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VIATORUM

ALTTESTAMENTLICHES REDEN VON GOTT. ELEMENTE BIBLISCHER THEOLOGIE •

DUTCH REFORMED PHILOSOPHY IN NORTH AMERICA: THREE VARIETIES •

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES: PATOČKA, HAVEL, AND TEMPTATION •

BY

WERNER H. SCHMIDT, THOMAS K. JOHNSON, J. SHAWN LANDRES

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CONTENTS (XLV, 2003) Nr. 2

91 TIM NOBLE
A Big "If"

94 WERNER H. SCHMIDT
Alttestamentliches Reden von Gott
Elemente Biblischer Theologie

117 THOMAS K. JOHNSON
Dutch Reformed Philosophy in North America:
Three Varieties in the Late Twentieth Century

134 J. SHAWN LANDRES
Truth and Consequences: Patočka, Havel, and Temptation

153 VĚRA V. TYDLITÁTOVÁ
On the Origin of the Tetramorph

163 BENEDIKT SCHWANK
Das Theater von Sepphoris
Seine Ausgrabung - Schlüssel zur Sprachenfrage

BOOK REVIEWS

169 IVANA NOBLE
Approaches to Phenomenology

172 PETER C. A. MORÉE
Struggling for dignity

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A BIG “IF”

Although this issue of *Communio Viatorum* is not intended to be thematic, there is nevertheless one theme common to the articles, namely the imaging or imagining of reality. Key for Christians is, undoubtedly, the language we use to imagine the reality of God, and our talk starts with the Old Testament, the theme of our first article. But a reflection on this question became even more important for us, as we were recently confronted with very different images of reality presented to us by Bush’s war campaign against Iraq, which raised serious moral and epistemological questions.

More than any other war in history, this was a war about creating rather than uncovering truth. Many of us will have seen the images filling our television screens from the outset of the invasion, with the myriad “embedded” reporters, purporting to offer a close-up view of war. To these were added images from Baghdad, not to mention the pictures supplied by the Arab-speaking news stations, such as Al-Jazeera, which brought a less sanitary view of the destruction and death caused by the Americans’ clean bombs.

Yet even before the war started it is clear that the creation of conditions for going to war was being undertaken. No doubt Saddam was a very unpleasant dictator, and responsible for the deaths of huge numbers of Iraqis. He may at some time have had access to weapons which could have caused mass destruction, and there is absolutely no doubt that he had and used chemical weapons against the Kurds in the north of Iraq and against Shiites in the south of the country. All of which makes him extremely unpleasant, not to say evil. But, perhaps unfortunately, that would not necessarily have justified war when it happened.

This meant that, to justify their desire to go to war, Britain and America had to produce evidence of material breaches of various UN resolutions, especially that which ordered Saddam to destroy his weapons of mass destruction. This is where the epistemological problems kicked in. Because, how can you know that something is not? Perhaps in some sense this is the kind of question which the Reformed Epistemologists, considered in this issue, are addressing. Of course, it suited Bush and Blair to believe that there were still weap-

ons which could, so claimed Blair, be deployed within forty-five minutes.

Their evidence for this was allegedly based on intelligence material, the validity and accuracy of which is currently being called into question. Part of the problem seems to have been relying on human intelligence, apparently from a high-ranking Iraqi army officer. If you are told, for example, that the moon is made of cheese, it is easy to look at it and find reasons to support your theory. If you are told that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction, it is easy to find a thousand and one places which he must be using to hide, produce, deliver such weapons. Interpreting the evidence to fit the facts as we understand them to be is a normal human way of going about ordering our life. The problem is that the facts as we understand them are not always the facts as they are – one only has to consider the way we still talk of sunrise and sunset and of the sun moving from east to west during the day to realise this. This is perhaps one of the moral questions which Patočka and Havel are concerned with, as the article in this issue shows.

Alongside the efforts from the Bush-Blair camp, there was also the posturings of Saddam and the Iraqi regime. Reading the article on the tetramorph in this edition and realising that this astronomical idea came from the same part of the world that produced Saddam, one may be tempted to see him as some sort of multiform character – hero and villain, saviour and destroyer, benign and despotic. Like Margaret Thatcher, he may have always been more loved outside his country than in it, but his appeal was precisely in his unwillingness to publicly bow to American demands.

Thus, an image having been created of Saddam as a clear and present danger to world security, America and Britain, and those who bought the story they had created, could feel justified in going to war. For all their attempts to create further stories showing unity, this was a minority effort – the so-called “coalition of the willing” amounted to something like forty countries, which is around twenty percent of the United Nations. Not exactly overwhelming.

The outcome of the war in military terms was inevitable. The outcome in political terms was perhaps equally inevitable. Certainly the Iraqi welcome for their “liberators” has been lukewarm. The differ-

ence between Saddam and the American occupation force seems to be equivalent to the difference between having two teeth pulled out without anaesthetic and having one tooth pulled out without anaesthetic. On the whole, you would rather not have to go through either.

So, a war which was based on the creation and imaging of one reality has now given way to a new situation in which not war but peace has to be imagined and created. If the Americans and British can genuinely facilitate the creation of a just (which does not automatically mean "pro-American") government in Iraq, allowing the people to use their talents and natural resources fairly and responsibly for their own benefit and that of humanity in general, then perhaps the story which was used to create the war will have a happy ending. But, it remains a big "if".

Tim Noble

ALTTESTAMENTLICHES REDEN VON GOTT ELEMENTE BIBLISCHER THEOLOGIE¹

Werner H. Schmidt, Bonn

I. Einstieg mit einer Frage: 2Kön 5,7

Was assoziiert, verbindet der Mensch in alttestamentlicher Zeit mit „Gott“? Was mag sich der Mensch denken, wenn er von „Gott“ spricht? Die Frage zielt nicht auf eine feierliche Glaubensäußerung der Gemeinschaft, sei es ein geschichtliches *Credo* mit der Erinnerung an die Rettung² oder ein nominales Bekenntnis, das Gottes „Eigenschaften“ oder „Wesenszüge“ benennt: „Barmherzig, gnädig, langmütig...“³ Gedacht ist eher an eine Charakteristik, die bis in die Alltagssprache reichen könnte, auch wenn sie nur in literarischer Gestalt bezeugt ist.

Eine Erzählung scheint „wie nebenbei“ zu verraten, was die Rede von Gott bedeuten kann. In einer Situation, in der mehr von ihm verlangt wird, als er nach bestem Willen vermag, ja scheinbar Übermenschliches erwartet wird, reagiert ein König mit der Frage (2Kön 5,7): „Bin ich denn ein Gott, der *tötet und lebendig macht*?“

Die Aussage, die den Unterschied zwischen Gott und Mensch zum Ausdruck bringt⁴, formuliert, was zumal in dieser Folge der Verbindung der Mensch nicht vermag, umgreift das Äußerste, die Grenzen des Lebens – nach Anfang und Ende. Ist es nicht allgemein-einleuch-

¹ Der Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Karlsuniversität in Prag danke ich herzlich für die freundliche, ehrenvolle Einladung zu einer Gastvorlesung (am 3. April 2003). Der Vortrag nimmt, leicht abgewandelt und erweitert, einen Beitrag auf, der erschien in: *Der Gott Israels im Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments*, QD 201, Freiburg 2003.

² Wie Dtn 26,5ff; vgl. Ps 136 u. a.

³ Etwa Ps 103,8 entfaltet Gottes „Eigenschaften“ sogleich (V 9) als Gottes Taten; vgl. Ex 34,6f; gegenüber den Völkern Jon 4,2; auch die Anspielungen oder eher Vorformen Jer 3,12; 15,15.

⁴ Diesen Unterschied hebt in anderen Situationen eine ähnliche Frage (Gen 30,2; 50,19) hervor: „Bin ich denn an Gottes Statt?“

tend oder gar selbstverständlich, daß eben die Grenzsituationen, Leben und Tod, „religiös“ bedacht werden, der Mensch seine tiefsten, letzten Widerfahrnisse Gott überläßt, überlassen muß und auch ihm zutraut? Jene Frage verrät zunächst: Man weiß oder setzt (anders als heutzutage in der Regel üblich) wie selbstverständlich voraus, daß Gottes Wirken beides, Glück wie Unglück, Gutes und Böses, umfaßt. Er kann Nachteiliges wie Vorteilhaftes, Krankheit wie Heilung schicken. Darf man, was in jener Wendung „töten und lebendig machen“ wie in einem Bogen zusammengehalten wird, unterscheiden und die Spannung auflösen, so bezeugt das Alte Testament schon früh, jedenfalls vielfach, daß sich auch *unheilvolle* Erfahrungen mit Gott verbinden können.

Nach altertümlich wirkenden Erzählungen geht es bei der Begegnung von Gott und Mensch um Leben und Tod.⁵ Trotz Bedrängnis berichten sie von einem heilvollen Ausgang; die Gefahr kann abgewendet werden. So schlagen sie mit der Spannung auf ihre Weise ebenfalls einen Bogen von tödlicher Bedrohung zur Lebensbewahrung. Die Religion scheint von früh an, wenn nicht von vornherein mehr als eine Antwort auf die Frage nach *Sinn*⁶ oder Sinnvollem zu sein, vielmehr auch kaum Faßbares, Dunkel-Widriges, Unerklärbar-Uneinsichtiges, Nicht-Heilvolles, Schwer- Erträgliches enthalten zu haben. Gott kann blind oder sehend (Ex 4,11), unfruchtbar und fruchtbar machen⁷, „böse handeln“⁸. So begegnet „Religion“ nicht nur als Aufruf zu Moral, als Stütze und Ermutigung, formuliert auch Begrenzung und versteht das Schicksal als Geschick. Umgekehrt bildet das

⁵ Ex 4,24-26; vgl. 12,22f; Gen 32,23ff; Num 22,22ff. Erzählzüge wie die Beschneidung durch eine Frau, zudem mit einem Steinmesser, u. a. sprechen für eine frühe Überlieferung; sie mag später eine andere Deutung erfahren haben.

⁶ Oder soll „Sinn“ – in weiter Bedeutung – auch Unerklärbar-Sinnloses oder sinnlos Erscheinendes einschließen, nicht die „Erklärbarkeit“, sondern nur die Deutungs-Bedürftigkeit des Lebens beinhalten? Wieweit geht Erfahrung aber nicht von bereits gedeutetem Leben aus?

⁷ Gen 16,2; 29,31; 30,2.17.22; 1Sam 1,5.17ff. Vgl. auch Namen wie Jo-natan, Natan-ja, vielleicht El-kana u. a.

⁸ Vgl. Ex 5,22; Num 11,11; Rut 1,21; thematisch auch Am 3,6; Jes 45,7; Hi 1,21; 2,10; Koh 7,14; (die Bestreitung der Umkehrung) Zef 1,12 u. v. a.; dazu H. J. Stoebe, *THAT* II, 1976, 803; C. Dohmen, *ThWAT* VII, 1993, 609f; W. Thiel, *Könige*, *BK* IX/2, 1, 2000, 75 und zum Folgenden 39.59.78f. Erst recht kann nach der Botschaft der sog. Schriftpropheten Gott dem Menschen bedrohlich begegnen (Am 5,17; Hos 5,14; Jes 8,14; 28,20f; 29,14 u. a.).

Leben oder Überleben im Erzählkreis um Elia-Elisa mehrfach unmittelbar das Thema, sei es im Blick auf den alltäglichen Bedarf, das Lebensnotwendige: „Der Mehlkrug soll nicht zur Neige gehen...“⁹, oder gar den Grenzbereich von Leben und Tod.¹⁰

II. Eine Frage in einer frühen Elia-Tradition: 2Kön 1,6

Nach einer Erzählung, die ebenfalls von einer Krankheit oder einem Unfall als Anlaß berichtet, klagt *Elia* an; der König, der sich wegen seiner Krankheit an einen anderen Gott, wohl einen Heilgott, wendet, wird gefragt: „Ist denn kein Gott in Israel, daß du sendest, Baal Sebul (Sebul), den Gott von Ekron, zu befragen?“¹¹ Anders als in der Karmelszene „Wenn Jahwe Gott ist, folgt ihm nach ...“¹² ruft Elia hier (a) weder zur Hinwendung zu Jahwe auf, noch richtet er sich (b) an das *Volk*¹³, sondern – wie in der Regel die sog. Vorschriftpropheten – an den König.¹⁴ Außerdem hat diese Begegnung (c) keinen wunderhaften Charakter, steht so gegenwärtigem Wirklichkeitsverständnis nicht entgegen und findet (d) in ähnlichen Überlieferungen eine Parallele und Stütze. Daß man sich im Fall einer Not an Gott bzw. den Propheten wendet, Heilung von Krankheit bei der Gottheit sucht und Gott durch den Propheten befragen kann, ist auch sonst bezeugt.¹⁵

Gewiß kann man gegenüber der stark verallgemeinernden Auslegung, die Erzählung „fordert Vertrauen auf Jahwe in *allen* Lebenslagen“¹⁶, Einwände erheben.¹⁷ Da der Kranke ja wieder gesund wer-

⁹ 1Kön 17,14; vgl. 4,43; auch 2,21; 4,40f; 7,1 u. a.

¹⁰ In den Wundergeschichten 1Kön 17,17ff; 2Kön 4,18ff.

¹¹ 2Kön 1,6 (auch in der Erweiterung V 3). Der Name der vermutlich für Krankenheilung bekannten Gottheit Baal Sebul, wohl „Herr der Fliegen“, ist vermutlich entstellend aus Baal Sebul „Fürst Baal“ (vgl. den Namen I-sebul).

¹² 1Kön 18,21.

¹³ 1Kön 19,10.14 gehört nach allgemeiner Auffassung nicht zum Kern der Elia-tradition.

¹⁴ Gewiß ist der König eine herausgehobene Einzelperson, indirekt sind darum viele oder gar alle mitbetroffen – ausgesprochen wird es noch nicht.

¹⁵ Vgl. 1Kön 14; 2Kön 5; 8,7ff; auch 20,5.8; Num 12,13. In anderer Situation verdeutlicht Jer 37 (V 3.7; vgl. 42 u. a.), daß – für den Fragesteller – Befragung des Propheten um Auskunft über den Ausgang und Fürbitte zusammengehören.

¹⁶ E. Würthwein, Die Bücher der Könige, *ATD* 11/2, 1984, 268.

¹⁷ M. Beck, Elia und die Monolatrie, *BZAW* 218, 1999, 144f (139ff.159) übertreibt die Kritik. Vgl. zustimmend aber E. Aurelius, Der Ursprung des Ersten Gebots, *ZThK* 100, 2003, 1–21, bes. 10.

den will, so nicht nur den Ausgang erkunden möchte, vielmehr zugleich auf Hilfe oder Befreiung von den Beschwerden hofft, schließt sein Handeln – mit der Zuwendung an einen anderen Gott – allerdings „Vertrauen in seiner Lebenslage“ ein.

Die vorwurfsvolle Frage setzt voraus, daß die Ungehörigkeit oder gar das Verbot der Wendung an andere Götter, die Ausschließlichkeit als Eigenart des Glaubens, dem Angeredeten bekannt ist, damit er den Schuld aufweis überhaupt einsehen kann. Dabei liegt (e) mit diesem Bekenntnis zu dem eigentlich anzusprechenden „Gott in Israel“¹⁸ gewiß kein „*Monothetismus*“ vor. Er müßte mit der Verehrung eines einzigen Gottes, streng genommen, *zwei* Aspekte enthalten, nämlich mit der *Affirmation* oder Zuwendung zugleich eine *Negation*, die Leugnung der Existenz anderer Götter.¹⁹ Hier wird aber die Wirklichkeit oder Bedeutung der Gottheit außerhalb des eigenen Volkes nicht in Frage gestellt, nur die Zuständigkeit des einen Gottes „in Israel“ ausgesagt.

Schließlich (f) enthält Elias Aussage (2Kön 1,6) die sachlich-inhaltlichen Charakteristika, die typischen Kennzeichen der sog. Schriftpropheten, noch nicht; nur die zweigliedrige *Form*, Schuld aufweis und Strafansage, ist mit ihnen gemeinsam. Sie haben die von ihnen verwendeten verschiedenen Redeformen kaum frei erfunden, vielmehr vorgefunden²⁰, mit ihren Einsichten gefüllt und ausgestaltet, so die Anklage wie die Gerichtsansage erweitert und verschärft: Das Volksganze ist getroffen. Diese Zuspitzung ist zuvor weder bei den prophetischen Vorgängern²¹ noch in der – älteren – Pentateuch-

¹⁸ Vgl. als Ziel der Einsicht: Gott in Israel (1Kön 18,36 gegenüber V 39: der wahre Gott); auch 2Kön 1,3.16 und die Beauftragung durch „Jahwe, den Gott Israels“ 1Kön 17,1.14.

¹⁹ Vgl. Jes 43,10; 44,6; Dtn 4,35.39; 32,39; 2Sam 7,22; 1Kön 8,60; 2Kön 5,15 u. a.

²⁰ Jer 27f zeigt noch die gleiche Redeweise mit Botenformel und Gottes Ichrede bei Hananja (28,2f.11) wie Jeremia (28,16). – Auch das Thema Leben geht bei den Schriftpropheten nicht verloren. So betonen Hosea und Jeremia (Hos 2; Jer 2; 3,2f; vgl. 5,24) in Aufnahme und Abwandlung eines Elements der Eliatradition: Die Leben erhaltenden Gaben verdankt das Volk – entgegen seiner Einstellung – nicht Baal, sondern Jahwe. Erst recht kann es in der prophetischen Botschaft – als Folge des in der Kritik genannten Verhaltens – um Leben und Tod gehen (gegenüber Einzelpersonen Am 7,16f; Jer 28,15ff u. a.).

²¹ Sie findet sich auch in der jüngeren Elia-Tradition 1Kön 19,10.14 (o. Anm. 13).

tradition bezeugt und vereinsamt die sog. Schriftpropheten in ihrer Zeit und Gesellschaft.

Darf man darum – aus den verschiedenen genannten Gründen – die Überlieferung von 2Kön 1 in ihrem Kern als vertrauenswürdig ansehen, so ist sie eine frühe Bekundung der Ausschließlichkeit des Glaubens.

(1) Mit der Anklage setzt Elia das Bekenntnis zu Jahwe mit dem Anspruch, allein Gott in Israel zu sein, voraus und geht davon aus, daß der Angeredete davon weiß.

(2) Allerdings vertritt der Prophet offenkundig *nicht* die übliche, selbstverständliche Auffassung, entspricht nicht dem Allgemeinbewußtsein, sondern bildet ein kritisches „Gegenüber“. Überhaupt bezeugt das Alte Testament selbst – auch außerhalb der Botschaft der Propheten – vielfach und vielfältig, daß die Hinwendung zu einem Gott nicht gewahrt, die Ausschließlichkeit nicht durchgehalten wurde, die *Wirklichkeit* also anders aussah.

(3) Dabei wird in dem, was dem Menschen zustößt, im Widrigen, Schicksalhaft-Zufälligen – aus prophetischer Sicht – eine Gelegenheit gesehen, den Glauben mit seiner Ausschließlichkeit zu bewahren.

III. Gott als „Helfer“

Zur Bestätigung sei nochmals mit Texten aus späterer Zeit gefragt: Was wünscht, erhofft sich der Mensch von Gott? Im Rahmen von Jeremias dem Volk geltenden Anklage „So zahlreich wie deine Städte sind deine Götter“ heißt es:

„Mir kehren sie den Rücken zu und nicht das Antlitz;
wenn aber die Not kommt, sagen sie:
„Stehe auf und hilf uns!“
Wo sind denn deine Götter, die du dir gemacht hast?
Sie mögen aufstehen und dir helfen
in der Zeit deiner Not!“²²

²² Jer 2,27f; aufgenommen in 11,13f.

Vor kosmisch-universalem Hintergrund²³ erhebt *Jeremia* ähnlich den zweigliedrigen Vorwurf der Abwendung von dem einen Gott und der Hinwendung zu anderen:

„Zweifaches Unrecht beging mein Volk:
 Mich verließen sie,
 den Quell lebendigen Wassers,
 um sich Zisternen zu hauen,
 rissige Zisternen,
 die das Wasser nicht halten.“²⁴

Wieder geht es nicht um eine – theoretische, lehrhaft weiterzuehende – Erkenntnis eines „Monotheismus“, sondern mit der Einsicht zugleich um eine entschiedene Antwort auf die Frage: Was verdient im Leben Vertrauen? Gegenüber dem lebendig-frischen Quellwasser hat das Gegenbild, ein untauglicher Ersatz, erhebliche Nachteile: Es handelt sich (a) nur um Zisternen, die (b) selbst gemacht und zudem noch (c) rissig sind. So wird auch hier die Existenz fremder Götter nicht bestritten; gegenüber der Wirkungslosigkeit anderer Mächte wird aber die Wirksamkeit des einen Gottes bekannt – nicht in ein forderndes Gebot gefaßt, sondern bildhaft dargestellt.

Noch in späterer anschaulich beschriebener *Götzenbildpolemik* wird ausgesprochen, was man von Gott erwartet: Der Mensch nimmt die eine Hälfte eines Holzes, um sich mit Feuer zu wärmen, aus der anderen Hälfte „macht er einen Gott und wirft sich nieder“: „er betet zu ihm und sagt: Errette mich: denn mein Gott bist du!“²⁵

Schon *Hosea* kann im Gotteswort (13,4) die – in Rechtssätzen²⁶ wie dann im Dekalog als Forderung ausgesprochene – Ausschließlichkeit des Glaubens als Zuspruch von Gottes hilfreicher Gegenwart

²³ Im Anschluß an Jes 1,2f; Jer 2,10–13; vgl. 8,7.

²⁴ Jer 2,13. Das Bildwort „Quelle lebendigen Wassers“ wird aus dieser klagenden Anklage in einem jüngeren Zusatz (17,13) in eine Vertrauensaussage übertragen, in die Anrede an die „Hoffnung Israels“ eingefügt; vgl. auch Ps 36,10; 42,2f.

²⁵ Jes 44,15–17; vgl. 1Kön 18,26.

²⁶ Das – schwer eindeutig zu bestimmende – Alter der im Bundesbuch bewahrten Rechtssätze, die die Ausschließlichkeit bezeugen (zumal Ex 22,19), kann und soll hier offen bleiben (vgl. Ex 34,14; 23,13.24).

weitergeben: „Einen Gott außer mir kennst du nicht, und einen Helfer außer mir gibt es nicht.“

In der Parallelaussage wird für „Gott“ schlicht „Helfer“ eingesetzt; denn für das Alte Testament bedeutet eben Gott zu sein: eingreifen zu können. So nimmt Deuteronomus die Einsicht auf: „Außer mir ist kein Helfer!“²⁷, und aus einer Aussage über Gottes Wesen: „Er wird nicht müde noch matt“ kann er die Folgerung für Gottes Tun ziehen:

„Er gibt dem Müden Kraft.“²⁸ Auch andere Aussagen, wie „Ich bin Jahwe, dein Arzt“²⁹, wollen wahr sein: Nur einer hat und gibt Leben, verdient so Vertrauen.³⁰

Führen die Klagepsalmen nicht eben diese Einsicht aus? Der *Hymnus* Ps 104 preist die Zuwendung des Schöpfers zu der – auf seine Schöpferkraft angewiesenen – Kreatur und bekennt zugleich Gottes Freiheit. Wie der Schöpfer „den Geist des Menschen in seinem Inneren gestaltet“³¹, so kann er den belebenden Hauch zurückziehen:

„Verbirgst du dein Angesicht, erschrecken sie,
nimmst du ihren Odem (Geist) hin, verschneiden sie
und werden wieder zu Staub.
Sendest du deinen Odem (Geist) aus,
so werden sie geschaffen,
und du erneuerst das Antlitz der Erde.“³²

Ps 104 ist in diesem Abschnitt durch *Echnatons* großen Sonnenhymnus beeinflusst.

