

**LANGUAGE AND THEOLOGY:
A CASE STUDY OF THE METAPHOR OF
BREATHING IN JOHN 20:22.**

By

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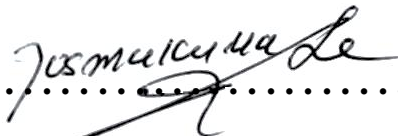
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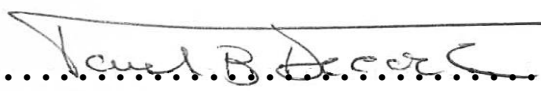
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DECLARATION

As required by the University regulations, I hereby declare that this thesis has not been presented at any other University or any other institution of higher education other than the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus) and that it is my own original work unless otherwise acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Since the blossoming of the linguistic theories in the Johannine scholarship, interest in the figurative language of John's Gospel has increased. In this study on John 20:22, the statement "Jesus breathed on them", that is, on his disciples, is addressed as a metaphor evoking the theme of creation. It is argued that this metaphor is essential in the understanding of the ideo-theological framework of the author of the Fourth Gospel. It plays a key function in the network of Johannine metaphors.

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CHAPTER I:

THE RESEARCH PREMISE

1.1 Problem statement

Van der Watt (2000) and Ruben Zimmermann (2006) have brought new insights into the study of metaphors in John's Gospel. Focusing on the function of metaphors in John's Gospel, Van der Watt argues that John's Gospel communicates its message by means of a network of interconnected metaphors. These metaphors are syntactically and semantically interconnected to create cohesion, thus illuminating the message of John. He further argues that the study of a particular metaphor opens the path to the ideo-theological framework of the author of the Fourth Gospel; and uses the metaphor of 'family' to illustrate how the "metaphoric network theory" works in John's narrative strategy (:198-200). In the same vein, Zimmermann states that "connections between images and the principal sets of images, have the character of nets" (:36). He continues with an emphasis on the theological purpose of the widespread variety of images to fulfil a theological function as part of John's narrative strategy. The images express the Godly dimension of Jesus and describe the relationship between Jesus and God; similarly, it refers also to Jesus as the saviour in creation. Images and symbols traditionally reserved for God are applied to Jesus. Thus, it is through foregrounding imagery from the Old Testament¹ tradition that the identity and function of Jesus becomes clear to the first and second reader of John's Gospel (:36).

The anthropological dimension of John's imagery seems to be another important contribution of Zimmermann (2006:39). Images in John's Gospel, he says, lead to an understanding of human life and to the basis for human actions. They complete the possibility of transformation because they orientate, awaken and build the faith of the reader of the Gospel. This is the view that the imagery in John's Gospel offers deeper insights into the knowledge of God and the human condition. These images enable an understanding of God and the world. Consequently, Zimmermann sees the study of a particular image or metaphor as essential for the reconstruction of the theology of John's Gospel. This study therefore is focused on the metaphor of breathing in John

¹ The abbreviation "OT" will be used for "Old Testament" throughout this thesis.

20:22; it is an attempt to construct the implied theological meaning². Although it only occurs once it has a key function for the interpretation of the Gospel of John in the theological framework of creation.

The study also examines how the metaphor of breathing works in the narrative and to whom it speaks. Furthermore, there is an attempt to show that the breathing of Jesus is not to be taken merely literally as physical breath. It combines the new creation and regeneration process of the humanity represented by the disciples. Besides this, the study shows that in the Johannine network of metaphors, the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor because the theme of creation traverses the whole Gospel from the beginning to the end. The overarching questions leading to this study are: what significance does the breathing metaphor have throughout John's Gospel? How can a dialogue between this metaphor and other metaphors in John be established? How does the breathing metaphor fit into the Johannine metaphoric network theory initiated by Van der Watt? How does it express the Johannine theology of creation?

To conclude, this study is executed in an African context. Therefore, the study of the breathing metaphor will serve as a frame of reference in the African quest for the re-creation, the Renaissance of the continent. The dark periods, slavery, colonization, the failures of independence, poverty and diseases, such as HIV and AIDS have threatened to destroy the hope for a better future for Africa. The breathing metaphor seems to represent a positive image of faith and hope-building in the re-creation and regeneration of Africa. The question for a contextual exegesis could be: can the breathing metaphor function as "an ethical and spiritual sap"³ to enhance the African Renaissance and healing?

1.2 General and specific objectives

The African continent and particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo, my home country, are facing a crisis with regard to hope as the current situation has led many to lose hope for a better future. To be overcome by Afro-pessimism as seems to happen in Africa generally, and the Congo specifically is not an option; it is not a solution to

² It is the assumption in this study that the breathing metaphor is a means through which John designs his theology of creation. It is argued also that the metaphor comes from the Old Testament tradition. It tells a story of God, creator and source of life, who brings salvation and re-creates the world through Jesus, the Messiah. Thus, John develops a theology by the means of a metaphor well-known in his community.

³ This is an English translation of what Ka Mana (2004:90) calls in French "sève éthique et spirituelle" to describe the role of the Gospel in the social transformation.

admit defeat. Thus, this study is a modest contribution to hope and faith building so the Renaissance of Africa might be a reality for all. The task in this study is not simply to grasp what is said in the breathing metaphor, or to search for the deeper meaning that the metaphor itself partly hides yet reveals but also to break open the dynamic of John's metaphor by raising the question of how the breathing metaphor fits into the metaphoric network of John's Gospel. At the end of this study, it is hoped that the theological meaning and the function of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 will be unravelled. Therefore, the specific objectives of this study will be to:

- demonstrate that the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor in the network of metaphors in John's Gospel
- unravel the significance this metaphor has within the entire Gospel of John
- show this metaphor and language itself can generate a theology and is vital to the understanding of the Johannine theology of creation.
- reveal how the African Renaissance can be read in the light of the metaphor of breathing.

1.3 Motivation and limitations of the study

In an assessment of imagery in John's Gospel, Zimmermann (2006:43) has emphasized that the study of Johannine imagery is essential for the reconstruction of the message and theology of John's Gospel. Although the main metaphors in John's imagery have been explored, there has never been an attempt to address the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 with attention to its theological significance and function in the network of metaphors in John's Gospel. This metaphor combines both the creation metaphor in Genesis 2:7 and the regeneration metaphor in Ezekiel 37:1-14; therefore it might have much to say to Africans in their quest for the African Renaissance. This breathing metaphor is of interest because it carries a message of hope for a better future for Africa and contributes to the development of optimistic and positive thinking in the current crises on the continent.

However, the study will not engage directly with the issue of African Renaissance; it will be examined as a possible contextualization of the main subject of this

investigation. Thus, the study is limited to how the breathing metaphor fits into the network of metaphors in John's Gospel; and how it renders comprehensible John's theology of creation. The hypothesis of the research is that the real intention as expressed in the Gospel was to remind readers that with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God introduces humanity into the re-creation or new creation process. This is seen as reminiscent of the creation scene where God breathed⁴ life into humanity in Genesis 2:7; and the prophecy concerning the resurrection of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14, which examines the regeneration of Israel prior to the establishment of the messianic kingdom. What Jesus did for the disciples, in the light of the metaphor of new creation as well as the metaphor of regeneration from Ezekiel, is that he breathed into them the "Holy Spirit and so grants them eternal life"(Ridderbos 1997:643).

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the research is the Tri-Polar meta-theoretical framework⁵. This has 3 poles of approach: the textual context (John 20:22); the African reader contexts; and the appropriation context, that is, the understanding and interpretation of the African Renaissance in the light of the metaphor of breathing. However, in this dissertation two of the poles, the reader's context and the appropriation will be dealt with in a very limited way. The main focus will be on the text of John. With this, the literary and narrative reading approach, focusing on the metaphor of breathing will be utilized. The purpose is to illustrate how the metaphor of breathing operates as a key metaphor in the narrative of John's Gospel; then as a stepping stone in the understanding of the Johannine theology of creation.

1.5 Methodology and outline of the work

The present study is aimed at understanding the message expressed in the metaphor of breathing, as portrayed in John 20:22. This understanding will involve the process of reading to combine socio-linguistic analysis and socio-historical description; narrative theological analysis; and rhetorical analysis. Socio-historical description and

⁴ The Greek word ἐμφυσάω is that one used by LXX to translate the Hebrew word [נָפַח] employed in Gn 2:7.

⁵ This is a proposal by Draper (2001:148-168; 2002:12-23) on a contextual approach of Scriptures designed in the footsteps of Bultmann, Ricoeur and Nolan. The model has three important steps, namely: *distantiation*, *contextualization* and *appropriation*. *Distantiation* refers to uncovering the meaning of the text in the original context, allowing the text to be the other. There is *contextualisation* when the meaning of the text moves from its original context to the contemporary context of the audience to analyse how this current situation relates to the text. There is *appropriation* when the text inspires praxis or social transformation a personal acceptance of the meaning and implications of the text for oneself and one's community).

“contextual exegesis” of the text allows hermeneutical access to clarify the metaphor of breathing in John’s Gospel. Socio-linguistic and socio-historic approaches are important for this study because these show how the Gospel of John reflects, contests and re-utilizes realities and social values of its original milieu (Smith 1995:12-26).

The study of the literary world of the text, using narratological criteria and rhetorical analysis⁶, such as literary context, structure, characters, implied reader, and an authorial ideo-theological framework could show that metaphors in John’s Gospel play a key role in community faith building and in increasing audience knowledge of Jesus Christ. Socio-historical description is emphasized for three reasons: it is more than a simple survey of traditions outside the New Testament; it provides insights to show how the metaphor of breathing is rooted in the Ancient Near Eastern tradition and it reflects one among many Old Testament views concerning the messianic expectations of the restoration of Israel⁷.

Thus, while the premises of the research are addressed in Chapter One, the socio-linguistic context of John’s Gospel to see the Gospel of John as a system of communication will be examined in Chapter Two. Elements such as the authorial ideological framework and that of the reader will be addressed. Chapter Three will deal with metaphors in general and metaphors in John’s Gospel to describe the precise meaning and classify the different metaphor categories. An understanding of the impact of the metaphor on readers and important clues around the interpretation of John’s text are the focus of this chapter. Among existing theories of metaphor in John’s Gospel, Van der Watt’s metaphoric network theory will be explored. The New Rhetoric, narratology and Religionsgeschichte will enable a detailed exegesis of John 20:22, in chapter Four. This leads to a specific focus on the theology of creation in John’s Gospel in chapter five. How the metaphor of breathing can be re-read in the context of the African Renaissance will be the conclusion in Chapter 5. A social-scientific approach

⁶ As summarized by The Pontifical Biblical Commission (1994:39), it “aims at something more than a simple catalogue of stylistic figures or oratorical stratagems” in a narrative. It provides insights which allow one to investigate “what makes a particular use of language effective and successful in the communication of conviction. It studies style and composition as (a) means of acting upon an audience and leads to the rediscovery or clarification of an original perspective that had been lost or obscured”. Furthermore, “the ‘New Rhetoric’ aims to penetrate to the very core of the language of Revelation precisely as persuasive religious discourse and to measure its impact in (sic) the social context of the communication.”

⁷ We are aware that there is no clear theology of the Old Testament concerning the messianic expectations. There is a variety of texts with a variety of interpretations as received and developed in later Jewish traditions. The reader interested in this issue may consult works by Hengstenberg (1970); Becker (1977); Van Groningen (1990); Smith (1993); Kaiser (1995); Storck (1996).

and contextual exegesis will be used to discuss the present situation in Africa in the context of the metaphor of breathing.

CHAPTER II:

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AS AN INSTRUMENT OF COMMUNICATION

This chapter examines John's Gospel⁸ as an instrument of communication⁹. If it is true that language is a fundamental form of social interaction, and that people "language" each other to create meaning (Malina 1985)¹⁰, then it might be valuable to consider the type of language in John, within the framework of sociolinguistic theories. If it is true that John wrote because he wanted to meet the need of his community (Hägerland 2003:309-322), then it might be equally useful to look at John's Gospel as a product of, and response to, the social context generating this text (Van der Merwe 1995:68). If it is true therefore that the ideo-theological framework of an author is influenced by what is happening socially, it might be instructive to clarify the "particular concern" of John in writing his Gospel and to examine the "ideological implications"¹¹ for his audience. This would create a framework for understanding the Johannine metaphor of breathing, the focus of this study. Most of the socio-linguistic readings of John's Gospel have proved to be relevant to the understanding of John, his context, message and audience¹².

The basic assumption is that if one wants to understand what John is saying, one has to question John's historical setting, identify who John is, establish his audience, clarify the genre of his writing and determine his message and ideo-theological framework. Drawing on socio-linguistic models, it will be argued that the context of John shaped his Gospel. That is, the situation of John's community of believers influenced the way John wrote the Gospel. Giving this consideration to John, as well as to his time,

⁸ We are aware that a huge debate exists on the identity of the author of the Fourth Gospel. However, for the perspective of our investigation, we call whoever wrote the Fourth Gospel John, for the life re-orientation of his readers. For the discussion on the author and date of the redaction of the Gospel see Brown (2003:189-99).

⁹ For the hypothesis on John's Gospel as a communicative act, I was influenced by Van den Heever (1992:89-99) who addresses John's Gospel in the light of communicative modes in narrative theory and the pragmatics of communication. The particularity of this approach is that it considers the unity of John's narrative as meaningful for the readers. From such a standpoint, it would be better to mention that Culpepper (1983) was the first scholar to draw attention to the integrity of the text of John as a whole. His main contribution is that he considers John's Gospel as a coherent and meaningful whole in its present state.

¹⁰ This work is available from <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/info/john-socioling.html>. [Accessed 20 November 2008].

¹¹ I borrowed this expression from Malina (1985) who argues that language affects an audience ideologically as well. In other words, ideological implications refer to what moves the audience to make a decision after listening to the author.

¹² Malina (1985) defends this position.

language, intention and audience allows his message to be understood and appreciated as it was originally meant.

2.1 The socio-historic context of John's Gospel

Uncovering the meaning¹³ of texts is the first step in the interpretation of the text. It requires at least the following: the reconstruction of the context of the text; a study of the genre of the narrative; the establishment of the audience; and the identification of specific authorial concerns or the ideo-theological framework. When these important requirements in the exegetical process are considered, inevitably the challenge would be to focus on reading John in its context with attention to his specific audience and particular concerns.

There are several reasons for reconstructing the socio-historical context of John's Gospel. Firstly, the establishment of the context of John's Gospel is crucial for the exegesis of the text (Dunn 1991:294,393-395; Ferreira 1998:26; Kenney 2002:9-15). This is supported by the assumption that a text may lose its significance if it is removed from its context. Thus, the more one sympathizes with the context of any writing, the more that the intention of the author becomes perceivable and the more the writing becomes comprehensible (Dunn 1991:294). Van der Merwe (1995:68) also suggests that the teaching of John's Gospel, in a certain sense, mirrors the situation of the author and of the Johannine community. Thus, the text of John is a mirror of what was happening in the society at that time; it reveals the joys and the fears of John's community.

Secondly, reconstructing the socio-historical setting of John's Gospel is seen as shedding light on the world that gave birth to this Gospel. To a certain extent, it shows how the context shaped the text of John and influenced the choice of vocabulary and the figures of speech (Whitacre 1999:30-31) as well as the topographic and cultural references of the text. The task of clarifying as much as possible the context of John enables an understanding of how concrete questions of the time have contributed to the writing of his Gospel. Thus, John's Gospel, in the way it is written addresses the particular historical situation of his time. It is on this basis that Jean Zumstein

¹³ Uncovering the meaning of the texts in its original context (*distantiation*) is one of the three steps of the exegesis as we have explained above. The meaning of the text changes when we move from its original context to the context of today's reader or hearer (*contextualisation*) to inspire praxis (*appropriation*) or social transformation (Tri-polar model). For more details, see Draper (2001:148-168).

(1980:29-30; 1991:223) portrays John's Gospel as "a contextual Gospel". For Zumstein (1980:209), John's Gospel did not 'fall from heaven'; it is a product of its time. It is the product of a dynamic tradition expressed in a language reflecting the threats, fears, expectations and encouragement of his community:

John's gospel is a proclamation of faith which took the risk to dwell in its time. Fruit of a dynamic tradition, it dared to settle in the language which expresses more strongly the sensitivity of the end of the first century in the East. This Gospel risked a challenge to re-express the Christian faith, not by repeating sacred formulas as static but in words that expressed the research, the amazement of a nascent spirituality. John announced the faith by respecting its audience, that is to say, taking seriously the threats, fears, expectations, incentives that traversed his Church. But it is so inserted into the life of Church in order to better bring out the One who is the way, truth, life. Thus, faithful to what he proclaims the Gospel of John has become a word which "became flesh and dwelt among us".

The value of the reconstruction of the social context of John's Gospel throws some light on the "concrete situation" in which the Gospel of John was written. As Dunn (1991:295) would argue, it shows how John formulated his text to address the particular concerns of his community. More precisely, this reconstruction shows how John reads the situation of the context of his community in the light of Jesus' experience. Thus, it can be argued that both Jesus and John's communities share a context of crisis, which is hostile and threatening. Additionally, clarifying the socio-historical context of John's Gospel not only illuminates the cultural and theological situation in which the Gospel was written but also determines to what extent these cultural and theological influences have shaped the language of John (Dunn 1991:294). So it can be argued that the vocabulary, the style of writing, the use of specific words and topographical and cultural references may reveal valuable information about the socio-historical context of John's Gospel and that of his community. Accordingly, a broad knowledge of John's context will suggest certain perspectives in the understanding of John's message. This is particularly important given that if it is by means of language that John's Gospel exists, its writing was shaped by its socio-historical setting and specifically by concrete community experiences. The experience of the community provides the context for the text, so influencing the way the Gospel is written.

However, setting John in its context has been challenging historically because in Johannine scholarship, little scholarly consensus has been reached (Keener 2003:140) regarding the socio-historical location of John's Gospel. The main difficulty is with the starting point or the methodology used because there is no external or clear internal evidence mirroring John's time. Van der Watt (2007:684) highlights the hypothetical character of Johannine scholarship in any effort to reconstruct the socio-historical background of John's Gospel. The major problem is that the Gospel is silent regarding the historical circumstances provoking its composition. There is no direct information about the context of John, though one is able to infer or reconstruct this context in the light of insights provided by the text (Vouga 1977:9). This explains why Van der Watt (2007:684) insists on the hypothetical character of some of the reconstructions of John's social context. In reality, two approaches challenge each other in seeking answers to the key question of "what the direct circumstance in which John's Gospel arose (is)".

Although debate on the reconstruction of the historical context of the composition of John's Gospel continues, it is acknowledged that Dunn (1991:297) adds to this discussion insights about how to reconstruct the social setting of any New Testament writing; he offers two foci, the broad and the narrow socio-historical contexts. Dunn's consideration seems to provide a methodology to be used in the search for a reconstruction of the context of John's Gospel. Therefore, we reconstruct firstly, the broad context in the footsteps of François Vouga (1977:9-15) and secondly, the narrow context, in the light of the Zumstein model (1991:209-223).

2.1.1 The Broad Context

Before examining the general context of John's Gospel, the exact date and provenance of John's Gospel are considered because these appear to impact on any reconstruction of a social context in which a text, in this case John's gospel is generated. The dating of John's Gospel is a much disputed issue (Keener 2003:140-142). One group of scholars locates John's Gospel in a later Christian period, 130 C.E. and another in a much earlier context of Christianity, 65 C.E. (Cassidy 1999:3). Two important consequences emerge here: there is an ongoing debate over the question of dating John's Gospel (Moloney 1998:2); then, this uncertainty causes difficulties in establishing the specific socio-historical context of John's Gospel. To avoid leaving the reader guessing, it should be

noted that for this study the general opinion of scholars locating John's Gospel at a date between 90 and 100 C.E.¹⁴.

Vouga (1977:9-11) argues that John's Gospel was written in Ephesus¹⁵ most probably at the end of the first century during the reign of the Roman emperors Domitian¹⁶. Drawing from this, Vouga focuses on the reconstruction of a picture of Asia Minor at the end of the first century. The aim of this enterprise was to have a broad knowledge of the world in which the Christian community lived. The fundamental question that guides his reflection is: what was the world like at the end of the first century in Asia Minor? To respond to this question, Vouga (:11-13) focuses on the examination of the political, economic and religious context of Asia Minor at the end of the first century.

Political Asia Minor, Vouga suggests is characterized by two important events regarding the context of the developing Christian community: the loss of protection from the Roman Law and the influence of Jewish wars. Regarding the loss of protection, Vouga explains that the end of the Domitian administration of the Roman Empire was a very troubled period (:11). Domitian, to extend his power, as Vouga (1977:11) explains recommended the imperial cult. This provoked violent resistance from both the Jewish and the developing Christian communities. However, since Roman Law recognizes Judaism as "*religio licita*", this refusal was tolerated. The Christian community was protected because of its attachment to the Judaic Synagogue. This situation changed when the Christian community was expelled from the Synagogue after the "council of Jamnia"¹⁷ because it lost the protection of the Roman Law and became a threat to the supporters of Domitian.

¹⁴ In favour of this opinion are Moloney (1998:2); Cassidy (1999:3); Keener (2003:140-141), the list is not exhaustive.

¹⁵ Numerous answers have been given to the question about the origin of John's Gospel (Alexandria, Antioch, Judea, and Jerusalem). According to Vouga John's Gospel was probably written in Ephesus. Three arguments are in favour of Ephesus. First, the ecclesiastic tradition (Irenaeus of Lyon) associates John's Gospel with Ephesus. Second, there are theological similarities between the Fourth Gospel and The Apocalypse to which the use of paschal symbolism in both books is added. Third, reference to Thomas, Philippe and Andrew who probably lived in Ephesus. No convincing argument has contradicted the traditional hypothesis which associates John's Gospel with Ephesus. Thus, I assume here Ephesus to be the place of birth for the Fourth Gospel. For more on this issue in general, see Burney (1922:95-128); Dodd (1998:3-14); Grant (1950:305-322); Wilson (1989:221-230).

¹⁶ A recent and influential work on this issue is Carter (2008). Carter argues convincingly that when one read John's Gospel he might feel what he calls the "invisible Rome" behind John's narrative. This hypothesis is illustrated in a comparative study of the titles reserved for the Roman emperor and their application to Jesus by his followers. This work provides an exceptional and rich bibliography on this issue.

¹⁷ Around A.D. 90-100, after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, Johanan ben Zakkai created a rabbinical school. The "Council of Jamnia" (also called "Jabneh" or "Javneh") is the name given to the decisions made by this pharisaic school. Jamnia was fundamentally a Jewish gathering about 40 years after the Death and Resurrection of

Another relevant event marking and influencing Christian community reflections and writings were the Jewish wars and the period of the reconstruction of Palestine. As Vouga (1977:11) comments many New Testament writings reflect the Jewish wars, as a punishment from God for Jewish unfaithfulness. Economically, Vouga (1977:11) highlights the development of Ephesus after the Jewish civil wars as an important center of business in the empire. This development had important cultural consequences: Asia became a multicultural center of Hellenism because of the frequent interaction between inhabitants from different regions and cultures. Even more important for this study was the use of a common language, Koine¹⁸. In addition, various philosophic schools such as Platonism, Aristotelism and Stoicism developed at this time in Ephesus. On the religious side, Vouga (1977:12) indicates the religious syncretism expressed by the mixture of Greek, Egyptian, Syrian, Phrygian and Babylonian cults. This resulted in the development of different kinds of mystery religions attracting the Hellenistic and Roman elites.

It is within this syncretistic context that Judaism and the developing Johannine Christianity appear in Ephesus. The quest for a doctrine to free people from suffering and to offer immortality was welcomed. This context also favoured the development of Gnosticism and many purification rituals, with the purpose of liberating the soul from the prison of the body. Vouga's reconstruction shares the opinion of scholars who date John's work in the 90s and suggest Ephesus as the milieu of composition. This historical reconstruction also emphasizes that the origins of the developing Christian community are located in a cosmopolitan world (:11-13) in which the community has

Jesus for Pharisees. It should be noted that at that time, Jews were being scattered, and the main question was the future of Judaism since there were no more temple, the fundamental feature of Judaism. Additionally, at this time, too, Christianity was growing and threatening that same Jewish identity. This resulted in severe persecution of Christians by the new leadership of Judaism. For example, in reaction to the fact that "Nazarenes" or "Christians" used the Septuagint to convert other Jews to the new "religious movement", the Zakkai and Jamnian schools decided the canon of the Jewish Bible with the intention of preventing the disappearance of Judaism in the Diaspora of the Christian and Roman worlds. Zakkai's successor, Gamaliel forced the "Nazarenes" out of the synagogues. Gamaliel obliged the Jews to pray the "Prayer of Eighteen Petitions," the 12th petition, which is still prayed today as the birkat, being "For apostates may there be no hope, and may the Nazarenes and heretics suddenly perish." For more details see Lewis (1992:634-637; 2002:161) and also Newman (1976:319-349).

¹⁸ The Greek word for Koine is Ελληνιστική Κοινή "the common dialect". This was the popular form of Greek which appeared in post-Classical antiquity (c.300 BC-AD 300). Alexandrian, Hellenistic, Patristic, Common, Biblical or New Testament Greek are other names for Koine. The original names are: Koine, Hellenic, Alexandrian and Macedonian (Macedonic); these names differentiate Koine to Attic dialectic. Thus, Koine refers to the first common supra-regional dialect in Greece which served as a lingua franca for the Eastern Mediterranean and ancient Near East all over the Roman Period. It is also known as the original language of the New Testament of the Christian Bible and of the Septuagint (The Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures). To summarize, Koine is the main ancestor of Modern Greek. For more details on Koine see Colwell (1962:479-87)

to face a multi-cultural environment, with its multi-dimensional problems (McPolin 1979:17). However, questions remain regarding the particular situation prevailing in the theoretical elaboration and writing of John's Gospel. To read the text without being aware of this may be misleading in the understanding of John's answer to a specific problem in his community.

2.1.2 Narrow context

After succinctly drawing the picture of the broader context of John's Gospel with Vouga (1977), the intention in this subsection is to examine the direct situation influencing the composition of John's Gospel. Jean Zumstein (1991) recently explicated the direct context influencing the composition of the Gospel of John and his community. His main thesis suggests a theological crisis and its consequences at the heart of the writing of John's Gospel (:242). To sketch the context of John's Gospel, Zumstein organizes his reflection around three major issues: the context of the production of John's Gospel; the authorial intention in writing the Gospel; and the group to which the Johannine polemic refers. Although there are three issues, for the sake of conciseness the focus in this subsection will be on the direct context in which John's Gospel was written.

Zumstein (1991:210-211) acknowledges that John's Gospel is a product of the "Johannine School" (:210). By "school" Zumstein understands a community in which the Christian tradition is put into writing for the community and transmitted by teaching. Thus, John reflects a particular tradition which is conserved and transmitted in the community for its guidance and encouragement. Then Zumstein (1991:219-230) argues that four¹⁹ major polemics characterized the context of John's Gospel: the Baptist polemic, the Gnostic polemic, the polemic against the world and the polemic against the "Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι), leading to the exclusion of Christians from the Synagogue. It is here that Zumstein (:251) argues that the synagogue crisis had the strongest influence on the composition of John's Gospel. A close examination of the synagogue crisis reveals a dispute around the messianic claim of Jesus opposed the

¹⁹ Due to the orientation of this study these four polemics are not going to be examined; the focus will be on the polemic against the Jews.

Jews²⁰ and the Johannine community. This forces the Jews to exclude the Johannine community from the synagogue because their claim threatens Jewish monotheism²¹.

