Postmodernism and Christian Theology (Part 11)

By Dallas Willard

Dallas Willard:

We've got to take a break. [gap in recording] ...and wind up in very much the same place, dissolving the identities that we normally assume in the modern tradition, normally assumed to exist objectively that you have two lines of argument. One is the identity thing with Derrida, uh Wittgenstein's argument's a little more circuitous. His argument goes like this goes deeper into the history of 20th century Philosophy. Right. But just to say. He starts from the idea that the only reason we believe in these identities is to explain how language works or language parentheses consciousness. The only reason we believe in these identities is because we think we need them to explain how language works He comes along and says we don't them. Language works this way namely by interior rules of the flow of discourse. [inaudible question] What I tried to do Patricia was to state the two basic philosophical arguments that underlie the postmodern stance. Now they aren't particularly postmodern in any other respect. They try to get at these main issues.

Speaker 2:

So given that and and I may you know if I’m going somewhere where you don't want to go just say so but I'm listening to this historical account of knowledge that [inaudible] apply it
today [inaudible] historically where philosophy is [inaudible] and the whole issue of [inaudible] and looking at identity of what Derrida and how what why would we be afraid of anything [inaudible] because a the whole idea of this apperceptionist approach that uh we see thing that we have essentials and we [inaudible] can approach a [inaudible] and know what knowledge can or can't be.

Dallas Willard:

I think the way that that issue comes up is on the issue of power and technology and the limits to which we should push that. The drive back of modernity has been push it as hard as you can. has been pushed as hard as that knowledge is intrinsically good. Even if it's not applied knowledge we should learn everything we can. Now that has been that drive of modernity which by the way underlies most talk you hear around the universities. Has been called into question. This is this is a major part of the postmodernist drive is to question whether or not knowledge is as such good. Might there not be some knowledge which is bad. You get uh I forget which one of your books gives Oppenheimer's reflections. I think it's [inaudible]. This is the famous case corroborated during the Atomic Bomb and then his reflections on that could that possibly have been a good thing we thought we we doing a good thing he was operating on the imperative of modernity but now then with cloning It's no longer a question I think as to whether or not it can be done.

But you do have questions like what would you have. Some of it silly. I mean the idea that you would have something that is identical to the one that is cloned Of course that in no sense of identity would that be true. [inaudible comment] Well I mean that just people don't think
very deeply about these issues. I mean you ask yourself how many courses did you hear identity explained in your college career. Probably not. When I explain it to my students is like what's this. But of course they talk about same and different all the time all of these discussions and in fact you have people who have a lot of money and more money than they have sense to believe that by cloning themselves are somehow going to continue to exist. Well you know at a certain point you just don't know what to say. Now there are other issues like is cloning a human being going to provide us with something that is a human being? Or will it only provide us with something that is merely a fleshy boney wet wear kind of robot. I think in some of these respects one has to say we'll see. Others don't agree with that. They think that somehow God is prepared to cooperate with the creation of persons by sexual relations.

Now we have of course variations on that petri dish sorts of things. As far as we can tell these are persons so maybe God cooperated with that and would God cooperate with cloning and see to it that the person results. Or is it in human power to create immortal souls. I don't think there are any very quick answers to those questions and certainly the old answer that we oughtn't to interfere with nature won’t do we've already interfered with nature in so many ways and obviously many of them are good. I think in many respects what we're looking to. I personally believe that the scientific enterprise is as much an expression of the action of God in human history as anything else. I believe that this has to do with God's purpose for the human race. I do believe that. That God's hand is on all of these fundamental areas of enterprise and that's a large topic. But. So I just think that we have to go slowly. And uh then we have to grow as much as we. One of the reasons why it's so urgent to reincorporated Christian doctrine into standard knowledge Is precisely what you hear complained about all the time. Oh we've continued to
grow scientifically but not morally. You're not going to grow morally if you don't have a basis for it in reality. And what is that basis going to be.

I think we now know it's not going to be liberal democracy. There are several versions of right wing stuff it's not going to be. for people of our persuasion something that you do on their own or is it actually true that there is a Jesus Christ in the universe and he's going to return. And in what sense is that going to be the solution. Which Mr. Roarty and Mr. Derrida and Mr. all the rest of us are concerned about. I don't really have a feeling that peace on earth goodwill to men is going to come. From accepting the non-absoluteness of our knowledge. I don't see any indication that the real problem of human existence lies in people thinking they absolutely know stuff. This. [inaudible question] Just to wander on. Well that's why Eagleton you know one of the things Eagleton says it's kind of contradictory claim in a way. But what he says is that you can't distinguish postmodernism from really right wing conservatives because just precisely as of this point if you undermine the idea that there is a Telos, a purpose in human being. That there is an arena there are really natures that things have.

