NDQ

NORTH DAKOTA QUARTERLY


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identity
MY COUNTRY, YOUR COUNTRY. MY HOME, NOW TWO HOMES.
A PASSPORT, A VISA, THE PROMISE YOU TAKE.
YET HEARTS STAY WHERE YOU ONCE WERE A CHILD
IN SPITE OF THE WALLS, THE DOORS, AND THE WILD.
RIO GRANDE
WETBACKS
build a wall
bad hombres down there
DEPORTATION
foreign-born labor force
Make Mexico Pay
THEY'RE RAPISTS
border tax
immigration
FRONTERA
promesas
VUELTA AL PASADO
CONSTRUCCIÓN DEL MURO
problema migratorio
La vida de un coyote
sueño americano
interrogante sobre
las relaciones futuras
orden ejecutiva
una era de hostilidad
IMPUESTO
más que una obra, es un símbolo
THE WALL

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On the Cover

Waiting for the train in Šid, Serbia (on the border with Croatia), January 2016. Photograph by Marc-Antoine Frébutte.

Pages 6, 135, and 184 feature details from Ute Kraidy's "Frontera," on the inside back cover.

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Çiğdem Pala Mull

The twentieth century presented us with a world of constant movement, making it increasingly difficult to define nations as separate entities. At a time when traditional allegiances to national identity are being questioned and reexamined, transnationalism offers us a way of thinking and seeing the relationships among and within cultures. Transnationalism emerged as an interpretive framework responding to transformations caused by globalization, including sometimes dramatic shifts in commercial and migratory flow. Increased immigration resulted in multicultural societies, while mass movements of people, ideas, and goods caused the blurring of borders and territories. Transnationalist critique involves the recognition, representation, and analysis of this flow of people, ideas, languages, and cultures across borders.

As a Turkish academician living in Turkey and specializing in American literature, I have always had both the advantage and the disadvantage of looking at texts from the outside. The "transnational turn in American Studies," for example, encourages scholars from outside the United States to engage their perspectives and include their voices in conversation about literature and culture. Looking at national traditions from transnational vantage points, non-American scholars can contribute to the field, not despite but rather *because* they read America outside of an Americanized national context.

In her presidential address to the American Studies Association in 2004, titled "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies,"[1] Shelley Fisher Fishkin invited scholars to look at literature beyond the boundaries of nation-states. According to her, "the goal of American Studies scholarship is not exporting and championing an arrogant, pro-American nationalism but understanding the multiple meanings of America and American culture in all their complexity" (20).

This is an invitation for all of us to rethink the categories of the

local, regional, and national. This is not a simple comparison of individual nations and cultures, it is a call to go beyond the nation, region, and culture.

According to Emory Elliott in his 2006 ASA presidential address "Diversity in the United States and Abroad: What Does it Mean When American Studies is Transnational?"[2] it requires a "genuine inclusiveness and broad international collaboration" (6). Elliott focuses on the expected outcome of this collaboration: "the inclusion of perspectives from abroad [will] resuscitate the study of US culture within an understanding of global dynamics, which [will], in turn, better elucidate the inequities and oppressions that currently plague US culture" (8).

The contributions selected in our issue all demonstrate points of view that allow for a cross-cultural interpretation. Just as the transnational perspective blurs the borders dividing people, nations, and cultures, the contributions in our issue blur the borders separating genres, forms, and disciplines. This issue includes texts involving literary criticism, sociological studies, sociolinguistics, political studies, poetry, personal narratives, documentary, translation, graphic arts, and photography. Exploring the complexity of transnationalism from various perspectives, all of them show the ability to see the world through transnational lenses. What unites all of the contributions here is their search for the layers of transnational meanings. If we take Shelley Fisher Fishkin's "transnational turn" in American Studies as a point of departure, the writers, creators, artists, and translators of these texts all engage in a dialogue involving "the multidirectional flows of people, ideas, and goods and the social, political, linguistic, cultural, and economic crossroads generated in the process" (22). The texts included here focus on areas where specific tensions and cultural conflicts are arising and identify particular tensions between the global and national in literature. They require us to think transnationally, urging us to question, rethink, and reexamine the ideological and theoretical frameworks we use to analyze texts.

This issue is the result of collaboration among many talented people. As a graduate of the UND English Department (MA in 1996 and PhD in 2001), I am ex-

tremely proud to be able to contribute to this issue of *North Dakota Quarterly* as one of the guest editors. I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to my fellow editors, Sharon Carson and Gayatri Devi, as well as to those who handled everything to put this issue together, and all of the scholars, writers, poets, and artists who contributed to this issue. I hope that this *Transnational* issue of *NDQ* helps create more movement and intellectual exchange among countries and scholars in different parts of the world.

Sharon Carson

I echo Çiğdem Pala Mull's thanks and gratitude, first to her and Gayatri Devi for sharing the guest editor labor with me for this project, but also to *NDQ* Managing Editor Kate Sweney, UND Faculty Editor Shawn Boyd, Fiction Editor Gilad Elbom, Poetry Editor Heidi Czerwiec, and Art Editor Lucy Ganje.

Deep appreciation also to all of our contributors for their thoughtful work, their patient collaboration with the editorial team, and in many cases their transnational generosity in presenting very long pieces in English. We are well aware that a key issue in transnational and comparative work is that of translation, including reciprocity of labor when it comes to moving between and among languages. In the spirit of blurred boundaries, we are pleased to include works which place linguistic and cultural translation at their center, as well as some adventures in "blurred genres."

I have been drawn to transnationalism as a flexible and demanding method of inquiry which seems especially helpful in breaking open routine habits of thought. Transnationalism can become a mode of intellectual and creative work that at its best offers fresh and sometimes helpfully startling juxtapositions among and between places, events, social practices, ideas, historical actors, writers, artistic works, political arguments, and philosophical worldviews. Shifting away from the often "routinized" and nationalistic thinking encouraged by—some would say required by—political dynamics within modern bureaucratized nation-states requires us to critique and often challenge our own presumptions,

to question our deepest alliances, and to honestly examine categories of meaning, perception, and value that have been shaped by—and continue to shape—our "national" lenses.

We editors have been acutely aware over the past months that our work together on this *Transnational* issue of *NDQ* carried on within a flurry of strong nationalist rhetoric and political action in the nations where many of us work and live. Assertions fly. Heated, sometimes violent conflict flared over borders, walls, markets, primacy. Nationalistic invocations of race. Heritage. Ethnicity. Religion. All have been proffered as markers of legitimate citizenship or essentialist national identities. At the same time, many people within (and crossing between) these same national boundaries argue for more expansive expressions of transnational identity and accountability, for stronger commitments to global justice, for transnational resource equity, and for more, not less, collaborative work across national borders in order to protect humane social and civic life. I especially welcome the varied perspectives among our contributors, the challenging questions they ask us to grapple with, and the insights they offer as we navigate these twenty-first-century crosscurrents.

Gayatri Devi

In one of my favorite pieces in the current issue, the poet Yahya Frederickson describes the telephone: one of the many ubiquitous ways in which immigrants, migrants, refugees, and otherwise exiled folks keep ourselves grounded in our displaced reality—our lives swinging between homelessness, refugee camps, transit and temporary shelters, and new homes. Those who orbit the world without a home, either through choice or by force, await the voice on the telephone from somewhere far away that relays news of a birth, a death, a marriage, a new home, a renovation, a sale, an earthquake, a war, an occupation, a gain, a loss, a quarrel, a forgiveness. An umbilical cord might be its metaphor. Sure, there is the Internet and email, but those who are displaced from home long for the human voice which might or might not know us, but which carries intimate news from India, Pakistan, Pales-

tine, Serbia, Bosnia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and other places, news important only to those for whose ears it is meant. It is metonymy as well: on the other side of the voice is the whole human, and another place and time. These phone calls sometimes tantalize the hapless traveler with visions of impossible return. Frederickson's poem, "Calls to Dabaab," describes one such phone call. In Frederickson's poem, the phone call is the fragile flower in the center of an intentional community of displaced Muslims and their allies in the upper Midwest, trying to create a new (old) home in a new land through an act of hospitality: "There's a tap on the doorjamb—the youngest man walks to the curtain, reaches through, pulls back a tray of cups steaming with sweet, creamy tea. We sip."

Hospitality, or the lack of it, in the face of displacement is the unspoken motif leading many of the pieces included in this special issue of *NDQ*. Two essays, Kyle Conway's "Modern Hospitality," and Marielle Risse's "No. The Car Wasn't Actually on Fire: Understanding Communication in Southern Oman," engagingly discuss the anxiety of hospitality in the West and the East to their respective "strangers." Hospitality might also be approached as a larger philosophical choice, a method and an end goal. It is this that Yusuf Eradam, in his delightful "My Life=A Haiku" (the longest entry in this issue), explores with wit and candor. Eradam calls the hospitality afforded by displacement, if one is so lucky, as the spur for his "curiosity for utopias and dystopias, an awareness-raising process of *knowing* why we seek happiness elsewhere, always somewhere else, always there and in the future, rather than here and now." That the displacement caused by transnational movement may be seen as an "awareness-raising" process and threshold is perhaps the key take-away of this special issue: beyond the victories, perils, traumas, and trials of often dangerous movement, there is the reporter's, the scholar's, the social scientist's, the artist's, the writer's, the photographer's vantage point on the journey. The exodus is never without its timely witnesses and recorders.

Two pieces in particular, Daniela Koleva's "Migrants, Refugees, and Games of Othering: An Eastern European Perspective," and Marc-Antoine Frébutte's "Balkan Beats: Migrations, Stories, and Memories," address the current historical exigency of the large-scale movement of political refugees fleeing execution, incarceration, and poverty from various parts of the Middle East and South Asia to Eastern and Western Europe. Frébutte's photographs and stories of refugees and migrants at various camps and transit points along the so-called "refugee route" linking the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southern, Eastern, and Western Europe are powerful reminders that for many who are displaced, home is a space always expressed in terms of time, in terms of the future, an essential unknowable, a sheer act of faith.

Koleva's piece problematizes the new narratives of arrival and "othering" of refugees in Eastern and Western Europe by making visible the old palimpsest of othering engendered by the oppositional histories of the Eastern and Western blocs and their specific casualties in Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War, and which remains as the repressed content of the hope-filled manifesto of the newer European Union. M. Önder Göncüoğlu's discussion of Lebanese novelist Amin Maalouf's *Ports of Call,* the story of a doomed marriage between a Muslim Ottoman and a Jewish woman in the chaotic aftermath of the Second World War, likewise explores the idea that "we are what we are becoming," with the novel representing a "dream of an ideal world making room for all differences, where Jews, Arabs, Turks, and Armenians live side by side against separation," a "healing device."

For another remarkable iteration of utopian imagination, we are excited to publish our co-editor Çiğdem Pala Mull's original "Translation of Excerpts from *Darürrahat Müslümanları* (Muslims of the Peaceful Country) by İsmail Gaspıralı." This will be the first appearance of Gaspıralı's Turkish utopian narrative in English.

Closer to home, Lois Roma-Deeley, Patricia Catoira, and Ute Kraidy explore our own experiments in "othering": U.S./Mexico

relations and U.S./Cuba relations. Like Frébutte's Balkan photographs, Kraidy's graphic "Frontera" calls to mind the human casualties that must forever resist the propaganda machines that camp out at borders, minimizing complex civil and national identities into rabble-rousing slogans engineered to be broadcast from the wall of discrimination. Lucy Ganje's visual piece, titled "Borderlines: Accounts Paid, Accounts Due," asks us to question the nature of borders between/within Indian Country and the United States.

An alternate version of America emerges from the quiet nostalgia of a seventies immigrant childhood in Cleveland, Ohio, in Gulchin Ergun's "Remembering Sunny Acres." An America where the Turkish language and Turkish meals met and shook hands with standard American fare (whatever that is), albeit awkwardly; an America where there was room for different voices, different accents, and different customs. In a particularly telling detail, Ergun notes that her Muslim family now includes barbecued pulled pork, a *haram* or proscribed food, at Turkish get-togethers, something that would have been unthinkable in a first-generation immigrant household. America assimilated its immigrants; immigrants, in turn, adopted America and its customs. It is a story that many of us can attest to from our own lives.

A similar spirit of genuine curiosity, a confident outreach to what is new and strange, a yearning for similarities envelop Cody Deitz's translations of poems from the Argentine poet Alberto Girri, and Gilad Elbom's tribute to the missing referent of heavy metal music. It is this fearless and open-hearted curiosity that is the essence of hospitality. In one of Frébutte's Balkan photographs, Qamar, a thirty-four-year-old Pakistani refugee at the Miksaliste help center in Belgrade, spends his days serving tea and coffee to other refugees. A member of a persecuted religious minority in his own country now waiting for asylum in Europe, Qamar's tent displays his motto: "Love for All, Hatred for None." We offer the following sampling of transnational writing and art in the spirit of "Balkan Beats" and Qamar's hospitality.

Notes

[1]Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies." *American Quarterly*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2005, pp. 17-52.

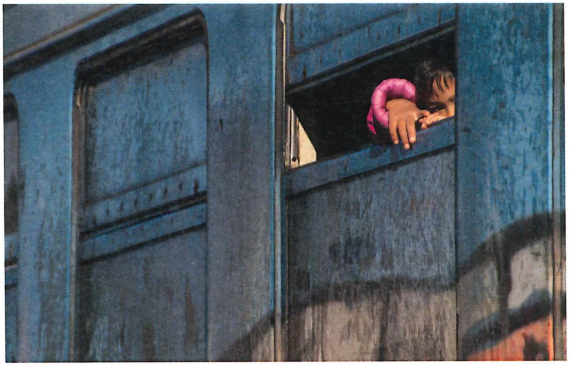
[2]Emory, Elliott. "Diversity in the United States and Abroad: What Does it Mean When American Studies is Transnational?" *American Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2007, pp. 1-22.

Balkan Beats: Migrations, Stories, and Memories

Marc-Antoine Frébutte

1. Preface

Since the refugee crisis began in the summer of 2015, hundreds of thousands of refugees have crossed the Middle East and the Balkans on their way to Northern and Western Europe to escape wars, violence, and despair in their homelands. However, public attention has focused primarily on specific locations within their travels, such as the Greek islands or the Hungarian border. Though the situations in these places are often extreme, the problems refugees face do not end once they leave them, but evolve as they continue on through the Balkans. Because of the limited media coverage, little attention is paid to a large portion of the migrants' journeys. From walking hundreds of miles to smugglers and closed borders, the Balkan route offers an entirely new set of difficulties that refugees must face in order to reach their desired destinations.



"Balkan Beats: Migration, Stories, and Memories" is a series of portraits and stories captured during my field experience in the Balkans from October 2015 until April 2016. Working as a volunteer in a refugee camp in Belgrade and then as a researcher for a Serbian non-governmental organization (NGO), I had the opportunity to travel all across the Balkans, to see the reality in the field, and to meet with the refugees. During my trips, all my feelings were mixed as I experienced funny situations, heard incredible stories, saw smiling children playing around, or, to the contrary, faced hopeless people and confronted hard moments while working in a constant state of emergency. After months in the snow, in the mud, under the rain and the sun, I decided

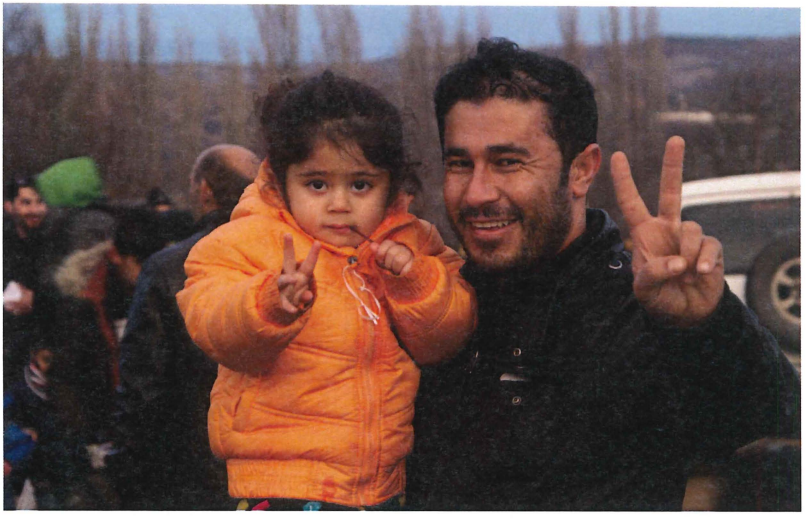
to write the stories of those migrants. By getting closer to the refugees, diving into their travels, their challenges, and their emotions, I tried to give a voice to those who faced this migration process but remained ignored as to their motivations since the media generally focused on the mass, not on individuals. In order to protect their privacy and security, I decided to change the names of the people from my stories, but their words remain true. These stories are a short snapshot of all the moments I experienced there. I offer one story and one photo per place I worked, usually at main border crossings. Those stories are just a few that I picked from hundreds that I could have written.

Thank you and all the best to all of those I got the chance to meet, from refugees to NGO workers, from citizens of the Balkans to volunteers. I did not know what to expect before going there, but now I can say that those moments with you were a storm for my soul!

2. Dimitrovgrad: First Step into the Balkans

Spotted in the forest at the border between Bulgaria and Serbia, a group of refugees is rescued by the mobile units of an NGO and brought to the registration center in Dimitrovgrad. Immediately after exiting the vans they are directed to the area where hot food and drinks are distributed. Women rest their bags on the ground and the men light their cigarettes as the children eat the chips and Chinese noodles that they were given. This group of fifty Iraqis crossed the border on foot with smugglers before being left to their fate once they reached Serbian territory. Several days of walking in harsh conditions were necessary in order for the group, which included children, women, and the elderly, to reach its goal. "They were lucky not to be bothered by the mafias while crossing the border. It happens often, and the police sometimes participate," explains a volunteer before adding, "When the mafia catches a refugee they take their money and valuables. Sometimes they also sequester them and ask the family to pay for their release. It's a dirty business that takes advantage of human misery. Unfortunately, the Bulgarian state does not do much to change the situation."

The Iraqis are grouped in a corner of the camp, sitting on their bags, holding their heads in their hands. One that seems to be the leader of the group approaches us and asks for information about the rest of



the trip: "Some people just told us that the borders are closed to refugees and that we should go to the [refugee] center of Krnjaca in Belgrade. You know more?" After we confirm his statement about the closure of the borders an old man comes to see us. "What can we do now? We all come from the same village in northern Iraq and we decided to leave together for fear of ISIS. We are Yezidis, and many of our people have been killed or abducted to serve as slaves. How can you let us stay here? You must help us! Look what they did to me!" he says as he pulls up his pant leg, showing us the burned skin on his leg. Behind them we see the faces of the women, huddled in worry over the agitation of the two men. Some of the women start crying when the situation is explained to them. One of them comes to us, her eyes red, and says: "What do you want us to do? We cannot return to Iraq, our village is probably destroyed now. . . . Germany cannot let us down."

The children continue to play while their parents, haggard, discuss the situation and the options they have: stay in Serbia and possibly seek asylum or try to cross the border into Croatia illegally, possibly with a smuggler, and with the hope of not being deported by the police. How-

ever, the most pressing matter at the moment is to reach Belgrade, either by bus or train. The group heads toward the station, following the lead of the volunteer who took charge of buying the tickets and distributing a food package to each individual. As they leave the camp, the women dry their tears, the men rekindle their cigarettes, and the children, all dressed in clean clothes, start on another bag of dried noodles.

3. Presevo: For My Tranquility, I Left

A man approaches me near the exit of the registration center of Presevo, a train ticket in hand. "Sir, a Syrian family gave me a train ticket since they finally decided to go to Šid by bus. It is a ticket for two people, and I am alone. Do you know someone who would like to come with me? It would be a pity if it is not used." This young Afghan, with a serene appearance, explains that he left his country two months ago, walked across the Iranian border, avoided police violence and mafia thieves, used the bus, and hitchhiked to Turkey.

From there he took a boat to get to the Greek islands. "It's the trip of a lifetime, this is the trip of my lifetime. I went through all the emotions, all the adventures, swung between joy and fear. I met bad people on the road, but I have also met very good ones. Look, that is Karl, from Denmark, and Philipp, from Germany, who helped me when I was in Greece," says Wasim while showing me, on his mobile phone, a picture of himself, a small brown man with a jovial face, standing in the middle of two blond giants. "They gave me their contact so I can write them when I come to Germany."

After several minutes of searching in vain for someone to accompany him, he decides to follow me into the tent of a relief agency

where they will give him something to eat and drink before he embarks on the long night of travel. "I have not found anyone yet. Either they already have a ticket, or they are many and have no desire to separate, or they do not have a valid document and cannot take public transportation," he disappointedly says to me. In the tent a volunteer gives him his meal for the evening: a cup of hot tea, a bottle of water, two slices of bread, a boiled egg, a packet of biscuits, and three clementines. His bag on his back and food in hand, he follows me outside of the tent and sits down in a chair beside a brazier placed near the tracks of the railroad. He drinks his tea silently, staring at the flames dancing in the fire. Upon leaving I tell him he can go rest in the tent if he desires, but he politely declines, saying that he will stay by the fire to read. In response to my question about the book he is reading, he pulls his cell phone from his jacket pocket. Upon its unlocking an image of Jesus Christ appears in the background. He clicks on a PDF file and tells me: "This is the New Testament, I read it every day. I turned to Christianity several years ago, but my choice is not accepted in my country. In Islam, it is forbidden to convert to another religion, some are willing to kill you if you do so. For my life and for my tranquility, I left."

In the early morning, while returning to the registration center, I meet Wasim again. He is still sitting near the brazier, his head bent over his phone. When he sees me, his face lights up: "The midnight train was canceled, so I stayed here and slept a little in the tent. I'll take the ten o'clock train scheduled to leave in a few minutes. I'm hoping it is not canceled this time. Unfortunately, I asked other people if they need a ticket, but I could not find anyone to come with me." With a warm handshake he says, "Thanks for helping, my friend. I hope our paths will cross again. May God protect you!"

4. Belgrade: Love for All, Hatred for None

It is almost ten in the morning in the Miksaliste help center as coordinators finish preparing the different sectors, foods, clothes, shoes, before opening the site to refugees who have already amassed at the entrance,

their faces pressed against the fences. Volunteers who came to help that day are conversing, gathered outside the central tent, waiting to find out where they will be needed. Among the Czechs, Americans, and Germans is Qamar, a thirty-four-year-old Pakistani. In hesitant German, he tells me his experience in Austria. "I spent several months in Austria after having applied for asylum. I started to learn German and I still continue here," he says, pointing to his exercise book. "But they did not go through with the request since my fingerprints were recorded first in Bulgaria. They deported me there because that's where I have to make the request, but I do not want to stay there as the conditions are terrible for refugees. I returned to Serbia and now I have to wait three months to return to Austria." While waiting out that period he has been coming to the center at Miksaliste every morning for more than a month and serves tea and coffee to refugees.

In the back of the tent, next to his drawings on which are written his motto, "Love for All, Hatred for None," he distributes drinks non-stop, responding with humor to those who are a little bit too eager and flock to his table, demanding more sugar and continuing to call him "Pakistani" in spite of his presence in the center for over a month. He tells me, "I fled Pakistan several months ago because I am an Ahmadi, a persecuted religious minority in my country. My family has been affected by the violence suffered by my community. My wife and my three children still live there, waiting to join me here in Europe." He explains that "Ahmadiyya is a reformist movement in Islam founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He came to restore Islam in its purity because it is the savior announced by Mohammed who was to return to earth in the thirteenth century after the prophet's death. For us, Jesus is not the son of God but his messenger, and he is not in heaven either. He had been taken down from the cross by his disciples, and after he woke he went to India where

he lived until his death at the age of one hundred twenty." It is from the Ahmadi movement that Qamar took his motto: "Everything must be love on earth. We must turn to the other with understanding and compassion. Violence has no place among us." He is surprised that his religion can be transformed into a message of hate and death by the Islamic State or by other aggressive groups persecuting Ahmadis in Pakistan.

With his green volunteer badge around the neck and little beard well cared for, he stays active throughout the day, caring for the refugees who quickly gobble up the small bags of food distributed in the morning and who, from time to time, drink a few sips of tea never sweet enough for their taste. He wanders into the tent to clean the tables and put the food that has not been finished in the garbage bin. In the late afternoon, after a day without a break, he returns to the Krnjaca refugee center in the outskirts of Belgrade, his backpack on his shoulder. As he slowly walks away from Miksaliste, limping slightly, he turns and, with a wave of the hand and a large smile, bids everyone "Bis morgen!"

5. Šid: Our Only Option Is Germany

In the bitter cold of winter, a mass of refugees slowly strolls under a large tent where two tall police officers are thoroughly examining their registration documents before letting them access the platform of the train that will take them to Slavonski Brod in Croatia. Only a few hours after their arrival in Šid, Serbia, these women and men are back on the road, luggage on their backs, passports in hand, and fatigue on their faces. About ten meters away from the tent four shadows are waiting by the entrance of the station, blankets draped on their shoulders, their hoods covering their heads, staring at the queue facing the doors of the train. Unlike the other refugees, these four men

are from Sri Lanka and are not allowed to board the train. "The police did not let us get on the train because we do not come from Syria, Afghanistan, or Iraq. Even when we begged them to let us pass. They told us that in any case, if it's not them, it will be the Croatian police that will stop us and return us here, to Šid," explains Nalaka, the only one among them who speaks English. It has been five days since their arrival at the center near the train station in Šid. Soon they will be sent to Belgrade where their case will be handled. "We tried to cross the border on foot, but we were caught by a police patrol. We will be sent to Belgrade in a few days. Until then we come to attend train boardings, in case there happens to be a small flaw. We know the train schedules by heart!" he adds, laughing.

There are more and more people like them, trapped in Serbia, unable to cross the border and go further to Germany. Since mid-November of 2015, the countries of the European Union have tightened controls, restricting access to all except those from countries such as Syria or Iraq. For these Sri Lankans it is impossible to lie about their origin in order to try to blend in, because, as one said, "We have too dark skin and we do not speak Farsi, Pashto, or Arabic." For them, the only possible legal options are to seek asylum in Serbia or to return home voluntarily. But neither of the two is possible for them. "We spent a lot of money to come here, more than six thousand euros per person for transportation, smugglers, food. Our families depend on us to support them and to send them money. Going back home would be a failure that our families would struggle to accept." What about seeking asylum in Serbia? "Firstly, they would not give it to us as there is no longer an official civil war going on in Sri Lanka, even if, in reality, Tamils continue to be persecuted. And, secondly, we do not want to stay here. We came to Europe to work and to send money to our families. Here in Serbia it is almost impossible to find a job and wages are about three to three hundred fifty euros per month. It is less than in Sri Lanka! What interest would I have to come here?"

The stationmaster's whistle sounds in the night, attracting the attention of the four men who turn to look at the departure of the train which they are not on. The refugees on board are happily waving to the staff

left on the ground, arms sticking out of windows as the engine roars. The lights of the train slowly disappear over the horizon, bringing in their wake the screeching of the rail. When the silence comes back, the translator of the group of Sri Lankans joins me, his head covered and face close to mine. He looks around at the platform which has suddenly become empty before saying, "The departing scenes are repeating daily for us, without knowing if one day we will be able to sit in one of those trains. I will have a Skype talk with my dad tomorrow. I will tell him about my situation and I will see how he reacts, but I am under no illusion. . . . My only option is Germany."

6. Opatovac: This Exile May Be a Chance

As the sun rises after a cold night at the Opatovac camp life slowly blooms again, pulling crowds out of hibernation. The first pink lights of dawn scattered across the horizon fade as half-awake refugees, muscles frozen by the cold, prepare for departure, standing at the gates of the tents that served as their shelter for the night. Bags ready, they slowly drink hot tea and firmly stand near each other to warm themselves. Volunteers quickly distribute some fruits and biscuits to children through the fences that separate the refugees. An old man asks me in French when they are going to leave: "We spent the night here, but I did not sleep as I feared missing the departure." As his granddaughter clings to his leg he explains that "only the two of us are left. We plan to join my son, her father, who is in Germany. She has no other family in Syria, me neither. ISIS and Bashar have done their butchers' work." Behind me a group of refugees is moving toward the buses which are waiting for them at the exit of the camp. Their eyes look tiredly at those still cloistered around them. "We are eager to arrive in Germany. Travel is exhausting, especially for her," he says, stroking her head.

A few minutes after the departure of the first group of refugees, a policeman comes to the second zone, opens the barrier and, with a loud voice, requests a line "all in a row, I just want to see one head." Plastic cups fall to the mud and the crowd comes to life, jostling, forming one disorganized cluster where everyone is trying to be the first on the bus.

"One line," yells the police officer again, without success. At the forefront, the grandfather contemplates the scene testily, brooding through his beard nervously and adjusting his big hat. The little man looks at the policeman then looks back behind him. He removes his backpack, which he gives to his granddaughter, and leaves his place to go organize the line himself. While performing large gestures with his plastic bag, he shouts "*Jala*, *jala*!" He speaks in a cheerful voice to other refugees, "Go, make a line, go, *jala*." With his hands he arranges, pushing the recalcitrant back into rank, encouraging them to take a place, using "*jala*" and "one line" many times. After a minute of stirring a fine line is established before the gate. He returns to the front of the row, takes his bag from the hands of his granddaughter, looks at the policeman, and says with a big smile, "Well, we're a line, we can go!"

One by one they come out from behind the fence, grabbing the water bottles being handed to them by volunteers. Close to the exit of the camp a policeman stops the line in order to count them. The grandfather, whom I follow, says: "We are on the road again. I have a lot of hope for my little girl. I want her to become a doctor one day, like her grandfather, and hope she returns to our country to help rebuild it. All these young people who are exiled must take the opportunity to learn, to bring their knowledge back home. This exile may be a chance, if we accept what Europe has to give us. They should be the future and the light of Syria, a bridge between East and West. Thank you sir for what you do." The police officer finishes counting and sends them in groups of fifty to the already waiting buses. They quickly go in and take a seat side by side.

The grandfather, who failed to sleep during the night, slumps onto his seat and falls asleep in an instant, his mouth wide open and head leaning against the window.

7. Dobova: From the East to the West—Musical Migration

It is a peaceful day in the transit camp of Dobova. Buses follow each other in the camp and release their flood of refugees who get in line, first to take food and drink, and then to go to the big tent to register to receive an authorization to remain in Slovenia. Among these people are many families and men from different backgrounds. All are fleeing war and violence in Syria and Afghanistan and hoping to find in Europe the conditions of life they can no longer find at home. In the queue I meet Amin and Sarah, a young Syrian couple awaiting their turn to register with the police. They tell me that they come from Salamyah in the west of the country but that they had been living in Damascus for three years in order to study music at the conservatory: "We left Syria to flee Assad and Daesh, fifty-fifty. Our parents encouraged us to leave. They stayed there because our grandparents cannot make the trip; unfortunately they are too old."

We separate for ten minutes, the time needed for them to register, before ending up in the rest area. "We left from Turkey on Saturday, twelve hundred dollars each for a place on the boat, I mean 'the boat.' It would be better to call it the large inflatable buoy on which we were twenty-five people. We left at night. You could see the black sea. The waves were huge. We got very scared. A friend of ours was driving; it was the first time he saw a boat. It took almost two hours to reach the Greek island. Now we are happy to be there five days after leaving Syria." Destination? "I hope Dresden, for the music and for its orchestra! Music is my life. Even during the trip I continued to practice, on the train and in the camps," he tells me, showing me his violin that he is carrying. "You want me to play something for you?" he asks me with a big smile. He removes the instrument from its case and begins the "Méditation" from *Thaïs* that I requested, before continuing with a cover from Fairuz, a Lebanese music star

known throughout the Arab world. Those in the camp turn their gaze to Amin. The police stop screaming, Arab translators take out their phones to capture the scene, Syrian and Lebanese sitting or lying on the ground begin to hum the well-known melody. The bow continues its course, voices accompany the instrument, smiles on the lips of the newly uprooted.

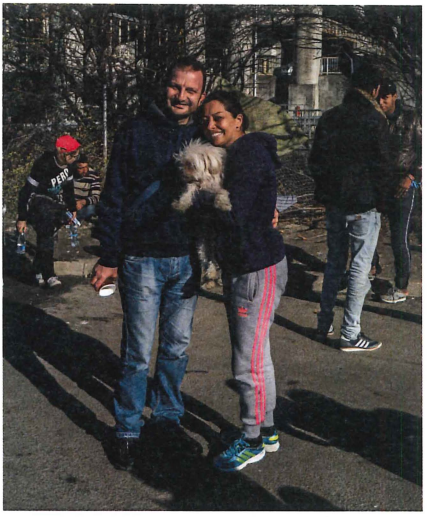
After a few unreal and calm minutes in this place more used to children crying and police shouting, the interlude is cut off by the "go, go" and "move" of the police chief who arrives to resume the departure of the buses. With strained eyes and swinging arms, the appearance of this big

body in the blue uniform of the *policija* has its effect. Amin quickly puts away his violin, translators return to the refugees, and volunteers come alive again to give one last bottle of water before departure. With just time to grab the plastic bag containing their belongings, Amin and Sarah are back on their way to Germany and their dreams of the *Staatskapelle*, the symphony orchestra of Dresden. They wave last goodbyes before the doors close and the bus starts on its route to Austria, direction Šentilj.

8. Šentilj: Last Step to Austria

In the courtyard of the Šentilj camp near the Austrian border a young couple walks slowly, holding by its leash a dog that they brought with them from Syria. A group of children follows them everywhere, hesitat-

ing yet sometimes finding enough courage to come closer and caress the little ball of white fur. "If we took the dog away from her she would become hysterical," says the husband, with a smile and sparkling eyes. With a gesture of his chin he points to the face of his wife, tense at the thought of losing her pet. "His name is Bianco. He has been part of the family for years. It was out of the question to abandon him in Syria, to leave him to the streets," says the young woman. "It was sometimes hard to travel with him but we're here now. On the way we always had to press him against us so that he wouldn't get hit. In Greece we slept in a hotel to avoid problems with other refugees." The children who seem delighted with Bianco's unusual presence in camp cause him no problems, but the Slovenian government may. As a United Nations refugee official told me, the government "is strict with veterinary controls. I hope that they have a valid passport for the dog, otherwise it will be taken."



Arriving from Aleppo with their elderly parents who are nearly in their seventies, these Christians fled the advance of ISIS and hope to "settle as quickly as possible in Europe and be able to find work in biochemistry. We have experience in this industry as we worked for Nestlé, so we should not have a problem finding a laboratory to recruit us. The important question is our choice of destination. We have family in Germany, but all refugees want to go there, just like with Sweden. We risk seeing our request refused if there are too many people who are seeking asylum. Maybe we should go to Austria or France, seeing that few refugees want to go there as they fear not finding work. They have Germany in their heads, and only Germany." For the couple there is no doubt that Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany, has been too loose with her statements: "They have eyes just for Merkel and ears just for her welcoming

messages, even though she changed her opinion about it a few weeks ago. They will not listen to what's new and will still stay obsessed with old promises. For us this is the time to decide on our future."

It is not easy to make such decisive choices for one's future, and it is even harder to define them considering the constant changes in information. Speeches are evolving and barriers are standing and falling. For this couple the time is short before they enter Austria, which is a few hundred meters from Šentilj camp. There they will register with the police and eventually submit their request for asylum. "Our parents would like to join our family in Germany. So if my husband and I want to stay in Austria we will have to split from them and they will have to travel alone without our help and without the certainty that they will find our family. It is a complicated choice that must be made quickly." For now the only thing of which they are sure is that they would love to go to Greece again. "It's so beautiful there. The landscape is beautiful and the people are extremely nice. And we ate the best pork chops we've had in a long time!" the woman says with an enthusiastic laugh. But when they go to visit Greece again they do not want to feel the stress and fear of traveling. They want to return in peace and walk with Bianco along the sea, as well as take time to look at the horizon without worrying about boat schedules or the threatening waves breaking on the shore, carrying death and bitterness.

Photographs by the author.

Migrants, Refugees, and Games of Othering: An Eastern European Perspective

Daniela Koleva

At the 2016 Modern Language Association (MLA) convention in Austin, Texas, along with sessions addressing my professional interests of African-American and American literature, I was drawn to presentations on travel, migration, and border crossing. The papers in these sessions employed the investigative categories of identity, space, place, and culture to examine historical and contemporary events in fiction and nonfiction. My intellectual interest in the topics of migration, traveling, and border crossing—similar to many other attendees, I am sure—was driven by the surge of refugees and migrants pouring into Europe by sea and land for a second consecutive year since August 2015, when Chancellor Angela Merkel announced Germany's open-door policy for refugees. As a European and native of Bulgaria, a country less affected than some by the mass movement of aspiring asylum seekers but nonetheless a potential target for rerouting of the migrant and refugee flow through its territory, I was doubly interested to hear academic readings of the transnational phenomenon referred to boldly by the mainstream Western media, official institutions of the European Union (EU), and leading European governments as the "refugee crisis," an apparent misnomer in the context of later sociological findings revealing the profiles of the people participating in the massive transcontinental journeys into Europe.

Data accumulated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other institutions invoked a "migrant and refugee crisis" to address the vast movements of people from Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa to and across Europe ("Desperate Journeys" 1). The shift in terms indicated the trajectory of attitudes and positions of global, regional, and small players as the crisis deepened in 2016. The transnational dimensions of the problem—people blocked at EU external borders and legal admittance of those who had already reached the EU interior—triggered sharp, contradictory reactions spanning the Atlantic and reverberating along a resurrected East-West Euro-

pean axis, with strong echoes in non-EU neighbor states. In short, an aspect of transnationalism such as mass migration, under the pressure of extreme political and social tensions in the EU, invoked various discourses of othering to propagate moral and political judgments of "right" and "wrong" approaches to handling the crisis in Europe.

The purpose of this essay is to trace acts of othering shaped by powerful discourses and implemented to ensure stable political leverage and pursuit of national interests in the context of an expectant structural revision of the EU. The migrant crisis at its peak between 2015 and 2016, and the subsequent EU responses by early 2017, reveal the need for transforming the cohesive and convergent policies affecting EU member states and asylum seekers and grantees, along with a potent reorganization of the existing asylum mechanism operating in the EU.

First off, neither the juggling of terms to denote the problem, nor the visibility of the discourses of othering, can diminish the fact that large numbers of people, driven by various existential motives, risk their lives every day to cover long distances of marred land, disfigured landscapes, fixed and elastic border formations to reach their coveted European destinations. Yet, it matters how their saga is seen from the various interpretive centers in Europe and America, the distributors or recipients of global and regional political and economic agendas. It is in their interpretations that we see the modes of othering in which they engage.

The refugee and migrant saga, as the MLA convention confirmed, has been received by U.S. academics mostly secondhand; it is a mediated reality projected on TV screens and written on the pages of mainstream newspapers and magazines in reportages aimed to reflect the scale of human disaster that envelops the European continent. The visual and verbal narratives of people suffering long-distance passages and dealing with privations are by definition rhetorical devices for achieving programmatic objectives on the wings of emotional deflections. And it seems that it was the emotional deflections and forms of sentimentalism spoon-fed by the media that framed the analyses of a large number of the conference presenters and attendees.

Regardless of the immediate topics of the conference presenters, not all of which were directly related to the refugee and migrant crisis, ref-

erences to the mass exodus of people from the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia to Europe were liberally tossed in to garnish the validity of the speakers' arguments or were simply employed as a lower layer of rhetoric to capture the audiences' attentions. With shocking tales of human suffering, images of blood trails and dead children's bodies—the most exploited example being that of three-year-old Alan Kurdi, lying lifeless on a Mediterranean beach as his family tried to reach Europe on boat—both presenters and discussion participants relied on emotionally charged arguments about violated human rights of people blocked at EU borders and harshly inhospitable, mostly Eastern European, responses to this major humanitarian disaster.

Pictures of the Hungarian-built barbed-wire fence erected on the Serbian-Hungarian border illustrated best the elevated tension on both sides of the fence, between those exhausted from the long march across borders but determined to seek relief in Western Europe from the misery and civil wars in their countries of origin, and those fully-armed border patrols and policemen, personifications of hostile Europeans blocking the migrants' advancement into Europe. In the American (Western) eye, Victor Orban's barrier—the Hungarian border of Europe—resurrected the classic, sentimentalist villain-victim paradigm that generated a predictable, black-and-white argument echoed with the same verve and pathos from session to session for the remainder of the conference. American scholars were agreeing independently of each other, for I heard more or less the same proclamation of Eastern Europe as racist and xenophobic in different sections of the MLA conference.

