

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION:

### FROM UBIQUITOUS UNCERTAINTY TOWARDS A THRASHING THEREOF

*Theologically, philosophically, psychologically, scientifically, socially, historically and literarily, life is not certain, but surprising, joyous and beautiful.*

*Practical theology and pneumatological Christian counselling are radically awakened and enlivened from ontology to praxis, not by an a priori faith determination, but by postmodern action, conditioning faith, by providing meaning and direction in life.*

*Postmodernism unshackled and invigorated “certain” theology and definite counselling. All Christians can counsel; they can empower people in pain through the Holy Spirit. Every Christian has an “own” theology as a specific, historical and contextual reaction to and on the revelations of God.*

#### 1.1 ASSUMPTIONS

A major assumption of the study is that uncertainty is not something that we can eradicate, as it will always haunt us. We make the claim, however, that it can be “defeated” and “thrashed”. This overcoming of uncertainty happens specifically in the framework of postmodernism “moving away”

from modernism. The uncertainty we usually experience is modernistic uncertainty where we long for and endeavour to achieve final unequivocal, unambiguous and objectively “scientific certainty” of a kind not possible in human life. Consequently, modernistic certainty is a deception and a fraudulent attack on us, thriving on our human longing to reach inhuman, immaculate, pristine and pure guaranteed assurance of certainty. *The demanding and problematic challenge is to conquer uncertainty without the possibility of eliminating it.* If we had eradicated uncertainty, it would be like a display room full of stuffed wild animals, having hunted them, claiming that they were the real animals and now we could finally triumph over them and study them in the exhibition hall. Thus, we have erected a straw doll, destroyed it and claimed that we have defeated the real “enemy”. The approach in the thesis towards this goal is to deal with uncertainty as powerless and as not having authority and control to influence us in any fundamental determining way. The way towards this “victory” is to “dance with uncertainty”, to celebrate human life despite the attacks and experiences of uncertainty. It is like experiencing a dim and faint light in darkness that is consequently no longer *darkness*, but it is also not satiated and replete light. The apostle Paul stated that we “only know in part”, but exclaimed that, through faith in Christ, we fully celebrate a Christian life in this world. It is a paradox, but what an exhilarating and exuberant way of life!

The thesis is *not* an exposition of what Christian or psychological counselling or practical theology is or should be. It is not a delineation of contents, methods, techniques and approaches of these fields. The aim is to trounce modernistic *uncertainty* by appraising Christian and psychological counselling from a practical theological approach in the transformation from modernism to postmodernism. Despite all our progress, advancements and “civilization”, we suffer. Since time immemorial people have experienced themselves as insecure, uncertain, “lost”, broken, inferior, frustrated, not whole and isolated. They regarded themselves as not fully part of a buoyant life and the “real” world vis-à-vis emotional, ideological, political, spiritual and evil personal and structural

attacks. They suffered starvation, under-nourishment, oppression and torture, and also encountered the overwhelming forces of nature and the effects of the mishandling thereof, for example, the “hot house effect”, deadly toxic ecological pollution, atomic rays, as well as devastating illnesses, e.g., AIDS, cancer, malaria, TB, small pox, yellow fever, bilharzias, diabetes and heart ailments. “Man’s [sic] basic problem is fear of never being whole” (Cox 1993:3,4). I wish to approach all this and more in this study under the single rubric of “*uncertainty*”. How is it then possible to “dance with uncertainty”? This is what this study is trying to face.

An assumption of this research is that a thesis is an extremely personal formation or design, like everything else in life. This means, among other things, that one cannot “define” what modernism, “the church”, postmodernism, deconstruction, quotations, history or a thesis in “essence” is. Oh yes, we can say many things about these concepts, but we cannot detect, find and pin them down to define and describe them to know clearly and accurately what they are and to pass on that information by way of a clear and distinct dissertation, as *the* answer to these problems. In fact, one cannot even say or repeat what a specific author’s view on a subject is, say Jacques Derrida, who has written more than 40 extremely complicated books, apart from many other publications. The moment you choose and repeat his thoughts on a subject, you have made a choice, privileging some aspects and shunning others, surely following an “unconscious” and hidden preference, even for yourself, and you have, in fact, *interpreted* his views and have portrayed a view that is not his conviction. One can even go so far as to state that if Derrida, for example, repeats or summarises his own views, it is no longer the same, but a new creation.

I found that after describing a topic, I “contradicted” myself when delineating the same idea later on, as I approached the same topic from a different angle and another perspective. This can be thoroughly perplexing, until I discovered that my assumptions are *my* constructions and that they

are uniquely personal assumptions, and not eternal, immutable iron race “truths”. What a discovery! This thesis consists of a whole range of such detections. This does not mean that one’s thoughts and life become uncertain and insecure, but that one *can* accommodate ambiguity and even rejoice in uncertainty. Therefore, the designation of the thesis as: *Dancing with uncertainty*. Previously, I thought I knew what a bird was, as I grew up observing a few birds and birds surprised me sometimes, especially when they made a nuisance of themselves at daybreak. After listening extensively to a person with a passion for and a lot of information about birds, I detected many “new” dimensions, aspects, scopes and ranges of birds and I no longer “know” what a bird is. Why is this so? I did not have the passion and assumption that even in the city, birds are a noteworthy part of life and influencing me in significant ways.

The assumption of the thesis is that one has to write about postmodernism in a postmodern way. I have to disclose that I am not even certain whether I have achieved this in a preliminary way. Many times, it appears as if there is no intrinsic relationship between sections and chapters, as the study is not a delineation of a pre-determined core viewpoint and conviction, and a setting down thereof. It expanded as I advanced. I have endeavoured, however, as far as possible to relate the different aspects of the thesis intrinsically, but in describing life, numerous aspects do not fit into the schemes and descriptions of one’s small mind, rambling on comprehensively.

Whether one can say that this is written in a postmodern way, whatever that may be, I leave to you, the reader, to evaluate with your own constructed assumptions. One thing, however, is important; to start defining postmodernism in a modernistic way and to write about deconstruction without “experiencing” the deconstruction of stable and enduring certainties, is like describing the features of a stuffed carnivore against a wall as if it had the characteristics of an attacking lion. I assume that I sometimes bluff myself to think I run with a wild roaring lion, but all that I do seems like wool-

gathering daydreaming.

## 1.2 THE METHOD OF STUDY

The method followed in this study is to research topics of authors, delineated in the study and comparing them with similar or oppositional statements and describing what is happening in this historical epoch, according to my constructed views, regarding history, postmodernism, modernism, the Holy Spirit, deconstruction, theology, counselling and philosophy.

My approach regarding meta-theory is to unearth assumptions, put them on the table, deconstruct and debunk them, and write as clearly as possible about my (hidden) convictions, goals and interests.

The assumption of the thesis regarding meta-theory is that there are no universal, true, pre-existing categories, which guide the research process.

Although it may be valid that we "...concentrate on methodology when there are too few good methods and good problems, just as we concentrate on etiquette when manners are in decline", the aim of the method of study is to justify the way in which a problem has been solved (Du Preez 1990:57). This thesis is not an in-depth study of research methods, but as it is vital to understand the difference between the approach of writing in a modernistic way, on the one side, and the approach of writing and quoting other authors and using their thoughts creatively in a deconstructive postmodern manner, on the other, it is important to delineate the "method of study" in a comprehensive way. It is imperative to re-evaluate "...the epistemic status of theories and models in a discipline. The modernist belief in truth, rationality and objectivity and even the ideal of a unified science, gave way to a much more pluralistic...picture of

psychology...” (Mouton 1990: 3). In modernism the “right” method of study is regarded as the criterion for “true” knowledge, but in postmodernism there is not a method to reach certain knowledge, as there are no privileged approaches to, or ultimate knowledge as such, only pluralistic approximations. Postmodern knowledge is always partial, tentative, described by enunciation rather than by positive representation. Knowledge is conceptualised and produced, rather than discovered or obtained. Meta-theory, indicating a modern method of hermeneutical research, lost its authority as a way of reaching a formal representation of the “object”.

The reason why the approach of the thesis regarding meta-theory comprises debunking assumptions, is to move away from axiomatic beliefs and postulates, which are generally accepted as universal principles or self-evident truths, laws and predictions, purporting to determine findings and which are taken for granted. “Some sociologists refer to such axiomatic beliefs as “domain assumptions” or “meta-theoretical beliefs” (Marshall 1994:24).

A postmodern method can never be indicated as this or that way. There is no position from which one can state absolutely, officially, or authoritatively, this is *the* method, or proclaim an all-inclusiveness regarding identity of methods, or to be able to record all methods. A deconstructive postmodern “non-method” is maintained against the authoritative modern method, but it is not to be interpreted as anti-methodological. Postmodern “methods” always embrace the excess of method, including inaccuracies, miscalculations and uncertainty. No grand theory controls and directs enquiry to reach final knowledge of the “object”.

Deconstructive postmodernism blurs the difference between subjectivity and objectivity, replacing the “object” with texts about the “object”. This approach strips the researching subjects of their “innocence”, as they gain control of authorship by construing, inferring, deducing, privileging and opting for specific ideas, and by applying these generalities to specific

action and events, whereby they, consequently, distort the comprehension, discernment, understanding, conception and ultimate knowledge thereof. No two iterations or repetitions of descriptions of “objects”, texts or events are ever the same. The bottom line of postmodern epistemological methodology is that it avoids all absolute, sovereign, supreme, sole and complete frames of reference as correspondence to the “truth”.

Sauber, *et al*, point out that one of the meanings of the concept *meta* in meta-theory is “beyond” something. A derived meaning of *meta* is to mean “about”. A meta-theory can be taken as something *beyond* a theory saying something *about* that theory. “...metalanguage - that is, a language or symbolic system used to...describe, or analyze another language or symbolic system” (1993:253).

The dilemma with a meta-theory is that it alleges to reveal the “truth” about the topic of a study. This “truth” is considered as the anchoring, motivating and determining point of the events and phenomena being studied. The thesis is wary about claiming knowledge as truth comprising a foundational contention, claim or assertion, determining counselling and theology. Du Toit (1996:43) debunked “truth” as a foundational principle as follows:

There will always be those who insist that they are telling the truth. And as Oscar Wilde said: ‘If you persist in telling the truth you will be found out!’ ...We are indeed doomed to search for truth within our contingent historical contexts, where the truth we find according to our language rules and rules of...convention allow us to find some consolation. This will be coloured by the knowledge of the provisional nature of our time and place in history where we can do no better than to dimly reflect in a mirror.

There are a number of modernistic dangers lurking when one uses the concept meta-theory.

Mouton (Du Toit ed 1996:49-63) regards a number of tendencies in meta-theory to be positivistic and consequently not acceptable, as they are similar to the natural sciences: A meta-theory may be regarded as a universal theory, indicating the validity of the theory regardless of the context; there may be a formalistic tendency to regard a theory as an axiomatic deductive proposition, as foundational with absolute or final validity; there may be a logistic tendency to impose logic as a formal principle on human life as a dehumanising straightjacket of rules, laws, principles and norms.

Modern methodology predetermines and defines the “object” of study by way of an essence and a fundamental “nature”. The method of study in the thesis is *not* to define or describe counselling or theology in a deductive-nomological way, where explanations involve postulating universal norms or foundational, constructed “truths”, which forms the *explanans* from which one derives deductively the *explanandum*, the description or definition of these concepts (cf. Mouton *ibid*:51).

The real danger of psychological, counselling, therapy or psychoanalysis, as well as practical theological theories and definitions is that they purport to explain and clarify knowledge of events and phenomena by way of causal models, operating as foundational and legitimating mechanisms that account ultimately for them. The exposition of distinguishing definitions, for example, between counselling and psychoanalysis, is not valid in a deconstructive postmodern framework. Definitions are regarded as primary, legitimating, original and foundational, not only as to reasons why events happen, but especially as a reference to rules, prescriptions, ideals, laws and norms, determining the practical differentiated life of people in a disruptive way.

Kennedy (1998:17) explained the issue as follows:



...the definitions of counselling and psychotherapy put forth here...are not recently coined but come from literature of past decades. There is a paucity of literature today that discusses specifically their differences or similarities. Popular literature would seem to suggest that the two terms are used interchangeably.

There are some who work in the helping professions today who have no or little concern if they are referred to as a therapist, psychotherapist or counsellor. These professionals reflect the openness of post modern society. They are more holistic in their outlook... However, other professionals still cling tenaciously to their modernist labels and refuse to see the folly of such meaningless distinctions.

The “method of study” can also be described as the *rationale*, justification, stimulus, inspiration, *raison d'être* and motivation determining the decisions about the contents and the way of writing, enlightening the study. A method describes a particular way of doing something.

The problem with a modernistic method is that texts are not written in a free, loose, playful, and frisky way, but in a very deterministic, moulded and regimented way, involving an inflexible, strict plan or a rigid system. A deconstructive postmodern “method” of writing and investigating other texts is to interrogate what they conceal, as they allege, imply and purport to reach final knowledge and truth, without providing justifying reasons. In a sense, deconstructive postmodern writing finds direct quotations from other authors difficult and not very evocative, redolent, suggestive and expressive to use in its writing. Reasons for this are that deconstructive postmodern writing does not regard quotations from authors as axiomatic truth; one is always deferring meaning; each quotation is done from one’s own horizon; quotations are a reinterpretation of the other’s writing by choosing that specific piece and not another; one

does not really know the real meaning and intention of the other author. One is always in a difficult position of knowing whose voice, from a million sources, traces, influences and resources, is speaking. Even if the original authors explain “exactly” what they have said, the new statements or explanations would again be fraud with difficulties to know what they entail. The consequence is that the borders between authors’ scripts and quotations become nebulous, fuzzy, blurry and indistinct, always referring to a possible other meaning. In the thesis thoughts of other authors are used in a deconstructive way, mentioning them as, “compare this or that author”, for example, “cf. Schrag”, as a palimpsest, a script with open opportunities for re-interpretations, re-inscriptions and re-descriptions. Deconstruction means that hierarchies of knowledge in writing are dismantled. Hierarchies assume that more modern “truthful” elitist writings, more complex systems and more knowledgeable humans on the evolutionary level have an edge on survival advantage, never mind that cockroaches and sharks outlasted most other species.

This deconstructive postmodern way of writing is clearly distinguished from plagiarism, where no indication or signals are presented when another author’s literal words, without any change, are presented *verbatim*.

Often I use words and concepts in inverted commas, as an aim of the thesis towards deconstructive postmodernism, indicating that the specific meaning of a word (in modernism) is not satisfactory and suitable and that I wish to reserve the right to different meanings, for example, “certainty”, “truth” and to “know”. “...some developments are irredeemable. No longer is it possible to portray the search for progress and knowledge as utterly benign and incremental; nor is there much enthusiasm for notions of truth and reality *without scare quotes* (*‘truth’, ‘reality’*) (Frosh 2002:10, emphasis added).

Regarding the way references and thoughts of others are used in the thesis, I wish to point out that there is a *fundamentalist* way of referring to texts, as if one has to make reference to every influence when one is writing. I have not made use of this modernist approach and paradigm. The modernistic way of quoting is not valid in a deconstructive framework, as if the meaning of the other author is objectively clear and provided as if in a sealed package. C. W. Du Toit, in an unpublished paper, laid bear, demystified and discredited fundamentalist quotations. He contends that if one only quotes from a script as if there is no other interpretation possible, nothing original will evolve from these thoughts; if the horizon of the writer and the quoted source were the same, nothing new would be said; in any case, one never knows exactly what the meaning of another author is. He writes as follows:

Sou die skrywer op fundamentalistiese wyse verwys, op univokale wyse met die sekerheid van so en nie anders nie, sou daar min goed uit die...verwysing gebore kon word. ... 'n kreatiewe herinterpretasie van dit waarmee hy besig is.

Dit sou immers moeilik wees om by elke verwysing wat natuurlik *vanuit jou eie horison plaasvind*, presies ook die horison te skets waarteen jou aangehaalde bron afspeel. (Klem bygevoeg). Sou die horisonne presies dieselfde wees, sou die skrywer niks nuuts gesê het nie.

Navorsing toon aan dat dit moeilik is om ooit presies te kan weet wat die oorspronklike outeur sê.

So is geen verwysing altyd presies in lyn met die verwysde teks nie. *Elke ander tekshorison verskil van die vorige*. (Klem bygevoeg). Hoe nader die een horison aan die

verwysde horison is, hoe sterker die moontlikheid dat die nuwe horison nie werklik iets nuuts sê nie. *Die waarde van nuwe tekste lê juis in die nuwe wat dit na vore bring...* (Klem begevoeg).

It is important to appreciate that one can never repeat another's thoughts exactly, as each person writes with a totally original background, context, intention and purpose. When a writer uses the writing of another person, the "...location of meaning is to be found in the reader who brings an interpretative framework to the text. To that extent every reader generates a new meaning and thus creates a new text." Texts "...are viewed as schematic, full of gaps that must be filled before their potential meanings can be actualised. That is to say texts are not seen as containers for meaning but frameworks for varieties of meaning to be realized by *readers*." (Emphasis added). When readers quote the writings of another author and what readers extract from texts depends on what they instil and introduce into the writing. All readers read and quote from a particular ideological approach, value judgements, social, historical locations and preconceived understandings, and read their own meanings into the quoted work. In the end the goal of reading and quotations are "...to engender meaning values" (Liem 2002:70-73).

To clarify the role of the writer and the thoughts of others in a novel way, Mahoney & Patterson, 1992:686) explains that "Hoshmand (1989) defined a research paradigm as 'a system of enquiry with its particular epistemological and ideological foundations, conceptual assumptions, and methodological standards and procedures' (p. 12)...alternative research paradigms view knowledge experiential and practical... There are different modes of enquiry, including researchers' approaches, roles and attitudes, strategies for using and analysing scripts...that distinguish these paradigms from *traditional* research paradigms." (Emphasis added).

They state that a new approach is that alternate research paradigms can be considered *interpretive*. A researcher, who is personally involved and who uses this involvement *heuristically*, carries out this writing. Thus, the enquiry is highly personal with more emphasis on description and discovery than on verification of theory.

Their approach deviates comprehensively from the modernistic way as postmodern paradigms acknowledge the *role of the researcher as an instrument* of the research. They call this an open, reflective, and sometimes “atheoretical mode”. When information is gathered, “...the *process of enquiry* is open to ...modification as research progresses, rather than being fixed in an established linear sequence.” This is also the approach of the thesis.

Borgen (1992:112) makes a fundamental difference between superficial traditional procedures and a procedure of scrupulous creativity: “Insight in research... means understanding the deep structure and embedded meaning, not just the surface structure. For the aware researcher, insight accesses...the paradigm. Meehl (1978) and others have observed that, too often in doing ‘rigorous’ research, ‘our energy is misinvested with narrow operationalism...’ (Borgen, 1984a, p. 594).”

There is a fundamental difference and animosity between a modernist and deconstructive postmodern way of restructuring the contents of “knowledge”. Borgen (ibid:112) says that “...some...aim toward restructuring psychology’s epistemology completely; for others, a brief check up and little fine tuning seem to be sufficient. Not surprisingly, there is some turmoil and resistance when the goal of some...do not match those of others in the discipline.”

Mahoney & Patterson (1992:686) are explicitly *positive* regarding writing in a specific field of

study and borrowing from other disciplines: “*Strategies for data collection*...borrowing from linguistics (hermeneutics), anthropology (participant observer), and philosophy (phenomenology). There is an attempt to find patterns of meaning by analyzing content and themes of the texts. Such methods and procedures are still in a state of development.”

The method of study as *motivation* is to endeavour generating the beginnings of different epistemologies and methodologies. The foundations of modern methodology, because of its fixed and pre-determined rules, fail. It does not make sense to describe a linear research process, step by step, delineating exactly the influences of others on the author in a contingent world of multifarious influences. How will we know that a meaning is valid, according to which final norm? How will we know whether it is *worthwhile* research? “The things to look at are styles, figures of speech, setting...historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of representation nor its fidelity to some great original” (Said 1978:21). A deconstructive postmodern method aims to dismantle and destabilise the use of binary oppositions to prove something modernistically correct, for example, a right way and a wrong way of writing. Postmodernism transcends binary logic towards a more fluid and less coercive conceptual organisation of thoughts and scripts, leading to endless strings of interpretations and multiple meanings. This method is a safeguard and takes a stand against dogmatism. “In my own writing, the accumulation of quotes, excerpts and repetitions is also an effort to be ‘multivoiced,’ to weave various speaking voices together as opposed to putting forth a singular ‘authoritative voice’” (Lather 1991:9). The result is that one’s thoughts and writing always become plural, local and embedded in contingent practice. In a deconstructive postmodern way, one can say that, methodologically, there is no ownership over the scripts one produces. This approach is not to claim that *everything goes*, as one always has to provide reasons as justifications for doing something.

Deconstructive intertextuality blurs the boundaries between authors and readers methodologically, always giving the readers more freedom to construct a temporary compilation. The method of the study aims at the goal that "...puts things in motion rather than captures them in still-life...a weaving of method..." (Lather & Smithies 1997:xvi). The overall aim with this deconstructive postmodern "method" of research is to endeavour to create the script and thesis, as well as the reader, into an active, creative *verb*, leaving a placid, docile *noun* in the background; the aim is not a passive, dogmatic string of correct quotations and statements, (according to whom? Who will say who and what is normal?), but as a creative stirring towards the dance of life with uncertainty. The aim is a lively subjective *verb* towards creativity, over against a passive objective *noun*, as something essential in itself within dogmatism.

The *logos*, the *logical* determination and definition in the methodology of modernism, are evaded by the postmodern *pathos*, the encompassing life *passion* and fractured tentativeness of the deconstructive approach. How does this postmodern *method of pathos*, as "non-method", reach theology and counselling? Postmodern approaches "...provide us with insights into the wonder of the human. ...Theologically, we believe that God does reveal God's own self to us and that, too, is a wonder... Postmodernism pushes us to speak of this revelatory action of God in humble terms, not grandiose and Archimedean terms. ...we catch only a small glimpse of the transcendent God. ...To speak as though we have some all-encompassing view may have been considered possible in a former logos-dominated, subject-object dichotomised *epistemé*, but such an *epistemé* is, for the third millennium...no longer viable. ...it is God who discloses not only a small share of the mystery of God, but also discloses a powerful insight into the meaning of the *humanum* itself" (Osborne 1999:191,192).

The method of research is provisionally successful if the inquiry manages to gain insight into the

assumptions underlying the taken-for-granted modernistic way of securing cognitive authority and ultimate knowledge in counselling and theology; if it deconstructs these assumptions towards contingent tentativeness, while maintaining trust in the creativity of human inventiveness towards the buoyancy and playfulness of uniqueness and differences in life. The method to follow is by way of the wisdom of creativity, exposing the rigidity of modernistic dogmatic knowledge.

The aim of the research method is to elucidate the dance towards creativity. *One cannot hurt each other in dancing* creatively...in counselling and theology. "...her creativity is a sphere of freedom, one that helps her cope with and transcend daily life" (Collins 1991:45).

### **1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The problem researched in this study is how to trounce uncertainty from modernism to postmodernism in appraising Christian counselling. As there is no longer consensus on convictions, world views and values in contemporary society, we live in an age of uncertainty. After the acceptance of the quantum and relativity theories, even the clearest facts in physical science have been "proven" only to be perspectives and with changes in the ways of observing, the "facts" also change fundamentally. Sometimes, for example, a beam of light is regarded as a solid material photon and from another angle, it is regarded as a "non-material" ray. Consequently, the criteria and assumptions by which life has been guided for hundreds of years, associated with reason, humanism, progress and stability, have been discredited, leaving a vacuum threatening to be filled with fragmentation, pluralism, scepticism and disintegration. This profound fragmentation of values has also afflicted theology.



The formation of theology in a postmodern context has occupied some “philosophical” theologians and interest has been shown from within practical theology. Wolfaardt (2001), for example, has followed an interesting approach with a systems approach, comprising postmodernism and deconstruction, as a point of departure in managing a congregation. The strategic question of what sources and criteria inform systematic Christian *practice*, especially in a counselling or pastoral setting, is the main focus of the study.

The crucial question is whether we can respond to changing convictions and shifting world views, and construct a Christian “presence” and action in the postmodern world, informed by faith and Christian traditions towards responding to the challenges of human need, pain, perplexity and bewilderment. The traditional models and world views of Christian life, theology, values, counselling and community appear anachronistic. I research this problem from the vantage point of practical and pastoral counselling theology. In this age, characterised by uncertainty, we can no longer take for granted the sources, status and authority of Christian counselling, care and social action.

In the light of the above crisis, some theologians, philosophers and researchers take an inappropriate road and endeavour to construct new models, world views and even “values” in a postmodern framework to guide Christian practice in a fragmented and pluralistic society. The problem with “new” models and approaches or the restoring of old paradigms and Christian world views is that it rests on the same old foundations with its invalid modernistic fundamentals. It is like reshuffling the cards more intensely, but still playing the same old invalid game. The modernistic foundations are crumbling and it is no use to restore new buildings on them. In a sense this study is the demolishing of the old modernistic foundations, but, and this is vital, not to try to erect new foundations as there are *no* foundations for un-ambiguity, absolute “truths” and certainty.

*Deconstruction does not mean that reconstruction is a possibility. Reconstruction is only the reverse side of the modern coin.* There is no way back into the conservative shelter of modern fundamentalism by way of new approaches and rebuilding Christian paradigms, as the storm blew off the roof of the shelter. Some, however, carry on with this task of reconstruction as if nothing serious has happened. "The purpose of this book is...to reconstruct the values by which Christian practice may be guided and ...a model... for a postmodern age (Graham 1996:3). Another dogmatic researcher's aim is to "define" the "Christian worldview" and to delineate "how it might be re-established... The re-establishment of a Christian worldview also requires a reintroduction of the idea of ethical oughtness to civil affairs." He mentions "character training" as an example of "...suggestions for recovering the grand narrative of Christianity...in seeking to re-establish a Christian worldview in a postmodern age" (Mathews 2000:5,10). It appears as if another researcher, Karl Rahner, pursuing new approaches, takes the contemporary crisis fully into account when defining the new task. He claims that "the Church" does not exist for itself, but to proclaim and enact the Gospel in human society and that pastoral practice is the living expression of the "Church's mission" to the world:

Pastoral theology deals with the action of the Church. It is pastoral because it engages in concrete circumstances, it is theological because it reflects systematically on the nature of the Church and analyses the circumstances which confront the Church today. The work of pastoral theology begins only when Christians here and now and at the local level incarnate the Church's nature (Rahner 1968:25).

Although it seems as if Rahner gives due primacy to practical or pastoral theology and Christian practice, he is disastrously maintaining exactly the opposite viewpoint, as he claims that it is "the Church" that determines the nature of practice. This insinuates that the models, message, world

views and values of churches are mysteriously independent of historical and social contexts and that action is merely the expression of an *a priori* faith determination. In this framework, postmodernism action is really the prerequisite of faith, as it actually constitutes “meaning” and direction. The standards of practice give shape to faith and not the other way round. In practical theology, this is a shift from ontology to practice. This Christian approach emphasises the agency, traces and signs of God, rather than the essence and identity of the Divinity. Practice is the sphere of the God-human encounter and “orthodox-practice” the channel of Christian truth claims. “Christians should not redefine social praxis by starting with the gospel message. They should do just the opposite. They should seek out the historical import of the gospel by starting with social praxis” (J. P. Richard 1972, quoted in Segundo 1984:85). Practical theology is radically awakened and enlivened, from ontology to praxis, not by an *a priori* faith determination, but by postmodern action providing meaning and direction in life.

The research problem is, succinctly put, how to deal in counselling and practical theology with uncertainty after the deceptive foundational pillars of modern certainty have been deconstructed and postmodern approaches paved the way towards fundamental new ways of experiencing and enjoying life. It means that we have based modern certainties on tragically flawed foundations and that the uncertainties that we now experience are a nostalgic and wishful longing without any justification. Christian theology and counselling are not constructed on scientific, mathematical, “eternal” and absolute certainty, but are an approach to life, celebrating in faith and trust without certain foundations. It is a dancing with uncertainty.

#### **1.4 THE FIELD OF RESEARCH**

The research field is a complicated one as a modernistic approach has circumscribed the borders

of different fields and disciplines in a virtual absolutist way. Modernistic approaches analysed increasingly demarcated fields in atomistic ways, as these approaches claimed that knowledge of the parts constitutes the whole. The consequence was a fragmentation of life and its study and the parts isolated to the extent that one could no longer view the whole. Consequently, the bush disappeared because of all the isolated trees. In deconstruction and in postmodernism one of the false distinctions was disclosed and dismantled, namely the privileging of certain concepts, subjects and terrains, for example, spirit/flesh, man/woman, as well as essay/poetry, speech/writing and finally science/philosophy, physics/literature. A false demarcation around theology and counselling has been deconstructed, namely as the study of “supernatural truths” and foundational counselling models and “principles”, opening up theology and counselling for Christians to have their “own” theologies, as theology can be regarded as a practical reaction to the revelations of God. Theology is not “supernatural”, but a human response to Christ as God’s revelation to the world. Counselling opened up outside the “professional” sphere where *every Christian can empower people in pain through the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit’s work extends beyond Christ, reaching towards enhancing human and humane lives, culture and society.

Strictly speaking in a modernistic framework, the research field is in practical theology and pastoral or Christian counselling. In this study we work towards a concept of pneumatological (Christian) counselling, especially in the chapter on the work of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the concepts Christian counselling and pneumatological (Christian) counselling are used interchangeably. The strictly demarcated boundaries, however, are deconstructed and life as a whole with various disciplines, literature, history, philosophy and psychology, is included in the study. We cannot understand the history as well as the present situation of theology, as an example, and they make no sense without the foundations and interpretations of philosophy. We delineate one of the vital topics in practical theology and pneumatological Christian counselling, namely the Holy Spirit and

his work, in the wider context of philosophy. “*De Geest is tenslotte alleen te vatten in een filosofie van de geschiedenis*” (Van Ruler 1973:32, emphasis added). We attend comprehensively to the philosophical foundations, not only of modernistic theology, but also of modernism and postmodernism, especially after Descartes’ disastrous influence up to the present. We mention literary theories to comprehend deconstruction as an approach to transcend modernism and its deceptions. We attempt to debunk modern psychology and its “principles” towards liberating people in postmodern frameworks of Christian counselling. History as a construction and interpretation has to be composed vis-à-vis the objective modern solidified concepts of history. As there are no boundaries outside modernism and its demarcation, this list can go on and on, but the research has to be restricted to the exuberance of life outside rotten and toxic modernistic “foundationalisms” and the constructions of theologies and “open” counselling, enhancing the humanness of people in pain. This thesis is a summons to all people towards the celebration of life, albeit in uncertainty.

## **1.5 THE CONTENTS OF THE CHAPTERS**

Chapter 2 delineates *communication* as the basis of theology and counselling, portraying the catastrophic consequences of modern communication as a standard, calling for quality communication in a postmodern framework, as we establish theology and counselling through communication.

Chapter 3 traces the *historical foundations* of modernism and construct an own concept of modernism, as no objective notion of modernism as a bird’s-eye-view is possible. This releases the quest for a postmodern approach, not as against, or a denunciation of modernity, but as *novum* beyond modernism.

Chapter 4 delineates the treacherous and extremely difficult road out of the mire of modernism by way of *deconstruction*. It explains that deconstruction is not a negative concept, but actually a celebration of life, releasing it from the shackles of modernism.

Chapter 5 unearths the *Cartesian dualist and dichotomous foundations* that caused havoc for three centuries in the thoughts and practice of modern society, culminating in ecological disasters, atom bomb horrors and genocide during the Second World War and endeavours to indicate a way out of them. There are positive fruits of modernism and postmodernism is not a rejection of modernism *in toto*, but an alternative approach to life.

Chapter 6 researches a way out of the maze of Cartesian determinations towards the contextual and praxis approach of postmodern counselling. Theology and counselling are presented as a practical “tool *and* an end” vis-à-vis a modernistic “tool *towards* an end”.

Chapter 7 culminates in the exuberance of *postmodern counselling through the Holy Spirit*, indicating that we do not strive with modernistic approaches and objective analyses towards victory, but we may live out of the conquest of the Kingdom of God in enhanced humanness. In a postmodern framework, reason’s domination of faith and trust is transcended towards the deconstruction of the radical difference of reason and faith, as well as faith comprehending reason and reason comprehending faith. The culmination of the work of the Holy Spirit in a postmodern framework is the invasion of life and joy in people’s lives through the victory over dichotomy and dualism towards the holism of the Kingdom of God brought about in society, culture and history through the Holy Spirit. Uncertainty is continuously danced away by the celebration of postmodernism.

Chapter 8 concludes by exposing the difficulty of renewing meaningful life experiences, despite the tragic influences of modernism. While we cannot eradicate uncertainty, we can proclaim, with a muffled voice, that we are dancing in the strong wind of uncertainty.

*Theologically, philosophically, psychologically, scientifically, socially, historically and literarily, life is not certain, but joyous and beautiful.*

## CHAPTER 2

### TOWARDS COMMUNICATION BEYOND CERTAINTY IN A POSTMODERN FRAMEWORK

*The ultimate problem with modern communication is that it relieves us from all responsibility to justify convictions.*

*Postmodern communication dances and laughs through barriers of final principles and dogma towards the celebration of limited but vibrant humanness.*

*Communication is the mode of being human;  
communication is the style of counselling;  
communication is the design of practical theology.*

*The world is co-constructed by our shared language (Wolfaardt).*

*Communication as an event, a process, a “happening” and a celebration,  
“constitutes” a message, “constructing” knowledge and “forms” information.*

*This is a movement from definitions of facts to discourse,  
from scientific objective descriptions to rhetoric,  
from data evidence to persuasive reasoning.*



To be human means to communicate, to be in “contact” with, to be with and for the other and the Other, to develop dialogue, to acknowledge and to listen to the other and the Other. *CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION IS NOT TO PROCLAIM PROPOSITIONS OF OBJECTIVE FAITH PRINCIPLES TO THE OBJECTS OF THE GOSPEL.* It is rather to encounter, to meet, to identify with and to commit one to another and Another, the covenant God through the mediator, Jesus Christ. Communication plays a central role in counselling and in theology. It is, in fact, basic to them. The aim of this chapter is to describe some of the problems of the concept communication, especially in a modern framework, to depict the background of these problems and to probe a way towards a postmodern framework in counselling and practical theology.

## **2.1 SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MODERN AND POSTMODERN COMMUNICATION**

Communication is not merely a neutral mental tool to use between people to relate meaningfully, as a means of conveying and receiving “meanings”. People seem to presume that meaning is in a sense self-evident, that meaning is already there, that it remains constant and that they only need to discover it. Meaning is presumed to be “a given” only to be detected in a situation. We explore these assumptions in this chapter. In fact, the “subject” and “object” of communication are critically explored, as well as the contents of the “message” that are conveyed in the process of communication.

We can compare communication and the “conveying of meaning” to a map of a territory. We often assume that traditional maps of territories remain viable, the same as inherited terms and concepts in language. This, however, is not so. Not only has the territory changed dramatically, the way in which we draw up maps and, perhaps most importantly, the style in which a map relates to the

territory, has changed in major ways. Everybody would agree that the “map is not the territory”. If this is so, what then is a map? Is it a description, a replica, a symbol, or a (new) creation of the territory? What can we say about the “subject” conveying the “map” to another person, the “object”? Who are they? Do they have consistent identities and can communication between them be *undistorted*? Is the “meaning” the “subject” sends, the same as the “meaning” the “object” receives? We explore these and other questions critically from a modern and a postmodern framework. We can say that the territory, the map, the relationship between the map and the territory, as well as the person “drawing up” the map and the “reader” of the map, changed dramatically. The world and society as we understand them, the relationship between our understanding and “reality”, and the way in which we communicate with one another, are in a continuous process of transition.

We can ask the above questions in counselling within a practical theological framework: How does one convey “meaning” to a person in need towards empowering and transformation? Who is the person conveying “meaning” and in what “role”? Is this “helper” an advisor, supporter, an “empowering” person, or one with similar needs? Can we reach the one in need by way of communication, can we convey “meaning” and receive it; or can we share “something” unique, so that the person in need is empowered to create, develop and explore own meaning in a different, distinctive context?

We can ask the same question in a practical theological framework: How does God convey “meaning” to us in need towards empowerment and transformation? Who is God conveying “meaning” and in what “role”? An active helper and controller, determining passive, dependent and despondent lives? What does God convey to us? Is it biblical “instructions” to be obeyed and

followed, Holy Spirit “messages” as conclusions to be applied, or, on the other hand, do we receive power to create, live and guide our own lives?

In these questions, the concept communication plays a vital role. In a sense one can say that *counselling is the way one relates* to a person in need, or a way in which two people in need connect. Practical theology can be described in many ways, but here it will be characterised in a certain sense as *the way we relate our society*, institutions, families, lives, churches and needs to God. *Communication is the mode of being human; communication is the style of counselling; communication is the design of practical theology. Counselling is created* in communication and *practical theology is designed* by way of communication in a relationship to the practical issues of the world. In a postmodern framework the role of communication has changed fundamentally as *communication is creating the contents* of counselling and *communication is forming the constituents* of the relationship between practical theology and the practical issues of society.

In a modern framework, we derive the concepts of counselling and practical theology from conclusive rational arguments and universal transcendent principles. In a postmodern framework, we trace, elicit and glean these concepts from involvement in the practical and contextual issues by way of a process of *rhetorical* communication and effective discourse and persuasion. Rhetoric is described as a particular approach towards knowledge and meaning. Rhetoric is explained as constituting, generating and producing knowledge by way of persuasion, discourse, arguments, characterisations, explanations, portrayals, descriptions and giving accounts and justifications. Rhetoric stands in opposition to dogmatic claims, issuing formal generalisations, to be swallowed despite the consequences.

In a postmodern framework, the merits of Christian Counselling and practical theology are not regarded as originating theoretically and are not obtained from a transcendent sphere, surpassing experience in a pre-eminent way. The merits of these concepts are obtained by linking them to practices and experience. The authentication of counselling and practical theology are only reached by means of their own efforts. Postmodernism establishes the credibility of pneumatological Christian counselling and practical theology through the practical merits and values of these notions themselves, and not from beyond them.

The differences are explored In this study between *modern* counselling, where “a subject”, a (Christian) counsellor provides assistance to “an object”, a person in need through psychotherapy, narrative counselling, advice, or other approaches, and *postmodern* counselling, where the contents and relationships are created through rhetorical communication towards contextual “meanings” in practice and in action. This process is also known as “co-construction”.

The differences between modern and postmodern frameworks for practical theology are explored in this study, where *modern*, transcendent, universal, eternal values and principles are deducted towards practice with predefined “messages” and “dogmas”. In a *postmodern* framework, practices and experiences are analysed, deconstructed, critically evaluated and explored in contextual frameworks with rhetoric justification towards tentative meaning. The *modern* approach claims the application of factual and empirical knowledge, based on truthful theories, “to help” a person. *Postmodern* counselling explores experiences and practices, decentring people and situations and through rhetorical persuasion, constitutes the self-creativity of the persons in need towards coping with and controlling of situations with the empowering and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In a *modern* framework practical theology applies principles and messages of the Word to situations, but in a *postmodern* framework the situation and the Word are deconstructed and the contextual experience is constituted, not through dogma, certainty and knowledge, but through the Holy Spirit and experiences in the context. No pre-established and final conclusions are drawn.

In the beginning, we focus on the concept communication to endeavour to bridge chasms, distances, opposites and adverse assumptions, convictions and beliefs, and even opposing paradigms. Communication, however, is not only investigated from a modern point of view as conveying “meaning” by way of a message and establishing contact between a “subject” and “object” as a neutral, open and objective channel. It is also and especially explored from a postmodern approach of *creating communication by way of communication*, contact, linkages, connections, agreements, correlation and harmony. The same applies to Christian counselling in practical theology: *Counselling and theology are created by means of and by way of communication*. The way we do counselling creates counselling and the way we do theology creates theology.

An important part of postmodern communication is to try to understand the other points of view, to accommodate other beliefs, to be sympathetic to them and to start extensive dialogue with them. It is of no value to jump on one’s horse and “rush off in all directions” with modern general principles, statements, proclamations and declarations to be applied in practice. This would only be part of the old style, a dogmatic certainty.

It is vital that practical theology and Christian counselling realise what the shifts between modern and postmodern are, what these fundamental changes mean in practice and to describe the

fundamental role of communication regarding these two notions. We will explore these issues in this study and a start will be made in this chapter.

The contents of the heading of the thesis, *Dancing with Uncertainty*, and also “communication” in this chapter are situated in a specific context and portray a specific image: Joy in life, despite ambiguity and perplexity. We characterise the modern worldlier by, *inter alia*, the invincibility, progress and victories of science, scientific methods, and empirical and objective “facts”. According to modern assumptions one could obtain *certain* or *sure* knowledge of objects and establish objective facts in an unbiased way. These certitudes of the past are now ridiculed as naivety and castigated as wrong assumptions. Objective, ultimate and “eternal” foundations are now claimed to disintegrate and great disillusionments are rampant with modern ideals, for example, progress and solutions of problems, and objective and final certainties. What we wish to show with “dancing with uncertainties” is that we can live and, in fact, do even more, enjoy the uncertainties of so-called knowledge, principles, solutions and empirical facts to the point of dancing with uncertainty, perplexity, hesitancy and ambiguity.

The ultimate in life is not reason, knowledge and certainty. *The aim of this chapter is to point out that rationalistic objective communication is not viable and that life consists of much more than objective facts, empirical firmness and rationalistic progress.* Communication is communication with the other, with someone who is different. This “other” can never be fully and finally “grasped” and “understood”, or “experienced” as the other always remains “different”.

We wish to dance with uncertainty and point out that there is life after modern absolutes and “dogmas”. What does this “dancing” mean? I wish to characterise joyful “dancing”.

Let us then start “dancing”...

The concept communication has become highly problematic in contemporary life, society and culture. We used to think we knew and understood what communication was and when it happened. Now, however, we are not at all sure what it entails and when communication occurs.

Is the above true? Many do not believe this “doubting” of communication. Let us use an example:

He says: “I love you.” She answers: “I love you too.”

Someone will conclude, “perfect” communication. Why this conclusion? The answer is, everything is clear and understandable; communication has apparently taken place. A message, with clear contents from one “identity” to another was sent, received and replied to. The basic ingredients of communication were there: The “*sender*”, “*encoding*”, the “*message*” and the “*receiver*” who “*decoded*” it and repaid the compliment. It seemed as if communication was effected.

Is this process, however, completely clear? This is not so clear-cut and uncomplicated as it appears. What if it is a homosexual male dog, “saying” this to another dog in a cartoon? Suddenly, everything becomes extremely problematic up to the point that we ask: Has communication in fact taken place?

What does this sentence now mean? What is “love” here? Can two dogs communicate with words? What does communication in a “cartoon” mean and what are the identities of the sender and the

receiver? This example, in fact, indicates that the so-called clear concepts, communication, sender, identity, medium and message become highly problematic when we place communication in a specific context. The point is, however, that *there is no communication without a context*. We can say that communication is always in a specific context. This means that we have to explain communication in terms of background, society, politics, power, language, culture, gender, economics, etcetera. This may become a never-ending list of descriptions to try to understand what happened with a “simple” act of communication.

Descartes and Kant viewed reason as context-independent with the ability to define clear meanings. This meant that it was possible to define subjects and objects with meaningful clarity that were universally true. This assisted people to reach invariability and construct their lives in all aspects as totalities. The aim of this process in history, thought, culture and society was towards “closure”, “certainty” and “control”. This was realised by way of correct, factual, objective, dispassionate and certain scientific language. Discussion, tentative descriptions, discourse, persuasion, argumentation, conversation and dialogue were replaced by true objective scientific facts. Causes were regarded to determine situations in a linear way and consequences were deduced in a logical sequence. We could define human action in terms of mechanistic and objective behavioural concepts.

“Towards a postmodern framework” entails not an opposite factual situation with alternative certainties, but a fundamental questioning, a comprehensive critique, a deconstruction and a critical discussion of the concept communication. We now define communication in terms of different contexts, plurality of social forms, with historical and cultural variability and inconsistency, in fragmentary and incommensurable language forms and with ambiguity. Closure, certainty and



control of communication became highly problematic, as well as its so-called context-independence, universality, invariance, totality and factuality.

A number of criticisms can be delineated to dismantle the modern concepts of communication, conveying “objective” knowledge to “objects”, receiving it through subject-object-communication.

The rationally autonomous subject in modern communication as a sender is a universal concept and does not apply simply to a particular culture or society, but is founded on *a priori* truths about the universal “essence” of human “nature” itself. The assumption is that people “know” the senders and their “identity”.

## **2.2 THE SENDER, THE RECEIVER AND THE CONTENTS OF COMMUNICATION HAVE BECOME PROBLEMATIC**

*Let us start with this “sender”.*

The postmodern approach denies the notion of a culturally and socially disembodied and autonomous individual with an identity without explicit contexts. This sender, as a “self”, has no essential nature that predates history and which can be located before a particular form of social and cultural life. There is only a decentred image of the “self”, a configuration without a centre, mediated and constituted through the discourse acquired and learned in participating within a specific historical, social and cultural context. We have no identities without detailed contexts and there is no way that we can step outside social and historic discourses and configurations. There is no “essential self” to be discovered without historical and cultural language mediation.

“Subjectivity and intentionality are not prior to but a function of forms of life and systems of language; they do not ‘constitute’ the world but are themselves elements of a linguistically disclosed world” (McCarthy 1987:4). The “self” or person has been described as *decentred*, which means that a person has no certain and unmediated identity or centrality. The self is not in the absolute centre of life and in control. We rather speak of a person in numerous social, cultural and historical contexts and constituted by a variety of networks of communication.

During the previous century Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Foucault, Derrida and others proclaimed in their own influential way that intellectual and philosophical thought is moving away from the homocentric foundations that have characterised it since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The human being is no longer “the measure of all things”, which it has been for many centuries, originating from Greek thought. Human sciences moved *beyond* centrally privileged “self-consciousness” and also outside the *cogito*, the thinking and controlling subject, always viewing the world as comprised of “subjects”, communicating with and controlling “objects”.

We can say that language “speaks us”, or rather, speaks through us, and we can thus maintain that the human “is spoken” through language. This means that, when a person speaks, language dictates the meanings, nuances, backgrounds and contexts of the speaker. The speakers cannot use and control language in their own way. People speak the language by way of life forms with their specific rules and ways. The *cogito*, the thinking subject, is thus decentralised, fractured, displaced and not in autonomous control.

In view of the above, it has become problematic in assessing who is really sending the message in communication. The subject or autonomous “self” is in any case not an un-ambiguous “sender”

beyond the contexts of life. Language and life forms “situate” and “use” the decentralised sender.

The next aspect of communication that is questioned, is the *contents of the message*.

In the modern framework traditionally, we viewed knowledge in passive objective terms. In this regard, the metaphor of a delivery system is apt. Knowledge, as the contents of a message, is an objective notion to be acquired, “packaged” and “transmitted” to “objects”. At universities, colleges and schools, knowledge “packages” are structured into closed pre-packed courses or modules, aiming at specific outcomes or competency. These *knowledge units* are transmitted or communicated to the learners as objects. The contents of knowledge facts and the transmission thereof are conducted within a framework, determined by rationalist, objectivist and technological language, understood by administrators, bureaucrats and managerial lecturers, as well as the learners. Knowledge is processed in a determinate way to provide bureaucratically manageable outcomes. Effectiveness according to pre-defined and pre-specific results is thereby realised. A postmodern quest resists this concept of knowledge as if a representation of objective facts or of the world of objects is possible. The problem is that if knowledge comprehends the act of representing, there must be clarity on *what* it represents. We must have a clear idea of *what* this represented “object”, this historically, culturally and “linguistically naked given” (McCarthy 1987:4) is. Unfortunately, however, we do *not* know this. This means that we do not know or have any “brute facts” at our disposal that we can represent with knowledge or language. Knowledge is not reproductive or representational of objects or facts. “The suggestion is that the world is co-constructed by our shared language. We can only ‘know’ the world through the particular forms of discourse our languages creates. As our language-games are continually changing, meaning is constantly slipping from our grasp...” Wolfaardt 2001:19). *Knowledge and language are*

*constitutive, generative and productive. This view of knowledge is persuasive and argumentative rather than demonstrative, and rhetorical rather than scientifically factual.*

The problem of knowledge is not only the question of to what it refers, but also the deeper question of the *connection* between language and “reality” to which knowledge is supposed to refer. Is the word cat, describing the black “object” on the carpet, not arbitrarily linked to the object? Is there a necessary and unavoidable connection between the two? If there is, in what does it consist? “Derrida proceeds as if the *connection between words and the world were arbitrary* and proscribes any serious attempt by language adequately to reflect the world as the worst kind of *mauvaise foi*” (Asher 1984:171).

The consequence of the above is that the “meaning” of the contents, knowledge or message being communicated, became problematic. The meaning of the message, “I love you” in the above example became fuzzy, ambiguous and uncertain, and one has to start discussing what it might mean. Can two animals “love” in a human way? Can two humans “love” in the symbolised form of two dogs? What is the meaning of “love” in the life of a homosexual in a cartoon portrayed by dogs? It has become clear that whatever “I love you” may mean, it does not refer to an unambiguous, certain and objective notion without detailed contexts. It may mean many things to many people, in many contexts.

The important question now is, what is the message or content being conveyed in communication? It must immediately be stated that this question is again framed in subject-object notions where something objective is being conveyed from the one to the other. It is a “modern” question. The postmodern question may ask what communication entails. This is so as “*communication is the*

*message*". This means that it is not knowledge as objective facts that are conveyed, but that communication as an event, a process, a "happening" and a celebration "constitutes" a message, "constructing" knowledge and "forms" information. This is a movement from definitions of facts to discourse, from scientific objective descriptions to rhetoric, from data evidence to persuasive reasoning.

What we in fact convey are not meanings, but sounds, signals and signifiers, and not "meanings" as such. Meanings are "constructed" by the sender and receiver. Communication dissolves the oppositions of *logos* and *mythos*, logic and rhetoric, literal and figurative approaches, concept and metaphor, narrative and argument, truth as propositions and persuasive reasoning. Descartes started a process in the philosophical debate leading up to modern scientific facts *excluding* rhetorical descriptions as tentative and provisional meanings. Proof and evidence became the foundation and certainty of life. "The research program of modern philosophy thus set aside all questions about argumentation... in favour of proofs..." (Toulmin 1990:31). This historical process initiated a movement from the particular to the universal, the local to the general and the timely to the timeless in modernity, as well as from the descriptive, persuasive argumentation, the rhetorical and discourse-oriented approach, to the scientific objective, technical and factual "data". Proof and objective knowledge became the god to be served unswervingly. A reversal of this process is that communication is the message and that it does not convey objective data or "meanings". Language constitutes communication and is not a vehicle to convey certain objective "facts".

To be able to better understand the above descriptions we can compare communication to dancing, providing clues to what happens in communication and language usage. The mode of dancing does not allow the dancer to behave towards dancing as if it were an object. The dancer is not the

autonomous subject of dancing. It is instead the dancing which presents the dance through the dancers. The dancers are in fact fractured, decentred, displaced and off-centre. There is a primacy of dancing over and above the dancers. They are caught up in the dance. By following the music, they dance, which actually means that they are “danced”; they are controlled and moved by the rhythm, music, movement and speed of the dance. The dancers are caught up in a dynamic cadence, in steps, a strategy and goals of the dance over which they do not have control. The dance is not linearly goal-oriented, but moves to-and-fro, not to end in a goal, but to renew itself constantly in repetition. Autonomous control and determination are balanced by what happens to one dancing. Dancing means “being danced”.

Similarly, “speaking” is “being spoken”, being guided, inspired and directed by words, rules and meanings. There is no fixed objective meaning to the to-and-fro movement of dancing and there is no fixed, stable and closed meaning to the rhetorical, argumentative and persuasive discourse use of language. This, it seems to me, is what Derrida means by *différance*, the deferring of meaning, as well as the referral to other references and to other meanings.

This vision opens up life, encourages creativity and spontaneity, liberates stagnated concepts, views and dogmas, as well as invigorating and enlivening ossified convictions and beliefs. To communicate means to live, to create, to have fellowship, to enhance one another and to promote meaning, all kinds of varieties of endless meanings. *Communication is the mode of being human. A human cannot be outside communication.* The human is a communicating, talking, sharing person. Communication occurs without words too. Communication is founded on the *covenant concept*, deep fellowship comprising care, commitment and support. This opposes subject-object-communication based on the *contract model* where people are objectively joined to one another to maximise their self-interest. In a postmodern framework I communicate, therefore I am. I enrich,

I care, I support, I am close, I love, I am intimate, therefore I am.

During the past two centuries of modernity individual fulfilment in business, marriage, education and politics has gradually eroded the sense of covenant communication and a caring community until today where the self-centred individual tends to be the centre, the reference point for all values. This modern individual “freedom” undermines covenant communication and human commitment since it treats everything as an object and a dispensable commodity. Marriage, church, work, God, friends, religion and money have value only insofar as they are of use to the self-centred individual claiming individual rights. This stands against communication, relatedness, wholeness, reconciliation, peace, love, harmony and sharing. To be human means to communicate, to be in “contact” with, to be with and for the other and the Other, to develop dialogue, to acknowledge and to listen to the other and the Other. *CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION IS NOT TO PROCLAIM PROPOSITIONS OF OBJECTIVE FAITH PRINCIPLES TO THE OBJECTS OF THE GOSPEL.* It is rather to encounter, to meet, to identify with and to commit one to another and to Another, the covenant God through Jesus Christ.

Modern communication is for an autonomous controlling individual to develop and define an objective message with a transparent meaning and to use language as a neutral clear medium to convey it to another person as an object who receives and interprets it towards understanding. This has become problematic and confusing.

The quest for postmodern communication is to unite thinking and the use of language, constituting communicative contact with another by rhetorical discourse and outreach in trans-active discourse. We pose “trans-active” communication as reaching out to constitute contact *vis-à-vis* “inter-active”

as communication between two objective identities.

In modernism, people are seen as autonomous individuals with an objective identity and communication as inter-active between subject and object. Here the person as a sender and as a receiver of knowledge exists independently *before* contact or communication with the other. The problem is that such theoretical independence of a person does not really exist; it is an empty assumption, as everyone is already mediated through culture, history and language, living in specified contexts.

In the quest for postmodernism, people do not exist as centred, autonomous, objective persons with identity *before* communication. They are people *coming-to-be* in their communication. They communicate by transacting with the other and the Other in endless variety. Who we are emerges from communication and events of communication describing our dance with life. We as selves are constituted and co-constituted as well as “negotiated” in communicative discourse.

Modern communication entails the problematic autonomous self with unmediated identity, transferring objective data to another person also with objective identity. There is no life in such a “relationship” as both are pre-eminently determined and they do not know it.

The quest for postmodern communication assumes that the “subjects” of “knowledge” effecting communication already belong to the very “world” that they wish to interpret as knowledge. It is, however, not possible to form disinterested and objective representations of that world. We are always involved in it and are already determined and “conditioned” by it. This so-called knowledge to be conveyed does not “exist” independently. The content of communication is already pre-



interpreted, it is already situated in a context; it is part of a text and understanding, outside of which there are other understandings and texts. "Knowledge" is only constituted by communication, by language usage, by rhetoric action and persuasive discourse dialogue. *There is no possibility to move outside or beyond ourselves as constituted by our historic cultural and language contexts to obtain un-pre-interpreted and "pure", immediate knowledge to be conveyed to another un-pre-interpreted objective self.* This is only possible in a situation where the subject and object are *dehumanised and abused by being "controlled" by objective, dominating facts, manipulating our lives as ossified objects.* It appears to me that this is the reason why Foucault describes modern knowledge as intertwined with and inseparable from power. Knowledge is entwined with power, controlling, determining, dominating and forcing us in a thousand ways.

Communication is not driven by objective knowledge as correspondence to an external reality conceptualised in data, as in modernism. This reference to objects does not clarify final meanings. Communication is rather the contact of faithfulness between oneself and another, as well as the Other. This is not measured in terms of something objective and external, but is anchored in one's faithfulness to oneself in communicating with the other and the Other. This is done by using persuasive rhetoric to reach out and in constituting contact in language, to provide and receive assistance in empathy and to heal and receive cure in dialogue. Communication is speaking *and* acting, as a word is also an act. This can be indicated as the performative use of language. The classic example is that God acted through language. He said: Let there be light - and there was light.

