



The dynamics of theologies: A transdisciplinary description

**Author:**Gys M. Loubser¹ **Affiliation:**

¹Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Research Project Registration:**Project Leader:** D.P. Veldsman **Project Number:** 1224719**Description:**

Dr Loubser is participating in the research project, 'Religious Experience from an evolutionary perspective', directed by Prof. Dr Veldsman, Department Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria.

Corresponding author:

Gys Loubser, gysloubser@gmail.com

Dates:

Received: 01 Sept. 2016

Accepted: 19 Dec. 2016

Published: 08 June 2017

How to cite this article:

Loubser, G.M., 2017, 'The dynamics of theologies: A transdisciplinary description', *HTS Theologies Studies/Theological Studies* 73(3), a3866. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.3866>

Copyright:

© 2017. The Authors. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

In this article, the author asks why the South African public, especially Afrikaans communities, is largely unaware of the knowledge generated in the field of science and religion. The author describes theologies as complex systems that interact with their environment. To illuminate the environment, the author turns to the theatre system and illustrates how the theatre system can illuminate the modelling choices of theologians.

Introduction

Scientific knowledge, like language, is intrinsically the common property of a group or else nothing at all. To understand it we shall need to know the special characteristics of the groups that create and use it. (Kuhn 1996:210)

Whatever scientific progress may be, we must account for it by examining the nature of the scientific group, discovering what it values, what it tolerates, and what it disdains. (Van Huyssteen 1986:68 quoting Kuhn)

There are many ways in which we can describe the dynamics of theological reflection. An obvious approach would be to place theological theories and approaches on a timeline and describe the progress from start to finish. However, this approach will offer us only a few linear hints as to why change occurred and almost no clues as to why theories and approaches reoccur. To illuminate the sources behind surface changes, we can turn to philosophers of science who can describe our understanding of knowledge and how that relates to the dynamics of theological reflection. Still, this approach tells us more about our models than our modellers. I propose we can illuminate the dynamics of theology, as an academic discipline, by describing theological communities and faith communities¹ as complex systems. This approach can shed light on the dynamics of our models and our modellers.

Why draw a distinction between theological and faith communities?² Theologies, as academic disciplines, emerge from the activities of a community of scholars. Theological communities are close-knit communities of inquiry in pursuit of optimal understanding regarding issues of faith. They operate in academic environments and are tasked with generating, facilitating, evaluating and critiquing models of faith communities, their theories, practices and experiences. Faith communities offer a way of life for their members and have 'distinctive forms of individual experience, communal ritual and ethical concerns' (Barbour 1997:xiii). They pursue the transformation of personal lives and the continued existence of the community. Although these two systems are connected, they have unique identities and function in different environments. In this article, I discuss and describe the dynamics of theological communities.

For most theologians, the dynamics of theology, as an academic discipline, runs in the background. However, for theologians who engage scientists and scholars from the wider university, the dynamics of theology swiftly moves to the foreground. It is through interaction with scholars from other disciplines that we come to see the boundaries, weaknesses, strengths and potential of theological reflection. The so-called field of *science & religion* has unearthed exciting and startling issues regarding the focus, method and credibility of theologies. Luckily, first-generation scholars in the contemporary manifestation of *science & religion* have pioneered different approaches by illuminating different aspects of the dynamics of theologies. These scholars focused mainly on

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

1. I will use the term *faith communities* in reference to traditional religious communities and emerging spiritual communities. The terms *faith practices* and *faith experiences* in turn include traditional religious practices and experiences, as well as spiritual practices and experiences.

2. 'Academic theology must not become a closed, abstract system out of touch with concrete reality and unrelated to those who are seeking to confess their faith in God within the world ... On the other hand, the confessing theology of a community of faith can so easily become ghetto-theology if it is cut off from the rigorous and critical scrutiny of academic theological endeavor' (De Gruchy 1987:45).

describing the relationship between science and religion, leading Ian Barbour to articulate four broad descriptions, namely conflict, independence, dialogue and integration (1997:77). However, these broad descriptions do not necessarily offer a progenitive description for engaging the nuances and complexities of the contemporary field of *science & religion*. Second-generation scholars focused especially on issues of methodology in a postmodern environment (Gregersen & Van Huyssteen 1998). However, the environment has changed once again. Now, given our global awareness through media, technological explosion, environmental concerns and discussions of the anthropocene, a growing number of scientists are asking – and answering, the ‘meaning’ – questions themselves (Christian 2005). The theologian is now only one of many voices facilitating sense-making. To navigate the field of *science & religion* and develop progenitive discussion is a much more involved task than before, given the extreme success – health and wealth – of scientific application.

Nevertheless, the South African public is still largely unaware of developments in the field of *science & religion*. Many issues breed in this naïveté, and we see the volatile consequences in society at large. Many religious and non-religious people still misunderstand the theory of evolution, amongst other issues, and its implications for faith (cf. Van Dyk 2013:9). Given the prominence and significance of scientific knowledge in our daily lives and the rich history of *science & religion* in Afrikaans philosophy (Duvenhage 2016:16), one would expect to hear much more informed opinion on faith and science from the pulpit. Alas! Neither churches nor scientific communities take the responsibility to educate their members on the issues discussed in *science & religion*. My aim here is to understand why mainline reformed churches in South Africa, specifically in Afrikaans communities, fail to take responsibility to educate their members and the public on the issues discussed in *science & religion*.

Science and religion

John H. Brooke (cf. 2008:297), a historian and philosopher of science, points to the fact that there are no such things as *science or religion*. What we have are sciences and religions. The proliferation of specialised sciences in Europe since the late 18th and early 19th century (2008:293) makes the term ‘science’ inept, even dangerous, in the field of *science & religion*. He points out that the boundaries between disciplines are constructed and change with time (cf. Brooke 2008:298). Natural philosophy, for instance, was broader in scope than contemporary natural sciences and included theological questions.³ However, ‘scientific communities, in their interface with the public, have tried to articulate a formalism usually called “the” scientific method’ (Brooke 2008:299). Even the word ‘religion’ developed out of comparative approaches to cultures, practices and rituals (Brooke 2008:298). Brooke (2008:300) also reminds us that the political

power and the constitution of authority come into play when scientist and theologians interact, be it in duet or dual. He (Brooke 2008:302) explains that ‘whether a particular piece of science is perceived as friend or enemy may crucially depend on local events and circumstances’. It becomes of the utmost importance to ask: *whose science and whose religion?* (Brooke 2008:301). We should also keep the audience’s environment in mind (Brooke 2008:302), because sciences and religions have social histories, and new ideas are the product of a community of inquiry within a wider cultural context (cf. Barbour 1997: 3–4). It is for this reason that I propose a transdisciplinary approach in describing the dynamics of theologies.

Transdisciplinary theologians (Loubser 2016:5) *recognise the knower in generating knowledge*. We focus on specific scholars and their specific approach to specific problems, because we recognise the role of the modeller in generating scientific and theological knowledge. Furthermore, transdisciplinary theologians *engage issues disclosed through lived experience*, which means the context of the audience is already included in our reflection. Transdisciplinary theologians also *appreciate that disciplines are open, have histories and are in disequilibrium* and, therefore, offer knowledge or models that embrace the social histories of disciplines and the environment in which they function. Moreover, transdisciplinary theologians argue that one of the ways to *enrich disciplinary research* is to *question disciplinary assumptions and disciplinary fragmentation*. Most importantly, transdisciplinary theologians argue that disciplines relate to each other *transversally* and, therefore, appreciate the significance of *transversal shifting*.

