

Historical-anthropological Jesus research: The status of authentic pictures beyond authentic material¹

Pieter F Craffert

Department of New Testament

University of South Africa

Abstract

A historical-anthropological approach to the study of the historical Jesus sets its own research agenda, starting with the research problem: to establish Jesus' identity as a historical figure. The interpretive style used to deal with such a figure is a cable-like process which accepts that the social type he belonged to, the stories about him, the setting within which he operated and his personal profile are configurations of each another. For example, when trying to understand the sources, the dynamics of the social type within a specific setting has to be taken into account. It is argued that identifying a social type is a matter of social analysis and not of merely labelling pre-established "authentic" parts of the tradition. If a social type is identified about whom stories such as those about Jesus are told, it is highly likely that Jesus could have been such a figure. This approach is used as a yardstick to evaluate the effectiveness of historical critical approaches (the Jesus Seminar and the third quest) in dealing with a figure from a distant historical and cultural setting. It is shown that neither of these approaches with their rationalist presuppositions and interpretive styles is very useful in understanding across cultural barriers.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study is not about any specific image of the historical Jesus but about the nature and quality of specific kinds of images; it is about different ways of looking at something. When reading a paper on Jesus as a shamanic type of figure at the 1998 SBL meeting in

¹ Paper presented at the International Context Group Meeting, University of Pretoria June 12-15, 2001

Orlando, USA, I was asked whether this *historical anthropological approach* to the historical Jesus is merely on the level of the gospels' presentation of Jesus or contributes to knowledge about Jesus as historical figure. Although I realised that it was, indeed, saying something about the historical figure, at the time I did not have a proper answer. That question has bothered me since. Whether intended or not, the question contains the fairly common assumption that historical critical studies deal with the historical person or the "real historical Jesus" and therefore serve as the yardstick for historical interpretation in this field of research. Again, whether intended or not, it contains the assumption that the sources as we have them today cannot possibly be about the life of a historical figure. There are therefore two sides to this issue: the status of the (historical critical) yardstick and claims about historical interpretation on the one hand, and the status and value of historical anthropological constructions of the historical Jesus on the other hand.

The question also illustrates the difficulty of escaping the force and tenacity of the received tradition of historical criticism. Overcoming the heritage (not to call it a hegemony) of historical-critical Jesus research is no easy task – if only because of the – number and extent of the publications and the numerical domination of the debate. A natural reaction would therefore be to offer alternative answers to existing (historical critical) questions. In my view, a historical anthropological approach should not (and cannot) answer these questions but poses and answers its own set of questions. Therefore, this study turns the challenge around and measures the historical critical approaches against the standard of a historical-anthropological approach.

2. A HISTORICAL-ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO JESUS OF NAZARETH

2.1 Identifying a research problem

Broadly speaking, the research programme of the Context Group, which works towards social-scientific (or as I prefer to say, historical-anthropological) interpretations of various aspects of early Christian literature and phenomena, can be described as continuous efforts to find appropriate models and scenarios for bridging both the historical and the cultural gaps which separate modern (mostly Western) interpreters from the ancient and first-century Mediterranean worlds. From this point of view, the actual

issue in historical Jesus research is the fact that he lived, operated and talked and the stories and reports about him originated and were circulated within a world and world-view fundamentally different from a modern industrialised one. In the first place, not the differences between the sources, or the so-called *myths* contained by them or the problem with authentic material, but the alien nature of the figure, the sources and their content which necessitates this research. The challenge of a historical interpretation is not primarily “did it happen” (as if we already understand the reports), but what is reported to have happened and how we entertain that. This point of view, as Bernstein (1991:75) remarks, creates an *Aufgabe*:

The search for commonalities and precise points of difference is always a task and an obligation – an *Aufgabe*. Without a *mutual* recognition of this *Aufgabe*, without a self-conscious sensitivity of the need always to do justice to “the Other’s” *singularity*, without a heightened awareness of the inescapable risks that can never be completely mastered, we are in danger of obliterating the radical plurality of the human condition. It is an *Aufgabe* not only when we seek to understand our own traditions (whether “West” or “East”) but when we authentically try to encounter and understand Eastwest and Westeast.

From the point of view of a historical-anthropological approach, that is also the obligation of the Jesus researcher: in the first instance, to do justice to the “singularity” of the reports and thus to figure out what they are about. What we can be certain of is that the gospels not only contain cultural stories about events, they contain cultural stories about cultural events and unless sufficient attention is given to these, we need not even ask the question, “what happened”.

2.2 A cable-like interpretive process

A second task is to reflect on the style of interpretive practice. Following Peirce, Bernstein (see 1983:224; 1991:327) proposes a distinction between chain-like and cable-like styles of interpretation. According to him, the thrust is that in science we ought to trust the multitude and variety of arguments rather than the conclusiveness of any one of them. Our reasoning should not form a chain that is no stronger than the weakest link,

but a cable whose fibers though ever so slender, by their sheer numbers and interwovenness make it much stronger. It will be argued that the interpretive style of the historical-anthropological approach is explicitly cable-like – it recognises the non-linear nature of a complex system constituted by several components interacting in meaningful patterns and often with feedback loops.

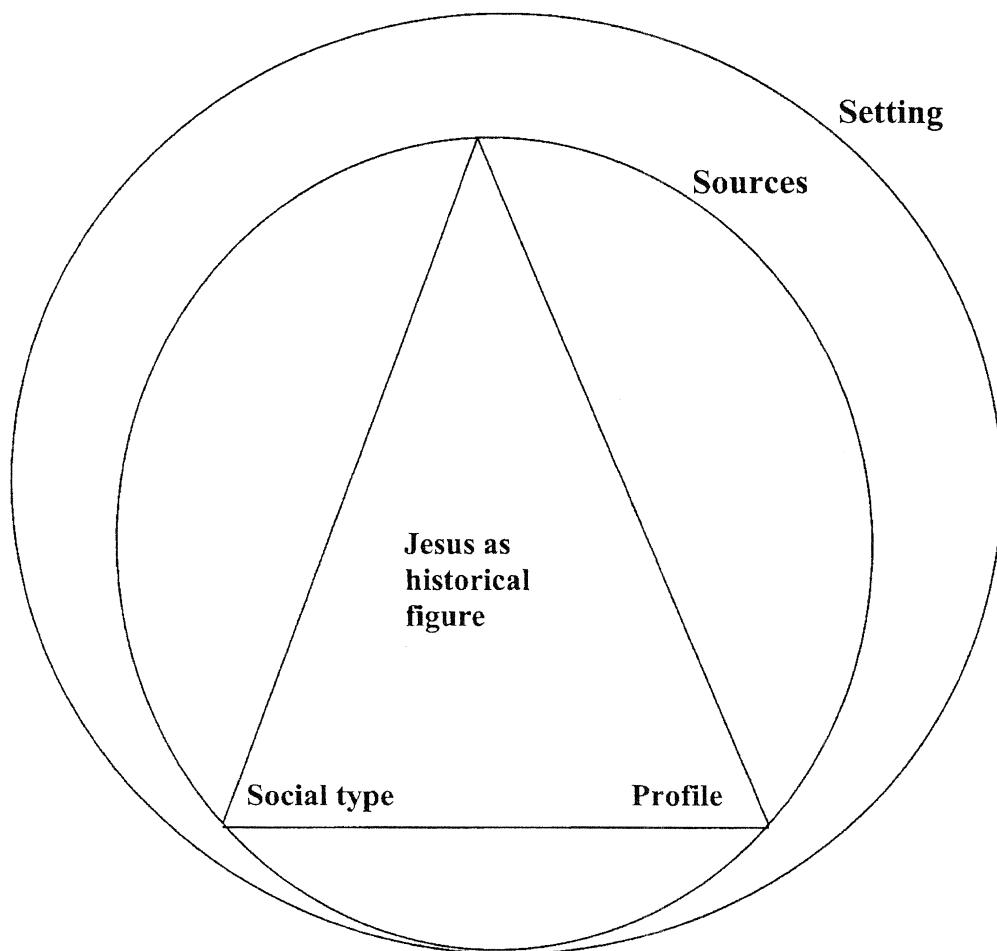


Diagram: A cable-like interpretive process

The above diagram can be used in describing the cable-like nature in which these elements function within a historical-anthropological approach.

