

# China and the World – the World and China

Volume 4

## Transcultural Perspectives on Global China

Edited by Barbara Mittler and Catherine Vance Yeh



# **China and the World – the World and China**

Essays in Honor of Rudolf G. Wagner

Edited by  
Barbara MITTLER,  
Joachim & Natascha GENTZ  
and Catherine Vance YEH

Deutsche Ostasienstudien 37

**OSTASIEN Verlag**

The editors thank Yang Jiechang 杨洁苍 for permission to use his picture “Mountains and Rivers so Beautiful (Country of Movements 1949–2019)” for the cover layout of the four volumes of this work. They also thank Carma Hinton for contributing her calligraphy “Every Day is a Good Day”, Nanny Kim for her many paintings and pseudo-calligraphies, and Mark Elvin for his “Sequoia in the Sierra Nevada, California”, painted in 1963.

Die vorliegende Publikation wurde durch die großzügige Unterstützung der Konfuzius-Institute an den Universitäten Heidelberg und Edinburgh und durch die Boston University, Department of World Languages & Literatures, ermöglicht.



Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliographische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

ISBN: 978-3-946114-63-5

© 2019. OSTASIEN Verlag, Gossenberg ([www.ostasien-verlag.de](http://www.ostasien-verlag.de))

1. Auflage. Alle Rechte vorbehalten

Redaktion, Satz und Umschlaggestaltung: Martin Hanke und Dorothee Schaab-Hanke

Druck und Bindung: Rosch-Buch Druckerei GmbH, Scheßlitz

Printed in Germany

**Volume 4**

**Transcultural Perspectives on Global China**

Edited by  
Barbara MITTLER  
and  
Catherine Vance YEH

# Table of Contents

## Volume 1: Transcultural Perspectives on Pre-modern China

*Das Alte China (Nanny KIM)*

FOREWORD	IX
The Joys of Transculturality – or Research and Teaching between China and the World: A Tribute to Rudolf G. Wagner (Monica JUNEJA and Barbara MITTLER)	

Editor's Introduction (Joachim GENTZ)	XV
---------------------------------------	----

*Every Day Is a Good Day (Carma HINTON)*

Zhuangzi's Twinkle and Methods without Truth (Joachim GENTZ)	1
Materialität antiker Handschriften: Beispiele aus China (Enno GIELE)	25
Concepts of "Authenticity" and the Chinese Textual Heritage in Light of Excavated Texts (Anke HEIN)	37

*Interpretation aufschwankendem Grund 1 (Nanny KIM)*

Biographical Genres and Biography: The Case of Yan Zun 嚴遵 (CHEN Zhi)	67
The Rule of Law in Eastern Han China: Some Cases of Murder, Suicide, Theft, and Private Dispute (Robin D. S. YATES)	83
Zhao Qi 趙岐 and Late Han Pedantic Conceptual Analysis (Christoph HARBSMEIER)	107

*Interpretation aufschwankendem Grund 2 (Nanny KIM)*

Antlers? Or Horns? Towards Understanding Gan Bao 干寶, the Historian (Michael SCHIMMELPFENNIG)	121
Kumārajīva's "Voice"? (Michael RADICH)	131

*Emptiness 1 (Nanny KIM)*

Transcending Boundaries: Afterlife Conceptions in Entombed Epitaphs and Votive Steles of the Six Dynasties' Period (Friederike ASSANDRI)	149
Motifs Traveled with Intentions: Mapping Tang China and the World through Pictorial Screens in Nara Period Japan (710–794) (WANG Yizhou)	171

*Emptiness 2 (Nanny KIM)*

Studying Fears of Witchcraft in Traditional China: A Close Reading of Three Examples from Hong Mai's <i>The Records of a Listener</i> (Barend TER HAAR)	203
<i>Chi</i> 癡, <i>pi</i> 癖, <i>shi</i> 嗜, <i>hao</i> 好: Genealogies of Obsession in Chinese Literature (LI Wai-yeec)	213
Entangled Histories: Insights Gained from a Hodological Approach to the <i>Blue Beryl's</i> Thanka on Metaphors of the Body (Elisabeth HSU)	233