„Wenn du aufgegangen bist,
leben sie,
gehst du unter,
so sterben sie,“

²⁷ Jes 43,11; vgl. 45,21; 46,4; 64,3.

²⁸ Jes 40,28f; vgl. Ps 103,8f.

²⁹ Ex 15,26; vgl. Hi 5,18; Dtn 32,39; auch 2Kön 20,5ff; Jes 19,22 u. a.

³⁰ Vgl. Ps 42; 84,3 u. a.

³¹ Sach 12,1. „Der Geist Gottes hat mich gemacht, und der Atem des Allmächtigen belebt mich.“ (Hi 33,4)

³² Ps 104,(27f.)29f; vgl. 146,4; Hi 34,14f; auch Gen 6,3 u. a.

heißt es dort³³ ähnlich. „Leben und Tod der Geschöpfe hängt von Gott ab“³⁴ – allerdings nach diesem Hymnus durch das Versinken des Aton am Abend:

„Gehst du unter im westlichen Horizont,
so liegt die Erde im Dunkel wie im Tode“,

nach Ps 104 nicht durch Gottes Abwesenheit, eher durch Gottes Wirken: Wie er „die Finsternis setzt“³⁵, entzieht er seine im Geist gegenwärtige Lebenskraft. Wird im Echnaton-Hymnus Gott mehr der Tag als die Nacht oder gar nur der Tag zugesprochen, so im Alten Testament die helle, lichtvolle wie die Schattenseite des Lebens.³⁶

Wo in der *Spätzeit Zweifel* an Gott aufkommen, sich skeptische Aussagen über sein Wirken auf Erden finden, von denen das Alte Testament kritisch berichtet, entstammen sie eher einem praktischen als einem theoretischen „Atheismus“; auch sie beziehen sich nicht eigentlich auf die Existenz, eher auf die Wirksamkeit Gottes im menschlichen Leben: „Jahwe tut weder Gutes noch Böses.“³⁷ Wieder sind es beide Seiten menschlicher Erfahrung, in denen Gottes Wirken bestritten wird. Auch die Reflexion des „Predigers“ *Kohelet* über die Zeit stellt als Antithesen nicht nur menschliches Tun, wie Lieben und Hassen oder Reden und Schweigen, sondern auch die Widerfahrnisse zusammen, die sich der Entscheidung oder Verfügung entziehen, das

³³ Zitiert nach Religionsgeschichtliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament, hg. v. W. Beyerlin, *ATD ErgBd 1*, ²1985, 46; das folgende Zitat ebd. 43; vgl. *TUAT II/6*, 1991, 848ff.

³⁴ E. v. Nordheim, Der große Hymnus des Echnaton und Psalm 104: Die Selbstbehauptung Israels in der Welt des Alten Orients. *OBO 115* (1992) 155–184, bes. 174. Einen erheblichen Unterschied bildet die Zuspitzung des Echnaton-Hymnus auf den König, die in Ps 104 fehlt.

³⁵ „Du setzt die Finsternis, so daß es Nacht wird; darin regt sich alles Getier des Waldes...“ (V 20)

³⁶ ... In Ps 104 wagt ein Dichter – in Anlehnung an den Sonnenhymnus Amenophis' IV. Echnaton – diese Aussage, weil er mit dem 1. Gebot bis in die äußerste Konsequenz hinein ernst macht. Wie alles Lebenspenden, so ist auch der Tod ein Handeln des einen Gottes, der keine Mächte neben sich kennt.“ So J. Jeremias, Schöpfung in Poesie und Prosa des Alten Testaments: Schöpfung und Neuschöpfung. *JBTh 5*, 1990, 11–36, bes. 23.

³⁷ Zef 1,12; vgl. Mal 2,17; 3,14f; Jer 5,12; Ps 73. „Er ahndet nicht.“ (Ps 10,4.11) Demgegenüber bezeugt Ps 14,1f: Der Verständige „fragt nach Gott“; nur „der Tor spricht in seinem Herzen: Es ist kein Gott“ (vgl. Spr 19,3).

Leben begrenzen (3,2): „Geboren werden hat seine Zeit und Sterben hat seine Zeit.“ Dabei überträgt Kohelet die sog. *Kanonformel* „nichts hinzufügen, nichts wegnehmen“³⁸ auf das Schicksal: „Man kann nichts hinzufügen und nichts wegnehmen. Gott hat es so gemacht, daß man ihn fürchte.“³⁹ So wird aus dem Nicht-Dürfen ein Nicht-Können, aus möglichem, aber unerlaubtem Handeln ein Lassen-Müssen, das als Gottes – undurchschaubares – Werk⁴⁰ verstanden wird. „Am guten Tag sei guter Dinge, am bösen Tag bedenke: Auch diesen wie jenen hat Gott gemacht.“ (7,14)

Die Zusammenschau von Texten aus verschiedenen Zeiten läßt eine Folgerung zu: Man erhofft sich Heilvolles, weiß aber, daß Gottes Wirken Lichtes und Dunkles umspannt. So klingt im Alten Testament als grundlegendes Bekenntnis in verschiedener Form immer wieder an, daß Gott „tötet und lebendig macht“⁴¹, „erniedrigt“ und „erhöht“⁴², einreißt und aufbaut, ausreißt und pflanzt⁴³.

Solche Aussagen, nach denen Gott Leben gibt und nehmen kann, umfassen das Leben als ganzes – dies geschieht hier überraschend direkt und pointiert. Dabei möchte die Doppelseitigkeit nicht Beliebigkeit oder Willkür bedeuten, sondern mit der Abfolge eine Gerichtetheit andeuten. Kommt dieses Bekenntnis darin nicht mit der Erinnerung an die Rettungserfahrung überein? Im Allgemeinen, im Verständnis menschlichen Lebens, ist – zugespitzt durch die Ausschließlichkeit – auch Charakteristisch-Besonderes nicht zu übersehen: Das Bekenntnis findet in dem, was für den Menschen schicksalhaft-unverfügbar ist, Geschick. Ist Gott so nicht Grenze und tragender Grund, der Zutrauen, Zuversicht verdient?

In verschiedenen Literaturbereichen, wohl schon recht früh, wird das Bekenntnis ausgesprochen, daß Gottes Macht bis in die *Unterwelt* reicht – mit dem Psalmisten formuliert: „Wenn ich mich in der

³⁸ Vgl. Dtn 4,2; 13,1. Im Jeremiabuch werden noch beide Vorgänge unterschieden: Ergänzungen finden statt (Jer 36,32), „Wegnahmen“ – Streichungen oder Kürzungen – sind nicht erlaubt (nach der jerdr Redaktion: 26,2).

³⁹ Koh 3,14; vgl. 5,6; 6,10; 7,13.

⁴⁰ Koh 3,9–11,13f; vgl. 7,29; 11,5.

⁴¹ 1Sam 2,6f; Dtn 32,39; 2Kön 5,7.

⁴² Ez 17,24; vgl. auch Hos 6,1; Hi 22,29; Jes 19,22; 30,26; Jer 31,10 u. a. (o. Anm. 29); dazu Lk 1,51f.

⁴³ Jer 1,10 u. a.; vgl. 24,5.8; 32,15; 45,4 u. a.; dann 10,5; 18,7ff u. a.

Unterwelt lagerte, da bist du (auch).“ Nach solchen Aussagen⁴⁴ scheint den Anstoß für das Glaubensdenken über den Tod hinaus zunächst nicht das Thema „Gerechtigkeit“, sondern die Rede von Gottes – ausschließlicher – Macht gebildet zu haben, die nach dem Bekenntnis keine Grenze hat.

IV. Rückfrage nach der Frühzeit

Eine – auch gegenüber der Elia-Überlieferung – ältere Gestalt der Tradition bezeugt das Alte Testament beiläufig mit der Aussage „das Volk des Kamosch“ (Num 21,29), des Gottes der Moabiter. Dieser Beleg ist kaum nur eine – aus Israels Sicht entworfene – Deutung von anderen, scheint vielmehr deren Selbstverständnis zu entsprechen. Zwar ist die Kategorie „Volk“ im alten Orient eher ungewöhnlich⁴⁵; bei Israels unmittelbaren östlichen Nachbarvölkern scheint allerdings eine solche Struktur bekannt zu sein: Zugehörigkeit einer Gruppe bzw. eines „Volkes“ zu einer Gottheit, einem sog. „Hauptgott“.⁴⁶ Entsprechend bezeugen es im Alten Testament frühe Geschichtstraditionen⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Ps 139,8; vgl. schon in der Überlieferung der Propheten des 8. Jh. v. Chr.: Am 9,2–4; Jes 7,11; Hos 13,14; auch Spr 15,11; dann Hi 14,13f; 26,5f; Ez 37 u. a. (dazu u. Anm. 112). Dabei ist zugleich ein Unterschied zwischen der Rede von Gott und – mit dem menschlicher Erfahrung entzogenen Raum – mythischer Vorstellung angedeutet.

⁴⁵ Dies betonte W. v. Soden, *Einführung in die Altorientalistik*, Darmstadt 1985, 13: Im alten Orient hat „nur Israel einen eindeutigen Volksbegriff ausgebildet..., der durch seine Geschichte bestimmt ist. Überall sonst werden die Menschen nur nach ihrer Herkunft aus einem bestimmten Land oder ihrer Zugehörigkeit zu einer sozialen Gruppe gekennzeichnet, sofern man nicht schlicht nur von Menschen spricht.“ Vgl. W. H. Schmidt, „Volk Gottes“. Einsichten des Alten Testaments: Ja und nein, *FS W. Schrage*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1998, 211–222.

⁴⁶ Vgl. Ri 11,23f; 1Kön 11,7.33; etwa auch die Mescha-Stele (KAI 181; TGI² 152f; TUAT I/6, 646ff); dazu A. Lemaire, *Déesses et dieux de Syrie-Palestine d'après les inscriptions (c. 1000–500 av. n. P.)*, in: *Ein Gott allein?*, 1994, 127–158, bes. 142ff.

⁴⁷ Vgl. Kernpunkte der Überlieferung wie Ex 18,12; 24,10f; auch 3,7.9.16; 5,1.3; 12,21–23; 14f; 19; Ri 5,4f; 11,23f u. a.

V. Selbst-Kritik des Glaubens in der Prophetie

Wenn auch aus der Bindung einer Gruppe an einen Gott „hervorgegangen“, ist alttestamentlicher Glaube – zumindest in seiner Ausgestaltung – doch ein kritischer, zumal selbst-kritischer Glaube, der jene Grenze bald sprengt. Nicht nur greifen Erzählungen über das eigene Volk hinaus⁴⁸, erst recht die sog. *Schriftpropheten*⁴⁹, die fremde Großmächte als Werkzeug des eigenen Gottes ansehen können.⁵⁰ Ja, in der Botschaft der Propheten ab Amos kann sich Gott gegen die – eigene – Gruppe, die Verehrergemeinde, wenden.⁵¹ Sie erfahren das eigene Volk als uneinsichtig: „Ja, töricht ist mein Volk, mich kennen sie nicht, unvernünftige Söhne sind sie und Einsicht haben sie nicht, weise sind sie, Böses zu tun, aber Gutes zu tun verstehen sie nicht.“⁵² Jeremia (8,7) kann – in Aufnahme weisheitlichen Gedankenguts – die „Ordnung“ der Naturwelt dem Gottesvolk entgegenhalten; sie erscheint als Vorbild: „Selbst der Storch am Himmel weiß seine Zeiten ..., mein Volk aber kennt nicht die Ordnung Jahwes.“⁵³ Der Prophet mahnt oder warnt nicht, sondern stellt fest: Das Selbstverständliche der Natur, die Ausrichtung, fehlt dem Selbstverständnis des Volkes. So hat das Wort einen doppelten Aspekt; es zeigt einen Mangel an Einsicht auf und zielt auf Einsicht in eben diese Situation. Soll Israel – paradox – erkennen, daß es nicht erkennt? Mit ihrer Botschaft beanspruchen die Propheten gegenüber bisherigen Glaubenseinsichten eine *Freiheit*, die so noch *nicht* in der (Glaubens-)Tradition erhalten war.

Die – in der Verheißung an Mose gegebene – Erläuterung des Gottesnamens „Ich werde sein, der ich sein werde“ (Ex 3,14) spricht gegenüber der unmittelbar vorhergehenden Zusage „Ich werde mit

⁴⁸ Vgl. Gen 20; Ex 5ff u. a.

⁴⁹ Am 2,1f; 9,7 u. a.

⁵⁰ Implizit schon Amos (5,27; 6,14 u. a.), Jesaja (5,26ff; 10,5ff; 28,2) wie Jeremia (4,5ff; vgl. 25,9; 27,6; 43,10).

⁵¹ Am 7,8; 8,2; Hos 1,6,9; Jes 6,9f; 22,14; Jer 1,13f; 16,5 u. v. a.

⁵² Jer 4,22; vgl. 8,7; auch 2,8; 9,2,5; 22,15f. „Vom Kleinsten bis zum Größten – sie alle“ (6,13; vgl. 2,29; 5,1,4f; 8,6,10; 9,4). Wo Jeremia selbst zum Prüfer bestimmt wird, ist das Ergebnis eindeutig (6,27–30). Schon Jesaja urteilt: „Israel aber hat keine Einsicht“ (1,3; vgl. 5,12f; 6,9 u. a.). Vgl. Gal 3,1 „ihr unverständigen Galater“.

⁵³ Jer 8,7; ähnlich schon Jes 1,2f u. a.

dir sein“ (3,12) Gottes Freiheit in seinem Wirken aus. Wieweit sie auch reichen mag, sie umfaßt noch nicht die – für die in der Gegenwart beginnende Zukunft geltende – „Negation“, die Hosea (1,9) auszusprechen wagt: „Ich werde nicht mehr für euch dasein.“⁵⁴

Etwa in seiner symbolischen Handlung mit dem Joch⁵⁵ stellt Jeremia nicht vor eine Alternative „Unheil oder Heil“, ruft nicht zur Abwehr einer drohenden Zukunft, zu Umkehr oder Buße⁵⁶, sondern zur Annahme des von Gott beschlossenen Geschicks, zu einem Verhalten *innerhalb* der vom Propheten angesagten Zukunft, wie sie Gott herbeiführen will, auf. Bei Einsicht, Annahme der Verkündigung bzw. Ankündigung, sichert Jeremia Lebensbewahrung bzw. Überleben zu. Würde er nicht auch gefährlich in die Nähe der sog. Heilspropheten⁵⁷ geraten, die sich diese radikale Unheilsansage – in Übereinstimmung mit der Überlieferung⁵⁸ – nicht denken können, wenn er die Abwendung der Unterwerfung unter Babylon als möglich in Aussicht stellte?⁵⁹ So kündigt Jeremia nicht Bewahrung *vor*, aber *im* Gericht an. Er kann auch Einzelpersonen aus dem das Volk treffenden Unheil herausnehmen.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Da Hos 1,9 in die Aussage von Ex 3,14 ein „nicht (mehr)“ einfügt, liegt die Annahme näher, daß die „Negation“ Hos 1,9 die Zusage Ex 3,14 voraussetzt. Andernfalls ist – komplizierter – eine dritte Größe, eine beiden Texten gemeinsame Tradition, anzunehmen. Dann würde Ex 3,14 die Tradition repräsentieren, die Hos 1,9 aufgreift. Allerdings erwächst die Deutung des Gottesnamens Ex 3,14 aus der Verallgemeinerung von 3,12 „Ich werde mit dir sein“ und hat insofern dort ihren Ort. Ähnlich verschärft Hosea (12,4) die Jakobtradition. – Möglicherweise wirkt Ex 3,14 noch in Sach 2,9 (bzw. 2,5) nach.

⁵⁵ Jer 27,11f; vgl. 34,2ff; 37,3ff.17ff; 38,17ff; 21,10; 32,28; auch 40,9; 42,4ff u. a.

⁵⁶ Die sog. Schriftpropheten wurden im Rückblick als Umkehrprediger verstanden, deren Ruf überhört wurde (Sach 1,4f; vgl. die redaktionellen Ergänzungen Jer 18,7ff; 26,3; 36,3.7 u. a.). Festen Anhalt hat der Umkehrruf in Jeremias Botschaft gegenüber dem Nordreich, welches das Gericht bereits erfahren hat (3,12f; 31,15ff), sowie in dem an ihn selbst gerichteten Gotteswort (15,19f; dazu u. Anm. 61).

⁵⁷ Jer 6,14; 8,11ff; 23,16ff; 28 u. a.; vgl. schon Mi 3,5ff.

⁵⁸ Vgl. Ps 46; 48; Mi 3,11; Jer 4,10; 14,13; 23,16f; Ez 13,10.16 u. a.

⁵⁹ Vgl. Einsicht als Ziel prophetischer Verkündigung: F. Diedrich-B. Willmes (Hg.), *Ich bewirke das Heil und erschaffe das Unheil* (Jesaja 45,7). *FS L. Ruppert. FzB* 88, 1998, 371–396 = Zukunftsgewißheit und Gegenwartskritik. Studien zur Eigenart der Prophetie, *BThSt* 51, 2002, 127–146.

⁶⁰ So den Äthiopier Ebed Melech Jer 39,15–18 (mit 38,7ff); König Zedekia/Zidkija Jer 34,1–7 (mit 37,7ff); Baruch Jer 45,1–5 (mit 36,4f). Insofern steht Johannes der Täufer sachlich Jeremia nahe, auch wenn die Propheten einen entsprechenden Ritus nicht kennen: Das Gericht ist gewiß; Umkehr und Taufe heben es nicht auf, sondern bewahren in ihm.

Umgekehrt sagt Jeremia *nach* Erfahrung des Gerichts oder *in* der Gerichtssituation Heil als Lebenserhaltung zu, fordert zur Gestaltung neuen Lebens im Exil auf.⁶¹ In einem solchen Zusammenhang, im Rahmen und als Folge der Heilsbotschaft, gewinnt das Mahnwort, mit ihm der Bußruf, eine andere Aufgabe – Einstimmung in die Zukunft, An- und Vorwegnahme des Heils.⁶²

Jeremia gewinnt oder vertritt seine Einsichten nicht ohne tiefe *Anfechtung*, ringt vielmehr – wegen der persönlich harten Folgen, die er als Bote zu tragen hat – mit Gott. Weil der Konflikt durch seine Aufgabe hervorgerufen ist, trägt er ihn auch mit Gott aus. Obwohl auf Gottes Seite⁶³ gestellt, muß Jeremia selbst Gottes Verborgtheit erfahren. Ihm erscheint Gott als im Sommer versiegender, ausgetrockneter Bach: „Du erweistest dich mir wie ein (als) Trugbach, als unzuverlässiges Gewässer!“⁶⁴ Erfährt Jeremia nicht mehr, wie die Berufungsgeschichte (1,8) verheißt, die Gegenwart und den Beistand Gottes in der Not? Die Klage zieht ein grundlegendes Bekenntnis Israels – Gott ist Retter aus oder in der Not – für den Propheten selbst in Zweifel und bildet eine der härtesten Aussagen im Alten Testament.⁶⁵ Kann sich Gott für die Heil ansagenden Propheten oder gar

⁶¹ Jer 29,5–7 in Konsequenz und Ausführung der Vision 24,5; vgl. 32,15; auch in späterer Situation 42,10f. Jeremia selbst wird die Gewißheit der Rettung in der Gefahr zuteil (1,8; 15,19f; vgl. 1,18f). Diese an ihn persönlich ergehende Zusage (15,19) ist mit der dem ehemaligen Nordreich Israel – nach dem Gericht – gegebenen Heilszusage in der Ermöglichung der Umkehr durch Gottes Wirken vergleichbar: „Laß mich umkehren, damit ich umkehre!“ (31,18; vgl. 17,14; 31,4; auch 3,12f; nachträglich abgeschwächt aufgenommen 4,1).

⁶² Nach Jer 3,12f durch Umkehr: Jes 44,21f; 55,6f oder durch Zuversicht und Freude: Jes 42,10ff; 49,13; Sach 2,(10 bzw.)14; 9,9f u. a.

⁶³ Nach dem Bekenntnis, wie das Volk schuldig zu sein, wird Jesaja mit der Symbolhandlung (6,6f) auf Gottes Seite gezogen, steht so ein Stück weit außerhalb der Gesellschaft – ähnlich, wenn auch auf andere Weise, durch vorgeburtliche Bestimmung, Jeremia (1,5,9). Indem der Prophet von der Gesellschaft unterschieden wird, kann er ihr gegenüberreten, ihr mit scharfem Blick, kritischer Sicht begegnen, seine Welt mit anderen Augen betrachten.

⁶⁴ Nach dem klagenden „Wehe mir“ mit der Frage „Warum“ (Jer 15,10.18a) bildet die Anklage V 18b den Höhepunkt des Liedes.

⁶⁵ „Welche Tiefe des Zweifels und der Anfechtung läßt das Alte Testament zu, wenn es ein solches Wort – wie die Klagen der Psalmbeter oder die Anklagen Hiobs – weitergibt, Späteren nachsprechbar und nachvollziehbar macht! Kommen darin nicht auch Offenheit und Freiheit des Alten Testaments zum Ausdruck, den gewohnten Rahmen sprengenden Erfahrungen und Aussagen Raum zu geben?“ (W. H. Schmidt, *Gott und Böses: Vielfalt und Einheit alttestamentlichen Glaubens II*, 1995, 267–282, bes. 80 Anm. 45)

das Volk als ferner, verborgener, sich verbergender Gott⁶⁶ erweisen, so hier für Jeremia selbst. Hat er sich getäuscht?⁶⁷

Bildet jene Klage die Umkehrung des eindrücklichen Bildwortes vom lebendigen, lebenserhaltenden Quell⁶⁸, damit eine Revision des prophetischen Gottesverständnisses? Jeremia scheint gegenüber Gott im Bildgehalt einen ähnlichen Vorwurf zu erheben wie gegenüber dem Volk. Was er dort tadelte, enthält im Bild aber ein zusätzliches Element: Die „löcherigen Brunnen“, „rissigen Zisternen“ (Jer 2,13) sind selbst gemacht. Zudem wird der Zweifel oder die Verzweiflung an Gott mit Gott durchgekämpft. Diese – schlimme, kaum überbietbare – Klage wird Gott selbst vorgetragen. Die Auseinandersetzung mit Gott findet im Gebet, im Gespräch mit Gott, statt; so wird – wie in den Klagepsalmen oder im Hiobbuch, das Jeremias Einsichten aufnehmen, so die prophetische Situation verallgemeinern kann⁶⁹ – das „Du“ der Anrede und damit das Erste Gebot durchgehalten.

Selbst innerhalb der Botschaft *eines* Propheten, erst recht *der* Prophetie oder gar des ganzen Alten Testaments besteht keine Einheit im Gottes-*bild* oder in der Gottesvorstellung, wohl aber eine Kontinuität in der Ausrichtung, hier in der Anrede an ein „Du“.

