



- CHAPTER I: SECTION C -

EPISTEMOLOGICO-PARADIGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS:

A CROSSCHECK ON MY PARADIGM AND PRESUPPOSITIONS WITHIN THE  
PARAMETERS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

1. INTRODUCTION: DECLARATION OF INTENT

In the opening paragraph of this dissertation I pleaded for a broader conception of "introductory chapters" to scholarly works which obviously includes dissertations. I stated in short that an introduction to a dissertation should include an analysis of the philosophical presuppositions of the scholar. This requirement was repeatedly confirmed by the insights from hermeneutics, semiotics, communication science, reception theory and the sociology of knowledge. The necessity of exposing one's philosophical presuppositions has also become much clearer - especially in the light of the role of "perspective" (i.e. in the sense of an ultimate commitment) and "master symbols" (i.e. in the sense of meaningful paradigms for everyday living) in the communication process. In this regard I would like to give account of the important parameters of "epistemology" and "paradigms" as found in the arsenal of the philosophy of science. Although these notions from the philosophy of science are specifically related to the "theory of knowledge" and "scientific models" respectively, they are also indirectly related to the "universals of knowledge" (especially the perspectival orientation of all knowledge) and "conceptual models" (especially master symbols and their conduct-modulatory function). In the light of these structural parallels with the notions of the cosmologic perspective and master symbols and their important role in the communication process respectively, I agree with Van Huyssteen (1986:3-6) that the epistemological and paradigmatic theories within the philosophy of science should be incorporated in all methodological and hermeneutical questions within theology.

In contrast to plying my trade in reclusion, I have thus once more committed myself to an honest and open dialogue where all cards are on the table. Too much time and energy has been wasted in the past in futile and senseless disputes for the very reason that scholars failed to reveal their declaration of intent, epistemological presuppositions, their paradigms, their theme demarcation and modus operandi. This was clearly illustrated in





section A of this chapter where the communication crisis within Christianity as well as biblical scholarship (illustrated from 1 Peter) have been discussed. At present, there is most probably no scientist (even in physical science) who won't admit the epistemological, paradigmatic, socio-historical, hypothetic and limited character of science. This was extensively argued by philosophers such as Karl Popper, initially, and later Thomas Kuhn who changed much of the current evaluation of the capabilities of science (cf Van Huyssteen 1983 & 1986 where he argues how these two scholars in particular shattered the traditional positivistic approach to science). Popper (1963:30) suggested that we should "... give up the idea of ultimate sources of knowledge, and admit that all knowledge is human: that it is mixed with our errors, our prejudices, our dreams, our hopes; that all we can do is to grope for truth even if it be beyond our reach." The only way to incorporate the epistemological and paradigmatic parameters of science is obviously by a critical evaluation of scholars' epistemological paradigms. A scholar who isn't prepared or neglects to put these cards on the table for everyone to see, is playing the one-man cardgame "patience" wherein he is engaged in an oracular monologue.

Giving account of one's epistemologico-paradigmatic presuppositions include, in my opinion, one's premises "outside" and "inside" his discipline (Rousseau 1984:55-56). I have already dealt with the text-theoretical considerations (cf I B which included my hermeneutical and textual communication theory) which constitute part of my paradigm and, therefore, reflect a number of my premises outside New Testament science. I will now proceed by explicitly summarizing and profiling my already overt and (up till now) covert epistemological and paradigmatic intentions and presuppositions underlying this dissertation (i.e. premises "outside" New Testament science). Some of my paradigmatic premises within ("inside") New Testament science have already become clear in this introductory chapter. In the remaining chapters, however, it will be defined explicitly and meticulously in the construction of the analytical methods and their application to a New Testament text (chapters II-IV), on the one hand, and in particular in my concluding and evaluative remarks (cf chapter IV), on the other hand.

An account of one's epistemologico-paradigmatic presuppositions "outside" New Testament science should include, in my opinion, one's traditionally "prescientific" (we will see later that this distinction is outdated) and epistemological presuppositions and commitments as well as one's science model and paradigmatic commitments. I have already spelled most of these presuppositions out in a paper read in 1983 and published in 1984 (cf Rousseau 1984:52-60). The reader will find that the



epistemological and paradigmatic presuppositions are not always clearly distinguishable and will, therefore, inevitably overlap.

