Being thought from beyond our borders: Towards ethical global citizenship

Author:
Johann-Albrecht Meylahn[1]

Affiliation:
[1]Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Correspondence to:
Johann-Albrecht Meylahn

e-mail:
jmeylahn@lantic.net

Postal address:
P O Box 14885, Lyttelton 0140, South Africa

Keywords:
identity; Other; deconstruction; postmodernism; subjectivity

Dates:
Received: 12 Aug. 2008
Accepted: 20 Oct. 2008
Published: 25 Sept. 2009

How to cite this article:
Meylahn, J.-A., 2009, 'Being thought from beyond our borders: Towards ethical global citizenship', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 30(2), Art. #56, 6 pages. DOI: 10.4102/ve.v30i2.56

This article is available at:
http://www.ve.org.za

ABSTRACT

This article is a response to the challenge of global citizenship in an age of global crisis. Citizenship has to do with where one feels 'at home', namely the space that gifts identity and life. What kind of narrative is necessary to transform global space into a home from where we can go beyond our borders to embrace the other in multidisciplinary research or interfaith praxis? The different models for multidisciplinary research[1] are made possible by the idea that research seeks that which is beyond its borders. This search could be a common space where the different traditions can accommodate one another, but it is not a home. The dominant discourse of this common space is to seek commonality and identities across borders while being aware of but ignoring differences – identity at the expense of differences. A home founded on identity at the expense of difference will always exclude. Theology can either be interpreted as thinking beyond the borders toward the Divine, or the Divine thinking us. The Exodus, the Incarnation and the Cross are all narratives of the Other crossing borders, liberating from boundaries, deconstructing the laws and norms that exclude. The religious traditions of these sacred narratives have something to offer, namely: to be thought by the Other, to receive life and (alien) identity from the Other, the gift of a home which is continuously deconstructed by the home still to come, therefore always open for the Other.

INTRODUCTION

To think beyond borders is not just a challenge or an invitation of our time, but it is a given, as different borders are crumbling in the wake of the forces of this epoch, namely the forces of global capitalism and techno-science. Global capitalism, along with multinational corporations and international finance markets, force humanity to think without national/political borders, as never before in history has the globe been so interconnected economically, environmentally and socially.

Derrida (2002:371–386) argues that there are positive and negative forms of globalisation. He focuses specifically on the numerous advances that techno-science has made. These advances raise numerous questions as they challenge traditional borders, for example the border between public and private space. However, globalisation also creates new borders and boundaries with certain homogenising tendencies. A certain culture is necessary for specific economic and political interests; for example, global capitalism thrives on a culture of materialism and consumerism (Jankowitsch & Sauvant 1978:226), which excludes other ideologies, cultural values and people.

I would like to interpret the theme 'Thinking beyond borders'[2] as thinking the other, those excluded by the new borders. To think beyond borders is to think the other, the foreigner, the one who is different from the same. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida (2000:3) reflects on Plato's dialogues, in which the foreigner always raises the question. It is from this position of beyond the borders of the same that the question arises and from where thinking starts. I believe that a conference with the theme 'Thinking beyond borders' is borne out o this question of the foreigner – in both senses of the word 'of'. Firstly, the question of the foreigner is a question that concerns the foreigner (other) as a theme or a problematic, for example: Who is the foreigner and how does one define foreigners? Secondly, the question of the foreigner is the question posed by the foreigner. My interpretation of the theme incorporates both these senses of the question of the foreigner.

In this article, I would like to respond to the theme 'Thinking beyond borders' by reflecting on the possibility of global citizenship that has the ethical capability to respond to some of the above challenges, but also a citizenship that resists homogenising tendencies by respecting alterity. I believe what is needed to create such a responsible global citizenship is a narrative that will help us to transform global space into a home from where we can go beyond our borders to embrace the other in multidisciplinary research and interfaith praxis. For this purpose, I have chosen one specific narrative, which is in itself a global narrative because it goes beyond the borders of one religious community, as it is shared by three of the world's religions, but more importantly, it is an example of how narratives can create spaces for an ethos of hospitality.

