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disClosure 25: Transnational Lives

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disClosure

A JOURNAL OF SOCIAL THEORY



VOLUME 25

Transnational Lives

EDITED BY ASHLEY RUDERMAN & CATHERINE D. GOOCH

disClosure Volume 25: Transnational Lives

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disClosure Editors
213 Patterson Office Tower
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506-0027
disclosurejournal@gmail.com

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2015-16 Editorial Collective

Matt Bryant Cheney is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Kentucky. His broader research interests include 20th and 21st Century US Literatures, Critical and Social Theory, The US South, and Comics Studies. He is the Coordinator for the 2017 International Conference on Narrative. His published work has appeared in *The Georgia Review* and *Critical Insights: The American Comic Book* (Salem Press, 2014).

Lauren Copeland is a doctoral student at the University of Kentucky in Gender and Women's Studies. Her research focuses on LGBT activism in the Middle East. She is particularly interested in the experiences of queer women in Palestine, Israel, and Lebanon as well as issues of identity, violence, and nation building.

Originally from Lima, Peru, **Yorki J. Encalada Egúsqüiza** is a PhD student in the Hispanic Studies Department. His research focuses on female migration, bilingualism and coming of age fiction along the Mexican-American border. He holds a Masters degree in Spanish and a Bachelors degree in Middle Childhood Education.

Catherine D. Gooch is a PhD candidate at the University of Kentucky, where she specializes in African American Literature. Her current research examines literary and cultural representations of the Mississippi River, focusing specifically on the River's relationship to black artistic production, labor, and economics in twentieth century African American Literature.

Agata Grzelczak is a PhD candidate in Hispanic Studies at the University of Kentucky. She holds MA degrees in Ethnolinguistics from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland, and French and Francophone Studies from UK. Agata's dissertation explores the representation of migrants and mobility in Spanish-Argentine audiovisual co-productions.

James William Lincoln is a PhD student in Philosophy at the University of Kentucky. His specializations include ethics, social, and political philosophy. His research explores the intersection of normative ethics and social/political justice, the role of emotions in moral epistemology, the works of Herbert Marcuse, and is concerned with understanding our political/ethical obligations to the intersectional individual in virtue of performative social constructions.

Joshua D. Martin is a PhD candidate in the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Kentucky. His research interests include the representation of masculinity construction, urban space, and violence in twentieth century Latin American and U.S-Mexico border literature.

Sheryl Felecia Means holds a bachelor's in English from Spelman College. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the Educational Sciences program, Philosophical and Cultural Inquiry track through the College of Education at University of Kentucky. She is presently engaged in research concerning race, identity, and education in Salvador, Brazil.

Originally from Miami, Florida and raised in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, **Lucía M. Montás** studied at the University of Florida where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish literature and a minor in Education. In 2009, she graduated with a Masters degree in Spanish literature from the University of Florida, and from 2009-2013, served as Lecturer of Spanish at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga where she taught Beginning and Intermediate Spanish. Currently Lucía is ABD in the PhD program in the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Kentucky and writing her dissertation on female urban narratives of the Dominican Republic.

Ashley Ruderman earned an MA in English and a certificate in Social Theory at the University of Kentucky prior to starting her doctoral work in the Gender & Women's Studies department. Her research examines cultural representations of lesbian criminality in relationship to state surveillance practices from the mid-century to present.

Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran holds a BA Hons. Sociology (Jaffna), an MA Anthropology (Madras), a certificate in Applied Anthropology in Development Process (Rome), and is a PhD student in Cultural Anthropology (University of Kentucky) and a lecturer in the Department of Social Studies at The Open University of Sri Lanka. He has also conducted ethnographic field work in India, Lexington, Rome, and Sri Lanka.

Anna Stone is a doctoral student whose interests include Irish literature, and 20th century British and American poetry.

Jonathan Tinnin is a PhD student in the English department at the University of Kentucky studying sanity narratives in Victorian novels and literary magazines published in asylums in 19th-century Great Britain. He maintains an academic interest in digital humanities, Victorian and Modernist poetry, and detective fiction.

Editor's Preface & Acknowledgments

Catherine D. Gooch & Ashley Ruderman
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

In honor of the 25th anniversary of *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*, we compiled a unique assortment of reflections, scholarly articles, interviews, art, and creative pieces that embody the interdisciplinary nature of the Social Theory program at the University of Kentucky. The 25th volume tackles the expansive—and important—topic of “Transnational Lives.” Our team-taught course, ST 600, explored what it meant to live transnationally. This journal continues the conversation by asking: How do definitions of home and belonging change for individuals living transnationally? What does cosmopolitanism mean in the 21st century? And what are the larger, far-reaching implications of migration and immigration both in the U.S. and abroad? The pieces in this journal answer these questions and more, as authors address topics from globalization to transnational religious identities. The articles and creative pieces we’ve included address different facets of our monumental theme, “Transnational Lives.”

To celebrate *disClosure*'s 25th anniversary, we offer reflective pieces from two UK faculty members. Dr. Ted Schatzki and Dr. Arnold Farr have supported the Social Theory program since its creation and still remain involved today. Our digital platform also allowed us to incorporate visual pieces. We feature Lexington based artist Lina Tharsing's stunning collection, *Making a New Forest*, as well as articles and interviews that use vibrant images in their analyses. The “Transnational Lives” issue of *disClosure* strives to embody the interdisciplinary nature of UK's Social Theory program, and the dynamic artwork and images we've included are fundamental to this inclusive approach.

This issue also features a critical conversation with the Committee on Social Theory's Fall Distinguished Speaker, Dr. Mahmood Mamdani, in which we discuss neoliberalism, globalization, and the state of higher education. Following this conversation are interviews with four scholars who were invited to the University of Kentucky for the Committee on Social Theory's Spring Lecture Series. The interviews with Drs. Nina Glick Schiller, Otto Santa Ana, Floya Anthias, and William Nericcio explore key topics related to transnationalism, such as cosmopolitanism, intersectionality, migration, media representation, xicanosmosis, and stereotypes. Their insights present a multifaceted approach to understanding “Transnational Lives,” and awaken readers to notice how issues of transnationalism are pervasive, common, and more influential than we might think.

We are grateful for the University's commitment to Social Theory over the past twenty-five years. The resources and infrastructure required to support an academic journal are many, and we recognize the important contributions made by the Office of the Vice President for Research and the College of Arts and Sciences. Without their generous financial support, this volume would not be feasible.

Work on this volume commenced under the leadership of Dr. Marion Rust, whose term as Director of Social Theory ended this semester. As director, Dr. Rust supported *disClosure*'s transition from print to digital publishing, which allows our journal to be accessed by scholars around the world. We recognize her dedication to Social Theory over the past four years, and thank her for her guidance. Dr. Rust's willingness to trust our vision for the twenty-fifth volume truly allowed us to make this journal our own. We have benefitted from the encouragement and support of Dr. Jeremy Crampton, who will proceed as the new Director of Social Theory.

Drs. Cristina Alcalde, Steven Alvarez, Francie Chassen-Lopez, and Ana Liberato proposed "transnational lives" as a capstone ST 600 course. Their expertise in and out of the classroom helped us publish a truly interdisciplinary journal, and we thank them for their vision. Dr. Chassen-Lopez must also be recognized for her role in supporting the collective as faculty advisor. The guest scholars who visited UK last spring not only enriched our class discussion, but also generously committed to interviews. We thank Drs. Floya Anthias, Nina Glick Schiller, William Nericcio, and Otto Santa Ana for supporting *disClosure*. Dr. Mahmood Mamdani's visit in the fall added a new dimension to our journal, and we thank him for taking time to meet with us. We recognize and thank Dr. Karen Rignall for making this interview possible.

Several individuals shared their expertise with us over the past year. Casey Hibbard transformed our ST 600 interviews into podcasts, all of which can be accessed on the Social Theory website. Adrian Ho, Director of Digital Scholarship at UK Libraries, responded to our technical and legal questions with the upmost patience and care. We thank Jami Wardlow at bepress for her technical assistance, and Michelle Del Toro for securing meeting space for us on campus. Social Theory Research Assistant and former *disClosure* editor, Eir-Anne Edgar, generously offered her advise on procedural matters. Additionally, we thank former editors Lydia Shanklin Roll, Grace Cale, and Rachael Hoy for their willingness to answer our many questions. Undergraduate copy editors Margaret Coppala and Alyssa Mertka played key roles as we assembled the journal, and we thank them for their time and commitment to *disClosure*.

Last, we recognize and thank our dedicated editorial collective, whom we collaborated with over the past three semesters. It has been wonderful to work with a wide range of promising scholars. We share every success of the 25th volume of *disClosure* with you.

Reflections on Social Theory

Ted Schatzki

SENOIR ASSOCIATE DEAN, DEAN OF FACULTY, AND PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY & GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Congratulations to disClosure on the occasion of its 25th edition!

Twenty five plus years is a long time for an irregular academic program—especially for one that is more likely to have an established place in a bookstore than at the academy and that has perpetuated itself more as an opportunity to bring people together than as a forum for studying a specific subject matter. UK’s Committee on Social Theory must have hit on a winning formula.

This could not have been foreseen at its rather inauspicious beginning. One evening in the summer of 1988, sitting in the then scruffy back room at Lynaugh’s, JP Jones and I sighed that we were bored at UK and in Lexington. Over the two years, however, since we had arrived in Kentucky, he, a geographer, and I, a philosopher, had discovered a shared interest in theoretical works about social life. The indistinct area of theory in which we were both interested included works of geographical thinkers such as Harvey, Soja, and Gregory, with which he was conversant but which were previously unknown to me, and the texts of sociological or philosophical thinkers such as Bourdieu, Giddens, or Heidegger, with which I was conversant and with which he had varying degrees of familiarity. We could not help but notice that the two of us who shared this interest hailed from different disciplines. In that moment of personal desperation was born the idea of setting up some sort of program in “social theory.” The premise behind this idea was that there exists a body of theoretical work about society that is not the property of any given discipline but that constitutes a nondisciplinary-specific—or transdisciplinary, as we came to call it—arena of ideas, theories, and ways of thinking.

This idea led to an application for a College enrichment grant to support a combined public lecture series/team-taught graduate seminar in social theory. The theme of that first spring combination was Topics in Social Theory. The rousing success of that venture led the next year to a larger MFAP (Multidisciplinary Feasibility Assessment Program) grant that JP, Wolfgang Natter (who had joined us as one of the instructors of the initial graduate seminar), and I received to establish basic components of the program that, twenty six years later, is known as Social Theory. It was the only “nonscience” application to be funded through the MFAP program.

It was evident almost immediately that the premise behind the program was correct: there really did exist a nondisciplinary-specific body of theoretical ideas about social life that scholars schooled in different disciplines drew on. Moreover, then, like now, there existed in the College of Arts and Sciences a healthy number of scholars in different departments who were interested in these ideas. The success of

the program, consequently, was not surprising. Indeed, a central reason why the Social Theory program has succeeded is because it has acted as a faculty development program for those studying social life who draw on theory and are intellectually drawn to a community of like-minded scholars with whom one can associate, learn, and exchange ideas. One of the great unintended benefits of the program is that it has served as an effective recruitment tool for attracting new faculty members to the College's Humanities and Social Science departments.

Graduate education was also a key component of the program from its inception: graduate students were just as enthusiastic about the initial seminar and lecture series as were both the faculty members co-teaching the seminar and the other faculty members who attended the lectures. The regularization of ST courses and introduction of the student-edited annual, *disClosure*, underwrote the formal certificate that scores of graduate students have since earned. I believe, however, that the Social Theory program has always been primarily a development program for students, too. It is the intellectual vibrancy and relevance of the program that has sustained it through the years and will continue to do so in the future.

Like many colleagues, my own intellectual trajectory has been decisively inflected by participation in the program. Exposure to ideas of which I might otherwise have remained ignorant has informed the evolution of the topics I write about and the groups with which I interact. I came to UK as a philosopher who knew something about theories of sociality, above all in sociology and anthropology, but who primarily engaged with philosophical issues. Today, I as a scholar have not interacted with philosophers for years. Instead, I publish and meet with faculty members and students primarily in the fields of geography, sociology, education theory, and organizational studies. This transformation could not have happened without Social Theory.

Theoretically, I believe that the future of social affairs is indeterminate and that it is luck, sometimes mere luck, if predications about it prove true. The Social Theory program, however, looks like a pretty good bet. The premises behind its formation remain true, and the benefits it brings are sustainable. All it takes is time and interest (and money).

UK Social Theory and the Shaping of an Academic Career

Arnold L. Farr

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

I began my graduate studies in philosophy at the University of Kentucky in August of 1996. As soon as I began my work in the philosophy department, I discovered UK's Interdisciplinary Committee on Social Theory. As a person who always had an interest in interdisciplinary work I was quite excited. I took my first Social Theory course in my second semester and attended all of the lectures during my six years in graduate school. After my first Social Theory class I enrolled for the ST certificate. I had the pleasure to serve on the first *disClosure* editorial collective and had the pleasure of publishing my first book reviews in the early editions of this journal. If I remember correctly, I wrote two book reviews and participated in two interviews.

I have always believed that ST was one of the best things to happen to me in my entire academic career. In fact, because of ST, graduate school was one of the most exciting and fulfilling times of my life. The combination of Social Theory and the UK philosophy program made it rather easy for me to get my first job. The kind of training I got in philosophy and ST made me attractive to several of the universities that I applied to. My training in philosophy prepared me to teach a wide range of courses in the philosophy department in which I was hired. My training in ST made it easy for me to be conversant across disciplinary boundaries. In my first job at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, I was able to teach a wide range of philosophy courses as well as courses that were outside of philosophy. For example, I co-taught a course on violence and reconciliation in Northern Ireland with a colleague from the English department in 2005 and 2007. This course culminated in a two week visit to Northern Ireland. My experience in ST also made it possible for me to teach a course entitled "Philosophy and the Social Sciences," as well as other courses that I developed. One of the last courses I taught at SJU was a course I developed called "Philosophy and the Democratic Body." In that course I used texts from thinkers whom I was exposed to as a ST student at UK. We read works by former ST speakers such as Iris Young, Elizabeth Grosz, Judith Butler, and others. One of the most important long-term professional relationships that I have begun when I met Professor Douglas Kellner through Social Theory. Professor Kellner was one of our ST speakers in the early 1990s when I was a graduate student. After becoming a fulltime professor myself I would encounter Professor Kellner at various conferences. We would talk about the ST program at UK. In 2005 I organized a conference on the work of Herbert Marcuse. Professor Kellner, one of the most recognized Marcuse scholars in the world, was one of our speakers. At this conference we established the International Herbert Marcuse Society which meets every two years. At present I am the president and Professor Kellner is the vice president of the IHMS. We have been on panels together and edited

journals, as well co-authored essays on Marcuse. Professor Kellner and I have led what has been referred to as a Marcuse revival. I am proud to say that my professional relationship with Professor Kellner began in the UK Social Theory program.

During my twelve years at St. Joseph's University I was called on to lecture in the Urban Studies department at the University of Pennsylvania on a regular basis. Throughout my academic career I've been able to engage colleagues from a wide range of disciplines. I attribute this ability to my education in philosophy and Social Theory at UK.

While working as a professor in Philadelphia I tried to remain connected to the Social Theory program. I came back in 1998 to present a paper at the Nation Theory conference sponsored by Social Theory. I also began participating in the International Social Theory Consortium which was organized by founding members of UK's ST program. These conferences gave me an opportunity to reunite with UK social theorists while I taught in Philadelphia. I still attend and present at these conferences to this day.

So, one of the most exciting things about coming back to UK as a faculty member in 2008 was reconnecting with UK social theory as a faculty member. It is exciting to get to teach the courses that I once took. Just as ST was one of my most important experiences as a graduate student, it is now one of my most important experiences as a faculty member. Being able to engage faculty and graduate students from a wide range of disciplines about issues that matter is just as thrilling as it was 25 years ago. As I travel around the country to give talks the one thing that most people know about UK outside of basketball is the Social Theory program. I am convinced that the ST program has put UK on the map as a quality academic institution. I will always be proud to be a part of such an awesome program.

Regimes of Prestige and Power: Transnational Authorship and International Acclaim in Rutu Modan's *Exit Wounds*

KYLE EVELETH
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

The machinations of international regimes of prestige and recognition of excellence, while important to the larger project of deterritorializing geographic cultural “margins and centers,” are perhaps not as innocuous as they initially seem. In January of 2008, Rutu Modan’s first graphic novel, *Exit Wounds* (Drawn & Quarterly 2007), became only the second comics album not published natively in French to win the esteemed *Les Essentiels d’Angoulême* (“The Essentials of Angoulême”) award; the first, awarded in the prize’s inaugural year of 2007, was American Charles Burns’ *Black Hole* (Kitchen Sink 2005). In addition, Modan became the first female to win the award. Awarded annually by Europe’s largest comics festival, the Angoulême International Comics Festival (AICF), “The Essentials” combines with AICF’s “Best Album” award to form *le Palmarès Officiel du Festival international de la bande dessinée* (“The Official Awards of the International Comics Festival”). Ostensibly, these selections represent the six best international comics offerings in the year of the award. Not to be outdone by the French, in July of the same year, at Comic-Con International in San Diego, The Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards exalted *Exit Wounds* as “Best Graphic Album - New,” making Modan the second woman to win that award (after Lynda Barry in 2003) and the first author not born to a native English-speaking nation (Israel); further, Modan became the first award winner not to publish with a US publisher (Drawn & Quarterly). The Eisner awards seek to represent the best in American comics, while SDCC International is an exposition of multifaceted forms and tangents, from author/artist meet-and-greets and cosplay (costume-play) competitions to academic roundtables, within and around comics production and consumption.

At first blush, these two incidents seem unremarkable but for their solidification of comics as an inherently international art form, an opportunity for peripheral writers like Modan to be recognized on the international comics stage. Indeed, here the elevation in the global comics centers of a peripheral-nations writer, publishing with peripheral Montreal-based publisher Drawn & Quarterly, seems a powerful assertion of Shane Denson’s recent contention that “as a more or less natural extension of volatile core processes at work in the act of reading comics,” graphic narratives have a “propensity toward various acts of border-crossing, adaptation, and reimagination.”¹ Certainly, conferring these two awards to Modan realizes the “potential to be powerful” that Hillary Chute and Marianne DeKoven identify in graphic narrative’s ability to “intervene against a culture of invisibility by taking the risk of representation.”² It is, in fact, that very narrative of “giving voice” and visual presence to the subaltern that triumphs in the international heralding of *Exit Wounds*. Consider, for example, the following reviews that focus explicitly upon *Exit Wounds*’ representation of foreign experiences and otherwise silenced narratives. First, from

comics scholar Eddie Campbell's personal blog:

In *Exit Wounds* Rutu Modan gives me something that's getting harder to find in my 'graphic novel' reading. That is, she's telling me something I don't already know. It's set in an actual place I've never been to, and the characters are involved in plausible actions that are outside of my experience.³

Second, from Armando Celayo in *World Literature Today*:

Modan is able to portray life in Israel as an ongoing effort to combat terrorism, and its potential to paralyze society, with an unrelenting spirit to survive. A shopkeeper at a train station where the explosion went off is chipper in his persistent petitioning for independent shops; a small cafe stays open in the same station, even after the owner loses her husband in the bombing. Terrorism seems to be a common (yet tragic) occurrence [...] Life never stops moving in Israel, but death is nevertheless remembered by the vigils placed at each bombing site.⁴

Exit Wounds is thus elevated into the upper echelons of comics prestige because of its ability to visually depict what scholar Aryn Bartley has termed, in his study of Joe Sacco's *Footnotes in Gaza*, "historical and present-day suffering, taking seriously events otherwise considered secondary 'footnotes' to official histories."⁵ The core difference between Rutu Modan and *Exit Wounds* and comics journalist (and 2006 winner of the same Eisner Award as Modan) Joe Sacco is, of course, that Sacco's journalistic graphic novel acts as a remediation (footnoting) of history; Modan's work, entirely fictional even if inspired by reality, makes no such claims to verisimilitude.