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## 2. EPISTEMOLOGICO-PARADIGMATIC PRESUPPOSITIONS

### 2.1 MY ULTIMATE COMMITMENT AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

#### 2.1.1 Jesus Christ as mediated through ancient canonized texts: my ultimate commitment and related master symbols

Just like any linguistic-literary (or symbolic for that matter) expression "... implies, or induces, or is related to a general view of the world, a way of understanding life, a spirituality ..." (Barr 1973:33), this dissertation is a linguistic-literary expression of a certain life-and-world perspective (ultimate commitment) reigned by a number of master symbols. This study reflects a perspective which regards the Bible as the primary, fundamental books and witnesses of the origin of Christianity and is therefore treasured as the orientation point for Christianity today. This implies that my ultimate commitment to the person and teaching of Jesus Christ as it is contained and interpreted in the New Testament against the background and the matrix of the Old Testament as a relevant, meaningful and determinative life-and-world view, is to be correlated to this reality in terms of the epistemologico-paradigmatic parameters of the philosophy of science which is accessible and open for criticism by anyone. A ghetto science (and therefore a ghetto theology) doesn't benefit mankind - on the contrary it captivates mankind.

With this approach I take the accusation of a "retreat to commitment" against theology by Hans Albert and William Bartley seriously: "The leading protestant theologians of the twentieth century have embraced as fact the philosophical contention that rationality is logically limited, that every man makes some ultimateley irrational commitment; and they have used this contention to excuse rationally their own irrational commitment to Christ" (Bartley 1964:215). Taking Bartley's criticism serious doesn't mean, however, that "commitments" are excluded from science. Van Huyssteen (1986:37-87) has convincingly argued how even Bartley is committed to "non-commitment" and that it was left for Thomas Kuhn to pave the way for a broader concept of rationality which would fully accommodate "commitments" in science. This was an improvement on the "critical rationalism" of Popper, Albert, Bartley and also the outstanding theologian, Wolfhardt Pannenberg, who was one of the first to accommodate the insights of Popper and Kuhn within theology (Van Huyssteen 1986:95-124). Van Huyssteen's (1986:158) own "critical-realistic rationality model" rejects in no uncertain terms any scientific model (including physical science) which excludes "ultimate commitments" as "... wetenskapsfilosofies verdag en selfs ongeldig." This implies that a distinction between "prescientific" (in an "ultimate commitment" sense) and "scientific" (in a paradigmatic sense) presuppositions in order





to exclude the former, is untenable. Both are essentially part of science. Even the so-called traditional distinction between natural and supranatural phenomena has come into question: "Wissenschaftlich waere heute eher das Umgekehrte: dass man sich trotz aller technischer Moeglichkeiten offenhaelt fuer das total Unvorhersehbare und Unerklaerliche" (Michel 1979:211).

My Christological and biblical perspective on life is, however, determined by the paradigm that the biblical witness did not only originate as part of ancient everyday reality, but that it should be meaningful within this reality. Therefore, it should be analysed with the aid and insights of the other sciences. This then links up with the intention to engage in a dialogue with other sciences and the avoiding of an ascetic monologue. The analytical dissection of the New Testament writings and their message resulted in a cacophony of fragments which necessitates the above required interdisciplinary and integrated approach. Ultimately, theology's right of existence in giving meaning to this reality will be decided on the battlefield of the hermeneutical-exegetical pursuit to orchestrate the communication of the perspective (heart) and master symbols of these ancient canonized texts into a beautiful symphony complemented by different sounds and instruments.

The above-discussed ultimate commitment and master symbols as premises outside New Testament science as such, already reflected an epistemological parameter, namely the endeavour to have a meaningful and integrated understanding of "this reality" in which we live in terms of the Christ proclamation of the New Testament texts (cf I B 1.1.2).

### 2.1.2 A meaningful interpretation of this reality: an epistemological commitment

The quest for a meaningful interpretation of this reality presupposes that one can't escape reality. This has important implications for an epistemology. It means first and foremost, that we live in this "reality" or "world". Therefore we must give account of the complex reality in which we live in order to understand this reality better and also to make it bearable. To flee from reality is senseless (because it is impossible in reality), cruel (because one is time and again disillusioned by reality) and miserable (because one doesn't learn to enjoy this reality) (Rousseau 1984:56).