This narrative is a narrative about the origin, the beginning or the *archē* (Genesis) of global space, namely the creation narrative, which culminates in the creation of the first city (the *archē-polis*) in the story of Cain and Abel (Gn 4). It is a text of the beginning in the sense that it tells a story of the beginning, but it is also a text of the *archē*, that which institutes or calls into being. It is the story of the *archē* of our world. Derrida argues that the origin of our world is the face of the other: '…the face [cry/question of the other] is not of this world. It is the origin of the world' (Derrida 1978:128). This first human space (city) was constructed by one who is eternally marked by the cry

1.Based on critical realism, root metaphors, experiential adequacy, epistemological adequacy and approximate truths.

2.This article is a re-worked paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Theological Society, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, 2–4 June 2008, with the theme 'Thinking beyond borders'.

of the other and who builds a city in response to that cry. This story tells of the origin of the first space that is constructed by humans – the *polis*.[3] My approach to this narrative will be to take the narrative absolutely seriously and not disappear behind the narrative to a historical critical exegesis of this text. Therefore I will focus on what the text 'gives to thinking' as Levinas (1976) describes the reflective philosophical approach to Scriptures. From this Talmudic approach to Scripture, and seeing that this is a Talmudic text, we can learn to approach the text as:

> *4[e]vidence and source of a specific way of thinking which is taken completely seriously only by pursuing one's own thinking through and beyond. When one takes the Bible itself as one's point of departure for further reflection and penetration, one comes not so much to one or another vision as to an irreducible form of thinking with its own originality.*
>
> (Burggraeve 2000:168)

In this article I will seek to penetrate this narrative to discover what this text gives to thinking by bringing this narrative into dialogue with the questions and experiences of our time in the context of the philosophical thinking of Derrida.

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WERE TWO: ONE AND AN *OTHER* – WHO WERE BR*OTHERS*

> *[1]Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man." [2]Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.*
>
> (NIV Gn 4:1–2)

Adam and Eve had two children, Cain and Abel. Cain sounds like the Hebrew for 'brought forth' or 'acquired', which means, to come into possession. Cain is the firstborn, the one brought forth, the one who came into possession or into presence. Abel, whose name means 'breath' or 'vanity' (Kidner 1971:74), is the second born. He is an afterthought, the shadow of his twin brother Cain,[4] only the breath after the one brought forth. According to Bataille, '[s]ilence is a word which is not a word, and breath an object which is not an object' (Derrida 1978:167). As the second born, Abel is not important within hierarchical society. He is meaningless in comparison to the firstborn, who has the favour of the family and will inherit the family wealth. The afterthought is but a breath, a non-object, not present.

These two brothers, who share the same blood, family and home (*oikos*), are very different as the one kept flocks and the *other* worked the soil. There is a difference between them, an otherness which cannot be included into the same, and yet there is familial similarity – they are brothers. That which identifies them as br*others* and separates them as different is the *br*eath of the *other*.

Abel is both other and br*other*, he is the breath, the *other*, the other of his brother, the shadow of his br*other*, the spectral non-presence that haunts presence. It is only in this simultaneous presence of the other as both brother *and* other that Cain's identity is established. '[T]he other appears as such only in its relationship to the same' (Derrida 1978:161). Cain can only be if there is his shadow, that which is not, the breath. Cain, as the one brought forth, can only be present if there is the one who is not brought forth. Cain's identity as firstborn can only be if there is a second born. Identity is dependent on the other who is both excluded and included in the same (brother), but always with a spectral difference that haunts the same (the breath), the other without which there cannot be the same. Identities are constructed in the space between sameness and otherness.

3.It is a text that tells the story of the first city: 'Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch' (New International Version, Gn: 417).

4.The Adam Clark Commentary argues that it is most probable that Cain and Abel are twins because there is no reference again to conception, only that Abel was born later.

