6 On the (further) development of Christian animal ethics

"Let's talk about ourselves. We are indeed soaring to greatness, if not god-like at least for our own emotional gratification. Our individual organismic selves, our tribe, our species are the culmination of Earth's achievement. Of course we think this way. [...] We are so brainy compared with the rest of life that we actually do think of ourselves as demigods, somewhere halfway between the animals below us and the angels above, and moving ever upward. It is easy to suppose that the genius of our species is on some kind of automatic pilot, guiding us to an undefined empyrean that will exist with perfect order and provide personal happiness. If we ourselves are ignorant, our descendants will find the empyrean as humanity's destiny when someday, somehow they arrive there. So we stumble forward in hopeful chaos, trusting that the light on the horizon is the dawn and not the twilight." (Edward O. Wilson 2016, engl. original 48–49).

With these trenchant sentences, the great biologist Edward O. Wilson (1929 Birmingham AL–2021 Burlington MA) sums up the core of Christian occidental anthropocentrism: Man sees himself in the middle position between animals and angels—this is exactly the Stoically inspired Christian image of the human position on the scala naturae. The Church Fathers would not have said it differently—only the word "demigods" would have been replaced by "images of God" (except for Ephraim the Syrian). However, what did not play the slightest role for the Church Fathers, but was only added in modern times, is an irrepressible scientific and technical optimism in progress. It is a by-product of anthropocentrism, which makes its extremely problematic side openly visible.

It is precisely this modern optimism about progress that has been in its greatest crisis for some years now. The young generation realises how much humanity has manoeuvred itself into a dead end over the past few decades. The worldwide Fridays for Future movement and other young environmental movements can no longer be placated with vague promises—they see that we are standing on the edge of the abyss. "The light on the horizon" that progress optimism promised us as "dawn" is thus now perceived rather soberly as "twilight" only a few years after Wilson's book was written.

According to Wilson, there has been a minority position over the millennia that has interpreted the world non-anthropocentristically and defined the role of humans much more modestly: "There is an unbreakable chain of self-understanding that thinking people largely neglect. One of its lessons is that we are not as gods. We're not yet sentient and intelligent enough to be much of anything. And we're not going to have a secure future if we continue to play the kind of false god who whimsically destroys Earth's living environment, and are pleased with what we have wrought." (Edward O. Wilson 2016, engl. original 50)

Wilson had to endure some criticism because in these and other passages he leaves the ground of his own discipline, biology, and ventures far into philosophical and theological terrain. Some have ridiculed him as a preacher for this. And yet his theses quoted here call for a debate on the matter, which one should not avoid despite or rather because of all the discomfort.

Anthropocentrist teleology weighs heavily on the Christian message in the ecological age—and would not be theologically necessary if one thinks of the message of the Old Testament and Jesus himself. But its 2000-year history—as old as that of Christianity itself—makes it in effect akin to a dogma: it seems to many Christians and theologians that to abandon anthropocentrism is to betray a core message of the Christian faith.

So let us first ask whether overcoming Christian anthropocentrism would be theologically legitimate. Three considerations lead us to argue for an affirmative answer:

– First of all, it remains a very serious fact that anthropocentrism has *shaped the entire history of Christianity and theology*. To want to overcome it is therefore a considerable intervention in the architecture of theology. It must be well justified and comprehensively thought through. But that does *not* make a *paradigm shift impossible*. Admittedly, it will remain difficult, as a brief review of the Second Vatican Council shows: "At the end of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, an influential theological advisor to the bishops, the young theology professor Joseph Ratzinger, presented an interim report in which he took preliminary stock of the situation. In it, he expressed the assessment that the disastrous, because it is unbiblical, influence of the Stoic natural law tradition on Christian ethics had now been overcome (Joseph Ratzinger 1965, 40–47). Actual developments were to disprove this optimistic prognosis more quickly than most people inside and outside the Church thought possible at the time." (Eberhard Schockenhoff 2021, 230). Ratzinger was

referring to the "disastrous, because it is unbiblical, influence of the Stoic natural law tradition" especially in sexual ethics. However, the same observation is appropriate for creation ethics. And Schockenhoff's analysis is just as correct here: it will take much longer than one would suspect for stoic anthropocentrism to be overcome.

– However, Christian anthropocentrism, although it has spread into the capillaries of theology, but also of liturgy, has *never been dogmatised.* Would that even be possible? First of all, it is clear that only historically revealed truths can be dogmatised. What is reasonably justifiable does not need dogmatisation, but cannot be dogmatised either, because the Church has no exclusive competence with regard to reasonably justified truths. Now, anthropocentrism in particular was justified exclusively philosophically for five centuries before the emergence of the Church—that it represents a revelatory truth has consequently never been asserted by the Church and would also ignore this historical fact. However, it could theoretically be that the truth of revelation is inseparable from the truth of reason of anthropocentrism. Then the truth of reason itself would be indirectly dogmatised as soon as the truth of revelation based on it is dogmatised (according to Josef Schuster 1984). Here, one could think of the dogma of the incarnation, the incarnation of God, which in the patristic interpretation is closely linked to anthropocentrism through the Logos idea. Because of this link, the Church has long treated it like a dogma and propagated it. It is like traditional Christian sexual morality: the Church authorities have tried to conceal its historical origin in a very specific, contingent philosophical current—and to pretend it has a revealed status, which does not exist in reality (Eberhard Schockenhoff 2021, 74–101). As soon as this suggestive manoeuvre is uncovered, one would have to prove that the connection between Christology and anthropocentrism is biblically the only possible one—because it is not a Church Father but the Bible that is the source of revelation. And there one comes up against insurmountable difficulties, as was shown in chapter 2. Despite all its official confirmations, especially in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, anthropocentrism is therefore not a dogma, but only *a constant, but historically contingent and changeable teaching* of the Church.
– With a view to overcoming Christian anthropocentrism, (besides numerous statements made during the ecumenical conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, cf. Michael Rosenberger 2001) some *statements by Pope Francis* in the encyclical Laudato si', which I have

already quoted in chapter 1, are encouraging: "In our time, the Church does not simply state that other creatures are completely subordinated to the good of human beings, as if they have no worth in themselves and can be treated as we wish" (LS 69). And "The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us" (LS 83). These are two clear examples of distancing from anthropocentrism. A significant dimension of spiritual depth also shines forth when Francis points out that Christ, who became "flesh", i.e. creature, "has taken unto himself this material world and now, risen, is intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light" (LS 221). He has thus become the "seed of definitive transformation" of the entire universe (LS 235). The interpretations of the Colossian hymn (Col 1:15–20) and the Logos hymn (Jn 1:1–18) are particularly dense: "One Person of the Trinity entered into the created cosmos, throwing in his lot with it, even to the cross. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole" (LS 99). Francis thus not only denies that everything in the "kingdom of ends" is ordered towards man, but furthermore affirms a holistic understanding of the incarnation that takes the Hebrew meaning of "flesh" seriously. He thus opens all doors to overcoming Christian anthropocentrism christologically and soteriologically.

Overcoming Christian anthropocentrism would therefore be theologically legitimate. But is it also advisable? For the justification of a paradigm shift, this is clearly to be demanded. From the perspective of at least six scientific disciplines, the answer here is also an unequivocal yes:

– *Theologically,* it is important to take into account what we have worked out in chapter 2: The Bible teleologically thinks biocentristically to a large extent, without being reflexive about it. Only formally does it advocate anthropocentrics, i.e. it sees human beings as the recipients of responsibility for creation, as is manifested, for example, in the concept of image in Gen 1:27. But the sense of the seven-day work of the Creation is not man alone, but the community of all living beings as inhabitants of the house of life. This biocentrist basic orientation runs at least through the entire pre-Hellenistic Bible. And even among the Hellenistically influenced late Old Testament and New Testament texts, only a few position themselves in favour of anthropocentrism.

- *Philosophically,* biocentrism embodies the far less steep teleology. It gets by with considerably fewer presuppositions and, in accordance with the principle of parsimony, is ceteris paribus preferable to anthropocentrism. If one reviews the passage through the philosophical and theological texts (in chapters 3 and 5) from a distance, one is struck by how hard they (must) try in all centuries to prove the aloga thesis on which anthropocentrism is based. Obviously, it has never been possible to silence the critical voices with convincing arguments. One must always confront them anew. The aloga thesis thus proves to be a black hole that devours an incredible amount of energy without really producing anything fruitful.
- From a *scientific* point of view, evolutionary biology does not allow for a monolinear teleology, which is indispensable for anthropocentrism. Life on planet Earth has evolved independently in many different directions. The strands of development diverge in more and more ramifications rather than converge into one strand. Moreover, modern behavioural and cognitive biology cannot identify such a deep divide between humans and animals as claimed in the aloga thesis. Gradual differences undoubtedly exist, and it is not at all in dispute that homo sapiens is the most intelligent species on the planet, relatively speaking. But the binary code of Greek philosophy between the Logos-endowed and the aloga is far too wooden to do justice to reality.
- *Psychologically,* since Sigmund Freud, the aloga thesis has been seen for what it really is: the reaction to "the second, the biological mortification of human narcissism" (Sigmund Freud 1917, 4). The sword of Damocles of this mortification has hovered over humans not only since Charles Darwin. Rather, people of all centuries have perceived and thematised a form of kinship between humans and animals—and many of their contemporaries have perceived this as a threat and as questioning. Freud, on the other hand, points out that the "self-consciousness" gained by devaluing others is ultimately unhealthy and pathological. A psychologically healthy person possesses a self-consciousness that does not devalue others but enhances and values them.
- From a *moral and psychological* point of view, anthropocentrism is one of the central blockades for a new relationship to non-human creation. It is true that it can rationally justify ecological and animal ethical humanism. But emotionally, it creates a climate in which people are more likely to be seduced by the "technocratic paradigm" of being able to do and shape everything, to more readily subscribe to economism, which sees

only (natural) capital in non-human creation, and to be more quickly inclined to chauvinistic thinking that derives primarily rights, but no duties, from the special position of humans, thus turning the intention of Gen 1:27 on its head (Michael Rosenberger 2021, 179).

– *Sociologically,* the adoption of anthropocentrism in early Christianity was the logical consequence of the affirmation of the surrounding secular society and its paradigms. The scientific avant-garde of antiquity thought anthropocentristically. In order to have a say in the discourse, early Christian theology was obliged to join and internalise this paradigm—and that is exactly what it did. For the same reason, however, it must now follow the paradigm shift that has been scientifically underway since Darwin. "In this process, the evolutionary worldview is taken for granted, and the question is whether Christology fits into it or can be fitted into it, and not vice versa." (Karl Rahner 1976, 180). It is not the theory of evolution that is at issue, according to Rahner, but faith in Jesus as the Christ. The discussion triggered by Darwin has been intensified by the dramatic escalation of the ecological crisis, the ideological cause of which is primarily identified as anthropocentrism. In the Rahnerian sense, one must consequently ask not with which tools of ethical humanistic anthropocentrism the environmental crisis can be solved, but which teleology is best suited to interpreting, understanding and ultimately also solving the environmental crisis. Theology should not ignore the scientific trend towards biocentristic and holistic concepts.

All six scientific disciplines discussed here thus make it urgently advisable to carry out the creation–theological paradigm shift away from anthropocentrism towards a less steep and presupposition-rich teleology. Of course, and here lies the valuable core of Stoic philosophy, it remains a teleology. A cognitivist form of ethics cannot be formulated without recourse to being—despite all justified admonitions not to fall into the "naturalistic fallacy" (George Edward Moore). On the one hand, this teleology must not be constructed in an overly simplistic, mono-linear way—this is forbidden by the findings of biology, which reveal many directly contradictory dynamics of nature. Living beings, in view of the finite resources on planet earth, live on the premise that other living beings die. The question of theodicy must therefore be constitutively integrated into a creation–theological teleology. On the other hand, the epistemic character of the connection between being and ought must be made permanently visible: It is not a matter of logical deductions, but of contingent, fallible and revisable, yet not simply

arbitrary or capricious interpretations of being with a view to opening up the potential of meaning. For example, the fact that we usually do not agree with the statement that the meaning of life is dying, but rather that the meaning of dying is the emergence of new life, is contingent. This conviction is not compelling. However, it is (more) helpful in practical life and therefore preferable with good reasons.

We need a teleology, but a new, more contemporary teleology than that of anthropocentrism. Arguing for such a paradigm shift is no small feat. Nevertheless, this venture will be undertaken in the following and an attempt will be made to sketch the first outlines of a new architecture of the Christian view of the relationship between God, humans and non-human creatures. To do so, it is inevitable to bring back into play those five points of view that have been and continue to be inextricably linked since the Stoa and throughout 2000 years of Christian history:

- The question of God's providence and its scope
- The question of the ability of humans and/or animals to reason and, in connection with this, their relationship to Christ.
- The question of the teleological interpretation of natural processes and a teleology appropriate to the natural sciences
- The question of the significance of feelings and how to deal with them
- And finally: the question of how to deal with animals and plants

It remains to be taken into account that in these questions I inevitably reach beyond the boundaries of my discipline, moral theology. I will therefore only be able to deal with them on a "first level of reflection". Nevertheless, there is no alternative to this approach.

6.1 You are wanted! The question of God's providence

"Above all, however, it [religion]—especially in its Christian variants—has become a means by which man can puff himself up, make himself important. Often insecure, he can convince himself that he is wanted and desired by a God who created him personally." (Andreas Urs Sommer 2022, 41). If we strip this sentence of an avowed atheist philosopher of its polemic, it contains an indisputable truth: the conviction that every human being is wanted and desired and thus valuable is one of the core messages of Christianity. Already biblically, it is linked to the idea of a personal Creator, God, who knows us even before we are born (Ps 139). But through the

Stoic influence on early Christianity, what the Bible states as an intimate happening between God and the individual is linked to the objective idea of an all-encompassing, foreseeing and forethinking plan of creation. That is not necessary. In the following, I will therefore pursue the question of whether and how the question of divine providence can be considered and formulated differently. To this end, after a brief outline of the history of philosophy and theology, I will offer some systematic theological considerations.

6.1.1 Historical Philosophy/Theology

"In antiquity, the belief in the fateful, meaningful work of the gods that excludes all chance and governs the universe according to unbreakable laws, or even in the rule of a hypostasised πρόνοια, is widespread and a characteristic topos especially for the Stoa." (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 15). With these words Wolfgang Schrage opens his study on the idea of providence in the New Testament. With these words he makes clear his main interest right at the beginning: the question is whether the conception of providence of *Greek philosophy* and especially of the *Stoa* corresponds to that of the Bible and what it means for today's theology if this is not the case.

"For the Stoa, providence is a divine world soul or world reason, rationally and pantheistically structured and deduced from the purposeful order of the course of the world and of human life, which as a formative and creative power sensibly plans everything in advance, penetrates it causally–rationally and teleologically keeps it in motion." (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 16). Thus, the Stoa's concept of providence is as steep as one can possibly imagine. If everything proceeds strictly according to rationally recognisable and comprehensible laws, the question of theodicy must also be answerable. And so it is: All conceivable evils are declared to be either useful for the overarching whole or educationally valuable for man. He should therefore submit to the divine plan with equanimity and dispassion. This proves his true freedom, which therefore is not threatened or diminished by almighty providence. In terms of content, Stoic providence runs unambiguously and straightforwardly towards man. From certain human abilities and animal and plant inabilities (descriptive), the reasonable plan of the "gods" is inferred (normative) to determine everything for the benefit of humans. The original intention here is both to impart self-awareness and

to admonish people to take responsibility. For the passive acceptance of an inscrutable "fate" (fatum), as advocated in the pre-Socratic period, would be irrational. This is precisely where the significant progress in intellectual history lies: only if there is a teleology of some kind (in the singular) or at least particular teleonomies (in the plural), i.e. lawful dynamics of nature that man can at least partially recognise by virtue of reason, can he assume responsibility for shaping his life and the world. The stumbling block of the Stoa is, of course, that it believes it recognises this teleology too clearly and unambiguously and narrows its content solely to man as the telos.

Compared to the Stoa, the *Bible* is conspicuously reticent about the *concept* of God's providence. "The idea of a divine providence (Latin providentia, Greek πρόνοια) comes from Greek thought, from where it influenced Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity." (Roman Kühschelm 2001, 895). "The Old Testament Jewish tradition, except for Hellenistic Judaism [...] does not betray any original interest in the theme of divine providence [...] Yet a certain form of historical guidance, world government and providence attributed to the sovereignty of YHWH is also attested to here." (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 31–32). Therefore, the *idea* of God's providence is also highly present in the Bible. Thus, the Old Testament sees God as the controller of history (Ps 78; 105–106; Is 2:12–22; Jer 25:9–14, etc.) and of creation (Gen 6–9; Ps 65:7–14; 104:27–30; 145:15–16).

The difference to the Stoic doctrine is nevertheless significant: "While the Stoa sees in the cosmic order the teleological planning of the impersonal πρόνοια, in Old Testament thought the trust in the personal God as the supporting ground dominates" (Roman Kühschelm 2001, 895). "The decisive perspective of the New Testament also on the subject of providence is [...] not shaped by the thought of the potentia absoluta of an omnipotent, all-predetermining God or even of world reason harmoniously and purposefully governing the universe" (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 137). "The interpretative approach and framework is rather the plan and the will conceived by God 'before the foundation of the world', and is therefore reliable, to bring salvation to the world through Christ." (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 261). The biblical concept of providence thus primarily serves a relational determination—man may and should entrust himself to God—while the Stoic concept of providence aims at the ontological determination of the cosmos as thoroughly reasonable. The Bible speaks explicitly of an existential attitude in the first-person perspective, while the Stoic account seeks to hide any existential interest behind the distanced analysis of the third-person perspective.