At the time, the EU's political class was making similar accusations in relation to Eastern Europe. Against the rise of Angela Merkel's *Willkommenskultur* (culture of welcome), interpreted by Katrin Bennhold in *The New York Times* as a "civilized act" given the backdrop of the country's sinister history, Victor Orban's perhaps most vocal but not solitary Eastern European nationalist argument to keep the migrants away from Hungary, and by default the EU, could indeed be construed as an act of racism and xenophobia if this is all one sees. In other words, to Americans and most Western Europeans, especially in the early stages, the complex process of mass migration, already liberally stirred into a

European pot of simmering internal contradictions, seemed reducible to one of its ingredients, namely, prospective refugees being denied access to Europe at particular external EU borders.[1] Such a topic invites inert conclusions behind which transpires the logic of othering. The stern American verdict that Eastern Europeans are racists and xenophobes sounded opprobrious to me as an Eastern European. Delivered in a tone of disgust and anger, the conclusions sounded like mini-performances of American academic melodrama staged in the tradition of misused political correctness.

In leading press viewpoints, similar lofty rhetoric diagnosed Eastern Europe's "aberrant" democratic backwardness, incivility, and repressive stance toward differences. Discussions of Eastern European xenophobia, intolerance, and illiberalism like those in Princeton historian Jan Gross' "Eastern Europe's Crisis of Shame," "The Stunning Hypocrisy of Mitteleuropa" by Paul Hockenos, an expert on Central and Eastern Europe, and "Hungary's Xenophobic Response," written by former U.S. ambassador Eleni Koulanakis, perhaps facilitated the fervent replication of the same thesis by the U.S. academics at the MLA conference. Furthermore, the above described American reaction is not solely a sporadic reaction to a humanitarian problem. It is embedded in the broad Western discourse of liberalism and its narrow practice of studying and inscribing Eastern Europe in a post-communist transitional space that is still in the process of being regulated as European.

In the decades before and after the Eastern European accession to the EU, multiple studies have been dedicated to the climate of tolerance in Eastern Europe, acceptance and integration of minority groups, attitudes toward transnationalism, and human rights in general.[2] The results have always been negative for the constitutive ethos of Eastern European states. Juxtaposed against the advanced, multi-dynamic Western European social model, Eastern Europeans needed to be disciplined and democratized. The post-communist discourse postulates the designation of the Eastern European space as other, before it could be tamed and integrated into the Euro-Atlantic project through organizations such as NATO and the EU. An older branch of Eastern European othering stems from the Western European Orientalist discourse gen-

erated during the Enlightenment and stretching well into the end of the nineteenth century.[3] Both the Orientalist and post-communist discourses on Eastern Europe have points of intersection that align to highlight Eastern European inadequacies and deviations in comparison to the reigning Western standards of the day. The traction of these discourses is still very strong given their scholarly prominence and the historical proximity of Eastern European inclusion into the Western project.

The American and, by extension, Western accusations of xenophobia and racism targeting Eastern Europe could not of course appease Alan Kurdi's little dead body, turned into a dramatic metaphor for human disaster by the media. Could the Western rhetoric in its protective stance toward life, acceptance, and inclusion of difference be simultaneously drawing a divisive line in Europe reminiscent of the Cold War? Could the illegal efforts of young people from the Middle East and Asia to dismantle the barbed-wire fence at the Hungarian border with bare hands and improvised tools be sufficient to generate an entire blanket statement of Eastern European racism and xenophobia run amok? Why did the flourishing anti-immigrant rhetoric already fully vocalized in parts of Western Europe go unnoticed at the academic forum? Why was there no similar deprecatory rhetoric against Turkey in the conference room where a heart-breaking letter by a Kurdish scholar told the tale of ethnic purges in towns and villages? Was Turkey a benefactor or detractor of transnational migration by virtue of its involvement in the border regions of Syria and Iraq? Why not a rebuke of Obama's administration and the U.S. Congress for admitting only ten thousand Syrian refugees, a goal that was only first met five years after the beginning of the civil war in Syria and implemented under "stringent controls in selecting refugee referrals from the United Nations refugee agency," according to White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest (Korte)? In short, what instigates the games of othering in which Americans and Europeans, Westerners and Easterners in the EU, are investing?

The borders of Afghanistan and Iraq have been destabilized since the American intervention in the region between 2001 and 2003. The scaled withdrawal of American troops in the period from 2007 to 2011 failed

to secure the integrity of Iraq, leaving behind porous borders. The Arab Spring of 2011, a tide of social movements across North Africa and the Middle East in which the U.S. Department of State saw a huge potential to democratize the region, failed to achieve its lofty goal. The hastily donned rebel garments in the Middle East and North Africa chosen to portray the character of a promising revolutionary were quickly exchanged for the cloak-and-dagger wardrobe of a sinister brigand, a composite transnational character snatching homes and safety from the locals. The higher the Western demand for democratization, the quicker the Arab Spring transformed itself into an Arab Winter. If Arab Spring meant best to express the softer and idealistic version of Lenin's revolutionary situation in which the rulers can no longer rule and the ruled no longer wished to be ruled, the Arab Winter crushed this naiveté with a reign-of-terror approach ready to eradicate those who stood in the way of the new religious order, as expressed by ISIS and other radical organizations. For many people now in the lands of Arab Winter, organized "trips" to Europe across border lines with or without the expensive services of seasoned smugglers seem a better alternative to leading lives in war and chaos.

At the peak of the migrant crisis between 2015 and 2016, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, known as Frontex, reported 1.8 million illegal border crossings into the EU ("Risk Analysis for 2017" 47). It has been no secret that the target destinations for large migrant groups from the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia remain Germany and Scandinavia. These places are preferred for their high standards of living, generous social programs, and openly-expressed political support for asylum seekers. In the late summer of 2015, Chancellor Merkel opened Germany's door to about one million refugees with a cordial German "Willkommen." That heightened the expectations of Syrians and Iraqis who could openly qualify for refugee status. It also drew citizens of other countries with internal conflicts, dire economic problems, social relations in explosive disarray, who saw an opportunity to migrate to the wealthy part of Europe.

The German chancellor's welcoming act and social attitude of acceptance had a positive resonance in Scandinavia, while in other EU coun-

tries it resulted in different vibrations. Italy and Greece responded more than anything out of humanitarian concerns given that they were the first EU countries encountered by the migrant flow. France had its share in the humanitarian maneuver to shelter those who reached its borders, but attitudes toward migrants' movements drastically changed once the UK announced its position to reject migrants. The refugee camp in Calais, notoriously dubbed "the Jungle," testifies to this. Austria, on the other hand, took a fair number of asylum seekers, but as the traffic through its territory grew exponentially it put a limit on the number of daily crossings.

Overall, the initial actions of Western European countries, in the spirit of moderate solidarity, expressed a commitment to the transnational agenda of globalism by opening the gates of "fortress Europe" and its rigidly-guarded socio-economic space. From a German perspective, the culture of welcome and its commitment to migrants and refugees meant an attempt to re-inscribe the EU as a potent and powerful actor on the international stage after the Ukrainian crisis of 2014. Germany, bolstered by its economic power, demonstrated an active political commitment to solving a complex issue facing the international community. The German economic boom could guarantee the integration of transnational bodies whose fresh blood, directly transfused into the national, export-oriented German economy, would also secure the prosperity of the aging German population, and by extension the prosperity of the EU.

The German act to invite an extremely high number of potential asylum seekers was backed by the European Commission but severely criticized by a number of EU member states. Germany faced accusations of making unilateral decisions on behalf of the EU that mostly served its narrow national interests. Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, also known as the Visegrad Group (V4), expressed both individually and jointly their strong disagreement with accepting large masses of migrants from the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia, arguing that the EU is not ready to integrate large numbers of people of different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The major split in the EU along the old East-West divide, however, occurred after the introduction of a quota principle for relocation of

refugees. This was introduced by the EU Commission in September 2015 to ease the pressure on southern EU member states and was an act explicitly backed up by core Western European countries. Under the banner of "European solidarity," each member state was assigned the admission of a certain number of migrants and refugees ("Refugee Crisis: European Commission Takes Decisive Action"). Strict penalties for non-implementation have been established.

The quota principle, an institutional effort to cope with the crisis, represents for the V4 an unsanctioned element of transnational rule exercised by Brussels's elite rather than a supranational decision approved by the member states. The act puts extra pressure on the Common European Asylum System, which was already showing some significant defects and generating contradictions among the EU member states. While acknowledging their responsibilities under the Common European Asylum System, the V4 advocates a "*voluntary mechanism* for coordinating Member States' support provided in order to enhance asylum systems of those Member States that are affected by a large increase in numbers of asylum seekers" ("Joint Statement of V4"; my italics). From their perspective, it is a rejection of an imposed European solidarity at the cost of solidarity as determined by the capacity and level of preparedness of each member state. This line of division between Eastern Europe and its Western counterpart in the face of the EU Commission revives an East/West split framed in national(ist) and Eurocentric terms.

Poland, for example, made a case that a high concentration of individuals from radically different, non-European cultures puts at risk the "civilizational identification" of the continent and represents a danger to its security. It expressed openly a preference for Syrian Christian refugees over any others. Recently, the Polish government took an even bolder step, declaring that until mechanisms for verification of refugees are put in place it will not accept asylum seekers. "We," Prime Minister Beata Szydlo declared, "will not import crime, terrorism, homophobia, and a brand of anti-Semitism that sets synagogues ablaze" (Cienski). Orban, the Hungarian prime minister, had long argued that the EU's open door policy on migration is an effort to destroy Europe. His Slovakian colleague Robert Fico argued that Muslim migration is a threat

to Europe, and Czech Republic President Milos Zeman declared the integration of Muslims to be an impossible mission.

The reactions are also exemplary of political, not epistemological, othering of migrants and refugees, which aims to preserve the vitality of the Eastern member states as sovereign subjects in the EU. The threat (mass migration) is defined as external, but the solution (quota principle) is acknowledged as an anti-democratic problem internal to the EU. Thus, the Eastern European othering of migrants invites the revival of an old paradigm of East/West continental relations where consequently Eastern Europe becomes an object of othering.

Studies such as Larry Wolff's *Inventing Eastern Europe* have dealt with the theme of Western othering of Eastern Europe. The terms *Eastern* and *Easternness* are products of the Western mental conception of regions that do not align culturally, politically, and economically with the "civilized" West. Wolff attributes the discursive construction of Eastern others to the European Enlightenment project and claims that "one might describe the invention of Eastern Europe as an intellectual project of demi-Orientalization" (7). Today's demi-Orientalization of Eastern Europe has been vocalized in expressions such as "Eastern Europeans are racist and xenophobic," and is as much a historical continuation of an older Western epistemological tradition as it is an extension of a much newer discursive tradition of post-communist assessment of Eastern Europe and its lack of potential to be liberal and democratic.

Thus, Europe again produced two forms of others: an internal and external. The theme of open versus closed EU borders orchestrated discursively each participant's game of othering. The debate has been framed by the issue of free movement of non-EU individuals across EU territory which facilitated access to the Common European Asylum System of Europe. The open-border policy toward non-EU citizens and potential refugees is perceived as an advanced, humanitarian, democratic act against which the closed-border policy of Eastern Europe is perceived as backward, nationalist, and retrograde. In particular, the barbed-wire fence between Hungary and Serbia ceased to exist as an interpretation of an EU border, but became a metaphor for a racist and nationalist location that smears the distinction between EU and non-EU space.

The open-border policy as an element of transnational and global ideology requires the methodological dismantling of the sovereign state. From the Eastern European perspective, the disruption of state sovereignty through the imposition of border policies jeopardizes the equal partnership among and between member states and their political and administrative center in the EU. To emphasize equality and sovereignty as integral elements of the EU treaty, Eastern Europe consolidates its response predominantly behind the sign of the closed border imbued with etatist meanings. The intensity of the political statements in Eastern Europe range from populist nationalism to patriotic etatism. The same trend became discernible in Western Europe as the flow of migrants escalated.

I am tempted to argue that the Eastern European game of othering migrants targets first and above all Western EU member states, which, under the protective umbrella of Brussels, push transnational projects of vast proportions to camouflage their narrow national interests. The migrant crisis illustrates the deepening of internal contradictions among EU member states, now reaching newly dramatic proportions. The cohesive character of the EU can no longer be pursued with transnational political decisions, penalty declarations, or moral exhortations regarding mass migration if the structure of the union is *de jure* supranational, but *de facto* strives to operate administratively as transnational. These mechanisms have proven counterproductive for deeper European integration and have been transformed by the core European countries into mechanisms for economic and financial control over the unruly Eastern European provinces. And the subsequent development of the migrant crisis resulting in Brexit and the rise of nationalisms in the West suggests a structural failure in the political and ideological construction of the EU.

But how did Western Europe react once the peak of the migrant crisis reached its territory? What mechanisms of the Common European Asylum System caused the introduction of the unloved quota principle and further antagonized relations with Eastern Europe?

Already in September 2015, shortly after Merkel's invitation to migrants and refugees to come to Germany, the magnitude of the influx of people across the Austrian-German border institutionally and technically

prevented the implementation of asylum procedures required by EU law. The German authorities admitted that they had lost track of people crossing or leaving their territory and insisted on instituting a *temporary border control* between Germany and Austria. In essence this was a suspension of the Schengen Agreement, a fundamental document guaranteeing the right of free movement within the EU. According to "Internal Border Controls in the Schengen Area," a study commissioned by the European Parliament, Austria responded with a similar measure, and by late September Slovenia and Malta also reintroduced internal border controls, only to be followed by France and Hungary in October, Sweden in November, Norway in December, and Denmark and Belgium in January and February 2016. The temporary suspension of the Schengen Agreement converted the internal European borders from virtually nonexistent lines into concrete, physical lines separating EU member states and behind which it was no longer possible to hide national and security interests. The reintroduction of *temporary border controls* was the "elegant" measure to create prerequisites for new divisive lines within (and outside) the EU. The harsh, barbaric Eastern European representation of the EU external borders was juxtaposed against the refined, velvet-gloved concept of the Western European internal borders of the Union. The tools "barbed wire" versus "passport control" had in essence the same effect: to limit illegal migration and channel the flow of people at a pace that would allow governments to process adequately the asylum seekers' registrations. But the symbolism that each tool carries revives old (trans)continental Western imaginaries about Eastern Europe as a region removed from "true" civilization. The external EU land borders could be "conquered" by the ethereal gate of paper inspections, which paradoxically resulted again in blockages, delays, and detentions of migrants.

A central defect of the Common European Asylum System has also impacted the East/West EU split. The Dublin Regulations that lay out the administrative refugee procedures within the EU require that migrants be officially registered at the first point of entry in the EU. The principle of free movement once within EU territory, however, allows for the migrants to file their applications for asylum in preferred Western European member states. A rejection of application under the Dublin

Regulations means a relocation back to the country of initial admission into the EU. This intensified the fear among Eastern Europeans that once confronted with a high number of applications, the Western European countries would "cherry-pick" the candidates and would lawfully, but not loyally, return the denied applicants to the point-of-entry countries. This stipulation biases Eastern Europe as a second-class EU territory in contrast to the progressive, first-class EU core territory of the Western states. The preparation of Eastern EU territory as a depot for "rejected" transnational human resources presents Eastern Europe with the challenge to conduct much more expensive and time-consuming integrationist policies toward refugees and migrants in comparison to Western Europe. With the fall of communism, Eastern Europe has already experienced a serious brain drain westward and is living with the consequences of a dramatic loss of top-notch demographic resources. It knows firsthand the efforts necessary to develop successful human resource projects. In sum, the closed and open borders in their soft and hard variants built up pressure all across the EU to be conveniently consumed today for political purposes by both Eastern and Western EU member states.

The varied border standards in the EU evoke the ghost of the East/West split and showcase the EU/non-EU division as well. Countries such as Greece, for example, that cannot fully cope with first-stop registration of migrants for one reason or another pass on the migrant problem to non-EU countries such as Serbia and Macedonia, which have neither the resources nor the motivation to control the migrant flow. The avoidance of registration is sometimes willfully sought by the migrants themselves, who in turn contribute to the proliferation of illegal trafficking across borders toward wealthy EU countries with generous welfare packages. Thus, the space between Greece and Eastern Europe, and in particular the narrow strip known as the Western Balkans, is perceived as a *transit space* for migrants and refugees. The reintroduction of internal border controls in the heart of Europe, right before the Eastern European line, coupled with the legal binding of the Dublin Regulations for readmission of migrants who have been denied asylum, creates a prerequisite for expanding the transit corridors by including parts of Eastern

Europe. It is the transit space scenario that countries such as Hungary try to avoid by reinstituting fenced border control. Similar acts, however, may quickly turn the Western Balkans into *buffer zones*, spaces in between the countries of migration and the EU. There, maximum pressure of migrant presence and unknown reliance on EU or other external sponsors for coping with the crisis will ensue. It is hard to predict what kind of transnational communities and formations the migration order will create in the buffer zones. The integration of low-qualified and ethnically diverse masses of people may assign the small Balkan countries a woeful destiny. As Bechev has noted in his study on the Western Balkans, the region has been relegated to the "periphery of the periphery" (8).

The Eastern European countries have the historic knowledge of what it means to be a buffer zone. They have maintained this status for quite some time since the fall of communism and have tried to make a case that they are an integral part of Europe. Milan Kundera, Václav Havel, Adam Michnik, and other dissidents dedicated their intellectual efforts on behalf of the political and cultural inclusion of Eastern Europe into the EU—the emblem of the Western European civilizational space and values. From this historical perspective, Eastern Europeans perceive it as their duty to defend the idea of Europe and its civilizational borders as they exist in their cultural imaginary. This cultural imaginary does not tolerate Eastern Europe to be read as Europe's other again.

Bulgaria and the Rest of the Balkans

According to Frontex, the Western Balkan Route—starting in Greece and leading through Macedonia and Serbia, then into Hungary and Croatia, and lastly into Western Europe—accounted for the majority of refugee and migrant transits between 2014 and 2016. In 2015, at the peak of the crisis, 764,038 illegal border crossings were detected in the region, a sixteen-fold rise since 2014 ("Western Balkan Route"). Ironically speaking, the Western Balkan Route offers settings, plots, and cast that might be the envy of any reality TV show specializing in survival matters. Prospective economic migrants and desperate refugees submit their destinies into the hands of smugglers. The mountainous terrain of

the Balkans introduces new life challenges for the migrants in stuffy, blistering-hot vehicles where they hide to avoid police and border patrols on their way to Germany and Scandinavia. A police bust usually redirects their journey to registration centers, or, worse, to tent camps with poor sanitary conditions such as Idomeni on the Greek-Macedonian border. As borders, following the domino effect, are closed, the migrants and refugees become further removed from their end goal and look upon the country that shelters them as a temporary stop on their journey westward. In their eyes, Bulgaria is one such temporary destination, a trap, perhaps, that must be escaped if they want their asylum applications to be considered first in Germany or Sweden. In order to circumvent the trap, migrants prefer to do business with smugglers and oftentimes portray the country in which they find themselves in a negative light for Western journalists and other migration authorities.

Compared to the countries of the Western Balkan Route, Bulgaria did not see a huge wave of migrants and refugees, but the numbers nonetheless proved significant enough to focus internal political and social debates on the country's migration and integration policies. According to Bulgaria's State Agency for Refugees (SAR), there are two types of centers to service refugees and migrants. Since 2012 Pastrogor, on the border with Turkey, functions as a transit center with a capacity of three hundred people who are later resettled into three registration and reception centers in the town of Harmanli, the Sofia quarter of Ovcha Kupel, and the village of Banya, Nova Zagora Municipality (SAR). These centers are critical for shelter and helping individuals apply for refugee status. In 2016, the centers could accommodate 5,190 people, adhering to the European accommodation standards according to SAR ("Doklad za Deinostta" 4). The current occupancy of the centers is at one hundred percent. The Bulgarian Interior Ministry report for December 2016 shows that sixty-six percent of the settled are from Afghanistan, eight percent from Pakistan, four percent from Iraq, fourteen percent from elsewhere, while only six percent are from Syria ("Mesechna Informacia" 5). The trend for January 2017 remains the same with a one-percent increase of Syrian registrations ("Mesechna Informacia" 5). Overall, 19,418 people were offered protection and social and medical services during 2016 ("Doklad za Deinostta"

4). Between 2014 and 2020, seventy-five percent of the budget for the functioning and maintenance of the centers will be provided by the EU, while the other twenty-five percent will come from the state budget (6). An additional amount of 4,883,200 euros for emergency support was offered in October 2016, along with the transformation of the Pastrogor and Harmanli centers from open into closed types (6).

Statistics show that forty-five percent of the asylum applications are filed by citizens of Pakistan, followed by Iraqi applications standing at twenty-eight percent, and only fourteen percent, or two hundred sixty applications, were submitted by Syrians ("Doklad za Deinostta" 7). In addition, the number of applications in 2016, 19,418, was only five percent lower than the number during 2015, 20,391 (7). For the same year, under the Dublin Regulations for readmission, 9,770 people were sent back to Bulgaria, primarily from Northern European countries (8). A quick reading of the facts confirms the observation that the current phenomenon of people moving across European borders is less than a refugee crisis, as initially presented to the global community, than it is a migrant and refugee crisis with distinct ethnic patterns, routes, and logistics of movement. The facts also indicate that the mass migration is to remain a common European problem for quite some time. It will continue to generate internal debates among EU member states regarding levels of transnational commitment and migrant policies, along with their adjustment and implementation. As a contentious issue it will play its role in the forthcoming agenda for restructuring the political and economic foundation of the EU and the development of each member state respectively. The problem of mass migration marks 2017, the year of super elections in Europe, in ways that only mute but do not hide the resurrected East/West dichotomy despite the fact that the West already substantially revised, and is still correcting, its initial, broad open-door policy toward migrants. Thus far, the UK is the most-striking example of rife nationalism in action, denying both current migrant and Eastern European transnational presences by its act of withdrawal from the EU.

The upsurge of national interest is not foreign to Bulgaria either. The Bulgarian government's proposal to open additional migrant centers within the country met with resistance from many Bulgarian citizens.

Similar to other Eastern European countries, Bulgarians see the EU's policy on migration as a loss of sovereignty. The completion of the Union's bureaucratic, transnational agenda stifles the subjectivity of the state and forces it to act at the expense of the local citizens' interests. Such a mismatch between EU visions and Bulgarian goals in defense of local interests is seen at the Turkish-Bulgarian border, where Bulgaria is building a wall to minimize the illegal migrant traffic. The EU allocates money for the protection of its external border, but at the same time stipulates that Bulgaria not spend the money on the wall. From the Bulgarian perspective, the wall, already under construction, is simultaneously the best protection of the external border of the EU and a guarantee of the integrity of the country itself. From a national point of view, an unprotected Turkish-Bulgarian border is an insecure space heightening the possibility for deterritorialization of the country under chaotic migrant pressure from the south and southeast. Some EU calls to open up more migrant and refugee camps on Bulgarian territory have met with public disapproval since an increase of such institutions is associated with the stimulation and formation of unstable transnational spaces both inside and outside the territory of the centers given their diverse ethnic migrant makeup. Most importantly, the integrationist policies could further slow down the very acceptance of the country as an equal EU member state.

As with other Eastern European countries prior to EU accession, Bulgaria was ascribed a peripheral status in relation to a core Europe. It, along with Romania, had to wait the longest to close the negotiation chapters and become an official EU member state in 2007.[4] Bulgaria had to wait almost a decade to be rightfully admitted in the EU at an exorbitantly high social and economic price. Strict visa application procedures for all Eastern Europeans regulated travels to Western European countries. Bulgarians still remember the long lines in front of the foreign embassies and the unpleasant interviews with embassy officials in order to get the coveted visa sticker on their passports as the only proof of their right to travel. When Bulgaria officially joined the EU, its citizens did not have access to the European job market for another seven years. The country is still not a part of the Schengen Agreement, and, similar

to other Eastern European countries, is not a member of the Eurozone. Monitoring controls in certain areas of integration are still in progress. The flow and distribution of EU subsidies upon which large segments of the economy depend are also under the strict control of Brussels.

Through the lens of this long and exhausting history of Bulgarian-EU relations, it is perhaps logical to judge the admittance of migrants into Europe as something premature; an event happening too soon and evading the logic of acceptance and timely application of structural procedures. Refugees aside, other migrants' efforts to stay in the EU are examined as acts that have to be first earned rather than ensured by quick asylum-granting procedures.

The joint statement of Germany, France, Italy, and Spain in support of a multi-speed Europe delivered on March 6, 2017, additionally heightened feelings of insecurity among Bulgarians and has set the tone for a more critical examination of the migrant problem. By embracing one of the five scenarios for restructuring the EU mentioned in Jean-Claude Juncker's "White Paper," Germany, France, Italy, and Spain signaled the possible return of the core-periphery model for dividing Europe and producing its others again (Zalan).

Historically there is a long-lasting Western tradition that conceptualizes the Balkans as a backward European periphery, a form of otherness distinctly remote from, but nonetheless inscribed in, the center. In Maria Todorova's seminal study *Imagining the Balkans*, the Balkans are a discursive construction where "unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity" (17). In the Balkanist discourse, the region is not construed as an oppositional pair against which the West legitimizes its meaning but is instead a marginal zone, a backyard or periphery that is both in Europe but not of Europe. In "Nesting Orientalisms," Milica Bakić-Hayden traces the mechanism by which the Balkan peoples, with the rise of their ethno-nationalisms, tried to shorten the distance between the core and the periphery by employing the technique of attributing oriental features to their neighbors to claim respectively the cultural and political space of Europe for themselves. The geographical proximity to the Ottoman Empire determined the

degree of Orientalization of a given nation. The exploitation of Orientalizing the other is what propelled their lofty national ambitions in a European direction.

Bulgaria is no exception to the trend of purging Oriental elements from its image. In the days of its National Revival, and later in the period of constructing itself as a modern independent national state, Bulgaria heavily relied on a strategy of de-Orientalizing, promoting and emulating European civilizational ideas while rejecting the Ottoman Empire's model as retrograde.[5]

In its most recent history, with its knock at the door of Western liberalism, Bulgaria again looked to the European civilizational model to assist its reorganization and transition from communism to capitalism while insisting on the integration of the country into European and transatlantic institutions. For example, Bulgaria represented its campaign for joining NATO and the EU as a "civilizational choice" (Kondev). More than two decades later, when Bulgaria was sucked into the vortex of systemic cataclysms raging in America and Europe, the rhetorical sharpness of the phrase "civilizational choice" resurfaced again, as Kondev argues, to be exploited for political purposes. The examination of the "civilizational choice" today goes hand in hand with a deep introspective look at the future of the nation. An element of this dissection is the migrant crisis and its possible effects on the social and cultural makeup of the country. The most skeptical but respectful voices insist that a deepening of the migrant crisis, combined with a severe demographic decline in the ethnically Bulgarian segment of the population and low prospects for economic advancement may lead to irreversible impacts on the cultural identity of the state. As Ivo Hristov claims, "The substitution of the entire psycho-mental code of the nation is already underway" ("Professor Ivo Hristov v *Panorama*"). This, subsequently, puts at risk the preservation of the Bulgarian European project from within, if that project is how we define our civilizational choice today.

More political parties in Bulgaria and Europe nowadays embrace the idea that belonging to Europe should not be at the expense of the cultural identity and national interests of countries. This ideological view-

point turns into a pivot not just for populist parties that thrive on cheap nationalism but also for parties with leftist and rightist political orientations. For the pro-European parties on the left of the political spectrum, use of national(ist) elements is an obvious but nonetheless expected paradox. For the right, the national(ist) path appears to be more natural and experiences additional pressure from constituents that oftentimes tilts the scales toward Euroskepticism. How does the migrant crisis shape the political views of the Bulgarians and their attitude toward the government and EU-prescribed measures in the situation of massive migrant flow?

The Bulgarian case shows that the level of economic security and access to health care and basic living accommodations is higher for refugees and asylum seekers than it is for the most vulnerable groups of Bulgarian citizens. This is a particularly touchy subject for some retired Bulgarians, who have worked and contributed to the social security system of the country all their lives and are now marginalized with a monthly income lower than what the country spends on a single asylum seeker. People holding low-paying jobs experience a similar frustration. Press publications note that the monthly aid for refugees is close to eleven hundred lev, money provided by both the EU and the Bulgarian government (Panayotova), while the minimum pension and salary, according to National Statistical Institute, are one hundred sixty-one lev and four hundred sixty lev, respectively ("Monetary Income"). This is a motive for social discontent, the notes of which are quite audible to political parties, which add national(ist) tinges to their platforms in order to ensure their political vitality. For example, during the presidential elections in November 2016, the candidate of the Patriotic front came in third, but lost to the independent candidate and current president, Rumen Radev, who was supported by the Bulgaria Socialist Party. Both candidates, however, showed a desire to correct the accrued social imbalances by implementing different registers of nationally-oriented politics.

Another source of discontent is the Bulgarian Council of Ministers' Decree 208 ("Postanovlenie 208") regulating resettlement and integration policies for migrants who have been granted an asylum status. The criticism, bordering on resentment, is that the government obliges the

local authorities to sign integration contracts with refugees and provide housing and generous social benefits for them and their family members. It places the burden on the local authorities, many of which lack the resources to meet the terms of the integration contracts. Furthermore, Bulgarians with similar social needs do not receive the same support from the local authorities ("Postanovlenie 208").[6]

The EU core member states' initial commitment to harbor large numbers of migrants has already taken a dramatic shift in a series of planned operations. This has intensified the migrant debate in Bulgaria. In March 2017, Germany began its deportation program for migrants whose applications for legal status had been denied. Austria also tightened its migration regime, insisting on quick removal and harsh monetary penalties for those who refuse to leave the country once their legal term of presence expires ("Avstria Zatiaga Merkite Sreshtu Nelegalno Prebivavashtite Imigranti"). In the Netherlands, Mark Rutte, leader of the re-elected People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, spoke of "growing discomfort" felt by the Dutch toward those newcomers who abused the freedom of the country and showed disrespect toward its the societal values (Vonberg). In the UK, after the Brexit referendum, the government put a halt to its program to resettle lone refugee children. The Eastern European countries followed suit in a series of new restrictive measures. Hungary started the erection of a second fence along the border with Serbia, Slovenia geared up to close its borders, and Poland wanted to seal its borders and expel migrants.

Besides the proliferation of European counter-migrant measures to push unwanted migrants closer to or beyond the EU external borders, perhaps the most intense factor that threatens to thrust Bulgaria into a spiral of instability is the possible rupture of the EU-Turkey refugee deal of March 2016, which called for readmission of migrants and tightening Turkish border controls on sea and land to curb the migrant flow from the Middle East and Asia. The deal has helped to "close" the Western Balkan Route, and, as UNHCR reports, the number of migrants arriving in Europe has declined by half ("Desperate Journeys" 2). But the worsening relations between Turkey and core European states, stoked by the ban against Turkish high officials holding rallies in European cities

with large Turkish populations eligible to vote in the Turkish constitutional referendum of April 2017, caused a sharp reaction from the Ankara regime. The Turkish verbal attack against the EU's restrictive measure included a threat to undo the EU-Turkey refugee deal and "flood" Europe with migrants. Such a step would give Turkey an ability to implement its geostrategic interests in the Balkans and in consequence affect Europe.

For over a decade Turkey's foreign policy has followed the trajectory described in Ahmet Davutoğlu's book *Strategic Depth*.[7] Turkey has viewed itself as a natural heir to the Ottoman Empire by virtue of which it has the moral power and historical obligation to maintain cultural and religious links with Muslim minorities in the Balkans and other neighbors in the Middle East that were once a part of the Empire. The doctrine sees Turkey not just as a mere nation-state, but as a *regional power* in its own right, a political formation that refuses to play second fiddle to the EU, NATO, or the Middle East. The ambition goes as far as extending the role of Turkey as a leader of the Muslim world, a reference to the glory of the Ottomans and a preparation for the installment of neo-Ottomanism. Critics see this identification with the old empire as an amnesia of Atatürk's Republicanism. The return to a glorious imperial past may legitimize policies of othering in favor of Turkish political, geostrategic, and economic interests. The successful referendum establishing a presidential republic in Turkey has solidified a strong nationalist outlook and with it comes the fear of some Balkan states that Turkey would use Muslim migrants as a tactical tool for westward expansion of its geostrategic interests. Currently, unified European criticism of Turkish authoritarianism following such a neo-Ottoman path is absent. Each of the core European countries handles its problems with Turkey on its own. The Venice Commission Declaration of March 3, 2017, is the only joint European document that warned against the rise of a hostile regime in Turkey on the eve of the presidential referendum, saying that it would *de jure* remove the checks and balances of the democratic model and would carry "an intrinsic danger of degenerating into an authoritarian rule" ("Turkey—Opinion on the Amendments to the Constitution" 28). The position lacks the power of a political statement coming from EU

headquarters, and as long as such a common voice is missing, individual responses of EU member states to Turkey's responses to the migrant crisis will be wrapped up in a nationalist rhetoric utilized for internal consumption during elections.

The EU-Turkish deal has slowed the influx of migrants, but at the same time allows Turkey to use migrants as a bargaining chip to control the transnational flow of people on its territory in return for substantial monetary compensation from the EU. Threats to break the deal on the Turkish side might result, according to some analysts, in the destabilization of the Western Balkans and even neighboring EU states. Turkey's role as a gatekeeper on the EU's southeastern border does not solve the cardinal problem that the EU faces, that is to revise the Common Asylum European System in a flexible format to ensure the protection and integration of refugees, to remove the divisive lines within the EU, to guarantee the functionality of its own borders, and offer productive partnerships to the non-EU counties in Southeastern Europe.

It is evident that the mass migration to and within Europe, especially in 2015 and 2016, mobilized different forms of national(ist) expressivity and drew attention to accumulated contradictions in the systemic functionality of the EU. The hard and soft regimes of border closures and extended time durations of these regulations introduced by different member states depending on their geographic location in the Union are the visible indicators of the crisis. They spread beyond EU borders to transfer chaos and disturbances to non-EU countries in the southeastern part of the continent. The EU member states are paradoxically united in their disagreement with the implementation of common migration policies dictated by quota principles for migrant resettlement. In addition, the tricky Dublin Regulation for readmission of denied applicants to the first country of registration puts the Eastern European member states at a disadvantage. This causes Eastern European protest, which in turn mobilizes the resurrection of old East/West divisions that threaten to crush Eastern European unruliness. Consequently, Eastern Europe rejects the Western European othering by criticizing the EU Commission's directives for handling the migrant

problem. This simultaneously generates a cycle of migrant othering which follows the logic of an East/West dichotomy that articulates Eastern Europeans as others too. In order to function, East/West and European/non-European divisions require the banners of patriotism and national protectionism. All participants are engaged in distinct games of othering. What crystallizes in the East/West European games of othering, crossed with Oriental/Occidental notions of civilization in the question of migration, is how the debate on transnationalism and mass migration is preparing Europeans for fundamental changes in the EU as an institution. The embrace of etatism and the focus on national interests across the EU is perhaps perceived as a historic chance for each member state to act as a player with a strong position in negotiating the new EU treaty that inevitably lies ahead.

Notes

[1]The economic crisis of 2008 caused the national debt problems of some EU member states as well as the serious issue of high-level youth unemployment in the south. This created the North/South line of division which is now overshadowed by the East/West split.

[2]See Bernd Baumgartl and Adrian Farell's *New Xenophobia in Europe*, Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumford's *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and Implications of Europeanization*, Cas Mudde's *Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe*, and Ray Taras's *Europe Old and New: Transnationalism, Belonging, Xenophobia*, among others.

[3]Classic studies include Larry Wolff's *Inventing Eastern Europe*, Vesna Goldsworthy's *Inventing Ruritania*, and Milica Bakić-Hayden's "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia."

[4]In comparison, other candidates of the former Eastern bloc joined the EU in 2004.

[5]This is the standard version of Bulgarian historiography. For a source in English, see Roumen Daskalov's *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans: Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival.*

[6]As of March 31, 2017, the interim government of Bulgaria repealed the controversial Decree 208. The document awaits revision.

[7]This is my translation from the Bulgarian edition of Ahmet Davutoğlu's Turkish book. To my knowledge no English translation exists.

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Translation of Excerpts from *Darürrahat Müslümanları* (Muslims of the Peaceful Country) by İsmail Gaspıralı

Çiğdem Pala Mull

Introduction

The Crimean writer İsmail Gaspıralı, also called İsmail Gasprinski, (1851–1914) was a Turkic journalist and writer who was a strong advocate for the cultural development of the Muslim communities living under Russian rule. He became a leader and a symbol of the intellectual awakening of not only the Crimean Tatars but also the Turkic people and Muslim communities around the world.

Starting in the fifteenth century, Crimean Tatars under the rule of Geray Khan's dynasty were allies of the Ottoman Empire and were a self-governing people under the empire's protection. Together with the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century, Crimean Tatars lost power. Military losses against Russia during the war of 1769–1774 left them under the oppressive rule of Russia. Crimean Tatars during this time lived under the hegemony of an invading state and were persecuted in their cultural and religious lives. A great number of Crimean Tatars found a solution by immigrating to the Ottoman lands, but many of these refugees perished during the perilous journeys they took in search of a better life. The ones that stayed lived through a century of social, economic, religious, and cultural decadence. İsmail Gaspıralı was born into this climate and was educated in both the Islamic madrassas in Crimea and Russian schools in Moscow. At a young age he had the privilege of visiting many European cities and his observations helped him develop a broad perspective. Witnessing the decay and backwardness in his own county as well as in the other Muslim countries, he developed

اسماعیل بك غصپرینسکی
Измайлъ бекъ Гаспринскій.

the "Usul-i Cedid" (New Method) in education, which proposed the inclusion of subjects such as mathematics, history, and geography into the curriculum. He also advocated the phonetic teaching of Arabic even though the traditionalist intellectuals and religious leaders were not pleased with these changes. Gaspıralı published a bilingual Russian-Turkish newspaper named *Tercüman* (The Interpreter) to transmit his ideas to intellectuals in different Muslim countries and summarized his aim in the motto "unity in language, idea, and work." He believed that using a common Turkic language was crucial in establishing unity among Russian Muslims. Parallel to the political and cultural awakening that was taking place among Ottoman intellectuals toward the end of the nineteenth century, Turkish enlightenment in Russia, kindled by Gaspıralı, promoted reforms in religion and the modernization of Muslim society.

Gaspıralı wrote one of the most important examples of Turkish utopian literature, *Darürrahat Müslümanları* (Muslims of the Peaceful Country).[1] It was published in *Tercüman* in installments during the 1890s and later was published in book form in 1906. The following excerpts are a translation of the earlier text, which was translated from Ottoman Turkish into modern Turkish by Hüseyin Gültekin.[2] In this narrative, the main character, Molla Abbas of Turkistan, travels to Andalusia in order to visit the greatest works of Islamic civilization and finds himself in an unknown country that can only be reached through underground tunnels. In this place, the peaceful country of Darürrahat, Muslims have created a social system without class differences in a completely self-sufficient manner utilizing science and technology together with religion. Reflecting the anxieties of Gaspıralı's time, the utopia underlined his hopes for a better life for the Muslim people. Hearkening back to the Golden Age of Muslim civilization in Andalusia, he imagined a place where education, science, belief, social justice, and the roles and rights of women in society were drastically different from the world in which he lived. In a literary conceit, the author presents himself as the publisher of a travel narrative titled "Letters from Europe" in *Tercüman*, which follows the viewpoint of a naïve, wide-eyed young student, Molla Abbas, whose good-natured ignorance is constantly emphasized. Although the young Molla Abbas is considered to be an educated man

in his own country, he cannot escape Gaspıralı's satirical views on education and the state of scholars in the Muslim countries.

First Excerpt

Peaceful and Strange Land of Islam
(Work of Abbas Fransovi)

This story is the epilogue to Molla Abbas Efendi's (from Tashkent) travel narrative called "Letters from Europe," which was published in *Tercüman*.[3] Leaving the travel to Europe and the commentary on Europe out, here we are presenting the epilogue of this work to our customers in the lands of the Ottomans.

Since it is evident that brilliant ideas and a polite form of writing are not to be expected from a coarse Turk, there is no need to request forgiveness of the faults to be found in the diction of the story.

Abbas Efendi is a student who received his education in Tashkent madrassas and went to Europe in order to visit "Gül Baba" in Tekriya and "Forty Saints" in France. After staying in France for a couple of years he continues his visit to Andalusia.

-The Publisher

In the year of 1880, forty-three hours after leaving Paris, I arrived at the Spanish border. At the last stop the customs officials checked my belongings, as is the custom and the rule. One of them took a careful look at me and said:

"Are you a Moorish Arab?"

"No, sir, I am the son of a Tatar from Tashkent."

"I see . . . from the land of Turkistan . . . where are you going?"

"To Spain, sir."

"Are you a merchant?"

"No, sir, a humble visitor."

"What are you visiting in our country?"

"Praise Allah, sir, your country is considered a holy land for us. We call it the Land of Andalusia; this country which cultivated the most

pleasant Islamic civilization is very famous and always worthy of a visit."

