

Ethics in-between – Ethics in a heterotopian world

Wolfgang Leyk

University Church of Erlangen-Neustadt, Germany

Abstract

The growing number of homeless and stateless persons challenges ethics because territorialized concepts of law, status or nationality no longer meet the needs of these people. This paper analyzes Foucault's concept of heterotopia as a tool for a better understanding of this situation, for a reasoned ethical answer and first steps into another spatiality. Heterotopia is also understood as alternative to frameworks like human rights or territorialized concepts and implies some philosophical and even theological problems. Exploring Paul Tillich's concept of time and space it can be shown that there are connections between theological topology and Foucault's topography. Therefore heterotopian heuristics are considered a complementary method for analysis of ethical problems.

Keywords: heterotopia, migration, refugee, city, denizenship, rights, responsibility, boat people, time, space, Tillich, fulfilment

To be means to have space.
Not to have space is not to be.¹

¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, Chicago 1951 (ed.1973).

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We can be: in a place, in a relationship, in power, in motion... Our being-there (Dasein) has many aspects. My interest in the topographic signature of life was triggered by the 2011 *Societas Ethica Sibi* conference on migration and poverty. Soon I was convinced that the question “where we are” is not a purely ontological one. It implies political questions as well as a comprehensive analytic challenge. Everybody has to find his or her own place in the world, everybody has to know the art of navigation² which until now has depended on positions and known whereabouts: the place we were, the space we had or we will have. It is important where we live or where we belong, this is the topographic signature of our lives.

There are different ways to reflect on this question:

- 1) It can be considered a political question because place / space is connected with membership, status and rights. A politically negotiated status is usually constituted on territories / places / spaces.
- 2) It is also a scholarly and philosophical question of how we position
- 3) ourselves in the world. It then turns into a fundamental question of universality or particularity. Are we looking for universal space or for moments of being at home in a specific place?
- 4) For theologians this question widens into a question of finitude or infinity, of Man’s place and God’s infinity, of time and eternity.

This paper reflects on the impacts of “having no place”. Refugees, migrant workers, boat people are often called displaced persons because their life without territory, place and status is dangerous and their need is a challenge to ethics.

Humanities have not reflected on topographical questions³ because they focused on universal concepts. Christianity was busy with conquering the world for the new faith and, without being interested in particular places. This paper uses Foucault’s concept of “heterotopia”⁴ to explore ethical implications of topography and it attempts a reasoned “practise of space” which is both heuristic and emphasizes the practical needs of displaced persons.

Finally I will examine if these results have a theological dimension and can contribute to a theological understanding of space. I consider Tillich’s *Systematic Theology* as exemplary not only because it reflects on time and space, but because the author is aware of the fundamental philosophical issues which accompany the reflection on space. He considers universality or particularity, deliberately avoids a choice and instead builds his system on a theory of correlation of God’s and man’s story⁵. Furthermore he mentions the impact time has on our perception of space. I propose to use Tillich’s concept as a procedural and analytical tool and not as a final solution for these paradoxes. I consider it as encouraging further research

² Michel de Certeau: *Kunst des Handelns* (in English: *Practise of everyday life*), Berlin 1988, p. 9 in his introduction (only in the German edition, translated by Wolfgang Leyk): “This essay is dedicated to ordinary man... to the many who are on the way...”.

³ Markus Schröer, *Räume, Orte, Grenzen - Auf dem Weg zu einer Soziologie des Raums*, Frankfurt 2006, 17- 46, esp. p. 29; Oliver O’Donovan, “Loss of space”, in: O. O’Donovan, Johanna Lockwood O’Donovan, *Bonds of Imperfection - Christian Politics, Past and Present*, Cambridge 2004, p. 296-320. The neglect of place is owed to border crossing dynamics of human reflection and the quest for universal answers. Another reason is that topography is considered a material question while philosophy is reflexion and imagination. Sociology revives the question of place by observations on relations or territorial liquidity of 2nd modernity which is “going global”.

⁴ I refer to the essay: Michel Foucault, “Of other spaces - Heterotopias”, (1967), available online <http://www.colorado.edu/envd/courses/envd4114-001/Fall09/Theory/Foucault-Other%20Spaces.pdf>, viewed November 11th, 2012, also available in: M. Foucault, Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, vol. 16, No. 1. (Spring, 1986), p. 22-27; M. Schröer, *Räume*, p. 19.