For the Bible, God's providence is "not an independent topos and not an object of speculation" (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 261): "If one is certain of salvation in the relationship experienced with God and Christ, and if the promise of God's victory, which can finally be expected, is firmly founded, the question of what happens to one personally or what happens to the world in detail obviously becomes relative" (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 262). Rather, it is about "the expectant reliance on God's promise and his irrevocable faithfulness" (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 263).

Against this background, it is easier for the question of theodicy to remain unanswered in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, and at the same time to be raised all the more audibly. "Not everything that befalls man and the world can be directly linked to God, especially not that which is contrary to God and negative. Attempts to explain evil are largely dispensed with. A God who predetermines and causes misery and death is mentioned only occasionally. God is not the one responsible for all suffering, cries and pain. It is true that there are many meanings and interpretations of the sufferings and evils that befall Christians, and certainly not an illusion of an ideal world or the justification and glorification of human fragility and misery. But often enough the question of whether something is intended by God's providence or why people are not spared it is left unanswered and no attempt is made to find a hidden meaning in it. Even Jesus does not receive an answer to his why-question (Mk 15:34). Only Easter illuminates such an answer a posteriori." (Wolfgang Schrage 2005, 263–264). The "Why?" of the crucified Christ and his subsequent loud cry remain in space. While the Stoa tries to explain away suffering as something reasonable and meaningful and demands that we bear it with equanimity, the Bible gives suffering a voice and makes it clear that any answer to the "why" question would be cynical and cold-hearted.

How did the *Church Fathers* manage to position themselves within this tension between the Stoa and the Bible? "The early Christian doctrine of providence can be understood as a struggle to find a form of thought that corresponds to the biblical understanding of God, because it had to take the risk of receiving the Greek metaphysics of providence. The recourse to Stoic cosmic thinking, which conceives the πρόνοια as a purposeful order of the world by virtue of its inherent world reason, was also to have a lasting influence on the Christian doctrine of providence because it sought to answer the question of theodicy by illuminating the order instituted by God in the act of creation." (Georg Essen 2001, 897). In this, as we saw in chapter 5, there is certainly room for manoeuvre. Whereas Nemesios of Emesa, for

example, sketches out a steep teleology that is consistently rationalistic to the last, Augustine is much more supple and advocates a flat, moderate teleology that still leaves room for non-rational processes. Nevertheless, the patristic image of God in essential points is more Greek than biblically determined. For it cannot be overlooked "that the patristic theologians as a whole could hardly detach themselves from the Hellenistic understanding of the divine as the necessary ontological ground of existing reality. Even the philosophical requirement that the concept of God must be linked to its essential immutability was not really dealt with in a productive way. [...] This problem of the form of thought was to have a lasting influence on the further development of the Christian doctrine of providence, if not to burden it altogether." (Georg Essen 2007, 388). The Church Fathers set a course that continues to have an effect today.

It is *Immanuel Kant* who, on the one hand, substantiates the Stoic doctrine of providence with new arguments and, on the other, expresses the greatest scepticism about its usefulness. Quite traditionally, Kant defines providence as a deeper wisdom and purposefulness of nature in contrast to fate as inscrutable, arbitrary coercion of nature. But then he asks primarily about the function of the providence paradigm in the context of ethics, for what we call providence cannot be observed empirically in nature but can only be grasped intellectually. Providence is therefore something that "we do not actually recognise in these art forms of nature, [...] but [...] can and must only think about them in order to form a concept of their possibility according to the analogy of human art acts" (Immanuel Kant, On Perpetual Peace AA VIII, 362). In other words, the notion of providence is a human construct—albeit a helpful and useful one and necessary for understanding nature. "The concept of providence, in fact, allows us to form a practical idea of the 'coincidence' of the purposiveness of nature with the moral purpose of reason." (George Sans 2015, 2564). The function of the concept of providence, then, is to substantiate moral claims by recourse to divine planning and purpose. However, Kant continues, this function can be better fulfilled by a less steep concept, namely the concept of nature: "The use of the word nature is also, when as here it is merely a matter of theory (not religion), more suitable to the bounds of human reason [...] and more modest than the expression of a providence discernible to us, with which one presumptuously sets Icarian wings to oneself in order to come closer to the mystery of its unfathomable intention." (Immanuel Kant, On Perpetual Peace AA VIII 362).

The effort to construct less steep argumentation leads Kant away from the concept of providence towards the concept of nature. One could also say: away from Stoic theology towards Stoic philosophy. Theology, however, follows this path only after a two-hundred-year delay. Julia Knop (2017, 50–55) shows very instructively how the paradigm of providence, which is classical in traditional theology, has completely decayed within the last one hundred years. To this end, she analyses the relevant articles in the three editions of the "Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche" to date. Engelbert Krebs, in the first edition from 1930 to 1938, still proceeds, with the unshakeable certainty of Neo-Scholasticism, from a maximum conception of the immutability, omnipotence and omniscience of God. In the second edition from 1957 to 1965, Karl Rahner remains faithful to this conception of content, but already discusses misunderstandable interpretations of the divine attributes and the theme of human freedom. Finally, Georg Essen's article in the third edition from 1993 to 2001 deconstructs the paradigm of providence as a model of thought that has historically fulfilled certain functions and thus puts it into perspective.

In the meantime, the deconstruction of the concept of providence has become widely accepted in Catholic and Protestant theology. This could be easily seen in the debate on so-called "intelligent design" in the 2000s. Put simply, it was about the question of whether it can be scientifically proven that behind the natural development of the world there must (!) be an intelligent designer, i.e. an omniscient Creator who plans everything ingeniously. While the Free Churches widely share this thesis, the mainstream churches expressed scepticism towards or even rejection of it. Even Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, who had initially shown a certain sympathy towards intelligent design, quickly backed down when he understood the theoretical problems he had gotten himself into. A strongly rationalistically charged idea of divine providence therefore has no future in the mainstream churches.

6.1.2 Systematic theological

More recently, Oliver Wintzek in particular launched a frontal attack on the talk of divine providence, which, in contrast to the critiques reviewed so far, is primarily justified on the grounds that talking of divine providence makes a strong understanding of human freedom impossible. Wintzek refers to a thesis by Nicolai Hartmann. Unlike the Stoics, Hartmann, influ-

enced by modern scientific thinking, considers the course of nature to be "blind" and continues: "Divine providence is quite different. It is teleological, a final determinism. In it, final purposes are the determining factor. And because the determining force in them is an infinite and 'omnipotent' one, which moreover permeates all world events—even the small spiritual world of man, man with his teleology is powerless in the face of it. Here he no longer finds any scope for self-determination; more correctly, what appears to him as his self-determination is in truth the power of divine providence working through him and over him. [...] man's providence is utterly annulled, his self-determination reduced to appearance, his ethos destroyed, his will paralysed. All his initiative and purposeful activity is transferred to God. [...] Thus the final determinism of divine providence abolishes ethical freedom." (Nicolai Hartmann [2] 1935, 741).

There is much that needs to be deepened and clarified in this quotation in order to understand it comprehensively. However, what is decisive for our question is what theological conclusions Wintzek draws from it. From his point of view, the classical idea of God's omniscience and providence, which he calls "theological determinism", brings serious problems for the core of faith (Oliver Wintzek 2017, 20). Also, on this basis, God himself would no longer be free, but determined by his own rules (Oliver Wintzek 2017, 24). However, anyone who claims that theological determinism is compatible with anthropological libertarianism, i.e. with a strong idea of human freedom ("theological compatibilism"), is postulating something impossible to consider: "The God of theological determinism is conceivable, but irrelevant because of its presence, which cannot be named otherwise than totalitarian. [...] The God of theological compatibilism—according to the thesis—is not consistently thinkable because compatibilism is not compatible with a strong concept of freedom and contingency." (Oliver Wintzek 2017, 25).

If God is thought of in Neo-Platonic terms as eternally at rest in himself and in Aristotelian terms as acting in categories of causality, Wintzek continues, the specifically Christian aspect of the image of God is lost (Oliver Wintzek 2017, 33–34), namely that a free God interacts with free human beings. In view of this, Wintzek deplores the traditional mistrust of theology towards contingency and pleads for an alternative: "The mistrust that prevails here, that God's sovereignty would be broken if radical contingency were allowed, should be contrasted with a trust in God's ability to be contingent: Instead of teleologically undermining and eternalistically making impossible the self-originating freedom, and as a consequence justi-

fiably integrating human suffering into God's sovereign plan and thus also unbearably obscuring God's morality, a conceivable and relevant theological alternative would have to emerge." (Oliver Wintzek 2017, 148).

Now, first of all, I agree with Wintzek when he states that the classical image of God as eternally unchanging, all-knowing and all-powerful is in urgent need of correction—this has already been stated. And likewise, I share Wintzek's plea for a strong, libertarian concept of human freedom. However, Wintzek (like Nicolai Hartmann) criticises not only the determinism of God, but also that of nature. And there he exceeds the competences of the humanities. Scientific determinism, which is ultimately a legacy of the Stoa (!), is a method that the natural sciences have chosen autonomously. Please note it is a method, not a result. Natural sciences construct the world *as if it were* exclusively determined by cause–effect relationships and therefore completely determined. And they arrive at many very useful results. Conversely, philosophy and theology, which as humanities construct the world *as if there were* exclusively freedom and responsibility in it, come to equally important and helpful findings. This is their autonomously chosen method, which the natural sciences have no right to interfere with.

The talk of God that Wintzek problematises only makes sense in this second context. From the perspective of the natural sciences, it has no meaning at all. What Wintzek rightly criticises, that God and his care since the Stoa have been linked with a thoroughly rationalised plan, which in turn manifests itself in the laws of nature, is therefore a Stoic and Christian category error: theorems of the first-person perspective of the humanities (God, freedom) are mixed with theorems of the third-person perspective of the natural sciences (laws of nature, teleology, determination), which is an absolute no-go. However, if the autonomy of the two perspectives and their own language games is respected, the theorems of the natural sciences and the humanities are equally justified. The prerequisite is a constructivist epistemology that overcomes traditional realism. The fact that the Stoics did not yet know constructivism cannot be blamed on them any more than on early Christian theology. Today, however, a pre- or non-constructivist theory is simply no longer communicable.

Without her assigning it so pointedly epistemologically, a clean distinction between the two perspectives is exactly the plea of Julia Knop. Thus, Knop begins with the sober observation that today no one needs the idea of divine providence to explain any natural or historical processes—the reference to inner-worldly causes suffices (Julia Knop 2017, 49). Such a

reference uses the explanatory patterns of the third-person perspective of the empirical sciences.

Conversely, however, what the concept of God aims at is also freed from paradigms of the third-person perspective, for the talk of divine providence aims to strengthen the human sense of self and responsibility—and it achieves this well without recourse to a teleology solely with reference to the person of God (Julia Knop 2017, 49). For the only thing at stake here is the belief in an ultimate meaningfulness and goodness of the world and of life, despite all lasting contradictions. It is not for nothing that the existential location of the biblical Creation narratives is the question of theodicy. From the third-person perspective, we see becoming and passing away, living and dying, flourishing and destruction. But only from the first-person perspective can we decide whether we want to recognise pure absurdity in it, like Albert Camus' Sisyphus, or a spark of meaning and love after all. In the sense of this second alternative, we could then say: "It is not about a divine master plan that could justify all world events in toto. It is not about a world strategy that has existed from eternity and only needs to be brought to fruition. Rather, it is about describing the personal participation of the human being, turned towards God in freedom, in his divine life." (Julia Knop 2017, 54).

In this context, Georg Essen emphasises the biblical concept of the covenant. With it, he can grasp and relate the moment of God's freedom as well as the freedom of people. "Covenant" is a term of the first-person perspective because a covenant agrees on claims that the covenant partners make on each other. In terms of natural science, however, the term is meaningless. Those who speak of a covenant presuppose a libertarian understanding of freedom: "The interpretation of history as the commerce between the liberating freedom of God and the liberated freedom of man, captured in the concept of the 'covenant', leads in turn to a theological concept of history as the place of intersubjectively binding practice, in which the individuating gaze of the one God calls man into a freedom that means responsibility for himself and for the neighbour. „ (Georg Essen 2007, 390). Essen draws consequences from this for the theological talk of providence (if one wants to maintain it at all): "In this respect we have to understand divine providence as an act of self-limitation of divine freedom in favour of created ones." (Georg Essen 2007, 393).

With the clear distinction between the two perspectives of knowledge and the constructivist foundation of theology, the opportunity arises to realise the common biblical and philosophical concern that is hidden in

the talk of divine providence: to describe a position of faith that confesses the goodness of the world and of life and tries to recognise and live out a meaning in all its absurdities and contradictions. At the same time, constructivist theology opens up the possibility of more clearly locating the talk of God's incomprehensibility and mysteriousness. It is in no way a capitulation to the scientific demands for exactness and precision, but a compelling consequence of the contextualisation of the speech of God as well as the speech of freedom and responsibility in the first-person perspective.

This does not resolve the question of theodicy, but it can be better classified and, above all, brought up more audibly. While (pre-constructivist) Stoic teleology explains suffering either as useful for the overarching whole or as pedagogically valuable for human beings, the Bible leaves the shouted out "why?" of Jesus (Mk 15:34) and remains silent about it—unlike the bystanders who seek an explanation for the "why?" and want to take action.

Seen in this light, it would be a matter of speaking of providence and even more so of God's plan in a most modest and restrained way (if at all); of not defining God's plan in more detail but keeping it open as an inscrutable mystery; of always marking faith in God's goodness as a faith in the enduring contradictions of life; and of giving voice to the cry of the suffering and not drowning it out by referring to faith in resurrection.

In this context, a form of modern, earthbound theology of the cross, which holds the suffering of the world within the darkness of God, gains a new and deeper meaning. It is not for nothing that Mark's Passion, with its darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour, refers back to the first Creation narrative. What is laid down there on the first day of creation, that there is light in the day and darkness in the night, is turned upside down at the moment of Jesus' death. The whole of creation suffers with the Son of God —and the Son of God with the whole of creation. Christian art has always kept this thought alive, whether by depicting the sun and moon above the arms of the crucified Christ, or by designing the cross as a tree of life. The tree of life is an ancient symbol of the divine order of creation, much older than Judaism and Christianity. If the tree of life has been designed and sung about as the cross of Christ since the early church, then the suffering of creation in its entirety is given expression in it and is inseparably linked to the suffering of the Son of God. There is no more consistent way to relativise the talk of God's providence.

And animals or non-human living beings as a whole? If the emphasis is on individual creation by a loving God, there is no reason to exclude them

as recipients of divine care. The only argument put forward for this could be the aloga thesis.

6.2 *Saved as the Body of God. The Question of Man's Endowment with Reason and his Relationship with Christ*

The aloga thesis still stands unchanged with many people. It enjoys great popularity and is, as it were, the anthropocentrists' most incisive one "but" against those who want to put animals, plants and ecosystems in a better position. The "biological mortification of human narcissism" (Sigmund Freud 1917, 4) triggered by Darwin is obviously still very deep-seated within many. In view of this, the tendency of many Church Fathers to appreciate also or even particularly small, inconspicuous animals and to flatten the steep scala naturae of the Stoa appears in a new light. It is a clear signal against the mainstream and its strong reservations. And yet, as mentioned several times, it does not mean that they fundamentally question the aloga thesis. In the following, this will be done in a behavioural–biological way as a first step. It is evident that, compared to antiquity, we have made enormous progress in animal observation. Nevertheless, we encounter a modern dispute about the aloga that in intensity is hardly inferior to the ancient one.

Theologically, the aloga thesis has been linked by the Church Fathers with the theorem of the incarnate divine Logos, Jesus Christ. Now this connection is not a problem in itself, for it is obvious that the two core statements of the Christian faith, the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of redemption, must be placed in relation to each other. The question to be discussed here, however, is whether the traditional reduction of the incarnation of God to becoming human, which is justified on the basis of man's exclusive ability to reason, is appropriate. This question, which will be explored in the second section, becomes more acute when animals can no longer be qualified as aloga.

Finally, one must ask about the idea of resurrection from the dead, which that corresponds to the incarnation of the Logos. Classically, non-human creatures were excluded from this—in line with the Stoa, but contrary to the biblical testimony. It must be examined whether new perspectives can be opened up for this under the framework conditions of a renewed form of Christology.

6.2.1 Ethological

"Reason" is not only a container term in the context of modern cognitive research. It was already so at the time of the Stoa. Even back then, what was used to determine whether a person was gifted with reason or not was a controversial issue. In going through ancient philosophy and early Christian theology, we have seen how diverse the criteria are by which reason is verified or falsified.

In the following, I will limit the question to how much "practical reason" animals have, i.e. how much "morality" can be attributed to them. I will explain this question on the basis of the reflections of three renowned antagonists: Michael Tomasello, who strongly emphasises the differences between humans and animals and ultimately advocates a gentle aloga thesis; Frans de Waal, who emphasises the similarities between humans and animals and disputes the aloga thesis even in Tomasello's unassuming guise, but does not want to call animals moral beings; and Marc Bekoff, who represents de Waal's theses even more pointedly and clearly affirms the classification of some animals as moral beings.

All three agree that the question of animal morality has several sub-questions:

(1) Do some animals have empathy, that is, are they able to empathise and sympathise with the feelings of other individuals?
(2) Do some animals have a (still relatively rudimentary) ethos and thus inevitably also a certain "unethos", i.e. can they intentionally harm and help each other?
(3) Do some animals have a theory of mind, i.e. can they mentally imagine what other individuals are thinking or intending and thus anticipate their behaviour in their own minds?
(4) Do some animals have shared intentionality or we-intentionality, i.e. can they cooperate in such a way that they pursue a common goal and play different roles to achieve it?
(5) Do some animals possibly have a sense of justice, i.e. can they develop an idea of reward and punishment and their proportionality to benefits or harm?
(6) And do some of these animals possibly have a broader conception of justice that balances the complex interactions of many individuals over long periods of time and strives for a balanced equilibrium?

