*Metaphorical stories in Luke's narrative world*

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## CHAPTER 1:  INTRODUCTION

### 1.1    General orientation

This study focuses on metaphor, particularly on the extent, nature and the importance of metaphor in some of the parables recorded in Luke's Gospel.  It is only recently, since the rise of the *New Hermeneutics*, a post-Bultmanian movement, that scholars have applied the post-Aristotelian concept of metaphor to parables (cf Kissinger 1970:xiii-xiv; Perrin 1976:107-127).    The *New Hermeneutics* created a new awareness of the performative aspect of language. Language, as indeed text, is alive.  It evokes emotions and feelings.  It affects us and communicates in different ways in different contexts.  It has the power to draw the listeners or readers into its world, challenging and confronting them with the need to make a decision of some sort.  This has led to the exegete asking a number of new questions. The *Who, Where* and *What* questions that characterised the analytical approach of the historical-critical period of scientific research, have been supplemented by the *Why* question: Why did or does someone behave or react in a certain way?   This new approach to the interpretation and analysis of texts has brought about a shift in emphasis from the individual elements that lie *within and behind* a text to the *story* set out in the text and indeed to the whole process of communication of the text.  This area of research is primarily literary, with an emphasis on the art and practise of narration. Such research does not necessarily exclude historical analysis, but the focus is now more on the *total* society within which the text is set.

Since Adolf Jülicher's ([1960] 1976) important book, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (first published in 1886), scholars have invariably searched for one single meaning within a parable: the *tertium comparationis* between the object (*Sache*) and the picture (*Bild*).  But with the rise of the *New Hermeneutics* and its emphasis on the performative aspect of language, parables can now be viewed as language *events* where there is interaction or dialogue between text and reader.  As events,

parables are no longer reducible to a single fixed set of meanings, but are, in essence, dynamic and polyvalent.

Early in the twentieth century a revision of the traditional view of the *metaphor* took place among philosophers. Etymologically the word *metaphor* implies motion (*phora*) that leads to change (*meta*). Liddell and Scott (1977:440) define metaphor as "a carrying from one place to another" or "a transferring to one word the sense of another." This definition is based on the traditional Aristotelian understanding of metaphor: an unfamiliar word being used in the place of a familiar word, for example, John is a lion. The well-known characteristics of a lion (for example, fierce) are transferred to John. As such, the function and value of the metaphor were seen to be purely decorative. As a non-literal, figurative way of speaking the metaphor contributed to nothing more than vividness and style. This perception of the metaphor has undergone a vast transition (see chapter 2 below). The metaphor is now hailed as having the ability to re-describe reality with immense ontological value. From the juxtaposition of two often paradoxical entities or thoughts, not only single words, the metaphor pricks the mind of the listeners or readers to see and experience things in a different light. As such, the metaphor is not merely *descriptive*, but becomes an *instrument* of knowledge. It not only *has* meaning, but is *creative* of meaning. It leads to *new* visions of reality. This is one of the challenging claims inherent in the new concept of metaphor.

It is this convergence of parable and metaphor that has led to a revival in parable research. In the past three to four decades such a vast number of studies in this area have been published, that this present work can by no means claim to be exhaustive or even to have taken close cognisance of the contemporary material available. What is exciting is the dynamic and highly relevant nature of this research. As instruments that lead to new visions of reality, parables invariably challenge conventional worldviews. Their challenge is not confined to their original listeners, but to all subsequent listeners who engage with the world of the parable. In the case of Jesus' parables, it is the world of *God's Kingdom*.

## 1.2    Aims and focus of study

Since the beginning of human history, men and women have clashed over a wide range of issues - gender, race, appearance, property, wealth, power, privilege, status and prestige, to name just a few.  These clashes have led to conflicts ranging from relatively harmless differences of opinion and disagreement to bloody revolutions and wars.  The canonical books of the Bible witness to these conflicts.  Older brothers are in conflict with younger brothers.  Cain kills Abel (Gn 4), Jacob flees from his enraged brother Esau (Gn 27).  There is contradiction and tension between apostles.  Paul and Barnabas part their ways (Ac 15).  Paul reprimands Peter (Gl 2).  Nations are at war.  People are forced into exile or reduced to a life of slavery.

The "new" South Africa, the country and the community in which I am living has not escaped conflict.  The political dispensation has changed, the country having been freed from Apartheid in 1994.  Apartheid has been replaced by a democracy.  But conflict between one political party and the next, between different races and cultures, within churches and families and among individual citizens has remained, sometimes with a detrimental effect on those not directly involved.

This confirms that the world and its many different societies are prone to conflict.  Wherever people are, there is conflict.  The causes of such strife are wide-ranging.  It goes beyond the scope of this study to delve into the most probable causes of human conflict, which by nature will vary from one situation to the other.  But generally speaking the narrow pursuit of one's *own interests* is the basic cause of all conflict (cf Vledder 1997:70).  This applies both to individual persons and to groups.  Individual interests, when shared with others, often form common interests.  These common group interests are sustained and asserted in many ways, inevitably leading to the marginalisation and/or the overt oppression of others.

