

NEW RESEARCH – NEW VOICES

Global Citizen – Challenges and Responsibility in an Interconnected World

Aksel Braanen Sterri (Ed.)



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**Global Citizen – Challenges and Responsibility
in an Interconnected World**

NEW RESEARCH – NEW VOICES

Volume 3

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Global Citizen – Challenges and Responsibility in an Interconnected World

Edited by

Aksel Braanen Sterri

University of Oslo, Norway



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PREFACE

The origin of this volume is the Global Citizens public lecture series held at the University of Oslo in the fall of 2012. The aim of the series was to spread awareness among students of our global challenges and discuss the responsibility we have as citizens in a global world.

Knut Kjeldstadli, Nina Witoszek, Karen O'Brien, Halvor Moxnes, Janicke Heldal Stray, Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Dan Banik, which all contributed to this book, held lectures as part of this series. I am grateful for their participation in both the lecture series and this volume. I am also thankful for the contributions from Evelin Lindner, Johanne Sundby, Andreas Føllesdal and Helge Hveem, who contributed on short notice with articles of their own to make this anthology something to be proud of. I have surely learnt a lot from them all.

This volume would not have been written, even less published, if it had not been for several people, and they all deserve thanks: Gøril Mellem for being responsible for the lecture series, and rector of the University of Oslo Ole Petter Ottersen and former vice-rector Inga Bostad for giving me the opportunity to be editor of this volume. All the participants deserve great thanks, not only for contributing their texts but also for all their patience.

Thanks also to Sense Publishers and especially Jolanda Karada for great help in putting this book together. Anders Lundell at the University of Oslo deserves special thanks. Besides proofreading and making sure I made the deadlines, without his initiative and great job coordinating with the publisher, this book would not have been published in this form.

All lectures in the lecture series are available for free on YouTube.

Aksel Braanen Sterri
Oslo, 15 November 2014

INTRODUCTION

The world must have looked small to the great economist John Maynard Keynes. Before the outbreak of the First World War, in the famous essay *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), he writes: “The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in bed, the various products of the whole earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep.” This is nothing compared to the connectedness of our days. We have never been richer, more enlightened, had better health or been more educated than now. Much of that has its roots in the interconnectedness of the world we live in. Still, as anyone who pays at least marginal attention to the state of affairs, knows the global challenges we face are enormous. Yet, at present, we lack the solidarity, the motivations and the institutions to solve them.

Some scientists say we live in “the Anthropocene”: “the first period in geological history defined by the significant impact of human activities on the Earth system”, as Karen O’ Brien puts it in this volume. Trade, production and consumption, the same activities that bring us our prosperity, are the causes of our problems. The most pressing challenge is the unsustainable omission of CO₂ in the atmosphere. It threatens to make life miserable for humans, but may have worse consequences for the species that share our planet. As sociobiologist Edward Wilson argues in *The Meaning of Human Existence* (2014) “a large number of species get extinct before they are discovered”. He prefers the term “Eromocene”, the Age of Loneliness.

The negative effects of our present behavior are not isolated to the ecological system. This was made clear when the financial crisis brought the economic system close to a collapse in 2008. This was a crisis that we were unable to prevent, and it is far from certain that we will be able to predict and prevent the next one. The spread of ebola in the fall 2014 is just a minor and most recent example of the health risks we face when people, services and products can move freely across borders, and in the beginning of the 21st century everyone has come to be familiar with the threat of global terrorism. As citizens of the world noticed in the fall of 1914, the state of affairs can change rapidly. The ability to cross borders can in one moment be a blessing, and in the next one create disasters that are felt far from its origin.

Luckily, the causes of our problems are also the solution: human action and innovation. This, however, requires a global perspective on the way we live our lives. How we, as global citizens, can make a difference is the question we set out to explore in this volume.

THE BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

The modern nation-state evolved as an efficient tool for handling free rider and collective action problems. By enforcing civil, political and social rights, the modern state has secured its citizens against a whole set of risks, such as homicide and other forms of physical violence, sickness, unemployment, disagreement over property, pollution and other externalities. In short, it is an attempt to remove us from the brutal, short, nasty and solitary life of the Hobbesian state of nature (e.g. Pinker 2011). Now we face the same problems at a different scale. Climate change is the most pressing example of a collective action problem. As every economist will tell you, if you can adjust the price so that everyone bears the total costs of their actions, we can put an end to the man made part of the global warming. But who sets the price in a global society without a legitimate authority where polluters in Norway can harm people in Indonesia who face more extreme climate, higher temperature and rising water levels? This is one of the common themes of the chapters in this book.