Implicit in the diagram is a notion about a historical figure that consists of three elements: biographical elements², a social type³ and a personal profile⁴. These belong together within the same triangle because they influence one another and work together in making up a historical figure. Social types are useful in understanding not only where a person's contemporaries would place her or him, but also provide some parameters for understanding a person's biography and some of his or her conduct. Knowing about a person is knowing (something) about a social personage and knowing about a social personage is knowing (something) about a person's biography. A social type not only describes a figure, but also helps to make certain features in that figure's life understandable.⁵

2.3 The outline of a historical-anthropological approach to Jesus of Nazareth

The third task is to formalise the research problem into an interpretive process. The above-mentioned research problem about the alien nature that confronts the modern (Western) research can be formulated as follows: what must be assumed about Jesus as a historical figure in order to explain the content of the given sources?⁶ In terms of the above diagram, the question can be put like this: *Can we come up with a description that*

2 Biographical elements refer to aspects such as details of place and time of birth and death, parents and family members, place of residence, occupation and hobbies, and the like. They also include, in so far as they can be determined, important specific events in a person's life.

3 Social type refers to a person's social identity in terms of values, behaviour, style and habits. Social types represent patterns in cultural expectations and cultural conduct. For detail, see below (§2.4.1).

4 By personal profile is understood those aspects of a person's life which are the special (in order to avoid the term "unique") elements a person contributes to life and society. These include a person's words and deeds, but can also be his or her mission or purpose in life; what a person wants to achieve in life. Marsh (1998:85) correctly remarks "that attempting to grasp a historical figure's intentions, based on conclusions inferred from their actions; 'reading' those figures in the light of worlds of thought which it is likely they would have inhabited" has always been what historians have done.

5 For example, if a person is a politician, it is likely that her or his biography will also reflect such features. Being able to establish which social type a figure belongs to, could cast some light on his or her personal profile as well as biography. Being able to connect a person's profile to a certain type might help in establishing some biographical details about the person.

6 The question was well formulated by Morton Smith (1978:5-6): "What sort of man and what sort of career, in the society of first century Palestine, would have occasioned the beliefs, called into being the communities, and given rise to the practices, stories, and sayings that then appeared, of which selected reports and collections have come down to us?"

can account for Jesus' social type, profile and biography, is well-established historically and cross-culturally, fits the first-century Mediterranean Galilean setting, and can account for the underlying traits, stories and deeds ascribed to him in his lifetime and continued to make sense in the life of his followers after his death?

The answer depends on an analysis of multiple components and fibres – including his social type and profile, the sort of stories told about him as well as the kind of elements ascribed to his biography – everything within a setting which can account for such stories. This is the case, to use a metaphor from Botha (2000:2), because these elements are configurations of each other. The better these elements can be correlated, the clearer the picture of Jesus as historical figure will appear. A cable-like interpretation operates with the “best-fit” hypothesis which accounts for all or most of the elements which are interwoven. It is not based on a bedrock of certainty (such as an authentic kernel); it can “prove” nothing but tries to be “powerfully persuasive” (Lewis-Williams 1995:3-4). Some of the fibres which make up this cable are discussed next.

2.4 Fibres in a “historical Jesus” cable

Each component in the diagram is connected to all the others by a variety of fibres which do not all work in the same direction. Some bring insight to and others carry information away from a specific component.

2.4.1 Social-type fibres

A social-type analysis is an extremely useful way of understanding the characteristic features of a particular type of individual. Since human beings are unlike molecules, they can never be identical to one another. Such an analysis therefore does not look for perfect homogeneity but similarities within the group or category characterised by the social type.⁷

A social type can be defined as “a human prototype – a sociological summary of the typical characteristics of a particular group or of a category of human beings usually

⁷ It may be asked how many features of a social type model would be sufficient for a person to fit the model. There is no exact answer to this question but it is important to realise that this question can be put to all social types (such as prophet or Cynic) and to most models about human beings and their conduct (see Almog 1998:7 for a discussion of the problem).

recognized and typed by the public and often granted a nickname” (Almog 1998:5). It is an analytical concept or abstract depiction constructed from a number of real cases in order to reveal their essential and common features.⁸ Social types can be identified in certain patterns of behaviour and ways of thinking which make the members of the group resemble one another and distinguish them as a whole from others (see Almog 1998:5-7).

The following features of the social-type model are relevant to this discussion (see Almog 1998:7-10). A social type is different from a social role; while they are similar in many ways, they are not identical.⁹ A role refers to the behaviour expected from a certain status holder while a type describes a fixed pattern of behaviour or consists of a significant number of traits; a role is usually limited to a specific area of life while a type covers a range of features; a single individual usually plays different roles but belongs to only one or two social types in a lifetime – the one is more temporary and the other more fixed; roles are usually evaluated in terms of efficiency or productivity while a social type is perceived as a certain way of being and becomes a reflection of personality and a style of life. Social types can be local (such as the *cowboy* or *astral prophet*) or appear across cultures (like the *yuppy* or the *shaman*) – in which case, different demands are placed on an analysis. Although any social type is culturally determined, some find expression across cultural boundaries.

The following tips for social-type analysis, taken from Almog (1998:17-19), are relevant to the present argument.

First, what is needed is the building of a prototype model and putting together a database of the specific social type. In most cases, enough examples and cross-cultural models are available. (That is certainly the case for the shamanic model which this author happens to favour and which has ample cross-cultural verification and application.)

Secondly, it is necessary to develop a socio-historical sense of the roots of the social type within a specific setting and an understanding of its cultural mechanisms and

⁸ The nature of *ideal types* (of which social type as described here is an instance) is such that “it is possible to identify and describe a social type without ever finding a single living soul who possesses the full range of features typical of the social type model” (Almog 1998:6).

⁹ Social types are different from stereotypes, which often depend on the exaggerated similarities within groups (see Almog 1998:6).

dynamics. This refers to the fibres connecting a social type to a specific cultural setting. In the case of Jesus of Nazareth, it has to be located within a first-century Galilean setting.

Thirdly, an analysis of the various aspects of the social type within a specific setting is needed. In this case, these are especially the nature and content of the sources. Certain types of stories and specific kinds of phenomena are ascribed to and associated with specific social types and these need to be identified in each particular case. As for Jesus of Nazareth, an analysis of the sources (their nature and contents) cannot be divorced from the kind of social type that he was and finding mutual links between the sources and the dynamics of the transmission of the sources and the social type provides an additional fibre supporting the overall construction.