THE UNAVOIDABLE MURDER (A SIN WE CANNOT MASTER): TO THINK THE OTHER BY INCLUDING AND LIMITING HIS/HER OTHERNESS

> *[3]In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. [4]But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, [5]but on Cain and is offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. [6]Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? [7]If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master it." [8]Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.*
>
> (NIV Gn 4:3–8)

There is violence in every *archē*. There is violence in the establishment of identity, namely the violence of excluding the other. Cain had to kill Abel. Sin was crouching at his door; it desired to have Cain and Cain was not able to master it. Was Cain's murderous act the first violence in this story, or was there a prior spectral violence, namely the haunting of Cain, as firstborn, by the breath, the other, seeking recognition, favour and presence? In the story Abel's offering received favour while Cain's offering did not receive favour, thus questioning Cain's right as firstborn, questioning his being brought forth and his presence, by the breath, the other whose sacrifice found favour.

Abel, the breath, the other, asks the question by putting Cain's being-brought-forth in question. It is the foreigner, the one who is other, who puts the same in question (Derrida 2000:3). Abel is only the breath, a shadow of the one who is present, but this shadow, this non-present asks the question and puts that which is – the present – in question. This links our narrative to another narrative, Plato's *Sophist*, thus crossing another border from the faiths of the book (Jerusalem) to the Greeks (Athens).

In the *Sophist*, the foreigner (*xenos*) puts forward the question and thereby puts in question the *logos* of the father Parmenides. 'The Foreigner shakes up the threatening dogmatism of the paternal logos: the being that is, and the non-being that is not. As though the Foreigner had to begin by contesting the authority of the chief, the father, the master of the family, the "master of the house"…' (Derrida 2000:5). This is the inherent danger of opening the same (offering hospitality) to that which is other (the foreigner), as the other will inevitably question the same. The Foreigner in the Sophist pleads '… not to think of me as a patricide'. How is it possible for a foreigner to be the murderer of the father? Does the murderer not have to be a child of the father to be accused of patricide? Derrida's answer to this question is that there is war internal to the paternal logos (Derrida 2000:7). 'In truth, with the question he is getting ready to put, on the being of non-being, the foreigner fears that he will be treated as mad…a son-foreigner-madman' (Derrida 2000:9). In the very first home, the non-being's sacrifice is accepted, thereby questioning the being of the firstborn. Abel as non-being challenges the being of Cain. Abel is both brother and other (brother-foreigner). Abel's non-violent violence is thus the originary violence, a spectral violence of the other putting the brother in question (a form of parricide). The first question, the first 'violence', is to be in-question by being thought from the point of view of the other. Abel's sacrifice finds favour; the other, the non-being, is welcomed and thereby the one brought forth; the firstborn is questioned. Was it possible for Cain to resist the originary non-violent violence that threatened to destroy him? Could Cain not have offered hospitality to this non-being, this shadow, which was other without risking his own destruction as firstborn, as same?

Cain's response is the contra-violence of excluding the other that inaugurates identity and history. 'Without intermediary and without communion, neither mediate nor immediate, such is the truth of our relation to the other, the truth to which the

traditional logos is forever inhospitable' (Derrida 1978:112). Cain could not have done otherwise – he could not have resisted and mastered the sin that was at his door. One could argue that it is a necessary sin (violence) responding to a potential (spectral) destructive non-violent violence that occurred prior to this murder. The identity of Cain is established through the violence of this murder and it marks him, identifies him for life. His identity is established there where he limits the power of the other, where he limits his being-in-question by the question the other is raising.

Identity needs a safe space where the power of the other who threatens to destroy it is limited. Home[5] is such a safe space as a home is established through boundaries that clearly define what is in (part of the same) and what is out (other). For a home to be a home that gifts identity (for example as firstborn), it also needs to be hospitable towards the other (recognise and define the other as second born). 'The nomad of home has to be hospitable in order to be *ipse*, itself at home, habitable at-home in the relation of the self to itself' (Derrida 2000:61). It is the dual movement of being at home (sameness) and being hospitable to others in which identity as *ipse* is established. Yet hospitality must be limited or the other will destroy the home. We know that boundaries, borders and limits are constitutive of life and of being and thus boundaries are necessary in order to be, to understand and to find meaning. Without boundaries, identity and understanding are impossible. There have to be limits (boundaries) to the home for the self to be itself, at home in itself. For the home to be able to *gift* identity, it needs to be open and closed at the same time. The home welcomes the second born, but limits the second born's power to challenge the firstborn. Identity as *ipse* is established through this *aporia* – the impossible possibility of hospitality.