The alternative to this commitment is a rejection of reality and realism claiming the "guidance of the Spirit" as one's ultimate commitment. This inevitably leads to an infinite subjectivism reigned by a variety of radical and opposing confessions and dogmas each claiming to be the truth or "God's will." In such an





approach there is often no room (or at the most an untenable dualism) for "reason" or "science". It is obvious that the rejection of the reality in which we live, makes any dialogue and epistemological pursuit impossible and senseless. This implies that the analysis and message of the New Testament have to be relevant for this reality in which we live. This dialogue with reality is indeed part and parcel of the church's missionary task. If Christians should ignore the realities of this world, it would mean the death of Christianity.

It has become clear that my perspective and master symbols have forced me to theorize on the phenomenon of human knowledge which threw me right into the arena of the philosophy of science. Thus the understanding of God and the understanding of reality have a common denominator, namely the epistemological dimension.

### 2.1.3 God and reality as an epistemological issue: science of religions, theology and the church

It is just as senseless to believe in a God who has nothing to do with reality as it is to flee from reality. If God is "real", then He is inevitably related to this "reality". The concept or creed "MY GOD" presupposes two basic components: the transcendence of God which implies that He is totally different and the immanence of God which implies that He is immanent in man's reality.

Each religion will define the meaning of God's transcendence and immanence in its own way and with its own symbols. If Christians accept that God is revealed through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, together with the assumption that this world is his creation, then it follows that Scripture and nature, faith and reality should correlate. If this isn't true, Christianity is playing a senseless game. "If there were indeed no connection between our lives and God, then everything that we have to say about God would be in vain" (Pannenberg 1975:1; Collins, J J 1981:125). In this sense we could state that even God (and therefore the Old and New Testament as witnesses to him) can't escape reality. If he is "really" God then this is his reality as Michel (1979:219) states: "Eben weil Gott dieser Welt nicht ferngeblieben ist, kann auch der Wissenschaftler seiner Wirklichkeit nicht entfliehen."

Theology is part of the subdiscipline "science of religion" which studies the relationship between God and reality. This implies that theology is part and parcel of the broader scientific study of reality. This confirms the mutual concern between theology as "... man's search for and response to 'ultimate meaning' ..." (Michell 1984:40), and epistemology which reveals man's search and theory of knowledge (i.e. ultimate meaning) in this reality.





It is Christians' responsibility (especially their scientific disciplines "theology" and "biblical studies") to make evident why they believe that the Christian faith is unique. They will have to verify why they regard a collection of ancient writings as God's Word and why it still has something to say to twentieth century man. What makes it different from the millions of other writings through the ages? What relevance does it have for heart transplants, space travels, politics, war, nuclear armament and pollution?

In this whole quest theology and biblical studies will have to proceed within the parameters of science in their study of the Old and New Testament. The subdiscipline New Testament science, therefore, should be on a par with other disciplines studying textual communication. That is the reason why I made use of disciplines such as semiotics, linguistics, literary science and communication science in the construction of my hermeneutical-exegetical theory which forms the foundation of this dissertation. This is also why I am correlating my communication paradigm with the results of the philosophy of science.