The ultimate problem of objective controlling and final authoritative knowledge is that it ultimately relieves the "knower" and communicator, as well as the recipient and "maintainer" of this absolute

knowledge and power, *from all responsibility* to justify *their convictions and views*. The truth, facts, objective data, certainty and finality have been reached. This situation is extremely irresponsible and dangerous as every person questioning, challenging or resisting this finality has to be stopped completely and utterly and, if necessary, to be “eliminated”. Nobody can or may differ from this. This knowledge and power form the basis of fanaticism, autocracy, authoritarianism, Biblicism, “churchism”, dogmatism, fundamentalism and sectarianism, *making one’s views and convictions absolute*, identifying one’s knowledge, truth and power as the ultimate, as “god”. No “idols”, aberrations and freedom are endured and those who diverge or deviate have to be wiped out - thus tension, alienation, blood, violence and war ensue.

*Rhetorical “dialectical” communication is responsible*, providing reasons and arguments, trying to persuade, leaving the other free, and receives liberty from the Other to make up one’s own mind and to follow one’s own way. *It lives by faith and trust*, and not by “truth”, certainty and finality. It takes “chances”, it creates and it strives towards an abundant creative life, enjoying every moment of it. *It dances and laughs through the barriers of dogma, certainties and final principles towards the celebration of fragmented and limited but vibrant humanness in the fullness of life. Communication with one another and with God is to be thoroughly and buoyantly human in the full face of life.*

What we have done above was to describe a number of topics in a modern way, transforming them towards a postmodern way. The subject, self, sender, receiver, dancer, speaker, lover, loved one, God, church, religion, money, freedom, faith and communication have been deconstructed and described in a different framework. This description was a quest from the modern to the postmodern. During this delineation, a number of subjects have been touched on and used in

descriptions without expounding them. This will be done later on.

In this chapter, we illustrated some of the problems of modern communication and explored a way towards postmodern communication.

The aim of this chapter was to characterise life as joyful living amidst complexities, as creating varieties of endless “meanings”, as enhancing fellowship and taking care of “different” others with the banner of love from the great communicator.

The strategy, “to dance with uncertainty”, was to relieve people in theology and counselling from fixed and final objective “identities”, as there are no “disinterested” people without specified contexts or “pure” situations. Everybody and everything are approached with specific interests and are already embedded in historical situations, pre-interpreted.

We explained that we are not determined by an objective “reality” from which we obtain final principles and “facts” to be certain, to control life and others and to reach final truth and ultimate meaning.

We pointed to the exciting vision that this approach opens up life and stimulates creativity in theology and counselling. We can confront life with its overwhelming problems and “dance” through its “uncertainty”, by providing viable alternatives amidst formalities, love among inflexible “objects” and endless “meanings” amid dispassionate “facts”.

This is done through rhetoric in theology and counselling and not through outlining fixed and final “truths”. The rhetoric and creativity of the Holy Spirit enlivens and heartens the rigid and detached “Word”, impersonal relationships and inflexible personal problems towards fellowship and commitment. This is always done tentatively and in a fragmented and limited way.

Many questions and queries remain or have now originated.

How can one say that the “subject” does not determine the “meaning” of a message, or that an author does not regulate the signification or meaning of a text? What does it mean that “communication itself creates communication”, that “theology originates theology” and “counselling creates counselling” through communication? What does deconstruction mean if it is not opposed to construction? Perhaps one of the main concerns is with the threat of relativism and scepticism. Is this approach a path towards nihilism? Is there any respect for “truth” left and are there possibilities beyond relativism, scepticism and nihilism?

If “God”, as a specific description of God, is “dead” and if the author, the central controlling “self” is decentred, and if hermeneutics, as the determination of the basis of texts and “facts”, and certainty of objective knowledge, is dead, what is then alive and well in practical theology and Christian counselling?

Finally, the quest is to ascertain whether it is possible to approach and start theology pneumatologically, through the work of the Holy Spirit, and not Christologically or “theologically”? What does this mean and how is it to be achieved?

Some of these issues and related ones will be explored in this study. In this chapter we have considered the possibility of communication as either being stifled with modern axioms and certainties, formalising theology and counselling, or as being enhanced towards postmodern openness in life and commitment to creativity and alternatives, freeing counselling and theology from straight-jackets.

The issue in this chapter was that postmodern communication itself is the means to create contact, love and connections, links and exchange, knowledge, information, awareness, comprehension, understanding and wisdom. Communication cannot convey these dimensions objectively as it purports to do. The subject and receiver are both only constituted in evocative communication, towards making contact with one another in life and creativity. This is to be explored in many ways.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CONCEPT MODERNISM AND SOME CONSEQUENCES FOR THEOLOGY AND COUNSELLING

*The concept modernism captures the fleeting moment, the fugitive, the ephemeral and contingent in a more or less fixed form. Modernism is thus the “permanent” or “eternal” in the present, in the transient and the contingent.*

*The time of monolithic church prescriptions in ideas, politics, science and religion was over. The old, distantly Platonic notion that there was in every field of thought or action a single correct ideal led to a corrupt dogmatism of power.*

*Basic respect for other human beings in the Renaissance did not become a permanent way of life. Others were still treated as “objects” and in medical and emotional healing the “experts” still decided what was “good” for the “patient”, albeit with “diagnosis and treatment”. This, however, remained a one-way communication from “expert” to “patient”, with negative consequences. What was still lacking, also centuries later, was a full acknowledgment of the independence and self-determination of a person with problems.*

*From the Enlightenment onwards many believed that God must be considered in the consciousness of a person and that theology must work out the location of God in the*

*human scheme of understanding. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, theology was regarded as focused on the inclusion of God in the consciousness of the believer. Faith was seen as a form of self-understanding.*

The concepts or descriptions of modernism and postmodernism, as approaches to life, are difficult and complex. One can say that they are much like the concept of love; there are as many understandings of it as there are people using it. I agree with Lovlie, (cf. Kvale 1992:119), that it would be extremely difficult to provide an accurate description of what the concepts modernism and postmodernism mean. They denote a *Weltanschauung*, an argument, an intellectual description, or a philosophical position. To be able to formulate a work description for the purposes of this thesis one can describe a modern approach as a combination of all these outlooks: A specific view of life, a philosophical and theological position and a post-structural and deconstructive argument. This description is not fixed, stable or rounded off; it is rather tentative, ambiguous and vague. This description tries to comprehend many views, convictions, arguments and “definitions” of a modern approach. The term “definition” is inserted in inverted commas, as it denotes in itself already an approach that cannot be defined in the usual sense of the word, as it does not denote something objective, specific and fixed. A postmodern *definition* of modernism will be a contradiction as its approach does not consist in clear-cut categories or does not make use of unambiguous considerations. Consequently, we can only describe it tentatively.

### **3.1 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERNISM**

The term modernism derives from the Latin *modernus*, indicating just now, the latest, and it

indicates a value. It is developed out of the word *modus*, measure. The Indo-European root from *med*, denotes to take appropriate measures. Consequently, the concept modernism implies the making of judgments, conceivably value judgments regarding relevancy or utility of the latest sort. In general, modernism indicates an affinity or sympathy with the new, the latest, or modern thoughts and standards. Modernism refers to a self-conscious and deliberate break with past forms and thinking, and indicates a search for new thought-patterns, styles and forms. *The concept modernism captures the fleeting moment, the fugitive, the ephemeral and contingent in a more or less fixed form.*

Relating to judgments and standards, another derivation of *modus*, is *la mode*, modishness or fashion. Fashion goes with the flow of time, the passing moment. Modernism is thus the “permanent” or “eternal” *in* the present, *in* the transient and the contingent (Ambler & Smart 1996:34,135).

This description shows the paradoxical in modernism, the changing *and* the permanent as two aspects of a situation. A paradox contains two aspects of a situation that cannot be mediated into one. Both aspects, however, can be seen as valid and can be maintained logically next to one another. A paradox in this case is not the same as a contradiction where two valid, but contradictory, aspects of a situation cannot logically be sustained next to one another. The paradoxical in modernism is not an issue, but the problem is that modernism emphasises the one side, the fixed, the permanent, the “eternal” and the final, *at the expense of* the changing, the historical and the contingent, for example, the affirmation of one final meaning as standard, not influenced or altered by historical changes or contextual variation. Modernity spells out an ethos, a way of thinking and feeling, as well as of acting, and behaving. This approach is inclined to focus



on the unambiguous, the certain, the objective, the fixed and final aspects of a situation. Modernism endeavors to escape time and transcend context towards a final standard, stability, constancy, firmness, the absolute, the unalterable and unconditional.

### **3.1 THE PROBLEMS WITH FIXED DESCRIPTIONS**

Although this description of modernism sounds apt, one must not forget that there are already a number of assumptions in this understanding, as the tracing of the word modernism, as it is done here, is derived from dictionary and encyclopedic descriptions, understood by people in specific historical and social contexts. There is also a specific method followed here, namely to trace the basic concept, but there are also many other possible approaches. The reason why this is emphasized is that the approach followed in this study is to eschew modernism in the sense of not emphasizing the absolute, final and fixed at the expense of the transient and contingent meaning.

The problem with a fixed description of modernism is that the term is actually used as a portrayal of whole centuries of events, thought-patterns, theological convictions, philosophical approaches and epistemologies. To distill entire centuries of thoughts and knowledge-patterns into a single, coherent view of life and call it modernism is a reduction in a severe form and consequently a devaluation of the ideas and their developments over many, many years. It infers that one can obtain an external perspective on the ideas of centuries, as a totality, rather than as a differentiated array and multiplicity of theological, philosophical and social perceptions. One consequence of an external approach is that centuries of insights are lumped together into a single totality and called a specific epoch. This epoch can then be described as one wishes, depending on the perspective

from which one considers the events and thoughts. Again, this means virtually that there would be as many descriptions of modernism as there are minds contemplating the centuries.

This problem extends further into postmodernism. If the characterization of modernism as an integrated whole is untenable, then the idea of postmodernism as a unified whole is also precarious. If there is no justified reason to view modernism as a harmonious whole, there is also no reason to treat reactions and rejections of this modern configuration, such as the appearance of postmodern concepts, indicating the failure or breakdown of so-called modernism. Yack (1997:40,79,81,139,) emphasises this point as follows:

...many postmodern narratives treat modernity as a totality... How can postmodern narratives declare “war on totality” with one breath and then proceed to make prominent use of the concept in another?

...once we stop thinking about modernity as a totality...we lose the strongest reasons for thinking that recent cultural, philosophic, and sociological innovations all work together to presage the end of modernity.

We are not experiencing today anything like “the end of modernity” or the transformation of one form of modernity into another. We are experiencing, instead, the collapse of a particular illusion about modernity... Recent social, intellectual, and cultural changes do not spell the end of modernity for the simple reason that modernity never existed as the kind of intellectual and coherent whole whose death is now being proclaimed. Modernity, in this

form at least, is a “never was” rather than a “has been”.

This, however, is not the only problem regarding modernism, or, for that matter, also postmodernism. A much more difficult problem is whether specific ideas, viewpoints and philosophical approaches and practices can in fact inaugurate new eras or epochs. B. Yack (ibid:87), for one, is of the opinion that most epochs are launched by political invasion, imperial collapse, or natural catastrophes, not only by the diffusion of new forms of knowledge. It can simply be regarded as an illusion that new ideas necessarily lead to new eras. At most, one might indicate that new approaches regarding knowledge, philosophy and beliefs, *together with major societal, political and natural events*, might lead to epochal changes. Whether this in fact is happening with regard to so-called modernism and so-called postmodernism is an open question.

For the purpose of this thesis the approach is that certain attitudes, viewpoints, convictions of knowledge, patterns of thinking, general assumptions and beliefs can be described as “modernism” and others as “postmodernism”. This is an indication of specific thought-patterns, philosophical trends and theological attitudes. If one uses these concepts, paradigms or matrixes, intellectual trends, inclinations, tendencies, affinities and leanings, one is thereby indicating that many differentiated ideas and divergent, different and varied beliefs are indicated by the concepts modern and postmodern. The whole of life, its ideas and practices of a specific era are definitely not included in these concepts. These concepts only indicate very particular trends viewed from distinctive contexts and explicit viewpoints.

According to a number of trends in today’s thinking, we appear to be on the brink of a new era of

intellectual approaches. As it, however, characterises everything in terms of what it used to be, for example, post-structural, post-industrial and postmodern, it shows that the starting point of this approach is still within the past, within modernism. It means that the characteristics of modernism are still to be understood and delineated to be able to comprehend the tendencies of postmodernism. For the purpose of this thesis, a number of the trends of so-called modernism are described to be able to understand the change towards so-called postmodernism.

### **3.3 THE INDICATIONS OF THE TRENDS OF MODERNISM**

To characterize some trends in the period known as the modern period, one can start at the end of the period known as the Middle Ages or the “dark ages”. This is as good as a number of other starting points. I doubt very sincerely, however, whether the people living in these “dark ages” would have described them by these derogatory terms. The so-called new epoch started with what was known as the Renaissance; a French word, translated from the Italian *rinascimento*, indicating a “rebirth” or “revival”. The Renaissance was known as an artistic and intellectual movement from approximately the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries when the so-called Enlightenment part of the modern era commenced. The name Renaissance came from the ideas used by the poets Petrarch and Dante in Italy. It emphasized the study of the classics of ancient Greek and Roman civilizations to imitate their life forms and themes and to kindle the classical spirit. This brought about a revival in learning and human values presented in the classical writings and a desire to remake themselves in the image of, what seemed to them, the two noblest civilizations which had ever been.

In many ways, the quintessential thinker of this period was the English scientist and philosopher Bacon (1561-1626). He has been hailed as the first modern scientist as he inaugurated

experimentation, empirical observation and induction as scientific methods, as well as the interrelations of the sciences themselves into a unified whole. “Causes are wholly material. Physical objects and processes obey laws which men [sic] of commonsense will usually discover by using scientific procedures” (Robinson & Groves 1998:53). What was important was that he placed a body of truth at the foundation of the sciences that he had called “first philosophy”, which could be labeled the foundational “laws” of reasoning and axioms of science and philosophy. This would guide individuals and society towards a happier life. His aim was not only to find a way towards understanding the universe, but also to provide a means of guiding people and of ruling over nature. The aim of science and philosophy was seen to be to endow humans with power. His famous dictum was, “knowledge is power”, as knowledge mediates power over nature and, most importantly, over our circumstances towards control of our lives. What is important is that this approach did not only designate specific scientific *facts*, but also a number of assumptions and beliefs, as the concept “first philosophy” and “laws” indicated.

With this approach to life, Bacon set the stage for his late-modern successors to devise laws pertaining to human behaviour and action. The fruition of this trend was to strive for behavioural power through knowledge, changing human attitudes and action through therapy or counselling, according to predetermined goals, theories and plans. This modern programme of counselling came under sharp scrutiny of postmodern thinking indicating that so-called expert knowledge is transformed into the exercise of power over others, whether the therapists wanted to do this, or not. Some criticism even called this power violence against others.

An intellectual movement, humanism, as part of the Renaissance, elevated humanity to the centre of the universe, but it did not yet establish the individual person as the determining centre of the world, as in the Enlightenment period. Humanism is derived from the Latin, *humanus*, and centred

on enhancing humanity as such. The emphasis was on a more humane life, but at this stage, not by excluding God and religion. The anti-religious emphasis of humanism would develop later. The humanists reacted against medieval scholasticism by emphasising human intellectual and cultural achievements rather than the misery and brevity of life. They focused on the need to escape from this lamentable situation and from divine control over all life, understood in a dogmatic and strict controlling way. Humanism at this stage was not against Christianity, and in fact, the 15<sup>th</sup> century thinkers Ficino and Mirandola endeavored to unite secular philosophy with Christianity. Actually, in 1548 the noted humanist, de Piccolomini, was elected Pope, Pius II. In northern Europe “Christian humanism” came into being as a result of the unification of evangelical piety and classical scholarship, with the aim of returning to the Bible and Christian faith regarding the developments in culture. Many Reformers, including Calvin, Zwingli and Melancton, had a humanist background. The church reformer, Erasmus, was a well-known humanist, who edited the Greek New Testament and the writings of the church fathers.

Three events were of crucial importance to the Renaissance period; the fall of Constantinople, which sent numerous Christian and classical scholars and a flood of classical manuscripts to the west, the development of printing and the Reformation. The increase in philosophical, scientific and social studies and the dissemination of thousands of books now focused more on the development of humanity. It was not so much that God was marginalised in humanism, as that the study of humans and of natural phenomena was now possible without the need to kowtow to church dogmas and hard and fast dogmatic explanations. The time of monolithic church prescriptions in ideas, politics, science and religion was over. The old, distantly Platonic notion that there was in every field of thought or action a *single* correct ideal led to a corrupt dogmatism of power. Heterodoxy of any kind, especially religious dissent, had been severely discouraged and sometimes punished with death during the Middle Ages.

During the Renaissance, pluralism and experimentation became norms. Old certainties were re-examined and new ideas were made universally available. In the place of a kind of *guru* approach to medical and emotional healing, systematic “diagnosis and treatment” came into practice. In general, the idea of the dignity of human beings replaced former notions of religious and social hierarchy, with far-reaching effects in philosophy, law, politics and the churches. Monolithic ideas in theology and the churches were challenged and refreshing new ideas encouraged. Science shook itself free from the shackles of church dogmatism and began seeking rational explanations for universal phenomena. Science made strides forward with such thinkers and researchers as Copernicus, Galileo, Harvey and Paracelsus. The divine right of princes, whether of State or Church, a crucial medieval notion, began to be challenged on the long road towards equality and democracy. In the arts, “ordinary” people replaced the allegorical figures, the aristocrats and religious hierarchies. A fascination with the emotions, thoughts and preoccupations of the “average” citizens took place. This trend was particularly noticeable in drama which became permissible after a century of church repression. The Renaissance age is “...a time of the *commedia dell’arte*, of Calderon, Lope de Vega and above all Shakespeare” (Mc Leish 1994:356).

There is, however, a dark side to almost all of these developments. In the culture generally, new dogmatisms quickly began to replace the old ones. They were less in number than before, but they were still just as programmatic, procedural, contrived and calculative. The rise of Protestantism led to Christian divisions, and fundamental schisms on a massive scale occurred with far-reaching consequences throughout the world. In politics the rise of separate towns and individual rulers all over Europe led to persistent squabbles, uneasy alliances and often wars which were as protracted as they were pointless. In Germany alone there were at one stage 300 princedoms. The new self-confidence that the Europeans had discovered, together with their new experiences of freedom and mobility beyond the continent, led them to regard people in other parts of the world not as their

equals, but as people to be colonised and their places to be “discovered and plundered”.

In general, “ordinary” people were “discovered” and there was a move towards a more humane life, but basic respect for other human beings did not become a permanent way of life. Others were still treated as “objects” and in medical and emotional healing the “experts” still decided what was “good” for the “patient”, albeit with “diagnosis and treatment”. This, however, remained a one-way communication from “expert” to “patient”, with negative consequences. What was still lacking, also centuries later, was a full acknowledgment of the independence and self-determination of a person with problems.

The second characteristic period of the so-called modern epoch which started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was the Enlightenment, also a blanket term like “Renaissance” for one of the dominant movements in the European intellectual history. Once again, the motivating idea was to irradiate human life and society with knowledge to the benefit of everybody and not only knowledge with a general concept of the mercy of God as in the Middle Ages. The aim was to steer intellectual activity away from the shackles of enslaving religious dogmatism. This process continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One important characteristic of this period was scientific rationalism, leading into many developments, for example, Marxism, Darwinism, quantum physics and the relativity theory, to name only a few peaks along a continuous onward path.

Grenz (1996:60) makes a valid distinction between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment as two phases of the so-called modern epoch. The Renaissance laid the foundation for the modern mentality, but the superstructure had to be erected by the Enlightenment. The early cosmology elevated humanity to the centre of the universe, but it did not establish the individual ego as the self-determining centre of the world. The Renaissance spirit undercut the dogmatic authority of



tradition and the church, but it did not enthrone the authority of reason and the scientific methods. Later on, however, these two stages flowed into one another.

Descartes (1596-1650), perhaps one of the main figures of this period and of modernism as such, re-appropriated Augustine's dictum, *cogito ergo sum*, and claimed that everything could be doubted except the thinking self, which is the first truth that doubt cannot deny. Descartes thus defined the ego as a thinking substance attaining certainty. He regarded, for the first time, the human person as an autonomous rational subject. His thoughts influenced the philosophical and theological approaches of the Western world for more than 300 years in a decisive way. It is, therefore, important to describe the different approaches and attitudes in his thoughts regarding the issues of modernism.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century, in contrast to medieval and pre-scientific culture, was pre-occupied with the distinction between the self and the world, as well as between the "knower" and the known. These objectivist modes of rationality, delineated by Descartes, became part of the intellectual thinking for hundreds of years.

He worked against the background of the previous centuries where society was badly in need of a new understanding of life and of new imagery. Ortega (1958:186) regarded the past two centuries before Descartes as "...the greatest crises through which the European destiny had ever passed...without solid ground on which to stand...swinging loose on its hinges." The one proper culture was broken up and there was no longer one true church. Increased exploration and commerce with other nations outside Europe started to upset the concept of euro-centrism that prevailed throughout the medieval era.

The telescope changed the perception of the world and the skies, as the naked senses, being the most intimate mode of access to the world, could no longer be trusted. With the denial of Copernicus of the rotation of the heavens around the earth, the cosy, finite universe of the medieval imagination burst asunder. Formerly there had been a place for everything and everything was in its right place, but now even the sun and the earth were “homeless and lost” (cf. Bordo 1987:13,14).

The epistemological insecurity of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance drastically influenced Descartes to search for clarity and absolute certainty. A series of wars, usually lumped together as the Thirty Years’ War, devastated Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Behind these conflicts lay the doctrinal disputes that divided Christians into confessional groups opposing one another. This led to the questioning, not only of different doctrines *vis-à-vis* one another, *but of doctrine itself*, as it was seen to divide people up to death (cf. Grenz 1996:63). In the aftermath of the Reformation and of the terrible religious wars that ensued, Descartes’ aim was to establish a “neutral” way of thinking, a detached and objective philosophy that was unfettered by religious constraints and to free thinking and philosophy from the dogmatic and sterile medieval theologies in which it had become embedded.

### **3.4 REPRESENTATION AS THE CARTESIAN WAY TOWARDS “CERTAINTY”**

Heidegger (1971:130) described the kernel of modernity, as established by Descartes, in terms of the reduction of the world to a picture: “The world picture does not change from an earlier medieval one into a modern one, but rather the fact that the world becomes a picture at all is what distinguishes the character of the modern age.” Descartes represented the world or a person’s experience of it as a picture. This *representation* of the world in the mind is still the dominant thought of knowledge in contemporary times. To explain the Cartesian mode of representation,

Heidegger used such descriptions as enframing (*Gestell*), a theoretical attitude and representational-calculative, manipulative and technological thinking. These descriptions of the method of Descartes referred to the formation, organising and fitting of experiences into a fixed descriptive grid, taxonomy of mental states. It meant placing the experience of phenomena into a set of prefigured possibilities and individual or atomic concepts into “de-contextualised” and preset thought-forms. Subjective phenomena now became “points of space” and “moments of time”. Mathematics was the main vehicle Descartes used for his formations. This approach enabled Descartes and the rationality of modernism to draw conclusions, establish unambiguous facts and maintain generalizations of life. One consequence for counselling in this framework, which is still relevant today, is that a person with problems is willy-nilly fitted into and classified according to fixed and final categories and “treated” accordingly.

The early Renaissance and Baroque philosophical traditions already used representation as a method, as exemplified in Shakespeare’s famous dictum, *the world is but a stage*, but in Descartes, it took on a new meaning. The formal and normative character of representation was his “mathematisation” of knowledge. He upheld logical certainty and mathematical correctness and certitude as the model for all knowledge. His basis for knowledge was “universal mathematics”, the science of measure and order. The key to enable him to achieve this reasoning was the construction of a new agency, the subject, *cogito*, which governed his representation of the world and knowledge axiomatically. The issue for Descartes was not the traditional sense of presenting something as an image, but rather the agency’s power, the *cogito*’s ability towards the reduction of the world to a figural representation. Knowledge of the world became knowledge as representation of objective phenomena in a rational symbolic form (cf. Judovitz 1988:68,69).

The background of Descartes’ thoughts was the historical mood of the so-called Dark Ages and the

times of uncertainty in the early Renaissance period. There had been mounting evidence that the “world” of sensible forms, mental images imprinted on one’s “soul”, teleological explanations and an earth-centred universe were a kind of vague haziness thinking from which one was now recovering. The radical doubt of Descartes was an extreme rejection of everything accepted on authority, tradition, trust and common sense. He had a deep suspicion of the immediate “look” of things, of common sense, of the reflection of the world in the mind and of the world of appearances. As it turned out, things were not at all as they seemed to be.

The basic problem was how and on what basis one can establish or re-establish true contact with, and obtain verifiable information from the world. Descartes’ answer was to use the right method, to represent objective phenomena in a symbolic form in the mind. According to this method, a foundation for a true “science” of “reality” can be built. These thoughts were the seeds of the modern construction of “reality”, especially by way of logical and mathematical construction according to the right rules and procedures, producing correct results, repeatable in other experiments (cf. Pippin 1991:23,24).

Descartes’ argument for the right method was that the certainty of his own thinking regarding his existence was the basis of his method. The way to the certainty of the thinking subject was to doubt everything. When this was achieved, the only thing that could not be doubted was the thinking subject’s thinking. The thinking or mental subject was the focal point of his method and self-certainty was the norm for this approach. If ideas or the contents of the subject’s consciousness could be methodologically identical with the subject’s original self-certainty, these ideas were then regarded as true. Descartes regarded the “clear and distinct” ideas as true because they were based on self-certainty. This approach was believed to be a new beginning and that thinking would not again be deceiving as in the dark past of history. The sensible world as substance could be

represented in truth through the method of mathematics, and the connection with “reality” could be re-established after the uncertainty of “eternal principles” and “metaphysical smoke” has been cleared (cf. Ibid: 24). By way of these methods, nature could be mastered and the fruits of the earth could be enjoyed.

This philosophy of rational certainty, however, called forth a great enemy of the new era - scepticism. After Descartes, many did not share his faith in mathematics as securing the subject’s domination of beings and consciousness as a master over every sort of perspective in which the world is fashioned. In fact, this basic faith in the transparency of consciousness to itself was questioned and rejected.

Despite hesitation, questioning and even rejection of Descartes’ elevation of consciousness to the centre stage, the “Age of Reason” was given a great impetus by his thoughts and brought an enhanced status to humans and a respectful estimation of human capabilities. Humanity’s status in the cosmos was greatly improved and human potential was respected. This centrality of the human mind and consciousness was called subjectivism, a crucial notion for the understanding of modernism that set the agenda for centuries of modern theology and philosophy.

### **3.5 SUBJECTIVISM AS A PART OF THE MAIN PROBLEM**

A starting point for and a description of modernity depend on the trends, assumptions and principles which are focused on, and which common patterns and tendencies in the history of modernity are chosen. There is actually no single starting point and no clear-cut characteristic that determines the modern period. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards to contemporary times there is, however, a humanistic-cultural and spiritual amalgam comprising technological mastery of nature,

modern science, humanism, secularism, democracy, the development of nation states, etcetera. This is a relatively coherent frame of ideas spelling out the concept of modernity. Central to this frame of understanding is the concept subjectivism. To understand the world and humanity systematically and methodically, Descartes considered the subject using concepts and distinctions objectively, derived from the subject-object split and the objects represented in the mind, to construct knowledge. He established the individual consciousness primordially and with privileged status over all the other “realities” as the starting point for enquiry by virtue of it being indubitable.

A number of authors point out the fact that Descartes’ influence is still determining many thinking patterns up to today. “In establishing the centrality of the human mind...Descartes set the agenda...for the next three hundred years” (Grenz 1996:64). Cahoon (1988:32) goes even further: “Descartes is the founder of modern subjectivism...few contemporary philosophers notice that Descartes’ underlying subjectivist interpretive categories remain powerfully in control of our thinking to this day. Most of us are still closet neo-Cartesians.”

As these viewpoints are also true for therapy or counselling, it is important for this field to understand what modern subjectivism practically means and what its consequences are. From a therapy point of view, Berger (1996:170) states: “Cartesianism still underlies and determines much of today’s thought.” He regards Descartes’ influence so damaging today that his aim is stated as follows: “To escape these undesirable limitations means finding a non-Cartesian alternative.” He even calls the heading of his research in this part of his work: “Towards a Non-Cartesian Psychotherapeutic Framework...” Later on, we will focus on Cartesian, modern, subjectivist counselling and possible alternatives. Here it is important to determine the meaning and consequences of modern subjectivism founded by Descartes and which were, in some ways, even broadened by Kant, Hegel and others.

To be able to understand why Descartes' thinking brought such a major change, it can be explained against the background of the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition. The Scholastics in the Middle Ages explained and systematised the Christian doctrines with the help of philosophy, especially Aristotle's philosophy. The theologians, Thomas Aquinas and Boethius, used Aristotle's philosophy, but Augustine, the church father, used Plato's. For the Scholastics who translated Aristotle's philosophy into medieval Christian form, the knower and the known exhibit an internal and intrinsic relation. The mind and sense organs were seen to receive intelligible forms of objects and the objects acted on the mind and sense organs. This created a dimension within which the mind and the object were a unity, except that the distinction between them remained. As the mind was capable of receiving the forms of objects, it was capable of becoming "all things", without being the objects. The object, in a sense, was one with the mind. The Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition distinguished a number of functional levels of the mind, acts of judgment, understanding and the grasping of "universals". The difference, for the Scholastics, however, was that sensation, imagination and feeling were not mental events. They were considered as material and bodily appearances and regarded as disturbances. They had to be overcome. The important aspect of their thinking was that the traditional concept of "ideas" was deemed as archetypes in the divine thoughts.

Descartes, however, started to use ideas systematically for the contents of the mind. This development of *identifying mind with thinking* in general and his *expansion of thinking to include "ideas"* were crucial. An idea in the mind was now treated as the mind's own "thought" and not something originating from a "realm of ideas", from God, or from somewhere else outside. *Descartes comprehended for the first time the human soul or mind as a uniform homogeneous conscious awareness.* He regarded the unitary soul in a person without any diversity of parts. There were no functionally differentiated levels as taken by the Aristotelian-Scholastics.

Sensations, judgments, ideas and fantasies were all now seen to be equally mental and, importantly, *private*. This made it difficult for him to relate to the traditional view of the unity of the mind with objects.

Descartes, especially because of his concept of subjectivism, could not accept and admit the internal relation of mind and object, the sphere in which they were seen to be one. He boldly asserted the most fundamental and inviolable categorical distinction between mind, as individual consciousness, and other non-mental things, as *res extensa*. He could not accept, *prima facie*, a relation of unity and direct communication between the thinking mind, *res cogitans* and the objective world, *res extensa*. He did not admit common “universals” for the mind to discern objects as a means to establish such a relation of unity.

With this development in Descartes, mind, soul and consciousness comprised only one, unitary field. Descartes did not discover or invent individual consciousness, but he provided it with a foundation of rational thinking. With this new approach of individual consciousness as a unitary concept, he weakened the Aristotelian-Scholastic dominant distinctions and concepts such as *aithesis* and *nous*, sensation and intellectual activity to mediate unity between the mind and objects. He isolated the unitary consciousness, *res cogitans*, from the body and the objective world, *res extensa*, and created a basic dualism. This view directly contradicted the Aristotelian-Scholastic concept of the unity of a person regarding the “soul” as the “act” or “form” of the body. Obviously, Descartes regarded the mind and the body in a sense closely united and one way or another as one whole, but they remained irreconcilable. By viewing everything outside the mind as non-mental, as being extended, *res extensa*, Descartes’ dualism enabled him to consider *the objective field as devoid of teleology and subject to pure mechanical analysis*. By eliminating all substantial forms, final causes and occult qualities, which were part of the prevailing medieval view of nature,



he could analyse nature in a strictly objective and quantitative-mathematical way.

The problem for Descartes, and for that matter for modernism, was that he founded his philosophy on a personal, private and subjective basis. In other parts of his system of thinking, he tried to overcome this privacy, but the foundation remained intrinsically private. Consequently, the non-private, interaction abilities and transcendental elements in a person were only derivative. The result of this concept of private individual consciousness, isolated from all non-mental objects and also from other individuals, each with an own private consciousness, was that there was *no natural place for communication*. These basic concepts and viewpoints militate against the possibility of any form of direct communication and dealings with the non-mental world or with other persons. This left Descartes only an indirect route towards knowledge of and communication with non-mental things, which he took, namely recourse to God and transcendental reason.

Logical reason was the capacity to draw conclusions from already asserted premises and instrumental reason was the capacity to determine the practical means to accomplish already given goals. Beyond these two types of reason, Descartes assumed the existence of a mental sphere with intuition regarding basic principles and values that form the foundation of logical and technical reasoning. This mental sphere or faculty comprised transcendental reason, with an activity like the *nous*, soul or mind, which asserted or recognized truths that applied to objects and the world. This was not regarded as the mere product of either logical considerations or sense experience. A part of the individual unitary mind was seen to be transcendental reason that could know the nature of reality beyond the mind's representations of that reality. Descartes regarded this faculty as the natural light which showed us truths that applied to both the world outside and another person's consciousness (cf. Cahoon 1988:44,45). He tried to overcome the isolation of the individual consciousness with his concept of transcendental reason.

Descartes also tried to solve the problem of the isolated subject by way of his theological views. God and the God-given faculty of natural light are seen to shape a relationship between individual consciousness and the world. God was indeed the guarantee for a person's pure, clear and distinct ideas. Following this route, the way for Descartes was open for genuine knowledge, also religious knowledge, through "clear and distinct ideas", on the basis of the most intimate transcendental being, God.

One result of this reasoning of Descartes, regarding the centrality of the human consciousness and especially rationality as the main priority, was that throughout the modern era one distinctive approach was that many disciplines have turned to the reasoning subject rather than divine revelation as the starting point for reflection and knowledge. *From the Enlightenment onwards this approach had, for instance, many supporters in theology that God must be considered in the consciousness of a person and that theology must work out the location of God in the human scheme of understanding.* In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, theology was regarded as comprising the concept "doctrine of faith" which focused on the inclusion of God in the consciousness of the believer. *This concept usually understood faith as a form of self-understanding.*

This view was criticised and rejected as faith in God was seen to be an element in consciousness and controlled by the conscious process. It was rather believed that all meaning in consciousness was transformed when a person believed in God. One consequence of the approach of Descartes and of the Enlightenment was that the transcendent God was taken theistically into and identified with the subject's self-consciousness and it resulted in a form of pantheism. This changed the relationship between God and a person into a *noetic* relationship, understood as a relationship based on rationalism. Theology was understood to be a rational clarification, explanation and delineation of dogmas and belief systems.

The relationship between God and a person outside this modernistic scheme of things, however, was rather seen as an ontic relation. The person was seen to *exist* in a relationship with God and was not regarded to have an independent existence without God and then to come into “contact” with God through the processes of consciousness (cf. Thielicke 1974:15). The consciousness of the believer, or the faith to be formed in one’s consciousness, is not to be seen as the central aspect of one’s life, but God, in whom a person believes and by which the subject is changed into a “new creature”, was to be the focal point. A Cartesian consciousness regarded faith as something to be understood as the relationship with God on a *noetic* basis, as a knowledge relation. To be a Christian meant rather to actualise faith in Christ, as the bond with God was seen to be an *ontic* relationship of a person existing in this relation. A person does not exist independently and then comprehends God with his consciousness. A person’s existence and whole being subsist in God and is comprehended by God. Reason is not disregarded, but rationalism as the ultimate focal point is debunked. This meant that the existence of a person, his being, is in an *ontic* relationship with God, rather than that his mind, his thinking is appropriating the *noetic* relationship with God.

The later scientific counterpart of Descartes was Newton (1642-1727), who provided the new scientific framework for modernity, proposing the physical world to be considered as a machine with laws and functioning with regularity. The thinking of Descartes and Newton laid the scientific *foundation for the Enlightenment modernism, an autonomous, rational subject encountering a mechanistic world*. The notions of the controlling subject and the mechanistic world brought about an explosion of knowledge. The aim was to unlock the secrets of the universe, to master nature for human benefit and to create a better world. This quest led to the modern characteristic of contemporary times to bring life as a whole under rational control to improve existence (cf. Ibid:3).

Modern counselling, for example, fell in this framework whereby “traumatic” issues of a “patient” are rationally analysed and problems, defined by insight, are treated by way of systematic methods. “Trauma” in the thesis is usually regarded as an objectivistic and modernistic term and placed in inverted commas. The problem is that one is never “certain” what this term indicates. *The main idea is the rational control of problems in a person’s life through the insights of a “knowledgeable” person.* A number of dubious and damaging assumptions are functioning in this counselling model, for example, clear knowledge of another person is possible, a “specialist”, with so-called full insight into a “patient”. This “specialist” can determine the life of that person. Lack of control in one’s own life is usually seen as part of the problem, indicating healing for the person through rational control by way of the right methods. The “patient” is regarded as passive and is expected to follow the “rules” by co-operating with the “expert”. Later on, we will look into this, but at this point it is important to understand that the approaches in “modern counselling” came a far way through the thought-patterns of traditional rationalism.

### **3.6 SOME EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERNISM**

In general, the intellectual foundation of the Enlightenment, influencing theology and counselling, comprised specific epistemological assumptions, for example, knowledge was seen as certain, objective and good. It was assumed that the rational capability of a person was able to demonstrate the correctness of philosophic, scientific, moral, political and religious convictions. This ensured *certainty*. Knowledge was also seen as being *objective*. It was claimed that the specialist as “neutral” observer had access to dispassionate knowledge, not as a conditioned participant, but as an independent subject from a vantage point outside the flux of history. This caused the sciences to split into separate disciplines to gain more expertise in limited demarcated fields.

This certain and objective knowledge was regarded as inherently “good”. The Enlightened scientist regarded it axiomatically that the discovery of knowledge was always good. This assumption rendered the Enlightenment outlook optimistic and led to the conviction that progress was inevitable. It was assumed that this outlook coupled with modern education, as a means of providing knowledge to the “uninformed”, would free us from the vulnerability to nature and from social bondage. All beliefs that curtail rational autonomy, or those based on external authority rather than reason and experience, became suspect. The self-determining subject as an autonomous self was understood to be free in individualistic terms (cf. Grenz 1996:3, 4). The basic shift during this period was from superstition to rationality, from hierarchical authority to subjectivism and “...from artistic realism imbued with guilt (as shown in the fiction of...Dostoevsky or Zola) to documentary realism (as shown in the novels of...Theodore Dreiser and H. D. Wells)” (McLeish 1994:356).

During the Enlightenment, reason was elevated at the expense of religion, which was denigrated in human affairs. In the Middle Ages divine revelation functioned as the final arbiter of the truth. This now changed and *reason was regarded as the arbiter of understanding the truth given through revelation*. The classic maxim of Anselm, *I believe that I may understand*, could be characterised to be changed fundamentally to read, *I understand that I may believe*. The medieval ideal of the static contemplative soul was rejected in favour of the person as creative, endeavouring to change the situation. The medieval cosmology regarded time as the eternal circling of the heavenly bodies, but now it was seen as “...an onrushing and forward-moving stream” (Grenz 1996:63). This movement of time had to be encountered by way of rational control.

The Enlightenment’s new rational scientific assumptions differentiated between natural and revealed religion. To be able to understand the concept natural religion it was important to realise

that reason comprised more than just a human faculty. Something of the old Graeco-Roman Stoic notion returned, that a fundamental order and structure lay within all reality and that this was discerned by mind's reason. There existed a basic correspondence between the mind and reality. God was seen as the Grand Designer of the universe and the orderliness in the "nature of things". Natural religion comprehended the "laws" of God by investigating the "book of nature" and the "natural laws" were discerned by the rational mind corresponding with reality. This regarded the mind as a common court of appeal to settle all quarrels, disputes and differences.

The above approaches indicated that a number of fundamental principles of the Enlightenment period were established; some of them were *reason*, *nature* comprising universal natural law, *autonomy*, *harmony* and *progress*. *Autonomy* was exercised to dethrone external dogmatic authority. *Harmony* was detected in the universe with its overarching order, being inherently reasonable and orderly. Harmony was seen as a type of ethical principle to govern human action. This view of harmony issued in the belief of progress through the proper scientific, objective approach. It was believed that to follow these guiding "principles" people would be happy, rational and free.

Increasingly, revealed religion came under attack from Enlightenment thinking, but some voices called for an equation of the two belief systems. Others sought to accommodate Enlightenment thoughts by arguing that revealed religion is a necessary supplement to the "religion" of reason. The British empiricist Lock (1632-1704) paved the way for the ascendancy of natural religion by stating that revealed religion could be the most reasonable form of religion if it is divested from revelation, its so-called "obsolete dogmatic baggage". For Christians, however, this was the crux of the matter, distinguishing true from false religion. Natural religion gained the status of true religion as it still provided a central place for God in its cosmology, namely the Grand Designer.

Because of placing religion within rational thinking and the elevation of natural religion, Enlightenment thinkers constructed a theological alternative to orthodoxy, known as Deism. The consequence of this development was that the Christian God was submerged into the natural realm, which paved the way for the discarding of God by many in late modernity (cf. Grenz 1996:73).

These developments, however, contained contradictions and it seemed that the modern Enlightenment movement began to run out of steam towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some problems were that former supporters of Enlightenment rationalism objected that reason alone was unable to provide answers about God, morality and the meaning of life. A leading thinker, Hume (1711-1776), embraced scepticism and concluded that logic and the empirical method, focused on the mathematical model, could never lead to true and certain knowledge. In the end, many concluded that the individual enlightened mind had produced nothing more than modern rationalism. When Hume and others, however, started to bury the principles of the era of Enlightenment, Hume's writings awakened one of the greatest philosophers of modernism towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, namely Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

Kant exalted the human mind in a new way to the centre of the knowing process. He stated that we could only experience and gain knowledge from the world because of the active participation of the mind. This was maintained against the general conviction of empiricism that the mind was "passive". One of the leading figures of empiricism, Lock, claimed that the mind began as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate and that it was completely passive in the knowing process. The mind received "impressions" from the external world, which it used to formulate ideas. Hume claimed that empiricism was unable to provide knowledge of reality as we only received perceptions, impressions and images of the world. The concept of a passive mind led to one of the

contradictions, set in motion by Descartes, which haunted modernism, namely materialism and especially determinism. The passive mind was understood to be determined by the objective world, causing materialism and it was totally controlled from outside. As chief architect of critical reason, Kant constructed the *Critique of Practical Reason*, after the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to try to escape determinism.

*Vis-à-vis* the notion of the passive mind, Kant put forward the revolutionary thought that the mind was active in the knowledge process. He compared this with the change in the thinking of Copernicus and it was later hailed as the “Copernican revolution” in thinking. He claimed that we did not derive knowledge from sense experience alone as it merely supplied the raw “data”. The mind actively systematised and organised sensations and sense perception to reach knowledge by way of concepts, *a priori* present in the structure of the mind. *Previously it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects, but he claimed that objects must conform to our knowledge.* He has done this by way of the concept of *a priori* categories of the mind to which the objective reality must conform. This meant that the *a priori* categories forming certain knowledge, did not have an external, objective and independent status, but they had to be understood as subjectively located within the human observer, making the object real. What we can know about objects is limited to that which we ourselves have put into those objects by way of our *a priori* categories, such as space and time. This notion of the observer’s *a priori* contribution to the knowledge of objects and the changing around of one’s thinking is traced to the thinking of Thales (c. 580 B.C.) and of Copernicus.

Thales, in his demonstration of the isosceles triangle, brought out what was necessarily implied in the concepts that he had put into the construction of the figure and he had formed *a priori* concepts to be able to do this. Copernicus failed to explain the movements of heavenly bodies revolving



around the observer. He decided, therefore, to postulate that the stars were at rest and that the spectator revolved around them. These methods changed thinking around and were claimed to bring certainty of knowledge. Here we cannot go into the comparison between Kant and Copernicus and it is enough to state that Kant's "revolution" in thinking was much more fundamental than that of Copernicus as he did not change the rules around of thinking in one's experience and of the phenomenal world.

Kant claimed that the observer does not actually perceive the object itself, but only representations of it. To be able to "experience" the object, the person must relate to the object by way of necessary and universal rules or categories, for example, time, space, causality and substance. The representational experience of objects must conform to the concepts or *a priori* categories subjectively located inside the observer. Through the experience of the *a priori* concepts and the concept of representation of objects, Kant was able to claim knowledge with certainty. This was, in a sense, the same way that Descartes had claimed the certainty of subjectivism, by moving the focus from objectivism to subjectivism.

Kant believed that this line of thinking provided a way forward towards knowledge through the wreckage of the Enlightenment. Kant's exaltation of the mind as a definite active agent in generating knowledge, as well as initiating moral concepts of duty, focused on the centrality of the autonomous self. This intense focus on self-reflection exalted and universalised the thinking self and became the main characteristic of the so-called modern era.

Kant's emphasis on the subject took the Cartesian thought a major step further. The Cartesian self became not just the focal point of philosophical attention, but the entire subject matter of philosophy, as the Kantian thinking self in a sense created the "world", the world of knowledge. *The*

*self became a world-creating self.*

Kant also took the next logical step regarding the self, not only knowing itself, but also all other selves, as well as the structure of every possible self, thereby constructing a universal human nature. This allowed him to make authoritative pronouncements on human nature as such, a comprehensive concept, embracing everybody. This was also a fundamental shift to radical individualism. Kant was convinced that a person as an individual could find truth by observation, experimentation, but especially careful reflection. This meant that the discovery of truth became ultimately a private matter (cf. Grenz 1996:80). With his philosophy Kant laid a newly defined intellectual foundation for the modern era, but this did not happen without contradiction in his thoughts.

Kant's concepts of knowledge had sharp limits. He claimed that we could have *a priori* knowledge of objects only to the extent to which we ourselves have put meaning into them. To overcome this limitation in knowledge, he divided "reality" into the phenomenal and the noumenal, two major kinds of "reality". Only the phenomenal world could be known and he could not state what *noumena*, the sphere behind the phenomena, really was. Thus Kant created a huge epistemological dualism between mental representations, with the help of the *a priori* categories, and the externally, empirically objective world. Up to contemporary times, this epistemological dualism haunts modern theology and philosophy, not to mention other intellectual fields.

Be this as it may, through the work of Kant, the surge of confidence in the individual mind and in the power of reason reached full tide during the Enlightenment period. The mind was seen to penetrate every area of the phenomenal world and this characterised the climate of the so-called modern period. This approach opened the way for the modern explosion of knowledge under the

banner of progress. The attempt to embody this new view of the self and human reason in social institutions emerged evenly during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. *The image of Western society was based on the concept of subjectivism*, of a free individual, the basis of the market economy run by individuals, as even corporation boards were made up of individuals and the centralised rational-legal state, enhancing the rights of the “subjects”. The institutionalisation of individual rationality led to private property for people in general, to certain types of intellectual and political freedom and to particular forms of democracy.

The general intellectual quest of the modern period had been to unlock the secrets of the universe to be able to master nature and society for human benefit, creating a better world. This, however, also created a contradiction as this quest eventually resulted in the ultimate control of the whole of life and in contemporary times produced the modern dominant technological mastery in the life of society and of individuals. The central aim was to “manage” the life of people in a rational way. The Enlightenment idea of the correspondence between reason and the rationality of nature in particular created serious problems for people in modern society. The effect of the notion of rationality in nature and in modern science was to boldly proclaim that human nature was also amenable to empirical study and control. A consensus developed on these assumptions that the methods of the natural sciences were applicable to human nature and human behaviour. This had created a deep-rooted incongruity between the historical lives of people and non-historical science.

The disastrous 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment belief in the ultimate unity and permanence of physical and moral reality resulted in the congruence between reason and experience, theory and scientific fact, reason and virtue, and between rationality and virtue. Rationalism as the ultimate principle, ensued. This caused humanity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be branded and degraded as one-dimensional. *In counselling, for example, the person in need was regarded as an “objective fact”, to be*

*investigated, perceived and analysed as a so-called empirical scientific and statistical substance and an object to be treated.* The important task of knowledge, *vis-à-vis* the modern approach, was not to detect “laws” of human behaviour, or the “substance” behind events and behind human behaviour, but to understand behaviour from a human point of view. A human being can understand behaviour, as the knower and the person in need are both human beings. Human behaviour can be known historically, but not scientifically and objectively through external perception.

The modern foundation, comprising Descartes' subjectivism and rationalism and Kant's “active” personal and universal rationalism, was laid towards the rationalization of life in all areas. Theologically everything was included in consciousness, even “God” and counselling was conducted on the basis of empirical scientific principles. Initially and in a limited way, this brought apparent progress, but in the end it led to crisis after crisis.

In this chapter some historical foundations have been exposed for the development of modernism. It developed like a thick black toxic cloud, covering everyone and suffocating everything, while claiming self-inflation and universal control. The quest was for postmodernism to find a way out of this Cartesian and Kantian dilemma towards overcoming modernism or by moving beyond it. This is to be investigated further.

## CHAPTER 4

### DECONSTRUCTION AS THE CRUX OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR POSTMODERNISM

*Theology and counselling are not “exact” sciences, as they are many times made out to be in modernism and as they purport to claim absolute truth. They do not rest on rationalistic assumptions to claim logical certainty.*

*Deconstruction demonstrates that there is no direct way or a certain approach to evaluate a person’s emotional “trauma”.*

*Counselling cannot rely on narratives, even on the narratives of the person in “trauma” to “reveal” the “truth”. It views these narratives as the creation of meaning from the person’s present priorities and assumptions, with specific aims in mind, or from the counsellor’s transient interpretations and not as objective facts. Narrative theology portrays approximations, not final dogmatic statements.*

*In counselling and theology, the past cannot be objectively repeated and not even summarised as the true statements of fact. They always work with present perspectives, glancing through them to the past, realising that their views are always coloured and determined by the present contexts, values, priorities and assumptions.*

*It is a misunderstanding to regard deconstruction as a concern only with text. From a deconstructive point of view, everything is text. Deconstruction is not purely textual theoría; it comprehends theoría and historical praxis. The assumption here is that “everything is text” and that all “reality”, the world, events, humanity, etcetera, are formed by way of concepts and language in texts.*

#### **4.1 FROM DETERMINATION TO DIFFERENTIATION**

In this chapter, some dilemmas of modernism as well as its “*aporias*” or blind alleys are pointed out to find a way of moving clear of them. Postmodernism is not a stance beyond modernism as there is no possibility of having an objective position from which to have an overview and to maintain integrity of new dogmatic statements. The basic problem is spelled out, namely, to delineate the contours of postmodernism without the necessary concepts to construct this approach to thinking and life.

Deconstruction is explored as a possibility out of this dead end towards creating a postmodern way. This endeavour as a total shift sidesteps modernism. With this fundamental change, the possibility of a centre of thinking becomes the deconstructed self; the text, history and narrative change towards a network of differentiated traces; critical discourse becomes a diverse process of troping, indicating meaning only indirectly. Constancy gives way to volatility; distinctiveness to differences; unanimity to variety; the midpoint to a multiplicity of edges, with no privileged core; ontology, the science of being, penetrating “reality” to creative language; epistemology to rhetoric; mysticism to lucidity; intimacy with a text to space; poetry to “textuality”; the absolute to the unfounded; *aletheia*,

truth as “revealing” to *carte blanche*; hermeneutics to deconstruction. Theology as final dogmatic statements moves towards justified rhetorical witness and counselling shifts from the detection and clarification of “traumatic” problems and programmable solutions towards exploring ambiguous interpretations, as well as tentative estimations towards wholeness.

In this chapter, an attempt is made towards the beginning of a grasp of the gist of deconstruction and postmodernism, and applied to practical theology and counselling in general.

#### **4.2 POSTMODERNISM IS NOT A REPLACEMENT AND A CONTRADICTION OF MODERNISM, BUT A DEPARTURE THEREOF**

In this study postmodernism is not viewed as a new epoch with a fundamental rupture usually understood to be suggested by the “post” of the postmodern. If it is regarded as a new period in history it remains a contributory factor to a modernistic schema of historical evolution, pre-determined by a so-called *argos*, or a “ground” of history, as well as determined by a *telos*, towards a final historical goal. If history, however, were still seen to be programmed by a determining foundation, or an ultimate goal, this framework of thinking, whether one calls it postmodernism or not, would remain a part of modernism, with its “*archo*”-teleological functions of the epochal ruptures in the evolution of history, or within that which exists.

Postmodernism is rather to be understood as an opportunity of a new beginning outside the framework of modernism. This *new* beginning comes by and within that which is at an end. What is at an end is to be described as a conviction about history, as a series of events, marking progressive steps in the re-appropriation of an “original” foundation towards a goal. According to

postmodernism, history as such is not at an end, but it is now perceived as so many occurrences of what is, of events, without being pre-determined by an *argos* or a *telos*, or to put it more in Heidegger's terminology, "open" events as so many "despatches of being". The events of the present time, the present "activity" of events, or the "present-ness" of events are seen to be open for new unconditioned, undecided and free opportunities, as a prospect for the creativity of humanity. Despite the fact that modernism is seen as always claiming "the modern", or the new, it remains an apology for what already exists. It remains one-dimensional, despite its development and progress. It is caught up in a vicious circle of predetermined origins and fixed goals.

My interpretation of modernism in this study is that it understands humanity to be caught up in a vicious circle of determinations and that the modern and new are always within that closed circle. Modernism is regarded to overcome speculation, theory and metaphysics by focussing on the empirical, the "facticity" and the "here and now", concentrating on the "truth" of the present. By making this focus absolute, however, modernism is still part and parcel of metaphysics, by way of "laws" and "principles" of life and a history determined by some overarching framework in which the "facts" of the present time have already been interpreted. This concentration on the "facts" of the present is not neutral, as it purports and claims to be, but it is already construed or interpreted according to some underlying concealed scheme of things. This means that life is not "open" to fundamental new possibilities, as this modern framework always already determines it. This can be understood as the deception of modernism, as it contends to enhance "openness" and "freedom".

To regard the modernising of life as the triumph of rationality and technology, as Heidegger denotes it, implies that modernism is claimed to have conquered metaphysics. Modernism is traditionally



regarded to have overcome the framework of thinking that understands theory to add meaning to practice, or that meaning is attributed to life from “outside” the empirical. Modernistic meaning is now supposed to be found in the facts of existence as they are, in being as it is, or in the empirical. This then, becomes a blanket acceptance of all that exists, a celebration of the here and now, of the present moment, of “the thing in itself” (Kant), of *die sache* (Gadamer), of everything presently taking place. In fact, what is not readily apparent is that this means that “the present” becomes a foundation or a *Grund* of life, a framework of meaning to interpret life. The constitutive categories of modernism, rationality, technology, the new, the focus on “facts” and progress towards improvement, are the critical conquering of situations through crises by way of progress from a beginning to an end. Theologically, it indicates the epochal configuration of the history of “onto-theology”, where God is regarded as Being causing the existence and progress of beings. To regard empirical “facts”, or beings as they exist, as the uncontaminated clear truth and phenomenology as the systematic delineation of it, however, is not a neutral approach to life as it is, but it is already interpreting existence from a framework of values. The consequence is that this approach is not without a theoretical foundation, or devoid of theory, as “facts” are never neutral and are always already interpreted and indicate a hidden foundation.

Postmodernism cannot be defined in terms of the above modern configuration. If it is regarded in terms of an idea of a history in which thinking manifests itself through a series of formations that progressively overcome one another towards the new, each new period being more “original”, enlightening and comprehensive than the previous stage, postmodernism will again be a part of modernism, albeit a new stage, based again on the concepts of critical overcoming and on more sound foundations and greater truths. A main characteristic of modernity is, by definition, the impossibility to overcome itself as it strives continuously to the new, but a “new” according to a pre-

defined rationality, empiricism and technology and indeed, corresponding to a definite *argos* and a specified *telos*.

Postmodernism cannot be conceived similar to the decisive rational categories of modernism. Consequently, the problem with the notion and contents of postmodernism is how to construct it with descriptions, frameworks and concepts that are *not* modernistic. How does one describe postmodernism in a postmodern framework without the prior establishment of such an outline? How does one found a postmodern thinking structure without a preceding determination of the notion postmodernism? This is the paradox of postmodernism. One has to work with a concept of postmodernism, departing from modernism, without using the defining conceptions of modernism. This, however, is not a contradiction, but a paradox, which may indicate a situation where two valid statements, in opposition to one another, may both be acceptable, though not logically compatible. This means that one would be able to state the parameters of a postmodern framework that is an advance towards a *novum*, but without conforming to modernism and also without necessarily contradicting modernism. Postmodernism does not follow a framework of illogical or irrational reasoning and, consequently, cannot contradict rational modernism. This is how I interpret Derrida and what I understand him to say when he indicates that we can never dissipate or get rid of metaphysics or rational principles and that we have to use rational reasoning to overcome these same rational arguments in an alternative way.