*Emptiness 3 (Nanny KIM)*

Manchu Sources and the Problem of Translation (Mark ELLIOTT)	251
Kalmyk Echoes, Torghut Returns: Poet-Exiles in a Time of Shrinking Frontiers (Haun SAUSSY)	265

## Volume 2: Transcultural Perspectives on Late Imperial China

*Die späte Kaiserzeit China (Nanny KIM)*

Editors' Introduction (Natascha GENTZ and Catherine Vance YEH)	IX
--	----

*Kommunikationsknoten 1 (Nanny KIM)*

Kim Chǒng-hŭi 金正喜 (1786–1856): A Late Chosŏn Korean Yangban 兩班 in Qing China (Benjamin A. ELMAN)	1
---	---

Early Protestant Historiography and the Travel of Some European “National Characters” to China: Karl F. A. Gützlaff's <i>Gujin wanguo gangjian</i> 古今萬國綱鑑 (1838) (Federica CASALIN)	23
---	----

Para/Texts and the Construction of Life Histories in Women's Literary Collections in Late Imperial China: The Case of Chen Yunlian 陳蘊蓮 (ca. 1800–ca. 1860) (Grace S. FONG)	39
--	----

*Kommunikationsknoten 2 (Nanny KIM)*

Shanghai as Entertainment: The Cultural Construction and Marketing of Leisure, 1850–1910 (Catherine Vance YEH)	51
---	----

从戏剧到演说——晚清画报中的声音 (CHEN Pingyuan 陈平原)	91
--------------------------------------	----

視覺奇觀與權力地理——《點石齋畫報》緬甸的空間政治與文化敘事 (CHENG Wen-huei 鄭文惠)	109
--	-----

*Kommunikationsknoten 3 (Nanny KIM)*

The Pitfalls of Transnational Distinction: A Royal Exchange of Honors and Contested Sovereignty in Late Qing China (Elisabeth KASKE)	137
---	-----

Medical Translation in Canton, 1850–1918 (Ellen WIDMER)	171
---	-----

Kant in China: Eine philosophische Wahlverwandschaft (Joachim KURTZ)	181
--	-----

*Kommunikationsknoten 4 (Nanny KIM)*

Ying Lianzhi: A Journalist Misfit Negotiating the Founding of the Tianjin <i>Dagongbao</i> (Natascha GENTZ)	201
--	-----

Shandong, the Yellow River, the Local and the Global (Iwo AMELUNG)	229
--	-----

從華夷之「辨」到華夷之「變」——華語語系研究再思考 (David WANG 王德威)	259
--	-----

## Volume 3: Transcultural Perspectives on Modern China

*Das moderne China (Nanny KIM)*

Editors' Introduction (Barbara MITTLER and Natascha GENTZ)	IX
--	----

*Worte ohne Schrift 1 (Nanny KIM)*

Is There a Common Reader in This Text? Understandings of Cholera in Daily-Use Compendia (Joan JUDGE)	1
---	---

Useful New Knowledge for Everyone to Digest? Transcultural Remakings of the Encyclopedic in the <i>Encyclopedic Dictionary of New Knowledge</i> ( <i>Xin wenhua cishu</i> 新文化辭書, Shanghai 1923) (Barbara MITTLER)	25
---	----

<i>Xin wenhua cishu</i> ( <i>An Encyclopedic Dictionary of New Knowledge</i> ): An Exploratory Reading (Leo Ou-fan LEE)	41
--	----

*Worte ohne Schrift 2 (Nanny KIM)*

Betting on a Cardinal Virtue: Transcultural Formations in Shanghai Finance (Bryna GOODMAN)	55
---	----

Cultural Imperialism Redux? Reassessing the Christian Colleges of Republican China (Elizabeth J. PERRY and Hang TU)	69
--	----

*Worte ohne Schrift 3 (Nanny KIM)*

The Emergence of the Modern Civil Engineer in China, 1900–1940 (Pierre-Étienne WILL)	91
---	----