Sciences and religions are rooted in human concerns and endeavours and are not abstract from the social context in which their concerns and endeavours take distinctive form (Brooke 1991:8). The issue between Galileo and the Roman Catholic Church, for example, had political ramifications, and therefore, Galileo’s science ‘acquired meanings and implications that it might otherwise not have carried’ (Brooke 1991:8). Social and political circumstances also played a role in the evolutionary speculations of Charles Darwin (Brooke 1991:10). The conservative backlash following the French Revolution generated an environment in which Darwin’s theory could be condemned as atheistic. However, it is important to recognise that it was ‘often not the natural philosophers themselves, but thinkers with a social or political axe to grind, who transformed the sciences into a secularizing force’ (Brooke 1991:13). Mary Douglas observes that one would be careless to argue that the sciences are the principle cause of secularisation (Brooke 2009:229). Douglas explains that:

[R]eligious activity is grounded in social relations, not primarily in concepts of nature. Consequently it is wiser to look to long-term changes in social structure and to changes in religion itself if one wishes to understand the momentum of secularity. (p. 229)

Kuhn (1996) also acknowledges the role of social, economic and intellectual conditions in the development of disciplines when he offers Copernicus as an example that:

illustrate the way in which conditions outside the science may influence the range of alternatives available to the man who

3. Barbour (1997:6) writes: ‘For Aquinas and his followers, the conviction of God’s rationality encouraged an affirmative attitude towards nature, which ... contributed indirectly to the rise of science’.

seeks to end a crisis by proposing one or another revolutionary reform. (pp. xi–xii)

It is clear that in describing the dynamics of theologies, we have to generate a model that can illuminate the environment of theological communities, internal and external and offer a way to understand how individual scholars interact through disciplinary boundaries.

The characteristics of theologies

Theologies, as well as faith communities, are social systems, which means that both of these systems can be described in terms of complexity. Therefore, the characteristics of complex systems apply to both systems. As such, we have to keep two descriptions in mind. Firstly, we need to ask how the complexity of theological communities illuminates the dynamics of theologies. Secondly, we need to ask to what extent scholars acknowledge the complex characteristics of faith communities in their modelling of theologies or knowledge generation.

A large number of components

Theologies consist of a large number of scholars⁴ (cf. Cilliers 1998:119). However, the components themselves and the communicative language can be complex enough to compensate for a large number of components (Sawyer 2005:176). For theologies to have vital and dynamic properties, they need a lot of diversity (cf. Cilliers 2010:4). As such, diversity can be seen as a resource that may become vital in adapting to the environment (Cilliers 2010:15).

Dynamic interaction

Scholars interact dynamically with each other through lectures, papers, articles, books and conferences (cf. Cilliers 1998:119).

Rich interaction

Scholars interact, formally and informally, with each other through a vast array of different capacities (cf. Cilliers 1998:120), which include, amongst other activities, writing articles and books, working on research projects and mentoring. These interactions can influence many other scholars in the community as well (De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers 2010:27).

4. The knowing agent or the self is important here. De Villiers-Botha and Cilliers (2010) argue for a *complex self*. The Cartesian self is certain of its mind and the ability to think independently of the senses and of emotions (De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers 2010:21). The Existential self is 'a subject with the universal ability to freely determine itself and its existence' (De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers 2010:24). In contemporary analytical philosophy, the 'I' is 'an object of direct knowledge (i.e. introspection), while external objects can only be known indirectly' (De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers 2010:24). To resist reductionist descriptions of the self, De Villiers-Botha and Cilliers (2010) argue that: the self is not a complete and coherent entity present to itself. It is constituted through the complex interactions amongst a host of factors, the significance of which cannot be pinpointed for each one. Our sense of self is the result of transient patterns in the network of traces, which we organise into a (temporary) narrative. Consciousness is an emergent property of this network, not a central control system that 'causes' the experience of the self. (p. 35) The identity of the theology can also be understood in this way. For a more detailed discussion see De Villiers-Botha and Cilliers (2010).

Some interactions are non-linear

A small input can have a large effect, whilst large input may have little effect (Cilliers 1998:120). This entails that a piece of information affects scholars in different ways and that scholars' interpretation of information is influenced by their particular ethics (Woermann & Cilliers 2012:404).

Interactions have a fairly short range

Scholars interact with other scholars in their immediate context (cf. Cilliers 1998:121), but this context need not be geographical (cf. Cilliers 2008:48). It may also refer to schools of thought within a discipline and virtual communities. These interactions may have long-range influence facilitated by scholars in the immediate context, and the influence can be suppressed, enhanced or modulated along the way (De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers 2010:28).

There are feedback loops in the interactions

Scholars may influence themselves directly or indirectly (cf. Cilliers 1998:121). They may generate knowledge that modifies their initial models or that influences the discipline in a way that influences their value in the discipline, as well as the validity of their knowledge.

Theological communities are open

Scholars interact continuously with their internal and external environments – influenced by politics, economics, institutions and law (cf. Cilliers 1998:122). Theologies are constituted by their relationship to their environments. Furthermore, the internal interaction of scholars within the discipline and the emergent properties constrain the behaviour of scholars in these theologies (cf. Cilliers & Nicolescu 2012:715–716). This also means that theologies have an influence on their environments. When we describe these boundaries as closed, 'we may end up underestimating the scope of our responsibilities' (cf. Woermann 2010:184).

Theologies operate under conditions far from equilibrium

Theologies change and adapt to new information, knowledge, research methods and new questions (cf. Cilliers 1998:122). One of the reasons for this disequilibrium is the openness or porousness of theological boundaries.

Theologies have histories

Theologies have histories and evolve through time, and their past is co-responsible for present behaviour (cf. De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers). These histories are also open to multiple interpretations, which means scholars who describe it shape the histories of theologies (cf. Cilliers 1998:122).

Scholars are ignorant of the whole system

A single scholar or group of scholars cannot be aware of all the knowledge generated within theologies

(cf. Cilliers 1998:122). Therefore, scholars can only respond to information locally available (De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers 2010:28). Scholars, like Karl Barth, may have a profound effect on a discipline, but they are not in control of a discipline. What is also interesting here is that theologies continue even though some scholars retire and new scholars are appointed. Theologies are not dependent on a single scholar. It also means that more than one legitimate description of a particular theology is possible, because modellers can only describe parts of theologies (cf. Cilliers 2008:46).

Self-eco-organisation

The spontaneous emergences of collaborations amongst scholars in theologies, in part, generate the structures of theologies (cf. Montuori 2008:xxxv). However, whilst theologies are self-directed systems that organise themselves and their environments, theologies are also profoundly dependent on, and co-organised by, their environments (cf. Montuori 1998:35).⁵ The environment in which theologies function changes continuously, and therefore, theologies have to be adaptable in order to cope with these changes (cf. De Villiers & Cilliers 2010:28).

This self-organisation relationally incorporates the history of the system (memory) and elements external to it. What is important here is that there is no central control; the network acts upon the relation between memory and external information to satisfy the constraints under which it operates. Thus, the structure of the system cannot be completely determined by the environment in which it finds itself, nor is the environment important merely to the extent that it serves the purpose of the system. Meaning, for a specific system in a specific context, is the result of a process, and this process is dialectical (involving elements from 'inside' and 'outside' the system) as well as historical (previous states of the system are vitally important) (De Villiers-Botha & Cilliers 2010:28–29).

A divergent range of timescales

Theologies display behaviour over a divergent range of timescales (cf. Cilliers 2008:45). Theologies have to cope with their environments and have to adapt to changes in their environments. Yet, to sustain themselves and their identities, at least parts of theologies change at a slower rate than changes in their environment (cf. Cilliers 2008:45). In this way, theologies develop 'memory'.

