

Tracing the Search for Mother God in Ex 19, 4 and Dt 32, 11 and Cultural Analysis by Mimetic Theory by René Girard

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Abstract

Inquiries are begun with very simple opinions. Does God exist as a gender-masculine? Was the Bible written only by men? In this sense, we can argue that God has the quality mother and all of the Bible was not written by men. Of course, this argument might not be 100% fact, but be probable. Or it seems a logical leap. Although there is such an objection, it could be shown that there is a new perspective that quits interpreting the Bible in only the way of men's view.

Silvia Schroer may indicate how a certain animal and its body part influenced the Israelite concept of God in the Old Testament. Using the archaeological findings, she analyzes that the vulture “nsr” (רשן) is symbolized as a goddess and hides behind the deity in ancient Israel

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and the Old Testament. Nevertheless, almost every bible text translates the word “nsr” (נשר) not as a ‘vulture’ but as an ‘eagle’, a typical male image of God. With regard to this situation, it can be in doubt that the authors have manipulated statements of women in Scripture. In order to expose the discrimination and manipulation, the memetic theory by René Girard is of use.

The study is about looking for traces of the goddess in ancient iconographies of the Near East and Egypt, and if and how this imagery reflects or penetrates Israel’s mind. The Bible uses the phenomenon of the animal as a divine symbol. These facts show that the religious symbolism of Asia Minor and Egypt has been added unnoticed to the God-experience of Israel.

- Keywords

Silvia Schroer, René Girard, vulture, goddess, mimetic theory, scapegoat, Exodus 19,4 and Deuteronomy 32,11

1. Introduction

The fact is well known that compared to today, in earlier societies the social status of women was very low. How so? It could be guessed that originally matriarchal or at least matrifocal civilizations were repressed by the patriarchal culture because the woman has a weaker body than the man. Was the status of the woman in the society at that time so low that it was not at the center of civilization? For this sense, we may first assume that the Scriptures were mostly written by men. Perhaps it could be understood that she seldom had a chance to speak publicly in front of an audience. Nevertheless, there is especially the “Book of Judith” as a woman who has spoken for the Israelite!

Of course, the Bible is focused on the addressees. In addition, we may assume that the Bible’s social, political, and cultural background was reflected by the authors as children of the time, even though the Bible is inspired by the Spirit of God. Some questions will arise:

- i) Suppose that all authors of the Bible are men. Are political and social measures possibly ideologic, so that women in a society could be unconsciously discriminated against and oppressed?
- ii) Was there then an intra-societal relationship between women and men in the form of rivalry and competition or conflict?
- iii) Did the authors perhaps manipulate statements of women in Scripture?
- iv) Are the Bible’s only references to freeing male views reflected in when the Bible is written masculine?

In fact, the Bible does not recognize gods and goddesses. In the Old

Testament, only the name of Israel's god applies. Although anthropologically recognized and believed that God exists and that He can intervene directly in human history, the one who believes in Him is the human being. For this reason, one can find out from the insight into the basic human constitutions how God revealed Himself to her or him.

Generally, humans are educated by parents. Faith is first handed down to the human being by the parents before it is guaranteed by a social system. Children should first be influenced by the mother. If women would have written the Bible, the Bible would have been different today.

Let's talk about gods and goddesses. What about the gods and the goddesses? Is a dualism that separates God from gods and goddesses justified? Perhaps this dualism itself is contradictory and rather a design with which human always wants to determine God by the human scale. This process can be a human self-idolatry, i. e. one designs the nature of God with a tendency to immanence.

But it should be asserted that God transcends character of the masculine and that of feminine and is essentially transcendent. Nonetheless, it must be not unjust to search and ask about God as gods and goddesses. When, because of the perverse traditions and cultures, human is in the state of non-salvation, it is always good to correct those traditions and cultures and rediscover the hidden core of the Bible.

This is the point of view of problem tradition and hermeneutics. Some essays by Silvia Schroer may indicate how a certain animal and its body part influenced the Israelite concept of God in the Old Testament. Using the archaeological findings, Schroer analyzes that the vulture was symbolized as a goddess and hid behind the deity in ancient

Israel and the Old Testament. However, almost every Bible text translates the word “nsr”(נשר) not as a ‘vulture’ but as an ‘eagle’, a typical male image of God.

I try to apply the theory of René Girard to this case, because his mimetic theory not only applies in many areas, including religious studies, cultural and literary criticism, theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology and mythology, but also give answers to former i)-iv) questions. If the Bible can classify a literature and contradict the constitutional and social situation at that time, it is possible to interpret and analyze it according to the mimetic theory.

Compared to exegesis, his mimetic theory seems to be general and extensive. However, by observing the concrete literature and myths, he exposes the basal inclination, character and nature of human. If the myth may imply a prototype and original event, history or tradition reveals a social phenomenon. If men have covered women’s trace in the Bible, we miss the female character of God. Thus, this paper is about Schroer’s insights and Girard’s mimetic theory and aimed at showing that the Bible contains female authors or at least is influenced by thought and lifestyle of women. In this sense, God’s quality will be revealed in the new dimension.

Regarding the female characters in the Bible, one cannot claim that all scriptures were written by male authors only. Even though men wrote the Bible, the stories and tales of women could unconsciously and unbelievably have influenced the Scriptures. Where Girard talks about scapegoat phenomena, he keeps emphasizing that women are among the scapegoats of choice. As the scapegoat they took the sacrifice of collective power so that they could bring salvation into the world and reconcile it to God. Probably, the word ‘nsr’ represents two

kinds of direction, i. e. one is negative and another positive. The former shows the suffering woman accompanied by disease and death, the latter by reconciliation with God. These examples of many female figures and kinds of scapegoats can be found in the Bible and the mimetic theory.

2. Exodus 19, 4 and Deuteronomy 32, 11

אתם ראתם אשר עשיתי למצרים ואשא **Exodus 19:4**

אתכם על־כנפי נשרים ואבא אתכם אלי

Exodus 19:4 αὐτοὶ ἐωράκατε ὅσα πεποίηκα τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις καὶ ἀνέλαβον ὑμᾶς ὥσπερ ἐπὶ πτερύγων ἀετῶν καὶ προσηγαγόμην ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἑμαυτόν

Exodus 19:4 vos ipsi vidistis quae fecerim Aegyptiis quomodo portaverim vos super alas aquilarum et adsumpserim mihi

Exodus 19:4 Ihr habt gesehen, was ich den Ägyptern angetan und wie ich euch auf Adlerflügeln getragen und euch zu mir gebracht habe.