A useful distinction between globalization from below and above is drawn by Halvor Moxnes in his chapter on global utopia. Some argue that we need more collaboration between states and better institutions at the global level, “globalization from above”. Some argue that we as citizens should take responsibility for global action, “globalization from below”. As the contributors make clear, we need both. In his chapter, Moxnes suggests that we as citizens in a global world need a “vision of the global world as a human community”. When we see ourselves as part of a “global civil society” or a “world people”, we can make meaningful changes.

Today, big transnational corporations and the most powerful nation-states will get their will. To counter their domination we need social movements that can act to the benefit of those people who have to live with the consequences of today’s policymaking, or the lack thereof. Within the nation-state, social movements have shown that they can make great and important changes in their societies. For global social movements to be effective and legitimate, Moxnes argues, they need to have a shared goal, a vision, or a utopia. In the words of Jesus, Moxnes finds a vision for the future: “It is in the needs of the human community that must control the economy so that the global economy does not make global community inhuman.” Drawing on the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas, he argues that we need to “create a sense of world solidarity and the corresponding political practice that presently exist on a national level as solidarity among citizens.”

Evelin Lindner is a truly global citizen and founding president of the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network and co-founder of the World Dignity University initiative. She takes the bottom-up approach seriously. Her message to us in the chapter Living Globally: Global Citizenship of Care as Personal Practice is clear: “being born in Norway [or other Western countries] is a privilege that carries a responsibility.” Her message is a damning critique of the way most of us live our lives, in our “shopping-mall Kindergarten bubble”. Lindner asks of us to adopt

the same humility that has made it possible for her to connect with people from different backgrounds. Rather than seeing diversity as a threat, we need to embrace “unity in diversity”. This aligns well with Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s position in this volume. In his view, cosmopolitanism should not be about Western intellectuals and political leaders trying to universalize Western values. Drawing on Immanuel Kant’s cosmopolitanism, he argues that we need “civilized encounters across cultural boundaries”: “Cosmopolitanism ... is not a moral universalism. Rather it entails an insistence on dialogue and respect even – or perhaps especially – when differences are profound and fundamental.”

GLOBAL ACTION ROOTED IN THE LOCAL

How far can we extend respect and dialogue? Given the fact that people live in a way that threatens the survival of our species, how much respect do they deserve? In the chapter *The Idea of Global Citizenship in the Age of Ecomodernity*, Nina Witoszek argues that we need to confront the fact that “cosmopolitanism *is* in conflict with deeply felt religion, patriotism and nationalism, and it would be silly and vapid to pretend that is not.” To be global citizens might be an appealing idea to globetrotting academics – like the sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. But on the ground, the prospect for a cosmopolitan and global ethics in today’s political climate looks bleak. Growing unemployment and insecurity, coupled with immigration concerns in both developed and developing countries, give rise to nationalist parties and extreme, parochial movements. Witoszek suggests another route towards a solution to our global challenges. We need to situate our effort to make global change locally, where we have our roots. Drawing on political scientist Elinor Ostrom and sociobiologist Edward Wilson, Witoszek argues that it is the close-knit societies that have the capability to solve collective action problems. Most people have a stronger sense of obligation towards the ones that are close, and are not motivated by “United Nations’ talk” about sustainable development. Even though the problems are global, the motivation has to come from individuals who necessarily will be rooted in their local context. It is here we can find motivation for action.

In the chapter *The Nation State in the Age of Globalizations* Knut Kjeldstadli develops this view further. He argues that the cosmopolitan view has a certain class structure. He cites the sociologist Craig Calhoun:

Both roots and the need for roots are asymmetrically distributed. It is often precisely those lacking wealth, elite connections, and ease of movement who find their membership in solidaristic social groups most important as an asset.

Rather than focusing on the more general “local”, as Witoszek does, Kjeldstadli argues that the nation-state is the best vehicle for action. An international regime of human rights has to be upheld by institutions, and such institutions must be carried by people who care enough to rally to support these institutions. Presently there are

no feasible alternatives to the nation states. A global state and global citizenship are to him elitist, undemocratic and utopian, if not dystopian, alternatives. That does not mean that the nation-state is perfect, or that every kind of state has the ability to tackle our global challenges. Instead, he argues for a specific political conception of the nation, the “nation as *unity in diversity*”, an inclusive nation that tolerates, and even finances diversity, that bases citizenship on where people live rather than on their heritage, and that tolerates dual citizenship. To Kjeldstadli, cooperating nations are the key to find collective solutions to the challenges that we face.