The question of hospitality and therefore the question of identity is the question of the other in both senses as referred to previously.

Firstly, the question of the other is a question of definition where the other is recognised (defined) as someone who is either welcome or not. Cain recognised the other as his brother and thus welcomed him. It is a question of inclusion and exclusion and thus a question of the borders of the home. Most homes offer hospitality to those who are defined as brother, sister, family or friend, the other who is the same.

It is in the presence of the other who is not my brother that identity is established not as inclusion within the same, but as a limitation to responsibility and hospitality.

> *Through the fact that the other [l'autre] is also a third part [tiers], in relation to an other who is also his neighbour (in society, one is never two but at least three), through the fact that I find myself before the neighbour and the third party, I must compare; I must weigh and evaluate.*
>
> (Levinas 2000:182–183)

In the presence of the third, I need to make decisions about the hospitality of the home and thus define my home, my identity. 'What is the limit of responsibility towards the other *other* (third) before I begin to lose my identity, my home' (Meylahn 2008:1)? As long as Abel as other was defined as the second born brother there was no problem regarding hospitality or identity, but the moment his sacrifice found favour the brother became an other who challenged (questioned) the identity of Cain as firstborn.

This leads us into the second sense of the question of the other, where the other poses the question and thus puts the same in question. As long as Abel was defined as second born brother there was peace; but Abel is more than this identification as he is also breath, shadow, that which cannot be defined within the borders of the same. The sameness of the home is threatened by the presence of the other *other* who cannot be included in the same. Cain's identity as firstborn was dependent on his br*other* as second born. Thus his identity as firstborn was dependent on welcoming and including his brother into the same as second born, but Abel was both brother (same) and breath, the other *other*, and as such cannot be included in the same because he remains other (he is not Cain) – an infinite Otherness that refuses to be included in the same. Abel was no longer just brother; he was infinite Other, who questioned the firstborn and therefore had to be limited to prevent the destruction of the identity of the firstborn, the one present.

Identity is established via the question of the other in both these senses, and in both senses there is violence – either the violence of inclusion into the same, thereby ignoring difference, or the violence of exclusion, thereby limiting difference. The other must not be allowed to put in question the borders of my home or identity, because that would destroy the home and therefore would constitute an unavoidable violence. It is a sin we cannot master. It is on this basis of including and limiting otherness that identities are established – not only of individuals, but also of homes, families, cities and societies. Thus it is the basis of the establishment of citizenship, which is the identity of the people of the *polis*.

TEXT AND CONTEXT

I would now like to cross another border: from the text to the con*text*, or from the abstract to the practical.

The theme of the conference at which this article was originally presented called us to think beyond borders, and as I have stated previously, in a global world we are forced to think without borders. I began this article with a description of the demise of various borders within the postmodern global village. How does one think, think oneself or think citizenship, without borders? This is one of the challenges of our time.

To live without borders is to live exposed. Robertson describes this global condition as nostalgia – a longing for a lost home (Robertson 1992:146). Nostalgia as a condition can also be described as homelessness or homesickness (Robertson 1992:155). There is a dominant feeling of homelessness because of a loss of boundaries through the process of relativisation, as the home is continuously relativised by the interruption of the other. Walsh describes the actual physical homelessness of those living in a shelter in Toronto with the following words: 'They have no stabilizing walls against which they can lean for the identity and security so critical for personal and family dignity' (Walsh 2002:1). These same words could describe a general feeling of our time.

In such a context where the sameness of the home is threatened on so many levels by the other, it seems impossible not to react as Cain did, by protecting the home from otherness, by excluding and strengthening our borders. This reaction finds expression in social phenomena such as xenophobia, racial tension, religious fundamentalism and the amount of money spent on private and national security. The evil that was knocking on Cain's door was too powerful and he was unable to master it. The murder of the brother had to be for the survival of the firstborn. Cain had to protect himself against that which is other. Is this violence, this murder, then not justified? The need for borders, the limitation of the being-in-question by the other, is so powerful that it seems justified.