That society is conflict-prone should, however, not be seen only in a

negative light - in the sense that harmony is being disturbed by some *outside* source.  This is largely the view advocated by *structural functionalism* (cf Malina 1993:21; Vledder 1997:58-59).  Structural functionalism pictures society as a relatively persistent, stable structure of well-integrated elements.  Each element has a function and contributes to the maintenance of society as a whole, providing harmony and a peaceful coexistence of its institutions.  Such a social system is the result of the consensus of values among all its members.  On such a view, conflict within society will invariably be regarded as deviant or abnormal, causing disruption and harm.  The structural functionalist perspective on society is challenged by the conflict model of society, known as *conflict theory* (Malina 1993:22).  According to conflict theory, conflict forms an integral part of every society.  The essence of society is that it is not a *fixed organic* structure, but is a *dynamic social* structure open to adaption and change.  Within an ever-changing world, societies need to adapt to change; and the creative force for this change is conflict.  Without conflict there will not be change (cf Vledder 1997:61).  Thus it is not the presence of conflict but its absence that is abnormal.  Conflict is an essential feature of any society.  Needless to say, conflict as such is hardly pleasant.  It creates tension and saps energy.  But insofar as conflict helps society to abandon old systems and contributes to the creation of new ones, it is exciting. It heralds the dawn of something new.

Change can be brought about in various ways.  People who do not wish change can be *forced* to change - by decree, revolution, or war.  Change can however also be prompted by interaction.  By this we mean the juxtaposition of contrasting worldviews with the distinct aim of reshaping the participants' understanding of reality.  The aim here will not be dominance, but conversion and reconciliation.

Worldviews are grounded in and find expression in the stories that we humans tell one another (Wright 1992:38; see also chapter 2 below).  Such worldviews are best challenged by the telling of *alternative* stories.  To use the

terminology coined by Jean-François Lyotard (1984) the first can be called "master narratives" or "grand narratives" (*métarécits*), and the latter "little narratives" or "small narratives" (*petits récits*) (see also Van Heerden 1997:44).  Instead of referring to "small narratives" Breytenbach (1997:1166) uses the very appropriate term "contra narratives" ("*kontranarratiewe*").  It will be argued in this study that efficient contra narratives are *metaphorical* stories.  Through the vividness of their images they evoke thought.  They are excellent tools with which to kindle new considerations and attitudes.

There is little doubt that Jesus challenged the prevailing worldview.  He did so primarily, according to the gospel writers, by means of the parables he told.  Reading and interpreting these Jesus parables as *metaphorical* stories (cf, inter alia, Scott 1990; Herzog 1994) has confirmed the effectiveness of these stories in challenging or subverting the prevailing worldview and realizing Jesus' vision of the *Kingdom of God*.  By telling stories, Jesus made his audience see things in a different light, thus opening up a new world for them, the reality of God's kingship as a phenomenon of the here and now.

Much work has been done on the parables of Jesus.  Our interest lies specifically in the Lukan metaphorical stories.  Although much has also been published specifically on the parables unique to Luke (see Forbes 2000:16-23), thoughts on the concept and theory of *metaphor* have largely been restricted to the reconstructed parables of the historical Jesus.  Applying the notion of metaphor to the Lukan parables (those metaphorical stories of Jesus retold only by Luke) fills, what we believe to be a much needed research gap.  Our interests lie further in looking at the challenge such parables (as metaphorical stories) potentially posed to the Lukan audience.  There is large scholarly consensus that the gospel writers did not only retell the stories of Jesus, but applied, reinterpreted, and even "re-created" them for their own social setting (*Sitz im Leben*).  Luke is of special interest to us because amongst the gospel writers, he is known as the *reconciler*.  He endeavours to resolve tensions and reconcile

people in conflict with one another (see chapter 4 below).  Luke brings opposing factions together.  And does so, inter alia, by telling the story of Jesus in parables.

The Lukan prologue confirms that this is *Luke's* story.  Before him many had undertaken to draw up an account (διήγησις) of the things that had been fulfilled among them, but now Luke tells *his* story, based on *his* model - how *he* sees reality.  Because I am specifically interested in Luke, I have chosen to study three well-known stories in the Gospel which are not found in Luke's sources (Q, Mark) and form part of the Lukan *Sondergut*.  These parables are to be studied in the narrative world of Luke-Acts.  Importantly, the parables form part of Luke's narrative world, and in order to understand the parts, it is imperative to have knowledge of the whole.  The process to be followed involves a continuing back-and-forth movement of corrective analysis between the whole and its parts, and the parts and the whole.