GLOBAL BUT UNEQUAL

As noted, globalization of trade, technology, research, art and ideas, have made societies better than we could have imagined only a few decades ago. For a large part of the world’s population, the fact is that we have never been richer, more educated, or enlightened. And, thanks to the World Wide Web, we are now more interconnected than ever before, to other people, their ideas, services and products.

But at the same time global disparities in wealth, resources and opportunities abound, and as both Dan Banik and Helge Hveem argue in their chapters, the benefits of globalization are not distributed equally. The Matthew effect is clearly visible: The ones that have plenty get more, and those that have little, gain little.

This is obvious when it comes to the situation of women in broad parts of our world today, a topic that is the concern of Johanne Sundby’s contribution. She argues that even though gender equality has come a long way in Norway and other Western states, inequality is the norm in the world at large. Our collaborative effort needs to be aimed at giving women education; also higher education; employment; but also the right to abortion, contraception, to be protected from genital mutilation and child marriages. “Empowerment of women is the bottom line”, and women’s rights are human rights: “That women are as important as men, need to be protected, educated and serviced through health care, are the fundamental messages that we can never compromise on.”

The division between men and women is not the only gap that is relevant. There are huge disparities in wealth, resources and opportunities between nations, and within them. Dan Banik argues in his chapter that we are obligated to help people that live in other nation-states. As Banik shows, there are many caveats, but that does not mean that we are not obliged to try. The bulk of research that show the limited impact of foreign aid should not reduce our willingness to contribute to reduce global poverty, rather it gives us an incentive to be more cautious and evidence based in how we organize and design aid.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The way we have solved collective action problems at the national level is by creating a state that is accountable to its citizens. We can be global citizens situated

within a nation-state, but will it be enough to provide people with the security and opportunities they deserve? In his contribution, Andreas Føllesdal, discusses the possibility for global *citizenship*. His underlying normative commitment is that of “normative cosmopolitanism”: “the equal standing of all individuals in the political order, including democratic control over the institutions that shape their lives”. That we live with the consequences of globalization is a strong argument in favor of some measures of democratic accountability of the global order. That does not mean that it is an easy task to create such a global political order. Kjeldstadli’s chapter is a well-argued critique of this mission. But as with the nation-state, a global state can take many forms and be supplemented by other political units, other cultures and other societies. Drawing on John Rawls, Føllesdal argues in favor of a thin, rather than a thick, basis for a global citizenship, based on a sense of justice, rather than on “shared beliefs, values and traditions”. Instead of a shared belief in the good society, we can base our commitment on just institutions underpinned by a coherent political theory.

Helge Hveem agrees with Føllesdal in the need for political institutions at the global level. Some changes can obviously be made at the national and regional level, but as Hveem puts it: “In issue areas which are truly global in character – climate change, global economy, defending universal values such as human rights – there is no alternative to global institutions.” Rather than focusing on justice, Hveem’s take-home point is that globalism, as he calls it, is in our own best interest. His first argument is based on the benefits of a multilateral trade and investment regime. The second is climate change. The economic consequences of climate change and of new waves of migration will be costly, even for the most protected areas. The third is the need to tackle criminal syndicates, and the fourth is the need to reduce the potential for armed conflict and war. But rather than building a new global state, Hveem argues that we need to reform our existing political institution at the global level, by, among other things, giving Japan, Germany, India and Brazil permanent seats (and veto power, as long as the institution remains) in the UN Security Council, while perhaps swapping France and Britain’s seats with the European Union.

This volume springs out of a lecture series at the University of Oslo, with the goal of getting students to reflect on their role as global citizens. But as Janicke Heldal Stray argues in the last chapter, democratic education needs to start earlier. She delivers a pointed critique of the Norwegian school reforms, which have contributed to a decline in the democratic education that the future generations of citizens are receiving. Facing a more diverse society than ever before and mounting global challenges this can be a serious mistake.

Getting the nations of the world to cooperate can sound like an impossible project, and the contributors to this volume have discussed several caveats regarding the solutions to our global challenges. But as Karen O’ Brian stresses, it might be that we only need a minority to generate new types of collaborations in support of meaningful changes. In the words of the anthropologist Margaret Mead: “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

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1. GLOBAL PRESENCE, GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

On the evening of August 22nd 2012, those who happened to pass by our University campus at Blindern noticed something quite extraordinary: Hundreds of students were queuing up in front of our largest auditorium. The line zigzagged between the buildings and into the park area. The students were hoping to secure for themselves a seat at the first Global Citizen lecture. Inside the auditorium and waiting for the students was Hans Rosling, the world-renowned Swedish professor. His lecture entitled "Fact-Based World View" was attended by those 500 students who could be safely admitted into the auditorium, and was later broadcast.