Steaming Toward the Future: Cao Ming, Locomotive, and Transcultural Socialism (Nicolai VOLLAND)	111
--	-----

<i>Waiguo Qiaomin</i> : A Few Comments on the CCP's Policy Toward Foreigners in the Late 1940s (Flavia SOLIERI)	121
--	-----

*Worte ohne Schrift 4 (Nanny KIM)*

The South China Sea and How It Turned into “Historically” Chinese Territory in 1975 (Johannes L. KURZ)	133
---	-----

Beijing Water 1908–2008: The Development of China's Capital as Seen through the Lens of Its Most Elusive Resource (Thomas HAHN)	161
--	-----

*Worte ohne Schrift 5 (Nanny KIM)*

Xi Jinping and the Art of Chrono-Ideological Engineering (Heike HOLBIG)	183
---	-----

Innovationsrhetorik chinesischer Prägung: Eine Analyse der Rede Xi Jinpings vom 9. Juni 2014 vor der Chinesischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Peking (Christian SCHWERMANN)	201
--	-----

## Volume 4: Transcultural Perspectives on Global China

*China und Europa (Nanny KIM)*

Editors' Introduction (Barbara MITTLER and Catherine Vance YEH) IX

*Worte ohne Schrift 6 (Nanny KIM)*

是享受、还是忍受“形单影只” – 比较视野中的“孤独”问题 (LIU Dong 刘东) 1

The Quest for Chinese Tea (Dietmar ROTHERMUND) 13

*Worte ohne Schrift 7 (Nanny KIM)*

Einige Gedanken zu Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft in China und dem Westen 29  
(Helwig SCHMIDT-GLINTZER)

China in Global Context: An Alternative Perspective on World History (Paul A. COHEN) 41

Why is Esperanto so Popular in Japan? The Case of Shimada Kenji (Joshua FOGEL) 53

*Worte ohne Schrift 8 (Nanny KIM)*

Another China. Representations of China and the Chinese 61  
in European Comics and Graphic Novels (Michael LACKNER)

Lost in Transhimalayan Transculturality. Opium, Horses 79  
and an Englishman between China, Tibet and Nepal (Axel MICHAELS)

Karl Marx's Critique of Religion and Christian Theology (Michael WELKER) 89

*Worte ohne Schrift 9 (Nanny KIM)*

The Expansive Scholar (Perry LINK) 99

汉学界的“广大教主” – 我眼中的瓦格纳先生 (XIA Xiaohong) 夏晓虹 101

Der Meister der Bonmots: Eher eine freundliche Polemik als ein giftiger Essay 105  
zur Frage der Sinologie als Wissenschaft (Wolfgang KUBIN)

Rudolf Wagner and the Taiping Rebellion: A “Culturalistic” Approach 111  
(Jan ASSMANN)

Rudolf G. Wagner's Photographic Memory (Nara DILLON) 115

*Sequoia in the Sierra Nevada, California, 1963 (Mark ELVIN)*

A Handful of *Haiku* (Mark ELVIN) 119

Moving Mountains: Of Foolish Old Men Who Want to Move Mountains – 127  
Berge versetzen: Von verrückten alten Männern, die Berge versetzen wollen –  
愚公移山 (Barbara MITTLER)

Two Images from Mount Tai, in Homage to Rudolf Wagner (Lothar LEDDEROSE) 133

*Worte ohne Schrift 10 (Nanny KIM)*

### APPENDIX

List of Publications by Rudolf G. Wagner 139

Of Sun, Moon and Stars: Con-/Traversing China and the World in Salon Style 149  
– in place of a Tabula Congratulatoria (Barbara MITTLER)

Cover Image: Yang Jiechang's *Mountains and Rivers so Beautiful* 153  
(*Country of Movements 1949–2019*)





# Karl Marx's Critique of Religion and Christian Theology

Michael WELKER (Heidelberg)

Since our joint work in the Research Training Group “Religion and Normativity” in the 1990s, I have felt a friendly connection with Rudolf Wagner. The intellectual exchange with him – often interrupted by our long-term stays abroad – was always fruitful and stimulating. I greet him in this volume in his honor with a contribution that my colleagues at Fudan University, Shanghai, asked me to make at the beginning of 2019, they asked me to reflect on Karl Marx's Critique of Religion and Christian Theology.