Being able to identify a historical figure with a specific social type in such an analysis is highly significant. It can help distinguish that figure from other social types in that setting; provides insight into the underlying cultural dynamics of the figure's life and of the origin of the stories about the figure, and provides a handle to understand the features ascribed to a historical figure.

In this type of analysis, Jesus' social type not only needs cross-cultural verification and credibility in the first-century setting, but should also be able to account for all the strands of gospel evidence (e.g., prophecy, healings, teaching). A social type is not added as a label and does not *come up* after being immersed in the sources for some time. It has to be demonstrated that such a social type fits the first-century Galilean world of Jesus and makes sense as background to the various strands of gospel traditions. A decision about Jesus' social type should therefore be the result of an analytical interpretive process in which various fibers interconnect: a picture of a first-century world and world-view together with an interpretation of the gospel evidence within that context play an integrated role.

Excursus 1: Take the isangoma, for example: Reflections on social types with cross-cultural validity

Cross-cultural interpretation always entails at least two worlds and two sets of concepts. These concepts have many names: emic and etic, experience-near and experience-distant; and the native's point of view and the observer's point of view. It is a fallacy to think

that the ideal in cross-cultural interpretation is to make use of emic (insiders) concepts or models. The idea that the subjects' own terms or models are more appropriate is mistaken for two reasons.

First, if emic terms are used, usually only the insiders will understand them. Take the *isangoma*, for example – the term does not explicitly carry the features which make an *isangoma* an *isangoma*. If outsiders are equally equipped to understand the insiders' meaning of the term, there is really no need for cross-cultural interpretation. What is true for the *isangoma* is true of the *prophet* or the *hasîd* or the *shaman*.

Secondly, if the emic word is used but filled in with etic content, it is no longer an emic term. For example, using the emic term *isangoma* but claiming that the *ukuthwasa* (*ithwasa*) is just an alternate state of consciousness (ASC) phenomenon would be very confusing to the insiders – then it is still their term (emic) but incomprehensible to them.

An *isangoma* who is found among the Zulu-speaking people in South Africa and who experiences *ukuthwasa*, can be described as an example of the shamanic type of figures experiencing ASCs (see Thorpe 1993:102ff).¹⁰ Without the cross-cultural explanation, the local term and the accompanying dynamics of such a social type would remain obscure for outsiders but perfectly understandable to insiders. When the local term is used, to make it apparent to outsiders, the prerequisite is that it be explained with valid cross-cultural terms or models. Explanations in terms of the local categories will remain obscure.

This is to say that local terms to the New Testament world (such as *prophet*, *hasîd* or *Cynic*) are as such not necessarily better emic terms (such as say, *shaman* or *holy man*). In fact, using the local term can be misleading. As said, insiders will be baffled when their familiar terms are filled with strange explanations for the sake of outsiders (such as ASC for *ukuthwasa*). For outsiders, the meaning and/or dynamics of any local term can easily be lost if that term does not have cross-cultural validity. In other words, the terms *prophet* or *hasîd* can easily be used without grasping the dynamics at work in a specific cultural system. The challenge therefore is not to use either the emic or the etic

¹⁰ The calling of the *isangoma* sets in with a fit of sickness, called *ukuthwasa*. "The candidate for training (or *twasa*) is continually ill, has many dreams and wanders about after being entered by an ancestral spirit" (Thorpe 1993:105; and see Mutwa 1996:26-32).

term but to use a concept which has explanatory and cross-cultural power – one which will mediate the cultural dynamics of a specific social type to outsiders.

What is needed is what Smith (1990:42) calls a “discourse of differences” and a negotiation of the differences. Cross-cultural models can be useful in doing this. A cross-cultural model is one which functions as an ideal type for more than one cultural system. An example is the *shamanic model*, which originated as an emic term/model for Siberian people where the shamanic soul flight was the typical feature. In order to identify Siberian shamans, this model has to function as an ideal type against which individual persons falling into that pattern can be measured. This local or emic term gained the status of a cross-cultural model when it could be used to describe the same pattern which was identified in other cultural systems. Instead of “soul flight” the cross-cultural model is best defined today as a pattern constituted by ASC experiences as its central feature. This gives explanatory power to the social type and as an ideal type with cross-cultural validity, the term *shaman* can be used for figures within different cultural systems belonging to the pattern (see Craffert 1999). Because of this, the *isangoma* can be treated as a typical shamanic figure.

2.4.2 The source fibers

Views on the sources and their contribution to knowledge about Jesus as a historical person are an integral part of the interpretive process. Like all others, the source fibres are inscribed in a network of interpretive practices since it is accepted that there is a tight linkage between the social type, the sources and the setting. In short, the sources are a product of and reflection on a specific social type. Analysis of the sources should therefore take note of the constructed context and the social type. Does the identified social type help to account for the content of the sources as well as the differences between them and does it help us to account for the (continued) beliefs and practices of Jesus’ followers? If Jesus belonged to a specific social type, how does that fact help in understanding the variety and kind of traditions taken up in the sources?

It is thus necessary to pay attention to the complex processes by which the sources were created, how they were related to the specific social type and how they relate to the specific Galilean setting. Some of the fibres which make up these entities and connect them in this complex process, are described.

2.4.2.1 Ethnography of the sources

The first fibre was introduced in the social type discussion. Can we come up with a social type model to account for the kind of stories ascribed to Jesus? Fibres also work in the opposite direction – in other words, with feedback loops. If a specific social type accounts for the content and diversity of gospel traditions, does that social type help to explain why each gospel portrays him in its unique way? Can each gospel's picture be understood if it is accepted that Jesus belonged to the identified social type?

What is needed in answering these questions is what will be called *an ethnography of all the sources*. It does not operate with the typical question: which image of Jesus in which gospel is most likely to be correct (see, e.g. Borg 1987:5).¹¹ Instead, as Mason (1995:466) suggests about historical reconstruction, it is not a matter of choosing one source over another but an attempt to explain plausibly how each source came into being if hypothesis X is correct. If Jesus belonged to a specific social type, does it help in understanding why each of the sources portrays him in its unique ways?

This part of the interpretive process is similar to what Chilton (1999:22-23) calls the process of *pentagulation*:¹² “Our methods must reject the misleading analogy of archaeological strata, and attend to the historical unfolding of meaning by exegetical means ... in a process akin to triangulation in mapping, we may infer from our reading of texts what his [Jesus] position must have been to produce what we read.” The principal concern in this approach is not authentic material but what must be assumed about Jesus as a historical person in order to explain the nature and content of a given text.¹³

This “test” should be applied to all the sources which with some external verification can be located in the early phase of Christian beginnings – such as the

11 This is also Funk's (1996:59) position. He argues that because of the differences between the gospels, they “cannot all be entirely accurate”. For this reason, the actual person was different from what the gospels represent. See also Crossan's (1998:96ff) discussion of the historical correctness of John or the Synoptics.

12 The process of triangulation in mapping implies the measurement or mapping of an area by means of a network of triangles.

