1 John: 'Effects' in biblical texts that constitute 'lived experiences' in the contemplative reading of those texts

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It is evident according to 1 John 2:28–3:10 that the eschatological events predicted in this text have implications for how people should live prior to these events. This essay explores this eschatological pericope by analysing a number of the linguistic effects used in the text in order to determine how the assumed spiritualities embedded in this pericope are generated to influence the readers. These linguistic effects form part of the rhetoric used by the author to awaken certain spiritualities (lived experiences) in readers in order to motivate them to act according to the recommendations given in the text. Four effects identified and examined in this essay that constitute 'lived experiences' in the contemplative reading of texts are (1) the dynamic interaction between text and reader, (2) the composition of images, (3) the dialectic of pretension and retention and (4) entanglement in a text.

1 Johannes: 'Effekte' in bybelste tekste wat 'geleefde ervaringe' in die nadenkende lees van daardie tekste konstitueer. Volgens 1 Johannes 2:28–3:10 is dit duidelik dat die eskatologiese gebeure waarna daar in die teks verwys word, implikasies het vir hoe die mens vóór hierdie gebeure behoort te lewe. Die artikel ondersoek hierdie eskatologiese perikoop deur 'n aantal van die taalkundige effekte in die teks te analiseer om vas te stel hoe die veronderstelde spiritualiteite wat in die perikoop ingebed is, gegenereer is. Hierdie taalkundige effekte vorm deel van die teksretoriek wat deur die outeur aangewend is om bepaalde spiritualiteite in lesers wakker te maak met die doel om hulle te motiveer om volgens die aanbevelings wat in die teks vervat is, te handel. Vier effekte wat in hierdie artikel geïdentifiseer en ondersoek word en wat spiritualiteite of 'geleefde ervaringe' deur die kontemplatiewe lees van tekste tot stand bring, is (1) die dinamiese interaksie tussen teks en leser, (2) die samestelling van beelde, (3) die dialektiek van pretensie en retensie en (4) 'verstrengeling met 'n teks.

Introduction

The work and publications of Jan du Rand on the *corpus Johanneum* are exceptional. Over his long academic career, he has made an invaluable contribution to the critical analysis and scholarly understanding of the discipline of the New Testament. He published numerous studies, but it is in particular for his discourse analysis of the Greek text of 1 John that I want to acknowledge him. This discourse analysis, published in *Neotestamentica* (Du Rand 1979:1–42), is an excellent analysis of the dialectic thoughts, semantic networks and rhetoric of the author of 1 John (hereafter 'the Elder'). Therefore, it is my privilege and pleasure in this essay to give something back to Jan du Rand for what he has given to the contemporary readers of 1 John. I have chosen the particular pericope of 1 John 2:28–3:10 on Johannine eschatology due to because of Du Rand's love of and interest in eschatological texts.[1]

This essay begins with a brief analysis of the relatedness of the three eschatological texts in 1 John. This constitutes the environment or context within which the spirituality[2] of the eschatology of 1 John is embedded. I shall then present a typical Du Randian discourse analysis of the indicated text (1 Jn 2:28–3:10), from which I shall point out some[3] mechanisms that will help to determine

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1. In a previous publication, 'Early Christian spirituality of 'seeing the divine' in 1 John' (Van der Merwe 2015:1–11), I discussed most of the 'effects' embedded in written texts that cause 'lived experiences' during the reading of such texts. In this essay, I develop further those insights, amongst others, by refining and elaborating them and expanding upon them. I also used the same eschatological text (1 Jn 2:28–3:10) because of the interest of Du Rand in eschatology. See also my publication on eschatology for a thorough discussion of the eschatology of 1 John (Van der Merwe 2006:1045–1076).

2. The term 'spirituality' is understood and used in this essay as the '*lived experience* of the divine-human relational process of transformation' (cf. Schneiders 2000:254; Waaijman 2002:312).

3. This pericope is loaded with semantic networks. It is impossible to point out all of them here.

the effects used both intentionally and unintentionally by the Elder in his rhetoric to evoke some spiritualities embedded in this eschatological text.

Eschatology in 1 John

Three clear eschatological texts (2:28; 3:2–3; 4:17) occur in 1 John, of which two (2:28; 3:2–3) appear in the same pericope. This heightens the awareness of the community that lived in this eschatological era. The present eschatological era (3:5, 8)[4] will end with the occurrence of the future eschatological event known as the *parousia* (2:28) or Day of Judgment (4:17), also referred to as revelation (2:28; 3:2). This event will introduce a new 'future or final eschatological' era (cf. Dunn 2003:295). The eschatological interpretation of this future event in these texts reflects the close relationship that exists between these three verses (2:28, 3:2f. and 4:17). It helps the reader to understand the Elder's rhetoric regarding this eschatological event. The close relationship between these three verses is indicated by similar expressions, as is evident in the following comparison (cf. Van der Merwe 2006:1055):

ἵνα ἐὰν φανερωθῇ *σχῶμεν παρρησίαν* καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ   (2:28)

ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὀψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθώς ἐστιν   (3:2)

ἵνα .... *παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν* .... ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως   (4:17)

From the above analysis, it is evident that verses 2:28 and 4:17 form a parallelism, which is established by the phrases σχῶμεν παρρησίαν [may have confidence] and παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν [equally: may have confidence]. This parallelism is further supported by the two semantically related references that refer to the future appearance of Jesus, ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ [at his coming] and ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως [on the Day of Judgment]. The parallelism further helps to relate the coming of Christ (τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ) to the Day of Judgment (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως). In addition, the phrases σχῶμεν παρρησίαν and παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν constitute a chiasm to emphasise the conduct expected from believers before the coming of Christ. It refers to the 'confidence' that these early Christians could have had regarding the *parousia* [coming].

From this loaded comparison, the following can be deduced: The Elder uses the verb 'revelation' (φανερωθῇ, 2:28; 3:2)[5] as a compound word to depict this revelational event as the *parousia* of Jesus (παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ, 2:28) and the Day of Judgment (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, 4:17).[6] Whereas *parousia* refers to the future eschatological event as such, the Day of

Judgment refers to the nature (purpose) of this event (Van der Merwe 2006:1055).

