

# S·T·K

**SVENSK TEOLOGISK KVARTALSKRIFT 2015**

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**THEMATIC ISSUE: PAUL RICŒUR IN DIALOGUE  
WITH THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

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# Ett dubbelnummer

JOHANNA GUSTAFSSON LUNDBERG

ROLAND SPJUTH

Sommaren är en tid för läsning. Det är därför lämpligt att det kommer ett extra tjockt nummer av STK. Vi har sedan länge tillsammans med gästredaktören Patrik Fridlund planerat för ett temanummer om den mångsidiga filosofen Paul Ricœur, vars postuma hundraårsdag under 2013 firades med ett endagssymposium vid Centrum för teologi och religionsvetenskap (CTR), Lunds universitet. Materialet fick emellertid inte plats inom det vanliga utrymmet för ett nummer av STK, och därav kom beslutet att göra ett dubbelnummer. Patrik presenterar nedan själv detta spännande material om en av vår tids viktigaste tänkare. Utöver det numret kan vi också äntligen ge rikligt med utrymme åt recensioner och också några inlägg som följer upp höstens nummer om folkkyrkan. Det är en viktig del i STKs uppgift att lyfta fram viktig litteratur samt också ge utrymme för teologiska samtal. Vi har sedan vi tog över som redaktörer förra hösten kämpat med att komma ikapp med utgivningen. Genom detta dubbelnummer så lyckas vi också med detta. Så med detta önskar vi er alla en god sommar med mycket läsning.

# Paul Ricœur in Dialogue with Theology and Religious Studies

## Introduction

PATRIK FRIDLUND (GUEST EDITOR)

*Patrik Fridlund is docent (reader) in philosophy of religion at Lund University, Sweden. He was awarded the Fonds Ricœur Postdoctoral Fellowship for 2009/2010, and he was a member of the research unit Dialogue et conversion at Institut de science et de théologie des religions, Catholic University of Paris 2009-2013. His main research interests are plurality of religions, human rights and religion, religion and politics, and philosophical questions about subjectivity, informed by readings of Derrida and Lévinas. His works include Mobile Performances. Linguistic Undecidability as Possibility and Problem in the Theology of Religions (2011), and numerous articles in English, French, and Swedish. He is co-editor of Plural Voices. Intradisciplinary Perspectives on Interreligious Issues (2009) and deputy director responsible for international relations of the open access review Logoi.ph. He has been teaching courses in religious studies, philosophy of religion, ethics, political philosophy and human right studies at Lund University, Kristianstad University College and Jönköping University College, and invited as lecturer to universities in Canada, China and France.*

Constantly on the move between the various genres and disciplines of the human and social sciences, the French philosopher and phenomenologist Paul Ricœur (1913-2005) sorts among the most distinguished philosophers of the past century. His massive bibliography – encompassing such disparate areas as history, anthropology, linguistics, political science and psychoanalysis – forms an invaluable source of theoretical reflexion, roughly centered on the nature of man. While this alone qualifies Ricœur as a uniquely relevant thinker for theologians, his relevance is augmented further by the implications of his personal background as a Protestant and his teaching positions at the Theological Faculty of Strasbourg, the Protestant Faculty of Theology of Paris, and at Divinity School of the University of Chicago. Moreover, in a number of fields, Ricœur's philosophy is of *direct* relevance to theology and religious studies. Topics such as the textual interpretation, the role, function and character of narratives, historicist accounts of tradition, memory etc. (bearing implications on the nature of truth and fiction), inquiries into identity, discussions on evil and on the relation between religion and politics are but a few examples.

This is (with some minor modifications) the way we introduced the international one-day conference *Paul Ricœur in Dialogue with Theology and Religious Studies* in September 2013. It was indeed a pleasure for me to organise this event together with doctoral student Per Lind, as project assistant, and Professor Samuel Byrskog and late Professor Catharina Stenqvist as senior advisors, in an organisational committee. With the mention of Catharina Stenqvist, I feel a brief paus is in order. Catharina was Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Lund University since 2001, and many have profited from the supremely generous and hospitable spirit of her research seminar. She was a strong supporter of this Ricœur conference, giving it her blessing from the get-go. A few months after the conference, she was diagnosed with cancer. Within another four months, in May 2014, she passed away before turning 64. It is indeed a great loss. While an upcoming special issue of *STK* will be officially dedicated to her memory, this takes nothing away from the fact that the current issue is literally, and unavoidably, made in her remembrance.

The one-day event *Paul Ricœur in Dialogue with Theology and Religious Studies* was a moment of commemorating the French philosopher who should have been 100 years old in 2013. It was a time for remembering, but also looking forward. In particular, it was a moment of sharing, discussing, listening to and criticising different readings of Ricœur's *œuvre*. It was also a moment of academic friendship. The conference was hosted by the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, and made possible by a generous financial support from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation). This special issue of *Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift/STK* (*Swedish Theological Quarterly*) is however not a conference report and it is not an example of what is sometimes called conference proceedings. The procedure has been a different one this time. The speakers at the conference were invited to write something on the topic of the conference and related to what they had presented. As a guest editor of this special issue, I am very happy that so many responded positively to this call. Both *STK* and I are proud to present an international collection of essays on Paul Ricœur with relevance to academic studies of religion. Although the authors read Ricœur from different angles, they have at least one thing in common; they are all well read in Ricœur's philosophy.

There are various perspectives represented among these contributions, ranging from broad discussions to rather specific analyses. There is also an ambition to take a step forward and extend Ricœur's thinking. This is so in particular with respect to a dialogue that never actually took place, but could have taken place, namely a dialogue

with feminist philosophy of religion. As much as there is a variety of perspectives thematically, there is also a variety regarding the contributors. Some are more trained in philosophy, others in theology, and they come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds—from Sweden, Denmark and Finland, but also from England, France and Italy. In this sense this issue of *STK* is indeed international. One immediate implication of this diversity is that most contributions are written in English by non-native speakers. Some are inclined to follow the standard of American English, some the standard of British English. In the Ricœurian spirit of hospitality and dialogue, this may be seen not as a problem but as an expression of variety and human richness. This is a fundamental aspect of Ricœur's thinking, elegantly touched upon by Pamela Sue Anderson in her article: "Ricœurian hermeneutics can help women and men to make sense of themselves, to understand their own cognitive and conative abilities, and to achieve greater self-awareness through dialogue across difference."

### Themes

As Bengt Kristensson Ugglå points out in his article, Ricœur navigated a changing intellectual landscape in the French context, while also traversing the demarcation lines of "Continental" and "Anglo-American" philosophy, as well as those between various ontologies, epistemologies and academic disciplines. One might therefore well ask what resources he drew from, and moreover – as have been asked by many – what was his identity as a philosopher? These are not simple, inconsequential questions. What is at stake is whether Ricœur was, after all, a theologian in disguise. Admittedly, this may be regarded a ridiculous and petty question. It reflects, however, the general issue of the respective natures of theology and philosophy, and by implication, their possible relationship. Given the religious and theological issues present in Ricœur, such as religious language, the church as an idea, and the significance of Creation, it is only to be expected that this question surfaces in this context.

The collection of articles starts with a short text by the Danish philosopher **Peter Kemp**, "Paul Ricœur on Theology. His Legacy from Karl Jaspers". In this text, Kemp starts with the claim that Ricœur distanced himself from theology. The problem that Ricœur saw with theology and religious rhetoric, according to Kemp, was that theologians generally fail to reflect on religious language. Hence, unable to take a step back, they are not aware of what they are doing. On this point, Kemp says, Ricœur is strongly influenced by Karl Jaspers and his distrust in theology. A consequence of Ricœur's opposition or distance to theology, along with his identifying of

Søren Kierkegaard as a theologian, was that he made very little use of Kierkegaard in his philosophical writing, although Kierkegaard would have been a natural dialogue partner in other respects. Interestingly enough, Kemp continues, in spite of this distance to theology Ricœur admired the Swiss theologian Karl Barth. What he admired in Barth was not the Christocentric theology. What he learnt from Barth was that what in theology is called “dogmatic” – in Ricœur’s own words – “consists in a conceptual and discursive arrangement of the sermon that connects a word considered as fundamental with a circumstantial judgment focusing on the present and the future of confessional communities”. According to Kemp, Ricœur did not intend to reinvent theology as some kind of new philosophy. Much as he distrusted theology, Ricœur wanted to give it a place in its own right, as a way of understanding the world different from that of philosophy; as a poetic plane different from any other level of discourse. In this spirit, Ricœur read the Bible, and entered into dialogue with biblical exegesis.

Precisely the issue of the relationship between philosophy and theology forms a starting point for the second article, **Bengt Kristensson Uggla**’s contribution entitled “Ricœur and/or Theology”. As theologian and philosopher, Kristensson Uggla is well placed to address the challenge posed by Ricœur concerning the identity of philosophy and theology. A strong trait in philosophy is its critical approach; that is to say, critical thinking. Kristensson Uggla argues that in Ricœur this *critique* takes the form of a tradition rooted in biblical thinking. What does this imply concerning Ricœur’s identity, Kristensson Uggla asks. Similarly, when Ricœur moved from Paris, where he was known as a philosopher, to assume a position at the Divinity school in Chicago, this was also an interdisciplinary move. Theologians in North America started reading Ricœur. Does this double reception of Ricœur mean that he had a double life? One life as philosopher, and another one as a Christian in the fashion of Karl Barth, that is to say a life rooted in Christocentric faith, and seeing “the real human” through Jesus, as a prism? No, Kristensson Uggla affirms, Ricœur saw the two domains as separate, and yet intervoven. One example of the use Ricœur saw of religious ideas in philosophy, Kristensson Uggla maintains, was his affirmation of Creation (albeit without links to any specific theological content). In this way, Ricœur is able to decentre the human subject in making human beings become recipients of life and meaning in a dialectic process. Furthermore, Kristensson Uggla suggests, much like Kemp, that there is an anti-speculative dimension in Ricœur. This is why Ricœur neglects dogmatics, and this is why systematic theology is absent in Ricœur’s thinking, *in spite of* his treatment of religious and theological issue, and his religiously coloured terminology. Biblical exegesis is a clear excep-



tion. Kristensson Uggla observes, in agreement with Kemp, that it appears to be the only theological discipline with which Ricœur enters into dialogue.

In his article “Paul Ricœur’s Interpretation of the Stories of Creation in Chapters 1-11 of Genesis”, the Finnish theologian **Harri Meronen** approaches one of the topics mentioned by Kristensson Uggla, namely Ricœur’s understanding of Creation. Furthermore, Meronen appears to confirm Kristensson Uggla’s claim that Ricœur was inclined to draw upon the biblical tradition in his thinking. In his reading of Ricœur, Meronen explores how Ricœur finds meaning in the Creation stories. Basing himself in particular on Ricœur’s *Penser la Bible* (1998), co-written with Old Testament exegete André LaCocque, Meronen focuses on two particular strata: “the beginning time” and “the decreation of evil”. Regarding the former, Meronen points to how Ricœur finds a distinction between origin and beginning, and his employment of the tension between continuity and discontinuity. Regarding the latter, Meronen unpacks Ricœur’s understanding of evil. Evil is something present from the very beginning, as something internal to Creation. At the same time, the human desire to transgress has the character of a sudden event. It is something that happens inexplicably, as a desire to transgress *all* limits. The conclusion for Ricœur, Meronen claims, is that evil is not substantial, but adjective. The human being is also – and very fundamentally – good, along with the rest of Creation. Moreover, Meronen suggests, the Fall, this interruption of “evil” and the sudden desire to transgress, brings some good and positive consequences on Ricœur’s account, such as death as an end to suffering, knowledge of good and evil, and the emergence of human responsibility.

According to Kristensson Uggla, Ricœur finds a philosophical resource in the biblical myths of creation such that these myths allow for a saying of “yes” to existence, and a situating of the human subject as a receiver of meaning, of life. This positive force, this “yes” is a theme in the article “Paul Ricœur and the Poetics of the Gift” by the Italian philosopher **Annalisa Caputo**. What does it mean to say that love is poetry, Caputo asks. She unpacks her answers from Ricœur: Love speaks. Love itself gives a recommendation: to love! It is about seeing beauty in things and in other people. In other words, it is not necessarily a particular person you should love, the imperative is *that you love*. It is about sheer love. In this pure love, Caputo explains, there is a certain asymmetry. In love, there may be nothing coming back. There might be nothing in return. On the other hand there is potential for a surprise. In this sense, Caputo says, poetics of love is something *different*. It is not like ordinary daily prose. It is rather ever more, and ever other, than normality. It is praise. It is also

something other than the logic of justice. Love pushes human beings to give more. In love the human is hyper-ethical without expecting anything in return. Caputo stresses at the same time that love is a response, it does not come from nowhere. Love is a response to a previous surabundance that precedes love. Thus, Caputo continues, the act of love is always a response, but without a "first giver". Caputo puts Ricœur's poetics of love in relation to his philosophy without an Absolute. If there is an overabundance of the Absolute, that is to say a God of hope, of love, and a God of creation, this is only possible to express in poetry, in symbols. In such surabundance, as "recipients of a gift", Caputo suggests, human beings cannot be seen as self-centred and self-based subjects. Hence human philosophy cannot be absolute.

Ricœur distanced himself from theology. Yet he reflected on religious language, and many religious and theological concepts are clearly present in his philosophical *œuvre*. The French philosopher **Olivier Abel**, in his article "Paul Ricœur and the Language of the Church Community", brings to our attention some short and unpublished texts by Ricœur on the topic of the idea of a church. According to Abel, Ricœur is one of the very few contemporary philosophers who has been thinking about the church in this way. It is indeed interesting, Abel says, to see what a philosopher thinks on this topic on the eve of *mai -68*. One central aspect is the "confessing community" and the meaning thereof. In Abel's reading of Ricœur, there is a dialectic between religion and faith that is highly interesting. The "confessing community" is necessary, because the "we" is indispensable. The "confessing community" is aroused by the word, the living word (*parole*). Only a linguistic community is capable of generating and supporting such living word. Thus this word is always in need of a vehicle or a structure. Hence, faith needs religion. This community in which there is a shared language, and a communality, is moreover a pluralistic community, in Ricœur's view. According to Abel, Ricœur claims that in the church community, a plurality of linguistic genres stand in relation to a plurality of forms. As early as in the formation of canon, discordance is overcome and accepted – not eliminated. On Abel's reading of Ricœur, there is therefore a diversity of discourses within the confessing community, inside the canon. There are narrations, prophecies, and laws. Abel points out that Ricœur concludes that truth is always a specific truth. Specific truth is thus contrasted to speculative, theoretical or philosophical truth. The confessing community, the church, is marked by the practice of what Ricœur calls "linguistic hospitality". In Abel's paper, the role of *utopia* is also thematised: in Ricœur, the church has a mission to challenge the actual society. In this way, the church can be said to explore possibilities while simultaneously resisting abuses.

As was stated in the very beginning of this introduction, Ricœur was constantly in dialogue with various philosophical schools, and with many disciplines outside philosophy. However, there is one field left unexplored by Ricœur, and that is the dialogue with feminist philosophy. Oxford philosopher of religion **Pamela Sue Anderson** wants to remedy that. In her article “Ricœur in Dialogue with Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Hermeneutic Hospitality in Contemporary Practice”, Anderson argues that Ricœurian thinking forms an excellent partner for feminist thought; but also that we need to help it be so. As Ricœur never applied phenomenology of hermeneutics to issues of gender or sexual difference, we need to imagine a dialogue between feminist philosophy of religion and Ricœur. It would be a dialogue, Anderson suggests, based on Ricœur’s critical hermeneutics of suspicion and his restorative hermeneutics of faith. One of the strong points in Ricœur’s philosophical project, Anderson claims, was his commitment to understanding human life. He was not interested in simply winning an argument. In consequence, Ricœur not only accepted but indeed cherished conflicts of interpretation. According to him, we must refrain from ideas of absolute knowledge, and do our hermeneutical homework. Anderson affirms that a training in hermeneutics is useful for a dialogue between feminism and masculinism in philosophy. When Anderson stages this dialogue, she situates it in the debates about embodiment and capability. Is human capability gender neutral? Is this how the capable woman reaches confidence in her ability to understand herself philosophically? Anderson refers to critical readings of Merleau-Ponty and Ricœur on *le corps propre*, “the lived body”, as a male-neutral body, possibly a transhistorical disembodied subject. In other words, Anderson argues, there are claims of gender-neutrality in phenomenology, which still presuppose a male body. This gendering is an injustice, Anderson continues, as well as a loss to philosophy which damages and obscures human capability. Therefore, Anderson concludes, it is important to uncover and identify the role of gender in philosophical texts.

### Contributors

Professor **Olivier Abel** is a former student and friend of Paul Ricœur. After teaching in Istanbul, he became Professor of Philosophy and Ethics at the Faculté Protestante de Théologie, first in Paris 1984-2013, and then in Montpellier from 2014. Abel is President of the *Conseil scientifique* of the Fonds Ricœur. He is the author of *Le pardon* (1991), *Paul Ricœur, la promesse et la règle* (1996), *L'éthique interrogative* (2000), *La conversation* (2006), and *Paul Ricœur, Jacques Ellul, Jean Carbone, Pierre Chaunu: Dialogues* (2012), among other works. His research features pre-

dominantly political and ethical philosophy (particularly themes like *courage*, *alliance*, and *forgiveness*) with a second thematic focused on anthropological topics (particularly hermeneutics of questioning and generations, anthropology of habit and inhabiting), and a third one dedicated to the relationship between Protestantism and political modernity (Calvin, Milton, Bayle, Rousseau, etc).

**Pamela Sue Anderson** is Professor of Modern European Philosophy of Religion, University of Oxford; Fellow in Philosophy, Regent's Park College, Oxford. She received her doctorate from the University of Oxford in 1989 and an honorary doctorate from Lund University in 2009. Anderson has published numerous essays in twentieth-century European philosophy, since completing her Oxford DPhil: part of which was published in *Ricœur and Kant* (1993). Her other books include *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion: the Rationality and Myths of Religious Belief* (1998); *Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Critical Readings*, co-edited with Beverley Clack (2004); *New Topics in Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Contestations and Transcendence Incarnate* (2010); *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion: Reason, Love and Epistemic Locatedness* (2012). She is a Guest Editor of *Sophia: International Journal of Philosophy and Traditions*, special issue on Feminist Philosophy of Religion (June 2014); she is also Guest Editor of *Text Matters: A Journal of Literature, Theory and Culture* special issue on 'Re-visioning Ricœur and Kristeva' (October 2014). A forthcoming work is entitled *In Dialogue with Michèle Le Doeuff*.

**Annalisa Caputo** is Researcher with National Scientific Qualification as Associate Professor in Theoretical Philosophy and Aesthetics at the University of Bari, Italy. She is currently in charge of a BA course in *Languages of Philosophy* at the University of Bari, and Visiting Professor of Philosophical Anthropology at the School of Theology of Apulia. She has written a monograph on Paul Ricœur (*Io e tu: una dialettica fragile e spezzata. Percorsi con Paul Ricœur* [2009]), and various articles (available in English is "A Second Copernican Revolution. Phenomenology of the Mutuality and Poetics of the Gift in the last Ricœur", 231-256 in *On the Proper Use of Phenomenology – Paul Ricœur Centenary* [2013]). Among her research interests are the thinking of Nietzsche and Heidegger. She has published several books on them, and also an international Heidegger-Bibliography, *Vent'anni di ricezione heideggeriana (1979-1999). Una bibliografia* (2001). She leads a research-team promoting philosophical and artistical culture and experimental teaching at the High School, following the method "Philosophia ludens" (learning philosophy through games).

**Peter Kemp** is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts, University of Aarhus, Campus Copenhagen, and Executive Director for the Centre for Ethics and Law, Copenhagen. He was President of the XXIIInd World Congress of Philosophy, Seoul, 2008. Major works include: *Théorie de l'engagement I-II* (1973), *Das Unersetzliche. Eine Technologie-Ethik* (1992), *La mundialización de la ética* (2007), *Sagesse pratique de Paul Ricœur* (2010), *Citizen of the World* (2011).

Professor **Bengt Kristensson Ugglå** lives in Stockholm, Sweden, and is holder of the Amos Anderson Chair of Philosophy, Culture, and Management at the Swedish-speaking University in Finland, Åbo Akademi University. His doctoral thesis from Lund University 1994 explored the communicative resources in Paul Ricœur's philosophical project from the 30s to the early 90s. He was appointed Associate Professor (Docent) in Studies in Life and World Views at Uppsala University in 1995. Kristensson Ugglå has published books, articles, translations, introductions and contributions to anthologies in connection with Ricœur's philosophy, mainly in Scandinavian languages. He has also extensively developed and implemented a cross-disciplinary hermeneutics in a wide range of areas. Two examples of books available in English are *Ricœur, Hermeneutics and Globalization* (2010), and *Trust and Organizations: Confidence Across Borders* (2013) – together with Marta Reuter and Filip Wijkström.

**Harri Meronen** is currently writing his doctoral work on Paul Ricœur's biblical interpretations. From 2009 to 2012 he worked in the Research Project of Theological Hermeneutics at the University of Helsinki. In 1994 he graduated in fine arts painting and environmental arts from the Art-school MAA (Maharishi Art Academy) in Helsinki, and in 2008 from the University of Helsinki with a Master in Theology. Meronen is also a pastor of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. He has published an article on Ricœur's interpretation of Psalm 22 in the Finnish theological review *Teologinen aikakauskirja/Teologisk tidskrift* 6, 2010 (pp. 556-571): Harri Meronen, "Psalmi johon Jesus pukeutuu sisältäpäin: Paul Ricœurin tulkinta psalmista 22". ("Insights into the Psalm Quoted by Jesus: Paul Ricœur's Interpretation of Psalm 22").

# Paul Ricœur on Theology

## His Legacy from Karl Jaspers

PETER KEMP

Taking into account that Ricœur took distance from most theology and preferred to focus on “biblical thinking” and biblical exegesis, he was an anti-theologian. But he was also a philosopher of religious language, and I think the best in his century. Therefore I consider that his opposition to theology has to do with his impression that most theologians do not reflect on their own language as theologians and thus do not take distance from their own work so that they could be aware of what they are doing. Distance would not mean denial but self-understanding.

For the same reason he could not accept religious rhetoric as more than a source for philosophy. He could admire this rhetoric in Pascal and Kierkegaard, but he would not repeat it as thinking. In the same way he could admire the language of Karl Barth, but as far as I know he never used Barth in his religious thinking. He could better accept Bultmann because he was an exegete, but he never took over Bultmann’s use of Heidegger in his interpretation of the Bible.

His distance to theology was a legacy from Jaspers. And I agree with what Bengt Kristensson Uggla said already in his dissertation from 1994 *Kommunikation på bristningsgränsen* (*Communication at the bursting point*) that the reception of Ricœur has neglected to consider his early writings and in particular the influence from Jaspers in order to understand him.<sup>1</sup> He not only took over Jaspers’ view of communication but also his distrust of theology. And this distrust was not only a distrust of liberal theology but also of the theology of Kierkegaard, which claimed that logical paradox was the object of faith and that faith was only an inward act which for Kierkegaard in the end signified negative decisions about marriage and profession and a demand for a life as a martyr. Jaspers assumed nearly all the existential concepts of Kierkegaard

such as the instant, the individual, choice, subjectivity and the concept of existence itself. But he did not assume his Christianity.

Ricœur did the same. However he did not assume the philosophical faith of Jaspers. But as some notes in the book *Karl Jaspers et la Philosophie de l’existence* (*Karl Jaspers and the Philosophy of Existence*) show, he became fascinated by the Kierkegaardian idea of repetition in the sense of the reaffirmation of existence.<sup>2</sup> But he also thought that Kierkegaard gave up this idea, and he believed that he already did that after *Gjentagelsen* (*Repetition*) and *Frygt og Bæven* (*Fear and Trembling*) in 1843, although as shown by new Kierkegaard research this change in Kierkegaard’s thinking only happened in the last period of his life, after *Kjerlighedens Gjerninger* (*Works of Love*) in 1847.<sup>3</sup> But this view on Kierkegaard as a theologian who gave up his best idea convinced him that Kierkegaard could only serve as poetic rhetoric and later he found Jean Nabert who developed much more philosophically the idea of original affirmation based on the thought of Maine de Biran and Immanuel Kant.

I presume that this rejection of Kierkegaard’s thinking founded the mistrust of theology in Ricœur. And this mistrust also brought him to avoid nearly any use of Kierkegaard after his lectures in 1963 on “Kierkegaard and evil” and “Philosophy after Kierkegaard”.<sup>4</sup> Only at the end

<sup>2</sup> Mikel Dufrenne et Paul Ricœur, *Karl Jaspers et la Philosophie de l’existence*, (Paris: Seuil), 179, note 18 a.o.

<sup>3</sup> Pia Søltoft, “*Kærlighedens Kende. En undersøgelse af kærlighedens skikkelser og kendetegn, sådan som de beskrives i Søren Kierkegaards forfatterskab* (København, unpublished draft, 2013). Cf. Søltoft; “Kierkegaard and the Sheer Phenomenon of Love”, 289-306 in *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2013* (eds. H. Schultz, J. Stewart & K. Verstrynge; New York/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Peter Kemp, “Ricœur’s silence about Kierkegaard”, paper for the International Conference on the

<sup>1</sup> Bengt Kristensson Uggla, *Kommunikation på Bristningsgränsen* (Stockholm/Stehag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 1994/1999).

of *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (*Memory History, and Forgetting*) would he quote Kierkegaard's praise of forgetting as the liberation of care from "What we learn from the Lilies in the Field and from the Birds of the Air",<sup>5</sup> but this text expressed a contentment about being a human and does not have the misanthropic tone that Ricœur earlier found in other writings of Kierkegaard.

It is through this that Ricœur stressed the Yes of creation, not only against existentialistic negativism, but according to Boyd Blundell also against Christocentric theology that has claimed as Karl Barth, that the study of the *real* human can be done only by taking the man Jesus as its starting point.<sup>6</sup> The question is what Ricœur saw in Barth since his thought is not Christocentrism. I think we can find an answer in the interview he gave to François Azouvi and Marc de Launay in the book *La critique et la conviction* (*Critique and Conviction*). There he claims two things: firstly, that Barth has taught him that

what theologians call "dogmatic" consists in a conceptual and discursive arrangement of the sermon that connects a word considered as fundamental with a circumstantial judgment focusing on the present and the future of confessional communities.<sup>7</sup>

And secondly, that at a certain moment in his life he had, under the influence of Karl Barth,

driven the dualism [between theology and philosophy] very far, to claim a kind of prohibition of talk about God in philosophy.<sup>8</sup> But he recognizes that later he has talked about the difference between "the philosophical argument [...] and the deep motivation of my philosophical engagement".<sup>9</sup> And he adds that by motivation he understands "sources" in the sense of "something that I do not master".<sup>10</sup> And amongst "sources of philosophy" he counts exactly what in his lecture on "Philosopher après Kierkegaard" he calls "the rhetorical-religious genius" of Kierkegaard.<sup>11</sup>

One can argue, as does for instance Bengt Kristensson Uggla, that Ricœur's work on the Bible was an integral part of broader hermeneutical ambition to rehabilitate a poetic discourse. But since Ricœur has always wanted to show that "the symbol gives rise to thought",<sup>12</sup> I consider that his ambition, the promised land, was to reinvent theology, not as a semi-philosophy or as a new philosophy, but as a thinking in its own right, a reasonable poetics of existence recognized as a way of understanding of life and world, a theology not only in ceasefire with philosophy but in peace because it is a thinking on a different level than philosophy, a poetic level different from any other level of thinking.

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Ricœur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 655; *Memory, History and Forgetting* / translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 505.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Boyd Blundell, *Paul Ricœur between Theology and Philosophy: Detour and Return* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010), 154.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Ricœur, *La critique et la conviction, Entretiens avec François Azouvi et Marc de Launay* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1995), 216; Ricœur, *La critique*, 226.

<sup>8</sup> Ricœur, *La critique*, 226.

<sup>9</sup> Ricœur, *La critique*, 227.

<sup>10</sup> Ricœur, *La critique*, 227.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Lectures 2, La contrée des philosophes* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 34.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricœur: *Finitude et culpabilité, II La symbolique du mal* (Paris: Aubier, 1960), 323-332; *The Symbolism of Evil* (translated by Emerson Buchanan; Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 347-357

# Ricœur and/or Theology

BENGT KRISTENSSON UGGLA

## 1. Paul Ricœur – a puzzling case for philosophy

For more than half a century the French philosopher Paul Ricœur (1913-2005) was almost omnipresent at the forefront of philosophical development, he also interposed in a wide spectrum of other disciplines, stretching from history and theology to linguistics and neuroscience. Despite this and even though without any doubt he may be said to have been extremely influential, his position remains somewhat enigmatic. Ricœur himself appears as a *puzzling case* within contemporary philosophy and there are several reasons for this. A confrontation with Ricœur raises a number of crucial questions.

The first question to arise is: what kind of intellectual position is implied in a philosophical project that started in the intellectual soil of French and German existential phenomenology, successfully managed to navigate in the antiexistential (and anti-humanistic) cognitive landscape of structuralism, and finally blossomed in the context post structuralism? For a long time Ricœur appeared as the great “survivor” in French philosophy. After that contemporary colleagues, from Merleau-Ponty and Foucault to Lévinas and Derrida, all had passed away, Ricœur himself continued his conversation with ever new dialogue partners, regardless of the changing cognitive infrastructures. How was this possible? What kind of cognitive resources made him compatible with contexts that differed so widely in terms of ontological and epistemological assumptions? Moreover, how can we determine the position of someone who recontextualized his thoughts time after time in this variable philosophical geography?

After this first set of questions follows a second: what kind of philosophical resources made it possible for Ricœur to be able to develop a transatlantic philosophical project from the 70s, when he constantly moved back and forth across the intellectual English Channel that for many years brutally separated Anglo-Saxon and Con-

tinental philosophical territories? Considering the fact that Ricœur tried to bridge the gulf between the different epistemologies as well as ontological assumptions of Continental and Analytic philosophies, we may once more ask: what did Ricœur’s own epistemological and ontological orientations look like? Is this project just a kind of philosophical eclecticism?

To these difficulties to determine Ricœur’s own philosophical identity, we may also add questions emanating as a result of his profound involvement and frequent interventions in a broad variety of other disciplines and debates, which raises a third set of issues, this time - concerning how this affected his identity as a philosopher: What does it mean to still insist on being a philosopher, as Ricœur did, whilst also having the role of a disciplinary boundary-crosser?

I will not take up these issues here, as that has been done elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> In this article I will focus instead on a fourth set of questions, regarding challenges that seem to be even more complicated; elaborating on what may be recognized as the major reason why Ricœur appears to be a puzzling case for philosophers: his connection to religion and the profound presence of a religious dimension in his work. Many philosophers have been so puzzled and annoyed by this that they have sometimes even termed him a theologian – in opposition to his own declaration of being a philosopher and his strong rejection of the label theologian.

The general history of the hostility, interspersed with attempted amalgamations, between theology and philosophy stretches back to the “origins” of Western civilization. In modern times, theology has tended to be regarded as a ghost of a repressed memory that has constantly

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bengt Kristensson Ugglå, *Kommunikation på bristningsgränsen: En studie i Paul Ricœur’s projekt* (Stockholm/Stehag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 1994) and *Ricœur, Hermeneutics, and Globalization* (London/New York: Continuum Books, 2010).



chased the identity of philosophers. However, today these issues of the place of the secular and the religious in the public space have become urgent matters. Effectively this also means that the challenges associated with coping with Ricœur, can in many ways be said to be equivalent to coping with some of the most crucial issues in our time. Thus, the enigmas associated with Ricœur, and the reception of his thought in the strained areas between philosophical and theological discourses, are expressions of more general problems and dilemmas of extraordinary importance from a broader perspective.

It is an undeniable fact that religion, as well as theological topics, is present in a profound way through Ricœur's comprehensive publication list. The occurrence of this dimension is most obvious in his many articles, but we also find a recurrent discussion in his major books, even though two clear periods characterized by different publishing strategies may be delineated. We are confronted with a great number of religious themes and concepts already in his very earliest works on Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel.<sup>2</sup> For readers who are trained as theologians, it is not difficult to detect profound influences from Luther's theology, which particularly is seen in the philosophical anthropology of Ricœur's philosophy of the will, both in his dissertation from 1950 and in the two volume second part of this project published ten years later.<sup>3</sup> The internal structure of his interpretation of the Lutheran concept of *self-arbitre* (how we can be at once bound and free) can even be recognized as a predecessor of the wounded cogito (*cogito blessé*), which he elaborated on from the second half of the 60s. Explicit religious and theological issues are also dealt with in the major books from this decade: his hermeneutical essay on Freud from 1965, and the collection from 1969

of essays that summarize Ricœur's 1960s (similar to the earlier collection of essays from 1955).<sup>4</sup>

Paradoxically, it was only after Ricœur received a professorship at a theological school (Divinity School, University of Chicago), that a new logic was introduced into his publishing strategy, resulting in a separation of theological and religious issues into different books. Some of which were edited by others<sup>5</sup> and some published by himself.<sup>6</sup> The dilemmas associated with this separation became a critical issue in the preparation of *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990), when the author ultimately decided to eliminate two chapters from the final publication, consisting of two lectures on "natural theology" which were part of the original Gifford Lectures which constituted the main content of the book.

However, also Ricœur as a person had strong affinities with what he himself named "the biblical faith" and identified himself with the Christian tradition (without claiming any exclusivism). Those who prefer a clear cut and an easy dichotomy between philosophy and theology have been puzzled by Ricœur as a philosopher, who explicitly declared that he is one of those who "identify themselves with the book that itself stems from the metaphorical identification between the Word of God and the person of Christ" in terms of a "second-degree identification."<sup>7</sup> He was a member of the French Reformed Church – although he later in his life sometimes played down this connection to

<sup>2</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence* (Paris: Seuil, 1947) together with Mikel Dufrenne, and Paul Ricœur, *Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers: philosophie du mystère et philosophie du paradoxe* (Paris: Temps présent, 1948).

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Philosophie de la volonté: I, Le volontaire et l'involontaire* (Paris: Aubier, 1950); *Philosophie de la volonté: Finitude et Culpabilité. I, L'homme faillible. II, La symbolique du mal* (Paris: Aubier 1960/1988).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), Paul Ricœur, *Le conflit des interprétations: Essais d'herméneutique* (Paris: Seuil 1969), and Paul Ricœur, *Histoire et vérité* (Paris: Seuil, 1955/1967).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980, edited with an introduction by Lewis S. Mudge), and Paul Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Fortress Press 1995, edited by M. I. Wallace, translated by David Pellauer).

<sup>6</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Penser la Bible* (Paris: Seuil, 1980) together with André LaCocque.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Ricœur, "The Self in the Mirror of the Scriptures", 219 in *The Whole and the Divided Self: The Bible and Theological Anthropology* (ed. J. McCarthy; New York: Crossroad 1997, translation David Pellauer).

French Protestantism by explaining it as being part of his resistance to organized ecumenism and his support of greater diversity, and although some of his most important dialogue partners were Catholics, it is nevertheless an inescapable fact that he donated his library to the *Faculté de théologie protestante de Paris*. Furthermore, Ricœur was frequently invited to speak in churches and congregations, he even delivered many sermons and has since long been a very common reference for theologians. It is not by coincidence that so many of the scholars who have written on Ricœur have (at least in their former life) been trained theologians, many of his fundamental concepts are also strongly associated with religion and theology: symbol, text, metaphor, narrative, memory, promise, forgiveness, etc.

If we consider that all these circumstances refer to a thinker who strongly refused to identify himself as a theologian, we may recognize why his presence tends to challenge the self-understanding of both philosophers and theologians. It is “an event that looks like a thought”, that in the same year we were celebrating the centennial anniversary of Paul Ricœur, we also celebrated the bicentennial anniversary of Søren Kierkegaard – two thinkers who both generate frustration by challenging the identity of philosophy and theology to the bursting point.

From this we may understand why the theme of the conference “Paul Ricœur in Dialogue with Theology and Religious Studies,”<sup>8</sup> can also be described as the major cause why Ricœur emerges as a puzzling case for philosophy. The attempts to evaluate and assess his particular philosophical position and contribution have generally resulted in extraordinarily diverse judgments. According to some standard works, aimed at presenting an overview of the philosophical scene of the past century, Ricœur is distinguished as one of the major leading figures, while in others he is overlooked and ignored.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University, 6 September 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Only in the French context, we are confronted by the contrast between François Dosse, for whom Ricœur gradually appears as the hero in his evolving historical drama of development within the human and social sciences, cf. *Histoire du structuralisme I-II* (Paris: La

This polarized reception has even been aggravated by the uncertainties concerning the relationship between philosophical and theological discourses and has also generated complications within the specific theological reception of his thought.

What further complicates the attempts to establish a clear distinction in Ricœur’s project between philosophy, on the one hand, and religious faith and theology, on the other, is the fact that he claimed that the most important sources for critical thinking have religious origins, they emanate from Jewish and Christian traditions:

Critique is also a tradition. I would even say that it plunges into the most impressive tradition, that of liberating acts, of the Exodus and the Resurrection. Perhaps there would be no more interest in emancipation, no more anticipation of freedom, if the Exodus and the Resurrection were erased from the memory of mankind.<sup>10</sup>

The circumstance, that Ricœur did not identify religious faith with (more or less blind) convictions – and critique as an external threat – but deduced the critical thinking as a tradition itself and stated that this tradition stems from religious sources, undermines any attempt to operate according to a simple dichotomy that puts religion and theology in opposition to secular, critical thinking and modernity. Moreover, since Ricœur’s reflections on religious faith may be conceived as integral parts of his hermeneutics of suspicion and his elaborations on critical hermeneutics, he rejected every attempt to identify religion with an immediate self-consciousness. In the same manner as he fully affirmed the critique of religion, his idea of “the hermeneutical

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Découverte, 1991-1992), *L’empire du sens: L’humanisation des sciences humaines* (Paris: la Découverte 1995), and Paul Ricœur, *Le sens d’une vie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1997) – and Vincent Descombes, who instead completely ignores Ricœur when describing the philosophical scene in France in his *La même et l’autre: Quarante-cinq ans de philosophie française 1933-1978* (Paris: Minuit, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> Paul Ricœur, “Hermeneutics and the critique of ideology,” 63-100 in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981), 99-100.

function of distanciation in all communication”<sup>11</sup> was applied in a generalized way to his understanding of religion and faith. It is true that Ricœur believed in the necessity of convictions, but it is equally true that he also stressed that all convictions can and need to be developed by critical distanciations. The decentering of the subject is also motivated by religious reasons. Thus, not only the internal structure of hermeneutical experience, but also Ricœur’s understanding of the religious experience, harbor a remarkably high degree of alienation, due to the omnipresence of different forms of critical distanciations. Ricœur found it as a necessity to ask critically – not only against Hans-Georg Gadamer’s understanding of the hermeneutical experience, but also considering the nature of the religious experience – how it is possible to introduce a critical instance into the consciousness of belonging. The dialectic between the experience of belonging and alienating distanciation is “the key to the inner life of hermeneutics.”<sup>12</sup> This idea of “the hermeneutical function of distanciation in all communication” has profound relevance also for the strong linkage between Ricœur’s reflection on the wounded cogito and the fractures and disproportions of the fragile self – and his contemplations on the silence, weakness and death of God, reflections that in an early stage was influenced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, although he gradually found his most important dialogue partner in Eberhardt Jüngel. If we consider the profound inspiration from this theologian on the two Gifford Lectures excluded from his book on identity, *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990), it is not by coincidence that there is a strong resemblance between Ricœur’s considerations on the ontological commitment of attestation in the last chapter of *Soi-même comme un autre / Oneself as Another* (Chapter 10: “Vers quelle ontologie?”, in English: “What ontology in view?”) and Jüngel’s plea for the abandonment of God as the guarantor of absolute knowledge and power in favor of the virtue of weakness and a trust without any security, as

it is outlined in *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*.<sup>13</sup> These constellations, where Ricœur’s project to reach beyond Descartes Cogito as well as Nietzsche’s Anti-Cogito, joins Jüngel’s project to reach beyond theism as well as atheism, open the perspectives for a trust without any security, undermining all prospects of establishing a simple dichotomy between philosophy and theology. In this paper, I have limited my elaboration on Ricœur’s enigmatic position to the challenges associated with a theological appropriation of his thought.