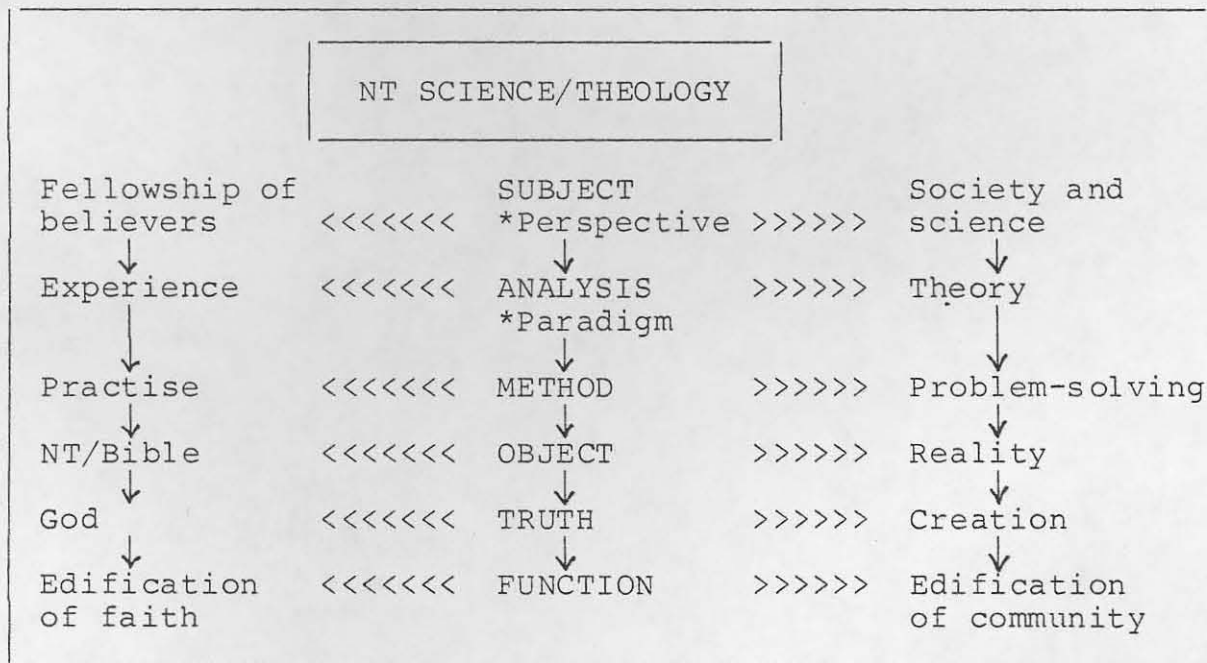
In the endeavour to correlate the concept of God with this reality with scientific means, it is important to realize that the "language" of the believer, the church and theology differ from each other (i.e. distinctions especially emphasized and explored by Van Huyssteen 1986:177-187). The intention of theology is first and foremost to fulfill the requirements of science, whereas the church has to fulfill the existential needs of the religious experience of its members. It is, however, important to note that the language of religious experience is the foundation and origin of Christianity and consequently the object of theological reflection (Van Huyssteen 1986:171-173). Obviously it is a long and tedious path to move from metaphorically verbalized religious experience (as is found in the Bible and the church's dogma) to a scientific theological reflection. It is to the credit of Van Huyssteen in his "critical-realistic rationality model" that he has bridged this gap in a responsible way which is fully in accord with the parameters of the philosophy of science. He argues that although the origin / roots of Christianity is found in believers' experience of God (this obviously includes Jesus of Nazareth as well as his followers through the centuries), this experience is related to this reality: "In die lang geskiedenis van Christelike teologiese refleksie het die grondmetafoor van die Christendom homself nie alleen op ongelooflike kreatiewe wyse deur die insig en geloofservaring heen van gelowige mense gehandhaaf nie, maar het die maksimale sin wat hierdeur as antwoord op eksistensiële lewensvrae gegee is en nog gegee word, goeie en genoeg redes verskaf (inderdaad nooit finale, positivistiese `bewyse' nie) om dit wat in ons teologiese uitsprake direk of indirek oor God





beweer word, te glo" (Van Huyssteen 1986:176; cf Rousseau 1984:69). And also: "Nie alleen teologies vanuit die geloofs-betrokkenheid van die teoloog nie, maar ook wetenskapsfilosofies word dit nou duidelik dat ons teologiese teorieë inderdaad na 'n werklikheid bo en groter as ons verwys" (Van Huyssteen 1986:177). This is not a retreat to a positivistic approach. Therefore, Van Huyssteen (1986:176-177) emphasizes the hypothetical, socio-historical boundness and eschatological nature of this knowledge of the "ultimate Reality" (i.e. God).

In the light of the previous paragraph, we can conclude that religious experience reflects reality. This implies that theological reflexion on religious experiences operates on an epistemological and scientific level. This basis provides the biblical scholar with the confidence that he is on a par with other scholars and within the parameters of the philosophy of science. We could schematize the New Testament science with its double obligation - that is towards society and science, on the one hand, and the church and the believers, on the other hand - in the following way:



(This schematization is a modification of the schema found in the publication of the Gereformeerde Synode van Delft 1980:12-13).

