Modernist Expert to Postmodernist Innovative Cultural Hermeneutist: A Journey in Adult Education

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Dedicated to the loving memory of my maternal grandmother,
Mrs. Gertrude Kulasena,
who deposited the Christian Faith in me and cherished me and tirelessly laboured for my primary school education

"I call to remembrance the faith that first dwelt in thy grandmother"
(2 Timothy 1:5)

... Teaching is similar to a raft, being for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping.

Lord Buddha (*Alagaddupama Sutta 22: 13*)

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Contents

Abstract

The repercussions of the turbulent years of the greater part of the twentieth century have been responsible for the demise of both the Enlightenment project and the modern period which was its bearer. This modern period was characterised by legitimising grand metanarratives (*récits*) that were built on the foundations of rationality, optimism and progress in which reality was represented, understood and lived. Human emancipation was expected to be the ultimate goal.

An impressive modernist representative of these metanarratives in the field of my own academic expertise, theology, is the German philosophical theologian, Paul Tillich (1886-1965). His "theology of culture" was a significant theological adult educational project in which he had attempted to represent and convey reality (and meaning) to a generation of adults in the postwar era of the 20th century.

Postmodernism has come to be characteristic of our experience of the world and our present worldview. It questions the legitimacy of the modernist project and along with it the modernist approach to education.

In the context of discussing self-directed learning and its application in my own role as an educator, in this thesis I use Paul Tillich's "theology of culture" as an example of a collapsed modern metanarrative to examine how the educator as an "innovative cultural hermeneutist" would better reposition his/her role as an adult educator in the present.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: the Journey's Beginning

The Aim, Background and Contexts of the Thesis

The primary aim of this thesis is to investigate the question: "how can I be an effective adult educator in the present through my role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist?" In the thesis I have attempted to answer this question by discussing and applying the notion of *self-directed learning* to contemporary adult educational theory. The most effective method of demonstrating the ways in which the question of the thesis is addressed in this study is to anchor it in the contexts of my role as an adult educator, in which it has its genesis, and to suggest how I intend addressing it in the thesis, and to suggest how I intend to addressing it in this thesis.

This thesis is the final part of the Master of Education (Adult Education) degree programme which I commenced at the conclusion of what I had thought was the end of my formal education, namely the completion of a doctorate in Religious Studies.[1] In many respects, my doctoral project served as an important undertaking that consolidated my intellectual heritage which has been informed to a considerable extent by the study of religion, philosophy and theology. However, when I started my formal academic career at the turn of the new millennium I came to pose a series of questions in relation to my being an adult educator in theology and religion in the tertiary sector in the climate of the 21st century. These questions were raised on three fronts: i) my cultural heritage – which was coloured by a colonial history of

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[1] *Paul Tillich and the new encounter of religions*, PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1999.

five hundred years and the formative influences it had on my worldview and practice as an adult educator, ii) the two immediate adult educational environments in which I lead my professional life as an educator in Christian theology and Asian religions, and iii) the Western cultural climate – which is characterised by postmodernism. Each needs explaining.

Context One

Cultural Heritage and Indoctrinated Baggage

My cultural heritage is that of the culture of Sri Lanka which is complex and multilayered. The chief reason for that complexity is its history (2500 years of recorded history), its multi-ethnic population and multireligious character. As a result, every custom, belief, taboo, pattern of thinking, linguistic expression, behavioural pattern, style of communication and aesthetic creation has been distilled through these ethnic groups and religious traditions over the centuries.

The Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka was one of the most powerful cultures which influenced my formative years and the worldview which grew out of those years. Since Theravada Buddhism has flourished since 300 BCE in Sri Lanka it has had a significant influence on my life. My study of Buddhism included its sublime philosophy, its traditions and various schools of thought, its influence in South and South East Asia, and its culture.

Hindu and Muslim cultures also had an impact on me. They became part of me –although not to the same degree as Buddhism and Christianity – through my schooling. Their greatest influence was exercised by my friends and respected teachers. Hindu tradition and its culture became a subsidiary influence on my thinking when I studied its philosophy and history as a major for my first degree. These multilayered traditions were the main sources of

wisdom that were embedded into my way of thinking throughout my formative years.

The culture of Christianity was among the many religious cultures which shaped my outlook and had a significant impact on my life. While it influenced my childhood as a "faith tradition" to which one may adhere, it influenced me mostly by opening up the world of the West to my thinking. This included the philosophy of the West, the thinking of the Greek philosophers and the early Church Fathers, the history of Western ideas, biblical criticism, the thought of the thinkers of the Enlightenment and the makers of Christian theology in the modern era, and lately, the postmodern movement in the West. In the main, it is the influence of the Christian culture on me that has become a focus in this thesis as I attempt to reconcile a version of its educational philosophy which has come to dominate in my role as an adult educator. How it came to be so needs explaining.

My initial theological training in Sri Lanka took place in the late 1980s and was followed by a period of specialist study of Christian systematic theology and Asian religions. Except for the study of Asian religions, my "theological" education was informed by the predominantly colonial Christian education system that had been established in the country since the arrival of the Portuguese colonisers in 1505. Throughout, its style has been pedagogical and its content modern both during the period of British rule (1796-1948) and after it.

The Christian missionaries who arrived on the shores of Sri Lanka throughout the colonial period, and especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both represented and propagated an understanding of the Christian message which was very much coloured by the European Enlightenment project. In their minds, colonising the "world" went almost hand-in-hand with Jesus' Great Commissioning in St. Mark 16:15 where he is quoted as having said: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." Like some of the propagators of the Enlightenment, these missionaries too

believed that their values should be universally applied – they tended arrogantly to see Europe as the most enlightened and advanced part of the world. They perceived Europe to be more civilised than the rest of the globe which, in effect, led to the dangerous feeling that other countries and races must be colonised, exploited or bettered. These propositions were very much embedded in the theological education that I received.

Interestingly, this form of education has a familiar ring when considering the instructional processes that were developed as a result of some dominant philosophies of education in the West such as essentialism, for example. The aim of such philosophy has been the transmission of "cultural essentials" in shaping the knowledge and values of the individual. In the process of learning the emphasis has been on content mastery with instructors serving primarily as transmitters of knowledge. In this respect, scholars like John Dewey[2] of the last century have had a considerable impact on educational philosophy. He believed that education was a continuous process of reconstructing experiences and that the learners were capable of greater and more active roles in the learning process. He also felt that the instructor's or the educator's role is to guide the process of learning and that the school is a social institution which should reflect and influence culture.

Liberalism is another philosophical school that played a significant part in Western education.[3] From their origins in classical Greek philosophy, liberal education traditions became foundations for early Christian approaches to education which also had been my predominant approach to education. This emphasis on developing each individual's intellectual powers with liberal exposure to classical thinkers is partly what liberal education was about.

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[2] See Dewey, *Experience and education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938) and Paterson, *Philosophy of education*. (New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, & Company, 1956).

[3] J.L. Elias & S. Merriam, *Philosophical foundations of adult education* (Huntington, New York: Robert K. Krieger Publishing Company, 1980).

Interestingly, it was against this background that the theology of the German theologian, Paul Tillich, became both attractive and foundational to my theological education and the way in which I came to interpret culture and structure my teaching. Tillich's theology belongs to the liberal school and, as I will explain later, is essentialist in character and modern in content. His ontological universalism, christocentrism, eurocentrism and modernist outlook represent these Western philosophical trends and were a great attraction to me.

The impact of Tillich's theology of culture was so significant that it became the focus of many of my early academic essays and then of my Master of Theology degree which was undertaken as a research degree for the Melbourne College of Divinity, the University of Melbourne. In that study I argued that Paul Tillich's theological method of correlation was, in fact, a philosophical and modern restatement of the Pauline-Lutheran doctrine of justification.

My doctoral thesis was a study of the development of Tillich's theological thought during the last decade of his life (1955-1965). The research was undertaken for the Victoria University of Wellington at a crucial stage of my intellectual development during which I paid attention to my Buddhist heritage and the study of Asian religions. In many respects, it was also a stage during which I wanted to think through the predominantly Western theological education I had received in the light of Asian religions and the Asian styles of theological discourse. This led me to spend a three-month research period at the Paul Tillich archive at Harvard University where I was able to examine his unpublished writings first-hand and form my own impressions of Tillich and his contribution to theology and religious studies. In my doctoral thesis I suggested that during the last ten years of his life Tillich paid considerable attention to the challenge presented by Asian religious thought – and particularly Buddhism – to the modern Western form of systematic theology. In the thesis I demonstrated that, with a view to entering into a meaningful dialogue with the world's religions other than Christianity, Tillich's later thought

was an attempt to go beyond Western systematic theology's "theological provincialism".

Along with the significant development of my intellectual engagement with contemporary culture that started with my doctoral project, I came to develop a further interest in its relationship to adult education. It is that interest which led me to undertake the Master of Education (Adult Education) programme in which I began to engage with the issue of postmodern cultural hermeneutics and their relevance to adult education. It was this issue that led me to begin a new phase in my thinking and teaching which is andragogical in style and postmodern in content. This present thesis outlines the milestones of that journey.

Although I have mentioned hermeneutics I must state that this study is by no means an exposition of hermeneutics - which is beyond the scope of this brief study. As will become evident in the following pages, I am using the idea of hermeneutics to argue the relevance of interpreting the contemporary culture in the language of its present manifestation and experience which invite us to engage in its understanding.

Context Two

Adult Educator and Teacher of Contemporary Culture

At present I hold two lectureships: one at Trinity College Theological School, the University of Melbourne, and the other at the United Faculty of Theology, the Melbourne College of Divinity. My first lectureship concerns teaching students and preparing them for both ordained and licensed lay ministries in the Anglican Church of the Province of Victoria. In total contrast to the custom of the church of the middle of the last century of recruiting young and unmarried men to be trained for the ordained ministry, today we have both men and women aged from the mid-thirties to the late fifties coming to Trinity

College to prepare for ordination. In many instances these students are married and come to study theology after spending many years in other, "secular", professions which are as diverse as the students themselves. Many of the students also hold degrees, including masters and doctoral degrees, in their respective professional fields. Given the wealth of experience and knowledge these candidates for ordination already possess at the point of becoming students again, the members of Theological School staff are constantly challenged to provide a learning experience for them that both encompasses their existing knowledge and deepens their knowledge with "new information" that contains the wisdom of the church's tradition and its intellectual heritage.

In some instances the students already hold a primary degree in theology. When preparing the course work for these students, our task is to provide advanced theological information through "tailor-made courses" of study where the students are given the opportunity to integrate their total learning experience into the new vocation for which they are preparing themselves.

Being the staff member of the faculty concerned with the contemporary cultural aspect of the learning experience of the students, I play a significant role in all the said areas of formation and their concerns in curriculum design and teaching.

Besides teaching, my responsibilities include assigning these adult students to field placements where they are exposed to a multitude of practical experiences. Again, in total contrast to the traditional practice, today not every student is appointed to a parish or a church congregation for his/her practicum – students are also placed in "secular" agencies to actively engage in understanding the disposition of the culture in which they are called to "minister" as the agents of the church. My task is then to evaluate their journals, reports and assignments from these placements, challenge the students and provide them with further academic learning and integrating opportunities in the classroom. It is in these tasks that Malcolm Knowles' assumptions concerning andragogy – which I have outlined in Chapter Two –

have become important to me as I fulfil my educational and formational responsibilities.

Then, whether it is in curriculum design or planning "field work", in every instance, I view the challenge with these adult students as not so much to impart knowledge and information as to enable them to know why they need to learn something and empower them to learn experientially, and to approach learning as problem-solving. I facilitate their learning by demonstrating that the subject or topic in question is of immediate value. In my context of teaching, all of these facets are concerned with the contemporary culture and its issues. It is in this intense engagement with educating adults that I have come to ask fundamental questions concerning the place of hermeneutics in interpreting and understanding contemporary culture, which can then be utilised for effective adult education. Some of the most important questions that I ask are:

"what are the key themes that network in the postmodern experience of our world today?"

"to what extent could these themes be identified so that they allow interpretation of certain attitudes and views about life at present?"

"what are the ways in which these themes govern and inform the validity or the invalidity of knowledge that is being received from the past?"

"what constitutes adult education?" – a "body of knowledge" or a process by which the adult gains the capacity to understand and interpret his/her experience of the world in order that he/she may live more meaningfully?"

"do adults need information as education, or rather the tools and skills to interpret information?"

It is questions such as these that I have channelled as challenges to my own development as an educator and have abridged to the question of this thesis:

"how can I be an effective adult educator through my role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist?" In effect, it is this question which is concerned with my own development that is being explored with reference to self-directed learning as a tool for innovative cultural hermeneutics. The sense in which I have used the phrases "cultural hermeneutist" and "cultural hermeneutics" is explained at the beginning of Chapter Two.

Context Three

Adult Educator and Teacher of Contemporary Religions

My second lectureship in the United Faculty of Theology involves my teaching two subjects and providing supervision for masters and doctoral degrees in related areas. The two subjects I teach are: Contemporary Religious Traditions of South and South East Asia and Groundwork for Christian Ministry in the 21st Century. These two courses are taught for the Bachelor of Theology degree and also for a number of Masters' degrees that are constituted by the Statute of the Melbourne College of Divinity: Master of Arts, Master of Theology, Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, and Master of Ministry. The two units are also taught online via the web as integrative units for the Master of Divinity degree which is open to enrolment by graduates in nontheological disciplines.

The Religious Traditions course is taught with a strong emphasis on the style in which these religious traditions are understood, practised and expressed not only in their native lands but also in contemporary Western societies. The purpose of such an approach is to educate students to find out for themselves the answer to the question "what is it about contemporary Western societies that causes Asian religious traditions to flourish?" As one may suspect, this study outcome is engineered by me to encourage these adult students to "read" the culture and its dynamic manifestations. With such an aim, I have almost

abandoned teaching religions as "cults", "bodies of knowledge", "metaphysics" and "doctrines." I attempt to teach religions as expressions of sacred traditions that give shape to cultures that order life in social organisations and politics with the ultimate goal of providing answers to the human predicament.

Besides these teaching responsibilities at the United Faculty of Theology, I also teach, supervise and facilitate an annual Master of Ministry Collegium on Theology, Ministry and Culture for the Melbourne College of Divinity. Once again, the approach I take is similar to the one concerning teaching religions – the students are given not information, but tools for interpretation. In terms of educational style I am concerned about andragogy and not pedagogy.

In this teaching environment I am privileged to teach a host of multicultural, multi-faith local students in Melbourne as well as another significant group of postgraduate students from all the states of Australia – and indeed from the international community – online. Teaching these two somewhat contrasting units is deliberate on my part to assist students to depart from the traditional study of "systematic theology" and "comparative religions" which, in my opinion, does not correspond to the understanding and processing of knowledge in the postmodern educational context.

The foregoing discussion highlights a wider educational issue concerning the differences among educators of adults regarding beliefs related to the adult as learner. Some believe that the role of education is to develop adults into mature individuals who will contribute to society in positive ways. Other educators hold the view that the aim is to liberate or free the individual mind. Still others believe that the education of adults implies keeping abreast of some institutional, occupational, or technological change. There also are many educators who fall somewhere in between these various beliefs or who have been affected by behavioural, humanistic, or radical beliefs. In addition,

people like Cropley,[4] Gross[5], Hiemstra,[6] and McClusky[7] have prompted a belief that learning must be lifelong in nature.

Consequently, many instructors of adults have become eclectic in their philosophical bases by choosing those aspects of various doctrines, philosophies, and approaches that fit a situation or individual educator's needs. If it has not become obvious already, stating this helps me to label my own beliefs regarding instruction and learning as being very eclectic in nature in that I draw on various philosophies to build my own individual approach. As is evident, I am greatly influenced by humanistic beliefs, such as helping learners to play a larger role in the educating process and viewing myself as an educator who facilitates.

In these many roles that define my role as an educator that I am constantly challenged to both learn from and be a resourceful teacher for my adult students. The subject matter and the context of my teaching are such that they make adult education in contemporary culture a substantial concern – which automatically raises the question: "what degree of innovation is needed in the understanding of the contemporary cultural situation to be an effective adult educator in the present?" More pertinently, the question is: "what intellectual facilities and tools need to be available to the individual educator and learner to enable them to decipher the ambience, the conditions and the frameworks within which knowledge/education is imparted in the present?" In addition to the challenge posed by the earlier context of my work, these

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[4] A.J. Cropley,*Towards a system of lifelong education* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980).

[5] K.P. Cross, *Adults as learners* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981).

[6] R. Hiemstra, *Lifelong learning* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Professional Educators Publications, 1986).

[7] H.Y. McClusky, "The coming of age of lifelong learning," *Journal of research and development in education*, *7*/4 (1974), pp. 97-107.

questions underline the concerns of my own development that correspond to self-directed learning.

Context Four

The Present Cultural Situation – the "post" of "isms"

The cultural milieu that we witness today has emerged from antifoundationalist "movements" such as *post*modernism, *post*structuralism and *post*colonialism. It is an important stage in the intellectual history of the West during which it has come to appraise its turbulent experiences – the devastation both in the 20th century as a whole and in the present – to accommodate itself to a future that is being both occasioned and promulgated by advances in technology and globalisation. To that extent, the prefix "post" in the terms that describe the mood of the present does not indicate a complete break from the past, but rather hints that we are in a process of ongoing transformation and change.

The present stage in the cultural history of the West can be explained in two ways. On the one hand, it has been occasioned as a sociopolitical and economic event, brought about mainly by the spread of mass industry. In this respect, globalisation can be seen as the force behind these economic and political processes[8]. Globalisation has created a crisis by integrating all

[8] See for example, Hugo Radice, "Taking Globalism Seriously," in *Global capitalism versus democracy: The social register 1999,* Leo Panich & Colin Leys (Eds.) (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999) & Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and its discontents: Essays on the new mobility of people and money* (New York: New Press, 1998) propagate an economic theory of globalisation scholars such as Kenichi Ohmae propagates a political theory. See Ohmae, *The end of nation-state: The rise of regional economies (*New York: Free Press, 1995).

scientific, cultural, political and economic activities of humanity into one worldwide network.

The fundamental challenges these developments have presented to the West in particular, and to all humanity in general, have drawn academics engaged in all cultural domains (e.g. education, politics, technology, sociology, theology and so on) into the vortex of the present crisis.[9] Related to this process are technological transformations – cyber-technology, the miniaturisation and commercialisation of machines for instance – have already changed the ways in which knowledge is represented and learning is acquired, classified, made available and exploited.