So it becomes obvious with Zumstein (1991:219) that John's Gospel arose in a context of polemics. In this context as Malina (1998:5) argues: "the author of John is concerned with spelling out the meaning of Jesus of Nazareth as: "the Messiah, the Son of God", and in developing emotional anchorage 'in Jesus' for his collectivity". Drawing on Zumstein's insights one could argue that in John's Gospel, Jesus is facing the hostility of the Jews and his disciples are facing the hatred of the world. This would explain the two level drama theory of Martyn²² and the language of John's Gospel showing that besides the revelation of the two historical times, two literary planes can also discerned²³.

Thus, the direct circumstance in which John's Gospel arose seems to elucidate the audience, the particular concerns of the author and the specific vocabulary choice. In other words, if John is writing about Jesus' origin in a polemical context, the choice of vocabulary ensues naturally, that is, words such as spirit, life, light, not of this world, freedom, truth, love and their opposite flesh, below, death, darkness, the/this world, slavery, lie²⁴. This necessarily presupposes that the context dictated the choice of vocabulary and the literary genre of the text.

²⁰ Dunn (1991:302) describes these "οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι" as the opponents of Jesus in John's Gospel. They symbolize the official representatives of Judaism, the religious leaders determining matters of faith and policy for the people. For further details on the Jews issue, one may also refer to the work by Probst (2002).

²¹ The expulsion of the Johannine community from the synagogue is largely accepted by scholars. In particular, it has been said that it was for their messianic claim that the community was discriminated against. Dunn (1991:305) interprets the information differently. Drawing on historical and theological insights, Dunn refutes the argument that a group of Jews was expelled from the synagogue (ἀποσυνάγωγος) by another group of Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) because they confessed the "messianity" of Jesus. This is dramatized in texts such as John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2. According to Dunn the clash between the followers of Jesus and the religious leaders concerns more the origin of Jesus than his messianic claim. According to Dunn, what caused the trouble was the fact that the Messiah claim was the summary of a much fuller Christology expressed in the title "Son of God". What is at stake here is the claim to the divine origin of Jesus; Jesus made himself equal to God, indeed God himself and this, for the Jews, was blasphemous. The debate is more around Jesus' divine origin than a simple messianic claim (:305). As Whitacre (1999:30) puts it, "the Johannine Christians were claiming for Jesus not only that he was God's agent, like a prophet, but that he is God". As one would infer it, such a statement challenged the Jewish monotheism. It resulted in the rejection of the Johannine community from the synagogue.

²² According to this theory, in John's Gospel one can discover the interplay and completion of the time of Jesus as well as the time of John. The events of John's time are addressed in the light of Jesus' experience of hostility with the Jews. Concretely, the experiences of Jesus' life mirror the conflict-ridden relations between the Jews and the community of John. The reader interested into this debate may refer to Martyn (2003).

²³ On this debate see Kowalski (1996).

²⁴ For more on the vocabulary of John's Gospel see Malina (1998:4-9).

2.2 The Genre of John's Narrative

Taking a closer look at the ways in which one would tackle the question of the literary genre of John's Gospel, it is important to acknowledge that there are many ways to address this question. The perspective adopted in this section focuses first on the state of the debate about the genre of the Gospels. Second, attention will be given to the actual genre of John's Gospel per se. This will be achieved by examining insights provided by discussions on the genre of the Gospels.

2.2.1 The Genre of the Gospels

Jason Foster (2009)²⁵ assessing the importance of genre argues that although all genre are equally legitimate, they are very different in the style in which they communicate and how they employ language. For that reason, one cannot read a message of condolences in the same way as one would read a newspaper, poetry or the sports section of *The Witness*²⁶ or a *Motu Proprio*²⁷ by Benedict XVI. Reading *The Witness* as if it was poetry, or reading a poem as if it were *The Witness* would probably lead to misunderstanding and misinterpreting the writings and the authorial "ideological implications". Therefore, identifying the literary genre of any writing is crucial to understanding what the author intends to convey and how he has conveyed it. Thus, genre provides a literary context for the reader to better understand the material and how it should be read. Thus, to better understand any system of communication, one is asked to clarify the mode of communication or its literary genre: letter, novel, email, sms²⁸.

The "genre" of the Gospels is complex and difficult to address (Dihle 1991:362). One clear difficulty faced in examining the nature of the genre of the Gospels is that there is a wide range of answers that have been given. Robert Guelich (1991:173-208) provides an interesting summary of the discussions on the genre of the Gospels. An exploration of Guelich's arguments could contribute to the process of identifying the genre of

²⁵ This work is available from http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/jas_foster.John.History.html. [Accessed 15 November 2009].

²⁶ This is a KwaZulu-Natal daily newspaper in South Africa.

²⁷ In Catholic tradition, a *Motu proprio* ("on one's own initiative"), is a papal document personally signed by the pope to express his special interest in a given subject. *Motu proprio* is less formal than constitutions and carries no papal seal. Its content may be instructional (e.g., on the use of plainchant), administrative (e.g., concerning a church law or the establishment of a commission), or merely to confer a special favour. The document is always introduced by words "*motu proprio*".

²⁸ I refer again to Foster's argument and add personal comments. For details on the Foster argument see the article cited above.

John's Gospel. Assessing the different answers that have been given to the question of the genre of the Gospels, Guelich groups them into two principal categories: analogical and derivational (:175). The analogical approach focuses on the comparative method; and addresses the genre of the Gospels in the context existing classical literary genres in the Greco-Roman and Semitic milieu. The conclusion is that the Gospels might be compared to ancient Greco-Roman biographies or to the apocalyptic writings in the Jewish tradition (:175-186)²⁹. In the conclusion of the analogical approach, Guelich argues convincingly that the difference between these two written genre remains in their different purposes. Greco-Roman biographies, as Guelich points it out, had a moral purpose, whereas the purpose of the Gospels is guidance, instruction and community faith building (:205-207).

As far as the derivational approach is concerned, Guelich notes the uniqueness of the genre of the Gospels in relation to the existing literary genres of the time (:186). According to this approach, the absence of suitable literary parallels raises the possibility of the existence of a new literary genre. Guelich's (:206-208) conclusion is that there is a specific literary genre, the "Gospel genre" whose purpose is to account for Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Furthermore, its goal is to encourage, guide and build the faith of the community it helps to create. Concerning the specific characteristics of the Gospel genre, in relation to other literary genres, Guelich argues that the difference between the Gospel genre and the other literary genres lies in three important elements: different purposes, content and form. Formally, this genre is characterized by Jesus' life, death and resurrection account. The material for this narrative is drawn from the oral tradition of the Church. Materially, the Gospel genre consists of the message that God was at work in Jesus' life, death and resurrection fulfilling the promises found in the Scriptures (:206-207). The audience and purpose of John's Gospel according to Zumstein (1991:219) is: "To believers shaken and

²⁹ A recent study which echoes this view is the work by Keener (2008). Drawing on the comparative model, Keener argues that the Gospels are historical biographies given that from the beginning the big interest of the early Christians was the life and character of Jesus (:29). It is on this basis that he states that "The existence of the Gospels themselves, and the role assigned to Jesus in them, testify that early Christianity had a greater interest in the history of its founder than many comparable contemporary movements did" (:30).

discouraged by the hostility they are facing, John intends to reaffirm that Jesus is the Son of God who came from the Father and returns to the Father.”³⁰

2.2.2 The genre originality of John’s Gospel³¹

The literary genre of John’s Gospel is unique to the New Testament tradition as no Gospel uses imagery and figurative language as the Fourth Gospel does (Zimmermann 2007:1), making it original in relation to the Synoptic gospels. To illustrate this, Van den Heever (1992:92) argues convincingly that the Jesus of John’s Gospel is portrayed in a variety of ways; he is the logos, the light, the lamb, the bridegroom, the giver of living bread and spirit, the life- giving bread, the door, the Good shepherd, the true way to life, the vine, the resurrection and pivotally for this thesis, the one breathing on his disciples. An examination of the literary genre of John, although challenging is crucial because it contributes to a successful understanding and re-appropriation of John’s message³².

It is emphasized that the literary genre of John’s Gospel lies largely within the context of its communication register. Van den Heever illuminates this debate in describing the Gospel of John as an ‘instrument of communication’ (1992:90). As one would infer it, according to Van den Heever, John’s Gospel was not written without a purpose; it came into being because the community needed instruction, guidance and encouragement. The basis of Van den Heever’s assumption is that: “it is impossible not to communicate”³³; in everyday human communication, language is meant to communicate³³; we say something because we want to convey a meaning, to affect and influence others³⁴.

³⁰ This is my English translation of the original quotations in French : “A des croyants ébranlés et découragés par l’hostilité dont ils sont objet, Jean entend réaffirmer que Jésus est bien le fils de Dieu, celui qui est venu du Père et retourne au Père”.

³¹ For further details on the genre of John’s Gospel the reader may refer to Davies (1992).

³² Foster (2009) may be cited here since he argues that “identifying the literary genre of any writing is critical to understanding what the author intends to convey and how they have conveyed it. Genre provides a literary context for the reader to better understand the material in front of them and how they should read it. We do not read poetry the same way as we read the business section of the Wall Street Journal (WSJ). While both genres are equally legitimate, they are very different in the style in which they communicate and how they employ language. If we read the WSJ as if it were poetry, or we read a poem as if it were the WSJ, the chances are excellent that we will misunderstand and misinterpret the writing”.

³³ Reference to Austin’s theory on illocutionary acts (1962). Elaborated by Austin, this theory was developed by Searl (1977). In the footsteps of Austin, Searl distinguishes and discusses three major approaches to the speech act, namely the locutionary act, illocutionary (see note above) act and the perlocutionary act. On the illocutionary act, he argues that those languages whose aim is to influence behavior constitute the illocutionary acts.

³⁴ Malina (1985) argues in the context of sociolinguistic theories that people language each other because they want to communicate. (See the above article for more details).

It is significant to restate that, the literary genre of John's Gospel depends on the literary genre of the Gospels³⁵. This means that the literary genre of John's Gospel largely determines the methodology used to examine it. On the one hand, John's Gospel is positioned with the other Gospels because the same issues are addressed, except for the John account of the story of Jesus. John's Gospel is not a creation "ex nihilo". This writing is a product of history; it stands in a long oral tradition preceding its elaboration (Keener 2003:54-64).

Additionally, John's Gospel fits into the framework of what is called "gospel genre". A holistic study of the John text has shown that John's achievement concerning God's work of salvation in the person of Jesus remains in the selection, arrangement and compilation of traditions from different communities. This makes John's Gospel an original style of writing, different from the style of the Synoptic Gospels (Zumstein 1991:209). Of particular importance in this debate is Mark W.G. Stibbe's work on genre criticism of John's narrative (1992:30-49). Regarding genre, Stibbe considers that the description "narrative Christology" is an appropriate term for the Gospel genre (:30). At the heart of the Gospels lies "the Jesus event" (:30). Jesus is the central figure in the Gospel and John is particularly concerned with presenting or re-presenting Jesus to his audience so that His life for them becomes significant and clear. Thus, the purpose of John's narrative is "Christological persuasion" (:40).

Given that John's Gospel reflects the major characteristics of the Gospel genre, two important observations emerge. First, John's Gospel and the Synoptics share the same standpoint that Jesus is God's Messiah. The difference resides in the way each writer collects, organizes and collates what belongs to the tradition of the community of believers and followers of Jesus. Second, the message in John's Gospel is not John's invention; it is the Christian tradition in John's language.

³⁵ A variety of approaches have been proposed on this issue. However, a detailed survey of this debate is beyond the scope of this study. Due to the perspective assigned to this study, this debate however relevant it is, cannot be explored. The interested reader should consult a recent work by Hurley (2002). In this article, Hurley refutes the comparative approach to the literary genre of the Gospels. He "maintains that the generic classification of the gospels requires a far more subtle approach than the simple comparison of texts on the basis of formal or thematic characteristics and tries to show that genre cannot be specified without reference to the effects produced in the reader". In other words, the argument of Hurley is that identifying the genre is the work of the reader of the text. A genre is not given in advance. The reader establishes the genre on the basis of his socio-linguistic knowledge and personal expectations. This work is also available from <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/000359ar>. [Accessed 30 November 2009].

Thus, John's Gospel does belong to the Gospel genre. The story of its genre, like that of the Synoptics, is complex and ambiguous. For most Johannine scholars, John has been seen as following the frame of reference of both ancient Greco-Roman, as well as Jewish biographies. All seem to have some features in common, such as the main character and didactic aspects. However, John stands both with and against the Synoptics. He stands with them regarding the main subject of concern, the Jesus event; and he stands against them, in terms of the language, the specific vocabulary and certain concepts he uses. In the latter of the two, it would be better to have a fresh look at the issue of the language of John's Gospel to provide insights to understand it as a product of its specific context.

2.3 The Language of John's Gospel

One might be surprised at the decision to reflect specifically on the "language of John's Gospel" after addressing only briefly the issue of the literary genre of John. This interest in John's language mirrors the basic experience of the readers and scholars of John's Gospel that the language, the imagery, the symbolism, the metaphors and the metonymies of John's Gospel provoke thought. Berger and Luckmann (1966:37) argue convincingly that language is a fundamental instrument of human communication. These quotations show how Berger and Luckmann underline the importance of language in understanding the social world: "The common objectifications of everyday life are maintained primarily by linguistic signification. Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with my fellowmen. An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life". Thus, according to Berger and Luckmann, people "language" each other because they want to communicate (:68). In other words, language creates society and society creates language (:134-167). It is by means of language that human beings are introduced into the value system of the society to which they belong (:129). This process of initiation is called socialization (:163).

If it is true that language is an important element in the socialization process, it is then possible to argue that language mirrors the society. It is possible to discover what is going on socially by paying attention to the signals given through the medium of language: culture, worldviews, fears, happiness, challenges and dreams, to cite a few examples. There is a close relationship between language and society. Language

participates in the social construction of reality and it introduces all the members of the same society into this social reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966:163). It is here that the language of John's Gospel becomes relevant for this study. In John, the focus inevitably falls on the nature of the language in John's Gospel, whose distinctiveness has been highlighted in New Testament scholarship (Zumstein 1991:212). Thus, it is wondered what kind of society John attempted to create in using his particular language.

Zumstein (1991:213) suggests there are two distinctive features of the language of John's Gospel. He argues firstly, that the language of John's Gospel is well known for its dualistic character. Throughout the Gospel, dualistic antithetic realities challenge each other: light and darkness, life and death, truth and lies, heaven and earth, the world and God. Second, John's "Christological narrative" utilizes imagery original to John. It is probably these two distinctive elements in John's language, which have created the ongoing debate among scholars regarding the origin of the religious language of John's Gospel. To conclude that John's language is unique raises the question of what kind of language is used in John? Frey, Van der Watt and Zimmermann add important insights to this debate when they examine the nature of the language of John's Gospel (2006); in stressing the uniqueness of the language of John, they recognized that John's language is essentially figurative. After briefly recalling the question of John's language in modern Johannine scholarship, they found the concept "imagery" appropriate to describe the figurative language of John. This includes: metaphors symbols and metonymies.

In spite of these existing works focusing on the language of John, questions remain as to the location of the origin of John's language³⁶. The location and nature of the language of John's Gospel is addressed in these works. John's language occurs in the interplay between, on one side the authorial intention in writing his gospel, on the other, the goal John wants to achieve in using this particular language³⁷. Not

³⁶ There are studies which try to find similarities between John's language with Hellenistic, Rabbinic, Qumran writings. Although it would be rewarding to explore these studies, we are not going to deal with them here due to the conciseness sake. For more details, see, for instance Schnackenburg (1965:75), mostly his commentary on John's purpose and style. Two influential works which summarize the issue of the language of John's Gospel and provides an extensive bibliography are Lindars (1972:44-45) and Schneiders (2003:26-34).

³⁷ It would be dishonest not to recognize that the choice of vocabulary was dictated both by the context of John's community and the goal that John wanted to achieve in completing his Gospel. Moloney (1998:3-4) is accurate here since he argues that the story of the Johannine community has influenced not only the authorial intention but also dictated the choice of vocabulary and orientated the goal that author of the Gospel wanted to achieve: " the

surprisingly, these two issues fall into the arena of sociolinguistics. In Johannine scholarship, the sociolinguistic reading of John's Gospel has provided new insights in the discourse of John's language. This sociolinguistic approach to reading John has both the feature of illuminating the nature of John's language and focusing on the effect his language has on his audience.

Bruce J. Malina (1985) addressing John's Gospel in the context of sociolinguistic theories describes the language of John's Gospel as an "antilanguage"³⁸. This is so, because John's community was an antisocial group. Discussing the notion of antilanguage, Malina admits being inspired by Halliday's theory (1978) on the construction of antilanguage. Before assessing Malina's model, the main ideas of Halliday on antilanguage theory will be summarized (1978:164-182). He argues that language is a fundamental means of communication in social life. However, when the social construction of reality is challenged by individuals, the society reacts with sanctions. The deviants are removed from the society because they threaten the social order. They create an antisocial group which stands against the social worldview and attempts in language to communicate an alternate value system. Halliday's example of breakaway group of people, such as prisoners and street children, to develop a new vocabulary and grammar for interactions among them is cited.

Fundamentally, this vocabulary and grammar is contra-indicative of the language used in the "normal" society. Thus, as well as language being a fundamental means of communication in society, antilanguage is also the basic means of communication in "antisocial groups". It serves not only as communication among members but also safeguards the value system of the community. In the same way as language plays a key role in the social construction of reality, antilanguage constructs a new social reality, different from, or even against, the social reality of the original "normal

Johannine community and its gospel had the following history. A group of like-minded Christians began within Judaism but was expelled from the synagogue and exposed to wider world. Within that wider world the early Christians whose experiences produced this gospel had come to a clear understanding of who Jesus was, what he meant for them, and how they should live their Christian lives in response to the challenge of Jesus...The use of the expression *logos* to refer to Jesus (1:1,14), the importance of knowledge (6:69;17:3), a stress on a region "above" and another "below" between which both angels (1:51) and Jesus (3:13; 6:62) move, and a number of other words and ideas found only in this gospel (cf. Notes to the commentary of details) suggest that the world into which this gospel was written was markedly different from the one that received the earlier stories of Jesus. Although not all would agree (cf. Robinson, *Priority*), it is widely accepted that this particular story of Jesus, and the language used to tell it, belong to the end of the first century".

³⁸ This thesis is developed in Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:46-47). A good summary of antilanguage theory in John's Gospel is also found in Petersen (1993:89-109) and Neyrey (2007:13-14).

society”. Halliday also argues that antilanguage is an important element of helping the antisocial group to reinforce boundaries and it also creates deep relationships among the members. Halliday continues to elaborate two significant characteristics of antilanguage, namely: relexicalization or overlexicalization, and metaphorization. The relexicalization phenomenon refers to antilanguage creating and using new vocabulary and grammar, with a tendency to add more vocabulary than already exists in the original “normal” language. The metaphorization phenomenon suggests that antilanguage has metaphors as a main feature in its communicative process. That is to say, antilanguage uses and over-uses metaphor in the process of communication.

After briefly recalling Halliday’s theory on antilanguage, Malina applies the model to John’s Gospel arguing that the language of John’s Gospel is an antilanguage. Two main hypotheses lead to this conclusion. Firstly, Malina suggests the “community of John”³⁹ is an antisocial group or breakaway group of people because it was chased from the synagogue (Brown 1979:168-169)⁴⁰. Secondly, Malina mentions that in John’s use of new vocabulary, particular concepts and metaphors are consistent with the relexicalization theory. Regarding the counter-reality that John creates, Malina argues that this is realized in John’s use ethics as related to dualistic language. John emphasizes the contrast between the above- spirit, and the below- flesh, light-truth and darkness-death. Further, in relation to John’s metaphorization, Malina argues that this

³⁹ The issue of the identity of the audience of John’s Gospel is crucial to this discussion. However, due to the focus of the study this issue will not be fully addressed here. Briefly, as Probst (2002) indicates: “there are at least three possibilities that C.K. Barrett advances for the audience to which John wrote his Gospel. First, he could have been writing to a primarily Hellenistic, non- Christian audience as a sort of “missionary tract”. Second, he could have been writing for Christians who were confronting problems of eschatology and Gnosis as the church expanded into new environments. Thirdly, he could have written his Gospel as a “counter-attack against the Jews, who were defaming the Christian Messiah”, a sort of precursor to Justin’s Dialogue with Trypho. Barrett’s conclusion is that the book was composed “in a setting which was partly, but only partly, Jewish.” Hellenists and pre-Gnostics, he contends were also part of the audience and circles in which the author intermingled. He recognizes a “Jewish element” in the language of the Gospel, but sees it as “too weak” to conclude that his audience was either solely or even primarily Jewish. C.H. Dodd seems to have a more nuanced view on audience and purpose. . Dodd argues that the audience to which the Gospel of John is written is steeped in the Hellenistic Judaism of Philo. Briefly, Philo’s Hellenistic Judaism represents a “cross-fertilization of Hebrew and Greek thought.” He notes a “range of ideas” that are presupposed in the background of John’s Gospel that are very similar to Philonic Hellenistic Judaism that are nevertheless treated in a manner that is different from Philo. He also argues that there are significant elements of Rabbinic Judaism present in the Gospel. Dodd thus sees the audience of John’s Gospel as primarily Jewish, but nonetheless a Jewish audience that is highly familiar with both Philonic and Rabbinic forms of thought.” (:8). Available from http://www.thirdmill.org/newfiles/chr_probst/NT.Probst.anti_judaism.john.pdf. [Accessed 26 November 2009].

⁴⁰ It has been seriously questioned if the community of John is a sectarian group. Although Malina portrays John’s community as an anti-social group of people, this does not infer the sectarian character of this community. Expressions such as “anti-social group” or “breakaway group” of people are to be understood as descriptive expressions and not as derogatory expressions. A summary of the discussions on the problem of sectarianism in John’s Gospel can be found in Brown (1979), Nissen (1999:194-212) and Keener (2003:149-152).

metaphorical quality can be seen in the "I am" statements, where Jesus describes himself as: "I am bread, light, a door, life, way, vine," and also in the list of ambiguity—misunderstanding—clarification sequences appearing in John's narrative strategy. Thus, metaphor constitutes an element of antilanguage present throughout John's Gospel.

In this antilanguage theory as applied to John's Gospel, the audience is identified while the goal John wants to achieve in writing his Gospel is simultaneously shown. In identifying John's community is an antisocial group, Malina postulates that John's choice of antilanguage meant to re-create a new value system for the group, different from that of the synagogue. John wanted to create a new social reality for his community, a new worldview based on the person of Jesus. Thus, antilanguage theory is an important concept for this study. This theory is a contribution in comprehending why the breathing metaphor in John's Gospel has been used and how it works in the narrative of John, for his audience.

2.4 Authorial ideo-theological framework

Two sociolinguistic issues are required to facilitate an understanding of John's Gospel as an instrument of communication and transformation. These are the restrictive hypothesis regarding the ideo-theological orientation of John's narrative and the more general theory concerning the purpose of John's Gospel. In assessing John's Gospel in the context of the socio-linguistic model, it becomes clearer that the direct circumstances in which John's Gospel arose influenced the writing style of John. As Zumstein (1991:209) would argue, it is time which necessitates the composition of John's text in the way it is. The language John uses may be more meaningful when the context is taken into account. Here, the direct situation of John's context seems to presuppose what Demetrius Dumm (2001) calls an authorial "special concern" governing the way the story of Jesus is presented. He argues that it is evident that the author of John's Gospel has noticed something happening in the Christian community that is a source of deep concern for him, and he has decided to react in the language of his Gospel (see *Introduction*).

Misunderstanding authorial intention may mislead the exegete. Therefore, it is essential for the interpreter to be aware of the intention of the writer at the moment of writing. In

other words, to be aware of the authorial intention opens the door to a successful interpretation of the text. A clear statement regarding authorial intention is to be found in John 20:30-31: “Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν [αὐτοῦ], ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα πιστεύ[σ]ητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.” Whitacre (1999:28) might be cited here since he argues that the specific purpose of John’s Gospel “was assurance for Christians but his great passion was to bear witness to Jesus”. In other words, Whitacre underlines that John has written his gospel with a specific purpose and intention, that of strengthening his community and clarifying the identity of Jesus Christ, in the context of polemics (:28-35)⁴¹.

Research on the purpose of John’s Gospel has been conducted according to various models. For example, it has been argued that W.G. Stibbe (1992:29-30) portrays John’s Gospel as a “Christological narrative”. Jesus is the central figure in the Gospel and John’s “special concern” is to present or to re-present Jesus to his audience in a way that He becomes convincing for them. Thus, as he concludes, John’s Gospel is a “Christological persuasion”. The particularity of this assertion is that it shows the Christological question at the heart of John’s Gospel (Koester 2008:6).

Although the issue of the purpose of John’s Gospel is relevant, it will not be explored fully here because the focus here is more on the “ideo-theological orientation”. This interest is motivated by the assumption that underlying John’s Gospel is, a theological framework to explain in contemporary terms why the Gospel was written in the way it is. Craig Koester (2008:2) calls this theological guideline: “the theological shape of the Gospel”. Recently in his *The Word of Life: a Theology of John’s Gospel*, Koester addresses the issue of the ideo-theological framework of John’s Gospel. Koester recognizes that the Christological debate is a pivotal question in John. What is said in the Gospel makes sense when applied to the identity of Jesus (2008:25). Additionally, Koester indicates that in following the narrative of John, it becomes clear that the concept of the Logos occupies the central stage in establishing the framework of John’s

⁴¹ Focusing on the hypothesis of Christians facing Roman persecution as well as the challenges of the Roman imperial claims for the developing Christian community, Cassidy (1992:80-88) has organized a study on the purposes of the Gospel of John. After briefly summarizing scholars’ views on the purpose of John’s Gospel, he concludes that in writing this Gospel, John “was concerned to respond to Roman challenges.” See also Carter (2008) for details on this issue.

Gospel (:8). For him, the concept of the Logos plays a key role in developing the theology of John's Gospel. It shows that the Christological narrative of John is constructed within the context of the Logos theory. Fundamentally, for Koester the concept of Logos gives the theological vision of John's Gospel. The identity of God and Jesus is understood in the light of the movement of the Logos; the readers of John's Gospel see that the story of Jesus encountering particular individuals is also the story of God engaging the world. This is clearly said in the dynamic of the Logos: the Logos was with God, he was God and then the Logos became flesh (1:1, 14).

Having created this framework, Koester (2008:8) comments that the term of Logos "fades from view" in the flow of the narrative; it is simply used for the spoken word until the language of God and the Word, which runs throughout the Gospel shifts to that of the Father and Son (1:14-18) (:8). Imagery, ironies and wordplays have a major role in the Gospel. They serve to clarify the identity of Jesus, Messiah, or Son of God (:10-11). Zumstein (2008:121-135) largely accepts this view based on the Logos theory as the theological framework of John's Gospel, and makes a number of additional remarks. Zumstein argues that John's Gospel is a network of texts that might be understood in relation to other existing writings, namely the Hebrew Bible and the Synoptic Gospels. This refers to what he portrays as the phenomenon of intertextuality (:122). Drawing from that Zumstein comments that John's Gospel is a "self-interpretive narrative" (:122). This is so because the narrative itself provides clues for its interpretation. It is here that Zumstein underscores the phenomenon of "the interweaving of intratextual relationships of meaning". Quoting Hallyn's and Jacques' (1987:202) paratext theory, Zumstein recognizes that John's Gospel has "various signs that introduce, frame, present, interrupt or conclude an existing text". It is on this cohesion and coherence he argues that the prologue functions as the framework for reading the narrative (:123).