It is good that these often neglected narratives come to light and are given credence by the traditionally central locations of cultural comics exchange in the West, the US and France. However, we must never ignore the fraught ideological position these prizes occupy in what James English calls the "economy of prestige," the larger context of global cultural capital exchange:

Viewed on the one hand as a necessity for the postcolonial world and an ethical obligation on the part of the major powers (a matter of genuine respect and recognition, not merely symbolic philanthropy), the investment of foreign symbolic capital in emergent symbolic markets has been seen on the other hand as a means of sustaining less overtly and directly the old patterns of imperial control over symbolic economies and hence over cultural practice itself. It is not a problem from which the prizes can hope to extract themselves.⁶

Valorizing *Exit Wounds* solely for its work in bringing to the center a marginalized viewpoint on a time and of a place of bewildering and constant violent tension reaffirms those "old patterns of imperial control." Put more bluntly, affirming *Exit Wounds* as, to use Rutu Modan's own words, an "authentic" portrayal of "modern life in Israel"⁷ authorizes its narrative to speak *as an Other*. Even as foreign acceptance has centralized a marginalized voice, it has reproduced the problems Gayatri Spivak outlines in "Can the Subaltern Speak?": namely, the assumption of cultural solidarity among a heterogeneous people ("authentic") even as the subaltern is depicted as unable to speak unless western intellectuals (comics critics and awards committees) authorize it to do so.⁸ The same praise that rewards her creative efforts elevates her specifically for her ability to speak as a subaltern (thankfully female, luckily in the tongue of the British Empire) about a confirmative account of the barbarity and backwardness of what Tom Murphy has identified in his contemporary review of *Exit Wounds* as the "seemingly intractable state

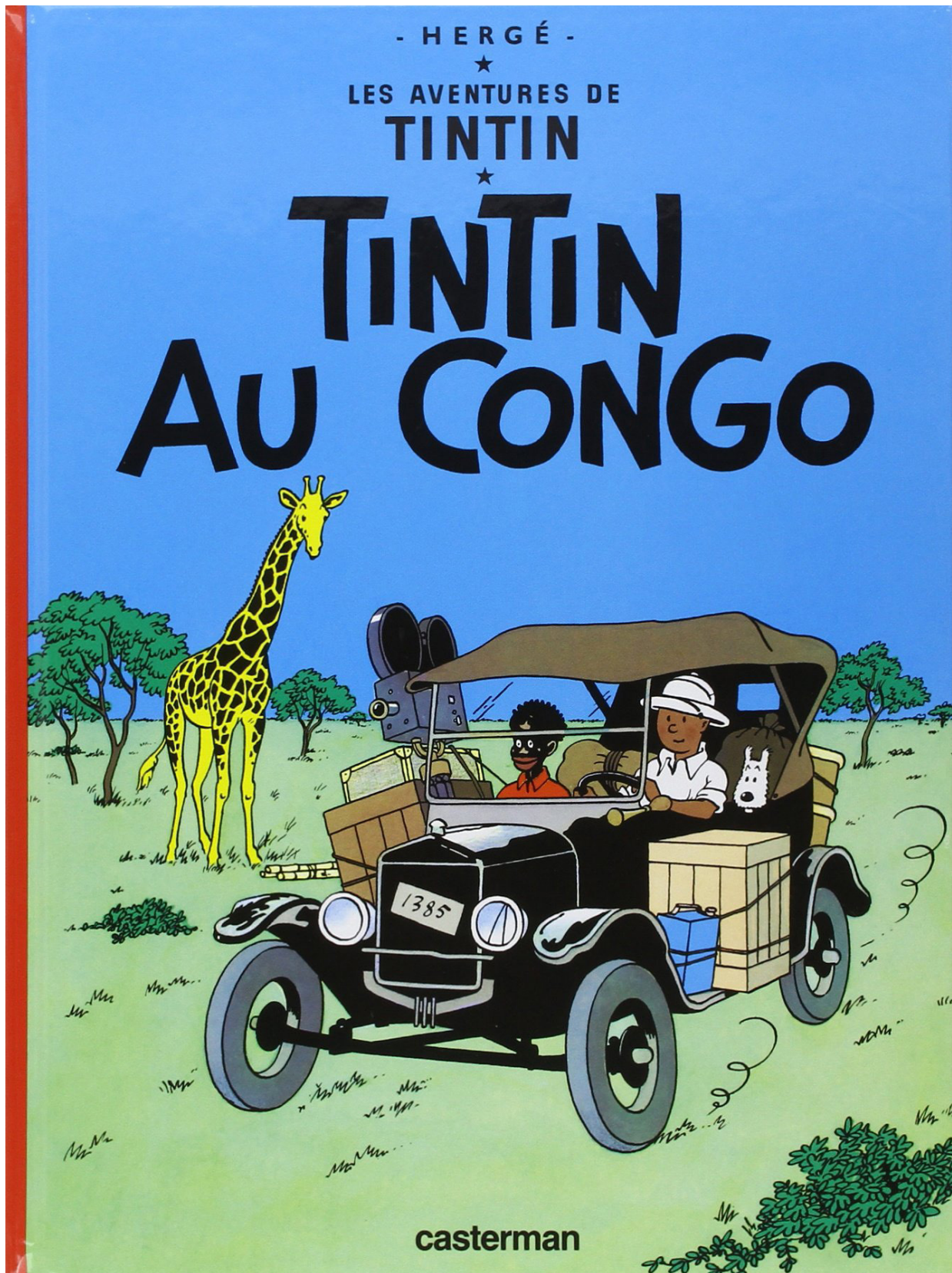


Figure 1. *Tintin in the Congo*, cover and inset. Note the blackface native sitting passenger to the extremely tanned Tintin in stereotypically-crafted “Africa.”

of conflict in the Middle East.”⁹ Her account forms a facet of the overwhelmingly essentialist, ethnocentric mythology of subaltern collectivity: to Western award committees, Modan “speaks” for all Israelis. Thus, considering *Exit Wounds* within this framework reinforces traditional colonial conceptualizations of Israel as a land beset on all sides by barbaric Muslims—an island of civilization in a sea of incivility, so to speak—and thus deserving of attention, protection, and cultural uplift by the major cultural and geopolitical powers that be. It is unsurprising that *Exit Wounds* comes to international prominence through two of the primary United Nations members in the same year that the Gaza War erupts, and that it wins an award primarily set aside for American comics artists during a time in which many American citizens and politicians viewed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a quasi-national concern.

It should be noted here that I do not suggest reading *Exit Wounds* in a solely national context, against its undoubtable transnationality. As I will demonstrate later, Modan benefitted from systems of cultural exchange before writing *Exit Wounds* and has continued to benefit from them in the years after its prize-winning international run. Rather, I suggest reading *against* the grain of *Exit Wounds*’ international acclaim as a graphic novel representative of the so-called “modern Israeli condition” that Tom Murphy identifies. That prevailing reading, I argue later, is not transnational but international in that it neither transcends nor redefines national boundaries but instead reifies them through subtle forms of oppression and Othering.¹⁰ Instead I advocate, as Leela Fernandes does, reading transnationally as “both a category that captures particular kinds of processes and a perspective on the world that is embedded within relationships of power.”¹¹ Rather than reproducing the “presumed parochialism of the territorial boundaries of the United States,”¹² I read *Exit Wounds* through a transnational lens in order to demonstrate the profound critiques of global flows of power inherent in *Exit Wounds*’ subject matter and execution. To do this, I will first consider the work’s subversive use of a visual style commonly understood in a nationalist context, the Franco-Belgian *ligne claire* style. Next, I consider its narrative resistance to serving as an “authentic” representation of midst-of-conflict Israel. Finally, I analyze cultural subversions in *Exit Wounds*’ transnational flows leading up to and then surrounding its celebration as exemplary international comics phenomenon.

Clear Lines, Blurred

Rutu Modan’s visual style in *Exit Wounds* fits four primary descriptions: 1.) its lines are clean and decisive with little shading or hatching; 2.) it uses bright, vibrant colors generally associated with comics that privilege fiction, rather than those that attempt to recreate a realistic reproduction of the world; 3.) it depicts objects more realistically than it does its characters, who are depicted more abstractly; 4.) and finally, depictions of buildings and locations often utilize common architectural perspectives rather than common expressive perspectives.¹³ The first three characteristics have often been noted by critics as exemplifying the Franco-Belgian “clear line” (*ligne claire*) style, most often associated with French *bandes dessinées* in general and *Tintin* author Georges Remi, better known as Hergé, specifically. The last characteristic is common in American comics, starting most identifiably with Winsor McCay. We should not take these influences as innocuous, however. Rather, it is my contention that Modan’s use of these styles is tendentious in nature, that her use of the styles subverts the representational traditions from whence they originate.

To understand these subversive tendencies, it is important first to outline precisely what I mean by “representational traditions.” No artistic style, as a method of mediation and representation, is without agenda or without influence. As French philosopher, linguistic, and literary critic Roland Barthes has argued, “all images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a ‘floating chain’ of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others.”¹⁴ A particular visual style grows out of a personal

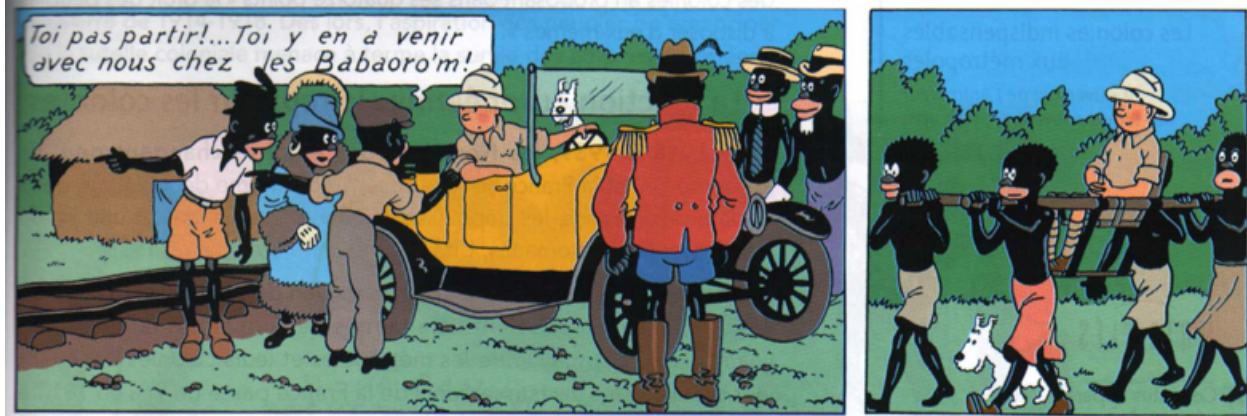


Figure 2. Natives in *Tintin in the Congo*.

evolution (see, for example, Modan's evolution from *Exit Wounds* to *The Property*, or Charles Schultz's slow polishing of *Charlie Brown*) as well as a historically and culturally-bounded set of influences and contexts that mold its growth dissemination. Moreover, recognizably "national" styles of visual artistry—such as "Japanese" manga style or "Franco-Belgian" *ligne claire*—are themselves shaped and formulated by complex negotiations between personal styles and by systems of privileging and dismissal at the local, national, and generic level. These stylistic turns and the assumptions about the world which mediate those alterations are an important starting point for understanding the ideological assumptions of an artistic style, or the image's representational method that interpellates the reader by way of its nuanced mediation of the world it "re-presents."^{15, 16} Once this set of assumptions—the "representational traditions" I indicated above—is made clear, subversions of it may be delineated.

For Hergé and his disciples, clear line style was a method of conscious signification as much as an aesthetic: clear lines went with clear, easily understood stories, unequivocal divisions between moral good and bad, and often simplified ways of making sense of the world. *Tintin* tends often to follow the US precedent for coloration found in superhero comics, in which primary colors signify heroes and secondary colors signify villains—though whether this arrived before, after, or during the same time in which coloration significance was codified in the US comics scene is up for debate.¹⁷ Regardless, there is little to no "bleeding"—color spilling over, color outside lines, colors being used in reference to two opposed individuals or objects—in *Tintin*, a conscious artistic choice that should be contrasted with other Franco-Belgian "realistic" style's use of color as a way of accurately representing the world.¹⁸ *Tintin* plots are often as straightforward, crisp, and clean as the artistic style. Indeed, Hergé's representation of the world using such strong and clear differentiation has been the target of much criticism as it often relies on racist or essentialist stereotypes to typify its actors and its locations. A recent examination of Hergé's portrayal of mental illness concluded that the associated behaviors were portrayed as invariably "unwise or overtly impulsive, reflecting loss of control."¹⁹ The portrayals often deploy stereotypes to depict mental illness unfavorably,²⁰ as well as stigmatize psychiatrists—"the only doctors with prominent roles in *Tintin*"²¹—as "repressive, greedy, or plainly evil."²² The use of stereotypes to typify Othered characters in Hergé is not limited to those with mental deficiencies or who abuse alcohol; Jean-Marie Apostolidès has illustrated thoroughly that Hergé's depiction of natives in *Tintin in the Congo* is essentially colonial, casting Tintin as the quintessentially civilized European to which the savage natives should aspire (see figures 1-2).²³ Tom McCarthy goes a step further, explaining that Hergé portrays the natives as "good at heart but backwards and lazy, in need of European mastery."²⁴ This is, of course, to say nothing of the Blackface that Hergé uses extensively in this volume, a work Hergé would later call one of the sins of his

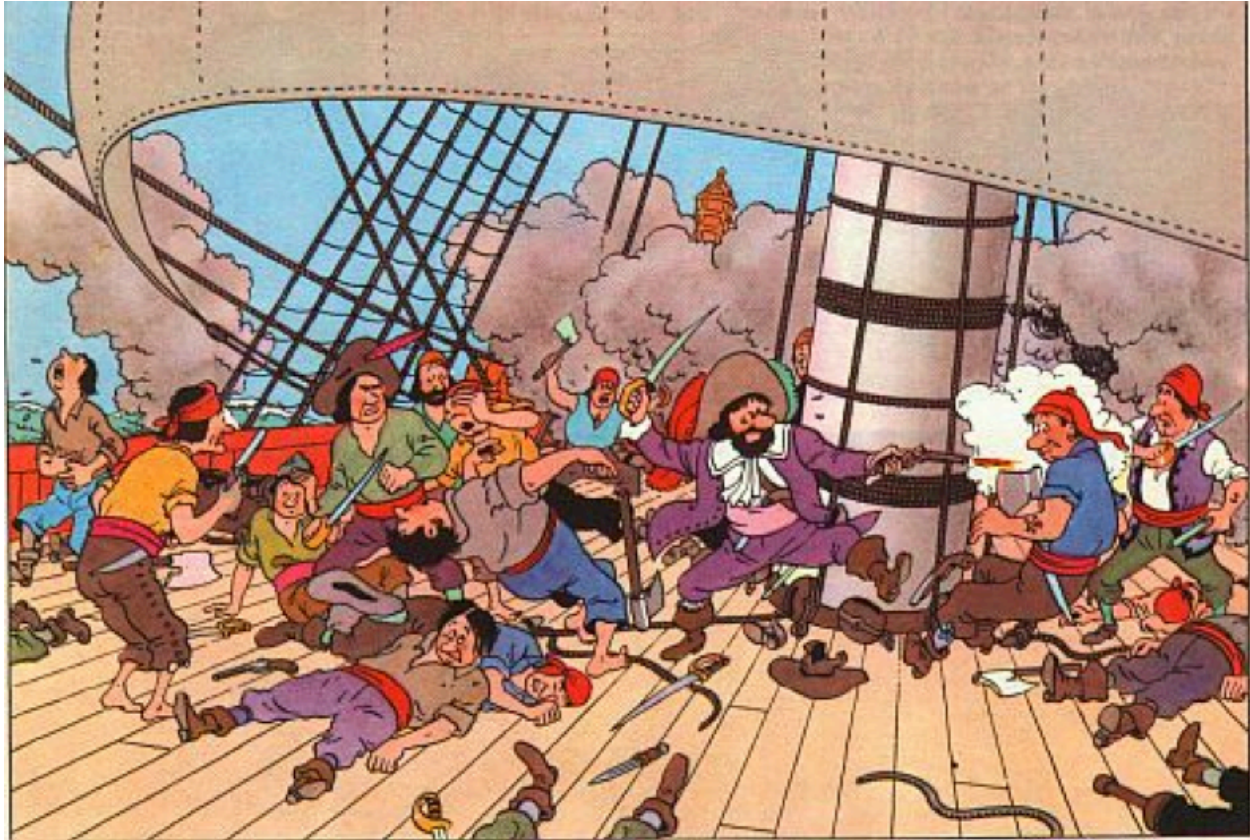


Figure 3. Hergé’s “ligne claire” style as seen in *Tintin*. Note the cartoonish characters set against a more realistically-rendered ship, drawn in good perspective.

youth. Speaking to writer Numa Sadoul, Hergé noted that, at just twenty-three, he had never been to the Congo and instead “drew [the Africans] in the spirit of the pure paternalism which reigned at the time in Belgium [...] I admit that my early books were typical of the Belgian bourgeois mentality of the time.”²⁵

In a departure from these historically, culturally, nationally-bounded, and fundamentally essentialist applications, Modan’s use of clear line maintains the same visual aesthetics while dispensing with the cultural baggage. Characters are drawn simply and clearly, closer on the comics arts spectrum to what Scott McCloud calls the “language” vertex: metaphorical representations of lived experience which are *perceived*, and thus require decoding to signify.²⁶ McCloud names this vertex of the iconographic triangle “language” because the most metaphorically-linked representation of the world is, in his conception, verbal language (specifically metonymic verbal language).²⁷ He argues that drawing characters in this metaphorically human fashion—that is, they are recognizably human in appearance but do not mimic reality with regards to wrinkles, shading, or proportions—enables increased identification of reader with character.²⁸ Conversely, Modan’s realistically-drawn backgrounds, vehicles, and buildings are closer to the “reality” vertex of the art triangle, as they more accurately depict objects as they appear in lived experience. Just as they appear more real, McCloud argues that they are also objectified by the reader, drafted to make the reader “aware of the [object] as an *object*, something with *weight*, *texture*, and *physical complexity*.”²⁹ While Hergé’s use of clear line was motivated primarily by a need to simplify characters as types—that is, acting objects and not subjects—Modan’s use asks readers to identify with the characters they portray. The story reinforces this technique in that it focuses less on the location (Tel-Aviv, Israel) and time (nominally 2002, though a lack of distinctive markers makes it difficult to temporally locate) and

more on the character drama at hand.

“Life Under Occupation”

Exit Wounds is primarily a story about modern alienation, particularly its destructive effect on human relationships. Protagonist Koby Franco is a cab driver, constantly separated from interaction with his clients by the imaginary (and, increasingly, real) barrier between driver’s seat and back passenger seats. In a series of panels in the fourth chapter, Koby silently drives his clients to their destinations while they go on with their lives behind him: a mother taking her screaming baby on a cab ride to silence his cries, a businessman engaged in a heated cellphone exchange, and two lovers passionately embracing—all of these characters and interactions form the background of his life. The perspective here places Koby in the foreground, both as the focal point and as a separate entity from the lived experiences going on behind him, in the background. Perhaps more troublingly, Modan’s artistic choices distance Koby from even his closest blood kin; he speaks to his sister Orly only via telephone conversations which are represented on the page by absolute divisions between panels, distanced by the gutters between them.³⁰ They speak to each other in this scene, but their dialogue is strangely unhinged:

ORLY: Listen, I can’t talk right now.