And you undercut the idea that there is an accessible doorway to truth which will allow you to go wandering is. His point of many other points many others make the same point is in this situation. Power is going to determine how we go and we we know how that works. We've seen it. So Tamerlane and Genghis Khan and Adolf Hitler Perhaps some more friendly looking types. We did mention that we know where that's going out to with his repression which is the very thing that supposedly we're escaping I think that's right. So. In part I don't think there's an easy answer here but we do need to it is a part of our responsibility as thinkers to help people understand what can be understood about identity. So. And also I think we do need to combat this idea of that which is constant. The problems of the human race are going to be solved by the
advances of knowledge. As that's understood in modernity, historically developed in the way it has been developed. We have. We need to ask that question please.

Can we assume that the problems of the human race will be solved by knowledge as we've come to understand it that gets back to this. What counts as knowledge. Now all the problems of thinking in terms of imperialism and mathematical physics. As the crown of knowledge. So I mean the heart of what we're doing here I'd just say the issue. Is. Postmodern a postmodernity raises valid questions. I don't think it gives us much in the way of answers but it does raise the valid questions. Each of us in our fields need to respond to this issue very self-consciously. And we need to in most of our fields we have to take on head on the idea that what we do does not constitute knowledge because it does not fit the mold of empirical. Mathematical stuff. How can we have a glance at just the last chapter. Of the Wittgenstein Derrida book. Thing. I really do think that I give most of us to figure this out in the way of basic argument.

There are a lot of nice terms actually one of the main parts of this book is to align one of the main points of this book is to align Wittgenstein with Derrida. It is to say that this fellow Wittgenstein is not giving us a nice comfortable theory of how language works and to walk off. And leave us with especially the idea that forms of life which are constantly referred to in discussions of Wittgenstein forms of life the idea that you learn how to do a certain thing and that that is the solid bottom layer of linguistic use. So he goes to some lengths to say that just as with Derrida there is no solid bottom layer of anything that Wittgenstein is trying to provoke into perpetual rethinking and re-examining. That you never get done with the movement of thought. But I thought this last chapter is that it brings up something that is so characteristic. Of. The. Postmodernist side. On page 150 and following. Really is a discussion of. The idea of presence again. Perhaps you could read this paragraph at the bottom [inaudible]. The possibility of my
disappearance in general must somehow be experienced in order for a relationship with presence and general to be instituted.

We can no longer say that the experience of the possibility of my absence my death affects me occurs to an I am and modifies a subject. I am being experienced only as I am present itself presupposes the relationship with presence in general and with being as presence. So the appearing of the I to itself in the I am is thus a relation with its own possible disappearance. This is a kind of crowning type of sentence. Therefore, I am originally means I am mortal. I. One of these. This is a typical deconstructionist of. What he's saying is I am affirms presence. It affirms my wholeness being here, I am. And you can be sure he is quite conscious of Exodus 3. But what he's saying. This affirmation. Is made in the face of the possibility of my disappearance. In other words, me. What what brings it about that I affirm I am Is. Say at least a marginal awareness that I may not be. Means I am mortal. So now anxiety is written the very affirmation I am. This is Heidegger's. He's putting it in his own language.

So what we try to do is to deal with this anxiety by repressing. The possibility. And that means to purge myself. Complete whole being that really does partake of the idea of God. And he goes on to discuss the connection here and then the connection of logic. Also with the idea of God because logic presupposes an identity in things that really is only. Found. Traditionally. Traditional. And God who is the Deathless one and forever asserts his own identity adequately. So the radical otherness here is simply the disappearance of the self. It is death of the self and that is what creates the anxiety on 152 you have the long paragraph there. Logic tied to inexorable identities. These identities apply to one's self and too things which I want to hang on to in my world. So this desire to have uh eight lines down there [inaudible]. the desire for things to have an idea of unitary self-identity. So now we've got to think I not only want me to be
identical I want my car to be the same just the thought that my car is going to be different. Creates an anxiety in me about me.

