

Interfaith Dialogue: A Deconstructive Site for the Cycles of Mythic

Violence?

Elyse Rider

The arena of interfaith dialogue is an important site for the investigation of how a deconstructive ethic can play out against the established cycles of mythic foundational and divine interruptive violence. An investigation here of key deconstructive themes theorised by Jacques Derrida will be woven into a methodology for an interfaith dialogue that moves deeper into cross-difference engagement and co-creative cultural growth. In developing this methodology I seek a deconstructive ethic and an appropriate structure for a generative culture in which cohesion is defined through difference. With these interests in mind I will address first the nature of divine and mythic violence as defined by Walter Benjamin. An overview of current interfaith dialogue approaches will then follow and the proposed praxis of a 'pluralist-deconstructive' dialogue introduced. Derrida's themes of justice, sacrifice and faith will in turn be used to expand the potential of this praxis, adding deeper dimensions to the concepts of self, other and God in religion and its potential development. I will then move into an exploration of what Derrida's deconstructive project may mean in a social context and, more specifically, an interfaith context. Finally, a structure will be proposed which

utilises Derrida's theory on *différance* to weave together the concepts explored into a methodological ideal for interfaith cultural development through hospitable dialogue.

Divine and Mythic Violence

'Mythic Violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake; divine violence is pure power over all life for the sake of the living. The first demands sacrifice; the second accepts it.'¹

There is a striking distinction drawn in Walter Benjamin's definition of mythic and divine violence that bares relevance to a methodology of interfaith dialogue: that between 'all life' and 'the living.' At first these phrases seem indistinguishable as what is 'all life' but 'the living' and is not all that is 'living' indeed 'all life'? There is clearly an important underlying distinction here nonetheless as the phrasing of the claim demands that 'all life' must be dominated for the 'sake of the living.' Benjamin does not, for example, say 'divine violence is pure power over all life' *for the sake of itself or for its own sake*. The difference between 'all life' and the living is in the verbal nature of the latter description. All life is a noun, named, static and in its claim to the 'all,' finite. The living is doing, moving, becoming, its limits are not defined, it is inherently dynamic. This apparently small distinction proves significant when we consider Benjamin's claim in the interfaith context. What Benjamin's definition opens is the possibility that all that exists already, all that is known and claimed, all that we are as collectives and individuals in this 'mere life,' is not all we could be or indeed inevitably will be whether we like it or not. What makes us different now from what we were and what we may become is the work of 'the living;' a force of change to which 'all life' is always, already subjected.

When dealing with belief systems and cultural paradigms in the context of religion and particularly in facing the exposure of the interfaith arena, there is a natural tendency in us as 'mere life' to preserve, to remain static. We bolster our immune systems against the destructive prospects of 'the living' which will deconstruct us and use our parts in new paradigmatic constructions of knowledge, social formations and relationships to the other, be it divine or human. Like 'all life,' all 'mere' temporal life, we are only ever *real* in the moment. We fight to prolong this reality; to remain real we dig painful foundations, bloody foundations and mythologize these moments of triumph as monuments against change. We reiterate them, translate them across generations in our attempts to preserve the knowledge of these

past, mythic moments. We collectivize our knowledge into religious and political laws that we violently maintain against difference within our communities and particularly against those exogenous to our circles of contained and labelled truths. This violence is embodied, it captures and spills blood.

Mythic violence is the violent struggle of mere life, all life, to remain intact through reiterating itself throughout and against its always already defining journey of deconstruction. Derrida shows how these reiterations of law and knowledge, in their cyclic nature, in their very reliance on reiteration as a process of translatable, transferable knowledge are, tragically and ironically, absolutely reliant on their own worst enemy: the gap, the abyss, the separation between the sign and the signified, the very deferral which makes translation possible. Out of this divide, this 'open' deferral, divine violence inevitably surges, to interrupt the static and to accept our carefully maintained artefacts of knowledge as a sacrifice to the 'living,' ready or not.

The violent politics of religion illustrates the bloodiness of mythic violence as people fight to maintain their identity, their belief systems, against the outside other. This unceasing bid to power is exemplary of Arendt's analysis of violence and power. For Arendt, violence is symptomatic of a lapse in power, violence 'functions as a last resort' against those subjects who 'refuse to be overpowered by the consensus of the majority.'² Power here is understood as cooperative, it is a function of the body corporate of society. Arendt thus categorizes power in the same order as peace and freedom, and 'force' in the same order as violence. Like peace and freedom, power is an end in itself, it needs no justification and is indeed beyond justification in that it structurally 'precedes and outlasts all aims.' Whereas violence is instrumental and justified as a means, power 'is actually the very condition enabling a group of people to think and act in terms of a means-ends category.'³ In this framework, power is ultimately social and as such is always-already there as co-existing and inextricable to the coherent community or society. Similarly, 'freedom' is socially defined as the 'direct aim of political *action* [and the] reason that men live together in political organization at all.'⁴ It is not initially the striving for inner freedom but in social freedom that we learn social empowerment: 'We first become aware of freedom or its opposite in intercourse with others not in the intercourse with ourselves.'⁵ That is the basis of our political existence and Freedom is thus recognised by Arendt as the '*raison d'être* of politics...its field of experience is action.'⁶ Freedom is the freedom the exercise power in political action. Power for Arendt is thus incompatible with sovereignty which is the structure that (en)forces compliance in the social body. Absolute peace and absolute power are thus symbiotic and stand in opposition to violence.

In reading this understanding of power and violence into Benjamin's

definitions of divine and mythic violence, we are able to investigate the implications of the mythic and divine in the social context, which is what we must do in the formulation of praxis of any kind. Benjamin's analysis of the extreme disruptive force of the 'general strike' as non-violent in its pure anarchism, in its collapse of means and ends into an action of pure interruption of the status quo, indicates the closest political action in the invocation of divine violence by pure social power. But Benjamin denies this possibility on both a normative and explanatory front. He warns that the extension of pure or divine power into the social context 'is sure to provoke, particularly today [and we might add particularly in the interfaith arena], the most violent reactions, and to be countered by the argument that, if taken to its logical conclusion, it confers on men even lethal power against one another.'⁷ Aside from this moral consideration, however, Benjamin also describes the impossibility of breaking the cycle of mythic violence by mere life itself. While revolutionary violence, as exemplified by the anarchism of the general strike, is the 'highest manifestation of unalloyed violence by man,'⁸ it is less possible for humankind to recognize the moments of divine violence as apposed to mythic or foundational violence and therefore even less possible for humankind to *direct* those moments. This is because as mere life, we are bounded by temporality which dictates that 'on the breaking [the] cycle maintained by mythic forms of law... on the abolition of state power, a new historical epoch is founded.'⁹ Therefore Benjamin maintains that 'only mythic violence, not divine, will be recognized as such ...because the expiatory power of violence is invisible to men.'¹⁰ In the socio-political realm of mere life, the cycle of mythic violence is always reinstated, exemplified by the fact that 'the task of 'peace' after all the wars of the mythic age, is the primal phenomenon of all law making violence.'¹¹ This analysis entreats us to pause a moment to consider how and indeed if any deliberate application of Benjamin's analysis into a methodology for social development might lead to the worst of political translations: the transformation of a potential divine violence into an act of mythic, foundational violence. This potential is of particular concern to a project of interfaith dialogue that seeks to deal with differences. There is a temptation that dealing with difference becomes eradicating difference, a temptation that has led to the worst acts of founding violence in history. Can, despite Benjamin's doubts and reservations, the process of generative divine violence be in anyway 'owned' or directed by social power without a bloody founding? Can the perpetual action underpinning Arendt's peace and freedom be realised through non-violent social power when exercised in the context of cultural and religious diversity? Is this cyclical interruption able to be democratized without being oppressively homogenizing? The potential effectiveness of