Postmodernism, consequently, has to proceed to a genuine *novum* that is not within the structure of modernism and also outside the modern, or “the new” of modernism, for example, not structured by the determination of a “*logico*”-teleological historicity of a closed modern system. To be able to evade or sidestep modernism, postmodernism has to confront it with its own inherent, intrinsic,

primary and underlying limits. Postmodernism has to follow a way towards the evasion and subversion of the framework, logical principles and foundations of modernism.

On the one hand, postmodernism is not a critical theory; leave alone the idea of a theory with greater truths. Nor is it a logical challenge to modernism, where modernism would be judged according to its own inherent logic, or a higher truth, towards bringing about a more satisfactory form of modernism based on foundations that are more solid and comprising a deeper meaning. To be able to move to a *novum*, postmodernism will have to shift into another mode, a new thinking style, other than that of criticism, dialectical critique or critical theory. To reject critical modernism by way of critical reflection, however, means to remain trapped in the same framework of modernism.

On the other hand, to move outside of modern criticism does not mean to accept the current state of affairs willy-nilly and to advance without a critical attitude. It is not valid for postmodernism that “everything goes”. A concept of *novum*, or open opportunities to life prohibits such a conclusion as it indicates another possibility. There is another likelihood between a *laissez faire* attitude of accepting every viewpoint without evaluation, or a standard, on the one hand, and an analytical, rational modernism, on the other. This is the prospect of postmodernism, with its novel approach, other than that of leniency or dialectical criticism.

Postmodernism does not offer a solution for the crisis in which modernism finds itself. Modernism in Western society reached a comprehensive and total crisis as its foundations, its basic classic and religious texts, its truths by which it lives and its meanings guiding life, had become obscure and

unintelligible. This uncertainty and lack of religious, philosophical and scientific security is threatening to submerge all cultural foundations. Modernism was understood to guarantee universal and comprehensive philosophic, scientific and religious worldviews to grasp the ultimate meaning and destination of life, but it could not. Postmodernism does not react to *this* crisis, as the crisis is understood as defined by and intrinsic to modernism. Postmodernism abandons the very idea of a modern crisis, let alone a fundamental and comprehensive one. The “end of history” is not seen as a catastrophe, as the reaching of a non-historical immobility, as the idea of progress and its disasters, and the modern epochal stages of history, are not regarded by postmodernism as constitutive of history. There are different possibilities of existence, for example, an operative milieu and a history, open towards creativity in life, which do not necessarily mean a moving to a different stance beyond modernism.

Postmodernism is simply a departure from modernism. It is an approach not to overcome modernism, or some aspect of modernism, but it is a mode where the parameters and frameworks of modernism are thoroughly transformed or left behind. Postmodernism is a twisting, a distorting, an altering of, a resignation and an absconding from modernism. Its approach is not an *aufhebung* (Hegel), a going beyond and a negation of modernism, while retaining the best of modernity’s past in a higher unity, nor is it an *Überwindung* (Heidegger), an overcoming and conquering of modernism towards an establishment of a new comprehensive worldview with metamorphic principles on a higher level. The way towards postmodernism is still reasonable, not irrational and uncritical, but it follows another approach, other than that of rationalism and of dialectical criticism.

Postmodernism is not a stretching towards, or reaching an *outside*, or a beyond past modernism.

It is rather an approach deprived of modern metaphysical and constituent categories, such as “the truth”, final meaning, ultimate foundations, objective facts and comprehensive certainty. Postmodernism is not a return to a more fundamental origin, nor a passage to an “outside” as a more elevated place; it is rather an approach to regard being, that which exists, *not* as a foundation, or a structure, but as an event, as an opportunity towards creative life. It understands being not as scientific, religious or philosophical meaning in itself, but as an event, the creative possibility towards fashioning feasible and imaginable historical meaning in life, albeit always ambiguous. Postmodernism does not portray the *Casein* of the ontology of being, but the postmodern is here regarded as similar to the *Arraigns* of Heidegger, which he emphasized after his *Kehre*. It is comparable to Heidegger’s endeavours to return to the spiritual and historical formations of life, with the purpose of twisting them in the direction of an *Ereignis*, an event of life, the opening up of life as an opportunity. Postmodernism is not a new act of understanding as it rediscovers *the* fundamental meaning, but it is the liberation towards positive opportunities in life. Life is not viewed as immobilised in a metaphysical or transcendental description, but it is reconstituted as an *Ereignis*, an “event-ness” of being, an opening of, and to life. Postmodernism detests the nullification of the historicity of history itself and keeps the un-programmable and unforeseeable open in history. It departs from modernity where history, life, the human being, God and theology have always already been determined, programmed and structured with a description of a specific identity devoid of possible alternatives.

The basic problem for postmodernism regarding modernism is how to think and reason outside the modern structure when one is incontrovertibly caught up in this framework. How does one work out a pure and solid stance, an objective perspective, when there is no such neutral position or a “God’s-eye-viewpoint” outside the rationalistic modern posture? How is postmodernism to secure

an “outside” stance beyond the modern categories, when, by definition, there is no “outside” position possible? To put it in another way, “...how does one make thought or action truly critical if the category that would ground such a criticism – truth – has been withdrawn?” (Nealon 1993:5). This thinking to establish a new approach from outside modernism leads to an impasse as the possibility of a grounding integrity fails.

Recognising this deadlock, the question now becomes crucial, namely, how to overcome the modernistic stalemate as there is no beyond after the withdrawal and closure of objective approaches. There is simply no non-arbitrary or secure resting-place for finality after the closure of modern objective thinking is exposed. The deadlock is not a simple stasis or paralysis in thinking and action which can be overcome as an obstacle. The impasse indicates a final closure of a comprehensive determining way of life in modern thinking and action (cf. Ibid:20, 21). In an ironic way De Man describes the modern situation, in view of the absence of an objective determining ground, or an overarching uniting framework and the lack of a “beyond” that could found it, as follows:

...nothing, whether deed, word, thought, or text, ever happens in relation, positive or negative, to anything that precedes, follows or exists elsewhere, but only as a random event whose power...is due to the randomness of its occurrence...these events then have to be reintegrated into a historical and aesthetic system of recuperation that repeats itself *regardless of the exposure of its fallacy* (1979:68, 69, emphasis added).

It is vital to understand why one cannot propose postmodernism vis-à-vis modernism as a new

approach, reaching deeper insight and liberation from the shackles of modernism and delineating a new postmodern way of life beyond modernism. One cannot make postmodernism a new foundation, or bring it to light as a new truth as if it were some forgotten “reality”. Rather, we must accept that the *history* of modernity and of reason, as delineated in chapter 3, cannot be replaced. They are destined to govern one’s thinking and provide one’s categories to reason. One cannot jump out of one’s cultural and historical context to some new neutral milieu from where one can start afresh on a new, different and free foundation. Only when one accepts this approach, that postmodernism does not replace modernism on a higher plane, can one be free of “speculative” thoughts and stop looking around for a still hidden “truth” and another more solid postmodern foundation.

What does this mean for the concept of postmodernism? It indicates that postmodernism cannot occupy an “independent position” of truth, certainty and a solid foundation. Postmodernism always has to have its opposite within it, as it indicates an attitude of ambiguity and differentiation, but also of openness and creativity. *This is the greatness of the postmodern.* It stands inside reason, as well as outside the absolute control of reason (rationalism) and affirms endless commentary, discussion, rhetoric and negotiation, from an extreme point of interpretation and undermines every absolute point of view, final value and ultimate judgement.

The problem with rationalistic modernism, which is based on reason, albeit an absolute view of reason, is that one cannot speak out against reason, without being for it and that one can protest against it only from within it. There is no position outside of reason to withstand the position of reason. Rejection of and protests against reason can only use the language of reason. From this point of view, there is no chance of defeating rationalistic modernism on its own ground.

A way out of the impasse is not some unreasonable approach, irrational way, or illogical position to conquer, or to side-step reason and to reject rationalistic modernism, but postmodernism remains a choice for reasonable strategies, devices, schemes and stratagems. There is such a possibility for postmodernism. Deconstruction is a reasonable way of disapproving rationalistic modernism from within reason. Hence, deconstruction, in its operation adopts the language of reason and rational critique, and works from within it.

#### **4.3 A PRÉCIS OF DECONSTRUCTION AND SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS**

The procedure of deconstruction is to reveal the assumptions of claims and conjectures that are taken for granted in a text. These claims are in fact assumptions on which statements rest to provide meaningful accounts. These claims, assumptions and statements are the coherence and integrity on which texts are based. Without these assumptions, which are usually taken for granted, or which are usually hidden away, the text would crumble into an absurdity, a misrepresentation or untruthfulness. If these assumptions are shown to be invalid the text may even change, for example, from theology to fiction, or may move to a different sense, for example, from philosophy to poetry.

If a text is presented, for example, as literal, the metaphorical setting is usually hidden. Deconstruction exposes these obscure and concealed assumptions of a text by incisions into it towards enquiring about the justificatory reasons, claiming authority. Deconstruction reveals the veiled premises, pretending to entail final authority and thereby uncovering the way a text achieves its grip and effect upon readers. It usually reveals how authority is claimed without providing



reasons and justification for this authority. Deconstruction exposes the concealed bluff and hidden self-deception, claiming authority, insight and knowledge without acceptable justifying reasons and arguments.

Deconstruction asks the basic question whether the claims of authority, truthfulness, sense and meaning of a text rest on foundations that are what they pretend to be, or whether the foundations are only taken for granted to be absolute. When this is done, the text usually collapses into a contradiction, as the claims of absolute authority lack justifying reasons and one has to find another “meaning” or basis to make sense of it.

We will come back to deconstruction in many ways, but it is important to mention some misunderstandings.

Deconstruction is “analysis”, dissection into components, a critical breakdown into questioning the parts or relationships and examining whether statements are valid, but these are not the main components. Just to query or take a text apart, or be critical about statements, is not yet deconstruction. Deconstruction is a distinct procedure of a specific type of close reading, exposing and analysing statements. It gets behind and beyond the foundations and assumptions of texts and expressions. Deconstruction “opens up”, throws “light” upon, reveals hidden foundations of claims without justification and many times the text as a whole cannot stand the exposure of contradictions, misinterpretations, unsubstantiated claims and lack of reasoned authority, and founders, or even disintegrates.

#### 4.4 A DEPICTION OF SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF DECONSTRUCTION

To define, or rather, to describe deconstruction, as a way towards postmodernism, is also not without its problems. There are many types of deconstruction and this study will not focus on all of them, but will only refer to them and to key proponents' deconstructive styles and work in an eclectic and general way. Martin Heidegger was first to approach deconstruction, calling it *aufbau*. Ludwig Wittgenstein assisted towards effecting the "turn to language" by introducing "language games" as a key concept, not denoting empirical meanings, but different types of practical language confinements (games), each with its own rules and methods, in its own demarcated area. Paul de Man initiated "rhetorical" deconstruction, whereas Gregory Ulmer explored "pedagogical" deconstruction, Michael Ryan "political" deconstruction, Gayatri Spivak "post-colonial" deconstruction, Rudolf Gasché "philosophical" deconstruction, Barbara Johnson "feminist" deconstruction, Michel Foucault "historical and literary" deconstruction and Jacques Derrida, working with deconstruction *par excellence*, exploring "literary and philosophical" deconstruction (Nealon 1993:27,52).

Deconstruction requires a thought style that is entirely at loggerheads with rationalistic and modernistic thinking. It involves the vigilant uncovering and subsequent dismantling of the key concepts, perceptions, notions and beliefs sustaining modernism. The strategy of deconstruction is to expose the assumptions on which the logic and integrity of a modern text is based. It is important to understand that from a deconstructive point of view, everything, all "reality", is "text". This will be explained later on.

A fundamental question of deconstruction is what the assumptions are of a statement. If these assumptions were shown to be without integrity, fictional, artificial, simulated or false, the statements would collapse into meaninglessness or falsehood. Deconstruction reveals contradictions, self-denials, inconsistencies, incongruities and conflicts within the text. If this lack of integrity in the script is exposed, the text may even metamorphose into a different literary genre, from a biography, say, to fiction, from a documentary to a novel, or from a history to fiction.

The above approach means that deconstruction requires a very careful reading of a (modern) text and its key concepts to uncover and subsequently dismantle their meaning. Consequently, the logic assumptions on which the text is based are exposed and if they are shown to be inconsistent, the text is demonstrated to be without integrity and sometimes it can even be shown to portray a deception as it belongs to a different literary genre.

Deconstruction exposes the text not to be a self-complete and self-identical narrative, but a palimpsest, a script with open opportunities for re-interpretations, re-inscriptions and re-descriptions. The aim is to debunk the belief that a statement or text is the final authority or truth and that no other interpretations are possible or valid. Deconstruction is not only a critical approach, nor does it follow the path of critical theory in the fine tuning or correction of the statements and system, as the basis on which the text operates, or to argue over the truth of particular claims and the rationality of individual presentations. Instead, it is concerned with the overthrow, the dismantling and the destructuring of the whole structure of the realist context of the text and of the comprehensive rationalistic system itself on which the text is based, or in which framework it is fashioned. This means that the aim of deconstruction is to indicate that a "text" can always be interpreted or re-inscribed in another way and that it does not portray the ultimate truth,

or have the final authority.

Deconstruction is also not concerned with simple corrections or critical changes, but to demolish the basis and assumptions on which a text and its context are founded. What is most important is that deconstruction is not interested in the truth or falseness of statements in particular claims of rationality, in the presentation of “facts”, or in the fine-tuning of the system in which a text operates, but *it is involved in the overthrow of the system itself*. The aim of deconstruction is to show that texts are not based on the ultimate truth, final distinctiveness and concluding certainty. It endeavours to indicate that the logic of “logocentrism” is only a warped rhetorical device to try to convince readers or listeners of its veracity and that the claim of rationalism, that the truth is automatically implicit in the statements by using meta-language, is dubious.

Deconstruction cannot be described in terms of a concept, theory, model, technique, hypothesis, method, philosophical posture or type of literary criticism, as it denies the “logocentric” assumption that the meaning of terms can be fully grasped in and of themselves. Modern texts are defined by “logocentrism”, portraying the idea that there is a fixed meaning or a centre of meaning, *established independently of language* and that *language can authentically represent this objective meaning and the objective world* from where it is derived. *Logos*, the word or concept, is seen in modernism to operate between the world and the script, indicating a stable or fixed meaning. Deconstruction dismantles “logocentrism” and opens the path to grasp many possible meanings of texts without direct reference to some originating external reality. “Logocentrism” operates by way of the correspondence theory of truth, stating that statements are true when they correspond with the “objective” facts. Deconstruction denies this inherent veracity of the so-called unmediated “facts” themselves. This common sense idea of correspondence between the word and the world is

deconstructed, that is, the language and meaning structures comprising them are taken apart and are exposed not to be valid.

The above implies that deconstruction is not a specific theory to be applied in different situations. It is rather a *strategy* to dismantle “logocentrism” and the common sense idea of correspondence, which operates without any intervention, between the word and the world. The strategy of deconstruction is to indicate that there is no unmediated stable meaning or truths between the word and the objective world.

*It is a misunderstanding to regard deconstruction as a concern only with texts. From a deconstructive point of view, everything is text.* Deconstruction is not purely textual *theoria*; it comprehends *theoria* and historical *praxis*. The assumption here is that “everything is text” and that all “reality”, the world, events, humanity, etcetera, are formed by way of concepts and language in texts. Deconstruction opens the way to start with language itself, with the depiction of what is indicated and not with so-called objective reality. Deconstruction depends more on rhetoric than on logical arguments, by collapsing the link between signifier and referent or the signified, and thereby demonstrating the illusion of the transparency of language as if the language corresponds with the objects “out there”. There is no uncomplicated and straightforward connection between the signifier and the signified.

Once one has done away with the concept of a transparent, direct and clear relationship between the word and the world, one can appreciate the creativity of language. The “object” is not discovered or found, it is “created” and depicted as a text. So-called facts are never innocent,

neutral or transparent, because only when they are used in a context are they meaningful, for example, as a historian invests them with meaning by way of “factual” information. When “facts” are used, they are correlated with and placed within an historical context, indicating the processes of collation, configuration, emplotment and colligation, (providing meaning to events by bringing them together under an organising description, theory or “principle”). Even the context is not something given, but is structured as, for example, the historian relates unconnected information towards “contextualisation”. The emphasis, however, is always on the text, not the “context” (Munslow 1997:105). Through this process of deconstruction, indicating a linguistic turn, the historian *creates* historical knowledge and histories, and *infers* historical meaning in situations by way of texts. Depending on the methodological inclination of the author, the meaning of events is provided by the historian’s emplotment. This is the means whereby events are turned into a story of a particular kind, for example, a comical, romantic, ironical, tragic or satirical tale, or some combination of it, *with the intention of imposing meaning on the events*. All histories consist of emplotments, comprising the creation of meaning (cf. Ibid:6,7,179,182). Deconstruction reveals that facts, and in this example, *historical facts and their meaning, just don’t turn up or arrive, but historians create the representation of these “facts” by mediating them through the historian’s own views, background, beliefs, assumptions and cultural situation*. This is usually not taken into account and *the “facts” of the past are mistakenly presented as “a matter of fact”, whereas they actually always portray the values, assumptions and priorities of the interpreter*.

The historian’s fingerprints are unavoidably imposed on the past, mediated through whatever theological, social, anthropological, political and psychological theories are used. There are no histories without historians, counselling without counsellors, theology without theologians, scripts without authors and meaning without interpreters of scripts; there is no objective meaning out there

somewhere to be detected, discovered, revealed and found. If God reveals something, it is always heard or experienced by a particular person within a specified background and context, which has to be interpreted and the revelation is “constructed” and written up accordingly. *This is what makes life so exciting and exhilarating*, as we are never regarded as passive objective mechanisms. Deconstruction exposes texts to the shock that we can never directly encounter objective facts and the past, whether as a political movement, a “traumatic” cause, an economic process, a revelation of God, or social development. We always employ language, fulfilling a two-fold function, as both a surrogate and substitute for the past and as a medium of exchange in our active engagement with it. Deconstruction delivers us from the illusion that we can possess the final meaning and ultimate truth of events, or of the past, and especially in this study, of the final meaning, ultimate truth and solution of the problems, “trauma” or stress of people in emotional pain.

The above entails that deconstruction designates that we work with language, concepts and terms “creating” knowledge and meaning and that we do not have direct “contact” with events or “objects”. Even sense perception is mediated through interpretation. Texts, however, also include practice, events and the so-called objective world. Deconstruction specifies that “factual” information is never neutral as it is endowed with meaning when interpreted and framed in a context by organising events under a specific viewpoint by a person with a definite background according to specific values. This entails that historians, theologians and counsellors *create* knowledge and meaning depending on their assumptions, beliefs and frameworks. *There is neither a theology out there to be found, nor an objective meaning in counselling to be discovered*. Deconstruction demonstrates that there is no direct way, or certain approach, to evaluate and understand a person’s emotional “trauma”.

Does the above now mean that deconstruction endeavours to establish an independent position beyond modernism to indicate what is more valid? Can one describe deconstruction in terms of an autonomous stance? To define deconstruction in terms of what it “is” and what its stance, its credo, is, is to pull it back into the orbit of the traditional concepts and categories, which have been the organising force behind modernism. Deconstruction eludes modernist preoccupations and searches for a “non-site” beyond such fixations to shift the focus away from the preoccupations of origins, the truth, “presence” and self-sustained clarity of meaning, towards the possibility of ongoing discourse, the frameworks of continuous enquiry and the progressive investigation of systems and structures comprehending our practices. As a textual practice it is, among other things, a stratified reading of texts with a view to scan and evaluate the specious assumptions towards final certainty on which texts purport to rest. This connotes that deconstruction thwarts preoccupation with concepts such as “presence”, the truth and ultimate meaning, but rather concentrates on discourse, options, possibilities and alternative meanings.

In the light of the above delineation, deconstruction repudiates *narrative* constructivism because of the latter’s acceptance of the possibility to relate narratives directly to the objective events and to understand these events through the clarity of meaning obtained through narratives. Deconstruction rejects the positivist insistence that a narrative can portray a correct understanding and meaning of “objective” events. Deconstruction reveals narratives to be an unstable source of information for ultimate meaning. The basic empiricist notion that meaning and the truth are “out there” is the underlying defect in the assumption of understanding of what knowledge is and how it is constituted. Deconstruction uncovers the false assumption that a narrative is a better method to find the correct meaning, for example, in a person’s life, as meaning is invented and created, and not “found”. *The positivist correspondence between narrative and “reality” is unmasked as invalid.*



Meaning is originated, not discovered. The “facts” of one’s life or the past are irrecoverable for at least the reason that there is no standard or measure against which the truth of events or the past can be measured. There is no final standard or measure against which to test the accuracy of the past against and to make a claim towards a final truth in narratives.

Deconstruction acknowledges the stance of the possibility of creative language, inventing, fashioning and shaping tentative meaning. This discloses the insight that meaning, knowledge, the past and events are to be understood as tropical (the figurative use of words), prefigured literary artefacts and objects *d’art*.

The tropical foundation to human consciousness can be taken as a model through which to evaluate how knowledge, “facts” and the past emerged from the exchange between “reality”, our consciousness and language. Once one has accepted that it is not so-called facts and evidence that frame interpretation, but that it is interpretation or creative language that frames the evidence or “facts”, the process becomes clearer. *Meaning is the product of language or literary artifice, rather than that of knowable objective reality.*

The rejection of the correspondence theory, entailing the direct relationship between the word and the world, does not mean that one is completely free to create any tropic plotment, argument, illogical statement, incorrect or ideological configuration to indicate *any* meaning and disclaiming responsibility for creating it. There has to be a meaningful reciprocity between the mental pre-figurative process and the references, arguments and indications of events and the past. One cannot write any absurdity and claim validity for it. Anything does *not* go. Language creates images

of things it indicates and provides arguments for their meaningfulness. Troping means using language to imply some meaning and tentatively explains events by creating and changing our perceptions, guiding us to look again at concepts from different perspectives, indicating signification and expressiveness as a continuous process.

We relate human action and events not to some objective extrinsic situation, but through language and how language operates in practice mediating action and events. The assumption here is that there is no immediacy between our thinking and “reality”, as this relationship is always mediated through language and always already interpreted within the framework of language. Language provides us with models of the direction that thought might take to provide some meaning in our experience, though inconclusive. This is a rejection of being cognitively secured by “objective” science, tradition and unmediated or direct common sense knowledge. Knowledge does not occur through appropriating the “acting” of acts and events, but through the deploying of arguments and the taking up of moral positions. Meaning and language are literary creations, as knowledge is generated through language rather than by the unmediated, primeval, un-inscribed and “un-contextualised” “traces” of the so-called objective world in one’s consciousness. “...deconstruction...belongs to the nuclear age. And to the age of literature” (Derrida 1984:27).

The past, (which always also encompasses everything which happened just now), for example, is not discovered in theory, or in a world set aside from everyday life, because history, the meaning of actions and events are designed and composed in the here and now. Meaning is created by language from our *present* viewpoints. It is not events that create meaning, but creative meaning that constitutes “facts”. All so-called facts are always *interpreted or constructed facts*. The appropriation is that there is no immediacy between thinking and “reality”, but events are mediated

through language. The past, for example, cannot be taken as solid objective information, to be transposed to the present, but it is “created” from a position of understanding on the basis of the here and now, *from our present perspectives and interpretation*. The implication of this is that, in a sense, a story, poem or description reveals more about the present stance and convictions of the author than the so-called objective story and “factual” past.

Deconstruction as a strategic reading of a text, which comprehensively includes life, theories and action, turns the statements that are rationalistically expressed by, or implicit in the text, back upon itself. It compares its statements with its own rational and logic structure, and asks whether it is consistent and compatible with its own standard of reason. It dismantles the rationalistic structure and reveals the “concealments”, deception, pretexts, ruses, red herrings, lures, ploys and blindness where the text fails to meet the standards it sets for itself. The question is how it is possible for modernism to acquire rational meaning in its statements and approaches. Modern meaning is reached by way of “logocentrism”, which is the framework of traditional (modern) texts, consisting of and thriving on binary opposites, for example, truth/falsehood, freedom/oppression, God/human, male/female, mind/body and knowledge/belief. Parker, S (1997:7) points out that according to our traditional thinking a modern text carries out its purposes, expresses itself through logic and reasoning in an underlying “rationalistic framework” in which the text finds its sense. The descriptions, arguments and explanations of texts are specific manifestations of an underlying logic, a rationalistic system whose veracity is presupposed by the texts in their writing, in the very possibility of their production. Each text assumes its own rationalism. Each term in the text assumes its own meaningfulness and occupies a place in the rationalistic system comprising other meaningful terms. *These terms, for example, cause and effect, and truth and falsehood, are embodied in the laws of logic that form the universally binding framework for realist thought as*

*expressed in modern texts.*

Since the time that Aristotle's laws of thought were drawn up, the basis of realist logic is that it assumes its own transcendence status as being the final truth as it links a so-called lucid word, term, concept or description directly with an object or with the independent world. It is only now that deconstruction and postmodernism has started to challenge these assumptions and inaugurated a *novum* in our thoughts and action, by indicating other possibilities. As indicated earlier on, the quantum and relativity theories, changing true "facts" by changing perspectives, "confirm" (and not "prove") other possibilities in life. These "true" laws of Aristotle were called the "laws of thought" because they were assumed to define the necessary conditions for truth in intelligent and rational thought. There is, for example, the law of *identity*: Everything is identical to itself,  $a=a$ . The law of *contradiction*: No statement is both true and not true, not  $a$  and not- $a$ . The law of *the excluded middle*: Every statement is either true or false,  $a$  or not- $a$ . There is nothing in-between, as something cannot be a third possibility between true and false. These "laws", assumed as ultimately true, are comprehensively maintained in modernism, guaranteeing certainty and final meaning. In traditional writing the text assumed the truth and sincerity of its own "voice" and of its own author based on this realism and its supreme "principles" (Parker S 1997:71, 90). The problem with these "eternal truths" is that it is not life itself, but an interpretation of life. It cannot prove that it coincides with life itself, as it is always only a reduction of life. Life always remains great and glorious, outside our final grasp.

Deconstruction, then, is a tactical manoeuvre and a specific approach in reading a text to turn the structure of rationalism, articulated by, or buried within the script, back upon itself, indicating contradictions and false assumptions. The aim is to dismantle the rationalistic structure and to

disclose the blindness, disguise, concealment and assumptions of the text where it fails to meet the standards of finality it sets for itself. It shows that the text cannot “prove” final certainty and the truth, but it assumes to be able to do so.

Deconstruction would first explain and expose rationalism, the so-called true laws of thinking and the system, and then dismantle them. The target would be the assumed “logical pillars” of its arguments (Parker S 1997:71). If a text, for example, pronounces a notion of freedom in a specific democracy, a deconstructive reading may attempt to indicate how the text hides forms of oppression within the laws and practice of that democracy. It would also point out how the text closes off the possibility of readers questioning and querying possible flaws in the statement. Deconstruction would indicate that the text in fact undermines and contradicts its own acknowledged intentions to describe freedom by its employment of oppressive devices in its practical expression. Deconstruction would explain that there is an inherent contradiction hidden at the heart of the text and would thereby reveal that *rationalism itself is simply a deformed and tortuous form of rhetoric* and not a statement of absolute truth. It reveals that rationalism purports to state the truth, but, in fact, the method of claiming the truth in this way is only a warped rhetorical device, a twisted art of convincing people of a supposed truth and that it is not “truth as a matter of fact”.

Traditionally a text purports to contain truth by pronouncing it an objective text in its statements. The text employs a meta-language in its attempt to illuminate its contents, as it is stated in the example above, freedom in objectivist “true” terms, for example, “this democracy consists only in freedom”. Object language is the language we use to refer to things when we speak. Meta-language is the language we use to refer to object language, its sense, import, significance, value,

worth and meanings, and its conventions for referring to things. By employing meta-language, a text pretends to reveal the truth, but it implicitly assumes what it tries to state or prove. Freedom that is stated in the text in our example, is referred to as a final fact, as “a signified”, or a “referent”, whereas it is actually only another signifié. In a statement, for example, “our democracy may contain many aspects of freedom”, however, the concept freedom remains a signifié and does not purport to be a signified and a final truth. Deconstruction reveals the deception in a text where it fails to meet the standard that it purports to achieve. Deconstruction attacks this realist foundation as not valid, as it cannot prove its truthfulness, but only assumes the truth. Democracy, for example, may hide oppression. This logical foundation of the truth is only a warped way of trying to convince and persuade, and nothing more than a twisted rhetorical device.

#### **4.5 DECONSTRUCTIVE STRATEGIES**

Deconstruction uses a number of strategies to dismantle conceptual schemes that assume the possibility of objectivity, the truth, realism, certain meaning and objective reality as a foundation of thinking and knowledge. A few of these strategies are the reversal and replacement of conceptual hierarchies, and the rejection of the binary system supporting them, the subversion of “presence”, the employment of “*difference*”, the utilization of the concepts of “trace”, “miss-reading”, troping, the supplement and placing concepts under erasure. This study, however, need not research them all in depth. We will only describe one important aspect of deconstruction.

One strategy of deconstruction is the reversal and replacement of conceptual hierarchies, and the rejection of the binary system supporting them. “Logocentrism” is based on a realist framework

using binary oppositions, for example, truth and falsehood, as absolute distinctions. Traditionally, conceptual hierarchies and binary oppositions have established meaning, certainty and “the truth”. The hierarchical ordering of concepts vis-à-vis one another is the way in which a text assumes the normality, the truth and certainty of one pole of the binary opposition, and regards the other pole as simply a negative, a distortion, a caricature and a misrepresentation of the original concept. To portray the true meaning, a traditional realist text functions in a network of conceptual hierarchies of binary opposites to reach its aim. The system of binary oppositions was used to claim the truth in traditional philosophy, theology, pedagogy and general reasoning. In each case of the binary oppositions, the former concept is favoured and privileged over the second concept. The subsequent concept is regarded as the subordinate, parasitic, hanger-on, scrounger, sponger, freeloader or bloodsucker term, for example, soul/flesh, man/woman, ideal/actual, right/wrong, fact/fiction, knowledge/belief, true/false, government/subjects, mind/body, white/black, clerics/worshiper, real/imaginary and stability/flux. Parker, S (1997:74,75) explains that in a rationalistic system, texts cannot be regarded as possessing a structure of binary concepts that are uniform, equal, homogeneous, standardised or consistent. The first term is privileged according to important value and there is a difference of significance, rationally, scientifically, semantically and metaphysically over the second concept. This bivalence and the privileging of the first term are viewed as a characteristic feature of realism. These hierarchies, however, have been branded as sexism, ivory tower spiritualism, racism, “logocentrism”, phallocentrism, etcetera. Derrida (1981:41) describes the beginning of deconstruction of these hierarchies claiming validity as follows: “In traditional philosophical opposition we have not a peaceful coexistence of facing terms but a violent hierarchy. One of the terms dominates the other (as axiologically, logically, etc.), occupies the commanding position. To deconstruct the opposition is above all, at a particular moment, to reverse the hierarchy.”

Deconstruction reverses, unfastens and dismantles rational preferences of a term and its negation. This reversal of deconstruction, however, is not a *volte-face*, a turn around, in the sense of defining truth in terms of “not-false”, but it is rather a collapse, an obliteration of the binary distinction which contrasts true and false. Consequently, deconstruction shows that truth is linked together with falsehood so that the one is not to be understood and comprehended without the other. This is not a reversal *per se* as it is only a strategic, not metaphysical move. This means that deconstruction does not arrive at a new position where black is now privileged over white, for the strategic goal of this reversal is not to reach a new position of truth that is the opposite of, better, or at a higher level of the original binary opposition. There is no new dogmatic thesis or ultimate statement of certainty to be reached, cancelling out the previous ones. The aim is not to demonstrate that these claims, discoveries and conclusions are wrong. Such a dispute over the validity claims of meaning and truth would provide tacit approval and validity to the hidden structures of the modern text and the rules of the rationalistic debate that the text assumes incorrectly about meaning and truth. Deconstruction makes its incision precisely at this point where the structure of meaning in hierarchical oppositions is exposed and the rules of reaching the final meaning are uncovered, brought into the light and exposed as false. One crucial aspect of deconstruction is the refusal of reading a text as the text wishes to be read, or simply to state the opposite, as it does not accept the framework of assumptions contained in the modernistic text.

#### **4.6 SOME CONSEQUENCES OF DECONSTRUCTION AND SEVERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGY AND COUNSELLING**

To be able to obtain a variable and fleeting grasp on the consequences of deconstruction, it is important *to interpret and illustrate some of its implications.*



- Deconstruction requires a very careful reading of a (modern) text and its key concepts to uncover and subsequently, to dismantle, their meaning. Consequently, the rationalistic assumptions on which the text is based are exposed and if they are shown to be inconsistent, the text is demonstrated to be without integrity and sometimes it can even be shown to portray a deception as it belongs to a different literary genre. *Theology and counselling are not “exact” sciences, as they are made out to be many times in modernism and as they purport to claim absolute truth. They do not rest on rationalistic assumptions to claim logical certainty.*
- The aim of deconstruction is to indicate that a text can always be interpreted or re-inscribed in another way and that it does not portray the ultimate truth, or have the final authority. Deconstruction is also not concerned with simple corrections or critical changes, but to demolish the basis and assumptions on which a text and its context are founded. *Counselling and theology do not entail a correct or final interpretation of “facts”, but work towards the approximate comprehension and interpretations of a situation, for example, where a person is in “trauma”.*
- Deconstruction is not a specific theory to be applied in different situations. It is rather a strategy to dismantle “logocentrism” and the common sense idea of correspondence, without intervention, between word and world, indicating that there is no unmediated stable meaning or truths between the word and the objective world. *Theology and counselling are distinct disciplines working towards the creation of tentative meanings and understandings, and not with objective and certain knowledge of situations.*

- Deconstruction designates that we work with language and with that which is formulated, and not directly with events or “objects”. Deconstruction specifies that “factual” information is never neutral as it is endowed with meaning and because it is already interpreted and framed in a context by organising events under a specific viewpoint by a person with a definite background and interests. *Theologians, counsellors and historians create variable knowledge and meaning depending on their assumptions, beliefs and frameworks. There is no objective counselling meaning out there to be discovered, or theology to be found. Deconstruction demonstrates that there is no direct way or a certain approach to evaluate a person’s emotional “trauma”.*
- Deconstruction thwarts the preoccupation with concepts such as presence, truth and ultimate meaning, but rather concentrates on discourse, options, rhetoric, possibilities and alternatives. *There is an important “ethical underpinning” in deconstruction. Respect for people in their unique situation assists counselling and theology to tread carefully, eschewing any objective, final or ultimate pronouncements and working towards fleeting interpretations as vague possibilities.*
- Deconstruction reveals narratives to be an unstable source of information for ultimate meaning. The positivist correspondence between narrative and “reality” is unmasked as invalid. Meaning is originated, not discovered. There is no final standard or measure against which to test the “truth” of the past. *Counselling cannot rely on narratives, even on the narratives of the person in “trauma” to “reveal” the “truth”. It views these narratives as the creation of meaning from the person’s present priorities and assumptions, with specific aims in mind, or from the counsellor’s transient interpretations and not as objective facts.*

*Narrative theology portrays approximations, not final dogmatic statements.*

- Meaning is created by language. It is not events that create meaning, but creative meaning that constitutes “facts”. The assumption here is that there is no immediacy between thinking and “reality”, but events are mediated through language. The past, for example, cannot be taken as stable objective information, but it is “created” from a position of understanding on the basis of the here and now, from our present perspectives and interpretation. *In counselling and theology, the past cannot be objectively repeated and not even summarised as the true statements of fact. They always work with present perspectives, glancing through them to the past, realising that their views are always coloured and determined by the present contexts, values, priorities and assumptions.*
- Deconstruction reveals the deception in a text where it fails to meet the standard that it purports to achieve. “Logocentrism” is based on a realist framework using binary oppositions, for example, truth and falsehood, as absolute distinctions. Deconstruction attacks this realist foundation as not valid, as it cannot prove its truthfulness, but only assumes the truth. Where it is stated as a “fact”, for example, that a specific democracy exhibits only justice, it may, however, hide oppression and justice/oppression is used as binary concepts. This logical foundation of the truth provided by “logocentrism” is only a deformed way of trying to convince and persuade, and nothing more than a rhetorical device. To convince, “logocentrism” employs meta-language to pretend to have direct access to the truth, but it only assumes what it tries to prove. *Counselling and theology cannot make use of meta-language to verify any objective statements, as it does not rest on a foundation of realism and its “laws”. They view realism as a definite theory with*

*particular assumptions, falsely claiming objectivity that confuses logic with certainty and final authority. Counselling does not claim access to the truth, but works with uncertainties, ambiguities and approximations towards some unclear, equivocal and “doubtful” understandings. This, however, does not mean that counselling and theology rest on relativity and sceptical grounds, as those would again indicate absolutist foundations. Lack of final certainty and absolute facts do not indicate nihilism or relativism. Counselling and theology work with convictions through persuasion and rhetoric, as the assumption here is that there are no other humane possibilities.*

- Traditionally in modernism “the truth”, meaning or certainty have been established by way of conceptual hierarchies and binary oppositions. The hierarchical ordering of concepts vis-à-vis one another is the way in which a text assumes the truth of one pole of the binary opposition and regards the other as simply a distortion and caricature of the original concept. *In traditional theology and modernistic counselling binary oppositions were used to claim the truth.* The second concept was regarded as the subordinate term, for example, certain/provisional, truth/falsehood, soul/flesh, knowledge/belief, white/black and stability/flux. Deconstruction dismantles rational preferences of a term and its negation of the second term. This reversal effected by deconstruction, however, is not a reversal of the oppositions, but it is rather an obliteration of the hierarchical contrasts true and false. In deconstruction, truth is linked together with falsehood so that the one is not to be understood and comprehended without the other. Deconstruction does not arrive at a new position where black is now privileged over white. There is no new dogmatic thesis. The rules of reaching the final meaning in “logocentrism” are uncovered by deconstruction as assumptions. Deconstruction refuses to read a text as the text wishes to be read, as it does not accept the framework of assumptions interpreting the traditional text. *Theology and*

*counselling do not use hierarchical oppositions to try and reach the truth. The subdued terms are emphasised to indicate that binary concepts are uniform, equal, homogeneous, standardised and consistent. Truth, for example, can only be comprehended in the light of falsehood.*

#### **4.7 THE GIST OF DECONSTRUCTION AS APPLIED TO COUNSELLING AND THEOLOGY**

The following incomplete and volatile statements capture *the gist of deconstruction as delineated and as applied to counselling and theology*:

- One can say that deconstruction exposes key contradictory statements in a text and rejects the rationalistic system supporting them. *Theology and counselling do not rest on rationalistic certainty.*
- Referring to similar valid meanings dismantles absolute meanings in a text. *Counselling and theology approximate meaning without sureness and certitude.*
- Deconstruction rejects “correspondence” between the word and world without mediating factors. *Theology and counselling are humanly and imprecisely constructed through the mediation of fallible historical concepts.*
- All information and so-called facts are always already interpreted and understood within a framework of values and priority. *Theology and counselling portray human interests and priorities and cannot claim neutral and absolute rational facts.*

- Knowledge and meaning, as well as *theology and counselling*, are created and constructed, not detected or found.
- Knowledge, also that of counselling and theology, is not a direct access to a situation, for example, to “trauma” and revelation, without mediation and intervention, and even then, the insight remains ambiguous and indefinite.
- Logic and rationalism purporting to portray the truth is only a warped rhetorical device towards persuasion and provides no ultimate signification or certitude. *Theology and counselling are very effective as rhetorical devices, without reflecting absolutes.*
- There is no valid meta-language or objective “signified” as the ultimate norm for knowledge and meaning because there is no “God’s-eye-viewpoint” or overarching viewpoint possible. *Theology and counselling portray subjectivist and limited insight.*
- Although there is a fundamental turn to language as a creative medium for knowledge and meaning, narratives have no direct positivist and privileged access to “reality”. *Theology and counselling use narratives as imprecise and dubious indications.*
- Hierarchical oppositions, for example, superior/inferior and spirit/flesh are rejected to try to reach the truth. *Subdued terms are emphasised in theology and counselling to enhance them and to indicate that binary concepts are uniform, equal, homogeneous, standardised, consistent and related.*

- There is no standard against which to test the past or revelation against. *We need not, however, live in “traumatic” uncertainty in view of no absolutes; in theology and counselling we can revel in trusting our faith and convictions by way of rhetorical and argued justification.* “Justification” in the sense of supplying reasons and argument for convictions.
- *Deconstruction validates discourse, persuasion and rhetoric towards agreements to live by, as well as to theologise and counsel. There are as many theologies and ways of counselling as there are people.*
- We celebrate and live by justifying trust and not by rationalistic absolutes. *In counselling and theology we dance in trust with uncertainties*

Our conclusion is a tentative one, orderly world and continuous knowledge paradigms are at an end.

In this section a start has been made towards exploring whether and to what extent postmodernism and especially deconstruction is pertinent to practical theology and Christian counselling. The move of postmodernism out of the dilemma of modernism as a deconstructive strategy has been investigated and some consequences of this revision of traditional thinking have been opened up. The assumption is that the paradigms of human beings and their world, as successions of orderly and clear world pictures, are ending now. Modernism is a final endeavour to maintain undistorted meaning and final control over diversity. “Every critic like every theologian and every philosopher is a casuist in spite of himself [!]. To escape or surmount the discontinuity of knowledge, each

resorts to a particular heresy and makes it predominant and even omnivorous” (R. P. Blackmur, *Language as gesture*, quoted by Leitch 1983:264).

The consequences of modernism for counselling, especially as portrayed in the framework of Descartes, are momentous and a possible way of surmounting it is to be explored in the next section.



## CHAPTER 5

### EXPOSING CARTESIAN DUALITY IN THEOLOGY AND COUNSELLING TOWARDS POSTMODERNISM

*The Christian researcher is working without pre-established axioms and principles, formulating an approach within activity of what is to be done. This approach by postmodernism in theology and counselling encourages the creativity of the human being to the utmost.*

*The postmodern framework proposes that the Holy Spirit never allows a fait accompli, a matter done according to a pre-established framework and pre-determined "laws and rules".*

*The so-called highly spiritual fundamentalist theology and counselling approaches, as well as the objective intellectualist agnostic materialist approaches are both tragic victims of the subject-object split, only depending which side is emphasised.*

The aim of this chapter is to delineate the characteristics of Cartesian thinking for modernism and especially modernistic theology and counselling, and to expose and brazen out this framework towards transcending it. The formalistic and mathematical method of Descartes is delineated and the consequences thereof are confronted and audaciously debunked for what it is, dehumanisation. The consequences of the subject-object split and the concomitant inflation of self-consciousness and the objectification of all "reality" are laid bare and the consequences for theology and counselling are flouted. The metamorphic turn to language in Wittgenstein, the incisive and vigorous deconstruction of Derrida and Heidegger's earth-shaking anti-metaphysical language

pronouncements are taken note of to counter the idolising Cartesian modernism even in contemporary times. Beyond the claustrophobic rationalistic system of Descartes, pointers towards and tentative propositions for alternatives are touched upon.

The aggrandisement of the self as subjectivism, on the one hand, posing precedence over what there is, purports to propose, create and manipulate the conditions of possibility of the truth of objective things towards making humans and society technological robotic beings. The role of the Cartesian self, on the other hand, as that of an empty and neutral substrate, formalises the self to be constituted without social, historical and material substance and dimensions, a virtual reality, with disastrous consequences. Counselling, within this modern framework, comprises the reduction to schematic axioms or platitudes that cuts off historical and socialised humanity living in a variety of contexts and circumscribes it by its relation to the world in terms of dominance, measuring, executing and manipulation. Modernistic counselling prescriptions consist in the reduction of the human towards adaptation in general. “Adapt or die” in terms of conforming, “adapt”, to the general statistical standards of generality, or else disintegrate, go to wrack and ruin, “die”, as a human being by not conforming to objectification, where “normal” life of technological society and its relations exist. The theological effects spell out a fundamental shift *from* the inflated self, controlling God as an object in onto-theology, expanding the horizon of subjectivity beyond control, *towards* liberation, by becoming conscious in faith of ourselves being always already constituted in God and consequently limited, but fully living in our historical and social contexts. We endeavour not to reach axiomatic certainty, but to dance in faith with joyful “uncertainty”.

Postmodern counselling does not only comprise a shift away from modern counselling, but a countering of the Cartesian framework, as the basis of modernism, as well as a theological metamorphosis, from theological subjectivism, not to objective “truths”, but towards a textual priority

of God over our lives in subjective contexts; not a “closure”, or finalisation of objective facts “about” God and humanity, but an open, ambiguous textual “play” in faith through the historical workings of the Holy Spirit, towards the construction of Christian counselling. There is the possibility of constructive counselling in this framework, away from an *ego-cogito* issued in a subject-centred dominant rationality, involving a controlling rationalistic technology.

### **5.1 PRE-MODERNISM, MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM REGARDING SUBJECTIVISM AND THE SUBJECT-OBJECT SPLIT**

From a point of departure where we can virtually describe modernism, postmodernism and pre-modernism from a number of different assumptions, resulting in an arbitrary, open-ended portrayal of these approaches to life, modernity can be understood as a reaction and response to pre-modernism. Pre-modernism has indeed shaped both modernism and postmodernism. One cannot escape from the random eventuality of pinpointing the beginning, and for that matter, the arbitrary contents of a pre-modern approach to life. As one possibility, let us then assume that the pre-modern approach was set in motion by the classical Greek notion of rationality. The Greeks proclaimed the idea that rationality brought one in accord with the *cosmos*, as well as the *polis*, the theological and political overarching harmony to which everybody had to strive. The transcendent rationality, the *logos*, was seen to form the basis of human rationality and operated from beyond or from the other side of the mental activity of humanity. The striking characteristic of this pre-modern approach was that it was not seen as if rationality was inside the mind and that the mind “used” reason in thinking and action, but that the mind was understood to be within the concept, “rationality”. “...is not so much that reason is in the mind as it is that the mind is in reason” ( Schrag 1994:256). This approach did not understand the reasoning of the mind as using rationality as a kind of “object” to think and act. It was rather that the mind, thinking and action, was found to be

within the *logos*, the overarching metaphysical and theological framework of everything in and beyond the world. Human beings were regarded as rational and free when they operated within the cosmological structure of the *logos* or rationality as such. The consequence of this approach was that consciousness did not know itself vis-à-vis an external reality, but was rather seen as part of the *logos* of the objective reality. Rationality was understood to be rationality of the *cosmos*, or being, where reason or the *logos* determine theology, or also rationality of the *polis* determining politics, and not understood in the first place as the “property” of human consciousness. This Greek concept of rationality exerted a great influence for many centuries and was a dictating feature up to the end of medieval thinking (cf. Schrag 1994:256,257).

Descartes is commonly understood to have begun “modern thinking” by turning the above approach around with the radical turn to the subject. He invented the modern concept of the subject as the source and centre for his understanding of the mind.

This basic shift in and reordering of our approach to life towards subjectivity remained fundamentally decisive for all later thinking, up to the present. Descartes was resolute that *the subject's relation to everything else was mediated and derived from its relationship to the self*. Every approach to life and to all its aspects, including theology, philosophy and counselling, proceeds from a framework that is wrapped up with this epistemological and abstract presupposition. The modern reflection became sediment in the form of a subject-predicate grammar of thought where reason itself was understood in terms of a subjectivist-objectivist action of the mind. “...substantiality in...objectivist thinking in epistemology became normative for philosophical inquiry” (1994:136). The entities and objects of sciences could now be sorted out and defined within a subjectivist approach. Pure subjective theory and objective, neutral reason with contexts were combined to establish a new approach to life. Descartes constructed the self as a

self-identical and unitary mental component, a thinking substance, and the society of people was made up of a series and aggregation of insular minds. With this modern approach, the self and society suffered an abstraction, eliminating the concrete historical and social experiences of humanity (cf. Schrag 1994:136,137).

In the wake of this approach of Descartes, the modern attitude to life concentrated on the subject as encompassing the whole of life. Regarding the *locus* of certainty and truth, subjectivity was the basis from which everything arises and to which everything had to be reduced or returned. Consequently, modern subjectivity posed a serious problem for Christ-centred theology as it made an object out of God to be comprehended by the subject as the ultimate foundation. With this approach the consequences of the thought of Descartes were eventually delineated where the characteristics, traditionally attributed to God, were transferred to the human subject. "Through a dialectical reversal, the creator God dies and is resurrected as the creator subject. As God created the world through the Logos, so man [sic] creates a 'world'..." (Taylor 1986:3). In contemporary terms, one can say that the modern subject defines itself by its constructive activity. This autonomous and self-determining subject is understood to relate fundamentally only to what it constructs and consequently, is unaffected by anything other than itself. A modern relationship to otherness, whether in the form of subjects, objects, nature or God, is always an aspect of a mediating self-relation. This relationship to others is regarded as necessary for complete self-consciousness. "Subjectivity is thus achieved only with the other" (Schrag 1994:197). In this way modernism achieved two enduring desires of previous thinking, the phenomenological reduction of *difference to identity* in subjectivity's full knowledge and also the hope of *realising a full and total "presence"* within the subject, uninterrupted by any deficiency or lack. The "other" and "difference" have been subjectively comprehended and presented (cf. Ibid. 1994:197).

In Descartes, the self of the person, the translucent *cogito*, led to an unbridled expansion of the subject in its assumption of an autonomous and sovereign, as well as a controlling, position in the world. This subject-centred rationality and epistemological paradigm marks the modern age, the age of representation of knowledge, where the subject uses and controls knowledge to a very large degree and this inaugurated the age of technological control and domination.

This concept of the subject, however, was not connected to history and social actuality, but was only theoretical and transcendent. Eventually this subject had no “contact” with the practical world. The self is “...a subject whose authority exceeds the bounds of the historical and social context” (Judovitz 1988:105). It is interesting to notice the combination of an “empty” subject with the study of the human sciences where this Cartesian subject made the systematic study possible by way of *objectifying* the study field. The so-called human sciences could not penetrate the subjectivist question of who a person might be, as it was already based on the interpretation of the Cartesian concept of the person as “vacant” or “empty” subject. The fundamental contradiction in modernism is that the objective human sciences are defined by the empty subject. “Knowledge no longer concerns being, rather it expresses the submission to being, both transcendental and empirical, to epistemological demands defined in mathematical terms” (ibid. 1986:106).

The problem with the Cartesian modernism is that the human being does not only become the measure of all things, but also the centre of all beings, the basis of all objectivity. The subject posits both the subjective and objective positions. The transcendental subjectivist position is reached through a method where the essence of the subject is defined through negation, to doubt everything, that is an expression of Descartes’ ontology, a negative one. The subject is represented as neutral and objective with the consequence that *it is denied as a social, historical*

*and empirical entity with contexts and this also leads to the objectification of both the self and the world.* The subject's relation to its own negative definition and that of the world as objectivist announced the nihilism, "nihil", the nothing or emptiness, intrinsic to the very foundation of modernism. Nihilism is regarded not only as an ethical issue, but also as the basic character of the subject devoid of social and historical contents.

That Descartes posited the subject in the subjectivist paradigm, created the duality of the subject-object scheme, which he, consequently, had to overcome. This was experienced as impossible and consequently Descartes endeavoured to change the concept, status and function of *representation*, the way the subject would represent the object. The subject and object were seen to stand over against one another in a contradictory opposition. This has been touched on in this study, but I wish to take it a step further with the aim of understanding the problem of modern subjectivity and objectivity in depth towards the dissolution of objectivist approaches in counselling and theology. We have noticed that Descartes excluded the visual character of the image of the object in favour of its figural representation, as well as the images of the object's phenomenological features in favour of the object's representation as a rational symbolic form. This formal and "empty" character of representation was based on all knowledge, transformed into symbols of mathematics, as a norm for certitude. Descartes, however, did not succeed with this approach regarding representation and consequently also relied on the rhetoric approach according to the rhetoric traditions.

A way to understand the revolution in Descartes' thought issuing in modernism, is to compare it with the thinking of the previous eras before or during the Middle Ages, or what is called pre-modernism.

The traditional interpretation of truth from Plato to the neo-Platonists equated it with "beauty" and

“goodness”. Descartes, however, defines truth in the narrowest way possible, as certitude, to be objectively represented. To be able to state truth objectively, he had to elaborate a theory of subjectivity controlling the objective field. Cartesian subjectivity, as a specific interpretation of consciousness, is not to be confused with an empirical subject, presented as the individual “I”, an ordinary self or person, for example, in the context of autobiography or meditation, or a person as a social, psychological and moral entity. What is vital is that the Cartesian subjectivity is a formal and impersonal entity produced by rational norms towards the fabrication of mathematical certainty. From this perspective, one can say that the problems of modernism are centred on the Cartesian subjectivism. This is especially how Heidegger has understood the problem: “ ... the matter of philosophy is subjectivity” (quoted from “The end of philosophy and the task of thinking” by Judovitz 1988:1). Merleau-Ponty made the same point in “Subjectivism and representation in Descartes”, (quoted by Judovitz, *ibid*).

The problem for Descartes and consequently for modernism, was how to obtain certainty in an uncertain world, how to reach certitude in knowledge and how to obtain rational certainty about the world and God in an uncertain climate infiltrating everything. The Cartesian answer to this question was that certitude was produced in the new concept of subjectivity. If the foundational role of Cartesian subjectivity in modernism is not understood and dealt with, it will be of no use to speak in postmodern terms of the “death of the subject”, or as the overcoming of subjectivity, as it may still mean the preservation of the Cartesian metaphysical underpinnings. Postmodern critique and approaches may then just reinforce the contradiction of the original articulation of the Cartesian subjectivity.

Cartesian subjectivism implies a new worldview defined by the theoretical priority of the subject. This priority implies the reduction of the world, or all “reality“ to an object. This new way of



understanding the world by the subject was representing the world according to a set of rational and mathematical standards, to or by a prototype. The world or objects took on the character of an image or a formal picture, the result of a systematic projection from the subject of a mathematical perspective of the world. Descartes constructed a new rational subject to reduce the world to a formal object. The new construct of consciousness, *cogito*, represented the world as a specific image, the result of a systematic projection of a mathematical perspective upon the world.

Although it appeared as if Descartes' use of a personal pronoun for the "self" was the same as the traditional usage, it was not. Descartes used the nominative case, "*je*", whereas usually the direct object pronoun, "*moi*", was used to designate the self. "...Descartes's use of the nominative "I" (*je*) indicates his autonomy as subject and the objective status of the world" (Judovitz 1988:2). This reflected two basic approaches to consciousness and the world. The self, "*moi*", was always both subject and object of the world, whereas Descartes' use of "I" as "*je*" indicated the autonomy of the subject and the world with an objective status (cf. Judovitz 1988:2). This theoretical construct of consciousness, or the self, delimited its personal, psychological, empirical and historical contents. This could be understood as a threat both to the practical concepts of a person and of God. The central concept of the *cogito*, I think, as consciousness determining objectivity as mathematical certitude, became the dominant paradigm of subsequent modernity.

## 5.2 SCEPTICISM AND RELATIVISM?

Before we investigate Descartes' specific approach, conflating "representation" with "presentation", which had comprehensive lasting influence on subsequent thinking for hundreds of years, we scrutinize the build up to Descartes' epoch from another angle. We ask why postmodernism and

deconstruction are invalidly charged with relativity and causing fundamental scepticism and answer this by way of the little historical excursion of the “production” of knowledge.

As the postmodern concept has a different approach to knowledge, “truth”, meaning and communication, and the manner in which deconstruction and rhetorical justification are used vis-à-vis the traditional approaches, the question is asked whether this approach will lead to relativism and scepticism.

The aim now is to consider the claims of relativism and scepticism regarding the postmodern and deconstruction approaches and whether there are differences between them. My assumption is that deconstruction and postmodernism do not lead to relativism and scepticism.

As a postmodern deconstructive approach asks primary questions about the foundations of “traditional” knowledge, the claim is made that this approach destroys any basis upon which one may construct true meaning, that one cannot obtain any certain knowledge and, in short, that this leads to a lack of foundations for knowledge, ethics and pastoral theology. The consequence of this claim is that the postmodern deconstructive approach inevitably brings about relativism and scepticism and creates a final impasse for knowledge, theology and counselling. The challenge is to provide valid reasons for the creation and generation of knowledge and for the construction of theology and Christian counselling, and not to build these constructions on flimsy and unconvincing foundations.

