίθη καὶ ἐπεν highlights the response’ (Levinsohn, Discourse Features, §15.2).
information (his genealogy). Jesus was the addressee of the previous speech (καὶ φωνὴν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γενέσθαι, Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοί εὐδόκησα) so, theoretically, it was unnecessary to make further reference to him. Given, though, that John the Baptist had been thematic in the previous pericope, the use of αὐτός ensures that Jesus, rather than John, is now the centre of attention.

3.3 The Proximal Demonstrative

I have elsewhere claimed that, when used anaphorically, one of the functions of ὁ ὅτις is ‘to switch attention from the thematic participant of the passage as a whole to another participant who temporarily becomes the centre of attention’.31

A common pattern, cross-linguistically, is for a new participant to be introduced in a non-event sentence, then to be referred to again with a thematic pronoun if he or she is the subject of the next. This is illustrated in Jn 1:41 (εὐρίσκει ὁ ὅτις πρῶτον τὸν ἀδελφόν τὸν Ἰδιον Σίμωνα). The previous verse (‘Ἡ Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος Πέτρου εἶς ἐκ τῶν δύο τῶν ἀκουσάντων παρὰ Ἰωάννου καὶ ἀκολουθήσαντον αὐτῷ—v 40) is of a background nature, as it is copular. As the event line resumes, the use of ὁ ὅτις marks Andrew as the temporary centre of attention, rather than Jesus.32

Lk 2:25 (καὶ ὁ ἀνήροις ὁ ὅτις δίκαιος καὶ εὐλαβής προσδεχόμενος παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ) illustrates the combination of ὁ ὅτις and additional encoding (ὁ ἀνήροις). Simeon is marked as the temporary centre of attention, rather than Joseph and Mary.33 The effect of the additional encoding must be to highlight what is said about him.

3.4 The Distal Demonstrative

The demonstrative ἐκεῖνος indicates remoteness from some reference point.34 When the behaviour of two participants or groups of participants is contrasted, this may simply mean that ἐκεῖνος refers ‘to a more distant noun’.35 So, in Lk 18:14 (λέγω ὡμίν, κατέβη ὁ ὅτις δεδικαιωμένος εἰς τὸν όικὸν αὐτοῦ παρ' ἐκεῖνον), ‘ὁ ὅτις refers to the tax collector (mentioned in the immediately preceding verse), whereas ἐκεῖνος refers to the Pharisee (the more distant referent).36

See also Jn 2:21 (ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ), which relates back to what Jesus said in v 19, rather than to the reaction of the Jews that is reported in v 20. (Using ἐκεῖνος, rather than ὁ Ἰησοῦς, seems to make the contrast stronger.)37

However, ἐκεῖνος often refers to someone who has only just been mentioned.38 In such circumstances, ‘remote from some reference point’ means that ‘animate participants in a narrative text who are designated with ἐκεῖνος are typically athematic’.39 In other words, the current centre of attention is

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32 See also Jn 3:2 (following the introduction of Nicodemus), 4:47 (following the introduction of an officer whose son was ill in Capernaum) and 6:71 (the first reference in the Gospel to Judas Iscariot); Lk 8:41 (following the introduction of Jairus) and 23:51-52 (following the introduction of Joseph of Arimathaea).
33 Ibid.
34 Porter, Idioms, 134.
36 Levinsohn, Unified linguistic description of ὁ ὅτις and ἐκεῖνος, 205.
37 ἐκεῖνος is emphatic, “He, on the contrary” (J. H. Bernard, The International Critical Commentary, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928], I.96). Although Jesus was the addressee of the previous speech, there is a discontinuity of situation (Levinsohn, Narrative, §2.4.4) because of the switch from events to a background comment, so some overt reference to him would be expected.
39 Levinsohn, Unified linguistic description of ὁ ὅτις and ἐκεῖνος, 207. In contrast, Bernard (John, 1,9), states, ‘Jn. uses [ἐκεῖνος] to express emphasis, or to mark out clearly the person who is the main subject of the sentence’.
some other participant, even though the presence of ἐκεῖνος represents over-encoding, thereby giving some prominence to the action performed by the participant.

