THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: CONTEXTUALISATION AS
METAPHORIC ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT
The use of metaphor, transposed from small to large units of speech is analogical to the structuralist transfer of the laws of language organisation from units of levels below the sentence to units of an order above or equal to the sentence. The metaphor can be defined as a word in counter-determining context. The unconventional contextual use of the metaphoric term creates a tension which can be explained in terms of the interaction view of metaphor. The metaphor functions as a contextual filter which selects, emphasises, suppresses and organises features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject. The contextualisation of a text can be defined as a text in counter-determining context. The tension between text and contemporary context or discourse is reminiscent of the tension between vehicle and frame in the metaphor. The contextualisation functions as contextual filter of the text which selects, emphasises, suppresses and organises features of the context or discourse by implying statements about it that normally apply to the text in its conventional or original context or discourse. As an activity, the metaphor, as well as the contextualisation has socio-political significance since it is determined by the discourse of the reader or contextualiser.

1 INTRODUCTION
The aim of this essay is to sketch a theory of contextualisation in terms of structuralist poetics and metaphor theory. Our use of metaphor, transposed from small to large units of speech (language as parole or performance) is analogical to the structuralist transfer of the laws of language organisation from units of levels below the sentence to units of an order above or equal to the sentence (cf Levi-Strauss 1958, Barthes 1966, Greimas 1966, Propp 1968 & Todorov 1973). I follow five steps. In the first section I discuss the function of context in the case of the linguistic sign, the metaphoric term and the text; secondly, the function of discourse and its relation to context; then the sociology of the world in the text and the world in front of the text; fourthly, the significance of isoto pic and equivocal discourses and finally contextualisation as an activity.

In this article I propose to explore a working hypothesis which I want to formulate as follows: aspects of the explanation of metaphor might serve as a paradigm for the explanation of the de-contextualisation and
the re-contextualisation of a text. What is at stake in this endeavour is the possibility of describing the process and activities involved in the contextualisation of a text.


2.1 In terms of Jakobson's definition of the poetic function (1960:358), 'the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination'. The two operations of selection and combination provide each linguistic sign with two sets of interpreters (Peirce 1931) or two references to interpret the sign, viz the code (on the hierarchical level) and the syntactic context (on the horizontal level) (Steiner 1976:73). Jakobson goes on to associate selection with equivalence or semantic similarity and combination with contiguity or (syntactic) context (Jakobson 1971a:255).

Capitalising on the work of another Prague structuralist, S Karcevskij, Mukarovsky (1976) sees selection as a more complicated process than combination. Selection is not just the choice of a ready-made sign from a group of similar ones, but exhibits the conscious effort to create a sign against the background of the existing linguistic system. The process of selection therefore constitutes the particular, individual, sociological and psychological designation of a sign in its relation to the general, social and ideological level of language-use of a particular speech community as represented in its code. Every word in speech can therefore be seen as a homonym (cf Steiner 1976:73). In speech, the linguistic sign can be seen as a new mapping of the relations between elements of the code and what they designate. The sign can also be seen as the intersection between the code and designated reality. On hearing an utterance, the perceiver would attempt to construct a tertium comparationis, that is a meaning accounting for the relation between the conventional referent of the word being used and the referent it has in the immediate syntactic context or situation of combination. The semantic fields within the code (which exist 'in absentia') are capable of supplying the tertium comparationis. Such a mental construct, that is recognising a sameness and a difference between the word's general (dictionary) meaning and its particular significance (which equals uniqueness) in speech, is part of all decoding. It is therefore part and parcel of poetic activity that the coded features of language (on the level of langue or competence) and the uncoded features of extra linguistic reality (on the level of parole or performance) interact. The particular designation of a word therefore assigns the reader or perceiver the task of discovering the referential relation (or tertium comparationis) between the designated reality (in its code) and the word. The

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1 Throughout this article, the terms 'context' and 'contextualisation' are first and foremost used in terms of the combination or contiguity of language units. The smallest contextual unit is therefore constituted by the sentence. The word acquires context by virtue of its contiguity with other words. The sentence can function as part of a discourse, as a literary text, or as part of a discourse as speech.
perceiver must associate the referent of the word with a class of referents in order to understand the designation. This type of selection designates the intersection of the dual perspectives of the word as the referential similarity and/or particularity of the word.

...in designation language is viewed from the standpoint of the reality designated (synonymity), and at the same time the reality designated is viewed from the standpoint of a given lexical system (homonymity).