## 2. Theologians and (their obstacles against) philosophy

Without neglecting the global scope of the influence that Ricœur’s philosophy has been the subject of, I think one could say that there seems to be two major contexts of particular interest for Ricœur’s work: the French context (with an epicenter in Paris) and the North American context (with the epicenter in Chicago). Similarly, without ignoring French-speaking theologians, such as Pierre Giesel and Claude Geffré and a philosopher of religion like Jean Greich’s (all mentioned have a marked philosophical profile), together with the important German theological reception and other thinkers like Peter Kemp, Richard Kearney, and Werner G. Jeanrond, arguably the most extensive (and unfortunately also “overgrown”) theological reception has been taking place in North America. There are several reasons for this, among which the most important cause may be the fact that the professor’s chair that Ricœur occupied was situated at a Divinity School (at the University of Chicago), where he frequently co-taught together with the theologian David Tracy. Thus, we approach a particular “theological” Ricœur in the US, which stands in stark contrast to the more “philosophical” Ricœur in France. A contextualization of these “two Ricœurs,” in America and France, is also of interest due to the two different ap-

<sup>11</sup> Ricœur, “Hermeneutics and the critique of ideology,” 91.

<sup>12</sup> Ricœur, “Hermeneutics and the critique of ideology,” 87-95.

<sup>13</sup> Eberhardt Jüngel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt: Zur Begründung der Theologie des Gekreuzigten im Streit zwischen Theismus und Atheismus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1977/1982).

proaches they represent to coping with the relationship between religion and secularization.

Ricœur's life among theologians in North America has itself been strongly polarized between "embrace" and "reject." In his book *Ricœur between Theology and Philosophy*, Boyd Blundell paints the following picture:

Two theologians. David Tracy and Hans Frei, have dominated the reception of Ricœur in North American theology, and characterize the initial positive and negative responses to Ricœur's hermeneutics.<sup>14</sup>

I agree with Blundell when he states, that there seems to be two main answers to the question of whether philosophical hermeneutics can be productively appropriated into theology: "enthusiastic affirmation and equally charged rejection."<sup>15</sup> Yet, it becomes more complicated when Blundell, within this polarized terrain, recognizes the post-liberal attack from George Lindbeck and Hans Frei as an attack on Tracy's *appropriation* of philosophical hermeneutics – and that very little of this attack actually reaches Ricœur. By distancing Ricœur from Tracy, he intends to display that Ricœur is much more compatible with Frei's position (even if he has not realized this himself) and finally (in line with Mark Wallace) put Ricœur in the service of Karl Barth's theology. According to Blundell's view, the French philosopher shares not only faith and reformed background with Barth, also his methodology and respect for the integrity of theology are said to have the same origin. This profound influence from Barth is used as an explanation to, what Blundell mentions as, "Ricœur's double life," which means: firstly, that Ricœur never mixed philosophical and theological reflections, and secondly, that there should be a fundamental affinity between Ricœur's hermeneutic philosophy and Barth's Christocentric theology.<sup>16</sup>

Blundell's conclusion raises a number of critical questions: Did Ricœur really practice a

"double life" and an "arm's-length approach" in his publication strategy? Is Ricœur's interpretation of the Christian faith really in accord with Barth's "resolutely Christocentric" theology where "a study of the *real* human can be done only by taking the man Jesus as its starting point"?<sup>17</sup>

What is the price of this operation – and is this reasoning sustainable? Blundell's argumentation does not only appear simplistic, he also ignores fundamental elements in Ricœur's ontological and anthropological as well as hermeneutical considerations. As a response to the first question above, one can note that, even if Ricœur's contributions to scriptural exegesis and biblical studies in particular were never published in the same volume as his philosophical work, it is an inevitable fact that his general discussions on religious and theological issues were interwoven into his philosophical works, this is the mainline at least until the late 60s. But, more important is to disclose the weak points of Blundell's (and Wallace's) when intending to detect structural connections between Ricœur and Barth.

Here, I find it clarifying to turn to the extraordinary critical investigation of Ricœur's work presented by Kevin Vanhoozer. Even though I find his theological conclusions hasty and incorrect, his interpretation of Ricœur's work offers an important contribution by his identification of some fundamental structures that are overlooked by Blundell and Wallace.<sup>18</sup> What becomes clear in this critical reading is that Ricœur "prefers to define the religious dimension in terms of creation rather than salvation", that "Ricœur's mediation of religion and atheism results in a faith in and love of Creation" – and that, according to Ricœur, "[t]he 'Yes' of Jesus towards Creation is stronger than his 'No'. Meaning is more fundamental than absurdity".<sup>19</sup> All this, however, causes him to reject Ricœur. This rejection is reinforced by the fact that Vanhoozer insists on describing Ricœur as theologian – and thereafter criticizing his shortcomings as theologian. How-

<sup>17</sup> Blundell, 154.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Wallace, *The Second Naiveté: Barth, Ricœur and the New Yale Theology* (Mercer UP, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur: A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology* (Cambridge UP, 1990), 130, 132, 209.

<sup>14</sup> Boyd Blundell, *Paul Ricœur between Theology and Philosophy: Detour and Return* (Indiana UP, 2010), 40.

<sup>15</sup> Blundell, 32.

<sup>16</sup> Blundell, 51-53, 131.

ever, what is more obvious is the fact that Vanhoozer himself seems to lack theological resources to cope with Ricœur's philosophy of creation. Vanhoozer's inability to identify any positive connections between salvation and creation, makes Christ appear in a world that is totally alien to him. Vanhoozer is maybe right in criticizing Tracy, McFague, and Jeanrond for ignoring this anthropology together with its ontological implications, due to their ignorance of Ricœur's earlier philosophy, but he is incorrect, not only when he recognizes Ricœur as a theologian, but also in his inability to mobilize any possible theological interpretation of Ricœur's preference for creation when speaking about God's presence. The fact is that a post-liberal christocentric theology, with a profound anti-liberal approach, has no theological resources which make it possible to identify a positive link between creation and christology, and thus no ability to cope with a philosophical anthropology linked to a perspective of creation, together with its ontological implications, in a constructive way. Thus, neither the theologians who embrace, nor those who reject him, seem to have access to necessary theological resources in order to cope with Ricœur.

Before we enter into a more constructive discussion, let us further extend the gap to the anti-liberal approaches of theologians operating on post-liberal conditions – no matter whether we talk about Barth, Frei, Lindbeck, Vanhoozer or Blundell – by briefly looking at Ricœur's own concept of revelation. In contrast to Barth's christocentric concept of Revelation, in Ricœur's work we approach a polyphonic concept of revelation, involving a multitude of genres and forms (narration, prophecy, wisdom, hymn and so on). This concept of revelation is open to creation, in a sense that comes close to Jasper's universal cipher; it is linked to an ontological surplus of life and meaning, in a sense that comes close to Marcel's incarnational mystery; and it manifests itself as an original Yes stronger than all the No's of negative ontologies, in line with Jean Nabert's concept of an *original affirmation*. We may also add the fundamental *indirect* approach to revelation inspired by hermeneutics, which makes mediation a necessity, as well as the Lutheran inspiration, that emphasis that God re-

mains hidden, also after his revelation: "God is designated at the same time as the one who communicates and the one who withdraws."<sup>20</sup> Thus, the revelation takes place between the secret and the revealed: "The one who reveals himself is also the one who conceals himself."<sup>21</sup> According to Ricœur's concept of revelation, the New Testament *continues* to speak about God; Christ is subsumed into an *economy of gift* where salvation is acknowledged as a recapitulation and restoration of the original creation, in accordance with Irenaeus and others.

### 3. Philosophy of creation – theology of creation?

At the same time as Ricœur was expressly a Christian philosopher, he (at least the "later" Ricœur) was totally foreign to any idea of a particular "Christian philosophy" and he made it quite clear that there can be no such things as a "Christian morality." The relationship between philosophy and theology became prominent to him when he should explain why the two chapters, that were originally part of his Gifford Lectures 1986, were finally excluded from his book *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990) In this particular situation he emphasized the importance of "an autonomous philosophical discourse" and declared his commitment to keep to the "asceticism of the argument" in order to avoid both crypto-philosophy and crypto-theology. No "ontotheological amalgamations" are accepted.<sup>22</sup> His strategy to avoid both confusion and separation is also flanked by a theological dimension inspired by a faith that knows itself to be without guarantee, a Cogito that is protected from all self-foundational claims because it appears as a wounded Cogito in "the hermeneutical age of reason."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ricœur, "The Self in the Mirror of the Scriptures", 216.

<sup>21</sup> Ricœur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, 93.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself As Another* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990/1992, translated by Kathleen Blamey), 24.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Jean Greich, *L'âge herméneutique de la raison* (Paris: Cerf, 1985).

Following on from these considerations, how can we cope with the fact that the main influences behind Ricœur's idea of creation originates from philosophy and the impasse caused by a post-liberal concept of theology that reduces theology to christology? The dilemmas associated with the lack of a relevant theological discourse able to transcend the dichotomy of philosophy and theology is further reinforced by the fact that Ricœur himself seemed to labor with a christocentric understanding of theology. Thus the result is a philosophy of creation without any theological connections – and, even worse, a philosophy of creation that seems to be theologically unacceptable.

As a kind of ontological prerequisite for Ricœur's hermeneutical philosophy and philosophical anthropology, we may identify a surplus of meaning, associated with the epistemological "seeing as," which is linked to a surplus of life, associated with the ontological "being as." Against the negativism of existentialism, Ricœur stressed the Yes of creation, the abundance of the incarnated mystery, and an original affirmation that is more fundamental than all negation. Although it may be true that Ricœur first learned that the subject is not a centralizing master but rather a discipline or auditor of a language larger than itself from Karl Barth, this was however an insight that he later learned from many sources – and, more important, the positive understanding of this decentering of the subject was a recognition of gift and creation, rather inspired by a philosophy influenced by Marcel's incarnated mystery. Moreover, it is beyond all doubt that his philosophical and ontological considerations were not derived from a christological theology.<sup>24</sup> According to Ricœur, the most fundamental motivation behind the deconstruction of the security of modern man and the recognition of the limitations of the subject are connected to the perspective of creation. To be decentered means to be a *recipient* of life and

meaning from outside; yet this decentering move is simultaneously a part of an "economy of gift," where it is correlated by a centering move. The dialectical relationship between the centering and the decentering of the subject, the productive and receptive elements of the appropriation of a text, the reorientation generated by the extreme possibilities for self-distanciation in the world in front of the text – are all part of Ricœur's understanding of *homo capax*, a dialectical anthropology which make it possible to reach beyond both anthropocentrism and anthropoclastism. The reason why Vanhoozer and others find every kind of philosophical anthropology to be illegitimate<sup>25</sup> – and ask whether Ricœur's philosophical anthropology is fundamentally Christian – is that they fail to recognize the fundamental decentering moves within Ricœur's dialectical anthropology, as well as the fundamentally positive implications of the weakness and fragility of the subject. Contrary to Vanhoozer, who acknowledges Ricœur's anthropological prerequisites as evidence of a narcissism that makes self-consciousness the only reference of biblical narratives, *homo capax* is never, according to Ricœur, equivalent to anthropocentrism. *Homo capax* is considered as the human being who both acts and suffers – text interpretation is thus defined as an extreme experience of self-distanciation. From the Greek tragedies Ricœur learned that the acting human being is always also a suffering human being – and the reverse: the same human being that suffers still acts. That is why the hero of the tragedies still insists on being responsible. Although one can never resist the supernatural forces that control fate, it remains necessary for one to author his/her actions, and even if accidents certainly dominate tragedy so they should be endured in a responsible manner.<sup>26</sup> This dialectical anthropology is anticipated already in the staged "circulation" of meaning in *La symbolique du mal* (1960), where the Adam myth is not only correlated to the narrative on Job within the Scriptures, but also related to Greek and Baby-

<sup>24</sup> Ricœur recounts that his earliest years were formed by an internal conflict between the influence from Karl Barth's anti-philosophical reading of the bible – and Ricœur's passion for a religious philosophy influenced by Bergson. Cf. Paul Ricœur, *La critique et la conviction. Entretien avec François Azouvi et Marc de Launay* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1995), 16-17.

<sup>25</sup> Vanhoozer, *Biblical narrative in the philosophy of Paul Ricœur*, 119.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990), and *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000).

Ionian myths. In this circulation between Adam, the responsible man, and Job, the victim of evil, we may also understand how Jesus in the story of the passion appears both as a “second Adam” and a “second Job.” There is a striking continuity over decades in these anthropological considerations – and its implicated recognition of creation.

In order to find an appropriate theological articulation of these fundamental anthropological dynamics, where an initial decentering move is counterbalanced by a centering move, in line with what Ricoeur mentions as a “double Copernican turn,” we may turn to the contribution from the specific tradition of Scandinavian creation theology, as it has been elaborated by theologians such as Gustaf Wingren in Sweden, and K E Lögstrup in Denmark, from original interpretations of Irenaeus, Luther, and Grundtvig. Here, we find an alternative model, where God’s presence in creation is approached as a prerequisite for an understanding of salvation as a restoration of creation and a restored humanity (*recapitulatio*), in contrast to the predominant post liberal theological paradigm and its stereotypical articulation of God’s revelation in Christ.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. Ricoeur – an anti-theologian?

Given that Ricoeur was frequently involved in religious issues, both by his personal religious involvement and his publications as well as the extensive reception of his works among theologians, it is surprising to recognize his own neglect of dogmatics and the absence of systematic theological reflections. Considering Ricoeur’s religious and theological interest, it is remarkable how seldom the philosopher entered into dialogues with systematic theologians, with very few exceptions (where Jüngel is perhaps the most important). Far from being the almost schizophrenic figure that Blundell profiled, when detecting Ricoeur as someone who clearly

separated philosophy and theology as an act of respect in front of a theology in its own right, I would instead emphasize the anti-theological traits in Ricoeur’s philosophy. The fact is that Ricoeur, despite his great interest in the field, tends to ignore theology and theologians – with one major exception: biblical scholars and exegetes.

Ricoeur had a life long love affair with the texts of the Bible, he published numerous articles concerning the interpretation of different biblical texts and also published books together with exegetes. Among theologians, biblical scholars thus appear as his most important dialogue partners. However, it was not the Bible recognized as a container of messages or theories, but “the world of the text”, the Bible as a polyphonic world of discourses, genres and texts that caught his interest; the Bible as a configuration functioning as a mirror (held by an invisible hand) for the reconfiguration of the self in the world in front of these texts. In addition, he saw no limitations to the implementation of a critical scientific analysis of either the world in front of these text or the world of the text.

When noting that, for Ricoeur, biblical exegesis was the royal road to theology, it is important to add that, in accord with his hermeneutical focus, the main focus of interest was directed towards what he mentioned as the “biblical thinking” or the “biblical faith” – and in particular the tension between the configuration of the texts and the refiguration of the world in front of the texts. The concept “biblical thinking” and Ricoeur’s work on the Bible were integral parts of a broader hermeneutical ambition to rehabilitate a poetic discourse. This project was programmatically outlined in his inventory of symbols, myth, and speculative symbols of evil in *La symbolique du mal* (1960). In order to travel beyond the “desert of criticism” and start from the “fullness of language” – still with all the resources of critical thinking intact – he used a methodological approach inspired by Kantian aesthetics: “the symbol gives rise to thought” – *le symbole donne à penser*. This means, first, that the symbol *gives* (i.e. I do not posit the meaning myself, the symbol gives it) – and second, that it invites *thoughts* (i.e. the symbols are recognized as a source for reflection, but they do

<sup>27</sup> Cf. my own book *Gustaf Wingren: Människan och teologin* (Stockholm/Stephag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 2010), which will be published in English translation on Cascade Books in 2015 as *Becoming Human Again: The Theological Life of Gustaf Wingren*.

not think themselves – interpretation and mediation is a necessity). However, before the symbols may speak to us, they need to “speak to each other” in terms of a circular movement. *La symbolique du mal* is an inventory, and at the same time a staged circular movement of symbols, myths and speculative symbols, where the biblical myth is subsumed in a wider economy of symbols and myths. Thus in this book, Ricœur manifests his general preference for more primitive and original expressions, which was also a guiding principle for him when dealing with theological issues. This recognition of the symbolic dimension as the most fundamental in language is also a core of Ricœur’s impressive investigations of metaphors and narratives in the 70s and 80s. Furthermore, in his later work he returned to the idea of the birth of philosophy in non-philosophy. The insight that poetic language teaches us things that we otherwise could not have recognized, is an important theme in the “Interlude” on tragic action, designated to Olivier (who committed suicide) – *encore*, once again – in *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990). Furthermore, in Ricœur’s last major work, *Parcours de la reconnaissance* (2004), Ricœur repeats that philosophy must learn from tragedy, even though it does not proceed conceptually, nevertheless, these pre-philosophical discourses carry a surplus of meaning; they are richer than philosophy because they can say more and teach us crucial things, not as allegory or gnosis, but as primitive symbols and myths – if we are capable of interpretation.<sup>28</sup>

What may appear as Ricœur’s ignorance of systematic theology and dogmatics – and his constant involvement in dialogues with biblical scholars – can also be traced back to his “posthegelian Kantianism” and the strong influence from Kant’s philosophy of religion, where the focus is turned from God towards religion as representation, belief and institution. Instead of metaphysical speculation, Ricœur focus on

limit-expressions, limit-situations, and limit-experiences. Religious language “uses limit-expressions only to open up our very experience, to make it explode in the direction of experiences that themselves are limit-experiences.”<sup>29</sup> This kind of “biblical thinking” radicalizes the aporias and the paradoxes as well as the experience of discordance and critical distanciation. There is a strong anti-speculative dimension in Ricœur’s religious considerations that prevents him from being too much involved in traditional doctrinal discussions. Thus, we may identify an anti-theological approach in Ricœur’s preference to talk about “biblical thinking” and “biblical faith” instead of “theology.” It is a matter of fact, that Ricœur in his considerations on religion and faith gave priority to pre-theological, more primary and original expressions of religious faith (including the linguistic mediations of this faith) and the circulation of meaning within the framework of a greater polyphony.

## 5. A possible model for theological appropriation?

In this article I have mentioned some of the extraordinary difficulties associated with how the appropriation Ricœur’s philosophy within theology has been actualized by its reception as well as his own works. In the last part of my paper I would like to return to Chapter 9 in my doctoral thesis from 1994, where I presented a one hundred pages discussion about the prerequisites for a possible theological appropriation of Ricœur’s philosophy.<sup>30</sup> My intention was to cope with the combined challenges from the dilemmas in the theological reception and Ricœur’s own interpretation of the Christian faith. Using the formulation “the world in front of the text” as a model, made it possible for me to discuss three problem areas, and the relationship between them: hermeneutics (“the world in front of *the text*”), anthropology (“*the world* in front of the text”), and imagination (“*the world in front of the text*”).

<sup>29</sup> Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 61.

<sup>30</sup> Kristensson Uggla, *Kommunikation på bristningsgränsen*, 473-572.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance: Trois études* (Paris: Stock, 2004). The use of a three-level model in Ricœur, *La symbolique du mal* (1960) is repeated by Ricœur in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) and his analysis of memory and forgetting in Ricœur, *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli* (2000).



First, theology has to deal with "the world in front of *the text*," this means questions raised by the fact that theology is an activity that takes place in the world in front of a specific collection of texts, and the issues associated with the hermeneutical conditions for a theological discourse. The starting point in the text implies an initial decentering of the subject; theology thus has to be more than *Glaubenslehre*. However, the hermeneutical conditions also mean that theology has to be developed without absolute knowledge, as a discourse that welcomes conflicts of interpretations. Thus, hermeneutics does not provide a final solution to theology's task of interpretation, instead it leaves theology with conflicts and furthermore teaches us the necessity of communicating in the search for truth. From a hermeneutical perspective, the theological alternative to various forms of objectivism may not be a relativistic anarchy of interpretation, but a critical and communicative hermeneutics developed by responsible selves. Hermeneutical theology is a critical and communicative theology, and as such it is an alternative to both various forms of objectivism as well as a relativistic anarchy of interpretations.

Second, theology needs to understand what it means to be human and live in the world (which is God's world) in front of the text. This does not only raise questions concerning philosophical and theological anthropology, but indicates that the shortest path to the self is through the other. Here, I would like to contend with the structural impossibility of relating Ricoeur to a liberal theological anthropocentrism, but also the necessity to avoid theoretical anti-humanism. Since Ricoeur's anthropology is developed within the framework of an understanding of the world as creation, it needs to be considered within a theological discourse able to identify a positive connection between creation and salvation in order to avoid a radical juxtaposition between anthropology and christology, that is blocking the theological reception of Ricoeur's philosophy. Here I recognize an important contribution from the profound tradition of Scandinavian creation theology, which can provide an anthropological impulse beyond the one-sided centering of anthropocentrism and anthropoclasm's one-sided decentering. A communicative anthropology has

the potential to elaborate theologically on the mutual relationship between receptivity and activity, gift and task, in all human projects.

Third, we are confronted with the question: what kind of concept of theology is implied by the words "in front of"? The task is to qualify that kind of imagination which is implied by the correlation between hermeneutics and anthropology, starting from the understanding of theological imagination as a dialectical interpretation of the mediating acts "in front of" texts. In accordance with his earlier correlation between symbol and thinking, text and interpretation, Ricoeur's extensive investigations on metaphors and narratives, during the 70s and 80s, are conducted by the linkage of two complex of problems: *semantic innovation* and *productive imagination*, with a marked poetic dimension.<sup>31</sup> This double, dialectical approach takes us beyond both a romantic concept of imagination and a theological grammar. This understanding of the theological imagination provides the possibility for the discussion of theological paradigms and models to go beyond the "either/or" which characterizes questions on whether theology should deal with texts *or* human beings, and take its point of departure in language *or* experience, and whether it should take the form of dogmatics *or* *Glaubenslehre*. This focus on imagination means - in contrast to the post-liberal understanding of theology as grammar - that language is not only grammar, but also rhetoric, and in contrast to a theology of consciousness it emphasizes the necessity of linguistic mediation. This dialectical structure also implies the presence of a profound critical instance, which reveals an understanding of theology and religious faith as dynamic realities necessary to approach by the combined perspectives of first, second, and third person, in accordance with the three-

<sup>31</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Seuil, 1975) and *Temps et Récit I-III* (Paris: Seuil, 1983-1984-1985). My understanding of the theological dimension of this poetic imaginative approach is closely associated with Peter Kemp, *Théorie de l'engagement: I, Pathétique de l'engagement. II, Poétique de l'engagement* (Paris: Seuil, 1973) and Richard Kearney, *Poétique du possible: Phénoménologie herméneutique de la figuration* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984).

folded structure of Ricœur's concept of the person (in *Soi-même comme au autre*). A multidimensional interpretation of theology and religious faith cannot be limited to a first person perspective (religion as intuition), the second person (religion as dialogue) or the third person (religion as phenomenon and institution). Moreover, there seems to be a striking resemblance between the internal structure of Ricœur's concept of imagination and the hermeneutical experience and the internal structure of a religious experience configured according to his "heterogeneous synthesis." This liberates new questions and perspectives, due to the correlation between the understanding of theology as a praxis of in-

terpretation in the world in front of the text and the internal structure of Christ according to the Chalcedonian tradition. Ricœur stressed that hermeneutics must choose between absolute knowledge and interpretation. This is also the case when coping with the theological imagination. From him we might learn that it is necessary to choose between theological imagination and absolute knowledge, but also that it is important to make a clear demarcation between theology and arbitrary thinking. Faith has primarily to be acknowledged in terms of hope – but hope is something that we can and need to talk about in terms of critical reflected convictions and trust.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> A reduced version of this article has previously been published as "Paul Ricœur as the Other" in *Dynamics of Difference: Christianity and Alterity: A Festschrift for Werner G Jeanrond*, ed. U. Schmiedel and J. Matarazzo (London/New York: Continuum/T&T Clark, 2015).

# Paul Ricœur's Interpretation of the Stories of Creation in Chapters 1-11 of Genesis

HARRI MERONEN

In this study, I present the meanings of the stories of Creation in chapters 1-11 of Genesis according to Paul Ricœur. Ricœur interprets these meanings in his article "Penser la création". This article is in the book *Penser la Bible*, which was published 1998, both in French and translated into English, titled *Thinking Biblically*.<sup>1</sup>

It should not be a surprise that for Ricœur, biblical Creation is the act of a personal, theistic

God.<sup>2</sup> In "Penser la création", Ricœur analyzes five subjects of the stories of Creation. The first of them is (1) a primordial beginning time of Creation, also including some other subjects related to it. The second subject is (2) Creation as separation. Ricœur divides Creation itself into three separate subjects. They are: (3) the Creation of the world, (4) the Creation of humanity, and (5) the anti-Creation/de-Creation of Evil.<sup>3</sup> In "Penser la création", these five subjects overlap and mix with each other, forming a many-faceted and complex composition. I will shortly give a brief account of each of these five subjects, and after that I shall concentrate on analyzing, in a more detailed fashion, two of these subjects: the beginning time of Creation and the de-Creation of Evil. I have chosen to concentrate on these two subjects, instead of the remaining three, for the following reasons. According to Björn Vikström, biblically based faith in Creation has a key role in Ricœur's thinking, whether theological or philosophical.<sup>4</sup> But how does Ricœur then explicitly interpret biblical Creation, this key issue in his thinking? As an example of this I present how Ricœur constructs the idea of the beginning time of Creation, arguing that it is specifically in the biblical-Hebraic sense of the texts.<sup>5</sup> And why the anti-Crea-

<sup>1</sup> Ricœur and André LaCocque, *Penser la Bible* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998). André LaCocque and Paul Ricœur. *Thinking Biblically. Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*. (Chicago and London: Chicago UP, 1998). This book, simultaneously published both in French and English editions, was authored according to a process in which LaCocque originally first wrote his exegetical articles in English and then Ricœur commented them hermeneutically in his articles, originally written in French. When needed, I also use some other sources, along with the main source "Penser la création", to complement my analysis on the subject of this article. Ricœur's biblical interpretations are not treated as an explicit subject in the research literature which is also the reason for the lack of the use of literature in this paper. Ricœur's biblical interpretations lack comprehensive research, which is the reason why I have taken them as a subject in my doctoral work called – by working title – "Paul Ricœur's Biblical Interpretations". This study gives a short account of some of the subjects in the chapter "Thinking creation" of my dissertation-work on the stocks. Ricœur has written much on the methodology and theory of biblical interpretation and biblical hermeneutics. His explicit biblical interpretations are in two works: *Penser la Bible* (the interpretations of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible) and *Paul Ricœur on Biblical Hermeneutics*, Semeia, 4/1975 (ed. J. D. Crossan; Missoula: Scholars Press & Society of Biblical Literature, 1975) (covering the whole issue of the journal, including the interpretations of the sayings of Jesus in the New Testament).

<sup>2</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 61; 64; 88-89, on the act of Creation as God's deed. Paul Ricœur, "Reply to David Detmer", 494-497 in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricœur* (ed. L. E. Hahn; Chicago and La Salle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1995), 495, on the personality of God and his "theistic schema".

<sup>3</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Björn Vikström, *Verkligheten öppnar sig. Läsnings och uppenbarelse i Paul Ricœurs bibelhermeneutik* (Åbo: Åbo Academi UP, 2000), 290-291.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Ricœur, "Comments after Jeanrond's 'Hermeneutics and Revelation'", 58-62 in *Memory, Narrativi-*

tion/de-Creation of Evil? Ricœur's *Symbolique du mal* is basically a philosophical work.<sup>6</sup> In it Ricœur also analyzes the biblical symbolism of Evil in addition to its other symbolisms. Instead of explicit philosophy, *Penser la Bible* represents "theological philosophy or philosophical theology" as Ricœur himself describes it.<sup>7</sup> There is considerable research on *Symbolique du mal* and its philosophical analysis of biblical Evil. For a change, in this article I give a brief account of Ricœur's theological-philosophical interpretation of biblical Evil in "Penser la création", and explain what he means by the de-Creation of it. But I feel that now I should give a short account of each of these five subjects.<sup>8</sup>

In the first subject, the primordial beginning time of Creation, Ricœur analyses how there are both temporal and atemporal qualities in Creation. In addition, in Creation the quality of time is different from any other, such as chronological, scientific or proper historical time. For example, the primordial time of Creation does not precede the proper historical time (documentary, dated or datable history) in a sense of chronological anteriority or temporal succession. Still, the primordial time of Creation constitutes the foundation of historical time. Ricœur explains

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ty, *Self and Challenge to Think God. The Reception within Theology of the Recent Work of Paul Ricœur* (eds M. Junker-Kenny and P. Kenny; New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 58-59.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Philosophie de la volonté. Finitude et culpabilité II. La symbolique du mal* (Paris: Aubier, 1960). For the sake of clarity, because the *Finitude et culpabilité* has two separate parts, the first one entitled *Philosophie de la volonté. Finitude et culpabilité I. L'homme faillible*, I subsequently use for the first-mentioned second part the following reference: Ricœur, *La symbolique du mal*.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Kearney, *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 43.

<sup>8</sup> In a way, these five subjects function as titles in Ricœur's interpretative analysis of the stories of Creation in Genesis chapters 1-11. At least in some measure and sense, the first two of these subjects, or conceptual constructions; *primordial beginning time of Creation* and *Creation as separation*, are already interpreted meanings of the texts, formed with the philosophical-theological conceptualization, and are similar to the "classical" concept of Creation *ex nihilo*.

how this happens in terms of a certain kind of temporal *caesura*, which occurs between the time of Creation and historical time.<sup>9</sup> Ricœur also explains how the diverse events of Creation propagate their initiating (*inaugural*) power of beginning to proper historical time.<sup>10</sup>

The second subject, Creation as separation, is represented by the narrative discourses on Creation. The literary form of narrative has some specific features that can present Creation as separation in a suitable way. Creation as separation is an alternative to Creation *ex nihilo*. In the process of separation, God separates himself from his creation. The meaning of separation is that the creature is not the Creator. This is the minimum sense of the biblical Creation. The separation also means that God's word does not create out of nothing (versus *ex nihilo*) and that the creative principle is the personal will of God.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 58-60; 62; 76; 95-96. By historical time Ricœur means, e.g., the idea of the biblical writers that dated or datable history begins – in the Bible – from the times of the ancestors inaugurated by the call of Abraham. Biblically the sense of historical time ("actual" history) also includes the "[...] documentary history, which is elsewhere represented in the Bible by those narratives, manifestly inspired by royal archives, that have to do with the peripeteia of the Davidic and Solomonic monarchies." (Citation: LaCocque and Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, 35).

<sup>10</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 77-80.

<sup>11</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 61; 66-68; 79. Chapters 1-2 of Genesis do not present where the elements that God separates came from. The notion of creation *ex nihilo* is a subsequent idea. Paul Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred. Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (ed. M. I. Wallace; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995): 132-133. "[...] the creative principle is a personal will. Whatever the mode of creation may be, it is God who creates." Paul Ricœur, *Sur l'exégèse de Genèse 1,1-2,4a*, 67-85 in *Exégèse et herméneutique* (ed. R. Barthes; Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971), 71-72: "[...] le principe créateur est une volonté personnelle; quels que soient les modes de création, c'est Dieu qui crée. Mais le trait le plus décisif et qui atteste la relation interne entre le récit de création et la totalité de l'Hexateuque, c'est le caractère même du geste créateur: celui-ci est, en un sens, une parole de commandement; ce qui implique l'idée d'une action sans effort et en outre celle d'une distinction entre la parole

The third subject is the Creation of the whole of the heavens and the earth (the world). This is represented in the quasi-narrative poem of Creation in Genesis, chapter 1. In the Creation of the heavens and earth, they start to exist as creation *in themselves*, as distinct works with a distance from and exterior to God. This externalization is the meaning of the process of their Creation as separation.<sup>12</sup>

The fourth subject is the Creation of humanity, of man and his culture. The separation of humanity from God is different from the separation of the heavens and earth: when humanity is separated from God, it starts to exist *for itself*.<sup>13</sup> By this *for itself* Ricœur means some kind of state (condition) of humanity in its existence as a separate being in relation to the Creator (also to other creatures, perhaps), at least, as follows. The Creation of man by separation does not mean alienation, isolation or detachment, but quite the opposite: it creates the very circumstances for proximity and a relationship between the Creator and humanity. In this sense, the relationship between God and humanity is different from the relationship between God and his other creatures. Namely, when God sets a limit just for its own sake, “do not eat from this tree [...]”, this separating and distancing injunction as a limit, “far from excluding proximity between humanity and God, constitutes it.” Man is the only creation to which God directly speaks in setting this limit, and “this intimacy in terms of

distance defines ‘proximity’, an unknown relation between God and the rest of creation.”<sup>14</sup>

The fifth subject is the de-Creation of Evil in the so-called story of the Fall. In the Fall, the limit-injunction in the form of prohibition “do not eat from this tree [...]” is transgressed by an incoherent, unexpected and illogical act on the part of the humans. The violation of that prohibition is the “realization” of human evil as the Fall, and this violation is a complete digression of the logical and physical connections of narrative succession. The prerequisite for the Transgression (the Fall, the violation of the prohibition) is the sudden mutation in human desire to want to transgress the limit.<sup>15</sup> I will explain what Ricœur means with this interesting mutation in human desire, in the last section of this article.

Ricœur interprets five main meanings (senses) for the biblical Creation. The first of these is that Creation is both a temporal and atemporal event.<sup>16</sup> The second is the one that Creation as separation explains: the creature is not the Creator.<sup>17</sup> The third is the initiating *beginning power* of the events of Creation. The fourth is that the creative principle of Creation is the personal will of God.<sup>18</sup> The fifth and prime meaning of the story of the Fall, and its anti-creation of Evil, is for Ricœur that “man is destined to good and is inclined to evil.”<sup>19</sup>

## The primordial beginning time of Creation

What does Creation mean as a beginning? Does this beginning have some kind of *moment*, a temporality and time of creation, or, on the contrary, does it have, a characteristically *atemporal* dimension? In Ricœur's analysis, Creation has both. The Hebrew word for the beginning, is *bereshit*, which means “in the beginning”. It is

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et l'oeuvre; le sens procède ici du motif sotériologique vers le motif créationniste: c'est dans l'expérience du salut que s'articulent, à la fois distinctes et continues, la parole et l'oeuvre: ainsi peut être repris et en même temps corrigé le thème archaïque de la puissance magique de la parole [...]” The creative principle is in action in God's word (*la parole*) in the form of *command*, which, e.g., implies a distinction (separation) between the created work and the word that creates it, yet in a way that between the word and the work there is also a continuity. This continuity can be understood in terms of biblical salvation (the so-called sotériological motif), which also includes the power of God's word to command the created work into existence (to be).

<sup>12</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 67-68.

<sup>13</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 66; 68.

<sup>14</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 69. Citations: LaCocque and Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 72.

<sup>16</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 95.

<sup>17</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 67-68.

<sup>18</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 79. Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 132-133. Ricœur, *Sur l'exégèse de Genèse 1,1-2,4a*, 71-72. See footnote 6.

<sup>19</sup> Ricœur, *La symbolique du mal*, 236.

translated in Greek *en arkhee* and in Latin *in principio*. But the Greek *arkhee* subordinates the temporal meaning of the original *bereshit* to its own atemporal meaning, and this “subordination” is translated also into the Latin *in principio* with its *principium*. Ricœur thinks that the original *bereshit* contains both the meanings of origin and beginning, when the origin refers to the atemporal and the beginning to the temporal dimension of Creation.<sup>20</sup> Ricœur writes:

Whatever might be the case as regards this notion of founding events, the insurmountable difficulty is to combine within the idea of precedence the noncoordinatable character of primordial and historical time in terms of chronology and the *founding* function assigned to the primordial events.<sup>21</sup>

The constitutive events of Creation function as a foundation, in the sense of an origin, for proper history.<sup>22</sup> The primordial history of Creation initiates historical time, actual history *par excellence*. The temporal feature between primordial and actual history is that the primordial history of Creation *precedes* actual history. In other words, factual history is the outcome of the primordial history of Creation, which has the both atemporal and temporal dimensions as origin and beginning.<sup>23</sup> But the primordial time of Creation is something other than any other time: chronological, scientific or proper historical time. In addition, when the primordial time precedes proper historical time, this precedence has

no sense of chronological anteriority or temporal succession. There is a clear *caesura*, a discontinuity and continuity, between the primordial time of creation and historical time. However, it is exactly at the discontinuity and continuity of this *caesura* that the events of primordial history initiate historical time.<sup>24</sup> Next I will present how Ricœur explains this biblical initiation (*inauguration*).

The three initial events of Creation, the Creation of the world, Creation of humanity and de-Creation of Evil function as the absolute beginnings. These three beginnings overlap each other like three concentric circles in the narration of Creation. The “absolute beginning” of these beginnings means that nothing is recounted as beginning to be before them.<sup>25</sup>

These three absolute beginnings are not the only beginnings. In fact, there is a whole multiplicity of relative beginnings. Namely, the following eight chapters of Genesis present the coming into being of many other realities, situations, relations, institutions, and their beginnings. All of these constitute the picture of humanity in its beginnings, together with the absolute and initial Creation recounted in the first and second chapters of Genesis.<sup>26</sup>

What connects the absolute beginning and the relative beginnings is the one main meaning of Creation, the power of beginning. This power of beginning is recycled from the one beginning to the others, starting initially from the three abso-

<sup>20</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 95-96. Ricœur thinks that the understanding increases when the texts are translated into other languages. This is the case, e.g., of translating the Exodus 3:14 Hebrew revelation of the name *ehyeh asher ehyeh* to all possible other languages (he presents this in his *Penser la Bible*-chapter “De l’interprétation à la traduction” [pp. 335-371] on the interpretation of God’s Name). Instead of this, concerning the original *bereshit* translation into Greek *en arkhee* he says that *en arkhee* tends to subordinate the temporal sense of the *bereshit* to its atemporal sense of foundation (origin).