interfaith dialogue as a progressive force in both conceptualizing and relating to otherness (in human manifestations and more generally), hinge on these questions.

Approaching interfaith dialogues

Interfaith dialogue is a technique used in promoting and mediating a situation of religious harmony between members of different faiths. There are two distinct schools of thought of approach to this process. The post-liberal school is based on religious tolerance. This is a non-intrusive and non-disruptive approach to the internally held belief systems of participant groups. 'The centrepiece of this post-liberal perspective is that ... all religious believers should stay in their own backyards...their backyard is their cultural-linguistic system which provides the beliefs or rules by which life makes sense.'¹² The process of interfaith dialogue makes no attempts to change or syncretise the participants' beliefs but rather to strike some kind of peaceful and non-threatening co-existence both philosophically and politically. Its sole purpose is a 'good neighbour' policy so that 'although we are to stick mainly to our own backyards, we should not ignore our neighbours...Our neighbours are there, we must live with them in peace and cooperate with them where we can.'¹³ Post-liberals do not seek to mitigate incommensurabilities which they see as given and they go so far as to see ideological mitigation attempts as intrusive. Some post-liberal practitioners see interfaith engagement as a fruitful step in conflict resolution out of which 'interpretations, mutual influences, and even mutual fecundations [come forth but]... we are finally left with several well-elaborated, complex, and yet mutually irreconcilable views of reality.'¹⁴ Other more separatist post-liberals see this ideological interaction as unnecessary and as adverse to the best interests of participants because it undermines their self preservation. These practitioners instead believe that sturdy fences make for a non-threatening neighbourhood. The mythic or foundational violence of these religions is not challenged by the process in the immediate term though the potential seed of 'differential' questioning is perhaps opened by the religions' exposure to alternative concepts. Historically it may often be observed that 'where religious groups or associations are self-contained, where conversions are rare or even prohibited, and where close contact between members of these groups is kept within strict limits even in non-religious fields, the internal features of each belief system tend to remain intact.'¹⁵ But is this really a sustainable option for a globalising world?

The school of religious pluralism believes not. In the 'market place' pluralism encountered in today's global society, we are not, according to

pluralists, 'so much free to choose as compelled to choose... For better or for worse, this alters the structure of belief in profound ways.'¹⁶ They see the crumbling of fences between religions and cultural paradigms more generally as an inevitability. The pluralist dialogue project is based on recognition of the human role in religious formation and development that is missing from the post-liberal school. For pluralists, humanity is 'crossing the threshold into a new era in the history of human religious life. What characterizes this new era is an increasingly general recognition of our individual and corporate role in fashioning the religious worlds, the symbolic universes in which we live.'¹⁷ Religious pluralism maintains the philosophical standpoint that no one religion is the sole source of truth, all belief systems may contain truths.¹⁸ This steps closer to syncretism than 'religious tolerance' as the truths are extended beyond the internal frameworks of the constituent groups and into an evolving realm of shared truth. Religious pluralism also has a greater call for internal change than religious relativism. Pluralism seeks a societal and theological change that will ameliorate religious conflict. They therefore apply a cooperative rather than a competitive or hands-off methodology to this change. Throughout history, pluralism has been at work wherever 'fences' have crumbled with the effect of religious and cultural syncretism. This is unsurprising for any scholar of religious history who notes the textual, ritualistic and mythological overlaps between religious cultures arising at certain points of interaction in the geo-historical contexts of diasporas, wars, trade relations, colonization or multiculturalism. As Hamnett explains, in 'given historical circumstances, *de facto* pluralism can modify the internal character of religious belief-systems for the believers themselves. Where this occurs, pluralism cannot be understood simply as a political 'state of affairs' involving only the external relations *between* groups.'¹⁹

Religious pluralists diverge on whether collectively managed syncretism is an appropriate 'ends' or 'goal' of interfaith dialogue. The natural process of cooption and amelioration of the other into the self through *de facto* pluralism has aided the political relations between cultures generating fusions in the place of conflicts. The observation of this tendency is different, however, from taking syncretism on as a project designed to epistemologically merge the different theologies and cosmologies of defined religious groups. Syncretic projects of interfaith dialogue that follow a self-conscious process must be cautious in their erecting of defined 'ends' to the process. The disequilibrium of the context could institute a new foundational violence in the mythic cycle. Indeed, post-liberal relativists have critiqued the pluralist approach for its colonialism in that it claims truth and neutrality over that of the participants' belief systems. Following Benjamin's

critique, the foundational act of mythic violence would serve only to generate a new system, equally prone to conflict and bloodiness as the older uprooted versions.

The ideal of globalised religious unity is not only a modern conception, but is itself mythologized. The myth of Babel in the Torah/Old Testament depicts a time in which language was one, perfectly translatable and economical. According to Derrida's deconstruction of the myth, humans were hard at work erecting the Name of Truth, univocal and absolute. What interests Derrida in the subsequent turning of the tongues is the idea that the divine violence exercised here was, and by character always tends towards, the preservation of some kind of space for the unknown. The tower of Babel, he explains 'does not merely figure the irreducible multiplicity of tongues; it exhibits an incompleteness, the impossibility of finishing, of totalising, of saturating, of completing on the order of edification.'²⁰ For Derrida it is divine violence that we are in a sense detecting when we recognise *différance* in the performance of translation (as the primary act of cross cultural understanding) and in hermeneutic performances enacted in any text. In playing with interpretations we are benefiting from divine violence which has opened these playgrounds for fledgling possibilities, the space for becoming different. If deliberate syncretic projects exhibit tendencies towards mythic and foundational violence in their attempts to suture these spaces, should we abandon the unconscious syncretism which has shaped us thus far? In this syncretism, borrowings from the other are rarely recognised as such, but systematically reinterpreted as indigenous creations. The creations of the other are made one's own, appropriated and plagiarised, any suggestion of the others' influence becomes dangerous and potentially offensive.²¹ This involves a certain narcissistic violence, opening in its course a space for difference within its structure but closing upon itself again once a sufficient adequation to the other has been obtained.²² These are not spaces for *différance*; the metaphysical solutions, answers and ends are met from within the newly adapted belief system from which the other, having at first been given brief access, is quickly excluded. Deconstruction cannot play out its course. While answers to questions of truth may have changed, the questions still remain answerable and justice remains safely kept in the confines of law.