KOBY: One question. Have you heard from Dad lately?

ORLY: All of a sudden you’re interested in Dad?

KOBY: So you have heard from him.³¹

The indirect responses demonstrate Orly’s mental distance from the conversation – she is busily painting her nails – while Koby’s focus on the call removes him mentally from another family situation: dinner with his aunt and uncle.³² All this hinges upon a grotesque characterization of the Franco family’s dissolution: the two children have not spoken to their father in so long that they cannot know for certain if he is still alive.

The cartoonishness of characters afforded by clear line style allows Modan to further explore the flaws in her characters. Just as they are complex and flawed characters in personality, so too are they visually depicted as such. Characters often have lumpy bodies in places where lumps would not realistically appear; hands are drawn with little attention to anatomical correctness, in order to make obvious an emotive response. Faces, though drawn simply, are expressive by their departures from reality.³³ Simplicity of character design, used both as a way of enhancing reader identification and as a way of making characters easy to remember, here is used to efface identities: Numi, the female protagonist of *Exit Wounds*, goes through several character changes that make it sometimes difficult to know Koby is talking to the same woman. Drawn first as a soldier, she is “giraffe”-like and masculinized;³⁴ drawn later as Koby’s love interest, she is graceful, vulnerable, and traditionally feminized. At the end of the book, as she becomes the redemptive force by which Koby can reconnect to human relationships, she finds herself somewhere between these two poles: her hips are gracefully curved in a pair of jeans while her torso is clothed unremarkably in a formless orange polo.³⁵ Koby too oscillates in his recognizability, gaining and losing weight in ways that both add to and detract from his superiority based solely upon the amount of space he takes up. As he loses confidence, for example, he shrinks;³⁶ when he is in control of his relationship with Numi, he grows in size, and his pudgy frame is accentuated by posture and framing.³⁷ These relations are interconnected by Numi’s changing height in relation to Koby—we discover early on that she is taller than he,³⁸ but when he becomes enraged at her and takes control in a later chapter, they are the same height.³⁹

These fluctuations in character size and stability coincide with an intriguing dis-location of *Exit Wounds*' "Tel-Aviv" from its real referent. As in Hergé's clear line style, backgrounds and objects are drafted as more realistic than the actors who inhabit them (figure 3). Unlike Hergé, however, few attempts are made to "authentically" reproduce the area represented. Where Hergé's depictions of the Congo relied on stereotypical concepts of sub-Saharan Africa (complete with the obligatory giraffe), Modan's Tel-Aviv is curiously devoid of recognizably "Israeli" cultural markers. Aside from a few obvious concessions drawn, as noted above, from Modan's personal experience (Hebrew and English on the taxis, some Hebrew on buildings), many of the locales in *Exit Wounds* are easily mistakable for any metropolitan area with palm trees and taxicabs. Nonetheless, the nonspecific "Tel-Aviv" is drawn vibrantly and meticulously in order to capture its more realistic objectivity. Buildings are given great care and attention; backgrounds are rich with signposts, foliage, and perspective-correct streets and curbs. Outside of the city, the text showcases farms in sweeping landscapes, complete with realistic swaths of sunset color. The ocean looks realistic, salty, as if it could be touched, tasted, floated in (figure 4). The same standard for realistic accuracy Modan sets on the cover continues throughout the book.

At first, this attention to detail is simultaneously comforting in its anchorage to "the real" even as it disturbs the otherwise cartoonish and melodramatic story. However, it combines with an attention to perspective reminiscent of early American comics author Winsor McCay. Just as McCay draws meticulously-drafted architectural wonders in *Little Nemo*, Modan in *Exit Wounds* crafts an accurate, if somewhat fantastic, depiction of "realist" buildings (see figures 5 and 6). Though McCay's drawings of architecture were technically brilliant masterpieces of analogue drafting (drawn with only compass, square, and straightedge) that influenced American comics for decades, they nonetheless contained flights of fancy that had referents existing only in McCay's mind. We mustn't forget, after all, that the sweeping cosmopolises that Nemo and Flip travel to are dreamscapes.⁴⁰ Modan's Israel, taken as it were from its artist's own nostalgic recollection, is no less imagined than McCay's. Unlike other works in which the primacy of place is apparent through the painstaking mapping of real-world geographies onto comics-world pages (such as Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon's *Pride of Baghdad* or Joe Sacco's *Footnotes in Gaza*), in *Exit Wounds* there are few and widely interspersed attempts to locate the reader in present-day Israel. Even Modan's depiction of travel between cities, which uses the familiar physical markers of space and travel time, takes on a different quality for the narrative of *Exit Wounds*—namely, that time and space are expanded or contracted to fit diegetic time, rather than extradiegetic time. The historical moment from which *Exit Wounds* originates—throughout 2002, from just months after the Hadera and Haifa bombings to nearly a year after—fades away from primary positioning in the narrative. Rather, it seems as though Modan has utilized McCay's architectural flights in good faith to the original context. Jeet Heer explains that "like Jonathan Swift's Lemuel Gulliver or Lewis Carroll's Alice, Nemo was a sober and innocent soul who traveled to a bizarre fantasyland which on closer inspection turned out to be a parody of the home that was left behind."⁴¹ Reflected in the hyper-industrialized, "ultimate corporate dystopia" of Mars,⁴² the parodic distinction of McCay's Slumberland's from the world from which it departs recasts it as the safe zone of satirical critique. The statements about society made in Slumberland, therefore, have meaningful weight in the real world only via metaphor.

But Modan, I think, is not so gentle with McCay's artistic endeavors. Though the Israel she depicts is clearly not a realistic representation, it nonetheless is not necessarily a parodic stand-in to enable spirited critique. Or rather, it appears initially to be such, but later, through the course of its narrative subversion, unravels this façade. Consider the exigency of the narrative: the motivating situation in the story is that Koby receives a call from Numi, his father's former lover, to explain that she thinks he was killed in the recent Palestinian suicide bombing in Hadera. Modan's inspiration comes from David Ofek's documentary of the incident, *No. 17*,⁴³ which recounts Ofek's journey to identify the unidenti-



Figure 4. Rutu Modan's take on "ligne claire" with similarly cartoonish characters on a realistic backdrop.

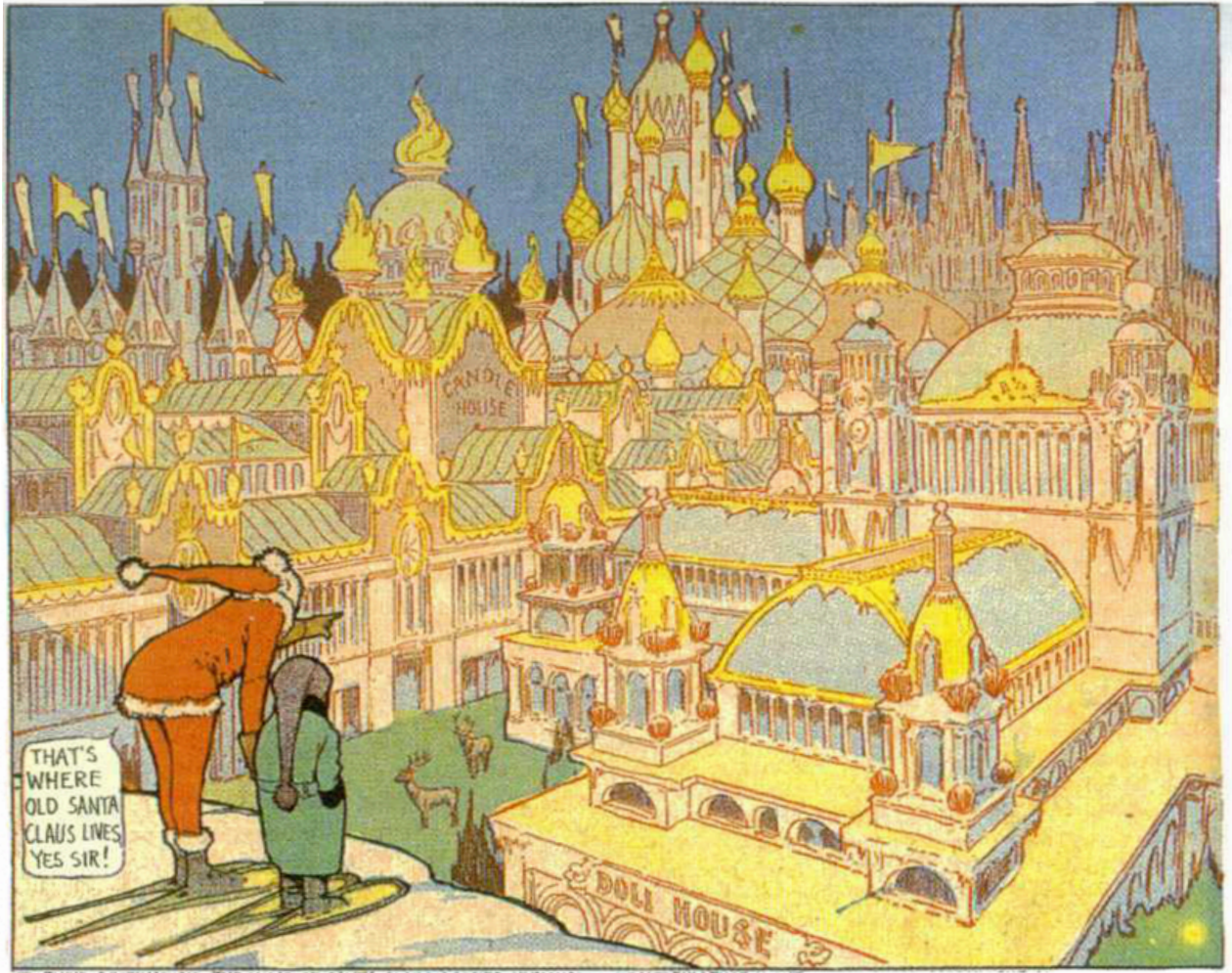


Figure 5. Example of Winsor McCay's mastery of perspective and architectural design.

fied, unreported seventeenth victim of the June 2002 explosion. From this story, Modan weaves a tale of loose ends needing to be tied up. But from this point on, bombings fade from view. Their remnants are left: shrapnel, blood on the bus, the survivors and families of survivors, but the explosions are conspicuously absent.

Consider this also alongside the historical context surrounding the creation of the work. Written between 2005 and 2006 and published in late 2006 to early 2007, *Exit Wounds*' genesis is bound up inseparably with a national identity that is, on an international level, largely considered mired in violence over an age-old land grab. The referent year, 2002, had the most documented suicide bombings in the post-2000 era (fifty-five), more than all the years of *Exit Wounds*' creation and maturation into international phenomenon combined (fourteen: seven in '05, four in '06, just one in '07; and two in '08).⁴⁴ As in *Exit Wounds*, there is a flurry of violence resulting in horrific deaths and shattered lives. Then, silence: a nation left waiting for the other explosions, going on with life as necessary. This emptiness, akin to the emptiness a family experiences after the death of one of its members, is treated with nothing more than the frustrated laughter of a worried spouse. Collective memory in and around the blast sites seems to have elided over the fact that the explosions ever happened, or agreed that they were so common they could easily be confused. When asked about the bomb that supposedly killed Koby's father, nobody can remember which one Koby and Numi are talking about. It becomes a running gag in the narrative that



Figure 6. Rutu Modan's take on McCay's perspective and architectural strengths.

the two explosions, separated by a matter of days but taking place 30 miles apart, cannot be extricated from each other. The two traumatic moments cannot be distinguished because to do so would mean addressing the moment of trauma, so instead life has gone on as if the bombs never went off. Life has comically – grotesquely – gone on: the market-stall owner continues seeking petitions for his causes after insisting that the dead can still sign,⁴⁵ the illegal immigrants remain invisible workers, unnoticed even when one is seriously wounded and replaced by another,⁴⁶ the diner at the bomb-site cafeteria expresses his displeasure when the owner does not continue her dead husband's generous portions.⁴⁷ The Israel in *Exit Wounds* is not a safe place, but rather exists as a place haunted by the ravages of war. The buildings, still drafted more cartoonishly than McCay ever made his Martian cityscapes, bear the blemishes of human error and atrocity. They speak from every panel of the horrors they've seen, sharing their longer and more correct memories that their residents have tried to forget. Thus is the national, local, and parochial content of *Exit Wounds* hidden slyly within the cosmopolitan artistry Modan utilizes, couched in a narrative that encourages readers to think of it not as an "Israeli problem," but rather a "human problem" that could—and has—happened anywhere else in the world.



Figure 7. A newspaper strip from 1993. Modan's style here is reminiscent of Art Spiegelman's comix work.

The World Stage

In her interview with the BBC, performed at Random House for the “International Edition” of *Exit Wounds*, Modan expresses disdain for the international pigeonhole into which she has been placed:

People in Israel don't expect me to represent Israel. I feel it more abroad, that people are looking at me as an 'Israeli artist,' and I understand it. I *am* an Israeli artist, my stories *are* Israeli. This is what I came from, this is where I came from. [...] But what can be irritating, sometimes, is that people expect me to explain 'the Middle East Situation' clearly for them through my comics, which I think I cannot do. It's too complicated. I do refer to the situation, but the way I live in it, it's in the background. It's *my* life, so I can only show a very narrow vision of life in Israel.⁴⁸

What these entities abroad do not realize, she argues, is that they have reproduced a common misconception, that the experience of one Other can speak for them all. Modan explains in the interview that in Israel her works are taken as she intends, as a slice of life from one perspective which cannot dream of representing the quintessential “Israeli” experience, largely because such an experience is a myth.⁴⁹ In fact, she explains that Israel is a “crowded place—many legs to step on, you know?”⁵⁰ The emotionally-charged reaction she relates in the interview—“why are you doing comics? Why are you publishing in English? Do you know what you're doing to Israeli culture?”—illustrates the kind of invective she faced as a result of international fame, in which she is considered largely a traitor to her own culture because of her publication in a foreign language with a foreign publisher.

Despite these troubles at home, Modan remains characterized abroad as a home-soil starlet and symbol of Israeli culture. This is not an unfair or erroneous characterization, as Modan is one of the most renowned contemporary artists in Israel today. On post-2008 editions of *Exit Wounds*, Modan is hailed for her work as an Israeli comics icon: winner of the Israeli Ministry of Culture's Young Artist award in 1997, four-time winner of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem's Best Illustrated Children's Book award (1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004), Chosen Artist of the Israeli Cultural Excellence Foundation.⁵¹ That she garnered these awards (and others) prior to her publication of *Exit Wounds* is conveniently left out of the account.⁵² In addition, the international systems of influence which allowed her to rise to prominence and which awarded her excellence long before Angoulême and the Eisners are largely uncredited. Modan worked as an illustrator and editor of the Israeli imprint of the American comedy magazine *Mad*, republishing “75% American material from *Mad*” and adding “original material to the other 25%.”⁵³ During her stint with *Mad*, Modan published extensively as a newspaper artist before starting the Israeli

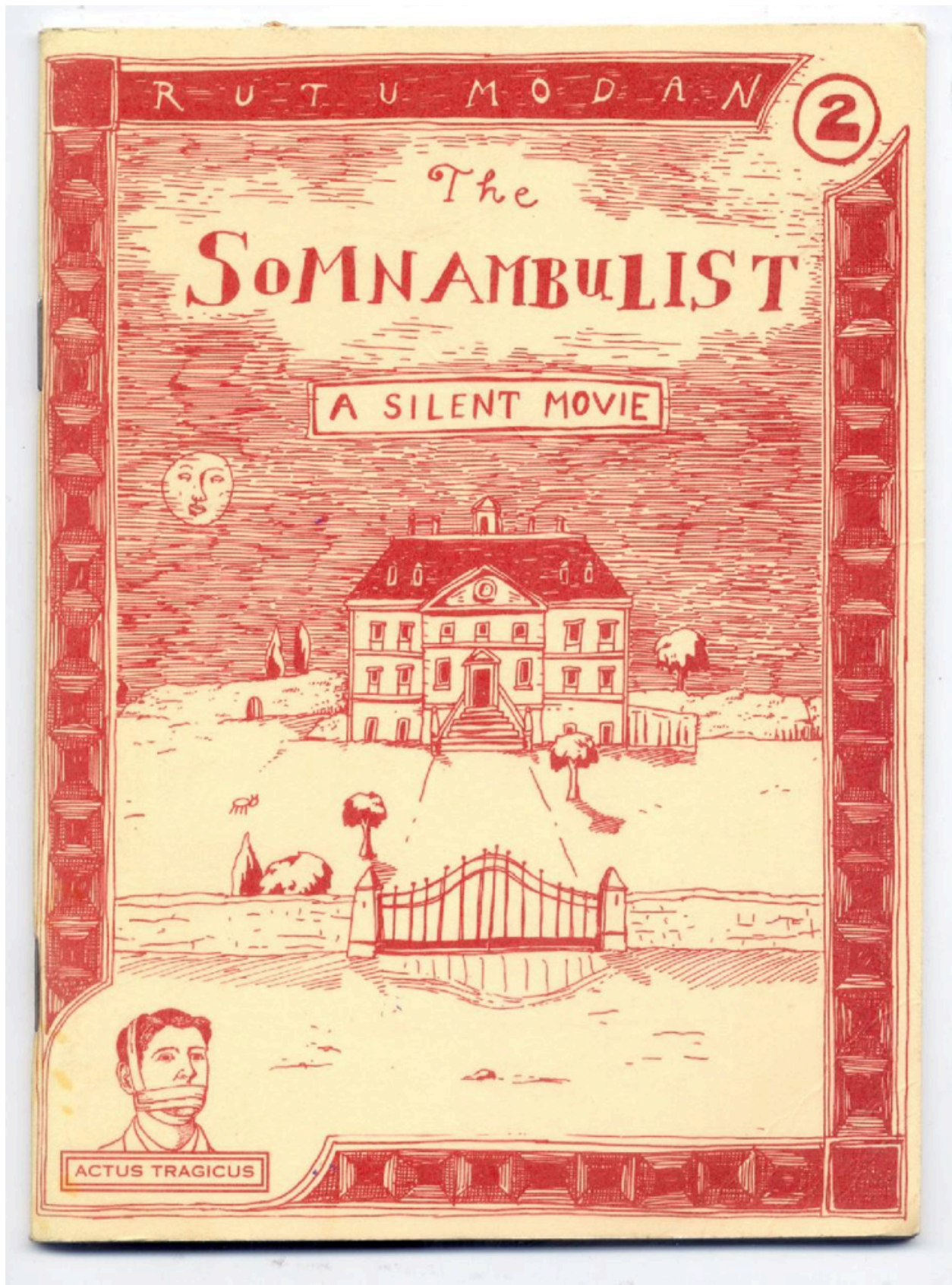


Figure 8. Rutu Modan's *The Somnambulist*, published with Actus Tragicus in 1995.

comics collective *Actus Tragicus* with Yirmi Pinkus. Several of the publications she made with *Actus* won international awards: in 2001, her illustration work in children's literature won a Hans Christian Andersen Award from the International Board on Books for Young People, and she was a finalist for the Ignatz Award for Best Story and Promising New Talent.⁵⁴

During this time, Modan experimented with a number of different art styles. Her prolific publishing of independent graphic novels with *Actus* and her long career as an illustrator demonstrate the depth of her artistic skill. I do not want to underestimate this point: though some comics artists are known for a singular style that is honed over time (such as the aforementioned Hergé in France, Osamu Tezuka in Japan, or Will Eisner in the US), some (and increasingly more contemporary artists) are comfortable with a wide range of styles. This comfort and ability to publish in different styles (shown in figures 7-9) suggests that the artist's use of a particular style, especially one which departs from the artist's other work, should be taken as an intentional choice. Understood accordingly, Modan's hybridized Franco-Belgian-American renegotiation of *ligne claire* reflects a conscious choice of style on the part of the author.