For introducing the theological content he continues: "by relating the logos to the absolute and foundational beginning and then tracing out its trajectory from preexistence to incarnation, the Prologue emphasizes that the man Jesus at the center of the following narrative is none other than God himself, come into the midst of the world" (:123-124). What is striking in Zumstein's argument is that he perceives John's Prologue as an entry into the reading of John's text enabling a correct interpretation of

the narrative. That is to say, the Prologue of John serves as the ideo-theological orientation of John's text.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to create a framework to understand how the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 works in John's narrative. To do this, a sociolinguistic reading of John's Gospel was the approach used. The purpose of this approach is that it seeks to discover what sort of concerns might adequately explain the way John wrote his Gospel. Throughout this chapter, the close relationship between language, context, authorial intention and ideological implications for the audience were clarified. A threefold question has guided the reflections: What kind of writing is the Gospel of John? Why does the Gospel start the way it does? What was the particular concern of John in writing his Gospel? To the first question, the standpoint is contrary to those perceiving John's Gospel as an example of ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish biographies and argues that John's text can be categorized in the Gospel genre. The basis of this assumption is that John's Gospel is a "Christological narrative". The Jesus event is at the heart of the Gospel. It is here that the particular concern of John, the second question was to make Jesus relevant for his community and for life re-orientation in this community. Thus, the ideological purpose of the Gospel is to make the reader believe in the Jesus as the divine Logos incarnate and to personally change to have life in its fullness. In summary, the main argument of this chapter is that John wrote his Gospel because he wanted to meet the needs of his community. His text is seen as an answer to the synagogue crisis and to the Roman challenge. Thus, the context of John influenced his choice of vocabulary; his use of specific concepts; and geographical, cultural and theological references. From a sociolinguistic reading of John, it is argued in this chapter that John's Gospel is an antilanguage because the text comes into being in an antisocial context, in a breakaway group of people against the synagogal worldview. This would explain why John overlexicalizes and employs metaphors to re-empower and create a new reality for his community.

CHAPTER III:

METAPHORS IN THE COMMUNICATIVE PROCESS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

Metaphors are one of the most important literary features of John's Gospel narrative strategy. Van den Heever (1992:90) notes that these are used in the context of interaction between people, leading him to see John's Gospel as an instrument of communication. Using insights of Van den Heever (1992) and Ruben Zimmermann (2006), an attempt is made in this chapter to provide a model to assess the use of metaphors in John's Gospel. An understanding of the meaning, structure and function of metaphors will be suggested by various standpoints to argue that John uses metaphors in a communicative event, with a theo-christo-anthropo- and ecclesiological purpose. That metaphors function in a network in John's Gospel will be emphasized to make the reader familiar with the concept of metaphor and to appreciate how and why John uses it to communicate his message.

3.1 Definition, structure and function of metaphor

In this section general information on the meaning, structure and function of metaphors is offered. If metaphors are one of the main features of John's narrative strategy, it seems important to provide a theoretical approach to the meaning, structure and function of metaphor. This is not an attempt to address every study on metaphors but will offer the possibility for a comprehensive examination of the use of metaphors in John's narrative strategy. Thus, in this section the focus firstly is on a definition of metaphor; secondly, on the structure of metaphor; and finally on its function.

3.1.1 Definition of a metaphor

Defining a metaphor is a complex undertaking because an understanding of metaphor has been extensively examined from the perspectives of theology, philosophy, rhetoric, literary criticism, political science, psychology and linguistics⁴². The general impression is that the more these disciplines venture to define what a metaphor is, the more these definitions become confusing⁴³. Prandi (2002:7) argues convincingly that:

⁴² Ortony (1993) may be cited here. This work is a collection of significant essays focusing on how these disciplines have tried to approach the phenomenon of metaphor.

⁴³ For a discussion that addresses the difference between symbol, metaphor, sign and motif, see Culpepper (1983:180-190); (2008:39-54) and Van der Watt (2000:1-24).

It is simply impossible to give a definition of metaphor that is both general and exhaustive; that can be applied to all the metaphors and exhaustive at the same time for the qualifying properties of each one. What actually happens is that several definitions of metaphor, heterogeneous enough to be incompatible, are each supported by some of the data, even when none is adequate for the generality of metaphors.⁴⁴

Although defining a metaphor is difficult, the approach here is one which goes from the etymological perspective to linguistics and rhetorical theories passing to the lexicographical approach.

For the etymological approach, Joubert (2007:84) makes an important contribution by insisting that the etymological approach of any word may lead to the rediscovery of its primary meaning, from which new meanings are disclosed. In a similar vein, Jacques Derrida (1972:273) argues that over time, the human intelligence shapes, fashions and moulds words so it becomes increasingly difficult to discover their “original” meaning. The work of etymology, he explains is to reach the primitive meaning of a word. So, etymologically speaking, the word metaphor comes from the Latin “*metaphora*” originating from the Greek word *μεταφορά* (*metaphora*) and from the verb *μεταφέρω* (*metapherō*), “I transfer, apply”. Fundamentally, the word metaphor is a composition of two Greek words, *μετά* (*meta*, “with, across, after”) and *φέρω* (*pherō*, “I bear, carry”). Literally, the word metaphor designates “to carry across.” At the heart of this definition of metaphor is the idea that an analogy can carry a concept across from one scenario to another because in Greek it still means “carry across” or “transfer”; in modern Greek metaphor means “transport” or “transfer”.

From a lexicographical perspective, the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2005:925) describes a metaphor as “a word or phrase used to describe somebody or something else, in a way that is different from its normal use, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful”. This definition of metaphor is significant for three particular reasons. First, it echoes the general opinion that metaphors use non-literal language. Second, it suggests that the

⁴⁴ The original quotations in French are: “Il s’avère simplement impossible de donner une définition de la métaphore qui soit à la fois générale et exhaustive; qui s’applique à toutes les métaphores et qui explicite en même temps les propriétés qualifiantes de chacune. Ce qui arrive en fait, c’est que plusieurs définitions de la métaphore, assez hétérogènes pour être incompatibles, sont chacune appuyées par quelques –unes des données, alors même qu’aucune n’est adéquate pour la généralité des métaphores.”

meaning of the word has changed over time. Third, it urges us to briefly examine the history of the debate on the meaning of metaphor from the perspective of linguistics and rhetorical theories.

From these perspectives, three major theories have emerged in defining a metaphor. These are: the substitution theory, interactive theory and speech act theory (Martinich 2000:567). The substitution theory represented by Aristotle considers a metaphor as a rhetorical device offering precision, smartness and style to a speech to persuade and convince the audience⁴⁵. In this regard, Aristotle defines a metaphor as “the transportation of a thing to a name that means another, transfer or of genus to species, or species to genus, or species to species or according to the rapport of analogy”⁴⁶. What is striking in this definition, comments F. Calargé (2005)⁴⁷ is that for Aristotle, the meaning of metaphor is not in the discourse but it is found in a name. To clarify, it is not a phrase carrying metaphorical meaning but a name. Thus, for Aristotle, a metaphor is to be defined in terms of the movement of a borrowed name, substituted to another, to express the intended meaning. A metaphor destroys the meaning of a name to create a new one. In doing so a metaphor re-describes the reality⁴⁸.

Contrary to the Aristotelian “substitution theory” is the “interactive theory” in which it is argued that it is the sentence as a whole that carries the metaphorical meaning not a word⁴⁹. This is so, because a word has its meaning in the semantic field of a sentence. This view of the interactive theory on metaphor did not last long. It was challenged in the late 1970s by John Searle, who questioned and rejected both the interaction and the substitution metaphor theories. While studying speech act theory, Searle (1977) suggested an approach to metaphor taking into account the ‘speaker's utterance meaning’⁵⁰.

⁴⁵ These considerations are taken from Ashworth (2007). This work discusses the treatment of metaphor by medieval logicians with attention to their reception of classical texts in logic, grammar, and rhetoric.

⁴⁶ This translation was modified and adapted to stress the substitution theory. The original quotations in Greek are found in *Poetics* 1457b7-18.

⁴⁷ This work is available from <http://www.info-metaphore.com>. [Accessed 25 March 2010].

⁴⁸ For more details on this issue see Gay (1992).

⁴⁹ Under the category of works supporting this view are, for example, Richards (1950), Black (1962), Derrida (1972) and Ricoeur (1975), whose investigations emphasize that the metaphorical meaning is not carried by a name, but it is in the sentence.

⁵⁰ Jarvis (s a) gives a good summary of this in her study on metaphor in its relation to the body. Jarvis argues that “metaphorical utterances work not because a certain juxtaposition of words produces a change in the meaning of the lexical elements but because the speaker's meaning differs from their literal usage”. Thus, as phrases like ‘It's getting hot in here’ or ‘Sally is a block of ice’ function as metaphors only in certain contexts with specific truth conditions,

The contribution of Ricoeur on the polysemic character of a metaphor is another perspective on metaphor from the linguistics and rhetorical researchers. Ricoeur (1972:98) argues that the meaning of a given metaphor is provided by the context in which this metaphor arises. The comprehension of a metaphor is governed by its context; the words preceding, following and determining its value; and its intended meaning. In this case, one is close to the authorial intention. In addition, Ricoeur (1991:64-85) argues that a metaphor is never perfectly under control; a metaphor is polysemic⁵¹; it gives rise to thought; it has a “surplus of meaning”. Ricoeur praises the power of hermeneutics to facilitate the construction of meaning. What is at issue in the linguistic and rhetorical theories on metaphor is not merely the relocation of metaphors in human communication but the conclusion that metaphors are everyday elements of human communication. They help human beings to communicate effectively to influence one another (Martinich 2000:567).

Three major conclusions on the process of developing metaphors have emerged. Initially, metaphorising is the substitution or transfer of a word or a phrase by another to create new meaning. This metaphor is then defined in terms of the movement of the first meaning to a second meaning creating a new reality (Derrida 1972:255-256). Thereafter, the meaning of a metaphor is still beyond any conceptual determination; the metaphorical field remains fertile to interpretation because the context in which a metaphor is used remains pivotal in the process of the re-construction of the meaning⁵².

there is no single principle according to which metaphors operate. For more details see the work available from <http://www.answers.com/topic/metaphor>. [Accessed 23 April 2010].

⁵¹ This view is also shared by Pandikattu (1997:13-15), who argues that a metaphor can be defined as a means or a strategy by which the representation of reality through language takes place. A metaphor creates new meaning that cannot be exhausted and fully grasped by a literal translation of the metaphor; it provides new insights, stimulating newness in a communication.

⁵² Recently, Martinich (2000:567) in his study on metaphor makes some relevant remarks seeming to summarize how the word is currently perceived. According to Martinich, a standard definition of a metaphor emerging from many dictionaries and encyclopedias is that a metaphor is “a figure of speech in which a word or a phrase literally denoting one kind of object is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them”. Although the theoretical adequacy of this definition may be questioned, it gives a general idea of what a metaphor might refer to. Furthermore, Martinich points out three major characteristics of a metaphor explaining this definition: comparison, interaction and speech act theories. According to the first characteristic he argues that a metaphor in its dynamic involves a comparison. Thus, every metaphor creates a rapport of similarity between two words or phrases. In addition, Martinich states that every metaphor engages a semantic interaction between some object or concept that literally refers to a word, and some concept metaphorically predicated by that same word. Thus, he concludes it is not words or sentences that are metaphorical but their use in specific situations; as a consequence, Martinich argues that to understand how metaphor functions, it must be understood how people communicate with language. The particularity of the work by Martinich is that it relocates metaphors in the speech act of human communication. Human beings “language” and communicate with one another by means of metaphors, to convey meaning. Thus, by metaphor, Martinich understands, a name or a phrase applied to an object or to a phenomenon to which it does not literally belong, to create new meaning. The power of a metaphor is the creation of a new reality to move people to the contemplation of the divine.

3.1.2 Structure of a metaphor

It has been shown that a metaphor is a means or a strategy, by which the representation of reality by language takes place. Also, a metaphor creates a new way of looking at life that cannot be exhausted and fully grasped by literal translation. Metaphors add new meaning and provide new insights stimulating newness in communication (Pandikattu 1997:13-15). Thus, “metaphorising” is to vivify, to renew and to re-create the meaning of a word (Derrida 1972:255-256). In this sub-section the structure of a metaphor will be examined to clarify the internal dynamic in the process of the creation of meaning.

Basically, a metaphor in its structure is made up of two parts, identified by very different terms (Zimmermann 2007:16). For example, I.A. Richards (1936:96-97) argues that a metaphor has two significant parts, “tenor” and “vehicle”.⁵³ Richards defines tenor as “the thing that the metaphoric word or phrase refers to and vehicle is the metaphoric word or phrase.”⁵⁴ So, for example, in considering a proverb “Love is a Rose”; it is well known that Love is not literally speaking a rose, a flower and vice versa. However “love” is compared to a rose, it is described using the attributes of “a rose”; Love is then the “tenor” and rose is a “vehicle”. Thus, the metaphor becomes the summary of the rapport of their interaction. More precisely, when the word “flower” is used to metaphorically express “love” in some cultures, love is not a flower and a flower is not love. However, the metaphorical meaning is created by the tension between the metaphorising of love and the metaphorised rose.

Some other concepts are used to express the same idea of tenor and vehicle initiated by Richards. For example, the terms “target” and “source” correspond, in cognitive linguistics, to Richards’ terms of “tenor” and “vehicle”, respectively. Also M. Black (1977:431-457) would use terms such as “focus” and “frame” instead of “tenor” and “vehicle”. H. Weinrich⁵⁵ (1974:431-457) will describe the same reality of “tenor” and “vehicle” in terms of “image creating and image receiving”. Some philosophers refer to terms such as “metaphorising” and “metaphorised”, or “signifier” and “signified” (Lacan 2002:190) to express the same idea. What emerges here is that a metaphor is

⁵³ His work was very influential on Ricoeur who after him developed the theory on the structure of a metaphor. See also Zimmermann (2000:108-133) for a summary on the subject.

⁵⁴ This commentary is available from <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellibst/21.html>. [Accessed 15 February 2011].

⁵⁵ Weinrich cited by Zimmermann (2006:16).

constructed of two remarkable parts, existing in tension to call the reader to leave the literal meaning, to seek the figurative meaning. The implication is that “metaphors are not ornamental” but have a specific function in human communication (Bontekoe 1987:209). This function can be epistemological, pedagogical, communicative or religious, according to the context in which a metaphor occurs.

3.1.3 Functions of a metaphor⁵⁶

The debate around the function of metaphors lies at the heart of metaphor studies. Scholars have differentiated various functions of metaphors according to the disciplines in which the metaphors are addressed. Thus, in this sub-section there is a summary of some of the views on the function of metaphors to show how metaphors shape perceptions and thereby affect on human reality.

3.1.3.1 Communicative function

It is well known that metaphors present an important means of communication used by humans in everyday communication. It is from this perspective that Lakoff and Johnson (1980:3-21) address metaphors as an existential reality. According to these two authors, much of everyday language is constructed from metaphors. People language each other with words or phrases with metaphorical meaning to persuade, teach and please. Thus, metaphors initiate conversation thereby fulfilling a communicative function. In front of a metaphor, the audience is called by the author to dialogue and to leave the literal meaning to search for the figurative. So metaphors promote dialogue between human beings. Metaphors have always existed as a means whereby people relate to one another and to the world around them. Thus, metaphors are instruments of language rendering the incomprehensible familiar⁵⁷, thereby facilitating better communication

⁵⁶ The model developed here is influenced by Zimmermann (2006:41-43), who addresses the issue of the function of images in John's Gospel. What he says about images in John's Gospel may be applied to the function of metaphors in John's Gospel since imagery in John's Gospel includes metaphors.

⁵⁷ Stefanowitsch (2005: 161-198) argues that there are two main hypotheses concerning the function of metaphor: stylistic hypothesis and cognitive hypothesis. The stylistic hypothesis regards metaphor principally as an extraordinary use of language, a figure of speech aiming to achieve particular aesthetic effects. This goal is achieved, as he noticed, in poetry, literary language, public oratory and various other registers prone to 'ornamental' language use. As one would notice with Stefanowitsch, the stylistic hypothesis remounts to Aristotle, who states in his *Art of Rhetoric* that “[i]t is metaphor above all that gives perspicuity, pleasure, and a foreign air” and then goes on to give advice about how to use metaphor appropriately to “ornament our subject” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* Book III, Chapter 2, §8ff). It has since been the mainstream hypothesis in literary criticism and rhetoric, often simply assumed implicitly rather than being subject to discussion. Regarding the view of the function of metaphor referring to the *cognitive hypothesis*, Stefanowitsch argues that the *cognitive hypothesis*, is diametrically opposed to the stylistic hypothesis. For him, instead of treating metaphorical expressions as ornamental stylistic devices, the cognitive hypothesis sees in them “a pervasive feature of everyday language”. More importantly, metaphor is perceived as a conceptual (or

between humans⁵⁸. Walker Percy (1958:96) accurately states that: “Metaphor is the true maker of language.”

3.1.3.2 Epistemological function

Kan Baake (2003:68-178) argues that during the cognitive process, metaphors play a key role. Not only do these deliver knowledge but also they produce and shape it. Metaphors are used as a means of delivering knowledge to children as well as to adults; these are used to facilitate an understanding of reality and render the incomprehensible, familiar. This view is close to Ricoeur (1978:132-133), who sees in metaphors one of the most important vehicles for enriching human language and perception. Addressed in the light of cognitive science, it can be argued that knowledge acquisition is often metaphorical in nature. Metaphors open insights and thereby facilitate discovery. For example, it is through metaphors that the identity of Jesus is described in John’s Gospel. The divine origin of Jesus is portrayed in metaphors such as logos, shepherd and bread. Accordingly, these metaphors help one to see the Father in Jesus, as Jesus would have expressed it. Thus, metaphors herald new insights in terms of knowledge about Jesus and help readers to acquire new perspectives about Jesus in his relationship with God.

3.1.3.3 Pedagogical function

Metaphors introduce step by step the discovery of new reality to give knowledge. Seen from the perspective of sociolinguistic theory, they are remarkable in the process of reconstructing new understandings of reality. As seen in Malina (1985), they introduce novices to the new worldview step by step to give them deepening insights for understanding a new social universe. In this process, metaphors first question things the way they appear to us and then open new horizons.

3.1.3.4 Theological function

Another dimension of metaphor to be singled out is its theological function because religious language is fundamentally metaphorical⁵⁹. Humans use metaphors taken from

mental) phenomenon, whose “essence... is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:5). In other words, the main function of metaphorical language is that of enabling us to understand abstract concepts, that is, concepts not directly accessible via bodily (sensory) experience in terms of concrete concepts, that is, concepts *directly* accessible to us.

⁵⁸ Aristotle has the merit of addressing the issue of metaphor as a rhetorical device. His approach was influential until the interactive theory by Black and Richards was proposed.

concrete or earthly realities to describe abstract or heavenly realities. Metaphors are perceived as a medium to enable the earthly and the heavenly to dialogue. In a religious context, metaphors exist as a means for people to relate to each other, to the world and to the Supreme-Being. They build the bridge between the physical and the metaphysical by way of analogy. They move people from the literal to figurative; they help people to communicate about what cannot be captured in words. For instance, when John the Baptist describes Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:29), this metaphor can have a powerful message for his audience. Thus John's metaphorical description of Jesus echoes the lamb sacrificed on the occasion of atonement for the forgiveness of the sins of Israel⁶⁰. In religious experiences, metaphorical description enables people to move from one world to another. In this case, the metaphorical description is a strong souvenir for the mind of the people addressed. In recalling a story, event or person of reference, the metaphorical description can lead people to changed behavior⁶¹. In theology, this is called a conversion, a change or metanoia.

Thomas Aquinas is correct in recognizing the importance of metaphorical descriptions when discussing the nature of God. God is from above, so earthly creatures use earthly reality in speaking about God to understand His nature. However, Thomas Aquinas insists that the use of earthly realities to describe what God might be, must be at the level of analogy because human reality cannot fully describe the nature of God. "Thus, all names applied metaphorically to God, are applied to creatures primarily rather than to God, because when said of God they mean only similitudes to such creatures"⁶².

3.2 Metaphorical strategies in John's narrative

What is at issue in this section is not only the examination of how John uses metaphor in his narrative strategy, but also how one can identify and categorize metaphorical constructions in John's Gospel. Insights to avoid taking everything in John as falling under the category of metaphor are provided in this section. First, the debate around John's use of metaphors is mapped; secondly, an identification of metaphors in John's

⁵⁹ Many scholars argue that religious language is metaphorical; they insist on the fact that religious utterances can be relevant only if they are interpreted as metaphor. For more detailed discussion on this issue see for example, Soskice (1981) and McFague (1983).

⁶⁰ For more details on Jesus' title of the Lamb of God, see the discussions in Schneiders (2011:16-18).

⁶¹ Even though Baum (1975:238) makes this observation while addressing the issue of symbolism and theology, it can be applied to a certain extent to figurative language in religious experience in general and to the discussion on metaphor and theology.

⁶² *Summa Theologica* 1.13.6.

Gospel will be undertaken; and third, attention will be given to the classification of metaphors in John's Gospel. Finally, the function of metaphors in John's narrative strategy will be discussed.

3.2.1 Mapping the debate

It is necessary first to map the debate around John's use of metaphor before discussing the metaphorical strategies in John's narrative. Ruben Zimmermann (2007:15) argues that, although John does not use figurative terms such as allegory, parable, riddle, symbol and metaphor to describe his figurative language, the use of figurative language is the central feature of John's narrative strategy. It is through imagery that John communicates with his audience to make the invisible accessible. In addition, Zimmermann in the debate regarding how to describe the figurative language of John's Gospel indicates that Johannine scholars are divided regarding the linguistic theories on symbol or metaphor to fully describe the figurative language of John's Gospel. After briefly recalling the evolution of the debate, he acknowledges that regarding the use of metaphor, Robert Kysar (1991) and John Painter (1991) were the first to successfully apply linguistic metaphor research in the analysis of the imagery of John's Gospel (:5). Otto Schwankl (1995), on the one hand, focusing on metaphor, understands the imagery of John's Gospel as metaphors and then addresses the motif of light and darkness as the central imagery of John's Gospel (:16). On the other hand, Ulrich Busse (1997; 2002) and Jan G. Van der Watt (2000) developed an approach based on metaphor theory. One particular benefit of these two works, Zimmerman concludes, is that attention is given to combining images into larger networks (:7).

Moreover, the work of Van den Heever (1992), many years before Zimmermann, provides particular insights into this debate regarding how to describe the figurative language of John's Gospel. Van den Heever persuasively asserts that metaphors are the main feature of John's narrative strategy. According to him the account in John's Gospel of the Jesus event specifically uses metaphors. As he explains:

What is often referred to as symbols or the symbolism of John's Gospel, should be understood as nothing more than metaphors. When viewed from the perspective of language theories it is clear that what used to be called symbolic expressions are actually metaphorical statements. In structure and function they exhibit the characteristics of metaphors. I will therefore use the terms metaphor/metaphorical to indicate everything that is included under the rubric of John's

symbolism. Note however Culpepper's section on symbolism (1987:180-198). I would argue even more strongly than he does for the centrality of the metaphors to the narrative⁶³.

As Van den Heever (1992) continues to explain the use of word metaphors to describe the figurative language of John's Gospel, he highlights that many discussions miss the point when it comes to describing John's figurative language. Instead of focusing on how symbols work in the narrative as "metaphorical expression", they concentrate on the discussion of symbols as words:

There is another point in which I differ from other discussions regarding John's symbols or metaphors, including that of Culpepper. Almost unfailingly all these discussions concentrate on the symbol as a word, for example, on 'bread', 'light', etc. I believe this misses the point. What should be studied is the way these symbols function as metaphorical expressions, that is, as speech acts or narrative acts. It is true that the literature on John's symbolism run(s) into many pages, but as far as I know no one has yet approached them from the point of view of theory of metaphor, and that located within narrative theory⁶⁴.

It is noticed with Van den Heever that the discussion on how to describe the figurative language of John is closed. According to Van den Heever (1992:92) metaphors are at the heart of John's narrative. In addition, it is not a word that is the bearer of metaphorical meaning but fundamentally the sentence and even more, the text as a whole (:93). The work by Van den Heever influenced Van der Watt, who further developed a network metaphor theory based on John's Gospel.

3.2.2 Identifying metaphorical constructions in John's Gospel.

Among the questions Zimmermann (2006:16-20) raises in his assessment of the figurative language of John's Gospel is how to identify metaphorical construction in John's Gospel. Like many Johannine scholars, Zimmermann recognizes that metaphors constitute the central literary device present throughout John's Gospel. John communicates with his audience by means of metaphorical constructions. Although it is true that John communicates his message essentially by means of metaphors, it is acknowledged that not everything in John's Gospel can be taken as metaphoric.

⁶³ See footnote 5.

⁶⁴ See footnote 5.

Zimmermann (2006:16) does raise the issue of the “metaphorical construction” of John’s Gospel according to the interaction theory of Black and Richards, who argued that the “metaphoricity” of metaphor does not rely on one word or lexeme but always involves a framework of text. A major question he asks is: “On which level of the text does the syntactical connection between focus and frame occur?” Zimmermann’s question is: “How can metaphorical construction in John’s narrative strategy be identified?” Zimmermann suggests three different levels to aid the identification of the metaphorical construction in John’s Gospel. This metaphorical construction can be identified on the sentence level; the context metaphor; and in the conceptual metaphor (:16-19).

On the sentence level, Zimmermann (2006:16-17) argues that metaphorical construction is identified for example in attributive metaphors such as ‘living water’ (John 4:10), prepositional metaphors, such as ‘fruit for eternal life’ (John 4:36) or genitive metaphors, such as ‘sons of Light’. Zimmermann continues with the best known metaphors on the sentence level, the so-called “I am sayings” where Jesus identifies himself with certain objects, such as light, bread, shepherd and a grapevine. It is well known that Jesus is not one of these objects; the reader of John is then called to transfer to Jesus the proprieties of one of these objects. In this perspective, he sees new hidden aspects of the Jesus identity. Context metaphors, the second level are identified when the metaphorical construction is seen within the broader context, that is, when the connection between tenor and vehicle is seen in context. To clarify this, Zimmermann, explains that in the metaphor of the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29, 36), the transfer to Jesus becomes clear only after the addition of auxiliary text (:17). Conceptual metaphor, as the third level can be understood in the context of cognitive theories when everyday experience is used to understand and express complex subjects. As Zimmermann states, John’s Gospel uses metaphors from everyday experience to formulate theological statements (:19). To elucidate this third kind of metaphor, he gives the example of the conceptual metaphor of space, “above-below”. He argues that our conception of the notion of “above-below” is influenced by human upright walk;

also, in our everyday experience, “above” is seen positively and “below” is charged with negative associations⁶⁵.

3.2.3 Typology of metaphors in John’s Gospel

The methodological stimulus for the identification of the metaphorical construction in John’s Gospel has provided tools to help “typologize” metaphors in John’s Gospel. Two major domains of metaphorical constructions can be distinguished in John’s Gospel (Zimmermann 2006:22-23). There are basic metaphors taken from daily human experience, such as light, birth, water, wine and bread, noticeable in the ancient world. There are, on the other hand, metaphors drawn from the Jewish tradition, such as temple and heaven. The use of both types of metaphors demonstrates a fundamental characteristic of imagery in general and metaphorical language in particular. The latter can be defined in terms of a permanent tension between tradition and innovation. Metaphors in John’s Gospel are linked to existing metaphor traditions in both the ancient world and Jewish culture. They bring something new to sharpen and produce a surplus of meaning beyond this metaphoric tradition. Metaphors in John’s Gospel illuminate how they depend on tradition and how they have been renewed and revised by the process of “metaphorical christologisation”⁶⁶.