However, it cannot be justified, because it is justified only by amnesia, the forgetting that the home/identity is established as much through the closure within sameness as the openness to otherness.

> *Asymmetry, non-light, and commandment then would be violence and injustice themselves – and indeed, so they are commonly understood – if they established relations between finite beings, or if the other was but a negative determination of the (finite or*

5.In this article I use the word 'home' in a broader sense, which includes home, family, community, society, *polis*, citizenship and self, as an identity who is at home within him/herself.

infinite) same. But we have seen that this is not the case. Infinity (as infinitely other) cannot be violent as is totality.

(Derrida 1978:133)

The violence toward the other is not justified because it is only in relation to the infinite Other that identity can be established. The other is not a threat to identity; rather the otherness of the other gifts space for identity. Cain becomes Cain (the master of the *oikos* – the home of his identity) through the grace of Abel – who is simultaneously his other and his br*other*. Derrida writes in *Of Hospitality*:

The guest (hôte) *becomes the host* (hôte) *of the host* (hôte). *These substitutions make everyone into everyone else's hostage. Such are the laws of hospitality. Now the impossibility of that "at the same time" is at the same time what happens. … One takes without taking. The guest takes and receives, but without taking. … We thus enter from the inside: the master of the house is at home, but nonetheless he comes to enter his home through the guest – who comes from outside. … The master thus enters from the inside as if he came from the outside. He enters his home thanks to the visitor, by the grace of the visitor.*

(Derrida 2000:125)

Before I can be an 'I' who thinks the other I am already a me-in-question by the thinking of the Other.

The subject – the famous subject resting upon itself – is unseated by the other [autrui], *by a wordless exigency or accusation, and one to which I cannot respond with words, but for which I cannot deny my responsibility. The position of the subject is already his deposition. To be me (and not I* [Moi]*) is not perseverance in one's being, but the substitution of the hostage expiating to the limit for the persecution it suffered.*

(Levinas 2000:181)

The Other cannot be silenced by murder – his/her blood will cry out from the ground that absorbed it.

THE IMPOSSIBLE MURDER: THE CRY OF THE OTHER ECHOED IN THE DIVINE QUESTION

[9]Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know", he replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" [10]The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. [12]When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth". [13]Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. [14]Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me". [15]But the Lord said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over". Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.

(NIV Gn 4:9-15)

Although Abel the breath, the afterthought, is murdered, the Other cannot be silenced as this murdered spectrality still haunts Cain as the cry of the other from the ground echoes in the Divine question, which cannot be silenced. The other cannot be murdered as he/she cannot be included in the same and so the murdered afterthought, the non-present continues to cry out to God and in God and so originally and eschatologically questions Cain, the founder of the first city.

This question is a Divine interruption or a Divine non-violent violence that opens what is by transcending presence in that it inquires about the one who is not present: 'Where is your br*other* Abel?' It is a question concerning the breath, the infinite Other. A question that cannot be answered by either a simple negative (he is not) or a positive (he is included in the same) thus Cain answers by trying to avoid taking responsibility for the other. 'I don't know,' he replied. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' However, this question cannot be avoided because the blood of the other cries out from the very ground. The blood of the murder is absorbed into the ground (the foundation) and this very ground will curse and drive Cain out so that Cain will no longer have a home, doomed to be a restless, homeless wanderer. The very ground that has absorbed the blood of the other has become a non-ground, or maybe a holy ground. It has become a non-foundation that brings with it a restlessness, a woundedness and an open-endedness as the Divine question is eternally asked, never to be forgotten.

