



'My city of ruins': A city to come

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'My city of ruins' is the title of a song by Bruce Springsteen and will accompany a public theological reflection of imagining alternative cities. A city of ruins is either a city *of* ruins in the sense that it is a city in ruins. Alternatively it is a city *of* ruins in the sense that it is a city that is built from ruins, like a phoenix rising from the ashes. The article will reflect on the second alternative namely the *poiesis* of a habitable, sustainable and political space (*polis*) in a time when all the meta-discourses of constructing and social engineering lie in ruins (have been deconstructed). The article will focus on Derrida's ideas of deconstruction and the hope and prayer of *perhaps*. Springsteen's song includes the prayer: 'come on, come on, rise up!' A city of ruins prayed into existence, rising up by the call (prayer) of those longing for a liveable, sustainable city to rise up from the ruins of too many empty promises of the various political agendas. Creating and imagining a city of prayer, which involves the prayers for justice incarnate in the broken language (ruined language) of revolutions, and transformations and political construction, thus calls a city of promise into existence.

Prelude: The first city

So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod¹, east of Eden. Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. ¹⁷Cain was then building a city and he named it after his son Enoch. (Gn 4: 16–17, NIV)

Where else should one start a prelude than with a book of beginnings, from Genesis, and particularly the genesis of the first city (*arche-polis*), in Genesis 4? Or maybe Genesis 4 is the story of the building of cities in general, and therefore tells one something of all human construction? The origin of our world is the face of the other² (Derrida 1978:128), Derrida argues. It is the confrontation with the other that is the origin of the world. It is the experience and the desire to understand otherness that wants to be expressed or communicated to another that reveals a world. The world is revealed to the one (same) as the other(ness) is included within the same, and thereby the otherness of the other is destroyed as it becomes part of the world of the one. Therefore, the experience of the other is always marked by violence, as the story of Cain and Abel tells it. This violence leaves a mark or a trace that cannot be erased, as Cain is left with a mark, or a trace. It is the mark of violence remembered, and the haunting divine question: Where is your brother? Yet this mark is not only the mark of the persistent divine question, but it is also a trace of grace that offers Cain the necessary protection, by curbing the unbearable³ of the divine question (see Meylahn 2009:22). It is therefore a gracious mark or trace that offers enough grace to build the first city. Yet that first city is built in the land of wandering (Nod). It is in the land of Nod, a land where there is no home, or stability, or certainty, where all foundations are questioned by the divine question: Where is your brother? It is this land of wandering that becomes the place for the first human construction for life together (*polis*), and it was constructed (built) in a non-place (Nod) through the trace of grace.

A world, a place to live together, a polis is built by this trace as grace, as a threatened yet created space, and it continues to be threatened yet also sustained by the encounter with the other. The creation of this vulnerable space for life together will be further explored.

1. Nod means wandering.

2. '...the face [cry/question of the other] is not of this world. It is the origin of the world' (Derrida 1978:128).

3. ¹³Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴Today 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". ¹⁵But 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' (Gn 4:9–15, NIV).

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A world with a particular character, which offers a space to be to all the identifiable things of that particular world, is created through language (Heidegger 1971:200f.), as language is the medium for the encounter with the other. Language is the *pharmakon* (Derrida 1981:99f.) that makes both the encounter possible and impossible.

The Genesis story tells the reader something of the character or characteristics of this medium within which to encounter the other, which is also the medium in which to be (house of being) or live, such as the first city, as the place of human life together. This medium or place of being (*polis*) is not a natural habitat as it is a creation (*poiesis*) or construction of a place (Cain was building the first city when his child was born), but, it is as natural as you will ever find, as it is the house of being and there is nothing outside of this polis⁴. There is no nature outside of construction, there is only One, the house of being, or one could say the city of being (*polis*). This city of being is marked by violence and grace. A world, created by the encounter with the other, is a world created in a land of continuous wandering (a land of Nod), of restlessness, as the divine question haunts any possible ground that would seek to arrest the wandering⁵. The ground, the foundation that would stabilise this world and give it permanence and absolute universal status, is haunted by the blood of the other, by the violence of exclusion. Yet there was grace enough to build a city. The mark of Cain, the trace of Cain, is a gift of grace. Language as gift (grace), *pharmakon*, medicine enough to remedy the violence committed (the sin that Cain could not refuse) to build a city. That city (human construction) remains haunted by the mark or trace of Cain. A space of grace is created (built) in the desert of the Real (land of Nod) for human habitation, and it has the same name as the first child, Enoch.