This “metaphorical christologisation” process occurs when, for example imagery or metaphors reserved for God in the Jewish tradition are applied to Jesus to highlight his divine qualities and action. Of particular importance is the way John applies the shepherd metaphor to Jesus in John 10; and uses the breathing metaphor to show how in Jesus, God continues his work of creation. It is here that Van den Heever (1992:90) is relevantly argues that:

⁶⁵ Zimmermann (2008:224-226) deals with the same issue with regard to the identification of symbols in John’s Gospel. He suggests two criteria that should one follow in the process of the identification of symbols in John’s Gospel in order not to leave the discovery of symbols to arbitrary: conventional plausibility and textual plausibility. With regard to the first, Zimmermann argues that, “if a motif holds a great deal of religious meaning within a linguistic community due to the traditional semantic field that can be sustained by means of older and contemporary text, then there is a high level of plausibility that the motif is used symbolically, in line of conventional usage”. The criterion of textual plausibility holds that: “the way in which an author identifies motif within a text as a symbol will be made clear by clues in the text.” In other words, “the symbolism of a text can be identified from the specific interaction between social-traditional convention and the actual textual evidence”. To a certain extent, it seems that these two criteria can be applied with discernment into the process of identifying metaphorical construction in John’s Gospel. This will not be elaborated in this study.

⁶⁶ For a discussion that shows how through images and metaphors the identity of Jesus is understood as a Christ see the detail argument of Zimmermann (2004). For a study that shows how the OT images reserved for God only are transferred to Jesus, see Thompson (2006:260-277).

Taking the Gospel narrative as a communicative text means that the textual signs are not regarded as standing only in relation to other (intratextual) signs. Because the whole ‘reality’ has a textual structure, textual signs do not only refer to other textual signs, but also to extratextual signs. Texts are in dialogue with social codes, historical constructions and meaningful actions. A pragmatic text such as John’s Gospel signals a complex communication process of intention, interactions with the flow of history, goal recipients of the communicative act, relationships that are formed or amended, changed behaviour, feedback. We are left with the way reality is rearranged by an author(s) through the selected narrated perspectives on what happened which are presented to the readers.

In summary, metaphors in John’s Gospel are not “esoteric jargon”, they are drawn from everyday life and the Jewish metaphorical tradition. Thus, borrowing from Zimmermann’s terminology (2006:22-23), John’s metaphorical construction can be distinguished, on the one hand, by *basic metaphors drawn from human life* and, on the other hand, by *specific metaphors from Jewish tradition or religious metaphor*⁶⁷. There are many other ways that metaphorical construction in John’s Gospel can be typologized. Van der Watt (1998:77-78), for instance, in his metaphor theory indicates that there are many ways to differentiate metaphors in John’s Gospel. To illustrate this assertion, he points to submerged metaphors, such as bread in John 6:50-58; to suspended metaphors such as in John 1:12-13; to copulative surface metaphors such as in John 6:43; and to genitive metaphors.

3.2.4 Function of metaphors in John’s Gospel

Van den Heever (1992:90) argues extensively that the use of metaphors is the essential literary device of John’s Gospel; and refers to John’s Gospel as an “instrument of communication”. This may be seen as Van der Heever’s implicit elaboration of a possible theory on the function of metaphors in John’s Gospel. Van den Heever further comments that metaphors cannot be studied in abstracto because they are part of human communication; they “are embedded in everyday speech or writing” (:89).

Similarly, Roman Jakobson (1960) argues that as an element of language which takes place in a particular communication event, metaphors have six essential functions: emotive, poetic, evocative, referential, phatic and metalinguistic⁶⁸. For the *emotive*

⁶⁷ Zimmermann (2006:22-23) uses these expressions to distinguish symbols in John’s Gospel. Since this categorization might be applied to imagery in general, I have applied it to the metaphorical construction in John’s Gospel.

⁶⁸ A good summary of these functions is given by Reese (1984:29-32)

function, it is argued that by using metaphorical constructions, John's Gospel communicates a dimension of an experience beyond information and conceptual content. Metaphors in John's narrative strategy reveal John's values and personal conviction regarding experiences of Jesus. While the *poetic* dimension of John's metaphors explains John's choice of particular vocabulary and metaphors to create a coherent system of meaning to communicate his experience, the *evocative* dimension is called imperative, prescriptive, provocative, persuasive or conative. This dimension deals with reader responses to John's metaphors. The *referential* or *denotative*, informative, cognitive and descriptive dimensions of John's metaphors imply that every metaphor says something about something else or someone else. Marianne Meyer Thompson (2006:260-277) argues that every picture in John's Gospel tells a story. The *phatic* function of John's metaphors is clarified by Zimmermann (2006:41) who argues that "the images are not an esoteric jargon, but rather they mean to open the Gospel to all people". Thus, these metaphors keep communication with all the readers of John's Gospel. The *metalinguistic* function of John's metaphors may be seen in its power to comment on itself. For instance, the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22 is interpreted in the light of Genesis 2:7 and refers to God acting through Jesus.

The above comments on the function of John's metaphors, based on the model by Jakobson help us to understand why John uses metaphors to communicate his message. As Paul N. Anderson (2006:158) would argue, John's distinctive presentation of Jesus' story is due totally to his theological interests. Thus the theological interests of John's Gospel could explain the choice of metaphorical constructions. This being the case and following Zimmermann (2006:36-41) it can be argued that metaphors in John's Gospel have a theo-christo-anthropo-ecclesiological function. Metaphors in John's narrative introduce ways to the knowledge of God, acting in Jesus Christ, in the human experience, for the recreation of a new people in God. The great advantage of this approach is that "understanding how an image conveys a meaning greatly facilitates a more accurate and profound understanding of what meaning is and how it should be embraced" (Anderson 2006:160).

3.3 Theories of the Johannine metaphors

Since the discovery of the richness of the figurative language of John's Gospel, and the blossoming of linguistic theories on how to distinguish and identify metaphors in

John's Gospel⁶⁹, an increasing number of studies have focused on metaphors in John's narrative strategy; these have led to the elaboration of many metaphor theories. Despite the objection that modern metaphor theories cannot be applied to ancient texts, such as John's Gospel, Otto Schwankl (1995), Ulrich Busse (1997; 2002), Van der Watt (1992; 1994; 1998; 2000) and many others have successfully developed theories about metaphors in John's Gospel⁷⁰. In general, these works were influenced by both the metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson and that of Paul Ricoeur.

The interest of Johannine scholars in the metaphoric theory by Lakoff and Johnson and Ricoeur seems to be motivated by insights enabling an understanding of how John creates cohesion in his use of diverse and complex metaphors. Also of interest is how John's metaphoric network communicates his message. These studies help Johannine scholars to pay attention to John's strategy of combining metaphors, resulting in a large network. Otto Schwankl (1995), for instance examines the motifs of light and darkness as the central imagery of the Gospel of John in applying Ricoeur's metaphor theory to John's Gospel.

Similarly, with attention to the ancient rhetoric theory of metaphors, Ulrich Busse (1997) would see in the "temple metaphor", a complex image that becomes an overall organizing principle (Zimmermann 2006:8). Similarly, Van der Watt (2000) would indicate the family metaphor as the most important imagery in John's Gospel because other metaphors such as birth, life, eating, love, knowing each other, solicitude and protection are other ways of expressing the same family reality. So according to Van der Watt "the family imagery is the constitutive and the most essential imagery in this Gospel" (:397). In addition to these works focused on one key metaphor in John's Gospel, the hypothesis of this study is that the breathing metaphor in John 20: 22 is a key metaphor in John's narrative strategy as will be demonstrated in this study. Since the model developed by Van der Watt will help us to develop this hypothesis, it would be better to briefly outline Van der Watt's metaphoric theory in John's Gospel. This theory was first outlined in some of his earlier works such as: *Interpreting imagery in*

⁶⁹ For more details see Van der Watt (1998) and Zimmermann (2006).

⁷⁰ These works are not the only ones addressing theory of metaphors in John's Gospel, they have been cited because of their interest in, and focus on, one metaphor in John from which some of them developed and elaborated a network metaphoric theory in John's Gospel.

John's Gospel (1992), *Dynamic of metaphor in John's Gospel* (1998) and developed in his work *Family of the King* (2000).

3.3.1 Van der Watt's metaphoric network theory

The main argument of Van der Watt is that metaphors in John's Gospel are linked to each other in a large network, enabling an understanding of the message of John. The point of departure for Van der Watt's metaphoric network theory in John's Gospel is that metaphors in John's Gospel are used on micro, meso- and macro-levels. The way metaphors work in small contexts is the same as in large contexts (2000:394). According to Van der Watt (1998:32-34), in John's Gospel four important devices used by the author create a metaphorical construction: substitution⁷¹, comparison⁷², interaction⁷³ and description.⁷⁴ Van der Watt argues in the metaphoric network theory that the way John uses metaphors in his narrative strategy indicates that "metaphors throughout the entire Gospel, should be read together" (1998:37). This is because they are interrelated, not only syntagmatically but also paradigmatically. Thus, metaphors from the same semantic field suggest cohesion on the basis of their superimposition with regard to common ideas. For example, the light metaphor would evoke darkness, day, night, or lamp as associated metaphors.

Furthermore, Van der Watt (1998:39) argues that, in John's narrative strategy, there are metaphors whose meaning calls other metaphors to spread an idea throughout the Gospel to create "thematic cohesion". According to Van der Watt, the family metaphor is a particular example of this kind of metaphor; it is the key metaphor in the Gospel. Language and imagery related to the family life, family members and familial actions

⁷¹ Substitution means that: "a word is used metaphorically, when it is substituted by a figurative counterpart on the basis of analogy" (see Van der Watt 1998:32). Accordingly, the discovery of the substitutive word is key to understanding of the meaning of the metaphor. In addition, Van der Watt argues that substitution facilitates the creation of metaphors in a larger context or macro-level. John, in his narrative strategy plays with two important realities, which are in permanent tension: the heavenly realities summarized by the concept "above" and the earthly realities by the word "below". The metaphorical construction occurs when images or realities from below are exchanged with the heavenly or spiritual realities. For instance, as he indicates, in John 10 the gate and sheep are replaced by Jesus and his disciples on figurative level (1998:32-33).

⁷² As far as comparison is concerned, Van der Watt (1998:34) argues that there is comparison or similarity "when two situations are paralleled" to create a metaphorical construction. In this process, substitution plays a key role because it by using substitution that the confusion between metaphor and comparison is avoided. To illustrate this assertion, Van der Watt states that in John 15:4 a comparison is made between the fruitfulness of the branches and that of the disciples.

⁷³ Metaphor interaction means that, metaphors are superimposed to interrelate according to the semantic field of meaning. In this way, they create a kind of coherence. Interaction specifically takes places as Van der Watt (:33) argues by means of an analogy, which involves similarity and difference. For example, in John 15, as he says, "the disciples and the branches will not bear fruit in the same way" (:34).

⁷⁴ There is description when a word, phrase or anecdote in a literary unit illustrates a point.

are present throughout John's Gospel: birth, life, food, bread, water, Father, Son, children, orphan, friend, slave, service, obedience, love, protection, vinedressing, sheep farming, housing and hosting. Thus, according to Van der Watt the family metaphor is the essential metaphor used by John in his Gospel to convey his message (:75). This metaphor is developed in a complex way throughout the Gospel. Different elements of earthly family reality are activated in an integrated way and used analogically to describe spiritual dynamics relating to the relationship between God and human beings.

As far as the metaphoric network theory is concerned, Van der Watt (1998:75-76) indicates elsewhere that a network is also created when different metaphors form part of large macro-imagery in the Gospel, and are interpreted within the boundaries of this imagery. This creates an interpretative, hermeneutic circle, in which the smallest parts supply the larger imagery and the larger imagery serves as background for a better understanding of the smaller parts. This observation illustrates that the metaphoric network dynamic also works thematically because a metaphor can be used and developed in a given literary unit to become the theme of this literary unit. This thematic cohesion in turn communicates a message. Here the metaphors are interrelated at a macro-level. The basis for their functioning is analogy and substitution at micro- and meso-macro-level. As Van der Watt (2000:396) highlights, John uses a wide variety of metaphors for different reasons so that thematic cohesion is created by the permanent interaction of the same semantic field. For instance, within the family metaphor, the metaphor of life is a key metaphor. Associated metaphors, such as light, bread, vine, water, eating, drinking and giving birth operate in the same semantic field and create thematic cohesion.

3.3.2 Zimmermann's cluster technique

It has been found that Van der Watt's metaphorical network theory in John's Gospel is close to that of Ruben Zimmermann (2006:27-35), who also argues for the networking of images throughout John's Gospel. As does Van der Watt, Zimmermann indicates that the connection and superimposition of various images within a small number of verses is a characteristic of John's narrative strategy. According to Zimmermann, images in John's Gospel are placed side by side in close succession, creating "a kind of polyptychon or patchwork technique" (:30). On the other hand, they are "pushed up against each other or imposed onto each other so closely that it is scarcely possible to

strictly separate the sets” (:31). Zimmermann calls this, “a cluster technique” because the “images (are) in and on each other”.

Fundamentally, Zimmermann (2006:33) argues that an image can be developed in a speech or in variations can, become the theme of a chapter. In addition, some images connect larger passages, while others are presented on purpose at the beginning, in the middle and the end of the book, or are found throughout the entire work, like a guiding path. As suggested by Zimmermann, the image of Christ as the “one who is sent” is an example of this “network of metaphors whose inner coherence can only be recognized in its totality. This metaphor formally eludes a clear nominal or semantic definition” (:34-35). Thus, for Zimmermann, the networking organization of metaphors helps the reader to have a perception of Christ, which is on the level of the entire Gospel (:36).

Conclusion

In this chapter, the meaning, structure and function of metaphors have been discussed. It has been seen that in a metaphor “the ability of a word or a phrase to have a reference other than ‘literal’ reference” is possible (Van der Watt 1998:30). Also, metaphors have two important parts: tenor and vehicle, whose tension creates the metaphorical construction. Thus, more than just being a linguistic phenomenon, metaphors constitute existential realities “we live by” as Lakoff and Johnson (1980:3) suggested. Not only do these metaphors help humans to communicate with each other and the world around them, they also help the audience to move from the physical to the metaphysical. This is why John’s Gospel uses metaphors as a narrative strategy. Metaphorical constructions are at the heart of John’s narrative strategy. They are used in an inter-related network to make the message of John comprehensive. These conclusions are intended to facilitate an understanding of the breathing metaphor to be explored in the fourth chapter. The different metaphoric network theories in John’s Gospel have demonstrated that metaphors in John’s Gospel have an internal logic. They are connected to each other at micro- and macro- levels so that their interrelationship results in a sophisticated type of cohesion. Through one metaphor, the reader can perceive the message of John on the level of the entire Gospel. These theories have revealed that the networking of metaphors in John’s Gospel also has a theological function; many of the metaphors are used to make the reality from “above” familiar to the Gospel’s readers. The hypothesis of this study is that the breathing metaphor in

John 20:22 is a very important metaphor in this Gospel as it fulfils a particular theological function. It is especially through this metaphor that Jesus should be understood as the one introducing humanity in the new creation process. This begins with the theological shape of the Prologue, introducing this idea of creation and life from above. The hypothesis of this thesis is that the diversity and multidimensionality of metaphors used in John's narrative strategy prepares the reader to access this fundamental reality. Thus, it is also argued that one single metaphor is insufficient to express John's theological reality. Drawing from Van der Watt's hypothesis that within the family metaphor, the life metaphor is a key metaphor; also it is argued that the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 is a key metaphor, as will be shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV:

THE BREATHING METAPHOR IN JOHN 20:22: BACKGROUND, LITERARY FUNCTION AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The breathing metaphor function in the Johannine network of metaphors is examined in this chapter. Van der Watt's metaphoric network theory (2000:193-198,397-400) will serve as guideline. The hypothesis is that the breathing metaphor is a key to the metaphor network in John's narrative. Some of the Johannine metaphors are embodied in it and others arise from it. This hypothesis also has further theological implications to be addressed in chapter V. The function breath and breathing occupied in the ancient Mediterranean and Near-Eastern world are examined together with the Old Testament traditions, stories and the intertestamental literature linked to the breathing metaphor. Third, the exegesis of John 20:22, both in its immediate context and its biblical intertextuality is undertaken. Lastly, the breathing metaphor function in the Johannine network of metaphors will be discussed.

4.1 Theoretical approach to breath and breathing

From a socio-linguistic perspective, it is well-known that the understanding of a metaphor depends on sufficient knowledge about the objects referred to in the metaphor. For instance, when John reports that Jesus breathed on his disciples, it is necessary to know the meanings evoked by the action of breathing on someone in the ancient Mediterranean and Near-Eastern world⁷⁵. There are many ways to examine the background of the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22. This does not mean that there is a freedom to interpret John 20:22 according to personal interests, or to shape this metaphor according to personal opinions. Although it may be possible to discuss John 20:22 for one purpose or another, it is obvious that the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22 is a theological construct in John's narrative. John refers to this imagery because he intended to communicate something to his audience.

The perspective open to us in this study is the one given to us by John's narrative, which aims to provoke a faith response from his audience (John 20:30-31). As modern readers of John's Gospel, it is, therefore necessary to briefly examine the ancient

⁷⁵ Although an anthropological approach on breath and breathing might be helpful for this study, we are not going to orientate the study in this perspective. This study assumes that the breathing to which John refers has a theological background. Thus our approach far from being exhaustive will focus on this theological background.

Mediterranean and Near-Eastern conception of breathing before starting with the interpretation of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22. Consequently, in this section there is a focus on the function of breath and breathing from both the Greek and Jewish ancient views since these two cultures shape the narrative of John. This could expose how Jewish John's narrative is. In other words, the outcome of this approach is to confirm the Jewish Hellenistic background of the figurative language of John's Gospel.

4.1.1 Greek views on breath and breathing

An understanding of the full meaning of the breathing metaphor requires an understanding of the role of breath in the human organism and in nature. Breathing is a dynamic movement of air flowing from a place of greater to a place of lesser pressure. It is not so much the movement per se which excites attention, but rather the energy manifested by the movement. Alison Banks Findly (1995:302-308) argues that the concept of 'breath' and its verbal form 'breathing' appear in the development of thought in many religions (:302). The centrality of reflections on breath and breathing is moved by the concern to understand what it is that gives human beings life; and under what circumstances death is defined. Findly suggests that breath and breathing both stand for life in almost all human cultures. This conclusion results from careful examination of Greek, Biblical, Islamic, Chinese, Hindu views on breath and breathing. Although the exploration of all these views could be helpful for this study, particular attention will be given to the Greek and Jewish views. Reflection on breath and breathing in Greek views is found to be at the heart of Pre-Socratic philosophical thinking. As Findly (1995:302) indicates Pre-Socratic philosophers took seriously the question of breath and breathing by because the fundamental elements sustaining the cosmos are fire, air, water and earth. In the same vein, Ionian philosophical interest in the relationship between soul and breath increased. Empedocles for example, argues that the soul must consist of a combination of these four elements, together with the principles of love and strife (Findly 1995:302).

Diogenes, following the Ionians argues that air is the element most capable of originating movement. Furthermore, he states that internal air in the human body has an important role in the functioning of the sense organs. Among the words Plato indicates as closest to the idea of life-force (*soma*, *psuche* and *genesis*) expressed by the word "breath," *psuche* seems to be the most important. This is so because *psuche* signifies

“the divine aspect of man that is the seat of rational intelligence and moral choice” (Findly 1995:302).

Thus, the idea of breath, from the beginning has been at the heart of Greek philosophical thinking. Breath and breathing was a metaphor for life alongside the related notion of vitality and energy. Such imagery in John’s narrative implies that people from John’s contemporary Hellenistic context would have been able to relate to what John is referring to in the breathing metaphor in 20:22. However, although in the Greek world the breathing metaphor may have something to tell to the audience of John, this metaphor has Jewish roots. What the Jewish tradition says about breath will balance and add to disclosing the meaning that John had in mind when using this metaphor in his narrative.

4.1.2 Breathing metaphor in Jewish Tradition

The concept of breath and breathing is theological and receives particular attention from the Hebrew authors of the Old Testament. There are three Hebrew words expressing the idea behind the breathing metaphor: *ruah*, *nefesh* and *neshamah*. A particular contribution that these words make in relation to breath and breathing is that they all emphasize the concept of life, alongside the concepts of energy and vitality. Thus, *ruah*, *nefesh* and *neshamah* are probably metaphors for life in the Jewish tradition. As in the Greek world, they express the idea of life-force, life sustainment, life restoration and life provision. It is on this basis that Ryken et al. (1998:119-120) argue that: “Breath is an image that links God with humanity in creation, salvation, prophecy, faith and judgment [It] evokes God’s original connection to all creation; corporate and individual salvation, judgment, and the restoration of the faithful; and the ambivalence about worldly success and failure that marks life of God’s faithful people”.

In Jewish tradition, the breathing metaphor is fundamentally a theological issue. The image and practice of breathing on someone emerged with the book of Genesis in which it is clearly stated that human breath is the breath-of-life that comes from the mouth of God (2:7): “And the Lord formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”⁷⁶. It appears, according to this account that God was

⁷⁶ The scripture translations, unless otherwise noted are from the English translation of the LXX in *Bible Works 6*.

the first to breathe into someone to communicate the breath of life. The Hebrew word for breath in Genesis 2:7 is נְשָׁמָה (*neshamah*) and its meaning is “breath of God”, “mind of God”. The original meaning of *neshama* is “the breath of life” or the life principle originating from God to enable humankind to acknowledge dependence upon God as the source of life (Kellerman 2006).⁷⁷

In addition, the Hebrew *ruah/neshamah* are translated in Greek by “pneuma”. The verbal form of breathing in the LXX is ἐμφυσάω which means to blow, to breathe. In Latin ἐμφυσάω is translated by the verb *insuflare*. It is here that it seems rewarding to notice that in the NT the verb ἐμφυσάω appears only in John 20:22 in reference to Jesus’ breathing on the disciples to impart to them the Spirit. In the biblical tradition, these words are originally used to underline the dynamic relationship between God, humanity and creation. The detail hidden in all these terms will provide the framework for understanding this metaphor in this study.

Paul S. MacDonald (2003:1-9) offers a summary of his study on *ruah*, *nefesh*, *neshamah* to further unravel the metaphor of breath and breathing. In Ancient Hebrew, as MacDonald indicates, *ruah* and *nefesh* have countless nuances which imperceptibly change their meaning (:2). For example, *nefesh* originally meant “throat or gullet” and was associated with the need for air, drink and food which go down the throat. The more abstract meaning of *nefesh*, as MacDonald continues is “life or vital force” sustaining desire and longing (:2). , MacDonald underlines that later this term came to be associated with the idea of “life force” or the living individual.

As far as *ruah* is concerned, MacDonald (2003:2-3) argues that initially this word meant “wind”. Given that each living being has God’s wind within, *ruah* came to be associated with “breath” or the organ of breathing. In addition, MacDonald reminds us that as well as *nefesh*, *ruah* can also refer to the individual; that is to say, the one who breathes. Before concluding his analysis on *ruah*, MacDonald significantly adds that *ruah* is often connected with the word *leb* (or *lebab*), “heart” (:5). Along with the concept of *nefesh*, these three terms attest that human beings are “God’s special creation”. Thus, if *nefesh* is the individual life connected to a body, then *ruah* is the life-force present all over the world and existing autonomously. MacDonald (2003:8)

⁷⁷ This work is available from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Breath+a+divine+truth+-+Nymph+Kellerman>. [Accessed 18 August 2009].

quotes Walter Eichrod to argue that *ruah* is the *principium*, the vital element or effective and immortal power sustaining things everywhere. Furthermore, *Nefesh* is the *principatum*, the life force or the individual and ends with death.

Of specific interest for this study of the breathing metaphor is the idea of breathing as metaphor for life; it is the vital force sustaining humans and the cosmos. It is also taken as a sign of “the presence of God in the world” as Kellerman (2009)⁷⁸ would say. The most primitive meaning of breathing is also wind, insofar as each living being has God’s wind within, the breath of life. Reflections on the breathing metaphor in both Greek and Jewish are that the imagery is taken from everyday life. People breathe and to breathe is a sign of life and vitality and thus a metaphor for life. Far from being mere decoration, the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 is genuine metaphorical because the reader of John’s narrative is engaged in dialogue with the text to grasp the message the writer wants to convey. Thus, the purpose of John’s Gospel as stated in chapter 20:30-31 is that the breathing metaphor might be taken as a strategy and means for John to converse with his Gospel readers to enable them to grow their faith in Jesus. It is an extremely powerful metaphor through which John is connecting his audience to all the traditions about life and breathing in the Old Testament tradition.

4.1.3 Breathing as a polysemantic practice

The different meanings underpinning the image of breathing are examined to unravel the meaning of the process of breathing on each specific person. One evident cause for the problems encountered in the study of the practice of breathing on someone is the existence of different theories and approaches. In this section, different explanations emerging from biblical studies, starting with anthropological perceptions and progressively focusing on theological understandings will be explored. From an anthropological perspective, the process of breathing on someone may not only have different meanings but may also suggest important figurative implications. Brown (1970:1023) is cited here since he argues convincingly that breathing upon someone is a polysemantic practice.

⁷⁸ I am using the electronic version of this work available from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Breath+a+divine+truth+-+Nymph+Kellerman>. [Accessed 18 August 2009].

Brown asserts that breathing on someone might be associated with a blessing; a communication of power to a successor⁷⁹; an exorcistic rite upon the baptisand⁸⁰; a supernatural and healing power coming from the breath of a holy man; or an early Christian ordination rite by insufflation. As an illustration of the ancient ordination rite, Brown states that: “The most famous example of this rite of ordination was the custom of filling a skin bag with the holy breath of the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, tying it up, and transporting it up river to Ethiopia where it was let loose on the one designated to be the Abuna or head of the Ethiopian church” (:1023). In some other situations the act of breathing on a person may suggest a curse or “some harmful influence” associated with the black magic⁸¹. It may therefore be important to emphasize here that in the case of John 20: 22, it is the general idea of the transmission of vital force that is in the creation account of Genesis (Bultmann 1966:689 and Brodie 1993:569). Therefore, it seems important to turn to the OT tradition and select some specific references to discover the most likely figurative meanings emerging from the OT tradition linked to the breathing metaphor in John 20:22.

4.2 The Old Testament texts linked to breathing

A number of OT texts might be singled out as intertexts for the understanding of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22. First and foremost attention may be paid to two key texts in the OT tradition: Genesis 2:7 and its reuse in Ezekiel 37:1-14. Of particular importance for both texts is that breathing is used as an image or metaphor for God’s life-giving breath (Ridderbos 1997:643).

⁷⁹ A more recent study is the work by Derrett (1999:271-286), who argues that the practice of breathing on someone, to which John 20:22 refers found its origin in the Indian tradition of Upanishad where the transmission of power to a successor was done by means of breathing on him. More on this discussion will be touched on in further sections. Keener (2003:1024-1025) also provides insights on the practice of breathing. See mostly his footnotes in this regard.

⁸⁰ To illustrate this point, Kollar (1979:518) makes a confident assertion regarding the relationship between breath/breathing and the liturgy. According to Kollar, breathing is a fundamental liturgical action that, understood as an insufflation, signifies the communication of life or power, or as an exsufflation, the expulsion of an evil spirit. Examples of both insufflation and exsufflation occur in the rite of baptism in Christian tradition. Additionally, Kollar argues convincingly that breathing is also used in the rite of consecrating the oil of chrism and the blessing oil of catechumens, and in the blessing of baptismal water.