"Yes, sir, . . . there are many Islamic works to see. Welcome. On the trains it is not possible to stop very often. If you have time I would like to have you as my guest. . . . We don't get many Tartars here from Turkistan. . . . You are a unique guest. . . ."

I enjoyed these kind words from the Spaniard and realized that they also are well educated like the French. Besides, these two peoples are brothers, their types and languages are similar and they share the same beliefs. However these French and Spanish people had great wars between themselves and cut the throats of each other similar to the Karabag people killing the Badkubelis and the Bukharans killing the Hokants.[4] They are also likely to continue cutting each other's throats! Since I knew French, I was able to communicate with the Spanish, and after reading travel writings I quickly gathered some information on the country. Anybody with any knowledge of the French language can communicate in every country in Europe. Many people, even the servants of big hostels, speak French.

The city that I stayed in was the capital city, Madrid. I continued my visits from this city. Spain is a country of sixteen million people but it cannot be compared to France in this respect. This must be because of its southern location. However, the regulations of the government and the customs show that it is a European country. They are a very open and happy people, they are very enthusiastic about dancing and musical instruments, but, still, they are more religious than the French. They show immense respect toward their religion and their sanctuaries.

As it stands, Spain is one of the secondary governments. Comparatively speaking, the people cannot be considered wealthy. In the past the American continent and some large islands belonged to Spain and at that time shiploads of gold were coming into the country. American savages[5] would give a handful of gold and silver in return for a small rifle made out of glass. Yet those times have passed and America and the islands formed their separate states. All the gold and silver were spent and gone. Lack of proper skills and unemployment brought neediness and desperation. Spain is a great example and a lesson for everyone:

wealth comes from work and skills, not from easy gold. A country full of gold was finished, but on the other hand the English land without any gold became the fortune of the world thanks to its people's abilities and hard work! Spaniards ended up hungry like the prodigal people. Busybody Brits, on the other hand, dominated everybody and gathered the whole world's property.

Spain is a peninsula on the southern part of the European continent. It is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. The water and air there are truly wonderful. They have plenty of grapevines, figs, pomegranates, lemon and orange orchards. Although some of the cities lack water and are somewhat desert-like, the majority of the country is quite fertile and fruitful. In between the African Islamic countries and Morocco and Spain stands the Strait of Gibraltar. Islamic warriors crossed this strait to conquer Andalusia.

In the year 84, according to the Muslim calendar [the year 668 in the Gregorian calendar], during the time of Caliph Velid bin Abdulmelik, the north side of the African continent up to the Atlantic Ocean was conquered and the people living there made the acquaintance of honorable Islam. Musa ibn Nusayr was among the Arab commanders who crossed the strait and spread the religion of Islam even into Andalusia. At that time the Christian governments were against each other because of treachery and defeat; there were many among them who wanted Muslims to come and conquer their land. That's why Musa ibn Nusayr asked for the caliph's permission to make an expedition to the Andalusian continent. He wrote that Andalusia was like Damascus in grace, like Yemen in climate and water, and like India in terms of its minerals.

After taking Spain, Commander Musa ibn Nusayr wanted to conquer the French and German lands. And after taking the whole of Europe under siege, he wanted to come to Istanbul. That's why, gathering the necessary equipment in the first half of the year 93 [711], Barbary Governor Musa ibn Nusayr appointed Tarık ibn Ziyad as commander to lead the Andalusian conquest. In a short while, a handful of Islam's warriors conquered the whole land and many fortresses, destroying the

Christian governments. However, some governments in the open country and on the mountains accepted paying taxes in return for their freedom. Apart from the perseverance and bravery of Islam, the justice and fairness demonstrated in the lands that were conquered made the Christians submit to Islamic rule and obey quite easily. For instance, the conquest of Sevilla was made possible after the Christians' comfort and peace in the conquered city of Toledo had been observed.

As soon as he received the news of Tarık ibn Ziyad's conquests and works, Barbary Governor Musa ibn Nusayr rounded up a legion of soldiers and conquered many other places in Andalusia, yet in reality Tarık was the true conqueror. Since Tarık became well known for his knowledge and talent for fighting and his fairness in administration, Musa became resentful and jealous. He wrote various accusations about Tarık in a letter to the caliph and they were both invited to Damascus for investigation. Musa defended himself deceitfully and Tarık ibn Ziyad was forced to leave his position. This well-known conqueror died in 97 [716] in desolate conditions in Andalusia.

In the year 113 [731–732], Muslims crossed the Pyrenees and attacked France. Conquering Toulouse and Bordeaux, they came all the way to the city of Tours. However, because they were too far away from Andalusia and couldn't receive the necessary help, the soldiers became weak. Also, French soldiers under the commanders Charles Martel and Kuledos attacked the Muslims. In the battle around the city of Poitiers Muslims lost and had to retreat to Andalusia. I came to France knowing that the Forty Saints pilgrimage was close to this city of Poitiers, yet I couldn't find the said area since time has passed and no signs of the Forty Saints have survived.

The continent of Andalusia was subject to the Damascus caliphs and was run by the appointed governors. But at the time the Damascus Caliphate collapsed and the caliphate was passed down from the Omayyad dynasty to the Abbasids. Abdurrahman from the Omayyad dynasty ran away to Andalusia in the year 140 [683–84] and was received respectfully as a caliph by the people of Andalusia. The Islamic government in Andalusia started with this Abdurrahman Caliphate and continued until 895 [1489–90].

The Islamic government in Andalusia, in its time, was one of the foremost in the world with respect to its science, ability, and governing style. Furthermore, it was superior to all governments because of the strength of the army, the brilliance of its knowledge, its general culture, and advanced economy. The civility and good harmony of the people in the Andalusian Islamic country became a model and a lesson for European people. The majority of the wisdom and science of European scholars was received in Andalusian madrassas. Just as the disunity and disorder among the Christians caused the conquest of Andalusia and the success of the Muslims, disorder among the people of Islam and the unity and perseverance in Christian minds caused the collapse of the Andalusian state. Ferdinand took Andalusia from the Muslims and the last *amir* was Mevla Ebu Abdullahu's-Sagir. After months under siege, Ebu Abdullah surrendered the fortress at Granada to Ferdinand and retreated to Maghreb. Spanish soldiers entered the city as Ferdinand and his wife Isabel sat on their thrones in Alhambra Palace. This was the end of the Andalusian state.

When the continent of Andalusia fell into the hands of the Muslims, it was a fertile country with fair weather, but because of the lack of civilization and lack of talent among its people, it was broken down and empty. Yet with the effort, perseverance, and good management of the sons of Arabs, the whole country was full of fruits and people in no time. As a result of the intelligence and civilization, roads and bridges were built everywhere. Fountains on the roads, wells in the desert areas, thousands of mills near water, factories, villages, towns, and cities were also built. Deserts turned into orchards and gardens, wilderness turned into farms. They brought water to places where it was deemed impossible before; they gave new life to the arid soil. As a result of their efforts, perseverance, and skills, the people of Islam became fruitful and developed day by day and turned Andalusia into a paradise. As seen in Arab history, alongside Vadi-i Kebir (Grand Valley), twelve thousand villages were built. During the time of Amir Yusuf, every Friday *khutbahs* (sermons) were given in his honor in three hundred thousand *minbars* (pulpits)! There were eighty large towns and three hundred cities. In the sultanate city of Córdoba were two hundred thousand houses, six hundred

mosques, five hundred hospitals, eight hundred madrassas, and nine hundred baths! The cities of Granada, Toledo, and Seville were also at the level of Córdoba. The Islamic civilization that was the result of great effort and talent should be evaluated according to these. This should demonstrate the Andalusian Muslims' enlightened and happy lives. Thanks to the intelligent and fair rule of the Andalusian Caliphate, they were more advanced than all of the European and Asian countries. As explained in the European histories, the treasures of the caliph were more than the total of the European governments' treasures. The wealth of the government comes from the wealth of its people. The wealth of the people comes from good management, skills, industry, and effort. The education and dissemination of science and wisdom are the reason and the result of this wealth. There have never been as many wise men in another country as we see in Andalusia. There is a list of two hundred three scholars who became famous with their scientific works. Some of them wrote one hundred books, the total number of works by them exceeds one thousand. Unfortunately, during the collapse of the Andalusian state these books fell in the hands of Spanish Christians. At that time they were very conservative and not appreciative of science. They burned whole libraries, saying that these were "the works of Islam and the works of the enemy!" The Muslims of Andalusia showed great improvements in medicine, surgery, pharmacy, ontology, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and logic. The caliphs paid large amounts of money for one book and spent fortunes on scholars, summoning them from many different countries through the ambassadors. The palace of the *amir* was also the assembly of scientists and scholars, the general Privy Council! The degree of interest in science and books was obvious in the fact that reverend Abdurrahman-ı Salis built a library in Córdoba with six hundred thousand volumes. There were seventy large libraries in the country that were used by the general public and students. Europeans used to come to Andalusia to study science and acquire skills. That's why Andalusian Muslims contributed greatly to the development of European civilization. We can even say that they were the mentors and masters of Europe. The present works of Islam that survive until today in Spain cause awe and admiration in everyone, making them say "thank God for

these." If people see Cami-i Kebir, which now has been converted into a church in Córdoba, or Alhambra Palace in Granada, they can understand the extent of the Andalusian civilization. Thank God, I was able to come from Tashkent and see all of these. During my visit I was so pleased with these feelings and sweet dreams. Sometimes my days were spent with bitter tears but as time passed I found comfort and delight in my life.

I stayed in Córdoba for a week, busying myself visiting the mosque. I couldn't get enough of what I saw! The second work of art was "Kasrül-hamra" (now known as Alhambra Palace) that belonged to the Melik Ibn Ahmer in Granada.

Every year hundreds of people from all over Europe come to visit this palace. Alhambra is composed of layers of quads, many buildings, and partitions. Yet the whole building in general is charming, graceful, and beautiful, as if it came out of the skillful hands of a seasoned master. It is impossible not to be in awe looking at the ornaments carved in marble, shapes decorated with tiny stones! One cannot draw these intricate details with pen on paper, yet these masters carved them in stone! They have stayed intact for five hundred years and there are also some writings and verses of the Koran written in gold and silver in appropriate places. For example, on the gate named Babü's Sara, the inscriptions in *Kûfi* and *Afrikî* style state that it was built in 749 [1348–49]. Since the ornaments and embellishments of Alhambra Palace are signs of unique workmanship, European masters always come here to learn the techniques.

During my first visit to Alhambra I took a guide with me. I talked to the warden of the palace and got permission to visit. I was feeling admiration and awe as I walked around. Even though the building gave me comfort, the hidden message of "past times will never come back" was mixing the bitter poison with sweet honey. I told the officers of the palace that I came from Turkistan and they granted me permission to visit the palace anytime I wanted. I spent a month visiting Alhambra, mostly during the days and some nights. I saw every corner of it. Sometimes during the dawn, under the light of the moon, I would walk through the sections and the courtyards.

According to Arab history, the climate, location, and the water of Granada cannot be compared to Damascus or Baghdad since it is a unique

corner of the world. They say, "Water stops the heat of the sun." No matter how hot this summer sun is in Granada, it rains a lot and cools the weather down because it is surrounded by the Sierra Nevada, which are always snowy and icy on top. When it is hot, the water coming down from the mountains counteracts the heat of the sun. That's why the city of Granada is a fruitful and fertile place; you can find all kinds of fruits and roses.

Close to Alhambra Palace there used to be a secondary palace located inside a big garden. The caliphs used to reside here at times. Spanish people call this place "Ceneralif." In Arabic it is called Cennetü'l-arif, so we can call Granada paradise on earth. I spent a month in Granada watching the scenery, contemplating on the path, full of emotion and various kinds of sadness.

One day, instead of going back to the city, I decided to stay in the palace. I walked around the palace until the evening and prayed. Since it was summer and there was moonlight, I decided to sleep on my prayer rug where I performed the *salaat* every day in the place called Lions' Square. There was a great fountain in the middle of this square. It had eight lions made out of marble and water used to come out of the lions' mouths. Even though nowadays the fountain is dry, under the moonlight it looked very graceful and impressive, so I sat down to admire it. As I imagined and reveled in the fantasy of the people in the palace, European ambassadors, wise men, and scholars of Islam walking around in this courtyard during the time of the caliphate, I heard quiet human voices and footsteps from the nearby Gülbahçe (rose garden) courtyard. The night was so calm that you could hear a fly. Who are these people? Palace attendants were away from this area; they wouldn't admit anybody into the palace at night. As for me, some days, instead of going back to the city, I stayed in the palace, purchasing food and water from these attendants. As the noise came closer to me, I crouched in a quiet and shadowy corner waiting in fear and shock. By God, what was this! Twelve beautiful girls came out of Gülbahçe courtyard into the Lions' Square! My God, what was this? I froze.

The girls lined up around the fountain and one of them started praying. After the prayer they retreated to Gülbahçe, where they had come from. . . .[6] My eyes were seeing but I couldn't believe them. The court-

yard was as quiet as a graveyard. In the name of God, I got up from my place and, quietly stepping on the marble stones, started to follow them to see where they were coming from and where they were going.

Walking around Gülbahçe courtyard, the girls entered the Harem Mansion one by one. . . . The air was quiet and the world was fast asleep. The moonlight was shining coyly. Walking on tiptoes, I entered the mansion, following the girls. When I went into the second section, they saw me and scattered around, saying, "Oh my God, who is this person? A European!" I was scared too, but I collected myself and I said, "No, sisters, I am not foreign, I am a Muslim. . . . Don't be scared. . . . By God, I don't know how and why I came to this place, it is just a coincidence." They calmed down a little and looked at each other. At that moment, one of the marble stones on the floor moved and a turban popped out. . . . I was so shocked that I didn't know what to do. What strange things are these? It has been five hundred years since the end of the caliphate and no one lived in this place since then! Who are these girls, what is this turban? The turban was on the head of an old and sage Arab. As he came out of the ground the girls pointed toward me. After looking at me with his full attention, the old Arab said:

"God bless you, son, are you Molla Abbas?"

"Yes, Father, I am Abbas." When I looked at him carefully, I noticed that this old Arab was Sheikh Celal, whom I knew in Paris. "By God, Sheikh Father, my mind doesn't grasp all this," I said.

"Son, you have so much to see, be patient, you will understand. . . . Come close to me."

I walked to the middle of the section. The girls were eyeing me from head to toe. Sheikh Celal pointed at the hole in the ground and told me to "jump in there." Sensing my fear and hesitation, he added, "Don't be scared, the girls and I will jump down, too." What could I do? . . . I let myself go as if falling into my grave. My feet soon touched a stone staircase. I descended thirty or forty steps. . . . There was such a darkness that is impossible to find on earth. My head was full of ideas and my heart was full of fear. Where am I going? Why am I going? What is going to happen to me? My God! As soon as I got my head together, I noticed a red light on the top of the staircase. I heard footsteps. I saw that they

were coming. The light was coming from a torch; Sheikh Celal and the girls descended one by one, carrying torches.

"Don't be afraid, son, walk. There is only one road, you can't get lost," said the sheikh and we went down forty more steps into either a section with a stone-ornamented arch or a dungeon. . . . Sheikh Celal opened the hole in the wall by removing two cut stones. . . . The girls went through that hole one by one. He told me to go through and hold the light. Then he himself came to the other side and closed the hole. From here we climbed up ten steps. Another big section! The girls spread their prayer rugs and started their morning prayers. . . . Since I was in shock at all of the things that happened, I didn't know what to think! Although Sheikh Celal was a friend of mine from Paris, I was sure of my anxiety and fear. . . . We are going underground, but where? . . . I meant to ask them but I couldn't find the time.

The second section that we were in was also built of stone. On the top of the stone staircase there was a pile of dirt. Sheikh Celal started to push down the dirt with the shovel that was waiting there. I also helped him with his task. In a short time we closed the entrance to the staircase through which we had passed. The road that we had traveled was completely closed! If somebody upstairs found the first staircase coming down they could find the first section, however it would be impossible to go through and find the road after that! After the prayers the girls sat on the floor. One of them took the basket hanging on the wall and put the fruit and bread in front of her friends. They gave us some fruit as well. . . . They ate, prayed, and talked like people. . . . They were definitely people, but what kind of people! I ate a couple of peaches, the kind of which I have never seen in the world. I couldn't hide my curiosity and asked Sheikh Celal:

"Sheikh, I saw that we went underground; yet tell me, where is this strange road leading? It is obvious where you get if you ride the camels in Turkistan or if you ride the trains in Europe. I cannot comprehend the road that I fell onto!"

"Yes, son, it is a curious road, I am sure you have never seen one like this. Be patient. . . . The section that we descended through eighty steps was the treasury in the times of the caliphate. It contained the most valu-

able goods and gold of the Andalusian caliphs. . . . This second section is called Bab-ı Selâmet (Gate of Salvation). Nobody on earth knows this place. Only a few people can have the honor."

Even though Sheikh Celal explained that the second section is called the Gate of Salvation, I was still anxious because I didn't know where we were going. I said, "Thank you for the explanation, but, for the sake of God, tell me, where are we going? . . . I am full of respect toward you, but I am losing my mind because of astonishment and curiosity!"

"Don't be alarmed, my son, trust us. These girls are also trustworthy and respect-worthy people. Don't bring fearful things to your mind. . . . This dark road will lead us to an enlightened land."

"My God, am I going crazy? How is this possible? An enlightened land under the earth. . . . I studied geography and geology, but a place like this. . . ." In the meantime, the girls got ready for the road and waited for the sheikh's orders.

"You will soon know the world that you didn't know before. . . . When we come out of this darkness, Feride Banu (that is the name of one of the girls) will explain the history of this land and you'll understand the past. . . . Be free of fear and anxiety. . . . We can't talk too much right now because we are underground; the air is spare and foul. We need to get out quickly. We don't want to faint in this darkness," said the sheikh, pointing the way. From the Bab-ı Selâmet section there was a straight tunnel. The girls started walking two by two, holding their torches. We followed them on the stone-paved road. Some areas were very damp with dripping water. We walked for two hours without stopping. My feet started to give in, but suddenly, thank God, a white light appeared. The girls started running while saying, "*Allahu ekber*, *Allahu ekber*."

I looked around as we came out of the darkness. The light of the world was there. Oh my God, I thought we came out to the face of the earth, but I noticed that we were in a well. I don't know what to call it if not a well. The length and the width of the place were almost eighty meters and surrounded by rocks and stones. When I looked up I saw a little piece of the sky. Thank goodness for that! We were on earth! I was thankful like a man who woke up from a terrible nightmare; then again

the place we were in was a waterless well about two hundred meters deep. Yet, with its air and light, it was still showing signs that we were on earth.

The girls sat on rocks and rested while Sheikh Celal performed his morning prayers. I followed his lead. Thinking that it would be inappropriate to ask further questions, I decided to be patient. Yet curiosity and bewilderment were still burning in me. My God, what else was going to happen to me? Being an understanding and compassionate person, Sheikh Celal talked to me after his prayers: "My son, you will soon be reaching a happy community. . . . Look at the bottom of this mountain across the way, there is a dark road again. If we walk on that road for fifteen minutes, we will find ourselves in Darürrahat."

"Tell me, Sheikh, is this country in this world? I am getting confused."

"Yes, son, it is in this world, yet none of the historians or geographers of the East or the West know this place."

"By God! Darürrahat is on the Spanish continent. We are three to four hours away from Granada. It doesn't make sense. Nowadays the furthest corners of the world are known, calculated, planned, and charted. The fauna and flora and the people are cataloged. There is a country underground, close to the city of Granada in Spain, and nobody knows about it. I cannot quite comprehend it!"

"Don't stress your mind. We will describe it to you, be patient, son."

After these words, the sheikh called the girls to his side and introduced us.

"Don't be shy around this person, he is a Muslim from Turkistan, his name is Abbas. Even though lately the people of Islam, just like the people of Europe, are in a sea of darkness and carelessness, there are some scientific steps being taken and some knowledge is taught there. There are some Muslim scholars that study, more or less, and are considered wise men. This man, Abbas Efendi, is a man highly educated in Tashkent and then in Paris. So I hope he can comprehend our situation here. . . . Try not to see his mistakes, forgive his tactlessness, and follow your conscience. . . . I hope that he will try to join the Islamic civilization and community and be a worthy person. He will see what he hasn't seen, he will know what he has not known, his mind will clear. . . ."

Even though I received education in Tashkent and became acquainted with the new sciences in Paris, the fact that this reverent sheikh looked at me and introduced me to these girls as "an ignorant and uncivilized person" bothered me very much, but what could I do? I studied grammar, logic, Islamic theology, geography, history, chemistry, philosophy, geometry, calculus, and other sciences. I was thinking that if I went to Turkistan I would be considered a first-rate scholar, but here they look at me as a child learning his alphabet! What strange people! My God, give me patience! Then the reverent sheikh said to me:

"These girls are students of a madrassa. This year they completed their education by getting the honor of being top students in their exams. According to the old tradition of our land, they were visiting the old Andalusia, Granada and Alhambra Palace, as an award. . . . To see the holy land that housed our ancestors for five hundred years is a sweet delight for all of us, but only a few can have the honor. . . . From the girls' mansion where we descended it is possible to see the whole of Granada and most of sacred Andalusia. . . . That is what these girls were doing when you ran into them. We have never had a visitor before; there is no road and the road that you saw is not known. . . . So, welcome, son, let it be good for you and for all of us. . . . The people you will see are human beings, but they are different from the people that you know. They are all Muslims, but they are not like the ones in Turkistan, Egypt, India, or Iran. You will see for yourself. . . . You know a little bit of Arabic, you can talk to the girls. Your lack of language will not be a problem, the scholars will understand whatever you say. Also, we can see your ideas and intentions from the way you look, the way you walk. Try to follow the rules of general morality, manners, and compassion. . . . Feride Banu will give you information about the place to where we are heading so that you know what kind of a country you fell into."

After the sheikh said these words, the girls introduced themselves to me and expressed pleasantries. To introduce myself and the fame of Turkistan, I composed a few lines of poetry praising the beauty of their faces and expressing my happiness. The girls listened to me while looking at each other. One of them said, "This must be the custom in Turkistan."

We rested for a while in this place, call it the bottom of a well or in between mountains, then we took to the road. Our road was the tunnel dug in the mountain across the way. When the girls entered the tunnel the torches that they held started burning. . . . I had not noticed it until this point, the torches were burning on their own, they didn't have any kindling, gas, or oil in them. To my surprise, these torches were full of electric power and were built in a way that has never been seen in our world! Looking at these torches, I realized that these people and their land that we were going to was not behind and possibly ahead of Europe in terms of philosophy, mechanics, and skills, even though they do not have any connection or communication with Europe. . . . Strange! What else will I see?

We walked underground in the dark for half an hour. Then we came to a section that is similar to the section I mentioned at the beginning of our journey. This was also a cave carved out of stone. As soon as we all went in Sheikh Celal said, "We are going to Darürrahat right now. It is a rule that no one should know the road and gates as we go there. We have to blindfold everyone." The girls used their head covers to cover their eyes and I used my oil cloth. . . . Sheikh Celal moved to a corner of the section and made noises indicating he was opening a door and putting a rock on the ground. . . . I didn't see anything. . . . After that he came close to us, made the girls hold hands and, holding my hand with one of his hands and holding a girl's hand with his other hand, told us to walk slowly, following each other. . . . We walked with the guidance of the sheikh. For a few steps we turned one direction; at the end we walked uphill a long way in the tunnel. . . . "Watch out, there's a staircase in front of you," he said. We went up twenty steps. . . . "Now we have arrived," said Sheikh Celal. . . . "We arrived safe and sound," he said to somebody I didn't know. . . . A gate was open and a pleasant breeze came in. . . . We walked again, blindfolded. I don't know the places we passed, but we stopped. . . . There was a fountain or a river. From the fragrances around me I realized that we were on the face of the earth. On one hand I was anxious and fearful, on the other hand I was very curious to see where we were. My mind was so confused that I cannot describe my situation with words! "We are here; welcome, remove your blindfolds,"

said the sheikh. . . . I pulled the oil cloth from my face and looked at the world to find myself in a large room decorated according to Islamic customs. There was sunlight coming in from the windows and I heard the water from the fountain. . . . Two old Arabs that looked like Sheikh Celal in terms of their age and clothing were standing next to the fountain with face cloths in their hands. . . . The girls dropped their head covers right away and started twittering like nightingales. They ran to the fountain, drank some water, and washed their faces. . . .

One of the old Arab started asking questions of the girls: "Did you travel safely, did our old Granada look pleasant, and how is the old country?" And the girls talked about what they saw and how much they enjoyed everything.

As for myself, I didn't know who I was or where I was due to my state of desperation and confusion. Thank God, Sheikh Celal paid attention to me: ". . . Come here, son, wash your face, it will refresh you if you are tired."

Nevertheless, after the wash my mind was quite calmed. The girls went into the second section and the sheikh and I followed. There we saw that a table was set and a meal prepared for all of us. Around this room there were soft red leather cushions. We ate the meat, rice, and many kinds of fruits and retired to the cushions. The two aforementioned old Arabs swept the room according to Islamic custom and left. . . . As I looked outside through the window next to me, my admiration increased! A divine, spacious green area. . . . Surrounded on all sides by forested mountains. . . . The highest tops of the mountains were ornamented with snow and ice and looked like silver jewelry. We were in a heavenly meadow surrounded by snowy mountains. When I took my eyes away from the mountains and looked at the land, I saw that it was divided into gardens, vineyards, rose gardens, and among them silver waters were running. Among the gardens, stone-house villages and Arabic-style narrow minarets reaching up to the sky created such a picture that the skill of my pen wasn't adequate to describe! I just kept staring at this country! Zerefsan in Turkistan, Paris in Europe are very nice and beautiful places, but Darürrahat was more beautiful than both of them.

I asked Feride, who was nearby, about the size of this country. She said, "If we want to say it according to your Turkistan calculations, the length is three hours and the width is two hours."

Then I said, "I beg you, tell me the real history of this beautiful and strange country, I am burning in the fires of curiosity and eagerness." I looked at the girls with utmost attention and I noticed that the majority of these girls were beautiful. . . .

As Feride prepared herself to speak we all got ready to listen. Because, according to the customs of this country, if a wise man or a wise woman is going to give a lesson or tell history, he or she has to be loyal to the real events and tell the story in a proper literary style. Feride Hanim started talking. . . .

Translator's Summary

Feride proceeds to tell the history of Darürrahat in a way expected of an educated woman. After describing the impressive civilization built by Muslim ancestors in Andalusia, she continues to tell the reasons behind the decline of this great civilization. In 1491, when King Ferdinand of Spain and his wife Isabel come to invade the city, Caliph Abdullah es-Sagir is unable to demonstrate the necessary leadership and the courage to save the city. One of the commanders, Musa bin Ebü'l-Gazani, argues for defending the city but cannot convince the assembly. One hundred thirty of Musa's followers and relatives take to the underground tunnel dug years before for a possible invasion but had been forgotten over time. They reach the place where they will build Darürrahat and bring with them the necessary equipment, books, and the desire to form a modern, advanced Islamic civilization. Molla Abbas wants to know more about this strange land and Sheikh Celal functions as his mentor.

Second Excerpt

Even though it wasn't too late, the sun was getting ready to go down behind the mountains. Since Darürrahat was surrounded by huge mountains on all sides, during the time of mid-afternoon, two hours before

the evening, the sun disappears, leaving this strange country in shadows.

We were very well rested after our underground voyage and decided to get on our way toward the city before it was completely dark. After everyone was out of the place we were staying to rest, the doors were locked.

This place was a guard station and the beginning of the underground road. As we left this place we found ourselves in a beautiful meadow. The girls walked in front of us toward the village, talking to each other. The sheikh and I followed them with difficulty.

When we came to the said village, I noticed that it had a style of building that had never been seen before. It had a circular, large open space paved with crushed material. There was no sign of dust, mud, or trash. In the middle of the circle was a large stone mosque and on one side of this mosque was a madrassa, and on the other side the assembly place and the great hall. . . . Around the mosque were old date trees, and around the circle there were orchards and gardens. In these gardens they had built houses that had the same exact distance to each other and the mosque. Obviously they were built according to a certain order and calculation. They stood beautifully inside the garden facing the mosque and the circle. When I paid attention to the buildings in this village, I noticed a very curious thing. Other than the mosque, none of these buildings reached all the way to the ground like what we normally see. They were all built on a stone belt, one *archine* (Turkish yard) high off the ground. It seemed as if all the houses were suspended in air. When I inquired about this situation, Sheikh Celal said:

"Listen, son, just like our spiritual lives and morals should be built on God's word and Islamic rules, our physical world should be suitable to the law of the instruments. In the nature of things there are harms and benefits to people. We need to know these, and while escaping one we need to invite and use the other. . . . Underground and in meadows like our country there is plenty of water, hence a lot of moisture. The plants and metals rotting in the soil transform from one form to another, creating poison for human beings and causing pain and various illnesses.

That is why we don't build houses on ground level. We build them over stone poles or belts so that the bottom of the house allows the movement of the air and the poisonous spirits and moisture cannot come inside our homes. . . ." I was very surprised to hear these words from the sheikh. He continued, "My son, during our migration our country was full of reeds, swamps, and had foul air. The immigrants suffered unending diseases and unpleasant ailments. Our wise men and the leaders paid attention to this problem, understood the reason for these diseases, and even discovered the solutions. They dug channels to help run the water off and dried up the swamps. They got rid of the reeds and rotten plants along the waterway, brought fresh water from the mountains, and built fountains. As soon as the water and air were clean, the community became healthy and comfortable. Presently there are virtually no illnesses in Darürrahat. . . . I realized that you are in awe, you are wondering how this is possible. Son, I am sorry but I have to call you ignorant! You have no idea about anything. In time you will understand. . . . All the graces of God are great but the greatest of all is the intelligence that God gave to human beings. With the power of intelligence you can go across oceans, discover riches hidden underground. You can also find solutions for many aches, pains, and illnesses. However, the will is only God's, human beings are only instruments. Nevertheless, the intelligence enlightened by knowledge and refinement is a joy and happiness for people."

We all arrived at the assembly hall in the circle. It was a building with three to five rooms built in the style of Andalusia. Two of the rooms were separated from each other by a glass wall and they were pleasantly decorated. We sat in one and the girls retired to the other one. At that time the old and wise imam of the village and the men who recite the *azan* came by. Since they had never seen people from other countries, they focused their utmost attention on me. However, because they were very well mannered they tried to hide their attention and curiosity. Sheikh Celal told them the coincidence of our meeting at Alhambra Palace and said that it was better to bring the man who has seen the secret road than to leave him there. He also added that he knew me from Paris and that I was a Muslim.

The imam of the village, after some pleasantries, asked me questions about Tashkent, Bukhara, and Turkistan.

"They say the land of Bukhara is an honorable country with its science and knowledge. Rumor has it that it is a garden of wisdom. . . . I wonder about the organization of the madrassas and whether all of the sciences are taught there?"

I told him all I knew about the style and structure of education in Bukhara and Turkistan. The old imam shook his head:

"Strange! Don't you need doctors, chemists, architects, and engineers in your area? Don't your leaders and governments need public management, accounting, and skillful clerks to run the government? According to what you say, in your madrassas there are no sciences other than the science of theology. They do not teach medicine, geometry, chemistry, natural sciences, economy, and they do not educate people other than spiritual training. Is that so?

"Yes, sir. They do not teach any other sciences except for religion and Islamic law."

"Thank God that you are not deprived of theology! How can you live in this world without any refinement and knowledge of various sciences? Such a strange situation! How can your governments manage and protect themselves? Why have the refinements and knowledge, the education of all sciences, been abandoned? In the old Islam there was a great effort shown in these areas."

"They say refinement and knowledge cause corruption, sir."

"What a shame, what a horrible oversight! Son, can a person walk blindfolded? You do not know about the soil but you try to plant; you don't know the water but you drink it; you don't know the world but you live your life in this world. . . . Such a shame, such a neglect! May God give you reason! I am extremely sad about your situation. Ordinary people might not know this, but don't the elite people, educated people, nobles know it? There is a need to learn the religious duties, but training soldiers, discovering new medicine and solutions, governing people require other sciences and refinements. Some sciences are for religion, some sciences are for life, some sciences are for spirit, and some sciences are for body. . . . What a pity that in our time Muslims

are not at the highest level. You are not going to see that in this country."

"I think the lifestyle and advancements that I will see in Darürrahat will be far ahead of Europe."

"You shouldn't take any offense, son. Hopefully, one day the people of Turkistan will be aware of sciences and refinements and get on the road to progress. . . . Ignorance and neglect are big and difficult problems to overcome, but they will pass. Even if you don't have the education and refinements, the public in general has the initial education that is reading and writing. The first step of knowledge is reading and writing."

"No, sir. Maybe half of the public knows how to read. Only ten percent of the people can write."

"Can this be true? Are you mistaken, son?"

"No, sir. This is our situation!"

"If this is the case you are quite doomed. You said that theology is taught there. Don't you know that reading, writing, and science are the duties of all Muslim men and women? If you all know this, why do you fail to perform it? I can't wrap my mind around this! Ignoring refinements, ignoring education, what a strange land!"

Translator's Summary and Conclusion

In Darürrahat Abbas is confronted with many new inventions, a surprisingly organized society, advanced engineering and architecture, higher levels of education for both sexes, a different type of leadership and justice system. The people of Darürrahat organize every segment of their lives according to rational principles without contradicting the principles of religion. After spending one month in Darürrahat, Abbas wants to leave in order to continue his pilgrimage. At the end of the narrative he finds himself in a hospital in Granada and questions if everything he had experienced was a dream, only to realize that Darürrahat was real.

Utopian narratives address the social problems and shortcomings of the time and the society in which they are written. In his utopia, Gaspıralı points out the major problems in Muslim communities as

being a lack of education in sciences, technology, women's rights, and progress, and offers his solutions through the ironic voice of Molla Abbas.

Notes

[1]The full English translation of Gaspıralı's *Darürrahat Müslümanları* will be published soon.

[2]Gültekin, Hüseyin, translator. "Darürrahat Müslümanları." *Türk Ütopyaları: Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Ütopya ve Devrim*, edited by Sadık Usta, Kaynak Yayınları, 2014.

[3]This text was serialized in the 1890s in *Tercüman* by İsmail Gaspıralı. In 1906 he published a book titled *Darürrahat Müslümanları* and based on these texts. This translation is of the serialized version.

[4]Gaspıralı points out the conflicts between the Khans of Karadag-Baku in the Caucasus and Bukhara-Hokant (Fergana) in Turkistan.

[5]The word "savages" here is used as the direct translation of the words "vahşiler ve yabaniler" in the original text.

[6]Editor's note: The frequent ellipses are a literary device used in the original text to indicate pauses.

My Life=A Haiku: The Transnational Eco-Ecesis of an Anatolian Boy via Creativity in the Age of the Anthropocene

Yusuf Eradam

To my late cats Minnosh, Poe Yavri Mou,
and the present ones Raki and Sharab

> If you understand others, you have knowledge; if you understand yourself, you see everything clearly.—Chuang Tzu

I met a traveler from the antique land of Anatolia who said:

"I have always been somebody else, always one of those modern argonauts, and never one of those juggernauts. That is how I believe I kept my endangered kind alive or saved it from extinction (*ecesis*)."

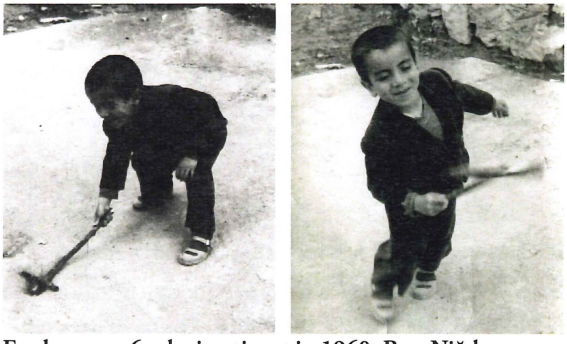
In the beginning I was real. As I became more educated, civilized, and transnational in this age of the anthropocene, I decided to be with other beings as my life is a symbolic act, my life's tagline being "Whoever I am, I will do whatever I can for others." Then I learned that we too did what we did "with God on our side" (Bob Dylan), seeing that the world is made up of "others" until I realized I was also "the other," one of the many "Objects in Mirror."

> He came from Anatolia thousands of years ago
> and embraced a standard American cat in fear
> as they dance in the window of the Cage here
> with objects in mirror closer than they appear.

I was born in Bor, on February 1, 1954, in the largest and greenest town of Niğde, an old city very near Mount Hasan and Salt Lake in Central Anatolia, Turkey. My birth was "heralded" to my mother in a dream. A very old, white-bearded man of God, also dressed in white, whispered in her ear: "Necibe, you will finally have a boy, name him Yusuf and he will be a great man." Mom had probably transferred her aspirations to her subconscious, which ironically did not come true in my form, as I am a small man, and my name, why would it be Yusuf?

My sisters' names were Leman, Nuran, Gülhan, all rhyming, and I sure would have been "Ilhan" to complete the whole, or some other name with an *-an*, *-han* ending, if it hadn't been for the interfering saint. I, too, was later named by my students the Saint of Bor while I was teaching at Ankara University in the early 1990s, mainly because I never discriminated against any of them, and they probably saw some Rumi hidden in my character.

When I was a little child, all I knew was to enjoy being spoiled by my mother, my first teacher. As I was the only boy after four girls, I was precious and the center of my home, just as the sun was for the solar system, and I was untouchable as the center, representing what the family had to hold. The earth was rotating around the sun, and there was the moon rotating around the earth. It was the same moon that would smile at Elizabeth Bishop from the mirror. This maternal centrality as a child caused me to assume that everything happening around me had something to do with me, which was diagnosed by yet another woman, who loved me dearly and quit immediately, blaming me for this habit of mine: "Everything may not be related to you, Yusuf!" This was the last thing she said cynically before leaving. On the other hand, I had also developed a skill to notice centers in all life's realms and also of fiction and art. I loved playing games, and was good at tipcat, as tipping the cat off its central hole in the ground before giving it a final blow was exhilarating. What a joy it was to sweat under the sun, next to the brook into which I would soon fall. Later I would learn and teach about my kind of solar joy (which might be suicidal at times) in the works of Hemingway, Camus, and Pasternak, and a "bit" in Sylvia Plath. I noticed later that reading stories and telling them is the best journey to being a world



Eradam, age 6, playing tipcat in 1960. Bor, Niğde.
Photo: Anonymous

citizen, and not only canonized literature. The only prerequisite for change is the readiness in the reader. Dogma, bigotry, and hubris? No, thanks! I have had enough.

That deep brook near our house, there right behind me in the open area next to the mosque, is where I would play tipcat with my friends. Do you know how it is played? You tip the cat, the shorter rod, and swing the tip, hit the cat, and fling it as far as possible. I could never imagine, when I was a child, that now I would both be the tip and the cat. Wherever fate flung me I was welcome in various ways. I did my best to belong to and adapt myself to that very setting. I had a passport with a crescent and a star on it, and although I did not practice any of the connotations of the signifiers on my ID, I was what others thought I was. At this point I usually remember exaggerated attention and care by the so-called "sensible" colleagues with either their extravagant expectations reflected upon this newcomer, or rather and maybe even better, "benign neglect," which has always been easier to deal with. These two human attitudes of discrimination and hypocrisy can by no means be seen in nature or in the "natural" habitat of animals. Hence, "mother nature" (*tabiat ana*) is not a sexist expression but the right way to label nature as it is as welcoming, warm, and secure as women, especially mothers.

However, sometimes even the compliments of a "native speaker" would hurt:

-Your English is so good. Where did you learn it?

-In Turkey.

-Oh, really?

As a child, I watched Indian music films (now industrialized Bollywood) on the flat roof of my aunt's house, films like *Sangam* (1964). Then slowly I was subjected to other languages, cultures, and identities, to learn that I can support the earth's support systems only with them, not in spite of them or against them.

Hence my mother's words of love echo in my head whenever I feel in exile at home: "I wish I could put you back in my tummy." I am not like Baudelaire, who would not let his mother go. Nor am I like Flaubert, whose mother wouldn't let him go, but still I do accept that

the will in me to continue living in nature, by nature, with nature around and in me, is actually the most precious inheritance from my mother and other women who spared some precious time for me.

My mother, my first story-teller and teacher, my first mentor and totem of self-reliance and "silenced value," would raise her voice against my father and anyone else when she was fed up with being degraded, when Dad was disloyal or ungrateful. My mother taught me to respect myself and to share with others anything I had, especially my food with the needy. She also taught me to sing or write away my pain, immediately to get rid of it so that it does not turn into *trauma*, a word I would later in my life believe is the politicians' income source. My mother taught me, not knowingly, that I am part of nature and that nature is in me. My father only knew that the cherry orchard behind the walls of our crumbling vineyard belonged, "unfortunately," to someone else. I was too short to jump and see what was beyond the wall, so I would ask Dad:

"What is the rest from here, Dad?"