Put simply, the abilities from the later stages presuppose those of the earlier stages. As far as the first two abilities are concerned, all three researchers agree that numerous animals that live socially possess them. *Michael Tomasello* summarises the two abilities under the umbrella term "altruistic helping" (Michael Tomasello 2016, 1–3), which is characterised by compassion, benevolence and care and represents a kind of "morality of sympathy" (Michael Tomasello 2016, 7–8). This form of morality is—as the name suggests—fed by feelings and not by rational considerations and is primarily directed towards those individuals who one finds likeable.

From the morality of sympathy, Tomasello identifies the morality of fairness in a comprehensive sense, which aims at cooperation even among distanced individuals and seeks to shape this according to the standards of justice and equality through agreements. This was necessarily highly complex and most likely (!) limited to humans (Michael Tomasello 2016, 2). For the concept of fairness is about the establishment of a balance that firstly also includes guilt, shaming and punishment, secondly takes into account the complex relationships within a group and thirdly signifies a consciously perceived obligation: You shall do this and not that! According to Tomasello, a comprehensive conception of justice requires the abilities of levels (3) to (6)—and he does not find these in animals, at least not clearly.

Ontogenetically, this uniqueness of humans has to do with the fact that only humans had to develop a complex distribution of roles in hunting in order to be successful and survive (Michael Tomasello 2016, 4). This is because man is the only creature that (before settlement and agriculture of the Neolithic Revolution) depends on large quantities of meat but does not have the bodily characteristics to hunt this meat without tools and complex cooperation. In contrast, most predators that hunt together are physically so well equipped that it is sufficient for them all to try to snatch the prey at the same time. They do not need the we-intentionality of distributed roles to be successful. At the same time, the prey is usually so large that there is enough food for everyone involved in the hunt and the question of distributive justice does not arise. Chimpanzees, on the other hand, the only apes that hunt together, use meat only as a supplement, while their main food is plants (Michael Tomasello 2016, 26–28).

Humans are thus much more dependent on each other than all other socially living animals, according to Tomasello's "interdependence hypothesis", and from this dependence an intensity and complexity of cooperation develops like in no other species. While in great apes the driving force for cooperation is competition—some individuals cooperate to win competi-

tion against others—and coalition building is based primarily on sympathy, humans cooperate for the sake of cooperation and the maintenance of social relationships (Michael Tomasello 2016, 26). Tomasello refers to David Hume, who names two conditions for the emergence of ideas of justice: First, no one in the group may have absolute dominance. And second, all group members depend on each other for elementary basic needs. The second condition, according to Tomasello, does not exist in apes (Michael Tomasello 2016, 37–38).

While there are still too few experiments with apes in the area of transactional justice, Tomasello sees clear indications, although not yet complete proof (!), in the area of distributive justice that apes have no concept of justice:

– In the so-called ultimatum game, a first player is given a good of which he must offer a part to a second player. If the latter refuses the share of it offered to him because it seems too small, the first player must also give up his share and both go away empty-handed. If, on the other hand, the second actor accepts the offer, he receives it and the first actor receives the rest. Unlike humans, the second actors in chimpanzees and bonobos accept any offer greater than zero, while humans reject very unfair offers (Michael Tomasello 2016, 32–33).
– Social comparison also seems to be absent in apes: Chimpanzees do not refuse to eat worse food than their conspecifics, but they do refuse to eat worse food than they are used to. They compare food, not its distribution among individuals (Michael Tomasello 2016, 33 in replicating an experiment by Sarah F. Brosnan 2006). Similarly, chimpanzees and bonobos do not become outraged when the human experimenter allocates unequal amounts of food to them, but they do when he withholds the better pieces and does not distribute them to conspecifics. Tomasello concludes that apes feel compassion and "social anger" but have no concept of something that is earned and therefore owed to them (Michael Tomasello 2016, 34).

"There is thus no solid evidence that great apes have a sense of fairness in dividing resources, and much evidence that they do not." (Michael Tomasello 2016, 33). Note Tomasello's caution in making snap judgements. He does not say that apes have no sense of fairness, only that the evidence suggests little in favour of that idea and much against it. He leaves the door open a crack.

According to Tomasello, insofar as animals practise helping each other reciprocally, this most likely occurs solely out of sympathy and not by deriving the action from ideas of justice. Sympathy is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for justice. In addition, there must be at least implicit consent or agreement to help each other. "The key point for current purposes is that great ape patterns of reciprocity on the behavioural level are underlain not by any kind of implicit agreement or contract for reciprocity, much less by any kind of judgments of fairness or equity, but only by interdependence-based sympathy operating in both directions." (Michael Tomasello 2016, 25).

Judith Benz-Schwarzburg describes a relatively highly developed example that can still be assigned to compassionate morality as follows: "In an experiment, rats freed conspecifics trapped in a tube. In contrast, they did not open tubes that were empty or only contained objects. If a second tube enticed them with a piece of chocolate, they opened both tubes and typically shared the chocolate with the freed animal. Thus, rats also respond pro-socially to the distress of conspecifics, suggesting biological roots of empathically motivated helping." (Judith Benz-Schwarzburg 2015, 246–247).

But here's the kicker: although Tomasello values animal capacities to the greatest extent possible within the morality of likeability, he ultimately remains within the scope of the aloga thesis: animals have no rationality. Their morality is founded on emotions alone, not on thoughts and reasoning. Conciliatory Stoics and Church Fathers have also gone this far.

Frans de Waal, on the other hand, sees at least in some particularly intelligent and social animal species a morality that includes considerations and calculations. De Waal wants to do away with the Stoic thesis that the good in humans is what is "humane", with rationality given to humans alone, and the evil in humans is the "animal" in them, the emotional, which must be tamed by culture (Frans de Waal 2006, 9). According to this "façade theory", morality and culture are a paper-thin façade that covers wild, cruel nature, but quickly collapses under pressure (Frans de Waal 2006, 34–36 and 2008, 25–35). In Konrad Lorenz and many representatives of sociobiology, de Waal still sees precisely this theory at work, according to which reason must dominate instincts and culture must dominate nature (Frans de Waal 2006, 9). In contrast, Charles Darwin assumed that humanity arose naturally and morality evolutionarily. In evolutionary biology, good and evil were of equal origin: "If animals can have enemies, then they can also have friends; if they can deceive each other, then they can also

be honest; and if they can be vicious, then they can also be friendly and altruistic." (Frans de Waal 2000, 31). In general, the Stoic paradigm has two major problems in the context of evolutionary theory: First, it undermines its explanatory power because it does not attribute an evolutionary origin to reason and morality. And secondly, modern "Stoics" such as Lorenz and sociobiology did not identify an alternative source from which morality could arise. In contrast, de Waal argues "that morality by no means begins with humans and, contrary to what we might think, is not an exclusively human achievement." (Frans de Waal 2015, 12).

A significant difference between de Waal and Tomasello concerns the "material" for observing animal behaviour. While Tomasello relies mainly on humanly constructed (and thus methodologically strongly anthropocentric!) experiments with animals, de Waal draws mainly on observations of animals in an open enclosure or in the wild, interacting without human influence. This is a fundamentally different setting. We know from observations of human behaviour that people behave in a far more nuanced way, especially in relation to moral questions, when they are in a real conflict situation than when they are questioned in a thought experiment or placed in artificial situations as in the ultimatum game. It is true that field observations also have their limitations because one cannot infer what is going on in animals' minds with the same precision as in constructed experiments. Nevertheless, one should not neglect their "anthropocentrist bias": "When apes [...] are tested among their peers, they perform significantly better, and in the wild they pay attention to what their conspecifics know or don't know." (Frans de Waal 2015, 43).

De Waal also sees empathy as a necessary condition for morality (Frans de Waal 2006, 238–246 and 2008, 43–48): The ability to empathise with the feelings of others is a condition of possibility for the development of the Golden Rule and thus of some kind of ethos. This capacity for empathy is located in very early structures of the brain and is present in a simple form in all animals (imitation, physical empathy, transmission of emotions).

The fact that even purely emotionally based morality of compassion can lead to enormously high-level behaviour can be shown by an example in chimpanzees: relatives but also non-related male chimpanzees as well as female chimpanzees who are friends with a deceased mother adopting her orphaned young. There is no recognisable self-interest for such behaviour, at least among the non-relatives. The behaviour is therefore very altruistic (Christophe Boesch et al. 2010, 1–6). However, it does not yet presuppose any considerations of justice and can in principle be explained without

calculating thinking and deliberation on the part of the chimpanzees in question.

But what about the higher morality that Tomasello, in agreement with de Waal, calls morality of justice? Research on this question has only existed since the beginning of the 21st century. At least a simple sense of justice has been demonstrated in dogs. If all dogs are rewarded equally for the same performance after a training session, they are all satisfied. If they are all not rewarded despite their performance, they are also satisfied—they concede this decision to a human trainer because they cooperate with him or her out of an intrinsic motivation and for the pleasure of cooperation. However, if some dogs are rewarded and others are not, the non-rewarded ones refuse to cooperate for days. They will not even let the human pack leader get away with such evident injustice (Frans de Waal 2008, 64–68; Friederike Range et al. 2009).

According to de Waal, a more comprehensive ethos of justice and reciprocity emerges above all where the two central resources of living together have to be shared: food and sexuality. The further back an animal's memory goes, the more comprehensive balances of giving and receiving can be drawn up, and the more diversely it is possible to remember who gave how much and who received how much. This gives rise to what de Waal calls "reciprocal altruism" (Frans de Waal 2000, 37): Giving and receiving no longer have to occur at the same moment but can be far apart. And they can take long detours via many individuals. A gives to B, B gives to C, C gives to D... and at some point, D gives something to A (Frans de Waal 2006, 257–294 and 1997, 31–37).

But woe betide any animals if the balance between give and take for an individual is not created equally in the long run. In other words, if they receive a lot but give little. Then there are drastic sanctions. The need of others to retaliate arises. Monkeys notice everything and retaliate. The one who does not respect the ethos of justice is consistently denied the sharing of food and tenderness. Nothing more is given to it, and nothing more is taken from it. For the sake of justice, apes are prepared to accept their own disadvantages. Unlike their human relatives, they enforce economic sanctions without regard for their own disadvantages.

In addition to sanctions, which are usually imposed unanimously by the whole group, authority figures in the group can help to secure justice through mediation. If they succeed in arbitration, this further increases their authority (Frans de Waal 2000, 47). For: "Without any doubt, prescriptive rules and a sense of order grow out of a hierarchical organisation

in which the subordinate constantly watches out for the dominant." (Frans de Waal 2000, 118). In order for leaders to actually promote justice, packs only recognise those personalities who are completely impartial and prefer to look after the weak (Frans de Waal 2006, 119–120). "A just leader is not so easy to find, so it is in the interest of the community to keep him in power as long as possible." (Frans de Waal 2000, 164).

Because great apes have much flatter hierarchies than animal apes, their need for ethical regulation increases immensely (Frans de Waal 2006, 117). In a monarchy, there is less to negotiate than in a democracy—we know this in the human sphere as well. The ability to negotiate ethically relevant points of contention in a nuanced manner and the realisation of flat hierarchies thus go hand in hand.

Ethology usually gives four components or "ingredients" as necessary conditions for morality (Jessica C. Flack/ Frans B.M. de Waal 2000, 22; cf. Sarah F. Brosnan 2006, 168):

- Sympathy-related components: bonding, helping and emotional contagion; learned adaptation to and special treatment of the disabled and injured; the ability to mentally swap places (cognitive empathy)*.
- Norm-related components: prescriptive social rules; internalisation of rules and anticipation of punishment*; a sense of social regularity and expectation of how one should be treated*.
- Reciprocity: concept of giving, trading and revenge; moralistic aggression against violations of the rules of reciprocity.
- Getting along with each other: peacemaking and conflict avoidance; caring for the community and maintaining good relations*; accommodating conflicting interests through negotiation.

Especially in the areas marked with an asterisk*—i.e. cognitive empathy, internalisation of rules, expectation of fair treatment and concern for the community—humans seem to have developed considerably further than most other animals, according to Flack and de Waal. Conversely, however, this also means that some animals possess considerable potential of all four components of morality. At the same time, de Waal admits that he is reluctant to call chimpanzees "moral beings" (Frans de Waal 2015, 31).

One of the first researchers, apart from Frans de Waal, who devoted himself to the ideas of justice of animals is *Marc Bekoff*. He calls it "wild justice". His specific focus is on animal play behaviour, because "if we define justice and morality as social rules and expectations that balance differences between individuals to ensure harmony in the group, then that is

exactly what we observe when animals play with each other" (Marc Bekoff 2008, 114). Play signals are particularly honest signals; cheating very rarely occurs. They reveal trust and empathy, apology and forgiveness, fairness and cooperation, joy and honour (!).

Morality reveals many similarities to playing. In both cases, it is a voluntary activity according to rules that must be known and understood by the participants (Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 456–457). In canids, for example, there are precise rules about how hard one may bite, that sexual advances are forbidden and that dominance behaviour must be kept to a minimum. Play is also a voluntary affair that ends immediately if the rules of fairness are blatantly violated. Neuroscience and behavioural research show that playing causes more flexibility and learning ability in the brain. During play, players continuously evaluate the intentions, signals and compliance with certain rules of their playmates (Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 459).

Play behaviour is not about dealing with material inequalities such as food and sex, which are the focus of Tomasello and de Waal's research, but about dealing with inequalities of behaviour. This has two major advantages (Sarah F. Brosnan 2006, 167–168): First, it broadens the scope of enquiry and shows another area in which animal and human responses to inequalities may have evolved. And second, it offers insight into the ways in which inequality considerations can directly influence an individual's survival and reproduction, becoming a direct target of natural selection.

Games need clear sign language to be recognised as games. Canids bow to each other to open a game. And if they intend to bite the other player, they bow again beforehand to avoid the misunderstanding that it is now a serious fight (Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 461). If the bite was accidentally too strong, they again apologise by bowing (Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 465).

Particularly strong wolves, dogs and coyotes deliberately restrain themselves during play, as excessive aggression is not tolerated by the group. The individuals concerned are no longer asked to join in, and if they join in of their own accord, the others stop playing. In this way, playing tends towards fundamental equality: physical dominance or differences in rank are faded out for the duration of the game (something we know from humans when adults play with small children). Play thus seems to be an important field for practising cooperation and negotiating social agreements (Marc Bekoff 2006, 53; Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 459, 462), and not only for

canids, but also for rats, wallabies and many other animals (Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 463).

Play behaviour has direct consequences for the fitness of individuals. Adolescent coyotes that have little desire to play or are excluded from games are much more likely to leave the pack than those that do participate. In this context, the rate of premature mortality for individuals that stay in the pack is 20 per cent, but for those that leave the pack it is 55 per cent—more than double (Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 468). Apparently, there is a direct fitness link between fair play and early survival, making this behaviour highly susceptible to change through natural selection. According to Sarah F. Brosnan (2006, 167), this is the first evidence of a direct fitness effect of adherence to or violation of social norms or standards.

Bekoff emphasises the evolutionary continuity between animal and human morality even more strongly than de Waal. He justifies this, among other things, with the criterion of parsimony. "The principle of parsimony suggests the following hypothesis: A sense of justice is a continuous and evolved trait. And, as such, it has roots or correlates in closely related species or in species with similar patterns of social organisation." (Marc Bekoff/ Jessica Pierce 2009, 456). Unlike de Waal, Bekoff should have no problem describing chimpanzees as moral beings.

Referring explicitly to the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, whose director is Michael Tomasello, Bekoff summarises his position: "Of course some people want to learn more about animals to make the case for human uniqueness, usually claiming that humans are 'above' and 'better' than other animals. But the more we study animals and the more we learn about 'them' and 'us', we frequently discover there is not a real dichotomy or non-negotiable gap between animals and humans because humans are, of course, animals. There is evolutionary continuity. Art, culture, language, and tool use and manufacture can no longer be used to separate 'them' from 'us' [...]. Line-drawing can be very misleading especially when people take the view that non-human animals are 'lower' or 'less valuable' than 'higher' animals, where higher' means human. In many ways 'we are them' and 'they are us'." (Marc Bekoff 2006, 45). "There is No Great Divide: Animals do Think!" (Marc Bekoff 2006, 46).

How are the three positions to be evaluated? First of all, it is striking that Tomasello, de Waal and Bekoff are still working from Stoic distinctions and demarcations. And, like their ancient predecessors, they base their considerations on observations of animal behaviour. So the Stoic method was in principle very successful—except that the potential falsifications

were blatantly underestimated due to the inescapable methodological anthropocentrism. Modern natural science has become considerably more cautious here.

For all their differences, Tomasello, de Waal and Bekoff position themselves very similarly on many points. First of all, they are jointly convinced that morality develops evolutionarily and unfolds in a bottom-up manner to ever greater complexity. They attribute a form of morality of sympathy to a great many animals, making it clear that they have at least some basic elements of human morality. All three also clearly emphasise the importance of social coexistence for the emergence and further development of morality. Finally, they agree that reflection on morality, i.e. what we call "ethics" as distinct from ethos, is the preserve of humans. However, Tomasello strongly doubts an ethos of justice among some animals, while de Waal accepts it within narrow limits and Bekoff even does so extensively.