(Mukarovsky 1976:47)

This implies two things: on the paradigmatic level the linguistic sign has a 'surplus of meaning' which transcends its significance in particular contexts. On the horizontal or sentence level, the linguistic sign's significance is 'fixed' and retroactively determined by contiguous sentence constituents. What is important for this discussion, is the fact that the nature of this 'surplus of meaning' of a 'word', 'vehicle' and 'text' is best accounted for by identifying this event as metaphoric in nature.

In the act of decoding, combination, contiguity or syntactic context plays a decisive role. Without the syntactic context, a designation refers to nothing more than the dictionary meaning of the lexeme as far as the decoder is concerned. In speech, the value of a term therefore exists as a function of its context. This notion led Mukarovsky to distinguish between 'semantic dynamics' and 'semantic statics'. The word without context is a 'semantic static'. In the verbal utterance the word as a dynamic semantic unit occurs as 'a contexture' or 'as a gradually realized context' (Mukarovsky 1976:50). The utterance remains semantically 'open' until it is complete. This means that the linguistic unit simultaneously serves as a context for other units and/or finds its own context by virtue of its contiguity with other linguistic units (Jakobson 1971a). Saussure (1967:282) characterises the relation between parts and wholes as their 'reciprocal solidarity'. In a literary text, the context in which lexical signs refer is constituted by the whole work, that is by the immediate sentence context, as well as macro context — that of the whole work (Jakobson 1971b). In speech, the context is constituted by the discourse taking place. In the work or discourse as a whole, the semantic quality of the word will similarly only appear gradually. Its significance will only become apparent through retention (or analepsis) and protention (or prolepsis) (cf Jakobson 1971b:280ff & Steiner 1976:83). As will become clear from the discussion of metaphor, the description of the function of the linguistic sign above shows that 'the metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language' (Richards 1936:92).

2 For an interesting exercise, the reader of this article might reread 2.1 above replacing the concepts of '(linguistic) sign' and 'word' with that of 'vehicle'; also 'sentence' with that of 'metaphor' or 'metaphoric expression'. Although this is an interesting exercise, based on the axis of substitution borrowed by Jakobson from Saussure, it does not account for all the complexities of metaphor.
2.2 In terms of metaphor theory, Richards's (1936:93) definition of metaphor inaugurated a new era in metaphor research and understanding.

In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction.

According to Richards (1936), Beardsley (1958) and Black (1962) the metaphorised word in the sentence (or 'vehicle'/ 'focus'/ 'subsidiary subject') interacts with the non-metaphoric units (or tenor/frame/principal subject). It is not only the terms 'vehicle' and 'tenor' that Richards introduces for the metaphoric term and the rest of the metaphoric phrase which are significant for metaphor research, but especially his idea of the interaction of these two entities. This idea is developed as follows. The metaphor functions by applying to the frame or (syntactic) context 'a system of associated commonplaces' or 'potential range of connotations' (Beardsley 1962:300). Only the focus's 'system of related commonplaces' or 'compatible features' (Abraham 1975:7) is filtered to the principal subject. The metaphor 'selects, emphasises, suppresses and organises features of the principal subject or context by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject' (Black 1962:44f). Abraham (1975:27) shows that the compatible features of the subsidiary subject are re-topicalised and transferred to the principal subject. He defines re-topicalisation as the process by which 'features of all the encyclopedic features of a lexeme with a low priority in the normal meaning of a lexeme have to be given higher priority' (have to be re-topicalised). In terms of Black's (1962:44f) filter, the metaphor functions as a filter which superimposes re-topicalised semantic features of the vehicle on the principal subject. This relationship between vehicle or focus and frame or context can also be explicated in terms of the tertium comparationis between the metaphorised word and its remainder or context. In this case the tertium comparationis is the encyclopedic relations between the vehicle and the frame of the metaphor as expressed in the re-topicalised semantic features of the vehicle. This involves 'shifts' in the meaning of words. In terms of Black's interaction view of metaphor (Black 1962:38ff) the new context (or frame in his terminology) 'imposes extension of meaning upon the focal word'. The use of a metaphor therefore fosters insight in the principal subject, frame or context.