⁸¹ For more details see Louw-Nida Lexicon *in Bibleworks 6*, under the study on breathing in John 20:22.

Genesis 2:7 evokes the creation scene in which it is reported that καὶ ἔπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν” (“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”)⁸²

Here the function of breathing is depicted in terms of giving life, making alive. It is God’s own breath that brings the human being to life. In other words, God’s breath creates and sustains life (Thompson 2001:171-172). There are striking similarities to the depiction of the life-giving work of breathing with that of breathing in John’s narrative. The idea of God’s life-giving breath appears also in the Ezekiel tradition. Here, not only does the reference to breath underline its role in terms of life-giving power but in the context in which the text occurs, God is also presented as the source of all life. The reference to God as the source of life occurs in chapter 37:5-6:

τάδε λέγει κύριος τοῖς ὀστέοις τούτοις ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ φέρω εἰς ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ζωῆς .
καὶ δώσω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς νεῦρα καὶ ἀνάξω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς σάρκα καὶ ἐκτενῶ ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς δέρμα καὶ δώσω πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ ζήσεσθε καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος.

“The Lord Yahweh says this to these bones:
I am now going to make breath enter you,
and you will live. I shall put sinews on you,
I shall make flesh grow on you, I shall cover
you with skin and give you breath, and you
will live; and you will know that I am
Yahweh”.

In verse 9, the work of the breath of God is once more “metaphored” in terms of life-giving. The reader is clearly reminded that the Son of man is asked to prophecy to the “wind breath-Spirit” to come and breathe on the dry bones, so that they will live again:

⁸² This translation and many others which will follow in this study, unless otherwise indicated, are mostly taken from the New Jerusalem Bible in *Bible works* 6.

καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με προφήτευσον υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου
προφήτευσον ἐπὶ τὸ πνεῦμα
καὶ εἰπὸν τῷ πνεύματι τάδε λέγει κύριος ἐκ
τῶν τεσσάρων πνευμάτων ἔλθε
καὶ ἐμφύσησον εἰς τοὺς νεκροὺς τούτους καὶ
ζησάτωσαν .

“He said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath;
prophecy son of man.

Say to the breath, “The Lord Yahweh says this:
Come from the four winds, breath;
breathe on these dead, so that they come to
life”.

In verse 14, Ezekiel reports the Lord’s promise:

καὶ δώσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς
καὶ ζήσεσθε
καὶ θήσομαι ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ὑμῶν
καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ κύριος λελάληκα
καὶ ποιήσω λέγει κύριος.

“And I will put my spirit in you,
and you shall revive,
and I will resettle you on your own soil.
Then you will know that I, Yahweh, have
spoken and done this-declares the Lord
Yahweh”.

The association of “breath/spirit” with creation, life-giving, renewal or restoration is also found in the Isaiah tradition. For example Isaiah 44:3-6 reads:

ὅτι ἐγὼ δώσω ὕδωρ ἐν δίψει τοῖς
πορευομένοις ἐν ἀνύδρῳ ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμά
μου ἐπὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὰς εὐλογίας μου
ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα σου . καὶ ἀνατελοῦσιν ὡσεὶ
χόρτος ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος καὶ ὡς ἰτέα ἐπὶ
παρὰ ὕδωρ. οὗτος ἐρεῖ τοῦ θεοῦ εἶμι καὶ
οὗτος βοήσεται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰακωβ καὶ
ἕτερος ἐπιγράψει τοῦ θεοῦ εἶμι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι
Ἰσραηλ . οὕτως λέγει ὁ θεὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ
Ἰσραηλ ὁ ῥυσάμενος αὐτὸν θεὸς σαβαωθ ἐγὼ
πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ μετὰ ταῦτα πλὴν ἐμοῦ οὐκ
ἔστιν θεός

For I shall pour out water on the thirsty soil and
streams on the dry ground. I shall pour out my
spirit on your descendants, my blessing on you
offspring, and they will spring up among the
grass, like willows on the banks of stream. One
person will say, ‘I belong to Yahweh, another
will call himself by Jacob’s name. On his hand
another will write ‘Yahweh’s and be surnamed
‘Israel’. Thus says Yahweh, Israel’s king,
Yahweh Sabaoth, his redeemer: I am the last;
there is no God except me

Reference to the life-giving function of the breath of God is equally found in Isaiah 57:16:

“οὐκ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐκδικήσω ὑμᾶς οὐδὲ διὰ
παντὸς ὀργισθήσομαι ὑμῖν πνεῦμα γὰρ παρ’
ἐμοῦ ἐξελεύσεται καὶ πνοὴν πᾶσαν ἐγὼ
ἐποίησα”.

“I will not take vengeance on you forever,
neither will I be always angry with you: for my
Spirit shall go forth from me, and I have created
all breath”.

Likewise, in Job the breath of God is the source of life. This is clearly stated in Job 33:4 where one may read: “πνεῦμα θεῶν τὸ ποιήσάν με πνοή δὲ παντοκράτορος ἡ διδάσκουσά με”. (“The Divine Spirit is that which formed me, and the breath of the Almighty that which teaches me”.)

A few other texts of Second Temple Judaism also underline the life-giving function of the breath of God, such as *Jubilees* 1:20-25 and in *Joseph and Aseneth* 8:9-11. As Thompson (2001:168) comments: “Here the function of God’s Spirit is depicted in terms of giving new life and renewal, so that Aseneth may be numbered among the chosen people of God and thus pass from darkness to light, error to truth, death to life”:

Lord God of my father Israel the Most High, the Powerful One of Jacob, who gave life to all (things) and called (them) from the darkness to light, and from error to the truth, and from the death to the life, you, Lord, bless this virgin, and renew her by your spirit, and form her alive again by your life, and let her eat your bread of life, and drink your cup of blessing, and number her among your people that you have chosen before all (things) came into being, and let her enter your rest which you have prepared for your chosen ones and live in your eternal life for ever (and) ever.

There are striking similarities between this prayer and some of the themes in John’s Gospel. The dominant portrayal of the work of breath-Spirit is described in terms of life-giving, so that Aseneth becomes one of the people of God. This echoes, for instance the theme of birth in John’s narrative (3:3, 5-6) and in Wisdom (15:11).

Old Testament texts and stories as well as some later Jewish texts explored previously are the OT background to the narrative of John 20:22. Although this list of the texts is not exhaustive, it is difficult to doubt that these texts and stories underpin John 20:22, where it is reported that Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit into his disciples. All these texts and stories of the Old Testament tradition are parallel to John 20:22 showing that the Johannine narrative draws on the creation account of Genesis and the recreation and restoration prophecy in Ezekiel tradition. Through the breathing metaphor, in both texts, God is the source of all life and the life-giver. His work consists of making life possible in the context of absence of life. The background for the use of such a life metaphor could have tempted some of the audience to lose hope in the possibility of

life because of the crisis they were facing. In this situation God Himself is both life and life-giver⁸³.

So, the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 evokes both the account of creation in the Genesis and the Ezekiel tradition. It presents God as the source of all life through His Son Jesus and the Spirit. This metaphor is now transferred to Jesus to explain the *telos* of his action, to be examined in the next section. Summarizing the metaphor, it is God who breathes and gives life in the Old Testament tradition (Genesis 2:7), whereas in the Johannine narrative, Jesus Himself breathes and becomes the source of new life (John 20:22). It can be argued that Jesus functions as life and life-giver; this is made clear in Jesus' many "I am" statements⁸⁴. Thompson (2001:87) argues that "in several of these statements Jesus apparently asserts not that he offers or mediates God's life but rather that in some way he is the source of life, the eternal "I am". By way of illustration we may refer to statements such as: "I am the bread of life" and "I am the living bread" in chapter 6. Some more statements are also found in the tabernacle discourses of chapters 7-10 where we read, "I am the light of the world", "I am the good shepherd who gives life to the sheep" (10:11;14), "I am the resurrection and life" (11:25). Finally, attention might be paid to "I am the way, truth and life" (14:6).

4.3 The literary context of John 20:22

A wide range of theories and methods resulting in different conclusions have been applied for the interpretation of John 20:22. In the exegesis, a Johannine intertextual⁸⁵ reading of John 20:22 to disclose the hidden meanings lying behind the breathing metaphor is undertaken. The focus is on the relationship of this verse to other texts from the Gospel of John and two levels of approach are used. The first is the immediate context of John 20:22, so it must answer questions such as: how do the verses

⁸³ I shall assume for the purpose of this study that the socio-historical background in which both the account of creation in Genesis and Ezekiel is the context of crisis which leads the writers to contemplate God as the one making life possible in a context of chaos, destruction and death to reactivate hope and faith in God. This view is drawn from Carroll (1987:246-247) who argues that the purpose of the creation account is that, "the 'author' wished to encourage a people who had suffered grievously and, perhaps were still demoralized as a result of captivity".

⁸⁴ It is reasonable to cite Ball (1996) as a recent work regarding the issue of the "I am" sayings in John's Gospel. Attention may be also paid to the work by Thompson (2001:87-98).

⁸⁵ A good summary on intertextuality is given by Nielsen (1999:69-70), who argues convincingly that: "In recent exegetical research the concept of intertextuality has played an increasingly important role. The main idea is that no text has come into being or is ever heard as an independent unit; it is always part of a network of texts. In principle such networks are endless. Each and every text has arisen out of a network of texts, which the author deliberately draws on, and indeed wishes the reader to notice. Yet at the same time, the text is also part of other networks of which the author is not aware when he or she was writing. For texts acquire their own history; they are used and reused, recycled into new situation, and new listeners associated them with other texts". More on intertextuality may be found, for example, in Draisma (1989), Nielsen (1990:89-95) and Zumstein (2008:121-135).

immediately preceding John 20:22 prepare for it and how does John 20:22 prepare for the verses which immediately follow. The second level involves the Gospel as a whole. The double master question here is: how does John 20:22 fit in the whole narrative of John's Gospel and how does the whole Gospel of John resonate in John 20:22?

Some of the themes in the previous chapters of John's Gospel resound in John 20:22. In this exegesis, the approach will be from the meaning of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 arising from the interplay between the narrative of John and the active reader. By active reader is understood the real reader through identification with the implied reader⁸⁶ who converses with John's narrative to reach the message he wants to convey in the Gospel.

4.3.1. The more immediate literary context of John 20:22

An idea of the limits of the exegesis to be undertaken is expressed in a number of questions. Some of these questions are: how do the verses immediately preceding John 20:22 prepare for it and how does John 20:22 prepare for the verses which immediately follow; and what is the literary unit of which this verse forms a part? Chapter 20⁸⁷ of John's Gospel is an account of the resurrection appearances of Jesus to his disciples. A series of encounters between Jesus and the disciples is narrated resulting in faith in the risen Jesus (Whitacre 1999:470).

The chapter ends with a statement clarifying the purpose of the whole Gospel of John (vv.30-31). According to Stibbe (1993:198-206), thematically speaking, chapter 20 of John's Gospel is the climax of John's narrative. It reintroduces and echoes issues and themes mentioned in the previous chapters but mostly in the Prologue. This view is shared by Zumstein (2007: 266-268) who argues that chapter 20 of John evokes themes from the Farewell discourses:

The reader of the Gospel of John, attentive to the organization of narrative time, discovers that the Easter cycle is not an adjunct element of the Johannine story, but on the contrary is the fulfilment of a series of prolepses made in the Farewell discourses. To put it differently, in the

⁸⁶ The Pontifical Biblical Commission (1994:41) defines the implied reader as "the reader which the text presupposes and in effect creates, the one who is capable of performing the mental and affective operations necessary for entering into the narrative world of the text and responding to it in the way envisaged by the real author through the instrumentality of the implied author". The same document describes the implied author as "the image of the author which the text progressively creates in the course of the reading (with his or her own culture, character, inclinations, faith, etc.). For more insights see Kieffer (1999:47-65).

⁸⁷ On the study on Chapter 20 of John's Gospel, see Stibbe (1993:198-206), Whitacre (1999:470- 488), Zumstein (2007:265-297).

Farewell discourses, the Johannine Christ announces his Pascal return and formulates its meaning. Chapter 20 does fulfil in the history of the characters what the Farewell discourses announced on the eve of the passion⁸⁸.

Johannine scholarship has made valuable suggestions concerning the structure of Chapter 20 of John's Gospel (Moloney 1998:516). However, for conciseness, this study adopts the following 'literary shape'⁸⁹ suggested by Stibbe (1993:200):

- A¹ 1-2 The prologue
- B¹ 3-10 The two disciples race to the tomb
- B² 11-18 Mary Magdalene looks into the tomb
- C¹ 19-23 The disciples meet the risen Jesus
- C² 24-29 Thomas meets the risen Jesus
- A² 30-31 The epilogue

When following Stibbe's literary shape of chapter 20, it appears that John 20 is composed of two main sub-sections (B¹, B² and C¹, C²), divided into two pairs of units (B¹, B² and C¹, C²) describing how the risen Jesus meets with his disciples. The first pair of units describes events at the tomb of Jesus. This pair of units is composed of vv.3-10 and 11-18. The second pair of units which consists of vv.19-23 and 24-29 depicts the appearances of Jesus in the house where the disciples are hiding for fear of the Jews (v.19). It is to this particular second pair of units that John 20:22 belongs.

It would appear that the immediate context of John 20:22 is the first appearance of Jesus to the disciples (19-23). Of particular importance here is the breathing of Jesus on the disciples and the gift of the Holy Spirit (20:22). In many ways, it makes sense on literary grounds to argue for John 20:22 as the focal point of the narrative. In support of this view are Stibbe (1993:198-199), Whitacre (1999:481) and Neyrey (2007:329). These scholars argue that this verse "reintroduces" and "resonates" themes present in previous chapters of John's Gospel. For example, as Stibbe (1993:198-199) demonstrates, there is parallelism between John 1:19-28 and John 20:19, 26; John 1:29-

⁸⁸ The original quotations in French are: "Le lecteur de l'Évangile de Jn, attentive à l'organisation du temps du récit, découvre que le cycle pascal n'est pas un élément adjacent du récit joh, mais au contraire l'accomplissement d'une série de prolepses formulées dans les discours d'adieu. En d'autres termes, dans les discours d'adieu, le Christ joh annonce sa venue Pascale et en formule le sens. Le chapitre 20 fait advenir dans l'histoire des personnages ce que les discours d'adieu annonçaient la veille de la croix".

⁸⁹ I borrow this expression from Moloney (1998:517).

34 and John 20:22; John 1:38 and John 20:14 and 20:16, to cite a few cases. Secondly, the breathing of Jesus and the impartation of the Holy Spirit occur in the context of resurrection. In the Christian tradition, the resurrection is interpreted as Jesus victory over the forces of chaos, destruction and death. This recalls the metaphorical understanding of the first creation scene, also underlining God's fight against the forces of chaos, destruction and death⁹⁰ to make life possible. Beasley-Murray (1987:31) is cited here as arguing that:

In v.22 the symbolic action primarily represents the impartation of life that the Holy Spirit gives in the new age, brought about through Christ's exaltation in death and resurrection. New age and new creation are complementary ideas in eschatological contexts. Strictly speaking, one should not view this as the beginning of new creation but rather as the beginning of the incorporation of man into that new creation which came into being in the Christ by incarnation, death, and resurrection, and is actualized in man by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 5:17).

Schematically, the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22 is preceded immediately by the first appearance of the Risen Jesus to his disciples, who had locked their doors (v.19); the shalom greetings; Jesus' reference to his Father's commission; and the great commission of the disciples such as in Matthew 28: "as the Father has sent me, so do I send you" (v.21). The event was happening "on the evening of that first day of the week"⁹¹ (v.19); in a place where the doors were locked,⁹² probably in Jerusalem⁹³

⁹⁰ This perspective of creation as a divine struggle against the forces of chaos, destruction and death is found in Rosenberg (1996:209-210). In this work Rosenberg argues that the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 (or 2:4a) is a demythologized version of the origin of the cosmos found in the poetic accounts in the ancient Near East (the *Ugaritic Baal* epic and *Babylonian Enuma Elish*). Even though Rosenberg (:210) is reluctant to argue directly that creation is the result of war between God and the forces of chaos, this can be inferred in what is hidden in statements such as: "Divine struggle with waters, victory over chaos, and cosmogonic promulgation of law/wisdom are found throughout biblical poetry (cf. Exod 15; Isa 40-42; 45; Heb 3:8; Pss 18; 19; 24; 29; 33; 68; 93; 95; 104; Prov 8:22-23; Job 38-41), and are closely associated with God's saving actions on behalf of Israel and its leaders." More details may be found in this work referred to in the bibliography and in our chapter on the Theology of creation in John's Gospel.

⁹¹ The mention of this time may suggest that an evocation of the OT concept of the day of the Lord, is sometimes referred to as "that day". Brown (1966:1019-20) sees here the Christian tradition of celebrating the Eucharist on Sunday influencing John when he was writing his Gospel.

⁹² There are many possible interpretations concerning this reference to the locked doors. Brown's (1966:1020) comments on this might be cited here: "Does the evangelist want us to think that the locked doors were to serve as a barrier to the possible entrance of police sent by the Jewish authorities to arrest the disciples? Or is it a question of the concealment of the disciples' whereabouts and an attempt to avoid public notice? Despite the explicit reason that John gives for the locking of the doors (i.e., the fear of the Jews), many scholars see another motive behind this description, namely, that John wants us to think that Jesus' body could pass through closed doors." It is assumed that such an interpretation receives more support if it is addressed in the light of the synagogue debate resulting in the exclusion of the community of John. With this in mind, it is also assumed that most probably, John's reference to the Risen Jesus, who passes through closed doors, is a way of confirming Jesus' divine origin. Thus, John is trying to argue that as God is present everywhere; Jesus does the same since his resurrection. It may also be a reference to the hand of God which wrote on the wall.

⁹³ Following Brown (1966:1020), it is possible that "the place where they were" refers to Jerusalem where the Jews would threaten the disciples. Lucan's parallel (24:33) makes it a little bit clearer that John refers to Jerusalem.

(v.19). It is on Sunday.⁹⁴ It would be better before concluding this discussion on what comes before John 20:22 to emphasize two particular matters. In the first appearance of Jesus to the disciples, Jesus' gesture of breathing on them and the gift of the Holy Spirit happened in the absence of Thomas (v.24). Secondly, Jesus sends the disciples without clarifying the nature of their mission (v.21), while in the Synoptics he does clarify it. All these constitute gaps in the narrative of John and raise questions such as: does Jesus restrict His breathing, the impartation of the Holy Spirit and the sending to this particular group of the disciples locked in the house for fear of the Jews? What exactly is the meaning of the breathing of Jesus to which John refers in the context of resurrection and the fear of disciples for the Jews?

To these questions and many others, John tries to give answers in what follows immediately after John 20:22. The nature of the mission is clarified (v.23) as well as the nature of sins to be forgiven (v.25). The breathing of Jesus is directly followed by the power to forgive sins and "the charge to hold fast the forgiven (believers) in ecclesial communion" (v.23)⁹⁵, the example of the nature of the sins to forgive (v.25)⁹⁶,

⁹⁴ The mention of the resurrection on the day of Jewish Passover binds this scene to the general context of Creation, which has served as a background for interpreting the breathing of Jesus.

⁹⁵ It is worth to mention that the exegesis of v.23 has been a much disputed issue in the Johannine scholarship for centuries, between Catholics and Protestants. The significance of notions such as "disciples" to whom Jesus gave the mission to forgive and hold sins, the link of the forgiveness of sins to the notion of Baptism and penance and the notion of sin and sins, Keener (2003) and Schneiders (2006; 2011) provide good summaries to identify the anachronistic character of some interpretations of v.23, for instance, as far as the sacramental interpretations of John 20:23 are concerned. Keener (2003:1206) argues that "it is anachronistic to read into this passage the later Catholic doctrine of penance of others' views about admission to baptism; it is likewise anachronistic to read into it Protestant polemic against the Catholic interpretation of the passage. Read on its own terms, the passage makes good sense as it stands". Schneiders (2006:353-355) recent insights relating to the interpretation and translation of v.23 challenge the traditional translation of *κρατέω* as "retain" in relation to sins to be forgiven. Convincingly Schneiders argues that "if one translates the verb according to its normal meaning, namely, 'holdfast' or 'take hold of, and treats *τινων* in the second member as an objective genitive, which this verb would normally take (see, e.g., Matt 9:25 and Heb 4.14), the verse would read, 'Anyone whom you hold fast is held fast'. In other words, what is held is not sins but people. I would suggest that, if this verse is interpreted not as a parallel of Matt 18.8 but in the context of Johannine theology and spirituality, this is precisely what the text does mean... 'Anyone whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven to them and those [the forgiven] whom you hold fast [in the communion of the church] are held fast' ". Drawing from that Schneiders (2006:352) stresses that the interpretation of John 20:23, which links the verse to the matter of penance "was dogmatically defined by the Council of Trent in 1551" (see footnote 28). In this paper I follow Schneiders' translation.

⁹⁶ It is surprising to notice that in v.23 Jesus emphasizes that the mission of the disciples consists mainly of the forgiveness of sins but the nature of sins is not clarified. Thomas' refusal of the Good News of the resurrection seems to be a kind of case study of sins to be forgiven and retained. This assumption is made because Whitacre (1999:482) states: "the ultimate sin for which one needs forgiveness is the rejection of Jesus (9:41; 15:22-24; 16:9)". Under the category of works that may also illuminate this issue is Neyrey (2007:328-329), whose conclusions suggest that v.25 may be taken as an example of sins to be retained and forgiven. After briefly discussing different references to sins in John's Gospel, Neyrey points out seven major examples of sins to which John's Gospel refers, namely: unbelievers (3:18; 8:24), liars and murderers (8:32), hypocrites (9:41), dropouts (6:60-65), judging unjustly, lack of loyalty (18:25-27) and cowards (9:22; 12:42) . Drawing from Whitacre and Neyrey we assume that v.25 might be taken as an example of sins to be forgiven and retained. Thomas' sins consist of dropping out of the community and rejection of the Gospel. He "is eventually forgiven by virtue of Jesus 'appearance to him and his continued association with the disciples (21:2)" (Neyrey: 329).

the appearance to Thomas⁹⁷ (v.27) and his confession of faith “My Lord and My God” (v.28). These insights make sense of the argument that the breathing of Jesus to which John refers, is addressed in the context of the synagogal crisis⁹⁸, in which the Gospel was written (9:22). A clue to this conclusion is found in John’s emphasis on the fact that the disciples were confined for fear of the Jews (v.19).

4.3.2 Jn 20:22 within the context of the whole Gospel.

The broader literary context of John 20:22 is the resurrection narrative starting at the end of chapter 19:38 and continuing in chapter 20:31 (Ridderbos 1997:644) because this verse appears in the section relating the first appearance of Jesus to the disciples (John 20:19-23). Stibbe (1993:198) is cited as explaining that “the last sentence of John 19 places the reader at the new tomb in the garden where Jesus is buried. The first sentence of John 20 brings us to the same tomb. In John 19 the tomb is occupied. In John 20, we shall see that the same tomb is empty” and “in the immediate context, John 20 takes us from the tomb as a place of despair to the tomb as a place of discovery”. Jesus breathes on the disciples in the context of resurrection. His breathing is depicted as the first thing he did immediately after the resurrection when He met his disciples. The breathing of Jesus on the disciples is a metaphorical construct in which today’s readers of John’s Gospel are practically lost if it is not addressed in the context of the whole Gospel of John.

When engaging with John 20:22, readers ask what the gesture of Jesus breathing on his disciples could mean. The breathing of Jesus has a clear meaning when read in relation to Chapter One⁹⁹. For example, in the Prologue John wrote explicitly that the Word comes from the mouth of God (Jn 1:1). In this section, John presents Jesus in his pre-existent life. This facilitates an understanding of his identity and the kind of life that comes from God through the Logos. Commenting on the Prologue, Zumstein (2008:123) argues that the Prologue of John’s Gospel serves as the guide to the reading

⁹⁷ There is a question about the reception of the Holy Spirit by Thomas when Jesus appears while Thomas was absent from the group of the disciples. Numerous answers were suggested to this issue. However, the patristic commentary argues that Thomas did receive the Holy Spirit just as Eldad and Medad received when they were absent from the seventy elders in the Old Testament. For more details, see Elowsky (2007:366-367).

⁹⁸ In this study we have assumed with Dunn (1999:305) that John’s Gospel was written in the context of the synagogue crisis. According to Dunn this crisis goes beyond a simple Jesus Messiah claim. The Messiah claim is a synthesis of a much deeper theological debate, that of the identity of Jesus. For more details see comments on the work by Dunn in chapter II of this study.

⁹⁹ Most commentators argue for an *inclusion* between John 1 and John 20 because some of the themes introduced in John 1 found their fulfilment in John 20. For details see, for example, Schneiders (2011:26).

of John's narrative. The Prologue seems to protect the text of John against non-understanding or false interpretation. Its function is to stake out the hermeneutical framework in which the narrative of John should be read.

The reference to the beginning of the Prologue of John's Gospel recalls the creation scene in Genesis and the theme of life coming from God. These two fundamental motives, namely, creation and life will run through the narrative of John. For instance, John 1:4 reads that, "ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων." ("What has come into being in him was life, life that was the light of men"). And also John 1:29 echoes the motives of creation and life in the "revelation formula" of the Baptist: "Τῇ ἐπαύριον βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει· Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἀίρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου." ("The next day, he saw Jesus coming towards him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world'")¹⁰⁰. The motif of life continues in chapter 3:3-8, where the discussion is about life from above; here it is stated that believing in Jesus gives life (v.16). Further in the narrative, John shows that the faith of the living brings life to those who are dead, as in the story of the resurrection of Lazarus (11:25-26). So, creation and life can be also seen as underpinning Jesus' different activities, such as: feeding (6:34-40), teaching (7:17-19), healing (9) and breathing (20:22).

It may be argued that John's reference to Jesus' breathing in John 20:22 seems to have been used to serve as a vehicle of Johannine theological reflection on God's unceasing activity of making life possible through Jesus (5:17). As Brown (1966:1037) puts it, in John 20:22 one may argue convincingly that, "John is proclaiming that, just as in the first creation God breathed a living spirit into man, so now in the moment of the new creation Jesus breathes his own Holy Spirit into the disciples, giving them eternal life". Turning from the connection of Jesus' breathing with the creation scene to the link of John 19:30 with John 20:22, this relationship may be argued on the basis that both texts refer to *πνεῦμα*. In John 20:22 Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit, while in chapter 19:30 John reports that, after taking the wine and saying 'it is finished', Jesus breathed his last (ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβεν τὸ ὄξος [ὄ] Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· τετέλεσται, καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν

¹⁰⁰ This point is raised by Schneiders (2011:4; 15-29), who describes John's Gospel as "a cosmic drama acted out in history rather than as a historical event with cosmic implications". As she explains, the cosmic drama is a struggle to the death between God's love for the world and the Devil (6:70; 8:44; 13:2) whose project, the alienation of all creation from God provoked in the beginning tends to the destruction of Jesus. Satan was defeated by Jesus whom the Baptist designates as the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world".

παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα). If the assumption that these two texts are related is correct, it would seem that their link is made possible by τετέλεσται . One interpretation of this verb suggests that in τετέλεσται the Father's salvation work has reached its consummation with Jesus' death in the cross (Morris 1995:720; Moloney 1998:504, 508).