"The rest is a cherry orchard, son."

That meant more to me, more than what it meant literally, I now realize. I believe that was the moment of the beginning of my curiosity about others' cherry orchards without any envy, gardens which were probably better than our vineyard and walnut trees and apple trees, in which there probably were some real toads. (Ah, Marianne Moore!)

We did not have cherry trees in our garden and father was not happy, though Mom was. Mom would exchange a pot of grapes from our vineyard for a pot full of cherries when Dad was away. Neighbors were happy to share what they had too, even time to make bread, spicy sausages, tomato paste, and pectin for winter. Neighboring women of three or four houses would put together what they had and get ready for the cold and share what they made together. This community work was called *imece*: rituals of producing together and sharing. Nature was benevolent and all we had to do was to imitate her. Dad, the most handsome shoemaker of Bor, the patriarch, did not know, he did not have to. He was remote, making shoes for others, befriended by alcohol and friends outside the family. He had his problems, I would find out later in life. He

was tall, and Mom was short and not a candidate for a beauty pageant. Dad used to make jokes about why he had married Mom. Mom's family name was "Moneychanger" (the Turkish is *Akçebozan*), so people could mistake us for the John Jacob Astor in Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," "with an orbicular sound to it, and rings like unto bullion" (590). Mom's father was a jeweler married to a beautiful young woman who died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty. Granddad took Mom out of school, saying, "From now on you are the mother to your little sister and brothers." She was only eight when she became a caretaker to my aunt and uncles.

"The rest is a cherry orchard," Dad used to say. This became a landmark ending some of my essays years later, meaning "to cut it short" when words did not suffice and the rest would be somewhat insufficient, unimaginable, unreachable, and unattainable. You can imagine how happy I was in April 1993 in Washington, D.C., when I was on a USIS fellowship touring seven of the United States of America. Cherry blossoms are ubiquitous and are never unreachable, I then thought.

That marked the beginning of my curiosity for utopias and dystopias, an awareness-raising process of knowing why we seek happiness elsewhere, always somewhere else, always there and in the future, rather than here and now.

Mom was happy with what she had and what she could present to us here and now. She could read, and although she could write too she would not, maybe rarely a letter or a note. Instead, she would talk the talk or, when she was happy or sad, she would sing. Her favorite folk song was always "Gesi Bağlarında Dolanıyorum" ("I Am Wandering in the Gesi Vineyards"), a song from Kayseri, very close to my hometown. The song is about a young bride's loneliness and loss of her beloved ones and family (the poem may be the longest song lyrics on earth: one hundred twenty-five stanzas, each of five lines. Thank God, all of it is not put to music.) The bride in the song is wandering in the vineyard in search of her lover and family. Why not at the town center, in the bazaar, or in other crowded areas, in the temples or other buildings, but in the vineyards? I believe for the same reasons the Joad family sought happiness in California after they had to leave their land

in Oklahoma to "the machine": Grapes were ripening in my mother's voice, and so was I.

From Mom I first learned to share with people around me whatever I am consuming. If I know they cannot afford it and still consume it all by myself, it is almost sacrilegious. And what about those flour-white sweet cookies Mom made for me! Since I had the right to do everything I did in my own way, I could eat the flour cookies all by myself, until I heard her screaming at me from the window: "Yusuf! Come here, right now!"

That was the end of my orgy. She hit my back hard with a slipper before wrapping some cookies for my friends in the street and reprimanded me so that I would never eat anything in the street as there might always be someone who cannot afford it. This incident marked the beginning of my charitable deeds.

Before becoming a philanthropist, one must first "see to see" (the opposite of death, according to Emily Dickinson) how benevolent nature is when you do not intend to only devour its resources, and how giving a tree is when you water it (as in *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang). Now I know why I love Emerson's teachings and Walt Whitman and H. D. Thoreau and why I found myself giving a "sermon-like talk" to a little Turkish girl before her parents during a cruise to the Greek islands, just before she attempted to pluck a flower:

Little Girl: "Ma, look how beautiful it is."

Ma: "Don't pluck it off, dear, it is too small."

Little Girl: "Can I pluck it off when it grows big?"

Here I interrupted (my mouthpiece was Emerson and the main idea from his poem "The Rhodora") and told the little girl that she could come to see the flower the next morning, but if she took it to her hotel room it would die immediately and even before it faded away it wouldn't look or smell the way it did there by the sea, in that wind, with those hills in the background, because we cannot take that whole to our home. The logic behind this moral is in Emerson's poem: Since some "self-same Power brought" us together, "Beauty is its own excuse for being" (71).

How would I know that my criteria for class material had already been determined at birth: why *Le Petit Prince* by Exupéry, why *Midnight's*

Children by Rushdie, why *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende, why "The Sky Is Gray" by Ernest Gaines, why "Death in the Woods" by Sherwood Anderson, why any work by Dickens and never a work which does not have a child or victim in it? The seeds of my methodology of raising awareness in my students by taking poetry and music to my interdisciplinary classes had been sown in the first years of my childhood home.

In the introduction to their book *Environmental Humanities: Voices from the Anthropocene*, Oppermann and Iovino remind us that the inflated "anthropocentric-credo" (term quoted in Crist and Rinker, 13) "acts as the driving force behind economic growth, political strategies and technological development—all to the detriment of the Earth's life support systems" (4).

One great revelation of the need of ours in the age of the anthropocene to side with the life support systems is our never giving up certain rituals, like celebrating the beginning of spring (Newroz) on March 21st. Early spring in 1960 was almost the end of my life but also the beginning of my consciousness of ecology and environmental humanities.

My best childhood friend was Erkan, the son of a Kurdish mother and father. Nobody but my father told me they were Kurdish. Mom was a believer and, though her joints hurt, would do her prayers, and she did not discriminate even positively. Everyone was Allah's subject and we were all equal. One day, Erkan told me it was their spring holiday, the Newroz, the beginning of spring, which would be celebrated by throwing seasonal vegetables and fruits into the brook for abundance and fertility in the future.

He dragged me to see the floating veggies and fruits on the surface of the water, the water rushing to the wheel of the mill down the street. We, the Sunni Muslims, had other great rituals, but this was new to me. Now I suspect that my leaning down into the stream to catch the veggies and fall into it might have been to only attract the attention of the indifferent dad, almost like Shelley's Ozymandias or like Stephen Crane shouting at the universe: "Sir, I exist!"

My father would smoke and drink alcohol (*raki*, basically) every day and would come home rather late. My elder sister and I would go out to the Republic (Cumhuriyet) Square and look for Dad in every

"boozed" restaurant along the street and when we eventually found him around one of those night tables with his friends, we would shudder and say:

"Mom says the dinner table is ready, Dad."

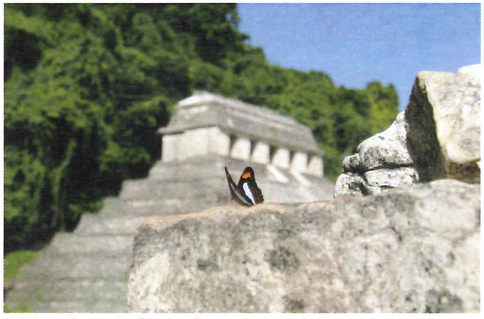
"You go and have your dinner. I won't be a minute."

That minute for Dad would be too long, sometimes a couple of hours, and even till midnight at times. During winter nights I did not know I was developing sinus problems leaning my forehead on the icy window, waiting for Dad, and I do not remember a scene like the waltz of Roethke's papa.

> He was in, and could not find the way out of the maze
> still Saginaw Blues remains in the maple's ablaze
> and they dance in the window of the Cage
> 'cause objects in mirror are closer than they appear.

This evolving critical eye was definitely against power and power relations of any kind and, hence, I loved Shelley's poems and loved teaching "Ozymandias" for years, as no patriarch is exempt from that hubris and desperate need for immortality.

Nor was the Mayan King Pacal. That is how my eyes and mind learned selective perception. In the Mayan language "Chichen Itza" means "at the mouth of the well of the Itza." *Chi* means "mouth" or "edge," and *ch'en* or *ch'e'en* means "well." How would I know I would *remember* later in Mexico that I was to be saved from the mouth of the well of the mill by our neighbor, Zehra Saydam? If only she knew how grateful I was. When you are a child you cannot appreciate such acts that deserve gratitude. She had literally saved my life. Saving me from a quick crushing was, I hope, not for a worse death like "crucifixion."



Mausoleum of Pacal, a Mayan king, in Chichen Itza, Mexico, 2015.

Therefore I write a haiku, now knowing less is more:

Vanity

What a great King he was,
Left many a stone to fling
at the butterfly.

Then "they" (my parents and other community members, whom I loved) knew that I should experience some pain and be a man. Turkish delights stuffed in my mouth to disable the kiddo from screaming, clean, super-white pillow covers, very clean home—it had to be as strangers were going to come in, and circumcision was the most important turning point in the life of a man to be. The little willy bled for a couple of days as the men cutting off the "redundant" piece were not Mayan medicine men but Arab farm workers (*fellahs*) who did this as part-time job. My dad escaped out of the room, crying—yes, he was literally crying—which serves as a metaphor for state violence against resisting youth, for governments trying to get rid of rebels by breaking into suspected terrorist hideouts in my first short-story collection, *Dirty Pillow Cover*.

The proud Eradam family—dad, mom, and three sisters—after the circumcision.
Photo: Anonymous

Since then I have been prejudiced about extremely clean and orderly homes or streets. There probably is something particularly sick about this.

Such traditional or cultural rituals involving violence helped me develop a keen eye fot humanities and humanism and my truest friends became animals and plants. Humans are only good when you are desperately in need of making love—otherwise, they can rarely be friends for keeps and hence the refuge in solitude for many a creative soul.

Nature heals her wounds while still waiting to hear from the lover, which is futile, as usual. Mom knew she had lost her lover, i.e., her husband, i.e., Dad, although they lived in the same house until Mom's death in a car accident, which was the fault of my mother's favorite brother. My uncle's one mistake killed both his favorite sister (Mom) and his wife. He lived long enough to marry two more women, who swindled him out of two houses, and poor uncle died of a heart attack in his vineyard, like Brando in *The Godfather*.

Suddenly Istanbul and Boarding School

We had an unexpected guest one day, one of my relative's husband. He would never come to our poor house as he was an MP and a respected judge. He wanted to register his son Haluk for Darüşşafaka High School, which is a distinguished institution for orphans and children of the poor. Naturally, Haluk was turned down as his family was well off. That is why "Uncle Vedat Mengi" came to tell my parents to get my papers ready to be able to take the exam. It was probably his wife Bedriye who told her husband to do this, as my mother would never be convinced by a sister of lesser wit.

After I succeeded in the entrance exams I was on my way to Istanbul together with my mother. That was the only time she saw Istanbul. She just came to accompany me, to leave me at her uncle's house for three days before I was admitted to the boarding school. My uncle's house was in Bebek, along the Bosporus (later I would be so surprised to see that it is a very rich district, and how we could have rich relatives I would never understand). On our way we got on a bus in the biggest city in Turkey. This was the first time we were out of our small town and there I was, standing between the legs of adults, holding on to my mother's skirt. I could see the sea, the Bosporus, through these legs. This was the only city on earth with a sea dividing it into two continents, and that moment was the first time I could hear that the owners of the legs were speaking a language I could not understand. They were not Turkish!

"Mom, what language are they speaking?" I asked in Turkish.

"Hush, we are getting off the bus soon."

But one of the women speaking another language answered: "We are speaking Armenian, dear. We are Turkish citizens and Armenian, too." Mother held my wrist more tightly, I could feel her grip. She would never hold my wrist so tightly, never again, after she left me in that boarding school. That grip was similar to the grip that took me out of the stream carrying me to my death in the mill.

Now, in 2017, in class at the university, I go back to my childhood days in my hometown before boarding school in Istanbul, and just when it was the right time to comment against othering and discrimination, I tell my students that I found out years later that the dirty cinema we used to frequent when I was only five or six was in fact an Armenian chapel, and that now it is renovated and open as a museum. All I wanted was to see a smile on my two Armenian-Turkish students in class, and I got it. I was acknowledging them as part of our whole, and they were happy I was doing this openly. They never ask, why a museum and not as a chapel anymore?

In that boarding school I found the opportunity to read Shakespeare, definitely the right new beginning for a child. Although I am critical of the Western canon now, Shakespeare is the best beginning in one's reading adventure, just like Maya Angelou (who was handed a copy of Shakespeare's works, which encouraged her to read and write, and whose poem "On the Pulse of Morning" I would later translate into Turkish). Abridged and simplified Shakespeare at first, yes, when I was only eleven years old. Later, in 2001, I would translate a play titled *Shakespeare, Abridged* by a company in Atlanta, Georgia, where I delivered my first academic paper on the schizophrenic members in David Mercer's stage plays at a conference on the "Outsider in Literature and Visual Arts" in October 1988.

God has his mysterious ways, as Forrest Gump's mom would say. At the conference I met another outsider like myself, Professor Felicia Campbell of UNLV, who would change my life. I still keep the leaf I picked up during our walk in the woods across from the hotel in Atlanta, where the conference was held, after we decided the opening cocktail party was too much for us strangers. She had become a transnational long before me, probably after climbing up K2. That is why she gave me James Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon* to read as soon as I arrived in Las Vegas to teach comparative literature and film.

If it hadn't been for Darüşşafaka (meaning "House of Affection"), now the most prestigious school in Turkey for orphans and run by a charity, I would probably be a chimney sweeper, or shoe polisher, or an assistant to Dad in his shoe shop. I developed *ataraxia* in this high school. Saving my time to learn about Epicurus later, I was observing my new habitat calmly to be able to, say, "continue" the life-force in me. If my mom had to leave me at a boarding school, it must be because she had no other alternative. Besides, I was successful in the exams—among two hundred fifty kids I was chosen, one of the elect I was. How would I have known that I had already chosen my path of ececism when I suddenly realized that the pine tree I was hiding behind in that garden had bark falling off the bulky trunk? Meanwhile, the other students at the boarding school were embracing their parents, and mine never turned up again to see me for eight long years. Ah yes, the pine tree had bark that was easy to tear off. So I gave the peelings shape, made animals that needed affection. Later some called this child a suave person, and some, like one of my students at UNLV, a reticent but top-notch professor. Seeing is not knowing, but it can help you know only when you are familiar with concepts like virtue or wisdom. Only then can you begin trying to understand others, which is the beginning of going back to your childhood of no discrimination and othering.

Ah! The Moon!

The USA is very clever indeed! The timing of Apollo 11's landing on the moon was perfect. I had been subjected to an English-oriented, English-speaking world already. We did not have a TV set but our neighbor, the butcher, had one. All the neighbors on the block would gather in his living room, and his wife would serve cookies and tea, and we would watch TV as a communal activity. On July 20, 1969, during summer holiday from boarding school, it was a clear night and there was a full moon in Ankara. And when it was announced that Neil Armstrong had stepped on the moon, I remember myself running to the butcher's balcony to be able to see a dream come true. I could only see the moon smiling at me (unlike Elizabeth Bishop), and I went inside immediately,

shouting: "I saw him, I saw Neil Armstrong stepping on the moon!" That was some giant step for humanity, yes, but all the neighbors laughed at me. I do not know why.

What a year 1969 was! For the first time ever in Eurovision song contest history, four countries won (cuatro ganadoras!) with a tie-break in Madrid, which I would not be able to visit until 2016. I remember my favorite of the four winners was Frida Boccara singing "Un Jour, Un Enfant" on stage before a metal sculpture created by Salvadore Dali. French, yes, I must have decided then to learn French and make songs in French with lyrics like "Papa, je vais ailleurs domain, encore une fois" (Father, I am going away again).

Since then, everything in the world, especially in Turkey, according to my childish, my adolescent, and young-man minds, happened because of the USA or thanks to the USA. It was always some foreign force or power that made things happen. There were others imitating Yusuf, the individual. What an irony!

We Turks were never to be blamed or praised for anything.

That road taken toward the possibility of making dreams come true must have opened new gateways, must have shed limelight on my less-trodden ways, I now know for sure. Today in class, from a critical point of view, this memoir makes its appearance as the frontier theme and literature in such courses like "Selected Topics in American Literature," or "Popular Culture and the USA," or "Creative Thinking and Behavior."

Soon some people "proved" that the moon landing was a hoax, fraud, or nothing but technology and studio effects. "As if," they said. Now, we say "theater." True or not, whatever happened had happened in the minds and imagination of children, and horizons were endless, dreams were various as they should be and we should never give them up. Why did I love Gabrielle singing "Dreams Can Come True," or the Des'ree song "You Gotta Be"? Now I know. I grew up on such works and images of "other cultures" and they kept me on the right and straight path. Strong women like Mom and their fire kept me intact. That is probably one of the many reasons why I studied theater for my PhD, the "as if factor." And how I would break into tears in the car of my English brother, Robert Mantle, in 1989, during the Easter holiday while we

were touring Ireland. That was when I heard on the radio that "Eternal Flame" was still number one on the "Top of the Pops" chart after maybe eleven weeks—unless I was in love and if it had not started raining again at the same moment when the Bangles started singing the song again. Now, I am "teaching" both: popular culture and romanticism, the maternal-golden-streak yet to bear many immortal movements, because

> From the vast city, where I long had pined
> A discontented sojourner: now free,
> Free as a bird to settle where I will. (Wordsworth 495)

Suddenly Love

It is all my mother's fault, and my sisters'. My life is like Joseph's dream. I fell in love with women who were caring, encouraging, sharing, nature-loving (environmental humanists), good cooks, definitely not ignorant (can be illiterate, but never ignorant, no!), music and poetry lovers, ready to set to the road, even on foot if necessary. And I have always been lucky in finding lovers, friends, colleagues, relatives, women from all walks of life, who have always been with me, around me, feeding me endlessly with all the emotions and ideas I needed as resources for my creative ecesis. If it hadn't been for the long list of appreciative women in my life, I would never be me today. In other words, no need to mythify my life, but otherwise I would be another Joseph who would not be able to get out of the well to find his way to Egypt and interpret the Pharoah's dreams. Coincidence it is, or the name's fate—I am a good interpreter of coffee cups, dreams, texts, rhetoric and discourse, film analysis, or generally texts of all kinds. Either I could not afford the venture, or they could not take the risk, all women, Turkish or international.

However, these women also taught me not to betray myself and nature while we were in love and after we fell out of love, "Betrayal" to other forms of life was unforgivable:

> How many times have I betrayed you
> How many times have I betrayed you

I didn't water the bougainvillea
I let my jujube tree dry up and didn't help with the vintage

Tell me, how many times have you betrayed me
As I betrayed you.

Then Suddenly Scotland

Love lost, love gained. I was in love with a pair of sisters and one of them said, don't go. I said to her: "You come with me, too." Neither of us gave in. Separation was a must as she was married with two kids, so she could not come to Edinburgh with me. But the younger sister kept her promise, she came all the way to London, and with all her family, so that I believe it was not the married elder sister in love with me but the younger one.

I went down to London to meet the younger one, of course as their family friend. Oh, I forgot to say, I was now (in 1989) an established songwriter and two of my songs were at the Eurovision song contest for the Turkey finale in 1983 and 1984. I can still sing well, I made a record with thirteen songs composed from my poetry and poetry by distinguished contemporary Turkish poets. I named the album *Shameless Rose*, to stand for a rose smelling shamelessly in the garden, standing for the *joie de vivre*.

I sang like Romeo under the younger sister's window only to wake the mother up. But we also had to separate as it was almost impossible for me to make her believe that I loved her "too" and, on the other hand, she was eighteen years younger than me. She believed I was just in contact with her to be close to the elder sister. But they did not know that I believed I could fall in love with anyone when one love is over. Love in my life is for anything and anyone, not just for "a girl."

This is just one of the three cases of two sisters loving me deeply. Three pairs of sisters whom I thought were my close friends, every time one of the two fell in love it was at the expense of losing the love of the whole family. All preferred their family ties, none gave up what they had for love, hence my solitude now with two cats and many books.

"RosyGirl" I called the little sister, who, like all women, when in the next room, coming and going, talking about Michelangelo, make me write and sing.

However, the idea of writing a utopia titled "Kitanka" came to me through my classmate, Aou Kitan, who was yet another married woman from the Ivory Coast. Aou and I were like peas and carrots, like Jenny and Forrest Gump. I did not look back when school was over in Edinburgh and we got our degrees, because if I had looked back I might not have found the courage to go back to Turkey in 1989.

Sometimes good friends need to stay good friends.

Suddenly the Kurdish Mother on TV

When I was a child I knew no "others" but I could see them suffering all the time. In 1992, I saw on TV a mother in a village in southeastern Turkey, a mother crying by the stove in a tea house as her own house had been swept downhill by an avalanche. I was too far away from her tragedy. Suddenly I remembered another woman, a bag lady I saw in New York. "A Brief Note to the Bag Lady, Ma Sister" was a long poem expressing my need to empathize with the Kurdish mother who was in difficulty, and, in doing so, with the bag lady.

Kurdish women in Kadifekale, Izmir, Turkey.

I see, I see ma sister, you have no home
I see, you're cold and hungry
But still I can't be sorry enough
I'm sorry ma sister, but I can't
I can't be sorry enough. (135)

This poem, published by Naomi Shihab Nye in her anthology *This Same Sky*, made the audience shed tears during a poetry slam in Chicago in 1993, when I was on that seven-state fellowship tour. That is when I learned that cacti were alive. Our guide kindly and finally warned the Russian academician in the group as she was not "seeing the cacti." Our guide, a professor from the University of Utah, said: "Please mind the plants, do not step on them."

"But they are just cacti," said the fellow Russian academic.

"Yes, but they are alive."

I feel related to anyone when I am traveling, I tell you. This time to the cacti. Later I would see cacti with ID cards, and they were more precious then (in 1993) than us human beings in my own country (in 2017).

Suddenly Las Vegas

There I was in the cage of slot machines (many pronounced it like "slut," so I suspected my own pronunciation) only to write poetry to be able to put up with the heat. I had already learned that cacti were alive, some of them even had ID cards on them in the Nevada desert, and there were wild donkeys too in the beautiful sunset of Red Rocks, and drivers were warned not to stop their cars to touch these wild donkeys as they might lose their hands or arms. These donkeys were like romantic rebels, they were not like the donkeys associated with stupidity and obedience in Turkey.

Then there was Gudrun in my landlady's home. Gudrun was huge, a mixture of a wolf and a dog. She was white, too. A huge, scary, white, wolfy dog, and she was walking in the house as if she were going to snap at my trembling hands. I did my best to love her, but had to leave for a hotel casino, maybe because of my fear of castration. A suicidal poem, "The Room Without A View," a poem of self-exile, came out after I left Las Vegas. When on the Amtrak train from Spokane, Washington, to Chicago, I had the chance to look at myself in that house at the Red Rocks in a poem which alienated me from suicide after I wrote it. Creativity is indispensable.

Bleeding all over, he swiftly escaped
through the door
towards the Cliffs
to piecing together Freedom and Peace.
Leaving the heat as a gift
knowing they would never
be able to exhale it.

Suddenly Saginaw

Saginaw, Michigan, is where one of the greatest American poets, Theodore Roethke, was born. Before my arrival, my award-winning story "Cinderella" had found its way into a local syllabus. This is a story about Kurdish mothers protesting on the most famous shopping street, Istiklal, asking the government to find their lost children. As they "danced alone" I empathized with them and wrote about a bourgeois young woman indifferent to their tragedy but destined to understand those mothers when she is confused with the protestors and is dragged by the hair to the police station, dropping one shoe behind. Empathy with the ecesis of suffering mothers opened another road to some new experiences and new people in Saginaw because Professor Kerry Segel of Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) had noticed that the author of the story was a professor of American Literature. I took to the road just before the great earthquake in Turkey in 1999, just before the new millenium started.They welcomed me warmly, though Michigan was cold, and gave me a cute little red house on the edge of the campus in nature, next to a lagoon.

He was the guest in a little red house on the prairie
by a road that opens to a rickety rush but he could hear
them dancing in the window of the Cage
knowing objects in mirror are closer than they appear.

9.9.1999, at around 9 pm: Colleagues at SVSU were warning us that something evil, bad, ominous might happen in a day with so many nines in it. At around 9 pm there was a "meow!" at my door. You can imagine how easily she managed to get in looking at me in the eye, and how she soon ruled the little red house.

Minnosh, my Saginaw stray cat, made me write a story ("The Native Speaker") about a lonely lover in exile in Saginaw, who thinks he has left his beloved by accepting this "Distinguished Foreign Professor" job and made me realize another metaphor for my presence in Saginaw: an opossum, the outsider, in Colin Wilson's term. I identified myself with an opossum and my lack of communication with most of the Americans to that of the opossum's coming out at dark to steal my cat's food. The wild animal was scared off easily and did not receive a warm welcome like Minnosh. I had to feed the cat indoors and the wild opossum in the garden, but Minnosh was a hunter, and she would bring me opossum babies as gifts to show me her gratitude.

I could understand Roethke only then, in his hometown, where he was an outsider. You get to know yourself as well as others especially after reading poetry from various lands, hearing those poets' voices carrying the sky wherever they go, and also by subjecting your very body and presence to the cultures of the people you visit. The need to define and describe myself must be a natural outcome of such moments. My best friends were the two resident poets of Saginaw, the late Al Hellus, who, before I left Saginaw, visited the little red house and provided me with great material about the Beat Generation. The other great friend was the activist-environmentalist poet Marc Beaudin, who helped me open my first photography exhibition at his gallery Cage for the benefit of the 1999 earthquake victims in Turkey.

Saginaw poets. The late Al Hellus (left) and Marc Beaudin at Cage, in December 1999, for the opening of Eradam's first photography exhibition, "Humanscapes from Turkey."

Photo: Anonymous

Professor Kerry Segel of SVSU took me to the chairperson of the photography department, a great gentleman, Hideki Kihata, who said: "Looking at the photos you take I can tell what sort of a person you are. You must not waste these photos from Turkey only in class activities, let me speak to a friend for an exhibition." That is how Marc Beaudin became a best friend. This is how my estrangement in some funny exile was cured, and poetry poured again for the benefit of earthquake victims' orphans.

"Bird Tree" behind the little red house. Saginaw, 1999.

Therefore, this child here needs to be "opened carefully" like the Cherokee rose of Georgia; like Emily D.; like the sad bride of Gesi Bağları; like Bartleby; like the mountain bluebird of Idaho; like Sylvia P.; like the American elm tree of North Dakota so similar to Plath's nature and poetry; like the Tule tree of Mexico; like Grandma Moses's paintings; like the cardinals of Saginaw; like a robin of Hartford, Connecticut; like the trans street sex workers of Thailand; like the orange blossoms of Miami, Florida; like the milky breasts of Rosasharn in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, saving a starving old man (I never forgave John Ford, who did not show this epitome of humanity in his film); like the "karsanbaç" (home-made ice cream, a mixture of clean early snow and grape pectin); and last, but not least, like the lost wooden door of his birth home in "Anatolia," which means "the place where the sun rises."

Eradam's mail box in Saginaw.

He listened to the whirly gig of his
clink and before he forgot to put
the red flag up he put a poem in
the mail box of his pleasure
dome danced with his wild cat in
the window of his Cage and thrust his
body into the solitude of dark bleeding night
the only realm he bloomed at.

Suddenly Cuba

In 2011 and 2015, I went to Cuba. My reason was to make two friends happy. The first trip was to act as a go-between to bring together the hands and hearts of two of my very best friends. They did get along very well, we had great fun together, but never the twain met in love. My attempt as a go-between was futile, but it inspired in me a story of love with the phrase I saw on a Cuban taxi during my first visit to the capital, La Havana: "Rentar Una Fantasia."

"*Rentar una fantasia.*" La Havana, Cuba, 2011.

There I realized that sometimes I wrote poems, stories after I lived the feelings, ideas, concepts in them. And, sometimes, I wrote them and experienced the content later, as every artist should be a little prophetic, they say. It always starts like that: You first rent a dream, then share it with everyone. Only then can it come true. That was the main reason behind the Gezi Park riots in Istanbul.

The Gezi Park riots in Istanbul against the present government took place between my two visits to Cuba. The riots started in 2013 and were forced to end in 2014 by the government's violent suppression. They

will be remembered for the assassination of so many young rebels who wanted freedom and were supporting the parliamentary system of the secular republic, almost a century old now. I could not run with the rebels, but I made a song for the victims, "Tree of Life," and wrote poetry. That is what I am created for, as Naomi Shihab Nye says in her poem "Famous."

From the Gezi Park protests. The Republic Monument in Taksim Square, Istanbul, 2013.

Jose Marti or Che Guevara were not only icons from a distance. I read of and about them. They had lived and died for their people, for the happiness and welfare of people all over the world. In my renovated fuchsia taxi, I, the San Jose from Istanbul, was sure to find my *amor de fantasia*. Cubans full of the *joi de vivre* can give you advice about love and life similar to that of Wordsworth's words of wisdom in "The Prelude."

You must first fall in love with all the people, yes, with everyone, then you must have the desire to live with them in one huge, ponderous home. Just imagine that big family. When you start working for them as well and as much as you do for yourself, then you will start turning red. Now you have become only "fuchsia" said a "red" friend.

I am you: the other.

So much depends on that red in women.

It always starts with loving women, you know, womanism it is, like that of Alice Walker's. Only then can you share your dream of love, of nature and environment, freedom, liberty, and happiness for everyone with everyone and every other living being. Only then shall we be able to stop enjoying the illusion of the intangibility of the precipices we build between the seemingly separate identities of us human beings.

Hence the impossibility of an exit to my human condition as an exile in my own country, no exit from this planet, as transnationality now means to me, an alien everywhere.

I believe in the process of growing to be a poet-child, I was actually not saved but drowned and wasted together with the spring veggies in the brook that went to the wheel of the mill. I have rented a dream of a futile hope of a sense of belonging.

His spinning top and petosky
stones in his hands, sweet
grass and mandala
as his regalia he opened
his homeless eagle eyes of cryptic
cacti raining on the tombs
of his kind flooding his own
dreams of ore.

Metin Altıok, a great Turkish poet who was among thirty-five souls assassinated in a hotel set ablaze by religious fundamentalists in 1993, defined this state of mind in his book title, *Resident Outsider* (1991).

"Snail Trail." Ayvalik, Turkey, 2016.

Knucklebones never stand upright on their rounded ends, and rented dreams have no exit: "*Sin salida.*"

Hence my ecesis with poetry in this "Inveterate Fight."

I always think of the horse
on this bloody arena.
Look at the perineum of the matador
it's so red. Always.
The bull is bound to be
slain
but the innocent black
mare may again embrace
the vast
plain.

Therefore, the age of the post-anthropocene must be legalized by all nations, now! We are acting too slowly in the hands of the doubt merchants of the culture of obedience. Self-defining poems bring only temporary relief.

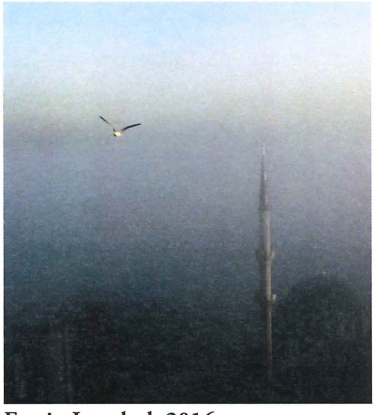
The Tule Tree

The Montezuma cypress (*Taxodium mucronatum*), or *ahuehuete* (which means "deep water" in the Nahuatl language), is Mexico's national tree and which I had the chance to worship in 2015.

Freedom and *loyalty*: two *sine qua non* concepts for Yusuf, the Anatolian boy. I believe I have inherited them from my mother's teachings, and that if we keep those strangers astray or segregate them from the whole to which we belong, this xenophobia results in crimes of hatred, whereas those strangers may actually be closer than our best friends or relatives. This appeared to me on a colleague's car side mirror, suddenly finding its way into this poem about my total alienation and exile in Saginaw, although I must admit I was befriended by great men like Lito Elio Porto of Austin, Texas, later in Turkey. I still believe organized religions, yes all of them, should be de-institutionalized as faith or belief in some god is a matter of conscience and resides in the individual's heart, and this is nobody else's concern. And now that I am an old child, as large as the tree of Tule (Arbol del Tule in Santa Maria del Tule) in Oaxaca, and because it is made up of many trunks looking like many tule trees gathered together, but deep in its DNA it has proved to be one single individual. This is probably why the huge mango I ate after visiting this monumental national tree tasted like life itself. I am one body

The tree of Tule, Mexico, 2015.

made up of many. "I am large, I contain multitudes," like Walt Whitman writes in his "Song of Myself" (88). Hence, "E pluribus unum," like the USA and like Turkey and like many other countries. I am at home everywhere, I am transnational and in exile everywhere, including my hometown. I can identify with "just a few trees" in the Gezi Park in Taksim in Istanbul, at the center of all centers of Turkey, where, at the end of the Ottoman Empire, water would be divided and distributed equally to people. Hence the name of the square "Taksim" (divide and distribute equally).



Fog in Istanbul, 2016.

Mother Nature and poets like Emily Dickinson taught me with their poetry of consciousness and knowing the purpose of ecesis, as in poem number 982: "If I can stop one Heart from breaking." That must be the reason for the need to identify myself with "the winged others" and understand and empathize, especially with cats.

Freedom

Fog in Istanbul,
trouble only to man,
nothing to the winged.

The power of metaphor in a child's imagination and in creative endeavors is one of the conspicuously invisible sources leading him/her to individuality, the tree of Tule. Only then can he/she take her sky anywhere she goes for everyone she meets and touches. Transnationality is being one with the rest of all diverse identities.

I may well have been born as a three-year-old Syrian Kurd named Alan Kurdi, but instead he found his transnational identity in death on

the Aegean sand in my country, and maybe that is what T. S. Eliot means by "in my end is my beginning," which is also Katherine Mansfield's and my eldest sister's epitaph. That is why I misunderstand the U2 song "Raised by Wolves" as "we are raised by wars" because I do not belong to that pack. Nevermore, nevermore!

Now I realize why I write anything I write like packing my suitcase or backpack. It takes me a long time to get ready for the end, and therefore I put in bits and pieces as they let me remember them casually, that's how I piece myself together.

However, I am like the patient etherized upon the table or like a fly pinned and preyed upon by a bird to be preyed upon by another hunter for eco-ececism. It is in vain to try to fly away because I feel I have become a threshold character, not a person but rather a presence, a *homo videns* like the Sioux Ohiyesa (Charles Alexander Eastman, the Santee Dakota physician), a person who is disturbed by seeing but not seeking power (as opposed to Foucault's classification). As one of Joe Orton's characters says, "I have finally learned to stand by what I have done instead of just doing what I think I can stand by." Now I realize I am arrogant enough to believe I can teach to humanity, though in vain, sensitivity concerning environmental humanities by means of literature and art. I still believe I can jump into social-media sharing to stop someone torturing an animal and save the poor soul (remember John Updike's poem "Good Dog"?) in the *gif*, and I cannot help cursing at the torturer. Now I have no nationality, because in today's world there is not a single totally happy and peaceful nation or civilization like the Commagene people of Mount Nemrut. If there is one, it must be insensitive, cynical, and indifferent, i.e., dead.

Fish on Galata Bridge, Istanbul, 2016.

Therefore, my journey of ececism is learning to go beyond the seen, the visible, the conspicuously consumed, and beyond the conspicuously invisible; i.e., a child's imminent honorable and righteous motive of try-

ing to exist (ececism) via creativity of any kind by taking the risk of facing violence of some sort, if not destruction or extinction:

> To tell his story of a rude awakening
> he shuttled across human borders in pain
> as he learned to dance in the window of the Cage
> "perhaps," he said, "objects in mirror are closer than they appear."

Way back home, I am still playing tipcat: my self is the "cat" tipped by environmental humanities and humanism. My imagination and creativity, in order not to forget "the other" self-images of mine, that "self-same power" (Emerson), took me to see and share the time spared for me on this planet.

The epitome of oneness with the whole of the universe and all other living beings during my travels was my meeting a barefooted and tiny old woman at the San Cristobal bazaar, a mother desperately trying to sell some herb unknown to me. I took the whole bunch between her arms, gave her a banknote imagining it would be enough. It was too much. She did her best to communicate with me to say that she did not have change, and she turned to other street vendors, who spoke to me in Spanish, which I did not understand. She gave me back the banknote, I gave it back to her. Then she took her little old purse out of her pocket and showed me a few coins in it and from her gestures I could tell she could not make change. I held on to the herb and put the banknote into her purse and closed it. My friends were smiling and they kept asking me what I would do with that herb. The old native woman did not accept the money immediately, she turned to the other vendors, kissed her

"Cuban Child." La Havana, 2011.

hand. I said it's okay and walked away with the herb bunch in my arms. I looked bizarre, I could tell, as the other women and my fellow travelers laughed at me.

Half an hour before I had seen a very old man with a burnt face. I met him again, tapped on his shoulder, and handed him the herb bunch. He was surprised but happy. We were speaking the same language, finally. By not being suspicious and putting extra meaning into what I was doing, they were actually letting me in. I belonged. I am grateful to them, like many others from other nationalities and identities for letting me be one of them.



The old woman at the San Cristobal bazaar, Mexico, 2015.

And yes, I do have two cats named not Tip and Cat, but Raki and Sharab. Raki, the boy, is happy to sleep under my double chin, and Wine, the girl, is always sucking my ear lobes, a simulation of her mother's breasts.

I know, being poisoned by Elizabeth Bishop, there is no cherry orchard on the other side of the wall. This gets clearer when suffering becomes one easy art to master. The golden streak of my eco-ecesis, together with all other beings via creativity, came with another haiku.

I came to your door
The leaves rustled under my feet
And you took it for fall.

If I had not mastered this life's art of suffering, I would have mastered another alternate reality. I might well have been a Jew, an Armenian, a Kurd, an African, a nomad, a gypsy, a tree, a cat, and many more, for sure. I would always, say "continue" in whatever life-form I found myself

in, I would always blossom with *le joie de vivre* and *tristesse* and pain. Nothing is certain and permanent except for what we remember and what we think we know, and I *know* I am alive now and I *know* that since I was once born, I am to die, and since I am still alive, I must not have done yet what I was born to do in this, my "Mongo," as the planet of doom was called in the Flash Gordon adventures. This has been the most valuable epiphany of my life that keeps me going, "malgre les guerres, malgre les dangers du mort" ("Bonne Justice" by Paul Eluard).

Cat in Cihangir, Istanbul, fall 2007.

While plum trees blossom
Death is but a coincidence
My life but a haiku.

One more thing: my chemistry teacher, Yesim Salman, at Darüşşafaka, the boarding school in Istanbul, was also a poet and she used to say, "only salt will stay."

I hope I have evolved from a child playing tipcat to yet another child who keeps writing poetry; from a child ready to learn and change to a child dressed by keen hands and a child whose transnationality is synonymous to being trans-identity, to being a no-world-citizen, to just being, an *étre en soi*, in Jean-Paul Sartre's terms, a being on his own, always looking up to some other future, while producing here and now his haikus, his stories, his songs, his photographs, all of which are proof of his attempts to see what is made conspicuously invisible to people of the world.

He buckled up with the rest of the world
in his word on the brittle wings of the oven bird
they danced and danced in the window of the Cage
as objects in mirror are closer than they appear.

Both literally and metaphorically, the hands of this poet hidden behind him, probably holding some new poem or song, have been shaken by so many distinguished hands and his jacket buttons have been done up by the hands of some great people, especially women.

I might have lost the vineyard itself, my home, where I feel like a transnational entity among other identities, who think they belong to a system of oppression. Yet I am wandering in my creative vineyards, knowing that so many of my kind of people cannot breathe, like Coleridge's ancient mariner: "Water water everywhere, and not a drop to drink."

Plum tree blossoms, Beykoz, Istanbul.

I have started feeling like an exile, or almost like a transnational alien at "home," i.e., my final state. What I should confess is that I am living in a cell of my own choice, the cell being my body, my city, my country, my native tongue, Turkish, and the culture I was brought up in, and then because of the impossibility of finding and founding a new identity at this age—sixty-three—on this planet I sometimes feel like a phantom, an outsider pretending to be an insider, understanding and helping the immigrants, say the Syrians when on my way to work. However, I feel a kind of a disturbing empathy for them which forces me not to exaggerate my efforts as they might be offended. Moreover, the fear of overdoing my empathy or sympathy may make them more defensive because I might be underestimating their own power to be happy in a kind of transnational survivalism, while I have been losing my power and skills to continue surviving with my so-called national traits.

My indifference or "benign neglect" of the problem is no remedy in a system or political rule, the most outstanding characteristic of which is indifference to the people's real problems, like poverty, lack of freedom.