Exodus 19:4 Ihr habt gesehen, was ich den Ägyptern angetan habe, wie ich euch auf Adlerflügeln getragen und hierher zu mir gebracht habe.

Exodus 19:4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

Exodus 19:4 Ihr habt selbst gesehen, was ich den Ägypten getan und wie ich euch auf Geiersflügeln getragen und euch hierher zu mir gebracht habe(Silvia Schroer).¹

Namen Selber habt ihr gesehen, was ich an Ägypten tat, ich trug

¹ Silvia Schroer, "Die Göttin und der Geier," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins*

euch auf Adlerflügeln und ließ euch kommen zu mir(Franz Rosenzweig / Martin Buber).²

Deuteronomy 32:11 כְּנֶשֶׁר יַעֲרֹךְ קֶנֶד על־נוֹצָיו יִרְחֹף יִפְרֹשׁ

כְּנֶשֶׁר יִקְחֵהוּ תְּפֹאֵהוּ עַל־אֲבָרָהוּ:

Deuteronomy 32:11 ὥς ἀετὸς σκεπάσαι νοσσιὰν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς νεοσσοῖς αὐτοῦ ἐπεπόθησεν διεὶς τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐδέξατο αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀνέλαβεν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τῶν μεταφρένων αὐτοῦ

Deuteronomy 32:11 sicut aquila provocans ad volandum pullos suos et super eos volitans expandit alas suas et adsumpsit eum atque portavit in umeris suis

Deuteronomium 32:11 Wie der Adler sein Nest aufstört, über seinen Jungen schwebt, seine Flügel ausbreitet, sie aufnimmt, sie trägt auf seinen Schwingen,

Deuteronomium 32:11 wie der Adler, der sein Nest beschützt und über seinen Jungen schwebt, der seine Schwingen ausbreitet, ein Junges ergreift und es flügelschlagend davonträgt.

Deuteronomy 32:11 As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions,

Deuteronomium 32:11 Wie ein Geier, der seine Brut zum Flug aufstört und über seinen Jungen schwebt, so breitete er seine Flügel aus, nahm es (Israel) und trug es auf seinem Fittich(Silvia Schroer).³

Reden Wie ein Adler erweckt seinen Horst, über seinen Nestlingen

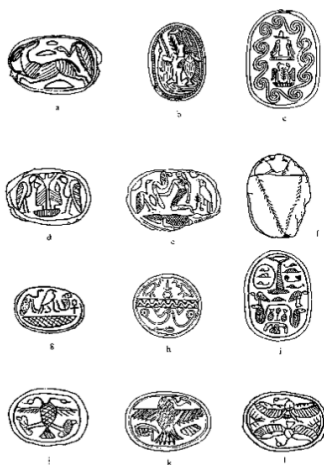
111(1995), 60-80. Hier 69.

2 Martin Buber, *Die fünf Bücher der Weisung*, Verdeutsch von Martin Buber gemeinsam mit Franz Rosenzweig (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1976), 203.

3 Silvia Schroer, "Die Göttin und der Geier," 70.

schwingt, seine Flügel spreitet, eins aufnimmt, es auf seinem Fittich trägt(Franz Rosenzweig/ Martin Buber).⁴

Both texts⁵ speak of a bird and its body part. It is said that the eagle or vulture carries its young on its wings. This is the common denominator in both texts. They happened in the mountains Sinai and Nebo and are statements of Moses himself. One report (Ex 19:4) is given by God through Moses, and the other (Deut 32:11) is a reminder of Moses' works on the Israelites. These two texts contain God YHWH's attribute and have a metaphorical and figurative character.



This bird “nsr” (רשן) is controversial in translation, whether it is the eagle or vulture. These pictures⁶ present various vultures. *Kanap* (כנף.) is clearly the wing, but even in Deuteronomy there are variations in the movements of the bird and the wings, namely “swinging”, “winged”, “disturbed”, “floating”, “Spreads”, “protects”, “wing-striking”, “swings”, “spreads”, “carries”.

Exodus 19 tells the Sinai-theophany. This chapter is at the center of the story of the revelation of YHWH. The Israelites were led by Moses through the desert in front of Mount Sinai. “This ‘Sinai theology’ fully

4 Martin Buber, *Die fünf Bücher der Weisung*, 561.

5 Lists of Version of the Bible is in the order: Masoretic Text, Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, El-derfelder Bibel, Einheitsübersetzung (“Unity Translation”) and the New Revised Standard Version.

6 Silvia Schroer, “Die Göttin und der Geier,” 77.

relies on the special existence of Israel revealed in the Exodus and the ability and willingness of Israel to accept the terms of the treaty and live the covenant with its God.”⁷

Who is the god of the Israelites? Here he is described as a bird. “You have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, how I carried you on eagle or vulture wings and brought you here to me.” There, this eagle or vulture represents the very powerful and mighty character of God. Yes, he fights even against the enemies and permanently for his possessions, namely, he always wants to liberate his people, Israel from enemy hands. He looks like a combative father and warrior.

It is questionable whether the word >> על << can be translated as “on”. It can also display the relation particles the means (>> with / through wings <<) or the way (>> flying <<).⁸ We never see the birds carrying their babies on their wings. For the observation of the nature of carrying young animals on the wings, it is even excluded under aviation (physical / aerodynamic) facial points.⁹ Of course, it is emphasized that the works of God are always supernatural. His ability to free himself from bondage is clearly stated here. While Exodus 19, 4 indicates a mighty image of the Father, in Dt 32, 11 the image of God is, in my opinion, more tender and merciful.

7 Erich Zenger, *Israel am Sinai. Analysen und Interpretationen zu Exodus 17-34* (Altenberge: CIS-Verlag, 1982), 154.

8 Christoph Dohmen, *Exodus 19-40*, Herders Theologischen Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), 46. Dohmen comments: Carrying "on the wing" already appears as a problem in the early translations, because LXX (similar to BHS) emphasizes the metaphorical character of the statement by means of a “ὥς” >> as well as <<. Compared to similar linguistic images, it turns out that the phrase לַעֲפֹנֶיךָ does not have to mean the concrete spatial >> on the wings <<.”