This is seen in Mk 16:9-13 (below) and again in v 20, where ‘forms of ἐκεῖνος refer to the participants with whom Jesus interacts following the resurrection. Because the sentences concerned describe events involving these participants, the reader would naturally assume that they become the centre of attention. The presence of ἐκεῖνος counteracts this assumption and ensures that Jesus remains thematic [the centre of attention] throughout the passage’.  

9 [‘[Ἀναστάς δὲ πρωί πρώτῃ σαββάτου ἐφάνη πρώτον Μαρία τῇ Μαγδαληνῇ, παρ’ ἦς ἐκβεβλήκει ἐπτά δαίμονια.]

10 ἐκεῖνη πορευθείσα ἀπήγγειλεν τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ γενομένοις πνεύμοις καὶ κλαίουσιν.

11 κάκεινοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ζῆ καὶ ἑβαπτὴ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς ἡπιστήσαν.

12 Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δυσὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν περιπατοῦσιν ἐφανερώθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ πορευομένοις ἐκ ἀγρῶν.

13 κάκεινοι ἀπελθόντες ἀπῆγγειλαν τοῖς λοιποῖς· odē ἐκεῖνος ἐπίστευσαν.

John’s Gospel uses ἐκεῖνος quite often to indicate that someone other than the referent is or is about to be thematic.\(^{41}\) Consider 1:6-9 (below). John the Baptist is introduced in v 6, then referred to again with ὁ δεῖ, introducing a comment about him (the temporary centre of attention—sec. 3.3). In v 8, however, ἐκεῖνος indicates that he ceases to be thematic, as attention switches back to ‘the light’ (v v 5, 8).\(^{42}\) This in turn allows the subject of v 9 to be left implicit (an instance of under-encoding—sec. 2.2).

6 'Ἐγένετο ἀνθρωπός, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης

7 ὁ δεῖ ἐς εἰς μαρτυρίαν μαρτυρήσαι περί τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν ἵνα αὐτοῦ.

8 οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περί τοῦ φωτός.

9 Ὁ Ἰησοῦς οὗ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν...

'Ἐκεῖνος is used four times in the narrative of Jn 9 and, on each occasion, its referent is the man who was born blind.\(^{44}\)

In v 9c (ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγεν ὅτι Ἐγὼ ἐμί), his speech contrasts with those of the previous speakers (9a-b), so ἐκεῖνος may well have been used because the referent is the ‘more distant noun’.\(^{45}\)

However, in v 11 (ἀπεκρίθη ἐκεῖνος, Ὁ ἀνθρωπός ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰησοῦς πηλὸν ἐποίησεν...), he was the addressee of the question of v 10. Since the default encoding for subjects in such a situation is ellipsis, the use of ἐκεῖνος represents an instance of over-encoding, thereby giving some prominence to what the man says. At the same time, the use of ἐκεῖνος in particular implies that he is athematic. In other words, John is indicating that someone else is the centre of attention. It could be that attention is currently on the neighbours, as they, rather than the man, determine how the story will develop by taking him to the Pharisees (v 13). As we meet more instances of ἐκεῖνος as the story progresses, though, its presence may actually be a reminder that the real centre of attention is Jesus.

Similar comments can be made about ἐκεῖνος in v 25 (ἀπεκρίθη ὅν ἐκεῖνος, Ἐλ ἀμαρτωλός ἦσιν οὐκ οἶμα). Over-encoding gives some prominence to what the man says, while reminding us that the

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40 Levinsohn, ibid., 208. As fn. 17 points out, ‘The absence of overt reference to Jesus in Mk 16:9-14 also implies that he is thematic’ (see sec. 2.2).

41 ἐκεῖνος is used substantially, whether as subject or obliquely, with unusual frequency in Jn., the figures for its occurrence in the four Gospels being … Mt. 4, Mk. 3, Lk. 4, Jn. 51’ (Bernard, John, I.9).