An intricate part of the study will be the challenge that Luke's metaphorical stories pose to a conventional worldview.  Such a worldview within Israel was closely interrelated with Israel's perceptions of God.  These perceptions included answers to questions such as: What is God like?  On whose side is God?  Whom does God include in God's kingdom?  As worldviews are articulated in the stories that we humans tell each other, Luke's narrative as a whole, as well as the individual parables, reflect on the conventional Israelite worldview.  Interpreting the Lukan metaphorical stories from this perspective, helps us to identify the challenge to the conventional worldview posed by Luke.  It is presupposed that the way Luke challenged the conventional worldview of his time and tried to work reconciliation is relevant also for our time.

## 1.3   Theoretical perspectives

Scientific research needs to be based on a sound theoretical footing.  Imperative in achieving this goal is both the clarification of semantically related terms, and the spelling out of assumptions and presuppositions on which the research is based.

The former avoids terminological confusion.  The latter contributes to evaluation of the research.

### 1.3.1  Terminological clarifications: paradigms, metaphors, and models

There is a clear relation between metaphors (our research topic), paradigms and models.  In relationship to metaphor, the movement is from the more general (paradigm), to the more specific (model).

The metaphor has been described above (1.1) as the juxtaposition of two often paradoxical thoughts or entities, which as a result of their juxtaposition prick the mind to see and experience something in a different light.  This leads to a new vision of reality.  A paradigm represents a particular vision of reality.  The term *paradigm* is found in Thomas S Kuhn's 1962 book, *The structure of scientific revolution*.  It can be described as a conceptual framework, a worldview, common to a particular scientific community at a stated time (Mouton & Marais 1996:145).

Kuhn developed his paradigm theory in direct response to the *growth theory* of knowledge, which advocates the view that knowledge grows in a linear way through the gradual *accumulation of facts* that are accepted as true, meaning that in the long run, scientific knowledge will converge towards absolute truth (Mouton 1996:16).  This "model" is based on the assumption that our sensory experiences are fixed and neutral, and that a rational, objective observation of data is indeed possible.  Kuhn found this theory to be seriously inadequate and proposed a theory of *scientific revolution*.  He observed that the history of the sciences is one of successive phases (paradigms), as a result of which one phase is discontinued altogether and replaced by another.  Each phase is characterised by a dominant theory which shaped the thought processes of a particular scientific community in that stated period.  The theory of Copernicus is replaced by that of Newton.  Newton's theory is replaced by that of Einstein.  Then we also have Lamarck and then Darwin ... and so forth (cf Mouton 1996:16).  These successive phases of scientific thought follow each other according to clearly discernable pattens: a

period of *normal science* is followed by a period of *scientific revolution*, which in turn is followed by another period of normal science (cf Mouton & Marais 1996:145-147).  During the period of normal science, one research tradition or theory dominates and is accepted by the scientific community.  Scientific thought within such a period of normal science is directed towards solving puzzles by the basic "paradigm", and a further refinement and improved articulation of already existing theories.  The paradigm itself  provides clues and determines what data is appropriate and relevant.  But history shows that within a changing world, questions or new puzzles inevitably arise - questions and puzzles to which an existing paradigm seems no longer able to yield adequate answer.  The scientist in fact is here confronted by an anomaly not predicted by his or her paradigm.  This anomaly is not overcome by the accumulation of more data (positivist model), but by a *new approach* which then leads to a new vision of reality.  This new approach emerges from scientific activities taking place during a period of *scientific revolution*.  This phase is characterised by tensions evoked in the struggle and challenge to find new answers.  In many ways it is a time of conflict caused by the tension created between the emergence of something new and the clinging to old theories.  The breakthrough is like a conversion (*Gestalt-switch*) or an "aha!" experience (Van Huyssteen 1989:53).  Significantly, the emergence of a new paradigm is not based on disproving accepted data, but very often on "unscientific" issues, such as vague ideas, gut feelings and imagination. Frequently new visions have emerged, when scientists have followed their intuitions and dared to look at something from a radically different angle.  Howard Kee (1989:9) points out, that as a result, "debates over competing paradigms turn not on logical process but on premises." The bottom line is this: one paradigm replaces another because it offers a promising alternative which has a greater ability to solve puzzles (Barbour 1976:9-10).

Metaphor is *one* tool in realizing the new vision of such an alternative paradigm.  By juxtaposing previously unrelated thoughts and entities, it reveals a

new view of reality, which otherwise, using only the positivist approach (see 1.3.3) of accumulating more and more logically based data, would have remained unseen. The metaphor then is an instrument for shaping our understanding and knowledge of the world around us.

Models make it possible for us to speak about reality. They are theories in practice, or "tools for transforming theories into research operations" (Elliott 1986:7). In contrast to metaphors and paradigms, models are consciously structured and systematically arranged (Elliott 1993:41). They help us to filter and to organise the raw mass of material available to us. Malina (1993:231) defines a model as "an abstract simplified representation of some real world object, event, or interaction constructed for the purpose of understanding, control, or prediction." A model is clearly not a literal or complete picture of the world around us. It is a simulation of reality from a certain point of view. As such, it isolates certain domains to be investigated and also provides the means of making predictions. A model can be compared with a lens that focuses on a specific area, or a map that enlarges one area of an otherwise complex system. The model is also not to be confused with a *description* of the world; it is an imaginative, conceptual tool for ordering experience and interpreting that world. The model identifies problems and questions that are to be investigated. On the whole, we may say that models serve two main types of research objective, one that is exploratory in nature and one that aims at testing a certain hypothesis (Elliott 1993:42).

