INTERACTION BETWEEN SCHOLARLY AND NON-SCHOLARLY READINGS OF GENESIS 11:1-9 IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

BY

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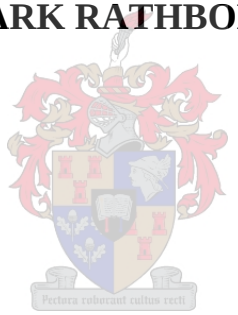

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Praise to *Moya* who guided and directed me.

Dedicated to the people of 'South' Africa who have helped and inspired me in reading the Bible responsibly.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any any university for a degree.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Summary

The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9 in the South African context refers to the transformation in biblical hermeneutics from the world of the text to the world of the reader and the post-colonial critique of Western essentialist scholarly modes of reading the Bible.

This study explored three essentialist modes of scholarly reading from the South African context that perpetuated imperialism and colonialism: Anglocentric -, Afrikaner - and Anti-colonial modes of reading. Non-scholarly readings of Bible Study Groups, African mythology and artworks of Azaria Mbatha view the text as subject. Non-scholarly readings, from the margin of the South African context, informed by a holistic and interconnected cultural discourse, deconstruct essentialism and constructs responsible readings of the Bible. These readings deconstruct centralistic essentialist discourses and construct a liminal space for new creative and responsible readings of the Bible in the South African context that stimulates healing. The *ubuntu* reading of Genesis 11:1-9 by Desmond Tutu reflects this. His reading incorporates the African connected reading praxis of non-scholarly readings, from the margin of the 'South' African context, and makes use of scholarly discourse. Tutu's mode of reading leans on Western humanism and ecclesiology that does not follow a critical-holistic cultural discourse. The African Independent Church developed as a reaction to Western ecclesial structures. In the African Independent Church the concept, *Moya* or Spirit functions as a reading matrix that deconstructs the discriminatory and exclusive forces of essentialist disconnection. The study proposes that a *Moya* reading is an open-critical and inclusive theological-ethical concept. The interpretative thrust is decolonial, deconstructing essentialism and creating a liminal space, for new responsible readings of Genesis 11:1-9. A *Moya* reading is holistic and connects people to the land, a perspective that is foreign to essentialist scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9.

This study contributes to the hermeneutical debate in South Africa, Africa and the global context by emphasising the importance of a continued interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings of the Bible from the margin.

Opsomming

Die interaksie tussen wetenskaplike en nie-wetenskaplike interpretasies van Genesis 11:1-9 in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks verwys na die transformasie in bybelse hermeneutiek van die wêreld in die teks na die leser en die post-koloniale kritiek van Westerse essensialistiese wetenskaplike metodes van Bybel interpretasie.

Hierdie studie ondersoek drie essensialistiese metodes van wetenskaplike interpretasie in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks wat imperialisme en kolonialisme bevorder het: Anglosentriese -, Afrikaner - en Anti-koloniale interpretasie modi. Nie-wetenskaplike interpretasies van Bybel studie groepe, Afrika mitologie en die kunswerke van Azaria Mbatha beskou die teks as subjek van interpretasie. Nie-wetenskaplike interpretasies van die marge van die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, geïnformeer deur 'n holistiese kulturele diskoers, dekonstrueer essentialisme en konstrueer verantwoordelike interpretasies van die Bybel wat heling stimuleer. Die *ubuntu* interpretasie van Genesis 11:1-9 deur Desmond Tutu reflekteer hierdie proses. Sy interpretasie inkorpureer die Afrika gemeenskaplike interpretasie praksis van nie-wetenskaplike lesers van die marge van die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks en wetenskaplike diskoers. Tutu se interpretasie is vanuit die perspektief van Westerse humanisme en ekklesiologie wat nie 'n krities-gemeenskaplike kulturele diskoers inkorpureer nie. Afrika Onafhanklike Kerk het ontwikkel as 'n reaksie teen Westerse ekklesiologie. In hierdie kerke funksioneer die konsep *Moya* of Gees as 'n interpretasie matriks wat diskriminerende en eksklusiewe kragte wat essentialistiese skeidings dekonstrueer. Volgens hierdie studie is 'n *Moya* interpretasie 'n oop, kritiese en inklusiewe teologies-etiese konsep. Die interpretasie is dekoloniaal. Dit dekonstrueer essensialisme en ontwikkel 'n liminale ruimte vir nuwe verantwoordelike interpretasies van Genesis 11:1-9. 'n *Moya* interpretasie is holisties en verbind mense met die land.

Hierdie studie lewer 'n bydrae tot die hermeneutiese debat in Suid-Afrika, Afrika en die globale konteks deur die belangrikheid van voortgaande interaksie tussen wetenskaplike en nie-wetenskaplike interpretasies van die Bybel vanuit die marge te beklemtoon.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

When the white man came to our country, he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to us, 'let us pray'. After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible.

Popular African Saying

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

George Santayana

Edward Said (1994:1) writes that the problem with the past is the uncertainty of whether the past is past or whether it continues in different forms[1]. In the period after the first democratic elections and the celebration of the *New 'South'*[2] *Africa,* colonial inequality[3], regarding employment, education[4] and gender discrimination[5], are

[1] "Many of the formerly colonized nations are, nonetheless, undergoing new forms of imperialism, neo-colonialism, or globalization" (Dube 1996:40).

[2] 'South' is, throughout, typed in inverted commas whenever it occurs before 'Africa', because it denotes a nationalistic delineation, a relic from the imperial history of Africa (Western nationalism and statism), where Western European forces divided the African continent into various colonial territories which were transformed into national entities after independence or rather after classical colonialism ended. Furthermore, it is a reminder that imperialism continues in the present.

[3] See www.statsa.gov.za

[4] The results of the 2001 'South' African census tell a sad story. Of the population of 44,819,782 people living in 'South' Africa of which 52.2% are female, only 9.6% are from European decent. Of the 9.6% of Whites, less than 1.4% has no education while 22.3% of the Black non-European population had no education. Since the 1996 census this figure declined by only 2%. At the opposite end, 29.8% of White people have a higher than secondary education, while only 5.2% of Black people have the same education. This figure rose by only 2.2%, while that of Whites rose by 5.7%. From the above the consequences of the apartheid education policy by which the Black population was seen as laborers not requiring tertiary education, is still evident. Today the forces of globalisation require highly trained professionals to be competitive, but with the prevailing educational disadvantage this requirement results in large unemployment figures, specifically in the Black sector of society: 19% of Black Africans, 13.9% of Coloureds, and 11.7% of Asian/Indians are unemployed, while only 4.1% of Whites are unemployed. Of particular concern is that, since 1996, unemployment has increased in all population groups by 4.5%. This follows the international trend of *developing* economies where resources are limited to the hands of the privileged.

[5] The unemployment statistics show not only an ethnic, but also a gender inequality. In all the ethnic groups unemployment among females is higher than among males: Black Africans, 43.3% vs. 57.8%, Coloured, 25.7% vs. 28.6%, Asian/Indian, 15.7% vs. 18.7%, Whites, 6.1% vs. 6.6%.

continuing and is being exasperated because of HIV/AIDS[6]. This is largely due to the exploitation of the poor through globalisation and neo-liberal economic policies that promote open economies and free movement of capital across the globe, perpetuating inequality[7].

Although 'South' Africa functions as a democracy, it remains vulnerable to global market trends and global politics, which is increasing the wealth of nationalist elites because of imperialistic collusion with the West. Zakes Mda (2004) writes in *This Day* of 28 April 2004: "For the first time in its history South Africa has become a serious player on the global economic stage. Before 1994, the only meaningful role that South Africa had was mining. The demise of apartheid ushered in a new era of diversification in which South African companies became multinational and listed on

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[6] The devastating effects of these socio-economic factors become disturbingly apparent when the HIV/AIDS pandemic is considered. According to statistics supplied by the SA Department of Health (SA Department of Health HIV report 2001), 11.6% of all South Africans is HIV-infected, with 1,700 new infections per day. Poverty and unemployment increase the risk of HIV infection due to lack of education, recreational facilities, etc. Poverty also increases the onset of AIDS because of the lack of proper nutrition, adequate shelter, hygiene, and money for anti-retroviral treatment or treatment of concomitant opportunistic diseases. In these circumstances, electricity for heating and cooking is extremely important. Only 39.3% of Black Africans have electricity for these purposes while 96.6% of Whites have electricity. Gender inequality and abuse place women in an even more precarious position. 'South' Africa has the highest rape statistics for a country that is not at war. It is estimated that 1 in 2 women will be raped in her lifetime (FAMSA stats from Cape Times Oct 24, 1991). Peter Piot (1999), executive director of UNAIDS, states that HIV infections worldwide are more prevelant among women. Patriarchal traditions of male domination results in the silencing and abuse of women.

[7] José Comblin (1998:149), from the Latin American context, states that economic factors drive globalisation and neo-liberalism, subverting culture to the economy. In this regard, a regressive view of culture as some relic from the past develops. However, beneath the surface the economic realities control the process. In this regard rich countries benefit from globalisation and multi-national companies based in these rich, Western countries move capital around in poor countries often exploiting the cheap labour of indigenous inhabitants. "Indeed, multinationals make demands and claim privileges for setting up their factories. Because they provide employment, they ask for compensations and obtain exorbitant conditions" (Comblin 1998:122). Comblin (1998:111) relates this to the neo-liberal economic model chosen by non-Western countries. It emphasizes:

- The opening of borders and equal competition for markets.
- This entails the involvement of multi-national corporations that seek to make profits and instead of the empowerment of people; it leads to retrenchments, unemployment, and poverty.
- Emphasis on exports:
  In order to export to raw materials to industrialised countries the natural resources and ecologies of non-Western countries are exploited..
- Privatisation of government companies
  In an attempt to raise profit, hence making basic services expensive, governments privatise companies that supply services to the poor.
- Global economic partnership:
  Economic inequality between the non-Western - and Western world remain a hampering crisis that places capital and power in the hand of the West and a privileged few in the metropolitan centres of non-western countries.

the London and New York Stock Exchange". The problem raised by Mda echoes the warning by Fanon, Said (1994:269) and others regarding nationalist ideologies of post-colonial states that fail to address pressing issues concerning the legacy of colonial capitalism. According to Mda (2004), the same is happening in 'South' Africa: "A new black elite has emerged in South Africa, mostly from the ranks of the liberation movement – people who were able to use their political pedigree and connections to amass vast amounts of wealth". Mda (2004) warns: "While the national elite stuff themselves in these public displays one can already hear rumblings from the youths in the ghettos who feel left out".

Globalisation and neo-imperialism develops within the cultural realm of post-modernism, the critique of Enlightenment universalism[8] (Taylor 1997:173). The result is that a movement from universality to particularity is taking place. The success of this movement is the retention of Western essentialism as a defence against relativity and nihilism through particularity. In other words, the essence of reality no longer follows a universal but contextual application. The context and not the text determines the essential characteristics of the interpretative process. This transformation embraces difference, diversity, and multi-culturalism. The problem is that subjectivity and diversity replaced the universal thrust of imperialism[9] without addressing the legacy of imperial inequalities.

Biblical scholarship is not exempt from cultural transformations. The interpretative crisis unleashed because of the transformation infused by post-modernity has caused visions of interpretative anarchy. Scientific controls like objectivism and value-neutral scientific inquiry is making way for subjectivity and diversity. Nevertheless, this transformation exposed the ethical bankruptcy of essentialistic biblical scholarship and its links to Western culture and colonialism.

[8] "Postmodernity is modernity coming of age: modernity looking at itself at a distance rather than from inside, making a full inventory of its gains and losses, psychoanalysing itself, discovering the intentions it never before spelled out, finding them mutually canceling and incongruous. Postmodernity is modernity coming to terms with its own impossibility; a self-monitoring modernity, one that consciously discards what it was once unconsciously doing" (Aichele, et al. 1995:3)

[9] Said (1994:8) states that: "...imperialism lingers in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices".

Historical-critical scholarship developed in the cultural sphere of the Enlightenment and produced an essentialist mode of reading transported to non-Western contexts. This attempted to transform the superstitions of indigenous non-Western people and introduce them to civilised modes of reading the Bible. In 'South' Africa this meant that, after the arrival of the Bible with the Dutch[10], British Imperialism and its civilising mission[11] resulted in an Anglocentric mode of reading the Bible. After the hand over of power in 1910 to the Afrikaner[12], the Bible and apartheid followed the same historical trace. An Afrikaner mode of reading that grew from the influence of Kuyperism and fundamentalism followed the Anglocentric mode of reading, rooted in historical-criticism. Hermeneutical modes, linked to postmodernism and the critique

[10] With Van Riebeeck and the *VOC*, the church arrived in the form of the Reformed Church. The VOC was, by the decrees of the *State Generaal* (Netherlands Government) of 1622, responsible for "public religion" and hence the church was part of the new halfway house (Loubser 1987:4)**.** This declaration stated that the Company had the responsibility, "*omme te conserveren het publijcke gelooff*" (Van der Watt 1989:4). In the time of Dutch government, the *VOC* introduced as its civil responsibility the Reformed Calvinist faith to South Africa by paying for the clergy. "Cape Dutch society professed Calvinist beliefs, but the *VOC* paid stipends to the clergy, who were nominated by the classis (convocation) from 1665, and kept political control by authorising the building of churches in the magisterial districts" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:36). Loubser (1987:3) remarks that "Van Riebeeck arrived with a reformed 'monoculture'". The 'Political Council' controlled both the refreshment station and the church. The chaplains were in the employ of the *VOC*, with the result that no religious group, other than the Reformed, was accepted. It was for this reason for the banning of the Moravian missionary George Schmidt (and others). It was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that the Lutheran church could hold services (Loubser 1987:4).

[11] Anglicising brought freedom from slavery but at the cost of cultural identity. Here the missionaries played an important role. The Rolong settled with the Wesleyans at Thaba'Nchu in 1833. "Like Sekwati, Moshweshwe admitted Christian missionaries, Protestant and Catholic...Moshweshwe was immensely impressed by the European way of life, of which Christian values seemed to him to form an important element" (Davenport and Saunders, 2000:61). The problem for him was to reconcile traditional African cultural practices such as heteronomy with the Christian practice of monogamy. The missionaries "actively sought the introduction of 'superior' Western cultural norms as an inherent dimension of Christianisation." (Saayman 1991:31). The problem is that the African social, religious, political and economic systems together forms an integrated whole and if one dimension is tampered with the whole becomes dysfunctional. People found themselves de-cultured and alienated. Steve Biko stated: "Their arrogance and their monopoly on truth, beauty, and moral judgement taught them to despise native customs and traditions and to seek to infuse their own new values into these societies" (Saayman 1991:31).

[12] Saayman (1991:25) states: "Perhaps the outstanding negative effect of the entanglement between mission and colonialism proved to be the role of capitalism". Mosala (1989) argues that racism was a necessary ingredient of the capitalist core of colonialism in 'South' Africa. The origin of apartheid can therefore be traced back to the British colonial period, for "apartheid as a political structure of oppression is the soul of the particular form of capitalist accumulation found in this country". (Saayman 1991:27). In this regard Afrikaner colonialism continued where British colonialism left off with a white community that still exhibits the "typical colonial features of a threatened minority living in the midst of a black majority implementing various measures to retain their power and privileges" (Kritzinger 1990:3). The British colonial policy of 'Native Reserves' was continued, essentially unaltered, by the Union of 'South' Africa and later the Republic of 'South' Africa. In this regard, the "National Party did not invent the apartheid laws or homeland policy – they merely perfected British colonial practice by pursuing it to its most destructive consequences" (Kritzinger 1990:4). The implication is that control of the geographical space and people was continued for the economic benefit of the white minority.

of universalism, influenced resistance to apartheid. The problem is that these anti-colonial modes remain rooted in Western essentialism that is continuing the cultural colonialism and exploitation of marginalised non-Western people in 'South' Africa. In the 'South' African context interpretations of Genesis 11:1-9 reflect this process.

Genesis 11:1-9 was one of the texts that had the most profound impact in the 'South' Africa context in the last century. In the document *Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture*[13] (HR), Afrikaner colonialism's racist policy of apartheid based it ideology on Genesis 11:1-9[14], the core of the Apartheid Bible[15]. Resistance readings, leaning on post-modern critique of Enlightenment scientism, reflected in Liberation - and Black hermeneutics from Latin America and the United States of America, opted for a reading of the Bible that emphasised the liberation dimension of the text. This resulted in the reversal of the stark oppressor/oppressed dichotomy that confronted colonial readings with liberation readings. Tutu (1999:11) writes, that for the oppressed the "Bible turned out to be the most subversive book imaginable in a situation of injustice and oppression".

The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings of the Bible[16], according to post-colonial hermeneutics, can transform the continuation of the link between the Bible and Western imperialism in biblical scholarship. This implies that scholarship must let go of its position of power by engaging non-scholarly readers from the margins of the 'South' African society. Letting go of power implies that the Western heritage of scholarship be critically engaged in order to re-position it and be

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[13] *Human Relations and the South African scene in the Light f Scripture* (1976), Cape Town: National Book Printers.

[14] Bax (1983:117), regarding Genesis 11, in *'Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture', writes* as follows: "The key Scriptural passage in the Report's argument is the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9). Not only in the 1975 Report but throughout the whole tradition of this NGK theology of race relations this has been in effect the cardinal text"

[15] Loubser (1987:ix-x) defines the 'Apartheid Bible' as follows: "…the totality of biblical texts and presuppositions by means of which people inside and outside the official churches legitimised the policy of apartheid or are still continuing to do so".

[16] In biblical scholarship the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers has been hailed as a de-colonial approach resisting Western imperialism (De Wit, et al. 2004, Sugirtharajah 1995, Segovia 1995, Dube 1996). The movement has been influenced by the move to hermeneutics and post-modern "interpretative communities" from the West and contextual theology from the non-Western world. In this regard, it draws on the strength's of the debasement of modernism and the ethical impact non-Western theologies. Ukpong (2000:15) indicates that a new phase of interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers is evident in African scholarship in Gerald West's *contextual Bible study* method and *inculturation hermeneutics.*

able to construct responsible interpretations of the Bible. This will contribute to the building of a just society. This implies a radical break with essentialist ideologies and the embrace of readers from the margin of the African context that continue to experience the pain and suffering of imperialism. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers implies that the transformation of scholarship occurs from the margin of the scholarly guild. This will result in the construction of liminal spaces from where new responsible readings will unravel inequalities and their links to Western imperialism.

From the above-mentioned, this study will reflect on problems concerning the following:

a. Questions regarding the link between essentialism, ethics and scholarship. Is there a link between education and the essentialist modes of reading of colonial and anti-colonial scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context? What are the ethical positions of these readings?

b. The role of non-scholarly reading and the construct of responsible readings in the 'South' African context open the following questions: How do non-scholarly readings engage the text? Do these readings construct a responsible alternative for the 'South' African context? Do non-scholarly readings succumb to the Western essentialist culture matrix? What are the ethical positions of non-scholarly readings? Do non-Western readers interpret Genesis 11:1-9 from the ethical margin or centre? Does the holistic worldview offer an alternative to Western essentialism?

c. The rise of the notion of an interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings of the Bible and the need for responsible hermeneutics highlights the following questions: Can the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers lead to the responsible reading of the Bible? Are all non-scholarly readings responsible? What will the theological-ethical thrust of a responsible reading be?

1.2 Hypothesis

The argument of this study is as follows:

a. Colonial and anti-colonial scholarly readings from the 'South' African context align with imperialism through education and essentialist modes of reading Genesis 11:1-9. Anti-colonial modes read texts from the margin and experiences of colonial exploitation. Colonial readings follow a centralistic ethics that aligns with elitism and imperial control of the margin.

b. Non-scholarly readings from the 'South' African context operate from two diverse cultural discourses: Essentialistic - and holistic cultural discourses. Both types of non-scholarly readings engage the text as the subject of interpretation. Colonial readings develop from an essentialistic cultural discourse and centralistic ethics. Anti-colonial readings lean on an essentialist matrix and the experiences of the colonised (margin). Indigenous readings develop from the intersection of an interconnected holistic cultural discourse and ethics of the centre - elitist and nationalist. Readings from the margin of the 'South' African context, informed by a non-Western, holistic and connected perspective, destabilises essentialism and dualism.

c. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings, informed by an interconnected, holistic, cultural discourse and the experience of colonial racism (margin) in the 'South' African context results in the construction of a liminal space. The effect of this new liminal space is the deconstruction of Western essentialism and imperialism, from where new responsible interpretations develop.

1.3 Methodology

In this study, the following three-part methodology is used:

a. The history of interpretation (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of Anglocentric - and Afrikaner colonial modes will reveal a trace of essentialism informed by the experiences of privilege linked to the imperial centre. Anti-colonial scholarly readings lean on the experience of exploitation of the colonised other and Western essentialist cultural discourse.

b. An ideological critique of non-scholarly readings will follow. I will argue that non-scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9 from the holistic perspective of the colonised (margin) are critical of essentialism and disconnected discourses. The holistic worldview of non-Western readers informs the critique of the essentialist strategy of imperialism. These holistic readings provide a deconstructive thrust that unravels Western essentialist ideologies.

c. A theological-ethical reflection of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings from the margin follows. The criteria for this reflection are holism, inclusivity, and critical openness to the other. A *Moya* reading is an example of a responsible 'South' African reading. It resists essentialism and provides a post-colonial response to Western imperialism. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings constructs a liminal space that transforms scholarship and constructs responsible readings.

1.4 Concepts

1.4.1 Western colonialism and imperialism

The etymology of culture and colonialism is from the Latin *colere*, meaning to cultivate, inhabit, or take care of a place. To inhabit a place is morally justified because of the ability of a group of people to cultivate or take care of the place. Refinement in education and civilization is the reason why Western nations inhabited and cultivated non-Western places. Colonialism is the inhabitation and control of foreign indigenous inhabitants and their geographical spaces by groups or nations who view themselves and their culture as superior. In other words, colonialism is characterised by domination imposed by a foreign minority, racially and culturally different over a materially weaker indigenous majority in the name of racial (or ethnic) and cultural superiority (Spurr 1993:6). Cultural superiority goes hand in hand with racial ideologies and the development of the colonised people through education. Education is the institutional machine that promotes the superiority of the imperial culture and perpetuates the perceived inferiority of colonised peoples.

The following poem of Rudyard Kipling (T.S. Eliot's 1962:143) reflects the perceived cultural superiority of the West and its supposed moral duty (or civilising mission) to impart its values:

Take up the White Man's burden
Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child

The moral duty or civilising mission of the West is rooted in Western culture's use of essentialist discourse that reduces non-Western people to humiliating racial and ethnic stereotypes. Serequeberhan (1991:4) writes that "European colonialism violently universalised its own singular particularity and annihilated the history of the colonised". This process of annihilation was fuelled by the Enlightenment as a "politically orientated struggle against superstitious beliefs...aimed at the 'release' of 'Man' from darkness and ignorance through the employment of reason" (Serequeberhan 1991:5). This orientation presupposes a single culture, religion, and global 'conformism' based on the essentialist constructions of the other by the West.

1.4.1.1 History and imperialism

Human history is rooted in the earth. It is about territory and possession, control, exploitation and creating wealth (Said 1994:5). Said (1994:5) states that: "At some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not posses, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others". This implies that just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. According to Said (1994:6), this struggle is complex and interesting because it is not about soldiers and cannons. It is about ideas, forms, images, and imaging.

Imperialism follows a trace from early accounts of Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek[17] and Roman imperialism to contemporary forms of the European and British imperialism of the twentieth century. This trace continues into the twenty first century through Western imperialism. All of these forms of imperialism and colonialism follow the same mechanics. Imperialism is the practice, the theory and the attitude of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory. Colonialism is in most instances a consequence of imperialism – establishing settlements in distant territories (Said 1994:8).

According to Segovia (2000:127), European imperialism can be categorised into three stages:

Early imperialism refers to the introduction of the mercantile phase in European imperialism that dates from the fifteenth century and continues through the greater part of the nineteenth century.

High imperialism focuses on monopoly capitalism and the integration of non-Western contexts into major capitalist nation-states. This continued up to the middle of the twentieth century.

Late imperialism or Western imperialism concerns the period to the end of formal colonialism and has a global imperial focus. This takes place through Western cultural, economic, military, and social controls that infiltrate non-Western contexts.

Western imperialism refers to the control of non-Western people and geographical territory from Western metropolitan centres by means of global economic structures – or global imperialism. Neo-Colonialism refers to the influx of Western multinational companies, organisations, and cultural agents in the non-Western world, constructing a global network of control and exploitation. Said (1994:1) warns that global

[17] Ferguson (1987:8) writes: "The Greek superiority that first made it felt through military conquest and civil administration soon brought more important cultural changes". Dube (1996:39) states: "Alexander's empire building project thus entailed an elaborate program of Hellenizing his conquered subjects. Alexander 'established a network of routes from Egypt to India and sprinkled cities throughout Asia to radiate Greek culture'. He founded Greek cities at 'strategic points, to serve as administrative centres but also to provide a focus as beacon of Greek culture in the alien lands of the Orient'".

connectivity, is not a value-neutral or equitable system, but reflects ranked or hierarchical relations between Western and non-Western contexts that is rooted in the history of imperialism – overlapping territories and intertwined histories.

The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion[18] (1989) refers to this new form of Western imperialism as global imperialism that uses the economic vulnerability of non-Western contexts to exploit its resources and people by constructing global imperial networks by means of multinational companies. This results in the perpetuated domination of non-Western contexts by one or more imperial powers – the United States, Japan, and Western Europe. "Their web of economic control includes an unfair international trade system, multinational companies that monopolise strategic sections of our economy, economic policies dictated by lending bans and governments together with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. A salient tool of domination is technology. The staggering size of Third World debt is only one dramatic sign of our subordination to imperialism" (1989:4-5). This creates a cycle of poverty that is increasing the wealth of the West at the expense of the non-Western world, except for the capitalist elites in the non-Western metropolitan centres who are the agents of Western empires.

Economic factors drives neo-imperialism by subverting culture to the economy. Comblin (1998:149) states that in terms of tourism, people sell their culture to tourists: "Indigenous people sell religious objects as though they were profane – and they know that they will be profaned. They sell their celebrations, their ceremonies: they become a spectacle in order to get money from tourists….At the end of this path peoples present the roots of their own past as a folklore show, with the illusion that they are descendants of their ancestors". The result is that non-Western cultures turn into essentialist constructions driven by Western tourism.

1.4.1.2 Imperialism, Education and Biblical scholarship

Jerry Phillips (1993:26) writes: "In its classic formulations the moment of imperialism is also the moment of education. Imperialism – a system of economic,

political, and cultural force that disavows borders in order to extract desirable resources and exploit an alien people – has never strayed far from a field of pedagogical imperatives or what might be called an ideology of instruction".

The problem of imperialism and colonialism has been how to deal with the indigenous people of the land – *the white man's burden* of European imperialism. From early forms of imperialism like that of Alexander the Great and Hellenism, there has been a link between imperialism and education (Ferguson 1987:9). Education focussed on the development of reason or '*logos*',[19] the origin of the essence of life that distinguished between the rationalism of civilised cultures and the superstitious beliefs of uncivilised cultures. The educated had the ability to understand the essence of life in order to live a good life. Virtue or perfection is to live in accord with rational nature (Ferguson 1987:285).

During the Enlightenment rationalism and essentialism resurfaced in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which had a profound impact on the reading of the Bible. Rational inquiry that focuses on the study of the text as object by an impartial observer forms the basis of historical criticism. According to Rogerson (1992:430), scholarly studies like the *Annotata* and *Vetus Testamentum* of Hugo Grotius (1538-1645) advocated literal and historical interpretation, concluding that the servant figure in Isaiah 53 was not Jesus, but Jeremiah. This is in line with studies of Spinoza (1634-1677) on the authorship of the Pentateuch; Richard Simon's focus on the role of scribal schools; the studies of English scholars on deism; and that of Germans like Baumgarten, Michaelis, Doderlein, Eichhorn that developed the documentary Hypothesis of the composition of the Pentateuch.

A significant sign of this turn to science were developments in biblical theology, which was closely linked to the critique of dogmatism and the church. The inaugural address of Johann Philipp Gabler as professor of theology at the University of Altdorf

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[18] *The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion* (1989). London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.

[19] "In Stoicism '*logos*' refers to the ordered and teleologically orientated nature of the cosmos. We can thus equate it to God and the cosmic power of reason of which the material world is a vast unfolding. Human '*logos*' is a particular part of the universal '*logos*'. The latter achieves awareness in us, thus combining God and humanity into a great cosmos. A later development is the equation of '*logos*' and '*physis*' (nature) in a fusing of rational and vital force" (Kleinknecht 1985:506-507).

in 1787 was a clear indication that a new paradigm was emerging. He proposed that biblical and dogmatic theology were different tasks, requiring different procedures. He suggested that Biblical theology should consist of historical exposition of the Bible, focusing on the authors' historical setting, followed by a philosophical rational explanation to determine the universal truth (Ollenburger 1992:5): "Interpretation, has the task then, of separating the unchanging truth from the changing mythical imagery that shrouds it" (Ollenburger 1992:5). Segovia (1998:53) states: "Modern Christian theology, was a theology that emanated from the centre, grounded as it was in Western civilization...it was a systematic and universal theology, altogether reticent about its own social location and perspective; a theology of Enlightenment and privilege, tacitly considered by nature superior to any theological production from outside the West....".

Historical criticism is the civilised mode of reading the Bible that became part of the educational enterprise of European colonialism. It was presented as "the proper way to read and interpret the biblical texts but also as the ultimate sign of progress in the discipline, the offer of the (Christian) West to the rest of the (Christian) world and the means by which the backward and ignorant could become modern and educated" (Segovia 1995:5). Said (1994:269) writes that the "annals of schools, missions, universities, scholarly societies, hospitals in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and America are filled with this history, which over time established so-called modernizing trends...". European imperialism viewed its educational system as a means to fulfil its *civilizing mission*[20] and to form a class of interpreters, who linked empire and the colonised, to promote the values and modes of reading of the empire (Sugirtharajah 1999:125).

With the demise of high imperialism, hermeneutics and its critique of universalism influenced scholars from non-Western contexts. Gadamer (1989:258-289) emphasized that hermeneutics cannot only be a matter of method, striving for objectively that secured knowledge, but must also be open to a dialogical process. He focused on the objective or linguistic side of Schleiermacher's approach, stating the

[20] This is a strategy of "disguising military might and economic greed under the guise of evangelical zeal, moral-rhetorical claims, and technological, racial, and cultural claims of superiority" (Dube 1996:40).

following: "...to understand what a person says is…to agree about the object, not to get inside another person and relive his experiences" (Gadamer 1989:345). In Gadamer's (1989:151) major work *Truth and Method*, first published in 1960, he writes that understanding is not so much a matter of subjectivity, but the placing of oneself within a process of tradition in which past and present are constantly fused. Hermeneutical theory is less a matter of method than a process of understanding. The goal of interpretation is the fusion of the present and past, the text and interpreter. "This fusion of horizons is a dialectical event in which the interpreter discovers that what is to be understood, is different to what had initially been assumed" (Fouche and Smit 1996:81).

Gadamer (1989:258-289) argues that readers approach a text through a set of questions which shape their pre-understanding. The text's own history of effects or "historically operative consciousness" (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) shapes pre-understanding. The implication is that the interpreter is always in the stream of tradition, for it is here that past and present are constantly fused (Lategan 1992:150). Goldingay (1995:219) states: "Experience of something is a precondition of understanding a text that refers to it. 'A text can be explained only when one has an inner relationship to the matter with which the text deals', that is, a pre-understanding that one shares with it…The 'principle of the empty head' – the principle that in interpretation we can and must set aside all preconceptions and approach a text with no assumptions – is a fallacy resting on 'naïve intuitionism'".

Segovia (1995:5) writes that despite the overwhelming academic socialization linked to historical criticism many "slowly began to question the program and agenda of such biblical criticism, especially the construct of scientific, objective, and impartial researcher – the universal and informed reader". The problem is that the hermeneutical tradition influenced by Gadamer, traced back to Schleiermacher[21] and

[21] Schleiermacher rejected all theological claims to a privileged access to the Bible, calling for a general hermeneutics, emphasizing that understanding is a universal process (Jeanrond 1992:439). "Like Semler, Schleiermacher attempted ultimately to understand the author of a text, and because he knew that even authors are not always conscious of their creativity, he defined the goal of understanding accordingly as the effort of understanding a text first as well and then even better than its author had done" (Jeanrond 1992:439). Schleiermacher's hermeneutics had a two-fold approach: "grammatical" or objective approach and "psychological" or subjective.

rooted in western scholarship, rationalism, and essentialism uncritically accepted the interpretative tradition that informs interpretation[22].

Lategan (1992:150) argues that Habermas and Apel's critique of Gadamer is directly linked to Gadamer's "uncritical acceptance of tradition as authoritative and his ontological understanding of language obscure the fact that language may be used as mediums of domination". Gadamer uncritically aligns with a universal hermeneutics that follows an undistorted flow of communication. Habermas (1971:314) states that "...only in an emancipated society, in whose members autonomy and responsibility had been realized, would communication have developed into the non-authoritarian and universally practiced dialogue...." In the case of post-modernism the 'false consciousness' constructed by manipulation makes way for fragmentation. "In place of `false consciousness' we today have `fragmented consciousness' that blocks the Enlightenment by the mechanism of reification...Rather than serving a critique of ideology, this analysis would have to explain the cultural impoverishment and fragmentation of everyday consciousness" (Habermas 1987:355).

Welch (1985:253) argues: "The perspective of Habermas, while critical of domination, is still that of the academic elite...His histories are from the point of view of those whose standards of rationality have been institutionalized to some degree". Welch is not convinced that Habermas' notion of rationality can exist outside of the influence of institutional power and privilege. Welch[23] (1985:256) writes that "...truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power...truth is a thing of this world..."

David Tracy's hermeneutics offers an alternative to rationalistic modes by focussing on the "other" in the dialogical situation. "Only by analogically reaching out to the hard concreteness of the other and through that expanding conversation to the proleptic concreteness of the whole, will any of us find that we have arrived where we began only to know the place for the first time...We understand one through analogies to our own experience and we understand ourselves through our real internal relations to and analogous understandings of the other" (Tracy 1981:452). Tracy's positive

[22] Hans de Wit (1991:313-344) states that Latin-American biblical reading is rooted in western hermeneutics.

assessment of liberation theologies[24] is due to his openness to the other and the emancipation of the other and self.

By viewing the phenomenon to be interpreted as the point of departure, Tracy's (1987:10) hermeneutic moves beyond relativism: "Any act of interpretation involves at least three realities: some phenomenon to be interpreted, someone interpreting that phenomenon, and some interaction between these first two realities...In order to avoid the temptations to pure subjectivity, it is better to start not with the interpreter but with the phenomenon requiring interpretation". This does not imply the smoothing over of the ideological nature of texts, but refers to a hermeneutic of suspicion informed by solidarity with the other. Tracy (1987:79) states: "There is no innocent interpretation, no innocent interpreter, no innocent text". This implies that "every discourse bears within itself the anonymous and repressed actuality of highly particular arrangements of power and knowledge" (Tracy 1987:79). Discourse support certain assumptions and excludes others that might disrupt hierarchies and power relations. In other words, the voices of non-Western interpreters of a text may reveal ideologies in the text that Western interpreters are ignorant of, thereby, revealing their own otherness[25] within their own discourse and selves (Tracy 1987:79).

The problem with Tracy's hermeneutic is that although it is critical of modernism it remains entrenched in Western hermeneutics. In this regard, Tracy's reference to difference and otherness reflects the Western cultural bias that separates the self from the other in order to control the other. The hierarchical tension between self and other makes it impossible for dialogue to take place without the other becoming the object of inquiry and exploitation. This happens by drawing the other into a dialogue constructed by the powerful. Dialogue and the other reflect the ability of Western hermeneutics to entice and assimilate.

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[23] It will be argued that the prevalence of power in all discourse, noted by Welch, places a question mark behind the critical hermeneutic of Schüssler-Fiorenza (1988, 1999) and Mosala (1989).

[24] Tracy (1981:398) writes: "...liberation theologies allow all theologians to hear and to see the tradition from a perspective faithful to its own most self-understanding:...the perspective of the outcast, the powerless, the oppressed, the marginalized, all those whose story the rest of us have presumed to tell them...The classic of liberation theologies is the classic not of a text but of an event: the event of a liberative praxis wherein the actions of whole peoples whose disclosive, ignored, forgotten, despised story is at last being narrated and heard in ways which may yet transform us all".

[25] Tracy (1987:93) writes: "...difference and otherness once interpreted as other and as different are thereby acknowledged as in some way possible and, in the end, analogous".

1.4.2 Essentialism, Western Culture and Africa

Diana Fuss (1989:xi-xii) writes that essentialism “is most commonly understood as a belief in the real, true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the 'whatness' of a given entity”. Essentialists argue that things or people behave as they do, not because they are forced or constrained by an external force (laws of nature) or God, but because of "intrinsic causal powers, capacities and propensities of their basic constituents and how they are arranged" (Ellis 2002:1). Essentialism moves to a position of clustering or stereotyping things or people, negating difference and the complexity of cultural, social, and historical experiences. Same things, constituted in the same ways, from the same basic components, would behave or act in the same way as a universal characteristic (Ellis 2002:1).

Classic essentialism is a reduction of reality through reason traced back to Greek philosophy (Plato – pure forms) as a function of Hellenism (traced to the imperial conquests of Alexander the Great). All things have an essence, making a thing what it is – ontological (Ferguson 1987:285). It was the cornerstone of Aristotle's metaphysics, dividing the world into four elements (earth, air, fire, and water). Each natural kind of object has its special place in the cosmos, and its own natural motion.

This notion continued during the Enlightenment, from where essentialism became a universal validation of all things. With the demise of the objective observer, a transformation is taking place to the subjective observer and subjective essentialism. The problem is that it remains a reduction of the reality, constructed within the parameters of nationalist delineations of the West. In the same way, Orientalism was a construct of the Orient, the other of the Occident. Said (1995:87) writes that: “...the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. However, none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, and even colonial bureaucratic and colonial styles”. According to Said (1994:17), the liabilities of such essences as the Celtic spirit, *négritude*, or Islam, in Post-colonial national states, are clear: "they have much to do not only with the native

manipulators, who also use them to cover up contemporary faults, corruptions, tyrannies, but also with the embattled imperial contexts out of which they came and in which they were felt to be necessary”

From the essentialist perspective, change is never a matter of oppression or colonialism. Ellis (2002:65) writes: "...the power to produce change is no more than an invariable disposition of something to behave in a certain way in certain circumstances..." Change is nothing else than the disposition of something to respond in a certain way. Colonialism is not a matter of forced change but the ability of perceived inferior cultures to develop and become civilised. Essentialists do not believe that values or cultures are a matter of socio-historical forces (Marx) or choice (libertarians). They argue that the natural selective process of evolution is a matter of genetic code. This implies that there are "likely to be some primitive epistemic values that underpin our language-learning abilities and our reasoning processes, and some social values that favour tribal cohesion and cooperation in the struggle for survival" (Ellis 2002:147).

The problem is that this explanation of Ellis fails to account for external material circumstance ignited by imperial greed, occupation, and exploitation of non-Western people. A further matter is the ethical question regarding the oppression of others for the survival of the self. In this context, cultural superiority seems more like an excuse to oppress.

Ellis (2002:157) admits that social scientists are critical of essentialism associating it with racism, social Darwinism, sexism, and cultural imperialism. He argues that New Essentialism does not identify with such attitudes. "What it implies depends on genetic differences there are between people, what effects these differences have, and whether these differences have any significant correlations with the differences that we commonly recognize" (Ellis 2002:157). Ellis states that because "statistical correlations" of differences point to weak tendencies essentialists are not "politically incorrect" (Ellis 2002:157). He argues that essentialism can help social sciences understand the intrinsic capacities and dispositions of human beings generally and the significant natural tendencies of individual and group behaviour of species (Ellis 2002:158-9). The problem with the argument of essentialists like Ellis is that the

transformation of these behaviour traits and dispositions remain unexplored. Firstly, to argue that war, genocide, and imperialism are natural tendencies does not account for the ethical process that drive people to such atrocities. Secondly, the question remains open whether these genetic codes of oppression are due to internal forces or a decadent display of material greed and historical forces.

In this study, it will become clear that the essentialist worldview of Western culture is the realm in which colonialism grew. In this regard, the modes of reading influenced by Western Enlightenment, constructs a realm for the imperial control of non-Western people. The problem is that this essentialism is inconsistent with reality. In connection with the above, Jacques Derrida (1976:3) argues that writing is an ideological activity that constructs reality, but that this construction is unstable and ambiguous. Writing is reductionist or *logocentric*[26] - an ethnocentric and phallocentric[27] cosmological construction.

"Metaphysics - the white mythology which resembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own logos, that is, the mythos of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason" (Derrida 1982:213). In this regard, the construction of the other is a function of the *logocentric* modes of the West that can be traced back to Plato and Kant (with the rise of modernity). Rorty (1991:21) writes: "The tradition in Western culture which centers around the notion of the search for Truth, a tradition which runs from the Greek philosophers through the Enlightenment, is the clearest example of the attempt to find a sense in one's existence by turning away from solidarity to objectivity".

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[26] Jacques Derrida defines this rationalist mode of writing as *logocentrism* – "the metaphysics of phonetic writing...which was fundamentally...nothing but the most original and powerful ethnocentrism, in the process of imposing itself on the world, controlling in one and the same *order*..." (Derrida 1976:3). This means that speech is regarded as the superior representation of truth because speech is a direct signifier of that which constitutes 'a sort of universal language' or *logos* (Derrida 1976:11). Writing, a secondary signifier of 'mental experience', is less trustworthy because it depends on speech. This is part of Western culture and can be seen "from Plato to Hegel (even including Leibniz) but also...from the pre-Socratic to Heidegger, always assigned the origin of truth in general to the logos: the history of truth, of the truth of truth, has always been...the debasement of writing, and its repression outside 'full' speech" (Derrida 1976:3). These rationalist modes of writing is "an ethnocentric metaphysics" that is directly "related to the history of the West" (Derrida 1976:79).

[27] Prentice (1994:45-46) states that imperialism's "phallocratic" fixation is reflected in it use of the following feminine references e.g. "imperial mother", "daughter colonies" and the "manhood of nations".

The focus on the essence of an object has been critiqued by post-modernism's skepticism of meta-narratives. Instead of objectivism and essentialism, post-modernism focuses its attention on subjectivity and essentialism. The problem is that the shift from universalism to particularism fails to uncover the hierarchical relationships between subjects. Ato Quayson (2000:87) states: "...the postmodern is part of an ensemble of the hierarchizing impulse of Western discourses, and that even though it hints of pluralism and seems to favor an attack on hegemonic discourses it is ultimately apolitical and does not feed into larger projects of emancipation".

The essentialist construction of non-Western peoples is rooted in the assumption that Western society is superior. This link points to the relationship between essentialism and racism of colonial discourse. Inevitably, differences are categorised from where hierarchies are constructed. Colonisation applied these hierarchies creating a flaw in the *Weltanschauung* of a colonized people (Fanon 2000:257). The dualistic nature of essentialist constructions that brings about a disconnected and hierarchical worldview is at the heart of the inferiority that the colonised experience. "Ontology - once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside - does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must a black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" (Fanon 2000:257). This racist construction of the colonised not only dehumanised non-Westerners but also in the case of Africa constructed a worldview that was foreign to the interconnected reality of the African.

The problem of essentialism is that in the African context educated elites adopted it by turning the tables of the binary opposition, Western/non-Western or Coloniser/colonised, in their anti-colonial struggles. Fanon (2000:257-258) states that this is a false identity: "The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man...His metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on him". Anti-colonial movements as reflected in Liberation -, Black -, and African theologies simply reverse the binaries of colonialism, thus operating from within the same essentialist mould as

the colonialism. A post-colonial response will return to the people, their experience, and worldview.

Onyewuenyi (1991:40) states that Western metaphysics generally focus on static concepts of being, whereas African philosophical thought is dynamic. "Existence-in-relation sums up the African conception of life and reality. The African does not separate being from force as its attribute. Rather Africans speak, act and live as if for them beings were forces...There is the divine force, terrestrial or celestial forces, human forces, and vegetable and other mineral forces" (Onyewuenyi 1991:40). The scholastic concept of separate beings, substances which exist side by side or independent of one another is foreign to African thought (Onyewuenyi 1991:41). "The African thought holds that created beings preserve a bond one with another, an intimate ontological relationship" (Onyewuenyi 1991:41).

The unease of contemporary Western culture with universal knowledge, as reflected in post-modernism and the move to intertextuality, overlaps with the African worldview. This reflects a common point of departure between post-modernity and post-colonial hermeneutics that provides new vistas of knowledge. Du Toit (1998:15) proposes that Africa can be typified as simultaneously pre-scientific (traditional), scientific (Western) and post-scientific (critical towards science - modernism). Post-colonial hermeneutics function on the level of the post-scientific that is critical of Western modernism and traditional, pre-scientific African culture reflected in patriarchy. In this regard, Africa incorporates a holistic rationality and gives equal weight to means and ends (Du Toit 1998:24). Westerners think with their heads using logically connected cognitive concepts and schemes, whereas Africans think with their soul, heart, formed intuitively in the style of feeling-thinking subjects. "African rationality is relational and integrating" (Du Toit 1998:24). In this regard, it is understandable that essentialist reductions of people and geographical space destabilises the African's total worldview. However, at the same time African rationality is paradoxical in that people can relate to mutually exclusive entities at the same time.

According to Said (1994:35), the “difficulty with theories of essentialism and exclusiveness, or with barriers and sides, is that they give rise to polarization that

absolve and forgive ignorance and demagogy more than they enable knowledge". Reality cannot have borders or exist separately. It is dynamic and deconstructs essentialisms. Holism is an epistemological break from essentialism. The connected African worldview brakes through the confines of modernist separation and reduction, opening new possibilities for scholarship.

1.4.3 Scholarly and non-scholarly readings

In Western biblical scholarship the critique of modernism and its premises of objectivity, value-neutral truth and rationality lead to a transformation from author centred modes like historical-criticism to literary criticism and later reader-response and reception theory (Lategan 1992:149-154). Reader-response theory and reception theory, of which Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser are representatives, reflects two extreme perspectives related to this transformation. Fish follows an anti-foundational[28] perspective that proposes that meaning is not constrained by a text, but by the reader's "interpretative community"[29] (Fish 1989:142).

Wolfgang Iser's reception theory takes a less radical stance by arguing that the reader fills gaps[30] that are present in the text. Fish (1989:77) states: "Gaps are not built into the text, but appear as a consequence of particular interpretive strategies, then there is no distinction between what the text gives and what the reader supplies; he supplies everything..." Thiselton (1992:517) notes: "Unlike Fish he (Iser) does not question the givenness of stable constraints in textual meaning, but underlines their potential and indeterminate status independent of actualization by the reading process". The move to the world in front of the text, in literary theory, focused attention on the

[28] "Anti-foundationalism is a thesis about how foundations emerge, and in contradiction to the assumptions that foundations do not emerge but simply are, anchoring the universe and thought from a point above history and culture, it says that foundations are local and temporal phenomena, and are always vulnerable to challenges from other localities and other times" (Fish 1989:30)

[29] Fish (1989:25-26) states: "It might seem that in traveling this road one is progressively emancipated from all constraints, but, the removal of independent constraints to which the self might or might not conform does not leave the self free but reveals the self to be always and already constrained by the context of practice (interpretive communities) that confer on it a shape and a direction".

[30] A text is "a system of processes whereby language allows itself to be broken up and reconstituted. The place where language is broken up and reconstituted is made by gaps in the text - it consists in the blanks which the reader is to fill in...Whenever the reader bridges the gap, communication begins. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves" (McKnight 1985:79).

differences of the reading strategies and social locations of readers. This resulted in the separation of scholarly and non-scholarly readers (Fish 1995:1-2).

Fowler (1985:5) distinguishes between the reader and the critic[31]. The critic is part of a critical tradition that critically scrutinises the text in order to produce a critical analysis (Fowler 1985:5-8). The reader, however, is subjectively involved in the reading process constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction between text and reader (Fowler 1985:8-9, 18-21). Vocation bounds the critic to uncover the characteristic, styles, genres of the text, constructing its meaning according to its essence. In this regard, essentialism limits the critic to analysis. Reading, on the other hand, is less conscious of it-self, and influenced by the culture or worldview of the reader. In general, Western and non-Western scholarly readers have been educated in essentialist reading that classify texts, peoples and lands in order to provide authoritative readings that may perpetuate imperialism. This is distinct from reading that remains an act of pleasure without authority. In this regard, Guillory (2000:31-32) distinguishes between "professional reading"[32] (referring to scholarship) and "non-professional reading"[33] (non-scholars) of text.

In the West, the turn to the reader developed in the sphere of the critique of modernity but in the non-Western world, this turn reflects Western oppression and exploitation of the non-Western world. In this regard, liberation theologies champion the cause of the people and their plight. "Liberation theology could be compared to a tree. Those who see only professional theologians at work in it see only the branches of the tree. They fail to see the trunk, which is thinking of priests and other pastoral ministers, let alone the roots beneath the soil that hold the whole tree - trunk and branches - in place" (Boff en Boff 1987:13). Scholars are the servants of the people or "organic intellectuals": "Being organic, intellectuals would not only originate in the working

[31] According to Lategan (1994:108), three types of readers are distinguished: naive, understanding and critical. This distinction is made in terms of the mental activity, textual function and effect of the reading process.

[32] It is "work", involving resources and time; It is a "disciplinary" activity, governed by conventions and protocols; It is "vigilant", not allowing the pleasure of reading influence the process in order to give a sustained reflection; It is a communal practice, envisioning an audience of students or scholars, to be submitted to the response and judgment of other professionals.

[33] It is practiced outside of work at the site of leisure; In contrast with professionals non-scholarly reading is organized by different conventions guided by the occasions; The motivation for reading is pleasure, although other moral reasons may also be included; It is a "solitary" activity.

class, but they would also be in constant conversation with its members...A reciprocal education relationship is envisaged" (Entwistle 1979:126-127).

Said (1994:55) warns that the danger of the "intellectual today, whether in the West or the non-Western world, is not the academy, nor the suburbs, nor the appalling commercialism of journalism and publishing houses, but rather an attitude that I will call professionalism". Professionalism refers to the work of an "intellectual as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine to five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behaviour - not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial, apolitical and 'objective'" (Said 1994:55).

Said (1994:57-59) distinguishes three dimensions of professionalism:

- The first dimension of professionalism is specialisation – or narrowing the area of knowledge. Said argues that the problem is that as a specialist, "you become tame and accepting of whatever the so-called leaders in the field will allow" (Said 1994:57).
- Secondly, there is the cult of the certified expert. A profession is certified by the proper authorities; "….they instruct you in speaking the right language, citing the right authorities, holding down the right territories" (Said 1994:58). This is a form of "political correctness, an insidious phrase applied to academic humanists who, it is frequently said, do not think independently but rather according to norms established by a cabal of leftists; these norms are supposed to be overly sensitive to racism, sexism, and the like, instead of allowing people to debate in what is supposed to be an 'open' manner" (Said 1994:58).
- Thirdly, there is a "drift towards power and authority in its adherents, towards the requirements and prerogatives of power, and towards being directly employed by it" (Said 1994:59).

An organic intellectual breaks through the dichotomy scholarly/non-scholarly, by undermining the hierarchical status quo that regards the non-scholar as naive, pre-

critical or ordinary. Maluleke (2000:94) writes that it represents a form of institutional apartheid: “The real question is how, which and why people are trained while others are 'ordinaried'”. The term ‘critical reader’ thus carries with it the baggage of Western colonial education, a form of professionalism that loses contact with the world relegating scholarship to an ivory tower.

Scholarly readings refer to the interpretations of trained readers whether in scientific criticism or hermeneutics. Scholarly readings, following essentialist modes and experiences of privilege related to the imperial centre, have the potential to perpetuate colonial and imperial ideologies. Scholarly readings, informed by the experiences of the marginalised and essentialist mode follow an anti-colonial reading, continuing cultural imperialism.

Non-scholarly readings are those readings informed by the experiences of the reader, thus breaking through the object/subject dichotomy. Although educational process does not influence the readings of non-scholars, these readings may also perpetuate imperial ideologies through the influence of Western essentialism and experiences related to the privilege of the imperial centre. Non-scholarly reading informed by the experience of colonialism and informed by a holistic cultural matrix has the potential to deconstruct colonial traces and construct postcolonial readings.

The purpose of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings is not to sustain the hierarchical relationship between them, but to transform scholarly isolation, to construct a liminal space, allowing for the transformation of scholarship and the development of new, liberating readings, thus breaking through essentialist reproductions. It risks moving beyond the confines of the guild to enter the world with its differences, ambiguities, and hierarchies[34]. This will lead to responsible scholarship and readings that are de-colonial.

[34] “Provided the unequal power relations between ordinary and trained reader are acknowledged and fore-grounded, provided the trained reader is willing to serve and to learn ‘from below’, and provided the poor and the marginalized continue to empower and be empowered, there is hope for something truly transformative emerging from the interface between trained and ordinary readers of the Bible” (West 1999:137)

1.4.4 Liminality/liminal space

The concept, liminality, refers to the work of Victor Turner (originally developed by A van Gennep) that studies rituals linked to the rites of passage. He specifically focused on the phase in which participants are betwixt, between their former social position and the new social position to which they are moving. This often goes with the suspension or reversal of everyday social values. The term has its roots in the Latin '*limen',* meaning threshold (Barnard and Spencer 2000:611).

In this study, liminal refers to the possibility of the transformation of essentialist readings of the Bible through the interaction of scholarly and non-scholarly readings. This interaction constructs a space from where new creative possibilities are possible. At the same time, this experience is liminal, referring to the interaction between unlikely conversation partners like marginalised people. Liminality has built into the concept an ethical thrust that moves from deconstruction to the construction of responsible readings.

Liminality, in terms of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers, does not refer to the surreal of post-modernism, as if, the liminal space is a twilight experience or the play of signifiers. It rather reflects the paradoxical situation of colonised people and their experience of suffering. It is the interaction of Western essentialism and holism. It is the interaction between modern and post-modern modes of reading and the non-Western world.

The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings construct a liminal space from where scholarship can enter an in-between-space that departs from the theories and modes of essentialism and 'worldlessness' to be transformed into responsible modes and readings that decolonises imperial traces. For this to be realised the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings has to be from the margin.

1.4.5 Responsible Reading: Centre and Margin

"We must read *as if"* (George Steiner)

Phillips and Fewell (1997:3) propose that scholars must "learn to read the Bible as if lives depend on understanding it – not just our own lives but other lives as well". Responsibility[35] refers to the fact that reading is contextual; it affects the lives of people. To avoid the negative impact of the interpretations of scholars Thiselton (1985:80) states that responsible biblical interpretation involves sensitivity for the text[36] and context[37] of interpretation.

Schüssler-Fiorenza (1988, 1999) proposes that hermeneutics and rhetoric[38] influences the transformation[39] of scholarship. This emphasises the role of power and public[40] accountability. Schüssler-Fiorenza (1999:12) states that responsible biblical scholarship must move beyond the scholarly guild: "Only if it moves out of its academic 'ivory tower' and becomes a publicly responsible discourse, will biblical scholarship be able to recognize the voices from the margins and those submerged by the kyriocentric records of biblical and contemporary hegemonic 'texts'"

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[35] Solomon (1990:8) defines ethics as the study of good and bad, right and wrong, the search for the 'good life' and the defence of the principle rules of morality. On the other hand, morality is a set of principles, or rules, that guide us in our actions (Solomon, 1990:209). Ethos is the morality of a particular group of people or the moral aspect of a culture. Ethos is socially and historically determined, referring to the community that share the values and the historical development of these values (Botha 1994:36).

[36] "A responsible hermeneutics will do something to prevent a shallow skimming from the text of the pre-formed viewpoints of the interpreter, now deceptively and dangerously clothed in the vestments of the authority of the text. Since in actual practice communities have sometimes shaped their lives and beliefs on the basis of what purport to be biblical truth but in fact have turned out to be bizarre distortions of it, biblical hermeneutics is of necessity a more anxious, more cautious, discipline than literary theory" (Thiselton 1985:80).

[37] "Responsibility also depends on purpose and situation. A piano can be used for firewood, and in most circumstances such action would be irresponsible. But if one were dying of cold, stranded on an ice floe in the Artic Ocean, it might conceivably become a responsible act to set fire even to a Steinway. In certain situations...the use of a text may seem to be vindicated solely by its effect in terms of reader-response. But such vindication is not appropriate when some claim is being made for authoritative role of the text in shaping thought and conduct" (Thiselton 1985:113)

[38] Schüssler-Fiorenza (1988:4) argues that epistemology and ontology are rhetorical: "Biblical interpretation, like all scholarly inquiry, is a communicative practice that involves interests, values, and visions".

[39] "Only if it moves out of its academic 'ivory tower' and becomes a publicly responsible discourse, will biblical scholarship be able to recognize the voices from the margins and those submerged by the kyriocentric records of biblical and contemporary hegemonic 'texts'" (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1999:12)

[40] "Since the sociohistorical location of rhetoric is the public of the polis. The rhetorical paradigm shift situates biblical scholarship in such a way that its public character and political responsibility becomes an integral part of our literary readings and historical reconstructions of the biblical world" (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1988:4).

In her Presidential address delivered on 5 December 1987 at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, titled *The ethics of Biblical Interpretation: Decentering Biblical Scholarship (1988)* she proposes that scholarship can be transformed or decentred[41] by following a twofold ethics of reading:

Firstly, an *ethics of historical reading* that changes the task of interpretation from finding out what the text meant to the question of what kind of readings can do justice to the text in its historical context (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1988:14).

Secondly, an *ethics of accountability* that stands responsible not only for the choice of theoretical interpretative models but also for the ethical consequences of the biblical text and its meanings. Scholarship must take the responsibility not only to interpret biblical texts in their historical contexts, but also to evaluate the construction of their historical symbolic universes in terms of a religious scale of values. Further, it must also include the elucidation of the ethical consequences and political functions of biblical texts in their historical as well as in their contemporary socio-political contexts (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1988:15). In this way, the scientist[42] ethos of biblical scholarship transforms to a more responsible interpretative praxis. The problem of Schüssler-Fiorenza advocacy position is that the hierarchical relationship between scholar and non-scholars remains intact. This is clear from her response regarding the scientific nature of biblical scholarship: "...I seek to contribute further to the development of a critical (feminist) ethic and rhetoric of inquiry that is scientific and objective. Only an inquiry that is able to explore all aspects of wo/men's reality and to take into account the intellectual distortions that are wrought by practices of exclusion and marginalization can make this claim. A feminist ethics of justice

[41] "...I am interested in decentering the dominant scientist ethos of biblical scholarship by recentering it in a critical interpretive praxis for liberation" (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1988:9)

[42] "This scientist ethos of value-free detached inquiry insists that the biblical critic needs to stand outside the common circumstances of collective life and stresses the alien character of biblical materials. What makes biblical interpretation possible is radical detachment, emotional, intellectual, and political distanciation. Disinterested and dispassionate scholarship enables biblical critics to enter the minds and world of historical people, to step out of their own time and to study history on its own terms, unencumbered by contemporary questions, values, and interests. A-political detachment, objective liberalism, and scientific value-neutrality are the rhetorical postures that seem to be dominant in the positivistic paradigm of biblical scholarship. The decentering of this rhetoric of disinterestedness and presupposition-free exegesis seeks to recover the political context of biblical scholarship and its public responsibility" (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1988:10-11)

therefore is not less but more objective". This type of impartiality implies that Schüssler-Fiorenza envisions a global super-community and a universal notion of justice[43] that unmasks her Western interpretative paradigm (Fowl 1988:393-394).