13 Compare also Hurtado's (1997:294-295) suggestion: “We should examine the variation in those sources for the Jesus tradition with strong ‘external’ claims as to age and general value, preferring that reconstruction of the historical Jesus which best accounts for the variation in the sources of early provenance.” This is implicit also in Davies's (1995:43-44) approach.

infancy gospels.¹⁴ They should be approached not only with the question of historicity, but the question of their ethnography: how do they fit into the dynamics of the kind of social type and what are the social functions of such stories in the life of specific figures?¹⁵

2.4.2.2 From event to text: The role of memory and remembering

Talking about historical figures prior to tape recorders, the inventions of film and video cameras or the archival possibilities of modern literate societies, always implicates memory and remembering. Even if *authentic snippets* were to be identified, they would not be archival deposits of historical events or words of Jesus. At best they could be the remembered versions of his followers. At least two fibres therefore have to be taken into account.

The one is about remembering in traditional societies. The idea that people in traditional societies have better memories than people in literate societies is not supported by the evidence.¹⁶ Claims in such societies that information has been transmitted correctly, also have nothing to do with the sentiments of an identity logic. Verbatim or correctly meant *traditional* (see Crossan 1998:75). Research shows that even though subjects believe that a tradition has been preserved “unaltered” that is not necessarily the

14 The scholarly verdict on these gospels is not very positive. Borg (1994:25) calls the Infancy Gospel of Thomas a fanciful tale which is the product of early Christian imagination in which the divine status of the post-Easter Jesus is uncritically projected back earlier into his life. Meier (1999:464) says: “if we can use the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, we can use *Alice in Wonderland* just as well.” The main concern is with what they contain (“there is virtually no historical information in any of these tales” — Funk and The Jesus Seminar 1998:24), but here I suggest the question should be with what they are. Are they reports about observable events or do they tell about cultural phenomena which can only be grasped within that cultural setting? How do they fit into the dynamics and structure of a specific social type within a particular setting?

15 If one were to read the gospels in order to determine historical accuracy between reports, it might be necessary to adopt a different set of tools and theories. Although I think that this approach will also contribute to decide about biographical elements, that can only be done as a second step after the sources have been interpreted within their cultural system and first-century social setting. Furthermore, if the view of the sources (the origin and transmission of the traditions) can benefit from the general context constructed for Jesus’ social type, so much the better.

16 Rather there is a positive relation between schooling and memory (see Crossan 1998:49).

case. It has been preserved in line with the tradition and the guardians of knowledge by means of accepted cultural means.¹⁷

The second is about memory, as such. The debate whether ancient people could remember better than modern people is, in a sense, trivial – obviously it is possible to improve memory by certain techniques and to record excellent recovery of information (like lists). The problem is much more fundamental, namely, the nature of memory, as such. Unlike the storehouse metaphor which informs most popular (and New Testament scholarly?) views about memory (namely, that events and data are stored or deposited on a clean slate which needs to be recovered), a more appropriate metaphor nowadays is the *correspondence metaphor of memory* (see Koriat, Goldsmith & Pansky 2000:483-485).

A proper way to think about memory and remembering is to accept that it is much less “accurate” than we tend to think and believe about ourselves.¹⁸ Bonanno (1990:175) points out: “... memory can no longer be thought of as an archival system of specific memories, an ever-expanding library consisting of full and complete records of discrete episodes, but rather as a *process* involving bits and pieces of information that are continually interpreted and reconstructed during the course of remembering.”

Two of the many features of this research are particularly relevant to the present argument. The one is the realisation that memory has much in common with perception. Stories about angels or ancestors can only be “remembered” where they can possibly be “perceived”. The second is the suggestion to think in terms of *overall faithfulness* instead of actual accuracy. Both these force the debate back to the particular cultural system.

17 It should be realised that this is not restricted to people in traditional societies. There is also no high correlation between accuracy and the vividness or confidence in the correlation between memories and events among modern educated people — as is shown by studies on so-called flashbulb memories (see, e.g. McCloskey, Wible & Cohen 1994). One such study on how people heard about the Challenger shuttle explosion it was found: “When the subjects were tested over 2 and a half years later, most described their memories as visually vivid; yet none was entirely correct, and fully half of them were substantially wrong in their memory reports” (Koriat, Goldsmith & Pansky 2000:512).

18 Research in psychotherapy, which works with the life narratives of subjects, increasingly points to the inadequacy of the archaeological metaphor for conceptualising human memory. Remembering does not consist of the uncovering of a fixed deposit of memories, “not in the uncovering of objective facts and details of a life story, or *historical truth*, but rather in the production of an articulated narrative understanding or *narrative truth*” (Bonanno 1990:176). This finding is confirmed by studies on hypnosis and memory which indicate that even different hypnotic versions of past events do not correlate. They are constructed versions of events and data based on a variety of current concerns (see Watkins & Watkins 1986; Piper 1994).

Therefore, we should abandon the idea that original or authentic sayings of Jesus or stories about him were somehow transmitted by his early followers.¹⁹ Stories by the disciples, even the day after an event so to speak, would already have been subject to the features ascribed here to memory and to the constraints placed by the cultural system on what can be remembered. What could possibly be “authentic” material would be culturally stamped authenticity. In other words, what is considered authentic within a specific setting is determined by the cultural system and the social type.

There never was original, uncontaminated authentic material and this is the reality the historical Jesus scholar has to face (and, for that matter, anyone trying to say something about Jesus). As Kelber (1999:108) says: “If we are going to develop sensibilities towards oral poetics with an adequate hermeneutical propriety, we will do well to emancipate ourselves from a deeply ingrained existential commitment to the original saying.” If that is not available, it is necessary to employ the appropriate tools available for the material. It becomes necessary to explore the ways in which knowledge is produced, conserved and transmitted in specific cultural settings. One such avenue to explore is the way in which knowledge is distributed in oral traditional cultures; that is, the social dynamics of tradition transmission.

2.4.2.3 Traditions in context: the transmission of stories

One of the fibres in this interpretive process is the way in which stories and information about significant figures are transmitted in predominantly oral cultures. If Jesus belonged to an identifiable social type in his society, how did the stories originate and how were they first transmitted? What kind of stories originated and were ascribed to certain kinds of figures? What kind of stories do typically belong to specific social types within particular cultural settings and what kind of stories are generated by certain practices associated with such figures? What were the cultural dynamics by which “eyewitness” accounts ended up in the available format we have them today? I want to suggest three such fibres.

¹⁹ It is surprising that Crossan, who realises the limitations memory places on the nature of remembered sources, does not apply that insight to his own view on the sources.

The first is the dynamics of rumours. Botha (1993) shows that far from being unreliable knowledge, rumours generally present themselves with pretensions to ideal verification. Rumours *always* reach us through a friend, colleague or relative (who is a friend of the first-hand witness). They embody a social process in society not only for dealing with a variety of situations, but also for preserving its memories. Botha (1993) states:

Rumours are improvised news resulting from a process of collective discussion entailing both an information-spreading procedure and a process of interpretation and commentary. In spreading and commenting upon presumed or ambiguous facts a group constructs one or two acceptable and valuable explanations. Changes in a rumour's content are not due to the failings of human memory, but rather to the development and contribution of commentaries made throughout the rumour's process... Everyday communication, and thus exchange of rumours, is an interactional, reflective process and *not* like a linear relay line. Various concerned parties converse with each other, and the rumour is the final consensus of their collective deliberations seeking out a convincing, encompassing explanation. Rumours entail a subjective *construction* of reality.