Indeed, the harshest critique of religion in European modernity was developed in Germany by Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century. Up until now they are regarded as the most important classics of the modern criticism of religion. Both thinkers not only deal critically with Christian religion and piety, but also with their philosophical predecessors who are critical of religion and of society. Thus, they do not only attack illusionary religious world views, but also moralizing philosophies critical of religion. As a result, their own criticism of religion receives a special impact. It expands into a broad critique of worldviews and culture.

The most brilliant minds in German-speaking Christian theology in the 20th century – I only name Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich – have learned from this broadly-based criticism of religion, morality and worldview. They realized that a Christian theology that self-critically wants to ward off religious and metaphysical illusions and wishful thinking, but also political and moral ideologies, had better learn from Marx and Nietzsche. With regard to Karl Marx, I would like to briefly present what can be gained from and what is helpful among his critical insights. In the first part of this essay, I present the development of Karl Marx's critique of religion. In the short second part I shall ask what Christian theology can learn from Marx.

## The Development of Karl Marx's Critique of Religion

As is well known, Marx in his early years as a student was an enthusiastic follower of Hegel and also of the so-called left-wing Hegelians, especially Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer and Arnold Ruge. With varying severity, the Left-Hegelians developed a critique of religion and a critique of conservative politics in Germany. They were inspired by the ideal of a revolutionary democracy.

After studying law and philosophy in Bonn and Berlin, the 24-year-old Marx in 1842 became a staff member and then the editor-in-chief of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, a Cologne-based newspaper. Here, he first came across the contributions by Friedrich Engels, son of a German entrepreneur. Engels worked in Manchester and wrote about the situation of the workers in England. Working at the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx also met the Jewish entrepreneur's son Moses Heß who combined his criticism of religion and of society with ideas of an economic transformation of society.

When the Prussian government banned the newspaper in 1843, Marx moved to Paris, where he published the journal *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French Yearbooks) with Arnold Ruge. Already in transition to Paris he detached himself from the criticism of religion and of society as formulated by the left-wing Hegelians, his former friends. Together with Engels, he even published a series of articles in the *German-French Yearbooks* voicing his rather sharp critique of left-wing Hegelianism. Some of the important related titles are: “Die heilige Familie oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten” (The holy family or a critique of critical criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and others); “Theses on Feuerbach”; and “German ideolo-

gy. A critique of recent German philosophy as represented by Feuerbach, B. Bauer and Stirner, and of German socialism and its various prophets". This open break with the socio-critical-philosophical, religio-critical, but also humanitarian socialist tradition must be clearly taken into consideration if one aspires to understand and appreciate the special impact of Karl Marx's critique of religion.

Marx's first groundbreaking text on the topic appears under the inconspicuous title "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie" ("On the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law"). Still under the influence of left-wing Hegelianism, Marx begins as follows:

For Germany the criticism of religion is in the main complete, and criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism.

He then continues:

Religion is the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again (Marx 2005, 175).

In religion, the human being is looked for in the "fantastic reality of heaven" (175). But, according to Marx, the human being is not a "being encamped outside the world" but "Man is *the world of man*, the state, society" (175). This world of man produces religion, and thus, a world-consciousness that is wrong, a

[...] *fantastic realisation* of the human essence because the *human essence* has no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a fight against *the world* of which religion is the spiritual *aroma* (175).

The fight against religion is thus ultimately a fight against a wrong or mistaken world (-view).

Religion plays a strange double role in this struggle against the wrong world. On the one hand, as Feuerbach had already recognized, it draws attention to the wrong world, and it indicates that man has not yet arrived at his true reality. On the other hand, religion obscures man's real situation and replaces his true reality with a fanciful reality.

*Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people (175).

