HEAVENLY CONVERSATION IN COSMIC LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the centrality of the Logos theme in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. The study demonstrates that the author of John's Gospel is keen to present to his audience the uniqueness of the Word which became 'umuntu' or 'flesh'. Apparently, the author of the Gospel is in interlocution with various strands in his audience who have a different understanding of the Logos.

Second, we discern a movement that ascends from verse 12 which is seen as the proof of the prologue. In his ascension, the Logos dwells, embraces, and befriends those who accept him. The dialectic between those who reject him and those who accept him calls for a sociolinguistic approach in order to highlight what the discourse of the author is all about.

The methodology that is employed in this study is that of sociolinguistics, and with the emphasis being on antilanguage. John consciously uses a dialogical method in order to distinguish between those who speak the language of the rejection of Jesus, and those whose language is different from the opponents of Jesus.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to examine the socio-literary function of the theme `Heavenly Conversation in Cosmic Language' in the Prologue of the Gospel according to St John. A sociolinguistic approach will be adopted in this study. The use of this methodology emanates from the fact that this study is concerned with language which embraces both heavenly and cosmic aspects, and the manner in which the author uses it to express an alternative worldview creating a framework of self-definition for his audience.

Worth mentioning from the outset is that sociolinguistics is part of the social-scientific methodology that has made a profound impact on Biblical studies research. Social-scientific methods are a departure from the positivist empiricism of the historical critical method. (Mosala, 1989:55). The Historical Critical Method was very useful in demythologising the Bible but was always historicist, that is, it concentrated on the history and religion of ancient Israel, the New Testament, and the early church. The twentieth century saw the emergence of social scientific tools which were quickly adapted by some Biblical scholars in their work.

They continue to be useful because they throw light on some aspects of the Bible. Scholars started looking at culture, society, economics and politics around which the Bible was written. Models from anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics and other disciplines have been adopted.

0.1 Aim of the Present Study

This study seeks to examine the socioliterary function of the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel as expressed by the real author called John. Few passages in the New Testament have enjoyed the attention which the Prologue has received. Studies of this passage have been done specifically from purely literary and aesthetic standpoint. This kind of scholarship has tended to diminish the social and theological importance of the Johannine themes. The Prologue relationship to the Fourth Gospel has frequently been likened to an overture of an opera. The comparison is rather apt, "Since an overture is calculated to whet the appetite of the hearers, preparing them for the work to be presented and bringing together themes developed in it." (Boismard, 1957:5)

The emphasis of this study is on the socio-literary meaning of the passage, rather than on word studies. Regarding word study research, it is necessary to take into consideration the objection raised by scholars like Barr. The study of language led to a debate about semantic issues as early as 1935, when Kent (1935:115-137) criticised the unscientific manner in which linguistic material was used in theological discussions. Later, Barr (1961) criticised the exegetical work of the biblical theology movement. Barr dismisses the notion that there was a relationship between theological thought and biblical language. He argued that these exegetical models are deficient because of what later has been perceived as two discrepancies (Rhode, 1991:4):

"(1) The way in which linguistic material was manipulated to prove that a relationship existed between the grammatical structure of a language and the thought structure of a language and thought structure of its speakers.

(2) The way in which linguistic material was manipulated to prove that an understanding of the Bible as a unity was a prerequisite for the correct interpretation of it."

Subsequent to the above discrepancies, Rhode using Barr (1961:10-14) lists the arguments that scholars used to justify these discrepancies.

"(1) The contrast between Israelite and Greek thought.
(2) The contrast between the static and dynamic character of the Bible languages.
(3) The contrast between abstract and concrete concepts embedded in the linguistic structure.
(4) The contrast in Israelite and Greek anthropology, which can be deducted directly from the linguistic evidence of the Bible."

According to Rhode (1991:4), Barr rejected this logico-parallelism, on the understanding that statements about the conceptual world of the Bible cannot be made on the basis of grammatical categories. Barr is said to have also argued that the need to establish a relation between language and thought patterns was the result of the popular Von Hamboldtian thesis in which he argued that the grammatical structure of a language offered a direct entrance into the thought processes of a people. Rhode, driving Barr's standpoint home, says:

"Barr cited an account of McAllaster who maintains that the retention of a reduced vowel in Hebrew is parallel to the shadowy continuance of the soul after death and

to the maintenance of a dead man's name through the levirate marriage'. McAllaster, according to Rhode (1991:5), also argues that "there is no neuter gender in Hebrew because they recognized no neuter objects".

Barr continues, using the same fallacious analogy, that the Hittites had a neuter but no feminine because they saw no essential difference between man and woman. "Barr maintains that the problem is not whether there exists a relation between thought and language, but whether there is actually a relation between thought and the morphological structure of a language." (Rhode, 1991:5). It was against these unscientific practices that Barr directed his energies when he evaluated the exegetical methods used in biblical theology circles.

0.2 Delimitation

As indicated above, this exercise does not pretend to pay more attention to the word study than the emphasis on the socio-literary meaning of the passage. In other words, the socio-literary function of the Fourth Gospel will be satisfactorily explored, thus endeavouring to evince that the Prologue is the centre of the Fourth Gospel.

Therefore, this study will look at the social function of language and religious language in Chapter 1. Questions about the meaning and interpretation of language are examined. In fact, it locates the Prologue within the context of the Fourth Gospel and that of the late first and early second centuries.

Chapter 2 investigates the major themes of the Fourth Gospel, which are, John's use of Language, the Environment of John's congregation, the political, economic and religious environment, the social class of John's congregation, John's narrator, and John's readers and narratees.. Chapter 3 deals with the Exegesis of John 1:1-18. The final chapter presents the conclusions.

0.3 Methodology: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

In examining the socio-literary function of the theme of Heavenly conversation in Cosmic Language (logos), this study will adopt a sociolinguistic perspective. The use of this approach stems from the fact that this study is concerned about the language associated with logos and how the author uses it to express an alternative worldview in creating a new self-definition for his audience. The perspective of sociolinguistics is a recent development in linguistic studies (See Halliday 1978). Even though it is not easy to give a precise and straightforward definition of what sociolinguistics is, it is possible to provide an outline of its presuppositions.

From here, we will establish the relationship between language and society. This can be achieved by giving a definition of sociolinguistics. The latter, according to Lategan (1984), is a development within linguistics which has relations with her various other literary and social disciplines. Wardhaugh (1986) says that, in practice, sociolinguistics is more than a simple mixing of linguistics and sociology. Sociolinguistics should look at connections between language and society, and then relate them to theories that throw light on the interaction of linguistics and social structures.

0.3.1 The Discourse of Antilanguage and Antisociety

Within the wider perspective of sociolinguistics, the model that will be used in the study is that of antilanguage. This study proposes the author of John's Gospel uses the theme logos to express an alternative self-definition for his audience, vis-à-vis the conventional norms of self-definition provided by their contemporary society. To achieve this goal, the author of John's Gospel resorts to the discourse of antilanguage and, as such, the language associated with logos by the author is antilanguage.

An antilanguage is a language that is parallel to, and generated by, an antisociety, that is, a group society that is set up within another society as a conscious alternative to it (Halliday,1978:164). An antisociety arises when a group within a society feels threatened or alienated by the dominant conventional norms of the present social structure and thus sees itself as the bearer of an alternative social reality. The language generated by such a group to express its alternative view of social reality becomes a mode of resistance to the prevailing social order, while at the same time providing the norms of self-definition for the group, relative to the self-understanding of other groups in society. Thus, "an antilanguage stands to an antisociety in much the same relation as does language to a society." (Halliday, 1978:164).

Viewed within the context of the functional role of language in general, the function of antilanguage is to create an alternative reality. An antilanguage is constructed in order to function in alternation, and serves as a vehicle of resocialization towards a counter

reality, set up in opposition to some established norm. However, it must be noted that it is not the distance between the two realities that is significant, but the tension between them. Above all, an antilanguage not only creates an alternative reality but also serves to maintain it. It is within that framework of an alternative social reality that an antisociety derives its normative self-definition.

CHAPTER 1

1. SOCIAL FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Language, whether spoken or written, entails soundings or spellings, which in turn, realize wordings that express meanings. As such, language is a form of communication. For the communication process to be successful, both the speaker/writer and hearer/reader must share the meanings encoded in the wordings. Such meanings, in turn, constitute, and are realized from, the social system. Language as a form of communication transmits shared assumptions and a collective set of interpretations of reality that make up the cultural environment of the speaker (S) and the audience. This implies that language is part of social interaction and therefore cannot be divorced from the social context of which it is a product. (See Halliday, 1978:8-16; Halliday & Hasan, 1985:3-14; Malina, 1986:2; Malina & Negrey, 1988:XIV; Thompson, 1990:28-29).

Again, society in its *Sitz-im-leben* has its culture, norms and values that have got to be maintained. Inevitably, there should be a form of interaction exercised by the society. Language certainly functions as a vehicle, as a means of communication in order that there is an interchange of culture and the value systems. Whatever experience, pre-understanding, context, these are to be communicated and interpreted by the society through language. In other words, the language to be spoken is determined by the society. For example, the argument might arise as to the legitimacy of a dialect as a language seems to be immaterial, in the sense that people of the one and the same environment are able to identify and communicate with one another. There is a close connection between the society and language.

The other aspect here would be to look at language as a cultural medium. The moment we do that, we are confronted with a question, what is culture? and an immediate response would be that culture consists of the abstract values, beliefs and perceptions of the world that lie behind people's behaviour and that their behaviour reflects. These are shared by the members of a society, and when acted upon, they produce behaviour considered acceptable within that society. cultures are learned, largely through the medium of language, rather than inherited biologically, and the parts of a culture function as an integrated whole.

Subsequently, we are faced with yet another question, how does language articulate culture? In response to this question, it needs to be stated that languages are spoken by people, who are members of societies, each of which has its own distinctive culture. Concurring with this statement Haviland says,

> "Social variables, such as class, gender, and status of the speaker, will influence people's use of language. Moreover, people communicate what is meaningful to them, and what is or is not meaningful is defined by their particular culture. In fact, our use of language affects, and is affected by, our culture." (1990:93)

1.1 Thiselton

In search of the meaning of language, Thiselton recalls the period of Reformation, and he holds Martin Luther in high esteem. Luther becomes a champion in going out of his way to stress the study of language which makes a positive contribution to biblical hermeneutics. Luther values language highly as a means of enabling people to handle

sacred truths skillfully and successfully. In support of this claim, writing to Eobanus Hessus, he urges: "I myself am convinced that without knowledge of (Humanistic) studies (Latin, literal) pure theology can by no means exist... There has never been a great revolution of God's word, unless God has first prepared the way by the rise and flourishing of languages and learning ..." (Thiselton, 1979:116).

Luther's main concern was in relating himself as a reader to the language of the text. Apart from "the revelation of the language of the text to his own world," he had awareness of how experience of life contributes to the understanding of language. In order to prove this claim, he went out on a research of empirical observation to the slaughterhouse, when he saw how animals were killed in order to understand better the language of sacrifice.