So I project this I Am and this identity into the world of objects which I inhabit. So what is what is building up here now is it an explanation of why we hold onto that see the title of the chapter. The hardness of the law why we drive for such a hardness of law that says things are always connected in this way the things that are connected by laws and they are in some sense the same and it always comes back to this anxiety. The author is saying about my death about the loss of my presence into an absence that is unrecoverable. So that on page 52-53. I want to read a few lines here on 51 54. And began to ask you the question is this really so. And now he brings in Freud which is canonical. So. And the mother of eight lines. This annulment of the self is originally the feeling aroused by the disappearance of the mother and later by other object losses thus death is experience able only so far as the self sees itself in the other who goes away. Withdrawal of love as it is. The anger the anxiety we figure as the fear of death is a constant feature of the relation to any others Which we cannot enclose in narcissistic unity with our ourselves.

The word that here is often used is totalization. The drive to totalize is to get something entirely encompassed into my life flow so there not any loose ends hanging out there that I don’t know about. [inaudible] I’ve got no. So I constantly try to do that to other people. Because of freedom their otherness will disappear that they will not fit into my identity and so on. Well just capping off is what I am concerned you see here towards the bottom of 154. About 12 15 lines up. The project of simply keeping things there. This project which presents itself as a respect for truth and obedience to the law. Is to be deconstructed not in disrespect for truth and disobedience of the law and certainly not in flight from the demands of reality which is too stirred up probably
because it is the fantasized fulfillment of an infantile wish. Which presents itself as respect for. This is set forth by Derrida is designed to frustrate the project of repression of frustration and anxiety by describing the relation so that as the sociable synthesis a structure which is not that of unity or self-identity but which includes as part of its identity its own otherness from itself or inability to fill out all its substance all the space [inaudible].

So now you have now the presentation of the deconstructionist as a very brave and courageous and hearty person over against those who fulfill their infantile needs are hiding behind the illusion of truth and law. Interesting picture. And the reason I want to make sure this is because you see. If you interpret religion in a certain way which you are apt to do. On this campus many quarters of evangelical religion You're going to wind up simply falling under the idea that it is a projection of [inaudible] You heard that before the fact that the whole theory of the origin of religion in Hume for example and in others is that is that Freud [inaudible] desire to protect ourselves from threats that make this fearful. Now these types of emotional explanations are designed to. Explain how we come to hold views for which there is supposedly no good reason.

That's when in a philosophical or academic discussion we start examining the emotional states of those who disagree with us. Usually on the assumption that they can only explain their disagreement with us on such a basis not because they have a good reason for disagreeing. You see what I mean. You have to be careful with these kinds of explanations. There might be a good reason. For thinking. That the entity and its identity and the laws that govern the concepts which are utilized in logic. There might be some good reason for believing in those other than I am scared to death and I don't want to face my death. So part of our work I think would be to consider whether there might be good reason for accepting these kinds of identities. Very last
page 160 [inaudible] of deconstruction the entity by entity means something that has an identity that falls under hard laws on the [inaudible] entity is monstrous. Entity is a monster. What is a monster.

A monster is something that is unnatural. Not everything that's awful is monstrous but we tend to think of things that are unnatural are monstrous. Herman Munster then is monstrous, remember that show. Deconstructionist say is that what you get in the way of an identity and entity that has this identity and so on is unnatural. And here's what he means this scene and every element of the scene for us swarmed with accidental characters that threatened to swerve away. A Medusa's head the with snakes that could get away. That's you, that's me. We have these accidental characters that threaten. Suppose they did get away. Suppose the scene before me oh was threatening to get out of control. Now that the hardness of the law has been questioned, exploded into which characters left me completely disoriented before apparent chaos and anarchy.

And that's often what someone who is listening to the postmodernist thinks is about to happen. Then I would say something like I've gone mad. But That. Would merely be an expression of giving up the attempt to know my way about it. Those are Wittgenstein's arguments. So you don't, what he's saying is you don't necessarily go mad if you give up the heart of the law. Once you do you simply stop looking for something that isn't there to be found anyway. And what is that, identity, law. Objectivity in the old fashioned sense. I have [inaudible] I've just given up looking for certainty. I've given up looking for a certainty that would reassure me in the face of my certain knowledge that I am going to die. Now. the anxiety about death is a real thing isn't it. Our new testament says something about this. Talks about how people are in
bondage for their whole lives through fear. [inaudible] Hebrew's 2 isn't it, is this the answer. If you can't make any sense of God, it is. Something like this or something like the Buddha.