With regard to science and the community the righthand column is relevant: it is the scientific search for truth in this reality - ultimately to serve the community. With regard to the church and





believers the lefthand column is applicable: it is the search for truth (God) in this reality through the mediation of the Biblical writings - ultimately to edify the believing community.

This concludes the verbalization of my ultimate commitments and my epistemological presuppositions. From these commitments it has become clear that I am committed to understand the New Testament in relation to this reality and within the parameters of a scientific paradigm. Therefore I will now proceed to analyse my paradigmatic commitments to science.

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## 2.2 PARADIGMATIC COMMITMENTS: SCIENCE AS A MASTER SYMBOL

### 2.2.1 Controlling this reality

This whole dialogue concerning commitments, truth and reality has to do with the understanding and controlling of this world (cf Strauss 1978:313-5). It follows, therefore, that research can't be limited to the mere gathering of knowledge as such (i.e. a masturbation science). This knowledge should ultimately serve mankind to understand and control this world (cf Du Preez 1983:32). With this in mind our analysis and understanding of the New Testament should also have the objective to make a contribution in understanding this world. This is then my first paradigmatic commitment to science.

The problem is, however, that this reality can be understood in as many ways as there are people with different presuppositions (cf I B 4.3.1). Therefore, the challenge is (and this is my next paradigmatic commitment) whether we are able to understand and control this reality in a responsible and meaningful way. This implies that in addition to my epistemological parameters and commitments, I have to define a scientific paradigm which accommodates these parameters.

### 2.2.2 The scientific control of this reality

If we don't want to waste our time, we should try to understand and control this reality in a scientific-argumentative way. Without this premise any dialogue concerning this reality would be utterly senseless because every one would only entangle himself in a personal monologue in which he echoes his own beliefs without accounting for it.

The question is, therefore, what is meant by a "scientific-argumentative way" of doing things? In this regard the master symbols in the current debate within the philosophy of science will be decisive, because once again science can be practised in a number of ways.

.1 The most basic and unique characteristic of scientific acts is: theoretical-logical analysis or theoretical abstraction. That means the theoretical identification and distinguishing (i.e. analysis) of the different aspects of reality with the aid of logical criteria (Strauss 1978:1-8; cf Van Huyssteen 1986:187-188). There are also other criteria that are relevant in describing scientific activities such as rationality, verification, methodology, subject-object relation, systematizing, et cetera. These criteria are, however, not limited to scientific acts but are also part of other walks of life. They are therefore to be distinguished from the primary





criterium (i.e. theoretical-logical analysis) which is the distinctive and unique characteristic of science.

.2 A second master symbol is that science forms part of the complex process of understanding of reality (which includes man with all his presuppositions and socio-cultural boundness as the analysing subject). This implies that man isn't able to constitute absolute and timeless truths. The contributions of Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn were decisive in shattering the logical-positivistic paradigm with its master symbols of objectivity, verification, empirical facts and man's "infallible" reason (cf Van Huyssteen 1986:15-22). The limitations of science were especially confirmed by Kuhn's conclusive argumentation that big discoveries and developments in natural and human science (cf Michel 1979:210) were never the result of reason alone - more often they were the result of conceptual transformations (cf Van Huyssteen 1983 & 1986:63-87; also Herzog II 1983:108 and their reference to Kuhn's "gestalt-switches"). Therefore we will always have to reckon with man's limitations and the way in which knowledge develops in our description of science. Herzog II (1983:113) argues that Kuhn's notion of paradigm is too limited and "... needs to include one's personal and social location, political convictions and values all of which shape and influence what one 'discovers' in a text."

These basic parameters of the philosophy of science confirm my own conclusions drawn from the results of the history of research on 1 Peter (cf I A 3); my hermeneutical parameters (cf I B 1.2); and also my communication model (I B 3). These limitations of scientific research were illustrated by the cacophony of research results in biblical scholarship which were caused by the fact that the different scientific paradigms (e.g. historical, linguistic or theological) came into the clutches of positivism (cf Thyen 1971; Scneiders 1982:52-58). Herzog II (1983:106) remarks with regard to the positivistic scientific paradigm which reigned since the Enlightenment: "The entire process assumed, indeed required, that the observer of the text was neutral, that the text harbored an isolable and identifiable meaning that could be established scientifically and that the neutrality of the exegete and the objectivity of the process were safeguarded by the use of appropriate interpretive tools. .... Confident in their achievements, generations of exegetes presented their 'assured results' and undoubted conclusions only to have their successors transform them into doubtful results and unwarranted assumptions."