The critique of religion thus aims at giving up the illusion about a state of the world in order to abolish the state itself which requires the illusion. In Marx's words:

Criticism has torn up the imaginary flowers from the chain not so that man shall wear the unadorned, bleak chain but so that he will shake off the chain [...] (176).

But how do we get from unmasking the chain to dropping it? Marx's answer is that we must go *beyond the critique of religion*: "once the *holy form* of human self-estrangement has been unmasked", our task is "to unmask self-estrangement in its *unholy forms*." Marx now demands:

Thus the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of the earth, the *criticism of religion* into the *criticism of law* and the *criticism of theology* into the *criticism of politics* (176).

Therefore, Marx first turns to the leading philosophy of law, that is Hegel's philosophy of law. But how can we criticize this philosophy, what means are available to us? The young Marx answers: Those who accuse philosophy of being in danger of building a dream world, just as religion does, are quite right. But the critics of philosophy believe they can abolish philosophy by turning their backs on it and muttering some angry and banal phrases about it (215). Marx counters these critics who merely appeal and moralize more or less loudly by saying: Do not remain with the critique

of religion and neither with the critique of philosophy. Instead, contribute to making philosophy a power which changes reality. But how can this happen?

Karl Marx's answer to this question takes up impulses from Arnold Ruge, who early recognized the critical power of the media, of journals and magazines. Philosophy becomes a force that changes reality by seizing the masses. Marx goes one step further, formulating:

The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses. (182).

Critical theory has to grasp "the *complete loss* of man" and to pursue "the *complete rewinning of man*" (186). The total loss of man and the power of the total recovery of man encounters philosophy in the proletariat. By seizing the proletariat, philosophy is realized by the proletariat:

As philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *spiritual* weapons in philosophy. And once the lightning of thought has squarely struck this ingenuous soil of the people the emancipation of the *Germans* into *human beings* will take place (187).

Marx is a true dialectician in that he uses philosophy and at the same time engages in its sublation. He also draws on the insights of Hegel and Moses Hess, who elaborated on the struggle between "master and servant", between "proletariat and wealth".

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement.

Both sides contribute to the preservation of injustices.

But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognises estrangement as *its own power* and has in it the *semblance* of a human existence.

It behaves conservatively. The class of the proletariat, on the other hand,

[...] feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence (Marx/Engels 1975, 36).

It therefore behaves in a destructive manner in this dialectical relationship. Left-wing Hegelians with their critical ideologies, on the other hand, are preventing this destructive impulse from being put into practice. They prevent the masses from seizing philosophy as they do not consider the real person and his/her real conflicts, they remain elitist because they do not get involved in the real conflicts of the masses.

Marx now accuses his former friend Bruno Bauer and his followers of completely uncritical behaviour towards methods of critique. His decisive objection is severe:

The act of transforming society is reduced to the *cerebral activity* of Critical Criticism (86).

Marx points out that through the fight against speculative theology, Feuerbach has already been driven to fight speculative philosophy, and has regarded philosophical speculation as the last pillar of theology. A few months later, however, Marx detaches himself just as decisively from Feuerbach as he had previously detached himself from Bruno Bauer. According to Marx, Feuerbach does not see clearly why religious and speculative worlds of the afterlife should have arisen. That is why he cannot really contribute to the practical revolution in the real world. Feuerbach also remains stuck in the investigation of alienated living conditions and their verbal criticism. Marx programmatically opposes him:

The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it (Marx 1976, 5).

The religious socialism of Moses Hess appears to be the first to focus on a revolutionary, practically-critical activity that changes the world. He takes up on conditions of social injustice, and the conflicts between rich and poor, calls them by name and wants to tame those property relations which separate people by forming parties, by “forming associations”. But then, with the help of Friedrich Engels, Marx also detaches himself from the socialist theory of Moses Hess: above all, his socialism does not recognize and overcome the social conditions that have brought about the division between rich and poor. It appeals only to overcoming in theory, not in practice, and draws its strength from moral convictions, from a transcendent point of view.