It is imperative to take cognisance of the fact that, in these three eschatological texts, the Elder also exhorts readers to 'prepare themselves' for the *parousia* and the Day of Judgment. If they have 'prepared themselves', then on that Day of Judgment, they may have confidence and will not be put to shame before him (i.e. Jesus, 2:28; cf. 4:16f.). They will then also become like him for they will see him as he is (3:2). These texts contain two exhortations, namely to 'abide in him' (μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, 2:28; cf. also 3:6, 9) and to 'purify yourselves just as He is pure' (ἁγνίζει ἑαυτόν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἁγνός ἐστιν, 3:3). It also contains a statement, 'Love has been perfected among us … just as He is' (Ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ'ἡμῶν … καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν, 4:17; cf. 3:10). All three of these texts relate to Jesus, who is the Son of God[7] and the personification of 'divine life' (1:2). On the Day of Judgment, faith in Jesus through whom God became incarnate and the example of his earthly life to which believers have to conform (καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν, 2:6) will be the measures according to which people will be judged. For the Elder, in this present eschatological time, imitating Christ is possible only as κοινωνία ([fellowship], 1:3, 6, 7) amongst believers and corporately with God within the household of God[8] (Van der Merwe 2006:1054–1057).

The eschatological climate in this pericope constitutes the environment for the spirituality of the readers. The Elder endeavours to evoke certain spiritualities in the readers in order to mobilise them to act correctly. The task of contemporary exegetes comprises investigation of these texts for stylistic as well as embedded mechanisms that the Elder knowingly or unknowingly used and by means of which spiritualities are evoked in the reader. These spiritualities form part of the rhetoric of the text to motivate the reader to adhere to the exhortations (or statements) in the text.

Exploiting mechanisms in texts to generate spiritualities[9]

Waaijman (2002:742) asserts that readers shape the depiction of sacred texts in their imagination. They do this in order to participate effectively in the texts. For Iser (1978:131), '(t)his involvement, or entanglement, is what places us in the "presentness" of the text and what makes the text into a presence for us'. In other words, readers are drawn into the world of the texts, and the texts are drawn into the world of the readers. Even copying these texts during the Middle Ages meant much more to the people than merely producing the

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4. Eschatological terminology is used by the Elder in the immediate literary context with regard to the present situation: φανερόω in 2:28, 3:2 [future coming] and 3:5, 8 [present coming] as well as ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν (2:18, [it is the last hour]); ἀντίχριστοι (2:18, [antichrist]).

5. Cf. also the present eschatological use of φανερωθῇ [reveal] in 3:3, 8.

6. For Painter (2002:214), φανερωθῇ, παρουσίᾳ and ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν (2:18) are eschatological terminology. He points out that both φανερωθῇ and παρουσίᾳ, which occur in the selected pericope to be discussed later in this essay, refer to the eschatological future coming, which is implied by the earlier declaration that ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν (2:18, [this is the last hour]). These eschatological references imply a scene of eschatological judgment.

7. Cf. 3:8, where the verb φανερωθῇ [reveal], which refers to the eschatological event, 'revelation', is connected to 'Son of God'.

8. See Van der Watt (1999:491–511) and Van der Merwe (2006:1045–1076) for a more thorough discussion on κοινωνία in the *familia Dei*.

9. In the case of reading literary texts, I wish to distinguish between two kinds of spirituality that can emerge from such an event. Firstly, the reader can have a 'lived experience' of the content of the text – being drawn into the text or drawing the text into himself or herself. Secondly, through such a lived experience, another 'lived experience', that of the divine, can emerge, depending on the content of the document as well as on who the reader is. Both these views are considered in this essay.
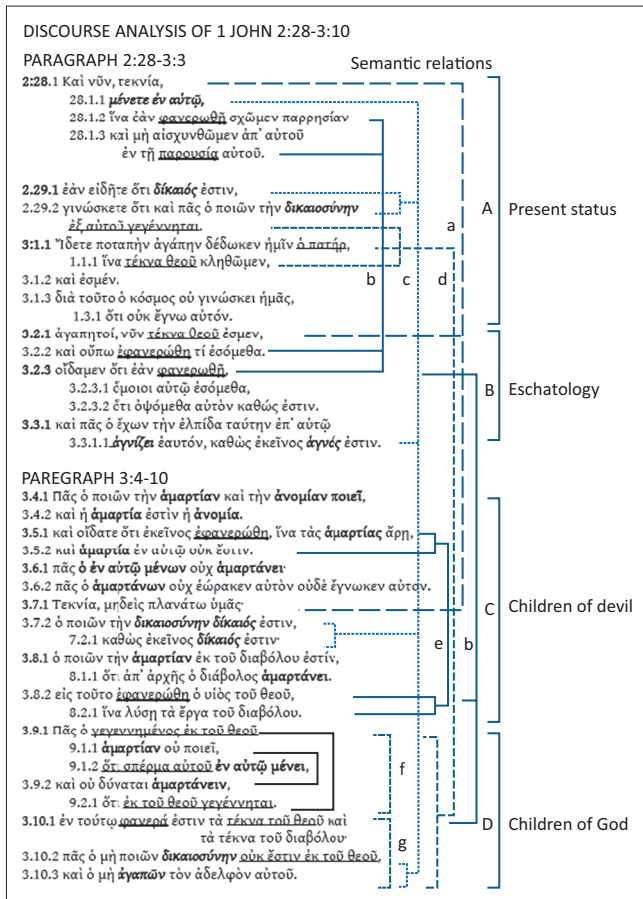
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF 1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

PARAGRAPH 2:28-3:3   Semantic relations

2:28.1 Καὶ νῦν, τεκνία,
    28.1.1 **μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ,**
    28.1.2 ἵνα ἐὰν <u>φανερωθῇ</u> σχῶμεν παρρησίαν
    28.1.3 καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ
            ἐν τῇ <u>παρουσίᾳ</u> αὐτοῦ.