Thus, it can be argued that, salvation and new creation are interrelated because for John τετέλεσται is a cry of victory, not a cry of defeat (Suggit 2003: 127). It is the acknowledgment of the triumph that Jesus has accomplished the salvation work that he came to do (4:34; 5:36; 17:4). In other words, τετέλεσται may suggest fulfilment and perfection of the task of creation that the Father entrusted to Jesus. Neyrey (2007:310-311) argues, first of all that τετέλεσται “suggests a victory cry of faithfulness to his task and perfection in its performance (13:1)”. Drawing from that Neyrey assumes that the evangelist understands: “It is finished” as being addressed to God. It is on this basis that he concludes that it functions like “I thirst” as a “self-focused address to God” (:310). There is a link between the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 and a number of themes throughout John's Gospel. These are: Logos, Work of God, Knowledge, Light, Truth, Messiah, and Good Shepherd, giving his life as a ransom, Holy Spirit, Life, lamb, wine, peace and joy.

4.3.3 Summary of the intratextual analysis of John 20:22

In this verse, John reports that on the evening of the resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples. After giving them the commission, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the holy spirit.” The breathing on them is generally seen as referring to Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:9-10 (Pretlove 2005:93). If breathing in John 20:22 is taken as John's re-use of the OT tradition about God's communication of natural life at the creation, the problem here would be: to what is John referring when he describes Jesus doing what God did at the first creation? The agreed exegesis of John 20:22 interprets the breathing of Jesus as expressing the communication of the new, spiritual life of recreated humanity (Zumstein 2010:286). The reference to breathing as an expression of God's

life giving action occurs 95 times in the Bible.¹⁰¹ This testifies how important the breathing imagery is in biblical tradition and particularly in John's Gospel.

4.4 The interpretation of John 20:22 in the history of Johannine exegesis

The framework used in this exegesis of John 20:22 discloses the theological significance of John 20:22 and is an exploration of the different ways in which this verse has been interpreted in the history of the Johannine exegesis. This historical survey is not exhaustive but rather a summary and introduction to issues raised by those theories and methods in relation to John 20:22 and the framework of the exegesis that follows.

In the history of the exegesis of the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22, several theories have been expounded. First, there is a strong tendency to interpret this verse in the light of Acts 2.¹⁰² Scholars¹⁰³ dealing with this particular approach try to clarify the relationship between John's accounts of the bestowing of the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 and the Pentecost event reported in the Acts of the Apostles (2, 1-13). The works by Wojciechowski (1987:289-291) and Hatina (1993:197-219) might be cited here since they argue that John 20:22 refers both to the gift of the Spirit and the speech ability that is linked to it. This interpretation was influenced by the parallel reading of John 20:22 and the targumic and rabbinic literature commenting on Genesis 2:7. Second, there are approaches attempting to free John 20:22 from the traditional exegesis emphasizing the

¹⁰¹ Cfr. Mark 7:34; Acts 2:2; 9:1; 17:25; 2 Cor 1:17; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 11:11; 13:15; Gen 1:30; 2:7; 6:17; 7:15; 7:22; Exod 15:8; 15:10; 2 Sam 22:16; 1 Kgs 17:17; 1 Kgs 19:12; Job 3:11; Job 4:9; Job 4:15; Job 7:7; Job 7:16; Job 9:18; Job 10:18; Job 11:20; Job 12:10; Job 13:19; Job 14:10; Job 15:30; Job 17:1; Job 19:17; Job 26:4; Job 26:13; Job 27:3; Job 32:18; Job 33:14; Job 36:12; Job 37:10; Job 39:20; Job 41:21; Ps 18:15; Ps 39:5; Ps 39:11; Ps 62:9; Ps 78:33; Ps 78:39; Ps 90:9; Ps 94:11; Ps 104:29; Ps 135:15; Ps 144:4; Ps 146:2; Ps 146:4; Ps 150:6; Prov 20:27; Prov 21:6; Prov 26:21; Qoh 3:19; Qoh 3:21; Wis 7:8; Isa 2:22; Isa 11:4; Isa 25:4; Isa 30:28; Isa 30:33; Isa 34:16; Isa 40:7; Isa 42:5; Isa 57:13; Isa 57:16; Isa 59:19; Jer 4:31; Jer 10:14; Jer 15:9; Jer 38:16; Jer 51:17; Lam 1:19; Lam 4:20; Ezek 22:20; Ezek 37:5; Ezek 37:6; Ezek 37:8; Ezek 37:9; Ezek 37:10; Dan 5:23; Dan 10:17; Hos 13:15; Hab 2:19; Hag 1:9; Mal 1:13. The details on this information are available from <http://bibletab.com/breath.htm>. [Accessed 3 June 2010].

¹⁰² Pretlove (2005:93-101) argues that there are eight methods to interpret this relationship between John and Acts: "the first is offered by those who say that John 20:22 did not happen. Second, there are those who say that John 20:22 is historically accurate, but nothing happened to the disciples when Jesus breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. It was an enacted prophecy which was fulfilled fifty days later. Third, some see John 20:22 as the promised gift of the Spirit, but then go on to say that Acts 2:1-4 is not historical. Fourth, others see Acts 2 as merely one event in the evangelism of the early Church. A fifth view sees the apostles alone being given the Spirit in John 20, with others waiting fifty days. Sixth, if John 20:22 is not the fundamental giving of the promised Holy Spirit, it may be seen as a portion of the imparting of a different ministry of the Spirit. Seven, a number of authors identify it with the new birth. Finally, John 20:22 is viewed as an indwelling and Acts 2 as a filling." According to Pretlove, what is clear in this variety of interpretations is that there is no consensus among scholars on this issue.

¹⁰³ According to Van Rossum (1991:150) representative of this approach is Archimandrite Cassien (Bésobrasoff) (1939). The main argument of his hypothesis is that John 20:22 is to be seen as "dogmatic interpretation of the descent of the Holy Spirit and as "the Johannine account of Pentecost". For the purpose of this study, this issue will not be explored in detail.

Johannine Pentecost theory in John 20:22. Of interest is Brown's (1970:1038) summary of the consensus of modern scholars: "it is a bad methodology to harmonize John and Acts by assuming that one treats an earlier giving of the Spirit and the other of a later giving." The preference to interpret John 20:22 in its own right is motivated by the assumption that John 20:22 refers to Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37: 9-10. At the heart of this assertion is the view that these last two texts deal with the issue of God's creation activity. If it is assumed that John 20:22 is the re-use of Genesis 2:7, then it seems that John refers to a religious story having a strong influence on the memory of his community to persuade them and to influence their behaviour. A third conceivable approach to John 20:22 that is more challenging reads the breathing of Jesus in the light of the Indian tradition expressed in the Upanishad where the "breathing on" symbolizes the empowerment of a successor in the case of the death of the chief (Derrett 1999:271-286)¹⁰⁴.

So, after having very briefly examined the different ways in which John 20:22 has been interpreted in the history of Johannine exegesis, it seems important that attention may be given now to the particular framework that is used in this particular exegesis of John 20:22 to disclose the meaning that John imparted to the breathing of Jesus and the related words.

4.5 The exegetical framework

In the analysis of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22, there is one crucial factor, namely that John's Gospel was written in the context of a synagogue crisis. John's metaphor usage is meant to respond to this particular issue to mirror that social context. What this means practically is that any study seeking to assess the impact of the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22 is mandated to address the verse in the light of the synagogue crisis and Roman challenges in response to which the Gospel was written.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ One of the biggest questions arising from this cross-cultural approach is that, it seems very difficult to demonstrate how much John's Gospel is influenced by Indian cultural traditions. If we note the extent to which this approach will go in proving how much Indian is John's Gospel, then it seems very difficult to conclude how Jewish the narrative of John is. The more balanced view would be that, although John's Gospel is a post resurrection writing reusing the Jewish tradition to prove the Messiah claim of Jesus (20:30-31), the influence of the ambient cultures in John's narrative strategy cannot be denied. The Jewish background of John's Gospel does not invalidate the hypothesis that other cultures may have influenced John while he was writing his Gospel.

¹⁰⁵ To express this in such a way serves to advance the opinion that "John was influenced by multiple cares and concerns when he published his Gospel" (Cassidy 1992:1). As Cassidy points it out again "within scholarly circles John's Gospel has been regarded as responding to Hellenistic culture, to Gnosticism, and to the rupture between Judaism and Christianity". Drawing from that Cassidy assumes that in a larger view the message within the Gospel

This suggests that John's reference to Jesus' breathing in John 20:22 is a "theological construct." This assumption is supported by the recent theory on the garden symbolism developed by Zimmermann (2008:221-235).

This theory seems to be a particular approach for interpreting John 20:22 in a way that respects its 'canonical shape'. Zimmermann (2008:233-234) attempts to show that the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22 refers to the new creation scene. Zimmermann establishes the garden symbolism, firstly in his *Christologie der Bilder* (2004); more recently, it was developed and illustrated in *Symbolic communication between John and his reader* (2008). In these different works, Zimmermann (2008:226-227) argues that the motif of garden and gardener permeates chapters 18, 19 and 20 of John's Gospel. Zimmermann writes that after the farewell discourses, Jesus went to a garden where he would not only be arrested but also would identify himself by using three *ego eimi* sayings (John 18:5, 6, 8) (:226). Zimmermann reminds us also that the garden motif appears again after the resurrection (:227) because Jesus' tomb is located in a garden near the site of crucifixion (John 19:41). Zimmermann further adds that the first narrative of the resurrection also appears in the garden. It is in the garden that Mary Magdalene (John 20:1) takes the risen Lord as a gardener before he calls her by name. Quoting Dietzfelbinger, Zimmermann comments that because of the garden location, Mary sees in the unknown person, the gardener belonging to the garden (:227).

Garden symbolism is so central for Zimmermann (2008:228) because within the Jewish tradition, the garden symbolism recalls "Eden", the garden of Paradise described in Genesis 2-3. God planted it himself (Genesis 2:8) and as a gardener cultivated it (Genesis 2:9). It refers also to the temple as was the case in Early Judaism¹⁰⁶ (:229). Also, the garden symbolism carries the Jewish eschatological beliefs regarding the return of the garden at the end of time (:229). Essential to the eschatological paradise are the removal of death and the giving of life when the Messiah comes (:229-230). Briefly, it can be argued that the garden symbolism is significant to Zimmermann because it refers to the creation scene of the beginning and to the new creation, to happen at the coming of the Messiah. The main idea of this theory is that the narrative of John might be read in the light of the garden symbolism, referring to the creation

serves to encourage Christians facing "significant political challenges and pressures" from the Roman Empire as a consequence of their loyalty to Jesus.

¹⁰⁶ See Jub 3:12; 4:26; 8: 19.

scene in Jewish tradition. John reminds the reader that Jesus was arrested, buried, and seen for the first time by Mary Magdalene in a garden. Again the presence of the angels and the reference to the gardener and to other motifs related to the creation scene account in Genesis give specific reason to argue that the whole garden story might be assumed as the narrative framework of John's Gospel.

The reference to Jesus breathing in John 20:22 might be taken as John's meditation on God as the one making life possible in the context of crisis, as explored in earlier chapters. For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that John 20 might be taken as the broader narrative context. Also, it is assumed that chapter 20 of John's Gospel provides the "theological shape" within which John's narrative strategy works in verse 22. This is so because of its influential reference to the creation narrative of Genesis (Zimmermann 2008:230-235). A third assumption is that by reading John 20:22 in the light of the whole of chapter 20, it can be seen how details fit into the whole, and vice versa. In support of this assumption is the argument that John 20:22 is the fulfilment of series of prolepses announced earlier in the Gospel, as developed in the course of this study (Cassidy 1992:71-72).

Bultmann (1971:689), in his exegesis of this verse, argues persuasively that *ἐμφυσάω* is to be approached in relation to both Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:9¹⁰⁷. This seems to be the basis on which he states that "it is the general idea of the vital force that is in view"¹⁰⁸. Bultmann notices that the procedures relating to the use of breath to transfer power have been studied by anthropologists but he was not influenced by this approach. He remained faithful to the idea that John 20:22 recalls the creation scene, simultaneously narrating the inauguration of the new creation beginning with the resurrection of Jesus.

The Greek verb *ἐμφυσάω* describing the breathing action of Jesus recalls Genesis 2:7 in LXX, where it is stated that, "the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." This time, however, it is Jesus who is breathing the breath-the Spirit of eternal life, life from above, into his disciples. In addition, *ἐμφυσάω* relates to the imagery of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14). In verse 9, the Son of Man is asked to prophesy to the "wind-breath-

¹⁰⁷ Barrett (1955:474) and Brown (1970:1022-1023) have also argued for this view.

¹⁰⁸ The following comments on Bultmann's remarks are drawn from his footnote 6.

Spirit” to come and breathe on the corpses, so that they will live again, whereas in verse 14, the Lord promises, “I will put my spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you in your own land”. Of particular interest in the exegesis of Ezekiel 34:14 are the comments by Pretlove (2005:99-101), many years after Bultmann. Pretlove sees the breathing imagery referring to the regeneration of Israel, prior to the establishment of the messianic kingdom. Pretlove argues that John saw, in what Jesus did for the disciples at this point, a partial and symbolic fulfilment of Ezekiel’s prophecy.

Thus, the main issue in John’s reference to Jesus’ breathing is theological; John wants to respond to those who do not accept the divine origin of Jesus. Note also that in this verse John 20:22, two contexts can be discerned: that of the disciples of Jesus and that of John’s community.¹⁰⁹ The common element in both contexts is a theological crisis. If, for the disciples of Jesus, the issue was the resurrection as a strong sign of the identity of Jesus; if for John’s community, the reference to Jesus’ breathing on the evening of his resurrection, in the context of the synagogue crisis is somehow a way to “legitimate” John’s community in the context of a synagogue crisis. John, by using the breathing metaphor is probably saying to his community that, in Jesus, God’s creation and salvific restoration work is revealed. This is so because Jesus acts like God; He is the one giving life and the Spirit, the life of God that sustains the new community as it did in the context of Ezekiel 37. Relying on that, the community does not have to fear but to remain confident and profess Him, in the footsteps of Thomas as “My God and my Lord” (20:28).

4.6 The theological significance of John 20:22 in John’s narrative

In interpreting the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22 to examine its impact upon John’s audience, it seems important to call attention to the breathing and the simultaneous words of Jesus (λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον) that appear as the highest point of the narrative (Whitacre 1999:481). The previous chapters appear to be preparing the field for this dramatic moment (Brown 1966:1037). From John 1:3-4 to John 20:22 the narrative seems to reflect John’s personal understanding of human dependence on God for

¹⁰⁹ This is a reference to two level drama theory by Martyn (2003:124-143). This theory argues that in John’s Gospel there are two times juxtaposed: the time of Jesus and the time of the community of John. John creates this literary trick to help his reader get into his narrative with the purpose of pushing the reader to give a personal response to the story of Jesus. More on this theory will be developed later on in this study.

existence. The reference to Jesus' breathing (v.22) may be read as reference to this theological commitment. The scene takes place in the evening of the first day of the week, "the feast of unleavened bread was still in progress", as Whitacre points out (:478). On the very day of his resurrection, as John reports, Jesus went to them locked in by their fears, and he said to them: "peace be with you" and "καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον·".

It is only in the gospel of John that the very first thing Jesus did immediately after resurrection from the dead and encountering his followers was to breathe the Holy Spirit on them. To discern the theological meaning of Jesus' breathing, the gesture in connection with the preceding chapters and more specifically with the preceding verses of chapters 19 and 20 has to be read. Again, the breathing of Jesus is directly preceded by the commissioning of the disciples (v.21). Commenting on this commissioning, Brown (1966:1036) suggests that, "the Father's sending of the Son serves both as the model and the ground for the Son's sending of the disciples". "Sending" is the key verb in this narrative and it reflects towards God, the Father who sends Jesus, the Son. The link between sending and breathing is at the core of John's belief that God is the source of all life (1:1-4). It seems relevant to mention that the relationship between sending (v.21) and breathing (v.22) may be discussed on the basis of what Jesus says earlier, "καὶ ὁ θεωρῶν ἐμὲ θεωρεῖ τὸν πέμψαντά με. (whoever sees me, sees the one who sent me) (12:45). This would possibly infer that John wishes his audience to see Jesus as "the metaphor for God"¹¹⁰.

This way of looking at Jesus as the metaphor for God has much in common with what Koester (2008:27-28) sees in the revelatory dynamic of the incarnation of Jesus:

In Jesus' life, death and resurrection, people not only receive information about God, but are granted an encounter with God. And the Prologue prepares readers to see the whole story of Jesus as God's act of communication through his embodied Word []. The word is differentiated from God and yet is identified with God. Where the Word addresses the world, God addresses the world.

¹¹⁰ Under the category of works from which this expression is drawn is Zimmermann (2006:37-38), who states that "Images and symbols that were reserved for God are now transferred to Jesus. It is through the images that Jesus is placed into the domain of God, becomes transparent for God, and becomes an image or likeness of God. Christ, however, is not a likeness in the pejorative sense, but rather for John the images finally enable perception of God himself. The otherwise invisible Father is made known only by the Son as John emphasizes in the last verse of his Prologue (John1:18). This Christological-theological point is similarly reflected in John 12:45 and John14:9. He who sees Jesus, sees the Father."

It seems important, therefore, to hold onto the key insights derived from the narrative of John, namely that Jesus is the incarnate Logos, who makes God known in the world; the Son who makes the Father visible by his incarnation (1:18). We can, therefore, argue persuasively that John's reference to the breathing of Jesus is an invitation to his audience to see how God the Father acts through Jesus, the Son (1:1a ; 12:49; 14:10).

Technically this would infer that the one who is sent implements the power and prerogatives of the one who sent him (14:11). Continuing this discussion on the relationship between "sending" and "breathing", it can be said that John 12:45 is not the only text which makes clear this Johannine theological conviction about Jesus. Some other texts parallel to "sending" and "breathing" possibly exist, such as John 14:7-11. However, the text in John 12:45 expresses clearly that Jesus is the "metaphor of God", the Father; that is, Jesus is the one who makes the Father known in the world.

As far as the relationship between breathing (v.22) and the power to forgive sins and "the charge to hold fast the forgiven in the ecclesial communion" (v.23) are concerned, it may be also possible to connect these two themes. Like the theme of "sending" and "breathing", the power to "forgive sins" and the charge to "hold fast believers in ecclesial communion" both engage with the motif of "sending" already been heard in "καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς"(v.21). It seems relevant that two different Greek verbs ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω are used for "sending". Discussing John's use of these two different verbs, Rengstorf (1964:398-406) suggests that "*apostello* denotes being sent with a commission, with an emphasis on the sender; whereas *pempo* focuses on the sending as such". Contrarily, Barrett (1978:569) argues for the interchangeable use of these two verbs. Whitacre (1999:480) agrees that what is particular in John's use of both verbs is the idea of comparison¹¹¹. It is the Father who sent the Son, who is also the sender of the disciples (John 1:18; 14:9). At this point, if it is taken that the disciples are sent by God through Jesus, then their power to forgive sins might be understood as the continuation of God's power to make life possible in the world through Jesus (1:1-4; 3:16-21; 5:17). Furthermore, Brown (1970:1036) understands the forgiveness of sins as the perpetuation of the salvific mission of Jesus.

¹¹¹ It is worth noting that Schneiders (2006:349-350) provides also fruitful insights and an extensive bibliography on the issue of ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω. Of particular importance in her argument is the fact that she provides the frequencies in which the two verbs occur in John applied both to Jesus or the disciples. Drawing from that Schneiders concludes that "in classical as well as Koine Greek there does seem to be a difference of nuance between the terms and John exploits the philological distinction for theological purposes"(:350).

Similarly, Schneiders (2006:355) argues that the “forgiveness of sins” and the charge “to hold fast believers in the ecclesial communion” are the purpose of Jesus’ mission. As Ridderbos (1997:645) would illustrate: Jesus is “the lamb of God, who takes away the sin” (1:29); the one making possible “the redemption from the slavery of sin” (8:34-36), giving the chance to have “eternal life” (3:16); “calling from darkness to light” (3:19ff); offering “the privilege of becoming children of God” (1:12), as opposed to “remaining under God’s wrath”; “dying in sin” and “sin remaining” (8:21, 24; 9:41). In what sense are the three themes of “breathing”, the power “to forgive sins” and the charge “to hold fast believers in ecclesial communion” connected?

Discussion on breathing and the power to forgive sins and the charge to hold fast people in ecclesial communion make sense if they are conducted in the light of the assumption that, as the breathing of Jesus aims to renew and restore life (Keener 2003:1204), so is the forgiveness of sins (Neyrey 2007:329). It provokes not only renewal and restoration of the community but also introduces the very same community into the fullness of life (Jn 3:16-21; 6:39; 10:10). Thus, the power to forgive sins, theologically speaking may hint at the power to make life possible (5:17; 6:40; 11:25) for the reason that sin is synonym with chaos, destruction and death (3:18,19; 8:24), the absence of life (8:21, 24; 9:41).

Remaining for discussion is “the nature of sins to be forgiven”. Whitacre (1999:482-483), Schneiders (2006:354) and Neyrey (2007:328-329) all provide fruitful insights to this discussion. For instance, Whitacre (1999:482) reasonably states that the “rejection of Jesus” is the biggest sin for which the forgiveness of sins is needed (9:41; 15:22-24; 16:9). Drawing from that, he stresses that “those who repent and believe can be assured of forgiveness and those who refuse to repent can be assured that their sins are not forgiven” (:483). Schneiders (2006:354) makes a similar point with her distinction between the notion of sin (singular) and sins (plural) in John’s Gospel. According to Schneiders, ‘the sin’ in the singular appears in the Baptizer’s description of Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29). This indicates “the refusal to believe in Jesus as the revelation of the Father”. Whereas, ‘sins’ in the plural which appear in John 8:21-24 where it reads that “you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am” refers to “the moral fallout of the foundational ‘sin’ of unbelief.”

Importantly, Neyrey's contribution is of particular importance because of the focus on different passages referring to sins and sinners in John's narrative (2007:328-329). After briefly reminding us that the Jews evaluated and accused Jesus of being a sinner (7:12, 47-49) for different reasons, such as the non-observance of the Sabbath (5:10-13, 33-34; 19:16, 24, 25), blasphemy (5:18; 10:33-34; 19:7), Neyrey (:328) lists a number of other sinners John mentions in his narrative, namely: unbelievers (3:18-19, 24); liars and murderers (8:32, 44); hypocrites (9:41); dropouts (6:60-65); unjust judges; those who refuse his commands; and cowards (9:22; 12:42). Drawing from that, Neyrey (:329) compares Peter's lack of loyalty (18:25-27) to Judas' rejection of Jesus, before indicating that Peter was forgiven and Judas was not.

Another point raised by Neyrey (2007:329) is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and forgiveness. After briefly reminding us that the purpose of the gift of the Holy Spirit is to conduct the judgment of the world's sins (16:8), Neyrey underlines that one of the chief characteristics of the Spirit is knowledge. He argues that the Spirit will help the disciples in the knowledge of the hidden secrets of the human heart and in the detection of what is false and ambiguous. Schneiders (2011:9) might be cited here since she specifies that the role of the Spirit is to help the community to discover that the rejection of Jesus is the ultimate sin: "the spirit reveals that the real sin was precisely not to believe that Jesus was God's gift". It is here that Neyrey (:329) concludes that "the forgiveness of sins will be an element of the worship of the group".

If the interpretation of John 20:22 and the breathing of Jesus in the immediate context of the John's narrative has succeeded in shedding light on how the breathing of Jesus is the pinnacle of the narrative, then it would appear that there are two general inferences which may be attempted. First, the implied reader of John's narrative is a major contributor to the hermeneutical task leading to the conclusion that the breathing of Jesus is the climax of the narrative. Kieffer (1999:46-65) discusses extensively how the implied reader of John's narrative plays a master role in the interpretation of the text. The meaning that the reader assigns to the narrative is the result of an effort to understand the narrative in terms of John's construction. The actual reader of John's narrative creates a "framework of meaning" including his theological presuppositions and preferences (Kysar 1970:85). The second conclusion suggested by the exegesis of John 20:22 in its immediate context is that John's Gospel is a product of its time. It has its own context, its particular narrative strategy and literary techniques; and it addresses

its own audience and readership. A correct reading of John 20:22 requires a respect of the socio-historical context in which the narrative arose because as one author wrote: “a text without context is a pretext for a proof text”¹¹². In this perspective, it is reasonable to argue that the historical situation of the community of John becomes a potential hermeneutical key for the understanding of the breathing of Jesus in John 20:22.

Kowalski (1996)¹¹³, in her study on the Shepherd metaphor (John 10:1-18) in the context of the historical situation of the Johannine community argues that two historical planes are woven together in John’s Gospel: the situation of Judaism at the time of the composition of the Gospel and its retrojection into the time of Jesus. If this is the case with the Shepherd discourse, this hypothesis might be applied to the breathing metaphor discussions. Thus, in John 20:22, the crisis at the time of the Johannine Community may have been retrojected into the time of Jesus. Thus, in the story of Jesus breathing in John 20:22, there are two juxtaposed times: the time of Jesus and the time of the community of John. Common to both is the context of crisis, which has a link with the fundamental historical event of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

It is here that some hermeneutical questions might emerge. First, why does John present a picture of Judaism which is not that of the time of Jesus? Martyn (2003:124-143),¹¹⁴ in his exegetical research on the situation of the Johannine community has recognized that John creates a kind of “two-level drama”, retrojecting the concrete historical situation of the Johannine community into the time of Jesus. This anachronistic style enables John to interpret the present and the future on the basis of the past, and simultaneously actualize the past salvation history. Additionally, if retrojection and parallelism with the time of Jesus are found on the plane of narration of John, it means that the narrative of John is influenced by his own theological reflections.

¹¹² This is an old maxim which Carson ascribed to his father. The original quotations are: "A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text." The well-known form of the quotations is "A text without a context is a pretext." This assumption has become the basis on which scholars argue that without respecting the context in which something was said may lead to a misunderstanding of its original meaning. More on these quotations is available from: <http://www.worldviewweekend.com/worldviewtimes/article.php?articleid=3134>. [Accessed 10 December 2010].

¹¹³ The original version of this work is in German. I am using here its unpublished English translation by Jonathan A. Draper, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

¹¹⁴ I have already referred to the work by Martyn (2003) in our previous chapter. Here, I am referring to Kowalski commentaries on Martyn’s “two level drama theory” in John’s Gospel. For more details, the interested reader might refer to his full work as indicated in the bibliography.

As a result of the discussions on the two planes model, it seems worthwhile to argue that this model can be applied to the breathing metaphor if one wants to check its connectedness with the socio-historical context of John. In the narrative of John 20:22, the two planes model is recognized by the message of John directed to his community facing a crisis; it also reports what happened to the disciples of Jesus on the evening of the day of the resurrection. If in Jesus' time, the breathing is meant to encourage the disciples, who were discouraged by what had happened to Jesus. Then, in the context of the Johannine community, it could be argued that the story of Jesus' breathing is directed toward those members of the community discouraged, after putting their hope in Jesus, by the synagogue expulsion, and its socio-religious consequences.¹¹⁵ Thus, the breathing of Jesus allows both historical experiences to be seen in the narration. The synagogue expulsion can be inferred from John's reference to the locked doors because of the fear of the Jews (20:19).