Another branch of pluralists maintain the need to consciously manage the interfaith interaction and see merit in the internal and external changes this may bring to belief systems. They do not, however, seek an ends to this process, understanding that the interaction is itself generative. In this way this methodology combines the syncretic approach to collaborative growth with the premise of the post-liberal approach that seeks to maintain

differences between groups. In avoiding ends and goals, these practitioners and participants of the interfaith process seek to avoid not only foundational violence but the colonisation that preconceived founding by the proponents of any ideology entails. As Christian pluralist, Knitter explains: 'Absolute final oneness does not seem philosophically, what the world is heading for, or theologically what God intends for creation. Rather through the dialogue and encounter of religions, there will be greater unity, yes, but it will produce ever more and exciting diversity.'²³ This diversity in turn feeds back into the communicative process so that through the 'transformative interaction of dialogue, each religious partner will be changed and thus have more to offer the ongoing process of communication and cooperation.'²⁴ It is this approach to interfaith dialogue that will be explored and elaborated on here. I will be investigating what the introduction of Derrida's deconstructive theory may bring to the theoretical framework of this methodology and in doing so develop an expanded praxis which will be referred to as 'pluralist-deconstructive interfaith dialogue.' I will primarily be examining what this process might entail ideologically for the participant faith communities as they engage in a deconstructive as well as a co-creative dialogue.

Justice

All the approaches to interfaith dialogue, regardless of whether their aim is syncretism, tolerance, or an appreciation of relativism, attempt to design a context and mode of communication across paradigmatic difference that is 'just.' This ideal in theory is not met in practice. Interfaith dialogue in action struggles with the issue of inclusion; which religions are represented and via what criteria? How is a 'religion' defined and what internal differences in culture and belief will be ignored in the effort to maintain a myth of representation? The ideal methodology is designed not to favour or enforce one belief system over another. Fairness in dialogue and mutual respect by the participants for each other, and in particular for each other's differences is crucial to the success of the dialogue. In enshrining respect for difference as a law of dialogue, a space is cautiously maintained in the interfaith arena through which justice is served to the participants in terms of both the belief systems they maintain and/or their political status. Maintaining this fair space, this opening for justice, is a constant concern for the mediators of interfaith dialogue and the groups involved. The slipping of power over the neutrality of the arena and the rise of violence between participants, in political, verbal and/or physical forms pose a potential threat to these precariously just grounds at all times. Even the most successful of in-

terfaith sessions cannot lay claim to an entirely just methodology for discussion, for a pre-existing disequilibrium in terms of language used, setting chosen, project activities, and the relative wealth and political power of participant groups are ever present factors. The enactment of the performance of interfaith dialogue reveals, if nothing else, the inability to disembodify ideology, the inability to extract religion from people or people from religion. We must therefore question whether the project of interfaith dialogue, fraught with difficulty in the *realness* of embodied and politicised life, could ever develop a 'just' praxis. To address these questions we must investigate the meaning of justice in its guises within and between belief systems.

Derrida describes justice as that which is '*to-come*, it remains *by coming* ...it *has* to come....it *is* to come, it deploys the very dimension of events irreducibly to come.'²⁵ The temporality of our position as mere life and the position of justice as deferred generates in us a desire to move *finitely* towards justice. We have faith in our own knowledge and enshrine, indeed found a path of our steps towards justice via law. We cherish this knowledge, these steps, as we believe them to have closed, a little further the assumed finite distance between justice and ourselves. What Derrida reveals is that because, like all things always-and-already, justice is not, like us, in the realm of mere life and thus has no finite or temporal dimensions through which we can grasp it. Justice is always-already deferred as much as it is always-already there and therefore in as much as we claim to name justice through law, we are enacting an injustice. This paradox is compounded by our assumed inability to comprehend or even hear the call of justice outside of the concept of means and ends, of temporality, of law. The opening through which we may hear the call to justice, only belongs to either law or justice 'by exceeding each one in the direction of the other – which means that in their heterogeneity, these two orders are indiscociable.'²⁶ This very indiscociability permits real life a relationship to justice via its mere forms of comprehension, or laws, and the forthwith desire to extend this legal knowledge. Because 'incalculable justice *commands* calculation', the open into which we are called by justice is a realm of movement; the realm of, to return to Benjamin's term, 'the living.' But Derrida does not end with this inevitability. He is prescriptive in his critique and seeks in the praxis of deconstruction a *directive* movement; one that is *knowing* rather than knowledgeable. He makes the apprehension of undecidability a precondition to or sign of awareness, of living. He maintains that a 'decision that would not go through the test and ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision; it would only be the programmable application or the continuous unfolding of a calculable process. It might perhaps be legal; it would not be just.'²⁷ Through engagement with the undecidable, through

deciding amid the undecidable and in full awareness of this impossible position, Derrida hopes that mere life will in a sense recognize itself as 'the living.' He therefore sees nothing to be 'less outdated than the classical emancipatory ideal'²⁸ and radicalizes this concept as a deconstructive ideal which 're-elaborate[s], without renouncing, the concept of emancipation, enfranchisement, or liberation.'²⁹ To liberate ourselves from the paradoxical trap that our own articles of knowledge ensnare us in, we must, according to Derrida, 'calculate, negotiate the relation between the calculable and the incalculable, and negotiate without a rule that would not have to be reinvented.'³⁰ To undertake this process, even to begin to think this process requires of us an important step: A step beyond the illusion of calculability. In full awareness of the precipice of incalculability below, of the abyss, we must jump, thereby taking ourselves 'as far as possible, beyond the place we find ourselves and beyond the already identifiable zones of morality, politics or law, beyond the distinction between international, public, private and so on.'³¹ We remain then constantly moving, indeed living anew always on the brink of our own decision-making rather than decision-following, enfranchised with the making of decisions outside of the maze of enforced laws. The impossibility of solution awakens an appreciation that it is this very impossibility, this extreme alteriority of the infinite other, that our life source, our drive to live or to be living, springs. The paradox of law and justice brings to light the very possibility of autonomy, as through 'reflecting, without flinching' on this paradox reveals that 'the foundation of law – law of the law, institution of the institution, origin of the constitution – is a "performative" event that cannot belong to the set that founds, inaugurates or justifies.'³² Our position as performers, as actors, is unmasked revealing our very selves as outside, or other than, our established and founded knowledges. The realization of our own performativity reveals in the paradox of law and justice 'the decision of the other in the undecidable.'³³