⁵ P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, “The method of correlation”, p. 59-65.

on theological resources which can turn topography into a topology which lets us understand the spaces we have or have not.

Place, Space or Territory?

Heuristics of space and place

Spatiality affects thinking. It has effects on life. It can create either a feeling of security or insecurity, a feeling of “being at home” or being lost, a perception of owning space or of living in the proximity of others (beside- each-other-ness)⁶. Reflections about place / space mostly aim at “localisation” no matter how this enterprise is evaluated⁷. “A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.”⁸ In Foucault’s Geography “place / site” is “defined by relations of proximity between points and elements”⁹. But this description of stability is no longer sufficient since the fixed focus on places and “landmarks” widened because the world as a whole came into view. Place is creative because in it “language unfurls, slips on itself, determines its choices, draws its figures and translations”¹⁰. Now “place / site” is tied to everyday practises, knowledge, relations and it seems appropriate to leave behind the benefits of particularity and localization and to reach out for a complex description.

The term “space” meets this comprehensive challenge by cross-ref- erencing positioning in geographically or sociologically defined “places”. “Space” provides a “setting” for communication and for the story of God’s people, especially in the Old Testament.¹¹ Contrarily “Space is an abstract notion,.... you can exist ,in space’ But not in , this space”¹². Thinking about space instigates reflections on knowledge, power, science, discursive formations etc.¹³ Place / site on the other hand facilitates particular and local observation because it limits the field of view.¹⁴

The difference between space and place is like a twofold heuristic structure. Space is like a container and like a “subject” owning places as if they were objects¹⁵. But as a kind of “res extensa” place / site is used by subjects.¹⁶ Places are defined by borders, but as spaces they offer boundless possibilities for motion.¹⁷ This twofold nature of space was already mentioned by Merleau-Ponty who refers to an anthropological “spatial” dimension of geometrical space / place¹⁸. Certeau has proposed a helpful definition for this phenomenon: Places are defined by

⁶ Idem, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p. 194-195.

⁷ O. O’Donovan has a theological interest in “localisation and place” and considers it a necessary setting for identity and communication, O. O’Donovan, “Loss of space”, p. 303, while Foucault for example judges the history of localisations as obsolete. But it is necessary to look closely: O’Donovan’s statement might even be considered foucaultian in so far as he mentions the interdependence of place, knowledge and relation.

⁸ M. Certeau, *Practise of everyday Life*, Berkeley 1984, quotation p. 117.

⁹ M. Foucault, “Of other spaces”, p. 22.

¹⁰ M. Foucault, “The Language of Space”, in: Jeremy W. Crampton, Stuart Elden, *Space, Knowledge and Power - Foucault and Geography*, Burlington 2007, p. 163-169.

¹¹ O. O’Donovan, “Loss of space”, p. 307-310.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 303.

¹³ M. Foucault, “Questions on Geography”, in: J. W. Crampton, St. Elden, *Space*, p. 173-184.

¹⁴ Foucault chooses the hospital as a space for observation and discipline. M. Foucault, “The Incorporation of the Hospital into Modern theology”, in: J. W. Crampton, St. Elden, *Space*, p.141-152.

¹⁵ According to Foucault “space” meant emplacement. Since emplacements lost their meaning space has become a heuristic factor and is not longer dependant on the notion of places.

¹⁶ M. Schröer, *Räume*, p. 20-30.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 286.

¹⁸ M. Certeau, *Practise*, p. 117. The geometrical space would of course be what formerly was called place and it would be determined by geometrical assumptions (modern geometry) or by what we perceive and can measure (Euclidian).

laws and very often by something lifeless... Spaces are created by actions.¹⁹ This understanding may widen territorialized concepts because it includes communities, frameworks or even surrounding landscape.²⁰ Spatiality can open particularity towards universality²¹ and may lead beyond concepts which are built on the fact that people own space and are members of territories.

Does this paradigmatic shift mean that it will be possible to find “living space” beyond territory? Will this spatiality have room for the growing number of “homeless” or displaced people whose rights were destroyed when they were deterritorialized?