At their best, politicians are hypocritically indifferent and are usually punitive and violent and by all means make me feel ontologically insecure in my own land (whatever that means), which makes me sound to myself like a character in the works of a late-nineteenth-century naturalist like Émile Zola, Thomas Hardy, or the one and only Martin Eden of Jack London.

My memories of living in Scotland are another matter. My privacy in the dormitory was violated by the British Council authorities, who had given me a scholarship. Yes, they entered my room without permission, and after I told them that I was going to *The Guardian* with the evidence, they apologized in a formal letter which was no apology at all. All I did was to write the evaluation letter I was asked to compose about Edinburgh and the school. I started my criticism for the betterment of conditions for all. They were not ready for criticism, I presume, and especially from the "Turkish" assistant professor!

"Poet." Painting by Merih Demirkol, 2015.
Yusuf Eradam collection

There were many more cases of pushing my Turkish identity either as an alien to avoid or an alien to be appreciated exaggeratedly. Compliments could hurt too, as a result of which you choose to become a reticent guy, which would satisfy their impressions, judgments, or prejudices. You are forced to be someone else in the myriad faces of xenophobia. Having been invited to Las Vegas as a distinguished foreign professor, to Cambridge as a representative, writer, and translator, facing discrimination and xenophobia is almost like humiliating your guests in your own house after inviting them to dinner.

The only consolation, relief, or remedy comes in my creative activities, in nature, in my flat in Istanbul when I am with my cats, books, and very few friends, all of whom might at times make me feel like a stranger even there in my cozy cocoon. Is that one of the many reasons why I love Emily Dickinson, my dearest Amherst recluse who could see to see better than any of us on the threshold of the world of objects?

Stone for a Sling

. . . I played
games with child friends whose names i forgot
i was the best at grabbing the five stones off the ground
thanks to those five stones in one hand
i could never ever hold a sling to kill birds . . .
then i saw life-size cartoons of wars, of massacres, of genocide . . .
of fingerprints crying out for their owners . . .
of human beings indifferent to human affliction . . .
now in my room with birds from all over the world
i play hide-and-seek in poems
hoping to shed light onto lullabies . . .
hoping not to be
the stone for a sling.

In such moments of creativity, I feel one with the whole and I believe I have just started seeing everything clearly. As Najaib Mahfouz said, "Home is the place where your efforts to escape cease."

I am the eternal wanderer and creativity is my home, wherever, however, and whoever I am.

"Bird's Way Back Home." Mexico, 2015.

Now an object in mirror closer
than it appears he sings his quiet
song from the top of a juniper tree
and looks at the onlookers
and to the serene melodies of the running
river, people dance in the window
of the Cage 'cause objects in mirror
are closer than they appear.
(November 11-14, 1999; Saginaw, Michigan)

Photographs by the author except where noted.

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Roots, History, and the Possibility of Coexistence: Horizontal and Vertical Consciousness in Amin Maalouf's *Ports of Call*

M. Önder Göncüoğlu

Introduction

A Lebanese journalist and novelist born in 1949, Amin Maalouf is a person of multiple identities. Like most of his fictional characters, he is formed by several affinities. He is a Christian Arab born in Lebanon, currently lives in France, and speaks both French and Arabic. He is familiar with the cultural winds blowing from both directions. That is, he seems to have been conceived within the long-conflicted history of the East and the West. In terms of his own understanding of cultural identity, he, therefore, comes to be an entity both comprising and compromising a large number of characteristics, of place, religious beliefs and orientations, nationality, language, race, and history; all of which, according to Maalouf, allow people to be part of one characteristic and another at the same time. Identity for him, therefore, is neither a singular entity nor an entity totally inherited from ancestors, but the sum of one's diverse affinities, including both traumatic and happy bonds experienced "horizontally" and "vertically." The hope for human coexistence, for Maalouf, seems to emerge from horizontal inheritance generated by one's time and contemporaries rather than a vertical inheritance that is more about traditions and ancestors.

I will explore and discuss the possibility of coexistence in light of Maalouf's understanding of cultural identity shaped around the ideas of horizontal and vertical inheritance. To this end, while discussing the possibility of coexistence I will turn back to his works in general, but to *Ports of Call* in particular. I will also discuss some of his interviews and essays, including some historical information of documentary value, to analyze his personal conception of identity in relation to his representation of cultural identity in his fictional works.

Maalouf's Perception of Identity and Horizontal Inheritance of Culture

The works of master storyteller Amin Maalouf have been analyzed in academic circles on a large scale. His writings have particularly drawn the attention of scholars dealing with the theme of crusades and the conflict between the East and the West. Maalouf's own background gives him an opportunity to contemplate East-West relations in his literary works. His identity in this context has been formed through various cultural affiliations that contribute to his understanding of the idea of identity. He was born in Beirut, Lebanon, as a Catholic Arab. Having been raised in a Christian family made it possible for him to feel close to the Christian cultures of the West. At the same time, his familiarity with Eastern cultures through his firsthand experiences in the East as a native speaker of Arabic, as well as his bond with both Muslims and Arabs, have made room for his keen understanding of Eastern cultures. With respect to his hybrid identity, Maalouf has addressed how his character and personality reflect and share some similarities in terms of their diverse intellectual, religious, cultural, and linguistic bonds. He remarks that "when I think about either of these two components of my identity separately, I feel close either through language or through religion to a good half of the human race. But when I take the same two elements together, I find myself face to face with my own specificity" (*In the Name of Identity* 17).

Maalouf worked as a journalist and traveled in a number of countries, such as India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Yemen, Algeria, as well as Vietnam, where he reported as a war correspondent. In 1975, when the war in Lebanon broke out, he had to leave his country for France, where he continued working as a journalist with several magazines, including *Jeune Afrique* and *An-nahar Arabe et International*, before settling down to earn his reputation as a prolific author engaged in creating stories going beyond the borders of certain lands and welcoming readers to wander through his multicultural lands.

Being Lebanese, Christian, Francophone, and Parisian Arab, Maalouf galvanized his under-

standing of the idea of identity through experiences he acquired while working as a historian, novelist, and pamphleteer. Having multiple perceptions about the role of cultures in shaping one's identity, his understanding of his own identity as a multitude of cultural bonds seems to be a natural outcome of experiences that he analyzed and then turned into an outstanding set of stories covering the common problems of identity. We can illustrate this with an example from his own history:

> Since I left Lebanon in 1976 to establish myself in France, I have been asked many times, with the best intentions in the world, if I felt more French or more Lebanese. I always give the same answer: "Both." Not in an attempt to be fair or balanced but because if I gave another answer I would be lying. This is why I am myself and not another, at the edge of two countries, two or three languages and several cultural traditions. This is precisely what determines my identity. Would I be more authentic if I cut off a part of myself? (*In the Name of Identity* 1)

Being familiar with both Christian and Muslim civilizations, and Eastern and Western cultures, Maalouf as a person of multiple identities has devoted himself to understanding the complexity of identity both through experiences acquired in different cultures and through insightful inquiries that elaborate identity problems:

> I am the result of my countries, of my family, of what I lived and learnt. Identity is not static, acquired once and for all. It is the accumulation of knowledge, the result of history combined with the present in constant evolution and, since nobody comes exactly from the same background and does not follow the same path, we are all unique, and this is what makes everyone so exciting. ("Amin Maalouf: A Symbiosis of the Orient and the Occident")

His works achieve a multicultural functioning, not a separation of cultures, and represent an in-

sightful view of the values of varied cultures in the Western and Eastern, African and Mediterranean worlds. His characters, accordingly, revolve continually around East-West relations. Defining individuals with "multiple belongings" (*Deadly Identities* 40) as border people, Maalouf as a border writer himself examines the idea of identity in his works, which are filled with characters having multiple belongings and affinities, affiliations learned mostly through horizontal inheritance.

Particularly in *On Identity*, with its definitions of vertical and horizontal culture, he clarifies the identity problem. He highly values the role of the horizontal inheritance of cultures in forming our identities, insofar as horizontal inheritance is an active process that is experienced and learned concurrently from and along with our contemporaries every day. For Maalouf vertical inheritance comes to refer to a sort of acculturation that is highly related to our ancestors, traditions, local values, norms, and religious tendencies:

> [E]ach of us is the deposit of two inheritances: one, "vertical," comes from our ancestors, the tradition of our village, of our religious community; the other, "horizontal," comes from our time, our contemporaries. It is the latter which, in my view, is more determining, and is more so each day that goes by. (*The Challenges of Interculturality in the Mediterranean* 79)

On this basis, when compared to vertical inheritance of culture that is traditional, static, and ancestral, horizontal inheritance with its dynamic nature seems to provide more space for multilayered perceptions of identities as it makes room for the hope of the coexistence of differences.

Identity as an Outcome of Various Affiliations and the Role of Geography

Similar to Maalouf's definition of horizontal inheritance of cultural identity, Homi Bhabha remarks in the *Location of Culture* that identity is neither stable nor constant. Therefore, it cannot be defined simply through an individual's racial and lingual affinities. As

identity is not steady, it tends to "undergo constant transformation" in the course of an individual's lifespan because of psychological, sociological, and historical causes (Hall 394). If it is not about one's innate characteristics, then identity comes to represent some attributes that are fluid and therefore potentially can change according to one's beliefs bound up with the aforementioned cultural factors. Similar to Bhabha's elaboration of identity, Maalouf argues that "identity isn't given once and for all; it is built up and changes throughout a person's lifetime" (*In the Name of Identity* 23).

Maalouf's definition of identity overall seems to foreground an analysis of identity that makes each individual unique. For an individual possessing a great number of affiliations, according to Maalouf, "no allegiance has absolute supremacy" (*In the Name of Identity* 13). Because of this, he posits that "every individual is a meeting ground for many different allegiances" (4). However, he also argues that none of those allegiances are "entirely insignificant, either" as they make up our "genes of the soul." Yet Maalouf highlights the fact that one should not forget that "most of them are not innate" (11). Every individual becomes a carrier of various allegiances, although these allegiances are sometimes not in tune with one another. The fact that individuals are a meeting ground for many allegiances in this respect presents any individual "who harbours" those allegiances with "difficult choices" (4).

Life itself inevitably provides individuals with many differences depending on when and where they are born. The fourteenth-century Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), in his *al-Muqadimma* (*Prolegomena*), exemplifies the role of geography as the true determiner of one's destiny. Maalouf himself foregrounds the inevitable role of cultural geography in shaping one's diverse identity: "Mankind itself is made up of special cases. Life is a creator of differences. No reproduction is ever identical. Every individual without exception possesses a composite identity. He need only ask himself a few questions to uncover forgotten divergences and unsuspected ramifications, and to see that he is complex, unique and irreplaceable" (20).

While highlighting the natural outcomes of cultural belongings and how relations shape our identities, he still distinguishes his idea of identity from any globalized and hence mixed idea of identity. By means of differences, and diverse affiliations, his idea seems to be a call to celebrate our unique identities differentiating us from the others. He describes his own identity as follows: "My identity is what prevents me from being identical to anybody else" (10). For Maalouf, an identity made up of diverse affiliations comes to "represent an enriching and fertile experience" that helps an individual to embrace differences as much as similarities between the identities. At the end of *Leo the African*, the narrator's advice to his son in this respect summarizes his understanding of identity:

> [W]herever you are, some will want to ask questions about your skin or your prayers. Beware of gratifying their instincts, my son, beware of bending before the multitude! Muslim, Jew or Christian, they must take you as you are or lose you. When men's minds seem narrow to you, tell yourself that the land of God is broad; broad His lands and broad His heart. Never hesitate to go far away, beyond all seas, all frontiers, all countries, all beliefs. (360)

Otherwise, generalizations and simplifications of the idea of identity may lead to ethnic violence, according to Maalouf, who calls that a "a recipe for massacres" (*In the Name of Identity* 5). He remarks that

> the identity of each one of us is formed by many affiliations but instead of coming to terms with all of them, we usually choose only one—religion, nation, ethnicity or others—as a supreme affiliation, which we confuse with total identity, which we proclaim in front of others and in whose name sometimes we become murderers. ("The Challenges of Interculturality" 80)

In general, it could be argued that Maalouf's novels explore themes of origins, exile, memory,

and identity. He employs historical reality in his works but subjects them to the needs of literature. Real historical figures appear in his works along with riots and wars that took place in the course of historical time. For instance, real historical figures such as Omar Khayyam, Nizam al-Mulk, and Hassan ibn al-Sabbah appear in his *Samarkand*. The events of his novels accordingly touch upon historical and geographical events that have documentary value, thereby representing the essential roles political and historical events play in an individual's perception of his identity.

Moreover, the dichotomous idea of West and East is frequently employed in his works. Maalouf uses a historical framework that includes historical facts and myth along with fantasy. In an interview concerning his work *The Disoriented*, Maalouf states that this mixture is characteristic of his figures: "I was inspired by the greater freedom of my youth. I spent it with my friends who believed in a better world. Even if none of the book characters matches a real person, none is entirely fiction. I have drunk from my own dreams, ghosts, remorse, as well as from my memories."[1] Through real historical events and figures he strengthens the messages and themes of his imaginary works, thereby favoring the multicultural aspects of his characters and stories. On the one hand he makes room for the coexistence of different religions and ethnicities, including different cultural traditions, with an emphasis on their function in emerging intellectual and cultural richness. He, on the other hand, intentionally narrates particular conflicts in order to question the bizarreness of mankind's insistent stubbornness to not let multicultural serenity emerge.

In this respect he analyzes the effects of historical events as obstacles created by humans themselves and paradoxically directed against themselves, thereby jeopardizing the possibilities of human coexistence in the world. Despite the universal properties that each individual shares with others in the world, such as their similar feelings with respect to their fears and desires regardless of the geographical, ethnical, and racial aspects, his question-

ing of humanity's situation might be construed as a pessimistic outlook to some extent. However, the message embedded in his seemingly pessimistic observations may well be regarded as a criticism of cultural enforcements that engender separateness rather than a welcoming of differences. Despite the critical tone of his various works, overall they can be considered explorations of a multicultural understanding of the individual's position in the world. His writing represents a desire to celebrate diversities that, according to Maalouf, can enable all human beings to contemplate the condition of themselves as strangers who have been secluded by the damaging dialogue between the East and the West.

In this respect, the "Forward" of *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* argues that the reason why he chose to write about the Crusades is because "those two centuries of turmoil . . . shaped the West and the Arab world alike, and . . . affect relations between them even today" (9). Likewise, he ends this essay in a similar tone by highlighting how the deep divisions between the East and the West date back to the time of the Crusades: "[T]here can be no doubt that the schism between these two worlds dates from the Crusades" (283). However, by celebrating diversities rather than the underlying clash of civilizations, Maalouf, according to Carine Bourget, "illustrates how civilizations have been in contact and have borrowed from each other well before the era of globalization, by emphasizing the Arabs' numerous (and often ignored) contributions to Western civilization" (21). Bourget also writes that Maalouf "dispels the simplistic view of the Crusades as a battle between Christendom and Islam, just as nowadays many intellectuals are attempting to refute the Manichean thesis of the clash of civilizations. In fact, one can read *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* as a book proleptically countering Samuel Huntington's influential Clash of Civilizations" (21).

With respect to the damaged East-West dialogue, Maalouf, according to David Weir, employs a language to recover this dialogue. Maalouf, he writes,

> uses the language of bargaining, of contract and deals, of [the] non-military, non-religious, . . . not rooted in the great belief systems, but in the simple necessities of getting on with one another in a complex society. Human nature is at stake, he accepts, but a human nature that has already found ways of getting along on a reasonably minimal level and that has developed the appropriate discourses for doing so. (10)

In terms of understanding the idea of identity as an outcome of several affiliations, Maalouf insists on highlighting the significance of diversity and plurality because the obsession with creating a single and unified idea of cultural identity by means of ignoring or minimizing differences might jeopardize both the welfare of communities and of every single identity. He argues that ignoring difference is as dangerous as excessive respect for it. Maalouf's philosophy seems to be centered most on suggesting the dangers of minimizing and maximizing affiliations. Minimizing identity to a single affiliation, according to Maalouf, "encourages people to adopt an attitude that is partial, sectarian, intolerant, domineering, sometimes suicidal, and frequently even changes them into killers or supporters of killers" (*In the Name of Identity* 30). Likewise, an abundance of differences in societies does not necessarily mean that the differences will ensure a "serene and responsible dialogue and coexistence," as various historical events have exemplified how differences can be employed as a means of conflict, particularly in relationship to political agendas. In other words, with a lack of respect and also with a lack of decisiveness in establishing and then maintaining responsible dialogues, the problems of coexistence will continue, thereby jeopardizing all identities. From this perspective, a mixed identity formed through serene and responsible dialogues, according to Maalouf, may promote peace and coexistence. He writes that

> [a] man with a Serbian mother and a Croatian father, and who manages to

> accept his dual affiliation, will never take part in any form of ethnic "cleansing." A man with a Hutu mother and a Tutsi father, if he can accept the two "tributaries" that brought him into the world, will never be a party to butchery or genocide. And neither the Franco-Algerian lad, nor the young man of mixed German and Turkish origin whom I mentioned earlier, will ever be on the side of the fanatics if they succeed in living peacefully in the context of their own complex identity. (*In the Name of Identity* 35)

In this context, the former minister of foreign affairs for Spain, Carlos Westendorps, writes that "we live in divided societies, globally, but also within nations, regions, cities and neighbourhoods; ninety percent of all countries have at least ten percent of minorities." Westendorps refers to a letter sent to him by Maalouf that concerns the ways that "peoples" may live together and face their differences in such a globalized world. In the letter, Maalouf writes that "the world needs to have a serene and responsible dialogue, respecting values but recognizing reality. The world also needs the reunion of those who assumed the responsibility of ruling countries and have already made a step backwards. In this dialogue of ex-leaders hides a promise of lucidity, vision, and effectiveness" (129).

Maalouf here underlines the fact that divisions and differences are essential characteristics of groups, communities, and societies, and inevitably will be significant for an increasing number of individuals. Referring to Maalouf's argument for the need of reunion, Westendorps posits that in a "world safe for difference, the main idea . . . is that a more just society, with fewer inequalities, where everybody is valued and respected, comes precisely from being different, and not because people are alike" (129).

Ports of Call and the Possibility of Coexistence

Similar to his other works, in *Ports of Call* (1996) Maalouf tells a hybrid story that recalls its author's identity. The story has elements of the historical novel and fantasy. The narrative begins in

the East during the period when the Ottoman Empire was in decline. Although the story on the surface seems to be a tragic love story between a Muslim Lebanese man, Ossyane Ketabdar, and a Jewish Austrian woman, Clara Emden, the dichotomous relation between the East and the West is highlighted. This is evident both in characters of different ethnicities and also in the portrayal of events taking place during the first half of the twentieth century, including the events of 1915 and the Turkish-Armenian controversy over populist history, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, the Nazi occupation of France during World War II, and the partition of Palestine in 1948. The subject matter of *Ports of Call* centers on how people are torn apart against the backdrop of war. This multidimensional context, centered around East-West relations, a recurrent traumatic motif in most of his works, represents a never-ending search for common roots through the means of a dramatic love story.

The unnamed narrator, who meets Ossyane in France, tells Ossyane's story starting during a period when the weakened Ottoman Empire faced a number of rebellions. In this period, Christian-minority Armenians supported the coup against Sultan Abdul Hamid II, causing the Ottoman counter-coup of 1909 that, in turn, led to a series of anti-Armenian pogroms in the province of Adana. A turbulent period stemming from the Turkish-Armenian controversy is detailed at the very beginning of the narrative. However, rather than dwelling on the conflict, the story itself draws the reader's attention to the peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities, suggesting that if they are not indoctrinated through political narratives, individuals of different religions and ethnicities may well live peacefully together, with the further benefit of providing individuals with plural identities a context in which to understand themselves.

The novel recounts Ossyane's life, beginning with his Turkish Ottoman ancestors and his childhood. Having both Ottoman and Armenian origins, Ossyane himself comes to represent the benefits of plurality, enabling him to contemplate the idea of complex identity in contrast to the ills of ethnic schisms that minimize human be-

ings' existence to a monolithic essence. Going to study in Montpellier, France, away from the burden of his father's revolutionary ambitions, Ossyane explores ways of escaping from any kind of local idealizations of identities. His search is more like a self-exploration surpassing ethnic and religious borders, leading to self-recognition by means of pluralities in opposition to singularities.

During World War II he meets and falls in love with a young Jewish woman in France while involved in the resistance. The common vantage point of these characters is their hatred of the policies of the Nazi regime during the war. Their meeting makes them recognize the shared ground as comrades in their struggle against racism. Although Ossyane is Muslim and Clara is Jewish, they are united against a common enemy. Ossyane becomes a war hero and after the war the couple moves to Beirut and decides to marry. Achieving this despite obstacles, the couple happily lives in Beirut until Ossyane's brother Salem is released from prison. Due to trouble with his brother, Ossyane moves to Haifa with Clara. At that point the novel becomes a story of separation and loneliness.

Wars and coups play significant roles in changing Ossyane's life as almost all of them correspond to great turning points in his life. Maalouf, in a sense, suggests that in the course of a life, no matter how much an individual believes to be in charge, outside factors intervene and dominate one's destiny to a large extent, reminiscent of Ibn Khaldun's idea that "geography is our destiny."

The first turning point in Ossyane's life comes with the Armenian and Ottoman conflict in Adana in 1909, when his family moves from Turkey to Lebanon with his father's Armenian friend, Noubar. The second turning point is World War II, when Ossyane becomes involved with the resistance and meets Clara. Finally, the Palestinian-Israeli war separates him from his wife and causes the most traumatic turning point in his life. Learning about his father's failing health, Ossyane returns to Lebanon alone, though Clara is pregnant at the time. As the war between Palestine and Israel breaks out while he is in Lebanon, Ossyane cannot return to Haifa, where Clara is trapped. Away from both his wife and new-born baby and suffering from loneli-

ness, Ossyane's situation worsens after his father dies. When his brother Salem commits him to an asylum in order to claim the fortune left behind by their father, Ossyane seems to lose all his ties with life. Having sought self-recognition in the various encounters of his life, Ossyane, damaged and secluded from all his affiliations, now loses his self-recognition. He spends more than twenty years in a mental institution and finally manages to escape and goes back to Paris with the hope of finding Clara and regaining his identity.

Deprived of almost all his established ties, Ossyane is perforce trapped in a state of nostalgia where he practices his identity as neither husband, father, nor brother. His ancestral affinity with Ottoman Turks and Ottoman Armenians alike does not matter any longer. Being a Muslim, Jew, or Christian does not imply any particular significance either, as he is secluded in an asylum where the only role remaining for him is to be a weak and passive patient who has lost all the virtues reasonable people hold on to. Nostalgia becomes the only means for him to practice a selfhood virtually, through his contemplations.

In terms of the need for a dialogical relation among nations and communities, Mikhail Bakhtin argues that the practice of "two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (4). From this standpoint, the only dialogues Ossyane conducts are his interior monologues, a reminiscence of the lost conversations carried out before he is trapped in desolation. Having lost all his ties and his self-recognition, Ossyane must wait a long time to regain his selfhood.

Hence, experiences in his early years help him expand his exploration of questions concerning the need for and importance of affiliations. He also discovers the subsequent ills of oppressive administrations that deprive individuals of their self-chosen or inborn affinities through sociopolitical suppression. It is noteworthy that while the conflict he witnessed when he was in France made room for self-achievement by bestowing upon him a heroic reputation and the chance to meet Clara, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict removes him from his ties.

Throughout the novel we learn of the pervasive influence of political outcomes on people of differing religions and/or ethnicities, all of which are elaborately represented by Maalouf through the events experienced in the love story. The coexistence of people from different religions, cultures, and ethnicities is therefore emphasized problematically through both the political events lurking in the background and through the events experienced by the characters in the foreground. The narrative suggests that neither the understanding of seemingly simple-appearing incidents nor the formation of identities can be analyzed independently from one another.

Coexistence and the Horizontal and Vertical Inheritance of Culture

As a common theme in Maalouf's works, relations between East and West always have a vital role to play. However, in *Ports of Call* this role concerns not only the relations of Western Europe with the Middle East, nor is it only about a relationship between a Muslim man and Jewish woman, but it is also about one of the well-known conflicts of the twentieth century. Turkish-Armenian relations are employed by Maalouf with an intention to highlight that controversies are maintained via political agendas of modern states. Otherwise, the message as found in *Ports of Call* is that communities have lived peacefully together before they were torn apart by the policymakers.

At the very beginning of the novel we learn that Ossyane's father, who is of Ottoman origin, received his education from a number of teachers of different ethnicities and religions. His Turkish teacher was once a priest, then became an imam. His Arabic teacher was a Jew from Aleppo. His French teacher was from Poland. Moreover, even before Ossyane's relationship with Clara begins as an example of coexistence of different religions and ethnicities, in the background it is foreshadowed through Ossyane's father, who was married to a Christian Armenian woman. The marriage of Ossyane's parents stands as a model representing the heritage that Ossyane inherits culturally. Ossyane says, "What I loathe . . . is racial hatred and dis-

crimination. My father was Turkish, my mother Armenian, and if they were able to hold hands in the midst of the massacre, it was because they were united by their rejection of that hatred. That is my inheritance. That is the place I come from" (*Ports of Call* 60).

Ossyane is raised in a community where the coexistence and hybridity of Levantine culture is paramount. In relation to Ossyane's historical background, Jumana Bayeh, in "Diasporic Literature as Counter-History," likens Ossyane's situation to the idea of homelessness. As he is "the son of two exiles from Turkey—his father is an Ottoman Prince and his mother an Armenian—the organizing principle of his early life is homelessness" (171). However, Ossyane, born after his parents leave for Lebanon, learns—in Maalouf's theoretical perspective—"horizontally" more about his home. His home becomes more than Lebanon and includes all his "vertical" inheritance by virtue of his parents' ancestries, his new home in Lebanon, and France. Throughout all his life his attitude toward foreigners from various religions and ethnicities represents a similar heritage welcoming differences. As Alhaj Mohammad Sumaya argues in *The Particularity of Identity,* "Ossyane also refers to his comrades in France and himself with the pronoun 'we,' which proves that he belongs to them. Ossyane's discourse implies how the novel condemns colonization and discrimination, as it calls for the purgation of the feelings of hatred accumulated from the past wars of the previous generations" (711).

Not limited to a certain land, Ossyane's perception of home therefore goes beyond some physical place. According to Bayeh, Ossyane's understanding of home "is not dependent upon territory or geography and is not bound by an idea of nationhood." It is, however,

> a concept of home that is coloured by anti-racist sentiments and does not rely upon a notion of collective or common cultures. . . . [It] is about place as a vantage point that allows the protagonist to be intensely critical of the violence between Jews

> and Palestinians in the 1940s. But also and most importantly, this view of home is unfinished and mobile." ("Diasporic Literature" 171-72)

Ossyane's family leaves Turkey during the onset of the First World War. Mount Lebanon becomes their destination because Lebanon, as Bayeh writes, provides them with "fraternity between the peoples of the (Ottoman) Empire, Turks, Armenians, Arabs, Greeks and Jews" (*The Literature of Lebanese Diaspora* 204). Lebanon, from Maalouf's point of view, comes to represent "the features of coexistence and hybridity that Levantine culture is defined by" (204). Ossyane and Clara's reunification in Lebanon can be considered an attempt to get involved in a process of constructing and maintaining an ideal community where "all differences of race, tongue, faith are brushed aside" in order to maintain "humanity, civility and commonality." As Ossyane himself realizes: "We wanted to stop the conflict, we wanted our love to be a symbol to another way out" (*Ports of Call* 122). The well-known conflicts of Turks with Armenians, Arabs with Jews, and, on a larger scale, the conflict between East and West, are all intentionally employed by Maalouf to question the atrocities perpetrated by countries throughout the centuries. Maalouf's response to these calamities "highlight[s] coexistence as a historical fact and emphasis[es] the common Levantine heritage" that most of these peoples share (Bayeh, *The Literature of Lebanese Diaspora* 28). Maalouf objects not only to historical conflicts resulting in hatred and segregation, but also to "the central precepts of nation-states and argues for a bi-national state" where Jews, Arabs, Turks, Armenians, Greeks, and Muslims coexist "as they have for centuries, in the same land" (28).

It is also noteworthy to consider the fact that the original French title of *Ports of Call* is *Les Échelles du Levant.* The word Levant in the original title reveals Maalouf's idea of co-existence and a hybrid identity more accurately because it represents a particular place in terms of West and East relations. Bayeh explains the significance of the word Levant in connection with

Ottoman and French relations starting in the sixteenth century:

> From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century the ruling French and Ottoman authorities came to a series of agreements referred to as the Capitulations. The first took place in 1536 between Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and King Francis I and officially granted France the privilege to trade freely in all Ottoman ports. This is why the phrase "les échelles du Levant" in the French vernacular refers specifically to several port cities of the Ottoman Empire, like Constantinople (modern Istanbul), Adana, Haifa, Beirut, Cairo, Alexandria, Aleppo and Damascus. (*The Literature of Lebanese Diaspora* 201)

Bayeh justly believes that *Ports of Call* comes to represent "a register of the historical interactions between France and the Middle East" (201). Representing East-West relations on a large scale, Maalouf's work accordingly reflects historical reality in *Ports of Call*. The picture he depicts includes a region "that is indifferent to race and religion and where men of all origins lived side by side in Ports of Levant, intermingling their many tongues" (201).

As an essential part of Levantine culture, coexistence of differences is represented skillfully in *Ports of Call* and at the same time Maalouf seems to suggest that his readers should question the causes of segregation through his explanation of the events in East-West relations. Maalouf, as a member of Levantine culture, in this respect addresses the fact that identities tend to be vulnerable to the influences of political conflicts. The irony is that as a vantage point for a number of cultural identities the Levant itself had been shaped through the encounters of various cultures in time, while in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries very similar encounters during conflicts resulted in the separation of communities. In terms of multilayered identities and the pluralities of the Levant's peoples, Jacqueline Kahanoff writes the following:

> Here [in the Levant] Europe and Asia have encroached on one another, time and again, leaving their marks . . . in the shadowy memories of the Levant's peoples. Ancient Egypt, ancient Israel, and ancient Greece, Chaldea and Assyria, Ur and Babylon, Tyre and Sidon, and Carthage, Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem are all dimensions of the Levant. So are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which . . . [constitute] the multilayered identity of the Levant's people. It [the Levant] is not exclusively Western or Eastern, Christian, Jewish, or Muslim. (quoted in Bayeh, *The Literature of Lebanese Diaspora* 202)

Searching for a remedy to the ills of political conflicts segregating peoples, Maalouf believes that in a world politically ruined by humanity for political benefits, a horizontal inheritance of culture has become more valuable in comparison to vertical inheritance of culture. Horizontal inheritance makes room for the hope of at least a prosperous future through never-ending and multi-layered perceptions of identities. Maalouf even argues that one might have things in common with a "passerby" in any place in the world more than with his or her "great-grandfather" (*In the Name of Identity* 101-102).

Therefore, in terms of Maalouf's perception of an identity that changes throughout a person's lifetime despite its ancestral factors inherited through familial and geographical bonds, Ossyane appears to refer to Maalouf's idea of horizontal inheritance when he asks the narrator, "[A]re you certain that a man's life begins with his birth?" (*Ports of Call* 15). Undoubtedly geography, according to Ibn Khaldun, has a pivotal role in shaping our identities; however, despite geography as a determiner of our destinies, the hope of coexistence could be achieved through Maalouf's definition of horizontal inheritance. In other words, it should be noted that we are also what we are becoming; that is, we are what we are practicing horizontally as much as what we have inherited vertically. Otherwise our perception cannot go beyond a tribal understanding of identity.

With respect to a tribal understanding of identities, a discussion Ossyane hears on the radio frustrates him:

> A few days ago, in Paris, I had occasion to hear a discussion on the radio between an Arab and a Jew, and I confess that I was shocked. The idea of staging a confrontation of two men, each speaking in the name of his own tribe, vying in the displays of bad faith and gratuitous cunning I find shocking and revolting. I find such duels vulgar, uncivilized, in bad taste . . . and inelegant. (*Ports of Call* 130)

In accordance with Ossyane's explanation of a tribal understanding of identity, Maalouf likewise points out the following in "The Challenges of Interculturality in the Mediterranean":

> I believe that we all take on, out of habit rather than conviction, an old conception of identity, a limited and distinctive conception that I would call "tribal" and that, although it was natural and tangible some years ago, no longer adapts to current realities; or to the realities of mixed societies, such as ours, or to the global realities. The historian Marc Bloch stated that "men are more sons of their time than of their parents." (79)

In this light, it becomes understandable when Maalouf states that he dislikes the word "roots": "I don't like the word, and I like even less the image it conveys. Roots burrow into the ground, twist in the mud, and thrive in darkness; they hold trees in captivity from their inception and nourish them" (*Origins* 299). *Ports of Call* represents the dream of an ideal world making room for all differences, where Jews, Arabs, Turks, and Armenians live side by side instead of in separation. The novel might be regarded even as a healing device, as Saree Makdisi writes, with "its capacity to resist the mutilating logic of a social and political world" (quoted in "Diasporic Literature as Counter History" 172).

Ossyane's more than twenty years in an asylum might be considered a period of stagnation during which he loses his ties with all his

affiliations, causing him to lose his belief in the idea of an ideal home. The mental institution is ironically called a "home," revealing the hollowness of his situation. While in this institution he becomes "uncritical" and "gives up the fight for coexistence" and "accepts segregation" (*Ports of Call* 174). However, although such a stagnant period in his life seems to correspond to his hopeless situation, his daughter's visit represents hope for the future. His daughter, Nadia, takes over her parents' hope for the coexistence of differences. She herself becomes a model for this goal. As Ossyane says, "I, her father, am Muslim . . . her mother is Jewish. . . . She herself might have chosen one or the other, or neither; she chose to be both at once. . . . Yes. Both at once and more [and therefore she is] proud of all her bloodlines that had converged in her, roads of conquest or exile from Central Asia, Anatolia, the Ukraine, Arabia, Bessarabia, Armenia, Bavaria" (*Ports Of Call* 167).

Conclusion

Ports of Call can be regarded as a call for accepting differences. Through unique and insightful identities, Maalouf portrays hybrid characters that highlight the role of cultures and politics with respect to individuals' receiving their identities. He emphasizes the significance of diversity and plurality, because the obsession of creating a single and unified idea of a cultural identity by means of ignoring or minimizing differences might jeopardize the welfare of all identities. For Maalouf, individuals' gains conducted through horizontal inheritance help them trust in a future ability to achieve tolerance and multiculturalism.

In *Ports of Call*, the first example of this is revealed by Ossyane's father when he leaves Turkey for Lebanon with his Armenian friend. Ossyane's father remarks that "the future does not dwell within the walls of the past" (28). His perception of homeland seems to be a place welcoming and embracing all peoples, contrary to political conflicts, which reduce people to single entities. The name he chooses for his son, Ossyane, also has a particular significance, as the name means "disobedience" and implies an urge to fight against the atrocities of single narratives. Another example revealing a hope for the future also appears in Nadia, who rebels on behalf of

her father against all restrictions and comes to find him in the asylum. From then on Ossyane's will to live is restored. Having married and moved to Brazil, Nadia, similar to her father and grandfather, goes beyond borders, gaining more through learning "horizontally" than she had received through "vertical" inheritance.

When Ossyane learns that his wife Clara had been told to forget about him while in the asylum, he leaves for Paris to find her. In Paris, he meets the narrator to whom he tells his story. Passing through a number of "ports of call' during the course of his life, such as Beirut, Paris, Haifa, the asylum, the Middle East, and Europe, Ossyane's story is not finalized by Maalouf, whose own life is a search for unknowns. As Ossyane states at the end: "life always finds its course, just as a diverted river will always hollow out a new bed" (172).

All we know is that Ossyane and Clara meet again. However, the narrator does not provide clues about their future, but does leave room for the hope of coexistence through never-ending and multilayered perceptions of identities. These identities are to be practiced horizontally and not remain static, but constantly evolve through an accumulation of history combined with the present.

Note

[1]From an interview with Amin Maalouf on October 22, 2012 at Casa Árabe's Auditorium in Madrid. This was an event celebrating the long-awaited publication of the novel *The Disoriented* in Spanish. For the article see http://en.casaarabe.es/event/meeting-with-the-writer-amin-maalouf

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THE WALL

Scene in a *Gari*

Yahya Frederickson

[Midday; a street in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. My wife FATHIA and I stand on the curb. Spotting a horse-drawn gari *coming toward us, FATHIA waves the* GARI *DRIVER to a stop beside us. The* GARI *DRIVER looks at her with the question, "Where to?"]*

FATHIA [speaking with the *GARI* DRIVER in Amharic]: Nowhere specific. We'd just like to ride around town and back. All we ask is please don't beat your horse to make her go faster. We're not in a hurry.

[*The* GARI *DRIVER nods; FATHIA and I climb aboard, me next to the* GARI *DRIVER, who clicks his tongue and lightly slaps the reins. His horse lurches forward, jostling the* gari *down a street void of cars. The* GARI *DRIVER turns the horse to the right behind the vast, mud-walled graveyard, left along its back wall flanked by hovels of flattened cans, scrap tarps, tree limbs, plastic bags, nylon cord, and old tires.*]

[*The horse's canter begins to splinter.*]

FATHIA [*whispering, to ME*]: I have to ask about his horse. [*Then, louder, to the* GARI *DRIVER*] Do you take good care of your horse?

GARI DRIVER [*smiling, looking straight ahead*]: Every six months I bring her to the veterinarian. That's more often than I go to a doctor.

FATHIA: What about when she gets too old to pull your *gari*?

GARI DRIVER: I'll take her to the edge of town and let her go. She'll make a good meal for the hyenas!

FATHIA: After all the work she's done for you, the living you've made from her toil? Isn't it hard to let her die that way? Why not just let her live naturally with you, till the end of her life?

GARI DRIVER: Look, I feed her three times a day, more meals than I eat myself. And her feed isn't cheap.

FATHIA: Wouldn't it be more merciful to shoot her in the head?

GARI DRIVER: I can't afford a bullet, much less a pistol. And even if I could, I wouldn't have the heart to shoot her. I've never heard of a *gari* driver shooting his horse. This is how the lives of all *gari* horses end—in the bellies of hyenas. Anyway, in the end, we all die, don't we?

FATHIA: True, but to be ripped apart by a pack of hyenas—on whom would you wish that kind of end? What about mercy?

[*The tour ends where it began; FATHIA and I climb down from the* gari, *hand several* birr *to the* GARI *DRIVER. FATHIA thanks him, raises her hands, says a prayer for the horse, the* GARI *DRIVER, and ourselves. Together the three of us say, "Ameen."* GARI *DRIVER drives away.*]

Calls to Dabaab

Yahya Frederickson

Fargo, North Dakota

Sharif's wife points me to the *diwan*, where Sharif and several other men sit on the floor around a phone. I say *salaam*, shake hands, offer condolences for the relative who died. There's a tap on the doorjamb—the youngest man walks to the curtain, reaches through, pulls back a tray of cups steaming with sweet, creamy tea. We sip. The tide of the mother tongue floods the men again. Sharif's son translates: they called the shopkeeper nearest the dead man's home, the one who has a phone. They're waiting while someone brings the widow. Time to call back. Sharif's half-brother dials. In Dabaab, the shopkeeper answers. Now the widow is on the line. Did he leave any debts? No, she answers. He paid them before he died. Do you need money? No. So his account is done. Whatever he did in this world is done. *Salaam*, they say. Done.

Translations of Three Alberto Girri Poems (from *Poemas Elegidos*)

Cody Deitz

Alberto Girri (1919–1991) was an Argentine poet, journalist, and translator. Beyond the prolific body of his own poetry spanning some thirty volumes, Girri is perhaps best known for translating many of the towering figures of Anglophone poetry into Spanish, including T. S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens. Like that of the English-language poets he translated, Girri's poetry works often in a metaphysical realm—the landscapes of his poems are populated with strange, often abstract images that explore the workings of the mind as well as the heart. Girri earned a reputation as a poet's poet, an intellectual force, and I think this is a fair assessment, though there is often a potent physicality beneath the more ephemeral, abstract explorations that dominate the lines.

Girri's work is especially interesting to me as a translator because, despite the poetic energies shared with American and European modernists of the same period and his contribution to South American poetry more broadly, his work is all but unknown to English speakers in the U.S. And even for Spanish-speaking U.S. poets or scholars of South American poetry, his work seems overshadowed by that of figures like Pablo Neruda or even other Argentine poets, like Alfonsina Storni and Jorge Luis Borges. Girri feels, in other words, like a minor poet, but his work is anything but *minor*.

from *Trece Poemas* [Thirteen Poems] (1949)

En La Oscuridad

Los hombres turbados por sus pequeñas traiciones,
los hombres abandonándose en insomnios,
los hombres, banderas flojas
y efímeros que ambicionan el mármol,
apenas los conozco.