There are inherent dangers to this deconstructive movement. Relaxing the prescribed hold on and right to name justice through laws leaves justice open to interpretation and '[a]bandoned to itself, the incalculable and giving idea of justice is always very close to the bad, even to the worst for it can always be appropriated by the most perverse calculation.'³⁴ Religion has always maintained social and moral order in communities, it has made being together possible and even purposeful, meaningful and 'good.' It has opened paths for exploration outside of our mere existence unimaginable, indeed 'unthinkable' to non-human creatures. Are we ready to abandon these tools? Importantly, religious law provides us with a set of tools through which to navigate some kind of peaceable social existence. To refer again to Arendt, the institution which remains in a state of perpetual so-

cial construction, rather than static fixed sovereignty, can allow this creativity in social power/action to flourish in the gathering of social power.³⁵ The self-aware, conscious forefront of the generative living is a risky position. It opens up a potential to direct pathways where as we have been in the habit of following, or of creating unconsciously our communal cultural and political directives. What could awareness bring to this process? Could it result in a violent seizure of power and the calculating construction of the most oppressive formations of social control? Could it end in apocalyptic chaos? These possibilities, like all possibilities, remain open in the emancipatory system of deconstruction. When surveying the political context of the globalizing world and the role of religion and interfaith politics in the suffering incurred here, we must wonder if these outcomes are already upon us. What we see around us are not, however, the outcomes of deconstructive anarchism or of the thoughtful deconstruction of religious order, quite the opposite. To return to Arendt's analysis for a moment, this violence is a result of a lapse in power, or a symptom of the absence of social power in the political context of globalization. As cultures and civilizations we have established our identities, we have enshrined into our religious orders and belief systems the laws that have maintained us. What we face now, in discovering each other closer and closer to our perceived homes, is that despite or rather because of our attempts to maintain our life, to shut each others influence out we are cracking our not so sturdy shells violently against each other in a 'quasi-spontaneous automaticity, as reflective as a reflex.'³⁶ We bolster our immunity against each other through repeating 'again and again the double movement of abstraction and attraction'³⁷ which preserves the known self, the law, against change, or the hint of threatening movement. Over generations this illusion of static order and knowledge '*detaches and reattaches* to the country, the idiom, the literal or to everything confusedly collected today under the terms identity and identitarian.'³⁸ Perhaps more dangerously, we are fostering a general law of xenophobia within our belief systems against outside difference. This internal 'auto-immune auto-indemnification'³⁹ against the other is not only an affront to the very functional benefits of religion to society as the maintaining force of social order and amicability within communities. It also defies the purpose or call out of which religion grew and grows in essence: the call to comprehend, to worship, the unknown, the ultimate other. This twisted fate of religion has brought us to the brink of tragedy, our auto-immunity has turned to an auto-immune disorder, and we find ourselves killing, though we should not kill, not only our enemies but through them, ourselves.

In light of this seemingly fatal diagnosis, we return to consider again the deconstructive risk. A step into a pluralist-deconstructive interfaith dia-

logue aims at cross-belief system understanding and thereby exposes the self to the other. Unlike the political realm of violent conflict, however, we are not justified in this interfaith context in demonizing the other. As discussed, this is antithetical to the process and there is a necessary assumption, like with 'peace talks' of all kinds, that the participants are willing to maintain respect in communication as an ideal even if lapses into violence do occur. Unlike political 'peace talks' however, interfaith dialogue that employs an educative function essentially asks participants to open their belief systems up for the scrutiny of the other. In so far as there is an element of cross-understanding, there is also an accompanying element of cross-critique. As far as there is an element of cross-critique there is also an element of self-critique because in the assumed neutrality of the dialogue arena participants *witness* not only the other's artefacts of knowledge but also their own. It is important to also consider another difference between a pluralist-deconstructive dialogue and political treaties. There is no founding violence here because there is no law which is being founded. Not only does this expel the possibility of the ultimate violence of a totalitarian demolition of difference, it also makes the process more durable in the social climate. When on the brink of the decision to participate, the decision to step authentically and in good faith into the interfaith arena, we need to recognize that, even through the process may be gradual, for those who have crafted an identity over the ages on the preservation of the articles of knowledge (of the laws we intend in the interfaith dialogue process to deconstruct) that these artefacts are seemingly all that binds communities together. What we seem to be calling for is a slow and painful cultural suicide. Undeniably some form of death is nigh in this process, but what does death mean in this context? What is it to die in this way?

Sacrifice

The *mysterium tremendum* refers to that to which we are drawn but may not reach, or even drawn near to other than through death, through the loss of self, a realization that awakens in us an all consuming tremble in the face of an ultimately unpredictable future. The intensity of the *mysterium tremendum* opens the opportunity to apprehend death and the loss of self through death. It announces '*another death*'; it announces another way of giving death or of granting oneself death.'⁴⁰ This is the crucial experience that allows for the 'gift'⁴¹ to be conceived and which marks the important distinction in levels of conscious awareness of the sacrificial act. The sacrificial gift to the other, of giving the full sacrifice of death of self in full trembling awareness becomes *distinguishable* from the inevitable ceding to

death of the self as a sacrifice demanded in the cycle of mythic violence. Mythic violence demands a reluctant, painful and often bloody sacrifice of otherness to the self 'for its own sake.'⁴² The 'gift of death' reconceived under a deconstructive framework here is not and cannot be bloody as what is given *represents* a kind of death and is 'not some *thing*, but goodness itself, a giving goodness, the act of giving or the donation of the gift.'⁴³ This gift, is not and cannot therefore be *dead*, it carries on, it keeps giving. The dieing fall may make us tremble but it will not end in tears and blood, in fact we must have faith that it will not *end* at all. In Benjamin's original statement he identifies mythic violence (foundational law making violence) as that which 'demands sacrifice,' whereas divine violence, the action of deconstructive and therefore 'just,' bloodless violence, 'accepts' sacrifice.⁴⁴

Death of the self, of the known, into otherness, is a precondition of existence – it is inescapable and, as Derrida explains, irreplaceable. 'All life,' like 'mere life,' must die and all death is at once the most unique and most common of all experience. No one can die in my place and I cannot die in another's, my death, regardless of the actions of myself or others remains an inevitability. When into the other we will inevitably fall the sacrifice will be accepted, without the *need* for a demand. What interests us here is the difference between death as *inevitability* and death as *sacrificial gift*. The sacrifice 'supposes the putting to death of the unique in terms of its being unique, irreplaceable and most precious.'⁴⁵ The way we move, the way we enact self-aware living, on the brink of the deconstructive edge is through perpetual self-sacrifice to the other. What is claimed in sacrificial death, what is dieing is our 'self' as a defined entity under our laws and names; our 'all life.' This is not, importantly, the same as killing our embodied existence, our 'mere life,' of which we cannot fully know, claim or justly name. The social groups in which, as Arendt notes, we humans have always-already collected, are of a different order to the structures of belief systems and their laws of identity. To sacrifice self as self-knowledge and to do so in faith, is what Derrida reconceptualises as 'the gift of death' that denies mythic violence and in this faith the death of self in self sacrifice is not an end, for there are no ends here. Derrida rhetorically asks: 'What is a self? An ipseity? What is it if ...the fact of being able to move oneself, to be moved and to affect oneself, is its condition, in truth, the definition? It is the proper of what one calls *the living* in general.'⁴⁶

