

No Such Country

A fragmented identity
as a chance for connection

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...the sense of having two places to be, two stories to maintain, two selves to balance, and finding no easy bridge between them.

*Elmar Lueth in *No Such Country: Essays Toward Home*, University of Iowa Press, 2002.

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- Lueth's statement reminds me of the grief, work and blessing related to a bi-national existence.
- This existence is a fragmented one, because we can only bring parts (fragments) from both worlds. In the dialogue, in the translation, something will be lost and something will be found.

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- “The movement is not toward resolution or the abstract clarity of argument. Instead, my stories move through a home that becomes more and more layered, following its constellations, telling its stories, and charting inside them the possibilities of belonging.” (Lueth, *ibid*, p. XV)
- Lueth’s statement encourages the possibility of living in different cultures at the same time, and bringing them into dialogue, where we become authors of our unique story.

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- My home will not be determined by a place, but by my decision to claim my life in whatever place I am in. Opportunities to grow and to learn are present in every place and in every situation.
- The movement of a life in different cultures adds layers to my story. Every layer is created by the fragments of the different cultures engaging in internal and external dialogue.
- This is what my life and supervision build on in their best moments.

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- Henning Luther's theory (in *Religion und Alltag*) understands fragmentation as a state of deficiency and need, and a state of openness and possibility. He describes identities as fragmented in their relationship to past, present and future. Fragmentation contrasts in totality, entirety.
- Only a fragmented life can change. It can be added to and subtracted from. It's existence of being fragmented opens possibilities. It also acknowledges the energy this endeavor requires and generates.

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- We can not have a full identity without fragmentation. A full identity without fragmentation is only possible if we sacrifice grief, hope and love.
- Because our story is fragmented it is open and can add layers to build a home for our unique life.
- To live in two (or more) cultures has the advantage of allowing us to see limits and therefore their fragmented character. It enables us to stand outside of each culture and differentiate from it.

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- This experience helps us to see others in their fragmented existence and character without losing hope.
- This knowledge enables us to guide and support others through the differentiation from their culture/ opinions/faith/values and to accept their life and the lives of others as fragments, even the life of God.
- Awareness of our fragmentation leads into dialogue with others, with the world, and with the Divine.