Tomasello is recognisably anxious to base animal morality exclusively on emotions—and to reserve the rationality of a calculated idea of justice for humans. This relatively sharp distinction between emotional morality of compassion and rational morality of justice enables Tomasello to grant many animals something like morality at all, and that is a decisive step forward. But his discourse is strongly reminiscent of the times when women were considered to have only morality of pity and only men morality of justice—a thesis that has been convincingly refuted by feminist criticism in recent decades. Consciously or unconsciously, Tomasello puts animals in the place where women were not long ago.

Recently, however, Tomasello seems to have opened the door a crack to include rational decision-making by animals: Great apes subject evidence that refutes their previous assumptions to close scrutiny. In other words, they investigate the reasons for their decisions. Tomasello and his colleagues call this "rational monitoring" of the decision-making process (Cathal O'Madagain et al. 2022, 1971). Humans do not do this until they are five years old. However, apes remain indifferent when conspecifics express a contrary assumption. Humans react to such an assumption as early as three years of age by seeking verification. So while humans are more sensitive to contradiction from peers, great apes are more attentive to contradictory physical evidence.

Despite this cautious approach by Tomasello towards practical reason in animals, above all one fundamental question remains: can the line between morality of sympathy and morality of justice be drawn as clearly and sharply as Tomasello suggests? Are the transitions not necessarily more flu-

id, as de Waal in particular emphasises? Neurobiologically, all animals with a brain have structures of thinking, structures of feeling and structures that connect the two of them. And it is precisely in these connecting structures (in mammals, including humans, the so-called prefrontal cortex) that decisions about one's own behaviour take place, as the research of Antonio R. Damasio (1997 and 2000) in particular has shown. Practical reason cannot be realised without a connection between thinking and feeling. Thus, even the morality of sympathy involves processes of reasoning, however simple they may be. Some animals may have little rationality—but they are not reasonless, i.e. without any practical reason.

If we reflect on the ethological insights philosophically from a certain distance, *Mark Rowlands'* treatise "Can animals be moral?" can be a good guide. Most ethologists, Rowlands says, question whether animals can be moral agents in the same way that humans are. But that is not the question at all. The question is rather whether they can act morally—that is, act on moral grounds (Mark Rowlands 2012, 21). And for this, the hurdles are not as high as Tomasello, de Waal and Bekoff assume. "For an individual to act morally, [...] it is not necessary that she have the ability to reflect on her motives or actions; nor does it require that she be able to explicitly formulate or understand the principles on which she acts, nor that she be able to adopt an impartial perspective of the sort required for a sense of justice." (Mark Rowlands 2012, 22).

Assuming that the bar for moral action is lower than generally assumed, Rowlands concludes on the basis of the ethological observations referred to earlier that some animals can be motivated to act for moral reasons—in the form of morally charged emotions. For such have a moral content because they guarantee the truth of a moral proposition (Mark Rowlands 2012, 71). These animals therefore act morally. But does this also make them moral agents?

A person is a moral agent if and only if she can be held morally accountable and morally evaluated (praised or blamed, rewarded or punished) for her intentions and actions (Mark Rowlands 2012, 75). Animals are not moral agents in this sense, as we do not hold them accountable. This is because we can only do so with individuals who can question and reflect on their own moral motivations (Mark Rowlands 2012, 93–98). Nevertheless, many animals are moral subjects, i.e. individuals who are at least sometimes motivated to act for moral reasons (Mark Rowlands 2012, 89).

In essence, Rowlands is putting many animals on the side of people who are capable of committing crimes. We do not consider children and people

with dementia or severe mental disabilities to be moral agents in the sense just defined—we do not evaluate their actions morally because we assume that they are not at all, not yet or no longer capable of questioning and reflecting on their actions. At the same time, we have to assume that children are moral subjects at a very early stage. Otherwise, we would not be allowed to try to educate them morally. The moral demands on children therefore increase with each year of life—and, in a mirror image, the moral demands on dementia patients decrease with each progression of dementia. This shows that the continuum between moral subjecthood and moral agency in humans is fluid. We do not yet reproach a six-year-old for some actions that we would certainly reproach a ten-year-old. Similarly, we will not deny all responsibility to people with mild or moderate mental disabilities or people with incipient dementia but will make this dependent on the scope of the respective action. Moral agency is therefore by no means a binary concept but describes a continuum between 0 and 100.

For our debate, it is completely sufficient to recognise animals as moral subjects in the sense presented, for Tomasello, de Waal and Bekoff agree that some animals can act like human children at the age of four, five or six. The term "morally analogous" is inappropriate for such behaviour—it is coyly concealed as "non-moral" or "irrational" and represents a negation without offering an affirmation. If one wants to mark a difference to humans, the term "protomoral" is more appropriate, for on the one hand it makes clear that protomoral behaviour is already moral behaviour, and on the other hand it signals that human morality has continuously developed from animal (proto-) morality and at the same time far exceeds it.

6.2.2 Christological

For the Church Fathers, as we have seen, the question of reason is closely linked to the question of the divine Logos, Jesus Christ. When the Logos enters this world, so the reasoning goes, he can reveal himself in a way that is significant for salvation history only to those creatures that are capable of receiving him. According to that argumentation, these are only rational beings, i.e., according to the Stoic conviction, human beings. Animals and plants or even inanimate nature can therefore have no communion with Christ and consequently cannot be redeemed to eternal life.

This conviction has become highly questionable at least since the middle of the 20th century. At that time, the churches' opposition to the theory

of evolution was in its last throes. In his 1950 encyclical Humani generis, Pope Pius XII conceded to the natural sciences that they could investigate "the origin of the human body from pre-existing and living matter", but restricted this by saying that monogenism, i.e. the descent of all human beings from Adam, should not be called into question (HG 36–37). But only fifteen years later the Second Vatican Council affirmed the freedom of research and science without any restriction (GS 36; 59; 62) and thus paved the way for the reconciliation of evolutionary theory and faith. Its full recognition came in an address by Pope John Paul II to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on 22 October 1996: The theory of evolution is "more than a hypothesis".

Karl Rahner (1904 Freiburg i.B.-1984 Innsbruck) had already made the overdue paradigm shift twenty years earlier in his "Foundations of the Christian Faith". According to Rahner, it is not the theory of evolution that is at issue for the modern world, but faith in Jesus as the Christ. Theology must rethink this and show its compatibility with modern scientific thinking. "In doing so, the evolutionary world view is taken as a given and the question asked is whether Christology is compatible or can be compatible with it, and not vice versa." (Karl Rahner 1976, 180). Rahner thus states a reversal of the burden of proof: while in his time Darwin was still under strong social pressure to prove the compatibility of his theory with the Christian faith, 100 years later the wind has turned 180 degrees. Now the Church and theology are challenged to show the compatibility of the Christian faith with modern natural science. From his long and circuitous justification for this reversal of the burden of proof, one can see that Rahner was exposed to fierce intra-theological and intra-church resistance.

Rahner is explicitly not concerned with deriving Christology from the theory of evolution. That would be a category error and would rob theology of its independence. Rather, it is about "an intrinsic affinity and the possibility of a reciprocal correlation" (Karl Rahner 1976, 181). In order to demonstrate this affinity, Rahner first assumes that all matter comes from a single origin and therefore represents a unity (Karl Rahner 1976, 183). This matter possesses the possibility of self-transcendence, of transcending itself to become something greater. "Becoming must be understood as a becoming more, as the emergence of more reality [...] as real self-transcendence, self-outdoing" (Karl Rahner 1976, 186). And this self-transcendence reaches out to its ground, its condition of possibility—the absolute mystery.

This, however, makes it conceivable that this absolute mystery, which believers call God, can submerge itself into the world and its matter: "Precisely because the movement of the development of the cosmos is thus carried from the outset and in all phases by the urge for greater fullness and intimacy and the ever closer and more conscious relationship to its ground, the message that an absolute immediacy with this infinite ground comes about is absolutely given in itself." (Karl Rahner 1976, 192). Absolute immediacy with the infinite ground means that this ground becomes part of matter and its history. In this message "it is said that before and behind everything that is individual and to be classified [...] the infinite mystery always already stands and that in this abyss is the origin and the end, the blessed goal" (Karl Rahner 1976, 193). The materialisation of the infinite reason in the world, as Christians believe in Jesus Christ, is then "the absolute promise of God to [...] creatures and the acceptance of self-communication" (Karl Rahner 1976, 195) by creation in one. As God, Jesus Christ is the absolute promise to creation; as a creature, he embodies the acceptance of this promise by creation. In this way Rahner wants to "take really seriously the word that the Logos became *flesh*" (Karl Rahner 1976, 182, emphasis there).

Rahner's great reflections, however, have a huge flaw: although they interpret the theory of evolution philosophically and theologically in an ingenious way and although they place the whole of creation within the horizon of redemption, they persist in traditional anthropocentrism. For despite the emphasised unity of the cosmos, Rahner is concerned with justifying why God could not become *just any* creature, but had to become *man*. For him, the dynamic of evolution inevitably runs towards man, because only in him does "the basic tendency of matter to discover itself in spirit through self-transcendence reach its definitive breakthrough" (Karl Rahner 1976, 182).

Here, we must make a clear distinction: That "what matter is can only be said from man [...] We say here deliberately: from 'man'..." (Karl Rahner 1976, 184), is entirely correct and simply reflects what we call today "epistemic anthropocentrism". Of course, the interpretation of the development of evolution must be opened up from a human perspective, with human categories and ways of understanding—how else?

But for Rahner, the increase in matter is directed towards that being which possesses "spirit" in the full sense of the word. And so, for him, "there is no reason to deny that matter should have developed towards life and towards man" (Karl Rahner 1976, 187). At this point, Rahner speaks of

"differences in essence" between human and non-human creation and of the "self-transcendence of essence". So much "essence" is rather suspicious to today's theologically sensitive ears, and Rahner does not specify what he means by it. He continues by speaking of the human being as the "actual event of self-transcendence", which the "lower [...] preludes [...]" (Karl Rahner 1976, 187). For him, non-human creation is "that reality which we call vulgar and, in its quite correct sense, 'unconscious' [...], that which possesses only its own idea, entangled in itself" (Karl Rahner 1976, 188). However, the cosmos finds itself in man (Karl Rahner 1976, 190–191).

God, the absolute reason for and the infinite mystery of the cosmos, thus reveals himself directly to man as the only spiritual creature and as mediated to the cosmos as a whole through man. Mentally, Rahner is very close here to Paul's Stoically inspired anthropocentrism in Rom 8. There, too, the "freedom and glory of the children of God" is attributed to the whole of creation. But there, too, it takes place through the mediation of human beings and for the sake of human beings. With their strong emphasis on the unity of creation, both in its origin and in its future, Paul and Rahner clearly go beyond the Stoa. But despite Rahner's affirmation, the Johannine "becoming flesh" is subordinated to Pauline Stoic cosmology (and specifically in the form of its scala naturae—keyword "the lower", "preluded").

Like every theologian, Rahner was also a child of his time. That theology must open up to modern evolutionary biology and enter into dialogue with it became clear to many in the 1970s. But that anthropocentrism can no longer be maintained so smoothly and easily, precisely because of the theory of evolution, was not yet seen. Carl Amery's criticism of Christian anthropocentrism from 1972 and even more so Lynn White's criticism from 1967 were obviously not perceived by Rahner. And so, although he takes a first important step, he does not yet take the necessary second one.

It seems that the dogmatic description of the relationship between Christology and creation theology has developed little since Rahner. Thus, *Franz Gruber* remains strongly oriented towards Rahner in his remarks on "The Unity of Creation and Incarnation" (Franz Gruber 2001, 208–210) and "Incarnation and Evolution" (Franz Gruber 2001, 210–214). Like Rahner, he sees the significance of the incarnation for the whole of creation: "In Christ, God loves creation unconditionally and makes himself known to it as Logos. In this way creation receives a dignity and depth that is unsurpassable." (Franz Gruber 2001, 208). "Thus creation too becomes visible in the Logos Son as the counterpart truly willed by God, as that created for the sake of

God's communion of life with the other of himself." (Franz Gruber 2001, 209).

As for Rahner, it is also decisive for Gruber that traditional anthropocentrism must be broken up: "The Logos of God is the way, the truth and the fulfilment of life. [...] Christian anthropocentrism also culminates in this sentence. That this, however, is not the last word of Revelation, is equally to be noted. For the goal of creation is its transformation into the kingdom of God. This transformation does not remain reduced to human beings alone." (Franz Gruber 2001, 214). However, Gruber does not problematise the fact that Rahner stops halfway here. Rather, he concludes: "If one does not reject Rahner's theological–philosophical reflection from the outset because of its idealistic way of speaking, then his interpretation is the most coherent metaphysical and theological mediation to date of the Christian claim to the meaning of an absolute goal of creation with a general evolutionary understanding of the world." (Franz Gruber 2001, 213).

Fifteen years later, *Elizabeth Johnson* followed the same path. With explicit reference to Rahner, she too thinks in terms of the theory of evolution as the basic social narrative and asks herself how the Christian message can fit into this. She sees the antiquated language of the Nicene Creed and its need for reform, but also its ability to reform, which is based on the description of God's activity in the world: "As for the Nicene Creed, it too may seem dated. At the very least its language speaks with the vocabulary of a bygone era [...] Yet pulsing underneath its threefold structure is a narrative of divine engagement with the world..." (Elizabeth Johnson 2015, 16).

Like Rahner, Johnson emphasises that the Logos became flesh and not just man. Jesus' humanity therefore stands for a part of the whole of creation. "In truth, the type of sarx that the Word became was precisely human flesh. Homo sapiens, however, does not stand alone but is part of an interconnected whole." (Elizabeth Johnson 2015, 195). Johnson refers to this perception as "deep incarnation", in line with Niels Gregersen. "The flesh that the Word of God became as a human being is part of the vast body of the cosmos. The phrase 'deep incarnation', coined by Niels Gregersen, is starting to be used in Christology to signify this radical divine reach through human flesh all the way down 'into the very tissue of biological existence' with its 'growth and decay'..." (Elizabeth Johnson 2015, 1 96). And she concludes, "The incarnation is a cosmic event" (Elizabeth Johnson 2015, 197). The scope of this deep incarnation goes all the way to the cross —the incarnate Christ suffers with all creation—and to resurrection—the incarnate Christ opens the way to eternity for all creation. Johnson speaks

by analogy of "deep resurrection" (Elizabeth Johnson 2015, 207). In all this, she remains oriented towards Rahner, to whom, as she explicitly confesses, she owes an enormous debt (Elizabeth Johnson 2015, xvii). Sallie McFague, on the other hand, who is subsequently presented, is quoted by Johnson only in passing and without addressing her quite different proposal for a paradigm shift.

After four decades, Rahner's paradigm shift in systematic theology thus seems to have found a certain acceptance: affirmation of the redemption of all creation through Christ—without overcoming traditional anthropocentrism in a way that is incisive in terms of thought. Systematic theological thinking seems to have stopped halfway. Let us therefore turn to a pointed counter-proposal. *Sallie McFague* (1933 Quincy MS–2019 Vancouver) is a generation younger than Karl Rahner and wrote her most significant works only after his death—at a time when the ecological question was increasingly coming to the fore. In view of this, McFague's goal is primarily a different way of seeing the world and, only for its sake, a different way of seeing God: "to cause us to see differently", "to think and act as if bodies matter", "to change what we value" (Sallie McFague 1993, 17). Dogmatics is put into operation to shape the world.

Like Rahner, McFague also starts from the societal recognition of evolutionary biology, which states there is a fundamental interdependence between humans and the cosmos. However, she places the ecological question on an equal footing with evolutionary biology. "We are part and parcel of the web of life and exist in interdependence with all other beings, both human and nonhuman. [...] The evolutionary, ecological perspective insists that we are, in the most profound way, 'not our own': we belong, from the cells of our bodies to the finest creations of our minds, to the intricate, ever-changing cosmos. We both depend on that web of life for our own continued existence and in a special way we are responsible for it, for we alone know that life is interrelated and we alone know how to destroy it." (Sallie McFague 1990, 202).

Unlike Rahner, McFague has already received the debate on "the historical roots of our ecological crisis" triggered by Lynn White in 1967. For her, traditional Western, Judeo-Christian anthropocentrism is the root of evil and must be overcome. "As we near the close of the twentieth century we have become increasingly conscious of the fragility of our world. We have also become aware that the anthropocentrism that characterizes much of the Judeo-Christian tradition has often fed a sensibility insensitive to our proper place in the universe." (Sallie McFague 1990, 202). She wants to re-

place anthropocentrism with theocentrism, biocentrism and/or cosmocentrism (Sallie McFague 1990, 203), although it remains completely unclear which of these alternative teleologies is really her favourite or how she wants to combine these different approaches. In this respect, she remains extremely vague.

But how can a renewed, non-anthropocentristic form of theology speak of God and the world? McFague, inspired by the parables of Jesus and the philosophy of Paul Ricœur, assumes that theological speech is always and exclusively metaphorical because the actual cannot be said univocally. "Metaphor is the way by which we understand as well as enlarge our world and change it." (Sallie McFague 1982, 18). But theological metaphors can be irrelevant or harmful to the Earth's ecosystem—and are not necessarily helpful. The classical talk of God as the king, ruler and patriarch of the universe has become such harmful talk in the 21st century. Its asymmetrical dualism between God and the world marks a great distance and difference between the two—it is an anthropocentristic, hierarchical, potentially destructive model. As an alternative, McFague proposes interpreting the cosmos as the body of God. The incarnation of God takes place in the whole of creation and not just in a single creature, the man Jesus of Nazareth. McFague sees a double proximity to tradition in this concept: she recognises the cosmic dimension of the divine in mysticism, in Hegel and in process theology. She finds the body metaphor in the ecclesiastical talk of the body of Christ and the body of the church, compared to which the talk of the body of the cosmos means expansion. "Christianity is the religion of the incarnation par excellence. Its earliest and most persistent doctrines focus on embodiment: from the incarnation (the Word made flesh) and Christology (Christ was fully human) to the eucharist (this is my body, this is my blood), the resurrection of the body, and the church (the body of Christ who is its head), Christianity has been a religion of the body." (Sallie McFague 1993, 14).