9 *Ibid.*, 58.

3. Vulture versus Eagle

Actually, the vulture is hardly known in Korea. Therefore, there is no suitable word for vulture and it is uniformly translated as an eagle. In fact, one sees in the country a large black eagle, which makes long trains and scavenges after the winter season from Siberian to Korea. For this reason, it is hardly distinguished between vultures and eagles in Korean. Further, the word “vulture” is used by negative meaning and symbol in English such as “materialistic vulture”, etc.

But Schroer introduces us to the difference between vulture and eagle. The vulture mentioned in the Bible is almost a species of griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*).¹⁰ Furthermore, she shows some features of the vulture as scavengers.¹¹ Due to the scavenging the vulture is for us, in contrast to the eagle, occupied with many negative associations. This

10 Silvia Schroer, “Die Göttin und der Geier,” 61. She comments: “The image art of the Near East and Egypt is almost always the Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*). Its particularly striking features allow a mostly safe distinction between eagles or hawks. The griffon vulture has a bald head and a very long, feathered neck. Eagles and falcons have a stocky neck and the typical hooked beak. In flight, the wings of griffon vultures are larger in relation to the fan of splayed tail feathers than in eagles. The seated vulture is high-legged, the bird's body falls in a characteristic curved line almost to the line of stand, i.e. most of the time one recognizes immediately the typical, pulled down hindquarters.”

11 *Ibid.*, 68-69: Moreover, Schroer writes “It has been observed very well that the birds breed high in the rocks (Jer. 49:16), and how a large flock of vultures can almost surprisingly assemble in the carrion in a very short time (Hab 1: 8; Job 9,26; 39; 27, 2 Sam 1, 23, see also Matthew 24:28, Luke 17:37). Vultures actually have a very efficient reporting system. When a bird goes down because it has found a carrion, those in the circle of high-altitude species immediately notice it with sharp eyes and rush to the spot, which in turn is noticed by birds even further away. In this way often up to fifty vultures can be found in a very short time in a place where no one was before.”; Dohmen also states (Exodus 19-40, 58): “In addition, vultures move in very large areas and, depending on the food situation, migrate almost like migratory birds. For example, the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) leaves the Balkan peninsula

is usually how you do not like to react to vultures, but to eagles. Therefore, the word “nsr” (רשן) may not be translated as a vulture, but as an eagle.

In Europe, it was not the vulture but the eagle that formed the Western heraldic symbol (Roman eagle, German eagle, Habsburg eagle, national eagle Sam in the USA, John Gospel, etc...). In Greco-Roman antiquity it was a divine and noble symbol; the far-rising eagle is the companion of the highest god, in the cult of the emperor soul-ladder and thus a symbol of immortality.¹²

While translating the Hebrew noun “רשן nsr”, it is unclear or mixed from time to time. If this name is described by careful observation, then it is clearer to translate. In any case, this bird is terrible for Europeans or others.¹³

According to Schroer and her iconographic study, vulture symbolism can go back even further into ancient times not only in Egypt but

in the autumn and only returns in the spring. [...] Such observations could provide a starting point for the image used in the Bible.”

12 Cf. Genoveva Nitz, “Adler,” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche Band 1* (Freiburg im Brsg: Herder, 32006), 159.

13 Christoph Dohmen, *Exodus 19-40*, 57. He comments: “In the altogether 26 Old Testament documents of the Hebrew noun רשן (>> vulture <<) it is sometimes not clear which big bird of prey, eagle or vulture is meant, because often only the big wings or the flight force in the foreground of the respective biblical statements stands, but there are some places such as We 1,16, where the baldness is mentioned, or Job 39: 27-30, where scavenging is expressly mentioned, it is quite clear that it must be a vulture and not the eagle, suggests that the Hebrew word, when it comes to a species description, always means the vulture. But since in ancient times both birds were often seen together, in some places also simply and quite generally the big bird of prey will be meant. Probably the רשן is the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), which used to be very common in Palestine. The eagle, which is much rarer in the Near East, almost completely supplanted the vulture - on the way to the Western translations of the Bible - from its biblical appreciation in the West.”

also in the Near East. The study is about looking for traces of the goddess in ancient iconographies of the Near East and Egypt, and if and how this imagery reflects or penetrates Israel's mind. Schroer tries to explain the connection to YHWH; "Feminist theology, especially the so-called matriarchy research, has been interested in the connection of the goddesses of the Middle East and Egypt with different animals for many years."¹⁴

Because vultures gather around carrion, it was thought that the vulture deals with death and is the companion of death, or perhaps life. If the people of that time thought so, then the vulture could be considered a heavenly animal and companion of the goddess.¹⁵

It follows from the study of Schroer that YHWH, Israel's god, implicitly assumes the inheritance of the Near-Eastern life mistresses and the Egyptian mother deities:

But not only the aspect of regeneration has found its way into the biblical metaphor of the vulture. YHWH, Israel's god, almost unnoticed, suffers the inheritance of the Near Eastern mistresses of life and of the Egyptian mother gods, when it is said that YHWH has taken his people out of Egypt and carried them through the desert on his huge wings (see Ex 19, 4; Dt 32, 11). Here the vulture is clearly a picture of the maternal love of the otherwise male-introduced God of Israel. It is likely that the metaphor of the shadow of the wings of God, in which the worshiper or the bishop wishes to hide confidently, is also due to the protective vulture wings (cf. Pss 17,8; 36,8; 57,2; 61.5, 63.8, 91.4).