If postmodern deconstruction provides reasons for the invalidation of modern knowledge, it does not necessarily mean that the postmodern issues in relativity. It may mean that true, certain and final knowledge is not possible in life. This may create uncertainty, but the postmodern cannot be

blamed for this insecurity. In fact, the assumption of the thesis is that we can live and dance with this uncertainty, as its power is broken.

The prior question is, however, why this question is asked from a modern perspective. To be able to understand the difference between modernism and postmodernism regarding this issue, one has to grasp the meaning of knowledge in modern culture and how it changed from one historical period to another according to the concept representation, which is supposed to create valid and certain knowledge.

Chia (1996:38, 43) said "...this ideology of representation has held us captive for more than three centuries." He explains: "Representationalism, the system of thinking that takes as self-evident language as a system of significations referring to the world beyond it, is of fairly recent origin." Representation is still today, according to the modern way of understanding, the prevailing view of attaining knowledge. He summarises how Foucault, the French writer, traced the changes of how knowledge was seen from one historical period to another (cf. *ibid*:40).

### **5.3 THE CONSTITUTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THREE HISTORICAL PERIODS**

In "The order of things" Foucault's interests were in the concepts of knowledge during different historical periods. He identified three historical periods, which he called "*epistemes*", beginning with the Renaissance during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Classical Age from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and the Modern Age from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Renaissance thought on the constitution of knowledge was around the relationships of resemblances. The knowledge of the world was made up of resemblances where knowledge was

a resemblance of the elements of the world, each part of knowledge indicating a sign of an element. “The system of the world and the system of knowledge of the world had, accordingly, the same essential structure” (Gutting 1989:142). Language was seen as a part of the world, as a part of resemblances. Knowledge, however, did not discriminate between magic, erudition and objective knowledge. Newton’s achievements in mechanics and optics were placed on a par with Paracelsus’ bizarre claim that snakes were repelled by certain Greek words. “Natural” signs in the world were just as much a form of language as words. Knowledge was thus seen as “...relating one form of language to another form of language” (Foucault 1970:40). Knowledge during the Renaissance period had no place for the concept representation, which only emerged during the Classical Age with Descartes.

During the Classical Age knowledge was achieved through strict identities and differences and as the formulation of truth about things. The nature of truth depended significantly upon the construal of the signs to formulate such truths. The status of “truth” depended ultimately on the formulation of signs. A major shift took place between the Renaissance and the Classical Age periods. Knowledge was previously understood as mere perception where no basic discrimination was made between the observer and the observed as such. Knowledge now, however, became the *analysis* of resemblances between subjects and objects. Knowledge now required proof as knowing no longer involved the “direct and immediate” connecting of the elements of the world, but their discrimination and isolation through distinguishing identities and differences. Some knowledge now was regarded as true and some as not true, because some resemblances were regarded as occasions for error.

With this major shift from *resemblances* as perception of the elements to an *analysis* of the resemblances, another shift, perhaps even more important, took place; signs as pertaining to

epistemology to signs as considered ontologically. Ontological signs were separated from the elements of the world and were regarded to exist only in the mental realm.

Renaissance knowledge emphasised the importance of *natural* signs, as of the same ontological order as the natural elements of the world. Classical knowledge involved mental categories, such as language, now regarded not as “natural” signs, but as signs of a different ontological order than the things of the world. “Natural signs are awkward and inconvenient because they typically do not fit easily and effectively into the mind’s working... The ideal system of arbitrary signs...would provide a framework for identifying the simplest elements out of which any system being analysed is composed...” (Gutting 1989:148). Renaissance knowledge was regarded as part of the “natural” realm, existing on the same level as “the world”. Ontology, or a different level of existence, was not at stake. Only an epistemological question was asked, namely, how resemblances provided knowledge. *Classical knowledge, however, became knowledge of a different ontological order, namely as existing in the mental realm, vis-à-vis the “natural” order.* Knowledge now consisted of concepts and language and not of resemblances in the same ontological realm. Consequently, a distinction was made between the two existing realms, the world and the mental realm, which was usually not referred to and which can be exposed as a silent or hidden assumption. When this hidden assumption is revealed, often people react as if it is sacrilege to query the “naturalness” of knowing, which is supposed to be provided by God. Actually, when the way people acquire knowledge is exposed as *the “production” of knowledge by themselves*, they reject their own hidden assumption and claim “natural” certain knowledge vis-à-vis “relativity” and uncertainty.

One basic consequence of knowledge as existing in the mental realm was that this knowledge can be true or not true depending on whether the knowledge accurately *represented* the natural elements of the world or not. The Classical concept of knowledge was focused on certainty,

correctness, truth and facts, and the hidden ontological assumption of the *two* realms explained this. “The enterprise of Classical thought became one of representing things in language as exactly as possible” (Chia 1996:42). Knowledge as “getting things right” became important in the Classical era and this meant to relate the sign and its object, the signifier and the signified, as closely as possible so that the two mirrored one another. Notions such as “proof”, “accuracy”, “truth” and “certainty” became important.

The problem with this view of knowledge is, however, that the link, which enables the signifier to represent the signified, is a necessarily arbitrary one. There is no “natural” connection between the sign, the signifier and the “object”, the signified, as representing is an intrinsically human, fallible, restricted and contained activity. The concept of “mind” or “mental activity” belongs to a different realm as the “world” and is predicated upon an acceptance of a person as an independent autonomous being acting on an external “reality”. This created a disastrous dualism between subjectivism and objectivism, which Descartes outlined in many connections and frameworks.

The fundamental question is how one obtains certain knowledge or truthful information from the external realm, called “reality”, as a different ontological realm other than the human realm. The representational theory of knowledge where the signifier represents the signified, the mind the object, moved from “appearance” to mental representations and finally back to “reality”. *This way of reasoning, to which we are accustomed, assumes that reality is the basis of our intellectual speculation. This way of thinking, however, falls into the trap of thinking the past in terms of the present.* “The first peculiar human invention is representation. Once the practice of representation is created, a second order concept follows in train. This is the concept of reality, a concept that has content only when there are first-order representations” (Hacking 1983:136). This emphasises the conceptualising of reality as a secondary step rather than being something that predates

representation. The practise of representation in fact, gives rise to the constitution of objects of interests. To think the concept of reality is always a secondary step, which follows representations, deciding whether they are true or untrue. This, however, does not proclaim that an undifferentiated material world does not exist before making representations. *It only means that one forgets or hides the fact that an inversion takes place in one's reasoning, as if the concept of reality precedes the creation of representations.* This inversion process gives rise to the uncritical acceptance of reality as the basis of our thoughts, assuming the ontological priority of the concept of reality over mental representations. We do not observe an objective reality, claiming information from it and then construct systematic knowledge. It is the other way round. We approach "objective reality" with concepts, language, assumptions, theories, approximations, values, "worldviews" and read off from it what we wish to ascertain according to our priorities. We do not know anything of the world, apart from our sense perceptions. These undifferentiated "impressions" are ordered, arranged according to our thinking systems and past patterned experiences, interpreted and, most importantly, provided with meaning with our constructions. "Reality" does not provide meaning and significance to us, but we construct understanding, knowledge and sense of it. We can conclude that outside our interpretation and meaning, there is no sense in life, only pandemonium and uncertainty. No wonder that Descartes had to "order" reality, "forcing" it by way of formal classifications to provide certainty and we moderns followed suit. This was a total misunderstanding of life. Life is "open", acquiescent, approachable, amenable and acceptable. Life provides itself to us like an open bed of flowers before us to be experienced in *our* exhilarations. The flowers are not objective meaning-providing certainties to be applied without our creative constructions.

Why are we inclined to reason from the basis of "reality" towards representations of reality and not the other way round? It is because we assume a subject-object split which predates our language

of reality, whereas in fact we are always already constrained in our thinking by linguistic expressions, which are creating the subject-object split in the first place. This means that we pose a concept of an objective world out there by means of our concepts and language and then go ahead as if this objective world exists before our thoughts. Again, this does not mean that we say that a material world does not exist, as *the issue is an epistemological one*, the question of how is knowledge possible and not an ontological one, the question of existence, whether a world exists or not.

In the representational framework of thinking reality is prior to the representation of reality, but this cannot be the case as we are always already constrained in our thinking by language and concepts in the world. The concept representation comes before the concept reality, which flows from representations, as “reality” is constructed by our concepts. Heidegger states: “Human beings remain committed to and within the being of language, and can never step out of it and look at it from somewhere else. Thus, we always see the nature of language only to the extent that language has us in view, has appropriated us to itself” (1971:134). He describes this as the “prison house of language”. We cannot conceive notions of reality, world and objects without concepts and language. *The consequence of this is that we cannot say that language describes objects, but we have to say that language create concepts of objects. “...it is in words and language that things first come into Being and are”* (ibid. 1971:13; italics added).

According to representational theories, research establishes a body of knowledge that claims a *privileged* understanding of objective facts of the world. To know means to represent correctly and truthfully in our minds using language, concepts and visual forms what the “world out there” is really like. This way of thinking is tragically and devastatingly problematic as no justification is provided how concepts, theories and language really correspond with the details of the real world. The claim



that this body of objective facts obtained by research and theories is “true” implies that we are able to stand outside human, fallible and severely restricted language, theory, concepts and the world to be able to verify this claim. This is not possible.

Wittgenstein attempted a picture theory of meaning that would prove knowledge as representation of “reality”. He tried to prove that the character of the world and the language used to describe it, somehow match. He was, however, unable in his first major work, *Tractatus*, to show the similarity between true meaning and the reference to reality. He concluded: “My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: Anyone who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he has used them as steps to climb up beyond them” (Wittgenstein 1953:6.54). He realised the following: “The limits of my language mean the limit of my world” (ibid. 1953:5.6). Derrida makes the same point when he states “There is nothing outside of the text” (1978:158). Chia (1996:76) drew the following conclusions: “There is no thingness about the material or social world except when comprehended through the codifying structures of language... Terms such as ‘reality’, ‘the world’ ...are themselves linguistic products. To claim that it is possible to match up bits of language to bits of the world is to smuggle in a transcendental posture which cannot be reflexively sustained legitimately.”

These major shifts from Renaissance knowledge to the concept of knowledge in the Classical Age continued to the Age of Modernism and are still rampant today. The central philosophical problem of the Classical Age was the task of determining in what ways and to what extent knowledge of the world was to be gained and how valid and true this knowledge was. This period had Descartes as father figure, but this approach was also the basis of the reasoning of the most obvious figures like Locke and Kant. This approach of Descartes had a major and determining influence on all aspects of life, also on theology. This approach with regard to knowledge and its certainty was important,

as it was historical responses to the challenges raised by scepticism and the issues of relativism, to establish final and certain knowledge about the world, but also, and perhaps more importantly, “eternal truths” and final certainty in life. This certainty, however, was built on a false dualistic foundation.

The third period is the so-called Modern Period. Here it is only necessary to mention that Foucault saw the distinguishing concept influencing knowledge as the sense of historical consciousness. During the Modern Period it was realised that knowledge was not free floating, but that it was imbedded in historical and cultural situations. This cultural and historical awareness of knowledge and its formation resisted the concept of representation and changed its status, but did not conquer and replace it, with the result that this struggle still continues in the conflict between modernism and postmodernism today. Actually, an assumption of this study is that deconstruction is a way towards exposing these incongruent and baseless assumptions of knowledge and its certainty, always deferring, postponing final meaning and “truths” and always claiming *difference*, detecting the other in the situation. This is not the same as relativity and scepticism as they are built on dualistic modernistic assumptions as the reverse side of the coin. In a general way, according to the representational model, they claim with certainty that the certain objective stance and “truth” is that we have to doubt everything and that all views and convictions have equal validity. They claim that it does not matter what one thinks as all views have equal validity. Postmodernism and deconstruction claim justification by way of rhetorical and reasonable arguments, and a specifically Christian way claims the validity of trust and faith as a higher and deeper way of “knowing” as solid trust on specific knowledge “assumptions”. This causes us to dance with objective, scientific and real uncertainty towards the celebration of life in faith and trust, without modern certainty.

#### **5.4 MATHEMATICAL CERTITUDE AS THE DOMINANT CARTESIAN PARADIGM**

Descartes built extensively on the historical representational foundation especially claiming consciousness as determining objectivity as mathematical certitude, which became the dominant paradigm of subsequent certitude. The problem with this consciousness paradigm was that thinking rationally denied its own character as linguistic representation. It presumed that its own language and character had become transparent assuming the guise of factual objectivity. Thus, consciousness was presumed to have direct contact with the world and the determined contents of “reality” in certainty by way of mathematical terms. The world or “reality” was no longer represented by language descriptions, pictures or concepts, but was described in certitude by formal symbols. The representation of the world and the presentation thereof became identical. The representation of the world by way of the transcendental approach and the presentation by means of an empirical approach were conflated. Descartes took a bold move by denying the instrumental character of representation. The ego seen as new consciousness did not employ language or concepts as mediation between the subject and the object. Subjective consciousness determined the objectivity of the world by way of formal symbols and presented objects directly. As the subject determined and dominated the object totally, mediation fell away. Descartes also took the next step beyond the description of the objective world by way of subjective prescription. The subject prescribed to the object what it should be in terms of formal mathematical symbols. This method became the new method of representation. The world was represented in terms of mathematics. The subject was tied to and determined by the mathematical reduction of the world and thereby became itself a formal and empty entity devoid of any human contents. This was the step towards the break with humanistic values of people annulled of traditional or Christian values. Cartesian rationality created an illusion of “certain” objectivity, as well as final determining subjective consciousness. This disastrous Cartesian thinking issued forth in modernism and modernistic technological control with all its far-reaching consequences. Formal mathematics became a new way of describing and “knowing” the objective world. Descartes’ theory of the self

as a specially constructed subject based on mathematical principles did not recognise practice. The Cartesian self was constructed mathematically by the assumption that the self-validation and transparent nature of mathematics excluded it from the terrain of practice. This led directly to a Cartesian separation of theory and practice that was upheld in modernism and modern theology up to contemporary times. The theoretical belief of the individual established and determined practice as a second “reality”.

Another consequence of Cartesian thinking was that Descartes’ search for certitude was simultaneously the search for an ideal language, where truth could be equated with formal correctness of mathematical propositions and where language ceased to exist as mediating discourse. Cartesian language ceased to exist as mediating discourse. Cartesian language patterned on mathematics prescribed an objective world. Descartes’ way of reaching certitude, not by way of interpretation, but by way of defining the self as a subject mathematically outside linguistic practice, eventually created contradictions in modernism. The main problem was his use of language. He had to use discourse and discursive language to effect his definition of human symbolic mathematical certainty in his arguments. Thus, he used language in the way he denied the validity of using language. He dehumanised the human being by sidestepping the defining contents of humans, namely by way of language. His certain “truths” simply became a rigid set of new conventions, in unison with or adequate to symbolic formal mathematical forms. He created a logical rational structure to escape the “illusions” of language, discourse and rhetoric, but by achieving that, he sidestepped life as such, as his newly created consciousness was devoid of historical and empirical contents.

It is vital to understand the centrality of consciousness working with the approach of the certainty of mathematics. Descartes designed universal mathematics as a new perception and standard for

the “objective” world, which had not been derived experientially from objects, but which was rather imposed upon them as an axiomatic order to which they had to submit. A new concept of human reason appeared, not contaminated by the diversity of objects it illuminated, as it derived its “evidence” from its own self-reflection. Here was an unmediated relation of reason to itself, replacing the previous concept of reason relying on the illumination of the divine.

Transferred to the domain of science, Descartes’ concept of mathematics as a prescribed axiom became a model for reason that can gain insight only into that which it produced itself according to its own logic. “An *a priori* representation of what defines science is brought to bear on the objects of knowledge” (Judovitz 1988:47). To be certain became a matter of projection, of discovering only that which was already outlined in accordance with the pre-determined logical rules. Rather than evolving out of an experiential encounter with objective things, knowledge was conceived as deriving from the imposition of rules upon the world. The natural world ceased to function as a source of information upon which knowledge might be based. Instead, scientific reason imposed upon nature its own definition of what constituted reliable and proper knowledge. The objective world ceased to function in its own right as it was subsumed under the aegis of an axiomatic system as a component of the new mathematical language (cf. Judovitz 1988:47). In a sense, from this perspective, one can say that the “objective” world had no room to “intervene” experientially and to “challenge” its axiomatic definitions. This involved a new definition of the objects of knowledge. Mathematical axioms predetermined the meaning and position of things. The universal character of axioms was opposed to the contingent character of experience, which was viewed as not reliable.

A major consequence of Descartes’ approach took place: Descartes reduced objects to mathematical signs and forced them to fit the rules of mathematical criteria. He transformed the

“objective” world into signs and thereby “lost” the world. This affected a worldly uniformity within its symbolic order. This, however, caused a major change in the view of the world as it spelled out a break with the natural “order” of the “objective” world. This meant that the self-referential character of certitude replaced the referential character of experience of the world. This generalised symbolic order was defined by measure, order and enumeration. These “signs” were used as instruments of analysis. The knowledge obtained through these symbolic signs was called proper knowledge, whereas other knowledge was called mere opinion. Descartes created an *a priori* character for knowledge as a “*meta-metesis*”, which meant that a universal symbolic order both preceded and determined all other knowledge of the world. “...universal mathematics both precedes and sets up all other knowledge of the world” (Judovitz 1988: 54). This approach was much like that of the logicians, the “*dialecticians*”, as far as they presumed the terms and matter of the syllogisms to be already known. Like them, Descartes presupposed that the full contents and consequences of the questions to be solved should have been perfectly understood as wholly determinate, so that the inferences from the “data” were *foreclosed in advance* (cf. Ibid. 1988:54). Thus only those problems that could be subordinated to the criteria of enumeration, “order” and measure, could actually enter the domain of proper investigation. Investigation, problem solving and analysis had to be set up according to the symbolic norms before they could receive treatment. Once they fitted into these norms, they would absolutely verify the formal approach, the logical paradigm. The result of this approach spelled out the indubitable character of the Cartesian method.

These assumptions and theory of Descartes were abstract enough to allow him to transpose them to other domains of knowledge outside “natural” science, for example, to philosophy, psychology and theology. What was at issue was that thinking, rationality and knowledge were redefined in terms of formal, universal “rules”. These “rules” were dependent on the self-creation of the person

as a subject, self-consciousness and an entity capable of rivalling through its formal method the sovereign relation that only God was previously seen to entertain with the world. The human being took God's place in determining the world. The illusion Descartes created was that the human being could step out of history and as a subjective consciousness could project itself outside all traditions and knowledge; that one could begin fundamentally and totally anew and could create a new symbolic language determining all knowledge. Descartes regarded this symbolic language as natural as it was the expression of rationality.

The pre-modern approach, exemplified by Galileo, was to work from the particular to the universal, from the experimental to the hypothetical. Descartes turned this around and claimed that reason had to determine the shape of the world of objects and that the character of what was to be defined as experience had to be projected. Experimental evidence could be accepted only if it had already been anticipated through formal hypothesis and therefore set up axiomatically by the formal foundation of knowledge. Descartes regarded Galileo's approach as lacking the formal union of reason and experience, wherein reason is posited as prior and superior to experience.

Galileo brought about some breakthroughs from pre-modernism, but these were not radical and fundamental enough for Descartes. Galileo announced a new worldview by providing a physical description of the world in geometrical terms, replacing the medieval, hierarchically structured cosmos. This led to the disappearance within scientific reasoning of all considerations that took the ancient and medieval concept of cosmos as their point of departure. Experience itself was in doubt, as the intervention of instruments created a new concept of perception. A radical shift in the perception of the stars came about by way of optical instruments, especially the telescope. A star seen through the telescope was regarded not to be the same object as the star seen by the naked eye. A change in the nature of perception resulted in the production of a different object. Galileo's

experiments resulted in the awareness of the mediating character of instruments, changing the general character of knowledge. Stress was laid on the instrumental character of knowledge for the presentation of nature or the world. Descartes agreed with Galileo regarding the interpretation of science as symbolic language, but differed fundamentally with him regarding the restricting of formal knowledge, or mathematical symbols purely to natural phenomena, extending them to the definition of all knowledge. "Whereas Galileo considers God to be the only true reader of the language of nature, Descartes considers his own rules, because of their man-made character, to provide him with an absolute vantage point both in relation to nature and to reason" (Judovitz 1988:76,77). This led Descartes not to accept Galileo's conviction of God to be the "only true reader" of the language of nature, but to maintain that his own rules, because of their human-fabricated character, provide him with an absolute vantage point both in relation to nature and to reason. Previously, this position had only been seen to be the privilege of the divine viewpoint (cf. Ibid:77).

The above approach also brought Descartes to the rejection of history and tradition as sources of certain knowledge. He re-thought all knowledge, also theological, philosophical and historical knowledge, by virtue of the new formal construct, that of absolute certainty. This instituted a formalistic and technological approach to all knowledge, marked by a profound disregard for tradition and history. The submission of past knowledge to the criterion of certitude led to a set of "truths" without phenomenology, contexts and historical dimensions. The consequences of that conclusion were dire indeed. From a Cartesian point of view, theology, psychology and philosophy only attained their true knowledge character if this knowledge became "epistemology". This "epistemology" produced itself as an autonomous formal language where pure abstract characters relied totally on trans-historical categories, for example, enumeration, intuition and certitude. "Epistemology" thus clearly absorbed the experiential, mental and historical as the notion of "clear



and distinct ideas” and defined itself by reference to the “thinking subject” and not to history, tradition, or experience. One consequence for theology is that many still claim in this theological paradigm to know for certain “that God exists” and that “they are saved”, disregarding the deeper level of theological faith or trust conviction. There is, however, no theological, formal or symbolic “certitude” for the “existence of God” and for “our salvation”. This can eventually mean that we are theoretically saved by “certitude of salvation” and still being outside a trusting faith in life. Paul said in Romans 1:16 that the just shall live by faith. For Descartes the mind is guided by reason alone. Facts are those truths assured by formal judgments. The universal symbolic figurations determine the facts of the situation, with reason indicating “clear and distinct ideas” of certainty.

The problem with this way of thinking, producing certitude, facts and certain foundations, is that the subject, who is the determining entity is projected as a formal mathematical axiom. This axiomatic entity does not really refer to an actual human being and its phenomenological, historical or empirical existence, but rather to a representation constituted through *symbolic* discourse. This subject is inaccessible to any inquiry regarding what it represents. It could not reflect on its own practical reality. The subject, the *cogito* is actually an empty sign of a formal axiom and general universal logic.

The classical and medieval views based on an enquiry into the being of objects were replaced by the epistemological priority of how things fit into the new formal order, the new rational language where “reason” scrutinised all knowledge. Representation of objects by way of concept and language description thus ceased to mean the traditional enquiry into the “essence” of things. It was replaced by the formal interpretation of being as axiomatic certitude, conforming to logical norms determined in advance; this resulted in proving anything with such an investigation, just starting with the right predetermined axiom.

## 5.5 THE CARTESIAN “WILL”, THE DETERMINATION OF THE WORLD AND THEIR THEOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The total disadvantage of Descartes' thoughts and the disastrous modernism that it spawned was that it confused the order of representation with that of the object, the sign with that which it supposedly embodied. In fact, there is no representation or sign, but only the *presenting* of the “objective” world in axiomatic formulas. This approach contains an ideology of the worst kind, as it presupposed the transparency and objectivity of this formal rational discourse, an idealisation of reason as final distinct and clear certitude. This absorption of the discursive into the figurative, the descriptive language into the symbolic, the historical into the formal and the practical into the theoretical, made it impossible to reflect on or criticise its own discursive thinking practice. *It has made itself immune to any attacks, but it remained isolated from life and historical creativity.*

The key to Descartes' thought was his construction of the thinking self, the *cogito*, although it was not in the forefront of his writings. The reason was that this constructed self had to fit into his whole scheme of things. The thinking self was posed as the universal subject as truth and it involved a negative procedure of emptying the subject of any contents other than that of thought itself. The consequence of this was the disembodiment of the subject and the autonomous construction and isolation as an entity void of any social and historical contents. The subject imposed on the world its own rational axiomatic order and, as a second move, extracted meaning from the world, deciphering and classifying nature, thereby effecting formal, rational science as a language of nature. Descartes' rejection of experience was supposed to liberate concepts from their perceptual limits leading to a new worldview where the formal definition of the objective world challenged practical observation. The relationship between science and nature was fundamentally changed

as science was presented as a set of principles or rules, an order defined in advance to which nature had to conform. This axiomatic character of science and knowledge determined and structured experience. The objective world and everything in it was now seen through this determining grid creating a new picture and paradigm of everything. The subject assumed this role of author and creator of a new picture of the world.

This new determination of the world had fundamental theological consequences as the subject and controller of knowledge was regarded as the creator of the new paradigm initiating and challenging God's creative capacities. This theoretical subject refused to accept the world that has been created by God independently of the knowing subject and regarded the "new" as its own product. The consequence of this stance was that the "objects" in the world could now be conceived in relation to the dominant subject and as its extension, its product. "The creative will of the Cartesian subject thus rivals God's will, since his newly created order challenges the preordained divine order" (Judovitz 1988:94). The horizon of subjectivity expanded with the conflation of the subject's act of "creation" with that of God. The pre-eminence of the new subject displaced the priority and hierarchical authority of the Bible events. Descartes mimicked and offset the authority of the biblical events. His new foundational paradigm assimilated the biblical history into his discourse of the dominant consciousness. This assimilation involved a particular interpretation of God as creator of *everything that is logically and axiomatically possible according to enumeration, measurement and order*. "For God acts as the last referent against the threat of illusion, one that gives verisimilitude to otherwise axiomatic truths" (Judovitz 1998: 97). He rationalised the powers of God as human creativity according to a hypothetical axiomatic order where God coincides. Thus, God had to play an additional role to guarantee Descartes' hypothetical worldview. God was seen as providing the transcendental *a priori* status of this new axiomatic worldview. God was now seen to be in human "service". It appeared that God was still seen by Descartes as the "Prime Mover",

as the transcendental referent to buttress the axiomatic. The bottom line was that the God of theology was relegated to the role of merely explaining the world, but always already as posited by Descartes. God functioned in the pragmatic sense alone, to guarantee the perfect intelligibility of the system (cf. Ibid:97). Theology has ceased to function in its own right and has been completely subordinated to epistemological and subjective concerns.

Pascal reacted strongly to Descartes and reproached him vehemently by claiming that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not the God of the philosophers. The true relation of a person to God did not pass through understanding alone or knowledge, but especially through worship. Grace is not to be subsumed under rationality, or to be reasonably negotiated, as it is a free divine gift and faith in God is not to be constituted according to rationalistic principles. God and faith are not to be absorbed into a self-creation of consciousness. Christianity and rationality, including axiomatic rules and mathematic formalism converged in Descartes and modified each other with respect to both form and content. "What can appear is determined in advance as what can be represented to a subject; a subject whose self-representation is the ground of all it represents to itself" (Flynn 1983:3). What the subject knew or could know depended only on its own "representation", but then understood as the certitude of the "presentation" of the world.

Descartes' use of and concentration on the "I", the subject could be called radical solipsism. By self-implication and by shutting oneself off from the historical and social world, formal knowledge considered in a solipsistic way what one's identity was. This was an affinity with the Platonic definition of thinking as a discourse that the mind carries on with itself without a spoken word. This, however, was a profound delusion as Descartes wrote and spoke by using material signs. Descartes' radical solipsism was to seek the illusion of some kind of pure, unmediated thinking, a perfect transparent subject to itself. The thinking subject was thereby hidden from view without any

way to describe it practically or to show how it mediates thoughts regarding the world. The self had become an unmediated formal but empty symbol. This is a total contradiction as the self used material signs, albeit formal signs, thereby playing a mediating role between the “world” and subjective thoughts.

Another important novel aspect of self-consciousness is the way Descartes defines the will of the subject. The will did not function as the particular attribute of an empirical subject. The will refers, more pervasively, to the general definition of subjectivity insofar it defines a new set of relations to the world. It was free will alone, or liberty of choice that Descartes found so great that he could conceive no other idea “to be more great”. His “will” caused him to know that he bore the image and similitude of God. The will intervenes with and mediates certitude. The will defines the subject as infinitely perfectible and, consequently, expansive and thereby, the will was understood to be more than a faculty or personal attribute. The will qualifies the character of the subject as self-legislated freedom. This freedom is self-determination as a prototype or model. The will has thus emerged as the fundamental characteristic, not of the subject as an individual, but of its formal position and determining the relationship of subjectivity to the world. This aspect of self-consciousness determined by the will, can be considered as the key to modernism, especially modern technology. The will predetermined the manifestation of consciousness.

God’s will ceased to function in the traditional fashion as one of the main attributes that described God and has now been used to define the subject and its will. It is important, however, to understand that it was never claimed that the Cartesian subject actually substituted itself for God. Rather, the subject, through its wilful relation to the world, manoeuvred itself into a new position in the dominant order of things. This theoretical position, however, is neither divine, nor fully human. This wilful “subjectivity” is one of the main characteristics of modernism. Descartes’ “subject”

signified a new way of being "human", as a rationalisation of human capacities, especially the will, to master the world, condemned as pure objectivity through representation that became "presentation" according to formal axioms. This concept of the will caused a creative as well as a disastrous train of effects, especially in the field of technology. Development of technology assisting society, as well as producing technological disasters, such as the hydrogen and atom bombs, indicated the contradictory nature of Descartes' legacy of self-consciousness defined by a limitless "will".

The problem for modernity has been the persistent existence of the Cartesian subject as the theoretical underpinning for not only science and technology, but also for those domains that today appear totally unrelated to it, those of the social sciences, and in an even more pervasive sense, the humanities in general. Although modern literature and literary theory have argued persuasively the "death of the subject" and critiqued the concept of "representation," they have failed to understand the correlation between the emergence of the metaphysical subject and its empirical counterparts. The critique of either of these two subjects individually, neglects to account for their necessary coexistence within modernity, as a single self-contradictory structure, one which simultaneously asserts the existence of a totalising formal subjectivity, while also affirming its opposite, that of personal, individual subjects, whose autonomy and subjective character seemed to exceed and challenge the very conditions of their existence (Judovitz 1988:183).

The above delineation was an attempt to present the origins of modernism in Descartes by outlining the major Cartesian tenets. They have shaped the character of modernism, influencing theology and counselling in a radical way up to today, but they have also constituted a crisis of modernism.

## 5.6 POSTMODERNISM COUNTERS “PURE IMMEDIACY” IN MODERN KNOWLEDGE AND THEOLOGY TOWARDS THE “OPENNESS“ OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

To be able to speak about postmodernism one has to understand the limits and contradictions of modernity issuing in its crisis. If this is not done the terms of critique would merely unreflectingly reiterate the terminology, concepts and crisis of modernism. Postmodernism is necessarily linked to the critique of the premises of knowledge and questions involving its epistemological status. *Critique that limits itself to purely cultural and societal debates, fails to share concerns with knowledge regarding the question of “representation” and “presentation” as the heart of the modern problem.* The crisis of representation, in which modern realist epistemology conceives of subjective representation as the reproduction of an objectivity that lies outside itself, projects a mirror theory of knowledge whose evaluative categories are those of adequacy, accuracy and truth. If postmodernism does not understand the underpinnings of this problem and counter it, it will not be able to provide an alternative postscript to modernism, *as it would be bound to incorporate the problem within itself and repeat its crisis. What is at issue is more than the delineation of historical epochs. Postmodernism has to question reason and its own modern foundations.* The premises of thinking have to be examined and a new approach to knowledge is necessary. We have to consider the consequences of the Cartesian revolution for modernity.

The problem, built into Descartes' deliberations and not faced by him, is that knowledge about the world is always mediated through representation, which means that the knowing subject can neither contain and totalise, nor reduce it, to a formal schema. Knowledge is created by language that is always arbitrary and has thus a conventional relation to the world, one that shifts both with the perspective of the observer and the context of the object under consideration. There is no set

model, formal axioms or mathematical formulae for knowledge. Knowledge is always ambiguous, tentative, contingent and open in its structure. The discursive nature of mediation makes a claim of representation into presentation impossible.

Descartes' answer to the above was to reduce these discursive delineations and descriptions to axioms of measurement, order, enumeration, intuition and formal symbols of mathematics. Descartes used this formal system of science to free language and concepts from their analogical relation regarding objects, which was for him the mask of illusion and deception. He sought absolute certitude through fixed "presentation". *The problem was that he not only "represented" objects with formal symbols, but that these symbols constructed the objects they propose to know by way of prescription.* This approach was extended to knowledge in general, stating that truth and certitude are to be defined as verification and adequacy of its own proposition. Human consciousness and the world had thus to be understood as products of the subject's hypothesis and projected formal plans, not as a representation in the mimetic sense of the word, but as a schematic prototype.

The problem with this approach in thinking, continued in modernism and, alas, also in postmodern critiques. This thinking was not concerned with the character of objects under consideration, but merely reflected the formal contentions of constructs and axioms. This means that a person could reflect and prescribe the contents of "objects" directly as axioms. *Knowledge was thus regarded as pure immediacy* between the subject and the object.

This understanding of knowledge also became an aim in modern theology, to endeavour to know God directly or without mediation. Some regarded immediacy as the "spiritual aspect" of Christianity. Directness, immediacy, union, direct contact and absorption into the spiritual are some



of the modern theological spiritual aims. This may be true in the teachings of other religions, for example, the attainment of absorption like a drop of water in an ocean, so the self-consciousness, or spirit of a person becomes “one” with the divine consciousness, but not so in Christianity. In Christianity the person always remain a separate person over and against God and there is no “merging” of the human and the divine and no un-mediated contact. The relationship of human beings and God through Jesus Christ is always one of faith and trust and it always remains a *relationship* between a person and God.

To overcome this aberrant approach of modernism, also in theology and counselling, postmodernism has to create a new approach. Vis-à-vis modernism, spawned by Descartes, postmodernism has to put forward that which cannot be represented, the other. That would deny us the solace of certitude by way of symbolic and formal norms of “clear and distinct ideas” and not to try to reach the unattainable. Observation, concepts or linguistic descriptions are not in principle governed by pre-established rules and they cannot be judged by a formal symbolic pre-determined judgment, by applying axioms to the investigation. These categories and “directives” are what the person, practising research in a postmodern way, is trying to formulate tentatively in the process of investigation. *The researcher is working without pre-established axioms and is trying to formulate “rules”, or rather an approach, of what is to be done in the activity.* The event of investigation always comes too early for the establishment of symbolic categories to do the investigation. The representation is always too soon for the realisation of laws, rules and symbols. Post-modernism always works in this “future anterior” (Lyotard 1984:81). This approach by postmodernism encourages the creativity of the human being to the utmost. There is an ongoing questioning of the limits of representation, challenging that which cannot be represented through a strategic inquiry into the processes at play in representation that dissolves the bounds of the positions of the researcher and writer.

A further remarkable event actually takes place when the postmodern functions according to the “future anterior”, namely the pre-eminence of both subjectivity and the act of representation, as originally terms are undone by the investigation or representation, according to the capacity of the act of investigation, to question and evaluate their own premises and rules. These approaches, premises and rules of the subject and the representation emerged *from the future* of the investigation. The act of investigation and representation by the subject establish the approach or the rules in the act of research. The postmodern reflects the re-thinking of the subject and research work of representation at the crucial juncture of representation *when it occurs*.

This postmodern approach eschews the modern theological solidification of laws and rules in its acts of doing theology, witnessing and counselling. There are no objectified revelations, pre-established frameworks and ossified representation of the gospel towards the work of the Christians or churches. This is extremely important as it opens up the churches and Christians to the work of the Holy Spirit. He enlightens and guides people regarding the creative work of representing that which cannot be represented. He always proclaims the “novel” in the act of experience. This is not the *modus*, the new of modernism operating according to preestablished axioms and frameworks to find and announce *only what was previously put into research or experience*. This postmodern framework proposes that the Holy Spirit never allows a *fait accompli*, a matter done according to a pre-established framework and pre-determined laws and rules.

Postmodern approaches defend theological reflection independent of extra-theological sources of determination. Modern approaches maintain isomorphism between theological affirmations and the “objects” of those affirmations. The forms and contents are supposed to be similar, or to coincide. Modern theology maintains context-independent determinate knowledge of God and the objects of theology, for example, revelation, and these fields of knowledge are not believed to be

reducible to a theological paradigm as mediation. It amounts to Descartes' approach, that knowledge is immediate between the subject and the contents of knowledge. The modern approach claims that language about God conforms directly to the "reality" it signifies. The contents of the Bible are maintained to be *Deus dixit*, God has spoken directly, without mediation. God's "language" in the Bible is viewed as a transparent medium through which He has provided knowledge without it being changed by human descriptions, language, paradigms, culture or concepts. The "modern" theology of Karl Barth, in fact following Anselms' reasoning of direct knowledge, was the well-known defender of this theological realism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is claimed to obtain direct knowledge of God through his immediate self-disclosure in human language, also of the Bible. The conclusion of this conviction is that theology, grounded on revelation, maintains knowledge that directly expresses the realities it signifies. This is how modernistic Christians can claim final, eternal truths directly from God, from beyond this world, from a separate sphere. This theological framework is a Cartesian delusion.

The postmodern approach rejects the understanding of knowledge referring to external "realities", such as the world and God, independent of conceptual schemes and paradigms. We, as subjects, always know by way of mediation, language and interpretation within a specific context, historical moment and with a specific background. Modernism betrays an objectivist bias insensitive to the interdependence and co-existence of the subject and object in knowledge. The presentation of knowledge within the framework of modernism posits the mind as a clear mirror transparent to an objective world. Knowledge containing a fit, a correspondence between the mirroring mind and the objects outside it, is supposed to be unmediated knowledge, which is impossible. Modernism presumes a radical subject-object distinction and split where the atomised, relational subject is passively receiving impressions or reflections of the "objects", determining the contents of knowledge within the subject. Modern theologies assume the direct knowledge in this schema as

the world and God are assumed to be exterior and objective. Postmodernism eschews this disinterested and bias-free subject without contexts *vis-à-vis* the object determined and projected outside the subject into an exterior reality.

The postmodern approach rejects the radical subject-object split of Cartesian modernism as it does not account for the reflexive nature of all experience from different perspectives, where the subject only knows the world *by way of its own prior participation in it*. There is no direct knowledge possible by way of a “God’s-eye-view”, separate from the network of beliefs and knowledge that generate understanding in the first place. Postmodernism points out, also in theologies and the Bible, that there is no extra-linguistic insight into objective “reality” or God, but there is only meaning-saturated, language permeated, provincial perspectives and culturally embedded representations of the world and of God. “...what is especially pernicious in most forms of *theological* realism is the tendency to reduce the reality of God to an entity knowable under the terms of this or that particular metaphysical vocabulary” (Wallace 1996:70). This reduction stems from the assumption and conviction that it is possible to assimilate God according to a determinate concept such as Being, or a catalogue of divine attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, immutability and impartiality. This reduction of God is seen to make Him a captive to certain modern thought patterns and schemes that Heidegger called “onto-theology”, determining what does or does not count as theological knowledge, (Heidegger 1969b:42-74, quoted in Wallace, 1996:70). In a postmodern framework in theology there is no reduction or determinate concepts of God and a postmodern approach may be as follows:

...in the absolute independence of the spirit, God is inexpressible mystery, indeterminate and unbounded, and always free to reveal and conceal God’s self according to the divine will. Thus, God is never an object knowable under the gaze of the independent subject’s bounded vision;

God is not an object subsumable under the horizon of a particular vocabulary. God is not a determinate reality exterior to the knowing subject, a fixed entity “on the other side” of the subject-object split as iterated by realism. God, rather, is the all-encompassing reality within which all knowledge is generated and sustained; the source and end of all determinations; ...who dwells prior to and beyond Being and all beings. God...surpasses every representation of God (Wallace 1996:70).

Postmodern knowledge avoids a mind-independent “reality” towards which conclusions about meaning and “truth” are guided. One could say, even if there would be such an “independent reality”, one does not have access to it. There is no overarching world of objects for knowledge claims to evaluate and thus, it becomes clear that all claims to knowledge are relative to conceptual representations. It is important that the concept “relative to” is totally and radically different from relativity or “everything goes”, which is actually a modernistic concept, the reverse side of the coin, when one denies the modern objective knowledge claims. One’s conceptions of the world are framed by the recognition of knowledge that is always already located within particular forms of life. Knowledge is always situation–specific, in a specific historical moment, theory–laden and with contexts, specific to interpreters with particular milieus.

### **5.7 “USEFUL” KNOWLEDGE OVER AGAINST “CERTAIN “ KNOWLEDGE AS A WAY OUT OF THE CARTESIAN DILEMMA OF “CERTAIN “ REPRESENTATION**

The problem with this postmodern approach, also in theologies and counselling, regarding the disdain for objective verified knowledge, is that it can easily disintegrate into self-signifying and self-representing inconsistencies and even contradictions. Some modern approaches realise this and flee back into final and certain “objective” knowledge and “truths”. There is, however, no exit from

this *cul-de-sac* and we must face this difficult problem. The postmodern approach may become infected with its own charge that no approach to knowledge possesses a universal standard for determining knowledge about the objective world. It cannot state that no conceptual scheme can comprehend objective reality, or that no such reality exists, without a totalising theory claiming objective certainty in its turn and thereby contradicting itself. The strong point of postmodernism against modernism is, however, that the subject has no evaluative framework, modern or postmodern, by which to evaluate the adequacy of particular perspectives of the so-called objective world or God. Consequently, it cannot claim such an independent framework to claim final statements about any perspectives. The way out of this dilemma is simply not to judge views, perspectives, theories and knowledge according to so-called objective standards, but *to provide reasons, rhetorical justifications and reasonable validations for what knowledge is*. One cannot use a meta-theory for competing claims to knowledge, as there is in any case no such liable theory, to determine certitude in knowledge.

Wittgenstein's concept of "everyday beliefs", including theological beliefs, is a useful insight into knowledge of "objects" (1969:22e). He used the commonsense cosmology of the earth as a ball rotating around its own axis in an orbit around the sun. This can be claimed to be "useful" knowledge, but by no means "certain" knowledge. There are no guarantees for this knowledge as it is a construct of cosmology specific to the current cosmological paradigm and *its knowledge is justified according to the paradigm*. This knowledge is, however, successful and as a construct it is useful as a reference point for understanding the universe. According to this simple example in this framework, knowledge is justifiable according to a revisable belief system that enables one to produce knowledge and to justify that knowledge without falling back into a radical subject-object split and claiming absolute objective knowledge.

The disastrous legacy of Descartes in modernism is that of “psychologism”, images of the psyche, which means that meanings are hidden away in the privacy of the mind or the “thinking brain”. This portrays solipsism, which indicates that the self in consciousness is the solitary “object” of real knowledge and the central reality of existence, as well as isomorphism, which denotes that the objective world is supposedly corresponding to the same geometrical forms and is of the same nature as those in self-consciousness. Knowledge, however, as Wittgenstein has shown conclusively, cannot be in the individual's awareness of objects, *as we are always already immersed in the world*. It is actually only when we take a step back, “theorise”, imagine ourselves out of the pragmatically encountered and emotionally constructed environment, as well as out of our historical and context-determined existence in which we experience life, that we become aware and are convinced of an “objective” world and so-called objective things.

It is nevertheless almost irresistible to consider knowledge as founded on meanings as sense-impressions hidden away in the privacy of the mind. The “givens” or the “data” of life, however, are the common forms of life in which we always participate right from the outset and not from one's sense data or objective observations. It is an abstraction, deception and falsification of thinking, of theology and of counselling to think that we can think and obtain knowledge from outside this human framework. In our theologies, narratives, counselling and scientific studies, we are always already immersed in this framework and cannot obtain any view from outside it. It is a modernistic pipe dream that historical traditions, specific language uses, cultural life forms, community structures and everyday thinking patterns, interpretations and meanings are dispensable. This false hope is as if I alone, untutored, self-reliantly, fully self-consciousness, lacking history, tradition and context, could possess the un-interpreted, un-trodden and pristine “facts” of the objective world, yielding themselves to me alone. It would be a “blik”, a glimpse in the blissful, uncontaminated, ephemeral “inhuman spirit world”, not this contaminated, messy, but human world. This, however,

unbelievably, is what we believe in our everyday theologies, research programmes, common sense discussions and counselling and caring of people. It is a view of individuals, floating in a neutral atmosphere and separate passively objective receptive bodies, obtaining “certain” and “objective” knowledge and “truths”. An interesting and fascinating idea, into which this study cannot do research, is the idea that, ultimately, the self depends on nothing but its own sensations for its vision of the world, which, no doubt, appeals strongly to the capitalist entrepreneurial spirit. So-called objective empiricism is possibly the appropriate epistemology for a private enterprise economy leading to extreme administrative control (cf. Kerr 1986:132). Wolfaardt suggests another possibility: “...postmodernism could include self-reflection on how we do our science discourse in late-capitalism by focussing on creating an environmentally sustainable enterprise, and valuing the person instead of privileging and legitimising administrative control” (2001:22).

The fascinating legacy of Descartes in modernism is both realism, the conviction that there is a neutral objective world out there, separate from and independent of self-consciousness, as well as anti-realism or idealism, the conviction that the only thing that we are aware of in certitude is the neutral mind in self-consciousness. Knowledge is founded in ideas about “objectivity” and “subjectivity” as representations. “We have been tempted into the habit of thinking that either the *Dinge* or *unsere Vorstellungen* must be the primary thing, but the choice between realism and idealism overlooks *das Leben*: that is Wittgenstein’s suggestion” (Kerr 1986:33). Wittgenstein makes the convincing point that the realists, in theology the fundamentalists, or in counselling modern psychologists, for all their passionate insistence on our having knowledge of objects outside our minds, never actually look inside the constructs of the world or people as representations. They too take it for granted that the problem of knowledge is about matching ideas in their minds with “objects” out in the world.



Realists, just as much as anti-realists or idealists fail to acknowledge that the “given” in life is *das Leben* and not objective knowledge or subjective representations. Wittgenstein is adamant that the life forms, the fact that we are situated in everyday circumstances, means that we are always already embedded in customs, language, history and culture and that this has to be accepted. Realists and idealists are both oblivious to *das Eigentliche*, the “real thing”, which Wittgenstein referred to as the “bustle of life”, *das Getriebe des Lebens* (Kerr 1986:133). Obsession with the representation of the objective “reality” makes the hustle and bustle of life, which cannot be represented, seem trivial, insignificant and contingent. The formalised, axiomatic and “symbolised” person replaced the social, cultural and historical human being.

Postmodernism breaks free from the obsession with representation and the accompanying depiction of the self as an “observer of reality”, as well as from the pristine self-consciousness “producing self-certain truths”. Traditional views of language are taken as understanding how we represent objects by words. The self, observing and representing, is a concept of consciousness as a detached spectator of the world. Wittgenstein brought us back from the deception to treat language as representation of “reality” and the self’s thoughts as a mirror image of the “objective” world, by indicating that the world has meaning only in the “stream of life” (Kerr 1986:135). Knowledge can be compared to common, shared practices in everyday life, and is not principally an objective representation of reality as in modern objectivity, while the subjective consciousness is not primarily the monological observer and the self-conscious master of objective rational depiction as in modern idealism. The so-called highly spiritual fundamentalist theology and counselling approaches, as well as the objective intellectualist agnostic materialist approaches, are both tragic victims of the subject-object split, only depending on which side is emphasised. Our language signs are so natural to us that we assume we can do without them and consequently, meaning becomes a pure mental activity. Thus, we forget that our status as rational agents depend

completely on the *materiality* of language signs. Just as Descartes did, modernism denied the “bodily” nature of meaning and mind. Postmodernism shows that minds and signs cannot be taken apart. Understanding of meanings in life is not produced by the idealist spiritual solipsistic self in the mind, nor by the observations and impressions of the un-spiritual realist empiricist, but is normally only *perception* of meanings in everyday life. Meaning is never independent of signs or language. Language is simply embedded in everyday life forms and experiences and is not an objective presentation or a subjective formation in the mind, as the world is not split up into subjective and objective realities.

Descartes’ antipathy to the body, emphasising psychologism, solipsism and isomorphism, has also emerged as Christian heresies, theologically labelled, for example, as Docetism, Gnosticism and Manichaeism. This also causes such tremendous psychological damage that counselling has to consider it.

Few people in our culture today would admit to thinking their bodies to be evil, or their minds to be sparks of the eternal temporarily imprisoned in these habitations of fleshly corruption. However, our mental hospitals are full of people damaged by such ideas, or, at any rate, using them to voice their distressing self-contempt. From pornography to torture, many everyday phenomena in our society trade on something very like hatred of the fleshly (Kerr 1986:140).

Postmodernism tries to get to the historical, the contextual and social human being, existing in the split either on the subjective or the objective side and tries to put an end to the solitary disembodied consciousness in both realism and idealism.

The above distinction between “certain” knowledge on the one hand and “useful and successful”

knowledge on the other, is an indication between modern and postmodern knowledge in epistemology, theology and counselling. Useful and successful knowledge is belief as an exercise in trust, not absolute proof. It is always fallible and functions as a ready candidate for continuous revision. Its power is in its ability to expand and extend our understanding of life or what one assumes to be reality. Postmodernism abstains from the susceptibility to and weakness of canons of certain evidence, independent of rhetorical arguments and their rational justifications in the first place. If one “knows” or believes that the world is moving like a ball, or that the Holy Spirit empowers one to serve one’s neighbour, one does not base this “knowledge” on canons of certitude or eternal truths, independent of the context of the assumptive and rationally justified knowledge. This “knowledge” is in line with every day interpreted experience that provides the confirming rationally justified *evidence*, but never the *final proof* for daily usefulness.

At the basis of a well-founded belief always lies another belief that is not founded, which means that the criterion for an adequacy of a belief is not that it is to be founded on the basis of an apodictic certain and everlasting warrant, to be self-evident to the mind, or incorrigible to sense perception, but that it be generative of a full and integrated construed and interpreted understanding of life experiences. Knowledge and justified (providing reasons and arguments to) beliefs are matters of utility and performance, qualifying one for action.

*“The thrust of Wittgenstein’s whole philosophy is that truth (religious, scientific, or otherwise) is a matter of empowering human agents to accomplish with integrity the difficult task of becoming thoughtful...persons in a world of conflicting loyalties and claims to attention“*  
(Wallace 1996:73).

One can say that, on this evocative and generative basis, theological beliefs and counselling

approaches are enhancing one's orientation towards spiritual and physical healing, moral growth and life renewal. In this vigorous and active approach to knowledge as justified beliefs, it unleashes expansive and productive encounters with life and inspires commitments to further the welfare of all parties in a situation. The practical power of this "useful" knowledge and justified beliefs sets us free to engage with others towards liberating and transforming counselling encounters. The positivist and realist will not accept such useful knowledge and justified belief claims as they are not available to certain rational proof and empirical validation, as well as that there are no available objective referents to verify or disconfirm such claims. What they do not realise, however, is that there are no final and certain empirical verification possible.

Wittgenstein confirms that a Christian is like a tightrope walker. The person almost looks as though walking on nothing but air. The support is the slenderest imaginable. It is, however, possible to walk like that. To this, one may add that what is important to realise is that the "evidence" for a Christian life and beliefs are not less than for the business of everyday life. The impression must not be given that to "believe" and "know" as a Christian, doing theology or counselling and following Christ, is to walk on a tightrope of uncertain knowledge and blind faith, whereas in other fields the "evidence" is secure, certain and much stronger. This is not so. In this life, we as humans just do not have any access to inhuman finality or certainty of knowledge in any field. The point made here is that while there is no pure universal and certain "reality" that can provide an absolute and fixed reference for moderating knowledge and faith claims, such reasonable justified claims nevertheless demonstrate their practical utility as guides for meaningful, compassionate and intelligible living and engagement with people and the world. A person and a Christian can really live without axiomatic certainty and "eternal truths". Yes, one can dance with uncertainty.

One can conclude that successful "knowledge" and justified beliefs are a matter of ethical

performance in life and counselling. It means that theological tasks such as ethical performance is of primary importance in one's *noetic* structure and determine it. Knowledge combined with the compassion to serve, is the heart of life and is not found in the abstracted Cartesian self, locating certitude in the interior life, but is born and borne in the historical and contextual activity of the person serving and counselling the other. Theological truth is not a matter of "knowing" for certain, but is created out of "doing", acting and serving based on useful knowledge. It is not arrived at through realism's disclosure of universal truths, laws and structures, or, the usefulness of idealism's or anti-realism's various language "spiritual" contemplative vocabularies and concepts, but by taking mediating responsibility towards another person in need and pain. Knowledge and belief are here not a Cartesian epistemological problem about correct and certain knowledge of the "objective" world exterior to the mind. In counselling it is also not the acquisition of certain knowledge through proven models and rules about the other as an "object", which is subject to the knowing professional's objective research, calculations and control. "It is not knowledge in the sense of *Auffassen* (understanding) which is also a *Fassen* (gripping)" (Wallace 1996:77). In the modern Cartesian framework the mind grasps whatever is stamped and determined by it as objective and clutches the other, condemning it as an object for the knowing and controlling subject. It is important to realise that this objective activity is a non-human, inhuman and inhumane action. Under the gaze of the subject's mind the alterity and novelty of the other are stripped towards categorising according to the subject's formal classification. Levinas, who is a powerful articulator of knowledge as performance and belief, states that "...a face confounds the intentionality that aims at it" (quoted in Wallace 1996:79). Knowledge, faith and counselling do not follow the controlling sovereign subject's conceptual grasping, but originates in the openness and solicitude exercised by a person towards the other as *another*. The person renounces all claims to own or possess the other by way of certitude, judging according to "truths" or any other means of control in the communicating process. Practising knowledge claims or justified beliefs is not a representation of

the other as an object to be categorised or classified, but it is a risking relationship with another person that is always different from and novel to me. This approach is non-dominating and emotionally non-violent as it proceeds in loving openness and a concomitant refusal to seize the other as a thing, an object at and under the subject's disposal.

### **5.8 *SPRACHLICHKEIT* (HEIDEGGER), *DIFFÉRANCE* (DERRIDA) AND DECENTRING TOWARDS ACKNOWLEDGING THE INDIVIDUAL'S OTHERNESS**

During the past fifty years or so, there was awareness of a failure of the construction of Cartesian consciousness and a loss of confidence in the subject and self-consciousness. Heidegger's disenchantment with the Cartesian subject led to his wide-ranging "destruction" of the history of metaphysics as basis for the central subject of self-consciousness. Wittgenstein rejected the private language of an isolated subject and suggested that the I be thought of essentially as a matter of grammar in everyday life and not as an "entity". Levi-Strauss called for dissolution of the subject to make human sciences possible in the framework of structuralism. Foucault pronounced the "death of man", which he saw as a sequel to Nietzsche's proclamation of the "death of God". Barthes coined the phrase in literature, "the death of the Author". Derrida proposes the deconstruction of the subject through a disassemblage of the metaphysics of presence. Rorty rejected the subject as an epistemological foundation for philosophy of the mind and suggested that the subject should be incorporated in social practices and encouraged conversation between people. From many sides these are endeavours of the dismantling, dissolution and deconstruction of subjectivity. The subject in these varied approaches loses its epistemological privilege since the Cartesian birth of modernity.

Schrag (1986: 7,8) points out that these variegated critiques of modern subjectivity are motivated

by an unknown interest in language, known as the linguistic turn. Heidegger's turn towards "linguistically" (*Sprachlichkeit*), the language ability or "linguaging", suggested a move, not towards mathematical models of linguistics as a science, but towards a pre-objective speaking (*Sachen*), namely, poetry. Foucault's archaeology of human sciences culminates in a shift from *the being* of a person as a historical subject to the "being of language". Wittgenstein's focus in his later life is not on true representation of the objective world, as in the earlier period, but revolves around language as "forms of life", where we are always already embedded in life and its non-subject-object split. Derrida's linguistic turn is what he names "grammatological", a "grammatical way", in character. Rorty's dismantling of "philosophy" is towards hermeneutical communication of conversation.

In all these approaches, there are some aspects of the deconstruction of subjectivity and self-consciousness. In all these varieties, the epistemological subject, whether in the framework of the Cartesian *thinking* subject, rationality, or in the paradigm of Hume's *sensing* subject, empiricism, or in the construction of Kant's *transcendental* subject, realism and idealism undergo displacement. Subjectivity in all its multiple modalities loses its epistemological, moral and existential *locale*, its priority space. The ethical subject as source of moral judgements fails; the existential subject to control life practically is shorn of its primacy and privilege. Heidegger exposes the "twilight" of subjectivity and he contributes to the negative fate of consciousness. The subject is depicted as a remains of a metaphysical construct. Accordingly, the subject as theoretical construct becomes unusually objectified as an entity amongst entities, an occurrence of a specific example of finite beings. Heidegger points out that the concept *subiectum* is inferred from the Greek word *hypokeimenon*, which means the "naming" of "that which lies before", leading to "the ground that gathers everything onto itself". This meaning of the concept of subject has first of all no relation to a human being and not at all to the 'I' (Heidegger 1977:128, quoted by Schrag 1986: 8).