Actually these are all illusionist answers you get them in Spinoza you get them in Buddhism. This is an illusionist answer. you're suffering from an illusion. Part of it is part of the solution is the old stoic one that you will never experience death because when it comes you won't be here. And he actually said that one of the lines. You fear something that is not cuz of course when death comes then what you are not present you are absent. [inaudible question]

Yeah no X Generation is often described in these terms. I hear it constantly don't you. Yeah that's what that's what I hear. And frankly I see something of it in the eyes of many of my students who come in now as freshmen at USC. On the other hand, I would say that hope for something else has not disappeared but the idea that they have seen through all of the things that stand as the hardness of the law. [inaudible] So what shall we say. Comes back to this question of what is really the case doesn't it and it's no help I think to say well there isn't really good case. No help to say that. Then you can go on if you want to [inaudible] Point out that there's no really the case you're just saying what the case is. Now defend it. Don't just holler and whistle, defend it. OK any other comments or questions as I'm sorry I wasn't able to work things out with have more and more of these passages. But as I say if you've got the two master arguments I think my reading of the book if you decide it's for you to do you've already [inaudible]

Speaker 3:

Dallas I'm concerned about the impact of this literature on the way we conceive of discourse itself and what I have in mind if you blur the distinction between trying to assess what
someone says on the one hand and trying to see if it makes sense verses [inaudible] useful ad
hominin remarks about there [inaudible] useful I say because it might [inaudible about the
position they're in. Blur that distinction though it is not clear to me what is left. And it becomes
very difficult when students come to us who're reared in this kind of culture someone mentioned
this the other day who are not concerned about knowledge.

Dallas Willard:

I think I think that people that Shawna's mentioning and I think they immediately grasp
exactly what you're saying. And that that then affects the whole enterprise. I mean why are we
here again. You have students in a class where what can the answer be if you take at least what
might be regarded as the extreme interpretation of postmodernist approach. What could it
possibly be. Why are we here. To learn how to play in the field of power. I don't see how you
can get any answer. Now a better way, a more interesting way would be to say well I want to
become a biologist. That certainly sounds better or I want to become a new testament scholar or I
want to become a capable pastor or administrator something of that sort see. But then the
question is what does that mean and if it comes in terms of the. Commonly understood idea of
postmodernism then it really does translate into I want to get a job and succeed at it.

And I think that is what [inaudible]. [inaudible comment] It's a big topic in the literature.
[inaudible question] Yes that's. Very definitely. Because what that does is it defines the culture
as a marketplace. The only values then are exchange values the ultimate values are the exchange
values is the bottom line [inaudible] And this would be of course a constant flux. Bank a takes
over Bank b and is taken over by bank c So all everything is in constant flux and all that matters
is [inaudible] And of course there's a lot of lying. I mean there are a famous line that shows up often and when something changes is in order to serve you better. You get a notice from your boss says in order to serve you better We have united such as you know that they were sitting around thinking about how to serve you better. But see that so just standard lies standard lies so you in cars you have laws against bait and switch.

So in order to deal with those that give you beautiful descriptions in the newspapers they won at this prize [inaudible]. That's just bait and switch. So all the efforts to deal with the law everything. [inaudible] You can by the way check it out. How many times you can go to a place and find that that car is still. So I mean everything will be subordinate to services. Now [inaudible] and others James have discussed this issue. Great from a consumer market. As a manifestation why is it a manifestation of postmodernity. Because everything is subject to the influx of economic change. There's nothing no identities remain other than the drive for Turnover and consumption. Nancy. [inaudible question] It still is there. Yes [inaudible comment] You know languages but see that is how we know. So for example when you read leotards full book I don't think all of it isn't in the reader. When you read the whole thing you see starting out starts out language of some sort. I'm sorry not that the book is knowledge the postmodern condition and he starts from the assumption that knowledge is language.