14 Silvia Schroer, "Die Göttin und der Geier," 60.

15 *Ibid.*, 61-62: Schroer writes: "The oldest images of the vulture's connection with the goddess

The vulture represents the caring, maternal goddess whose compassion is appropriated by Israel's God. The vulture symbolism fits as a mosaic piece in a larger image of religious history developments of the Israelite period. YHWH, the male-introduced state god, was able to absorb a small amount of "female" traits and features originally associated with the goddesses. Thus, Israel's God can work as a midwife (Ps 22, 10a) or scream like a woman giving birth (Isa. 42:14). While female eroticism and sexuality could not be integrated into the male image of God, motherhood could be included here and there.¹⁶

4. On the wings

As Schroer mentions, the wing in Ex 19, 4 and Dt 32, 11, also in the psalms somehow refers to a quality of God. Can one understand in this sense a metaphor of parental love? Certainly, Schroer emphasizes the maternal deity in the vulture picture, but even though she recognizes that YHWH, the male-introduced state god, is allowed to absorb a small amount of female qualities and traits, it is proven that YHWH

in the Near Eastern tradition came from *Çatal Hüyük* in present-day Turkey. The vulture belonged to the mistress of life (birth) and death, who dominated all four directions and supervised the whole cycle of life. It was often portrayed as lion and panther in *Çatal Hüyük* and *Haçilar*, emphasizing their elemental vitality and wildness. The beginning and end of a human life were equally entrusted to her. The vulture, as a scavenger by nature concerned with the sphere of death, was suitable as a companion animal of the goddess to represent this connection of becoming and passing away."

16 Silvia Schroer, "Die Göttin und der Geier," 69-71.

has not only female but also male characteristics.

In Ex 19, 4 and Dt 32, 11 Moses stands for the principal person who communicates the word of God and shows what Sinai-theology or Sinai-theophany is about for a moment. The person Moses was at first very haughty because he had grown up in the pharaoh's house. But he became a humble man after fleeing to Midian, and then only with the help of Aaron and Miriam, the prophetess, could his sister return to Egypt to deliver Israel out of Egypt. According to the Old Testament, Moses is testified as the greatest prophet. But Aaron and Miriam as a companion stood by Moses.

In this way YHWH, the God of Israel, carried his people from Egypt on "His" wings and brought them to the mountain Sinai. The Bible uses the phenomenon of the animal as a divine symbol. These observations of nature "could provide a starting point for the image used in the Bible. Not to be overlooked in the interpretation of the image, however, is that the idea of driving, riding, flying or coming on the "wings" of the wind or the dawn (see 2 Sam 22:11, Ps 18:11, Ps 104, 3; Ps 139: 9) is more frequently associated with God YHWH in the Bible and belongs in the context of statement of theophany."¹⁷

Dohmen further writes that if one takes this hint of the background seriously in Ex 19, 4, then there is a connection to the statement to be found in the following verse about the election of Israel. In this respect, the statement of Ex 19, 4 points out that YHWH brought his people Israel to the Sinai in a divine way, just as he himself would appear, thus directly following the previous formulation of the Exodus miracles.¹⁸

¹⁷ Christoph Dohmen, *Exodus 19-40*, 58.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

This idea that YHWH carries his people on vulture wings, could not be added to the time of the Sinai experience, but before the time of Sinai-theophany to the idea of the male presented state god. Therefore, the religious symbolism of Asia Minor and Egypt was added unnoticed to the God-experience of Israel.¹⁹ With regard to wings, the psalms contain frequent metaphors from the shadow of the wings of God, in which the worshiper or the female prayers, who are traced back to the protective vulture wings (Pss 17,8; 36,8; 57,2; 61.5, 63.8, 91.4).²⁰

In the same way as in Ex 19, 4, Dt 32, 11, through observations of nature and religious motives, also takes up the only place where, within the Old Testament, one speaks of carrying on the wings again. The movements express an intense brood care of the vulture here, namely, "disturbing", "floating", "spreading", "protecting", "wing-striking", "swinging", "spreading", "carrying". This vulture's brood care, "which is shared by male and female animals, was probably observed in antiquity and has led to the vulture in ancient civilizations becoming the epitome of parental love and in direct connection with mother

19 Erich Zenger, *Psalm: Psalmen Bd 3* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003), 136. Zenger comments: "The pictures of Ps 91, V.1-2 come from two areas of experience of the ancient Israelite life world, which are fused here so that they form a plastic unity. The images "shelter / hiding place" and "shadow" come from the ancient oriental sanctuary theology". The Hyksos, immigrants from Palestine, settled in the eastern delta of the Nile and for more than a hundred years ruled over Egypt. Josephus Flavius already saw in these foreign rulers of Egypt the ancestors of Israel. It is possible that the two cultures react to each other and mix"; Cf. Jan Assmann, *Moses der Ägypter: Entzifferung einer Gedächtnisspur* (München/Wien: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1998), 54-72; cf. Silvia Schroer, *Der Mann im Wulstsaummantel ein Motiv der Mittelbronze-Zeit II B. Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel Band I* (Freiburg/Schweiz und Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 106-107.

20 Cf. Silvia Schroer, "Die Göttin und der Geier," 70.

deities. [...] Just the background of parental love, which is found here in Dt 32, 11, which is also used in other contexts as a picture of YHWH's relationship to Israel (see, for example, Hos 11: Is 49,15; Moses to God in Num 11:12)''.²¹

Although, according to the Ten Commandments, there is no image of God and no representation of anything in the heavens allowed to be made on the earth below or in the water beneath the earth (compare Ex 20, 4, Dt 5: 8), one can find in the cultures of Ancient Orient and Egypt and also in Israel the representation of various animal species that refer to deities.²²

Numerous wing pictures and signs, which could indicate a heavenly essence or a deity, are found.²³ Moreover, the hybrids played a divine role, such as sphinxes and cherubim, etc. Also, cherubim, which are in direct connection with the Holiest YHWH, have large wings (compare 1 Kings 6, 23-28; 2Chr 3, 10-13; Ex 25, 18-22; Ex 37, 7-9; Num 7, 89; 1Chr 28,18).²⁴ Behold, Seraphim, who have six wings and always refer to the God who is in the present, sacredly praise him (Isa 6) and many angels with wings!

However, one must not immediately conclude that the wing sym-

21 Christoph Dohmen, *Exodus 19-40*, 58.

22 Cf. Silvia Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder: Nachrichten von Darstellender Kunst im Alten Testament* (Freiburg in der Schweiz und Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/ Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 69-120.