“Having no place” and the loss of territory: empirics

The phenomenon of having no place has challenged politics since WW II, the best proof for that being the foundation of UNHCR in 1950. I am referring to recent research by Wolfgang Scheppe which was presented in the migropolis exhibition in Venice²². This project of representative political science followed the traces of illegal immigrants, handbag sellers, tourists in Venice but also boat people on the Adriatic Sea whose situation is particularly dramatic. The war-like defence of Fortress Europe, the gated community²³, by Frontex Border police annually causes several thousand deaths. According to Scheppe Venice and its surrounding waters are a fractal mirror of global problems. As a “generic city” Venice is a “container” of several “invisible cities” (Calvino)²⁴. The idea of several cities contained in the space of one can be traced back to Plato’s competing urban models of the kings and the philosophers city. Scheppe discloses these distinct cities by charting and illustrating specific kinds of mobility for different groups of the cities inhabitants:

- a) Subsistence based forced mobility: the mobility of sellers of faked Gucci handbags, illegals, migrant workers, refugees.
- b) Tourist and leisure induced voluntary mobility and, as a variation,²⁵ the mobility of “jet- set” businessmen or economic migrants like salespeople.

It must be remarked critically that the academic discourse focuses on voluntary mobility. Sociological or philosophical reflections neglect that often mobility is forced and caused by necessity for subsistence, war or ecological problems. Representative of mobility are to a lesser extent airports or generic shopping malls, but much more refugee camps or bad housing. Latter examples might exceed scholarly experience²⁶ but should be taken more seriously into account for a realistic description of today’s mobility.

¹⁹ M. Certeau, *Practise*, p. 118.

²⁰ O. O’Donovan, “Loss of space”, p. 303-307.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 306.

²² 2009 in Venice in Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa / Piazza San Marco.

²³ Wolfgang Scheppe, “Militarization of Borders” in: *Migropolis – Venice of a Global Situation*, Venice 2009, vol. 1, 2, p. 438-464; p. 460.

²⁴ Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, London 1972/1997. Calvino’s book has become a manifesto for architects and urban planners. It is written as a conversation between Kublai Khan and Marco Polo. Polo is reporting about cities he has seen, especially about their “inner life”, their tensions, strength and weaknesses. In the course of the narration the reader becomes aware of many “possible cities” which can be contained in the place of a city. Polo is introducing the Khan to a multidimensional view about urban life, its various functions, dynamics and complex formation. The reader is also becoming aware that the background of the narration about several cities is in fact one generic city: “Venice”. On generic cities also: W. Scheppe, *Migropolis*, vol.1, Prolegomena, p.104-119.

²⁵ O. O’Donovan, “Loss of space”, p. 296.

²⁶ O. O’Donovan’s typical example for motion is the businessman and jet-setter, “Loss of space”, p. 296.

The Loss-paradigm

Having no space

The Second World War's refugee problem promoted reflections on loss of territory. In 1943 Arendt wrote her essay "We refugees"²⁷. Being herself stateless in France, Arendt had worked with Jewish refugees before she emigrated to the USA. In her essay she describes how refugees' lives mirror the loss of order and human rights which were once provided by national states²⁸. Now political existence bears the signature of loss of "place" (that is home and rights). A new paradigm forces displaced people to live in "abstract nakedness" and to face the world as bare humans which are almost asking to be victimized.²⁹ In this context Arendt coined the term of "the fabrication of corpses" which has made an unlucky career from Heidegger³⁰ up to Agamben. People lose place and autonomy. Their living space now is with a dramatic description by Agamben the "camp" (*das Lager*) which is home to Baumann's "human waste", the global precariat and the "outcasts" of modernity. These concepts imply continuous transition of thresholds which usually secure and structure life. Displaced people live in a continuous emergency state. Many of them die suffocating in containers or cramped luggage compartments. They drown in Adriatic Sea waters, freeze to death walking "green borders" or die of thirst in the Mexican desert close to the U.S. They are always on the run because they have no papers no matter if they are sellers of faked Gucci handbags and Rolex watches, Sinti and Roma in Eastern Europe or an ethnic minority elsewhere.