He doesn't even discuss that. [inaudible question] Well you really asking me to go to the wall. I've even published little paper title the absurdity of thinking in language. And philosophically [inaudible]. Because. This is an essence claim. It's in essence claim. [inaudible] Came. From. Texture. So thinking is language linguistic consciousness is language. That's saying all. Shall we say acts of consciousness or acts of thinking are acts of language Then what does that mean. Well Wittgenstein very straightforward simply says that all thinking means the
manipulation of symbols and what would those symbols be, linguistic symbols. So the way you approach this Nancy is simply to go work go to work on the issue and what way would all acts of thinking involve language. There are a number of things that one can do. For example, you can find people who have no language but still think. These are not just children. Very interesting when you get a discussion of this in my context at least at USC The first thing that people bring up kids bring up now are animals. Dogs whales elephants because now there's an intense consciousness. That somehow these creatures are important shall we say and they don't have language. And yet they are conscious. Of course one of the joys of philosophy is if you can establish one concrete case you. But then others will come back and say oh no they do have a language. No. What and uh people. Who. Don't seem to have a language and yet obviously think. Well also what happens is language is turned into something. Shall we say rather different from what we thought language was and sometimes that will be stripped down to just a code. So there are even things written on languages of the brain where language turns out to be the chemical processes of the brain. So now what we have to do here is distinguish two cases. One where language means something like English German French Greek Braille sign language OK. And then we deal with that case in that case obviously thinking occurs without language and you can just establish that by looking in the cases.

The other case is impossible to refute. It's something like what Hume says about the argument from evil and that natural dialogues says something like this would be impossible by looking at the evil in the world to refute the existence of a good God simply because God under this discussion is so big and there's no limit to what he can do that you could never- [gap from 45:48- 46:07] that he couldn't make things turn out alright. And I think that's true. Now. In the case of the. Strange things called language. I'm inclined to say in that case that the hypothesis is
has no content because there is no way that you could find anything that would refute it. Why? Because language can turn out to just be whatever you need. I mean if you can put the chemical processes of the brain into the category of language it's hard to imagine anything you couldn't put into the category of language. And so the idea that thinking is linguistic becomes vacuous. It doesn't really mean anything.

So I think that's the way you have to go about this. Now there's one other thing I'll add and I think I can get this in before the Bell rings. I'd like to ask my colleague if thought is truly linguistic. How did so many bright people miss this. And to challenge them to find the point. And to identify the person. Who first discovered. That thought or consciousness is linguistic. I think I know enough about this to say they're not going to find it. Because it didn't happen. No one discovered this. Factually it was driven by positivism and empiricism. The truth of the matter I believe is that. Consciousness of the self and all of that sort of stuff cannot stand up. To empiricism because it obviously is not empirical the self is not empirical Your thoughts aren't empirical. And. The really in the 20th in the 20th century the person who just pulls it all together and establishes it as a pattern is Wittgenstein.

You have behaviorists Watson and some others people fool around with it. Bug Wittgenstein is the one that did this and he did it by creating an atmosphere. I don't I hesitate even to say he did it these kinds of things are almost like. Tsunamis they just come. But I do I ask people now how did I mean who do you think is smart. In the history of philosophy. Someone might say well Kant. How did he overlook this then? I mean it isn't that people couldn't overlook things we have. You know we have done that and we know the power of preconceptions. But exactly how could he have uh Hume. Who was sort of the patron saint of modern thinkers. He overlooked it. Bach overlooked it, Descartes. Where were these people. If
this is the way. And I think that's that's very medicinal. [inaudible question] When. Well if you will tell me how you do that. I will tell you how you can get by without it. I mean there may be Christian concerns. My concern at the first level is not Christian my concern is what's the right description of thinking. And frankly I'll bet you think you think in words when you're not saying or hearing or seeing a word. And that really this is too I don't want to do much with it because it would be too quick to do justice to the issue. But I will just say I mean. Images of words aren't words. And certainly I am sure you think many times when there are no actual words. Before you. And you've been doing a lot of it. This hour. Now you say well but that will get us back to the level where we treat our images of words as words. But that's no more appropriate than treating an image of an elephant as an elephant. An image of a word is not a word. A mental image. so I don't mean to try to settle that in any way but my general response should be simple. Well I mean it's a question of describing your experience. What's the appropriate description of your experience? And the reason why I finally one day just ripped off this paper was I had just heard someone say that they thought their question was How can you not think in words Well the real question is how do you think in words. How do you do it. And that's where I think the descriptive work has to be done. Now obviously there's a lot of the stuff we do with words. I don't mean to deny them.