⁶⁶ Jer 23,23; Jes 8,17; 45,15; auch 28,21; 29,14. Die Aussage nimmt Psalmen-sprache (vgl. Ps 104,29 u. a.) verschärft auf und kommt „eigentlich“ von dem sich erschließenden, sich zuwendenden Gott her. Vgl. L. Peritt, *Die Verborgenheit Gottes: Allein mit dem Wort*, Göttingen 1995, 11–25; H.–J. Hermisson, Der verborgene Gott im Buch Jesaja: Studien zu Prophetie und Weisheit, *FAT* 23, 1998, 105–116.

⁶⁷ Nach der Andeutung von 17,15 (vgl. 1,11f) auch wegen des Ausbleibens der angesagten Zukunft.

⁶⁸ Jer 2,13; dazu o. Anm. 24. Das Wissen um die „dunkle Seite“ Gottes geht aus vom Bekenntnis der Zuwendung, die Rede von Gottes Ferne und Verborgenheit vom Zeugnis von Gottes Nähe und Offenbarung. Die Frage „Bin ich denn für Israel zur Wüste geworden oder zum finstern Land?“ (Jer 2,31) setzt bereits Jeremias Verkündigung mit der Erinnerung an Gottes Führung in der Wüste, im Düstern (2,2.6), mit der Entgegnung der Hörer voraus und verschärft.

⁶⁹ Vgl. etwa Jer 15,10; 20,14ff mit Hi 3; dazu G. Fuchs, Die Klage des Propheten, *BZ* 41, 1997, 212–228; 42, 1998, 19–38. – Hiob vermag, wie ja die Himmelsszenen voraussetzen, den Sinn seines Lebens und Leidens nicht zu erkennen, hält aber an Gott fest. Versteht Hiob, der das „Warum“ und „Wozu“ nicht beantworten kann, trotz Nicht-Erklärbarkeit seines Schicksals dieses nicht als Geschick und bewahrt so den Glauben an Gott? Muß man darum die Frage nach dem „Sinn“ des Lebens (vgl. Anm. 6) nicht vom Glauben, von der Zuwendung zu Gott, unterscheiden?

VI. Prophetie und Weisheit: Jer 9,23f

Bei den Propheten finden sich, wie jener Vergleich mit der vorbildhaften Ordnung in der Natur zeigt⁷⁰, zwar allerlei Anspielungen auf die Weisheit, die sie in ihre Botschaft einfügen, letztlich aber keine weisheitliche Denkstruktur. Sind bei allen Berührungen Weisheit und Prophetie – einmal als zwei Denkbewegungen genommen – nicht im Grunde *wesensverschieden*?

Die Spruchweisheit will Erfahrungen sammeln, nach Lebensregeln suchen, sie verdichtet in Worte fassen, um Gefahren zu meiden, einen „Rat“⁷¹ zu erteilen. Dabei stößt sie im Blick auf Unvorhersehbares auf Grenzen menschlicher Einsicht: „Wie kann der Mensch seinen Weg verstehen?“⁷² und warnt vor Überschätzung eigener Fähigkeiten, vor Überheblichkeit.⁷³ Der Prophet kann die Mahnung, sich nicht selbst für weise zu halten, aufnehmen und zur Anklage zuspitzen.⁷⁴ Geht die Weisheit vom Unterschied zwischen dem Weisen und dem Toren, dem Gerechten und dem Frevler aus, so kann der Prophet diese Aufteilung auf zwei Gruppen aufheben, das Volk insgesamt schuldig nennen.⁷⁵ Erkenntnis fehlt über Gruppen, wie den Priestern, hinaus dem Volksganzen.⁷⁶ Dabei redet der Weise von Gott in 3. Person („Der Mensch denkt – Gott lenkt“ Spr 16,9)⁷⁷, der Prophet – nach der sog. Botenformel „So spricht Jahwe“ mit Berufung auf Gottes Autorität in seinem Namen – von Gott in 1. Person. Haben die Schriftpropheten insofern aber nicht tiefe Gemeinsamkeiten mit den Weisheitslehrern, als beide die Absicht haben, Einsicht zu wecken – wenn auch einerseits in die Erfahrung, andererseits in die von Gott herbeigeführte Zukunft und die Situation der Zeit?

⁷⁰ Vgl. o. Anm. 53 zu Jer 8,7.

⁷¹ Vgl. den „Rat“ des Weisen gegenüber dem „Wort“ des Propheten Jer 18,18.

⁷² Spr 20,24; vgl. 16,19 u. a.

⁷³ „Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall“ (16,18; vgl. 11,2; 18,12; 26,12 u. a.).

⁷⁴ „Rühme dich nicht ...“ (Spr 27,1); vgl. Jes 5,21; 14,12ff; 28,1; Ez 28 u. a.

⁷⁵ Vgl. etwa Spr 15,8 gegenüber Jes 1,10f; 6,5. Entsprechend sind ethische Forderungen der Weisheit Warnungen oder Mahnungen; den Propheten können sie als Schuld aufweis, so als Begründung für die angesagte Zukunft dienen. Der Weise kann die Tradition, ergänzen, erweitern, sie so auch abwandeln, der Prophet kann sie umkehren (s. o. Anm. 54 zu Hos 1,9).

⁷⁶ Vgl. Hos 6,6; Jes 1,2f u. a.

⁷⁷ Wie auch der Priester; vgl. etwa den aaronitischen Segen Num 6,22ff.

So können sich weisheitliche und prophetische Überlieferung durchdringen. Wie die Propheten weisheitliches Gedankengut aufgreifen, gibt es umgekehrt in Prophetenbüchern, zumal im Jeremia-buch, eine weisheitliche Überarbeitung prophetischer Überlieferung. So wird Jeremias Einsicht in „die Sünde Judas“, die „auf die Tafeln ihres Herzens“ aufgeschrieben ist (Jer 17,1), verallgemeinert zu der Aussage (17,9): „Abgründig ist das Herz über alles und heillos ist es – wer kann er ergründen?“

In einem solchen Fall⁷⁸ handelt es sich um einen doppelten Vorgang: Einerseits werden weisheitliche Einsichten unter Aufnahme prophetischer Botschaft verschärft. Andererseits werden prophetische Einsichten durch weisheitliche Aspekte verallgemeinert. Ist es gerade die Absicht dieser „Schicht“, die situationsbezogene, an bestimmte Adressaten ergangene prophetische Botschaft allgemein-menschlich, so zugleich situationsübergreifend-grundsätzlich, auch für andere, ja alle Zeit zu verstehen?

Eine solche Intention kommt zugespitzt zum Ausdruck in der Ergänzung Jer 9,23f: „So spricht Jahwe: Ein Weiser rühme sich nicht seiner Weisheit, und der Starke rühme sich nicht seiner Stärke, ein Reicher rühme sich nicht seines Reichtums, sondern dessen rühme sich, wer sich rühmen will: zu verstehen und mich zu erkennen, daß ich Jahwe bin, der Treue, Recht und Gerechtigkeit auf Erden wirkt; denn an solchen (Menschen bzw. Handlungen) habe ich Wohlgefallen, ist der Ausspruch Jahwes.“ Menschliches „Sich-Rühmen“, das zugleich ein „Sich-Verlassen auf“⁷⁹ enthält, ist ausgeschlossen; entscheidend ist nur die Erkenntnis Gottes sowie seines Wirkens. Dieses Handeln soll der Mensch anerkennen, sich dessen allein rühmen. Das Wort gleicht ein Stück weit eher einem *Sprichwort*⁸⁰, geht jedoch über die im Sprüchebuch zum Ausdruck kommende Weisheit hinaus,

⁷⁸ Vgl. noch Jer 23,18 mit V 22; auch Jer 17,5ff; dazu Hos 14,9 u. a.

⁷⁹ Vgl. Ps 49,7 u. a.

⁸⁰ Auf Weisheitsstil deuten Vokabeln wie „weise / Weisheit“, „verstehen / erkennen“ hin. Dem gleichen Bereich sind „Stärke“ (Koh 9,16), „Reichtum“ (Spr 22,1; 11,28 u. ö.; 10,22: Reichtum als Gabe, nicht Leistung), „sich rühmen“ (Spr 27,1f; 25,14; 20,14) nicht fremd. Auch „Recht, Gerechtigkeit, Treue“ sind – allerdings als menschliche Eigenschaften – in der Weisheit beheimatet (Spr 21,3,21 u. ö.). Nahe steht insbesondere Spr 21,30f (vgl. 22,1f). In Jer 9,22 ist wohl an drei menschliche Möglichkeiten und Wirklichkeiten des Eigenruhms gedacht.

ist insofern von prophetischer Einsicht durchtränkt und mitgeprägt, als es in der Ichrede als Gotteswort⁸¹ gestaltet und kontrastvoll formuliert ist. So kann das Alte Testament menschliches und göttliches Tun durch „nicht – sondern“ gegenüberstellen: „Nicht uns, Jahwe, nicht uns, sondern deinem Namen gib Ehre!“⁸² Ja, zumindest nach Voranstellung von Gen 1 und 2 ist für das Alte Testament die Unterscheidung von Werk Gottes und Tun des Menschen grundlegend.

VII. Ausklang: Abschließende Bemerkungen zum Zusammenhang von Altem und Neuem Testament

Den Abschluß sollen ein paar allgemeine – so die komplexe Sachlage auch ein wenig vergrößernde – Überlegungen bilden, die auf Zusammenhänge des Alten Testaments mit dem christlichen Glauben hinweisen möchten.

Das Erbe des Alten Testaments ist vielfältig. Ihm verdankt die Christenheit zunächst Texte, *Worte*, die sie weiterträgt, zumal *gottesdienstliche* Redeformen, wie das dreimal „Heilig“⁸³, den aaronitischen Segen⁸⁴ oder den Zuspruch von Gnade und Vergebung.⁸⁵ Ist der christliche Gottesdienst darum nicht der Ort, an dem die Fortgeltung des Alten Testaments für jedermann am deutlichsten wahrnehmbar wird? Bezeugen solche Worte, die Gottes Ehre besingen, Gnade und Segen zusprechen, nicht die Identität Gottes, statt Aufhebung vielmehr Bekräftigung und Vergewisserung alttestamentlicher Gottesaussagen?

Mancherlei *Erzählungen*, die (in ihrer realistischen Anthropologie) vom Handeln und offen-ehrlich auch vom „Fehlen“, Scheitern des Menschen berichten, helfen, Lebenserfahrungen in ihrer Zwiespältigkeit beim Erproben des Glaubens im Alltag weiterzugeben. Die *Psalmen*, die als Gebet wie Lied weiterwirken, geben für wechselnde, gute wie schwere Situationen, Freude wie Angst, Gewißheit wie

⁸¹ Vgl. vom Erkennen: Jer 22,15f; vgl. Ez 20,12. Vom prophetischen Hintergrund her bildet Jer 9,22f wohl das Vorbild für 1Sam 2,10 LXX; 1Clem 13,1; aufgenommen 1Kor 1,31; 2Kor 10,17; dazu W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, EKK VII/1 (1991) 212ff.

⁸² Ps 115,1; vgl. 100,3; Dtn 7,7f; Sach 4,6; Dan 9,18f u. a.

⁸³ Jes 6,3 (vgl. Ps 99) aufgenommen Offb 4,8.

⁸⁴ Num 6,24ff; vgl. Ps 90,17; 121,8 u. a.

⁸⁵ Ps 32,1f; 103,8ff; 130,3f; Jes 54,10 u. a. Etwa: „All Morgen ist ganz frisch und neu des Herren Gnad und große Treu“ (EG 440) ist durch Klgl 3,31f angeregt.

Zweifel hilfreich Sprache vor, um in Lob, Dank und Klage Höhen und Tiefen des Lebens auszusprechen, es zu verstehen oder gar zu bestehen. So werden neue Erlebnisse und Widerfahrnisse zugleich in einen Glaubens- und Lebenszusammenhang eingefügt.

Wie die Psalmen nicht alle in gleicher Weise nachsprechbar sind, so „gilt“ der *Dekalog* nicht so ungebrochen wie jene im Gottesdienst weitergesprochenen Gnadenzusagen; ihm gegenüber besteht Bindung und Freiheit. Der Dekalog, der seinerseits im Alten Testament bereits den Rechtssammlungen verallgemeinernd-zusammenfassend vorangestellt ist, wird im Neuen Testament bzw. in der christlichen Theologie noch einmal in dem – zwar dem Alten Testament entnommenen, von ihm aber noch nicht als Kern des Dekalogs gedeuteten – *Doppelgebot* der Liebe konzentriert.⁸⁶ Er enthält oder entfaltet so Konkretionen des Liebesgebots. Allerdings bleibt dabei nicht zu übersehen, daß er nicht nur auf zwischenmenschlicher Ebene orientieren möchte, vielmehr, bildhaft gesprochen, zwei – mit der Wendung zu Gott wie zu den Mitmenschen zusammengehörige – Tafeln aufweist. Gewiß bezeugt das Neue Testament: „Der Sabbat ist um des Menschen willen geschaffen“ (Mk 2,27); aber eben die – in der Nachwirkung des Alten Testaments weltweit verbreitete – Wocheneinteilung mit einem siebten Ruhetag enthält einerseits ein gewichtiges soziales Erbe (Ruhe auch für Tagelöhner u. a.), erinnert andererseits den Menschen zugleich zeichenhaft an die Begrenzung eigenen Handelns.

Der Zusammenhang von Altem und Neuem Testament läßt sich nicht schlicht als Kontinuität darstellen, umgreift vielmehr Unterschiedliches, ja Widersprüchliches und Gemeinsames. In seiner Theologie des Alten Testaments betonte G. v. Rad nach eigenem Zeugnis⁸⁷ geradezu die tiefen Einschnitte, „die fortwährenden Traditionsbrüche, die Neueinsätze, m.e.W. die unglaublichen Spannungen innerhalb der alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen“, um so „auch bei dem Schritt vom AT zum NT genügend Raum“ zu lassen, trotz und in der Diskontinuität Kontinuität zu entdecken. So suchte G. v. Rad für den Übergang vom Alten zum Neuen Testament zugleich einen Ansatz

⁸⁶ Dtn 6,5; Lev 19,18.34 bzw. Mk 12,28ff; Mt 19,16ff (in Weiterführung von Mk 10,17–22); Röm 13,8ff u. a.

⁸⁷ Antwort auf Conzelmanns Fragen: *EvTh* 24, 1964, 388–394, bes. 390.

beim Alten Testament selbst, die Ermöglichung von ihm her, und findet sie nicht nur in der Offenheit des Alten Testaments⁸⁸, sondern in der Einsicht der Umbrüche mit dem Bekenntnis zur Identität im Wandel.⁸⁹

Beim Nachdenken über den Zusammenhang der Testamente ist wohl nicht primär die Frage nach Kontinuität und Diskontinuität zu stellen, überhaupt nicht von einer Frage auszugehen, sondern zunächst – als grundlegende Einsicht – von dem im Neuen Testament ausgesprochenen *Bekenntnis* zur Identität Gottes, das in verschiedenen Wendungen zur Geltung kommt. Aus diesem Bekenntnis, insofern aus dieser Gewißheit, ergeben sich die Fragen.

Schon das Alte Testament bezeugt die Identität Gottes im Wandel der Gottesnamen und Zeiten – in der Anrede an Mose (Ex 6,2f): „Ich bin Jahwe. Ich bin Abraham, Isaak und Jakob als El Schaddaj erschienen, unter meinem Namen Jahwe aber habe ich mich ihnen (noch) nicht zu erkennen gegeben.“⁹⁰ Obwohl die (Erz-)Väter den Jahwenamen noch nicht kennen konnten, glaubten sie an den einen und denselben Gott; er erschien unter anderem Namen, insofern in verschiedener „Gestalt“ oder Wahrnehmung, anders anrufbar. Zwei Phasen der Religionsgeschichte bzw. des Glaubens werden unterschieden, aber zugleich die Identität bekannt. Der „Charakter“ Gottes bleibt – mit ihm die Eigenart, die Ausschließlichkeit des Glaubens. Ist Gottes Identität nicht ähnlich im Wechsel vom Alten zum Neuen Testament mit der spannungsvollen Einheit von „Ja – Aber“, von Übereinstimmung und Widerspruch zu bezeugen?

⁸⁸ G. v. Rad fand im Alten Testament eine „ruheloze Bewegung auf eine zunächst ausbleibende Erfüllung hin“ (*Theologie des Alten Testaments*⁴ II, 1965, 397). W. Zimmerli überschrieb in seinem *Grundriß der alttestamentlichen Theologie*⁴, 1982 den Schlußabschnitt (§ 23) „Die Offenheit der Verkündigung des Alten Testaments“.

⁸⁹ Umgekehrt formuliert: Für das Zwar-Aber, das Verhältnis von Zustimmung und Kritik, des Neuen Testaments gegenüber dem Alten findet sich schon im Alten Testament selbst Anhalt, zumal in der prophetischen Botschaft (etwa in der Kritik am Opfer, Tempel oder Verständnis der Erwählung; vgl. auch Jer 8,8f u. a.).

⁹⁰ Vgl. Gen 17,1. Mit der Unterscheidung bei Bekenntnis zur Identität nimmt die Priesterschrift zwar nicht dem Wortlaut, wohl aber der Sache nach ihr vorgegebene Tradition auf, wie sie etwa Ex 3,6 (vgl. Gen 46,1-3 u. a.) bezeugt ist – d. h. bei Quellenscheidung in der elohistischen Schicht, anders in der jahwistischen Darstellung Gen 28,13 u. a.

Der Gottesname JHWH, der schon in späten Textbereichen des Alten Testaments⁹¹ selbst zurücktritt, hört beim Übergang zum Neuen Testament auf. Die Identität kann aber auf andere Weise zum Ausdruck kommen; auf drei „Felder“ des Glaubens sei andeutend hingewiesen:

a) Das Bekenntnis zum *Schöpfer*: „Der Himmel und Erde – das Meer und alles, was in ihnen ist – gemacht hat“⁹² wird zumal in der Apostelgeschichte ausdrücklich aufgenommen.⁹³ In solchen den Testamenten gemeinsamen Gottesprädikationen, wie dem Bekenntnis zu dem „einen Gott“⁹⁴ dem Zeugnis vom „*lebendigen Gott*“⁹⁵ oder etwa auch Paulus’ Selbstaussage von der Berufung „vom Mutterleib an“⁹⁶ kommt die Identität Gottes im Übergang vom Alten zum Neuen Testament – sprachlich – zu Wort. Dabei ist schon vom Alten Testament her deutlich: Der Schöpfer ist zugleich der Retter und Erlöser.⁹⁷ So ist in Schöpfungsaussagen zugleich ein Element des *Vertrauens* enthalten.

b) Für das Alte Testament ist der *Geschichtsbezug* des Glaubens grundlegend. In der Bindung der Feste an die Geschichte sah F. Heiler⁹⁸ „eine der größten Revolutionen der Religionsgeschichte“. Dabei ist das „Gedenken“ als erinnerndes Bewahren⁹⁹ vom Festhalten

⁹¹ Wie in der Chronik, im Hiobbuch, beim „Prediger“ Kohelet oder im sog. elohistischen Psalter (Ps 42–83).

⁹² Ps 146,6; ähnlich 115,15; 121,2; 124,8; Ex 20,11; als Bekenntnis Jon 1,9 u. a.

⁹³ Apg 4,24; vgl. 14,15; 17,24; ähnlich in Offb (4,11) 5,13; 10,6; 14,7; vgl. Röm 1,24; 4,17; 2Kor 4,6 mit Gen 1,3; Ps 33,9.

⁹⁴ Mk 2,7; 10,17f; 12,28ff; Mt 4,9f; 6,24.33; 22,37f; 23,9; 24,36; Röm 3,29f; 11,36; 1Kor 8,4.6; 12,(4–)6; 15,28 u. a.

⁹⁵ Vgl. Jer 2,13 (o. Anm. 24); Ps 36,10; 42,2f.9 mit 1Thess 1,9 u. a. „Lebendig“ heißt nach dem Alten Testament auch: kein unbeweglicher, vom Geschehen nicht betroffener, vielmehr auf es eingehender Gott, der sich insofern „wandeln“ kann, wie zumal die Aussage von Gottes „Reue“ bekundet. Vgl. J. Jeremias, Die Reue Gottes, *BThSt* 31, 21997.

⁹⁶ Von Jeremias Berufungsgeschichte (Jer 1,5) nimmt das zweite Gottesknechtlied (Jes 49,1.5) den Zusammenhang von (a) Vorherbestimmung vor der Geburt, (b) Berufung für die Völker und (c) Verkündigung (statt wie ursprünglich beim Motiv „von Geburt an“: königlicher Herrschaft) und fügt einen vierten Aspekt hinzu: (nur) zum Heil (Jes 49,6 „Licht der Völker“ führt Jer 1,5b weiter). Diesen Motivzusammenhang greift Paulus (Gal 1,15f) auf.

⁹⁷ Jes 43,1 u. a.

⁹⁸ F. Heiler, Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion, *RM* 1, 1961, 155.

⁹⁹ Die Identifikation der Geschlechter von damals und heute, früherer und gegenwärtiger Generation („unsere Häuser“ Ex 12,26; vgl. „heute“ Dtn 5,1.3; 30,15 u. a.) wird entsprechend im Abendmahl ausgesagt: „gegeben/vergossen für dich/euch“.

eines Ursprungsmythos zu unterscheiden, da die *Einmaligkeit* des Ereignisses bewußt ist, die Vergangenheit aber grundlegende, erschließende Kraft für die Zukunft hat; zugespitzt geurteilt, kann nicht das Ereignis, wohl können ähnliche Erfahrungen wiederholt werden. Umgekehrt werden neue Erfahrungen¹⁰⁰ in einen geschichtlich bedeutsamen Zusammenhang gestellt.

Diese Verbindung von Glaube und Geschichte wird im Übergang zum Neuen Testament strukturell durchgehalten; angedeutet: Aus der Feier „zum Gedächtnis“¹⁰¹, welche die bleibende Geltung für die Gegenwart bezeugt, wird im Neuen Testament „zu meinem Gedächtnis“. Daß in der christlichen Theologie „die Rede ist vom Handeln Gottes in der Geschichte“ ist „vielleicht das bedeutsamste Erbe der alttestamentlichen Tradition“ urteilte R. Bultmann.¹⁰² Ist mit und in der „Struktur“ nicht wieder das Bekenntnis an den einen Gott bewahrt, der sich in der Geschichte auf neue Weise bezeugt? Dabei bietet das Wort „Struktur“ nur eine Problemanzeige, keine Darstellung des Sachverhalts; es wäre etwa auch durch „Eigenart“, „Wesensart“, „Charakter“ umschreibbar.

Von diesem Ereignis her sieht das Alte Testament gewiß teils anders aus, werden andere Schwerpunkte wahrnehmbar, manche Einsichten schärfer gesehen. So gibt das Neue Testament hermeneutische Anregungen; es stellen sich – auch historisch-kritischem Verständnis – andere Fragen nach dem Selbstverständnis des Alten Testaments. Erschließt sich umgekehrt das neue – mit und in Jesus neu anbrechende – Geschehen nicht auch vom Alten Testament her? Eröffnet es nicht einen Deutungs- und Erwartungsrahmen? Wäre, allgemein gesprochen: in anderem kulturellem Raum, genauer: aus anderer Glaubensüberlieferung, die Wahrnehmung, Erfahrung oder „Begegnung“ nicht anders erfolgt und gedeutet worden?