Why write in English with a rich personal and cultural history of Hebrew comics? Why publish abroad in another marginalized comics market (Montreal, Canada) with a readily-available and supportive Israeli comics publishing network at hand? Why adopt styles explicitly linked to centrist comics powers, France and the US? The answer to these questions, I believe, lies somewhere between what world literature critics theorize and how *Exit Wounds* actually came to international prominence. David Damrosch argues in *What is World Literature?* that "the writer from a marginal culture is in a double bind. With little to go on at home, a young writer can only achieve greatness by emulating desirable foreign models."⁵⁵ The fact that one must attract the empire's attention by publishing in "tongue of the empire" rings true in Modan's use of Franco-Belgian and US comics aesthetics. Before publishing *Exit Wounds*, Modan's local prestige had not translated well to the larger world stage, even though she had published in French and English with her graphic novels. But Modan was not, at the release of *Exit Wounds*, a "young writer"—she was forty-one, with almost two decades of illustration work and more than a decade of graphic novel work behind her. Moreover, it seems that she has remained very true to her Israeli comics roots, as evidenced by her insistence upon the complexities of what the world calls quantifiable "Israeli" experience: she is not a representative of the subaltern whose voice may be taken as the voice of all, and she insists upon this in her interviews as well as in her work.

Regardless of her insistence upon a reading of her work as an individual, Modan seems to have been mistakenly read as an Israeli representative. Indeed, English points out that the festival structure, far from dislocating or translocating the works it exalts, may instead "offer recognition of a sort that assumes and affirms the (originally *national*, now *local*) situatedness of [...] production."⁵⁶ That is to say that, in championing *Exit Wounds* and Rutu Modan as an "Israeli graphic novel" by an "Israeli artist," the inherently transnational work *Exit Wounds* attempts is undermined by reaffirming *international* relations. Rather than shuffling off the "crushing weight" of the international stylistic traditions they must use to gain recognition,⁵⁷ these works are instead slotted back into a nationalistic system (albeit one that pits each nation comparatively against one another) which credentializes them based upon their adherence to traditional nationalistic narratives between countries. This is the "inter"national—that which reifies the difference between nation-states. In the case of *Exit Wounds*, becoming "that which gains or loses in translation" declaws the work, weakening its stinging critique of the world systems that enabled its creation, systems which ultimately reinstate nationalist narratives of hierarchization on a global scale.⁵⁸

Rutu the Untranslatable

Jan Baetens has argued convincingly that Hergé's work is untranslatable. The thrust of that ar-



Figure 9. Etgar Keret's *Nobody Said It Was Going To Be Fun*, co-published with and illustrated by Rutu Modan in 1996. Note the significant differences in line style and coloration.

gument hinges upon the inherently nationalist tendencies expressed in *Tintin*—namely, the dismissal of Flemish dialect, which Hergé spoke, in favor of codified nationalist French as envisioned by Maurice Grevisse.⁵⁹ Baetens contends:

Hergé would take great care to eliminate from his texts this popular mixing [the Flemish dialect] of two dialects, neither of which was the “official language,” just as, in visual terms, his style arrived at the famous “*ligne claire*” only by taming what was joyously anarchic and disordered in his early endeavors, and just as the language his heroes speak became increasingly polished (and, at the end, perfectly aseptic, again like his graphic style, which quickly degenerate into academism from the sixties on).⁶⁰

In addition to seeing a snapshot of the coagulation of a representational tradition, this passage illustrates a deeper tension in Hergé’s work that appears again in *Exit Wounds*, but which is neutered by its international—rather than transnational—reception. In *Exit Wounds*, this “untranslatable” tension between home dialect and codified “*le bon usage*” appears along slightly different but equivalent lines: between Hebrew, Modan’s native language, and English, the language of international comics. To be considered in the Angeloueme awards, *Exit Wounds* was translated into French by Arles-based publishing house *Actes Sud* (Southern Acts); after winning the Eisner, it was translated into Hebrew for resale in Israeli markets. Remarkably, it was *not* Modan who oversaw the translation and *not* Drawn & Quarterly who authorized the publication; rather, the publishing was handled by Israeli house Am-Oved, under the title *Karov Rahok*, “Close-Far.” Indeed, this title is perhaps most illuminating of the situation in which *Exit Wounds* exists on the global stage. Rather than transcending the boundaries of its origin through its subversive use of the master’s tools, *Exit Wounds* instead remains distanced from itself and from its home life: it is close, speaking of the same world, but far away, concentrating on the tensions that silently oversee the process of its exchange. Thus *Exit Wounds* made the untranslatable tensions of a Franco-Belgian aesthetic style, an American satirical mode, an international conflict of increasingly national interest to uninvolved parties, and the personal struggles of a well-known author to gain deserved prestige translatable onto the world stage. Unfortunately, more was lost in the translation than was gained.

Notes

- o. All images are used in strict compliance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107 of United States copyright law (commonly known as “fair use law”). This material is distributed without profit with the intent to provide commentary, review, education, and scholarly critique.
1. Denson, Shane. “Afterword: Framing, Unframing, Reframing: Retconning the Transnational Work of Comics.” *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives: Comics at the Crossroads*. Eds. Shane Denson, Christina Meyer, Daniel Stein. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013: 271-285.
2. Chute, Hillary and Marianne DeKoven. “Introduction: Graphic Narrative.” *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 52.4 (2006): 767-782.
3. Campbell, Eddie. “Exit Wounds.” *Eddie Campbell’s Blog*.
4. Celayo, Armando. “Exit Wounds.” *World Literature Today* (1 January 2008).
5. Bartley, Aryn. “Staging Cosmopolitanism: The Transnational Encounter in Joe Sacco’s *Footnotes in Gaza*.” *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives: Comics at the Crossroads*. Eds. Shane Denson, Christina Meyer, Daniel Stein. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013: 67-82.
6. English, James. *The Economy of Prestige*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005: 298.
7. Modan, Rutu. *Exit Wounds*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2010.

8. Troublingly, what little critical work that exists discussing *Exit Wounds* does so as a catalyst for introducing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to readers who are unfamiliar with the situation and, presumably, wouldn't understand it without "a cognitive and affective experience that allows students to access the subject matter" (see Thomas Juneau and Mira Sucharov, "Narratives in Pencil: Using Graphic Novels to Teach Israeli-Palestinian Relations," *International Studies Perspectives* 11.2 (May 2010): 172-183). Thus, in one fell swoop, both Israeli art and comics as a medium are struck mute.
9. Murphy, Tom. "Exit Wounds." *Full-Page Bleed*.
10. The concept of transnationalism as "borderless internationalism" has its roots in essayist Randolph S. Bourne's article in *The Atlantic*'s July 1916 issue, in which Bourne rejects the melting pot theory of cultural assimilation, which he contends "create[s] hordes of [...] cultural outlaws without taste, without standards but those of the mob," instead suggesting that America is "coming to be, not a nationality but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other lands, of many threads of all sizes and colors." Later critics like Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Szanton Blanc in *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (London: Routledge, 1993) and Ulf Hannerz in *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*, (London: Routledge, 1996) have picked up the term in anthropology and cultural studies.
11. Fernandes, Leela. *Transnational Feminism in the United States: Knowledge, Ethics, and Power*. New York: New York UP, 2013.
12. Fernandes, 10.
13. Architectural perspectives demonstrate draftsmanship (the ability to produce seemingly three-dimensional objects with realistic scaling and perspective), whereas expressive perspectives demonstrate narrative and character development in storytelling visual media. For example, in film the establishing shot of an urban skyline is akin to an architectural perspective, while a close-up on an actor's face is an expressive perspective. For more about verisimilitude versus expression in comics art, see Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, William Morrow, 1994).
14. Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image." *Image, Music, Text*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977: 151-163.
15. Interpellation is, according to French philosopher and linguist Louis Althusser, the process by which ideology, as it is embodied in major social and political institutions (such as schools, religions, and cultural institutions like marriage and familial linkage) constitutes the nature of individual subject identities by "hailing" at them in social interactions; when they are hailed as a component of their subject identity, the subject responds by affirming or denying their subjectivity. In comics, certain national traditions, like large eyes in Japanese *manga* and visuo-verbal sound bubbles in American super-hero comics "hail" to knowing readings such that they function even beyond the boundaries of the comic: a well-placed "BIFF!" or "POW!" on a poster "hails" the comics-reader-subject, forcing them to "own" their subjectivity and respond to it.
16. Barthes, 152.
17. For an examination of the interdependency of Franco-Belgian and American comics at the turn of the 20th century, see Giancarlo, Ascari. "Fumetto belga, ovvero, seguendo una linea chiara/ Belgian comics: a clear line to follow." *Abitare* 428 (May 2003): 203-4.
18. See, for example, the art of Jean Giraud and Jije's *Jerry Spring* series.
19. Medrano, Juan, Pablo Malo, Jose J. Uriarte, and Ana-Pia Lopez. "Stigma and Prejudice in *Tintin*." *BMJ* 339 (19-26 December 2009): 1406-1407.
20. *Ibid.*, 1407.

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Apostolidès, Jean-Marie. *The Metamorphoses of Tintin, or Tintin for Adults*. Trans. Jocelyn Hoy. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010: 10-15.
24. McCarthy, Tom. *Tintin and the Secret of Literature*. London: Granta, 2006.
25. Sadoul, Numa. *Tintin et Moi/ Entretiens avec Hergé*. Paris: Casterman, 2004.
26. McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003: 49-51.
27. Ibid., 49.
28. Ibid., 44.
29. Ibid., 44.
30. *Exit Wounds*, 22.
31. Ibid., 21-22.
32. Ibid., 21-23.
33. Koby's nose is something of a marvel, changing in size, shape, and location throughout the work to change the expressiveness of his eyes and mouth.
34. *Exit Wounds*, 31.
35. Ibid., 172.
36. Ibid., 148-149.
37. Ibid., 90-91.
38. Ibid., 31.
39. Ibid., 139-140.
40. A "cosmopolis" is a city inhabited by many worlds' cultures.
41. Heer, Jeet. "Little Nemo in Comicsland." *Virginia Quarterly Review: A National Journal of Literature & Discussion* 82.2 (Spring 2006): 104-121.
42. Ibid., 106.
43. BBC Collective. "Rutu Modan 'Exit Wounds' Interview." *Youtube* video, 5:39. August 8, 2007.
44. All information from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has tracked suicide bombing details since the Declaration of Principles in September 1993.
45. *Exit Wounds*, 68-69.
46. Ibid., 90-91.
47. Ibid., 73.
48. BBC, n.p.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. *Exit Wounds*, back cover.
52. Department of Israeli Cultural Excellence. "Rutu Modan—Illustrator." *ICEexcellence.com*.
53. Sobel, Marc. "The Rutu Modan Interview." *The Comics Journal*, May 29, 2013.
54. Israeli Cultural Excellence, n.p.
55. Damrosch, David. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003: 9.
56. English, 291.
57. Damrosch, 9.
58. Ibid., 289.
59. Baetens, Jan. "Tintin the Untranslatable." *Sites: The Journal of Twentieth-Century/Contemporary French Studies* 5.2 (2001): 363-371.
60. Baetens, 365.

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At Home in the Free-Market World: The Neoliberal Cosmopolitan Man in Salman Rushdie's *Fury*

Mary J. Nitsch
HARPER COLLEGE

To risk stating the obvious, the end of the last century saw a radical shift in borders and boundaries. The rise of the Internet minimized divides in space and time, networking vast numbers of people across the globe through computers and eventually cell phones. The transnational organizations like the European Union offered new regional experiments in governance and trade—the more economically focused entities like NAFTA echoing the EU in its orchestration of the mobility of capital and commodities, though not of people. The scientific community's dire warnings of a warming planet also underscored how intricately connected local environments are. In the face of these significant changes, cosmopolitanism was revitalized as a means of theorizing an individual's place within an increasingly networked and hybridized world. Given the sweeping nature of these integrations, theories of cosmopolitanism come from a variety of disciplines, making it challenging to see a coherent answer or project. Philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum and Kwame Anthony Appiah offer a moral approach to the subject; literary and cultural studies like Bruce Robbins and Paul Gilroy focus on its (multi)cultural dimensions; and social scientists such as Saskia Sassen and Ulrich Beck explore political and legal ramifications of the term.¹ With this variety in perspectives, it can be difficult to determine how cosmopolitanism might assuage the growing pains of our sprawling global village.

Moreover, recent complications in the interconnectedness of transnational projects and organizations make this determination all the more crucial as the Right rises across Europe in response to the largest refugee crisis in decades and the United States continues to tighten its own borders. A series of regional insurgencies, economic crises, and prolonged wars has also rocked much of the world: the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Global Recession, and the Arab Spring to name but a few of these destabilizing events. Cosmopolitanism's appeal in such moments is obvious: the concept purports to celebrate and protect difference while recognizing a commonly shared human existence—one that transverses national boundaries and local affiliations in deference to our common humanity. Such a deeply human perspective would, in theory, negate the hegemonic impulses of the Global North, while spreading the ideals of peaceful, liberal democracy and economic prosperity to a culturally rich, though economically poor, Global South. Few would disagree that such a humanistic idealism is sorely needed as the morning news brings images dead Syrian children washing up on Turkish beaches and young Nigerian women kidnapped into sexual slavery by Boko Haram.

These dire circumstances, concerning as they may be to cosmopolitans, demand a concrete politics of action that the theory has yet to provide. One need not look further than the Syrian Civil War and

resultant refugee crisis or the continued violence of Boko Haram to see an absence of political will among those “citizens of the world.” To be fair, there is a strong tension between the philosophical/cultural/social ideal and the lived realities of people situated in highly transnational contexts. Indeed, this tension has clear moral, cultural, and political implications that structure people’s local lives, determining their access to citizenship, to resources, to social institutions, to cultural practice, and more. Simply put, this tension begets the following question: How does one live humanely in an economically and culturally transnational world?

This essay will consider the limits of answering that question through a cosmopolitan lens. Specifically, I briefly review several dominant strands of cosmopolitan theory, particularly for their universalizing tendencies. Next, I consider how an uncritical adoption of a universalizing perspective can lead to the reproduction of a neoliberal cosmopolitanism, which seriously compromises the concept’s ability to remedy economic, social, and political inequalities. Finally, I turn to Salman Rushdie’s cosmopolitan novel, *Fury* (2001), to render the limits of neoliberal cosmopolitanism, acutely seen in the novel’s cynical acceptance of neoliberal economic policy and its transformation of women into sexualized commodities.

Dreams (and Nightmares) of a Cosmopolitan Language

Before arguing for cosmopolitanism’s limitations, I will pause here to review its possibilities by briefly considering the work of several notable scholars on the subject. Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, sociologist Paul Gilroy, and humanities professor Bruce Robbins have all turned to the ancient Greek concept to theorize humanitarian solutions to various transnationally felt social problems. Written for a general audience, Appiah’s philosophical exploration attempts to revitalize the term so that we may use “minds and hearts formed over the long millennia of living in local troops and equip them with ideas and institutions that will allow us to live together as the global tribe we have become.”² Cosmopolitanism will instruct different people to now live peacefully together in a culturally hybrid world. Resisting Appiah’s idealism, Gilroy rejects traditional expressions of cosmopolitanism as elite projects that stultify culture and difference, advocating for a “cosmopolitanism from below” whose vitality is expressed through London’s multicultural popular texts.³ Robbins takes a third track, situating cosmopolitanism as a viable response to the problematic patriotisms and resultant militarism alive and well in the Global North, most explicitly in the United States.⁴ To some degree, the differences in definition bespeak disciplinary differences, though all three authors converge on the idea that a transnational perspective is vital to addressing people’s pressing needs for dignity and peace.

Not ignoring the impressive insights each text offers to philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies, a striking commonality is found across all pieces: cosmopolitanism—be it of the moral, grassroots, or political variety—must forge a transnational path that eschews the pitfalls of liberal universalism and cultural relativism. Appiah’s metaphor of conversation, Gilroy’s expression of convivial cosmopolitanism, or Robbins’s condemnations of “I’m great, you stink” narratives all attempt to tread this path. Additionally, all three authors weave academic work and popular texts (autobiography or cultural) into their analyses, in effect, modeling the hybridity they seek to protect while appealing to the universalizing norms that render the hybridity comprehensible. That is, borrowing Appiah’s metaphor, a shared language must be spoken for a conversation among others to ever occur, and a sort of popular cosmopolitanism provides a rich and productive mother tongue.

However admirable the goal, the dream of a cosmopolitan “language,” to revise Adrienne Rich’s poem, imposes universalizing tendencies that require the utmost scrutiny. Whose universalities will structure the conversation, the conviviality, or the “I” in these theoretical formations? As cultural geographer David Harvey notes, “There is, therefore, always an imperializing moment in any attempt to make

that [appeal to universal notions of freedom and liberty] particular formulation, drawn from the one place and time, the foundation for universal policy.”⁵ In and of itself, a universalizing perspective need not be oppressive; in practice, however, it often is, as the histories of colonization, capitalist expansion, and socialist counter-expansion readily demonstrate. To turn to Harvey again, the metanarrative that informs much of the recent turn to cosmopolitanism is that of liberally informed individualism, be it the political or economic varieties.⁶ Here, appeals to human rights or economic freedom are ensconced with the nation state, itself cast as an institution perpetually behind the times of global networks of information, trade, and culture.⁷ To revise the nation into the current moment, the remedies of liberal democracy and free trade, always already intertwined in popular political Anglo-American discourse following the Blair-Clinton years, must be administered across the globe to bring about a global utopia of freedom and prosperity. Thus, journalist Thomas Friedman can stage the opening narrative of *The World Is Flat* unironically on a golf course in Bangalore where multinational corporate skyscrapers direct his aim. In his ahistorical vision, the arrival of western business signals India’s entrance into the global community (as if centuries of modern imperialism and ancient global trade did not).

I will pause now to define my key term of neoliberalism and consider its relationship with cosmopolitanism. In her seminal analysis of neoliberalism in the non-Western world, anthropologist Aihwa Ong recognizes the multiple meanings of this contested term. In the Global South, neoliberalism can signify American neoimperialism, managed by intermediaries like the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, and expressed through the hard drive for free markets in hitherto closed spaces. In domestic critiques, neoliberalism is understood as a form of neocolonization through which the United States acquires vital resources through military invention, mostly notably seen in the Iraq War. In American political discourse, however, Ong notes how neoliberalism is rarely used to describe the political, economic, and cultural shifts in post-70s America. Here, easy conflation of political and economic freedom allow conservative politicians and organizations to dramatically scale back institutionalized social services and promote policies that increase elite wealth and power. Thus, neoliberalism can be broadly understood as “radicalized capitalist imperialism that is increasingly tied to lawlessness and military action.”⁸

David Harvey, another important thinker on the subject, takes a slightly different track in his monograph on neoliberalism. Through a Marxist lens, Harvey seeks to historicize neoliberalism’s hegemony as economic policy and as political philosophy. His macroeconomic definition of the term echoes some of Ong’s formations: a celebration of private enterprise and of the individual (in the idiom of “responsibility”), distrust of state regulation, and advocacy for the free and rapid movement of capital everywhere, from foreign direct investment to outsourcing of production processes.⁹

Tracing its philosophical iterations from Locke to Mills to Kant, Harvey explores how earlier expressions of liberalism readily conflated an individual’s humanity with her/his/their economic productivity. This conflation is universalized as the human condition: a condition that exceeds the particularities of place and that demands self-governance and freedom from pre-modern tyrannies. Borrowing from postcolonial critics, Harvey underscores the liberal thinker’s selective application of the label “human” to justify imperial projects and the disenfranchisement of women, children, and people of color everywhere. The neoliberalism of today, Harvey contends, is expressed through these same problematic idioms of “freedom” and “individualism,” structured by the grammar of capitalism and conquest. In this way, neoliberalism becomes the vehicle for elite groups across the global to carry out a transnational class project, the fruition of which is their rapid and vast enrichment. As cosmopolitanism often requires a similar class privilege, I contend that neoliberalism is the universalizing shadow looming over many cosmopolitan projects.¹⁰ The resulting neoliberal cosmopolitanism offers the appeal of a humanitarian perspective without sacrificing the economic and social privileges neoliberalism has conferred on the few at the expense of the many.

