

“Is Border a Protestant Topic Having Created a Secular Topology?”

In the chorale “Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott” Martin Luther wrote probably a bit earlier than 1529 the first two sentences give confidence in God by creating a place being a stronghold for a “we”. The first two phrases say: „Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, ein gute Wehr und Waffen. Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not, die uns jetzt hat betroffen.” So, there will be a territory of faith belonging to a homogeneous group which is under pressure and which is in need of security. The territory their faith prepares for them gives this security. The stronghold has a clear border made of stone and of weapons. Here a border is created between those who suffer affliction and those who pressure them. So, the others being dangerous foes and the people belonging to one’s own group are separated and this gives confidence for those inside. A border of faith and of believes will include those who belong to one’s own faith or who share one’s own believes. This people create this real ‘we’ whereas the others belong to a virtual ‘them’. So, a border especially a border based on faith or on belief is not simply a frontier. It is more than a political issue about a topographical reality. It is a marker for identification which is bound to a special mode of space. Borders have a topological impact excluding and/or including people on the basis of a discourse about homogeneity. Luther chorale using Psalm 46 is, of course, not the first invention of borders but it invents homogeneity within this border. Faith becomes a fortress. A hundred years later this idea of a border creating homogeneity was used by Catholic theologians in the opposite manner. The pressured ‘we’ is not secured by a border any more but others not belonging to one’s own pure universe of faith are excluded from the common ground, like the Lutherans for not obeying the Pope. For the Jesuit Robert Bellarmin a visible border has to be drawn between those believing in the correct form of faith and those who are dissenters in this or that respect. This border is the Church. Here, the fortress of faith is generating excluding power against others and for the sake of those staying in it.

In the 19th century during the wars against Napoleon which created in Germany a sort of longing for homogeneity towards a united nation Luther’s chorale was used in an excluding mode. The same can be said about the war against France in 1870/71 and in the First World War (Michael Fischer, Religion, Nation, Krieg, 2014). Here, inclusion and exclusion belong to the border of homogeneity at the same time.

Then, the most important secularization of borders by believes was realized in economic terms. One of the essential elements of Henry Ford’s River Rouge Plant in Detroit was a secured border between those working for the company in this plant and those excluded from that. This created the typical economy of the classical, so called ‘heavy’ modernity (Zygmunt Bauman, Liquid modernity). The social and cultural homogeneity of the workers for the Ford Motor Company was considered to be one the basic elements for the economical success. In classical Fordism strictly observed borders are topological incentives for economic success. In the borders where rich states like the USA and the European Union currently try to exclude those who should not belong to their territories this heavy modern topology is still present. It is based on a secular faith of homogeneity by a higher idea which is implemented on the ground of a shared territory.

So, one may argue that a protestant faith needs borders to function as positive factors for the homogeneity of a nation, a state or a culture. Yet, theses borders cannot be secured as empowering borders for the afflicted. They are transformed into a heterotopian topology for

generating homogeneity by power and discipline. This is a sort of secular fate for territories created by faith and confidence in religious strongholds.

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