2.29.1 ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι **δίκαιός** ἐστιν,   A   Present status
2.29.2 γινώσκετε ὅτι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν **δικαιοσύνην**
        ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.   a
3:1.1 Ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατήρ,
    1.1.1 ἵνα <u>τέκνα θεοῦ</u> κληθῶμεν,
3.1.2 καὶ ἐσμέν.   b   c   d
3.1.3 διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς,
        1.3.1 ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν.
3.2.1 ἀγαπητοί, νῦν <u>τέκνα θεοῦ</u> ἐσμεν,
3.2.2 καὶ οὔπω <u>ἐφανερώθη</u> τί ἐσόμεθα.
3.2.3 οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἐὰν <u>φανερωθῇ</u>,
        3.2.3.1 ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα,   B   Eschatology
        3.2.3.2 ὅτι ὀψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστιν.
3.3.1 καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ
        3.3.1.1**ἁγνίζει** ἑαυτόν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος **ἁγνός** ἐστιν.

PAREGRAPH 3:4-10

3.4.1 Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν **ἁμαρτίαν** καὶ τὴν **ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ,**
3.4.2 καὶ ἡ **ἁμαρτία** ἐστὶν ἡ **ἀνομία.**
3.5.1 καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος <u>ἐφανερώθη</u>, ἵνα τὰς **ἁμαρτίας** ἄρῃ,
3.5.2 καὶ **ἁμαρτία** ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν.
3.6.1 πᾶς **ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων** οὐχ **ἁμαρτάνει·**
3.6.2 πᾶς ὁ **ἁμαρτάνων** οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.   C   Children of devil
3.7.1 Τεκνία, μηδεὶς πλανάτω ὑμᾶς·
3.7.2 ὁ ποιῶν τὴν **δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός** ἐστιν,
        7.2.1 καθὼς ἐκεῖνος **δίκαιός** ἐστιν·   e   b
3.8.1 ὁ ποιῶν τὴν **ἁμαρτίαν** ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν,
        8.1.1 ὅτι· ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος **ἁμαρτάνει.**
3.8.2 εἰς τοῦτο <u>ἐφανερώθη</u> ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,
        8.2.1 ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.
3.9.1 Πᾶς ὁ <u>γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ</u>
        9.1.1 **ἁμαρτίαν** οὐ ποιεῖ,
        9.1.2 <u>ὅτι· σπέρμα αὐτοῦ **ἐν αὐτῷ** μένει,</u>   f
3.9.2 καὶ οὐ δύναται **ἁμαρτάνειν,**
        9.2.1 ὅτι· <u>ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.</u>   D   Children of God
3.10.1 ἐν τούτῳ<u>φανερά</u> ἐστιν τὰ <u>τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ</u> καὶ
            τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου·
3.10.2 πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν **δικαιοσύνην** <u>οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ,</u>   g
3.10.3 καὶ ὁ μὴ **ἀγαπῶν** τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

FIGURE 1: Discourse analysis of 1 John 2:28-3:10.

texts fully or accurately: 'It was a way of appropriating a text' (Waaijman 2002:744). This, involvement in texts, signifies that the serious or contemplative reading of biblical texts produces various kinds of spiritualities, both of the text and the divine.[10] These various spiritualities critically depends on the content the text communicated about the divine and also on who is reading the text.

This essay will focus on only three of the effects that Waaijman (2002:744) discusses and through which spiritualities embedded in texts are constituted: (1) the dynamic interaction between text and reader in the reading process, (2) the imaginative composition of images and (3) the dialectic of pretension and retention.[11] A fourth effect is taken from Iser (1978:131), namely (4) entanglement in a text. Contemplative reading ushers in these effects. These effects help us to make sense of the texts and to determine some of the lived experiences evoked when the early Christians read these texts. These effects are, in what follows, applied to 1 John 2:28–3:10.

In order to make any sense of these effects proposed by Waaijman and Iser, it is necessary to begin with a discourse

analysis of 1 John 2:28–3:10 in which these effects will be investigated.[12] Such a discourse analysis will have four functions: (1) It will help us to identify the different semantic networks (semantically related words or phrases or concepts) that enhance better understanding and dynamic interaction between text and reader. (2) It will help us to determine the argument and rhetoric of the author. (3) It will assist us in constructing the bigger picture by means of semantic networks that created coherent mind maps. (4) It will also help us to relate what has already been read with what is still to be read.

Although this discourse analysis looks slightly different from that performed by Du Rand in 1979, there is also quite an extensive resemblance between them. Numerous semantic networks occur in this discourse, but not all of these networks can be indicated in this brief analysis, therefore only some of them are referred to in the discussion.

The first effect: Reading a text creates a dynamic interaction between the text and the reader

The reading of a written text comprises a continuous dialogical negotiation for meaning between the text and the reader. Such a negotiation evokes different 'lived experiences'. According to Iser (1978:107), a text is a 'structured prefigurement'. The way in which texts are received and interpreted depends both on who the reader is and on the kind of text (genre) that he or she is reading. Reading certainly does not comprise a one-way process but an active interaction and negotiation between text and reader (cf. Iser 1978:107). According to Waaijman (2002:748), readers become actively involved when they understand and imagine the meaning of the text and when they reflect on the entire text. The reading of texts constitutes in readers 'lived experiences' of the characters, their identities[13] and their conduct in the texts. Such reading events innovate and create events and experiences when (reading) the text enlightens readers and allows them to bring their own skills and competencies into play (cf. Iser 1978:108). The rhetoric of the Elder, as embedded in the text, will then influence the 'lived experiences' of the readers and persuade them to act in particular ways.

From the above selected text and discourse analysis (2:28–3:10), we can distinguish the following formal and informal strategies embedded in the text to generate particular 'lived experiences' and conduct within an eschatological environment. Waaijman (2002:750) refers to the following three formal strategies, here applied to 1 John:

10.In this essay, 'divine' refers to God the Father, the resurrected Christ and the Holy Spirit.

11.Waaijman (2002:689–773) devoted an entire chapter on 'Hermeneutic research' in his classic publication *Spirituality: Forms, foundations, methods,* which discusses the essence of the spiritual reading of texts. Only three of the many 'effects' are examined in this essay.

12.According to Thomas (2004:55), the identification of structure in 1 John is a difficult challenge. This is reflected in the lack of consensus amongst scholars. In a thorough study, Thomas (1998:369–381) succeeds in constructing a chiastic structure of the text of 1 John. The discourse analysis conducted by Du Rand (1979:1–41) prior to the work of Thomas also verifies structure possibilities embedded in the text of 1 John.