The metaphor of the cosmos as the body of God gives rise to a new view of the human being in creation. If it is first about his corporeality and not about his spirituality, then his position is no longer above the other creatures, but at their side and connected with them. "The organic world view and the new creation story brings it to our attention indisputably that we are bodies, made of the same stuff as all other life-forms on our planet; that we are bodies among the bodies of other life-forms on earth, and that, all together, we form one body, the body of the Earth which is again but one of the bodies in the greater universe." (Annalet van Schalkwyk 2008,

208). But if man is a tiny, transient part of creation, he should humbly acknowledge that he was created from the ashes of extinct stars. "We are all made of the ashes of dead stars" (Sallie McFague 1993, 44).

If the world is understood as the body of God, God can only be accessed and experienced through this body. "In the universe as a whole as well as in each and every bit and fragment of it, God's transcendence is embodied. The important word here is 'embodied': the transcendence of God is not available to us except as embodied." (Sallie McFague 1993, 133). The non-objective God can only be experienced in an objectively mediated way through the corporeal world. "We never meet God unembodied" (Sallie McFague 1987, 184). This corresponds to the fact that for McFague the most important sense for the knowledge of God is not, as in the philosophical tradition, the sense of sight, which perceives from a distance and thus tempts us to objectify, but the sense of touch, which allows what is to be felt to come very close to it and to be touched by it (Sallie McFague 1997, 95; cf. Margit Eckholt 2009, 24–25). God is to be taken seriously and valued in this cosmos, for creation is his very own self-expression. The body metaphor is therefore connected with the greatest possible appreciation of creation.

The passion of the cosmically incarnated God is therefore always present everywhere creatures suffer. God suffers with the creatures, and they participate in his crucifixion. "All pain to all creatures is felt immediately and bodily by God: one does not suffer alone. In this sense God's suffering on the cross was not for a mere few hours, as in the old mythology, but it is present and permanent. As the body of the world, God is forever 'nailed to the cross', for as this body suffers, so God suffers." (Sallie McFague 1990, 216).

This understanding logically has consequences for soteriology. Salvation is the redemption of all earthly matter, all bodies, not just human, here and now (and only in a derivative way at the end of time). "Creation is the place of salvation, salvation is the direction of creation." (Sallie McFague 1993, 180). And this salvation takes place where creatures are liberated, healed, loved. "In the universe as the body of God, the direction (or the hope) of creation is a movement towards the inclusion of all living beings in the liberating, healing, inclusive love of God in a community where presence among us is celebrated in its fullness and bounty." (Annalet van Schalkwyk 2008, 211).

McFague explicitly rejects accusations of pantheism and classifies her approach as ecofeminist panentheism (Sallie McFague 1993, 47–55). In it,

God is not reduced to the world, but is seen as one who is willing to act in and through the world as well as to suffer in and with the world. To avoid misunderstandings, McFague draws on Ex 33:18 several times: as Moses at Sinai sees only the back of God, so we see "only" creation as the back of the living God (Sallie McFague 1993, 131–145). We cannot look God in the face any more than Moses could. Moreover, McFague uses other—and specifically personal—metaphors for God to avoid a pantheistic misunderstanding. "Without the use of personal agential metaphors, however, including among others God as mother, lover, and friend, the metaphor of the world as God's body would be pantheistic, for the body would be all there were. Nonetheless, the model is monist and perhaps most precisely designated as panentheistic; that is, it is a view of the God–world relationship in which all things have their origins in God and nothing exists outside God, though this does not mean that God is reduced to these things." (Sallie McFague 1987, 71–72).

But what is the role of Jesus in such an understanding of God and the world? For McFague, Jesus is the metaphor and parable of God (in genitivus subiectivus *and* obiectivus!) par excellence. "The belief that Jesus is the word of God—that God is manifest somehow in a human life—does not dissipate metaphor but in fact intensifies its centrality, for what is more indirect—a more complete union of the realistic and the strange—than a human life as the abode of the divine? Jesus as the word is metaphor par excellence; he is the parable of God." (Sallie McFague 1975, 76; cf. also 1982, 19). Elsewhere McFague also speaks of the paradigm and culmination point that Jesus is for the incarnation of God in the world. "The radicalization of incarnation sees Jesus not as a surd, an enigma, but as a paradigm or culmination of the divine way of enfleshnment." (Sallie McFague 1993, 133).

However, Jesus is only one of many examples of God's incarnation in this world, which at best has a relatively special position ("culmination point"). There is no causal relationship between the incarnation of God in Jesus and the incarnation of God into the world. "When I confess that Jesus is the Christ, I am saying that he is paradigmatic of what we see everywhere and always: God with us, God with and for all of us, all creatures, all worldly processes and events. [...] If incarnation were limited to Jesus of Nazareth, it would not only be a surd (and hence, absurd), but paltry in comparison to God's embodiment in all of creation." (Sallie McFague 2001, 20). According to McFague, however, the idea of Jesus' uniqueness must be abandoned not only because it does not fit into her concept of a cosmic incarnation, but also because it is firstly offensive to other religions, secondly implausible

and absurd in an enlightened world, and thirdly incompatible with the scientific view of the world (Sallie McFague 1993, 159). Jesus does reveal God's love in a very pure form, but this is only "paradigmatic [...] but [...] not unique" (Sallie McFague 1987, 136). For Christians, Jesus is special because he is their founder and their "historical choice" (Sallie McFague 1987, 136). But that is all he is.

McFague uses the term "Jesulatry", created by Paul Tillich in this context (Sallie McFague 2001, 159; cf. Ioanna Sahinidou 2015, 20). Whoever worships Christ as unique makes an idol out of a historical person, for this view is individualistic, anthropocentristic and spiritualistic (neglecting the body). The attack on classical Christology could hardly be more massive. According to McFague, two essential transformations of the concept of the incarnation are needed. "The first is to relativize the incarnation in relation to Jesus of Nazareth and the second is to maximize it in relation to the cosmos." (Sallie McFague 1993, 162).

As far as human freedom and responsibility are concerned, the apersonal image of the world as God's body remains limp. McFague sees the special position of human beings biblically in participating in God's creative work. She thus advocates formal anthropocentrics as grounded in the biblical Creation narratives. However, she enters unnoticed into the fairway of Stoic interpretations of Genesis 1 when she sees human self-consciousness, reflectivity and freedom as the decisive ontological basis for responsibility and places this in the image of God. "We human beings might be seen as partners in creation, as the self-conscious, reflexive part of the creation that could participate in furthering the process." (Sallie McFague 1993, 104).

She also speaks of "the peculiar kind of creatures we are, namely, creatures with a special kind of freedom, able to participate self-consciously (as well as be influenced unconsciously) in an evolutionary process. This gives us a special status and a special responsibility: We are the ones like God; we are selves that possess bodies, and that is our glory. It is also our responsibility, for we alone can choose to become partners with God in care of the world; we alone can—like God—love, heal, befriend, and liberate the world, the body, that God has made available to us as both the divine presence and our home. Our special status and responsibility, however, are not limited to consciousness of our own personal bodies, or even of the human world, but extend to all embodied reality, for we are that part of the cosmos where the cosmos itself has come to consciousness. If we become extinct, then the cosmos will lose its human, although presumably not its divine, consciousness. As Jonathan Schell remarks, 'In extinction

a darkness falls over the world not because the lights have gone out but because the eyes that behold the light have been closed' (Jonathan Schell 1982, 128)." (Sallie McFague 1990, 216–217).

The first part of this long quotation is problematic due to the very traditional conflation of the biblical Creation narrative and Stoic ontology, but at least it is fitting in its result, for it presents formal anthropocentrics, and this can indeed only be justified with the special intellectual abilities of humans. But the formulation "we are the part of the cosmos in which this has come to consciousness" and, even more so, the Schell quote expose the passage as not only formally anthropocentric, but at the same time covertly teleologically anthropocentristic. Man is not the eye of creation without which it goes blind, but rather one who eclipses the light of God in creation. If humanity is erased from the earth, the cosmos loses nothing at all—and possibly gains quite a lot. In later publications, McFague makes up for this lapse by resorting only to terms taken from the general creation ethics debate, but no longer connected to the body metaphor: Humans, she argues, are guardians and caretakers of the small planet (Sallie McFague 1993, 108–109) as well as partners and helpers of God in the work for a sustainable planet (Sallie McFague 2008, 58). Even though McFague does not explicitly mark this change of terms and metaphors as a correction, I read it this way.

McFague's approach is extraordinarily consistent and provides a striking alternative to Rahner in embedding Christology in an evolutionary world view. I see her greatest strength in comparison with Rahner in the fact that the connectedness of the Logos with the whole of creation is constructed through being of shared flesh, shared corporeality rather than through consciousness and spirituality. Here McFague exposes the error of thinking in classical theology from the Church Fathers to Rahner: if we take seriously the belief in the incarnation of the Logos, creatures do not need reason (the ability) to have direct and immediate communion with him. It is not the spirit but the flesh that is the hinge of salvation: caro cardo salutis.

However, McFague also leaves a big question mark: For her, as presented, there is no uniqueness to Jesus Christ. The historical Jesus of Nazareth is a special person and an impressive example of God's incarnation in creation—but no more. "According to her, the model of the cosmos as God's body excludes any claims of Christ's uniqueness, who is a 'paradigmatic embodiment of God.'" (Ioanna Sahinidou 2015, 20). In this context, McFague understands the Christological dogmas of the first four councils as "founding models" (Sallie McFague 1982, 103) that later on can and

sometimes even must be replaced by other models. "She opts for a creative interpretation of dogma that sees Jesus Christ as the 'founding model' from which new models can grow." (Margit Eckholt 2009, 16). Pointedly, one can say: "Nature and not just Jesus is the sacrament of God." (Ioanna Sahinidou 2015, 20). Let us recall the three arguments against the uniqueness of Christ: firstly, the postulate would be hurtful to other religions; secondly, it would be implausible and absurd in an enlightened society; and thirdly, it would be incompatible with the scientific view of the world (Sallie McFague 1993, 159). Moreover, it would be individualistic, anthropocentristic and spiritualistic (bodiless and without presence).

So should we leave Nicaea behind and become Arians? Would this correspond, as with God's plan of creation, to a retraction of all too steep theses of classical theology? Let us look at the arguments one by one:

– Whether the confession of Jesus as the Christ is individualistic, anthropocentristic and spiritualistic depends entirely on how it is formulated and justified. Of course, this has often been the case in the course of church and theological history. But fundamentally, the belief that God is incarnated in a special way in a single creature leaves all the room in the world for a holistic (God is present in the whole of creation), biocentristic (God is incarnated in a special way in a living being, without it having to be a human being and precisely this human being) and body-centred present interpretation of the Christ event (salvation takes place here and now and bodily).
– In her thesis that the uniqueness of Christ is incompatible with the scientific view of the world, McFague is probably thinking primarily of the theory of evolution. If this is taken seriously, evolution by no means runs directly and unidirectionally towards man and even less towards Christ, even if Teilhard de Chardin claimed so. One could also think of the possible existence of life on other planets in other galaxies: what would it mean for these living beings that they have no contact whatsoever with the Logos of God in person and cannot even know about Him? However, all these are not insurmountable obstacles against the background of Rahner's considerations. Especially if one takes the classical doctrine of the Trinity seriously, the incarnation of God the Logos in a single, historically identifiable creature is joined by the incarnation of God the Holy Spirit in the cosmos as a whole. Ioanna Sahinidou is absolutely right that a properly understood doctrine of the Trinity opens more doors here than it closes.

– Of course, abandoning Nicene Christology would make it easier for many non-believers to access the Christian faith and would give many believers the feeling that they are "orthodox" after all. McFague is undoubtedly right with this argument. But the question is whether the quantitative acceptance of an article of faith is the primary or sufficient criterion for its correctness. After all, one need not interpret it as ominous and tragic if the majority of people decide otherwise at this point. After all, this seems to have been the case already in the Johannine community (Jn 6:66).
– McFague makes the most serious accusation against classical Christology by saying that it is hurtful and demeaning to those who are different and non-believers. Again, one must admit that Christology was often used in this way in the course of Christian history. In this respect, however, a serious category error was committed. The confession of Christ is not an acknowledgement of an objectively provable fact and as such would also be meaningless. And of course, the question of personal salvation does not depend on whether one explicitly affirms Christ. The redeemed in the parable of the Last Judgement (Mt 25:31–46) manifestly did not do so. As with the question of God's providence (cf. chapter 6.1.2), it is rather a matter of a very personal conviction of the first-person perspective. The existential question is: "Who am I, Jesus of Nazareth, for *you*?" Peter's answer in the fourth Gospel makes this clearer than in the other three Gospels: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life." (Jn 6:69). The uniqueness of Christ is thus to be interpreted analogously to the uniqueness of spouses to each other. It is not objectively measurable or ascertainable; indeed, for different people, and with good reason, different people may be religiously unique. Christianity has no right whatsoever to impose the uniqueness of Jesus Christ on all people but can only advertise it. Seen in this light, it is a serious category error to use the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which is a scientific–theological consensus formula for teachers, in the liturgy as an existential confession of personal devotion and faithfulness.

Understood correctly, all McFague's arguments against Nicene Christology can be invalidated. This does not prove anything, and as I said, this would not work. However, the classical affirmation of Christ can be connected without problems with its expansion for the whole of creation. This is precisely the aim of *Niels Henrik Gregersen*'s concept of "deep incarnation". In addition to the danger of anthropocentrism, Gregersen also sees the

danger of "chronocentrism" (Niels Henrik Gregersen 2016, 2). He criticises classical theology for placing an excessive focus on the historical period of Jesus' life—largely neglecting the extension of the cosmic Christ far beyond Israel and the year 30. God has a "date" with the world in history—quite literally in the double sense of date and appointment. According to Gregersen, this is the unique perception of the connection between God and the world in Christianity, which is without parallel in other world religions. "God has not only created the framework of the world, but also has a 'date' within it. This intertwining of Creator and creature—'without separation, without confusion' (Council of Chalcedon 451 CE)—is without parallel in other world religions." (Niels Henrik Gregersen 2010, 167).

Gregersen sees theological potential in the idea of a "date" between God and the world that can be localised in space and time. However, in order to develop it, the bodily-spiritual existence of Jesus must be considered in expanded terms, as is expressed today in philosophy with the concept of extension: Christ has an extended body, an extended consciousness, extended interactions. A form of Christology fixed exclusively on the historical Jesus would therefore remain on the surface of the skin—only when it is extended to the cosmic Christ does it go under the skin. "If we think of the incarnation in purely historical terms (Jesus as a bygone historical figure), and at the same time subscribe to the metaphysics of historicism (all that exists only exists as indexed in time and space), we could only speak of a skin deep incarnation. [...] In contrast, deep incarnation presupposes a wide-scope view of incarnation by focusing on the extended mind of Jesus. [...] The very notion of incarnation is to be expressed as part of an extensive interactionist view of the embodied mind. But the concept of incarnation also operates within the horizon of a cosmic Christology." (Niels Henrik Gregersen 2016, 2).

Gregersen's concept of "deep incarnation" thus pleads for a fruitful and exciting connection of the Christ personalised in Jesus with the cosmic Christ. "The view of deep incarnation speaks of a universe in which God is not only present in a general manner (as expressed in traditional concepts of the immanent activity of the divine creator), but in which God is conjoining and uniting with the material world in the bodily form of God's incarnate Son of Logos or Wisdom. [...] what from our temporalised perspective is an event that took place in the 30 years of the life story of Jesus is from the perspective of eternity a process beginning with creation itself, which culminated in the incarnation of Jesus, and is still with us because of the depths of the resurrection of Christ." (Niels Henrik Gregersen 2016, 4).

Pope Francis also sees this deep connection: "For the Christian experience, all creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the incarnate Word (verbo encarnado), because the Son of God took into his person a part of the material universe in which he placed a seed of definitive transformation" (LS 235). In this interpretation, a mediating authority between Christ and creation does not occur. The Logos enters directly into the matter of this world and acts directly on it. Unlike Rahner, human reflectivity and spirituality do not play a mediating role. The humanity of the Logos does not step between this and the cosmos but is part of the cosmos. In contrast to Rahner and Paul, who construct a triadic relationship of Logos–human being–cosmos, Pope Francis speaks of a dyadic relationship of Logos–cosmos. He thus no longer needs an anthropocentristic structuring of the Christ event and can unfold its meaning for creation as one and as a whole much more directly.

6.2.3 Eschatological

The Jewish tradition and, following it, the message of Jesus of Nazareth are deeply coined by the idea of the uniqueness of earthly life. This is an indispensable prerequisite for the ideas of the Last Judgement and the raising of the dead that permeate both Jesus' preaching and the creed of the first Christians. The Greek doctrine of the transmigration of souls, as is inherent in Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy, is for this reason firmly rejected throughout patristics. In contrast, the Stoic concept of an eternal life of all rational beings seems very close to the Judeo-Christian message of resurrection. That the Stoa understands eternal life as a continued existence of the rational soul freed from the body and not as a holistic re-creation by a faithful and loving God is overlooked and passed over by the Church Fathers. If, however, the guarantor of eternal life is not the faithfulness of the Creator but the possession of a rational soul, all creatures without reason are excluded from eternal life. Ultimately, then, an inaccurate perception of the biblical message of resurrection, already tinged with Hellenism, is responsible for early Christian theology's conviction that animals and plants must be excluded from salvation and eternal life.