In the absolute alteriority of death, Derrida sees the manifestation of the unmanifest, generative divine, the living, the acceptor of the sacrifice. He presents us with a formulaic exposition of the divine other or the divinity of the other starting from the following play on Kierkegaard's theory of subjective divinity: 'every other (one) is every (bit) other.'⁴⁷ Derrida then reiter-

ates the statement with 'God' replacing one of the these 'every others.' This is done in a way that does not alter the 'extent of the original formulation.'⁴⁸ This act leaves us with two claims pertaining to the divine: Firstly: 'Every other (one) is God' and secondly: 'God is every (bit) other.'⁴⁹ In so far as the other is unknown it/he/she/they are like God and God, in its otherness, is like them. Moving from Kierkegaard to Nietzsche, Derrida follows through a revelation of the 'secret' behind the mystery as 'Gods secret witnessing'⁵⁰ within the self, within each self. This motivates acts mythic violence as demonstrated by the Abrahamic myth of the Isaac sacrifice, a myth of obedience and of submission to the abstract divine witness within the self whose voice dominates that of our fellow humans. In Derrida's deconstructive alternative, that secret, that fearful motivation to submit to 'law' itself becomes that which is ultimately sacrificed via true communicative engagement with embodied human others. The sharing of the secret disrupts the economy of sacrifice and instates a 'sacrifice of sacrifice,'⁵¹ a sacrifice, in short, of the privileged positioning of God as embodied in secrecy, in mystery whether in self or in other. God and divine law become 'unclaimed' territory here and so too does the power to demand sacrifice in His name. Sacrifice, and therefore 'mythic violence,' are themselves sacrificed 'at the instant of the infinite sharing of the secret'⁵² with others. It follows that a sacrifice of mythic violence to otherness is a sacrifice to God defined as generative divine violence and it is in this call, which at first appears suicidal in its structural-self annihilation, that the hope of 'salvation' lies. The sharing of the secret here can be understood as two-fold. It is not only the sharing of ones own knowledge, understanding of the divine and law with others, the co-deconstructive process, but also the sharing or dispersal of the possibility of secrecy with others, the relinquishing of ones claim to secrecy or truth. Significantly for a pluralist-deconstructive interfaith dialogue, not only in reaching out to the other are we reaching out to the divine, to that which religion is primarily interested in, but also in opening ourselves up to the others, all of the 'every-others' in the arena we are choosing to sacrifice our selves (that which we have known as our selves in 'all life' defined by our names and laws) to the *living* divine. This is not only the ultimate love for the other and through this for every other one, but also the ultimate leap of faith.

Faith

We must have faith in order to step forth into the realm of possibility, into the openness and seeming bleakness of this desert entirely other than us. It is through faith that this movement, that living, is just – is, to put

it plainly, a worthwhile endeavour, one that will generate systems of good more than systems of violence. Following Benjamin, Derrida describes the 'messianic' as that which comes forth from the other as a harbinger of deconstruction or change; a generative performative of divine violence, belonging 'from the very beginning to the experience of faith, of believing, of a credit that is irreducible to knowledge and of a trust that "founds" all relation to the other.'⁵³ This is not a call to faith in the emancipatory ideal; this would be too far a fall-back into naming, into claiming, for we know the emancipatory ideal, it is conceivable to us. Rather the messianic is a call to faith in alterity itself, in otherness. What does it mean to have faith in the other rather than in ourselves? What does the sharing of the divine secrecy entail? Faith in the self, like mythic violence, 'demands sacrifice' it demands the sacrifice of freedom for the sake of the known present, it demands sacrifice *to* knowledge. Faith in the other is not a closed system. It accepts the perpetual sacrifice *of* knowledge. It is in acts of faith, of movement into the unknown other that, as Derrida describes, 'justice inscribes itself in advanced.' Through the perpetual reiteration, not of law but of these faithful acts, a universalisable culture of faith emerges. Furthermore, it is this 'universalisable culture of this faith[that] alone permits a "rational" and universal discourse on the subject of "religion."' ⁵⁴ Faith in the dispersed other and otherness is therefore a precondition of a just interfaith dialogue. In aligning faith with justice Derrida puts forward an alternative to the law/justice paradox. Using faith, not law to move towards justice, allows for the awareness of the always deferred nature of justice. Faith does not attempt to trap justice in the present as, unlike law, faith is an appeal to and an act of trust and hope in what is 'to-come.' The 'to-come' is indeed a precondition of an act of faith. This faith in justice, Derrida explains, 'alone allows the hope, beyond all "messianisms," of a universalisable culture ...in which the abstract possibility of the impossible translation could nevertheless be announced.'⁵⁵ This extraordinary faith-based claim indicates the possibility of a culture founded in, and only in, the faithful act. This culture is 'beyond messianisms,' in that the messianic interruption in this culture is dispersed, is performed democratically within the deconstructive structure of the system.

It is at this point that we remember our proximity to the worst, of our potential in this self-aware role. Not only do we need to have faith in the other, a faith that allows for our consciousness to enter the realm of the living, the performative space for the perpetual sacrifice, but we must also have faith in ourselves at the moment of this performance. Returning to Derrida's formula for the 'divine other' in Kierkegaard's theology we find a potential well of this self-trust. The play of words in the formula, the switch-

ing back and forth between otherness and the divine, for Derrida ‘seems to contain the very possibility of a secret that hides and reveals itself at the same time.’⁵⁶ This secret is found in a surprisingly intimate area, it is very close to home, it is within our own selves. The secret is the ability to know internally what is unexposed externally, and to observe one’s own thoughts and changeable mindsets. This capacity to be-with-oneself in secret points to an internal ‘witness that others cannot see and who is therefore *at the same time other than me and more intimate with me than myself*.’⁵⁷ In re-configuring this extraordinary space of otherness at the heart of the self as a *shared* potential, Derrida reveals the potential recompense of the sacrificial act. The sacrifice as a *knowing act* rather than an unwilling death, relies on the state of reflexive awareness that takes the place of mythic divinity as the unseen witness. Awareness of the unseen witness is crucially linked to the sharing/dispersal of the secret. It connotes the sacrifice of the secret through perpetual sharing as the act that places what was once secret, or unknown other, in the realm of awareness and thereby, of deconstructive critique. This witnessing level of consciousness, once engaged in perpetual sharing/self-sacrifice, observes reflexively the indecisiveness within our decisions and the incalculability in our calculations; it observes these states in secret, with irony perhaps, veiled from the outside world, but the act of sacrifice, perpetually democratizes this secrecy. The deconstructive secret witness is what allows us to ‘make’ a decision and at the same time to retain, with full knowledge and further pondering, its undecided ghostly presence. This is the very quality essential to reflexive thinking. Its presence is not always possible to expose in words, a possibility of a difference that could have been, even if it is not yet able to be articulated or even fully thought. So long as we can watch the ghost, it may yet transform and manifest in new ways. Once externalised, what watches inside us is *other* than the acting, performing, speaking self, this witness is not self but rather other-in-self; no longer the secret divinity of the static mythic realm, but a presence of revelatory deconstruction and evolution that encounter with human otherness entails.