The above-discussed limitations of scientific knowledge requires that one should incorporate other parameters in one's scientific paradigm.





### 2.2.3 The scientific control of this reality in its totality

One of the reasons for the limitations of scientific knowledge is found in the fact that reality is studied fragmentally within the different subdisciplines of science. Different subdisciplines focus on different aspects of reality for example mathematics on "number", physics on the "physical", linguistics on "symbols", religion on "faith", et cetera (cf Strauss 1978:3).

Because of the fact that the different subdisciplines each has its own study object and therefore occupies itself with a fragment of reality, it often results in a fragmented and even a faulty understanding of reality. The epistemological and paradigmatic boundness of all scientific disciplines makes this inevitable. It is therefore imperative that scholars should take note of the results of other subdisciplines. I have already shown how semiotics, linguistics, literary science, communication science, hermeneutics, Greek, science of religion, history, sociology, psychology and ultimately the philosophy of science are relevant for this dissertation and its analysis of the communication of ancient canonized texts. The interdependence of the sciences makes an integrative approach, in my opinion, imperative for the development of science. Strauss and Visagie (1983) have argued convincingly that theology, for example, can't operate without reckoning with the other sciences. They showed conclusively that for example concepts like the "uniqueness" or the "omnipresence" of God are based on our view of number and space (which could be faulty or one-sided if we don't acknowledge the insights from mathematics). It is in the dialogue between different disciplines that crosschecking and -fertilization takes place to the benefit of science.

The disadvantages of fragmental research is clear in all scientific disciplines in the sense that it claims general truths for a fraction of reality while it disregards the totality. Although fragmental research could benefit the refining and testing of methods its limitations should be acknowledged. It is only in a synthesis which honours the totality of the fragments where analytical results find ultimate and maximal meaning. Michel (1979:212) remarks: "Die Wirklichkeit der Welt und des Menschen ist eben unvergleichlich komplexer, differenzierter und auch geheimnisvoller, als unsere besten wissenschaftlichen Methoden es fassen koennen. Darum wird sich and der grundsatzlichen Offenheit und Revisionsfaehigkeit des wissenschaftlichen Apparates der Grad der Wissenschaftlichkeit entscheiden."

The two previously discussed master symbols of my scientific paradigm, namely the limitedness and interdependence of scientific disciplines, enforce a third master symbol:





#### 2.2.4 The relational nature of truth in the scientific control of this reality

In the quest for "truth" man and his limited and fragmental interpretation of truth reflect the important role of personal involvement. Something is true "for me". As we have already seen, man is socio-culturally determined and this implies that his interpretation is influenced by his whole background. This means that our knowledge of reality will always be one-sided and therefore tentative. Interestingly enough, this is also confirmed by the semantic issue of sign and reference in semiotics (cf Plett 1975:99-102) and also by the definition of "communication" (i.e. the act of creating meaning) and the results of the newly developed reception theories. Especially the implications of the notions of "multiple meaning and interpretation" as well as "perspective" in my communication model as discussed under I B 3.4.2 and 3.5.2 respectively, are relevant in this respect. The concept "relational truth" reckons with this very fact (cf Gereformeerde Synode van Delft 1980:12-13; Herzog II 1983:112). This concept is an improvement on the former distinction between truth (i.e. objective) which has to be acknowledged (i.e. subjective). We can't know objective truth - only in relation to man (cf Deist 1979:16-22; 1981:2-11; Heyns 1974:85-96; Strauss 1978:319; Pannenberg 1977:346-48; Schneiders 1982:54; Van Huyssteen 1981:291-302; Van Niekerk 1982:150-65). Therefore the concept of "relational truth" is extremely useful to acknowledge the parameters of "truth" which is in line with the recent developments in the philosophy of science.

It is precisely because of this fact that everyone stands in a particular relation (determined by his presuppositions and socio-cultural background) to the truth, that the theologian has the freedom to understand reality from his frame of reference (i.e. the biblical message). This, however, doesn't free him from a scientific approach nor from the demand regarding "relevancy" which brings us to the last master symbol in my scientific paradigm.