Thus, the first city we read of in Genesis was a city of grace, constructed in the land of Nod as a place of new-beginnings for the marked and ruined Cain.

The city of the same: The religious city

⁴Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth. (Gn 11:4, NIV)

The first *polis* was built as a gracious space to live in, where the divine question was graciously curbed: the ground

4. In reference to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, where he argues that 'there is nothing outside the text [there is no outside-text; il n'y a pas de hors-texte] (Derrida 1997:158). Derrida also argues that language is the supplement of nature, but this supplement is neither in nor outside of nature (Derrida 1997:149). It is the house of being and therefore it is nature and therefore moving beyond the nature-culture dualism or natural-construction dualism.

5. ⁹Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know", he replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth". ¹³Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴Today 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". ¹⁵But 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' (Gn 4:9–15, NIV).

(foundation) continues to cry out to the Lord, as the space is marked (ruined) by that question, but being marked is also protected. The first *polis* was the first construction to find a way to live together and was, thus, a first politics. What happens when the divine question is forgotten in the politics of the *polis*? What happens when the poison (*Gift*) of the gift (*pharmakon*) is forgotten? What happens when the *polis* is seen as a deserved gift? Then a city will be built 'to make a name for ourselves', as the polis seeks to become absolute; it seeks to become foundational and universal and to ignore that it is built in the land of wandering. It becomes so sure of itself that it ignores or forgets the haunting of the divine question. The divine question is no longer heard as the ground from which the question arises has been solidified (solid as a rock) and the ears have become deaf to the cries of the murdered other(s) and the hearts have turned to stone (Mt 13:15). The space of marked grace has been replaced with a captured absolute Word. The land of Nod (wandering) has been replaced with something stable and sure. There is no wandering nor wondering as all is *begriffen* in a *Begriff*. The space of grace is replaced with the totality of a concept, the power of the concept which includes everything and brings everything under its control. Everything can be included into the same via a third term, namely a concept thought (see Levinas 1969:42). A believed neutral concept thought, Word (*Begriff*), with which all that is other can be *begriffen* (captured, grasped or grabbed). This is a way of reducing any otherness to the same of the totality of a system of thought (Levinas 1969:158–159) based on a thought concept, and then the cry of the other can no longer be heard, as the other, in his or her or its otherness, has been reduced to the same and included within the totality.

A thought concept upon which everything is thought, but which itself is not thought, is that upon which things are thought and meaning is discovered, but which itself is not thought, as it is believed to be given (natural or the way things are). Heidegger argues: meaning is that 'in which the intelligibility of something keeps itself, without coming into view explicitly and thematically' (Heidegger 1996:298). This thought concept upon which all is thought is a Holy Word (as it is believed to be the way things are or the way God created things), which is taken for granted and that gives meaning and purpose to everything and allows the world to become self-conscious (see Berger 1967:32). Berger (1967) describes religion as follows:

Finally the highly theoretical constructions by which the *nomos* of a society is legitimated in toto in which all less-than-total legitimations are theoretically integrated in an all-embracing *Weltanschauung*. (p. 32)

This Holy Word is placed into a golden Ark in the holy of holies in the temple (see 1 Ki 8). The temple and the city built around this Holy Word are defined by it, as the city is divided into spaces of purity and worthiness, which are allocated around this Word. The most holy of places only the purest and purified are worthy enough to enter. The space around this most Holy Word in the Ark is divided into concentric circles of diminishing purity and worthiness and



therefore, circles of judgement and exclusion. This Word or thought concept gives those who wield it the power to divide the world into pure-impure, worthy-unworthy, acceptable-unacceptable, included-excluded, good-bad, right-wrong and righteous-unrighteous. This Word gives power to judge and thereby also to exclude and even annihilate, without being haunted by the divine question, because it is done in the name of a divine Word and, therefore, gives licence to kill in the name of the Word.

The city is divided into those who are friends (same or pure or worthy or welcome) and those who are enemies (other or impure or unworthy or unwelcome). The city is no longer built in the land of Nod by the trace of grace, but built on a solid foundation of *the* Word that is *begriffen* in an Ark and is expressed in the ar(k)chitecture of the city. Later in history this Word will become the word of a king, or the Word captured in an ideological handbook, or in the constitution that builds or constructs the absolute secure solid city; a word or concept thought or an *ideology* that rules the city with the totalitarian force of an absolute truth. These cities are holy cities, built not by a trace of grace, but built on the truth of their founding Word (concept thought). In these cities the other is excluded or excluded by being reduced to the same.