Versteht man das Alte Testament als Interpretationshilfe der Begegnung mit Jesus, so ist auch umgekehrt zu bedenken: Die Deutung bzw. Blickrichtung regt zugleich zur Wahrnehmung an, läßt anders

¹⁰⁰ Die Offenheit für die Zukunft kommt in prophetischem Zeitverständnis Jes 43,18f gegenüber Dtn 32,7 betont zum Ausdruck.

¹⁰¹ Ex 12,14; Dtn 16,3.12; Ps 111,4 u. a.

¹⁰² R. Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen* II, 1952, 240.

sehen, macht auf etwas aufmerksam. Insofern gehören Altes und Neues Testament bzw. ihre Betrachtung wechselseitig zusammen.¹⁰³

c) Das Alte Testament greift schließlich selbst – etwa in der Nachkommenbelehrung¹⁰⁴ oder in der für wechselnde Situationen gedachten, sei es von vornherein so verfaßten oder in der Sammlung später so gedeuteten Sprache der Psalmen – *über* die Ursprungssituation der Texte *hinaus*.

Charakteristisch ist zumindest seit der prophetischen Botschaft die Ausrichtung auf *Zukunft* – mit der Hoffnung auf Gottes Herrschaft.¹⁰⁵ Es kann, wie es auf einen neuen Exodus¹⁰⁶ oder ein neues Herz¹⁰⁷ ausblickt, ein neues, erweitertes Bekenntnis¹⁰⁸ erwarten. Die Hoffnung übergreift Israel¹⁰⁹ und geht – zumal mit dem Bekenntnis zu Gottes Macht auch über das Totenreich¹¹⁰ – über den Tod hinaus bis hin zu der Erwartung: Der „König der Schrecken“¹¹¹ wird beseitigt: „Jahwe wird den Tod für immer vernichten.“¹¹²

Das Alte Testament stellt seine eigene – partikulare, auf eine Gruppe oder Volk bezogene – Glaubensüberlieferung in einen *universalen Rahmen*.¹¹³ Mit der Schöpfung und der Bestimmung des Menschen

¹⁰³ Vgl. W. H. Schmidt, Hoffnung auf einen armen König. Sach 9,9f als letzte messianische Weissagung des Alten Testaments, *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift. FS O. Hofius. BZNW 86*, 1997, 689–709, bes. 706f.

¹⁰⁴ Ex 12,26f u. a.

¹⁰⁵ Seit Jes 2,17 bis Jes 24,23; 60,19f; Sach 14,9 u. a. – In ihrer biblischen Gestalt ist auch die Väterüberlieferung weithin auf Zukunft bezogen.

¹⁰⁶ Jes 43,16ff; 52,12 u. a.

¹⁰⁷ Ez 36,26; vgl. Jer 24,7; 31,33f; Mal 3,24; Ps 51,12.

¹⁰⁸ Jer 16,14f = 23,7f; vgl. Jes 48,20 u. a.

¹⁰⁹ 1Kön 8,(43.)60. Die Hoffnung ist breit gestreut und hat verschiedene Gestalt (Ps 22,28f; 83,19; 2Kön 19,15.19; Jes 45,6.14.22f; auch 2,2–4; 11,9; 19,21ff; 25,6f, in Ausweitung von Ex 24,10f; Jes 37,16.20; 42,4.6; 49,5f; 55,3–5; Zef 3,9f; Sach 2,11 bzw. 15; 8,20–22.23; 9,10; 14,9.16f u. a.). Die Völker sollen Gottes Herrlichkeit sehen (Jes 40,5; 52,10).

¹¹⁰ Vgl. über die (o. Anm. 44) genannten Aussagen hinaus: Ps 22,30; die Hoffnung auf Vernichtung des Todes Jes 25,8 u. a. Psalmen bezeugen die Gemeinschaft mit Gott auch im oder beim Tod: „Doch bleibe ich stets bei dir“ (Ps 73,23ff; vgl. 49,16 u. a.).

¹¹¹ Hi 18,14; vgl. Ps 94,20.

¹¹² Jes 25,8; vgl. 26,19: „Deine Toten werden leben“; auch Dan 12,2.

¹¹³ „Während die Griechen mehrere Archegeten des Menschengeschlechts kennen, ohne sie miteinander zu verbinden, sehen die Israeliten in Adam den einzigen Stammvater aller Menschen. Wahrscheinlich hat der Glaube an den einen Gott diese Konzentration bewirkt.“ (W. Speyer, Genealogie, *RAC IX*, 1976, 1145–1268, bes. 1204)

als Gottes Bild, einer „*Würde*“ (Ps 8,6), die er nicht durch sein Handeln zu erwerben braucht, die ihm vielmehr unabhängig von seiner Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gruppe oder Religion zugesprochen wird, kann das Alte Testament von vornherein wesentliche Aussagen generell formulieren¹¹⁴ und hegt eine weltweit ausgreifende Hoffnung.

Ausdrücklich nimmt das Neue Testament die Hoffnung auf „einen neuen Himmel und eine neue Erde“ auf.¹¹⁵ Blickt der Christ darum nicht nur auf das Alte Testament zurück, sondern gemeinsam mit ihm, mit Altem und Neuem Testament, aus, nach vorne, vor-aus?

Alttestamentlicher Glaube hat vorgegebene mythische Überlieferungen oder Vorstellungen, etwa vom Gott als König im Kreis der Götter, in seinem Sinne tief *umgestaltet*, ursprünglich Fremdes sich so anverwandelt, daß es *Eigenes* ausspricht. So ist wie das Bekenntnis zum „Königtum“ Gottes oder die Hoffnung auf das „Reich“ Gottes etwa auch die Anrede „Vater“ durch die (insbesondere im Ersten Gebot ausgesprochene) Ausschließlichkeit, damit alttestamentliche Glaubensgeschichte, geprägt – zumindest entspricht der metaphorische Gebrauch dieser Intention. So kommt *in* allen Bereichen wiederum die Unterscheidung von Werk Gottes und Tun des Menschen zur Geltung.

¹¹⁴ „Der Mensch lebt nicht vom Brot allein.“ (Dtn 8,3) „Kein Lebender ist vor dir gerecht.“ (Ps 143,2) Vgl. Ps 8,5f u. v. a.

¹¹⁵ In Weiterführung von Jes 43,18f: 65,17; 66,22; 2Petr 3,13; Offb 21,1.

DUTCH REFORMED PHILOSOPHY IN NORTH AMERICA: THREE VARIETIES IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Thomas K. Johnson, Praha

A striking development in Christian scholarship with roots in Europe has taken place in North America in the past generation or two. This scholarship may be largely unknown in Europe, but it may be of special interest there. I am referring to the unfolding of Dutch Reformed philosophy. This description sounds rather ironic, and the irony may be sharpened by asking why this particular intellectual development should not be called “Varieties of American Reformed Theology.” An answer to this question will get us started on our study.

The reasons these movements should be called “Dutch in North America,” not “American,” are multiple. On the one hand, the major leaders in these three movements are all of a Dutch ethnic heritage, either raised in Dutch communities in the U. S. or Canada, or else they are immigrants from the Netherlands. On the other hand, the leaders of these three movements all took much of their inspiration from Dutch Reformed theologians or philosophers, especially from Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck, who themselves drew on the writings of John Calvin. The reason these movements should be called “Reformed” is that the key leaders of the movements all have or had strong ties to classical Reformed churches, many of which have a strongly confessional orientation. The reason we can call these writings “philosophy” and not “theology” is that they address many classical philosophical questions, and further because many (not all) of these writers insist strongly that they are *not* theologians. (Only Cornelius Van Til is an exception here.)

The three varieties could be described as *The New Reformed Epistemology*; *The Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*; and *Reformed Transcendentalism*. The first two names are used by the representa-

tives of these movements. I have given the name “Reformed Transcendentalism” to the movement that calls its own philosophy “Pre-suppositionalism” because I think this name better describes this type of philosophy.

The main developers of “The New Reformed Epistemology” have been Nicholas Wolterstorff (Yale Divinity School) and Alvin Plantinga (Notre Dame University), whose basic ideas have been promoted and used by thinkers such Ronald Nash and Dewey Hoitinga.¹ *Return to Reason* by Kelly James Clark² can serve as a useful compendium of this type of philosophy. *The Philosophy of the Cosmological Idea* has been developed by American and Canadian followers of the Dutch thinkers Herman Dooyeweerd and Dirk Vollenhoven. Gordon Spykman has explored the implications of this philosophy for systematic theology, Roy Clouser for the theory of knowledge and reason, Al Wolters for worldview studies, Hendrik Hart for systematic philosophy, while James Skillen has written numerous books in educational and political theory from this perspective.³ *Patterns of the Western Mind* by John. H. Kok⁴ serves as a

¹ The literature is extensive. A few selected titles can be mentioned: Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*, Grand Rapids 1974; *God and Other Minds*, Ithaca, N.Y. 1967; Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the bounds of Religion*, Grand Rapids 1976; -, *Until Justice & Peace Embrace*, Grand Rapids 1983; Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (eds.), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, Notre Dame and London 1983; Dewey J. Hoitinga, Jr., *Faith and Reason From Plato to Plantinga: An Introduction to Reformed Epistemology*, New York 1991; Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith*, Grand Rapids 1988.

² Kelly James Clark, *Return to Reason*, Grand Rapids 1990, 1998.

³ Again, just a few of the numerous works can be cited. L. Kalsbeek, *Contours of a Christian Philosophy: An Introduction to Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought*, Toronto 1975; J. M. Spier, *What is Calvinistic Philosophy*, trans. Fred Klooster, Grand Rapids 1953; Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories*, Notre Dame and London 1991; Gordon J. Spykman, *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics*, Grand Rapids 1992; Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, Grand Rapids 1985; Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought: Studies in the Pretended Autonomy of Philosophical Thought*, Nutley, N. J. 1980; James W. Skillen, *Recharging the American Experiment: Principled Pluralism for Genuine Civic Community*, Grand Rapids 1994; James W. Skillen and Rockne M. McCarthy (eds.), *Political Order and the Plural Structure of Society*, Atlanta 1991.

⁴ John H. Kok, *Patterns of the Western Mind*, Sioux Center, 1998

useful introduction to this perspective. “Reformed Transcendentalism” is largely the work of Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987). Van Til was heavily indebted to the Dutch theologians Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. His views have been developed and promoted by thinkers such as John Frame, Richard Smith, and Scott Oliphant.⁵ *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* by Greg L. Bahnsen⁶ is a thorough guide to this perspective. It is worth noting that 1998 saw the publication (or republication) of books that summarized or unified a half a century of research and writing by scholars from each of these three philosophies. This article will outline some of the distinctive ideas of each perspective.

I. The New Reformed Epistemology.

The NRE writers like to start with the question, “Is belief in God a rational belief?” As they discuss the rationality of religious belief they like to keep two things in mind. First, since the Enlightenment many serious thinkers have regarded belief in God as an irrational superstition, and second, the results of the numerous attempts to “prove” the existence of God, that is, “natural theology,” from Aquinas to Paley and Swinburne, have been less than overwhelming. The NRE writers generally say that the arguments for the existence of God all depend on assumptions that some people bring to the discussion but other people do not bring into the discussion. Therefore they call the arguments “person relative” arguments for the existence of God, not “proofs.” In order to show that belief in God is a rational belief, they claim, it will be necessary to re-examine what makes any belief a rational belief. In the course of doing this they will discover the failure of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment theories of knowledge which fail to explain why ordinary everyday beliefs are

⁵ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, Phillipsburg 1987; -, *Perspectives on the Word of God: An Introduction to Christian Ethics*, Phillipsburg 1990; -, *Medical Ethics: Principles, Persons, and Problems*, Phillipsburg 1988; Richard L. Smith, *The Supremacy of God in Apologetics: Romans 1:19–21 and the Transcendental Method of Cornelius Van Til* (Ph. D. Dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1996).

⁶ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis*, Phillipsburg, NJ 1998.

rational. This discovery will then prompt them to begin articulating a new theory of knowledge, a “new Reformed epistemology.”

Their more detailed introductions to their philosophy go something like this. The challenge to belief in God arising out of some Enlightenment thinkers developed into the theory of knowledge called “evidentialism.” A classical spokesman for evidentialism is W. K. Clifford, who said, “it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.”⁷ Clifford’s explanation of why he thought it wrong to believe anything without sufficient evidence is that what we believe, on any subject, has a wide impact on many people and on society as a whole. “The harm which is done by credulity in a man is not confined to the fostering of a credulous character in others, and consequent support of false beliefs. Habitual want of care about what I believe leads to habitual want of care in others about the truth of what is told to me... The credulous man is father to the liar and cheat.”⁸

Clifford’s evidentialist theory of knowledge led him to be an agnostic with regard to belief in God; indeed, he thought it was morally wrong to believe in God. In response the theistic evidentialists have agreed with the evidentialist theory of knowledge (it is wrong to believe anything upon insufficient evidence) and have then argued that the evidence does exist to make belief in God a rational belief. Some theistic evidentialists have returned to classical natural theology, others to historical arguments, whether for the resurrection of Jesus, the historicity of the Bible, or to other types of evidence. But the NRE has rejected the entire Enlightenment/evidentialist theory of knowledge.

Alvin Plantinga took the first giant step in this new direction in his studies on the philosophy of mind, specifically whether or not it is possible to prove that other people have minds. Simply stated, Plantinga pointed out that it is probably impossible to prove that another person has a mind, and yet most of us regard it as fully rational to believe that other people have minds. (Those of us who are educators might be forgiven for doubts with regard to an occasional student.) If it is rational to believe that other people have minds, even though the evidence for the existence of their minds might not satisfy Clifford

⁷ W. K. Clifford, *The Ethics of Belief in: Lectures and Essays*, London 1886, 346.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 345 and 346.

and the evidentialists, then maybe it is rational to believe in God without evidence, especially if God is more like a mind than any object in the physical realm. This is to suggest that belief in God is a direct or immediate belief, not a belief that is formed on the basis of rational inference or evidence. In other words, say Plantinga and friends, belief in God is more like believing other people have minds than it is like a proof in the natural sciences.

According to Plantinga, evidence or proof has relatively little to do with belief in God, and neither evidence nor proof are needed to make belief in God a rational belief. However, this does not mean one should avoid studying and discussing arguments for the existence of God. This may be a good exercise for students, and they may be a lot of fun. In reading Plantinga's books and articles (which contain various arguments for the existence of God) one can get the impression that he pursues these arguments as an interesting hobby, with all the passion and enthusiasm that go into any great hobby. But, of course, a hobby does not generally have great religious significance. (This should not be interpreted as suggesting that Plantinga is not serious about either his philosophy or his Christian beliefs.)

The NRE approach to religious epistemology obviously has broad ranging implications for a total theory of knowledge. Their account, briefly stated, is as follows. They point out that the different things that people believe stand in certain relations to each other, that people have a noetic structure. The central distinction in this structure is between *nonbasic beliefs* and *basic beliefs*. Nonbasic beliefs are held inferentially, on the basis of evidence rationally interpreted. In contrast, basic beliefs are things that are known directly, not on the basis of evidence or inference. Basic beliefs include perceptual beliefs (e. g., I see my desk), memory beliefs (I ate breakfast this morning), and simple logic. Nonbasic beliefs would include things like scientific hypotheses and complex mathematical formulas. NRE calls a belief a "proper" belief if it is one that it is rationally justifiable for a person to hold (which does not automatically guarantee its truth). Thus, "properly nonbasic beliefs" are "beliefs that one justifiably holds on the basis of other beliefs."⁹

⁹ *Return to Reason*, 132.

Philosophy since Descartes has used a method of doubt, which we could call “classical foundationalism.” In order to try to exclude any possibly false ideas from the body of truths we affirm, the classical foundationalist says we must start from a very limited number of properly basic ideas and apply careful rules of inference to arrive at a very limited number of properly nonbasic beliefs. The only types of beliefs that the classical foundationalist accepts as properly basic are of three types: things *evident to the senses*; matters that are *self-evident*; and *incorrigible propositions* (usually about our own subjective state). All properly nonbasic beliefs, claims the classical foundationalist, must be derived by careful inference from properly basic beliefs. The evidentialist objection to belief in God clearly operates only within a classical foundationalist theory of knowledge. If classical foundationalism fails the test of rational scrutiny, evidentialism will fall, too, which would open the possibility that belief in God is rational without evidence.

The problems with classical foundationalism, says NRE, are multiple. To start with, it would require that people hold very, very few beliefs about anything, since very many of our everyday beliefs fail to meet the classical foundationalist standards of rationality. The number of beliefs that classical foundationalism allows as rational is so few that it is quite certain that by these standards there has never been a rational person. Further, classical foundationalism regards as irrational many beliefs that clearly seem to be rational to rational people, e. g., that my wife has a mind. Finally, classical foundationalism fails to meet its own standards, for it cannot prove that this limitation to claims to knowledge is itself a properly basic belief or is derived from properly basic beliefs by means of careful inference in such a way that would make it a properly nonbasic belief. Classical foundationalism can be said to be self-defeating or even self-referentially absurd.

In light of the total failure of classical foundationalism to give an account of knowledge, NRE has proposed an alternative which its adherents call broad foundationalism or Reidian foundationalism (in gratitude for ideas learned from Thomas Reid). They retain the term “foundationalism” because they think the distinction between basic and nonbasic knowledge is a proper distinction. However, there are

two massive differences between classical and Reidian foundationalism. The first is that Reidians reject Cartesian doubt (and thereby evidentialism) that says “guilty until proven innocent” with regard to normal knowledge claims. Because they think human epistemological equipment works well most of the time, they argue for an “innocent until proven guilty” stance toward normal knowledge claims. The second major difference from classical foundationalism is that Reidians are convinced that the knowledge that is properly basic is very wide ranging in scope, much, much wider than classical foundationalism allowed. This wide properly basic knowledge includes matters about the physical world, the existence of the minds of other people, and at least for some people knowing God. This means that claims to know or encounter God can stand as rationally justified claims without any further evidence or proof.

Since many of the new Reformed epistemologists are members of Reformed Churches, they like to point out that their conclusions sound a lot like Calvin, especially when Calvin talked about the “divinitatis sensum.” Accordingly, many of their quotations from Calvin come from the first three chapters of *The Institutes*. (The Reformed critics of NRE might point out that they rarely mention chapter four of Calvin’s *Institutes*, which talks about the smothering and corruption of the natural knowledge of God.)

Having taken the starting point for their thinking in the rationality of belief in God more than thirty years ago, and having also rejected classical foundationalism and evidentialism, some of the new Reformed epistemologists are now engaged in developing a comprehensive theory of knowledge to stand in contrast with much western epistemology since Descartes. I, for one, am eager to see more of their results.

II. The Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea.

John Kok’s *Patterns of the Western Mind* contains an introduction to the two major distinctive elements of this philosophy: a particular interpretation of the history of western thought and a highly developed ontology. And the two distinctive elements stand in a close relationship to each other.

“A set of resolute commitments and assumptions precede the historian’s analysis, define his focus, and govern his evaluations and judgments. These prior assumptions bear ultimately a confessional and even religious character... there cannot be an “objective”... description of the history of philosophy (or of psychology or of physics.)”¹⁰ By putting statements like this in the opening chapters of their books, Kok and his colleagues are not only saying that every history of philosophy is written in light of the philosophical commitments of the historian. They are claiming that all learning and education in every field of study, whether philosophy or mathematics, theology or physics, takes place in light of a set of commitments and assumptions that a person brings to the learning task. Further, they will often argue, the commitments and assumptions that a person brings to the learning task necessary contain a religious dimension because everyone makes assumptions about the basic religious questions, such as “What has always existed? What is our place in the universe? What is the solution to the world’s problems?” Whether a person brings Marxist, Darwinist, or Christian faith commitments to their learning, religious assumptions always shape learning. The Augustian-Anselmian phrase that “faith seeks understanding,” they claim, is a description of all learning, even if that faith is an atheist faith.

Under this framework Kok provides a very interesting historical introduction to philosophy intended for humanities students in their early years. His historical introduction largely follows that of the Dutch writers Dirk Vollenhoven and J. M. Spier. A few examples of his comments on some of the great thinkers of the tradition will serve to illustrate this model of philosophical historiography.

Western thought from Philo through Ockham is described as “The Period of Synthesis.” The key to grasping this era of philosophy, they claim, is to see it as an attempt to combine the biblical message with pagan patterns of thought, which attempt necessarily had to fail. “The radical antithetical nature of the Christian message often became infected and contaminated by paganism.”¹¹ “There is no lasting unity

¹⁰ *Patterns of the Western Mind*, 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 75.

and in the long run both the pagan way of putting things and the biblical insight are distorted. To grasp the Good News with bad categories warps the gospel and twists the truth.”¹² One can hardly imagine a Christian thinker using stronger terms to reject the biblical-classical synthesis.

Of St. Augustine, Kok writes, “One could say that in his writings two Gods appear. On the one hand there is the covenanting God of Scripture, the Lord and Creator who loves Augustine and who is loved by Augustine... On the other hand, there is the neoplatonic One: a god who is a self-identical, uncompounded essence, ‘being’ in the absolute sense.”¹³ The criticism of St. Thomas is similar. “The Thomistic proofs do not prove the existence of the Father of our Lord, but rather an aristotelian god, an unmoved mover. With the traditional attributes of simplicity, impassibility, immutability, and eternity, his conception of God too often sounds more Greek than Christian.”¹⁴ Kok and his friends think the great Christian thinkers of the era of synthesis did not sufficiently understand that pagan classical philosophy brought a pagan faith commitment and ground motive with it.

The philosophers of this group not only claim that the biblical-classical synthesis brought much grief to the Christian community by introducing a false understanding of God. They also claim that the synthesis of biblical faith and classical philosophy prepared the way for the secularization of western thought and culture. Thinkers of this group generally think the secularization of thought and culture has been disastrous in its effects while they also applaud the freeing of state, society, and education from ecclesiastical control. Some seem to hint that an ecclesiastical society flows from a false synthesis. Their account goes something like this:

The Scholastic thought of the Middle Ages with its nature/grace conceptual framework was a result of the synthesis. Scholasticism divides life into two areas, “nature,” which includes society, state, philosophy, and reason, and “supernature,” which includes grace, faith, church, and theology. The realm of nature is then interpreted to

¹² Ibid. 75.

¹³ Ibid. 86.

¹⁴ Ibid. 108.

be quite independent and autonomous from supernature and grace. And then at some point in time people began to think that “nature” could be governed and interpreted by reason alone, without reference to the church or the Christian faith. And finally people began to think of the supernatural realm as unnecessary and secularism is complete. For the tiny remnant that continues to cling to the Christian message, the nature/grace conception leaves them with the impression that their faith is irrelevant to vast areas of daily life; faith and grace have nothing to do with life as it is lived and interpreted in the realm of nature. The philosophers of this group think that most Christians in the western world, whether Protestant or Catholic, misinterpret the Christian faith because of an unconscious nature/grace dualism inherited from the synthesis period.

If the unity of philosophy from the time of Augustine through the Middle Ages was that of a synthesis of Christianity and classical thought (with a basic framework or ground motive of nature and grace), the theme that unifies philosophy since the Enlightenment is the rejection of the biblical-classical synthesis. The new ground motive or basic conceptual framework is that of nature and freedom. On the one hand nature is “conceived as a set of scientifically discerned laws and processes.”¹⁵ On the other hand there is human freedom. The background problem for most modern and postmodern thought is how to give an account of human freedom in a mechanically determined world. Obviously this interpretation of the history of philosophy since the Enlightenment gives a high priority to Kant’s problematic.