Secondly, it was in the 18th century (if not even earlier with Spinoza), and later with the rise of biblical criticism, that the study of language was seen as a step forward and going a mile beyond traditional scholarship. According to Thiselton Saussure further maintains that the principle on the nature of language is a structured system (structuralism). Other than structuralism, which denotes the interdependence of words and confinement within the structure, Saussure has the other two principles, that of language operating on the basis of human convention, and that of the contrast between synchronic and diachronic linguistics. James Barr and Eugene Nida agree with Saussure as far as the latter principle is concerned, as well as that of language as a structural system. Making the case clear, they state that the function of both principles "underline the decisive importance of context in biblical interpretation in a way which guarantees

that we pay due attention to rights of the text as a linguistic particularity." (Thiselton, 1980:124).

In other words, the context, the circumstances surrounding the text are taken into account, as well as the meaning articulated by the language. Returning to diachronic and synchronic linguistics, the contrast that exists between the two is appreciated. It is essential for diachronic linguistics to concern itself with the background of language and also the reasons for the change of meanings from time to time. It is quite evident that language is not static, but dynamic. Equally important is synchronic linguistics, which investigates and scrutinizes language at a particular point in time. It is quite clear that such an exercise is not futile, in the sense that it avails itself of an opportunity to pose and assess the language in its immediate and wider context at that particular moment.

Therefore, one would maintain that both diachronic and synchronic linguistics form an equilibrium and are complementary to each other. They sound caution to one to have respect for the text when translating.

Having employed the theory of Thiselton in explaining the social function of language, it is of paramount importance to mention some of his works. He has published widely in the field of biblical hermeneutics. He is the author of 'The Two Horizons' and 'New Horizons in Hermeneutics', to mention but a few. However, he does not write from a sociolinguistic perspective, but from a linguistic one; his method is linguistic hermeneutics. For example, while Thiselton is in search for the meaning of language, he cannot help but recall the period of Reformation, whereupon he holds Martin Luther in

high esteem for stressing the study of language, thus making a positive contribution to biblical hermeneutics. Thiselton's emphasis is on the decisive importance of context in biblical interpretation in a way which guarantees that we pay due attention to rights of the text as linguistic - particularily. The concern of this study is to look at the importance of both language and society. However, Thiselton has consistently pursued a linguistic perspective

1.2 Berger

In pursuit of the social function of language, Berger and Luckmann maintain that:

> "Language, which may be defined here as a system of vocal signs, is the most important sign system of human society. Its foundation is, of course, in the intrinsic capacity of the human organism for vocal expressivity, but we can begin to speak of language only when the vocal expressions have become capable of detachment from the immediate 'here and now' of subjective states." (Berger and Luckmann, 1971:51)

In other words, language is not snarling, grunting, howling or hissing, although these vocal expressions could be capable of becoming linguistic as long as they would be integrated into an objectively available sign system. What is important to note is that the common objectification of everyday life is maintained at the most by the linguistic signification. Everyday life is characteristic of the language-conversation, which I share with other humans. This means an understanding of the language is of uttermost importance in order to understand the reality of everyday life.

Other than the definition of language as a system of vocal signs, Berger and Luckmann see language as having its origins in face-to-face situation from which it can be readily detached. However, they warn:

> "This is not only because I can shout in the dark or across a distance, speak on the telephone or via the radio, or convey linguistic signification by means of writing (the latter constituting, as it were, a sign system of the second degree) ... " (Berger and Luckmann, 1971:52)

The functional aspect of the language rests on its detachment, which in turn lies much more basically in its capacity to communicate meanings that are not direct expressions of subjectivity 'here and now'. This capacity of communicating meanings is shared by language with other sign systems. However, because of its immense variety and complexity, it becomes much more readily detachable from face-to-face situation than any other, like, for example, a system of gesticulations. In other words, the non-verbal communication comes into play. The very body language itself becomes very dynamic. In this way, language is capable of becoming the objective repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which it can then preserve in time and transmit to following generations. (Berger and Luckmann, 1971:52)

Again, language is seen as originating in, and has its primary reference to everyday life; it makes one conscious of the reality which is dominated by the cluster of meanings directly pertaining to present and future actions. These meanings are shared by one

person with others in a taken-for-granted manner. The social function of language seems to be increasing by leaps and bounds, when Berger says:

> "I encounter language as a factitive external to myself and it is coercive in its effect on me. Language forces me into its patterns. I cannot use the rules of German syntax when I speak English; I cannot use the words invented by my three-year old son if I want to communicate outside the family; I must take into account the prevailing standards of proper speech for various occasions, even if I would prefer my private "improper" ones. Language provides me with a ready-made possibility for the ongoing objectification of my unfolding experience." (Berger and Luckmann, 1971:53)

Although Berger writes about society and language, he nevertheless emphasises the sociology of language, and not sociolinguistics. He has also made a wide publication on sociology. For example, 'The Social Construction of reality - a treatise in the Sociology of Language', 'Sociology, a biographical approach', are some of his publications. In the former, it becomes crystal clear that his intention is to specialise in the empirical science of sociology. In other words, his sole aim is to deal justly with the experiences in the life of the people; rather than embarking on the language and society. To crown it all, Berger spells out his singleness of purpose:

> "Since our purpose in this treatise is a sociological analysis of the reality of everyday life, more precisely, of knowledge that guides conduct in everyday

life, and we are only tangentially interested in how this reality may appear in various theoretical perspectives to intellectuals, we must begin by a clarification of that reality as it is available to the common sense of the ordinary members of Society."(1971:33)

His main emphasis is on the social activities and life of the people, the members of the society.

1.3 Gadamer

For Gadamer, it would appear the hermeneutical tools, which are not only one language, but languages are to be used in order to translate a foreign language understandably - thus resulting into a meaningful and fruitful conversation. This kind of conversation so supersedes and outshines the non-verbal communication that might have taken place, even before between the partners.

However, Gadamer maintains that a conversation is a starting point which triggers off the ontological shift of hermeneutics. Underlying this statement, is what Gadamer himself advocates: "A written tradition is not a fragment of a past world, but has always raised itself beyond this into the sphere of the meaning that it expresses.(Gadamer, 1979:352).

In other words, a written document takes us to the past and yet it makes us remain in the present - thus bridging the gap between the two speakers, although the horizon widens. At any rate, it is a shift to a certain degree when there has been no record for a

conversation. To reiterate Gadamer's words, "It is true of everything that has come down to us that here a will to permanence has created the unique forms of continuance that we call literature." (1979:352). So the theoretical aspect of a conversation is reinforced, hence the hermeneutics takes place. Gadamer's emphasis is on the distinction between writing and the spoken word, and he maintains that what is spoken exists solely for itself, quite detached from emotional elements of expression and communication. Driving his point home, he sees writing as a methodological advantage which presents the hermeneutical problem in all its purity, divorced from everything psychological. Gadamer highlights all writing as a speech of a different nature, whose signs are to be transferred back into speech and meaning. The very meaning has undergone some change through being written down, and this transformation back is nothing else other than the real hermeneutical task.

In appreciation of language, Gadamer points out the problem presented by various languages though every language is able to say everything it wants, as well as doing it in its own way. Despite what language and various languages do, Gadamer believes that "there is still the same unity of thought and speech, so that everything that has been transmitted in writing can be understood." (1979:364). He also claims the importance of the unity of language and thought as the premise from which the philosophical approach starts. That is, the reason and thought vis-à-vis the hermeneutics, which is understanding and interpretation.

The shift mounts (as Gadamer makes his contribution) from the word to the Logos, as an attempt to establish the ontological understanding of God. It seeks to answer the

question, who is God? Greeks are explaining what the word is - and as such are enabling us to move from philosophy to theology. Put simply, there is a philosophical and a theological link - the word which is Being - which was and is to be. Plato tried to portray the position of the soul within itself and, in doing so, he says, "The pure thought of ideas, *dianoia*, is silent, for it is a dialogue of the soul within itself. The logos is a stream that follows from this thought and sounds out through the mouth" (1979:368).

Gadamer like Thiselton values highly the unity of language and thought to an extent that he (Gadamer) criticises Plato for not considering that fact that the process of thought, if conceived as a dialogue of soul, itself involves a connection with language.

All in all, this highlights the unity of language and thought vis-à-vis the process of incarnation. It is the shift that has been mentioned earlier on, from philosophy to theology. Jesus Christ the word became man and yet also the second person in the Trinity. Jesus Christ is the divine word explained by human words, a multiplicity of words which are fundamental and dialectical with each other.

Gadamer is more philosophical in his hermeneutics. He is important for this study because John uses philosophical categories in his language. As has already been mentioned, there is a mounting shift as Gadamer makes his contribution - from the word to the Logos. He grapples with an attempt to establish the ontological understanding of God, as well as answering the question, who is God? To this, Greeks come to our rescue, thus enabling us to move from philosophy to theology. In other words, both the philosophical and theological link ensues - the word

which is Being - which was and is to be. On the other hand, John speaks of the Word that was there from the beginning. For John, the Word comes from above and is characteristic of being metaphysical. According to Gadamer, logos is a stream that follows from the pure thought of ideas and sounds out through the mouth. Certainly, John collaborates with the same idea that Jesus Christ is the divine word explained by human words, a multiplicity of words which are fundamental and dialectical with each other.

1.4 Halliday

Halliday elicits some aspects to which he refers as realities that lie above and beyond language, which the latter serves to express. Because of this, there are many directions in which we can move outside language in order to explain what language means.

> "For some linguists (for example, Chomsky 1957; Lamb 1966), the preferred mode of interpretation is the psychological one, in which language is to be explained in terms of the processes of the human mind or the human brain. For other linguists, perhaps, the direction might be a psychoanalytic one, or an aesthetic one, or any one of a number of possible perspectives."(Halliday 1989:2).

Halliday maintains that language is understood in its relationship to social structure. He views the primary perspective to be adopted as a social one, however, not to the exclusion of the others; the former seeks to focus on our explanations for linguistic phenomena. "We attempt to relate language primarily to one particular aspect of human experience, namely that of social structure."(1989:4). Halliday finds it essential to tease

out this particular angle, which grapples with educational questions more especially. It is here that the social dimension seems particularly significant and, most unfortunately, it is the one that has been the most neglected in discussions of language in education. After all learning is a social process and the environment in which educational learning takes place is that of a social institution, be it "in concrete terms as the classroom and the school, with their clearly defined social structures, or in the more abstract sense of the school system, or even the educational process as it is conceived of in our society."(1989:5). Knowledge is communicated in social contexts, through relationships, like those of parent and child in primary socialisation, or teacher and pupil, or classmates in secondary socialisation. These are defined in the value systems and ideology of the culture. Most significant is that the words which are exchanged in these contexts obtain meaning from the in context in which they are embedded, which again are social activities with social agencies and goals.