In a metaphor, the significance of the metaphor is determined by the relationships and interaction of meanings between the 'image donor' or vehicle and its counter-determining or alien new context (what Black calls a frame). A metaphor may therefore be defined as a word in counter-determining context (Weinrich 1967:6 & 1976:320). The semantic characteristics of both 'image donor' and 'image receiver' can be identified in terms of component or constituent or sem analysis. This applies to the mi-

3 Cf especially Maartens (1980) for possibly the most extensive explicati-

cro-metaphoric ('Mikro Metaphorik') analysis of a metaphor. What is true of the micro-context of the metaphoric term is however also true of the macro-context. Subsequently, Weinrich (1976:330-339) distinguishes between metaphors of the context ('Kontext Metaphorik') and metaphors of the text ('Text Metaphorik'). The 'metaphorics of the context' analyse the way in which the text thematically creates (through its contiguity) a context of expectations in which the model reader (Eco 1979 & 1983) experiences the metaphoric term as alien, or in a relationship of tension with its context (Weinrich 1976:334). This thematically created context consists of linguistic utterances which are in line with the competence of the reader, as well as with neighboring metaphors (which Brooke-Rose 1958, identifies as replacement metaphors). The 'metaphorics of the text' study the text in the situation, that is in relation to it's socio-historic, political, economic and pedagogic situation. Steiner (1976:76) states that if the text does not provide us with any general or particular extra-textual clue, it is not possible to understand the metaphoric term. The polarisation of characters or socio-political groups in texts have to be studied in relation to it's reference to the socio-historic situation, not in terms of reflecting it (then one would succumb to the 'referential fallacy' - Eco 1976 and Petersen 1978), but in terms of the fact that 'all language is basically socially situated and constituted' (Mukarovsky 1970) and that the language of a particular text belongs, paradigmatically to a particular socially based code. The interaction between the metaphorical term and the counter-determining context, macro context and situational (sociological) context of the text determines the sense of a metaphor. The influence of the sociological level of context will be discussed below. Richards (1936:32) (cf also Gadamer 1965:275) regards the entire literary narrative as the context of the metaphor. Although from different vantage points, Mukarovsky (1977a) and Weinrich (1967) regard the entire poem and its socio-historical situation (as represented in the aesthetic object) as the context of the metaphor. In the same way, every socially based concept, phrase, sentence, periscope, chapter, book and literary genre in the New Testament is to be regarded as the context for the interaction of a vehicle and it's frame.

When the metaphoric term (vehicle) is introduced into a new context, two things happen simultaneously. On the one hand, this activity implies that the vehicle is removed from its 'appropriate' frame or context. As such, it is de-contextualised, that is it loses some of its intra linguistic as well as extra linguistic levels of context and thereby some of its relevant or appropriate extensions of meaning. An 'expropriation' then takes place. On the other hand, when it is introduced into a new frame or context, new intra linguistic, as well as extra linguistic levels of context are appropriated to the vehicle. As such, the vehicle is then re-contextualised, obviously with new levels of linguistic, as well as social contexts. It is precisely this moment of re-contextualisation which reveals the metaphor as an interactive event, activity or practice. The metaphor as such, or more precisely the re-contextualisation of the vehicle, brings about an interaction between the meanings constituted by the vehicle in its 'appropriate context(s)' and the meanings constituted by the vehicle in its 'new context(s)'. In analysis, the exegete will be able to identify the linguistic and semantic characteristics of the metaphoric
term in its 'original' and 'non-metaphoric' context, as well as in its new context. In terms of the interaction view of metaphor, the exegete will be able to construct a tertium comparationis, that is of all those semantic characteristics which are common to both the first and second levels of contexts. This is an important activity as it will reveal the body of meaning or semantic properties which is contextualised in the new context or situation of combination.

When we interpret the metaphor as a contextualisation, we move one step further. In this case we interpret beyond the interaction view of metaphor. Since some of the semantic traits of the metaphoric term on the first or original contextual level are, for obvious reasons, not transferred to the second or metaphorical contextual level, one can say that the vehicle, as metaphoric term, has a 'surplus of meaning' not accounted for by the original level. The same is true if one looks at the metaphoric term from the perspective of the metaphor. In its new frame or context, the metaphoric term is determined by the semantic characteristics constituted by the tertium comparationis, as well as by the contextual levels which are added in view of the new or second level of contexts, constituted by contiguous syntactic units into which it is introduced. As such, the significance of the metaphor is not to be equated and limited to the tertium comparationis. The new context adds new levels of meaning to it.