A second reason for the attractiveness of the Stoic concept of eternity is that it calls on all rational beings to make a responsible decision about their own salvation. Only those who possess reason, as is clear to Stoa and the Church Fathers, can and must make reflective and free decisions

about their salvation. Now, the idea of the Last Judgement undoubtedly only makes sense if those to be judged have acted freely and of their own volition. Particularly in view of the highly developed Roman legal system, this is immediately obvious to everyone in the Roman Empire, and the biblical stories of God's judgement support this idea. However, this seems to exclude non-human beings all the more clearly from eternal salvation (and disaster), for they cannot decide freely and responsibly.

The pseudo-Athenagoras (cf. chapter 5.16) develops these considerations most clearly: Animals and plants have a need to live, but no need for knowledge of the eternal and thus no need to live forever. In accordance with the principle of economy, it would therefore not be rational for them to be given an eternal life if they do not strive for it at all. No, they exist solely for the sake of human beings, who, as rational beings, have their own purpose. As soon as man no longer needs non-human creatures, and that is the case in eternity, there is no reason for them to continue to exist. Lactance argues in the same direction (chapter 5.7).

We observed a completely different tendency in Tertullian (chapter 5.5). For him, the core problem with the Platonic doctrine of the transmigration of souls is not the migration of the soul from a human body into an animal body, but the migration from the body of one individual into that of another individual. The soul is very specifically designated to a particular living being and cannot possibly exist in another. Each soul is unique and perfectly created for the equally unique body in which it dwells. Tertullian proves that one can effectively refute the doctrine of transmigration without disparaging animals. One does not even have to bother with the idea that a human rational soul migrates into a rational animal. It is quite sufficient to perceive the soul as part of creaturely individuality. With this much more fundamental categorisation, Tertullian is able to undermine the doctrine of the transmigration of souls in a much more sustainable way and at the same time avoid devaluing animals, even underpinning their fundamental similarity to humans.

However, non-human creatures have a place in eternity only for Irenaeus of Lyons. Referring to Is 11, he can only imagine heaven with the inclusion of all creatures. Irenaeus decisively rejects an allegorical interpretation of the text, as becomes visible in later times, e.g. in Jerome. Thus, there is at least one patristic advocate of the resurrection of all living creatures. For him, the biblical testimony stands above philosophical arguments.

On what basis the resurrection of animals and plants is to take place remains open, however. For Irenaeus, too, there is no question that only

human beings have insight and free will. Redemption for animals would therefore have to be thought of in two stages—which is still in line with but goes further than Irenaeus' idea. First of all, redemption happens for all creatures on the basis of divine love and faithfulness to them, completely independent of their merits or the possession of an immortal rational soul. For those creatures who have insight and free will, however, it cannot take place over their will or even against it, but only with respect for that will. Otherwise, one could speak neither of human freedom nor of divine justice. According to this understanding, insight and free *will* would not be a condition for resurrection itself, but only for a specific form of what happens in the context of resurrection, namely judgement in the double sense of establishing justice and administering it correctly.

In popular piety, the idea of the redemption of all creation has always remained alive, against all theological objections, through two millennia. Pope Francis revived this image of an eternity populated by all creatures in his encyclical Laudato si'. Of all creatures, he writes, "The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings […] are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator." (LS 83). "In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God." (LS 244). "Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all." (LS 243).

Anyone who takes seriously the incarnation of the divine Logos, which was the subject of this sub-chapter, cannot avoid postulating a redemption of the entire cosmos. "Theologically, each creature in the web of life is a symbol of presence; each is intrinsically good, embraced by God and called into redemptive future. In Christ, God entered evolving creation in a profoundly new way: the Incarnate One, Word-become-flesh, became an earth creature, sharing biological life with others on this planet. The risen Christ has assumed a cosmic role, leading creation back into God in a great act of love and thanksgiving that will be realized in its fullness in the great eschaton." (Mary E. McGann 2012, 49).

6.3 "The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us" (LS 83). The question of the teleological interpretation of natural processes

Today, teleologies are strongly questioned from various sides. The natural sciences do not recognise any teleologies per se, since they methodically assume chance. Natural philosophies are less methodologically determined in this respect, but are quickly suspected of metaphysicism if they only speak cautiously of teleology. And theological teleologies are suspected of ideology outside their own discipline anyway. Nevertheless, within the framework of cognitivist animal and environmental ethics, teleological considerations and decisions cannot be avoided, for the question of whether the cosmos exists solely for humans or also for animals or even for all living beings or even first and foremost for ecosystems must be clarified before one can make concrete normative statements in this respect. This does not necessarily require a teleology of being, but a teleology of ought. However, whether the latter can be justified without the former, and if so, how, must be well considered.

In the following, I proceed in two steps: First, I pose the fundamental question of teleonomies in the plural and a teleology in the singular. Then, I discuss which of the classical four environmental and animal ethical models of teleology is most appropriate in the context of modern natural science on the one hand and ecological threat scenarios on the other.

6.3.1 Particular teleonomies and comprehensive teleology

A particular teleonomy in the nature of individual living beings represents an answer to the question of what a living being naturally strives for and what function such striving has for it. Thus, the observation that all living things seek food is usually interpreted as their striving for self-preservation. A comprehensive teleology of nature as a whole, on the other hand, attempts to answer the question of for whose sake the cosmos exists—for the sake of human beings (anthropocentrism), pain-sensitive beings (pathocentrism), living beings (biocentrism) or ecosystems (holism).

Both levels—that of teleonomies and that of teleology—are interrelated. If one were to claim that living beings have no teleonomy of self-preservation, the teleology of biocentrism would be deprived of its basis. Conversely, the teleology of biocentrism does not necessarily follow from the recognition of the teleonomy of self-preservation of living beings, because it could

be that this teleonomy is secondary and is relativised by another teleonomy (in stoic anthropocentrism, for example, by the striving for knowledge of reason). The teleonomy of self-preservation of living beings is thus a necessary but not sufficient criterion for the teleology of biocentrism.

The classical moral–theological position can be illustrated by *Thomas Aquinas* (1225 Aquinas-1274 Fossanova). Thomas, following in the footsteps of Aristotle, acknowledges both particular teleonomies in the nature of individual living beings and a comprehensive teleology of nature as a whole.

Thomas places the particular teleonomies in the context of his anthropology and ethics under the concept of natural inclinations (Thomas Aquinas, summa theologiae I–II q 94 a 2). Every agent acts for the sake of a good that he wants to achieve through his actions. In doing so, human reason conceives of all those things to which man has a natural inclination as goods and thus as desirable. Thomas names three such inclinations (inclinationes naturales):

- The striving for self-preservation, which man has in common with all living beings and which arises from the vegetative faculty of the soul (anima vegetativa).
- The striving for procreation and the raising of offspring, which humans have in common with all animals due to the sensual faculty of the soul (anima sensibilis) (today we would say: the striving for species preservation).
- The striving for community life and knowledge of God, which only man possesses, in particular in the rational faculty of the soul (anima rationalis). Here, Thomas reduces human relationships with each other and with God to the rational dimension on the one hand, and on the other, denies animals any reason. He adopts both assumptions from the Stoa and its reception in Christian theology.

Thomas is well aware that he cannot prove the three natural inclinations empirically, but that they represent interpretations of plant, animal and human behaviour. This is one of the reasons why he formulates them in such a general way that sufficient room for interpretation remains, especially for the weighting of the three aspirations among each other and their concrete design in individual cases. What is decisive, however, is that each example of natural striving has an inner functionality and, as a rule, is directed towards a meaningful purpose. Otherwise, Thomas would have to assume that nature is dysfunctional—which in the context of faith would reflect on the Creator. It is therefore reasonable for him to take natural inclinations—

one's own as well as those of other living beings—into account when thinking about and deciding on one's own actions. This does not exclude but rather includes the fact that the inclinations of different individuals or of a single individual can conflict with each other. But it does mean that they are directed towards real goods—and these are relevant in terms of ethical action. The current animal welfare debates are basically attempts to transfer this Thomasian figure of thought to farm animals. From animal striving, one deduces what is good for them, and the animal welfare thus recognised is seen as the ethically required goal of action.

As far as the overarching teleology is concerned, Thomas is completely oriented towards the Stoa. For him, therefore, there are two kinds of beings: those that are externally controlled and those that control themselves from within. However, only beings who have free will can control themselves, and only those who can make a judgement and a decision on the basis of rational considerations have free will. These are human beings. Animals, on the other hand, according to Thomas, are completely externally controlled by environmental stimuli (Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles II, 47–48).

This division of the world into actively acting and passively externally controlled beings has serious consequences for Thomas. Whoever can act actively is an agent (principalis agens) who has his purpose in himself. What is only controlled from outside, on the other hand, is an instrument that has no end in itself but is absorbed into being an end for agents. Animals are thus by nature subordinate to humans because they are unfree slaves. It is not a sin to kill them because they are created for the benefit of man and ordered towards him and his needs. Cruelty to animals is only forbidden because it could be directed against humans as cruelty in a next step or because an animal that belongs to another human being is harmed (Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles II, 112).

If man acts in accordance with reason (ratio), he can therefore do anything to animals that benefits him because they are subordinate to him as a rational being. But for Thomas this does not mean that feelings towards animals are completely irrelevant. On the contrary: if man is additionally guided by feeling (passio), he will have mercy (misericordia) towards suffering animals. And that is a good thing (Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae I–II q 102 a 6 ad 8). Here, Thomas cannot help but appreciate, against Stoic axiomatics, the numerous biblical passages that speak of mercy with animals. However, this does not play a central role for him. As a so-called supererogatory work, i.e. as a deed that is not demanded by justice but is

voluntarily done beyond it and is therefore "meritorious", mercy towards animals remains a secondary appendage of his anthropocentristic ethics.

The teleonomy of self-preservation inherent in all living beings and the teleonomy of the preservation of the species inherent in all animals are thus always and in principle negated by the teleonomy of cognition given exclusively to humans. They are not even mentioned in his justification of anthropocentrism.

Can such establishment of teleonomies or a teleology still be justified in an evolutionary world view? *Christian Kummer* explores this question. From the paradigms of evolutionary theory (changeability, development, chance, ...) it is clear to him that Darwin "no longer saw any place for talk of purposes in nature" (Christian Kummer 2011, 63). This is evident from the fact that "adaptation is not a question of intention, but an inevitable consequence of mutual competition" (Christian Kummer 2011, 63). Evolution thus pursues neither a particular nor an overarching telos—it has no intention. Since Darwin, therefore, people have been designing widely ramified family trees instead of a straightforward scala naturae. Paradoxically, however, humans are at the very top of these family trees and are thus valued as the highest living beings, as in the Stoa.

But what, Kummer asks, could be evolutionary and biological criteria for a higher valuation of certain species? He makes the following suggestion (Christian Kummer 2011, 106):

- The increase in functional differentiation as well as the integration of the different abilities into the whole of the organism.
- The decrease in the organism's dependence on the environment.
- The increase in the individual autonomy of the living being. The more autonomy a living being possesses, the more it has become an end in itself.

Ultimately, all three of Kummer's criteria boil down to the assumption that evolution tends towards the greater autonomy and independence of living beings. This is quite plausible from the point of view of evolutionary biology. However, in my opinion, Kummer ignores two aspects: Firstly, from an epistemological point of view, the concept of (reflection-based) autonomy is a methodologically anthropocentric concept. This cannot be different but should be reflected explicitly. And secondly, Kummer represents a very individualistic understanding of autonomy. The fact that, according to his understanding, the most "autonomous" living beings are, of all things, the most social animals, is ignored. I consider that a biological omission.

Nevertheless, Kummer emphasises that we cannot identify a comprehensive purpose for evolution—such a purpose would be entirely speculative. But what about man's ability to define purposes? Does he stand outside evolution on the basis of this ability or is this ability only a sham? Kummer expressly wants to keep this question open. He considers it possible that man only reads purposes into nature because he cannot imagine them any other way.

Biologically, Kummer's considerations are probably well considered and correct. Philosophically and ethically, however, they are insufficient, for cognitivist ethics cannot be satisfied with leaving the question of a rationally recognisable order of nature completely open. Such an order will have to contain end–means relations. Otherwise, only ethical non-cognitivism would remain. Of course, the competition-driven evolutionary dynamic itself has no intentions. But it proceeds according to laws that determine who wins the competitive struggle and who loses it—and these give evolution a certain rough direction. The fact that biodiversity in the course of evolutionary history has continued to increase despite all five previous mass extinctions (macro perspective) and that social organisms have evolved towards increasingly complex interaction and, precisely because of this, towards ever more intelligence and autonomy (micro perspective) points to the immanent telos of nature after all.

Against this background, it is remarkable that all four established justificatory approaches to environmental and animal ethics, i.e. anthropocentrism, pathocentrism, biocentrism and ecocentrism, are teleologically structured. Without a careful premise about the telos of nature, environmental and animal ethics (and ultimately cognitivist ethics as a whole) do not seem to be justifiable. It is therefore not necessary to fall prey to the "naturalistic fallacy" (George Edward Moore) and conclude from being to ought without any critical hermeneutics. Nor is it necessary to derive an all-embracing monolinear teleology from the limited teleonomies observed in natural science. But within the framework of cognitivist ethics, one cannot avoid resorting to something like rule-based "nature". Even contractualists like John Rawls (who refers to "general facts" and classifies his theory as natural law theory) and discourse ethicists like Jürgen Habermas (who needs "nature" as that which is not made by human beings to underpin his idea of equality) have recognised this.

Here lies the undeniable merit of the Stoa. It has written into the pedigree of occidental ethics that claims of ought must be indispensably related to knowledge about being. Its weakness, however, lies in the fact that it has

developed a teleology that is all too simple and straightforward compared to evolutionary biology and that focuses solely on human beings. It can only justify this with a rationalistically narrow concept of reason. Both are no longer convincing today, and are even harmful to humans, animals, plants and ecosystems.

Christian theology and ethics of creation should therefore emphasise more clearly the irrevocable conflict of natural teleonomies, which, in view of the limited resources in the earth's ecosystem, lies in the fact that all living beings are dependent on the death of other living beings. This creation–theological origin of the theodicy question must not be covered up with unctuous phrases but must remain as an indissoluble objection to naïve harmonisation of the talk of divine love and care, and even be made strong. At the same time, however, the effort must be upheld to interpret directional indications for potential meanings that give pre-ethical goods and ethical claims a foundation from the numerous conflicting teleonomies of nature. Renouncing the development of such potential meanings would signal a capitulation of cognitivist ethics.

6.3.2 Biocentrism as the most appropriate teleology[30]

Ecologically speaking, the world is on the brink of disaster. Consequently, the goal of any form of environmental and animal ethics must be to show ways and means to curb the current force of economic and technological rationality and to take away its dominance over all social processes (cf. Michael Rosenberger 2021, 44–47). In view of this enormous task, an ethical approach that recognisably plays down rather than dramatises will only contribute to the preservation of the status quo. To be clear: the cool apathy of Stoic anthropocentrism may have a rational plausibility, but due to its lack of emotion, it will not initiate change. For this to occur, emotionalisation is necessary—in connection with a considerable broadening of horizons. What is needed is an ethical approach that invites and enables people to put themselves in the shoes of an animal or a plant.

Pope Francis is absolutely right when he stresses that the solution cannot be expected from a doctrine alone—neither an anthropocentristic nor a

30 On this section, see Michael Rosenberger 2021, 131–188, which presents, appreciates and weighs up all four approaches in great detail. In the following, I will concentrate on a few of the arguments presented there.

non-anthropocentristic one because: "It is a question of talking not so much about ideas, but above all about the motivations that arise from spirituality in order to foster a passion for environmental protection. For it will not be possible to commit ourselves to great things with doctrines alone, without a 'mysticism' that animates us, without 'inner motivations that spur, motivate, encourage and give meaning to personal and communal action' (EG 261)." (LS 216). The question, therefore, is which teleology is most open and affinitive to spiritual motivations. And here the biocentrist and ecocentrist approaches are ahead (Haydn Washington et al. 2017, 39).

In the discourse of the last five decades on the environmentally and animal ethically appropriate teleology, almost everything revolves around the question of to whom dignity should be ascribed: humans, animals, plants and/or ecosystems? The concept of dignity does not establish a rational principle of action, but an emotional inhibition, which is paradoxical since talk of (human) dignity is of Stoic origin and thus stems from a rationalist model of thought. Granting dignity to someone means: "Stop! Stop and look at the dignitary from the other, non-benefit-oriented perspective! Perceive him or her as an independent you with his or her own needs!" The attribution of dignity, on the other hand, contributes little to determining the content of rules of action in conflicts over goods. Rationally and argumentatively, recourse to it would be dispensable, which is also advocated by many for whom the reference to rights is completely sufficient. But without the mention of dignity, much of the emotional charge is lost. The importance and urgency of the issue is downplayed. This is precisely where the importance of granting dignity to all creatures, not just all human beings, lies. Talk of "dignity" is a signal booster of the first order.

This is all the truer when (as in the encyclical Laudato si') theological talk of the brotherhood and covenant fellowship of all creatures is used to complement the philosophical concept of dignity. It evokes vivid images that are understandable to everyone and is thus even more holistically appealing. Argumentatively, animal and environmental protection can be justified anthropocentristically as well as biocentristically or ecocentristically. But I think it is naïve, if not negligent, to completely exclude the emotional side, for anthropocentrism (cf. Michael Rosenberger 2001, 162–163)

– tends to trust *technical rationality* more and is more seduced by the "technocratic paradigm" than biocentrism or ecocentrism. It tends to overestimate more the human knowledge of natural processes and the human ways of managing nature.

