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Cain and migration: Opportunity amidst punishment?

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In the colonial period since 1492, the colonial masters of Europe sent perpetrators within the colonised territories to other colonies where they became slaves – forced migration and diaspora. These slaves started a new life and became, like Cain's children, the ancestors of a few notable families (e.g. in South Africa) – a typical postcolonial situation of creating hybrid identities where East met West in Africa to procreate. The question this article asks is the following: how can one link migration and diaspora to Cain's situation? Cain's punishment was twofold: the earth would no longer yield to him any fruit, and he would become a fugitive and a wanderer (Gn 4:12). It is as if the first logically led to the second in the Hebrew text. Cain's vulnerability had a positive effect, so that later on in the story he seemed to have settled and procreated to the extent that his children became founders of arts, science and technology. The LXX partly solves this contradiction by making Cain physically handicapped with trembling and groaning. Significantly, in both traditions he is said to leave the presence of the deity to live elsewhere where he would not be confronted with either the deity or his parents. In both instances, a migration is clearly taking place with the implication that once being branded a perpetrator one can no longer reside within the community or society in whose midst the transgression took place. The perpetrator is removed from the victims and the latter need no longer confront him or her. This article will subsequently consider the following: the value of migration in the biblical text, the significance of Cain moving away from his clan and deity, and the effect of settling elsewhere.

Introduction

What started as a small refreshment colony for Dutch ships during the expanding of commercial sea routes in the 15th century soon turned out to become an integral part of a larger migration process that saw groups of people transplanted from elsewhere to the southern tip of the African continent. Initially, some came as part of the European workforce of the Verenigde Oost-Indiesche Companie (VOIC), enslaving the few they could find inhabiting the area around them. However, migration was not always voluntary – the colonial masters of capital sent perpetrators within the colonised periphery to other colonies for enslavement. They created a forced migration, which, in turn, produced a diaspora. These slaves started a new life in their newly adopted countries, and became like Cain's children in Genesis 4:20–22, the ancestors of a few notable families (in South Africa, for example, most Afrikaner families have a slave woman as their ancestral mother). In a typical colonial situation, hybrid identities were created: East met West in Africa to procreate. But then the sad irony: some of these slave mothers were indigenous to Southern Africa, and the epistemology of the day saw them as the descendants of Cain, wild people, barbarians, uncivilised, as the tradition of Cain interpretation showed. Both Eben Scheffler and I come from a migratory background. As far as I know, Eben's migrational history is of a voluntary missiological nature. Mine is further back in history and part of forced migration with my ancestral mother, Catharine of Paliacatta/Pulicat (1631–1683), sent to the Cape as prisoner after her death sentence was commuted in Batavia. In the Cape, she became the washerwoman of successive commanders of the VOIC. She was impregnated by a soldier from Heidelberg, Germany, Hans Christoffel Schneider, who was sent to Robben Island for leaving his guarding post in the process and then banished from the Cape. The boy born from this liaison, Christoffel Snijman, later married a Huguenot woman, Marguerite de Savoie, a religious refugee from Europe (see Upham 2012).

The question this article asks is how to link migration/diaspora/exile with Cain. Cain's punishment was twofold: the earth no longer yielded to him any fruit and forced him to become a fugitive and a wanderer (Gn 4:12). It is as if the first – the soil closing its womb to Cain logically led to the second in the Hebrew text – Cain becoming a wanderer in search of a livelihood and food. In interpretative history, Cain's mark in verse 15 attached to him a stigma of shame, 'a punitive symbol that permits a community to humiliate, discriminate, and harm outcast criminals' (Von Kellenbach 2013:14). As stigma it is 'fraught with cruel and repressive implications' (Von Kellenbach 2013:14) for others penalised in the course of history because of its understanding as a divinely endorsed marginalisation.

Note: The collection entitled 'Eben Scheffler Festschrift', sub-edited by Jurie H. le Roux (University of Pretoria) and Christo Lombaard (University of South Africa).

In an ironical twist though, Boesak turns the table in associatively identifying Cain with whiteness (1984:151–154), marking the white oppressors homeless and landless because of their oppressive policies.

Cain

The story of migration and exile starts with Adam and Eve when they are banished from the Garden of Eden and barred from returning with two angels guarding the eastern entrance to garden. Cain, in turn, is forced to migrate after he killed Abel. He receives a mark protecting him and he finds a wife, procreates and builds a city. He moved to the land of Nod, portrayed also as some area east of Eden. It is as if the first human beings and their immediate progeny slowly migrated further east (Léonard-Roques 2003:28).