Looking back on the argument so far, we can describe the function of context as that activity which causes the same metaphoric term to acquire two different sets of 'meanings' in two distinct contexts, namely its non-metaphoric and its metaphoric contexts. We can say that these contexts are as wholes — and consisting of different levels of syntactic (and social) contexts within their own frames of reference — hierarchically related to the metaphoric term. As such, they are also mutually exclusive. In other words, it would be a fallacy to endeavour to find similarities between certain levels of context of the first and second order. The metaphoric term functions within two distinct and mutually exclusive horizons or levels of context (cf however the discussion of the isotopy of discourse below).

2.3 In every reading, interpretation or contextualisation of a text, the reader, interpreter or contextualiser experiences 'die Stellung zwischen Fremdheit und Vertrautheit...der historisch gemeinten, abständigen Gegenständlichkeit und der Zugehörigkeit zu einer Tradition' and 'das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Text und Gegenwart' (Gadamer 1965:279 & 290), the original and the present context. It is an imperative for the interpreter to reveal this tension (cf Thiselton 1980). It is precisely this tension, this alien aspect of the text, this 'shock' or 'clash of meanings' which reveals the metaphoric nature of the text (cf Beardsley 1962:296; Mukarovsky 1970:89; Ricoeur 1982c).

To account for the metaphoric nature of the contextualisation of a text I want to propose an interaction view of contextualisation. According to this view, the contextual reading or contextualisation of a text metaphorises the text, or more specifically the 'aesthetic object', brought about by the artistically structured text (Mukarovsky 1970, 1976). Just as in the case of metaphor, the figurative use of the aesthetic object or semantic characteristics in a text (brought about by its structure) basically
takes place when a text from an alien context or discourse situation is introduced into a new context or discourse situation. The parallel is clear: the metaphorised text is equivalent to the vehicle/focus/subsidiary subject and its discursive and new context to the tenor/frame/principal subject or context of the metaphor. Contextualisation can therefore be defined as a text (more specifically the aesthetic object) in counter-determining context — the metaphorised text, together with its new context, that is the discourse into which it is introduced, thus constitutes the interaction from which the tertium comparationis is integrated into the reader's discourse.

The metaphorised text functions by applying to the discursive situation a system of associated common places or potential range of connotations. Only the text's system of related common places or compatible features (Abraham 1975:7) is filtered to the context. The interaction between text and discourse constitutes an interactive event or contextualisation which selects, emphasises, suppresses and organises features of the discourse by implying statements about it that normally apply to the text (cf Black 1962:44f). In terms of Abraham (1975:27), the compatible features of the text are re-topicalised and transferred to the reader's discourse. In terms of Black's filter, the filter superimposes re-topicalised semantic features of the text on the discourse. In terms of the tertium comparationis, the compatible features of the text are the structures and semantic features (constituted by the interactive event between the text and the discourse) which are re-topicalised and transferred to the reader's or contextualiser's discourse. This involves 'shifts' in the meaning of the text. In terms of the interaction view of contextualisation, the new context or discourse imposes extension of meaning upon the text.

The main problem which confronts the contextualiser in terms of the text's ostensive reference, that is its fulfillment in a multi-layered extra-textual world, manifests itself on two levels, namely the level of the original context and that of the current context. Ricoeur (1982b:158) describes two ways of reading as corresponding to these references of the text.

By reading we can prolong and reinforce the suspense which affects the text's reference to a surrounding world and to the audience of speaking subjects: that is the explanatory attitude. But we can also lift the suspense and fulfill the text in present speech. It is this second aim of reading which is the real aim of reading.

Although the socio-political, economic and educational context is only one aspect of the aesthetic object (the first way of reading), it is an indispensable aspect — it forms the basis of its structures and concepts. An adequate understanding of the aesthetic object of the text requires at least some understanding of its original socio-political context. It is obvious that an adequate understanding of the socio-political context or discourse into which the text is introduced (the second aim of reading), is even more important.