Heidegger proposes to “normalise” the oxymoronic result of a subject becoming an inhuman and unnatural object, by replacing it in his early work with *Dasein* and in his later work with an additional concept, *Ereignis*, the event of appropriation. This is done to check the misdirected consequences of a person being the inaugural original or foundational subject; that existing self-conscious entity in which all existence is grounded and through which it reaches its certain knowledge of the world, categorised axiomatically as objectivity. By this subjectivism, the human being becomes the centre from which life as a whole, including God, is observed and scrutinised. Life as such is signified, characterised and epitomised by the controlling and prescribing individual subject. Cartesian self-consciousness has spawned the final modern epistemological designs of grounding all knowledge in the cognitive subject, but also in the ethical designs of a technological domination of nature and history by a wilful “inhuman” subject, controlling the vast outposts of the universe, even “God”.

Derrida is most vociferous in his opposition to the category of subjectivity in its epistemological, scientific and literary use. His deconstructive strategy is the “White Mythology” of “logocentrism” and the metaphysics of presence, the Cartesian framework that has been the refuge for the denizens of subject, self, ego and self-consciousness. From Plato the metaphysics of presence has provided the space in which the subject had a centre and eventually staked out its Cartesian claims of self-evidence, self-identity, self-consciousness and being apodictic. Derrida deconstructs this space of presence and renders the subject “homeless”. The “presence”, “consciousness”, the “consciousness of presence” and the “presence of consciousness” in the subject loses its place.

It appears as if the guiding motive of (some) of Derrida’s work is the engaging of “difference”, that is older than either presence or absence, and out of which presence and absence can first be thought. This performance of “play” of difference, however, is unnameable and is thus called



“*difference*”; (play is lightheartedness *vis-à-vis* dogmatic solidity). There is no name for difference, not even essence or being. The concept “*difference*” itself is also not even a name, as it is a pure nominal entity and, in any case, it continuously breaks up in a chain of different substitutions. To be able to observe this play of *difference* he points us to *écriture*, writing. As the voice of speech, tied to the presence of the subject is deferred, effectively set aside by *difference*, we are advised to abide by writing. “We thus come to posit presence – and, in particular, consciousness, the being-next-to-itself of consciousness – no longer as the absolutely matrix form of being, but as a ‘determination’ and an ‘effect’. Presence is a determination and effect within a system which is no longer that of presence but that of *difference*” (Derrida 1973:147).

This dismantling of the subject is in postmodernism referred to as *the decentring of the subject*. The subject appears not as the singular base, foundation, or centre of knowledge, discourse and action, but rather as the concrescence of multiple forms of combinations of facts and facts as eventful in life in general. The speaking subject speaks from within and from a language and does not objectively use it as a neutral medium. Consequently one can even say language speaks (through) a person (Heidegger). Regarding writing, the inscriptions of the authorial subject proceed in this framework and against the background of delivered forms of textual inscriptions, the fact that it is inscribed. It is also called textuality. Concerning the subject initiating action, it is important that the subject as agent is socialised by the communal, cultural and historical patterns in which the person acts. This is so as the subject is not a monological consciousness accompanying a monadic Cartesian ego, without contexts and the dimension of phenomenology. The subject is not the sponsor of mental contents and the Archimedean point, the *locus* of certitude in matters of knowledge and action. The subject is not a pre-given entity and not a post-given notion. It is simply the multifarious residue result of a convergence of the historical and social events within discourse and action. The subject is not an entity at all, but rather an event that participates in the

discursive and social practices and inscribes its contributions on their textures. The speaking subject is not the inventor of language, but uses language, or is used by language that is already there. The authorial subject is not the creator of textual inscriptions, but is simply participating in the world of these textual inscriptions. The subject as agent is not the producer of social practices, but is a partaker in social frameworks, constitutions and forces. "What is at issue is not a subject as zero-point consciousness, unalterable presence, or underlying substratum; such would achieve intelligibility only within an abstracted epistemological space" (Schrag 1986:121).

The decentring of the subject has been successfully achieved by the heavily accented themes of "destruction" and "deconstruction" and has produced a veritable revolution of *Denkwege*, noticeable in various human sciences and the consequences have to be awaited and worked out. "Yet, one cannot but notice that something funny happens on the way to the deconstructionist forum. In the various projects of deconstruction of the subject a discernable trace of subjectivity remains whilst the deconstruction is in progress and after it is completed" (ibid. 1986:10). In Heidegger's framework of destruction and deconstruction the subject is not so much eliminated as it is resituated within an existential space of the person's way of being. While endeavouring to avoid the radical Cartesian subject-object split and the epistemological snare of subjectivity, he is making an effort to retrieve the subject.

Derrida is understood by some to augment Heidegger's deconstruction of the subject and ontology as metaphysics. He approves of Heidegger's effective deconstruction of both the objectivism and subjectivism of metaphysics, but declines Heidegger's efforts to eventually return to the requirement for an elusive and fugitive presence, no matter whether he speaks of the presence of the subject as *Dasein*, or the presence of *Ereignis*. In Derrida's reading of Heidegger, the central problem remains the *Seinsfrage*, the primacy of presence and also of the subject.

This, however, seems a misunderstanding of Heidegger's intentions. For Heidegger, the fateful moment in the history of ontology was the metaphysical turn in the discourse about being as presence. Presence was now constructed as a property of entities that is present-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*). Descartes constructed the subject as a *Vorhandensein* entity degrading all entities as objectivity and controlled knowledge about them with formal axioms. This *Vorhandensein* of entities and the Cartesian consciousness brought about a forgetfulness of Being (*Sein*) as an ecstatic temporality. With his "ontological-ontic-difference" framework Heidegger was able to move beyond these concepts and beyond metaphysics. His thinking beyond the presence of metaphysics culminated in the later Heidegger's celebrated *Kehre* from reflection towards language, from meaning to *alethea* (revealed truth) and from Being to *Ereignis*, as event of appropriation. It appears as if Derrida did not appreciate the revolutionary questioning in *Being and Time* and especially after his *Kehre*, as he indicts him being obsessed with Being. It appears as if Derrida uses the "difference" of Heidegger's "ontological-ontic-difference" and applies it as "*difference*" in grammatological rather than ontological ruminations. It seems, however, that Heidegger has already turned to language in a similar way.

This study does not research Derrida's reading of Heidegger, but what is vital is the elusiveness of the "presence" of the subject in both Heidegger and Derrida. The difference between them, however, is that Heidegger endeavours to retrieve the subject in non-Cartesian and non-metaphysical terms, whereas it seems as if Derrida's response was only reactionary. Derrida, however, acknowledges the concept of subject and says: "The subject is absolutely indispensable. I do not destroy the subject; I situate it. That is to say, I believe that at a certain level of both experience and philosophical and scientific discourse one cannot get along without the notion of subject. It is a question of knowing where it comes from and how it functions" (Macksey & Donato 1970:271).

What is important after the disassembling, dissolution, “destruction”, disbanding, resituating and deconstruction of the subject, is to *maintain* a decentred subject. This would by no means be some classical notion of subject, ego or self, indicating a radical subject-object split, providing epistemological foundations, accounting for identity and supplying elusive self-reference. Christian counselling in a postmodern practical theological framework has to encounter a post-metaphysical, post-Cartesian and post-epistemological decentred subject. It can only achieve this if the deception and duplicity of modernist self-consciousness have been understood and fundamentally exposed.

For the knowledge and methods of counselling to be truly liberating, they have to be outside the Cartesian and modernistic frameworks and have to approach people in pain in a decentred way. To “know” another person is not to submit the other to the control of one’s totalising consciousness, where oneself and the “traumatised” person are brought together by a common denominator, a formal essence or being that both share and to which the “patient” must willy-nilly submit. This potential for abusive “violence” against the other usually results from championing the interests of the “system”, institution or organisation, as well as a church over and against the particular needs of the individuals. The system or totality stands for an all-inclusive understanding of experience that would take away the alterity and novelty of the other by denying its transcendence in the system. All forms of totalitarian thinking destroy the individual’s otherness by flattening out its differences from the system. In modernistic counselling the freedom and spontaneity of the other to stand in a heterogeneous and a-systemic relation to the totality, laws or system are subordinated to the demands of the totality of sameness, commonality, synthesis, order, predictability and control. Postmodern counselling is rather guided by the Holy Spirit. The formal axioms of the Cartesian scheme spawned a neutral third term, beyond the first, the subject and the second, the object, namely an objectivist term for the human person. Hegel’s “*Geist*”, Husserl’s “horizon” and what Heidegger attacked as metaphysical “Being” would reduce the person to a formal intelligible

and common sameness. This threatens a person's concrete specificity, conformity to a pre-determined order and to be subsumed under a uniform and so-called "harmonious system and the commonweal or common good". The postmodern approach threatens to break up utility and is a threat to the domination of the other's alterity and control of a person's individuality. The freedom from formalism through the Holy Spirit obligates me to care for my neighbour in need and to take responsibility for the other in pain, but in a manner that rejects all forms of domination, timeless truths, formalism and absolutism. One of the main problems of the "modern" person is still the infiltration of the Cartesian detached identity of the person that has no personal traits and that deep down is an artificial abstraction, an isolated monad, a so-called individual consciousness on its own. "The I that has no counterpart, that exists in relation to neither God, a Thou, nor an It loses its human quality. It becomes the docetic ghost of a *res cogitans* which is beyond love and hate, good and evil...the shadowy and solipsistic I ..."(Thielicke 1990:68).

This chapter disclosed the modern disaster of thinking, acting and doing theology and counselling based on the Cartesian subject-object split of and, concomitantly, the embellished self-consciousness shaping everything in formal objectivist concepts. The postmodern turn to language deconstructed this objective formalised understanding of people towards non-determined, historical, contextual, decentred selves taking creative control of their own humanness. By doing this, we experience that we are always already in God, in language, in the unitary subjective-objective world and when we speak, language speaks (through) us, when we serve, love flows through us and when we believe, the Holy Spirit works through us, towards coping with a broken ambiguous world, *by dancing with uncertainty*.

## CHAPTER 6

### POSTMODERN NON-CARTESIAN COUNSELLING

*The “truth” or logos does not pre-exist, but is fully incarnate in praxis, the embodied evocative writing, speech, argumentation, explanation and action. The consequence is that the “discovery”, or rather, the “creation” of truth is indissolubly linked to the communication thereof.*

*“Theory” cannot be ignored and abandoned, but what is most important is that theory is always already concomitantly embedded in practice.*

*What heals in therapy? “...the most honest answer...is that we do not know” (Ornstein 1995:113).*

*We first have to deny theory to encapsulate and pre-determine practice and to abandon the tendency to take “knowledge” as our primary way of interacting with people.*

*The dangerous and confusing problem now remains that while we hear the postmodern voice of Esau, we experience the modern hands of Jacob. Researchers and counsellors propose liberated postmodern counselling, while presenting modernistic enslaving therapy. These counsellors are unaware of the crucial and extremely dangerous Cartesian, modernistic issues of subject-object dualism, “representation” solidifying into “presentation”,*

*“enframing” and the radical theory-practice dichotomous split.*

*Counselling in the postmodern framework is pre-theoretical insofar as it is not derived from theory. It is also pre-cognitive in the sense that it is not a cognitive act proceeding from a translucent self.*

Postmodernism is not an approach to life and specifically to counselling and theology that starts *de novo*, from an a-historical, theoretical base; it rather takes place within historical modernism with all its assumptions and approaches. What this means is that one has to be aware of the ubiquitous presence of modernism in all our thinking and approaches. Modernism should be analysed specifically to be able to go beyond its metaphysical underpinnings. In this chapter the aim is to concentrate specifically on postmodern counselling in a non-Cartesian framework and the problems involved in this approach. The goal is to work towards a practical, non-representational, non-referential, non-formal, non-dualistic and a non-theory-praxis split in counselling. This would involve ceasing mental explanation seeking, model-building and validation focused activities that would open up a space by which the goal of developing a praxis framework could be explored. By doing this, the overall aim would be to keep the question open, by not fixing final solutions or approaches to determine postmodern counselling as a “new saviour”.

## **6.1 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF CARTESIANISM AND A PROVISIONAL EXPOSURE**

Culture since Descartes has been increasingly dominated by subjectivism and individualism which issued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century “a psychological person” who is intent upon the conquest of a person’s “inner life” and embraces the ideal of deliverance through self-contemplative manipulation and exploration.

After approximately a hundred years of “formal” counselling, psychoanalysis or therapy, it has become clear that many of their approaches in modern therapy have gone off beam and a lot of work was not successful. Why? One reason is that “Cartesianism still underlies and dominates much of to-day’s thought” (Berger 1996:169). To show how relevant and important this view is that Descartes’s reasoning still dominates our thoughts, particularly in counselling, one can point to the purpose of Fisher’s arguments in favour of the Cartesian image of a person. It is to demonstrate that the Cartesian view is crucial for the continuation of psychological science. Fisher (1995:323-352) claims that it is vital for psychology to maintain an image of a person as delineated by Descartes. He goes so far in his argument to state that without the qualities that this vision of Descartes contains, *there would be no subject for psychologists to study*.

The same can be claimed about modern theology, namely that it is working within a modern framework spawned by Descartes. “I am not saying too much if I venture the opinion that ...there is always a pinch of Cartesian salt, if not a whole container, in modern theology (Thielicke 1990:57). In fact, Thielicke has written a book of 420 pages to counter a whole type of modern theology as Cartesian (Thielicke 1974).

Descartes has generated and triggered networks of interrelated ideas and themes with a wide and vast influence. It is important to summarise these networks of ideas to be able to find a way towards non-Cartesian frameworks for counselling. In speaking about the Cartesian legacy we have to distinguish between the statements and claims of the historical Descartes and “Cartesianism”, the generating of related convictions, claims and statements upon “foundational” claims by Descartes. By critically analysing the features of Cartesian thinking in various frameworks, one may create some space towards postmodern counselling.



Some of the characteristics of the Cartesian legacy and a tentative exposure of them are succinctly reviewed:

- *The ontological duality of mind and body*

Descartes initiated a rigorous distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. This created a radical severe *separation between mind and body*. This separation provided the basis for the systematic distinction of the *radical metaphysical and epistemological dichotomy of subject and object*. Even the post-Cartesian critics who challenged this metaphysical dualism have generally accepted some version of the subject-object split as basis to the understanding of the world (Bernstein 1983:115,116).

*The consequence of this split was that we could only approach life by way of either subjectivism or objectivism. Alienated dualism infiltrated all disciplines, methods and thought.*

- *Subjective individualism verifying knowledge*

The aim for subjective consciousness was to achieve clear and distinct knowledge. The subject or the "I" had to engage in "intellectual purification" to achieve this goal. Methodical doubt suspended judgment of all opinions and prejudices to discover the Archimedean point of certainty as final foundation for all knowledge. This self-reflection and solitary monological thinking as internal dialogue discovered the lack of foundations of former prejudices and convictions. Meditative reflection achieved this self-transparency and self-understanding of all knowledge. Personal individual verification guaranteed knowledge. Methodical doubt led to indubitable truths (Bernstein 1983:116).

The modern foundations of thinking are riddled with contradictions:

- A project that began with doubt concluded with indubitable certainty.
- Radical doubt churned out and emitted radical certainty.
- This conviction oscillated in our reason between overweening confidence and despairing scepticism.

- *There is no defect of imperfection in the will and understanding*

As we had been created in the image of God we shared an “infinite” will, while our understanding, however, containing no imperfection, was limited and finite. Finite knowledge was related to God’s knowledge as part of an infinite whole. Human sin and error resulted from the misuse of these capacities for which we alone were responsible. Descartes claimed that by virtue of our unconstrained free will we could judge, evaluate, assert and deny (ibid. 1983:116).

This overpowering of the will led to domineering modernistic technology and here the focus is especially on the counselling control of the “experts” over the dependent “patients”. This dichotomy in Descartes spelled modern disaster as God’s will was emulated, but not his love.

- *Only appeals to reason itself justify knowledge*

According to Descartes we should be sceptical about any claims to knowledge that were based solely on the senses, perception, opinions, prejudices, tradition, or any authority other than reason. Only reason validated knowledge. All rational human beings shared this universal reason that was not limited by historical contingencies (Bernstein 1983:117).

This radical dualism between the reasonable mind and the experiences of the body, intuition, belief and imagination created modern robotic thinking objects.

- *The Archimedean point of clear and distinct ideas is the solid foundation for knowledge by following strict formal rules and the correct method of doubt*

The “rules” extended our knowledge systematically and nothing would be admitted as knowledge and truth unless it satisfied the rigorous requirements of rational “rules”. The doctrine that vagueness was unreal should be maintained. The aim was to know clearly and distinctly a completely determinate reality (ibid. 1983:117).

*Strict “rules” and clear ideas as knowledge were sought to sidestep the contingent historical uncertainties and to have anchors in modern arbitrary and capricious situations. Descartes bypassed shambolic life to find certainty in calibrated life.*

- *Direct intuitive knowledge of the objective world is possible*

Language and signs is an external disguise for thought, so that no language mediation is necessary for knowledge. Direct knowledge between the subject and object was possible as immediate knowledge without mediation. Descartes assumed to clearly contact the objective world directly without any interference.

Descartes had to formalise knowledge and communication of knowledge to be able to eradicate interferences between subject and object. This falsification of life as pristine sterility is projected in modernism to be able to obtain direct and certain knowledge, which were lopsidedly invalid.

- *Truth is ascribed to judgement*

The source of error and falsity is misjudgement, when I affirm or deny what I do not understand clearly and distinctly. Judgment as an activity of the world can always be withheld. I am responsible for making false judgments and because of the infirmity of my nature I cannot altogether avoid errors.

*Descartes maintains the subject as the ultimate solipsistic judge. Everything depended on self-consciousness, giving way under the tremendous pressure leading eventually towards modern crooked evaluations and judgments.*

- *Language is transparent and refers to, or pictures the objective world by way of objective representation*

We believe that something is true if we have an idea in our mind that corresponds to actual “state of affairs”, “facts”, “events” and “objects”. Mental representations, veridical perceptions and empirical verification of an “object” provide certain knowledge.

Language in modernism became unreliable as it became apparent that language created knowledge and was not as transparent it was thought to be in modernism.

- *Propositions capture external facts if they correspond to the objects*

In the neutral framework of language, propositions are in a linear one-to-one relation to facts. Hidden or past events are described in theories, inferred by observation, as a hidden explanatory mechanism to discover the facts.

*Descartes portrayed language as directly in contact with “reality” to disclose “facts”. What was not disclosed was that the subject was always already involved in the objective reality. What was disclosed was already determined beforehand.*

- *Truths are timeless, universal and absolutely certain*

Truth ignores historical, socio-cultural and political factors. Truth is not based on empirical findings, phenomenological frameworks or is not derived from various contingent contextual situations. Truth restricts language to artificial, formalistic, logical, referential-semiotic concepts. Truth has a premium on mathematical symbols and formalisation of experience, impoverishing and disenchanting our life world.

*Descartes reasoned as if he could rise above the contingencies of time and place to a modern universal disinterested standpoint as if pure thought was possible.*

- *Theory and practice are basically distinct and separated*

Theory is inherently involved in the application of knowledge and technique by way of method. Practice is deductively related to theory. Theories are rationally invented and then applied in

practice. Theory organises and understands knowledge and furnishes the contents, models, and rationale for applying knowledge. Theory shapes and determines practice. Theories or models are the priority and comprise the key issues. Theory shields us from ignorance in practice. Theory is a system of *a priori* rules and principles and practice as a mere application of theoretical protocols.

*The disintegration of modernism shows that praxis is evocative action, deprived of pre-established principles and determination. Approaches are formulated within action in a creative way and are not supplied beforehand by theories.*

- *There are mental entities and our minds are containers of theories of knowledge of objective facts*

The mind has a basic inner-outer distinction relating to the thought-language distinction. Psychology is a study of separate, interior, disembodied psyches and its theories of this field are to be applied in practice.

The collapse of modernistic thinking showed that there were no thoughts without language. Body-mind was a holistic unity and the psyche could not be untangled in an unspoiled and unblemished way.

Almost every assumption of the Cartesian account and its legacy has been subjected to damaging criticism. These criticisms arose from major dissatisfactions with the Cartesian concepts of timeless, universal and certain truths that did not take contextual, historical, political and socio-cultural factors into account at all; (compare Hoffman 1992, Gergen 2000 and Smedslund 1985).

The legacy of Descartes with its emphasis on subjectivism, cognition, and the subject-grounded and self-consciousness centred approaches to rationalism within modernity is a problem (cf. Schrag 1994:66); also the metaphysics of “presence” of the self and logocentrism (Derrida); its restricted, artificial, formalistic, logical, referential-semiotic concept of language was unacceptable (cf. Corradi 1990 and Richardson 1986); the Cartesian scepticism about the existence of the external world was seen to be problematic (cf. Richardson 1986).

The premium the Cartesian approach placed on the formalisation and mathematical formalisation of experience, impoverished our life and world. The Cartesian concept of the mind that our thoughts were completely and without distortion presented to us directly upon mere internal inspection provides unjustified authority to the self's impressions of “objects”.

## **6.2 THE OVERCOMING OF THE THEORY-PRACTICE DICHOTOMY**

The two main aspects of a non-Cartesian framework on which we wish to focus here are:

- *The basic distinction and separation between theory and practice, as a consequence of the Cartesian representational model of knowledge.*
- *The radical objective split of the subject and object.*

The Cartesian legacy's way of formalising knowledge and fitting and organising experiences into a fixed, descriptive grid of mental states, forces life experiences into a set of pre-figurations. This is what Heidegger has called a “*Gestell*”, a framing or “enframing” experience, comprising a theoretical attitude and a representational–calculative, as well as a manipulative, “theme creation”

with a type of a dominant technological thinking, towards a realist presentation of life. Phenomena were placed in a situation lacking a historical dimension and devoid of contexts with a pre-selected set of atomic concepts, characterising subjective experiences in terms of isolated points of space and separate moments of time. Heidegger had a strong reaction against this approach, as he understood it, to misapply the representational calculative thinking to persons and language in the same ways that natural science treated “objects” of research. Bruns (1986:6,10,41) pointed out that Heidegger “...takes you out of the vocabulary of theory and method, forma and configuration, structure and system...” and also out of calculative operations, aiming to cure us of this addiction to theories of meaning and significance. This rejection of the Cartesian legacy of theory-practice dichotomy in modernism has great importance for counselling. It signifies, among other aspects, that counselling is not an approach to clarify theories and isolate analysis towards applying counselling techniques in practice. This treated the person in pain like an object in natural science.

Berger (1996:171) pointed out that Wittgenstein offered consonant “...critical analysis of representational practices in his critiques of traditional scientific psychology.” Wittgenstein made a fundamental distinction between verbal descriptions and internal subjective phenomena, regardless whether they were by way of first-person introspection or third-person external “object” observation, on the one hand, and observations made of objects in the external world, on the other. “I experience a pain” is totally different from “I observe a dog”. He rejected that standard practice in scientific psychology of formally treating personal phenomena as “furniture of the Inner” in the same way as natural science formally treated external “objects” (cf. Johnston 1993; Baker and Hacker 1982 and Sueter 1989, quoted by Berger 1996:171). Wittgenstein’s linguistic analysis reveals the fallacies of presenting the reports of the “inner-life”, the referents of subject-predicate, objective-attributes and linguistic reports. Wittgenstein’s “...approach to the Inner involves a



completely new way of understanding our psychological concepts” (Johnson 1993:27).

Heidegger and Wittgenstein have presented us with a totally new anthropology, displacing the representational and formal “presentational” reflection of the legacy of Descartes’ epistemology. Berger (1996:172) points out that Castoriadis (1982:207-208) also objects strongly to the Cartesian framework that causes “...mastery over the study of the living being, of the psyche, or of the social historical”.

What is important is that this Cartesian evaluation is comprehensively radical and critical as it includes the effects of framing or “enframing, the rejection of “representation” and its concomitant theory-practice dichotomy. Other approaches, including hermeneutics, historicism, constructivism and pragmatism may be similarly anti-foundational and may emphasise historical, narrative, cultural and political contingent factors to be taken into account, *but they are still predicated on a tacit retention of representation, practice-theory dichotomies, features of radical subject-object-split and “enframing”*. Historicism especially retains objectified, specialised conventionally scientific linear concepts of time and thus continues unabated with the Cartesian legacy in modernism, by posing “clear” historical facts as transparent and unmediated by interpretation. This same approach, regarding the historical problems from the past in a “traumatised” person’s life, causes distortion in counselling, by way of one-sided unmediated and so-called transparent interpretation. Postmodern counselling does not accept a transparent and unmediated “clear” history and follows an approach to mediate the past by way of interpretation and language construction in an ambiguous, tentative and “uncertain” framework. The past history of a person is always seen as constructed and interpreted.

Here, for the moment, we wish to remain with the theory-practice dichotomy. Most counsellors

maintain the traditional modern position of a dichotomy that exists between theory, models, analyses and constructs of problems and practice, so that theory is to be applied to clinical practice. (Berger 1996:173) explains that theory is related to the technique, “treatment” and “help” to be comprehended and applied in therapy practice and that practice is deductively related to theory. The practice is presumed to work in therapy just as it does in other science, as an application of theory.

The value of theory in a traditional modernistic approach is that it enables counsellors to understand and organise the contents of a person’s problems towards the *rationale* for an interpretation as the kingpin of counselling intervention. The understanding of problems, the organising of information and the theorising regarding models of counselling guide one to the practice of therapy. *The bottom line of modern counselling is that theory and models of the mind shape technique and practice.*

Different solidified theories and models of the mind reflect different coagulated interpretations towards technique and practice:

- Structural analytical counselling works in terms of structural conflicts.
- Those following Lacan, in terms of linguistic theory, applied to Freud’s psychoanalysis.
- The followers of Klein practice counselling in terms of primitive, archaic responses and fantasies.
- Instinct theory is accompanied by catharsis and abreaction.
- Those following the genetic point of view use the reconstructive method and the dynamic approach.
- The theory of ego psychology elevates the analysis of defences to a position on a par

with that of the contents of “drives”

- Inter-personal theorists believe that the practical nuances of a person’s experience with others enrich interpersonal experiences that underpins cure (cf. Rangell 1985:61 and Berger 1996:174).

These approaches remain entrenched in representational becoming “presentation” Cartesian assumptions. The ubiquitous presence of theories and theoretical models, confirming the theory-practice dichotomy, the maintaining of the conventional concept of language as transparent, logical, semiotic and referential. The retention of “data”, also in observation and analysis, shows a confining and restricting framework of Cartesian modernism.

A major problem is that some thinkers claim to have left modernism behind as they have given up some foundational objectivist assumptions, purporting that knowledge rests on a set of basic fundamental axioms as the founding certitude from which other knowledge claims are deducted. They also claim to have left behind objectivism, comprising the belief that a neutral objective observation is possible. Models retaining logical formalisms, including hermeneutics, self-psychology, constructivism and “action linguistics” are subject to the same critique.

*It appears, however, according to Berger, as if these researches are unaware of the crucial and extremely dangerous Cartesian, modernistic issues of “enframing”, subject-object dichotomy, “representation” solidifying into “presentation” and the radical subject-object split, for example, Hoffman 1992. These logical formalised models apparently show the lack of a comprehensive “rejection” of the Cartesian legacy ( Berger 1996:174). The dangerous and confusing problem now remains that while we hear the postmodern voice of Esau, we experience the modern hands of Jacob. Researchers and counsellors propose liberated postmodern counselling, while presenting*

modernistic enslaving therapy.

The assumption believed to be totally true in modern approaches to counselling is that a given model or theory logically and necessarily entails a particular technique or practice. The assumption is that a model in the mind is equivalent to having a model of curative practice. The path from theory to practice contains a *non sequitur* as it contains fallacies. A practical technique inferred from a theory or model of the mind may appear reasonable, sensible, compelling or even borne out by practical counselling, but it is still not logically and necessarily entailed in the theory or model. A mental theory may illuminate pathology, lack of developmental processes and fundamental problems and “trauma”, but *it can never prescribe what actually needs to be done from moment to moment*. The aim of modern counselling to restore by whatever means the direct relationship or even unity between theory, exploration or research and cure, practice or technique is not valid. There is no obvious reason to assume that “analytical understanding is open analytical cure” (Loewald 1980:381: cf. Berger 1996:175).

In counselling, the origin of analysis shows that it is not simply the theory of its “object”, but essentially and first of all, an activity that makes that “object speak” in a person. Still today, however, the activity is regarded to flow from theory. A postmodern approach maintains no clear links between theory and action in counselling. We have to be honest enough to recognise that *theories shield us from ignorance* and “...from the knowledge that we have, at bottom, very little understanding of the therapeutic process” (Shapiro 1995:133). Ornstein (1995:113) puts it pointedly when answering the question, what heals in therapy? “...the most honest answer...is that we do not know.”

This does not mean that “theory” is irrelevant to practice, but *that practice is not logically and*

*necessarily deducible from theory*. “Theory” cannot be ignored and abandoned, but what is most important is that *theory is always already concomitantly embedded in practice*. The problem is that we are so “encultured in modernity”, (Berger 1996:176), that we first have to deny encapsulating and pre-determination of practice by theory and to abandon the tendency to take “knowledge” as our primary way of interacting with people. As long as theory in general is considered as a system of *a priori* rules and principles, and practice subordinated to a mere application of theoretical protocols, no alternative to this modern approach would be possible. The whole framework of the Cartesian legacy, regarding theory with its cognitive schemes hiding “representation” with realist “presentation” in its background and focused on explanation-seeking, model-building and validation comprehension, is to be deconstructed. Only after the deconstruction of “*theory*”, can *discursive practice* be acknowledged to play its tentative role in a non-representational and non-dualistic framework, where the practical contents do not allow a dichotomous “inner and outer” approach, a dualistic thought-language distinction and a contradictory subject-object split.

The root of the theory-practice dichotomy is that the Cartesian approach pictures the mind as a sphere of interiority where the intra-psychic states of consciousness are operating. The mind is regarded as a container of mental entities. Ideas are seen as copies of impressions leading to the thesis of ideas as representations of “objects”. In traditional physics atoms were regarded as the cornerstones of science. In counselling mental ideas are taken in the same way as atoms in science. Ideas are the cornerstones of theory and knowledge to be applied in practice. Cartesian epistemological enquiry’s main task is to account for the communication between the internal states of consciousness, sensations, ideas and thoughts and the external world. The empirical approach still operated in this paradigm and only “re juggled” the status and function of “sensation and thought”, but appropriated the concept of interiority as applied to mind and defined its task as epistemological enquiry. Cartesian rationalists and empiricists used the inner domain of mental

entities and their epistemological communication with an exterior world, aiming to secure “unimpeachable foundations of knowledge” (Schrag 1986:42). The concept of “mental entities” and the framework of representation in which it operates are parts of the modern paradigm that continues to survive. This includes the assumption of the radical subject-(as container of mental entities)-object-(the external “reality” and experience)-split, making it possible to keep self-consciousness as the determining concept as priority in knowledge. *This built a modern foundation for counselling and theology to be determined by self-consciousness.* Wittgenstein, with his rejection of “private language”, has made it impossible for a so-called natural expression of “factual” thoughts. Because of his emphasis on the practical use of language according to social concepts and practical understanding, we are only capable of private thinking just insofar as we have mastered public uses of the language of thought. Language as an instrument is a cultural product and project, and not something originating in “an isolated mental state” (Harre 1996:186).

Postmodern counselling does not function in a representational framework where the subject, the counsellor, “represents” the “object”, the person in “trauma”, by way of “specialised” knowledge and fitting this knowledge into a *theoretical* framework or model, analysing the “object” and prescribing curative measures by way of specialised techniques towards application and the practising thereof.

If we do not rely on representational formalism embracing “theory”, the challenge is to find a way out of being “enculturated into modernity” and a direction out of our thinking that “...is so steeped in Cartesianism that we are left rudderless when we cast about for a true alternative...” (Berger 1996:176).

How can we meet this challenge to move beyond theory determining practice in counselling within the subject-object split between mental entities and practice? How can we escape the modern

Cartesian pressure to explain things at any cost with calculative reason that had only interest in how things work and what techniques and strategy they employ? Counselling is to travel along the path of practice that counts, rather than to be seen as an arrival at some goal that can be captured pre-determinedly in a representational and formally verified way. To explore the practical road together guided by the Holy Spirit is what counts, not the theories, schemes and models in which problems are analysed and “cures” prescribed to be practiced.

If counselling “...in a praxial, non-representational...non-dual”...way, is to come into being, “...the conclusion seems inescapable that it is going to have a difficult time finding a place in the current cultural, moral, economic, political, and therapeutic climate. But then some believe that the essential revolutionary aspects ...have always been vulnerable to repression, to backsliding into tame, de-fanged, scientifically respectable, culturally attractive methodology whose therapeutic goal is social adjustment” (Berger 1996:180).

To be able to advance beyond the theory-practice split we have to deconstruct the way that modern “Cartesian “theory”, models and techniques work. A theory is established by way of a statement formulated as an objective state of affairs. We are then tempted to accept the assumption that the statement is true and that the theory is valid. This, however, is already open to a number of possible interpretations and the assumption is, therefore, false that this is a true and valid theory “corresponding” to the objective “facts”. By its very nature the theory, based on a statement of “fact”, then permits the making of further deducted statements now of a well-articulated and systematic nature, providing credence to the theory. The fact that this well-articulated and systematic theory is only a deduction of a pre-determined statement as an assumption of “facts” is totally hidden. The initial interpretation or statements of the perceived “object” already accepted as true is now perceived retrospectively, owning its quite definite character within the now well-

specified contents produced by the *later* statements. The theory has now obtained a determinate character, which it did not, in its original “openness” as assumption, or perception, actually have. *A “theory” always has an epistemological and social history of its production, within a practical context, but it appears as a de-contextual, a-temporal and a-historical system of natural, unmediated necessities. This is the hidden methodology of how a theory that was at first merely a number of assumptions takes on the appearance of a modern definition that is basically a deception.*

Once a “theory” is systematically delineated it constitutes part of the social forces that form concepts and create habits of thought. These “theories” determine what cannot be thought in any other way. A theory thus “...becomes a self-evident reality which, in turn, conditions our further acts of cognition. There emerges a closed, harmonious system within which a logical origin of individual elements can no longer be traced” (Fleck 1997:37). Once inside a system, theory or a paradigm, it is extremely difficult to escape from it. The modern Cartesian theory-practice split determined our thoughts, society and churches for 300 years. This framework is deconstructed where theory of thought, perception and assumptions work to disconnect themselves from their own practical social and historical origins. Also to disconnect them from their roots or grounds in the social practices, *to maintain their appearance of autonomy and to create the illusion of being about a “system of facts” existing independently of it and external to it.* This can be called the *ex-post-facto* facts contradiction.

It is clear that *theories are derived from practice and not vice-versa* and are developed from contextual, social and historical conditions. The consequence of this is that the Cartesian mental theory, shorn of historical, empirical contents, is of the same stock as the Cartesian mental ego, split off from the body and the objective world. The important theological statement countering this



deception is that Christ the Word came into the world and became flesh. *This means the Holy Spirit always brings clarity from within a situation.* The solution (or theory) does not come from outside.

Kvale (1992:40, 41) in following Koch (1959: 783, quoted by Kvale) mentions four common themes of theory and practice, namely extrinsic legitimation; the quest for universality; an abstract rationality and the idea of commensurability. To move beyond the theory-practice split towards discursive praxis in counselling, particular characteristics of theory *vis-à-vis* practice are to be delineate:

- There is a quest for universality, formulating theoretical laws for all behaviour in an unrestricted general psychological framework. Psychological or counselling theories are often regarded as globally relevant when they have been formulated on a restricted observation basis, such as the behaviour of “white Norwegian rats and white American college student in laboratory settings” (Kvale 1992:42).
- Theory involves a formal rationality of hypothetical-deductive theories and an intervening variable design, correlating linear variables to predict and control behaviour. The quest is for theoretical rules and an experimental-quantitative method covering all “psychological” problems.
- There is a conviction of quantified behaviour theory with a scope of comprehending all behaviour. This co-incides with the emphasis on commensurability. There is a quest for decision procedures to compare the many heterogeneous theories and to find “rules” to decide about controversies between theories.

- Theory is to be formalised by external legitimating, often taken from a fashionable theory of natural science. Counselling and "...psychology became a history of what to emulate in natural sciences, even the language of physics as the ideal for psychology" (Kvale 1992:40,41).

These are ways to dress up psychology and counselling as scientifically respectable, but *this indicates more glamour than insight*. The focus is then not on the problems to be approached historically or empirically, but the problems are preceded by doubtful theory. "Psychology was unique in the extent to which its institutionalisation preceded its content and its method preceded its problems" (Koch 1959:783, quoted in Kvale 1992:41). *The modern approach is to make all people measurable and commensurable*. The striking example of this formalism of theory is the statement of the President, Friedhart Klix, in the opening address of the "Conference of the International Union Psychological Science" in Mexico in 1984, where he advocated psychology as a science: "...measure what is measurable and make measurable what is not" (Kvale 1992:41). This is virtually a direct application of Descartes' formalism to prescribe certain knowledge to all phenomena as pre-determined axioms.

Counselling theory prior to action determines and controls practice in this framework of theory-practice. What is not realised is that psychological and counselling theory in this modern Cartesian framework is extremely restrictive, with the characteristics of universality, abstract rationality, commensurability and extrinsic legitimacy as delineated above. From this one can deduce the statement that psychology and counselling are "a child of modernity" (Kvale 1992: 39) and consequently it has to be deconstructed. There are a few trends in academic psychology towards the deconstruction of modern psychology, especially with the focus on the deconstruction of

rhetoric in texts about people, for example, in Parker and Shotter (1990). They take their cue from Derrida, Foucault and Lacan, looking for the internal contradictions of these psychological and counselling texts, their historical, theoretical and social formation, uncovering the power relations at work and exposing the dichotomy between theory and practice. The enlightening realisation is that theory is always already embedded in a multitude of practical networks, as well as situated in historical, social and cultural activity.

What is interesting is that trends that could not fit into the paradigm of modern Cartesian psychology and counselling were simply left out, or ignored. Kvale (1992:46,47) mentions especially Wundt, Merleau-Ponti and Vygotsky. Wundt, who founded a laboratory in Leipzig in 1879, specialising in cultural psychology, writing 10 volumes on *Völkerpsychologie*, exceeded individual consciousness, not predictable from psychology and counselling. His analyses of the relation of language and culture, and of individual consciousness and the cultural heritage, was ignored in modern psychology and counselling. It influenced, however, Durkheim, Mead and, importantly, Vygotsky. Vygotsky's development of a cultural, historical psychology from the 1920's remained at the margins of psychology and counselling for half a century. From the 1940's the phenomenological psychology of Merleau-Ponti in child psychology has been ignored in modern counselling and psychology. Especially his rejections of the dualism of an inner and outer world and his critique of the prejudice of the objective world especially made a great impact later on.

Vygotsky, with his concept of *praxis*, as a unity of theory and practice, a tool and its effect in practice, is of importance for this study towards postmodernism.

Traditionally, hermeneutics, the art of interpretation and the interpretation of messages, consisted of three aspects, *subtilitas intelligendi*, understanding, *subtilitas explicandi*, interpretation and

*subtilitas applicandi*, application. The mythological Hermes, the messenger from the Greek gods, carried messages to the humans and he interpreted the messages.

In one of his central theses in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer, however, argues that there are no distinct moments or elements of hermeneutics. They are internally and intrinsically related in that all acts of understanding involve interpretation and all interpretation involves application. This view is a major shift, also for counselling where application is an essential part of understanding, or where “theory” is a part of practice. Gadamer believed that this is the most poignant problem in the modern world (cf. Bernstein 1983:38,39). During the past three centuries a radical deformation of what practice really is, took place. Practice was now understood to be an application of theory. Scientific theory was applied to technical tasks. This degrades reason to technical control in practice. In the modern age a fabricating in the framework of means-end mentality has distorted and corrupted practice. Modernism regards reason and theory as instruments for determining the most efficient and effective means to a pre-determined end. The only concept of practice that is viable is one of technical application, manipulation and control. In counselling this means that the dogma of modernism denotes that only after the “important” issues of theory and objective knowledge are resolved, can we turn to “easier” concerns of practical, moral, personal, social and relationship issues. This modern prejudice is fundamentally questioned by a postmodern approach.

The new approach means that we always already belong to traditions, history, social and cultural contexts, and especially language, before they belong to us. The power of the effective contextual frameworks is always shaping us in comprehensive ways. The way to expose the myth and power of “theory”, not only a cognitive critique is necessary, but it is also important to develop a historical, discursive and inter-subjective practice. To deconstruct modern counselling and psychology, regarding the theory-practice dichotomy and the subject-object split, is to weaken them as arbiters

of human experience by way of determining theoretical constructs towards discursive praxis approaches where the cultural, historical and social practices are already comprehensively engaged. Postmodern counselling works towards people with problems as “changers”, changing their life totalities and “re-shapers” of their environments that in turn shape them. This is maintained *vis-à-vis* modern counselling where people are regarded as “objects” to be helped and changed. Counselling does not “help” people, but only “assists” them to make themselves aware to become “shapers” and “changers” of themselves and their environments. In general, modern counselling helps people *to adapt* to their problematic situations as they are and to help them to become able to cope. An important question is, what kind of counselling would help people develop to their full productive creative capacity?

### **6.3 THE METHOD OF PRAXIS COUNTERS THE THEORY-PRACTICE DICHOTOMY**

Postmodern counselling works towards the method of practice. Traditionally in modernism, method was treated as fundamentally separate from experiential contents and outcomes. Method is regarded and used as something to be applied, a functional means to an end, pragmatic or instrumental in character. Vygotsky, in sharp contrast, understood method as something to be practised, not applied, in his approach to psychology. Method is, in his view, neither a tool for achieving results, nor a means to an end. The switch regarding methodology is that method is regarded as a tool, or means *and* a result. The method is simultaneously a prerequisite and a product. One of Vygotsky's main works was *Mind in society*.

In a postmodern approach of the decentring of the Cartesian monological ego as a monadic self of presence and meaning, we replace and resituate the self and consciousness within the practical space of discourse and action. The foundational theory of consciousness is set aside to free the

movement of praxis. The consciousness of decentred subjectivity becomes multi-dimensional and dialogical in a praxis framework, always already embedded in historical, social and cultural dimensions.

Action is not to be confused with labour or work. Labour is the human activity usually grounded in biological necessity to sustain life. Labour is to be distinguished from work, or the fabrication of products and artefacts that constitute a human world. Both *homo laborans* and *homo faber* are grounded in conditions of unique activity. Action itself is also closely and un-detachably combined with language, issuing in the concept of discursive praxis or action. Praxis is where the *logos* and the *nomos*, the theoretical and the practical are embedded in a non-dichotomised, non-dualistic unity of practice. Without language praxis would be blind and would lose its revelatory character and also its practical subject where people then would become performing robots. Without praxis language would become formal and empty. Meaning is always embedded in praxis and meaning-making underlies and pervades all human activities, where theory is always already included.

Praxis always goes concomitantly along with “truth”. The Cartesian epistemological theory-practice split resulted in the separation of the truth *per se* from the communication thereof. According to the modern concept, truth is regarded as a private affair, an act of the solitary ego, representing a state of affairs in the framing of propositions. This is a formal objective and prepositional understanding of truth. This representational “truth” is first established by the monological ego before it is communicated. The communication of this “truth” is always understood as an ancillary event, as an action of self-consciousness *after* the “discovery” of the “truth”. This bifurcation and dichotomy of truth and communication is deconstructed in the recovery of communication and truth in the framework of praxis.

Schrag (1986: 190) understands truth as an achievement of praxis. Truth is regarded as the disclosure of events by way of explaining, arguing, describing and justifying what is happening in writing, speaking and acting. Multiple perspectives of the self, the world, others and events are put forward by way of interpersonal “rhetorical “conversation” (ibid. 1986:190). The modern distinction between “finding and having the truth” and the communication thereof collapses. The “truth” is now rhetorically created in writing, acting and in multiple dimensions of communication. Rhetoric becomes the art of evocation, reciprocal communication and mutual persuasion, and is a form of practical life, emphasising creative, performing capacities. The “truth” or *logos* does not pre-exist, but is fully incarnate in praxis, the embodied evocative writing, speech, argumentation, explanation and action. The “truth” in this sense is decentred and is situated within the historical, social and cultural context. The consequence is that the “discovery”, or rather, the “creation” of truth is indissolubly linked to the communication thereof.

This approach has vast consequences for counselling. Not only is it *not* viable to find the pre-existent “truth” about a person in “trauma” to unlock the problems of the situation, but neither are dominant frameworks of counselling, curing devices or techniques to be applied in practice or communication. The counsellor cannot “help” the person in need towards healing, growth and problem solving. There is no truthful advice to be dished out towards “helping” the “patient”. The “truth” of the situation is to be created, constructed or described by way of evocative, reciprocal rhetorical communication towards curative methods, healing and growth. Communicative rhetoric challenges and replaces modern subject-centred rhetoric, where the counsellor, as a knowing subject, is invested with a panoptic overview and a controlling professional knowledge, always bordering on dominance, manipulation and coerciveness. Postmodern evocative communication comprising praxis-counselling rhetoric, destabilises, eliminating substances and essences, and decentralises both the counsellor and the person in trauma. Not one of them functions as a prime

causal agent in the practical communication. This evocative praxis circumvents control by both in dialogue. Modern counselling, characterised by its professional centripetal counselling force, is replaced by the mutual and reciprocal dynamics of communicative rhetoric.

It is valid to acknowledge Foucault's insight that rhetoric as "knowledge" is indeed always a display of power. The power of communicative reciprocal rhetoric, however, does not reside in a hegemonic centre. This mutual evocative rhetorical communication continuously disallows the appeal to final authority, as the centre is disseminated within "a network of inter-dependencies" (Schrag 1992:131)., relating to praxis "truth" in the situation.

The important emphasis *vis-à-vis* the classical rhetoric of persuasion is that of being-*with*-the other. Because of the professional, modern, monadic "truth" approach of self-consciousness, the concrete we-relationship of evocative events did not normally take place. Classical and modern rhetoric situates the counsellor as the controlling agent, the dominant active voice in the mode of professional causal efficiency. This over-powering therapist acts upon the passive "patient" as hearer and recipient, defined as the *terminus ad quem* of the force of persuasion. Within this dominant framework the counsellor functions in the mode of "*being-for*" (Schrag 1992:130) and *on-behalf-of the other*. This serialising of rhetorical counselling is replaced by the collaborative deliberation and action *with the other*.

The problem with modern counselling became apparent when neither the counsellor, nor the recipient, nor the contents of the "truth" could be established prior to the counselling event. In the postmodern approach the binding *topos* of our intertexture communicative praxis first constitutes the counsellor and the person in pain in a praxis and reciprocal relationship. The counsellor is now neither a stable or professional substance, nor a centred monadic sovereign subject, but has



become a mutual communicator as an emergent form and an implicate of the evocative praxis process. Correspondingly, the person in pain is not presented as a brute “given”, comprising a monadic atomistic subject, but is a contingent constellation of historical, social and cultural practices. Concomitantly, the frameworks, models or “truth” contents of the counselling process are not pre-determined, or discovered as ready-made in the mind of the counsellor, or found in the analysis of the problem, but are mutually created and formed as part of the evocative communicative practical process.

This makes every counselling event an original, contingent experience and every person involved, a unique manifestation of life. This refigures counselling as a rhetorical performance in such an original way that neither the counsellor, nor the person in pain, nor the structured framework, functions as causal, generative or originating principles, or guidelines. The professional substance of the counsellor, as well as the “patient” as a passive recipient, needs to be deconstructed, as does the attributive “truth”, that confers upon them properties of causal and determining efficacy.

The decentring of the counsellor as sovereign subject and the deconstruction of the passive “patient” as an objective substance and the debunking of the “truths” as pre-determined solids of universal validity, however, do not comprise a pulverisation of the counselling event into an indeterminate flux of chaotic everything goes. The committed counsellor and the vulnerable interlocutor, as well as the framework of evocative praxis communication, deploy their own inscriptions of reference and of meaningful interpretations, albeit not from the bird’s-eye-view vantage point of founding and originating generalities, laws or principles. They manoeuvre, rather their own interventions from a perspective of being responsive and from a passionate committed involvement in the framework of a we-relationship. Instead of a self-reflection as a monad in a

multiple situation they act as constituents of a constructed inter-subjectivity in historical action. This communicative constitution does not displace the autonomy and integrity of participating contributors. Both retain inter-dependent responsibility and they respond by being-with-the-other.

This non-Cartesian, non-modern approach in counselling does not guarantee success, but one can always “dance” with uncertainties; in fact, one should always be able to see, to live, to rejoice, albeit through a tainted glass darkly as life’s experiences portray ambiguity.

In the postmodern approach to counselling we have to account for radical ruptures, intrusions of negativity, the breakdown of communication, intervention of incommensurability, agonistic postures and the failure of coping on both sides. This is indeed a grand challenge. When an irremediable negativity, a recalcitrant “*différend*” (Lyotard) intrudes the counselling binding *topos*, how can we respond to it?

The background of the intrusion of *negativity* was that Plato regarded negativity as non-being maintaining a liaison with the structures of being. Non-being was seen to figure in the very constitution of being itself to the extent that it suffers finite determinations of what it is and infinite “determinations” of what it is not. Augustine, from a theological point of view, accepted this classical point of view that “being” and “good” are incontrovertible and described negativity as evil, the intruding of non-being into the realm of being, which had to be overcome, by conquering the negative and dismissing it. Hegel regarded the negativities determining human finitude and alienation to be annulled and raised in a dialectical process, towards a higher unity, a synthesis produced by a thesis and an antithesis, (although Hegel did not use these specific terms). Hegel regarded the breakdown in the travail of the human spirit as a *necessary one*, leading to an eventual synthesis. Hegel enlisted universal reason, teleology and a theodicy to overcome the

discontinuities of alienation and the very constraints of finitude, but always *only* putatively. Kierkegaard and Marx, from different perspectives, from concrete ethical-religious existence and from concrete socio-economic existence, rejected Hegel's synthesis as only in the realm of pure thought and had not comprised practical socio-economic and ethical religious existence.

In counselling it is important to account for the intrusion of radical ruptures and the negativity of alienation and alterity, that which is radically other, as one has to counter the attitude to simply withdraw from communication that fails to meet expectations. Not, however, as Hegel did theoretically.

- *Alienation* indicates a contradiction in belief structures, conflicts in social practices, a clash of political perspectives, or a disruption of a "friendship" as a condition of estrangement.
- *Alterity* indicates the intrusion of that which is different, or other into perception, rhetoric and action. This is the alterity that is at issue when I encounter an approach, viewpoint or perception that I differ with, a style or behaviour that I do not accommodate, a self that is other than the self that I experience. These instances of otherness or alterity stand over against one's existential space.

There is always the possibility of alterity and alienation in our counselling encounter. There is both that which is not understood and which is misunderstood. Then, we have to backtrack, revise, reformulate and reorder our thoughts to be able to continue practical communication. Both have to accept never to achieve an untrammelled, perfect, ideal or unambiguous situation, or pristine mode of communication. It is only the Cartesian formalism of robotic existence that can expunge misunderstandings and that which is not fully understood. As there is, however, no translucent *cogito*, so there is no translucent communication, speech act or praxis. Rhetoric, writing and

communication cannot outstrip the opacity and distortions of alienation and alterity. *The wonder of life is that we can continue to communicate and be understood in spite of these disruptions.* This is why we can “dance” with uncertainties. The myth of pure consensus and total disagreement, translucent commensurability and sheer incommensurability, as well as transparent language and incomprehensible semantics are to be demythologised. There are no solidified, undivided, non-differentiated, hermetically sealed chunks of either commensurable or incommensurable communication, of either consensus or disagreement. Both the effort to secure privilege for paralogy (Lyotard) and the effort to claim privilege to consensus as the proper end of discourse (Habermas), lead to a conceptual wearisomeness of either/or that remains impoverished. “As there is no translucent cogito, so there is no translucent speech act. Discourse cannot outstrip the capacity distortions that accompany the intrusions of the negativities of alterity and alienation” (Schrag 1992:134). In accommodating the negativities of communication and of alterity within a dynamic discursive praxis, mutual rhetoric, even in its agonistic turns, displays communication towards fellowship in counselling. When alterity is accommodated, the integrity of otherness, other forms of social practices of thought, is maintained. This accomplishes a better understanding of one’s own approach and a need for adjustments and accommodation to the presence of that which is other. This counselling praxis acts towards a unification that incorporates difference, an appropriation without forming totalities, interplay without synthesis and a convergence without coincidence. The forming of totalities and universals, and the unification promised by the Cartesian heritage of both the idealist and realist varieties, governing certitude by way of *a priori* universal and necessary rules, methods, schemes, laws, models and paradigms are reduced by the postmodern approach to contingent strategies. Not rules or laws, but signposts and indications, not assurances, but tentative convictions, not fixed teleology, but directive goals, not certitude, but trust, which characterised the non-Cartesian approach.

In a theological counselling structure it is also not “the law” and fundamentalist certainty that is important, but the trust of convictions as framework to operate in. Fundamentalist assured prescriptions and coerciveness, grounded in unimpeachable epistemic guarantees of being within that, which is “right” and “true”, stands *vis-à-vis* the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The obsession with final truth, correctness and certainty, rounded in a-temporal conditions of universality and necessity, is a disparagement of the Word becoming flesh in praxis, within the historical and social contexts of concrete life experiences from where the Holy Spirit operates to guide from evocative events. This is not the privileging of the contextual or of the principle, but the Holy Spirit encompasses both the *logos* of partial enlightenment, tentative meaning and ambiguous knowledge, as well as the “flesh” of the historical, contextual and discursive life and life experiences of Jesus Christ as Saviour in a non-dichotomous praxis experience. The flesh without Spirit is “dead” and Spirit without flesh is otherworldly ethereal, whereas the Spirit within the flesh is working in a evocative praxis way.

This praxis approach of a non-dichotomous theory-practical notion resists a linear model. A linear model simply juxtaposes the concepts of theory, model and pre-determined knowledge and practice within a serial succession of causal explanations terminating in an *aporia* of origins. It also resists a hierarchical model, which dictates an inclusion of practice under theory, or theory under practice. This terminates in the *aporia* of ultimate grounding. Both of these models operate in the modern framework of abstracted, universal logos, or knowledge without the historical particularised changing scene of custom and tradition.

A new postmodern approach is necessary where the claims of theory and practice intersect, lie across one another, converge without becoming coincidental, progressing with an interplay of participation and distinction, but not separation.. Counselling in this postmodern framework is pre-

theoretical insofar as it is not derived from theory. It is also pre-cognitive in the sense that it is not a cognitive act proceeding from a translucent *cogito*. It comprehends practical understanding, issuing from comprehension through doing. It is an entwined *knowing how* with *knowing what*, a responsiveness within our discursive praxis as it takes shape within historical social practices, habits, projects and involvements. It is an understanding, proceeding from participation in the progress of life of our interconnected, reciprocal and inter-communal embedding in the world. There is no discernment in counselling eliminating contexts, descriptions of phenomena and history from the practical background informing our participation in the communal world.

Now, however, the monarchical subject is dethroned, but not negated or expelled. The theoretical subject is decentred and resituated within the sphere of praxis. There, the decentred subject can no longer function as foundation, ultimate ground and sole legislator in discursive action. It is rather an emergent from the patterns of discursive praxis, comprising social, historical and cultural dimensions.

Modern theory, models of understanding and hermeneutical analysis have traditionally been regarded as an extension of Cartesian epistemology providing access to phenomena and problems. These approaches were understood as neutral methods and as context-less strategies. Postmodernism recasts theory and hermeneutical analysis in practical evocative events. *Counselling encounter is now seen as communicative rather than epistemological*. It is no longer a neutral, context-less method and strategy, initiated by an abstract epistemological subject, but it is treated as a cultural, social and historical inter-active praxis. Analysis and interpretation cease to be understood as a professional and isolated mental insight. The modern classificatory schemes of interior mental ideas, volitional faculties, bodily experiences and affective states are, at best, a post-praxis dimension within which the “patient” is analysed and interpreted, after the inscriptions

of interpretation and analysis as manifesting evocative and revealing events of communicative praxis.