It was no surprise that Rosling's lecture drew crowds. Millions have watched Rosling's TED-lectures, a fitting testimony to his communication skills. But we must see beyond skills and style to explain why students chose to queue up on this August evening. Students were drawn by the very topic of Rosling's lecture. Rosling spoke about an interconnected world, a world where our destinies are intertwined. He described a global society that faces challenges that we never have seen before – in terms of demography, resource distribution, energy and climate. He emphasized the need for sound data when predictions are to be made about the future – when those predictions are made that form the core of any serious debate about social, environmental, and financial sustainability.

Our students are the leaders of the future. They are the ones who will have to make tough decisions, prompted by the need to safeguard sustainability. They are the ones who will have to see themselves as members of a global community. No wonder that they recognize the relevance of the topics addressed by Rosling and the other contributors to the Global Citizen lecture series. The University, on the other hand, must see it as one of its core missions to engage in the global challenges ahead. After all, the complexity of these challenges is without precedence. They can be debated and tackled only by drawing on a broad range of scientific disciplines. And they can be properly understood only by applying the right perspectives in terms of time and space. The University must look beyond the geographical and time horizons that typically constrain contemporary politics.

It is against this backdrop that the University of Oslo has named its new action plan for internationalization "Global presence – global responsibility".

In the words of the European Commission, we are facing "a considerable number of interlinked challenges in the early 21st century, including the economic and social

consequences of the global financial crisis, climate change, declining water and energy resources, shrinking biodiversity, threats to food security and health risks” (Council of the European Union 2010). The series of Global Citizen lectures – arranged during fall 2012 – touched upon most of these issues. We are glad to see that these lectures have now been collected in the present anthology. Some of the articles challenge the very concept of global citizenship. We welcome the philosophical, linguistic, sociological, and cultural approaches to this concept, as they take us further in our endeavor “to think more dutifully and act more beautifully” – as the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss put it. The present anthology will help keep alive the discussion of the moral dilemmas and scientific challenges that lie ahead of us.

Knowledge is connected to power, history and cultural differences, but at the same time the new social media as well as mobility and academic collaborations have democratized access to knowledge. We live in a world without borders as we knew them. We might be in closer interaction with a fellow academic across the Atlantic Ocean than we are with our own neighbors. Through technological development and means of communication and transportation, we can choose to interact with any part of the world. This means that we might think of ourselves as international rather than national beings, as global citizens rather than local entrepreneurs, or better; as flexible citizens, both national and transnational at the same time, as members of a world citizenship, as Seyla Benhabib puts it. Seyla Benhabib (2006) Many benefits derive from this perspective, and excellent research is dependent upon it. But often we remain indifferent to those challenges that do not affect us directly. This anthology will have served its purpose if it inspires us – our students and academic staff – to reflect upon poverty, climate change, human rights, religious dialogue and global health governance, as well as the significance of being a citizen in the world today.

The term Global Citizens was re-invigorated by Barack Obama in a speech he made in Berlin in 2008 when he told the Germans and the rest of the world that “we have drifted apart, and forgotten our shared destiny (...). But the burdens of global citizenship continue to bind us together.” Our candidates must be equipped with social, ethical and civic competences, with initiative and with entrepreneurial spirit. We must provide a learning environment and an atmosphere that are conducive to self-development. The Global Citizen lectures can be seen as elements of a modern version of “bildung”, stimulating autonomy and critical thinking, and fostering an ability to gauge the interdependence that characterizes the world of today.

Indeed, interdependence was a key issue in the final lecture in the Global Citizen series this year. The series that Hans Rosling opened was concluded with a lecture by the Nobel Prize Laureate Joseph Stiglitz. Discussing the interdependence of the world’s economies, he made it clear that we are all global citizens and – regrettably – that not everybody shoulders the responsibility that comes with it.

We are grateful to all of you who have contributed to the lecture series and to this anthology.

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HALVOR MOXNES

2. GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP – WHY DO WE NEED UTOPIAN VISIONS?

“We cannot imagine a society without utopia, because this would be a society without goals” (Ricoeur 1986, 283). This is the topic of this chapter: what goals do we – as global citizens – have for society? But what is this “global citizenship”? On its webpage the University of Oslo tells us that it is not real, but *imagined*: “A Global Citizen is one that *sees* himself or herself as a member of a wider community.” A global community does not yet exist in terms of statehood, institutions, and passports. So what we are asked to do is to live *as if* we were members of the global world in the same way as we are parts of a local and national community. So what are our visions of the global world in which we are asked to become citizens?

TWO WAYS TO A GLOBAL WORLD?