23 There are a lot of pictures of the different forms of wings. Cf. Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel Band I* (Freiburg in der Schweiz und Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/ Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985); cf. Othmar Keel, Hildi Keel-Leu, and Silvia Schroer, *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel Band II*, (Freiburg in der Schweiz und Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/ Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

24 Cf. Silvia Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder*, 121-133. In Old Testament the cherubim appear as carriers of YHWH, 1 Sam 4,4; 2Sam 6,2; 2Ch 13,4; Ps. 80,2; Ps 99,1; Isa 37:16, etc.

bolism can be mechanically linked to the divine essence, the appearance of the deity and the cultures of the ancient Orient and Egypt. Perhaps these phenomena, that the heavenly beings or gods/goddesses receive the wings, are found in different ways throughout history. In my opinion, of course, that in ancient times people had awe for the Divine and the mighty nature and wanted to express the invisible Divine with a parable as flying beings.

In Ex 19,4 and Dt 32, 11 vulture images are used, and it follows that the motive of the movement is on/with wings, reminiscent of a theophany, applied so that God leads Israel in this way. Further, the carrying of children plays a special role in many of these pictures as parental love. And there is still the aspect of life symbolism that suggests a new beginning. Therefore, God does not come to Israel, but as parents to their children, God carries Israel to meet them, and thus begins a new life for Israel. Yes, they can always feel safe and content under their wings and lead a new life.²⁵

In Mt 23, 37b, Lk 13, 34b Jesus has his mercy and compares to a hen, who wants to protect her chicks under her wings. Here one sees that the wings play a protective role and perhaps express charity as the attributes of God and maternal concern for children: “He shields you with his wings, you find shelter under his wings, shield and protection is your faithfulness” (Ps 91: 4).

5. Authors and addressees

The psalm 131 can be attributed to women as speakers and writers.

25 Cf. Christoph Dohmen, *Exodus 19-40*, 59.

This psalm shows a praying woman and her as a main author. We also meet many women in the Bible who did not just play a minor role in the story. For example, Miriam, who accompanied Moses as a prophet and especially in Ex 15, 21, sang Deborah, a prophetess, judge in Israel, who sang a song of victory, and to which the Israelites came up to make themselves speak (Judges 4, 1-5: 31), Naomi and Ruth of Moab in Ruth 1-4, Hannah in 1 Sam 1, 10f; 2. 1-10, the prophetess Hulda in 2 Ki 22, 15-20 and 2Chr 24-28, Sarah in Tob 3, 11-15, Judith in Jdt 9, 2-14; 13.7; 16, 1-7, Esther in Est 4, 171-z, the martyrdom of the seven brothers and their mother in 2 Macc 7, 1-42, Elisabeth and Mary in the Gospel of Luke, the women who helped and supported Jesus from Nazareth to Jerusalem, and especially Mary Magdalene, who was under the cross of Jesus and the first reporter of the resurrection of Jesus!

After the law book (Deuteronomy) had been found in the time of King Josiah, according to this book, King Josiah reformed the cult and eliminated idolatry (2Ki 22,1-23,27; 2Chr 34,1-35,19). He has again committed the Passover to the glory of the Lord in Jerusalem. According to the report, such a Passover feast had not been celebrated since the days of the judges who ruled Israel, not even the entire time of the kings of Israel and Judah. In addition, all cults and rites were centralized by him in Jerusalem.²⁶

26 Georg Braulik, "Das Buch Deuteronomium," in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, ed. Erich Zenger, et al. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 144. Braulik states: "Yoshiya 622 BC. made the (then) Deuteronomy the basis of a sworn commitment. In 2Ki 22f is a text that was probably written during the lifetime of Yoshiya and despite all stylization in the core is historically reliable (22,3-12.13.14.15-20; 23,1-3.21-23). He reveals that the Torah book, an official document previously known, was "found" in the temple. Even the narrative structure Dt-2Ki. forces to identify it with the Dt."

The Bible contains various literary genres. There is also a reading of the culture of ancient Israel (kingdom) and of rituals in the Torah. One can assume that the kingship in Israel at that time postulated its own story.

The song of Moses, Dt 32, 1-43 is a regular recitation for the conceivable apostasy and the consequent catastrophe, but also for the mercy of YHWH, especially in Dt 32, 11. Deuteronomy has designed a kind of theory of the feast. It makes the pilgrimage festivals the priority places of the world interpretation and socialization of Israel. In the festive liturgy, it becomes possible to experience what Israel is from its social design. When the families bring their sacrifices (12) and deliverances (14, 22-27) to the sole sanctuary in Jerusalem or celebrate the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Tabernacles (16, 9-12 and 13-15), they arrive at the common prayer and supper to the perfect joy of their God. Because all the members of Israel are together, without there being any social differences, a sibling society is realizing itself symbolically. In it, both the woman and the man may preside over the sacrificial liturgy of their family; there are no more poor in their family. Therefore, it is unimaginable to exclude the women from the sacrificial liturgy. Normally, mostly men fought against enemies and pagans to protect the community and family. If they had died in the war, then the women and the elderly people made sacrifices to the altar. Who else? And in the context of this liturgical meal-sharing the right of the woman can be determined.²⁷

Schroer finds in the Book of Wisdom the traces of Greek and Egypt-

27 *Ibid.*, 150-151; cf. Georg Braulik, "Durften auch Frauen in Israel opfern? Beobachtungen zur Sinn- und Festgestalt des Opfers im Deuteronomium," in *Studien zum Deuteronomium und seiner Nachgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2001), 59-89.

ian goddesses, e.g. *Dike* and *Ma'at*. Besides, she tells about the personified wisdom. "In various images of women and goddesses, the *chok-māh* appears in verses 1-9 and in the book of Jesus Sirach. In each of these writings, wisdom, as a personification, assumes certain theological functions. [...] Following the Ptolemaic-Roman Isis royal theology, Sophia takes over the position of divine patroness of the royal house, but not the maternal role of Isis (mother of Horus / ruler). In terms of content, however, the references to the attributes of the All-goddess and All-rescuer Isis, as praised in numerous aretalogies and dedications of the late Hellenistic and Roman periods, are narrower. Isis was mistress of all the cosmic and terrestrial powers, who the sciences, the seafaring revered. The prisoners hope for her, she was praised as the author of equality between women and men."²⁸

6. Mimetic theory

In many of his literary studies, René Girard has repeatedly pointed to correspondences between the life of the authors and their literary works. In doing so, he also analyzes human desire, which basically constitutes the essence of the human.