How do these characteristics come into play in describing the dynamics of theologies? Concerning theological communities, it illuminates the way in which scholars interact within theological communities, as well as how they interact with scholars from other communities. These characteristics also provide guidelines with which we can evaluate the models generated by scholars in theological communities.

5. See footnote 4 of this article.

The dynamics of transforming theologies

These characteristics, in relation to the field of *science & religion*, have three critical implications pertaining to how we describe the boundaries of disciplines; how the ethics of scholars play a role in generating, facilitating, evaluating and critiquing models; and how paradigms are shaped and reshaped through self-eco-organisation.

Boundaries

Theologies have boundaries, and the function of these boundaries is to constitute a system and to enable interaction between theologies and their environments (cf. Cilliers 2010:8). A description of the boundaries is simultaneously a function of the activity of a particular theology and a product of the reason for the description (cf. Cilliers 2008:47). For scholars in *science & religion*, this is one of the most intensive tasks. If our description overemphasises the openness of the boundaries, we may lose the integrity of the particular theology. But, if our description overemphasises closure, it may lead to a theology that underplays the role of the environment (cf. Cilliers 2008:47). This is why it is important to look at the ethics of the modeller.

Part of the difficulty in describing the boundaries of theologies is that part of these communities may exist in different spatial locations (cf. Cilliers 2008:48). Moreover, non-adjacent shared systems could be part of many different communities simultaneously. Different communities interpenetrate each other, and theologies share certain systems with other disciplines (cf. Cilliers 2008:48). In other words, changes in disciplines or shared systems can have a profound effect on theological communities. For instance, when universities change their policies, these changes will inevitably lead to changes in theological communities. Furthermore, if scholars are richly connected, there will always be a short route from any scholar to the 'outside' of the community (cf. Cilliers 2008:48).

I propose that we can describe the boundaries of theologies by describing the focus of a theological community, the experiential resources they draw on and the heuristic structures they employ to constitute the specific community (cf. Van Huyssteen 1999). These boundaries also enable transversal relations between a theological community and other disciplinary communities because they may share experiential resources or heuristic structures. Because these boundaries are open, *transversal shifting* may occur. In other words, changes in other disciplines or shared systems may initiate transformation in theological communities. I suggest that most scholars reflecting on *science & religion* offer descriptions of transversal shifts and attempt to articulate the implications of these *transversal shifts*. Kuhn (1996) writes:

[C]risis need not be generated by the work of the community that experiences them and that sometimes undergoes revolution as a result. (pp. 180–181)

For example, when paleoanthropologists discuss the possibility of a new hominoid species like *Homo naledi*, these discussions do not influence theology directly. However, these discussions may impact the way in which scientists model our evolutionary development, which may initiate a transversal shift. Furthermore, changes in the social structure of scientific communities may also initiate transversal shifts. For instance, when resources are reallocated to new research projects or research papers are published in open access journals rather than in traditional journals like *Nature* (Williams 2016), the structure of scientific communities changes. In other words, the discovery of *Homo naledi* does not influence theological reflection, but the possible remodelling of our evolutionary history and the ways in which scientific communities conduct and publish research does influence theological communities transversally.

Ethics

Modelling or generating knowledge also involves ethics, because 'any description is always relative to the perspective from which the description was made' (Cilliers et al. 2013:2). What matters to scholars in their work and personal lives constitute this perspective (Woermann & Cilliers 2012:404).

As such, self-critique is paramount because generating knowledge always involves choices for which scholars are responsible (Woermann & Cilliers 2012:406–407). There are always other ways to describe complex systems or other ways of generating knowledge (cf. Woermann & Cilliers 2012:407). By accepting this, scholars respect diversity and accept that their models or knowledge are subject to revision (cf. Woermann & Cilliers 2012:408). Thus, the ethics of scholars play a role in how they generate, facilitate, evaluate and critique models of faith communities, their practices and experiences.

With regard to the dynamics of theologies, it means that the ethics of theological communities are determined by the collection of choices made by scholars within these communities (cf. Cilliers 2004:27). They are responsible for these choices and cannot shift responsibility to *a priori* criteria or someone else. In other words, theological communities do not only generate criteria for ethical behaviour but also function because of ethical choices made by scholars (cf. Cilliers 2004:27).

Paradigms

Transdisciplinary theologians *enrich disciplinary research by questioning disciplinary assumptions and disciplinary fragmentation* and, therefore, engage and critique disciplinary paradigms. Kuhn (1996:176) argues that we can discover paradigms by 'scrutinizing the behaviour of a given community's members'. As such, paradigms are what members of a theological community share, and, conversely, a theological community consists of scholars who share a paradigm. He writes:

A paradigm governs, in the first instance, not a subject matter but a group of practitioners. (Kuhn 1996:180)

Interestingly, Kuhn argues that new theories and discoveries emerge in the minds of one or a few individuals who concentrate intensely on crisis-provoking problems (Kuhn 1996:144). This can explain why the field of *science & religion* generates so much research concerning epistemology, paradigms and suggestions for theological reform (cf. Kuhn 1996:87). Scholars 'will constantly try to generate speculative theories that, if successful, may disclose the road to a new paradigm and, if unsuccessful, can be surrendered with relative ease' (Kuhn 1996:87). Theological reform, according to Kuhn, occurs with a growing sense that an existing paradigm has ceased to function adequately (cf. Kuhn 1996:92). Kuhn (1996:94) also likens the choice between paradigms to the choice between political institutions and modes of communal life.

I propose that paradigms are generated through self-eco-organisation. In other words, macro-behaviour is the result of 'the micro-activities of the system, keeping in mind that these are not only influenced by their mutual interaction and by top-down effects, but also by the interaction of the system with its environment' (Cilliers et al. 2013:3).

Theatre as reflection of the environment

To illuminate the dynamics of particular theologies at a particular time, we need to shed light on the environments in which these theologies functioned. This will help us understand the modelling choices and ethics employed by the modellers. I suggest that we can turn to theatre to illuminate the environment of theological communities.

Temple Hauptfleisch (1997:2), a socio-theatre researcher, argues that studying the arts and artists of a specific community can offer a guide to the intellectual, emotional and political climate of that community. Like all social systems, the theatre system is dynamic, open and in disequilibrium as it interacts with the society (environment) in which it is embedded (cf. Hauptfleisch 1997:4). It is a system that is very sensitive to changes in its environment – social, political, economic and moral changes (Hauptfleisch 1997:4). Furthermore, he argues it is the theatre system, the sum of artefacts and *the means of production*, that reflect the community and in the long-term may influence or change that community (Hauptfleisch 1997:3). He writes:

[I]f the theatre as system of processes and beliefs, is seen to shift its emphases and structures, it tends to signal or denote corresponding changes in the society itself. And *vice versa* perhaps, because of its status, any value-based change in the theatrical system at large must in the long term also affect the larger system in some way. (p. 114)

However, it is important to note that the theatre system does not affect the larger system through a single, unaligned and de-contextualised performance (Hauptfleisch 1997:114). It is the system as a whole that can affect its environment. He explains:

Theatre is a cultural symbol within most societies and is highly privileged in terms of funds, facilities, exposure (see the arts

pages of newspapers and arts programmes on television) and educational status, and hence is imagined as highly influential. In fact the formula may be seen to read: The arts (and thus theatre) = art = culture = belief and value systems = socio-cultural and socio-political structures. (p. 144)

Styan (1981:xi) also argues that the arts and artists may offer insight into our perceptions and us. He explains that we should also look at the style of different theatre productions to understand the environment in which the artist functions:

[I]f an artist's perception of reality is conditioned by the age he lives in and by the medium he works with, an understanding of style will supply some of the clues to both. (p. xi)

One of the most versatile styles in German theatre was the expressionist movement. Here the artists rejected any realistic style and offered private experience, inner vision and what they saw (Styan 1981:1). Expressionism, as a style in German theatre, was initially a protest against 'pre-war authority of the family and community, the rigid lines of the social order and eventually the industrialization of society and the mechanization of life' (Styan 1981:3). However, after the brutality of WWI, they left the personal and subjective and expressed sophisticated concern for society (Styan 1981:3-4). Expressionist drama became political with a distinct Marxist temper (Styan 1981:4). Dramaturges like Reinhardt, Piscator and Brecht utilised theatre as an instrument for social change and told much more sober stories (Styan 1981:6).