Patte (1995:62) rejects the scholarly/non-scholarly hierarchy and proposes that both contain reader interests[44]. "Appropriate multidimensional critical exegetical practices must be framed by a nonhierarchical conception of the relationship between critical and ordinary readers. This is a conception...according to which the otherness of others is valued and affirmed, rather than despised and denied" (Patte 1995:62). Patte (1995:25) writes that the so-called neutral or objective practices of critical exegesis are androcentric and Eurocentric: "Androcentrism and Eurocentrism are not only the description of male-Americans but are directly reflected in the modes of interpretation...We European-American males are thus accused of taking as absolute what is not absolute". Leaning on the work of Gadamer[45], Patte states that these interpretative practices are one-dimensional reflecting the interests of white, male scholars. He proposes a multi-dimensional method[46] in which scholars and non-scholars *read with* each other. "In order to be ethically accountable, multidimensional critical exegetical practices must acknowledge their interested character and, as a consequence, must recognize that critical readings and ordinary reading (which are usually explicitly 'interested') belong together – rather than in hierarchical relationship" (Patte 1995:73). According to Patte (1995:72), the goal of critical exegesis is to bring ordinary readings to critical understanding.

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[43] Thiselton (1992:433) asks regarding the universality of Feminist hermeneutics: "What critical principle is used to unmask the objects of suspicion as instruments of social power, control, or interest? Further, is this critical principle a transcendental critique which can operate trans-contextually or is it a socio-pragmatic norm which can function only internally within the context of a given tradition?"

[44] According to Patte (1995:101): "many of our rejections of ordinary readings as illegitimate, are actually rejections of the interests and concerns that govern these readings. This is not a judgment about legitimacy. This is a judgment about validity, that is, about the value of being interested in one meaning-producing dimension of the text rather than another."

[45] "We choose a given critical method rather than another, because in our view it is the most appropriate for addressing the issue we want to deal with" (Patte 1995:57). This statement is linked to Gadamer's proposal that interpretative methods and truth are aligned.

[46] Patte (1995:27) states: "...our practices of these methods, and thus our conception of what 'critical' exegetical practices entail, should be completely re-orientated: They must allow us to affirm the legitimacy of plurality of interpretations – both our own and those of various other groups. If we do so, our interpretations will no longer be androcentric and Eurocentric; we will no longer implicitly or explicitly claim that our own interpretations (what ever they are) are universal – because they strive to establish the single true meaning of the text".

Patte (1995:50) scrutinises Schüssler-Fiorenza's interpretation of Matt. 23:8-11 in *In Memory of Her* regarding discipleship. According to Patte (1995:50), Schüssler-Fiorenza adopts a one-dimensional exegesis, with a hierarchical structure in her use of historical-critical method, by not pointing to other historical dimensions of the text. Patte (1995:50) argues that Schüssler-Fiorenza's use of historical-critical methodology pursues an advocacy perspective: "...her critical work is also an 'interested' or 'advocacy' interpretation: It is a 'feminist critical hermeneutics'. Because she has at heart the interests and concerns of women oppressed by sexism and prejudice in both the social and religious realms, she deliberately passes a value judgement upon the two dimensions of the text..." Patte (1995:50-51) concludes: "...her critical exegetical study in this book uses a certain critical method that belongs to the historical-critical methodology, rather than to another one because it promotes her Christian feminist agenda by ascribing greater authority to the textual dimension that expresses a discipleship of equals...Any given critical exegesis that uses a specific method...is also an interested interpretation, that is, an interpretation performed in order to address the concerns and interests of a certain group in a specific social and cultural context".

"Reading with" is misleading, disregarding the gender hierarchy. In the words of Schüssler-Fiorenza (1999), this "changes nothing". The problem with Patte's ethics is that the inscribed imperialism or the worldliness of the signifier is lost in a play of signifiers, resulting in the re-inscription of essentialist readings. Schüssler-Fiorenza (1999:8) argues that Patte, in response to her SBL presidential address, overlooks the fact that politics of exclusion and silencing has shaped scholarly modes of reading. Schüssler-Fiorenza (1999:8) states that Patte "does not grapple with the fact that kyriocentric Euro-American male-stream scholarship is part of the problem rather than part of the solution. If one has once understood a kyriocentric analysis of structures of domination, one can no longer formulate an advocacy position for white Euro-American male scholars in analogy to the advocacy stance for those who throughout history and still for the most part today have been silenced and marginalized in the academy and biblical religions". Patte does not deconstruct the imperial discourse of male, Western biblical scholarship and it's silencing powers. Schüssler-Fiorenza (1999:8) argues that Patte legitimises the "solidarity of white male exegetes and claims scientific and theological authority for them. Their work has the

task to bring to critical, i.e., scientific consciousness the interpretations of 'ordinary' readers. Thereby he re-inscribes not only the status divisions between professional and 'ordinary' readers that are the heart of the silencing and exclusionary tendencies of the disciple but also between scientific, i.e. (white male) scholars and hermeneutical, i.e. advocacy readings".

The problem with Patte's proposal is that ideology cannot be limited to the method used by the interpreter[47]. Truth and power follow a contextual link, according to Welch (1985). Aichele (1995:27) acknowledges this relationship, stating: "To say that all readings of a text are ideological is to insist that the act of reading is fundamentally ethical". In the 'South' African context, the history of colonialism and imperialism is the ideological dimension that affects the reading praxis of scholars. It is also the connecting factor between scholarly and non-scholarly reading of the Bible (Said 1994). Responsible interpretation will regard the interaction between scholars and non-scholars as a function of colonialism and imperialism. Responsible scholarship in 'South' Africa, with all its Western, essentialist baggage, needs to face the other - interacting with non-scholarly readings: "The approach to the face is the most basic mode of responsibility. As such, the face of the other is not in front of me but above me…In relation to the face I am exposed as a usurper of the place of the other" (Phillips and Fewell 1997:4)

Responsibility implies that reading texts can follow from two positions: the centre or margin. Reading texts from the *centre* implies that experiences related to imperial privilege, elitism and ethnocentric nationalism inform the hermeneutical process. Readings from the imperial centre construct text that secure the privilege of the reader. Reading from the *margin* highlights the fact that experiences of colonial exploitation and marginality informs the reading process. Anti-colonial modes read texts in solidarity with the margin, while decolonial read the text from the experience of colonial exploitation of non-scholarly readers. The former position is reflected in the reading of Schüssler-Fiorenza and the latter, in the work of Dube (1996), reading the text *from* the margin.

[47] "The power and privilege of the exegete-interpreter in part determined the ethical boundaries of reading, but the ethical is not reducible to the reading method or the approach like meaning, the ethical exceeds the particular desire of the reader, the text, the context" (Aichele 1995:304)

1.4.6 Reading

Reading[48] is a semiotic[49] act in which signs need decoding. In the context of this study, reading is an inclusive reference to the ability to decode signs and is not limited to literacy. Literary texts are compilations of *written signs* that the reader decodes. Both signifier and signified constitutes sign. The signifier is the medium of communication and the signified the content or meaning. Meaning passes from the sender through the signified to the receiver. Communication or the *semiotic machine* (De Saussure) suggests that meaning is the flow from a sender or encoder to a receiver or decoder. This is an important distinction, pointing to De Saussure's dualistic metaphysics, making a distinction between mind/soul/spirit and body (Aichele 1997:24). It becomes clear that the distinction between signifier and signified reveals a deep incoherence. Failed transmission implies that the signified cannot reach its intended destination and the signifier becomes a shield or obstacle, preventing access to the signified. To be certain of the content of the message, you have to contact the sender and repeat the message, by becoming the sender. The only way to get a message across is to bypass all signifiers, mediums of communication, and return to the spoken word or "voice". The problem with texts is that the original voice of the author is absent[50].

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[48] Reading is a theoretical concept referring to developments in literary criticism related to reader-response theory (Fish 1989) and reception theory (Iser 1989). These theories focus specifically on the interaction between text and reader.

[49] Berger (1995:73) writes: "The most fundamental concept in semiotics is the sign; semiotic theorists posit human beings as sign-making and sign-interpreting animals". Semiotics is the study of signs. "The word *semiotics* comes from the Greek root *semeion*, or sign, and is used to describe a systematic attempt to understand what signs are and how they function" (Berger, 1995:73-4). The term, 'semiotics', is commonly associated with C.S. Pierce. Some associate the term 'semiology' or *words* (*logos*) "about signs" (*semeion*) with the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Both authors focus on how meaning comes about and on how it is transmitted (Berger 1995:74). Berger (1995:75) writes: "A sign can also be defined as anything that can be used to stand for something else...according to Pierce, a sign 'is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity'". From this perspective, the whole universe consists of signs, interpreted or given meaning by an interpreter. Berger states: "If the universe is perfused with, if not composed exclusively of, signs, then humans are, of necessity, semiotic animals…" (Berger 1995:76). De Saussure (Berger 1995:77) viewed semiology as the "science that would study 'the life of signs within society'". Signs are like a piece of paper with one side being the signifier and the other the signified and together making the sign for a sheet of paper.

[50] "Faith may tell us that God is the sender: that is, that the Bible is the word of God. Scholarly research may identify historical or cultural features of people who produced the various biblical texts or

Aichele (1997:27-28) states: "The channel metaphor of communication, though very pervasive in modern Western thought, is seriously flawed; because it allows us to think that the mental meaning can pass unaffected through the physical channel" (Aichele 1995:27-8). Therefore, the assumption that the physical material of the channel (signifier) is indifferent, neutral or transparent to the signified message content that it transmits is misleading (Aichele 1997:28). Derrida (1976:158) writes: "The reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses". A film version of a novel is different from the printed text. The problem is that the signifier is a physical reality while the signified a mental construct. This means that the physical signifier must reproduce a mental construct of the sender. The critique of Enlightenment scientism that relies on objective meaning that determines the essential characteristics of the signifier resulting in the construction of a universal mental image (signified) reflects the problem.

Aichele (1997:35) states that *modern semiotics* focuses on the ability of the signifier to convey a message or signified emphasising denotation, reference, literal meaning, etc. For the modernist the purpose of language is the successful communication of a message (Aichele 1997:35). Meaningless or distorted language is not really language. It is, at best, a derivative or secondary or crippled language linked to primary language – fiction is rooted in non-fiction that is a primary language of fact and reality (Aichele 1997:35). Likewise, for modernist semiotics, metaphorical language (in the broad sense of any figurative language) builds on prior 'literal' usage, and, in a similar manner, connotative language adds a second level of meaning on top of denotative[51] language (Aichele 1997:36).

Readers use cultural codes to decode the sign to arrive at the meaning. Berger (1995:82) states: "At the simplest level, codes are systems for interpreting the meanings of various kinds of communication in which the meanings are not obvious

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who have passed them down to us. However, in the last analysis, the senders of these texts are no better known to us…" (Aichele 1997:27)

[51] Denotation refers to the literal or descriptive meaning of a term, figure, text, etc (Berger 1995:85). Scientism, that views the text as object and reader as objective observer, produces denotative meaning. A rational process decodes the signifier that results in the construction of the signified or mental construction. The task of the scientific reader is to relate the essential characteristics of the signifier to its universal application or the signified.

or evident". In this regard, culture is a learnt codified system to which we are blind because it seems natural to us. This process of decoding influences our aesthetic judgements, moral beliefs, cuisine, etc. The work of cultural critics involves the process of decoding texts of various kinds like words, images, objects, literary, rituals, etc. Sub-culture's cause "aberrant decoding", decoding which is different from what the creator intended (Berger 1995:83-4). Reading text from other cultures according to denotation implies that the reader has the ability to relate the essential characteristics of the text to the cultural codes of another culture in order to construct a signified. Connotative meaning[52], on the other hand, implies that reconstructing the cultural codes, to derive at the signified, is impossible resulting in a play of signifiers.

Aichele (1997:37) writes that *post-modern semiotics* exists alongside modern semiotics, focusing on the signifier: "Postmodern semiotics has long been in a distinct minority position alongside modern semiotics, although it too can be traced back to ancient roots; once again, however post-modernism is not what follows after modernism, but something that exists alongside it. Postmodernism is a sort of a parasite on the modern..." Post-modern semiotics rejects the notion that language offers a clear channel of communication. Aichele (1997:38) states that language is not clear communication, but rather to assure "privacy and territoriality": "Language inherently conceals and privatizes. The message is a coded secret. My language allows me to communicate the secret with others who are somehow like me (those of my tribe, my class, my religion or race or sexual orientation) - whatever sets me and 'my people' apart from 'the others'" (Aichele 1997:39). It rejects the modernist dismissal of the material neutrality of the signifier. Understanding is rather 'eisegesis', a reading 'in' of meaning. The signifier does not contain meaning it rather imposes itself on the signifier (Aichele 1997:39).

'Play' exchanges the channel metaphor. "Meaning emerges from the play of signifiers, from the juxtaposition of the message with other messages. The play of understanding a text is fundamentally an, *inter- textual* play, an ideological

[52] Connotation is a term used to describe the cultural meanings attached to a term (Berger 1995:84). It is from the Latin *connotare*, meaning 'to mark along with' or the historic, symbolic, and emotional connections that 'go along with' a term.

production of meaning" [53] (Aichele 1997:40). According to Derrida (1976:158-159), this implies the primacy of the text: "*There is nothing outside of the text*...there has never been anything but writing; there have never been anything but supplements, substitutive significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the "real" supervening, and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement, etc. And thus to infinity, for we have read, *in the text*, that the absolute present, nature, that of which words like "real mother" name, have always already escaped, have never existed; that which opens meaning and language is writing as the disappearance of natural presence".

Culture is not a neutral phenomenon, but actively participates in the suppression of other meanings, through a complex system of codes identified through genre conditioning to produce meaning. Genre identification makes it possible to understand a message by identifying it as a member of an inter-textual group of messages. This process of differentiation between inter-textual groups or genres forms the basis for the production of meaning (Aichele 1997:94-95). Genre[54] identification is not determined by the material aspects of the sign such as rhyme, rhythm, typeface, etc. alone. The "sensitivity" and the "expectations of the receiver" primarily determine the genre decision (Aichele 1997:96). Aichele (1997:96) points out that genre functions like a frame, establishing the conditions of the message's truth (the possibility of reference) but also the value: authority and rightful owners. The genre is a meta-code that moves from the connotative maze of signs on a piece of paper or the play of metaphors to arrive at denotative meaning.

Genre categories identify or give a message identity – a metaphysical act (Aichele 1997:97). A shift in genre identification may obscure the messages of a familiar text. In such situations the materiality of the signifier appears from under the layers of

[53] "This concept is generally defined as the suggestion that all texts are (to varying degrees) related to one another because of our common cultural heritage and in some cases, that texts actually make use of plots, characters, events, themes, heroes and heroines, and stylistic devices found in texts that preceded them" (Berger 1995:91). Parody or comic imitation is an example of these relationships between texts.

[54] "Genre identification provides a final (meta-) connotative layer of the sign, for which the signifier remains the same but the signified has become highly complex and finely nuanced. At this point semiosis is limited for it determines a limited range of meanings produced through the specific code applied, but it also opens up unlimited intertextual associations" (Aichele 1997:96).

connotative codes, the meaninglessness of the materiality of the sign appears as the opaque, resistant strangeness of the text (Aichele 1997:97).

The material sign that at the same time signifies and connotes, intensifies the tension involved in framing messages. Repeated violations of expectations break the receiver free from narrow genre borders. Therefore, no one set of codes can authoritatively release the meaning of the message, for new sets of codes are always possible. The incompleteness of the genre codes produces a space of signifying play, which is also a space of significance. The looseness of the connection between the material aspect of the signifier and a mental construction results in the 'play' of meaning (Aichele 1997:98). The complexity of written text amplifies the play that can only be contained by imposing a frame that limits the slippage of meaning. Genre sacrifices the infinite number of readings in favour of a privileged reading. “The frame obliterates the self-referentiality of the text and enables or rather forces it to refer unambiguously” (Aichele 1997:98). Wolfreys (1998:18) states that a text is a “differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces”.

The continued changing inter-textual network results in the fact that every reading is a "first reading" implying that no book can be read twice. The likelihood of the readings changing is unlikely because, although the codes may rearrange, the system remains stable. This system is unconscious and only becomes apparent when reading a difficult text that resists the reading codes. This happens when a new genre emerges or modifications occur on established ones.

Aichele (1997:104) writes that "ideology provides an intertextual frame that transforms the meaningless materiality of the...signifier into a fullness of meaning, a signified meaning which is ‘natural’ and ‘normal’ and even ‘obvious’”. Imperial controls mark the strength of an ideology through conformation. In this regard, the opponents of an ideology adopt the ideological reading. In these circumstances, the ideology possesses the text. “This puts those who both reject the owners’ ideology and yet also wish to possess the text in the name of some other ideology in a difficult position. They must become counter readers of the text. They will try to ‘steal’ the text from its current owners by claiming it for a contrary ideology. No ideology can

ever take such complete possession of the text that there will be no possibility of a counter-reading" (Aichele 1997:104).

Post-modern semiotic have resulted in the notion that reading results in limitless interpretations of the text influenced by Gadamer's hermeneutical circle reflected in Black Theology. Habermas exposes this, but as Welch argued, this leads to new essentialism envisioning a universal truth that is impartial. Said (1994) argues that the signifier does not lead to infinite interpretation but constrains meaning through the essentialist reduction of the hierarchies of coloniser/colonised.

Said (1983:32-33) states that the text has two irrefutable characteristics:

Firstly, there is the "reproducible material existence of a text". These texts are subject to "legal, political, economic, and social constraints, so far as their sustained production and distribution are concerned" (Said 1983:32-33). The text is the result of immediate contact between author and medium. "Thereafter it can be reproduced for the benefit of the world and according to conditions set by and in the world; however much the author demurs at the publicity he or she receives, once the text goes into more than one copy the author's work is in the world and beyond authorial control" (Said 1983:33).

Secondly, the text is the instance of style or the signature of its author's manner, which is a collection of features variously called idiolect, voice, or irreducible individuality (Said, 1983:33). "The paradox is that something as impersonal as a text, or a record, can nevertheless deliver an imprint or a trace of something as lively, immediate, and transitory as a 'voice'" (Said 1983:33). Said (1983:33) proposes that style neutralizes the 'worldlessness', silence, or solitariness of texts, thus, leaping from silent semiotic structures into the world where the act of writing has an effect and vice versa. Texts function within an inter-textual network, connected to the world and reflecting the engagement between authors and texts in time and space. This implies that a text's ontological status as a text is contextual and addresses anyone who reads. "To be sure, texts do not speak in the ordinary sense of the word. Yet any simple diametric opposition asserted on the one hand between speech, bound by situation and reference, and on the other hand the text as an interception or suspension of speech's

worldliness is, I think, misleading and largely simplified" (Said 1983:33). In contrast, Said argues that Paul Ricoeur's semiotic creates the impression that a text can be world-less, as if the style of the author is erasable. Alter (1992:34) states: "The making of literature everywhere involves a free relay of the imagination with language, inventively using such elements as rhythm, repetition, musicality, imagery, character, scene, act, and symbol, even when the writer's aim is to produce `something essentially truer and more necessary than literature"'.

Said, writes that Ricoeur makes a distinction between speech that is *worldly* and texts that are *world-less*. According to Ricoeur, in speech, "the function of reference is linked to the role of the *situation of discourse* within the exchange of language itself: in exchanging speech, the speakers are present to each other, but also the circumstantial setting of discourse, not only the perceptual surroundings, but also the cultural background known by both speakers....Thus, in living speech, the *ideal* meaning of what one says bends towards a *real* reference, namely to that 'about which' one speaks …..; On the other hand a text takes the place of speech. By interpreting a text, the reader "actualizes the reference". In this regard, "...a text is somehow 'in the air', outside of the world or without a world; by means of this obliteration of all relation to the world, every text is free to enter into relation with all the other texts which come to take the place of the circumstantial reality shown by living speech" (Said 1983:34).

Said (1983:34) argues that for Ricoeur, "speech and circumstantial reality exist in a state of presence, whereas writing and texts exit in a state of suspension – that is, outside circumstantial reality – until they are 'actualized' and made present by the reader-critic. Ricoeur makes it seem as if the text and circumstantial reality, or what I shall call worldliness, play a game of musical chairs, one intercepting and replacing the other according to fairly crude signals". The problem is that for Ricoeur this "game takes place in the interpreter's head a locale presumably without worldliness or circumstantiality's" (Said 1983:34). In terms of Ricouer's separation between speech and writing, the construction of a semiotic field is a rationalist mode of writing – *logo-centrism.*

The problem, according to Said, is that worldliness does not come and go. A separation between circumstantial reality and the text, or speech and writing, distorts the fact that texts are worldly. He argues that scholars are not merely the alchemical translators of texts into circumstantial reality or worldliness, for they too are subject to and producers of circumstances, which are felt regardless of whatever objectivity the critic's methods possess. Texts have ways of existing intertwined with circumstance, time, place, and society – texts are in the world. "Whether a text is preserved or put aside for a period, whether it is on a library shelf or not, whether it is considered dangerous or not: these matters have to do with a text's being in the world, which is a more complicated matter than the private process of reading. The same implications, is undoubtedly true of critics in their capacity as readers and writers in the world" (Said 1983:35). Texts do not exist beyond the interpretative process. It is only within text-reader engagement that the text has power.

According to Derrida (1976:130), the worldliness of the text implies that "the primary function of writing, as a means of communication, is to facilitate the enslavement of other human beings". This does not imply that ideologies force themselves on readers. The engagement between text and reader is the crucial moment perpetuating ideologies.

In this regard, the reading of texts reflects a hierarchical tension or the worldliness of the process. The synchronic and diachronic[55] dimensions of reading reflect this. Synchronic reading reveals the oppositional hierarchies within time and space, deconstructed from the experience of readers from the margin, which reveals the inconsistency between colonial experience and the essentialist reductions of dichotomies. This reveals the dimension of agency of the colonised that speak for

[55] De Saussure makes a distinction between static or synchronic and evolutionary or diachronic linguistics. *Synchronic* refers to the relations between coexisting things within time and space, while *diachronic* refers to the succession of things over time. Both these perspectives are important to decipher a message, but not possible at the same time (Berger 1995:89-91).

Synchronic analysis	**Diachronic analysis**
Simultaneity	Succession
Instant in time	Historical perspective
Relations in a system	Relations in time
Analysis the focus	Development the focus
Static	Evolutionary

themselves (Spivak 1990). The diachronic dimension follows the trace of hierarchical oppositions through the history of reading linked to the imperial context of textual construction. Colonial and post-colonial discourse and readings reflect these dimensions (See Section 1.4.7).

Essentialist readings do not expose the oppositional hierarchies of the text. It remains focused on the syntagmatic[56] dimension of the text in an attempt to discover the meaning. These reading simply reproduce the ideology of the text constructed through the reduction of the oppositions. This can also be from a diachronic or synchronic perspective reflected in historical or literary reading respectively.

Paradigmatic[57] readings grapple with the oppositional dichotomies from where a text is constructed. It reflects on the complexities of textual construction and the ideologies that result in texts. Responsible reading takes place when the ideologies of the text are exposed.

1.4.7 Post-colonial reading

Post-colonial reading refers to an interpretative strategy that unravels imperial traces involved in the interpretation of the Bible (Sugirtharajah 1998, 1999). This relates to the worldliness and ideological structure of the reading process, obscured by value-neutrality, objectivity, and subjectivity (Said 1983). Tiffen and Lawson (1994:3) state: "Imperial relations may have been established initially by the guns, guile and disease, but they were maintained in their interpellative phase largely by textuality. Colonialism (like its counterpart, racism), then, is an operation of discourse, and as an operation of discourse it interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation. They are always already written by that system of representation". The ideological nature of the text implies that the act of reading involves ethical decisions. Post-colonial reading is an ethical response to the inscribed colonialism of imperial texts.

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[56] *Syntagm* means chain, referring to the linear progression of narratives (Berger 1995:94-5).
[57] 'Paradigmatic' involves the analysis of texts in terms of patterns of opposition found in text (Berger 1995:95).

In this study postcolonial refers to the textual process of inscribing imperial traces in text. In this regard, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001:14) distinguish between *colonial discourse theory* and *post-colonial theory*:

A *discourse* is a system of statements by which we can know the world. This is bound to social knowledge. The world is discourse. Speakers and hearers, writers and readers come to understand themselves, their relationship to others and their place in the world through discourse. It is that complex of signs and practices that organises social existence and social reproduction, which determines in which way experience and identities are categorised (Ashcroft et al 2001:14).

Colonial discourse theory is that theory which analyses the discourse of colonialism and colonisation; which demonstrates the way in which such discourse obscures the underlying political and material aims of colonisation, and which points out the deep ambivalences of that discourse, as well as the way in which it constructs both colonising and colonised subjects (Ashcroft et al 2001:14-15).

Post-colonial theory explores and develops propositions about the cultures and political impact of European conquest upon colonized societies, and the nature of those societies' responses. Here, *post-* refers to the onset of colonization and not when it ended. It means 'after colonialism began', rather than 'after colonialism ended', because the cultural struggle between imperial and dominated societies continues into the present (Ashcroft et al 2001:14-15). It involves discussion of experiences of various kinds; migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, as well as responses to the influential master discourses of imperial West such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experience of speaking and writing by which all these come into being[58]. In particular, it focuses on the response of colonised people, resisting colonialism in the construction of a cosmology from the margins.

[58] "None of these is 'essentially' post-colonial but together they form the complex fabric of the field....However we would argue that post-colonial studies are based on the 'historical fact' of Western colonialism and the diverse material effects to which this phenomenon gave rise" (Ashcroft et al 1995:2).

Edward Said, Homi K.Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak are synonymous with post-colonial theory. Edward Said's earlier works like *Orientalism* (1985) uses colonial discourse theory. His later work, *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), makes a shift to post-colonial theory by focusing, like Bhabha and Spivak, on de-colonial discourses of colonised people. In *The Scramble for Post-colonialism* (1994), Stephen Slemon provides a diagram to explain the difference between Said's Orientalism and de-colonialism as understood by Bhabha and Spivak (See Figure 3).

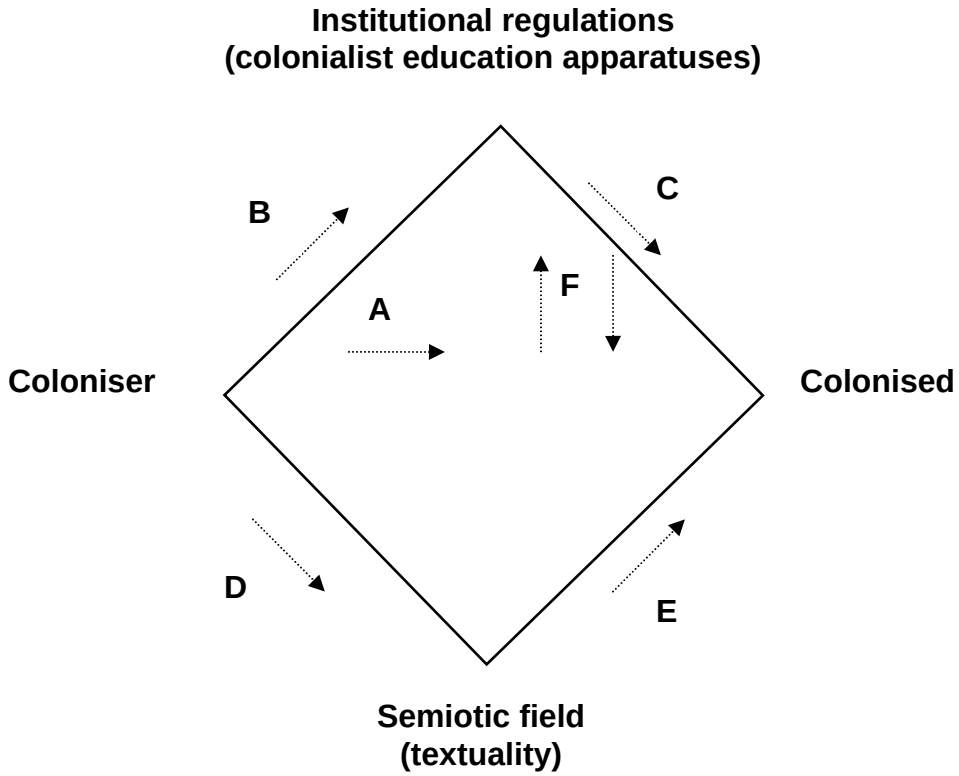

Figure 3: Colonial discourse and Postcolonial theories

The dichotomy coloniser/colonised has a left-to-right influence of power, indicating domination through direct political and economic control (A). This is the classical form of colonialism found in colonisation by European countries. Lines BC and DE represent ideological regulations constructing the colonial subject and manufacturing false consent. Line A represents 'brute force' or 'direct political' control: "...they reject the basic thesis that power manages social contradiction partly through the 'strategic production of specific ideas of 'self', which subordinated groups then internalise as being 'real' (Slemon 1994:17). Theories that examine the conquest of the other through war and physical restraint follow along line A. Line BC represents

the use of institutions like education (Slemon 1994:17). Line DE focuses on the way ideology reproduces colonialist relations through the strategic development of semiotic fields of representation like literature, advertising, sculpture, maps, etc. (Slemon 1994:18).

The upward and downward movement indicated by F represents the ambivalent relationship between semiotic field and educational institutions. The institutional power that runs along line BC refers to the power to construct semiotic fields, according to the cosmology of the coloniser resulting in cultural imperialism - downward arrow. At the same time, the upward arrow indicates the power along line DE. This refers to the canon of texts that supports colonial agendas. This movement is ambivalent with a complex movement between text and institution.

The work of Edward Said, on Orientalism, operates through line F. The scholarly educational apparatus called 'Orientalism' on line BC appropriates textual representations of 'the Orient' (Slemon 1994:19), but at the same time, forms the semiotic field (through line DE). Colonialist power does not simply run through A, but through a complex set of relations along line F. The line that runs upward, pointing to the field of study, runs downward at the same time as a projection of the 'the Orient'. This ambivalence ends up referring to a single intention, "The intention of colonialist power, to posses the terrain of its Others" (Slemon 1994:20). This is the point at which Said's colonial discourse theory initiates a "*foundational* ambivalence" between historical specificity and agency.

Colonial discourse theory focuses on the ambivalence on F. This movement points to the role institution played in the formation of canons to construct oppressor-oppressed relationships. The line therefore runs upward from the semiotic representations. What secures this movement is attention to the historical condition between coloniser and colonised. The problem is that we have a double movement that also infuses critical reading at the same moment in colonialist history – in other words, a downward movement. "The ambivalence makes our understanding of colonial operations a great deal clearer for historical periods, but it also upsets the positivism of highly specific analyses of colonialist power going on *within* a period" (Slemon

1994:22). This ambivalence reflects the dynamic relationship between text and reader from where ideologies disseminate.

Sarup (1996:161) writes: "Said posits a binary opposition between power and powerlessness, which requires the supposition of an exterior controlling intention and leaves no room for negotiation and resistance…In Bhabha's view, though the representation may appear to be hegemonic, actually it carries within it a hidden flaw invisible at home but increasingly apparent abroad". Sarup (1996:161) examines colonial discourse in terms of psychoanalytical and historical dimensions, concluding: "colonial discourse is an apparatus of power and goes on to suggest (against Foucault) that the colonial subject who is the object of surveillance is also the object of paranoia and fantasy on the part of the colonizer". The coloniser does not hold power in a simplistic way. Rather, there is ambiguity and tension between the stereotyping of the other and the interface with the other. This mimicry is on the one hand reassuring for the coloniser because the other become like him, but at the same time disturbing – a menace. It is a displaced image of the coloniser, because at the same time reality, or the experience of the colonised, undoes his mastery. This destabilises the power and control of the coloniser because essentialist categories cannot encapsulate the experience of the colonised. Bhabha (1990:67) states: "the idea of nation is inseparable from its narration; that narration attempts interminably, to constitute identity against difference, inside and outside, and in the superiority of inside over outside, prepares against invasion and for enlightened colonialism". The margins displace the centre of culture; therefore, anxiety is part of hybridisation - a sign of danger but also of something new emerging (Sarup 1996:162-3). This implies that reading is a interactive process that involves text and reader and that this process not only perpetuates ideologies but also deconstructs ideologies. In other words, texts do not impose ideologies but rather the dynamic interface between text and reader. In this study it will become clear that colonial is perpetuated when essentialist cultural discourse inform the text-reader interaction; while a holistic perspective decolonial in that it deconstructs colonial discourse.

In the context of colonisation the imperial forces never totally obliterate the indigenous culture; rather, a transaction between coloniser and colonised is established. The result is not a melting pot of cultures, but as Bhabha (1995:206)

argues that a process of difference entered into, with culture remaining anchored in its identity. Culture does not remain stable and unchanged, it moves in an adventurous process of change and discovery. Hybridising is the strategy for survival of colonised culture, "allowing a means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past and developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth" (Ashcroft 1995:183).

Bhabha (1995:207) describes hybridity as the 'Third Space, destroying utopian ideologies of multi-culturalism and diversity. Bhabha (1995:207) opts for difference as the *enunciation* of culture: "Cultural diversity is the recognition of pre-given cultural 'contents' and customs, held in a time-frame of relativism; it gives rise to anodyne liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange, or the culture of humanity". Bhabha (1995:207) quotes Fanon to define this Third Space as, "the zone of occult instability where the people dwell". Culture is not uniform and stable, clearly distinguished in terms of binary oppositions, but consists of a complex diversity and hybridity. Bhabha (1995:209) writes: "...we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between*, the space of the '*entre'* that Derrida has opened up in writing itself – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist, histories of the 'people'. It is in this space that we will find those words with which we can speak of Ourselves and Others. And by exploring this hybridity, this 'Third Space', we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the other of our selves".

From the above it is clear that 'hybridity' frees the dialogue between readers of the Bible from a polarity of self and other. It makes the 'Third Space' a reality, an anthropological leap from idealist security in an uniform self, opening up a place of dialogue and play, an ethical encounter with the self through the other, negotiating difference and change, "enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable', authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification" (Bhabha 1995:206).

According to Derrida (1982:291), this alterity is implicit in writing: "Discontinuity, delay, heterogeneity, and alterity already were working upon the voice, producing it from its first breath as a system of differential traces that is as writing before the

letter". Spivak (1976:66), leaning on the work of Derrida, states: "Writing becomes a term for Derrida (and for which he owes Freud, amongst others, an enormous debt, which he has always acknowledged) which announces both the structured (`written') condition of all forms of text, including human identity, and also the idea that all such writings are never completely logically coherent or homogeneous, but are in some way marked or traced by what we term alterity or otherness: moments which subvert, contradict the logic, figures, traces, conceptualizations for which we cannot account, which our reading cannot make fit in with the overall structure, and which, because of their heterogeneous nature, announce the structure they inhabit as structure". She constructs her post-colonial reading of texts on this otherness implicit in texts.

Gayatri Spivak (1990:132) refers to herself as a post-colonial, diasporic, Indian who seeks to decolonise the mind. Sarup (1996:163-164) defines her as a deconstructionist, feminist and Marxist[59]. She is particularly interested in the representation of 'Third World Women' as a homogeneous group. Following Marxist critique, she argues that the 'Third World' is a production of the wealth and cultural self-representation of the First World. In this regard, Western feminism is ethnocentric and a contemporary form of colonial discourse, privileging cross-cultural universal assumptions[60] (Sarup 1996:164). "The 'Third World Woman' is not allowed to speak; she is caught between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, between tradition and modernisation. She is rewritten continuously as the subject of patriarchy or of imperialism" (Sarup 1996:165).

Agency focuses on whom or what is oppositional when ideology or discourse, constructs human subjects. This refers to post-colonialism, reflected in the work of Bhabha. He extrapolates ambivalence, away from a term within the colonialist

[59] "She believes that the task of the critic is to ask: who is represented and who is not? It is to utilize the methods of literary analysis, to demonstrate the indeterminacy of the distinction between truth and fiction in imperialist histories, as well as to construct counter-narratives....She argues that analyses of colonial discourse demonstrate that history is not simply the disinterested production of facts, but is rather a process of 'epistemic violence'...She believes that, in a sense, there is nothing that is central. "The centre is always constituted in terms of its own marginality". (Sarup 1996:163-164)

[60] First World feminism has built-in colonialism that validates form of behavior acceptable or possible for the elite, but at the same time oppressive for sub-proletarian women (Sarup 1996:165).

equation, to expose the flaw in the articulation of colonial administration itself[61] (Slemon 1994:23). Bhabha's proposes intention cannot manage the ambivalence between text and institutional controls (line F). The left to right movement of power ignites the deconstructive impulse from the experiences of the colonised. Colonist essentialist reductions are flawed constructs of colonial subjects, emphasising the epistemic power of the colonised - agency.

Bhabha's argument is that ambivalence is everywhere in the model, as an effect of the distortions of colonialist discourse (Slemon 1994:23). There is always resistance to power, an agency to colonist resistance, because colonialist representations are over-determined and ambivalent (Slemon 1994:23-24). The ambivalence produces an impossible subject but also impossibility of the 'colonial identity' itself. Spivak is critical of the recuperation of 'authentic' subaltern voices for the colonised speak only through speaking positions that imperial and other powers permit to its Others. Slemon (1994:28) states: "Criticism which argues otherwise necessarily participates in an inherently neo-colonialist function whose contemporary home is the Western university".

In this study, it will become clear that reading the Bible through the eyes of colonised readers constructs holistic readings that break through the essentialist constructions of the other by the Western scholarly readings. In this regard, the interaction between non-scholarly readings from the margin of colonial essentialism creates liminal spaces for the construction of responsible readings.

1.4.8 Ideological critique/reading

Ideological critique focuses on the paradigmatic level or the dichotomies and power relations between coloniser and colonised. Eagleton (1976:80) writes that ideology "pre-exists the text; but ideology of the text defines, and operates and constitutes that ideology in ways unpremeditated, so to speak, by ideology itself'. Ideology is a

[61] Slemon (1994:23) writes: "Colonial discourse, Bhabha goes on to argue, is *itself* an ambivalent discourse...the representation may appear hegemonic, but it carries within it a hidden flaw invisible at home but increasingly apparent abroad when it is away from the safety of the West. The representation of the colonial subject…is not so much proved or disproved…as dis-articulated in the way it actually works at specific moments of colonialist history".

matter of discourse and power, encountered in the discourse of every text and the ideological collusion with the reader. In this regard, reading is an instrument of power that the powerful use to exploit others. However, Spivak and Bhabha emphasise, that readings from the margin reveal the ambivalence and inconsistencies of colonial ideologies.

Said is critical of the limitlessness of interpretation or the play of signifiers of post-modernism. Said (1983:39) argues that text are worldly and impose constraints upon their interpretations, “the way the closeness of the world’s body to the texts body forces readers to take both into consideration”. Said (1983:40) reacts against particularistic or post-modern semiotics that places "undue emphasis on the limitlessness of interpretation...this has been derived from a conception of the text as existing within a hermetic, Alexandrian textual universe, which has no connection with actuality. This is a view I do not agree with, not simply because texts in fact are in the world but also because texts place themselves ...and indeed are themselves, by soliciting the world's attention. Moreover, their manner of doing this is to place restrains upon what can be done with them”. Separation of writing and ideology conceals the role of power.

Derrida (1976:121) relates this to Western ethnocentrism: “The traditional and fundamental ethnocentrism which, inspired by the model of phonetic writing, separates writing from speech with an axe, is thus handled, and thought of as anti-ethnocentrism. It supports an ethico-political accusation: man’s exploitation by man is the fact of writing cultures of the Western type”. In other words, the process of reading, the engagement between text and reader, is the moment that Western ethnocentrism reaches its climax, but it is also the moment where ideology is deconstructed.

An example of this, according to Said (1983:44), is the Western novelistic tradition with texts that insist upon their circumstantial reality and their status as already fulfilling a function or meaning in the world. These authors have “valorised

speech"[62] by connecting a silent text to the world. Said (1983:45-46) states that all text dislodge other texts and are "facts of power": "They compel attention away from the world even as their beginning intention as texts coupled with the inherent authoritarianism of the authorial authority…makes for sustained power".

In the genealogy of text there is a first text or "sacred prototype" that is the root for the displacing power of all texts. Said (1983:46) states, "…that the displacing power in all texts finally derives from the displacing power of the Bible, whose centrality, potency, and dominating anteriority informs all Western literature". In this regard, human authors with the same displacing effect as the Bible later replace God as author-authority. Said (1983:47) therefore rejects Ricoeur's notion of an equal relation between hearer and speaker - "Texts incorporate discourse, sometimes violently"[63] (Said 1983:47).

Said (1983:48) argues that Ricoeur's position is a simplified idealization that views interpretation as a conversation between equals: "…the discursive situation is more usually like the unequal relation between colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed....Words and texts are so much of the world that their effectiveness, in some cases even their use, are matters having to do with ownership, authority, power, and the imposition of force". Although texts may be viewed as silent printed objects, there are many forces that maintain a text as a fact not of mute ideality but of "*production*". Said (1983:50) concludes: "My thesis is that any centrist, exclusivist conception of the text, or for that matter of the discursive situation as defined by Ricoeur, ignores the self-confirming will to power from which many texts can spring".

[62] Said (1983:45) writes: "By valorization of speech I mean that the discursive, circumstantially dense interchange of speaker facing hearer is made to stand – sometimes misleadingly – for a democratic equality and co-presence in actuality between speaker and hearer. Not only is the discursive relation far from equal in actuality, but the text's attempt to dissemble by seeming to be open democratically to anyone who might read it is also an act of bad faith. Not only is the discursive relation far from equal in actuality but the text's attempt to dissemble by seeming to be open democratically to anyone who might read it is also an act of bad faith".

[63] "Foucault's contention is that the fact of writing itself is a systematic conversion of the power relationship between controller and controlled into 'mere' written words – but writing is a way of disguising the awesome materiality of so tightly controlled and managed a production" (Said 1983:47)

In the same way, the scholar is not a simple translator of texts into circumstantial reality. "The reproduction of textuality in criticism is itself bound up in circumstance, in 'worldliness'. Indeed, for both post-colonial writer and critic, this worldliness is a crucial factor, for the manner and target of its address, its oppositionality, its revelatory powers of representation, its liminality, are fundamental features of its being in the world" (Aschroft et al, 2001:21-22). Although Said agrees with Derrida that speech is not prior to writing, in critique of Ricoeur also rejects Derrida's position. Texts announce materiality by their contextuality in the same way as speech. The worldly construction of texts places restraints upon interpretation. Contextuality exists at the same level as the object, thus, not concealing its worldliness. It is not outside the world as proposed by realists and structuralists, but part of the world and present in the text as a part of its formation (Ashcroft et al 2001:22).

Ideological critique refers to the unravelling of the ideologies inscribed in the reading process. In other words, the reading process activates ideologies. Non-scholarly essentialist readings from the centre of privilege activate colonial ideologies. It is the purpose of ideological critique to expose these ideologies. "Ideological criticism is a critical mediation between text and reader which contends there can never be a pure, ideology-free, uninvested meeting between text and reader" (Aichele 1995:302).

Ideological reading is a reading from the margin of the interpretative process - reading against the grain of the ideological thrust constructs responsible interpretations. Non-scholarly readers from the margin resist the power of these ideologies through their contextual experiences that reveals the inconsistencies of ideological readings. "Ideological reading, as we define it, is a deliberate effort to read against the grain – of texts, of disciplinary norms, of traditions, of cultures" (Aichele 1995:302).

In chapter 3 it will become clear that non-scholarly readings, from the Western centre, collude with inscribed textual ideologies and that readings from the margin are de-colonial - the face of the other.

1.4.9 Theological-ethical reflection

Western scientific modes of reading hail human reason as the tool to discover the truth and understand God. Similar, is the way hermeneutics and the demythologising of Bultmann moves beyond the spiritual realm. Sugirtharajah (1999:10-11) writes, that in the Indian context, Bultmann's demythologising was an attempt to subdue Indian superstition but in effect created a new idol: "Indian readers were encouraged to fall prostrate before this idol, without thinking for a moment that the whole program of demythologization was aimed at Europeans, who had lost the sense of awe and wonder and the feel for the numinous as a result of the scientific mode of thinking. Demythologization was seen as a transferable pedagogic strategy for illuminating the mental darkness of Indians and their superstitious ways". In this regard, rationalism and essentialism has reduced theology to rational construction - humanism. The engagement of non-scholarly readers with the Bible is an attempt to transform this process. Non-scholars read the Bible not only read the Bible through the lenses of their experiences but also a people with religious commitment. In other words, the theology of non-scholarly readers is an ethical theology that engages the Bible from the context of their daily lives.

Western theology and ethics, informed by essentialism, focused on the rational prowess of theologians to construct absolute and universal principles, regarding God and the Christian life. The essentialist tenants of this theological paradigm separated theology and ethics. This resulted in theological discourse that distanced itself from world issues and perpetuated oppression. This constituted a *theology from above* that disregarded the anthropological dimension of theological discourse. Philosophy and metaphysics informed reflection concerning God and life. Contextual theology, arguing that the history and experiences of cultures and communities inform theological reflection (*theology from below*), turned the tables on abstract and rational theology fusing an intimate link between theology and ethics.

Theology from above not only linked a Western conceptual framework to theological reflection but also failed to address critical ethical issue regarding poverty, discrimination, and exploitation of non-Western people. On the other hand, a *theology from below* is also in danger of becoming relativistic and fragmented, thus perpetuating abuses in the name of nationalistic cohesion. In this regard, a *theology*

from below must incorporate an ethical thrust that deconstructs oppressive forces by giving hermeneutical priority to the margin of a community or culture. In the 'South' African context, this involves sensitivity for a non-Western holistic and connected worldview. This implies that it must be able to link people, land, and God.

In this regard, a *theology from below* must also distinguish between two ethical positions, namely: the centre and the margin. The centre refers to the imperial centre from where control and exploitation initiates. It is also the centre in terms of privilege and flow of material wealth from the margin. The margin refers to the experience of exploitation and colonialism. This is the experience of poverty and loss of cultural identity.

The cultural and ethical dimensions, in terms of colonial discourse in 'South' Africa, are interwoven reflecting the complexity of the hermeneutical process. The intersection of these two dimensions reveals four reading matrixes:

1. *Colonial reading* refers to the intersection of essentialist cultural discourse and a centralistic position. The essentialist discourse separates the coloniser and colonised, emphasising the perceived superiority of the imperial culture.
2. The opposite spectrum of colonial readings is *decolonial reading*. This reading is informed by a holistic worldview and positioned on the margin of society. In the context of this study decolonial reading is representative of a responsible reading containing the cultural matrix of Africa and a critical cutting edge reflected in the experience of the marginalised.
3. *Indigenous readings* develop from the intersection of the cultural discourse of the colonised, which is holistic in the case of Africa, and an ethics of the centre. These readings reflect elitist and nationalist positions that uncritically accept tradition.
4. *Anti-colonial readings* represent the opposite of indigenous readings. These readings reflect the marginalised position and the cultural discourse of the coloniser, which is essentialism in the case of 'South' Africa.

The following theological-ethical criteria inform a responsible reading of the Bible in the 'South' African context:

- A responsible reading follows an interconnected and holistic worldview. Western essentialism emphasises disconnection and separation perpetuating

imperial ideologies. This has resulted in a dualistic theological discourse that also separates God and creation. The covenant between God and Israel connected land, people, and God (Gen. 12, 15). This connectedness also had an ethical cutting edge. The story of Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings 21) emphasises that not even those in authority have the right to disconnect people from the land. Injustice and disconnection from God also has a direct effect of the connection between Israel and the land. The destruction of kingdom of Israel and exile was a result of injustice and disobedience to God (Is. 36:1-39:8; Jer. 39:1-45:5). The covenant is not an exclusive phenomenon but inclusive, connecting people to one another and God. Although God made a covenant with Israel, it was not at the expense of others but a means to reveal the love and grace of God to all people. Isaiah states in chapter 60-66 that judgement and hope is for all the people of the earth. This inclusive perspective is rooted in Genesis 1-11 that emphasises that God created the world and all people. The lineage of all people has a common starting point, Adam and Eve, and Genesis 1:26 emphasises the fact that God creates people in his image. This highlights the connection between people. The emphasis on the righteousness and justice of God specifically in the Law and prophetic traditions warns against the spiritualisation of the connection between people. Exploitation and oppression disconnect people from one another because of the disrespect of their divine link. At the same time, this disconnects the oppressor from God.

- A responsible reading grows from the margin of society. In other words, it moves beyond imperial elitism and nationalistic theologies. It is a theology of the people reflecting their experience of God and a life of poverty on the margins of society. This perspective is rooted in covenant law (Deut. 15:4-10 and 24:14; Lev. 25:25; Ex. 22:25 en 23:3) and the prophetic tradition (Amos 5:11 and 8:6; Is. 34:5; Jer. 5:28) of the Old Testament. It reflects the ethical imperative implied in God's concern for the oppressed.
- A responsible reading brings healing. In other words, the transformation of the disconnection of injustice takes place. The result is that people re-connect with one another and the land. The eschatological writings of the Old Testament reflect this process of reconnection. Isaiah 60 emphasises that the New Jerusalem will be a place where all people will gather and live in peace. The eschatology is not empty promise regarding the future. It is a shared vision of the future that starts in the

present. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings is a start and not the conclusion. It is an engagement that has the vision to transform and bring healing by reconnecting people to one another, God, and the land.

A theological-ethical reflection of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings proposes that a reading from a non-scholarly perspective from the margins of society is de-colonial and a responsible reading of Genesis 11:1-9. This moves beyond Western rationalistic essential modes of reading that is a function of imperial subjugation transforming scholarship through the construction of liminal spaces. I will propose that the concept *Moya* reflects the hermeneutic of non-scholarly readings from the margin of the 'South' African context. This mode of reading deconstructs an essentialist *theology from above* and is a responsible mode of reading for decolonisation in 'South' Africa.

1.5 Structure of the Study

In chapter 2, I will argue that an essentialist worldview informs colonial scholarly modes of reading Genesis 11:1-9 in 'South' Africa. I will explore three types of colonial readings, namely:

- Anglocentric reading, by J.W. Colenso's, in *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1863), reflects the civilising mission of the West that regarded non-Western culture as inferior.
- The Afrikaner colonial reading of the document *Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture* (1976) (HR) portrays the intimate link between colonial racism and capitalism.
- Anti-colonial readings of Black - , African and Liberation hermeneutics, that interpret the text from the reversal of the coloniser/colonised dichotomy (margin) leading to new oppressive nationalist ideologies, is traced back to similar reading by the Afrikaner, struggling against British imperialism. The work of J.D. du Toit reflects the resistance trace that continued in Black - and liberation hermeneutics.

In chapter 3, an ideological critique of non-scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context will follow. The study reflects on three types of non-scholarly reading, namely: Bible study groups, a reading by Avorti that incorporates African mythology and two artworks by Azaria Mbatha. These diverse non-scholarly readings reflect the notion that reading does not only refer to texts but also oral tradition and art. I will argue that non-scholarly readings, informed by a holistic African worldview from the margin, construct interpretations that move against the grain of dominant essentialist ideologies. These readings provide a critical resource for the ideological critique of Western essentialism.

In chapter 4, a theological-ethical reflection of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading will follow. Inclusively, an open-critical thrust, the face of the other, and contextuality are the main theological-ethical criteria that guide this reflection. I will propose that the *ubuntu* reading of Genesis 11:1-9 by Desmond Tutu is an example of an interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings. Tutu's reading, however, lacks the critical dimension of a holistic perspective. I will argue that the concept *Moya* (Spirit), linked to the African Independent Church, provides dimensions for a deconstructive reading that is critical and constructive. A *Moya* reading deconstructs essentialist constructions of essentialist scholarly readings and creates a liminal space for the construction of creative and responsible readings of Genesis 11:1-9.

In Chapter 5, I will return to the global context by focussing on the link between post-modern culture and imperialism. I will reflect on the possible contributions of this study in the wider and local hermeneutical debate.

Chapter 2

Scholarship and Essentialism: Reading Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context

In this chapter, I will argue that Western essentialism provided the sphere for colonialism and imperialism to grow by promoting essentialist modes of reading Genesis 11:1-9 through its educational institutions (Said 1994). This does not imply that all scholarly modes of readings perpetuate imperialism, or that essentialism is imperialist. It will become clear that the close link between essentialism and Western culture cultivated the fertile soil for the development of colonial and imperial readings of the Bible through educational institutions.

Essentialist modes refer to the method of observing and classifying texts by scholars in order to control the reading process. In other words, scholarship with its roots in Western cultural discourse has developed methodologies to control the interpretation of texts. Essentialism is rooted in the Western idea that all things of the same kind have similar characteristics that makes them part of that particular group. The classification and categorisation of people leads to the construction of cultural hierarchies dividing people, due to the influence of Darwinism, into superior and inferior cultures. The result was that Western humanity was regarded as civilised and non-Western humanity as uncivilised and in need of Western education, mission and commerce leading to colonial exploitation. This same process is part of the cultural imperial linked to scholarship and biblical interpretation. These essentialist modes are rooted in Western culture that is alien to the African holistic and interconnected worldview. The disconnection and dualistic nature of essentialism creates a theological-ethical problem in that it disregards the connection between people, land and God. This results in a reading praxis that has a built in blindspot for injustice because of the separation of physical and non-physical reality. The pure, abstract, rational and mental world separates the impure, temporal and geographically situated world that results in the failure to acknowledge the impact of these worlds on one another. In this regard, I will refer to three modes of reading in the 'South' African context, namely:

- J.W. Colenso's publication, *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1863), reflects the role of historical criticism in Anglocentric readings. This mode of reading is rooted in the presupposition that non-Western people and contexts are subjects of the civilising mission of the West, thus, separating the civilised Western world and the uncivilised people of Africa through essentialist discourse.
- The Boer Calvinist mode of reading of *Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture* (1976) (HR) reflect the impact of Afrikaner colonialism. The roots of Boer Calvinism, linked to Kuyperism and Fundamentalism, promoted the view that the covenantal relationship between God and peoples cluster people together in distinct and separate units or peoples. This dualistic worldview forms the basis of the separation between black and white leaning on the experience of the power and privilege of the colonial centre.
- Anti-Colonial readings of the twentieth century, follows a resistance trace back to the Afrikaner's resistance of British Imperialism, reflected in the reading of J.D. du Toit, *Hemelbestormers* (1912). I include Du Toit at this late stage of this chapter, after the reference to HR, because of his anti-imperial reading strategy, reading in solidarity with the experiences of colonial oppression reflected in Liberation and Black hermeneutics. The essential message of liberation[64] links Du Toit, Liberation - and Black Hermeneutics. The modes of reading followed in Liberation and Black hermeneutics take their point of departure from the contextual experience of oppressed people. The reading of Miguez-Bonino[65] of Genesis 11:1-9 follows a similar resistance trace. It is also at this point, where the reading of Du Toit and that of contextual modes of reading differ. Du Toit's reading follows Kuyper's Calvinist perspective in order to comment on humanism of scientific modes. Miguez-Bonino incorporates liberation hermeneutics and social analysis in his reading. Du Toit's reading, in terms of its Kuyperian roots, however, reflects greater similarity with Boesak's Black hermeneutics.

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[64] Boesak (1976:13) writes: "While we acknowledge that the expressions of liberation theology are not identical, we must object very strongly against the total division (and contrast) some make between Black Theology in South Africa and Black Theology in the United States; between Black Theology and African Theology; between Black Theology and Latin American theology of liberation". Although the contexts of these theologies differ they are similar in terms of their focus on justice and reliance on hermeneutics.

2.1 Anglocentric readings[66]

2.1.1 From Dutch colonialism to British imperialism

In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck founded a victualling station at the Cape[67]. This event was the beginning of Dutch colonialism, through the influx of more colonialists. The territory expanded beyond the Cape into the interior, realising Van Riebeeck's wish that it would become a Dutch colony: "….heel van Hollant afwenden ende t' eenemael van deese plaets haar vaderlant mogen maecken'' (Van der Watt 1989:3). By the 1770's, the colony had spread to 700 km east of the Cape. This brought the colonists in contact with indigenous chiefdoms/tribes consisting of people who spoke one or more of the vast variety of African languages.

In 1795, the British annexed the Cape, except for a brief period of Batavian rule from 1803-6. From 1803-1806, the Batavian Republic (United Netherlands) regained control of the Cape under the Treaty of Amiens. Their liberal humanitarianism came under suspicion but soon after renewed struggle in Europe the Treaty of Amiens failed, and the Cape was again occupied by the British (Davenport and Saunders 2000:42).

British rule saw the arrival of the Anglican Church mainly focussing on the settler community of civil servants, soldiers and later the immigrants who settled in the Eastern Cape, Durban and the Cape (De Gruchy 1995:32). Under the leadership of Robert Grey, who believed that the church could only grow and develop in 'South' Africa once it was freed from the influence of the British crown, the first Synod of the Church in the Province of South Africa (CPSA) took place in Cape Town in 1870 (De

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[66] 'Anglicist' refers to Sugirtharajah's (1999:9) reference to the introduction of Western investigation like historical criticism. In this study, 'Anglocentric' relates to the centralised imperial discourse of British essentialist modes of reading.

[67] This view of the Cape by the VOC changed in 1657 when nine Company employees were allowed to establish their own farms at Rondebosch. Colonization increased in 1679 when Simon van der Stel granted twenty settlers land in what is today Stellenbosch (Davenport and Saunders, 2000:21).

Gruchy 1995:34). Although the CPSA had a more integrationist view regarding indigenous people, it was the activities of missionary societies, based on the perceived superiority of European culture, which instigated the civilising mission. The civilising mission had a close link with the abolition of slavery, regarded as an uncivilised practice. Missionaries like John Philip played an important role in this regard, focusing on evangelical humanitarianism (Davenport and Saunders 2000:41). He said: "Let the advocates of religion and humanity use their efforts to put a period to the slavery of the Aborigines within the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and they will, by that single act, do more for the promulgation of the gospel in South Africa, than all the funds of the London Missionary Society..." (Saayman 1991:39).

The journals of many missionaries and historians reflect the perceived inferiority of indigenous cultures. Tindall[68] (1959:28) describes the cultural ritual of manhood as follows: "The youth is seized early in the morning of the day the ceremony is to be performed. Dragged out of his hut, stripped of his skin kaross and his loin girdle. By this time, the males of the village are assembled. They spout plentifully an unmentionable kind of water, all over his body". Tindall (1959:28) then concludes with reference to the role of Christianity and the Bible in Africa: "Scriptural law is now displacing heathenish customs, and Christianity teaches Gospel ordinances. Light extinguishes darkness, and the once unblushing sinner is ashamed of his past deeds".

Other missionaries like Merriman[69], father of John Xavier Merriman who would later become one of the architects of the Union, (1957:89) found it strange that black Africans linked Christianity with Western culture: "One man told me it was too hot for him to turn Christian; he must wear clothes if he did, and might not grease his body, or paint it with red clay...And when I told him that Christianity did not consist in clothes, or the arts of life, he could scarcely comprehend the distinction, so unhappily has the Gospel been lowered in this land, and made to appear merely as a part and parcel of European civilization". Bryce (1899:90) notes the following on the

[68] Joseph Tindall (1959), a Methodist missionary, and his wife arrived in Cape Town in June 1836 and was a missionary in Southern Africa from 1839 to 1855.
[69] Nathaniel James Merriman was born in Wiltshire 1809 and ordained in 1835 to the Lancashire curacy of Brindle. He sailed to the Cape in 1848 where he focused on missionary work. As Archdeacon of Grahamstown he had to present Colenso for heresy in 1863.

religion of Africans: "Religion was a powerful factor in Kafir life; but religion did not mean the worship of any deity, for there was no deity. Still less had it any moral significance. To the Kafirs, as to most savage races, the world was full of spirits - spirits of the rivers, the mountains, and the woods".