In considering the first question, the second hermeneutical question would be: if so much of the interpretation of John 20:22 and the breathing of Jesus is determined by its immediate context, what is it that leads the present day Christian to examine this text for direction and inspiration in his own context? The meaning of the breathing metaphor both in Jewish and Christian traditions will be recalled in the concluding chapter to argue for the connectedness of the breathing metaphor with the Johannine context and our own context with its own crisis. For now, attention will be paid to how the breathing metaphor works in the network of Johannine metaphors to underscore its major role in the narrative of John's Gospel.

4.7 The metaphor of breathing in the network of Johannine metaphors

In the previous sections of this chapter, the aim was to try to grasp the meaning of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22. The hermeneutical question leading the discussion was: "Why did Jesus breathe on his disciples?" John uses a religious metaphor of the Jewish tradition to express something about the identity of Jesus and his activity (1:1-

¹¹⁵ Keener (2003:196) gives an illustration of this experience when he points out that "Part of the crisis for many Johannine Christians must have been feeling cut off from the synagogue communities, feeling publicly maligned in the places where family and friends still participated in public prayer."

18; 20:30-31)¹¹⁶. The major part of the following section discusses how John's metaphorical speech about Jesus fits into the whole of John's Gospel.

At the outset, it might be stated that Van der Watt's metaphoric theory is a guideline. However, different from Van der Watt's view which highlights the family metaphor in John's Gospel, it will be suggested that the breathing metaphor might be given a key position in the network of Johannine metaphors. This might be assumed on the basis that this metaphor expresses and depicts the original act of creation, the original work of God, which can be also addressed as a metaphor. This hypothesis has further theological implications which will be explained to conclude the last two chapters. There is a wide range of metaphors in John's Gospel sharing the same life, giving a semantic field with the breathing metaphor in John 20:22. To show the connectedness of the breathing metaphor with these other Johannine metaphors, it seems important to recap with Van der Watt (2000:394) that metaphors in John interact in the same way at micro- and macro- levels, to form a network. In other words to form a thematical cohesion, "the way metaphors function in smaller (micro) contexts, corresponds to the way in which they function in larger (macro) contexts".

Regarding how the process of the network of metaphors functions on a macro-level (larger context), Van der Watt (2000:396) argues that most important metaphors are identified on the basis of both their frequency of use and their structural position within the narrative evolution. Van der Watt claims that the life metaphor is a key metaphor in the network of Johannine metaphors. In addition, Van der Watt argues that to form a network, metaphors are connected syntactically and semantically. When this theory is applied to the study of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22, it can be argued that, on the macro-level, the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 seems to mimic the same process. For instance, a number of metaphors are not only syntactically linked to the breathing metaphor but they share qualities at the semantic level. These are, for instance, light, truth, door, bread, water, wine, and lamb, to cite a few. .

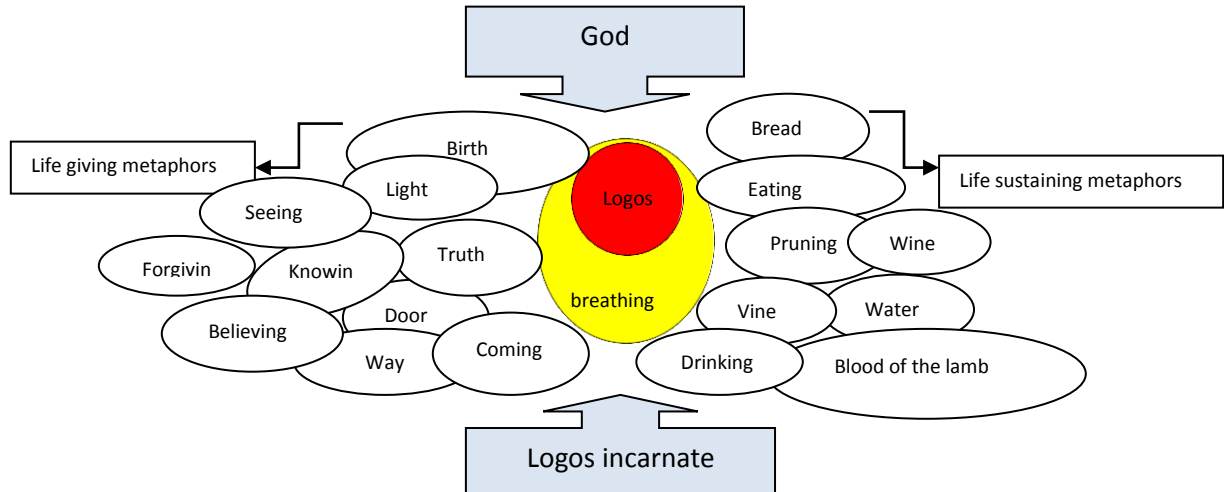
The conjoint element between the breathing metaphor and these other metaphors, light, truth, door, bread, water, wine and lamb seems to be the life metaphor. It is here that the limit of Van der Watt's hypothesis on the family metaphor as the key metaphor in John's Gospel might be discussed. Yet, when the narrative of John is followed, what is

¹¹⁶ Fruitful discussions on this issue are in the influential work by Neyrey (1986:152-71).

discovered is that God, the Father is the source of all life (1:1-3; 6:57); through Jesus, the Son and the Holy Spirit, He creates and sustains unceasingly this same life in different ways to give all opportunities to reach the fullness of life (John 1:4; 5:17, 21, 25-29; 6:33, 51, 57, 68; 8:51; 10:9, 28; 11:25, 26). Since this hypothesis is made in the light of Van der Watt's approach, an attempt is made to apply Van der Watt's conclusions to the objective of the present study. First, the breathing metaphor is not the only metaphor which can be studied as a key metaphor in the network of Johannine metaphors; there are some other inter-related metaphors forming a network, such as the temple and family metaphors.

The fundamental reason for giving a key place in the Johannine network of metaphors to the breathing metaphor lies in the complex and inclusive nature, as well as in the position of this metaphor, in the narrative. Elements of this metaphor occur in a network throughout the entire Gospel. That is, a complex network of different metaphors is related to the idea of the breathing metaphor. In the breathing metaphor, the life-giver metaphors are life (1:4, 14, 17; 6:50, 51; 10:9; 11:25, 26; 14:6), light (1:4; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 36, 46) and truth (1:14, 17; 8:32 15:1; 18:37); in the life-sustaining metaphors are bread (6:32, 33, 34, 35, 41, 48, 50, 51, 58), wine (15:1-8), water (4:10-4, 36; 6:27, 35, 36; 7:37, 39; 19:34) and blood of the Lamb (1:29); and the verbal metaphors are coming (1:9; 7:32, 35), knowing (17:3), believing (3:16; 7:32, 35) and drinking and eating (6:53-56). For instance, the metaphorical use of the expressions such as "born from above" (1:12-13), light, Logos, truth, eating and drinking form part of the extended idea of the breathing metaphor of the fullness of life that comes from God. The argument that the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor in the Johannine network of metaphors is schematically¹¹⁷ illustrated below:

¹¹⁷ This schema is inspired by that of Van der Watt (2000:424). It illustrates the interrelatedness of metaphors in John's Gospel. The schema does not contain all the metaphors in John's Gospel. It aims to illustrate how the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor from which other metaphors depart and return. The schema needs a bit more unpacking, especially in relation to God and Jesus as well as the two groups of metaphors discerned as life-giving and life-sustaining metaphors. The category of metaphors described as life-giving metaphors, are metaphors showing how God shares His life with human beings in different ways. His Word made life possible for all as well as the light, door, the knowledge of the truth. The life-sustaining metaphors are metaphors which show how God through Jesus continues to sustain and develop this same life that He has given to humans. Drinking and eating in John are meant to sustain not only the physical life; they are also fundamental for spiritual life. As far as God and Jesus are concerned what is at stake here is that, God is the source of all life. In other words, God is life-giver of life. As the Father of life, God loves the Son and "has given all things into his hands". Thus, God the Father, through Jesus, the Son gives life without measure. Jesus speaks the Word of God because he has the life-giving Spirit of God (6:63-64). This is the same life of God described in the creation accounts of Genesis about the breath of God. It is the very same life breath of God that gives life to the dry bones in Ezekiel. These two references to God's breathe of life intimates that God's breath of life creates and sustains life through Jesus. It is difficult to doubt that this is the



Commenting on the expression “born from above”, Van der Watt argues that “by being born as child of God, the person is able to participate in the spiritual world of God. This implies that a person has eternal life in its entire dimension” (:398). Furthermore, the concept of life that lies behind the breathing metaphor is also linked to several verbs that John uses in his Gospel. For instance, the person has to eat and drink to protect and develop the life within. The image of developing life is found in the pruning of the vine in John 15. It is here that metaphors such as vine, water, shepherd and family are related to the breathing metaphor. This is possible because the breathing metaphor is about life that comes from God, a life that needs to be protected and developed. To a certain extent, the breathing metaphor is the focal imagery to which most of the metaphors proceed and are related. This is not clearly stated by John, however, it can

framework in which the narrative of John works since in John 20:22, Jesus breathes the Spirit of life into his disciples. This view is supported by the command “to forgive sins”, which brings life. In John’s narrative, Jesus communicates and sustains this life of God in different ways: illuminating and revealing (8:12; 9:5; 14:6), protecting and guiding (10:9, 11), and, simply by bestowing life (11:25). This activity of Jesus to give and sustain life can be explained more specifically. For instance, Jesus sustained life by feeding with the “bread that comes from heaven” because he is the bread of God (6:33) that comes from heaven (6:32, 33, 50, 51) and gives life to the world (6:51). Similarly, the statement “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6) indicates that Jesus is the way that leads to the truth and by which one enters into the life of God. Just as Jesus is the door that opens to life, and the shepherd who guides the sheep to the abundant and nurturing pastures, and the bread that sustains life, so He is the means or way that leads one to truth and life. It is necessary to acknowledge that all these comments do not exhaust the meaning of these metaphors as they are still open to a surplus of meaning. Life-giving and life-sustaining may not be the best way to distinguish these metaphors. More categories would probably be more satisfactory: nourishment (bread, wine, water); the lamb is not merely nourishing but is protective (see Egypt) and a remedy against sin; there are metaphors of journey or access to life (way, door); light and life are opposed to death and darkness; “breathing into” goes together with working, pruning; seeing is expressive of believing, knowing, loving(?). The act of breathing can be given a key position in as far as it is expressive of, or the image of, the original act of creation, the original work of God, creation itself may be more of a key metaphor.

be inferred by following the narrative as illustrated in the diagram. The breathing metaphor is tied up with the basics of John's theology of creation (Brown 1966:1037).

It is interesting to note that John starts his Gospel with the theme of "giving life" as "creation" (1:4, 12) and ends with the same theme of creation (20:22). The fundamental idea of life that comes from God is expressed in both the Logos metaphor and in the breathing metaphor¹¹⁸. Thus, life from God is the common denominator between the Logos metaphor and the breathing metaphor. Already in the Prologue, the life from God is introduced to the world by the presence of the Logos (1:1-4); the implication of being born from above is to gain eternal life (3:3, 15, 36). Metaphorically speaking, the purpose of the breathing of Jesus is to introduce humanity, represented by the disciples, into the fullness of life. Brodie (1993:569) is correct here when he comments that:

The breathing...represents the giving to them of all that is alive within him. (Nothing is more basic to life and love than breath). And what is alive within him now is not simply a physical breath, but the breath, the life, of one who has ascended to union with the Father. They no longer have to depend on their first creation, on the limited life and gifts that they were given through natural birth and upbringing. He is opening to them a further sphere, a divine Spirit which offers them a new sense of life, what might be called a new birth or new creation.

The reason why the breathing metaphor is assumed as a key metaphor in the Johannine network of metaphors might be questioned, however, this is beyond the limit of this study. It can be argued that as this appears in the analysis of the time in which the Gospel of John was written, it might be that the theological crisis led John to confess his faith in the divine origin and especially the divine activity of Jesus (20:30-31) by using a metaphor that was only reserved for God in the biblical tradition. Thus, John might have been arguing that throughout his entire ministry, the objective of Jesus was to bring to humanity the life from God, as shared with humans at the beginning of the creation. Through Jesus the same breath of life coming from God is present in the world. Interpreted in this way, the breathing metaphor served the community by imparting important information and inspiration to help them deal with the theological crisis resulting in their expulsion from the synagogue. On the other hand, the breathing

¹¹⁸ The theme of life permeates the whole Gospel of John. It appears in many different contexts throughout the entire Gospel: (John 1:4; 3:15, 16, 36; 4:10, 11, 14, 36, 50, 51, 53; 5:21, 24, 25, 26, 29, 39, 40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47, 53, 54, 57, 58, 63, 68; 7:38; 8:12; 10:10, 28; 11:25, 26; 12:25, 50; 14:6, 19; 17:2, 3; 20:31).

metaphor appears to be a call to faith because the objective of John is to persuade his community to have faith in Jesus (20:30-31).

Another reason that probably led John to use the breathing metaphor might be that the expulsion from the synagogue undermined the community morally, psychologically and spiritually. The experience might have been experienced as a “cataclysm” by the community. John’s reference to the breathing metaphor, showing how God brings life out of chaos might have given them hope and faith. Although chased from the life of the synagogue, the community experiences new life in the Risen Jesus who creates a new community for them, as God did with the dry bones. John’s reference to the breathing metaphor might have been a way of confessing that the new Israel is restored with the breathing on the disciples on the day of His resurrection. This brings us to the question: how should the breathing metaphor be interpreted in the African context?

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been seen how the Johannine author uses metaphorical constructions to enable his readers to come to a better understanding of his message. The study of the breathing metaphor is valuable for understanding the message and the theology of the Gospel. The reference to the breathing in John 20:22, has a particular function and theological implications. By exploring the relationship between the breathing metaphor with various metaphors sharing the same semantic field, a perspective on the interrelatedness of various metaphors creating thematic cohesion has been exposed. Such a metaphorical network has genuine potential and deserves to be addressed. Furthermore, this is an investigation into the breathing metaphor in John 20:22, from the perspective of the metaphorical network theory, enabling the reader of John’s Gospel to come to a better understanding of John’s theology of creation and the importance of the Spirit. In examining the context of John’s Gospel, the theological implications of the use of the breathing metaphor in the light of this same context has been examined. A close relationship between the breathing metaphor and the various metaphors sharing the same semantic field to create metaphorical networking has been suggested. From a narratological, sociolinguistic, religionsgeschichte and theological perspective, it has been argued that the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor in the networking of metaphors in John’s narrative strategy.

CHAPTER V:

FORMULATING A THEOLOGY OF CREATION IN JOHN'S NARRATIVE

Introduction

The various manners and contexts in which John uses the Old Testament creation traditions to formulate a theology of creation in his narrative are explored in this chapter. References to the creation narrative are found throughout the narrative of John's Gospel (1:3-4; 4:34; 5:17; 6:57; 6: 35; 15:1; 8:12; 9:5; 14; 6:10; 9,10; 11:25; 17:24, 29; 20:22, 23). One of the creation account characteristics of John's narrative is that there is no distinction between creation, revelation and salvation. According to John, the revelation of the identity of Jesus leads the reader to faith and to life (3:16). Thus, the *telos* of John's account of creation is for the audience to come to faith to have life. Fundamentally, John's theology of creation might be described as John's way of reminding his community of God's unceasing war against the chaotic forces (5:17). Du Rand (2005:22) argues that "God's revelatory and salvational commitment to the world" does not end with the death and resurrection of Jesus but continues through the mission of the disciples under the guidance of the Paraclete¹¹⁹. To infer that the creation motif is the unique theological perspective of John's Gospel is not the purpose of this chapter. Its purpose is to show that the narrative of John can be understood from a creational theological perspective. The methodological approach will be to discuss the metaphorical meaning of creation in the biblical tradition in parallel with the mythologies of the surrounding cultures about creation. Attention will be paid mostly to the understanding of the creation as God's victory over the forces of chaos, death and destruction. Second, the narrative of John in parallel with the biblical metaphorical understanding of creation to single out John's theology of creation will be explored. The findings of these discussions will expose the path to a contextual reading of John's theology of creation on the African continent, the topic of the concluding chapter.

5.1 Johannine scholarship and the creation motif

The purpose of this section is to examine the interest of Johannine scholarship in the theology of creation in John's narrative, not to review in detail the whole debate but to show that most argue that John's Gospel may be read from the view point of creation

¹¹⁹ Hatina (1993:219) defends this position.

motif. The various ways some Johannine scholars deal with the creation motif in John's Gospel will be examined.

Although the theme of creation traverses the whole narrative of John's Gospel, in Johannine scholarship John's theology of creation has been neglected with not much attention being paid to the theme of "the theology of creation in John's Gospel" itself (Dodd 1953:203, Barrett 1958:125-127, Bultmann 1962:19-20, Brown 1966:23-24, Schnackenburg 1968:232-241). For instance, the influential work of Bultmann (1962:19-20) dealing with the concept of creation in John 1:3-4, does not examine clearly the issue of the theology of creation in John¹²⁰. Under the category of recent works addressing John's narrative from the perspective of the creation motif, Du Rand (2005:21-46) and Zimmermann (2008:226-235) may be cited because of new insights they provide, which may lead one to give particular attention to the theology of creation in John's Gospel.

Du Rand (2005:24, 36-46) addresses the issue of the creation motif in John's Gospel in stressing two important moments in John's narrative, namely the incarnation of the Logos (1:14) and the breathing of Jesus onto the disciples (20:22). He defines creation as God's revelatory and saving commitment to the world, starting with the incarnation of the Logos and continuing with the mission of the disciples under the guidance of the Paraclete (:22). Du Rand provides several references to the creation motif to show how John manipulates his audience theologically by emphasizing God's creation work through Jesus and the Holy Spirit (:23). According to Du Rand, life and light are two major images John uses to emphasize God's creation work. The Logos is the giver of all life like God in Genesis: and Light makes explicit the revelatory nature of the Logos in the incarnation (:40). Both Life and Light are related to salvation. Life is either resurrection or spiritual life and Light is shining in the darkness (1:5) indicating the victory of the light over darkness. To conclude, Du Rand argues that "just like the 'first' creation centred the person of God, Creator, the second focuses on Jesus the light" (:41).

The recent work by Zimmermann (2008:226-235) on the garden symbolism can also be seen as exposing the paths for such discussions but it does not discuss directly the theme of creation in John's Gospel either. Zimmermann suggests that the whole of

¹²⁰ A good summary of Bultmann's investigations and critics are found in Kysar (1970:77-85).

John's narrative should be read in the light of the "narrative of creation" and so of "the garden scenario in Genesis 2-3" (:232). In addition, Zimmermann takes the motives of garden and gardener as key words referring to the creation scene of Genesis and giving rhythm to the whole narrative of John.

Thus, all these different authors suggest that the narrative of John can be approached from the theological perspective of the creation theme (Zimmermann 2008:232; Du Rand 2005:22). There is a departure from the perspective that the creation theme is present throughout John's Gospel. Different stories, discourses and events in John's Gospel become clear when interpreted according to the influence of the creation theme. The theological emphasis is God's commitment to reveal Himself and save the world. This project starts with the incarnation of the Logos (1:1-18) and continues with the disciples guided by the Paraclete (20:19-23). This is portrayed in terms of the cosmic struggle between light and darkness and truth and lies, amongst others. This also echoes the idea of God's combat against the chaotic forces in Genesis. Therefore, to understand John's theology of creation, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the OT understanding of creation, since John incorporates some motifs from the OT tradition in his narrative to convince his audience (Du Rand 2005:22).

5.2 Sketching the meaning of creation in the biblical tradition

The aim of this section is to explore the metaphorical meaning of the theme of creation as an aid in formulating John's theology of creation. Besides the creation accounts in the biblical tradition we will pay attention to various events and speeches related to the creation scene which present creation as God's combat against the chaotic forces in order to make life in the world possible.

There is a wide range of meanings given to the theme of creation, such as God's ordering of the disorder of the beginning and God's struggle against chaos. One clear difficulty faced in understanding the theme of creation is the existence of the several meanings given to it. For instance, in the biblical tradition, the word creation initially "refers both to the act by which God created the universe and to the product of that process" (Ryken et al. 1998:179). However, William P. Brown (2000:293) distinguishes three denotations of the theme of creation. According to him, creation originally refers to "the primordial origination of the world, the beginning of history".

This is what Brown describes as *creatio ex nihilo*. The second meaning Brown assigns to the theme of creation is “the continuing order and maintenance of the world (*creatio continua or continuata*)”. The third meaning, related to the second is the creation as a “new or future creation, even the consummation of history.”

The biblical texts often use the language of the surrounding culture in which creation was understood as a battle of the creator against the forces of chaos. However, the focus in the biblical tradition is not on the origin of the forces of darkness, as in the Gnostics writings but on the destructive powers of created beings like the serpent. It is quite striking that the *taninim* in Gen 1:21 are creatures; Job 40:15 speaks also of Behemoth as a creature. The chaotic force in these creatures comes from rebellions against God; in the traditional intertestamental exegesis of Isaiah 14:12¹²¹, the serpent in Genesis 3 is certainly rebellious against God and destructive. The power of darkness in John is connected with the reign of Satan: 12:31; see also 12:25-36 and compare with John 1:5 where the same verb is used.

The underlying idea of the OT creation account is that creation might be interpreted as God’s victory over the chaotic forces. This can be assumed as God’s permanent activity is to make life possible. In the salvation story, this creation takes various forms and is expressed in different ways¹²². For instance, the creation of Israel as the people of God; also the exodus and covenant are different ways that God makes life possible for his people in the context of chaos, death and destruction. The characteristics of God’s act of creation can be drawn from the OT accounts (Genesis, Psalms, Wisdom, Job) will be identified. In this study the term ‘act of creation’ will be understood as the unceasing act by which God makes life possible and the process by which he calls the universe into being through the force of his word.

As a starting point for sketching the metaphorical meaning of creation¹²³ in the biblical tradition, the idea of creation is not the invention of the biblical tradition (Paul Auvry

¹²¹ Tonstad (2006:69-76) discusses extensively this issue.

¹²² Campbell (2010:13-14) argues that some of the biblical accounts of creation are found in Psalms and Proverbs, others in Job and Isaiah. Some of these accounts emphasize the effortless authority of God; others hymn the triumphant victory of God in combat with the forces of chaos (Rahab, Tannin, Yamm).

¹²³ One difficulty faced in understanding the phenomenon of creation is the existence of several meanings given to the word “creation”. For instance, in biblical tradition, the word creation initially refers both to the act by which God created the universe and to the product of that process. Brown (2000:293) distinguishes three connotations of the concept “creation”. According to him, creation originally refers to “the primordial origination of the world, the beginning of history. This what Brown describes as *creatio ex nihilo*. The second meaning Brown assigns to creation is “the continuing order and maintenance of the world (*creatio continua or continuata*)”. The third connotation

1973:98; Oden 1992:1165). It already existed in the Near-Eastern milieu before the biblical revelation (Du Rand 2005:28-32). In Egypt, for instance, narratives of creation by Atum are found on the walls of pyramids. In Mesopotamia, the Akkadian writings also give an account of creation. The idea is also present in the Ugaritic tradition, where it is reported that the supreme god El was portrayed as “creator of creatures”. The dominant view of these Near Eastern accounts of creation is that creation is comprehended as a result of war of a deity against the forces of chaos, death and destruction (Du Rand 2005:29). It is not seen so much as making out of nothing but as a victory of the deity over the forces of chaos (Rosenberg 1996:210).

It is striking that almost the same pattern appears in the biblical account of creation. McKenzie (1968:157-160) argues that the biblical account of creation incorporates some motifs from the Near Eastern mythology. It is on this basis that Paul Auvry (1973:99) asserts that some similar elements appear in both accounts. Rosenberg (1996:210) asserts that “Divine struggle with waters, victory over chaos, and cosmogonic promulgation of law/wisdom are found in biblical poetry (cf. Exodus 15; Isa. 40-42; 45; Heb.3:8; Pss.18; 19; 24; 29; 33; 68; 93; 95; 104; Prov. 8:22-33; Job 38-41) and closely associated with God’s saving actions on behalf of Israel and its leaders”. Similarly, Du Rand (2005:33) argues that “a prominent aspect to take notice of in the biblical creation account is the typical pattern of chaos/wilderness...creation as ordination...failure of the creature to live up to expectations...recreation or restoration after the disaster.”

However, in the theory of *creatio ex nihilo*¹²⁴, the idea that there was a kind of war between God¹²⁵ and the forces of chaos, death and destruction seems to be rejected. This theory emphasizes the power of the word of God, which called everything to being. To balance the mythological account of creation and the biblical account, some commentators indicate that in the case of Yahweh there were no real battles. God created with the force of His Word. His work consisted particularly in ordering the

which is related to the second is creation as “new or future creation, even the consummation of history.” In this study the term is understood as the unceasing act by which God makes life possible or the process by which he calls the universe to being by the force of his word.

¹²⁴ There are ongoing discussions around Creation *ex nihilo*. A recent work reflecting the state of the debate is by Copan (1996:77-93). Reacting to May’s proposal (1994), which argues that the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is a post biblical invention, Copan asserts that the theory of creation-out-of -nothing has biblical grounds. (Rm 4:17 and Heb 11:3) This discussion is limited to the awareness of the on-going debate about the creation *ex nihilo* theory.

¹²⁵ The concepts Yahweh and God are used interchangeably to express the same reality.

disorder of the beginning¹²⁶. Along similar lines, Dennis Carroll (1967:246-247) argues that the biblical account of creation adapts mythical elements to express a truth which goes beyond myth. In addition, Carroll underlines that although the Genesis creation accounts are not to be taken as history in the strict sense, they are deeply situated in a historical faith. This is the basis on which Carroll assumes that the author wishes to comfort people, who had suffered seriously and were demoralized by the experience of captivity (:246).

Although it cannot be denied that there was an influence of Near Eastern mythological insights in the biblical account of creation, it seems too simple to argue that there were no battles between God and the forces of chaos, death and destruction resulting in creation. Analysed from the perspective of the purpose of the biblical accounts of creation, which is to call people to faith in God in the context of crisis, it can be argued first that the biblical accounts of creation, particularly in Genesis use a well-known language to convince his audience. Second, this incorporation of the Near Eastern elements in the biblical account of creation can be interpreted as a demythologization process through which the biblical tradition in an artistic fashion intends to emphasize that God controls all the forces of chaos, death and destruction. Here, the point is that, “as Yahweh once made possible the Exodus from Egypt, he would again affect an Exodus from Babylon” (Carroll 1967:246).

If it is taken that the Near Eastern mythological accounts of creation mostly praise their gods to the detriment of Yahweh, it seems logical to assume that they threatened the faith of Yahweh’s people, who believe in Yahweh as the Creator of all. Connected with this kind of assumption, it is possible to describe them as “forces of chaos, death and destruction”. At this point, a discussion on the meaning of the expressions “forces of chaos” may add something to this debate because it is a common tendency to link and reduce the expression “forces of chaos” to negative metaphysical forces threatening humans. However, in another second sense, the expression “forces of chaos” refers to all that in real life is against the well-being of humans. This may take different forms: political dominion, economic exploitation, destructive theology,

¹²⁶ One of the magisterial works that has attracted the attention of scholars regarding the study on the relationship between the biblical creation account and the pagan mythologies of Near Eastern ancient world is Gunkel (2006:3-84). The merit of this work is that it shows clearly that the biblical account of creation draws on the pagan mythologies of the Near Eastern ancient world. In relation to this study, this work seems to argue that creation in biblical accounts is the victory of God against the forces of chaos and destruction, as this is the case in pagan mythologies.

destructive philosophy, negative ideologies, pandemic diseases, cataclysm and ignorance¹²⁷.