If the social dynamics help us to understand why some of the Jesus traditions were transmitted (such as healing and birth stories), it also confronts us with an epistemological reality. Truth is not something in itself: it is there, but always stands in relation to people. Botha (1993) concludes: "A rumour process is, in the end, only a speeded up version of the comprehensive, imperceptible process through which we acquire all of our ideas, opinions, images and beliefs. Rumour research leads us once more to the realisation that reality is socially constructed. Certainty, in a final sense, is social: what the group to which we belong considers to be true *is* true."

The second is gossip. Gossip, which is part of the mystery of human conversation, is one of the methods of storing, transmitting and retrieving information in all, but especially in nonliterate societies. Therefore, Botha (1998:32) says it cannot be called trivial but should be seen as part of the dynamic process of communication in society. He shows how gossip was not only possible but probably one of the effective means in the

social process of maintaining values and group boundaries in the early Christian movements. Rohrbaugh (2001:239) concurs, stating that gossip “is indeed a significant means of informal social formation and control.”

Far from suggesting that gossip and rumour research undermines the reliability of the “authentic” Jesus material (in so far as it is necessary, that has already been done by referring to the characteristics of memory and remembering), these features of the oral phase of the material nourishes an appreciation for alternative views on knowledge. It is not only *formalised knowledge* obtained and analysed by systematic means (determining what is original will give us a picture of Jesus) that is useful knowledge.

We may not gain more biographical details of Jesus when we think about the Jesus stories in terms of gossip dynamics, but our understanding of human nature is enhanced by knowledge of the characteristically personal subjects of gossip which are always part of a definite context Gossip is an unruly interplay of information and moral judgment. Far too often we act as if instrumental, orderly, disinterested knowledge is “good enough”.

(Botha 1998:48)

In this regard it is worth considering Kelber’s (1994:147) question whether any historian can base a picture of a historical personage on an extremely selective group of sayings attributed to that person. Instead, the research referred to here operates on the notion that the social knowledge “created” and transmitted in society is as good as it gets.

A third fibre to be explored is the cultural mechanisms by means of which knowledge is created and preserved in non-literate societies. As people living in literate societies, we are so used to the ingenious author who produces the next best-seller at her/his desk that we hardly ever think about the *how* and the *who* of creating mental images or knowledge in traditional, pre-literate societies. As Noll (1985:449) says, “[w]hat is often understated in discussions of nonliterate societies by modern observers is that the cultural mythology is a *living* one. There are no written sources to validate religious beliefs, only the repeated, ritualized, re-experiencing of the sacred” and there

are specific figures and special cultural ways of obtaining and preserving relevant and important knowledge.

In traditional societies, not just anyone controls cultural knowledge and not every individual can contribute to the creation of “new” knowledge. It was remarks about the role that the shaman plays that alerted this author to the importance of this issue. “As a historian, mythmaker, and storyteller, the shaman not only reflects the culture of his or her people but directs the development of that culture. The shaman is more knowledgeable, more adept, and more potent in dealing with unseen powers than everyone else in the community” (Krippner 1985:454). As Hultkrantz (1985:453) says, among the Mohave, for instance, the shamans dream new myths. This is because someone with special qualities is needed to enter the realm where superior knowledge is kept. One of the reasons is that only certain figures know or have access to the cultural ways and means of doing that.

Particularly in a world where knowledge was limited and often had to be “stolen” from the divine realm or from other human beings, access to knowledge (especially “new” knowledge for a community) was obtained by the appropriate means. “Since the knowledge held by animals, plants and other natural phenomena is inaccessible to man in his normal waking consciousness, the wise man develops states in which he can communicate directly with the nonhuman world” (Kiefer 1985:454). It is a mistake to think that people in traditional societies cannot tell the difference between fantasy and sense perception. Kiefer (1985:454) points out, “[t]heir very expertise in fantasy cultivation proves that they can and that they consider the knowledge achieved this way equal or superior in epistemological status to sense perception.”

Before dealing with the specific question of the status of different historical approaches, it is necessary to fulfill the promise of measuring historical-critical Jesus research against the above approach.

3. THE “THIRD” AND THE “reNEWed” QUESTS

Historical-critical Jesus research today consists of at least two identifiable trends. The one associated with the Jesus Seminar calls itself the *reNEWed quest* (see Funk 1996:65)

while the other is known as the *third quest*.²⁰ Here the term *third quest* will be used for both the “conservative and middle-of-the-road Protestant scholars” (Meier 1999:461 n 8) and “conservative” Jesus scholars from the Roman Catholic tradition as well as some more liberally minded scholars who accept the synoptic gospels as historically reliable source. Despite fundamental differences with the Jesus Seminar, they share certain features which link them to the historical-critical paradigm.

Despite the sophistication of several aspects of historical-critical Jesus research, it is rather unsophisticated with regard to several other aspects. In showing some of these, it will be argued that it basically represents a chain-like interpretive process – it is as strong as its weakest link(s). I hope to clarify these remarks in the following paragraphs.

3.1 The rationalist presuppositions of historical positivism

Despite major disagreements in application and practice, the Jesus Seminar and the third questers share two fundamental convictions which demonstrate their commitment to historical positivism: the first is the reliance on authentic material as the basis for constructing a picture of Jesus as a historical figure and the second is that both operate with a modern, naturalistic world-view in evaluating the gospel stories and content. Each of these is described briefly (for detail, see Craffert 2001).

The first is very clearly illustrated by Crossan (1995:1-6) when explaining the difference between himself and a conservative member of the third quest: for Crossan 20% of the gospel material is authentic (original) and for Brown 80% is authentic and the rest is unauthentic. For the Jesus Seminar, the real Jesus was very different from his followers’ portrayal of him as a mythical Christ figure. Therefore, the first step of interpretation is the distinction between the historical Jesus and the Jesus of the gospels (the mythical Christ) and the appropriate action is to “sort out the sayings, parables and deeds of Jesus into two groups: those that stem from Jesus of Nazareth and those that

20 In my view it is both useless and misleading to use the term *third quest* to refer to all Jesus research since the middle eighties (see, e.g. Theissen & Merz 1998:28-29; Dunn 1999:33; Meier 1999:459). Wright (1992), who coined the term *the third quest*, makes a clear distinction for example between the third questers and the members of the Jesus Seminar, who are excluded from his list. Not only do the members of the Jesus Seminar further exclude themselves from that list, but many do not see Jesus as “Jewish” — which is generally taken as the main characteristics of it (see, for example Theissen & Merz 1998:11; Dunn 1999:33; Meier 1999:483-485; Wright 1999:31).

belong to the Christian overlay added by the gospel writers” (Funk 1996:64; see also Crossan 1998:140; Borg 1999:11).²¹

The hallmark of the third quest is that the Synoptic Gospels are, to a large extent, taken as authentic material or as sources which provide a reliable picture of the historical Jesus (see Evans 1993:14; Sanders 1993:73; Theissen & Merz 1998:60-61). Using the same historical-critical tools and methods (criteria of authenticity), they argue that most of the stories and reports in the gospels are actually authentic and historically reliable²² – they only have to be pruned of some post-Easter additions.²³

What is “mythical” can be detected by means of a literal reading of the sources pushed through a modern naturalistic grid of reality; whatever does not pass the modern test of historicity and/or historical plausibility, is cut off (see Funk and The Jesus Seminar 1998:24). While the Jesus Seminar removes everything which does not fit the modern world-view (calling them myths, legends or post-Easter creations), the members of the third quest (even the most conservative ones) apply that world-view criterion with equal force. The difference is that the supernatural category is employed for those elements attributed to Jesus which do not fit that world-view.