A pragmatic approach for dealing with the loss paradigm is the construction of beyond-territory-memberships like the EU concept of *denizenship*³¹. It has become part of the EU identity politics and serves the growing number of resident non-civilians by enabling a citizenship which is not necessarily connected to full civil rights. It is considered as a step

²⁷ Hannah Arendt, "We refugees", in: Marc Robinson (ed.), *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, Boston-London 1996, p. 110-119. Arendt writes about her experience as a refugee, about attempts to avoid the word "refugee" so that no dependence on government agencies would be implied. She tells how Jewish refugees and immigrants tried to invent fictional "former lives and success stories" because simply as humans they seemed to be worth nothing.

²⁸ H. Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft – Antisemitismus, Imperialismus, totale Herrschaft*, München 1986/2011, p. 559- 607; Giorgio Agamben, "We Refugees", in: W. Scheppe, *Migropolis*, vol.1, 120-125, also published as: "Beyond Human rights" in: G. Agamben, *Means without ends, Notes on Politics*, London 2000. A complex reflection about the end of the nation state also offered by theologian Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, "Nation, State, and Civil Society in the Western Biblical Tradition", in: O. O'Donovan, J. Lockwood O'Donovan, *Bonds*, p. 276-295. Lockwood ties nationality to a biblically founded concept and shows that nationality is not strange to Christian faith (p. 284-291). She explicitly refers to Arendt's work on loss of nations and remarks that Christian globalism has served the demise of the national state. On the other hand Christian confined by biblical tradition which knows a lot about topography. It is nevertheless a misjudgement to think that Christian and political "common goods" can exist besides each other or even be turned into a hybrid "democratic creed" (p. 294). Lockwood emphasizes that the Bible understands political power as vicarious. This means that rulers are accountable not only to God, but also to their people.

²⁹ H. Arendt, *Elemente*, p. 613-625, "Vor der abstrakten Nacktheit des Menschseins hat die Welt keinerlei Ehrfurcht empfunden.", p. 619.

³⁰ Heidegger quotes Arendt in his 1949 speech "Das Gestell". "... Ackerbau ist jetzt motorisierte Ernährungsindustrie, im Wesen das Selbe wie die Fabrikation von Leichen in Gaskammern und Vernichtungslagern, das Selbe wie die Blockade und Aushungern von Ländern, das Selbe wie die Fabrikation von Wasserstoffbomben."

³¹ Important information can be gained from these two papers: Atıkan Ece Özlem, The Treatment of Third Country Nationals in the European Union Sussex European Institute, in (SEI) Working Paper, No. 85, <<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=sei-working-paper-no-85.pdf>>, viewed November 10th 2012; Neil Walker, Denizenship and the Deterritorialization in the EU in EUI Working paper Law, No. 2008/08 <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/8082/LAW-2008-08.pdf?sequence=1>, viewed November 10th 2012.

towards equality for EU and non-EU citizens. But this supra- or trans-national concept has a crucial weakness because it requires papers which are only obtainable if you are “territorialized” and have the status as “negotiated individual”. It is a territorialized concept and implies membership as well as it depends on conditions of entry such as passports and immigration papers or green cards. Therefore it does not meet the needs of displaced persons.

If refugees, migrants and other displaced persons are no longer integrated in order structures of a nation or a federation, their situation requires a dynamic concept which discharges territorialized mechanics of inclusion and exclusion and is able to “unhinge the old trinity of state / nation / territory”³². This is why I turn to heterotopian heuristics.

Heterotopia and methodology

“Today the site has been substituted for extension which itself had replaced emplacement”.³³ Foucault’s Heterotopia turns from scientific geography to observation of extensions, relations, dynamics of knowledge and networks.³⁴ Topography or geography is about governance, distribution, inclusion and exclusion of people. Spaces are locations where power is executed and language is created, where discursive formations come into being and so on... Foucault’s geography is connected to his specific topics and it is no surprise that he reflects a lot about spatiality³⁵.