Over against the synthesis of Christianity and classical philosophy in an earlier age, and over against the rejection of this synthesis in the modern and postmodern era, Reformational philosophers think it is important to develop an authentically Christian philosophy. This they attempt to do under the heading of laws which they claim God gave or gives to the creation, hence the name “cosmonomic.” This is their distinctive ontology.

“God’s law” is seen as the boundary line between God and non-God that both keeps God and creation totally distinct but also is the primary point of connection between God and creation. The concept

¹⁵ Ibid. 140.

of “law” here is far broader than the moral concept of God’s law commonly found in Christian thought. It is “the totality of God’s ordaining acts with respect to the cosmos... continuously laid down and maintained by God for all that is created, in heaven and earth.”¹⁶ “This structural law... includes what we usually refer to as the laws *of nature*, but which are actually God-given laws *for nature*.”¹⁷

When the cosmonomic thinkers look at the world they see a multi-dimensional reality. They claim there are roughly fifteen dimensions of created reality, which they also call aspects, modes, or law-spheres. What distinguishes one dimension from another is a different type of divine law given to govern that dimension of creation. Thus numeric (mathematical) laws are different from organic (biological) laws, and both are different from aesthetic laws. Or as Kok says,

If it makes sense to speak of “being-subject to God in a social way,” then it makes just as much sense to speak of a God-given law that holds for the social dimension of creation... A numeric law holds for that which is numeric, a spatial law for that which is spatial, a social law (a norm actually) holds for that which is social, and so forth. Each of these laws holds from the foundations of the world, for they were dictated by the Creator. These laws for earthly creatures together contribute to the structure of earthly creation.¹⁸

One of the crucial differences between different types of law spheres is that some require a conscious choice to follow the relevant laws, whereas in other spheres we do not have a choice about obeying the relevant law. For example, in the kinematic sphere we do not have any choice about following the law of gravity, whereas in the jural sphere, not only choice but also much thought and effort will be required to follow the sphere law of public justice. The conflict between good and evil exists exclusively in those law spheres in which people must choose between obeying or disobeying the relevant law. Good and evil are either going the right direction or the wrong direc-

¹⁶ Ibid. 192.

¹⁷ Ibid. 193.

¹⁸ Ibid. 212.

tion in a law sphere or law structure that is itself good and enduring because it was created by God.

Many of the problems in academic and political life arise from a confusion of the relationship among the law spheres. For example, logical antinomies normally arise when a law from one dimension of creation is used to analyze a different dimension of creation. And the many “isms” that come and go in academic and political life arise when all of creation is interpreted by means of a creation law for one dimension of creation. This absolutizing of the relative is only truly overcome by seeing God as the creator of all reality who gives distinct laws for the distinct dimensions of reality.

In the social-political arena the cosmogenic thinkers advocate “sphere sovereignty,” a term probably coined by Abraham Kuyper. Society is seen as made up of several different entities, such as family, marriage, education, church, state, business, etc., each of which should be regarded as a distinct part of creation with distinct, God-given laws, tasks, and areas of competence. Therefore, each sector should be seen as accountable to God but sovereign in relation to the other spheres. This means not only that the state should not be under the church, not only that business should not be under (run by) the state, but also that education (schools) should not be under the state. They advocate a separation of church and state, a separation of business and state, and a separation of school and state, because each institution represents a different dimension of creation with a distinct creation law, which requires each institution to function in a different manner. They claim that their way of thinking is a healthy alternative to the ideological distortion of academic and political life seen in the various “isms” of the last centuries and also a true alternative to any tendencies toward totalitarianism. While avoiding totalitarianism they claim also to avoid undue individualism because they see each person as connected with others in multiple institutions and communities. The social-political application of this originally Dutch Calvinist philosophy has received considerable interest in the US, among Catholics and Protestants, both at the popular level and at the upper levels of politics and education.¹⁹

¹⁹ Richard John Neuhaus is an example of a (formerly Protestant) Roman Catholic social theorist using the notion of Sphere Sovereignty to interpret society and even

One has to wonder if some of the terminology of this philosophy might contain a bit of old anti-Catholic sentiment, especially the way Catholic thought is described as a synthesis with paganism. This is particularly ironic, given the marked similarities between this philosophy and the natural law theories of Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus.²⁰ In light of the well known affinities between medieval natural law theories and Stoicism, one can be forgiven for wondering if the “cosmomic” philosophy is not a Christianized, redeveloped cousin of Stoicism. This would suggest that the cosmomic view of the relation between Christianity and philosophy needs some further refinement. All their best efforts to the contrary, these thinkers have made extensive use of ideas also found in secular philosophy.

III. Reformed Transcendentalism.

Reformed Transcendental Philosophy, sometimes called “Presuppositionalism,” is largely the work of Cornelius Van Til and his students and followers. Its focus is epistemology, and like the NRE, it is very conscious of difficulties related to classical natural theology and the arguments for the existence of God. But the solution proposed is quite different. Rather than arguing for the proper basicity of belief in God, RT argues that the existence of God, as well as a suppressed knowledge of the existence of God, is the transcendental condition of any knowledge or any communication. In order to stimulate thought and discussion Van Til liked to scatter ironic one-line provocations through his writings, things like “One has to be a theist to claim to be an atheist,” and “antitheism presupposes theism.” This echo of Tertullian is worthy of investigation.

Van Til thought that modern culture has not taken the critique of knowledge since Hume and Kant seriously enough. Van Til argues that if Kant is right that the human mind structures and categorizes

papal statements. See his *Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist*, Doubleday, 1992.

²⁰ A good primary text is Thomas Aquinas, Treatise on Law in: *Summa Theologica*, Questions 90–97 with an introduction by Stanley Parry (Regnery Gateway, N. D.). For an outstanding overview of classical natural law theory see Jean Porter, *Natural & Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics*, Grand Rapids 1999.

sense data so that the human mind constructs or legislates knowledge, we no longer have any basis for natural science, logic, or morality. Our everyday experience of the world is rendered incoherent, and real communication becomes impossible. Van Til's simplified summary of Kant's critical philosophy is that "we always make facts as much as we find them."²¹ (Van Til was in constant dialog with Kant in his various books, taking Kant as the key representative of Western epistemology.) If Kant was right, we really do not know anything about the world outside our minds. What Kant called "knowledge" could better be called skepticism. But Van Til did not think it was necessary to agree with Kant.

Van Til followed Herman Bavinck²² who claimed that real knowledge of the thing in itself is possible because there are correlations among human mental categories and structures; the structures of created reality outside our minds; and human sense perceptions. Because all these are created by God, Van Til and Bavinck thought that we do have real knowledge in science, logic, morality, and everyday experience. This makes a nonskeptical epistemology a part of the Christian doctrine of creation. Further, Van Til claimed that human knowledge is not really constructed or legislated by the human mind, whether about nature, logic, morality, or daily experience; all knowledge, he claimed, is analogical, meaning it is a thinking of God's thoughts after him. So whenever anyone knows or communicates anything, even if that person is an atheist, it is because God has created that person in his image and structured the world so that people can think his thoughts after him.

This leads to the transcendental element in Van Til's thought. In Kant's transcendental analysis Kant asked what the preconditions are that render human experience intelligible, what conditions need to be true to make sense of our experience of the world. And in Kant's analysis, knowledge that is transcendently ascertained cannot be false. This leads to an interesting philosophical move on the part of Van Til, for he thinks religious certainty is to be found on the tran-

²¹ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic*, 346.

²² Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation*, Longmans 1909, reprint Grand Rapids 1979, chapter 3. This is the book version of the L. P. Stone Lectures at Princeton Seminary in 1908 and 1909.

scendental level. Normal people, he thinks, live with certainty of knowledge of the thing in itself because on a transcendental level they know things they may not be conscious of knowing. Transcendentally people know they are made in God's image and live in God's world with epistemological equipment designed to give real knowledge of this world, even while that person might claim to be an atheist. This transcendental knowledge, which is often denied or suppressed, is the result of God's general revelation which makes it possible for people to have true knowledge, whether of natural science, logic, ethics, or anything in ordinary experience. Van Til argues that any form of naturalism or materialism renders the world and human experience incoherent, but people generally do not act as if human life and experience are incoherent because they secretly assume what they know transcendently. In light of this, keeping in mind the way Kant argued that transcendental knowledge is totally certain in contrast with the vast uncertainties of empirical or logical knowledge, Van Til thinks he has given an utterly certain proof, not only of the existence of a god but of God as understood by the Christian faith.

A central part of Van Til's philosophy is his notion of general or natural revelation. He says, "God speaks His requirements through all the facts with which man deals. He speaks to men in the works of creation and providence... There is no fault in the objective revelation of God to men... Paul makes bold to claim that all men know deep down in their hearts that they are creatures of God."²³ "As made in the image of God, no man can escape becoming the interpretive medium of God's general revelation both in his intellectual (Romans 1:20) and in his moral consciousness (Romans 2:14,15)."²⁴ But this general revelation leads to natural atheology, not to natural theology. The reason is that people generally suppress or repress the general knowledge of God. "They keep under the knowledge of God that is within them. That is they try as best they can to keep under this knowledge *for fear* they should look into the face of their judge."²⁵

²³ p. 84.

²⁴ p. 409.

²⁵ p. 449.

This leads to tremendous internal contradictions in the life and thought of the modern atheist. On the one hand, in a good Kantian manner, the modern or postmodern atheist thinks that the laws of natural science, the laws of logic, and the moral law are created by the human mind to impose order on otherwise incoherent experience.²⁶ However, atheism means that the human brain is only a result of chemical and biological processes, which implies that there can be no coherent account of thinking which uses universals, causal connections, and moral prescriptions. So, “Involuntarily men think back, with the prodigal, to the father’s home.”²⁷ Involuntarily and unconsciously people live on the basis of what they know about themselves, God, and the world via general revelation, using the truths of general revelation to interpret life, while consciously and intentionally regarding themselves as atheists. Van Til’s transcendental epistemology builds on a depth psychology similar to that of Tertullian which led to Tertullian’s claim that the soul is by nature Christian (*Apology*). Van Til thought this should be central to the public presentation of the Christian faith in a post Kantian culture.

Epilogue:

When the various groups of Dutch immigrants moved to North America, they brought with them a great love of learning. This led to the establishment of schools and educational institutions of various types, as well as to starting publishing houses. Naturally, their Calvinist faith played a central role in this love of learning. In this environment of faith and learning three major styles of philosophical reflection unfolded in dialog with each other, as well as in dialog with much of the history of western thought. This philosophical flourishing has long been flowing from the Dutch immigrant community into the broader North American culture. Theologians and philosophers of almost every variety and orientation are interacting with one or another of the Dutch Reformed philosophers in North America. Maybe some Europeans would like to join these stimulating interactions.

²⁶ p. 110.

²⁷ p. 192.

The author of this article is a descendent of Dutch Reformed immigrants to North America. He grew up in Holland, Michigan, but currently lives in Prague, Czech Republic.

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES: PATOČKA, HAVEL, AND *TEMPTATION*

J. Shawn Landres, Santa Barbara, CA

Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

- Matthew 16:25-26

The real test of a man is not how well he plays the role he has invented for himself, but how well he plays the role that destiny assigned to him.

- attributed to Jan Patočka by Václav Havel

Twenty-six years ago, on the first of January 1977, a group of Czech and Slovak intellectuals inaugurated Charter 77, “a free informal, open community of people of different convictions, different faiths and different professions united by the will to strive, individually and collectively, for the respect of civic and human rights in [their] own country and throughout the world.”¹ Charter 77 – at once a document, a social movement, and a political community – sought to lift Czechoslovakia from the depths of post-1968 “normalization” (the state euphemism for “repression”) and to guide the nation toward a future in which “all the citizens of Czechoslovakia [could] work and live as free human beings”² – a vision realized thirteen years later, on the twenty-fifth of December 1989.

This much is well known. Better known, even, is the name and spirit of one of Charter 77’s first three spokesmen, Václav Havel. But what of the man who was the primary author of the Charter’s found-

¹ Charter 77 – Declaration, in: H. Gordon Skilling, *Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia*, London 1981, 211.

² *Ibid.*, 212.

ing document, the man who put his towering intellectual stature in the service of freedom, the first man to sacrifice his life for Charter 77 and the ideals it represented? What of a quiet, gentle man, scholar of Plato and Aristotle, intellectual heir to Jan Komenský (*Comenius*) and Tomáš Masaryk, protégé of Edmond Husserl and teacher of Václav Havel?

Who was Jan Patočka? “He was utterly dedicated to philosophy and teaching,” Havel recalled in 1986, “and he never modified his opinions, but he did try to avoid things that might have put an end to his work. At the same time, he felt, or so it seemed to me, that one day he would have to put his thinking to the test in action... He also knew, however, that, if he were to take this final step, he would take it completely, leaving himself no emergency exits...”³

Indeed, there was no emergency exit. On 13 March 1977, Patočka died of a cerebral hemorrhage, following eleven hours of brutal police interrogation. Ever a paragon of understatement, *The Times* of London called him a “Czechoslovak philosopher and civil rights leader.”⁴ Roman Jakobson put it more bluntly in a tribute published in *The New Republic*: “There have been three Czech philosophers of world significance and exceptional moral power and purity: Jan Amos Komensky (1592–1670), Thomas Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937), and Jan Patočka (1907–1977).”⁵

Born in 1907, Patočka studied philosophy under Husserl and was appointed lecturer at Prague’s Charles University just in time for the Nazi invasion. Banned from teaching, Patočka spent World War II in private pursuit of his academic work and gave assistance to German-Jewish philosophers fleeing the Holocaust.⁶ He resumed his post in 1945 but lost it again when the communists took power in 1948. Although he was able to smuggle out his writings for publication in the West, his first book was not published in Czechoslovakia un-

³ Václav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hviždala*, trans. Paul Wilson, New York 1990, 135 (hereafter quoted as *DP*).

⁴ Obituary – Professor Jan Patočka: Czechoslovak philosopher and civil rights leader, *The Times*, London, 14 March 1977, 18.

⁵ Roman Jakobson, Jan Patočka: From the Curriculum Vitae of a Czech Philosopher, *The New Republic*, May 7, 1977, 26.

⁶ Obituary, *The Times*.

til 1967 – and then he was officially silenced again in the wake of the post-1968 crackdown.

Patočka first came to international attention with the publication of his dissertation, *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem* (1936), and with his subsequent eulogy of Edmond Husserl in 1938. After the war he turned his attention to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Comenius. During the late 1960s and early 1970s he resumed his work on the roots and development of phenomenology from Hegel to Heidegger, earning widespread acclaim for his effort to resolve problems left unaddressed by both Husserl and Heidegger. In addition to his studies on phenomenology, Patočka had a longtime interest in the philosophy of history, an interest which culminated in *Concerning the Meaning of Our Time* (1969) and *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* (1975), the latter having been translated into German, French, and English (November 1996) and now generally regarded as Patočka's *magnum opus*. He was the intellectual force and primary author of Charter 77, and wrote – as late as 5 days before his death – a number of critical supporting documents which circulated widely both in Czechoslovakia and abroad.

Although Patočka only briefly held university teaching positions and could not publish, his works were distributed in *samizdat* editions throughout Czechoslovak intelligentsia. He also presided over innumerable private seminars in his own home and at the *Theatre on the Balustrade* (Divadlo Na zábradlí), where a young dramaturge and playwright named Václav Havel was starting his career. Shortly after Patočka's death, Havel wrote about these after-hours sessions:

He would talk to us late into the night about phenomenology, existentialism and philosophy in general. Listening to him was bliss; he spoke slowly, ...but he talked with pleasure, with an inner flame... The strength of his exposition was not only in the breadth of his knowledge and the unswerving manner in which he was able to penetrate beneath the surface of phenomena and relationships, but his entire personality, its genuineness, its modesty, its humor. These unofficial seminars pulled us into the world of philosophizing in the true, original sense of the word: no classroom boredom, but rather the inspired, vital search for

the significance of things and the illumination of oneself, one's own situation in the world.⁷

Central to Patočka's philosophy was the "movement of human existence" – a way of *being human* that rests on a profound sense of responsibility – a responsibility that is, paradoxically, both existential and metaphysical. According to Patočka, this idea of responsibility, which is now popularly described as the responsibility to "live in truth," is the only source of and the only means to freedom. The "movement of our existence," writes Patočka, appears as a triad:

- (1) the movement of sinking roots; of anchoring – an instinctively effected movement of our existence;
- (2) the movement of self-extension, of self-projection – the movement of our coming to terms with the reality we handle, a movement that takes place in the region of human work; and
- (3) the movement of existence in the narrower sense of the word which is characterized, with respect to the first and second movements, by seeking to give those preceding realms rhythms, an overall closure, and a global meaning.⁸

Put another way, the three movements are first, the "movement of acceptance," found in loving family relations; second, the "movement of self-sacrifice," found in the transition from self-gratification to productive work and systems of exchange; and third, the "movement of truth," the "sphere of authentic politics and philosophy."⁹ While the first two movements – life and work – might appear fairly self-evident, it is the third movement that represents Patočka's most important contribution to philosophy: it involves, in the words of one commentator, "taking the fact of human mortality and finitude as a

⁷ Václav Havel, Last Conversation – 1 May 1977, in: Skilling, *Charter 77*, 242.

⁸ Jan Patočka, The Movement of Human Existence: A Selection from *Body, Community, Language, World* (1968–1969), in: Erazim Kohák, ed. and trans., *Jan Patočka: Philosophy and Selected Writings*, Chicago 1989, 274 (hereafter *MHE*).

⁹ Ján Pavlík, Philosophy, "Parallel Polis" and Revolution: The Case of Czechoslovakia, in: Barry Smith, ed., *Philosophy and Political Change in Eastern Europe*, La Salle, IL 1993, 80–81 and passim.

moral challenge, to make of one's life something of real significance, in its historic context."¹⁰ With such a turn Patočka deftly combines the phenomenological encounter with death and the ethical imperative to live, and thus articulates a single, coherent moral philosophy of responsibility. This challenge – not to rise *above* one's situation but to *find* one's self within it – led Havel and others to proclaim Patočka the philosopher of Charter 77, and by extension, of the re-nascent Czechoslovak nation.

Patočka's philosophical challenge addressed itself to the political reality in the wake of post-1968 sociopolitical repression. The ideology of communism had "ceased to be an intellectual problem and became merely a question of power."¹¹ And with this power, the new leaders of Czechoslovakia unilaterally struck a Faustian bargain with their subjects, who were powerless to refuse the deal. In exchange for total submission, the leadership offered the temptation of material wealth (or some approximation thereof). As a result, reports R. J. Crampton,

Czechoslovak citizens not only found their disposable income increasing but also, more surprisingly, found goods and services on which to spend it. Between 1970 and 1978 private consumption rose by 36.5 per cent, country cottages became popular status symbols, and whereas in 1971 there was one car for every seventeen Czechoslovaks, by 1979 the figure was one for every eight.¹²

To be sure, not everyone could be bought off – witness Charter 77 – but Havel and his colleagues no doubt sensed that they were fighting an uphill battle against the hegemonic forces of "really existing socialism" that were gnawing through the core of the Czechoslovak soul. The answer to Patočka's question, "What are the Czechs?" threatened to become meaningless.

¹⁰ Andrew Shanks, *Civil Society, Civil Religion*, Oxford 1995, 121.

¹¹ Quoted in R. J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, London 1994, 341.

¹² Crampton, 347.

One way to impress upon the people the urgency of the situation – other than to release manifestos like Charter 77 and Havel’s subsequent essay, *The Power of the Powerless* (1978) – was to communicate through a different medium, that is, theatre. Enter Václav Havel, playwright: “Ultimately, all theatre is built around the conflict between who a character seems to be and who he really is. ... In my plays [this theme] comes back ... as the theme of identity in crisis. It is not just about identity hidden behind a mask, hypocrisy, or a social role, but identity that is decaying, collapsing, dissipating, vanishing.”¹³

Although he did not finish it until 1985, Havel started working on his play *Temptation* during his 1977 imprisonment for leading Charter 77. *Temptation* is Havel’s Faust play – an interpretation of the timeless morality play relocated to the current setting. Patočka himself, no doubt, would have approved of Havel’s enterprise. In 1973 the philosopher had published an article entitled, *The Meaning of the Myth of the Devil’s-Pact: A Meditation on the Variations of the Faust Saga*.¹⁴ The central theme of the fable, Patočka argues, is to be found in the “problem of the sale of the immortal soul,”¹⁵ and in the notion that Faust is forced to come to terms with the difficulties inherent in such a sale. The core of the fable, Patočka suggests, depends on the critical assumption that “Faust can see an advantage in the choice that he encounters, and that he is not a poor man [who is] led astray and blinded [by temptation].” Patočka continues:

The advantage that he sees is autonomy [*selbstgewählter*, choosing-for-oneself] and self-actualization [*selbstgewirkter*, effectuating-for-oneself] ... as against an unending passive ac-

¹³ Havel, *DP*, 193–194.

¹⁴ Jan Patočka, Der Sinn des Mythos vom Teufelspakt: Eine Betrachtung zu den Varianten der Faustsage, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 15:3, 1973, 291–303. English-language quotations reproduced here are my own, translated from the German with reference to a French translation published as *Le sens du mythe du pacte avec le diable: Meditation sur les variantes de la légende de Faust*, in: Jan Patočka, *L’Ecrivain, son “objet”*, Erika Abrams, ed. and trans., Paris 1990, 128–149 – hereafter as SMT. (NB: I am grateful to my mother, Renata Landres, MA, CPhil, and to my grandmother, Mrs. Vally Ray, for their invaluable counsel in preparing the translations.)

¹⁵ Patočka, SMT, 291.

ceptance. Not *in* the choice, but *after* it [in its consequences], is Faust cheated. He is too weak for his choice and lands therefore not at the desired higher level-of-Being [*Seinsstufe*], which he seeks; he becomes a common magician, instead of a pure intelligence. The Faust fable is not a bare moralistic warning, but a prophetic fable about human freedom, about its labyrinth, its tragedy, its damnation.¹⁶

The legend of Faust thus interpreted by Patočka appears extremely relevant to the Czechoslovak situation of the late 1970s and 1980s, insofar as Faust's choice parallels the people's "choice" of communism. Moreover, it challenges each audience member not "as a poor man, led astray and blinded," but as one unprepared for the dire consequences of his nation's choice. Communism simply did not live up to its expectations, and in the wake of "normalization," it stopped trying. *Temptation* was "a prophetic fable" in its own time, calling the Czechoslovak people to attend to their situation.

Although there are a number of books and articles in Czech that discuss the broader philosophical implications of *Temptation* – Havel himself has praised, among others, commentaries by Ivan Jirous¹⁷ – there is no scholarship in English that purports to link this play in particular with the spirit of Patočka's philosophy.¹⁸ Given Patočka's

¹⁶ Ibid, 292–293.

¹⁷ See, for example, Havel, *DP*, 65.