The civilising mission not only transported Western values to Africa but also sought to reap economic benefits by introducing capitalism that missionaries participated in by trading and acquiring land. The insistence of missionaries that people turn from a pastoral life to agriculture reflects this. Merriman (1957:42) states: "All missionaries in South Africa agree in saying that the pastoral life...is of all the states the most irreclaimably vicious; and that to improve men you must first get them to cultivate the soil".

Although Philip's work played a role in the abolition of slavery, the Eurocentric mission to civilise informed his worldview. He regarded Western missionaries as the agents of British civilisation and interests: "While our missionaries, beyond the borders of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilization, social order, and happiness, they are, by the most unexceptionable means, extending British interests, British influence and the British Empire" (Saayman 1991:39). Tindall (1959:129) reports: "Step by step, though very slowly, the Gospel makes inroads into heathenism and a ray of light appears in the midnight gloom. Many are anxious to possess the conveniences of civilized life". Other missionaries like Pringle expressed the link between Western civilisation and imperialism more directly by saying in 1820: "Let us enter upon a new and nobler career of conquest. Let us subdue Savage Africa by justice, by kindness, by the talisman of Christian truth. Let us thus go forth, in the name and under the blessing of God, gradually to extend the territorial boundary also of our colony until it shall become an empire" (Dube 1996:43-44).

The civilising mission promoted capitalism in that it implied that egalitarian systems of non-Western people be replaced by a capitalist system. In 1828, the constitution of

Ordinance 49[70] allowed Blacks to enter the colony freely under a pass-system to sell their labour and to trade, thus, abandoning the previous strict territorial segregation. This resulted in Blacks entering the district for economic reasons. In some cases, whole tribes immigrated and unknowingly became colonials (Loubser 1987:10).

George Grey's policies, implemented in *British Kaffraria* (the area between Keimouth and Keiskamma River), reflects this link with imperialism. He tried to bring about maximum socio-economic integration, "hoping to make the Xhosa 'a part of ourselves, with a common faith and common interests, useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue'" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:141).

During the governorship of Rhodes many exploitive measures where introduced, one being the Glen Grey Act of 1894[71] (Davenport and Saunders 2000:109). From this it become clear that imperialism prepared the way for Western capitalism to grow in the non-Western world by reducing its people to cheap labour and its geographical space to raw material. Cultural imperialism is a function of stability necessary for capitalism to thrive.

Magubane (2000:339) proposes that the emancipation of slaves enacted in Westminster 1834 transformed an existing labour force into proletarians. The abolition of slavery and the civilising mission did free non-Western people from slavery, but incorporated them into a capitalist system whereby capitalism replaced the slavery system of Dutch colonialism. The problem is that capitalism exploited

[70]Ordinance 49 of 1828 gave free slaves and Khoikhoi the same rights as whites (Loubser 1987:10). The autocratic manner of execution of the ordinances, low compensation refundable in London and Xhosa raids embittered the Dutch colonials and so many of them decided to move away from British tyranny and ideas of equality at the cost of their beliefs and customs. The liberal humanistic ideas of people like Philips and his testimony before the Aborigines Committee of 1838 to reverse D'Urban's popular decision among whites to annex larger frontier land and expulse black, infuriated many white colonialists. Policy decisions of the English, such as the reversal of decisions to annex larger areas of the frontier at Queen Adelaide Province, were viewed with suspicion and had an influence on the decision to move (Davenport and Saunders 2000:51). The missionaries such as Philip were convinced of the assimilation of indigenous people into European Christian culture, after removing the shackles of oppression. For the ex-slaves, as for the Khoisan servants, the reality of freedom was very different from the promise. As a capitalist economy developed, they remained a dispossessed and exploited element in the population, with little opportunity to escape their servile lot (Rodriguez 1997:xxii).

[71] "Africans in general had little reason to like him, for he tended to identify 'civilised' with 'white', and to look upon the black as a potential laborer rather than an object for compassion. His (Rhodes) Glen Grey Act of 1894, that 'bill for Africa' over which he took enormous pains, had something to do with the extension of local government to African communities on Cape Colonial lines, but rather more to do with the utilisation of black labour" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:109).

non-western people by using them as labourers to extract wealth from the land to the benefit of the capitalists of the empire. Magubane (2000:339) states that when slave labour was replaced by cheap labour independent subsistence production transformed into low paid agricultural construction and later mine workers. Civilisation and imperial exploitation thus resulted in the continued oppression of non-western people, who were now labourers, instead of not being slaves. "Inspired by a spirit of trusteeship, much of the missionary activity in nineteenth-century Africa was aimed at ending slave-trading practices, and a major component of the new imperialism that inspired the 'scramble for Africa' in the 1880's was the moral imperative to end the practice of slavery on the African continent" (Rodriguez 1997:xxii).

Saayman (1991:26) writes: "As far as British colonialism in South Africa in particular was concerned, it should furthermore be remembered that 'the clergy was an integral part of the English ruling class, and the ideas that they propagated were part of the ideology through which that class defended, and attempted to maintain, its position within the upper reaches of the social hierarchy'". He continues that economic exploitation went hand in hand with the annexation of land. "Missionaries became directly involved in the issue through the fact that large tracts of land were alienated and 'given' to missionary societies or churches, generally after they had made an appeal to the colonial authorities" (Saayman 1991:29). On this piece of land, the missionaries established the European way of life for the African to follow[72] – a home a way from home. The dispossession of land created dependency and the availability of cheap labour. On their own land, they had cattle and could exist as farmers. To supply the cheap labour needed by the growing capitalist system Black people were increasingly force off their land.

Magubane (2000:342) writes that the years 1870-1902, during which the mining industries grew, are important in this history of capitalist development in 'South' Africa because Africans were conquered and dispossessed of their means of livelihood. This reduced people to vast pools of labour from which capitalists would

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72 Kiernan (1995:117) states that by the start of the twentieth century mission focused on upliftment with the intention to produce educated elites. Unwittingly, missionaries were preparing their adherents for entry into the urban industries, communicating to them Western values and attitudes that all formed part of the civilising mission.

recruit all the labour power it required. Essentialist notion of African labour also developed in this time. Bryce (1899:89) writes: "The male Kafir is a lazy fellow who likes talking and sleeping better than continuous physical exertion and the difficulty of inducing him to work is the chief difficulty which European mine-owners in South Africa complain of...it will be long before he acquires the habits of steady and patient industry...".

Darwinism laid the foundation of the civilising mission. Tindall (1959: 32) classified the level of civilisation of non-Westerners in terms of their agricultural ability: "Some are so far civilized as to take charge of sheep and goats". On other occasions, he refers to people as "half-civilized" (Tindall 1959:39). He also used intelligence as criteria to differentiate between people: "The Damaras are more intelligent in appearance than the Hottentots. They have fine figures, are raven black in colour; their huts are conical, made of sticks scientifically laid and covered with grass" (Tindall 1959:59). Not only do these references reflect the hierarchy of civilisation but also the power of the colonial observer that redefines non-Western people in terms of Western criteria.

Bryce (1899:96-97) evaluates the impact of Westerners on the country: "Many unjust things, many cruel things, many things which would excite horror if practiced in European warfare, have been done against them. But whoever tries to strike the balance of good and evil due to the coming of the whites must remember what the condition of the country was before the whites came".

2.1.2 Historical-critical readings

The civilising mission follows the Enlightenment, during which the accomplishments of Europeans developed into a superior view of their culture, replacing the primitive superstitions of converts with the rational science of missionaries. Under the Wesleyans, London Missionary Society and other missionary organisations, British-based Christian humanitarianism sought “to convert the indigenous people and to bring them in touch with European culture and technology, which were seen as necessary accompaniment to conversion” (Davenport and Saunders 2000:123). In this sense, the connection between education and the civilising mission fuses. An

example of this is the educational achievements of the Lovedale mission (Davenport and Saunders 2000:141). Converts to Christianity were educated in these missionary schools. Those who entered ministry were educated in historical-critical reading of the Bible. An example is Tiyo Soga (1829-1871), a pietistic Presbyterian minister who was educated in Scotland (Saayman 1991:62).

J.X. Merriman (1969:52) stated: "We have an educational franchise with what in other countries would be considered a high qualification. Overall, this has worked well. Our Natives have increased both in wealth and in habits of industry and civilization. They give little or no trouble, though of course they require careful, and above all, just management". Education was a means to status in society and political power. Merriman (1969:53) proposed in terms of the Union that education should become a criterion: "The best course would be to adopt a high franchise with a real education text, which would shut out all but the Native who was fit to exercise the rights of a citizen..."

Enlightenment science and Anglocentrism went hand in hand, resulting in the classification, categorisation and renaming[73] of non-Western contexts and people, thus, to separating the colonised from the coloniser, the primitive from the civilised. In terms of the Bible, historical-critical reading developed as a civilised mode of reading. Enlightenment scientism requires specialised academic training in the theories and methods of scientific inquiry exclusively provided by academic institutions of the West. Male Western scholars formed the core of these training programmes. It emphasised the classic ideals of the Enlightenment, specifically the development of rationalism, focusing on knowledge as a universal phenomenon – scientific method as applicable to all areas of inquiry; facts are neutral and knowable; research as a search for truth, involving value-free observation and recovery of facts; rational, uninvolved observers (Segovia 1995:4).

Segovia (2000:61-64) distinguishes four aspects of Enlightenment modes:

[73] "Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted and finally brought under control" (Said 1994:271).

- *Empiricist stance*: The text is a reality "out there" with pre-existing, stable and determinate, controlling meaning that can be derived from the author, the text, or the readers.
- *An objectivist gaze*: The intrusion of any particular ethos cannot destabilise the interpretation of a text. Interpretation is an objective and impartial activity that uncovers the universally valid meaning contained in the text.
- *Hierarchical bias*: The reading needs to be informed and universal. This requires academic training in established and rigorous principles of research and analysis.
- *A competitive strain*: The scientific inquiry is open to critique and recommendations to establish a 'correct' reading.

Scientific reading required silence before the text, calling upon its operative "reader-constructs, the informed and universal critic of the academy, to refrain from taking any type of stand with regard to the text under consideration...not to express any sort of reaction, cognitive or affective, or any sort of evaluation, positive or negative, regarding the text" (Segovia 2000:62). The aim of reading is purely to extract data from the text, without any dialogue with the results. This task was left to other scientists, the theologians, or ethicists. There is no room for a dialogue with real life readers and the effects 'exegesis' has on their lives. The importance of objectivity and critical scrutiny is the only principal for understanding the message[74].

Historical criticism focuses on the "authority of the observer, and of European geographical centrality, is buttressed by a cultural discourse relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary racial, cultural, ontological status. Yet this secondariness is, paradoxically, essential to the primariness of the European…" (Said 1994:70). The western education system empowers the scholar with control over the text, to dissect and analyse it from where a universal semiotic is constructed[75]. Rationalism and universality, of European culture, determine the truth of this

[74] "A violation of it would not necessarily have been seen as incurring 'exegesis' but would have been certainly perceived as unseemly, precisely because it signifies the undesirable intromission of the flesh-and-blood reader into the critical discussion" (Segovia 2000:63).

[75] Western scholarship of the twentieth century is continuing with conquest exegesis because of the influence of German exegetical research that was linked to nineteenth-century German imperialism. (Dube 1999:300).

construction - a form of Eurocentrism. “This Eurocentric culture relentlessly codified and observed everything about the non-European or peripheral world and so thoroughly and in so detailed a manner as to leave few items untouched, few cultures unstudied, few peoples and spots of land unclaimed…" (Said 1994:267-268).

This process of codifying and naming colonial space is according to Bujo (1992:40) one of the ways in which Africa was subdued. Across Africa, Westerners drew frontiers without any consideration of ethnic distribution or customary law, splitting families and clans by the new boundaries (Bujo 1992:40). In the same, way Europeans gave names to mountains, rivers, and new nations. Colonialists replaced traditional chief or they were enticed by greed, becoming agents for their new masters. Another, aspect is that traditional religion was vigorously campaigned against (Bujo 1992:41). In this way, the Western impulse to divide and name foreign territories threatened the connection of African's to the land.

Spurr (1993:13) states that a classical colonial mode is surveillance. In this regard, the observer is in a position of privilege, observing and inspecting an object. The reserved privilege position of the white man remains a problem. The civilising act of education can transform the black man to the status of observer. This implies schooling in historical criticism and scientific theory, to become value-neutral observers and civilised readers of the Bible. The problem is that the gaze is never innocent or pure, never free of mediation by motives but colonising the text. The reader master, controls, fixes the boundaries, types, and ultimately disregards the text for the ultimate, pure and universal. Spurr (1993:28) writes that this process of taking over is appropriation, taking control of the other because of the right of the civilised. This resulted in the view that historical-critical reading is a superior mode of reading, controlling the text through its rational reading praxis. Ultimately claiming the text the rational process had to lead to the uncovering of the universal essence of the text. This led to the process of classification in terms of authorship, genres, and context to differentiate between texts. Each with its own essential characteristics forming a hierarchy of meaning rooted in Darwinism (Spurr 1993:63). The problem is that classification is according to Western standards and for their benefit.

The civilised/primitive dichotomy continues through scientific modes like historical criticism or civilised modes of reading that "corrected" the indigenous or superstitious modes of reading. In terms of this method, the scholar is in control of the text, scrutinising and analysing it through the scientific Enlightenment method that reduces the Biblical text to a form of pre-critical writing, operating in the realm of myth and folklore. The reading of Genesis 11:1-9 by Bishop John William Colenso clearly reflect this.

2.1.3 J.W. Colenso

Bishop John William Colenso (1814-83) went to KwaZulu Natal with the backing of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG). He was both a biblical critic and critic of British colonial policy. Colenso broke with the accepted literal mode of reading the Bible that uncritically accepted the bloodshed and violence in the Old Testament. For Colenso many of these historical accounts in the Bible were simply rationally incorrect. It would therefore be morally reprehensible to use these texts uncritically as a source for preaching. Text had to be rationally scrutinised before viewing them as 'Word of God'. Sugirtharajah (2001:116) writes: "Employing what was at that time known as higher criticism, Colenso dealt with the moral repulsiveness of some scriptural narratives by showing them to be historically unreliable. In this process, he transformed the image of God from a bloodthirsty and vengeful tyrant into a modern benevolent paternal figure of love and care".

Colenso's resistance to literal modes of reading and colonial practices grew from his interaction with Zulu people that was far greater than that of his compatriots due to his knowledge of the Zulu language. Where they viewed Zulu people as primitive, savage and heathen he argued that the Zulu, like Israel of the Old Testament, did not know the true law (Sugirtharajah 2001:127). The Zulu people are not essentially amoral but had a moral narrative of their own, in which they wrestled with good and evil, reflected by the concepts *uNembeza* (central moral force) and *uGovanta* (destructive force) (Sugirtharajah 2001:127).

Although the church and others in Britain condemned Colenso for his, so called, irreverent critical work on the Pentateuch, A.P Stanley gave the following report of

him to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel: "The Bishop of Natal is the one colonial bishop who has translated the Bible into the languages of the natives of his diocese. He is the one colonial bishop who, when he believed a native to be wronged, left his diocese, journeyed to London and never rested till he had procured the reversal of that wrong" (Rogerson 1995:41).

Sugirtharajah (2001:139) describes Colenso's mode of reading as a hermeneutic of "dissidence" - A coloniser who engaged in "oppositional discursive practice" against his own system. Although Colenso resisted stark colonial modes of reading and atrocities, he viewed the Zulu as "heathens" and of a "lower level of civilization". He retained the classical colonial dichotomy of his time - superior British civilisation and inferior African heathenism[76].

Wellhausen's theories, correlating the results of Documentary Hypothesis with the different eras of Israel's religious history, influenced his mode of reading the Bible. The composition of Levitical and sacrificial material, according to Colenso, emanates from the post-exilic period (Rogerson 1992:431). His mode of reading drew on the Enlightenment worldview valuing rational inquiry of the text. The rational ability of the scholar exposed paradoxes and contradictions contained in the text from where deductions regarding the essential truth of the text followed. Although Colenso argued that Zulu converts raised critical questions, regarding inconsistencies in the text, a Western interpretative frame of reference guided him when interpreting the text (Sugirtharajah 2001:133). At best, he used comparative method to provide a link between his readings and that of Zulu people. The analogy between the Zulu as people of a "lower level of civilization" with the Israelites of the Old Testament reflects his comparative reference. This also highlights Colenso's perceived inferiority of Zulu culture that needed Western civilised culture to uncover the 'primitive truth' for them. "The 'primitive truth', for Colenso, was the fatherly love of God, which was available to all people" (Sugirtharajah 2001:118).

[76] Sugirtharajah (2001:112) quotes Colenso stating: "And it seems to be in the order of providence that the Briton, more than any other, should go out into other lands...and make possession of different regions of the earth, where he will be brought at once into connection with races on a lower level of civilization".

The wider European scholarly debates represent the cultural sphere in which Colenso's critical reading of the Pentateuch and specifically Genesis 11:1-9 takes place. Rogerson (1985:232) argues that Colenso's work *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined* (1862), that developed into a series of seven books from 1862 to 1879, was a most remarkable achievement by a British critical reading of the Old Testament of the nineteenth century. He read historical critical scholars like Havernick, Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Ewald, Kalisch and also the work of Abraham Kuenen's, *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek* published in Leyden in 1861 (Rogerson 1985:221).

In the Preface to the fourth part of *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1863) Colenso (1863:viii) states that he "adopted as chief representative of the traditionary school of theologians" the work of Delitzch. Colenso (1863:viii-ix) also writes that no Bishops or Doctors of the Church of England, according to his knowledge, has published any critical work of importance on the Pentateuch except for a Tract publicly ascribed to Archbishop Whately of Dublin. This Tract entitled *Tractatus Tres de locis quibusdam difficilioribus Scriptura Sacrae*[77] published in 1849 contains a critical review of Genesis 11:1-9 that Colenso also translates (Colenso 1863:ix). Combined with his education in mathematics from Cambridge, it is safe to say that Colenso was well entrenched in European scholarship and rational inquiry.

Although Colenso claims that, his critical work originated from questions raised by Zulu converts, his scholarship developed because of the influence of the Enlightenment. This reflects the link between Colenso's work and European critical scholarship, from W.M.L de Wette through to Wellhausen, emphasising the use of historical-critical tools to read the Old Testament (Rogerson 1995:164-165). Rogerson (1992:431) states that a "turning point was reached in OT interpretation

[77] In the critical reading of Genesis 11:1-9, the writer argues that the differences of language and races are not the reason for the scattering of the people. The problem was that they were set on forming an empire with the sanction of religion. The city was to become the "head of the world" with its own temple and idolatry. They chose a plain because of the custom in the Bible of "high places" being a reference to God. The tower became an artificial mountain. The "true living God" threw discord into their minds and made them quarrel about religious worship e.g. Jews and Samaritans, sects of Christians and denominations. The strongest faction took possession of the tower and the other went off in different directions, settling in different localities (Colenso 1863:ix-x).

with the publication in 1806-1807 of the *Contributions to Old Testament Introduction*, by W.M.L. de Wette, (1780-1849)". He was the first scholar to use historical criticism to construct a history of Israel, which radically differed from the biblical accounts and questioning the Mosaic contributions to the Pentateuch. Gesenius, (1786-1842) furthered these developments by focusing on Hebrew grammar and lexicography, developed by Gramberg (Rogerson 1992:431-432). Wellhausen[78] drew on the accounts of the documentary hypothesis of Eichhorn in his *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1866), focussing on the religious history of Israel (Rogerson 1992:431-432). Another significant influence was the rise of evolutionism[79] and the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859).

These views where taken up by J.W. Colenso, bishop of Natal, who published a series of volumes on Old Testament criticism (Rogerson 1992:431-432). Colenso argued that P was early and the laws post-exilic, whereas Wellhausen regarded P as post-exilic. Rogerson (1995:165-166) writes that, Colenso was representative of the criticism of the time but also lead to the soaring of his friendship with Maurice[80].

In this section, I will focus on Colenso's reading of Genesis 11:1-9 taken from *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined* (1863). His mode of reading into this seven-volume work later led to his trial and excommunication. I will argue that although his mode of reading challenged the literal and dogmatic colonial mode

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[78] The highpoint of Wellhausen's influence came with S.R. Driver's work, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1891). This led to the *International Critical Commentary* to which scholars from Britain and the USA contributed (Rogerson 1992:431-432).

[79] It contributed to a movement to analyse the Old Testament in the light of Assyrian and Babylonian texts, tracing the development of biblical accounts of events like the Flood and creation in the Ancient Near East as a whole. H. Gunkel developed a form of criticism that went behind the sources J and E to individual units of narrative and their social settings (Rogerson 1992:432). W. F. Albright introduced Assyriology and archaeology in America. The Albright school sought to vindicate the accuracy of the Bible through archaeological evidence. This expanded to grammatical and linguistic features of the Bible in which key concepts gave access to God's revelation in the work of G.E. Wright, *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* (1952). In Germany, Eichrodt adopted a simple organising principle in terms of the covenant. Von Rad, following the work of North on the growth of tradition, focussed on the Old Testament traditions as confessions of faith in God as embodied in Yahwistic, Deuteronomic, priestly and prophetic traditions. "Von Rad's was essentially a descriptive, historical, and genetic way of reading the OT" (Rogerson 1992:432).

[80] His critical work resulted in his friendship with Maurice, a scholar friend who held onto the historicity of the Pentateuch, soaring after his publication of *The Pentateuch and Joshua* (1862) that rejected the historicity of the Pentateuch. Maurice was also critical of *Essays and Reviews* (1860), a publication of seven essays by members of the Church of England, using critical tools in their reflection on education relegating the ancient Hebrew of the Old Testament to primitives (Rogerson 1995: 38-39).

of the time, it remained essentialist, lifting an eternal truth from the rationally purified text.

2.1.3.1 Colenso's reading of Genesis 11:1-9

Colenso's commentary of Genesis 11:1-9 is in Chapter XXVII (pp264-272). The format of the commentary follows a critical dialogue between literal scholarly readings and critical scholars. In this regard, Colenso merely quotes the various scholars in order to provide their direct words and not with his own "imputations" (Colenso 1863:V111). In the commentary, the work of Delitzch is representative of the "traditionary" or literal mode of reading and Kalisch is the main proponent of critical reading. The critical engagement with various scholars by Colenso reflects the "competitive strain" of historical-critical scholarship that aim to discredit the argument of others.

Colenso (1863:264) links the text to the "Jehovist"[81], "a person, evidently of a very enquiring and philosophical mind, and for the age in which he lived, singularly well-informed on geographical and ethnological matters". He writes that the purpose of the "Jehovist" was to give an account of the variety of languages among the "different families of the human race" (Colenso 1863:264). Driver refers to the aetiological argument of the narrator as primitive[82]. Driver (1909:134) states: "The narrative thus contains simply the answer which Hebrew folk-lore gave to the question which differences of languages directly suggested. In reality differences of language are the result, not the cause, of the diffusion of mankind over the globe…the explanation is so worded as to convey, like the other early narratives of Genesis, spiritual lessons" (Driver 1909:134).

From a literal reading or "traditionary view" it may seem that the writer assumes that from the time of creation (2,000 years) no diversities of language had arisen and that

[81] Driver (1909:132) similarly basing his work on Wellhausen reduces the author to particular characteristics that deals with explaining the "origin of various existing customs and institutions". In the case of Genesis 11:1-9, the meaning of the text is reduced to an explanation of the "diversity of languages, and of the distribution of mankind into peoples speaking different languages and inhabiting different parts of the earth" (Driver 1909:132).

[82] Driver (1909:132) is critical of the aetiological reflection of the Yahwist, arguing that it is "primitive".

people spoke the same "primitive tongue" - Hebrew, spoken by Adam (Colenso 1863:264). Willet supported this by refering to Augustine, Hierom and Tostatus, all following a literal reading of the text. Delitzch differs from this perspective arguing that Hebrew could not have been a primitive language[83]. Colenso (1863:266-267) summarises his argument:

"It is manifest that Delitzch's great difficulty is this - to account for the fact that the primeval Hebrew tongue, spoken in Paradise, and by all before, and in Noah's family after, the Flood, should have been retained amidst the 'curse-laden' tribes of Canaan, and not in the family of Abraham, - so that the latter must actually first have learned it, when he came into contact with them. Not being able to allow the possibility of this, he falls back upon the notion that the names, Adam, Ishah, Eve, Cain, Abel, Nod, Noah, are all *translations* of the original forms, into words of similar meaning in Hebrew, - a theory, which requires also to be swelled by the assumption that all the conversations, recorded in G.i.1-xi.9, are only translations, and that all the names in G.v are, in like manner, modified from the original forms into pure Hebrew words, expressing literally the same meaning, and not only these, but also the names in G.xi.10-25, - at least, till we come to Peleg, in whose time 'the earth was divided'".

Colenso (1863:46) argues that there is a link between Genesis 11:1-9, the confusion of "tongues", and Genesis 10:25, that states in Peleg's day "the earth was divided". The problem for Delitzch, following a "traditionary" view, is that it is impossible to argue that Hebrew could have been the primitive language because this would mean that Abraham who spoke Aramaic learnt it from the Canaanites. Colenso (1863:267) rejects the "traditionary" view, writing, "...if Scripture is sufficient to prove the fact of a primeval language, it must also prove that this language was Hebrew". Delitzch's reference to a process of translation is insufficient because the original document does not allude to such an occurrence (Colenso 1863:267). In support of Colenso's critique of Delitzch, he refers to Kalisch, who leans on linguistic research that confirms the existence of one "*Asiatic*" language, thus, rejecting the notion that Hebrew was the

[83] Driver (1909:134) argues that the "rise of a science of comparative philology has shown…when compared with the other Semitic languages, Hebrew exhibits elements of decay, and Arabic is, in many respects, an older and more primitive language. But, unless all analogy is deceptive, the language of the primitive men must have been of a far more simple, undeveloped form than any of the existing Semitic languages…"

first language. The problem with Kalisch's argument, according to Colenso, is that his observation refers to different languages of "*one race*". Using an essentialist system of classification Colenso (1863:267) writes that there is no affinity between "the Chinese tongue and the Indo-European family of languages". He refers to the scientific research of Wiseman, arguing for the "'radical difference' among languages" (Colenso 1863:267).

Turning to Genesis 11:4 Colenso (1863:268) notes that the "story of the 'dispersion of tongues'" is linked by the Jehovistic writer to the "famous unfinished Temple of Belus" (*Birs Nimrod*). The language and actions ascribed to the Divine Being is anthropomorphic. This refers to one of the characteristic of the "Jehovist" discussed in Chapter 6: "The Jehovist also uses frequently strong anthropomorphisms ascribing human actions, passions, and affections to Jehovah" (Colenso 1863:50). Colenso (1863:268) states that based on the name, Babel, the story is not a historical true account. He writes that the derivation of the name Babel refers to the Hebrew that means confound. This implies that historically linking the narrative with the "Temple of Belus" is incorrect. The word has been compounded by either 'Bel' meaning 'House of Bel', 'Court of Bel', 'Gate of Bel' or, 'El' in which case 'Bab-El' means 'Gate of God'[84]. This does mean, according to Colenso (1863:268), that the "Jehovist" probably did not develop the story but may have received it from others.

Delitzch and Rawlinson follow the "traditionary" argument that translates Babel as "gate of God" (Colenso 1863:268-9). Kalisch gives an account of Birs Nimrod linking the tower to the temple[85] built by Merodach-adan-akhi in 1100 B.C. and finished by Nebuchadnezzer five centuries later. Colenso (1863:270) states that if the "Jehovist lived in Solomon's days, about 1015-975 BC and the Temple of Belus was begun, as Kalisch has just said...not more than a century would have elapsed to his time, hardly enough for the unfinished building, however wonderful, to have become

[84] Driver (1909:136) states that the etymology of the word 'Babel' is regarded as 'incorrect', "it signifies 'gate of God'…and that it cannot be derived from the Hebrew ba'lal, to *mix*, *confuse*. It is simply a popular etymology, which lent itself conveniently to the purpose which the narrator had in hand".

[85] Driver (1909:137) writes: "As Gunkel has remarked, the narrative reflects the impression which Babylon would make upon a foreigner, rather than that which it would make upon a native. The unfavorable light in which the foundation of Babel…is represented, the idea that the erection of what…can hardly have been anything but a Babylonian zikkurat (or pyramidal temple-tower) was interrupted..."

the subject of a legend". However, according to Colenso (1863:270), progress in astronomical observations by Chaldaeans could link the tower to an observatory and related stories about large structures that received fresh currency with the building of the new structure.

Following "traditionist" arguments, Rawlinson dates the building of the tower to 2600 B.C. linking it to the time of Peleg. Colenso (1863:270) writes: "...here the date of the building of the Tower is carried up beyond 2348 B.C. the date which the Hebrew Scriptures fix for the Deluge..." Colenso (1863:272) rejects the historicity of the narrative in accordance with Kalisch's argument that ancient nations possessed myths and fables similar to the confusion of tongues in which deities inflict punishment[86] on people.

Delitzch (1863:272) holds onto the historical accuracy of the reference to the original unity of languages (Colenso 1863:272): "...when the lingual unity of the races was lost, together with their unity in God, together also with the unity of their all-defining (*allesbestimmenden*) religious consciousness, instead of a manifoldness in unity, there came a splitting-up with loss of unity, a cleaving-asunder with utter loss of connection, - such, however, as points back with a thousand fingers to the fact of the

[86]Drivers (1909:133-134) argument is as follows: "In the first place, if it is in its right position, it can be demonstrated to rest upon unhistorical assumptions: for the Biblical date of the Flood is B.C. 2501 or (LXX) B.C.3066. And, so far from the whole earth being at either…'of one language and of one (set of) words,' numerous inscriptions are in existence dating considerably earlier even than B.C. 3066, written in *three* distinct languages…But even if Wellh.'s supposition that the narrative relates really to an earlier stage of the history of mankind, be accepted, it would be not less difficult to regard it as historical. For (1) the narrative, while explaining ostensibly the diversity of *languages*, offers no explanation of the diversity of *races*. And yet diversity of language, – meaning here by the expression not the relatively subordinate differences which are always characteristic of languages developed from a common parent-tongue, but those more radical differences relating alike to grammar, structure, and roots, which shows that the languages exhibiting them cannot be referred to a common origin, – is *dependent upon diversity of race*. It is of course true that cases occur in which a people brought into contact with a people of another race have adopted their language; but, speaking generally, radically different languages are characteristic of different races, or…subdivisions of races, or sub-races, which, in virtue of the *faculty* of creating language distinctive of man, have created them for the purpose of intercommunication and to satisfy their social instincts. Differences of *race*, in other words, are more primary in man than differences of *language*, and have first to be accounted for. (2) Not only, however, are differences of race left entirely unexplained in the Biblical narrative; but the great races into which mankind is divided must have migrated into their present homes, and had their existing character stamped upon them, at an age vastly earlier than that which the chronology of Genesis permits…The *antiquity of man*, and the *wide distribution of man, with strongly marked racial differences*, are two great outstanding facts, which the Biblical narrative…not only fails to account for, but does not even leave room for".

original unity". To which Colenso (1863:272) responds: "If the last statement be true, yet how does it prove the historical truth of the narrative in G.xi.1-9?"

These statements by Colenso reflect his critical engagement with "traditionary" readings of the Bible. His style is sarcastic and direct using quotes from different writers to reject their reading arguing that their reasoning is loose and based on "traditionary" presuppositions (Colenso 1863:270). Colenso (1863:80) writes: "...the Pentateuch is not, as the traditionary view assumes, the work of one single writer, Moses, - describing transactions which fell in part within his own cognisance...but a composite work, the product of several different authors, who lived in different ages". In this regard, he rejects the notion that the Bible is a "divinely infallible record of absolute historical truth" (Colenso 1863:82). Colenso (1863:85) continues later: "Let it be once freely admitted that these stories of the first chapters of Genesis, whatever they may teach of Divine, Eternal Truth, and whatever precious lessons may be drawn from them by a devout mind, are in their present form and structure mythical descriptions...". From his essentialist classification of the text as "Jehovistic", he states that the text is a compilation of various authors making a chronological reading of the text historically implausible (Colenso 1863:17).

Colenso follows the same rational mode of reading of Wellhausen that influenced scholars like Driver. Driver (1909:134) proposes that the text reflects a spiritual lesson that "emphasizes Jehovah’s supremacy over the world; it teaches how the self-exaltation of man is checked by God; and it shows how the distribution of mankind into nations, and diversity of language, are elements in His providential plan for the development and progress of humanity”. Colenso's reading of Genesis 11:1-9 follows complex rational arguments in response to the literal readings of "traditionary" scholarship. The purpose of Colenso is to discredit "traditionary" scholarship’s naiveté and pre-critical superstitious arguments with his rationalism. His argument regarding the origin of language and Babel reflects this. The essential characteristic and purpose of the Yahwist, providing an explanation for the diversity of languages and cultures, is Colenso's point of departure in reading the narrative. In other words, Colenso's reading approaches the text as an object from where the scholar rationally extracts meaning related to the essential characteristics of the source (Yahwist). This

separation between text and reader; and the rationalist discourse reflects the premises of the Enlightenment and its disconnected worldview.

2.2 Afrikaner readings

2.2.1 From Dutch Colonialism and British Imperialism to Afrikaner Colonialism

2.2.1.1 Segregation and Capitalism

Afrikaner colonialism is a complex development, traced back to Dutch colonialism and opposition to British imperialism. On the one hand, Afrikaner colonialism, which climaxed with Afrikaner nationalism and the Republic of 'South' Africa, is historically linked to Dutch colonialism and racist segregation ideologies; on the other hand, it is also a continuation of the economic exploitation of British imperialism through capitalism. The link between racist segregation ideologies and the civilising mission was the sphere in which apartheid grew and essentialist modes of reading linked to Kuyperism and fundamentalism developed to legitimise apartheid biblically by the Dutch Reformed Church.

Giliomee (2003:xvi) argues that religion as a socio-political force is greatly underestimated in the history of the Afrikaner and apartheid. According to Giliomee (2003:xvii-xviii), the main ideological influences on apartheid were not Nazi racial dogmas but the following: (i) The practice of segregated schools; (ii) The theology of the Dutch Reformed Church with its mission strategy that promoted self-governing indigenous churches; (iii) Racial discrimination in the United States; (iv) Imperialist ideals of indirect rule and trusteeship; (v) Emerging theories of social conflict in plural societies.

Giliomee (2003:xviii) proposes that apartheid went beyond the influence of Calvinist beliefs, economic interest or racial obsession. It was an expression of the Afrikaner's preoccupation with ethnic survival. The Afrikaner, as a small white minority group in Africa, viewed the Nationalist victory of 1948 as a God-given chance to secure

survival. Apartheid was viewed as a policy to secure the survival of the Afrikaner through the maintenance of ethnic groups and cultures (Giliomee 2003:xviii). Giliomee (2003) proposes that survival is a salient motive in understanding the history of the Afrikaner. Giliomee views economic and political factors as a function of survival - a factor that he believes led to the rise of apartheid and its abolishment.

The problem with Giliomee's assessment of the history of the Afrikaner is its underlying romantic idealism that relegates economics and politics to the margin and views the Afrikaner as a unified entity that is striving to maintain its cultural identity. In the eyes of the non-Western population of 'South' Africa this survivalist mode of Giliomee, in terms of the Afrikaner, is nothing else than the legitimisation of exploitation. In this regard, the abolishment of apartheid is nothing else than the continuation of Western imperialisms through globalisation that has retained economic and political power in the hands of white and black elites. This is clear from the history of the Afrikaner, who rose from rags to riches, controlling the majority of wealth in 'South' Africa. These developments arose from essentialist views of non-Western people resulting in a superiority complex, segregationalism and exploitation that can be traced back to the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck.

The superiority of Western culture is reflected in Van Riebeeck's (1954:34) journal inscription that described the indigenous population: "It is no use to think: they are merely wild savages, what can they do, for the more we have intercourse with them, the more impudent they prove to be. Though, not as savage and stupid as beasts, they are cunning enough to be able to seize every opportunity which offers, while as a result of their intercourse with the Dutch, they become more clever and crafty every day". The inferior view of the indigenous people by the Dutch and their purpose to provide food for the victualling station resulted in the fact that religious mission was not a major focus. Biblical grounds, linked to Genesis 9:18-27 and the curse of Ham legitimised slavery and racial segregation. The Dutch viewed the missionary activities that did take place as a mode of subduing slaves and the indigenous population (Loubser 1987:5-7). But, because conversion meant that the slave had to be freed, it was undertaken hesitantly (Davenport and Saunders 2000:26).

Commerce and church was intimately linked and with Van Riebeeck the Reformed faith was transported to 'South' Africa as the official religion of the Dutch settlers. This led to the establishment of the first Dutch Reformed congregation in Cape Town in 1665. The purpose of this congregation was to help the settlers cope with and adapt to their new context, providing pastoral care and community linked to their European home (De Gruchy 1995:29). Although there were exceptions to the rule the purpose was not to evangelise the indigenous population of the Cape but rather to maintain the socio-religious values of the European settlers. The arrival of the French Huguenots (Calvinist victims of religious persecution) who were absorbed into the Dutch settler community later strengthened the Reformed faith in 'South' Africa (Villa-Vicencio 1995:46).

Magubane (2000:337) writes that the arrival of the Dutch East India Company signalled the incorporation of 'South' Africa into the emerging world capitalist economy. The company expected the occupants of the station to trade with the Khoisan and San but later this changed to acquisition through force. Van Riebeeck's journal entries reflect this growing sentiment. Van Riebeeck (1952:112) writes that "the natives offered lean, inferior beast and sheep" for trade while they kept the best. He envisioned capturing the indigenous people's cattle as reprisal for their continued thieving. "If one cannot get the cattle from them by friendly trading, why should one then suffer their thieving without making any reprisal? This would only be necessary once: with 150 men, twelve thousand cattle could be secured without the danger of losing a single person. On the other hand many savages could be captured without a blow as they always come to us unarmed; they could then be sent to India as slaves" (Van Riebeeck 1952:112). This is not surprising according to Magubane (2000:337): "The Dutch colonists were expressing the logic of mercantile capitalist development in the era of primitive accumulation". Primitive accumulation thus goes hand in hand with colonial conquest and forced accumulation of goods and land. After the indigenous peoples were subdued, they became the slave and their land the property of the company. This wove the double standard of 'South' African history of non-Western servile workers and Western free colonists.

Loubser notes that, “in the early days of the colony the relationships between the colonists, the freed slaves and the Hottentots were determined by cultural and class differences rather than differences of colour” (Loubser 1987:5). Van Riebeeck (1954:258) writes in his journal in April 1658 of arrangements to establishing a school for the slaves of the Company. The purpose was to teach them the Dutch and the Christian faith. Van Riebeeck (1954:258) adds that the slaves were not so willing to attend: "To encourage the slaves to attend and to hear and learn the Christian prayers, it is ordered that after school everyone is to receive a small glass of brandy and two inches of tobacco". The punishment of slaves who escaped from their owners was severe. Van Riebeeck (1954:293) describes the punishment of runaway male and female slaves: "all are to be tied to a post in the open and scourged; one is to be branded, whilst two are to be placed in chains, linked to each other, until their master's request that they be set free". In general, the Dutch described the slaves as lazy. Van Riebeeck (1954:376) comments concerning a slave that was missing and found hidden among the grain: "...he had been lying hidden out of sheer laziness, which is much in evidence among the slaves".

To the European mind these differences, combined with religious beliefs, were the salient factors that separated people. The history of religious persecution of the French Huguenots was a testimony to this: “...in 1678...a government notice warns the Christians against 'whoredom' with non-Christian women and slaves” (Loubser 1987:5). In general, Europeans viewed non-Western people and slaves as heathens. Thus, religion was the criterion separating the Western population from the non-Western population. Initially, the Dutch did not allow marriages between slaves and Westerners. The exception was that a free black person, through birth, could marry a Westerner and had the same privileges (Heese 1984:30). Borchardt (1986:72) notes that segregation was not a matter of race but in terms of a person's status as a slave or free burghers. Van Riebeeck (1954:373) writes the following concerning Eva who left the Dutch to return to her tribe: "...she said in Dutch, she had a Dutch heart inside her and would never forget the Dutch but would always try to be of service to us whenever she could".

Later, in the eighteenth century, Whites started to see themselves as a distinct group or “Christians” versus non-Westerners. “Adam Tas and his fellow-citizens stated in

their petition of 1706 that, 'the blood of Ham' had not been overcome by some of the Coloureds" (Loubser 1987:5). In "1780 Governor Van Plettenberg reported that it would require more than human effort to convince the colonists to accept the "caffirs" as fellow human beings and fellow-Christians" (Loubser 1987:5). Furthermore, Alberti, a magistrate of Uitenhage, tried to persuade the Whites that in law, no provision was made for discrimination between Whites and Hottentots. Next, in 1788 some Dutch from Stellenbosch, made objection concerning the fact that a "dark of colour and of heathen descent" corporal arrested a fellow Dutchman (Loubser 1987:5).

During the eighteenth century, various other events were early warning signs of racial prejudice. This is seen in the case of Etienne Barbier that fought the cause of unequal justice between Western and non-Western people[87]. Later in 1779 with the arrest of Carel Buytendag the 'Kaapse Patriote' protested against the arrest of a Westerner by a non-Westerner[88]. This was an indication that in the general cultural realm the separation between the civilised, Christian and 'barbaric heathen' culture slowly began to change into racist views. This emphasises the role essentialism played in reducing non-Western people to the status of heathen or "caffir". Loubser (1987:5-6) writes that at the "end of the eighteenth century race prejudice was firmly established everywhere. After 1800 the Afrikaans language had become a symbol of White

[87] In 1739, a party of settlers and Khoikhoi defied Company orders on stock-bartering and attacked a group of Nama at the Orange River mouth. They killed several people and stole some of their cattle. They were summoned to appear in court, but rebelled under Etienne Barbier. He accused the "Acting Governor, D. Van den Henghel, of 'favouring Hottentots and Chinese above white men'" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:37). He was later apprehended and executed, "the first important martyr for the cause of unequal justice" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:37). What was noteworthy is the support he gained from the settlers at the frontier, resulting in a more lenient punishment of his followers.

[88] During the 1780's the 'Kaapse Patriote' made their appearance, especially following the arrest of Carel Buytendag in 1779. Buytendag, a brutal employer of Coloured labourers, was arrested by armed slaves and without trial, banished, to Batavia by the order of the Independent Fiscal, W.C. Boers (Davenport and Saunders 2000:37). The 'Kaapse Patriote' reacted by sending a deputation to the Netherlands. "Blending...political demands with a strong desire to protect their immediate self-interest, they also insisted that in future white men should not be arrested by "caffirs" (slaves who served as auxiliary police), that burghers should be allowed to punish their own slaves without tyrannising over them, that Englishmen and Frenchmen should be denied residential rights, and that Chinese, Japanese and convicts should not be allowed to live among the burghers and run businesses in competition with them" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:38). Although the petition was rejected by the Heren XVII, these attitudes reflected the desire to develop a close knit homogeneous community focusing on self-interest.

identity". The problem is that this essentialist worldview also influenced the indigenous population[89].

Prior (1997:94) adds that there is a link between racism and white superiority: "The heart of the Afrikaner history of South Africa is the unquestioned assurance of the superiority of white civilization". According to Giliomee, these racist attitudes was a response to insecurity and fear linked to Dutch colonialism and later continued with apartheid (Giliomee 2003:xviii). During Dutch colonialism racism was a way to safeguard European culture from becoming, 'barbarized' and later during the twentieth century the Afrikaner adopted apartheid to survive as a white minority in Africa. The problem is that throughout the colonial history, there was a connection between racism and economic considerations. Exploitative measures linked to the rise of British Imperialism emphasised this.

The annexation of the Cape by the British was met with resistance from the Dutch colonialist because of the abolition and integration policies. In this regard the economic losses of abolition and the focus on integration caused great resistance, resulting in the Great Trek, that later became one of the most powerful myths of Afrikaner nationalism. Prior (1997:82) writes: "Some of the emigrants used biblical imagery, for example, describing Natal as a 'land overflowing with milk and honey', and their trek as a 'wandering in the desert', but that is hardly sufficient to prove that they considered themselves to enjoy the divine mandate corresponding to the Israelite conquest of Canaan".

Resistance by the Afrikaner to British Imperialism climaxed in the First and Second Anglo-Boer Wars resulting in great suffering and poverty incurred by the Afrikaner. The lucrative mining fields of the Boer Republics drove the British to forced subjugation of the Afrikaner. The violent subjugation of the Afrikaner was viewed by some British as similar to the civilising mission of inferior cultures. In the mind of John Buchan, a member of the British administration, the Afrikaner character was

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89 Tindall (1959:28) writes in his journal that the Hottentots, who have had contact with the Dutch, since the arrival of Van Riebeeck, have taken to the racist attitudes of the Dutch, concerning black people: "The Hottentots have long practiced a system of plundering and murdering the Damaras, and of taking their children captive. They have imbibed the tenants of the Dutch inhabitants of the Colony, that black people are designed from God for slavery".

only just above that of black 'South' Africans. He argued that if the Afrikaner is won over to the British side, "we shall have secured one of the greatest colonising forces in the world" (Spurr 1993:67-68). The Afrikaner could be settled on the colonial frontier assuring that Britain's Central and Eastern African colonies would be secured in the hand of whites (Spurr 1993:68). Spurr (1993:68) concludes that Buchan viewed the Afrikaner as a "kind of white Kaffir who, though existing nearly at the level of the black native, can be used as an instrument of subjection for the benefit of a more highly civilized white society".

This indeed happened when the British transferred power to the Afrikaner after the Second Anglo-Boer War. With this the Afrikaner and Briton became partners in the continued colonisation of 'South' Africa. The transfer of power from the British to the Afrikaner was prepared in Article 8 of the Treaty of Vereeniging a personal victory for Milner. “He told Chamberlain that the blacks should not be forced to change their ways or to work for whites, but that the whites should teach them ,‘habits of regular and skilled labour’ and keep them severely away from strong drink. He placed blacks low on the Great Chain of Being, as people to be ,‘well-treated’ and ,‘justly governed’” (Davenport and Saunders 2000:240). Milner appointed a ,'South' African Native Affairs Commission in 1903, which formalized the idea of segregation in terms of ,“territorial separation of black and white as a permanent, mandatory principle of land ownership” (Davenport and Saunders 2000:240).

The basis of the treaty was that Blacks would not be enfranchised before granting Boers representation in government, and then with securities for “the just predominance of the white race” (Davenport and Saunders, 2000:234). The British had the right to grant political rights to Blacks in any constitution restoring self-governance, but when the time came, they refrained from doing so. To compensate the wrongs done to the Boers, the British disenfranchised other groups in the new colony. After various reparatory measures was agreed upon, the “British also promised not even to consider the enfranchisement of ‘natives’ until self-government had been introduced, thus giving the Boers a decisive say in the matter” (Davenport and Saunders 2000:234). This handover, of imperial power, to the Afrikaner in

1910[90] was firmly rooted in imperialism's hunger, for geographical territory, with the only difference that the imperial centre was white enclaves, within the non-Western world. The Natives Land Act (1913) was a clear example of the onset of territorial segregation in the construction of a white imperial centre, controlling the land. "It aimed specifically to get rid of those features of African land ownership and share-cropping which white farmers found undesirable, and enlarge reserves to ease congestion and facilitate the recruiting of labour for mines" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:271).

The Group Areas Act, (consolidated in 1966) was a clear demonstration of the imperial control of White 'South' Africa, over the land and its people, finally leaving the Black, non-Western population with less than 13% of the land. Kritzinger (1990:3) states that apartheid, racism is nothing but the continuation of British colonialism: "The ending of British colonialism, indeed did (legally speaking) establish a sovereign state, but did not put an end to colonialism, since power was transferred to a white minority, and the rights of the black majority were not enshrined in the constitution". After the first democratic elections in 'South' Africa a new alignment of Black and White elites are evident, continuing imperial relationships linked to Western imperialism and global capitalism.

Magubane writes that the "white working class is a peculiar creation of imperialism, and enjoys the fruits of compromise, between monopoly, capitalism and the Afrikaner petty bourgeois nationalism as it evolved after 1910" (Magubane 2000:345). The victory of Afrikaner nationalism paved the way for white control and economic growth to curb the growing rise in poverty of Afrikaners. J.X. Merriman (1969:54) stated: "In the Cape the Natives are the workers, growing in riches as result of their industry. They are rising, while a large class of Europeans are sinking and cause a fearful anxiety for the future". It was these fears that eventually lead to the

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90 After initial plans for the anglicanisation of the defeated Afrikaners through the education system, and numerical swamping through British immigration, were abandoned as impractical. The British looked to the Afrikaners as collaborators in securing imperial, political and economic interests. Self-government in 1907 and 1908 by the Boer republics excluded any rights of Blacks, and with the Union of 31 May 1910, under General Louis Botha with the focus of 'conciliation between Briton and Boer', their fate was sealed. In 1910, the Act of Union unified the Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal and the Orange Free State as a self-governing entity, under British jurisdiction. This was a white government with a discourse, of racial separation, the order of the day.

disenfranchising of Black 'South' Africans with the formation of the Union. This addressed the poor white problem and effectively disenfranchised black people. Merriman (1969:137) argued:"...Natives, who will be taught to read into the Act of Union an attack on their rights which is wholly contrary to the spirit in which the Act is conceived. That will be bad, but far worse, will be the unfriendly feeling, towards the Natives...in the minds of the majority of the European population, who will feel that their dearest wishes have been imperilled for the sake of some paper guarantee of an equality which they do not believe in". The irony is that Merriman (1969:137) concludes by stating: "I venture to hope therefore that my strictures upon this deputation business will not be put down to anything beyond a sincere desire for the welfare of the Natives..."

With wealth in white hands, the reduction of black people to dependency took place. Bryce's (1899:x) comments is an indication that this situation can be traced back to before 1895: "Political parties in Cape Colony were, in a broad sense, British and Dutch, but the distinction was really based not so much on racial differences as on economic interests. The rural element which, desired a protective tariff, and laws regulating native labour, was mainly Dutch, the commercial element almost wholly British. Mr. Rhodes, the embodiment of British Imperialism, was Prime Minister through the support of the Dutch element, and the Africander Bond. Englishmen and Dutchmen were everywhere in the best social relations".

The 1913 Native Land Act transformed the situation of the impoverished Afrikaner (Magubane 2000:354). The act had three aims: 1. The limitation of black ownership to 'Native Reserves'. 2. Create measures to induce and regulate the flow of black labour. 3. It placed restrictions on the permanent settlement of blacks in white areas (Magubane 2000:355). The racism and exploitation of this act meant that whites exerted control over black labour in order to enrich themselves. This disenfranchised position put black workers in a humiliating and unequal position vis-à-vis their employers and white workers[91].

[91] Magubane (2000:103) writes that the unique value of migrant labour was that it was an instrument of "rigorously limited and controlled 'acculturation'". It substituted household industries in rural areas with cheap manufactured goods from the metropolitan centres by a labour force lured to the cities by wages and new goods. Colonialism and imperialism provides the broad structural underpinnings of capitalism. The control of geographical space and people functioned as a mode of protecting the influx

Afrikaner colonialism is also an extension of British imperialism and capitalism. With the formation of the union in 1910, the British handed over power to the Afrikaner. This disenfranchised the non-Western population of 'South' Africa leaving them with little or no political agency. The control of the land, and the economic system, was in the hands of the White Afrikaner population, continuing colonial rule of non-Western labourers.

In this regard, the separations between people envisioned by apartheid links it to the history of colonialism and imperialism traced back to the arrival of Dutch in 1652. British imperialism that followed, simply handed over power to the Afrikaner settlers in 1910, continuing the control of the people and the land. Kritzinger states that apartheid racism is nothing but the continuation of British colonialism (Kritzinger 1990:3). Afrikaner colonialism simply continued the mechanics of British imperialism regarding race, land, and money (Davenport and Saunders 2000:271). From the above it is clear that the trace of colonial racism solidified in Afrikaner colonialism. It was a reaction against the British policy of integration and the continuation of British economic exploitation when the British handed over the colony to the Afrikaner after the formation of the Union in 1910.

2.2.1.2 Essentialism, the Afrikaner, and the Dutch Reformed Church

Segregation and capitalism went hand in hand with the rise of apartheid, resulting in wealth accumulating in Western hands - the Afrikaners and British benefited. The fusion between the Afrikaner and the Dutch Reformed Church led to the moral legitimisation of colonial racism and exploitation. This church became synonymous with the Afrikaner people and the Afrikaans language providing biblical legitimisation for colonial racism and the accumulation of wealth in Western hands.

The collusion between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Afrikaner follows a trace back to the British annexation of the Cape. Anglicisation, the abolition of slavery and

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of capital from the West. This is continuing today in the form of global imperialism where market forces continue to be manipulated and controlled by Western corporations and their agents in non-

integration resulted in fierce resistance from the Dutch colonialists that started viewing themselves as Afrikaners, an amalgamation of Huguenots and Germans[92]. "An originally diverse European settler population was thus coaxed into cultural uniformity, with the language of the Netherlands and the religion of the Reformed Church as cement. The Afrikaner people, an amalgam of nationalities, came gradually into being during the century after Hendrik Bibault, who described himself as an 'Africaander', in 1707" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:22).

The Anglicisation programme of Somerset that replaced Dutch with English as the medium of education, resulted in great resistance by the Dutch speaking population (Davenport and Saunders 2000:45). Robert Grey referred to Christianity as 'the Queen's religion' and tried to impress with the importance of the Bishops as compared to leadership of other religions[93]. Coupled with the economic losses due to the abolition of slavery a strong anti-British feeling grew that resulted in Dutch colonialists moving to the interior of 'South' Africa. In general, Afrikaners used a racist referential system and it is even present in Anna Steenkamp's Voortrekker journal. She writes that the equality of Coloureds and Christians are contrary "to the laws of God and the natural distinction of descent and faith" (Loubser 1987:12).

Although the church did not support the migration of Afrikaner from the Cape or segregation[94] this position changed as tensions between Western and non-Western

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Western contexts. The global capitalist network focuses on the increase of profit margin that leaves the people poor and disempowered.

[92] In 1689, 180 Huguenot refugees, fleeing religious persecution in France, arrived in the Cape. Already at this time the effects of Dutch colonialism was felt by the Huguenots: "The Huguenots might have developed into a distinct community, but Simon van der Stel settled them along the Berg river among Dutch settlers, requiring them as far as possible to learn, worship, and communicate with the authorities through the Dutch language" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:22). Although more German-speaking immigrants arrived during eighteenth century they generally married Dutch, and in a number of case free black women, and their children were brought up to speak Dutch.

[93] "In 1852 the synod of the DRC even had to protest against the arrogance of the bishop in presuming that all citizens fell under his diocese" (Loubser 1987:11).

[94] In 1829 the Church acknowledged that joint partaking of Holy Communion by different races in the same church must be seen as an irrefutable principle based on the infallible Word of God (synod of 1829) and that no discrimination was to be made 'in thought and action' between Christians. In the hearts of the people, however, a different attitude rested. This can be seen in the minutes of the church council of the Somerset West congregation. In 1828 the question of allowing a member of colour and his attendance at Holy Communion was discussed, and for the first time since 1819 the word 'bastaard' is found in the minutes (Loubser 1987:11).

members of the church increased in the Cape and the imperial controls[95] of the British diminished. One of the most contentious issues that drove segregation was the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Two prominent cases were regarding Bentura Visser[96], a non-Western convert, and the Dutch Reformed Church of Stockenstrom[97]. According to the journal inscriptions of Tindall segregation was not only linked to the Lord's Supper but included general worship services[98]. This resulted in the decision taken by synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of 1857 that "as a result of the weakness of some" separate congregation be "set up among the heathen" (1857:60). This decision was based on the proposal[99] of Rev A. Murray (snr). The reason for segregation was based on practical reasons and not biblical, but it created a precedent for future compromises, as Dr Robertson of Swellendam had warned. It is clear that, despite the fact that the Colony was non-racial, these attitudes prevailed – not only in the hearts of the Trekkers but also at the Cape[100] (Loubser 1987:13).

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[95] Loff (1983:17) notes that it is important to acknowledge the influence of the, "Kommissaris Politiek", an instrument of British imperial control, who was present at church meetings. The synod did not declare itself in favour of integrated Communion services and prevented by the "Kommissaris Politiek" who pre-empted all debate (Loff 1983:17). In Caledon, Stellenbosch and Somerset West separate Communion services were held, but the representatives were not permitted to express their views, "because the 'Kommissaris Politiek' ruled that racial discrimination had no place in such services" (Loff 1983:17). All this changed in 1843 with Ordinance 7, freeing the Church from the authorities (Loff 1983:17).

[96] A non-Western convert, Bentura Visser, was allowed to become a member and was baptized on 28 October 1828, changing his name from Bentura Visser to Bentura Johannes. After he partook in Holy Communion, "Deacon J. Theunissen told the Church Council meeting in November 1828 that people were very unhappy that Bentura had dared to partake in the Lord's Supper together with 'born Christians'" (Loff 1983:12). Threatening to stay away from Communion in future, Rev J. Spijker explained that this was unacceptable and not Christian behaviour. From these events and statements, accusations were flung about and on Christmas Day, many members took Holy Communion at neighbouring congregations, while others left the church during the service. These racist sentiments never were expressed in public, mainly because of the influence of British Imperial mechanism that controlled church activities.

[97] In 1855 in the congregation of Stockenstrom segregation at Holy Communion was allowed "as an accommodation of the prejudices and weakness" of the white community (Loubser 1987:12).

[98] Tindall (1959:13) writes in his journal: " .I was told by an intelligent looking black man that many of the Dutch farmers did not suffer their servants to worship with them. They employed them in looking after cattle etc., as cruel as the treatment, an Englishman receives from the family he serves, when he drives them to and from a place of worship which he never has time to enter".

[99] "De Synode beschouwt het wenschelijk en schriftmatig, dat onze ledematen uit de Heidenen, in onze bestaande gemeenten opgenomen en ingelijfd worden, overal waar zulks geschieden kan; maar waar deze maatregel, ten gevolge van de zwakheid van sommigen, de bevordering van de zaak van Christus onder de Heiden, in den weg zoude staan, de gemeente uit de Heidenen opgerigt, of nog op te rigten, hare Christelijke voorregten in een afzonderlijke gebouw of gesticht genieten zal".

Borchardt (1986:76) argues that this resolution was not the start of separate churches, only separate worship. Loubser (1987:13) disagrees, stating that this was the result of racism rooted in society: "the theology of the church had been left untouched by the emerging extra-ecclesiastical people's theology, but this (non-biblical) concession was to provide the starting-point for a theology of experience to infiltrate the church. It was to render the church powerless to criticise the growing tendency of people to identify, their own situation of oppression with that of Israel in the Old Testament".

Borchardt (1986:77) notes that after the 1857 synod decision, Huet criticized the, 'no equality' slogan and the reference to the curse of Ham, but was ignored. It was Huet's view that this was only an interim procedure and hoped that non-Western people could be educated and civilised to once again worship with Westerners. These events were not isolated, but ran across the whole spectrum and the final solution to the problem was the establishment of the *NG Sendingkerk* in 1881.

Loubser (1987:15) writes that the annexation of the 'South' African Republic (Transvaal) in 1877 by Sir Theophilis Shepstone and the resulting First Anglo-Boer War (1880-1) were the events which forced the Afrikaners to become aware of themselves as a nation. Before the War, the church was not an agent of 'national awareness', but became such only after the war[101]. The Anglo-Boer wars, the agony of the scorched earth policy and the concentration camps resulted in the increase of poverty among the Afrikaner. In this situation, the church saw itself as an agent of God caring for the Afrikaner people (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 194-230).