Furthermore, as a clear indication of detaching from the modern frame of logocentric single meaning structure, the present Western culture is also experiencing an explosion in matters concerning sexuality, gender, ageism, ethnic minorities and other such current issues.

On the other hand, the mood of the contemporary culture has come about as a result of significant changes in what we may call "cultural matter," that is, changes in the arts which have had a profound effect on the notions of *meaning* and *reality*. The term *postmodernism* is used to describe these changes in "cultural matter" and is therefore seen as referring to cultural and artistic developments, social conditions and the mood to which these conditions give rise. Generally, while the term *postmodernism* refers to the changes in the cultural domain and the term *postmodernity* refers to the social domain, recent literature on the subject does not strictly adhere to this distinction, but uses *postmodernism* to describe both expressions. Thus, for

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[9] In this respect, it is of interest to note that *futurism* was the first "modern" attempt to reorganise art and society around technology and the machine ethic and include poetry, literature, painting, graphics, typography, sculpture, product design, architecture, photography, cinema and the performing arts and focus on the dynamic, energetic and violent character of changing 20th century life, especially city life.

the purpose of consistency in this thesis I will also follow the practice of using *postmodernism* to describe the two.

Noting the extent of changes in contemporary culture, it is correct to state that while the terms *postmodernism* and *postmodernity* in the academic literature of the last three decades or so have attempted to precisely describe deep structural changes in thought and cultural expressions, they have also become descriptive terms for all sorts of shifts and transformations in contemporary Western societies and cultures at large. Thus, among their various themes is their well-expressed pessimism about the way in which the "modernist" thought of the last three hundred years has fashioned Western society, and the undisputed faith it placed in technological progress. The difficulties these shifts and transformations have caused vary from issues such as problems with realty, representation, language, personal identity, meaning, values, ethics and morals to promises of high-tech efficiency and complacency. Whether they are seen as positive or negative influences, one cannot deny that they all have a direct impact on the process of adult education.

Having mentioned, in a cursory fashion, the problems which postmodernism raises it is important to note that, at the beginning of the third millennium of the Western calendar, the world is still in its early stages with regard to assessing what the postmodern criticism of modern ideology entails in its totality. What is evident, however, is that postmodern criticism has questioned the most fundamental thought categories such as *self, history, knowledge, God* and *meaning* which were foundational to the birth of the modern West. The postmodern criticism of modernity and what it had represented and constructed in terms of metanarratives which were then embodied in the cultural narrative of the West presents us with a platform on which to articulate the uncertainties, fears, and meaninglessness that permeate our generation. It also has challenged us to rethink every category, value and truth that has been part of the basis of the teaching and learning of our former generations.

From a theological perspective, both postmodern criticism of modernity and the process of globalisation have presented a series of challenges that are targeted at the understanding of "reality." Technically, while the inquiry into the understanding of reality is generally seen as the task of the philosopher or the theologian, the questions of reality and how it is represented have become major questions for the contemporary cultural critics such as Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida and the like. The refined Western scholastic expression of reality is found in ontology (derived from the Greek terms *On,* being, and *logos,* word or science). Ontology fundamentally deals with the question of *being* and *nonbeing*. As is evident in the great treatises of Western civilisation, it is with this question by which all thinkers – the ancient philosophers such as Plato, the Stoics, the early Church Fathers, the great Medieval and Enlightenment thinkers and their inheritors who have contributed to the thinking of the past three centuries – have been captivated in one way or another. In South Asia, sages have engaged themselves with the questions of *Sat* (Sanskrit, *being* and *asat, nonbeing*) and *Atman* (Sanskrit, the Ultimate Soul).

While it is no longer the case, since Western civilisation and its intellectual heritage by and large had expressed itself in "Christendom" in the last two millennia, the most popular expression of this inquiry into reality is found in the concept of God. This concept, however, highlights to some extent the confusion about the "reality" that it conceptualises and God has become a name to a large number of people, particularly to those who live in the Western world. While there is an extremely complex history as to how the question of reality evolved in the West, suffice is to say that, following the experiences of the last century – the two World Wars on the political front and a major shift in the arts on the cultural front – this question has become an enigma in the present times. Then, from a theological point of view, one is able to see the relevance of postmodern criticism of modernity to adult theological education in the West.

Various issues that these contexts present raise a series of complex questions concerning what it means to be an adult educator/theologian in the

present. My stated role as an adult educator is also seen as being interchangeable with the notion of the "intellectual" of the academy. Hence, in this thesis I will use the expression "adult educator" to mean the "theologian" who is an "intellectual" in the university.

These are the main issues that have provided the immediate background for me to undertake this project to both work through and articulate the context in which I may develop my adult educational practice in tertiary education. The issues outlined highlight the importance which I ascribe to postmodern thought and to associating myself closely with it. I have done so deliberately because in the postmodern form of thinking I have recognised an invitation to question both the modern worldviews in which my theological education was grounded and the metanarratives that had given legitimacy to it.

The association with the postmodern movement has not been an easy one; for it has occasioned an "intellectual crisis" in my being an effective educator and theologian in the present cultural context. The crisis was created by questioning all thought forms that were foundational to my education, thinking, biblical and theological hermeneutics, intellectual inquiry and teaching tertiary students. Another way of describing this "crisis" is to say that, through the postmodern criticism of the modern worldview, I came to recognise that the place of the theologian in the present historical moment has become problematic. It is so because the modernist conceptual bases that were fundamental to both the identity and legitimising of the notion of "theologian" have significantly changed.

On the one hand, the conceptual bases have changed along with the significant shifts in semantics, *logocentric* and *phonocentric* frames of reference. On the other hand, due to the media saturation of postmodern popular culture, the theologian's place – and, as a matter of fact, the place of the "intellectual" in general – has been almost completely usurped by broadcasters, TV journalists, sports personnel, celebrities and the like who now set trends, define morals, break stories, and champion worthy causes. The values, moral standards and expert knowledge and opinions that were

once represented by the church or the academy have declined. The rift between the contemporary culture on the one side and the church and the academy on the other seems even greater than that between the church and the academy that resulted in the period of the Enlightenment in Europe.

The reference to the concept of *culture* in terms of the "contemporary culture" in this thesis in many respects epitomises an issue that is at the heart of the inquiry of this thesis. That is, a recognition of how the present cultural ethos has come to problematise the task of education for the theologian in particular and the intellectual in general. Michael Peters expresses this irony well when he writes:

> The turn to culture and to the attempt to re-theorize culture as a central category in the humanities and social sciences is primarily a response to changing historical conditions that allegedly have given the notion of culture an autonomy and potential basis for a new politics, while emphasizing a historicism that denies claims to universality, to universal experience and to universal history. Culture, in other words, has become more anthropologically differentiated and a much more complex concept.[10]

These broad and complex issues provide the conditions under which I have attempted to answer the question of this thesis. My introductory and autobiographical notes to the thesis can now lead to introducing the parameters within which this study has been conducted.

My specialised field of teaching theology to adults falls into the category of what is known as "the theology of culture" which is the kind described by Paul Tillich. The *theology of culture* is not the same as the intellectual inquiry which is known today as *cultural theory*. While the theology of culture pays serious

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[10] *Postmodernism, politics and education* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Bergin & Garvey, 1996), p. 49.

attention to the issues raised by contemporary cultural theory, its predominant focus is an educational one. As will be explained in Chapter Three, in addition to having a "theological" understanding of culture, the theology of culture adds to itself the dimension of religion. In doing so, the educational process of the theology of culture is made apparent – it employs a hermeneutic to interpret the present historical moment to facilitate a dialogue between culture and religion.

In the brands of philosophy of religion and the theology of culture in which I have been educated religion is seen as the meaning-giving substance to a culture which, in turn, informs all the spheres of cultural life. In the theology of culture, the appropriation of the religious material to the culture can be understood as conveying and representing "reality" – God and his ultimate purpose for the world – through the church and its symbols which are the instruments by which this reality is disclosed and channelled. This task of representing and conveying reality is understood as the educational function and duty of the professional theologian. In conventional terms, one may say the theologian's function is to interpret God's revelation to the public. That such was seen as the primary educational task of the intellectual is obvious if one surveys the genesis of, and the background to, the most notable educational institute both in the West and in the East.

In this context, discussing education as conveying reality needs clarifying. The phrase "conveying reality" or "truth" seems to connote religious overtones. Without defining the word, postmodern commentators and cultural critics favour phrases such as "real" and "reality" to mean whatever claims actuality, authenticity, trueness, and legitimacy. For a thinker such as Jean-François Lyotard it is matter of the status of knowledge.[11] Whatever the case may be, the postmodern claim is not so much whether anything is "real" but rather the

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[11] *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). Lyotard's analysis of the situation is not altogether original. He seems to be drawing on postindustrial society as outlined mainly by Alain Touraine, Daniel Bell and others.

assertion that there is no simple, direct relationship between reality and its supposed representation. If this complicated issue could be circumscribed for the purpose of this thesis, I could justifiably argue that, as a theologian, when I use a phrase such as "conveying reality", "truth", or "representing" or "imparting" knowledge I am assuming the educational task of representing and conveying meaning. While there are semantic difficulties in using words such as "reality" "truth" and especially "knowledge," to incorporate various nuances and connotations assigned to these words in postmodern literature, I will use them in different parts of the discussion to underline the particular facet of the problem with reality being represented.

Given my background in theology, I have chosen Paul Tillich's theology of culture as a starting point – more correctly, as a basis – from which to argue this thesis. To that extent, the discussion on Tillich in this thesis is by no means an attempt to elucidate his theology. In this study I have outlined only the main features of his theology of culture which are the themes of his theological commentary on culture which expose a modern narrative of education.

His theology of culture is an important representation of a twentieth century theological adult educational project in which Tillich had attempted to represent and convey reality (and meaning) to a generation of adults in the period that followed the two great World Wars. That it was an adult educational project is apparent when, explaining the meaning of theology, Tillich says: "theology is the methodological interpretation of the contents of the Christian faith."[12] According to Tillich, the contents of the Christian faith are expressed in its symbols. This being the case, theology is said to be a function of the church which *must* serve the needs of the church. Therefore, the theological *system* is built to serve the church in two ways: "the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for

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[12] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology – 1*, (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1953), p. 18. Hereinafter referred to as *ST-1.*

every new generation."[13] The Christian message is one pole, the "situation" is the other pole of all theological work, and the task of the theologian is to speak to the "situation."

In these ways Tillich's cultural discourse represents one of the impressive modernist intellectual systems of knowledge that is prescriptive of the modern framework of adult theological education.[14] Besides being an ingenious user

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[13] Ibid., p.3.

[14] Besides Tillich having been openly celebrated as the "outstanding" or the "the foremost Protestant thinker of the United States," especially during his Harvard years and thereafter, he has been acclaimed with other appellations. For example, he has been called "a modern Thomas Aquinas" (1); "the most enlightening and therapeutic theologian of our time" (2); "an apostle to the skeptics, the intellectuals, the disillusioned of our era" (3); a "landmark and turning point in the history of modern theology" (4); a modern Renaissance man in the best possible sense of that term"(5). He was called also the "most philosophical of the theologians of our century,"(6) and as a "stroke of good fortune for our day (*ein Grenzfall, ein Sonderfall, ein Glücksfall*)"(7)., and as the "master of mediation." (8) It is reported that scholars have compared Tillich's *system* to a pyramid and to an ocean, (9) and declared it to be "beyond doubt the richest, most suggestive, and most challenging philosophical theology our day has produced."(10).

(1) H.Lilje, cited in Schmitz, *Die Apologetische Theologie Paul Tillichs* (Mainz, 1966), p. v; (2) Theodore Green, "Paul Tillich and our secular culture," *Theology,* p. 50 ; (3) Introduction by the editors to *Theology of Paul Tillich* (Revised Edition). Kegley, Charles, W. Ed., (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), p, xi; (4) Niebuhr, cited in C. Rhein, *Paul Tillich, Philosophie und Theologie* (Stuttgart, 1957), p. 195; (5) Dillenberger, in Ferré, *Paul Tillich, retrospect and future,* p. 36; (6) C. Hartshorne, in Ferré, *Paul Tillich, retrospect and future,* p. 28; (7) Hartmann, in H.J. Schultz, ed., *Tendenzen der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundret* (Stuttgart, 1966), p.270. All references cited by Ronald Modrash, *Paul Tillich's theology of the church: A catholic appraisal* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976), p.168. (8) Gilkey, Langdon. "Tillich: master of mediation." *Theology of Paul Tillich* (1982), p.26, (9) Wilhelm & Marion Pauck, *The life and thought of Paul Tillich.* (San Francisco: Harper & Row

of the philosophical concept of "being", Tillich developed a "theological system" which is one of the most remarkable discourses that engaged with the twentieth century Western culture.

As Christendom's influence in shaping the Western civilisation since about the 3rd Century CE until about the middle part of the 20th century is an obvious fact, while it is ironical, it also justifies employing Tillich's avowedly "theological" system to argue the thesis of this study. To that extent, one cannot overlook the fact that the notions such as God, *self,* spirit, symbol, sign and religion have been significant aspects of the Western metanarrative. They have been the concepts that have both constructed and represented the modernist worldview.

In spite of some events which are best described in theological terms, it must also be said that some phases in the history of the West in the last two centuries represent a series of events that are descriptive of the modern understanding of twentieth century Western culture. In this respect also Tillich's theology of culture is significant because the context of his cultural hermeneutics was the modern cultural background that reflected the consequences of radical changes which took place in Europe and America from about the middle of the nineteenthcentury to the middle of the twentieth century.

Having outlined all that concern my role as an adult educator, my own educational background and the significant part of Tillich's theology of culture in it, the purpose of this thesis can be summed up along the following lines. *Tillich spoke of the truth as expressed in the Christian message to the postwar generation. To do so he employed a hermeneutic which was modernist and this was successful with the generation he taught. As an adult educator and a theologian I am also keen to speak and teach the truth to my*

Publishers, 1989), p. 245; (10) J.H. Randall, Jr., *Journal of religion* 46/1 (1966): p. 223, cited in ibid.

generation. My generation is postmodern and I need to employ a hermeneutic which enables me to interpret and learn from the cultural situation which is characterised by the postmodern experience so that I may be successful in being an educator to the present generation. This, then, concerns becoming an innovative cultural hermeneutist through a self-directed learning exercise which must be conducted in respect of exploring wider adult education themes. It is this exercise that has been personalised to the question of this thesis: "how can I be an effective adult educator through my role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist?"

In many respects, the chapters of this thesis represent the stages of my own intellectual journey – the self-directed learning process – as an adult educator and a theologian. And as a theologian it is an adventure to step outside the "theological circle" (Tillich's phrase) and fathom the wider issues which inform the outworking of theology in the present, so that I may be effective in problem-solving and developing an andragogical style of educating adults. In doing so I may become an educator who adopts the role of facilitator or resource rather than lecturer or grader. This also marks the shift from a position of being the "learned theological educator" to being an "innovative cultural hermeneutist".

Methodology and Research Concerns

Methodologically, the argument of the thesis and its presentation have been both andragogical and self-directed. In this context, by *andragogical* I mean constantly processing the researched material in the confines of my study as well as in the classroom. What has been learnt through research has been tried out in the classroom and whatever results it achieved in the classroom have been processed and re-presented as the argument pursued in the thesis. It is also self-directed to the extent that the whole project has been guided by motivation and volition in initiating and maintaining the task of

learning to which I have committed myself through this thesis. In these respects I have attempted to exercise a great deal of independence in setting learning goals and deciding what is worthwhile learning as well as how to approach the learning task within the framework that I have detailed.

In approaching the thesis in these ways, I have engaged myself in the study to go against my background and schooling in the academic disciplines of theology, philosophy, education, contemporary culture and religious studies. To that extent, besides drawing on a multitude of literature, I have carefully utilised manifold facets of thinking and intellectual inquiry represented by these schools of thought.

In carrying out this study, I have also used my training in theological and religious studies to explicate the arguments and broader issues that are related to the postmodern discourse and themes of adult education.

I have written this thesis as an academic who has been committed to teaching and research for the last ten years. Hence, some limited base material found in the thesis have been written or presented in a different – or another – form elsewhere. They include some small sections of my previous works on Tillich such as writings, numerous lectures given in classrooms, seminars and also some limited material from one of my publications.[15] Besides, as this study is not on Paul Tillich, I have drawn on – and rewritten – some of this material because, within the confines of this thesis, it is not possible to say anything original about Tillich's ideas in a way that I had not read them for the last twenty years. To attempt to say anything original about Tillich would be to step outside the defined premise of this thesis.

Some limited material found in the section on postmodernism in Chapter Four also comes from a number of sources which are mine. In Chapter Four I have

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[15] Ruwan Palapathwala, Beyond Christ and system: Paul Tillich and spirituality for the 21st century. *Religion in the new millennium*, (Eds.), Frederick J. Parrella, & Raymond Bulman (Mercer University Press, USA, 2001/2002), pp. 205-219.

developed and used brief notes from my classroom lectures and seminars which contain a significant part of my ideas which have gradually developed through my engagement with the question of this thesis since commencing it three years ago. Over those three years, as a result of being engaged in self-directed learning, my ideas concerning postmodernism and adult education have significantly shifted and developed as I have put them to the test in my classrooms and advanced seminars conducted for graduate students. All this does not mean that I have "cut and pasted" my previous writings, lecture and seminar notes. That would have been impossible as my ideas on the same subject in different pieces of writing are now either significantly different, or have progressed to a new dimension of understanding.

I have also tested my ideas in public lectures that I have given in the last three years in the university setting. Such exercises were consciously and subconsciously guided by my work for this thesis and the thesis question I am attempting to answer here. In that respect it has been impracticable to separate the writings I have done for this thesis and a lecture or a seminar that I had prepared with the issues I am discussing in this thesis as my guiding principles. For instance, some material in Chapter Two was written both for this thesis and for an advanced seminar I conducted on Paul Tillich last year. The discussion on *self* in Chapter Four also was written for this project as well as for my 2002 Noel Carter Public Lecture: "Buddhist and Christian Perspectives on Human Suffering" in which some assumptions I make in this thesis were put to the test.

Having confessed to the methodological approach I have utilised in this thesis, it must be also said that what is original in this study is the way in which I have *re*-sourced and devoured the literature at my disposal to *re*-think and interpret my present circumstances and role as an adult educator. In that way, in the practice of my teaching, learning and research this three-year-long project has certainly shifted and directed me to a new position of integration and understanding of something new in relation to adult education. Therefore, the entire experience and the methodology followed in writing this

thesis have been a profound learning experience in the continuum of my life as an adult educator.