El corazón entristecido por los moradores de la justicia
pasados a cuchillo,
los cedros constantes, el paisaje de la nostalgia
adulando hincado en el olvido,
apenas los conozco.

Busto de mujer joven, mi subversion es llamarte.
Prodigo del muro, ¿qué verdad oprime tu urgencia?
Cuando desciendes, los cuerpos son aldabas,
y por precepto del amor los cuerpos se abren paso
en silencio.

Busto de mujer joven diluido en la vigilia,
mi pensamiento es amargo y se exalta.
Búscame, cércame en todo lo que apenas conozco,
no me volveré.

[In the Dark

Men troubled by their little betrayals,
men who abandon themselves in insomnia,
men, loose flags
and ephemera who aspire to marble,
I hardly know them.

The heart saddened by inhabitants of justice
put to the knife,
constant cedars, the landscape of nostalgia
flattering driven into despair,
I hardly know them.

Bust of young woman, my subversion is to call you.
Prodigal wall, what truth oppresses your urgency?
When you descend, bodies are door knockers,
and by precept of love bodies make their way into silence.

Bust of young woman diluted in the wake,
my thoughts are sour and exalt.
Find me, encircle me in everything I hardly know,
I will not return.]

Ante un Espejo

Ya que aprendes los gestos de la emoción
y su vaguedad en medio de otros dones,
ya que recuerdas y en los que recuerdas
eres préstamo vil, sólo bruma y polvo,
ya que conspiras y saludas y te nutres,
y hace tiempo aceptaste lo que pronto,
pronto serás aunque tal mudanza no desees,
ya que prosperas en tu validez de hombre,
considerate asimismo vacante y condenado,
hasta que doblando la rodilla encuentres
la encerrada, maliciosa tórtola del corazón.
Al ceñir su cabeza estarás libre y apresado
advirtiendo milagros en cada una de tus partes,
y entonces, más que en la razón
preferirás vivr con un temblor,
o una cinta dormida en la muñeca.

[Before a Mirror

Now that you learn the gestures of emotion
and its vagueness among other gifts,
now that you remember and in those you remember
you are a vile loan, only mist and dust,
now that you conspire and greet and nurture yourself,
and long ago you accepted that soon,
soon you'll be, even if you don't desire such change,
now that you prosper in your validity of man,
consider yourself likewise vacant and damned,
until kneeling you meet
the locked up, wicked turtledove of the heart.
Clinging to its head you will be free and caught
warning miracles in each one of your parts,
and then, more than in the reason
you'd prefer to live with a shaking,
or a sleeping ribbon on your wrist.]

from *Propiedades de la Magia* [Properties of Magic] 1959

Mendigos

La imaginación se equivica,
nos representa pasivos,
incorpóreos
como espectros de animales
acurrucados en establos,
y en rigor
lo que hacemos es adiestrarnos,
poner en juego tácticas
y pruebas para intimidar
con el principio de la bondad,
con las parábolas de la bondad,
con ese espurio lirismo del afligido,
y cuando harapientos, desdeñosos
de la insolación y de los inviernos
incitamos al amor,
a la obra de la limosna
como toque de amor,
por dentro juramos
que las cabezas gachas,
el pie vacilante,
la mano abierta,
son el ordinario disfraz
del golpe de vista del ratero,
del hacha del Verdugo entre los dientes.

[Beggars

Imagination is wrong,
it shows us impassive,
intangible
as spectral animals
huddling in stables,
and strictly speaking,
what it does is train us,
to put into play tactics
and tasks to intimidate
with the law of kindness,
with parables of kindness,
with that spurious lyricism of the afflicted,
and when ragged, disdained
by sunstroke and by the winters
we urge to love,
to the work of charity
as the touch of love,
on the inside we swear
on the bowed heads,
the hesitant foot,
the open hand,
they are the ordinary disguise
at thief's first glance,
the axe of the executioner between teeth.]

At the Water Station Along the Arizona-Mexico Border

Lois Roma-Deeley

Body refuses to die
becomes one with thirst, tongue swelling
though Body keeps on
walking, walking—
who knows how long?
surely the sun can't stay this strong?
only this stubborn heart jumps the quiet,
eating away all thoughts of before or after—
blood carries a thousand weights
of doubt, inhales
the roiling sun—now what's this? rattling
under blue plastic barrels on steel stands
rising above the desert floor
below crushed granite—
a hundred steps more then drink now fall down—
twice bitten
under the curse of a simple blue sky.

Refugee Body

Lois Roma-Deeley

If I could speak from the afterlife, my first words would be:
the sea is harsh and unforgiving
and I would tell you
leave this city of tanks and guns—and everyone
we've ever known.
Our church will fill with soldiers.
Women will scream. Men will weep. Our child
will die in your arms.
You could not protect us. I would tell you

when they came for me, my love,
it was like the wind
rushing through an open door and up the stairs—
they came
and put a thunderbolt into my throat—and without a thought
for the approaching season of the ceaseless rain
which will pour over the roof into the gutters and down to the dock
only days after you leave.
I first saw all this in a dream. I told you then
when we were cupped together
in our bed that you would be leaving
in a crowded boat,
cold and shivering and all alone,
crying on the shoulder of some stranger.
I see you now

sick and lost,
riding the fever down after the storm has taken you
this far and no more. And I see how
the world remembers us—
like a full moon reflected in the wake of white water—
once here, now gone.

Body's Fever Dream

Lois Roma-Deeley

From the west tower, peasants are watching
the ass of the King's horse jump a stone fence

and disappear. Soon hearts will be eaten
like black plums, the juice running down the chins

of men. A woman, spreading her legs,
prays the blade's quickness will kiss her

in a pure line, crotch to chest. After ten days
at sea, Body sweats with fever, rolling

from side to side in a lifeboat. Roads of a city rise,
under the canvas tarp,

shale pearls in the moonlight.
Now something sings

like shattering glass. It could be
the windows of little houses in little towns breaking.

Or the bones of good citizens shivering in damp sheets.
It could be Body

turning to that first love, whispering—
The heart wants what the heart wants.

But now all Body wants is for the swelling waves to stop—the roll
of this shifting world to end. Then, what

is it? That far off sound? cracking
like a first voice at the back row of a church choir,

that infinite roar—

Tortured Body

Lois Roma-Deeley

For days, under the swinging lights
you were a deep bruise. Like the last
taste of blueberries in a jar

you were gone before I noticed
what was being done to me. First
a porcelain tub is filled with ice;

then, pulling at the nipples,
the singular hum that only comes
when the world rises; when worlds fall

into the electric hands of a god
whose very breath is a violent
storm inside my heart. You are not

coming to save me.

Neither Here nor There: Fluid Identities and Exile in Jesús Díaz's *Dime algo sobre Cuba* (Tell Me Something About Cuba)

Patricia Catoira

With the renewal of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States under the Obama Administration, travel restrictions to the island have also begun to ease, to the chagrin of the powerful Cuban-American political establishment. American cruise, airline, and ferry companies are hurrying to lock in contracts to develop an untapped market. The over five-decade-long economic embargo and hard-line policies against the Castro brothers' regime has made Cuba a de facto forbidden-fruit destination for many Americans. From the Cuban side, the impossibility for most Cubans to leave the island in the wake of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 propelled different waves of dramatic exodus to the United States, such as the Mariel Boatlift in 1980 and the Rafter crisis throughout the 1990s.

Jesús Díaz's novel *Dime algo sobre Cuba* (1998) takes place during the aforementioned Rafter crisis, when thousands of Cubans, defying their government's restrictions, threw themselves into the ocean in makeshift rafts, hoping to reach Florida. Cubans were willing to risk their lives at sea and fend against hurricanes, scorching sun, dehydration, and sharks, rather than endure the stark economic conditions Cuba began to suffer as a result of the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the subsequent end to the influx of subsidies from its former Eastern European allies. The Clinton Administration imposed the so-called "Wet Foot, Dry Foot Policy" to handle the crisis. It allowed Cubans who reached U.S. soil (dry foot) to stay in the country while those caught at sea (wet foot) would be returned to Cuba directly or via a third country. Framing the hardships of the ninety-mile crossing with a subtle veil of humor reminiscent of Cuban *choteo*, *Dime algo* points to the absurdity of such a policy. After Díaz's main character, Stalin, defects to the U.S. via Mexico, his Miami-based brother concocts a scheme in which he is to become a *balsero* (rafter). Stalin will hide on his brother's rooftop at the mercy of the blazing sun and water and food deprivation until he can look the part. At

that point, Stalin would be set loose in a raft a few miles off the coast of Florida in the hope of reaching land before the U.S. Coast Guard apprehends him at sea.

Beyond the political subtext, *Dime algo* delves into the meanings and spaces of exile, belonging, and alienation. Critic Gustavo Pérez Firmat has written extensively on the Cuban-American experience. Through essays, fiction, and memoirs, he has tried to make sense of "his obsession for a lost homeland" (Stavans 681). In his 1994 study *Life On the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way*, Pérez Firmat puts forth three stages in the experience of Cuban exiles in the U.S.: substitution, destitution, and institution. In the first stage, the exile creates copies of the native culture in the new land and imagines himself there, not here. When the fantasy of recreating home in a new environment collapses, exiles enter a state of destitution—they feel estranged and disconnected. Whereas in the first stage they were still there—at home—at least mentally, in the destitution phase Cuban refugees are nowhere. With time, Pérez Firmat argues, exiles develop a new relationship with their American surroundings. Although the feeling of rootlessness may not dissipate completely, they find themselves at peace and are able to adopt the new cultural system and balance it with that of their remembered homeland. This state of institution is the one Pérez Firmat is most interested in, for it is the one that applies to what he calls the one-and-a-halfers: the generation that came to the United States at a young age, embraced American customs, and absorbed Cuban culture through their parents' longing for their homeland. This generation of the one-and-a-halfers—to which Pérez-Firmat belongs—are "translation artists," for "their intercultural placement makes them more likely to undertake the negotiations and compromises that produce ethnic culture" (4).[1] They are able to choose from both cultures (language in particular), but, as in a tug of war, one at the expense of the other. The one-and-a-halfers maintain a level of biculturation—that hyphenated zone—as far as their parents continue "being" Cuban and they—the offspring—become American. In *Cincuenta lecciones de exilio y desexilio* (2000), the scholar confesses to the turmoil of living in the hyphen and how he longs to settle down in one place, one culture, one language, and one country

(118).[2] The constant negotiation occurring in the hyphen becomes an active performance of the Cuban-American experience, of building an identity that ultimately seems to lean more heavily toward the American side.[3]

In *Dime algo*, the harsh physical conditions on the rooftop of his brother's building send Stalin on an six-day emotional journey which, in effect, make the character experience Pérez Firmat's first two stages of exile in a very condensed time. Stalin sets off on his journey by recounting the events in the last five days of his life as a way of making sense of his actions and understanding himself. The novel is structured as six journal entries, headed by the day of the week and the day of the month. Although the year is absent from the entry titles, the events are set during 1994, at the height of the *balseros* crisis. The journal structure of the novel emphasizes the intimate—and thus uncensored—nature of Stalin's words while capturing, at the same time, the feel of a travel narrative.

The use of self-narration in *Dime algo* is similar to other works by Díaz, in particular *Las iniciales de la tierra*. It is through personal crises, being accused of a crime in that novel or going into exile as in Stalin's case, that Díaz's protagonists question authoritative discourses and succeed in building their own system of language and meaning.[3] Through the debacles of his characters, Díaz exposes the always turbulent relationship between culture and politics on the island in the wake of the Cuban Revolution.

Fidel Castro's government tried to control this relationship from the beginning. In his famous closing remarks to the meetings that took place in 1961 between the nation's artists and intellectuals and the government, Castro passionately proclaimed that the success of the Revolution was above everything, including artistic freedom: "Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing. Against the Revolution, nothing, because the Revolution also has its rights and the first right of the Revolution is the right to exist and in opposition to the right of the Revolution to exist, there can be no one" (11).

Díaz's characters often reflect the writer's own troubled relationship with the government, from being an exemplary revolutionary writer to forced exile. Díaz fully adhered to the Cuban government—as exempli-

fied in *Los años duros*—until the 1980s, taking part in the official condemnation of Heberto Padilla's "counter-revolutionary" writings and supporters during the highly-publicized Padilla Affair in 1971. In the mid-eighties, Díaz began to show a progressive dissatisfaction with the regime, especially with regard to freedom of expression. Díaz's own *Las iniciales* fell under the scope of official censorship and the author had to shelve it for twelve years until its publication in 1987. Despite his falling out with the Cuban government, Díaz's exile, first in Germany and later in Spain, never became a banner for anti-Castro politics. His persistence toward the need for change on the island through dialogue among all the affected parties caused critics like Ambrosio Fornet to declare that Díaz never belonged to the Cuban exile (46). Indeed, Díaz made a distinction among the Cuban expatriates, calling those in Miami "el exilio" and the others dispersed elsewhere "la diáspora" (Pichler). After settling in Madrid, he founded the cultural journal *Encuentro* (meeting/encounter), which aimed above all "para dar a todos el beneficio de la palabra" (to let everyone speak) (Ortega 247). The journal and its online version have become a space of dialogue and tolerance. Beyond its political inclusiveness, *Encuentro* has also provided a forum in which to discuss Cuban cultural production inside and outside the island, making it one of the most dynamic cultural magazines.

Despite the recognition of *Las iniciales* and *Los años duros* as key moments—each for different reasons—in Cuban letters and the quality of his other works, Díaz remains a marginal figure in the Cuban canon. He is "one of Cuba's best kept literary 'secrets': a secret produced by the inclusion and exclusions of literary-canon making" (Vera-León 67). It is possible that Díaz's complex trajectory on the island and his insistence that the diaspora create a space for dialogue has made him hard to pigeonhole in the traditionally polarized debate about Cuba, and thus it has been easy to relegate the artist to obscurity. *Dime algo* belongs to what could be called Díaz's diasporic writing. The novel is usually linked to the other three novels Díaz published in the last five years of his life: *La piel y la máscara*, *Siberiana*, and *Las cuatro fugas de Manuel*. Although the few critics who have reviewed *Dime algo* have not considered it at the level of *Las iniciales*, they have praised it as part of Díaz's attempts to de-center exile discourses.[4]

Las palabras perdidas was also published during Díaz's exile in Spain, but the novel revisits the relationship between the Cuban government and artistic expression. The text follows a group of Havana university students wanting to create a literary journal and the challenges they face. The publication of the novel itself represented a triumph over the Castro government's cultural policies: "both a chronicle of repression and tangible evidence of the victory of the artist over the bureaucrat" (Buckwalter-Arias 367).

Díaz had already dealt with this theme of exile in the 1970s while living on the island. The first years of that decade witnessed increasing censorship and marginalization of writers (emblemized by the Padilla Affair), which led Cuban critic Ambrosio Fornet to coin the term *El Quinquenio Gris* (the gray five years) to refer to those dark years from 1971 to 1975. Working under the attentive eye of the Cuban state, Díaz no doubt absorbed (forcibly or willingly) the strict dichotomy imposed by the Cuban government regarding exile: with us or against us. He showed the importance of place (the island) and experience (the Revolution) to claim a Cuban identity. In the essay "De la patria y el exilio" (1978) and its film version, the documentary *55 hermanos* (1978), he registered the reception in Cuba of a group of young Cuban-Americans called "the Antonio Maceo Brigade." They had been taken to the United States as children at the beginning of the Revolution and decided to accept Cuba's invitation in 1977 to visit their native land. Despite emotional family reunions and good will on the part of visitors and Cubans, Díaz showed that the *brigadistas* would never be accepted as Cubans because they had not experienced the Revolution and that the Cuban-American community would never understand the *brigadistas*' desire to establish a dialogue with the Cubans on the island.

This failure to reunify Cubans is also addressed in his film *Lejanía* (*Parting of Ways*, 1985). Those who had left the island after the Revolution appear morally flawed compared to the hard-working, self-sacrificing Cubans contributing to the collective goals of the Revolution. The individualistic, consumer-driven society lured Cubans into exile, corrupted them, and thus made them unfit for the new Cuba under the Revolution. Díaz's dogmatism, whether self-imposed to align with state

policy or willfully adopted, hindered the film's ability to delve deeper into the complexities of exile beyond superficial caricatures. The writer revisited *Lejanía* from his new place of exile in Europe by rewriting the film in his novel *La piel y la máscara*. The novel centers on the making of the film and is narrated by its five actors (characters of the novel). The polyphonic nature of the narration creates different versions of reality and events, thus challenging the monolithic grand narrative of *Lejanía*. The interactions among the characters and their own monologues show them motivated by individualistic goals, able to "act" the part of a revolutionary Cuban and willing to defect if the film takes them on tour abroad. As Antonio Daniel Gómez points out, Díaz's rewriting underscores the significance of the place of enunciation when representing Cuban reality. Beyond the writer's attempt to redeem the aesthetic and ideological failings of the film, *La piel y la máscara* is as much an effort in "unwriting" *Lejanía* as in presenting the silence and vacuum that it displays eleven years later (184). Writing from exile and about exile is key here. Exile, as place and condition, appears then in Díaz's work as the locus from which to reassess the past and reinscribe the present, to deterritorialize national discourses, and to pluralize the narratives. Díaz rewrites himself as he rewrites moments in Cuban history.

In *Dime algo*, Stalin's self-narration leads him to the path of reassessing his life and his relation to the island. His memories become fragmented and disrupted by a constant reevaluation of his past actions. This process of self-introspection wracks his brains as he agonizes over his previous opinions. His internal narrative reflects the delirium and shock imposed by the severe environment on the rooftop. This vacillating also points to his negotiation of two cultures and systems of belief. Early on, Stalin reveals this unsettled mental space, declaring:

> Until when could he stand the thirst, the loneliness, the hunger, and the memories on that rooftop? Being there, half-naked and alone, with his head and skin boiling, was it not much more unbearable than being a dentist and a waiter at the same time [in Cuba]? Why did he not give up, go down to the street, approach a policeman and tell him: "Look mister, I am Cuban and I want to go back to Cuba"? But, to

> go back to fucking what, if in Cuba he was considered a deserter and did not have a wife, a job, a fan, nor a bicycle anymore? (56-57)[5]

By referring to himself in the third person, Stalin empowers himself as a narrator and detaches himself from the "real" Stalin. He establishes a distance not only with the Stalin who was in Cuba until a few days before, but with the Stalin who is currently in dire straits in Miami. As a result, the reader has access to two levels of introspection: Stalin's stream of consciousness as he carries out the action taking place and the narrator's judgments of those actions and thoughts.

Stalin's desire to remain in Cuba until just a few days earlier is rooted in his love for his wife Idalys, who stayed behind. Stalin's feelings for his wife parallel those he has for Cuba. In fact, it is easy to see Idalys, a beautiful mulatto woman who works as a showgirl at the famous Tropicana, as the embodiment of the island's attraction. Foundational and national discourses have traditionally inscribed Cuba within a mulatto framework, as a way to acknowledge and symbolize the country's rich mixture of cultures and races. Idalys is beautiful, loving, fun, and fifteen years younger than Stalin. His concerns about Idalys's fidelity begin to shake his faith in Cuba itself. He fears that she would go out with tourists from the club. Indeed, the presence of tourists in this novel refers the reader to the new opportunities and frustrations in Cuba since the 1990s.

As a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence in the early 1990s, Cuba lost its main trading partner and a major source of subsidies. The resulting economic crisis shook up the social system. Tourism became the quick fix to generate immediate hard currency. The government, after some waffling, legalized the dollar and the euro, but then reversed the measure in 2004. The influx of foreign tourists and currency encouraged the growth of services that were only available to foreigners or Cubans with access to foreign currency. As a result, acquiring dollars became the main goal for most Cubans during that period. When Stalin, who had trained as a dentist, is ordered to go to a hotel to help a tourist with a toothache, he internalizes and fights his second-class condition in the new Cuba:

> Why had I answered as a servant? He was wondering now. . . . Why had he felt so ashamed walking through tourists on his way to the elevator? How was it possible that he had reached the point of desiring to make himself disappear, fade away, become invisible as if he was somebody committing a crime? Ah! If he could ever tell anyone the exasperating humiliation that being Cuban meant in Cuba. (45)

His reservations about Idalys are then paralleled by his reservations toward his job and his country. The fact that he is a dentist but makes less money than a doorman at a hotel shakes his loyalty to the Revolution. His disillusionment has begun to grow internally, but he is still emotionally paralyzed.

When Stalin happens to be riding on a Havana commuter boat that is hijacked by Cubans who want to flee to the U.S. (based on a true event), he becomes angry, but for unexpected reasons—not because he is a true revolutionary or because he is afraid of reprisals. The hijacking inconveniences him because he was looking forward to going home, hoping to catch Idalys cheating with another man. That incident would resolve his ongoing suspicions and make his life much simpler. For Stalin it is important to determine the status of his marriage for it is in many ways what drives his existence in Cuba. He does not want to leave Cuba on a whim. When U.S. authorities detain the commuter ferry and offer him the chance to stay in the U.S., he refuses and asks to be returned to Cuba. That same day, when he arrives at the island treated as a hero, he finally finds his wife with another man in his bed. He then plots to poison Idalys by mixing rat poison with the meager coffee left in the house. Stalin frames the break-up scene with Idalys as a nightmare:

> Tired of suffering he clung to the illusion that what had happened since the hijacking of the commuter boat named New Dawn had been only a dream, and he entered a state of lethargy in which he was no longer able to discern if he was in his Havana bedroom with Idalys, caught in a nightmare in which he was forced to suffer sun stroke on a roof top because a stupid kid had confused him with Fidel Castro, or if he was in Miami dreaming something better, that Idalys had died

> while suffering atrocious pains like a cockroach poisoned by a little coffee. (171)

The suffering from his wife's infidelity becomes intermixed with Stalin's present-time physical pain from the harshness of the sun. Without his wife and fed up with the lack of basic consumer goods and cash, Stalin becomes emotionally detached from his homeland—while in Cuba and then as he thinks about it from Miami. He defects while on a work-related trip to Mexico, which he ironically had won for refusing to stay in the U.S. during the hijacking incident. As he ponders his defection from his blazing hideout, Stalin no longer yearns to stay on the island. He realizes that Cuba goes beyond the physicality of the geographic island and that he will be able to find it again elsewhere. Pérez Firmat's destitution phase kicks in.

Pérez Firmat characterizes individuals in the phase of destitution as feeling displaced, estranged, and disconnected with their surroundings. It is a liminal space—neither here nor there. The loneliness and physical and emotional isolation that the rooftop imposes on Stalin symbolize this transition. The climax of the first memories has brought Stalin to a no man's land. Cuba no longer appeals to him, he does not want to return and he damns himself for not having left sooner when he had a chance on the commuter boat. On the other hand, he looks at Miami and does not like what he sees. He assesses the American city through his brother's transformation. His brother's new (American) life stuns him; Stalin does not yet understand his brother or his choices. His brother changed his name from Lenin to the more American-pleasing Leo. He used to be a lawyer in Cuba and in Miami he has become a well-known performing clown. Leo's wife, also a Cuban émigré, code-switches from Spanish to English, and what Spanish she retains is outdated. Leo and Cristina discourage their son from speaking Spanish "to shake Cuba off of him." Stalin realizes that being Cuban in Miami is not the same as being Cuban in Cuba. Things, even language, change.

Stalin's intense suffering at the mercy of the sun and blazing heat sends him into a delirious nightmare in which he dreams he is adrift in a raft with others. In this dream the boat is about to sink when Yemayá, the

Afrocuban deity personified as his wife Idalys, emerges from the water and ignores his pleas for rescue. The Yoruba goddess Yemayá is considered the mother of all beings. She controls the oceans and seawaters and all the creatures that live therein. In the dream, Stalin feels both the humiliation of abandonment and the horror of sinking. When he wakes up in a sea of sweat and screams, he thanks God for being alive despite his current state of thirst, hunger, loneliness, and fear. More importantly: "He told himself that he would erase Idalys from his life as she had done with him, and he wondered when he would need to go downstairs to the house to the bathroom, making a conscious association between Idalys and shit" (61). The role of Yemayá in the dream is twofold. On the one hand, the goddess's indifference to his pain and her resemblance to his wife allow Stalin to break away from his attachment to the physical motherland embodied in the person of Idalys. On the other hand, because Yemayá is the source of life and controls the ocean, she metaphorically allows Stalin to emerge from the waters with a new life. This nightmare, as well as the one he had while remembering the breakup scene with Idalys, represent the purgatory of the voyage, from which Stalin eventually emerges in a new light.

It is not surprising that right after this nightmare with the goddess Yemayá and his symbolic rebirth Stalin begins to build a new life. He enters into Pérez Firmat's institution phase with the help of Miriam, one of Pérez Firmat's one-and-a-halfers. She is the niece of Cristina, Stalin's sister-in-law. She is young, green-eyed, and attractive. Although born in Cuba, she came to the U.S. at the age of two and does not speak Spanish. While immersed in the nightmarish mix of dreams, recollections, and starvation, Stalin hears a voice: "it is a miracle, he thought when he heard that voice that was saving him from death, lightening him as a breath of fresh air" (76). When he hears the voice again and opens his eyes to witness "the miracle," he describes Miriam as a nurturing, mothering goddess:

> In between the veil of sleepiness and hunger he managed to see a young woman from whom a clean and clear aura emanated. She was carrying a straw basket in her right hand, like in children's stories, and

> like in those stories she had small white, aligned teeth, long hair, as black as the nights without electricity in Havana, and green eyes [green often denoting hope in Hispanic culture] like the hope of having woken up in another dimension that shook him up and made him sit up clumsily in the cot. (76)

Miriam feeds him and brings him to life. She has successfully replaced Idalys and become his new Cuba.

Although the protagonist realizes that he is still in Miami, he senses a new stage for himself through Miriam. She talks to him a little bit in broken Spanish but mainly in English, a language he barely understands. He resorts to the English he remembers from song lyrics of groups such as the Beatles and to clichés from American films. The act of reaching out to communicate through a different cultural referent with Miriam denotes his will to move forward and get out of his emotional rut. Stalin is moving toward the American side of the hyphen. Miriam's hybrid nature, her condition as a one-an-a-halfer, helps Stalin navigate both worlds, the here in Miami and the Cuba of his memory. He thinks Miriam is as beautiful as his ex-wife, but in a different way. Miriam, like Idalys, embodies a state of inbetweenness:

> She had wavy hair, as black as evil, super white and small teeth, light sienna-colored, tanned skin; and shining green eyes. . . . She looked like a nineteenth-century *criolla*. Could she be Cuban? No, because if that were the case she would speak Spanish, although she was not a Yankee either, of course. (120)

Stalin's uncertainty about Miriam's identity is echoed by the young woman herself when he is finally able to convey to her that she seems Cuban and she responds in English:

> I would like to [be Cuban], you know. . . . Sometimes it is difficult to live here, you know. . . . Who am I . . . I'm not Cuban. . . . I'm not exactly an American. Those WASPs, you know, those Jews, those His-

> panics, those Blacks, I'm afraid they hate us. I don't know. Anyway, I ask myself, who am I? Can you tell me? (120)

Stalin then realizes that Miriam's insistence that he tell her something about Cuba goes beyond a mere formality. In the same way that Stalin is remembering his actions in previous days to find himself, his motives, and his identity, Miriam hopes to find something to identify with in Stalin's stories and memories of Cuba. The reader never hears the stories he tells her in the same way the reader never hears the confessions of the protagonist of *Las iniciales*. Stalin has built a language with Miriam that is no longer translatable for us, the readers. They symbolize the "translation artists" Pérez Firmat alludes to in his analysis of the one-and-a-halfers. Both characters find Cuba and their place in the U.S. in each other, through a new language and vocabulary.

Both Stalin and Miriam need each other at this crossroads in their lives. Miriam needs him to keep her in touch with some notion of Cuba and Stalin needs Miriam to establish a link with the Miami that confronts him. They sexually consummate their relationship and their biculturation the day before he is set to leave for the raft trip. Despite the pain Stalin feels from the sun and food depravation, the pleasure he experiences in the sexual encounter reaffirms the new beginning. Similarly, the emotional embrace with his brother Leo in the yacht that will take him to the sea signals the closing of the insurmountable distance between the polarized ends of the hyphen. Realizing the potential danger of the enterprise on which he is about to embark, Stalin does not want to leave without apologizing to his brother for having denounced him as a traitor when Leo left Cuba—similar to Díaz's role in the "Padilla Affair"—and for cutting ties with him all these years. They both purge their bad feelings in the ocean, the locus of Stalin's nightmares and rebirth. Partisanship is left behind and brotherhood foreshadows a new era of tolerance and understanding. As he drifts away in the dark, Stalin does not reject his past but he does not feel tied by it to Cuba (the island) anymore. He has stripped himself from the rhetorics and discourses that kept him exclusively "there." Meeting Miriam and embracing his brother have helped him dismantle the "here" and "there" construction. Being

a "translations artist," Stalin's vision of Cuba (and Miami) is now fluid like the waters surrounding his raft. The last entry of the journal is a blank page with just the title, "Tuesday 28." Stalin knows he can now build a new life, a new language, with which to write a new narrative. Díaz points to that blank page as the site of dialogue and personal liberation in which each individual can inscribe his own version of exile and national identity.

Notes

[1]See Pérez Firmat's "The Facts of Life on the Hyphen" for the critic's own struggles translating his memoir *Next Year in Cuba*, originally published in English, into Spanish.

[2]María de los Ángeles Torres rightly points out that Pérez Firmat fails to include in his discussion of the one-and-a-halfers those who veer toward the Spanish/Cuban side of the hyphen or who go back and forth.

[3]"no me resigno a vivir en el hyphen, en el 'entre,' en ese vaivén que he tratado de reivindicar en algunos libros. No niego que la vida pueda satisfacer a otros; sólo afirmo que no me satisface a mí. Carezco de vocación de alambrista; el vaivén no me asienta, me marea. Y eso es lo que busco más que nada; asentarme, como lo estoy ahora en este butacón, en un solo idioma, en un solo país, en un ambiente con gente" (118).

[4]I borrow this argument from Antonio Vera-León. In "Politics of Self-Narration in Revolutionary Cuba," Vera-León focuses on *Las iniciales* and contends that the crisis for Díaz's protagonist in that novel, which well applies to Stalin in *Dime algo sobre Cuba*, arises when faced by the discourses of Cuban revolutionary modernization (69).

[5]See Ortega, Ordonqui García, Rubio Cuevas, Guerrero, and Yulzari.

[6]Translations from the Spanish original are all mine.

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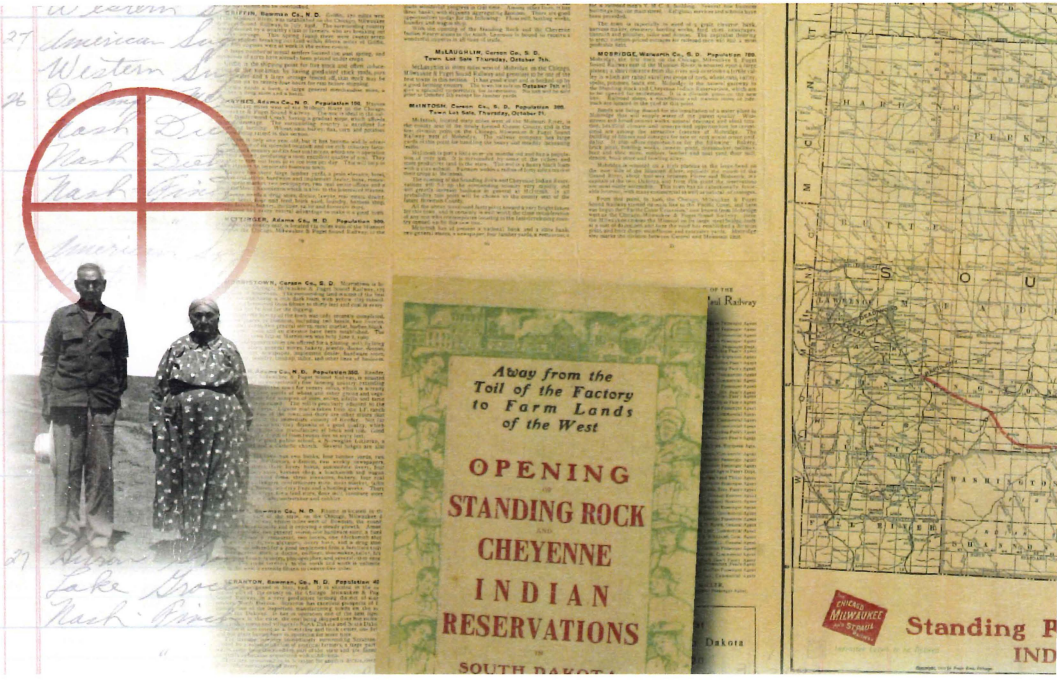
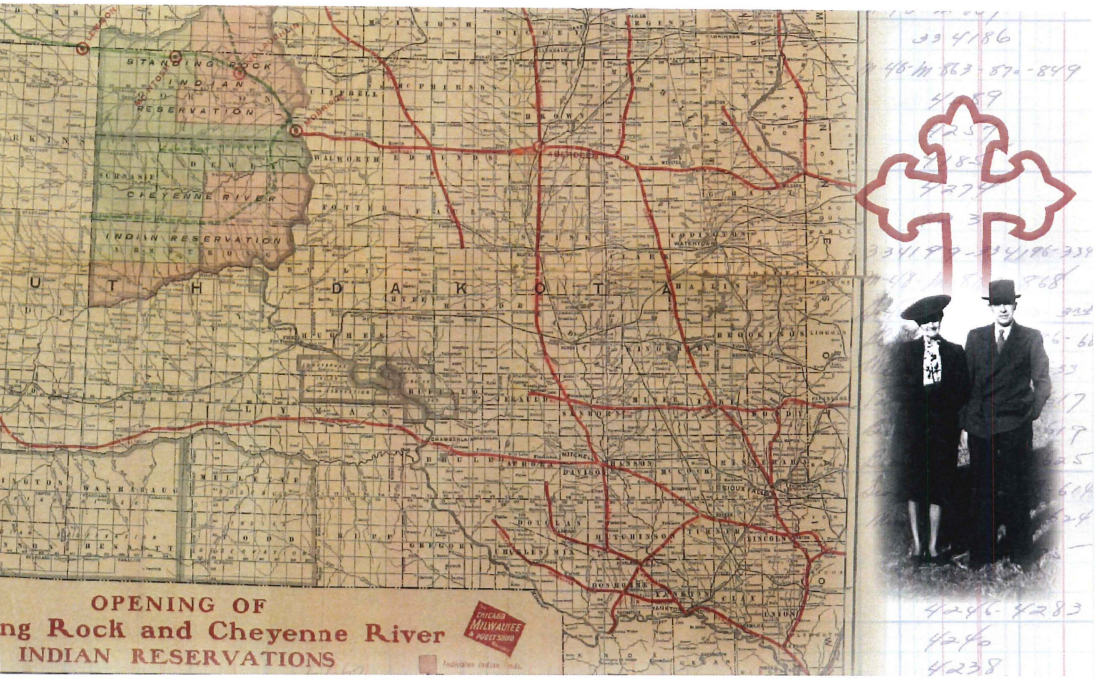


This piece portrays the movement of two families, both caught up in transnational border policies.

Transnational borders within the United States of America are crossed daily—no need for a passport, no luggage or car searches, no checkpoint questions, at least not directly. These borders are in place because American Indian tribes, through hard-fought military and legal battles, retain their status as sovereign nations. The over three hundred tribal nations within the U.S. constitute over twelve hundred transnational boundary lines. Within these boundaries, the federal government authorized the taking of over ninety million acres through the General Allotment, or Dawes Acts (1887, 1898), and the Land Acts (1909, 1910).



European settlers, spurred by government and industry promises of economic prosperity, and without understanding tribal jurisdictional issues, crossed these borders. My own ancestors were among them. Literal "stakeholders," they were participants with the tribal members in a social experiment to assimilate American Indians and eradicate their cultural and social traditions. This legacy continues to shape transnational dynamics today. With my art I try to raise some necessary questions at the borders between Indian Country and the United States.

The first day of fourth grade came with a new bus driver wearing a baseball jacket and thick-rimmed glasses that slid down the sweat on her nose when we told her she took us to the wrong school. By the time we arrived at John Dewey Elementary, the bell had rung and we'd missed homeroom. It was the talk of the day. But when my sister and I came home, we were surprised, even miffed, at the lack of reaction from our parents. They didn't believe us, or not until Mrs. Tuttle, our in-the-know American neighbor, confirmed the story. It wasn't too long afterward that we had to memorize our address. Just saying that you lived at Sunny Acres, next door to Okutan *amca*, wasn't good enough.

Sunny Acres wasn't a development. It was a hospital, and we lived on the grounds. Dad was a pulmonary specialist and we lived there in the sixties, back when living quarters were provided as a "benefit" to work at a TB hospital. The hospital was built on top of a hill and the doctors' houses near the edge of the grounds at the bottom. There were about ten houses with at least two other Turkish families that Dad had helped bring to the United States. With the other foreign families, this was a Turkish-flavored United Nations on the west side of Richmond Road, with names like Eren and Dinçman alongside the Indian and Asian contributions of Ghatak, Clavacilia, and Chow that came and went over the years.

The houses were different only by address number. Standing in a row, they were cookie-cutter small square homes and slightly worn, the way that houses get when they're beaten down by multiple tenants or lots of kids. Screens on the windows were bowed and dented, but if you got the screen up and stuck your head outside, you'd have seen that before Sunny Acres became a hospital, it was a farm. Our backyard was a kid's dream: an open field dotted with oak and apple trees backing up to our very own woods.

Once it got warm our days were spent barefoot and outside. Most times it was rustling up the neighborhood kids to play war. Armed with bows and arrows whittled

from forsythia bushes, we'd patrol the grounds, ready to take on kids from the other side of the street. Arrows didn't fly very far, and never hit what you aimed for, so we'd chuck crabapples at the enemy and protect ourselves from the returning volley with garbage can lids. When we ran out of apples, we'd let ourselves get chased toward Fatso. He was my tree, a big oak with a tubby trunk and solid straight arms. We'd climb him to squirt our secret weapon, a foul-smelling juice fermented from purple berries we left to rot in Mom's old hair-dye bottles. We knew every inch of this playground: the potholes to avoid when riding bikes downhill, where to find blackberry bushes, and which tree to shake for the best green apples. We didn't even think of coming home for lunch or dinner until we heard Dad's whistle. Everyone knew it, but how a thumb and middle finger could produce his shrill three-note call we never figured out. It's not like we didn't try.

The backyard was pretty much our territory and adults didn't enter except for parties. In those days parties in the backyard weren't fancy affairs with mosquito-misting systems and outdoor kitchens. It was pretty much a grill and a bag of charcoal. The picnics began on Memorial Day with the first squirt of lighter fluid onto a pile of charcoal chunks and a "stay away" wave of the hand as Dad flung a match onto the pile. With the whoosh of flames came the smell of summer. For me it was cross-hatched dents on the back of your legs if you sat too long on the lawn chairs, Turkish ladies crowding shaky card tables to park foil-wrapped plates, or, once it got dark, kids climbing into a car to tell ghost stories.

We'd get excited as the guests started pulling into the driveway. Company would bring a house gift, usually a box of Fannie May chocolates or pistachio-stuffed *lokum*. After the welcome *hoşgeldiniz* and kissing of cheeks, Mom would thank them and ask us to open a box and offer them to the guests as they got settled outside. "Hold it out and say *buyrun*," she'd instruct. "Start with the women. Oldest to youngest." This was a girl's job, so it fell to my sister and me to grab the boxes and head out to the guests.

No matter where the parties were held, the women would al-

ways find the chairs first and congregate on one side, with the men nearby, standing in loose circles. We'd approach the oldest lady in the bunch, usually a grandmother visiting for the summer. It wasn't hard to pick them out. They wore sweaters or knitted vests over dresses, no matter how hot it was, and held court in the middle, making you twist through a multitude of legs to offer them candy. By the time you whispered *buyrun*, they'd start up the usual chitchat, "*Ay, ne guzel cucuklar*," and then they'd talk about you like you weren't there.

"Gulçin looks so much like Zekiye *hanim*. And Serpil, just like Cahit *bey*," they'd say. This would be followed by "How old are you now?" and "What are you studying?" It ended with "You'll be a doctor when you grow up, won't you?" and then everyone would shake their heads in agreement as if they'd said a universal truth, like gravity makes objects fall. It didn't matter if you were six or sixteen, it was the same set of questions, a ceremony between the old and young that emphasized education and ambition as the only things worth asking about. The simple ones we could handle in Turkish, the language you were supposed to respond in, but the tougher the question, the harder the reply. It caused anxiety offering those candies. The just-arrived grannies expected any kid to know Turkish and weren't shy about sharing their opinion. We understood Turkish, just about everything that they said, but in our house, if Mom asked, "*Derslerinizı yaptınızmı*?" we'd respond, "Yeah, we did our homework." Mom and Dad spoke Turkish with each other, but they didn't care what language we spoke. We didn't get criticized if our Turkish wasn't perfect or if we had American accents.