The poor-white problem, of the early part of the twentieth century, after the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War, became another aspect of the Church-'volk' relationship, which later led to a total identification between Church and 'volk'[102]. Loubser (1987:18-19) writes that with "the struggle for cultural survival against anglicisation

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[100] Therefore, the claims of the synod of 1829, promoting, integration, was unfounded and only the result of the influence of British Imperial controls through the "Kommissaris Politiek".

[101] "This became clear at the synods of 1894 and 1897 where the word ,'people' (volk) appeared more frequently in the minutes. By the time of the synod of 1890 the Church was already so taken up by the swelling tide of national consciousness, that the use of the English language in the churches was again raised" (Loubser 1987:16).

[102] The concept 'volk' or peoples, refers to the Afrikaner people who were identified as a homogeneous group linked to Biblical references of the Israel and the covenant.

and impoverishment at the end of the nineteenth century, the ‘people’s interests’ thus became an important motif alongside the interests of the Kingdom”. Botha (1984:211) notes that all these factors lead to the fact that the DRC developed from an open church in which slaves, French Huguenots, German soldiers and officials were accommodated without regard of race to a church identified with one specific group of people - the Afrikaner.

In a statement after the rebellion against the pro-British government in 1914 and the execution of Jopie Fourie, who became the first martyr for Afrikaner Nationalism, the DRC publicly aligned itself with the impoverished Afrikaner people. At a meeting of the Council of Churches Dr DF Malan echoed these sentiments: “The church has a special calling with regard to the Afrikaner people”. The church sees its duty as nationalistic. The church would serve its calling to the Kingdom of God and the existence of the Afrikaner people best by keeping itself as a church, and also the ministers in their official capacity, strictly outside the arena of party politics unless religious and moral principles are at stake or the interests of the Kingdom of God justify such action[103] (Botha 1984:216-217). Later, the threat of communism and other integrationist movements justified this role of the church bringing order and civilisation. A study by Du Plessis (1921:11-12) contains similar essentialist tenants as the civilising mission[104] of British Imperialism. According to Lombard (1981:29), this was the first attempt of the DRC to study the "race problem" socially, economically and politically from an international perspective.

The Afrikaner introduced this civilising mission as part of a “Calvinist” social strategy. In this view, God called the Afrikaner with their 'higher morals'[105] to take

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[103] Prof NJ Brummer declared: “The mightiest hoop around the cask of our national existence is without doubt the church” (Loubser 1987:23). The Church’s role in party-political activity was thus justified as a general reference to the Kingdom of God.

[104] In a study by prof J. du Plessis (1921:11-12), reflecting similar arguments as the civilising mission of the British, Du Plessis writes: "...the white race is and must remain the ruling race. The coloured and black sections of the population occupy a strictly subordinate position. This is not due, as is very generally supposed, to the accident of their colour: it is due to their lower stage of cultural development....On the other hand, the European race must look upon the natives as a sacred trust. They are minors, whose interests we must have at heart...They constitute the 'white man's burden'...".

[105] Positive ethic of *gun-aan-ander* (grant unto others) countered the negative view of other races in 'South' Africa (Kinghorn 1986:96). In the midst of the value judgement of other races, this positive ethic accepted non-Westerns based on their humanity and dignity. The Afrikaner had a duty to fulfil regarding the other races. The Afrikaner received the Divine call to develop other races and to Christianise them. The Afrikaner would grant them their place to be a nation and development -

control of politics, and ultimately govern 'South' Africa. The White, Christian, moral Afrikaner people versus the Black, heathen, immoral natives formed some of the components of the dichotomy promoting Christian-Nationalism (Deist 1994:173-4). Prior (1997:89) notes that Pres Kruger stated that: "God chose his Volk in the Cape Colony and brought them out into the wilderness, and, having chastened them, made a covenant with them, and 'the enemies were defeated and the trekkers inhabited the land which God had given them in his rightful manner'. God had visited his Volk, with British imperialism, because they had not fulfilled their covenant obligations in celebrating the renewal of the covenant for over 30 years. At Paardekraal in 1880, he recognized that the people of the Transvaal Republic were 'a People of God in the external calling' and 'God's People'".

At the first multi-racial conference in 'South' Africa, organized by the Council of Churches, of 27-29 September 1923, proposal were made on issues such as Black Education and self-government. Loubser (1987:21) notes that this conference was a direct result of the 1913 Native Land Act to which the church responded favourably. Borchardt (1986:81) argues that after the tabling of his Native acts on 2 June 1926 the Cape Synod leadership proposed that the basis of segregation should be morally and ethically justified and not in terms of physical appearance.

In 1935 the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Church, accepted a missionary policy that supports segregation based on race (Kinghorn 1986:87). The missionary policy (1935) states, that the "traditional fear" of the Afrikaner of "equality", is rooted in their rejection of the idea of racial mixing. In this regard, all people have equal rights and that the domain for the exercise of these rights is within the limits of the person's particular cultural group. Genesis 11:1-9 formed the biblical basis for the justification of this segregational view (Kinghorn 1986:89). Loubser (1987:30) notes that this signifies that segregation already existed in the church and that this later extended to the social and political level.

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through better housing, sanitation, water, medical care etc (Kinghorn 1986:96). This was done without dialogue with other 'volke' (peoples), except for tribal chiefs, for whom an alliance with the new National Government, would be beneficial and who could help with promoting the ideologies of the Afrikaner. The colonial motive of upliftment as a strategy, for subjugation is clear but in this regard, the focus was on control and not merely on the acquisition of land. This ethic of granting the other his humanity was a strategy in the process to civilise the non-Western population.

The centennial 'Symbolic Trek of the Ox-wagons' in 1938 inflamed nationalism and unity and saw the myth, of the 'Great Trek' being elevated to a symbol of Afrikaner nationhood and anti-British sentiments. D.F. Malan broke away from the Afrikaner National Party and established the National Party in 1934. The vision of this new party was to free South Africa from British rule, but only for whites. In 1936, white supremacy was further entrenched by the removal of the Cape Africans, who qualified from the common voters' roll. Pro-German sentiments created resistance to the Second World War from 1939. "The groundwork for a policy of apartheid was already laid in the period 1910-1948. By the beginning of the twentieth century, under the influence of a crude Darwinian scientific racism, the superiority of the white race was presumed" (Prior 1997:75). At the people's congress[106] of 1939, in which the church played a prominent role, it was decided that:

- The Christian and national worldview of the Boer people should form the foundation for education;
- An Institute for the promotion of these values that included the three Afrikaner Churches should be formed (Deist 1994:174).

'Christian' in this context referred to the basic premises of Calvinism in which the Bible and the three confessions should be the norm and moral guide for society. Nationalism promoted the religious-cultural value system of the Afrikaner and Afrikaans as the national language (Deist 1994:175). The implication of Calvinism was the self governance of each ethnic group according to its own principles (Deist 1994:177).

In 1942, the memorandum sent to the cabinet concerning the 'native policy', by the Federal Missionary and Welfare Councils of the Dutch Reformed Church, reflects a clear departure from the pragmatic argument that justified segregation. The memorandum made a shift from pragmatic, to racist segregation, or apartheid:

[106] "The Afrikaner, whose cultural needs, Botha and Smuts had played down, was also made to feel that he mattered to the new regime. Malan began a campaign for bilingualism in the civil service and in so doing, opened job opportunities for his people in a new important field. In 1925, the meaning of 'Dutch' in the constitution was extended to include Afrikaans, which thus became an official language for the first time. It had already been adopted in the schools and by the Dutch Reformed Churches, whose Bible was completed in 1933" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:301).

principle of racial apartheid and of racial purity (Kinghorn 1986:92). The principle had to be maintained for two reasons: (a) for the sake of self-preservation – racial miscegenation would bring about a decline in civilisation, morals and religion; (b) for the sake of Christian charity and compassion for the Coloureds, because they were lagging behind the Whites in all respects" (Kinghorn 1986:92).

According to Kinghorn (1986:100-102), it was at the people's congress in Bloemfontein 1944 (organized by the FAK on the racial policy) that the apartheid rhetoric was first systematically presented by none other than JD du Toit. Kuyperism made this shift from a pragmatic to a racist theological justification of apartheid possible. The "volkskongres" (people's congress) of 1944 rejected "*gelykstelling* and *verbastering*" based on Genesis 11:1-9. EP Groenewald following the notion of the guardianship of one nation over another, at the Transvaal Synod of the DRC in 1948, emphasised the hierarchical dimension of apartheid[107] by stating: "stronger nations have a responsibility towards weaker nations" (Loubser 1987:68). HB Fantham later 'scientifically' investigated the proposal that Whites and Black had to live apart[108].

The victory of the National Party, based on the apartheid slogan[109], in 1948 over the United Party came at a time of opposition[110] by African, Coloured and Indian

[107] He referred to the Gibeonites who became woodcutters and water-bearers of the Israelites as proof of this principle. Groenewald states that "Scripture does not lay emphasis on the mere domination and subjection of one nation by the other...Israel, the people of God, was to subject the other nation, but from Israel the peoples of the world were to benefit because it was the bearer of God's revelation" (Loubser 1987:68). This is part of the natural rhythm of nature: "therefore there were always superior and inferior peoples and always an obligation towards the inferior. But there is also a continuous shift in the responsibility of the declining people to the upcoming" (Loubser 1987:69). Loubser (1987:69) states: "Behind these lofty ideas there is a hidden bias. The 'inferior' nation surely cannot be denied the right to choose its guardian. Even the example of the Gibeonites proves this. With this kind of argument the British imperialists could as easily have justified their annexation of the Boer republics and demanded their subordination" .

[108] Biological proof was provided of the negative effect of the mixing of White and Black races. His work had a remarkable influence on the racist attitudes of the time, providing 'scientific', legitimate proof for the policy of apartheid. The earliest use of the term apartheid, with its racist dimension is found in the work of Rev JG Strydom in 1938 (Kinghorn 1986:90). Apartheid was presented as a key to maintain the privileged status of some over and against others (Kinghorn 1986:93-96).

[109] Davenport and Saunders (2000:374) state: "The strength of the Nationalist manifesto thus lay in its simplicity, and in its appeal to the voters', desire for security in a world which seemed to be moving too fast in a liberal direction, and turning its wrath against South Africa as it did so. The weakness of that manifesto, considered as a contribution, to South African development, lay in the way in which it made the country's problems seem easier to resolve than they really were, and in a way it rode roughshod over the dignity, and ultimately the physical welfare of those who were at the receiving end of the policy"

elements as well as international economic difficulties. Prior (1997:75-76) notes the following regarding the rationale of the National Party: "Its rationale involved a number of factors: the drive to maintain a segregated society in keeping with the Afrikaner politico-religious precepts; obsession with racial purity and eugenics; and the securing of white political supremacy, and economic privilege against the threat of African urbanization and social advancement. Another goal of the National Party was for the Afrikaner to gain equality with or even dominance over the English-speaking population". The systematic enforcement of the policy of apartheid[111] came about with the inception of the National Party. The Dutch Reformed Church morally assisted the National Party with the implementation of these policies[112].

The fact that the Federal Missionary Council of the Dutch Reformed Church organised the influential 1950 conference that focused on the 'native issue' illustrates the involvement of the church with the development and justification of apartheid (Loubser 1987:77). This conference finalised the ideology of apartheid by finding solutions to some practical aspects of apartheid. The church helped in completing the total blueprint of apartheid. Loubser (1987:78) cautions that although the church, being only the agent organising the congress, it cannot be held responsible for all the resolutions. But the fact that the majority of the members of all three Afrikaner churches accepted the broad outlines, provided by the congress, cannot be doubted (Loubser 1987:78). The church link to apartheid is further emphasised through its involvement in proposals regarding legislation to fulfil the church's Calvinist social dream. On the other hand, the church did not agree with all of the proposals regarding apartheid legislation. Loubser (1987:86) states that in 1957 the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches sent a deputation to Verwoerd to protest against proposed legislation that would prevent Blacks from attending church services in White areas.

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[110] Opposition came from the newly formed ANC Youth League, with leaders like Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu. The mineworkers' strike of 1946 indicated the emergence of politics of mass mobilization.

[111] The anthropological work of W.W.M Eiselen provided the ideological justification of apartheid as a form of cultural distinction. "Apartheid was designed to preserve the cherished cultural identity of each group: all distinct ethnic units must be allowed to survive, each with its own language, religion and traditions" (Prior 1997:76).

[112] In 1956, a publication by an *ad hoc* commission of professors on race relations was accepted by the synod of 1957. This formulation was less radical and excluded many references to the Old Testament.

On 31 May 1961, 'South' Africa became a republic. The decade before 1960 saw nearly a hundred laws passed controlling the lives of Blacks, especially in the cities. Apartheid became a totalitarian philosophy, "becoming part of the collective consciousness of people" (Loubser 1987:86). From 1948, when the (Afrikaner) Nationalist Party assumed power on the basis of its apartheid platform, the DRC addressed their petitions to a sympathetic government (Saayman 1991:72). The close link between church and state resulted in the document *Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture (1976)* that biblically justified apartheid.

The Dutch Reformed Church's association with the government and apartheid caused strain in terms of its international relations. This was emphasised by criticism of apartheid that arose because of the Sharpeville massacre at the 1960 Cottesloe conference of the World Council of Churches. At this meeting, the representatives of the Dutch Reformed Church accepted proposals regarding open churches, and structural unity. The decisions leaked to the press, causing a stormy reaction, bordering on the hysterical. Eventually, the resolutions were rejected by the Dutch Reformed Church and relations with the World Council Churches were later broken. The Afrikaner and Verwoerd[113] could not accept that the spiritual unity of believers implied a visible unity of Black and Whites and an open church. International pressure started building up against 'South' Africa and the Church. In 1968, the South African Council of Churches made the following statement in a *Message to the people of South Africa* (1968): "There are alarming signs that this doctrine of separation has become, for many, a false faith, a novel gospel, which offers happiness, a place for the community and for an individual. It holds out to men a security built not on Christ but on the theory of separation and the preservation of racial identity. It presents separate development of our race groups, as a way, for the people of South Africa to save them. Such a claim, inevitably conflicts with the Christian gospel, which offers salvation, both social and individual, through faith in Christ alone". Resistance to apartheid and the climax of the Dutch Reformed Church's exclusion from the global context came with the 1982 World Alliance of Reformed Churches rejection of apartheid, declaring a *status confessionis* on the matter. This was also the

[113] In 1958 Verwoerd became prime minister and stated: "South Africa has a greater task than to establish Christian civilisation in South Africa. It must become a permanent basis for the White man" (Loubser 1987:86).

moment of change for the Dutch Reformed Church and resulted in the document *Church and Society: A Witness of the DRC* (1986) that rejected apartheid.

The Dutch Reformed Church followed the same racist ideology that developed among the Afrikaners. This can be seen in the formation of separate churches for Coloured members (The Dutch Reformed Mission Church), Black members (The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa)[114] and the Andrew Murray Dutch Reformed Church for English members (1965).

Giliomee (2003:454) links apartheid in the DRC to the missionary theories of Gustav Warneck that focused on establishing national churches that preserved the mother tongue and traditional customs - churches that are self-supportive, self-governing and self-propagating. Kinghorn (1986:68) notes that Warneck followed a romantic view of peoples that lead to his notion of "*Volkschristianisierung*". Although this was an influential theory that guided missions in English churches they steadily moved to an integration strategy from the 1920's. German missions and the DRC remained committed to Warneck's theories (Giliomee 2003:455). Kinghorn (1986:68) notes that in 'South' Africa, Johannes du Plessis popularised the work of Warneck.

Giliomee (2003:454) writes that Du Plessis "envisaged the development of autonomous, self-governing black churches as a counter to English missionaries, who tried to produce converts by copying 'Western civilization and religion'". Giliomee traces this sentiment back to the early days of settlement at the Cape and the Dutch East India Company's emphasis on the promotion of Dutch language and Reformed religion in institutional life. In this regard, the sentiment was that apartheid is a mode of evangelism that attempted to form friendly and peaceful relations between white and black through ethnocentric self-governance. From the perspective of apartheid, the militant and reactionary expressions of self-governance promoted by the Ethiopian movement were an attempt to dig 'a gulf of hatred' between whites and blacks and not in the reconciliatory spirit of apartheid (Giliomee 2003:457).

[114] The latter two churches combined in 1994 to form the Uniting Reformed Church.

The problem with Kinghorn and Giliomee's argument is that the idea of separate churches for whites and blacks, led to the first 'daughter church' of the DRC in 1881, more than 10 years before Warneck's influential work. The idea of separate churches was expressed with the unwillingness of white congregants to take communion with slaves and other non-Western members and not grand theories on missions or the institutional power of the DRC. The theories of Warneck fitted in with the Dutch Reformed Church's constituency who wanted to control black people in an effort to secure their own economic wealth and control of the land. Self-government implied that the "gospel had to be taught in a way that strengthened the African 'character, nature and nationality' - in other words, the *volkseie* (the people's own). Africans had to be uplifted 'on their own terrain, separate and apart'" (Giliomee 2003:454). Separations between white and black had to "'ensure the survival of a handful of [Afrikaner] people cut of from their national ties in Europe'" (Giliomee 2003:454). Apartheid was viewed as the fulfilment of the authentic identity or the *selfsyn* (or being oneself) of all people's.

Self-government implied that black churches were dependent on the education of the white church and had to subscribe to the practice of the white church translated into indigenous forms. Giliomee (2003:459) states that Rev JC du Plessis expressed alarms over the spread of Ethiopianism and a member of the conference states: "Who is today the best friend of the white man in the land? The native who got his education from the DRC. He is the greatest opponent of political agitators". In this regard, the theories of Warneck were a theoretical tool in the systematic exploitation and oppression of non-Western peoples.

Giliomee (2003:461) argues that two major views of apartheid existed: total separation and self-development, and segregation with development or justice. The latter perspective was emphasised by Rev William Nicol of Johannesburg who proposed with Gerdener that existing reserves be developed. "The church leaders were fooling themselves. It was an illusion that any government would have the resources to build coloured townships that were 'a hundred per cent', to use Gerdener's words. Neither was it able to provide 'the best social, welfare and community services for natives in the reserves', as the Sauer Commission report of 1947 recommended" (Giliomee 2003:463).

The focus of Afrikaner Nationalism to control geographical space with all the economic benefits that it entailed emphasises the link between Afrikaner history and colonialism, thus, continuing the imperial rule of the British. It differed from British imperial rule in that the civilising mission was replaced with Calvinism[115] that emphasised the separate development of Western and non-Western people. This emphasised the link between the Afrikaner and Dutch segregational ideologies that viewed the non-Western population as the heathen Black population that were not allowed to mix with the Christian, White population. Black people had to be Christianised and left to develop with the help of the Christian White population. To integrate them would go against the principles of Calvinism that focused on the covenant people, emphasising the priority of diversity of nations. Mixing would be a form of syncretism that is sinful, and only reduces the civilisation of superior nations.

In *Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion* (1989:4) states: "One of the most serious and lasting legacies of European colonialism is racism. In South Africa it has been institutionalised and legalised in the form of the notorious system of apartheid" A transformation of the segregation ideology of Dutch colonialism into a system of government disenfranchised the non-Western population and controlled the land and its resources.

2.2.2 Boer Calvinism

[115] An aspect of Kuyper's influence beyond the scholarly realm was the formation of the "Kalvinistiese Bond" (1929), which called for the christianisation of society (Deist 1994:136). Another Kuyperian development is the focus on the 'volk' as a distinct unit of conservative theologians, whereas the more liberal-minded critical theologians called for inclusive political models.

The influence of Kuyperism[116], fundamentalism, romanticism[117]and racism resulted in the development of Boer Calvinism. This mode of reading provided a platform for the racist interpretation of the Bible, continuing the essentialist race ideologies that developed during Dutch colonialism. The development of Boer Calvinism was a reaction against the influence of Enlightenment science and the liberal ideas that went along with it, like equality. The resistance to Enlightenment science led to the expulsion of Du Plessis[118], a professor at the Theological Seminary of Stellenbosch[119], for using historical criticism.

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[116] The influence of the theology of Kuyper of the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam had a long historical prelude starting with the founding of the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch. Although the theological paradigm at the time was influenced by critical-realism of the Enlightenment, traces of naive-realism can be found in the work of Andrew Murray, one of the founders of the seminary. In much of his work the impression is created that the inerrancy of the Bible as the Word of God, based on historical foundations, is paramount for faith in God (Deist 1994:25-27).

117 Romanticism developed as a reactionary movement against the Enlightenment. The focus was on the experiential or irrational and therefore the main proponents of this movement were poets and artists. It further reacted against the isolation of individual rationalism and promoted communal experience (Kinghorn 1986:63). In this regard, an organic 'volks'-principle was developed in which language played an important role. Language is the natural mode of expression of the 'volk', a unifying dimension (Kinghorn 1986:65). It is therefore important to see the interconnectedness of the language movements of the Afrikaner and nationalism. Language is not a pragmatic phenomenon but an expression of the communal identity and roots or "*Volksgeist"* (Kinghorn 1986:66). The 'volke' are part of the creation order of God as stated by Kuyper, but 'volke' are not equal. There is a hierarchical difference between nations. These views particularly grew in Germany, and strands are to be found in the "Ossewabrandwag" (Kinghorn 1986:67).

[118] Plessis who was later ostracised because of his humanistic reading (Deist 1994:67). Du Plessis wrote, "...De wetenschap gaat uit van het materiële, het zichtbare, het beperkte, 'the proximate'. De godsdienst gaat uit van het geestelike, het onzichtbare, het onbeperkte, 'the ultimate'. ...Beide hebben, ter laatsten instantie, eenzelfde doel, namelik een synthese te vinden van het dualisme van ons aards bestaan, het dualisme dat zich toont in de tegenstelling van materie en rede, lichaam en geest" (Deist 1994:389-390). This dependence on science in the search for truth was too threatening for the church and the conservatives of the Seminary (Loubser 1987:27-28). In the uncertain times after the Anglo-'South' African War poverty, Anglicisation, depression this historical-critical reading destroyed the 'last anchor' ('the Word of God') of the Afrikaner, resulting in a rejection of these humanistic modes by the Afrikaner (Deist 1994:73-75). In this situation the insecurity of liberalism, individualism and a rationalist approach to the Bible created too much uncertainty. In 1930, Du Plessis was suspended from the Stellenbosch Seminary. "The most important result of the whole affair was that the DRC closed its ranks to the emerging hermeneutical awareness in European theology as it was proposed by Bultmann, Barth and Brunner" (Loubser 1987:28). Kinghorn (1986:55) observes that, this situation lead to a suspicion on hermeneutical questions related to the reading of the Bible. "Posing such questions, was regarded as an attack on the authority of Scripture" (Kinghorn 1986:55). "Thus a 'hermeneutic vacuum' originated in the church into which foreign elements could infiltrate unseen. Due to the lack of a hermeneutic awareness the theological problem of church and society was clumsily addressed" (Loubser 1987:29).

[119] The Theological Seminary at Stellenbosch was inaugurated on 2 November 1858, to train Dutch Reformed Church ministers as an alternative to have them study at liberal universities in Europe (Deist 1994:1). Deist describes the semiotic of the first couple of decades at the seminary as 'orthodox', focusing on the transcendence of God according to pietistic and Reformed premises (Deist 1994:6).

Kuyperism developed as a reaction to theoretical and historical developments. Firstly, it developed because of the dissatisfaction with the Enlightenment and the effect of science on theology. Kuyper (1943:11) states: "Two *life systems* are wrestling with one another, in mortal combat. Modernism is bound to build a world of its own from the data of nature; while, on the other hand, all those who reverently bend the knee to Christ and worship Him as the Son of the living God, and God himself, are bent upon saving the 'Christian Heritage'. This is *the* struggle in Europe, this is the struggle in America, and this also, is the struggle for principles in which my own country is engaged..." Secondly, it was the influence of the “revolutionary spirit” of the French revolution, promoting humanism and individualism. Kuyper (1943:87) writes: "The French Revolution ignores God. It opposes God. It refuses to recognize a deeper ground of political life than that which is found in nature, that is, in this instance, in man himself".

In reaction to modernity, Kuyper’s mode made a radical break with rationalism and empirical science towards church dogma as the foundations of truth. The confessions of the Church became the criteria for truth. Kuyper (1943:110) argues that Calvinism "foster *love for science*" because God is the starting point of science; he created the cosmos or material matter. This relates to the fact that God created the cosmos that is the starting point of all science. "Calvinism alone, by means of its dominating principle, which constantly urges us back from the Cross to Creation, and no less by means of its doctrine of *common grace*, threw open again to science the vast field of the cosmos, now illumined by the Sun of Righteousness, of Whom the Scriptures testify that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Kuyper 1943:118).

Kuyperism protected theology from humanism and the Enlightenment system. To counter the effect of the revolutionary spirit Kuyper sought refuge in church confessions, as an all-encompassing worldview. From this point of view, nothing exists outside the Lordship of God, and this, therefore, is the premise of all truth and value systems. The revelation of God in the Bible contains the guidelines of this system as articulated by Reformed Church Doctrines (Deist 1994:86). The confessions became the normative tradition and principle for reading the text.

Deist (1994:86) notes that Kuyper's Christian science is rooted in a dualism – the world consists of believers and unbelievers, therefore the science and rationality of believers are purified through the Word of God, of which the confessions are a summary. In this regard, Deist links Kuyper's textuality with the 'reformed scholastic' tradition of the seventeenth century that left little room for the critical influence of science (Deist 1994:87). It is a rationalist system by which the world is separated into an ideal of believers and the sinful other – unbelievers. This separation is kept intact by an exclusive rational system rooted in the confessions that sustain the notions of the ideal, moral community that is defined as the 'volk' or people of the covenant[120]. According to Kuyper (1943:171) Calvinism is the foundational "life-system" that governs all of reality: "Calvinism did not stop at a church-order, but expanded in a life-system, and did not exhaust its energy in a dogmatic construction, but created a life- and world-view, and such a one as was, and still is, able to fit itself to the needs of every stage of human development, in every department of life..."

The principles, on which Kuyper bases his system, are all easily accessible to any person through observation. Any churchgoer can understand these principles, whereas critical science involves abstract humanistic theories which confuses people and leads to unbelief. All the believer needs is the infallible "Word of God". Kuyper (1907:164) states: "Die toetssteen nu, die met ontwijfelbare zekerheid aanduidt wat uit de natuur en wat uit de genade opkomt, is de Heilige Schrift". Science can only confirm what people read in the Bible. Kuyper (1907:168) writes: "...de Heilige Schrift selve, in haar geheel, naar vorm en inhoud, *is* het Woord des Heeren, is de geboekstaafde getuienis van den levenden God". According to Deist (1994:89-90) this is a naïve realist system or Common Sense Realism that accepts reality at face value and the Bible as the normative instruction book. In this respect, the following principles apply:

[120] Kuyper (1909:35) states: "En zoo volgt dan, dat de menschheid, het menschelijk geslacht of hoe ge de gezamenlijke menschen noemen wilt, in de hoogere saamvatting van hun *zedelijke* leven niet kunnen optreden dan als saamgevat in een 'Verbond met God'. Het is dit Verbond met God, wat van de menschenmassa eerst *zedelijk* organisme maakt, en (evenals bij een volk) de 'wet' als een macht op laat treden, den *wil* in werking zet, en het diepe besef van ondelinge en weerkeerige verantwoordelijkheid doet geboren worden".

- The basis of all knowledge is common sense and does not require complex theoretical reflection. The countering of critical readings took place by appealing to reality that provided simple and logical readings.
- The approach has multiple applications to wide range of issues.
- Polemic is minimised by reference to logic.
- It is accumulative, incorporating various Calvinistic principles.

The foundation of Kuyper's mode is the doctrine of the spheres of sovereignty, a classification system of creation in terms of various related 'levels of existence' (e.g. state, society, and church) that are all under the rule of God (Loubser 1987:38). These spheres form an organic unit, each with its own 'sovereignty', untouched by sin. The creation ordinances[121] of God give authority to the 'volk' as the agent of His rule (Loubser 1987:39). The authority of God's creation ordinances ensures the sustaining of these spheres of sovereignty (Loubser 1987:39-40). The 'volk' has a binding responsibility and authority to govern itself in all spheres of society. Kuyper (1909:79) states that the concept, 'volk', insured the unity and moral responsibility of a people: "Maar heb ik met een *volk* te doen, dan is het zedelijke, hoogere leven van deze menchengroep reeds tot uiting gekomen. Dan is er onder hen een wet; een besef van zedelijke aan hoorigheid; een staan voor en met elkander; onderlinge verantwoordelijkheid; voor elkaar en voor het geheel".

Politics, education, culture, the Church, etc., may not be ruled by individuals in a multi-national system because it betrays the creation ordinances of God. The world exhibits plurality and is not uniform, as the liberal humanist proposes. The theory of diversity proposes that the differences between 'volke' be sustained and regarded as a matter that will be resolved after, the Second Coming (Loubser 1987:40). The implication of Kuypers concept, 'volk', is that reality can be broken into distinct and homogeneous units that leave no room for hybridity and difference. This perspective reflects the preoccupation with Western essentialism to divide and separate reality in order to deduce its essence or core characteristics.

[121] "In South Africa each ethnic group was seen as an organism which formed part of the body of humanity. As an organism, a people had a rhythm and a law of its own as expressed by its language, history, biological composition and locality. Each group was seen as a collective whole, which was supposed to evolve harmoniously from its origin; it was thus sovereign and directly responsible to God, for its own household" (Loubser 1987:39).

According to Kuyperism, unity has to be humanity's only purpose, but the power of sin has corrupted humanity with a desire for uniformity. In this regard, he mentions the tower of Babel as an example of the failure of uniformity. "The living unity, which God desired, had to be born from an inner conviction. This unity had to grow out of the diversity of peoples and generations" (Loubser 1987:41). The problem of uniformity is that humanity simply becomes an instrument, a cog in a machine in which internationalism and not patriotism becomes the order of the day (Loubser 1987:42). This is against the creation ordinances of God and therefore unity is subordinate to diversity. Only religion is an adequate counter-measure to the death of uniformity and as such a guarantee of freedom. Scripture teaches that only those who are willing to die may live, and where God is with us, we shall not bow before any tyrant (Loubser 1987:45). The problem with Kuypers reading of Genesis 11:1-9 is that the sin of uniformity has lead into an essentialist ideology. In the 'South' African context, this essentialist mode of reading, rooted in Calvinism, created one of the dimensions of the cultural discourse for colonial racism to be fused into a socio-political system that would be enforced with religious zeal.

Another dimension of the essentialist cultural discourse was fundamentalism from the Princeton Theological Seminary. Kuyperism and fundamentalism has a similar agenda, to counter the effect of Enlightenment science in biblical scholarship (Deist 1994:83). American fundamentalism, also described as 'hyper-fundamentalism' promoted the conservative values, of the professionals that subscribed to it, and the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible (Deist 1994:96). Fundamentalism differs from Kuyperism in terms of its purpose. Kuyper foresaw a radical restructuring of society, where as fundamentalism, has a soteriological focus that resulted in a revivalist strategy for people, searching for security, amidst negative socio-economic and political forces (Deist 1994:96).

The fundamentalist, Machen, bases faith on historical truth represented in the Bible (Deist 1994:100-101). Scholarship simply provides the scientific proof for the content of the Bible. Reading the Bible and applying the principles of, 'plain sense reading', reveals the interpreted facts of history as recorded in the Bible. History is not open to interpretation because the Bible provides the interpretation of history as

the basis for faith (Deist 1994:100-101). Aspects like the virgin birth of Jesus and the resurrection are the main points of contention. The foundation of these confessional dimensions rested on the fact that the Bible as a whole was inerrant (Deist 1994:97). To question any aspect of the Bible was a sign of secularism and unbelief.

Fundamentalism holds on to the non-empirical and non-rationalist worldview[122]; but it does try to confront empiricism and rationalism by means of proving the historicity of the Biblical world through empirical and rational means. This is a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, the former based on a selection of fundamental principles and the latter providing proof of these foundational principles (Deist 1994:102). The Bible forms an "organic whole" to formulate fundamentals through inductive means (Deist 1994:102). The distinction between faith and reason makes way for reason, as the basis of faith - faith based facts[123].

Another aspect of fundamentalism is that reality is larger than physical reality, moving beyond positivism to include non-physical reality. A religious worldview is inherent to creation, part of the created order and natural for the believer. Meaning is not inherent to creation but is rather a supra-natural aspect, located in God – and nature points to this. The dualism between science and faith is broken by a creation view of reality, ruled by God – *soli Deo gloria* (Deist, 1994:164). In this regard, the Bible is an objective point or an 'archimedean' point outside of the self (Deist 1994:166). This extra-cosmic point of reference is found in the revelation of God, the Bible, which is objectively compiled and interpreted – mechanical inspiration (Deist 1994:167).

Fundamentalism differs from pietism in terms of its historical roots. Pietism's roots go back to Puritanism and fundamentalism arose because of a series of booklets that appeared between 1912 and 1916 in the USA, entitled *The Fundamentals*. The rigid view of reality and fixed norms or fundamentals had a great influence during the uncertainty, resulting from the poverty and suffering, of the Great Depression in the

[122] A major difference between Kuyperism and Fundamentalism was that, the former made a distinction between Christian - and secular science; or natural and revelation theology. Fundamentalists do not have a clear division and therefore human nature was not totally corrupt. In practice, 'common sense' assertion was on a par with the authority of the Bible.

United States. People needed something to hold onto that fundamentalism provided through its rigid and authoritarian system. The critical atmosphere of the Enlightenment only increased people's insecurities, thus, rejected as a humanistic and untrustworthy system. The analogy between the situation of the American people and the poverty experienced by the Afrikaner resulted in the advancement of fundamentalism in 'South' Africa. But another aspect of this development is that it correlated with the essentialist cultural discourse of the Afrikaner. Fundamentalism is an example of a religious form of essentialism that reduces the biblical text to universal principles. The danger of fundamentalism is its rigid authoritarianism that enforces its essentialist principles without regard for difference or context.

Kuyperism and fundamentalism provided the Afrikaner with an essentialistic mode of reading that supported notions of segregation and Western superiority. The exclusive understanding of the covenant supported the national agenda and secured a privileged white enclave for the Afrikaner. This is evident in a sermon by J.D. du Toit, entitled *Ons land deur God gegee en versorg* (1915). Du Toit (1915:66) proposes an analogical link between Israel and the Afrikaner:

- The Afrikaner has a history of oppression: Geuse of Holland and Huguenots, oppressed by the Spanish and Roman Catholics respectively.
- The Afrikaner had to immigrate to a land God promised to them.
- The Afrikaner minority had to destroy many heathen nations like Silkaats and Dingaan[124]
- God gave the Afrikaner the land and He sustains it[125].

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[123] Deist (1994:103) quotes Machen: "In order to come to the Christian view it is necessary only to be scientific"

[124] Another myth that served as fuel for Afrikaner Nationalism in later years was the events surrounding the Battle of Blood River as it became known. The murder of Retief and company on 6 February 1838 resulted in Andries Potgieter arriving from Graaff-Reinet to win a victory over Dingaan at Blood (Ncome) River on 16 December 1838 with 470 men. The significance of the victory was that the Boers defeated multitudes of Zulu's while they suffered only three casualties. This battle became an icon in Boer history of the providence of God. "Sarel Cilliers, the Voortrekker leader whose biographer was reminded of the battles of Tours and Plassey (thus perhaps underrating the aspect of revenge), recorded in his memoirs that before the battle the Boers had made a vow to treat the occasion as holy if victory should come their way. The Church of the Vow was accordingly built in Pietermaritzburg, the new capital named after Retief and Maritz, and the Republic of Natalia now came into being" (Davenport and Saunders, 2000:79-80). The importance of the vow became over-inflated in later years and became a marked event, celebrated with patriot conviction.

[125] The accumulation of the land is related to the myth of the 'open land'. This is today regarded as a result of the time of turmoil or "*mfecane/difaqane"*. The word "*mfecane*" is Xhosa and means 'to be weak', 'emaciated from hunger' (Davenport and Saunders 2000:13). The "*mfecane"* developed as a

According to Deist (1994:111-123), the convergence of Kuyperism and Fundamentalism resulted in Boer Calvinism, a deductive system based on various Calvinistic faith postulates, distinguishing between two dimensions: history and theology. The historical dimension consisted of the following premises:

- The biblical authors received the revelation of God firsthand.
- Their perception of the revelation was correct.
- Their interpretations of the revelation as, reflected in the Bible was objective and correlated with the events themselves.
- The original documents were preserved.
- These documents are unambiguously and literally (a-historically).
- Biblical proclamations are not in conflict with the results of Christian sciences.

The theological dimension rested on two premises:

- Church confessions are clear and unambiguous. These confessions correlated with the Biblical message;
- Experience is not a theological category. The foundations of faith are stable and factual. The Bible provides this foundation and is not some mystical experience that the critical approach proposed.

Boer Calvinism mostly borrowed from the cultural perspective of Kuyper, but neglected to practically incorporate the distinction Kuyper made between general and specific grace. This distinction in Kuyper's model gave recognition to the views of the secular world, although only through the general grace of God (Deist 1994:163). In Boer Calvinism, this distinction fused, developing into a closed and exclusive system. Afrikaner Calvinism became a call to the Afrikaner to fight views that differed from its main system or all forms of -isms: rationalism, naturalism, materialism, atheism, totalitarianism (Deist 1994:158). On the one hand, it was

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move to "state-building" beyond the European colonial territory. The reasons for this is a matter of debate, but may have been a combination of population pressure, action of Portuguese slave traders in the eastern parts, upsetting of the old order and the centralized Zulu kingdom. The expansion of the Zulu territory under Shaka was a big influence. The question is whether the 'open land', according to colonial mythology, was the result of internal events in African society or was imposed from outside.

oppositional, critical of humanism growing from the French Revolution; but on the other hand, an apologetic proposing a new order based on the sovereignty of God and obedience to his will (Deist 1994:159).

In Boer Calvinism, the 'volk' was the result of the general grace of God. The 'volk', accordingly, had a natural tendency to be Christian. The Christianising of the 'volk' is the result of the specific grace of God. This resulted in a classification system that regarded nations without Christian roots as inferior, regardless of their present religious state. The distinction between the White and Black populations of 'South' Africa is a consequence of the creation ordinance of God, according to which some 'volke' would be superior to others. The parallel drawn between the history of Israel and the Afrikaner is proof of the divine election of the Afrikaner (Deist 1994:181-183). Apartheid, therefore, is not a naturalist preference, but a phenomenon brought about by the general grace of God (Deist 1994:184). As seen from this perspective, the difference between general and specific grace become hazy. The 'Afrikanervolk' as Christian 'volk' become interchangeable terms (Deist 1994:185). Boer Calvinism forms the basis of many sermons of so-called 'volkspredikers' (preachers of the peoples)[126].

Boer Calvinism became a mode of reading that supported the racist ideology of the Afrikaner, rejecting liberal ideas such as equality by reinforcing the status of the

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Drought is another possibility, added to the above, but also the Griqua movement mentioned earlier (Davenport and Saunders 2000:16).

[126] In the volume of sermons by Rev CR Kotze from 1930 to 1946, the Kuyperian dimension of obedience to God is emphasized in the sermon "*Berggode"*, with 1 Kings 20:23 as text (Kotze 1955:1-4). He argues that the enemies of the Afrikaner are fighting them on the plain because they know their God is a mountain god and there they are trying to lure the Afrikaner away from the church. The fight is on the plains. – In society – but the Afrikaner must not give in to the rule of equality: "Ons kerk staan vas en handhaaf die kleurlyn; ons is teen gelykstelling en gemengde huwelike" (Kotze 1955:4). The threat of racial equality is a form of oppression of the Afrikaner who has to submit to the humiliation of speaking another language and adopting other values. In another sermon, "*God maak nasies en die duiwel maak die 'empire'"* (Is. 51:6), equality is viewed as the strategy of the colonial forces to control people, but nationalism destroys the empire (Kotze 1955:8-9). In "*Geen Uitlander-regering nie"* (Deut 17:15) Kotze argues that the Afrikaner must have an independent government, because, no Christian should be ruled by non-Christians. Heathens should be ruled over by Christians. The Afrikaner nation is more developed than any other nation in "South" :Africa – they are the most educated, most cultivated and most Christian people and therefore they should govern. The racial superiority of the Afrikaner is proof that equality is a sin (Kotze 1955:18-20). The same fear of equality, based on racial superiority, is found in JD du Toit's paper at, the 1944 people's congress in Bloemfontein. He viewed Blacks as 'barbaric' on account of the curse of Ham. "And now, thus, after the dark ages God is going to bring about something wonderful in history. The Boer nation, a new type, develops from a miraculous intermingling of blood" (Loubser 1987:57).

Afrikaner as the people of God, separated from other peoples, to fulfil their divine calling to bring the truth to inferior and heathen peoples. The reading of Genesis 11:1-9 of *The document Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture* (HR), in which the Dutch Reformed Church biblically justified apartheid, is an example of the use of a Boer Calvinist mode of reading.

2.2.4 Human relations and the South African scene in the light of Scripture[127] (HR)

HR is a reading from the perspective of Afrikaner colonial control of 'South' Africa to legitimise the policy of apartheid, following the racist and civilising trace from Dutch colonialism and British Imperialism. The reading mode that developed from the Western essential cultural matrix supports White exclusivity and superiority by fusing Kuyperism and Fundamentalism. This reading accentuates the question of diversity, decentralisation of power but with the problem that the *White master* enforced the separation and divisions, because of his/her supposed superiority and election by God, without considering the consequences and disruption of the community. In this regard, Western dualistic worldview of the Afrikaner resulted in the spiritualisation of unity and that enforced separation, enriches the white population at the expense of the black population of 'South' Africa. It is a reading from the centre of colonial racism leaning on the experience of privilege.

HR places Genesis 11:1-9 in the context of Genesis 10 and the end of Genesis 9 (HR 1976:15). "The descendants of Noah's three sons remained in the vicinity of Ararat for a few generations (Gen 10:25) before they decided to move in a (south-) easterly direction to (the later) Babylonia (11:12)" (HR 1976:15-16). The document follows a similar historicist argument as fundamentalism by historically linking Genesis 11:1-9

[127] Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture (1976). National Book Printers Ltd. Cape Town. This document served as a report at the 1974 Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church on race relations. The official title in Afrikaans is "Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in the lig van die Skrif". In October 1974, the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church approved and accepted this publication. It developed after the constitution of the first General Synod of the DRC in 1962. A commission was appointed to work on Scriptural justification of apartheid. At subsequent Synod meetings, reports were rejected, because of their controversial nature. In 1970, a new commission under Willem Landman was appointed. The synod of 1974 accepted the publication Human relations and the South African scene in the Light of Scripture (HR). Many statements were

with the preceding events of Genesis 10. This is a clear departure from the historical-criticism and Colenso's rejection of the historicity of the narrative. The problem with this historicist reading of the text is that it gives the text a universal and absolute authority. In other words, the principles deduced have authority without regard for cultural or contextual differences.

Then a discussion on Gen 11:1-9 follows: "In the first verse these people are described as 'the whole earth' in the sense of 'all the inhabitants of the earth'…therefore there were no other people on earth! It is also said, that at that time, they all spoke the same language" (HR 1976:16). This was the 'state of affairs' after their arrival in 'Babylonia' and the start of their 'building program'. Verse 6 states: "Behold the people ('am) is one and they have all one language" (HR 1976:16). Colenso's reference to linguistic research disclaimed literal references to a single language, undermining the historicity of the text.

Unity and the building of the city is related: "These people clearly valued the unity of language and community because, apart from the motive of making a name for themselves, their city and tower had to serve specifically to prevent their being 'scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth' (v4)....the undertaking and the intentions of these people were in conflict with the will of God. Apart from the reckless arrogance that is evident in their desire to make a name for themselves, the deliberate concentration on one spot was in conflict with God's command to replenish the earth (Gen 1:28; 9:1,7)...God's perception of their efforts and intention leads to a judgement which was to affect human beings in the very structure of their community life: their one language was split up into a diversity of languages, with the result that a communication crisis developed and it was impossible for them to associate meaningfully with one another. The result gives evidence of God's intention as far as they were concerned: 'So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth'" (v8 & 9) (HR 1976:16). This irony of this conclusion, relating the building of the tower to disobedience of God's command to fill the earth is contrary to

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later amended, for example in 1978 paragraph 65, concerning mixed marriages was amended, changing the term 'inadmissible', meaning 'immoral', to 'extremely unwanted' (Loubser 1978:90).

the Calvinist tradition that emphasises the arrogance of the people[128]. Colenso's reading views the narrative as a primitive explanation of the development of language and ethnic differences, related to the characteristics and function of the Yahwist. The Boer Calvinist reading of HR, rejecting the critical viewed influenced by the Enlightenment, sought to fuse a historical link between creation ordinances (Genesis 1:28) and the scattering of the tower builders, reflecting the influence of fundamentalism. At the same time, the impact of Kuyper's link between covenant and 'volk' is clear from the primacy given to separating, implied by the scattering.

The document continues to discuss the significance of this event in a second part. It states that in terms of the origin of the diversity among races and peoples the event can be both "underrated" and "overrated".

It is "underrated" in that some think that the division of languages had no effect on the differences between races and peoples. Although the document does not mention race or peoples, it emphasises keeping the following two factors in mind: Firstly, the scattering points to the significance of language to the psychic structure of humanity. The implication of the scattering is the splitting of people into different cultures and religions. Secondly, the text explains the diversity of peoples of Gen 10. The references made by the ancient Egyptians, who recognised five races, support this (HR 1976:16-17).

The reference to the spiritual link between language and the psychic nature of humanity reflects the influence of Romanticism. This provides an essentialist link between culture and language, an important element of the National Party's promotion of the Afrikaans language as the language of the people. The primacy given to language as a function of cultural difference gives language an ontological status that is justified theologically through the historicist view of the text. In other words, God

[128] What is of interest is that the conclusion drawn by HR that the punishment of God is linked to Genesis 1:28 is not followed by Calvin. Calvin (1948:323-324) writes that the sin of the builders is their "obstinacy against God" and a sign of their "headstrong pride, joined with contempt of God". He writes that the dispersion was not a simple act to replenish the earth but the result of a violent rout because the bond between them was broken with the confusion of their language because they wanted to gain a name for themselves (Calvin 1948:332). Calvin does not relate the event of the building in terms of imperial motives, linked to Nimrod, but he states that "all conspired together, so that the blame cannot be cast exclusively upon one, nor even upon a few" (Calvin 1948:326).

ordains not only the 'volk' but also their language. In this regard, language becomes a function of the essentialist ideological mechanic of apartheid.

The event is "overrated" by those supposing that there would not have been a diversity of races and peoples without the confusion of tongues. HR (1976:17) notes that "diversity was implicit in the fact of Creation (Acts 17:26) and the cultural injunction (Gen. 1:28; 9:1&7)". Another aspect is that the confusion of tongues occurred after the process of 'differentiation' into separate 'families' or community units", had already begun (Gen. 10:25); differentiation was hampered because people lived together in one 'geographical region' (Gen 11:2) (HR 1976:17). In a certain sense, up to that moment in time, the 'unity' had been artificial and, clearly, in conflict with the intention that humanity should spread across the face of the earth – sin is a dividing force that influences the family as well (Gen. 6). Finally, the judgment of the confusion of tongues was not 'arbitrary' but resolved itself in the course of generations – family divisions of the sons of Noah (Gen. 10:25) (HR 1976:17). This reflects Kuyper's notion of unity as uniformity linking the documents segregational perspective to the notion election of the 'volk' as a creation ordinance.

The document draws on S du Toit[129] (1969:12-14) and argues that the Bible is a revelation, not a book of science in terms of scientific fact. The focus is the Kingdom of God and not humanity or the world. Interpretation should start with listening to the Word of God, and not with our own epistemologies and sciences, although science brings many of the facts of the Word to light (archaeology). The document leans on Du Toit's proposal concerning the dispersion: "As a result of the fact that one could not understand the language of the other (Gen. 11:7), what would have been a natural

[129] In chapter 6, *"Die rasse- en volkeprogram vir die heilsgeskiedenis"*, the story of the tower of Babel is discussed (Du Toit 1969:53). The story is seen as a Biblical norm for racial relations. Like HR the sin of the people is their failure to follow the command of God in Gen 1:28 and 9:1 (Du Toit 1969:53). They disobey God's command to fill the earth, but seek power in their unity in continuity with the character of Nimrod (Gen 10:8-12). Du Toit (1969:54) describes this as the roots of imperialism that results in marginalisation and nullification. The confusion of tongues is the root of God's judgement on the sin of the people that disrupts the building of the tower. The natural difference among people in terms of language now becomes a division that will remain to the end of time according to scripture (Gen 11:7). However, the grace of God is also seen in this act: He maintains his command that humanity shall fill the earth; and secondly, He prevents humanity from forming a mass union that will result in sin – egoism of power (Gen 11:6). Human effort to create unity will fail because it is against the will of God. For this reason, the geneology of Shem is given in Gen 11:10-32 leads to Abraham, the spiritual father of humanity who is one in Christ. To conclude, he quotes Zimmerli rejecting self-righteous nationalism and/or colourless internationalism (Du Toit 1969:54).

differentiation, became a division, which resulted in continual tension and conflict among peoples, something which, according to the Scriptures, will endure to the very last" (HR 1976:17). It is also an act of mercy and blessing because it guaranteed the continued existence of the human race and in as much as God achieved His purpose with the creation of the human race:

"To arrive at the whole truth in connection with the family of nations, Gen 10 and 11 must be read in conjunction. The progressive differentiation of humanity into peoples and races involved not only a curse, but also a blessing, not only judgement on the sinful arrogance of the tower builders of Babel, but also an act of mercy whereby mankind is not only protected from destruction, but God's purpose with the creation of man is achieved" (HR 1976:18).

Zimmerli (HR 1976:18) writes: "'He who speaks only of blessings and ignores the curse, speaks falsely. But no less falsely speaks he who calls the diversity of peoples according to language, country and nation sinful. It is indicative of the sober balance of the Scripture that it is as far removed from selfish nationalism as from a colourless internationalism'".

The problem with the abovementioned references is that in the 'South' African context the essentialist cultural discourse provided the justification for colonial racism. The blessing that Zimmerli refers to has an ironical twist when difference results in forced separation. The sinfulness of forced unity does not justify colonial racism.

The document accepts "the policy of autogenous development" with a qualified yes: "The diversity of races and peoples to which the confusion of tongues contributed, is an aspect of reality which God obviously intended for this dispensation. To deny this fact is to side with the tower builders…We must not forget that Gen. 11 also tells us of man's attempt to establish a (forced) unity of the human race" (HR 1976:18). The document does not reject unity outright, but qualifies it as a forced unity. It was not a "God-given command, but in sinful, human arrogance. This form of unity carries within it the germs of its own destruction and can never be a substitute for the unity that God alone can give" (HR 1976:18). Gen. 10 emphasises the "primordial relatedness of all nations: everyone's genealogical history is traced back to one

progenitor, Noah (10:1). In no instance does the diversity revoke the essential unity of the human race. In all races and peoples we are dealing with individuals 'related' to one another on the horizontal plane, and on the vertical plane, to God, to whom they are accountable" (HR 1976:19).

The document spiritualises[130] unity. The covenant with Abraham, "the spiritual father of a new 'people', one in Christ", and the crucifixion, resurrection and Pentecost focuses attention on the "new song that the redeemed of all peoples will sing at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 5:9) (HR 1976:19). This notion of unity is in line with the Calvinist tradition[131]. The problem with the spiritualising of unity in a situation of colonial racism is that it becomes a self-justifying argument that fails to unravel injustice. In other words, if unity is a spiritual matter the theological critique of the injustice of forced physical separation is not possible. This spiritualising of unity follows the trace of Western dualism.

The document regards the building of the tower as sin and rebellion against God's command to fill the earth. The dispersion is both punishment and grace. HR views unity as a function of the togetherness of the people –versus scattering. The document rationalises the inconsistencies in the text in terms of the link between Genesis 10 and 11. HR views them as an explanation of how the different people of

[130] The document HR is the most profound articulation of apartheid racism. According to Loubser (1987:97), unity is spiritualised in the document. To understand the neo-colonial view of unity, it is important to start at the definition given in the document in par 3. Here a distinction is made between 'race' as a biological, 'people' as a cultural, and 'nation' as a political concept (HR 1976:8). From this definition, the nature of the problem in the world context is not a pure racial problem. It is viewed as complex and not all "tensions between peoples are based on racial contrasts" (HR 1976:9). This distinction is an important premise in the argument because it covers the racist roots of apartheid by focusing attention on culture. Apartheid is therefore an answer to a cultural problem and not a racist strategy. In this regard, diversity remains as a cultural phenomenon, and not racism. This sets the stage for a spiritual unity, for the apparent differences between cultures, bridged by colonialism and the subjugation of cultures. According to Loubser (1987:99-100), racism remains latent in the document, but from the abovementioned the question can be asked whether culture is not used as a cover for racism, for the two dominant cultures in South Africa is European and African, or White and Black.

[131] Calvin also uses this concept of unity (1948:331). Although the document does not agree that the text is the work of Moses as Calvin claims that the unity of humanity is located in their faith: "....He has proclaimed one gospel, in all languages, through the whole world, and has endued the Apostles with the gift of tongues. Whence it has come to pass, that they who before were miserably divided, have coalesced in the unity of the faith" (Calvin 1948:331). This interpretation does refer to unity as a mysterious, eschatological event that is realised by faith but not in terms of structural reality. This is also followed by Von Rad (1963:153) who writes that, the "election and blessing of Abraham", was the word of grace and judgment of God. This connected primeval and sacred history. In this way HR's, reluctance to understand unity as a physical reality can be traced back to the heart of the Calvinist tradition.

Gen 10 came about[132]. HR emphasise the fact that diversity was part of the created order by linking it to the imperative of the created order pointing to similar Kuyperian roots.

In terms of unity, HR views unity as something exclusive, existing among the people of the covenant, "the faithful among all peoples" – Christians. The document states: "The spirit of exclusivism prevalent among the Israelites in this regard should be attributed to other factors, rather than to any consciousness of racial identity. Such factors were the religious fervour which flowed from the fact that they were the chosen people of God..." (HR 1976:25).

The document follows denotative meaning with Calvinist principles pervading the semiotic, making a distinction between Christian and non-Christian reality - Afrikaner and non-Afrikaner. God is in control of the Christian reality, therefore Christians have the responsibility to enforce the principles of his kingdom: "...the Church has a prophetic function in respect of the state and society when the Scriptural norms that should apply in all spheres of life are not respected" (HR 1976:11). HR pursues the primary language of the text, the voice of God that will reveal God's will for race relations. The voice of God is an a-historical and transcendent, which can be applied to all contexts and all spheres of life.

In HR, Kuyperism and Fundamentalism is refined by incorporating science or, rather, quasi-scientism. HR (1976:7) states: "In its consideration of relations between races and peoples, the Church of Jesus Christ must accept the Word of God as premise and norm". This approach does not reject scientific knowledge, stating: "The Bible must be interpreted in accordance with recognised, reformed, scientific, hermeneutic principles in keeping with its actual intentions – it is not a scientific text-book for empirical sociology or anthropology. The Scriptures must not be used biblicistically – texts must be interpreted in their own context and in the context of the entire history

[132] "The problem with the report is, however, that a reconstruction of prehistory is given without any historical argumentation whatsoever, to serve a political purpose. Having done the rearrangement all sorts of quasi-historical deductions are made from Gn11" (Vorster 1983:105)

of salvation" (HR 1976:11). The context of the Bible is the revelation[133] of God, therefore it is emphasised that, "the Church will constantly have to be aware of the central theme of its preaching – i.e., the way of salvation in Christ and the coming of the kingdom of God – and it will have to indicate and extol the norms that coincide with this theme in all spheres of life" (HR 1976:11). The mode is rigid, transcendental, and results in the universal application of its principles.

HR supports an Afrikaner colonialist racist ideology by the use of an essentialist mode of reading supported by Boer Calvinism's notions of an exclusive view of the covenant, 'spiritual unity', inerrancy of the Bible and the moral superiority of the believer. The essentialist mode that leans on Kuyperism and Fundamentalism, reflected in the document, complemented the colonial racist ideology that steadily grew from 1652 in 'South' Africa, resulting in an Afrikaner colonial reading of the Bible. Although Du Plessis, BJ Marais, BB Keet and later B Naude opposed Afrikaner colonial readings of the Bible this ideology infiltrated so deeply into the history and lives of the Afrikaner and the Dutch Reformed Church that individual voice could not stem the tide.

The document *Church and Society: A witness of the DRC* (1986) that rejected apartheid responded to the criticism of HR reading of Genesis 11:1-9. It followed the arguments of Reformed tradition that viewed the dispersion because of human pride and not unity. Unfortunately, the view that the dispersion was a blessing in terms of God's purposes with creation lead to the conclusion that apartheid gave expression to God's creation ordinance. It also followed scholars like Westermann (1984:557) who views the Abrahamic covenant and Pentecost as the reversal of the dispersion. The problem with this document is that the Dutch Reformed Church leaned on Western scholarly consensus without embracing the African context. In chapter 4, it will become clear that the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers does not propose the abandonment of scholarship. It proposes that the construction of responsible readings require an engagement with the colonised and marginalised for the construction of new liminal spaces.

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[133] "There is a very real danger that the Church, imagining itself obedient to the Scriptures, may in reality bow to some other authority, for example some humanistic-liberalistic ideal; the voice of specific people or political party; the pressures of economic or emotional factors, etc." (HR 1976:7).

2.3 Anti-colonial readings and Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context

2.3.1 Anti-colonial context

Anti-colonialism in 'South' African by Black - and Liberation hermeneutics track similar traces followed by the Afrikaner's struggle against the British Empire. The problem is that this anti-imperial struggle operated within the confines of an essentialist paradigm that limited the liberating power of the movement to privilege a small white minority and eventual collusion with the empire resulting in apartheid colonialism. This in turn resulted in an anti-colonial struggle of the black population of 'South' Africa following similar essentialist traces leading to the same cycle repeating itself at the service of global imperialism. In this regard, the reading of JD du Toit provides a strategic link with modes of reading that resisted apartheid. It also echoes a warning that resistance, in turn, may be the sphere for the perpetuation of exploitation.

Political resistance to Afrikaner colonialism grew from the non-Western educated elites, who were socialised in the cultural matrix of the West. Western ideals like liberty, freedom and nationalism[134] lead to the formation of the African National Congress[135] and the writing of the Freedom Charter (Davenport and Saunders 2000:403-405). Resistance to racism in 'South' Africa resulted in a strategy that followed a different route than the rest of Africa. The Civil Rights movement of Martin Luther King Jnr; and the Black Consciousness movement of Malcolm X, in the USA, influenced resistance movements in the late 1960's and 1970's. Martin Luther King Jnr had a vision of an integrated, multi-cultural society in which black people had the same fundamental rights as white people. Malcolm X regarded the system as fundamentally corrupted by racism, therefore black people needed to unite to oppose white racism. 'Black Consciousness' refers to the awareness of Black people that their humanity is constituted by their blackness. It means that Black

[134] See Derrida's deconstruction of Mandela's incorporation of Western humanistic values in his critique of apartheid in *'Racism's Last Word'* (1985)

[135] Pixely ka I. Seme, a Zulu lawyer trained at Columbia, Oxford and the Middle Temple, put the idea of a Native Congress in the mind of Sol Plaatjie. It took place in Bloemfontein from 8-12 January 1912 which was the birth of the ANC (Davenport and Saunders, 2000:275-276)

people are no longer ashamed that they are black, that they have a Black history and a Black culture, distinct from the history and culture of White people. It reflects the determination of blacks to be released from the adherence of White values and judgment. It is an attitude, a way of life. Viewed thus, Black Consciousness is an integral part of Black Power. Black Power is also a critique of and a force for fundamental change in systems and patterns in society, which oppress or give rise to the oppression of Black people. 'Black Theology' is the reflection of Black Christians on the situation in which they live and on their struggle for liberation (Cone 1985:10-11).