What does a neoliberal cosmopolitanism look like? I turn now to a literary analysis of neoliberal cosmopolitanism and then to its fictional illustration in Salman Rushdie's work to answer that question.

The Ambivalent Tourist: Rushdie's Neoliberal Cosmopolitan

As literary critic Timothy Brennan notes, cosmopolitanism elicits "among other things, a thirst for another knowledge, unprejudiced striving, world travel, supple open-mindedness, broad international norms of civic equality, a politics of treaty and understanding rather than conquest."¹¹ This breadth in definition resonates with the problematics of cosmopolitanism discussed earlier, but offers the new, potentially productive element of ambivalence: "[cosmopolitanism] is a fundamentally ambivalent position" that shifts in definitional key terms depending on "whose prejudice, knowledge, or open-mindedness one is talking about."¹² This ambivalence allows for dangerous slippages from critique of dominant ideologies to a subtle acquiescence to them, and for Brennan, it is U.S. cultural and economic hegemony that shifts from problem to inevitability in the critical turn to cosmopolitanism. Focusing on post-Marxist cultural theory and postcolonial literature, Brennan illustrates how the cosmopolitan dismissal of nationalism and fixed cultural identities implicitly serves the interests of transnational capital, whose power brokers effectively argue in similar ways for a neoliberally run world.¹³ The political and literary limits of cosmopolitanism emerge through its easy dovetailing with neoliberal projects.

To consider literary cosmopolitan ambivalences, we would rightly turn to the work of Salman Rushdie, one of a host of cosmopolitan postcolonial authors.¹⁴ Moreover, to consider Rushdie's work in the high period of neoliberal cosmopolitanism, we would turn to his dot-com, post-9/11 novel, *Fury* (2001).¹⁵ Simultaneously a *fin-de-siècle* novel, a mid-life crisis narrative, and a satiric portrait of America, *Fury* presents the tale of Bombay-born, Cambridge-educated, and Manhattan-exiled Professor Malik Solanka. Earlier in life, the cosmopolitan professor turns away from the academy and towards educational television, namely to a show featuring puppets and philosophy. Little Brain, his star puppet, becomes a cultural sensation for her savvy interviews of great philosophical thinkers and stylish looks, and Solanka becomes very rich as a result. Despite his economic success, he is repeatedly overcome with a violent rage, one that drives him to almost kill his sleeping wife and child. Fleeing to Manhattan, he abandons his family to save them and seeks to lose his rage in America's vapid pop culture. The rage of the city, however, only heightens his own, until he finds emotional solace and sexual outlet in affairs with two young, gorgeous cosmopolitans: Mila Milo and Neela Mahendra. Even a quick review of the novel's plot illustrates Brennan's idea of cosmopolitan ambivalence and Harvey's exploration of its neoliberal underpinnings: the neoliberal city is sublime to Solanka, inspiring in him awe, horror, and rage. His access to its riches and an elevated social position from which to mock the aspirational hoards is conferred by his cosmopolitan past. Even his inexplicable sex appeal is attributed to his easy charm with elite women wherever he finds himself. Indeed, Solanka is the contemporary cosmopolitan with all its ambivalences: he is repelled by conspicuous consumption and attracted to dot-com wealth; he is enamored with the crowd and enraged by individuals; he is culturally comfortable and socially agitated in the various metropolises he calls home.

Before examining the novel further, a word must be said on Rushdie's own status as a cosmopolitan author and his relationship to the cosmopolitan ambivalence of the well-heeled set. Lest we commit the authorial fallacy, we should gesture towards one of Rushdie's numerous claims to a cosmopolitan, liberal perspective on art and politics. A host of essay collections make his political alliances clear.¹⁶ A mix of literary criticism, nation theory, and religious critique, each collection reveals his tacit acceptance of the secular nation state expressed through a politically liberal perspective. Rushdie travels widely across subject matter and spaces, too—a cosmopolitan Solanka perhaps echoes. In one essay in particular, Rush-

die comments that “liberal capitalism or democracy of the free world will require novelists’ more rigorous attention, will require reimagining and questioning and doubting as never before.”¹⁷ Refraining from questioning or doubting the current economic order, Rushdie proposes that, while inevitable, neoliberal capitalism must be monitored by artists as those projects come to non-Western spaces.¹⁸ A little later in the same piece, he positions the novel as a cosmopolitan arena for democratically preserving particularity in the midst of the transnational: “Literature is the one place in any society where, within the secrecy of our own heads, we can hear *voices talking about everything in every possible way.*”¹⁹ The novel’s purpose is to educate readers on complex political realities, and it is telling that Rushdie imagines that purpose through the (neo)liberal trope of the individual.

With this take on the novel as an imagined cosmopolitan space, we should also situate our analysis of *Fury* in Rushdie’s more contemporaneous nonfiction, which quickly illustrates his deepening cosmopolitan ambivalence in his critique of fundamentalist violence and acceptance of Western neoimperialism. Immediately after the attacks on 9/11, Rushdie publicly aligned himself with the United States, describing his political position as one aligned with those rooted against fundamentalist violence and supporting the sending of “our shadow-warriors against theirs” (though tempering his call for US militarism with appeals for better intelligence: “No more Sudanese aspirin factories to be bombed, please”).²⁰ Later in the editorial, his acquiescence to internal surveillance and US militarism shifts into an excoriating of the critique of American geopolitical hegemony: to argue that American foreign policy wrought the 9/11 attacks is “appalling rubbish” and “sanctimonious moral relativism.”²¹ Rushdie’s individual experiences with the fatwa aside, his sudden rush to defend the actions of a right-wing American president and ignore an American neoimperialist legacy in the Middle East warrants some consideration. Rushdie cannot defend the metropole and the globally oppressed in the same breath, thus he sacrifices the latter to align himself with the former. Suddenly, there are fewer voices speaking in Rushdie’s private, cosmopolitan imaginary of the novel.²²

Moving back to *Fury*, we see the novel doing little to explicitly recover the cosmopolitan Rushdie. The failure is painfully ironic as *Fury*’s geographic and historical backdrop, financially booming New York City of the late twentieth century, seems the perfect ground for a cosmopolitan confrontation of neoliberal practice.²³ In a cursory engagement with neoliberalism, Rushdie considers postcolonial issues of location and belonging in a historical moment marked by the mass dislocation and the selective enrichment of late capitalism, and these concerns echo earlier cosmopolitan writings—of Bruce Robbins in particular. Yet the novel’s protagonist suffers from perpetual identity crises that continually distract him from meaningfully engaging his surroundings. Largely, the crisis is gendered—his male mid-life nightmare figures women as emasculating and treacherous, as even his prized puppet adopts the stereotypical demon-woman role—a theme reminiscent of Rushdie’s earlier demon woman, Sufiya Zinobia of *Shame*. Such personal turmoil frustrates any explicitly postcolonial challenge to the neoliberal status quo.

However, a closer reading of the narrative reveals more than a crisis of masculinity: Rushdie also articulates an ambivalence towards the postcolonial migrant’s negotiations of the neoliberal order. Such ambivalence could certainly open up a space of critique as Brennan suggests, so it is worth lingering over Solanka’s uncertainties in his neoliberal environs. Solanka is simultaneously enamored and disgusted with the glittering spectacle of American wealth, thus lending a critically interesting ambivalence to his perceptions of New York as the representative American space: one he believes is dominated by the towering lady of liberty, and one he recognizes as ravaging the developing world for cheap labor and resources. Marking his own placelessness, Solanka embodies the locational ambivalence of migration as he has traversed and settled on three continents without feeling completely at home on any of them. Partially out of wanderlust and partially out of self-help, Solanka arrives in America to find a release from the horrible fury that grips him and that likely has cosmopolitan origins: he survived a disturbing

childhood in a colonized land (in India), matures within in the racially isolating educational system of the colonizer (in England), and flees both pasts for the mindless self-absorption of the present neo-imperial power (in the U.S.). Through Solanka's desire for and unease in each potential homeland, Rushdie may be subtly critiquing (and implicating himself in his approval of) America's global oppressive hegemony in economic and cultural realms. As postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha has theorized, the ambivalence of mimicry and colonized identity can propose a means for resistance, acting as a living reminder of the paradox between colonizers' homogenizing project and racist rejection of native assimilation.²⁴ In Rushdie's text, Solanka's migrant position may allow him that same subversiveness in the context of globalized finance and multinational corporations.

Logically, an initial critique of neoliberalism comes in the form of Solanka's disorientation in the heart of American financial power. Opening with a survey of the metropole's wealth, Rushdie establishes Professor Solanka's voyeuristic relationship with the neoliberal, American city living large off financial speculation. At first, he seems to be there to watch the spectacle of the opulent city unfold. Indeed, unencumbered by work or financial need himself, Solanka spends much of the book playing the affluent tourist or flâneur. But he is no vapid tourist. Both Solanka and the narrator are attuned to the ludicrous consumption that surrounds them as affluent Americans register their cosmopolitanism through conspicuous consumption—and protagonist and author disdainfully render their judgments. In the opening pages of *Fury*, Rushdie wryly catalogues spectacular wealth and conspicuous consumption:

limited-edition olive oils, three-hundred-dollar corkscrews, customized Humvees, ... outsider art, featherlight shawls made from the chin-fluff of extinct mountain goats. So many people were doing up their apartments that supplies of high-grade fixtures and fittings were at a premium ... In spite of the recent falls in the value of the Nasdaq index and the value of Amazon stock, the new technology had the city by the ears: the talk was still of start-ups, IPOs, interactivity, the unimaginable future that had just begun to begin. The future was a casino, and everyone was gambling, and everyone expected to win.²⁵

The rapid-fire descriptions of cosmopolitan goods and financial investment convey both the whirlwind atmosphere of Solanka's new environs as well as the seductive lure of the wares themselves; thusly, his ambivalence is registered. Rushdie's characteristic sarcasm can be heard in the lines quoted above, but the speedy sentence structure does more than illustrate the metaphor: it also imparts the siren's song of America's conspicuous consumption in Solanka's ears. Shortly after this mocking description, the consumer-carnival that greets the professor from his apartment-window gazing is only somewhat negative to him or to the narrator—as Solanka's story unfolds, we see his easy affiliations with the nouveau riche and the dot-com world. Early on, Solanka eagerly wanders through streets that offer makeshift bazaars, then identity parades, and finally spontaneous dance parties. The deeper the professor digs into the city, the more Rushdie distances Solanka's experiences from any potentially savvy global critiques. Grounded in neoliberal cosmopolitanism as Solanka is, the distance comes with his rather smooth transition into life with Manhattan's elite. As he sheds his touristic and flâneur-ish perspective, his critiques all but vanish. Indeed, Solanka is at home in this elite world: he speaks the language, secures rental property in a fashionable neighborhood, socializes with old friends, takes several younger lovers, and helps create a profitable website.

Of course, it is his cosmopolitan identity and elite class position that allow for such a smooth transition into New York City life. Situating Solanka's critiques within a more cosmopolitan context, we begin to see Rushdie's creation of a "globetrotter," to borrow Zygmunt Bauman's concept: a wanderer by choice, easily adapting to homogenized niches, carved into local landscapes by highly mobile elites.²⁶

Within the same paragraph that critiques American culture as costly spectacle, “there were circuses as well as bread,” Solanka marks himself as a “metropolitan of the countryside-is-for-cows persuasion” who gladly walks alongside his “fellow citizens” of the American global city.²⁷ Extending this egalitarian vision of said global city, Rushdie grants Solanka a modicum of class awareness as he ponders the ease with which he has abandoned his London-based family and home. He cannot translate his flight into a Hindu rejection of the material world as “a sanyasi with a duplex and gold card was a contradiction in terms.”²⁸ The professor’s methods are self-consciously “first world” (in Bauman’s terms) as he travels unimpeded by spatial, national, or economic constraints thanks to recent neoliberal efforts to reduce those barriers.²⁹ Ever the neoliberal cosmopolitan, Solanka can uproot, traverse the globe, begin housekeeping, and rebuild himself—wherever his gold card is accepted.

Even the ostensibly progressive source of Solanka’s wealth, Little Brain, illustrates how neoliberal cosmopolitanism can co-opt the dream of a global culture. Brennan’s analysis of cosmopolitanism and its potential subversion of neoliberal power structures speaks directly to this quandary, as cosmopolitanism is essentially a subtle product of its subject of critique: neoliberal economic and cultural hegemony. Cosmopolitanism’s inefficacy is compounded then by “an [American] argument about the importance of a white, middle-class minority in the political sense of the term”³⁰—a minority that defines the parameters of what Stuart Hall calls “global mass culture.”³¹ To Hall, the easy, instant arrival and absorption of American images across physical and linguistic boundaries is a form of cultural imperialism rather than the spontaneous mixing of local cultures. Indeed, linguistically localized as Anglo-American, these pop cultural signs are rendered universal because of their purported accessibility, and their transmission across the globe makes them so. Thus, the continuities between cosmopolitanism and Anglo-American cultural/economic hegemony prevent the former from thinking beyond the classed, racial, and (I would add) gendered norms imposed by their geographic origins. In short, through neoliberally informed cosmopolitanism, Anglo-American racism, sexism, and classism go global. *Fury* shifts this problem back to the Anglo side of cultural production: Solanka’s Little Brain and her accompanying television show can exemplify Western beauty and racial norms, celebrate the Western canon of philosophical thinkers, and be a global phenomenon.

Beyond culture, Rushdie also illustrates the limits of cosmopolitanism as meaningful critique of neoliberalism’s specifically economic oppressions. Solanka’s early criticisms of consumerism skim the surface of globalized production and wealth, which one scene illustrates well. On his first walk through the neighborhood, Solanka notes a street vendor’s imitation designer handbags and references a name-brand secondhand store, labeling both as signs of global economic inequality. The crime resides in America’s apathy towards its wealth, which drives the upwardly mobile of developing nations mad with envy. Rather than turn his flâneur-ish eye onto the manufacturing sector, perhaps stumbling across an apartment-turned-sweatshop or a trafficked laborer, the professor’s thoughts circle around the wealth itself and its assumedly tragic, poor distribution among the world’s bourgeoisie. He cannot look behind the label (or imitated label), so he never questions the possibly exploitative production involved in manufacturing the clothing or the non-elite migratory flows that bolster that industry. Nor does he pause to describe the actual persons hawking the illegal wares, who are unlikely to participate in any lavish consumption. Solanka interacts only with other cosmopolitans, migrants by choice, rather than those migrants of necessity.

One might argue that Solanka’s indifference to immigrant working-class struggle is in itself a critique, both of the situation and of the protagonist himself. However, Brennan’s explanation of the Southern, cosmopolitan writer’s treatment of transnational life offers an explanation for Solanka’s class-based apathy, as the writer “join[s] an impassioned political sarcasm (a situated satire) with ironic detachment, employing humor with a cosmic, celebratory pessimism.”³² Even if Rushdie is mocking Solanka with his tepid criticism of neoliberalism and the bourgeois of the Global South, the very effect of that criticism is

detached and cursory, resulting in an implicitly fatalistic vision of global class structures as imperturbable. Moreover, Solanka's stumblings into other overly political metaphors do not speak highly of his critical acumen. The spectacle of New York and his emotional neediness are too distracting. Encountering a celebration of sexual and then of national identity, Solanka represses his troubling memories of violence (realized and potential) within his various families, all while "rub[bing] shoulders and [getting] jiggy" with the vulgar masses.³³ The crowds become spaces in which to dissolve as Malik, ever the flâneur, sees the gay pride marches and Puerto Rican girls there "to lose themselves" as well.³⁴ It is an ironic interpretation as both gatherings are the public performance of marginal identities; this publicized naming and claiming of otherness draws Solanka in, which he interprets as "the unarticulated magic of the masses," promising the "satisfying anonymity" he desperately desires.³⁵ Solanka's reading of collective self-negation can only be a projection of what he needs New York City, and by extension, America, to be: the ahistorical, apolitical country; the land of perpetual, self-centered self-construction. It is the perfect articulation of the neoliberal obsession with individualism, tinged with a hint of economic privilege and consumeristic desire.

Revealing the illusion of neoliberal cosmopolitan detachment, Solanka embraces American vapidness and narcissism. Indeed, for the first half of the text, New York City figures as the ultimate panacea for the migrant man's mid-life crisis:

It was precisely his back-story that he wanted to destroy. ... He had come to America as so many before him to receive the benison of being Ellis-Islanded, of starting over. Give me a name, America, make me a Buzz or a Chip or a Spike. Bathe me in amnesia and clothe me in your powerful unknowing. Enlist me in your J. Crew and hand me my mouse ears! No longer a historian but a man without histories let me be. I'll rip my lying mother tongue out of my throat and speak your broken English instead.³⁶

The soporific thrill of American ignorance to global realities—criticisms for which Rushdie later upbraids British journalists covering Ground Zero—this is the viagra for Solanka's creative impotence. To drug himself with culturally sanctioned amnesia means to forget history, including the geopolitical and economic policies that signify the U.S. as a neocolonial force. Indeed, Solanka readily jumps into the neoliberal cyber-marketplace that elides the reality of the sweatshop, the death squad, and perpetuation of global poverty. Parroting tech-marketing rhetoric, Rushdie celebrates the Internet's revolutionary time-space collapse as "available to all, at the merest click of a mouse,"³⁷ rendering a virtual cosmopolitan identity as infinitely accessible. Never does this cosmopolitan mind that the chip-manufacturing sector relies heavily on sweated labor in the Global South or that the digital divide is a local as well as global chasm. For this cyber venture on an online Little Brain, while augmenting Solanka's already impressive wealth, assuages his masculine crisis. Thus, it is the unapologetic and uncritical participation in the new global economy that Rushdie cites as curative for Solanka's anxieties about age, gender, and identity.

Gendering Cosmopolitanism

Importantly, the tech economy is not the only problematic solution for his migrant hero. Rushdie rather dramatically turns Solanka towards women as a site of psychological relief. Here, again, we see an ambivalence that veers to the uncritical and oppressive. As Ambreen Hai suggests, Rushdie's feminism is an ambivalent one, revealing potentially liberating and insightful critiques of patriarchy.³⁸ Indeed, both central women in the text, Mila Milosevic and Neela Mahendra, share the protagonist's migrant and cosmopolitan identity, suggesting an agency drawn from class position and cultural mobility. Relevant to

the context of the transnational is the considerable scholarly work and human rights reporting that continually describe women as the most exploited of those who suffer the short-ended stick of our new global economy. On the flip side of that gendered coin, Mila and Neela represent independent, economically powerful women thriving in the global city. That representation counters the homogenized portrait of the immiserated and violated “Third World woman” that dominates most Western cultural presentations of women in the Global South.³⁹ That the women initially figure as fellow cosmopolitan immigrants cannot be ignored as a challenge to homogenized portraits of Southern women’s disempowerment.