The same foods appeared at every party and there were several versions of standard things like *börek*. Mom's was a buttery layered phyllo stuffed with parsley and feta cut into perfect squares. Şükran-*teyze* usually made *talaş börek* stuffed with lamb bits and sometimes someone would bring a special labor-intensive *su böreği* that got complimentary *okhhhs* from the other ladies who recognized the extra work that went into making it. The only time chips, potato salad, or Jell-O molds appeared was when the American wives brought them.

When they brought their ambrosia salads there would be a miraculous rearrangement of trays and bowls so that the pink fluff with miniature marshmallows ended up on the second-rate table with the Coke and plastic cups. Even so, the dinner special was the old-fashioned American hamburger. It was the adopted star of the immigrant menu and topped with customary ketchup and mustard, but in our Turkish picnic tradition there was always someone who would misunderstand or ignore the distinction between a burger and a *köfte*. They would bring their patties with onion, parsley, and cumin mixed in so you'd see at least one kid with the I-got-the-dud-and-it's-not-a-real-burger face and the maternal eat-it-anyway look that was the reply.

These were not parties where alcohol was the main event. I don't remember anyone bringing wine or beer. It was mostly whisky and only the men drank it. After dinner the men and women would begin to commingle and if the talk before dinner was of family and kids, the after dinner talk was politics and the economy. And whether they were talking about Turkey and NATO, missiles aimed at Russia, the stock market, or Vietnam, everyone had an opinion and as they got more and more animated, more and more of them would talk at the same time. The conversation would become noisy with raucous eruptions like "*Hiyar gibi adam*" or "*Kaz kafa*," insults lobbed at presidents or party leaders. We would laugh at how calling someone a cucumber or goose head could be so rude.

We called them all *teyze* and *amca* in the customary way to address aunts, uncles, or those older, but to us it was not just being respectful. They were our honorary relatives. Alone in this diaspora in northern Ohio, we became each other's families, counting on them for birthdays, graduations, July Fourth, or *Cumhürriyet Bayramı*, the Turkish Independence Day. Of them, Yalçin *amca* was one of our favorites.

Yalçin Dinçman was one of Dad's oldest friends. They'd gone to high school then medical school together. When they sent out their letters looking for positions in the States, the Dinçmans ended up in North Carolina while my parents landed in Chicago. After my Dad, Yalçin *amca* told the best stories. They were fascinating to us be-

cause they were tales of Dad's life before he was married and things he would never have told us on his own. The stories were usually crazy teenage things they did in high school, like how they got drunk and dressed up as American Indians, an image we found especially amusing since Yalçin *amca* was shaped like a snowman, one wearing a goatee and black-rimmed glasses. Imagining his big belly in a loin cloth broke us up, but through Yalçin *amca* we learned how there was a pastry shop in their neighborhood in Ankara called *Fok Pastanesi*. Once, they climbed onto each other's shoulders and changed *Fok Patanesi* to *Bok Patanesi*. This was hilarious to them because *bok* in Turkish means shit. We'd crack up that they said *Fok*, they'd crack up at *Bok*. Yalçin was exuberant and expansive in everything he did, but especially in the way he ate and talked. When he laughed, his mouth took over his face. You could see past his gold teeth down the back of his throat. When he ate, he attacked his plate. His arms would wave wildly and bits of food would fly off his fork and knife. Some of it would get stuck in his beard and if you got too close you'd risk getting some on your face.

Still, his energy was infectious, and as they traded stories of their youth both Dad and Yalçin *amca* would recall better and funnier stories and we would gather at their feet to listen. As they egged each other on, Dad would stand up to tell his stories. Mom would put a gentle hand on his arm and say, "*yavaş, yavaş*," in a slow-down-honey kind of a way because his voice was the one that got the loudest. Dad would tell stories of their first years in the United States. How he didn't really know English, a fact he'd somehow ignored until he actually got to Chicago and started working. As a married couple they were given a room in the residents' quarters in a building attached to the hospital. After settling in for their first night, Dad stepped out, but couldn't remember which floor the room was on. He got into the lift and the elevator man asked, "Up?" Dad didn't understand what he said so he said, "Up." When they got to the top, the man looked at him kind of puzzled when he didn't get off. He asked, "Down?" so Dad said, "Down." Up and down they went until the elevator

man got irritated. He started asking for floor numbers. "Eight," he said. "Eight," Dad replied, and so on and so on. Somehow the door opened and Dad recognized their floor and dove out. He took the stairs after that.

We loved those stories. We wanted to hear them over and over again, every party. Everybody had their immigrant tales and we never tired of hearing them. By the end of the evening, when they were really loosened by the Johnny Walker Red, they'd get sentimental, reciting poems they'd learned as kids and sing old songs. Dad would bring out the tape deck and they'd raise their arms and dance side-by-side, arm-in-arm to classical Turkish music.

That will always be my idea of a picnic party. It's odd, given that the last party at Sunny Acres was probably in the early seventies. Families started leaving Warrensville Heights to join each other in the suburbs. When that happened, the celebrations moved indoors. They became swankier as families welcomed guests into their new houses. Yet people were comfortable sitting on the ground if the house wasn't furnished, and guests still brought food and danced in the empty living rooms. I don't remember any big holiday that we spent alone. It's probably why I never learned to cook for less than a crowd. Even now, my husband will say, "You're making too much food," and chide me for staying up late before holidays to make *börek* and baklava, even if it's only the two of us celebrating.

It seemed the parties stopped after Dad died. When I came home to visit, it seemed too painful for everyone to get together like we used to. No one wanted to sit around and tell old stories when they resurrected memories of people who were gone. Then Mom got sick, more of the old guard died, and the get-togethers were more often in the cemetery than anywhere else.

The closest I get to a party of my past now is when I visit my brother and sister, who still live in Ohio. When I blow into town, there are waves of sadness, but we celebrate that we can still get together. We collect at their houses with the kids who surprise me by how fast they've grown, but as I look around the rooms, I am sometimes startled to see that there are no old people. The elders are now us, my brother, sister, and the visiting me.

It is between their children and friends that I am most reminded of how different things are. My nieces, who were taught to call me *teyze* when they were little, call me by my first name. I would never have called my aunts by their first names any more than I'd have gone to school naked. And last year, my sister's husband added barbecued pulled pork to the menu at Courtney's graduation party. I snuck a glance at my sister, who shrugged a "he still doesn't get it or care" response. It's not like we were particularly observant Muslims, but you can be sure no part of a pig ever hit the grill at a Turkish get-together. That dish would have been hidden far behind the Jell-O salad or mysteriously forgotten at those parties of my youth.

You don't hear much Turkish spoken anymore, but the kids still want to hear stories. Not so long ago they'd gather around me on the couch and ask for "Gulch's Weird and Gross Stories." They weren't the tales of immigrants in a new country, but the strange things I'd seen in my life as a doctor. I told of how I'd found worms in the intestine during a colonoscopy or how I'd taken maggots out of an infected leg, and they'd squeal in delight and disgust and beg for more grotesque details. As I think back, I remember that we must have asked for the same. How else would we have known Yalçin *amca*'s story of a boy who complained of buzzing in the ear and the cause being a family of cockroaches that had taken up residence.

On a recent visit, I noticed that my brother's daughter, Aliye, was more curious about her grandfather and how her Dad grew up. Somehow the subject of demonstrating affection in Middle Eastern culture came up. I mentioned how my father demonstrated affection more easily by doing things for us, rather than telling us. I gave her an example of how her Dad was similar in that way. That he showed his love by cooking for them and faithfully packed their lunches every day, making sure to include a variety of food because he worried they wouldn't eat if they got bored with what was in the bags.

"Yeah," she said, "Dad made lunch every day. He'd pack a hard-boiled egg 'because it was good for me.' I told him once I wouldn't eat

it unless it was dyed blue and stuck on a Popsicle stick, so that's what he did. He dyed them crazy colors for a year and put notes inside too. All the other kids were jealous." I chuckled and told her how her Dad hated hard-boiled eggs growing up. How my Mom would seat us in the kitchen at the old house on Richmond Road and make toast with hard-boiled eggs, but, when Mom wasn't looking, he'd lob the yolks into a storage bin in the stove. The drawer was rarely used, but when my mother opened it to clean sometime later, she discovered dozens of moldy green balls courtesy of her father.

She laughed and said, "I didn't know that about him."

"Mm-uh," I said. "Maybe there are lots of things you don't know about him." So I wonder, who will remember the stories that we grew up with? Who will be the curator of our memories?

When I fly to Cleveland now, it's usually my brother who picks me up. Last time he told me that his company got the contract to tear down Sunny Acres. The ride to his house passes an exit close to where we used to live, so I asked him to go slowly so I could see the old house. The houses are gone and a new landmark, BJ's Wholesale Foods, sits almost across the street from where we lived. The houses are no more, but you can still see their outlines. I can pick out the cracked driveway where we played a made-up game of tag we called "germ" and the crooked yellow peace sign my brother spray painted onto the brick. Fatso's still there, and the apple trees. If I close my eyes, I can still see kids crowding into Okutan *amca*'s old white car, telling ghost stories in the dark.

> The patience and tolerance to live harmoniously in an unfamiliar culture; the fortitude to be content with less than comfortable circumstances for prolonged periods; an understanding of and sympathy with a foreign history and religion; a willingness to learn a new language; the flexibility, imagination and humility necessary to climb into the head of people who live by a very different set of assumptions; none of these are found automatically in our modern developed Euro-Atlantic culture. (Gardiner 174)

I am an example of the difficulties of transnationalism; I'm a Christian American and have spent the last eleven years trying to understand the Sunni Muslim people who belong to the Gibali-speaking tribes of Southern Oman. I have lived overseas in four countries and spent a significant amount of time in a fifth—it is easy to change what you wear, what you eat, when you eat, what side of the road to drive on, what days are the weekend, where the light switches are located, and what time stores are open. It's difficult to learn a foreign language, but it is far more difficult to learn and understand new communication strategies.

I once met a Gibali-speaking friend, Mahad, for a day-fishing trip. I had known Mahad for several years at that time but he brought along two cousins whom I was meeting for the first time. I pull my car up alongside his and he announces that we will all go in my car. His car had "a fire." I look at his car (engine running); there don't appear to be scorch marks anywhere.

"What caught on fire?" I ask.

"The car!" Mahad says, in an isn't-it-obvious tone of voice.

"What happened?" I am now out of my car, walking around his car, which looks the same as always.

"Fire!" he repeats, hauling fishing gear from his car to my car.

"Did you take it to get repaired?" I venture.

"No," he says, slamming his car doors. "It's OK."

I stare at Mahad.

"What happened?" I ask again.

He shakes his head in despair at my obliviousness, "fire."

We get in my car and I start driving. He directs me off the paved road and onto a rough trail, full of loose rocks. I drive over rocks which ping up and hit the undercarriage with loud thuds. I yelp and wince.

"Don't move! Don't say anything!" Mahad instructs me. "My cousins will think you are scared."

"Well, I am scared," I say. "I don't want my car hurt."

"Don't show that!" he replies.

Once we get to the beach, they sort out the gear and I take out the snacks, offering bags of chips to the cousins. They take them and begin walking to the rocks to fish.

"See how they are good!" Mahad says, "They are not hungry but they take the chips to be polite!"

"But if they are not hungry, they could just say no," I answer. He glares at me. Exchanges like this would sometimes end with him asking a rhetorical question: how could a normal, sane person have the patience to have a conversation with an American woman?

I wrote down this conversation when it happened, more than six years ago, but it was only afterward that I could see the contours of what was said and not said. I have been doing anthropological research on Gibali-speaking tribes in the Dhofar region of Southern Oman for almost ten years, and I am still trying to understand and articulate how Gibalis use language to communicate, deflect, hide, and obfuscate. Even with Gibalis who are fluent speakers of English, verbal interactions can go widely astray, especially between Gibalis and expats.

For example, one of the hallmarks of American speech-acts is to be forthright, clear, to say what you mean and mean what you say, to try to make words mirror what you think and believe. Gibalis often use words as masks, using verbal communication to hide their intentions in ways which are clear to other Gibalis, but confusing to outsiders.

In Gibali communication, the result is what is most important: to put the correct ideas into the

minds of those to whom one is talking, to get the desired outcome. In the above conversation "fire" was not the point; the point was he wanted us to go in my car as it was a long drive on rough roads. Perhaps he didn't have enough gas and, in any case, my car was much newer and in better shape. But he didn't want to express that he needed my car. When the rocks hit my car, he didn't want me to react because of his cousins: if I was so obviously worried about my car, they would suggest we turn back. And he remarked on them not being hungry to show their self-sufficiency.

Being self-reliant, and expecting others to be self-reliant, are keystones of Gibali culture for both men and women. Handling the situation by saying "can we take your car?", "if you act scared, my cousins will call off the trip," and "thanks for bringing snacks" would be giving power to others. Mahad would have been placing himself in a subordinate position: asking me for the car, intimating that the trip depended on the agreement of the cousins, having to show gratitude or that his cousins needed my food.

I didn't catch any of this at the time. I was just happy to be going fishing, but the exchanges amused me so I wrote them down. A few months ago, searching for something else, I found the document with the exchange and I could, at that time, "read" it. I saw the subtexts I didn't catch the day it happened because I spent the intervening years going on many more fishing, camping, and driving trips. Watching, watching, watching, and more watching made me realize if I leave town with men in the research group, we will usually take my car because, having been a girl scout, I have water, blankets, tow ropes, wood, knives, pillows, and matches in my car at all times; the lights, brakes, windows, and speedometer all work. If I am in the car with Mahad and other men from the research group, no one remarks if I react when rocks hit my car and the men take or leave the food I bring as they choose. However, in front of older men and men who don't know me, the men use words to show their independence from me.

Some people compare understanding a foreign culture to peeling back the layers of an onion, but to me that implies that there

is a destination to be reached. To me, understanding culture is like mountains beyond mountains. You get to one level only to find there are infinitely more layers to discover. Perhaps in another five years I will have an even deeper understanding of that conversation.

Understanding is such a slow process because it is unusual for Gibalis to become friends with people outside their religion and tribe. The Dhofaris who are part of my research group are Sunni Muslim and their mother tongue is Gibali, a non-written Modern South Arabian (MSA) language also known as Jebbali or Sheri. Most Gibalis also speak Arabic, the language of government, education, and business in Oman, as a second language. Most also know some Mehri, another unwritten MSA language; Urdu or Hindi, to communicate with expat workers; English; and/or languages picked up by travel or interest, including French, Korean, Swahili, and German.

Their social system is organized by tribes and sub-tribes. With the exception of expats who have lived in Oman for a long time and acquired a passport, all Omanis belong to a tribe. After identifying as Muslim, it is the most important way to classify people. When Gibalis call one another, the first question is "Where are you?"; when they talk about a person, the first piece of information is the tribe name. There is no way to exist outside of the tribal structure. In saying your name you will spark a whole series of associations in your listeners and all the positive and negative actions of your family, extended family, and tribe revolve around you like unseen gravitational fields, pulling people closer to you or keeping people away from you. A typical Western view is that tribes are harmful, but in Dhofar tribes are seen as a safety network.

Gibali women and men can become close friends with people from other tribes and even intermarry. When a group of friends sits together it is impossible to tell who belongs to which tribe; yet, as Gibalis say, there are "lines" (limits) in friendships with non-tribal members. Nothing negative about a family or tribe member is ever said in front on non-tribe members.

It is even more difficult to be friends with people of a different

religion. I know more than a dozen Gibali men well, and of them only two have ever talked to a Christian woman outside of a work situation, e.g., when she was either a passenger in their taxi or their teacher. The Gibali women I am friends with have never been friends with a non-Omani, non-Muslim woman.

So how did I manage to gain the trust of the Gibalis in my research group? How did I learn to read communication exchanges? I was once talking to another American about my research and how difficult it is to get access and insight into Gibali culture. He said, "So you must ask a lot of questions." I said, "No, I don't ask any questions." The look on his face was the look of a person struggling to reframe the whole conceptual framework of what "research" means. "Research" means asking questions, right? Socratic dialogue, give and take, write a plan and make inquiries, figure out what you want to know and go look for the answers. You "pursue" research; you "hunt" for answers; you "capture" data; you "acquire" answers; there are so many metaphors of the "chase" for information.

To understand Gibali culture, I went on beach picnics and fishing trips and I sat. Gibalis sit. When there is work to do they work, but when there is no work, they sit. With men, meals are eaten with concentration so one can get back to sitting and talking. When there are kids around there is more talking during meals as the children need to be corralled and fed, but as soon as everyone has finished eating, it's back to sitting and talking.

Westerners have the, usually unspoken, expectation that meeting for coffee should take an hour or two, but among good friends Gibalis don't have a sense of how much time should be spent on a visit. When making a formal visit to someone's house, one might stay fifteen minutes, half an hour, two hours, or longer; the time is predicated by outside factors: when men are free to drop off or pick up women, prayer time, when people will normally go to sleep, etc.

Among family and close friends you should stay together until there is a specific reason to go. Several times I will feel that the visit is done and my Gibali friend will suddenly order more food or make reference to us sitting for another two hours, with the caveat that Gibali women

usually expect to be home before sunset. Agreeing to meet Gibali men at three p.m. might mean we will be together until five p.m., eleven p.m., or one a.m. If I try to leave at seven p.m., they will ask with surprise, "Why didn't you tell us you were busy?" And by sitting, watching, and listening I was slowly able to see how Gibalis choose what to say and when to say it.

For example, when Gibalis greet each other, "How are you?" is repeated over and over in Gibali or Arabic. Between good friends, the first three or four passes are expected to have a positive answer. After that, and after a little time, the actual answer can finally be revealed. No one would think of saying, "Hey, you just said four times that you are OK and now you tell me that you didn't get the job you wanted." "Everything is fine" was the appropriate thing to say before, but now it's appropriate to reveal what is going on. It's not that Gibalis don't know what truth is, or don't believe in telling it—truth is a commodity to be displayed to those who need it, at the correct time. The correct time might be, in fact, never.

For researchers this can lead to serious misunderstandings. One man who was trying to research a sensitive topic complained to me that Dhofari men only wanted to talk about "cars and football." Given that he made me uncomfortable with his blunt statements, I could imagine how Gibalis would cordially duck his attempts to get them on a sensitive topic with a long soliloquy on their favorite sports team.

Twice I have watched researchers give an overview of their project to Gibalis who nodded along and gave their full approval, but when the researchers left the Gibalis turned to me and said, "We didn't understand anything." Like Mahad above, Gibalis don't want to show that they are in the position of needing something or not understanding something, especially in situations where there is a new person in the group. Knowing me for years allowed them to tell me that they were confused, but they would never admit that in front of the researchers who were strangers. "Let them enjoy their time," the guys in my research group say. "But they think you agree with them," I respond. They shrug, smile, make a motion of dismissal with their hands.

For Gibalis, words are used to show their independence, not necessarily reflect the true opinions of the person speaking. When at work one afternoon I called a Gibali friend to tell her I was ordering lunch. She said she was starving and that she also wanted food. When I called her back half an hour later to say that the delivery man wasn't coming, she told me that, actually, she wasn't hungry. When I called ten minutes later to say the delivery man had shown up after all, she told me she was starving. She had said that she wasn't hungry to show friendship to me, so that I wouldn't feel badly that I had disappointed her, and to show that she didn't need the food.

When I don't operate within the Gibali framework by not being independent and asking for reassurance, Gibalis react in an amusing but didactic manner. When I had moved into a new villa with a large living room I decorated it with paintings, Arabian rugs, colored glass lanterns, pillows in abundance. When Gibali friends stopped by, I asked, "What do you think of the living room?" The three men stood rooted, observed everything carefully, made expressions of surprise and approval, waved their hands elegantly; they vowed that in their lives they have never seen such decorating; they swore they did not know that such marvelous decorating was possible on this earth; they wondered out loud how it was possible to take a plain room and turn it into a palace, a castle, a dream; they declared that I must come immediately to their own houses and commence redecorating their own homes.

My friends were teaching me that when I disingenuously asked for compliments, I was going to get enough compliments to choke on. Either ask and accept the fake whipped-cream compliments with proper abashment or (better) don't ask. In that case I had spent three days rearranging the living room and was not really interested in the truth; the cotton candy compliments were perfect.

Gibalis will sometimes say something negative about Dhofar to expats and then, when the expats start to join in, will bring up social problems in the expats' country. It's funny to see this in action, but not amusing for the expats who thought they were indulging in criticizing the trash on the beach and suddenly are try-

ing to defend their own politicians. For example, if tourists object to the price of water, within a few minutes they will be casually asked about the cost of the airfare to Oman and then the hotel room price, until it becomes clear that it is ridiculous to complain about the price of water when they have already spent so much money on the vacation. Watching Gibalis and expats in conversation often reminds me of cowboys herding cattle. No matter where the tourist wants to go linguistically or physically, they will end up where the Gibali wants them to be.

Rarely, when expats don't abide by these conversational rules it can lead to anger. Dhofari students become furious if an expat teacher says something along the lines of, "You failed the midterm and have done none of the homework, you are going to fail the class, so it's better if you drop it." From the Gibali point of view, how dare the teacher say that s/he might fail? There is always a hope and it is imperative for teachers to stay positive—to say what the student wants to hear. A few times this has escalated to the point where students bring in parents and vow that "the teacher said I would fail, so I failed, it is his fault." Of course, part of this is posing, but to state a possible negative outcome is seen as helping to create it.

Given the social pressure to keep a pleasant and polite atmosphere at all times, the need to say what one really believes is almost always trumped by the need to create the correct impression. Thus Gibalis understand that what a person says at one moment might not reflect what they actually believe, as a person is trying to cover what they feel and uncover what others feel. They assume everyone is equally engaged in a kind of spin management, whereas outsiders, especially Westerners, are usually working out of a completely different framework.

I call it the "Will the car ready on Thursday?" problem. Expats drop off their car to be serviced, ask, "Will the car be ready on Thursday?" and are told "Yes." What is meant is "Yes, if the mechanic, who is currently out of the country for a two-month vacation, decides to come back three weeks early and fix your exhaust it might happen, it could happen, but otherwise it will probably be Sunday before we can find someone else to do it."

The expat hears, "Thursday morning your car will be ready if I have to go without food and sleep; if I have to walk barefoot for seventy-five miles across burning sand, your car will be ready on Thursday." This results in the expat arriving on Thursday and having a hissy fit because the car is not ready.

When I quoted back something a Gibali friend had said to me, he snapped at me, "Are you following me word by word?" i.e., I should not remember and repeat exactly what he said. As part of this construct, it is possible to argue in opposite directions from one day to the next and never get called out for it. One night I told the group of Gibali men I was with that I wanted to leave our picnic early because I was worried about the state of the road; they argued the road was fine and I disagreed. The next night I wanted to stay late, so I argued that the road was fine to drive on and no one mentioned my flip-flop.

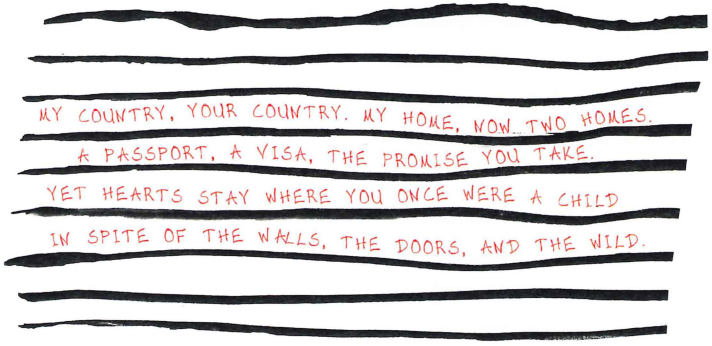
A Gibali friend told me that no one gets sick during Ramadan minutes after telling me that a mutual friend's parent was sick. Trying to parse this leads down rabbit holes of cultures, understanding, intentionality, and what is the truth. He believes that Ramadan is a special and separate time of year in which good things happen so that no one can get sick and at the same time knows that people not only get sick, but die during Ramadan. The two strands can exist separate and equal, without the need to twist them together into one narrative strand.

The link between words and actions works differently in Dhofar—sometimes it feels like living in a world formed by deconstructionists. Many times I have seen a Gibali man tell another that he will do something he has no intention of doing. Men thousands of kilometers from Salalah, the town where I live, will tell friends that they will be at the café in five minutes; Gibali men who are in Dubai will proclaim they will meet friends for dinner in Salalah.

"I did not" can mean "I did not" or "I did it, but now sort of regret it," or "I did it and regret it but would rather die than give you the satisfaction of admitting it," or "I did it, am glad I did it and am really enjoying watching you twisting yourself into knots because I won't admit it."

As I think about the difficulties of intercultural communication, I remember the connections between buildings and floors at MIT, where I worked for several years. MIT managed to connect almost all the buildings on campus to each other through underground tunnels or above-ground walkways. As you map out a path from one point to another, you need to remember which floor the connection is on. For example, going through a line of four buildings, you might walk between the first two building on the third floor, go up the fourth floor to walk to the next building, and then up to the sixth floor to get to the last building.

This is the perfect metaphor for intercultural communication—if I stayed on my own floor with my own style, I would hit cement walls. Messages sent will never be received, and I won't be able make headway. I am able to do my research because I show, with halting steps and many mistakes, that I am trying to walk up to their level of communication.


MY COUNTRY, YOUR COUNTRY. MY HOME, NOW... TWO HOMES.
A PASSPORT, A VISA, THE PROMISE YOU TAKE.
YET HEARTS STAY WHERE YOU ONCE WERE A CHILD
IN SPITE OF THE WALLS, THE DOORS, AND THE WILD.

Few words are as potent as the two I have paired in the title to this essay. Yoked together, they're explosive, a tinderbox and a match.

And yet the first word calls out for the second. One of the characteristics of modernity (by which I mean "how we live now") is the sense that space is not what it used to be. Less and less is distance an obstacle to overcome. It is easy for us to venture out into the world: we get on a plane and fly away, or we log into Facebook and visit our far-flung friends without leaving home. And it is easy for the world to come to us: movies, music, and news all come to our laptops and smartphones, and tourists (and refugees) get on a plane and fly to our cities. They arrive at our doorsteps, and we arrive at theirs, virtually and in the flesh. We—and they—arrive under different conditions, to be sure, but we arrive nonetheless. As our contact with others increases, we must find ways to open our doors and say to the stranger, "Welcome."

Or not. If one party refuses to extend hospitality, or the other refuses to accept it, the match might hit the tinderbox. As the politics of xenophobia take hold in Europe and North America, examples of this scenario are not hard to find. People are afraid of the barbarians at the gates. They worry about threats to their safety and way of life. They are like the characters in "The Fall of the City," a radio drama written in verse from 1937, who are warned of a coming conqueror, "This one is dangerous! / Word has out-oared him. / East over sea-cross has / All taken . . . / Every country. / No men are free there" (MacLeish). The "conqueror" people fear now is the foreign worker who takes their job or the lone-wolf terrorist who strikes without warning. Better yet, it is the trade agreement that sends their jobs abroad (or lets the foreign worker into the country) or the ideology that inspires the terrorist. Since space is not what it used to be, what had been a distant threat is distant no longer.

What, then, do we make of modern hospitality? We must first ask what we mean when we talk about modernity. Two narratives, one dominant, the other al-

ternative, provide competing definitions, but the alternative narrative is more responsive to questions of how we live now. It shows how each of these four words reveals something about modernity's constitutive contradictions—the relationships we carry on with others as we move through an open-ended world. We must also ask why the tinderbox is so dry. What is the source of the anxiety that has given rise to the nativism in Europe and North America? Finally, we must ask how ideas of hospitality (and a willingness to be vulnerable) can help us break the cycle of fear that feeds it.

Modern Anxiety

The question "What is modernity?" has been an Ariadne's thread in the social sciences and humanities for at least seventy-five years, so my four-word answer—"how we live now"—might seem rather glib. But each word hides as much as it reveals. Let us pry them open to disclose their underlying ambivalence and complexity, which are key to understanding the anxiety that is a defining trait of our modern world.

How

It is tempting to think that what makes us modern are the tools we use. We see progress in new technologies that let us do things more quickly, easily, or efficiently. Consider communication, to name a prominent example. The printing press made it possible to reproduce books without employing scribes. The telegraph, and later the telephone, made it possible to send messages without physically transporting them, and radio made it possible to send them even without laying copper wire. Television and the Internet continued the trend, and now, for fifty or a hundred dollars a month, our smartphones give us access to vast libraries of information. With each new technology the link between content and producer becomes more abstract, to the point now where content appears completely unmoored.

But modernity is defined not by things but the relationships they engender. That is, it is not our tools that make us modern, but how they have changed the ways we relate to each other—not what we have, but how we live. As technologies have loosened their grip on content, the world we navigate

through has grown. It is bigger now than twenty years ago (when web browsers had not yet made the Internet widely accessible), or sixty years ago (when television news was just beginning to bring us images of faraway places), or one hundred years ago (when transatlantic radio transmissions were still a relative novelty). Our world is also bigger because travel is easier. The trends there are similar to those in communication: flying is routine, at least for those with the means to do so. Thus we enter into and maintain relationships with more people at greater distances in ways we could not have before. Some relationships are meaningful, some are not; some are friendly, some are not.

Therein lies one source of anxiety: our contact with alterity is constantly growing. We are constantly confronted with the strangeness of the world, which often appears threatening because it is unknown.

We

When I say "we," whom do I mean exactly? I am writing about Europe and North America because the events that concern me have taken place there, and because I am North American. Perhaps I am writing about the West. But what exactly does that term mean?

"The West" has many different meanings, but they tend to be rooted in geography and history. We use the term to designate a certain intellectual heritage, that of the Greeks filtered through the philosophy of the Enlightenment, which gave us ideas of politics and democracy that still have purchase today. The dominant narrative of the West relies on a notion of modernity that is characterized by "the growth of reason, defined in various ways: for example, as the growth of scientific consciousness, or the development of a secular outlook, or the rise of instrumental rationality, or an ever-clearer distinction between fact-finding and evaluation" (Taylor 154). The forces of modernity, in this view, are universal and not a function of culture.

In fact, this view masks its own ethnocentrism and distorts what we see of others. It obscures the different ways people live now, and, as a result, it misses the fact that "a Japanese modernity, an Indian modernity, and various modulations of Islamic modernity

[have entered] alongside the gamut of Western societies, which are also far from being uniform" (Taylor 163). It also obscures the unevenness of modernity within our own communities, which is manifest, among other places, in disparities in wealth from one place to the next and the resulting gaps in people's access to resources.

An alternative narrative of modernity results from observing this unevenness and in light of which labels such as "the West" appear inadequate. Other labels pose similar problems. The media, for instance, bring us foreign ideas, while highways and airports bring us foreign people, but as we incorporate them into our lives (and as we venture out of our own communities), they begin to appear less, well, *foreign*. We discover that what we call the West has porous borders and that it is, in a word, hybrid. "The West" becomes a shorthand that, despite its usefulness in designating an intellectual tradition, is ultimately misleading. We should use it with caution: "the real problem is not hybridity—which is common throughout history—but boundaries and the social proclivity to boundary fetishism. Hybridity is unremarkable and is noteworthy only from the point of view of boundaries that have been essentialized" (Nederveen Pieterse 220).

Live

How do we move through the modern world? One answer comes from seeing how changes such as those I describe above contribute to and are symptomatic of a larger trend toward abstraction.

Increasingly, we must put our trust in what Anthony Giddens calls "expert systems" (or "systems of technical accomplishment or professional expertise that organise large areas of the material and social environments in which we live today") that are too complex for us to grasp in any easy way (27). They are designed, for instance, to ensure people are competent in their jobs so we can be confident in their work even if we lack the expertise to evaluate it. Consider the trust we put in doctors. I don't have the expertise to decide whether my doctor is a quack, but I know she has earned a degree from an accredited institution, and I trust the accrediting agency, if nothing else. What other choice do I have? I trust it, and everything works out fine. Be-

sides, if everyone needed medical training to have confidence in their doctor, society would grind to a halt.

But expert systems are growing more complex. In the past, we knew there was eventually a backstop—some sort of guarantee based on real-world expertise—that acted as a warrant for our trust. Now we're not so sure. Expert systems have become so enmeshed in each other that the warrant for our trust in one is, often enough, simply another. What if my doctor gives me bad advice? I can complain to the hospital administration, and if I'm not satisfied, I can complain to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (the province where I live). But what if the College fails? To whom do I turn if I lose my faith in it, too? Worse yet, to whom do I turn if I simply lose faith in expert systems altogether? I call the number I find on a "contact us" webpage, but it leads only to a Kafkaesque phone tree, where I navigate through a labyrinth of menus but never reach an actual person.

As we lose faith in expert systems, we also lose our sense of ontological security, or the "confidence that most humans beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (Giddens 92). If expert systems fail—governments cut funding to social safety nets as companies ship jobs overseas—on whom can we count but ourselves to maintain our sense of security? Our modern condition, as Zygmunt Bauman argues, becomes one of existential anxiety, the haunting thought that whatever we're doing, it's not enough:

> Targets may be set only for the current stage of the never-ending effort—and the satisfaction brought by hitting a set target is but momentary. . . . [T]here is no time to rest, and all celebration of the success-thus-far is but a short break before another round of hard work. (Bauman 78)

We feel compelled to prepare for whatever future tests we might face, but because we don't know when or how we might be tested, we'll never know—until we're tested—whether we have prepared enough.

Now

Finally, what is the nature of our current historical moment, the *now* of modernity? It is tempting to see our lives as the culmination of the events that have led up to this point. Such a view would be consistent with the dominant narrative according to which the forces of modernity are universal and lead necessarily to the advanced state we have achieved in the West. But it would also fall into the same trap: it would miss other modernities in other places, following other trajectories, and it would gloss over the uneven way modernity developed in Europe and North America.

Instead, we need to see Western modernity, hybrid and messy, as having developed in fits and starts, a fact that accounts (among other things) for the uneven geographic distribution of access to resources. As a consequence, we also need to rethink our relation to history. History is not an inexorable march toward the present, nor is the present some sort of *telos*, a point where we realize what in the past had only been unanswered potential. Simply put, Western modernity is not (as Francis Fukuyama would have it) the culmination of history. This is a good thing. If we see history as having a direction—if we think it has led inexorably to where we are now—we risk closing off certain choices we would otherwise be in a position to make. (Why fight fate?) If we are not at a historical endpoint, the future remains open-ended and contingent, even if our choices are not readily apparent.

"How we live now": these words capture the ambivalence of modernity and its attendant anxiety. We go out into the world, as the world comes to us. Not only are we exposed to others, but we depend on them, and the more we get to know them, the more our sense of who *we* are (as opposed to who *they* are) is troubled. We fear losing our identity, even if (as I argue below) we can choose to adapt and evolve.

Modern Threats

In the last decade, not to mention the last year, right-wing political parties have grown in popularity in Europe and North America, as leaders have struggled to find ways to accommodate the immigrants and refugees who have arrived on their shores. The Front national in

France, the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs in Austria, Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, the UK Independence Party in Great Britain—all have made electoral gains by appealing to nativist sentiments and exploiting people's fears of outsiders.

The 2016 election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency is emblematic of this trend. Trump's promises to build a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico, deport millions of undocumented immigrants, and ban Muslims (or subject them to "extreme vetting") all respond to the anxiety that comes from the fear that whatever we're doing, it's probably not enough. During his campaign, nothing captured the logic of this anxiety better than a tweet by his son, Donald Jr., who on September 19 sent out a picture of a bowl of candy and asked, "If I had a bowl of skittles [sic] and I told you just three would kill you [sic]. Would you take a handful? That's our Syrian refugee problem" (cited in Horowitz). The implication was that although most refugees were good, a few were bad, but to guard against the bad, the only choice was to ban everyone. Nothing short of an absolute ban would be enough.

This rhetoric has emboldened people to act on their fear of others, and reports of anti-immigrant (and anti-Muslim) crimes have spiked since Trump's election (Hatewatch Staff). The situation in Europe is similar. We should be careful of this trap: according to Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, groups like ISIS are counting on this reaction. It is an explicit part of their strategy and a reason they have begun to shift their focus to "soft targets" such as Bastille Day revelers in Nice or shoppers at a Christmas market in Berlin: "Indiscriminate attacks have a very powerful effect on the public in general, which is one of the main goals of terrorism: to seriously intimidate a population" (Europol 7). They want to encourage absolutist reactions by fostering a sense of insatiable anxiety because such reactions help them recruit new members: "A real and imminent danger is the possibility of elements of the (Sunni Muslim) Syrian refugee diaspora becoming vulnerable to radicalisation once in Europe and being specifically targeted by Islamic extremist recruiters" because of the discrimination and alienation they experience (Europol 9).

Here, then, is the explosive potential of modern hospitality. Our continued existence depends on our relationship to the stranger—whoever we understand the stranger to be—and our strategies to deal with the threat certain strangers pose. The absolutist path appears to promise security, but it plays into the strategy of the very groups who pose a genuine danger. A more tempered approach appears to promise only risk, but what if that risk had the potential to help us interrupt the logic of the self-fulfilling prophecy?

Modern Hospitality

The radio drama "The Fall of the City" ends when the conqueror that the townspeople fear appears to enter the city. In fact, he is nothing more than an empty suit of armor, but the people submit to him all the same: "The people invent their oppressors: they wish to believe in them. / They wish to be free of their freedom: released from their liberty: / The long labor of liberty ended!" (MacLeish). A similar poem, C. P. Cavafy's "Waiting for the Barbarians," ends without anyone outside the gates at all, only the question, "Now what's going to happen to us without barbarians? / Those people were a kind of solution." They were an organizing principle, a common enemy against whom people could rally.

Both works are open to interpretation, but their main point is clear enough: our fear of outsiders plays a central role in how we understand ourselves. The fates they describe could be ours, but they need not be. The dominant narrative of Western modernity needs its villains, but the more complicated alternative narrative makes it hard to preemptively declare an entire group of people good or bad. Ultimately, what matters is our ability to act within the contingencies of a given situation. This is where hospitality becomes possible.

Hospitality implies a certain reciprocity between guest and host. The word even derives from the Latin *hostis*, meaning "guest," and *potis*, meaning "master" (Benveniste). But reciprocity cannot be imposed—demanding that a guest conform to a host's expectations denatures the act of hospitality itself. At the same time, absolute hospitality—opening our doors unconditionally—is risky. We

make ourselves vulnerable at a time where we're already haunted by the idea that however much we do, it might not be enough to keep us safe.

We should look at vulnerability differently. It is valuable *because* it is risky: showing vulnerability can have a humanizing effect for the people to whom we let ourselves become vulnerable because it demonstrates trust. It undermines strategies like those of ISIS to use immigrants' and refugees' feelings of alienation as a recruitment tool.

This is not to say we should make ourselves blindly vulnerable. There is no doubt that some people want to harm us, and we should continue to use lawful means to protect ourselves. But just as the notions of *us* and *them* are contingent on circumstances, so are notions of hospitality. We need to discern between people who are threats and people who aren't. This work can be difficult and requires vigilance to ensure that we welcome those who wish to join us and, in the process, expand the community we refer to when we say "we."

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A Spot of Body, Without Blood

Bibhu Padhi

A body lies on a road in the north,
under fog and winter.
A hazy picture of mice
scampering away onto the road
from under its thin sheet of
helplessness, is all there is,
except a sheer white night
that seems to tease the warmth
of our homes, our extended lives.

Talks of help and national loss
continue all through day
and night, loud and clear, on
handsome faces, against a music
that is meant to be sad and near.
What is the purpose
of this show of love on a day
that has darkened earlier than usual?
Did the body ever know
what it was, why it was here,
what happened to it on the night
when it was worshipping
the difficult freezing cold?

I don't know what I can do
from here, but all I know is
there is a body lying somewhere
in a city in the north, now hunted
and disturbed by creatures
we hate to be with, at the end of
a long struggle with himself
and a whimsical, fantastic god.

Things Come Together

Bibhu Padhi

I wonder if the trees and hills,
the distant towns and forests
were not in me, always,
just as I am, their growth
taking place in me each time
I heard their names.

A farmer tills his field
somewhere in my mind
and doesn't know how to read;
he has to be told again and again,
how things grow.
And, at end of it all,

he must just smile
and go back to his work.
And yet this mind feels
the exact pressure of his
plough on the furrow,
his moist hands, his sweat. He hasn't
grown. He doesn't need to know.

Where do things grow? Do they
grow at all. They change
their names, I know.
Perhaps all growth is just
a change in names, no more.
Is there anything more
to what one is, here and now?

The Tree No One Knows

Bibhu Padhi

I know this tree
bare and thin like
the air I breathe.