It is very popular to speak of the world as becoming one, global entity, and acknowledge that there is a strong process of globalization going on. But this is not just one process; there are several, and they seem to have different goals. I suggest that we can roughly distinguish between a globalization from above and a globalization “from below” (Falk 1993, 39-50).

The globalization that comes from above is based on the collaboration between powerful nation states (G 20) and their institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and large industrial and finance companies. This globalization has created a common economic market; there is little preventing money from moving all over the world. But there is also globalization “from below”, from social movements, especially in the areas of environment, human rights, health, and the fight against poverty and wars. In addition, there is the globalization of the poor, of workers, refugees and asylum seekers, but these frequently have restricted global mobility.

Where do the University of Oslo and its education of students belong in this tension between a globalization from “above” and one from “below”? Does it want to have it both ways? The University wishes to qualify its candidates for an international job market, but also to educate its students to become global citizens. In his annual address for 2012, the Rector of the University, Ole Petter Ottersen, spoke of how students prepared for the *responsibility* that comes with global citizenship. There is more to becoming a global citizen than participating in a common job

market. And it is this “more” that I want us to explore. The meaning of “global citizenship” depends on what vision we have for a global world in the future. If we are to show responsibility, we must know what goals we have for our work as global citizens. I suggest that these goals should build on the vision of a *community* of all the world’s people.

Such visions have a long tradition in so-called utopian literature, reflecting both popular, political and religious movements throughout history (Segal 2012). My focus in this chapter is on utopia in the traditions about Jesus; I will attempt to establish a dialogue between his images of the Kingdom of God and our discussions of a global community. And I will conclude in what may seem a strange place, trying to see the similarities between the visions of Jesus and those of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas.

THE BEGINNING OF UTOPIA

The words “vision” and “utopia” seem now to have disappeared from the political vocabulary, so we need to bring them back. The word “utopia” is a modern creation, a combination of the Greek word for “place”, *topos*, and the negation “*ou*”, literally “no place” or “nowhere”. It was first used by the English philosopher Thomas More in a book of that title in 1516 (More 1975). The book consisted of More’s reflections on contemporary society, and described human life, society and institutions in an ideal “nowhere”, in contrast to the England of his time. Thus, Utopia was described from a specific perspective; it contained what More considered to be ideal. For instance, in Utopia property was equally divided, in contrast to the great inequalities in England. Thomas More inspired many followers in the centuries that followed, who used descriptions of “no place” as criticisms of injustice in the political, economic and social aspects of their societies. Thus, “utopias” became important expressions of protest and models for change, for instance in the French Revolution. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were strong movements of utopian socialism with visions of universal solidarity. Both Marx and Engels inspired in their writings a utopian Marxism, which finally, in the Soviet Union, became destructive and oppressive.

END OF UTOPIA OR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AS A NEW BEGINNING?

However, instead of visions of a universal community, the strongest movement in nineteenth century Europe was nationalism, and the nation state became the dominant political form. Starting in the nineteenth century, that political movement swept away the multi-national empires of Europe and the Middle East, so that the idea of the nation state became the model for the establishment of all new states. Therefore, following the catastrophe of World War I, the attempt to create an international organization to secure peace, The League of Nations, was based on the structure of nation states. The United Nations was also built on the vision of a fellowship of

states that was to secure a world of peace, as a reaction against the disaster of World War II. But although the UN was built on the vision of a better world, it could not do more than its most powerful member states agreed to. In area after area, not only with regard to war, but also to climate and environment, the nation state structures have been unable to act on global visions. Almost 70 years later the visions have been reduced to pragmatic, sometimes cynical, realism. And “utopia” has become a word that signals something negative, even hopelessly out of reach.

But utopias are not totally moribund. For instance, the historian Jay Winter speaks of Global Citizenship as an example of “utopian moments” (Winter 2006). Set against the structures built on nations and states, he finds that the concept of “Global Citizenship” represents a different approach. It starts from below, and is based on women and men who share a vision of a common humanity, of a global “civil society” or a “world people”. The building of a global community of human and civil rights starts with individuals, groups and movements. It spreads through social contacts, through news channels, through mobile phones and social media.

DREAMING THE FUTURE

But what can visions or utopias actually do? Winter points us in the direction of an answer when he says that “Utopia is a fantasy about the limits of the possible, a staging of what we take for granted.” Martin Luther King’s speech from the march on Washington on August 28th, 1963, “I have a dream,” is an example. He was speaking of a place for African Americans that had not yet arrived. But articulating the dream of a place with equal rights, with no racial hatred even in the states in the deepest South, was a way of bringing that dream closer. And his repetition of the phrase, “I have a dream,” had a rhetorical function. I remember that when I first heard a recording of the speech, I was irritated that so much of the time was taken up by long periods of applause. But then I realised that the applause from the large crowds that filled the mall in Washington that day was not empty noise. It was their way to express that they identified with what King said, that they, too, shared his dream of a better world, and were committed to work to make that dream come true. Martin Luther King’s address is an example of the most important function of utopias. With his speech he explored, in Winter’s terms, “the limits of the possible.” The philosopher Ricoeur said something similar, that “utopia extends the boundary line between the possible and the impossible” (Ricoeur 1986, 310).