Indeed, Mila’s entrance into the text offers the potential for cosmopolitan bonding as she and Solanka immediately recognize each other as “outsiders” in America. Sharp-eared Mila detects the colonial accent in Solanka’s voice and hails him as a fellow European migrant. She too has caught Solanka’s wandering eye, and not for wholly sexual reasons at first. Despite her decidedly American dress—baggy clothes, black D’Angelo Voodoo baseball cap—Mila appears too striking to pass for the khaki-clad, Nike-wearing denizens of Solanka’s treasured America. Her appearance is doubly significant, molded as she has after Solanka’s beloved and first puppet character, Little Brain. Now lost to her global-cultural icon status (a loss that figures as a primary source of his creative rage), Little Brain once signified for Solanka spunky intellectual vivacity: L.B., the ultimate cosmopolitan, was “his hip, fashion-conscious, but still idealistic *Candide*”⁴⁰ who travels through time to interview famous, male (of course) philosophers. Rushdie deliberately sends Mila into the narrative as Solanka’s first human, creative lifeline as she mimics a past sign of artistic energy and an idealized expression of the cosmopolitan elite.

Soon, however, her palliative status ends, illustrating the limits of cosmopolitanism to right emotional wrongs of the past. Mila’s compassion for the ruin inflicted by Solanka’s fury comes from her own experience of a father destroyed by the demons of divisive nationalisms and historical conflict, echoing that which cosmopolitan solutions propose to redress. After the professor confides in Mila about his loss of Little Brain and his flight to New York, she explains the death of her mother, a life on the literary superstar circuit with her talented, ex-pat father, and his sudden death during his return to Serbia. The explanation reveals her as another well-educated globetrotter, raised in the conference rooms of prestigious, international literary gatherings and educated by the finest tutors. Also a victim of childhood trauma, Mila shares in Solanka’s desires to dissolve painful pasts into American pop cultural oblivion. More importantly, though, she illustrates the failure of that self-abnegation. Later, when Malik enters Mila’s apartment he is quick to notice that even the room “was trying hard to be an all-American apartment but failing badly,” with posters of American pop icons overshadowed by massive bookshelves filled with Eastern European literature.⁴¹ As neither she nor Solanka can forget their pasts, Mila decides that Solanka must revitalize himself through artistic creation by bringing another puppet world to life. So he does, with Mila’s help. Her particular method of assistance is where Mila’s character settles into a portrait of perversity and feminine deviance.

With Mila, Rushdie shifts from ignoring the class privilege of the cosmopolitan experience to overlooking the gendered privilege of these men of the world. Fellow female cosmopolitans come to serve Solanka’s creative and physical needs as Mila most explicitly inspires and services him through incestuous role play. The quick objectification by Rushdie’s cosmopolitan protagonist is not terribly surprising, as some critics of cosmopolitanism have noted the limited gender analysis in the theory. As anthropologist Maila Stivens has argued, the cosmopolitan perspective is also often doubly coded as elite and as masculine.⁴² Cultural studies scholar Mica Nava, whose work explicitly addresses feminine cosmopolitanism in the British metropole, also concedes that “the specificity of *gendered* relations to elsewhere and otherness, whether racist or anti-racist, has attracted little attention.”⁴³ Rushdie’s gender blind spot merely mirrors the common trends of cosmopolitanisms to ignore the gender inequality inherent in (trans)national mobility and privilege.

However common, this particular blindspot is incredibly troubling, as the following close reading will reveal. And the neoliberal slant of Mila's gendered objectification is also notable and even more disturbing, given the overt references to incest. As is inexplicably common in *Fury*, Solanka's late-middle-age charm ultimately drives the young beauty mad with passion for him. This passion will serve economically productive ends as part of Solanka's artistic flow is dammed by more than fury's scars and cosmopolitan wanderings: he has become creatively impotent. Mila, mimicking the earliest, original version of Little Brain, becomes an older, real version of his doll-daughter. Afternoon discussions between the professor and woman take an unsettling turn when the encounters gradually become sexualized. Getting her own key to his apartment, Mila comes to the professor every afternoon, dressed in a baby-doll nightie, to sit upon a pillow perched on the professor's soon-to-be excited lap and grope him for several hours. Mila explicitly labels herself in these scenes as a lustful Lolita, a living doll for his cathartic amusement: "Everybody needs a doll to play with... You don't need it anymore, all that rage. You just need to remember how to play."⁴⁴ Here, the intellectual, wordly Mila is reduced to sexy muse whose prowess unleashes Solanka's profitable creativity, updated for the cyber marketplace.

As Solanka and Mila's encounters become more problematic, Solanka's powerlessness is reiterated as he fails to refuse Mila and to see the cosmopolitan city that he once imagined as gleefully harboring. Indeed, the global city all but dissolves as Rushdie situates the narrative in the private space of Solanka's bedroom. It isn't until the sexual culmination of their illicit afternoons, rather than the acknowledgment of their mutual perversity, that Solanka emerges out of the bedroom and out of his funk. After one of their petting sessions, Solanka keeps Mila from leaving by sharing with her his hypothesis on the varying translations of the fellatio in English and American contexts. Fellatio is rare and signified as extremely intimate in England; whereas, in the United States, its commonality results in a desire for female sexual purity and male satisfaction. Narratively, the tirade gives Mila the inspiration and excuse to remove the pillow in "an unexpected and overwhelming escalation of their end-of-afternoon routine."⁴⁵ Through a narrative jump in time, Rushdie elides the highly probable oral sex scene between Solanka and Mila, through which she can conveniently satisfy the professor without asking him to transcend too taboo a boundary—no matter how metaphorical it is between them. That evening, the professor renews his old creative pursuit of dollmaking with "new fire," after a pep talk from Mila heavily laden with sexual innuendo:

There's so much inside you, waiting, she had said. I can feel it, you're bursting with it. Here, here. Put it into your work, Papi. The furia. Okay? ... Make me dolls that come from [the original Little Brain's] neighborhood—from that wild place in your heart... Blow me away, Papi. ... Make adult dolls, R-rated, NC-17 dolls. I'm not a kid anymore.⁴⁶

Sexual metaphor saturates Mila's talk and inspires Solanka to start creating those wilder dolls to fulfill Mila's desire—the incest taboo turned global commodity. Mila ceases to be a sexual deviant, becoming a less disturbing muse, albeit still a figure whose power comes from her sexuality. She is now "genuinely inspiring," and with her "potent urgings," Solanka's "long congealed and damned" ideas to "burn and flow."⁴⁷ Interestingly enough, Mila's dropping of her childlike, doll persona in the speech becomes narrative reality for her. The afternoons with Papi cease, though not for any ethical reasons. Solanka simply finds a more beautiful cosmopolitan with which to replace her, Neela, who ends up, not dumped, but dead.

Borrowing from Aijaz Ahmad's "symptomatic reading" of misogynistic feminine representations in *Shame*, I read Rushdie's continual figuring of women as monstrous virgins or sexy muses as compromising any meaningful critique of neoliberalism that Solanka's earlier cosmopolitan ambivalences might

have suggested.⁴⁸ Indeed, if one's goal is to complicate neoliberal power dynamics, then reproducing misogynist images of women suggests a limited attempt at best. Here, we are reminded of Stiven's critique of cosmopolitan discourse as uncritically grounding itself in masculine privilege.⁴⁹ Rushdie's call for "rigorous attention" to current geopolitical events sounds rather weak if his "reimagining" ratifies gender inequalities, and the only voices echoing in the cosmopolitan imaginary of the novel are patriarchal.⁵⁰

Ultimately, through unsettling narrative and conspicuous silences, *Fury* illustrates the shortcomings of cosmopolitan ambiguities in the negotiations of present-day neoliberal ventures and gendered inequalities. We should, as Edward Said suggests, offer readings "that gives voice to what is silent or marginally present" in metropolitan novels that introduce colonial space as a backdrop or plot device.⁵¹ Those with a cosmopolitan perspective, it seems, would have even stronger impetus to do so. In this essay, I have outlined the limits of cosmopolitanism to complicate current global power structures, particularly in the ways in which it might simply reproduce them. What is surprisingly missing in Rushdie's text is an engagement with the problematic gender and class realities that allow a cosmopolitan man, of colonial origins or not, to prosper from an exploitative world economy that has dramatically widened the gap between rich and poor. What *Fury* does illustrate is gendered inequalities, but only as experienced by elite cosmopolitan women. A narrative so interested in stock-market fortunes and cyber revolutions as well as once-marginalized colonial identities (be they South Asian or Eastern European), could easily articulate the exploitive practices of neoliberalism. And a writer explicitly concerned with the careful evaluation of liberal capitalism should have little trouble imagining the persons forced to live in squalor and work in quasi-prisons so that his protagonist's global city can be paved with gold. Though Solanka crosses continents, we never glimpse a sweatshop or slum. Indeed, Rushdie resolves his narrative with Solanka's return to the distinctly American metropole to reclaim his role as bourgeois father. The global city and Solanka the cosmopolitan, for all their ill-begotten wealth, are supplanted for the restitution of patriarchy and the rejection of narrative challenge to neoliberalism. Cosmopolitanism purports to offer a non-oppressive identity in a transnational world. However, the theory is easily appropriated by neoliberal values and projects, as *Fury* readily demonstrates. Indeed, Rushdie's novel offers us little more than cosmopolitan elitism and unsettling gender constructs.

Notes

1. An inventory of this scholarship would be too large to include in this essay, but, for a sample of salient publications across disciplinary divides, see Nussbaum's *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (2006), Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), Robbin's *Perpetual War: Cosmopolitanism from the Viewpoint of Violence* (2012) and *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (1998), Gilroy's *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004), Sassen's *The Global City* (1991), and Beck's *Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006).
2. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: An Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Penguin, 2006). Walking through the term's philosophical history and his own cosmopolitan upbringing, Appiah sees cosmopolitanism as a discursive strategy through which one can tolerate difference. The metaphor of conversation frequently appears to encourage the requisite familiarity of difference, rather than its acceptance, which would ostensibly make for a peaceful, or at least tolerant, world community.
3. Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London: Routledge, 2004). Specifically, Gilroy deploys cosmopolitanism to get outside of more singular analyses of race and gender to both critique and revive multiculturalism in Great Britain. The term allows him to

- then critique the erasure of the multicultural city in the whitewashed film *Notting Hill* and the colonial nostalgia alive and well in British football chants. Cosmopolitanism's possibilities reside in its popular expressions from the city itself as seen in several multiracial pop artists, including the hip hop artist *The Streets* and Sasha Baron Cohen's parody, *Ali G*.
4. Bruce Robbins, *Perpetual War: Cosmopolitanism from the Viewpoint of Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). Continuing in his exploration of a "new cosmopolitanism," Robbins calls for a globally mindful view to combat the perpetual militarism of the United States and economic inequality. His "new, dirty cosmopolitanism" seeks to revise the neoliberal agenda into one of local and global social justice. As is well known, Robbins is not one to throw the national baby out with the cosmopolitan bathwater.
 5. David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
 6. Ibid.
 7. These arguments are popularly represented in much of Thomas Friedman's work, namely in *The World is Flat*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2005) and *Hot, Flat and Crowded* (New York: Picador, 2008).
 8. See Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 1-4.
 9. See David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
 10. David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). Similar arguments are made by international-relations scholar Peter Gowan in "Neoliberal Cosmopolitanism," *New Left Review* 11 (2001): 75-93; sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos in "Beyond Neoliberal Governance: The World Social Forum as Subaltern Cosmopolitan Politics," in *Law and Globalization from Below: Towards a Cosmopolitan Legality*, ed. De Sousa Santos and Rodriguez-Garavito, 29-63; and sociologist Craig J. Calhoun in "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Towards a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism" *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.4 (2002): 869-897; among others.
 11. Timothy Brennan, "Cosmo-Theory," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.3 (2001): 659.
 12. Ibid, 659.
 13. Timothy Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
 14. In an earlier work, Brennan classifies Rushdie as "Third-World Cosmopolitan" writer, including Isabel Allende, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Derek Walcott, among others. Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989).
 15. Salman Rushdie, *Fury: A Novel* (New York: Random House, 2001).
 16. See, for example, Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (New York: Penguin, 1992), *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey* (New York: Random House, 1987), and *Step Across the Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002* (New York: Random House, 2002).
 17. Salman Rushdie, "Is Nothing Sacred" in *Imaginary Homelands*, 426-27.
 18. Rushdie's concern in the larger piece is the rise of fundamentalist Islam as the new foil to Western liberal democracy and capitalism in the post-Soviet era.
 19. Ibid, 427. Emphasis in the original.
 20. Salman Rushdie "Fighting the Forces of Invisibility," *Washington Post*, October 2, 2001. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2001/10/02/fighting-the-forces-of-invisibility/5ef65046-32ed-4888-ad3c-f009d4347e64/>

21. Ibid.
22. Brennan historicizes an earlier qualifying of his once progressive politics, reading Rushdie's more muted criticisms of the Thatcher-esque conservatism as a direct result of the fatwa and his attendant, precarious position. With his life at stake, Rushdie found himself dependent on the British government, with its long history of working-class and immigrant repression, all the more heightened during the introduction of neoliberal policies. His dependence, Brennan argues, muted any leftist criticisms of his new-found protectors. Thus, "the Rushdie that the fatwa kidnapped" was a serious and savvy writer who openly opposed imperialism, orientalism, and anti-democratic movements. See Timothy Brennan, "The Cultural Politics of Rushdie Criticism: All or Nothing," In *Critical Essays on Salman Rushdie* ed. M. Keith Booker (New York: G.K. Hall, 1999), 120.
23. Indeed, it is not by chance that the Occupy Wall Street movement was born in New York as it unfolded in the heart of Wall Street. That movement offered a sort of cosmopolitan politics to redress the economic ravaging of much of the Global North and South post-the Great Financial Crisis. Rushdie's Solanka is too caught up in the glittering excesses of free market to notice the seeds of those politics around him.
24. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Men" In *Locations of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
25. Rushdie, *Fury*, 3-4.
26. Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
27. Ibid., 6.
28. Ibid., 82.
29. Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization*.
30. Brennan, *At Home in the World*, 310.
31. Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity" in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, eds. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti & Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 378.
32. Brennan, *At Home in the World*, 41.
33. Rushdie, *Fury*, 7.
34. Ibid., 7.
35. Ibid., 7.
36. Ibid., 51.
37. Ibid., 187.
38. Ambreen Hai, "Marching in from the Peripheries: Rushdie's Feminized Artistry and Ambivalent Feminism" In *Critical Essays on Salman Rushdie*, ed. M. Keith Booker (New York: G.K. Hall, 1999). 16-50.
39. This argument is most famously argued by Chandra Mohanty. See Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" in *Feminist Review* 30, (1988): 61-88.
40. Rushdie, *Fury*, 17.
41. Ibid., 176.
42. Maila Stivens, "Gender, Rights and Cosmopolitanisms" in *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives*, ed. Pnina Werbner (New York: Berg, 2008).
43. Mica Nava, "Domestic Cosmopolitanism and Structures of Feeling: The Specificity of London" in *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, eds. Nira Yuval-Davis, Kalpana Kannabiran and Ulrike

- Vieten (London: Sage, 2006), 42.
44. Ibid., 130.
 45. Ibid., 137.
 46. Ibid., 138.
 47. Ibid., 138.
 48. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (New York: Verso, 1992), 152.
 49. Stivens, "Gender, Rights and Cosmopolitanisms."
 50. Rushdie, "Is Nothing Sacred," 426-27.
 51. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 66.

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Day by Date: Postcolonial Contention and Cosmopolitan Temporality in Niyi Osundare's *Days*

Senayon Olaoluwa
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

Framing the Cosmopolitanism of Time

The centrality of movement to the ideals and practice of cosmopolitanism is obvious in critical scholarship in so many areas. However, the extent to which the discourse is extended to the notion of time may not have been as dispersed. Similarly, the hybridity that is forced upon the postcolonial world may have received much attention from scholars and critics, but such attention cannot be said to have engaged the idea of time with as much vigour. Perhaps this condition of sparse attention to both areas stems from the assumption that there is a contemporary global synchronization of temporality which overrides other paradigms, as they are construed to be subordinated to a perceived universal paradigm. This essay therefore reads Niyi Osundare's long poem *Days* as addressing the cultural tensions and diffusions that have resulted in the synchronization of the postcolonial temporal paradigms and those of western temporal model. It acknowledges the agency of modernity in the subordination of other temporal paradigms. For, prior to western modernity, the rendition of time as a quotidian exigency was invented and observed relative to given cultures and spaces. Invariably, the parallel paradigm of time utility finds its finest expression in the assertion that "the clocks of all men and women, of all civilizations, are not set at the same hour."¹ Modernity, that is, when construed in singularity, has thus meant the imposition of a kind of universal setting of contemporary civilizations at the same hour. The struggle to maintain this credo of universalism has meant, more often than not, the performance of hybridity in formerly colonized spaces.

For the postcolonial world in particular, the imposition of western time order centralizes the quantitative logic of the Gregorian Calendar. Invented by Christopher Clavius in the late 16th century,² the calendar relied on colonial might and its attendant teleology of the civilizing mission, to gain popularity and dispersal. Yet even in the western world, the invention of the calendar was originally received with skepticism and reluctance when it was first adopted by the Catholic Church. This eventuated in controversies which produced gradation and phases of adoption in the West and other parts of the world.³ The "ordering of difference"⁴ as typical of colonial practice, presented the Gregorian Calendar and by implication—the colonial calendar—as the temporal measure of universal civilization. It was indeed deployed against the indigenous forms of time reckoning and other similarly conceived notions of temporality. Invariably, western imposition became established and integrated into the psyche of the colonies, to the extent that there was no question about its retention after independence. This was precisely because the modernization project of colonialism was already benchmarked by and harmonized with the

time model dictated by the Gregorian Calendar.

Having abandoned African pre-colonial modes of temporal rendition to obsolescence and ruin, the tendency for many is to gloss over the resilience of such indigenous modes of temporality while celebrating the exotic in the name of the universal in the postcolonial era. Yet, if the modernity of the West—which was expressed through colonialism in Africa—prided itself on a kind of cosmopolitan credential,⁵ Africa's modernity, as will be illustrated by the Yoruba worldview in this essay, is no less cosmopolitan. Moreover, the question of western modernity was itself mediated and inspired by some kind of utopia which located movement at its core. In Couton and López's explication,⁶ although utopianism is today considered a potentially dangerous conceptual domain, such view:

overlooks the fact that, from its inception, movement has been central to the utopian tradition. The power of utopianism indeed resides in its ability to instantiate the tension between movement and place that has marked social transformations in the modern era. This tension continues in contemporary discussions of movement-based social processes, particularly international migration and related identity formations, such as open borders, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Understood as such, utopia remains an ongoing and powerful, albeit problematic instrument of social and political imagination.

Utopianism, moreover, is necessarily associated with pleasures which combine with imagined attraction of places to engender movement wherever it has been known to make an impact. Movement in this sense is construed as an all-round journey in which case departure and return are constitutive. In the colonial world, the dispersal of this paradigm was at once a justification for the workings of utopia. Additionally, the movement of the colonized across the British metropolis during and after colonialism also served to complement the utopian process.