– tends towards the all-dominant *economistic thinking* that sees non-human living beings and the ecosystem only as "natural capital" and at best protects them for the sake of long-term economic consequences. According to Kant, however, the concept of dignity is precisely the opposite category to measurable and scalable monetary values. It sets the ethical perception of dignity bearers exactly against the economic calculation—knowing full well what power the latter possesses.
– is more easily seduced into *chauvinism* by deriving primarily rights and hardly any duties from the special position of humans, thus subordinating non-human living beings on principle.

A holistically based form of biocentrism, such as the one I advocate below, will apply the traditional precautionary principle, which in principle anthropocentrism also recognises, more readily and comprehensively and will thus proceed more cautiously and in a more error-friendly manner. It is more inclined to humble acknowledgement of the limits of one's own knowledge and ability and to reverent wonder before the immeasurable mysteries of the cosmos. In view of the enormous requirements for the preservation of an earth worth living on, this is a strong argument in its favour.

It is precisely from these considerations that my plea for holistically based biocentrism arises. In its basic form, this is a form of moral individualism and attributes intrinsic value or dignity to all living beings and only to them. In a comparison of the justificatory approaches of environmental ethics, biocentrism proves to be the most appropriate, consistent and economical option. It does not exclude any living being from the community of morally relevant individuals—there is no "nasty rift" between humans and animals or between animals and plants. However, in order not to end up in system-blind individualism that ignores all relationships of living beings, I speak of holistically based biocentrism. Collective systems have no dignity. However, they are of paramount importance for the common good of living beings because they are the condition of possibility for the individual good of their members. As in law, this can sometimes even mean that the system takes precedence over the individual (common good principle). Also, in an analogous manner to law, it can make perfect sense to ascribe a moral status to certain communities of life a posteriori and treat them as "quasi-persons". All in all, holistically based biocentrism is thus moral individualism bound to the common good.

Let us define more precisely what this is all about in six theses (cf. Michael Rosenberger 2021, 157–162):

(1) All living beings have an inalienable dignity. They have a moral status a priori and must therefore be morally respected for their own sake. We have direct duties towards them.
(2) Dignity is the opposite of a price (Immanuel Kant, Metaphysics of Morals AA VI 434–435). A price signals replaceability and interchangeability, whereas dignity signals uniqueness and non-replaceability. Furthermore, a price signals the comparability of values, which are scalar, i.e. they occupy a continuous scale from a minimum to a maximum. It recognises greater or lesser value and also equality (with Kant "equivalence") of value. Dignity, on the other hand, signals incomparability (incommensurability) and is not scalar but binary. Either a being has dignity, or it has no dignity. Either it deserves moral respect or it does not.
(3) Dignity is an end in itself. It belongs directly to its bearer, is not transferable and cannot be exercised by proxy like rights. Unlike a prize, it cannot be lost.
(4) Any action affecting an individual with dignity shall be justifiable to that individual.
(5) As dignitaries, living beings must never be completely instrumentalised, never viewed exclusively in terms of their benefit to others. They must always be considered and respected at the same time and even first as an individual counterpart, as a "you".
(6) Individuals with dignity are bearers of their own goods. These must be included in fair consideration of goods. Dignitaries have a right to fair treatment.

The attribution of dignity to all living beings and only to them, i.e. the plea for biocentrism, can be supported by some further considerations. The main argument in its favour is that every living being has its own good, which is realised in "the full development of its biological powers" (Paul W. Taylor 1981, 199). In addition, it is also a (co-)bearer of other goods, e.g. the good of its own population and the good of its own species, which consists in the transmission of genetic information and in the preservation of the species. The dignity of a living being, however, is grounded in its potency to realise its own biological powers (Paul W. Taylor 1984, 154–155). If it is then further presupposed that "membership in the earth's community" (onto-)logically precedes the living being's concrete Thus-Being, then there

arises a priori the direct moral duty to respect and promote the fundamental potency of each living being's self-realisation. "Now there is indeed a property that human beings share with animals and which is at least as plausible a basis for the ascription of absolute value as Kantian autonomy and related concepts. This property consists in the fact that every human being and every animal is a good for itself... no human being and no animal experiences itself as a means to another end." (Michael Hauskeller 2015, 143).

Put another way: Every living being has two properties analogous to self-purposefulness in the Kantian sense. "It is the subject of purposes and it has a practical self-relation." (Friedo Ricken 1987, 8). Even living beings that cannot sense pleasure or pain possess "needs" that are analogous to conscious "interests". Plants tend to fulfil their needs, for example for light and water, in a very purposeful way. This corresponds to the reasoning of Aristotle, who also attributes striving to the vegetative soul faculty (Friedo Ricken 1987, 14–16; Aristotle, De anima II 4, 415a25–b2). Plants also relate to themselves. Their organism is not only the result but at the same time the cause of material accumulations of itself and the bearer of identity in all material exchange.

Theologically, the philosophical argumentation can be deepened and emotionally substantiated: Non-human living beings, just like human beings, are created directly by God and are wanted and loved by him (Gen 1–2). God himself becomes "flesh", i.e. creature, and thus gives all "flesh", i.e. all creatures, an unsurpassable dignity (Jn 1:14). Finally, creatures are included in salvation—the "kingdom of God" cannot be conceived without them (Is 11; Mk 1:13). Biocentrism is thus not only the most appropriate approach for philosophical reasons, but also the most extensively attested to and the most anchored biblically.

In summary, a relatively consistent picture emerges: cognitivist environmental and animal ethics needs recourse to particular teleonomies (the striving of animals and plants for their own goods) as well as to a carefully formulated comprehensive teleology (the dignity of all living beings). Only on this basis can the complex balancing of goods be carried out, which inevitably results from the conflict of different interests. Without this, there would be no theodi zee question, but also no ethics! In view of this conflict, biocentrism proves to be the most appropriate, least discriminatory teleological definition in the age of ecological crisis. Time is pressing for it to replace 2500-year-old anthropocentrism. "The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us." (LS 83).

6.4 Body signals for the good. The question of the importance of feelings

An old story tells how a professor is on holiday on a farm during the summer. When he offers to help the farmer with the harvest, the farmer wants to give him an easy job and sends him to sort the potatoes. He is supposed to put the big ones in one basket and the small ones in another. But when the farmer comes to pick up the sorted potatoes around noon, there is not a single one in either basket. The professor had not been able to decide what was meant by "large" and what by "small".

This is a paradigmatic example. Pure thinking is unable to draw a clear and discrete boundary within a continuum because this necessarily contains a final, non-rationally justifiable, i.e. "arbitrary" moment. Now, in the case of potatoes, this may be ethically irrelevant. However, the weighing up of goods, which is part of all ethical decisions, is not different in principle. This raises the question that I would like to explore in the following: Do purely rational decisions exist at all, as we like to postulate for "objective" discussions in the wake of the Stoa and 2000 years of Christian ethics? And if not, what is the relationship between reason and emotion for moral judgement? Can feelings contribute anything substantial to ethical decision-making?

In a first step, a look at history will help us to better understand the Stoic position and its Christian reception. In a second step, I undertake a re-evaluation of the emotions with the current knowledge of neuroscience, which at the same time enables a confirmation of the classical spiritual teaching and practice of the discernment of spirits (cf. on the following: Simon Blackburn 1998; Michael Rosenberger 2002, 59–72; Michael L. Spezio 2011, 339–356).

6.4.1 Greek scepticism towards feelings

Ancient philosophy does not recognise an appropriate term for what we call "feeling" in English. The Greek term for feeling is πάθη or πάθος, the Latin term is affectus or passio. This indicates the basic perspective from which feelings are viewed: They are "passions", impulses that arise from external influence, which man suffers and which ultimately threaten his (rational) autonomy. Accordingly, the question is asked about the immediate cause that gives rise to a feeling, but not whether a feeling can also convey content, whether it "says something" of itself.

This view of emotion, which is general in ancient philosophy, finds its extreme culmination and summary in the teachings of the Stoa,. The goal of man is the subordination of passions to reason. The latter is regarded as the ἡγεμονικόν, as the dominating and controlling authority, which orders and directs emotions. Accordingly, the Stoic ideal is ἀπάθεια, dispassion. This does not necessarily have to be interpreted as complete lack of feeling. What is decisive, however, is that reason alone should guide action; passions contribute nothing substantial to the formation of moral judgement. This subordinate position manifests the "bias against the pathé that is deeply rooted in Greek thought" (Peter Kaufmann 1992, 27).

In the Middle Ages, too, the assessment of emotions moves entirely along the lines laid out by Greek philosophy. *Thomas Aquinas* defines affects as "acts of the sensual faculty of striving, in so far as they are connected with bodily changes" (Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae I–II q 20 a 1). For him, affects are processes that are suffered, and only the body, not the soul, can suffer in the proper sense. Behind this is the everyday experience that feelings produce directly and not voluntarily controlled somatic effects (Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae I–II q 22 a 3). Nevertheless, Thomas in the wake of Aristotle takes a somewhat more positive view of passions than the Stoics. If man strives to be good, not only spiritually but also with sensual desire, he is to be called more perfect. Sensual desire for a morally valuable object is therefore good (Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae I–II q 24 a 1 and 3). Thomas here explicitly distances himself from the Stoics and follows the Peripatetics (Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae I–II q 24 a 2). As a logical consequence of his theology of creation, he outlines a holistic anthropology in which every part of the human condition is regarded as good and significant. Passions then have the important role of "corporealising" the judgements made by reason, spreading them into the bodily existence of man and shaping it from reason.

However, even with Thomas, passions have a heuristic function very indirectly at most, for feelings direct the attention of reason to opportunities for action with which man has already had good experiences. The goodness of these experiences creates a "resonance" in them, which in turn becomes a motive for action (Eberhard Schockenhoff 2007, 72–73). In this thought lies the germ for what we find in the Ignatian discernment of spirits and in the neuroscientific findings of the present in a much more precise and detailed way. In Thomas, it remains a germ that is not further unfolded.

The basic line remains the same in antiquity and the Middle Ages: reason and emotion are understood as strictly separate realities. They stand

in a hierarchical relationship to each other. Reason is considered to have dominion over passions. It makes the relevant decisions; it is supposed to order and control passions. Passions, for their part, are the extended arm of the rational will into the body, the medium by means of which the soul shapes the body, but which in turn contributes nothing to the formation of moral judgement by reason.

6.4.2 Feelings as a Constitutive Component of Reason

From the 17th century onwards, the perspective from which feelings are viewed changes. They are now understood as sensations, an inner state of mind that deserves attention for its own sake. The inner state of a person manifests itself in feelings, for anthropological basic structures correspond to it as immanent conditions of possibility for its emergence. These must be perceived even before the question is asked as to which external influences have contributed to the emergence of a feeling. The sign of the change in perspective outlined in this way is a completely new, only gradually clearly defined terminology. Instead of passiones and affectus, English now speaks of feelings and sensations, French of sentiment, German of Gefühl and Empfindung—the purely passive categories are replaced by more active ones.

The philosophical current that provides for sustained revaluation of feelings is Anglo-Saxon empiricism. For it, there is no such thing as thinking that is purely independent of experience; rather, all knowledge is experience-based and connected with feelings. *Francis Hutcheson* (1694 Drumalig-1746 Glasgow) developed an approach on this basis in his metaethical essay "Illustrations on the moral sense" in 1728, which is still discussed today as "moral sense philosophy". Its core thesis is the assumption of an innate moral sense, which in turn generates a fundamental moral feeling that allows us to recognise good and evil, right and wrong. Reason only has the task of conducting an accompanying check to ensure that the moral sense is not disturbed and subject to a sensory illusion.

What was introduced into ethics from moral sense theory on the basis of observed phenomena could not be sufficiently specified, however, as long as the biological structures of cognition and feeling had not been researched more precisely. It is only the neuroscientific findings of the last few decades that allow a more precise classification of the two variables and their embedding in a comprehensive framework. Among the various

syntheses, the work of the Portuguese American neurologist *Antonio R. Damasio* stands out. His findings, which have been intensively discussed and further developed and refined in detail over the last twenty years, but which, despite all attempts, could not be refuted in principle (cf. Michael L. Spezio 2011, 339–356), will guide the following presentations.

Damasio starts from three striking examples of neurology. The first occurred in the summer of 1848, when a sensational accident occurred during blasting work for the construction of a railway in Vermont (USA). Through his own carelessness, an iron bar several centimetres thick was catapulted at high speed through the skull of the foreman Phineas Gage, penetrating it at an angle. To everyone's amazement, he was able to walk and talk again just a few minutes later, despite the visible hole across his head. Only after months did changes in his personality become noticeable. His sense of responsibility and social behaviour was completely destroyed. Despite his intact cognitive faculties, he was no longer able to pursue a normal profession. His life ended in a human catastrophe. Although it was not possible at the time to explain this tragic development medically, a country doctor documented the case so meticulously that it has remained a reference case in neurology to this day.

Damasio himself experienced a similar case in the early 1970s. He pseudonymously calls it the "Elliot case": A man aged about 35 who had a benign brain tumor directly above the nasal cavity was successfully operated on, whereby a small part of the healthy brain tissue surrounding the tumor in the so-called prefrontal cortex, a region directly behind the forehead, slightly above the nose, also had to be removed. After the operation, all of Elliot's rational abilities remained unchanged; he continued to be intelligent and possessed tremendous knowledge and skills. What was disturbed, however, was his ability to plan the future, to judge and to decide—to such an extent "that he could no longer act as a reliable member of society" (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 68). Because of his unreliability, Elliot lost his job and lived a listless life. Damasio also observes an unusual emotional distance in him, even from his own biography and from moving events in it. Memory is very good, but joy and pain about one's own experiences are completely absent. "Knowing without feeling"—this is how Damasio sums up his patient's condition (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 78).

Finally, neurology is aware of anosognosia, the inability to feel an illness as one's own. Patients suffering from anosognosia are aware of their, often, life-threatening condition, but do not feel any emotions about it. They know, for example, that it is their own left side of the body that

is irreversibly paralysed. But instead of sadness or despair, they feel an unshakable cheerfulness and indifference. The part of the body affected is *recognised* as one's own, but not *felt* as such. One might be inclined to view this positively as Stoic apathy. The tragedy, however, is that people with this condition do not actively participate in their recovery and rehabilitation, which at the very least slows it down extremely, and sometimes prevents it altogether.

In the case of anosognosia, a different area of the brain is damaged than in the cases mentioned previously. However, in all examples, a complete loss of feelings can be registered. This is why Damasio combines the cases mentioned into a working hypothesis: feelings are relevant, indeed indispensable, for social behaviour and ethical decisions in humans. He tries to substantiate this neurologically.

The concept of mind has been used to describe very different things in the course of the history of philosophy. Damasio defines it as follows: An organism possesses mind when it is able to shape the future consciously and make plans, when it can therefore act in a true sense (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 131). Several activities are necessary for such action:

Thinking: The brain stores knowledge and memories preferably in the form of images. For reasons of storage capacity, these are not stored as facsimiles (in a computer this would be a bitmap graphic), but in dispositional patterns, from which they are reconstructed in a creative and interpretive manner depending on the current situation (in a computer this would be a vector graphic). Thinking takes place largely in the construction, reconstruction and combination of such images and not in concepts—in analogies and not in univocities. In a concrete situation, analogous, i.e. structurally related, cognitions of memory are evoked and brought into connection with the present in order to interpret it.

Being moved by emotions[31]: From a neuroscientific point of view, emotions are complex systems of immediate and involuntary, i.e. not consciously controlled, physical reactions (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 193). A higher pulse rate, a changed breathing rate or other phenomena are such emotions in the body. Emotions thus affect the body from the brain, but in turn they

31 In the German translation by Antonio R. Damasio 1997, "emotion" is rendered as Gefühl, "feeling" as Empfindung (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 14). In contrast, the German edition by Antonio R. Damasio 2000 translates "emotion" with Emotion and "feeling" with Gefühl. This second terminology is obviously the right one.

influence brain processes through feedback from the body. This happens in particular during

Feeling: If an emotion is consciously perceived in the brain, Damasio calls this perception a feeling (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 198–199). Feelings are therefore representations of bodily states in the brain. All feelings are preceded, evolutionarily and also logically, by a "background feeling": the "image of a bodily landscape that is not shaken [by emotions]" (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 208). In comparing current feelings with this background feeling on the one hand, and in establishing a connection between current feeling and contemporaneous perception of the environment on the other, the brain can gain information that is significant for the (survival of the) organism. Emotions are therefore carriers of information. Their depictions in feelings "are just as cognitive as any other perceptual image" (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 218). A comprehensive concept of the mind must consequently include feelings. It is precisely at this point that Damasio applies his central hypothesis.

The purpose of thinking—according to Damasio—is decision-making. The purpose of decision-making, in turn, is to ensure that the organism reacts as appropriately as possible to the current environmental conditions. Emotions play an irreplaceable role in this because they have the character of somatic markers. An emotion is a "body signal" that pre-sorts the conceivable options for action in the decision-making process and eliminates most of them even before rational consideration (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 238). In addition, emotion directs the attention of thinking to a few, very specific possibilities for action by emotionally reinforcing them. Overall, the system that generates emotions in the body and then feeds them back into the brain is therefore a "tendency apparatus" (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 239), an evaluation and interpretation system. From the sheer vastness of facts for thinking, a tiny part is selected, controlled by emotions, which thinking can then consider and bring to another emotionally guided decision[32].

32 Ultimately, this is the answer to the well-known problem of the difference between unconditional existential fulfilment and the impossibility of reflexively catching up with it completely. Expressed mathematically: practical reason cannot be grasped in algorithms but is learned through models and examples. It consists in recognising structures ("patterns") that connect thoughts with feelings. Decisions are made through analogies, and the analogies are emotionally coloured, because only through feelings can the regressus ad infinitum be overcome, which thinking would otherwise fall prey to—cf. Patricia S. Churchland 1996, 194–196.