3 THE FUNCTION OF DISCOURSE AND ITS RELATION TO CONTEXT

Ricoeur (1982b:145) defines a text as 'any discourse fixed by writing'. A
text therefore constitutes an emancipation from the oral, dialogical or discourse situation. 'From the moment that the text escapes from its author and from its situation, it also escapes from its original audience' (Ricoeur 1982d:192). In terms of Frege's (1970) distinction between the sense and reference of a text, the text causes an upheaval or 'explosion' (cf Ricoeur 1982a) of the relations between language and its referential aspect, that is the world or circumstantial milieu and the subjectivities or interlocutors of the original communication situation. One can therefore not analyse the text as an event in terms of its reference to its 'original extra-textual context'. This can only be possible if one is in the physical context or partakes in the ostensive world of discourse. However, the textualised discourse does refer, viz in what Ricoeur (1982a) calls the 'world of the text'. The text constitutes and refers in its own world. Ingarden (1968) states that this world is constituted by 'intentionale Satzkorrelate' (sequent intentional sentence correlatives). Each particular sequence of sentence correlative opens up a particular horizon. This horizon, obviously has social realities ingrained in it (cf Jauss 1982). As the reader reads, it is gradually modified or changed by the succeeding sentences (Iser 1974:278).

In terms of its communicative function, Mukarovsky (1977b:88) identifies the subject of the work, its 'message' or 'aesthetic object' (constituted by the entire structured work) as oriented toward a distinct existence that mediates between the artist and the addressee(s). The work does not comprise a direct reflection of either its author's psychic dispositions or the ideological, economic, social or cultural situation of the given milieu. It is the particular aesthetic object of a particular work which is mediated as a message which has this function. The aesthetic object does contain a social, political, economic, educational and ideological basis (Mukarovsky 1977a:87). The aesthetic object of a text is that socially based body of meaning which is constituted by the creative totality of structures and the function of the words of a text. As such, the aesthetic object of a text is a multi-layered structured body of meanings. These 'layers or structures of meaning' can roughly be identified in terms of literary, social, economic, educational and other relevant structures constituting the aesthetic object.

Mukarovsky (1970) affirms the social nature of both the work or text and the recipient (or his/her discourse). He respectively describes these entities 'as social sign' and 'as a social creature, a member of a collective'. The extra-textual social reality is incorporated into the artwork as a presupposition. This presupposition is based on the prior penetration of reality 'as a particular social structure' into the very structure of art and its recipient. The non-ostensive reference of a text points towards a possible world. 'Texts speak of possible worlds and of possible ways of orienting oneself in these worlds' (Ricoeur 1982c:177). The contextualiser therefore, on the one hand, apprehends the proposed worlds which are opened up by the non-ostensive reference of the text. On the other hand, the contextualiser applies this non-ostensive reference of the text in terms of his/her own real world.

This event has two sides. Firstly: as constituent part of the 'aesthetic object' which the contextualiser creates, the text is de-contextualised in terms of its original context, and secondly, it is re-contextualised by
the reader in his/her own context (Ricoeur 1982a:139). This activity implies that the text is removed from its appropriate or original discourse. As such, it is **de-contextualised**, that is it loses some of its intra-linguistic, as well as extra-linguistic levels of context and thereby some of its relevant or appropriate extensions of meaning. On the other hand, when it is introduced into a new discourse, new intra-linguistic, as well as extra-linguistic levels of context are appropriated to the text. As such, the text is then **re-contextualised**, obviously with new levels of linguistic, as well as social contexts as presuppositions built into its very frame. As a contextualisation, the textual traits present in the discourse of the reader — s/he is a member of a collective! — are structurally ingrained into the frame of the discourse. It is precisely this moment of re-contextualisation which reveals the contextualisation as an interactive event, activity or practice in which semantic traits function as variable entities appropriated by the reader or contextualiser according to his/her own discourse needs or preferences (cf 5 below). His/her own social and ideological predisposition therefore determines the contextualisation.

According to this line of argument, the activity whereby a contextualisation is accomplished can be put in reverse. I believe that this procedure, that is to see contextualisation as a metaphorical activity or practice, can be utilised to analyse and describe texts which are contextualisations in themselves. When we interpret a text as a contextualisation, we move one step further. In this case we interpret beyond the interaction view of contextualisation and start to take the contextualisation and the discourse (as speech, as well as social reality) in which it is embedded, apart at the semes!

In terms of the reference of New Testament texts, we are confronted with the problem that there is no common spatio-temporal network for text and reader. The concrete conditions for ostensive reference do not exist anymore. What is more, the particular (aesthetic) nature of the gospels as literary creations jeopardises their epistemological use in terms of historical questions. Regardless of these facts, however, the reader experiences these texts as linking up with reality in some way or another. Ricoeur (1982a:141) explains the quality of this 'reality' in terms of existentialism as follows:

... the abolition of the first order reference, an abolition effected by fiction and poetry, is the condition of possibility for the freeing of a second order reference which reaches the world not only at the level of manipulable objects, but at the level that Husserl designated by the expression *Lebenswelt* and Heidegger by the expression 'being-in-the-world'.