<sup>21</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 60. Citation: LaCocque and Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, 33-34. Italics in the citation are mine.

<sup>22</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 60; 95.

<sup>23</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 80; 82-83; 95-96.

<sup>24</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 58-60; 95-96. Because the primordial time of creation cannot be coordinated with historical time – even in the thinking of the ancient Hebrews themselves – e.g., the so called literal reading of the texts (i.e. the use of the texts made particularly by the fundamentalists) is impossible in terms of intellectual honesty. Concerning this, Ricœur states, “It is liberating to admit that there is no call for trying to date the creation of Adam in relation to Pithecanthropus or Neanderthal man.” (Citation: LaCocque and Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, 33.) The narratives of Genesis 2-3 universalize the description of the human condition in an archetypal and etiological sense. Still this universalizing does not exhaust the founding meaning (role) of the primordial events.

<sup>25</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 76-77; 79.

<sup>26</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 77-78.

lute beginnings of Creation.<sup>27</sup> This recycling (circulating) of the power of beginning has a special function: it gathers all diverse beginnings into the events of one whole Creation. Concerning this one whole Creation, Ricœur points out that to the culture of the ancient Near East, there is no distinction between the absolute and relative beginnings. The writers of the stories of Creation thought that “every beginning is absolute” and belongs to the initial events of Creation as a whole.<sup>28</sup>

Recycling of the power of beginning happens with the use of the symbolism of the three absolute beginnings.<sup>29</sup> This use of symbolism sets up an interpretative inter-signification between the absolute and relative beginnings. This inter-signification erases the distinction between relative and absolute beginnings when it serves as a vehicle for the recycling of the power of absolute beginnings to the relative ones. I shall provide one, but hopefully an illuminating, example of this recycling of symbolism. In Genesis 2:23, Adam meets his newly created companion, Eve, with his happy exclamation: “At last, this one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh!” In Genesis 4:1, Eve meets her firstborn with a *similar* exclamation: “I have produced a man with the help of Yhwh!”<sup>30</sup> Here the symbolism

of the happy exclamation refers to the “initial” creation of a previously non-existent human being and her/his existence, placing both the creation of Eve and the birth of her firstborn into the rank of absolute beginning.

The absolute and relative beginnings constitute one primordial beginning with its diverse founding events when they all together propagate their common energy of beginning to the one proper history that they initiate. Ricœur sums up the initiating function of primordial beginnings and their characteristic temporal-atemporal dimension, in a sense of origin, as follows: “[...] the notion of origin has itself its own temporal development along the line of founding events transmitting the energy of the origin.”<sup>31</sup>

### The anti-Creation of evil

The story of the Fall represents how human beings become responsible for themselves and for others. This responsibility is the very consequence of the so-called Fall.<sup>32</sup>

How is Evil anti-created (de-created) for Ricœur? To begin with, Evil is represented with the symbol of the serpent as having “always already been there.” It does not have a beginning or origin as a created thing, but just the opposite. When Eve is looking at the tree, the speaking animal just shows up there, without any explication of why it appeared and where it came from. The same kind of inexplicability also concerns the so-called Fall (the Transgression). The prohibition “do not eat from this tree [...]” is transgressed by an incoherent, unexpected and illogical act on the part of the humans. This violation against the prohibition is a total digression from the logical and physical connections of the narrative succession. The temptation is presented as

<sup>27</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 79-80. Paul Ricœur, “Ethics and Human Capability. A Response”, 279-290 in *Paul Ricœur and Contemporary Moral Thought* (eds J. Wall, W. Schweiker and W. D. Hall; New York: Routledge, 2002), 283: “To underline the difference between origin and beginning, I tried to show that the notion of origin has itself its own temporal development along the line of founding events transmitting the energy of the origin.”

<sup>28</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 78-79. Ricœur, e.g., refers to Pierre Gibert’s concept of relative beginnings and criticizes it. Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 88-89. Creation is an ordering and contingent *event* as an act (work, doing; *œuvre*) of God.

<sup>29</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 77-79. The power of beginning is circulated with/by the symbolism of the absolute beginnings.

<sup>30</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 77-78. “At last, this one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh!” is my modification – which could also possibly be an adequate and alternative translation of the original Hebrew sentence – of Genesis 2:23: “This is

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now bone of my bones, and flesh from my flesh [...]” *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments. Authorized King James Version* (London and New York: Collins’ Clear-Type Press, 1959). On the modification of Genesis 4:1, see LaCocque and Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 79-80. See also Paul Ricœur, “Ethics and Human Capability. A Response”, 283.

<sup>32</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 76.

a sudden mutation in human desire to want to transgress the limit. Human desire is mutated into a desire for infinity, to transgress *all limits*.<sup>33</sup> And last but not least, the enigmatic “always already there” of Evil coheres with the historical experience of all of humanity and every one of us in the following sense: even though Evil is a part of our life, none of us can say whether he or she is the source of Evil.<sup>34</sup> We cannot find the starting point of Evil in humanity. In all these ways, the story tells that Evil is a de-created thing without a beginning.

Ricœur stresses that the so-called Fall does not make humans substantially Evil. Instead, Ricœur thinks that it makes humanity Evil *adjectivally* (attributively, “epithetically”, *par épithète*).<sup>35</sup> All the capacities and abilities that make Adam and Eve humans are not lost, mutilated or destroyed. Human beings remain still the same blessed and revered creatures as before the Fall, and are not cursed by God. On the contrary, now the whole human condition includes more good things that did not exist before the Transgression. Some of these good things are, for example, the shame of nakedness as a considerable cultural acquisition, death as the end of suffering, the knowledge of Good and Evil, and the responsibility of humans for themselves and others. But the price and reason for these is also their “opposite”: the inclination to Evil in the just mentioned adjectival sense of it.<sup>36</sup>

The term “Fall” is not biblical, and instead of it Ricœur uses the conception of *Transgression of the limit*. This limit is one set by God for the humans with his prohibition so that they should not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It is not that something specific (to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and

Evil) is forbidden, but that the prohibition poses and functions as a limit for its own sake. The injunction creates a unique and intimate proximity between God and the humans, which is not on a par with any relation between any other creatures and God. In posing this limit, God establishes a proximity between himself as an Unlimited One and the human beings as the finite ones.<sup>37</sup> The trust of this proximity is questioned by humans with their transgressing act, in acting differently than God taught them with the injunction, “choose Good and you shall live”. “Good” is the relationship of trust between God and the humans. The so called Fall – the Transgression – happens, when the humans choose instead of this good relationship of trust the distrust of God’s injunction.<sup>38</sup>

The Transgression is an absolutely “non-coordinatable” and unexplainable act. It just diverges totally from all preexisting contexts and settings. However, the injunction itself poses the alternative of doing the opposite of what it prohibits. “For what is a prohibition that does not entail an alternative between obedience and disobedience”, states Ricœur.<sup>39</sup> The start and precondition for Transgression (the Fall) is a sudden mutation in human *desire*. The desire here is for infinite wisdom, to know everything, like God.<sup>40</sup> The exact “moment” of the temptation to transgress the prohibition is in Genesis chapter 3 verse 6:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave it also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 72.

<sup>34</sup> Ricœur, *La symbolique du mal*, 241.

<sup>35</sup> Ricœur, *La symbolique du mal*, 241; 242.

<sup>36</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 73-76. Ricœur notes, e.g., that the threat of death as the punishment for the violation of the prohibition is not carried out. Instead of this punishment, death is presented in Genesis 3:19 as the [relieving] end of the earthly sufferings of the humans. Ricœur asks whether death is not beyond all hope, in the sense of the greeting of it as a sister (alongside brother sun) by Francis of Assisi.

<sup>37</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 68-69.

<sup>38</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 69-72.

<sup>39</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 90. Citation: LaCocque and Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, 58.

<sup>40</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 69; 72.

<sup>41</sup> Citation of Genesis 3:6; *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments. Authorized King James Version*. The sense (*reference*) of the desire (which poetically functions in, or better; *through* the whole verse 6 and the semantics of it), is not sexual desire or any other, similar kind of *passion* for something. Everything depends here on the semantics of the Hebrew word  $\text{רָצוּה}$  (*h<sup>aa</sup>m<sup>e</sup>d*) used in verse 6 for desire. The



Ricœur describes this as follows:

We may admire here how in this composition the narrator has joined suspicion at the level of language and subversion at the level of desire. When the limit is suspect as a structure, the desire for unlimitedness flows through the breach thereby opened.<sup>42</sup>

In choosing disobedience instead of obedience, human beings end up knowing Good and Evil. In this sense they become like God, and the serpent spoke the truth: "you will become like God."<sup>43</sup>

To conclude, for Ricœur, instead of some bad consequence, the knowledge of Good and Evil as the likeness of God makes human beings responsible for themselves and for others. Because of their Transgression, the humans resign and are retired from their original proximity and relationship to their Creator, but, at the same time, achieve their independence as responsible beings. In the sense of responsibility, the likeness with God even gives the human beings a potential position of rivalry with God. In these ways,

as a result of the Transgression, man has achieved his adulthood in humanity (as an image of God) by becoming responsible for himself and others.<sup>44</sup>

Ricœur sums up his thoughts on the human condition according to the story of the Fall with Immanuel Kant's words: "Man is destined to good and is inclined to evil." For Ricœur, this paradoxical and ambiguous constitution of the human condition distills the whole symbolic meaning of the Fall.<sup>45</sup>

In *Penser la Bible* Ricœur develops his interpretations of certain "strong" Old Testament texts, taking carefully into account the rich history of reception of the texts and the exegetic research on them.<sup>46</sup> Ricœur's exploration in *Penser la Bible* represents explicitly philosophical theology. In addition, Ricœur's biblical interpretations in the book belong, by their quality, to the most theological part of his work. Even he himself does not attribute *theological* to any other of his works but *Penser la Bible*.<sup>47</sup>

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word *h<sup>aa</sup>m<sup>e</sup>d* means desire and want in the sense such as "craving for chocolate"; as the story explicitly says, "the woman saw that the tree was good for food."

<sup>42</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 69; 72. Citation: LaCocque and Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, 43. The desire for unlimitedness is the desire for the unlimitedness of God.

<sup>43</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 74-75; 90.

<sup>44</sup> Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 72; 74-76. Ricœur, "Ethics and Human Capability. A Response", 59.

<sup>45</sup> Ricœur, *La symbolique du mal*, 236.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Ricœur, "Comments after Jeanrond's 'Hermeneutics and Revelation'", 58-59. Ricœur and LaCocque, *Penser la Bible*, 7-11; 14-17; 223; 335-336; 411-414. Vikström, 250.

<sup>47</sup> Kearney, 43. Ricœur says, "What I am exploring in Thinking Biblically [*Penser la Bible*] is a sort of philosophical theology or theological philosophy – not an easy task in a contemporary intellectual culture which still wants people to say whether they are 'philosophers' or 'theologians' and is uncomfortable with overlaps."

# Paul Ricœur and the Poetics of the Gift

ANNALISA CAPUTO

## Preliminary Remarks

In Ricœur's last works, we can find what he calls a *poetics of agape* or even more simply a *poetics of love*.<sup>1</sup> Ricœur is aware of the risks underlying the decision to use this term (love), but also conscious of the fact that poetry does not have other, more appropriate, terms to express the tension of his desire.

"Talking about love may be too easy, or rather too difficult. How can we avoid simply praising it or falling into sentimental platitudes?"<sup>2</sup> How not to fall into exaltation or emotional banality? How to talk about the poetry of love, without, in so doing, writing a poetry, becoming a Poet? Ricœur chooses the "dialectic" path of a comparison between love and justice: "here by dialectic I mean, on the one hand, the acknowledgment of the initial disproportionality between our two terms and, on the other hand, the search for practical mediations between them – mediations, let us quickly say, that are always fragile and provisory".<sup>3</sup> Of this dialectic<sup>4</sup> we only want to consider the crux: what does it mean to say that *love is poetry*?<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See in particular Paul Ricœur, *Liebe und Gerechtigkeit. Amour et justice* (Tübingen: J.B.C. Mohr & P. Siebeck, 1990). In this paper, I refer to the English translation by D. Pellauer: "Love and Justice", 23-40 in *Hermeneutic of Action* (ed. R. Kearney; London, Sage, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Ricœur, "Love and Justice", 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ricœur, "Love and Justice", 23.

<sup>4</sup> On the particular Ricœurian "dialectic", I take the liberty of referring to my book *Io e tu. Una dialettica fragile e spezzata: percorsi con Paul Ricœur* (Bari: Stilo, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> A first and more extensive version of this theme is in Annalisa Caputo, "A Second Copernican Revolution. Phenomenology of the Mutuality and Poetics of the Gift in the last Ricœur", 231-256 in *On the Proper Use of Phenomenology – Paul Ricœur Centenary* (ed. O. Abel and P. Marinescu). *Studia Phaenomenologica*, 13, 2013.

## 1. The Hyper-ethical Language of Love

Emphasizing the link between love and poetry means, above all, remembering that love *speaks*, but it speaks a language that is *different* from the ordinary language of everyday life, logic and prose. The poetry of love is primarily a poetry of "praise".<sup>6</sup> From the uniform grey of everyday objects, from the anonymity of the everything, in which everyone is equal to everyone else, the "poet" (metaphorically speaking), i.e. the lover, sees a gaze emerge that says: *Love me!* And of his appeal – so different from the imperative, but also from normal description of what it is – he decides to make poetry. An uncanny use of the imperative form,<sup>7</sup> that can be understood - in its "scandalous" role - only starting from the link that precedes it. In a way, it is not the beloved who says *Love me!*, nor his/her lover, but love itself.

The commandment to love is love itself, commending itself, as though the genitive in the 'commandment of love' were subjective and objective at the same time".<sup>8</sup>

Love can not be *commanded*. It is *recommended*. "*Allow yourself to feel loved!*" In fact, the language of love is able to awaken the primeval beauty in things and in others. His speaking is a new creation that says: "*Let it be!*". It projects the self beyond itself. That is why an authentic "poetic" relationship can never be written by one

<sup>6</sup> In several passages Ricœur connects this *poetry of praise* to the hymn. See, in particular, *The Hymn to the Charity of Paul of Tarsus*, 1 Cor, 13.

<sup>7</sup> On this subject see David W. Hall, *Paul Ricœur and the Poetic Imperative. The Creative Tension between Love and Justice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), in particular chapter 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ricœur, "Love and Justice", 27.

person. Praise attracts praise. Poetry attracts poetry. The offering of oneself, the gift attracts the gift.<sup>9</sup>

Then, where is the difference between the lover and the “merchant” (this is the word used by Ricœur)?<sup>10</sup> It is again a question of language, of style. The poet ‘gives’, but his gift is not one of the market, it is not an exchange. It is the “hyperethical feeling”<sup>11</sup> of a broad economy of the gift, which has quite different forms of expression than the forms with which men justify their actions. It is not the norm of daily “prose”. It is the exception of the gesture that oversteps normality, to return it to its original momentum. In this sense, love is always il-logical. Its logic is “different”, “poetic”. In fact, it cannot be enclosed in grammatical, syntactical, or stylistic rules. We can try to explain a poem “logically”, but - even assuming that we can understand it - in schematizing it we reduce it, we remove its fingernails, we prevent it from having on us the impact that its linguistic and conceptual distortion wanted to have. This is the economy of the gift, in the poetics of love: “it develops a logic of superabundance that, at first glance at least, opposes itself to the logic of equivalence that governs everyday ethics” - writes Ricœur in *Love and Justice*.<sup>12</sup>

In relation to this “logic of superabundance”, even more radically, in *Le parcours de la reconnaissance (The Course of Recognition)*<sup>13</sup> Ricœur says that superabundance is not even a *logic*. It

is an *A-logic*. And mind you: Ricœur does not contrast the love-poetry only with the “logic” of violence or that of mercantilism, or liberal individualism, but more radically he also contrasts love with the “logic” of justice, which – even if it were a perfect prosody – would never reach the heights of the hymn of praise.

In fact, even the best justice lies in the rule of equivalence. *Give to each his own* is the classic formula that unites the just to the equal. And it is “logical” that it be so. It would be impossible to live in a world in which the equivalence of equality did not support social and legal constraints.

The philosophy of Ricœur is neither subversive, nor a-moral. It pushes morals to “give more”. In fact, man is not only a *rational animal*, nor even just a *political animal*, but – just for this reason – he is also a *poet* of the hyperethical. Man not only needs to be *recognized as an “each”*, the same as all others (in social practices, judicial systems, governmental institutions, distribution of goods), but also, and even more fundamentally, he needs be *recognized as the “beloved”*, as a “You” different from all other selves (chosen for his uniqueness and singularity). In this sense, just as love can never supplant and eliminate the need for justice, the prose of justice can never level love’s poetic yearning.<sup>14</sup> The poetry is a gamble that raises man from the horizontal logic of reciprocity, from the quietist dimension of the equivalence, to the disorienting economy of superabundance.

“*To disorient without reorienting is, in Kierkegaardian terms*” – Ricœur points out – “*to suspend the ethical*. In one sense, the commandment to love, as hyperethical, is a way of suspending the ethical (...).”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> On this subject, see John Wall, *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricœur and the Poetics of Possibility* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), in particular pp. 130-136.

<sup>10</sup> See in particular Paul Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance. Trois études*, Paris: Stock, 2004. English translation by D. Pellauer, *The Course of Recognition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Ricœur, “Love and Justice”, 33.

<sup>12</sup> “Love and Justice”, 33-34. For Ricœur, the “crazy” apex of this love is to love our enemies, as is proposed in the evangelical *agape*.

<sup>13</sup> I believe it is possible to consider *Parcours* as a last phase of Ricœur’s thinking, beyond those usually proposed by scholars: see for example Jean Greisch, *Paul Ricœur: l’itinérance du sens* (Grenoble: Millon, 2001); Marcellino Agis Villaverde, “Paul Ricœur en perspective: evolución y etapas de su pensamiento”, in *ÁGORA – Papeles de Filosofía (Paul Ricœur)* 25/2 (2006).

<sup>14</sup> On love and justice, see in particular Antoine Garapon, “Justice et reconnaissance”, 231-248 in *Esprit*, March-April (2006); Paula Ponce de Leão, “De l’universel au concret. Justice et éthique dans l’œuvre de Paul Ricœur”, 85-98 in *Répliquer au mal: Symbole et justice dans l’œuvre de Paul Ricœur*, (eds J. Porée & G. Vincent; Rennes: PU Rennes, 2006); Christoph Theobald, *La règle d’or chez Paul Ricœur. Une interrogation théologique*, 139-158 in *Paul Ricœur. L’herméneutique à l’école de la phénoménologie* (ed. J. Greisch ; Paris: Beauchesne, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Ricœur, “Love and Justice”, 37 (italics mine).

The disorientation of love suspends the return, the equivalence, the exchange. ‘Love’ does not say *do ut des*, but rather (if we can transform the expression) it says *do ut dem*; I give because I must give. To offer without expecting anything in return – this is a “first gift” (*premier don*).

Une générosité (...) sans égard pour l’obligation ainsi engendrée de donner en retour: générosité libérée des règles d’équivalence régissant les relations de justice.<sup>16</sup>

The gap, the jump is from the logic of the market (including the fairest market) to the *sans prix*,<sup>17</sup> that is the “without-price” of poetry: in-utility, anti-market. Here Ricœur, inevitably – as a philosopher – cannot but remember the *pricelessness* of philosophy, much akin in its in-utility to the anti-market of poetry.<sup>18</sup> There are, Ricœur points out, things that can not be bought and sold. One of these is the poetic experience (and the artistic experience, in general). Another of these is thought and its freedom, its ability to challenge, provoke, and criticize what exists. “Le spectacle qu’offre l’histoire est celui d’une défaite croissante du sans prix, refoulé par les avances de la société marchande”. But there are oases of resistance in which the *non-tradable* “remains” in its specificity of “without price”.<sup>19</sup> Love, returning to the poet, is without price. This “saves” the gift of the poet, distinguishing it from that of the merchant. In this case, “I give” is a surplus: an superabundance that, however, is not closed in on itself, but responds, in turn, to a previous overabundance and calls again, in a circle, for further overabundance. This is what protects the poetics of love from the risk of the detachment of superiority. To the masters of suspicion, who insinuate doubt (... this *gift* is not a gift, but *poison* because it crushes the other in a debt that can never be reciprocated and which

harms his dignity<sup>20</sup>), the poet responds with the fragility of his desire, a desire that Ricœur, in a strong and original manner, called “*optative*”.

## 2. The Optative of Mutuality

The poet is a man of the optative, that is to say a mode that is neither descriptive nor normative (“ce mode qui n’est ni descriptif ni normatif”),<sup>21</sup> but a desiderative mode. For the poet, *I want* does not mean that *it must be so*. It means *I would like it to be so*: a tightrope between what it is and what I would like it to be. The poetic form of *love me!* is not a “command”. It is the “desire” that the other might experience the beauty of the priceless gift of self, and – in turn – become a poet of praise (not an insolvent debtor). Ricœur writes: from the *do ut des* to the “I give so that (*pour que*) you give”.<sup>22</sup> But this “so that”, this *pour que* can only be *optative*.

Perhaps, to be less ambiguous than the Ricœurian expressions may seem, the poet should say: “I give ... I would like for you to give, too”; “I gave you a gift ... I would like for you to do the same”. Even more radically, the lover should not even say *Love me!*, but he should say, *Love!*, where the emphasis is once again on “You” and not on “I”. In fact, the desire of the giver, if it is really superabundant, it is not even *that you could love me*, but *that you can love*. If the object of the love of the “You” becomes a third party (not me), this does not make the giving of the You less worthy, nor would the gratuity be less abundant, nor would the movement of mutual disclosure be less effective.

Although, in the poetic optative, hope remains, hidden, non-invasive: the hope that you can, with your poetry, respond to mine; that your superabundance may actually address my desire

<sup>16</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 337.

<sup>17</sup> See Marcel Henaff, *Le prix de la vérité. Le don, l’argent, la philosophie* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2002), quoted by Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 339-343.

<sup>18</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 339-341.

<sup>19</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 343-44.

<sup>20</sup> See Paul Ricœur, *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 621-625; Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 327-337. On this subject, see Alison Scott-Bauman, *Ricœur and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion*, 59-77. (London/New York: Continuum, 2009). She distinguishes two phrases in Ricœur’s writings from the 1960s: ‘masters of suspicion’ and ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’.

<sup>21</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 354.

<sup>22</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 335.

for you. In this sense, the possible reciprocity, is not, would not be exchange, but mutual recognition, mutuality (*mutualité*). Reciprocity, Ricœur points out, is something above us (“tourne au-dessus de nos têtes”) while mutuality is between us (“circule entre nous”).<sup>23</sup> In mutuality there is no “exchange” of gifts, understood as “something” that objectively passes from one to another and from another to one. There is no horizontality of the “right” reciprocity (on the same level). There is the asymmetry of a dual superabundance, because the interest-free gift each time falls from a gap in altitude, from the height of pricelessness.<sup>24</sup> In Ricœur’s own words:

La générosité du don suscite non pas une restitution, qui, au sens propre, annulerait le premier don, mais quelque chose comme la réponse à une offre. À la limite, il faut tenir le premier don pour le modèle du second don, et penser, si l’on peut dire, le second don comme une sorte de seconde premier don.<sup>25</sup>

It is a fragile mutuality, as fragile as the identities on which it is based, and as “fragile” as the poetic thread that supports it. For this reason, every authentic gift is a “risk”. One assumes the risk of being rejected, of not being recognized, not being accepted, appreciated. You accept the possibility of misunderstanding and ingratitude. For this reason, every authentic gift is an expectation of something perhaps not fulfilled: “attente, qui peut être indéfiniment différée, voire perdue de vue et franchement oubliée”. However, it is an expectation that is always open to the possibility of a “surprise”: the surprise of this “second first gift” able to fulfill the gratuity of

the original act of donation.<sup>26</sup> For this reason, every authentic gift is a place of hope, “un espace d’espérance”, “une onde d’irradiation et d’irrigation qui, de façon secrète et détournée, contribue à l’avancée de l’histoire vers des états de paix”: it is the hidden counter-current in the history of violence. For this reason, each authentic gift “est (...) ce qu’est par ailleurs l’hymne au plan verbal”<sup>27</sup>: it is the poetry of the optative: gratuity that evokes gratitude and gratitude that evokes new gratuity. It is *reconnaissance!*<sup>28</sup> The French language is one of those where “gratitude” can also be said with the word “recognition”. There is no construction of identity if “I” am not recognized as such, if “I” am not watched and loved in my uniqueness. However, there is no real recognition that does not provoke gratitude in “me”, for being freely known, recognized, and watched and loved. Recognition arouses gratitude and, as men who are recognized and grateful, we are capable – in turn – of gratuity.

This is the paradoxical aspect of the phenomenology of the gift, which does not – as you might think – move from gratuity to gratitude, but from gratitude to gratuity. That means, basically, that no one is ever an absolute “first” giver, but every act of love is always a response, always a “second *first gift*”. We might ask, then, how is it possible to create (or that it be created, originally) a gift of response, if it is true that there is no First, as the initial giver. Here, the response of the last Ricœur bifurcates in two directions. The first direction leads to what we

<sup>23</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 335.

<sup>24</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 336: “l’accent tombe sur la générosité du premier donateur; plutôt que sur l’exigence du retour du don”. See Marcel Henaff, “Remarques sur la règle d’or. Ricœur et la question de la réciprocité”, 326-337 in *Paul Ricœur* (ed. M. Revaut d’Allonnes & F. Azouvi; Paris: L’Herne, 2004). He defines “reciprocity” as the way in which Ricœur breaks the Cartesian circle of egology.

<sup>25</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 350.

<sup>26</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 351-355. The surprise of this giving of oneself freely enters “dans la même catégorie affective que le premier”.

<sup>27</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 354. See Olivier Abel, “Fragilité de l’approbation”, 45-57 in *Foi et vie: Ricœur ou le pari de l’universel*, 5/103 (Dec. 2004); he speaks of a “reconnaissance inquiète” (p. 54).

<sup>28</sup> On this subject, see in particular Peter Kemp, “Reconnaissance à Ricœur - Ricœur et la reconnaissance”, 63-74 in *Hommage à Paul Ricœur* (eds O. Abel and J. A. Barash; Paris: Unesco, 2006); Maria Villela-Petit, “Três estudos de Paul Ricœur como etapas de uma filosofia do reconhecimento”, 47-59 in *Multitextos (CTCH): Uma aproximação a Paul Ricœur*, 5/1 (2007).

might call the *poetics of a philosophy without an Absolute*. The second direction leads to what we might call the *poetics of a theology of the overabundance of the Absolute*.<sup>29</sup>

This second leaves its traces in what Ricœur himself calls “exercises of biblical exegesis” or of “apprentice theologian”, where Genesis is reinterpreted as the original donation of existence;<sup>30</sup> the commandment to love our enemies as the apex of the poetics of love, in *agape*; the law and justification as a gift of freedom and liberation; eschatology as the possibility of awakening the unfulfilled promises of history. In this way, the God of hope and that of creation are, at the two ends of the economy of the gift, the same God,<sup>31</sup> but the poetry of this God is never ultimately expressible in human prose. It is barely graspable by the stutterings of exegesis and theology. Absolutely unthinkable for, and in, the fragile links of philosophical research.<sup>32</sup>

In this sense, in a manner consistent with the existential premises of his hermeneutic phenomenology, that of Ricœur is the poetry of a philosophy without an absolute. And the question about the First Giver remains unanswered, or better, with a response suspended in the *epoché*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Maybe we should say: in the question of the “gift”, in some way, Ricœur crosses his two research directions: the philosophical and exegetical/theological. It is no coincidence that the end of Ricœur’s intellectual *Autobiography*, recalling precisely this “challenge” of meeting/convergence between a “philosophy without absolutes” and “biblical faith”, says: “Le petit livre bilingue *Liebe und Gerechtigkeit. Amour et justice* (1990) indique la direction à suivre pour relever ce défi”: Paul Ricœur, *Réflexion faite* (Paris: Esprit, 1995), 82.

<sup>30</sup> See, in particular, André LaCocque and Paul Ricœur, *Penser la Bible* (Paris: Seuil, 1998), 57-101.

<sup>31</sup> See Ricœur, “Love and Justice”, 32.

<sup>32</sup> It is the famous end of Paul Ricœur *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 409: “sur cette aporie de l’Autre, le discours philosophique s’arrête”.

<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that the Poetics of the last Ricœur are not necessarily related to the theological-transcendent dimension (as in *Philosophie de la volonté*), but it becomes more ethical-existential. For this reason, we do not totally agree with a number of scholars who, in a latent manner, risk turning the terms “poetic” and “transcendence” into synonyms,

It is necessary to feel loved, so as to feel recognized and be grateful. But this “primality” of love does not necessarily have to be linked to a transcendent origin.

That *there is something else at the origin of our life* is a phenomenological datum. That *I haven’t created myself* is a phenomenological datum. That *man is not a self-centered and self-based subject, but the recipient of a gift, an “inestimable object of transmission”* (“*inestimable objet de la transmission*”<sup>34</sup>) is a phenomenological datum. That *the self is the result of an overabundant lineage of love, is the gift of the transmission of life* (given by parents, indicated on the family tree, rooted in the history of our ancestors...) is a phenomenological datum. Beyond these phenomenological data, begins the enigma of origin, which is the enigma of one’s birth and life. It is the miracle of birth (in Hannah Arendt’s terminology), which in its incomprehensibility and unspeakability, makes each man “priceless”, worthy of praise: possible poetry - poetry of the possible.<sup>35</sup> The miracle of gratuity that – although it can never cross the drift of history – offers in the gift the space for a “suspension”: “clearing”<sup>36</sup> in which the “forest” of

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see for example Théoneste Nkeramihigo, *L’homme et la transcendance selon Paul Ricœur. Essai de poétique dans la philosophie de Paul Ricœur* (Paris Namur: Culture et vérité, 1984); Bernard Steven, *L’apprentissage des signes. Lecture de Ricœur* (Dodrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer, 1991); Alain Thomasset, *Paul Ricœur: une poétique de la morale* (Peeters: Leuven University Press, 1996); Domenico Jervolino, *Ricœur. L’amore difficile*, (Roma: Studium, 1995).

<sup>34</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 281-286.

<sup>35</sup> On the “passion for the possible”, see in particular Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur. A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990); Brian Treanor and Henry I. Venema eds, *A Passion for the Possible. Thinking with Paul Ricœur* (Fordham: Fordham UP, 2010); Jozef Verheyden and Theo L. Hette-ma eds., *Paul Ricœur: Poetics and Religion* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> See Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 355: “une ‘clairière’, dans la forêt de perplexités”. On this issue, see Fabien Lamouche, “Paul Ricœur et les clairières de la reconnaissance”, 76-87 in *Esprit*, 7 (2008).

the “endless struggle for recognition” thins out and becomes a place of *reconnaissance*.<sup>37</sup>

Will there ever be a poet and a poetics able to correspond to this enigma of the origins? The fragile word of the philosopher stops on this question. Which is also a threshold of *astonishment*. *Thaumazein*... that is surprised by its own existence and its possibility to be, even without knowing how or why. Beyond every how or why: “without any meritoriousness: [...] only being a human being” (S. Kierkegaard).<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ricœur, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, 274. On the theme of ‘struggle’, see Fernanda Henriques, “A alteridade e o trágico na filosofia de Paul Ricœur”, 243-274 in *Herméutica y responsabilidad. Homenaje a Paul Ricœur* (eds M. Agís Villaverde *et al.*; Santiago de Compostela: Santiago de Compostela UP, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Paul Ricœur, *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli* (Ricœur 2000: 656). The philosophy of the last Ricœur, with Kierkegaard, defiantly continues to think and to invite us to think that “it’s great to be men”. The end of *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli*, links this Kierkegaardian praise of existence to the expression of the *Song of Songs*: “l’amour est aussi fort que la mort”.

# Paul Ricœur and the Language of the Church Community

OLIVIER ABEL

## Introduction: Thinking the Church

Rare are the philosophers who are interested in the idea of the church, in the church as idea. But it is the case, for example, for Kant in *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*), 1793, when he speaks of “ethical community”. My purpose in the present study is to show that Paul Ricœur developed very original reflections on this subject, reflections that can be considered both as witness to a pivotal period and as testing ground or as a laboratory of philosophical themes developed elsewhere or further. What is a *philosopher*, on the eve of May 1968, thinking about the “meaning and function of the church community”? This is, in fact, the title of a collection of three unpublished texts taken from copied lecture notes<sup>1</sup> in “Cahiers d’étude du Centre protestant de recherches et de rencontres du Nord” (n°26-1968) from a colloquium on this theme in Amiens in 1967.<sup>2</sup> It is around these

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this study, the citations identified with a Roman numeral and a letter come from three original texts recovered from recordings and copied lecture notes in “Cahiers d’étude du Centre protestant de recherches et de rencontres du Nord” (n°26-1968). These three texts are entitled “Being Protestant Today” (which dates from 1965 and seems to have been distributed in advance to the participants), “Presence of the Church in the World” (a title which evokes the books of Jacques Ellul, *Presence in the Modern World*, 1948, and *False Presence in the Modern World*, 1963), and “Sense and Language.” The reader will find a detailed outline of these unpublished texts in the appendix 2. Paul Ricœur, to whom I had asked in the early 1990s if he would authorize their publication in the formation of a small book by Labor et Fides, never went over them for correction in the end.

<sup>2</sup> Protestant France of the 1960s saw the emergence, alongside traditional parishes, of research centers which represented precisely another form of church: le Centre protestant de recherche de rencontres du

core texts and others around this same period that I try to reconstruct the idea of “confessing community”, which interested Ricœur then.

My starting hypothesis, which I only sketch here, is that religion is both a language among others, separated, and a fusion of different languages, the point where the same language speaks to all before settling into separate and autonomous languages.<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that Ricœur himself alternates between an acute sense of the separation of genres of language and an intimate sense of the fusion of these languages. In any case, it is certain that the question of faith and religion is profoundly linked, for him, with the word [*parole*] and language [*langage*], so that religion is for him a language into which one is born, and he operated a dual and careful work of translation for a long time according to the audience to which he addressed himself – to his activist Protestant “friends” or to his philosopher colleagues.

In the examined texts, which are addressed to the first of these audiences, one will see three major themes successively approached which allow to outline what a “church community” is. First, we see how Ricœur proposes a *rapprochement between the function of this community and that of utopia*. Here, utopia is not an es-

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Nord, le Centre protestant de l'Ouest, le Centre de Vilemétrerie, le Centre protestant d'études et de documentation, etc. These centers gathered Protestants among which certain ones no longer attended parishes and also there mixed in a number of Marxists. They and the circles which gathered them disappeared in the wake of May 1968. It is thus in this context that one must place the proposal of Paul Ricœur, then president of the Mouvement du christianisme social and of the Fédération protestante de l'enseignement.

<sup>3</sup> I propose three states of language: a state of fusion where everything blends in a dramatic or hymnal way, a state of separation of genres which marks the effort of classicism, a state of translation which proposes of mixed genres of judicious or amorous crossings.



cape from the world, but a limit horizon which demands us to return to the world otherwise. We perhaps have a similar utopia when Pierre Bayle, chased from the Catholic France of Louis XIV, but disappointed by the fanaticism of the Protestant churches of refuge, publishes the periodical *Nouvelles de la république des lettres* in the 1680s: the free republic appears as a figure of the invisible church, and thus utopic. According to Paul Ricœur, perhaps also in connection with a disappointment or a sense of crisis, we sometimes have to make something like a *fictional ecclesiology*. The dramatic figure of the church community that he proposes searches for a passage between imagination and institution – a difficult road, which will also be his as dean at Nanterre. Yet this imagined community responds to a call; it is provoked by a word, which presupposes a framework, a linguistic theatre.

Next we will see exactly how for him the element of this confessing community *par excellence* is language. Ricœur, perhaps to balance what was then the apotheosis of the notion of work, shows language [*le langage*] and word [*la parole*] as the major site or major battlefield of his time. To the extent where language is, as he will say later, the institution of institutions, and to the extent where linguistic trust, restored in spite of and through suspicion, will seem to him later the element of all human attestation, it is clear that this is a fundamental issue. *The constitution of the church community is firstly language*; that is its function. I will search in the dialectic not of writing and orality, but of language and the word, the philosophical equivalent of the intimate dialectic in the confessing community between religion and faith.

Finally, we will try to find in the linguistic turn of Ricœur's philosophy one of the reasons for him turning away from the purely speculatively dialogue between philosophy and theology and to search within the diversity of *expressions* of the confessing community the opening of a relation to a possible world. This interpretive opening is inseparable from this plurality itself. My hypothesis is that the plurality of linguistic genres entails a *plurality of forms of the church community*. The diversity of literary genres in the collection of biblical texts raises not only a plurality in relation to the world, to time, to God,

but the possibility of a diversity of forms of community. Ricœur refers to the inexhaustible inventiveness of reception which continues a tradition of reading in constantly making it branch off by original translations, but also the *canonical* formation of the community as it overcomes and accepts discordance.

To conclude, we return to ourselves in a context that has changed in many ways, but where the perspective of the meaning and function of the church community remains a topic of reflection perhaps more urgent than ever, both as space of deconstruction and as horizon of fiction and exploration of possibilities.

## A Utopic Community

The utopic function of the church community appears as a counterpoint to an analysis of modern society described as a technical world. It is a society that accumulates the means and eliminates the question of ends. It is also a society founded on rapid growth, but which fails to give meaning and significance to this growth, which thereby becomes a false infinite. Ricœur writes that this society

is characterized by a growing mastery of man over the means and an effacement of his ends, as if the increasing rationality of means gradually reveals the absence of meaning. This is particularly true in capitalist societies where man is handed over to the pressure of advertising and credit institutions, to the incessant pressure of lust. In this way, the pathetic motive of a society of production is rendered manifest: desire without end. Another vain dream animates the man of consumer society: the augmentation of his power. At its limit, it cancels time, space, the destiny of birth and death. But in such a project, all becomes instrumental, useful, in the universal reign of the manipulable and available. (I a)

It is within this context that Ricœur calls for utopia:

In the face of this, the task is not of recrimination and regret, but to witness to a fundamental meaning. How? Even if the word was suspicious or ambiguous, I would say advocate for utopia. I call utopia this vision of a fulfilled humanity both as

totality of men and as the singular destiny of each person. It is the aim that can give meaning: to desire that humanity is one is to desire that it is realized in each person. We are thus responsible for the pressure and the thought of a double destiny. The first, that of totality, is the issue of all debates on decolonization, on research of a generalized economy, on nationalism. It is a matter that prevails on particularisms and egoisms; the needs of humanity taken as a whole. But there is another side, that of the anonymity and inhumanity of industrial society, which requires that we personalize to the maximum relations increasingly more and more abstract. I say, like Spinoza, “the more we know singular things, the more we know God”. This recourse to utopia gives me the opportunity to clarify in which manner I see the relationship between ethics and politics. I believe neither in the dissolution of ethics into politics under pain of Machiavellianism nor in the direct intervention of ethics into politics under pain of moralism. What I am searching for is the articulation of two levels of morality: the level of moral conviction and the level of moral responsibility of power. (I a)

The function of the church community would be to exert a constant “utopic” pressure on the inclinations of our society, to resist its abuses, but also to give to it a horizon, an aim, a point that introduces a tension with instrumental rationality where it is not a question of efficient management blind to the pathology of desire that it arouses. This slight pressure, this inclination or disinclination introduced in the figures of the hopeful, but also in the small choices, concrete habits and maxims of action, can seem pathetic, but it weighs like a small rudder that can change the interior orientation of the entire ship in the end.<sup>4</sup> I would like to insist here on two lines of argument outlined in this text: the first, on the difference between ethical conviction and ethical responsibility, and the second indicating the breadth of the utopic horizon between the task of regrouping dislocated humanity and the task of singling out personal destinies.