Magubane (2000:374) adds that the impact of trade unions is crucial for the understanding of resistance in 'South' Africa. 'South' Africa has always had the largest, most active and organized working class in Africa. In this regard, political organisations and trade unions have played a fundamental role in shaping and advancing resistance movements. Magubane (2000:375) writes: "...the existence within the national liberation movement of a working class capable of meshing working class aspirations with the national movement as a whole deepens its revolutionary potential, and constitutes a decisive and qualitative stage in the development of the liberation movement.

Western concepts like nationalism, reducing the colony to its colonial identity, leaving control in the hand of non-Western people informed resistance in 'South' Africa. Saayman (1991:33) states: "Thus, in a paradoxical manner, mission prepared the way for the eventual demolition of the whole colonialist structure. Perhaps the most revolutionary idea of all to come of missionary Christianity was the notion that all Africans were one people, regardless of tribal origin...This laid an essential ideological foundation for African nationalism". African Nationalism did provide a mode of resistance, unifying people against a common oppressor, but the implication was that a Western mode of classifying that separated people functioned as a means to colonisation to resist oppression.

The problem is that the transition of power that occurred in 1994 in 'South' Africa was characterised by the increase of wealth and power of non-Western elites, with the rest of the population suffering under the strain of global imperialism. This highlights

a process governed in the years after classical colonialism by the logic of a world system whose type is global capitalism, controlled at the top by a handful of leading industrial countries (Said 1994:319-320). The end of apartheid signified the start of Western imperialism. The liberal ideas that fuelled resistance were the same ideals promoted in the constitution of 'South' Africa that focused on the liberalisation of the economy through privatisation and the opening of the economy to global markets.

The formation of a democratic nation failed to emphasise the history of colonialism that enriched a White minority and Black elites under the rubric of nationalism. The national identity – struggling to free itself from imperialist domination – found itself lodged in, and apparently fulfilled by, the state: defence forces, flags, legislatures, schemes of national education, and domination. Nationalist elites took the control once occupied by the British or French through political parties and mechanism modelled on their colonial masters (Said 1994:319). The problem is that when the "new national state gets established, argues Partha Chatterjee, it is ruled not by prophets and romantic rebels but, in India's case by Nehru, 'a state-builder, pragmatic and self-conscious'. To him the peasants and the urban poor are ruled by passions, not reason; they can be mobilized by poets like Tagore and charismatic presences like Gandhi, but after independence this large number of people ought to be absorbed into the state, to be made functional in its development" (Said 1994:319). Fanon remarks that the battle against colonialism does not run along the same lines as nationalism. Nationalism follows the same track hewn by imperialism, conceding authority to a nationalist bourgeoisie, extending its hegemony (Said 1994:330). In these circumstances, the impoverished majority still suffer under colonial exploitation in an open market ruled by profit margins.

Nationalism in Africa is a form of classification of people, according to criteria laid down by the West. This creates a hierarchical view of humanity in the global context, distinguishing between developed capitalist countries and under developed or developing non-Western countries. Spurr (1993:69) writes that this system has the same function of classifying human society according to Western standards of technological and political advancement.

This is reflected in the rest of Africa, where the leaders of political resistance became national architects, bordering off the nation, by constructing a national identity, with defence forces, flags and national rituals parading on the international stage as an independent state, while multi national companies, with kickbacks to the national heroes, control the economy. On grassroots level, the people are starving, dying of HIV/AIDS, while a selected few are prospering by keeping Western ideologies of nationhood and liberal economics intact.

2.3.2 Anti-Colonial readings

Anti-Colonial readings are not new to the 'South' African context and follow a trace back to the resistance of the Afrikaner to British Imperialism. In this regard, the liberation function of Black Theology in 'South' Africa flows back to the reading of Afrikaners like JD du Toit that resisted imperialism by constructing a dualistic coloniser/colonised dichotomy. His link with Black hermeneutics is through the Calvinist tradition and Kuyperism that he shares with Alan Boesak. Further, Du Toit's reading highlights similarities to the reading of Miguez-Bonino from the Latin American context and Liberation hermeneutics. I will argue that these similarities are important because of the impact of Liberation and Black hermeneutic as forms of anti-colonial writing in the 'South' African context. These modes read the text in solidarity with the oppressed, reversing the coloniser/colonised dichotomy, reading from the margin. The role of essentialism, on which these readings base their hermeneutics, results in the fact that these readings later become oppressive and failing to construct responsible interpretations. In this regard, the Western essentialist dichotomies that empowered these hermeneutics become the dichotomies that perpetuate nationalism, elitism, and exploitation of the marginalised within the system. Cone's (1996:1) definition of Black Theology reflects the rationalism and dualism of Western essentialism: "*...a rational study of the being of God in the world in light of the existential situation of an oppressed community, relating the forces of liberation to the essence of the gospel, which is Jesus Christ*".

The concept 'Black Theology' in 'South' Africa found its first expression in 1971 at a seminar on Black Theology at Roodepoort (Bosch 1979:220-221). The document *Black Power Statement of National Conference of Black Churchmen (NCBC)* (1966)

reflects the main aspects of Black Theology: "All people need power, whether black or white. We regard it sheer hypocrisy or as a blind and dangerous illusion the view, that opposes love to power. Love must be the controlling element in power, not power itself. So long as white churchmen continue to moralize and misinterpret Christian love, so long will justice continue to be subverted in this land" (Cone 1985:5). It continues: "Powerlessness breeds a race of beggars" (Cone 1985:12). It is understandable that to reclaim human dignity and self-worth Black people needed to assert themselves. The problem is that the mechanic of this mode of thinking finds its roots in the same essentialist cultural matrix that resulted in racial discrimination and the marginalisation of Black people in the United States and 'South' Africa.

The construction of the inter-text contains a political dimension informed by Black Theology and the Black Consciousness/Power movement of the United States of America[136]. West writes, referring to Kritzinger's evaluation of Black Theology, that Tutu and Boesak's readings follow a *kerygmatic* dimension that views the Bible as the 'Word of God' (West 1991:71). This perspective views liberation as the central message of the Bible without taking the possible role of ideologies in the reading process serious.

Due to colonial racism in 'South' Africa, Black Theology became a mode of resistance, like Black Theology in the United States[137] operating from a contextual hermeneutical perspective. In this regard, Black Theology in 'South' Africa and the United States focus on moving beyond Western scientific reading by taking as their hermeneutical starting point the experience of the suffering of Black people under

[136] See DN Hopkins, *Black Theology: USA and South African Politics, Culture and Liberation* (1989)

[137] To some extent the US form of Black Theology developed as a response to Black Muslims who challenged Black Christians on the oppressive nature of Christianity. Being a Muslim was viewed as the only emancipatory way to go for Blacks. "In contrast to this challenge the Black Theology of the sixties has proclaimed that the Christian gospel, if preached correctly, truly aims at the dignity and salvation of the black man" (Bosch, 1979:221). Cone heads one of the most militant forms of Black Theology: "According to Cone, whites are definitely not allowed to participate in this whole discussion. Even liberally minded whites may not express any opinion or risk any interpretation of Black Power and related phenomena" (Bosch 1979:221). Cone (1996:4) writes: "The appearance of black theology on the American scene then is due primarily to the failure of white religionists to relate the gospel of Jesus to the pain of being black in a white racist society. It arises from the need of black to liberate themselves from white oppressors". Less radical components are Deotis Roberts, Major Jones and Joseph Washington (Bosch 1979:223). For Cone, liberation and reconciliation are synonymous: "To be reconciled is to be set free". Reconciliation with the white man is irrelevant for Cone (Bosch 1979:223).

White racism[138]. Boesak (1977:12-13) confirms: “Theologically speaking, blacks must take this responsibility and formulate in their own words their belief in God. They can no longer hide behind the theological formulas created by someone else. But moving away from the illusioned universality of Western theology to the contextuality of liberation theology is a risky business, a thing that is not done innocently. There is, however, a consolation. In the search for theological and human authenticity within the own situation, Black Theology does not stand alone. It is but one expression of this search going on within many different contexts. Across the world oppressed and hopeful people share the same faith in the one Lord, one baptism and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all (Eph 4:5,6)". Boesak echoes the words of Cone linking the experience of the oppressed to the liberation message of the Bible. Cone (1996:4) states: “Theology can never be neutral or fail to take sides on issues related to the plight of the oppressed. For this reason, it can never engage in conversation about the nature of God without confronting those elements of human existence, which threaten anyone’s existence as a person. Whatever theology says about God and the world must arise out of its sole reason for existence as a discipline: to assist the oppressed in their liberation. Its language is always language about human liberation, proclaiming the end of bondage and interpreting the religious dimensions of revolutionary struggle”. The problem is that this view of the Bible leads to a selective use of text (canon within a canon) or the ignorant perpetuation of ideologies linked to the text-reader interaction. The latter is clear from the continuation of essentialist ideologies in Black Theology that ignorantly disseminated patriarchal and class ideologies.

The difference between Cone and Boesak is their perspective on the relationship between the Bible and the experience of the people. Cone (1996:23) promotes a reading of the Bible “in the light of the black situation”. This emphasises the reader or contextual dimensions of the text-reader engagement. Boesak (1977:16) proposes that: “...it is the Word of God which illuminates the reflection and guides the action”. Boesak's (1977:16) fear is that "Cone attaches to much theological importance to the black experience and the black situation as if these realities *within themselves* have

[138] Cone (Cone 1996:4)) writes; “American white theology has not been involved in the struggle for black liberation. It has been basically a theology of the white oppressor, giving religious sanction to the genocide of Amerindians and the enslavement of Africans”.

revelational value on a par with Scripture". Boesak (1977:16) states: "God, it seems to us, reveals Himself in the situation, the Word is being heard in the situation, thereby giving meaning to the situation. The black experience provides the framework within which blacks understand the revelation of God in Jesus Christ". It is at this point that Boesak (1977:112) links Black Theology with Liberation Theology arguing that the "will of God" is "liberating the oppressed". Boesak (1977:113) states: "Indeed, Black Theology is a theology of liberation in the situation of blackness. For blacks, it is the only legitimate way of theologizing - *but only within the framework of the theology of liberation*". The intention, theological methodology and passion for liberation of Black theology links it to African - and Liberation Theology (Boesak 1977:113).

Boesak's focus on the textual dimension of the hermeneutical process develops from his Reformed theological predisposition (*sola Scriptura*). The problem is that this focus on the text does not appreciate reading as a kinetic or interactive process. He steps into the same trap as Cone underestimating the role of ideology within the reading process. West (1991:71-72) states that scholars like Mosala and Mofokeng[139], following a materialist mode of reading, linked the role of ideology to the text resulting in severe criticism of Black Theology (See chapter 4). This perspective, however, also becomes problematic because of the essentialist reduction of text to ideology, failing to recognise the dynamic interpretative process.

Another dimension of Black Theology focuses on the use of Marxist analysis, a material reading of the text. This approach is represented by, among others, scholars like Mosala and Mofokeng (West 1991:71-72). The strategies of these modes also differ: Tutu and Boesak[140] follow a non-racist and Mosala an anti-racist strategy.

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[139] During a conference on reconciliation: "The possibilities of reconciliation for Blacks and Whites in South Africa Today" in 1975 TA Mofokeng states the following: "In the Bible the objective reality of reconciliation is connected with divine liberation" (Mofokeng 1985:172, in *Cry justice*). He quotes James Cone in this regard: "There can be no reconciliation with God unless the hungry are fed, the sick are healed and justice is given to the poor" (Mofokeng 1985:172). "There is no possibility of reconciliation between black and white people in this country until the oppressive structures and institutions, be they black or white, are transformed and put into service for the benefit of the underprivileged majority of this beautiful land" (Mofokeng 1985:172).

[140] See A Boesak's, *Farewell to Innocence: A socio-ethical study of black theology and black power* (1977). In this study he rejects the premises of Black Power, opting for Martin Luther King's civil rights position and the 'Word of God' as critical dimensions in the struggle for Black Liberation (Boesak 1977:112)

Liberation hermeneutics from Latin America follow a similar material analysis, linking the suffering of the poor to capitalist exploitation and globalisation.

2.3.3 Anti-colonial readings of Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context

2.3.3.1 J.D. du Toit[141]

The writing of J.D. du Toit (1912) is part of a movement of ethnocentric Afrikaner nationalism traced back to Dutch colonialism. The anglicisation policy of the British, the annexation of Basutoland (1868), now Lesotho, the diamond fields (1871), the Transvaal (1877), and Orange Free State (1880-1881) brought a new solidarity among Afrikaners of the Cape and the other provinces, giving rise to nationalist ideals (Kannemeyer 1990:27). One of the fathers of the Afrikaans language movement was Arnoldus Pannevis, who moved from Holland to the Cape in 1866. With two of his pupils, S.J. du Toit and C.P. Hoogenhout and other concerned Afrikaners, the "*Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners"* came into being on 14 August 1875. This organization set itself the purpose to promote the Afrikaans language. It was not purely a language organization, but strove for Afrikaner Nationalism[142] as it developed from the 1860's[143]. Later, in 1880, the initiation of the Afrikanerbond[144]

[141] JD du Toit, the son of SJ du Toit. SJ du Toit studied under A Kuyper and JD du Toit was a student of HH Kuyper (Deist, 1994:36). Although they were strongly influenced by Kuyperism, the relationship between the Vrije Universiteit and Princeton Theological Seminary reflected a common value system, although exceptions may also be found (Deist 1994:83-84).

[142] The fall of Smuts and the rise of Hertzog introduced a new era of ideologically driven politics. Problems in the Smuts camp developed with the racial policies that resulted in bloodshed (e.g. Bondelswarts – Khoi chiefdom, Bulhoek – Israelite sect) and strikes on mines because of the colour bar (resulting in the retrenchment of many whites for the gain of capitalists), thus contributing to his demise (Davenport and Saunders 2000:292-294). The Nationalist-Labour pact secured growth in power for Hertzog and the empowerment of Whites vs. Black. The development of Afrikaner Nationalism grew with the birth of the Afrikaner National Party in 1914 under General Hertzog, in a breaking away from the ruling South African Party. This coincided with the imperial government's request that the 'South' African government invade German South West Africa, which was unacceptable for the Afrikaner.

[143] Davenport and Saunders (2000:107) writes: "The Afrikaner political and cultural revival began in the mid-1870's, at a time when the use of the Dutch language seemed to be in danger of disappearing from public life...Its focal point was Paarl, where a group of clergy and teachers founded the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners 'to stand for our language, our nation and our land." This group of concerned Afrikaners, mainly intellectuals from the Paarl, tried to sell the idea of nationalism, with Afrikaans as language, to the people. Publications like the newspaper "*Die Afrikaanse Patriot"* and "*Die Geskiedenis van ons Land in die Taal van ons Volk"* saw the light (Davenport and Saunders 2000:107).

[144] The Broederbond was instrumental in the formation of an Afrikaner Nationalist identity. Firstly by attacking Hertzog's leadership, because of his policies regarding bilingualism and his cool attitude to Afrikaner Nationalism – excluding him from the Voortrekker celebrations (Davenport and Saunders

took place with SJ du Toit[145] and DF du Toit, clergy of the DRC, being the main movers. "The Bond strongly attacked the spread of British influence at the expense of traditional Afrikaner ways, and adopted the rigorous neo-Calvinism of Dr Abraham Kuyper of the Netherlands..." (Davenport and Saunders 2000:107). The movement resisted the influence of British Imperialism through Western ideas of nationalism and liberty, rooted in Calvinist religion[146]. A focal area of the second movement was the struggle for Afrikaans in education and the translation of the Bible in Afrikaans – a dream of Pannevis. In 1923, the first translation of the Bible in Afrikaans was started by JD du Toit and JD Kestell, and was later completed by BB Keet, HCM Fourie and EE van Rooyen. By 1924 Afrikaans was the only language used in the Reformed churches and in 1933 the Bible translation was completed. It was revised in 1952 and again in 1983, by EP Groenewald, JP Oberholzer, JL Helberg, PA Verhoef, W Kempen and AH van Zyl, after new manuscripts were discovered (Kannemeyer 1990:45).

2.3.3.2 JD du Toit and Genesis 11:1-9

The sermon of JD du Toit, *Hemelbestormers* (15 November 1912), focusing on Genesis 11:4, is divided into three parts: a. The building of the city and the tower; b. The ambition of the tower builders; c. The fear of dispersion of the tower builders.

a. The building of the city and tower

2000:337). Later he openly attacked the Bond and accused them of playing political games behind the guise of being a cultural organization. The intended influence is based on a circular letter sent by JC van Rooy and IM Lombard in the 1934's in which they state that: "'our solution for South Africa's troubles is not that this or that party shall gain the upper hand, but that the Afrikaner Broederbond shall rule South Africa'" (Davenport and Saunders 2000:337). Others saw it more as a watchdog, promoter of financial security for Afrikaners and developing organisational structures, influencing society. Bodies like the Voortrekkers, Volkskas Bank, Uniewinkels, Federale Volksbelleging (under Sanlam,) were some off the results. The calling of congresses, keeping an eye on the trade unions and promoting Afrikaner interests in government organisations like the post office, railways and harbours.

[145] Later he lost favour with the other concerned members of this movement because of his support of Cecil John Rhodes (Kannemeyer 1990:31)

[146] The Anglo-Boer War slowed the process down but after peace was negotiated the angelization policies that followed was the necessary impetus to bring about resurgence. G.S. Preller formed the Afrikaanse Taalgenootskap in Pretoria that led to similar organizations in Potchefstroom, Bloemfontein and Cape Town. In July 1909 The Zuid-Afrikaansche Akademie voor Taal, Letteren en Kunst was founded. The movement was further strengthened by the opening of various Afrikaans newspapers: *"Die Vaderland"* (1915), *"Die Burger"* (1915), etc; and magazines: *"Die Huisgenoot"* (1916) (Kannemeyer 1990:42).

In the first part, Du Toit focuses on the city and tower. He views the city as something that impresses, reflecting the power and might of humanity. The tower with its height impresses even more, specifically the ability and drive of humanity to reach great heights. The top of the tower reaches the sky, beyond the reach of the eagle or any other creature. The city and the tower are the constructions of a mighty global empire. The ideals of progress and development that drives nations, find its roots in this narrative. The account of Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10) who was obsessed with power and violence that precedes Genesis 11:1-9, emphasises the link between the Kingdom of Babylonia and the tower. Nimrod was the founder of a kingdom that sought to control the globe, the archetypal imperialist. Therefore, the whole cycle of imperial rulers starts – destroying one another to gain control. It all started at Sinar. One nation and one language made it possible to start a global kingdom. Their language was confused by God and the building of the city was brought to an end (v8) (Du Toit 1912:38).

The association between Nimrod, the imperialist, and Genesis 11:1-9 is absent in the document HR (1976) reflecting the contextual differences between the turn of the twentieth century and the role of British Imperialism and Afrikaner colonialism of the seventies that needed to establish itself. Du Toit's reading resists British Imperialism by following the "common sense" realism of Kuyperism, linking the tower and Nimrod. Colenso and Driver rejected this connection, based on historical arguments.

Du Toit (1912:39) writes that the sinful desire of humanity has remained: one kingdom, one state, one king, one nation, and one language for the whole world. Today it happens in other ways, with more obstacles to face, but the desire remains intact. “Scripture” (“Die Skrif”) predicts that this will continue until the Antichrist will unite all earthly powers.

Du Toit (1912:39) proposes that the name of this sinful desire for unity is ‘imperialism’. Although people do not build towers that reach heaven or stay in the confines of a single city, they do seek geographical expansion, to bring about a global kingdom – annexation, amalgamation, consolidation and then finally global control and triumph, through the means of politics, diplomacy, contracts, weapons and wars. Du Toit leans on the resistance of humanism and uniformity by Kuyper.

b. The ambition of the tower builders

The purpose of the city and the building of the tower are to glorify humanity – to make a name. Satan sits behind these desires. Satan is using the people to storm heaven. It is the satanic character of sin, rebelling against God and waging war against the Almighty. Satan wants to be like God. He tried to cross to heaven to dethrone God, but God cast him to hell (Ps 29). Satan, however, will not give up. He uses nations and organises them into kingdoms to further his imperial purposes. He uses people to challenge God by misleading them to think that they can be like God. This incites self-centredness, pride and rebellion. By doing this, Satan deceives humanity, for no one can be like God. Satan wants to make a name on earth. He wants to be the ruler of the earth – bringing the name of God in disregard and glorifying him through the manipulation of God's creation (Du Toit 1912:39-40).

This is a direct opposite of Jesus' prayer 'hallowed be thy name'. The narrative illuminates the power of the 'Lord's prayer' in our struggle for the name of God, the kingdom of God, and the will of God. Our desires are secondary. We must struggle against evil. It pleases Satan to see the defiling of God's name, not only by individuals, but also by nations. Great kingdoms are trying to make names for themselves with their armies, fleets, colonisation and self-enrichment. When people say "I am a German/Englishman", then the world must shake. Being big is the desire until only one earthly power is the greatest (Du Toit 1912:40).

Du Toit links the imperial impulse to the defilement of God. From the perspective of Kuyperism imperialism is ultimately a religious problem. Imperialism opposes the creation ordinances of God - difference, 'volke' and the role of the covenant fuse through imperialism into a sinful uniformity.

c. The fear of dispersion of the tower builders

Dispersion was the main fear of the people of Babel. Dispersion meant being small, being without a name. It means living in submission to God, like Abraham. God confuses the tongues of the people to make them small and powerless like Abraham,

who was blessed (Gen 12:2) – I will make you a great nation, bless you, and make your name great. This is the seed of Abraham, the elected nation, the congregation of Jesus Christ (Du Toit 1912:40).

The sin of Sinar was that the command of God, to fill the earth (Gen 1:28), repeated to Noah (Gen 9:1), was disobeyed. People resist God's command by building a global kingdom to unite all people in one place. Satan wants to keep people together to better use them. Then there is better control and sin can spread more rapidly, like in Sodom and Gomorrah. Then humanity will destroy itself through its injustices. This destroys the salvation plan of God, the messiah, resulting in humanity falling prey to Satan. In the end God's name and creation is destroyed (Du Toit 1912:40).

God judges them, and with violence, intercedes to confuse their language and disperses them. He wars against Satan and intervenes in human history to secure the covenant. God, and his anointed one, who separated humanity and Satan, now brings separation between people, nations and languages. He does this to secure his plan for creation, to unite everything in Christ (Eph. 1:10). God alone is the ruler of the world and he will bring unity. This is not an earthly, sinful unity brought about by Satan, but a heavenly, spiritual, Godly unity (Du Toit 1912:41).

Du Toit (1912:41-42) then draws three conclusions from this text for state, church and individuals:

In the *state,* there is a general call for unification of railways, airlines, fleets and communications. Even language and religion must become one. The Union incorporates the people in one global kingdom. Is this to the glory of God? Did they not remove God's name from the constitution? We have united to make a name for ourselves, to be great. So, the state is coercing us as an agent of the state. Therefore, we must choose. Either we are for, or against God; there is no middle way (Du Toit 1912:41).

Is the *church* uniting to glorify God or to serve Satan? The Roman Catholic Church, a unified whole, but our fathers have seen the Antichrist in it. In these days, we hear of church unity. 'One nation, one church', this is the motto – is this to the glory of

God, or is it selfishness? Are you seeking a name for your congregation? Must it be as important and 'civilised' as another? Are we serving evil? (Du Toit 1912:41-42).

Individually, we must remember that submission to God is the source of worship. Selfishness and pride smothers all godliness. We must be humble before God. God sees and knows such people. He gives them a new name that is eternal (Rev. 3:12). God will remove those from the book of life and the holy city who slander his name (Rev. 22:19) (Du Toit 1912:42).

According to Du Toit, the building of the tower is the result of disobedience to God – rebellion. Humanity is disobedient and do not want to disperse as God commanded in Gen. 1:28. The dispersion is a punishment for sinful ambition and a way of securing the will of God. Du Toit, in opposition to British imperialism and metropolitan capitalist control, views the city as an expression of human arrogance, tracing it back to Nimrod and the unity that goes along with it. He rejects development as a form of cultural superiority. Difference is regarded as a creation ordinance and the will of God. Du Toit links this with the Afrikaner's colonial history, settling in 'the land of milk and honey'. The dispersion is a divine command. The reading of Du Toit, influenced by Kuyperism, takes its point of departure from the covenant, linking the relationship of God to a specific people or nation. The reading of Du Toit resists the humanism and uniformity of imperialism through the uses of religious semiotics. It is an anti-colonial reading that resists the control of the empire of the Afrikaner people and geographical space.

Du Toit took his lead from Abraham Kuyper who said at the turn of the century that, "the ordering of different nations and states could be traced back to the Tower of Babel, where God introduced the confusion of tongues to counteract the Devil's attempt to establish a world empire" (Giliomee 2003:462). Du Toit's reading, influenced by Kuyperism, is a critique of the cultural arrogance of British imperialism and the liberal ideas relating to equality. His mode of reading views the text as the Word of God, from where a synchronic reading follows. Du Toit's writing views the text as reflecting the intention of the author, namely God. There is no fragmentation of the text into different authors or sources, as was the case with historical-critical modes. God is the author of the *entire* Bible that constitutes a unit, following a clear

historical chronology. The reference to Gen. 1:28 and the command to fill the earth through common sense reading forms part of the wider context of Genesis 11:1-9. Reference made to Nimrod, as the prototypical empire builder, and Babylon in Gen 10:8-10 reflects God's rejection of imperialism. In terms of the contents, the reason for the dispersion is the sin of imperialism and the pride that is located in the unity, sought by the British Empire. The diversity of language and distribution into nations are God's providential plan.

Du Toit interprets the text in solidarity with the experience of the marginalised Afrikaner that suffers under the impact of British Imperialism. Du Toit reverses the coloniser/colonised dichotomy and makes a choice to read the text from the margin. The problem is that the anti-colonial reading of Du Toit contained essentialist traces that later developed into means of oppression. Essentialist views regarding the Afrikaner as the people of God, God's command to fill the earth of Genesis 1:28, the Calvinist view of society and the common sense view of the text perpetuated colonial racism. The essentialist mode of reading that separated the Afrikaner from global uniformity, zealously resisting imperialism, became the disseminator of colonial racist ideologies that separated Whites and Blacks with the same fanatical fervour.

The next section will emphasise that resistance to colonial racism of Black - and Liberation hermeneutics followed a similar essentialist mode resulting in the growth of an elitist nationalism and global imperialism.

2.3.3.3 Anti-colonialism, colonial racism and essentialism

Anti-colonialism in 'South' Africa reached its climax with *The Kairos Document*[147] (1986). In this document Black -, African and Liberation theologies come together in unified critique of the racist status quo in 'South' Africa (1986:18). The document is a critique on the role of State power and its theological justification in the face of the suffering of black people in 'South' Africa. "'State Theology' is simply the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism. It blesses injustice, canonises the will of the powerful and reduces the poor to passivity,

[147] *The Kairos Document: Challenging the church* (1986). Johannesburg: Skotaville.

obedience and apathy" (1986:3). In reaction to the oppression of State Theology, the Bible's message is summarised as that of liberation: "Throughout the Bible God appears as the liberator of the oppressed" (1986:25). This conclusion turns the tables on State Theology that uses the Bible to sustain the status quo and places God on the side of the oppressed. The purpose is to construct a contextual message, rooted in the experience of marginalisation and suffering of the people. “This means that the starting point for prophetic theology will be our experience of the present KAIROS, our experience of oppression and tyranny...our experience off trying to be Christians in this situation” (1986:17). The document interprets the text in solidarity with the oppressed, interpreting the text against the grain of colonial racism by reversing the White/Black dichotomy. “Our KAIROS impels us to *return to the Bible* and to search the Word of God for a message that is relevant to what we are experiencing in South Africa today” (1986:17).

The problem with this generalised conclusion is that it uses the same essentialist constructions that lead to the oppression of the people to liberate them. This is the same mode of reading, found in the document *The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion* (1989), linking apartheid to colonialism. In this regard, the call to resistance remains, anti-colonial. In other words, the reversal of colonial discourses takes place to bring about liberation.

The indebtedness to essentialist discourses results in new forms of oppression as the history of the Afrikaner in 'South' Africa has shown. Essentialist modes of reading justified the civilising mission of British imperialism by using a Darwinist classifying system thus viewing non-Western people as inferior to European culture. With the handing over of power to the Afrikaner essentialist modes of reading continued rooted in Kuyperism and fundamentalism. It argued that the separation of people is a divine creation ordinance but that not all "volke" are equal in terms of culture and faith. This legitimised colonial racism. Du Toit used this essentialist notion of "volke" in his anti-colonial reading of Genesis 11:1-9 that shows remarkable similarities with liberation readings as I will show in the next section. Said (1994) and others, have argued that this is problematic, leading to new forms of exploitation, by elites, that are educated in these Western essentialist modes.

2.3.3.4 Reading Genesis 11:1-9 in Latin-America and 'South' Africa

Miguez-Bonino's reads of Genesis 11:1-9 from the Latin-American context. Miguez-Bonino (1999:15) writes: "Genesis 10-11 tells us that God wants to disturb the imperial attempt to unify all of humankind around one "emperor-warrior", one city, or one name". This does not imply that God is jealous of their empire. According to Miguez-Bonino (1999:14) the narrative context of Genesis 10-11, links the building of the tower with 10:8-10 where Nimrod, the founder of Babel, is mentioned and characterised. The text depicts the founder of Babel as a tyrant. In this regard, the purpose of the narrative is not primarily to explain the origin of diverse languages but the "condemnation and defeat of imperial arrogance and universal domination represented by the symbol of Babylon" (Miguez-Bonino 1999:15). What God does is to dissolve the false unity of domination and the liberation of nations that desire their freedom - their own places, language and families. In this regard, God's descending is not only an act of judgement but at the same time liberation (Miguez-Bonino 1999:15). This connection between Nimrod and imperialism is similar to that made by Du Toit highlighting a separation between imperial tyrants and the exploited.

He concludes that the wider context suggests that it is God's intention that unity, bridging human differences, results in a "blessing for all the families of the earth" (Genesis 12:3), something that domination cannot accomplish. The implication is that empires like the Spanish, that ravaged Latin America, and contemporary empires like the British and United States, representing hubris, be deconstructed. "God re-creates the diversity that some want to harmogenize" (Miguez-Bonino 1999:16)

The reading of Miguez-Bonino (1999) follows the same argument as that of Du Toit, viewing the Tower as a sign of power and imperial control. The difference between the two readings is that Du Toit reading from a Kuyperian mode incorporates Calvinist principles. In other words, the imperial exploitation of the British is a blasphemous attack on the majesty of God. It is at this point that Du Toit and Boesak's reading intersect.

In his work *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition* (1984) Boesak rejects the Dutch Reformed Churches' views of the Reformed

tradition. Boesak (1984:94) follows the arguments of Kuyper from the perspective of black oppression when he writes: "Scripture is the indisputable foundation of the life and witness of the church in the world and it is the guiding principle for all our actions". The reading of HR is therefore regarded as a manipulation "of the word of God to suit culture, prejudices, or ideology and is alien to the Reformed tradition. But the way in which Reformed Christians in this country have used the Bible to justify Black oppression and white privilege, the way in which the gospel has been bypassed in establishing racially divided churches, the way in which scripture has been used to produce a nationalistic, racist ideology, is the very denial of the Reformed belief in the supremacy of scripture" (Boesak 1984:94-5).

Boesak (1984:95) subscribes to Kuyper's mode of reading: "We believe passionately with Abraham Kuyper that there is not a single inch of life that does not fall under the Lordship of Christ". For Boesak (1984:97) in 'South' Africa, "white Reformed theology has persistently pointed out that we live in the 'broken reality' of a fallen world. This is true. But in the theology of apartheid this leads to the acceptance, the idealization, and institutionalization of the brokenness, and of that kind of apathy that induces Christians to accept sinful realities such as racism". Boesak (1984:97) writes that the opposite is true of Reformed Theology: "In true Reformed theology, however, the recognition of the broken, sinful realities of our world becomes the impulse toward reformation and healing….This means that Reformed Christians are called on not to accept the sinful realities of the world. Rather we are called to challenge, to shape, to subvert, and to humanize history until it conforms to the norm of the kingdom of God".

From a post-colonial perspective Boesak's reading reflects the Western rationalist ecclesial writing[148] that constructs a systematic text of 'Word of God' in the Calvinist images, translating Western ecclesiastic concepts into African concepts[149]. Both Boesak and Du Toit subscribe to essentialist tradition traced to Kuyper and his link

[148] Cone notes that Black theology developed as an scholarly pursuit leaning on the "neo-orthodox theology of Karl Barth" (Cone 1996:xviii). "There is no 'abstract' revelation, independent of human experiences..." (Cone 1996:xix).

[149] Loader (1987:11) states: "This work by Boesak is interesting because it so closely resembles the use of the Bible in the white churches. The authority of the Bible is invoked in order to base the credibility of the theologian's ideas on a trustworthy foundation, but the contextual perspective which affords the text its meaning is only covertly present".

between "volk" and covenant. Du Toit did this in order to reject British imperialism that sought to assimilate the Afrikaner into the empire. Boesak viewed the "volk" as the "people of God" that are being oppressed by Afrikaners and their policies of colonial racism. He reverses the White/Black dichotomy for Black liberation. This strategy remains disconnected and essentialist by separating White and Black. What is of interest is that Du Toit's reading later mutated into HR legitimizing racism.

Miguez-Bonino's reading is influenced by Marxist social analysis suggesting that the Tower is more a case of human oppression than spiritual obstinacy. The problem of both these readings is that they are foreign to African culture. The essentialist reduction of the text to a central message of liberation links the text with Western essentialism in the case of Du Toit or Western humanism in the case of *the Kairos document, Road to Damascus* and Miguez-Bonino. Said (1994:253) states: “That is the partial tragedy of resistance, that it must to a certain degree work to recover forms already established or at least influenced or infiltrated by the culture of empire”. Although the readings are in solidarity with the experience of the oppressed, they perpetuate imperialism through essentialist cultural discourse. An example is patriarchy. Cone (1996:xv-xvi) states: “The most glaring limitation of *A Black Theology of Liberation* was my failure to be receptive to the problem of sexism in the black community and society as a whole…Contrary to what many black men say (especially preachers), sexism is not merely a problem for white women. Rather it is a problem of the human condition”.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that colonial and anti-colonial scholarly modes of reading Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context operated within an essentialist paradigm that formed part of the fertile soil of colonial exploitation. There is a link between scholarly modes of reading, influenced by essentialism, and historical dynamics that perpetuated colonial and imperial ideologies. The intimate link between the historical dynamic and scholarly essentialism resulted in colonial exploitation.

In the case of Colenso's reading, it became clear that, although he pleaded the case of the Zulu people, he remained indebted to Enlightenment scientism. In this regard, his

mode of reading relied on the superiority of Western rationalism, as an alternative to the superstitious worldview of the Zulu people. In this way, his reading supported the civilising mission of the imperial centre. Although he argued that, his critical discourse rose from the questions of his Zulu interpreters, it remains unclear whether he truly understood the holistic worldview of the Zulu people.

The Afrikaner colonial reading, reflected in the document HR, with its quasi-scientific mode of reading that incorporated scientific knowledge and Reformed principles, giving priority to the latter, retained an essentialist reading. It differs from scientific modes, in that it followed a theocentric discourse, focusing on the covenant as principle for the separation of people. It reads the text from the experience of the centre, securing the socio-economic privilege of the Afrikaner.

The anti-colonial readings of Du Toit, *The Kairos Document* (1986) and *The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Conversion* (1989) reverse the coloniser/colonised dichotomy, making a choice to reading the Bible in solidarity with the colonised other (margin). The problem is that these readings remain locked in a Western essentialist paradigm that results in the perpetuation of imperialism. Kuyperism and its theocentric discourse that later led to the racist reading of HR informed Du Toit's and Miguez-Bonino's anti-colonial reading. Both readings forge a link between imperialism, the tower and Nimrod. In the case of Du Toit, Boesak and Miguez-Bonino the intervention of God is an act of liberation.

In the next chapter, the focus shifts to non-scholarly readings of the Bible of the 'South' African context. How do non-scholars read the text? Does essentialism influence the text-reader interaction? Alternatively, do they deconstruct ideologies? What types of readings deconstruct ideologies? Which readings perpetuate ideologies?

Chapter 3

Non-scholarly Readings of Genesis 11:1-9 and Colonial Ideologies

Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.

Popular African Saying

It was this powerful African saying that inspired Chinua Achebe to become a writer. He felt, the ‘hunters’, the White plunderers of Africa's riches, were distorting Black people's history (Khumalo 2004). In this Chapter I will turn to non-scholarly reading, to listen to the lions. I will argue that these readings view the text as the subject of interpretation and operate as a function of the worldly experience of non-scholarly readers. Two cultural matrixes inform non-scholarly readings: Essentialistic - and holistic cultural matrixes. Essentialist cultural discourse links to the West and creates the sphere for colonialism and imperialism to thrive through its disconnected worldview. The previous chapter emphasised that scholarship was an agent of colonialism by transporting these modes of reading to non-Western contexts. Interwoven with the cultural matrixes, is the ethical position of the reader. I will distinguish between two reading ethics: reading from the centre and margin. The former refers to readings that align with imperial ideologies. The latter deconstructs exploitative modes. It will become clear that although non-scholarly readings break through the object/subject dichotomy, those readings informed by essentialism, from the national and elitist centre of 'South' African society, align with Western imperialism. The complexity of the reading process will reveal that the history of imperialism that connects the coloniser and colonised, blurs the clear separation between lion and hunter.

Another aspect, that will become clear in this chapter, is the false view that ideologies exclusively exist, in the biblical text (Mosala), or the reader (Boesak). The engagement of text and reader is the dynamic event from where ideologies perpetuate and are deconstructed. I will argue that reading Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context, results in the perpetuation of colonial and decolonial readings. On the one hand, this will question the notion that ideologies exist in the text, disseminating the

oppressive system, without regard for the cultural matrix that informs the reading process. On the other hand, it will eliminate the notion that the "light of the text" will deconstruct ideologies.

I will reflect on the interpretation of Genesis 11:1-9 of five Bible Study Groups; a comparative reading incorporating African mythology; and two linocuts by the 'South' African artist, Azaria Mbatha. The last two readings reflect the wide range of semiological representation of non-scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9. These representations are more accessible in the 'South' African contexts where oral culture is salient. Draper (1996:60) writes that the vast majority of people in 'South' Africa live in a primary oral or residual oral context[150]. This is not only a matter of literacy, but refers to their oral culture, in which texts play a minimal role. Interpretation of the Bible in 'South' Africa is not an exclusively textual or literary process, but other forms of texts like visual representation, myth, *re-membering* and narrative are included.

3.1 Non-scholarly reading in the 'South' African Context

The study of non-scholarly readings of the Bible in the 'South' African context leans on the work of scholars like West, Ukpong and Dube. The work of scholars in the field of empirical contextual hermeneutics like Denise Ackerman, Bernard Combrink, Ferdinand Deist, Dirkie Smit, and others, made this transformation possible in 'South' Africa. In Latin America Ernesto Cardenal and Carlos Mesters are pioneers (Conradie 2001:333). Scholars from the Universities of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape made a comprehensive contribution to empirical Biblical hermeneutics. In 2001, their findings were published in Scriptura 78 (2001). The problem of the above-mentioned studies, from the 'South' African context, is their failure to take the critical contribution of non-scholarly readers seriously. The empirical studies, regard the readings of non-scholarly readers as pre-critical readings, conditioned by contextual subjectivities, without consideration of the critical contribution of these

[150] Draper (1996:59-60) argues: “In Southern Africa, by way of contrast, the vast majority of our people are living in a context of either primary orality or, for most, residual orality. This does not mean that they do not read or write, although many do not...rather they function in an oral culture in which text plays a minimal role” (Draper 1996:59-60). The oral culture has a high regard for the word as the oral communication of God.

readers, related to their experiences. By doing this, scholarly readers simply miss the decolonial impulse of non-scholarly readers.

Internationally, the publication *Through the Eyes of Another*: *Intercultural Reading of the Bible* (De Wit *et al* 2004), records an intercultural empirical study. It focuses on cultural dynamics, but fails to take note of inscribed ideologies of the reading process. The readings remain locked in centralistic ethics and are unsuccessful in unravelling the imperial connections between cultures.

The next section will focus on non-scholarly readings from the 'South' African context. I will argue that non-scholarly readings, from the margin and a holistic worldview, can assist 'South' African hermeneutics to construct responsible readings of Genesis 11:1-9.

3.1.1 Readings of Bible Study Groups[151]

This study involved five Bible study groups: two from the DRC in Durban and Pretoria; two from ecumenical organisations: Diakonia Council of Churches and the Montwood Park Support Centre (MSC); and the Optima Bible study group (College for partially sighted people).

These Bible studies followed similar methodologies:

1. The meetings opened with prayer and God's Spirit was invoked to guide the interpretation of the text.
2. The text was read communally and then once by each participant individually. In the case of the Optima group, of blind readers, the reading was repeated twice to help members of the group to remember the text.
3. The participants then shared their interpretations of the text (exploring the connotative meaning of the text through stories and experiences). The only question asked was: "What is your interpretation of the text?"
4. Members of the groups and the facilitator asked clarifying questions, based on responses of the participants, stimulating further discussion.

[151] See Appendix 1 for Bible Studies of Genesis 11:1-9

5. The Bible studies concluded with communal prayer. In groups with a diverse cultural demographics prayer followed spontaneously in the person's first language. In the Optima Bible study group, the prayers were more intense experiences. Participants from African Independent and Pentecostal churches prayed with great emotion and intensity.

I participated as the facilitator, while the non-scholarly interpreters became my teachers. They helped me to interpret the text in the *world* and not as a rationalist construction, decolonising my mode of reading. They helped me to deconstruct the essentialism of doctrinal systems and the value-neutral, scientific modes of humanistic transcendentalism. The non-Western interpreters helped me to understand my privilege as Western 'South' African under apartheid colonialism. This engagement constructed a liminal space from where a new responsible reading developed - a *Moya* reading (See Chapter 4).

3.1.1.1 Dutch Reformed Church Groups

3.1.1.1.1 Profile of the groups

Bible studies with two groups from the Dutch Reformed Church took place. These groups were included because of the salient role Genesis 11:1-9 played within the 'South' African context and the DRC specifically. The criteria for selecting the groups were there educational status and socio-economic position.

The Durban group consisted of twelve people (nine women and three men). The members of this group were all retired and above 60 years of age. Only two members of the group received tertiary education. Socio-economically, most of the members were from a middle working class background. Most of the women in the study were widows who were homemakers for most of their lives. I have been part of this group for more than five years and know the members very well. There was also a degree of trust between the members of the group that allowed for relaxed, spontaneous conversation and discussions. The group followed a contextual mode of reading of the Bible for the past three years and were comfortable with reflecting on the text and questioning one another's interpretations. Democracy in 'South' Africa directly

affected this group through loss of privilege and status. Most of the participants' husbands and children worked for government-controlled services (railways, police and postal services). Retrenchments, since 1994, resulted in growing unemployment. This had a negative effect on the Afrikaans community resulting in the closure of Afrikaans schools, decline in church membership and poverty increasing. Although the church remained predominantly White except for a few Black and Indian people attending a service in English, the community has, with the demise of apartheid, transformed overnight. At the time of the Bible study at the end of 2003 more than 50% of the community consisted of Black and Indian members with less than 6% Afrikaans speaking people (in the early 80's more than 70% of the community spoke Afrikaans).

The profile of the Pretoria group is in stark opposition to the Durban group, consisting mainly of professional people and students between 18 and 65 years of age. The members of the group belong to the Afrikaner elite. Although their political power declined because of apartheid, their wealth has expanded due to the neo-liberal economic policies of the ANC government.

The group consisted of 38 people who invited me to do the Bible study with them, as part of a strategic planning workshop. It was a once off event and most of the participants were unknown to me. The group divided into smaller groups of 5 to 6 people each and then reflected on the text following the same process discussed above.

3.1.1.1.2 Summary of readings

The Durban group followed a synchronic reading linking the text with other texts. Some members did ask critical questions referring to the height of the tower that reached heaven. The respondents proposed a symbolic interpretation of the height of the tower[152]. This reference follows similar proposals by scholars, like Von Rad

[152] "The tip of the tower reached heaven. Is it possible? Is it a symbolic reference for reaching God?"

(1963:145) and Westermann (1984:547). Other respondents noted that the building of the tower emphasises the skill and ability of humanity[153].

One of the members linked Genesis 11:1-9 to Nimrod and imperialism as is the case with anti-colonial readings. This link between Ham and Nimrod resulted in a racist colonial interpretation, referring to human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.

The majority of the group linked the sin of the people with disobedience in terms of God's command in Genesis 1:28: "People did not want to fill the earth therefore God confused their language so that they would start quarrelling and disperse" This reading aligns with Afrikaner colonial interpretations of the document HR (1976). Others stated that their sin was pride and arrogance - "to attack heaven"[154]. Instead of interpreting the reference to Genesis 1:28, as an imperative for separation between peoples the group spiritualised the text and interpreted the dispersion from an evangelistic perspective: "Israel was supposed to be a light for the nations. God wanted to send them out to be a light for the nations (Isaiah 49). The tower became an obstacle in the way of God's plan for the people. They became disobedient like Jonah". In their rapidly changing community, the group saw themselves as the light in the chaos that surrounds them. Afrikaner colonial interpretations, in general, argued that the Afrikaner has a special purpose to evangelise the non-Western population - civilising mission.

The understanding of the Preotria group regarding the tower varied between references to sin against "the will of God" (creation ordinance), pride, ambition, self-centredness and arrogance. Others focused on the dispersion as a function of evangelism, to reach out to others. God gave people gifts and He wants us to use these to honour Him. Therefore, if we do not to reach out to others, he will make a plan and disperse us[155]. This evangelistic interpretation is similar to that of the Durban group but with the difference, that the Pretoria group view themselves as privileged people who have talents and knowledge to impart.

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[153] "People are capable of building – they had skills. Nothing is impossible for people"

[154] '"Mens wik maar God beskik'. People make their plans but God decides the outcome. People wanted to take over heaven. Make a name for them, wanted to be like God". The reference to an attack of heaven follows Du Toit's interpretation of the text.

One of the members stated that the dispersion was a matter of moving out of our comfort zones: "The story show that what we do must be to the glory of God, therefore God disperses them to move them out of their comfort zones in order to grow". The interpretation has a theocentric centre from where the dispersion is God's attempt to release people to reach their personal potential - "to grow". This perspective reflects the impact of individualism in which God is personalised. Another group, consisting of younger members, followed a typical post-modern reading of the text. They said the narrative reveals God's "sense of humour". The group thought it was funny that the people chose to crowd together, "keeping themselves warm". This reading moves beyond doctrinal references, reflecting post-modern playfulness.

3.1.1.2 Diakonia Council of Churches

3.1.1.2.1 Profile of the Group

Diakonia Council of Churches is an ecumenical organisation based in Durban. Denis Hurley was a founding member, with Paddy Carney as its director (he was director from Diakonia's founding in the seventies through to 2004). It is a multi-racial organisation focussing on social justice issues. It played an active role in the resistance to apartheid.

The organisation invited me to conduct a Bible study with staff members. The group consisted of 18 members between the ages of 25 and 65, who actively participated in the anti-apartheid struggle and younger members who joined the organisation after the elections of 1994. The reading process followed the same basic structure as that of the other groups. The participants collectively read the text, after which each member silently reflected on the text before sharing his/her interpretation. I knew most of the members of the group and this contributed to create a relaxed atmosphere. The majority of the group were Zulu speaking and the rest were English. This group was

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[155] "God will make sure we go out into the world although we do not want to, like the tower builders. We receive talents to use to the glory of God"

included in the research because of their demographic of non-Western members, their role in resisting Afrikaner colonialism and their involvement in other socio-political struggles.

3.1.1.2.2 Summary of the reading

The respondents read the text synchronically from their experience of Afrikaner colonialism and globalisation. A participant followed the canonical context referring to Genesis 1 and Acts (Pentecost). Another participant, an Old Testament scholar, followed a diachronic reading of the text referring to the historical context linking it to Babylonian imperialism. He concluded that the dispersion refers to the divided Babylon[156].

The older members of the group, among them founding members of this organisation, immediately identified the text with apartheid[157] and HR (1976). Younger members read the text in terms of their experience of democracy. The group viewed the building of the tower as hubris[158] and the dispersion as a punishment from God; interpreted in the context of unity[159]. Many participants referred to the democracy[160] and the role it plays in bringing diverse cultures together. Unity is not conformity, but a way to build unity. A couple of respondents argued that the sin of building the tower was conformity: "Unity does not dissolve differences". Another reader noted that Afrikaner colonialism[161] was a form of conformity and intolerance.

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[156] Scholarly research shows that it is a text written after the exile. It refers to Babylonian imperialism. Babel was destroyed because of division.

[157] "The text was used to justify apartheid, but the story of Pentecost in Acts shows how people are brought together"

[158] "They wanted to make a name for themselves. They are not concerned with the rest of the world only their fame and fortune"

[159] "Unity is different from conformity because it allows for diversity"; "They put differences, like culture aside and built together for their own future"

[160] "We are building on our democracy with different bricks. We are different cultures that form one building"; "Differences do not have to confuse. It is still possible to communicate. It does not have to be a hindrance – rainbow nation. We have to be creative in order to move beyond our differences and for understanding to be possible."

[161] "As a child, we were taught that people wanted to see God and He therefore confused them so that they will not reach heaven. They wanted to do what they wanted. Today through the history of SA we see white Afrikaners did what they wanted to do. They did not consider other people that were different from them. God wants people to make an effort to reach others. Differences of language are hindrances that force us to make an effort"

A reader made a link between the tower and the terrorist attack on the Twin Tower on 11 September 2001[162]. She regards the destruction of the tower and the World Trade Centre in the United States as an attack on capitalism. This is a warning that we must move closer to the land - "live on the horizontal plane". This reading from an egalitarian perspective, views the dispersion as a return to the land.

Another member made a similar comment as the Pretoria group, viewing the dispersion as a way to move beyond our 'comfort zones'. However, this member saw it as a means to understand other cultures and not a call to evangelism. Another member followed an existential reading: "What are the towers in my life? What are the things I have to work through?" This reading reflects the impact of individualism.

3.1.1.3 Montwood Park Support Center

3.1.1.3.1 Profile of the Group

The Montwood Park Support Centre is a community based, ecumenical organisation that focuses on the support of people living with HIV/AIDS and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. It opened in 2001 as an initiative of the churches, schools and individual stakeholders of Montwood Park, Durban. The Bible study group consisted of twelve members of whom seven were Zulu speaking, three English and two Afrikaans. Churches represented in the group were the following: Anglican - (2), Methodist - (3), Baptist - (3), DR - (2), and Congregational Church (2). The group consisted of ten women and two men. The group invited me to conduct the Bible study as part of a planning meeting. The members of the group were between 35 and 75 years of age. This group was included because of their predominant non-Western demographics and their involvement with social issues.

[162] I see an analogy between the tower and the Twin Tower of 9/11. We live in a consumerist society, reaching for the sky. This is against God's will; we must use the land, according to God's will. We must live on the horizontal plane.

3.1.1.3.2 Summary of the reading

The readings followed a synchronic process interpreting the dispersion as a punishment for pride. One of the members followed a diachronic reading, arguing that the text is a myth and interpreted it symbolically. She viewed the tower as an illustration of the fact that God entrusts people with responsibilities, but we fail because of pride[163].

A reader stated: “People used this unity for their own selfish purpose and not to serve others”. This reading is a judgement on those who do not participate in community projects like the centre. She contextualises pride in terms of her negative assessment of the apathy in the community regarding HIV/AIDS. Two other participants made similar references to community involvement, but included a reference to power[164]. According to this reading, power is not something people wanted to gain but something already given by God that requires responsible use. Another reader viewed the tower as a symbol of patriarchy and the disconnection between men and women[165]. A holistic cultural matrix informs the majority of the respondent's readings.

Some saw the dispersion as a “diplomatic” and “tactful”[166] way in which God interceded because of love. “The dispersion was a way of disciplining people”. Others said: "People were made to be one, unified, but people want power to show how great they are. This destroys the unity among people". The forcefulness of the unity was the sin. True unity was not a matter of force but equality.

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[163] "The story is a myth. It is not real and only symbolically reflects the fact that God has given us a free will. The problem is that we become arrogant. We do not know to take responsibility"

[164] "Story shows that we cannot handle power. We make war and kill instead of helping people"; “We cannot handle power. We make war. Power is there to help people”.

[165] "Building big buildings and towers are things that men do. They seek control at the expense of us women. They forget God made us in his own image"

[166] "God was tactful in this story. He did not break the tower down, but confused the people"

3.1.1.4 Optima Bible study group

3.1.1.4.1 Profile of the group

Optima, is a training college for visually challenged people from all over Africa. The members of the Optima Bible study group are blind and partially sighted people. This Bible study group started at the request of the students and teachers of the college. It meets every week for singing, Bible study and prayer. The composition of the group changes every 6 months when new students arrive. The students are from vastly differing contexts and denominational backgrounds, including African Independent Church, Catholic, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Reformed Churches. Members of the Andrew Murray Ministry participated in the Bible study. The group referred to in this study, consists of 16 members who have been meeting for about a month. Ages vary from middle twenties to the fifties. The group consists of fourteen Black - and three White members. The group was included in the research because of its non-Western demographics.

3.1.1.4.2 Summary of reading

The group followed a synchronic reading of the text within the canonical context. One member viewed the building of the tower as an attempt to reach God. He linked the unity of languages to the creation narrative: "One man, Adam, was created by God and we are all his descendants". He views the dispersion because of the arrogance of humanity – "to go find God"[167].

Many members did not regard the building project as a completely negative act: "People come together to do good, but they can also do bad things". One member said: "They didn't pray to God before the decision was made to build the tower". Some members linked the tower to human pride[168]. Another linked the dispersion to

[167] "God created one man, Adam, and we are the descendents. From the dispersion at Babel, there are different languages. People were trying to reach God, to find God, so He confused their language".
[168] "People were ambitious and only thought of themselves. They were trying to be higher than other people - proud."

the ambition to control land: "Communication problems caused conflict. Humanity was divided because they wanted to control the land. We are one people and in the beginning, we were one. New developments in transport bring people together but we are self-centred and want to control the land and its resources. We ask: What can I get? We do not think of others. There is a lack of love."

A participant, from the African Independent Church, made explicit reference to the spirit that dwells in all people, unifying all[169]. In this regard, the dispersion is not a matter of separating people but a result of sin. An interpreter mentioned the notion of power as something inherent in humanity but that there is a difference between human power and God's power[170]. In this regard, human power leads to pride, while God's power results in the helping of others.

3.1.2 African Myths and Genesis 11: *The African blue bird song* (Solomon Avotri)

Solomon Avotri[171] (1999:17) uses the analogy between the tower, as a mechanism to reach God, and *The African blue bird song*, an Akan myth[172], concerning the separation between God and humanity[173], to interpret Genesis 11:1-9.

According to myth, long ago men were happy, for *Nyame* (God) dwelt among them and talked with them face to face. These blissful days, however, did not last forever. One unlucky day it changed when women were pounding a mash with pestles in a mortar while God stood by looking on. God's presence annoyed them, and told him to be off; and as he did not take off fast enough to please them, they beat him with their

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[169] "The spirit of God dwells in all of us. We are all one."
[170] "Pride comes to a fall. We cannot only trust in our own power. We must learn humility."
[171] Solomon Avorti is Associate Professor of Bible at Payne Theological Seminary in the USA. Originally from Ghana, he is now an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church.
[172] The Dinka people of the Sudan have added that a rope hangs from the sky, where Nyame lives, so that people could move up and down the rope, but God sent a blue bird to cut the rope. According to Nuer tradition people climbed the rope to be young again. In the presence of God life is renewed so that when they returned, life could begin all over again (Avotri 1999:17)
[173] The traditions that are rooted in myth have disappeared largely due to the influence of Christianity. The Nuer tradition, which includes the renewal of life in the presence of God, “can be understood as symbolic of the mere power to live" (Avotri 1999:18). According to Avotri (1999:18), the "African myth attempts to explain why humanity does not have this power in the first place. Seemingly, Nyame has put a distinction between the divine and human worlds, thereby creating for humans the dilemma of

pestles. Then God retired altogether from the world into the sky. Still to this day people say: 'Ah, if it had not been for the women, how happy we would be!' (Avotri 1999:17).

Avotri (1999:17-18) writes: "Even though there is no mention of a city here, the myth is tied to a human community that becomes the meeting place of earth and Sky (Nyame). Nyame's dwelling among them and talking to them face to face may suggest some cultic (i.e., worship) connection. 'It is hardly an exaggeration to say that every compound in Ashanti contains an altar to the Sky God, in the shape of a forked branch cut from a certain tree which the Ashanti call *Nyame dua*, literally, *God's tree*. This forked branch holds a brass or earthenware pot containing ancient stones. People put daily offerings in these pots or on the roofs of their huts for the Great God of the Sky'".

Avotri (1999:20) interprets the text from the wider context of Genesis 1-11, linking the creation narrative and the fall: "Offending God by eating the forbidden fruit the Yahwist presents a progression of hostility between Yahweh and humanity. The divine reprisal is swift and severe; human life span is limited to 120 years - an emphatic statement of the denial of immortality to humanity (Genesis 6:1-4). In Genesis 6:5-7, Yahweh even regrets that he has made human beings in the first place and decides to blot them out, by means of a flood (Genesis 7:1-24). Only Noah and his family are saved. Thus a relationship that began so propitiously has ended in disaster, so that as soon as humanity multiplies again, divine-human hostility resurfaces".

In Genesis 11:1-9, God is no longer accessible to humankind - it depicts God as being far away in the sky. "For this reason, humanity strives to do for itself what it thinks necessary for its self-preservation (Genesis 11:4a). Reacting with fear similar to before (Genesis 3:22), Yahweh is threatened by human unity and its potential for greater achievements: 'And Yahweh said, 'Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them' (Genesis 11:6). Following his words with

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alienation and divine inaccessibility. From an African perspective, the Tower of Babel story raises

action, Yahweh destroys humanity's effort and its limitless possibilities of creativity (Genesis 11:7). As a result, the tower never reached heaven, and they never make a name for themselves (Avotri 1999:20-21). The dispersion is not punishment for human arrogance or pride but God's determination to keep himself transcendent and inaccessible to humankind.

Both the African blue bird story and story of the Tower of Babel present God as the God of the sky, who, although much greater than humans, is nevertheless depicted in vivid anthropomorphic terms. God exhibits anger and impatience. God is not the loving God but the one who opposes human dreams and creates a harsh world for them. God's capriciousness and unfairness thwarts human happiness. When human desire for immortality threatens divine supremacy, God thwarts their efforts. In other words, God does not hesitate to inflict suffering in order to enhance God's own well-being. At the end of both stories, God prefers to live in isolation from human beings (Avotri 1999:22).

Avotri (1999:21) notes a link exists between the importance of a name in Africa[174] and the reference to the tower builders wanting to make a name for them. In both cases, it refers to the desire of humanity to "overcoming the human fate of mortality". It is an 'affirmation of life' in both stories. The African story yearns for happiness in the midst of harsh realities and, like the Tower of Babel story, presents the deity as the one with power over life and death. The theme of a great name, securing immortality, is present in both. In Africa, naming rituals[175] secure immortality (Avotri 1999:23).