What is more, by historicizing the Western temporal paradigm through a rendition of the Gregorian Calendar, it becomes even clearer that the exploitative notoriety of the modernity that framed colonialism goes back as far as the onset of the Middle Ages. According to Lynn White,

The same exploitative attitude appears slightly before A.D. 830 in western illustrated calendars. In older calendars the months were shown as passive personifications. The new Frankish calendars, which set the style for Middle Ages, are very different: they show men coercing the world around them—plowing (sic), harvesting, chopping trees, butchering pigs. Man and nature are two things, and man is master.⁷

The symbolism of discriminating between man and nature in order to exploit the latter created an absolutism of superiority. It would later inform the designation of the colonized others as exotic in order to justify the exploitation of both human and natural resources in spaces outside the western world. In Africa, the exploitation of the West started with the expression of interest in African natural resources in exchange for western goods. But what started on a rather equally "passive" note was soon to change into a re-definition of terms. Africans were sooner considered to be inferior and comparable at best to lesser human beings in order that the Western "man" could be considered "master." It is in this very sense that we come to terms with the role of the Western invented calendar in the prosecution of colonialism and imperialism both of which are best summed in exploitation.

But to assume that there was no equivalent modernity of temporality on the ground at the advent of colonialism in Africa is to deny the obvious. Chinua Achebe's cultural novels, for instance, give an indication of a clearly defined mode of temporal reckoning, in which case the market days, Orié, Nkwo,

Eke, and Afor serve both as market and week days. The foregrounding of the market days is instructive. The days are analogous to the commercial calendar of, say, the Ottoman Empire, which in spite of the patronage of the Gregorian Calendar in Turkey today, is still resiliently operational.⁸ In a similar vein, the Ogu/Gu people of Nigeria and Benin Republic stuck then and still stick to the rendition of temporality by reckoning time in terms of their market days among which are Hundo, Jegan, Petu and Soki. The Luo people of western Kenya still in their own way continue to hold tenaciously to their sense of time while allowing the western temporality to take its quotidian course. In this sense, cyclical phases and series of sequential events typify time as a relational concept.⁹

For the Yoruba in particular, four days originally used to make a week. As a common saying now goes, “*Bo ni se ri ola o ri be e, ni mu ki babalawo o difa ororun*” (An Ifa priest makes an-every-fifth-day-divination because today does not necessarily prefigure tomorrow). The adage feeds into the ontological practice of Yoruba sense of time. The divination of life renewal every five days speaks to the understanding that a new week begins on every fifth day. It then presupposes that for the Yoruba, four days originally made a week. The invention of the Gregorian Calendar was not without its spiritual undercurrent. Similarly, the Yoruba cosmology is also steeped in the account of the sacred, as the four days did not just appear in primordial times from the blues. According to C. L. Adeoye,¹⁰ the making of the original Yoruba days involved utopianism and its attendant movement. As he explains, Orunmila had to travel to heaven upon the creation of the earth to ask Olodumare, or the Almighty, for days. But what Orunmila got was a temporal bulk called “Ose” (week) which he thereafter broke into four and shared with three other gods. The days in the said order were named after certain gods who in turn shared the days together with other smaller gods. Each day is therefore reckoned against the predominant god that possessed it:

1. Obatala—*Ojo Ose*.....Obatala Day
2. Orunmila—*Ojo Awo*.....Orunmila—Awo (Cult) Day
3. Ogun—*Ojo Ogun*.....Ogun—Ogun Day
4. Sango—*Ojo Jakuta*.....Sango—Sango Day¹¹

The four days, in the above order constitute what is known as *Ose Orun*, indicating that a week ends on the fourth day and a new one begins on every fifth day after the Sango Day.

There is a second category of weekly rendition among the Yoruba; this is the week that Ela brought with him to the world. This is why it is called *Ose Ela* (Ela Week), Ela being an equivalent of Jesus Christ in Yoruba cosmology. The week, which has seven days in it, according to Adeoye, is also called the Week of Modernity. The days are thus named:

1. *Ojo Aje*—Monday
2. *Ojo Isegun*—Tuesday
3. *Ojo’ru*—Wednesday
4. *Ojo’bo*—Thursday
5. *Ojo Eti*—Friday
6. *Ojo Abameta*—Saturday
7. *Ojo Aiku*—Sunday¹²

The reckoning of temporality in the Ela Week as against the Orun Week, Adeoye further explains, stemmed from the realization that its calculation coincided with the reckoning of time in the West. This shows how the seven-day Ela Week became more popular than the four-day Orun Week. One thing that is clear from the foregoing is that the intervention of Ela in bringing about a seven-day week may not be

unconnected with the consequences of Africa's contact with Europe. To that extent, this narrative of the fusion and reconciliation of Yoruba pre-colonial temporality with western temporality underscores what Drichel has described as the often overlooked complex relationship between the debates around hybridity and temporality.¹³ For, on the one hand, the Yoruba response to the western model of time and week enumeration, and the resolve to align an autochthonous temporal order with the exotic, illustrate the pragmatic negotiation of Otherness. However, on the other, it foregrounds the critical point about ontological priority—to echo Roux—at both levels.¹⁴ In this sense, the necessity of adopting and integrating western time model informed the cultural recognition accorded the western time paradigm among the Yoruba.

But it is perhaps in the understanding that all identities are dialogic that we are able to come to full terms with the Yoruba response to the western temporal order. In other words, there is a sense in which we may begin to find a parallel between, for instance, the Irish cultural responses to the English cultural practices at multiple levels together with their suggestive hybridity.¹⁵ In a nutshell, the transformation from a four-day week to a seven-day week by the Yoruba is a conscious attempt to key into a new modernity. The transformational antecedent is best captured in the institution of “a social order which has turned from the worship of ancestors and past authorities to the pursuit of a projected future—of goods, pleasures, freedoms, forms of control over nature, or infinities of information.”¹⁶ As seen in the narrative of the original four days, specific gods and apotheosized figures are designated as possessing the days. However, in the case of the new seven-day week, none is so named and there is invariably an aura of secularity in the designation of each of the days. However, it is my contention in this essay that in spite of the acclaimed secularity, which presupposes an aspiration towards comparison with western days, the rendition of the Yoruba/African days in practical terms can at best be described as hybrid. This explains why there may still be certain occasional, if faint echoes of the indigenous week in the Week of Modernity. In privileging the Week of Modernity, how then are we to make sense of the hybrid week that constitutes Osundare's preoccupation in *Days*?

Rendering Days in Hybridity

Privileging the Ela Week, Osundare in *Days* reflects the intimations of the dialogic, the hybrid and the complexity that arises from ontological reconciliation of an African temporal order with a western mode. The cosmopolitan import of all these also finds expression in the long poem. Osundare as one of the leading Anglophone African poets of the second generation is reputable for the sense of conceptual focus that distinguishes each of his collections. To be more explicit, Osundare's creative oeuvre is distinguished in the way it centralizes a particular concern. He explores it using all the available tropes and links the concern to other contending social imaginaries without breaking away from the core of his argument. In observation of this consistency, Dare affirms,¹⁷ for instance, that one of the thematic reflections that have found privileged articulation in Osundare's poetry is the notion of temporality and its ramification for history and the calendar. The collection, *Days*, is therefore the poet's effort to provide an update on his reflection on a postcolonial temporality in which the Yoruba ontology finds a central expression. What is more, the reflection of the text is significant in the sense that the Yoruba ontology serves as an entry point for a postcolonial reflection on time in a way that is both national and transnational at the same time, which validates the cosmopolitan concern of the text.

Debates around the continued relevance of postcolonial studies persist.¹⁸ While some argue that its relevance may have long been outlived, others contend that the “postcolonial remains.”¹⁹ Invariably it is with the staging of postcolonial hybridity as a cultural category that we come to terms with the veracity of such assumptions about the continued relevance of postcolonial theory. Postcolonial poetry, in

particular, has proven to be quite illustrative of this claim. This is in spite of the subordination of this generic category in the critical reception of world literature. Postcolonial poetry exemplifies the hybridity of postcolonial literature. Such understanding is illuminated by the notion of “belonging to multiple worlds that are transformed by their convergence [...through which] postcolonial poets indigenize the Western and anglicize the native to create exciting new possibilities for English-language poetry.”²⁰ This then appropriately captures the textual encounters in *Days*. Osundare privileges the convergence of multiple worlds in a manner that relies on the agency of his imagination to create realities at the interstice of the indigenous and the Western. Yet at other times, the liberty of creative imagination is stretched to an extent that leaves readers wondering how best to relate with the realities evoked on account of the transformative constituents that both excite and amaze readers.

In the first part of the 3-part poem, Osundare does a representation of the seven days of the week in a style that testifies to their contemporary understanding as a seamless blend of both African and western ontology. But this is not to say that the representation is not without instances of the tensions associated with intercultural encounters. For instance, the *Ela Week* in the Yoruba rendition tends to be presented as beginning on Monday, a temporal template adopted by Osundare in this collection. This is unlike the Western rendition that places Sunday before all other days. Yet, there is a sense in which this tension is resolved in the rendition of the day. Whether represented in African or Western mode, it retains the recognition of the first working day. Osundare’s evocation of the day takes into account all the significance it holds for Yoruba and Nigerians generally in the contemporary drift—from the mythical to the quotidian. Thus the rhythm of Monday is perhaps best expressed in the lines below:

A new day is quivering on its mark
 Time for the sun to un-silence its whistle
 Behold roads aloud with feet
 Costumed corporate clans

Hordes of the Sweat Brigade
 Machetes out of their scabbards
 Pens out of their pockets
 Tongues out of their mouths ²¹

Knowing that “Imagery is a universally central dimension in poetic meaning production” precisely because it “is manifestly a basic and omnipresent constituent of the mental life of human beings,”²² it is important to examine how this consciousness of the senses plays out in the lines above. The coalescence of two different worlds within the internal dynamics of the Nigerian modern life plays out in a way that validates Garuba’s notion of “coeval normativity.”²³ That is, a socio-cultural template that allows for the expression of parallel ways of life in society, where one is not projected to eclipse the other. From this local angle, it is evident that modernization may have brought about the popularity of white collar jobs in the urban areas and other city centres. Nevertheless, rustic manual farming activities as an extant subsistent and economic category in the rural spaces also run their parallel course. To that extent, a rendition of commercial activities in the everyday life of the nation can only be holistically articulated in the aggregate of the diverse activities that reference the confluence of the traditional and the modern. This is why the opening poem paints a picture of the national rendition of Monday as a day defined by business activities. Its ramifications are to be found in the elite circle that constitutes the “Costumed corporate world clans.” They are also visible in activities of the “Sweat Brigade” that includes farmers with their “machetes,” students with “pens out of their pockets” as well as a million other categories that the meta-

phor conjures. In this case, the differential concepts of modernity and tradition are depicted as regulated by the same temporal paradigm. This allows for a simultaneous performance of parallel activities within the context of labour. Inevitably, “machetes” and “pens” are concurrently engaged.

Obviously, the metaphor of activities on Monday is suggestive of the dynamics of a recent and postcolonial ontology which is loud in its articulation of hybridity. There is nevertheless a simultaneous evocation of the mythical angle to the day, especially as conceived in the paradigm of *Ela Week*, the Yoruba Week of Modernity. According to Tiryakian’s,²⁴ human beings most often do not realize the unity of human and natural time until there is a temporal rupture. However, Osundare’s awareness of the unity is evident in the way he accounts for the rendition of Monday, in which case, the constellation of activities that results in Durkheim’s notion of “collective effervescence” is inclusively rendered.²⁵ This rendition is both mythical and quotidian:

Monday morning
The week’s bell has gone
Birds shake in the trees
Fishes stride across the waters

The above lines exude the nuances of hyperbole and are aligned with the magical trope in African literary oeuvre. They provide a prefatory insight into the subsequent mythical rendition for which Monday is known and the popular understanding that this registers in the Nigerian popular culture. As the persona puts it, “Monday” is “Spell-bag of myth and mantra.” Because conceived in the popular imagination as a no-nonsense commerce day, the persona feeds into the popular notion of Monday as *Ojo Aje* (Aje Day). Aje is a god/goddess of wealth that in the reckoning of the Yoruba is next to Esu in mischief.²⁶ Yet, for all her mischief, Aje is desired and wooed in supplication by all. This is the import of the italicized content that unfurls in a dramatic insertion. It explains why the “akara” seller cannot brook purchase on credit at her shop because it is Monday. It is for the same reason that Alogbo vehemently rejects the sight of a man in rags on Monday morning.²⁷ All these point to the seriousness with which business activities are conducted all over the world on Monday as the first day of the week days. Yet, we cannot but admit that by ascribing Monday to the goddess Aje in the Yoruba rendition, there is a conscious effort to reinforce the economic significance of the day. This is informed by a hybrid modernity that demands seriousness from dwellers in both urban and rural areas. By the same token, it also allows for a non-conflicted interaction of modernity and tradition. Rather than interrogating the business-like understanding of the day in Western tradition, the mythical ascription of the day to Aje only serves to foreground the uniqueness of the day in the economic conceptualization of days. The sacred thus complements the secular in an otherwise impossible alliance mediated by the hybridity of different worlds.

From this point on, Monday as Aje Day is rendered in ambiguity that is commensurate with concepts such as vicissitudes, instability, uncertainty, migrancy. The day thus takes on a life of its own and an incarnation that chimes with its mythical understanding of the goddess of mischief. This is why, for instance, Aje is both, “he” and “she,” and “master” and “mistress” in the poem. Monday thus becomes the “Rare guest,” the “Vice-royal of vicissitudes,” “the Wandering One” that “lives at the crossroads,” the ultimate “Crossroads Prince,” and “luminous shadow in the threshold/Of the migrant moon.” However, unlike in the pre-colonial past when such understanding was couched in linearity, it has in the present assumed a sort of complexity. The original meaning is allowed flexibility to fuse with the parallel temporal and economic notion of Monday as a Western heritage. Inevitably, this becomes one sure way in which the ambivalence of postcolonial poetry is validated,²⁸ seeing that while embracing the structure of Monday as an “imported” time gauge, it has to fuse into local folk understanding to make sense. Thus,

Aje as an unpredictable yet sought after god/goddess in the Yoruba cosmology becomes a symbol of post-colonial cash economy. Being conscious of the history of cash economy as beginning with cowries in the wake of batter trade, the persona invokes the memory of its evolution in order to align the historical with the contemporaneous. Therefore:

Monday's road is long
 Its feet come with many toes
 Day of the cowrie
 Day of the coin

Day of the crispy notes quarrelling for space
 In the pocket of the strong-armed...²⁹

The evolution also takes into account the tension and crisis that attend contemporary economic system in which case "Golden silences hover/Above the blast of crashing prices," an observation which speaks both in reflection and anticipation of major national and global economic crisis, including the 2008 economic meltdown during which neo-liberal globalization was adjudged inadequate. To that extent, the representation of Monday by the persona illustrates what Georganta perceives as engaging the necessary "clashes, and syntheses between civilizations."³⁰ In all this, our understanding of the day is illuminated by the trope of personification which leaves our imagination to the various epochs invoked. Invariably, Monday assumes a life of its own, appropriating the mischief of Aje, while mutating on its own "road" with "feet" that "come with many toes" in subservience to the exigencies of time and history. This is one way in which we cannot but agree with Plotnik that "the personification of unexpected things can energize a story."³¹

The evocation and rendition of the other days of the week in the collection get across as a combination of personal, mythic and popular imagination. In this case, the persona validates, subverts and invents meanings and significance relative to the days. He shows at the same time the dialogic entanglement between cultures and textures of temporal delineations in global ramifications. More critically, his rendition of the days of the week chimes with the notion of *chronopolitanism*. As a concept, *chronopolitanism* does not espouse a globalization of time. It instead sensitizes us to the socio-political and moral burden of such espousal, especially where some spaces of the world tend to impose temporal tyranny on others. *Chronopolitanism*, as conceptualized by Cwerner is:

the deepening of the cosmopolitan community in time. The chronopolitan ideal is then analysed in terms of the opening of new futures, pasts, and presents, which have fundamental implications for political thought and practice. This redimensionalization of the cosmopolitan ideal also reveals the limits of political, economic, and cultural practices more commonly associated with the process of globalization.³²

In this way, Osundare relates the African past to the present and the African temporality to western temporality. In the process, he also reflects on the contradictions in which the global present is enmeshed and the extent to which the contradictions are framed by historical, cultural and ideological impositions to which indigenous and exotic cultures alike are compelled to respond.

Tuesday, for instance, assumes meanings that take cognisance of the local reckoning of the day as Ela Day of Victory (*Isegun*). But in the process of affirming this recognition, there is an arbitrary blend of the traditional meaning of the day with imagery and metaphors of the Triumphal Entry:

Palm fronds in the sky
 Palm fronds in the sky
 This day is Victory's day
 Palm fronds in the sky³³

Modern African writers are products of Euromodernism and there is an instantiation of the literary hybridization tendency which Euromodernism promotes in the lines above, as in other stances in the poem. For, certainly, palm fronds are not emblematic of victory in the Yoruba culture, because as far as popular imagination is concerned, palm fronds symbolize mourning and death. In a sense, Osundare has succeeded in evoking this contradictory trope that comes across as hybridization of African and Western Christian myths. Yet this leaves us with posers regarding the extent to which his postcolonial mytho-poesis can be taken seriously. For, neither does Tuesday designate victory in western rendition. Nevertheless, far from being considered an isolated and tyrannical creative imposition, the poet must be seen as having acted within the liberty that the notion of Euromodernism provides. It is characteristic of postcolonial writers and more particularly poets to reinvent and subvert existing cultural and mythical sites of modernism. Indeed such postcolonial poetic liberty provides us with:

instances in which post-colonial poets name, rename, and even de-name the signature sites of modernism and relocate the imagination to a "a free-floating noumen," a space that is neither global nor local but somewhere in between. According to the author, Euromodernism crucially enabled a range for non-Western poets after World War II to explore their hybrid cultures and post colonial experience. Among the hybridizing literary strategies of post-colonial poetry that can be traced in part to Euromodernist bricolage are translocalism, mythical syncretism, heteroglossia, and apocalypticism.³⁴

While the above appropriately describes the tendencies of Euromodernism, it is necessary to intimate that just as postcolonial poets subvert icons of modernist sites, they also invent meanings which are in conflict with traditional sites. For, just as Tuesday does not symbolize victory in Western temporal rendition, so also does the notion of victory not resonate with palm fronds symbolism in the Yoruba understanding.

The rendition of other days is replete with further instances of the mytho-poetic tendencies which do not subscribe to the local and original meanings which the days bear. The rendition of Wednesday as "Ojo Ru" (Confusion Day) is subverted. The subversion is evident in the emphasis on the other suggestive meanings of "ru" which are "sprout" and "ashes." It thus allows a free rein of metaphors of sprouting and plenitude on the one hand, and of ashes as the successor to a fiery fire, on the other. In the original understanding of this day among the Yoruba, it is best described as the day of negativity. It is considered to bring with it difficulties, to the extent that people in the olden days were discouraged from embarking on projects on the day.³⁵ Osundare's Euromodernist tendencies are also evident in his proclamation of every Wednesday as ashen on account of the annual Christian observance of Ash Wednesday: "This Day of Ashes/Grey and grim/The soft, silent song/Which epilogues the drama of the blaze." The multiple meanings that "sprout" out of "ru" underscore the value of ambiguity. They subvert the tyranny of singularity of meaning which used to be ascribed to the word in order to privilege other possibilities to the day in the postcolonial present. This ensures that the absolutism of negativism gives way to multiple symbolisms in which negativism and positivism are implicated. What is more, it is also an indication that the absolute negativism of Wednesday as "Ojo Ru" no longer holds water in a postcolonial present that relies less on oracular projections for human activities. The other possibilities foregrounded in the day

illustrate how ambiguity “can be seen as an affect of desire,”³⁶ which in this case meets the expectation of both author and readers.