There are a few similarities with the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 and Cain and Abel in Genesis 4. Firstly, Adam and Eve are driven out of the Garden of Eden. Their migration was for all practical purposes enforced, especially with angels with flaming swords guarding in the east. With Cain, it seems as if he migrates out of his own will. But his punishment, that he would become a wanderer and fugitive, makes it logical that he had to move on to somewhere. If migration is included in the punishment, it is also enforced. In both confrontations, God refers to desire. In Genesis 3:16 it is the woman's desire aimed at her husband, and in Genesis 4:7 it is the desire of the animal lurking at the door that is aimed at Cain. Wénin (1999:5) relates this obvious parallelism to the relationship between his parents: the husband shall rule over his wife (Gn 3:16b) and Cain needs to master the desire lurking at the door (Gn 4:7). Adam knew his wife and the fruit of that knowledge was Cain. Wénin (1999:11) argues that Cain became the object of his mother's desire, whereas the desire he had to master links up with his parents' relation that is marked by covetousness and manumission. According to Wénin (1999:12), the relation between Cain and his mother, Eve, is at the root of his jealousy of Abel. This is the desire the deity wants Cain to master. But Cain fails, and with it, he fails the test of being human: putting order to chaos, reigning in the energies released by desire and returning the world to the chaos from which the deity pulled it during creation (Wénin 1999:15). For this reason, Cain's migration is simply a return to the chaotic world. Cain and chaos soon became synonyms.

In verse 12b, Cain is condemned to be a fugitive and a wanderer (נָ֥ע וָנָ֖ד תִּהְיֶ֥ה בָאָֽרֶץ), a status he repeats himself in verse 14. Verse 16 alludes to the play of words נָ֥ע וָנָ֖ד when it states that Cain went away from the presence of the deity, settling in the land of *Nod* that is east of Eden (וַיֵּ֣שֶׁב בְּאֶֽרֶץ־נ֔וֹד קִדְמַ֖ת־עֵֽדֶן׃).

The wordplay of the Masoretic text (MT) version disappears completely in the Septuagint (LXX) where (verse 12) Cain is condemned to be groaning and trembling on earth (στένων καὶ τρέμων ἔσῃ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). It similarly repeats the words in verse 14, but in verse 16 the land of Nod becomes a geographical place. The LXX reads καὶ ᾤκησεν ἐν γῇ Ναιδ κατέναντι Εδεμ, that is, Cain went away from the deity to live in the land of Naid over against Eden (for a discussion on the land of Nod in the Hebrew text, see below).

Cain is cursed with the earth not opening up to him. For him, as a farmer, it is a death sentence because his possibilities to make a living are closed down. He is cut off not only from the soil, but also from the community. Thus, the moment he is declared a fugitive and a wanderer, one with no community and without any residence, he was obliged to move away. Dershowitz (2000:50) observes that the deity did not impose proportional punishment, but his exclusion would carry serious consequences by being exposed to nature and animals without the safety of other people. Without land to till and without a community in which to live for protection, Cain was as good as dead (Westermann 1984:307).

The words נָ֥ע וָנָ֖ד (a combination of two participles, Byron 2011:97) express an existence of being hunted and hounded, but it should be stated that it is not the life of a nomad (Westermann 1984:304). Cain accepts his punishment, reiterating that he will become a wanderer and fugitive in being driven from the soil, literally banished (verse 14). Cain's subsequent removing of himself from the face of the deity concludes this banishment, or being cut off. Cain's existence remains under the anger of the deity and he needs to hide himself. Cain's acknowledgement of his banishment and new life as a fugitive and wanderer indicates what has become unavoidable: Abel was prevented from enjoying family bonds, and now Cain experiences the same fate (Byron 2011:98). The consequence of Cain's murdering his brother is that he has become an outcast with a vague mark as his only protection.

In verse 16 Cain is said to have gone to live *be aretz Nod*, translated in some versions as some kind of country, the land of Nod, opposite the Garden of Eden. Stronger than the geographical indication is the symbolism behind the name, the participle נָד which the LXX translated with τρέμων. Ancient interpreters like Pseudo-Philo, Ephrem or Clement of Alexandria and Chrysostomos (Byron 2011:101) saw a play here between Cain's punishment and the place he went to, namely, the land of shaking. Byron (2011:102) argues that the story in the history of interpretation thus received a much more vengeful outcome, turning the land of Nod into a land of homelessness or restlessness (Westermann 1984:314). Similarly, east of Eden implies outside of the Garden of Eden, that is, a state of isolation from the deity.