42 'The reference to the “light” in 1:8 becomes a catchword for the resumption of focus on the main subject of the prologue' (Jo-Anna A. Brant, John [ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ Commentaries on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011], 32).

43 'The Greek of this verse is somewhat awkward, as the verb “was” appears to have no subject’ (Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John. The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 82).

44 ἐκεῖνος also appears three times in the reported speeches of Jn 9 (vv 12, 28, 37); see below on its significance in v 37.

45 Schnackenburg, Johannine Epistles, 72, fn. 3.
centre of attention is elsewhere. It could be that attention is currently on the religious leaders, since in v 24 they put him under oath and, dissatisfied with his responses, then excommunicate him (v 34). Once again, though, its presence is more likely to be a reminder that the real centre of attention is Jesus.

This seems to be confirmed by the use of ἐκείνος in v 36 (ἀπεκρίθη ἐκείνος [καὶ εἶπεν], Καὶ τίς ἐστιν, κύριε, ἲνα πιστεύσω εἰς αὐτόν;). This time, both the over-encoding and, in most MSS, the use of the long speech orienter ἀπεκρίθη ... καὶ εἶπεν, give prominence to the question with which the man counters Jesus’ question of v 35 (‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’—NIV). Once again, though, ἐκείνος indicates that he is atheomatic. Instead, Jesus remains the centre of attention as he both answers the question (v 36) and, more to the point, provides in v 39 ‘the interpretation of the story, for this miracle was a σημείον’.  

The final instance of ἐκείνος in Jn 9 is a non-narrative one, in Jesus’ reply of v 37: Καὶ ἐώρακας αὐτόν καὶ ὅ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκείνος ἢστιν. The reported conversation began with Jesus asking, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ (v 35)—a question whose topic is ‘you’. The man’s counter-question of v 36 (‘And who is he, sir, so that I may believe in him?’) changes the topic to ‘he’; i.e., ‘the Son of Man’. The referent of topical ἐκείνος in Jesus’ reply is still ‘the Son of Man’, so the use of ἐκείνος could serve as a reminder to return to the original topic: the ‘you’ of the question, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ and respond to that, which the man does in v 38, with the words Πιστεύω, κύριε.

I conclude that a proper appreciation of the role of ἐκείνος in narrative and, indeed, in non-narrative, helps us to appreciate the bigger picture and recognise which participant is the current centre of attention.

3.5 The Articular Pronoun

Throughout the New Testament, the articular pronoun δ (accompanied by the connective particle δέ) is used in narrative to refer to a new subject who was the addressee of the previous speech. I have elsewhere claimed that, at least in Luke–Acts and John, speeches or actions performed by this new subject ‘are simply intermediate steps en route to the goal of the conversation’.

Lk 10:25-28 (below) is typical of such conversations. The orienters that introduce the speeches of vv 26 and 27 begin with an articular pronoun. This is because it is the speech of v 28 that answers the question of v 25, whereas the speeches of vv 26 and 27 are only intermediate steps to the realization of that goal.

[INITIAL SPEECH] 25 Καὶ ἰδοὺ νομικός τῆς ἀνέστη ἐκπειράζων αὐτόν λέγων, Διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσῃ;

[INTERMEDIATE STEP] 26 δέ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν, Ἔν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται; πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις;

[INTERMEDIATE STEP] 27 δέ ἀποκρίθη εἶπεν, Ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου...


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46 ‘The words are a form of adjuration ... to tell the truth’ (Henry Alford, The Greek Testament [London: Rivingtons, 1883], I.807).

47 Ibid., I.809.

48 B. F. Westcott (The Gospel According to St. John [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1881], II.44) describes the question as ‘eager, urgent, wondering… The thought which it meets seems to be beyond hope’.

49 Bernard, John, II.339.


51 Levinsohn, Discourse Features, §13.1.
Every non-initial speech of Ac 12:14b-15 (below) is introduced with an articular pronoun. This is because what is important to the ongoing story is not the individual speeches, but the goal as it affects Peter (his purpose in knocking is that someone open the door!). Furthermore, this goal is not even attained by the conversation, but only because Peter continues knocking (v 16).  