The binding *topos* in this discursive praxis approach of postmodern counselling is rhetorical within the interstices of our amalgamated speech and action and, in general, also our writing and reading. Rhetoric describes discursive practices of action and theory that achieve integration without creating totalities, effecting solidarity without homogeneity and producing combinations without coincidence. Rhetoric ensures mutuality and reciprocity between two parties locked into the encountering of the problematic situation. A rhetorical approach ensures the dynamics of agreement, acceptance and rejection of approaches, consent and disavowal that textures the events of the counselling encounter. *In a sense, everything happens at the same time.* It is a Cartesian approach, however, where we first “know” by tapping the resources of an “internal” thinking of the *cogito* and, at some later stage, communicates what we learned.

Praxis is the communicative act of agency, knowledge and “truth”. Rhetoric has become communicative rhetoric with fundamental consequences where it negotiates knowledge without epistemology and “truth” without separate theory. *This is a “new” postmodern orientation towards shared understanding and collaborative action in counselling.* Communicative rhetoric is distinguished from manipulative practices, propaganda and coercion. This persuasive rhetoric requires the providing and receiving of good reasons and justifications for interpretation. Communicative rhetoric creates a climate for the evocation of new perspectives, fresh convictions and novel patterns of action. This enhances corresponding responses in the collaborative action and thought in counselling.

A rhetorical discursive praxis comprises not only disclosure and articulation in counselling, it also

embraces critique by which it persuades and evokes matching responses. Communicative rhetoric displays a montage of discernment, assessment and conclusions. This rhetorical discernment is not inherent in the modern theoretical constructs of the subject-centred rationality, projected from the monadic mental entity, but stems rather from the discernment, assessment and appraisal of the forms of discursive praxis as they play off against and challenge each other in a postmodern framework. Operative rhetoric as critique moves beyond the modern theoretical and epistemological network of *a priori* "rules" and antecedent established standards towards contrasting comparisons, challenging different convictions, commenting on sediment perspectives and accepted beliefs.

What makes this rhetorical approach in counselling exciting is that it does not have to search or wait for a transcendent criterion mirrored in the mental entity to provide an intelligible critique. Practical communicative rhetoric on its own provides resources for understanding with reasonable justification, discernment, assessment and critique. It operates without the theoretical endorsement of theory or epistemology. "Operative...on the hither side of the modern theretico-epistemological network of a priori rules and antecedently specified criteria..." (Schrag 1992:138). This does not mean that critical rhetoric does not take all sides and perspectives into consideration. It operates never without tradition or historical resources, but neither is it restricted to and bound by tradition. It uses historical resources and tradition to moderate invention and also uses originality and ingenuity to contain, control and restrain tradition. Rhetorical critique is simultaneously conventional and innovative, recollecting and novel.

In counselling, communicative rhetoric is an art, providing convincing justification, comported by a discernment of that which is fitting for the specific historical circumstances. *Its postmodern approach is that of contingency rather than necessity, a reasonable probability rather than a priori*



*certainty, unpredictability rather than inevitability, ambiguity rather than formal precision and the ingenuous rather than the inevitable.* The counselling art's main characteristic is perhaps the disclosure of the specific historical, social and personal convergence. Rhetorical discourse transpires because modern meaning, discernment, understanding, convictions and beliefs have become callused and have been queried. Modern self-evident propositions and proofs are exposed and released from the threats of closure, clear of the *aporias* of narrative closures, beyond a ceaseless circling of the articulation of theory back upon itself and ahead of the consuming, engulfing and overwhelming process of textual production and never-ending re-reading. Postmodern counselling consists of give and take, negotiation and co-operation, as well as mutual, reciprocal and shared claims upon the practical life-world, which disclose a medley of perceptions, intentions of desire, configurations of action and patterns of existential involvements.

Postmodern counselling comports a structure and a dynamics of practical reference of alternatives. *This is not a theoretical subject-centred reference as a modern quest for objectively determined answers and solutions, nor a reference of signification entangled in the aporia of a system of signifiers and the signified, problem-solving strategies signifying solutions as the signified, to be used again and again as a prescribed model.* It is rather a reference elicited by the intrusion of alterity, the other, a disclosure within the experience of evocative praxis. *Postmodern counselling is an "Ereignis" as a manifestation of meaning, despite uncertainty and a muffled voice of hope in the resounding darkness.*

Postmodern approaches reform and refigure consciousness and *logos*, after they have been pruned of their pretentious claims for pure theory and a serial succession of moments of mental acts towards liberated communicative assemblages, engagements and *gestalts* of praxis.

#### 6.4 PRAGMATISM'S FAILURE AND VYGOTSKY'S ANSWER BY WAY OF A PRAXIS METHOD

The problem, however, remains to determine by what method we generate communicative praxis in counselling. How are we to approach practical and critical activity? By what method do we activate discursive praxis? The traditional modern concept of methodology was to define method fundamentally separate from experimental contents and from the results. The method is seen to be separate, isolated from that for which it is the method. Method is regarded and used as something to be applied. It was basically pragmatic or instrumental in character, operational as a functional means to an end. In the modern framework methodology is basically understood in causal terms as an instrument to achieve results. Praxis can be understood as a conjunction of theory and practice, but modernism creates a problem whereby theory, models, understanding, albeit joined to practice, direct, control and steer practice to its goals.

It is, consequently, important to carefully distinguish the method of praxis. *The method is not theoretically to be applied in the process of practice, nor is it the blind forces of practice or nature following its own direction.* It is a completely dialectical process whereby praxis determines method and method determines the praxis, not from outside, as in the case of theory as a separate set of pre-determinations, but intrinsically inseparable from the results. This becomes clearer when we ask the question, what method do we use in counselling? The question is not, what method in the sense of a model, a theory, a strategy or operational framework of convictions, for example, psychoanalytic, Transactional Analysis or Gestalt approaches, but by what method do we approach the whole situation in terms of *how* we approach counselling praxis. *Method is now the function inseparable from the activity of its development in the process. Method is defined in and by the process of its production. It is evocatively brought forward by the praxis of counselling.* What is done and the way in which it is done in counselling is thus not determined by pre-established

principles from outside, or by universal rules of theoretical models, but the praxis process encompasses the method of praxis. How does this work?

Newman (1991: 48, 49) investigates pragmatism and clarifies it to the extent that pragmatism as a modern method is something to be *applied*, whereas a praxis method is something to be *practised* in praxis. He claims that pragmatism became a dominant methodology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by rejecting the strong approach of this era, empiricism, regarding the world and its mechanical and biological processes as assertive regarding knowledge processes and idealism, and rationalism regarding the mind to be dominant, determining knowledge processes. Pragmatism made the focal point the practical objective matter, the *connection* between thinking and doing, the mind and action. Peirce is said to have coined the term pragmatism, *pragma*, from the Greek, indicating a deed or act, to emphasise that words acquire their meaning from action. Meaning is, thus, derived from deeds, not intuitions. The consequence was that no meaning could be pragmatically established separately from the socially constructed concept of its practical impact. Pragmatism, however, oriented towards results, is basically using method as an instrument towards practice and, consequently, entails pure method. The meaning of thought and theories is to be found in their capacity to solve problems, indicating complete instrumentalist reasoning.

Newman focuses on a leading pragmatist, Quine, in his seminal work in the 1950's, *The Two Dogmas of Empiricism*, explained pragmatism in terms of a worldview comprising a network of concepts occupying a central position, and sensory experiences occupying peripheral positions. In between are the practical-theoretical links connecting the centre and the periphery. All elements within this network are accepted only on the pragmatic criterion of efficaciousness; the successful and effectual are the only norms. He regards "...the conceptual scheme of science as a tool...for predicting future experience...as a device for working a manageable structure into the flux of

experience” (Quine, quoted by Newman, 1991:50). Pragmatism, thus, according to Newman, views the conceptual scheme and theories of science as a tool to be applied in practice. A tool deemed “superior” by its appeal to efficaciousness, because “it works”. Pragmatism, however, stands *vis-à-vis* praxis.

The young Marx endeavoured to use praxis as the method of transforming all social reality, but his approach was changed into a theory for guiding deterministic economic development. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Vygotsky “unearthed” the concept of praxis, indicating method as a tool *and* result *vis-à-vis* pragmatism, using method in a causal way as a tool *for* a result.

The radical difference, between tools *for* a result, instrumentally, on the one hand, and a tool *and* a result, not as a means, on the other, regarding methodology is *the drastic discrepancy between a modern and a postmodern approach in counselling*. Tools *for* results here indicate, analogously, theory, concepts, ideas, beliefs, convictions, attitudes, language, thoughts and intentions that are completed, formulated, fabricated and readily usable for particular purposes.

This indicates that the approach in modern counselling is to use “tools”, models, theories, etcetera, as shaping the practical situation. The “tools” are used to attain certain results in practice. The “tools” themselves, however, are not intrinsically part of the practical situation in modernism; they are devised somewhere outside practice to be applied to whittle the practical situation from outside.

Newman (1991:52-55) points out that, contemporarily, there are two basic distinctively different tools in industrial society. There are the usual tools that are mass-produced, for example, hammers, scissors and pens, and there are tools specifically designed by tool and die makers. The latter tools are uniquely and specifically designed and fabricated to produce other products, also

the “normal” and casual tools. These two types of tools are qualitatively different. The difference is detected in that the former, more general type of tools are tools *for* results. They are used for specific purposes and they are identified and recognised as functional and utilisable for those specific goals, which has the severe consequence that these tools become reified, fossilised, solidified and, so to speak, set in stone and completely identified solely with a certain function.

Tools, however, also have a reciprocal input on the human users and effect cognition. The tools, insofar as they are social extensions of human activity, characterise the human user in a pre-determining sense, for example, as a writer with a pen achieving a specific uniting goal. The pen’s impact on the author pre-determines the person as a writer or as writing. Language as communication shapes those who adapt to it.

The die or toolmaker’s tools are completely different in a most important way. While they are also purposeful, they are not “categorically distinguishable from the result” achieved by their use (Newman 1996:53).. These tools have no reified, manufactured, social character independent of that activity. What makes the concept of differentiating between these two totally different classes of tools difficult is that both classes are recognisable as products and are, in a sense, inseparable. Productive activity whereby they were formed, defines both. The radical qualitative difference is that the toolmaker’s tools are inseparable from the results in that their essential character and characteristic features are *identified with the activity of their development rather than their function*. “*For their function is inseparable from their activity of their development* (ibid:1995:54). The crux of the matter, according to Newman (ibid.1996:54, 55) is that these diemaker’s tools are described, characterised and defined in and by the process of their production. The general concept of tools, however, is described and defined by their function, as they are tools *for* results. If one defines toolmaker’s tools only by their functions one fundamentally distorts them and also deforms what

“definition” is, as definition describes the full contents of a concept. One has to define these tools as functional tools *and* as results.

According to Newman (1996:55) Vygotsky was able to establish a fundamentally novel psychological method by using this distinction between the two types of tools, and innovative psychological methodology, “tool and result”, or tool making. This also distinguishes the difference with the dichotomies of the Cartesian legacy regarding concept-practice, or theory-practice from Vygotsky’s unitary praxis, as theory is, according to him, already *only* embedded in practice. This corresponds with Wittgenstein’s rejection of a private language, residing in a monadic individual’s consciousness, as well as the understanding of meanings in language inhabiting *only* everyday practice. In both cases there are no separate realms of meaning, theories or concepts. There is only praxis in which these realms are always already embedded and entrenched.

As tools are used in an analogous way, they can also be, as indicated, theories and models. This means that theories and models in counselling cannot be separated from the unique and individual experiences of counselling as is done in modernism. If there is separation, the techniques, approaches and “truths” used by modern counselling are mechanical instrumentalist, reified and calcified approaches pre-determining the person in pain towards “adaptation”. In the first place, this is done for the person to fit into these pre-fabricated theories and structures and, secondly, into a specific outcome or result following the goals and ends of these approaches. *This is a contradiction of the concept counselling where a person in pain is in the first place to be maintained and upheld as a self-activating, capable and independent person to decide independently and interdependently about problematic issues.* The opposite of “to maintain” and “to uphold” is significantly, “to destroy”. This is, sad to say, what sometimes happens in modernistic counselling when a person’s self-determination, autonomy and independence, taking control of one’s own life

and circumstances, are not upheld, but shunted.

It is important that the postmodern approach in counselling should not miss the fundamental innovation that Vygotsky brought to psychology and to methodology. The proficiency and competence of this approach is innovative, ingenious and inventive and the approach to practice is known as primary creative praxis, transforming people and situations. In this framework counselling is regarded as the transforming of people and situations by way of praxis, whereby the person in pain enacts an own transformation as well as that of the situation. The person or situation is not changed by way of mental approaches, techniques, models, theories or criticism, but by being involved in taking control of own decisions as a personal, historical being. (This study does not research the problems regarding people who are not capable of this because of certain major illnesses, for example, "Alzheimers".)

Human beings are here regarded as qualitatively different beings from everything else, due to their historical existence. Praxis exists only in an historical framework where human's practice changes by way of decisions from moment to moment. In this framework history is understood as a continuous framework of taking decisions of practising change. Decisions always involve change, even if it is to do "nothing" or to continue doing "nothing". What this means in counselling is that persons in pain can discover their historicity, that they are continuously shaping, forming and deciding about and "controlling" their lives and situations. It is always their responsibility what they decide and "where" they go.

The psychiatrist, Frankl, told the story that the Nazis stripped him naked before a panel to "study"

him and eventually asked him to respond to questions. He explained his total control of his own life as a unique, historical being, by stating that they could do anything virtually to him, after they have killed his wife, parents and children and that they could kill him too, but that there was one thing that they could not do. *Only he, and he alone, could decide and control his verbal and active responses to them*, indicating that he and not they had the *final* control of decision in his life, as he was a historical being. History means continuous decisions, change, and movement. He was historically ultimately in control of his life.

If this historical, praxis approach is valid, it becomes clear that the way to counselling is not by way of fixed frameworks or theories, models and techniques predetermining the counselling sessions, but by way of the freedom of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, also using “psychological knowledge”, etcetera, but also from the understanding that this knowledge is already embedded in practice, enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Clarity is, however, to be reached on praxis as historical transformation.

Vygotsky’s paradigm of human activity is practical, the shaping of transformation methodologically by way of “a tool *and* result”. The emphasis is on *what people do*, remembering that language and convictions are always already embedded in the praxis. The specifically human form of life is not mechanical, robotic or instrumentalist to reach certain goals, but practical and critical activity. Postmodern counselling puts an end to causal empiricist, idealist, materialist and reified activity using pre-determined models and theories *for* a particular end and decides in favour of a historical, transforming and changing activity.



The causal tool as a methodology for a result has been rejected by the physical sciences, but it persists within everyday common sense and within the human sciences. The reason for this is that scientists researching physical phenomena no longer demand that a moral, theological, political or economic account be provided in the explanations as was the case in the Middle Ages and pre-modern times, when Scholastic and Aristotelian science did just that. After Copernicus, Galileo and especially Descartes, the physical sciences were formalised by way of mathematical symbols and technology, with knowledge being quantified and measured by the human eye, hand and mind. This removed the constraints of faith, teleology and pre-determinations of God, according to ancient and medieval theology. To this day, however, human sciences and especially psychology and counselling remained fettered by the Deistic dogma of causality. These disciplines are to a great extent under the influence of the dominant ideas and principles of moral, cultural, political, legal and ideological spheres. The cultural and political establishment requires accountability and responsibility, not, however, in the sense of preserving quality and integrity, but rather in the sense of *who does what*. They demand predetermined “professional” qualifications towards protecting the formal rules of adaptation regarding parameters set by pre-established rules and laws. It goes without saying, that this is not a plea for irresponsibility and “dark” practices, but a quest and supplication for the release of a formal, pragmatic and ideological stronghold, maintaining the subject-object split and concomitant theory-object dichotomy.

Newman (1991: 59ff) makes a critical distinction, but a dichotomy, between society and history as human “life spaces” regarding activity and praxis. He claims that all societies as an institutional configuration within history, adapt their members to history and society. The problem, according to him, is that some societies adapt their citizens to society to such an extent that most people do not even know that they are in history as well. Holzman and Polkington (1989, quoted by

Newman), assert that the single most powerful cause of neurotic psychopathology in the United States is that Americans are deprived of any historical identity. Adapting to society means carrying out certain acts, behaviours, roles, etcetera, in conjunction with the narrow confines and definitions of the particular time, place and role in society. Thus our hour-to-hour, day-to-day predetermined and socially controlled “activities” are not seen as praxis in the historical sense. They are best understood as objectified activities and made into commodities. This means that society and its laws predetermine subjects to produce work in a mechanical, robotic and instrumentalist way, by way of prescriptions and behaviour control towards reaching goals. They are not working and living in an open environment towards creativity and towards identifying with their work as personal and human work. Their work has an idolised existence over against them and they are not part of the activity process determining it, as it is *unchangeable*, that denies the main characteristics of a historical being.

Newman, however, is not clear on what history or the historical dimension of human beings is. He describes humans as living in two spheres, society and history, and spells out clearly what society entails, but his concept of history is vague. For our purposes in this study it is, however, suitable to clarify history as being engaged as people in *changing activities* and to live an independent creative life as an active historical agent. This means not being predetermined and controlled by society, institutions or political frameworks as a means to an end. This remains within the modernistic paradigm where traditional counselling and psychology, entailing human activity, have been causally determined.

Causality as an explanatory principle permeates all modern counselling and psychology. It is belief that if the causes of a problem are found, then the present reality can be changed. This again is

the determination of practice by theory, or the present by the past as a final theoretical construct, as if one is not a historical being moving forward continuously by way of praxis, change and decision.

This pernicious trait, according to Newman (1991: 62), is clearly visible in Piaget's approach regarding developmental psychology. For Piaget, development consists of the means by which children, acting on the situation in society, move themselves through stages in the acquisition and use of basic human epistemological tools, by which to understand the world. These tools are the "theoretical" and not historical categories of experience, the concepts of object, relation, temporality and *causality*, which is basically a Kantian belief. Piaget never asked the fundamental question, what is methodologically "the social-cultural-historical notion of causality itself" (ibid. 1991:62). *The assumption is that causality is a natural state that a child acquires within the developing self.* There is no mention of any historical development in the sense of the child performing in a historical activity. It is maintained that the mind is structured to "see" causality within the cultural climate. With this kind of approach, developmental psychology grafted 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century naturalistic and physical methodology on to itself.

Vygotsky, in contradistinction, posits a totally different framework and approach for a child's "development", not in a causal way, but in a practical manner. Conceptual "development" is according to a reciprocal, shared, mutual and joined style between adults and children, not "freely or spontaneously along lines demarcated by the child himself"[], but neither can the adult simply "transfer his [] own mode of thinking to the child" (Vygotsky 1987:142,143, quoted by Newman, 1991:68)). The child's constructs look just like the adult's meanings, but they are created in an entirely different manner from adult meanings. A child's language, words, meanings,

generalisations and concepts are not the adult language, although they are produced using the same word meanings, etcetera, predetermined by the adult language. The language surrounding the children in which they grow up predetermines the direction and path that the development of the child's language and generalisations will take, but, and this is the crucial point, according to Newman (ibid:1991:68), it "...links up with the child's own activity"(ibid. 1987:143). *Thus, the characteristic notion of children's development is that of activity, of using language and creating meanings.* Children manifest their historical framework by living actively and using the surroundings to create own language meanings in a practical way. This agrees with Wittgenstein's activity of playing language games, a historical life form as an activity.

According to Vygotsky, emphasised by Newman, the child's own activity as praxis is manifested in learning *adult* language. This original, historical activity is masked in casual observation and perception, but the language around the child merely concedes the child's activity, but does not obliterate it. What is remarkable is that the constant and stable word meanings and language structures do not eradicate the concrete activity of the child's own creative development. The unique historical development is that of practical activity of meaning making. The background of this indissoluble and indivisible framework of influence from the child's own creativity within it, is the inseparability of transforming activity, to create novel individual meanings, from predetermined language structures, meanings and concepts. A child's thinking and speaking are not linear, causally, teleological, purposefully or functionally related, but they are reciprocally inseparable by meaning and the practical creation thereof.

Unlike functionalist and causal linear theorists, such as, for example, Piaget, Newman emphasises that Vygotsky regards thinking and speaking as reciprocal and that meaning belongs both to the

domain of thought and speech. *It becomes clear that meaning is not first a concept thought out and then applied in practice, it is a unity and a unit of verbal thinking.* Consequently, the praxis method must be semantic analysis, studying “verbal thinking” meanings. It is not thinking and speaking that make us human, but it is uniquely human to create meaning by way of the reciprocal unity of speaking and thinking, manifesting the ability to transform, to change historically, the same as to create tools, theories, models, language and *simultaneously* results as part of it. This coincides with the unique insight of Wittgenstein that the main characteristic of language is not that it refers, but that people refer *using* language. The activity is emphasised. *What is fundamentally uniquely human is the activity of reforming, of being creative, and of transforming and changing. Causal, serial development, eliminating the uniquely human activity and creativity of a child’s “development” is indistinguishable from the study of birds when stationary and pinned to a board on a wall, as if they could not fly. These non-flying birds do not indicate birds and not the study of birds (cf. Newman 1991:70).*

If this approach is valid, indicating the practical uniqueness of people being continuously active and changing, counselling can focus on the activity and creativity of people in pain, empowering themselves towards transforming and changing themselves from being victims towards taking control. Historical counselling and psychology do not emphasise the transforming activity of people in pain. Counselling and psychology, however, were always involved in a quest of the uniquely human. *For Freud it was the sub-consciousness and the social need to repress it. For Vygotsky it was the transforming activity and the social need to express it. For Wittgenstein it was the practical involvement, “language games” or involvement in the activity of life, of meaning-making, turning away from the deadly dualistic separation of thought and action, on the one hand, and language and “thought and language”, on the other. “Language games are the forms of language*

with which a child begins to make use of words... the mental mist which seems to enshroud our ordinary use of language disappears. We see activities... which are clear-cut transparent” (1953:17).

To emphasise the practical transforming activity in counselling does not reify, solidify and ossify a different new method, praxis, as it is not a *method* of practice, but a *practice* of method, comprising doing something different relevant to practice, rather than objectifying a method, albeit a praxis method. The practice of method is not a novel method to be practised, but *the method is a practice*, a “tool *and* result”. This comprises, among other things, that *transformation is not reform*, as in modernism. Reform is a theoretical approach to change matters peace-meal as a new theory and method of “change”. Transformation, however, changes totalities as method in praxis and this change involves the whole if one aspect of a person or situation is touched. Praxis methodology involves a complete and holistic paradigm transformation. This method operates not casually or functionally, but holistically, permeating one’s whole life and all relationships.

## **6.5 A CHANGE IN THE CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE TOWARDS HISTORICITY OVERCOMES THE MODERN APPROACH**

The last methodological bastion of modernism, a difficult nut to crack, was the concept of language. Vygotsky’s and Wittgenstein’s approaches changed the traditional perceptions of language. Language was traditionally in modernism understood to have a special status. It was regarded as thoroughly objectified and treated as if it were ready-made, produced and practised, as if it were not a socially produced cultural artefact, created by human formation and organisation. It was held

to be following an ontogenetic and polygenetic emergence of some natural independent course. At worst, it was seen in some interplay with social production, but never, as it was, regarded historically as a human social production. Vygotsky saw language, meanings and signs as tools produced by human activity. People are tool users *and* toolmakers. Humans are not just language users; they are language and meaning creators.

This is not a contradiction of what Heidegger said that language speaks (through) people, which was an emphasis on life experiences and that language is not a private mental affair, but that the language that we use to create meaning, is always already available in society.

When persons in emotional pain are victims, passive recipients of life experiences and being overwhelmed by problems, a counselling approach towards the empowering of people by their own creativity, transforming action and historical praxis, moving forward towards continued fundamental changes, is a necessity. Counselling is the creative action *with* a person towards praxis as transforming action. People feel this intuitively as they describe their problems, I was taken aback, (could not advance), I was shocked into passivity, I could not move or think, I was set back, (not transforming forward), I was horrified and could not do anything, my heart (and life) just stood still, I did not know where to go, I could not decide, etcetera. Does one not need a plan (a theory) to move forward? No, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. *The method is in the activity*; it is a tool *and* an end. The plan is always already embedded in practice.

*Even if we believe in moving according to a predetermined plan, we do not realise that it is a myth, as the plan did not originate in an isolated mind, but was constructed in praxis always already in*

*the background.* There is an interesting shift in the thoughts of the later Karl Marx regarded as the dialectical materialist of *Das Kapital* vis-à-vis the young Marx, according to Newman (1991:65-66). Whether it indicates an epistemological break in his thoughts cannot be researched here, but it is only mentioned to emphasise transforming praxis vis-à-vis a theory-practice dichotomy. The Young Marx stated that the task is not to understand the situation, but to *change* it. He was attacking Hegel who, according to him, had action only in his “head”. Marx of *Das Kapital* said that in the construction of their cells bees puts to shame many architects. “But what distinguishes the worst architect from the least of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he [sic] erects it in reality” (Marx 1967:178). This is in total contradiction with the revolutionary activity as method *and* praxis that he propagated earlier on. *As if the theory (imagination) is erected in the isolated mental thoughts separate from practice and then applied to practice.*

This also reminds us of a fabricated legacy of Marx, Marxist *dialectic* materialism, concocted by ideologically inclined politicians and economists abusing Marx’s thoughts, to propagate domineering communism by way of a historical dogmatic principle (theory) of Marxist *historical* materialism. The Marxist “tool *and* end” had become a “tool *for* a result”, a causal and functionalist calamity for the history of communism. The Young Marx taught that life precedes consciousness and not that theory (consciousness) precedes practice (life). This is a reintroduction of a linear iron-race purpose as a psychological construct restricting creativity and introducing again the so-called “God-given” causal principle, known as the first cause, back into play. This is dehumanisation as it objectifies and reifies imagination, theory, and dogmatic “truths”, opposing and attacking the human being in transforming action of praxis, where theory and imagination are always already included. Within their dogmatic beliefs, imagination, theory and predetermined overpowering structure there is no escape for passive victims, as people make no room for the Holy Spirit as



*Creator Spiritus.*

In this chapter we have investigated approaches towards life where praxis, including theories, is a priority. In the final section the emphasis will be on the work of the Holy Spirit in praxis and the postmodern relationship of faith and knowledge as a unity.

## CHAPTER 7

# POSTMODERN CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is finally to be identified only in the philosophy of history  
*(Van Ruler).*

*You experience God's presence by caring for your neighbour in need.*

*Faith and knowledge had much more in common than was maintained for 2000 years.*

*Let us, then, not fight uncertainty, but dance with uncertainty in the celebration of life,  
through the music of the Spirit.*

In this chapter the unique move is made to approach theology and counselling not traditionally through Christ, but through the Holy Spirit. The study explores what that means. This is done in a postmodern framework, countering the modern dichotomy and dualism in Descartes' approach.

### 7.1 THE HOLY SPIRIT ENHANCES OUR HUMANNESS

Postmodern Christian Counselling has a specific and unique approach to life and "trauma" and consequently, it is radically different from all other (modern) counselling, however effective that may be. It is not that modern or postmodern counselling in general cannot make a contribution, but only Christian counselling through the Holy Spirit defeats uncertainty towards the beginning of a holistic celebration of life in a "full" human way, where relations with God and fellow human beings are

restored and enhanced, albeit ambiguously. In the final analysis, it is not through insight, empowering, clarity, detecting of the unconscious drives, changing of frameworks, dedication or rest that a person in pain is tentatively restored and enhanced to be “fully” human, but only through the work of the Holy Spirit. This means that the main characteristic of the concept “Christian” is to be approached pneumatologically. To be a Christian is to be saved through faith in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but *only and exclusively by the work of the Holy Spirit making that a reality in one’s life, even though diffidently*. Without the Spirit, our lives and religion are but “corpses”. One of the main features of pneumatology is that the Holy Spirit enhances the humanness of a person. There is never a “divinisation” process in human life. We do not become ‘angels’, here, or later. We remain what we are, become more what we are and strive for more of what we are, namely unique and special human beings.

At first, the issue of the “humanness” of people is considered, as it hangs together with the legacy of Descartes’ radical “spirit”-matter/body split. A postmodern approach deconstructs this dichotomy and contradiction. Subsequently, the metaphysical concept of two stories in the universe, a so-called natural and supernatural division, is re-considered. Consequently, the hermeneutical “essence” of humanity as always creating meaning and understanding, is being made problematic by the quest of interpretation leading to heterogeneity.

The Holy Spirit does not take the place of history and interpretation, providing non-human and ‘supernatural’ added information and certainty. The Holy Spirit counsels and empowers by way of accompaniment and enlarging perspectives within the historical, interpretational life of human praxis. The work of the Holy Spirit does not mean to start *de novo, à partir de Dieu*, fresh from God’s point of view, or a bird’s-eye-view. This theme is explored in this study towards an

affirmation and celebration of deconstructive multiplicity and “plurivocity”, where there is always, through the Holy Spirit, an opening and chance for the novel, creative praxis, even through the tear and the breakdown. In “alterity” and the different is also the space for practical theology and Christian counselling, as well as the room for the *ecclesia*, namely always finding another possibility, outside the finally closed system, spelling “death”.

Postmodernism and deconstruction are to maintain the difference between God and humanity in all its undecidability, respecting the distance and otherness that inhabits and disturbs the relationship. The Holy Spirit prevents and protects the Christian and the *ecclesia* from settling in the stability of immanence, the familiarity of understanding, the professional mastery and domination of knowing for certain and the certitude of a “false” presence. The person in “trauma” is protected from counselling manipulation of analysis, pre-determination and application of theoretical insights, loose from the context, towards an iron race practice and adaptation.

Undecidability, ambiguity, deference, rejection of immediacy and accepting mediation from the Holy Spirit do not destroy anything, but save the person from total destruction. Those who would have seen God, according to the Bible, would not have lived, as God is a totally holy consuming fire. In this study, we wish to indicate that the Holy Spirit guides and protects us from this “seeing”, “experiencing” of and certitude from God, by always debunking the final system of knowledge, know-how of counselling and practical theology and the pastoral work of the churches as something in itself, an idol, not in service of and not committed in compassionate empathy to those in spiritual, political, economical and emotional “trauma”. The temptation for us is always to become something separate from or move above this world, to try and unite in some ethereal transcendence with “God” and to try and live “supernaturally” or an otherworldly life, calling it a dedicated “Christian” life. In

this endeavour there is a frantic, if not fanatic quest for direct “supernatural” revelation, for absolute certainty and elevation into a “perfect” life. The Holy Spirit brings us down to earth and empowers us to overcome these dichotomies to celebrate our humanness, by loving and serving those in need.

As an *advocatus diaboli*, the Holy Spirit is always on a rescue mission to save us from becoming an idol, to try and shelter our “important” image, our iconic quality, which task it is to trace the infinity, the final meaning, absolute certainty and the professional and complete answer. The Holy Spirit, however, always and decisively, guides the Christian and the *ecclesia* towards and through the jolt, shock and “trauma” of the different, the revelation of a graceful God *vis-à-vis* us. Our task is *not* to resolve the undecidability, arrest the movement of difference, stall the play, fix the curing models and techniques, seek and “find” infallibility and untangle the scrambled wires of society’s most venerable communication system.

Christianity depends on the death of its author; Jesus had “to go” to make “room” for the Holy Spirit to come and convince us, as well as to guide us. By the Holy Spirit, we can follow Jesus to his death, where we have “to arrive” at the end of ourselves, our “traumatised” technological progress, our atom and hydrogen bomb knowledge, our political, economic and social professionalism, keeping two-thirds of the world population beneath the breadline. The Holy Spirit disturbs us and keeps us moving from our resting place of contentment, our grounding in the “security” of our knowledge, our hermeneutical way of “full” understanding and our counselling and psychological way of “adapting” people in pain to their “traumatic” situations. Empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit towards a place and a time, where we have *to “ground”* ourselves and the *ecclesia* in praxis, despite uncertainty, to love and serve our neighbour, breaking down economic, political and

societal barriers and poverty chains towards a celebration of life. By doing this, we only see through a dark bronze plate, used as a mirror, into a riddle and, through faith in the revelation of the Holy Spirit, where we only know partially, we dance in uncertainty.

In Christian Counselling one has to take the perceptions of the person in “trauma” regarding life, culture and God into account. We can only “know” God according to the way we “experience” the divine through “knowledge”, spiritual encounters through the Holy Spirit and participation. We have to evaluate these “experiences”. The framework in which we do this is that God became a person, according to the New Testament and revealed himself in a personal mode through the person Jesus Christ, disclosing human and personal traits.

An important aspect of Jesus is that *one can only acknowledge that Christ is Lord through the Holy Spirit*, according to the New Testament. This emphasis makes it vital to start one’s theology with the Holy Spirit. This means that Christianity and belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour can only be spiritual. One can approach God, Christ, the Bible and the Christian churches only pneumatologically and not through discursive reason, our experience of “nature”, or through meditating on our inner “spiritual” being. This is so because John 4:24 indicates that God is Spirit.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the churches started to realise the lack of emphasis on the person and the work of the Holy Spirit and focused more on pneumatology, as “from its beginnings, Western theology lost interest in the Holy Spirit” (Comblin 1989:xi). Also in the Roman Catholic Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Vatican II broke with a long tradition and included the Holy Spirit, by using the Trinitarian formula, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in its statements. Vatican I, for

example, spoke generally of “God”. This change initiated a new theological movement, as “there was no pneumatology in the Catholic Church; now it is developing rapidly” (ibid:xii). Approximately the same happened in the Protestant Churches where charismatic and Pentecostal movements started in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Eastern churches, however, maintained a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in their theology, liturgy and in the faith of the Christians. The mainstream churches in the West believed that the spiritual phenomena of the early times have disappeared, as they were no longer needed. Lately, however, it was realised that the comprehensive work of the Spirit, including the charismatic emphasis, was needed for the churches in dire straits. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, is quite definite, as Christianity rests on the experiential work of the Holy Spirit. Van Ruler emphasised this emphatically in his theology and indicated that all theology should be approached pneumatologically. “Wij raakte er dieper van doordrogen, toen wij...ontdekken, dat...het Christusgeheimenis, spiritueel van aard is en dat het daarom dienstig zou kunnen zijn, door de poort van de pneumatologie heen tot elke christelijke categorie te naderen...het regnum Christi...roept om...de Geest” (1974:118).

The notion, *gratia interna*, the inner workings of the Holy Spirit, indicates that the Holy Spirit entered into all forms of existence, but the life of the Holy Spirit and of Christianity cannot be brought to light only through an analysis of culture or “existence”. Thus, one cannot start Christian theology empirically or “naturally” and consequently, also not Christian counselling. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, however, in the context of the Kingdom of God, or the reign of God, has a determined influence on the comprehensive existence, the churches, nature and culture in general. Van Ruler goes so far as to maintain, in this regard, that the work of the Holy Spirit is “van nog meer gewicht”, *comprising more weight than the work of the Messiah, the incarnation, the cross and the Ascension*

(ibid:132). He emphasises this as he indicates that, at this stage in history, the whole Christian *Seinverständnis*, is at stake. The life of the Spirit, the life of God, is poured out through the historical working of the Holy Spirit, from the creation into the human beings at the creation, into the body of Christ and it comprises the whole cosmic existence, including all history and cultural activity, renewing them and guiding them towards meaningful existence, albeit it in ambiguity and uncertainty in a broken world.

The work of the Holy Spirit is severely curtailed, restricted and diminished in a Cartesian framework where modern theology, used subject-object categories, regarding Christ, the Word, as objective and the work of the Holy Spirit as subjective. Outside this Cartesian framework, the Holy Spirit is more than a medium, an instrument, a mode, an agency, an influence, a force and a means.

The work of the Holy Spirit is that of *testimonium Spiritus sancti*, but also much more. His work is not restricted to the hidden influence of inner lives, but extends to the creation, the incarnation of Christ, the creation of the churches, the creation of history and culture, the initiating of the Scriptures and it extends to the ends of the earth, bringing everything in the cosmos together under the Kingship of Christ. Pietism with its one-sided emphasis on the inner life and personal experience is severely curtailing the work of the Spirit. He also works in the public, political, moral and ethical spheres. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is to be understood as an historical salvation and restoration event, one of many, including the establishment of churches, etcetera, indicating that the movement and unity of the Spirit is not to be disturbed, or broken by the scheme of the subject-object split. The consequence of this split would be a rigid and taut isolation of the human *vis-à-vis* the Godly, of life in all its dimensions over against the revelations of God, and of culture, blocked off from the presence of God. The unity and togetherness of the subjective and the



objective can be maintained, despite the distinction thereof, but if it is radically split up and maintained in opposition to one another, it creates havoc. Revelations of God are “objectified”, thought to be closed off and concluded, as if the Holy Spirit is not continuing with the unitary “subject-object” work of God’s Kingdom.

This legacy of the radical Cartesian subject-object-dichotomy in modernism led also to another duality in modern theology, that of spirit and flesh, and of God and the world. The incarnation of the Word resists this duality, as well as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh. God is acting and present in his revelations in the worldly and human existence, but in such a manner that God and the world do not fuse, leading to pantheism, or that God and humanity do not merge, leading to deification and panentheism. To restrict pneumatology and the work of God in the world in a dichotomous way to the consciousness of persons leaves history, society and culture outside the realm of God, or “godless”, leading to the abnormal where existence is absorbed by solipsistic self-consciousness.

The delineation of some aspects of pneumatology is important for Christian and pastoral counselling, as a non-Cartesian postmodern approach emphasises experiences of people. What are the criteria of the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the lives and “trauma” of people? Practical-pneumatic theology takes the experiences in and events of people’s lives seriously. It is a central part of practical theology to evaluate a specific human praxis pneumatologically. One main criterion to evaluate *Christian* praxis or *Christian* counselling is to “try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). Bohren (1975:150) states: “Die Vermischung des Geistes mit dem Menschlichen ruft nach ‘Entmischung’. Der Geist soll erkannt und benannt werden.” The question is, however, how does one “try”, put to the test, or check whether the “spirits” are from God or not. The evangelist

John introduces a plain, but important criterion, namely, every “spirit” that confesses that Jesus Christ came into the flesh, is from God. This is an anti-Gnostic criterion and we can formulate this in more general terms: Only the Spirit that coincides with the life and Spirit of Christ is from God. Christ is the unique union of God and human being so that He became the criterion for our experiences from God. This is also the crux point where the theological, the Christological and the pneumatological are combined. This is, for example, a way to discern pantheistic experiences as “mystic” experiences of “reality” from Christian experiences. In Christ it is vital and necessary that the human and personal aspects are coming to the fore. If a “religious” spirit, or an experience of God, is not genuinely human, personal, humane, charitable and benevolent, it is not the Spirit of Christ and unchristian. The personal and the humanness of life and experiences are the solid criterion for true spiritual and Godly “knowledge”. The Holy Spirit revealed God in the human person, Jesus Christ. The ultimate, proper and specific revelation of God was not in animals, rights, writings, rituals or experiences, but primarily in the human person of Christ. The emphasis is on a *human* faith where God manifests himself by and within personal relationships with people. In his letter in 1 John 2 John indicates the most practical theological criterion for *experiencing God’s presence by caring for our neighbour in need*. In the Spirit of Christ is more critical distance, more liberation, more love for justice than in the everyday relations. His focus is on the comprehensive salvation of releasing and renewing people to become more human and to enhance better quality relationships. The Holy Spirit assists towards “whole” human beings, new and open opportunities in life and activates them to novel and creative praxis. General mystic experiences of “reality” are usually more passive, conservative, apathetic, retiring and stoic (cf. Dingemans 1990:72,73).

C. Halkes (1984:24,25,46; cf. Dingemans 1990:170,171) goes so far in her theology of pastoral action that she maintains that revelation is no self-giving of God “from outside”, but is enclosed in

the process of a person becoming more human, the process of “in-carnation”, “*menswording*”, becoming human, of which Jesus Christ is the unique example. If human beings are inspired, vitalised or vivified by the Spirit of God, then they “listen” to the “voice” within themselves. This is an interpretation of classical theology where “nature”, the voice within and “grace”, the voice from outside are co-mingled, “uniting” the transcendence and immanence of God’s Spirit. We can then, according to this claim, listen to the Spirit’s voice in us. Halkes, however, does not abolish the tension between transcendence and immanence, as the Spirit always maintains a critical attitude. God does not conform to me, or harmonise with me, as there is too much to be changed and renewed in me, according to this view. The main emphasis is, however, on the humanness of the manifestation of the Spirit in service towards, love for and acceptance of the “other” in pastoral action. In addition, what is important is that the training and education of the counsellor, or pastor is not restricted to modern “knowledge” only. The unique quality of humanness is to be enhanced, as well as the Spirit’s enriching one’s process of becoming more and more humane. In this spiritual process of being influenced by the Holy Spirit, we are also enriched by other human sciences, for example, psychology and philosophy, enabling the Christian counsellor to be a more “rounded” person in practical service.

The conclusion to be drawn from the refusal of Christ-monism, where everything is to be seen only and exclusively from the cross and resurrection of Christ as the basis of salvation, Christian life and counselling, is that the Holy Spirit is not only intrinsically connected to and enhancing the salvation of Christ, but also that the Spirit goes much further, working much more comprehensively in society, the world and in history. Christ’s salvation, liberation and empowering is the medium “used” as a start by the Holy Spirit to enable us to live a full human life of love and service. As Christ is the foundation to bring forth the Kingdom of God in the world through his life and sacrifice, so the Holy

Spirit is the One who realises the *basilea* of God in human lives, human structures, culture and society, though in a “hidden” way.

The striking and encouraging message of the Holy Spirit, is that we do not live and serve “supernaturally”, but we live and serve with human passion as mere humans, as broken earthenware, establishing the *basilea* in its overpowering glory, albeit in a human, fragmentary and ambiguous way. From a pneumatological perspective Christology is especially about Christ, what He did and about the church, whereas the work of the Holy Spirit regarding the Kingdom is especially about humanity and culture. Van Ruler, therefore, called the church a temporary “emergency measure”. *The consequence of this approach is that people can become Christians to become genuine human beings and not the other way round. The aim is full humanness.* The aim in life is thus not to become Christians and to “live in the church” for its own sake, but to serve one’s neighbour in the world with the passion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The basic question is whether our “religion” is in the service of humanity, or whether our human lives are in the service of our “religion”, indicating idolatry in the churches.

In pneumatological Christian counselling the Holy Spirit begins to instil creative order in persons’ chaotic, “traumatic” existence by way of evocative praxis of change and humane goal setting by the persons themselves. If we do not allow the Holy Spirit to make human and humane space for us, we will always try in vain to become “one” with God in a religious way, to solve our problems “supernaturally” and “spiritually”, and not historically, and we will fall back in the non-Christian service of God. This is actually following the firmly believed “law” of “*do ut des*”, I will sacrifice to and fulfil God’s “law”, so that He will save and bless me. The Bible, however, changed this around, and we can only love and give, because He first loved us and gave himself to us.

## 7.2 THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS WITHIN HISTORY, BUT DOES NOT REPLACE HISTORY WITH “SUPERNATURAL” DIMENSIONS

One consequence of the above approach, where the Holy Spirit works comprehensively within history, the world and society and which we experience in a *human* way, is that we can never speak of the demonstrative work of the Spirit as a spiritual designation of something apart, above, or behind the empirical. This is also resisting the modern antithesis approach of, for example, Abraham Kuyper, in the Netherlands, organising a separate Christian political party. If we do this we restrict the work of the Holy Spirit to a specific aspect and movement within history and society. Then we forget that the Spirit comes with the overpowering *basilea* of God, albeit always “quietly”, preliminary, concealed, covered and shrouded. The work and presence of the Holy Spirit is always the *inhabitatio* of the mystery of God’s work in the world. If this mystery becomes the “miracle” of the visible presence of the “supernatural” life of God, we have caught the work of God’s Spirit in rituals, structured forms and formulae, political parties, vigorous prescriptions, recipes and pre-determinations of who God is and how He should work. Even worse, we have caught God in the modern cause-effect process of the natural world in a non-Christian way. God’s Kingdom is then identified with the development process in history in an immanent way. The human being now knows where the “Christian” Kingdom is and where not, and the Kingdom can be pointed to and identified in history. This is theological nonsense, as we live right to the very end through “faith” and not through “seeing”. “Uncertainty” is not the opposite of God’s light, but is the “veiled” way of God working in the world. Modernism tried to “force” the “unseen”, unclear, preliminary and ambiguous through “mathematisation”, formalism and objective logic towards pristine clarity and final certainty, as well in modern theology, towards fundamental “supernatural” truths. After John

the Baptist, as “the greatest prophet who ever lived”, had fulfilled his mission of announcing Christ as the unique Saviour of the world and had been incarcerated, he sent messengers to Christ to ask him whether He was the Christ to come. Indeed, we can dance with uncertainties.

Van Ruler (cf. 1974:145,146) rejected the cause-effect process of the Kingdom of God as he maintains that the Holy Spirit operates from the end of time, as it is the presence of the coming *basilea* from the final closure or fulfilment. The work of God happens from the end of history. It starts from the fulfilment of the *basilea*, so to speak, invading history from the “conclusion” of God. The Holy Spirit and his work are always understood from this perspective. This theological approach is detected in the Biblical structure and is taken over by Van Ruler from Gunning, who maintained that the work of the Spirit comes from the Kingdom of God approaching us “backwards” from the future (ibid:134). This understanding of the Kingship of God is then always already final and coming into the world guiding it towards the conclusion of history. This approach always supersedes the idea of a *supernatural* sphere. “Der Geist im N.T. ist hiernach nicht ubernaturliche kraft schlechthin, sondern die Kraft der zukunftigen Welt (M. Bruchner, in R.G.G. II, 944,5; quoted in Van Ruler 1974:134). The eschatological should not be understood by way of the idea of natural and supernatural realms, which is according to the ontological-transcendence approach of philosophical and human concepts, and does not originate from the Bible.

The perspective that is disclosed in this approach is that the Holy Spirit guides within history, of which He is the foundation. He does this from and out of the coming “backwards” of the Kingdom of God. Among all the nations of the world, Israel became a nation and its history was “created” to reveal Christ and the Holy Spirit as well as the coming of the “final” Kingdom of God. “De geschiedenis is een praedicaat van den Geest” (ibid:145). The Holy Spirit, however, works in such

a way that “It does not take the place of history...” (Comblin 1989:185). In history we live truly human, contingent lives, not in a “supernatural” way. According to this approach, our existence is not something primordial, original in itself with some essence in itself, but it is historical and the Holy Spirit creates space for our humanness. It, however, is done in such a way that the Holy Spirit is not poured out towards the initiation and establishment of the Kingdom, moving towards the Kingdom, but *vice versa*, the Spirit works from and out of the final Kingdom of God. In Christ and in the Holy Spirit the fullness of God and His *basilea* is present in the world, not supernaturally, but in a human and humane way.

One major consequence of this approach is that we do not pray, work for and struggle for the victory and the “coming” of the partially developing Kingdom of God, but pray and work for the “coming” of the finally victorious Kingdom into the world, society, politics and culture. In our culture we experience the disastrous opposite approach. We live, work and practise our theology usually in such a way as *to obtain* victory, albeit through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The victorious approach, however, is that we can pray and work already from and within the triumphant Kingdom, albeit fragmentarily.

The non-biblical approach is clearly evident in the Hollywood “success story” where the themes of the films are usually around “cowboys and crooks”, the “good and the bad guys”, the “good” fighting the “evil”. Life is thus filmed, portrayed and held up as a norm to be tragic, where the movie-goer, the spectator of life is held spell-bound by the suspense of the passionate historical, human and heart-gripping theme of, “who is going to win?” good or evil? This is presented as the valid portrayal of life in general and it has become a norm of our approach in life, also in the Christian life and in the life of the churches. We are seen to be part of the struggle towards victory over evil.

The main question and vital tension is always, are we to be successful, are we going to make it, or not? Success and the struggle for it, as well as the tension and stress inherent in it has reached epidemic proportions, causing major breakdowns on the way and leaving paranoiac wrecks battling for survival and success in the “rat-race”. Pneumatic Christian counselling portrays life differently. Christ has finally conquered on the cross, not only sin and disintegration, but also evil when he exclaimed, “it is finished”. The Holy Spirit empowers us from the overpowering *basilea* of God and the triumphant cross and resurrection of Christ towards living *from* this basis *of* victory and not *towards* victory, albeit always fragmentary and ambiguous.

One of the consequences of the above approach is that life in this world is the real life in which we have to live fully and positively. This contingent, historical, human and personal life is the only real life on which to concentrate. We have and can only live an earthly human life. It is not our task to be “heavenly minded”, as we do not know what that means. Human beings have no “supernatural” goals above the world or beyond humanity. The distinction natural-supernatural is a theoretical “philosophical” distinction with no Christian validity. Plato taught that the real life is beyond this world in his metaphor of the cave, where we see only shadows of the real world. Outside the cave we would be able to see the truly “supernatural” and real life. Consequently, what we experience on this earth is only shadowy forms of the real “supernatural” existence.

The Christian message proclaims exactly the opposite, as God loved this world and Christ became “flesh” here to provide earthly life for us in abundance (cf. John 10:10). Revelations of God are taking place in this world and only in the forms of appearance according to this human life. There is no “immediate” contact or knowledge of God, but only through the Holy Spirit in faith. “De mens is dus niet aangelegd op een directe ontmoeting met God, alleen op een bemiddelde” (Berkhof



1973:53). Theology need no longer talk of “revealed truths” in theology in the modern framework of certain knowledge and of dualism and dichotomy between knowledge and faith. Theology can be human reflection on and communication with “revelation”. Fundamentalists must face the awkward challenge of why so-called revealed truths are couched in fallible human and limited fragile language formulations. The Bible is no *depositum veritatis*, a sediment and residue of eternal truths, which is an Aristotelian influence of viewing truth as immutable and eternal. What has been a “truth” in a specific situation always has to be established anew in another context and situation.

In modernism the churches struggled to maintain the Gospel against naturalism, materialism and the empirical “evidence” of the sciences. There was no room to be recognised for spiritual matters in the world and in the practical earthly lives of people. At most, so-called inner beliefs could be tolerated and “private religion” could be accepted, indicating that it was not important. Only the so-called scientific truths were important. Modernistic philosophy, science and psychology became the new “religion” and scientists, doctors and psychologists became the novel “high priests” who pronounced authoritative “truth” couched in arcane language. A strategy of the churches, both the liberal and the fundamentalist, was to endeavour to make faith measure up to the standards of reason and scientific “knowledge”. Since these disciplines had the prestige of so-called certain knowledge, the churches were increasingly marginalised. Another strategy, to leave the field of knowledge to science, also did not work, since the churches became irrelevant private “soothsayers”, when measured up to the “knowledge” and influence of the “proven” sciences. Up to today many try either to live up to the standards of “objective reason” and lose their “soul”, or to preserve the integrity of their “unproven” message and lose their credibility. It is a modern catch-22 situation where both options conclude in dead-ends. “...suspicion cast upon faith is a factor in the crisis of faith regularly encountered in...people who are taught to have hard evidence for what they

believe. They are pinioned by standards set too high for science itself to meet. Without being able to question them, however, they are forced to make the false choice between truth and God...this conflict between faith and reason exacerbates the crisis and adds to the anguish" (Stiver 1994:89,90).

### **7.3 THE CARTESIAN DICHOTOMY AND ITS DEMISE AS A HARBINGER OF THE LINKING OF REASON AND FAITH IN POSTMODERNISM**

With the "revolution" in science, however, matters changed fundamentally. The quantum and relativity theories showed extensively that "knowledge" was not as certain as it was made out to be and that "facts" changed, depending on the approach of the scientist and perspective of the so-called objective stance of the researcher. We "know" now that *faith and knowledge have much more in common than was maintained for two thousand years*. In "fact", the radical difference between faith and knowledge cannot be maintained, as it can only be distinguished, but not divided. The consequence of this postmodern, non-Cartesian realisation is that spiritual matters in this world, and not from a "supernatural" world, are just as valid as the so-called scientific ones, if not more so.

In postmodern counselling the dichotomy between faith and reason, and scientific and spiritual knowledge are to be repudiated. The shocking realisation is that the modern churches have never lived and thought outside the modern paradigm where reason is enthroned to the detriment of faith. All theology and the thinking of the churches are couched in this rationalistic paradigm, eschewing complete trust in faith and consequently, needing a comprehensive and major transformation.

Hans Kung in his recent book, *Global Responsibility*, points out that along with the gift of modern science has come lack of wisdom, with technology, a lack of spirituality, with industry, a lack of ecology and with democracy, a lack of morality. In life and counselling the modern motto is basically that if one cannot be certain and does not truly “know”, to that extent one is not scientific in a degrading sense. “...the almost comical attempts of disciplines like psychology and ethics to emulate the so-called hard sciences reveal the conviction that insofar as a discipline’s results lack objective certainty, to that extent the discipline is not a science, immature, or at worst, a pseudo-science” (Stiver 1994:87).

To be able to disclaim and renounce the dichotomy between reason and faith one has to understand the Cartesian background to this dilemma. This can pave the way to understand that the work of the Holy Spirit transcends these dichotomies, dualism and contradictions in the world. “Het gaat niet alleen om de vraag, hoe ik mijzelf kan beamen, maar ook om de vraag, hoe ik de wereld kan beleven, wat ik in mijn existentie te doen heb, wat God met het zijn voorheeft en wat de zin van alles is. Ook op deze vragen is het werk van de Geest het antwoord” (Van Ruler 1973:25). The distinctive and outstanding characteristic of the Holy Spirit is that it is evocative and sets us in action; it motivates our praxis and enables us to be truly human in our ways. We have to agree with Van Ruler that the *pneumatology is the foundation for anthropology*. This enables us to approach people and life holistically and to move beyond the dichotomies and dualisms of modernism.

It is interesting that modernism is characterised by the objective work of Christ and the solidified “truths” of the Bible, whereas the postmodern period is typified by the holistic work of the Holy Spirit. This also caused a rift between reason and faith to be bridged by understanding the Cartesian dichotomy and by its deconstruction.

The Cartesian theory-practice dichotomy and subject-object split had its disastrous effect on the radical distinction between faith and reason and this study works towards the overcoming of this dichotomy and dualism through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Cartesian craving for *certainty* reveals the deception that one can only trust in the indubitable. This trust in radical certainty and the search thereof usually had a disastrous consequence of oscillation between overweening confidence and despairing and depressing scepticism about many issues. "Scratch a sceptic and you will find a frustrated modernist" (Stiver 1994:87). Certain knowledge was desperately pursued, but lopsidedly and wonkily to the detriment of faith.

A corollary to the craving for certainty is the demand for pristine *clarity*, authority, order and legalistic precision. Life, however, is for living and enjoying, albeit where meanings are usually uncertain and dubious, and events and experiences often perplexing, but life is not for classification, cataloguing and taxonomies. A new approach in counselling, moving from modernism to the postmodernism, is vital. When battling with problems, guilt is usually experienced in a confused life and a false goal can easily be to endeavour to put one's life in order and legalistically strive towards perfectionism, leading to more frustration. Counselling is the opposite of prescriptions towards precision and clarity, as healing starts where a person is experiencing total and unconditional acceptance, especially from Christ and close friends. The inclination in modernity is to question anything not clear, precise and distinct in terms of its epistemic credentials, rather than to query the criterion. Instead of asking *whether we are not putting forward the wrong questions*, how to obtain absolute knowledge and pristine clarity and how to obtain universal, objective knowledge from outside bodily, societal and historical contexts, the same pursuit is

applied with even more intensity.

With certainty in knowledge and epistemic clarity and precision the “*objective foundation*” can be laid *with incorrigible sense data and self-evident convictions* corresponding to the empiricists’ and rationalists’ approaches as main protagonists of the Cartesian modernism. This construction of classical “*foundationalism*” is generally accepted unconditionally as the warped conviction that one must have certain and clear foundations for one’s knowledge, *ignoring belief structures already built into them*. One can then only attach to the foundations what is in certainty inferred from them. Implicit in this approach is the absolutistic demand for the correct methodology. If one violates the method, one has not fulfilled one’s epistemic duties. This reveals an ethical dimension, idolising “evidence” as a betrayal of faith. The consequence of this was the motto with which we grew up, namely that *it is wrong to believe anything on insufficient evidence* and if we cannot attain absolute certainty we should proportion our beliefs only to certain evidence. This false assumption was maintained as if the world with its experiences and history was adequately modulated and neatly ordered according to rational principles and logical foundations.