Westermann (1984) provides reasons for Cain's banishment and subsequent migration. He argues that banishment from the group was simply the punishment for fratricide or parricide in early communities. He justifies his view with a reference to the *Arabia Petraea* of Mosil who wrote about the Arabian society as follows:

> If anyone kills his own father or brother, he is not to be killed but is to be excluded from the tribal circle and no strange tribe, or even enemy tribe, is to receive him. By his crime he has lost the right to be a member of the human community. (p. 315)

A murder poisons the sources of life (Westermann 1984:317).

Frazer (1918:78–103) provides a lengthy discussion on the issue of banishment in other cultures. In most of the cultures he refers to, the murderer is banished from the midst of the tribe or group in which the murder took place, the reason being less a moral aversion of the crime and more from what he calls 'prudential motives', the dangerous ghost of the victim haunting and pursuing the murderer in their midst. It is a fear of an enraged ghost of the murdered victim that lies at the root of many ancient customs observed in connection with homicide. The spectre of a murderer dogged by a powerful and angry ghost endangers the society. Some choose to execute the murderer; others choose to send him (or her) away with certain preconditions for returning to appease the spirit of the murdered victim. There is a particular necessity for Cain to leave his tribe. His murdering of his brother changed the relations within his community and he could no longer stay there.

In the LXX, Cain's curse is transformed. Although the Masoretic text turns Cain into a fugitive and wanderer, the LXX makes the curse physical and personal: Cain receives a vocal groaning and a bodily tremor.[1] Theologically, it appears that the deity in the Hebrew version is much more lenient or sympathetic towards Cain than towards Adam and Eve in the previous chapter (Dershowitz 2000:51). Byron (2011:98) argues that Cain, as city builder and progenitor of arts, science and technology, does not tie up with him being a wanderer and fugitive. He sees a lack of justice in connection with the nature of the crime. Subsequently, he views the LXX's transformation of Cain's punishment into tremors and groaning as an attempt to rectify the lack of justice. The physical affliction attributed to Cain appears to be more agreeable than the punishment the MT provides for Cain, a mere fugitive and wanderer in the land of Nod.

The land of Nod provided many readers or interpreters since late Roman Antiquity (on the basis of the two basic renditions found in the Vulgate and Septuagint) with a gap that can be filled in so as to render Cain's bad name in proportion to his crime. In the story, Nod sounds like a geographical location, but more than that the reader does not know. In line with the LXX translation, Clement of Alexandria sees Nod as disturbance and Pseudo-Philo sees it as the land of trembling. The commentary on Genesis by Ephrem supports the LXX and explains it as a land in which Cain wandered in fear and trembling. To Byron (2011:101), the story creates a dissonance between justice and injustice. The murder screamed for vengeance, and the deity fails to provide it. Later interpretations would add such vengeance.

1.Byron 2011 provides the following explanation: But the description of Cain 'groaning' and the use of στένω for either נוד or נוע is without precedent. The translator seems to have noticed the alliterative nature of the Hebrew participles and attempted to imitate it with his choice of Greek terms. It maybe that his choice of τρέμω led him to choose στένω, which not only retained the alliteration but also served to emphasise the seriousness of Cain's punishment (p. 98). In 1 Samuel 1:13 Hannah's lips are described as 'moving' (נוע – without making a sound), suggesting a quivering of lips. It is possible then to picture Cain as not only trembling but also his lips quivering.

Argues Boucher (2003):

> Biblical exegetes obtained the basic material for their extrapolations from the Septuagint and the Vulgate, the two major renditions of the story. Since both documents presented slightly different pictures of the Biblical episode, variations were amalgamated, giving writers a larger pool of basic facts for their extrapolations. At times, as we will see, exegetes incorporated extra-Biblical facts insuring that the myth would extend far beyond the word of the Scripture. (p. 36)

The Judeo-Christian tradition developed Cain into a wild animal-like creature with a conflation of the physical and the moral. Hayden White (1987) explains:

> The wilderness is the chaos lying at the heart of darkness, a void into which the soul is sent in its degradation, a barren place from which few if any return. (p. 160)

Thus, wilderness appears in the heart of a human being, manifesting as insanity, sin or evil, in short, reflecting a falling away from God. The archetypes of wildness are rebels against God, for example Cain, Ham and Ishmael. In Hebrew thought, they are men who have fallen even below the condition of animality itself and can be killed with impunity. Thus, when a human being lost God's blessing and fell into a condition of accursedness, his or her spiritual condition manifested in terms of wildness (cf. Snyman 2008:395–426). The community's relationship with the accursed was clear: they are to be exiled, isolated and avoided (White 1987:162).