Feelings thus represent condensed value experiences of a human being. It is thanks to them that the mind is capable of intuition and creativity. Without feelings, these intrinsic human abilities would not be possible at all. And it is precisely the prefrontal cortex that is the neuronal network of the brain responsible for the acquisition of feelings. If it fails, the aforementioned devastating consequences occur.

In rationalist ethics from the Greeks to Kant, feelings serve at most as the driver of action. In terms of content, they have no influence on moral judgement. However, "Experience with patients like Elliot suggests that the cool strategy advocated by Kant and others is far more in keeping with the way patients with prefrontal damage approach decisions than with the usual modus operandi of normal people." (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 236). People with a prefrontal cortex lesion are incapable of seeing the future as their own and thus as significant; they are completely absorbed in the present; they are unable to filter out of the sheer flood of possible actions those that have a chance of fulfilling meaning. The mind, as Damasio defines it as the ability to act independently, thus emerges from the entire organism (Antonio R. Damasio 1997, 311). Reason cannot be realised without the reciprocal connection of thinking and feeling, of brain and body. Feelings are an integral part of "practical reason".

Francis Hutcheson's thesis that there is an innate "moral sense" that can be grasped in a feeling can be affirmed in principle. In neurological terms, it consists in the two-way networking of brain processes and somatic mechanisms, which in turn form the basis of the indissoluble connection between thinking and feeling. However, Hutcheson's opinion that it is only *one* morally relevant feeling produced by the moral sense is misguided. Actually, a whole range of feelings claim significance for human decision-making and judgement.

At this point at the latest, the classic idea of "*discernment of spirits*" comes into play, as it has shaped the spiritual tradition of Christianity. Ultimately, it aims at an attentive perception of one's own feelings—and not in a rational reflexive way, but in a holistic way. It is about feeling current feelings and their long-term dynamics and comparing them with earlier feelings of one's own or of others (e.g. of the people around Jesus or the saints). Then, a judgement can be made as to whether the option for action from which these feelings arise leads to more faith, hope and love or not, i.e. whether it comes from the Holy Spirit or the evil spirit, in the traditional image.

Ultimately, both modern neuroscience and the classical discernment of spirits suggest a completely different picture of feelings than the Stoic-inspired ethical tradition of the Occident. Feelings are, first of all, not sinister, dangerous and unreasonable temptations from an evil external world that *threaten* our autonomy, but bodily signals that give us valuable and reasonable (!) clues about right and good behaviour and thus in the first place *make* autonomy *possible*. Without them, thinking would be completely helpless and lost. Only with their help can a sentient being come to decisions worth living. It is evident that feelings (just like clever thoughts) can lead someone astray. However, unmasking such feelings is not solely and not even primarily a matter of thinking, but above all of a "critique of feelings by the feelings themselves", as proposed by the classical discernment of spirits[33].

From a psychological point of view, the Greek scepticism, even aversion, towards feelings has a clearly recognisable cause: those who follow their feelings suffer a certain loss of control, for feelings come over us; we do not make them and cannot control them willingly. On the contrary, they control us and have us in the palm of their hand because they can be incredibly strong. This contradicts the Stoic image of the autonomous, sovereign and domineering human being. Theologically in terms of creation, this image cannot be upheld. Man is in many ways determined externally because of his integration into a bodily creation. And this alienation is per se neither bad nor corrupt, nor is it part of a lowly animal nature, but rather of his good creation. He may accept with gratitude and humility that not all judgements about what is good come from himself. In many cases, the decisive insight is given to him without his doing. To grasp it, however, requires a sophisticated and nuanced culture of feelings.

6.5 "Come to me, brother wolf!" The question about animals and plants

As we have seen in the textual analysis, the range of positioning of the Church Fathers towards animals is quite wide. This also relates to the core point of Christian animal theology: the interpretation of the governmental mandate in Gen 1:28. Their opinions range from empowerment to harsh

33 Ignatius of Loyola, the master of this discernment, experiences this firsthand. All the rational objections of his confessor do not help him to recognise the asceticism he practised in Manresa as excessive. Only the deeply felt disgust at this way of life can convince him (Ignatius of Loyola, Report of the Pilgrim No. 25).

slave-like ownership (as in John Chrysostom with reference to the naming in Gen 2) and to the widely predominant understanding of humans being obliged to care for animals. In contrast to the dominant Stoic perception of animals from the point of view of their usefulness to humans, many Church Fathers remain very reserved (especially Lactance, Nemesios of Emesa and Augustine). On the whole, most of the Church Fathers are considerably more animal-friendly than the majority of Stoic philosophers. They are recognisably concerned to moderate and soften Stoic anthropocentrism, even if they do not see themselves as being in a position to overcome it. Gentle reforms, but no revolution—this is how one could summarise the broad line of their ideas.

From this pathway of the early church, many Christian ethicists today draw the conclusion of enacting gentle reforms in order to gravitate towards ecological and animal ethical humanism, but also retain anthropocentrism as their basis for such changes. I hope to have shown that this is only possible by ignoring several intrinsic flaws of stoic anthropocentrism, which I have identified in this publication. First, copying the early Christian strategy of dealing with the Stoa would be oblivious to history. Neither is Christianity today the tiny minority in a majority society dominated by Stoic anthropocentrism, nor can we overlook the fatal consequences of anthropocentrism for non-human creation in the 21st century.

Moreover, the analysis of the Stoa's five-part network of ideas has highlighted the need for profound and comprehensive changes in Christian theology. Those who want to cling to anthropocentrism will find it difficult to make these changes, and thus risk the ever-advancing untrustworthiness of Christianity. The five ideas that make up the core of the network can only be corrected together, so deeply are they interconnected due to the enormous internal coherence of Stoic ideas. Renewed Christian animal ethics must therefore postulate theological corrections far beyond animal ethics. This is briefly repeated in the following presentation of the five ideas:

– The talk of *God's providence* is to be taken with the utmost caution. It must not be understood as an objective fact, but must be read in the context of God's loving care for his creatures and the existentially experienced trust in God. Moreover, it encompasses all living beings as recipients of divine love and care. An understanding of providence that explains away all adversities and antinomies of life by invoking God's higher logic is to be strictly rejected. The question of theodicy remains

the radical, permanently unanswerable question that must always be voiced and heard anew, even for the sake of the Crucified Christ.

– The *aloga thesis* of man's exclusive gift of reason cannot be upheld in its absoluteness. This was already suspected in antiquity, even among the Stoics, for otherwise there would not have been such a gigantic effort to defend it. Moreover, in conjunction with the new view of emotions proposed in chapter 6.4, purely rational and cool-headed people, such as the Stoa constructs as the ideal image of humans, would be the truly reasonless. Theologically, this has massive consequences for humans' *relationship with Christ.* The connection of the incarnated Logos with all flesh does not take place through intellect, but through the body and co-creatureliness. Otherwise, the incarnation would not be necessary at all, because the divine Logos can also connect with rational beings without incarnation, as the Stoics rightly claimed. Seen in this light, one of the early Church's most momentous mistakes was that it played down the potential criticism of the Stoa in the message of the incarnation (and also conversely the Stoa's potential to be critical of the incarnation) and made it largely invisible. *Eschatologically,* everything thus boils down to the hope that all creatures will be raised to new life by the faithful and loving Creator.
– Cognitivist ethics needs recourse to both particular teleonomies and a cautious comprehensive *teleology*. The Stoa correctly recognised this, and it is important to adhere to it despite all criticism. What is necessary, however, is that the teleology be constructed in a much less steep and hierarchical and by no means monolinear way. Among the four classical approaches to justification in environmental and animal ethics, *biocentrism* is therefore the most appropriate. It is the model of moral individualism that draws no principled boundaries between different individuals and thus includes them all. At the same time, it best reflects biblical thinking and thus guarantees that the Christian message is faithful to its origins. Unlike a large number of the pathocentrist approaches, biocentrism is furthermore aware at all times that a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle alone does not solve all problems. Animals are supposed to be legal persons, yes, but so are plants. Therefore, as called for in chapter 6.1, the theodicy question remains virulent because there is no flawless behaviour in terms of animal and environmental ethics that could amicably resolve all competition. Rather, the annoyance remains that every creature can only live at the expense of other creatures. One of the greatest theological (!) tasks in the context of animal ethics is to keep this

awareness awake and to endure the hardly bearable tension that results from it. Proponents of pathocentrist animal ethics especially are tempted to think of redemption too simply.

– If you want to value animals, you also have to value *feelings*. The Stoic devaluation of animals only worked because it was linked to a decidedly negative view of (human and animal) feelings. Modern neuroscience shows that feelings are a necessary component of (practical) reason. Pure thinking without a connection to the corresponding feelings is not capable of evaluating insights and making them fruitful for one's own actions. The 2000-year-old spiritual tradition of the discernment of spirits, which guides us to good and life-serving decisions through an internal critique of feelings by means of empathy, has always known this intuitively, without being able to unfold it in an argumentatively appropriate way in the coordinate system of an anthropology of Greek provenance. The revaluation of feelings also means the relativisation, though not a devaluation (!), of thinking. Thinking and feeling together constitute reason. This clearly defuses the discussion about a feeling-based morality of sympathy in contrast to a purely rational morality of justice, as is conducted in behavioural research.

As a relatively young field of ethics, animal ethics is currently caught up in disputes over principles that are sometimes reminiscent of religious wars, or at any rate of the Babylonian confusion of languages. Anthropocentristic approaches are pitted against non-anthropocentristic approaches, utilitarian against justice approaches, animal welfare against animal rights approaches, principle-oriented against pragmatist approaches and emotivist against rationalist approaches. Christian animal ethics can no more escape these discourses than any other. But it can, more than many others, reflect on history and learn from mistakes made. And perhaps non-Christian animal ethics, whether secular or otherwise religious, can also learn something from Christian history and its mistakes. At any rate, this would be desirable in order to develop a form of animal ethics that can inspire as many people as possible and bring about better living conditions for as many animals as possible.

The "Fioretti di San Francesco", a legendary account of the life of Francis of Assisi written in the late 14th century and thus almost two centuries after the historical events it depicts, contains the story of the Wolf of Gubbio in chapter 21, which is missing from all the old accounts of his life and is

therefore hardly likely to be historical. Nevertheless, it reflects the spirit of the saint and can provide good food for thought.

Near the village of Gubbio lived a wolf that killed animals and people. The inhabitants were so afraid of him that they never left the village unarmed. When Francis heard about it, he left the village to look for the wolf. When he saw him from afar, he called out, "Come to me, Brother Wolf!" When the wolf approached, Francis rebuked him for his cruel actions and made an agreement with him. In future, the wolf was not to harm any man or animal in Gubbio. In return, the inhabitants of the village would give him something to eat every day. As the story goes, the wolf kept to the agreement, as did the villagers. And he stayed there until the end of his life.

The story tells of how there are inevitably competitive situations in this world—between humans and humans, humans and animals, animals and animals, between humans and plants, animals and plants, and plants and plants. Sometimes this competition leads to bloody conflicts. These cannot simply be overcome with human force; the wolf is obviously too clever for that. It must therefore be recognised that there will be no unrestricted dominance by one party or another in the conflict. But what is the alternative? Francis approaches the wolf and calls out, "Come to me, brother wolf!" And he comes. Apparently, he senses that the saint wants to meet him guilelessly and defencelessly and is looking for a constructive solution for both sides. One may speculate how Francis might have made the proposed terms of the agreement clear to the wolf. It would hardly have been possible with words alone. But he succeeds in concluding the deal. Unlike in Stoic philosophy, it is possible to include the wolf in the legal community of humans. The wolf abides by its obligations just as much as the villagers because both sides experience the solution as fair and feasible. They share the resources, and sharing connects them.

"Come to me, brother wolf!" In animal ethics, as in human ethics and also in the still barely developed field of plant ethics, it is a matter of emphasising siblinghood more than antagonism, cooperation more than competition, commonality more than difference—without denying or trivialising antagonism, competition and difference. An animal ethics approach that does not do this cannot claim to have any validity.

6.6 Crown of Creation? A conclusion

The expression that refers to human beings as the "crown of creation" develops relatively late. It first appears in the work of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 Mohrungen–1808 Weimar) (Barbara Schmitz 2012, 26). And yet it captures relatively well what the Stoic tradition gave to early Christianity: consistent and irrefutable anthropocentrism. Christianity internalised it so strongly from the beginning that it thought it could be found in many biblical texts.

But I want to prevent a misunderstanding. It is not my intention to make the Stoa a scapegoat and absolve Christianity of guilt, nor is it my intention to portray the Stoa as stupid and deluded. On the contrary, the five elements of the network of ideas around anthropocentrism could only have remained recognised for so long because they are extremely intelligent and incredibly consistent with each other. The Stoic structure of thought is impressive and fascinating. Moreover, it has not only produced terrible things, but also many beneficial ones. The establishment of universal human rights would have been inconceivable without the Stoa, and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly adopted Stoic figures of reasoning. Christianity, Europe and indeed the world therefore owe much to the Stoa. But the best ideas also have dark sides. The more their strengths shine, the greater their shadows are cast. What the Stoa achieved for humanity in 2000 years, it bought at the expense of non-human living beings and nature, as we recognise today. And precisely because the Stoic arguments are so clever and plausible, they have long been able to conceal their weaknesses in thought with great efficiency.

The fact that this book looks primarily at the dark sides of Stoic thought and its Christian reception is in the nature of its question. One of the tasks of critical theory is to bring the dark areas of intellectual history to light. Only in this way can they be overcome. And that is the real intention of this study.

In 1956, a German archaeological team led by Theodor Bossert and Ludwig Budde found the floor mosaic from the late antique basilica of Mopsuestia from the second quarter of the 5th century during excavations at the burial mound of Misis in southeastern Turkey. In the middle, it shows a hitherto unseen depiction of the Flood narrative. In its centre, on four wooden feet, stands an oversized box (Latin arca can mean both ark and chest). Noah's right hand protrudes from the only opening on the side of this box with an outstretched index finger. Around the box only animals

are visible—in the inner rectangle fourteen animals of the air, including a magpie, rock partridge, guinea fowl, goose, cock and hen as well as a peacock, in the outer rectangle eighteen land animals, including a lioness, fallow deer, dromedary, lion, billy goat, donkey, leopard, pig, ox, bear and ostrich, which, although a bird, is counted among the land animals because it cannot fly. In contrast to the biblical narrative, most of the animals are not depicted as pairs. On the box-like ark is the inscription: ΚΙΒΩΤΟΣ ΝΩΕΡ—the box of Noach (whereby the final Rho is given different interpretations, either as a component of the name "Noer", or as an abbreviation of a third word, or as the numeral 100).

As far as humans are concerned, only Noah's hand can be seen, nothing of his family, and the rest of the biblical narrative is not depicted either. The mosaic concentrates on the essentials. And these are obviously the animals, which take up about 90 per cent of the surface, and the ark, which stands in the middle of the depiction. The emphasis of the depiction becomes clear when we compare it with other depictions of the ark from around the same time:

- A coin from Apameia from the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Iulius Philippus (244–249 AD) shows Noah and his wife in a box-shaped ark floating on waves. On the top right of the ark sits a raven, while from the left a dove carries an olive branch—the two birds that Noah sent out to scout the terrain at the end of the flood according to Gen 8. In the left half of the picture, Noah and his wife stand after leaving the ark with their hands raised in thanksgiving. Apart from the two birds sent out on Noah's behalf, no animals are visible—they would hardly have had room on the tiny coin.
- Numerous early Christian sarcophagi and catacomb paintings from the 3rd and 4th centuries show Noah all alone in an orant position in the ark. He stands there as an image for the soul of the deceased. No other people or animals are depicted.
- Two other floor mosaics from this period depict animals, but without any connection to the Noah narrative: In the Villa Romana del Casale (not inhabited by Christians) near Piazza Armerina in Sicily, a 4th century floor mosaic shows a variety of interactions between humans and animals, especially fights and domestication. These are striking illustrations of Stoic anthropocentrism and its emphasis on human domination due to reason. In the floor mosaic from the Basilica of Aquileia from the beginning of the 4th century, on the other hand, most of the animals are

depicted on their own. There is no recognisable theological interpretive context; rather, the artists are simply expressing their delight in animals. This corresponds to many Church Fathers in whose texts we have observed a similar joy.
– The two oldest pictorial cycles of the Noah narrative were once in the Roman patriarchal basilicas built under Emperor Constantine, each on the northern nave walls, on which there was a pictorial passage through the entire Old Testament: The cycle in San Paolo fuori le Mura had four; the one in Old Saint Peter's had two images of the Noah narrative. Both cycles perished with the old basilicas but had been painted off by the beginning of the 17th century, so we know of them.

Like no other early Christian depiction of the Noah narrative, the mosaic of Mopsuestia shows an enormous variety of animals. On the other hand, there is no evidence of an allegorical understanding of the image, as was already widespread at the time. Neither is there any indication that the box of the ark is meant to symbolise the Church (which would usually be indicated by a cross), nor is there any evidence that the sacrament of baptism is alluded to—water is not even depicted. Both an ecclesiological and a sacramental-theological interpretation can therefore be excluded with great probability.

The depiction is about the animals. They are worthy of God and Noah to be saved from the great Flood. Not for the sake of man, who should subjugate and domesticate them as in Piazza Armerina, but for their own sake. Noah's outstretched finger makes it clear that Noah is speaking to them or showing them something: the way out to freedom, to a new, better life. In this way, the mosaic in Mopsuestia sets a striking counterpoint to early Stoic Christian anthropocentrism.

The image was buried for a long time before it was dug up again. Perhaps the biblical biocentrism that shines in the Noah narrative can also be unearthed and re-appropriated.