The city of the other

Cities of refuge⁶ were built to offer hospitality to those who were persecuted (Nm 35:9–32; Dt 19; Jos 20:1–9). These cities offered conditional refuge or hospitality and thereby did not truly offer hospitality, as the other had first to become part of the same (fulfil the necessary conditions) before she or he could enter. Once they had met with all the conditions they could enter and live *as if* they were one of them (the insiders). So often that is the case in places of refuge for the homeless and destitute in the cities of today. They are ‘welcome’ under certain conditions. These conditions of ‘welcome’ are often so dehumanising that they (the other) are only welcome once they have been reduced to a manageable object. The other is reduced to an object that can easily fit into the totality of the same, which can then be managed by the same concept thought without disturbing that Word. The other (homeless, refugee, destitute) is dehumanised, and robbed of her or his otherness, to ensure that they can become manageable in the politics (life together) of the city. Their otherness is taken from them as they are reduced to items to be managed in the total city.

6:“Then the Lord said to Joshua: ⁴ “Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, ⁵ so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood. ⁶ When they flee to one of these cities, they are to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state their case before the elders of that city. Then the elders are to admit the fugitive into their city and provide a place to live among them. ⁷ If the avenger of blood comes in pursuit, the elders must not surrender the fugitive, because the fugitive killed their neighbor unintentionally and without malice aforethought. ⁸ They are to stay in that city until they have stood trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time. Then they may go back to their own home in the town from which they fled.” ⁹ So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. ¹⁰ East of the Jordan (on the other side from Jericho) they designated Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau in the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead in the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan in the tribe of Manasseh. ¹¹ Any of the Israelites or any foreigner residing among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities and not be killed by the avenger of blood prior to standing trial before the assembly’ (Jos 20:1–9, NIV).

The question arises: Can cities truly welcome the other, to allow the other to feel at home, and by feeling at home become host in the host city? Can the city allow the other to enter as guest and become the host, that is, truly feel free and at home to the extent that they feel free to welcome others (become host)? Is it possible to fulfil the:

Great Law of Hospitality – an unconditional Law, both singular and universal, which ordered that the borders be open to everyone, to every other, to all who might come, without question or without their even having to identify who they are or whence they came. (Derrida 2001:18)

This brings one to the radical hospitality of Paul’s thought that includes all into the household of God unconditionally, by grace alone, through Christ alone. This universal hospitality is impossible and therefore, throughout the Western traditions, conditions have been applied to limit the universal unconditional law of hospitality.

These questions of limitation return one to the beginning (Genesis), and the archē-violence or the sin that could not be mastered (Gn 4:7–8). This was a sin that could not be mastered as the other was threatening the identity of the same. The identity of the firstborn (Cain) was threatened by this *brother* (Abel)⁷. The identity of the same (*ipse*) is established by this dual moment of welcoming the other as well as limiting the power of the other. ‘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). Cain can only be identified as firstborn if there is the *brother*, who is the secondborn (Abel). In other words, Cain’s identity as the firstborn is dependent on the *brother*, but at the same time threatened by the *brother*. The story continues by exploring the threat to the identity of the firstborn by the secondborn. Abel’s sacrifice is acceptable to God and therefore the privileges and rights of the firstborn (his identity as firstborn) were questioned by the presence and the acceptance of the secondborn’s sacrifice. It is this inherent violence of the presence of the *brother* that threatens the identity of the same. It is this inherent violence to the identity that needs to be limited by placing conditions of welcome on the other.

The moment one focuses on the limitation or conditions of welcome offered to the other (limitations on hospitality), one forgets that the identity of the same (subject) is only established in relation to the other⁸, in relation to the question of the other (foreigner), as identity of the same is only established in relation to the hospitality offered to the other. That is to say, that identity is always a question of the

7: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’ (Meylahn 2009:2 of 6).

8:‘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).



foreigner (other). This is unavoidable that the 'I' (something identifiable, something with an identity) can only become an 'I' in relation to the existence and the welcome offered or not offered to the other. Or stated differently, the home only becomes a home (*oikos*) in relation to the presence and welcome offered to an actual or potential guest⁹.