Depending on the field of research, there are of course different kinds of model. Generally a distinction is made between three kinds of model: scale models, analogue models, and theoretical models (Ricoeur 1975:85; 1981:240-241). Scale models are replicas of the original, for example, of a ship. Analogue models are only partially similar, showing analogy, for example the use of electrical circuits in computers. Within the social sciences use is made of theoretical models. They are abstract, conceptual models and are not "things" at all.

Models are indispensable.  As Thomas Carney (1975:5) notes: "... we do not have the choice of whether we will use models or not.  Our choice, rather, lies in deciding whether to use them consciously or unconsciously."  We need to free ourselves from the positivist delusion that our visions of reality can ever be perfect.  The conscious, stipulated use of models has the advantage that research can be subjected to the "falsification" criterion.  They aid scientists in determining the merit of the research done.  And because models are used consciously and constructed systematically, they can be adapted and subjected to a process of fine-tuning.

There are various points at which models and metaphors overlap.  The use of the model as such within the social sciences presupposes that maybe the unknown phenomenon to be researched is similar to the known one on certain points.  This has led to models being called *scientific metaphors* (cf Mouton & Marais 1996:139).  By investigating a specific phenomenon in this manner, the researcher reveals certain similarities and relationships which he or she then systematises as a model of that phenomenon.  Important for us is the fact that in using one phenomenon to investigate another, the model provides a *new language* within which the unknown phenomenon may be discussed.  Here in essence lies the value of the metaphor.  According to Mary Hesse (cf Ricoeur 1975:85), both the model and the metaphor have the power of revelation and "re-description".

We should note that in contrast to a model that is used over a sustained period of time, the metaphor is always used momentarily.  The metaphor is inherently characterised by the elements of novelty and surprise in the new thought-combinations and images that it evokes.  That is why the metaphor is not only a tool for re-description, but a creative tool for new visions.  The model explores, re-describes, and systematises the "given".  The metaphor opens up a "new world".

When a metaphor becomes conventional and established, and when it

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loses its novelty, like the well-known metaphor "God is father", it begins to function strictly as a model and so becomes a "lens" through which we view other passages of the Bible.  Sally McFague (see Macky 1990:56) refers to models as "relatively permanent metaphors".  For example, from the metaphor "God is father" a "father-child"model is developed to look at and to describe, for example, the relationship between God and humanity.  Accordingly, in an ever-changing world in need of constant adaption, the rise of new metaphors play an important role. They are excellent tools in creating alternative and new visions of reality.

In this study the "theory of metaphors" will be used as a model to look at the parables of Luke.  This will occur within the wider framework of a postmodern, holistic paradigm in which neither knowledge nor reality are viewed as fixed, objective entities, but as being part and parcel of the sociology of life.  More elaborate consideration therefore needs now to be given to the *sociology of knowledge* and *scientific epistemology*.

### 1.3.2  Sociology of knowledge and the construction of reality

The philosopher who has most influenced our way of modern thinking in the West, is without doubt the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), who is sometimes thought of as the founder of modern philosophy.  A legacy attributed to Descartes is the split between subject and object, which Ted Peters (1992:9) calls the "principle of distanciation".  According to this principle everything is observed from a distance, with the observer, that is the human being, being clearly separated from the object it observes.  Being separated from the object, it was believed that the observer finds himself or herself in relation to the object in a *neutral* position and can therefore come to *objective* conclusions.  Under the influence of Descartes it was assumed that everything, even truth, could be objectified. Peters (1992:9-10) writes: "Descartes formulated the question of truth as if the truth had nothing to do with himself .... He implicitly cedes the content of truth to the objective world and not to himself as a subject."

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From this matrix of thinking emerges traditional science's view on facts.  A fact is traditionally distinguished from transient and adaptable theories as something definite, permanent, and independent of any subjective interpretation. A historical review will however show that what was regarded as a certain "scientifically proven" fact by a past generation is today often rejected as such, or what among contemporaries might be viewed as "fact" to a certain group of people, is repudiated by another.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Ludwig Fleck (see Kee 1989:9), a Polish historian of medicine, observed that the "facts" that emerged from scientific investigations varied with the social theory of the investigators.  He concluded that "facts" are always the result of a definite "thought style" and are shared by a "thought collective" (see Kee 1989:10).  Being a "thought collective", "facts" invariably undergo social reinforcement, with the result that a conventionalised solution to a problem is perceived as "truth".  The process is one of subjective knowledge becoming objectified and socialised in signs, which in turn come to be expressed in general terms that are assumed to be universally recognised as valid by all members of the society in question.  This leads to expressions such as, "Everyone knows that ...", "That is a fact ..."  Should an alternative "thought style" be active in that community to propose "new" solutions to a given problem, it is inevitably rejected as "untrue", merely being the subjective thought of the individual.