Given that this thesis is written for a master's degree in adult education, it is also imperative to note that the predominant concern of the thesis is how I can be effective as an *adult educator* through my role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist. To that extent, while I am a theologian capitalising on Tillich's project, I will not occupy myself in discussing or resolving "theological issues" in relation to postmodernism in this thesis. In other words, while I am a theologian, the irony of this thesis is that I am not approaching it with the concerns of a "professional theologian" or a "teacher of religious education." At best, I am approaching it as a "theologian of culture" whose primary concern here is not *theos (*God), but *culture.* To that degree, I have confined the issues discussed in the thesis as they apply to the teaching tasks in which I have found myself at present and explained earlier in this chapter. Whenever my views on theological matters are discussed and elaborated on with respect to Tillich, especially in the two chapters to follow, I have assumed that I am revealing only a certain model of hermeneutic – inevitably a theological one – to which I am not "committed" but about which I am ambivalent in view of the said aim of this thesis.

The Structure of the Thesis

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two discusses the two important adult education concepts: *andragogy* and *self-directed learning*. The two concepts are discussed in Chapter Two to both justify my own self-directed learning process through dealing with the subject of this thesis and demonstrate the relevance of self-directed learning for the educator's role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist.

Chapters Three, Four and Five present the ways in which my self-directed learning process has been undertaken in the contexts of my academic expertise and teaching. The three chapters have brought the issues that

need apprising to the fore. Chapter Three discusses Paul Tillich's theology of culture with a view to exposing the main themes of his thought in which his hermeneutical style of interpretation is seen at work.

Chapter Four will demonstrate the particular way in which Tillich employed the themes of his theology within a modern framework to carry out an educational task – to convey the truth of the Christian message with a particular style of interpreting culture. Through a brief discussion of Tillich's method of correlation and its underlying assumptions, this chapter also demonstrates the extent to which concepts such as reason, *logos*, revelation, truth, and God were utilised to construct a certain modern version of a "cultural narrative" – a Christian narrative – within which his hermeneutic is employed for the theological educational task. In the case of both Chapters Three and Four, implicitly, I am also revealing the hermeneutical style to which I have accustomed myself with in my role as an educator.

In the relatively long Chapter Five the issues that inform the themes and concerns of the postmodern experience on which grounds I am arguing for a new hermeneutic by departing from the old hermeneutic are discussed in detail. The chapter discusses these themes as characteristic of the postmodern condition and highlights their implications for the role I am coming to assume as an innovative cultural hermeneutist in the contemporary cultural context of education in the West in general and in my own educational setting in particular.

Chapter Six concludes with a summary of the thesis and a brief discussion of the issues which it has raised, followed by an account of how it has assisted my self-directed learning experience in the metaphor of "journey" and my transition from being a modernist expert to a postmodernist innovative cultural hermeneutist. How the learning which I have acquired from this study has contributed to the effectiveness of my role as an adult educator is also discussed.

Chapter Two

Adult Education and Self-Directed Learning

The primary aim in presenting this thesis is to investigate the question: "how can I be an effective adult educator through my role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist?" Before I venture into a discussion of the self-directed learning process in which the innovative part of the question is explored, it is important for me to address two matters: firstly, to explain what I mean by the phrases *cultural hermeneutics* and *cultural hermeneutic*, and secondly to survey in some detail the broader adult educational theories that have informed and directed the process from the background.

Cultural hermeneutics and Cultural Hermeneutist

In my attempt to understand and express the task of my role as an educator in the sense of a cultural hermeneutist, I found Shaun Gallagher's interpretations[16] of the complex hermeneutical traditions which are associated with the names of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, Josef Bleicher, Jügen Habermas, Richard Palmer and Paul Ricoeur helpful. Gallagher presents four models of hermeneutics – conservative, moderate, radical and critical – which are relevant to my thesis. They assist me in identifying and naming Tillich's style of hermeneutics (which has also been mine) and the new models I am attempting to develop and express through this study which would, in effect, enable me to be an effective adult educator

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[16] *Hermeneutics and education* (New York: State University Press, 1992), p.3.

in the present through my role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist. A brief outlining of the four models which Gallagher presents is in order.

The first model, which he calls "conservative", is based on the nineteenth century hermeneutic tradition defined by Schleiermacher and Dilthey. The hermeneutical aim of this tradition is to achieve transhistorical objectivity. For Schleiermacher hermeneutics was "the art of understanding", and the art of practice that related discourse and understanding (*Verstehen*) to each other. For Heidegger it was an "existential, phenomenological analysis of human existence insofar as 'understanding' is an existential-ontological characteristic of human beings."[17] Gallagher shows that Schleiermacher and Dilthey's (who inspired Heidegger) "conservative hermeneutics" maintained that

> through the hard work the interpreter should be able (a) to break out of her own historical epoch in order to understand the author as the author intended, and/or (b) to transcend historical limitations altogether in order to reach universal, or at least objective, truth.[18]

From a careful reading of Tillich's entire *corpus* and his own acknowledgements of the people who influenced his thinking, it seems apparent that Tillich adopted Schleiermacher and Heidegger's interpretations of hermeneutics in his "methodological interpretation" of both the Christian scriptures and culture. Tillich met Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) in Marburg (1924-1925) at the time when Heidegger was completing his book *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time). Tillich often recalled the impact which Heidegger and his book had made on him. [19] As a result, when Tillich left Germany to go to

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[17] Ibid. p.4.

[18] Ibid., p.9.

[19] Paul Tillich, *On the boundary* (London, Collins, 1967), pp. 48, 58 and "Philosophical Background to My Theology (1960)," *Hauptwerke 1: Philosophische schriften*, Ed., Gunther Wenz, (De Gruyter - Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, Berlin & New York, 1989), p.415.

America as a refugee his theological emphases and his expressions and vocabulary became much more Heideggarian. In this way, Tillich placed the search for the "religious" and the Christian message within an ontological structure. Thus as outlined in Chapters Three and Four Tillich's style of cultural hermeneutic is not only conservative but it is also markedly Heideggarian.

Gallagher associates the work of Gadmer and Ricoeur with the second type of hermeneutics, which he calls "moderate." From this perspective language significantly limits absolute objectivity; for the readers of an author's work are conditioned by their prejudices which in turn are conditioned by their historical existence. Hence, "interpretation involves creativity and not just reproduction; the reader participates, just as much as the author does, in putting together the meaning, or in the case of poetry or literature, in creating the aesthetic experience."[20]

Gallagher's third model – which (he says) is inspired by both Nietzsche and Heidegger – is called "radical" and is now practised by deconstructuralists and poststructuralists like Derrida and Foucault. In this case "reading is more a case of playing or dancing than a Puritanical application of method."[21] Interpretation requires playing with the words of the text rather than using them to find truth in or beyond the text." Consequently,

> Deconstruction can only be performed within the language it attempts to deconstruct. Its aim is not to establish an authentic or even creative interpretation. Such an interpretation would simply be another text in need of deconstruction. Radical hermeneutics aims at deconstruction of the meaning of a text not in order to analyze it or to reconstruct a different meaning. It is not a replacement of one text with another, but a displacement of certain metaphysical concepts such as unity, identity,

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[20] Ibid, p.10.

[21] Ibid.

meaning, or authorship, which operate in and around the text. The hope is not to establish some other version of the world as the proper or correct version, but to show that all versions are contingent and relative.[22]

Gallagher calls the last model which he introduces "critical" which is represented by Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel who were inspired by Marx, Freud and the Frankfurt School of social criticism. Critical hermeneutics is characterised as a "curious combination of radical and conservative elements." It means

> Hermeneutics is employed as a means of penetrating false consciousness, discovering the ideological nature of our belief systems, promoting distortion-free communication, and thereby accomplishing a liberating consensus. On the other hand, critical hermeneutics is conservative to the extent that it expects actually to accomplish an ideology-free situation of consensus. This is like saying, with conservative hermeneutics, that an absolutely objective perspective can be gained, that given the right method, we can escape the hermeneutical constrains of our finite, historical situation. From the point of view of deconstruction, critical theory shares the conservative and moderate, naïve optimism that language, through ideal communication, will deliver something other than itself or that it will, if played rightly, effect significant non-linguistic, material emancipation.[23]

Gallagher's careful analysis of the various traditions into four hermeneutical models is, indeed, helpful. With reference to Gallagher's work I can define what I mean by the phrase "cultural hermeneutics". It is the interpretation of "cultural matter", that is, the realm of a culture that is reflected in its arts within which, in effect, the notions of *meaning* and *reality* are enshrined. As I will

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[22] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[23] Ibid., p.11.

explain further in Chapter Five, the term *postmodernism* is used to describe these changes in "cultural matter" and is therefore seen as referring to cultural and artistic developments, social conditions and the mood to which these conditions give rise.

I have already identified the "conservative hermeneutics" model as the one that Tillich employed and therefore, by implication, as the one that I too employed up to the point of undertaking this thesis. What Gallagher describes as "radical" and "critical" hermeneutics correspond to the model or paradigm of hermeneutics with which I am curiously concerned and which I am attempting to develop through this study in the light of the experiences that I have outlined in the previous chapter. How one may consciously draw on these models of interpretation as an adult educator is what I mean by "innovative cultural hermeneutist." Having said this, my aim here is not to defend the radical and critical hermeneutical approaches; it is not even to hold fast to the classification of the models in a definite way. Rather it is to make the point that they have marked a significant departure from the hermeneutical type of the modern era.

Adult Education

Since the concept is so central to what adult education is all about[24] self-directed learning has been one of the high-interest topics in adult education over the last ten years or so. As a result, a copious amount of literature on the subject has been published in which the topic receives an increasing amount of support and criticism, both of which reflect its impact on the knowledge base related to instructing adults.

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[24] J. Mezirow, A critical theory of self-directed learning."In *self-directedlLearning: from theory to practice*, S. Brookfield. (Ed.), New Directions for Continuing Education No. 25. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985).

The concept of self-directedness in learning was first discussed in educational literature as early as 1926[25] and from these writings, a preliminary description of self-directed learning emerged. In Lindeman's words: "Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy ... adults have a deep need to be self-directing; therefore the role of the teacher is to emerge in a process of mutual inquiry."[26]

Although self-directed learning has received attention in the recent past, theorists such as Kulich and Tough have shown that it has a long and rich history. Kulich shows that prior to the evolution of formal schools, self-education was the primary means individuals had of dealing with the changes going on about them.[27] Tough demonstrates that self-education, for example, has been an important tool in the lives of scholars throughout the history of Western civilization – Socrates and Aristotle, for example.[28] Hiemstra mentions Alexander the Great, Caesar, Erasmus, and Descartes as other historical examples of self-directed learners.[29]

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[25] See S. Brookfield, The contribution of Eduard Lindeman to the development of theory and philosophy in adult education," *Adult Education*, 34 (1984), pp. 185-196.

[26] E.C. Lindeman, *The meaning of adult education (*New York: New Republic, 1926), p.16.

[27] See J .Kulich, *An historical overview of the adult self-learner*. Paper presented at the Northwest Institute on Independent Study: The adult as a self-learner (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1970).

[28] A. Tough, *Learning without a teacher*: *A study of tasks and assistance during adult self-teaching projects*. Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1967. In his publication *Continuing education of adults in colonial America*, Long has shown the that a spirit of self-directedness was prevalent in the learning of colonial American adults, and cited many self-improvement societies, the instructional content in newspapers, and an expanding subscription library system as supporting examples. (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Publications in Continuing Education, 1976).

[29] R. Hiemstra, Self-directed learning, in T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education* (2nd ed.) (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994).

It seems obvious that the concept of andragogy has played a significant role in stimulating theories about, approaches to working with, and literature related to instructing adults. But parallel to many of the andragogical assumptions has been the thinking on self-directed learning that stemmed from learning projects research.

Given the importance of the subject in adult education, researchers, theorists, and practitioners ask the questions: "What is self-directed learning? Who is engaged in it? What are the proper roles for educators and institutions wanting to provide it?"

Andragogy

The term *andragogy* (from the Greek word *anere* for adult, and *agogus*, the art and science of helping students to learn) came to be used by European educators in the 1950s. In the theories of these educators, the word came to capture the growing body of knowledge about adult learners in contrast to pedagogy. Andragogy is a theory developed by Malcolm Knowles which attempts to describe how adults learn.[30] His main hypothesis was that adult learning could not follow the principles of traditional pedagogy in which teachers are responsible for making decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned and when it will be learned. Since adults in general are more self-directed, he argued, they should take control of their own learning. Knowles does not, however, relate the definition of an adult strictly related to chronological age.

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[30] M.S. Knowles, *The modern practice of adult education* (revised and updated). Chicago: Association Press, 1980 (originally published in 1970).

In Knowles' view, in general, adult learners are self-directed, goal oriented, practical people – problem-solvers and have accumulated life experiences. Hence the implications of these characteristics of an adult learner for the principles of andragogy in teaching and learning are:

- Learners should know why they are studying something.

- Instruction should be task-oriented, and it should take into account the wide range of different backgrounds of learners.

- Learners should be able to relate what is being studied to their personal/professional experiences.

- Learners should be motivated and ready to learn.

- Learners should be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.

- Instruction should be problem-centred rather than content-oriented.[31]

The implications of these characteristics for teachers' teaching are that they should be aware that their role has been changed. Then, in practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught. Strategies such as case studies, role playing, simulations, and self-evaluation are most useful. The teachers or instructors adopt the role of facilitator or resource person rather than lecturer or grader.

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[31] Adapted from Linda Leach's citation of Knowles, *The adult learner. A neglected species* (4th ed.). Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1990), pp. 57-63 in *Self-directed learning*: *Theory and practice.* Unpublished PhD Thesis (University of Technology, Sydney), p. 20

Self-Directed Learning

According to Cross, an estimated 70% of adult learning is self-directed learning.[32] Knowles describes self-directed learning as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others," to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes.[33]

Fundamental to contemporary studies of self-directed learning was the pioneering work of Houle.[34] He used an interview technique with several adult learners to develop a motivational typology of learning styles. He discovered that people generally were either goal oriented (some specific goal or objective serves as the learning stimulus), activity oriented (being with others in the pursuit of learning is the primary motivation), or learning oriented (enjoyment of learning for its own sake is the stimulator). More recent research that involved both formal and informal learning has added to the typology a fourth category which has been identified as "the self-reliant, autonomous, and independent learner."[35]

Subsequent to Houle's work a significant amount of research has been undertaken by many adult educational theorists. While examining all such material is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is of interest to refer to some

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[32] K. P. Cross, *Adults as learners* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981).

[33] M. Knowles, *Self directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers* (New York: Association Press, 1975).

[34] See C.O. Houle, *The inquiring mind* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961).

[35] R. Hiemstra, *Lifelong learning* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Professional Educators Publications, 1976), p. 35.

major works in the area to substantiate the ideas pivotal in self-directed learning. In this regard Tough needs mentioning. In the late 1960s he advanced his theory of self-directed learning on the notion that people accomplish considerable learning without assistance by teachers[36] His research culminated in 1971 with his seminal work on adults' learning projects.[37] Using a probing interview technique, Tough showed that most adults spend as much as seven hundred hours each year in deliberate learning projects. Nearly two-thirds of his original sample reported that these projects were self-planned. A number of subsequent studies have substantiated these original findings.[38]

A different approach to examining the self-directed learning phenomenon was initiated by Gibbons and others.[39] Utilising the biographies of twenty high achievers, these researchers have demonstrated that self-directed characteristics such as creativity and self-confidence were common among the subjects. Then, others such as Guglielmino developed a scale to measure characteristics related to self-directed learning styles and readiness to

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[36] A. Tough, *Learning without a teacher: A study of tasks and assistance during adult self-teaching projects* Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1967.

[37] A. Tough, *The adult's learning projects* (2nd ed.) (Austin, Texas: Learning Concepts, 1979).

[38] The following provide summary information about Tough's research on learning projects: R. Caffarella, & J. M. O'Donnell, *Research in self-directed learning: Past, present and future trends.* In H. B. Long & Associates, *Self-directed learning: Application & theory* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, Adult Education Department. 1988), pp. 39-61; P. R., Penland, Self-initiated learning,. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 29, (1979), pp. 170-179; and A. Tough, Major learning efforts: Recent research and future directions, *Adult Education*, 28, (1978), pp. 250-263.

[39] M. Gibbons, A. Bailey, P. Comeau, J. Schmuck, S. Seymour, & D. Wallace, Toward a theory of self-directed learning: A study of experts without formal training, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology,* 20/2 (1980), pp. 41-45.

undertake self-directed learning.[40] In the recent past, efforts also have been made to provide an instrument to measure personality characteristics related to the self-directed learning phenomenon.[41]

From another standpoint, Mocker and Spear have discussed self-directed learning in a descriptive model of lifelong learning entirely based on the locus of control for decision making about the objectives and means of learning.[42] The model is a two-by-two matrix of learner and institution; the self-directed learning situation occurs when learners – not the institution – control both the learning objectives and the means of learning. The following situations occupy the other cells of the matrix: i) formal learning, in which institutions, not learners, control objectives and the means of learning; ii) nonformal learning, in which learners control the objectives and institutions control the means; and iii) informal learning, in which institutions control the objectives but learners control the means of learning.

Thus, whether or not learning is self-directed depends not on the subject matter to be learned or on the instructional methods used. Instead, self-directedness depends on who is in charge – who decides what should be

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[40] L. M. Guglielmino & P. J. Guglielmino, *Self-directed learning in business and industry: An information age imperative.* In H. B. Long & Associates, *Self-directed learning: Application & Theory,* 1978, pp. 125-148. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, Adult Education Department.

[41] L. F. Oddi, *Development and validation of an instrument to identify self-directed continuing learners.* Proceedings of the 26th Annual Adult Education Research Conference, 1985, pp. 229-235. Arizona State University, Higher and Adult Education, Tempe, Arizona. Also Oddi's Development and validation of an instrument to identify self-directed continuing learners, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 36 (1986), pp.97-107.

[42] D. W. Mocker, & G.E. Spear, *Lifelong learning: Formal, nonformal, informal, and self-directed*. "Information Series No. 241. Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1982.

learned, who should learn it, what methods and resources should be used, and how the success of the effort should be measured. To the extent that the learner makes those decisions, the learning is generally considered to be self-directed. As some critics have pointed out, Mocker and Spear's model could be viewed as a continuum rather than as a matrix.

From the theories expounded by the aforementioned theorists and also others whose views are not discussed here, the following could be said.