God scatters them, because their attempt to reach heaven, threatens God's supremacy. God did not want them to obtain immortality - make a name. The focus of this

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similar issues about the divine-human relationship".

[174] Avotri (1999:22-23) quotes Mbiti: "The original paradise was lost: men's direct link with God was severed or eclipsed, the closeness between the heavens and the earth was replaced by a vast gap without a bridge, the gifts of immortality and resurrection melted away, and death, disease and disharmony came and reigned ever since....Through marriage and childbearing, [people] are still able to achieve something of the original immortality".

[175] Avotri (1999:23) quotes one such prayer invoking the ancestors:

"*Your food is here,*
Let the children have good health
The women have childbirth,
So that your names not be obliterated"

reading is on the supremacy of God threatened through the Tower. Avotri (1999:18-19) notes, that many commentators have a negative view of the story (sin and punishment). His interpretation, however, presents it in terms of the structure of the divine-human relationship and alienation from God that sets humanity on a path of a constant quest for immortality.

3.1.3 Azaria Mbatha and Genesis 11

Azaria Mbatha[176] of Rorke's Drift[177] bases most of his art on Biblical themes. It emphasises the important role of art in resistance readings of the Bible[178]. Nadine Gordimer notes that art was "at the heart of liberation" (De Gruchy 2001:204). Mbatha (Eichel 1986:7) states: "I hope that, in portraying the African experience, I

[176] Azaria Mbatha was born in 1941 in KwaZulu-Natal. He attended Rorke's Drift between 1962 and 1964. Later, in 1965 he studied art at the Konstfachskolan in Stockholm, Sweden. From 1977 to 1980, he studied social sciences at the University of Lund, Sweden (Eichel 1986:61).
His art uses symbols and ideas from the Zulu tradition and culture. Although culture plays an important role, as in all art, it has universal appeal: "I am convinced that some of the insights of this culture are common to everybody who tries to live a humane and social life" (Eichel 1986:6). In this regards he states that the symbols are chosen to send a message to all who suffer from isolation, alienation and anxiety. His pictures challenge to entice people into dialogue for a literate and illiterate audience.

[177] The Evangelical Lutheran Church Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift, was established in 1962. The work of Azaria Mbatha and John Muafangejo are probably the most well known integrating African context and Biblical images in their work. Mbatha produces the most specifically Christian imagery, while Muafangejo's work, at first religious in content, develops into an explicitly social commentary" (Sacks 1992:346). According to De Gruchy: "The work of Azaria Mbatha and John Muafangejo, both of whom worked within an African Christian ethos" are examples of the art that breaks through the Western dichotomy of the sacred and profane (De Gruchy 2001:235). In this regard, struggle and faith are not viewed distinct dimensions in the work of the artist but essentially the same.

[178] "Awareness of this intrinsic connection between art and culture is important not only for appreciating art and the vocation of the artists, but also for understanding their role in the public square and the shaping of corporate and personal identities" (De Gruchy 2001:191). The artist is dependent on the culture and values of society and therefore reflection on the values of a white community is not only alien to the artist's work but also a continuation of the colonization of his mind and the black public. This reinforces misconceptions of the other by the white public.
After the Soweto uprising in 1976, the art of resistance grew from within communities who could no longer be silenced. The struggle produced artistic creativity that was not there before (See Resistance Art in South Africa by Sue Williamson). "White artists tended to bury their heads in the safety of their cultural enclaves; black artists produced non-confrontational works for white consumption" (De Gruchy 2001:204). However, even before 1976 the manifesto of the Organization of South African Artists (1975) challenged artists to participate in the transformation of the country and realise the cultural potential of Africa. After 1976, many more initiatives followed. The Community Art Project (1977) and the Federal Union of Black Artist (1980) were formed – both focussing on the development of community art projects (De Gruchy 2001:204-5). Therefore, it was within the Black Community itself that art gave expression to people's suffering, and the hope of liberation grew.

am also expressing the powerlessness and isolation of these people". Mbatha's reading reflects the impact of colonialism and racism on an African society.

Mbatha (1963, 1979) created two artworks entitled *The Tower of Babel*. The first was in 1963 and the other in 1979. See figure 2 *The Tower of Babel* 1963 and 1979.

His 1963 work depicts a tower constructed of many smaller, square shaped huts that forms two rows, moving up into the sky. The entrances to the huts are dark, indicating that they are empty with no life in them. To the top of the construction, it splits in two with a figure descending between the two rows of huts splitting. Around the splitting tower, people gather in many different groups. The people are fully clothed with robes. To the bottom of the picture, there are signs of plants with large leaves. The style of the buildings and the clothing of the people reflect that of the people of the Ancient Near East. The people gathering in groups probably refer to the scattering of the people.

Figure 2: The Tower of Babel 1963 (left) and 1979 (right)

In the 1979 picture, the mood is more sombre. The tower has the same construction with empty huts. Compared to the 1963 depiction, of the tower, the difference is, that traditional round shaped African huts are used, instead of square buildings. The people are naked, scattered all over and huddled in small groups. Parallel columns

penetrate the top of the tower. They symbolise the disruption caused by the scattering and the separation between people. In the fields that surround the tower, a lonely fully clothed man approaches an ancestor, who is witnessing the destruction of the tower.

The impact of apartheid, explains the differences between the 1963 and 1979 depictions. The added columns in the 1979 work symbolise separation. The sombre mood and the naked people point to the experience of suffering and dehumanisation because of colonial racism. The presence of the ancestor, in the 1979 depiction, highlights the fact that colonial racism did not only disconnect people, but also separated people from the spiritual realm. Racism and separation follows a trace back to the cultural alienation of the people under the lure of the civilising mission. “The African approaches his ancestors by working for them, carrying wood to prepare a festival for the ancestors. When Man began to aspire to higher things, his simple life no longer satisfied him. He left his simple mud huts behind, gave up his tradition and together with others he built a mighty tower many storeys high. But the tower cracked and broke in two....The tower is destroyed. The huts are empty and dead. Humanity is naked and vulnerable, without shelter” (Eichel 1986:15). Anderson writes that the ancestor cult is the most prominent aspect of African traditional religion – “the heart of the African spirit world” (Anderson 1991:79). The ancestors constitute the individual's connection to the community. The main function of ancestors is that of protection, but when they are neglected, they unleash destructive powers (Anderson 1991:79).

Mbatha's reading is distinctly different from the other readings, in terms of his inclusion of the African spiritual realm. Mbatha (Eichel 1986:6) states that his pictures should not be seen as works of art, but as pieces of reality: "I must show what I see with my soul”. A holistic African worldview informs Mbatha's interpretation of Genesis 11:1-9. Western essentialism, results in cultural erosion, that impacts on the total socio-cultural system. Cultural imperialism goes hand in hand with the destruction of the moral fibre of society, climaxing, in poverty and suffering. His reading is from the margin - the experience of the colonised. Mbatha (Eichel 1986:8) states: “European civilization...brought about the end of African civilization

and replaced it with its own. I cannot find the words to describe what a terrible crime this is".

The building of the tower is part of the colonial obsession with development and civilisation. The experience of disconnection, results in alienation from culture, community and land. Mbatha's depiction of Genesis 11:1-9, from the margin of the 'South' African context and informed by a holistic approach, in which cultural imperialism is critically scrutinised, as a disconnecting force that brings about separation between people, the land and spiritual reality.

3.2 Ideology and non-scholarly readers

In all the readings, it was clear that the experience of the interpreter played a role in their readings - text as subject. The readers did not view the text as an object of inquiry; but perceived it as a meaningful part of their existential life experience. The intersection between culture and ethical position, referred to at the beginning of this chapter, emphasises that non-scholarly readings, informed by a holistic worldview and positioned on the margin, deconstructs colonial interpretations of Genesis 11:1-9. These holistic readings interpret the text against the grain of Western essentialism but also include an ethical cutting edge highlighting that disconnection is the result of injustice, whether between cultures, gender, and geographical spaces. This mostly reflected in the readings of non-Western readers in the Bible studies and the work of Mbatha.

Mbatha's 1979 linocut portrays the link between colonial racism and cultural-religious fragmentation of African society. Racism and the exploitation of Black labour destroyed the relationship between people and the land. Development and progress associated with Western culture enticed people, leaving behind the cultural roots and wealth. Mbatha's interpretation of Genesis 11:1-9 is a reading from the margin, reflecting the plight (nakedness and vulnerability) of colonial subjects, uprooted from the land and their spiritual roots. The injustice of colonial racism, cut through the fibre of African society, dislodging the individual from community, land and the spiritual realm.

The majority of readings of the Diakonia group viewed democracy as a metaphor for the connections between different cultures. One respondent linked the tower to "White Afrikaners" who controlled the people of 'South' Africa. The reading positions itself in the margin - the experience of being Black in a racist society. This reference made a distinction, between White and Black, implying that the imperial connection can only follow a left-right movement. This results from an essentialist worldview that separates White and Black, ending in reductionism. The majority of readers view democracy as a response to colonial racism, representing a marginal ethic. The problem is that interconnectedness links to Western humanism and does not reflect African holism that incorporates the spiritual realm. An essentialist cultural framework, leaning on the notions of a universal democratic interpretative community, reflected in the ethic of interpretation of Schüssler-Fiorenza, informs the majority of these anti-colonial readings.

It was clear form the Montwood Park Support Centre that solidarity with the marginalised, people suffering from HIV/AIDS, are the focus areas of the interpretations. The link a respondent made between gender violence and the disconnection of male and female reflect the interconnected worldview of the reader. The focus on unity and oneness of all people, who receive power from God, reflect this interconnected perspective. The readers understood power as a spiritual force that permeates through all people that must be used responsibly. A member of the Optima group followed a similar view, highlighting that the power that comes from God is not self-righteous. In this regard, the interpreters follow a holistic perspective. The perspective reflects a decolonial reading, informed by a holistic interpretative paradigm and solidarity with the marginalised. Some of the readings from these groups reflect an essentialist humanistic angle. Interpreters saw their work as a form of charity and advocacy, following an anti-colonial reading strategy.

The non-Western reading of Avorti and some non-Western members of the Bible studies followed an indigenous reading. Holism and a centralistic ethical position, informed these readings. Avorti uses an analogy between African myth and Genesis 11:1-9 to interpret the text. The problem with his reading is that African cultural discourse is uncritically accepted. Theologically, Avotri's reading is problematic in

terms of its disconnected view of God, the negative portrayal of women in the Akan myth, the priority given to a name or status, and the finality of the scattering of the people. The separation between God and creation is inconsistent with the theology of the covenant and the incarnation that point to God's focus on reconnecting with creation. A similar reading followed from a member of the Optima Bible study group. The negative portrayal of women in the myth, creates the impression that the impatience of women, lead to the separation between God and humanity. This view of women emphasises an ethic that results from the patriarchal centre of African society. The priority of a person's name as a form of immortality can easily become a mode of elitism and a status symbol, differentiating between powerful and powerless families. This reflects the view that the scattering is a creation ordinance and that connections between people are limited to tribal alliances.

Most of the readings from the DRC groups followed an essentialist cultural discourse and centralistic position. The main perspective was that God dispersed the people so that they can proclaim the gospel. The readings reflect the ethical position of the centre following an evangelistic perspective - passing down superior knowledge from the centre to the margin. They view the scattering as part of God's creation ordinances. Dispersion to other geographical areas is an opportunity for growth, for the enrichment of the coloniser. Colonialism is legitimised as a form of glorification of God. The reference of a member of the Durban group, to Nimrod and imperialism, aligns with an anti-colonial perspective, reflecting a reading from the margin. The danger of essentialism became apparent when he, emphasised, that Ham is a decendent of Nimrod, resulting in racist deductions. The impact of individualism and post-modernism was evident in the younger and wealthier Pretoria group. A similar interpretation developed from a member of the Diakonia group, reflecting on the towers in her life. However, most of the DRC interpretations remained located in an ethic of the centre and essentialist cultural discourse (individualism).

In the 'South' African context scholarly and non-scholarly readings, from the margin and informed by a connected worldview, constructs a liminal space for the deconstruction of colonial readings and the development responsible readings. In the next section, the deconstructive thrust of holistic non-scholarly reading from the

margin, will be explored. These reading unravel the colonial dualism that essentialism constructs.

3.2.1 Crossing the civilised/primitive dualism

The difference between civilised/primitive, Christian/heathen is constructed in the essentialistic scholarly reading of Colenso and the DRC groups. In the Optima Bible study and Mbatha's work, it becomes evident that this distinction dissolves because people are unified and equal due to the same spirit that permeates creation. To be a person, is to have *Moya* or spirit. People connect through this inclusive worldview. Therefore, it is impossible to separate people in terms of Darwin's hierarchical views of culture. This perspective destabilises the reading of Colenso that views the writers of the text as primitive, reflected in the civilising mission.

The holistic perspective of Mbatha deconstructs essentialist notions of cultural inferiority. The irony of his reading, is that the civilising mission is directly linked to the poverty and suffering, of African people. Although missionaries viewed African culture and religion as superstitious, inferior and even uncivilised, Mbatha's decolonial reading, highlights that African culture and religion is it's wealth. The interconnected nature of this cultural discourse also deconstructs the imperialistic forces, by revealing the injustice that permeates essentialistic cultural discourse.

3.2.2 Crossing the unity/difference dualism

The majority of the non-Western participants regarded the text from the perspective of a unified worldview, as opposed to many Western participants, who were informed by an essentialist worldviews. A holistic perspective views unity as the basic principle of creation. References regarding the unity of all creation and the power that God gives all people, by members of the Optima group, are a stark contrast to the view of the document HR (1976), stating that the dispersion should result in enforced separation. One of the members of the Optima group stated, “When a branch of a tree is cut off, a day or two later you will see that, that tree is busy dying". A member of the Montwood Support Centre said, "People were made to be one, unified, but people want power to show how great they are. This destroys the unity among people". A

member of Diakonia Council of Churches said, “Differences do not have to confuse. It is still possible to communicate. It does not have to be a hindrance – rainbow nation. We have to be creative in order for understanding in differences to be possible”. Another said, “The text was used to justify apartheid, but the story of Pentecost in Acts shows how people are brought together.” One of the members of the Optima group said: “People are stronger when they unite. When one or two come together, to do something for good or evil, this is true. We should unite to do good".
An interconnected cultural perspective, informs these readings, pointing to the inconsistency of a disconnected worldview in the African context. An inclusive and connected paradigm deconstructs the unity/difference dualistic construction of Western essentialism. Mbatha's reading introduces an ethical thrust, by linking the suffering of people and colonial racism.

3.2.3 Crossing the land/landless dualism

The colonial modes of scholarly readings, discussed in chapter 2, do not link Genesis 11:1-9 to the question of land. Through the eyes of the holistic perspective of colonised readers, there is a connection between land and people. In this regard, the settlement on, exploitation of, and territorial displacement of people from the land by imperialism, is the focus of the holistic cultural matrix of colonised readers. A participant from Optima said: “We want to control the land...there is no love...” This is a critique of settlement and dispersion. In this regard, the settlers in Shinar took control of the land without considering the people. They exploited it through an extravagant building project. The dispersion is a process of territorial displacement, severing the connection between the land and people. The experience of forced removals, linked to apartheid policies, creates sensitivity for the experience of dislocation.

A reader of the Durban DRC group said: “People were capable of building – they had skills. Nothing is impossible for people”. This perspective views the colonial occupation and development of the land as a positive quality of humanity. The ability of humanity to build and develop skills overshadows the conquest of the land and the cultural imperialism of people - civilising the *native*. A member of DRC Pretoria said, “We cannot succeed on our own strength. God will make sure we go out into

the world although we do not want to, like the tower builders". Going out into the world, implies, entering other geographical territories and settling. This view is also reflected in the civilising mission that informs Colenso's and the HR (1976) reading.

A member of Diakonia said, "Tower connotations with Twin Tower of 9/11. We live in a consumerist society, reaching for the sky. This is against God's will. The land belongs to God. Live horisontally". The land is part of our humanity and connection to God. Land is not as a mode of production, it is a gift. Mbatha's reading, reflecting an egalitarian socio-economic system, also points to the connection between land and people. These perspectives unravel the disconnected view of colonial readings. Pointing to the suffering that humanity experience because of disconnection from geographical space. This disconnection is not innocent, but benefits the metropolitan centre.

3.2.4 Crossing the male/female dualism

Scholarly readings, in chapter 2, did not mention gender as a part of their readings. A participant from the Optima group mentioned that the Tower reflects the male impulse to control: "Building big buildings and towers are things that men do. They seek power at the expense of us women. They forget God made us in his own image". The tower is a phallocentric display of male power. This reading deconstructs the patriarchal nature of colonialism by leaning on the holistic worldview of Africa. Patriarchy disconnects male and female, through gender exploitation that degrades women and distorts their humanity. The link between power and male dominance is part of colonialism's drive to observing and classifying non-Western people, resulting in reductionistic views of women. The holistic perspective of Africa destabilises this connection, by unravelling the hidden ideological strains that fused in colonialism. It is a reading from the margin, which leans on experiences of abuse and exploitation of women, by men. In this regard, the infusion of a male/female dualism is not innocent, but creates the sphere for the exertion of male domination.

3.3 Non-scholarly readings, the text and colonial ideology

Chapter 2 of this study reflected on the colonial history of 'South' Africa and its association with colonial and anti-colonial scholarly modes of reading, informed by essentialism. The infusion of non-scholarly readings in the scholarly debate has opened a new avenue in which non-scholarly readers become the subjects of the reading process.

Firstly, this means that the culture and experiences of the reader filters through the interpretative process, as a source of knowledge, resulting in the untangling of the worldliness of the text. This does not mean that the "worldliness" and ideologies of the text has an impact outside the text-reader interaction. The moment the text and reader engage, the culture and experience of the reader informs the readering process, this, either perpetuates or deconstructs ideologies. In this regard, the essentialist cultural matrix and centralistic ethic, of the Dutch Reformed Church groups, perpetuate colonial ideologies. The text is constructed as an evangelistic imperative, viewing the dispersion as a missionary motive. This construction of the text, results in the perpetuation of colonial ideologies that assumes that the imperial culture is superior to the culture of the colonised. In the 1979 reading of Genesis 11:1-9, of Mbatha, his experience of apartheid, informed by his holistic worldview, produced a deconstructive reading that is critical of colonial racism. This resulted in a construction of the text that viewed the dispersion, as a critique of colonial racism and the alienation between people and geographical space. This differs from his 1963 work, informed by the experience of colonial industrialisation. In this reading, the construction of the text implied that the dispersion was because of development and industrialisation. This highlights the role of a reading against the grain that deconstructs the centralistic ethic and essentialistic discourse, of colonial interpretations. The worldliness of the text is not wrapped up in the text, but it is the result of the interaction between text and reader, resulting in colonial or decolonial constructions.

Secondly, the reader is not in control of the text, as is the case with scholarly reading, making judgements and distancing it from the scholar. Experience informs non-scholarly readers, and at the same time, the text affects their experiences. In other

words, there is a dynamic engagement between text and reader. It reflects an intertextual dynamic, in which meaning is part of the interaction between text and reader. The text is not an object "out there", with objective and universal meaning. Non-scholarly reading is a living process. The reference to the tower, as a sign of patriarchy, noted by a member of one of the Bible study groups, reflects the role the reader's holistic worldview plays in deconstructing patriarchy. In this regard, the disconnection between male and female, results in the building of the tower that emphasises the impact of male domination and control. The tower becomes a critique of patriarchy. The text presents the critical motive.

The readings of non-scholarly readers address fears, regarding the inscribed ideological content of the texts, of Schüssler-Fiorenza and Mosala's. Ideologies continue because of the inscribed ideologies of the hermeneutical process. In 'South' Africa, essentialism aligns with colonialism, resulting in colonial readings. Alternatively, the inscribed ideology in the reading process makes the construction of decolonial readings possible. Non-scholarly readings from the margin, informed by a holistic worldview in the 'South' African context, resists colonial ideologies by deconstructing essentialist discourse.

Experience from the margin, results in a critical engagement of text and reader and not a sterile hermeneutical circle, reflected in Patte's ethics of interpretation discussed in chapter 1. The experience of colonial exploitation, informed by a holistic worldview, reveals the link between essentialism and the exploitation of Patte's multi-dimensional approach. In this regard, Patte's failure to acknowledge the inscribed ideologies in the reading process, results in the continuation of patriarchy and imperial ideologies.

Said's reference to the role of rivers, in the African context, reflects the link between colonial experiences and the holistic cultural matrix of African readers. Said (1994:254) writes that in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the river is functional, carrying the explorer into the mysterious new world. Ngugi, re-experiences the river, by naming it in *The River Between.* It is the life of the people and a source of joy (Said 1994:254). "The post-imperial writers of the Third World therefore bear their past within them – as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as

potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a post-colonial future, as urgently reinterpretable and re-deployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist" (Said 1994:256).

3.4 Conclusion

Non-scholarly readings of Bible study groups, African mythology by Avorti and artworks of Azaria Mbatha, read the text as the subject of interpretation. Western essentialism and centralistic ethics informed the majority of readings from the Dutch Reformed Bible study groups. The connection between the dispersion and the missionary imperative reflects the civilising mission of colonial readings. Not all non-Western interpreters follow a decolonial reading. These interpretations varied between indigenous, anti-colonial and decolonial readings. Some of the readings from the Diakonia group follow an anti-colonial perspective, while the reading of Avorti, reflects traces of an indigenous reading. The reading of Mbatha and others, informed by a holistic perspective that focuses on the connection between people, land and God, follow a decolonial reading.

This chapter reveals that ideologies also influence non-scholarly reading. In this regard, the link between scholarship and education should not be generalised. This chapter emphasised that non-scholarly readings, form the margin of the 'South' African context and informed by a holistic cultural discourse, are decolonial readings.

In the next chapter, the study will explore the theological-ethical dimension of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings. It will become clear that an interpretative matrix, from the margin of the 'South' African context, informed by a holistic and interconnected cultural matrix, follows a deconstructive reading strategy. It also constructs new liminal spaces, from where responsible interpretations of the Bible develop. Referring to the non-scholarly readings of this study, I will argue that a *Moya* reading, linked to the African Independent Church, incorporates a holistic dimension, marginal cultural matrix and stimulates healing.

Chapter 4

Theological-ethical reflection on the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9: Towards a *Moya* reading

Non-scholarly reading destabilises the object/subject dichotomy by reading the text as the subject of communication. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings of the Bible takes the work of reader-response, reception theory, ideological critique and deconstruction a step further by pointing to the hierarchy of readers. Fowler leaning on Steiner's work pointed to the difference in modes of "critics" and "readers" (Fowler 1985). The difference is not only quantitative in terms of function, but also qualitative in terms of mode and power. The mode of scholarly readers, discussed in chapter 2, reflects the influence of essentialism and reading from the centre of imperial power. Anglocentric readings, emphasised the superiority of Western versus non-Western people, reflected in the engagement with the ancient text of the Bible, viewed as primitive and mythical. Afrikaner readings, from the centre of Afrikaner Nationalist power, held to a similar essentialist perspective influenced, by Kuyperism and Fundamentalism, stating that the text is the transcendental "Word of God". Anti-colonial readings, interpret the text from the margin of colonial racism, but retained the essentialist paradigm, in its reversal of the Black/White dichotomy. The problem is that contemporary biblical scholarship, retained the essentialist cultural matrix that informed the transformation in hermeneutics from author centred modes (like historical criticism), to text centred modes (shaped by structuralism and post-structuralism), reader centred modes (contextual hermeneutics) and later ethical modes of reading (Lategan 1992; Schüssler-Fiorenza 1988, 1999; Patte 1995). The impact of non-Western scholars through post-colonial hermeneutics unravelled this essentialist bias, linking non-Western cultural discourse with an ethics of reading from the margin (Dube 1996; Sugirtharajah 1999; Segovia 1995, 2000).

The agency of silenced and marginalised, non-Western people, reveals the ambivalence of Western essentialist constructions, opening the door for the deconstruction of the false consciousness, created by essentialism (Spivak 1990). The deconstructive trend, of the turn to non-scholarly reading in 'South' Africa (as

revealed in chapter 3), is located in the movement from the essentialist reduction of colonial (reading from the centre) and anti-colonial (reading from the margin) interpretations, to decolonial readings, that highlight the interconnected and holistic perspective of readers experiencing marginalisation, due to imperial exploitation. This provides challenging questions regarding traditional essentialist Western views, concerning theology and ethics.

In this chapter, I will argue that a *Moya* reading is a contextual reading of non-scholarly readings from the margin that informs the theological and ethical debate with a holistic and interconnected alternative, shedding new light on the link between people, land and God. The interaction between colonial/anti-colonial scholarly readings and a *Moya* reading, constructs a liminal space that deconstructs essential traces, and develops new responsible readings.

In the first part of this chapter, a reflection on the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers of the Bible, in 'South' Africa, will emphasise the priority of a holistic cultural matrix and an ethics of marginality - outside the subject (Levinas 1993). In the second part of this chapter, an evaluation (based on cultural matrix and ethics) of the move to an interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading, in the 'South' African context, will follow. In the third part, the *ubuntu* hermeneutics of Desmond Tutu, a contemporary example of the construction of a liminal space, from the interaction of scholarly and non-scholarly readings, will be critically discussed in terms of ethics and cultural matrix. In the fourth part, I will argue that a *Moya* reading, linked to the African Independent Church, is a contextual response to imperialism and colonialism and unravels essentialism, centralistic ethics and brings about healing. Finally, a contemporary interaction between a scholarly and non-scholarly *Moya* reading, will reveal the deconstructive impulse and constructive movement to healing, that develops from this liminal space.

4.1 The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings in the 'South' African context: Holism and Marginality

Reading the Bible in 'South' Africa today presents the reader with many challenges. On the one hand, the reader's own subjectivity is a challenge. Constructing our own

identity is under negotiation. Post-colonial theory has shown that identity breaks through essential categories, reflected in multi-culturalism. Bhabha (1995:207) rejects "multi-culturalism", as a form of neo-liberalism, proposing the existence of a "third space" or hybridity. Anti-colonial readings of Black hermeneutics read the Bible from the margin, but at the same time, it leans on Western essentialism. In this regard, *The Kairos Document* (1986) is hybrid. Similarly, non-scholarly readings, of the Diakonia group, reflect the contextual experiences of Black people, regarding colonial racism, and at the same time, it reflects the influence of Western essentialism. Post-colonial hermeneutics deliberately unravels the essentialist foundations of colonial and anti-colonial readings, by reading the text from the cultural discourse of the marginalised. This ethical position reveals the instability and hierarchical relations between the cultures of the coloniser and colonised.

The same instability is also present in indigenous hermeneutics. African Theology reads the text as subject, informed by African Religion and the African worldview (Martey 1993, Ukpong 2000). The problem of comparative readings that link the African context and the Bible is the uncritical hermeneutical circle that develops. This accepts African tradition and culture, without regard for the margin. Avorti's reading emphasises the perpetuation of patriarchy. This aligns with Patte's multidimensional hermeneutics that leans on Gadamer's hermeneutical circle. Patte proposes a "reading with" in which scholars bring "ordinary readings" to critical understanding. What this means is that scholars, informed by theories and methodologies, transform the interested readings of "ordinary readers" into scholarly modes. The problem, as the reading of Avorti revealed, is that the uncritical acceptance of patriarchy, results in scholarly readings that perpetuate oppression. Although an indigenous cultural matrix informs this reading, it remains an oppressive matrix in terms of the experience of people on the margin of the society. The reading of the woman, from the Montwood Park group, highlights the patriarchal trace in the 'South' African context. In terms of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers in the 'South' African context, it seems that anti-colonial and indigenous readings are in danger of continuing essentialism and centralistic ethics, respectively.

The second problem the reader has to work through is the text itself. The text is not only the subject of the reading process, but according to Schüssler-Fiorenza and Mosala the location of inscribed ideologies. Sugirtharajah (1998:19) writes that the Bible is a product of an ancient world that both embodied and legitimized colonial intentions: "Most of the Bible's writings are thus set in an imperial context and are made to serve the militaristic, expansionist impulses of Israel and to respond to these of Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and Rome".

In chapter 3, it became clear that the reading process and not the text, as an object, contain inscribed ideologies. This is an important observation because this makes deconstructive reading possible. Centralistic ethics perpetuate ideologies and ethics from the margin deconstruct ideologies, by reading against the grain of imperialism (Spivak 1990, Bhabha 1995). Inscribed ideologies of conquest, in the reading process, are what moved the post-colonial theorist, Spivak (1990), to embrace subaltern - or readings from the margin. Bhabha (1995) notes that the essentialist construction of the colonial subject is a false identity that demands a decolonial reading from the margins, to reveal the ambiguity of colonial constructions. The reading of Mbatha is an example of a reading from the margin, informed by the cultural matrix of the colonised other. In this regard, the interaction of scholarly and non-scholarly readers, in the 'South' African context, needs to consider the cultural matrix and ethical position of non-scholarly readers. The non-scholarly readings, in chapter 3, revealed that a cultural matrix informed by holism and the experience of the marginalised, are salient dimensions for responsible readings.

Holism and the margin deconstruct colonial modes. The term deconstruction leans on Western hermeneutics linked to the work of Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction reflects the link between Western hermeneutics and post-colonial hermeneutics, specifically in the work of Spivak. Deconstruction is an open and critical reading praxis. It is not a negative process of destruction but opens dialogue. Derrida (1972:xiv) states: “Deconstruction is not a form of textual vandalism designed to prove that meaning is impossible. In fact, the word `de-construction’ is closely related not to the word `destruction’ but to the word `analysis’, which etymologically means `to undo’-a virtual synonym for `to de-construct’. The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or generalised scepticism, but by the careful teasing out of warring

forces of significance *within the text itself*. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not meaning but the claim to an unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another". The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings, is not concerned with judging, either, scholarly or non-scholarly reading. It is rather, the formation of a liminal space, from where the tension within the newly constructed space will "undo" essentialist and centralistic discourse. This does not lead to relativism and anarchy but responsible readings. In other words, reading that are contextual and liberating reflecting the fact that deconstruction is an ethical act[179]. This is only possible if scholarly readings are committed to holism and the margin of the 'South' African society.

An important aspect of deconstruction, which fuses a salient linkage with a holistic worldview, is the fact that deconstruction heralds a return to a worldview in which God cannot be separated from the world. Caputo (1997:159) writes that deconstruction is the re-invention of religion: "Deconstruction is a blessing for religion, its positive salvation, keeping it open to constant reinvention, encouraging religion to reread ancient texts in new ways, to reinvent ancient traditions in new contexts. Deconstruction discourages religion from its own worst instincts by holding the feet of religion to the *fire* of faith..." Taylor (1982:49) concurs: "God and world cannot exist apart from one another. God forever becomes incarnate, and the finite is always in the process of becoming reconciled with the finite. The absolutizing of relativity is at the same time the relativizing of absoluteness. These are but two dimensions of a unified epistemological-ontological process".

Levinas (1985:117) argues that truth is not essentialistic, in its objective or subjective guises, but "outside the object", reflecting the presence of the other/Other: "The Holy Scriptures do not signify through the dogmatic tale of their super-natural or sacred origin, but through the expression of the face of the other man [sic] that they illuminate, before he gives himself countenance or a pose. It is an expression as irrecusible as are imperious the worries of he everyday world of the historical beings

[179] Caputo (1997:159) writes: "...deconstruction moves beyond all Enlightenment debunking of religion and chastises the Enlightenment...". Kearney (1993:33) argues that deconstruction is an ethical process: "Writing is ethical for Derrida to the extent that a literary text is one which remains structurally open to the other". The deconstructive act of scholarly and non-scholarly readings

that we are". It is not the mystical, but the ethical, the face of the other, who we encounter when we read the Bible[180].

Holism reveals what was lost through the Enlightenment and what deconstruction is re-introducing - the Other. In this regard, the commitment to the margin and holism is not a foreign concept for scholars but is part of the contemporary scholarly transformation. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading contributes to responsible reading, in the 'South' African context, but also to scholarship and the transformation of Western essentialistic cultural discourse, in general. The deconstructive impact of readings, from the margin, emphasises the theoretical link between Western and non-Western scholarship. This moves beyond a rhetoric of blame, that have lately highlighted Western and non-Western discourse, to a more constructive dialogue.

The interaction between scholars and non-scholars, in the 'South' African context, has the potential of deconstructing essentialist theological concepts regarding God, creation and the Bible. Taylor (1982:xix) writes: "Deconstruction directs our attention to critical problems which merit serious consideration: the death of God, the disappearance of the self, the erasure of the (A)author, the interplay of absence and presence and of silence and speech, the encounter with death, the experience of exile, the insatiability of desire, the inevitability of delay, the burden of totality, the repression of difference, the otherness of Other, the subversion of authority, the end of the book, the opening of textuality, and the advent of writing". In this regard, the holistic perspective of non-Western cultural discourse provides the West with the opportunity to rediscover the interconnectedness of reality, destroyed by essentialism. This is not a matter of antagonism or scepticism, but a moment of trust. In this space of trust, we can discover the connection between people and God. This has the

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interacting is not a play of signifiers ending in relativity, but an ethical act that helps the faith community to rediscover the other/Other.

[180] "When we read the Bible, the Other face is already present, in the Bible, behind the Bible, in front of the Bible, and forever in the Bible's shadow, signifying. We can read (and write our reading of) the Bible as myth, history, or sacred scripture, but if we have not seen the face of the other we have not understood what we have read. This notion of reading conceives of reading and writing as a perpetual openness to, recognition of, and responsibility to this Other – the otherness of the text itself, other-ness of its writers, the otherness of its readers, and above all the otherness of those individuals who are caught up in the Bible's signifying power as it is deployed both as weapon and tool" (Phillips and Fewell 1997:7).

potential to bring about the healing, of non-Western people from colonial exploitation and Western people, from fragmentation and isolation.

Does this mean that we are making a hermeneutical leap back to dogmatism? Is it the end of scholarship?

Davies (1995:53) warns, that a responsible reading of the Bible in the global context, is only possible if the Bible remains in the academy[181] and not fused with agendas of religious institutions[182]. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading, is not an attempt to throw out the baby with the bathwater. However, it is an attempt, to develop an interpretative process that is responsible, with scholars continuing to be scholars, as servants of the people, without the suspicion of being humanistic or heretics. It is a deconstructive movement aiming to serve and not destroy[183].

In the next section, a critical evaluation in terms of culture and ethics of the hermeneutical processes, proposed by scholar, who interact with non-scholarly

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[181] "I hope I can write for Christians and non-Christians, and that we can agree about what presuppositions and aims of our common (etic) discourse are. I do not require any kind of belief, except in the usefulness of universally agreed rules of evidence and argument so that we can genuinely seek to persuade or entertain each other" (Davies 1995:53).

[182] "The purpose of 'bible study' is religious understanding of scripture, and the presupposition of this activity is that the bible of the church or synagogue relates directly to the life of its members in an authoritative way. It is a divine message for them. Such study may occasionally draw on academic methods or resources...but these are ancillary and of themselves bring no deepening of *religious* understanding" (1995:20). "Academic study, for which I reserve the term 'biblical studies', by contrast *is* interested in how and why biblical literature came to be written, in the constraints and nuances of the original languages, the history of transmission of the text and canon. It is by contrast uninvolved in questions of authority or inspiration, since it has no tools for addressing such matters: they cannot be formulated or resolved by academic discourse; at best such claims can only be described and analyzed" (Davies 1995:21). "To sum up what has been said so far: the dichotomies of church/academy and theology/biblical studies are not interchangeable. For there are *three* arenas of bible study: One is the church, which, as a confessing community, requires its Bible for devotional and liturgical purposes; as far as doctrinal purposes go, it is rare to find any church studying its bible in the context of systematic theology: the level at which scripture informs doctrine among churchgoers is relatively *un*theological, in fact. A second arena is the 'biblical studies' of the academy, which is humanistic and non-confessional...A third is 'Scripture', which is that subdiscipline of theology that deals with 'the Bible'. This discipline exists physically within the domain of the academy but serves the church, or claims to." (Davies 1995:24).

[183] "(Deconstruction) can also serve to question the presumption of certain university and cultural institutions to act as the sole or privileged transmitters of meaning. In short, deconstruction not only teaches us to read literature more thoroughly by attending to it *as language*, as the production of meaning through difference and dissemination, through a complex play of signifying traces; it also enables us to interrogate the covert philosophical and political presuppositions of institutionalized critical methods which generally govern our reading of a text. It is not a question of calling for the destruction of such institutions, but rather of making us aware of what we are in fact doing when we are subscribing to this-or-that institutional way of reading" (Derrida 1984:125).

readings, will follow. In this regard, the study moves beyond theoretical reflections, to explore the 'South' African context, to identify a contextual form of reading that is holistic and from the margin.

4.2 The turn to non-scholarly readings

4.2.1. Gerald West

The focus on non-scholarly reader is part of a movement known as the 'turn to ethics', that focuses on the effects of scholarly readings and the construction of responsible readings, influenced by hermeneutics, reader-response criticism and deconstruction. In the context of 'South' Africa, Gerald West, in *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context* (1991), introduced this movement towards the flesh-and-blood readers of the text. Ukpong (2000:4) writes that this movement represents a third phase in African scholarship, moving beyond comparative and evaluative methods (Black - and Liberation hermeneutics).

Gerald West (1991:161) states that the "majority of ordinary readers read the Bible pre-critically...They read it pre-critically because they have not been trained in critical methods". According to West (1993:132), "pre-critical" interpretation is contextual: "...the world of the reader, including the theological tradition of the reader, tends to dominate the textual construction". He states that the term ‘reader’, referring to the transformation in hermeneutics to the world in front of the text, in an African context, should be understood metaphorically, therefore, including illiterate people, "who listen to, discuss, and retell the Bible" (Dube and West 1996:7). The term ‘ordinary’ refers to a general and specific usage. Generally, it "includes all readers who read the Bible pre-critically" (Dube and West 1996:7). Specifically, it refers to a particular sector of pre-critical readers, those readers who are poor and marginalized[184] (Dube and West 1996:7).

[184] “Acknowledging our interests, however, is important, particularly because we are an elite whose readings affect the lives of others, especially in contexts where the Bible is a significant text. So in such contexts we should go beyond acknowledging our own socio-political concerns to become aware of experiences, needs, and questions of those others who are often the victims of our readings – the poor and marginalized” (West 1998:641)

"Critical readings", are interpretations, whether scientific or hermeneutical, of readers educated in the use of tools and resources of biblical scholarship (Dube and West 1996:7). The implication is, where the world of the reader dominates in pre-critical reading, the textual pole comes into its own with critical reading (West 1993:133). 'Ordinary readings', are the product of readers who do have resources to read texts critically, "but they do not have access to the structured and systematic sets of resources that constitute the craft of biblical scholars" (Dube and West 1996:7). Although non-scholarly readers make use of "hidden transcripts"[185] as a form of resistance to their oppressors, West (1999:135) classifies this as pre-critical readings.

The problem is that neutrality, proposed by the Enlightenment, is not possible. Scholarship involves an "ethic of risk" (West 1993:134). It implies that scholars must take the risk to read the Bible from the margin. The starting point for West is a commitment[186] to the liberation of the poor and oppressed, through the interface between scholarly and non-scholarly interpreters. West (1991:172-173) writes: "....this is perhaps the crux of the relationship between the trained and the ordinary reader, the oppressed need to develop their own organic and resistant intellectuals who can learn with such groups while simultaneously helping them to foster modes of self-education and struggle against various forms of oppression….Such a position highlights the political function of the trained reader. Such a position also emphasises the pedagogical and democratic nature of the relationship between the trained and the ordinary reader". The problem is that West retains the essentialist dualism, which qualitatively relegates non-scholarly reading to an inferior[187] position, by classifying them as pre-critical or naive.

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[185] "Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a 'hidden transcript' that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed. A comparison of the hidden transcript of the weak with that of the powerful and of both hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offer a substantially new way of understanding resistance to domination" (West 1999:135)

[186] According to West (1999:137-138) this commitment implies the following: "first, a commitment to begin with reality as perceived by the organised base; second, a commitment to read the Bible in community; third, a commitment to read the Bible critically; and fourth, a commitment to socio-political transformation through Bible reading" (137-138)

[187] One of the reason non-scholarly readings are inferior, according to West (1999:139), is that "... ordinary readers tend not to read the text carefully...".

The problem arising with "reading with" is that it may end in the service of the coloniser, instead of liberating the colonised and transforming scholarship. This is reflected in, *Biblical scholars inventing ancient Israel and 'ordinary readers' of the Bible re-inventing Biblical studies* (1998), where West responds to the cultural exegesis of Daniel Smith-Christopher in, *Text and Experience: Toward a cultural Exegesis of the Bible* (1995). In the above-mentioned, Smith-Christopher (1995:16) asks whether the "exegesis of the poor" can contribute anything to scholarship: "...what we would like to know from liberation theologians is whether the poor Brazilian peasant who read the Bible can give any insights into what the text means *for others besides themselves*, let alone whether their observations can actually guide a process of rethinking historical-critical reconstruction of past events. *That* is the question of cultural exegesis of the Bible. Can the native American elder, the Indian or African student or scholar, give all of us new ideas about what the text *historically meant*?" West (1998:635) argues that non-scholarly readers do provide new insights: "The ordinary reader can enable Biblical scholars to see something they might have missed concerning what the text historically meant". West (1998:635) qualifies this response, by adding, that from a perspective of Liberation hermeneutics this implies that the "ordinary reader" should form the centre of the discipline itself. The question is, why would non-scholarly readers want to become the centre of an institution that promotes essentialist modes of reading and degrades non-Western culture?

Gloria Kehilwe Plaatjie (2001:36-38), is suspicious of West's 'reading-with', stating that it is in danger of being seen as a form of anthropological writing - namely, writing "about" and becoming an "authority" on black people. Maluleke (2000:94) states that the modern[188] dichotomy ordinary/critic is a form of institutional apartheid. Secondly, the categories are ambiguous, supplanting the divisions of gender, race, economic locations, and power relations that exist between, trained and untrained reader of the Bible. Thirdly, the formulation of the untrained-versus-trained highlights the uncritical acceptance of the ideologies, choices and commitments inherent in the 'training'.

[188] According to Segovia, (2000:79) West's mode of reading, leans on the oppositional modernist matrix which is hierarchial, empirical and objectivist.

West's reading highlights his ethical decision, to read in solidarity with the marginalised, black community and those oppressed by colonial racism. At the same time, his cultural matrix reflects an ordinary/critical reader dualism. In this regard, West does not escape from the essentialist cultural discourse of the West. "Reading with", remains indebted to Western essentialism that systematises and structures interpretation.

West's position, in terms of the interaction between scholars and non-scholars, has shown traces of transformation. In, *Indigenous exegesis: exploring the interface between missionary methods and the rhetorical rhythms of Africa; locating local reading resources in the academy (2002),* West proposes an indigenous mode of reading. West (2002:2) argues that 'critical' refers to the structured and systematic questions asked by scholars. In this regard, exegesis has shifted to mean the same as critical. "One consequence of this shift has been the recovery of so-called 'pre-critical' forms of exegesis – those structured and systematic set of questions that were used for centuries by the Church..."(West 2002:3). West (2002:3) focuses on "indigenous African forms of exegesis", from where he proposes a *'marabi'-mode of reading*. The problem is that he constructs an African mode in terms of 'structured and systematic questions'. In this regard, West seems to have shifted from an anti-colonial reading to an indigenous reading. Western essentialism, informs the former perspective, and the latter follows an uncritical reading of African culture.

4.2.2 Justin Ukpong

Ukpong highlights the role of inculturation hermeneutics, leaning on the work of Daniel Patte (1995) that rejects Schüssler-Fiorenza's (1988, 1999) linkage to Western essentialism and universal ethics (Ukpong 2002). Ukpong (2002:22) follows Patte, viewing the text as subject. In this regard, the scholar reads the Bible *with* non-scholarly readings in order to construct critical contextual readings.

Ukpong (2000:16) develops inculturation hermeneutics[189] that follows a holistic cultural discourse, whereby both secular (economic, social and political) and religious dimensions interconnect. He proposes that scholars read the Bible "with" "ordinary readers" of the Bible. "The characteristic of ordinary readers here include that they are strongly influenced by the world-view provided by their indigenous culture as opposed to the world-view of Western technological culture, and that they are poor, oppressed and marginalised" (Ukpong 2000:16). Further, the African context is the *subject* of interpretation of the Bible, informed by African socio-cultural perspectives (Ukpong 2000:16). Ukpong (2000:17) states: "...the basic hermeneutic theory at work is that the meaning of a text is a function of the interaction between the text in its context and the reader in his/her context".

Ukpong's (2002:19) inculturation hermeneutics does not fall prey to the notion of inscribed ideologies of the text: "the experience of ordinary people today...share existential conditions and experiences similar to those reflected in the Bible which seems to demand a privileged position in the understanding of the Bible. This is not to deny the hand of the elite in organizing and presenting the biblical material, and introducing their ideological positions into the text in the process. Rather, it is the awareness of this that has influenced the denial of the epistemological privilege to the elite to avoid a reinforcement of elite ideology in the reading. Bypassing such ideology emphasises the epistemological privilege of ordinary people. In that way the interests of ordinary people come to dominate the agenda for a liberating reading" (Ukpong 2002:19).

This implies that the epistemological privilege of the "ordinary reader" (or "common people" as opposed to the elite), results in a counter-narrative, that unravels the ideological traces, inscribed in the reading process, and the elitism of the scholarly guild[190] (Ukpong 2002:20). This is a transformation of the hierarchical relationship

[189] Ukpong (2002:19) writes: "People (African people in our case), identified socio-culturally as groups and defined in terms of their common identities and their concrete, socio-historical life situations, constitute the subject of interpretation of the Bible in the methodology of inculturation hermeneutics...It means that their socio-cultural-historical context provide the resources for the reading".

[190] Ukpong (2002:22) writes: "Reading 'with' ordinary readers has meant creating critical reading masses and building communities of faith that read the Bible critically. It is a mode of reading that makes it possible to overcome the predominance of the elite ideology in biblical interpretation".

between scholar and non-scholar by giving priority to non-scholarly readers. Scholars read text as part of the community, and facilitate the interactive process, that leads to the community constructing a critical interpretation of the text. "It is a collaborative reading process that transforms and enlarges the subjectivity of readers through hearing and appropriating the text with people whose personal experience and insights are different from one's own. It implies the recognition and affirmation of the otherness and personal worth of the other" (Ukpong 2002:21-22).

Inculturation hermeneutics implies that the meaning of a text is a function of the interaction between the text, studied in its socio-historical context, and the socio-cultural context of the reader. "The purpose of interpretation is to appropriate a text's meaning in a contemporary socio-cultural context. Biblical texts are seen as rooted in their historical contexts yet as plurivalent, capable of speaking to different situations and contexts across time and space" (Ukpong 2002:27). Although Ukpong (2002:20) claims that "ordinary readers" refer to the marginalised class of society, this diversity of meaning, resulting from the inter-textual connotative meaning, disregards the worldliness of the signifier in the reading process. His proposal that an elitist ideology will not usurp the poor is a dangerous illusion, if the commitment of scholars to the margin and holism, is not clearly stated. Otherwise, it will only lead to the construction of new essentialist readings that will continue Western cultural imperialism. Diverse interpretations are the result of the play of signifier's that results in a particular contextual construction. In this process, scholars systematise non-scholarly reading, resulting in an essentialist construction. The problem is that this reading duplicates cultural discourse, without providing a critique of culture, or the reading process. Ukpong steps into the same trap as Gadamer, by uncritically accepting culture, and failing to develop the critical dimension of African holistic culture.

In chapter 3, it became clear that non-scholarly readings from the margin and a holistic cultural matrix, resulted in a critical construction reflected in Mbatha's linocuts. His reading deconstructs essentialistic, disconnections between people, land and God. A participant, from the Montwood Park Bible study introduced the disconnection between men and women, as a critique of patriarchy. This emphasises,

that her holistic cultural matrix, resulted in a critical deconstruction of the forces of disconnection and injustice.

Ukpong's (2002:35) view regarding the relationship between Western and non-Western scholarship, in the following statement, is problematic: "Within the academy in the West, Third World biblical scholarship is regarded largely as outside the mainstream of biblical scholarship...Academic production in the Third World...hardly have a place in Western academic agenda's...It is my belief that as long as Third World biblical scholarship is consigned to the margin of biblical scholarship and therefore ignored or treated as of no consequence, we shall be still far from living out the global village concept". It seems that it is possible, for Ukpong, to exist beside Western scholarship, as if it is just another cultural construction. The history of colonialism and the essentialism of the scholarly enterprise, seems to dissolve into a happy global village where the ideological connection between Western and non-Western scholarship disappears.

Ukpong's "inculturation hermeneutics" is an attempt to incorporate the holistic cultural matrix of African readers. In this regard, holism offers a clear alternative to essentialist reductions of colonial discourse. The problem is that Ukpong's approach remains in the centre of African tradition and scholarly elitism. It fails to look inward at African culture and allows holism's critical dimension to develop.

4.2.3 Musa Dube

Dube (2002:49) asks whether inculturation hermeneutics can resist globalisation. Ukpong's inculturation hermeneutic reflects what is wrong with the turn to ethics in biblical scholarship. It has become a Western essentialist movement distinguishing between scholarly, western readings and non-scholarly, non-western readings, re-inscribing imperial hierarchies. Dube (2002:55) states that it ignores black theology and women, reflecting the “position of male academic church leaders”.

According to Dube (1996:12), globalisation perpetuated exclusivism and silencing by essentialist separation of scholarly and non-scholarly reading. Biblical scholarship is a major servant of these powers of dominance, therefore what is regarded as critical -

and ordinary readings closely reflects the global structures of dominance. These structures defines, exports, and markets what is worthy of study and what is not. "The so-called critical theories and methods of reading the Bible are thoroughly systematized cultural models of the West. These models are created and sustained by thousands of trained scholars through privileged institutions of financial donors" (Dube and West 1996:12). Readers from non-Western contexts are regarded as 'ordinary readers', "those who read from different cultural perspectives, those whose reading techniques are unrecognizable to Western trained readers, and those who stand outside the hall of mirrors for whatever reasons, but whose standards are still defined and seen through the structures that subordinate and marginalize differences" (West and Dube 1996:12).

Dube (1996, 2002) opts for a reading "from" the margin, learning from non-scholarly reading[191]. This refers to the critical dimension of the worldly cultural code of the non-scholar that construct decolonial readings, unravelling Western essentialism. Dube (1996:43) states that decolonisation is when the "colonized reread the imperializing texts and write new narratives that assert the adequacy of their humanity, the reality of global diversity, and their right to independence...Their practice challenges the Western or the so-called First World academic schools of cultural texts to expose and to reject the literary forms of imperialism, or to admit their acceptance of it...". This is not an acceptance of the scholar, as a value-neutral facilitator in the interpretation process, but acknowledges that scholarship itself is *worldly.* This promotes a reading strategy that destabilises essentialist modes, by interpreting from the world, with sensitivity for ethical questions that arise from the experiences of people.

Dube (1996:115) states that the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers is rooted in the potential of scholars to 'learn'[192] from non-scholarly readers:

[191] Phillips and Fewell (1997:2) writes: ".being a good reader of the Bible has very little to do with specialized training and a lot more to do with an informed understanding of the world. 'Ordinary readers'…despite the lack of formal schooling nevertheless bring powerful interpretative skill and rich experience to the reading of texts, biblical or otherwise. 'Tacit knowledge' proves to be every bit as credible and important as the technical skills, graduate programs privilege. Scholars should learn to pay greater attention to such readers and their readings".

[192] Tolbert (1995:351) continues: "Once the extent of one's 'educated' ignorance is acknowledged, the need to listen as carefully and as thoroughly as possible to the perceptions, experiences, and viewpoints

"This assertion was a genuine search, which in part acknowledges my own difference; that is, it recognizes the Western academic interpretative communities that inform my biblical interpretation and estranges me from their perspective. It was also an acknowledgement of my own position and their position as belonging to the suppressed knowledge's". This approach of Dube, reading 'from' the margin, highlights the suspicion she has of her own training. It is an attempt to search for modes of reading, that unravels essentialism and centralistic ethics, that inform colonial scholarly reading.

The mode of reading, from the margin, crosses over the rationalistic modes informed by Western scholarly training, by reading 'from' the 'world'. Dube's (1996:38) reading, informed by post-colonial theory, emphasises her sensitivity of African culture and the experiences of the colonised: "The victims of imperialism become the colonized, that is, those whose lands, minds, cultures, economies and political institutions have been taken possession of and rearranged according to the interests and values of the imperial powers...By its practice and its goals, imperialism is a relationship of subordination and domination..., which actively suppresses diversity and promotes a few universal standards for the benefit of those in power". This implies that imperialising interpretations promotes values and representations that legitimise expansionist tendencies, grounded in unequal international racial relations (Dube 1996:38).

Dube (2002:51) departs from Ukpong, whom she argues, follows an "*inculturation from above*" linked to missionary reading - an *evangelical preparation.* As an alternative, she proposes an "*inculturation from below"* that takes the ideological baggage of the text, as subject, seriously. It is a reading that incorporates an ethics of suspicion, linked to oppressive relations between male/female; coloniser/colonised; West/non-West and White/Black. Dube (2002:54) writes that women[193] challenge the patriarchy of indigenous readings and proposes the following:

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of those marginalized or traditionally silenced *before* attempting to act with them or on their behalf is indisputable"

[193] In *Feminist theology: a critical theology of liberation* (1999), Mary Grey, points out that various categories of feminism can be distinguished. In Europe and North America the term 'feminist theology' is accepted, Womanist theology (US black and Coloured women) in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and Mujerista theology (Hispanic women). The reason for this distinction is the difference between the Western and non-Western world. Feminist theology in the Northern Hemisphere are

- Engendered inculturation hermeneutics;
- A gender inclusive Christology;
- A critical reading both of the AR (African Religion) and of the biblical narrative;
- A scrutiny of biblical translations and how they have given male gender to God, even where indigenous names and concepts of God were gender neutral, and how this affects women in society; and
- A mode of reading that emphasises African culture and highlights the presence of women in their search for liberation.

Dube (2002:55) writes that Black and African Theologies propose the validity of African Christianity and the legitimacy of African culture, but that African Feminist/Womanist theology includes ideological critique to this. "This theology is mounting a critique of both African culture and African Christianity in ways that previous African theologies have not been able to. From these theologies, we may learn how to be truly African yet critical of aspects of African culture". An example of this is the use of African myth like the *African blue bird song* that perpetuates sexist stereotypes of women, blaming women for the separation between God and humanity. Avorti's interpretation of Genesis 11:1-9 reflects this perspective (See chapter 3).

Dube's reading from the margin is a responsible reading, which deconstructs the inscribed imperialism of essentialistic reading processes and remains located in the subject position of the reader. This subject position is not severed from other contexts, but are connected through the imperial relations between Western and non-Western contexts. In this regard, non-western reading from the colonised margin engages the text from the perspective of their experience of Western imperialism, exploitation, patriarchy, unemployment, low wages and alienation from the land. Dube's "reading from" is an interface between holism and a reading from the margin. She is aware of the essentialistic and centralistic traces that inform scholarship, hence, she reads the Bible from the experience of non-scholarly, non-Western readers from the margin.

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usually associated with the secular feminist movement which followed the Universal Declaration of

4.3 Theological-ethical reflection of Desmond Tutu's reading of Genesis 11:1-9: Constructing a Liminal Space

In this section, I will propose that Tutu's reading of Genesis 11:1-9 constructs a liminal space, through the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading, from the margin. In this regard, the coloniser/colonised dichotomy do not enclose his reading praxis. It reflects an interconnected cultural matrix informed by the African concept *ubuntu* that deconstructs Western essentialism, from the experiences of the colonised other. Tutu develops a Black African hermeneutic that incorporates the African *ubuntu* matrix and an ethical cutting edge that reads the Bible against the grain of colonial racism. 'Black' refers to the influence of Black hermeneutics from the United States on 'South' African scholarship and 'African' highlights the influence of African hermeneutics.

In this section, I will propose that although Tutu's reading refers to the African cultural worldview in terms of *ubuntu*, it reflects the influence of Western humanism and theology. The liminal space constructed by Tutu implodes when interacting with holistic non-scholarly readings, from the margin of the 'South' African context, (discussed in chapter 3) that connect people, land and God.

4.3.1 African Theology and Desmond Tutu

Ukpong (2000:4) distinguishes between three developmental phases of African scholarship:

Phase I (1930-1970): A reactive, apologetic, focussing on legitimisation of African culture and religion, mostly through comparative method[194];

Human Rights (Grey 1999:90).

[194] Comparative studies focused on the legitimisation of African religion and culture. This is reflected in the work of Joseph John Williams (1930) *Hebrewism of West Africa: from Nile to Niger with the Jews* (Ukpong 2000:5-6). Later the methodological weakness of comparative method was improved on by comparative religion, in the work of Mbiti and others. The focus shifted to studies of Africa-in-the-Bible that investigate the presence of Africa and African peoples in the Bible and the significance of such presence. The overall purpose was to articulate Africa's influence on the history of ancient Israel and Africa's contribution to the history of salvation, as well as to correct negative interpretations of some biblical texts on Africa (Ukpong, 2000:7). This research is referred to as 'Afrocentrism'. These studies correct negative images of Africa and African peoples, like the racist connotations to the story

Phase II (1970-1990): A reactive-proactive mode in which the African context is the source, using inculturation-evaluative and liberative methods[195];
Phase III (1990's): A proactive mode, focusing on ordinary readers with African context as subject, using liberation and inculturation methods.

In 'South' Africa, colonial racism permeates throughout Ukpong's three-phase division. In this regard, there is an interface between phase I and II in the 'South' African context resulting in Black African hermeneutics. This mode of reading incorporates the use of the African cultural matrix and Black Theology from the United States of America, reflected in the work of Tutu. This interface has not been without controversy as can be seen in the debate been Mbiti[196] and Tutu.

Mbiti[197] (1979:477) views Black Theology as a reactionary theology birthed from the failure of Christianity to be just: "Black Theology is a painful phenomenon in the history of the Church". He traces it back to the arrival of slaves from Africa in the USA and the African origins of Black theology (Mbiti 1979:478). It has a context of suffering, sorrow and anger and is an embarrassment to Christianity in the USA. A problem is the focus on colour[198]. Mbiti (1979:479) states: "For Black Theology blackness has become an ideology embracing much of life and thinking of Negroes in America, whether their skin colour is black, dark brown, light brown, khaki or coffee,

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of Ham in Genesis 9:18-27 (Ukpong 2000:7-8). Then there are those that study African people in the Bible and their contribution to biblical history of Temba Mafico and Divid T Adamo (Ukpong 2000:9).

[195] Later evaluative studies focused on the encounter of African religion and culture with the Bible, and evaluate the theological underpinnings, resulting from this encounter (Ukpong 2000:9). The aim is to facilitate the communication of the biblical message within the African milieu, and to evolve a new understanding of Christianity that would be African and biblical. "Generally, the historical-critical method is used for the analysis of the biblical text, and anthropological or sociological approaches are used in analysing the African situation" (Ukpong 2000:9). An example of this approach is Patrick Kalilombe work (Ukpong 2000:9).

[196] The African theologian Mbiti is critical of Black Theology and does not regard it as African. In the publication: *Black Theology/African Theology – Soul mates or Antagonists?* Tutu (1979) reacts to Mbiti's critique of Black Theology.