It is a matter of limiting the power of the other (guest), whilst welcoming the other into the home to ensure that the home can become what it is: a place in which to be host and thereby offer welcome to a guest. A home is a place to be at home and potentially or actually offer welcome to a guest. It is through the other (guest) that I enter my home and become host of my home. Therefore it is the other who actually welcomes me into my home, to ensure that it can be argued that the other actually is the host, who welcomes me into my home. That is the strange relationship that one has with the other (guest), a sin that one cannot master, as the other questions and identifies me at the same time. It is this questioning that disturbs one so much, resulting in one wanting to murder the other, yet this other is the one who says: Thou shall not kill!¹⁰ The questioning other is simultaneously also the one who identifies me as neighbour, brother or host, who shall not kill, and thus gifts me with my identity. It is in this sense that Derrida can speak of the similarity resemblance between the face of the other and the face of God (Derrida 1978:135).

This is the relationship between the first- and secondborn, but what about the other others? The guest (other) cannot become host, because there always remains a third, another other and the list of others to come is limitless. It is both the third, in the form of another guest seeking hospitality, as well as a third as another host. It is because of the third, as Levinas argues, that there is the necessity of politics¹¹. It is because of the third, the other other, that we need to compare, weigh and evaluate. It is because of the presence of other others that politics becomes necessary for the building of the city – the building of the city eternally marked, and thus identified, by the question (presence) of the other(s). Politics is the art of evaluating, comparing and weighing in relation to the other.

The need for the political city

In the presence of a third, in the presence of society or the public, there develops a need or practical necessity for politics, the art of evaluating, comparing, weighing and by implication knowing the difference between friend and

enemy, between who to welcome and who not to welcome. What is so easily forgotten in politics is that the enemy, as other, is always also the friend who gifts me my identity or who gifts the city (*polis*) its identity and that characterises the particular politics of that particular city.

Carl Schmitt defines politics as the necessity of clearly defining the identity of enemy and friend¹². Although this might be an oversimplification of Schmitt's argument, I want to hold onto the idea of the practical necessity of this distinction for the practice of politics in Schmitt's thought. Clearly defining who is welcome, and under what conditions they are welcome, is the art of politics. Therefore cities do not truly offer hospitality to the other, as all hospitality is conditional. This becomes so blatantly clear in most cities, where they might provide shelters for the 'other' (homeless, refugee, migrants), but 'welcome' into these shelters is offered only to those who comply with all the conditions of acceptance¹³. Nobody is accepted unconditionally! The cities of refuge that Derrida imagines are different and alternative, although they are not utopian¹⁴ whilst remaining focused on the messianic. His thoughts are not utopian (no-place), rather his thoughts on the other are what gifts place. It is the welcome offered to the other that creates the very place where the welcome to the other is offered (it is the other who creates the home into which she herself seeks welcome) to the one who has no place (no home and no place to lay his head [Lk 9:58]).

The city of ruins: The messianic city to come or the city of the child

Is there a way beyond this political city that offers only conditional welcome to the other? Is there a way beyond these cities of violence? The violence of the religious city excludes the other and divides the city spaces according to the degrees of worthiness or violence of the city of the other, where the city's identity is ruined by the presence of the other (the enemy). Is there a politics (the art of being together) that is beyond the ruins of these two forms of violence? Is there a city that can arise from these ashes? Is there a prayer that can raise a city from the ruins, 'come on, come on, rise up!' Who would be called upon to come, in this prayer? Who is called upon to come and rise up? Bruce Springsteen (2002) seems to be praying for something or someone to come on and rise up¹⁵.

9.'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).

10.'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).

11.'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).

12.'The specific political distinction, to which political actions and notions can be reduced, is the distinction between friend and enemy' (Schmitt 1976:26).

13.Derrida, reflecting on the French situation, argues: 'Both to the right and to the left, French politicians speak of "the control of immigration:.. This forms part of the compulsory rhetoric of electoral programmes. Now, as Luc Legoux notes, the expression "immigration control" means that asylum will be granted only to those who cannot expect the slightest economic benefit upon immigration. The absurdity of this condition is manifestly apparent: how can a purely political refugee claim to have been truly welcomed into a new settlement without that entailing some form of economic gain?' (Derrida 2001:12).

14.Although he argues in his address to the International Parliament of Writers (IPW) that his politics for the cities of refuge might 'appear utopian for a thousand reasons' (Derrida 2001:8).