Subsequently, the land of Nod became a place of exile, compared with a desert, an isolated and dark wasteland (cf. Boucher 2003:36). In the Middle Ages, Cain became a 'monstrously deformed creature' or was clothed in the garbs of a wild man (Boucher 2003:37). Cain became the archetypal Wild Man in the Hebrew tradition and, analogically, in the Christian tradition. He became the explanation for monstrous or fantastic creatures, or any human being who defied European cultural norms (Boucher 2003:37). Here enters the colonial mind: in the 16th century, it was then easy to depict a piece of land in similar terms and associate it with the Land of Nod. For example, Jacques Cartier, a mariner sent out by the French King Francois I to explore North America, linked the place he arrived at to the land of Nod. The appearance of that particular place fitted his perception or imagination of what Cain's place of exile could have been. He argues as follows (as cited in Boucher 2003):

> If the land were as good as the harbors, it would be a blessing, but it should not be called the New Land, but horrifying and rugged stones and rocks; for along the entire north shore I did not see a cart-load of soil and I landed in many places. Except for Blanc Sablon there is nothing but moss and short, stinted shrub. In short I deem that more likely this is the land that God gave to Cain. (p. 35)

Cartier's audience were sufficiently acquainted with the myth of Cain and the imagery with regard to Nod and Cain himself, that they would have grasped his description immediately, even when he commented on the indigenous inhabitants as scary and wild. His interest was not ethnographic, but his utilisation of a biblical analogy offers a

'conceptual bridge', which ultimately legitimises his depiction of the indigenous inhabitants. As wild men, they are Cain's progeny. It was then easy to connect the inhabitants seen in this piece of land to the progeny of Cain, as the latter were understood to have been associated with the notion of 'wild men'. In other words, Cain as a fugitive and vagabond is a law unto himself and an adversary to civilisation. His character found fertile ground as a prototype of many wandering characters in Western fiction and films.

Robert Doak (2001:17) argues that it started with the arid landscape presenting a region where nothing grows, a desert with a scorching sun. In the early Western film, Cain, as wanderer, is portrayed as the outlaw, the Indian, the roaming gunfighter, the nomad and the typical Augustinian monstrous villain (Doak 2001:17). In later films, the wanderer is depicted in Romantic terms – violent but sympathetic and a champion of the oppressed (2001:20).

The wanderer is an outlaw, but essentially a good man who suffered at the hands of society whose control he challenged. Says Doak (2001):

> As sympathetic Cain figures, they reveal that if, in opposing this power, the Western hero must accept ostracization, and even exile, as a small price to pay for maintaining independence and a connection with the sustaining wilderness. (p. 25)

The Cain-like figure may kill someone, but the benefit accrued from the murder outshines the malevolence associated with it. Such a killer is usually banned and not executed (Doak 2001:22).

Cain's vulnerability in the Romantic interpretation has a positive effect, and can be related to the second part of his story in which he seemed to have settled and procreated to the extent that his children became founders of arts, science and technology. In these films, sedentary life is contrasted with nomadic life, alluding to the figure of Cain as exemplar of nomadic life. In some, sedentary life is seen as the ideal with its association with order and progress, while the errant wild brutish inhuman brother is killed (Doak 2001:19). Sedentary life as the ideal is revealed when the nomadic outlawish character experiences a change of fortune, that is, receiving a job and being married. Cain, condemned to the status of a fugitive and a wanderer, soon after he moved away, is depicted as someone who took a wife, procreated and even built a city, a prime example of sedentary life in Genesis 4:17–19. However, the LXX and ancient Jewish interpretation turns Cain into an outlawish character by making Cain physically handicapped with trembling and groaning. Significantly, in both the MT and LXX he is said to leave the presence of the deity to live elsewhere where he would not be confronted with either the deity or his parents.