The idea that interpretation (contextualisation in terms of this article) requires an explication of the type of being-in-the-world unfolded 'in front of the text' leads Ricoeur (1982a:142) to further capitalise on Heidegger's view (1962) that understanding corresponds dialectically to being in a situation. Applied to the theory of the text, this dialectic entails 'the projection of our own most possibilities' (Heidegger 1962) in terms of the proposed world of the text which the reader could inhabit. Just
like poetry and fiction, the New Testament texts opens new possibilities of being-in-the-world, not only under the modality of being-given, but under the modality of power-to-be. It is precisely in and through fiction (which utilises metaphorical language) that the redescription of reality can take place (Ricoeur 1982b:164). The application ('Anwendung') or appropriation ('Aneignung') of a text basically entails the appropriation of a proposed world. This world is not behind the text as a hidden intention of the author but 'in front of it'. The world which the text invites the reader to appropriate is, in Heideggerian or existentialist terms that world which the work unfolds, discovers and reveals (Heidegger 1962). This activity of contextualisation instigates a new discourse with one's current context. It facilitates simultaneous activities of disappropriation and deconstruction of the structure(s) and ideologies of one's own world, as well as the appropriation and construction of a new world (cf Ricoeur 1982a:144).

4 THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE WORLD IN THE TEXT AND THE WORLD IN FRONT OF THE TEXT

An important procedure which needs some clarification is the activity of analysing the socio-political reality of the aesthetic object and that of the contextualiser or the world in front of the text. It is only in these discourses that the aesthetic object of the text realises itself in its reference. Since all language originates from a social basis, the aesthetic object, similarly, has a social basis constituted by the social context of the text. The social value of the aesthetic object can be determined by using acknowledged models of sociology to analyse the social realities ingrained in the text. Since the different social levels of context is structurally ingrained into discourse as a presupposition, recognised social scientific models of explanation can be used to explicate the 'worlds' of a text. In terms of the interaction view of contextualisation, an adequate social science model for the explication of the world in and in front of the text will have to explicate implicitly presupposed social conditions in terms of which reference takes place on the level of the model reader. The social science model must describe socially shared patterns (structures) in terms of their socially meaningful purposes (functions), coercive tactics, power and interest relationships, the means of manipulation and control, the roots of poverty, the basis of educational and income inequality, racism, the nature of militarism and its economic role, nationalism, cultural intolerance and the actions of people in terms of particular symbolic universes (cf Anderson and Gibson 1978). Such analyses will highlight the social phenomena in the context or discourse responsible for the 'sorting' of semantic characteristics. In other words, this activity identifies the socially based co-ordinates playing a role in the contextualisation. As such, these social co-ordinates function as the decisive part of the contextual filtering of the text. These co-ordinates select, emphasise, suppress and organise features of the text by implying statements about it that normally apply to the context!

Malina (1983:16) identifies three main types of social interaction models, viz the structural functionalist, the conflict and the symbolic models (cf Turner 1978). We can add a fourth one, viz the idea of purity (Neusner 1973 & Neyrey 1986). Structural functionalism describes the in-
teraction of people in a specific social system in terms of their 'socially shared patterns (structures) performed for socially meaningful purposes (functions)'. This model analyses the cohesiveness, equilibrium or balance of a society held together by its core values or beliefs, that is the integration and consensus of meanings, values and norms. Beliefs represent the information a person has about an object. These beliefs determine the attitude and corresponding behaviour of a person. These core values are realised in human attitudes and corresponding behaviour by means of a society's social institutions. Attitude can be described as an acquired predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975:6). This model can be likened to a photograph from which the static structures or patterns of behaviour, the norms instigating the moral obligations and the behaviour supporting the social functions and their stability in a society can be studied.

The conflict model describes social systems in terms of the coercion and power and interest relations operating in a society. Coercion and power are used to protect group interests and thwart change. It is inevitable that the diversity of protective activities of interest groups in a society will generate strain, disagreement, the use of force and conflict. It is activities of constraint and not these of consensus and cooperation which hold social systems together. Constraint, however, generates conflict and instigates the change of value systems. This model can be compared with a slow-motion film in which the coercive tactics, the differing goals and the variety of interests of groups in a particular society can be studied in terms of the unending process of change in that society.