13.Haas, De Jonge and Swellengrebel ([1972] 1994:83) provide a good explanation of the interrogative pronoun τί [what] in the phrase τί ἐσόμεθα [what we will be]. For them, this pronoun asks about identity or quality. Consequently, it stresses the continuity between the present state of believers and their future state as well as the quality of the future state that lies in store for them as children of God.

1. **Participation:** This is created through repetition (reveal, born of God, know, abides, right[*eous*], cannot sin, love, etc.) and imitation (love, right[*eous*], pure; see also 2:6, 'to live as Jesus lived'). Through these expedients, the Elder seeks to keep the text and the spiritualities of the text alive.

2. **Detachment:** This strategy seeks to transcend previous adverse practices and behaviour (stop denying the Son, stop being lawless or committing sin, be not deceived, stop doing what is not right, et cetera). These adverse references form part of the Elder's rhetoric and serve to establish a contrast between the subversive conduct of the community and the prescriptive conduct in the above mentioned text (2:28–3:10) and also the rest of the epistle.

3. **Transformation:** A change in conduct through participation in new works and the simultaneous detachment from adverse practices necessarily lead to the transformation of the identity and character of the reader. This should lead to being born of God, having the seed of God, becoming the children of God, becoming pure, becoming like him and abiding in Jesus. By means of the repeated use of metaphors regarding family life, the Elder assists the reader in identifying with the other members of the household of God. The identification with the Father and Son and the readers' connectedness with them through faith bring about a continuous transformation and the 'lived experiences' of the texts (and of God and Jesus) in the reader (cf. Van der Merwe 2015:5).

The following informal strategies are also used in the selected text. These strategies generate dynamic interactions between the reader and the text and complement the formal strategies (also cf. Van der Merwe 2015:5–6):

1. Semantic networks: The semantic networks constructed in the discourse analysis of the pericope (2:28–3:10) guide the imagination of the readers and strengthen their expectation of the *parousia*. They also imperatively emphasise an introspective analysis of the reader's present conduct. These networks not only point out the coherence of everything referred to in the text but also involves the reader with the rhetoric embedded in the text as well as with the Elder's arguments. The linguistic construction of paragraph 2:28–3:3 as well as the developing argument of the Elder express a close eschatological parallelism between the present (νῦν, 2:28; 3:2) and the future (ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, 3:2; Du Plessis 1978:70ff.). The identity and character of the reader are critically important for the future (2:28; Du Rand 1979:12). The content of the second paragraph extends the identity and character of the reader by comparing the children of the devil (3:4–8) to the children of God (3:9–10).

The following semantic networks refer to the repetitions and semantic relationships of the various words or concepts or themes and to the rhetoric of the Elder. Its aims is not only to constitute coherence in the pericope but also to propose a certain related identity for the readers and to uphold the conduct that they should follow – which again evokes various spiritualities in the readers.

The first semantic network, indicated in the discourse analysis (Figure 1) as 'a', comprises three family-related references (τεκνία/ἀγαπητοί, 2:28; 3:2, 7). The Elder uses these references to indicate the intimate relationship that exists between him and the readers in the Johannine community in order to identify them as part of the household of God. The second network ('b') refers to both the revelation (φανερο ω) or *parousia* of Jesus (2:28; 3:2; 4:17, which are semantically related and refer to this revelation as the 'Day of Judgment') and the incarnation of Jesus (3:4, 8). The last occurrence of the verb φανερόω refers to the revelation of Jesus as destroying the work of the devil (3:10). The third network ('c') refers to three virtues that the believers (the children of God) should demonstrate (righteousness [2:29; 3:7, 10], purity [3:3] and love [3:10]), which relate to the characters of both the Father and the Son. These virtues can only be achieved when one abides in Jesus. The fourth network ('d') refers to the family metaphor that characterises the believers (3:1, 2; 4–10). The fifth network ('e') refers to the revelation of Jesus as taking away sin (3:5) and destroying the work of the devil (3:8). The sixth network ('f') refers to the child of God who cannot sin, and this forms a chiasm (3:9) that emphasises that the seed of God remains in believers. The last indicated network ('g') compares the children of God with the children of the devil with regard to righteousness and love (3:10). Only two of these networks will be attended to below.

2. Linguistic features: *E*xamples of these are 'the occurrence of the first person plural (we) of personal pronouns (ἡμᾶς, ἡμῖν, ὑμᾶς), the first person plural of verbs (-ῶμεν, ἐσμεν, ἐσόμεθα), the high frequency of adjectives (every one, all [πᾶς];[14] 'no-one' [μηδεὶς], 3:7) and the repetitive chiastic structures,[15] parallelisms[16] and cyclic reasoning[17] in the text' (Van der Merwe 2015:6). These all help the readers to comply with the intention of the text. The eightfold occurrence of the adjective πᾶς, in combination with a participle (3:4, 6 [twice], 9) or with only the participle (ὁ ποιῶν, 2:29; 3:4, 7, 8, 9, 10; cf. ὁ μὴ, 3:10) accentuates the personalised active person (cf. Du Rand 1979:14). These features draw the readers into the events described in the text, and it draws the text into the readers. The reader experiences the reality of being part of the household of God. 'Being part of' emphasises the close relationship between the Father, Jesus and the children of God.

3. Dialectic language: Dialectic discourse is defined as a rhetorical technique that extensively uses antithetical and binary language to convince or persuade another person regarding the truth or correctness of a specific argument (cf. Benjamin 1983:65; Cosigny 1989:281–287; Gadamer 1980:3;

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14. The eightfold use of the phrase πᾶς ὁ [everyone who], followed by a participle, which occurs in 2:29; 3:3, 4, 6 (twice), 9 and 10, creates coherence in the pericope and also substantiates the 'lived experiences' embedded in the text (cf. Brown 1982:118).

15. 2:28; 2:29; 3:1–2; 3:6, 8, 9.

16. 3:2–3; 3:4, 5, 7, 8.

17. 'Abide (2:28; 3:6); right(eous) (2:29; 3:7, 10); revealed (2:28; 3:2); love (3:1, 10); children of God (3:1, 2, 10); born of God (2:29; 3:9 [twice]); children of the devil (3:8, 10)' (Van der Merwe 2015:6).