¹⁸ *Temptation* received mixed reviews at performances in London (Stratford), New York, and Los Angeles. All the critics liked the playwright, and most liked the script; none particularly liked the production he or she had attended. The New York staging came in for especially sharp criticism. Although most critics at least recognized the play as an allegory for the broader Czechoslovak situation, few sought out the play's literary and philosophical genealogy. The *Independent's* Andrew Rissik came closest, writing that Havel's Faust character "is a portmanteau version of other Fausts. His sexual irresponsibility comes from Goethe, his philanthropic eagerness for knowledge from Thomas Mann, and his kid-glove charm and fickleness from Hendrik Höfgen in *Mephisto*." At the same time, however, Rissik concludes that "Foustka [Havel's Faust] is made from bits of other writers' work, but mostly the wrong bits." Although the specifics of the Stratford production may have evoked such a bricolage, it is more likely that theatre critics and, later, reviewers of the two English translations of the play, simply did not have enough information about the playwright and his intellectual milieu. See, among others, Andrew Rissik's review of *Temptation*, *The Independent*, May 2, 1987 as reprinted in *London Theatre Record*, 23 April–6 May 1987, 564.

active involvement with seminars at Havel's theatre, we might assume not only that Havel read a *samizdat* edition of the text, but also that he drew upon it in the writing of his own version of the Faust legend.

Insofar as I wish to test this assumption, the second part of this article will seek to discuss the text of *Temptation* in the spirit of the Patočka's interpretations of the Faust legend. Patočka's essay consists of an introductory section followed by three interdependent sections addressing Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, respectively. As such, I shall proceed accordingly, dividing my remarks into three sections.

I. The "Movement of Sinking Roots": Marlowe's *Faustus* as Counterexample.

Of his first movement of human existence, Patočka observes, "We are always already somewhere, we are in the world, integrated in an instinctual affective foundation... To this movement there belongs, ... as its integrating center, a certain self-understanding..."¹⁹ Inherent in the first movement is a sense of belonging, of having a concrete foundation in-the-world which one might call "home," and from which one might draw physical and psychic sustenance. In Patočka's reading of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, the heretofore all-powerful *sacrum imperium*, the Holy Roman Empire, is unable to resist the power of new political and economic centers precisely because the Holy Roman Empire's spiritual authority had no foundation in temporal power. For Patočka, the central question of the Faust legend – that of the sale of one's immortal soul – finds sociopolitical expression in Marlowe's version of the tale, insofar as the political and economic masters of Faustus's Germany force the Church to submit to them:

The idea of a spiritual empire indeed was conceived with the intention that a completely truthful [man], i. e., a man searching

¹⁹ Patočka, MHE, 280–281.

for truth and living in truth can live in a state-organized community; from the instant that this idea no longer suits the self-preserving aims of the organization's authority, however, this [spiritual empire], abandoning its intention, is lost – even if previously it had been adequate, perhaps, to one level of the search for truth. The danger is that it [the state] forgets about the truth of encompassing its true essence, and thereof [it forgets] its *raison d'être*.²⁰

In *Temptation*, this idea finds dramatic expression in the setting – both theatrical and political – and in the characters. The play is set in and around a “scientific institute” of a purpose indeterminate other than that serving the interests of political higher-ups. The Institute has no name, no clear mission – no foundation on which to base its aims or actions. With nothing on which to base an identity, the Institute and its staff must constantly justify their very existence. The setting thus has strong parallels to enterprises populated by what Patočka calls “scientific bureaucrats,” who are “researchers” interested not in the impartial pursuit of scientific truth but more simply in their own survival.²¹ Taken to an explicitly political dimension, the setting is “scientific socialism” made manifest – not only the Institute, but the entire political system, has lost sight of its original purpose, and can see ahead only far enough to assure its own continued survival: “We should all bear in mind,” the Deputy Director of the Institute tells the assembled staff, “that essentially [the Director] is working for a good cause, that even he is not his own master, and that therefore we have no other alternative than to exercise at least that minimal amount of self-control necessary to make sure that neither he, [nor] our Institute, nor, consequently, any of us has any unnecessary problems.”²² In his analysis of Marlowe, Patočka suggests that the spiritually dead Holy Roman Empire collapses under the weight of its own bureaucracy; at the end of *Temptation*, Havel scripts the

²⁰ Patočka, SMT, 294–295.

²¹ See Jan Patočka, On the Principle of Scientific Conscience, *Telos* 18, Winter 1973–74, 158–161.

²² Václav Havel, *Temptation*, trans. Marie Winn, New York 1989, 10.

destruction of the Institute and in doing so predicts the eventual disintegration of the “scientific socialist” state that was its patron.

The idea that the roots of one’s own destruction are planted in the attempt to assure one’s own continued survival also runs through both Marlowe’s and Havel’s characterizations of the Faust figure. Marlowe’s Faustus and Havel’s Foustka are metaphysically and existentially “homeless,” vacillating between pledging allegiance to the devil and avowing faith in the established “good” (Heaven, in Marlowe’s case; the mission of the Institute, in Havel’s). Marlowe’s Faustus, of indeterminate origin, spends the play gallivanting throughout Europe; in *Temptation*, Foustka is as ill at ease at home as he is at work. Foustka’s apartment is invaded alternately by his landlady and by Fistula, he comes and goes from his lover’s flat, and he is always late to work or rushing off somewhere else.

Physical homelessness parallels moral drift – or as one critic puts it, “truth juggling and avoidance tactics.”²³ By contrast, Foustka’s fellow Institute staff members “survive because they recognize some authority, even if it is a lie.”²⁴ Such an inability to take a stand – or at least to toe the line – has damning consequences. After Havel’s Mephistopheles, Fistula, hears that Foustka has duplicitously pledged his loyalty to the Institute even after swearing fealty to him, he reminds Foustka: “To deceive a liar is fine, to deceive a truth teller is still allowable, but to deceive the very instrument that gives us the strength to deceive and that allows us in advance to deceive with impunity – that you truly cannot expect to get away with! ...[The devil] would never have let you get away with the betrayal that I just let you get away with, never!”²⁵ (For a similar transgression in Marlowe’s play, Mephistophilis threatens the “traitor” Faustus that he will “in piecemeal tear thy flesh.”²⁶)

The end result is the same in both plays: renouncing all and renounced by all, Faustus/Foustka cannot save himself, because there

²³ Sylvie Drake, Stage Review – A “Temptation” Without Passion, *The Los Angeles Times* July 14, 1989, Calendar section (VI), 1,13.

²⁴ Lesley Chamberlain, A universal weakness, *TLS* May 15, 1987, 518.

²⁵ Havel, *Temptation*, 88.

²⁶ Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, V,i:76, in: Irving Ribner, ed., *Christopher Marlowe’s “Dr. Faustus”*: Text and Major Criticism, New York 1966, 50.

is no longer a “self” to save. As Patočka points out, “Faust allows himself, through the equivocation over the bargain, to be deceived, and [he] loses [his] truly immortal soul.”²⁷ Or, as the Director tells Foustka, “You cannot serve two masters at once and deceive them both at the same time! You cannot take from everyone and give nothing in return! You simply must take a side!”²⁸ Having long ago abandoned the truth, Foustka loses himself in a void of lies – and the same fate, Havel anticipates, will befall the socialist state.

II. The “Movement of Self-Extension”: The Potential of Goethe’s Faust.

The terms of the wager set by Goethe’s Faust with Mephistopheles are thus: “If ever your flatteries can coax me / To be pleased with myself / ...Then let *that* day be my last!”²⁹ To win his bet, then, Faust must strive for what is in effect Patočka’s second “movement of human existence,” wherein “the immediate instinctual gratification is placed at a distance.... [It is] the realm of mediation (abolishing immediacy), of work.”³⁰ Goethe’s Faust can only win through delaying, and ultimately resisting, self-gratification. Finally he does save himself, in part by avoiding the fatal mistake made both by Marlowe’s Faustus and Havel’s Foustka. He takes a side, admitting at last that freedom and life must be earned anew each day in an ongoing, unceasing effort. Leaving aside for now the parallels to Patočka and Havel’s notions that freedom, responsibility, and truth are grounded in everyday reality, the point here is that Goethe’s Faust wins his wager by “overcoming what is instinctual, immediate ...[by] means [of] asceticism”³¹ – as Patočka observes:

Paradoxically, the transgression [that] protects Faust [is the one which] he brought on himself with [his wager]. It is the transgression [through] which [one] discovers empirically that life

²⁷ Patočka, SMT, 294.

²⁸ Havel, *Temptation*, 99.

²⁹ Lous MacNeice, trans., *Goethe’s Faust, Parts I and II*, New York 1951, 59.

³⁰ Patočka, MHE, 281.

³¹ *Ibid.* 282.

in its immediacy [is] inseparable from [its] connection [with] those things that are valued [*Geltenden*]. [This fault] shows itself in that death is the result where life should have been attained. Meaningful life reveals itself thus as an aspect of ethical life; the consciousness of the sin is its legitimate result.³²

Here is a Faust who, perhaps still resisting his own death but no longer fearing its consequences, can appreciate the true value of life – that is, the value of living in truth. This Faust not only takes a side, but also admits to the side he has taken, and in doing so, overcomes the forces that threaten to carry him to oblivion.

Where is such a Faust figure to be found in Havel's *Temptation*? Not on stage – there we find Foustka – but perhaps in the audience itself. Havel's audience is the people of Czechoslovakia, a people who in the hopes of a better life in the here-and-now, made a pact with the ideologues of totalitarian socialism, a pact that is revealed as moribund. Havel hopes that the audience members can see the bargain for what it has become and, in seeing it, can realize that they are not bound to it.

To be sure, Patočka was dissatisfied with Goethe's interpretation of Faust precisely because Faust's redemption seems a foregone conclusion, even from the very beginning of the play. The Hegelian dialectic that permeates the play, according to Patočka, makes it *impossible* for one's soul to be sold at all, because reconciliation is achieved by the very expression of its possibility.³³ Insofar as the Goethe-Faust of *Temptation* is the audience, which at the time of the play's writing had not yet decided to forgo instant self-gratification in return for a chance at true freedom, this play does not suffer from the same structural bias. A major task of *Temptation*, then, is to goad the audience into making a choice, into purifying itself of the immediate and instinctual,³⁴ and into taking a stand.

"The role of theatre," Havel said in 1986, "... is not to make people's lives easier by presenting positive heroes into which they can project all their hopes, and then sending them home with the feeling

³² Patočka, SMT, 296.

³³ Ibid. 296–297.

³⁴ Patočka, MHE, 282.

that these heroes will take care of things for them. ...I'm trying to do something else: to propel [the viewer], in the most drastic possible way, into the depths of a question he should not, and cannot, avoid asking; to stick his nose into his own misery, into my misery, into our common misery, by way of reminding him that the time has come to do something about it."^{35,36} Indeed, at the end of *Temptation*, in the wake of a conflagrating fire that has consumed the entire cast, the script instructions read: "if the smoke - or the play itself - hasn't caused the audience to flee, and if there are still a few left in the audience who might even want to applaud, let the first [person] to take a bow and thank the audience be a fireman in full uniform with a helmet on his head and a fire extinguisher in his hand." The fireman, though technically acting out a role, is in the eyes of the audience not an actor at all, but rather one of their own, who has stepped forward to douse the burning embers on stage.

If Foustka is the anti-hero of *Temptation* - more than partially responsible for the fire - then the audience, embodied in the common man who steps forward to put out the flames - is the play's hero. As Havel remarks, "this doesn't just mean that a viewer who is moved by what he has seen may start looking for a real solution) ...it also means that he becomes this 'positive hero' while he's still in the audience, as one who participates and co-creates the catharsis, sharing with others the liberating delight in evil exposed. Through the demonstration of the misery of the world, an experience is evoked that is - paradoxically - edifying." This paradox is substantively identical to the one Patočka identifies in Goethe's *Faust*. Forced to recognize a misery they have brought upon themselves, the members of the audience achieve the means of their salvation.

III. The "Movement of Authentic Existence": Portrait of the Playwright as Mann's Leverkühn.

Havel relates that he had been "haunted by the Faust theme" ever since his first imprisonment after the publication of Charter 77. Iso-

³⁵ Havel, *DP*, 199.

³⁶ Havel, *Temptation*, 102.

lated from external events and deceived even by his own lawyer, Havel “took upon [himself] an inordinate share of the responsibility, ... as though [he] alone were to blame” for the repercussions resulting from Charter 77. It was during this period of imprisonment, Patočka was interrogated to death; no doubt Havel, who had been instrumental in recruiting Patočka to the leadership of Charter 77, felt a share of guilt for his death. About this time, Havel had been persuaded to apply for early release from prison; part of this application was then “published in a falsified version in order to discredit [him].” He continues:

I had no idea how to stop this from happening, or how to defend myself against it. It was a very dark time for me, but then odd things began to happen. ... Instead of the usual books, ... I suddenly had delivered to my cell Goethe’s *Faust*, and then, right after that, *Doctor Faustus* by Thomas Mann. I had strange dreams and was haunted by strange ideas. I felt as though I were being, in a very physical way, tempted by the devil. I felt that I was in his clutches. I understood that I had somehow become involved with him.³⁷

To be involved with the devil against his will – this is neither Marlowe’s *Faustus* nor Goethe’s *Faust*, each of whom *invites* (consciously or not) Mephistopheles into his life; rather, this is the *Faustus* of Thomas Mann’s Dr. Adrian Leverkühn, who has had Mephistopheles thrust upon him, and to whom his soul is more important than his life. As Patočka points out, “henceforth the transaction takes on a meaning diametrically opposed to that of the old legend of *Faust*. Man risks himself, his Life, in order to win back his immortal soul: a ransom [*Loskauf*] hides under the mask of a sale.”³⁸ The self-imposed solitude of Leverkühn the composer parallels the imprisonment of Havel the playwright, and each man redeems himself through his art. Thus Havel himself, as the author of *Temptation*, is also a *Faust* figure.

³⁷ Havel, *DP*, 66–67.

³⁸ Patočka, *SMT*, 297–298.

This is the essence of Patočka's third movement, the "movement of breaking through" the situation in order to achieve the authentically human. "Not by inventing illusions [à la Marlowe's *Faustus* or Havel's *Foustka*]: rather, detachment from particulars brings us to a level on which we can integrate finitude, situatedness, earthliness, mortality precisely into existence."³⁹ Referring specifically to Mann's *Leverkühn*, Patočka notes that "his exclusion from participating in all fundamentally human movements and relations, in work, love, friendship, and struggle, no longer appears as a damnation, but as a condition indispensable to his service of the truth."⁴⁰ It is the same for Havel, insofar as his aim is "to risk, in extremis, even life itself to save what gives it meaning and a human dimension"⁴¹ – in exposing his art, and his soul, to his audience, Havel challenges his audience to save themselves.

This is not an attempt by a self-interested playwright to impose his vision of humanity onto a passive audience – recall that his definition of theatre includes the audience as co-creator of and co-participant in the cathartic moment. It is the same for the concertgoer who listens carefully to the conclusion of *Leverkühn's Lamentation of Doctor Faustus*. As the narrator of *Doctor Faustus* tells us,

This dark tone poem permits up to the very end no consolation, appeasement, transfiguration. ...[But] listen to the end, listen with me: ...what remains, as the work fades on the air, is the high G of a cello, the last word, the last fainting sound, slowly dying in a pianissimo-fermata. Then nothing more: silence, and night. But that tone which vibrates in the silence, which is no longer there, to which only the spirit hearkens, and which was the voice of mourning, is so no more. It changes its meaning; it abides as a light in the night.⁴²

³⁹ Patočka, MHE, 277.

⁴⁰ Patočka, SMT, 301.

⁴¹ Václav Havel, *The Anatomy of Reticence*, trans. Paul Wilson, in: Jan Vladislav, ed., *Václav Havel, or, Living in Truth*, London 1986, 183.

⁴² Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter, New York 1948, 491.

The abiding “light in the night” – which finds its parallel in the lingering embers on the stage of *Temptation* – is not a clarion of victory, but a sign of the possibility of a “change of mind”⁴³ Albeit a timid one, it is a breakthrough to authenticity – as Patočka notes, “we do not conceive of the attempt at breaking out as an effort at mastering, seizing hold; it is not a will to dominance but a striving for clarity in this situation, accepting this situation, and, with this clarity, it is a transformation of that situation.”⁴⁴

Still, how do we get there from here? Havel recalls that before writing *Temptation* he had felt himself at an artistic impasse: he “felt the need to begin in a completely different way, ...[not] to depend so transparently on [his] own experience.” Having used up existing forms, he was on an “eternal search for a ‘second breath.’”⁴⁵ Compare this effort with Patočka’s description of Leverkühn’s “impossible bet”:

to create a work of art in a pettier age, when all methods and possibilities seem exhausted and so, first, must be renewed with utmost intellectual rigor, but, then, also [must be] smelted and recast, [the means and possibilities] together with the artwork [itself], in an all-engulfing fire.⁴⁶

In this way Leverkühn is set on his own eternal search for a ‘second breath,’ a search that can be fulfilled only through the creation of a work that evokes the age by consuming itself alive. Not only does Havel rise to this challenge, but within the context of *Temptation*, he literally casts his own work into the flames by having the play end in conflagration.⁴⁷

Moreover, there are parallels between the form and structure of Havel’s new drama and the form and structure of Leverkühn’s new music – “modifying rhythmically a fugal subject already in its first answer, in such a way that despite a strict preservation of its thematic

⁴³ Mann, 490.

⁴⁴ Patočka, MHE, 283.

⁴⁵ Havel, *DP*, 66,68.

⁴⁶ Patočka, SMT, 299–300.

⁴⁷ Havel, *Temptation*, 101–102.

essence it is as repetition no longer recognizable. ...[The] correspondence is [the music's] profound significance, calculation raised to mystery."⁴⁸ Havel, in a parallel way, describes his style thus:

I don't have a musical ear, and I certainly don't have a wide knowledge of music, but I still think that, because of this intensified emphasis on composition, something close to music and musical thought enters my plays. I really enjoy things like the symmetrical – and ultimately the symmetrical asymmetrical – interweaving and mingling of motifs, phasing them in and out, developing them rhythmically, mirroring motifs in their opposites. Again and again I find myself tending toward the analogical construction of dialogue: recapitulating bits of dialogue, repeating them, interchanging them, putting words spoken by one character in the mouth of another and then back again, dialogue running backward or contradicting itself, stressing the rhythmic alternation of conversational themes...⁴⁹

Havel's dramatic style, of which *Temptation* is perhaps the epitome, seems to recapitulate the twelve-tone structure adopted by Leverkühn. To the audience member, such a structure evokes a sense of being bound within this rigid frame, in a deadly trap from which there is no escape. "The experience that the artist makes," Patočka points out, "is in reality that of sin."

In Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, both Leverkühn and the reader encounter such a feeling of being trapped – in the aftermath of the apparent death of Leverkühn's angelic young nephew. One of Patočka's favorite Czech martyrs for truth – St. John Nepomucene (Jan Nepomuk) – is sacrificed again in Mann's novel, in the form of Leverkühn's innocent nephew, Nepomuk Schneidewein. The death of Nepomuk precipitates Leverkühn's final break with the world, just as in the aftermath of Nepomucene's martyrdom the Czech nation receded into itself. The crucial difference, for Patočka, is that whereas the Czech nation of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries was a

⁴⁸ Mann, 378–379.

⁴⁹ Havel, *DP*, 192.

broken-down shadow of what it could have become,⁵⁰ Leverkühn's final separation was a Patočkan break-through to the sphere of authentic human existence.

To the extent that Havel and Leverkühn are parallel Faust figures, each achieves authenticity – and thus redemption – not by attempting to ransom that which was taken from him, but rather by finding within himself that which is truly his own. As Patočka concludes, “the re-awakened soul is not a ransomed soul, but one created [*gezeichnete*] for judgment through [an act of] will”:

This universal responsibility [*Verantwortung*] and the will to it – universal responsible-ness [*Verantwortlichkeit*] – is ...Leverkühn's last legacy, [a legacy] not only of him personally, but also of his musical work, [a legacy] to the difficult time in whose beginning he knows himself to live.⁵¹

This legacy is made, both by Havel the man and by *Temptation* the play, to the same kind of era, not 1930s Germany but the “cruel, disenchanting, soulless world”⁵² of 1970s and 1980s Czechoslovakia. Havel's legacy parallels Leverkühn's legacy – he offers to the Czechoslovak people, through *Temptation*, the challenge to assume universal responsibility.

It is fair, perhaps, to conclude that Patočka's central philosophy and his interpretation of the Faust legend are made manifest in Havel's *Temptation*. First, the play's setting – the Institute – and its main characters – Foustka and Fistula – enact Patočka's reading of Marlowe's *Faustus*; Foustka is a physically and morally homeless anti-hero, unable to accept the situation into which he has placed himself. Second, the performance of the play, the cathartic experience it brings to the audience, suggests Patočka's explication of Goethe's *Faust*. Havel urges the play's audience to resist, like Goethe's Faust, the temptation of self-gratification, and to take a stand against the false

⁵⁰ See Ernest Gellner, *Reborn from Below: The Forgotten Beginnings of the Czech National Revival*, in his *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford 1994, 130–144 passim, but esp. 133–134 and 143.

⁵¹ Patočka, SMT, 302,303.

⁵² *Ibid.* 298.

promises of the state. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the relationship of the playwright to the play parallels the relationship in Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* of Adrian Leverkühn to his music. Václav Havel himself is a Faust figure, taking on, through his dramatic enterprise, the universal responsibility that has been thrust upon him. This relationship, between Havel and *Temptation* is perhaps the most important, and yet perhaps most often overlooked, aspect of the dramatic enterprise. This sense of responsibility is Patočka's own prophetic legacy to the world:

This universal feeling of responsibility, then, is not a mystery, nor a sense of union, nor a blending and synchronicity of everything in universal sympathy. It is a synergy [*Solidaritätsgefühl*] of participation in the truth and beyond that, [in] what it makes possible: human destiny. What does this responsibility mean in the universal sense? Nothing other than [this]: to submit oneself to judgment and so to the law and the universal true community; to want to be judged in the knowledge of [one's] complicity in everything: to want to take on and to atone for one's part in the universal cruelty, not wanting to escape from it into the private, the frivolous [*Spielerisches*], the aesthetic – to want to participate in the universal justice as that single situation in which the soul, as such, can exist – as a being rising from out of the Fall.⁵³

In the tradition of Comenius and Masaryk before him, Jan Patočka thus challenges the architects of his nation's future to bring about a world in which “all the citizens of Czechoslovakia [could] work and live as free human beings”⁵⁴ – in which they can live authentically, responsibly, and in truth. It is to the credit of the citizens and their leaders that thus far, they appear to have accepted the challenge.

⁵³ Ibid. 303.

⁵⁴ Skilling, *Charter 77*, 212.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE TETRAMORPH¹

Věra V. Tydlitátová, Praha

I looked; a stormy wind blew from the north, a great cloud with flashing fire and brilliant light round it, and in the middle, in the heart of the fire, a brilliance like that of amber, and in the middle what seemed to be four living creatures. They looked like this: They were of human form. Each had four faces, each had four wings. Their legs were straight; they had hooves like calves, glittering like polished brass. Below their wings, they had human hands on all four sides corresponding to their four faces and four wings. They touched one another with their wings; they did not turn as they moved; each one moved straight forward. As to the appearance of their faces, all four had a human face, and a lion's face to the right, and all four had a bull's face to the left, and all four had an eagle's face.