"Truth" is seriously challenged when traditionally perceived facts no longer provide solutions to new puzzles experienced within a community.  A new "thought style" may then emerge with greater puzzle-solving capability, which may in the traditional sense lead to new "facts", often drastically different to previous ones. The basic compatibility between this approach to knowledge and truth and Thomas Kuhn's paradigm theory is very apparent.

It must be noted that a rejection of the traditional view concerning facts in no way reduces the scientist's endeavour to secure relative objectivity, or his or

*Metaphorical stories in Luke's narrative world*

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her efforts to restrain freewheeling subjectivity (cf Elliott 1993:37), but it does reject the idea that total objectivity is attainable.  Nobody has an "immaculate perception" (Carney 1975:1) or a "god's-eye view" (Wright 1992:33).  Every investigation, as every interpretation of text, is socially conditioned and takes place from a certain position.

This realisation of the social conditioning of knowledge has led to the scientific discipline known as the "sociology of knowledge" (*Wissenssoziologie*). It began as a kind of byproduct of the philosophical work of Max Scheler, but received its classical formulation by Karl Mannheim, and was then refined by Alfred Schulz, a German philosopher who emigrated to the United States of America in 1939 (cf Berger & Luckmann 1967:4-10; Kee 1989:10-11).  The most basic premises here are that the consciousness of the human being is determined by his or her social being, and that no human thought is immune to the ideologising influences of its social context.  It is the task of the sociology of knowledge to analyse the process by which knowledge is thus socialised.

From knowledge being socialised, it follows naturally that *reality* itself is a social construction and not, as Descartes advocated, a fixed, unchangeable object, outside the subjectivity of the individual.  The sociology of knowledge accordingly postulates that man creates social reality, and man is in turn shaped by that reality.  This world-building process is described in Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger's joint and independent writings, particular in Berger and Luckmann's, *The social construction of reality* (1967), and in Berger's, *The sacred canopy* (1969).  The process develops along the lines of externalisation, objectification, and internalisation.  Howard Kee (1989:11-12) gives a helpful overview of this complex issue.  First, reality is observed as something separated from the human being, an *external* entity with which the human being enters into an ongoing relationship.  This relationship is reflected by the language we speak, the culture we adhere to, and the symbols of our everyday praxis.  These in turn do not only accept the reality, but form and shape it.  Secondly, once reality has

been structured by and in the society and culture of a particular community, it is *objectified* and becomes something "out there". Reality becomes an *object* outside the subjectivity of the individual, a collective item. This is, thirdly, followed by the act of *internalisation*, by virtue of which reality becomes something invisibly situated *inside* a given community. By means of socialisation reality is transmitted from one generation to the next, each individual needing to learn how to identify with this reality and live within its structures, thus allowing it to shape his or her life. For our purpose it is important to note that reality in general, and our perception of God in particular, are not "objects" removed from ourselves of which we have a clear, untainted view as "subject". Humankind is part and parcel of this reality, and reality in turn is intrinsically linked to humankind within his or her social context, hence *social* reality.

When discussing social reality a distinction is made between the *social* and *symbolic universe* (see Berger & Luckmann 1967:19-46; Petersen 1985:x; 93-104; Kee1989:12; Van Staden 1991:61). For the sake of clarity and in view of the literary nature of this study, reference should also be made to the *narrative world* of text. All are conceptual constructions of reality. The narrative world is defined by Norman Petersen (1985:7) as follows: "The narrative world is that reality which a narrator bestows upon his actors and upon their actions ..." This "world" is not to be confused with the "real" world, but it is a literary construction of the world outside of the text to which the text refers, hence also called "referential" world (Petersen 1985:8). This world is analysed in terms of two socio-scientific categories, *social arrangement* and *symbolic forms*, constituting the social and symbolic universe respectively. The social universe is the reality of everyday life as it presents itself to humankind through a number of social relations. Underlying this reality are the social institutions one encounters in everyday life: economics, politics, kinship and cult (religion) (cf Van Staden 1991:91). The symbolic universe comprises an overarching, cognitive system of knowledge, belief, and values that provide meaning to society. As such, it helps to "make sense" of often

14

diverse subjective experiences. In essence it is a system of meaning. It explains why things are the way they are, while at the same time legitimising social institutions as the appropriate way of being and behaving. For analytical purposes it is divided into mythology (including cosmology), theology, philosophy, and science (cf Kee 1989:12; Van Staden 1991:91). A view on reality is not confined to social experiences, but is the resultant vision that emerges from the interaction between the social und symbolic universes. Kinship (like father) may interact in a dialectical sense with a reflection on God (theology), which in turn determines the way we not only see, but also experience reality. Although two people may share the same social universe, reality may be quite different for them, depending upon the differing meanings they have attached to it - meanings based upon their differing universes.