Self directed learning

- views learners as responsible owners and managers of their own learning process. It integrates self-management (management of the context, including the social setting, resources, and actions) with self-monitoring (the process whereby the learners monitor, evaluate and regulate their cognitive learning strategies).[43]

- recognises the significant role of motivation and volition in initiating and maintaining learners' efforts. Motivation drives the decision to participate, and volition sustains the will to see a task through to the end so that goals are achieved.[44]

- shifts control gradually from teachers to learners. Learners exercise a great deal of independence in setting learning goals and deciding what is worthwhile learning as well as how to approach the learning task within a given framework[45].

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[43] D.R. Garrison, Self-directed learning: Toward a comprehensive model, *Adult Education Quarterly,* 48/1 (1997), pp. 16-18.

[44] L. Corno, Encouraging students to take responsibility for learning and performance, *Elementary School Journal,* 93/1 (1992), pp. 69-83.

[45] L.M. Morrow, "Promoting Independent Reading and Writing through self-directed literacy activities in a collaborative setting," *Reading Research Report No. 2.*

- promotes collaboration. Learners collaborate with teachers and peers in learning.[46]

- develops domain-specific knowledge as well as the ability to transfer conceptual knowledge to new situations. It seeks to bridge the gap between school knowledge and real-world problems by considering how people learn in real life.[47]

The successes of self-directed learning have made a significant contribution to educational and training practices with adult learners in areas such as instructional suggestions,[48] policy recommendations[49], and some also into implications for future research[50] and into efforts to create new theories related to instructing adults.[51]

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[46] J.T. Guthrie, A. Solomon, & J.M. Rinehart, Engagement in reading for young adolescents, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 40/6 (1997), pp. 438-46.

[47] C. Temple & M.L. Rodero, Active learning in a democratic classroom: The 'pedagogical invariants' of Celestin Freinet (Reading around the World)," *Reading Teacher*; 49/2 (1995), pp. 164-67.

[48] See,e.g., R. Hiemstra, "Self-directed learning: Individualizing instruction," in H. B. Long & Associates, *Self-directed learning: Application & theory,*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, Adult Education Department, 1988, pp. 99-124.

[49] See, e.g., R. Caffarella, & J.M. O'Donnell, Research in self-directed learning: Past, present and future trends, in H. B. Long & Associates, *Self-directed learning: application & theory.* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, Adult Education Department. 1988), pp. 39-61.

[50] See, e.g., R. Hiemstra, *The educative community: Linking the community, education, and family.* Baldwinsville, NY: HiTree Press, 1982.

[51] S. Brookfield, (Ed.)., *Self-directed learning: From theory to practice* (New Directions for Continuing Education), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 25 March (1985).

The central theme or view that emerges out of all these works is that the individual learner is capable of assuming considerable responsibility for, and control of, learning activities when such opportunities are provided.

Before proceeding to the next chapter of the thesis, it needs mentioning that this assertive self-directed learning is not without critics. For instance, in the works of critical theorists such as Griffin[52] and Collins[53] the predominance of the concept of self-directed learning illustrates the tendency of humanistic adult educators to collapse all political questions into a narrowly reductionist technical rationality. For them, from a critical perspective, the co-opting of the early free spirit of self-direction into a masked form of repressive practice can be seen as yet one more example of the infinite flexibility of hegemony, of the workings of a coldly efficient repressive tolerance. Consequently, an alternative form of practice that began as a challenge to institutionally arranged adult educational provision has become technocratic and accommodative. According to Griffin, this situation has eventuated because the discourse on self-direction is totally disconnected from questions of power and control in society and illustrates the misguided tendency of humanistic adult educators to depoliticise and decontextualise all practice into a concern for personal growth.

Noting the valid point that is made here, Stephen Brookfield makes an important contribution to self-directed learning by suggesting an alternative approach to its conceptualisation. He argues that self-direction can be interpreted as an inherently political idea, an oppositional, counter-hegemonic force. If the powerful political underpinnings to the idea could be made

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[52] C. Griffin, *Curriculum Theory in Adult and Lifelong Education* (London: Croom Helm, 1983) & Adult Education and Social Policy (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

[53] M. Collins, Self-directed learning or an emancipatory practice of adult education: Re-thinking the role of the adult educator, *Proceedings of the 29th Annual Adult Education Research Conference* (Calgary: Faculty of Continuing Education, University of Calgary, 1988) and *Adult education as vocation: A critical role for the adult educator* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

explicit, he argues, self-directed learning could play a substantial role in awakening the critical spirit in mainstream adult education.[54]

Brookfield shows that against all the best intentions to advocate self-directed approaches to learning, it is quite possible to discover later that one's efforts have served to bolster the oppressive structures that we thought we were opposing. "It is possible, too," he says, "to have a good heart, boundless energy and a deep well of compassion, but to lack political clarity" and therefore we fail to discern the wider political forces and structures shaping our practice. Through focusing on the political dimensions of self-directed learning, he points out; these adult educators could become more aware of the social construction of adult educational knowledge and practice.

Furthermore, Brookfield shows that there is a certain irony in the fact that a concept like self-direction, which is seemingly bound up with ideals of liberty and freedom, can end up serving repressive interests. This happens, he points out, when the images of self-direction in most people's minds are of self-contained, internally driven, capable adults working in splendid, though atomistic isolation. These, according to Brookfield, work against cooperative and collective impulses. Thus, citing self-direction, people can deny the importance of collective action, common interests and their basic human interdependence in favour of an obsessive focus on the self which then leads one to be sustained by one's own internal emotional resources without external supports or momentum.

Citing the works by Belenky and her associates[55] on gender and Broughton and Sullivan[56] on critical approaches to psychological development, Brookfield

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[54] S. Brookfield, Self-directed learning, political clarity and the critical practice of adult education, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 43/4 (1993), pp. 225-230.

[55] M.F Belenky, B.M. Clinchy, N.R. Goldberger, & J.M. Tarule, *Women's ways of knowing: The development ofself, voice, and mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

shows how this view of adult development as a movement toward the separate and autonomous self has been challenged. These works question the patriarchal notion of atomistic self-determination as an educational ideal and as the natural end point of a person's psychological development. In contrast to this patriarchal notion, these works advance a feminist valuing of interdependence and a socially constructed interpretation of the self as equally viable educational ideals and as legitimate foci for conceptualising psychological development.

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[56] J.M. Broughton, (Ed.), *Critical theories of psychological development* (New York: Plenum Press, 1987) & E. Sullivan, *Critical psychology and pedagogy: Interpretation of the personal world* (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1990).

Chapter Three

Themes of the Modern Cultural Hermeneutic

With my continuing academic and research interest in theology and religious studies, I am particularly interested to explore how an idea of culture may be constructed from "religious" and "philosophical" standpoints. Tillich's theology of culture does exactly that and it is discussed here to highlight two things:

(i) to demonstrate the themes Tillich employed so that a "methodological interpretation" of the scriptures and culture is possible, and

(ii) to illustrate how, within a metanarrative or an overarching structure such as *Logos,* these themes work together to represent reality in a transhistorical manner.

The themes to which particular attention is paid in this chapter are: Being (God), *Logos, self* and symbol. In the discussion it is also necessary to note the essentialism that is presupposed.

Paul Tillich's Concept of Culture

While Tillich's theology of culture is partly a complex representation of the erudite ideas of German classical philosophers such as Friedrich Schelling, his basic premise is that "culture is the *form* of religion and religion is the *content* of culture."[57] It is within this premise that he formulates his ideas on

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[57] Paul Tillich, "The idea of a theology of culture (1919)," *Main Works – 2, (*Ed.) Michael Palmer, (New York/Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), pp. 69-86.

culture and then uses them as a launching pad to venture into understanding the cultural developments – especially those in Europe and in America – in the 20th century.

It was in an address that he delivered to the society *Kant Gesellschaft* in 1919 that Tillich outlined the programme of a new science – a theology of culture free of the constraints of institutional religion and its orthodoxy and in tune with revolutionary art, morality, and political life. His purpose was to bring about a new creative union between the former and the latter by founding his thought on the transcendent identity that he believed was basic to both. This transcendent identity for him was God, or – as he preferred to describe God in philosophical terms – the Divine or Being or Being-Itself. Hence, Being-Itself is the principal theme that is presupposed in his hermeneutic. The state in which human beings are drawn to, or arrested by, this "transcendent identity" he called "ultimate concern" which was his term for religion. The embodiments of this ultimate concern or religion he called "symbols"– "religious symbols" – to be exact. In this way, religion and symbol make up the other two of his matrices that both describes culture and assist in its methodological interpretation.

Within Tillich's scheme, in a nutshell, his theology of culture can be explained thus. Ideologically, the basis of culture is religion. The cultural spheres such as arts, politics, medicine, and so on are different forms or manifestations of the fundamental religious reality. Hence, his statement: "culture is the *form* of religion and religion is the *content* of culture." Now, while this statement expresses a vision of culture in idealistic terms, the actual experience of the human reality is the opposite; for there is no perfect and harmonious relationship between the actual cultural life of human beings and the religious ground or reality of the culture. In the broadest terms, for Tillich this disharmonious state of affairs between religion and culture is the "human situation" or the human predicament. This basic human predicament makes itself manifest in every generation and its expression may differ from one period to another. This human predicament is the "question" human beings ask in every generation in their quest for meaning. It is fundamentally the

question "why is such?" which is refined by the philosopher to the question: "to be or not to be?" The "answers" to this quest for meaning are given in religion and its symbols and it is the task of the theologian to interpret and convey them to the inquirers. In the task of appropriating the answers to the questions, the theologian also acts as a philosopher without whom s/he cannot know in which form the question is asked so that the content of the answer could be appropriated. In this task the theologian is a mediator between religion and culture who skilfully employs an existing metanarrative in which the mechanics of questions and answers work out in perfect order. Because the theologian is at the service of the church and the Christian message in which the answers are found, it is the Christian symbols which are interpreted by the primary symbol of Jesus the Christ as the New Being. This is the crux of Tillich's theology of culture and the framework of his theological educational endeavour. The metanarrative at the service of Tillich's grand theology of culture was the modern worldview in which everything had a place in its overarching structure.

Now, it is important to look at the outworking of this modern educational project in some detail to examine the style of hermeneutics that are at work.

Themes of Tillich's Modern Hermeneutic

Being

Tillich idea of being is that which gives the overarching structure for his entire programme. Broadly, he defines *being* as the *whole of human reality*, *the structure*, *the meaning and the aim of existence*.[58] Within this broad definition he uses the concept of being in three senses. 1) God is both the Structure of Being and transcendent of this structure. God is thus the Depth or Being-itself or the Ground of Being. 2) Human being, the created being, has two senses

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[58] *ST-1,* p. 17.

of being a) essential being, the undistorted created being, b) existential being, the fallen being. 3) Christ is the New Being who heals the rift in the fallen being.[59] These three meanings are based on the question: "What is being?" which Tillich believed one has the ability to ask.

> It implies, first, that we do not have that for which we ask. If we had it, we would not ask for it. But, in order to be able to ask for something, we must have it partially; otherwise it could not be the object of a question. He who asks has and has not at the same time. If man is that being who asks the question of being, he has and has not the being for which he asks. He is separated from it while belonging to it. Certainly we belong to being – its power in us – otherwise we would not be. But we are also separated from it; we do not possess it fully. Our power of being is limited. We are a mixture of being and non-being.[60]

This question of being is not about any special being or beings, but about that which is implied when it is asked what it means to *be*.[61] It is said to be the fundamental question which arises in the human being in the face of the experience of the human predicament. According to Tillich, it is the question which searches for the "really real" or "Being-Itself."[62] Since it is the question of "being" it is called the *ontological question*. In Tillich's theology this question of being is the question about God. However, since the question is about the "really real" and not about any special being or beings, Tillich identifies God

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[59] See Robert E. Chiles, (Ed.), "A Glossary of Tillich Terms," *Theology Today* 17 (1960): 78-79.

[60] Paul Tillich, *Biblical religion and the search for ultimate reality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p.11.

[61] Ibid., p.6; *ST-1,* p.181.

[62] Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, p.13.

with Being, *Deus* with *Esse*[63] and rejects the idea that God is *a* being (*ens*) "alongside or above others," or even the "highest being."[64] Thus, God is "Being-Itself" (*esse ipsum*) or "the Power of Being" – the power in everything which resists nothingness, meaninglessness, or simply nonbeing.[65] In relation to God another common concept which Tillich uses is "Ground of Being"[66] which is synonymous with the expression "dimension of depth"[67] and he speaks of the depth in God in which all distinctions and polarities disappear.[68]

With these views in the background, it is possible to understand how the logic behind his theology is held. Ontologically speaking, God is not beyond the subject-object structure, but God is identical with it.

> Since God is the ground of being, he is the ground of the structure of being. He is not subject to this structure; the structure is grounded in him. He *is* this structure, and it is impossible to speak about him except in terms of this structure.[69]

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[63] *ST-1,* p.261.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., p.261.

[66] The German word *Grund* describes best what Tillich means by "ground." *Grund* is metaphysical in its emphasis and points to the foundation of a concept rather than to the material connotation of the word "ground" (Gr. *Boden*).

[67] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology – 3* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 120. Hereinafter referred to as *ST-3.*

[68] Adrian, Thatcher, *The ontology of Paul Tillich* (London, Oxford University Press, 1978), p.56.

[69] *ST-1,* p.264.

Based on this understanding, Tillich constructs the extremely complex ontological self-word polarity or the subject-object dichotomy in his theology. In the process of this exercise how he employs the theme of *self* becomes apparent; he does so by placing his doctrine of the human being within that complex ontological structure. This allows him to claim that the structure of the *self* corresponds to the structure of the *world*, and thus it is possible for the human being to intuit universals and thus grasp and shape meaning. This proposition also underlines a certain *logos* structure of the mind and a *Logos* structure – the "principle of divine self-revelation"[70] – which is grounded in God. I will return to this theme in the latter part of the next chapter on the discussion of the idea of reason.

From this kind of an ontological understanding Tillich proceeds to explicate his understanding of existence as a state of estrangement so that the other two meanings of being can be explained. In this exposition it is of great interest to note how Tillich's hermeneutic is avowedly Heideggarian – the hermeneutic style Gallagher called "conservative."

It goes like this: the human being, the created being is both "essential being," the undistorted created being and also the "existential being," the fallen being. These two notions explain the ideal concept of culture and the real life culture that I briefly explained earlier. In Christ the *Logos* – the concept which explains the Greek philosophers' view of the created order of things – has become flesh and thus Christ is the New Being in whom the "Essential-God-Manhood" has appeared. Christ is therefore God's revelation in which answers the question of estrangement are found. Therefore, it is Christ who heals the rift in the fallen being and creates the new being. This proposition is very important for Tillich because it is on this basic ontological understanding

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[70] Ibid., p.19.

of the concept of being as a literal predicate of God that "every doctrine, symbol and concept is traced back to one of the structures of being itself."[71]

However, religiously speaking, Tillich claims that God as Being-Itself is absolute and beyond the subject-object structure of everything that *is*.[72] So then, religiously speaking, since God is transcendent, the word *God* could be taken to be symbolic – although the experience of God itself is nonsymbolic. On this basis Tillich could say that God is personal because God is the basis of all being and all personality.[73] It is only such an application of personality to God, it is said, which qualifies any symbolic application of finite categories to God.[74]

Symbol

Tillich's theory of symbolism arises out of his basic idea of God as Being-Itself. He employs symbols to underline that they ultimately signify God who is not known otherwise. This proposition is very important in his entire theory of culture as it is the symbols that play a role in representing and conveying answers to the questions raised in the face of the experience of the human predicament. In the following section it becomes obvious how much he is dependent on the hermeneutic of symbol to represent meaning in transhistorical objectivity which is the end-goal of conservative hermeneutics.

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[71] John C. Cooper, *The "spiritual presence" in the theology of Paul Tillich* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), p. 55.

[72] *ST-1,* pp. 264-265.

[73] Tillich, *Biblical Religion*, p.83. See also pp.22, 26; *ST-1,* pp.271-272

[74] See *ST-1,* p.271. Tillich comments also that one "cannot be ultimately concerned about anything that is less than personal." Ibid.

To define the particular function of religious symbols, Tillich first distinguishes a *symbol* from a *sign* and suggests that a genuine symbol should be called a *representative symbol.* While symbols and signs are alike in that they both "point beyond themselves to something else,"[75] by using *symbolic material*, symbols point to something which cannot be grasped directly but must be expressed indirectly. "Symbolic does not mean unreal. It means more real than anything real in time and space."[76] The importance of making this distinction is to prevent the symbol from losing its power and meaning.[77] In an earlier description, Tillich named this characteristic of the symbol its *perceptibility".* This implies that the symbol makes perceptible that which is intrinsically invisible, ideal, or transcendent and gives it objectivity. From this distinction, the basic difference between signs and symbols is drawn; symbols do, and signs do not, *participate* in the meaning and power to which they point. In a reply to Edwin E. Aubrey, Tillich wrote: "symbols are nearer to the reality expressed in them. Their direct, immediate, non-symbolic nature must have an original affinity to the symbolic content they represent."[78]

The other distinction between signs and symbols is a functional one. "The symbol represents something which is not itself, for which it stands and in the

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[75] Tillich, "Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God (1955)," *Main Works . Hauptwerke 4: Writings in the philosophy of religion*. John Clayton, Ed, (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter - Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, 1987). P. 395.

[76] Tillich, "Religion and its Intellectual Crisis (1955)," reproduced in Ibid., p. 393.

[77] Here Tillich is in agreement with Carl Jung and Wilbur Urban. Jung states that symbols should be clearly differentiated from mere signs, *Psychological types* (New York, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., 1923), p. 601. Wilbur Urban states that the "use of symbol as identical with sign ... makes the symbol notion useless." *Language and Reality* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939), p. 405.

[78] Tillich, "Symbol and Knowledge (1941)," *Main Works . Hauptwerke 4: Writings in the Philosophy of Religion*. John Clayton, Ed., (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter - Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, 1987), p. 274.

power and meaning of which it participates."[79] This is the "figurative quality" of a symbol and it highlights why symbols are needed at all – they stand for something which they are *not,* and their function underlines what a symbol is, namely, its "symbolic" act. From this standpoint, Tillich derives what he calls the "main function" of the symbol, which is the "opening up of levels [dimensions[80]] of reality which otherwise are hidden and cannot be grasped in any other way. Every symbol opens up a level of reality for which non-symbolic speaking is inadequate."[81]

The explanation of the functional character of symbols leads to the conclusion that they cannot be replaced by other symbols. Neither could they be invented, replaced or removed at will. For a symbol has the characteristic of having an "innate power" which means that it has a power inherent within it. This characteristic is considered the "most important" one, for it distinguishes a symbol from a sign – which is impotent in itself.[82] For this very reason a symbol cannot be called "only" a symbol; for, when we speak of symbols, "we speak of those dimensions of reality which we cannot approach in any other way than by symbols" – they are not "used in terms of 'only' but in terms of that which is necessary, of that which we *must* apply." [83]

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[79] "Religious Symbols ...(1955)," p. 397.