UTOPIAS AS “MAGIC REALISM”

The function of utopias is closely linked to their *form*. The Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Márquez, most famous for his book *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), is an example of this. His books are written in the literary style of “magic realism”, which “extends the boundary line between the possible and the impossible”. In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in literature in 1982, Marquez spoke about

the role that authors (“the inventors of tales”) have in creating a utopia as a contrast to the totalitarian utopias that had destroyed the world. He spoke of “a new and sweeping utopia of life . where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth” (Winter 2006, 4).

Marquez wrote about the poor and oppressed in Latin America, but his books, like other great works of literature, are not only expressions of their own time and context. What makes them great is that they can be “re-contextualized” in new settings, so that we can experience them as relevant to our own contexts. Moreover, great literature not only mirrors that which is known and exists, it also opens outward towards the future.

Works of “magical realism” such as those by Marquez and other “inventors of tales”, and the dreams of Martin Luther King, reveal to us the possibility of a better world in a way that government declarations and budgets cannot. This is because they speak to a broader range of our lives: not just to our intellect, but to our empathy and emotions, our hopes and commitments, our fantasies and faiths. It is this wide range that religions also address, and must be the reason why Richard Falk, an American professor of global and international studies, describes the work towards a global citizenship using religious terminology: “Citizenship thereby becomes an essentially religious and normative undertaking, based on faith in the unseen, salvation in the world to come – not in heaven, but on earth – guided by convictions, beliefs and values” (Falk 1993, 49).

Falk described global citizenship using religious language. If we turn this around we may say that religious language can contribute to the meaning of global citizenship. All religions have visions of the world, of a global context for human lives. To be a believer in God is to be part of a global human universe. That does not mean that religions have only universal attitudes. Often they also express strong divisions, for instance when they claim salvation for their followers, but not for others. But here I want to focus on their global vision.

JESUS - A UTOPIAN VISIONARY?

My examples are from Christianity, and more specifically they are based on the teachings of Jesus. The stories about Jesus-in the gospels share aspects of the “magic realism” of Marquez. The stories are placed in realistic settings of 1st century Galilee, but are combined with supernatural events and the sayings of Jesus with visions of a new world. Therefore I will place Jesus and his movement within the history of utopias. This is not a new suggestion. Intellectuals of the early Communist movement, like Friedrich Engels, described the Jesus movement as Communists, sharing much of the same vision. But instead of Communism, nationalism became the dominant ideology in Europe in the nineteenth century. Despite their criticism of the Christian churches, many intellectuals saw Jesus as an ideal and a model for their vision of a new Europe based on nation states. The historical Jesus was portrayed as a role model for Christian Europe and interpreted as an ideal for its inhabitants

as citizens of a nation, not subjects of a king. But this nationalism became linked to imperialism and colonialism, and Jesus and Christianity could be used to support these.

It is with this history in mind that I suggest the story of Jesus be read in a different way; not from the perspective of the nation state with all its limitations, but as a vision of global citizenship. That does not mean that I consider global citizenship to be a religious idea, or that Jesus presents views that are necessarily better than those of philosophers or contemporary activists. But I do think that religions, including Christianity, are important partners in building a vision of the world as a global community. That is because the sayings of Jesus (and other ancient religious texts) do not speak from within a narrow “religious” sphere; they address people in the totality of their lives. What makes them unique is that they speak about the responsibility of a life in community from the perspective of faith in God. And it is this faith in God that gives the sayings of Jesus a force to engage and motivate many people toward a vision of a global community. Of course, Jesus’ sayings will above all engage Christians, but we should remember that most of the two billion Christians today live in the poor areas of the world, in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Moreover, since Jesus cannot be exclusively identified with the wealthy countries of the West, his teachings can also inspire and motivate people beyond Christianity.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS UTOPIA

Jesus had a name for utopia, and that was the “Kingdom of God”. All who have studied Jesus agree that the Kingdom of God was the most central part of Jesus’ sayings and his message. He spoke of it in parables and images, and he illustrated it with symbolic acts of healing and communal meals. But the strange thing is that it is difficult to discover the exact meaning of the phrase “Kingdom of God”.