Foucault’s essay “Of other Spaces” and his essay on flight³⁶ emphasize a spatiality we could call empiric or bodily in so far as it makes us aware that we are limited, vulnerable beings and subjected to power even if it seems that we “own space”. But most important Foucault reflects how we are sometimes thrown “out of place into other places” which have their own order and time³⁷. Not surprisingly Foucault’s Heterotopia shows a hermeneutical double structure: other spaces can positively be found in hospitals, graveyards or ships.³⁸ And there are spaces which are extremely heterotopian up to the extent of being unreal spaces (outopias / Utopias) In the 15th/16th century geography abandoned scientific methods and gave way to fantastic non-scientific constructions of places which nevertheless remain connected to real society by analogy or correlation.³⁹ These spaces are totally excluded, because they are even exempt to existing heterotopias but they affect reality because they mark reflective thresholds and make aware of inclusion and exclusion dynamics which are constantly switching sides. I am emphasizing Foucault’s 5th principle of Heterotopias: it “... always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable.”⁴⁰ This heterotopian phenomenon is helpful in capturing essential dynamics of real, existing heterotopias. It is important to understand that utopias have a spatial quality.⁴¹

Scheppe’s research discloses a specific heterotopian phenomenology. Once migrants survive their journey to Venice, they build their own invisible city and society in otherwise deserted parks. They do haircuts and other business in streets and places and establish a heterotopian economy.⁴² These heterotopias owe their existence to a system of inclusion

³² G. Agamben, “We Refugees”, p.123.

³³ M. Foucault, “Of other spaces”, p. 22.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

³⁵ St. Elden, J. W. Crampton, “Space, Knowledge and power: Foucault and Geography”, in: J.W. Crampton, St. Elden, *Space*, p. 1-16.

³⁶ M. Foucault, “The Force of Flight”, in: St. Elden, J. W. Crampton, *Space*, p. 169-172.

³⁷ M. Foucault, “Of other spaces”, p. 24.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 24-26.

³⁹ M. Foucault, “Of other spaces”, p. 24.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

⁴¹ Nigel Thrift, “Overcome by space: Reworking Foucault”, in: St. Elden, J. W. Crampton, *Space*, p. 53-58, especially p. 55, about Foucault choosing spatial non-categories for describing spatial qualities.

⁴² W. Scheppe, *Migropolis I, II*, see the articles: “Heterotopia Street”, p. 1106-1125; “Heterotopia Society”,

and exclusion. They are “other (heterotopian) spaces” – to other (real) spaces – and by this reciprocity they maintain a function for society, the driving force being interventions by power or knowledge. With heterotopia Foucault steps out of sites into a multidimensional “multiversal”⁴³ understanding of space including power and extensions. He goes beyond the subject-driven understanding of an additional “anthropological” dimension of space by Merleau-Ponty or Certeau because he takes into account the creative power of contexts and surrounding dispositive. These might be floating or liquid like the traveller’s seat in a train, ship or plane. This can be understood as a position which cannot be mapped, because it is contained in the infinity of sea or air or the anonymity of a shopping mall⁴⁴. By this understanding place and space are totally deterritorialized and Foucault’s topology has left previously known topographic science. In this polytopical world displaced people can become a place on their own, their own reserve (living space) of imagination or their heterotopical reality which is branded by the struggle for subsistence and survival.⁴⁵ As proof Scheppe presents many exemplary biographic narratives of refugees and migrants.

Heterotopia: living space beyond subjectivity

Heterotopia leads beyond subjectivity, cartography and topography. If there still is an acting subject to be found, it is “given room” for action. The science of surveying and mapping makes voyages from one space to another possible, like “walking” through space and grasping possibilities.⁴⁶ Latour’s essay on navigation⁴⁷ explores how to navigate in a polytopian world, how to find directions of future movements, how to understand space as a referent to possibilities and as a help for understanding networks.⁴⁸ This is done by becoming aware of differences and exclusions which are guiding own movements.

Foucault’s concept is most convincing if applied to current challenges of a hetero- or poly-topical world. New topography does not relieve us from responsibility and from the need for ethics even if it seems that we are living as passive subjects in a situation of “unknowingness”⁴⁹, even if it looks as if we are now “owned” by the spaces we once owned.

The Ethos of Spatial Practise

Two basic elements are conditional attitudes for this spatial practise:

- 1) Endurance of cognitive dissonance: “... Ethics require us to risk ourselves precisely at the moment of unknowingness, when what forms us diverges from what lies before us...”⁵⁰. Ethics are not about bridging cognitive gaps by rules or – in our case – territorialized concepts. Ethics are about courage to endure heterotopias in spite of their complexity because the situation is serious. Migrant’s lives always bear a signature of fundamental negativity. They are deterritorialized, they possess

p. 1126-1145; “Heterotopia Economy”, p. 1146-1153.