Holmberg 1977:233; Lake 1986:206f.; Murray 1988:286). Murphy (1971:116) adds to the definition that dialectical discourse also makes use of metaphors referring to transformation or even 'becoming' to convince readers that transformation is not only imaginable but also inevitable.

In the case of 1 John, each dialectical choice[18] becomes an opportunity to direct the readers in making the right decision regarding ethical conduct in the household of God. Thus, dialectic discourse prompts readers to associate with God and to act like children of God. In 2:28–3:10, as already mentioned, the children of God are set against the children of the devil (3:4–10). For the Elder, the Father of the former is righteous (29:1; 3:7) whilst the devil commits sin from the beginning (3:8). His conduct is defined as the works of the devil (3:8). Believers are from God (2:29; 3:9) whilst the children of the devil are not from God (3:10). Believers know God, but the others do not (3:1, 6). The children of God do what is right (2:29; 3:7), and therefore, they will see him through the resurrected and glorified Christ. The children of the devil commit sin, therefore they will not see God (3:6; cf. Van der Merwe 2015:6).

Introspectively, the dialectic discourse in the text and some choices made by the readers create tension and sometimes even guilt within the readers, as well as a longing to do the right thing. This is reminiscent of what Paul says in Romans 7:15 (also v. 19): 'For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.' In addition, the high frequency of dialectic discourse in 1 John (see Tollefson 1999:79–89) is deliberately used by the Elder to communicate intellectually as well as emotionally with the readers, namely to convince them that change is definitely possible and also inevitable 'now' and has critical implications for the *parousia*.

4. Two prominent themes: These occur in the first paragraph (2:28–3:3). They closely relate to one another and run parallel throughout the paragraph to constitute important structural markers. They also contribute to the inherent cohesion of the paragraph, and together, they are responsible for the culminating eschatological spirituality embedded in the phrase '… for we shall see him as He is'. One theme (identity) is then explicitly developed in the second paragraph (3:4–10) whilst the other (eschatology) is implicitly present in the same paragraph. These themes are the following:

a. **The coming of Jesus:** This is the first prominent theme, and it is introduced in 2:28 in the phrase 'when He is revealed, we may have confidence' (ἐὰν φανερωθῇ σχῶμεν παρρησίαν). In this first paragraph (2:28–3:3), a number of eschatological references occur: φανερωθῇ ([revelation], 2:28; 3:2) or παρουσία ([coming], 2:28), which relates semantically to τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως [the Day of Judgment] in 4:17. The expressions παρρησίαν ([confidence], 2:28) and αἰσχυνθῶμεν ([make ashamed], 2:28) form a unit, which is arranged in a chiasm with ἐὰν φανερωθῇ ([when he is revealed], 2:28) and παρουσία ([coming], 2:28). Thus, the eschatological climate and awareness are clearly evident.

18.Also directly successive dialectical choices do so.

In the present, the readers experience confidence and peace through the Father-child relationship (3:1) and will do so in future by being 'the same as' (ὅμοιοι) the Son (3:2; Du Rand 1979:13).

b. **Conforming to the identity of Jesus:** This is the second prominent theme, which is introduced in 2:28 (μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ) and which the Elder discusses until 3:10. The following expressions refer to this conformism: μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ ([abide in him], 2:28), ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ([do what is right], 2:29), ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα ([we shall be like him], 3:2), ἁγνίζει ἑαυτόν ([purify themselves], 3:3) and ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ([love one's brother], 3:10). The Elder clearly states that the certainty of the readers' salvation is based upon their adoption of God in the present and in the future (Du Rand 1979:13).[19]

Throughout this pericope, these two themes are intertwined in a dialectic tension that is created, on the one hand, by the mysterious moment of the coming of Jesus and, on the other hand, by the reality of this world (the real struggle to conform to Jesus' way of living, 2:6). This tension is intensified in the next paragraph (3:4–10) where conforming to the identity of Jesus is explained as a dichotomy, contrasting the lives of the children of God (3:9–10) with those of the children of the devil (3:4–8). This causes anxiety in the readers who have not yet conformed to the life of Jesus and peace and excitement in those who already have.

5. **Intimate forms of address:** By using these two forms of address, 'beloved' (3:2)[20] and 'little children' (2:28; 3:7),[21] the Elder endeavours to make the reading of this epistle a personal experience. When he addresses his readers as 'beloved' (ἀγαπητοί),[22] he firstly wants to attract their attention and secondly wants his readers to identify themselves with him and vice versa. He attempts to emphasise the spiritual truth already pronounced in 3:1 where he stated that, through the love of God, true believers can be called children of God (ἵνα τέκνα θεοῦ κληθῶμεν, 3:1, 2, 10). They are now (νῦν) already children of God (3:2) and they do what is right (ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, 2:29). This emphasises the reality of their present status as children of the Father – νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν (3:2, [now we are children of God]). This status balances the future character of God's children, which the Elder intends to describe in the rest of this verse (Smalley 1989:144), and was meant to encourage and motivate them to live as children of God.

19.'The dominant motif of the first paragraph (2:28–3:3) is being a child of God in the present and also in the future. *Present indications* are: now little children (νῦν, τεκνία); know that … born of him (γινώσκετε ὅτι … ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται, 2:29); that we should be called children of God (ἵνα τέκνα θεοῦ κληθῶμεν, 3:1); and that is what we are (καὶ ἐσμέν, 3:1); the world does not know us (ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει, 3:1); we are God's children now (νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν, 3:2); we know that (οἴδαμεν ὅτι, 3:2); who has this hope (ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα, 3:3) (see also Thomas 2004:150). *Future indications* are: when he is revealed (ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, 2:28); may have confidence (σχῶμεν παρρησίαν, 2:28); not be put to shame (μὴ αἰσχυνθῶμεν, 2:28); at his coming (ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ, 2:28); what we shall be has not yet been revealed (οὔπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα, 3:2); when he is revealed (ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, 3:2); we shall be like him (ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, 3:2); we shall see (ὀψόμεθα, 3:2) (Du Rand 1979:12; Thomas 2004:150–151)' (Van der Merwe 2015:6).