Interestingly, Hauptfleisch argues the main driving force behind the true impact of theatre as a socio-political instrument is in the celebrity generated by the system. Turner (2004:9) also observes the social function and cultural formation of celebrity when he writes:

[A]s the media plays an ever more active role in the production of identity; as our consumption practises increasingly reflect choices that privilege the performance of identity; and as celebrity becomes an increasingly common component of media content; it is not surprising that celebrity should become one of the primary locations where the news and entertainment media participate in the construction of cultural identity. (p. 102)

Celebrities, especially stars, 'articulate what it is to be a human being in contemporary society' (Turner 2004:103) and 'represent typical ways of behaving, feeling and thinking in contemporary society' (Turner 2004:104). Interestingly, Turner (2004:105) explains that sport celebrities are usually connected to national identity, and their conduct and performance are related to societal anxieties about morality and social behaviour (Turner 2004:106).

The influence of theatre, both on stage and film, has been utilised throughout history. Goebbels, Hitler's Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, 'placed great importance on film as a means of entertainment, while also considering entertainment as a very effective means of propaganda' (Gorman & McLean 2003:88). Goebbels utilised film as a tool to reinforce existing values and beliefs. Television can also shape and reinforce popular attitudes

(Gorman & McLean 2003:148), and this power to influence behaviour, ideas, language and fashion derives from its suggestion to what is normal, desirable and important.

Durham and Keller (2001:ix) explains that societies utilise culture to cultivate attitudes and behaviour 'that predispose people to consent to established ways of thought and conduct'. For instance, the Frankfurt School argued that American Media culture worked to promote US capitalism, because giant corporations controlled the cultural industries (Durham & Keller 2001:4). They organised these industries according to the structures of mass production 'churning out mass-produced products that generate a highly commercial system of culture which in turn sold values, lifestyles, and institutions of American capitalism' (Durham & Keller 2001:4).

Taking my cue from the above, I propose that we can illuminate the environment in which theological communities function by turning to the theatre system. Furthermore, we can, to some degree, anticipate transformations in theological communities if there are transformations in the theatre system.

Theatre and theology in South Africa

To describe the entire theatre system in South Africa to illuminate the environment in which theological communities in South Africa function is a project on its own. Here, I can offer only a few snapshots to illustrate the argument. I will highlight some of the influential aspects of the theatre system in South Africa and discuss how that may relate to the ethics and modelling choices of theological communities. As stated above, my main focus, however, is to understand why the field of *science & religion* is still unknown to the South African public (specifically Afrikaans communities).

South African theatre and theology

After the Anglo-Boer war, the Afrikaner rapidly appropriated all cultural institutions for social and political purposes and thus Afrikaans universities, newspapers and theatre companies rose (Hauptfleisch 1997:38). Amongst other approaches, they employed theatre as an educational tool and utilised it in the cause of Afrikaner nationalism (Hauptfleisch 1997:34). Why? Is it because they understood that 'the artwork, and the artist is only a medium whereby a longer term process of persuasion is set in motion by the particular artistic or cultural grouping' (cf. Hauptfleisch 1997:111)? Pauw observes that it was the Afrikaans writers who first 'construed the history of the Dutch settlers in South Africa as the history of a unique and unified people – the Afrikanervolk' (2007:109). Totius, a poet, glorified the Afrikaner as a trampled people that were standing up again (Pauw 2007:109). Melt Brink 'wrote 14 Dutch pieces on the growing nationalist movement between 1868 to 1877' and then shifted to an early form of Afrikaans (Hauptfleisch 2007:5). Afrikaners made rigorous demands of the arts and

artists to promote the language and Afrikaner nationalism (Hauptfleisch 2007:5–6), because it was necessary to write good poems and novels in Afrikaans (Giliomee 2012b:278). They felt oppressed and their language, culture and history were disregarded (Giliomee 2012a:221). Their children had to be schooled in English and were taught about the glorious British Empire (Giliomee 2012:224). This led to the first Afrikaner nationalist organisation – Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners – and the newspaper *Die Patriot* to promote Afrikaans as a language and culture (Giliomee 2012a:224). It is important to note that the promotion of Afrikaans as a language and culture was not intended to lead to Apartheid. However, Apartheid ideology emerged, in part, as a result of the way in which Afrikaner identity and culture was modelled. If we construct identity in contrast to other cultural identities, we risk constructing a defensive identity constantly under threat from the other. The construction of Afrikaans identity and culture turned radical during the Great Depression (1929–1933) accompanied by a massive drought in South Africa during the same time (Giliomee 2012c:300).

During the 1930s and 1940s, many theologians and artists studied in Germany, the Netherlands and the United States of America (cf. Hofmeyr 2012:445). Impressed with the growing Romanticism and National Socialism in Germany, fighting against the British and communism, these young theologians and artists imported these ideas into their own communities in South Africa (cf. Hofmeyr 2012:445). The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) associated with the poverty and social issues of the Afrikaner people (Brümmer 2013:239). The socio-economic factors also led to race issues and the split between church communities along racial lines (Koopman 2014:987). Brooke (2009:230) notices that when nations with a long religious tradition are oppressed by a foreign power, ‘religion has often reinforced a sense of national identity that breaks out of its chains with a new vitality once freedom has been gained’. Abraham Kuyper’s theology of culture and *volk* ‘opened the way for Romantic nationalism in its German form, which was becoming fused with racism’ and penetrated the thinking of Afrikaner intellectuals (Pauw 2007:113). Rossouw (2001:99) also observes that Apartheid theology, at first, was meant to be pastoral and served to comfort and heal Afrikaners who felt their cultural identity endangered. However, during the 1930s, this pastoral character was replaced by a much more radical form of apartheid (Rossouw 2001:99). Pauw (2007:107) identifies three factors that shifted the emphasis to apartheid theology during the 1920s:

1. the pastoral need created by the poverty and destitution of Afrikaners after the SA War
2. racial prejudice and racism that were already present in the church
3. the importation of romantic notions of nation and purity.

These socio-political and socio-economic factors generated an environment in which natural theology could flourish. Theologians drew on sources such as history, culture, nature and rationality rather than on the special revelation of God in

Christ (Pauw 2007:112). This is because religion, like other social constructions can change with society (Pauw 2007:50). The change can be from within or from a ‘reformation of certain aspects of the ethnic group in its relation to the rest of society’ (Pauw 2007:50). Natural theologians, therefore, wanted to make sense of the environment in which they live. Brooke (2015) explains that:

One of the reasons why the Darwinian impact was so great is that many people had come to assume that through studying the natural sciences, one was studying something that was spiritually edifying – that from the study of nature, you could actually draw moral and religious lessons. And so we have that tradition, often called ‘natural theology’, where you could establish the attributes of God independently of revelation.

So, when human history, nature, human nature or human rationality is given the same or higher status than the Bible, we are dealing with natural theology (Rossouw 2001:91). Interestingly, Brooke (cf. 1991:301) notices that Germany was home to the most radical forms of biblical criticism in which scientific methods were used to understand the biblical message. This led to new attitudes towards revelation in which Scripture ‘was not itself revelation but rather a human witness to the human experience of revelation’ (Barbour 1997:68). That, coupled with the massive growth and popularity of science, generated an intricate environment in which German theologians needed to make sense of changing faith communities and the use of science by the Nazis to reshape society (cf. Barbour 1997:84).