With certain epistemic foundations laid with legalistic precision, faith is suppressed by a-historical and context-less *universality*, where “knowledge” is what is true for everyone, everywhere, at all times, in the same way. A bird’s-eye-view is assumed as if we can know the “laws” and “rules” governing the universe according to the way things are and go. The solution of problems is to be found in “truths” claimed to rise above the contingencies of time and place to a universal, disinterested standpoint. This usually leads to fanaticism and rejection of those who do not accept the political blueprint, the moral “high ground” of prescribed life styles, the exclusive economic “laws”, causing total dependency and spiritual legalism by binding heavy loads on people’s backs.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a manifestation in theology of this fundamentalist approach has been and still is that we must only accept “supernatural” truths valid for all times and places. This false conviction is linked to the idea that if we are clear about what we believe and certain about it, it must be true and valid in the same way for everyone at any time. *One cannot but ask, if life and the convictions in churches are so formalised and prescribed, is there any room for the Holy Spirit at all.* This is especially valid for counselling where the rules have to be applied at all times by the recognised “professionals” towards adaptation of the “patient” to the acceptable. True life is not to be learned through laws, but to be enjoyed in trust. Faith cannot be measured up to the standards of reason.

Trusting faith is in some way viewed as inferior to logical truth. *Truth* is regarded as *clarity of insight*, as understanding penetrates the “essence” of things when viewed objectively. Life, bodily and emotional experiences are not accepted as valid sources of truth. One’s life is supposed to culminate in the focus on intellectual insight. Knowledge is supposed to correlate most closely with being, the eternal, the immutable and absolute. Knowledge is supposed to “see” clearly and exactly. Mere belief falls short of that standard. This Platonic legacy, endorsed and enlarged by Descartes, regards belief, opinion, passions and desires with the shadowy twilight of becoming, changing and perishing.

The dualism and dichotomy of modernism, inaugurated by Descartes, *split “reality”* into two metaphysical substances, “thinking things” and “material things”. The picture this yields is that of a disembodied mind floating above history and social contexts, dovetailing with the assumption of a Gods-eye-point-of-view. Modernistic polarities and priorities are vital to realise what is “important” and what not: Reason versus faith, mind versus the body, prose versus poetry, logic versus trust, clarity versus imagination, thoughts versus emotions and common sense versus intuition.

It is important to delineate concisely the disastrous influence and practice of the modernistic Cartesian approach in the various areas.

As there is no neutral, objective “reality”, the modern objectivism is rejected and consequently the representational theories, Descartes’ subjectivist solipsism is ruled out as invalid.

Modernistic constructivism initiated by Immanuel Kant, as a legacy of Descartes, where the subject controls the object in a subjectivist way, is to be deconstructed as it rests on invalid assumptions. The path forward will be by way of dismantling the pillars of this modernistic thinking in theology and counselling.

The empiricist foundation of sense data and the direct connection between people by way of language as a neutral, undistorted and clear meaning system is exposed to be false. There is no direct connection between signifiers, language use and the signified or referents, the objective “reality”. This means that I can never be conscious of some object, or of a so-called objective reality, but I can only be conscious. That of which I am conscious, is “created” by language and concepts.

Central to a human being is the preservation and alteration of meaning and meaning structures. To be effective in pneumatological Christian counselling denotes that Christian meaning has been established in a person or group’s life. The realm of meaning is the sphere in which psychotherapy or counselling functions. An important aspect of life is how meaning develops in a person’s life and the relationship between language, concepts and meaning as this indicates how to practise counselling. Postmodern counselling techniques can be considered as co-constructed formal

meaning procedures, or meaning rituals. Techniques are only instruments to initiate, punctuate and re-organise experience towards meaning. According to rationalist-cognitive counselling a person's thinking, emotion and behaviour are compared with a set of standard rational axioms presumed to be universally valid. Rational therapy means to use techniques to modify perturbing emotions, to change irrational beliefs and to rectify dysfunctional behaviour patterns. In postmodern counselling a technique does not do anything *for* a person; rather, the person does something *with* the technique. "...there is no direct correlation between the type of strategic intervention carried out and the quality of change processes that occur...the therapist...cannot determine or control either when or how clients organize the final outcome of the reorganization" (Neimeyer & Mahoney 1995:104).

#### **7.4 THE OVERCOMING OF THE REASON-FAITH DICHOTOMY THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

This background of dualism and dichotomy in modernism, separating reason and faith in a drastic way, especially since Descartes, originating in Plato, had a major influence in theology. Augustine, the church father, overwhelmingly influenced by Neo-Platonism, made a sharp distinction between reason and faith, but to the advantage of faith. He claimed that faith preceded reason and he formulated this in a definition of theology in the classic statement that is still maintained by many in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *faith seeking understanding*. His main "evidence" was a mistranslation of Isaiah 7:9 in the Latin Vulgate: "Unless you believe, you surely will not understand." The problem with this interpretation and conviction is that one can only claim such a "truth" on the assumption of a radical difference between the two. Throughout Western history theologians followed this Augustinian approach; Tertullianus elevated faith above reason, Luther did the same in the Reformation, Kierkegaard followed the same route in a radical way in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Barth did the same under the influence of Kierkegaard.



The most significant alternative was Aquinas claiming that reason preceded faith. He followed Aristotle vis-à-vis Plato, who influenced theology in the West for over a thousand years. Many believed that western thought was but a series of footnotes to Plato. Aristotle was less rationalistic and more empirical than Plato. Aquinas followed Aristotle, claiming that knowledge pertains only to that which is self-evident and demonstrated on the first principles, all of which must be known with certainty. Beliefs are based on God's authority. The problems with this approach are that Aquinas claimed that if one knows something, one does not believe it; and if one believes something one does not know it. The fact that this approach allows a person to have valid knowledge of God apart from special revelation was also queried. In these claims the separation between reason and faith could hardly be greater. The Deists, elevating reason above faith and who accepted only what was universally available to any person's reason as truth about God, worked within the same paradigm. It is important to note that the difference between medieval faith and faith in the Reformation and the modern period was in a different regard for faith. Stiver (1994:90-92) maintained that faith became more suspect vis-à-vis the ever-increasing prestige of reason. Faith and reason were realigned, with reason attaining top priority. Modernity lost faith in faith .

The difficulty with this problem is that we are so used to making a radical distinction between faith and reason. In all of the permutations of these two concepts, in rationalism and empiricism, idealism and realism, positivism and phenomenology, the basic framework and paradigm stay the same. Stiver (1994:83) has claimed that the presuppositions are unquestioned and "go without saying". This was the womb out of which our theology was birthed and the milk that we imbibed. Our eyeteeth were cut on these ideas. They are like the air we breathe, so close to us that we are unaware of them as our framework. Only recently a postmodern approach has unearthed the presuppositions and deconstructed them. These "truths" taken for granted were overthrown.

Knowledge need not be legitimised by the basic tenets of modernity. Knowledge need not be certain, clear and precise. No foundation as a first principle is needed from which other principles are inferred to be able to know and no method has to legitimise the process towards valid knowledge. A universal, a-historical and context-less framework for knowledge would not only be regarded as unnecessary, but impossible. One just cannot divide the world of reason, mind and logic on the one side and faith, imagination, emotion and the body on the other. The will, wisdom and practical reason could not be played off against discursive reason. The essay cannot be superseded by the narrative and poetry, as each is a part of the whole. Univocal, clear and unambiguous concepts cannot gain superiority over symbols, metaphors and ambiguous intuition. *Absolute certain presuppositions of reason are actually faith hypotheses.* All thinkers and authors bring their worldview, convictions, and commitments into their statements. The Holy Spirit works in all these fields in an undisclosed, mysterious and surreptitious way. Augustine had also already claimed that a commitment and having the proper love for the subject could be as important for gaining knowledge as logic and wide reading. Every discipline and every realm of knowledge would include all the above characteristics as a continuum between faith and reason. “All would have all elements. Physics and religion would be distinguished, as well as biology and psychology, but not along invidious lines of more or less rationality. Each discipline would be rational in its own way, in the way appropriate to the phenomenon with which it deals” (Stiver 1994:95).

In this time of turmoil and challenge some narrativists call for retreat into Christian enclaves and some fundamentalists cry out for a recoil towards the solid foundations of “revealed truths”, to shut the door on an active struggle with the postmodern framework, precisely “...at a time when the door had been knocked off its hinges” (ibid:98). Rather than be disturbed by the disappearance of foundationalism, theologians should be glad to be rid of a “thorn in the side” since ancient times.

The Holy Spirit shattered the dichotomies in worldviews, theologies and science in a fundamental way in the epoch of postmodernism. Non-Cartesian counselling enhanced the holistic union of people in their “traumatic” experiences of life, in their inhuman domination of adaptation and in their rush towards certain and logical change. It made peace with the brokenness of the world, the ambiguities of life and the uncertainties of knowledge and understanding. The final victory in this world, albeit fragmentary and uncertain, is to conquer uncertainty, by not making it an issue or problem, as its teeth are drawn and it is only pretending to have any power. *Let us then, not fight uncertainty, but dance with uncertainty in the celebration of life, through the music of the Spirit.*

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION: TO EXPERIENCE LIFE ITSELF IS AT STAKE

*They stopped interpreting in the great experiences of pain and death in this Great War; like killing the lice on their bodies, they killed their feelings one by one as they regarded them as vermin, because there was nothing else to do.*

*The thick black cloud of toxic pollution comprising rationalism and depravity could only be moved away by the fresh breath of life ? God's pneuma.*

*Deconstruction, as a debunking and an overcoming of absolutes and deceptive assumptions towards celebrating life in its diversity, is used as a way towards postmodernism Christian freedom.*

*Pneumatological Christian counselling and practical theology are re-assessed outside the shackles of pre-determined "doctrines" and everlasting "truths" towards the experience with people exploring and defeating uncertainty in their painful lives, by way of dancing with uncertainty.*

*The little learner in her class conquered the problem (of uncertainty) by way of deconstruction; she drew a red cat by not thinking of one, but by concentrating on her dreams of how she was going to play with her little newly born kittens at home.*

In this study I endeavoured to detect the deception and treachery in modernist thinking and

approaches. In modern life the situation worsened remarkably. The horrors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the threats to human sanity, safety and life, spelled out in the introduction, brought about desperation that still has to be countered and conquered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to speak only of fairly recent times, experience of life has become the framework for practicing counselling, doing theology and being a Christian. Schleiermacher was one of the main exponents of religious experience as the majestic feeling of dependence on God. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the situation is desperate after the experiences of the devastation of the atom bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Hitler's slaughterhouse of murdering 5-6 million Jews, the bombing carnage in Vietnam and Indo-China, millions of babies and small children especially dying of starvation and malnutrition, and two-thirds of the famished world's population living below the breadline and going to "bed" hungry each night. It is an experience of being totally overwhelmed in a deadly wounded society and world; in fact, *what is at stake is not this or that horrible experience, but the possibility of experience as such.*

This seemingly ultimate "trauma" started with the Great War, the First World War early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: "Men stopped asking questions, deliberately. They ceased to interpret... "Just as he tried to delouse himself as regularly as possible," said Jacques Riviere, "so the combatant took care to *kill in himself*, one by one, as soon as they appeared, before he was bitten, *every one of his feelings*. Now he clearly saw that *feelings were vermin, and that there was nothing to do than to treat them as such*" (M Eksteins, quoted in Lowe 1993:1; emphasis added).

This is what pneumatological Christian counselling and theology are all about: The simple question is what do you do with lifeless people, "zombies", "corpses" being somehow kept alive, people apparently incapable of feeling anything and given over to hopeless apathy. With the disintegrating

of modernism and the shift to postmodernism this indifference, the lack of the will and verve to live, to love, to be concerned, an impassivity, insensitivity and absence of commitment, responsibility and trust are to be faced by counselling and theology.

The aftermath of this shift to postmodernism is even worse, if that is possible. An assumption of the thesis is that the consequence of the "numbing and freezing of feelings", *uncertainty*, as a result of violence, "trauma", and the experience of death is that postmodern persons live not only without the experience of genuine authentic feelings, but in a vacuum of emptiness, cynicism, scepticism, disparagement, distrust, sarcasm, denigration, presumed relativity which gave way to blandness and blankness, the living dead, and the seeing blind. Nothing excites or causes them pain towards action; nothing stirs them up, or touches their "soul" towards joy. Postmodern humanity has become synonymous with TV, the Internet, films, pornography, violence, blood, murder, war, crime, maiming, torture, rape and drugs - *hyper-realistically on the screen*. We are so used to it, so conditioned, so apathetic that it is merely like the air we breathe; we hardly notice the deadly toxic pollution that has set in like a thick black cloud.

This "cloud" can be moved by the fresh breath of life, the overwhelming strong wind of God - *pneuma*. The approach of the thesis is pneumatological. God is in life as the creative and healing power through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit raises the dry lifeless bones in a vacuum without feeling and hope through the process of counselling and theology (Ezekiel 37). "Kortom: de praktische theoloog constateert ...velen...leven zonder enige beleving van God... Hij openbaar zich op een persoonlijke wijze door mense" (Dingemans 1990:187).

The wrong and treacherous thinking and reasoning of Descartes issuing in disastrous networks of modern rationalism and theory-practice splits, causing disastrous technological control towards

disintegration was explored. Some of the main problems were highlighted where false immediacy was claimed by way of reducing “representation” to “presentation”, eschewing mediation especially through language, as well as the imminent subject-object split and the theory-practice dichotomies, leading to the inflated self-consciousness controlling everything in the world, even God, in an idolatrous way.

It was not claimed that modernism could be eradicated, but postmodernism was tentatively described as moving away or beyond modernism. Deconstruction, as a debunking and as an overcoming of absolutes and wrong assumptions, towards celebrating life in its diversity was used as a way towards postmodernism. Pneumatological Christian counselling and practical theology was re-assessed outside the shackles of pre-determined “doctrines” and everlasting “truths” towards the experience with people exploring and overcoming their uncertainty in their pain. The unique way of the Holy Spirit and pneumatological counselling and theology was dealt with towards the humanness and humaneness of people.

The continuous disaster, still maintained in so-called postmodern studies where representation reduced to presentation and objective studies via the subject-object split, were disclosed. The possibility of praxis as a “tool *and* end” instead of a “tool *towards* an end” was delineated as a possibility of indicating how the Holy Spirit works within and with our creative responsibility of creativity and not from outside in an objective way.

In this novel postmodern approach the visions of especially Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Derrida, Foucault and Levinas were tentatively explored. Modern psychological counselling and modern theology were approached, endeavouring to eliminate skew and distorted rationalisms of modernism. Tentative approaches towards postmodernism were put forward towards a holistic

approach to life. The question of how to deal with uncertainty was answered, not by rejecting or conquering uncertainty, which would always be with us like any temptation, but by disclosing its false and treacherous foundations and liberating us from its clutches by accepting it as a part of life, but *not focussing on it in a problematic way*. It is like the teacher asking the pre-school class to draw a red cat without thinking about a red cat. Nobody could achieve this except Suzie and when she was challenged about this possibility, exclaimed that she achieved it. When asked how, she explained that she was thinking of her beautiful little kittens she was going to play with at home while she was drawing a red cat. She detected the ultimate overcoming of a problem, which could not be eliminated except by deconstructing it and eliminating its absolutes, towards other possibilities.

After battling through these 300 years of “bearded” principles in modernism, rationalism and eternal verities, may I invite you to look into the puzzle of life through a dark glass and to the dance?

LET US DANCE WITH UNCERTAINTY.

*Ik hebt gesegt*, I have spoken finally, tentatively and provisionally.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. QUOTED LITERARY WORKS

- Ambler, R &  
Smart, N 1996 Analysis of communism. *Thesis Eleven* 42, 19-31.
- Asher, K 1984 Deconstruction's use and abuse of Nietzsche. *Berkley Journal of Sociology* 29, 169-178.
- Berger, L S 1996 Toward a non-Cartesian psychotherapeutic framework: Radical pragmatism as alternative. *Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology* 3(3).
- Berkhof, H 1973 *An introduction that aims to initiate: Introduction to the study of dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- 1985 *Introduction to the study of dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Bernstein, R J 1983 *Beyond objectivism and relativism: Science, hermeneutics, and praxis*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1991 *The new constellations: The ethical-political horizons of modernity/postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bohren, R 1975 *Dass Gott schön werd: Praktische Theologie als Theologische Asthetik*. Munchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag.
- Bordo, S R 1987 *The Flight to Objectivity*. New York: State University of New York.
- Borgen, F H 1992 Expanding scientific paradigms in counselling psychology, in Brown, S D & Lent, R W (eds), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Bruns, G L 1989 *Heidegger's estrangements: Language, truth, and poetry in the later writings*. Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Cahoon, L E 1988 *The dilemma of modernity: Philosophy, culture, and anti-culture*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- 1996 *From modernism to postmodernism: An anthology*. London:

- Blackwell.
- Castoriadis, C 1982 The crisis of western societies. *Telos* 53(Fall).
- Chia, R 1996 *Organizational analysis as deconstructive practice*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Collins, P H 1991 Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of black feminist thought, in Fonow, M M & Cook, J A (eds), *Beyond methodology. Feminist scholarship as lived research*, 35-59. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Comblin, J 1989 *The Holy Spirit and liberation*. Tr. from the Portuguese by P. Burns. New York: Orbis.
- Corradi, J E 1990 All consuming images: The politics of style in contemporary culture. *Contemporary sociology* 19(2), 278-279.
- De Man, P 1979 "Shelly Disfigured", in his essay: The Triumph of Life, in Bloom, H et al, (eds), *Deconstruction and Criticism*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Derrida, J 1973 *Speech and phenomena*. Tr. A. Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 1978 *Writing and difference*. Tr. Bass, A. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 1981 *Dissemination*. Tr. Johnson, B. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 1984 Of an apocalyptic tone recently adopted in philosophy, tr. Leavey J P. *Oxford Literary Review* 6(2), 3-37.
- Dingemans, G D J 1980 Theologie in de spiegel van natuurwetenschap en techniek. *Kerk en Theologie* 31.
- 1990 *De tijd van de verborgen God: Verkenningen en reflecties*. 's-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum.
- Fisher, W 1995 *Human communication as narrative: Towards a philosophy Of reason, value and action*. Colombia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Fleck, L 1997 *The genesis and development of a scientific fact*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Flynn, B 1983 Descartes and the ontology of subjectivity. *Man and world* 16, 3-23.

- Frosh, S 2002 *After words. The personal in gender, culture and psychotherapy.* New York: Palgrave.
- Foucault, M 1970 *The order of things.* London: Tavistock.
- Gergen, K J 2000 *When relationships generate realities: Therapeutic communication reconsidered.* Internet 2000/11/20.
- Graham, E L 1996 *Transforming practice: Pastoral theology in an age of uncertainty.* Wiltshire: Redwood Books.
- Grenz, S 1996 *A primer on postmodernism.* Michigan: Eerdmans.
- 1971 *On the way to language.* New York: Harper and Row.
- Gutting, G 1989 *Michel Foucault's archeology of scientific reason.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hacking, I 1983 *Representing and Intervening.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halkes, C 1984 *Vrouwen, mannen, mensen.* Baarn: Ambo.
- Harre, R 1996 *Varieties of relativism.* Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Heidegger, M 1969a "The essence of reasons." Evanston: North-western University Press.
- 1969b The onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics, in *Identity and difference*, 42-75. Tr. Stambauch, J. New York: Harp & Row.
- 1971 *On the way to language.* New York: Harper and Row.
- 1977 The age of the world picture, in *The question concerning technology, and other essays.* Tr. Lovitt, W. New York: Garland Publishers.
- Johnson, W B 1993 Outcome research and religious psychotherapies: Where are we and where are we going? *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 21(4), 297-308.
- Judovitz, D 1988 *Subjectivity and representation in Descartes. The origins of modernity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kennedy, W J 1998 *Counselling in the new millennium. A post-modern approach.* Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.
- Kerr, F 1986 *Theology after Wittgenstein.* Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1995 Moral theology after MacIntyre: Modern ethics, tragedy and

- Thomism. *Studies in Christian Ethics* 8(1).
- Koch, S (ed) 1959 *Psychology: A study of a science*, vol. 3. New York: Mc Graw-Hill.
- Kvale, S (ed) 1992 *Psychology and postmodernism*. London: Sage
- Lather, P 1991 *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- Lather, P & Smithies, C (eds) 1997 *Troubling the angels: Women working with HIV/AIDS*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Leitch, V B 1983 *Deconstructive criticism: An advanced introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Liotard, J-F 1984 *The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*. Tr. G. Bennington & B. Massoumi. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Loewald, A W 1980 *Papers on psychoanalysis*. Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Liem, J 2002 Contemporary Hermeneutics: Bane or Boon? *evangel. The British Evangelical Review* 20(3), 70-73.
- Lowe, W 1993 *Theology and difference: The wound of reason*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Mcarthy, T 1987 General introduction, in Baynes, K, Bohman, J & Mc Carthy, T (eds), *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?*
- Macksey, R & Donato, E (eds) 1970 *The language of criticism and the science of man [!]: The structuralist controversy*. Baltimore: J. Hopkins University Press.
- McLeish, M D & Lukens, R J 1994 *Language, structure and change*. New York: Norton. *Studies in Christian Ethics* 9(1).
- Mahoney, M J & Patterson, K M 1992 Changing theories of change: Recent developments in counselling, in Brown, S D & Lent, R W (eds), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Toronto: John

- Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Marshall, G (ed) 1994 *The concise Oxford dictionary of sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marx, K 1967 *Capital. Vol 1*. New York: International Publishers.
- Mathews, N L 2000 *Toward reestablishing a Christian worldview in a postmodern age*. Doctoral thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria. Cambridge: MA – MIT.
- Mouton, J &  
Joubert, D (eds) 1990 *Knowledge and method in the Human sciences*. Pretoria: The Human Sciences Research Council.
- Munslow, A 1997 *Deconstructing History*. New York: Routledge.
- Nealon, J 1993 *Double reading: Postmodernism after deconstruction*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Neimeyer, R &  
Mahoney, M J  
(eds) 1995 *Constructivism in psychotherapy*. Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Newman, F 1991 *The Myth of Psychology*. New York: Castillo.
- Ornstein, A 1995 The fate of the curative fantasy in the psychoanalytic treatment process. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 31, 113-123.
- Ortega, J 1958 *Man and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Osborne, K B 1999 *Christian Sacraments in a postmodern world. A theology for the third millennium*. New Jersey: Paulist Press.
- Parker, I 1997 Discourse analysis and psychoanalysis. *British Journal of Social Psychology* 36, 479-495.
- Parker, S 1997 *Reflective teaching in the postmodern world: A manifesto for education in postmodernity*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Parker, I &  
Shotter, J 1990 *Deconstructing social psychology*. London: Routledge.
- Pippin, R B 1991 *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Rahner, K 1968 *Everyday faith*. London: Burns & Oats.
- Rangell, L 1985 On the theory of theory in psychoanalysis therapy. *Journal of the American psychoanalytic association* 33, 59-97.
- Richardson, J 1986 *Existential epistemology. A Heideggerian critique of the Cartesian project*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Said, E W 1978 *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Sauber, S R,  
L'Abate, L,  
Weeks, G R &  
Buchanan, W L  
(eds) 1993 *The dictionary of family psychology and family therapy*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Schrag, C O 1986 *Communicative praxis and the space of subjectivity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 1992 *The resources of rationality: A response to the postmodern challenge*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 1994 *Philosophical Paper: Betwixt and between*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- 1999 The Problem of Being and the Question about God. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 45, 67-81.
- Segundo, J 1984 *Faith and Ideologies*. New York: Orbis.
- Shapiro, R 1995 The idiosyncratic nature of cure. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 31, 133-139.
- Smedslund, J 1985 Necessarily true cultural psychologies, in Gergen, K & Davis, K (eds), *The social construction of the person*, 73-87. New York: Springer.
- Stiver, D R 1994 Much ado about Athens and Jerusalem: The implications of postmodernism for faith. *Review and Expositor* 91.
- Taylor, M C 1986 *Deconstruction in context: Literature and Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 1992 Tears. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* 72.
- Thielicke, H 1974 *The evangelical faith: Volume 1, prolegomena. The relation of theology to modern thought forms*. Tr.

- Bromiley, G W. Michigan: Eerdmans.
- 1990 *Modern faith and thought*. Tr. Bromily, G W. Michigan: Eerdmans.
- Toulmin, S 1990 *Cosmopolis: The hidden agenda of modernity*. New York: Free Press.
- Van Ruler, A A 1973 *Theologisch werk VI*. Nijkerk: G. F. Callenbach.
- 1974 *De vervulling van de wet.: Een dogmatische studie over de verhouding van openbaring en eksistentie*. Nijkerk: C.F. Callenbach.
- Vygotsky, L S 1962 *Thought and Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- 1978 *Mind in Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 1987 *Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky, Volume 1*. New York: Plenum.
- Wallace, M I 1992 *The second naiveté: Barth, Ricoeur and the new Yale theology*. Macon: Mercer Universtiy Press.
- 1996 *Fragments of the Spirit: Nature, violence, and the renewal of creation*. New York: Continuum.
- Wittgenstein, L 1953 *Philosophical investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1969 *On certainty*. Tr. Paul, D & Anscombe, G E M. New York: Harper & Row.
- Wolfaardt, J A 2001 *Congregational management: Only study guide for CGM308-3*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Yack, B 1997 *The fetishism of modernities: Epochal self-consciousness in contemporary social and political thought*. Notre Dame: University of Nortre Dame Press.

## 2. CONSULTED LITERARY WORKS

- Alston, W P 1988 Referring to God. *Philosophy of Religion* 2, 113-128.
- Anderson, H &  
Goolishian, H A 1990 Beyond cybernetics: Comments on Atkinson and Heath's "further thoughts on second-order family therapy". *Family Process* 29(2), 157-163.

- Appleby, R S 1993 An argument worth hearing. *Cross Currents* (Fall).
- Arlow, J A 1997 The genesis of interpretation: Psychoanalytic explorations of technique. *Supplement to the Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 27,193-206.
- Asher, K 1984 Deconstruction's use and abuse of Nietzsche. *Berkley Journal of Sociology* 29, 169-178.
- Barrett, B B 1993 *Psychoanalysis and the postmodern impulse: Knowing and being since Freud's psychology*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bockmuehl, K 1991 The unreal God of modern theology: Bultmann, Barth and the theology of atheism: A call to recovering the truth of God's reality. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* 71(1), 107.
- Brummer, V 1994 Has the theism-atheism debate a future? *Theology* 47.
- 1989 Metaphorical thinking and systematic theology. *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 43.
- Bulhof, I N 1992 *Ons ontbreken heilige namen: Negatieve theologie in de hedendaagse cultuurfilosofie*. Kampen: Kok
- Burns, R M 1987 Bernard Lonergan's proof of the existence and nature of God. *Modern Theology* 3(2).
- Burrell, D B 1992 An introduction to theology and social theory: Beyond secular reason. *Modern Theology* 8(4).
- Caird, G B 1996 New Testament theology. *The Heythrop Journal, Book Reviews* 37(2).
- Chadwick, H 1988 Process theology: New dictionary of theology: Challenges ahead. *Theology Today* 51(3).
- Chatman, S 1988 On deconstructing narratology. *Style* 22(1), 9-17.
- Clack, B R 1995 D. Z. Phillips, Wittgenstein and religion. *Religious Studies, Review Article* 31(1).
- Clark, P Y 1995 The 'cogwheeling' of Don Browning: Examining his Eriksonian perspective. *Pastoral Psychology* 43(3).
- Cobb, J B jr 1995 Ally or opponent? A response to Stanley Hauerwas. *Theology Today* 51(4).



- Cochlan, D 1992 Training the practical theologian. *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 14.
- Cohn-Sherbok, D 1993 Holocaust theology. *Theology Today* 49(Apr).
- Colapietro, V 1989 Beyond doubt: tradition, narrative and process faith. *Cross Currents* (Spring).
- Coleman, J A 1976 Vision and praxis in American theology: Orestes Brownson, John A. Ryan & John Courtney Murray. *Theological Studies* 76.
- Collins, J J 1996 Introduction: The Bible and Christian theology. *The Journal of Religion* 76(2).
- Colwell, G 1991 What is Christian faith? *Religious Studies and Theology* 11(2 & 3), 57-65.
- Commins, G 1987 Woody Allen's theological imagination. *Theology Today* 44(2), 235-249.
- Conradie, E M 1993 How should a public way of doing theology be approached? *Scriptura* 46, 24-49.
- Corbett, T 1995 Teaching dogmatic theology: Reflecting on the discipline. *Irish Theological Quarterly* 61(1).
- Corradi, F G 1990 *The other side of language*. London: Routledge.
- Costas, O 1992 Liberating news: A theology of contextual evangelization. *Christian Scholar's Review* 22(2).
- Cottingham, J 1994 Religion, virtue and ethical culture. *Philosophy* 69, 163-210.
- Cox, H 1993 Pentecostalism at Harvard: Liberation and the Spirit. *Christian Century*, 110(Aug. 25), 806-808.
- Crossan, J D 1982 Difference and divinity. *Semeia* 23.
- Crowel, S G 1996 Husserl, Derrida and the phenomenology of expression. *Philosophy Today* 40(1/4).
- Crozier, M 1995 Ferenc Feher and the European hermeneutic: Reflections on the frozen revolution. *Thesis Eleven* 42(10-18).
- Daniels, C B 1989 Experiencing God. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 49(3), 48-506.
- Davis, C 1994 The deconvergence of theology and religious studies. *Studies in Religion* 94(4/3).

- De Hart, P 1996 Eberhard Jungel on the structure of theology. *Theological Studies* 57.
- De Knijff, H W 1994 Theologie als wetenschap. *Kerk en Theologie* 45(2).
- De Lange, F 1993 High standards need strong sources. *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 2(May).
- Derrida, J 1982 *Margins of philosophy*. Tr. Bass, A. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 1995 A certain 'madness' must watch over thinking. *Educational Theory* 45(3).
- Descartes, R 1960 *Discourse on method and meditations*. Tr. Lafleur, L J. New York: The Liberal Arts Press.
- Detweiler, R 1992 Overliving: Poststructuralism as exegesis. *Semeia* 54.
- Dews, P 1995 The limits of disenchantment. *Themes* 213.
- Dixon, J W jr 1983 Art of the making of the world: Outline of method in the criticism of religion and art. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 83(March), 15-36.
- Donahue, J R 1996 The literary turn and New Testament theology: Detour or new direction. *The Journal of Religion* 76(2).
- Dore, C 1993 Moral scepticism. *Philosophical Books* 34.
- Dorrien, G J 1992 Reconstructing the common good: Theology and the social order. *Journal of theology for Southern Africa, Book Reviews* 80(Sept).
- Douven, I 1994 Conceptuele schemas en convergentie: Putnams intern realisme. *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte* 86(2).
- Downing, B D 1987 Deconstruction's scruples: The politics of enlightened critique. *Diacritics* (Fall).
- Dreyer, J 1995 The methodology of practical theology and the public good. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 90(March).
- Driver, T F 1987 Theology of culture. *Religious Education* 82(2).
- Dulles, A 1976 Method in fundamental theology: Reflections on David Tracy's blessed rage for order. *Theological Studies* 37.
- Edwards, J C 1992 The authority of language: Heidegger, Wittgenstein and the

- threat of philosophical nihilism. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* 72.
- Efran, J S,  
Lukens, M D, &  
Lukens, R J      1990    *Language, structure and change.*    New York: Norton.
- Eicher, P            1988    The church as contrast society? *Theology Digest* 35(2).
- Eldridge, R         1991    Romantic rebirth in a secular age: Cavell's aversive exertions. *The Journal of Religion* 71.
- Ellis, C J            1981    Relativity, ecumenism and the liberation of the church. *The Baptist Quarterly* 29(2).
- Epston, D           1990    *Narrative means to therapeutic ends.* New York: Norton.
- Escobar, S          1994    Beyond liberation theology: A review article. *Themelios* 19(3).
- Evans, C S &  
Evans, J H         1984    Liberation, authority and the cognitive crisis in the theology of David Tracy. *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 39(1,2).
- Fackre, G            1992    The state of systematics: Research and commentary. *Dialog* 31(1).
- Fisher, W            1987    Whose life is it to define the self? *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology* 3(3), 323-352.
- Fitzer, J             1991    Romance and the rock: Nineteenth-century catholics on faith and reason. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* 71.
- Ford, L S            1990    Evangelical appraisals of process theism. *Christian Scholar's Review* 20(2).
- Fowler, R M         1990    Who is 'the reader' in reader response criticism? *Semeia* 52.
- Frei, H W            1993    Types of Christian theology: *Modern Theology, Reviews* 11, 180ff.
- French, W C         1990    Subject-centered and creation-centered paradigms in recent catholic thought. *The Journal of Religion* 70, 48-72.
- Fuller, M            1994    Antireductionism and theology. *Theology* 97(Nov-Dec).
- Gabbard, G O       1991    Do we need theory? *Bulletin of the Menninger clinic* 55, 22-29.

- Gall, R S 1990 Beyond theism and atheism. *Philosophy of Religion* 27.
- Gasché, R 2000 In the separation of the cisis: A post-modern hermeneutics. *Philosophy today* (Spring).
- George, R L & Cristiani, T S 1986 *Counseling. Theory and practice*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Gergen, K J 1997 On the poly/tics of postmodern psychology. *Theory and Psychology* 7(1), 31-36.
- Gerrish, B A 1985 A prince of the church: Schleiermacher and the beginnings of modern theology. *Modern Theology* 1(4).
- Giles, J 1994 A reply to Antony Flew. *Philosophy* 69.
- Gilkey, L 1984 Events, meanings and the current tasks of theology. *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 111(3).
- Gocalbes, O F 1995 Cognitive narrative psychotherapy: The hermeneutic construction of alternative meanings, in Mahoney, M J (ed), *Cognitive and constructivist psychotherapies*, 139-162. New York: Springer.
- Godzieba, A J 1995 Ontotheology to excess: Imagining God without being. *Theological Studies* 56.
- Goldingay, J 1991 Modes of theological reflection in the Bible. *Theology* 94 (759).
- Goncalves, O F 1995 Hermeneutics, constructivism, and the cognitive-behavioural therapies: From the object to the project, in Neimeyer R & Mahoney M J (eds), *Constructivism in psychotherapy*, 195-230. New York: Springer.
- Grant, C 1987 Identifying the theological enemy: Polanyi's Near Miss. *Modern Theology* 3(3).
- Green, G 1990 Imagining God: Theology and the religious imagination. *Christianity and Literature, Book Reviews* 39(2).
- Greenberg, L & Greenwood, R 1995 What priesthood now? *Theology* 98(785).
- Gregersen, N H 1990 How to cope with pluralism in dogmatics: A proposal. *Studia Theologica* 44.

- Grenholm, C-H 1994 Christian interpretation of the Old Testament in a pluralistic context. *Studia Theologica* 48.
- Griffin, G D (ed) 1993 *Introduction to the founders of constructive postmodern philosophy: Peirce, Bergson, Whitehead, and Hartshorne*. New York: State University of New York Press. Gron, A 1989 Introduction: The question of natural theology. *Studia Theologica* 43.
- Guidano, V F 1991 *The Self in Process*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Guinness, O & Gunton, C 1990 Using and being used: Scripture and systematic theology. *Theology Today* 47(3).
- Gutierrez, G 1993 The God of life. *Modern Theology, Reviews* 9(1).
- Haack, S 1996 Evidence and enquiry: Toward reconstruction in epistemology. *Mind, Book Reviews* 105(417).
- Hall, J H 1996 Reconstructing Christian theology. *Theology Today, Book Reviews* 53(1).
- Hanford, J T 1993 Is the faith of faith development Christian faith? *Pastoral Psychology* 42(2), 95-105.
- Haring, H 1992 De laatste zekerheid van een verlichte theologie. *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 92.
- Harre, R & Gillet, G 1994 *The discursive mind*. London: Sage.
- Hart, K 1992 The trespass of the sign: Deconstruction, theology and philosophy. *The Journal of Religion* 72.
- Hastings, A 1991 Modern catholicism: Vatican II and after. *Christian Scholar's Review* 473.
- Hastrup, K 1987 The reality of anthropology. *Ethnos* 52, 287-300.
- Hauerwas, S 1993 Dispatches from the front: Theological engagements with the secular. *Theology Today* 39(Jan).
- Hawkes, J 1990 Juan Luis Segundo's critique of David Tracy. *Heythrop Journal* 31, 277-294.
- Heaton, E W 1991 The school tradition of the Old Testament. *The Journal of Religion Book Reviews* 71.
- Heidegger, M 1959 *Introduction to methaphysics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Heller, A 1982 The antinomies of peace. *Telos* 5(Fall).
- Henriksen, J-O 1989 How is theology about nature natural theology? *Studia Theologica* 43.
- Herbert, R T 1995 The nonrationality and noncognitivity of the belief in God's existence. *Philosophical Investigations* 18(3).
- Hester, J 1993 Faith, reason and skepticism. *Philosophical Books* 34(4).
- Hick, J 1994 Disputed questions in theology and the philosophy of religion. *Theology Today* 51(1).
- Hiley, 1987 The deep challenge of Pyrrhonian scepticism. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25(2).
- Hinchliff, P 1985 The non-theologian's revenge. *Modern Theology* 1(4).
- Hodgson, P C 1987 Ecclesia of freedom. *Theology Today* 44(1).
- Hoffman, I Z 1992 Some practical implications of a socio-constructivist view of the psychoanalytical situation. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 2.
- Hopkins, B C 1996 Transcendental ontologism and Derrida's reading of Husserl. *Philosophy Today* 40(1/4).
- Hoshmund, L T 1995 Psychology's ethics of belief. *American Psychologist* (Jul).
- Hosinkie, T E 1985 Experience and the sacred: Retrospective review of Langdon Gilkey's theology. *Religious Studies Review* 11(3).
- Hough, J C jr 1984 The education of practical theologians. *Theological Education* 22(2).
- Houlden, L 1991 An education in theology. *Theology* 94(760).
- Hughes, G J 1988 The philosophical assessment of theology. Essays in honour of Frederick C. Copleston. *Philosophical Books* 29(3).
- Hunsinger, G 1987 Beyond literalism and Expressivism: Karl Barth's Hermeneutical Realism. *Modern Theology* 3(3).
- 1993 Truth as self-involving. Barth and Lindbeck on the cognitive and performative aspects of truth in theological discourse. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 61(1), 4-56.
- Ibsch, E 1990 Harde noten om te kraken: De zachte wetenschappen. *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte* 82(1).
- Inbody, T 1996 The constructive theology of Bernard Meland. *The Journal of Religio, Book Reviews* 76(1).

- Ivey, A E 1986 *Developmental therapy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Jabes, E 1992 From the desert to the book. Dialogues with Marcel Cohen. *Philosophy of Religion* 32.
- Jean-Luc, M 1994 Metaphysics and phenomenology: A relief for theology. *Critical Inquiry* (Summer).
- Jeanrond, W G 1996 Criteria for new biblical theologies. *The Journal of Religion* 76(2).
- Jenkins, D 1991 Evangelization and culture. *Theology* 94(757).
- Jewett, P K 1994 God, creation and revelation: A neo-evangelical theology. *Religious Studies Review* 20(1).
- Jobling, D 1992 Forced labour: Solomon's golden age and the question of literary representation. Poststructuralism as Exegesis. *Semeia* 54.
- Jonkers, J 1995 Normativiteit en empirie in de praktische theologie en de sociale wetenschappen. *Praktische Theologie* 22(5).
- Jungel, E 1991 Theologica essays *The Journal of Religion*, Book Reviews 71.
- Kaufman, G D 1994 In face of mystery: A constructive theology. *Zygon* 29(3).
- Keeves, J P 1997 *Educational Research, methodology, and measurement: An international handbook*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaye, J 1992 Beyond the narrative in the negotiation of therapeutic meaning, in McNamee, S & Gergen, K (eds), *Therapy as Social Construction*, 166-185. London: Sage.
- Kelber, W H 1988 Gospel narrative and critical theory. *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 18(4).
- Kenel, S A 1986 Ernest Becker and the claims of fundamental theology. *The Journal of Religion* 66.
- Kennedy, P 1996 Deus humanissimus: The knowability of God in the theology of Edward Schillebeeckx. *The Journal of Religion*, Book Reviews 76(1).
- Kennedy, W B 1992 Towards an educational paradigm for practical theology: Ministerial Formation. *Kerk en Theologie* 40(1).
- Kerr, H T 1987 Trademarks of theology: Editorial. *Theology Today* 43(4).
- Kirkpatrick, F G 1991 Together bound: A new look at God's discrete actions in history. *Philosophy of Religion* 32.

- Kluback, W 1985 Hermann Cohen: The challenge of a religion of reason. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 17, 87-96.
- Koekemoer, J H 1989 Teologiesering vir die gesekulariseerde mens. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 45(2).
- Krieger, D J 1994 The new universalism: Foundations for a global theology. *Zygon, Reviews* 29(2).
- Krolock, S 1985 Through a glass darkly: What is the phenomenology of religion? *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 17, 193-199.
- Kunst, J L 1992 Towards a psychologically liberating pastoral theology. *Pastoral Psychology* 4(3).
- Kurtén, T 1990 Introduction: Theology in relation to church, culture and society. *Studia Theologica* 44.
- Kuschel, K-J 1996 Born before all time: The dispute over Christ's origin. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* 76(2).
- Lakeland, P 1982 Notes and comments: David Tracy's idea of the classic. *The Heythrop Journal* 22(3).
- Lamadrid, L 1992 Is there a system in the theology of Nicholas Lash? *Heythrop Journal* 33, 339-414.
- Lawrence, R J 1992 Response to Don Browning. *Pastoral Psychology* 41(2).
- Leavey, J P jr 1982 Four protocols: Derrida, his deconstruction. *Semeia* 23.
- Ledbetter, M 1992 Virtuous intentions: The religious dimension of narrative. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* 72.
- Lefebure, L D 1996 The wisdom tradition in recent Christian theology. *The Journal of Religion* 76(2).
- Lemmer, J C 1991 Hipotese-generende ondersoek in pratiese teologiese navorsing. *Praktiese Teologie in SA* 6(1).
- Levinas, E 1989 Ethics as first philosophy, in Hand, S (ed), *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lim, D S 1994 Trends of theology in Asia. *Themelios* 19(3).
- Lochman, J M 1973 The importance of theology for church and society. *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26(3).
- Loewald, H W 1970 Psychoanalytic theory and the psychoanalytic process.



- Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 25, 45-68.
- Long, B O 1996 Ambitions of dissent: Biblical theology in a postmodern future. *The Journal of Religion* 76(2).
- Long, E T 1995 God, reason and religions: An introduction. *Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 38.
- Louw, D J 1993 Wisdom as a new paradigm for practical theology in post-apartheid society. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (Aug).
- Lovin, R W 1992 The real task of practical theology. *Christian Century* 5–12 (Feb).
- Lubek, I,  
Van Hezewijk, R,  
Pheterson, G &  
Tolman, C W  
(eds) 1995 *Trends and issues in theoretical Psychology*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Luhmann, N 1988 Religious dogmatics and the evolution of societies. *Philosophy of Religion* 24.
- Lyotard, J-F 1988 *The differend: Phrases in dispute*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- 1989 *The Lyotard reader*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- 1992 *The postmodern explained: Correspondence 1982-85*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- 2001 *Answering the question: What is postmodernism?* Pretoria: University of South Africa: Electronic reserves.
- McCann, D P 1981 Political ideologies and practical theology: Is there a difference? *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 36(4).
- MacIntyre, A 1996 Critical perspectives on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre.
- McGhee, M 1995 The turn towards Buddhism. *Religious Studies* 31(1), 69-87.
- McClendon, J W 1989 Distinguishing modern and postmodern theologies. *Modern Theology* 5(3).
- Maddox, R L 1990 The recovery of theology. *Theological Studies* 51.
- Mahoney, M J (ed) 1995 *Cognitive and constructive psychotherapies*. New York: Springer.
- Mahoney, M J 1991 *Human change process*. New York: Basic Books.
- Margolis, J 1984 *Philosophy of psychology*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

- 1995 *Historied thought, constructed world: A conceptual primer for the turn of the millennium*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Markham, I 1991 Teaching theology in a modern university. *Theology* 760(Jul/Aug).
- Marshall, J L 1994 Toward the development of a pastoral soul: Reflections on identity and theological education. *Pastoral Psychology* 43(1).
- Martin, D M 1987 Learning to become a Christian. *Religious Education* 82(1).
- Matter, E A 1991 The Bible in all ages? *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* 71.
- Mavrodes, G I 1990 Revelation in religious belief. *Philosophy of Religion* 27.
- May, C 1992 Bernard Lonergan and political theory: *Religious Studies and theology* 12(2-3), 43-68.
- Medema, H P 1995 Gereformeerde theologie in Nederland. Stromingen - motieven - namen. *Acta Theologica* 15(2).
- Mele, A R 1994 Springs of action: Understanding intentional behaviour. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54(Dec).
- Merkl, P H 1976 Method in fundamental theology: Reflections on David Tracy's blessed rage for order. *Theological Studies* 37.
- Meynell, H 1995 The idea of a world theology. *Modern Theology* 1(2).
- Michaelson, G E 1985 Faith and history: The shape of the problem. *Modern Theology* 1(4).
- Middleton, J R 1994 The liberating image? Interpreting the *imago Dei* in context. *Christian Scholar's Review* 24(1).
- Migliore, D L 1993 Faith seeking understanding: An introduction to Christian theology. *Theology Today, Review* (Apr).
- Milovanovic, D 1997 *Postmodern Criminology*. London: Garland Publishing, Inc.
- Milbank, J 1995 Can morality be Christian? *Studies in Christian Ethics* 8(1).
- Miller, B 1993 From existence to God: A contemporary philosophical argument. *Philosophical Books* 34.
- Miller, D E 1984 Foundations for a practical theology of ministry. *Theological Education* 20(2).
- Miller, J 1995 The social control of religious zeal: A study of organisational contradictions. *Sociological Inquiry, Book Reviews* 65(3/4).
- Mize, S Y 1995 Dorothy Day's apologia for faith after Marx. *Horizons* 22(2).
- Mounce, H O 1994 Faith and reason. *Philosophy* 69, 85-95.

- Mouton, E 1990 Faith, language and experience: An analysis of the feeling of absolute dependence. *Hervormde Teologiese Tydskrif* 46(3).
- Mouton, J & Joubert, D (eds) 1990 *Knowledge and method in the Human sciences*. Pretoria: The Human Sciences Research Council.
- Mouton, J & Marais, H C (eds) 1992 *Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences*. Pretoria: The Human Sciences Research Council.
- Murphy, D G 1991 Hendrikus Berkhof and theological appeals to experience. *Calvin Theological Journal* 91, 350-369.
- Murphy, N & Naudé, R M 1993 Metodes in die Christelike etiek. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*. 49(1,2).
- Neimeyer, R A & Neimeyer, G J 1987 *Personal construct therapy casebook*. New York: Springer.
- Neimeyer, R A 1995 Constructivist psychotherapies: Features, foundations, and future directions, in Neimeyer, R A & Mahoney, M J (eds), *Constructivism in psychotherapy*, 11-38. Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Neville, R C 1994 A theology primer. *Religious Studies Review* 20(1).
- 1995 Religions, philosophies and philosophy of religion. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 38.
- Newbigin, L 1990 Evangelisasie in de context van secularisasie. *Kerk en Theologie* 41(1).
- Newsom, C A 1996 Bakhtin, the Bible and dialogic truth. *The Journal of Religion*. 76(2).
- Nickel, J 1992 Mathematics: Is God silent? *Christian Scholar's Review* 22(2).
- Nielsen, K 1992 The burden of ideological masks in ideologiekritiek: On trying to view faith scientifically. *Metaphilosophy* 23(3), 251-267.
- Nipkow, K E 1993 Empirical research within in practical theology. *Journal of Empirical Theology* 6.
- Oakes, E T 1992 Apologetics and the pathos of narrative theology. *The*

- Journal of Religion* 72, 37-58.
- Ogden, S M           1996   Theology and Biblical Interpretation. *The Journal of Religion*. 76(2).
- Ogletree, T W       1993   Grounding theology in practice. *Christian Century* 12 May.
- O'Hara, M           1995   Is it time for clinical psychology to deconstruct constructivism?  
*Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 8, 293-303.
- Pailin, D A         1987   Groundwork of philosophy of religion. *Philosophical Books*. 28(4).
- Pannenberg, W     1996   Systematic theology. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews* (1).
- Pargetter, R        1990   Experience: Proper basicity and belief in God. *International  
Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 27(3), 141-163.
- Parker, D C        1991   Scripture is tradition. *Theology* 94(757), 11-17.
- Patte, D            1996   Ethics of biblical interpretation: A reevaluation. *The Journal of  
Religio, Book Reviews* 76(2).
- Pattison, G        1990   From Kierkegaard to Cupitt: Subjectivity, the body and eternal life.
- Peck, C             1995   Back to the future: Participatory Bible study and biblical theology.  
*Theology* 98(785), 350-357.
- Penner, H H        1986   Rationality and religion: Problems in the comparison of modes of  
thought. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 54(4), 645-  
671.
- Peperzak, A        1991   *Tussen filosofie en theologie*. Kampen: Kok.
- Perdue, L G        1994   *The collapse*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- 1996   The collapse of history: Reconstructing Old Testament theology.  
*Book Reviews. The Journal of Religion* 76(2).
- Perkins, P         1996   Spirit and letter: Poking holes in the canon. *The Journal of Religion*  
76(2), 307-327.
- Peters, P          1992   *God, the world's future: Systematic theology for a postmodern era*.  
Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- 1994   God, the world's future: Systematic theology for a  
postmodern era. *Religious Studies* 20(1).
- Phillips, D Z      1988   *Faith after foundationalism*. London: Routledge.
- Pinnock, C H      1991   Tracking the maze: Finding our way through modern theology from  
an evangelical perspective. *Theology Today* 47(4), 448ff.
- Pojman, L P        1990   Religious belief and the will. *Philosophy of Religion* 28, 47-61.

- Pollard, A B 1995 When worldviews collide: Religion and the culture of disbelief. *Critic's Corner. Theology Today* 51(4), 583-587.
- Polling, J N 1977 Practical theology. *Cross-Currents* (Winter).
- Poole, F J P 1986 Metaphors and maps: Towards comparison in the anthropology of religion. *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 54(3), 411-457.
- Pousson, E K 1994 A 'great century' of pentecostal charismatic renewal and missions. *Pneuma* 16(1), 81-100.
- Pregeant, R 1989 Christological groundings for liberation praxis. *Modern Theology* 5(2), 113-132.
- Preston, R H 1996 Confusions in Christian social ethics. *Studies in Christian ethics. Book Review* 9(1).
- Quinn, P L 1995 Towards thinner theologies: Hick and Alston on religious diversity. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 38, 145-164.
- Raiser, K 1993 Rearticulating an ecumenical vision: An interview with Konrad Raiser. *The Christian Century* (May), 516- 520.
- Raschke, C A 1982 *New dimensions in philosophical theology*. USA: American Academy of Religion.
- 1991 Theological thinking. *The Journal of Religion, Book Reviews*. 71.
- Raventlow, H G 1987 The authority of the Bible and the rise of the modern world. *Modern Theology* 3:2.
- Reich, K H 1993 Integrating differing theories. The case of religious development. *Journal of Empirical Theology* 6(1), 39-49.
- Rendtorff, R 1996 Recent German Old Testament theologies. *The Journal of Religion. Review Articles* 76(2).
- Rice, R 1990 The reign of God: An introduction to Christian theology from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. *Christian Scholar's Review* 20(1).
- Richards, G 1987 Faith and praxis in liberation theology, Bonhoeffer and Gandhi. *Modern Theology* 3.
- Rijs, O 1993 Recent developments in the study of religion in modern society. *Acta Sociologica* 36.
- Roberts, D 1995 Democracy and culture: The Janus face of the postmodern in

- Ferenc Feher's writings on aesthetics. *Thesis Eleven* 42, 41-51.
- Robbertze, H C G 1991 Theological paradigms and conservative Afrikaners. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 47(3), 825-835.
- Rolston, H 1989 Science and religion. *Philosophy of Religion, Book Reviews* 26.
- Rogelberg, S G (ed) 2002 *Handbook of research methods in industrial and organisational psychology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Rowe, W L 1995 Religion within the bounds of naturalism: Dewey and Wieman. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 38, 17-36.
- Russman, T A 1989 A prospectus for the triumph of realism. *Philosophy of Religion, Book Reviews* 26.
- Sanders, A F 1995 Traditionalism, fallibilism and theological relativism. *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 9(3), 192-214.
- Santiago, S 1986 God in process thought: A study in Charles Hartshorne's concept of God. *Modern Theology, Reviews* 3:1.
- Sapp, M 1997 *Counselling and psychotherapy. Theories, associated research, and issues*. New York: University Press of America.
- Scharlemann, R P 1995 Can religion be understood philosophically? *International Journal for Philosophy of Religio* 38, 93-101.
- Schellenberg, J L 1995 Divine hiddenness and human reason. *A Quarterly Review of Philosophy, Book Reviews* 104(414).
- Schildgen, B D 1994 Augustine's answer to Jacques Derrida in the *de doctrina Christiana*. *New Literary History* 94.
- Schillebeeckx, E 1971 Naar een verruiming van de hermeneutiek de "Nieuwe Kritische Theorie". *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 11.
- Schindler, D L 1990 On meaning and the death of God in the academy. *Communio* 17(Sum).
- Schneidau, H N 1982 The word against the word: Derrida on Textuality. *Semeia* 23.
- Scholtz, M G 1985 Diskoers as self-ondermyning. *Journal of Literary Studies* 1(3).
- Schreiter, R J 1986 Constructing local theologies. *Modern Theology, Reviews* 2(4).
- Schrotenboer, P G 1977 *Church and theology in the contemporary world*. Geneve:

- RES Publication.
- Schweiker, D 1995 Jurgen Moltmann's theology as a theology of the cross. *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* 24(1), 95-107.
- Schweiker, W 1992 The irony of theology. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Review Essay* 60(4), 757-766.
- Scott, P 1993 Theology after Gorbachev? *Theology* 96(770), 117-127.
- Sharpe, E J 1971 Some problems of method in the study of religion. *Religion*. 1(1), 1-14.
- Shotter, J 1990a *Deconstructing social psychology*. London: Routledge.
- 1990b Wittgenstein and psychology: On our 'hook up' to reality, in Phillips-Griffiths, A (ed), *The Wittgenstein Centenary Lectures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shutte, A 1992 The possibility of faith today. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 80(Sept), 14-23.
- Slater, P 1995 Lindbeck, Hick and the nature of religious truth. *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 24(1).
- Smart, N 1994 Christian systematic theology in a world context. *Religious Studies Review* 20(1), 3-12.
- Smith, J E 1995 Philosophy and religion: One central reflection. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 38.
- Sokolowski, R 1996 Eucharistic presence: A study in the theology of disclosure. *The Heythrop Journal, Book Reviews* 37(2).
- Solle, D 1994 Thinking about God: An introduction to theology. *Religious Studies Review* 20(1).
- Soskice, J M 1987 Metaphor and religious language. *Philosophical Books* 28(1).
- Spearritt, G 1995 Don Cupitt: Christian Buddhist? *Religious Studies* 31, 359-373.
- Springsted, E O 1992 Conditions of dialogue: John Hick and Simone Weil. *The Journal of Religion* 72, 19-36.
- Stancliffe, D 1991 Christian initiation and its relation to some pastoral offices. *Theology* 94(760), 284-291.
- Stanesby, D 1986 Science, reason and religion. *Modern Theology, Reviews*. 3(1).
- Stavenga, G J 1989 Theologie als wetenschap. *Kerk en Theologie* 40(1).
- Strachan, K 1993 Studdert Kennedy on evangelism. *Theology* 96(772).