"Worldview" is the view of reality which emerges as a result of the interaction between the social und symbolic universes. As such, it is and always will also be "metaphorical". Just as in metaphor two thoughts or identities are juxtaposed, "worldview" is the result of the juxtaposition of a social und a symbolic universe.

### 1.3.3  Epistemological considerations

In discussing Thomas Kuhn's paradigm theory above (1.3.1), mention was made of the "theory of knowledge". The technical term is *epistemology*. Epistemology has its etymological root in the Greek word ἐπιτσήμη (knowledge, understanding). Generally it has to do with how people *know* things. Since the rise of the "sociology of knowledge" it has become imperative for any scientist or researcher to give some account of his or her "understanding of knowledge". This in turn is closely related to our understanding of how human beings view reality, described above (1.3.2). The concept of reality as a social construction inevitably leads to a revision of traditional epistemological views.

As the "theory of knowledge" is a very complex und widely discussed

matter, we will confine ourselves to a general account and focus on the main premises and assumptions.  The epistemology which has dominated human thought in past centuries is that of the positivists (see Mouton 1987:1-24;  Van Huyssteen 1989:3-10; Wright 1992:32-35).  The roots of positivism can be traced to the subject-object split of René Descartes (1596-1650), the development of the inductive model for scientific research by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and the work of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century British empiricists.

Spurred on by the critical questioning of traditional ideas during the period of the Enlightenment, the positivists sought to devise a method for reaching absolute truth.  Absolute truth can by definition only be based on undisputable knowledge.  The positivists believe that at least for some things this goal is attainable, that some things are simply "objectively" true.  The latter is deeply entrenched in the assumption that the subject (observer) can distance him- or herself from the object (the item under investigation), in order to make a neutral and objective observation free from any subjective interpretation. The scientific point of departure of the positivist, both for the natural and the social sciences, is the accumulation of *empirical* data - that is all data based on observation through the human senses.  This data is arranged *logically* in a unitary system.  The methodological model used is that of induction.  Whereas deduction embarks on a research project with a clear conceptual framework in mind (a model, a theory, a set of hypotheses), induction starts with empirical "facts" from which general theories are developed, these theories being in turn verified by new empirical facts drawn from real life experiences (cf Mouton & Marais 1996:103).  It is assumed that, by applying this method of repeated empirical verification, a point can eventually be reached at which knowledge of such things becomes irrefutable.  All other things which can *not* be tested "empirically" are rejected as being unscientific knowledge, exposed to human subjectivity.  That the positivist epistemology has its immense restrictions, is clear enough.  Not only do many questions remain unanswered, especially those exposed by the "revolution" which Thomas Kuhn

*Metaphorical stories in Luke's narrative world*

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brought about with his paradigm theory, but the metaphysical is downgraded to a sphere in which no "real" (scientific) knowledge is possible.

Although the positivist view of knowledge has largely been rejected by philosophers, it remains entrenched in the minds of many people that science does simply look *objectively* at things as they are.  A totally different view is that of the phenomenalists (cf Wright 1992:34), although both start from within the same "subject-object paradigm".  The phenomenalists profess that what they observe is only a phenomenon - not the real thing, not the thing itself.  The only knowledge we have is *subjective* and *relative* knowledge: the individual human being can determine with certainty only what he or she perceives, feels, or touches.  Instead of proclaiming in a positivistic sense, "this is the way it is", the phenomenalists would state, "this is the way I see it", or "this is the way it is to me".  Applied to text, we can say: the former (positivist) believes that the text is a direct window on reality - he or she reads it as it is, potentially free from any presuppositions, theories, or models; the latter (phenomenalist) on the other hand, has no access to reality - when reading text he or she has access only to the author's view of events, or maybe access only to his or her own *thoughts* in the presence of the text.  Peters (1992:11) observes: "Critical distance through objectification has made us forget that there is only one reality that includes both external objects and human subjects in relation to one another."

A paradigm-shift is called on to challenge the dichotomous thinking of both objectivity (absoluteness) versus subjectivity (relativeness), as well as the implicit claim that knowledge (in order to be true scientific knowledge) always requires empirical verification.

Kuhn's paradigm theory has paved the way to radically new insights (see Van Huyssteen 1989:55-57).  Kuhn argued that acceptance or rejection of theories is never settled by logic and empirical verification alone, but rather by their puzzle-solving capabilities.  Seeing research items as puzzles, which appeal to the scientist's intellectual capacity and involve him or her in the scientific process, has

highlighted the dialectical relationship between the scientist (subject) and the research item (object).  This has led to a revised definition of the meaning of scientific objectivity.  Objectivity is not an enterprise free from all subjectivity, but rather "critical engagement and participation" (Mouton 1996:31).  "Critical" refers to the heightened awareness of the role the observer plays in the scientific process, based on the realisation that there is no such thing as an "objective", or "neutral" or "detached" observer; the observer always forms part of the whole; and his or her personal background, feelings, inclinations, and biases are just as real as the object being studied.  "Engagement" highlights the continual dialectical relationship between subject and object - the subject being not only the individual scientist but the scientific community of which he or she forms part (paradigm).