What, if the historical Jesus did, indeed, belong to the category of people (social type) about which such “mythical” stories are a regular part of their biographies? What, if, based on the kind of social type that he was, that he regularly had visionary experiences, that people acted in the belief that he could control the elements, that he could control the spirits, that he could heal, that in his lifetime he acted as mediator to the divine world, et cetera? If he belonged to such a social type, these reports are neither

21 From this starting point, only 16% of the deeds and 18% of the words ascribed to Jesus in the canonical gospels are taken as authentic. The verdict of most individual members of the Jesus Seminar differs, but the general pattern is the same. Most of the sayings and deeds ascribed to Jesus did not originate with him and the complexes ascribed to him all point in the same direction. Jesus was some kind of teacher: according to Funk (1996:143), a “teacher of wisdom, a sage”; for Crossan (1991:421; 1994:93, 198) a “peasant Jewish Cynic”; and for Mack (1995:40) a cynic teacher.

22 See, for example the following: “Thus, the complex facts that we have examined in support of the historicity of Jesus’ resurrection passes the same tests for authenticity employed by the Jesus Seminar to establish the authentic sayings of Jesus. It therefore deserves to be accorded no less degree of credibility than those utterances” (Craig 1995:163). The same type of argument underlies Evans’s (1995:110-111) view on Jesus’ death and the messianic dimensions of his life.

23 As one of the proponents explains: “To be sure, the canonical gospels are permeated with the Easter-faith of the early church and must be carefully sifted with the criteria of historicity” (Meier 1999:465).

myths nor “supernatural”. Then the *Aufgabe* (first task) of Jesus scholars is not to determine the authentic parts (free of myth or post-Easter additions) or to accept the reports as reports about supernatural events, but how to do justice to their “cultural singularity”.

3.2 Social roles: A fragmented, linear and random process

Claims about Jesus’ social type are widespread in Jesus research. In fact, it is a significant component of almost all historical Jesus constructions. Compared to the research programme suggested above, the very large range of social types in historical-critical Jesus research do not perform well. Four specific features characterise all of them:

- Social type is mistaken for social role.
- These social roles are merely labels attached to the identified authentic material.
- These social roles have little or no connection with the cultural or historical setting.
- These social roles have few or no cross-cultural comparisons.

The most common social type among third questers is Jesus as a prophet of some kind. Meier’s (1999:483) viewpoint is typical: “I think that the critically sifted data of the gospels demand that the depiction of Jesus as the eschatological prophet working miracles à la Elijah must be a key element in the reconstruction of the historical Jesus.”

What he means by *critically sifted data* has nothing to do with a social analysis of the evidence in terms of the social type and cultural setting, but with authentic material receiving the appropriate label. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God and performed miracles (such as, healings and exorcisms) and these functions need labeling – as is the case with social roles.²⁴ Neither an *eschatological* prophet nor one working miracles is a recognised social type in Israelite tradition. Like the social types used by the Jesus

²⁴ The difference between social type and social role has already been pointed out. Social type is more permanent, has a wider range, depends on an identifiable cultural pattern, is established by means of a social type analysis; a social role refers to a function or status of limited range (teach, heal, minister), is an official category which can be identified by anyone because of the position.

Seminar,²⁵ these can only be found on the pages of New Testament publications. This is confirmed by the Elijah parallel.

Since when is Elijah a typical biblical prophet²⁶ or on what basis is he an exponent of a recognisable social type in that tradition? Furthermore, Elijah cannot be a social type for understanding Jesus' social type unless it has been established that he belonged to such a type. Elijah himself is a figure in need of analysis and interpretation and simply citing him as example does not contribute to the analysis or understanding of Jesus' social type. This is indicative of the labeling instead of analysis approach. When trying to understand one figure in a culture, it does not help to simply cite more examples from the same culture by way of explanation unless they are based on a comparative analysis (either within the same cultural setting or across cultures).

The popular social type for the Jesus Seminar is Jesus as a teacher of some kind (most often a Cynic teacher) who also healed and performed some miracles. The same questions can be asked about the social roles ascribed to Jesus in these studies. In a sense, the pattern is clearer here because authentic material is established "independently" from the "social type". The latter is only a label added onto the ($\pm 20\%$) identified authentic material. There is no connection between most of the stories ascribed to this "social type" and the type himself – according to this view, if it was not for the "resurrection", no one would have attributed so many "myths" (baptism, healings, exorcisms, nature miracles) to the life of a cynic teacher.

Both these examples show that historical-critical Jesus research operates with a fragmented, linear, or better, atomistic, chain-like process of interpretation. The so-called social types are rather social roles added as an afterthought on the pre-established authentic material or identified functions in Jesus' life. The fact that they enter the discussion usually as the last component of the portrayal of Jesus confirms the point that no social analysis takes place where the social type, its features within a particular cultural setting, the specific individual and the sources are in constant interaction.

25 Crossan's Cynic who is also a magician/healer (see Crossan 1991:347, 421) and Funk's sage who was also a miracle worker (see Funk 1996:143, 252) are examples.

26 The question is whether Elijah should even be seen as a typical prophet from the Hebrew Bible who were primarily social, moral and religious reformers. For Josephus, much closer to Jesus, *prophets* were individuals with special insight into the future (see, e.g., Gray 1993:164-165).

4. HISTORICAL FIGURE OR GOSPEL PICTURES?

It has been suggested above that if a social type, which accounts for the variety of traditions ascribed to Jesus in his lifetime, can be identified then it can be accepted as a portrayal of the historical figure. In other words, the historical figure is found within the sources and not somewhere underneath them. Such a picture, as indicated, does not depend on authentic material somewhere deep down in the sources, but in a complex set of arguments about a culturally authentic picture. As stated at the beginning, the validity of a construction rests on the persuasive power of an integrated interpretive process and not so much on individual elements. My suggestion is that this is as good as historical knowledge about Jesus can be. Three additional arguments will be mentioned.

First, the canonical gospels all consist of pictures of Jesus which ascribe multiple functions to him: teaching, astral prophecy, healing, visionary experiences, exorcisms, becoming spirit possessed, and so on. For the gospel authors at least, it made sense to describe Jesus as combining these features and functions within his person. Either they were familiar with such a pattern or they accidentally created it; in other words, they either operated with a social type familiar to their world or utilised a model which would have made no sense in their world. It is obviously still possible that they only knew the social type and simply made use of it in order to describe their hero/saviour.

Therefore, the second argument is based on an observation about human beings and social movements: it is more likely (or at least, an equal possibility) that a figure's followers would maintain and continue the practices, style and structure of the life which they shared during his or her lifetime, than to suddenly develop a totally new set.²⁷

The third argument states that if it is possible to account for the reports in terms of the identified social type, they need not be ascribed to later creations. If through the social-type model it can be shown that during his lifetime Jesus could have been experienced as a mediator of divine power who were believed to control the elements, acted as healer, was known as a prophet and wisdom teacher, made use of scriptural

²⁷ A similar position is taken by scholars defending diverse pictures. Allison (1998:45) says it goes against universal human experience to accept that the early Christians accurately recorded many of the words of Jesus but somehow got a false impression of him. Smith (1981:416) suggests that the proposition that a man's devoted followers radically misrepresented his teachings is *a priori* improbable.

historical questions that can be answered – like, what was Jesus like as a historical figure? Perhaps, having read the sources from this perspective, it might be possible to return to some of the “pure biographical” questions in a new light.