In both a migration is clearly taking place. With Cain the implication is that once being branded a perpetrator (murderer) one can no longer reside within the community or society in whose midst the transgression took place. The perpetrator is removed from the victims and the latter need no longer confront him or her. The migration itself seems to have become a spiritual affair. The land has been turned into a wasteland with Cain, a farmer with a sedentary lifestyle, unable to sustain himself. The fertility of the soil is withheld from Cain and he is forced to become a nomad like Abel once was. Later in the story he returns to a sedentary life by building a city. Nevertheless, the city is not the ideal, and a later one, Babel, is destroyed: 'People who build cities are people who are putting down roots, settling and making claim to more than the wanderer's existence', argues Ochs (1976:59). To Ochs, wandering, or the act of migrating, of not being settled or having taken root is a value from patriarchy. Not even the ark of the covenant survived settlement despite enduring the 'exigencies of desert travel' (Ochs 1976:59). In fact, reading further in Genesis one finds that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Moses, and Israel are continuously on the move. Ochs (1976:60) interprets it as follows: '[*E*]xile is a spiritual prerequisite for revelation, and wandering is the spiritual destiny of God's people'. The focus on spirituality, nonetheless, masks the tragedy caused by people moving around, for those on the move and especially for those in whose midst the people are moving.

Migration

In terms of migration theory, in an article on displacement, Peter Admirand (2014:675) claims the following: '[*F*]rom Cain, the forced wanderer, arises those who will migrate to follow herds and wherever their livelihood settles – much like the millions of economic migrants today'. In the history of Christian biblical interpretation, Cain became known as the wandering Jew, a negative term that links Cain's wandering and being a fugitive as punishment for the fratricide he committed (Admirand 2014:678). Yet Abraham's wanderings and fugitiveness – migration – is explained in terms of divine action. Ochs (1976:60) regards wandering, exile and misery as a patriarchal spiritual requirement, that is, 'the impossibility of feeling at home in this world or with these people'.

I understand migration as the crossing of spatial boundaries whereby an individual or a group intends to change his, her or their residence (Kok 1997:23): 'What is required for migration is that a change of residence must accompany the crossing of the boundary of a migration-defining area'. It is not a new phenomenon – readers will encounter migration already early in Genesis. Although the population movements in South Africa and elsewhere were rather slow and quite unobtrusive since the advent of humanity,[2] the expansion of the sea routes from the 15th century onwards made migration more sudden and dramatic in impact in exporting human beings to countries far away from their place of origin. The pace of migration as well as the distance travelled increased significantly because of the slave trade and the colonisation of territories in Africa, the Americas and parts of Asia.

2.Manson (2007:33) argues that one cannot refer here to migration as the latter implies nomadic and rudderless wanderings, whereas the Iron Age people were closely tied to their residences. He also sees migration as displacement, especially of those in whose midst the wandering group settles. He understands this kind of movement as segmentation and differentiation. See Maggs (1986:27–43), Swart (2007:6–12) and Giliomee and Mbenga (2007:viii).

Over against a rather positive view on migration,[3] one needs to recognise that a migrant would not have arrived in a neutral space. The stories of Abraham do not tell the reader about the populations in whose midst he moved in. Since the 15th century and the advent of the era of colonialism, colonial spaces were constructed by colonial hierarchies – a space of power relations that is already informed and constituted by coloniality (Grosfoguel, Oso & Christou 2015:641).[4] Someone migrating to the colony would enter and experience the space differently when the possibility of assimilation into the dominating society is greater than that of being associated with the dominated.

In thinking about migration, the effects of the movement of people need to be taken into consideration too (Dube 2016:66). Michael Prior (1999:130) makes the point that the biblical text and its reception in the West is part and parcel of the legitimation of the imperialist expansion of the Europe into the rest of the world. He (1999:150) says: 'The driving force within biblical studies has been the search for ancient Israel as the taproot of Western civilisation, and the antecedent of Christianity'.

Migration involves diaspora, and with the latter, exile. Diaspora deals with what Segovia (1999:186) terms 'geographical translation', in other words, 'the phenomenon of un-settlement, travel, and re-settlement from home-land to other-lands'. In common parlance (like the *Oxford English Dictionary*, OED), diaspora refers, firstly, to Jews not living in their homeland, that is, outside of Israel. In cultural studies, it refers to territorial displacement, forced as in indenture or slavery or voluntary as in emigration. Minimally, diaspora deals with territorial displacement (Segovia 1999:187–188). Although the term migration has a positive ring around it, displacement relates to human rights violations (Duthie 2011:243–244). Displaced people are especially vulnerable to violations of their basic human rights, for example, the destruction of their homes or property, ethnic cleansing, unlawful deportation, forced conscription or sexual assault (Duthie 2011:245).

