

Creation Stories For Philologists

The Consolation of Philology

Genesis is in doubt. The more likely account is that the world was assembled, *logos* and all, by a convocation of abysmal philologists. These philologists are said to have proceeded on the assumption that there was a prior text—although there was never any agreement upon what exactly that text might have been. Thus, it comes as no surprise that when the world finally emerged, it did so as a vanishingly small fraction of its own apparatus.

Consequently, even to the extent that the world has proved functional—or plausible—traces of the initial disagreement persist as accident, disintegration, and scribal error, and the making of the world was also the invention of discord, ambivalence, oblivion, regress, slander, deceit, and misreading. But from the perspective of these demiurges, who were, after all, content to invent the devil with the word, the antitheses were no doubt acceptable, because the world, so constructed, necessitated additional philology.

Der Geist und die Freigeister

In the beginning there was a darkness that was at once an unending abyss and a limitless sea. This state was without form or substance, unless we should attribute substance to the water of that watery nothingness. It was agreed that there was neither creation, time nor history until the primordial heron flew in and called out the word of destiny. Out of that cosmogonic utterance, came light, the emergence of land and the development of creation as it is now known.

What the bird was, or where it was from, no one ever sought to debate. Since these matters found expression as analogs to the incomprehensible—admittedly, this is one of the more obscure points in the doctrine—they would be violated utterly by even the most tentative approach of theology or analysis. Like the world itself, speculation began with the utterance.

No one knew for certain what the word was, but doubtless it was wonderful and immense. Many supposed it to be of a profundity that surpassed mortal comprehension and might only be understood by the king who was divine. A few free thinkers supposed that the word was unknown even to the king, since the king, unlike the heron, was unknown to the abyss. The word, they maintained, was shrouded in the uncertainty that inevitably clouds all interaction between Nothing and the Unknowable. The more orthodox members of the congregation would reply that the only real inevitabilities in such matters were the free thinkers themselves.