<sup>4</sup> This is the image of the language which governs the body given by John in his epistle (John 3:5) and commented by Louis Simon, then Ricœur’s pastor at Palaiseau, in his work *Une éthique de la sagesse. Commentaire de l’Épître de Jacques* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1961).

On the first line of argument, one sees how old and radical, according to Ricœur, is the affirmation of an irrepressible ethical plurality:

My deep conviction is that we cannot have a unified conception of morals; we cannot unify us ourselves morally because we pursue incompatible things; on the one hand a certain purity of goals and intentions, on the other, a certain efficacy of means. These two words – purity, efficacy – can also deteriorate into each other: purity-purism, efficacy-Machiavellianism. But the moral life precisely rests on a dialectic of the desirable absolute and the realizable optimum. (II b)

Depending on Weber, as we know,<sup>5</sup> Ricœur insists on the work of mutual correction between the two ethics. One will find this tension again later between love and justice (see *Amour et justice*, Tübingen: Mohr AJ, 1990). On the one hand, there is the Gospel ideal, which is not very far from the Kantian ideal.<sup>6</sup> But on the other hand, everything is not possible at the same time in a given period (here he gives the example of our societies, which do not know how to be both egalitarian and productive). The ethical paradox of responsible conviction is that it is not limited to an external accusation, but that it must not cease to implicate oneself. And to not too quickly resign, because it is this resignation of our intelligence and our will which makes the bed of Machiavellianism.

The danger of technocracy, of bureaucracy, is clear. It is always possible that the incompetent people that we all are will be eliminated by those who know, and that there is a seizure of decision by the competent ones. But it must be said that this seizure feeds our resignation. It is because we are not informed enough and do not take the trou-

<sup>5</sup> In his lecture in 1920 on this theme, Max Weber had anticipated with lucidity what for Paul Ricœur was the consequence of his own “blunder” as a pacifist youth. Ricœur had great admiration for this lecture.

<sup>6</sup> “We can present it as a sort of ideal, of idealism, of absolute respect of the human person, in Kantian language, or according the Gospel perspective of perfection: ‘Be perfect as your Holy Father is perfect.’ That is moral conviction. In Kantian language, ‘Treat always the other man not only as a means, but also as an end.’” (II b)

ble to learn elementary things that we are put out of the game. (II a)

It is plausible to place in the wake of this tension an alternative dialectic of the social imaginary proposed by Ricœur between utopia and ideology:

On the one hand, we must resist the seduction of pure utopic expectations; they can only despair action. Because of a lack of anchorage in ongoing experience, they are incapable of formulating a practical path towards the ideas which are situated elsewhere. The expectations must be determinate, thus finite and relatively modest if they are to be able to arouse responsible engagement. Yes, one must avoid the horizon of expectation of escape. We must bring the present closer by a staggering of intermediate projects in relation to action. [...] We must, on the other hand, resist shrinking the space of experience. For that, we must struggle against the tendency to consider only the past from the standpoint of the achieved, unchangeable, passed. We must reopen the past, rekindle in it unfulfilled potentialities, that were prevented or massacred. In short, against the adage that wants the future to be open and contingent, and the past unequivocally closed and necessary, we must render our expectations more determinate and our experiences more indeterminate.<sup>7</sup>

This does not prevent that

utopia is what prevents the horizon of expectation from fusing with the field of experience. It is what maintains the gap between hope and tradition. (II a)

The second line of argument is also largely documented by Ricœur and contributes to give precision to the utopic horizon. It was already claimed that modern society, in its technical and instrumental aspect, determines a pathology of desire which affects both interpersonal bonds and collective solidarities.

I think that in this absence of meaning, we experience not only the alteration of our relations with

others, but also the absence of collective projects [...] We are looking for an inclusive rationality, which would give both individual meaning and collective meaning, which would allow us to understand all the meanings of the word “to understand” – that is to say, that we would be included in it. (II a)

Only such a “comprehensive” rationality (hermeneutics in a broad or radical sense of the term) would allow to gather together the sections of an objective rationality and an irrational subjectivity.

the human subject becomes pure violence at the moment where all objects become objects of calculation. (II a)

And he continues:

Thus, on the one hand, we must gather together humanity, which is dislocated, and on the other hand, individualize the destinies which are uniform. Two fronts to hold together. (II a)

This broad dialectic is evoked when one comes across “Le socius et le prochain”, when Ricœur indicates that:

The theme of the neighbor operates, therefore, as permanent critique of the social bond. With respect to the love of neighbor, the social bond is never intimate enough and never broad enough. It is never intimate enough since social mediation will never become the equivalent of the encounter, of immediate presence. It is never broad enough since the group only affirms itself against another group and closes in on itself. The neighbor is the double existence of the close and the far.<sup>8</sup>

One cannot separate the demand of human community in its reiterative universality from that of human personality in its deep singularity. I would like to add that it is on both sides that language plays with metaphor. It is to this language, both dramatic and metaphorical, that I would like to attribute the character of language in a state of fusion. We will see later how this

<sup>7</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit, Tome III* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), 312-313; [*Time and Narrative III* (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1990), 228].

<sup>8</sup> Paul Ricœur, “Le socius et le prochain,” 113-127 in *Histoire et vérité* (Paris: Seuil, 1955), 125; [*History and Truth* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1965), 108].

language is changed into separate and clearly distinct genres, but also is made available for translation, for linguistic hospitality.

## A Confessing Community

We now come to the central point of this study: the linguistic character of this community aroused by a word [*parole*]. The language of church community is not an instrument of “com,” a means, a technique of communication.

I hasten to say that when I speak here of language, I do not think only of words that must change, but also the meaning of the message. (III)

Ricœur seeks in the word [*parole*], to the contrary, what would counteract the excesses of merely instrumental communication where the logic of efficacy, productivity, consummability, and of communicational performance, so to speak, prevails. All the problems of our society can be considered as problems of signification and illnesses of language.

Language is the battlefield, the place of all our combats. Because it is in language itself which is the place of forgetfulness: [...] the power of language to interrogate man and to open possibilities is forgotten. To open possibilities: possibility to exist as man, to tell a story. It is the struggle against this central forgetfulness, which requires me to preserve, on the side of logical and technical language that is objective, a language which understands, on the side of technical language by which I dispose of all things, the language which awakens possibilities. (I b)

The function of preaching is therefore in each case first to

restore the space of interrogation in which the question can take on meaning. (I b)

And this space is common to those who are raised by this interrogation, question or call. The confessing community is *first* constituted by this space of possible interrogation.

It is the basis of the message to understand this community, not as an addition of “I” nor

even as a “third” institution, but as the always difficult possibility of a “we.”

I do not think that the subject of faith can be an individual; the subject of faith is not an “I”, but “we” [...] Interpretation can only be a segment of tradition, that is to say, in the transmission of the message in the history of a community. The word [*parole*] only arouses man if it continues to be transmitted. That is why preaching can only be heard by the many. (I c)

Ricœur resists, then, the ironic temptation to abandon the community, the church, the parish. He believes that outside of a confessing community, critical work is nothing more than painstaking, scholarly exegesis that is empty.

What is central is the possibility to speak of the first person plural, the possibility to say *we*. And this “we” only has internal meaning for the community if it speaks to all outside of the community.

So even if I now speak inside of a Christian community, I speak for all, and I would like to hold onto a language which is comprehensible by all. (II c)

This is precisely why we need a linguistic community capable of generating and supporting this word [*parole*].

If a confessing community does not bear the work of interpretation, the first dialectic that we described in the first part also dies. The dialectic of conviction and responsibility demands to be supported by the concrete dialectic of the ecclesial and the social. The idea that the Church should lose itself in the world until it disappears seems to me stripped of meaning because if it loses itself, there is no longer anything that is lost. It is the function, no longer of preaching, but of worship to maintain an internal milieu whereby there may also be an external relation of church-world. It is here, as in language: if the tension between poetry and prose disappears from our language, our language would be destroyed. (I c)

Ricœur outlines here the idea that the poetry of worship responds to the prose of the modern world:

the religious community must not have two languages, but two levels of language; one which will be like a liturgy that will be the gift of the internal function of the organism, the other, a prose, a profane language that takes from the concepts and practices of all men. And it is the art of holding together the poetry of the internal life and the prose of the relation to the world of a community, which will determine its survival. All the tensions that I stated earlier - reason-understanding or meaning and calculating intelligence, conviction and responsibility, perspective and prospective - I would say that the church community must be the place where all these tensions are lived to the most extreme point of brightness and intensity. (II c)

But to fully understand the situation of the language of the confessing community, it is necessary to call on another tension, still more intimate. Ricœur writes:

the confessing community is this place where the problem of the word is lived, thought, and announced as the conflict of religion and faith. (III c)

On the one hand, faith continues to deconstruct religion.

The problem of demythologization is born there. It is born from our cultural distance with respect to the credible that is available from the apostolic period. It is therefore necessary to make us contemporaries of Christ, to appropriate the essential message, to carry out the destruction of the letter (I use destruction in the Heideggerian sense: deconstruction). I do not wish by it to remove the true scandal; the task to the contrary is to eliminate the false scandal to restore the original scandal. (I b)

But on the other hand, this deconstruction cannot go far if it is not done within a tradition. It takes the existence of a confessing community to live the struggle of religion and faith.

I do not think that faith can exist outside of a recovery and indefinite correction of the religious vehicle. (I c)

Since Kierkegaard, if not Calvin, until Karl Barth, this critique of religion by faith is a classic theme in Protestant theology. But in revers-

ing the critical front to show that there is no living faith without a religious element already deposited, Ricœur proposes an original approach for his time. Later in the examined text, he will propose the convergence between external critique, which uses the demystification of the masters of suspicion in the wake of Feuerbach, and the internal critique used by demythologization in the wake of Bultmann, which is a deconstruction of secondary rationalizations and alternative theological elaborations:

We must never forget from the view of the first Christian generation, there was a writing [*écriture*]. This writing was the Bible, that is to say the Old Testament. Before this writing, there was living preaching. But to the extent that writings issued from this preaching that were deposited and sedimented, they become a second writing in their turn, what we call the New Testament. [...] [t]he first preaching represented a deconstruction of the letter of the Old Testament. [...] [i]t is the Gospel which wants to be demythologized. (III b)

It is interesting to note that these texts by Ricœur are indeed contemporary to those by which Jacques Derrida introduced *deconstruction* with the idea of textual difference [*différance*]. Rather Ricœur speaks of the gap and tension as seen with the living metaphor [*la métaphore vive*] where he *retains* the semantic differences, sensitive to that which is already sedimented and the original gaps. But it is not a question, according to Ricœur, of opposing the word to writing. And if writing is the paradigm of distanciation in community - we know how this autonomisation of the written in relation to the intentions of the author is for him a major and positive phenomenon - it is one of the points on which he distances himself perhaps from Gadamer. It seems to me that the dialectic of religion and faith is informed here by language and the word (or of writing as it operates in semantic differences); constantly the word must deconstruct language to spawn a new way. But this word is based on linguistic traces of previous words. In place of resolving the opposition between structure and event, language and the word, Ricœur builds on this dialectic of sedimentation and innovation which will take on its full deployment in *La métaphore vive* (*The Rule of Metaphor*),

1975, and *Temps et récit I-III (Time and Narrative I-III)*, 1983-85.

He writes again:

Ebeling states that the bent of religion is the relic. The relic is a remnant of the primitive object, which traverses time without being used and without being destroyed, which traverses history such that it was at the origin and comes to us. The word [*parole*] cannot become a relic because it survives by interpretation, constant reinterpretation. I call interpretation not only what we can do intellectually, but also practically, socially to render current a word that continues to be word when it is constantly converted again into an event, which becomes again constantly itself an event. Consequently, the word is always an event dying and disappearing [...] it arises and disappears. The word is fleeting, opposed to structures, which remain. (III c)

But language would die without its permanent recovery by words pulling the old instruments by new interpretations; the word would be insignificant if it distanced itself from significations already deposited, not only available, but also that became reserve provisions.

This is where we can rejoin the much later proposals of Paul Ricœur comparing the irreducible plurality of religions to those of languages, and opening up the question of linguistic hospitality to other languages, to other traditions, to other cultures, to other religions than those in which one grew up. It is under the auspices of this hospitality that religious dialogue will be treated through the paradigm of translation. In *La critique et la conviction (Critique and Conviction)*, he speaks precisely of his Protestant conviction as a

random fate transformed into a continuous choice [...] a religion is like a language in which one is born or where one was transferred by exile or by hospitality. In any case, it is in oneself; what is implied is to recognize that there are other languages spoken by other people.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Paul Ricœur, *La critique et la conviction* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1995), 219; [*Critique and Conviction* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998) 117], .

## A Plural Constitution

Briefly leaving the core texts of the years 1967-68, I would now like to build a bridge to subsequent texts which open up, in my view, a third component of reflection on the language of church community. In 1975, in *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse*, Ricœur addresses "La philosophie et la spécificité du langage religieux," and he begins in these terms:

it is possible, in the framework of a philosophical investigation, to identify a religious faith on the basis of its language, or, more precisely, as a *particular modality of discourse*. [...] The most appropriate way to interpret this language according to its internal nature consists in an analysis of its modes of expression. [...] [i]t is worthwhile to examine it because in it, something is said which is not said in other modalities of discourse.<sup>10</sup>

Better, it is a modality of discourse, which carries a specific *truth*, a specific relation to the world. He continues:

These witnesses of faith do not carry a primary basis of theological statements in a metaphysical, speculative sense of theology, but expressions which raise forms of discourse as diverse as narrations, prophecies, laws, proverbs, hymns, prayers, liturgical formulas, wise sayings, etc. [...] The "confession of faith" that is expressed in the biblical documents cannot be nor must not be separated from the *particular* forms of discourse which distinguish the Pentateuch, Psalms, Prophets, etc. Not only does each form of discourse refer to a particular style of confession of faith, but the juxtaposition of forms of discourse produce a tension, a contrast to the very heart of the confession of faith.<sup>11</sup>

One notices in the passage here how the linguistic turn in Ricœur's philosophy, understood both as deconstruction and as enlargement of the modes of language, was for him one of the grounds for turning away from a purely speculative dialogue between philosophy and theology

<sup>10</sup> Paul Ricœur, "La philosophie et la spécificité du langage religieux", 13-26 in *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse* I (1975), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ricœur, "La philosophie et la spécificité du langage religieux", 13.

and to search in the diversity of expressions of the confessing community throughout the centuries the opening to another relation to the world

before any provision of faith or non-faith, a world is proposed. This world in the language of the Bible is called new world, Kingdom of God, new Being.<sup>12</sup>

And Ricœur adds:

a text is revealed to the extent where it is revealing of a world [...] faith is the attitude of one who is ready to let it interpret itself in interpreting the world of the text.<sup>13</sup>

In his epilogue to *Fe y filosofía. Problemas de language religiosa*, he writes:

If there exists something like a religious experience – feeling of absolute dependence, unlimited trust in spite of all reason to despair, opening onto a horizon of unprecedented possibilities, [...] this experience passes through language. A faith which is not said remains not only silent but undefined. Yet, through the language of men, the discourse of faith takes a variety of forms. In many essays gathered here, I underline the importance of literary genres in which biblical discourse is articulated in an original way: narratives, laws, prophecies, hymns, wisdom writings. The reader here is each time a confessing community which understands itself in interpreting the texts which found its identity. A circle, which one can call a hermeneutical circle, is established therefore between the founding texts and the communities of interpretation. [...] For every believer, belonging to a community of listening and interpretation remains a random destiny transformed by a reasoned choice continued throughout a lifetime.<sup>14</sup>

This is my thesis: to the extent where language is the institution of institutions and where the confessing community is a community of language

<sup>12</sup> Ricœur, “La philosophie et la spécificité du langage religieux”, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ricœur, “La philosophie et la spécificité du langage religieux”, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Ricœur, “El caracter hermeneutica comun a la fe biblica y a la filosofia”, 221-226 in *Fe y filosofía. Problemas de language religiosa* (Buenos Aires: Do-cencia y Almagesto, 1990), 223.

and word, the diversity of genres throughout biblical texts opens not only a plurality in relation to the world, to time, to God, but a plurality articulated in forms of community. I say articulated because the community is the place where all these tensions between the forms of language and the forms of interpretation, under the regime of the conflict of interpretations, are lived to the most extreme point of glowing intensity. The metaphor is that of the merger, but also the gap, of the contrast and the tension between the two poles, which remain distinct. Later the metaphor, for Ricœur, speaking of the great period of religious revival, will be that of the thickness of its channels, dogmas and institutions which had had to master this energy, these fiery streams.

We have already explored one of these tensions. Extending the dialectic of moral responsibility and moral conviction, and of ideology and utopia, we already had the duality between the prose of the social world and the poetry of liturgy (we know the importance of the Song of Songs in the Jewish liturgy). Later, in *Amour et Justice*, the opposition between the argumentative prose of justice and the hymnal poetry of love joined together in an inextricable way in the analysis of the passage of Luke 6 where the two formulations are together, as if they constantly revive one another and improve one another.<sup>15</sup>

In several texts, we see the philosopher linger on the fact that the Bible intertwines three genres in its great narrative: the prophetic, the legislative, the sapiential. I tried to link between these genres and the three figures of the ethical aim, forgotten and recalled by the prophet, of the moral norm established by the legislator-narrator, the practical wisdom in response to complaint as well as hymn, and thus extending the initial claim of an irrepressible ethical plurality. In other texts from the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, Ricœur distinguishes five genres in decoupling narrative and in adding the hymnal psalm. Later, *Penser la Bible (Thinking the Bible)*, 1998, proposes a more ample and systematic exploration of each of these literary genres: the narrative of creation (Genesis), loving obedience (Exodus), the watchmen of the

<sup>15</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Amour et justice* (Tübingen: Mohr AJ, 1990).

imminent (Ezekiel), the complaint as prayer (Psalms), the bridal metaphor (Song of Songs), to which he adds a study on the question of the naming of God in the burning bush episode: “De l’interprétation à la traduction.” He leaves here to the side the more neo-testamental - dialogues, parables, the passion narratives, letters, apocalypses, etc. - that he sometimes studied elsewhere. Whatever it is, we imagine a plurality of community configurations generated by these diverse “genres” and traditions of reading that we know how language opens the imaginary. And the social imaginary is not an exception to this rule; utopia is first a literary phenomenon.<sup>16</sup>

But the constitution of the traditions of reading and interpretation do not remain in a state of lazy juxtaposition. Under the stimulus of the conflict of interpretations that could tear them apart, the historical communities cannot support their own disparity without canonizing together seemingly incompatible textual traditions, and this work of selection, arbitration and compromise generates at the same time a textual canon and community that gathers together plural texts. As Ricœur writes in another unpublished text much later, and which shows how much this subject remains present with him to the end:

the process of canonization accompanies and intensifies the formation of the Church as first worshipping community and cultural by implication. To become Canon and to become Church goes together. These are the needs and constraints of becoming a Church which motivate in depth the process of canonization.<sup>17</sup>

So there is both constitutive plurality and conflictual work to compose the whole by the invention of canons.

Ricœur did not stop proposing differentiations in the modalities of discourse, but also he proposed the different functions to which ecclesial community give form. The reader will find in the appendix a typology proposed in 1968 by

Ricœur, drawing on Harvey Cox, to distinguish *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*. He returns to it five years later to show how these different functions are in crisis and on the brink of collapse. The process of canonization, of channeling, the work of disagreement, of discordance overcome and accepted, seems no longer in play.

In all these texts, we assess how, at the turn of the 1960s to 1970s, the philosopher is concerned about thinking of the meaning and function of the church community. It is not a question of escaping from the difficulties of the church and society in his time in a utopic or speculative evasion, much less as in a pious sense of retreat from the world. Rather, to the contrary, it is to return otherwise with the force of a transformative fiction. But it is also again the old gesture of his phenomenology: one can understand and analyze perverse pathologies and effects, and one can bear its critique from a legitimate core of meanings which order the phenomenon. What we examined therefore are the imaginative variations around the *eidōs* of church community. This is a philosopher on the one hand and on the other hand as Christian of philosophical expression (as it is of musical or pictorial expression) that he approaches this interrogation both as a problem that he elaborates and as a call that he receives.

## Conclusion: And today?

It is time to conclude by returning to ourselves. These texts from 1968 are extremely relevant for us in their proximity as well as in their distance. For example, it is remarkable that Ricœur does not hesitate to speak of humanity as a whole and insists as much on this *totalizing* dimension of utopia as on its singularizing dimension. Today, totalitarianism is suspected everywhere; we fear to use such terms, and we even lack this semantic desire to denounce the totalitarian imposture of false totalizations.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Paul Ricœur, “De l’interprétation à la traduction”, 335-371 in *Penser la bible* (eds André Lacocque & Paul Ricœur; Paris: Seuil, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> This text, entitled “Le Canon entre le texte et la communauté,” was given in a lecture at the Fonds Ricœur in February 2002.

<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, we no longer dare to speak of Machiavellianism in a bad sense, as Ricœur does here, since Machiavelli became to an excess the “normal” for political thought, as if politics was only that.



We are no longer in a society of growth, but curiously we are not able to overcome this problem of growth from the accumulation of means and the elimination of “ends”. We would like growth, but we do not know why. We suppose that that would resolve everything. The paradox is that our societal model of growth is in full *collapse* for reasons of the depletion of natural resources, the inability to manage our waste, the mental inability to support an overly complex world, and the political incapacity to share knowledge and governance. Our best projects are returned against their intentions; we cannot and do not want more, but we still do not know what is the engine of our society.

As for the church community, for its part, it has failed. The lines of dislocation that he foresaw worsened, and few intellectuals of his generation or of the generation which followed searched to maintain this “internal milieu of language”, of shared convictions, of critical demands, of interpretation by many. The internal dialectic of two ethics was not held to the point of incandescence. The confessing community replied to the pious needs of the faithful whose peace was covered over with proud hearts, who lost the dramatic sense of this great humanity as well as the existential meaning of the living singularity of each existence.

What Ricœur brings here is more radical. It is precisely the idea that everything starts by random birth: “A religion is like a language in which one is born,” or where “it was transferred by exile or hospitality,” a kind of second birth that does not erase the first, but adds and reinterprets it. All Ricœur’s work is destined to think this enigma of birth, to accept finitude and narrowness, but also the gift and possibilities. The church community is a community that recognizes this condition with gratitude. It does not recruit the “best”, but makes it better for everyone, *anyone*, and presupposes a radical *fiction* of redistribution of births.

What is the engine of our society? This question can be retranslated into a call for the redistribution of all opportunities to the widest possible share. But it also translates as the call that throws us to every newcomer to the world: “Who do you say that I am?” To each, the fictional church community we seek offers a

chance to appear to be “otherwise”. It gives him the chance again to “seventy times seven” (Mt 18: 21). That may be precisely what is most lacking in a world where humans feel increasingly unemployable, useless, unnecessary, good to be discarded without ever being able to show “who” they are. But from the same movement, the fictional church community we seek also allows us to give way to others, to place itself to other than itself, for unawareness of itself, to return to the world. What is also lacking in our society is that it values everything that grows and never which diminishes to give way. This double movement, the fictional church community that we seek is not proposed on a single scene, but on the contrary, its whole effort is focused on the invention and the formation of a plurality of these scenes of appearance and effacement in a way to what there are for all *genres*. Ricœur continued to support this invention and to provide figures in it.

## Appendix 1: Urbanization, Secularization, Ecclesiology

Here is a text from the same period as our document, and provides further analysis of the three functions of the church community. This report is presented in May 1968 in Valencia by Ricœur, then president of the movement, the Congress of Social Christianity, under the title “Urbanisation et sécularisation”.<sup>19</sup> In a last point on “ecclesiology”, he believes that “before thinking about the organization and the organizations of the Church, we must think about its *function*.” He mentions three functions suggested by the American theologian:

Taking the leading idea that the Church is “the *vanguard* of God”, Harvey Cox organizes its present task around three departments, three ser-

<sup>19</sup> In this text, Ricœur combines his reflections on his reading of the famous work of Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York, Macmillan, 1965). Initially released in the fall 1967 in the *Revue du christianisme social*, we have included it in the special issue of *Autres temps* No. 76-77, dedicated to “Paul Ricœur, histoire et civilisation, neuf jalons pour un christianisme social.”

vices : to proclaim, to care, to render visible hope in the community signs. Drawing from three corresponding Greek words - *kerygma* or announcement, *diakonia* or therapeutic through reconciliation, *koinonia* or eschatological community - he speaks of the triple kerygmatic, diaconal and communitarian function of the Church. I gladly adopt this framework of analysis.<sup>20</sup>

These three functions correspond to different linguistic and communicational modalities.

According to the *kerygmatic* function, Ricœur writes:

It is the function of the Church to discern the surplus meaning of the non-sense, even in the face of the deteriorating process of the modern city. Let us always put at the responsibility of man what seems to come from foreign forces, inhuman powers. This is the crux of what we might call the preaching in the world; preaching to the faithful must remain a simple relay.<sup>21</sup>

According to the *diaconal* function, he writes:

diakonia is not restricted to these functions of substitute; it applies to the centers of decision, to the major points of the functioning of the city where processes of integration and disintegration intersect. This is a theology of the itinerant and of responsible control finding their points of application. How will the Church be at the vanguard of God, if the individual Christian is at the rear of the historical development, if all sensibility and all reactions are turned towards paradise lost and not to the kingdom which comes?<sup>22</sup>

Finally, according to the *koinonial* function, properly communitarian, he writes:

Once again, the words of Paul - neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female - do not constitute a secondary application among others of the unity in Christ. It refers to the focus itself on anthropology and ecclesiology, the very place of their origin. Man, not such and such a man. It's the humanity of man. And the huma-

nity of man is marching when the Greek, the Jew and the Barbarian are involved in a process of reconciliation. Then man happens. At the same time by the same operation itself of the gesture of reconciliation, a community is possible.<sup>23</sup>

And he concludes his text by these words:

I would think that the traditional parish will find its chance when it will be one church modality among others. The non-parish will save the parish. We must learn to discern the figure of the Church wherever the ministry of the announcement that the diakonia of the concrete community has vis-à-vis the whole city, such that the modern world made it, that is to say, the secular city.<sup>24</sup>

On 19 July 1973, a few years later, the newspaper *Le Monde* published an excerpt from a response by Ricœur in the journal *La vie nouvelle* (Bruxelles), under the title, "Paul Ricœur distingue trois lignes de rupture dans la crise du christianisme."<sup>25</sup> Ricœur begins by saying:

The challenge now, in all Christian churches, seems to me triple and corresponds to three ruptures which pass across all confessions and not just between Roman Catholicism and others.<sup>26</sup> A first break threatens to separate established religion and spontaneous communities.

Parenthetically, it is a crisis in the *koinonia* function.

In this form, the churches live in a particularly virulent way a drama that affects all institutions experiencing the same crisis between organizations and wild expressions of freedom. It is natural that

<sup>23</sup> Ricœur, "Urbanisation et sécularisation", 125.

<sup>24</sup> Ricœur, "Urbanisation et sécularisation", 126.

<sup>25</sup> In the subsequent quotations, I give the integral text as published in *Le Monde*, 19 July 1973.

<sup>26</sup> In the text, "Présence des églises au monde" (1967), we see how often his church utopia traverses churches. Ricœur writes: the issues that we are discussing today are to such a degree of radicality, and are so new that they have nothing to see - or little to see - with what divided us between Protestants and Catholics since the 16th century. The churches are faced with such a new situation that together they now have to invent new behaviors. I would gladly say that the great church is in front of us rather than behind us. (II)

<sup>20</sup> Paul Ricœur, "Urbanisation et sécularisation", 113-126 in *Autres Temps. Cahiers d'éthique sociale et politique* 76-77 (2003), 124.

<sup>21</sup> Ricœur, "Urbanisation et sécularisation", 124.

<sup>22</sup> Ricœur, "Urbanisation et sécularisation", 125.

the same crisis is even more violent than elsewhere because of the exceptional nature of the ecclesial bond. Is it not then the most urgent task for those, whoever they are, who bear the fate of the Christian community, to maintain the same quality of this vital life and to ensure to all the circulation of life between the institution and the non-institution? For the church today is on both sides. To recognize and to live is the first duty.

Ricœur continues with a crisis of the *diaconal* function:

a second break passes between two functions of the institution itself, concern for its internal cohesion and the service of the world. The first, reduced to itself, leads to turn all activities toward what I would call grossly internal consumption. The second, separated from the first, dissolves the church in the world, which is one of the ways the salt loses its savor. Is it not then a specific task for the Church today to preserve the tension between these two directions of its concern: for why preserve the internal link, if not for the service of others? And what service would it be if we were no more distinct?

And Ricœur concludes with a crisis of the *kerygmatic* function:

I am concerned, in a more personal way, by another divorce that I observe in all the churches, and which, though not as deadly in appearance than the previous two, has no less weight for future disasters. I see diverge further serious, competent, scientific theological work (especially when it is well articulated on exegesis, discourse theory, hermeneutics, fundamental philosophy) and a concrete commitment, usually political or simply social and educational. The disaster would be that theological work is isolated and turns to pure research, while political commitment would only be gauged as light and fragile improvisations. One of the most disturbing signs that reinforce these three breaks, is that they lead the entire body to rupture. Is it not a call to fight on three fronts simultaneously and stand as a mediator of these three lines of rupture?

## Appendix 2: Summary of “Meaning and Function of an Ecclesial Community” (Centre protestant du Nord, Amiens 1967)

I. “Being Protestant Today” [“Être protestant aujourd’hui”] (Background Paper on an oral text and without correction of the author, 1965):

- a) The Confessing Community in the Technical World (developed in II a, b);
- b) The Language of the Confessing Community (developed in III a, b);
- c) Pleading for a Confessing Community (developed in II c and III c).

II. “Presence of the Church in the World” [“Présence de l’Église au monde”] (first group of reflections):

- a) Points of Insertion;
- b) Types of Presence and Pressure of the Confessing Community;
  - 1. The Distinction between the Two Morals: Moral Conviction and Moral Responsibility;
  - 2. The Role of Utopia.
- c) The Specific Function of the Christian Community.

III. “Sense and Language” [“Sens et langage”] (second group of reflections):

- a) External Critique of Religion: Demystification;
- b) Internal Critique of Religion: Demythologizing;
- c) Faith and Religion: The Authentic Word.

Translation: Michael Sohn, including all quotations.

# Ricœur in Dialogue with Feminist Philosophy of Religion

## Hermeneutic Hospitality in Contemporary Practice

PAMELA SUE ANDERSON

### Introduction: On dialogue

A twenty-first-century feminist philosopher has to work painstakingly in her analysis of a philosophical text, in order to discover those shared assumptions which emerge as the necessary conditions for dialogue with that text.<sup>1</sup>

The present essay builds upon the discovery of shared assumptions, which are the necessary conditions for a dialogue between a feminist philosopher of religion and the text of ‘Paul Ricœur’s hermeneutic phenomenology’. This dialogue will assume that Ricœur’s text is the result of an exchange between two different spheres of discourse: that is, the description of human lived experiences and the interpretation of those experiences. In the development of his own distinctive twentieth-century philosophical position, Ricœur brought together phenomenology as a descriptive discourse concerning what appears to human consciousness and hermeneutics as a twofold method – of critical and restorative hermeneutics – interpreting the meaning of those appearances. The discourse and method of Ricœur’s hermeneutic phenomenology, then, constituted the necessary ground for explaining and understanding ‘a text’, whether that be an actual written document, an object of discourse or any meaningful action considered as a text.<sup>2</sup> However, what quickly becomes clear to the twenty-first century feminist philosopher is that Ricœur never applied his descriptive phenomenology or his critical and restorative hermeneutics to questions concerning the gender, or sexu-

al difference, embedded in human lived experience.

To fit into the theme, *Paul Ricœur in Dialogue with Theology and Religious Studies*, I have also chosen to imagine a reversal of a feminist philosophical dialogue with Ricœur’s text(s), in order to place Ricœur in dialogue with ‘feminist philosophy of religion’. Of course, this will require me to bear in mind the assumptions which a twentieth-first-century feminist philosopher would share with Ricœur’s twentieth-century text. In the context of this reciprocally related hermeneutic-feminist dialogue, we will confront some of the same issues, which any scholarly exchange between theology and religious studies would face. The issues include treating the text of ‘a feminist philosophy of religion’ with the tools of, on the one hand, objective analysis and logical argumentation in the social and human sciences and, on the other hand, faith-based understanding and Christian revelation. But equally, as a feminist philosopher, I already share assumptions concerning the dual moments of a Ricœurian, critical hermeneutics of suspicion and restorative hermeneutics of faith: each of these hermeneutical moments can be employed to confront sex/gender in philosophy of religion. So, I propose that these shared hermeneutical assumptions of a feminist philosopher and the text of a Ricœur’s phenomenological hermeneutic will help to facilitate a dialogue between the two interlocutors – the feminist and the hermeneutic phenomenologist – in mediating differences of sex and gender across human lived experiences.

We know that Ricœur built his life’s work on reading, writing and interpreting texts. But similarly, I have argued that feminist philosophy of religion relies upon reading, interpreting and ‘re-visioning’ texts, especially but not only

<sup>1</sup> Pamela Sue Anderson, ‘A Joyful Dialogue with Spinoza and Others: Le Doeuff, Deleuze and the *Ethics*’, 341-355 in *Paragraph* 37:3 (2014), 347.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Edited and translated by John B. Thompson; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981), 35-8, 51-2, 147-9, 197-198.

‘Anglo-American philosophy of religion’ itself as a text.<sup>3</sup> Ricœur was so committed to interpreting human experience – treated as texts of meaningful action – that we find both the method and the structure of his philosophical writings to be premised upon understanding life across disagreements of meaning. Hermeneutics becomes his distinctive method when applied to phenomenological description of human experience; hermeneutics is not only his most characteristic tool for resolving conflicts of interpretation between different positions, it is a major indication of Ricœur’s deep and passionate commitment to understanding human life and to living together.

Ricœur was never the sort of philosopher who wanted simply to win an argument. Instead he aimed to enter into ‘the conflict of interpretations’ (*le conflit des interprétations*), in order to increase the number of topics and possibilities for new understanding.<sup>4</sup> Ricœur was also never a philosopher who simply wanted to find the end or absolute resolution of all conflicts or disagreements. Instead he aimed to learn from every form of interpretative conflict. In fact Ricœur made it perfectly clear that we must choose between hermeneutics and absolute knowledge!<sup>5</sup> Absolute knowledge – or, what Ricœur himself called the ‘hegelian temptation’ – might have been his *telos*: to resolve all conflicts in an final unity. But instead, Ricœur chose hermeneutics as the path for ongoing interpretation; this path has no end point. As a hermeneutical phenomenologist, Ricœur sought constantly to increase knowledge of what is given to us and humility in the face of human difference. Today I propose that using a Ricœurian hermeneutics in a dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion adds to this unending process of interpreting differences.

In preparing this essay, I turned to *On Translation*, which was published in English the year

of Ricœur’s death, 2005.<sup>6</sup> I was struck by the way in which this small gem of a book demonstrated a distinctive passion for hermeneutic hospitality. Although Ricœur himself describes translation as ‘linguistic hospitality’, his hermeneutical method in *On Translation* touches, I suggest, more profound insights concerning differences between two sides of a dialogue. In this context, a translator and a text bring two different languages into a sort of interpretative dialogue attempting to communicate across differences, by way of shared understanding. This will be the case here: where my aim is putting Ricœur in dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion.

## 2. Hermeneutic hospitality: *On Translation*

The hermeneutic dimension of *On Translation* appears initially in the ‘fear’ of, and then, ‘resistance’ to, linguistic and cultural differences. Fear and resistance as two hermeneutic sensibilities render Ricœur’s account of translation similar to a broken dialogue: when at the sharp edge of suspicion there is a betrayal of a text. Sexual difference has been a focus of French psycholinguists such as Luce Irigaray; but Ricœur was silent when it came to Irigaray’s elucidation of sexual difference, ‘the feminine’ and ‘the masculine’ in psycholinguistic terms. This might be understandable due to his own difficulties with Lacan and Lacanian psycholinguistics in the late 1960s-70s. However, Irigaray herself fell out of favour with Lacan in 1974. So, Ricœur might have found an ally in Irigaray, since Lacan rejected each of their critiques. Unfortunately, Ricœur never engaged with either Irigaray or her impact on philosophy of religion.

Irigaray herself remains a contentious figure in feminist philosophy of religion. Moreover, I would like to contend that Ricœur’s dual hermeneutics of betrayal (or suspicion) and faithfulness (or faith) have more relevance for feminist philosophers seeking to engage with texts, in order to re-vision gender in philosophy of religion.

<sup>3</sup> Pamela Sue Anderson, *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion: Reason, Love and Epistemic Locatedness* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), ix-x; cf. Pamela Sue Anderson, *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion: the Rationality and Myths of Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Ed. D. Ihde; Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1974).

<sup>5</sup> Ricœur, *Hermeneutics*, 193.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Ricœur, *On Translation* (Translated by Eileen Brennan; London: Routledge, 2005).

gion than Irigaray's 'fling with' philosophers and their texts.<sup>7</sup> (I will say more about re-visioning below.)

For the moment, I would like to consider more closely what Ricœur says about the translator, who like an interlocutor in dialogue, remains loyal to the words of a text, whether written or spoken; and this loyalty remains, even while knowing that a negative moment of betrayal is an inevitable other side of the positive moment of Ricœurian hermeneutics. A moment of betrayal implies that the words written or spoken are not always translated with a sensibility of (critical) openness to the original language of the text. Of course, one of the perennial problems for any hermeneutics, especially when the differences of language are involved, about which Ricœur has always been clear is that we can never be absolutely certain of the original intention, for good or bad, of any author or speaker. Moreover, betrayal might take place simply because lack of fidelity is thought to be the way to protect one's own side or one's own self from unsettling differences. We could take, for example, the resistance of a Christian theologian – in the form of self-protection – who fears betrayal of his Christianity, if he engages in a feminist critique of the (masculinist) God of Christian theism.