Most of the discussion among biblical scholars has focused on the question of *time* – when will the Kingdom of God come – is it present now, or will it arrive in the future? I think that this question of “when will the Kingdom come” has diverted focus away from the question: “What is the Kingdom like?” I will therefore look at the Kingdom of God as *place*, as an imaginary place that is different from the existing, known places; it is a “no-place,” a utopia (Moxnes 2003). Many of Jesus’ parables begin with “the Kingdom of God is like” followed by a story or image from nature or from societal life that has a surprise ending (e.g. Matthew 13). It may be about a man who hires workers for his farm and who pays those who worked for one hour the same as those who worked for a full day, or about a man who, when his friends refuse to come to his party, invites the poor and the outcasts. Or it may compare God not with a powerful Eastern king but with a father who cares for his children.

These stories function like other utopias, as images of an ideal world that serve as a critique of the present world. There are two particular questions in these Kingdom parables that are relevant for our discussion of global citizenship. First, who belongs

in the Kingdom? We may ask: Who has the privilege of being a global citizen? And secondly, what is the economy of the Kingdom like? We may ask: how should people in a global community relate to one another? (Moxnes 2012, 184-98)?

THE ECONOMY OF THE KINGDOM

One of the ways in which Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God is using economic terms, but different from those of the global market economy. It is especially the Gospel of Luke that speaks much of money, of rich and poor, for instance as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). To understand his point we may use the slogan from detective stories: "Follow the money!" This seems to be the way in which Luke's gospel characterizes persons and groups: the way they deal with money reflects what type of people they are, their social relations and what society they build. Monetary ethics is equivalent to social ethics, and this is reflected in the terminology. The word economy comes from a Greek term, *oikonomia*, which means "the management of the *oikos*," the word for house or household. "Economy" did not mean only the exchange of money; it included all forms of exchange between people in terms of resources, whether they were material, social or political.

The forms of exchange revealed the character of the social relations between people. An economic imbalance indicated a social imbalance, for example when the weak and the poor were exploited by the powerful without getting anything in return. It is this situation Jesus describes with his rhetoric of woes and blessings, parables and narratives. The rich and powerful do not create a just world; rather, they combine extortion of the poor with rejection of God. In contrast Jesus presents an idealized picture of economic relations in the household and family. In his sayings the function of the household as a social and economic support group is important. The close relations between members of the family was also expressed in their economic relations, that is, in the giving of food, clothing, shelter and assistance without expectation of a quick return or balance. It was "economy" in the sense of householding that supported children and gave household members security.

Jesus also applied these images to God and portrayed God as a caring father, for instance in these phrases of the well-known prayer: "Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdoms come ... Give us each day our daily bread" (Luke 11:2-3). Although the father in this society was of course a powerful and patriarchal figure, it is his role as a supporting and giving caretaker that is emphasized. The image of the Kingdom of God as a household where God cares for his children was a critical alternative to the economic exploitation by the rich and powerful in Jesus' society.

These parables and sayings must be seen in the historical context of Jesus in Palestine. Galilee at this time was experiencing both a centralization of the economy into larger estates with increased taxation, as well as a more monetized economy. We might say that it was the equivalent of today's global economy, extending its reach with the powers of the Roman Empire and also affecting the village societies in Palestine. If this is the context, we may see Jesus' parables and sayings as a criticism

of a development that threatened the lives of village societies and the poor. The Kingdom of God was obviously a challenge to contemporary kingdoms.

WHO ARE THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY?

Who were the people whom Jesus addressed? It seems obvious that the peasants and fishermen in Galilee in no way can be described as a “world people” or a “global community”. But Jesus does address issues that are relevant to the question of who belongs to a community. In a typical statement, he spoke of those who belonged in the utopia of the Kingdom of God as: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20). Therefore I will draw on readings of Jesus that do not come from the privileged positions of the rich, Western part of the world, which I and many readers of this text belong to. We may speak easily about being global citizens. We can travel all over the world and wave our passports and slip easily through border controls, while less fortunate travelers, with identities that are less recognized, are subjected to endless checks and sometimes are turned back. And that is only those we happen to see; we don’t see all those who are smuggled in the back of trucks, those who seek their fortunes overseas in unsafe boats, or through jungles or deserts to reach a place without war and hunger. Can we imagine a history of Jesus written from the experience and perspective of immigrants and refugees, with a hope for a world that is not ruled by boundaries of ethnicity, nationality and religion?