[197] Anderson (1991:20) writes: "Mbiti, Idowu and Setiloane...concentrate on 'African Theology' in the narrower religiocultural sense – which often involves casting traditional African religions within a Western academic and theological framework. Ostensibly, African Theology is ' an attempt to give African expression to the Christian faith within a theological framework". On the other hand, Black Theology is an urban form of African Theology, related to socio-political resistance to Afrikaner colonialism. Daneel states that this is an oversimplification. He points out that African theology also contains the dimension of liberation evident in the contribution of AIC's (Daneel 1989:xxxi).

[198] Mbiti (1979:478) writes: "One such concern is 'blackness' itself. It wants to see 'blackness' in everything. It speaks of a Black God, Black Church and Black Liberation, Black this and Black that...It is necessary to remind oneself that racial colour is not a theological concept in the Scriptures".

or even if they have a remote African ancestry and most of their biological heritage is actually French, English, Scottish, American Indian or other. All are ‘black’.

Furthermore, Mbiti (1979:479) is critical of the view that the Bible is a book of liberation. To him, this is a limiting view: “When the immediate concerns of liberation are realized, it is not at all clear where Black Theology is supposed to go. Black Theology is deeply ‘eschatological’, yet its eschatological hopes are not clearly defined. There is no clue as to when one arrives at the paradise of ‘liberation’”. Mbiti (1979:481) concludes that Black Theology cannot and will not become African Theology. African Theology arises from the joy of the experience of Christian faith, it is not restrictive in concerns, nor is it an ideology and it's concerned with Africa and the problems and joys of Africa[199] (Mbiti 1979:481-482).

In his response, Tutu (1979:484-485) argues that there are unquestionable links between the Blacks in the United States of America and 'South' Africa, namely:

- Skin;
- The bond with Africa, and the colonial racism;
- Both were baptised and are part of the body of Christ. This implies that black people are compelled to help the whites to correct many of the distortions that have happened to the gospel to the detriment of all.

Tutu (1979:487) emphasises that there are similarities between Black - and African hermeneutics:

Firstly, African hermeneutics resists Eurocentric Christian cultural discourse by reading the Bible from the African cultural matrix. In the USA, the same process is present where Black people read the Bible form the cultural matrix of Black culture to resist White essentialist reductions. So, both promote the humanness and agency of Black people. Tutu writes (1979:487): “They stake the claim for the personhood and humanity of the African and Afro-American, for anything less than this is blasphemy against God who created us as we are in His own image, not to be carbon copies of

[199] “African Theology has no interest in colouring God or Christ black, no interest in reading liberation into every text, no interest in telling people to think or act ‘black’” (Mbiti 1979:482).

others of His creatures no matter how advanced and prosperous they might conceive themselves to be".

Secondly, both are a theological critique of Western universalism and essentialism. Both develop a contextual hermeneutic traced back to Africa.

Black Theology deconstructs African Theology through the critique of the placid nature of African Theology that focuses on "anthropological concerns". African Theology needs the "existential urgency" of Black Theology. The explicit political dimension of Black Theology provides this, especially in the 'South' African context. Tutu (1979:490) states: "I myself believe I am an exponent of Black Theology coming as I do from South Africa. I also believe I am an exponent of African Theology coming as I do from Africa. I contend that Black Theology is like the inner and smaller circle in a series of concentric circles...I and others from South Africa *do* Black Theology, which is for us, at this point, African theology". African Theology, according to Tutu (1979:490), has lost its cutting edge because it remains ignorant of ethical and political issues concerning Africa such as poverty, military coups and health. This can change, according to Tutu (1979:490), only when a radical spiritual decolonisation occurs within each exponent of African theology that unravels the notion that a Western value system and categories are of universal validity. He challenges African hermeneutics to move beyond comparative method[200] and be African by embracing the wholeness of being, humanity, transcendence and the spirit of Africa - *ubuntu* (Tutu 1979:491).

[200] African Theology, like that of Mbiti (1979) fails, through comparative method, to interpret the text from the worldview of the people and remains limited to essentialism. Anderson (1991:18) writes: "Mbiti tends to translate African concepts of man into Western theological terms, which in the light of all that has been said thus far, is unsatisfactory. Thus he considers that African peoples see man in two main parts: the physical and the non-physical, and that this is a universal belief among all African peoples. Mbiti does not emphasise the essential unity of man in African traditional thought in his attempt to make this acceptable to Western theology". This reconstruction of an "objective phenomenon as an African traditional world view" or an "ethnographical approach" failed to engage "present-day Africans and their existential situation" (Anderson 1991:22). It will become clear from Tutu's reading of Genesis 11:1-9 that he incorporates the experience of non-scholarly readers that introduces the ethical cutting edge absent from African Theology.

With the rise of material analysis, Tutu's hermeneutic is criticised by scholars like Mosala[201]. Mosala (1989:17) is critical of the lack of sensitivity, regarding the ideological nature of the Bible, of Black hermeneutics, like that of Tutu, that refer to the Bible as the "Word of God". Mosala states that although the Black experience of oppression and exploitation provides the epistemological lens through which the God of the Bible is viewed, as the God of liberation, they remain enslaved to the wider neo-orthodox theological praxis in reference to the Bible, as a hermeneutical starting point: “Paradoxically, black theology’s notion of the Bible as the Word of God carries the implication that there is such a thing as a non-ideological appropriation of Scripture. Black theologians condemn white people’s view of God and Jesus Christ as apolitical, that is, above ideologies, on the one hand; but they maintain a view of Scripture as the absolute, non-ideological Word of God that can be made ideological only by being applied to the situation of oppression, on the other hand” (Mosala 1993:53). Mosala (1989:18) links this kind of reference to the Bible as an ideological manoeuvre that protects ruling-class interests evident in the Bible. These interests convert into faith postulates that transcend social, political, racial, sexual, and economic divisions. This turns the Bible into an inter-classist and a-historical, document[202].

The problem with Mosala's materialist mode of reading is its indebtedness to the Western cultural discourse, traced back to Marx and Engels. Said (1994:203) writes: "...on September 17, 1857, Engels spoke of the Moors of Algeria as a ‘timid race’ because they were repressed but ‘reserving nevertheless their cruelty and vindictiveness while in moral character, they stand very low’, he was merely echoing, French colonial doctrine”.

The problem with Mosala's critique of Tutu is his proposed linkage between text and ideology. Tutu's reading of Genesis 11:1-9 will reveal that his Black African

[201] Mosala's (1986:176) criticism is rooted in Marxism: “....we will take our cue from the words of Marx when he writes: The weapons of criticism cannot of course, replace criticism of the weapon, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses. Theory is capable of gripping the masses as soon as it demonstrates *ad hominem*, and it demonstrates *ad hominem* as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But for man the root is man himself”.

[202] "For the 'Word of God' cannot be the object of criticism. Least of all can the 'Word of God' be critiqued in the light of the black experience. The only appropriate response is obedience. At best the black experience can be seen in the light of the 'Word of God' but not vice versa" (Mosala 1986:178)

hermeneutic incorporates the experience of non-scholarly readers, from the margin of the 'South' African context, that deconstruct the essentialist paradigm of colonial racism. Colonial ideology deconstructs from the margin through the interaction of text and reader.

4.3.2 *Ubuntu*[203]

Tutu locates his hermeneutic in the African context and culture highlighted by his *ubuntu* reading of the Bible. *Ubuntu* is derived from the Xhosa expression, "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye bantu*" which translates to "a person depends on other persons to be a person" or "I am because we are" (Battle 1996:99-100). Battle (1996:100) traces the first reference to "*ubuntu"* by Tutu back to *"My search for God"*, (St Mary's Jubilee Lenten Talks, St Alban's, Ferreirarstown, 5 April 1979). In 1972 he already stated: "In the African *Weltanschauung*, a person is not basically an independent solitary entity. A person is human precisely in being enveloped in the community of other human beings, in being caught up in the bundle of life" (Berger 1996:100).

Tutu (1999:34) states: "*Ubuntu* is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, '*Yu, u nobuntu*'; 'Hey, he or she has *ubuntu*'. This means they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate". *Ubuntu* is the African ethos that brings about peace and harmony. At the same time, however, it is critical of all that introduces chaos and disharmony. Tutu (1999:35) states: "*Ubuntu* means that in a real sense even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. Our humanity was intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid's atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanized as well".

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[203] Skhakhane (2000:126) writes that the African balances collective and individual identity. A person is firstly part of a particular community, for it is the community which defines who a person is and can become. According to Skhakhane (2000:126) *ubuntu* also refers to the spirit world and the intimate relationship between community, individual and the ancestors. This implies that the there must always be a good relationship between the individual and his ancestors. Further, this relationship is reinforced and sustained through rites and rituals throughout one's life. "Therefore '*ubuntu*' is the ability to relate well to nature and to other people because you relate well to your ancestors" (Skhakhane 2000:126).

The role of *ubuntu* in the theology of Tutu has led Battle (1996:93) to the conclusion that Tutu has an "*Ubuntu* Theology" or "an absolute dependence on God and neighbour in such a way that the eventuality of human identity is discovered therein" or "*imago* Dei as human interdependence". *Ubuntu* is not only a typically African worldview but is at the same time critical of white Western culture. Battle (1996:96) states: "*Ubuntu* is not humanism in the Western sense of favouring Enlightenment notions that truth claims are located in the rational capacities of individuals. The African conceptualization of being human is antithetical to Enlightenment notions, because Western humanism tends more toward materialism than toward an African balance between material and spiritual realities".

Ubuntu refers to respect for the full humanity of all people (Battle 1996:97). In terms of apartheid, *ubuntu* "disallows false dichotomies of Black and White people" (Battle 1996:101). A system that values humanity, in terms of race, is unintelligible, from the point of view of *ubuntu*. Tutu (1999:51) states: "…when I dehumanize you I inexorably dehumanize myself". In this respect, reconciliation in 'South' Africa implies that whites regain there own humanity. "This kind of justice seeks to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community, he or she has injured by his or her offence" (Tutu 1999:51-52). Tutu's ethics of interpretation reflects the African ethos - *ubuntu*, holism, peace, unity or "shalom". This ethos is also the starting point for justice, rejecting dualism and egoism that ends in racism and exploitation of apartheid - "to be Black in South Africa means to be an object of colonisation, disinheritance and exploitation" (Saayman 1991:23).

Values like equality and justice related to the Civil Rights movement in the United States of America inform Tutu's *ubuntu* reading (West 1991:72). He combines the perspectives of Martin Luther King Jnr and the African worldview (Berger 1999:100). Tutu's *ubuntu* reading draws on the analogy between *ubuntu*, as a reference to equality and interconnectedness, and the ideals of human freedom and dignity of the French Revolution reflected in the Declaration of Human Rights. In this regard, Tutu follows a reconciliation strategy highlighted by his notion of 'South' Africa as the

'Rainbow Nation'[204] (West 1991:72). In the next section, I will propose that this linkage between *ubuntu* and Western humanism limits the potential of an *ubuntu* reading to develop into a holistic cultural discourse.

4.3.3 Desmond Tutu and Genesis 11:1-9

Tutu (1983:39) opens his interpretation of Genesis 11:1-9 by writing: "In this essay I wish to show that apartheid, 'separate development', 'parallel democracy,' or whatever this racist ideology is currently called is evil: totally and without reminder". In this regard, he deals "not with statistics, but with people who know that they too, despite all appearances to the contrary, are God's children and not His stepchildren" (Tutu 1983:39). This reference of Tutu clearly reflects his commitment to serve the people and listen to the experiences of non-scholarly readers of the Bible.

Tutu highlights the role of the concept "shalom" that he regards as the theological core of the Bible. Tutu (1983:39) states: "The Bible reveals that God's intention for all His creation and for all humankind is harmony, peace, unity, fellowship, friendship, justice and righteousness – conditions summed up in the almost untranslatable Hebrew word '*shalom*'"[205]. This fuses an analogy with the harmonious interconnected cultural discourse of Africa reflected in the reading of a member from the Optima Bible Study group that argued that people are "one".

From this Tutu (1983:39-40) turns to the creation narrative: "In view of the biblical storyteller in the first creation narrative, the climax is reached when God creates human beings, and the most important feature of that part of the story is that they are created in the image of God (Gen 1:26). This is man's most important attribute. The Bible at this point makes no reference to racial, ethnic or biological characteristics – which is remarkable considering that the piece of writing in which this information is found is in a proper sense chauvinistic". A woman form the Montwood Park group,

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[204] See Neville Richardson's *Why Christian ethics needs Africa* (1996) In *Archbishop Tutu: Prophetic Witness in South Africa*. Eds. L Hulley, L Kretzschmar and LL Pato.

[205] He then inserts a section on the theological semantics of 'shalom' by C.F. Evans in Alan Richards (ed), *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (1950) in which it is described as totality, well being, harmony, material prosperity untouched by violence, etc.

dispelling patriarchy, also emphasised the fact that God creates people in his image. All people are equal.

Scholarly consensus regarding the presence of two creation narratives in the Bible informs Tutu's reading. This reflects that Tutu fuses scholarly and non-scholarly readings. Tutu (1983:40) states that the style of the creation narrative reflecting God's purpose for creation follows in poetic and highly imaginative language: "The first creation narrative (Gen 1:1-2:4) ends with a description of the universe at peace. Man rules over the created universe on God's behalf. There is order and harmony. The narrative alludes to this poetically when it shows that all animate nature is vegetarian. There is no bloodshed, not even for sacrificial purposes. Here we find God's *shalom*" (Tutu 1983:40).

The second creation narrative reflects the same state of affairs: "The second creation narrative containing the stories of Adam and Eve and their descendents describe the idyllic condition in the paradise of Eden. Adam and Eve live in childlike innocence gambolling with the animals, none of which preys on the others. Lion and calf live happily together. There is harmony between God and man (sic), between man (sic) and his fellow man (sic), between man (sic) and the rest of God's creation. And man (sic) is at peace with himself as well (Gen 2:5-25)" (Tutu 1983:40).

Sin corrupts God's intention: "The negative description depicts the situation when God's intention has been thwarted for the time being. The picture we get is of disorder, disharmony, alienation and estrangement. There is here for the first time in the creation story separation and disunity" (Tutu 1983:40). However, the tension, introduced with the fall of humanity, will not last forever: "Creation must await the setting free of man (sic) when it too will be liberated to celebrate the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thus separation, disunity and division are all due to sin and are contrary to the divine purpose" (Tutu 1983:41).

These narratives on the intention of God for creation and the corruption caused by sin culminates in Genesis 11:1-9: "The Old Testament proto-history culminates in the fearful story of the Tower of Babel where because of human sin ('hubris'), God confuses men's (sic) tongues so that they are unable to communicate (Gen 11:7)"

(Tutu 1983:40). Once again, sin destroys the peaceful co-existence of humanity and they disperse to all corners of the earth. Tutu (1983:40) states that this is not what God purposed for humanity: Consequently, with the whole situation crying out for reconciliation, for at-one-ment" (Tutu 1983:40). This argument is similar to that of the Diakonia Bible Study groups, stating that the separation is not a new creation order. Humanity and all of creation is intimately connected and sin disrupts this connection. The experience of colonial racism disrupted the holistic worldview of Africa, sensitising the reader to the ideological connection between the dispersion and a racist ideology.

Tutu follows scholars like Von Rad arguing that the Tower is a sign of human arrogance. Von Rad (1963:147) writes: "What the narrative portrays is something thoroughly primeval; it shows how men in their striving for fame, alliance, and political development set themselves against God. But a punishment befell them. They who were so concerned with unity and alliance now live scattered in a disorder in which they can no longer understand one another". According to Von Rad (1963:148), this is part of human cultural history with Babylon as the original seat of all cultures. In this regard, the narrative that Von Rad allocates to the Yahwist loosely connects to the Table of nations in chapter 10 explaining humanities division into nations. The narrative in the context of Genesis 10 argues that the result of diverse nations is the result of sinful rebellion against God (hubris)[206].

The problem with the reading of Von Rad is that it ends at this point of difference without continuing the argument by accounting for the positive aspects of unity. Tutu follows Westermann's line of argument focussing on the restoration of unity. Westermann (1984:556) states that primeval and eschatological time often corresponds in the Old Testament[207]. For Westermann the variety also serves humanity in dislodging false ambitions and fame of verse 4.

[206] "The multitude of nations indicates not only the manifold quality of God's creative power but also a judgment, for the disorder in the international world, which our narrative regards as the sad conclusion, was not willed by God but is punishment for the sinful rebellion against God" (Von Rad 1963:148).

[207] Westermann (1984:557) notes that the focus has to turn to the future when barriers will be abolished: "This is the context of Acts 2:11 where the good news of the Christ bursts the language barriers...But it does not in any way alter the plurality and difference of languages".

Tutu (1983:40) follows a similar argument as Westermann (1984:557) that links the narrative to the New Testament, stating that God sets in motion the divine process that culminated in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ: "We might say then that the rest of the story of the Bible is how God goes about repairing the damage that sin caused, restoring the primordial harmony and unity that sin destroyed". The Bible is concerned re-establishing "shalom" through Jesus Christ (Tutu 1983:40).

Following the same reference concerning eschatology, Tutu (1983:40) writes that the "descriptions of paradise regained, of the so-called Messianic age, echo descriptions of the time of the beginning" (Tutu 1983:40). The 'Messianic age' will be the age when creation returns to the way God intended it to be, as is reflected in Isaiah 11 – the end of conflict and violence (Tutu 1983:40). Tutu (1983:40) refers to Hermann Gunkel regarding the eschatalogical time: "'*Endzeit ist Urzeit*' – 'The end time is the beginning time'".

A distinct deviation from Westermann is Tutu's resistance to his unqualified positive appraisal of difference. This is due to the experience of dehumanisation of apartheid. Tutu (1983:40-41) writes: "Apartheid contradicts the testimony of the Bible categorically. Whereas the Bible says God's intention for humankind and for His entire universe is harmony, peace, justice, wholeness, fellowship, apartheid says that human beings fundamentally are created for separation, disunity and alienation. The apologists of apartheid have sometimes used the story of the Tower of Babel as divine sanction for their ideology of 'separate development' and ethnic identity".

Tutu has no problem with the idea of cultural differences and states: "There is, of course, nothing wrong with racial and cultural identity; in fact, we should celebrate these divine gifts. But we should not give them an importance God never intended for them. It is surely a perverse exegesis to say that a story that clearly describes God's punishment for human sin and depicts that punishment as an inability on man's part to establish communication and community with fellow humans, is in fact one that sets forth God's intention for His human creatures...The Old Testament knows of only one legitimate separation among persons and that is the separation between believers and pagans. Every other kind is sinful" (Tutu 1983:42).

A participant, from the Diakonia group, also reflects this sensitivity: "Unity is not similar mindedness, but rather focussing on one purpose – to reach out and not sit in our comfort zones of homogeneity". The context of the primary unity of all people informs views regarding difference. Difference can never be the final word on humanity. Difference is the result of sin that caused the scattering. Another reader, from the Diakonia group, said: "We are building on our democracy with different bricks. We are different cultures that form one building".

Tutu (1983:43) continues by emphasizing the centrality of the Biblical message of "shalom" in Christ's work of reconciliation: "He unites God's children of all races, colours, cultures, sexes and nationalities in one fellowship, thereby transcending all those barriers and distinctions humans often regard as overriding. This work is continued in the person of the Holy Spirit that brings diverse peoples into one fellowship". A member of the Diakonia group echoes this perspective: "Differences do not have to confuse. It is still possible to communicate. It does not have to be a hindrance – rainbow nation. We have to be creative in order to move beyond our differences and for understanding to be possible". The Holy Spirit, in Tutu's reading, is an external power that enters people, forging a connection between people. This perspective differs from Mbatha's reading that presupposes an internal spiritual link between people and the land. A member of the Montwood Park group also referred to the fact that the indwelling of the Spirit of God presupposes unity. In this regard, life without the Spirit is impossible.

Pentecost is the reversal of the Tower of Babel narrative. "The building of Babel resulted in a dispersal of peoples. At Pentecost there was a gathering in and bringing together of different peoples from the various parts of the globe" (Tutu 1983:44). The sin of Babel was "to storm heaven" but "praise God" at Pentecost. Thus, the hubris is left behind and "shalom" restored.

Tutu (1983:44) writes: "The first creation narrative was written during the Babylonian exile, and in part was meant to bolster the sagging morals of the Jewish exiles, by showing just how much greater their God was than the Babylonian deities. In proper sense therefore it was intended to be chauvinistic propaganda". What is significant according to him, is that although the writing of the text is that of chauvinistic

propaganda, the climax in Gen 1:26 with the creation of human beings in the image of God is inclusive – "(that) persons are created in the divine image is meant to apply to all human beings" (Tutu 1983:44). This is remarkable, because it would have been "understandable if the author had somehow indicated that it applied only to Jews" (Tutu 1983:44). Race or ethnicity does not play a role in this narrative, "every human being is God's representative" (Tutu 1983:44). Apartheid negates this by turning a "biological characteristic to a universal principle", determining our worth.

Tutu (1983:45-46) concludes: "In concrete terms, apart from the deep hurts that the apartheid policy daily inflicts on all its victims…, such as the assault on human dignity when a black adult is addressed as 'boy' or 'girl'; when any black over sixteen years can be accosted in the street and asked to produce a document proving his right to be there; when a black cannot expect the common courtesies as a right; when a shop assistant looks at him with dead eyes that light up when a white person is addressed with a smile – there is the agony of 'grand apartheid', the policy designed to turn blacks into aliens in their own land, so that there will be no black South Africans...I have visited many such dumping grounds and will never forget the little girl who said that when there is no food to borrow, they drink water to fill their stomachs". Real peace and security will come to our beloved land only when apartheid has been dismantled. "I have no doubt that this will happen. If God (is) for us, who can be against us?" (Tutu 1983:47).

Tutu's interpretation places the Tower of Babel narrative in the wider canonical context. In this regard, through the creation narrative the intention of God is *shalom* (an analogy for *ubuntu*). The Tower of Babel reveals the sin of humanity ('to storm heaven') that destroys unity. The dispersion is therefore not the intention of God for creation, but the result of the corruption of God's intention or *shalom*. The reconciliation of Christ and the Holy Spirit returns the peace and unity to creation corrupted by sin. In this sense, the text is read as a synchronic unit.

Tutu's reading incorporates scholarly research and the experiences of non-scholarly readers. It constructs a liminal space where the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading constructs decolonial interpretations for the 'South' African context. Tutu's interpretation is a constructive post-colonial reading. It is a reading

from the people's experience of colonial racism and exploitation reflecting solidarity with the margin. At the same time, an interconnected worldview forms the basis of Tutu's reading from the margin. In other words, the experience of oppression reflects the impact of disconnection on the people of 'South' Africa as a whole. Colonial racism disconnect White and Black people. Tutu addresses Mbiti's critique of Black Theology by developing an African Black Theology. A theology that interprets the text from the experience of colonial racism informed by an African, interconnected worldview. In the case of Mosala's critique of Tutu's hermeneutic, Tutu emphasises the deconstructive impulse of a reading from the margin informed by an African connected worldview. Imperial ideologies are unravelled within the text-reader interaction, resulting in the construction of a liberative reading. In other words, the movement of reading against the grain of the imperial impulse from the centre destabilises colonial constructions from where the connected worldview of the reader constructs new contextual readings.

The major criticism that remains of Tutu's reading of Genesis 11:1-9 is that the interconnected worldview that informs his critique of essentialism and racism is not holistic. The link between people, geographical space and the spiritual realm remain absent from Tutu's reading. Although, Tutu's reading contain elements of non-scholarly readers regarding an interconnected worldview these notion reflect Western humanistic ideas. *Ubuntu*, seems like the presentation of Western humanistic ideas like democracy in African dress. Tutu's understanding of the Holy Spirit reflects his link to Western ecclesiology. From the reading of Mbatha the Spirit is understood as an internal power and linkage between the people, land and God. In this regard, the healing dimension of Tutu's reading is limited to the forging of peaceful relations between people. It says nothing about the disconnection from the land and the spiritual realm itself. In this regard, I now turn to the African Independent Church as a contextual development and the role of *Moya.*

4.4 African Independent Churches (AIC) and *Moya*[208]

4.4.1 African Independent Churches (AIC)

4.4.1.1 The rise of African Independent Churches (AIC)

The AIC has two inter-related functions: Firstly, it is a form of resistance ecclesiology and theology; and secondly, it is a contextual spiritual home for African Christians.

According to Nthamburi (1990:43-44), the genesis of the African Independent Churches can be traced to the advent of European colonisation in Africa: "One thing that is significant in the independent church movement is that most churches, particularly those that were founded in the early period, arose out of the protest against white domination within the mission-founded churches. It was a protest against political domination".

The God of western civilising mission was a God so distant and so foreign to the history of the colonized peoples. Exploited and oppressed, they found it difficult to identify this God with the God of Exodus, who becomes aware of the situation of oppression and servitude in which the people find themselves. In this respect, the Bible, and the Old Testament in particular, primarily – and in a special way – has the role in African religious movements of expressing the reaction and revolt of African Christians within the institutional churches in which the despised, humiliated human being lives in a relationship to God under the rubric of absence (Nthamburi 1990:44).

Several factors contributed to the emergence of indigenous churches according to Villa-Vicencio (1988:31-32):

- Exclusion of Blacks from leadership positions in established mission churches.
- Racism in established churches;
- Disciplinary measures in the case of Black insubordination;
- Western schismatic and denominational practices;
- Subordination of women;

[208] *Moya* is a Sotho word that refers to the Spirit.

- Personal leadership conflicts;
- Commitment by African Christians to incorporate their own cultural and traditional religious ideas into their churches. Mission churches were experienced by black converts as foreign as colonialism itself.

In the period between 1900 and the 1960's segregationist policies and later apartheid, were seen as an alternative to integration. Within this scenario, European-White culture could continue without the influence of African culture. Mission churches sought to uplift or Westernise Blacks without any regard for their culture and tradition[209].

The link between African Independent Churches and the political aspirations of Africans plays a salient role in the resistance of colonialism. In this respect, the development of AIC is a reaction against the influence of Western Christianity's link to colonialism and socio-economic exploitation. In terms of the AIC as a socio-religious reaction to "Western Christianity" in South Africa, De Gruchy (1995:28) makes a distinction between "settler Christianity" and "missionary Christianity".

The influx of Dutch and later British settlers who transported their brand of Christianity to the new colony forms the historical roots of settler Christianity. This led to the planting of European churches like the Dutch Reformed Church and the German Lutheran Church followed, later in the nineteenth century, by denominations from Britain (Anglican, Methodist, Wesleyan, etc.) and the Roman Catholic Church.

"Missionary Christianity" refers to the influence of missionary activity among the indigenous peoples and the slaves brought to the Cape as slaves. What both these forms of Christianity had in common was their link to Europe and the process of colonialism. In this regard, resistance to apartheid has a relationship with resistance of "settler Christianity" and the yearning of the settler community to remain connected to the "old country" and its culture.

[209] "Thus the indigenous churches were born as structural alternatives to the traditional Western, white, European-type structures found not only in the English-speaking churches but also in the black churches" (Villa-Vicencio 1988:32).

The holistic spirituality of the AIC reflects its contextual nature. The support of apartheid by the Dutch Reformed Church highlights its Western essentialist cultural baggage and the inability or fear of adapting to a new context. The AIC is a breath of fresh air providing a contextual space for new experiences, and readings from the cultural matrix of Africa. The AIC is a contextual phenomenon moving beyond a Western cosmology, deconstructing Western essentialist theology and ecclesiology through an African experience. At the same time, the AIC is a movement beyond the narrow Western confines that missionary Christianity prescribed. The AIC provides a spiritual location that links the day-to-day experiences of a marginalised community and God so that people can re-centre. In this regard, AIC reflects the need of colonised non-Western believers for a space to express their faith within their cultural context. Western imperialism – linked to the civilising mission – viewed African culture as primitive and superstitious. The AIC's gives Africans a channel to express their faith within their own cultural matrix. In this regard, people are free to move beyond the stark separation between physical and spiritual reality. This happens by embracing a holistic spirituality.

The AIC is not only a reactive phenomenon but also an authentic expression of the spiritual yearning of Africans. Maimela (1985:71) writes that the African Independent Church movement came about because of the 'spiritual hunger'[210] of people. "A large number of African Christians believe that the church is not interested in their daily misfortunes, illness, encounter with evil and witchcraft, bad luck, poverty, barrenness – in short, all their concrete social problems..." (Maimela 1985:71).

In *Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a study of African Independent Churches* (1991), Inus Daneel (1991:18) states that the AIC is, for Black Africans that have been socially, culturally and spiritually uprooted, a 'place to feel at home'. 'Independent' points to the fact that these churches are independent from Western-orientated (or mainline churches) that developed as a reaction against missions and colonialism. Daneel (1991:18) proposes that these churches are not only part of a

[210] "The gospel proclaimed by white missionaries was often superficial and impoverished; it did not even touch on many facets of the life or struggle of the African. There was no answer to man's concrete physical needs" (Anderson 1991:30).

reactionary movement, but are institutions in their own right. Turner (Daneel 1991:31) states that this church is: "a church which has been founded in Africa, by Africans, and primarily for Africans"[211].

Daneel traces the roots of this movement back to Kimpa Vita[212]. Southern African examples are Mantsopa Makheta (born in Lesotho in 1793) and Nongqause[213], the Xhosa prophetess[214] (Daneel 1991:47).

Daneel (1991:85) argues that the translation of the Bible into tribal vernacular was one of the fundamental reasons for the rise of the AIC. He states that the Bible was the first printed literature in Africa and hence literacy became an essential attribute to enable people to read the Bible. Literacy often went hand in hand with baptism and confirmation – therefore the written text had tremendous importance. The printed word had the effect that people could read the Bible for themselves. This resulted in the critique of missionary interpretations. People realised that they remained silent regarding certain issues. This led to "the discovery that the Bible does not speak only of the soul and its redemption, but also of social justice, in a way that the missionaries tended to conceal; that there was in Scripture a spontaneity, a vitality and a dynamic which was apparently lacking in the rigid structures of the missionary agencies" (Daneel 1991:85). Of particular importance was the analogy between the African worldview and the Old Testament, leading to questions, concerning polygamy and sexuality, issues missionaries concealed. More important was the apparent support of the *ancestor cult*. The importance of the fifth command is an example. This is all part of the 'cultural exposure' of people to Western culture and its 'text' (Daneel 1991:83).

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[211] Turner (Daneel 1991:32) defines the AIC as follows: "an Independent Church is a new movement arising from the interaction between a tribal community and its religion on one hand, and a heterogeneous foreign culture intruding with its (Christian) religion on the other".

[212] A Congolese girl, Kimpa Vita, baptized as Béatrice, started making appearances as a prophetess. She claimed divine intervention in which the spirit of St Anthony took possession of her. She sold all her possessions and fiercely attacked the Roman Catholic Church, forbidding her followers to keep to the rituals and owning symbolic artifacts like crucifixes. She taught that Christ appeared as a black man and that the apostles were black. Christ identified himself with the Africans and their suffering at the hands of white colonial powers. Christ will restore the Congolese Kingdom and create a paradise on earth. After a couple of years she was arrested and burnt at the stake. Bosch states the following regarding Kimpa Vita: "It is a protest against an interpretation of the gospel, which has been channeled according to white intentions" (Bosch 1979:221).

[213] See *The Heart of Redness* (1993) by Zakes Mda.

Linked to the Bible and its interpretation is the role of leadership. Daneel (1991:138) points out that the key to the AIC is leadership: "One of the great appeals of these movements is the existence of structures which offer authority and prestige – in other words, fulfilment of leadership ambitions". The imprint of the Zulu monarchy on many of the AIC in SA is reflected in that the "...leader whether 'Bishop', 'Overseer' or 'President' is a king, *inkosi*, and the church is his bride" (Daneel 1991:139). The chief – and prophet type distinguishes Ethiopian and Zionist churches. "The ideal chief-type leader would be an able executive official, bold in the struggle against the Whites; the prophet – whose leadership shows parallels to the traditional soothsayer or doctor (*isangoma, n'anga*) – must establish a direct link with the supernatural through visions and dreams" (Daneel 1991:139). The preaching of the Word is strongly associated to the prophetic office. "It is a task that implies inspiration through God's Spirit and knowledge of his Word" (Daneel 1991:147).

Ngada (2001:1) states*:* "Christian missionaries compassed sea and land to make proselytes or converts amongst the indigenous black people of South Africa. Like the scribes and Pharisees of old, the efforts of the Christian missionaries were hypocritical and the only result was that they produced hypocritical black converts, that is to say black people who wore a convenient mask in order to look like good Western Christians...It was Western culture, Western 'civilisation', Western customs dress, and Western values. They themselves often said that they had come to 'civilise' the 'uncivilised' pagans of Africa. What this meant in practice was that they taught blacks to think, act, speak and dress like whites. It was a case of black people wearing white masks" (Ngada et al 2001:1).

This critique implies that Western mission developed in the cultural realm of Western essentialism, Darwinism and centralistic ethics, resulting in the civilising mission. Ngada et al (2001:3) acknowledge that the AIC is a space where the African cultural matrix informs the interpretation of the Bible. This brings about a contextual theology that frees the biblical message of Western baggage. "African culture prepared the way for us to accept the Word of God in faith" (Ngada et al 2001:25). This can be seen in the link between African mythology and creation narratives:

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[214] Nongqawuse delivered a message from the ancestors that all cattle in amaXhosa must be killed and

"Long before Africans were able to read the written Word of God in the Bible, they acknowledged God as the Creator. They believe that God provides them with all they needed, and that in observing the traditional customs and cultural practices of their people, they were obeying and worshipping God" (Ngada et al 2001:27). In this respect, missionaries misunderstood the "Word of God" and the role of culture, thus confusing the people. The authorship of the Bible is the result of 'inspired' human activity through the Holy Spirit: "We believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that from beginning to end it is inspired by the Holy Spirit" (Ngada et al 2001:26).

Hymn 143:2, from the *Amagama okuhlabela* produced by the American Board Mission (1850) (a standard in AIC, especially with Nguni Zionists) reflects the importance of the Bible. This hymn is a favourite used to open a service[215] (Makhubu 1988:72).

"Usikhanyisele
Ngeqiniso lakho
Ngezwi elingcwele
Vus' abantu bakho"

Illuminate us
With your truth
Revive your people
With your Holy Word

The Bible in the hands of the people led to the development of a contextual theology that leans on the holistic cultural matrix of the AIC. Responses of members of the Optima Bible study that are members of the AIC highlight this holistic worldview. In this regard, mention is made of the Spirit that dwells in people and the connection made with geographical space. Mbatha's linocuts highlight the relationship between land, people and ancestors.

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wait for liberators (Russians) to bring deliverance from the British.

African Theology and the AIC cannot be separated. African Theology strips Christianity of its foreignness, forming it by African religion and cultural identity (Martey 1993:76). AIC contributes toward African Theology and guards against it becoming a sterile academic exercise, divorced form the life situation of Africa. Many view it as an authentic Africanised Christianity, but others disregard it as a form of heresy, syncretism and even Satanism. Although African Theology cannot be limited to the African Independent Church movement, there is a strong link. Nthamburi (1990:44) states in this regard: "...in contrast to the historic churches, they incorporated African religious ethos such as faith healing, spontaneity in worship, freedom of expression in the Church and the controversial attitude of veneration of ancestors". AIC's gives expression to the culture and beliefs of the people of Africa that have a strong spiritual basis. "Indeed it is almost natural for Africans to take for granted the presence of God in every situation" (Nthamburi 1990:44).

The focus on holism and community is linked with Africans living in close-knit communities where relationships are jealously guarded. "To be in fellowship with one another is to have a common bond that unites individuals to a cohesive group where individualism withers away. In the midst of the loss of African cultural identity and the consequences of socio-economic alienation, independent churches advocate a return to authentic African humanizing communities" (Nthamburi 1990:44-45).

Taylor (1963:21-22) writes that Western Christianity was a 'too-cerebral religion...the white man's religion...a classroom religion'. In contrast, African traditional religion is a 'spiritual religion': "the African is part of his environment, and is at one with it, which is largely that of spiritual and natural forces" (Anderson 1991:4). To understand the whole concept of African spirituality, Westerners need to be wary of "being too precisely analytical, for that would transpose the imagery back into European symbols and destroy its meaning" (Taylor 1963:59).

Western education in Africa has produced scholars that define Africa in terms of Western rationalist and analytical concepts, making a distinction between secular and

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[215] From *Who are the Independent Churches* (1988) by Paul Makhubu Skotaville Johannesburg.

spiritual. Taylor (1963:72) writes that African culture has a “sense of cosmic oneness...fundamentally all things share the same nature, and the same intersection one upon another...a hierarchy of power but not of being, for all are one, all are here, all are now...No distinction can be made between sacred and secular, between natural and supernatural, for Nature, Man and the Unseen are inseparably involved in one another, in a total community”. The African cultural code is holistic, in which “everything is at the same time given ‘spiritual’ and ‘secular’ meaning, without being categorised” (Anderson 1991:5).

The danger reflected in the hermeneutics of Mbiti and other African Theologians is that African culture is uncritically accepted. This results in a reading from the centre that is blind to oppressive traces. The danger is the perpetuation of ideologies like patriarchy. The problem is that the negative view of Western mission may result in an uncritical sway in the direction of non-Western culture.

4.4.1.2 Types of African Independent Churches

4.4.1.2.1 Early developments

Tiyo Soga (1829-1871), A Xhosa, was the first Black minister in ‘South’ Africa. He was educated in Scotland for ministry in the United Presbyterian Church. For him, Africa was the place of the Black man. Saayman (1991:62) writes: “Black Consciousness of the 1960’s and later therefore had its origins and roots in the nineteenth century, in a process in which Tiyo Soga played an essential role”. His African-consciousness is a basic ingredient of Black Consciousness and later of Nationalist thought. Soga worked at Emgwali, a Presbyterian settlement in the 'white corridor' between East London and Queenstown, on land given to him by Sandile, as a reward for their assistance in the cattle killing of 1857 (Davenport and Saunders 2000:469). The problem is that Soya, deeply influenced by Western culture, viewed African culture through the eyes of Western civilisation. In a letter that he wrote on 9 June 1864, Soga (Hofmeyer, et al 1998:137) refers to African marriage customs as “heathenism”: “...more than one-half of those girls who have learned to read the word

in our stations, and received impressions of good from the instructions of missionaries, but whose parents, living in heathenism, sold them away afterward for cattle, when they came of age". Western imperialism disturbed the balance between the community and the individual by changing cultural values related to the community. One of these practices is that of *lobola*, the marriage ritual in which the groom pays an amount of cattle for the bride, referred to by Soga as a heathen practice. Culture and patriarchy intersect regarding this sensitive issue. The reference to the exploitation of women in African society by a member of the Montwood Park group is a reading from the margin that deconstructs the oppressive disconnection of male and female. In this regard, the cultural matrix of the AIC must not be idealised but viewed critically from the margin.

Nehemiah Tile, an evangelist of the Wesleyan mission in the 1870's, left the church in 1883 after a clash with the Rev. T. Chubb of the Healdtown College, to start the Thembu National Church which he lead until his death in 1891 (Saayman 1991:64). During his ministry the annexation of the Transkei took place. The focus of the Church with the Thembu chief, Ngangelizwe as head, was to establish an independent church freed from white domination. According to Sundkler (1961:38), Tile argued that if the Queen of England was the head of the English Church, so the Thembu should be the head of the Thembu church. Tile valued traditional structure and authority. This lead to military protest, but after it failed he adopted a diplomatic style by petitioning the colonial authorities[216].

On his tombstone he is referred to as the "Founder of the Ethiopian Church of Africa in 1884". Rev L.N. Mzimba of the African Presbyterian Church provides the following description of Tile's (Hofmeyer et al 1998:139) church: "The first definite movement of the independent spirit started forty-two years ago. Rev. Nehemiah Tile separated himself from the Wesleyan Church...They had also an awakening sense of power and racial responsibility. Social and political avenues were closed against them, but the Church seemed to offer a highway to increase influence. They were no

[216] "The fundamental principle of later Black nationalists in South Africa, namely that white power had to be resisted by Black unity, thus finds its basis here with Tile." (Saayman 1991:66). It became a form of Black Consciousness that strongly developed during the apartheid struggle.

doubt also moved by the bearing of the white man, many of whom would not worship in the same building as them".

The basis of tribal unity[217] can be traced back to Ntsikana (1780-1821), a Xhosa councilor to the King who, according to legend, became Christian without the influence of missionaries. He integrated African symbols and rituals. He is known for his hymns, of which the "Great Hymn" is the most famous (Saayman 1991:54):

He who is our mantle of comfort,
The giver of life, ancient on high,
He is the Creator of the Heavens,
And the ever-burning stars:
God is mighty in the heavens,
And whirls the stars around in the sky.
We call on him in his dwelling-place,
That he may be our mighty leader,
For he makes the blind to see:
We adore him as the only good,
For he alone is a sure defense,
He alone is a trusty shield; He alone is our bush of refuge:
Even HE – the giver of life on high,
Who is the Creator of the heavens

4.4.1.2.2 Ethiopian Movement[218]

The name links Christianity with Africa before the British and European missionaries arrived. The name, Ethiopian, refers to Ps 68:31 that states Ethiopia will stretch out her arms to God. This is an important reference because of its link to Cush and the

[217] Much of his teaching was later used by the ANC, promoting non-violence and supra-tribal African unity (Saayman 1991:57).

[218] According to Davenport and Saunders (2000:243), the Ethiopian Movement is associated with a political movement drawing from the "Ethiopian victory over the Italians at Adowa, although the founding of the church preceded this event. In the Cape and Transvaal the movement was accepted, but legally denied in Natal and the Orange Free State, "where it was officially linked with black nationalism by the authorities".

descendents of Ham used to justify slavery. Africans turned the white supremacist view around and saw this as a link to an independent route free from white tutelage. From this, the political slogan "Africa for the African" grew (Kiernan 1995:120).

These churches broke away from established churches mainly to exercise control over their own affairs. Kiernan (1995:118) writes: "Ethiopian' is a classificatory term which covers all churches, and their subsequent offshoots, that broke away from mission control chiefly on grounds of racial disparity...". The church leaders came from the African elite as capitalism replaced the pre-capitalist egalitarian economy. Although ‘civilized’, educated and Christianised blacks could be incorporated as equals into the mercantile sector, legislation linked to the Union of 1910 denied them. Self-affirmation and the movement of Black Nationalism grew from this movement (Villa-Vicencio 1988:32-33).

In 1892 Mangena Mokone, a preacher alienated from the Methodists, established the first Ethiopian Church after he was excluded from a meeting of white clergy. James Mata Dwane later joined him. He was later ordained as Bishop of the Ethiopian Order of the Anglican Church. The 1896 attempt at affiliation with the AME from America was never quite consummated (Villa-Vicencio, 1988:32-33). Sundkler (1961:39) traces the Ethiopian Church back to Tile, although tribal interests did not limit Mokone's group.

4.4.1.2.3 Zionist Movement

The Zionist movement originated because of colonial capitalism and the need for a contextual spirituality, but unlike the Ethiopian movement, it developed as a peasant movement. Kiernan (1995:117) states that the early migrant experience gave rise to Zionism, radiating from the industrial cities into the countryside through migrant networks with its strongest social support from the urban working class. The “peasants” were unable to gain from capitalism, like the elite and therefore found a home in Zionism. The implementation of the 1913 Land Act and other legislation which drove people off their land to secure cheap labour in mines, giving birth to the Zionist Movement. Kiernan (1995:118) writes: "...the Zionist church serves the social

and religious needs of the poor and illiterate by attempting to transcend their sense of deprivation and inadequacy..."

The Christian Catholic Apostolic Church of Zion in the US helped with the establishment of Zionist Churches, also known as churches of “Zion and the land”. The aim was to establish self-supporting communities on the land. Today, many of these egalitarian communities of economic self-realization have lost their appeal. The best known of these communities are at Moria near Pietersburg (Villa-Vicensio 1988:34).

Sundkler (1961:48) states that, the initial force behind this movement was an apocalyptic Church in the United States, the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, founded in 1896 by John Alexander Dowie. The Zionist movement is revivalist, with a strong pre-millenarian theology, whereas the Ethiopian movement was politically motivated (Davenport and Saunders 2000:243). Sundkler (1961:49) argues that the "*ama-Nazaretha*", founded by Isaiah Shembe, also relates to Zionism. Shembe was baptised by Rev W.M. Leshaga of the African Native Baptist Church, an offshoot of a Black Baptist group that practiced the sacrament of feet washing that played a prominent role in Shembe purification rites (Sundkler 1961:50).

4.4.1.2.4 The Churches of the Spirit

These are largely Zionist-Apostolic churches, constituting a religious-cultural response to the socio-economic contradiction of the capitalist system among the Black working class. The suffering caused by segregation laws, urban dislocation, impoverishment, industrial workers and so forth, turned to traditional culture and religion to find resources for personal and collective survival. “Theirs is a cultural and religious protest, therefore a potential subversion of the dominant white forms of Christianity in white-ruled South Africa” (Villa-Vicencio 1988:34). Anderson (1991:3), following Daneel (1991) uses the term ‘Spirit-type churches’ to designate prophetic movements which emphasise the inspiration and revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Although the roots of AIC's are located in their protest to colonialism, they acquired an apolitical aura during the institutionalisation phase of their development. The roots of their origins, which are linked to Black Nationalism continue to be manifested as a potential form of resistance. Villa-Vicencio (1988:34-35) writes: "The African Independent Churches and especially the Zionist churches are, in fact, in contradiction to all 'mainline churches', strictly speaking black working-class churches'...they too constitute in a more radical manner than the black mission churches, an oppressed community seeking to understand the gospel in relation to their own oppression".

4.4.2 *Moya* and the African Independent Church

4.4.2.1 *Moya*: Holism, Ethics and Healing

Responsible reading of the Bible in the 'South' African context has the challenge to develop a reading that deconstructs essentialism, centralistic ethics and stimulates healing. The question is whether *Moya* has the holistic dimension to do this without becoming a centralistic African matrix. In other words, does it have an ethical cutting edge and can it reconnect people, land and God.

A Bishop (Ngada et al 2001:23) from the AIC states: "In everything our guide and our teacher is the Holy Spirit". This mode is rooted in the otherness of the culture of Africa: "We have always been aware of the world of spirits. It is part of our African heritage...In Africa the Almighty Spirit was there, healing us long before the missionaries landed on our shores" (Ngada et al 2001:23). The spirit is there from birth to death. At birth, the rite of "*imbeleko/thari"* introduces the baby to the living spirits of the ancestors that guides and protects the child. "Thus the African child grows up in an atmosphere of sharing, caring and togetherness, rather than in the typically Western atmosphere of individualism and isolation" (Ngada et al 2001:24).

Linked to this holistic worldview is the role of land. "All things are saturated with religious meaning. Because there is no distinction between sacred and secular, physical and spiritual – everything is at the same time 'sacred' and 'spiritual'. This 'everything' is all embracing, including people, events, nature, work – in fact, all facets of the African's life" (Anderson 1991:75). Anderson refers to Mbiti who states

that African traditional religions are ‘earthly’ and ‘anthropocentric’, “’pragmatic and utilitarian rather than spiritual or mystical’” (Anderson 1991:75).

Hymn 215 from the *Hymns of the Nazaretha* of Shembe[219], reflects the connection between land and God:

The land is now dead
Oh, Lord of the Nazarites
Lend your ear
Receive its wailing
Let your spirit come
To those who are sick therefore
Do not turn your back on them
You spoke through your word

It is clear that *Moya* is a holistic concept that connects people, land and God. The danger is that this concept may turn into a centralistic discourse that is blind to ideological traces within African tradition.

Anderson (1991:17) notes that the link between *Moya* and "life force" reveals its ethical cutting edge from the margin: "*Moya* is therefore ‘the very essence of human life’ and it ‘has no independent existence of its own’. Significantly, *Moya* is ‘a completely personal entity. No other form of life or natural object is attributed with the possession of *Moya’”* (Anderson 1991:17). Power or ‘life-force[220] is the centre of all African behaviour. The “purpose is to acquire *life*, *strength* or *vital force, to live strongly*, that they are to make life stronger, or to assure that force shall remain perpetually in one's posterity” (Anderson 1991:52). This is the life force, personal force, or *muntu*, which also defines humanity. “It is a personal force that is able to increase or decrease, exert influence or be influenced by others, reflecting the interconnectedness of all life” (Anderson 1991:61). The familiar chant of the

[219] *The hymns of the Nazaretha* (Isaiah and Galilee Shembe) translated B Mthethwa (1996) from hymnal *IziHlabelelo zamaNzaretha* (Zulu).

liberation struggle, *Amandla ngawethu* (Power is ours) with the symbolic clenched fist, reflects this. Anderson writes that this is "'the determination of Black people to affirm themselves as human beings in the face of White domination, and to mobilise their collective power in order to overcome it'" (Anderson 1991:62).

Moya affirms the human-ness of people and mobilises power to affirm and retain that power threatened by oppression and injustice. "In the holistic African worldview, we may not adopt a Western dualistic idea that the power of the Spirit only has to do with some sort of mystical, inner power which does not meet our concrete physical, social, political and economic needs...The universe and all it contains is permeated with 'power', which may be appropriated by a person, in varying degrees, and may be applied with good or evil consequences" (Anderson 1991:63).

In this regard, oppression suppresses the *Moya* or life force of a person. The holistic African worldview implies that oppression is not individual. Distorted relations between people, people and the land, or between people and God, results in suffering. The forces of disconnection are the sources of injustice and oppression. In other words, the disconnection between men and women results in suffering due to patriarchal ideologies. Patriarchy is the source of injustice. Finally, the question is whether *Moya* has the capacity to stimulate healing and reconnect people, land and God.

Nthamburi (1990:45) states: "One cannot be spiritually healthy when one is sick....Sickness is seen as a testing of faith, for one can be sick physically and spiritually" (Nthamburi 1990:45). In these circumstances, people look to *Moya* for strength. Anderson (1991:63) writes: "When faced with sickness, death, poverty, misfortune, sorcery, oppression, injustice, witchcraft, evil spirits, famine, floods, and so on *ad infinitum*, there is a longing for something outside oneself that will enable one to cope, for one cannot manage alone". The enabling power of *Moya*[221] gives the

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[220] Readings from the Optima and Montwood Park Bible study groups emphasised the role of power as an internal force. This highlights the role the African view regarding life force or power played in the interpretative process.

[221] "In the era where *commodity forms* reigns supreme, they have carved out a control base in which they manipulate the most important commodity in the lives of the *commondityless, the landless, the capital-lless* masses of African descent, namely the Spirit – *Moya*. If they cannot control the means of *material* production, they can at least, control the means of *spiritual* production" (West 1991:158).

person and community the ability to be empowered to restore balance by opposing negative, oppressive or evil powers because no event comes by chance or by accident.

The holistic nature of *Moya* implies that power is internal and external. "The universe and all it contains is permeated with 'power', which may be appropriated by a person, in varying degrees, and may be applied with good or evil consequences" (Anderson 1991:63). Power is linked to ontological dimension of African culture: "To live is to have power; to be sick or to die is to have less of it" (Anderson 1991:64). Calling on the power of *Moya* reflects the desire to reconnect to people, land and God. Power is inherent in a state of reconnection. In this sense, *Moya* reveals disconnection and is at the same time the source of reconnection or healing. Dube (1996:124) states: "It is *Moya* that empowered them to reject the discriminative leadership of missionary founded churches and to begin their own churches" (Dube 1996:124). She adds, *Moya* resist patriarchy and discrimination within African culture and articulates a reading of healing (Dube 1996:124)

In the next section, I will explore the implication of the holistic, ethical and healing dimensions of *Moya* in the hermeneutical process.

4.4.2.2 *Moya* and reading the Bible

In chapter 1, I proposed those three theological-ethical dimensions that are paramount for the construction of a responsible reading praxis in the 'South' African context: Holism, marginality and healing. In this section, I will explore the impact of each of these dimensions contained in the concept *Moya* on the reading praxis of the Bible in order to deconstruct essentialism, centralistic ethics and bring about healing.

4.4.2.2.1 Holistic worldview

Moya refers to the interconnection between people, land and God. This holistic understanding of *Moya* reflects the intimate link between God and his creation. The disconnection imposed by colonialism and imperialism destroys the fibre of African society. This is clear from essentialist readings of the Bible. Not only does essentialism undermine the interconnectedness of all things, it legitimises the

perpetuation of colonial racism and the exploitation of the land to enrich the imperial centre. The interaction between essentialist discourse and a *Moya* reading results in the construction of a liminal space from where the holistic perspective presents reality not according to essentialist redactions but through the agency of the holistic worldview of the colonised.

Moya represents the cultural matrix of the reader. It is at once an epistemological key but at the same time, it deconstructs the very notion of such a key. The reason for this is that *Moya* resists essentialism. It stubbornly interconnects beyond objective and subjective notions of truth. It rather connects the other to the point where bracketing of truths or interpretations are deconstructed in the name of connectivity, exclusivity and openness. It is not reducible to a set of systematic questions, theories of methods - A deconstructive reading that resists systematic reductions. The purpose of this stubbornness is to bring about healing but resisting separation, leaving someone or something on the outside.

It is rooted in the connectivity between all people emphasising a non-discriminatory reading praxis. The oppression of non-Western people resulted in the entire globe experiencing disconnection and suffering. In this regard, *Moya* is critical of the imperial connection between Western and non-Western contexts. Derrida (1972:xv) states: “Critique does not ask `what does this statement mean?’ but `where is it being made from? What does it presuppose?’...”. It resists essentialist construction of the other that dehumanises and reduces the other to a mere function. Failing to acknowledge the hierarchical composition of globalisation simply means that humanity remains corrupt. In this regard, reading Genesis 11 cannot view the dispersion as a final word on intercultural relations. It remains a result of sin, as Tutu (1983) has also pointed out. Through the worldly experience of the colonised, separation between people is oppressive, because all people connected through *Moya*.

Moya does not make a distinction between civilised and primitive. Western civilising mission made a distinction between the religion of non-Western people that classified as heathen, and Western civilised Christian religion. A *Moya* view regards people as connected, all having the same spirit. The only differentiation is between evil and good spirits. Moya rejects the classification people with other belief systems as evil,

as is done in the civilising mission. Evil brings oppression and pain to all people. In this regard, some Africans regard Christianity as being evil. In this regard, the focus in the DRC groups on dispersion as a call to mission, is rooted in the evil of disconnection.

Moya reflects a contextual pneumatology. Western conceptions regarding the Holy Spirit have been influenced by essentialism that views the Holy Spirit as an external power. A *Moya* perspective views the Holy Spirit as an internal and personal life force linked to the creation. The holistic perspective implies that it is internal and external at the same time. The difference between the Holy Spirit and evil spirits is that the Holy Spirit is a connective power while evil disconnects. In this regard, the Holy Spirit is part of every person. The question is whether we follow the Holy Spirit or evil. It is impossible for someone not to have a spirit. In this regard, the Holy Spirit informs the reading of the Bible through a holistic perspective.

A cultural discourse of holism informs the reader in the hermeneutical process. In this regard, the reader interprets the text as a function of a connected universe. This implies that the text is not fragmented but read as a whole and as inter-text. In terms of the content, a connected cosmology will inform themes and reference to separation and disconnection.

4.4.2.2.2. Marginality

Moya is representative of a reading from the margin. It reflects the worldview of the oppressed and colonised other. Its interconnected paradigm results in the critique of enforced disconnection. In this regard, the disconnection between land and people through colonialism is critically scrutinised because disconnection is the result of evil or injustice that suppressed the life force of people. It alienates people from their source of power or life force. Colonialism separated people from the land and sought to civilise the culture of the people. This resulted in oppression because the connection between individual, community, land and God is the source of power. *Moya* is not only critical of the link between essentialism and colonialism but all forms of disconnection that result in the exploitation of people. In this regard, people suffering will call to *Moya* for strength and justice.

Moya connects people and land. This is important in the context of imperialism that focuses on the acquisition of land and the alienation of indigenous people from the land. The silence of Black hermeneutics on land issues reflects the short sightedness of political liberation, regarding African culture. On the other hand, *Moya* is a critique against the damaging environmental effect of Western business that exploits the non-Western geographical spaces through mining and industries. The development cult of the West that links to classic colonialism and continues in Western colonialism is seeking to develop Africa as a market for its goods. If the land is suffering, the people and their spirit suffer too.

In AIC's women are in the majority. They are part of the leadership. "In church everybody shares their faith equally without regard to gender differences" (Ngada 2001:48). Patriarchy is still a problem that leads to splits in churches (Ngada 2001:48). The *Moya* reading is a liberating one, reflecting the worldview of Africa, while at the same time it is liberating and moves beyond the inscribed imperialism of the text. Bishop Virginia Lucas remarks, concerning patriarchal trends in the Bible, and her role as church leader: "…I always tell people that when God spoke to me through the Spirit, God never opened the Bible to me. Instead, God's Spirit told me to begin a church and heal God's people, which are what I am doing" (Dube 1996:114). A *Moya* "framework, therefore, is a mode of reading that resists discrimination and articulates, a reading of healing: healing of race and gender relations; of individuals, classes, and nations" (Dube 1996:124). *Moya* is not a naive[222] acceptance of inscribed ideologies of colonial readings or the religious community. It is a deconstructive[223] impulse that is critical of forces that aim to disconnect, silence and exploit people.

The perspective of the person suffering, the marginalised through disconnection, informs the text-read interaction that evokes the holistic worldview. The disconnected relationship is the point of reference and those locked in the centre, the

[222] "The faithful reader approaches the text aggressively, determined to believe it, and hence she fills in the indeterminacies in an attitude of acceptance, adopting a position she would not take with any other kind of text. She does so because she has been persuaded, pre- and extra-textually, by her community that this text is sacred and hence demands this response" (Detweiler 1985:224-225).

privileged. A *Moya* reading sensitises the reader to textual elements and themes of disconnection because of decentring.

4.4.2.2.3. Healing

Moya incorporates an understanding of healing that is holistic. Colonial racism resulted in disconnections between people, and between people and land. In terms of *Moya* healing will go hand in hand with a process of reconnection. Western capitalism regards land as a source of production failing to make the spiritual link between people, land and God. Geographical occupation by Western imperialism that views land in terms of a function of the economy is a case in question. In this respect, decolonisation link stimulates reconnection with the land. Black hermeneutics, focussing on the political dimension of liberation remains silent regarding land. Tutu's *ubuntu* reading of Genesis 11 focuses on the injustice of racism, but racism is part of Afrikaner colonial control of land and wealth in 'South' Africa.

Dianne Stinton (2004:116) argues that the African holistic cultural matrix consists of three dimensions: life, mediation and community.

Firstly, life is a central cultural value reflecting the holistic and communal character of African anthropology. It also refers to the life force or being of a person. Life is good when there is balance or, in other words, when the individual, community, environment and spiritual realm function in harmony (Stinton 2004:120).

Secondly, mediation focuses on the restoration of balance. The failure to restore order will result in suffering. To mediate intermediaries are used. Stinton (2004:126) writes that social and political custom prescribes that people of higher status are approached indirectly through a third party. Although people can approach God directly, a human being (priest, diviner, etc) or spiritual beings are approach. *Moya* plays an important role as an agent to re-establish balance.

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[223] Derrida states: "...deconstruction doesn't consist in a set of theorems, axioms, tools, rules, techniques, methods" (Derrida 1996:218).

The third dimension is community. Community is only possible because of the balance that *Moya* sustains. It remains the fundamental aspect of African anthropology although jeopardised by modernisation. The community defines the individual. Holism contrast the slogan of modernism - *Cogito ergo sum*, I think therefore I am (Descartes) with *Cognatus ergo sum* - I belong by blood relationship, therefore I am (Stinton 2004:129).

Adamo (2001:54-85) identified three reading strategies of Africans: therapeutic, protection of life and success.