Since Descartes and "the anthropological turn" (Kant) the human is understood as an autonomous, self-sufficient individual. But according to Girard, this philosophy and anthropology is only partially true because, above all with regard to desire, humanity is shaped by the imitation or mimesis of idols. What is the mimesis? The word Mimesis

28 Silvia Schroer, "Das Buch der Weisheit," in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, ed. Erich Zenger, et al. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 52004), 406.

is derived from the Greek. Above all, Plato talked about it. So Girard introduces the mimesis of Plato:

First, even in Plato, there is a tendency typical of Western tradition to refer the term mimesis primarily to externals such as gestures and facial expressions. [...] Beginning with Aristotle, this reduced view of mimesis, which, above all, excludes the area of the desire for appropriation, characterizes the Western mimesis tradition up to our present day. Secondly, there is already a common belief in Plato that the central ethical dimension of mimesis lies in the distinction between the permitted imitation of good role models and the forbidden imitation of bad examples. The guards in Plato's state are to imitate only good examples: but if they imitate something, then from an early age only those role models that fit their profession, brave, rational, respectful, free men and other such; they must not perform slave-servant acts, or be capable of imitating them, or of any other ugly kind, so that they do not become imitators of connoisseurs of this being. The guards expressly forbid the imitation of women, prostitutes, slaves, neighing horses, roaring bulls, rushing rivers, roaring sea, thunder and rage. This logic of imitating good role models and avoiding bad ones is familiar to us all from childhood. On a scientific level, socialization theories of recent decades have taken this insight as the point of departure.²⁹

According to Girard, the root of romantic individualism can be

29 Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girards mimetische Theorie: Im Kontext kulturtheoretischer und gesellschaftspolitischer Fragen* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003), 67-68.

traced back to Descartes' subjectivist "cogito ergo sum", the anthropocentric turn that allowed Augustine's concept of individuality, which is rooted in the relationship to God, to prevail over ideas of human and human as a self-contained monad. But Girard does not want to disagree with this modern individualism because he thinks that Descartes' solipsistic individualism avoids the traditional idea of mimesis. Here Girard is concerned with the realization that the mimetic desire expresses a fundamental and extreme openness of all people to others. That is, the mimetic theory sees the human as a social being, to which necessarily belongs the relationship with others.³⁰

This results in the essence of human. Woman herself and man himself does not know what he is supposed to desire but imitates the desire of others. Girard calls this imitation of the desire of others triangular desire, desire according to the other, imitated desire and above all mimetic desire or mimesis. Hence, mimesis is essential to the constitution of human, and is not merely an outward complement to one of its essentially independent beings.³¹

We can think further. People who cannot cope with freedom are exposed to fear. They are looking for a supportive vanishing point to look at. There is neither God nor King, nor Lord, to bind them to the universal. To escape the feeling of the particular, people desire accord-

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 58-59; Cf. René Girard, *Figuren des Begehrens: Das Selbst und der Andere in der fiktionalen Realität*, Aus dem Französischen von Elisabeth Mainberger-Ruh (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1999), 21: Girard writes: "Jealousy and envy presuppose a threefold presence: the presence of the object, the presence of the subject, the presence of the one to whom one is jealous or who one envies. The two vices are therefore triangular: nevertheless we never perceive the person to whom we are jealous as an example, since we always take the point of view of the jealous person in regard to jealousy."

ing to the other; they seek replacement gods because they cannot let go of the infinite. Yet, one is ashamed of this mimesis in modern society.³²

According to Girard, there is one more factor besides subject and object. How does the mimesis still work? In human desires, there is not just an object and a subject, but a third greatness, the rival. Perhaps it is about defining the position of the rival within the system that he forms together with object and subject. The rivalry is not the fruit of a coincidence of the two wishes that are aimed at the same object. The subject desires the object because the rival desires it. By desiring this or that object, the rival gives the subject to understand that the object is desirable. In any case, the desire is essentially mimetic, it is based on a model desire. In comparison to the mimetic of the childish desire, the desire of the adult differs in nothing from it, except that this, especially in the European culture, is usually ashamed to imitate someone to take him as a model.³³ He presents himself as a model for the others. But two desires that desire the same object hinder each other. Any mimesis that involves the desire automatically leads to a conflict. People are always partially blind to this cause of rivalry. The same thing, the like, evokes the idea of harmony in human relationships.³⁴

For Girard, passionate desire is of the highest intensity. Vain desire in turn is a shimmering reflection of genuine desire. Since everyone

32 *Ibid.*, 72.

33 *Ibid.*, 65: Palaver explains: "Aristotle, who speaks in his poetics of the fact that human is different from the rest of living beings, that he is particularly capable of imitation and acquires his first knowledge through imitation". Perhaps tradition played a more important role than in modern times, i.e. imitation of the old tradition and heirs.

34 René Girard, *Das Heilige und die Gewalt*, aus dem Französischen von Elisabeth Mainberger-Ruh (Zürich: Benziger, 1987), 214-215.

has the impression to desire more intensely than others, we always keep the desire of others for vanity. It is about a love that turns into desire or was actually a passion from the beginning. The dialectic of passion and vanity remains individualistic.³⁵

Furthermore, sexual desire is one of those human passions that can easily lead to two people fighting each other in a mimetic dispute over an "indivisible object."³⁶ Girard continues:

The close relationship between sexuality and violence, an inheritance common to all religions, is based on quite impressive convergences. Sexuality and violence often clash in their immediate manifestations - abduction, rape, deflation, sadism, etc. - and in their later consequences. Sexuality causes various real or imaginary diseases; it leads to the bloody pains of birth, which can always bring about the death of the mother, the child or both together. Even within the ritual framework, when all marital rules and other prohibitions are respected, sexuality is accompanied by violence; as soon as one escapes this framework in an inadmissible love such as adultery, incest, etc., it causes extreme impurity and violence. Sexuality causes countless quarrels and struggles, jealousy and resentment; even in the most harmonious communities, it is a constant source of chaos.³⁷

So we see a possibility to cause larger problems through an indivisible object. What can happen if rivalry does not spread into the indi-

35 Cf. René Girard, *Figuren des Begehrens*, 28.

36 Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girards mimetische Theorie*, 62.