[80] Tillich, "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols (1961)." *Main Works . Hauptwerke 4: Writings in the Philosophy of Religion,* John Clayton, Ed., (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter - Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, 1987), p.416.

[81] "Religious Symbols ... (1955)," p. 397.

[82] Tillich, "The Religious Symbol (1940)," *Main Works . Hauptwerke 4: Writings in the philosophy of religion.* John Clayton, Ed., (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter - Evangelisches Verlagswerk GmbH, 1987), p. 254.

[83] "Religious Symbols ...(1955)," p.401.

While Tillich attributes the characteristics noted above to religious symbols too, religious symbols are further refined, because he says that they express the ultimate. Since religion is a state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, religious symbols are the "the language of religion" and they are "the only way in which religion can express itself directly." [84] They represent "that which is unconditionally beyond the conceptual sphere, they point to the ultimate reality implied in the religious act, the unconditioned transcendent"[85] and therefore, open up "the depth dimension of *reality itself*."[86]

The general criterion of religious symbols, according to Tillich, is their "measure of validity" or "authenticity" to the religious experience which they express. However, since the criteria of religious symbols do not account for the truth which they possess, in this context, the term *truth* is taken to mean the degree to which a symbol is able to reach the referent of *all* religious symbols.[87]

Religion

In the context of explaining the foregoing themes of being and symbol, the matrix of religion can be now explained. As mentioned earlier, for Tillich *religion* is the *state of being grasped by an ultimate concern*. By this expression, Tillich seems to express both what the "religious attitude" of the human being entails and what subjects human beings to that attitude or concern. Again, from the standpoint of his theology of culture which I have briefly outlined, it is important to see how the notion of religion works in the

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[84] "The Meaning and Justification ... (1961)," p.415.

[85] "The Religious Symbol," (1940), p.254.

[86] "Religious Symbols ... (1955)," p.398.

[87] See "The Meaning and Justification... (1961)," p.419.

grand order of things. Tillich interpreted the concept both theologically and philosophically.

From a theological point of view in Tillich's programme *ultimate concern* is described as *the concern of theology*.[88] Ultimate concern is the "religious concern" which excludes all other concerns from ultimate significance and makes them preliminary.[89] To discover what is meant by *ultimate concern* from a theological sense it is helpful to note that by "religious" he means the experience of the immediate presence of God to oneself. To explain this he used Schleiermacher's phrase "the feeling of absolute dependence" (*das Gefühl der schlechthinnigen Abhängigkeit*) which he says needs to be understood as "the impact of the universe upon us in the depths of our being which transcends subject and object."[90] He uses this understanding of religion to claim that "religion" is more than "a system of special symbols, rites and emotions, directed toward a highest being."[91] He thinks that a definition of religion which suggests that such a being exists is a failure, and could lead only to atheism; for cults, myths, devotions and ecclesiastical institutions are narrow definitions of religion, and such a religion is only one sphere of life. The reason for this narrow sense of religion is the tragic estrangement of the human being's spiritual life from its own ground and depth.[92]

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[88] Tillich avoids the expression *the* to deter any objectification of ultimate concern. See *ST – 1,* p.15.

[89] Ibid., p. 14.

[90] Tillich, *Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology.* Carl E Braaten, Ed.,(London: SCM Press Ltd., 1967), p. 96.

[91] *TPE,* p.65.

[92] See Paul Tillich, *Theology of culture.* Kimball, Robert C., Ed.,(New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p.8.

The broader understanding of *religion* for Tillich has many expressions. In one instance it is the awareness of our relationship to the Ground of Being.[93] It is the "state of being grasped by the power of Being-Itself."[94] Then, in another context, religion is defined as "the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the questions of the meaning of our life."[95] All these definitions indicate that religion is not a "special function" or a sphere in one's life, but rather "the dimension of depth in all of its functions."[96] The word *depth* points to that which is ultimate, infinite and unconditional in one's spiritual life. Then, what concerns one ultimately is the "religious concern" and only the religious concern is ultimate.

However, if the question is asked: "About what is one ultimately concerned?" Tillich does not give a direct answer. The reason is that the "object of religion" is not an "object."[97] The moment one tries to consider it as an object, it ceases to be the religious concern. The word *concern* implies the *existential* character of this experience. *Existential* means asking for meaning of being and that which concerns ultimately. Hence it gives itself only to the attitude of ultimate concern. It cannot be a "highest thing" which can be called the absolute and then talked about in objective detachment. Rather, it should be the object of "total surrender" which also demands one's own subjectivity while one can look at it.[98] According to Tillich, the history of religion is an

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[93] Paul Tillich, *Ultimate concern: Tillich in dialogue,* Mackenzie Brown, Ed.,(London: SCM Press Ltd., 1965), p.13.

[94] Tillich, *The courage to be* (Glasgow: William Collins & Co., Ltd., 1986), p.153.

[95] Paul Tillich, "The present situation (1963)," *Christianity and the encounter of world religions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p.3.

[96] Tillich, *Theology of culture,* pp.5-6.

[97] See Tillich, *Perspectives on nineteenth and twentieth century Protestant theology.* p.109.

[98] *ST-1,* p.15.

attempt to find this object, and all religions have called this object "God."[99] By stating that "God" is the object of this concern, on the one hand he expresses the religious aspect of the concept. But on the other hand, by stating that "God" cannot be replaced by "ultimate concern" he opens a way to express the philosophical aspect of the concept.[100]

From a philosophical point of view, for Tillich the most critical concern for oneself is one's being without which one is *not* it could be deduced that one's ultimate concern is about one's being and not-being. It is the "state of being concerned about one's own being and being universally."[101] What concerns one ultimately is one's being and meaning about the infinity to which one belongs, but from which one is separated and for which, at the same time, one longs. It is about one's being saved or damned; for one is ultimately concerned about one's being, since one does not have being. On the same note it could be said that one is able to be "concerned" about one's being because one belongs to being. It is from the point of view that one's ultimate concern is about one's being that the "religious concern" is said to be about one's salvation.

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[99] See Tillich, *Ultimate concern,* p.11.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Tillich, "The Lost Dimension in Religion," *Essential Tillich,* (Ed.) Church, p.1.

Chapter Four

A Style of Modern Theological Education

The Modern Narrative

Based on the discussion in the previous chapter it is now possible to outline how Tillich employed the basic hermeneutical themes in carrying out his educational task. In introducing his theology, Tillich said: "A help in answering questions: this is exactly the purpose of this theological system."[102] Out of this evolves his theological programme in which he sets out on an educational task to present the essential doctrinal themes of Christianity in a modern idiom through a correlation with the questions of the "situation" as raised by the cultural epoch of his time. In this way he attempted to build a *system* in which one could engage with the culture meaningfully and represent knowledge and meaning. Aptly, that *system* was called *systematic theology.* It is important to note here how the modern propositions of a metanarrative are at work in every assumption he makes to fulfil the educational task.

In his understanding the task meant three things which – one may note – reveals the aspects of what hermeneutic meant for Schleiermacher as explained in Chapter Two. The three things are:

- an attempt to be consistent in his thought so that each proposition of the system is compatible with the other propositions in the system.

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[102] *ST-1,* p. x.

- to attempt in such a way that it becomes possible to establish a certain relationship which otherwise would not have been apparent, between symbols and concepts.

- indicating an overarching structure in which knowledge could be represented, a "systematic construction" which allows one to conceive the object of theology in its wholeness, as a *Gestalt* (the total structure of a living reality) "in which many parts and elements are united by determining principles and dynamic interrelations."[103]

Accordingly, his *system* or project is divided into five parts in which each symbol is interpreted as the answer to a certain question which the "situation" poses. The part of the system which is important for the purpose of this study and also fundamental to his entire *system* is the section "Being and God". It outlines the overarching framework of his programme – the basic structure of being which gives the answers to the questions implied in this structure and determines all other answers. This section takes precedence because the rationality of the whole programme rests on the efficacy of demonstrating how "every doctrine, symbol, and concept is traced back to one of the structures of being itself."[104]

This brief discussion now moves on to demonstrate how the methodology and other key themes he employs ensure that the aforementioned three-fold task is carried out in an orderly manner.

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[103] *ST-3,* pp. 3-4.

[104] John C. Cooper, *The "spiritual presence,"* p. 55.

The Method of a Theology of Culture

As indicated earlier, Tillich called his methodology *the method of correlation*. It is so because "[Christian] theology is the methodological interpretation of the contents of the Christian faith"[105] which are expressed in its symbols. Since the theologian's task is to serve the needs of the church, his/her educational service is twofold: "the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation."[106] The Christian message is one pole, the "situation" is the other pole of all theological work, and the task of the theologian is to speak to the "situation," that is demonstrating how meaning is represented and conveyed.

Tillich called his narration: *apologetic theology* – a theology which presupposes a common ground with the inquiring party and which is therefore, called *answering theology.* It attempts to answer "the questions implied in the 'situation' in the power of the eternal message and with the means provided by the situation whose questions it answers."[107] By proposing such an approach, Tillich believed that the method of correlation can relate the message and the situation in such a way that neither of them is obliterated. [108] The message is the "affirmation that Jesus of Nazareth, who has been called 'the Christ,' is actually the Christ, namely he who brings the new state of things, the New Being."[109] It is the claim that "the *Logos* became flesh, that the principle of the divine self-revelation has become manifest in the event 'Jesus as the Christ.'"

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[105] *ST-1,* p. 18.

[106] Ibid., p.3.

[107] Ibid., p.6.

[108] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[109] *ST-2,* p. 112.

By *correlation* he meant "a unity of the dependence and independence of two factors."[110] From this basic understanding, the term *correlation is* given three main meanings. First, it is a correlation which qualifies the divine-human relationship within religious experience and second, it is a correlation on its cognitive side.[111] In this context *religious experience* for Tillich means an "existential" relation to truth which is a practical knowledge, based on a participation of the knowing subject in the spiritual realities, a touching and tasting (*tactus* and *gustus*) of that with which one deals.[112] The cognitive side" of the correlation means a kind of cognition implied in faith which is qualitatively different from the cognition involved in the technical, and scholarly work of the theologian. It is a cognition which has a completely existential, self-determining, and self-surrendering character. It is called *self-transcending* or *ecstatic reason* – the organ with which we receive the contents of faith."[113] With this basic outline of the meaning of the concept of correlation, the function of the method is as explained before: to make an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise and to demonstrate that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions.

At this point it is necessary to elaborate briefly upon that which has been said in the previous chapter concerning Tillich's concept of being. That is, in ontological terms, for Tillich the "situation" is basically the question of "being" marked by our "estrangement" from Being. Thus, the "situation" is marked by the loss of being, and as a consequence, by a threat of nonbeing. Since the question is basically concerned with this issue, the questions for Tillich are "existential," which means they ask for the meaning of being.[114] Hence, this fundamental question is expressed not so much in the "psychological or

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[110] *ST-2,* p.14.

[111] *ST-1,* pp. 68, 69.

[112] Ibid., p. 46.

[113] Ibid., p. 60.

[114] Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1951), pp. 98-99.

fundamental question is expressed not so much in the "psychological or sociological state in which individuals or groups live" but rather in the "scientific and artistic, the economic, political and ethical forms in which they express their interpretation of existence."[115] Appropriately for his time, Tillich believed that existentialist literature had the capacity to encapsulate the ways in which the question has been expressed. [116] This included, for him, cultural expressions such as poetry, art, drama, the novel, and also therapeutic psychology and sociology.

Tillich maintains that asking the meaning of being does not imply an objective search for a "highest thing" called the "the absolute". It is rather a "concern" – a concern which excludes every other concern from ultimate significance – which is "ultimate concern." Highlighting the position he maintains here is important because it exposes how he refines the decisive goal of theology to an ultimate concern – a transhistorical reality – in which meaning is objectified and represented. Hence it is important to state the two criteria he establishes for theology.

The first of these is "the object of theology is what concerns us ultimately. Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object insofar as it can become a matter of ultimate concern for us."[117]

Since the ultimate concern has neither object nor content, the second criterion states: "Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or non-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object insofar as it can become a matter of being or non-being for us."[118]

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[115] *ST-2,* p.4.

[116] See Paul Tillich, Psychoanalysis, existentialism, and theology," *Pastoral Psychology,* 9/87 (1958), pp.12-13.

[117] *ST-1,* p. 15.

[118] Ibid., p. 17.

Then, as the questions are existential, the answers to the questions also are existential – they express what matters to us ultimately. Again, one may note the Heideggarian hermeneutic at work in these two propositions.

Since there is a significant claim for "truth" made in the process of theology, it is important to briefly state how Tillich intentionally Christianised his educational programme which may, in fact, operate as a philosophical device without colouring it with Christian material. I am keen to highlight this Christianising at this point because it illustrates clearly how Tillich, the conscientious theologian, appeals to the modern framework or narrative at his disposal which, one may argue is quite remote from the concerns of the "Christian message" as contained in the Bible. Tillich's intent is clear: he wants to mediate the message of the Bible (religion) to the culture by employing its own framework of reference and tools which he sincerely believes best serve him to articulate the "questions" for which he claims religion has the answers which are, of course, transhistorical in content.

From this standpoint, Tillich's attempt to interpret the Christian message to the contemporary world by way of interpreting the "Christian symbols" becomes apparent. In brief, it means the "eternal truth" is given in revelatory events and they are embodied in the symbols of the Christian faith. Through a process of correlating the answers with the questions that arise from the "situation" the eternal truth revealed in the symbols is interpreted and presented as the answer to the questions. The substance of the answer, according to Tillich, is the "the *logos* of being, manifest in Jesus as the Christ" [119] which is unchangeable; it is "spoken" *to* human existence from beyond it. However, this does not mean the question is derived from the pre-given answer, because then the revelatory answer becomes meaningless; for there is no question to which it is the answer.[120] In this respect, the question and answer are independent of each other. Since it is not the sole purpose of this study to

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[119] Ibid.

[120] *ST-2,* p.15.

detail Tillich's methodology it suffices to confine the complex questions that may arise from this methodological process to Tillich's statement: "in respect to *content* the Christian answers are dependent on the revelatory events in which they appear; in respect to *form* they are dependent on the structure of the questions which they answer."[121] The emphasis is that the answer is given in the way in which the question has been understood.

Before the discussion of this chapter is concluded, two more concepts – reason and revelation – that made Tillich's educational programme possible within the modernist narrative need brief attention. They further reveal the different facets of the overarching structure that is presupposed in his hermeneutic of culture.

At the outset, based on his ontology, and reflecting the assumption of Greek philosophers such as Plato, Tillich insists that the world is so created that it consists of a certain *structure*. This structure, he suggests, finds its intended correspondence in the human mind. Thus when the structure of the human mind meets the structure of objective, external reality, knowledge becomes possible. This correspondence between the "structures" is what Tillich means by the word "reason" which he relates to the concept of *Logos*.[122] By "reason," however, he does not mean "reasoning," but is referring to the "meaningful structure of reality."[123] Following the Stoics, Tillich speaks about *Logos* as the "divine power which is present in everything that is."[124] What is implied in all these statements is that there is an inseparable relationship, an identity, between humanity and God present or manifest with *Logos* in creation and history.

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[121] *ST-1,* p.72. Emphasis is mine.

[122] Tillich, *Perspectives on Protestant theology*, p.30. The *Logos* is described with a lower case letter when it is descriptive of a finite reality.

[123] Paul Tillich, *A history of Christian thought*, Carl E Braaten, Ed., (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1968), p.31.

[124] Ibid., p. 7.

Tillich's thought is fashioned by four interpretations of the word *reason* – and in each interpretation *Logos* is taken as the principal denominator. These understandings of the term *reason* are by no means original to Tillich. They have become so much a part of his thinking for the simple fact that his entire thinking is dominated by the modernist narrative and the key proponents of it. This becomes obvious in his understanding of "critical reason," which, he says, establishes the divine *Logos* which is present in every human being. This idea, he says, was predominant in the eighteenth-century and he sympathises with the philosophers of the Enlightenment as those who were extremely passionate and who became martyrs for the passion which they attributed to the divine *Logos* within them.[125]

His second interpretation of reason is what he calls "intuitive reason." It is the "phenomenological" aspect which is identified with Plato's idea of the intuition of the essences, and specifically of the universal essences of the good and the true. He identifies its many roots in the Middle Ages, especially in the Franciscan tradition with which he himself finds affinity.[126] In a third sense, by "reason" Tillich means also technical reason. "It analyses reality into its smallest elements, and then construes out of them other things, larger things."[127] Although Tillich does not use technical reason in his educational programme he values it for its ability to analyse reality and to construct tools out of reality as in logical positivism.[128]

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[125] Tillich, *Perspectives on Protestant theology*, p.32.

[126] Tillich, *History of Christian thought,* p.143.

[127] Tillich, *Perspectives on Protestant theology,* p. 33. Einstein's mathematical physics, according to Tillich, reflect this kind of reason. Tillich asserts also that there was a strong element of intuitive reason in Einstein and that he attempted to describe the relationship between the two in his own process of thinking. The critical element, too, was present in his political activities. Ibid., 34.

[128] See Ibid., p. 34.

Lastly, and most importantly, by "reason" Tillich means ontological or universal reason, which refers to the structure of all reality. It includes the structure of reality as well as the structure of the mind. Tillich calls this *Logos* principle the "rational structure" which is the basis of "ontological reason,"[129] understood in the sense of the corresponding structures. In Tillich's view, ontological reason is what the classical philosophical tradition claimed as that which enables the mind to grasp and transform reality. It is effective in the cognitive, aesthetic, practical and technical functions of the human mind."[130] This ontological reason, then, can be seen as expressing the totality of the rational structure of the mind and the universe. Thus, reason has both a subjective and an objective character. Subjective reason is the structure of the mind which enables the mind to grasp and shape reality on the basis of a corresponding structure of reality. Objective reason is the rational structure of reality which can be grasped and shaped.[131] It is with this understanding of the "corresponding structures" that Tillich can say that the human being and the world are equally related to the "rational structure of the universe" or *Logos.* Reason, in both its subjective and objective form, points to what Tillich calls "the depth of reason" or "essential reason," which is transparent to the ultimate.[132]

Epistemologically, Tillich establishes the basic ontological unity between essential being and God on this idea of "essential reason." Like essential being, essential reason is "in unity with Being-Itself."[133] However, since actualised being, that is, existential being, is estranged and exposed to the "destructive structures of existence," essential reason, which is fallen, is subjected to finitude and separation. Despite its fallenness, as Tillich argues, fallen reason is, like the fallen being, not totally cut off from essential reason.