In pursuit of the social functions of language, Halliday poses a question as to what do we mean by text? In response, he offers that it (text) is language that is functional. The latter meaning the language that is doing some job in some context, "as opposed to isolated words or sentences that might be put on the blackboard."(1989:10). In other words, any instance of living language that plays some part in a context/situation, we shall call a text.

Something remarkable about the nature of the text is that, even though a text, it appears as words and sentences on a page, it is really made of meanings. Further explicating the question of the text, Halliday states that Buhler has nothing to say, naturally, since he

was not primarily concerned with the nature of the linguistic system. Provided we accept the notion of an enabling function that is intrinsic to language. It is this that enables language to be operational; text is language in use.(1981:28)

There is a sense in which what Halliday calls 'realities that lie above and beyond language', is to be pursued in relation to the term "Logos". As a matter of fact, Halliday illustrates how Malinowski studied the language used in a fishing expedition when the islanders went in their canoes outside the lagoon into the open sea to fish, no sooner had they caught a cargo of fish, than they had a problem of navigating a rather difficult course through the reefs and back into the lagoon. They had no alternative but to be constantly in communication with those on the shore. The mounting shift of Malinowski's example becomes effectively clear as he refers to the islanders, who "could shout instructions to each other, and they were, so to speak, talked in, in the way that an aircraft is talked down when it is coming in to land."(Halliday, 1989:6).

Halliday's use of the example of an aircraft with which communication is maintained while it is coming in to land, highlights a fitting analogy with the term "Logos" which is viewed as lying above the contemporary reality; a term from above. In other words, a meaningful dialogue and interpretativon takes place between the speaker and the recipient.

1.5 Wardhaugh

Whilst Wardhaugh shares the same opinion with Trudgill vis-à-vis the relationship between language and society, he recalls an approach associated with Naom Chomsky - the most influential figure in late twentieth century linguistics theory. Using Chomsky, Wardhaugh completely breaks from the sociological approach and is freely objective and perceived things as they are. Chomsky has an analytic, scientific approach:

> "Chomsky has argued on many occasions that, in order to make meaningful discoveries about language, linguists must try to distinguish between what is important and what is unimportant about language and linguistic behaviour. The important matters concern the learnability of all languages, the characteristics they share, and the rules that speakers apparently follow in constructing and interpreting sentences."(Wardhaugh, 1986:2,3).

However, many linguists have found Chomsky's anti-society view of linguistic theorizing impossible to accept as anything but a rather sterile type of activity, with its explicit rejection of any concern with the social uses of language (1986:10).

Even the distinction between what Chomsky has called competence and performance, is emphatic on the amount of knowledge about the language not what the latter does by way of communication. Further, Wardhaugh embarks on the comparison of sociolinguistics and the sociology of language. He refers to investigators having found it appropriate to introduce a distinction between sociolinguistics and the sociology of language. Sociolinguistics has as its main function, the investigation of:

"The relationships between language and society with the goal of a better understanding of the structure of language and how languages function in communication; the equivalent goal in the sociology of language will be to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language, e.g. how certain linguistic features serve to characterize particular social arrangements." (1986:12).

Put simply, we study sociolinguistics in order to find out as much as we can about what kind of thing language is, and in the sociology of language we reverse the direction of our interest. Wardhaugh is fully convinced that both sociolinguistics and the sociology of language require a systematic study of language and society if they are to be successful. He lays more emphasis in order to make his point clear: "A sociolinguistics which deliberately refrains from drawing conclusions about society seems to be unnecessarily restrictive, just restrictive indeed as a sociology of language which deliberately ignores discoveries, about language made in the course of sociological research." (1986:13).

1.6 Trudgill

For Trudgill (1983) language is a social and cultural phenomenon shaped and informed by values and norms of society: it is used to construct social reality. The powerful or the upper classes decide on what standard language should be. Trudgill points out that under-class dialects are used in theatre as a way of entertainment and ridiculing the under-classes.

Trudgill goes on engaging in a serious exercise, looking at what sociolinguistics means. Inter alia he says, "Language is not simply a means of communicating information about the weather or any other subject. It is also a very important means of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people." (1983:13).

Put simply, language is a hermeneutical tool that can help effect the fusion of the two aspects, that of understanding and agreement of two people. Pursuing the function of the language, Trudgill comes to a realisation that it opens other avenues, that is, "both these aspects of linguistic behaviour are reflections of the fact that there is a close inter-relationship between language and society."(1983:14). It would appear the hermeneutical tools, which are not only one language, but languages, are to be used in order to translate a foreign language understandably. Trudgill has a fitting example to corroborate the aforesaid statement:

> "If the second Englishman comes from Norfolk, for example, he will probably use the kind of language spoken by the people from that part of the country. If he is also a middle-class businessman, he will use the kind of language associated with men of this type. `Kinds of language' of this sort are often referred to as dialects, the first type in this case being a regional dialect and the second a social dialect."(1983:14)

Again, Trudgill says, "Sociolinguistics, then, is that part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. It investigates the field of

language and society and has close connections with the social sciences, especially social psychology, anthropology, human geography, and sociology."(1983:32)

For sociolinguistics to be effective in biblical interpretation, it has to help discover the language of the under-classes. It is a known fact that the language of some biblical passages is upper-class language, and it is important for interpreters to read behind the text, namely, look for that which is excluded from the text. In the case of the Apocalypse, one needs to expose the social background, class position, audience, and social function, in order to uncover that which has been excluded from the text.

Social Function of Religious Language

We now turn to the social function of religious language, as advocated by Ian Ramsey and Paul Ricoeur.

1.7 Ramsey

Ramsey urges that religious language has to be logically incidental in order to be appropriately utilised for such a strange situation as religious people claim to speak about. He speaks of a discernment, which is an insight in which theology is founded. The former, that is the discernment, provokes a commitment; a claim to which a religious man makes an appropriate response. Further, Ramsey maintains that this kind of insight is perceptual and more. However, with these attributes, the insight as such is imbued with situations which are distinctively different. Such difference is characteristic of "the light dawning, the ice breaking, the penny dropping."(1957:90).

Whenever such a discernment occurs, it provokes a total commitment to what is discerned. For example, "We yield ourselves in religious loyalties as conscience yields to the claims of duty, and our religious devotion has similarities to that devotion which we show to persons, communities and nations."(1957:90).

There is here a mounting shift which triggers off from discernment to a total commitment, and finally issuing in religious loyalties. The latter make us duty bound and devoted to the lives of persons, communities and nations.

Again, Ramsey, in trying to define what religious language is, grapples with eludicating in some detail of the logical behaviour of various words and phrases used about God. There are diverse attributes which are logically straightforward, nevertheless, we could still distinguish at least three logical areas within it. Firstly, there are attributes such as 'immutability', `impassability', whose singleness of purpose was to evoke the characteristically religious situation, even then such attributes by no means pleaded negatively the distance of the word `God' from observational language. Secondly, there were those attributes such as `unity' and `simplicity', whose function was once again to evoke the discernment - commitment, of course, this time making a rather more positive language claim in relation to it. Such attributes were seen as claiming a key position for the word `God' in relation to all other categories.

Thirdly, with regard to such phrases as `first cause', `infinite wisdom', `creation ex nihilo', `eternal purpose', Ramsey noticed how each of these had the logical structure of a qualified model, where the qualifier had a two-fold function. First, it so developed

`model' stories in a particular direction until the typically religious situation was evoked. Consequently, in the second place, it claimed an appropriately odd logical position for the word of `God'. The bottom line of Ramsey's endeavour to explicate what religious language is all about, is to make us realize how traditional puzzles and problems could be illuminated, and the logical significance of various theological claims made clearer, if we were in the position to give to theological language the oddness which is its legitimate due. Ramsey sounds a warning: that we should not commit anthropomorphism, talking of God in a literal sense, "as if we had privileged access to the diaries of God's private life, or expert insight into his descriptive psychology so that we say quite cheerfully why God did what, when and where."(1957:91).

Ramsey engages in a philosophical exercise as he handles the question of religious language. Unlike John in his gospel, Ramsey propounds on religious language in a deep theology. In other words, he does not come nearer to sociolinguistics, there is no mention of society and linguistics. Of course, his style in defining the religious language is metaphysical, which thing is in relation to the term "logos".

1.8 Ricoeur

One of Ricoeur's fields is the theory of interpretation and philosophy of language. Whilst Ricoeur is grappling with the correct definition of the hermeneutical task, he is prompted to enter into a discussion of the problem of language as discourse, whose terms are modern and their adequate formulation attributed to the tremendous progress of modern linguistics. Examining the whole problem of language, Ricoeur cites Cratylus, whereby Plato had already identified the problem of the fact that isolated

words or names would remain unsolved. In other words, he was saying, it was in putting the words or names together that an effort of uttering or speaking something could be made. Driving this point home, he says, "The logos of language requires at least a name and a verb, and it is the intertwining of these two words which constitutes the first unit of language and thought". (1976:1).

However, Ricoeur makes a paradigm shift from a philosophical exercise to an embarkment on the explication of religious language. His point of departure is by first asking about specifically religious way of speaking about evil, to which he unhesitatingly answers that the language is that of hope. He attempts to justify the central role of hope in Christian theology. "Hope has rarely been the central concept in theology. And yet the preaching of Jesus was concerned essentially with the Kingdom of God: the Kingdom is at hand; the Kingdom has drawn near to you; the Kingdom is in your midst." (1974:436).

Returning to the problem of evil, he maintains that religion uses another language about evil. And this language keeps itself entirely within the limits of the perimeter of the promise and under the sign of hope. He perceives that this type of discourse places evil before God. In this particular instance, he quotes the psalmist: "against you, against you alone have I sinned, I have done evil in your sight".

Ricoeur's understanding of this invocation is that it transforms the moral confession into a confession of sin, and as such, appears to be an intensification in the consciousness of evil. All this he terms an illusion, "the moralizing illusion of Christianity". (1974:438).

Again, he maintains:

"Religious language profoundly changes the very content of the consciousness of evil. Evil in moral consciousness is essentially transgression, that is, subversion of law; it is in this way that the majority of pious men continue to consider sin. And yet situated before God, evil is qualitatively changed; it consists less in a transgression of a law than in a pretension of man to be master of life. The will to live according to the law is, therefore, also an expression of evil - and even the most deadly, because the most dissimulated: worse than injustice is one's own justice. Ethical consciousness does not know this, but religious consciousness does. But this second discovery can also be expressed in terms of promise and hope." (1974:438).

Put simply, to be morally conscious of evil, is nothing else but essentially transgression. In other words, law becomes powerless. It has only the vocabulary to know the difference between what is wrong and right. Otherwise, it is God's grace that matters.

Ricoeur has published widely in the field of the theory of interpretation and philosophy of language. He is the author of "Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning", "The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur - An Anthology of His Work", "The Conflict of Interpretations", to mention but a few.

Ricoeur concentrates on the question of modern linguistics and the whole problem of language. Like Ramsey, he does not write from the sociolinguistic point of view

1.9 Summary

The significance of the above dicusssion to the present study is the thesis that sociolinguistics is the home of the text of the Bible. Jesus himself used parables symbolic of the language of his audience, hence he was understood better in some instances. So the question of the relationship between language and society is essential.