The foundation, *logos*, language of the same, identity, home, city – all those things that seem so solid and foundational because the other has been limited – are tainted because of the blood of the other who is murdered either by inclusion or by the attempt at exclusion. This tainted ground reveals that the surface of all grounds (foundations) are cracked, opening their mouths, to receive the other's blood, and that which appeared so solid is in fact its rigidity toward the other.[6]

The cry of the other cannot and will not be silenced because it is taken up in the question of the infinite Other, which taints and cries out from all grounds and cannot be avoided. The other as infinite Other is inescapable. 'A relationship that obsesses, one that is an obsession, for the other besieges me, to the point where he puts in question my for-me, my in-itself – to the point where he makes me a hostage' (Levinas 2000:138). The other is the only being we want to kill, need to kill (a sin that we cannot master), but at the same time the Other is impossible to kill, for you cannot kill a shadow or a breath as you cannot destroy a non-being.

The Other is the only being who I may wish to kill, but the only one, also, who orders that "thou shall commit no murders," and thus absolutely limits my powers. Not by opposing me with another force in the world, but by speaking to me, and by looking at me from an other origin of the world, from that which no finite power can restrict: the strange, unthinkable notion of unreal resistance.

(Derrida 1978:130)

This Other limits my power to kill it or to include it in the same, because even if I kill my brother, his shadow, breath, the infinite Other, still calls out from the ground which absorbed the blood and is thus echoed in the Divine question. This question comes to me from another origin of the world, an *archē* prior to my response, and likewise eschatologically interrupts me, thus limiting my power.

It is in this infinite Other that the question of the Divine resounds, or in the Divine question that the infinite Other resounds.

The face is neither the face of God nor the figure of man: it is their resemblance. A resemblance which, however, we must think before, or without, the assistance of the Same.

(Derrida 1978:135)

This relation to the infinite Other is prior to any other relation and this relation haunts all other relations. It is an unavoidable ethical relation and as such it is a religious relation. "The ethical relation is a religious relation. Not a religion, but the religion, the religiosity of the religious".

(Derrida 1978:119)

Before Cain can go and build a city this infinite question holds him, places him in an inescapable responsibility towards the cry of the other. Derrida argues that this is

[n]ot a theoretical interrogation, however, but a total question, a distress and denuding, a supplication, a demanding prayer addressed to a freedom, that is not a commandment: The only possible ethical imperative, the only incarnated non-violence in that it is respect for the other.

(Derrida 1978:119)

6.'This unthinkable truth of living experiences, to which Levinas returns ceaselessly, cannot possibly be encompassed by philosophical speech without immediately revealing, by philosophy's own light, that philosophy's surface is severely cracked, and that what was taken for its solidity is its rigidity' (Derrida 1978:112).

This question one cannot escape. It is an ethical responsibility toward the other that is prior and posterior to any other responsibility or relation. It is a non-law Law prior to the laws that govern all thinking. 'Moreover, is this Ethics of Ethics beyond all laws? Is it not the Law of Laws?' (Derrida 1978:138). Cain stands homeless and denuded before this question, yet it is impossible to live naked, without a home. One cannot live in such an ethical relation to the religious. 'My punishment is more than I can bear,' is Cain's response to the persistence of the Divine question. It is unbearable to live without ground, without foundation, hanging above the abyss between being and non-being on a thin thread of responsibility toward the other as other, the infinite Other.

In response to this plea, God marks Cain with an eternal mark – as a trace of the question of the Other, but also to protect him from the other(s). It is a mark of grace as it creates a space within a groundless wandering to build a city.

THE GRACE TO BUILD A CITY ON TAINTED GROUND: TO THINK BEYOND BORDERS

> *16So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod,[7] east of Eden. 17Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.*
>
> (NIV Gn 4:16-17)

The Lord is gracious and allows Cain to leave the Divine presence with its unbearable denuding question. But the Divine leaves a trace on Cain, thus placing Cain's life and identity under the trace of the question (the mark), as a reminder but also as protection. This trace (mark) is both the reminder of the first question, but also the continuous eschatological interruption by the question (cry) of the Other and as such protects against another murder. As long as identities, cities are marked (wounded) by the trace of the question of the Other there can be no murder by including the other in the same or by trying to eliminate the other.

Cain leaves the presence of the Lord to live in the land of wandering (Nod), but with the mark of grace. He leaves the presence of the Lord, the unbearable groundless question, so he can build a city, but with him as protection and reminder goes a trace of the Lord – the mark.