The above insights are reflected in the more recently developed epistemological theory of "critical realism".  Critical realism itself is a wide-ranging subject  (see Van Huyssteen 1989:125-197; Meyer 1989).  Our discussion will focus on critical realism as proposed by Thomas Wright (1992:35-37).  Wright (1992:35) suggests the following definition:

> This is a way of describing the process of "knowing" that acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence "realism"), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence "critical").

This definition highlights the radical difference between itself on the one hand, and positivism and phenomenalism on the other hand.  For the positivist the process of knowing follows a simple, one-directional line from the observer to the object.  The observer, from a neutral and detached stance, looks "objectively" at the object and views reality.  This reality is tested by empirical observation.  If empirical

testing (verification) is not possible, one cannot speak of truth.  The phenomenalist looks at the object, but discovers that the result of his or her observation reflects back on to the observer.  The observer can only be sure of his or her own sense-data.  Truth then is relative.  For the critical realist, however, there is a continuous to and fro between the observer and the object being observed - similar to the two entities juxtaposed in a metaphor.  The observer observes something, which in turn is challenged by critical reflection.  Out of the "juxtaposition" and the "interrelation"of observer and object, knowledge concerning reality emerges - not complete, or absolute, but *true*.

Critical awareness of this process reveals three important things (cf Wright 1992:36).  First, the observer may be considering an object from *one point of view* only.  Realising this creates an awareness of the non-existence of any absolute or "god's-eye view", and the limitations under which an individual person views an object.  But the *critical realist* will remain open to (true) knowledge gained by looking at an object from a different stance.  Second, every observer, inevitably and without exception, interprets the information received from his or her senses through a grid of expectations, previous experiences, psychological state, and so on.  The observes "point of view" is therefore not merely a matter of location, the position from which I look at an object, but also a matter of the  "lens" through which that object is being observed (= worldview).  Thirdly, the lens in turn is "tinted" by the community to which I belong, ranging from a network of close family and friends, cultural groups, to whole towns, provinces or even country.  The sociology of knowledge discussed above (1.3.2) has created awareness of the influence that a particular community has on the way we see reality.  Every observer is socialised into the traditions, expectations, anxieties, and other elements of the community to which he or she belongs, which in turn makes him or her see the object being observed in a particular way.

An elephant may serve as an illustration of the critical awareness called for by critical realism.  An object like an elephant can be viewed from different angles.

19

Depending upon where you are, you will see the same elephant, but different parts of it.  Some parts will be clearly visible, others will be obscured.  Furthermore, depending on the "lens" you are looking through, and the community to which you belong - artist, hunter, conservationist, or tourist, you will see different elephant "realities", ranging from the beautiful lines and the calming sight of a majestic slow-moving mammal bordering on the brink of extinction, to a beast which evokes the most terrible feelings of fear.  Although the different observers may see different things, and although critical self-reflection and interaction with other observers may lead to changes in conclusion - one can nevertheless speak "truly" of reality.  But for any "realism" to survive, cognisance needs to be taken of the many factors involved in the process by which that knowledge is attained.  So a revision of the traditional terminology is called for.  Instead of speaking of *truth*, one  should rather speak of what is *real*.  Instead of speaking of *objective* or *subjective* knowledge, one should rather speak of *public* or *individual* knowledge.

From a methodological perspective, critical realism advocates a scientific approach which is neither exclusively deductive (from model to material) nor inductive (from material to hypothesis) but *abductive* (Elliott 1993:48-49). Abduction is a kind of to-and-fro between deductive and inductive methods.  The movement is from data to hypothesis which in turn however involves a continuing back-and-forth movement of suggestion checking.  Only by this method can we gain knowledge of things that is not derived from experience alone and that are not explicit in the material under analysis.

When critical realism is applied specifically to literature, the different presuppositions of the epistemologies discussed above are very apparent (cf Wright 1992:65-66).  The positivist regards literature as a *neutral* description of the world.  The phenomenalist regards literature as a collection of *subjective* feelings. The positivist says the purpose of criticism is to establish the *right* or *true* meaning of the text, and assumes that there is such a truth and that it can be found.  The phenomenalist says that there are only *my* reading and an infinite

*Metaphorical stories in Luke's narrative world*

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number of other possible readings.  The critical realist conceives literature as the articulation of worldviews, or better still, the telling of stories that bring worldviews into articulation.  In the process of reading, the reader  enters into conversation with the text.  Knowledge takes place within the larger framework of both the worldview that is articulated by the text *and* the worldview of the reader engaged in dialogue with the text.  When pieces of this puzzle fall together for the reader, that is, when things start to fit within the framework of the readers own story or the stories they are accustomed to, there is knowledge.  Knowledge as viewed by a critical-realist epistemology is never absolute, but by definition open to the possibility of challenge, modification, and subversion.  It features on the linear scale of "possible" to "highly probable".  It is never fixed.  Its major contribution lies in its puzzle solving ability.