20.Cf. 2:7; 3:21; 4:1, 7, 11.

21.Cf. 2:1, 12; 3:18; 4:4; 5:21.

22.Cf. 2:7; 3:21; 4:11; at 4:1, 7, which in each case introduces a new section. See also the use of 'my dear children' (Τεκνία [μου]) and 'little children' (Παιδία) at 2:1, 18, 28 (Van der Merwe 2015:6).

The second effect: Reading a text composes images

When biblical texts are read, the readers' imagination composes images of what the text presents to them. The reader subjectively and selectively composes '… the images out of the multifarious aspects of the text[23] as well as the metaphors embedded in the text' (cf. Iser 1978:150; Van der Merwe 2015:5). The physical images, material objects, attitudes or events described in the text are imaginatively experienced. The reading process then facilitates the passive fusion between the meaning of a text and the experience of the text in the mind of the readers. This entails a connection between the text and the readers: The readers themselves, '… in constituting the meaning,[24] is also constituted' (Iser 1978:150). At this point, various perspectives of parts of the text move into focus and become actualised in relation to and in comparison with preceding parts. In this reading process, readers constitute a sequence of these images in their minds. The successive images again progressively constitute a certain configuration to generate both a field of meaning and experience (Iser 1978:108–118).[25] Such a configuration is then understood, interpreted and applied in the lives of the readers.

Osborn ([1967] 2009:115), in his research on 'archetypal metaphor in rhetoric', makes a pioneering contribution to the understanding of metaphors. For him, archetypal metaphors create new possibilities both for conducting rhetorical analysis and for the composition of images in the mind. His view of the archetypal metaphor '… carries the idea of basic, unchanging patterns of experience' (Osborn [1967] 2009:115). Osborn ([1967] 2009:116) claims that archetypal metaphors demonstrate a persuasive power because of '… their attachment to basic commonly shared motives' (Osborn [1967] 2009:116). Adams (1983:56–71) also discusses the family metaphor as an archetypal metaphor.

In 1 John, the Elder uses a coherent network of metaphors[26] that relate to the social veracity of 1st-century family life (Lassen 1997:103; Moxnes 1997; Van der Watt 1999:491). He does this to explain important Christian concepts and conduct (Van der Merwe 2010:209). Family metaphors (network 'd' above) are also used quite extensively in this eschatological pericope (2:28–3:10). The Elder writes about the relationship between God and the Johannine Christians from a family perspective. Elsewhere in this epistle, he makes the apophatic statement that 'nobody has ever seen God'. How then can one talk about such an invisible God? By using the family metaphor, the Elder not only makes it possible to talk about this God, but he also explains to the reader the character of the relationship between God and his children. He succeeds in drawing the reader into the text to experience life in the household of God via the characters and events described in the text. He incorporates conventions from the everyday family life of the 1st-century Mediterranean environment that used to be widely accepted in his description of the household of God. He applies these conventions to the actions and events in the community. In so doing, the Elder attempts to initiate and establish images of the social interrelatedness between a father and his children in the minds of the readers (cf. Van der Merwe 2010:209; Van der Watt 1992:272–279).[27]

In 3:1 the Elder proclaims the theme of the fatherhood of God, which he already introduced as early as 1:2, 3, where he refers to Jesus as his Son (1:3). He relates this to the idea that believers can be called 'children of God' (3:1, 2, 10). More family terminology occurs, such as 'born of him' (2:29),[28] 'God's children' (3:2),[29] 'Son of God' (3:8), 'born of God' (twice, 3:9), 'God's seed' (3:9), 'children' (3:10) and 'brothers' (3:10). The behaviour in the family refers to the 'love the Father has given' (3:1), to 'do what is right' (2:29; 3:7), 'to live pure' and to 'love their brothers' (3:10). All of these references create images and lived experiences of the environment of family life. The readers of the 1st century were familiar with these images and could identify with them. All this then engenders eschatological hope (3:3, ἐλπίδα) and longing to see the Father and Jesus the Son of this divine family after the *parousia* (Van der Merwe 2015:6).

The use of these relational family images[30] entangles believers with one another and corporately with God (see 1:3 on fellowship) in relationships of which behavioural expectations inherently form part. This suggests that familial images referred to and used in written texts can

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23.*Texts are linguistically polysemous*: A text is, by virtue of its linguisticity, polysemous (see Ricoeur 1973:97–111). A text cannot be reduced to a single, univocal, literal meaning. The polyvalence of words and the semantic richness of larger linguistic units generate various valid interpretations in different readers. The interpreter today also has an advantage over the readers of the 1st century. The tradition that is operative in the contemporary interpreter helps him or her to draw from the text richer meanings than were available to the original readers (see Gadamer 1975:300–307; Ricoeur 1976:43–44; Schneiders 2003:185).

24.*Total reader involvement*: Schneiders (1982:59) indicates that the embodiment of a text finds its meaning (and *gestalt*) in some literary genre that operates in such a way as to engage the reader, cognitively and affectively. For her then, the literary genre is not so much a tool for classifying different texts but rather a strategy for total reader involvement with the subject matter of the text (Schneiders 1982:60). Even Bultmann (1984:145–153) argued over three decades ago that exegesis without presuppositions is not possible. Thompson (2001:204) refers to Iser (1978:275), who declares that the meaning of a written text occurs not in the text itself but in the connection between the text and the reader. It 'brings the literary work into existence' Thompson (2000:204). Meaning, then, is found only when '… the imaginative activity of the reader seeks to create coherence while reading progressively through the imaginatively-composed biblical text' (Thompson 2000:204).

25.See also Robbins (2008:1–26) on his discussion and explanation of rhetography and rhetology.

26.Metaphorical language forms a vital part in any culture (Lassen 1997:103). Its main function is to '… provide a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:154).

27.For some of the thoughts on family life, I rely on my publication on 'Domestic architecture: Culture, fictive kinship and identity in the Gospel of John' (Van der Merwe 2010).

28.Three times, the Elder highlights their spiritual birth, which forms the basis for their status as children: 2:29; 3:9a, b.

29.Six times in this pericope, the Elder notes the status of believers as the children of God (2:28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10a, b).