It was such experiences of marginality among Mexican Americans in the Southern USA that inspired Virgilio Elizondo, himself a Mexican American, to read the gospel stories of Jesus of Galilee in a new way (Elizondo 1983). His reading represents a creative re-contextualization of an old narrative in the context of contemporary suffering. Elizondo read the stories of how Jesus identified with the poor, the sick, the rejected, and how he lived in the borderlands, both socially and geographically. He read Jesus’ presentations of the Kingdom of God as prophecies to the poor and the rejected.

Elizondo found in this experience of Mexican Americans, the *mestizaje*, in the US border region with Mexico, the foundation of an identity as a people. This act of creation of a people has exemplary importance for others. Elizondo says that Jesus’ vision of a people “could serve as a prototype of the *fronteras* of the world - whether they be nations or neighborhoods – where diverse peoples encounter one another not to fight, humiliate, or exclude one another, but to form new friendships and families in space where the “impure” and excluded can find new possibilities and inaugurate new beginnings” (Elizondo 2009, 274).

UTOPIAN CHALLENGES

I see two utopian visions in Jesus’ sayings and stories of the Kingdom of God that challenge our ideas of a global community and a global citizenship. The first is how Jesus starts creating a community from the margins, with people who are in a

marginal position in terms of resources, status, acceptance; they are people living on the edges of society. This challenges the distinctions between insiders and outsiders, “us” and “them”, that are created and upheld by divisions of ethnicity, culture and religion. The other challenge is the way the “economy of the Kingdom” is not based on the logic of market and profit, but on sharing of resources according to need, based on the care and trust of close family relationships. The critical point of this Kingdom economy is not to place it in a future life, but to use the ideals of close human relations to govern the contemporary economy. In the context of the current world crisis I find that the ancient understanding of economy as “householding” takes on a new and more defined meaning. It is the needs of the human community that must control the economy so that the global economy does not make the global community inhuman.

HABERMAS: A GLOBAL HOUSEHOLDING

This is also the concern of the German “public philosopher,” Jürgen Habermas, who for 50 years has been engaged in politics in the public sphere. Habermas sees the development of a citizens’ democracy as the lasting result of the nation state, which ensures social solidarity between citizens (Habermas 2001, 58-112). His present concern is how this democracy can be preserved and developed in a post-national situation. Globalization with globalized markets has threatened the autonomy of nation states and limited their opportunity to shape policies of social solidarity; it is a situation that makes a post-national organization necessary. Habermas first discusses the possibility that the European Union could develop a self-understanding of egalitarian universalism, before he considers the global picture within the framework of a restructured United Nations (Habermas 2001, 104-12). The goal for such a global community would be a politics that can “catch up with global markets,” that can enact a “political closure of an economically unmastered world society” and instead “make a change of course toward a world domestic policy.”

The phrase “a world domestic policy” is significant. It combines two terms that seem to be at different ends of a spectrum; domestic policy is normally something quite different from world politics. The term “domestic policy” represents the social solidarity that is the mark of Habermas’ idea of national democracy. In combining the two terms into “a world domestic policy,” he suggests that the domestic solidarity that was part of the bond between citizens in a nation state should be extended to the world as a global society. The greatest challenge as Habermas sees it is to create a sense of world solidarity and the corresponding political practice that presently exists on a national level as solidarity among citizens. This means transforming the way in which we view the world, no longer as different from home, but *as* our home.

I find this an interesting proposal from one of the world’s leading philosophers who dares to imagine a world structure beyond nationalism and who spells out possible ways to implement such a utopian vision. There is a structural similarity between Jesus’ paradoxical descriptions of the Kingdom of God as a household

and Habermas' vision of a "world domestic policy". In both instances, the domestic solidarity of home is transferred from a local to a larger arena: in Jesus' parables, from household to kingdom; in Habermas' philosophy, from the nation to the world. And in both instances, the goal is to create a new identity and sense of belonging, based on a different and larger collectivity than the original one, whether that was a household or a nation. Both Jesus' words about the Kingdom and Habermas' ideas of "a world domestic policy" point political thinking back to its primary task: to view human life and society in light of the ultimate aims of politics, that is, to work towards a better world with a good life for all.

A CHALLENGE RETURNED

This chapter began with how the University challenged students to see themselves as members of a wider community, and to prepare for the responsibility that comes with global citizenship. In conclusion we may return the challenge to the University: How can the teaching of the University prepare students to see themselves as responsible global citizens? I have argued that this first of all requires a vision of the global world as a human community, not only as a global market. And I have drawn attention to the long history of utopias that have presented images and politics of a more human and inclusive world. The examples come from history, politics, literature, religion and philosophy, and there are many more, from most areas of teaching and research within the University. Thus, the challenge is now for the University to use these combined resources for broad teaching programs to engage students in discussing and creating visions and utopias for a human, global community.

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