⁴³ Bruno Latour: *Entering a risky territory: space in the age of digital navigation*, p. 581-599, available at: <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/117-MAP-DIGITAL-GB.pdf>, especially p.595, viewed November 10th, 2012.

⁴⁴ Zygmunt Baumann, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge 2000, p. 99.

⁴⁵ M. Foucault, “Of other spaces”, closing statement p. 26, using the image of a ship; also M. Certeau, *Practise*, p. 111-114 on Railway navigation and incarceration.

⁴⁶ M. Certeau, *Practise*, about “Spatial Practises”, p. 91-130, esp. p. 105.

⁴⁷ B. Latour, *Entering a risky territory*.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 590. It would be interesting to correlate more deeply Latour’s reflections on human and physical geography, mimetic and navigational mapping to Foucault’s geography.

⁴⁹ N. Thrift, “Overcome by space”, in his closing remarks, p. 56-58 using a term by Judith Butler.

⁵⁰ J. Butler quoted in N. Thrift, “Overcome by space”, p. 58.

neither papers nor status and they have no stakes in the current discourses.⁵¹ In light of these practical needs endurance is just a first step.

- 2) Reflective agility: heterotopia denies mimetic maps and topographical order. These are replaced⁵² by flexible spatial experience, continuous confrontation and surprises. The feeling of having arrived and “being at home” makes place to the necessity of departures. These paradoxes mutually depend on each other and stimulate each other. We feel like we own a space and yet notice our heterotopian existence as being “beside-each-other”⁵³. Baumann’s liquid space concept explains this as due to forced subsistence which makes people continuously meet strangers and fight for their livelihood. Certeau describes this “liquid life” as resembling the glance through an airplane window. The new spatial practice triggers continuous reflection encounters with speculative possibilities.⁵⁴

Questions:

What can this reflective approach achieve? Does it not mean that people get “lost in space”? Does a liquid and trans-territorial concept not dissolve the few values and certainties which modernity has left to us? Does it not deny the universal idea of basic human rights which seems necessary to negotiate humane existence or the movement of people? Would it not be more efficient to forget about new spatiality, to pragmatically widen the number of beneficiary and to provide new membership concepts? Should the guest (even if uninvited) not have the chance to turn into a fellow citizen?⁵⁵ Would it not be better to bridge with good will and humanity the gap left by dissolving territoriality?

The problem is that this return to universality might erode ethical reflection on particular situations because it installs a ready-made methodological grid for surveying problems. In his plea for particularity O’Donovan has rightfully hinted at the danger of ideology filling structures left behind by the loss of nation state. A fitting example would be the “war against terrorism” which also was called a “war against evil”.⁵⁶

Spatial Practise – A Political Approach⁵⁷

EU’s denizenship pragmatically tries to tackle the difference between trans-territorial universality and territorial particularity with the help of a supranational framework. Another approach tries to connect heterotopias to existing reality. Displaced people in the Swiss town of Basel can leave their space out of society and find space in government bureaus giving assistance to people “sans papiers”⁵⁸. A more playful approach is the foundation of heterotopian cyber-communities⁵⁹. The practise of asylum or sanctuary might also be considered heterotopian. Such attempts at spatial practise enable navigation through a polytopian and multidimensional world by better comprehension of our life’s map. Now it is possible to re-frame “places” and re-gain particularities as “space for action”, the latter proposal

⁵¹ W. Scheppe, *Migropolis*, “The Person, Legitimacy and Mobility”, p. 126-173.

⁵² Z. Baumann, *Liquid Modernity*, on time and space in liquid modernity, p. 91-129, esp. p.104-109.

⁵³ P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, p. 194-195.

⁵⁴ M. Certeau, *Practise*, p. 212-214.

⁵⁵ This is the title of an Interview with Seyla Benhabib in http://en.qantara.de/wcsite.php?wc_c=9613 viewed November 5th 2012.

⁵⁶ O. O’Donovan, “Loss of space”, p. 320.

⁵⁷ M. Certeau, *Practise*, headline of the 3rd part, p. 91.