Firstly, therapeutic reading refers to the use of the Bible in dealing with illness. Adamo (2001:54) writes that African Christians believe that the Bible contains something potent for healing that was kept from Africans by missionaries.

Secondly, the Bible is read for the protection against destruction of crops, clothes, houses, land, trees, water, etc (Adamo 2001:67).

Thirdly, is reading the Bible for success or the totality of life (Adamo 2001:85). In this regard, reading the Bible pertains directly to the sustaining of life. It is not only a reading that produces knowledge, a form of intellectual gymnastics, but the very act of reading has an effect on the reader and the community itself.

Adamo's three strategies of reading the Bible are insightful in terms of the role the text plays in mediations. *Moya* is therefore not only abstractly involved in connecting people and the spiritual realm but it also becomes the interpretative matrix of the reading of the text. *Moya* transforms the reading praxis from being a rational act to action. In other words, the words of the text have the power to bring healing.

A *Moya* reading implies that the deconstructive is also the moment of reconnection. When life is threatened, community is in jeopardy that requires mediation for the restoration of connections.

4.5 *Moya* and the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading

4.5.1 Reading the Bible in Africa

Maluleke (2000:94-95) warns: "…there cannot and should not be such a thing as 'African Biblical Scholarship' if this is envisaged in terms akin to that produced by western-type training. Both African Christians and African Christian theologians have not been able to relate in any exclusive way to the Bible – as a singular collection of texts – in the way that both the historical critical and latter day sociological hermeneutics have done" (Maluleke 2000:94-95). He insists that their relationship to the Bible is "part of a larger package of resources and legacies which include stories, preaching and language mannerisms, songs, choruses, ecclesiologies, theodices, catechism manuals and a range of rituals and rites" (Maluleke 2000:95). He concludes that most African 'biblical' scholars "operate as philosophers, missiologists and quasi-systematic theologians" (Maluleke 2000:95).

The experiences of people of Africa reflected in readings informed by concepts, as *Moya* is part of the identity of African hermeneutics. From this perspective, "African Biblical Scholarship" sounds more like African camouflage of Western essentialist discourse. Oduyoye (1979:109) remarks: "Modernization had had a disruptive and weakening effect on African life and thus on African religion".

Africa is too diverse and complex to limit it to essentialist reductions. Maluleke (2002:150) states that it is impossible to reduce African theology to one single theology because of the diversity of Africa in terms of language, cultures, religions, etc. A *Moya* reading is not reducible to a new essentialist construction moulded and packaged by scholars. *Moya* is dynamic, changing and impossible to put into words for it to be a method. It is intertwined with the life experience of people. It is in itself a diverse and changing reading optic.

Teresa Okure (West 2002:4) characterises the mode of African scholarship as "exegeting 'inclusively'". West responds (2002:4-5): "Okure is not alone in making this claim, and the claim is not restricted to an African *women's* approach. This inclusion of ordinary African 'readers' of the Bible in African biblical scholarship is

acknowledged, whether implicitly or explicitly, by most African biblical scholars…I do not think that this is merely a nostalgic yearning for a lost naiveté, as it is in western literary biblical scholarship, where the scholarly reader imagines his or her scholarly self in this 'ordinary' role". African biblical scholars take real ordinary African 'readers' of the Bible more seriously and certainly acknowledge their real existence and presence". This inclusive reading of Africans is reflected in the *Moya* cultural matrix that deconstructs inscribed ideologies and contributes to the construction of decolonial readings of the Bible.

In this regard, the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading, in the 'South' African context, can benefit from a *Moya* reading. A *Moya* reading deconstructs colonial discourse from the experience of the colonised and a holistic worldview. This deconstructive process activates once colonial discourse and discourse from the margin engage constructing a liminal space from where new readings flow to bring healing. In the next section, the activation of a deconstructive process between contemporary scholarly reading and non-scholarly reading of Genesis 11:1-9 takes place.

4.5.2 *Moya* and Genesis 11:1-9 in the 'South' African context

Reading Genesis 11:1-9 as a function of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers, in the 'South' African context, creates a liminal space from where Western and non-Western cultural matrixes engage. The readings of non-scholars, of Genesis 11:1-9, by Mbatha and some respondents of the Optima and Montwood Park Bible study groups reflect the holistic, ethical and healing dimensions of *Moya*. A critical interaction between these non-scholarly reading and scholarly reading follows in this section.

4.5.2.1 Unity and Interconnection

The unity among the people who settled in Shinar reflects the interconnectedness of all people. One of the respondents of the Diakonia Group notes this, by referring to the fact that the earth had one language when the people settled in Shinar: "One language means that they had a common understanding or thinking. It does not refer

to one physical language. Like African tribes coming together – being of Africa". A man from the Optima group used the image of a tree to describe the danger of disconnection: "When a branch of a tree is cut off, a day or two later, you will see that, that tree is busy dying". A member of the Montwood Park group added the dimension of power by stating that God gives people power to use responsibly. This emphasises the link between the *Moya* and life force that connects people.

The connected matrix of a *Moya* reading is not limited to the "spiritual unity" proposed by HR. *Moya* does not only focus on connectivity but it is also has a critical thrust that deconstructs forced separation. The "spiritual unity" that HR proposed was used to legitimised colonial racism and the exploitation of non-Western people. In terms of *Moya* this is nothing else than the violence of tower building that separates people from the land. Forced removals of people from the land, migrant labour and the exploitation of natural resources is an example the effect of disconnection and not unity.

From a *Moya* perspective, all people are interconnected through their common understanding or culture. Not even language or tribal differences can separate people. In this regard, the text is not an object of inquiry that has to be rationally dissected. The text is the subject and the reading is informed by the holistic cultural discourse of the interpreter. *Moya* deconstructs the essentialist Western scholarly perspective of Von Rad that links the unity of the people to nationalism[224].

Von Rad (1963:145) and Tutu (1983:40) agree that the sin of the tower builders is "rebellion against God, a concealed Titanism". Mbatha contextualises the rebellion by referring to the impact of colonialism. This reading, informed by holism, does not only interpret this as a disconnection between God and humanity, but includes the land.

[224] Von Rad (1963:144) writes "…nationalities tend to emerge from great migrations. Large bands for some unknown reason find themselves on the move; suddenly they step out of the obscurity of their previous unhistorical existence into the light of history and climb to cultural power. Accordingly, sedentariness takes on special forms. So it happened here. They did not settle down as they were before, innocent and unsophisticated; rather they were interested in a strong alliance and in fame. Thus, with the building of a great city and a tower, they began to erect a monumental architectural work. Great zeal, the vital optimism of a young nation, animates them in this gigantic work of civilization…Thus the city arises as a sign of their valiant self-reliance, the tower as a sign of their will to fame. Their joy in their inventiveness…".

Walter Brueggemann (1982:98) writes that there is a dialectic between unity and scattering in the text. On the one hand, it is God's will for there to be unity among all people in terms of a covenant relationship with him. On the other hand, the scattering that God wills is a fulfilment of his mandate in Genesis 1:28. Brueggemann (1982:100) uses the metaphor of the Trinity, by Juan Luis Segundo, to explain the balance between scattering and unity: "...the Trinity in which the Godhead is `neither confused nor divided'....So God's will is that humanity should not be *confused*, that is, with parts inappropriately combined, nor *divided*, with parts treated as autonomous. But the human community as both scattered and gathered, is like the character of God who is confessed as three in one and one in three". Brueggemann (1982:104) concludes that a new language community is possible by connecting Genesis 11 with Act 2: "There will not be restoration of genuine speech and listening until the spirit is given (Acts 2) like the first wind that blew to give life (Gen.1:2)".

This interpretation of Brueggemann does not sustain the closed essentialist parameters of scholarship but leaves room for a connected vision of the text. In this regard, Genesis 11:1-9 is not the final word on a primitive text as was the case with Anglocentric readings or racism in the case of Afrikaner colonial interpretations but he connects diversity and unity. Although the reading of Brueggemann is from a Western context it does touch sides with the connected worldview of African readers.

The problem remains that Brueggemann's post-modern interpretative paradigm remains indebted to the Western cultural matrix. By maintaining the tension between scattering and unity the experience of Africans who were dehumanised as a result of colonial racism is incompatible with scattering. His reading also fails to address the connection between people, God and land. Sugirtharajah (1998:15) writes that postmodernism is still seen as "Eurocentric in its conceptual and aesthetic thrust". The reason he states this is that it lacks a theory of resistance. It fails to cultivate a transformative agenda because of its inability to be worldly, in the words of Said. Although it challenges the certainties of Western metaphysic, the problem is that reading the text has to take account of it and the readers' worldliness. In this regard, ideological motives, experiences of privilege and oppression cannot be a matter of difference but has to enter the interpretative agenda as a matter of ethical urgency. A

Moya reading that does not only enable a holistic reading praxis but is an ethical tool that deconstructs forces that disconnect addresses this urgency.

4.5.2.2 Name and Imperial Power

The moment people settled on the land their connectedness became a function of power. They wanted to make a name for themselves. Avorti (1999) makes it clear that a name in Africa has a very important function and that "immortality" is secured through the passing on of a persons name to the next generation. The tower builders wanted to make a name for them and secure immortality because of the distance between God and creation. Mbatha's reading deconstructs Avorti's uncritical reference to the role of names, by proposing that ambition can lead to destruction. Derrida (1985:169) follows a similar argument by stating: "He punishes them for having thus wanted to assure themselves, by themselves, a unique and universal genealogy".

Scholars, like Brett and Berquist, propose a link between Genesis 11:1-9 and Persian imperialism reflected in ideological struggles in the province of Yehud (Berquist 1996, Brett 2000, Carter 1999). Brett (2000:5) proposes that Genesis was in fact an attempt to undermine the ethnocentric ideology of the Persian Empire reflected in Nehemiah and Ezra[225]. Brett links this imperial motive to Nimrod of Genesis 10[226]. The sin of the people is their ethnocentrism reflected in the uniformity of the tower. The scattering reinforces diversity. Brett (2000:47) argues that the building of the

[225] Brett (2000:47) writes: "... the story would have had a particular relevance for the Persian period, in which we find the quest for a homogenous 'holy seed'. Yahweh, the editors are saying, desires diversity rather than homogeneity. The 'sons of Japheth' can dwell happily, for example in the tents of Shem. The quest for genealogical superiority is mistaken. The only relevant likeness to God is found in righteousness, and in avoiding crimes of dominance. But at the same time, divine favour resists any simple explanation".

[226] Brett (2000:46) argues that Genesis 11 should be read in the context of Genesis 10. In this regard the "unifying principle among the Hamites is urbanism, and this feature is reflected especially in the mythical Nimrod, son of Cush (or Ethiopia), who somehow founded the urban centres of Babylon and of Assyria. Nimrod is an empire builder, indeed the prototype of empire builders…guilty of crimes of dominance". The empire builders are guilty of improper ambition and the Tower of Babel episode in Genesis 11 is designed to show this. Whatever the historical origins of this tower, the final editors have provided a link between Nimrod in Genesis 10 and the tower in Genesis 11 by stating that Nimrod's cities are located in Shinar (10.10), precisely the location of the tower project (11.2). The builders with grand designs want to build a city (11.4), just as Nimrod did; they are made of the same stuff as the empire builder. Brett (2000:46) writes that those who built the Tower of Babel, we infer, were sons of Ham, even though Genesis 11 does not identify them as such.

tower results from the fear of diversity: “More generally, this fear can be explicated as a fear of linguistic and ethnic diversity. Yahweh has grave doubts about homogeneity and forcibly makes the tower builders confront their fears: ‘Yahweh scattered them from there over all the earth (11.6-8). The intervention re-affirms the first vocation to fill the earth, and in this sense the ending of the Tower of Babel narrative, does not amount to punishment; it is an affirmation of diversity”.

Mbatha (1986) argues that people submitted to Western culture and intrigued by it because of a devaluation of their own culture. This is linked to the fear of not being good enough, not Christian enough, not civilised enough of the "civilising mission". The universal validity of Western culture in the African context caused suffering and alienation. The scattering is a sign of God's intervention to bring about reconnection - deconstructing universalism. Derrida (1985:174) states: "He destines them to translation, he subjects them to the law of translation both necessary and impossible; in a stroke with his translatable-untranslatable name he delivers a universal reason (it will no longer be subject to the rule of a particular nation), but he simultaneously limits its very universality: forbidden transparency, impossible univocity. Translation becomes law, duty and debt, but the debt one can no longer discharge”.

This reading reflects Mbatha's critique of the uniformity of the civilising mission that resulted in the cultural alienation of Africans. The interface between Mbatha and Brett's reading reveals the blind spot in Brett's reading, regarding land. In this regard, ideological struggles in Yehud include issues that relate to the control of geographical space.

4.5.2.3 The Tower and Disconnection from the land

The reading of Mbatha reflected in his linocuts reveal the dynamic of a *Moya* reading. Colonial racism reveals the disconnection between people, the spiritual realm and the land. This state of disconnectedness is critically scrutinised in the context of the African worldview in which *Moya* is the connecting life force of all creation. The building of the Tower of Babel portrays the move to disconnection and alienation through colonialism and the construction of a Western society in Africa. The disconnection introduced by the building of the Tower affects the life force of the

individual, disconnection from the community and spiritual realm. In this regard, Mbatha's interpretation reflects Stinton's dimensions of life and community. The mediatory dimension and reconnection is only possible through *Moya*. In other words, the reading of Mbatha is a critical examination of the illness of society that needs to reconnect. The healing strategy, which Adamo refers to, is present in the fact that God does not tolerate disconnection because life is jeopardised. Balance is restored through the confusion of languages.

The *Moya* reading, of Mbatha, acknowledges the connection between people and land, moving beyond a perspective of economic production. The land, people and the spiritual realm are connected. Disconnection results in suffering through separating people from their territory. Apartheid and now Western imperialism, dislocated people from the land, removed people and relocated people to become foreigners in their own land. Global modernity is a force in which geographical location (territory) is no longer a determining factor in the formation of identity. The link to space has been transformed to a global spatial awareness in which case 'to be in this place' is an ambiguous concept. 'This space' is linked to other places and people. Take for example an airport, a space constructed to transcend its space, linking it to another space without the discomfort of traveling through the geographical terrain.

In the global world, there is a discomfort with space and the linkage to a particular place. It limits the ability to connect if spatial boundaries enclose the self or prohibit entry into other spaces. Refugees are an example of spatial ambiguity where there is a violent dislocation or separation from space at home and elsewhere. Global modernity is transforming nationalist geographical *located-ness* toward inter-located space in which case all people are wanderers and at the same time global residents. To cling to the nationalist myths of a particular geographical space, or being fenced in by borders that cut up the globe into fragmented places, creates the impression that the other space and place and person is alien, foreign, endangering our place and identity. The problem of global residency is that it ignores the marginalised position of non-Western people within the global space. The wealth and power that comes with being a global resident, remains limited to a select few, in the metropolitan

centres of the Western and non-Western worlds[227]. Everyday things like collecting firewood, water, etc. are very important aspects of geographical space and socio-cultural exchange. The family and community are dependent on the same space for wood or water and one another.

Moya connects people to one another and to the earth. Making a name went hand in hand with a vertical movement away from the earth. Power and disconnection from the land and other geographical spaces went hand in hand. A member of the Optima Bible Study said: "We abuse the land and its resources. We do not think of others". The Tower is a sign of disconnection from the land and not only hubris as many scholars argue. A participant of the Diakonia Bible Study Group made the following comment: "We live in a consumerist society, reaching for the sky. We must use the land according to God's will. We must live on the horizontal plane". This comment makes the connection between capitalism and the alienation from geographical space. One of the most damaging effects of globalisation is "deterritorialisation"[228] that disconnects people from geographical space through complex networks of communication and transportation. Further, people are cosmopolitans or citizens of the world without connection to a particular place[229].

Fokkelman (1991:44) shows sensitivity to the role of space in the narrative. He writes that the narrative introduces a spatial revolution with humanity reaching to the horizontal plane. This vertical action provoked vertical repression, leaving humanity only on the horizontal plane (Fokkelman 1991:44). The problem with this reading is that the will to control geographical space does not come under scrutiny. Fokkelman does not explore the effect of hubris and dispersion, conquering other geographical space.

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[227] The luxury of accessing other spaces is problematic when only 39% of Black South Africans are able to use electricity for cooking food (Statistics South Africa 2003).

[228] Tomlinson (1999:106) writes: "…globalization fundamentally transforms the relationship between the *places* we inhabit and our cultural practices, experiences and identities". Globalisation disconnects people from each other in order to maximize profit. The connections and interface between people of different cultures are not what is of importance but rather the speed with which product can be moved from one geographical space to another.

[229] Tomlinson (1999:185) writes that this is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity.

Moya moves beyond the notion of fulfilling the divine command to fill the earth related to Genesis 1:28 (Van Wolde 2000, Wenham 1987, Brett 2000). Wenham (1987:242) describes the Tower as an "anti-God project" and links it to Nimrod whose name, according to Wenham, is "we shall rebel", a motive of the Tower building. Wenham (1987:245) writes that the building of the Tower is rooted in a "desire to displace God from heaven, to make a name".

A *Moya* reading would necessarily lead to the filling of the earth because the land belongs to all and not to the powerful few. The tower signifies control of the earth in the hands of the empire. In this regard, the people are the subjects of the empire and not connected to the land. This interpretation does not support Afrikaner readings of this text that claimed that the dispersion and difference between cultures is a divine sanction for segregation and apartheid. Connecting with the land does not appose the connectedness of all people.

Scholars like Westermann (1984:547) and Von Rad (1963:145) argue that the Tower reaching into heaven should not be pressed as an attack on heaven but this rather reflects the height of the building. A *Moya* reading regards the mere disconnection from the land or vertical movement as a disregard for God because land and spiritual roots are linked. The movement of God downward is a countermove to the upward movement of the people. It also reflects the seriousness of the actions of people for the Creator to intervene in person.

4.5.2.4 The tower and patriarchy

The vertical violence of the tower builders also reveals the phallocentric thrust of patriarchy that separates men and women. An African woman, from the Montwood Park group said: "Building big buildings and towers are things that men do. They seek control at the expense of us women. They forget God made us in his own image". A *Moya* reading is critical of disconnection in terms of gender that results in abuse and violent demonstrations of power. The sin of the tower builders from a holistic perspective involves more than just the relationship between God and humanity.

This, points to the importance of a *Moya* reading in terms of the growing critique of African Theology's uncritical views of culture and Black Theology. Mosala (1986:129) argued that Black hermeneutics which presents itself as a mode of liberation for black people, has been silent on the oppression of black women. "In its opposition to oppressive structures of the church, Black Theology does not include among such structures patriarchalism. The lesson is very clear for black women: the liberation of black women is the responsibility of black women. Neither the church, nor black male theologians, nor white women can be expected to be sensitive to the human needs of black women". The indignity suffered by Black women, and their struggle calls for an act by Black women themselves. Western male essentialism have been exchanged for Black male experience, but this experience has quietly removed women. "The church seems to be willing to re-educate people on every issue, except the issue of the dignity and equality of women" (Mosala 1986:133).

Dube (1997:20) states: "No doubt Two-Thirds World women suffer more from imperialist intrusion; hence, they are more conscious of it. Western feminist readers, on the other hand, benefit from their social location". This is interesting because an African woman noted the inscribed phallocentrism of the text.

4.5.2.5 Confusion, decolonisation and healing

God does not merely punish people, as Wenham[230] argues, but confuses their language to test humans to reveal to them their superficial unity as a function of power. The confusion thus leads to dispersion that continues until this day as a testimony of the devastation of human greed for power. This is the devastation of colonial greed, where one group of people exploit another and take control of their land once again alienating people from the land and seducing them by belittling their culture and customs. Derrida (1985:165) writes: "The `tower of Babel' does not merely figure the irreducible multiplicity of tongues; it exhibits an incompletion, the impossibility of finishing, of totalizing, of saturating, of completing something on the order of edification, architectural construction, and system and architectonic". The destruction of the Tower of Babel is implicit in its name. This incompletion inscribed

in any system that controls and exploits, failing to recognise the connectedness of people to one another and the geographical space that they inhabit. It reveals the "internal limit to formalization" of any system of power (Derrida 1985:166).

However, with the dispersion people re-connect to the land. In Genesis 12, God's word of grace breaks into history through the covenant with Abraham. The covenant is inclusive of all people because of their interconnectedness that reaches its climax in Pentecost where the Holy Spirit is the life force of all people. Scholars like Westermann (1984), Brueggemann (1986) and Wenham [231](1987) all refer to Pentecost and the reversal of the confusion. The Holy Spirit in these reading is an external force, but in terms of holism the Spirit is the source of healing. Invoking the mediation of the Spirit restores the connection of the individual to people, land and God.

However, a *Moya* reading views the interconnectedness, not as a matter of the reversal of a state of disconnection, but rather the affirmation of the unity of all people. Avorti (1999:19) notes that the text is not a negative judgement on humanity but a positive affirmation of the relationship between God and creation. This perspective reflects his indigenous reading that is not critical of African tradition. The history of colonialism emphasises that this positive relationship can form the basis of manipulation and abuse. Another aspect is that this unity is not only spiritual but also physical in terms of the land. The Holy Spirit is not only a spiritual authority but also a physical authority that reveals geographical violence that oppresses people and leaves them with less dignity and means for survival - "life force". The dispersion is also the moment of grace in which people reconnect to the land. People also reconnect to one another without the dehumanisation of cultural imperialism. The deconstructive reading of *Moya* reveals the ideological nature of essentialist discourse but continue to construct a message of life.

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[230] Wenham (1987:245) writes: "...confusion of languages prevents community living and technological cooperation: people cannot trust or work with those they do not understand".

[231] Wenham (1987:246) states: "The hopelessness of man's plight at Babel is not God's last word: at least the prophets and New Testament look forward to a day when sin will be destroyed among the nations of the world".

4.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I proposed that a *Moya* reading, informed by an African holistic worldview and the margin of the imperial centre, deconstructs scholarly discourse informed by essentialism and centralistic ethics. *Moya* is related to the AIC, that arose as a result of resistance to Western ecclesiology and the spiritual need for a contextual ecclesiology. *Moya* is the expression of the life force of the people. It is, however, also a critique of the exploitation of imperialism that diminishes the life force and power of people. Reading from a connected, holistic worldview breaks through the borders erected by essentialism and reveals its imperial trace. It is a decolonial reading that is a critique of Western imperial deterritorialisation and exploitation that transforms scholarly essentialism through the experience of the colonised. A *Moya* reading is critical of inscribed ideologies of essentialistic readings, deconstructing them from the holistic perspective of Africa. In other words, a *Moya* reading is suspicious of forces that disconnect people from one another and the land. West (1992:46) states: "The negative moment of deconstruction is liberative in that it deconstructs dominant and hegemonic interpretations and exposes their tenuous nature".

Non-scholarly reading, through the eyes of the colonised and a holistic cultural discourse, constructs a liminal space that is de-colonial, breaking through the rationalistic essentialism of colonial scholarly readings. "The positive moment of deconstruction is liberative in that it empowers the poor and oppressed, and those who interpret the Bible in solidarity with them, to read the Bible from their contexts and so to construct their own visions of South African society in continuity with their liberative interpretations of the Bible" (West 1992:47).

A *Moya* reading revealed the disconnected view of contemporary scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9. Scholars were not sensitive to the intimate connection between land, people and God. A *Moya* reading emphasised that the building of the tower was a metaphor for the disconnection between land and people. This extends to the relationship between male and female reflected in the phallocentric display of power. Dispersion was an act of grace that reconnected people to the land.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 The global context

This study is set against the background of the socio-cultural transformations known as globalisation. The reason for doing this is that no study takes place in a vacuum. Further, this study will remain an ivory tower exercise if the continued inequalities, noted in chapter one, remain unaddressed by biblical scholarship.

Scholars like Tomlinson (1999) acknowledge the positive impact of globalisation while Said (1994) is severely critical of it. Those that sing the praises of globalisation focus on developments in regard to the ease of connecting people through communication media. This is beneficial in terms of helping one another. After the tsunami's[232] hit in Asia (26 December 2004) news reports informed the world of the devastations and help for victims became readily available. Economically, globalisation makes international trade possible at the press of a button. The ease, with which people can communicate, opens up a new world to us all.

However, at the same time this ease of communication and connectivity also comes at a price. Connecting people and places that are not equal partners becomes a problem when the press of a button can ruin a small African country's economy as capital moves around the world in search of maximum profits. Globalisation also comes at a price when not all people have the means to access the global network. In this regard, globalisation is an ironical concept that sells the false dream that all people are free and connected. The problem is that not all benefit from this connectivity.

[232] The tsunami's were caused by seismic activity of the coast of Eastern countries. This resulted in massive waves hitting the coastal regions of most Asia countries. The estimate loss of lives was calculated as more than 200,000. The tsunami's destroyed many coastal villages and brought the economies of these areas to a halt.

In the first chapter of this study, I argued that the continued inequalities and injustices of the post-democratic 'South' Africa are linked to global imperialism. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings of the Bible is set against the background of important ethical questions relating to poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender and land. In this regard, the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading is a critical contribution to uncover the global imperial forces by linking it to Western cultural discourse, expressed in the hermeneutical and theological developments within the West and their agents in the non-Western world.

Modern and post-modern hermeneutics, through essentialism, have inconspicuously provided the sphere for the imperial agenda of the global imperialism to grow. Western essentialism and elitism reflected in historical criticism promoted through Western educational institutions. This has transported Western essentialism to the non-Western world in order to bring civilisation. With the rise of hermeneutics, the critique of the Enlightenment and modernism was embraced by the non-Western world in the rise of Liberation -, black and other contextual hermeneutics. The problem remained that the contextual modes merely re-inscribed Western essentialism by reversing racist, sexist and imperial dichotomies. This follows the trace of essentialism linked to scholarly institutions that trained non-Westerners scholars in hermeneutics. Tracy (1994:107) notes: "Many of the post-moderns, for example, seem too academic in the fully pejorative sense, far too convinced that ideas alone determine history...Any purely academic understanding of history as the history of ideas unites a curious intellectual arrogance with an ethical obtuseness to the massive suffering in concrete history, including the history of the present".

Imperialism is continued through post-modernism through it's linkage to essentialism and neo-liberalism. Taylor (1997:173) writes that neo-liberalism is a late development of capitalism that deploys "flexible modes of accumulation" reflected for example in the ease of movement of capital across the globe to markets with greater profits.

Post-modernism functions as an enchanting human face to the complex process of capitalist extraction. Taylor (1997:173) writes that it does this through three modes:

1. Post-modernity celebrates diversity enabling capitalism to function without the analysis of structural dynamics. Connectivity without taking the hierarchical relations between people and places into consideration contributes to global imperialism.
2. The theoretical underpinnings of postmodernism is critical of the meta-narratives of liberation movements, arguing that they are naive and modern relics. This neutralises the exposure of hierarchical relations and secures the capital of the wealthy by pulling the proverbial carpet from under the feet of the poor.
3. Post-modernity focuses on the unleashing of creative forces to construct images to portray oppressive forces as a case of healthy diversity.

A further aspect, according to Comblin (1998:156), is the ethical predicament of science introduced with the development of nuclear science and its military use. Science focuses on specific goals and no longer chance discoveries. "Today scientific research entails large amounts of capital…Research cannot be directed at any object whatsoever; discoveries are aimed at conquering the market. Researchers are increasingly employers of companies; their research is governed by the company's goals". This means that any discovery that is not of economic interest is not going to develop (Comblin, 1998:156).

In the global context, imperial scholarship is a function of both the influence of essentialist cultural discourse and centralistic ethics, providing the space for cultural colonialism. In this regard, the interaction of scholarly and non-scholarly readers disrupts the institutional guild and destabilises the power of Western imperialism by placing scholarly and non-scholarly discourse within the same interpretative space. In this process the cultural framework of readers from the African and Western scholarly context, represent two different worlds or cultural matrixes. The interaction of scholarly and non-scholarly reading in the 'South' African context from the margin[233] introduces a destabilising effect reflecting the cultural bias of Western scholarship. It reflects the history of colonial infusion of Western essentialism at the expense of an African holistic worldview. The holistic worldview is the epistemological key to unlocking the wealth of decolonial discourses. A *Moya* mode of reading that is not

[233] Bujo (1992:67-70) argues that African Theology should engage African tradition and the marginalised. In this way, it can develop as a contextual theology that is not limited to liberation movements linked to the America's and other non-Western contexts.

neutral cultural discourse, but has the ethical cutting edge to construct a critical discourse, unravelling imperialism, racism and sexism.

Post-modern playfulness and the ease of global connectivity provide a dangerous foundation for the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading. It may be viewed as a strategy to bring people and diverse reading communities together, reflected in the study, *Through the eyes of another: Intercultural reading of the Bible* (De Wit et al 2004). However, it can never be only a way of connecting to construct new readings for the benefit of power. In this case, it will loose its power as a decolonial movement. In this regard, the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings must be contextual or in the words of Said, worldly. It must take the power relations in that context seriously by engaging the silenced. It must accept that the text-reader interaction is worldly. It is concerned with power and ideology aiming to secure control over other people and places. It must take seriously that no context is an island and that we are connected. In this regard, it offers a critical alternative to global post-modern biblical scholarship by the holistic and experience from the margin of non-scholarly readers.

Taylor suggests that post-modernity needs to take steps to an ethos of struggle (Taylor 1997:180). This implies that:

1. Post-modernity needs to enter informal networks of communication and not remain encamped in scholarly and intellectual guilds. The interaction with non-scholarly readers from the margin is a definite step in this direction.
2. Post-modernity must develop a public ethic. It is meaningless for the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers to produce pages and pages of scholarly rhetoric. It must have a liberating effect in the context of that interaction. In this regard, it is not the scholar that becomes a "transformative intellectual", in the words of Fiorenza (1999), but the interaction itself must be transformative. It is a liminal engagement that brings about a liberative reconnection. This globalisation makes the globe a better and more peaceful place.
3. Post-modernity is to embrace new genres. This implies the abandonment of exclusive mechanisms of intellectual and highbrow rhetoric. This entails a focus on the stories of people with all their inconsistencies and anomalies and scholarship that writes in genres that speak to people.

To address the problem of the continuation of imperialism through essentialist modes and centralistic ethics of reading, whether modern or post-modern, I argued that reading was a worldly experience (Said 1983). In this regard, the cultural matrix and experiences of non-scholarly readers from the margin of the 'South' African context offers a decolonial alternative. Said argued that texts are communication media that contain the inscribed constraints of the author, but the reading process perpetuates ideology. In this regard, inscribed in the reading process are imperial ideologies. This is particularly important in terms of the fact that all truth is power. The text contains the inscribed power of the author to write and to influence. Reading is therefore not a leisure activity that has no influence in terms of the political and ideological – reading is an ideological process (Eagleton 1976). Said proposes that colonialism and imperialism has influenced the globe, constructing the Western privileged world and the non-Western, colonised, exploited world. The reading of cultural texts like the novel provided a means of influencing colonial ideologies, constructing the colonised through essentialist modes (Said 1994:35). Essentialism not only constructs the colonised, but also borders them off from the coloniser, creating a hierarchical connection that simplified colonial processes like the civilising mission. Against this background it was easy to deduce that all non-Western contexts and peoples are primitive, barbaric and under-developed, in need of civilisation and education from the Western, civilised, developed and Christian world. Essentialist cultural discourse and centralistic ethics that inform the hermeneutical process continues the material, geographical and historical processes of imperialism. However, holistic and experiences from the margin deconstructs essentialism and centralistic ethics.

Reading the Bible has not escaped the influence of imperial ideologies (Dube 1996). In this regard, reading the Bible in ‘South’ Africa informed by essentialism continues imperialism through globalisation. One of the most influential texts in terms of the previous century was Genesis 11:1-9 used to justify colonial racism.

Educational institutions continued the influence of essentialism (Slemon 1994). Scholarship plays a salient role in the continuation of Western cultural imperialism.

This is reflected in the role of Enlightenment science and later in hermeneutics that constructed new essentialist readings (Said 1995). In this regard, Said argues that a transformation of the role and function of the intellectual is paramount for a responsible reading of the Bible (Said 1994).

In biblical scholarship, Schüssler-Fiorenza, leaning on the critical hermeneutics of Habermas, introduced a turn to an ethics of interpretation of the Bible that deconstructs centralistic ethics and the separation between scholarship and social location (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1988). Daniel Patte took up Schüssler-Fiorenza's challenge, as a male Western scholar from the perspective of Gadamer's hermeneutics, arguing that all readings engage different semantic dimensions of the text reflecting the interests of the reader. He emphasised that scholarly readings are only legitimisations of scholarly interests through scholarly theories and methods. He suggested a 'reading with' strategy in which scholars read with non-scholarly readers. The problem of Patte's approach is his failure to give attention to the role of centralistic ethics. Schüssler-Fiorenza, notes that Patte's hermeneutic fails to read form the margin, perpetuating patriarchy. Another problem is that the hierarchical distinction between "critics" and "ordinary" readers are retained, reflecting an imperial connection linked to Western essentialism (Maluleke 2000, Dube 1996).

Leaning on deconstruction, Spivak and Bhabha argues that the reading process do not result in stable essentialist constructions. The experience of people marginalised through colonialism and informed by a holistic cultural matrix deconstructs colonial discourse (Slemon 1994). Three theological-ethical criteria guide this study: Holism, marginality and healing. The reading of non-scholars that deconstructs essentialist scholarship and centralistic ethics leans on the cultural matrix of holism and the ethical position of the margin. Deconstruction occurs at the point of interaction between these oppositional discourses and destabilises the essentialism of colonial reading. It will also unravel the essentialist discourse of anti-colonial discourse and the centralistic ethics of indigenous readings that follow a holistic perspective.

In this regard, I set out to argue that colonial - and anti-colonial scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9 in 'South' Africa follow essentialist cultural discourse and a centralistic ethic of reading. Non-scholarly readings, from the margin, informed by a

holistic cultural matrix deconstruct imperialism constructions. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings creates a liminal space, for the transformation of scholarly modes and the construction of responsible readings that stimulates healing.

Chapter 2 revealed that Western essentialism and centralistic ethics informed Colonial (Anglocentric - and Afrikaner readings) and anti-colonial scholarly readings of Genesis 11:1-9. Anglocentric reading, reflected in the work of Colenso, reflect the influence of essentialism and Darwinism, linking with the civilising mission. The historical-critical mode that developed created the cultural sphere for colonialism to grow, under the influence of centralistic ethics that failed to recognise the effect of colonialism.

Colenso links Genesis 11:1-9 to the primitive, aetiological function of the Yahwist that attempts to explain the diversity of languages and cultures. Driver follows a similar line of argument by reducing the text to a controllable form related to the Yahwist, from where the critical reflection of science introduced an objective reflection on aetiological questions. Driver argued that although the text is a primitive form of aetiology it contains a ‘spiritual message’ that views the dispersion as God's will for the development of humanity through nationalism.

Afrikaner reading in the document HR reflects the influence of essentialism and a centralistic ethics. Western essentialism came in the guise of Kuyper's Calvinist mode and Fundamentalism. These modes fused in Boer Calvinism that positioned itself on the centre of White privilege that justified colonial racism. This mode of reading highlights the influence of segregation and colonial capitalism traced back to Dutch colonialism and British Imperialism that continued the disenfranchising and exploitation of the non-Western population of 'South' Africa. The Dutch Reformed Church read Genesis 11:1-9 in the context of Genesis 1:28, leaning on Kuypers reference to the creation ordinances of God and a fundamentalist authoritarian thrust, the document HR stated that the sin of the tower builders was their disobedience to fill the earth and refrain from unity. Unity is a spiritual concept revering to the unity of all beliers in Christ. The exclusive interpretation of the covenant in terms of

ethnicity, reflected in the scattering of the tower builders, aligned with the apartheid policies of the Nationalist government (National Party).

Anti-colonial readings that read the Bible from the experiences of marginalised people reverse the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy. These readings remain within the cultural realm of essentialism and are therefore in danger of uncritically reading texts from the essentialist construction of the margin resulting in the perpetuation of imperial ideologies. This is in the reading of Du Toit that read Genesis 11:1-9 from the experience of the Afrikaner suffering enforced by British Imperialism. The essentialist cultural discourse that influenced his reading later developed into the justification of apartheid. Anti-colonial readings that resist colonial racism reflected in *The Kairos Document* (1986) follow the same fusion of essentialism and marginal ethics as Du Toit's reading. Miguez-Bonino's, reading of Genesis 11:1-9, informed by Latin-American Liberation hermeneutics, on which 'South' African anti-colonial readings lean, follows a similar line of argument as Du Toit, linking the building of the tower and Nimrod the imperialist. Miguez-Bonino's reading develops from the use of socio-analytical tools and Du Toit's from the work of Kuyper. Alan Boesak follows the same point of departure as Du Toit reflecting similar essentialist notions. The essentialist cultural discourse that informed anti-colonial struggles against apartheid has transformed into the justification of neo-liberal economic policies and Western imperialism. In this regard, after democracy and the eradication of apartheid policies poverty has increased.

The link between essentialist cultural discourse and scholarship (colonial and anti-colonial), in the 'South' African context, highlights the fact that a reading from the margin informed by a holistic worldview has the potential to construct a responsible reading. The influence of scholarly education and essentialism ignited a turn to non-scholarly reading that interacts with scholarship in the construction of new ethically accountable readings. The question is whether non-scholarly reading follows a holistic perspective that has the potential to deconstruct essentialism and centralistic ethics.

In Chapter 3, it became clear that non-scholarly readings break through the object/subject dichotomy of scholarly modes of reading, by viewing the text as the

subject of interpretation. An ideological analysis of the readings revealed that scholarly reading follows four reading dimensions. Colonial readings lean on a Western essentialist cultural matrix and align with colonial discourse, reflected in continuation of the civilising mission in reading of some of the respondents of the Dutch Reformed Bible study groups. Exceptions were traces of anti-colonialism, linked to Du Toit readings, and post-modern perspectives informed by essentialism and centralistic ethics. Anti-colonial readings followed from the Diakonia group that read the text from the margin of apartheid racism. The group viewed democracy, linked to Western humanism as an alternative to apartheid racism. In this regard, Genesis 11:1-9 was primarily concerned with bridging the gaps between cultural differences. Indigenous reading of Avorti, interpreted Genesis 11:1-9 in the context of African myths and a centralistic ethical position. The effect of the centralistic position is the uncritical retention of African patriarchal ideologies. Decolonial reading from the margin and a holistic cultural matrix followed from the Mbatha that connected people, land and God. Genesis 11:1-9 is a critique on the civilising mission that promoted Western cultural discourse resulting in the alienation of people from their culture. The dispersion is a critical moment that reflects the fragmentation of society because of cultural imperialism. Responses from the Montwood Park and Optima Bible study groups incorporated references to the interconnectedness of people, the role of power or life force as a connective agent, and the critique of patriarchy[234].

The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading does not necessarily result in responsible readings in terms of the theological-ethical dimensions of holism, marginality and healing. The interaction of colonial scholarly readings with colonial non-scholarly readings will confirm colonial discourse by aligning essentialism and centralism. The interaction with anti-colonial non-scholarly readings will result in the perpetuation of essentialism, reflected in the link between Du Toit and Black

[234] Haddad (1996:207) writes, “African theology…has fallen into the trap of idolizing African culture in an uncritical way…Because (it) starts from the context of African culture, which is patriarchal,… it runs the risk of being party to the legitimization of the domination of women”. In this regard, the institutional formation of resistance culture in governmental structures had the same effect as the handover of power by the British to Afrikaner Nationalists, excluding non-Europeans. Colonial governments systematically attempted to disempower women, but nonetheless there were individual and collective protests. "Even though women did lose power during this period, ‘it was neither even nor linear. However, in the post-colonial period their power was further eroded because decolonization was essentially a transfer of power, from one group of men to another” (Haddad 1996:205).

hermeneutics. Indigenous readings of non-scholars, informed by holism, will deconstruct essentialism but the centralistic ethic will result in the continuation of centralistic ethics. The deconstruction of essentialist and centralistic scholarly readings are possible through the interaction with decolonial non-scholarly readings. Decolonial reading have the potential to deconstruct essentialism and centralistic ethics, from the margin and a holistic cultural matrix.

In Chapter 4**,** a theological-ethical reflection of the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings followed. The purpose of this chapter was to evaluate scholarly models that initiate interaction with non-scholarly readers in terms of the theological-ethical criteria of holism, marginality and healing. In this regard, the study proposes that the model of Dube, "reading from", is a responsible model for the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings. Secondly, the hermeneutic of Tutu was explored as a contemporary example of decolonial reading. However, close investigation revealed that although his *ubuntu* reading is from the margin of colonial racism it leans on Western humanism and ecclesiology that views connectivity as a function of democracy. In this regard, Tutu's reading does not make the connection between people, land and God.

Next, the study turned to contextual ecclesiology reflected in the African Independent Church and the role of the concept *Moya*. I argued that *Moya* incorporates the theological-ethical dimensions of holism, marginality and healing. It is holistic in that *Moya* reflects the view that the Spirit dwells in all people and connects people to land and God. The suppression of the power or life force of a person, results in the oppressed invoking *Moya* to restore disrupted connections, from where healing is stimulated. In this regard, *Moya* is a contextual articulation of non-scholarly reading that has the potential to deconstruct centralism and essentialism.

In the final part of the chapter, I set out to construct an interaction between scholarly - and *Moya* non-scholarly readings. It became clear that *Moya* non-scholarly readings deconstructed essentialist views of scholarly readings in terms of the inherent connection between people, land and God. It also leads to the deconstruction of patriarchal ideologies that uncritically accepted the tower as a phallocentric expression of male domination. The interaction between scholars and non-scholars

constructs a liminal space from where constructions, from the margin, destabilises centralistic readings. The text-reader interaction reveals the ideological and hierarchical connection between essentialistic and holistic cultural discourses that perpetuate colonialism and imperialism. Finally, *Moya* non-scholarly reading stimulates healing by stating that the *Moya* is not an eschatological source of peace and harmony but that the presence of *Moya* restores connections. This process of restoration is not only spiritual but includes community and land.

5.2 Research Problem

Essentialistic cultural discourse and centralistic ethics informs modern and post-modern scholarly modes, providing the sphere for the continuation of Western imperialism through globalisation. Colonial and anti-colonial scholarly modes in the 'South' African context reflect this. Contemporary hermeneutics have opted for a turn to non-scholarly reading and their interaction with scholars. The question is whether all non-scholarly readings are responsible? In the 'South' African context with its history of colonialism and imperialism, this is an important question in the light of the continuation of colonial inequalities and exploitation. The role the Bible played in the past as a justification of colonial racism but also as a source of liberation highlights the link between the Bible and the justification of colonial racism. The Bible remains salient to the majority of people of 'South' Africa and therefore demands a responsible reading that deconstructs essentialist cultural discourse and centralistic ethics of which Western imperialism is feeding. In this regard, the construction of responsible readings that deconstruct essentialism is paramount, to avoid the perpetuation of essentialist cultural discourse and centralistic ethics that read text from the perspective of privilege and power. The question is what types of cultural discourse and ethics will provide the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings with a deconstructive thrust from where responsible readings can develop.

5.3 Hypothesis

The study proposed that colonial and anti-colonial scholarly readings lean on essentialism and centralistic ethics that aligned with the imperial centre in the 'South' African context. The deconstruction of essentialistic and centralistic ethics implies

that these scholarly reading need to interact with holistic non-scholarly readings from the margin of the 'South' African context. In this regard, not all non-scholarly readings have the potential to deconstruct essentialism because of essentialistic and centralistic dimensions implicit in these readings. The theological-ethical criteria that guided this study are holism, marginality and healing. Holism reflects the interconnected dimension of African culture that connects people, land and God. Holism reverses the disconnection and fragmentation of essentialism that created the sphere for imperialism and colonialism to grow. A holistic cultural matrix complemented by an ethics of the margin, the experience of the colonised other, is the point of departure of responsible hermeneutics in the 'South' African context.

Finally, the deconstruction of essentialism and centralistic ethics that align with the imperial centre remain empty if healing and reconnection does not take place. I proposed that the concept *Moya,* linked to the African Independent Church, reflect these criteria. A *Moya* non-scholarly reading provides a responsible point of departure for the construction of a liminal space that deconstructs essentialism from the margin. In the 'South' African context, this implies that the reconnection of people and land addresses the destruction of colonial racism. This does not imply that a *Moya* reading is the only contextual articulation of a responsible reading. The diversity and vibrancy of the African context implies that the expressions of holism, marginality and healing will be as diverse and varied. In this regard, it is an example of a contextual articulation with a deconstructive impulse, which aims to bring healing in the 'South' African context.

5.4 Methodology

The first part of the study followed the history of interpretation (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of 'South' African colonial and anti-colonial scholarly readings. This mode emphasised the link between essentialism in scholarship and the history of colonialism. Secondly, the ideological critique of non-scholarly reading revealed that essentialism and centralistic ethics inform colonial non-scholarly reading. Holism and centralistic ethics inform indigenous readings. Essentialism and marginality inform anti-colonial readings. Non-scholarly readings from the experience of the marginalised and a holistic cultural discourse have the potential to deconstruct

centralistic discourse. Ideological critique located ideology in the text-reader interaction producing oppressive and liberative readings of the same text. Finally, a theological-ethical reflection linked to holism, marginality and healing provided the point of departure for the evaluation of contemporary scholarly modes that interact with non-scholars. The reflection revealed that *Moya* is a contextual articulation of these dimensions.

The modes used in this study were successful in indicating that *Moya* non-scholarly reading presents a deconstructive alternative for the interaction with essentialist and centralistic scholarly reading. Future research can benefit by including a rhetorical analysis of the discourse of essentialist and centralist readings. This implies a more detailed study of the connection between the mode of reading and content of Genesis 11:1-9.

5.5 The Implications of the Study

- **Transforming scholarship:** Engaging[235] the holistic and worldly experience of non-scholarly readers from the margin transforms scholarship. In this way, scholarship moves beyond the constraints of an ivory tower enterprise and engage the margins of society as an act of solidarity.
- **Ideological critique of the hermeneutical process:** The experiences of readers on the margin and informed by a holistic cultural discourse destabilise the inscribed ideologies of essentialist and centralistic readings of the Bible. In this regard, colonial -, anti-colonial and indigenous readings are deconstructed.
- **Decolonial readings:** The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings, from the margin and informed by holism, results in liminal experiences from where responsible readings arise and healing stimulated.

[235] Fish (1995:1) states: "The literary critic as I imagine him is anything but an organic intellectual in the Gramscian sense; instead he is a specialist, defined and limited by the tradition of his craft...". Therefore, "...if you want to send a message that will be heard beyond the academy, get out of it....the academy love it or leave it" (Fish, 1995:2). West (1998:630) disagrees: "But I do not believe his arguments hold good for Biblical studies, particularly in those contexts where the Bible is a significant text in society".

In this regard, the non-Western world and specifically Africa has a prominent place in Christian history and scholarship. Readings from Africa are not only important for the decolonisation of Africa, but with the growth of Christianity in Africa, it will potentially be the "*representative* of Christianity in the twenty-first century" (Stinton 2004:132). Africa can affect the global situation through its theology. It encourages the recovery of holistic views of life and healing. This will transform Western theologies that tend to develop dichotomies and hierarchies (Stinton 2004:133). Theologies of mediation can potentially bring new dimensions to the need for reconciliation on the vertical and horisontal planes (Stinton 2004:133). The theologies of community, challenges the rampant individualism within Western Christianity (Stinton 2004:133). Finally, the focus on a "lived" theology, forged from the concrete realities of everyday life counters the abstract ivory tower theologies of the West (Stinton 2004:133).

The comments of Stinton, regarding the role of African theology in the global context, has already been identified by Schüssler-Fiorenza (1988:17) in her Presidential address delivered on 5 December 1987 at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature where she referred to the future impact of contextual hermeneutics: “Questions raised by feminist scholars in religion, liberation theologians, theologians of the so-called third World, and others traditionally absent from the exegetical enterprise would not remain peripheral or nonexistent for biblical scholarship. Rather, their insights and challenges could become central to the scholarly discourse of the discipline. In short, if the Society were to engage in a disciplined reflection on the public dimensions and ethical implications of our scholarly work, it would constitute a responsible scholarly citizenship that could be a significant participant in the global discourse seeking justice and well-being for all”.

The participation of non-Western scholars refocused the cultural bias of post-modern hermeneutics. Bosman (1990:54) proposes that post-modern theology must make greater room for creativity and the critique of the ideologies of readers. The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers transforms the dynamics of biblical interpretation by combining unlikely conversation partners. This opens the possibility for creativity and the unravelling of entrenched ideologies. A *Moya* reading is a creative alternative to abstract post-modern theories and a critique of

Western essentialism that transforms the scholarly ethos. Said (1994:241) states: “Just as culture may predispose and actively prepare one society for overseas domination of another, it may also prepare that society to relinquish or modify the idea of overseas domination”. The interaction between scholars and non-scholars in the 'South' African context is indeed preparing essentialist and centralistic scholarship to relinquish its imperial control of the Bible[236].

Locally, the interaction between scholars and non-scholars can contribute to the growing question whether White scholarship in 'South' Africa is African[237]. The dialogue between Masenya[238] and Snyman[239] raises this question. Snyman (2002:2) writes: “It seems to me that Masenya’s contention is that white people have no hope to be African, because Africans are black. She follows the old apartheid logic to its consequences and uses it to her advantage now that the demise of apartheid resulted in new power relations of ‘black’ subordination of whiteness”. Is this study another attempt by a 'White' scholar to be African by implicating non-scholarly readings from the margin? One of the contributions of this study is that the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings does not pretend to mask the cultural baggage of the scholar, White or Black. Both share the same Western scholarly bias. What the interaction does is to uncover the essentialist and centralistic traces of this bias and provide a liminal experience. In this regard, the *Moya* reading, discussed in chapter 3, is not a new comparative mode of reading in which scholars read "for" the people. It is an attempt by scholarship to read the text in solidarity with the marginalised by reading the text from their experience. This is done in order to reveal the critical moment of non-scholarly reading that unravels the continuation of essentialism and centralism in the scholarly guild and in society to construct responsible readings that stimulates healing.

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[236] "The closed book is the biblical text as enclosed in an academic institution which licenses a single, restricted interpretative paradigm within which one must operate...The open text is the biblical text as the site of a proliferation of meanings that accord with its character as a sacred text, constantly read and reread without ever being exhausted" (Watson 1993:3-4).

[237] "The traditional, white Protestant perception of theological argument would enable white theologians to be quick to point out the damaging effect of the liberationists' practice of 'contextual theology' on the Bible. They would say that one should not start with the 'situation' or 'context' but rather with the Bible as the authoritaitve Word of God" (Loader 1987:13)

[238] Masenya, M.J. 2002. Is White South African Old Testament Scholarship African? *Bulletin for Old Testament Studies in Africa* 12:3-8.

[239] Snyman, G. 2002. *Who has the moral right to speak? A rumination on current South African Theological Discourses.* Article presented at the OTSSA 2002, Stellenbosch.

Antjie Krog (1999:431) wrote the following in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

so much hurt for truth
so much destruction
so little left for survival
where does one go from here?
voices slung
in anger
over the solid cold length of our past
how long does it take
for a voice
to reach another
in this country held bleeding between us?

5.6 Future Research

In the 'South' African context the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readings can benefit from the inclusion of readings of specific marginalised communities like refugees, the youth and HIV/AID suffers. Non-scholarly readings of specific ethnic groups and tribe in Africa will give greater understanding of the diversity of Africa and holistic cultural discourse. This diversity will also highlight different dimensions of the deconstruction of colonial discourse in different African contexts.

Research on the contemporary situation in the Dutch Reformed Church, is specifically relevant in terms of ethical discussions relating, to racism, gender and homosexuality. The interaction between scholars and non-scholars can be particularly helpful in engaging marginalised voices in debates, mostly dominated by the clergy.

In the Reformed tradition, the Bible plays a central role - *sola Scriptura*. What effect does the interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers have on this foundation of Reformed Theology? What effect does a *Moya* reading have on

Reformed Theology? Does it undermine Reformed pneumatology or is it a contextual expression? Alternatively, does it help us to understand the doctrine of the priesthood of individual believers[240]?

The interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly readers opens important questions regarding ecclesiology. How does this change the way we are a church? Are the churches in 'South' Africa contextual? Do they reflect the life force of the people? Do they mediate healing? Alternatively, are the churches in 'South' Africa Western settler churches that fear syncretism?

The current research focusing on Genesis 11:1-9 can also benefit by expanding research to include global readings of Genesis 11:1-9 and its impact on the 'South' African context. In this regard, research involving non-scholarly readers from other contexts and their experiences of colonialism has the potential to develop a more comprehensive response to global imperialism and essentialist discourse.

[240] "Surely Martin Luther's radical doctrine of the priesthood of individual believers - and hence of the legitimacy of non-privileged, individual sacred text interpretation - did a great deal to confuse issues of authority and interpretation in the western Christian tradition" (Detweiler 1985:214)

Appendix 1: Non-Scholarly Interpretations of Genesis 11:1-9

DRC Durban Bible Study Group:

- Reference was made to Gen 10 and the table of nations. Gen 11 refers to the descendents of Nimrod.
- Ham is a descendent of Nimrod the imperialist. We can see the effect of this when we look at Zimbabwe and all the suffering caused.
- People had one language. God confused the language of the people.
- People are capable of building – they had skills. Nothing is impossible for people.
- People were unified and equal, but God decided that thing must be different.
- The tower that reached to the heavens pointed to the power of the people, that nothing would be impossible for them afterward.
- People did not want to fill the earth therefore God confused their language so that they would start quarrelling and disperse.
- The tip of the tower reached heaven. Is it possible? Is it a symbolic reference for reaching God?
- People thought that unity strengthens, "eendrag maak mag". They did not want to disperse over the earth.
- People wanted to make a name for them (v4). God became less important
- God came to look at the city that they have built. He shows an interest in their activities.
- Israel was supposed to be a light for the nations. God wanted to send them out to be a light for the nations (Isaiah 49). The tower became a stumbling block in the way of God's plan for the people. They became disobedient like Jonah.
- The fact that there was only one language indicates that there was only one nation
- People wanted to play God. They wanted to be the best. But God intercedes no matter what the situation or place
- "Mens wik maar God beskik". People make their plans but God decides the outcome. People wanted to take over heaven. Make a name for them, wanted to be like God.
- Tower a beacon or orientation point to return to
- Tower was never completed. Built in phases. Symbolic language.

- People disperse across the earth to other places. Were their any other people there?
- The sin of the people was their lust after power and prestige. It was their idolatry.
- To disperse was a missionary command.

DRC Pretoria:

- The story points to the will of God. Our clever plans are not always, what God wants.
- People focused on their own will. They were driven by ambition.
- God has a sense of humour. People were crowding together, keeping themselves warm. It is Gods will that they disperse over the earth.
- The story show that what we do must be to the glory of God, therefore God disperses them to move them out of their comfort zones in order to grow.
- The people are hard and do not think of what God wants - self-centred.
- We cannot succeed on our own strength. God will make sure we go out into the world although we do not want to, like the tower builders.
- We receive talents to use to the glory of God. If we do not want to go out, He will make a plan.

Diakonia Council of churches:

- The text confuses me. It is difficult to understand its place in Genesis. It's a text that I usually skip.
- The next participant said that she shares the previous respondent's confusion concerning the text. However, see in it a lesson against conformity in terms of race, peer group etc. Unity is different from conformity because it allows for diversity.
- They wanted to make a name for themselves. They are not concerned with the rest of the world only their fame and fortune. They did not focus on God’s purpose.

- I see an analogy between the tower and the Twin Tower of 9/11. We live in a consumerist society, reaching for the sky. This is against God's will; we must use the land, according to God's will. We must live on the horizontal plane.
- Verse 3 says that the people built a tower with bricks. They put differences, like culture aside and built together for their own future. We have the same challenge in SA - reaching the sky for our unity.
- We are building on our democracy with different bricks. We are different cultures that form one building.
- Verse 7 focuses on confusion, not understanding. Differences do not have to confuse. It is still possible to communicate. It does not have to be a hindrance – rainbow nation. We have to be creative in order to move beyond our differences and for understanding to be possible.
- The text was used to justify apartheid, but the story of Pentecost in Acts shows how people are brought together.
- We should not remain isolated but reach out to other people no matter how difficult.
- People were brave and focused, but forgot that God has power
- The Lord scattered the people so that they could reach out to other people.
- As a child, we were taught that people wanted to see God and He therefore confused them so that they will not reach heaven. They wanted to do what they wanted. Today through the history of SA we see white Afrikaners did what they wanted to do. They did not consider other people that were different from them. God wants people to make an effort to reach others. Differences of language are hindrances that force us to make an effort.
- God did us a favour; otherwise, life would have been boring. We have to make an effort to get to know others. Unity results when we bridge differences. Unity is not similar mindedness, but rather focusses on one purpose – to reach out and not sit in our comfort zones of homogeneity.
- One language means that they had a common understanding or thinking. It does not refer to one physical language. Like African tribes coming together – being of Africa. Secondly, it is good that God confused them so that they could move from their comfort zones.

- I was listening to the news and they were reflecting on our democracy and its relevance. What was the context of the text? We are together in SA. What brings us together? What do we do to make it easier to communicate? We must reach out across borders.
- Text helped me to reflect on my own life. What are the Towers in my life?
- Diversity is good, without diversity there is conformity. Unity is through diversity. It is not about me, but others.
- Scholarly research shows that it is a text written after the exile. It refers to Babylonian imperialism. Babel was destroyed because of division.

Montwood Park Support Centre:

- The people built a city to make a name for ourselves. They wanted to be powerful.
- People spoke one language over the world with only one meaning.
- Things will not happen our own way. We want to control other people. God exercises His power.
- The world had one language. There was only one group. People were made to be one, unified, but people want power to show how great they are. This destroys the unity among people.
- People use the unity for their own selfish purposes and not to serve others.
- We must watch out for pride and control.
- Building big buildings and towers are things that men do. They seek control at the expense of us women. They forget God made us in his own image.
- The text reflects a power issue, control
- People do things without the Lords leadership.
- God lead the people to that place (Shinar). It was through Him that they got there. But they were not thankful. We are intelligent and start relying on our own power instead of remaining humble.
- God was tactful in this story. He did not break the tower down, but confused the people.

- The story is a myth. It is not real and only symbolically reflects the fact that God has given us a free will. The problem is that we become arrogant. We do not know to take responsibility.
- Story shows that we cannot handle power. We make war and kill instead of helping people.
- God loves us, but disciples us when we go astray – he is diplomatic.

Optima Bible Study Group:

- God created one man, Adam, and we are the descendents. From the dispersion at Babel, there are different languages. People were trying to reach God, to find God, so He confused their language.
- People are stronger when they unite. In a situation when one or two come together to do something, for good or evil, then it is more likely to succeed. We should unite to do good.
- When a branch of a tree is cut of, a day or two later, you will see that tree is busy dying.
- The spirit of God dwells in all of us. We are all one.
- People were ambitious and only thought of themselves. They were trying to be higher than other people - proud.
- The people did not pray to God before they made the decision to build the tower.
- God taught people a lesson in humility.
- The people tried to find out where God is. However, we will never see God. The different languages are the will of God. They wasted time and decided to stop building. It is important that people speak their own languages today because then they understand each other.
- The text shows the power of God over human beings.
- The people united and called God to come down, to show Him how clever they are. Their science did not impress God.
- Pride comes to a fall. We cannot only trust in our own power. We must learn humility.
- Communication problems caused conflict. Humanity was divided because they wanted to control the land. We are one people and in the beginning, we were one.

New developments in transport bring people together but we are self-centred and want to control the land and its resources. We ask: What can I get? We do not think of others. There is a lack of love.

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