- Strudwick, V 1995 The role of history in theological education. *Theology* 98(785), 358-364.
- Swift, D E 1992 Black prophets of justice. *Christian Scholar's Review* 22(2).
- Taliaferro, C 1996 Consciousness and the mind of God. *Mind, Book Reviews* 105(417).
- Tanner, K 1994 The difference theological anthropology makes. *Theology Today* 50(4), 567-579.
- Taylor, B 1995 Religion, radicalism and fantasy: *History Workshop Journal* 39.
- Taylor, M K 1992 Remembering Esperanza: A cultural-political theology for North American praxis. *The Journal of Religion. Book Reviews* 72.
- Templeton, E 1991 The church's task in reconciliation. *Theology* 94(761), 326-332.
- Ten Kate, L 1995 Ons ontbreken heilige namen. Negatieve theologie in de hedendaagse cultuurfilosofie. *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift* 87(2).
- Thiel, J E 1989 Theological authorship: Post-modern alternatives. *Haythrop* 30, 32-50.
- Thijs, L 1995 Geloven voorbij de beeldenstorm: Gedachten over geloofsverbeelding. *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift*. 1.
- Thomas, O C 1986 Christianity and perennial philosophy. *Theology Today* 43(2), 259-266.
- Tieleman, D 1995 *Geloofscrisis als Gesichtsbedrog: Spiritualiteit en Pastoraat in een Postmoderne Cultuur*. Kampen: Kok.
- Tryon, G S (ed) 2002 *Counseling based on process research. Applying what we know*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Twelftree, G H 1991 Jesus the exorcist: A contribution to the study of the historical Jesus. *The Journal of Religion, Book reviews* 71.
- Vajda, M 1995 Man in transcendental homelessness: In memory of Ferenc Feher. *Thesis Eleven* 42, 32-40.
- Van Brakel, J 1989 Putnam on Davidson on conceptual schemes. *Dialectica* 40(3).
- Van de Kamp, W 1987 Theologie in verandering. *Kerk en Theologie*. 38(4).
- Van den Hengel, J 1994 Paul Ricoeur's oneself as another and practical theology. *Theological Studies* 55.
- Van der Ven, J A 1988 Practical theology: From applied to empirical theology. *Journal of*



*Empirical Theology 1.*

- Van Egmond, A 1990 Het einde van de religie. *Gerformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 90.
- Van Es, J J 1990 De macht van verhalen. Lezing op een predikantendag in Kampen, *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 90.
- Van Gelder, C 1991 A great new fact of our day: America as mission field. *Missiology* 19(4).
- Van Huyssteen, W 1983 Thomas S Kuhn en die vraag na die herkoms van ons teologiese denkm Modelle. *Ned. Geref. Teologiese Tydskrif* 24.
- Van Niekerk, A S 1986 Systems theory and the guiding of the church. *Theologia Viatorum* 14(1).
- V. Peperstraten, F 1995 Beknopte gesiedenis van de wijsbegeerte. Van Thales tot Lyotard. *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift, Recensies* 87(2).
- Van Peursen, C A 1975 *Cultuur in stroomversnelling*. Kok: Kampen.
- Van Wyk, A G 1991 'n Verkennende gesprek rondom die begrip teologie in verskillende prakties-teologiese benaderinge. *Praktiese Teologie in Suid-Afrika* 6.
- Vanhoozer, K J 1992 Biblical narrative in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: A study in hermeneutics and theology. *The Journal of Religion* 72, 451.
- Vaught, C G 1985 The quest for wholeness. *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion* 17, 87 - 96.
- Veenhof, J 1987 De praktiese en sosiale betekenis van de triniteitsleer. *Gereformeerd Theologiese Tijdschrift* 87(3 Aug).
- Veldsman, D P 1990 Religieuse ervaring: Aspoestertjie van teologiese besinning. *Hervormde Teologiese Tydskrif* 46(3).
- Velthuysen, G C 1987 'n Nuwe antwoord op 'n ou probleem: Die kritiese realisme van Wentzel van Huyssteen. *HTS* 43(1, 2), 205-231.
- Visscher, A M (ed) 1990 *Pastoral studies in the university setting*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa.
- Von Balthasar, H U 1988 The glory of the Lord: A theological aesthetics. *Philosophy of Religion* 23.
- Vos, C J A 1991 Pneumatologiese perspektiewe vanuit 'n kommunikatiewe handelingsteorie. *Acta Theologica* 11(2).

- Vroom, H M 1992 Does theology presuppose faith? *Scottish Journal of Theology* 45.
- Wallace, M 1991 *The unreal God of modern theology: Bultmann, Barth and theology of atheism. A call to recovering the truth of God's reality.* Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard.
- Wang, X 1995 Derrida, Husserl and the structural affinity between the 'text' and the Market. *New Literary History* 95.
- Webb, E 1987 Metaphysics or *existenzerhellung*: A comparison of Longergan and Voegelin. *Religious Studies and Theology* 7(2, 3).
- Webster, J 1985 Eberhard Jungel on the language of faith. *Modern Theology* 1(4).
- Wells, D 1995 Evangelical theology today. *Theology Today* 51(4).
- Westerman, P C 1994 The modernity of fundamentalism. *The Journal of Religion, Review Article* 74.
- Westhelle, V 1995 The current crisis in Latin American theology. *Theology Update* 34(1).
- Westphal, M 1989 Kierkegaard's critique of reason and society. *Philosophy of Religion, Book Reviews* 26.
- Whalon, P W 1990 Anglican comprehensiveness and the pluralism of David Tracy. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 27(4).
- Wheeler, B G 1991 Beyond clericalism: The congregation as a focus for theological education. *The Journal of Religion. Book Reviews* 71.
- White, G 1987 Theology and logic: The case of Ebeling. *Modern Theology* 4(1).
- Wiebe, D 1976 Explanation and theological method. *Zygon* 1(1).
- Wiggen, R 1991 Christian curricula. *Theology* 94(760).
- 1989 Plurality and ambiguity: Hermeneutics, religion, hope, by David Tracy; reviewed by Jeanrond, W G and Wiles, M. *Religious Studies, Review* 50(July).
- Williams, J A & Smith, R G 1989 Critical faith and the practice of religion. *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42.
- Williams, R 1991 The literal sense of scripture. *Modern Theology* 7(2).
- Wilson, J F 1989 Church and state in America: A bibliographical guide. The colonial and early national periods. *Religious Studies Review*

- 15(4).
- 1991 Expertise of ministers of the church. *Theology* 94(760).
- Wojtyla, K 1990 The acting person. *Philosophy of Religion* 28,47-61.
- Wood, C M 1996 Scripture, authenticity and truth. *The Journal of Religion* 96.
- Wuthnow, R 1989 The destructuring of American religion. *Society and faith* 89.
- 1993 The congregational century. *Cross Current* (Winter).
- Ziarek, E P 1996 The rhetoric of failure and deconstruction. *Philosophy* 96.
- Zuber-Skerritt, O 1996 *New Directions in action research*. London: Falmer Press.

## **GLOSSARY: AN EXPANDED BACKGROUND**

**Symptomatic, suggestive, descriptive and illustrative elucidations of *postmodern and deconstructive* approaches in COUNSELLING, HISTORY, LITERATURE, PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY AND THEOLOGY.**

*A PRIORI*

AGONISTICS

ALTERITY

ANALYSAND

ANOMIE

APORIA

BINARY THINKING

CATHRESIS

COGNITIVISM

CONTEXT

COUNSELLING

COUNSELLING THEORY

DECENTRING

DECONSTRUCTION

DESCARTES

DIFFERANCE

DIFFEREND

FIGURE OF SPEECH

FOUNDATIONALISM

FUNCTIONALISM

GRAMMATOLOGY

HEIDEGGER

HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE

HERMENEUTICS

HISTORY

INTERPRETATION

INTERTEXTUALITY

LITERARY THEORY

MODERN THEOLOGY

NOT-KNOWING

PARALOGY

POSITIVISM

POSTMODERNISM  
POST-STRUCTURALISM  
PRAGMATISM  
PRESENCE  
RATIONALISM  
READING  
RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE  
RHETORIC  
STRUCTURALISM  
TEXTUALITY  
THEOLOGY  
TROPES  
TRUTH  
WITTGENSTEIN

### ***A PRIORI***

From the Latin, *a priori*, “from what comes before”. “Knowledge” is acquired by deductive reasoning alone according to rationalist theories, irrespective of experience. Descartes sees reason as a faculty, for example, as creating innate *a priori* knowledge.

On the other hand, *a priori* knowledge is denied by the empiricists, such as David Hume and John Locke, who argue that only *a posteriori* knowledge, that which comes through experience, can truly be said to be knowable.

Many have argued that to deny *a priori* knowledge is to make it impossible to prove the existence of God, as He is not outwardly perceivable.

The existence of *a priori* truths is often appealed to in ethics, that is to say, that the fundamental moral ideals can be arrived at by the use of reason.

### **AGONISTICS**

It is a combative striving to overcome an opponent.

### **ALTERITY**

It is being different, unlike, dissimilar, distinct and diverse or it is a lack of identification with some part of one's personality or one's community.

### **ANALYSAND**

The so-called psychoanalytic patient is often referred to as an analysand.

### **ANOMIE**

It is social and personal instability, alienation and a sense of purposelessness caused by a steady erosion of standards and values.

### **APODICTIC TRUTH**

Apodictic truth is an imaginary concept of truth where we know something with absolute certainty with no possibility of mistakes.

### **APORIA**

It shows wonder and amazement before confusing puzzles and paradoxes of our lives and of life in general. Ancient philosophers, for example, Socrates, tried to evoke this attitude and did not try simply to provide answers to puzzles.

### **BINARY THINKING**

It is an approach where we see no gray, no fuzziness between categories. Everything is either black or white. The first concept is usually privileged to the disadvantage of the other, for example, man/woman and spirit/flesh.

### **CATHRESIS**

It is a literary term depicting the misuse or strain of words.

## COGNITIVISM

Cognitivism is the most influential general thesis in modern cognitive psychology. It is the view that behaviour is to be explained by a psychological theory which holds there to be an inner mental structure, comprised of mental processes instead of mental representations in a rule-governed manner. This theory involves ascription of beliefs and desires which aids us in making sense of and predicting behaviour. It relies on the assumption that individuals represent states of affairs internally and that they have cognitive states of contents by virtue of some relation to those representations. Thinking involves the systematic manipulation of such representations.

The problem with this theory is the inability to say precisely what content consists of.

## CONTEXT

A context comprises borders, frames, limits, fringes and margins, which in practice mark out and distinguish, separate and define, exclude and enclose. A modern context produces "certainty", clarity and correctness. The deconstruction of borders or contexts interrogates any and every specific determination, line of division and frame of jurisdiction. No border is guaranteed and no context is "saturable", final, any longer. Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written can be put between quotation marks. In so doing it can break with every given context, engendering endless new contexts in a manner which is illimitable. A context never creates itself *ex nihilo* (cf. Derrida 1972:185, 1977:220, quoted in Leitch 1983).

The effect of all this is to undermine context, depicting it as an arbitrary imposition, a discredited universal. When context is transformed, it is a useful mobile mechanism for breaking up traditional hermeneutics and finality in interpretations. It releases creativity and creates wider horizons.

The problem with modern contexts is that "con-text" implies a text and an environment, which necessarily means a difference exists between these entities. The text is framed and bounded. The context limits the text. Difference can separate text and context. Once borders are overrun and difference is set loose, context multiplies itself immeasurably. There is no limit. Context is mobile not rigid. It inaugurates difference and subverts stabilizing context.

Traditionally, context functions to curtail both textual dissemination and interpretive free play.

It ensures meaning and orderly reading. It promotes and protects tradition. Although the idea of context depends on a concept of “intertextuality”, it reduces it in the name of “law”. Context serves as border control. A text’s dependence on an infiltration by prior codes, concepts, conventions, practices and other texts appears as a strategic instrument, combating the old “law” of context. “Intertextuality” subverts context. “Intertextuality” posits both an un-centered historical enclosure and a decent red foundation for language. In so doing, it exposes “contextualisation” as limited and limiting, arbitrary and confining, self-serving and authoritarian, theological and political.

“Intertextuality” offers a liberating determinism. It is a disruptive power and potential for hermeneutic liberation. The unstable and disseminative energies of “intertextuality” characterize a deconstructive formulation of “intertextuality”. A realm of unstable verbal mirages replaces the old empirical world of stable fact and event. Linguistic units of stable products of representation show themselves as problematic imposing limited forms of order and regularity. These constricting formations bear an ideological charge and ethical force. To escape narrowness and rigidity and to break up all such fixed and exclusionary forms, postmodernism uses strategies of expansion and inclusion.

The aim is never to assert a dominant position beyond history. It seeks dispersion, decentring, free play, discontinuity and dissemination. The play of contexts has no limit and ensures the mobility of context.

## **COUNSELLING**

Modern counselling is described as “...a process of defining, understanding and addressing a specific problem, as well as advice and suggestions given by a person acknowledged as being an expert in one or more areas, such as in marriage, dependance on substances (drugs), vocations or child-rearing...professional assistance in coping with emotional, vocational, marital, educational, rehabilitation, retirement, and other personal problems. The counsellor makes use of such techniques as guidance, advice, discussion, and the administration and interpretation of tests” (Corsini 1999).

## **COUNSELLING THEORY**

Deconstruction delves into established assumptions and challenges the foundations of even the most accepted and time-honoured counselling theories. It breaks down frameworks by unearthing and undoing entrenched assumptions and “doctrine” that underlie them. The theory



that events and history of “trauma” can be known with certainty is being shunted. Its *modus operandi* is to carefully disassemble all reified and rigid belief systems. It de-sanctifies and destabilizes secure models erected from seemingly solid, valid and reliable convictions. Deconstruction addresses the impossibility of any theory or method that answers the complex questions of people in pain with confident answers. It confronts us with the limits of what is possible for human thought to accomplish.

Deconstruction strips theory of its ideological vested interests in which it always comes packaged. Deconstruction serves to tame theory. It disturbs institutional as well as individual complacency; undermines monistic thinking and evokes increased indeterminacy. It puts everything in question and wipes the slate clean. It also augurs well for new beginnings. It unsettles us to the core and thereby opens our vision to newly reveal what may have been looked at but not seen before.

Although there is no pure language in any field, counselling theories, with their dogmatic commitments to particular approaches and schools, compound non-neutrality with the logocentricity of its language. There are no objective tools in counselling. It cannot start from an uncontaminated beginning. The conceptual tools that are used are inevitably implicated in counselling. There can be no claim to knowledge let alone superior knowledge. The ideal of a transcending ground of knowledge to know for certain about a person’s problems turns out to be impossible. Are the ongoing presumptions of error not the basis of all knowledge? “If nobody loves theory, it is probably because too much is expected of it” (*The anatomy of psychotherapy*, L. Friedman, quoted in Karasu 1996:13).

By definition, every theory represents an ideal or hypothetical set of facts, principles and circumstances.

Theories are vulnerable to change as they always include unproven assumptions. Modern theories become frameworks of data and clear explanation of events, which operate both to guide thinking to begin with and to continuously shape and reshape it thereafter. They steer observations by providing focus and direction, forming restrictive boundaries for what is included and necessarily excluded. It forces closure upon what one looks at and sees and, in a more extreme sense, suppresses information by eliminating whatever appears inconsistent or competitive with preferred pre-existing beliefs. In this way, theories may reify that which is favored or familiar and, wittingly or unwittingly, obliterate the unflavoured and unfamiliar.

In counselling belief, systems are regarded as enduring “myths” in postmodernism, which are

historically sanctioned and consensually confirmed. Theory of counselling can even serve as a refuge from life and can form a personally intimate connection to the particular counsellor as a “dwelling for the self”. Theoretical constructs are by their very nature hypothetical and open, to be potentially proven or disproved, de-mystified or discarded.

Theories have the tendency to proliferate to fill the gaps in so-called knowledge. As metaphors become cut off from their reference, they tend to be reified and become objects of magical thinking. Instead of remaining provisional, the metaphor itself is transformed into the immutable essence. The theory in fashion becomes the final description as the metaphor promises more than it can deliver. Theories are thus misused. A counsellor’s most cherished theories are at a high risk of becoming self-fulfilling prophecies. The proposed theory, which is usually consistent with the personalities of its followers, can subjectively alter the perception of a person’s life. The consequence is that theory dominates specific data collection, which tends to confirm the same theory. The danger is always that the singular correctness of a person’s theory can inhibit the counsellor not to see beyond it.

In the more than 140 forms of psychotherapy practiced in modernity, not one given paradigm is able to resolve the problems of people in pain but new paradigms have to be invented.

## **DECENTRING**

Decentring moves the focus away from the self as the controlling centre in personal and social life. It is an attitude to recognize another person’s thoughts and feelings even if they differ from a person’s own.

A decentralized organization is one in which many decisions are made by employees and managers of all levels.

## **DECONSTRUCTION**

Deconstruction is probably the most exciting approach in post-structuralism. It is a form of textual analysis, applied to literature and philosophy but also history, anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and theology. To ask “what is deconstruction?” is to pose a question from the very realm of “essences” which deconstruction contests. We may describe, however, how it functions. It operates through an “inconsistent logic”. This notion is a deliberate contradiction in terms, since logic is usually defined as not contravening the “laws” of thought, whereas an “inconsistent logic” is explicitly self-contradictory and against reason.

The deconstructive strategy is, however, the demonstration of self-contradiction in the assumptions of the text. It differs radically from the standard philosophical techniques of finding flaws in the logic of an opponent's argument. The contradictions uncovered, reveal an underlying incompatibility between what the writer believes in the arguments and what the text itself actually says. This gap between authorial intention and textual meaning is a key focus of deconstruction (cf. Howells 1996).

Deconstruction is the undoing or the exposing of assumptions and of internal contradictions of a system of thought and of theory. It is the critical process of always finding more meanings and explanations for concepts, ideas and researches. It can involve "taking apart" and dismantling the whole system on which statements and assumptions rest, examining elements in details to determine whether everything fits with everything else (cf. Corsini 1999:254).

Deconstruction in counselling subverts taken-for-granted practices and "realities", those so-called truths that are split off from the conditions and control of their production, those disembodied ways of speaking that hide their biases and prejudices and those familiar practices of self and of relationships that are dominating (cf. White 1992:121).

Deconstruction is an approach to elucidate the role that personal power, subjectivity and political interests play in the way people explain and maintain psychological, social and theological phenomena. Its assumption is that knowledge, values and morality cannot be fully objective or detached from personal motives, social and cultural contexts of the person making those claims. It is a critical and thorough examination of the assumptions and values implicit in practice, research and theory.

Deconstruction seeks by a process of retracing, the element in the system which is a-logical and contradictory, the thread in the text in question which will unravel it all, or the loose stone which will pull down the whole building. Deconstruction annihilates the ground on which the building stands by showing that the text has already annihilated that ground. Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself.

Deconstruction is not a critical operation; the critical is its target. Deconstruction is deconstruction of critical dogmatics (cf. Derrida, quoted in Leich 1983:205). Deconstruction turns on criticism and on itself. That which is unquestionable melts down into the indecisive. Security and certainty falters. Deconstruction is always distinct from analysis or a "critique", as these disturbances in text are not internal to textual analysis. There is no getting around

text; eventually it comes to haunt every project.

In Latin, *concludere*, means “to shut up”. This means peace and quiet, constriction, confinement and guarded silence. Conclusions serve as guardrails of truth, as their protection. A conclusion renders results, passes judgments, reduces details and effects settlement. Deconstruction questions coherence, unity, order and closure. It undermines the taming of difference, the tightening of borders and the logic of last supplements. It assaults conclusions. The person who deconstructs emerges as a connoisseur who stops at the insignificant, gazes at its surface and lets exaggerated wonder become everything as it relishes its freedom. It is the secondary, eccentric, and the borderline cases, the marginal, parasitic and lateral which are important. This way hope lies. Limitations devour creativity. Deconstruction somehow unmasks the ministry of meaning, the cure of history and the unmediated prophecy of truth. We face, only fleetingly, utter discontinuity and *différance*.

## DESCARTES

For Descartes, the “true” and correct method enables one to solve problems rather than to “open” them. The roots of this attitude lie in his obsession with certainty, encompassing the clear and distinct knowledge of his own existence. This claim is not only *that* he is, but also *what* he is. He claims an identity of essence and existence, of identity between thinking and existence, or about direct and certain knowledge between one’s thoughts and the world, which Aquinas attributed only to God, for only God could be unquestioning self-intelligence. Descartes calls in God only to confirm us in our self-obsession or self-idolatry. This reaches certainty and the truth about truth (cf. Versfeld and Meyer 1966:17).

## DIFFÉRANCE

Derrida’s neologism *différance* captures three significations:

“To differ” – to be dissimilar, divergent, different or unlike in quality, form or character.

“*Differre*” (Latin) – to separate, disband, disperse or scatter.

“To defer” to postpone, suspend, delay, adjourn.

The first two mark out distinctions, while the third refers to differences in temporality.

*Différance* is more original than being, to be or to exist. No human concept comes before it. It invades every concept and entity. Nothing escapes it. As a paradox, it even permits sameness, repetition and identity. (When, for instance, we proclaim twins are identical, we

necessarily assume their difference.) All similarities are produced out of differences. Thus, difference is constitutive of similarities, resemblances and repetitions. Différance is not another name for God.

Différance is not a name, a master concept, a unique word or a founding concept of something as a nominal entity. There is no name for this phenomenon. It is neither a word nor a concept. It has neither essence nor existence. It does not belong to a category of being. Différance is not capable of being something, a state, force or power in the world, to which we could give all kinds of names. It is neither a process nor a product. Not only is there no realm of différance, but it is also the subversion of every realm. *This is threatening, as we always desire a "presence", a transcendent security beyond this world, which is an impossibility (see "presence")*.

Différance cannot be exposed, as we can expose only what can become present or manifest; what can be shown, is presented as being-present.

The aim of différance is to disrupt centres of determination of life, sites of dominating "truths" and the interpretation of stable, harmonious and present entities. In this broken world, we usually crave a centre, a "truth" and a final place of rest and certainty. Différance puts us on edge not to worship idols.

The aim of différance is creative and improving energy in full force (cf. Leitch 1983:41-45).

## **DIFFEREND**

Differend indicates a different form of language. This is Lyotard's concept that indicates that one party cannot voice complaints or issues because the other insists on speaking within a different language discourse, language genre or "language game", for example, such as narration over against speculation.

## **FIGURE OF SPEECH**

This is a collective term in the rhetoric for all kinds of striking or unusual configurations of words or phrases. This variation can affect all aspects of the linguistic system, the semantic, graphic, phonological, morphological and pragmatic patterns. It occurs through repetition, for example,

parallelism and alliteration; also through extension, for example, parenthesis; through abbreviation, for example, ellipsis; through permutations or transposition, for example, palindrome. Certain types of replacement are figures of speech, for example, trope (Bussmann 1996:164-165).

## **FOUNDATIONALISM**

This is the conviction that there are apodictic, self-evident and finally conclusive truths. These self-evident and obvious truths form the ultimate basis from which other knowledge claims are deduced. Postmodernism claims that all knowledge and truth claims need justification and that all apodictic claims contain certain assumptions to be accepted in trust.

## **FUNCTIONALISM (PSYCHOLOGY)**

The functionalist attitude was a natural outcome of the widespread interest in Darwinism and in the “doctrine” of the “survival of the fittest”. In many respects functionalism was the precursor of behaviourism.

Functionalism stressed the mind as a functioning and useful part of the “organism”. It emphasised such techniques as human intelligence tests and controlled experiments to test the ability of animals to learn and solve problems. This represented a clear break with the introspective methods favoured by other 19<sup>th</sup> century psychologists. James and Dewey were the earliest proponents of this approach. From 1890 to 1910, it reached its peak. Today it is no longer regarded as a separate psychological “doctrine”, but it has a lasting influence, especially as intelligence and aptitude testing.

## **GRAMMATOLOGY**

It is Derrida’s term for the skill, art and knowledge of writing.

## **HEIDEGGER**

Husserl claimed that phenomenology should use pure descriptions of the “things themselves”. Martin Heidegger as a student, colleague and severe critic of Husserl claimed that phenomenology should make manifest what is hidden in ordinary, everyday experience, or being-in-the-world. In *Being and time* (1927; tr. 1962) he described what he called the structure

of “everydayness”, being-in-the-world, which is an interconnected system of purposes, roles, functions, intentions and tasks. One main task for him was to discount the Cartesian subject-object dualistic split, the procedure and practice to reduce “representation” to “presentation” and the dichotomy between theory and practice, within which the “ego” was presented. He consistently called the human being “*Dasein*”, which has not been properly translated.

It seems as if he maintains that one is what one does in society and the world and therefore, a reduction to one’s own private experience is impossible. Consequently, he has emphasised the vital social role of language and claimed that language speaks (through) a person. As action consists of a direct grasp of life and “objects”, it is not necessary to posit a special mental activity called “a meaning”, to account for one’s intentions. “Being thrown” into the world among “things” in the continuous acts of practice and of realising projects is a more fundamental and direct kind of intention than in merely thinking *about* or observing a situation.

According to Heidegger the dispute between idealism and realism operates with the Cartesian concept of the dualism between subjectivity and objectivity and needs to be unmasked as false. It also portrays the deceptive Cartesian dichotomy between theory and practice. As an answer to this problem, Heidegger insisted on a phenomenological description of our existence as always already “in the world”.

Instead of being isolated centres of consciousness, we are always already agents in the world, acting and reacting; the “real” is always already encountered. Realists try to prove and demonstrate the existence of the objective world. They try to close the gap between our minds and the world – a gap, which according to Heidegger, simply did not exist. If we realise that we are always already in the world, the scepticism about the knowledge of the external world simply collapses. There is no gap between self and the world, subject and object, and mind and reality that needs to be bridged. The “scandal”, according to Heidegger, is that people think the gap is to be bridged by a correct representation. Realists pretend to be able to observe the world from above, as if it were from a God’s-eye-point-of-view. We cannot picture ourselves as transcendental subjects confronting objects without contexts, upon which we subsequently confer intelligibility (cf. Kerr 1997:128-143).

The fundamental change in Heidegger, known as the “*Kehre*”, was, according to him, not a shift away from these issues mentioned above, but is instead a “play” within the content matter itself. *Die Kehre spielt im Sachverhalt selbst*. One can rather speak of different emphases in Heidegger and three emphases can be pointed out to be important.

For Heidegger (phase 1) in *Being and time*, the question about being or existence is set out within the parameters of transcendental philosophy, but towards its denouement. Transcendental philosophy was regarded to be able to observe objectively and unbiasedly. This “observation” was subjected to an *Abbau*, a “destruction”; it was dismantled and transfigured from within.

Heidegger’s “ontological-ontic” differentiation takes the place of the transcendental-empirical doublet and an existential analysis of the *Dasein* replaces the search for the person’s representational knowledge about “objects”. Through this process, the transcendental knowledge of Descartes and especially of Kant becomes existential from within the world. Objective knowledge becomes engaged knowledge within historical, cultural and social contexts rather than *a priori* forms of perception resident in a subject beyond all contexts in the inner self.

Another important emphasis of Heidegger (phase 1) is the liberation of epistemological servitude to a representational theory of truth and final certainty. Knowledge claims for Heidegger are the pre-predicative understanding of being involved in the world. Our knowledge is always already involved in the world and objects cannot be represented by knowledge.

This view also replaces the semiotic doublet, signifier-signified. An object or God cannot be at hand to be pointed to. Signs and signals cannot show us the referents or “signifieds”. The world and God is already a “showing” and a letting be seen, the notion of “*Aufzeigen*”, not within the framework of Cartesian representation and signification, but within the context of praxis-oriented intentions, a “*Vorhabe*”, within practical life or practical projects.

Within this context the important concept of “care”, “*Sorge*”, as a basic aspect of and approach to human life, is emphasised. We can draw the conclusion that practical theology and counselling is about the “care” of people and of God’s world, not from “supernatural” principles, or from objective knowledge, but from within the everyday issues and problems of people and society.

Language becomes an issue for Heidegger (in phase 1). Language is seen as a constitutive of *Dasein*, replacing the Cartesian “subject-object, theory-practice split, representation-becoming-presentation” human being. Language is grounded in praxis and it describes meaning from within the world and not objectively from without it. Language is not the neutral channel to convey messages and meaning.

Regarding language and being or existence, Heidegger (phase 2), as seen especially in the



*Letter on humanism*, portrays a shift towards language as the “house of being”. The meaning of being, the “*Sinn des Seins*”, is now in the background and the truth of existence, “*Wahrheit des Seins*”, is emphasised. Existence (praxis) comes to the fore in the framework of language creating truth. To attain this, an “*Abbau*”, a “destruction” or deconstruction is necessary as a dismantling of sediment and deceptive assumptions, views, beliefs and convictions. Truth, communication and language co-mingle in an epiphany of disclosure or revelation in praxis. By this “showing” of truth, the Cartesian bifurcation of truth and its communication, as a second stage, is effectively overcome. We can draw the conclusion that human creativity is vital in counselling, where people in pain take responsibility in the praxis of everyday life and for their lives and society, where there are eventful happenings comprising the enlightening experiences of truths through the evocative work of the Holy Spirit.

Heidegger (Phase 3) leads to an erasure of being or the concept of existence, a crossing out, an X over being or existence and a transfiguration of language into “*Sagen*”, a saying or a declaring, indicating a poetic type of symbolic speech, replacing instrumentalist language. These moves are more radical deconstructive manoeuvres, heralding the end of hermeneutics as certain understanding. “Poetic” language moves from language as a topic and object of investigation to “*Andenken*”, a poetic commemoration of the performance of language in praxis. The grammar of being or existence, spelling out meaning and certainty, is subject to an erasure, an X, and replaced with the saga about the “*Ereignis*”, the event of appropriation, the opening up of true life. “Poetic” language is rather “a showing” than a referring to; it is a setting forth, instead of an explaining and it is evocative rather than demonstrative. The Cartesian subject-centred thinking is thoroughly displaced. We draw the conclusion that this metamorphosis of language and existence is the praxis-oriented approach of the saga of our caring for people and life, in the opening of the face of God through his Holy Spirit within the issues of this world.

We must point out that Heidegger’s arguments in phase 3 are not an account of a final saga, a “*Letztebegrundung*”, a final conclusion for or basis of our thinking and action. We can conclude from Heidegger that we cannot think or act the beginning or end, as we are always already in life and within its beginnings and ends, as we are enclosed in God, and we are in Christ, within God (cf. Schragg 1994:159-175).

## **HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE**

This is a concept of Heidegger, extensively used by his student Gadamer and eventually incorporated into the therapy theory of Anderson and Goolishian. For Heidegger it meant that one’s study of a text could not be linear but circular. One cannot understand the beginning until

one has understood the end and one did not understand the end until one had read it through from the beginning. This translates into therapy theory so as to say one's understanding of a person in pain must move back and forth in an interactive dialogue with what the person says and with the script of the "trauma".

## HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics aims at the understanding of meaning and truth. It maintains trust in language to say something meaningful about something to someone. Hermeneutics as a "doctrine" of interpretation developed from a method of text interpretation to involvement with the text and eventually to interpretation as a fundamental characteristic of being human. The context of time in which the text has been written and the distance from the time of writing necessitates "the unification of horizons" (Gadamer). This distance in time and the unification never makes understanding conclusive, but makes interpretation possible.

Derrida queries the borders of hermeneutics and asks whether it is possible "to own" contents from the past. He describes hermeneutics as "good will grasping at power". The question is whether the claiming of meaning does not install a hierarchical relationship where a reduction of the past (text) is manipulated, from "the other" to the same. The necessary aim is to achieve meaning and certainty in hermeneutics, at the risk of transgressing the borders of meaning towards reducing uniqueness to the familiar.

For postmodernism and deconstruction the text is not about "reality", the "object" about which is written, but about the writing and reading subject. If there is any trace of "presence" of the "object" of meaning, it is always postponed, based on the absence of final certainty and meaning. The sign, speech or writing is always a substitute for something else, which is not present. The sign is thus a supplement of that which is absent. *Hermeneutics tries to bring the absent into presence*, but cannot. It will always fail. There is no origin of meaning. It must always be "created" in the contemporary situation.

Hermeneutics needs "intertextuality" urgently as texts can never refer directly to "reality". There are always numerous texts, citations, presentations, referrals, productions and quotations, of that which is referred to, within and before the text. Originality is a problematic concept in hermeneutics.

The problem with hermeneutics from a deconstructive point of view is that it has no regard for singularity, the exception and the uniqueness of events and individuals. The fact that an event

takes place at a precise moment in history and in a specific context makes universalising and generalising impossible. The border of hermeneutics is the situated and dated event. The untranslatable, the irreducible and the irreplaceable make the hermeneutics of the poetic, for example, impossible. It is a misunderstanding that Derrida rejects the metaphor as he honours it as creating something in the present, something unique. Deconstruction protects the uniquely singular person, name and event, which is “untouchable” against the overpowering abuse of hermeneutics to represent them in certain signifying terms and concepts.

Derrida does not wish to replace philosophy with rhetoric, or the concept with metaphor. He wishes to notice the difference and tension between them and to enhance the worth of the supplement in them. For Derrida, the text determines the interpretation thereof; for hermeneutics (Gadamer) the text is subservient to the interpretation. Consequently, hermeneutics and deconstruction cannot commingle or merge. The differences are too fundamental and valid communication towards integration will not succeed. This is the reason why the discussion between Derrida and Gadamer could not succeed.

Deconstruction and hermeneutics operate in different paradigms. Deconstruction focuses on the unique text, hermeneutics on interpretation and the meaning of the text.

Deconstruction adores the indefinite and the unique, whereas hermeneutics glorifies the tradition *as interpreted*.

For deconstruction truth raises its head, folds it and retreats and we can never finally own it or take it into our hands. Hermeneutics claims that meaning makes sense as the other; the unknown is caught in the fusing or coinciding of horizons and captured in understanding.

For hermeneutics the centre, the fundamental and the determining are important and highlighted to produce clarity and meaning towards certain understanding. The problem is that if the other is reduced to the familiar, it is impossible to return to the other, or to find the other again. For deconstruction the emphasis is always on the underdog, the suffering, the unimportant and the decentred. Life in its comprehensive fullness is to be adored and uplifted in praise of details, albeit tentatively; everyone is important and the domination of understanding, reducing the unique one to a meaningless figure, is to be overcome in practical theology and counselling (cf. Blans 1998:208-232).

## **HISTORY**

History consists of memory, substitution, signifiers, figures, difference and texts, and not of

“reality”. The historian always makes a favourite choice regarding a particular “em-plot-ment”, the creation of a plot or story. We refer to the whole process of “creating” history as one of style. The historical text may emerge in a particular style, as a satire, romance, comedy, tragedy or a combination of two or more. The “facts” of history are chosen and interpreted according to ideologies. These assumptions can be conservative, liberal, radical or anarchist. The historian’s explanations, hypotheses and interpretations of the “laws” of history display preferred modes of deduction, including “organicist”, mechanistic, causal, “formist” and “contextualist” approaches. Taken together, these structural sets of “emplotment”, arguments and ideologies comprise the style describing *the ethical, epistemological and aesthetic aspects of history writing*.

<b>TROPE</b> (literary)	<b>EMPLOTMENT</b> (explanatory)	<b>ARGUMENT</b> (rationally)	<b>IDEOLOGY</b> (politically)
metaphor	romantic	formist	anarchistic
metonymy	tragic	mechanistic	radical
synecdoche	comic	organicist	conservative
irony	satiric	contextualist	liberal

(cf. Munslow 1997).

A definite interpretation, an explicit perspective and implicit assumptions always enter into historiography in a few ways:

Aesthetically, in the choice of conservative, radical or liberal narrative strategy. Epistemologically, in the choice of an explanatory paradigm, comprising “knowledge”, beliefs, convictions and prejudices.

Ethically, in the choice of a strategy by which the ideological implications of a given historical representation can be drawn for the comprehension of current social problems or personal attitudes.

It is all but impossible, to assign priority to one or another of the three moments thus distinguished, or to untangle them. Despite what historians and learners of history believe, meta-historical hermeneutic operations always determine the writing or conveying of history. Emerson denied that there was any history; there was only biography, he said. *History is always a personal “creation” according to the context, assumptions and priorities of the interpreter* (cf. Leitch 1983).

Traditionally, the aim of writing or conveying history was the attempt to recapture what actually happened in the past. We “reproduce” the past, even if we had to refigure events reported in documents as an object of knowledge. Postmodern “contextualisation”, however, is not just a narrative version of empiricism, which endorses the link between statement and referent. It is rather a means of understanding that precedes empiricism. We do not report the past objectively, we create it as we deploy language to define the concepts used, to characterise the kind of relationships we imagine between them. We do not validate history by the appeal to past “reality”, but how that “reality” is reproduced in writing. *We do not judge history as if we were outside history.*

The tropologically determined or prefigured strategies of explanation allow an inventory from which to construct explanations or interpretations of the past. No set of historical circumstances is inherently tragic or comic, etcetera; the historian writes the “plot” by imposing a judgement on the events. The “employment” becomes the vehicle of explanation. History is an act of *historical* “creation”. Precision in the “generation” of facts is literally impossible, as “facts” are propositions or events under a description that are turned into “creative narratives”, explained by arguments and offered as sustained and coherent ideological positions (cf. Munslow 1997:158-160).

## **INTERPRETATION**

All “facts”, “data” structures and “laws” are interpretations towards constructions, assembled descriptions and formulations. There are no facts and data as such, only assemblages. All interpretive orderings, whether psychological, historical, sociological, theological, logical, dialectical or structural, are acts of “mastery”. Interpretation comprises controlling and ordering and demonstrates authority. It is more of a job to interpret interpretations than to interpret things... (Montaigne, “Of Experience”, *Essays*, quoted in Leich 1983:167).

Deconstruction of interpretation is an interpretation of interpretation. Traditionally, we endeavour to establish a stable centre of truth, a signified or referent, which escapes the activities of the signifier and of fluctuation, “play” or vacillation. “Logocentric” hermeneutics centres, deconstruction decentres. Deconstruction continues access to the edge. Deconstructive “interpretation” is inherently transgressing the borders. Stability gives way to vertigo, identities to differences, unities to multiplicities, decentring to no privileged centre, ontology to the philosophy of language, epistemology to rhetoric, mystification to demystification, and hermeneutical interpretation to deconstruction. Deconstruction promotes reading as simultaneous libidinal, social and political, and favours textual intervention on

fragmented levels as a celebration of a free life.

## **INTERTEXTUALITY**

“Intertextuality” means that the text is not an independent, autonomous and unified entity, but a set of relations with other texts. The grammar and lexicon of language drag along numerous bits and pieces of history. In deconstruction, this is called “traces”. The text resembles unaccountable collections of incompatible sources, ideas, convictions and beliefs. The genealogy of the text is necessarily an incomplete network of conscious and unconscious borrowed fragments. Tradition is a merger and a fusion. Every text is an inter-text (cf. Leitch 1983:58-59).

## **LITERARY THEORY**

Literary theory is the body of ideas and methods, the tools, by which we attempt to understand literature. It formulates the relationship between author and text, from both the standpoint and context of the author and an analysis of their thematic presence within texts. It shows various approaches for understanding the historical context in interpretation, as well as the relevance of linguistic and unconscious elements of the text. Literary theorists trace the history and development of genres such as narrative, the dramatic and the lyric, the novel and the short story.

In recent years literary theory sought to explain the degree to which the text is more the product of a culture and a context than the product of a modern individual author and in turn how those texts help to create the culture, contexts and meaning.

It does not refer to the meaning of a text, but to the theories that reveal what literature can mean. This is sometimes designated as “critical theory” or “theory”, and now undergoing a transformation into “cultural theory” within the discipline of literary studies. It refers to any guidelines or “principles” derived from internal analyses of texts, or from knowledge external to the text that can be applied in multiple interpretive situations. All critical practice regarding literature depends on an underlying structure of ideas. Theory provides a *rationale* for what constitutes the subject matter of criticism (Internet encyclopaedia of philosophy 2002-07-29).

## **MODERN THEOLOGY**

Modern theology tries to organise theological knowledge as a comprehensive system of thought

around questions of the nature of unchanging, eternal realities that is logically consistent and internally coherent. Theological truth is determined by rational arguments and was encoded in propositions that were linked together by reason.

Underlying modern theology was a belief that human rationality is based on universal “laws” of thought. True logic is translucent and its model is mathematics. Religious thought was logically consistent. The goal of modern theology was to present a single, unified picture of truth that is comprehensive and potentially exhaustive. Like modern science, a priority was the search for a grand unified theory of fundamental unchanging realities and for universal structures and values that underlie the flux of life and history. Biblical history is the “data” on which they build modern theology. Modern theologians, however, seek more than truth in the context of history; they look for the unchanging eternal truth structures that underlie “reality”.

A positivist stance was followed in modern theology, following a direct correspondence between the Bible and theology, also called a one-to-one correspondence between the messages in the texts and their interpretation by the theologians as objective “observers”. Theology is the fall-out of this correspondence. This approach assumed that the theologian as careful scholar of the text could understand the meaning intended by the writer accurately and without bias. The cultural and historical background and personal experiences and contexts of the theologian do not enter the picture. Because theology is seen as an accurate and unbiased reading of the Bible, and as the Bible interpretation is regarded as true, theology itself becomes absolute truth. Modern positivist theology claims both biblical interpretational authority and theological certitude.

The assumption in modern theology is that precise words, exact algorithmic reasoning and carefully defined concepts refer directly to “reality”. This guarantees precise meanings and certitude without distortion or loss. Consequently, faith is defined as understanding and affirming cognitive creedal statements without mental reservation. *The problem is that faith, feelings and responses are taken as the products of theology and not as its heart.*

As theology is seen to require precise, technical knowledge of the Scriptures, dogma history and “Christian” philosophy, it should be done by “specialists”. “Experts” are to determine the correctness of the everyday Christians’ belief and theology. Theology is restricted to the iron race of “correct knowledge” and corresponding faith as an entry point to Christian life.

A main problem with modern theology is that truth is seen as one truth, reason as a unity and humanity as one humanity, with the assumption that God can communicate with us and we with

one another through this “unity channel” without distortion towards one true and overarching theology. The fact is that each one has an own theology, as a reaction to the revelations of God through the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Ignoring our finiteness and the worshipping of our minds are to be thwarted.

A major differentiation is to be made between the Scriptures as records of Divine revelations and theology as a human endeavour. In postmodern theology, everyday people work with possible and probable truths and especially with mysteries where there are many paradoxes.

Postmodern theology does not work with eternal, universal structures of reality, as we have only history as the basis of God’s work and self-revelation. In its search for unchanging truth, modern theology ignores the story of God’s deeds unfolding in history. Greek thought operated with a radical dichotomy between a realm of ideas and a realm of events, claiming the ideas, and not history, as ultimately real. Consequently, many regard Christ’s coming into the flesh and all the Christian aspects of salvation, at best, as a mythological way of expressing timeless and eternal truths. In modernism, problems of everyday life are not the context for practical theology. Faith is not regarded as a personal response to Christ that manifests itself in personal theology, in obedience and a transformed life, confronting everyday issues in society.

“Experts” determine modern theology and, consequently, from the view of naïve realism, there can be only one right theology. The ideal is total agreement and unity; disagreements lead to confrontation, accusations of heresy and schisms. Modern theology finds it difficult to live with radical differences, as the aim is certainty, unity and certitude.

The natural-supernatural distinction implicit in Cartesian and positivist worldviews deeply influenced modern theology, creating a division between “evangelism” and the “social gospel”. Many thought you could have the one without the other and rejected this dichotomous message of modern theology, while accepting only the assistance and social benefits without the “spiritual”.

Modern theology had to face many developments eroding its foundations. The idea that there is only one truth and only one way to represent “reality” was shattered by non-Euclidian geometry and non-Cantor algebra, as well as Einstein’s relativity theory and Bohr’s theory regarding quantum mechanics. Unbiased observation and the passive receiving of true knowledge reflected through the senses and innate mental categories were shown to be determined within historical contexts and value-laden “facts” (cf. Hiebert 1999:18-22, 37, 107).



Modern theology had to face the issue of the three dimensions of referees:

I call it as it is – pre-modern and naïve realism and naïve idealism.

I call it as I see it – modern and the representation of “facts”.

When I call it, it is called – postmodern and the creation of knowledge.

*Modern theology* is comprehensive, with “supernatural” systematic formulations, eternal values and one right theology, “representing” the one true revelation of God, focusing on the right understanding of texts. Theology is directly “supernaturally-given”.

*Postmodern theology* is historically and humanly based theology of every person, as well as community-based, as reactions to the revelations of God in the world, focussing on the social and personal contexts and texts. Theology is a human creation with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### **“NOT-KNOWING”**

This is Harlene Anderson and Harry Goolishian’s concept for the recommended approach that therapists should have towards the people they counsel. Postmodern counsellors avoid taking dogmatic postures and always remain flexible towards the perspectives of the people they counsel, as well as adaptable in their own convictions.

### **PARALOGY**

It is Lyotard’s concept, indicating a stimulating discussion that generates ideas next to other ideas, without necessarily resulting in consensus. These paradoxical convictions can stand validly next to one another. These new ideas emerging as paralogy, allow us to describe concepts locally and provisionally in their own context.

### **POSITIVISM**

Positivism seeks to create universal and general or “generalisable” theories over and above contexts and subjective histories. The postmodern focuses on the local, the detail and the unique.

### **POSTMODERNISM**

Postmodernism's assumption is that knowledge, values and morality cannot be fully objective or detached from the motives, social and cultural contexts, history and traditions of the person making these claims. Postmodernism is a critical and thorough examination of the assumptions and values implicit in practice, research and theory to find the contexts and history determining them. Convictions, beliefs and views cannot transcend the time and place where they were produced and they are to be limited to the context where they were produced. These convictions are never value-free, but people should disclose their values and priorities so that others can scrutinize them.

## **POST-STRUCTURALISM**

Post-structuralism can be regarded as a branch of contemporary critical theory, particularly dominant in France, which may be seen in such areas as history, philosophy, literary theory, theology and psychology. The implications of post-structuralism are immense. The following notions are a few of the characteristics of post-structuralism:

Post-structuralists attempt to overcome the biased tendency, apparently endemic in thought, to view life in terms of pairs of opposites, for example spirit/flesh, where the first one is privileged.

It rejects the primacy of the subject and accepts the consequences of the "decentring" of the subject. The subject is viewed as a project, a focal point of forces rather than a creative agent.

Literary work is regarded as a web of other texts, whose meanings are produced by its readers rather than by authorial intention.

The core of psychological alienation in counselling is for Lacan the inescapable dominance of the language of others.

Post-structuralist history explores the political, social and institutional structures in terms of the relationship between meaning and power. The post-structuralist theory questions the basis of the relationship between the subject, language, history and life in general (Howells 1996).

## **PRESENCE**

The *locus classicus* of presence is the mind, which directly knows its meaning in itself in a direct

and unmediated fashion. In modernism, this is the basis of self-presence, of certainty and the foundational centre of certain knowledge. With the centring or foundational point, a bird's-eye-view overseeing everything, certain meaning, presence of truth and final certainty can be procured. The maintaining of "presence" is based on the assumption that the mind can communicate directly and accurately with itself and with the world towards pristine truths.

## **RATIONALISM**

It comes from the Latin, *ratio*, "reason". It is a system of thought that emphasises the role of reason in obtaining knowledge, in contrast to empiricism, which emphasizes the role of experience, especially sense perception. It is primarily identified with Descartes who believed that mathematics and geometry represented the ideal for all thinking, including philosophy and science. His conviction was that by means of reason alone certain universal and self-evident truths could be discovered and from which the remaining contents of knowledge could be deduced. He believed that these self-evident truths were innate and were not derived from experience.

Rationalism in ethics is the claim that certain primary moral ideas are innate in humanity and that such moral principles are self-evident to the rational faculty.

Rationalism in theology is the claim that the fundamental principles of religion are innate or self-evident and that revelation is not necessary. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, rationality has played chiefly an atheistic role in theology.

## **READING**

In deconstruction, all reading is necessarily "misreading". Meaning is never pristinely certain. Texts are "unreadable". Reading does not transport truth, but is a form of transmutation. When you repeat something in a text, it is no longer the same as you have shown preference to choose that piece and you quote it in *your* context. Repetition is subversive as it summons difference. There can never be correct or objective readings, only more or less energetic, interesting, careful and pleasurable readings (cf. Leitch 1983:58-59).

## **RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE**

Modernism is confident that human language is reasonably reliable when referring to the realm of life in general, but not certain when referring to the sphere of religion. Religious language

can be compared to glass. One cannot see clean glass, but experience only the consequences thereof. There are a number of different convictions regarding religious language:

1. Language is univocal . Carl Henry believes that language, which refers to God and humanity, has exactly the same meaning. According to this view, there is no problem with language.
2. Language is analogical. We can postulate that there is an analogy between what a word or a concept means when it applies to humanity and when it applies to God. This is known as the theory of analogical predication. St Thomas of Aquinas is perhaps the greatest proponent of this perspective.
3. Language is equivocal. Language cannot refer to the “infinite”. Some mystics and representatives of “negative theology” take this route. St. John of the Cross is a good example of this position.
4. Metaphysical language is meaningless. Only propositions that can be empirically verified have meaning. This is the conviction of the logical positivists, for example, A. Ayer and R. Carnap.
5. Religious language is moral discourse. Language about God is really language about how people should behave towards each other as well as towards life. The notion of God serves as a “regulative ideal” (Kant) to grant validity to the ethical imperatives. R. Braithwaite and A. Ritschl hold this position.
6. Religious language is metaphorical and symbolic. Language contains helpful metaphors and symbols about God, but there is no way to substantiate them ontologically or realistically. This is the position of P. Tillich who does not believe that we can talk about God as a “being” the same way as we talk about “beings”. God is rather the metaphorical and symbolic “ground of being”.
7. Religious language is a mode of signification. This view agrees that there is an ontological or a “realistic” distinction between this life and God, but denies the linguistic distinction. “Reality” can be signified by language, but not completely, for example, we can know that God loves, but we cannot know how God loves. This is the position of W. Alston.
8. All “language forms” or “language games” exist within particular “forms of life”.

Speaking a language is an activity. Meaning is thus best understood as “use” of language. Words and concepts do not have meaning, they have usage. Thus speaking about God in the context of life or of a religious community is as valid as an other activity. L. Wittgenstein, P. Holmer and P. Van Buren hold this perspective (Stiver 1996).

## **RHETORIC**

Rhetorical, “figural” language affirms the paradigmatic structure of language, rather than the representational, referential or expressive proper meaning of a so-called objective world. It marks the full reversal of the established priorities, which traditionally root the authority of the language in its conformity to the extra-linguistic “objects”, rather than the intra-linguistic resources of figures. No primary un-rhetorical language exists.

Rhetoric frustrates ontology and hermeneutics, the establishment of clear and certain language between subject and object. Rhetoric does not pose facts and data, as there are none to be “proven” without justification, but provide justifications for arguments and views.

All signs are rhetorical figures, that is, all words are metaphors. Literal or referential use of language is only an illusion, born of forgetting the metaphorical roots of language. Différance and rhetoric combine to deracinate the so-called stable texts of the great traditions.

Rhetoric provides a way beyond the closure, certainty and finality of reference, as if one can find the final answer in denotation. Signs are displaced and substituted. We inhabit a world of devices and tropes. Rhetoric leads to the abyss by destroying language’s own basic axiom, certainty. Rhetoric accepts this impasse and celebrates the abyss. We confide always in images and in faith. In theology, we see a puzzle through a bronze plate as a mirror.

## **STRUCTURALISM**

Structuralism conveys the idea that language is made up of constituent units that have to be identified, isolated and related to a vast network of meanings. Languages as well as all cultural phenomena are to be seen as the products of systems of significations, which are defined only in relation to one another within the system, as though the system itself was dictating meanings. All significations are arbitrary, but there is no way of apprehending life without a code. Structuralism tries to identify and define the “rules” and constraints in which and by virtue of which meaning is generated and communicated. This method is referred to as immanent as

it does not look outside language or cultural phenomena to explain them. Structuralism has been criticised for its devaluation of the individual's autonomy and an apparent disregard for history (Encarta encyclopaedia 1996).

## **“TEXTUALITY”**

In postmodernism, the world “is” text. Nothing stands behind. There is no escape from language. Language is our “prison house” (Heidegger). Textuality means that texts about life and in life are a priority.

## **THEOLOGY**

Theology both calls forth caricatures and harbours ambiguities. Modernism regards theology to be the systematic rendition of Scripture, a Christian *gnosis* whose units are doctrine, pre-critical apologetic for beliefs established by church or professional authority, the contents of an established system of beliefs or a discredited metaphysical mode of objectifying thought.

Postmodern theology is the reflectively procured praxis and insight as understanding and belief that encounter a specific religious revelation and experience. Theology is the critical praxis of interdisciplinary conversation in the ever-present territory of the “big” questions, interpreted especially through the concepts of metaphor, history and narrative. Theology is an expressly human enterprise; persons and groups are not differentiated or separated as specialist versus non-specialist, or professional counsellor versus non-professional counsellor. As praxis, the interrelationship of praxis and theory, experience and reflection are accentuated; the theory-to-praxis, source-to-application model is challenged. We all are theologians. Religion and theology interpenetrate. Experience and reflection are mutually informing.

Modern theology mistakenly becomes an intellectual discipline, at times isolated from religion and human experiencing. Then we imply that ideas exist on some trans-historical plane and have some kind of separate inherent life and movement of its own. We imply that these ideas can be isolated from the persons who created them and from the existential context from which they emerge. The danger is to function according to the theory-to-practice or source-to-practice model. Then we study master ideas and engage in the awkward and artificial task of applying them to situations.

Understanding theology in the light of praxis engenders a reorientation. Postmodern theology

is not *theoria*; it is not a set of ideas formulated in a series of doctrine or propositions, recorded on paper. Theology is not something that is, or that one has. “Theologising” is praxis, an active, dynamic process that emerges and evolves in history, changing reality. Theologising is the praxis of doing theology. Pneumatological counselling is part of the practice of theology. The practice of theology requires knowing theology and “doing” theology. It is a doing theology on one’s feet and simultaneously doing it in one’s head. Theologising is always *within* action. Theology presupposes prior practice and informs future practice.

Doing theology can be characterised as the interpenetration of religion and theology, experiencing and reflecting practice and theory (praxis). What and how we reflect, experience and theorise are always a reflection of prior experience and practice towards subsequent experience and practice. In modernism, we lost sight of the fact that we are hypothesising or constructing a perspective and that our reflections are not representations that mirror or correspond to reality. The praxis in which we engage is never solitary but inherently social. Theology is a reflexive activity. It is included within that which we are trying to understand. Theology is a more or less comprehensive vision of human experience.

## TROPES

From the Greek, *tropos*, indicating “a turn, a manner”. It is a term in rhetoric for expressions with a transferable meaning, for example, metaphor. It can be understood as a substitute for a denotatively suitable word. A trope is a semantic substitution. It is classified according to its relationships with the substituted word, for example, irony or emphasis.

Troping means using metaphors and explaining events by altering us to look again at objects and concepts from the perspective of something different – signification and re-signification. Each of the tropes is defined according to its particular rhetorical and, therefore, explanatory function. *We relate events and human actions not according to some wholly extrinsic situation, but through language* and specifically how language operates in relating parts to wholes and *vice versa*.

The tropes, irony, metonymy and synecdoche are kinds of metaphors, but they differ from one another in the kinds of reductions or integrations they effect on the literal level of their meanings and by the kinds of illuminations they aim at on the figurative level. Metaphor is *representational*, metonymy effects *reduction*, synecdochy is *integrative* and irony effects *negations*.

<b>TROPE</b> (literary)	<b>EMPLOTMENT</b> (explanatory)	<b>ARGUMENT</b> (rationally)	<b>IDEOLOGY</b> (politically)
metaphor	romantic	formist	anarchistic
metonymy	tragic	mechanistic	radical
synecdoche	comic	organicist	conservative
irony	satiric	contextualist	liberal

(cf. Munslow 1997).

A trope embodies a defence in poetry. In poems, images show particular configurations and they correlate with the tropes. Images portray a picture of presence and absence; part for whole and whole for part; fullness and emptiness; high and low; inside and outside; and early and late. Putting this information together, we find, for example, a psychic defence, a trope of “reaction-formation” in images of presence and absence, for example, “I will *enjoy* my loneliness”.

## **WITTGENSTEIN**

His approach is a description of how our minds are actually “placed” in the world so that we can never view the world objectively, or from outside. His understanding of language is that of language “forms” or language “games”, indicating that we are always already using language from within a specific context in a situation. The “forms” or “games” of language we use depend on our context from which we use language. Realists and anti-realists are both assuming that our relationship with objects in the world is paradigmatically one of representation. Wittgenstein brought about an understanding of us as agents, who are engaged, as embodied and embedded in culture and in numerous contexts.

Wittgenstein tried to expose the great Cartesian delusion, to take naming as a primitive, self-sufficient operation, forgetting that a great deal else was already in play in language before the mere act of naming makes sense. Our possibility to look at and see a tree depends on a whole conceptual scheme and on our having a language. What we call language and mind enters so deeply into what we call the world or reality that the very idea of ourselves as “observers” of objective facts and of knowing the truth in certainty is already compromised from the beginning. The central place of the subject and representation are dislodged from their status as the most characteristic activity of the human being with regard to objects in the world and of certainty in knowledge (cf. Kerr 1997:128-143).





