Portraits and Handbooks

In one of the long hallways of the theology faculty at Bamberg University – a white corridor, sparsely adorned with stucco in the oldest building of the university, a former Jesuit school – hangs a series of portraits of modern social ethics scholars. They show important contributors to the field such as Wilhelm Korff, Enrique Dussel, Dietmar Mieth, Hans-Joachim Höhn, and Marianne Heimbach-Steins.[1] Every morning on my way to work as an assistant at the chair of religious education I passed by this modern ancestral hall. These portraits stood for continuity and scholarly refinement in one of the youngest disciplines of the theological canon. This self-assertion was particularly important at a time when theology in Bamberg lost its status as an independent faculty and was integrated as a department into the humanities, a process which also called into question the need for the many theological sub-disciplines, such as social ethics, religious education, or practical theology.[2] It might well be that the practical theologian Rolf Zerfaß was moved by

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1 I found that a similar portrait gallery of important theologians hangs in the theological seminary of Tübingen, ending with the portrait of Franz Xaver Arnold (see below) (cf. Schneider 2009, p. 15).

2 Some scholars in the English-speaking world, e.g. Bonnie Miller-McLemore, prefer to call their field pastoral theology, being concerned with the challenges of pastoral workers. Historically, the discipline bears that name and focus as well. Today, many scholars, especially German-speaking, refer to the discipline as practical theology, to show that their area of concern extends beyond the church. Notwithstanding that the term "practical" can encompass other theological sub-disciplines, concerned with the applied side of theology, e.g. religious education, I prefer the term practical theology, as it encompasses the world, its culture, and the daily challenges of pastoral workers living in it. Thus, wherever I talk about the historical developments or positions that focus on the pastoral worker, I use the term pastoral theology. In all other instances, I use the denomination practical theology.

similar sentiments as he often began his lectures with the questions, "Where do we come from?", "Where do we stand?", "Where are we going?". Writing a habilitation thesis in the field of practical theology evokes similar feelings, especially when one comes from the outside – in my case from the fields of Christian social ethics and ecumenical theology: Where do I come from, where does my discipline stand, and where is it going – or, where do I want to take it, especially in times of social and cultural change?

It is hardly unknown that pastoral theology as a university subject begins with Franz Stephan Rautenstrauch's reform of the theological curriculum in 1774, which sought to improve the education and the professional training of Catholic priests in Maria Theresia's Austrian empire. While much has been written about the political circumstances of this reform in enlightened absolutism, which understood priests as a civil servants and the church as a cultural asset to the monarchy, Rainer Bucher's notion that pastoral theology started as a *crisis science* at the beginning of modernity is important for our quest to get to the roots of the discipline's need for self-assertion. Bucher argues that at a time when the old certainties of churchly traditions begin to falter, Rautenstrauch is both aware that there is a disconnect between the theological tradition and the practice of pastors – as well as with the paradigm shifts in science and society of the time – and he is doubtful whether the established disciplines can overcome that rift. The introduction of pastoral theology as a means to scientifically improve the practice of pastors is not only an addition to the theological canon but in essence a modern endeavour: "practice becomes reflexive, i.e. modern"* (Bucher 2001, p. 183). This notion already maps out the coordinates between which practical theology seeks to assert itself; on one axis the tradition of theological scholarship as well as its reception within the church, and on the other the current situation of a breaking down of certainties both in church and in society. Systematic theology, in its assessment of the Second Vatican council, might label these axes *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, arguing that theology needs both. The sociology of science, true to Thomas Kuhn,[3] might look at the graph over time and ask at which points in the history

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3 The systematic theologian Mark Massa has applied Kuhn's concept of paradigm shifts to the development of doctrine (cf. Massa 2008). In an earlier work, Hans Küng has used the terminology as well (cf. e.g. Küng 2018 (1987), 135–178, chapter: Paradigm shifts in Theology and the Natural Sciences*). However, Küng emphasises continuity over discontinuity and in many cases opts not for a new tradition, but a *re*formulation of tradition – bearing in

of theology the crisis was so profound that a paradigm shift occurred and the rules of the discipline were, in part, rewritten.

Scholars today, however, usually want to refrain from such overarching perspectives and understand their work neither as another step in a long line of tradition and refinement nor see it as a break with existing paradigms. Rather, we should direct our attention back to the portrait gallery at Bamberg University. A series of portraits allows the viewer to find commonalities and differences between them. It allows them to abstract from the individual persons to arrive at typologies. The Cologne artist AUGUST SANDER is well known for his photographic typologies of *People of the 20th Century*. While we recognise the seriality in Sander's portraits, which allows us to see what life was like, e.g. in the cities of the Weimar Republic, the artist himself directs us to the individuality of his portraits, arguing that every photograph shows the traces of life in the face of the portrayed person. However, he also makes the point that it takes a trained eye to see them: "A well-known poem says that every person's story is written plainly on their face, although not everyone can read it." (Laporte et al. 2018)[4] In the field of architectural photography, BERND AND HILLA BECHER have produced a similarly large convolute of typologies, in this case of industrial buildings. Like Sander's portraits, the Becher photographs exhibit both seriality in their identical compositions as well as individuality in that they direct the viewers' attention to the differentiating details of each building. In their strict composition and even lighting these photographs forbid any nostalgic idealisation of the days of the heavy coal and steel industry, whose decline they document. To answer Rolf Zerfaß' questions of where I come from, where I am, and where I am going with this habilitation, I propose a small gallery of ancestors in the tradition of both August Sander as well as Bernd and Hilla Becher, which will show both people and places. In doing so, I join not only the ranks of photographers but also those of visual sociologists.[5]

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mind the existential nature of belief systems and the (devastating) impact of paradigm-shattering when it comes to questions about "the wherefrom and whereto of world and man"* (ibid., p. 165).