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[129] *ST-1,* p.80.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., pp.84-87.

[132] Ibid., pp.88-90.

[133] Ibid., p. 83.

The remnants of essential reason in fallen reason seek reunion with essential reason.

Essential reason, for Tillich, is "identical with the content of revelation."[134] When the relationship which Tillich asserts between essential and fallen reason is seen in this way, the epistemological position which he presupposes is clear. The question must be asked because there is a discontinuity, but one can "ask" the question because there is – at the same time – a continuity between existential being and Being-Itself. So as his logic goes, within the "rational structure" or *Logos* or "ontological reason," when subjective reason penetrates the depth, it can seize the essential truth.

Since essential reason is fallen, which means it is both at one with God and separated from God at the same time, human reason is no longer identical with the *Logos* structure of God. Therefore, reason in existence has to express its relation and experience of God in myth and cult. Thus myth and cult express the depth of reason in a symbolic manner. This experience, according to Tillich, drives human beings to seek revelation. Reason "asks" for revelation.[135]

In Tillich's vocabulary the term *revelation* has an ontological definition. In his understanding revelation is not "divine information about divine matters, given to prophets and apostles and dictated by the divine Spirit to the writers of the Bible, or the Koran, or other sacred books", [136] it is rather *the manifestation of the ground of being for human knowledge*.[137] Although essential reason found in the fallen being cannot exhaust the depth of being, nevertheless it

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[134] *ST-1,* p.83.

[135] Ibid., p.90.

[136] Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of faith* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957), p.78.

[137] *ST-1,* p.105.

can seek revelation and reunion with that from which it is separated. So, the fallen being has the ability to "ask" the question and "receive" the answer.

Chapter Five

Themes of the Postmodern Cultural Hermeneutic

The discussions in the previous two chapters have highlighted how, as a representation of a modernist project, Tillich's theological educational programme can operate within a comprehensive, assumedly total, framework of reference. The hermeneutic of the whole process is made easy by the whole structure in which the programme is narrated.

With a deliberate attempt to articulate the entire programme within a *Gestalt* (the total structure of a living reality), whether they are the themes of Being or of *Logos*, each concept was not only interconnected but also had a place in the overarching structure within which the concepts were able to operate in relation to one another to speak about, represent and convey reality. Despite the contradictions that may appear in the working out of the mutual interdependence of questions and answers in the method of correlation, within the all-embracing notion of being-itself and the rational structure of *Logos*, it still seems possible to devise a satisfactory outcome and, at the end, supposedly, convey the "eternal truth" which is contained in the symbols of religion.

In sum, within the entire structure of operation, the truth that is being transhistorically represented by the symbols is both "authentic" and "real." The logic of the representation is rigorously upheld by reason. It is this very dynamic of representing truth within the category of reason and other interlocking themes such as *self* that has become extremely problematic in the postmodern context. In that context the old themes of constructing and interpreting culture are rejected and replaced by the new.

Postmodernism

Before focusing on the new themes that emerge from the postmodern experience and that profoundly challenge the conservative hermeneutic it is necessary to outline how the postmodern experience has come about.

From an historical point of view it is correct to say that the turbulent years from about the beginning of the twentieth century gradually contributed to the collapse of the metanarratives of the modern period. Some examples of the events that contributed to this and that continue to generate a sense of pessimism to this day are: the two World Wars, the Stalinist terror, the *Shoah* (the holocaust), the atomic bombing of Japan, the war in France, the hostility in Algeria, the devastation in Vietnam after 1945, concentration camps, vast scale genocide in the African continent, the Gulf War of 1990, the tragedy of former Yugoslavia, the widening gap between the rich and the poor and damage to the environment. The more recent event of the invasion of Iraq – which is craftily termed Gulf War Two – and the devastation it has brought upon human beings too must be added to this list.

As a consequence of the experience of these events, the naive belief in human progress that was promised by the Enlightenment ideals – optimism, rationality, search for absolute knowledge and the knowledge of true *self* as the gateway to all knowledge – has been shattered. While many positive developments also took place in technology during modernism – such as in the medical sciences, – one may ask if the vast scale destructions were the legacy of modernity, was modernism more a *destructive* than a *constructive* period of human history? If the foundation stone of modernity was reason, had reason itself failed? Or were the excesses of the Second World War the product of reason? The devastating experiences of these examples during the last three years of this century seem to answer both questions in the affirmative.

While these events across the globe gradually began to change our worldview, various new developments and shifts that are taking place in our understanding and in all the cultural spheres concerned with human life have brought about the condition which has come to be called *postmodernism*. It is now established that the postmodern movement itself originated in the 1960s, possibly after 1963 initially in response to the antimodernist trends in literature, the arts and architecture.[138] Only in the early 1980s did the debate gain the attention of the professional philosophers, and extend to other areas of discussion. Consequently, as an intellectual movement, it has come to capture a tendency across a range of disciplines and aesthetic practices for a radical reappraisal of modernist normative structures and representations. Thus, reflecting its impact on the cultural life of the West in its entirety, virtually every academic discipline has adopted ideas about postmodernism and continues to produce books and periodicals based upon its own definition and emphases of the topic.

Whatever the case may be, as I will outline in this chapter, the central theme that runs through all the literature highlights the fact that the "grand narratives" of Western history, and in particular enlightened modernity, have broken down. The "metanarratives" which could provide legitimate foundations for truth are disputed and abandoned. As David Harvey puts it, postmodernism hence "represents some kind of reaction to, or departure from, 'modernism.'"[139] For Toulmin, postmodernism is a body of developments and directions marked by: "eclecticism, pluri-culturalism, and often a post industrial, high tech frame of reference coupled with a sceptical view of technical progress."[140] Then, postmodernism is, as the adjective "post"

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[138] See Hans Bertens, *The idea of the postmodern: A history* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 23

[139] *The condition of postmodernity* (Cambridge MA/Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1989), p.7.

[140] Stephen E. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The hidden agenda of modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p.3.

proposes, a series of "posts" – posts of those stages of modernisation which together have constituted the cultural narrative of the modern world: individualisation, secularisation, industrialisation, cultural differentiation, commoditisation, urbanisation, bureaucratisation, and rationalisation.[141]

In sum, these themes

- propose that the society, culture and lifestyle of the present times are significantly different from what they were, say, about thirty years ago.

- are concerned with concrete issues such as developments in mass media, the consumer society and information technology.

- suggest that these kinds of developments impact upon our understanding of more *abstract* matters such as meaning, knowledge, identity and reality.

- claim that previously used methods to analyse the situation are no longer applicable or useful, and that new approaches and vocabularies must be created to understand the situation of the present.[142]

With this brief introduction to postmodernism it is now important to take account in some detail of the issues that:

- obliterate the principal notions that were imperative for the hermeneutic of Tillich's theological educational scheme.

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[141] Steven Best & Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern theory: Critical interrogations* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1991), p.3.

[142] Ibid., p.5.

- outline the present experiences that make an overarching narrative irrelevant, and

- identify the themes that emerge in the postmodern context which are important for the innovative cultural hermeneutist.

These Issues are discussed with reference to a selected number of postmodern topics that challenge the fundamental themes that sustained the conservative hermeneutic of Paul Tillich and, by implication, mine also. The question about representing "eternal truth" or "reality" in a transhistorical fashion is also discussed.

Given that postmodernism is an elastic critical category with a multitude of applications and potential understandings, only a limited number of implications can be outlined for the purpose of the present study.

The importance of this discussion is that it assists me to demonstrate how, in the many postmodern discourses which are critical for my transition from being the modernist expert to a postmodernist cultural hermeneutist, a new hermeneutical paradigm has emerged In doing so, in this somewhat lengthy chapter I shall identify the hermeneutical types that Gallagher has described as "radical" and "critical" which I said resonates well with the kind of hermeneutic I have called "Innovative hermeneutic."

Themes of the New Hermeneutic

The loss of Self

Modernism was characterised by the Enlightenment-humanist rejection of tradition and authority in favour of reason and natural science. This meant

that the autonomous individual became the sole source of meaning and truth – the Cartesian *cogito*. Modernism explored possibilities and constantly searched for uniqueness and its cognate – individuality. Kaja Silverman has pointed out that this taken-for-granted idea of the individual can be dated back to the culture of the Renaissance, where it came to designate individual consciousness as a private, essentially free, decision-making agent and source of meaning. The Renaissance idea of the individual "man" assumed that "he" was an independent, fixed entity, a "human nature" clear of historical and cultural circumstances. This, Silverman demonstrates, gave birth to the romantic idea that humanity can achieve a transcendent state of truth through philosophy, religion and art.[143]

During the modern period, progress and novelty were valorised within a linear conception of history – a history of a "real" world that becomes increasingly real or objectified. I have demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four how this ideal played a key role in Tillich's education project of culture in which he argued that the individual *self* has the capacity to ask the question and seek answers to it within the rational structure of being – *logos* – which corresponds to the rational structure of Being-Itself, the *Logos.* It is the breakdown of this ideal on many fronts which has plunged the modern ideology and the culture it created into disarray with the consequent loss of *self.*

The *collage* approach taken in art and architecture in the 1950s and 1960s was the initial contributor to the experience of the loss of *self* and its interconnected meaning structures.[144] It immediately contributed to

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[143] *The Subject of semiotics* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1983).

[144] See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The cultural logic of late capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, c.. 1991); Angela McRobbie, Postmodernism and popular culture / (London [England] ; New York, N.Y. : Routledge, 1994); John

abandonment of the modern romantic image of the lone creative artist. The playful technician who could retrieve and recombine creations from the past replaced the artist. Art no longer became the representation of the artist's intuitive-creativity which resulted from (his /her spirits) engaging with an apparent transcendental or transhistorical reality – God. As a consequence, not an experience with "reality," but data alone have become necessary. In this way if the creative *self* is de-centred, multiplied or fractured, the ideals concerning artistic creativity, originality and self-expression are questionable. Not only that, but also when this synthetic/collage approach was taken up by the visual, musical, and literary arts, it created a crisis by startling viewers into reflection upon the meaning of representation, that is, the representation of "reality." The consequence of this was that pop-art (especially, Andy Warhol's work in America) came to reflect culture.

The impact of collage has also come to reflect the lack of originality in other important cultural domains – spirituality and religion – which were formerly sustained by the monotheistic (and thus monolithic) Christian theology in the West. Initially, this became quite apparent in the American culture following the Second World War when people – though ethnically European, African, Asian, or Hispanic – began to search for authentic or "rooted" religious experience by dabbling in a variety of religious traditions. Today's New Age spirituality has come to embrace this eclecticism in a novel way. The apparent decline of church membership (which was an important "life style" experience that was based on the modern cultural narrative), and the outbreak of interest in transcendental meditation, Yogic practices, pilgrimages to Asia and the like in the West are all but far reaching examples of this collage approach to life. In the face of a collage approach to life the unified structure of thought and the method of interpretation seem quite irrelevant to the experience of people.

Docker, *Postmodernism and popular culture : A cultural history* / (Cambridge ; Melbourne : Cambridge University Press, 1994).

The overall impact of these developments was, then, that a pattern in the arts and everyday spiritual life became distanced from universal standards and moved into an atmosphere of multi-dimensionality and complexity had appeared. The modern ideal sovereign autonomous individual – the *self* – had been rejected, with a new emphasis upon anarchic collective, anonymous experience. Collage, diversity, and the mystically unrepresentable have become the foci of attention. Most importantly, the distinctions have been dissolved – the subject and object, *self* and other have been merged. The consequence is that any attempt to define, reify or re-present the human subject has been rejected. These are good examples that correspond to the hermeneutic style which Gallagher called "radical" where interpretation requires playing with the words of the text rather than using them to find truth in or beyond the text.

How certain themes concerning the *self* in the postmodern discourse give credence to this radical hermeneutic can be explained by examining the two ways in which the *self* has been deconstructed on two other fronts: the sociocultural revolution and the antiessentialist revolution. While the former has deconstructed the individual *self*, the latter has deconstructed the essential *self* – the ontological *self,* interpreted as spirit or soul.

Sociocultural Revolution

The fundamental proposition of postmodernism concerning *self* is that of sociology, that the *self* is fundamentally social. Although many theorists approach the subject from different points of emphasis, they all arrive at the same conclusion concerning the loss of *self.* For instance, in the writings of

Douglas Kellner[145] and Angela McRobbie,[146] the *self* is related to the question of identity and how senses of identity can be constructed by the consumption of mass-produced objects and images. The postmodern *self* for Kellner is the self created by heightened awareness of appearance and style, and thus, the making of identity has become increasingly related to what individuals either buy, or can be persuaded that they want to buy. Identity has become something which is forged by using goods as signals of both individuality (difference from social groups) and solidarity (a sense of belonging to other social groups). As a direct consequence of this, *self* and identity have become something for which one "shops".

The increasing invasion of signs and images (in the media, displays, advertising etc.) have created ideal lifestyles (subcultural narratives) about which people may fantasise and with which they can identify. These phenomena are clearly visible in the increasing number of cultural mediators who act as "professionals" who (via the media) advise people on everything from holidays and hair styling to interior design and wine tasting, the editors of lifestyle magazines, caring professions, life coaches, therapists of all kinds, and the like.[147] Thus, cultural critics such as Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, and Guy Debord have shown that the idea of a *self* achieved under modernity has disappeared in the wake of consumerism, mass culture, and the growing bureaucratisation of life. What matters ultimately is not any transcendental reality which fashions one's life, but images. The authentic

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[145] *Critical theory, Marxism and modernity* (Cambridge : Polity, 1989); *Jean Baudrillard : from Marxism to postmodernism and beyond* (Cambridge : Polity in association with Blackwell, 1989); *Postmodern theory: Critical interrogations* (London : Macmillan, 1991)

[146] *Postmodernism and popular culture* (London [England] ; New York, N.Y. : Routledge, 1994); *Feminism and youth culture : From 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen'* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire : Macmillan, 1991).

[147] Mike Featherstone *Consumer culture and postmodernism* (London: Sage, 1991).

self does not matter any longer, what authenticates one's self are fashion statements, shopping and lifestyle – one's *self* has no substance.[148]

In sociological terms, the disappearance of the authentic self can be further explained with reference to Erving Goffman, who is seen as an important precursor of the postmodern *self.* His particular sociological study of people has been in terms of how people perform in social situations and not in terms of what they are "inside." His important 1959 book, *The presentation of self in everyday life,*[149] – in which he records the findings of his study of various institutions that make up social life (e.g. home, the workplace, high school) – points out that people act out social roles under certain circumstances, and thus life is essentially theatrical. He refers to people as *actors* and demonstrates the different ways in which they act "on stage" and "back stage."

Goffman seems to pay no attention to the modernist questions about whether the *self* "is" authentic or not. His only interest is in whether or not our various performances successfully promote our social survival. Hence the *self* "is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die – rather, it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited."[150] Thus, for Goffman, the *self* is seen only as a series of façades erected before different audiences. Although the façades seem to *appear* to emanate from some intrinsic *self* inside the social performer, the truth is the opposite – the *self* is a creation of the façade which arises from one's interaction with other actors on the social stage. Goffman's thesis corresponds closely to the postmodern notion that it

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[148] See, for instance: Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The cultural logic of late capitalism,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); *The cultural turn: Selected writings on the postmodern, 1983-1998* (London ; New York : Verso, 1998).

[149] (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1971)

[150] *The presentation of self in everyday life*, p.223.

is not possible to see *selves* as independent individuals with essences which they then express in whatever ways they personally prefer – the notion of a real, permanent and deep *self* is either lost, or replaced with a superficial collage of social constructs.

However, when we concur with the postmodern criticism of the notion of the *self* that was made in modernity, we are still left with the question: "is there an indestructible essential *self* who still resides in the individual and creates the culture?" Does the postmodern criticism ultimately annihilate the *self,* or introduce – and invite us to a discussion about – new ways of living in our present cultures? The "anti-essentialist movement" seems to have answered these questions in the negative.

Anti-essentialism

Basically, anti-essentialism is rejection of the idea that people have a timeless, universal core which ultimately explains their actions, thoughts and creations.[151] It is the rejection of the kind of essentialism that was imperative to Tillich's theological education programme in which the human being's essential identity with Being-Itself was crucial to forging a link between the two so that the truth the human being seeks may be successfully mediated.

Postmodern theorists have denied any notion of the *self* as substantial, essential or timeless. This particular criticism challenges the modernist view that was discussed in Chapter Three in relation to reason's being grounded in individuality. Also as mentioned earlier, it is this criticism that applies to the rejection of a high culture as represented by modernist art.

An interesting manifestation of this is found in today's cultural creations in fields such as music, art and architecture. In music we see the scratching and

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[151] See Karol Janicki, *Against essentialism,* (München : Lincom Europa, 1999).

mixing as a form of musical customisation. The many musicians we have today can hardly be said to be performers in the old sense of the term – their reputation does not depend on their musical ability as such, but on the ways in which they mix and match musical sounds which is produced by high-tech computers. In art we find a move towards more impersonal media such as video installation. There is also a widespread willingness among artists to do collaborative pieces and to employ assistants to fabricate their work. In architecture also there are signs of a move towards collaborative projects and away from the virtuoso performance of the master architect.

Essentialism has been put on trial on different fronts such as in postfeminist thought, in gay politics and in relation to ideas of racial or ethnic identity. Some of these issues are outlined later in this chapter.

Theorists such as Michel Foucault argue that the stable, unified *self* has always been an illusion. Foucault, having written extensively on elaborate histories of a diverse range of social institutions, argued that they were tied in to the complex operations of power in a given society. He claimed that this power was exercised through surveillance, monitoring and other forms of regulation of people's lives. Hence, for Foucault, the modern-day notion of the *self* is bound up with, and inseparable from, the workings of such structures and institutions. The direct impact of this theory is that none of us can claim to stand apart from the exercise of power. While Foucault is identified with the radical type of hermeneutic, in only in the light of his critique of power structures and ideological prejudices that we are enabled to see his hermeneutic as what Gallagher called "critical hermeneutic" too.