Derrida extrapolates on Kierkegaard in this vein stating that ‘once there is a secret witnessing within me, then what I call God exists, (there is) what I call God in me, (it happens that) I call myself God – a phrase that is difficult to distinguish from “God calls me.”’⁵⁸ In the faithful leap, or wander into the desert of uncertainty, or incalculability, of indecision and ultimately of deconstruction of the self in the gift of self-sacrificial death, the faithful find at their core, at the internal khora (the desert within the desert)⁵⁹ a glimpse of a familiar other, an intimate other, the living self oscillating across the rift of selfhood and otherness. According to Derrida’s analysis,

the impossibility of substitution of the unique self in sacrifice and death 'refers to what links the sacred to sacrifice and sacrifice to secrecy.'⁶⁰ It is in the sacrificial gift of death that the self/other binary is deconstructed along with law, knowledge and identity bound selfhood. It is in this space, this desert, that otherness, indeed the ultimate other (God), is revealed, and hidden, as the guiding self, the higher self that witnesses and perhaps now may direct the performative acts of becoming. This possibility is contingent upon communicative engagement and perpetual sacrifice/sharing/giving in the realm of the social and particularly the cross-cultural. In revealing divine life and living at the heart of the sacrificial gift of death, we glimpse at the khora of deconstruction our divine other-selves. In walking together we abandon our fear of the other and replace it even with love and a recognition of inter-human dependency.

It is not only respect for, but love of difference that underpins the movement of the universalisable culture beyond the cycle of mythic violence. An interfaith dialogue arena holds much potential in the furthering of this culture. Dialogue, as we have discussed, occurs effectively only in moments of cross-difference understanding. If interfaith dialogue was to expand on its tolerance to include a genuine engagement with each other, as unique and every bit other, what Derrida terms the universalisable culture could perhaps enfold participants. Reading Derrida into interfaith dialogue reveals that a source of respect for each other's differences is a sense of kinship that comes from recognising in the other that irreplaceable and unique otherness that is also manifesting in the self. The ghost of indecision, seen in secret, is revealed as the possibility of difference at the core of all living; the perpetual presence of the 'might have been' and 'the could be' in the act of performative becoming. Indeed, the variety of human experience revealed in the intercultural context bolsters rather than undermines our desire for communication in this context. For Derrida, '[r]espect for this singular indecision'⁶¹ reveals new cultural possibilities as it opens up the 'chance of every responsible decision and of another "reflecting faith" of a new "tolerance."⁶²

Social applications and implications

In seeking social application, or an ethic of cultural development, we must address at this point some ideal of 'the good.' Derrida reiterates the notion of the 'good' in a deconstructive ethic synonymous with divine calling. As we are placed, in this ideal, at the forefront of our own development, *responsibility* is crucial. For Derrida, responsibility is possible on the condition that 'the Good no longer be a transcendental objective, a relation be-

tween objective things, but a relation to the other, a response to the other; an experience of personal goodness and a movement of intention.⁶³ The relationship with the other is the sustaining force here; it is what calls for movement, for living, in as much as it calls for giving death/life.⁶⁴ Derrida announces the condition on which goodness 'can exist beyond all calculation' as 'the condition that goodness forget itself, that the movement be a movement of the gift that renounces itself, hence a movement of infinite love.'⁶⁵ This 'goodness' does not only forget itself in death, but through this action, its source 'remains inaccessible to the donee.'⁶⁶ This dissymmetry of the gift, the violation of a restricted, conserved economy in which something given is always balanced and summed to zero by something gained, means that the gift is above all 'a goodness whose inaccessibility acts as a command to the donee.'⁶⁷ It is a powerful command, a trembling command which is in effect a command to *live*, not die, to perpetually give life and to keep giving, for one cannot arrive at death, at that ultimate alterity to which we are called, and thus the call necessarily keeps us living, 'for the sake of the living.'⁶⁸ In sharing or giving and opening the secret, this dissymmetry recognises in the very inability to fully reveal or indeed know the secret, that which perpetuates the sacrificial act infinitely and thus maintains the living sacrifice as unclaimable and thus dispersed. Derrida points out that in the economy of exchange, goodness 'subjects its receivers, giving itself to them as goodness itself but also as *the law*.'⁶⁹ This unexpected invocation of the law illustrates the status of laws as, unlike life, replaceable. This new law of connectivity between self and other is a law that points to itself, to its own founding. It is a law of responsibility to the other, a law that maintains its force, its source of life so long as responsibility to the other is maintained. What is significant here is what makes this law different to the laws of the mythic cycle of violence: The absence of a founding in a temporally bound and preserved moment. The law of responsibility is founded in the process of deconstructive self-sacrifice. It lays its foundations on that which unfounds. It is indeed dependent on a shift in conscious awareness and on an experiential encounter with the other through perpetual self-sacrifice. This law of encounter is further explored by Derrida under the theme of hospitality as a site for self and other exchange in the cultural context.

Derrida observes that 'not only is there a culture of hospitality but there is no culture that is not a culture of hospitality.'⁷⁰ Furthermore, and perhaps indicative of the fundamental nature of the hospitable act as it stands in the political context, 'all cultures compete in this regard and present themselves as more hospitable than the others.'⁷¹ This competition points to the aporia of the hospitable act as an enactment of giving the genuine gift.