Ricœur himself was passionate about hermeneutics, conflicts and finding a path through disagreement in the direction of increased understanding. And yet, his silence concerning conflicts over gender issues in philosophy, or with and between gender in theology and in religious studies screams out to feminist philosophers at least. I have already suggested that this could not simply be due to his generation of philosophers generally not engaging feminism, since over his very long life span Ricœur never shied away from conflicts in philosophy on other matters of personal identity or of religion and theology. A resistance by his own generation of philosophers to feminism might be a reason for

silence. Yet again, whatever the reasons, let me suggest points at which we might create a dialogue between Ricœur and feminist philosophy of religion.

To be in dialogue with a philosophical text, or in dialogue with another woman or man, the interlocutors must share certain common assumptions. For one thing, Ricœur's idea of 'hospitality' is a hermeneutic assumption which, I suggest, we share. In *On Translation*, Ricœur discusses 'linguistic' hospitality, but I am appropriating this hospitality for hermeneutics. So, 'hermeneutic' hospitality would aim to balance trust and fear; it would address dangers in a betrayal of faith by learning to welcome differences. For another thing, we should assume the central importance of texts for philosophical dialogue between theology and religions, as well as between philosophy of religion and feminist philosophy of religion.

Ricœurian hermeneutics has critical philosophical potential in translation but also in dialogue. Ricœur encourages a reflexive hermeneutics of suspicion and faith. His philosophy was clearly dedicated to the dual moments of hermeneutics. From his earliest work on a philosophy of will, Ricœur practiced a dual, critical and restorative interpretation of human symbolism concerning the origin and end of evil. Even before Ricœur became known for his engagement with the three masters of suspicion – Marx, Nietzsche and Freud – he challenged what he identified as a 'first naïveté' when it came to Christian symbolism.<sup>8</sup> Basically, my point is that Ricœur seeks to avoid over-confidence due to either naïveté or hypocrisy, when interpreting the meaning of a text.

Whether in translation or in hermeneutics, the interpretation of differences across discourses and cultures can be a critical tool for dialogue. Yet philosophical dialogue remains a fragile business: to confront disagreement, in a genuine exchange of meaningful discourse is personally and politically challenging. It is a specific concern of mine that some feminist theologians have

<sup>7</sup> Pamela Sue Anderson, "Transcendence and Feminist Philosophy: On Avoiding Transcendence", 27-54 in *Women and the Divine: Touching Transcendence* (Eds J. Jobling and P. Haynes; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and Anderson, *Re-visioning Gender*, ix-xiii, 50-1, 62-3, 93-4.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Translated by Emerson Buchanan; Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 19-24; and Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (Translated by Denis Savage; New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1970), 32-36.

taken up a hermeneutics of suspicion as their method of feminist critique – without understanding the dual nature of Ricœurian hermeneutics, of both faith (trust) and suspicion (mistrust) – and so, without the positive moment of faith there is no possibility of genuine dialogue. But to be fair, I have not previously written about the dialectical moments of a feminist dialogue with Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology either. Nor have I written about the influence of Ricœur on my own feminist philosophy of religion. To be honest, my work is nevertheless informed by Ricœur's hermeneutic of criticism and restoration. Yet rather than focus on mutual failures of transparency, I would like to make a question productive: why Ricœur himself never attempted a dialogue with French feminist psycholinguistics or with feminist philosophy more generally, whether beginning with the hermeneutical moment of faith or suspicion. The answer might be simple: it was a generational thing for men and women of Ricœur's age to leave feminism to those younger than them.

Olivier Abel has made the suggestion that Ricœur's initial silence concerning 'feminism' perhaps go back to 1949 France when Simone de Beauvoir published, *Le deuxième sexe*. As a Protestant (not a Roman Catholic) and a philosopher in post-WWII France, Ricœur had no objections to the arguments in Beauvoir's landmark text. However, later when he might have become involved with feminist philosophical debates, Ricœur felt unable to read all of the books which would have been necessary for him to study, in order to be informed on feminist philosophy; he always read everything on any topic before he discussed it philosophically in print. Yet whatever his reasons, there seems to be a blind spot when it comes to a self-reflexive hermeneutics of suspicion concerning gender in Ricœur's own philosophical writings.

### 3. Ricœur and feminist philosophy of religion

It could be said that as a consequence of my own writings which, on the one hand, have explored Ricœur's work since the beginning of the 1980s, and which, on the other hand, have worked on a

feminist philosophy of religion since the mid 1990s, I have led a split existence when it comes to my philosophical thinking. For this reason, the conference "Ricœur in Dialogue with Theology and Religious Studies", Lund University, 2013 gave me the opportunity to bring two domains together in "Ricœur in Dialogue with Feminist Philosophy of Religion".

Ricœur never wrote about feminism or had any dialogue with feminist philosophy, whether with individual persons or texts. Nevertheless, his passion and his tools for mediating conflicts would suggest that Ricœurian hermeneutics could do a great deal for the conflicts – the negative and positive moments - in philosophy of religion, addressing internal conflicts and external disagreement. In particular, I would like to explore what exactly Ricœur has to offer students in dialogue with theology and religious studies on the contested ground of feminism, and more specifically, on the issue of re-visioning gender in philosophical texts. It is true that precisely at the point where there is difficulty or difference creating disagreement, Ricœurian hermeneutics will find an opportunity to open up new possibilities. So, let us see what difficulties and differences might generate disagreement – between feminist philosophy and philosophy of religion - to which we can respond, offering to place Ricœur in dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion.

My project for the past 20 years has been cultivating the ground for a feminist philosophy of religion; and this has meant a struggle to break new ground between philosophy and theology with insights from feminists who have tended to find themselves on the fringes of both disciplines. Or, as some philosophers would say, on the one hand, the 'hard core' of the field of philosophy of religion is gender-neutral, while a feminist philosopher would add that this hard-core is 'male-neutral'; that is, male with the (unwitting) pretence of neutrality. On the other hand, 'soft edges' of the field of philosophy of religion might be allocated to women and 'their' gender issues! Clearly this imagery is ironic, reflecting the very sexism which is so problematic, with its 'hard' and 'soft' metaphors, privileging the former over the latter. Describing men as hard and women as soft is almost laughable, if it was not

still so real in many places where philosophy of religion is taught. It is obvious that fear and resistance are everywhere apparent when it comes to disagreements or conflicts between feminism and masculinism in philosophy. Yet dare we say that this is one of the best reasons to have training in hermeneutics – and why Ricœurian hermeneutics would be incredibly useful – in dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion.

We might find that the most fruitful points for dialogue, employing the tools of Ricœurian hermeneutics, are on topics on which both feminist philosophers and hermeneutic phenomenology share philosophical sensibilities. So, rather than conflict resulting in a battle between opposing sides, ending in the defeat of one by the other, both the feminist philosopher and the hermeneutic phenomenologist would seek to mediate conflicts; they would develop a dialogue, in order to help both sides to learn from each other. In particular, the challenge for a dialogue, with the help of Ricœurian hermeneutics, would be to make learning new possibilities the task, and not ‘winning the day’: we are not aiming to knock out ‘the other guy’!

In *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion*, I returned to old texts in the field – those which Ricœur might have described as ‘configurations’ in philosophy of religion – and I sought to re-vision gender in the field as it has been configured (especially in the asides of a text). This re-visioning is similar to Ricœur’s ‘reconfiguring’ of the world ‘in front of a text’. I have not explicitly appropriated Ricœurian hermeneutics in my reading and re-visioning gender in traditional texts of theology or religions. But perhaps I could have, and I might have done so unwittingly.

All too roughly, the Anglo-American field of philosophy of religion has served as the object for my re-visioning. I explained ‘re-visioning’ as ‘the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction’.<sup>9</sup> ‘An old text’ is another name for the

object of re-vision. The aim of *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion* is to see ‘with fresh eyes’, as if I am ‘entering an old text [of traditional theism]’, one which I have taught and studied for more than thirty years, but now ‘from a new critical direction’ informed by women-philosophers and not only by men in the field. As a woman-philosopher, I teach Anglo-American philosophy of religion, while writing on topics in European philosophy of religion, notably Ricœur’s French hermeneutic phenomenology. So, as a feminist philosopher my dialogue was, broadly construed, with twentieth-century philosophy of religion in the Anglo-American world; but there is no doubt that my own hermeneutic sensibilities – learnt from Ricœur – are at play on some level in any dialogue I might have between theological and/or religious texts and philosophical texts.

#### 4. French twentieth-century philosophy and dialogue

Independent of my work on feminist philosophy of religion, I have studied dialogue as a practice for women philosophers in relation to French philosophy in the twentieth-century.<sup>10</sup> Dialogue has a much more philosophical feel in Europe. Or at least I suggest this is true in the contemporary context. Anglo-American philosophy of religion is much more concerned with proofs for the existence of the traditional theistic God or ‘arguments’ in defence of ‘His’ omnibenevolence in the face of innocence suffering and evil than dialogue with historical texts. So, both my feminist concerns and my Ricœurian sensibilities have been ideal for encouraging dialogue. Yet the difficulty is the resistance to dialogue with foreign texts, blocking hermeneutic hospitality. For instance, this resistance is appa-

<sup>9</sup> Adrienne Rich, “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision”, 18-30 in *College English* 34:1 (October 1972), 18; reprinted in *Adrienne Rich’s Poetry and Prose*, pp. 166-177 (Eds B. Gelpi and A. Gelpi; New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 167.

<sup>10</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977); Vladimir Jankélévitch and Béatrice Berlowitz, *Quelque part dans l’inachevé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977). Michèle Le Doeuff, “Women in Dialogue and in Solitude”, 1-15 in *Journal of Romance Studies* 5:2 (Summer 2005); cf. Anderson, “A Joyful Dialogue”, 341-55.



rent when twenty-first century philosophers dismiss or slight feminist philosophy of religion.

This difficulty is gradually decreasing as more feminist analytic philosophers – women and men – are engaging with gender, sexuality and race, employing methods from the social and human sciences.<sup>11</sup> In this way, Anglo-American philosophy is being slowly changed by feminist philosophical interventions into a field which has been restricted by its exclusive object, traditional Christian theism, and by strictly logical argumentation about the theistic God. Needless to say, a Ricœurian model of hermeneutic dialogue with (foreign) texts, with other religions, with other sexualities, genders and so on, has not been exploited – or used – enough yet by Anglo-American philosophers of religion. Nevertheless, my own increasing concern for issues of epistemic injustice, including hermeneutic injustice, and loss of confidence within the field of analytic philosophy of religion has led me to return to Ricœur. In recent years, my aim has been to develop a feminist dialogue concerning ‘the capable subject’ (*le sujet capable*) and ‘the lived body’ (*le corps propre*) as two different levels of Ricœur’s own hermeneutic phenomenology; these are timely topics for feminist philosophy of religion. Thus, placing Ricœur in philosophical dialogue with feminist debates about embodiment and capability increases the opportunities for feminist philosophers, in turn, to engage in dialogue with hermeneutic phenomenologists.

The aim of the next section of ‘Ricœur in Dialogue with Feminist Philosophy of Religion’ is to reverse our direction of thought and have feminist philosophers of religion turn to focus explicitly on the hermeneutic phenomenology of ‘one’s own body’ and ‘the capable subject’.<sup>12</sup> Focusing on these conceptions in dialogue will enable us to explore gender in hermeneutic phenomenology.

<sup>11</sup> Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion*, 1-3, 89-95.

## 5. ‘Le corps propre’ and ‘le sujet capable’: dialogue with a text

To achieve my aim, it is necessary to initiate a feminist dialogue with a philosophical text. This dialogue will focus on three topics from the “Introduction” and “On Interpretation” in *Philosophy in France Today*.<sup>13</sup> First, in the Editor’s “Introduction”, written more than thirty years ago, Alan Montefiore reflects on the philosophical ‘subject’s loss of self-confidence in its own ability to understand itself, and indeed, in its own intrinsic significance’.<sup>14</sup> Second, in “On Interpretation”, Ricœur interprets his own self-identity as a philosopher by elucidating the path he took to ‘hermeneutic phenomenology’ of the lived body.<sup>15</sup> Third, in retrospect, and in dialogue with these two chapters, we discover that Ricœur himself anticipated his later, larger philosophical account of the capable subject.<sup>16</sup>

In turn, the feminist dialogue with a Ricœur text will give us more ground for a Ricœurian dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion. So, we are given Ricœur’s hermeneutic elucidation of the phenomenological subject’s loss of self-confidence in its own ability to understand itself; and, to this we can add, a feminist question about gender. A feminist critique would question a philosophical tradition, which had addressed the problem of personal identity without giving any attention to the role that gender or sexual difference might have played. Similarly, a feminist critique would expose a hermeneutic tradition which had failed to give attention to the role gender or sexual difference has played in

<sup>13</sup> Pamela Sue Anderson, “Lost Confidence and Human Capability: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology of the Gendered, yet Capable Subject”, 31-52 in *Text Matters* 4 (2014).

<sup>14</sup> Alan Montefiore, “Introduction”, vii-xxv in *Philosophy in France Today* (Ed. A. Montefiore; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), xi.

<sup>15</sup> Ricœur, “On Interpretation”, 175-198 in *Philosophy in France Today* (Ed. A. Montefiore; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 187.

<sup>16</sup> On the capable subject, see Paul Ricœur, “Who Is the Subject of Rights?”, 1-10 in *The Just* (Translated by David Pellauer; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000), 2-7; Paul Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition* (Translated by David Pellauer; Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2005), 89-149.

interpreting religious myths, in particular, concerning the origin and end of evil. Ricœur's own phenomenology of religion had elucidated the self-understanding in the ancient myths concerning defilement and evil with very little awareness of gender.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, a feminist philosopher today can, in dialogue with Ricœur and Montefiore focus on the 'subject's loss of confidence in her own ability to understand herself'.<sup>18</sup> A dialogue with the 1983 text reveals a moment when feminist self-understanding was just on the horizon: feminist consciousness did develop in three decades of transition, 1983-2014, in both French and Anglo-American philosophy. During these decades women in philosophy actively sought to restore a woman's confidence in her own ability to understand herself, philosophically, personally and socially. I place my emphasis on "restore", since the use of restoration recalls both Ricœur's positive moment of hermeneutics and Ricœur's phenomenological account of that which needs to be restored: the 'originally', 'capable' subject.

So, in dialogue with a hermeneutic phenomenology of human capability and embodiment, we can recognise that, for Ricœur, originally each lived body, as *le corps propre* (one's own body), was a capable body. To this phenomenological recognition is added a Ricœurian interpretation of what has happened, gone wrong, or has been concealed, in the loss of confidence in one's own capability. The additional feminist questions have to do with *l'homme capable* (the capable [hu]man): Is 'human' rather than 'man's' capability gender neutral? Or, is the gender in philosophy necessarily masculine?

We could propose that Ricœur never meant for capability to be restricted to *l'homme* in the sense of the generic 'man'. Only an implicit and pernicious gender bias would ignore *la femme capable* (the capable woman) who, similar to any capable man, can have confidence in her

own ability to understand herself philosophically. Crucial to this self-understanding, though, is the fact that the lived body of socially and materially specific subjects is gendered: gender is part of what gives a fundamental, yet materially distinctive, sense to each originally capable being. However, a decisive question of (hetero)sexual difference arises here. How does a philosopher, or theologian, address an implicit heterosexual bias in a dialogue with Christian myths? Heterosexuality is implicit in the narrative of Adam and Eve. The story of the 'original' creation of women and men – which is based to some degree, as Ricœur himself has shown, upon an ancient religious myth – will continue to re-inforce pernicious heterosexual norms. In turn, this myth will ratify evil done to women because of (her) seduction of Adam into sinful desire and ratify violence done to gay and lesbian relations in the name of a good 'god' who had created man and woman for each other.

In 1980 when I first thought about beginning a dialogue with Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology and with Ricœur himself, I attempted to understand two necessarily interrelated aspects – those of practical reason and of natural inclination – making up what I came to identify as Ricœur's Kantian dual-aspect subject of action. At the time, I argued that the dual aspects of Kantian rationality and sensibility together constituted the two moments of Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology.<sup>19</sup> Thirty years later, placing Ricœur in dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion, it is quickly apparent that contemporary (feminist) philosophers have a much greater social awareness of the damage done by philosophical and religious myths concerning the female subject; these myths have tended to inhibit and/or prohibit her ability to understand herself as living in a sexually, materially and socially specific body with a non-negotiable human capability for dialogical relations.

So feminist philosophers in dialogue with Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology today can recognize that the philosophical subject contin-

<sup>17</sup> Ricœur does discuss Eve, see *The Symbolism of Evil*, 28-29, 253-260. Cf. Pamela Sue Anderson, "Defilement and death in Ricœur's configurations of two female figures: or, action at the boundaries of the self's clean and proper body". Invited lecture delivered, *Ricœur Retrospect III: Culture*, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 9 January 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Montefiore, "Introduction", xi.

<sup>19</sup> This argument developed in my 1980s research for my doctorate (DPhil) at the University of Oxford – part of which was later published as Pamela Sue Anderson, *Ricœur and Kant: A Philosophy of the Will* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983), 41-59.

ues to struggle with a whole (new) range and wider dimensions of dis-unity in human identity. Ricœur himself moved far beyond his early recognition of the Kantian tensions between freedom and nature; such tensions are not the most difficult challenge, if they ever were, to a philosopher's self-unity. Equally from Ricœurian dialogues with feminist philosophy we can discover that the on going dis-unity of the self involves cultural, as well as cognitive, conative and affective factors. It is not just that the self's unity within the history of twentieth-century philosophy has been broken up, but that something highly significant has been lost from a 'first naiveté' concerning the creation of women and men.

But I think that we can agree, in a Ricœurian spirit: this loss of self-unity and of a first naiveté are not things to be mourned. Instead we can and must retrieve what has been lost from our social and interpersonal awareness of human capability and the lived body in the development of new ethical understandings of gender, sexual orientation and other social and material matters. Contemporary feminist philosophers at least have come to recognize that women and men have materially and socially specific differences due to gender's intersection with a whole range of social and material mechanisms of oppression. But instead of mourning the supposed 'death' of a transparent and unified subject, dialogue with philosophical and religious texts should enable Ricœurians and feminist philosophers alike to see the unique singularity in each of our visions of the world, without obscuring the concrete differences of our lived (bodily) experiences.

## 6. Gendering and re-visioning gender in dialogue with Ricœur

In the twenty-first century, gendering has become increasingly evident as a philosophical issue.<sup>20</sup> My attempt in the present essay is to formulate a dialogical relation between, on the one

hand, imagining Ricœur's dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion and, on the other hand, generating a feminist dialogue with Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology; these dialogues reflect how far gender awareness has come in the past three decades of philosophy in Europe and in the Anglo-American world. In this section, I would like to address a dual process: first gendering, which happens (unwittingly) in philosophy, and, second, re-visioning gender in philosophy of religion which, as I have proposed, is a deliberate process for feminist philosophers and hermeneutic phenomenologists.

Here 'gendering' means the generally hidden process of determining the qualitative - as distinct from the numerical - identities of bodies, especially bodies in relation to culturally recognized sex and/or gender norms. So far in this essay, I have assumed that gender already exists in philosophical and religious texts. This means that we need both phenomenological tools to uncover the gendering, which has gone on in western philosophy in reading and writing great philosophical works. But we also need a critical and a restorative hermeneutics in philosophy of religion, in order to tackle both hermeneutic injustices in centuries of gendering philosophy and hermeneutic justice in re-visioning gender for future centuries. Thus, as a hermeneutic issue, gender exists as a presupposition to how we think, act and live. Yet philosophers generally have resisted seeing gender's role in their thinking.

At this stage, I suggest that we recall Ricœur's idea of hermeneutic hospitality. Philosophers could welcome feminist insights into how we have in fact betrayed gender by refusing to recognize both the dominance of one gender (type) in our thinking and the damage to the other gender(s) which philosophy excludes and devalues. A socially, materially and sexually specific male gender has been privileged at a great loss to philosophy itself; the epistemic conditions, which have been necessary grounds for developing philosophical knowledge, have encouraged epistemic injustice; injustice rather than justice has flourished when it comes to gender in philosophy. But remember that gendering has been a hidden process in western philosophy; so, gendering needs to be elucidated before philoso-

<sup>20</sup> I stipulate what is meant by 'gendering': it is the generally hidden process of determining the qualitative as distinct from the numerical identities of women and men.

phers can grasp the problem with the construction of gender in philosophy.

Thus, a critical focus in my own feminist hermeneutics of philosophical and literary texts, in *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion*, attempts “to look back with open eyes” and “from a critical distance” at the gendering of human identities by the moral and religious dimensions of texts.<sup>21</sup> This gendering of identities has very definitely, even if unwittingly, shaped the philosopher’s self-understanding, especially her or his understanding of human emotion, reason and cognition.

In the previous section of this essay, we engaged with points from Ricœur’s “On Interpretation”. In this section, I would like to stress the significance of Ricœur’s distinctively French ‘reflexivity’.<sup>22</sup> For Ricœur, reflexive means being subject-oriented in the sense that the philosophical subject literally turns back upon him or her self. Now, a contemporary feminist appropriation of this philosophical reflexivity might add gender awareness to the subject’s reflexive act. The philosophical subject would, then, recognise her ability to reflect socially and materially upon herself, her actions and how they have been marked by gender. This self-reflexivity does not necessarily ensure self-understanding in philosophy; but at the very least it could initiate a hermeneutic process of uncovering what has been hidden about our identities as human subjects.

Most relevant for the hermeneutic phenomenologist’s dialogue with feminist philosophy (of religion) is that the subject’s self-understanding could emerge in relation to its own (internal) alterity. And it is worth noting that, unlike the French phenomenologist Emmanuel Levinas and the French psycholinguist Irigaray, Ricœur never takes the self’s alterity to include sexually specific female subjects.<sup>23</sup> This makes Ricœur sig-

nificantly different from either Levinas or Irigaray when it comes to gendering philosophy; he is simply not interested in elucidating sexual difference. Yet this is not the only way a feminist philosopher understands gendering. Rather than two sexually specific subjects, one male and the other female, philosophical subjects can be differentiated by gender according to gender’s intersection with social and material mechanisms; for instance, when sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, religion intersect with gender, we can no longer identify two distinct gender types.

In other words, gendering as a social process, can be interpreted with the help of hermeneutic phenomenology. So, then, Ricœur in dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion should be able to offer tools for elucidating and interpreting gender and alterity, as they function in philosophy of religion today. Thus, the hermeneutic process of gendering can be critically addressed with the negative (critical) and positive (restorative) moments of Ricœurian hermeneutics.

The closest Ricœur himself comes to giving an account of a female figure in a philosophical text is an interesting exception, Antigone, in *Oneself as Another*.<sup>24</sup> Previously, I have placed Ricœur in dialogue with Antigone, relating his reading intertextually to other configurations of this same female figure from ancient myth and modern philosophy.<sup>25</sup> These other configurations move Antigone from Sophocles’s text to the texts of G. W. F. Hegel, George Steiner, Martha Nussbaum, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler and more recently, Julia Kristeva. But what is remarkable, yet contentious about Ricœur’s configuration of Antigone for my essay is that she does not represent sexual difference: Antigone’s action is not configured as that of either a wo-

<sup>21</sup> Anderson, *Re-visioning Gender in Philosophy of Religion*, ix, 1, 49, 89-94.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Ricœur, “On Interpretation”, 187-188.

<sup>23</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (translated by Alphonso Lingis; Duquesne UP, 1992); Luce Irigaray, “The Fecundity of the Caress: A Reading of Levinas. *Totality and Infinity*,” “Phenomenology of Eros”, 185-217 in *An Ethics of*

*Sexual Difference* (translated by Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill; Cornell UP, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* (Translated by Kathleen Blamey; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 241-249, 256.

<sup>25</sup> For my own early inter-textual reading of Antigone, see Pamela Sue Anderson, “Re-reading Myth in Philosophy: Hegel, Ricœur and Irigaray Reading Antigone”, 51-68 in *Paul Ricœur and Narrative: Context and Contestation* (Ed. M. Joy; Calgary: U of Calgary P, 1997).

man or a man. Instead Antigone is a tragic figure for Ricœur.

In Ricœur's configuration, Antigone is above all a tragic figure because her 'one-sidedness' in the face of "the complexity of life"; this inevitably means death.<sup>26</sup> The point of seeing Ricœur's Antigone text in dialogical relation to other configurations is that Ricœur's gendering does not explicitly portray any normative figure of female alterity in *Oneself as Another*. A feminist reading of Ricœur's Antigone would conclude that "she" configures neither gender nor sexual difference. Antigone's singularity suffices to mark her out as at most for Ricœur, an exception to any gender. Antigone is not a figure of female alterity because she rejects her roles as fiancée, wife, home-maker, mother, etc. Ultimately, she is the figure no living human being can be, or would want to be, since giving up life. Antigone's tragedy is to be walled up alone in a living death.

What is also noteworthy about Ricœur's Antigone is its relation to G. W. F. Hegel's reading of Antigone as "the eternal irony of the community".<sup>27</sup> This eternal irony is apparent in the ways in which Antigone is sharply distinguished by her action from the role of her sister, Ismene, and from her own potential role as a wife and mother. Antigone resists and persists as the eternal irony of the community; she is necessary, yet she must die. Again, Irigaray, in sharp contrast to Ricœur, disruptively mimes Antigone as a sexually ambiguous figure who can be read to play either a masculine or a feminine role. But in playing these gender roles Irigaray's Antigone can imitate sexual difference, of woman (not man), of mother (not father), sister (not brother), former lover (not beloved). In Irigaray's disruptive miming of a female figure in a text, she deliberately mimes roles for Antigone, as if she could be multiply gendered, in order to explore the dimensions of sexual difference between two sexually specific subjects. It, then, seems that Ricœur has not kept up with feminist texts, in-

sofar as he configured the philosophical subject, including Antigone, as genderless and so, not a sexually specific subject. But, of course, a critical hermeneutic of suspicion might discover some hidden aspects to Ricœur's unwitting gendering in philosophy.

## 7. Ricœur in dialogue with texts of and by women

To keep our dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion going, let us consider two texts from the French literary theorist and psycholinguist, Julia Kristeva. Kristeva can help us to a better understanding of how the subject is gendered. We might even imagine Ricœur re-visioning gender and female figures in the texts of philosophy and of religions, in the company of female authors like Kristeva. First, in Kristeva's dialogue with Catherine Clément, she claims that it is

That sense of strangeness that confers on certain women the appearance of a disabused and benevolent maturity, a serene detachment that, it seems to me, is the true sense of [what] Hegel so enigmatically calls "the eternal irony of the community". In fact, women do not remain on the near side of phallic power, but they accede to it only to better learn their way around its omnipotence. That *detachment*... stems from our immersion in Being and sensible timelessness.<sup>28</sup>

Is Kristeva proposing that this 'immersion in Being' gives a woman – like Antigone, if mirroring the maternal position - (social) confidence in her own capability? My tentative answer is that Kristeva makes gender crucial in this (non-Ricœurian) Hegelian reading of confidence and capability; for a woman, both of these characteristics – confidence and capability – derive from her eternal, maternal gender role; this is implied by a woman's immersion in Being and sensible timelessness.

Second, in *Feminist Readings of Antigone*, Kristeva develops several new and highly nu-

<sup>26</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 249.

<sup>27</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Translated by A. V. Miller; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977), 288. For more on Hegel's reading of Antigone and Ricœur's relation to it, see Anderson, "Rereading Myth in Philosophy", 55-59.

<sup>28</sup> Catherine Clément and Julia Kristeva, *The Feminine and the Sacred* (Translated by Jane Marie Todd; New York: Columbia UP, 2001), 60.

anced points concerning Antigone. These configurations of Antigone are relevant for re-visioning gender. In her eighth interpretative point (out of nine) concerning Antigone, Kristeva suggests

Far from being a relic of the past, the universality of Antigone resonates in the psychic life of women today. [...] the emancipation of the “second sex,” and the intermingling of diverse religious and cultural traditions (as Judith Butler discusses in *Antigone’s Claim*)<sup>29</sup> – the anthropologically universal dimension of *feminine solitude* confronted with the drive of de-binding (*déliation*) still makes itself evident today in clinical observation, as well as in social behaviour. Solitude and de-binding (*déliation*), neither necessarily reject motherhood, but rather demand and accompany it. [...] This cannot make us forget, however, the emerging strength of those women who have the opportunity and the capacity to generate a new understanding, skill, or even a way of life or survival out of it: a remarkable consequence of the emancipation of women that is still in process.<sup>30</sup>

In the above Antigone opens up the possibility of playing a maternal role as an equal, but different gender from one playing a paternal role. Kristeva stresses the emerging strength of women who have the opportunity and capacity to generate new understandings of themselves.

For my part, in “The Lived Body, Gender and Confidence”, I interpreted the story of Eve as the first woman who suffers a loss of confidence in her own intrinsic significance. Eve is not primarily portrayed as a maternal figure in texts of ancient culture and in ongoing religious traditions. Instead we read the texts of western culture as they capture the philosophical imaginary in portraits of this woman (Eve) in the process of becoming aware of her body physically and cognitively. At the very same moment in the *Genesis* narrative, when this female figure glimpses her own capability she becomes simultaneously

conscious of losing confidence in her own body and in her cognitive ability.<sup>31</sup>

My interpretation of the texts configuring Eve’s desire, especially of the ancient myth in *Genesis*, follows the narrative concerning this “first” woman phenomenologically. So, unlike thinking historically about a particular woman, narrating Eve’s loss of confidence is meant to capture the lived experience of women generally, and their relations to men. In reading the *Genesis* story, we find that Eve reflects the gendering of woman in both western philosophy and theology. In following the narrative concerning Eve’s desire for knowledge of good and evil, we are told that desire leads Eve not only to disobey a divine command, but to seduce the “first” man (Adam). In this narration, a clear, gender difference appears with Eve and Adam. In other words, this interpretation supports differentiation of human subjects by (two) gender(s). Thus, gendering the lived body becomes a process moving from pre-personal capability to personal awareness of moral values.

In addition, insofar as gendering appears in dialogue with this text about Eve, when it is read phenomenologically, portraying the man as seduced by the woman, then the action of the female protagonist is configured to set in motion the fall of the lived body from an original condition of innocent capability to one of lost confidence in the power to act and to know. This gendering assigns a different value to man as opposed to woman. And yet, both of these gendered subjects remain capable: assigning good or

<sup>29</sup> Judith Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Julia Kristeva, “Antigone: Limit and Horizon”, 215-230 in *Feminist Readings of Antigone* (Ed. F. Söderbäck; Albany: State University of New York P, 2010), 226.

<sup>31</sup> This conception of capability derives from a range of Ricœur’s later writings. More work could still be done on exactly how to define capability. Is it pre-personal? Capability might be both metaphysical and ethical in Ricœur’s philosophy, especially since informed by Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and Spinoza’s *Ethics*. Yet Ricœur himself appeals to “the phenomenological point of view” to describe the multiple expressions of the capacities of “the I can”; see Paul Ricœur, “Autonomy and Vulnerability”, 72-90 in *Reflections on the Just* (Translated David Pellauer; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007), 75. Hermeneutic phenomenology enables Ricœur to describe ‘selfhood’ and the ‘I’ through “the mode of different abilities”; this includes, “I can speak, can narrate, can act”, Ricœur, “Autonomy and Vulnerability”, 76; cf. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 10–23, 298–317.

evil to one and another of the heterosexually gendered pairs does not lessen human capability as an original power of action.

Eve becomes aware of, as I have retrospectively interpreted her in the phenomenological terms of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “the embodied modalities of her existence” as she is thrown open into a “mortal situation of listening”.<sup>32</sup> Becoming attuned to her situation, the woman’s self-discovery involves both surprise and terror. In moving from pre-personal to personal awareness, Eve remains incarnate; that is, she retains her bodily awareness, motility and entanglement in intersubjective, fleshy existence. At the moment when the gendered subject emerges out of pre-personal existence, she is aware of her own lived through body.<sup>33</sup>

## 8. Problems of French phenomenology for feminist philosophers

Contemporary feminist critiques of the phenomenological subject and its body have challenged the lived body as the medium of gender-neutral perception. For example, Judith Butler’s critique of Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* challenges the implicit heterosexuality and traditional male-gender norms of the lived body.<sup>34</sup> Butler contends that the lived body

tends to be confused with a “naturalized” body; and the latter is always already an “interpreted” body which, as Butler also contends, means a gendered body.

For another example, Michèle Le Doeuff accuses the *Phenomenology of Perception* of objectifying the female body:

Merleau-Ponty says that for a normal subject, the body of another person is not perceived as an object. The perception that might have been objective is in fact inhabited by another, more secret, perception, which, he says, accentuates the erogenous zones of the visible body of the other according to a sexual schema peculiar to the perceiving subject so that this body will call forth “the gestures of the masculine body”. He was speaking of the visible body in general, perceived by a normal subject; however, it becomes clear that this visible body is a woman’s body, seen and re-drawn by the gaze of a man, who before long will move unhesitatingly from gaze to gesture? Not only is the subject necessarily male, the visible body necessarily that of a woman, but also the gaze (of a man directed at a woman) can remake what it sees, to accentuate what he finds erogenous. A form of visual violence is normalized here in all its generality. On principle and as a general procedure, the (masculine) gaze re-creates the visible body of a (feminine) other precisely as it wishes.<sup>35</sup>

In *Giving an Account of Oneself* Butler discusses Michel Foucault’s critique of “the trans-historical subject” in phenomenology.<sup>36</sup> Can there be such a subject? Clearly for existential phenomenologists like Beauvoir the subject is always embodied and situated in a world, transcending history. And yet, at the time when Merleau-Ponty and Ricœur developed their respective phenomenological accounts of *le corps propre* (one’s own body) in Paris, even though they had read Beauvoir’s phenomenology in *The Second Sex*, their descriptions seem to assume a male-neutral body as, quite possibly, a trans-

<sup>32</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (Translated by C. Smith; London: Routledge, 2002), x–xvi, 158–170. I employ phenomenological terms to describe the however implicit, dominant configuration of Eve as her story unfolds from an originally given account of human capability to the apparent loss of what was originally hers; see Pamela Sue Anderson, “The Lived Body, Gender and Confidence”, 163–180 in *New Topics in Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Contestation and Transcendence Incarnate* (Ed. P. S. Anderson; Dordrecht-London-New York: Springer, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Anderson, “The Lived Body, Gender and Confidence”, 163–4, 178–9.

<sup>34</sup> Judith Butler, “Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description”, 85–100 in *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy* (Eds J. Allen and I. M. Young; Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989).

<sup>35</sup> Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Sex of Knowing* (Translated by Kathryn Hamer and Lorraine Code; London: Routledge, 2003), 79; cf. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 180–181.

<sup>36</sup> Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham UP, 2005), 115–117.

historical, dis-embodied subject.<sup>37</sup> In particular, they attempted no explicitly gendered description of Eve and her gradual awakening to the pre-personal capability to which her body will in some sense cleave, but from which she will in another sense be separated by the critical process of gendering the male as ‘subject’ and the female as ‘abject’.<sup>38</sup> The dual sense of the body both cleaving to and separating from pre-personal form creates an ambiguous condition for the lived body.

We could also read the dual sense in the ambiguous condition, which appears in Ricœur’s hermeneutic phenomenology: the condition includes the pre-given human capability and the misunderstandings of self (and others). In his last text, Ricœur admits that the course of recognition for the capable subject encounters existential difficulties of identity, alterity, differences, violence, inabilities undergone, failures of memory and endless conflict on the level of lived through experiences.<sup>39</sup> There is an opening in this text to take up the loss of confidence in the ability to understand oneself and be understood in terms of the gendered body.

Let us now return to the story of Eve who is configured as a fleshy figure of abjection. Appropriating Merleau-Ponty’s use of ‘flesh’, we can describe the pre-personal form of Eve’s incarnate capability constituting a fleshy inter-subjective field of affection. Flesh connects bodies and world(s) intersubjectively. Moreover, at the same time as constituting an intersubjective field, this living body can be surprised by the upsurges of transcendence which “fly up like sparks from a fire” setting off new, more perso-

nal discoveries in relation to the “lived through” world.<sup>40</sup> Flesh constitutes a generality from which particularity emerges. For instance, in the mythical portrait of Eve, she gradually emerges as the lived body and person (subject): but this is she who will be abjected. Describing her in terms of flesh and fleshy is, to a certain degree at least, consistent with the biblical myth of the first woman’s body. Yet the negative imagery of abjecting flesh has been rejected by those philosophers and feminists who think we have—and should have—left mythical stories and images behind once we have been educated by history, biology, genetics, etc. Nevertheless descriptions of flesh, especially including the female body’s association with she who is abjected from her own subject position, remain part of the ethical, social and spiritual imaginary of western cultures.

Arguably the term, fleshiness, captures how (hermeneutic) phenomenologists still imagine and connect sexed bodies. In the feminist terms of Merleau-Ponty’s contemporary and friend, Beauvoir, the female body becomes “the second sex” or even, “the sex”. And this is relevant to our focus on the manner in which confidence (*la confiance*) and lost confidence, or mistrust (*méfiance*), of individually gendered bodies becomes a critical issue for contemporary feminist and non-feminist philosophers. For the sake of argument, I have identified confidence as a social phenomenon; and it is something that can be lost. It can also be elucidated, in phenomenological terms, at the point (in time) when the lived body intersects with the personal realm of that body-subject’s history and culture. In the first half of twentieth-century France, Merleau-Ponty and Beauvoir each offered highly significant descriptions of the ambiguous condition of the lived body. They uncover the manner in which the pre-personal realm of (capable) flesh surges forth in sensual, spiritual and ethical life creating the possibility of inter-subjective communication. They also anticipate a hermeneutic phenomenology by making manifest fleshiness as an original medium of communication enabling body-subjects to remain entangled in an intersubjective world. Thus, body-subjects be-

<sup>37</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany; London: Random House, 2009). For useful references to the influence Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty had on each other’s phenomenological writings, see Katherine J. Morris, *Starting with Merleau-Ponty* (London: Continuum, 2012), 129-134.

<sup>38</sup> Pamela Sue Anderson, “‘Abjection... the Most Propitious Place for Communication’: Celebrating the Death of the Unitary Subject”, 189-230 in *Bodies, Lives, Voices: Gender in Theology* (eds K. O’Grady, A. Gilroy and J. Gray; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 249-254.

<sup>40</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xv.



come aware of themselves as vulnerable selves in their relations within the world.

Feminism has a crucial role to play in a hermeneutic phenomenology of lost confidence and, in the case of philosophy of religion, in the loss of a self's ability to understand herself.<sup>41</sup> What makes loss a useful focus? First, a feminist critique of lost confidence goes back to the myths concerning Eve and the origin of "female weakness": there the felt loss in a woman's own capability challenges an uncritical and non-reflexive stance on the self. Second, this critical focus elucidates a capacity for understanding gender through hermeneutic dialogue with religious texts and with philosophical interlocutors in a time of cultural transition.

Claims to gender-neutrality in phenomenology conceal highly significant issues of loss of confidence, loss of epistemic justice and loss of reflexive self-understanding. Moreover, this gender-blindness fails to enable dialogue with texts that have been sources of pernicious gender, homophobic and other sexual violence. Loss of self-confidence in who we are as sexually, materially and socially specific, embodied subjects not only damages our knowledge and cultural - especially religious - practices, but this damage obscures that which was in phenomenological terms originally given: our human capability.