Arnold Ruge’s conception of media developments, magazines and critical public discourse, so Marx contends, also remains stuck in a “socialist humanism”. This humanism, which is still characteristic of many politically progressive movements in the West and most liberation movements today, is morally directed against inhumanity. In this way, however, it does not grasp and change the immanent conditions and the laws of domination of humans over humans. Instead of changing them, socialist humanism as he conceives it, appeals, it waits, it urges but never actively instigates change. It keeps itself in limbo, at the same time waiting for the revolution and attempting to forestall the revolution with political and social actions and reforms. Marx frees himself from this level of thinking on the basis of Engels’ impulses. As he concentrates on the laws of economic reality and on the development of economic practice, the material base, Marx now connects a focus on changing the economic conditions in which people live with ideas that theory becomes a historically effective force only when it seizes the masses. With this step, he reaches the level of mature Marxism, as presented, for the first time, in his “Manifesto of the Communist Party” of 1848.

As is well known, this manifesto begins with the thesis:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. [...] [O]ppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another (Marx/Engels 1976, 482).

This situation did not change in the modern bourgeois society but was only transformed by establishing other conditions of oppression and other forms of confrontation than those that had existed in feudal society.

In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it [the bourgeoisie] has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. (487).

Paradoxically, these relations of exploitation are difficult to grasp and difficult to negate. They are difficult to grasp, because a *permanent* revolution of production, a permanent change of production goes hand in hand with an uninterrupted upheaval of all social conditions.

[E]verlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones (487).

The relations of exploitation are difficult to negate, for they are establishing themselves worldwide.

In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations (488).

In this situation, complaints about the terrible state of the world and moral appeals to people to change social conditions as quickly as possible are not at all sufficient. Rather, one needs to see things in the eye: the bourgeoisie, in its struggle against feudalism, has forged the weapons that, as Marx says, will bring its own death. It has also produced the people who will carry these weapons – the modern workers, the proletarians. In the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for increased possession and increased power over the means of production, parts of the ruling class will fall and become part of the proletariat. This would supply the proletariat with a mass of

educational elements that, if they work effectively for the proletariat and for the abolition of private property, would unite above all in the communist movement.

This Communist movement assumes that bourgeois society is incapable of ruling because it is incapable of securing the existence of its slaves even within their slavery, because it is forced to let them sink into a situation where they must feed the slaves instead of being fed by them. The mature theory of economic-historical materialism runs as follows: Every analysis, every critique, every change in social reality is an analysis and a change in the economic structure of society, more precisely in the conditions of production. The conditions of production are the real basis of all orders, of all forms of thought and behavior of a society, up to the sensations, illusions and views of life. There is an inherent logic of development in the conditions of production. Whoever grasps this logic of development knows why a social situation, including seemingly purely individual behavior, has become as it is and can foresee how further development will proceed.

Every development takes place because of a fundamental conflict between the productive forces of society and ownership structures. The expression of this conflict is class division. There are basically two positions in the production process: owners and non-owners of means of production. Initially, ownership structures are an incentive and a driving force for the development of productive forces, but then there is a reversal. The productive forces generate the preconditions for their own redundancy, and the property relations turn into fetters of the productive forces. Then comes an era of social revolutions. Property relations are redefined and new forms of productive forces inevitably emerge. This distinguishes the economic epochs/ages and controls the course of history.

### **What Can Christian Theology Learn from Karl Marx?**

Until about 20 years ago, many European intellectuals and politicians still asked: Do we go into a future of humankind with or without religion? This question has shifted to the question: Do we go into a future of humankind with a cultivated or uncultivated religion? We encounter uncultivated religion in tyrannical forms (aggressive fundamentalism and terrorism) or in chaotic forms (stupid, silly, volatile religiosity). Since serious statistics predict that despite strong secularization in the West, the percentage of more or less religiously-bound people worldwide will rise from 85% to 87%, criticism of religion is an important task. As Marx and Lenin clearly saw, it cannot be replaced by prohibition and persecution of religion, because this will only enhance its growth in the long run.

The critical and self-critical academic examination of religion is one of the main tasks of theology. It can certainly begin with the statement of the young Marx:

*Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress.