This relationship is well articulated by Hudson who describes it as follows: "Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society, whereas the sociology of language is the study of society in relation to language." (Wardhaugh 1986:12)

This dialectical relationship between language and society becomes a premise from which a philosophical approach begins, that is, the reason and thought in relation to the hermeneutics, which is understanding and interpretation..

CHAPTER 2

JOHN'S USE OF LANGUAGE

2.1 The Environment of John's Congregation

Brown depicts the life-setting in the divided Johannine communities at the time the Epistles were written, probably A.D. 100. What is important here is to provide a kind of transitional section that seeks to establish what happened between the Gospel and the Epistles to cause the kind of division recorded in 1 John 2:19. It has to be worked out hypothetically. I suggest that a struggle ensues between two groups of the Johannine disciples who are interpreting the Gospel in opposite ways, in matters which concern Christology, ethics, eschatology and pneumatology. There is dissolution of the two Johannine groups after the Epistles were written. Brown points out, "The Secessionists, no longer in communion with the more conservative side of the Johannine community, probably moved rapidly in the second century toward docetism, gnosticism, cerinthianism, and montanism". (1979:24). This answers the question, why the Fourth Gospel, which they brought along with them, is cited earlier and more frequently by heterodox writers than by the orthodox writers.

"The Church Catholic" which is exhibited by the growing acceptance of the Johannine Christology of the pre-existence of the Word, is attributed to the adherents of 1 John as well as Ignatius of Antioch. However, it is regrettable that the secessionists together with the heterodox descendants misused the Fourth Gospel. Yet, the orthodox writers in the first part of the second century, did not cite it as scripture. Nonetheless, one thing in

John's favour happened, the use of the Epistles as a correct guide to interpreting the Gospel finally won a place in the Canon of the Church (Brown, 1979:24).

Most significant, despite the dissolution of the two Johannine groups and misuse of the Fourth Gospel, is the allusion to the Logos highlighted in the Johannine Christology, that is, "the pre-existence of the Word".

The misuse of the Fourth Gospel stems out of the volatile situation caused by the type of language used by John on the pre-existence of the Son of God. Contrary to this Brown touches on the very diverse phenomenon known as gnosticism, saying: "A common thesis in the gnostic systems involves the pre-existence of human beings in the divine sphere before their life on earth" (1979:151).

The Fourth Gospel puts it in no uncertain terms that only the Son of God pre-exists and yet the gnostics maintain that human beings pre-exist.

2. 2 Political Environment

Jeremias portrays the political situation in Judaea quite vividly. The latter was unfortunate in A.D. 6 in losing its political independence to the Romans with the deposition of the Ethnarch Archelaus. It would appear the kind of independence they had possessed, was generally there in name, since the days of Judas Maccabaeus (165 - 161 BC). It was only once before the dissolution of the Jewish state that history saw a King over the Jews, in the person of Agrippa I (AD 41 - 44). As a matter of fact, Herod was succeeded by the Ethnarch Archelaus after his deposition. Herod intervened on

death, should not be underestimated. Bequests and building operations, were distributed among cities and islands. There was a bitter and popular outcry against the abuse of the whole commonwealth because of despotism, against the squandering of money that had been wrung from the people's very lifeblood.

Certainly, there was bribery and corruption. The entire political situation was immersed in evil and characterised by moral decay. The authorities were used language for their personal empowerment and political oppression.

The same applied no less to John when he used the language politically as well as theologically, that is, the language of the Kingdom of God. Again, it was during this first-century Palestine that Jesus emerged to kick against the scandalous practice of evil by adopting the anti-society language. For example we hear Jesus speaking to the Jews, the children of Abraham. "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever." (John 8:34,35).

The Jewish religious leaders regarded Jesus' language as blasphemy, for instance, when he called himself the Son of God. Whilst he had discussions with the Roman leaders, he was very severe when it came to the Jewish leaders. All felt uneasy and threatened by Jesus' stance.

2.3 Economic Environment

Clevenot sees the Roman Empire as a military dictatorship. There is the question of the land, whereby 'the state was a power of coercion benefitting the ruling class of landowners who were deprived of the means of production'. (1985:56). However, at the final analysis the emperor is the only person who has an access to the land. He is the greatest landowner and handles all the public expenditures. Obviously, with the ruling class existed the working class, which resulted in a language that had to be spoken. An antilanguage inevitably becomes a common denominator between the two groupings.

Here, we are confronted with the position of Jesus vis-à-vis the socio-economic situation in first-century Palestine. In this context, Jesus joined the movement of the outcasts. In other words, Jesus aligned himself with women, tax collectors, the poor and the marginalised spoke Aramaic to the outcasts and the poor.

The main reason is that Jesus come out of the margins not the centre. This is bespoken by the nature of his birth, that comes out of a womb of an ordinary woman - Mary. Jesus comes outside the walls of Jerusalem, hence aligning himself with the antisociety. God chooses the margins in order to create a new centre, a cosmic centre. The margins were people who had no access to the cosmic centre. Yet Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life ..." This self-identification of Jesus is concretised in the margins from where he came. Before the marginalized spoke, he already knew. Speaking in Aramaic as opposed to Greek, meant the complete identification of Jesus with the condition of the poor.

Here, the language of the poor and marginalised is included in the reign of God. No doubt, Jesus communicated at all levels and no level was beyond his reach.

The language Jesus spoke was evident to the poor, because the poor grasped reality and Jesus responded to that reality's call of the poor with his heart, his womb. Metaphorically God had a womb as well. God is neither man nor woman. In fact, the use of the word womb in this particular instance is an attempt to express the particular sensitivity in the true sense. As a matter of fact, God himself was in a womb, that is, being conceived of the virgin Mary. The real question of a womb is demonstrated by Jesus' ministry. The condition of the poor, spoken and unspoken by Jesus did not depend on the verbalization of words. Instead the word was made flesh, he became human among humans.

Jesus saw what was essential and expressed it richly, appealingly and tellingly. Jesus saw through to the hearts of the poor, and therefore, he spoke from the perspective of the poor. In other words, he empathised with the poor, the antisociety. Jesus himself was antilanguage - he spoke in parables, the language of the Kingdom. Those with whom he identified were the outcasts and the more he was humiliated, the more he was exalted among the poor. To them he communicated a new word.

Jesus' language has a distinctive and strong universalistic character. This is particularly evident in his practice of employing words which have a double-Jewish and Hellenist background. To this effect, Amaladoss, John and Gispert-Sauch say:

'John's ideas and terminology may have developed within the Palestinian heterodox Judaism under the influence of pressing Hellenism. But the very choice of such heterodox-Judaistic language shows that John is deliberately moving towards a world which seems approachable to him only through the kind of 'open-ended' language we find in John. In using a terminology which awakened echoes in Hellenistic language and speculation, John was venturing out to a wider world where a new interpretation would be inevitable.' (1979:375-376).

It is common knowledge that many households suffered from creeping poverty. the most affected segment of society was women and children. Women were over represented among the poor, and their experience of poverty was more acute. Not only in our day, but also in Jesus' day, women's disproportionate share of the poverty burden reflected the fact that women, historically, have had less access to employment, and within the labour market, they tend to be crowded into low-paying jobs. An added reason why women were poor was the fact that their effective property rights had often been restricted in practice. For instance, legally, the wife differed from the slave in the first place because she kept the right of possession (but not of disposition) of the good she had bought with her as a marriage portion. (Jeremias, 1982: 368). This was due to severe fiscal exploitation of the first century. It is of little wonder that the majority of the Jesus movement were women. Jesus spoke their language, the language of the heart, the womb.

It is in this sense that Malina says that the simplest way to discern the presence of antilanguage is to note its distinctive development of and penchant for new words in place of old ones. Antilanguage is language re-articulated, but only partially. Its implicit principle seems to be of the same grammar, but different vocabulary, though only in certain areas. And these areas are those of central concern to the focal interests and activities of the antisocietal group. In John, this concern is articulated as follows: "That you may continue to believe that Jesus is Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name (Jn 20:31)(1984:12).

In other words the author of John is concerned with spelling out the meaning of Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah and in developing emotional anchorage "in Jesus" for his collectivity. It is to this end that the author develops his very different vocabulary. It is this language which we portray as antilanguage in this study. The Gospel, and more especially John, speaks the language of the bread: "I am the bread of life. he who comes to me will never be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6.35).

Furthermore, it is characteristic of antilanguage not simply to articulate in its area of concern, but to overarticulate by employing a rather large range of lexical items to cover the same area. this feature is easily demonstrable in John, in the language of the reign of God. We should note, first, his contrasts between "Spirit, the above, life, light, not of the/this world, freedom, truth, love" and their opposites: "flesh, the below, death, darkness, the/this world, slavery, lie, hate." (Malina, 1984:12). These words are variants used to describe contrasting spheres of existence, opposing modes of living and being.

2.4 Religious Environment

Worth mentioning from the outset is that by the time John's Gospel was written, the Johannine Christians had been expelled from the synagogues (9:22; 16:2) because of what they were claiming about Jesus (Brown, 1979:22). Such an expulsion is a portrayal of a situation in the last third of the first century, during which period, the centre of Judaism was in Jamnia (Jabach). Noticeably, this Judaism was dominanted by the Pharisees and thus no longer pluralistic as before 70 A.D. The expulsion from the synagogues is now the episode of the past; the persecution (16:2-3) continues, and there are deep scars in the Johannine human mind or soul regarding "the Jews' (Brown, 1979:23). The insistence on a high christology aggravated by the hard struggles with 'the Jews', harms the community's relations with the other Christian groups whose evaluation of Jesus is inadequate by Johannine standards. Endeavours to proclaim the light of Jesus to Gentiles may also have met with difficulty, and thus 'the world'is employed as a blanket term for all those who prefer darkness to the light. Hence, the Greeks preferred light to darkness, they came forward demanding to see Jesus. Gentiles as they were, they did not first become Jews before becoming Jewish Christians.

What really entranced the Greeks, was that John's language of the logos became familiar to them. Jesus had made inroads into all races, class and status through his omni communicative language.

John's language differed from the language of the religious centre in that it was the antilanguage. According to Halliday (1978:171), "the early Christian community was an antisociety, and its language was in this sense an antilanguage," hence the statement as it stands would be most appropriate for John and the group that originally resonated with its story, John's group. Moreover, Halliday has sketched the notable characteristics of the phenomenon of antilanguage (Halliday 1978:164-182). his description is indicative of the fact that antilanguage finds its social residence among the people following weak groups (for example, individuals put into prison, the underworld, adolescents) and forming antisocial groups. Without a doubt, the description fits John quite well. When examining the rest of the New Testament writings, these bespeak a counter-society with a counter-language typical of competing groups in strong group settings. Therefore, it remains a fact that only John reveals all the salient traits of antilanguage. Because antilanguage was authentic he spoke with authority, which was given to him by God. As far as the language was concerned, many things came into play, religious leaders used the dominant language of a dominant culture, for example, (John 4:9) "The Samaritan woman says to Jesus, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans)." One is inclined to think of three things that are implicit in this statement. Obviously, there is the question of racism, that is Jew and Samaritan. Also, there is a question of culture, whereby the Jews do not associate with the Samaritans. Again, one inevitably cannot exclude the question of gender. Specifically, the woman conversing with Jesus, makes a self identification, "I am a Samaritan woman". Worse still, is when she is in conversation with a Jewish man, who fall in the same category of the Jews who discriminate against women, particularly Samaritan women.