Finally, it is perfectly possible that the historical figure could have been different from the gospels’ presentation. In other words, there is no final “proof” that Jesus was, indeed, like this, even if a social type is found which can account for the content and type of stories ascribed in the gospels to the historical figure. By the same token, however, it is equally possible that constructions by the third questers based on the *authenticity* of the synoptic gospels (which, as Crossan 1998:97 shows), are really arbitrarily taken as authentic by them), can also be mistaken. But so can the 20% “authentic” or “original” material of the Jesus Seminar be fictional. Even if Q and Thomas are earlier, that does not make them historically accurate.³¹ In fact, I have tried to show that historicity is a much more complex issue than identifying early or multiply-attested material. Historicity, according to my argument, is the end product of a cable-like interpretive process: it has to ring true to the setting, the cultural system and the identified social type. What is historical about a figure and social type is a matter of understanding the stories within their cultural setting.

A yardstick cannot be based on single links but should depend on the persuasive power of all the fibres. If a social type model (well grounded in the first-century Galilean world and world-view) does help us to recognise the features in the text, explain the content of the texts, and understand why such stories about Jesus became the topic of rumour and gossip and some of the practices were continued by his followers, then we can be fairly confident that if Jesus was not like that, the gospel authors had a figure very similar to that in mind. Perhaps the time has come to question the validity of the yardstick which claims that the historical figure could not have been like this.

31 Crossan (1998:149) admits as much that if there is a tight linkage between the context and the earliest layer of text, “that is the best reconstruction of the historical Jesus and his companions presently available.” The two pillars of the historical-critical approach are clearly visible here: the earliest gospel traditions transmitted in stratified layers has been uncovered over the last two hundred years of research. In undermining the assumption of the distinction between the historical figure and the mythic Christ and rejecting the idea of authentic snippets of Jesus material, the argument presented in this study is that if a tight linkage can be found between a known social type and the gospel presentations, that is also the best historical construction available.

Excursus 2: Take the shamanic journey, for example: Reflections on historicity

Shamans often travel to other worlds. In fact, the shaman's experience of separation from the body and travelling as a free soul or spirit to one of the worlds in the specific shamanic cosmology, the upper, middle or lower worlds, is taken by many scholars as the most important feature of the shamanic social type (see Walsh 1989:26; Ripinsky-Naxon 1993:92). For locals, there is absolutely no problem in understanding such reports as real soul flights or journeys – they obviously happen as described: the shaman's soul travels to the culturally known world (and they will not even understand if it is said that the shaman actually experiences an altered state of consciousness [ASC]). Locals will affirm the historicity without a second thought.

What are outsiders to make of such reports – are they 'really real'?; what about the historicity of shamanic soul journeys?

Scientists with a culturally sensitive approach, will either make use of a cross-cultural model or adopt a discourse within which differences and similarities between different reality systems can be negotiated.³² For them the answer cannot be "Yes IT happened" but, "Yes, something happened which, by our light, can probably be described as an ASC experience" (which can arguably be shown to do justice to the native's point of view of a soul journey, but cannot replace their view).³³ Both these positions affirm the "historicity" of shamanic journeys but in doing so, however, affirm different things.

Another group of scientists, whom I will call ethnocentric ones, will answer the question about the historicity of shamanic journeys with a clear, "No!". Souls do not leave the body and cannot fly to worlds which do not exist. Their verdict on the historicity of shamanic journeys would be that they do not happen and cannot be

³² Elsewhere I have described this as a process of cross-cultural comparison (see Craffert 1995, 1996). In many instances cross-cultural models short-circuit this process by providing models distilled from many real cases in different cultural settings. ASC is one such a model describing what Rosemont (1988:52) calls *homoversals* – that is signifying general aspects "for all human beings, physiologically and mentally constituted as they are".

³³ Scholarly definitions of the shaman still reflect the tension between the emic and the etic definitions. Those who want to restrict the study and definition of shamanism to the Siberian setting, often favour the definition which make soul flights an essential feature (see Eliade 1961:153). For others (see Lewis 1984:9; Walsh 1993:742) shamanism has reached the level of a cross-cultural model and the essential feature is no longer the shamanic journey or soul flight but a variety of ASC experiences (together with certain specific functions).

“historical events”. Among anthropologists today there are very few who still share this philosophical position. This is not the case with New Testament scholars, however. Take the nature miracles in the gospels, for example (or Jesus’ baptism, or the transfiguration, or the healings or the resurrection stories).

The fellows of the Jesus Seminar “were unable to endorse any of the nature wonders as historical events” (Funk and The Jesus Seminar 1998:531). Similarly, one of the conservative voices of the third quest says, “the so-called ‘nature miracles’... did not fare well in my testing. In my opinion, only the feeding of the multitude has a fair claim to go back to some remarkable event in Jesus’ lifetime” (Meier 1999:482). Historical-critical New Testament scholarship is unanimous about these.

For Jesus’ compatriots, he could control the elements, walk on the sea, provide food and drink, converse with the ancestors, return after his death and so forth. Not once do we find an explanation in the texts about what is “actually” being conveyed. As in many traditional societies today, locals understood that certain social types (like shamans) “provide” the game or fish, provide protection or control the elements (like bringing rain), travel to other worlds in out-of-body flights and the like.

Cultural-sensitive scientists can affirm the “historicity” of such reports by means of cross-cultural models, such as ASC. Malina’s (1999:369) study of the episode of Jesus walking on the sea is an example. He argues that as reported, this incident “has all the hallmarks of historical verisimilitude.” The same applies to Pilch’s (1995) study of the transfiguration stories.

The difference between modern scholars and first-century Mediterranean people is, in fact, one of world-view. We no longer share their world-view, but all scientists today do not share the same world-view either. The difference between ethnocentric and culturally sensitive scholars is not only between different world-views but also how they view the world. The first can be described as the distinction between a mechanistic (Cartesian) ontology and a systems ontology; the second is the difference between a single picture of the world and the acceptance of multiple ways of looking at it or multiple world-views.

For the ethnocentric scholar, the modern (Cartesian/Newtonian) world-view provides the critical grid for evaluating all other world-views; other world-views are obviously disallowed the status of “reality”. Systems thinking, on the other hand, not

only accepts a multiplicity of world-views but also that each can be described as a complex system in itself (see Cilliers 1995; Capra 1996:17-71). Kriel (2000:76-77) describes a systems ontology as follows: “[S]cience is moving from viewing ‘solid material bodies’ as ‘the paradigm of reality,’ to viewing matter-in-systems as the paradigm of reality.... Something only becomes real, comes into existence, in a system. Nothing, neither a piece of matter, nor a word or an idea, exists as an isolated entity. Subatomic particles are already energy/matter-in-complex-system.”