It is time to cross a vitally important border from the world of our text to our postmodern world and how this text creates a space for thinking about epistemology, understanding and knowing – building cities of knowledge. Research reaches out toward that which is other *um es zu ergreifen oder es zu begreifen*, thus to capture the other in a *Begriff*, thereby including the other in the totality of the same. This certainly describes modern epistemology. Postmodern epistemology seeks to avoid these totalizing strategies of modernity, thereby respecting the alterity of the other without capturing the other in the same.

Is it possible to think the other without the murder (destruction/inclusion of the other into the same)? Is knowledge without the violence of *ergreifen*, *begreifen* and *Begriff* possible or is it too much to bear, as Cain pleads? The ground that has absorbed the blood of the other cries out and forces the murderer to be a restless (groundless) wanderer. How is it possible to think, to find meaning, to be and to establish a city without a ground (foundation), because from the ground comes the cry of the other echoed in the question of the infinite Other? How does Cain, the restless wanderer, build his city without any ground? Is the only ground that is left to him this tainted non-ground?

In this post-murder time, or postmodern time, is the only ground on which to build a home localised, historic, cultural-linguistic non-foundations (non-truths) relative to other localised, historic, cultural-linguistic non-foundations?

7.Nod means wandering.

No, the Lord was gracious, and Cain left the presence of the groundless question with only a mark, a trace of that infinite question, as reminder and as protection. All that Cain has is his marked self that speaks of hi[s]story, and by this grace he builds the first city.

I believe that Van Huyssteen's postfoundationalism echoes something of this grace and seeks a way beyond this impossibility of groundlessness (non-foundationalism) without resorting again to foundationalism. Postfoundationalism has incorporated different epistemic models. I will shortly reflect on two of them.

The first model is 'critical realism'. Critical realism is fully aware that the other cannot be included in the same. There is always a *différance*[8] (a shadow or a breath) and all 'totalities' are marked and wounded by this shadow, but the shadow does not deny the fact that there is an other and that the other can be recognised, although within a veil of shadow. Cain did build a city, so there are cities even if these cities are marked with the shadow. The problem is that the other can only be recognised, known, interpreted and understood from within the borders of the same, thus destroying the other, but the breath, the shadow, cannot be destroyed and so it marks, limits and defies the same by eternally deferring 'totality' as it questions (deconstructs) any attempt at totality in the present.

The language and the metaphors used to understand and interpret the other within the borders of the same are local and paradigm specific and because they are 'marked' they are not universal and complete, but wounded and open to the question of the other. Van Huyssteen (2005) argues that the different localised paradigm-specific languages (metaphors) are not completely different from each other because they use similar reasoning strategies. Thus the same has shifted, so that it is no longer the same content or the same reference, but the same reasoning strategies or shared rational resources. For example

> *[s]cience and theology have similar ways of reflecting and a similar understanding of what knowledge is, therefore they might not agree on the reference of their texts, but they certainly can make sense of each other's texts, because they are constructed on similar principles of how knowledge is acquired (epistemology).*
>
> (Meylahn 2006:987)

The same has shifted from the object of knowledge (the other who is never fully known) to the method of knowledge, but what is forgotten in Van Huyssteen's critical realism is that the same (same reasoning strategies) is still haunted by the mark of Cain, by a trace, by *différance*.

The second model is what Van Huyssteen calls 'root metaphors' or what Ricoeur calls 'itineraries of meaning'. There are different models of interpretation and each of these models in their own way probe the inner limits of texts[9] (Meylahn 2006:988). Texts, understanding, interpretation might be founded on wounded ground because from the ground comes the persistent cry of the Other, but they are not completely groundless. Cain still built his city although it was on tainted ground and therefore this tainted ground still guides our interpretations and constructions. 'As such reading and interpretation is in a sense rule-governed and is in fact guided by a productive imagination at work in the text [tainted ground] itself' (Van Huyssteen 1997:150).