However, John came with a new language, a language not understood by the Scribes and Sadducees, this language was the *logos*, the word of the lowly. What is important here is the Johannine conception of the logos.

As Barrett notes, no other New Testament writer shows such mastery of the material as John does, who holds together Jewish, Hellenistic and primitive strands of though in consistent unity. Barrett further argues that the Johannine logos has a cosmological function similar to that described by Philo, but that the logos became flesh.

Secondly, neither the Jews understood what the *dabar* is all about. In the old Testament the word of God is creative. Its creative nature is seen in Genesis as the command, the fiat. Psalm 33:6 summarises the creating word of command thus, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made". The words of the Lord is also communicative. The Lord communicates his purpose through the prophets' message which is regarded as the word of the Lord (Jer. 1:4). In Ezekiel 1:3 it is said, "Now the word of the Lord came into me." In all these passages the word is not abstract, but spoken and active. Barrett observes that the word in the Old Testament signifies and event, whereas in John the logos is the timeless word (*en argei*) become an event (*Sarx egeneto*) (1978:153).

2.5 The Social Class of John's Congregation

John's language must be seen in the context of his society, the social class of his readers. This is due to the fact that language fulfills an important social function. Trudgill affirms this fact when he posits that: 'Language is not simply a means of communicating

information about the weather or any other subject. It is also a very important means of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people' (1983:13). In the case of the Gospel according to John, it is necessary to examine how the language he uses can throw light into the social context of his congregation.

Trudgill further refers to a main conversation that comes into play during interviews. Because of the artificial and formal situation, more attention is paid to the contained speech by the speaker that is normal in everyday speech with close acquaintances. Commonly known to informants, was that their speech was being studied and therefore they had to be on the alert, as far as their pronunciation was concerned. Hence the style of pronunciation has therefore been termed 'formal speech' (1983:108).

Reverting to John's language in the prologue, there is no doubt that it is formal. John tells himself that in addressing this kind of sophisticated audience, he is going to use the type of language that is carefully selective and well chosen. His congregation is of a high class, who are on the same level as John. He is also omni-communicative as his audience all understand him.

Again, Trudgill has some important remarks in as far as the context is concerned. 'Language, like other forms of social activity, has to be appropriate to the speaker using it. This is why in many communities, men and women's speech is different.' (1983:100).

For instance, if a man used language inappropriate to his sex or wore a skirt, in Trudgill's society, he would be scorned. What clearly emerges is that behaviour is not

only appropriate to the individual, it also needs to be suitable for particular occasions and situations.

In connection with the behaviour, it would be absurd to give a boxing commentary in the language of the Bible or a parish church sermon in legal language. It would be no less than a mistake or a joke. In other words, language 'varies not only according to the social characteristics of the speaker (such as his social class, ethnic group, age and sex) but also according to the social context in which he finds himself'. (1983:100).

Jesus' movements were from the rural background to an urban background, and he was capable of adapting himself to both situations. He was able to express himself according to the context in which he found himself. The same applied no less to John as he addressed an audience different from the readers Synoptic Gospel. For example, when addressing Jewish people, he used the Jewish symbolism and names familiar to the Jewish background. As was typical of John, he would use his language as he addressed the upper class, and could also communicate to broader society. Clearly, he could adapt himself according to context in which he found himself.

Croix has a different approach when tackling the question of class. He uses the term class struggle, which predisposes him to what Marx terms exploitation. In fact, this goes back to the ancient Greek world, wherein the condition of being a slave was far lower than that of a citizen or even of a free foreigner.

The upshot of it is that Croix later than the first-century Palestine, detects that there are two distinct classes, the ruling class and the working class, the former comprising the masters, landlords or money lenders, while the latter comprised wage labourers, slaves, serfs, 'Coloni', tenant farmers and debtors of respective employers.

Due to imperialism, the poor had to pay tributes to Rome in the form of taxes, no matter how much they earned. More appalling, was the fact that the landowner, due to the special profit, could attain to the surplus value which could be shared with their relatives, but not shared with the suffering poor.

Also worth mentioning here is the exclusion of the Greeks as they were not regarded as belonging to the Jewish world. The history of the tabernacles was not known by all the Greeks. In spite of themselves, not having first become Jews, they went up to worship at the Feast. They did not only worship with them, they had a request which they brought to Philip: 'Sir,' they said, 'we would like to see Jesus'. (John 12:21).

There is a further question: What did they want to see? They wanted to see Jesus, the Logos, the latter which as a Greek term meant life and light, both of which meant the glory (donar). Incidentally, both Jews and Greeks as an audience, witnessed the light if not the glory. Hence, Jesus said, 'The hour has come for the son of man to be glorified'. (John 12:23). The language spoken both by Jesus and the Greeks, has between them meaning as well as interpretation.

2.6 John's Narrator

John's narrator is seen as a middleman standing between the implied author and the reader, thus bridging the gap/silence that would result between the two, were it not for the role played by the narrator. The latter is the voice of the text which is dynamic and meaningful. In other words, the narrator brings about the fusion of the two horizons, that is, between the implied author and the reader. There is evidently some excellent work done by the narrator who takes the reader right into the text (the world of the narrative), in order that there should be interpretation and meaning.

In the prologue of John, the narrator is the mouthpiece in terms of telling the story, introducing the dialogue, providing explanations, translating terms, and telling us what various characters know and did not know. In short, the narrator stimulates and influences us what to think. The narrator serves as a reader's commentary, that is, the narrator provides information for the reader, and he does that intrusively. The narrator interposes between the narrative and the reader as alive and as such makes the narrative/text be alive too.

The narrator is very much aware that he is communicating with a reader or audience, opening the concealed avenues as regards the meaning of Jesus' life and death.

Culpepper highly commends the 'expositional mode', which is referred to by Meir Sternberg as necessarily introductory or orienting information. Sternberg's observation is that exposition given by the narrator is capable of being concentrated in one place or

distributed throughout a narrative. Further, Sternberg analyses some deviations from this 'expositional mode' "which have the effect of qualifying, modifying, or demolishing the reader's first impressions of a character or situation in the narrative world". (1983:19).

Culpepper further highlights John's strategy, which conforms closely to the norm of chronological preliminary, concentrated exposition. As a result of this, the narrator in turn is able to give the reader 'a concentrated, more or less, chronologically arranged, block of exposition in the prologue, which proves reliable as the work progresses'. (1983:19).

There are two things which happen in a reciprocal manner. On the one hand, a narrator may tell the reader all the vital information, yet, on the other hand, the reader may be required to detect things as the story progresses. The role of the narrator, as far as the story is concerned, changes according to circumstances. For instance, the narrator may have only limited insight into the story, or may supply privileged information to which no ordinary observer of the action would have access. Thus, in the light of this, the narrator is to a greater or lesser degree 'omniscient'.

Specifically speaking, the Johannine narrator is neither unreliable or deliberately suppressive, in the sense that he begins the narrative with an overview of the identity of the central figure and the course of action to follow. A typical example is that is found in the prologue. From the outset, the narrator shares his omniscient vantage point with the reader, hence the reader is in a position to be given, immediately, all that is required

to understand the story. In other words, the opportunity of pre-understanding is given to the reader.

Besides the narrator being omniscient, another attribute is that of being 'omni-communicative'. Put simply, the narrator feeds information to a diverse audience equitably, to the inner Jewish adherents and outsiders alike. They all understand stories about dabar and the logos. Complementary to the narrator's information, is the manner in which Culpepper makes us understand John's language. John speaks candidly about the logos when he says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. He expresses himself quite vividly when he touches on the central figure - Jesus the pre-existent logos.

2.7 John's Readers and Narratees

In order to recognize John's social class, we need to keep a sharp eye on the language or the voice of the narrator. Culpepper, referring to Peter J. Rabinowitz, 'argues there are at least four audiences in any narrative text: (1) the actual audience, (2) the authorial audience, (3) the narrative audience, and (4) the ideal narrative audience' (1983:206).

This, having been said, he suggests that the actual audience may be either historical (first century) reader or contemporary readers. Yet, the authorial audience, he says is the audience for whom the 'real' author thinks he is writing. There occurs a distance between the actual and authorial audiences, hence, most writers, including the fourth evangelist, attempt to minimize this distance. Still on the point of greater distance between the audiences in question, the actual reader has much difficulty in appreciating

the book. Here, Culpepper has a new discovery as he says: 'It is in this gap that exegesis and the study of Koine Greek, Judaism, and first-century Greco-Roman culture have played a vital role in the interpretation of John'. (1983:207).

It becomes clear therefore, that some of John's readers were Greeks, Jews and Greco-Romans. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that by studying the authorial audience implied in the Gospel a clearer picture may emerge of the audience for which the evangelist intended to write.

Of course, other than the above-mentioned sophisticated society, Culpepper deals with the four audiences as delineated by Peter J. Rabinowitz. The latter speaks of the narrative audience present in fictional literature. In fiction, the reader has to pretend that imaginary characters are 'real', that certain situations 'exist', and that various events are, or are not, possible. The narrative audience is capable of accepting the story on its own terms. On the other hand, 'both the actual and the authorial audiences know better but willingly suspend their disbelief in order to enter into the story'. (Culpepper, 1983:207). These audiences would be regarded as understanding John's language as readers, but with some reservations, in order to be part of the story. Particularly in John, we are made to understand that the narrative audience accepts that all of the events took place as the narrator says: 'Water turned to wine, men were healed, a multitude was fed, and Lazarus was raised from the dead'. (Culpepper, 1983:207).

An observation is made, that is, for the contemporary reader, reading the Gospel may become an exercise in pretense, as the reader would pretend to know and think what the

evangelist assumed his first-century readers knew and thought in pretending to believe that water could be changed to wine, and that a man born blind could be given sight by obeying the command to wash clay and spittle from his eyes.

The last, and not the least, is the 'ideal narrative audience'. This ideal audience believes the narrator, accepts his judgments, and appreciates his irony.

Further, we would need to look at the relationships among the audiences, as explained by Rabinowitz. It is a general rule that the distance between authorial audience and narrative audience has a tendency of being along an axis of 'fact', either 'historical' or 'scientific'. Put simply, the narrative audience believes that certain events could, or did, take place. In this case, the distance between the narrative audience and the ideal narrative audience has a tendency of lying along an axis of ethics or interpretation. The ideal narrative audience has a prerogative to be called upon to judge the narrator whilst having agreed with him that certain events are good or that a particular analysis is correct.