This view can be extended to deal with the ontological reality of different cultural systems. In other words, the “reality” of components is appreciated as embedded in the complexity of the whole system (see Craffert 2001:111-113). “Reality” in each world-view should be evaluated on its own terms. The culturally sensitive scholar can be fully committed to a modern scientific world-view but views the world differently in accepting that there are multiple world-views.³⁴ This view of the world can tolerate that shamanic journeys are embedded in a complex system where they have the status of “reality”. Whether explained as a “soul trip” or an ASC, the reality status thereof can be appreciated. It can be appreciated as a “really real” human event or phenomenon. There is no “really” apart from the reality system involved. But such scholars also know that not “all forms of otherness and difference are to be celebrated” (see Bernstein 1991:313).

5. SUMMARY REMARKS

By way of summary, the following distinctions between a historical-anthropological approach and the historical critical approaches can be noted: “Contrary to other approaches, the historical-anthropological approach accepts that Jesus himself and everything available about him are the product of an alien first-century Mediterranean cultural system and therefore formulates the research problem as “what was Jesus like as a figure in his culture?”

34 Elsewhere I have argued: “We can be passionately committed to the beliefs that regulate our actions when they are based on the strongest possible historically-contingent justifications. This is different from declaring our vocabulary final, immune to criticism, or the norm for evaluating others” (Craffert 1996:464). This is based on the philosophical position that Bernstein calls *engaged fallibilistic pluralism*: “For it means taking our own fallibility seriously — resolving that however much we are committed to our own style of thinking, we are willing to listen to others without denying or suppressing the otherness of the other. It means being vigilant against the dual temptations of simply dismissing what others are saying by falling back on one of those standard defensive ploys where we condemn it as obscure, woolly, or trivial, or thinking we can always easily translate what is alien into our own entrenched vocabularies” (Bernstein 1991:336).

With that starting point, the interpretive approach has been introduced which pays attention to all the components of the system within a single process – multiple fibres connect the different components but they are interconnected and linked by feedback loops – they are configurations of each other.

Jesus' social type should be determined by means of a social analysis and not merely by means of labelling.

The logic of a historical-anthropological approach has nothing to do with authentic material or the appropriate labels which should be added to the identified authentic kernel or with the pre-established distinction between the nature of the historical figure as opposed to the portrayal in the sources of a so-called mythical figure. The logic is rather that of identifying the kind of figure within a historical setting and relating the content of the sources to that kind of figure (social type). When thinking about the traditions and sources it is necessary to employ the means which allow us to have access to the cultural dynamics and processes by means of which knowledge, stories and traditions were developed and transmitted.

If such a social type can be found for dealing with all the pieces of evidence in the gospels, it is highly likely that Jesus could have been such a figure. In my view, the shamanic figure, in fact, provides such a social type. The problem with historical-critical Jesus research is that if Jesus was indeed such a figure, there is no way that this can ever be detected by that means.

Works consulted

- Allison, D C 1998. *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian prophet*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Almog, O 1998. The problem of social type: A review. *Electronic Journal of Sociology* 3(4), 1-20.
- Bernstein, R J 1983. *Beyond objectivism and relativism: Science, hermeneutics, and praxis*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Bernstein, R J 1991. *The new constellation: The ethical-political horizons of modernity /postmodernity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Bonanno, G A 1990. Remembering and psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy* 27(2), 175-186.
- Borg, M J 1987. *Jesus a new vision: Spirit, culture, and the life of discipleship*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

- Borg, M J 1994. *Meeting Jesus again for the first time: The historical Jesus and the heart of contemporary faith*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Borg, M J 1999. Seeing Jesus: Sources, lenses, and method, in Borg & Wright 1999:3-14.
- Borg, M J & Wright, N T (eds) 1999. *The meaning of Jesus: Two visions*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Botha, P J J 1993. The social dynamics of the early transmission of the Jesus tradition. *Neotestamentica* 27(2), 205-231.
- Botha, P J J 1998. Rethinking the oral-written divide in gospel criticism: The Jesus traditions in the light of gossip research. *Voices: A Journal for Oral Studies* 1, 28-58.
- Botha, P J J 2000. Submission and violence: Exploring gender relations in the first-century world. *Neotestamentica* 34(1), 1-38.
- Capra, F 1996. *The web of life: A new synthesis of mind and matter*. London: Flamingo.
- Chilton, B 1999. Assessing progress in the third quest, in Chilton & Evans 1999:15-25.
- Chilton, B & Evans, C A (eds) 1999. *Authenticating the words of Jesus*. Leiden: Brill.
- Cilliers, P 1995. Postmodern knowledge and complexity (or why anything does not go). *South African Journal of Philosophy* 14(3), 124-132.
- Craffert, P F 1995. Is the emic-etic distinction a useful tool for cross-cultural interpretation of the New Testament? *Religion & Theology* 2(1), 14-37.
- Craffert, P F 1996. On New Testament interpretation and ethnocentrism, in Brett, M C (ed), *Ethnicity and the Bible*, 449-468. Leiden: Brill.
- Craffert, P F 1999. Jesus and the shamanic complex: First steps in utilising a social type model. *Neotestamentica* 33(2), 321-342.
- Craffert, P F 2001. Jesus van Nasaret as historiese figuur: Die rol van wêreldbeelde en interpretasiestyle. *Fragmente* 7, 101-115.
- Craig, W L 1995. Did Jesus rise from the dead?, in Wilkins & Moreland 1995:141-176.
- Crossan, J D 1991. *The historical Jesus: The life of a Mediterranean Jewish peasant*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Crossan, J D 1994. *Jesus: A revolutionary biography*. San Francisco: Harper.

- Crossan, J D 1995. *Who killed Jesus? Exposing the roots of anti-Semitism in the gospel story of the death of Jesus*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Crossan, J D 1998. *The birth of Christianity: Discovering what happened in the years immediately after the execution of Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Davies, S L 1995. *Jesus the healer: Possession, trance, and the origins of Christianity*. London: SCM.
- Dunn, J D G 1999. Can the third quest hope to succeed?, in Chilton & Evans 1999: 31-48.
- Eliade, M. 1961. Recent works on shamanism: A review article. *HR* 1(1), 152-186.
- Evans, C A 1993. Life-of-Jesus research and the eclipse of mythology. *ThSt* 54, 3-36.
- Evans, C A 1995. What did Jesus do?, in Wilkins & Moreland 1995:101-115.
- Funk, R W 1996. *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a new millenium*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Funk, R W and The Jesus Seminar 1998. *The acts of Jesus: The search for the authentic deeds of Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Gray, R 1993. *Prophetic figures in late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The evidence from Josephus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hultkrantz, A 1985. Comments. *Current Anthropology* 26(4), 453.
- Hurtado, L W 1997. A taxonomy of recent historical-Jesus work, in Arnal, W E & Desjardins, M (eds), *Whose historical Jesus?*, 272-295. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Kelber, W H 1994. Jesus and tradition: Words in time, words in space. *Semeia* 65, 139-167.
- Kelber, W H 1999. The quest for the historical Jesus: From the perspectives of medieval, modern, and post-enlightenment readings, and in view of ancient, oral aesthetics, in Crossan, J D, Johnson, L T & Kelber, W H, *The Jesus controversy: Perspectives in conflict*, 75-115. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.
- Kiefer, C W 1985. Comments. *Current Anthropology* 26(4), 454.
- Koriat, A, Goldsmith, M & Pansky, A 2000. Towards a psychology of memory accuracy. *Annual Review of Psychology* 51, 481-537.