37 René Girard, *Das Heilige und die Gewalt*, 56-57.

vidualistic dimension but into the collective and social dimension?

There may be violence resulting from rivalry. A well-known formula of Aristotle and Aquinas “Homo homini amicus” is no longer in the formula of Thomas Hobbes “homo homini deus or lupus”. Where mimesis leads two people or groups, peoples, to direct their desires to a limited object that they cannot share, rivalry and mutual violence are threatened. Or a fragment of Heraclitus “War is the father of all things, king of all things.”³⁸

For this reason, we assume that mimesis reveals itself as a conflict between peoples or cultures. That’s why Samuel Huntington interprets this situation:

Without true enemies, no true friends! If we do not hate what we are not, we cannot love who we are. These are the old truths that we are now rediscovering in pain, after the sentiment of a hundred years. He who denies these truths denies his family, his heritage, his culture, his birthright, his whole self! It will not be easy for him to forget that. Statesmen and scientists cannot pass by the sad truth of these ancient truths. For those who seek their identity and reinvent their ethnicity, enemies are indispensable, and the potentially most dangerous enmities strike us at the fault lines between the great cultures of the world.³⁹

Jealousy, envy and enmity derive from rivalry and competition.

38 *Ibid.*, 133.

39 Samuel Huntington, *Der Kampf der Kulturen: Die Neugestaltung der Weltpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert*, aus dem Amerikanischen von Holger Fliessbach (München/Wien: Europa Verlag GmbH, 31997), 18.

Mainly Girard mentions the people and folk envy. The goal of every people is to seek their own God. Through the mouth of the fictional character, it is said that the people are the bodies of God. Each people remain a people as long as it owns its particular god and mercilessly excludes all other gods throughout the world; as long as it believes to conquer with its God and to drive out all other gods from the world.⁴⁰

In primitive society, it seems that natural and social disasters cannot be distinguished. Natural catastrophes often even serve as metaphors for socially caused crisis phenomena. Therefore, Girard examines the relationship between both disasters and social reconciliation with disasters through a mechanistic process.

Originally, the term “scapegoat” comes from the Old Testament in Lev 16. Girard uses the term scapegoat mechanism not in the biblical sense, but in everyday language to emphasize the unconscious psychological process of crisis resolution. We talk about a scapegoat when someone is falsely blamed for a spontaneous psychological mechanism. The violence of all against all turns into a rallying of all against one or another. The victim is killed by all together or expelled from the community, which usually also leads to death. The misjudgment of the actual occurrence is a necessary condition for the functioning of the mechanism. The transformation of the scapegoat into a sacral being that brings both ruin and salvation to human means the creation of the supernatural, a transcendence of violent unanimity or social transcendence.⁴¹ In history, this mechanism has been applied to hatred of the Jews and witch-hunts as well against the marginal and the weak.

As an example, Girard takes a myth that is very important in north-

40 Cf. Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girards mimetische Theorie*, 39-41.

41 Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girards mimetische Theorie*, 201-203.

western Canada, near the Arctic Circle. It is the founding myth of the *Dog-Rib* Indians:

A woman has intercourse with a dog, and she gives birth to six puppies. Her tribe chases her away, and she is forced to seek her own food. One day when she returns from the bush, she discovers that her pooches are children who hatch from their animal skins as soon as she's out of the house. She pretends to leave the house, and after her children discard their skins, she takes them away, forcing them to retain their human identity from now on.⁴²

He analyzes this myth: What he calls the crisis, the general dedifferentiation, is identical with the wavering between human and beast in the mother, but also with the children who represent the community. The sacrificial symbol is femininity, and stereotypical crime is bestiality. The woman is certainly responsible for the crisis, because it gives birth to a monstrous community. So you're actually dealing with a scapegoat who is charged with a stereotypical crime and treated accordingly. In the myths there are two moments that cannot be distinguished by the interpreters. The first moment is the indictment of a scapegoat who is not yet sanctified and unites in himself all the evil forces. This first moment is overshadowed by a second, namely, the positive sacrality evoked by the reconciliation of the community. The prose texts suggest that the myths contained a first transfiguration corresponding to those of the persecutors; but it is, so to speak, only the

42 René Girard, *Der Sündenbock*, aus dem Französischen von E. Mainberger-Ruh (Zürich: Benziger, 1988), 75.

pedestal of a second transfiguration. Even more believing than ours, the mythological persecutors are so besotted with their scapegoating effects that they can actually be reconciled by them; it overshadows the reaction of reverence and hostility already elicited by its victim.⁴³

Most examples of mimetic desire in Girard's first work tell of men who rival women - who are only objects of desire. With regard to his statement that women are only desired by men, he was accused by the feminists. But he starts from the observation that mimetic desire is by no means gender-specific but applies more or less equally to women and men. He even regards Freud's approach to being misogynistic.⁴⁴

Yes, male and female desire are not fundamentally different, but every moralizer undermines the distinction between woman and man. But where Girard talks about scapegoat phenomena, he keeps emphasizing that women are among the scapegoats of choice. Femininity is a typical sacrificial symbol for him. Why then? Is it really the fact that goes back to a difference between a woman and a man? For Girard it is rooted on the one hand in the lower social position of women in a concrete society and on the other hand in the lower physical strength. As a weaker sex, women have always been at risk, rather than becoming scapegoats. Even according to Girard archaic goddesses are female scapegoats, for example, Minoan culture in Crete. There is much to support the thesis that even cultures marked by the mother symbol are rooted in the victim mechanism. As in the founding myth of the *Dog-Rib* Indians, divinized women can be found in many myths that served their cultures as scapegoats. Because of her

43 Cf. *Ibid.*, 75-77.

44 Cf. Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girards mimetische Theorie*, 373-380.

weakness and relative marginal position, the woman can play the role of the victim, like the animal and the child. For these reasons, it can become the subject of partial sacralization, it is simultaneously desired and rejected, despised and admired.⁴⁵

As physically weaker, women were less involved in violence from the start and more likely to be victims of collective violence. Is this fact a mercy or a curse? This status of sacrifice made it easier for myths and their related culture to inflict on women the excessive tendency to violence while keeping them from the structure of society's power and violence. Or we can see through the victim status of women a violent society. That's why Girard says in an interview that women are the preferred carriers of the truth.⁴⁶ This results in the Bible which shows that who God is and what He is.