30.According to Adams (1983:56), the family is a relational image. This image draws its archetypal 'force' from the traditions around the cultural construct of 'family'. This entity, 'family', appears to be one of the oldest entities of social cohesion. Obviously, humans have shared the family experience for as long as they have existed. Connotations of the different roles of family members carry with them deeply persuasive implications. Hence, familial images are derived from a 'common place and literal associations between human beings. They are the simple states of familial relatedness that we pass through as members of the social matrix, where conjointment with others is the source of procreation and culture, and the creative grounding of our existence' (Adams 1983:56).

evoke primary '… actions, attitudes, and emotions' (Adams 1983:57). By using household expressions, the Elder involves the personal cognitive, emotional and social attachments that were familiar within early extended family life. This he then applies within the sphere of believers. These expectations of family life are embedded in the archetypal relational pattern that featured through centuries of human existence. 'The concept 'son', for example, entails certain generalisable rights, duties, privileges, attitudes, pitfalls, problems, etc., which are associated with it. These associations can set up expectations, attitudes, emotions and actions' (Adams 1983:57) if believers could be made to feel 'son-ish'. The same pertains to the figures of the 'father', the 'brother' as well as 'life in the family' (Adams 1983:56).

When the Elder tries to get his readers imaginatively bonded to and involved in this kind of family life, he discloses a collective orientation. Such an orientation is imperative because one of the paradigms designed in 1 John was to bind people together for collective action and to distinguish them from other groups (see Van der Merwe 2010:207–226). For creating such collective experience and bonding, I already indicated that the Elder had at his disposal a range of familiar familial images to which he could refer. The family relationship amongst believers constitutes and strengthens a unity spelled out by means of cultural or religious norms. In this sense, relational images have a 'bonding power' that distinguishes them from other references of categorisation. The taxonomy 'brothers and sisters' (1 Jn 3:10) is a more powerful reference for unification and affection than 'people' because 'people' lacks the familial connotation and force (cf. Adams 1983:56f.).

In contrast with the *familia Dei* [household of God], the Elder displays the *familia diabolus* [household of the devil, 'c' above] in the last paragraph (3:4–10) with a specific reference to 'the devil' and 'the children of the devil' (3:10). Again he uses household terminology. He namely refers to those in opposition to the 'children of God' as 'children of the devil' (3:8, 10). The devil is their father (see Jn 8:44); he has been sinning from the beginning (3:8). The works of this devil and his children are 'to sin', which is depicted here as lawlessness (3:4) and 'not to do what is right' (3:10)' (Van der Merwe 2015:5). This is the dominant structural marker of this paragraph (3:4–10; Du Rand 1979:13).

The reading of written texts gradually evokes a conceptual world. The picturing of the opposing images of family life (*familia Dei* vs *familia diabolus*) in this paragraph creates lived experiences of tension and concern in the reader. This means '… that textual perspectives contrast with each other' (Waaijman 2002:745). As the early Christians read the texts, figures arose and their (different and various) actions became clear. Certain figures were characterised, some more than other, and were connected. As the text developed, themes developed or were pictorially illuminated from other perspectives (Waaijman 2002:746). The picturing of opposites helps the reader to understand, distinguish and experience entities or particular events in a certain way (Van der Merwe

2015:5). This environment of opposites creates tension within believers, which is further critically enhanced by the presence of the two eschatological texts (2:28; 3:2). These tensions affect the 'lived experiences' of the believers through what the text communicates about God and Jesus.

The above account underscores the strong rhetorical dynamic and imaging of the family metaphor. When family metaphoric is applied to a particular group of people in a specific situation, bonding power, images and lived experiences are created, and the reader is drawn imaginatively into the sphere of the household of God where the children of God are united into a coherent group.

The third effect: The dialectic of pretension and retention is created when the text is read out aloud and repeatedly

Occurrences of public reading and recitation and even of public performance of Scripture are evident in Scripture (Dudrey 2003:235).[31] Sometimes biblical writers explicitly requested that their texts be read aloud to the church.[32] Most New Testament epistles simply assumed that the entire local church or congregation or all the congregations of the city or the region would hear the text read aloud (Dudrey 2003:235). These epistles were read over and over again when the Christians assembled on Sundays for worship. This may have brought those who heard the readings a sense of proximity to the text (Waaijman 2002:744).[33] Repeated (contemplative) reading or studying of the same (biblical) text will create various lived experiences. This will also happen as a text becomes more familiar to the reader and as the reader develops more insight into it.

1 John provides a specific example of a biblical document consciously written to be read aloud to an audience – a document of 'oral literature', filled with identifiable oral and auditory features[34] (Dudrey 2003:236). Witherington (2006:410) also agrees that 1 John was read aloud.[35]

31. For example, Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth. See also Revelation 1:3, 'Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it' (Dudrey 2003:236).

32. Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; Revelation 1:3 (where ἀναγινωσκω describes oral reading).

33. This also happens today when we read Scripture. Over the years, believers have constructed a theological framework that lies latent in their subconscious. When they read Scripture or listen to the gospel, this theological framework is called up into the conscious mind to help them understand the gospel cognitively.

34. Dudrey (2003:235–255) focuses substantial attention on the notion of orality in 1 John. According to him, 'Nonliterate people can remember large amounts of oral material if they are stated memorably. Characteristic oral devices – aphorisms, balanced structures, parallelisms, antitheses, alliterations, assonances, verbal jingles – help an auditory audience follow along. Designed for reading aloud publicly, 1 John is full of identifiable oral features. These illuminate its character, message, and structure' (Dudrey 2003:235).

35. An invaluable study on literacy in ancient Greece by Thomas (1992:91) endorses that 'the written word in the ancient world, particularly the written record of literature, was meant to be heard rather than read silently'. Gavrilov (1997:56) verifies Thomas's findings and points out that '… it may be taken for granted that through antiquity books were written to be read aloud'. Gavrilov (1997:56) refers to the work of the Balogh (1927:84–109, 202–240), who assembled passages from ancient and later Christian authors. With these passages, he attempted to demonstrate that '… reading was both practised and conceived by the ancients … to be loud, also when it was done in solitude' (Gavrilov 1997:56).