This study presupposes a critical-realist approach to the texts to be investigated.  It is seen as a puzzle-solving contribution to the parables in Luke. No-one is claiming that the result of the study is in any sense absolute or final, or objectively accurate.  But it is seen as an alternative approach to the Lukan parables in the hope that it will provoke thought and new insight.

### 1.4    Methodological remarks and investigative programme

The basic differences between induction, deduction, and abduction have been noted above (1.3).  Although, depending on the aspect of research under consideration, all three of these methodological approaches may feature in this study, it will largely be governed by an abductive approach.  As such, it follows a line in the logic of the procedure of discovery, involving a continual back-and-forth movement of checking between hypothesis and evidence and vice versa. Similarly the research is not confined to a single goal.  Large parts will be exploratory, but then again at times it will be descriptive and/or explanatory (see Mouton & Marais 1996:42-46).

The study is based on the conviction of the researcher that (1) the parables

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in Luke's Gospel can and should be read within Luke's narrative world;  (2) my interpretation of Luke's narrative as a whole and the individual parables will help me to identify Luke's worldview; (3)  Luke's fondness of juxtaposing opposites forms part of Luke's literary style; (4)  the parables, when read as metaphors (diaphoric in nature), challenge a conventional worldview which does not adhere to the Lukan worldview; and (5) in juxtaposing opposites Luke creates an alternative worldview which contributes to Luke's intention to resolve conflict between groups in tension and to work for reconciliation.

In this study no new methodological and/or interpretative methods of investigation as such are tested or developed.  The world of the parables and that of Luke's narrative is investigated using known methods of interpretation.  Notably the methods will not be confined to one particular discipline; they will be interdisciplinary.  In the past, prior to 1970, data in the Bible was seen either to be "historical" or "theological", which in turn determined the two main interpretative methods, that of theological exegesis and historical criticism.   This period of biblical interpretation was governed by the paradigm of the "purists", who believed that a "mixing" of approaches, practices or methods would create "impurities" (Robbins 1995:276).  The primary way to prevent the infiltration of such impurities was to determine an encompassing method of analysing biblical texts into which all other methods are incorporated in some subordinate position.  This positivist view has largely been abandoned today in favour of the interdisciplinary analysis and interpretation of texts.  This method assumes that there is no single, perfect method of text analysis, but, depending on the phenomena within the text that is being investigated, various disciplines can and should be used - not in opposition to one another but in dialogue.  Two of the most prominent new approaches to text analysis are that of literary criticism and socio-scientific criticism, both of which are used in this study (see, inter alia, Van Staden 1991; Elliott 1993; Horrell 1999). Robbins (1995:277-280) provides a helpful model for the interrelated use of these methods of interpretation.  As these methods have already been developed, the

methods of interpretation used will be indicated and motivated within the relevant parts of this study as we arrive at them.

After this introductory chapter the study proceeds in chapter 2 with a reflection on metaphor and on worldview.  In this chapter the notion of metaphor is presented from a "philosophical" perspective, indicating new perceptions concerning the meaning and the purpose of the metaphor and clarifying traditional misconceptions.  These new insights are applied to the concept of stories, that is, narratives, and to the value of stories in articulating worldviews, in particular our perceptions of God.  Chapter 3 consists of a "theological" view of metaphors.  The chapter is descriptive and explanatory and shows how biblical scholars (especially historical Jesus scholars) have applied the newly gained insights on metaphors to the parables of Jesus.  The polyvalence of metaphors allows the metaphor to be introduced into different contexts.  This leads to chapter 4 in which Luke's story is investigated.  The study of Luke's story is foremost an investigation of Luke's narrative world (that is the world of the text).  As this world, however, does not exist in isolation, Luke's narrative world is also investigated against the backdrop of Luke's contextual world (that is the world of Luke's community).  The two are invariably juxtaposed to create a (new) symbolic universe.  The purpose of reading Luke's story is to gain understanding of the underlying goal pursued by Luke when writing his narratives.  The chapter therefore concludes with a paragraph on Luke as a reconciler of opposites.  In chapters 5-7 three unique parables of Luke are analysed: "The Good Samaritan", Luke 10:25-37 (chapter 5); "A Man Had Two Sons", Luke 15:11-32 (chapter 6); "The Rich Man and Lazarus", Luke 16:19-31 (chapter 7).  Metaphor is used as a model to interpret these parables.  In each instance both the background of tension (providing the backdrop of Luke's metaphors) as well as the challenge to conventional wisdom are investigated.  Chapter 8 provides a summary of conclusions drawn.