Another representative in whose work the idea of an eternal and permanent essence is questioned is Julia Kristeva. She draws mainly on poststructuralist and psychoanalytical theories from a feminist standpoint. In her writings, she introduces gender politics into the poststructuralist questions concerning meaning and goes on to deny that there is some essential, timeless category of womanliness from which the voice of

women can be extracted and reproduced in literature.[152] Her main contention is that women are linguistically silenced and that this problem can be addressed by creating texts which are playful, diverse, slippery and unstable in meanings, and which thus progressively undermine masculine language and values such as rigour, intelligibility, stability, and structure. She goes on to show that the traditional definitions of *self* in terms of gender (him/her, he/she etc.) also need to be liberated so that experimental ways of using language can encourage multiple forms of selfhood.[153] Her writings show that her particular style of poststructuralism engages in the undoing of the imagined unity of the *self*.

Post-structuralism

Along with dismembering themes that were related to the modern concept of *self* poststructuralism questions the assumptions of representation. In the past, structuralism was basically concerned with representing knowledge by discerning *how* texts meant, rather than *what* they meant. It deliberately played down any notion of the content of a text (e.g. the moral of a story) to bring to the fore a number of questions about meaning, representation and authorship, and to explore the relationships between language and knowledge. Ferdinand de Saussure pointed out that studying the interrelated elements within language is the most viable way to understand the workings of language in a text – rather than looking for the etymological development and/or "natural" roots of particular words. Based on this, Saussure showed that language is made up of individual units and does not have natural

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[152] *Language--the unknown,* tr., Anne M. Menke (New York : Columbia University Press, c. 1989).

[153] *Strangers to ourselves,* tr., Leon S. Roudiez (New York ; London : Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991); *Revolution in poetic language, Desire in language,* tr. Margaret Waller, (New York : Columbia University Press, 1984).

attachments to objects and ideas.[154] For instance, Saussure would say that, except for social convention, there is no relationship between the experience of feeling angry and the word *angry* – another word would have done the same job. Hence, for Saussure, language is an arbitrary system and not a transparent or innocent reflection of reality. He extended this linguistic theory to semiology[155] which decodes the "signs" that make up a culture. "Signs" are forms – words, images, objects, values, and so on – which embody meaning/s as conferred by social convention through language. Thus, a sign is a unit of meaning produced by the relation of a *signifier* (e.g. the sound of words – "I hate terrorists") to a *signified* (e.g. an idea/concept or a mental image evoked by hearing/reading/saying the words "I hate terrorists"). This shows that, as in the case of the relationship between words and objects, the relationship between the signifier and the signified also is arbitrary. The implications of structuralism are, then, that it highlights the fact that language can neither point beyond itself nor express individuality – it can only produce (not reflect) meaning. The obvious outcome of these insights is that they ask the fundamental question: "where does meaning come from?"

Poststructuralism took the issues raised by structuralism even further. While structuralism detaches texts from the foundations of reality, as I discussed in detail when explaining Tillich's notion of symbol, it nevertheless implies that the meanings the texts convey are supported by deep, hidden, fundamental structures. However, poststructuralism denied any such all-encompassing ultimate structure and refuted structuralism for its superior claim to objectively observed universal facts behind all texts. For poststructuralists, contrary to the structuralists, a text is never complete even in its own terms – text is always fragmentary and incomplete.

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[154] *Course in general linguistics* (Paris: Payot, [1922] 1974).

[155] See Pierre Guiraud, *Semiology*, trans. George Gross (London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975).

With this brief survey of structuralist and poststructuralist positions, particular attention must be paid to the work of Jacques Derrida[156] – who is a key source of inspiration of the post-modern feminist theorists. Derrida's own particular poststructuralist blend of philosophy, linguistics, and literary analysis goes by the name of *deconstruction* – the style of interpretation outlined in Chapter Two that Gallagher called "radical hermeneutics." While Derrida shares most of the poststructuralist concerns, he is much more interested in how the meanings of texts can be plural and unstable than in fixing them to a rigid structure. He refers to the ways in which language is constructed to signify reality. He thus questions the "transcendental signified" to which all signifiers are supposed to refer. The signifier, Derrida claimed, is not directly related to the signified – there is no correspondence between them – and thus, language is less stable. He demonstrated that a speaker and a hearer can actually construct different meanings from the same word because of different frames of reference and, therefore, different realities. Derrida described *meaning* as taking place through signifiers, of which words can be one type. But these words are social constructs of historical, cultural and linguistic meaning.

Therefore, there is not one narrative in any one exchange, but there are many. In his deconstruction, he questioned also what is known as "metaphysics of presence."[157] This is a way of questioning whether there is a single body of knowledge. His theory is really applied to Western forms of knowledge (e.g. science and humanities: theology, philosophy, sociology etc.) which assume that they have built themselves up on certain "centres" and

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[156] *Of Grammatology,* trans., Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), *Speech and phenomena, and other essays on Husserl's theory of signs,* trans., David B. Allison, (Evanston: NorthWestern University Press, 1973) and *Writing and difference,* trans., Alan Bass, (Chicago: Chicago University Press,1978); *Acts of literature,* (Ed.) Derek Attridge (New York : Routledge, 1992); *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL : NorthWestern University Press, 1988).

[157] Madan Sarup, *An introductory guide to post-structuralism and postmodernism, (*2nd ed.) , (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1993), p.35.

"origins." Derrida deconstructs these centres and origins and shows that they have no basis in reality – they are only myths. When this idea of presence is removed or denied by Derrida, his project presents a radical challenge to both positivism and phenomenology.[158] A further implication of Derrida's denial of presence is its impact on what he calls *phonocentrism.* He extended the criticism of phonocentrism to deconstruct *logocentrism* and *phallocentricism*. Derrida uses the term *logocentric* to indicate that which has determined metaphysical systems of thought, that is, their dependence on a *Logos.* By *phallocentricism* he meant the primacy of the phallus which connotes a unitary drive toward a single, supposedly reachable, goal. So when Derrida deconstructs this concept, it challenges the very fabric of Western disciplines of knowledge which are not only phonocentric and logocentric, but also male-centred. Another concept that comes under Derrida's scrutiny is *dualism*, that is, the expression of everything in terms of binary opposition.

Based on his criticism of these notions, he has traced their role in traditional Western philosophy's search for meaning which was apparent in Tillich's project which I highlighted in Chapter Three in the outworking of his entire methodology. Derrida rejects this search for meaning because, for him, meaning does not exist. He has shown how Western philosophy had assumed that there is an essence which is the basis of all beliefs; "hence there seems to be a disposition, a correspond, to a secure stable 'transcendental signifier' which would directly relate, correspond, to a secure stable 'transcendental signified' (i.e. *Logos*)."[159] Idea, Matter, the World Spirit and God may be examples of such signs, which in return can act as "the foundation of a system of thought and forms an axis around which all other signs circulate."[160] According to Derrida, any such transcendental meaning is a fiction. Derrida said that all such thought-systems, which depend on a first principle, could be deconstructed. When that happens, hidden assumptions

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid., p. 37.

[160] Ibid.

are unveiled, which means there is no "pure" knowledge outside of society, culture, or language. There are no things called "essential meanings" which are *out there*: they are rather *put there* by the tools, knowledge and assumptions we use to look for them. What may be taken as the deep or central meaning of a text depends on where one stands – a text or a piece of writing can never simply be a window to the truth. Thus Derrida attempted to liberate thinking from singularity.

The main outcome of Derrida's poststructuralist deconstruction project was his contribution of the idea that a *text* could have alternative interpretations (any form of communication through language is a *text* for Derrida). He theorised that we cannot overcome the kind of difference (in French, *différence*) that separates the object of perception from our perception. He applied the word *différence* to describe the ineliminable gap between reality and language that confounds us. In this theory Derrida constructed postmodern feminists found expression – they stated that "if they agreed on anything, it was that woman, the other, the feminine, had been left unthematised and silent in the void between language and reality, and the time had come for her to emerge from this abyss."[161]

Representation and Metanarratives

As it was clearly demonstrated in chapters two and three in relation to Tillich's theological cultural narrative, supremacy of rationality in epistemology is the fundamental proposition of the modern concept of reality, representation and grand-narratives. As in the field of poststructuralist thinking, this proposition raises further questions on many other fronts of contemporary postmodern thought in which the concept of reality itself is questioned – it raises doubts about the relationship between reality and representation.

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[161] Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist thought* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), p.198.

Concerning the description of reality, relatively recent developments in mass communication – especially television – have presented a whole range of problems. In his analysis of the problems presented by television, Baudrillard comments that media culture is consumed by what he calls "an effect of frantic self-referentiality." In explaining this effect he goes on to show that, since media now operate without necessarily making any reference to reality, we are faced with a situation in which the image "bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum."[162] According to Baudrillard, all forms of representation, whether posters, newspapers, television, cinema, and so on, have saturated reality to such a degree that experience can take place only at a remove. In his work he gives many terms such as *hyperreality, implosion, cyberblitz*, and the *code* to describe this postmodern condition. While each term carries a different connotation, in total they are related to what Baudrillard means by *simulation. Simulation* for him is not exactly the opposite of truth, nor has it any attachment to reality. As he explains, representation

> ... starts from the principle that the sign and the real are equivalent (even if this equivalence is utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Conversely, simulation starts from the *utopia* of this principle of equivalence, *from the radical negation of the sign as value,* from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference. [163]

While computer-generated images and spaces are clear examples of that to which Baudrillard refers, for him simulation is not an "event" confined to a particular technology, but a state of affairs into which the postmodern age has

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[162] *Selected writings*, (Ed.).,Mark Poster, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p.170.

[163] Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton & Philip Beitchman, (New York: Semiotext (e), 1983), p.11.

entered where "it is now a principle of simulation, and not of reality, that regulates all of social life."[164]

Another major representative, who describes the implications of the postmodern condition especially in relation to metanarratives and knowledge, is Jean-François Lyotard.[165] He challenges the "legitimating myths of the modern age" which he calls the "grand narratives." The discourse which gives legitimacy to such narratives for Lyotard is philosophy. He questions and attacks the ideas that science can progressively liberate humanity and that philosophy can restore unity to learning and develop universally-valid knowledge for humanity. Lyotard claims that one is no longer able to talk about a totalising idea of reason because there is no reason, but there are reasons.

By *metanarratives* Lyotard means transcendent and universal truths or any form of universal philosophy, whether it is that of Hegel or Marx, which underpins Western civilisation. It is those metanarratives which function to give that civilisation objective legitimation. According to Lyotard, the postmodern condition is the situation in which those metanarratives have all lost credibility. He points out that *grands récits* are master narratives in which humanity seeks its *telos* in the conquest of nature. However, when postmodernity signals a crisis in a narrative's legitimising function, metanarratives disintegrate or lose credibility.

The emergence of new theories in epistemology has created a postmodern climate in which the old universals and the cultural narratives they created have been steadily dismantled. Diversity and particularity have now replaced

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[164] Baudrillard, *Selected writings,* p.120.

[165] *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). Lyotard's analysis of the situation is not altogether original. He seems to be drawing on postindustrial society outlined mainly by Alain Touraine, Daniel Bell and others.

them. The belief in one absolute standard or metanarrative for all has also been eroded with the collapse of major ideological powers such as, for example, Communism.

Furthermore, the emerging emphasis on the validity of other forms of human knowing has challenged the modern domination and belief in the supremacy of reason. For instance, even as early as the first few decades of the last century, Freud and Jung had highlighted the importance of human emotion and the symbolic meaning of dreams.[166] Most notably, in more recent years, feminist movements have come to claim the validity of many experiences that fall outside the modernist framework.[167] They are modes of thought and expressions which are seen not as irrational or antirational but as important ingredients in postmodern experience and epistemology.

In the preceding section I have presented numerous examples of postmodern thought to demonstrate how the key themes employed in a modern conservative hermeneutic for an educational project like Tillich's can no longer be utilised in the face of the postmodern experience. Since the discussion in this chapter has also introduced the context in which the new hermeneutic may be understood, to reiterate and highlight their significant contribution to the postmodern "construct" of experience and understanding, I will briefly outline how postmodern feminists employ these themes to interpret and understand culture and their experience in it from their perspective. The following discussion by no means exhaustive, but it is sufficient to demonstrate what I have called the "new hermeneutic" at work. The various

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[166] E.g. Paul Kline, *Fact and fantasy in Freudian theory* (London: Methuen, 1972); Jung, *Memories, dreams, reflections,* (Ed.), Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard & Clara Winston (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963).

[167] E.g. Melissa Raphael, *Thealogy and embodiment: The post-patriarchal reconstruction of female sacrality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Sisters of dust, sisters of the spirit: Womanist wordings on God and creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998).

theories of a number of groups of women that come under the single umbrella of *postmodern feminists* are of special significance.

Before the discussion why I have chosen postmodern feminists needs explaining. Within the Western intellectual tradition the feminist movement seems to have arisen as a sincere and genuine critique of the conservative modern hermeneutic against its entire logocentric and phallocentric frameworks of reference.

The most progressive feminists – like all postmodernists – avoid in their writings any reference to phallogocentric thought which, in effect, is logocentric. The idea of logocentrism, as I have shown in chapters Two and Three, is a fundamental category of thought in both theological hermeneutics and Western thought in general. With a view to "liberating women," the term *phallogocentric* is used by postmodern feminists to refer to two interrelated issues: ideas ordered around an absolute word – *Logos* – and the "male" (related to the phallus). Earlier it was discussed how the *logocentric* thought is questioned by "poststructuralists". Like all poststructuralists, postmodern feminists treat any *explanation* of why women are oppressed with great suspicion.[168] This marks a clear departure from the old style of hermeneutics and introduces a new hermeneutic that is pertinent to our experience of the world today.

The fragmented *self* which was outlined earlier is a reoccurring theme in the feminist discussions. Within many contemporary feminist theories it this very issue that has found many manifestations ranging from a philosophical notion of the *self* to *self* as understood in terms of one's colour, social and self-identity.[169] While postmodern feminists capitalise on the deconstruction of the philosophical *self* in their discourses, multicultural and global feminists capitalise on the latter types of self-identity issues in voicing their concerns for

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[168] Tong, *Feminist thought,* p. 193.

[169] See Ibid., p.7.

"minority" groups such as coloured women. While the insights the multicultural and global feminists share are important for voicing the concerns of other "minorities" such as ethnic groups, gays and lesbians, a discussion of those issues is beyond the scope of this single project.

Furthermore, the women's concerns that feminist theories attempt to articulate are no longer lonely "voices" coming from groups of oppressed women. The voices of the feminists and other "minorities" that we hear today are very different from what they were about three decades ago. Those voices which we heard in the past came, predominantly, from reactionary groups who opposed the cultural and political narrative which was based on the modern ideals of nation, class and belief in the wholesale transformation of the world. In other words, they were reactions to the hermeneutical style that was employed to define and group their place and status in society. In the present times, the situation has changed.[170] Those voices of women – as the term "theory" aptly describes – have now matured and as Yeatman claims with regards to postfeminism, "feminism's come of age."[171] That is, as Ann Brooks explains, feminism has developed into "a confident body of theory and politics, representing pluralism and difference and reflecting on its position in relation to other philosophical and political movements similarly demanding change."[172]

In rebelling against these frameworks of reference the feminist movement, especially the postmodern forms of it, have come to be the most impressive representation of the nonrational and nonlinear engagement with the human experience and reality. In these respects, the "feminist theories" seem to be

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[170] David Newman, (Ed.) *Boundaries, Territory and postmodernity* (London; Portland, OR : F. Cass, 1999).

[171] *Postmodern revisionings of the political,* (London & New York: Routledge, 1979), p. 49 cited in Ann Brooks, *Postfeminisms* (London & New York: Routledge, 1979), p.1.

[172] *Postfeminisms*, p.1.

the best examples to demonstrate the outworking of the new hermeneutical themes that are characteristic of the postmodern cultural narrative.

Feminists and the New Hermeneutic

Owing to the profound changes brought about by the issues which have been discussed earlier in this chapter, the contemporary feminist theories have significantly shifted from what they were for their early liberal feminist predecessors such as Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor and Betty Friedan. For instance, a number of leading feminist theorists, notably, the "French feminists" – Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and the like – have begun to voice their concerns within the "poststructuralist/*post*-modernist" hermeneutic.[173] Many of them – Julia Kristeva, to name one – are no longer interested in rediscovering the voices of women in the great works of literature written by women, or in looking at the stereotypes by which women were misrepresented. These contemporary feminists, sometimes also known as "postfeminists", believe that "feminism was doomed from the start by its allegiance to master narratives (for example, patriarchy) and by its reputed denial of difference in favour of a naïve and utopian vision of empowered sisterhood."[174] Departing from the position of the past feminists, these postfeminists have begun to deconstruct even the very notion of gender. This is a significant hermeneutical shift as is evident in the following section.

Hélène Cixous, for instance, drawing heavily on Derrida, rejects terms such as *feminist* and *lesbian* because they are, according to her, terms parasitic

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[173] Tong, *Feminist thought,* pp. 2 &12.

[174] Suzanna Danuta Walters, Postfeminism and popular culture,"*Material girls: making sense of feminist cultural theory* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 136-7.

upon phallagocentric thought.[175] Building on Derrida's notion of *difference* which I briefly outlined above, she has demonstrated the distinction between feminine writing (*l'écriture féminine*) and masculine writing (*littérature*). As a psychoanalyst, Cixous shows that masculine writing is basically phallocentric, that is, "rooted in a man's genital and libidinal economy, which is emblemised by the phallus."[176] For many sociocultural reasons, she claims, masculine writing has reigned supreme over feminine writing. Again, drawing on Derrida, she registers her objection to masculine writing which, she says, is cast in binary oppositions and man has "unnecessarily segmented reality by coupling concepts and terms of polar opposites, one of which is always privileged over the other." [177] A few examples are:

Activity/Passivity
Sun/Moon
Culture/Nature
Day/Night
Speaking/Writing
High/Low[178]

Developing along the lines of poststructuralism there are also feminists who raise their voices as ecological feminists or ecofeminists. Ecofeminism is a relatively new method which feminists have developed as a hermeneutic for thinking about "women's issues" in relation to nature, politics, and spirituality. There is no single definition of ecofeminism. They believe that the domination of women is directly connected to the environmental rape and pillage of our planet. From this standpoint, issues of power, domination, and subordination are key themes in ecofeminism. In the broadest sense, their mission is to

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[175] Tong, *Feminist thought,* p.193.

[176] Ibid., p.199.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Hélène Cixous & Cathrine Clement, "Stories," *The Newly born women,* tr., Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 63,65 cited ibid.

topple patriarchy in which men are said to exert power over women. To that extent, they struggle against other forms of oppression such as racism, speciesism, heterosexism, classism, and imperialism. In these respects, they champion the causes of "minority" groups such as ethnic minorities, gays, lesbians, coloured and Third World peoples.

