

Box 4- An aside 'reality' in modernism and postmodernism

The **modernist** tradition rejected the mythical and religious views of the world and gave rise to science, democracy, liberation movements and a belief in the supremacy of rationality. Within this tradition there was an implicit belief that there existed a given external reality and that the task of all enquiry was to develop a better and better model (or map) of that external reality.

The **postmodernist** perspective is that the assumption about a pre-given external reality is not valid, especially in the domain of human culture, values, beliefs and organisations. In general, and particularly in these social domains, it is impossible for anyone to have a model of reality that does not constrain their perception in some way. So while postmodernists do not say that there is not an external reality, they would claim that it is impossible to have an unbiased perspective on what it is.