The reading of a written text causes the reader to become more vigilant and active. When such a text is descriptive, it arouses images in the imagination of the reader. These images emerge against the background of what the reader has already read and also (during repetitions) against the background of what still lies ahead to be read. The text continues to disclose itself at every moment of reading. This creates various 'lived experiences'. The unfolding of the text takes place against 'the combined background of memory and expectation' (Van der Merwe 2015:7; Waaijman 2002:744).

Husserl (referred to in Waaijman 2002:744) labels this recalled background 'retention' and the awaited background 'pretension' (see also Iser 1978:112). Retention comprises the already read text, and pretension – which is still untenanted – the text still to be read. 'The tension created between retention and pretension controls the reading experience' (Van der Merwe 2015:7; see also Waaijman 2002:744).

In this pericope (2:28–3:10), the verb φανερόω [to make visible, to appear] occurs six times (2:28; 3:2 [twice], 5, 8, 10). This high frequency dominates the whole of the Elder's line of thought (cf. Westcott 1902:98), and creates a dialectic of retention and pretension. The verb φανερωθῇ in 2:28 relates semantically to παρουσία (2:28), from which it receives its meaning, and occurs again in 3:2, the same meaning referring to the second coming of Jesus somewhere in the future. In verses 3:5, 8 (also 1:2) ἐφανερώθη has a different, although semantically related, eschatological meaning, referring to the incarnation of the Son of God. This appearance of the Son of God, which commenced at the incarnation (1:2) and presently continues to be in effect (3:5, 8), will be completed in the future (2:28; 3:2; Smalley 1989:146).

The Elder converges the two eschatological and revelatory events (the incarnation and *parousia* of Jesus) by using a similar verb, φανερωθῇ [to make visible], in reference to these events. Thus he wants to describe these two events (incarnation and *parousia*) as a single, all-embracing appearance or epiphany of God. Both of these events, as depicted in the retention and pretension of the verb φανερωθῇ, reveal the identity of God that became visible (experienced) through Jesus Christ. When the first readers read φανερωθῇ in 2:28, they would have recalled (retention) the incarnation of the Son as referred to in 1:1–3, as well as its 'pretension' as an epiphany of the love of God (4:9), his involvement in the redemption of sinners (3:5; 4:9, 10, 14) and his involvement in the destruction of the works of the devil (3:8).[36] Still part of the pretension is that, at the event of the *parousia*, Christ will again be revealed as an epiphany of the identity of God (3:2). At this event, the righteousness (1:9; 2:29) of God will be experienced (cf. Schnackenburg 1992:152), as well as his glory (Jn 17:24), love (1 Jn 4:8, 16) and purity (1:5, 3:3; Van der Merwe 2006:1055–1056; also Van der Merwe 2015:8).

36. See also the Gospel of John: to reveal the Father (17:6–8); to glorify the Father (17:4); to do the will of the Father (4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29).

The fourth effect: Entanglement in a text – The way new experiences are formed

New converts and those who discover new truths in a text after repetitive readings are, in the manner described above, caught up in the reading of the text. At first, these Christians do not know what is happening to them. They probably only feel the need to talk about these new eschatological truths (information) that they have discovered and the new life in Jesus of which they have become aware. They do this in order to find out more about what it is in which they have become entangled and what is expected of them to enable them to become part of the household of God. Their presence in the text depends upon their association with the correlative familiar objects or events in their minds. When they are present in any event, such as abiding in Christ and living righteous or pure lives, then something must have happened to them (Iser 1978:131). Iser (1978:131) explains that the more the 'present' reality and experience of the text means to the readers, the more their characteristic selves will, at least for the extent of the reading of the text, draw them back into the 'past'. This then implies that the literary text of 1 John transfers the established views of the readers to the past by itself becoming a present, lived experience. Such a present experience of the text by them is unlikely as long as their characteristic, personal views form their present. 'Experiences do not come about merely through the recognition of the familiar. Experiences only arise when the familiar is transcended or undermined' (Iser 1978:131). Thus, each new action or acceptance of new truths become new experiences.

The entanglement of the reader with a text has the effect that various criteria of orientation are pushed back into the past whilst their validity for the new present is suspended. What happens here is that the past of the reader, whatever it might be, starts '… to interact with the as yet unfamiliar presence of the text' (Iser 1978:132). During the course of reading, these experiences continue to change. This is because the attainment of any form of experience is not a matter of calculation, of adding on, but rather '… a restructuring of what the readers already possess' (Iser 1978:132).

When reading the pericope dealt with in this essay (2:28–3:10), something happens to the reader's personal collection of experiences. These experiences cannot remain unaffected. This is because the presence of the experiences in the text has not been constituted through the recognition of what the reader already knows. The familiar experiences are only momentary; their significance changes during the course of the reading. The higher the frequency of these moments, the clearer will be the interaction between the present text and the past experience. New experiences then emerge when the experiences that have been stored are restructured. Such restructuring is what provides to new experiences their forms (Iser 1978:132).

Conclusion

This essay studied the eschatological pericope in 1 John (2:28–3:10) to discover and exploit the spiritualities embedded in this text. It became evident that the events foreseen in this text have implications for how people should live prior to these eschatological events. This essay probed how certain mechanisms in the rhetoric of the Elder, embedded in the text, constitute the following effects on the spirituality of the readers.

The reading of literary texts creates dynamic interactions between the text and the reader. The Elder uses various semantic networks and figures of style (chiastic structures and parallelisms). The two parallel and complementary themes and dialectic language contribute towards drawing readers into the text so that they become part of the dynamically constructed text. The interactions between the text and the reader constitute involvement, tensions and responsibilities, and they influence the emotions of the reader.

The reading of literary texts composes images in the mind of the reader. In 1 John, the family metaphors used by the Elder create not only distinct household images but also family structures, which reflect on relationships with which the reader should associate and to which the reader should conform, following family conventions. This should evoke 'lived experiences' of affection in all the members in the *familia Dei* within the eschatological tension of νῦν [now] and ἐὰν [when].

During the reading of a text, a dialectic of pretension and retention occurs. This is effected through the high-frequency use of repetitive words, phrases, concepts and activities throughout the selected text and helps the reader to become involved in the events of the *familia Dei*.

The entanglement of the reader in the text evokes new lived experiences. Stored experiences are restructured to constitute new experiences.

Acknowledgements
Competing interests

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