#### 2.2.5 Progression in the scientific control of this reality

This whole dissertation gives expression to a desire to find better answers in our engagement, analysis and control of this reality. It reflects the hope of that New Testament science will progress in its endeavour to make ancient canonized texts communicate meaningful with twentieth century man.

In the evaluation whether scientific projects are a progression or regression one would have to agree on certain criteria for evaluation. This critical evaluation is essential if science





wants to serve mankind at all. Certain criteria are already implicitly part of this dissertation (as a matter of fact in all scholarly work). Nevertheless, I would like to verbalize them now as they are part and parcel of one's commitment which functions as a master symbol.

The engagement of science and its disciplines with reality already presupposes the basic criterium - that is the degree of reality relevancy or "werklikheidsrelevansie" (cf Rousseau 1984:74-75). This implies that the scientific work which correlates the closest to reality and consequently gives the greater clarity or meaning to phenomena in reality should be evaluated as the better answer at that point in time. This criterium correlates with Van Huyssteen's three criteria: reality concernment; critical and problem-solving ability; and the constructive and progressive ability of science. To my mind, these criteria are only different aspects of the basic criterium of "reality relevancy" (cf Van Huyssteen 1986:172-173).

Van Huyssteen (1986:173-186) has two requirements for a reality-concerned theology, namely a cognitive (i.e. intellectual) and contextual (i.e. expressive) concern for reality. Cognitivity presupposes a scientific realism (i.e. theology that refers to entities in this reality) and a truth convergence (i.e. progression in theology) whereas contextuality requires the coherent and trustworthy accommodation of religious experience, the church and theology as relevant contexts for theological scientific reflection (Van Huyssteen 1986:177-187).

Van Huyssteen's (1986:187-206) second criterium (i.e. the critical and problem-solving ability of theology) determines the ability of a theology to solve empirical and conceptual (paradigmatic) problems in the areas of its object (the Bible), its tradition and science as a whole. The latter correlates with my interdisciplinary and integrative approach.

The criterium of progression shifts the emphasis from rationality to the capabilities and progressiveness of a theory in solving problems more effectively without disregarding the tentativeness thereof (Van Huyssteen 1986:206-214). Needless to say, a meaningful progression in a scientific discipline could either be revolutionary or evolutionary.