⁵⁸ “Stimme der Sans-papier”, Basel - Die Zeitung der Anlaufstelle für Sans-papiers und der Union der Arbeiterinnen ohne geregelten Aufenthalt, (15th of March 2010).

⁵⁹ Fred Truniger, Sabine Wolf, “Heterotopien”, in:

http://wiki.arch.ethz.ch/twiki/pub/Control/DiplWahlws0506/14_zuri.pdf viewed November 5th 2012.

meeting O'Donovan's want for particularity. A political spatial practise pays attention to people no matter where and who they are and leads beyond passive membership towards action.

Membership actually is a passive category because to belong naturally to a nation or an ethnicity, to a given framework is not due to active choice. The Kantian/Arendt idea of "membership in a community" however exceeds territorialized contexts by a moment of activity which makes aware of other people and instigates to judge.⁶⁰ Again a twofold heuristic structure is detectable: active membership makes us aware of given context but it might also turn us against law and the contexts we are born in and we belong to.⁶¹ Active membership as sense of community facilitates a delegalised responsibility⁶² which acknowledges the space it belongs to by deliberately transgressing it. This should have happened in the case of Eichmann and in fact took place when Jewish resistance fighters entered the war not having a national affiliation⁶³.

Such action replaces natural given and passive memberships by active choices and enables us to live and act in hetero- or polytopian worlds⁶⁴. The merit of heterotopian topography is awareness and the fact that it is able to do both: discern structures and orders and then move and navigate from "one place to another"⁶⁵.

Theological outlook: from topography to topology

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,..." Mt 28,19

"And Jesus said to him, «Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.»" Mt 8,20

Bible:

The heterotopian map is not strange to belief⁶⁶ and topographic heuristics are at the core of theology with the Old Testament being "full of the sense of place"⁶⁷. Concerning Israel or the Temple it actually seems that universal God went territorial and particular. Furthermore biblical topography constantly reaches out for "other spaces" like paradise, a thorn bush where Jahwe reveals himself, altars like Beth-el and of course the Temple. These stories bear the signatures of authors knowing what it means to be displaced. The New Testament is not different: Christ is born among shepherds on a heterotopian field – outside of town. Christ himself is a truly heterotopian "temple" which is not built from stone. Golgotha is the heterotopian place of trial where a death sentence becomes the fountain of mercy and life. The grave becomes the origin of life. These spaces are not only locations, they are like interfaces of Man's and God's history, parts of a cascade of spaces, platforms for faith⁶⁸ and referents.

⁶⁰ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Chicago 1989, especially the 12 session, p. 68-72, especially p. 71.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

⁶² Annabel Herzog, "Hannah Arendt's Concept of Responsibility", in *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 10 Sussex (2004), <<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/cspt/documents/10-3.pdf>>, p. 39, viewed October 25th, 2012.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 49. Jewish resistance fighters in WWII did not primarily belong to a certain nation but considered themselves Jewish – thus changing and transcending the meaning of membership and legality in nations.

⁶⁴ M. Certeau, *Practise*, p. 237.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*. This happens not only by acting but also by reflective action like creating narrations, p. 220.

⁶⁶ Understanding Christian life as pilgrimage: Hans G. Ulrich, "Wie Geschöpfe leben – Konturen evangelischer Ethik", in: *Ethics in Theological Discourse*, Münster 2005, p. 44-50. About a parochial existence with traces of heterotopia: G. Agamben, *Kirche und Reich*, Berlin 2012; P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 195 on Pilgrimage, *ibidem*, vol. 2, p. 69.

⁶⁷ O. O'Donovan, "Loss of space", p. 307, J. Lockwood O'Donovan, *Nation*, p. 284, about the importance of Israel as "role model" for politics.

⁶⁸ I refer to B. Latour, *Entering risky territory*, p. 581-589.

