

Review of the Dissertation of

**Anna Světlíková**

on

**„Typology as Rhetoric: Reading Jonathan Edwards”**

Charles University, Prague  
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Anna Světlíková makes a puzzling, if not cryptic, remark in the last paragraph of the Acknowledgements, namely that over the years she came to think of dissertation writing as a search: „I do not think I have found some particular *thing*, indeed if there is something to be found it might not be a thing at all. This work, then, is not about what I have found; rather, it is a record of a part of that search.” This is indeed modest and fair enough. However, if she used the metaphor of search, we are inclined to ask *what* exactly she was searching for and what direction(s) she has taken for accomplishing that search?

Having read the dissertation „Typology as Rhetoric: Reading Jonathan Edwards” we may, perhaps, answer our own question. Anna Světlíková, it appears to us, was searching to rescue / reconcile a pre-/early modern theological rhetorics by / with postmodern literary theories. If so, I can sympathize with the author as twenty years ago I was concerned with a similar project by trying to relate this both traditional and subversive biblical rhetorics to, among others, Paul Ricoeur’s idea of appropriation. Světlíková, however, considers typology now in the light of J. L. Austin’s speech-act theory and Derrida’s and Hillis Miller’s criticism of Austin’s theory and she invites Paul de Man’s interpretation of allegory in discussing Edwards’ idea of types. As she writes: „the recognition in deconstructive rhetorical criticism that ‘literature’ brings out more clearly what is part of language, namely its rhetorical a tropological aspect..” (Thesis, p.4)

Anna Světlíková’s thesis is, following Northrop Frye, is that biblical typology is ultimately a form of rhetorics. Her approach to Jonathan Edwards’ typology from the perspective of rhetorics „proceeds from the recognition of the fundamentally tropological nature of all literature” (p.32). To be more exact, she claims that her work „attempts to show how the tropological, parabolic and performative dimensions of language are at work in Edwards’ texts” (p.36). One of the strength of Světlíková’s thesis is the emphasis on the performative nature of typology.

The structure of Světlíková’s thesis is reader-friendly: she summarizes the content of the chapters both at the beginning (pp.36-38) and at the end (pp.205-219). However, she could have communicated more information within the Content (p.3). The seven chapters evoke even a sense of completeness, at least for biblical-minded readers. Frankly, Chapter Two is informative only to readers ignorant of the idea of biblical typology and Chapter Three for readers unfamiliar with Edwards’ use of it. To a certain extent this is valid also for her discussion of emblem-literature in Chapter Four. However, this recapitulation of knowledge is justified by not only in view of the future publication of the thesis in a monograph-format (which I strongly support) but also because some new perspective is always shed on this traditions in the light of the ideas of a recent theorists. I was happy, for example, to hear about the work of the Czech biblical scholar Jan Heller. An overall critique of mine is that the quotations seem to be disproportionately long throughout the thesis.

The greatest merit of the dissertation is that the author has chosen to discuss a frequently debated, dubious topic but she has approached it in a highly original way. As there are not orthodoxies or heterodoxies in this rather uncultivated field her initiating and engaging in dialogues between Yale 1 (pre/early modern theological hermeneutics) and Yale 2 (postmodern, deconstructive literary criticism) is not only fruitful but fascinating.

Now, the task of the reviewer, I understand, is to raise questions the candidate should answer during the public debate. These are the questions I wish to address her:

- 1) You suggests that typology has to do with the performative nature of language. Can we also say that typology is kind of „grammar” of language?
- 2) Is what you say of speech-act-theory (Austin), of deconstruction (Derrida, Miller, de Man etc) valied for typology in general or only to Edwards’ typology?
- 3) What has reader-response theory to do with typology? Can we say that it is ultimately reading that construes all, including typological, meaning?
- 4) How would you comment on Gadamer’s rehabilitation allegory in *Truth and Method* and its relevance for Edwards’ typology ?
- 5) You quote Frye that typology is a figure „moving in time”. Would you agree that this temporal aspect of typology is closer to the biblical and reformation principle of *analogia fidei* and Edwards’ natural typology to the medieval tradition of *analogia entis*? (*A History of the Work of Redemption* being an exception?)
- 6) Could you clarify the difference between metaphor and type ? On p. 77 you seem to be critical with calling metaphorical identifications with politicians, typological. If so, why? In a metaphor, for example, „You are a rose” the tenor (You) is identified with the vehicle (rose). However, is the figuration in the examples „You are Electra/Hamlet/Judas/Peter/Churchill etc.” is just metaphorical, or, typological? Could you give your reasons?
- 7) Emblems and types have indeed much in common as both have to do with some imprint or a mould. However, when we are to relate them, as you do, to the genre of the parable on the basis of Miller (pp. 198-199) should we not emphaize that type, because of its real, or, supposed temporality, and its association with biblical salvation history (which you perhaps do not emphasize enough, again, *A History of the Work of Redemption* excepted), is much closer to parable? For example 1 Cor 10 is both type and parable, thus type is parabolic but this cannot be said of the emblem for which time and history are redundant. Do you agree?

Now seven questions, in the light of the argument above, should suffice and my only duty is to congratulate the author and it is my pleasure to declare that *I recommend the work for defense.*

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