Summary

The Prologue is a heavenly conversation which transpires between the Trinity. It is, therefore, Language of Divine Trinity. It happens in a pre-existent, pre-historical period, before anything was created.

When the Logos became flesh, or human, then this God-talk becomes antilanguage, because the Word is rejected by 'cosmic society' (Jn 1:11). Even the language Jesus

spoke was not the language of the religious and political leaders. They did not understand it. It was, therefore, antilanguage because it was a language that Jesus set within that society as a conscious alternative to it. Jesus did not identify himself with the dominant conventional norms and values of the ruling class. Instead, he transformed the society's sociopolitical, economic and religious environment. In other words, he reconstructed the society as well as transformed humanity. This was due to new language, hence the new order, new norms and values, the new social and religious values. Nonetheless, he established an antisociety which was based on the norms and values of the Kingdom (reign) of God. Thus, his antilanguage, which was the same as the language of Shalom and righteousness, stood to the antisociety, that is the citizens of the Kingdom of God, as language, namely the language that was spoken by the opponents of the society, 'society' meaning the opponents of Jesus. Antilanguage is something to do with that which is new - an introduction of newness. The narrator is an antinarrator, and the narratee have to listen attentively in order to be transformed. The ethos had to change with the advent of Jesus. The latter came to create a new environment in order for the people of God to thrive.

Revelation chapter 21 goes back to the Prologue. Jesus comes down to bring the newness in his body. Chapter 21 is place in such a critical part in the development of the author's plot. In fact, it is the climax of the book of Revelation. Satan, the source of all evil, has been defeated, and all his power taken away. The author then describes the alternative reality where there is no suffering, persecution, death, sorrow, or tears. this new reality has more splendour and power that that of Rome because it is rooted in justice. The reason why there is such splendour is that all light is radiated by God and

the lamb. The values of justice, peace and reconciliation reign supreme since they are embodied in God who is tabanacled among humans. This experience is qualitatively different to that of his contemporary cities. God is at the centre of the new city and declares that He "makes all things new" (21:6). This means that the human dignity of people would be restored, and everything else will be renewed.

There is the question of New Heaven and New Earth. The "new" in Greek, *Kainos*, means new in kind and not just another, but a radical transformation or renewal (Sweet, 1990:296). The question that arises is why does the author of Revelation use the terms "new heaven and new earth" at this point in the book. For twenty chapters John is vilifying the Roman Empire and all its allies. He exposed the corruption used in order to sustain splendid lives for a minority. John becomes sarcastic about the power and splendour of the present order. He quickly points out that the new order (a new heaven and a new earth) is a radical alternative to the present one.

There is a dichotomy of the old heaven and the new heaven. The old heaven or the present heaven is the dwelling place of God, but it is not perfect and eternal because in it Satan has a place (Sweet, 1990:296). the first people, Adam and Eve, committed sin and were driven out of paradise. This has a qualitative meaning of the coming of Jesus - bringing in the New Heaven. The latter understood in the context of Jesus' coming.

CHAPTER 3

EXEGESIS OF THE PROLOGUE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

(1;1-18)

3.2 Logos in Eternity

Here a comparison is made between Gen. 1:1 "In the beginning God created . . .' The words 'In the beginning' point to the BEGINNING who is God himself. Genesis relates events from eternity, and eternity is God himself.

John's statement that 'in the beginning was the Logos' is an echo of Gen. 1:1. He already demonstrates that the 'Logos' he is speaking about is not the standard Greek Logos. This is the Logos that is eternity itself.

There are two Greek words which mean the word, namely, the *rhema* and the Logos. The former means the spoken word while the latter means many things to many people. According to the stoics, the Logos means the immanent reason, the inner rational property expresses itself in material objects animate and inanimate (barrett, 1978:35). The stoics believe that the Logos is a cosmic being. It is something that permeates the whole universe. It permeates all structures in the universe, be it political, economical, social, cultural and technological. It permeates them all. Gnostics view the Logos as one who prepares for the personified mediator. they regard the Logos as the healer and creator. The Logos is a mythological intermediary being between God and man (Barrett, 1978:152).

3.1.2 The Logos in the Hellenistic World

(The first part is introductory to the section)

vv. 1,2. There is a probability that John 1:1,2 is an exposition of Gen. 1:1ff. What is commonly held is that the phrase 'en arche' in John 1:1,2 renders 'brst' in Gen. 1:1.

It is also apparent that *'ho Theos'* in the prologue alludes to Gen. 1:1. Further, it could be argued that the central terms '*phos*' (light) and 'skotia' (darkness) in vv. 4,5 are derived from Gen. 1:2-5. The dialectic of light and darkness is dominant in both Genesis and John. In Jewish exegesis, Gen. 1:3 serves as a basis for the predominant idea of logos/dabar and its identification with light. It could be argued therefore that John's use of the logos betrays a Jewish thought pattern in which '*dabar*' is the incarnation of the word. Moreover, John seems to be influenced by Jewish exegesis when he interprets Logos to mean Light. The connection here is based on Gen. 1:3.

If John's Logos is related to the Gen 1:1, then the Logos of the prologue is an indirect reference to Jesus Christ. The Logos is therefore offensive and foolish to the Greeks. The Logos refers to the historical figure of Jesus Christ.

It is also a Trinitarian statement. The Logos, according to vv. 1 and 2, is not only with God, but also is God. 'with, that is, pros' denotes the connection, community, and communication with the Trinity. This is the same idea that is mooted out by the author/s of Gen. 1:25-26, where the plural form is used, 'let us make humans in our own image'. The Logos, is therefore, not only Jesus as person, but incorporates the Trinity.

Other than the Book of Genesis, there are other instances in the Old Testament where the word of God is creative. Its creative nature is noticeable in Genesis. Psalm 33:6 summarises the creative word of command thus, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made". The word of the Lord is also communicative. The Lord communicates his purpose through the prophetic message, which was regarded as the word of the Lord. (Jer. 1:4). In 1:3 Ezekiel says, "Now the word of the Lord came unto me." In all these passages the word is not abstract but spoken and active. Barrett observes that the word in the Old Testament signifies an event, whereas in John the logos is the timeless *(en argei*) word which became an event (*Sarx egeneto*) (1978:153).

Logos achieved a comprehensive and varied significance with the process of rationalization which characterised the Greek spirit. With its manifold historical

application one might almost call it symbolic of the Greek understanding of the world and existence.

It should not be overlooked, however, that for the Greeks Logos is very different from an address or a word of creative power.

No matter how we construe it as used by the Greeks, it stands in contrast to the 'Word' of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Naturally, concrete utterance is part of its content, especially when it is employed in an emphatic sense, as in human words of command, divine or oracular sayings, logic, *Mantikoi* or philosophical dialogue.

But there is implied the connected rational element in speech, which seeks to disclose the issue itself in the demonstration, as distinct from the harmony and beauty of sound, for which the Greek uses ethos or rhema, and especially in contrast to *rhema* as the individual and more emotional expression or saying.

The Development of the Logos Concept in the Greek World

The two sides of the concept are:

1. We have in view the use of logo for word, speech, utterance, revelation, not in the sense of something proclaimed and heard, but rather in that of something displayed, clarified, recognised, and understood. Logos as the rational power of calculation in virtue of which man can see himself and his place in the cosmos. Logos as the indication of an existing and significant content which is assumed to be intelligible. Logos as the content itself in terms of its meaning and law, its basis and structure.

and

2. I would state the logos as a metaphysical reality and an established term in philosophy and theology, from which these finally develop in later antiquity, under alien influences, a cosmological entity and hypostasis of the deity a deuteros theos.

If John's Logos is related to the Gen. 1:1, then the Logos of the prologue is an indirect reference to Jesus Christ. This Logos is therefore offensive and foolish to the Greeks. The Logos refers to the historical figure of Jesus Christ.

3.1.3 The Logos in the Old Testament

(The first part introduces this section)

In explicating the Logos in the Old Testament, Eric May has as his primary object, 'to probe the exact relation of the Old Testament to this sublime Johannine doctrine on the divine Logos'. (1970:438). In order that there should be clarity and completeness, he raises the question as to what is the source of St John's Logos-doctrine as we find it in the Prologue. There are incorrect responses to this question which unfortunately are rejected.

In order to answer the question, emphasis must be placed upon the examination of logos in the Old Testament. Such a question, like whence did St John the Evangelist derive his doctrine of the Logos as the divine Son of God, is asked. Posing such a question generates the following answers: one path points to Philo's Hellenistic philosophy.

Another way leads to the Palestinian Targumim. A third points to Sacred Scripture, to both the Old and the New Testaments. It would seem one could arrive at the solution of his problem only by taking that third road.

Eric May denies that Johannine Christology borrowed the term logos and the ideas associated with it from Philo, as has been contended by many.

However, JN Birdsall corroborates the fact that John was influenced both by the Old Testament and by Hellenic thought, 'Philo made frequent use of the term Logos, to which he gave a highly developed significance and a central place in his theological scheme'. (1962:744).

Birdsall suggests that the term was derived from stoic sources, leading him to his discovery of Greek thought in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus he makes use of it on the basis of such passages as Ps. 33:6, which expresses the means whereby the transcendent God may be the creator of the universe and the Revealer of himself to Moses and the Patriarchs (JN Birdsall, 1962:744).

Further, J N Birdsall goes for an in depth explanation of the Logos in the Septuaguint, as was used to translate the Hebrew *dabar*. The root of which signifies that which lies behind, and when so translated as 'word' it also means a meaningful sound, possibly it may also mean Thing! Commonly known in the Hebrew psychology 'a man's *dabar* is regarded as in some sense an extension of his personality and further as possessing a substantive existence of its own'. (1962:744).

Again, examining the Logos in the Old Testament, Eric May explains how the word is used as a bold figure of speech in the form of personification instead of hypostasis. For instance, we find the creative act represented as a word of God: Gen. 1:3, and God said: 'Be light made. And light was made'. Again, the Word is used for specific action, for example, as in Is. 55:10-11, 'As the rain and the snow come down from heaven . . . so shall my word be which shall go forth from my mouth.' (May, 1970:441.

This alludes to the power, command and fiat of the unmoved mover, the person who is behind all creation.

: The Johannine Logos is '*dabar*'. The fact that John historicises the Word, is an indication that he is not referring to the Greek Logos.

: v. 3. '*Dabar*' is creator. All things were made through him. Therefore, '*dabar*' is the source of life, of being, of creation. He is not creation because he differs significantly from creation. There is space between him and creation since he is not created. Nevertheless, the spatial difference is not conflictual, but demonstrates the difference between God the Creator, and his creation.

Schrackenburg states: "The Logos participates in creation. But no exact description of how he does so is given. Only the fact is stressed: All things were made through him". (1968:236). However, Schrackenburg argues in as far as the preposition *dia* is concerned. The preposition, he says, leaves several possible interpretations open. As a

result he puts forth two possible suggestions. Firstly, that the Logos could have been a helper charged by God and equipped with his creative power, a demiurge, according to which the actual world was created in all its multiplicity. Secondly, it could be finally the creator himself, through whose actions "all things" were made. He also touches on the biblical account of creation whereby God created the world, by his fiat.

