

Prophetic artist

No fear of freedom in art. It depends on its effect.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

John 9,33

"When one believes that the world which can be known intellectually is not everything, and that that which lies behind it is in not an abyss, not hell, but rather has quality – that is actually spirituality," answered the Austrian director Götz Spielmann to the question of whether a trace of his spirituality was visible in his new film, "Revenge". The prize winning drama that develops between the red light district and the seemingly intact world of the Wood Quarter gets its almost hauntingly absorbing effect through the eye of the camera which does not avoid the hardness of everyday life, but presents this without emotional film music, quasi succinctly.

There is a plot in the foreground – Alex's bank robbery in the wood quarter, which should liberate him and Tamara his Ukrainian lover from forced prostitution. Tamara is shot by the police officer Robert and finally a relationship drama develops between Alex and Robert's wife Susanne. This is not a goal in itself, but rather quasi an excuse to represent the life diversions and relationships which are subliminally indicated in scenes of silence: How Susanne tries to save her family through this affair with Alex, and how he, as a ragged grandson in the city, defends the reputation of his grandfather. Not only the directing reveals a view which approaches the world openly, also the actors act with an authenticity that would not have been possible without personal and serious exploration of the social reality represented there.

Is "Revenge" a Christian film? Spielmann would certainly deny that. Even less is it an unchristian film. It grasps problems which are so everyday, that they would rather not be seen in this clarity. Such art has something prophetic. It is moved by the same spiritual dynamic as the Old Testament prophets were. Precisely they were the strongest protagonists of social criticism in history. In comparison, no other work from ancient literature unrelentingly reveals social ill as does the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

As the longest scripture of the Bible, it consists mostly of criticism and does not stop before Kings or even God. But such a critical text would not be read over two and a half thousand years if there were not a positive power in it. Without the "burning fire" in his heart (Jer 20.9), without a spiritual power which says yes to life and engages itself for the inner quality of the relationship, Jeremiah would not have been able to achieve anything. "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." (John 9,33)

Whoever allows him or herself to be led by this spiritual power, does not have to fear approaching reality, also not in its hardness. Who is a prophetic artist for you? Who helps you to look your reality in the eye without palliation and nonetheless fearlessly?