The symbolic model interprets social systems in terms of the shared social definitions, values, expectations and feelings about significant historical persons, events and cultural symbols of a group. Every group member has, broadly speaking, a symbolic competence which is generated, preserved and protected by the group. Symbols acquire the status of unquestionable truths and function as uniquely real for a particular group. The symbolic universe of a particular group defines the role, rank and status of individuals in the group. It also defines the exclusiveness and inclusiveness of the group. Individual group members act in accordance with the group's symbolic universe.

The model which is based on the idea of purity originated with Douglas (1966). From the perspective of cultural anthropology, Douglas states that the idea of purity describes the way in which societies classify and arrange their worlds. 'Purity' describes the process of ordering a sociocultural system. On a second level of ordering, 'purity' also describes the ritualistic or cultic purity practices which structure a given society. 'Pollution' on the other hand stands for the violation of the ordering principles, as well as the ritualistic or cultic classification system for purity and its boundaries (cf Neusner 1973 & Neyrey 1986).

Since these models address socio-political and cultural anthropological issues, concentrating on a specific level of social significance of their object, their interpretive analytical results are functional or one-dimensional. 'Functional' describes an interpretive strategy as teleological and perspective (Grossman 1975). A functional approach studies its object from a specific perspective and concentrates on specific levels of
meaning in the object of study. As such, the application of these models will not only supply the social coordinates determining contextualisations, but also truth perspectives on social realities in discourses and contexts.

5 ISOTOPIC AND EQUIVOCAL DISCOURSES

In order to account for the homogeneity and multiplicity of meaning that a text acquires in different contexts, Ricoeur (1974:75) introduces the concepts of the 'isotopies of discourses' and 'equivocal or plurivocal discourses'. An isotopic discourse is a discourse which elaborates on another discourse on a homogeneous level of meaning.\(^4\) As such, isotopic discourses constitute more than just a *paradigmatic equivalence of contexts or discourses*. In isotopic discourses a symbol (or a text) central to one discourse is introduced into another where it basically retains the contextual specific significance it has in the first discourse. A few examples are: Son of Man (Dn 7:14 and Mk 14:62); shepherd (Ezek 34 and Jn 10); vineyard (Is 5 and Jn 15). What we find here is that the symbol or text comprises semantic characteristics which are firmly rooted in a minimum context or discourse. Although new discourses add marginal significance to the symbol or text, it basically retains the significance of its minimum context.

Equivocal or plurivocal discourses, however, constitute the possibility of lexemes, metaphors and texts to 'develop contextual variations'. These multiple, concurrent, superimposed isotopies of discourse cause ambiguity by virtue of their heterogeneity which Ricoeur (1974:78) describes as 'an enigma...where the equivocalness of being is spoken in the equivocalness of discourse.'

6 CONTEXTUALISATION AS ACTIVITY

'Activity' refers to the fact that human 'practice' always occurs in complex contexts. The 'activity' of composing a text (or a contextual reading) therefore designates the labour on language as an event interacting with socio-political, educational, economic, ideological and psychological conditions (cf Coward & Ellis 1977:62ff, 147ff). Every society has to produce and reproduce its conditions of existence (cf Fish 1980). It is in the process of the contextualisation of texts that the process of signification, that is as the process of 'newness', is realised (cf Kristeva 1974). What happens is that old systems of signification are demolished and replaced by new systems. As such, the contextual reading constitutes a political activity or practice (cf Althusser 1975). It is precisely the social nature of language, as well as the activity of the reader or contextualiser of a particular discourse which gives a contextual reading socio-political meaning in the world actually experienced (cf Granger 1968:6). As such, the labour of producing a contextualisation, objectifies itself in the contextualisation as a work (Ricoeur 1982e). As a produced work, the contextualisation will represent categories and levels of social

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\(^4\) An isotope is one of two or more atoms with the same atomic number, which contains different numbers of neutrons.
involvement through its structure or style (cf Ricoeur 1982e:136f). Since style individuates a contextualisation, the contingent and individual nature of the contextualisation retro-actively designates its author or implied author. When a contextualisation is produced with social categories overtly present or present in absentia, the covert reasons for such an activity might be questioned in terms of its practical function in and for interest groups in society or society as a whole.

WORKS CONSULTED
CONTEXTUALISATION AS METAPHORIC ACTIVITY


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