Within this socio-political and socio-economic environment, Karl Barth offered a closed theology that could safeguard German theological models and faith communities against the Nazis. Four centuries earlier, Martin Luther posed a political and doctrinal threat to the Catholic Church by arguing that the individual can receive salvation without the mediation of the church (Brooke 1991:94). The only mediator between God and humans is Jesus Christ. Barth, also trying to bypass Nazi theology, argues, ‘God can be known only as revealed in Christ and acknowledged in faith’ (Barbour 1997:85). In fact, he insisted that religious faith ‘depends entirely on divine initiative, not on human discovery of the kind occurring in science’ (Barbour 1997:85). He also ‘rejected any external criterion for the adequacy (or plausibility) of the Christian faith, especially on the basis of the limits to human nature and human knowing’ (Conradie 2011:58). Barth completely rejected the openness of theology. However, I suggest, based on the description of theology offered above, that his emphasis on a closed theology was driven by socio-political considerations. As such, whilst Barth offers a model of theology that emphasises its insulation from the environment, his modelling ethics is still shaped by the environment, and illustrates that theology is co-organised by its environment. In other words, Barth offered a model of theology that severed it from any influence other than revelation. However, his choices in modelling theology in this way were influenced and motivated by the inappropriate use of knowledge from the sciences by Nazi theologians.

Under the segregated environment in the mid-fifties in South Africa, a number of writers began to write actively against the regime and its politics (Hauptfleisch 2007:11). Between 1956 and 1962, the 'first real break with the received tradition of the British colonial theatre heritage' and a long-term rift between the artist and the state occurred (Hauptfleisch 2007:11). However, it is important to acknowledge that, as in all social systems, some writers agreed with the status quo, whilst others critiqued it. Plays like *Die Jaar van die Vuuros* (by W.A. de Klerk) and *Die pluimsaad waai vër* (by N.P. van Wyk Louw) questioned the architects of Apartheid. They were followed by writers like Athol Fugard and Bartho Smit – the most banned playwright in Afrikaans – whose plays *Moeder Hanna* and *Putsonderwater* were played for a selected audience only (Hauptfleisch 2007:11). There were also collaborative efforts across racial barriers to confront the system and integrate traditional African elements into contemporary theatre (Hauptfleisch 2007:12). These efforts made some noise, and in 1965, the government introduced the *Group areas and separate amenities act*: 'From now on no racially mixed casts and no racially mixed audiences were to be allowed' (Hauptfleisch 2007:12). However, during the 60s mainstream public theatre flourished, but it was unable to address the real issues of the day because it relied on the government for facilities and funding (Hauptfleisch 2007:14). So, they turned to improvisational and experimental theatre forms 'as a way of raising the *political consciousness* of the performers and public' (Hauptfleisch 2007:14).

Between 1972 and 1974, the movement towards a serious and locally grown theatre of opposition became a virtual revolution (Hauptfleisch 2007:15). The major factors that led to this 'were the overt and militant growth of the Black Consciousness movement (particularly since 1969), the cumulative effect of the playwrights' boycott (1963) and the Equity ban (1966)' (Hauptfleisch 2007:15). Moreover, the 'frustration of working along segregated lines, and a growing disillusionment with the state funded Performing Art Councils (PACs)' flourished into a force of change.

Both *epic theatre* and *cabaret*, as developed in Germany, are of particular importance for South African theatre. During his time in Berlin between 1919 and 1930, the Marxist Edwin Piscator, working with Bertolt Brecht, developed epic theatre (Styan 1981:128). Their aim was to develop theatre that 'could be used for the public "discussion" of political and social issues' (Styan 1981:128). They stripped the stage of realism in pursued of assisting the actor to facilitate what they regarded as the ancient mission of the actor: entertaining and teaching simultaneously (cf. Styan 1981:130). As oppose to early expressionist who offered their subjective emotions, 'epic' actors offered commentary *on* their emotions (Styan 1981:130). Actors needed to transcend their egotism and 'become the mirror in which the audience saw itself' (Styan 1981:130). Epic plays were to report on social and political themes and would open its content for inspection by the audience (cf. Styan 1981:131). This was done not only in the content of the play but also in the way the play was presented.

Piscator utilised stage machinery to reflect a modern scientific society and employed film as an independent narrative device (Styan 1981:131). He projected newsreels and still photographs, which became 'visual commentary upon, and an extension of, the drama, and assisted the actor in creating the desired objectivity' (Styan 1981:131).

In his own work, Bertolt Brecht also aimed at a political examination of society, class structure and economic systems (Styan 1981:141). Brecht's theatre became didactic in a scientific age and the dialectic became a major tool for 'recognizing, examining, and representing social contradictions and antagonisms in order to transform society' (Silberman 2012:175). He taught the German playwright to turn the mirror on society, away from subjective expressions, and assist the audience with social criticism (Styan 1981:165). Brecht, however, did not limit himself to theatre and also utilised film and radio plays (Durham & Keller 2001:4) and had a profound influence on theatre and film across the world (Silberman 2012:169). In fact, Marc Silberman observes that during the 1990's Brecht 'remained among the top four foreign language playwrights on American stages' and 'German-language stages in Europe' (2012:169).

Interestingly, Brecht wanted to re-establish the comic as a tool that could open the mind of the masses (Silberman 2012:172) and drew from philosophy to understand how we shape reality. Silberman (2012) writes:

... Brecht's point of departure assumes that any representation of reality is always a construction of reality, and the goal of constructing a particular reality is to gain knowledge about it in order to undertake actions effectively that can change it. (p. 173)

In the mid-1920s, Brecht wrote a play on the Chicago grain trade market and became interested in economic theory just before the market crash in 1929 (Silberman 2012:174). His play *Modern Times* was also constantly revised as Germany underwent socio-political transformations between the mid-1920s and mid-1950s (Silberman 2012:182). These revisions were important because Brecht 'sought to develop a kind of thinking that can understand the process of historical change and the changeability of human behaviour' (Silberman 2012:185).

Alongside epic theatre by Brecht, German cabaret also made its way to South Africa. Hennie Aucamp describes the cabaret writer as: a preacher in clown's make-up (Aucamp 1994:5). However, it is necessary to keep in mind that German cabarets were also subject to commercial enterprise (Lareau 1991:471). In the early years of German cabaret, just before WWI, cabarets were synonymous with conspicuous consumption and eroticism (Lareau 1991:473). German cabaret flourished after WWI 'as a means to escape on one hand, but on the other and perhaps more importantly, as a means for coming to grips with the strange new environment' (Lareau 1991:476). This should also be distinguished from the 'literary cabaret' that pays attention to intellectual quality (Lareau 1991:476). Nevertheless, cabaret can and has been

employed to draw attention to socio-political and socio-economic issues. For instance, in their production *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1933), Brecht and Kurt Weill attack the family as representative of capitalist values (Aucamp 1994:6). This anti-capitalist theme in cabaret is also accompanied by war as a theme (Swart 1994:39). Cabaret can give expression to collective violence and anger, as well as collective opportunism and pride (Aucamp 1994:6). In its critique of society, it employs irony, satire, hyperbole and parody (Aucamp 1994:28). What is important here is that cabaret is a theatrical form that mixes a variety of smaller forms. As such, it is very flexible and can easily adapt to changes in the environment. It is exactly the malleability of cabaret that makes it a favourite for artists who wish to comment on the issues and structures of their communities and societies.