15.Springsteen wrote this song in response to the 9/11 attack on New York. I will not be doing an exegesis of the song nor of its political context, but will select some of the words as material. My city of ruins: 'There's a blood red circle – On the cold dark ground – And the rain is falling down -The church door's thrown open - I can hear the organ's song – But the congregation's gone – My city of ruins – My city



Or he is praying to and with those who are already there to rise up. Who is to come on and rise up a new city from these ruins?

Is there a way beyond the ruined city as the foundations of the fathers (the concept thoughts) have been questioned by the arch-violence of the other, the violence of the divine question that disturbs the concept thought with the question: where is your brother?

These are cities of ruins, resulting from too much violence: the violence of both religious or ideological cities and their violent exclusions, or of broken promises as hospitality offered could not be offered without limitations and conditions.

The prayed for city is a city to come, and as city of the future it is a city of the child. It is not a utopian city, but a city already present, like the child is already present, but as a city of the child it is a city of *perhaps*¹⁶. The idea of the city of the child is used as a metaphor for the city to come. The city of the future is the city that belongs to the child, as children are often seen as citizen to come, but they are not only to come, they are already present. Therefore the idea of the child plays in well with both the idea of the philosophers to come, but who are already here, as well as Nietzsche's last *Verwandlung* into the child (Nietzsche 2000).

The city of the child is *perhaps*, without any certainties or guarantees, a city of justice and democracy to come beyond these ruins. A city of the child is the city of the future and the continuous expectation of the messianic to come: a city of a new justice and a new politics¹⁷ to come. It is a new politics and a new justice that is not utopian, but that comes from the other who is without place (*u-topia*), but who is coming (*arrivants*), whilst already being there. Who are the others coming, yet who are already there: the messiah, the child? The child is the citizen of the future, yet already there, as the child is without a political space (without political rights). It is the prayer for the other (child or messiah), who has no place to lay his head, to come on, to rise up in the city's midst so as to create (*poiesis*) perhaps a new city: a *polis* and politics of welcome. This is like a child imagining a different world, a *make-believe* world: a world *made-of-faith-and-hope*.

(Footnote 15 continues ...)

of ruins –
Now the sweet bells of mercy – Drift through the evening trees – Young men on the corner – Like scattered leaves, – The boarded up windows, – The empty streets – While my brother's down on his knees – My city of ruins
My city of ruins – Come on, rise up! Now there's tears on the pillow – Darlin' where we slept – And you took my heart when you left – Without your sweet kiss – My soul is lost, my friend – Tell me how do I begin again? – My city's in ruins – My city's in ruins – Now with these hands – With these hands, With these hands, – With these hands, I pray Lord – With these hands, With these hands, – I pray for the strength Lord – With these hands, With these hands, – I pray for the faith, Lord
With these hands, With these hands, – I pray for your love, Lord – With these hands, With these hands,
I pray for the strength, Lord – With these hands, With these hands, – I pray for your love, Lord
With these hands, With these hands, – I pray for your faith, Lord – With these hands, With these hands, – I pray for the strength, Lord – With these hands, With these hands – Come on, rise up – Come on, rise up.'

16. See Derrida's (2005:49–73) thoughts on 'perhaps'.

17. With regard to democracy and with regard to justice? For we would be tempted to match Nietzsche's gesture, as we have just seen it in outline, to the call he seems to be making for another justice: the one soon to be within reach of the new philosophers – the *arrivants* – the one already within their reach, since these *arrivants*, who are still to come, are already coming' (Derrida 2005:64).

A new justice that is beyond good and evil:

... a justice that would at last break with sheer equivalence, with the equivalence of right and vengeance, of justice as principle of equivalence (right) and the law of eye for eye, an equivalence between the just, the equitable (*gerecht*), and the revenged (*geracht*) that Nietzschean genealogy has relentlessly recalled as the profound motivation of morality and of right of which we are the heirs. (Derrida 2005:64)

The question remains, what would equality mean without calculation? Could there be a politics or a city without calculation, without comparison, evaluating and weighing?

What kind of city would this be? Would this disappropriation not beckon to this other 'love' whose true name Nietzsche argues in conclusion, is friendship (Derrida 2005:64)? This species of love would be a love more loving than love. It would need to be a love that would denounce the right to property (Derrida 2005:64). It is a love that would not seek to possess the other, but allow the other to remain other. The true friend is the one who remains other (enemy) and thus the true friend is the enemy. Can one live with his or her ruin at the heart of the utterly new (see Derrida 2005:66)?