Further corroboration that there was a kind of war between Yahweh and the forces of death resulting in the creation of the world is raised by Kessler and Deurloo (2004:16-17). According to these two authors, in Gen 1:2 after the introductory topic sentence, there are three descriptive noun clauses announcing the central theme of the narrative. These clauses, as they are developed portray a situation where God combats and destroys the forces of death with His Word. With these three clauses, Yahweh begins his creation: *The earth was jumbled and disordered; darkness was over the face of deep; and God's spirit was hovering over the face of waters* (:16).

Whether there was war or not when Yahweh created, metaphorically speaking, "creation" refers to Yahweh's unceasing war against the forces of death and evil. Thus, creation can be comprehended as God's unceasing activity of making possible life out of chaos. Campbell (2010:13) states that the OT tradition imaged God's activity in creation in a variety of ways. "This creation moves from chaos to order, from darkness to light, from emptiness to a world full of life, capped by man and woman" (:14). If it is true that the creation account in Gen 1-2 begins with a state of chaos. This chaos might be interpreted as the absence of life, symbolized by the expression "the earth was jumbled and disorder". From this perspective, God's work would be that of making life possible. Thus, creation would infer the idea of the victory of God's life force over the forces of chaos, death and destruction or disorder. The OT tradition portrays the forces of chaos as beasts and monsters of the sea and abyss¹²⁸: *Tananim, the great sea*

¹²⁷ I am referring here to two important works by Ka Mana (2004 and 2005). Of particular importance in these works for this study is the way the Congolese philosopher and theologian defines the forces of chaos. Reflecting on how the Gospel may be preached today in Africa, Ka Mana organises a discussion in relation to the notion of "forces of chaos" that destroy life in Africa. According to him, all that destroys life in humans constitutes the forces of chaos (poverty, diseases, some theological discourses, political and religious ideologies and economic exploitation). Since for him, the notion of the kingdom of God articulates the present and the future, Ka Mana proposes a Christian discourse focusing on social transformation. It is Christian discourse that tries to give answers to fundamental questions that burn in the heart of Africans. Although it seems important here, it is not part of this current discussion.

¹²⁸ Fore discussion on these monsters see Gunkel (2006).

*monsters*¹²⁹, *the sea, the abyss, the deep, the waters*¹³⁰, *the Leviathan*¹³¹, *Behemoth*¹³², and *Rahab*¹³³.

Focusing on the context of polemic in which the biblical account of creation arose, it appears that the underlying idea is that God is the living-life-giver (Ps 33:6). This is reinforced by the biblical account of creation presenting God as the source of all that exists beyond the Near Eastern mythologies. God is seen as a living-giver of life; the source of all life and his creation act is the victory of life over chaos, death and destruction. This is the framework in which John writes in his narrative to raise faith in the God-Creator, through Jesus, to his community facing crisis.

5.3 Towards the formulation of John's theology of creation

These discussions on the creation in the biblical tradition were to prepare for a possible formulation of the theology of creation in John's narrative. God's unceasing work of making life possible in the context of chaos, death and destruction (Kessler and Deurloo 2004:13-34) might be identified as the focus of these discussions. This "permanent war"¹³⁴ of God against anti-life forces has become His permanent concern in human history; his purpose is to lead the creation to its perfection. It has taken different forms, starting from the original creation to the resurrection of Jesus. Having looked at the metaphorical meaning of creation in the Jewish tradition, how John applies this framework in his narrative is discussed.

5.3.1 The meaning of creation in John's narrative

If it is by means of language that theology is expressed, it is fundamentally shaped by the context. The socio-historical background of John's Gospel has been explored and the way John organizes his narrative of Jesus is shaped by the specific concerns of his community. In dealing with these particular concerns, the author of the Fourth Gospel had a specific theological shape as discussed in the previous chapter. Following insights provided by Koester (2008), it is seen that creation story is at the heart of John's Gospel. There are some similarities between the Old Testament tradition of

¹²⁹ For more details one shall refer to ; Ps 74; Job 7:12; Gen 21:1 ; 1 En 60:7-9, 24; 4 Ezra 6: 47ff; 2 Baruch 29:3-4 (as food for the eschatological banquet); Isa 27:1 (associated with Leviathan).

¹³⁰ Gen 21:1; 7:11; Ps 74:13; Job 3:8; 7; 12; Dan 7:2-3; Rev 21:1.

¹³¹ Job 3:8; 26:13; 40:25; Job 41:1-34; Ps 74: 14 (several heads!); Ps 104:26 (a mere creature); Isa 27:1.

¹³² Job 40:15-24 (a creature, the first of the great acts of God! See v.19)

¹³³ Ps 89:10-11; Job 26:12; Isa 51:9-10.

¹³⁴ Closely linked to this is the image of judgment: God fights and judges. See Daniel 7.

creation accounts and John's use of this same tradition in his narrative (Dodd 1963:41; Borgen 1965:3). Similarities are seen at the level of the purpose of the creation account in OT tradition; the context in which this account came to being; the use of the ambient language; and the emphasis on Yahweh's Power¹³⁵.

The purpose of John's use of the creation account in the context of his community is to lead people to life through faith in Jesus (3:16; 4:34; 6:40; 5:24; 10:10, 27-28). In the context of crisis, John reads the situation of his community as a moment of death. John interprets the real experience of his community as a kind of chaos, death and destruction making life impossible for his community. Technically, it can be argued that John uses the same strategy that the writer of the biblical account of creation used to raise faith in God, in the hearts of people threatened by the chaotic forces. The reference to the metaphorical language of the biblical accounts was influenced by John's desire to do something for a community threatened by despair. The aim of John in using the dualistic language of light and darkness, truth and lies and that of alternative cosmology is to challenge the community to opt for life rather than for death (Du Rand 2005:23). John wanted to remind them that God is permanently at war against the forces of death (5:17). The result of this combat is that God is making "unceasingly life possible" for his people.

Following the narrative of John, moments of death and the creation story can be identified on several levels: in the incarnation of the Logos (1:1-18), the transformation of water into wine (2:1-11); the healing and restoration of health stories (11, 1-43; 9:1-41); the discourse on the bread of life (6:35); and the resurrection stories (20:19-23, to cite a few examples. More specifically, according to the two planes drama theory, for example, the first moment of the absence of life can be identified in the passion and death of Jesus, with the psychological effects on the disciples. This event discouraged and disoriented the followers of Jesus. Some left and denied him (the day he was arrested 18:8, 25-27); others stayed locked inside because of fear of the Jews (20:19); and some returned to their previous work (21:3). This can be interpreted as a moment of death for the new community created by Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus, from this

¹³⁵ Our assumption is that there are many OT traditions which relate the creation scene. For instance, the theme of creation is also prominent in the wisdom literature. It seems that the wisdom literature reflects contemporary creation traditions which are also shared by John: eg. Creation through wisdom, etc. This view is supported by Clifford (1994) and Du Rand (2005:28-36).

perspective might be taken as a triumph of the forces of life over the chaotic forces¹³⁶. This view is supported by Perkins (2008:500), who argues that the “resurrection of the dead is a new act of God’s creative and saving power closely linked to the judgement that is to bring an end to sin, evil and death”. In following chapters 19-21, it can be argued that the narrative moves from chaos to order, from darkness to light, from emptiness to the fullness of life symbolized by the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. All this occurs during the Jewish Passover, a celebration of progress from slavery to freedom and life in the Promised Land.

The second moment of death is the experience of John’s community. They are excluded not only from the synagogue but banished from whole areas of Jewish life. In this context, when John recalls a religious metaphor having great importance in the minds of the people, this metaphor restores hope and life to them. In using the breathing metaphor John reminds his community that Yahweh continually combats the forces of chaos (4:34; 5:17). As he made life possible in the beginning (1:1-3) and after the resurrection of Jesus (20:22), He would also make life possible for those suffering from rejection and exclusion because of their faith (20:30-31).

5.3.2 The God of John’s narrative

John’s narrative is theocentric¹³⁷ as it focuses on God’s Power despite some commentators focusing on the Christocentric character of John’s narrative. Throughout the gospel, the narrative of John is about God’s permanent desire to make life possible for the world (Koester 2008:30-52). The most telling and frequent characterization of God in John’s narrative is that God is the one who gives life through, Jesus, the Son (1:3; 3:16). That is to say, the narrative of John portrays God as the source of life. Jesus and the Paraclete (life-giving force of God) are seen as the way in which God is still at work in making life possible in the context of chaos (5:17). The chaos is the result of turning away from God, of not believing in Jesus, who is the life and the source of life (3:16-18; 4:14; 6:35, 37-38, 40, 46-47, 51; 7:37-38; 8:24). More precisely, “the Spirit of God is the power of life and the agency through which life is received” as Thompson

¹³⁶ This can be inferred when reading texts such as 3:14; 7:39; 8:28; 11:4; 12:16, 23, 32; 13:31-32.

¹³⁷ Thompson (2001:227-240) may be cited here since she discusses the issue of the God of John’s Gospel. This work is an answer to Dahl (1991), who states that God is a neglected factor in NT theology. Against this perspective Thompson discusses how theocentric John’s Gospel is because it directs attention to God. This designation is particularly apt in light of the fact Johannine Christology seeks always to relate Jesus to God. In John’s narrative, Jesus refers to God as his Father, source of life and Jesus the Son of the Father, who confers God’s life; He is God’s life giving Word.

(2001:229) puts it. All this is not new in the community of John; it is the substitution of the OT narrative by the new narrative.

The Prologue of John's Gospel, with its reference to the creation motif can be identified as the stepping stone of the Gospel (Stibbe 1993:22-31). The theme of creation, that is, life giving started in the Prologue and traverses the whole Gospel of John from different perspectives. What John does in his narrative strategy is to praise God's continuing work of creation through the deeds and words of Jesus. This continuous creation of God has taken various forms in Jesus' life: sustaining and nurturing (6:35; 15:1), illuminating and revealing (8:12; 9:5; 14; 6), protecting and guiding (10: 9, 10) and bestowing life (11:25; 20:22). In John's narrative strategy, Jesus is presented as a fundamental agent of social and even cosmic transformation, the one who inaugurates and fulfils the messianic promises of restoration and renewal of all creation. The incarnation of the Son of God (Jn 1:3) and the breathing of the Spirit onto the disciples (John 20:22) are two significant moments in the narrative of John recounting the creation story (Du Rand 2005:24, 36-46).

Another way of discussing John's theology of creation in his Gospel is to examine the characterization and identity of God in John's narrative. That the God of John's Gospel is fundamentally the living Father who gives life through the Son and the Spirit is identified from a vast body of knowledge as an important characteristic of God. According to John's narrative, God is the source of all life (1:1-3; 6:57). John's understanding of God as the source of life echoes what the Jewish tradition says about God being the Creator of all that is visible and invisible. As in the OT account of creation, for John, God is the living God and source of life and is known through the life-giving work of Jesus, the Son, who has life from the Father (Jn 5:25-26) (Thompson 2001:228-229). People are expected to open themselves to this gift of life by faith in Jesus (3:16-18), something the synagogue people refuse to do (9:41).

Moreover, having looked at the way some of the Johannine metaphors work together with the breathing metaphor and how some others arise out of it to form a network in John's narrative, it can be argued that the breathing metaphor serves as the climax of John's theology of creation. This metaphor summarizes what John intends to say about God using Jesus as the full metaphor for God. What is more, the breathing metaphor

opens up possibilities of creation and justice for a community suffering from rejection and exclusion.

Conclusion

In this chapter the theology of creation in John's narrative is formulated. Taking insights from the metaphorical understanding of the biblical account of creation, it has been argued that there are two important interactive moments of death in John's narrative: the death of Jesus symbolizing the death of the community and the exclusion of John's community from the synagogue, a moment of cataclysm, destruction and death for the community of John. Thus, John's theology of creation behind the breathing metaphor is identified as a moment of life creation and restoration. Thus, it can be further argued that the breathing metaphor and its theology of creation have something to say to the African context. The history of Africa is a long experience of God's combat against the forces of chaos, death and destruction. Since this study on the breathing metaphor is done in the African context, how the breathing metaphor is relevant for the African continent is important to include here. Some moments of chaos, death and destruction in African history making the breathing metaphor and its theology of creation relevant for the African continent are identified.

CHAPTER VI:

THE BREATHING METAPHOR: CONCLUSION AND SOME CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVES

6.1 Breathing metaphor and community identity

In this study, the intention was to examine, using socio-linguistic methods, narratology, rhetorical analysis, *Religionsgeschichte* and metaphoric theory, the meaning, function and theological implications of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22. It has been argued that John's Gospel is an instrument of communication and transformation; the author wrote his Gospel because he wanted to communicate with his audience to effect and transform them. To fulfil this task, he uses some stylistic and literary techniques to have a greater impact on his audience.

From the perspective of socio-linguistic theories, it has been shown that metaphorization is powerful in the context of social exclusion to re-orientate world views.. In John's Gospel, for instance, metaphorization has been seen as a process by which "social deviants", John's community members¹³⁸ are re-introduced into a new society (Malina 1985:11). This is so, because their original world (Judaism) of which they were a part has been 'displaced' and 'destroyed' with their exclusion from the synagogue and the need to reconstruct another world. The exclusion of John's community from the synagogue is not only seen from the perspective of a physical removal from a physical place, the synagogue but includes social, religious and economic exclusion. It might be argued that John's use of metaphorical language is meant to create for his community a new social identity. It might also be also possible to interpret this as a pedagogical process through which "outsiders" are introduced into a new community, where new social realities and new identities emerge.

Metaphorization in John's Gospel functions strongly to rebuild faith and hope within the community. It provides John with the opportunity to draw the hopeless and disoriented of his community into a Christian world of experience with its own knowledge, roles, values, attitudes and social meaning. John's use of the breathing

¹³⁸ For more on the Johannine community see Martyn (1978:149-176), Brown (1979) and Keener (2003:149-152).

metaphor may be approached as kind of “legitimation”, to use the word of Berger and Luckmann (1966:92)¹³⁹. There is legitimation when a society faces the challenges of confronting another culture. In this case, this society is called to explain its “social universe”. One of the ways to legitimate a given culture is to incorporate others in one’s own self system¹⁴⁰. To a certain extent, this is probably what John is intending to do in using the powerful metaphor of God’s breathing in the Jewish tradition. So, in the face of punishment by Rabbinic Judaism, the community of John is re-socialized through using the breathing metaphor. This metaphor re-constructs for them a new world view; it creates among them strong interpersonal bonds, legitimates the new community and it rebuilds hope and faith within them. This is the basis on which Malina (1998:11-14) describes John’s Gospel as a “resocializing story”.

From the narratological and new rhetorical perspectives, it has been noted that John’s Gospel is a two plane drama in which the time of Jesus and the time of John’s community interact. As a result, the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 might be approached as a “biographical reconstruction”¹⁴¹ because the history of the community is reinterpreted in the light of the community’s current understanding and state, and vice versa. It serves to confirm and maintain the faith of John’s community and boost its hope in Jesus as the one through whom God makes everything new (20:30-31). In portraying Jesus breathing on his disciples, in the context of synagogue crisis, it can be argued that the purpose of John is to remember that in Jesus the renewal of Israel and the whole creation emerges.

¹³⁹ According to Berger and Luckmann (1966:92) “legitimation as a process is best described as a “second order” objectification of meaning. Legitimation produces new meanings serving to integrate the meanings already attached to disparate institutional processes. The function of legitimation is to make objectively available and subjectively plausible the first-order objectifications that have been institutionalized”. The aim of legitimation is to create the integration of the individuals in the social universe of the society by means of explication and justification. This becomes urgent when the social universe is transmitted to a new generation which challenges it. It is on this basis that Berger and Luckmann argue convincingly that “legitimation “explains” the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings. Legitimation justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives.[It] not only tells the individual why he should perform one action and not another; it also tells him why things are what they are” (93-94). There are consequences of legitimation, namely: healing (therapy) and nihilation (:103). There is healing or therapy when the deviants are convinced and re-socialization and nihilation when those challenging the social universe (deviants) are expelled from the group.

¹⁴⁰ For instance, the Community of John is composed of Gentiles and Jews expelled from the synagogue. To create for them a new social reality, John had to convince his community that its legitimacy is in the Spirit given by Jesus to continue his mission (John 20:19-23). To make it more powerful, John uses the Jewish Scriptures referring to the first act of God which creation and the transmission of God’s breathe of life in the first human being he creates from the dust of the earth.

¹⁴¹ Wanamaker (1995:46-55) uses this expression in the context of his study on the concept of conversion in the letters of Paul to the Thessalonians. Even though it does not fit fully here, the biographical reconstruction theory is referred to because it shows how two periods can interact in the process of conversion. What makes the expression important is that at certain extent, a parallel can be established between the notion of the interaction of times in the two plane drama theory and in the biographical reconstruction in the context of conversion.

Theologically, John's narrative strategy exploiting the breathing metaphor reveals the way in which material realities become metaphors of the divine. The reader is drawn individually into the play and challenged to give an authentic and personal response, to rise to the challenge of living in the context of despair and disorientation caused by rejection and its consequences (John 12:35-36). It can also be argued that the breathing metaphor makes John's narrative a "three plane drama"¹⁴² in which the time of Jesus, the time of John and the time of the reader interact. The breathing metaphor is used to restore hope and faith, expressed in its theological meanings held by the Jewish and Christian traditions. Hence, although the breathing metaphor, indeed the whole John's Gospel, shows how people come to the knowledge of God through Jesus, it also shows how language can help people to encounter God in this quest. In addition, the breathing metaphor is a metaphor for life; it confirms and maintains that life is the other name of God.

From the metaphoric theory perspective, it has been argued that the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor in the network of metaphors in John's Gospel. This is so in as far as the act of breathing is expressive of the original act of creation, the original work of God. From John's incarnate theology the suggested hypothesis was: in the beginning was the breath of life of God; the breath of life became the word of God which is light for the world. He who comes to the light and knows the truth has life. Everything proceeds from the breath of life from God and goes back to it. Jesus, the one who is sent and has the authority of the one who sent him breathed on his disciples the breath of life to make them *τέκνα θεοῦ*, a new creation so that they could have the breath of the life of God in its fullness¹⁴³.

6.2 Fundamental implications for Africa today

The above observations have some practical implications when reading the text in the context of contemporary Africa. The central consequence of the study on the breathing metaphor is the challenge to take life seriously in all its aspects, guided by the life experience of John's community. We may never know and understand exactly what John meant by his reference to the breathing metaphor in chapter 20:22. This awareness

¹⁴² I borrow this expression from Kowalski (1996) who argues that in the Shepherd discourse three different time periods are in interaction, the time of Jesus, the time of John's community and the time of the contemporary reader of John's narrative.

¹⁴³ This statement echoes the Prologue and some similar text which are linked to it such as John 1:12, 32, 33; 3:14, 32-34; 12:32; 16:21; 19:30; 20:17; 20:22.

keeps us humble, simultaneously provoking us in terms of what the breathing metaphor says to us today. Experience is the primary context for doing theology and reading the Bible, so it seems important to address the breathing metaphor in the light of our own experience. We may illustrate the above observations from the example of John. He uses his own context and life experience as the starting point of his theologizing or the understanding of Jesus, in relation to his personal past and the experience of his community. Now, the breathing metaphor will be addressed in the light of some key issues in the African context to see how these are part of God's progressive plan to lead humanity into wholeness and the fullness of life, which He intends for all in creation, through the redemption in and by Christ.

6.2.1 Breathing metaphor and HIV/AIDS

In the African context, particularly in my own Congolese context, the exploration of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 raises important questions about how to address the issue of HIV/AIDS. Many Africans and Congolese living with HIV/AIDS are hopeless when facing this pandemic disease. Despite poverty and suffering, people with HIV/AIDS in Africa and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in particular die in social exclusion and under heavy condemnation. This situation of exclusion and condemnation of people with HIV/AIDS in Africa and Congo is similar to that of the community of the author of the Fourth Gospel. Both have faced exclusion and rejection. Thus, the breathing metaphor, in the context of HIV/AIDS in Africa and DRC would see people with HIV/AIDS facing exclusion and despair caused by the “theology of destruction”¹⁴⁴, made alive by the life of God Himself.

People with HIV/AIDS in Africa and DRC have to interpret their own experience in the light of the message of hope and restoration brought by the breathing metaphor in John 20:22. They have to fight fatalism by believing in the life of God, which is present in them, regardless of their sickness. They are collectively called to believe that “nothing is impossible for God”¹⁴⁵ and at the same time, acknowledge that “everything is

¹⁴⁴ West (2004:113-123) describes the “theology of destruction” as this particular theological discourse that explains sufferings as a punishment from God. Focusing his attention on the way some churches address the issue of HIV/AIDS in Africa, West has the general impression that their theological discourse becomes destructive. It presents HIV/AIDS a punishment from God. In plain terms, this theological discourse seems to argue that people with HIV/AIDS are sick because they misbehaved. Therefore, God is punishing them for their wrong doings. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that until till now it seems challenging to find a medicine to fight the HIV/AIDS infections.

¹⁴⁵ See Gen 21:1; Luke 1:26-38

possible for one who believes in God.” This requires from them the ability to reconstruct their biographies in the light of the whole redemptive project of God. In addition, they are called to read their present state and situation in the light of the strong conviction that God is the source of life and he is breathing life and energy upon them, even though the experience of suffering seems to contradict this..

Moreover, the parallel reading¹⁴⁶ of the exclusion of the Johannine community and that of HIV/AIDS sufferers is influenced by the need to do something in a context of crisis. Following Gerald West this approach is moved by three major reasons. First of all, the “dominant discourse”¹⁴⁷ of some churches in Africa among infected people is still destructive, discriminative and judgmental (2004:113). For example, West argues that the theological discourse of some churches in Africa presents HIV/AIDS as punishment from God. The consequence of this theological discourse is that people with HIV/AIDS are condemned to despair and rebellion against God because of rejections they are facing. In this context, the breathing metaphor seems to question the church explanation of suffering. It refutes the fact that people with HIV/AIDS are silenced when they try to find the meaning of their suffering by questioning God. Second, the parallel reading of the breathing metaphor and HIV/AIDS may lead to the reintegration of HIV/AIDS as part of human experience. In this regard, the positive reading of HIV/AIDS in relation to God’s project of salvation, the valuing of the cry of people with HIV/AIDS could be interpreted as one of the ways to find answers to its challenges. Lastly, the breathing metaphor may help people with HIV/AIDS to recognize their own experience of rejection and to remain faithful to the God of life. It is here that it can be argued that in reading their own context of rejection and suffering in the light of the breathing metaphor, people living with HIV/AIDS make John’s Gospel a “three plane drama” in which three dimensions interact to enrich each other: the time of Jesus, the time of John’s community and their own context.

¹⁴⁶ I am inspired here by the West (2003:335-344) and (2004:112-124). These two works aim to do something for the people living with HIV/AIDS in the South African context. To my mind, what West says can be applied to any context facing the same crisis.

¹⁴⁷ This expression echoes what West says about the theology of destruction in the context of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. By dominant theology, West is pointing a finger at the way some African churches explain HIV/AIDS in Africa.

6.2.2 Breathing metaphor and African Renaissance

The breathing metaphor is also very powerful imagery in the overall context of African suffering. It is not only in the context of HIV/AIDS that the breathing metaphor has a message of life and hope for Africa in her long experience of sufferings. There are similarities between the community of John and many communities on the African continent; both experiencing rejection and despair. The history of the African continent, argues Patrick Adeso (2005:77-83) is a dark history¹⁴⁸. From tribal wars, slavery, colonization, failure of independences, neo-colonialism to economic discrimination, the African continent has been described as the “Third-World”, the concern of Africans is to find a meaning for their suffering and rejection and simultaneously to launch the ‘resurrection’ of the African Continent.

This concern for the resurrection of Africa has been described by many as the African Renaissance. In this quest for resurrection and renewal, the breathing metaphor might have much to say to the African Continent. It transforms the suffering and rejection of Africa; it shows the spiritual journey of Africa today in the light of the time of Jesus and the time of John’s community. Two concepts are important here: life and hope. Ka Mana (2006:19-31) accurately argues that the Gospel has much to say to the African continent in its quest for renaissance. He entrusts to Africa the mission of the renewal of world ethics and the promotion of the civilization of hope in an “Age of Despair”, to borrow Albert Nolan’s¹⁴⁹ expression (:49-75). In other words, the breathing metaphor addressed in the context of the African Renaissance raises the question of the new presence of Africa in the World. The issue here is to show how the breathing metaphor in John’s Gospel can fertilize the African dream and hope for Renaissance. This could be made possible by its capacity to read the present in the light of the past to move Africans to invent a better future for the continent. This is what the narrative strategy of John’s Gospel and what the breathing metaphor is all about, to move people from a given place to another.

¹⁴⁸ Adeso (2005:77-83) describes the African context in these terms while addressing the issue of the sufferings of Africa in the light of the book of Job. According to him, both Job and Africa are facing suffering. As with Job, Africa struggles with her suffering to live.

¹⁴⁹ Nolan’s recent work (2009) discusses the issue of hope and despair. The particularity of this work is that it shows convincingly that Jesus Christ is the ultimo hope for humanity. Nolan reaches this conclusion after describing accurately how ideologies, philosophies, theologies and church leaders have deceived the world in its history.

6.2.3 Ecological reading of the Breathing metaphor

Another important issue which can be addressed in the light of the breathing metaphor is the problem of air pollution. The air we breathe is polluted although clean air is vital for life in the world. The industrialization of some countries globally threatens air quality in many countries. To protect air has been a serious concern for those dealing with the issue of justice and peace and the protection of creation. Besides the philosophical, economic and even some theological reasons sustaining such an enterprise, the breathing metaphor in John 20:22 has much to say in this context. It appears as a powerful innovation because of its direct engagement with air as a metaphor for the life of God, which is present in the world. The breathing metaphor used for the issue of air pollution suggests that we have to protect air because it is the life of God, which gives vitality and energy to the cosmos. This is a well-known Jewish theological conception about *ruah / neshamah* as inherited by the Christian tradition. Without any attempt to be exhaustive, all these issues in the light of the breathing metaphor need to be seriously addressed. The aim of this study has been to unravel these fundamental issues to show they might be addressed in the light of the study on the breathing metaphor in John 20:22.

6.3 The proposal and result

The title of this Master's thesis is, "Language and Theology: a case study of the breathing metaphor in John 20:22." The proposal was that following Van der Watt's metaphoric theory, the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor in the Johannine network of metaphors. The nature of John's Gospel, which I have described as an instrument of communication and transformation has led to this conclusion. This was displayed in two ways: first by identifying that the language of John's Gospel reveals what is going on in his social context; and secondly, following Bruce Malina's sociolinguistics conclusions, metaphORIZATION was identified as a way of reconstructing John's community's world view and values because John's community was a "rejected group of people". The word ἀποσυνάγωγος, for example, revealed the crisis resulting from this exclusion. In this regard, the nature of the crisis between John's community and the other Jewish groups has also been examined. The crisis was fundamentally theological. Then a discussion on the imagery in John's Gospel with a focus on metaphors in John's narrative strategy was explicated. It was shown that the study of a particular metaphor

could enable us to understand more about the message and the theology of John's Gospel. It brings to light the world behind, in and beyond the text. Life-giving, life restoration and life sustaining gifts were identified as key words to give rhythm to the dynamic of metaphors in John's Gospel. Van der Watt's model of a metaphorical network theory in John's Gospel has helped to show that the breathing metaphor is a key metaphor in John's narrative strategy. This illustrated the relatedness of the breathing metaphor to the other metaphors in John's Gospel that are related to "life giving (birth, resurrection, light)" and "life sustaining" (water, wine, bread, blood of the lamb).

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