Although these are only two examples of German theatre during the 1920s and 1930s, both these forms have had great influence on German theatre, as well as in other countries, including South Africa. Important here is that significant artists found it necessary to develop ways of critiquing socio-political issues and educating their audiences on widespread problems in their societies. Political unrest, economic instability, war, capitalism, industrialisation, the intensifying importance of science and growing national identities prompted artists like Brecht and others, to show people what they are doing, how they are living and where they are going.

In South Africa from the late 1970s, three major trends in the theatre system occurred. Firstly, theatre and theatre practitioners 'discovered the power of *performance* as a socio-political weapon' (Hauptfleisch 2007:16). Secondly, 'genuine and wide-ranging attempts at transcending the racial, linguistic and other barriers at understanding through the process of theatre were undertaken' (Hauptfleisch 2007:16). Thirdly, a significant and noticeable shift away from the institutionalised and imported European forms towards a more informal indigenous performance tradition arose (Hauptfleisch 2007:16). By the late 80s, the theatre transformed from a *theatre of anger* to a *theatre of reflection* (Hauptfleisch 2007:16–17). Hauptfleisch observes:

Most noticeable too was the re-emergence of and growth of the satirical revue and the cabaret as form, with the work of Robert Kirby, Pieter-Dirk Uys, Ian Fraser and Casper de Vries particularly prominent in the eighties, along with the more literary cabarets of Hennie Aucamp – especially *Met Permissie Gesê* (With Your Permission, O:1981; P:1983) and *Slegs vir Almal* (Only for Everybody, O:1984; P:1986). (p. 18)

In 1985, the emphasis shifted from socio-political concern to include social and personal issues (Hauptfleisch 2007:18). Now, gay and feminist issues surfaced, 'as well as a variety of environmental matters' (Hauptfleisch 2007:18).

As South African theatre practitioners drew on German epic theatre and cabaret to offer socio-political critique and educate their audiences, South African theologians also turned to Germany to critique Apartheid-theology and its

roots in natural theology, for example, Beyers Naudé's propagation of the Confessing Church in Germany (Pauw 2007:150, 206). Similar to Barth, anti-apartheid theologians attempted to develop models of theology that could bypass apartheid theology. Early voices focused on ecclesiology, specifically church unity, since apartheid theologians did not give adequate consideration to ecclesiology in modelling apartheid theology (cf. Pauw 2007:202–203). Apartheid theologians emphasised creation theology and argued for pluriformity, which overshadowed their ecclesiology (Pauw 2007:203). As such, anti-apartheid theologians in the DRC, like Beyers Naudé, accentuated ecumenicity (Pauw 2007:203). Anti-apartheid theologians outside the DRC focused on Christology in their modelling of theology (Pauw 2007:204). This Christological emphasis can also be seen in the Belhar Confession, which De Gruchy links to the same tradition as the Barmen Declaration (cf. Pauw 2007:211). However, Pauw observes that the 'urgency of anti-apartheid theology ... came from a more Barthian revelation theology – what Jonker has described via Berkouwer as Biblical theology' (2007:230). Theological models offered by Van Ruler, Berkouwer and Barth were especially influential amongst anti-apartheid theologians (Pauw 2007:244). The Barthian emphasis on the church's mandate in society and Bonhoeffer's critique of the separation between the church and the world resonated with anti-apartheid theologians and the theological models they argued for (cf. Pauw 2007:244, 247). For Barth it is clear that faith communities have a responsibility towards society, however what this responsibility entails could only be known through revelation. Apartheid theologians' emphasis on creation ordinances and their implicit non-Christocentric models were seen as weaknesses in their armour (cf. Pauw 2007:252). Anti-apartheid theologians could thus weaken their armour by focusing on Christology.

Christ need not be read into all Biblical text, but Christ is the entry point to a proper understanding of all texts and to avoiding the danger of natural theology, as was explained by D.J. Smit in his tribute to Wille Jonker (Pauw 2007:251).

Thus, as with all confessions and theological models, we must understand these theological models in their environment. Pauw (2007) states:

The authority of Christ with reconciliation and justice ought therefore never to be understood as a timeless construct. It must be understood as having served a specific purpose, namely to expose the theological fault at the base of apartheid theology. (p. 252)

Similar to the theatre system, DRC theologians employed different ethics in modelling theology because both apartheid and anti-apartheid theological models were presented in the same church family with a background in Reformed Calvinism (cf. Pauw 2007:132). Some theologians defended the status quo, whilst others critiqued it. Reconciliation and justice in Christ shaped anti-apartheid theological models, but they never explicitly based these models on political or

social theories (cf. Pauw 2007:242, 210). Anti-apartheid theologians 'believed they were busy with Biblical theology over and above any form of natural theology', which drew motives and knowledge from sources other than Christ as revealed in the Bible (Pauw 2007:210).

Interestingly, resistance to scientific knowledge can also be traced back to discussions in the 1920's, which led to Johannes du Plessis being forced to leave his post in theological education at Stellenbosch since he argued for the importance of scientific knowledge in theological reflection and modelling (cf. Brümmer 2013:225). Whilst this can also be linked to political dynamics, the main thrust behind the opposition to Du Plessis' theological model came from a growing fundamentalism amongst faith and theological communities. Brümmer (2013:232) comments that this fundamentalism is understandable because of the social, political and economic uncertainty that reigned during these discussions. This epistemological conversation resurfaced again in the mid-eighties with the work of Wentzel van Huyssteen. In his book *Teologie as kritiese geloofsverantwoording: Teorievorming in die Sistematiese teologie* (1986) (translated: *Theology and the Justification of Faith: Constructing Theories in Systematic Theology* [1989]), Van Huyssteen draws on the philosophy of science to shed light on the epistemological sources underlying apartheid and anti-apartheid theological models. He argues that the epistemological attitudes of both apartheid and anti-apartheid theologians are still locked in foundationalist epistemologies (cf. Van Huyssteen 1986). He explains that the intellectual activities of theologians are shaped by primary convictions and this implies the models they construct are shaped by their personalities, education and the paradigms in which they operate (cf. Van Huyssteen 1986:81). After the political fall of Apartheid, themes in South African Reformed theology have transformed to include issues concerning gay, feminist, environmental and African issues.

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, I want to know why the developments, knowledge generated and models offered in the field of *science & religion* are still understood only as a 'nice-to-have' in theological communities. I argue that theologies emerge from the activities of scholars who generate, evaluate, facilitate and critique the practices, experiences and rituals of faith communities. Understood this way, I offer a complex description of theologies and illuminate the dynamics of theological communities. Here I argue that theologies are, amongst other characteristics, open and therefore co-organised by their environments. This means theological models offered by scholars are shaped by the ethics of the scholars offering the models; and these scholars are real persons who engage and reflect on the community in which they live. As such, to evaluate the models offered we need to consider both the ethics of modellers and whether they acknowledge the complex characteristics of that which they model – the practises, experiences and rituals of faith communities.

To illuminate the environment that co-organise theology and shape the ethics of scholars, I argue that we can turn to the arts, specifically the theatre in both its stage and film forms. By shifting the focus to the theatre system in South Africa (specifically its relation to Afrikaans communities), I shed light on the environment in which theologies function and suggest that the theatre system can offer some clues as to what we can anticipate in theological modelling.