4 Pierre Laporte relates that quote from August Sander's 5th radio lecture (1931). Cf. the analysis of Sander's topologies by Gabriele Conrath-Scholl and Susanne Lange (Conrath-Scholl and Lange 2004).

5 I have written on visual sociology briefly in my dissertation, albeit in the context of mind maps as visual representations (cf. Henkel 2017, pp. 105–107). Recently I have been particu-

I propose to look into two handbooks that mark the beginning and the current state of modern practical theology from the middle of the 20th to the early 21st century, a time period of tremendous, unparalleled economic and cultural change – which is only fitting for a crisis science. I will start with Karl Rahner's (et al.) *Handbook of Pastoral Theology* from 1964 in the wake of the Second Vatican council and its Copernican shift to the "pastoral principle" (Theobald 2014, pp. 212–213) as a paradigm of understanding the current times with their "joys and hopes, sorrows and fears" (GS 1) as a place where God's word becomes manifest. The second "handbook" will take us to the beginning of the 21st century and help us deal with the uncertainties and ruptures of late modernity from the perspective of English-speaking academia in the United States. We will also switch denominations from the Catholic Herder publishing house to the Methodist Vanderbilt University with its diverse set of students from different religious communities.[6]

The terms 'modernity', 'late modernity', and 'postmodernity' have been used differently by the authors referenced here. While some relate to Jean-François Lyotard's diagnosis of postmodernity as the "end of the large narratives" and then later to Francis Fukuyama's concept of the "end of history", others follow Anthony Gidden's diagnosis, that we are living in late-modern times, where the individual bears the burden of demonstrating his singularity after the breakdown of the collective identities which characterised the power-struggles of modernity. I follow the latter here, especially considering Andreas Reckwitz' *Society of Singularities* (Reckwitz 2019)[7]. According to Reckwitz, the strive for sin-

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larly drawn to the work of Caroline Wanjiku Kihato, who conducts photography workshops for marginalised urban residents to document their daily lives (Wanjiku Kihato 2010), and the work of Roman Williams, who uses a photography in his analysis of inter-religious settings (Williams 2015, 2016).

6 There is another important handbook project at the end of the 20th century, namely Herbert Haslingers *Handbuch Praktische Theologie* (1999). The omission of it does not deny its significance for the discipline. On the contrary, it will be referenced throughout the book.

7 In his text on the *Differences of Late Modernity**, the practical theologian Christian Bauer follows the same terminology, emphasising the the ambivalence and potential brutality of the times we live in: "The decisive difference between postmodernity and late-modernity is the contrast between plurality and difference. Our present time is not a *postmodern* field of flowers of colourful plurality where pastoral theology could restrict itself to a semantic picking of empirical flower buds. Rather, it is a *late-modern* battleground of steely [cf. the metaphorical and material qualities of steel discussed in this book, C.P.] multiplicities […]

gularity has also influenced late-modern architecture, which is an important context for our work here:

> With its repetitive structures, the International Style seems rather monotonous, and it has largely been neglected since the 1980s in favour of unique designs. So much so that it seems necessary for today's museums, concert halls, flagship stores, and apartment buildings to be built in an original style [...]. In globalised and urbanised late modernity, the interchangeable spaces of classical modernity are to be replaced with recognisable individual places, each with a unique atmosphere that can be associated with specific narratives and memories. [...] It is no surprise, then, that the late-modern subjects who move in these environments seek satisfaction in the particular. The type of subject that predominated in the West up to the 1970s – that is, the average employee with an average family in the suburbs [...] – has become, in Western societies, an apparently conformist negative foil to be avoided by the late-modern subject.* (ibid., pp. 8–9)

The portraits of these two handbook-projects and their authors will be accompanied by portraits of the places where these projects came to be realised: the *Herder* publishing house in Freiburg, where Karl Rahner met with his co-authors, and the campus of *Vanderbilt University*, home to Bonnie Miller-McLemore. My aim is to raise awareness not just for these places, but for their details and their materiality in particular. Steel will be prominently featured here, as it will when we come to the corporate campus in the following chapter.

Figure 1: August Sander: Victim of Persecution, c. 1938; Catholic Priest, 1927; Young Farmers, 1914 / Bernd and Hilla Becher: Water Towers 1972-2009

> Take a look at the aforementioned three images from August Sander's "People of the 20th Century" series. They can be found on the website of the *August Sander Stiftung*. Compare these images with the "Water Towers" series by Bernd and Hilla Becher. An installation view showing the seriality of the images can be found on the website of the *Tate* – formerly known as the Tate Gallery – which has six complete typologies by Bernd and Hilla Becher in its collection.

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where [pastoral theology] has to prove itself not just discursively but existentially" (Bauer 2014, p. 32).