There are problems with hermeneutic phenomenology. Yet phenomenological terms have enabled us to explore given conditions of our lived bodies and human capability; and following Ricœur, we can add hermeneutic sensibilities - a hermeneutic hospitality - to our philosophical dialogues. Hermeneutics involves interpretation of texts, of written but also spoken words. And, in this context, the hermeneuticist interprets the opaque, in order to make more transparent the capability and epistemic locatedness of each subject. In the end, Ricœurian hermeneutics can help women and men to make sense of themselves, to understand their own cognitive and conative abilities, and to achieve greater self-awareness through dialogue across difference.

But it is equally true that we have to help Ricœur by raising awareness of gender, by way of a hermeneutics of suspicion and a hermeneutics of faith.

## 9. Conclusion

A Ricœurian dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion and feminist dialogue with Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology simultaneously support women and men in philosophy, who are critically open to both the gendering and the re-visioning of gender in philosophical texts. Philosophy of religion and feminism become part of a changing European culture: together they help us to articulate the material, social and cognitive dimensions of a subject's conditioning. In particular, imagining Ricœur in dialogue with feminist philosophers of religion enables increased understanding of those dimensions of a subject's life that phenomenologists would describe as non-natural.

In dialogue with texts in French phenomenology and in feminist philosophy of religion, I have tried to demonstrate that significant changes in the culture and content of philosophy have taken place since the moment when, in 1980s Oxford, Montefiore edited a collection of essays, including Ricœur's "On Interpretation". Over these past three decades, I began to dedicate myself to uncovering a process of gendering, and this was followed by re-visioning gender in modern European philosophy of religion. In this paper I have aimed to bring Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology in dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion; but this requires a hermeneutic process of dialogue with texts in philosophical theology. These texts offer evidence of confidence being lost in the ability to achieve self-understanding in contemporary philosophy of religion, as well as evidence of new possibilities in the creating of new dialogue partners and in an ever-increasing ability to understand one another. These are the possibilities for renewed self-confidence generated by putting Ricœur in dialogue with feminist philosophy of religion.

<sup>41</sup> For further background, see Anderson, "Lost Confidence and Human Capability: A Hermeneutic Phenomenology of the Gendered, yet Capable Subject" 31-52.

# En trinitariskt förankrad kyrkoteologi

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*Jan Eckerdal och Patrik Hagman replikerar här på Mats Aldéns och Johanna Gustafsson Lundbergs artikel "Skapelsen som evangeliets förståelsehorisont: en ecklesiologisk erinran", vilken publicerades i STK vol 90:3 (2014).*

Varje kyrkotradition behöver för att hålla sig vital en pågående konversation om hur vi skall tänka om kyrkan. Därför vill vi gärna komma med några synpunkter i frågan. Detta med anledning av artikeln "Skapelsen som evangeliets förståelsehorisont: en ecklesiologisk erinran" (STK no 3/2014). Vi välkomnar den diskussion som artikeln aktualiserar. I artikeln riktar teologerna Mats Aldén och Johanna Gustafsson Lundberg kritiska synpunkter mot vad de ser som en samtida tendens att betona kyrkans sociala förkroppsligande i en gemenskap av människor. Som exponenter för denna tendens lyfter man fram Ola Sigurdson och oss två. Den förenande faktorn är förutom fokus på kyrkans sociala kropp att vi hämtat inspiration från anglikansk, romerskkatolsk och anabaptistisk teologi för att få ett kritiskt perspektiv på den lutherska traditionen.

I artikelns slutformuleringar märks att det inte minst är just dessa resurser från andra traditioner som artikelförfattarna vill problematisera och att de därtill ser det som en mycket tillspetsad situation där stora värden kan gå förlorade:

Blicken för vad som är förenligt med det teologiska och ecklesiologiska fundament som Svenska kyrkan vilar på är inte alltid helt klar och vi menar att den reformerade Svenska kyrkans ande, väsen och atmosfär, som så många finner dyrbar, faktiskt står på spel.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mats Aldén och Johanna Gustafsson Lundberg, "Skapelsen som evangeliets förståelsehorisont. En ecklesiologisk erinran." *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalsskrift* 90, nr. 3 (2014), 131.

En utgångspunkt för våra arbeten är att vi försöker hitta fram till sådana frågor som är kyrkoteologiskt konstruktiva och viktiga att ställa och som därmed kan hjälpa oss att komma bort från sådana frågor som låser debatten i dikotomier och återvändsgränder. Frågor som vi alltså inte vill söka svar på är om kyrkan skall vara konservativ eller liberal, öppen eller tydlig, gemenskapsinriktad eller tjänsteinriktad, och så vidare. Det är vår övertygelse att på de frågorna finns det bara dåliga svar. Det måste vara möjligt att tänka kyrka bortom dessa dikotomier.

I de kritiska synpunkter som Aldén och Gustafsson Lundberg riktar mot sådan ecklesiologi som de förknippar med oss är ordet *risk* återkommande. Artikeln uttrycker upprepat att ecklesiologi som syftar till att uppvärdera betydelsen av kyrkan som social gemenskap *riskerar* att få vissa slagsidor och oönskade konsekvenser. Det första vi vill svara på de farhågorna är, ja visst. Så är det. I stort sett bejakar vi de risker som artikeln lyfter fram såsom reella och ser dem som något som varje kyrkotradition behöver vara vaksam inför. Kristen tro som tar konkret gestalt i den ena eller andra formen är kort sagt riskfylld. Att eliminera alla risker som är förbundet med att vara kyrka i världen kan man inte göra med mindre än att man också vingklipper möjligheten att som kyrka göra reell skillnad.

I artikelns konklusion sammanfattar Aldén och Gustafsson Lundberg vad det är som skulle riskeras om sådan ecklesiologi som vi företräder tillåts inkorporeras i den folkkyrkliga traditionen: "[D]en kyrkosyn som uppfattar kyrkan som en formerande social gemenskap ... löper risken

att bli exklusiv och relativt sluten”.<sup>2</sup> Detta som en konsekvens av att skapelsetanken kan hamna i skuggan av en tanke om kyrkans annorlundaskap. Och visst finns det en risk för en sådan slutenhet. Frestelsen att formera en gemenskap på ett exkluderande sätt och definiera den i motsats till andra är närvarande i varje mänsklig gemenskap. Men när folkkyrkoteologen Einar Billing reflekterar över den frestelsen uttrycker han sig lite annorlunda:

Det är förunderligt hur nära för oss skröpliga människor frestelsen ligger att blott vi själva är innanför vilja sluta dörrar som borde hållas öppna, och att känna en viss njutning av att tillhöra en exklusiv krets.<sup>3</sup>

Billings utsaga är förtroendeingivande i det att han inte bara förbinder tendensen med den ena eller andra ecklesiologiska tradition som han vill ta avstånd ifrån (även om inte heller Billing var sen att påpeka när han såg tendensen i exempelvis frikyrkliga kontexter). Istället uttrycker Billing det som en svaghet som är förbunden med ”oss skröpliga människor” – en kategori som vi nog alla gör klokt i att se oss som inkluderade i, oavsett traditionstillhörighet. Genom den formuleringen öppnar Billing för att exkluderande tendenser till slutenhet också kan leta sig in i hans egen folkkyrkotradition.

I linje med den hållningen menar vi att det finns skäl att hysa oro varje gång en viss kyrkotradition (i den aktuella artikelns fall alltså luthersk folkkyrkotradition i Wingrensk tappning) tenderar att peka ut ett sådant ständigt närvarande riskområde såsom något som framför allt *andra* kyrkotraditioner är behäftade med – och att lösningen för den egna traditionen är att hålla dessa andra på behörigt avstånd. Resultatet kan då bli en viss blindhet för hur slutenhet och exkluderande också kan frodas exempelvis i luthersk folkkyrkotradition.

Vårt intresse för kyrkans sociala kropp är inte bara ett försök att normativt uppvärdera den teologiska betydelsen av sådana aspekter. Det finns också ett deskriptivt anspråk på att belysa hur en kyrkotradition alltid förkroppsligas på ett eller

annat sätt, vare sig det finns en teologi för det eller inte. I våra arbeten har vi inte minst strävat efter att lyfta fram hur den folkkyrkliga traditionen socialt förkroppsligats, när betydelsen av kyrkan som en aktiv gemenskap av människor tonats ner. Ett exempel på vad som då kan bli synligt är hur kyrkans anställda medarbetare på ett problematiskt sätt kan få rollen av att utgöra kyrkans *vi*.

Som vi ser det finns det två avgörande ”risiker” som en kyrklig praktik har att navigera mellan. Å ena sidan att gemenskapen blir inåtvänd och exklusiv, å andra sidan att gemenskapen helt försvinner och kyrkan förvandlas till en tjänsteproducent. Men gemenskapsfrågan som sådan kan inte reduceras till en av många preferenser som kyrkans medlemmar kan tänkas ha. Kyrkan har sitt existensberättigande i att vara en gemenskap av människor som är olika varandra. Det är en del av kyrkans natur: den är ett nytt folk bestående av människor ur alla jordens folk. Det är bara mot denna bakgrund som kyrkans tal om kärlek är meningsfullt. Kyrkan är inte för kärlek i allmänhet, vad nu det skulle kunna vara, utan för en kärlek som bland annat får sina konturer av tron på att det är möjligt att bygga gemenskap mellan människor som är genuint olika varandra. Och att det är just denna kärleksfulla gemenskap av människor som är olika varandra som pekar mot Guds rike.

Artikelförfattarna pekar på fyra punkter i sin kritik. På samtliga fyra lyfter de fram Gustaf Wingrens teologi som ett bättre alternativ. Det handlar om fyra grundläggande drag i en kyrkosyn; Ordets betydelse och transformativa potential i vardagen, kyrkan som samlad och utspridd, moralens allmänmänsklighet och mångfaldens plats i kyrkan. På tre av dessa instämmer vi och ställer oss frågande till om det verkligen är korrekt att vi står Wingren emot. Vi ser inte att våra arbeten underminerar eller avviker från dessa punkter. Även vi vill betona att evangeliet befriar i vardagen och att det blir fel om det andliga livet enbart hänförs till en kyrklig kontext. Vårt eget försök att bidra till det slag av dialektiskt tänkande som artikelförfattarna vill slå vakt om, är genom att belysa kyrkans specifika situation i just vår tids samhälle och föra den kristna traditionen i dialog med sekulära tankeströmningar. Det vi vill undvika är som

<sup>2</sup> Aldén och Gustafsson Lundberg 2014, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Einar Billing, *Kyrka och stat: i vårt land i detta nu* (Stockholm 1942), 26.

sagt ett sätt att tänka där dialektiken stelnar till dikotomier (gemenskap *kontra* öppenhet et cetera).

Det andra grundläggande draget som anförs är en tanke hos Wingren som vi ser stor potential i, nämligen påminnelsen om att kyrkan existerar både som samlad och utspridd. Även här vill vi instämma. Wingren utvecklade delvis sin kyrkosyn i form av ett tvåfrontskrig, där pietismen utgjorde den ena fienden och högkyrkligheten den andra.<sup>4</sup> När Wingren lyfter fram skapelseperspektivet är det inte i första hand mot en kristolcentrisk teologi som udden är riktad. Det är mot en exklusivistisk kyrkosyn som inte förmår integrera ”det vanliga livet” i det kyrkliga.<sup>5</sup> Därför betonar Wingren starkt kyrkan som utspridd. Men det betyder inte att kyrkan som samlad är frånvarande i hans tänkande.

Tvärtom verkar Wingren förutsätta att kyrkan samlas, medan det är ifrågasatt om den ”sprids ut”. Frågan är om det samma gäller i vår tid, eller om vi måste ägna vår möda till att se att vi får med båda polerna i denna dynamik. För Wingren finns det ett tydligt, om än inte betonat, perspektiv på den konkreta gudstjänstgemenskapen som den plats där ordet – inte enbart det talade ordet utan även det sakramentala – når människorna. Han skriver till exempel:

Och nattvarden sätter på motsvarande sätt människan in i en gemenskap av nattvardsfirare. Kristus blir förvandlad i oss, och vi bli, som Luther säger, ’förvandlade till varandra’, inneslutna i varandra genom kärleken.<sup>6</sup>

Det här är orsaken till att vi vill betona kyrkans praktiker. Att tala om kyrkans praktiker och handlingar är inte ett nytt sätt att dra en tydlig gräns för var kyrkan börjar och slutar, mellan

4 Det viktigare målet är antagligen högkyrkligheten – Wingren insinuerar ofta att högkyrkligheten faktiskt har pietistiska drag. Se Ola Sigurdson, *Karl Barth som den andre: En studie i den svenska teologins Barth-reception* (Eslöv 1996), 95-97, samt Bengt Kristensson Ugglå, *Gustaf Wingren: Människan och teologin* (Stockholm 2010), 199.

5 Kristensson Ugglå 2010, 232-234; Sigurdson 1996, 96.

6 Gustaf Wingren, *Predikan: En Principiell Studie*, 2 uppl. (Lund 1960), 228-229.

dem som hör till den kristna församlingssamfundskapet och dem som inte gör det. Precis som Wingren anser vi att frågan om vem som är kristen eller inte faktiskt är en fråga som kyrkan inte skall besvara. Och som Wingren påpekar betyder detta också att den inte skall svara ”alla” eller ”alla medlemmar” eller något liknande.<sup>7</sup>

Kyrkan varken kan eller behöver säga: ”den här gruppen människor är sant kristna”. Det kyrkan behöver kunna är att beskriva och ge exempel på hur kristet liv kan se ut. Kyrkan kan ha en tydlighet om hur kristet liv kan se ut, utan att det betyder att vi måste ha en exklusiv gemenskap. Genom att flytta fokus från ”vem är kristen” till ”vilken handling ger uttryck för det kristna evangeliet” kan vi se att kopplingen mellan dessa två inte alls är stabil eller entydig. Både människor som bekänner sig till Jesus och människor som inte gör det kan utföra handlingar som i den meningen gestaltar evangelium. Det handlar alltså inte om något som är *unik* men däremot om något som är *specifikt*. Ibland utför man mera sådana handlingar, ibland mindre. Men handlingarna i sig är likväl något som kyrkan kan peka på när den förkunnar vad tron på Gud handlar om. Exakt hur dessa handlingar ser ut är starkt kontextuellt och bör så vara. Evangeliet måste i varje tid gestaltas på nytt. Några allmängiltiga detaljerade föreskrifter är vare sig möjliga eller önskvärda. Istället krävs en praktisk kunskap som lärt sig urskilja hur en viss handling i ett visst sammanhang kan uppvisa en familjelikheter med sådana kristna praktiker som exempelvis dop och nattvard.

Det tredje draget handlar om moralens allmänmänsklighet. Här är det nog korrekt att vi verkligen har olika åsikt. Frågan är komplicerad och vi kan inte ingående diskutera den här. I korthet kan man dock säga att vi bejakar att kyrkans partikulära perspektiv har specifika moraliska implikationer. Betyder det att kyrkan har specifik moralisk kunskap? Ja, men det gäller alla mänskliga gemenskaper – Patrik använder i sin bok sin gamla karateklubb och en amatörteaterförening som exempel. Alla mänskliga gemenskaper utvecklar sina egna moraliska praktiker. Dessa går givetvis att beskriva. Det handlar alltså inte om kunskap i den snäva mening som

7 Wingren 1960, 263.

Wingren avser. Det specifika kristna narrativet har självklart moraliska implikationer, något som inte heller Wingren förnekar. Återigen specifikt snarare än unikt. Det som kännetecknar (eller borde känneteckna) kyrkan är att dess moralpraktiker inte bara finns till för dess egen skull:

Kyrkans människor äro oavbrutet på väg mot världens människor. Församlingen är mänskligheten i vardande, den är till för de utomstående, liksom Kristus var till för världen och dog för världen. Just så går det mot parusien, mot Guds rike.<sup>8</sup>

Det är precis så vi tänker oss den kristna gemenskapen, en gemenskap som ständigt strävar efter att nå utöver sig själv. Eller med Bonhoeffers ord, att vara kyrka för andra.<sup>9</sup>

Det innebär att kyrkan inte kan vara kyrka om den blir en alltför enhetlig gemenskap, vilket utgör den fjärde punkten i kritiken. Också på denna punkt är vi helt eniga. Vi förespråkar varken enhetlighet inom gemenskaper eller likriktning mellan gemenskaper. Även här behöver vi dock se till kyrkans konkreta situation för att diskussionen skall bli meningsfull. Vi tror inte att mångfalden värnas genom det ”folkkyrkofolk” som Aldén och Gustafsson Lundberg hänvisar till när de skriver ”vi vet att de kommer och vi vet att de vill”, om människor som vill döpas, konfirmeras, vigas, firas gudstjänst, eller begravas i kyrkans ordning.<sup>10</sup> Tvärtom finns det tydliga indikationer på att de som efterfrågar de kyrkliga handlingarna i Svenska kyrkan alltmer består av en ekonomiskt välsituerad medelklass som därtill är etniskt homogen.<sup>11</sup> I jämförelse med denna grupp menar vi att många av de gemenskaper som möts inom kyrkan i långt högre

grad kan ses som genuint gränsöverskridande på lokal nivå.

Vi tänker oss att det är en ofrånkomlig realitet att Svenska kyrkan i framtiden inte kommer att kunna bygga sin verksamhet på anställda i samma grad som idag. Då har vi två alternativ. Antingen dra ner på verksamheten och i praktiken ge upp folkkyrkans vision om att förkunna syndernas förlåtelse till hela samhället; eller också kan vi gå in för ett större fokus på frivilliga. Vi menar att det senare alternativet ur teologisk synpunkt är en god sak. Men, rent praktiskt: är det möjligt att engagera frivilliga i kyrkans arbete utan ett större fokus på kyrkan som gemenskap?

En rimlig kyrkosyn behöver ett tydligt skapelseperspektiv. Det är självklart. Men vi tror att vi måste komma bort från den märkliga motsättningen mellan skapelsecentrerad teologi och kristocentrisk teologi. Kristen teologi behöver vara trinitarisk. Den skall alltså inte bara upprätthålla dessa två perspektiv utan även Andens verk i kyrkan. Kyrkan är en del av sin egen bekännelse. Värdet med Wingren finns bland annat i hans betoning av att skapelseperspektivet inte får glömmas bort och det håller vi gärna med om.<sup>12</sup>

I denna rörelse mot en trinitarisk kyrkosyn ser vi gärna att resurser från den svenska lutherska traditionen lyfts fram. Men detta kan ske på olika sätt. Om det lutherska fungerar som en gränsdragning mot det som inte får vara med, så att perspektiv som inte har sin bakgrund inom dessa gränser på förhand utesluts uppfattar vi det som mycket problematiskt, både för Svenska kyrkans egen hälsa, men också för dess ekumeniska kallelse. Kristi kyrka är större än Svenska kyrkan. Om Svenska kyrkan isolerar sig från denna större kropp minskar dess möjligheter att möta tidens utmaningar radikalt.

<sup>8</sup> Wingren 1960, 257.

<sup>9</sup> När Bengt Kristensson Uggle sammanfattar Wingrens mogna ecklesiologi är det just detta uttryck han stannar för. Kristensson Uggle 2010, 269.

<sup>10</sup> Aldén och Gustafsson Lundberg 2014, 125.

<sup>11</sup> Andreas Sandberg, ”Medlem i Svenska kyrkan – en fråga om klass?” i *Nyckeln till Svenska kyrkan: En skrift om organisation, verksamhet och ekonomi 2012*. (Uppsala 2012) 85-94.

<sup>12</sup> Kristensson Uggle 2010, 118.

# Kroppar i gemenskap utan "kyrkifiering"

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Åter förs en diskussion om kyrkan. Vad kännetecknar kyrkan? Frågor som återkommer handlar om kyrkans uppdrag, om gemenskap och om var gränserna går. I detta inlägg i debatten vill jag föra in några lutherska tankar som får konsekvenser för var gemenskaper skapas och blir synliga. Enligt Martin Luther känns kyrkan inte igen på bestämda yttre ordningar, utan på evangeliets rena lära och rätt förvaltning av sakramenten. Detta är kyrkans kännetecken, *notae ecclesiae*. På vår tids språk skulle det kunna formuleras som att kyrkan finns där upprättelse sker. I talet om kyrkan som social kropp återkommer längtan efter gemenskap och helande men också begreppet folkkyrka. Detta begrepp definieras dock olika.

Vilket folk handlar det om? De två grekiska begreppen för folk, *emos* och *demos* för tankarna åt olika håll. *Emos* uttrycker ett folks gemensamma kultur, språk, traditioner och religion och hör nära samman med begreppet etnicitet. *Demos* däremot förstås som ett folk, eller en grupp av människor, som lyder under samma lagar och åtnjuter samma medborgerliga plikter och rättigheter. Ibland brukar man enkelt kalla den första förståelsen för den tyska och den andra för den franska. Det är tveklöst så att Sverige närmat sig den franska modellen där medborgarskap inte är knutet till etnicitet eller religiös tillhörighet. Mycket av den politiska kampen idag handlar om att värna ett medborgarskap som är pluralistiskt mot krafter som på nytt vill se en etniskt och nationalistiskt definierad tillhörighet. Då bränner det till. Var finns kyrkan spacialt, geografiskt? Jag menar att den framförallt är lokal och global, men ofta uppfattas som nationell, eftersom det

lutherska efter reformationen kom att knytas nära statsmakten.

I Sverige förs denna diskussion mot en bakgrund där evangelisk-luthersk tro länge varit avgörande för ett fullvärdigt medborgarskap. Först 1952 kunde en svensk medborgare lämna Svenska kyrkan utan att gå in i något annat kristet samfund. Kopplingen mellan det svenska och det lutherska har alltså rötter som går tillbaka till reformationens införande. Att den kyrka som beskriver sig som evangelisk-luthersk heter Svenska kyrkan har inte gjort diskussionen enklare. Även efter år 2000 signalerar namnet etablerad majoritetskyrka med nära koppling till det svenska. Det är lätt att uppfatta namnet som etnisk markör. Svenska kyrkans ledning signalerar däremot tillhörighet till den världsvida kyrkan.

Det gamla lutherska enhetssamhället, som krävde en tydlig luthersk beaktelse och praktik är borta. Idag framträder krav på en annan sorts enhetlighet. Viljan att inordna alla under samma normer och livsmönster tycks bestå. Den världsbild där de flesta hade någon form av gudstro är idag ersatt av en närmast sekularistisk förväntan. För att uppnå verklig tillhörighet och ses som en trovärdig medborgare handlar det inte längre om att gå till nattvarden minst en gång om året och att kunna sin katekes. Istället förefaller det som att alla måste vara ateister, eller åtminstone agnostiker. Först då uppnås förtroende i samhället.

Hur ska då kyrkorna förhålla sig till detta enhetssamhälle? Självklart måste de vara tydliga på ett nytt sätt. Men hur? Jag menar att debatten mellan Jan Eckerdal och Patrik Hagman å ena sidan och Johanna Gustafsson Lundberg och Mats Aldén å den andra i förlängningen handlar

om just detta. Hur ska kyrkan vara kyrka i en helt ny tid? Tydlig och öppen på samma gång.

## Olika gränser korsar varandra

Flera olika gränsdragningar korsar varandra. En handlar om gränsen mellan de anställdas och icke anställdas kyrka. Den blir tydlig när tjänstekyrkan lyfts fram, men också när nätverken mellan kyrkans anställda blir starkare än till andra områden i samhället. En annan gräns går mellan den synligt gudstjänstfirande församlingens gemenskap och dem som betalar sin medlemsavgift men sällan visar sig i kyrkan. Vilka gränser avses? Var finns den osynliga kyrkan? När kraven på kyrkans tydlighet skallar blir det viktigt att veta vilka gränsdragningar som avses och vilken sorts tydlighet man strävar efter. Just därför är det viktigt med öppna och gränsöverskridande samtal. Jag välkomnar därför debatten i STK:s temanummer om folkkyrkan.

Ett tredje begrepp för folk, nämligen *laos*, kan vara till hjälp. Då det användes i den tidigaste kyrkan innefattades alla i gudsfolket. Här finns alltså en öppning som spränger gränser och vetter mot en världsvid gemenskap. Sockengränser och nationsgränser, det vill säga kyrkans geografiska gränser, där medborgarrätt ställs mot universella, mänskliga rättigheter, utmanas påtagligt i vår tid. Då kan *laos*, gudsfolket, vara en viktig inspiration för att se den fjärde grupp av människor, som möter oss som det nakna livet, *homo sacer* enligt Giorgio Agambens terminologi. Detta nakna, rent "zoetiska" (eng. *zoetic*) liv, utan medborgarskap, ses inte ens alltid som ett folk. Men de söker sig till våra gränser. De sitter utanför våra kyrkor, som de mest utstötta, föraktade som trasproletariatet i marxistisk terminologi. Hur vi som medborgare, och som gudsfolk, förhåller oss till dem, och andra förtvivlade och desperata människor, är en av vår tids stora utmaningar, en kallelse som landat på vår förstut-rapp.

Som Judit Butler påpekar så finns inte något obestämt biologiskt, naket liv, endast "highly juridified states of dispossession". Kommuner och stater har makten att avgöra tillhörighet och villkor på ett sätt som gör att många hamnar i vräkning och utanförskap. Detta är en etisk ut-

maning som vi som kristna delar med alla människor, inom det Martin Luther kallade den borgerliga rättfärdigheten, *iustitia civilis*.

Den andra, s.k. främmande rättfärdigheten, *iustitia spiritualis*, är gudomlig, en gåva. För Luther framstår den som en kärlekens omfamning. Den bryter människans kretsande kring det egna, och öppnar henne därmed för närvaron i nuet. Kärleken skapar överflöd, glädje och frihet. Gud behöver inte blikkas. Guds kärlek är en gåva som frigör människan. Hennes gensvar handlar om lovsång och tacksamhet, menade Luther. Nu kan all hennes energi riktas mot medmänniskan. Här finns en porös gräns mellan kyrkan och det övriga samhället som alla kristna tillhör. Den etiska utmaningen delas av alla, men det överflöd, som kärlekens omfamning ger, inspirerar till generositet, barmhärtighet och upprättelse, lokalt och globalt.

Om man ser "skapelsen som evangeliets förståelsehorisont" för att alludera på Bengt Kristensson Ugglas formulering, så får det konsekvenser även för synen på kyrkan. Då finns horisonten av ständig nyskapelse med, det vill säga den gåva som alla människor möter och har gemensamt som skapade varelser. Evangeliet framträder då som ett bidrag i det gudomliga skeendet med hela världen, före kyrkans födelse och genom alla tider och folkslag. Samtidigt som inkarnationen ses som avgörande, så blir kyrkan som institution inte liktydig med Kristi kropp och uppenbarelse, utan ett av Guds redskap för att upprätta liv och överflöd i en brusten värld. Redan i Luthers 95 teser lyfte han fram de hungriga och fattiga. De hemlösa och fattigas nöd återkom sedan i hans Heidelbergförklaring. Ända fram till 1540-talet fortsatte Luther att skriva om sociala och ekonomiska problem. Detta är bara några exempel på kyrkans uppdrag av helande. I detta perspektiv är hela människan, även människans kropp viktig. Den försvinner aldrig ur synfältet för att ersättas av talet av kyrkan som kropp. Kyrkan är väsentlig utan att för den skull "kyrkifiera" livet. Kyrkan finns istället till för att upprätta det skadade livet. I ett lutherskt perspektiv har den kristne, lika väl som kyrkan, del i världens brustenhets, men är kallad att delta i Guds helande verk. Detta påverkar var och hur man söker tydlighet. Gränsen kan aldrig

dras mellan en tydlig gemenskap och dem som står utanför.

På den evangelisk-lutherska kyrkans hemsida i Finland kan man läsa:

Ordet liturgi kommer från de grekiska orden 'laos' och 'ergon', som antingen betyder folkets arbete eller det arbete som görs till förmån för folket. I svenskan finns också samma dubbla synvinkel. Genom gudstjänstens liturgi tjänar Gud församlingen och församlingen tjänar Gud.

Liturgin uppfattas självklart som gudstjänst. Men i den lutherska förståelsen ingår en tanke om att även vardagens arbete är en gudstjänst. Jag menar att detta är väsentligt. Det skymtar i Johanna Gustafsson Lundbergs och Mats Aldéns artikel, när de skriver att kyrkan är "utspridd i skapelsen, var och en i sin jordiska kallelse" samtidigt som "hon är kallad till gudstjänst, undervisning, bön och lovsång".

## Huvudfoting eller konkret, fysiskt närvarande?

Jan Eckerdal varnar för risken att kyrkan blir en "huvudfoting" utan social kropp. Men är kyrkan verkligen en huvudfoting? Det känns inte helt övertygande. Som Mattias Martinson lyfter fram så står katedralen där, mitt i staden. Mycket konkret, närvarande. Klockorna hörs över slätt och skog, men också på stadens torg, till och med i dess köpcentra. Dopfontens fysiska närvaro, som Billing beskrev som nådens välkomnande, kombineras i klassisk luthersk teologi med den kroppsliga närvaron i vardagen, i tjänsten för medmänniskan, för barn, gamla, föräldrar och vänner, men också för alla dem som anonymt tjänar människor, som busschaufförer, snabbköpskassörskor eller med administrativa uppdrag, skriftställer, ekonomisk planering och arkitektur.

I ett sådant perspektiv är de kristna, och kyrkan som social kropp, alltså mycket påtagligt och fysiskt närvarande, både i synfält och som kroppslig aktör, när det finns en teologi som bejakar och synliggör detta. Mats Aldén och Johanna Gustafsson Lundberg beskriver denna teologi som att "skapelsen och det av Gud givna

och önskade liv och de sammanhang i samhällslivet som den enskilde kristne lever i till vardags utgör den bakgrund och det sammanhang som gör kyrkan begriplig och som uttrycker dess av Gud givna uppdrag och mål". För Martin Luther var pigan lika väl som den mest uppsatte Guds medarbetare i vardagen. Så var det om de själva tänkte så eller inte. Upprättelsens budskap i kyrkan handlade om Guds villkorslösa kärlek, något som gav tröst, uppmuntran och kraft för tjänst i vardagen. Där var diakonins plats. Men var finns denna lutherska tolkning idag? Ibland förefaller det som om endast så kallade religiösa handlingar eller det som görs med kyrklig etikett räknas för att synliggöra det kristna.

Att se en mening med det vardagliga arbetet håller på att bli alltmer sällsynt på teologiskt håll. Det är inte särskilt framträdande ens i evangelisk-luthersk förkunnelse. Kanske är det inte så konstigt. Luthers övertygelse om att det var medmänniskan som behövde mina gärningar, inte Gud, kunde lätt utnyttjas av husbönder och arbetsgivare till att predika arbetets lov, på ett sätt som blev till en tung plikt. Att detta var främmande för Luther är väl belagt. Han förflyttade visserligen munkordnarnas devis *ora et labora* till vardagen. Att be och arbeta var något som gällde också för lekmännen. Den förbannelse av arbetet som beskrivs i 1 Mos 3 som en konsekvens av syndafallet, upphävs dock av Kristus och hans försoningsgärning, menade Luther. När Adam och Eva planterade och skötte om lustgården så var det ett fritt arbete. Men det gick inte ut på att bli rättfärdiga inför Gud, menade han, bland annat i sin traktat om en kristen människas frihet från 1520. Luther uppskattade vila och gemenskapen runt bordet, lika väl som det gemensamma arbetet för medmänniskans bästa. Men det frihetsperspektiv Luther hade på arbete, vila och lust är avlägset i samtida debatt. Idag används uttrycket "protestantisk arbetsmoral" snarare som en negativ hänvisning till att arbetslinjen är det enda som ger människan värde. Inte undra på då att människor som söker andlighet hellre vänder sig till dem som lyfrer fram vandrigen eller reträtten, som en mötesplats för det gudomliga. Inget ont i det för jäktade nutidsmänniskor. Men var finns tilltalet och upprättelsen för den som varken har tid eller råd att söka sig dit?



Bakom ropen på tydlighet kan man ana att lutherska synsätt blivit en del av samhället, på gott och ont. Vem vet att läskunnighet för alla startade för att varje människa, oberoende av kön eller social ställning, skulle kunna läsa åtminstone katekesen? Det är enklare att beskriva katekesplugg och utantilllärande av psalmer som något negativt, närmast ett övergrepp på unga människor. Ändå framstår det som viktigare än på länge att kräva läskunnighet för alla. Idag när välfärdsstaten krackelerar finns en frestelse för kyrkorna att agera plåster för att bli synliga, snarare än att ställa krav på kommun och stat och själva bidra till det gemensamma ansvaret för samhällets välfärd. Den evangelisk-lutherska kyrkans förhandling med moderniteten har nämligen lett till att mycket av det kyrkan stod för blivit osynligt för kyrkan själv. Ibland så till den grad att man gärna bröstas sig med det moderna och upplysta i kontrast mot andra, som porträtteras som barbarer.

## Kroppslig gemenskap utan kyrkifiering

Billings dopfunt från medeltiden möter idag den ofta rotlösa samtidsmänniskan. Historiska byggnader och traditionens långa arv är för många en dragningskraft i en tid som på olika sätt avtraditioniserats. Teologiskt tar sig detta uttryck i ett ökat intresse för arkaiska traditioner och för en nostalgisk längtan efter de tidiga kyrkornas praktik. Ibland kombineras detta med en kyrkosyn där kyrkan står över allt och alla. Kyrkan som social kropp blir exempelvis liktydig med Jesu kropp för Gregorius av Nyssa, någonting Graham Ward knyter an till. Graham Ward menar att förlusten av Jesus som judisk, könad kropp innebär födelsen av kyrkan som kropp, där alla andra kroppar situeras och får sin betydelse i ljuset av Gal 3:28, där det inte finns jude eller grek, träl eller fri, man och kvinna. Även om kyrkan på detta sätt framstår som en inkluderande social kropp, så är det främmande för luthersk teologi att ensidigt lyfta fram kyrkan. Luther betonar alltid Gud som hela skapelsens Gud och kyrkan som ett, men inte det enda, av Guds många sätt att verka i världen.

Även om kyrkan i viss bemärkelse alltid är en enda kropp, så tar den sig olika uttryck. Inkarnationen, som Guds förkroppsligade närvaro, likaså. Luther frågade därför var kyrkan fanns. Hans svar pekade mot de platser där upprättelse sker. Däremot menade han inte att kyrkan, som institution, alltid pekade klart på Kristus. Detta är övertydligt i hans polemik mot den romerska kyrkans förfall och i hans hårda ton gentemot påven. Inte heller menade han, som Gregorius av Nyssa, att den som ser kyrkan ser Kristus. Luther betonade det levande ordet, som gjorde Kristus närvarande i hjärta och liv. Tilltalet och människans upprättelse stod i centrum. Detta var kyrkans primära uppgift, men kärlekens upprättelse var inte begränsad till kyrkans agerande. Det levande Ordet kunde inte stängas inne, lika lite som Guds handlande med människor. Samtida teologer talar alltmer om helandet av hela skapelsen, om att "återupprätta jordens kropp, den mänskliga kroppen och vår relation till alla levande kroppar".

## Att bli salig eller vara helig

Luther skilde mellan att vara salig och att vara helig. Salighet är något endast Gud kan ge. Det hör samman med att ta emot Guds kärlek i Kristus. Varje människa är dock helig, genom att vara Guds skapelse (*heilig sein*). Att vara helig tillhör den världsliga regimen och gäller därmed alla, oavsett tro. Luther menade exempelvis att det fanns mycket helighet hos turkarna. Helighet uppnås i strävan efter jämlikhet och rättvisa för alla genom rimliga medel, också genom kroppens förnuft. Detta tillhörde för Luther den ekonomiska sfären.

Luthers distinktion mellan att bli salig, *selig sein*, och att vara helig, *heilig sein*, kan idag vara till hjälp. Det blir en mycket tydlig kallelse till arbete för helande och upprättelse i dagens värld. Både i det lokala och i det globala. Inför Gud, *coram Deo*, är den kristne den friaste av alla, men gentemot världen, *coram mundi*, har vi ett ansvar tillsammans med alla människor av god vilja.

När teologer som Yoder, Hauerwas och Cavanaugh betonar kyrkan som kropp, det vill säga som en tydlig social gemenskap, blir det viktigt

att fråga dels vilkas gemenskap det handlar om, dels varför man inte ser den kroppsliga, fysiska närvaro jag ovan nämnt. Att kyrkan är kallad att arbeta för alla människors upprättelse är för mig självklart. Men bör kyrkan vara synlig som en avskild gemenskap för det? Ofta är det en kallelse hon delar med alla människor av god vilja, även med dem som gör det goda av tvång.

Alla de tre ovan nämnda teologerna är män. Yoder, som jag minns från min tid i Princeton, USA, som en gammaltestamentlig profetgestalt med pacifistisk lidelse, är mennonit, Hauerwas metodist och Cavannaugh romersk katolik. Spe- lar detta någon roll när samtiden strävar mot ekumenik och gemenskap mellan kyrkor? Jag menar att det är väsentligt att ständigt föra sam- tal med representanter för olika kyrkor och teo- logiska inriktningar och låta sig inspireras av varandra. Krister Stendahl brukade ofta säga att det alltid finns något hos de andra som man kan avundas. Samtidigt är jag övertygad om att en viss kunskap om den egna traditionens arv är viktigt för att kunna föra dialogen på ett frukt- bart sätt. Det finns också i den egna traditionen inslag att vara stolt över. Aldén och Gustafsson Lundberg lyfter fram Gustaf Wingren och skap- elsen som evangeliets förståelsehorisont. Win- gren kom som teolog att framförallt betona en dynamisk skapelsesyn, särskilt i polemik mot de tyska teologer, som under 1900-talets första hälft använt skapelsens tal om ordningar som något statiskt, och för att legitimera rangordning mel- lan olika folkslag, samt mellan man och kvinna.

Olika lutherska läsningar har sedan slutet av 1800-talet stått mot varandra. Alla delade dock en förståelse av att Gud verkar inom olika sfärer, inte bara inom eller via kyrkan. Luther övertog från Aristoteles tanken på att Gud verkar inom olika stånd. Själv har jag återkommande beteck- nat de tre sfärerna *oeconomia*, *politia* och *ecclesia* för löftessfärer. Här finns en rörlighet som Gustaf Wingren såg i skarp kontrast mot de sta- tiska skapelseordningar man läst in i luthersk teologi.

Detta blir ett motgift mot alla teokratiska anspåk på att kyrkan eller teologin står över allt annat. Teologin är lika lite som religion något som enbart tillhör det privata, men den har inte utslagsröst om det rätta eller det goda, utan ingår i ett samhälleligt samtal där olika röster kommer

till tals. Kyrkans uppdrag är att erbjuda kärleken, som gör oss saliga, samtidigt som hon, tillsam- mans med alla heliga, arbetar för det goda och det rätta.