Based on the above, I suggest that resistance to scientific knowledge in theological reflection today is motivated by two themes in South African Reformed theologies. The first is fundamentalism, which has been a part of South African theological modelling since the beginning of the 20th century. The second is the negative uses of natural theology that led to apartheid theology, and the ecumenical and Christological emphasis in anti-apartheid theology that attempted to bypass natural theology. These two attitudes towards theological modelling clarify why there is still resistance to the knowledge and models generated in the field of *science & religion*. However, we see a massive increase in theological models that emphasise ecological concerns, which has to deal with scientific knowledge, because it is the scientists who reveal these ecological issues. We also see many theological models that emphasise feminist issues, which mean scholars draw on sources other than the Bible to interpret the Bible. Theological models that emphasise gay issues draw on many disciplines, amongst others, medical science, psychology and politics – also sources other than the Bible. Theologies are open, and therefore, we need to allocate more resources and efforts on how to understand and facilitate the co-organisation of theologies. If we only focus on theologies themselves and the segments of faith communities we prefer to reflect on we will not be able to deal with *transversal shifts* – at least not proactively. If theologians are trained to deal with closed systems, like the descriptions offered by Karl Barth, theologies will always be reactive and need to force down closed boundaries in order to deal with their environments – theological models are shaped by the motivation for the modelling and the ethics of the modellers.

Furthermore, the boundaries of faith communities are drawn according to modellers' ethics and attitudes towards modelling. In other words, we are responsible for who is included and who is excluded in our models of faith communities. The main question we need to ask here is whether critical voices, be it post-religious, secular, atheist or post-theistic are part of the faith community. Do only members who agree with the current theological model in use constitute faith communities? Are critics of the current theological models not part of faith communities? Do their activities not shape the organisation of faith communities? In practical terms, should we include members of Renaissance, a faith community in Pretoria, as part of the DRC's faith communities' critical members or are they part of a different faith community? These are important questions in modelling faith communities, because reductionist models may not offer useful insights and distort theological models.

If we reduce theological reflection to include only those members who completely agree with or adhere to current theological models in use, we generate models with no progenerative value.

What can we anticipate in theological modelling?

In the South African theatre system, there are two aspects that are of significance for our question in this article, namely the *festival* and the *growth of Afrikaans television and film*.

Festivals like KKNK (Oudtshoorn), Vryfees (Bloemfontein), Aardklop (Potchefstroom) and Woordfees (Stellenbosch) have a very specific purpose to promote Afrikaans as a language and culture (Hauptfleisch 2001:173). This is motivated, in part, by the triple threat of Americanisation, Anglicisation and Africanisation (Hauptfleisch 2001: 172–173). These festivals ‘come to express, display and communicate a particular vision of Afrikaans and the ‘Afrikaner’ cultural context to the public at large (directly and indirectly)’ (Hauptfleisch 2001:173). Interestingly, during the past 2 years, we see a growing trend to translate English and other texts into Afrikaans and the reoccurrence of Afrikaans plays written to promote Afrikaans or critique Apartheid – not to mention the massive growth of cabaret, satire and stand-up at the festivals:

1. Aardklop feesprogram 2015: *Kinder van stilte* (Playwright: Mark Medoff); *Moeder Moed en haar kinders* (Bertolt Brecht); *Oskar en die pienk tannie* (Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt); *Siener in die suburbs* (P.G. du Plessis); *Son.Maan.Sterre* (Alice Birch); *Twee vir die prys van een* (Donald Churchill).
2. KKNK feesprogram 2015: *Bidsprinkaan* (André P. Brink); *Die Seemeeu* (Anton Chekov); *Moeder Moed en haar kinders* (Bertolt Brecht); *Na-aap* (Franz Kafka); *Siener in die suburbs* (P.G. du Plessis).
3. KKNK feesprogram 2016: *Die huis van Bernarda Alba* (Federico Garcia Lorca); *Kul* (Anthony Horowitz); *Nouliks of niks* (Samuel Beckett); *Pa* (Florian Zeller); *Son. Maan.Sterre* (Alice Birch); *Hond se gedagte* (Georges Feydeau) [It is also important to mention the play *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona) originally produced by the Market Theater].
4. Vryfees feesprogram 2015: *Bidsprinkaan* (André P. Brink); *Wie’s bang vir Virginia Woolf?* (Edward Albee); *Siener in die suburbs* (P.G. du Plessis); *Tsjekhof-triptiek* (Anton Chekov).
5. Woordfees feesprogram 2015: *Die seemeeu* (Anton Chekov); *Don Juan onder die boere* (Bartho Smit); *Orgie* (André P. Brink); *Siener in die suburbs* (P.G. du Plessis); *Son.Maan.Sterre* (Alice Birch).
6. Woordfees feesprogram 2016: *Hond se gedagte* (Georges Feydeau); *Mis* (Reza de Wet); *Moeder Moed en haar kinders* (Bertolt Brecht); *Orgie* (André P. Brink); *Raka* (N.P. van Wyk Louw). *Son.Maan.Sterre* (Alice Birch).

The funding of these festivals is also important. Some of the most prominent funders are kykNET, ATKV, Dagbreek Trust

and Media24. One of the most recent developments has been the establishment of the ‘Nasionale Afrikaanse Teaterinisiatief’, also known as ‘Nati’ (National Afrikaanse Theatre Initiative) by the Dagbreek Trust. The purpose of Nati is to fund and promote Afrikaans theatre and drama (a) and to assist in promoting better co-operation amongst the different Afrikaans Art festivals (Malan 2015). The Dagbreek Trust also funds *Afrikaans.com* and the Afrikaanse Taalraad with the mission to promote Afrikaans as a language and culture (b & c).

The massive growth in the Afrikaans film industry, with kykNET allocating resources to the development of Afrikaans television and films, has also greatly influenced the theatre system. The exclusively Afrikaans pay-tv channel kykNET is owned by M-NET, which was established by Naspers (National Press) in 1986 (d.). J.B.M. Hertzog formed Naspers in 1915 with D.F. Malan as the first editor of *Die Burger*, a daily newspaper (Lewis 2011). Naspers has grown to a market capitalisation of over \$66 billion and is one of the largest companies in Africa (d.). As a broad-based multinational internet and media group that owns MultiChoice (MIH Holdings Limited), Media24 and MWeb Holdings (Lewis 2011), Naspers has great influence on the news and entertainment industry, as well as our access to it.

kykNET offers news and entertainment to all Afrikaans speaking people and promotes Afrikaans as a language and culture. They have even made it possible for Afrikaans speaking people overseas and in diaspora to share in this language and culture through a new online application named ShowMax. The kykNET Filmfees has grown during the past 4 years and showcases a variety of issues important to Afrikaans speaking people.

The last time the theatre system displayed behaviour like we see today, was when Afrikaners wanted to protect and uplift their language and culture during the turn of the previous century, which led to strong nationalist trends – evident in South African and international politics once again. However, we also see behaviour similar to the 1960s to 1980s with theatre that turns the mirror on the audience and offers social critique.

What does this signify for theologians? The main thread in theological modelling during the times mentioned above was the inappropriate description of disciplinary and theological boundaries. Some scholars offered descriptions that assimilated theology into other sciences and causes, whilst others offered models with which they tried to fortify theology from the environment. Now, during political and economic instability in South Africa, coupled with a drought and our growing dependence on scientific knowledge and technology, scholars in the field of *science & religion* should be vigilant regarding disciplinary boundaries. The theological models we generate, evaluate, facilitate and critique shape and are shaped by our environments. We should disdain reductive models that cut theologies off from

their environments. We should tolerate revisions to our models, for they are provisional. But most of all, we should value responsible and progenitive models.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his gratitude to Prof. T. Hauptfleisch for his insights, discussions and input in the development of this article.

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.