Speaker 4:

One thing to add might be When when they. Were directed apart from what your response was which was to try to get at is this really true the other responses to the question of what happened why would we as Christians be concerned about it in addition to whether it's true or not when we try to take a look at how this idea gets started and [inaudible] I can tell you in my
field the idea that language the idea that we think that among other things is one of the central forces toward the drive to get rid of the self-consciousness physical [inaudible]. The primary today philosophy is functionalism where the idea is that to think is to have uh mentalese run through the brain. And you try to figure out what mentalese is and it turns out that that the chemical and physical changes in the brain that imitate a computer program so to speak so that now once you [inaudible] you don't need consciousness you don't need anything other than brains and brain states that undergo the proper behaviors but now to think is not to have a conscious state but to reduce to a linguistic act and that is further reduced to mentalese which processes computer programs through the brain. SO that is one [inaudible]

Dallas Willard:

There is another way that it fits in I think Brian and if you but this depends on other. Like JP’s case here also I mean this depends on adding some other concerns. But for example if you take a representationalist as distinct from an apperception as view of consciousness and you add on that you think in language then you're going to be thinking only within the framework of a given language. So that that's a concern to some people theologically one likes to ask questions like Which language does God think in. Does God think in language? [inaudible jumble]

Speaker 4:

I guess my question would be that doesn't seem to- I mean obviously we're speaking to our peers here uh we don't want to think in terms of language because it might lead to this justify this functionalism or it might reveal that we are trapped in a language um is it necessarily our uh
is it necessarily [inaudible] I received that language from my parents and sure they received it from their culture and sure I think in those categories and yet God in some way can use my language that I received to connect me to himself. There is not a language that God cannot use there's not a language that currently doesn't have the term God in it or some approximate term and since all these terms are uh of course we [inaudible]. So I guess my question is is there anything about the notion that we can only think in language than necessarily Christianly speaking uh [inaudible] keep us apart from God [inaudible].

Dallas Willard:

No. I think the answer is no. For example, if you take the apperceptionist approach this doesn't become a problem because language then opens you up to the world. To say that you speak one language doesn't mean you can't. Know a world which exists in the same thing with JP's point. So you were talking in this particular issue I'm also very concerned with we're stuck with with a profession that adds on these other things. So I think the answer is No. As. To God's consciousness whether or not he thinks in language. You know I hardly know how to approach that for sure it isn't any language known to us. Though rumor is its Hebrew still. My first concern is just is that how consciousness works and so on.

Speaker 5:

But he has chosen language to speak to man.
Dallas Willard:

Absolutely that's correct. And I I think that's a good reason for supposing that language doesn't create a trap.

Speaker 6:

Dallas this has incredible implications. I think personal life. I will kill you. I've had a very heavy burden for about three weeks or so. Personally that last night I think I had a breakthrough and I went home and I got on my knees in my living room there's a place I go to pray I was there for a good long time just crying out to God and one of the things that has helped and I believe he has met me there and spoke to me about something and one of the things that has helped me through that has been some ways of understanding God as a conscious subject. And I think that understanding the nature of consciousness actually allows a person to get a greater grasp on what God is like so prayer has a [inaudible] and I think that spiritual life we have a vested interest in understanding consciousness because God is a conscious kind of thing. And misunderstandings of consciousness could actually cause us for example to want to have sense impressions of God in one sense or something other and [inaudible] some of the things I've learned from you about God and so on have actually changed my prayer life and have made it more much richer than it used to be- Well

Dallas Willard:

Well I mean the spiritual have a lot of implications for the spiritual life in terms of spiritual disciplines in terms of practices of solitude and silence and so on. Can you actually have silence in the sense that this is very common can I ever get out of my inner chatter. Can I ever
come to a place where the chatter stops? There aren't any words and I'm able to contemplate things and be silent and so on. It's a major issue. There's a lot to do. This. Harry.

Speaker 7:

I don't mean to take this in another direction [inaudible] actually I'm just wondering, uh looking at this issue of postmodernism [inaudible] certainly reveal the issue of langue in western culture and certainly cultural variability [inaudible]

Dallas Willard:

Yes, indeed. I mean there was now we get into the issue is communication linguist. Fascinating issue. And if I understand the context you're referring to the lovely book called Numbers without theology which is fundamentally about how third world people as we call them do theology and how they handle communication and it's addressed as particularly to this issue of highly verbalized theology and doctrine and so on. Fascinating studies. Now if you talk to many third world people with the explicitness that westerners talk to one another they will turn you off fast. Because they will experience it as you running over them. What what what is communication well communication is kind of like standing around [inaudible] you do this that and the other that all this indirect material. So I think if I understand you that I really think this is an important topic and it kind of turns the tables. To what extent is communication linguistic. [inaudible comment] work like that. I'm sure when you can be sure of this when they're standing around they're working. All right well we'll talk a little bit about [inaudible]
[End]