## Utmaningen från det nya enhetssamhället

Som jag tidigare påpekat är det gamla enhets- samhället borta. Det nya skyntar närmast i kra- vet på en sorts sekularism, som kräver ett relig- ionsfritt samhälle. Där utmålas religiös tro ofta som roten till allt ont. Religion förväntas vidare höra till den privata sfären. Den ska hållas borta från offentligheten. Tro framställs som ett klä- desplagg som man kan välja att ta av eller på, inte som en livshorisont. Samtidigt lever både religiösa och sekulära i ett pluralistiskt samhälle, där människor med olika religiös bakgrund finns inom samma geografiska område. Alla behöver därför träna sig i det som på FN-språk kallas för co-habitation. Alla lever, emellertid dessvärre inte med varandra, snarare bredvid varandra, utan särskilt många mötesplatser.

Vad innebär detta för kyrkorna och för de kristna? Att de bör försöka bli tydliga genom sin särart? Men tydliga blir de redan genom att hålla fast vid att alla människor är heliga och genom att hämta kraft ur bön och lovsång. Här knyts vardagens etik samman med kyrkans praktik. Patrik Hagman refererar till John Howard Yoder och hans tankar om att nattvarden handlar om vardagsekonomi. Detta en kristen hållning som delas av alla kyrkor, även om Yoder formulerar det kraftfullt. Tanken återfinns i Olof Hartmans nattvardsbön om "ditt bords hemlighet: ett enda bröd och en enda mänsklighet".

## Att läka en söndrad mänsklighet

Samuel Torvend menar att för Martin Luther var omsorgen om de mest fattiga och utsatta ständigt närvarande och knuten till måltiden i kyrkan. Rättfärdiggörelsen av nåd förkastar nämligen varje anspråk på särskild behandling baserad på personlig eller kulturell överhöghet över den andre. Eucharistin förnyar och bekräftar den ega- litära gemenskap som upprättats i dopet. Natt-

varden blir alltså en ekonomisk vision för att dela rättvist. Att ständigt återvända till nåden, som Luther beskrev som en kärleksomfamning, var för honom en kraftkälla för vardagens gudstjänst. Som kristna har vi alltså ett tydligt uppdrag som, om vi tar det på allvar, blir utmanande gentemot en konsumistisk omgivning. Det handlar om att vara till för dem vi möter, oavsett, religiös tillhörighet, hudfärg, etnicitet eller kön. Ett uppdrag, som innebär att vi ständigt måste börja om och höra orden om upprättelse, för att på nytt söka förverkliga visionen av Guds rike. Här framträder en både materiell och kroppslig gemenskap, som för den skull inte blir "kyrkifierad", utan verkar med skapelsen och det framtida gudsriket som förståelsehorisont.

## LITTERATUR

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*Redaktionell kommentar: Med anledning av prof. Alf Härdelins bortgång den 4 augusti förra året publicerar vi nedanstående recension. Boken har inte blivit recenserad i STK tidigare och måste betraktas som ett av Härdelins viktigaste verk.*

Alf Härdelin, *Världen som yta och fönster. Spiritualitet i medeltidens Sverige*. Scripta minora 13. Stockholm: Sällskapet Runica et Mediaevalia, 2005. 592 sid.

När vetenskapsmannen och kyrkohistorikern Alf Härdelin närmar sig koret i Litslena kyrka i Uppland, stannar han till inför altarskåpets huvudbild av den krönte Gudsmoan Maria med det lilla Jesusbarnet på sin högra arm. Där låter Härdelin sin blick svepa över skulpturens förgyllda detaljer och med orden, musiken och färgerna inbjuder han sin läsare att följa honom in i den medeltida spiritualitetens dynamiska sfär, en sinnenas och det andliga livets värld med synliga och osynliga väggar som öppnas och stängs framför våra förvånade ögon.

För att beskriva Alf Härdelins bok, *Världen som yta och fönster: spiritualitet i medeltidens Sverige*, skulle vi kunna använda oss av bilden av ett par glasögon med två metallinfattade glas, vilka är sammanbundna av den mellanliggande näsbryggan. I sju kapitel, tre i ena glaset, tre i det andra glaset och det sjunde, näsbryggan som förenar de två ögonglasen, delar författaren med sig av sin syn på katolsk medeltida spiritualitet. I Härdelins första ögonglas framställer han för oss sinnenas kyrka och pekar ut kyrkorummet, riterna och orden. Det andra ögonglaset tar sin början redan i näsbryggan med det första av fyra underavdelningar till mysteriernas kyrka. Härdelin betraktar vår vandring från den yttre, sinnenas kyrka, till den inre, mysteriernas kyrka, som ett hermeneutiskt övergångskapitel. Väl inne i mysteriernas kyrka styrs vår resa fortfarande i hög grad av bilder, men nu är det våra inre, mentala bilder som anger vad vi ska erfara. Här möter tre stora ämnen, Bildfält och tankestrukturer följt av Treenigheten och kyrkan för att avsluta i De sakramentala mysterierna.

Det finns också en skimrande tråd, med tre kulor på, som löper genom boken, som i min överförda bild får representeras av skalmar och senilsnöre, nämligen för det första författarens ständigt återkommande historiebereskrivning, för det andra hans egna många teoretiska och intressanta praktisk-teologiska reflektioner samt för det tredje hans beskrivning och analys av bilder, texter och liturgier av de mest skilda slag.

Vi kan också beskriva det Härdelin gör i sin bok med andra ord. Den yttre kyrkan tar sin början i de fysiska byggnadernas rum för att leda fram till Ordet, den inre parallella resan tar oss från våra egna mentala bilder till de sju sakramenten. Det är en vacker och tydlig parallellställning mellan första och andra delen.

Den spiritualitet som vi möter i Alf Härdelins bok är den spiritualitet som varit förhärskande i en klos-

termiljö, med en stark tillhörighet till Maria, Gudsmoan, och med ett birgittinskt fokus. Härdelin gör också en annan sak med sin läsare i det att han skapar väldigt täta bildmiljöer och grupper av miljöer, dels genom sitt sätt att skriva men också genom de 23 fina bilder som inte bara illustrerar utan skapar förutsättningar för läsaren att också visuellt ta del i författarens yttre och inre resa. Vi anar författarens egen personliga trosvandring genom hela texten. Härdelin står fram som produkten av en god katolsk mission, smakfatt av erfarenheter från en lång forskargärning såväl som den egna livsvandringen med utveckling av trons frö till full mognad och insikt.

Detta menar jag är bokens styrka, samtidigt som det också blir en brist om vi betraktar boken i ett större sammanhang där birgittinsk kontext inte står i ett absolut och självklart centrum.

Det är alltså inte hela medeltidens spiritualitet i Sverige som vi möter i *Världens yta och fönster*, det är en del - men en viktig del som vi har saknat i litteraturen om det medeltida Sverige.

Lisa Nyberg  
Teol. kand., fil. mag., Lund

Johan A. Lundin, *Predikande kvinnor och gråtande män. Frälsningsarmén i Sverige 1882–1921*. Malmö: Kira förlag, 2014. 192 sid.

Den teologiska och historiska forskningen i Sverige har i påfallande liten utsträckning intresserat sig för Frälsningsarmén. Därför är historikern Johan A. Lundins bok om rörelsen ett välkommet tillskott inte bara för historiker och kyrkohistoriker, utan även för en bredare teologisk publik. I blickfånget står frågor om skärningspunkten mellan religion, genus och modernitet; syftet är, för att använda författarens egna ord, ”att undersöka vilken roll religion spelade för görande av maskulinitet och feminitet i det framväxande moderna svenska samhället”. Genom att anknyta till tidigare genusvetenskapliga studier inom fältet och till filosofen och genusteoretikern Judith Butlers förståelse av kön och genus som något performativt lyckas Lundin presentera Frälsningsarmén ur ett nytt perspektiv och visa hur ett vid tiden framstående och omfattande samfund reproducerade och omförhandlade föreställningar om vad det innebar att vara kvinna respektive man.

När väckelserörelsen initierad av William (1829–1912) och Catherine Booth (1829–1890), vilken snabbt spridit sig bland Englands arbetarklass, år 1878 antog namnet Salvation Army var ett av dess särskiljande drag kvinnornas framträdande roll. Det här blev ett utmärkande linje även i det svenska sammanhanget. Under sommaren samma år som det nya namnet antogs var parets äldsta son Bramwell Booth (1856–1929) på besök i Sverige och de andaktsstun-

der han höll besöktes bland andra av Hanna Ouchterlony (1838–1924), som när Frälsningsarméns arbete formellt etablerades i Sverige 1882 utsågs till kommandör över den svenska armén. Även om Ouchterlony inte var den enda kvinnan med en ledande position i rörelsen, kännetecknades konstruktionen av kvinnlighet inom armén under perioden av en alltigenom märkbar tvetydighet. Samtidigt som ideal vilka framstod som centrala för feminiteten i sekelskiftets Sverige utmanades, till exempel genom att kvinnorna inom Frälsningsarmén gjorde anspråk på en tydligt markerad roll i det offentliga rummet, så framställdes kvinnorna även som fysiskt och psykiskt bräckliga och ytterst ansvariga för arbetet kopplat till hushållet.

Utifrån ett brett och rikt källmaterial, bland annat tidigare utforskat arkivmaterial, redogör Lundin för Frälsningsarméns första 40 år i Sverige på ett mångfacetterat och intresseväckande sätt. Med hjälp av det performativa perspektivet – alltså synen på handling som meningsskapande – kastas nytt ljus över flera delar av frälsningssoldaternas liv och gärning. Författaren rör sig med god disposition mellan allt från soldaternas omvändelseberättelser, sociala verksamhet samt uniformering och övriga klädsel till deras relation till och anammande av moderna föreställningar och innovationer. Till exempel lyckades soldaterna genom bruket av moderna färdmedel som tåg, cykel och på sikt även bil framstå som en rörelse ”i tiden”.

Tiden som skildras i boken utmärktes i Sverige av en omfattande samhällsomvälvning, vilket författaren illustrerar med hjälp av den tilltagande urbaniseringen och sociala differentieringen respektive konsolideringen av de klassiska folkrörelserna. Det är emellertid lika viktigt att förstå Frälsningsarmén i förhållande till dessa fenomen som i förhållande till den av Lundin inom paranteser satta sekulariseringen. Arméns arbete för att expandera religionens sociala inflytande kan exempelvis med fördel tolkas i relation till den tyske kyrkohistorikern Hartmut Lehmanns beskrivning av ett Europa som under perioden i fråga kännetecknades av ett dialektiskt förhållande mellan ”avkristning” å ena sidan och kristen väckelse å den andra. Denna förklaringsmodell har noterats i den tidigare svenska forskningen om kristen manlighet, vilken författaren även förhåller sig till i inledningskapitlet.

I den, om än begränsade, internationella forskningen om Frälsningsarmén som behandlar genusrelationer noterar Lundin två positioner. Å ena sidan en som utgår från att armén gav understöd till kvinnornas emancipation och å andra sidan en som menar att rörelsen dominerades av män och reproducerade stereotypa föreställningar om manlighet och kvinnlighet och på så sätt upprätthöll kvinnornas underordning gentemot männen. Boken avslutas med konstaterandet att det inte legat i undersökningens syfte att ”driva någon av dessa ståndpunkter”. Även om det av författaren är klokt att närma sig denna problematik på ett mer ny-

anserat sätt finner läsaren återkommande analytiska förenklingar, vilka leder bort från det maktperspektiv som lyser igenom i flera av resultaten.

Det framkommer till exempel att kvinnors yttre, i form av kläder, skor, frisyr och dylikt, reglerades på ett skarpare och mer omfattande sätt än männens. Också kontrollen av och bestraffningen för kärleksförhållanden och ”okyskhet” drabbade kvinnorna i större utsträckning än männen. Som bakomliggande anledning till dessa villkor anger Lundin att kvinnorna granskades hårdare av det omgivande samhället och att Frälsningsarmén därför var särskilt måna om att kvinnorna i rörelsen inte utåt skulle framstå som ”lösaktiga”. Den analysen må inte vara utan grund, men i dess ofullständighet riskerar den resultera i en otillbörlig historieskrivning där patriarkala strukturer och en förkastlig kvinnosyn inom ett religiöst samfund rättfärdigas utifrån dess utsatta position i samhället. Problematiken är signifikativ för studien, som förvisso är rik på teoretiska och jämförande perspektiv och således även på kritiska frågor, men tenderar resultera i något korta och förenklade synteser. Andra sidan av myntet är att Lundin ger en desto mer tillgänglig redogörelse över Frälsningsarméns tidigaste verksamhet i Sverige, vilken också förtjänar en bred läskrets och omfattande publicitet.

Martin Nykvist  
Doktorand, Lund

Klas Hansson, *Svenska kyrkans primas. Ärkebiskopsämbetet i förändring 1914–1990*. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Historico-Ecclesiastica Upsaliensia 47. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2014. 500 sid.

Klas Hansson har gett sig i kast med att undersöka hur ärkebiskopsämbetet inom Svenska kyrkan har förändrats mellan 1914 – 1990. Detta har resulterat i en omfångsrik avhandling som passande nog lades fram i Uppsala under senkvåren i år; det är ju som bekant 100 år sedan Nathan Söderblom utnämndes och vigdes till Svenska kyrkans primas. Valet av Söderblom innebar verkligen en förändring i relation till vad som varit.

Efter en sedvanlig inledning där allt från syfte och avgränsningar till teori och metod avhandlas, följer en bakgrundsteckning. De sju ärkebiskopar som verkat under perioden skildras utifrån ett femtontal aspekter som något förenklat kan sägas täcka in formella förändringar av ärkebiskopsämbetet, kyrkoteologisk uppfattning samt hur de var och en för sig har agerat och skildrats i ett antal sammanhang. I den mån underrubrikerna förändras har detta med yttre förändringar att göra, som att exempelvis Bördagsplakaten inte längre är relevanta att undersöka i relation till Bertil Werkströms ämbetsperiod.

Varje ärkebiskop skildras i sitt eget kapitel som rubricerats med sammanfattande och värderande ordpar,

som "Expansion och förnyelse" vad avser Nathan Söderbloms period och "Försiktighet och reträtt" när det gäller hans efterträdare Erling Eidem.

Avhandlingen avslutas med ett kapitel där analys och slutsatser följs av en sammanfattning. I analysdelen tillför Hansson vad han kallar "ett sociologiskt perspektiv" där Pierre Bourdieus begreppsvärld något oväntat införs som ett "analysinstrument och inte som en värdering av de i undersökningen ingående biskoparna". Varför? Det är svårt att se nyttan av att "Bourdieu-märka" avhandlingen när andra mer relevanta teoretiska överväganden saknas.

Först ska det sägas att Klas Hanssons avhandling utgör en välgärning i ett bestämt avseende: Det har länge saknats en sammanhållen skildring av svenska ärkebiskopar. Hanssons bok, befriad från avhandlingens formalia och teoretiska begränsningar, torde vara ett gott underlag för en sådan.

Den har också ett bestående värde i det att den är systematisk i upprepningen. Den som exempelvis vill jämföra Brilioths och Josefssons kyrkoteologiska positioner, eller hur Eidem skildrats i pressen i relation till Gunnar Hultgren, hittar i Hanssons avhandling en genväg till fördjupade studier. Så långt innehåller den mycket gott.

Men dessvärre, av de frågeställningar som författaren anger som övergripande är det svårt att förstå vad han i sitt sammanhang menar med "förändring". Detta blir inte tydligare i avhandlingens undersökningsdel. Hansson skriver om förändring utan att ange några som helst ledtrådar till begreppslig begriplighet.

Förändringsbegreppet är komplext och kan inte förklaras genom att skildra vad som förändras och i vilken riktning. Det deskriptiva måste få hjälp av en metaförståelse av förändringens "inre" mekanismer – dess "hur" – för att bättre kunna svara på de frågor som Hansson ställer till sitt material. Därför blir det också otidligt skildrat i avhandlingen hur erfarenheter av en ärkebiskop och förväntningar på nästa hänger samman:

\* Hur bidrog de sex ärkebiskoparna var och en för sig och alla sammantagna till att förutsättningarna för den sjunde förändrades?

\* Hur hängde exempelvis de erfarenheter som regeringen hade av Söderblom samman med de förväntningar som ledde fram till att även Eidem utnämndes från tredje förslagsrummet? Var alternativen otänkbara för att de stod Söderblom för nära eller fanns det andra skäl?

När Klas Hansson väl bestämmer sig för att skriva den breda och efterlängta skildringen av 1900-talets ärkebiskopar inom Svenska kyrkan – det borde han verkligen göra! – lär en genomläsning av Reinhard Kosellecks *Erfarenhet, tid och historia. Om historiska tidens semantik* ha mer att erbjuda av begreppslig

klarhet än något som Pierre Bourdieu kan erbjuda i det här sammanhanget. Det vore en förändring till det bättre.

Mikael Hermansson  
Doktorand, Lund

David Wagschal, *Law and Legality in the Greek East: The Byzantine Canonical Tradition*, 381-883. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. xx + 331 sidor.

Denna monografi är en omarbetning av David Wagschals doktorsavhandling från år 2010 vid Durham University. Wagschal har föresatt sig att undersöka kyrkorättsbegreppet i den bysantinska traditionen. Undersökningen har fyra huvuddelar som föresätter sig att undersöka: (1) kyrkorättens form med fokus på kyrkorättskällornas form i synnerhet i handskriftstraditionen; (2) hur kyrkorätten introduceras i de bysantinska kyrkorättsamlingarna; (3) kyrkorättens språkdräkt; och (4) systematiseringen av kyrkorätten.

Wagschal är väl medveten om att han försöker fylla en lucka i den engelskspråkiga forskningen och han likställer i stort forskningsläget med den engelskspråkiga forskningen. Han känner till delar av den kontinentaleuropeiska forskningen men avfärdar i allmänhet denna eftersom den (i synnerhet den tyskspråkiga och grekiskspråkiga forskningen) inte utgår från hans egen föreställning om den bysantinska kyrkorätten. Den något kursiva och fragmentariska användningen av befintlig forskning framkommer bland annat när han påstår att det inte finns någon särskild studie av bysantinsk rättsterminologi vilket är direkt fel. Professor Spyros Troianos publicerade en sådan studie år 2000. Trots att Wagschal har vissa hänvisningar till Troianos så har han missat flera standardverk av Troianos vilket är anmärkningsvärt eftersom Troianos är en av de mest framstående bysantinska rättshistorikerna i vår samtid.

Wagschal påstår att hans undersökning primärt försöker komplettera Hamilton Hess' *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (2 uppl. 2002) och Heinz Ohmes *Kanon ekklesiastikos: Die Bedeutung des altkirchlichen Kanonbegriffes* (1998). I inledningen lyfter han fram "rättskultur" som analysbegrepp. Han pekar särskilt på Dieter Simons *Rechtsfindung am byzantinischen Reichsgericht* (1973) och Rudolph Sohms epokgörande monografier om den kyrkliga rättshistorien för sin förståelse av den bysantinska rättskulturen.

Simon lyfts fram för hur han kontrasterade den bysantinska rättens retoriska karaktär mot modern kontinentaleuropeisk rättsdogmatik. Sohm lyfts fram för sin epokgörande motsättning mellan kyrkobegreppet och rättsbegreppet respektive mellan den gammalkatolska kyrkorätten (dvs. kyrkorätten fram till gregorianska reformrörelsen på 1000-talet) och nykatolska

kyrkorätten (dvs. kyrkorätten i västkyrkan efter den gregorianska reformrörelsen). Trots dessa hänvisningar till kontinentaleuropeiska forskare framträder en tydlig anglocentrism hos Wagschal. De grundläggande skillnaderna mellan angloamerikansk rättskultur (dominerad av prejudikatsrätt och adversalsystem) och kontinentaleuropeisk rättskultur (dominerad av lagboks rätt och inkvisitorialsystem) gör att forskare utan juridisk allmänbildning och hemmahörande i den angloamerikanska kultursfären i allmänhet uppvisar ringa förståelse för den kontinentaleuropeiska rättskultur som utgör kontexten för den kontinentaleuropeiska rättshistoriska forskningen. Både Simon och Sohm var utbildade kontinentaleuropeiska jurister till skillnad från Wagschal.

Det Wagschal får med sig från Simon och Sohm är att kontrastera den bysantinska kyrkorätten mot en nidsbild av modern, västerländsk rättskultur (en nidsbild som bygger på en högst oberättigad generalisering om man enbart betänker de stora skillnaderna mellan angloamerikansk och kontinentaleuropeisk rättskultur). Detta utgör Wagschals huvudsakliga forskningsmetod. I monografins slutsatser erkänner han själv svagheten i detta förfaringssätt när han skriver: ”My constant counterposing of the phenomena in the Byzantine texts with a caricatured formalist ‘foil’ has no doubt made the contrast particularly sharp. I may also have fallen unconsciously into the trap of orientalism, that is, of subtly favouring conclusions that present Byzantine culture as the shadowy opposite and ‘other’ of the western experience” (s. 281). Denna plötsliga självinsikt har dock inte fått några praktiska konsekvenser för undersökningen.

Genom hela studien kontrasterar Wagschal de bysantinska kyrkorättskällorna mot sin nidsbild av modern västerländsk rättskultur. Han gör inga uppriktiga försök att förklara den bysantinska rättskulturen utifrån dess egna villkor, strukturer och funktioner utan nöjer sig endast med att ständigt påpeka att den inte motsvarar hans fördomar (generaliserade som allmänna föreställningar) om lag och rätt. Trots att Simon lyfter fram det retoriska i den bysantinska rättsprocessen förbigår Wagschal att tydligt undersöka den retoriken och i synnerhet domstolsretoriken i den bysantinska kulturen och hur rättskällorna relateras till denna retoriska kultur. Det han fått med sig från Sohm är den tidigkatolska kyrkorättens traditionalism och antikvarianism (som Wagschal ständigt hänvisar till), men han har missat själva huvudpoängen hos Sohm, nämligen att den tidigkatolska kyrkorätten inte uppfattades som lagstiftning utan som troslära. Trots sina hänvisningar till Sohm använder Wagschal helt okritiskt ”lagstiftning” som ett analysbegrepp, även om han ständigt påpekar att det i källorna saknas en föreställning om lagstiftning som motsvarar den moderna västerländska rättskulturens lagstiftningsbegrepp. Detta antyder en mycket kursiv och fragmentarisk läsning av Sohm.

Wagschal använder sig också sporadiskt av rätts-teoretikern Harts igenkänningsregel (”rule of recognition”) utan att diskutera detta analysbegrepp. För det mesta hänvisas endast till traditionalism som igenkänningsregel. Man skulle utifrån Sohms huvudpoäng (som Wagschal dock har missat) kunnat fastslå att den bysantinska kyrkorätten primärt måste tolkas som troslära och inte som lagstiftning och därför har trosregeln (regula fidei; kanôn tês alitheias) som sin primära igenkänningsregel.

Wagschals monografi har som bihang några mycket användbara översättningar av inledningarna till ett urval av de bysantinska kyrkorättsamlingarna. Denna monografi uppmärksammar förtjänstfullt en oberättigad lucka i den engelskspråkiga forskningen men dess eget bidrag till att fylla denna lucka är ringa.

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David Gudmundsson, *Konfessionell krigsmakt. Predikan och bön i den svenska armén 1611–1721*. Bibliotheca historico-ecclesiastica Lundensis 56. Malmö: Universus Academic Press, 2014. 256 s.

Inom äldre homiletisk forskning har tidigmoderna svenska förkunnelsen i fält beskrivits som ”lagiskt” och ”gammaltestamentligt” orienterad. Detta synsätt har också förekommit inom viss populärvetenskap där fältpredikans aggressiva tonläge och krigiska drag har framhållits. Dessa ofta obelagda typologiseringar bildar utgångspunkt för David Gudmundssons avhandling i kyrkohistoria, framlagd vid Lunds universitet, vilken utgör den första mer omfattande undersökningen av fältpredikan i Sverige under stormaktstiden (1611–1721).

Författaren undersöker tematik och funktion i både tryckta och otryckta fältpredikningar och i sex fältbönböcker. För att kunna hitta konfessionell tematik i detta material har författaren utgått från Thomas Kaufmanns begrepp konfessionskultur som analytiskt perspektiv. En metodologisk utgångspunkt tar författaren i konceptet ”erbjudna identifikationer” med vilket i detta sammanhang avses hur förkunnarna genom sina predikningar artikulerade och strävade efter att förmå åhörarna att anamma roller av typen kristen, undersåte och soldat.

Efter ett bakgrundskapitel om det kyrkliga livet i fält gör författaren en fördjupad undersökning av predikan, psalm och andaktslitteratur i fält där han framhåller den för hela avhandlingen viktiga insikten att det inte rädde särskilt stora skillnader mellan hur det kyrkliga livet förväntades gestaltas i fält och hur det förväntas gestaltas i det civila sammanhanget hemmavid. När det gäller fältpredikans form ger de – bevarade – fältpredikningarna vid handen att predikanterna i fält följde rådande homiletiska konventioner. I detta kapitel ifrågasätts också den äldre uppfattningen att

fältpredikan skulle ha haft en ”gammaltestamentlig” karaktär, med vilket både har avsetts att predikningarna oftast skall ha hållits över gammaltestamentliga texter och dessutom tydligt ha utmärkts av så kallad gammaltestamentlig lagiskhet. Författaren observerar att fältprästerna i det bevarade predikomaterialet i större utsträckning predikade utifrån Gamla testamentet under början av 1600-talet än vad som blev fallet under senare hälften av 1600-talet och början av 1700-talet då prästerna främst predikade utifrån evangelieperikoperna. Viktigt i sammanhanget är också att predikotexterna från Gamla testamentet hämtades från Psaltaren i större utsträckning än från de ”krigiska” böckerna (som ex. Krönikeböckerna). Gammaltestamentlig predikan i fält innebar alltså knappast med nödvändighet att det predikades med texter om israeliternas krigsföring som utgångspunkt. I det sammanhanget kan enligt mitt förmenande också betonas, att användningen av ”gammaltestamentlig” och ”lagisk” som närmast synonymerna knappast var en självklarhet vid denna tid då dikotomin lag-evangelium kunde anses genomsyra både Gamla och Nya testamentet.

I anslutning till den teoretiska ramens diskussion om erbjudna konfessionella identifikationer behandlas i kapitlen 4-6 identifikationerna ”rätt kristen”, ”svensk undersåte” och ”kristlig soldat”. Författaren finner flera belegg som förmår styrka Kaufmanns uppfattning om hur den konfessionella tillhörigheten knöts både till så kallad antipapistisk retorik och till bilden av Martin Luther som ”vägröjare”. Samtidigt går det att skönja en tendens enligt vilken den polemiska tonen, som var som mest påtaglig under tidigare hälften av 1600-talet, efterhand avtar.

Predikanterna avsåg också att främja en nationell identitet. Det svenska folket beskrevs – i likhet med det israeliska folket – som särskilt utkorat. Följaktligen drogs analogier mellan Israels folk och det svenska folket, ett samband som byggde på tanken att svenskarnas krigsframgångar var tecken på att de i likhet med israeliterna hade den rätta tron och att de av den anledningen var utvalda till ett särskilt syfte. Denna identifikation åberopades både under arméns med- och motgångar, särskilt under motgångarna. I likhet med israeliterna stötte ju även svenskarna på motgångar vilka tolkades som straff för det svenska folkets otacksamhet inför de framgångar som ytterst utgjorde en Guds välsignelse. I det perspektivet kunde också motståndarna beskrivas som Guds redskap. Deras angrepp på den svenska armén sågs då som uttryck för Guds vilja att tukta svenskarna.

I diskussionen av den tredje konfessionella identifikationen, ”kristlig soldat”, diskuteras bland annat Hilding Pleijels teser om hustavlans påverkan på stormaktstidens mentaliteter. Trots att Pleijels ståndpunkter, särskilt hans stundtals okritiska uppfattning om den folkliga receptionen av hustavlans sociala struktur, har ifrågasatts, vill Gudmundsson inte förkasta Pleijels tes helt utan menar att hustavlans

samhällsordning genom fältprästernas predikan var känd av soldaterna (och rimligtvis även av övriga åhörare). Prästerna tycks nämligen ha förväntat sig en grundförståelse av detta budskap hos åhörarna. Huruvida denna samhällsordning sedan verkligen accepterades av de soldater och civila som lyssnade är givetvis en annan sak. Denna slutsats förmår Gudmundsson till att betrakta treståndsläran som ett sammanhållande band i den tidigmoderna lutherska konfessionalkulturen.

Författaren förhåller sig påtagligt försiktig när det gäller att förklara de förändringsprocesser han finner i sitt material. Detta är på sätt och vis klokt med tanke på att det bevarade materialet enbart utgör en bråkdel av de fältpredikningar som hållits under perioden. Författaren går också en balansgång när det gäller frågan om hur pass effektiv och framgångsrik förkunnelsen egentligen var. Å ena sidan signalerar talet om ”erbjudna identiteter” att fokus är riktat mot själva idealen och inte åhörarnas reception, å andra sidan talas om att förkunnelsen kunde ”bidra till skapandet” av en nationell identitet (s. 175), något som inte nödvändigtvis behöver tolkas som att förkunnelsen verkligen lyckades.

Till avhandlingens förtjänster hör att författaren bidragit till att problematisera de ofta schablonmässiga (och inte sällan omedvetet pietistiskt färgade) uppfattningarna om stormaktstidens lagiska och ”gammaltestamentliga” förkunnelse. Genom att systematiskt ha gått igenom allt tillgängligt källmaterial kan Gudmundsson bekräfta Yngve Brilioths antagande från 1945, att fältpredikan troligen inte skilde sig från ”vanlig” predikan. Avhandlingsförfattaren har därmed lyckats med konststycket att dekonstruera ”fältpredikan” som homiletisk genre.

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John W. O'Malley, *De första jesuiterna*. Skellefteå: Artos, 2012. 466 sid.

John W. O'Malley, professor i kyrkohistoria vid Georgetown University, Washington, har skrivit ett omfattande verk om Jesu sällsams första tid. Boken kom ut redan 1993, har översatts till en rad olika språk och anses allmänt vara ett standardverk. Trots det blev det först 2012 som den kom i svensk översättning av Per Beskow.

O'Malleys verk är inte en bok om Ignatius utan om jesuitordens tidiga historia. Som en röd tråd skildras Ignatius första följeslagare: Pierre Favre, Francisco Xavier, Diego Lainez och Alfonso Salmerón. Senare skulle Jerónimo Nadal och Juan Alfonso de Polanco ansluta och bägge två spelade en viktig roll. Jesuitorden är inte en mans verk.

Ignatius och hans följeslagare hade som vision att genomföra en pilgrimsresa till Jerusalem, men av



olika skäl kom de bara till Rom. År 1539 blev orden godkänd av påven Paulus III: Socii Christi Jesu, Jesu Kristi följeslagare. Därefter hände allt mycket fort: 25 år senare hade rörelsen vuxit i en omfattning som ingen hade kunnat ana; man bedrev mission i Brasilien, Indien och övriga Asien, hundratals skolor upp till universitetsnivå hade öppnats och man ägnade sig åt omfattande social verksamhet. Historien om hur allt detta kunde växa fram på så kort tid är en spännande läsning.

Boken är inte en historisk genomgång i kronologisk ordning. O'Malley har istället en tematisk uppdelning av sällskapets olika tjänster och verksamheter samt deras relation till kyrkan i övrigt. De tjänster som de ägnade sig åt kan indelas i fyra kategorier: ordets tjänst, förvaltning av sakramenten, barmhärtighetsverken och skolorna.

Det talade ordet ingick i den första tjänsten. Man förkunnade och samtalande med människor för att föra dem till bikt och nattvard. Ignatius bok *Andliga övningar* fick stora framgångar, en handbok för en ledarledd reträtt. För alla som började i sällskapet var en sådan reträtt obligatorisk. Jesuiterna införde generalbikten, en genomgång av hela livet i samband med reträtten.

En annan viktig del av jesuiternas tjänst var barmhärtighetsverken. De besökte sjukhus och fängelser och förbättrade villkoren för de fattiga, ofta genom att samarbeta med befintliga organisationer.

En verksamhet som inte fanns med i den ursprungliga planen men som sedan växte och blev en av de största var skolorna. Det började med intern undervisning för jesuiter, men år 1546 fick de tillstånd att bedriva offentlig undervisning varpå antalet skolor växte snabbt. Jesuiterna var de första som ägnade sig åt vuxenundervisning i stor skala, även om barn och ungdomar också var en viktig målgrupp. Genom att öppna universitet och skolor även i protestantiska områden såg man en möjlighet att vinna tillbaka människor till den katolska läran. Den holländska teologen Petrus Canisius var den som var mest aktiv i denna verksamhet i Tyskland, vilket kan vara en av förklaringarna till jesuiterna dåliga rykte bland protestanter i Tyskland.

Men de konflikter som jesuiterna drogs in i var överraskande nog mest med andra katoliker. Som underställda påven och inte stiftsbiskoparna blev de bemötta med avund. De stack ut eftersom de inte liknade någon annan katolsk orden eller organisation. De skilde sig inte bara från lutheraner utan också från skolastiker och humanister, om än på olika grunder.

Att författaren är mycket kunnig och insatt i jesuitordens första tid råder det ingen tvekan om. Möjligen kan man fundera över hans distans till rörelsen som själv varande jesuit – det finns ett apologetiskt drag i boken. Han väjer dock inte för att nämna mindre trevliga drag hos jesuiterna. I Portugal var orden aktiv under inkquisitionen och enstaka jesuiter deltog i för-

följelserna av heretiker. De hade också understött det ökända Index över förbjudna böcker även om de var kritiska till omfattningen av böcker som hamnade där. Å andra sidan är det tydligt att O'Malley tonar ner jesuiternas kamp mot lutheranerna. Han tillbakavisar uppfattningen att jesuitorden bildades som ett svar på Martin Luthers reformation, även om jesuiterna spelade en viktig roll vid reformkonciliet i Trento (Tridentinum). O'Malley skriver också att kritiken mot Luther hårdnade efter Ignatius död, en tid som inte behandlas i denna bok.

Vad var det som gjorde att sällskapet blev så framgångsrikt och fick ett sådant inflytande? Författaren ger oss ett antal ledtrådar: jesuiterna var pragmatiska och anpassningsbara, rörelsen svarade också på människors längtan efter ett mer personligt andligt liv. Jesuiterna erbjöd en alternativ prästkallelse som varken innebar munkpräster eller församlingspräster som var begränsade till ett kloster eller en församling. En viktig del i jesuitprästernas identitet var att de var rörliga, de bodde i kommuniteter i städerna men kunde när så behövdes resa någon annanstans. Jesuiterna blev därför ett viktigt redskap när det gällde att missionera i nya länder.

Även när det gäller skolorna kom jesuiterna rätt i tiden. Människor från lägre samhällsklasser hade börjat efterfråga högre utbildning och de svarade på detta genom att erbjuda gratis skolgång för massorna. Kyrkan och påvedömet utmanades av både reformrörelser och heretiker där jesuiterna blev en samlande kraft.

Boken är en spännande läsning även om dess detaljrikedom och omfattning innebär att den vänder sig till pastorer, präster och teologer i första hand, snarare än till allmänheten. Det är inget tvivel om att boken behövs i en svensk kyrklig kontext där det finns ett stort intresse för ignatiansk spiritualitet. Reträtter och kurser erbjuds även utanför jesuitorden. Men även om man är förhållandevis påläst om Ignatius och hans andliga övningar kan kunskapen om kopplingen mellan Ignatius och den orden som han bildade vara ganska vag. Här har *De första jesuiterna* en viktig kunskapslucka att fylla.

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Eric W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul. Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 343 sid.

”Manuskriptstudier” har blivit en trend inom den bibelvetenskapliga textkritiken, vilket innebär att en viss fokusförskjutning ägt rum bort ifrån den hypotetiska ”originalkällan” till de faktiskt existerande manuskripten. Eric Scherbenskens bok *Canonizing Paul* påminner oss om att den ideala, ursprungliga bibeltext som forskare ibland försöker återskapa inte är vad läsare genom tiderna faktiskt förhållit sig till. Scherbenske

visar att redan de tidiga utgåvorna av Paulus brev innehållit åtskilligt utöver själva texten som varit ämnat att styra tolkningen. Redaktören lyfts här fram som någon som på mer eller mindre subtila sätt utövat sitt inflytande över läsningen.

Vilka verktyg hade en redaktör under antiken till hands för att påverka tolkningen av en annan författares verk? Denna fråga besvaras i bokens första kapitel som tar ett brett grepp om den grekisk-romerska antikens litterära värld och diskuterar de redaktionella konventioner som var allmänt rådande. För det första kunde själva texten korrigeras och manipuleras enligt vissa principer: Ord och fraser kunde läggas till eller tas bort i syfte att förtydliga, eller återställa, vad man uppfattat vara ursprungsförfattarens mening. För det andra skulle det bestämmas vilka verk som skulle ingå i en utgåva samt i vilken ordning dessa skulle placeras, något som ofta rymde en pedagogisk tanke. När dessa beslut fattades var ställningstaganden om olika skrifers äkthet avgörande. För det tredje innehöll utgåvorna en mängd så kallade paratexter i anslutning till själva huvudtexten. Paratexterna var förklarande texter av olika slag, som inte var skrivna av originalverkets författare, och vilkas syfte var att hjälpa läsaren att förstå och tolka materialet. Detta kunde vara en kort biografi över författarens liv, en sammanfattande introduktion över verkets innehåll, korta kapitelsammanfattningar i början av varje kapitel, liksom andra förklarande noter, exempelvis i huvudtextens marginal.

Från detta breda perspektiv vänder sig Scherbenske sedan till att ingående studera tre tidiga utgåvor av Paulus brev. Först ut är ett kapitel om Markions utgåva som också är den tidigaste kända utgåvan av dessa (från mitten av 100-talet). Ett problem är att det inte finns några bevarade manuskript av denna utgåva, utan kännedomen om den kommer genom Markions kritikers ofta polemiska utsagor. Här måste Scherbenske pussla flitigt för att få ihop en hypotetisk källa att undersöka. Trots att Markion av sin samtid fick stark kritik för att han på ett otillbörligt sätt hade "skurit" i texterna så blir hans bearbetning begriplig utifrån tidens redaktionella konventioner. Markions utgåva speglade tydligt hans teologiska övertygelser, men detta var helt i sin ordning i förhållande till hur antika redaktörer arbetade.

I kapitlet som följer undersöks den euthalianska utgåvan av Paulus brev. Denna grekiska utgåvas upphovsman, Euthalius, var troligen verksam mot slutet av 300-talet men är i övrigt okänd. Vad som gör den särskilt intressant är Euthalius flitiga användning av paratexter. Till dessa hör ett förord till breven, sammanfattningar av vart och ett av dem, beskrivande kapitelinledningar, en lista över citat (främst GT-citat) som används i breven, en skildring av Paulus martyrium, samt en beskrivning av Paulus resor. Utgåvans syfte är att framställa brevsamlingen som ett kateketiskt material som främst ska syfta till en moralisk ut-

veckling hos dess läsare. Kontrasten mellan Markions starka teologiska intressen och Euthalius uppenbara brist på sådana är slående. För Euthalius var Paulus mer en moralisk förebild än en skarpsinnig teolog.