When two uniquely situated beings meet, who, Derrida asks, will take it upon themselves to welcome the other? Who will assume the role of the host and in doing so subjugate the other to the role of the guest.⁷² Who will be 'at-home' and who will be made to feel 'at-home' through a certain contrived performative grace? As Derrida explains, '[v]isitor and invited, visitation and invitation, are simultaneously in competition and incompatible; they figure the non-dialectizable tension, ... at once active and deferred, of the concept of hospitality.'⁷³ Once again, Derrida turns his deconstructive efforts to the identification of the germ of potential difference in this aporia. In his exploration of the theme he comes upon an alternative actor in the hospitable performance, that of the unexpected visitor, the interruptive other. This interruptive guest is one who demands a more genuine act of hospitality. Not being a part of the competitive role-play, they pose something of a threat to the known order. Derrida depicts the 'welcome' as a 'peaceable and peaceful experience'⁷⁴ but notes that the unexpected other brings 'a more violent experience, a drama of the relation to the other that ruptures, bursts in or breaks in.'⁷⁵ This unexpected guest is potentially 'an experience of the Good that elects me before I welcome it, in other words of a goodness, a good violence of the Other that precedes welcoming.'⁷⁶ In so far as the unexpected guest demands an authentic act of hospitality as opposed to a staged and expectant *habitual* act of hospitality, the interruptive visitor holds the host *hostage*. The host is at the mercy of the guest as much as the guest is at the mercy of the host. But what is hospitality without these roles of guest and host? Derrida describes 'the experience, the apprehension, the exercise of impossible hospitality, of hospitality as the possibility of impossibility [as an] exemplary experience of deconstruction.'⁷⁷ Because the power balance is realigned through the messianic advent of the ultimate other, the unknown rather than the familiar expected guest, generates an unscripted performance of togetherness, of impossible hospitality. Impossible hospitality thus becomes the 'deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than "its-other", to the other who is beyond any "its-other."⁷⁸ If our home, our self-hood, is dismantled, mutually by ourselves and (each) other in the performance of impossible hospitality, then where do we enact the living gift? It is tempting to construe deconstructive interfaith dialogue as sacrificial exodus, away from all our homes, our zones of sleepy comfort, to awaken together in the desert of our alterity, perhaps to awaken somehow different, or rather, in the process of difference. But this is contrived; a marginalisation of deconstruction to a merely neutral public space, where, in its neutrality, precisely nothing is deconstructed. What is required is the welcoming of the unexpected other into the very heart of the home. The

hearth, which is the cultural counterpart of the secret, the 'private,' is revealed as the desert terrain with all its aporetic potential. Indeed we could see this transformation as already foreshadowed in the ancient gods of the hearth, where the other-than-human, the divine other, is enshrined as an *adytum*, literally a 'not passable place', at the very focus of the self. We find here the paradox of an exodus towards the hearth/khora.

The law of the gift of goodness, of impossible hospitality, commands us to remake the decision, to encounter the undecidable anew, every time. It is a law for justice in an active sense, it is a law of *responsibility* which leads the unique, irreplaceability of each deciding moment and each deciding subject to the opening within itself, the opening through which we might step to assentation. As Derrida explains, the 'gift of infinite love comes from someone and is addressed to someone'⁷⁹ – which means that responsibility, like death, demands irreplaceable singularity in the giving relationship. Furthermore, because only 'death or rather the apprehension of death can give this irreplaceability... it is only on the basis of [the apprehension of death] that one can speak of a responsible subject.'⁸⁰ Instead of the law being handed within a culture and followed unthinkingly, this law of responsible engagement, engagement with our own becoming and that of the others around and within us, is determined by the experience of, and commitment to giving the gift of death. This subject position is special as the 'irreplaceable [must] be aware of *itself* ...and therefore be a self with a rapport to itself, which is not the case in every unique and irreplaceable being in its existence.'⁸¹ This would also render the gift uneconomical in so far as it precludes fungibility, and along with it the possibility of representation, since all representation requires substitution; the dishonesty of one sign speaking for another. The potential of this move is unprecedented as through it 'the possibility of a mortal's assentation to responsibility through the experience of its irreplaceability'⁸² is opened. Indeed self awareness, the awareness of self as 'ipseity,' the awareness that *necessitates* a perpetual movement towards the unknown in its revelation of the unknowability of the even the self, becomes the very 'condition of...compassion, sacrifice, expiation'⁸³ – in short, the precondition to conscious assentation. 'Assentation' here is therefore not a completed project, a 'summit' for instance; it is in motion still, it is climbing but it now knows it is climbing.

The opening of this possibility, this potential potential bares much weight on the question of a deconstructive universalisable culture through difference that our interfaith methodology is moving towards. What is striking about Derrida's claim is that if, for our methodological purposes, we expand his terms of reference and speak of communities of faith as unique actors amongst others and within themselves we can glimpse the possibil-

ity of a type of *communal* assentment to responsibility. It is the social context of the interfaith dialogue that puts this possibility of the communal scale to us. What the very presence of representatives of communities, of cultures, in the interfaith arena does is make explicit and inescapable the social and the cross-social. Our methodological project must consider, therefore, a relational social theory between the different selves and others involved in the process at different levels. We must consider the other and otherness as the incalculable aspect of the secret internal self as well as the other as external to self in others as other beings. We must also consider this relationship in regards to cultural groups as defining bodies of identity, as selves, as law making and breaking acting collectives.

Derrida goes so far as to identify the absence of a space for the otherness, for the 'mystical' or unknowable, in society as the very condition which allows for extreme forms of violent oppression to arise. 'Politics excludes the mystical' and in doing so 'either neglects, represses or excludes from itself every possibility of secrecy and ... everything that allows responsibility to be dedicated to secrecy.'⁸⁴ The potential for bloody mythic violence appears in the social mirror of attempts to suture difference in the realm of the intra-psychic. Without this witness we are without authentic democratic potential as our decisions, having not passed through the indecisive are prone to the calculable order of the given social structure. From the point of this absence, 'it takes very little to envisage an inevitable passage from the *democratic* to the *totalitarian*.'⁸⁵ These spaces must be respected for the deconstructive structure to be transcribed from the individual to the social realms. They must remain crucial in our structuring of the interfaith dialogue arena. This means that dialogue must not only be authentic, at heart(h), it must in deconstructing the hearth maintain its unique journey, its irreplaceability. In maintaining this at each welcoming hearth of the dialogue participants we also maintain the inevitable otherness in ourselves and others that we keep moving towards and which is always deferred, we maintain that voice which is outside the structures of the self, the critical other, for each other and thereby avoid the imposed totalitarian 'ends' of realising the fully revealed and dispersed secret.

A *différent* structure for pluralist-deconstructive interfaith dialogue

In making space within ourselves for what is different in each other, and in deferring the ends or goals of this deconstructive hospitality and giving, the pluralist-deconstructive interfaith dialogue is a forum for the instigation of a dialogical practice of *différance*. Derrida describes his hybrid neologism of '*différance*,' the differing and deferring of meaning and naming,