Ezekiel 1:4-10

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each

¹ Many thanks to Jiří Prosecký for his advice on Assyriological questions.

of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Revelation 4:2–8

Despite its undeniable attraction, the Book of Ezekiel does not belong among the most frequently expounded Biblical texts, since it contains a number of reports which are difficult to decipher, and although they can be successfully interpreted theologically, their roots remain obscure. The beginning of the work itself contains the description of the remarkable call of the prophet, full of apocalyptic features including four winged cherubim² with a number of eyes and animal faces. Even the most competent of authors such as Walter Zimmerli,³ Bernhard W. Anderson,⁴ Walter Eichrodt,⁵ Robert Brunner,⁶ John Bright,⁷ Brevard S. Childes⁸ and others have a tendency to address the historical background of the book in relation to analogical passages from Isaiah and Zechariah or the theological meaning of Ezekiel's visions more than offering an interpretation of the images themselves. Nor do Old Testament commentaries such as *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*,⁹ *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*¹⁰ or the commentary to *The New Jerusalem Bible* offer much more. Calvin considers Ezekiel's visions an expression of human weakness, the

² *The New Jerusalem Bible*, London 1985, 1407: "These strange creatures are reminiscent of the Assyrian KABIRU (a name akin to that of the great winged creatures over the ark, see Ex 25:18i), creatures with a human head, the body of a lion, the hooves of a bull and the wings of an eagle; their stood guard outside the palaces of Babylon. These servants of the gods are here shown harnessed to the chariot of the God of Israel, a vivid illustration of Yahweh's transcendence."

³ Walter Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2¹⁹⁷⁹.

⁴ Bernhard W. Anderson, *The Living Word of the Old Testament*, London 4¹⁹⁸⁸, 432–3: "Ezekiel's call, like Isaiah's, came in connection with a vision of Yahweh seated upon a heavenly throne in ineffable glory and transcendent majesty."

⁵ Walter Eichrodt, *Der Prophet Hesekiel*, ATD, Göttingen 1959.

⁶ Robert Brunner, *Das Buch Ezechiel*, I. Bd., *Zürcher Bibelkommentare*, Zürich/Stuttgart 2¹⁹⁶⁹.

⁷ John. A. Bright, *History of Israel*, Philadelphia 1981.

⁸ Brevard S. Childes, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, London 3¹⁹⁸⁷.

⁹ R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy, eds., *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. I., London 16¹⁹⁸⁸ (hereafter as JBC).

¹⁰ M. Black, H. H. Rowley, eds., *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, London 1987.

translators of the Kralice Bible avoid a commentary altogether, and the Czech Ecumenical Translation (ČEP) refers to the similarity with Babylonian processional celebrations.¹¹

Nevertheless, the *tetramorph*, or beast with four forms, the enigmatic apparition which appears in Ezekiel and The Revelation, has been a favorite allegorical figure ever since Hellenistic times thanks to its square structure. In Ezekiel 1:1 this numerical symbolism is strengthened even more by the mention of four tetramorphs, each of which has the face of a human, a lion, a bull and an eagle (פני אדם, *pněj adam*, פני אריה, *pněj arje*, פני שׂוֹר, *pněj shor*, פני נֶשֶׁר, *pněj nesher*) looking out to the four corners of the world.

Disregarding various esoteric postmodern interpretations of the tetramorph, we cannot overlook the preoccupation of C. G. Jung with the rehabilitation of quaternity on a mental and spiritual level.¹² For Jung the “four animals”, the angel (human), eagle, bull and lion are an image of the parts, qualities and aspects of oneness. It is the complexity of the *mandala*, of the universal portrayal of the macrocosm and the microcosm which corresponds to the image of the divine (icon). Analogies, for example from Egypt, illustrate how four-formed creatures serve as a portrayal of the divine in unity and multiplicity. Here the four sons of Hor are pictured as a tetramorph, one with the image of a person and the others with the faces of animals (different from those in the Bible). Likewise the Indian Brahma has four faces; however, the resemblance to the classical tetramorph is weaker, since it does not involve a combination of animal and human faces which is so appropriate for various psychological and allegorical interpretations. Despite all his radical psychologizing, there is a remarkable sentence in Jung which I will try to prove holds true for the interpretation of the tetramorph: “Thus the mandala repeats symbolically archaic ways and means which were formerly concrete realities.”¹³

If we allow ourselves to consider the late medieval or early modern iconography preserved on Tarot cards as what is minimally acceptable for a historical document, we can turn our attention to the

¹¹ Starý zákon. *Překlad s výkladem (ČEP)* XIII. Ezechiel - Daniel, Praha 1984.

¹² Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, New Haven and London 23 1972.

¹³ Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, 104.

card known as *The World from the Great Arkana*. In the center of the card is a woman surrounded by a wreath and “four animals.”¹⁴ As the name suggests, this icon pictures the world, a macrocosm and microcosm in its oneness. It also symbolizes the world in its original wholeness, with paradise and the island of the blessed rediscovered. This rather late portrayal – even if one would deny value to the reading of such cards – nevertheless surprisingly contains and preserves a very ancient, if not in a certain sense original, concrete meaning of the tetramorph, which we shall come to shortly.

It seems that the tetramorph had a special attraction for the church Fathers due to its striking appearance in both the Old and New Testaments. That is why the Fathers made them into the mounted beasts of the church. Irenaeus of Lyons along with Jerome equated the four animals with the four gospels. Matthew is represented as a person, or an angel, symbolizing Christ’s human origin, because the Gospel of Matthew begins with the lineage of Jesus. Mark takes on the picture of a lion whose roar in the desert is reminiscent of the preaching of John the Baptist at the beginning the his gospel. The Gospel according to Luke begins with the sacrifice of Zechariah and therefore the symbol of the writer is an ox, a traditional animal of sacrifice. The Gospel of John begins with a prologue corresponding to an eagle soaring to the heavens. All these are a christological expression of the human nature of Christ, the lion of his royal office, the ox of his sacrifice and his reign, and the eagle of his ascension and divine nature.¹⁵

Gradually the individual faces of the tetramorph were assigned to the four major prophets, the four major Patriarchs, the four major church councils, as well as to the four principal virtues, the four natures of personality, the four corners of the earth, the four rivers of Paradise, the four seasons, the four colors, or the elements.¹⁶ It appears the fascination with allegory reached its peak toward the end of antiquity and the early Middle Ages, when it became an in-

¹⁴ Hajo Banzhaf, *Das Tarot Handbuch*, a Czech transl. by Ivana Krausová, *Základní kniha o Tarotu*, Praha 1994.

¹⁵ J. C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*, London 1987, 28.

¹⁶ Starý zákon, překlad s výkladem XIII, ad loc.

tellectual game. The elaborate chain of analogies inscribed into the formula of the tetramorph could have easily become an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the subsequent search for order in both the macrocosm and microcosm. The symbolism of the tetramorph was propitious not only due to its boundless speculation, but also thanks to its incessant obscurity, which served to inspire emotion as well as fantasy. It would seem that the penchant for allegorizing has lasted up to the present to such an extent that what was in essence the profane origin of the tetramorph escapes us, having been theologically re-labeled and thus incorporated into the prophecy of Ezekiel. At the same time, it is precisely the theological meaning of the tetramorph which is so especially interesting. In order to recapture the theological meaning of the tetramorph, we must first disclose the original concrete meaning of the “four beasts”, as indirectly referred to on the tarot card called World, as well as by C. G. Jung, who understood its concreteness in the realm of the intellect as opposed to that of the senses. In the book of Ezekiel, while the use of the tetramorph is highly poetical, in essence it is a factual description of an external and visible reality.

The prophecy of Ezekiel is precise in its reference to time and place “the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month... by the river Chebar” (Ezek. 1:1), a practice not unusual in mystical and apocalyptic literature and which therefore should not be overestimated. One thing, however, must be taken very seriously, and that is that the vision is situated in Mesopotamia. This information, so obvious from an historical perspective, is the key for understanding Ezekiel’s vision. Babylonian science, if we can call it that, was obviously pervaded with religious notions which were dubious for the Jewish population. On the other hand, there is evidence drawn directly from the *Tanakh* that the Jewish captives were not overly resistant to the sort of knowledge which could be used in both everyday life as well as theology. In Ezekiel’s vision it is not, in a strict sense, Babylonian gods who are described (as the commentary to the Czech Ecumenical Translation suggests), but rather the visible heavenly firmament in astronomical terminology.

As early as the 13th century BC, Mesopotamian astronomy contained signs of the Zodiac, which for the most part correspond to

ours,¹⁷ while the system of twelve constellations appears later. “Some of the tables of *Enuma Anu Enlil*¹⁸ were devoted to particular constellations, such as tablet 53 to the Pleiades. Scorpio, Cancer, Leo and some others probably also had tablets of their own (BPO Iip. 24).”¹⁹ In the Mesopotamian zodiac the four constellations known as the gates through which the Sun rose on the days of the equinox and solstice had particular significance. In the Spring, at the time of the fixing of the heavenly calendar, the critical point was found in the constellation of Taurus,²⁰ whose bright red star Aldebaran on the ecliptic was regarded as the “royal star” which watched over Mesopotamia. The Babylonians called the sign of the Taurus “*gu.an.na*”, or the Bull of Heaven.

“As a constellation, the Bull of Heaven is Taurus, and it has been suggested that the story of Enkidu throwing the thigh of the bull at Ishtar attempts to account for the apparent lack of the bull’s hind quarters in the outline of the constellation.”²¹ The Assyrian version is rather different: *ishluch imitti alima ana panisha iddi* (...[Gilgamesh] even tore out the shoulder of the bull [of heaven] and tossed it before her [Ishtar]).²²

The heavenly gate of Spring in the sign of the Bull was significant for many agricultural cultures which were dependent upon the return of the sun. Perhaps the Czech nursery rhyme proclaiming the arrival of spring, accompanied by dancing through raised hands, finds its origin there as well:

The golden gate is opened
Unlocked with a golden key
Whoever comes in
Will loose his head.²³

¹⁷ Josef Klíma, *Společnost a kultura starověké Mezopotámie*, Praha 1962, 161. See also Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia. An Illustrated Dictionary*, London 1992.

¹⁸ Ulla Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology. An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*. CNI Publications 19, Copenhagen 1995.

¹⁹ Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology*, 130.

²⁰ Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology*, 23.

²¹ Black and Green, *Gods*, 49.

²² Gilgamesh VI 161, in: *CAD I/J* 125, ed. by John A. Benkman et al., Chicago 1960.

²³ In Czech „Zlatá brána / otevřená / kdo do ní vejde / tomu hlava sejde.“

Another “royal star” was Regulus in the constellation of Leo. The sign of the lion was called “*ur.gu.la*”. In this constellation the sun rose at the time of the summer solstice.

The third heavenly gate on the ecliptic was Scorpio, or “*gir.tab*” with the “royal star” Antares. We know from the Gilgamesh Epic (sixth table of the Assyrian version) that the Scorpion was the gate to the afterworld, a sort of gate of death, opposite not only in terms of location but also of meaning to the gate of the Bull. Gilgamesh was able to pass into the afterworld between the two mountains guarded by the scorpion monsters after an initiatory interrogation.²⁴ That the image of a scorpion gate was adopted by, for example, the Greeks, is corroborated by Kerényi. Directly from the burning stake Hercules rose on the carriage with Athena into heaven through the gate in the sign of Scorpio, near Sagittarius, or the centaur transported into the sky.²⁵ From Mithraism we know of the two *dadoforo*i, the torch-bearers in the form of a bull and a scorpion, who hold an upright and downright flame as symbols of birth and death, the rising and setting sun.²⁶

As a negative association of an unlucky sign, the constellation of Scorpio was sometimes called the Eagle. Friedrich Weinreb testifies to the transformation of the scorpion into the eagle. The autumn month *marheshvan*, which corresponds to the sign of Scorpio (עֶקְרָב, *akrav*), near Sagittarius, was known as *cheshvan* and associated with the eagle (נֶשֶׁר, *nesher*), if there was an abundance of rain that month. The scorpion and the eagle are two distinct possibilities between which humans can choose. Akrav (Scorpio) can become Nesher (Eagle).²⁷ This Nesher is not to be confused with the constellation Aquilla (Eagle) called *eru*.

The fourth “royal star” was *Fomalhaut* (Mouth of the Fish), usually assigned today to the constellation of Piscis Austrinus although in ancient times it belonged to Aquarius. Unlike the other three “royal

²⁴ Benjamin R. Foster, trans., *The Epic of Gilgamesh. A Norton Critical Edition*, N. Y. / London 2000.

²⁵ Karl Kerényi, *Die Mythologie der Griechen*, Band 2. Die Heroen- Geschichten, München 1994; from German orig. translated by Jan Binder, *Mythologie Řeků II, Příběhy hrdů*, Praha 1998.

²⁶ J. C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia*.

²⁷ Friederich Weinreb, *Symbolika biblického jazyka*, transl. by Milan Horák, Praha 1995, 167–169.

stars” which lie very close to the ecliptic and therefore indicate it clearly, *Fomalhaut* is noticeably to the south. It is, however, the brightest star in the vicinity and therefore became the point of reference for the changing of the seasons regardless of the irregularity of its position in the geometric arrangement of the other “royal stars” on the ecliptic. The sign of Aquarius, known as *gu.la*, the Great, in Mesopotamia, had the form of a human and signified winter. The four opposite signs of the zodiac with their “royal stars” form the shape of an imaginary cross inscribed into the circle of the ecliptic, known as the Path of the Sun for the Babylonians. We could also circumscribe it as a square, the ideal floor-plan of divine architecture. Without exaggerating, we could also mention Jung’s mandala, the quadrature of a circle, the image of cosmos. The universe with such a striking structure appears as the true and only holy place, the abode of the divine. In this regard, Ezekiel’s cosmic vision corresponds to those chapters which describe the ideal Temple.

We have therefore before us “four beasts”, no longer allegorical characters, nor even in a strict sense purely Babylonian deities. Regardless of the fact that the constellations were ascribed to various gods, they were at the same time simply constellations, imaginary pictures made of stars which served for human orientation in space and time. As such it was possible even for Jewish thinkers to accept them, and as we know from a later tradition, their representations were not considered as idolatry. A good example of such ambivalence on the symbolism of stellar signs from the point of view of Jewish intellectuals is Friedrich Weinreb. While rejecting the primitive belief in the power of the stars which allegedly determines human destiny, he had an appreciation for the symbolism of the twelve signs of the zodiac as some sort of subtle representation of the world.²⁸ In fact, thanks to the discovery of the mosaic floor in Bet-alfa from the beginning of the 6th century,²⁹ we know that the signs of the zodiac were so “harmless” that they could be used to decorate synagogues. In regard to Ezekiel’s vision, we cannot even speak in terms of astrology, because what it involved was actually an early example of the exact science we know today as astronomy.

²⁸ Weinreb, *Symbolika*, 147–148.

²⁹ Miloš Bič, *Ze světa Starého zákona II*, Praha 1989, 445.

Ezekiel's description of the heavenly beasts also reminds us of the stars. "In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures darted to and fro, like a flash of lightning." (Ezekiel 1: 13-14) Likewise the vision of the extraordinary construction of the wheels (אופניִים, *ophanim*) corresponds to the mechanism of the sphere of stars, to some sort of celestial astronomical clock, or to the circling of a heavenly charioteer. According to ancient conceptions, the Sun and the Moon move across the sky on chariots. It was just such a flaming chariot with burning horses which carried the prophet Elijah up to heaven. The image given in the Talmud is an apt one: "Like the flame that goes forth from the mouth of the furnace" (Hagigah 13b). The wheels are presented as a symbol of cosmic mobility (vv 16.17). In the Talmud the wheels (*ophanim*) are classed with the Seraphim. However, Ezekiel emphasized that the heavenly beings do not move of their own will like gods most certainly would, but "...It is the spirit in the living creatures, which comes from God, that is the purposeful power of God directing the activities of the universe and man.³⁰ The stars and even the fiery chariots or spheres which move them are, despite all their splendor, only servants, and in the end nothing more than an example of a perfect mechanism.

Ezekiel's vision describes the visible cosmos as the pedestal of God's throne. The constellations are the mounted animals of the Lord, carrying his sapphire throne upon command. The vision of Ezekiel is a theological message based upon the cosmology of his time. Thanks to the enormity of God's glory, the entire universe is merely a throne (כִּסֵּא, *kise*) or chariot (מֵרֶכֶבָה, *merkava*). This image, emerging from a description of the concrete creation of the world, appears theologically stronger than the later allegories, no matter how spiritual they may have been. Understanding the original secular meaning of the tetramorph makes possible a more insightful look into the theology of Ezekiel. God is not portrayed simply as the lord of inanimate idols, whose interest in the chosen people is based upon predominance over

³⁰ JBC 349.

the deities of Babylon, but as the ruler of the entire universe. Ezekiel therefore addresses his prophecy to all of creation and demands an absolute response to God not only from the Jews or the Babylonians, but from the whole celestial sphere, which moves not by its own power, but by the spirit of the Lord.

We live in a truly cosmic age, noted for its fascination with outer space. After Galileo Galilei and Giordano Bruno, we no longer look at the universe in the same way as the Babylonians; however, we do perceive it more intensely. It can be said without exaggeration that a new cosmic spirituality has been born. Fiery chariots in the sky are not fantasies for us but an everyday reality. In this context the visions of Ezekiel may seem peripheral and essentially irrelevant when taken in a purely allegorical sense. But these same visions are the language of our times, as long as we adhere to the biblical, strictly concrete perception of the world.

DAS THEATER VON SEPPHORIS SEINE AUSGRABUNG – SCHLÜSSEL ZUR SPRACHENFRAGE¹

Benedikt Schwank OSB, Beuron

Im vergangenen halben Jahrhundert hatte ich das Glück, zum mindesten drei für das Neue Testament wichtige archäologische Ausgrabungsprozesse persönlich miterleben zu dürfen: die Grabungen in Qumran, in Jericho und die weniger bekannten in Sepphoris. Dieses Sepphoris wird hier ausgewählt – wobei ich mich noch weiter beschränke und nur über das Theater von Sepphoris spreche.

Auf halbem Weg zwischen Ptolemais am Mittelländischen Meer und dem Westufer des Sees Gennesaret erhebt sich in Untergaliläa ein Hügel. Auf seinem Gipfel ragt ein weithin sichtbarer, viereckiger Turm, die „Zitadelle“, aus mittelalterlicher Zeit. Von der antiken Stadt sehen wir vorerst noch nichts. In neuerer Zeit wurden 1948 die Häuser des arabischen Dorfes *Seffurje*, die auf diesem Hügel standen, gesprengt. In der Ebene südwestlich des Hügels erstand dann die israelische Siedlung *Zippori*. Auf dem Hügel wurden Kiefern bäume angepflanzt.

Seit etwa 1986 ist die Literatur über die Ausgrabungen auf dem Hügel von Sepphoris durch neue Funde, Keramik aus dem 8./7. Jh. vC. und andere Funde von der persischen bis zur byzantinischen Zeit, angeschwollen.² Uns geht es nur um die Geschichte der

¹ Zusammen mit Lichtbildern wurde diese Gastvorlesung am 25. November 2002 an der Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Karls-Universität in Prag gehalten. Der vorliegende Text ohne Lichtbilder bietet also nur eine Zusammenfassung der wichtigsten Gedanken. – Ich danke Prof. Dr. Petr Pokorný für die Anregung, den Inhalt zu veröffentlichen.

² Vgl. James F. Strange, s. v. Sepphoris in: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. V. 1090-1093, New York u. a. 1992 (= Strange); Zeev Weiss, s. v. Sepphoris in: *The New Encyclopedia of Archeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Vol. 4. 1324-1328, Jerusalem 1993 (= Weiss); V. Fritz, s. v. Sepphoris in: *Neues Bibel-Lexikon*, Bd. III. 570, Zürich u. a. 2001.

Ausgrabung des Theaters. Denn über den neuen Funden (Dionysos-Mosaik, Nil-Mosaik, Mosaik der Synagoge u. a.), die alle aus der Zeit des 2. Jh. n. Chr. und später stammen, geriet das Theater in Vergessenheit. Um die Datierung dieses Theaters wurde jahrelang gekämpft. *Wann wurde dieses – vorher ganz unbekannte – Theater erbaut?* Die Datierung hat Folgen für die Frage: *Wie sprachen die Juden in Galiläa zur Zeit Jesu?*

Rückblickend erkenne ich: Wenn man *sachliche* Argumente hat, darf man sich durch *menschliche* Kritik nicht irritieren lassen: Nach 20 Jahren des Widerspruchs ist heute *das* wissenschaftlich anerkannt, was ich schon 1976 schriftlich dargelegt hatte.³ Durch die Ausgrabungen in Sepphoris hat sich unser Bild von den Jugendjahren Jesu grundlegend geändert. – Viele werden sich noch erinnern an Bilder mit Jesus in der Schreinerwerkstatt Josefs zu Nazaret. Wir stellten uns dazu ein kleines Dorf vor mit rechtgläubigen jüdischen, nur eine semitische Sprache sprechenden Einwohnern, weit ab von der großen Welt: Ein Dorf, in dem es außer der Dorfquelle und der Synagoge wenig gab. Als der zwölfjährige Jesus nach Jerusalem kam – so meinten wir damals – sei er erstmals mit Leben und Wohlstand einer Hauptstadt – war sie hellenistisch? – in Berührung gekommen. Wir dachten mit Joachim Jeremias Jesus hätte nie eine hellenistische Stadt betreten. *Das* wenigstens ist sicher überholt durch die Ausgrabungen des neutestamentlichen oder herodianischen Jericho durch Ehud Netzer seit 1974.

Doch wer von uns hatte früher, etwa um das Jahr 1975, von einer Hauptstadt *Sepphoris* gehört? Und wenn, wer hatte damals mit diesem Namen eine wichtige Weichenstellung für die neutestamentliche Exegese verbunden? Dabei lag diese, literarisch (bei Josephus Flavius) sehr gut bezeugte Residenzstadt des Herodes Antipas, des Landesherrn Jesu und des „Königs“ von Galiläa und Peräa, nur 6 km (= eine gute Fußstunde) von Nazaret entfernt. Diese, uns früher unbekannte, Stadt ist in den letzten 25 Jahren „handgreiflich“ vor uns auferstanden. Zwar waren auf dem Hügel schon 1931 Sondierungen von L. Waterman durchgeführt worden. Sie ließen auf ein Theater

³ Das Theater von Sepphoris und die Jugendjahre Jesu, in: *Erbe und Auftrag* 52/1976, 199–206 und in: *Lebendiges Zeugnis* 32/1977, 78–86.

schließen. Doch dieses Ergebnis wurde kaum beachtet; denn der Ortsname wird in der Bibel nirgends genannt, und von Ruinen sah man an Ort und Stelle wenig. Angeregt durch die Ausführungen von Prof. Robert North SJ während meines Studiums am Päpstlichen Bibelinstitut in Rom, hatte ich Sepphoris 1954 erstmals besucht und 1976 erstmals im deutschen Sprachraum über das Theater von Sepphoris und seine Bedeutung für die Jugendjahre Jesu geschrieben.⁴ Doch die Arbeit stieß weitgehend auf Ablehnung: Das sei Phantasie ohne jede Grundlage in den neutestamentlichen Texten.

Angefangen hatten die Erkundungen 1908 in der Kreuzfahrerkirche St. Anna am Hang des Hügels; in ihr lagen Säulenreste, die sicher nicht von den Kreuzrittern stammten. Später fanden sich ähnliche Kapitelle im Theater. 1931 hatte Waterman einen hypothetischen Grundriss veröffentlicht. Erst 1973 begannen Vorbereitungen für geplante Grabungen. 1986 war das ganze Theater im Wesentlichen ausgegraben.