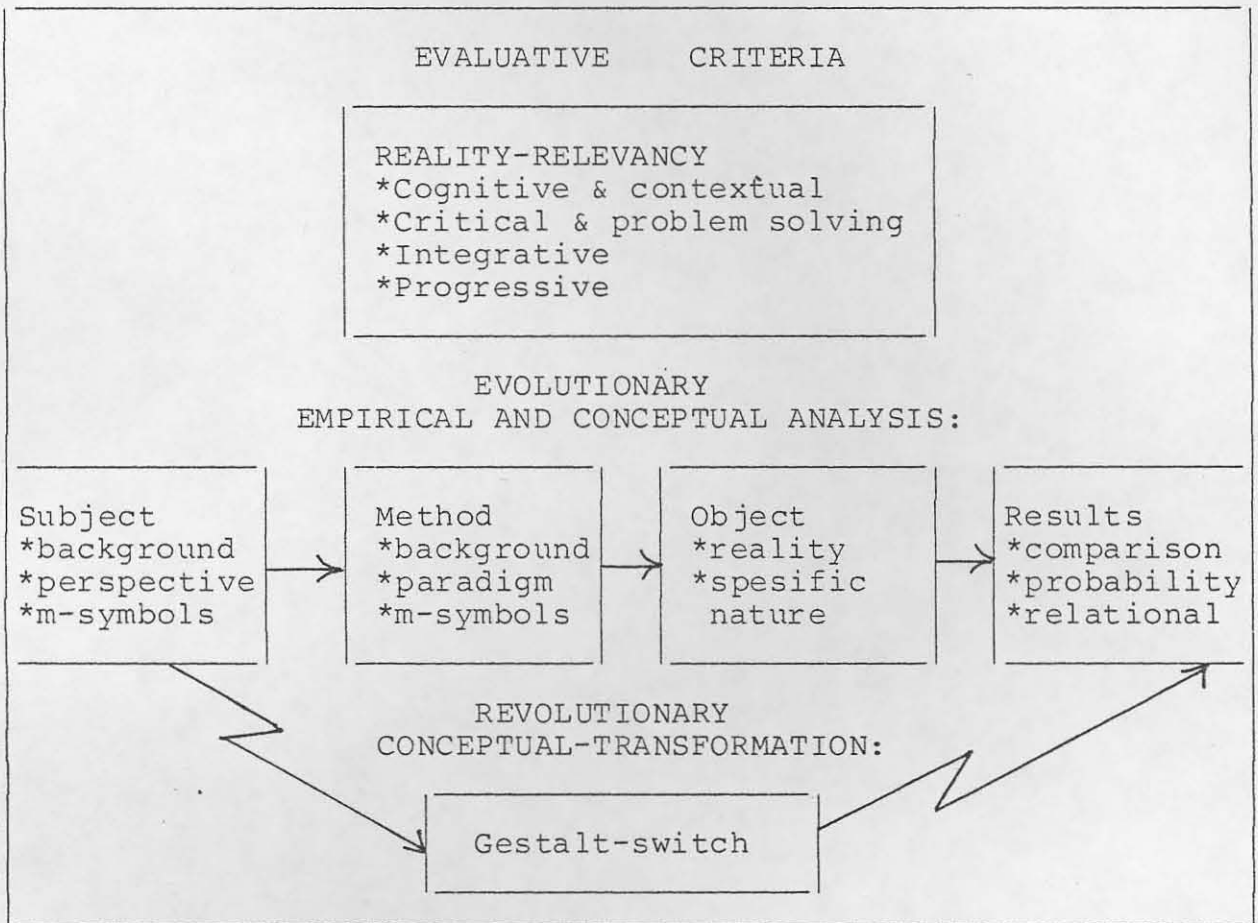
This is then the challenge of theology as a whole and for New Testament science in particular: "In hierdie proses staan die Bybel, as ons eksklusiewe toegang tot Jesus van Nasaret, sowel as die kreatiewe, konstruktiewe vermoë van ons teologiese refleksie, voor 'n permanente en fassinerende uitdaging: om naamlik op krities-realistiese wyse tentatiewe maar geloofwaardige uitsprake te maak oor die werklikheid van die Objek waaroor ons vooruit-





grypend nadink, en in Wie ons glo" (Van Huyssteen 1986:214).

I would like to summarize the constituents, characteristics, criteria and development of the scientific process with the following schematization:



Ultimately, the reader will have to evaluate if this dissertation has enhanced the progression of New Testament science. The reader and more specifically, the history of New Testament research, however, will be the final judge in the years and decades to come. I am hoping, at least, that it would be judged as a scientifically responsible and methodologically sound dissertation. That would have fulfilled the aim of doctoral theses in general and therefore worth my while. If it provides more clarity in the field of New Testament science, I would gratefully accept it as a graceful bonus.

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### 3. CONCLUSION

This dialogue with the philosophy of science has, in my opinion, confirmed the symphonic parameters of my communication model as an hermeneutical-exegetical answer to the cacophony echoing from biblical scholarship. The "cards" of my epistemological and paradigmatic commitments are on the table for everyone to see. The challenge is, therefore, for scholars from all disciplines who want to engage in a dialogue regarding the communication of ancient canonized texts, to put their cards on the table as well. Scientific dialogue without this kind of exercise is doomed and senseless. If someone, for example, has "hidden cards" which presupposes that reality as a whole is evil and should be avoided; or that science is profane; or that truth is absolute; or that the dogma of the church is faultless; or that religion is primitive and outside the bounds of science; or that Christianity is irrelevant, any dialogue concerning the understanding of the New Testament will be in vain and senseless - unless the presuppositions concerning the above-mentioned issues are first evaluated and discussed.

In the light of my commitment to dialogue, it follows that this study doesn't claim to have absolute truth or final answers. It must be clear that the results of this dissertation claim validity only against the background and acknowledgement that it is based on a cosmologic perspective which includes a specific ultimate commitment paradigm, methodology and a necessitated thematic demarcation. It therefore doesn't matter if "... all will share my conclusions - for few may - but that all will admit the problem facing our discipline, and see "the solution" [my addition] from somewhat the same angle. That, indeed would be something" (Barnlund 1973:56).

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