References

- Aucamp, H., 1994, 'Die sewe doodsodes in kabaretverband', *SATJ* 8(2), 4–26.
- Barbour, I.G., 1997, *Religion and science: Historical and contemporary issues*, HarperSanFrancisco, San Francisco, CA.
- Brooke, J.H., 1991, *Science and religion: Some historical perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York.
- Brooke, J.H., 2008, 'Contributions from the history of science and religion', in P. Clayton & Z. Simpson (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of religion and science*, pp. 293–310, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Brooke, J.H., 2009, 'That modern science has secularized Western culture', in R.L. Numbers (ed.), *Galileo goes to jail: And other myths about science and religion*, pp. 224–234, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Brooke, J.H., 2015, 'Science, religion and changing conceptions of nature: An interview with John Hedley Brooke', viewed 10 June 2016, from <http://www.blogs.hss.ed.ac.uk/science-and-religion/2015/02/14/science-religion-changing-conceptions-nature-interview-john-hedley-brooke/>
- Brümmer, V., 2013, *Vroom en regsinnig?: Teologie in die NG Kerk*, Bybel-Media, Wellington, South Africa.
- Christian, D.G., 2005, *Maps of time: An introduction to big history*, California Press, CA.
- Cilliers, P., 1998, *Complexity and postmodernism: Understanding complex systems*, Routledge, London, New York.
- Cilliers, P., 2004, 'A framework for understanding complex systems', in P. Andriani & G. Passiante (eds.), *Complexity theory and the management of networks*, pp. 23–27, 04, World Scientific Books, World Scientific Publishing Co. Pty. Ltd.
- Cilliers, P., 2008, 'Complexity theory as a general framework for sustainability science', in M. Burns & A. Weaver (eds.), *Exploring sustainable science: A South African perspective*, pp. 39–57, AFRICAN SUN MeDIA, Stellenbosch.
- Cilliers, P., 2010, 'Difference, identity and complexity', in P. Cilliers & R. Preiser (eds.), *Complexity, difference and identity: An ethical perspective*, pp. 3–18, Springer, Dordrecht.
- Cilliers, P. & Nicolescu, B., 2012, 'Complexity and transdisciplinarity – Discontinuity, levels of reality and the hidden third', *Futures* 44, 711–718.
- Cilliers, P., Biggs, H.C., Bignaut, S., Choles, A.G., Hofmeyr, J.S., Jewitt, G.P.W., et al., 2013, 'Complexity, modeling, and natural resource management', *Ecology and Society* 18(3), 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ES-05382-180301>
- Conradie, E.M., 2011, 'All theology is natural theology: The hermeneutic necessity of natural theology?', *NGTT* 52(1&2), 58–65.
- De Gruchy, J.W., 1987, *Theology and Ministry in context and crisis: A South African perspective*, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, MI.
- De Villiers-Botha, T. & Cilliers, P., 2010, 'The complex 'I': The formation of identity in complex systems', in P. Cilliers and R. Preiser (eds.), *Complexity, difference and identity: An ethical perspective*, pp. 19–38, Springer, Dordrecht.
- Durham, M.G. & Kellner, D., 2001, *Media and cultural studies: Keywords*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA.
- Duvenhage, P., 2016, *Afrikaanse Filosofie: Perspektiewe en dialoë*, Sun MeDIA, Bloemfontein.
- Giliomee, H., 2012a, 'Afrikanernasionalisme, 1875–1899', in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortyde tot vandag*, Tafelberg, Kaapstad.
- Giliomee, H., 2012b, 'Afrikanernasionalisme, 1902–1924', in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortyde tot vandag*, Tafelberg, Kaapstad.
- Giliomee, H., 2012c, 'Radikale nasionalisme', in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortyde tot vandag*, Tafelberg, Kaapstad.
- Gorman, L. & Mclean, D., 2003, *Media and society in the twentieth century: A historical introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA.
- Gregersen, N.H. & van Huyssteen, J.V.W., 1998, *Rethinking theology and science: Six models for the current dialogue*, William B. Eerdmans Pub, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Hauptfleisch, T., 1997, *Theatre and society in South Africa: Some reflections in a fractured mirror*, J.L. van Schaik Academic, Hatfield, Pretoria.
- Hauptfleisch, T., 2001, 'The eventification of Afrikaans culture – Some thoughts on the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK)', *SATJ* 15(1), 169–177. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10137548.2001.9687731>
- Hauptfleisch, T., 2007, 'The shaping of South African theatre: An overview of major trends', in S. Arndt & K. Berndt (eds.), *Words and worlds. African writing, literature, and society – A commemorative publication in honor of Eckhard Breiting*, Africa World Press.
- Hofmeyr, J.W., 2012, 'Die Afrikaanse kerke in die 20ste eeu', in F. Pretorius (ed.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika: van voortyde tot vandag*, Tafelberg, Kaapstad.
- Koopman, N., 2014, 'Bonhoeffer and the future of Public Theology in South Africa. The on-going quest for life together', *NGTT* 55(1), 985–998.
- Kuhn, T.S., 1996, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, 3rd edn., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Lareau, A., 1991, 'The German Cabaret Movement during the Weimar Republic', *Theatre Journal* 43(4), 471–490. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3207977>
- Lewis, D.R., 2011, 'Apartheid Inc, the story of Naspers, Media24 and Channel Life', viewed 9 June 2016, from <https://mediaalternatives.com/2011/11/15/media-inc-the-story-of-naspers-media24-and-channel-life/>
- Loubser, G.M., 2016, 'Being transdisciplinary theologians in and beyond apocalyptic environments', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72(4), a3473. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3473>
- Malan, M., 2015, 'Inisiatief steun Afrikaanse toneelkuns', viewed 9 June 2016, from <http://www.netwerk24.com/Vermaak/Inisiatief-steun-Afrikaanse-toneelkuns-20151104?mobile=true>
- Montuori, A., 1998, 'Complexity, epistemology, and the challenge of the future', *Academy of Management Proceedings* 98, 31–41.
- Montuori, A., 2008, 'Foreword: Transdisciplinarity', in B. Nicolescu (ed.), *Transdisciplinarity: Theory and practice*, pp. ix–xvii, Hampton Press, Inc., Cresskill, NJ.
- Pauw, J.C., 2007, *Anti-apartheid theology in the Dutch Reformed family of churches: A depth-hermeneutical analysis*, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam.
- Rossouw, G.J., 2001, 'Essentials of apartheid', in J.W. Hofmeyr, C.S.J. Lombaard & P.J. Maritz (eds.), *Perspectives on Christianity*, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
- Sawyer, R.K., 2005, *Social emergence: Societies as complex systems*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Silberman, M., 2012, 'Bertolt Brecht, politics and comedy', *Social Research* 79(1), 169–188.
- Styan, J.L., 1981, *Modern drama in theatre and practice (vol. 3)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York.
- Swart, A., 1994, 'Die soldaat as metafoor in twee van Hennie Aucamp se kabarettetekste', *SATJ* 8(2), 39–57.
- Turner, G., 2004, *Understanding celebrity*, Sage, London.
- Van Dyk, P.J., 2013, 'The Bible and evolution: Opinions amongst southern African clergy and theologians from the Reformed church tradition', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34(1), Art. #776, 1–9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v34i1.776>
- Van Huyssteen, J.V.W., 1986 *Teologie as kritiese geloofsverantwoording: Teorievorming in die Sistematiese teologie*, Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, Pretoria.
- Van Huyssteen, J.V.W., 1999, *The shaping of rationality: Toward interdisciplinarity in theology and science*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Williams, P., 2016, 'Digging for glory', viewed 27 July 2016, from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/06/27/lee-berger-digs-for-bones-and-glory>
- Woermann, M., 2010, 'Corporate identity, responsibility and the ethics of complexity', in P. Cilliers & R. Preiser (eds.), *Complexity, difference and identity: An ethical perspective*, pp. 167–191, Springer, Dordrecht.
- Woermann, M. & Cilliers, P., 2012, 'The Ethics of complexity and the complexity of ethics', *South African Journal of Philosophy* 31(2), 403–419. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2012.10751787>