Warum sind gerade *diese* Grabungen so bedeutsam?

1. Theateraufführungen waren *sicher* griechisch.
2. Diese fanden in der jüdischen Hauptstadt, eine Fußstunde von Nazaret entfernt, statt.
3. Daher die drängende Frage: Ab wann gab es dieses Theater? Wann wurde es erbaut?

Waterman datierte nach seinen Münzfunden (ab hasmonäisch), nach der Stadtgeschichte und nach der Lage des Theaters im Zentrum der Stadt auf dem Hügel, mit Häusern, die sich ans Theater anpassen, so: „Ende Herodes d. Gr. (37–4 vC.) oder/und Herodes Antipas in der Zeit, in der er seine Residenzstadt Sepphoris *als Zierde von ganz Galiläa*⁵ wieder aufbaute (ab 4 vC.–20 nC., das heißt bis zum Umzug nach Tiberias)“⁶.

Wenn aber das Theater schon vor 20 nC. existierte (d. h. vor Umzug der Residenz), dann sieht die Umwelt Jesu plötzlich ganz anders aus! Dann stoßen wir hier auf *grundsätzlich Neues* zur Frage: Welche

⁴ Vgl. Anm. 3.

⁵ Josephus Flavius, *Antiquitates* 18.2,1 § 27: και Ηρωδῆς Σεπφοριῶν τευχισαῖ προσήμα του Γαλιλαίου παντοῖ.

⁶ Vgl. Leroy Waterman, *Preliminary Report of the University of Michigan Excavations at Sepphoris, Palestine, in 1931*, Ann Arbor 1937.

Sprache(n) gebrauchten Jesus und der Jüngerkreis in Galiläa? Schon lange sind viele griechische Inschriften aus dieser Zeit bekannt, und in letzter Zeit hat wohl kaum mehr ein Exeget bezweifelt, dass sich Jesus etwa mit Pilatus ohne Dolmetscher auf griechisch verständigen konnte. Doch man dachte an eine kleine Oberschicht mit Griechischkenntnissen. Da nur etwa 10 % der Bevölkerung in neutestamentlicher Zeit Lesen und Schreiben konnten – so James D. G. Dunn, im Sommer 2002 in Durham⁷ – war es bisher unmöglich, von Inschriften her auf die Sprachenkenntnisse breiter Volksmassen zu schließen. Hier eröffnet die Ausgrabung des Theaters der jüdischen Stadt Sepphoris eine grundsätzlich neue Möglichkeit.

Die Außenmauer des Theaters ist an den schmückenden Halbsäulen deutlich erkennbar. So wird der Durchmesser des Halbkreises berechenbar; er beträgt 74 m. Je nach dem, wie viele Zentimeter man pro Person rechnet, kommt man auf etwa 5000 Zuschauerplätze. Hierin liegt die Bedeutung dieses Theaters: Das Theater von Sepphoris war *kein kleines „Hoftheater“!*

Wir haben also folgende Situation; Sepphoris war

1. *jüdische* Stadt (literarisch bei Josephus klar belegt) und
2. hatte Anfang des 1. Jh. nC. ca. 25 000 Einwohner (archäologische Argumente).

Mit anderen Worten: *Wenn Theatertag war, kam praktisch jeder junge Mann ins Theater. Und dazu mussten alle griechisch können!* Grabungen unter der *Skene* wurden durchgeführt, um womöglich Gebäude *unter* dem Theater nachzuweisen, und um auf diese Weise doch noch ein späteres Datum für seine Erbauung nachzuweisen: Es wurden aber keine älteren Bauten unter dem Theater gefunden.⁸ Damit war es eindeutig am wahrscheinlichsten, dass dieses Theater von Herodes Antipas vor 20 nC. erbaut worden war. Danach wurde der

⁷ Vgl. den Bericht in *Erbe und Aufträge. Benediktinische Monatsschrift* 78/2002, 412: J. Dunn von der Universität Durham legte in seiner „Presidential Address“ überzeugend dar, dass in der neueren Exegese des NT oft ein Gesichtspunkt vernachlässigt wird: In den Anfangsjahren der Urkirche gab es nichts Schriftliches, sondern eine *lebendige, mündliche* Überlieferung, die bis zum vorösterlichen Jesus in Galiläa zurückreicht. – Inzwischen veröffentlicht James D. G. Dunn sine These in dem Artikel *Altering the Default Setting: Re-envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition*, *New Test. Stud.* 49, April 2003, 139-175.

⁸ Ein Luftbild dieser Grabungen in *Qadmoniot* 113/1997, 8.

Streit um die Datierungsfrage in Israel stillschweigend beiseite geschoben, das ausgegrabene Theater wurde teilweise restauriert, und seit 2000 finden in ihm kleine Aufführungen statt.

Für uns hat die Frage nach dem Alter des Theaters ein anderes Gewicht. Ich wiederhole unsere Überlegungen. Wir fragten: *War dieses Theater während der ersten 25 Jahre des Lebens Jesu schon da?* Die Antwort von L. Waterman war schon 1931: Ja! Auch ich war von Anfang an dieser Meinung.

Dagegen versuchten die jüdischen Ausgräber, vor allem Meyers und Netzer, eher eine Erbauung im 2. Jh. oder doch Ende 1. Jh. nC. anzunehmen. Unausgesprochen steckten dahinter zwei Vorentscheidungen:

1. Die jüdische Stadt Sepphoris hat nichts zu tun mit den Anfängen des Christentums.

2. Die Juden des 1. Jhs. nC. waren nicht so liberal, dass sie praktisch geschlossen an Theateraufführungen teilgenommen hätten.⁹

Die Gegenargumente waren angebliche Bauten unter dem Theater, doch diese konnten, wie wir gehört haben, gerade *nicht* gefunden werden. So fasste 1992 von *christlicher* Seite Strange zusammen: „The works of Herod Antipas at Sepphoris included a theatre...“¹⁰ Und 1993 zog erstmals ein jüdischer Autor nach: „The theater apparently was built... in the reign of Antipas...“¹¹ Bei seinen Literaturangaben wird auch erstmals nach über 20 Jahren auf jüdischer Seite eine Arbeit von mir zitiert.¹²

Schluss:

Wir haben gemeinsam erlebt, wie im letzten halben Jahrhundert die Kenntnisse über einen Ausgrabungsort angewachsen sind. Welche Folgerungen ergeben sich fürs Verständnis unserer neutestamentlichen *Texte* und für unsere Vorstellungen von der *Umwelt Jesu*? Wir

⁹ Die Wirklichkeit sah anders aus; Juden hatten sogar reservierte Theaterplätze. Vgl. B. Schwank, Theaterplätze für „Gottesfürchtige“ in Milet. In: *Bibl. Zeitschr.* 13 (1969) 263.

¹⁰ Strange, V, 1091.

¹¹ Weiss, 4, 1325.

¹² Weiss, 4, 1328.

hörten zu Beginn von den früheren Vorstellungen: Jesus in der Schreinerwerkstatt des Josef (oft anachronistisch mit modernen Werkzeugen dargestellt). Jetzt sehen wir, wie die Umwelt wirklich war: Vor allem haben offenbar *alle Juden* (vorsichtiger: zum mindesten *alle jüdischen Männer*) *in Sepphoris griechisch gesprochen* (neben Aramäisch). Früher kannte man zwar viele griechische Inschriften, meinte aber die Griechischkenntnisse seien nur auf die Oberschicht beschränkt gewesen. *Das Volkstheater von Sepphoris hat diese Meinung umgeworfen.*

Alle sind sich heute einig: Jesus sprach sicher griechisch; denn auch die Bibel der Juden war in der herodianischen Zeit die griechische Bibel (= LXX). Die heute noch diskutierte Frage ist nur: Wie viel griechisch? Wie viel aramäisch? (Nebenbei: Alle Zitate im NT werden nach der griechischen Bibel angeführt.) In Zukunft werden wir sehr vorsichtig von dem beliebten Argument Gebrauch machen „Das *kann nicht* von einem Fischer vom See Gennesaret stammen, weil es in gutem Griechisch niedergeschrieben ist“ (z. B. 1 Petr, Jak). – Wer einer griechischen Theateraufführung mit Verständnis beiwohnt, muss *gute* Griechischkenntnisse haben. Warum sollten solche Kenntnisse zwar alle jüdischen Bürger von Sepphoris gehabt haben, aber die späteren Apostel aus dem selben Galiläa nicht?

Vielleicht konnte ich ein wenig aufzeigen, wie fruchtbar es ist, wenn man sich im Leben nicht von Tages- und Mode-Meinungen bestimmen lässt, sondern von den Tatsachen, die man selbst gesehen hat.

Ivana Noble, Praha

Approaches to Phenomenology

A Hundred Years of Phenomenology: Perspectives on a philosophical tradition. Ed. Robin Small, Ashgate, Aldershot, Burlington, Singapore, Sydney, 2001, pp. 222, ISBN 0-7546-0416-0, hardback, 45.00.

This collection of essays deals with various contemporary approaches to phenomenology, which are presented by Australian, American, Asian as well as European philosophers, who have a shared vision, as Robin Small, the editor of the collection, puts it: “to bring phenomenology in its authentic form to both students and younger colleagues” (xi). Small sees the book also as an occasion for “the phenomenological movement”, which he traces back to the publication of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* (1900 and 1901), to reflect on its impressive hundred years of history, and to search for “its relevance to problems of society, culture and literature.” (xiii) After Small’s “Introduction”, which also offers freshly written overviews of Husserl’s philosophy and of the mainstream development of the phenomenological school of thought, the book is divided into three parts. “Part I: Approaching the Sources” examines in detail the main themes of Husserl’s philosophy and the debates these have started. “Part II: Following the Tradition” deals with the further development of phenomenology in the works of Heidegger and Sartre, but also with its critique represented mainly by Derrida. Finally, “Part III: Making Connections” is concerned with different attempts to link phenomenology to other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, literature and cultural studies.

The first part starts with an essay “Husserl’s Transcendental Subjectivity” written by Max Deutscher. He examines and modifies three of Husserl’s key concepts: transcendental ego, epoch and life-world. Deutscher, arguing for an existentialist type of phenomenology, interprets Husserl’s ambiguous notion of transcendence in terms of the “transcendental motif” (5), which applied to the problem of self can mean “self-discovery” or “self-understanding”, thus limiting the validity of Husserl’s epoch, and stressing the need for involvement in the world rather than detachment, and for intersubjectivity rather than

mere subjectivity. His own philosophical interests, however, seem to harmonise conflicting statements of Husserl – in particular with regards to the notion of transcendence. Maurita Harney, who in the following chapter offers “Reply to Max Deutscher” very clearly summarizes his position and singles out two main themes: “(i) transcendental subjectivity as an attitude or method of enquiry – hence the transcendental ego, intersubjectivity and life-world are *found*, not constructed; (ii) the epoch, by its very nature involving a tension of detachment and involvement, and a bracketing which can never be complete or total.” (25–26) With Deutscher’s modifications bringing Husserl closer to the existentialist tradition, she points out that questions arise as to whether e.g. Husserl’s epoch cannot be dispensed with completely. William V. Donila in “Phenomenological Relativism and Objective Rationality” interprets Husserl in terms of the tension between the relativism in Husserl’s phenomenological description and the promise of rigorous knowledge, which should provide firm criteria for rationality. This is where Donila’s main interest lies. He proposes to take more seriously Husserl’s “aiming at *undistorted* cognition” (41). Yet he criticises Husserl’s emphasis on the “*transcendental* aspects involved in cognition”, which grew in strength especially in his later works, at the expense of “the *empirical* contents of the dynamic mind.” (41) Luciana O’Dwyer in “Reality in Husserl and in Heidegger” in my view represents the most interesting contribution. She contrasts Husserl’s and Heidegger’s “reality” to that of the Anglo-Saxon realist-antirealist debate, and demonstrates that in phenomenology the task is not “of distinguishing between real and unreal experiences, but rather of distinguishing between the various forms with which reality presents itself to us” (50). Robin Small concludes this part with “Ryle and Husserl”, providing readers with a historical account of some aspects of the debate between the analytic philosophy and the phenomenological movement.

The second part opens with Richard Campbell’s essay “Heidegger: Truth as *Aletheia*”, which similarly to O’Dwyer argues for a widening of the notions. In his case he finds unsatisfactory the understanding of truth just as “the correctness of statements”. He sees possibilities in Heidegger’s transformation of the question of the meaning of truth in relation to his understanding of being, but these possibilities

need further developing. He criticizes Heidegger for misinterpretation of *aletheia* in the Greek tradition, and sees his phenomenological account of truth as well as his ontological metaphor of open religion, as only partially satisfactory. Purushottama Bilimoria in “Heidegger and the Japanese Connection” explores the split between Heidegger’s social and moral defects and his spiritual interests, as he traces Japanese and Chinese impact on him, and partly also an Indian one. Bilimoria appreciates Heidegger’s inspiration on a number of Eastern philosophers, but also shows his blind spots in reading these traditions. Max Deutscher and Paul Crittenden analyse the development of phenomenology presented and challenged by Sartre. Deutscher in “Sartre’s Story of Consciousness” concentrates on the process of liberating of consciousness, which he sees in Sartre’s “making nothing of it” (120) by refusing to give it any ontological content. Thus, as we read, a space for human feelings and activities is regained. Crittenden in “Sartrean Transcendence: Winning and Losing” sees Sartre’s approach as inconsistent. His negative ontology cannot be, according to the author, reconciled with his justification of the struggle for human freedom, but he makes a substitute for the lost ontology, according to the author, by stressing intersubjectivity as a condition for meaning in our language. The last chapter of this part, Damian Byers’ “Ordinary Temporalisation: Origin of Derridean *Différance*” shows Derrida’s sympathetic reading of Husserl, but also the shortcomings in his reading of the Husserlian analysis: “Derrida concludes by finding a fatal metaphysical presupposition at the heart of Husserl’s analysis” (135), namely the difference. This, as Byers points out, starts Derridean deconstruction, but without a sufficient appreciation of Husserl’s shift from the metaphysical to the phenomenological understanding of “origin”.

The third part looks at the interdisciplinarity of phenomenology and brings three very interesting contributions. Helmut Loiskandl in “Data, Facts and Appresentation – The Phenomenological Approach and the Concept of Fact in the Social Sciences” sees phenomenology as an ally in the fight against “a rationalistic definition of social facts” which “has overlooked the importance of myth, meaning and value” (156) The essay by Horst Ruthrof, “Literature: The Noetic Dimension – A Critique of Husserl’s Noematic Meaning” criticizes Hus-

serl's preference for meaning as it reveals itself in logics and mathematics, rather than in everyday language or in literary text. The author argues that these would provide better conditions for seeing the lack of stability and the indefinity of human meaning-intention and its identity. The final chapter, "Phenomenology and Cultural Crises: An Attempt to Situate 'Critical Self-reflection' in Australian Culture" by Jocelyn D. Blomfield characterises the Australian situation as "the dissolution of rationality into empty 'rationalism'", and traces parallels with Husserl's account of the crisis of sciences. She shows specific features of Australian culture present in its poetry and history, and in her search for the possibilities of stronger cultural self-awareness returns to the late Husserl and to Ricoeur, and to the two key elements she reads in them, "the notion of 'truth'" and "the role of 'referent'" (184).

This collection of essays fulfills its aim as it provides an interesting and challenging reading not only for those who are already interested in phenomenology, but also to a more general philosophical audience. It would have been good to have had an essay in the book on the use of phenomenology in analysing religious experience as this has been one of the key areas its application. But the collection's strengths lies in the detail in which the variety of strands leading from Husserl are depicted, as well as the unresolved dilemmas, and the inspiration as a third agent between the continental metaphysical tradition and Anglo-Saxon rationalist analysis.

Peter C. A. Morée, Praha

Struggling for dignity

Jakub S. Trojan, *Idea lidských práv v české duchovní tradici*, Praha: OIKOYMENH, 2002, ISBN 80-7298-044-0

As a part of a longer research project on Human Rights, facilitated by the Protestant Theological Faculty in Prague, its *spiritus agens* Jakub S. Trojan wrote a comprehensive study on the question which contri-

bution the Czech spiritual or religious tradition could give to the idea of human rights. The question itself is a proper one, since human rights and religion have rather a relation of tensions and ambivalence. In the name of various religions, Christianity included, basic human rights are being violated in many parts of the world. Some Christian churches have serious theological doubt to the concept of rights of sinful human beings. Moreover, the experience of human rights organizations in many countries of Eastern Europe is that religion and churches are rather as an obstacle than a support in the process of building a society based on freedom and democracy.

Trojan's intention is to approach the question from a broad scope. Not only the churches or theology are included in his inquiry, he focuses in general at the Czech „duchovní“ tradition, i. e. spiritual though with some organizational framework. By this he places himself a tradition of interpretation of Czech history which goes back to Tomáš's Masaryk's book *Česká otázka* [The Czech Question], published in 1895. In this work Masaryk presented an understanding of Czech history in terms of moral values by asking the question which of these values can be extracted from Czech history and can guide us in present-day dilemmas. His final verdict was that the main theme of Czech history was the struggle for humanity. In that light he gave shape and distinctions to Czech history, and as a unavoidable consequence he was criticized by reknown Czech historians for his selectiveness. However, Masaryk's study was not a historiographic one nor a theological, but a political statement in the first place.

Human rights as a set of moral and juridical values were not used by the end of the 19th century. It seems quite safe to suppose that Masaryk would have used this term instead of humanity. It is Trojan's effort to apply the same model to Czech history, but now with human rights as the criterium. After an introduction about the Old and New Testaments and their role concerning human rights, Trojan analyses the thoughts and the work of some persons who played a major role in the history of the Czech lands: Milíč of Kroměříž, Matěj of Janov, Jan Hus, Mikuláš of Pelhřimov, Petr Chelčický, Václav Budovec of Budov, Jan Amos Comenius and finally Bernard Bolzano. One of the main keys of Trojan in his search for human rights in the centuries before the age of human rights is the question whether a

representative of the Czech spiritual tradition connects some independence to human subjects in their relation to power and authority of the rulers or the state.

In this sense, when in the 14th century Milíč of Kroměříž¹ stressed the moral aspects of ruling and strongly criticizes those rulers who are misusing their power for their own benefit at the cost of the poor, in the eyes of Trojan he gave an argument to the defence of the dignity of each human person. Similarly, when Hus denied the supreme authority of the pope over all human kind by calling to the eternal principle of the truth, as a consequence he defended the freedom of conscience in final matters of the Christian faith.

Trojan's study gets perhaps the most interesting and challenging when it focuses on the theologically radical wing of the Bohemian Reformation, the *Unitas Fratrum* and its spiritual father Petr Chelčický. For the last one, power was essentially evil and could never be "christianized." He saw the necessity of power in human society, which otherwise would turn into a violent chaos, but he and the early Unity of the Brethren rejected any participation of christian believers in worldly affairs. The nature of power is violent, which has to be denounced by every true follower of Christ. Force may never be used to change someone's belief and conviction. In this theological concept the freedom of every human being to choose his or her own conviction is deeply rooted in the understanding of the person as a creation of God. However, a consequent application of Chelčický's views would prevent us from building a society where human rights are respected and eventually enforced when they are systematically violated. Unfortunately, Trojan avoids to discuss some of the consequences of Chelčický's radical ideas that could be very interesting in the present debates on the legitimation of war (Iraq) by arguments of human rights.

The selection of the representatives of the Czech spiritual tradition raises inevitably some questions. Trojan selected mainly representatives of the Bohemian Reformation for his survey. From the main

¹ In my study on Milíč I did not state that the postilla Gratiae Dei is older than *Abortivus*, as Trojan suggests on p. 99, note 122. I mainly offered a more precise datation than the one by Pavel Spunar.

religious tradition in the Czech lands, Roman Catholicism, only Bernard Bolzano has been admitted. The argument for that decision is that Bolzano as an enlightened Catholic theologian defended the concept of religious tolerance and freedom of conscience. Does that mean that there are no other Roman Catholics in Czech history who could be seen as forerunners of the idea of human rights? And what about the third religious tradition in the once multi-cultural environment of Bohemia and Moravia, the Jewish tradition? Or are there other reasons?

Trojan's study is an excellent presentation of the way how Czech Protestants see their role in the history of their country. It is a tradition which influenced developments nationally and internationally far beyond what one would expect from the nominal membership. Moreover, it is a tradition which has repeatedly been able to take a second breath by finding inspiration in its historical heritage. Trojan gives proof that this tradition is able to participate in the discourse on human rights on the global level and to contribute some important aspects to it. At the background of this process lies the perception that Czech Protestantism represents the very best of the Czech spiritual tradition and history.

By doing so, he is not disregarding some questionable aspects of this tradition. In the case of e.g. Comenius, he criticises the last bishop of the old Unity of the Brethren for the suggestion to introduce censorship in order to guarantee public mental health. The vast spread of diffusing and dangerous ideas by use of printed books could destabilize society and should be strictly controlled. Trojan evaluates it as a minor inconsequence of Comenius, who has been a strong defender of the freedom of religion. In this light it is a bit unfortunate that when writing about Bernard Bolzano, who had similar ideas on censorship as Comenius, Trojan detects this as a consequence of Bolzano's roman catholic background.

The historical part of Trojan's book ends with the Enlightenment and its echo's in the 19th century in Bolzano's thinking. Reflections on later periods - the 19th century with its nationalism, the 20th century with its totalitarian systems - are missing, which is certainly a pity. Especially under the communist regime one of the main struggles in then Czechoslovakia was about human rights. One result was

the emergence of Charter 77, one of the strongest human rights groups in the former Eastern Block. In terms of members the group was small, but in its composition it was one of the broadest groups possible, containing members from all different confessions and convictions. Also for the churches (not only in Eastern Europe, but in Western Europe as well) the challenge of human rights was a very tough one. Trojan himself, a pastor in that time, decided to join Charter 77, together with other Czech protestants. Some of them found the inspiration for their decision in Czech history. A reflection on these experiences would have been very helpful to the reader as a concrete conclusion to an interesting and challenging study.

Steven L. Bridge, *Where the Eagles are Gathered. The Deliverance of the Elect in Lukan Eschatology*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament – Supplement Series 240, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 2003, S. 193.

Der Verfasser untersucht die lukanische Fassung der apokalyptischen Rede Lk 17,22–37. Neben mehrerer weniger überraschender Beobachtungen, wie z. B. dass Lukas sich mehr auf die Rettung der Erwählten und weniger auf die Bestrafung der Sünder konzentriert, dass er einige in der apokalyptischen Zukunft erwartete Ereignisse als schon geschehene betrachtet usw., ist seine Hauptthese bedeutend, wonach die sich versammelnden *aetoi* in Lk 17,37 nicht Geier, wie bei Mt 24,28, sondern wirklich Adler sind. Sie spielen da nicht die Rolle eines Instruments der Strafe Gottes, sondern der Retter der Erwählten, wie es in den Apotheosen der Fall ist. Sie bringen die Seelen in den Himmel (vgl. z. B. 1Hen 96,1–1). Schade, das B. den parallel erschienenen Kommentar zur Apostelgeschichte von D. Dormeyer nicht kennt, der sich mit der Rolle der Apotheose bei Lukas näher befasst. Im Ganzen eine gelungene Arbeit, voll vom exegetischen Material.

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