as ‘the historical, epochal unfolding of Being or of the ontological *différance*.’⁸⁶ In attempting to maintain a structure for a pluralist-deconstructive interfaith dialogue we must keep the open open. It must be protected from neutrality, ‘neitherness’ as the conflation of the other. It must prevent the reduction of hospitality, the quintessence of the home as hearth, to the no-home or no-space of the merely public and political. One must *be at home with* the other. This dialogue is power in action in Arendt’s sense in that it is a collective act in which a social group engages in making something, sharing something and is in the throws of co-deconstruction and creation via their gathering. It is not, however, a political structure that builds walls or fences to shut each other or external others, especially marginalised others out. Nor is it a structure through which we might be tempted to build pathways to a Kingdom, a Kingdom with exclusive walls and large gate, our ancient perverted dream of shutting the other out once and for all: ‘[N]ot only is there no kingdom of *différance*, but *différance* instigates the subversion of every kingdom which makes it obviously threatening and infallibly dreaded by everything within us that desires a kingdom, the past or future presence of a kingdom.’⁸⁷ Derrida indeed designates as *différance* ‘the movement according to which language, or any code, any system of referral in general is constituted “historically” as a weave of differences.’⁸⁸ The metaphor of weaving, the way Derrida describes it, is appropriate for the interfaith process in as much as it encapsulates the performance of construction through the deconstruction of meaning. ‘The word *sheaf*⁸⁹ in interfaith dialogue may thus mark, as in Derrida’s process of *différance*, ‘that the assemblage to be proposed has the complex structure of a weaving, an interlacing which permits the different threads and different lines of meaning – or of force – to go off again in different directions.’⁹⁰ The limits of the sheaf, its border, is constituted by the loose threads which ask to be woven but never tied off. The process of becoming through difference weaves engagement with the external and internal others in and out of each other in intimate spaces of meeting, revelation, mirroring, critique and then solitary refection, movement and return. The sheaf is not a tower to be named and destroyed, it surrounds us, it is us and our relationships; its shape is determined by our performative moments of interaction and it can grow creatively, outwardly, in any direction without end.

Monash University

Elyse.Rider@arts.monash.edu.au

NOTES

- ¹ Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," eds Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings: Volume 1, 1913-1926* (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004) 250.
- ² Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*. (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1970), 51.
- ³ Arendt, *On Violence*, 51.
- ⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Portable Arendt*, ed Peter Baehr, (New York: Penguin, 2003), 442.
- ⁵ Arendt, *The Portable Arendt*, 442.
- ⁶ Arendt, *The Portable Arendt*, 440.
- ⁷ Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", 250.
- ⁸ Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", 252.
- ⁹ Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", 251-52.
- ¹⁰ Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", 252.
- ¹¹ Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", 248- 49.
- ¹² Paul F Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*, (Maryknoll and New York: Orbis Books, 1995), 52.
- ¹³ Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions*, 52.
- ¹⁴ Raimundo Panikkar, "Religious Pluralism: The Metaphysical Challenge", ed Leroy Rouner, in *Religious Pluralism* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 108.
- ¹⁵ Ian Hamnett, "Religious Pluralism", ed Ian Hamnett, in *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief: Studies Critical and Comparative* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 7.
- ¹⁶ Hamnett, "Religious Pluralism", 7.
- ¹⁷ George E. Rupp, "Commitment in a Pluralistic World", ed Leroy Rouner, in *Religious Pluralism* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) 215.
- ¹⁸ Leonard Swindler, *After the Absolute: The Diagonal Future of Religious Reflection* (Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1990).
- ¹⁹ Hamnett, "Religious Pluralism", 7.
- ²⁰ Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours De Babel", ed Gill Anidjar, in *Acts of Religion* (New York and London: Routledge, 1980), 104.
- ²¹ Carl F Starkloff, *A Theology of the In-between: The Value of Syncretic Process*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002).
- ²² Starkloff, *A Theology of the In-between*.

- ²³ Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions*, 30.
- ²⁴ Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions*, 30.
- ²⁵ Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority", ed Gill Anidjar, in *Acts of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 256.
- ²⁶ Derrida, "Force of Law", 257.
- ²⁷ Derrida, "Force of Law", 252.
- ²⁸ Derrida, "Force of Law", 258.
- ²⁹ Derrida, "Force of Law", 258.
- ³⁰ Derrida, "Force of Law", 257.
- ³¹ Derrida, "Force of Law", 257.
- ³² Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone", ed Gill Anidjar, in *Acts of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 57.
- ³³ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 57.
- ³⁴ Derrida, "Force of Law", 257.
- ³⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 199.
- ³⁶ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 78.
- ³⁷ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 78.
- ³⁸ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 78.
- ³⁹ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 78.
- ⁴⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, Trans. David Wills (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 40.
- ⁴¹ In Derrida's theory, the gift is a regular and important theme. It signifies absence in that the gift, as an object is completely symbolic, replaceable and arbitrary. What it facilitates is the exchange of good will and gratitude as feelings of participants in the economy of giving. It is therefore of the same incalculable order as the theme of justice in that it call forth actions and performances that it is conceptually beyond. Jacques Derrida, *Given Time 1. Counterfeit Money*, trans Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), 30.
- ⁴² Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", 250 (my emphasis).
- ⁴³ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 41 (my emphasis).
- ⁴⁴ Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", p. 250.
- ⁴⁵ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 58.
- ⁴⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality", Ed. Gill Anidjar, in *Acts of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 420 (my emphasis).
- ⁴⁷ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 87.
- ⁴⁸ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 87.
- ⁴⁹ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 87.

- ⁵⁰ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 109.
- ⁵¹ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 114.
- ⁵² Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 115.
- ⁵³ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 56.
- ⁵⁴ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 56.
- ⁵⁵ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 56.
- ⁵⁶ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 87.
- ⁵⁷ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 109 (his emphasis).
- ⁵⁸ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 109.
- ⁵⁹ Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, trans David Wood, John P Leavey, Jr and Ian McLeod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 126.
- ⁶⁰ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 58.
- ⁶¹ Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 59.
- ⁶² Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", 59.
- ⁶³ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 50.
- ⁶⁴ It is interesting how at some points in the use of English language these words become interchangeable. We could say 'the gods demand your *life* as a sacrifice' and equally 'the gods demand your *death* as a sacrifice.' The meaning remains intact.
- ⁶⁵ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 50-1.
- ⁶⁶ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 41.
- ⁶⁷ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 41.
- ⁶⁸ Benjamin, "Critique of Violence", p. 250.
- ⁶⁹ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 41 (my emphasis).
- ⁷⁰ Derrida, "Hospitality", 361.
- ⁷¹ Derrida, "Hospitality", 361.
- ⁷² In French this discussion on hospitality is made more interesting as a result of the word for guest and the word for host being the same word: *hôte*.
- ⁷³ Derrida, "Hospitality", 362.
- ⁷⁴ Derrida, "Hospitality", 364.
- ⁷⁵ Derrida, "Hospitality", 364.
- ⁷⁶ Derrida, "Hospitality", 364.
- ⁷⁷ Derrida, "Hospitality", 364.
- ⁷⁸ Derrida, "Hospitality", 364.
- ⁷⁹ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 51.
- ⁸⁰ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 51.
- ⁸¹ Derrida, "Hospitality", 420.

⁸² Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 51.

⁸³ Derrida, "Hospitality", 420.

⁸⁴ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 34.

⁸⁵ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 34.

⁸⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Différance", trans Allen Bass, in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 22.

⁸⁷ Derrida, "Différance", 22.

⁸⁸ Derrida, "Différance", 12.

⁸⁹ Derrida, "Différance" the concept of the 'sheaf' is used throughout.

⁹⁰ Derrida, "Différance", 3.