On the continuum of the political to the spiritual, the academic to the grassroots, ecofeminists act on different fronts: while some are strictly front-line activists, others work towards social change and express themselves through dedicated spiritual practices. Hence, in its own peculiar style of feminism, ecofeminism has developed its hermeneutic from an interdisciplinary approach which encompasses politics, spirituality, nature, and a pre-patriarchal understanding of history.[179]

In absolute contrast to the modern conservative hermeneutical style, an aspect that features strongly in ecofeminism is its deep affinity with the nonlinear, nonrational, emotional realm. Based on their argument that, originally, all spirituality was earth-based and centred on a oneness with nature, they are also drawn to "alternative spiritualities" such as paganism, women's spirituality, shamanism, and New Age rituals.[180]

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[179] Maria Mies & Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (London, New Jersey: Zed Books, 1993); Steinberg Molyneux, "Mies and Shivas ecofeminism. A new testament," *Feminist Review* 49 (1995): 86-107; Val Plumwood, "Nature, self, and gender: Feminism, environmental philosophy, and the critique of Rationalism," Michael Zimmerman, (Ed.) *Environmental philosophy. From animal rights to radical ecology* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993). pp.. 284-309.

[180] See Irene Diamond & Gloria Feman Orenstein, (Eds.) *Reweaving the world: The emergence of ecofeminism* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990); Carol Adams, (Ed.) *Ecofeminism and the sacred* (New York: Continuum Press, 1993); Janet Biehl, *Finding our way: Rethinking ecofeminist politics,* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991); Carol Bigwood, *Earth muse: Feminism, nature, and art*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993); Leonie Caldecott & Stephanie Leland, (Eds.)

Besides the insights drawn from the anti-essentialist and poststructuralist/post-modernist refutation of the modernist hermeneutics, in recent years cyber-technology also has contributed to adding another dimension to the new hermeneutic.

While the limited scope of this thesis does not allow discussing these issues in any detail, given the extent of the cyber-technological explosion in the present, some cursory references to the new developments would be add further ammunition to the case I am presenting in this thesis. In this respect, Donna Haraway needs special mentioning.

Haraway's type of feminism focused on the metaphors which science uses and how those metaphors subtly determine the networks of power which control our world. Her work ranges from primatology to epistemology, from cancer research to information technology and developmental biology.[181] Her brand of feminist theory has influenced science fiction writers exploring the interfaces between human/ machine/ animal/ information and those who are interested in the politics of the Other – whether that other be defined in terms of race, gender, species, or technology. Because she deals explicitly with the theoretics of the cyborg – the being who is part human and part machine – Haraway has been particularly influential on cyberpunk writers.

Reclaim the earth: Women speak out for life on earth, (London: Women's Press, 1983).

[181] "Manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980's," *Socialist Review* 80 (1985): 65-108; "The promises of monsters: A regenerative politics for inappropriated others.In *Cultural Studies,* (Eds)L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, & P. Treichler. New York: Routledge: 295-337; When man (TM) is on the menu." In *Incorporations*, (Eds.) J. Crary & Sanford K. Winter. New York: Zone Books, 1992: 38-43; A game of cat's cradle: science studies, feminist theory, cultural studies. *Configurations: A Journal of Literature and Science* 1 (1994): 59-71.

In her baroquely titled book Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. *FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse®*[182], Haraway concentrates on biological networks and takes a critical look at the way biotechnology is constructing our bodies. She tackles masculine bias in scientific culture and sees herself as the troubled "modest witness" of the ethical maelstrom of genetic engineering.

Drawing on these ideas, Haraway believes that male-dominated society creates and exploits "essential" distinctions between male and female in order to keep itself running. She finds the answer to this dilemma in the cyborg which is a creature in a "post gender world" that could overstep all socially imposed expectations and constraints. Hence, for Haraway, cybernetic technologies, by creating new, boundary-blurring images of *self*, provide opportunities for getting out of social – and even biological – limitations of identity. In this way, she believes, new political alliances can be formed which are no longer restrained by gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity or location. In her *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature* she writes:

> The cyborg incarnation is outside salvation history. Nor does it mark time on an oedipal calendar, attempting to heal the terrible cleavages of gender in an oral symbiotic utopia or post-oedipal apocalypse. ... The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. In a sense, the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense - a "final" irony since the cyborg is also the awful apocalyptic *telos* of the West's escalating dominations of abstract individuation, an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space.[183]

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[182] (Routledge, 1997).

[183] Ibid. pp.150-151.

In complete contrast to the line Tillich had argued to elucidate a "theory of culture" on the human quest for meaning, reality, "eternal truth" and subsequently "salvation" from the *angst* of nonbeing, the cyborg incarnation is outside salvation history. Nor does it mark time on an oedipal calendar, attempting to heal the terrible cleavages of gender in an oral symbiotic utopia or postoedipal apocalypse. The cyborg is a creature in a postgender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. In a sense, the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense – a "final" irony since the cyborg is also the awful apocalyptic *telos* of the West's escalating dominations of abstract individuation, an ultimate *self* untied at last from all dependency, a man in space.[184]

Haraway's radical insights and utilisation of the postmodern hermeneutical themes have elevated her to the status of a heroine, giving rise to a generation of women such as Sadie Plant and Claudia Springer who have started to call themselves "cyberfeminists." They are entertaining both the possibilities and implications of using the figure of the Cyborg to give a voice to articulate feminist concerns in a context with which we could transcend the social definitions of masculinity and femininity.

Springer's argument in her book *Electronic Eros: Bodies and desire in the postindustrial age*[185] deserves mentioning. In the book, drawing on psychoanalytical and film theory as well as on the history of technology, she presents a sustained analysis of eroticism and gender in films (e.g. *RoboCop*, *The terminator*, *eve of destruction*) cyberpunk books, (e.g. *Neuromancer*, *Lady El, Count Zero* and *A fire in the sun*), comics (e.g. *Cyberpunk* and *Interface*) and television series (*Man and machine*) to demonstrate that, while new electronic technologies have inspired changes in some pop culture texts,

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[184] Ibid.

[185] (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

others stubbornly recycle conventions from the past, refusing to come to terms with the new postmodern social order. It is an order in which, Sadie Plant claims in her book, *Zeros and ones: Digital women and the new technoculture,* cultures can no longer "be shaped or determined by any single hand or determining factor. There is no centre of operations, no organizing core."[186] The impossibility of coming to terms with this cultural situation creates anxiety for those who are accustomed to being in control. She claims that men have always been in the "prospect of being in the position to know, and preferably control... crucial to modern conceptions of what used to be called man's place in the grand scheme of things." In a male-dominated world, losing orientation is equivalent to losing a control over the self. In a digital world where "revolutions in telecom, media, intelligence gathering, and information processing... coincided with an unprecedented sense of unease,"[187] those who attempted to organise the system became overwhelmed by the anarchy of it.

From this standpoint, Sadie Plant thinks that women can take computer technology from the hands of men; for – like women – software systems are used as men's tools, their media and weapons which are developed to satisfy their interests. In doing so, she argues that technology can be used to explore alternative forms of fantasised identities which are subversive and completely free from male domination. "Women's liberation," she claims, "is sustained and vitalised by the proliferation and globalisation of software technologies, all of which feed into self-organising systems and enter the scene on her side."[188]

All these examples provide numerous illustrations of the way in which one has to interpret culture/s today. It seems obvious that what has been identified as

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[186] (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p.45.

[187] Ibid.

[188] *Cyberspace/cyberbodies/cyberpunk : Cultures of technological embodiment*, (Eds.) Mike Featherstone & Roger Burrows (London : Sage, 1995). p.58.

"the conservative hermeneutic" is almost obsolete in the attempt to interpret, understand and teach in the present.

Chapter Six

Innovative Cultural Hermeneutist: the Journey's End and New Beginning

Summary of the Thesis

In this thesis I have attempted to identify, name and carefully outline the intellectual journey I had to make from being a "modernist expert" to becoming an "innovative cultural hermeneutist." The challenge was named as the task of being an effective adult educator in theology and religion in the tertiary sector in the climate of the 21st century. I began this study by identifying the three issues that had to be confronted. They were: i) my cultural heritage – which was coloured by Sri Lanka's colonial history of five hundred years and the formative influences it had on my worldview and practice as an adult educator, ii) the two immediate adult educational environments in which I lead my professional life as an educator in Christian theology and Asian religions, and iii) the contemporary Western cultural climate – which is characterised by postmodernism. In explaining each issue I showed how my "theological" education was set within a modern context and pedagogical style of instruction which, in effect, prepared the framework within which I could model my role as an educator with a deep appreciation of the German theologian, Paul Tillich, and his theology of culture.

While registering my indebtedness to Tillich, I have identified the challenge of being an educator in the present especially in relation to the postmodern experience of the world today and its impact upon – and relevance for – adult education. The contexts in which I have placed the appraisal of my role as an

educator are my places of employment – Trinity College Theological School and the United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne, Australia. I stated that in these contexts I see my role as an educator as being not so much to impart knowledge and information, as to enable the adult students to know why they need to learn something and empower them to learn experientially, and to approach learning as problem-solving. This approach to education was identified as *andragogy.*

Since the areas of my teaching are concerned with the contemporary culture which has emerged from antifoundationalist "movements" such as postmodernism and poststructuralism, the main question that has been addressed in this study is how to assume the role of an innovative cultural hermeneutist so that adult learners are introduced to an andragogical style of learning. With a view to achieving the aim of this thesis, in Chapters Three and Four, the study was focused on understanding and carefully exposing a modern hermeneutical tradition – Paul Tillich's theology of culture – which I confessed had also been the tradition to which I had belonged. In discussing Tillich's theology of culture I was challenged to take stock of the modern conceptual frameworks, themes and assumptions which undergirded one of the most impressive but *modern* theological adult education project.

With reference to Gallagher's description of hermeneutical types in Chapter Two I showed that Tillich's hermeneutic was conservative and to a great extent Heideggarian in its expression. In outlining the themes of this hermeneutic – Being, symbol and religion – I demonstrated how they enabled Tillich to carry out his educational task.

Following the unveiling of Tillich's old theological hermeneutic in Chapter Five, I have presented numerous examples from the condition which has come to be called *postmodern* to demonstrate the emergence of the critical and radical hermeneutics through which a selected number of themes of the postmodern condition such as the loss of *self*, antiessentialism, poststructuralism, and a multitude of other themes within them were outlined. In citing these examples I have argued that one cannot operate within the old

hermeneutic and be an effective adult educator in the postmodern context. The educator who wants to be effective in the present I have named an "innovative cultural hermeneutist"- that is, the adult educator whose task of education is both informed and enriched by employing these new hermeneutical styles which I have collectively termed "innovative hermeneutics."

Indeed, being an innovative hermeneutist is not the position every academic who teaches theology adopts. Being an academic staff member of the United Faculty of Theology and the Melbourne College of Divinity which together have about one hundred and fifty academics, I am also challenged to observe how some academics still operate within the hermeneutic that was identified as "conservative." Of course, such academics name themselves as either "evangelicals" or "orthodox theologians." The purpose of mentioning the existence of these academics is not to prejudice their teaching, but rather to underline the fact that the position I have come to appropriate to my practice as an adult educator is confined by limitations and constrains within a large educational institution. My fellow academics are by no means alone. In spite of the postmodern condition and its experience conservative hermeneutics in theological education exist to this day. While I do not intend to develop an argument here, it suffices to say that many theological institutions thrive and carry out – in terms of full-time and part-time student enrolments – successful theology degree programmes that one may say are framed within a worldview that naturally lends itself to conservative hermeneutics.

There is also the relativity of our experience of the world, and where we are at any given time also places great constraints on teaching theology and religion. Undoubtedly, the case I have argued in this study is confined to my own circumstances and at best to teaching theology and religion to adult students in the west. If I were to teach in an institution either in South Asia or South East Asia – the parts of the world which were not affected by the Enlightenment project or modernity as was the "Christian West" – my role as an "innovative cultural hermeneutist" might acquire a different meaning. These questions, challenges and concerns again and again raise the

question: "where do we find meaning?" If our contemporary experience of the culture in which we live is to provide the basis for education then certainly this meaning cannot be ascertained through transhistorical objectivity. It can be ascertained only in the way in which adult learners are invited to learn through motivation to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy. Coming to this realisation through a significant shift in my worldview with academic credibility is an important milestone in my intellectual journey as an educator – the role within which I have chosen to operate effectively in a micronarrative; for

> The postmodern condition is the condition of being left only with micro-narratives: small, local, relativistic stories that – precisely because they make no universal claims – enable us to challenge modern discourses of power, free us to listen to alternative stories, and promise emancipation from the tyranny of human reason.[189]

Since the process of learning that has taken place for me through this thesis has been described in the metaphor of a journey it is now important to describe the transition and the sense in which I have come to embrace it.

The First Journey's End

The sense in which the first journey has been discontinued in my outlook and understanding as an adult educator can be described with reference to a simile of Lord Buddha known as the Parable of the Raft which is found in one of the discourses of Buddha known as the *Majjhima Nikaya* (the Middle Length Discourses). To preserve the prudence of the words of Buddha I shall translate it from the original *Pali* text and reproduce the whole simile here.

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[189] Andrew Wright, *Religion, education and post-modernity*, (London & New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004), p.25.

On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika Park. He addressed the monks gathered and said unto them:

"Monks, I shall show you how the Dhamma is similar to a raft, being for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of grasping. Listen and attend closely to what I shall say." "Yes, Venerable Sir," the monks replied. The Blessed One said this:

"Monks, suppose a man in the course of a journey saw a great expanse of water, the nearer bank dangerous and frightening, the further bank secure, not frightening. But if there were not a boat for crossing by, or a bridge across for going from the not-beyond to the beyond, this might occur to him: 'This is a great stretch of water, the nearer bank dangerous and frightening, the further bank secure and not frightening, but there is not a boat for crossing by, or a bridge across for going from the not-beyond to the beyond. Suppose that I, having collected grass, sticks, branches and foliage, and having tied a raft, depending on that raft, and striving with hands and feet, should cross over safely to the beyond?' "Then, monks, that man, having collected grass, sticks, branches and foliage, having tied a raft, depending on that raft and striving with his hands and feet, might cross over safely to the beyond. To him, crossed over, gone beyond, this might occur: 'Now this raft has been very useful to me. I, depending on this raft, and striving with my hands and feet, crossed over safely to the beyond. Suppose now that I, having put this raft on my head, or having lifted it onto my shoulder, should proceed as I desire?' What do you think about this, monks? If that man does this, is he doing what should be done with that raft?"

"No, Venerable Sir."

> "What should that man do, monks, in order to do what should be done with that raft? In this case, monks, it might occur to that man who has crossed over, gone beyond: 'Now, this raft has been very useful to me. Depending on this raft and striving with my hands and feet, I have crossed over safely to the beyond. Suppose now that I, having beached this raft on dry ground or having submerged it under the water, should proceed as I desire?' In doing this, monks, that man would be doing what should be done with that raft. Even so, monks, is the Parable of the Raft taught by me for crossing over, not for retaining. You, monks, by understanding the Parable of the Raft, should abandon even good states, how much more so bad states." [190]

This parable of Buddha underlines the utmost importance of the understanding - and all it entails – at a given point of time necessary to journey from one point to the other. Once one arrives at the point at which one needs to arrive all that enabled the transition ceases to be of importance. Not even the Dhamma – the liberating law discovered and proclaimed by Buddha – is important once the crossing over is accomplished. Correspondingly, it is of immense value for me to understand my transition from a modernist expert to a postmodernist innovative cultural hermeneutist in a similar vein.

The Beginning of the New Journey and its Implications

I set out in this thesis to investigate the question: "how can I be an effective adult educator in the present through my role as an innovative cultural hermeneutist?" The implication of the new journey is the new learning and ability I have gained to be effective in my role as an adult educator. This

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[190] *Majjhima Nikaya,* Alagaddupama sutta, 22:13-14.

effectiveness is enhanced on two fronts: firstly, as I have already mentioned in the preceding section, by adopting an innovative hermeneutic for the interpretation and understanding of the contemporary experience of the world, and secondly, by developing an andragogical teaching style through which the adult learners are enabled to learn through self-direction. In Chapter One I have detailed that the adult learners I encounter come from two groups: those who are in preparation for ordination and those who study for specific qualifications in theology, divinity and religious studies. Through the learning I have gained from this study the following actions on my part would enhance the effectiveness of my teaching.

(i) To clearly identify objectives for the adult students before the course of study begins and explain the relevance of the unit/course to the work for which they are preparing themselves (e.g., Christian ministry after ordination or other activities in the case of nonordination candidates). In doing so to demonstrate the practical implications of the course of study for their future work and to ensure that the course is not pursued only for the sake of knowledge.

(ii) To organise the units and courses that have clearly defined learning goals, and demonstrate to the students how the course of study will help them attain their goals.

(iii) To actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as a facilitator for them. In doing so, to encourage the students' perspectives about what topics to cover and let them work on projects that reflect their interests.

(iv) To foster an environment where the adult students are encouraged to perceive themselves as peers to the teacher and thereby cultivate intellectual freedom and encourage experimentation and creativity.

(v) To provide regular feedback mechanisms for students to inform me what works best for them and what they want and need to learn – and for me to be sufficiently flexible to be able to make changes based on student input.

(vi) To allow the students to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership and guide them to acquire their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts.

(vii) To demonstrate to the students how the class will help them achieve their learning goals.

(viii) To facilitate and encourage the students to connect learning to their knowledge and experience base, and in doing so to assist them to draw on those aspects of their experience and knowledge which are relevant to the subject under discussion.

(ix) To understand the significance of the motivators that have brought these adult learners to the classroom or the programme of study.

(x) To respect the adult students and acknowledge the wealth of experiences that these learners bring to the classroom and thus allow them to voice their opinions freely in class.

These skills along with my aptitude for being an innovative cultural hermeneutist would pave the way for me to accomplish much in my role as educator.

The chapters of this thesis, it was said, represent the stages of my own intellectual journey – a self-directed learning process – as an adult educator and a theologian. It has been an endeavour which ended the intellectual journey which began during my formative years and evolved through my

completing a doctorate on Tillich and finally taking a new direction through the completion of this master's degree programme in adult education.

My journey in adult learning is new and this field of study too is relatively new. However, it is a field which is just as substantial as traditional education and carries the potential for greater success. Indeed, the heightened success requires a greater responsibility on the part of the educator and for that I have prepared myself through my journey from modernist expert to postmodernist innovative cultural hermeneutist. This I celebrate.

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