Det sista som undersöks är Codex Fuldensis (daterat till 546–7 v.t.); ett av de tidigaste manuskripten till Vulgata. Även denna utgåva är intressant på grund av dess rika paratextuella material. Till skillnad från de två tidigare utgåvor som undersökts tycks det här inte finnas någon genomgående redaktionell tanke bakom vilket material som tillfogats texten, utom möjligen en allmän idé om ekumenisk inkludering. Särskilt anmärkningsvärt är att några av paratexterna tar ställning på motsatta sidor i förhållande till pelagianismen, tidens stora stridsfråga. Klart är att själva paulustexterna vid den här tiden uppnått en status som heliga texter som inte fick manipuleras, återigen i tydlig kontrast till Markions utgåva. Redaktörens möjlighet att påverka läsningen begränsades därför till paratexterna. När Scherbenske kommer till sitt korta avslutningskapitel har han framgångsrikt visat på den antika redaktörens möjligheter och makt att styra läsarens tolkning av det som med tiden blev betraktat som heliga skrifter, i det här fallet Paulus brev.

Scherbenske kombinerar en noggrann uppmärksamhet fäst vid exempelvis textkritiska detaljer med en imponerande bredd i sin behandling av primärkällor som sträcker sig över ett millennium, och där Scherbenske hela tiden ger ett balanserat och förtroendeingivande intryck i sin behandling. Kombinationen av bredd och djup ställer förvisso stora krav på läsaren, som inte kan förvänta sig att tekniska teologiska termer förklaras eller att grundtexternas grekiska alltid översätts. För att kunna ro detta projekt i hamn måste Scherbenske helt enkelt förutsätta en gedigen förkunskap. Ett problem för mer avancerade läsare av boken är dock känslan som riskerar att infinna sig av att ingen av de tre utgåvorna riktigt får diskuteras "färdigt". Markions utgåva, exempelvis, debatteras flitigt bland forskare just nu och flera monografier har utkommit på senare år som berör ämnet. Scherbenske hade behövt ägna hela sin bok åt endast denna utgåva för att förslagen i det kapitlet verkligen skulle kunna stå sig och riktigt övertyga (därmed vill jag inte förneka att Scherbenske tveklöst lämnat ett viktigt bidrag även till den debatten). Slutomdömet måste ändå bli övervägande positivt. Detta är en väl-skriven och välargumenterad, lärd och lärorik bok, som väcker många tankar och som redan gett upphov till spännande diskussioner.

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Ola Sigurdson, *Theology and Marxism in Eagleton and Žižek: A Conspiracy of Hope*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012. 253 sid.

Då det är 25 år sedan Berlinmurens fall och marxismen gick in i en kraftig lågkonjunktur är det intressant att läsa Ola Sigurdsons bok om hur starkt intresset för marxism och teologi har blivit inom politisk filosofi. Om början av 90-talet, enligt Sigurdson, var årtiondet då "historiens slut" utropades och sekulariseringsteoretikerna tyckte sig se religionernas slutparantes har det sedan drygt ett decennium tillbaka skett en "teologisk vändning". Särskilt förvånande är det nyvunna intresset för teologi bland vänsterradikala tänkare, vilket sociologen Göran Therborn har påpekat.

Förhållandet mellan marxism och teologi är inte helt nytt men den utveckling som har skett inom detta område de senaste decennierna ger en god anledning till att se närmare på hur detta tar sig uttryck. Uppgiften genomför Sigurdson på ett pedagogiskt och skarpsynt sätt med utgångspunkt i två nutida vänstertänkare. Den förste är den brittiske litteraturteoretikern och filosofen Terry Eagleton. Sigurdson beskriver honom som en katolsk agnostiker som tagit starka intryck av thomisten Herbert McCabe. Den andre är den slovenske sociologen och filosofen Slavoj Žižek som med sina populärkulturella referenser och sin provocativa humor blivit något av ett YouTube-fenomen. Hos Žižek ser Sigurdson en protestantisk ateist vars omfattande verk om tysk idealism och psykoanalys har gjort Hegel och Lacan till självklara delar av sin filosofi och teologi.

På ett pedagogiskt sätt tar Sigurdson läsaren igenom den kristna trons huvuddelar (tron, Gud, ondska, fri vilja och framför allt eskatologi och hopp) enligt Eagleton och Žižek. Eagletons katolska ådra blir tydlig i hans syn på människans natur som "moderately rational" men också i hans syn på förhållandet mellan natur och nåd. Det blir i sin tur påtagligt i hans ideologikritik som ser potentialiteten till det sant emancipatoriska som ett frö i det nuvarande ideologiska läget. Förhållandet mellan ideologi och icke-ideologi kan alltså, enligt Eagleton, förstås i analogi med en thomistisk förståelse av förhållandet mellan natur och nåd. Hoppet för Eagleton blir ett sorts "hopp trots allt" i en profetisk och eskatologisk anda. Här framstår Žižek som en skarp kontrast när han outtröttligt lyfter fram nödvändigheten av mötet med "det reala" som något radikalt annorlunda än "det symboliska". Tro är, enligt Žižek, att vara pånyttfödd och det gör att man kan se på existensen på ett sätt som bryter med varje tidigare föreställning om den. Om Eagleton betonar att det finns någon sorts kontinuitet, betonar Žižek brottet, diskontinuiteten och traumat. Žižeks hopp står på så sätt i en mer apokalyptisk tradition.

Givetvis talar Žižek om tron som övertygad ateist men för att bli en "riktig" ateist och dialektisk materialist, såsom Žižek förstår det, måste man gå igenom den genuint kristna erfarenheten av Guds död på kor-

set. Korset befriar människan både från idén om en transcendent Gud, när Gud uttömmar sig själv i sin son, och den sublimerade guden á la Feuerbach, när Kristus ropar "Min Gud, min Gud...", vilket i sin tur ställer människan inför "det reala" – Gud är en icke-gud.

I sin genomgång tydliggör Sigurdson på ett övertygande sätt förhållandet, särskilt i Žižeks fall, mellan marxismen och teologin. Ytterst bygger förhållandet på, som bokens undertitel säger, "a conspiracy of hope". En sådan konspiration har möjligheten att både gå bortom nuvarande uppfattningar om lag och rätt och bryta med den rådande ideologin. Men för att det ska vara möjligt behövs det eskatologiska hoppet som ett utopiskritiskt redskap för att inte kritiken ska reduceras till en optimistisk framtidsvision. Bilden av det nya Jerusalem behövs för att se hur gammalt det nuvarande är, skriver Sigurdson. Här skulle jag önska en mer kritisk genomgång av inte minst Žižek vars decisionism har blivit hårt kritiserad och anklagad, i synnerhet från annat marxistiskt håll, för att vara alltför oberäknelig och våldsam.

Sigurdsons frågeställning om förhållandet mellan marxism och teologi sträcker sig längre än det uppenbara att de använder teologiska modeller i sina verk. Han undrar om det till och med är så att den teologiska vändningen hos dessa marxistiska tänkare innebär att deras politiska filosofi är omöjlig utan teologin. Med andra ord är frågan om förhållandet är historiskt och stundom faktiskt eller till och med strukturellt? Sigurdsons slutsats är att både Eagletons och Žižeks tänkande är starkt kopplat till teologin fast med tydliga "konfessionella" skillnader. Det skulle bekräfta och även överskrida Karl Löwiths tes att marxismen är en sekulariserad form av judisk-kristen messianism. Om påståendet inte skulle gälla för Marx själv, så gäller det helt klart för Eagleton och Žižek.

Sigurdsons genomgång av Eagletons och Žižeks användning av och förhållande till teologin är tydlig och gedigen. Den upprepande växlingen mellan utläggande analys av författarnas omfattande och ständigt växande verk och de teologihistoriska exkurserna gör innehållet tillgängligt och fördjupande. Det jag frågar mig är om inte boken skulle ha blivit än mer intressant om författaren i slutet hade skrivit fram sin egen position tydligare. Om det är så att Sigurdson ser så positivt som det kan verka på Eagletons och Žižeks teologiska bidrag i synen på hopp, eskatologi och apokalyptik hade det kunnat utgöra ett intressant perspektiv till Jayne Svenungssons senaste bok (*Den gudomliga historien: profetism, messianism och andens utveckling*, 2014.) som kritiserar bland annat Žižeks apokalyptism.

Trots detta fungerar *Theology and Marxism* som en mycket bra introduktion till två nutida politiska tänkare som konstruktivt behandlar teologin. Särskilt uppskattade jag beaktandet av Žižeks djuplodande

psykoanalytiska insikter som säkert kan bidra till en vidare teologisk reflektion.

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Masterstudent, Lund

Sigurd Bergmann, *Religion, Space and Environment*.  
New Brunswick (USA) och London (UK): Transaction Publishers, 2014. 498 sid.

Sigurd Bergmann är ekoteolog och förgrundsgestalt inom religion och ekologi samt professor i religionsvetenskap i Trondheim. I *Religion, Space and Environment* ser Bergmann till religionens roll för att människan skall känna sig hemma i världen. Religion hjälper människan att situera sig i världen och den religiösa perceptionen, praktiken, känslorna är nära knutna till den miljö som de uppstår i. Givet att vår tid karaktäriseras av mobilitet och förändring så sätts förmågan att göra sig hemma på hårda prov.

Boken har sex tematiska delar. "Hem" ser till religionens betydelse för att vi kan känna oss hemma i världen. "Jorden" vidgar perspektivet till sakrala geografier och rör sig från Mayakulturen till modern ekospiritualitet. "Landskapet" diskuterar kolonialisering och sakralisering av landskapet. Fjärde delen tar sig an frågan om hur klimatförändringar förändrar religioner, och nästföljande avsnitt ser hur mobilitet möjliggjorts av teknologin. Därefter ges en teologisk reflektion utifrån trinitarisk teologi som kontrasterar den levande ande som är närvarande i världen, till exempel på heliga plaster, med samtidens fetischism där allt blir en vara. Avslutningsvis knyts allt ihop med hjälp av Roy Anderssons film *Du levande*. Boken är ett resultat av föreläsningar som Bergmann hållit på skilda håll i världen under de senaste åren och både konstvetenskapliga perspektiv och klassisk litteratur berikar diskussionen som sträcker sig från poeter som Goethe och Rilke, till samtida tänkare som Edward W. Soya, geograf och grundare av 'critical urban studies'.

Centralt är begreppet "Beheimatung", som betecknar processen "of making oneself at home" och som kräver reflektion, eftersom det är snarlikt begreppet 'Heimat'. Heimat-begreppet var centralt inom nazismen, där det knöts till rasistiska 'Blut und Boden' föreställningar, och Bergmann tydliggör skillnaderna: Heimat är statiskt, förknippat med födelseplats och skiljer sig diametralt från Beheimatung som betonar rörlighet, något skapat, som han själv formulerar. 'Making oneself at home' låter sig inte enkelt översättas med att finna sig tillrätta, det finns ett aktivt handlande, snarare att göra sig hemma i världen. Känslan av tillhörighet, är också längtan efter att höra hemma. I en traditionell transcendentalism tar det sig uttryck i en längtan till något 'bortom' som är central i den mänskliga existensen. Teologin har ofta lagt fokus på tid, men Bergmann vänder sig till 'lived religion' och forskningsperspektivet 'The Spatial Turn'.

'The Spatial Turn' lägger fokus på platsen, det rumsliga och studerar exempelvis sakrala geografier såsom tempelruiner. Men en plats vi alla kan förhålla oss till, och som får allt starkare betoning i tider av globalisering och klimatförändringar, är platsen vi alla delar: planeten vi bebod, "the Earth".

'The Spatial Turn' utmanar inte bara teologin i förhållande till platsens teologi utan även i förhållande till de ekologiska frågorna. Bergmann menar att dessa kan knytas samman, bland annat i den växande miljörelösen, men även i andra sociala rörelser som bidrar till en civilisationskritisk diskussion.

För det är inte bara rörlighet, migration och globalisering, som präglar samtiden, utan även klimatförändringar, och det är en problematik som påtagligt kommer att förändra våra levnadsförhållanden. Bergmann frågar: Hur påverkar natur i allmänhet och antropogena klimatförändringar i synnerhet religion och kultur? Bergmann hävdar att "In the face of dangerous changes in climate and water systems, /.../Christianity needs to accelerate its turning towards 'space'". Idag ställs den kristna världsbilden och ekoteologin inför stora utmaningar.

Problematiken som Bergmann inringar – människans sökande efter ett hem i världen och betydelsen av platser som platser som vi kan längta till, leva på och kalla heliga – möter idag en mycket påtaglig verklighet. Inte bara i förhållande till flyktingars sökande efter en ny plats att leva på, utan också i situationer då platser hotas av förstörande exploatering av naturresurser och ställer människorna som bebod eller knyter an till platsen inför stora känslomässiga och faktiska förluster. Bergmann pekar på en av våra stora samtidsfrågor när han skriver: "In the context of climate-related migrations, whether one is able to create a home in a strange place, new place might decide their fate as well as the capacity for social and ecological peace. But having the ability to make oneself at home will also determine whether those who remain in a place can deal with those who relocate to that same place."

Konkreta exempel på miljöförstörelse, klimatförändringar och därpå följande konflikter och migration kan ses runt om i världen. I Sverige ser vi gruvdrift i förhållande till den samiska befolkning, på den afrikanska kontinenten är problemen stora med jordrofferi där företag tillskansar sig mark, vilket driver människor på flykt. Ofta hamnar de i kåkstäder i växande megastäder i det globala syd eller som flyktingar om de tar sig till västvärlden. Klimatförändringar, extrema väder tillstånd och översvämningar, tvingar människor på flykt. Här blir inte bara de etiska frågorna gällande global rättvisa, utan också de samhälleliga och därmed också politiska aspekterna tydliga.

Trots att Bergmann diskuterar frågor med stor bärkraft för påtagliga historiska skeenden i samtiden så är det oftast inte de konkreta exemplen han förhåller sig till. Här blir måhända de konstvetenskapliga, filoso-

fiska och teologiska perspektiven begränsande, och man kan invända att Bergmann bara snuddar vid de svåra samtidsfrågorna utan att dra ut linjerna. Men man kan också, vilket är mer konstruktivt, ta det som ett tecken på att religion och ekologi befinner sig i ett tvärvetenskapligt fält, där en mängd disciplinära perspektiv berikar varandra och som för närvarande också skapas inom forskningsparaplyet 'Environmental Humanities' eller 'Humanities and Climate Change'. I detta fält är *Religion, Space and Environment* ett mycket viktigt bidrag till diskussionen.

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Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay 'on the Trinity'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 365 sid.

Ansatsen i Sarah Coakleys senaste bok är anspråksfull. Coakley, systematisk teolog och professor i religionsfilosofi verksam vid universitetet i Cambridge, har nämligen för avsikt att ange nya utgångslägen för den systematiska teologin.

Efter två kapitel där Coakley gör reda för sin metod och position följer tre förhållandevis disparata kapitel som i tur och ordning behandlar patriastik, närmare bestämt en konstruktiv omläsning av bönen och den kristna treenighetsläran hos några kyrkofäder, den pneumatologiska diskursen hos några samtida karismatiska rörelser inom den anglikanska kyrkan och slutligen en ikonografisk undersökning av hur treenighetsläran gestaltats i kristen konst. Resultaten av dessa tre undersökningar behandlas därefter vidare i två kapitel där fokus hamnar på den ömsesidiga relationen mellan bön, begär och treenighetsläran. I kapitel sex sker det genom en jämförelse mellan Augustinus och Gregorios av Nyssas teologier, medan betydelsen av en apofatisk vändning inom teologin, som hon själv förespråkar, filioque och idolatri diskuteras ytterligare i bokens sjunde och sista kapitel.

Som redan denna korta redogörelse av Coakleys essä om treenigheten ger för handen rör det sig om en uppslagsrik och ambitiös text som spänner över vitt skilda ämnesområden. Att det dessutom handlar om ett slags programförklaring för hennes kommande arbeten gör det hela än mer intressant. Coakleys essä om treenigheten är den första, initiala ansatsen i en serie utlovade böcker i systematisk teologi på temat *On Desiring God* där hon har för avsikt att vidareutveckla och fördjupa de perspektiv som här skisseras.

Coakley förordar en interdisciplinär och icke-reduktionistisk metod som hon benämner *théologie totale*. Det är en sådan metod som hon själv ger exempel på i tre av bokens kapitel. *Théologie totale* innebär ett närmande mellan samhällsvetenskaperna och teologin. En förening mellan dessa vetenskapsområden kan enligt Coakley lyckas då teologin inte låter

sig reduceras av samhällsvetenskaperna, utan där den senare istället informerar teologin om doktrinernas komplexitet och rörlighet i vardagslivets levda religiositet.

Inom religionsantropologin och religionssociologin har intresset länge varit riktat mot vad man med Meredith McGuire och Nancy Ammerman, för att namna några i skaran, kan benämna vardagslivets religiositet eller levd religion (*lived religion*). Inslaget av ett empiriskt fältarbete på den systematiska teologins område är emellertid inte lika självskrivet. I Coakleys fall handlar det närmare bestämt om ett teologiskt återbruk av en drygt 20 år gammal rapport som hon författade för the Church of Englands Doctrine Commission. Det finns, menar Coakley, en teologisk skatt att finna i samtida kristna grupperingars församlingsliv; det är där teologin levs, utövas och kroppsliggörs. Teologin bör emellertid inte lika självskrivet. I Coakleys vidare, endast agera korrektiv åt människors kroppsliggörande av kristna doktriner, utan också ta fasta på vardagslivets religiositet i det egna arbetet, som föremål för teologin.

Även om Coakleys ansats är intressant brister hennes hantering av det empiriska materialet. Hennes förfarande pekar samtidigt ut några av svagheterna med *théologie totale*; den interdisciplinära teologen förväntas kunna behärska allt från semiotiska bildanalyser till fältstudier och samhällsvetenskapliga teorier och metoder. Ett sådant engagemang kan förvisso vara angeläget, men riskerar att falla om inte teologen bemästrar de områden som krävs för att en *théologie totale* ska lyckas.

Den samtida kyrkliga problematiken som kretsar kring kön och sexualitet har enligt Coakley sin hemhörighet och potentiella lösning i en teologisk begärproblematik. Hennes hypotes är emellertid inte endast att begär är mer grundläggande än genus och sexualitet utan också att lösningen på den sekulära genusproblematiken står att finna i den kristna doktrinen om en treenig Gud. Genom att förlägga problematiken dithän kan Coakley stipulera en lösning som tar sin utgångspunkt i den kristna bönepraktiken och i en förnyad, men, understryker hon, inte förtryckande asketism. Hon lämnar därmed diskussionen om sexualitet och genus, även om hon återkommer till frågan huruvida man som feministiskt informerad teolog kan benämna Gud som fader. Hennes svar är med vissa förbehåll jakande. Problemet rör inte fadersnamnet i sig utan och den eventuella idolatri som det kan medföra.

För Coakley är asketismen en strategi mot en idolatri där det mänskliga begäret är upptaget av sådant som leder henne bort från Gud. Konsekvensen av en sådan gudsfrånvänd avgudadyrkan är, menar hon, en ångestladdad och neurotisk tillvaro utan kärlek. Disciplineringen av den mänskliga kroppen handlar för Coakley om att lära sig tänka, handla, se och begära på rätt sätt, men detta levnadssätt står inte att finna, åtminstone inte enbart, i historiens källor utan är sna-

rare en uppgift in via. Det är en anledning till att bönen och pneumatologin ges en framskjuten plats i hennes teologi; i bönen kan människan bli berörd av den helige ande som motverkar idolatri och konstituerar människan på nytt. Att känna Gud handlar, i Coakleys apofatiska teologi, snarare om att bli känd av Gud och därigenom förändras.

För den som är bekant med Sarah Coakleys teologi sedan tidigare känns flera av tankegångarna igen. Bortsett från några brister när det gäller fältarbetet har Coakley med *God, Sexuality and the Self* lyckats peka ut vägen framåt för den teologi som hon är i stånd att formulera i ett mer omfattande och kommande teologiskt arbete.

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Gunnar Sundin, *Läs Bibeln med påskglasögon! Två studier kring en bibelsyn som utgår från tesen TRONS TEMPUS ÄR PRESENS*. Visby: Nomen Förlag, 2012. 121 sid.

Kristna har i alla tider betraktat Bibeln som Guds ord, d.v.s. som normerande i någon mening i nuet, som Guds tilltal till den enskilda människan. Hur kan denna bekännelse förenas med vad vi vet om Bibelns beskaffenhet och hur ska Bibeln som helhet tolkas och förstås? Dessa frågor bildar stommen i allt vad bibelsyn heter.

Bibelsyn omfattar en rad problemområden: omfattning (kanonfrågan, textkritiken), tillkomst (isagogiska frågor, frågor om inspiration och uppenbarelse), tolkning (hermeneutiska och textteoretiska frågor), innehåll (centrum, bibelteologi, genrer), giltighet (områden, kriterier, rangordning av böcker) och roll (ensam norm, biroll, argument för lära och liv, Guds tilltal som skapar tro och frälser). Gunnar Sundin rör vid flera av dessa frågor när han med sig själv som exempel går igenom vad som hänt på bibelsynsområdet från 1950-talet och framåt med en del historiska återspeglningar.

Boken består av två delar, en mer teoretisk del som tar upp historiska och filosofiska frågor och en mer praktisk del med reflektioner kring bibelbruket i predikan, själavården och den enskilda bibelläsningen. I den första delen beskrivs några kulturella, psykologiska och vetenskapshistoriska förändringar som får följd för en bibelsyn. Upplysningen med dess framstegsoptimism, positivism och individualism har fått ge vika för ett mer mångsidigt tänkande om människan och världen. Den gängse sekulariseringsteorin visar sig inte heller vara en universell företeelse.

För att bättre förstå individens upplevelser av sig själv och omvärlden tar Sundin hjälp av en psykologisk modell där individens medvetande rör sig mellan en yttre existensvärld och en inre existensvärld. De två världarna överlappar varandra en del och i detta

gränsområde finns leken, fantasin, konsten, musiken, litteraturen, dansen, teorierna, symbolerna och religionen. Samspelet här mellan det yttre och det inre är livsviktigt för människan. En annan dubbelhet i vårt tänkande illustreras av en rad motsatspar, å ena sidan undran – varför – orsak och verkan – grekiskt tänkande – förklara världen – naturvetenskaper, osv, å andra sidan förundran – vartill – mål och mening – semitiskt tänkande – förstå världen – humanvetenskaper, osv. Det första ledet präglas av matematikens språk och resulterar i en mosaikkarta av den s.k. verkligheten, det andra ledet av de stora berättelsernas språk och ger ett fågelperspektiv på mänsklig tillvaro. Dessa synsätt påverkar bl. a. historisk forskning och därmed bibelforskningen.

Med olika argument visar Sundin att historisk forskning inte är så tillförlitlig. Historia och fiktion vävs alltid ihop. Inom bibelforskning finns två huvudlinjer, den ena konservativ som inte tvivlar på det som utsägs i texterna, den andra kritisk som ifrågasätter det som står där. Den första kan leda till olika former av fundamentalism, den andra kan lämna efter sig en mycket reducerad bild av det historiska skeendet. Dock. ”De kritiska bibelforskarna liknar de konservativa i den meningen att de koncentrerar allt sitt intresse på den historiske Jesus”. Och den historiska fixeringen befrämjar inte ett fruktbart bruk av Bibeln.

Detta sista är en viktig punkt i den andra delen. Sundin har dessförinnan hänvisat till bl.a. Kuhn, Berger och Luckmann, Wittgenstein, Ricœur och Kristenson Uggla för att teckna ett nytt filosofiskt landskap. Vi måste idag nöja oss med att anta sannolikheter och avstå från att hävda absoluta sanningar. Det gäller också Bibeln. Risksamhället har alltmer ersatt kunskapssamhället. Vi har att utprova olika sätt att leva med riskerna, att våga leva med osäkerhet, att öva oss i tillit. I denna osäkra värld kan bibeltexter förmedla en hoppets livshållning, trots allt. En fruktbar bibelläsning måste därför vara framåtriktad och inte fixerad vid det historiska.

I detta läge blir påskdagens händelser, en uppståndelse och i nuet levande Herre, en nyckel till all bibel-tolkning. ”Bekännelse och tillbedjan inför Den Uppståndne Herren”. Mycket i Nya testamentet är ”kristologi och tillbedjan ... draperad i historiska kläder” (s.82). Den andra delen är en värtalig plädering för en sådan ståndpunkt med många välformade meningar som säkert har sina källor i många år av undervisning i gudstjänst och själavård. ”Vår krampaktiga strävan att historiskt kunna förklara sammanhang räcker inte till för en djupare förståelse av innebörden. Det är först genom insikter om, vad detta att Herren lever betyder för mig, för andra, för världen, som Kristustron får sin kraft” (s. 73). I detta läge blir det nästan ett antingen – eller mellan textanalys och tillägnet av textens budskap, mellan ”hjärnans eller hjärtats bibelläsning” (s.92).

Sundins receptiva resa från teologistudierna på 50-talet fram till nuet säger oss en hel del om vad som hänt under denna tid i Sverige och hjälper oss att på nytt tänka igenom vad bibelsyn är för något. Hans helhetsmodell med ett centrum som genomsyrar allt påminner mig mest om ett lutherskt sätt att tänka, men medan lag – evangelium, synd – nåd (Golgata) dominerar i lutherska kretsar förskjuter Sundin på ett hälsosamt sätt centrum mot död – liv och påskdagens händelser. På den punkten liknar han Lukas sätt att berätta om Jesus.

Eftersom Sundin står i en levande dialog med sin samtid inom många kunskapsområden förvånar det mig att han inte tycks ha mött senare tids exegetik som så kraftigt betonar en litterär, narrativ analys. Inte heller spelar språkteoretiska resonemang någon större roll i hans reflektioner. Austins talaktsteori har till exempel haft stor betydelse för flera evangelikala teologer som arbetat med bibelsynsfrågor. Inom språkforskningen har också den pragmatiska dimensionen numera en mycket stor plats med dess betoning av kommunikation och effekt hos mottagaren. Förståelseprocessen hos Sundin består av information – kunskap – insikt – personlig mognad – förståelse (s. 82). Förstå lika med göra, viktigt inte minst för dagens ungdomar, lyser i stort med sin frånvaro. Dessa noteringar skulle mycket väl kunna förstärka Sundins position i bibelsynsdebatten.

Birger Olsson  
Professor emeritus, Lund

Veronica Johansson, *Stimulating the Brain: Ethical Perspectives on Deep Brain Stimulation and Nano Scaled Brain Machine Interfaces*. Lund: Lund Universitet, 2013. 166 sid.

Kan man behandla svår depression genom att skicka ström genom elektroder som opererats in i hjärnan? Ja, man börjar faktiskt kunna göra det. Tekniken kallas ”Deep Brain Stimulation” (DBS) och är ett slags ”pacemaker för hjärnan”. Etiska perspektiv på denna nya teknik undersöks och diskuteras i en ny doktorsavhandling från Centrum för teologi och religionsvetenskap vid Lunds universitet. Avhandlingen har titeln *Stimulating the Brain: Ethical Perspectives on Deep Brain Stimulation and Nano Scaled Brain Machine Interfaces* och är skriven av Veronica Johansson.

Avhandlingen är unik på flera sätt. Först det första har mycket lite tidigare skrivits om etiken rörande denna specifika teknik, även om ”neuroetiken” och ”nanoetiken” som sådana är stora och växande fält. Fokus sätts alltså på en viktig, ny medicinsk teknik. För det andra är avhandlingen något så ovanligt i teologiska sammanhang som en sammanläggningsavhandling, måhända den första i sitt slag vid Lunds universitet (dylika avhandlingar är dock regel inom

medicin, naturvetenskap och teknik). Den består av fyra artiklar samt en ”kappa” där bakgrunden till projektet ges, syfte och metod klargörs, och resultaten sammanfattas. För det tredje har Johanssons etikforskning bedrivits i mycket nära kontakt med de medicinska forskarna, vilket är ovanligt. Några av dessa är också medförfattare till tre av artiklarna. Johansson är dock ”försteförfattare” och har huvudansvaret för innehållet.

Johanssons doktorandprojekt i etik har utgjort en integrerad del av forskningen vid forskningscentret Neuronano Research Center, som startades vid Lunds universitet 2006. Det gemensamma målet för forskningsprojekten vid centret är att utveckla en ny generation av Brain Machine Interfaces (BMI) d.v.s. direkta samspel mellan elektronik och det centrala nervsystemet. Huvudsyftet med Johanssons etikprojekt har varit att diskutera etiska utmaningar som forskningen vid centret ställs inför. Forskningsfrågorna har kommit att klargöras efterhand som projektet fortskridit.

Man ser tydligt denna utveckling i artiklarna. Den första artikeln handlar om BMI i allmänhet, medan de senare handlar om en specifik teknik, nämligen DBS. Och även när det gäller denna specifika teknik sker en förskjutning. Artikel nummer två handlar mer allmänt om etiska perspektiv på denna teknik, medan artikel tre behandlar ett specifikt etiskt problem, nämligen frågan om autenticitet i ljuset av de personlighetsförändringar som tekniken kan ge upphov till (en patient beskriver det som att hon upplever ”en tredje version av mig själv” det vill säga det friska jaget, det sjuka jaget samt jaget efter behandlingen). Den fjärde artikeln fokuserar på framtiden och de etiska frågor som vi har att ta ställning till när tekniken utvecklas vidare.

På ett allmänt plan kan avhandlingens metod beskrivas som ”inbäddad etik” (”embedded ethics”) det vill säga etikforskning som bedrivs i mycket nära kontakt med de medicinska forskarna. Johansson är medveten om de risker ett så nära samarbete kan medföra, nämligen brist på kritisk distans. Hon betonar dock att hon inte är ute efter att föreslå riktlinjer för vad som är rätt och fel, utan snarare att identifiera olika slags etiska frågor som den nya tekniken väcker och då är denna metod outhärlig.

Avhandlingen har flera starka sidor. Den är välskriven och visar på god förtrogenhet med vetenskapliga aspekter. Det är också positivt att Johansson är öppen med sin egen utveckling under skrivprocessen det vill säga att arbetet successivt har lett till vissa förskjutningar av fokus. Dessa förskjutningar av fokus har medfört skillnader i artiklarnas innehåll som förefaller välmotiverade. Närheten till de medicinska forskarna har också troligen bidragit till att hon fått upp ögonen för etiska aspekter som annars kanske varit svåra att upptäcka, särskilt den i avhandlingen centrala frågan om autenticitet.

Det finns dock vissa problem med avhandlingen. Ett är att Johansson verkar ha en alltför stark tilltro till vad närheten till den medicinska forskningen kan åstadkomma. När hon skriver att ”medan andra svenska etiker studerar Platon, Kant och Rawls har jag gått kurser i neurofysiologi, nanoteknologi och BMIs” väcks frågan vad hon vinner och vad hon förlorar. Det jag efterlyser är inte nödvändigtvis mer etisk teori, men mer medicinsk etik och forskningsetik. Jämförelser med etiska analyser av andra typer av medicinsk teknik som redan varit i fokus under lång tid skulle kanske kunna belysa DBS på ett fruktbart sätt.

Ett annat problem är en tendens att i den så kallade kappan överdriva det nya i de egna bidragen. Exempelvis betonar Johansson att hon utgår från ett nedifrån-perspektiv (”bottom-up”), som hon framställer som nytt och ovanligt. Det må så vara, men frågan är hur mycket detta faktiskt har påverkat hennes analys. Den första och andra artikeln fokuserar på principer som är centrala i traditionell medicinsk etik och som ofta förknippas med ett ovanifrån-perspektiv (”top-down”) till exempel mänsklig värdighet, autonomi, rättvisa, göra gott och icke-skada. Det framgår inte av dessa artiklar att principerna verkligen kommer nedifrån det vill säga från enskilda fall och kontexter som Johansson mött i samarbetet med de medicinska forskarna. Frågan tränger sig på om detta möjligen är en efterrationalisering i kappan (även om det måhända stämmer när det gäller frågan om autenticitet, som behandlas i den tredje artikeln och i viss mån den fjärde). Ett annat exempel är den i fjärde artikeln införda distinktionen mellan inneboende etiska frågor (frågor som tekniken i sig väcker) och icke-inneboende etiska frågor (övriga etiska frågor, exempelvis frågor rörande rättvis tillgång till tekniken). Johansson hävdar i kappan att denna distinktion är ny, men är den verkligen det? För mig framstår den som en ganska traditionell distinktion inom tekniketiken.

Sammanfattningsvis är emellertid avhandlingen ett gott hantverk och väl värd att läsa. Den utgör ett originellt bidrag i den svenska etikforskningen.

Anders Nordgren  
Professor, Linköping

*Genèse religieuse de l'état laïque. Textes choisis de Roger Williams* (utgivare Marc Boss; översättning Mireille Hébert; förord Jean Baubérot), specialnummer av *Études théologiques et religieuses* (Hors série, supplément till no 1, volum 88 [2013]). Även Geneve: Les Editions Labor et Fides, 2014 (med samma paginering). 204 sidor.

Den högt rankade tidskriften *Études théologiques et religieuses* vill, enligt förordet till ett specialnummer om Roger Williams, slå hål på två myter. Den ena är att den åtskillnad mellan stat och religion som präglat den franska republiken skulle vara unik. Den andra är

att denna åtskillnad historiskt uteslutande skulle ha grundats i filosofiska och anti-religiösa argument. Detta specialnummer presenterar ett urval texter av Roger Williams (ca 1603-1683), teolog och präst och en av grundarna till det som kom att bli delstaten Rhode Island, där hans idéer om en religiöst neutral och sekulär stat implementerades tidigt.

Den här samlingen texter har ett kort förord av Jean Baubérot och en tämligen omfattande inledning av Marc Boss som också har sammanställt utgivarens noter. Därefter följer fem olika textsjok av Roger Williams, översatta till franska av Mireille Hébert. Boken avslutas med att annex. Ett imponerande arbete har lagts ned på textkritiska kommentarer, som redovisas i den tjugo sidor långa notice éditoriale, men också löpande i fotnoter till texterna.

I det här texturvalet finns olika genrer representerade och olika temata behandlas. Williams dryftar teologiska spörsmål och han ägnar sig åt att beskriva och diskutera sina intryck av kontakten med de amerikanska ursprungsbefolkningarna. Av de cirka hundra sidorna av Williams egna texter som urvalet omfattar är det en ganska liten del som uttryckligen diskuterar huvudtemat för den här boken, den sekulära staten. När det görs är huvudlinjen att staten inte ska ha med religion att göra, att den ska låta människor ha den tro de vill ha. Rent konkret innebär det att staten inte ska pålägga medborgarna avgifter till religiösa ändamål, inte påtvinga dem någon religiös förkunelse, inte ha religiösa inslag i domstolsförhandlingar, eller i ceremonier av civilrättslig karaktär såsom giftermål och begravning. Om civila myndigheter inte blandar sig i religiösa angelägenheter finns det heller ingen grund för att förfölja religiöst olikänkande eftersom det i en religiöst neutral stat inte finns någon som kan kallas "religiöst olikänkande".

För Williams var den mest omedelbara frågan den om frihet för olika kristna samfund, men han drog själv den logiska slutsatsen att den frihet han önskade dessa också måste tillerkännas alla andra i en allmän religionsfrihet. Williams tankar var uppseendeväckande och för många revolutionära. I hans samtid sågs det som anarki att släppa religionen "fri".

Williams anför pragmatiska skäl för religionsfriheten. Han har dock också och kanske framför allt teologiska argument. Han åberopar sig på Jesus, Skriften, Guds vilja och kristendomens principer i sina argument contra förföljelser i religionens namn, contra idén att alla i en viss civil gemenskap måste ha samma religion och mer allmänt contra en sammanblandning av religion och det civila. Han anför Gud, Jesus och Skriften pro samvetsfrihet också för vad han kallar hedningar, judar och muslimer. Värt att notera är att Williams teologiska skäl för att hålla isär stat och religion inte grundar sig på tanken att religiösa människor inte ska ha med världen att skaffa; det handlar hela tiden om att det är staten som inte ska lägga sig i människors religiösa liv.



Intressant är att den Williams som framförde dessa argument för religionsfrihet var vad som i dagens termer skulle kallas fundamentalist och exklusivist. Han förenar alltså en religiös bokstavstro och religiös hängivenhet med en politisk öppenhet och tolerans och en plädering för religionsfrihet. Detta är ett viktigt motto i dagens debatt. Exemplet Williams visar att religiösa fundamentalister inte måste vara ett problem politiskt (även om de naturligtvis kan vara det).

Det finns andra sidor som är mindre spännande och mer problematiska. I Williams texter kan två tendenser utläsas. Den ena är en anda av radikal frihet som ser att religion måste kunna flörera och spela en roll i samhället, utan andra restriktioner än de mest nödvändiga. Den andra tendensen innebär en betoning av andlig frihet och att religion är något som rör enbart den rent andliga sfären. I grunden finns här en tanke att religion är en fråga om relationen mellan Gud och den enskilde människans inre liv. Detta pekar mot en förståelse av religion som något mycket individuellt och helt andligt (hur det nu ska förstås). Det kan ses som ett uttryck för en hållning där religion är apolitisk, icke-konkret och något som endast har med hinders frågor att göra.

Sådana här omdömen om vad som är intressant, spännande eller problematisk hos Williams handlar om hur hans texter läses idag och vilken roll de kan spela i dagens debatt. Williams verkade på 1600-talet och hans texter tillkom i situationer som var annorlunda än våra situationer. För att kunna använda Williams behövs nog en del klargöranden. Vad be-

tyder det att i Williams kontext tala om en sekulär stat? Är det samma sak som en *état laïque* och vad betyder i så fall det? Vad är egentligen *laïcité*? Och hur ser förhållandet ut mellan Williams behov och våra? Vidare, om religion och stat ska skiljas åt är frågan: Vem är fri från vad, i första hand? Det verkar som Williams framför allt ser att religionen måste befrias från staten och från de civila myndigheternas kontroll. Har det någon betydelse för diskussionen i dagens svenska samhälle som snarast ser frågan om att staten och det offentliga rummet bör hållas fritt från religion? Hur ska Williams betoning på religion som en andlig domän förstås när han samtidigt använder just religiösa argument för den sekulära staten?

En fråga måste därför bli i vilken utsträckning *Genèse de l'état laïque* är användbar. Och för vem? Projektet att ge ut Williams texter i den här formen tycks framför allt rikta sig till den som intresserar sig för Williams historiska roll i argumenteringen för och utvecklande av en sekulär stat. Det finns naturligtvis också en del att hämta för den som vill arbeta med frågor om hur religion och stat idag och i framtiden bör förhålla sig till varandra, men det kräver att man står ut med en del arkivarbete och att man har ett visst tålamod med till synes ovidkommande teologiska resonemang i Williams texter och till synes petrimetriga textkritiska kommentarer av utgivaren.

Patrik Fridlund,  
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