The city that Cain built is built on ground and as such the city is not fictional (groundless) – but the ground is marked with the blood of the other, therefore the city is 'rooted' in tainted ground from which the cry of the Other is eternally heard. The city is

8.Derrida's concept of *différance* for me captures something of this mark of Cain, which eternally reminds us of the cry of the other, both the original (*archē*) difference between the same and the other and the infinite difference that is eternally deferred and eschatologically postponed. *Différance* is a combination of both these words: *differ* and *defer* (Critchley 1999:35).

9.Texts understood in this context in the widest possible sense of texts (phenomena), as all that which can be interpreted.

built on the ground, but because the ground is tainted, the city is restless and never completely at home within itself. Our cities and our constructions are temporal constructions – haunted, marked by the cry of the other that is heard from the very ground upon which the cities are built. By the grace of the mark, which is but a trace of the infinite question, cities are constructed; therefore the absolute relativism of groundlessness has been curbed by the use of 'root metaphors' and 'critical realism'. Grace is bestowed on us to enable us to build the city, maybe a postfoundational city, which is not built on a foundation or on a non-foundation, but on a marked foundation, a foundation marked with a trace of the cry of the other and Other, *différance.*

Postfoundationalism enables, even invites us to think beyond the borders of different disciplines. Each postfoundational city (each construction) has a certain limited view of the other – limited by the trace (mark) that tells the story of both the *archē*-logical cry of the other whose blood taints the foundation of the city as well as the infinite cry of the Other still to come that eschatologically interrupts the city by seeking hospitality. This limited view (understanding of the other) can be described as approximate truth. 'Approximate truth means that there are adequate epistemic and experiential reasons to believe that this construction does indeed suggest a certain truth' (Meylahn 2006:898). This paves the way to think beyond borders and opens the door to bring together different disciplines, each with their own adequate truths, thereby finding a fuller picture (optimal coherence) of the other and hence the possibility to construct optimally coherent cities.

We cannot escape the sin, as optimal coherence is still a form of *Begreifen* within the same, although it has greater respect for alterity. The mark of Cain remains, even on optimal coherence, thereby again and again wounding and thus reminding Cain of the breath, the other, the cry of the other taken up in the Divine question. The city will always be wounded, as it is marked by the cry of the Other. This city will always be restless since the ground slips away as it absorbs the blood of the other, there where he is included in the same. This mark of Cain deconstructs the optimal coherence as it wounds and thus opens what is for the Other always still to come. The mark made it possible for Cain to build the city, a postfoundational city, but the trace remains, reminding Cain and all builders of cities that the city is wounded by the trace of the infinite Other, by *différance.* The city is question-marked by the Other; it exists by the grace of the Other.

*IN*CONCLUSION: THEOLOGY AS BEING THOUGHT FROM BEYOND

By marking us with a trace of the Divine question, the Other continually thinks us. It is the thought of the Other that puts us in question. It is not we who think the other who is beyond the borders of the same, but the Other who eternally thinks us, and our thinking, language and history is a response to that prior being-in-question and continuous being-in-question.

Theology can either be interpreted as thinking beyond the borders toward the Divine, the Infinite or the Transcendent, or it can be understood as the thinking that seeks to respond to our being-in-question because of the Divine question that echoes the cry of the other. I believe that theology is the thinking that is called forth by being-in-question through the thinking of the Other. Theology in this sense is thus to think the being-thought by the Other.

The text examined throughout the article, as well as others, for example the Exodus, the Incarnation and the Cross, are all narratives of the Other crossing borders, liberating from boundaries, and deconstructing the laws and norms that exclude. I believe that the religious traditions of these sacred narratives have something to offer our globe, namely to be thought by the Other, to receive life and identity (alien identity) from the Other. They offer us the gift of a home, which is originally marked by the being-in-question and continuously deconstructed by being questioned by the home still to come and as such always open – being-in-response to the Other. The sacred narratives gift us with a temporal home/city, which is marked by the divine trace of being-in-question by the *archē*-logical question and the being-in-question by the eschatological interruption by the Other always still to come. Maybe this narrative, which places all that is between the *archē* (alpha) and the *eschaton* (omega) of the Other, can open that which is to embrace an ethos of hospitality as that which is a journey in the 'marked groundless space/home' of this narrative towards a democracy still to come.

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