Migration cannot be imagined in the biblical text without thinking about exile or diaspora and displacement of the former inhabitants: many Jews throughout the centuries lived voluntarily outside of what they perceive as their land; in other instances they had no choice and had to reside in other countries because of enforced exile (Davies 1982:117); and in yet other circumstances they were given land on condition they drive out the original inhabitants as was the case in the book of Judges and Joshua. Admirand (2014) states that migration is at the cusp of the biblical and anthropological journey:

> While science testifies to our origins in Africa, the mythical creation stories of Genesis (and with the differences, the Qur'an) outline why human beings were expelled from Eden. This pattern of (forced) migration continues until the next generation with Cain coerced to wander the earth. In fact, from Abraham to Jesus to Mohammed, such a pattern of movement, wandering, exile is a dominant trope. (p. 674)

For this reason, Admirand (2014:677) states that the Israelite story 'testifies to the fragility of the migrant and the constant need to be watchful for changing circumstances as exile was dependent upon often mercurial rulers'.

The image Israel had of themselves in the biblical texts is one of migration: the history of the patriarchs is one of migration in search of land, settling for a while in Egypt where enslavement forced them to move again, wandering in a desert before launching a conquest into someone else's land, displacing them. After a while, they could not retain the land and were displaced by another power, Babylon. They moved into Babylon and Egypt and North Africa, not everyone returning under Cyrus' decree. Their sojourn in Babylonia enabled them to produce the Babylonian Talmud. Josephus wrote (Ant 14.7.2):

> Now these Jews are already gotten into all cities; and it is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that has not admitted this tribe of men [*sic*], and is not possessed by them.

The diaspora in some instances even refused to help the Jews in Jerusalem in the war against Rome. Exile was not an unmitigated evil (Davies 1982:83).

Exile is closely linked to this image (Pohl 2003:3–15). Israel never was the place of birth of the Jewish people; they had to enter the land from without. They were born in exile, so to speak. Abraham was deterritorialised from his place of birth. When he entered the Promised Land, he had to buy a burial plot. The Torah was given to Israel in Sinai, not in the Promised Land. A defining document, the Babylonian Talmud, was written outside of the Promised Land, in Babylon. Disaster at the centre, the destruction of the temple and the loss of the land did not spell the end of Judaism. In fact, exile seems to have been the condition for the survival of Judaism. Settling was dangerous: the people soon lost their 'spiritual uniqueness' (Ochs 1976:60) by taking on the religious customs of their neighbours. Feeling at home, cultivating the soil and establishing one's roots became anathema to exile and wandering.

However, migration and exile meant in quite a few instances the displacement of others. For example, in Genesis 12:1 Abram receives the call from Yhwh to move with his family and brother Lot from Haran (in Turkey) to a place the deity will designate for him. Previously, in Genesis 11:31, it is said that Abram moved with his father from Ur in Mesopotamia to Haran. In Haran, it appears Abram acquired a considerable amount of wealth (livestock, slaves and material goods).

3.Irvin (2014:8), although recognising the ambiguities of migration, argues for the presence of hope and anticipation among those who voluntarily migrated and successfully settled and assimilated in the new territory. He ignores the effect of migration on slaves, or those forced to migrate to the colonial periphery.

4.The essay by Grosfoguel et al. (2015) on racism contextualises migration to European metropolitan centres with regard to the colonised entering the former coloniser's spaces. The current stream of refugees from Syria and economic migrants from Northern Africa also encounter a space informed by set power hierarchies that they need to negotiate to survive. Grosfoguel calls for a nuanced understanding of migration with regard to the colonial legacy to escape homogenisation of the experience.

Verse 5 states he took all his possessions and he arrived in Canaan via Shechem and Bethel, before he moved to Egypt because of a famine in Canaan. Abram succeeded in being deported from Egypt and he then moved into the Negev and back to Bethel where he once set up camp. It does not seem as if he and his entourage assimilated to the communities around them, presumably because they were nomadic. The story states explicitly that the Canaanites as well as the Perrizites inhabited the land. Nonetheless, when Abram and Lot came in conflict with one another, the two of them decided to separate, each taking his own direction, with Abram *receiving* a definite portion from the deity: land belonging to the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites (Gn 15:19–21).