3.1.4 The Logos in the New Testament

Gerhard Kittel makes mention of the emphasis which the whole of the New Testament places on hearing (AKOUO) which presupposes speech. He points out an essential part as an implication of the religious relation in the New Testament, 'thus expressed both quantitatively and qualitatively by the many words of speech -→AGGELLOU and derivatives →KERUSOU/KERUGMA→ MARTUREOU etc'. (1977:101). Further, driving his point home, Kittel sees no accident nor the result of arbitrary extraneous influences that the Greek word for speech, both as verb and especially as noun (LEGOU/LOGOS), should be the vehicle of important New Testament statements.

In matters like the baptism and transfiguration, where the whole emphasis seems to be on action, the →FONE LEGOSSA (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). 'And the voice from heaven said, "This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased".' This is just not an accompanying phenomenon; but it is that which gives the event its theme and content.

Of course, let it be stated that the 'usage remained basically free from necessary implication that is shown by the ingenuous way in which many statements can be made that enshrine negative estimate of the "word".' (Kittel, 1977:101).

Therefore, both in the New Testament and as elsewhere in the Greek world, it can be said of something which is present only as logos that it is nothing (Col. 2:23). Logos is also said to be the term for a bad word. The New Testament speaks of the unwholesome talk (SAPROS LOGOS) (Eph. 4:29), the empty words (Eph. 5:6) (KENOIS LOGOIS). The logos is comparable with a cancer (2 Tim. 2:17). There is the exploitation with the stories by the greedy teachers (2 Pet. 2:3). Incidentally, it describes how the human logos works itself out in sin.

Cahill, also advocating the presence of the logos in the New Testament, says that 'nowhere else in the Gospels is there so unified and global a description of the role of the logos incarnate in the world. Therefore, the difference between the Synoptics and John is perhaps better understood by his positioning of the logos as a center which immediately places this Gospel in a more rarified symbolic atmosphere than that which the Synoptics occupy'. (1976:71).

3.2 Strophe 2: The Logos and Creation. The dialectic of Light and Darkness (vv. 3-5)

The anonymous poet strikes the point of the inauguration of the Word's relationship to mankind by his agency in creating 'all' without any exception (Boismard, 1957:44). Doubtlessly, the poet is inspired by the first creation story in the book of Genesis (Gen. 1:3-30) whereby God is said to have named all things and brought them into existence.

The first thing to be noticed is the peculiar style seen in the use of the neuter to denote human beings - this is the kind of usage the evangelist will adopt throughout his Gospel (3:35; 6:39; 10:29). 'All through him came into being, and apart from him no single thing came to be.' So here 'all' and 'no single thing' seem to refer primarily to men and women.

Incidentally, the words of Jesus later echo the second part of the statement, 'apart from me you can do nothing' (15:5). The act of using the neuter for persons poses this curious inclination as it becomes evident from the next line, 'what came to be found life in Him'. 'And here a second distinctive feature occurs: "life" consistently signifies the believer's participation in the very life of God Himself, communicated through the Word (10:10b)'. (Boismard, 1957:45). To make significant what word is used as a bold figure of speech in the form of the personification instead of a hypothesis. For instance, we find the creative act represented as a word of God: And God said: Be light made. And light was made." (Gen 1:3) Again, the word is used for specific action, for example, as in Is. 55:10-11, "as the rain and the snow came down from heaven . . . so shall my word be which shall go forth from my mouth." (May, 1970:441).

This alludes to the power, command and fiat of the unmoved mover, the person who is behind all creation.

3.2.1 The Logos as Creator (v. 3)

The Word is Creator because what came to be through the Word is creation. Creation is therefore, the content of the Word. The Logos is the Mediator of creation, positively and

negatively, because 'everything was made by him, and nothing was made without him'. This verse must be understood in the context of light and darkness: light is positive while darkness is negative. The creative activity of the Logos is the creativity of God through the Logos. Darkness is the underside of Light.

3.2.2 The Logos as Life and Light (v. 4)

The dominant theme here is the celebration of Life. The covenant of Life is highlighted through the metaphor: and that life was the life of human kind. It is possible to say that the Logos is Mediator not only in terms of creation, but also in its continuance. Life and Light are characteristic of the Logos. They come to humans in both creation and new creation. Light and Life is therefore, an example of John's use of antilanguage. Metaphorically, Jesus says that he is the light and life. Again, this is noticeable in Chap. 8v12, "I am the light of the world, he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life".

3.2.3 The Logos as Light that combats Darkness (v. 5)

John uses the Logos as the vehicle that carries the Light. Light and darkness are used symbolically because they are two different spheres, although they are related. The Logos in this context bears some inherent analogical relationship to the Light which it symbolises. Humans are not able to grasp the full meaning of the Light that is transported by the Logos because there is a residual mystery that escapes our intellect. This could be the reason why the constituency which the Logos came to did not receive him; rather it rejected him. This rejection could be ascribed to the all-encompassing

darkness in which this community lived. It was this darkness that the Light came to combat, in order to pull the community out of it.

In the dialectic of Light and Darkness, Darkness represents death while, Light represents Life. During the first century, the forces of Darkness, and therefore of death wields tremendous power. The Pax Romana was an enforced peace. The Colonies were the underdogs which had to pay extravagant taxes to the Empire. The Jewish-religious leaders were as corrupt as their Roman masters.

Through excessive taxation and the Temple Tax, the peasants were impoverished. This was the world in which the Logos became '*umuntu*' human; it was a world that was enveloped in utter darkness. He came to be the Light. It is no wonder then, that the world did not comprehend him.

3.3 Intermezzo: Entry of Narrator 2 vv. 6-8

Bultmann posits that vv. 6-8 should be considered in secondary addition because it is prose, and therefore does not belong to the original poetic hymn (Borgen, 1970:95). Bultmann further asserts that if the author of the Fourth Gospel was a former disciple of John The Baptist, and that he added 'these words about him as a testimony to leaving the Baptist's sect and becoming a Christian'. (Borgen, 1970:95).

What is apparent in these verses is the entry of a narrator who is keen to introduce the Baptist and his role in witnessing about the light. The voice that tells the story of the Baptist and speaks to the reader is a rhetorical device that is distinguishable from the

voice of the narrator who tells the story of the Logos in vv. 1-5. For the sake of clarity, the narrator who tells the story of the Baptist is identified as Narrator 2.

John The Baptist's story is neither unreliable nor deliberately suppressive, but rather confirms the central theme of the Logos as light. The narrator of the story is 'omnicommunicative' because he tells what he knows, namely (v. 7).

3.4 Strophe 3: The Logos in history (vv. 9-12)

3.4.1 The Ignorance of the World about the Logos (vv. 9-10)

Miller contends that 'Strophe III moves us forward to the decisive event of the incarnation of the Logos whom it represents as having stood historically in a salvation-imparting relation to men.' (1983:558). The voice of narrator one (vv. 1-5, 9-12) is not necessarily in opposition to narrator two. Both share the same point of view. (v. 9). Logos is regarded as authentic light that enlightens the world. The 'world' here may be understood as 'darkness'. The world is always placed in opposition to the Incarnate Logos. The authentic light is the Logos who illumines the existence of every human although, not all embrace this light.

To prove that not everyone accepts the light, v. 10, admits that the world rejected him. 'Kosmos' (v. 10a) denotes the world inhabited by human beings, 'in 10b the world including human beings, in 10c humanity, fallen and in darkness, yet remaining the object of God's love'. (3:16). The world demonstrates its ignorance about Jesus.

'Darkness' is the reason for this ignorance - 'where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise'.

The ignorant of the world, including the Jews, reminds of the utterance that is akin to the Jewish saying regarding the unresponsiveness of humans to wisdom: 'wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men, and found no dwelling place' (cf. Enoch 42:2). Without the Logos, the Kosmos is in utter darkness, symbolised by ignorance.

3.4.2 The rejection of the Logos by the insiders (v. 11)

By insiders we refer to Israel, the Jewish people, among whom the Logos became 'sarx'. The words 'to his own' approximate his own people, first Israel, but also humanity in its entirety. Israel, however, is the focus because of her peculiar status as 'God's own' (Exod. 19:5; cf. Rom. 15:8; John 4:22).

Schrackenburg puts the question of rejection by 'his own' very forcefully and emphatically when he says, "the enigmatic and painful fact, that the Logos met with rejection in the world, is expressed still more pointedly, almost paradoxically, in V.11; he came to his own realm, but his own, those who belonged to him did not accept him" (1965:258).

3.4.3 The acceptance of the Logos by outsiders (v. 12)

John's congregation was composed of diverging individuals, among whom were outsiders or deviants. Even during this period, social groups made rules and attempted at

some time and under some circumstances, to enforce them. Social rules are meant to define situations and the kinds of behaviour appropriate to them. In the process, some are defined as 'right', while others are forbidden as 'wrong'. However, not everybody knows such rules. A person who is supposed to have broken any social rule is not trusted to live by the rules agreed on by the group. Such a person is ostracised and regarded as an outsider.

Yet in the Fourth Gospel, it is these people, who are regarded as deviants by the ruling class, who accept the Logos. Of course, Jesus was also regarded as a deviant by his opponents. According to their self-understanding of the Messiah, Jesus did not meet the profile of the expected Jewish Messiah. The antigroup or antisociety accepted the Logos without remainder. The religious insiders made rules on the character of the expected messiah. These rules made it impossible for them to accept the Word that became human. V. 12b is the centre of Boismard's chiastic structure, where the author declares these deviants as the children of God. They are pivotal in the Kingdom of God: (a) they are given (b) power (c) to be children of God. They move from darkness to light. In terms of the characteristics of the Kingdom of God, it is the insiders - Israel, who regards herself as the child of Abraham, who are now the deviants. The phrase *'tekna Theou'* stands at the pivot of the prologue because it contrasts with the phrase 'children of Abraham' which is known by the Jews.

The children of Abraham vis-à-vis the children of God were surpassed by the antilanguage that invaded the Torah. The children of Abraham who were the first enemies of God because of the sin they committed, were nonetheless faithful, true and

obedient. The dynamism of the antilanguage that came with the Logos was equivalent to the domanis (power) in the Acts 1:8, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ... On the other hand, to those who received and believed in him, he empowered them to become the children of God. There begins the process of exaltation and elevation of the recipients and believers. It is by sheer grace that the latter become neighbours of the Son of God.

3.5 Intermezzo: Narrator 3 (v. 13)

The comment 'that those who believed in his name, who were born not from some blood-line, neither from human impulse nor from any man's desire, but from God', is a deliberate explanatory note added by narrator three. The purpose of the comment is to demonstrate to the 'insiders' that boasting about the children of Abraham's etiquette does not qualify them to be 'children of God'. The only way to become 'children of God' is through accepting the Logos who became human. The 'children of God' have the perception of the fullness of God in the person of the Trinity, that is, God, the Son and Holy Spirit. Again 'the children of God', as Paul puts it, are those who have not received the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but have received the spirit of sonship when we cry, "Abba! Father! (Rom. 8:15). It is as if the narrator is saying that we all receive grace upon grace even when we are the children of Abraham.