Can one live in a city of ruins, where true friends are enemies and enemies are friends?

If one proffers a yes to this 'principle of ruin, beyond knowledge and truth, precisely an empty place would be left – left by Nietzsche as we would perhaps like to read him: a place open for that which can perhaps still take place – by chance' (Derrida 2005:66). A city of *perhaps*, created in the empty space: the non-utopian city created in the empty space or non-space: *u-topia*. This can only be a city of faith and hope created by the mark of grace, there, where true friends are enemies and enemies are true friends in the eternal divine mark or trace, a city which echoes the question and the command: where is your brother, who is your neighbour, love your enemies! This would be a city of the future, a city of perhaps, a city that is always to come, and therefore a messianic city of the child. A city always to come that is already coming.

Nietzsche (2000), in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, refers to the last *Verwandlung* into the child¹⁸. A child dreams her fantasy world, a *make-believe*-world, knowing it is not real, but real enough to be in for as long as she can. She knows that it is not eternal and that it is not of this world, but of the world to come, as it is of the future. It is a city of poets and therefore *poiesitics*, where the philosophers are not kings¹⁹ (Plato), but those who were thrown out of the city, namely the poets²⁰.

18. „Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Ja-sagen. Ja, zum spiele des Schaffens, meine Brüder, bedarf es eines Heiligen Ja-sagens: seinen Willen will nun der Geist, seine Welt gewinnt sich der Weltverlorene“ (Nietzsche 2000).

19. Plato, in *The Republic*, argues that philosophers should be kings, 'I said: "Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils,—nor the human race, as I believe,—and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day'" (Plato, *The Republic* Book V). Plato (2012–05–12). *The Republic* (p. 308), Kindle Edition

20. The expulsion of the poets in Book V of Plato's *Republic*.



Poieslitics are made of the two words, politics and *poiesis*, and therefore it suggests a politics of imagination, a politics of poetry, creating the make-believe²¹, or a politics of faith and hope. *Poieslitics* is creating a vulnerability or sensitivity to the eternal cry of the excluded other, whose blood cries from any attempted construction of a stable ground. These are cities of composition, construction, creation, or as Bruno Latour (2003:42ff.) would argue, cities of constructivism where one constructs, supports and strengthens the constructions that work. Or one works with that which is historically present, knowing that it is not perfect, but in need of always being opened to welcome what is to come²². This is a kind of politics, but not based on a concept thought, nor based on the clear distinction between enemies and friends, but a city where the distinction has faded between both enemies and friends, and a non-community community. It is a city of philosophers (poets) to come, but who are already here because they are thought. They are to come and yet they are here – composing, building, creating (poets) and thereby welcoming the cities to come. Cities are undone (ruined) by offering a welcome to the other, and in their offered welcome are redone (rebuilt and re-created) as cities of welcome. In that sense, they will be cities of democracy to come and cities of justice to come, as these cities seek to offer those without place a place – which is not a conditional place, but by offering a place or space to the other, the very space of the city is defined as a space of welcome. These cities of welcome are cities of justice and democracy to come. Democracy is understood as democracy to come, and is therefore not any current form of democracy which is failing in many ways within the capitalist world. A democracy to come keeps alive the idea of creating space for multiple voices, especially the voices of those not heard before. There is always another other and therefore these cities are always cities to come, cities that like Nietzsche's child, proclaim a yes, *ein heiliges Ja-sagen. Ja, zum spiele des*

21. Creating the make-believe, the 'as if', or the awareness that all that is created is make-believe and not eternal or absolute.

22. All these questions remain obscure and difficult and we must neither conceal them from ourselves, nor for a moment, imagine ourselves to have mastered them. It is a question of knowing how to transform and improve the law, and of the knowing if this improvement is possible within an historical space which takes place between the Law of an unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to every other, to all newcomers, *whoever they may be*, and the conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which *The unconditional Law of hospitality* would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire, without form and without potency, and of even being perverted at any moment' (Derrida 2001:22–23).

Schaffens (Nietzsche 2000), yes to the game of creating spaces of welcome to the other as she or he or it comes as homeless, as refugee, as enemy, as animal, as plant, etcetera. In that play of creating (*Schaffens*), a city is created as a city to come, welcoming the other and whatever else is still to come.

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