[INITIAL SPEECH] εἰσδραμοῦσα δὲ ἀπήγγειλεν ἕστανε τὸν Πέτρον πρὸ τοῦ πυλῶνος.

[INTERMEDIATE STEP] 15 οὐ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἐπανεις, Μαίνη.

[INTERMEDIATE STEP] ἢ δὲ διήφυγες τοῦτος ἔχειν.

[INTERMEDIATE STEP] οὐ δὲ ἔλεγον, Ὄ τεῖγελός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ.

An articular pronoun is used in John’s Gospel on just six occasions. Each time, it introduces a single speech or act that is an intermediate step towards a goal. Typically, its effect is to move attention on from the referent of the pronoun to the other speaker or actor.

In Jn 1:38, for instance, the disciples’ question is but an intermediate step between the two speeches of Jesus that bring them into contact with him.

[INITIAL SPEECH] λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τῇ ἁρτῃ;

[INTERMEDIATE STEP] οὐ δὲ ἐπάν αὐτῷ, Ἄραββα, ὡς λέγεται μεθερμηνευόμενον Διδάσκαλε, ποῦ μένεις;


An articular pronoun is used in Jn 9:38a (below) to introduce the man’s response to Jesus’ speech of v 37. We have already seen (sec. 3.4) that ἐκεῖνος has marked the man as athematic. Marking his speech of v 38a as an intermediate step is consistent with this pattern, and implies that attention is rather directed to what Jesus then has to declare. Consequently, I must disagree with Hoskyns’s assertion about v 38: ‘This is the climax of the narrative and the purpose for which it was told’. Rather, as Bernard states, ‘The cure of the man’s blindness was symbolic of the giving of spiritual vision to those conscious of their spiritual blindness, who are therefore willing to be healed. But some do not feel the need of a Healer… And the mission of Jesus leads up to judgment, according as men do or do not recognise their Deliverer in Him.’

37 ἐπέτειν αὐτῷ ὃ Ἰησοῦς. Καὶ ἕωρακας αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετὰ σοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἐστίν.

[INTERMEDIATE STEP] 38 οὐ δὲ ἔφη, Πιστεύω, κύριε· καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ.

[GOAL] 39 καὶ ἐπέτειν ὃ Ἰησοῦς. Εἰς κρίμα ἔγω εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον ἅλθον ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ οἱ βλέποντες τυφλοὶ γένωνται.

4. Conclusions

Analysing the system of reference to activated participants in terms of default and marked encodings has yielded insightful results.

Default encoding values were identified for three specific situations:
1. when the subject is the same as before;
2. when the new subject was the addressee of a speech reported in the previous clause or sentence;
3. other changes of subject.

This allowed us to identify any overt reference to a subject in the first two situations to represent over-encoding, whereas ellipsis of the subject in the third situation represented under-encoding.

Under-encoding typically occurs when the referent is the centre of attention (the VIP) for part or all of the narrative, and is particularly common in the Synoptic Gospels, where Jesus is the VIP. Quite a number of the overt references to Jesus in the Synoptics then become instances of over-encoding.

52 The form of the speech orientser is not affected by whether the reported speech is direct or indirect.
53 ‘The invitation for which, perhaps, they had scarcely dared to hope was forthcoming at once’ (F. F. Bruce, The Gospel of John: Introduction, Expositions and Notes [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], 56).
55 Bernard, John, II.339.
Cross-linguistically, over-encoding either signals the beginning of a new narrative unit or is used as a slowing-down device to give prominence to the following speech or action.

This paper has also discussed how intensive pronouns and anaphoric uses of proximal and distal demonstratives help to identify which participant is thematic (the current centre of attention). Typically:

- The referent of an **intensive** pronoun is **thematic**.
- The referent of a **proximal demonstrative** is **temporarily thematic** (briefly replacing the VIP as the centre of attention).
- The referent of a **distal demonstrative** is often **athematic** (someone other than the referent is the centre of attention).