3.6 Strophe 4a. Logos, the neighbour (v. 14)

The word became flesh is the climax of the whole pericope in John chapter one. When John comes to the fourteenth verse he comes up with this tremendous statement: 'And the word became flesh and dwelt in the midst of the people'. According to Boismard

'became flesh' means 'flesh' (flesh and blood) in the Bible indicating the human being in all his contingency, creatureliness, earthbound character, implying - in contract with the Spirit representing the dynamism of God's infinite power - our human powerlessness. (1957:47).

The word takes the form of the flesh. The creator in the beginning is invisible and once he is in-dwelling among us, he is visible, who "dwelt among us full of grace and truth". Unlike the other Messiah expected by the Jews, this one is full of grace and truth. "Grace, a favourable word of Paul's, is the extravagant goodness of God to undeserving men, while truth for John means "eternal reality as revealed to men either the reality itself or the revelation of it" (Dodd) (Hunter, 1965:19).

The will of God is more dynamic than the will of the flesh. It is God's will that the Word dwells among the humans. To the Jews it is like seeing God in the cloud, tabernacle. But in this instance, he (God) pitches his tent. The Logos avoids the centre of power, but remains on the margin with those whom he heals. The coming of the Logos is good news and what we notice here is that the Gospel is demonstrated deliberately in the antilanguage. Before Abraham was, I am (*ego eimi*).

At a given time in history God chose a womb of a woman to manifest himself in the world. Out of this womb the word was born. the word became human and Jewish. The word carried in the womb, which was a cultural womb, because Mary's was not a spiritual womb. She was rural woman living in the countryside of Nazareth. Here, she was still upholding her values and cultural principles. And God chose this woman who

came from one of the smallest and despised town in Palestine. It was the womb of this despised woman from the countryside of Nazareth that was chosen for the manifestation of God on earth. It was in Nazareth that some of the most popular riots took place. It was here that the Maccabean and Hasmonian revolts occurred and yet, God was transcendent and conceived in the womb of this immaculate and humble woman.

Having perused the Bible, one has never come across any mention of where heaven and earth meet. However, a miracle at a given time in history happened when heaven and earth met in the womb of Mary. In her womb the divine and the human met and the word became flesh. The womb did not become flesh in the sky, but it became flesh in the womb of the innocent woman of Nazareth.

Nazareth was despised in those days. There was nothing good that could be expected to come from Nazareth. It is this same place known by its riots that God chose to manifest himself. In the whole history of the logos become flesh, man does not play an important role. The reason being that men were in the centre and women were on the periphery. Women in those days were subjected to the worst forms of oppression, dehumanisation and exploitation that this world has ever seen. They were oppressed in their homes by their husbands and by the government of the day, by the religious leaders and the society at large. Women and children were not regarded as important in *the basileia toutheou.*

3.6.1 Logos becomes '*umuntu*' human (v. 14a)

Logos becomes '*umuntu*' by joining the 'deviants' as their neighbour. This word which became '*umuntu*' became a friend of the outcasts of the society, like prostitutes and people with different kinds of diseases, of which some were unclean.

Schrackenburg expresses this miraculous happening in his own way when he says:

> "The hymn to the Logos now reaches its climax. the fact that the Logos is again mentioned explicitly is already a link with V.1; but the thought itself swoops back. It expresses the unmistakable paradox that the Logos who dwelt with God, clothed in the full majesty of he divinity and possessing the fullness of the divine life, entered the sphere of the earthly and human, the material and perishable, by becoming flesh" (1965:266).

The Word denied himself the favourable acceptance by the Pharisees and the Sadducees for the sake of the despised. This word had *inimba* (Xhosa word) meaning the deep compassion emanating from the woman's womb. Mayson summarises Jesus' compassion here: 'He was a people's person before anything else. It was from his compassionate contact that his healing sprang. He made people to become whole'. (1987:34).

3.6.2 Logos pitches his tent among deviants

Both Lindars and Bruce maintain the meaning of ekenosen is to pitch a tent or tabernacle. When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, God commanded

them to erect a tabernacle so that his dwelling place should be established among his people.

Again, Bruce and Lindars argue that it is this statement, which implies that God manifested his presence among his people in the tent which Moses pitched that he has taken up residence on earth in the word which became flesh (Bruce, 1983:40), (Lindars, 1972:19). The Logos bypassed the temple built of bricks and mortar by Solomon, and preferred to pitch his tent among 'deviants', and by so doing elevated them.

3.6.3 The deviants share the glory of the Logos: What is glory?

It is John's genius to go the same length with the Synoptic Gospels to cover the work of the incarnation story. Marsh encapsulates it all when he says, 'This is clearly the climax of the prologue, the crown of the summary history that has been recounted. The word that created, that shone through creation, that has cast its brightness upon the chosen people of God, in whom the truly righteous had believed, a last came into the sphere of human life as man. (Marsh, 1985:19).

Boismard endeavours to define this glory:

> 'For the present, however, the hymnist describes this "glory" as the salient feature of the Word, that of "an only Son coming from the Father". As the evangelist will point out to the reader at the conclusion of his narrative of the first "sign" at Cana, it is this "glory" evinced by Jesus that brings his disciples - at least inclivatively - to new faith: he manifested his glory and his disciples began to believe him' (2:11b). (1957:48).

3.7 Intermezzo: Narrator 4 (v. 15)

Again, the Baptist invades the Prologue to witness to Christ, Though later in time, Christ ranks before his forerunners "before I (John) was born, he already was" The words means literally he was first in respect of me. Doubtless the allusion is to Christ's pre-existence. John the Baptist is one of the deviants. This is the reason why he continues to witness about him.

3.8 Sharing in the Logos

3.8.1 The deviants are now shareholders as they are related to Jesus. He lays down his life for his friends because of the immeasurable love he has for them. Jesus is himself a deviant. when threatened by the Pharisees about Herod, who wanted to kill him (Jesus), his response was, "Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures toady and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course", (Luke 13:22)

3.8.2 They also share grace upon grace

Theirs is the prevenient grace that has brought them up the spiritual ladder and as such they are said to have been elevated.

3.9 Intermezzo: Narrator 5 (vv. 17-18)

The main emphasis lies on the contrast between Moses and Christ, that is, Law and Gospel. "The Law according to John, did bear witness to Christ (5:39), but Moses is primarily an accuser (5:45). Glory is expressed not so much in deeds of power as in acts

of grace and in the communication of truth, and grace is expressed, as by Paul, in contrast with law." (Barrett, 1978:169)

3.9.1 The law of Moses: Insiders are under the law. The children of God are under the law of grace, therefore, they are gracious.

No one has ever seen God, not the law of Moses, not even Abraham, but only the son of God (Jesus), who "nearest to the Father's heart" is the rendering of Greek that means literally in the bosom of the Father, an oriental phrase suggesting close fellowship of a meal" (Hunter, 1965:20).

God and the Son are not alone. There is also the presence of the Spirit who gave Jesus the power to speak the antilanguage. For example, Jesus says, "For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to world." (John 6:33).

3.9.2 Jesus has revealed their new Father to them. The new Father is the precursor to the glory beheld by the Johannine community, the latter articulating the response of faith to the earthly existence of Jesus. John uses antilanguage to present Jesus in a dynamic way. " I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser" (John 15:1)

In short, the story of Jesus, about to be unfolded, is the truth about God. It is the "God" translated into human terms and spelt out in human words and acts.

3.10 Summary

The point at which the descent tapers is v. 12. The Logos from eternity, that is, from above, becomes incarnate when he identifies with a group from below which accepts him as the coming one. He becomes their neighbour and empowers them to become children of God, like him. From this point onwards, we observe an ascending movement which climaxes with v. 18. The movement goes back to eternity. The Logos exalts those of low degree and gives them glory. In a sense, they become like him. The purpose of this chapter was to show the blessings of the incarnation of the Logos to humanity and the benefits of accepting him as the only begotten of the Father.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Areas to be included in this section:

(a) The importance of the theme of Logos and how the author's self-understanding of the Logos theme differs considerably from the common Greek understanding of the Logos.

(b)The fact that the author identifies an 'antisociety', expressed especially in v. 12, and that those who accepted him he empowered to be the children of God - this is anti society against those who rejected him. The author identifies those who did not accept him as those who were born of blood and the will of the flesh and the will of man. Apparently, John refers to those who prided themselves as being 'children of Abraham'. The dialectic here is between the 'children of God' who were not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man'. These are antisociety and society, and the 'children of Satan'. The difference between light and darkness is highlighted by the difference between these two societies; they who rejected him, are children of darkness, while those who accepted him, are children of the light.

(c) Further, it has to be stated that the gospel of John is different from the synoptic gospels. Although the rest of the New Testament portrays a counter-society with a counter-language that is consistent with competing groups, it is only John who eminently displays the salient traits of an antilanguage. John argues that Jesus was

being labeled as a deviant by Jewish society. This fact is highlighted by the rejection of Jesus by his society, In John's gospel there is a collectivity that emerges from, and stands opposed to, Jesus and the language he uses. The notable groups that oppose him include the (this) world (79x in John; 9x in Matthew and 3x each in Mark and Luke. The Jews were his leading opponents, therefore John:, 5x in Matthew and Luke, 7x in Mark) the other groups are the adherents of John the Baptist who do not yet want to believe in Jesus; the crypto-believers, Jewish Christians and Christians of the Apostolic churches. The last group could be identified as perhaps "the sheep not of this fold" (John 10:16). It is therefore, reasonable to state that John's "antilanguage is a form of resistance to this range of competing groups that consciously reject Jesus and his language.

(d) Using the model of antilanguage, the argument is that the author and his audience constitute an antisociety, that is, a social and religious collectivity which stands opposed to the religious norms and values of that part of Jewish society which rejected Jesus. The author's use of the Logos who pitches his tent among those who have been empowered to become children of God, marks a process of self-identification for the author's social and religious collectivity, while providing the new group with a framework for an alternative self-definition as a distinct group which has been empowered to become the children of God in the new dispensation.

(e) This study has demonstrated that further research is necessary to understand the role of the prologue in the context of the Fourth Gospel. A careful reading of the

Prologue proves that the major themes of the Gospel are already announced in the first chapter. What is helpful is the chiastic structure which depicts the movement of the Logos, and therefore, highlights the Christology of John. The Jesus portrayed by the prologue comes from eternity, therefore, from above, but humbles himself in such a way that he becomes a neighbour of the lowest by pitching his tent among them. At this point he becomes a Jesus from below; he becomes the crucified among the crossbearers. He could only be understood as such.

(f) Nevertheless, this study does not claim to have exhausted the wealth, symbolism, and irony of the prologue. However, the methodology of antisociety and antilanguage is helpful in this regard, but needs to be employed and tested in future research.

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