They are understandable not as isolated sites but as a part within the “extension” of God’s story with man. In this understanding biblical topography is not mimetic cartography but made for navigational use which turns topography into topology. And the Bible is an important travel story for humanity.⁶⁹

Time and space. tillich

Tillich shows that theology always has been concerned with time and space and understood faith as “pilgrimage” (*Peregrinatio*). The Church tried to conquer the world and understood these efforts as a third fulfilling stage of history leading to God’s Kingdom.⁷⁰ Time (history⁷¹) and space are mutually dependent and there is an interesting interdependence of fulfilment and Heterochronias which are “other times in other spaces”, time accumulated or fleeing.⁷² This idea is not at all strange to biblical testimony: “But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2. Peter 3,8). This kind of biblical heterochronia is used by Tillich in order to deconstruct theological historiography. Tillich further uses the term utopian⁷³ to deconstruct any notions that history can fulfil itself. It is utopian to think that somewhere in this world and in history could be a place of arrival because time and space are not available to man. It is God’s heterochronic time which encourages hope. Heterotopia / Heterochronia are challenging a distinction between what is important or not in faith (3. Mose 10,10 / 2. Sam 14,17 / 1. Cor 12,10 / Hebr. 5,14)

Heterotopia enables a deeper understanding of space: “Spaces are qualitative, lying within the frame of physical space but incapable of being measured by it.”⁷⁴ The specific quality of Tillich’s spatiality is that it opens for the experience that our subjectivity is confined by other people and powers which are controlling us. We are finite to the extent of non-being. “But, to be spatial also means to be subject to nonbeing.”⁷⁵ The security of having space always is accompanied by accepting insecurity and confinement. Such a confinement does not lead into emptiness but is a threshold we have to cross to realize the disposition of God’s “oikonomia” which creates “sanctuaries” as generic “other places”. “We are in a holy place when we are in the most secular place...”⁷⁶ This heterotopia frees us from the confinement of flesh; it does not aim at universality. But it is open for future exploration and for the advent of God’s kingdom so that hopes and dreams will not “dry up”.⁷⁷

Conclusion

Heterotopian heuristics enable deterritorialized thinking and are charged with awareness that space is not at our disposal. They encourage us to go to “other spaces” where “other people”

⁶⁹ “Narration created humanity” – Pierre Janet quoted by M. Certeau, *Practise*, in his chapter on “spatial stories” p. 115-130.

⁷⁰ P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, Chicago 1963, p. 344-350.

⁷¹ Dealing with a Foucaultian concept like heterotopia the term “history” seems not very appropriate. Nevertheless Tillich’s understanding of history is close to Foucault’s because he is well aware of the limitation of historiography explaining or fulfilling itself. P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, p. 318.

⁷² M. Foucault, “Of other spaces”, p. 25.

⁷³ Tillich considers as utopian: fulfilment of history in itself. P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 88, p. 268, judging changes in history as changes in Man’s fate. P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 30, p. 74, utopian is the neglect of the correlation between the world and God’s history. Utopian is the notion of a place of arrival. P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, p. 354 where time fulfils...

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 318.

⁷⁵ *Idem*, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 194-195: ... or vanishing or being swept away like Foucault’s “face in the sand”. Spatiality always includes the danger of non-being.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 278, God is used as a “critical dispositive...” *Idem*, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 68-69.

⁷⁷ M. Foucault, “Of other spaces”, p. 25.

live and to check out possibilities of their inclusion. Heterotopia applied leads towards attempts at regaining out-of-society spaces without levelling complexity and contingency of space. This method is about awareness, empathy and resistance. It focuses on personal and situational responsibility more than on theoretical frameworks. It will not support the idea that there are borders which should or can be defended. Thresholds are challenges for reflection, action and communication.

Heterotopian heuristics instigate reasoned spatial practise, awareness of contexts and spatial peculiarities which consequently further cautiousness and readiness for explorations. In politics such a practise will rarely be found with governmentality. But there are possible connections which should be encouraged. In the end heterotopia should not only provide interesting heuristics but enable society to become aware of spaces besides itself and of those who are excluded. B. Latour concludes: "A whole set of new features, such as anticipation, participation, reflexivity, and feedbacks, might now be included in the navigational definition of maps. We are aware that this new way of looking at risk geography might have interesting political consequences as well."⁷⁸

Teaching ethics I am sometimes tired of the dilemma between particularity and universality, descriptive or normative ethics, utilitarianism and deontology. Heterotopia makes aware of in-between, out-of-space positions and is offering a third complementary way for ethical reflection.

⁷⁸ B. Latour, *Entering a risky territory*, p. 596.