Religion is indeed concerned with human misery, but also with human greatness and dignity, and with the immense range of human existence. On the one hand, as religious writings say, human life is a life "from dust to dust" – on the other hand, man is made „only a little lower than God himself“.

Many religions have their roots in the family ethos and thus propagate the protection of the weak, the children, the sick, the old. But then they go beyond the family ethos and propagate a humanity that is not only out for good neighbourliness but also for peaceful relations with dissenters, even enemies. An honest diagnosis of real human misery is a strong concern of cultivated

religion. The strong diaconal connections of religion and welfare work and education in the history of mankind make this clear.<sup>1</sup>

Marx admits that the protest against human misery is characteristic of religion. But protest is not enough. His criticism of religion is even instructive for us today in the fact that he recognizes no help in mere protest. Protest might even bring a possible concealment of misery. Religious moralism and secularized moralism, as Marx clearly sees it, usually do not help. In a world society so strongly dominated by the power of the media, it is not possible to raise this issue loud enough: mere complaints about unjust conditions and mere appeals to overcome them are not enough. We must act.

This doctrine should find its way into every theological critique of religion. Western humanism has striven for a solution in the division of powers. Within this division of powers, politics and religion work together, but in a spirit of constructive mutual criticism in order to realize an ethos and a practice of justice and of the protection of the weak.

Marx and Engels saw clearly that this goal cannot be achieved without a realistic grasp of the economic conditions and the critical work for their transformation towards just and humane living conditions. Whereas politics has learned this lesson to some extent in the economically successful countries, the economic analytical and socio-political forces of religion are still largely underdeveloped. Here we must learn self-critically by resorting to a theology anchored in the academy. Today, however, a theology critical of religion must also make clear that, again spoken with Karl Marx, a mere preoccupation of religion with itself is insufficient.

Not only is the constant examination and distinction between true and false religion important, but also the critical examination of the economy, the media, the law, science and humanities, politics, education, the medical system and the defence system.<sup>2</sup> All of these systems, along with the powers of the family, shape successful societies on this earth. A demanding social analysis must go beyond the concentration on politics and economics if it is to fight against human misery and for the material development of just and freedom-loving living conditions, in the spirit of Marx's intentions.

## References

- Hagen, Jürgen von (ed.). *The Impact of the Economic Market on Character Formation, Ethical Education, and the Communication of Values in Late Modern Pluralistic Societies*, to be published as: Hagen and Welker 2019–2020, Vol. 1.
- , Michael Welker et. al. (eds.). *Character Formation, Ethical Education, and the Communication of Values in Late Modern Pluralistic Societies*. Leipzig: EVA, 2019–2020.
- Cohen, Jack et. al. (eds. and trans.). *Marx and Engels 1844–1845*. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works, vol. 4. New York: International Publishers, 1975.
- et al. (eds. and trans.). *Marx and Engels 1845–1848*. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works, vol. 6. New York: International Publishers, 1976.
- et al. (eds. and trans.). *Marx and Engels 1843–1844*. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works, vol. 3. New York: International Publishers, 2005.
- Dutt, Clemens et. al. (eds. and trans.). *Marx and Engels 1845–1847*. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works, vol. 5. New York: International Publishers, 1976.

---

1 Welker 2014.

2 Cf. Hagen and Welker 2019/20, a series in preparation of ten book publications on “Character Formation, Ethical Education, and the Communication of Values in Late Modern Pluralistic Societies”.

- Marx, Karl. "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law", in: Cohen et. al. 2005, 3-129.
- . "Theses on Feuerbach", in: Dutt et. al. 1976, 3-5.
- , and Frederick Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Cohen 1976, 477-519.
- . "The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Company", in: Cohen et. al. 1975, 9-211.
- Welker, Michael. "The Power of Mercy in Biblical Law", *Journal of Law and Religion* 29.2 (2014), 225-235.
- (ed.). *The Impact of Religion on Character Formation Ethical Education, and the Communication of Values in Late Modern Pluralistic Societies*, to be published as: Hagen and Welker 2019–2020, Vol. 2.