Abraham's migration story illustrates the fragility of the human being in their reliance upon others for survival. Abram looked for pasture and food. Whether that was the reason for the initial migration, I do not know, but during the course of the narrative, it is clear that the lack of food and pasture pushed him into the direction of Egypt from where he is eventually deported. This fragility constitutes a 'constant state of anxiety, uncertainty and compromise' (Admirand 2014:675). The story also illustrates how the recipient community may initially welcome the stranger in the land, until the latter increase in numbers and pose a threat to the recipient community, especially when the latter suffers drought and famine causing political upheavals (Admirand 2014:676). The immigrating group can discover that their status changed overnight, as was the case with the Israelites in Egypt. They were eventually forced to move in search of a better life (though not for those in whose midst they subsequently moved into).

As Israel is depicted just before starting their conquest of Canaan receiving the last instructions from Moses in Deuteronomy, one of their first duties, after having entered the land, settled and tilled the soil, would be to take the first fruits to the sanctuary and declare the following (Dt 26:5–10 [New Revised Standard Bible]; Machiela 2008:379–400):

> A *wandering Aramean was my ancestor*; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.

The context of Deuteronomy 26 is that of being in the Promised Land and the occasion of the offering of the very first fruits. In other words, wandering is no longer an issue and the presence of first fruits imply that famine is no longer endangering the life of the covenant community. The history of the patriarchs was one of starvation with Abram going to Egypt when he experienced starvation in Canaan and Jacob sending his sons to collect food as they similarly experienced starvation at some stage (Janzen 1994:373–374). In this way, the offering of the first fruits is brought into a symbolic relation with the first fruits gathered in the new land (Carmichael 1969:278). And in the very next book the effect of the migration about to take place is depicted in what can be called a text of terror: the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan are driven out.

And Cain? Cain was forced to leave his tribal setting. His perpetration of murder cut through various ties making it impossible for him to till the soil or raise a family. Life to him was only possible outside of the closely knit fraternity woven around Adam and Eve and their other children. His journey was dangerous; he could not reckon on security and safety. His only protection a vague mark given to him by the deity. He enters the land of Nod without any claims. His entering of the land stands in contrast to Abraham's entering and later the conquest where the indigenous inhabitants were driven out. Cain, the perpetrator, perpetrates no more in the land of Nod. The progeny of Seth, born with the blood of Abel crying from the soil, ironically, enters a Promised Land with a genocide. Cain, in the land of Nod, eventually goes from strength to strength: his progeny builds a city and became the founders of arts, culture and technology. Did the mark end with Cain's death?

Conclusion

A wandering European man and a Bengali woman were my ancestors who went down to South Africa, the one for work, the other for punishment, where their progeny as freed slaves started to become part of the colonial machine displacing indigenous inhabitants depicted as monstrous and wild, marked just like Cain. In the end, they too partake in the characteristics of Cain in acting in a fratricidal way.

This is the contradiction I see in Cain: in contrast to the role the story of Cain played with the advent of modernity where Cain and his progeny were associated with wildness and barbarity, monstrousness with bestial qualities threatening the individual of modernity, my reference to Cain is an exercise to come to terms with the apartheid in South Africa, embracing accountability and commemoration, while being transparent about the processes I am obliged to engage with.

In other words, I engage with Cain in terms of the perpetrator dealing with his legacy of fratricide (in my case, racism) that proceeds through many stages and many formats. In the past, the figure of Cain was used to create certain hierarchies of power between colonial powers and the colonised, the wild people. But recently, with the decolonial turn asserting itself more and more, the exoticness and grandiosity of early associations between Cain and the colonised got exposed for what it is: racism. In Germany, Cain is utilised to engage the legacy of the Holocaust within the third generation of Germans.

The link between Cain and migration is perhaps less based on the notion of wandering and more on the interpretation of

the effect of wandering with a mark. A vagabond with a mark constituted to modernity a wild and barbaric creature, or at least a being unsuitable for what has been perceived as civilisation. The marking of others has now returned to bite the marker and to be marked as racist. For the moment, the question remains whether it is possible to get rid of the mark of Cain.

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