7. Conclusion

While we at least acknowledge that the Bible was written by male writers, the views of women in the narratives and traditions of the salvation history of the Bible may have really penetrated. Schroer uses the image of the vulture in relation to the attribute of God and seeks the traces of God as Mother. It follows from her study that YHWH, Israel's god, could almost implicitly claim the legacy of the Near Eastern mistresses and the Egyptian mother gods, if we do not exclude the possibility of somehow being influenced by the Egyptian culture during the Israelite slavery in Egypt.

45 *Ibid.*, 381-382; cf. René Girard, *Das Heilige und die Gewalt*, 209-210.

46 Wolfgang Palaver, *René Girards mimetische Theorie*, 384-385.

Regarding the women in the Bible,⁴⁷ one cannot claim that all scriptures were written by male authors only. Even though men wrote the Bible, the stories and tales of women could unconsciously and unbelievably have influenced the Scriptures. At least you cannot just say that the Bible is written by men only. Look at the book the Song of Songs! In the Song of Songs the woman seems to play a more active part than the man. This may indicate female (co-) authorship.

Summing up:

First, I mention that in many of his literary and scholarly works, René Girard has pointed to the close relationship between the life of the author or the seat of life (*Sitz im Leben*) and their literary works, and has discovered mimesis behind it. This could argue that female characters in the Bible are closely related to their literary works and they work as co-authors of the Bible. Schroer also focuses on the maternal deity in the vulture picture and applies female qualities and traits to YHWH. These traditions and traces are not derived from ancient Israel but Ancient Orient, the Near Eastern and Egypt. It could be concluded from the premise that female eroticism and sexuality had been integrated into the male image of God before the time of Sinai-theophany.

Second, there may have been discrimination and manipulation during the Bible constitution, for example, translation of “nsr” (נָסַר). If God had included female quality in Himself, She or He would have been departed through sexuality, which causes various real or imaginary disease and quarrels and is a constant source of chaos in mimetic

⁴⁷ See chapter 4 and 5. It shows many examples and female figures representing the possibility that female authors might have existed in the Bible.

way. God should keep the Oneness in Self, not the two essences. In this sense, translation of “nsr” in the Bible would have been fixed by the view of men, that is, ‘eagle’ instead of ‘vulture’. It should be remembered that both women and men may preside over the sacrificial liturgy of their family, and in this sense it is expected to include women in the sacrificial liturgy in Dt 32, 1-43.

Third, I describe the definition and nature of the mimetic theory. There is revealed the essence of human, that human is as a social being to which necessarily belongs the relationship with others. The people of antiquity are also so-called mimetic. The cause of rivalry and sexuality comes up, whether and how two people or a large number of groups or peoples fight in a mimetic dispute over an indivisible object. Perhaps women and men in ancient Israel were fighting for political power and men had power. Girard says that women are among the scapegoats of choice, where he talks about its phenomena. For him it has stemmed from the lower social position of women and their lower physical strength. It follows that goddesses and their symbol in the Bible, for example “nsr” vulture picture, mercilessly excluded or were not emphasized. Likewise, it might have been forgotten that women could have been (co)authors of Bible.

Finally I told about the scapegoat and the myth of the Dog-Rib Indians. This shows that usually the sacrificial sign is femininity, although it can be generally applied to the Jew, the marginal and the weak. With Girard’s mouth women are very easy to become an object of desire. In this context, women were sometimes victims and it was easy to face the threat of violence. Yes, they may be one of the most scapegoated victims of social structure who can become the subject of partial sacralization—desired and rejected, despised and admired. It is an experi-

ment to connect Girard's theory and analysis with ancient Israeli society and the Biblical symbol.

By observing the movements of the bird in Ex 19, 4 and Dt 32, 11, one finds the background of parental love, which is used as a picture of YHWH's relationship to Israel. After the Israelites were freed from Egypt, they desperately needed not only a fighting god, but also a merciful and protective God who acts like a mother. Jesus also compared himself with this pictorial symbolism and showed it as an attribute of God (Mt 23, 37b, Lk 13, 34b). God himself carries his people on the wings and shields them with his wings. I believe that this quality of God enriches our faith and serves God, who is not the sole cause of guilt, with infinite compassion.

Of course, we imagine that in antiquity there is competition or conflict between women and men in order to have the primacy of society as an object. Especially in the course of time it seems that women have failed to win the common object. A plausible confirmation is a lower physical strength. Because of this, women as a weaker sex have always been at risk, rather than becoming scapegoats. Girard points out that the victims' status of women made it easier for myths and related culture to garner women's excessive tendency to violence while keeping them away from the structure of society's power and violence. Although this analysis is accused by the feminists, it sheds light on the fact that a possible perverse and violent society can return to the right order. Jesus, as a scapegoat, took the sacrifice of collective power so that He brought salvation into the world and reconciled it to God. How many maternal figures in the myths did he care about the children? Likewise, there have been and are many female figures as authors in the Bible and history who reveal God's love and truth.



This picture reminds me of God whose arms look like wings: “As soon as I recognized the difference between the two hands of the father, a new world of meaning opened up to me. The father is not just a great patriarch. He is mother as well as father. He touches the son with a male and a female hand. [...] He is truly God, in whom both manhood and womanhood, fatherhood and motherhood, are fully present. [...] But when I looked at the red cloak for a longer time, another picture came to me which is even stronger than that of the tent: the outstretched wings of a mother bird. [...] Even more than the picture of the tent, the image of the wings of a mother bird expresses the feeling of security that God offers to his children. They refer to care and protection, a place to rest and feel safe.”⁴⁸

48 Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Nimm sein Bild in dein Herz. Geistliche Deutung eines Gemäldes von Rembrandt*, Übertragung ins Deutsche von Ulrich Schütz (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 121991), 119-120; *The Prodigal Son* ca. 1669 oil on canvas, 262 x 205 cm. The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, picture from: Web Gallery of Art <http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/rembran/painting/biblic3/prodig2.html>

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