I can see it shining
on my night sky,
like a star.

The January breeze
passes through its
transparency as if
it wasn't there at all,
but soon begins to feel

as if there was something
it had just left behind,
absentmindedly—
something speechless
but true, like itself.

It has been there
since I was born—
thin and leafless, like
my skin and bones.

They appear on landscapes,
in between trees and bird cries.
In this town very few know;
in New York's 42nd Street;
on Ganga's waters, the Himalaya's
steadily declining snow;
in clean and clear desert places in
Africa and Siberia, where
nameless creatures build up,
unknown to themselves, our paradise.

Each seeks the others, in daylight,
but more so during the nights,
when we are enveloped by all.
And then, how quietly they move into
each other, turn broader, in sleep,
in dream, between one dream and another!
How they find their way out of our
harsh judgments, clever words!

Somewhere in the distance of earth's
growing years, we shall meet through
their generous links and suddenly
recognize ourselves as different from
what we were, when we were last here—
their vast forms humbling us to a silence
we had forgotten to use in our frenetic effort
to narrate ourselves and not listening at all.

A small record store. The address, an old edifice in a seldom-traveled thoroughfare in the center of London, wasn't easy to find. In America, where things are constructed on a much larger scale, nobody would give a narrow alley that cuts through buildings, connecting one small street to another, a name. But here, in a city dedicated to preserving its own past, often at the expense of progress or convenience, this alley does have a name: Saint Anne's Court. You locate it on the map, ask for directions, and suddenly you're there, in front of an unmarked door. Nothing indicates that this is a business, that visitors are welcome, or that the shop is open. The walls around it are covered with shaky, poorly imitated, handwritten versions of official band logos, the most popular of which, judging by size and frequency, seems to be Venom. A man pops up behind you, taps your shoulder, and asks if you're looking for something to smoke. You shake your head and thank him. The man asks if you're sure. He can get you, or so he claims, the best stuff. The absolute best. Maybe later, you say. The man closes his eyes and offers a polite, almost imperceptible bow. The perfect businessman. This must be the place.

You push the door open. It leads you down a short, badly lit flight of stairs, at the end of which a small dungeon appears. A voice, barricaded behind piles of records, asks if you've come for the new Metallica, the much anticipated second album, then adds, without waiting for an answer, that it hasn't been officially released yet. Due any day now. You're ashamed to admit that you don't even have the first album. A negligence that could be easily rectified, the voice says, and places a copy in your hands. Not a brilliant cover, the voice says, but what a record. These chaps will be as big as Purple, as big as Zeppelin, as big as Sabbath. Mark my words.

Nothing but a bunch of cheap, overrated, third-rate Diamond Head clones, says a deeper voice. Slowly, as if waiting for a smokescreen to dissipate, your eyes adjust to the darkness. Two clerks emerge from behind the counter. Both are long haired, in leather jackets, eager to impart information.

Come on, says Clerk A, and rolls his eyes.

I'm serious, says Clerk B. If you want the real thing, look no further than Diamond Head or Blitzkrieg. Faster, sexier, and more original.

Clerk A rolls his eyes again. We're not looking for sexy, he says. We're looking for heavy.

Speak for yourself, says Clerk B.

You might as well listen to all that electronic, experimental, or industrial garbage, says Clerk A, if you value originality so much. Metallica is all about taking a good formula and making it better. What, if I may ask, is wrong with that?

What, if I may ask, is wrong, says a soft new voice, with electronic, experimental, or industrial music?

You turn around. A fellow customer, too passionate about her musical preferences to observe local codes of politeness and refrain from interfering in the conversations of others. Her eyes are green, her face is pretty, accentuated by angular, dramatic, somewhat theatrical makeup. She touches your elbow, letting you know that if you really like it loud, and if you're willing to consider broadening your musical spectrum, she might be inclined to help.

A predictable problem. Do you stay with the guys or do you go with the girl? Do you adhere to your original plan and try to benefit as much as you can from the knowledge and experience of astute record shop operators, or are you flexible enough to take a detour, a chance, a risk? Would you like to conduct thorough research, guided by a pair of experts, or do you prefer a more associative, nonlinear, adventurous approach? Do you buy music logically or capriciously? Can you be sold something that you had no intention of purchasing? And if so, is it merely because the salesperson is an attractive woman?

The guys, merely trying to help, encourage you to stay at the store. The girl, they tell you, as lovely as she may be, is obviously in the wrong place. The shop specializes in heavy metal, and this is a pivotal moment in the history of the genre. That famous band from California is about to release a follow-up to an impressive debut, and things, to employ a couple of overused truisms, will never be the same, for better or worse. The crisp production, excessively heavy sound, speed-of-light guitars,

larger-than-life drums, aggressive vocals. Is it good or bad? Good, some will say. The heavier the better. Bad, others will argue, because the true sound of self-taught musicians will soon turn into something so flawless, so commercial, so overwhelmingly professional that the very essence of raw, unbridled, necessarily imperfect music will be compromised.

The girl says you could always go back to the store tomorrow, next week, some other time. Clerks A and B are bound to be there, ready to help, make recommendations, push their merchandise. You know that if she leaves the store without you, you might never see her again. Of course, you might not like the music she listens to, but this is your opportunity to expand your horizons, explore new directions, give other styles a chance. You decide to go with the girl.

Are you hungry? As a matter of fact, you are. Good, she says, and takes you to a nearby fish and chips place. This is before the age of globalization, before prefabricated restaurants, before universal chains of standardized food. You sit and eat. Her name, by the way, is Katherine, but she goes by Kaz. She asks about your favorite musicians. She seems to be genuinely interested. Uriah Heep, Judas Priest, UFO, Yesterday and Today, Graham Bonnet, Robin Trower, Ronnie Montrose, Lee Aaron, Triumph, Anvil, Headpins, Hellion, Girlschool, Riot, Raven, Tygers of Pan Tang, Wild Dogs, Rock Goddess, Mercyful Fate. She's impressed with the fact that you like quite a few all-female or female-fronted bands. And your favorite movies? *The Killing*, *Contempt*, *The Phantom of Liberty*, *Day for Night*, *Stardust Memories*, *Idaho Transfer*. Once again, she compliments your taste. Powerful female characters, unconventional narrative structures, a strong emphasis on the beauty and mystery of design rather than the marketable aspects of coherence and clarity. You must also like *Liquid Sky*, she says.

Unfortunately, you've never seen *Liquid Sky*.

Perfect, she says, and gets up. They're showing it this afternoon at the Classic Royal. If we hurry, she says, we might be able to catch it. She's already seen it twice, but she wouldn't mind watching it again.

Hard to refuse. You dash to the nearest underground station, hop from one line to another, and make it just in time for the opening titles. You'll love the soundtrack, she says. Surprisingly, you do. The music is

harsh, disturbing, delightfully obnoxious. Cacophonous, monotonous, simultaneously colorful and morbid. It drills a hole in your head, poisons your bones, assaults your nervous system in a variety of relentless ways, and boils to a crushing, strident, magnificent crescendo that leaves you utterly breathless. It's exactly what you like, except it's all done electronically, without a single guitar, without a single drumbeat, without any sort of singing. You find it hateful and captivating.

The plot, a disorienting collage of fantasies and nightmares, is more frightening than any horror movie, murder mystery, or rape-and-revenge story you've ever seen. With the help of a nebulous alien life form lodged inside a small flying saucer that somehow lands on the roof of her cheap penthouse apartment in New York, an androgynous fashion model, slender and alluring, kills, mostly indirectly, the people who sexually assault her during the course of twenty-four hours: a young stranger she meets at a nightclub, her lecherous drama professor, a misogynistic drug addict determined to dispel allegations of impotence, her own girlfriend, and a gay model, a permanent expression of disgust on his face, who pronounces her the ugliest woman in the world. Himself a victim of ridicule, he uses every opportunity to degrade her, and the frequent encounters between the two are marked by gradually escalating verbal and physical abuse. Both, as the closing credits reveal, are played by the same actress. At the end, she also kills, rather tragically, a visiting scientist who tries to help her. The alien, according to the scientist, is interested in a rare substance produced in the human brain at the moment of sexual ecstasy, particularly when the people experiencing it use opiates. In other words, the alien, through a series of hands-free, remote-controlled, lethal neurological invasions, destroys her rapists exactly when they climax. Since the ordeals that she endures are marked by the kind of satisfaction that is never mutual, she is spared. But for how long? Despite his genuine concern, the scientist fails to convince her that her life is in danger. Frightened and skeptical, she stabs him. It is men, she seems to say, not extraterrestrial aliens, who pose the greatest threat to women. In an act of mock betrothal that can only be interpreted as suicide, she injects herself with heroin, replaces her postmodern, punk-rock, do-it-yourself clothes with a traditional wedding dress, climbs on top of her apartment

building, and offers herself to her heavenly savior, begging it to take her away.

Yes, you're enjoying the movie, but putting the pieces together is a bit of a challenge. Kaz helps, offering perceptive observations in carefully constructed sentences and a sweet voice that strikes you as natural, intelligent, and far from didactic. You like her more and more.

Outside, as if on cue, she runs into a man with a mustache. She gives him a big smile, opens her arms in what looks like genuine excitement, embraces him for just a little longer than necessary, and kisses him on both cheeks, her eyes glowing. You hope with all your heart that he is just an old acquaintance, a former classmate, or a distant relative. She introduces you as her American friend. The mustache shakes your hand and claims it's a pleasure to meet you. He has a slight accent, but he is not, in case you were wondering, French. He is, long live the difference, from Belgium. Kaz continues to impress you by reciting your favorite musicians with remarkable accuracy, and her Belgian friend says, no offense, that the list is interesting but predictable. With the exception of a very promising act from Denmark, all the bands you admire are from Britain or North America. Have you ever heard Belgian metal?

Kaz suggests that you go back to the store. She feels guilty for having dragged you out of there. The guy from Belgium says it's an excellent idea. He would be happy to show you all those criminally ignored bands from the exotic Benelux.

You're not sure. It's getting late.

Come on, says Kaz. The night is young.

Come on, says the man from Belgium. It would be his honor to introduce you to Killer, Crossfire, Acid, Ostrogoth.

Why is this Belgian person so eager to take you back there? Is this his secret strategy? Show the girl that he has no objection to the presence of a competitor, then eliminate you toward the end of the night? What exactly lurks behind this friendly façade? You need to find out. You go back to the store.

Look who's here, Clerk A greets you.

Good to have you back, Clerk B says. Too much electronic music is bad for your health.

Kaz laughs. Leave him alone, she says. He's made some new discoveries today.

Another brainwashed victim, says Clerk A.

Half an hour with our new arrivals and you'll be completely deprogrammed, Clerk B says. Good as new.

The store feels much more comfortable now. Things look familiar, it all makes sense, you begin to feel like a regular. And all those Belgian bands, despite your initial skepticism, are not bad, not bad at all.

If we jumped a few decades into the future, Kaz would probably tell you that there is no substitute for the brick-and-mortar record store, a social environment that has traditionally thrived on the dynamic and polyphonic exchange of expansive, digressive, and inherently subjective information. In other words, music lovers motivated by a sense of exploration and discovery, she would explain, do not necessarily know what they're looking for. Many of them do not have a specific product in mind when they enter a record store. The problem, Kaz would say, is that most of the statistical algorithms used by digital download outlets or other online music marketplaces fail to replicate the familiar experience of prospective clients whose musical preferences are necessarily challenged and modified by constant interferences from store clerks, fellow shoppers, staff selections, in-store attractions, and other agents or factors present at the site. The basic assumption is that fans of Janis Joplin, for example, will be looking for comparable or related music. In an attempt to provide quick results, standard statistical algorithms, whose recommendations usually remain within the generic, geographical, or generational boundaries of predictable profiles, would probably suggest records by Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, Grace Slick, Stevie Nicks, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, and other American folk, soul, or psychedelic icons from roughly the same time period. But if we admire the uninhibited qualities of Janis Joplin, her over-the-top performances, her electrifying energy, her hypnotic vibe, or just the fact that she screams, would such algorithms recommend Memphis Minnie, Faye Adams, Wanda Jackson, Koko Taylor, Patti LaBelle, Betty Davis, Betty Wright, Marva Whitney, Esther Phillips, Lyn Collins, Lynn Carey, Ruth Copeland, Jenny Haan, Dawn Muir, Dawn Crosby, Danielle Dax, Sarolta Zalatnay, Leonor

Marchesi, Gwen McCrae, Minnie Riperton, Candi Staton, Loleatta Holloway, Amii Stewart, Precious Wilson, Ullanda McCullough, Evelyn Thomas, Tasha Thomas, Inga Rumpf, Robin Sinclair, Nina Hagen, Nina C. Alice, Mona Soyoc, Eve Libertine, Poly Styrene, Margie Joseph, Azucena Dorado, Wendy O. Williams, Ann Boleyn, Jody Turner, Darby Mills, Chrissy Steele, Betsy Weiss, Maryann Scandiffio, Leather Leone, Kate French, Sabina Classen, Melanie Bock, Brenda Marín, Marcela González, Lori Bravo, Nicole Lee, Mika Kawashima, Hanin Elias, Linn Achre Tveit, Anja Natasha Lindløv, Erica Stoltz, Uta Plotkin, Sonja Kristina, Sonia Sepulcral, Emily Kopplin, Christine Davis, Stacey Peak, Carla Green, Karryl Smith, Clara Smith, Bessie Smith, Mamie Smith, or other equally wild and outrageously spellbinding female singers that belong to such various, improbable, and dissimilar categories as rockabilly, gospel, grindcore, funk, punk, noise, hip-hop, minimal wave, underground disco, dark ambient, digital techno, Hungarian pop, Argentinian progressive rock, jazz-inspired krautrock, German thrash metal, Bolivian death metal, American doom metal, Mexican speed metal, Norwegian black metal, Japanese avant-garde metal, classic blues, country blues, or early 1920s cabaret? Probably not. We would probably end up, despite our best intentions, with the usual limited roster of popular contemporaries. What we need, Kaz would say, is a virtual record store that simulates some of the fundamental elements of video games, particularly the idea of users who must navigate through a cumulative labyrinth of tangents, encroachments, wrong turns, dead ends, false clues, hidden doors, and other hurdles and hindrances before the target is reached, the task is accomplished, and the desired record is found and bought.

But anyway, back to 1984. The music is loud, the headphones blocking all outside sounds. Kaz exchanges whispered pleasantries with her Belgian friend. You observe their conversation, trying to convince yourself that nothing truly intimate transpires between them, just polite small talk, but you suspect, your inherent optimism notwithstanding, that this mustached metal maniac might be a former or prospective lover. They are, if you're not mistaken, standing very close to each other, although as far as you can see, there is no physical contact between them, which you find encouraging.

You sample the latest releases by Angel Witch, Praying Mantis, Cloven Hoof, Hollow Ground, Grim Reaper, Brands Hatch, Bashful Alley. Kaz, the Belgian by her side, approaches you and hints, ever so politely, that it might be time to go. She's getting hungry again. And so are you, to tell the truth. Does she have dinner plans with her continental companion? Does that mean it's time for you to say goodbye, procure a takeaway sandwich, and repair to your affordable bed-and-breakfast room in nearby Covent Garden? She waits for you to make your final selections and pay for the records you're absolutely sure you couldn't do without, then leads the way up the stairs and out into the evening air.

You're almost out of the alley, and you begin to accept the fact that this might be the point where you call it a day and cease to perform your role as the proverbial third wheel, when someone whistles behind you. It's our hardworking narcotics merchant, a territorial fixture. What you intend to do, especially considering the fact that you've always found the very idea of illegal drugs juvenile, somewhat pathetic, and altogether boring, is simply walk away. Kaz, however, stops, asks you to wait for her, promises to be back in a second, and walks over to the other end of the alley. In your imagination, she's a smart girl who knows better than to get herself in trouble. But who knows, she might not be the image of perfection you've constructed in your mind.

You look at her Belgian friend, who shrugs. You can't hear the conversation between the lady and the supplier, but after what looks like preliminary negotiations, she hands the man, and this you can see very clearly, a folded banknote. In return, she receives a small envelope, which she puts in her purse. She seals the transaction with a handshake, and saunters back to meet you with an enigmatic smile. It would be terribly indiscreet to ask her about the deal. You resolve to act like a gentleman, respect her privacy, and remain silent. If she chooses not to provide an explanation, you're not going to demand one.

At the corner of Carlisle Street, right in front of Soho Square, she stops, kisses the Belgian, and tells him that she will, with a little bit of luck, see him around. She would have loved to prolong this fortunate meeting, but her American friend is staying at her apartment, and it is, she's afraid, getting late. Flabbergasted, you clear your throat and make

an effort to corroborate her statement as quickly and as convincingly as you can.

The mustache understands. He says that it was very nice to have made your acquaintance, wishes you a very good night, and walks away, stopping one more time to wave a final farewell. As soon as he disappears around the corner, Kaz retrieves the envelope from her purse, opens it, and reveals two tickets to Judas Priest at Hammersmith Odeon. A present, she says, and may God, not to mention the king of Belgium, forgive her.

You share a cheese and pickle sandwich on the way to the venue. You will eat something more substantial after the show. You have no idea how much she paid for those tickets, but it soon becomes clear that they were worth every penny. The concert exceeds your expectations, combining the raw sound of the roots of the genre with the depth, maturity, and variety that have made the band one of the most exciting, most accomplished, most potent forces in heavy metal history. Kaz says that this is not her cup of tea, although she does like the singer.

Of course. He is, and this is just your personal opinion, the best. The guitars, too, are tight and wild, the rhythm section rough and solid, and the unique rendition of familiar classics is perfectly balanced with the stellar deliverance of new material. In a world that anticipates the imminent domination of commodified music, there is something very comforting about the reliable mixture of structure and spontaneity, aggression and melody, anger and passion, and so on, and so forth.

Kaz is happy you enjoyed it. Dinner?

Why not. Your treat.

She takes you to an Indian restaurant, small, authentic, and quite delicious, where she finally gets a chance, in response to your request, to tell you about herself. She's originally from Newcastle, moved to London a few years ago to study painting, sculpture, photography, cinema. Her favorite musicians are Throbbing Gristle, The Lemon Kittens, The Flying Lizards, The Creatures, The Normal, Crass, Discharge, This Heat, Cabaret Voltaire, Fatal Microbes, Migraine Inducers, Severed Heads, Ceramic Hello, Pseudo Code, Logic System, Snowy Red, Section 25, SPK, Clock DVA, The Neon Judgement. She says you might appreciate

this kind of music. Harsh, crude, and largely improvised, it often resembles the raunchy sensibilities of heavy metal. And what she really likes about these artists is that they never strive for an official seal of approval. Does she care if this music rarely gets played on the radio? Does she care if it fails to win the recognition it deserves? Not at all. She plays a homemade mellotron, writes cut-up poetry, and takes black-and-white pictures of unimportant people and places. You can't expect society to accept you, subscribe to your aesthetic vision, or otherwise acknowledge your existence. Unless you're willing to please audiences, chances are you'll always be ignored. Widespread legitimacy is guaranteed only for those who operate within the boundaries of the official national narrative or the current economic system. The rest are better off investing in what they really want to do, even if it means staying in the margins.

Does that mean that the art she values and creates is ignored for ideological reasons? No, she says. It's ignored because nobody knows it exists. Some of her high school friends were into birdwatching. They walked around with binoculars, professional literature about nesting and migration, and carefully laminated notebooks in which they recorded their observations. They would get together on weekends, travel to remote locations, scan the sky for two days straight, and talk about larks and swallows with the same excitement that characterizes music fanatics who visit the local record shop daily and make annual pilgrimages to music festivals. Ultimately, these are precious, intimate, essentially subversive activities, which would be quickly destroyed if their devoted practitioners were foolish enough to embark on a campaign for large-scale legitimacy. Besides, the public and the press will always confuse image with substance. People are surprised when they find out that Woody Allen, for example, is not an insecure, confused, neurotic little man but a focused, hardworking, successful film director. People fail to realize that the image an artist or performer adopts and projects is an accurate reflection of neither lifestyle nor personality. After all, it sounds a lot more thrilling to believe that rockers drink all day, that movie stars party all night, and that the typical teenage metal fan worships the devil, slaughters black cats, drinks human blood, and commits suicide twice a week.

Personally, you don't believe that the devil exists, but Kaz says that if heavy metal is a sign, Satan is the signified. Have you heard the story about Deely and the bridge?

You're not sure.

Following an unsuccessful application for a travel grant to an international semiotics congress, John Deely decides to rob a bank. He desperately needs the money. After careful research, he finds the perfect location: a peaceful little town, nestled at the foothills of a small mountain, with a new and inexperienced police force. He robs the local bank and speeds up the mountain. The police chase him. He reaches the top of the mountain and goes down the other side. The road bifurcates. The police are far behind, going uphill, and Deely is completely out of sight. He takes the right fork of the road and stops the car. He has a sign in the trunk that says: BRIDGE OUT. He places the sign in the middle of the road and keeps driving at full speed. By the time the police reach this spot, Deely is gone. All they see is the sign. Naturally, they take the left fork of the road, and Deely gets away. And there is no bridge at all. A good example of a sign-object relation, and the object doesn't even exist. The object doesn't exist, but it's definitely part of reality.

Is the devil an imaginary bridge? There is no question that the diabolical exists: in sacred texts, in the minds of believers, in human language. And especially in heavy metal. Do we really need to prove that Satan is alive outside a purely mental realm, outside our manmade sphere of cultural artifacts?

Another version of the story: Deely had a son who died in a car crash. His son is no longer in existence, but Deely is still a father.

But why dwell on morbid subjects? If you don't mind throwing away your nonrefundable lodging deposit at that cheap hotel in Covent Garden, and if you would like to help her turn a recent fabrication into an honest truth, you're welcome to ride the bus with her to Kentish Town, a nice and quiet neighborhood, and spend the night, or whatever is left of it, in her flat. You might have to share a bathroom, not to mention a bed, but breakfast, she assures you, will be served.

The Animals of Our Names

Robert King

Our ouzels—are American Dippers.
Our elk aren't elk, nor our antelope.
Wapiti wade in the aspen shadows
at the edge of the valley and pronghorn
browse in the distances of yellow grassland.

What isn't itself? There's Li Po—Rihaku,
in Japanese—who may not even have been
Chinese—and today I read our robins are
red-breasted thrushes, the way colonists
often name the new world for the old one.

Robins know Latin, *migratorious*,
rubecula, *et cetera*, but now
begin to speak in Chinese, the same
number of syllables over and over,
Dippers obeying the forms of water

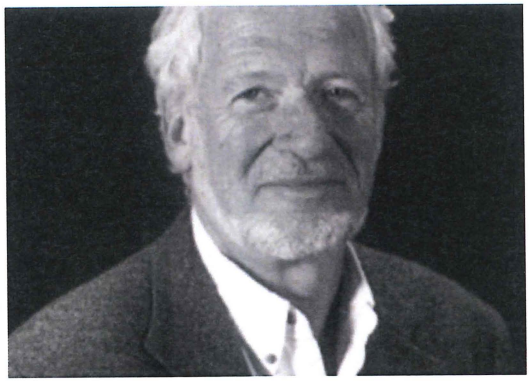
and there at the edge of the twilight field
Li Po comes out of the timber to feed
in his ancient lumbering manner
and Rihaku spooked by who knows what
startles off across the grass near Laramie. (*NDQ*, vol. 78.4, p. 68)

Remembering Robert King

Award-winning teacher, poet, and *North Dakota Quarterly* contributor Robert King died April 14, 2017, in Colorado. King taught creative writing at UND for nearly thirty years and directed the UND Writers Conference for several years. *NDQ* published a number of his poems, including the one reprinted on the facing page. He continued to teach and write poetry and articles in retirement.

King grew up in Colorado, earning BA and PhD degrees at the University of Iowa and an MA at Colorado State University. He taught at the University of Alaska/Fairbanks before joining the UND faculty in 1968. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Franklin; three children, Lisa Borden-King (Minot), Lynn McGarry (Grand Forks), and Lawrence King (Bismarck), from a previous marriage; and five grandchildren.

King authored seven chapbooks of poetry: *Standing Around Outside* (1979), *A Circle of Land* (1990), *Learning American* (1998), *Naming Names* (2001), *What It Was Like* (2003), *Rodin and Company* (2011), and *In The Empty Mountains* (2016), as well as two full volumes of poetry (*Old Man Laughing*, 2007, and *Some of These Days*, 2013), and one volume of creative non-fiction (*Stepping Twice into the River: Following Dakota Waters*, 2005).



Sharon Carson, named Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor at the University of North Dakota in 2015, teaches American literature and comparative religions and literature. She also works in public humanities. Her research projects include comparative analysis of early nineteenth-century African-American and German writers, and cross-national teaching and research in Turkey.

Patricia Catoira is Associate Professor at Montana State University. She teaches Latin American literature and culture. She is the Coordinator of the Latin American and Latino Studies program at MSU. Her publications have focused on gender and race in Cuban literature as well as Cuba's cultural production and globalization after the breakup of the Soviet Union, during the so-called "Special Period." Her current research focuses on violence and masculinity in contemporary crime fiction from Latin America.

Kyle Conway teaches in the Department of Communication at the University of Ottawa. His most recent book is *Little Mosque on the Prairie and the Paradoxes of Cultural Translation* (University of Toronto Press, 2017).

Cody Deitz is a poet who hails from California but now resides in Grand Forks, North Dakota, where he is a PhD student in English at the University of North Dakota. He is a recent winner of the Academy of American Poets University Prize, and his poetry has been published or is forthcoming in various literary journals, including *Heron Tree*, *Literary Orphans*, *NAILED*, *Split Lip Magazine*, and others, and his chapbook, *Pressed Against All That Nothing*, was recently released by Yak Press.

Gayatri Devi is Associate Professor of English at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. She can be reached at gdevi@lhup.edu.

Gilad Elbom is a graduate of the University of North Dakota. He is currently employed by Oregon State University, where he teaches American literature, Middle Eastern literature, the Bible as literature, science fiction, detective fiction, and other kinds of fiction. His first novel, *Scream Queens of the Dead Sea*, was published in 2004 and has been translated into German, Russian, and Hebrew. He is indebted to Amir Langer for his help in the development of the original idea for this issue's "Sign of the Devil."

Yusuf Eradam is a poet, short-story writer, translator, photographer, critic, editor, songwriter, and a professor of English and American cultures and literatures. He has published a CD of thirteen of his songs. He is the author of fourteen books and nine translations, including Sylvia Plath's *Ariel*, Paul Auster's New York Trilogy, and Glen and Krin Gabbard's *Psychiatry and the Cinema*. Eradam is the Chairperson of the Department of English Language and Literature of Istanbul Kültür University. Visit his website at www.yusuferadam.com.

Gulchin Ergun is a proud Turkish-American and an Ohio native. She received her medical degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland and is a practicing gastroenterologist in Houston, Texas. Ergun is a member of the Inprint Writers Workshop at Houston Methodist Hospital.

After graduating with a master's degree in Human Geography at the University of Zürich, **Marc-Antoine Frébutte** worked as a guest researcher at the Peace Institute in Ljubjana and in the BCSP in Belgrade. Currently, he is working on a PhD in Human Geography on Serbian diasporas at Saarland University, Germany.

Yahya Frederickson is the author of *In a Homeland Not Far: New and Selected Poems* (Press 53, 2017), *The Gold Shop of Ba-'Ali* (Lost Horse Press, 2014), the chapbook *The Birds of Al-Merjeh Square: Poems from Syria* (Finishing Line Press, 2014), and three other chapbooks. His poems have appeared in *Arts & Letters*, *Hanging Loose*, *Midwestern Gothic*, *Ninth Letter*, *The Southern Review*, *Water-Stone Review*, *Witness*,

and other journals. A former Peace Corps volunteer in Yemen and Fulbright Scholar in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Kyrgyzstan, Yahya teaches English at Minnesota State University Moorhead.

Lucy Ganje recently retired from the University of North Dakota Art/Graphic Design Department, where she taught graphic design, typography, and letterpress. Her visual art investigates identity construction, the taking of American Indian lands, sovereignty, and intercultural dialogue, often taking a journalistic approach to visual storytelling. She is the art editor for *North Dakota Quarterly*.

M. Önder Göncüoğlu received his BA degree in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey (2001). He completed both his MA (2004) and PhD (2011) degrees in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University, İzmir, Turkey. He conducted his postdoctoral research in the Department of English at Southeastern Louisiana University (2014). Currently, he is working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Muğla, Turkey.

Daniela Koleva is a lecturer in the Department of English at the University of North Dakota. Her scholarly interests are African-American literature, Eastern European studies, literary theory, and the history of nationalism.

Ute Kraidy holds a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from the Universidad de las Américas-Puebla, and a master's degree in Journalism (Magazine Production) from the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. She has fifteen years of experience designing for the nonprofit, health, and higher education sectors, and her favorite projects are those that span cultures, borders, and languages. She has worked and lived in Mexico, as well as Germany and Lebanon, and currently she lives in the U.S. with her family.

Çiğdem Pala Mull is a Professor of English and the Chair of the Western Languages and Literatures Department at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey, where she has been a faculty member since 2001. She completed her PhD at the University of North Dakota in 2001. In addition to several articles on American culture and literature, she published a book titled *Gotik Romanın Kıtalararası Serüveni* (Intercontinental Journey of Gothic Novel) (Ürün Yayınları, Ankara, Turkey, 2008). She is also the translator of Harold Bloom's *Western Canon*.

Bibhu Padhi has published eleven books of poetry. His poems have appeared in distinguished magazines and anthologies throughout the English-speaking world. He lives with his family in Bhubaneswar, India.

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Lois Roma-Deeley's fourth collection of poems, *The Short List of Certainties*, won the Jacopone da Todi Book Prize, and was published by Franciscan University Press in 2017. Her previous full-length poetry collections are: *Rules of Hunger*, *northSight*, and *High Notes* (a Patterson Po-

etry Prize Finalist). Roma-Deeley's poems have appeared in numerous literary journals and anthologies, nationally and internationally. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and CASE named her Professor of the Year, Community College, 2012. Roma-Deeley is the recipient of a 2016 Arizona Commission on the Arts Grant. Visit her website at www.loisroma-deeley.com.

The Summer/Fall issue of *North Dakota Quarterly* will be rich with fiction and a few essays to make you think. These will include a critical exploration of modern discussion-based class models and a photo essay by W. Scott Olsen concerning nostalgia. We have included a few excerpts below to whet your appetite.

On the Speed of Nostalgia
W. Scott Olsen

Just off Peoria Avenue and 11th Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on a clear midsummer morning when the temperature is already eighty-three degrees and the forecast passes one hundred, a sign for Meadow Gold milk and ice cream holds to scaffolding atop a large brick shelter, a historical monument. Sunlight hits the roofs of nearby buildings while empty streets are still shadowed. I am the only one here. Yes, this is a tourist stop but it's still very early.

Concrete inlays tell me I am on Route 66, the Mother Road, the source for the American Road Trip Dream. While a part of me is elated, thrilled, ready to hit the gas, shift some gears, burn some rubber and squeal, a part of me keeps looking around for something else. There should be more, I think. Some flourish or flash. I'm not quite sure what it is. A Cadillac with tail fins. A convertible Corvette. Something that screams both innocence and adventure.

But queue the road music anyway. Something from the early 60s, summertime fast. There's a theme song for this:

If you ever plan to motor west,
Travel my way, take the highway that is best.
Get your kicks on Route sixty-six.

This is the beginning of my day's adventure. Route 66! Ten minutes before seven in the morning, sunrise heat already causing the air to shimmer, and I have a thousand miles to drive today. A bit more, if I'm lucky. My hope is that this day will end in Phoenix, Arizona, at my brother's home, a sixteen-hour drive I've done before. But this time is different.

This time I can stop if I want. This time I can linger at the sights. I can talk to strangers. I can wander toward the edges of anything. I cannot say I am here because of this road. But now that I'm here, it's the road that matters.

Roll the windows down, I think. Turn up the music. It's time to go.

I am old enough to remember the television show *Route 66*. Two young men, Tod and Buz, drive their convertible Corvette in a show inspired by both *The Naked City* and Kerouac's *On The Road*. It was a Beat Generation dream, every week a new adventure. Most episodes were not set on Route 66, but that did not matter. Route 66 is more idea than pavement. Maine to California, this show was the road trip epic. Anything could happen. This was American youth searching for meaning. Odd temporary jobs. Odd people searching for more. Anything could be dangerous or romantic. Shrimpers. Heroin addicts. Hollywood stars. Anything could be anything at all.

Lying on the floor, my pre-driving self watching the black-and-white television, I'm sure I held my breath.

What happened one week had little bearing on what would come later, had little dependence on what happened the week before. This was the genius of the show and a truth about the road. It was random, frivolous in causality, serendipitous, alluring. Tod and Buz met everyone and seemed to come out pretty well.

Route 66 became a metaphor for everything possible and everything good. Freedom. Self-reliance. Adventure. Empathy and wonder and hope. Yet here is what I believe. Route 66 was the moment we lost it,

too. At that moment, watching the show, we felt the need to recover something, to go back somehow. Not really back in time—but back to some alternate self, to who we felt we could have been, were meant to be, should have become, if only the reality of reality had not directed our lives away.

The road wasn't simply famous. It wasn't just the Indy brickyard or the Alaska Highway. Maybe it was the song. Maybe the show. But Route 66 became a goal for everyone, the icon for both speed and distraction. Most of us would never get there. If we'd been there, we could never get back.

To drive the whole length, from Chicago to Los Angeles, is a common desire for people who love the road, who love to drive. To drive the whole length and pretend we are Tod or Buzz, or to touch the places the famous—Elvis, Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe—touched in their own quest to get some kicks, is a way to change the way we see our lives.

In short, we are nostalgic for the Route 66 we believe once existed, a road we have always imagined but never driven. A road we never saw, never felt with our tires or legs. We are nostalgic for a memory that is not our own. It's just an idea, a bit of desire, a siren calling while we're tied to the mast.

And so, if the opportunity comes, we roll down the windows and press on the gas, even today, hurtling backward in time. We want the road today to change our past. This is the mother road, the source for the American Road Trip Dream.

I'll admit it. I want kitsch. I want art deco. I want cheesy roadside attractions and diners built of chrome. I want all that stuff today. I have no idea why.

My first car was a Mustang. It was used, weary, broken in a hundred ways, and the most wonderful thing I had ever imagined. It did not last

very long. But I can say it has lasted forever. It gave me a romance, a love that persists. This road leads somewhere. This bend will straighten, then bend again.

I have driven from Key West to the Beaufort Sea, chased storms in Colorado and the northern lights in Minnesota. I have hurtled through midnight river-bottom fog in Missouri, crested mountaintops from Mount Evans to Mount Washington, seen midday sun in Death Valley and endless twilight on the Trans-Canada Highway. I have steered into blizzards and windstorms, crossed black ice and sudden rockslides. I have a lifetime of prairie roads, gravel and broken pavement, as well as fresh-made interstate highway, always at speed, sometimes a little and sometimes a lot too fast, radio loud and always happy. But I have never driven Route 66.

There's a sweeping blue and yellow arc over the road out of Tulsa. All it says is Route 66. Yes, it says, you are on that road. There's a large sign on an overpass. Route 66! There's an imitation Oklahoma oil rig. Route 66!

It's all over the top. And frankly, it's all amusement-park fun. It doesn't seem real, but I am smiling in a big way. There is a metal roadside sculpture that shows a horse and buggy confronting an ancient Ford. The horses are rearing, afraid and ready to bolt. The husband and father driving the Ford leaps from the car to take on the horses while the wife and mother turns to protect and comfort the daughter in back. The sculpture is very good. One era and then the

other. This is where it began, I think. Not this place, of course. This moment.

Nostalgia is a desire for the past, a desire for the unrecoverable, a wish to start over and do it all again, knowing what we know, having been there once before. It's impossible. It's also real in a knee-rattling and breath-stealing way. It can be a type of sorrow, perhaps a type of mourning for what we missed. It can also be the deep satisfaction of perspective, a looking back with wisdom, the joy of finally understanding.

If only, we think. If only we could go back. Tune the radio to an oldies station. Put a cuff in your jeans.

It seems there is a way to reach back, to wait, to see the future arrive and then decide what to do in the past. In physics, it's called the delayed choice experiment, or the double slit experiment.

In Borrowed Light
Jeff Fearnside

Her hair was a bouquet of fire, her face pale, skin soft, features strikingly delineated—dark mare's eyes, a narrow aquiline nose, lips naturally pink. She was twenty years old and hoped to die naked in the arms of her lover.

She met him on the road. He, too, was a redhead, with black leather chaps covering his lanky legs. He had just refueled his 1973 Honda 750 and was grabbing a bite to eat at the same time she was trying to bum a ride at a rest stop on I-25 just outside Albuquerque. She could tell he wasn't attracted to her but figured a few days on his classic motorcycle with her slender body pressed up against his own thin frame would probably be more than enough to change his mind. Besides, she had a pretty face and the most delicious tumble of hair most guys had ever seen. She only hoped she didn't look too much like a hooker, though her careless, tart appearance was designed to get attention.

He waved her down beside him, ordering a cup of coffee for her by signaling the waitress, pointing to his own cup, and holding up two fingers.

"Where are you coming from?" he asked.

"Puerto de Luna," she said. "It's just down the road.

"Puerto de Luna," he repeated. "Port of the Moon. Is that like a gate to heaven?"

"It's the door I came through," she replied dryly. "Whether it leads to anything depends on where I go. So, where are you going?"

"Seattle. How about you?"

"Nowhere special. Seattle."

He didn't respond right away, and though she sensed he was weighing the consequences of giving a lift to someone who would meld her plans so quickly with a stranger's, she didn't try to explain herself. She had learned long ago that a deliberately mysterious attitude often seemed wilder than genuine enthusiasm.

Life Sentence
Brian Walter

Alice Dodge was falling fast, her already-orphaned son leaping to the hospital window a second too late to save her, her daughter peering up from the hard pavement with a look of dawning horror as the dot in the sky above her—curled curiously almost into the shape of a comma—grew thrillingly and horrifically recognizable at the mortal speed of nine-point-eight-one-meters-per-second-squared (for if we are all slaves to the arbitrary but binding laws of gravity, Alice was, at every moment in her headlong pitch, our poster child in thralldom to the universal millstone), her short, gray-flecked hair plastering and then re-plastering her face after a curiously deliberate hand was raised to pull it aside, apparently to treat herself at least momentarily to the rare and frankly rather extraordinary prospect of a twenty-six story building's cracked and weathered western wall speeding upward a couple of feet from her nose at an equally cumulative velocity, her three-year-old winter overcoat (black cashmere) gathered around her body but billowing with the speed of her fall against its single-button gathering just below her breast (just below her heart), her mind not racing but somehow pacing through the events of her sixty-six years, proceeding step by step, T-cell by T-cell, synapse by synapse through the convoluted narrative that had delivered her to that height in the first place, that had (further) delivered the kindred sight that had induced her to leap forward and down from her life, and that would (she well knew—we all well know) culminate in the Gorgon's head of terminal punctuation (for verification of which, no doubt, the increasingly impatient reader has already scanned all the way through to the dreaded end of this life sentence), but a monster (this spectre of a definite end) that she (she, at least—and possibly alone) did not—could not—fear anymore, for Alice, it should be said, owned no restaurant, not this Alice, and she had had no chat with Cheshire Cat (though a Red Queen or two), and this Alice (my Alice) had almost entirely skipped puberty (to say nothing of girls' puberty books) to proceed with alarming directness and dispatch into adulthood, almost, one might say, had begun life at the very moment that she leaped forward with her

plan to end it, this mother of two, whose son (whom we shall call—let me see, let me see—Charlie, I guess, for the sake of argument) was born neither early nor late, but caesareanally, yes, to be sure, some forty-two years, three months, two weeks, one day, twelve hours, and thirty-seven minutes before Alice threw herself out the hospital window, who (Charlie, that is) had proceeded, oddly enough, from this entirely unremarkable advent through a childhood of hide-and-seek and Hardy Boys mysteries and sleepovers and scout badges and piano lessons and take-out burgers with no pickles, please—a reasonably conventional march from age two to twelve, in other words, certainly not the kind of personal history that would, in itself, predict someday his mother's precipitous and fatal decision, for Charlie had in fact turned out to be a nice young man, unmarried (though into his fifth decade of life, it is oddly true), but otherwise of entirely sound mind and reasonably stable emotions, the kind of son who will throw himself at the window desperately clutching for the barest purchase on his mother's overcoat (three years old, black cashmere—a combination birthday and Christmas present), the kind of son, moreover, who would summon the outlandish and rather inadvisable courage to deliver a eulogy (for his own mother) at the funeral service four days later, who would shed tears as hot and fast while watching her fall as he had when, at the age of seven (being something of a late bloomer, it should probably be admitted), while he was learning to ride a bike . . .