Thursday which in the Yoruba rendition is “Ojo’bo” is regarded as the day Ela made an outstanding success of his attempt to tie the cord connecting the different spaces of the earth.³⁷ It is little surprise then that in Osundare’s interpretation, the day becomes one of loss and recovery/redemption, as the “day which has soared to the skies/ has dropped to the waiting earth.” Friday as another day of negativity in the Yoruba rendition however takes on meanings that are more sympathetic to cotemporary understanding. The persona foregrounds its being the last working day, serving as an anticipation of the consumerism and vanities of the weekend. The elegant fusion of pun, alliteration, apostrophe and rhetorical questions plays a significant role in foregrounding the position of the persona about this day:

Fryday fry-day, how many headless fishes
dance in the dread ful oil of your evening, the
firewood of hours glowing red and rude beneath
your pot? How many blended backs sizzle black
and blighted in the vineyard of your vice? How
whispers die between the lip and the lyric?³⁸

But Osundare returns to the original meaning of the day in the Yoruba rendition when he subscribes to the difficulty associated with it through a projective mediation of the imagery of a fallen elephant across the road: “No easy day, this day, no easy day: elephant across the road.”³⁹ The initial rendition of Friday as prefatory to the vanities of weekend partying can be read in a sense as the culmination of “colonial annexation, settlement and control.”⁴⁰ It has brought about new meanings about how we make sense of each of the days. Nevertheless, Osundare’s return to the original meaning of Friday as “Ojo Eti” (Day of Eti), especially when “*eti*” is read as difficulty, instantiates the various possibilities to the conceptualization of postcolonial hybridity. For, not only do postcolonial writers engage in collusion with Western modernity to play up its assumptions. By virtue of their writing, they also stage resistance to such assumptions in order to retain extant indigenous significance borne in cultural symbols.⁴¹

In Saturday’s rendition, we come to terms with the reinvention of meanings and significance. It is represented as a day originally feared and possibly abhorred for its confusion. For this reason, Yoruba people in the olden days would not embark on any venture, as an instance of negativity in the process would be trebled.⁴² This is why it is designated “Ojo Abameta” (a day of multiple propositions) which has now become the day of great ceremonies and partying:

Dancing day
Summit of songs
Roofs rock
Treetops sway like masquerades
In a state of trance
Laughters soar in the high heavens

Rainbow wardrobes usurp the streets
Flighty trends drape wild dissipations
In frantic fabrics (40-41)⁴³

Conceded to by other days in contemporary rendition as the day for informal venture and light moods,

the day is seen as coming with a baggage of possibilities, bringing into the present an echo of its meaning in the past centuries. This is why “A trinity of propositions complicates/ The narrative of a crowded day.” Yet, all this makes “This short day very long.” With Sunday, there is a conscious reconciliation of its significance as the day of resurrection in Christian/Western rendition and the Yoruba cosmology, being the day Ela hands over the glory of his success to humanity.⁴⁴ This is the import of the day as “Ojo Aiku” (A Day of No-Death). Osundare feeds into this postcolonial hybridization sentiment when he writes:

Death dies today
Ash-coloured claws, relent your grip

Death died today
Wilted leaves, let go of the branch

Death died today
Lurking ailments, depart the shadows

Death died today
Heads, stands tall on your shoulders

Death died today
Oh sun, reclaim the patrimony of the sky.⁴⁵

It is important to remark that much as this is a veritable instantiation of postcolonial hybridity, the tone and manner of composition are largely indebted to the incantatory poetic tradition of the Yoruba. It is often deployed in spiritual contexts to seek victory over adversities and adversaries. Conceiving Sunday in this sense dramatizes how the native is “anglicized” while the Western is “indigenized” in postcolonial poetry.⁴⁶ Through this poetic device which clearly mediates between oral practices and “imported literary forms,”⁴⁷ we witness the transformative possibilities associated with the discourse of modernity.⁴⁸ In this particular instance, the transformation has privileged transposition of tropes which begins with the expression and ascription of incantatory values to Sunday. It creates a situation that both amazes and defamiliarizes precisely because of the way it transforms the otherwise normative notion of Sunday in the Western milieu. The grand irony that emerges in the representation of an incantatory Sunday consists in knowing that incantation in Christian worship especially in colonial context is labelled pagan practice. But here now is a Sunday that affirms Christian victory over death while privileging tropes of incantation. This goes to show how postcolonial writers often find “a potent linguistic correlative for their biculturalism” through hybridization of contradictory cultural categories.⁴⁹

Personifying Temporality in the Critique of Global Relations

In “Some Days,” a section in 23 parts, days assume a life of their own, with dispositions and tendencies that speak to those of humans, nations, and issues bordering on cosmopolitan pains and pleasures on a global level. In this instance, personification is predominantly deployed and sustained to underscore the symbolism of days. This approach to the unfurling of the poems in this section should be understandable as personification, fusing with allegory, is reputable for generating secondary meanings.⁵⁰ Osundare’s deployment of the trope is unlike certain instances for which critics express reservations about some writers’ use of the device because of what they consider the writers’ lack of skill among others.⁵¹

Neither can his privileging of personification in this section of the poem be described as an overkill which could make it “less a trope than simply as instance of tropological abuse.”⁵² Knowing that narratives are sustained when “personifications retain a certain degree of complexity and elusiveness,”⁵³ the boredom that should have arisen from the preponderance of personification in this poem is precluded. Instead, we encounter new possibilities with intimations of enthralling ambiguities to the deployment of the trope in this work. This leaves readers with many faces of allegorical personifications in the poem.

Central to all this is temporality. In I, time is construed around the mobility of age and ageing and the transition of female beauty into wrinkle. This way, “The rosy cheek with Eden of dimples/Has become a swathe of sour pimples.” In VI, there is a juxtaposition of the weak and the strong, the powerful and powerless among nations, pointing to the contradictions and injustices that punctuate the making of each categorization. This is precisely because “Some days know what it means/ To have/ And not to hold”; and “Masked Days/ Sip the juice of passing moments!” Invariably the intimations in the poems speak to the dynamics of global relations which pit weaker nations against stronger ones. It further shows how the concept of development does not necessarily translate into transcendence of poverty on account of the opening up of markets and compliance with the other tenets of neo-liberalism in the weaker nations. For that matter, there is a strong sense in which the pretensions of “Masked Days” constitute a commentary on the paradox of development in weaker countries. In such places, the supposed interventions of poverty alleviation from advanced nations are mostly counter-productive in the way they exacerbate descent into poverty and dispossession.⁵⁴ It is in this way that the deeper import of the imagery of sipping “juice of passing moments” begins to crystallize. The interaction of days is thus invested with human agency in order to foreground the seriousness of the issues in the poem. For that matter, the exploitative imagery of the sipping of the “juice of passing moments” is indexical of the initiatives of economic advancement which the powerful nations of the world offer to the weaker nations. Often, such initiatives end up benefitting the powerful while rendering the weak even weaker. The memory of the structural adjustment programmes implemented in a number of Third World countries in the last quarter of the 20th century is a proof of this assertion.

In exploring the sustained metaphor of global relations through the cosmopolitan interaction of days, it is not difficult to perceive that the greatest challenge to the realization of the cosmopolitan ideals is the intransigence of racism. In the process, there is the tendency of certain races and hues of pigmentation to regard themselves as superior to others. In the process, a riveting analogy of interaction in condescension plays out at a metaphoric level. It leaves us with an intriguing imagery of varied and panoramic encounters between humans and days. The mediation of personification in the encounters is of particular significance here:

Some days
Lock you up

In the prison
Of your skin

Lynch you
For Your looks

Stab your voice
For its strange accent
Dim-sighted

They cannot see

Beyond the surface
Mud-eared

They are for ever deaf to
The summons of the deep

Some days live for ever
In the carapace of colour⁵⁵

That racism stands in the way of achieving true cosmopolitanism is clear in the above poem, as the attitude of some days negates the notion of feeling “at home everywhere in the world.” The imagery of “stabbing” another person’s “voice” for betraying a “strange accent” speaks to this negation. It also touches on the fate of black people, especially in their various travels and movements across the Western space where they suffer all manner of rejection on account of their colour.

All this results in the preservation of privileges on the basis of colour. It prevents the practice of social equity among races, even in an age that continually espouses movement across spaces through the invention of attractively progressive concepts of mobility and intercultural exchanges. These concepts continue to mutate from one designation to another. Each instance of failure in practice results in the invention of another; yet the question of race remains constant. The situation is the same whether in the reflection on and review of multiculturalism, or cosmopolitanism, whose conceptualization and practices continue to gain ascension as successor to globalization.⁵⁶ When “some days” thus “live for ever/ In the carapace of colour,” it becomes hard to accept the notion that cosmopolitanism is a panacea for racism. The investment of days with agency in human inter-racial relations is further underscored by Osundare’s ingenuity at transcending the conceptual boundary in the utilization of image metaphors. According to Gibbs and Bogdonovich,⁵⁷ image metaphors insist on the mapping of concrete images from a source domain to a target domain. In this way, the abstraction of days does not impede our understanding of the seriousness of the obstacles to human progress that is constituted by the institution of racism. Yet the world is increasingly propelled by the dynamics of movement through the various institutions and structures that are put in place. Thus, the relevance of any nation is often projected by the level of movement of people on a global scale flowing into and out of it. Therefore, the intensity of efforts at ensuring this level of mobility is framed and justified by the prospects and ability of cosmopolitan practice to mediate a transformative positive attitude against the parochialism of racism.⁵⁸

Feeding subsequently into the strand of hospitality within the broad-based discourse of cosmopolitanism, Osundare takes us through an anticipation of the ideals in which the attitudes of some other days are beautiful altogether:

Some days know
The secret leaning of the heart

Their auricles are acres of clay
Watered by the kindest dew

Their music the beat of every pulse
Smiles grow in the garden of their lips

There is grace in their greeting
Bliss in their blessing

A merciful moon sits in their night
In the centre of their night

Their hours ripen
In the shadows of a dangerous sun

When they pass
Houses throw open their doors

Flowers drape them
In their rarest fragrance

For them tenderness is no treason
Compassion is no constraint

Some days
Are not allergic to softness

Some days
Are not afraid of being human⁵⁹

Rather than extolling racial essentialism which stands in the way of cosmopolitan hospitality, what is instead advocated is a de-emphasis of identity. The essence is the humanity of individuals, be they strangers or citizens of a particular space. With this kind of tendency, cosmopolitanism stands a chance of making sense to all. As Baker contends,⁶⁰ this attitude has the capacity of engendering an ethics of hospitality. It transcends the morality of identity and difference on the one hand, and the flawed liberal consciousness that frames the notion of ethical relations to strangers, on the other. Therefore, the intimations of the days in XXIII are aligned with an evolutionary process of cosmopolitanism. They anticipate a time when altruistic compassion and understanding will inform the broad-mindedness of people and nations in the position to render assistance to the needy precisely because they “know the secret leaning of the heart.” In the same vein, for such individuals and nations, tenderness to others will not be refracted by prejudices of colour or identity, as they will not see “tenderness” as “treason.” The bottom-line here is that when humanity is fully evolved into progressive practices, “some days” will “not be afraid of being human,” as identity dissolves into the more compelling espousal to be humane. When efficiently deployed, personifications have a way of negating the dualism of the body and the mind as both the concrete and the abstract melt into each other.⁶¹ This much is what we witness in this section of the poem when days are not only invested with human agency, but are also invested with interactional qualities through which they become sites of various metaphoric performances. This is why “A merciful moon sits in their night.” It also explains why Hamilton further contends that “it is fruitful to consider personification as both a product of thought and a product of speech.”⁶²

Espousing Cosmopolitan Ethics in Temporality

In the third and last section of the poem, Osundare advances the exploration of migrant metaphors, consciously privileging ambiguity in the deployment of diction. Inevitably, as is characteristic of ambiguity as a trope that leaves us with gaps,⁶³ Osundare provides us with typically enthralling lines that allow our critical minds to wander in various directions. In this section, readers grapple with the fusion of the indigenous and the Western in the articulation of temporal relativism. In consequence, even where a poem is apparently imbued with intimations of folkloric time, evoking memories of antiquity, it leaves room for the possibility of making statements on the present. For instance, in “Day of the Crossroads,” temporality sets out as intractable precisely because it cannot be said to be amenable to what is known as “the ‘clock time’ worldview.” Where there seems to be an indication of temporal certitude with respect to minutes and hours, the understanding is best limned as holding a magically mythic significance. On account of this,

What time of day it is
We do not know:

It has the misty intimations of dawn
Though it is already past the twilight zone

Its rainbow is one long quarrel
Between the sun and the lingering rain

At times when you behold its sun
You think it is the moon eating its dinner

The minutes are longer
Than the hours⁶⁴

But once we move beyond the lines that tell of a narrative in which “minutes are longer/ Than the hours” the preceding confusion yields to the possibility of tracking the itinerary of days as metaphors of postcolonial cosmopolitanism. Again, with this kind of suggestion, days also exhibit a form of human incarnation, where the challenges of constant movement provoke thoughts that are both desirable and forbidding. For, in “Going West, facing East/ This day hits the market in shifting colours.” But thereafter, for the cosmopolite whose location is best placed in Africa, the leading compass “fingers” for the journey “betray a riot of routes” (104). In the shocking discovery that ensues, we are faced with the ideological battle that obtains from the dichotomization of the world. This in spite of the unifying ideals of globalization, which remain so only at the level of imagination, and for that matter, tantalizing. Therefore, the excitement that “this day” exudes on setting out is soon to give way to despair and confusion precisely because:

North rides South
West wrestles East

The wanderer faces the puzzle
Wondering where to go⁶⁵

The overall imagery of oppression that stares us in the face is that of two spatial categories that ordinarily should be equal partners. They are however constructed in inequity because one sees the other as a horse it must ride. The import of the imagery is reinforced in the way it evokes the past and the uses into which horses were put by humans, a graphic symbolism of domination of human beings over beast. At another level, this could be read as the culmination of ideological battles between the North and the South. These ideological battles which are religiously and economically ontological, have continued to determine the fate of many cosmopolites around the world. Their ordeals, most often, are ascribed to their religious persuasions together with the capitalist tendencies and structures which exclude them as strangers from the envisaged gains of the cosmopolitan experience. Put differently, their original location as citizens of the global South or North have a way of affecting their reception in other climes outside their domains. In a similar vein, in spite of the espousals of multiculturalism, the religious affiliation of cosmopolites as, say, Christian or Moslem, still goes a long way in determining their reception by their hosts. That this continues to be so should not be surprising. As Witte explains,⁶⁶ individuals have been known to engage in a transposition of notions of the theocratic and the political. In the same way, international relations continue to rely on historical experiences of religious affiliations in the determination of economic and social relations.⁶⁷

In “April 23, 1564,” the date believed to be Shakespeare’s birthday, Osundare reflects on the antecedent of racism as the bane of cosmopolitanism. As an inveterate antecedent, the fate of Othello is once again brought to the fore, not so much for its historicity as much as for the implications it still has for the black race in contemporary times. Many a critic has warned against comparing the condition of Othello with that of the colonial and postcolonial world,⁶⁸ and one must add, especially Africa. There is nonetheless a sense in which the representation of Othello in Shakespeare’s play of the same title prefigures “the ordering of difference” which came to define western colonialism and by implication cosmopolitan practice in Africa and the rest of the world where colour dissimilarity was an issue. What is more, the postcolonial condition together with its cosmopolitan credentials, is still analogous to Othello’s condition. This must then have informed the persona’s observation that:

Othello, Moor or less,
Still more noble than nifty...

Those airy nothings still seed our spheres
Endowing every pulse with

*A local habitation
And a name*⁶⁹

It is the “ordering of difference” that still accounts for the dichotomization of the world in a way that mocks the designation of the globe as a global village. The economic ramifications have left a section of the earth, especially the global South, in a perpetual search for survival in other climes in the part arbitrarily mapped as the global North. To that extent, the conceptualization of cosmopolitanism as voluntary movement becomes particularly flawed and tricky for citizens of the global South. The dichotomization, when explored further, reveals the ugly racial angle to it. In this case, poverty or wealth is not only a function of location in the global equation and geography, but also a function of skin pigmentation. In “Rich Day, Poor Day,” Osundare addresses this condition as both geographically and racially construed:

Rich day

Poor day
 Where are your empires
 Where are your conquests
 How many skulls
 Pave the ground
 On which
 Your castle stands
 Poor day
 Rich day
 Show me your pogroms
 Show me your branded hours
 Ocean floors white
 With black bones
 Scars so long
 They stretch from
 South
 To North ⁷⁰

The ambiguity of the “stretch from/ the South to the North” allows us the liberty to argue that the “stretch” provides the ground for discussing the peculiar nature of the cosmopolitanism of citizens of the South as that which is primarily motivated by poverty. The argument is validated by the knowledge that earlier in this section of the poem, we have read that in some places of the earth that must be appropriately located in the South “mornings break no fast/ [and] evening go to bed/ with straws/ between their teeth; yet, in a land beyond the seas/dogs feast from golden plates/ the cat’s dinner/consumes a handsome fortune” (122). The imagination and imagery in the lines prove Ramazani’s assertion that postcolonial poetry is hybrid not only in language but also in form;⁷¹ what with the amazing twist to the active agency of “mornings” in breaking “fast.” The idea radicalizes the normative cognition and collocation of morning and breakfast in English expression.

What then are the possible ways in which the challenges to the realization of the cosmopolitan espousals can be tackled? While there is no one answer with mathematical precision to this poser, Osundare nevertheless deftly engages this question to demonstrate the place of nature in redirecting humanity to the ideal with respect to true cosmopolitan practice. This he does through the evocation of a collage of natural activities which ordinarily should result in clashes and commotion especially in view of the suggestive mobility of the interactive activities. But instead, these activities result in blissful scenery. The predominant deployment of imagery is significant in this evocation that identifies love as the elixir for cosmopolitanism, as we read “Love Days”:

Light the fire
 Stoke the flame
 This day is the day
 That love has chosen

The pigeon eyes the dove beneath the eaves
 The buck tilts its ears towards the doe
 Trees lock leaves with trees
 In their green dance above the roofs

Hours embrace their minutes
 Weeks wax strong on the passion
 Of endless seasons. Drops of desire
 Bloom into stirring seas

This is the day

Of purple sighs and care-less laughters
 Of long-missed songs and throbbing winds
 There is a sparkle in the eye of the sun
 The moon's cheek is a paradise of dimples⁷²

The wisdom in the lines above speaks to the position that “representation of past, present and future humanity [...are] unchangingly diverse.”⁷³ Therefore, contemporary humanity stands to be better served when practices of cosmopolitanism break away with the attitudes of spatial and racial essentialism that stand in the way of peaceful coexistence between strangers and indigenes/citizens alike. In this way, while staying true to the difference in space and colour, humanity stands to gain a lot from the quotidian practices of natural time. This learning is demonstrated in each day running its course without encroaching upon the functions of the preceding or succeeding day. Taking us back specifically to the seven days of the week, Osundare in the last poem “I Envy the Days,” calls our attention to the cosmopolitan model of days of the week. The model deplores predatory cosmopolitan practices of some human beings and nations that result, for instance, in interference and colonization on account of superior arsenal prowess. Quoting the entire piece will be as well:

I envy the days
 For the civility of their order

I have never heard Monday
 Speak ill of Sunday

Have never heard Thursday grudge
 Wednesday for its urn of ashes

Sunday never blames Saturday
 For the wildness of its ways

Nor does Friday ever ridicule Tuesday
 For being in the middle of nowhere

Each day has its own range
 Knows its limits

No day has ever tried
 To extend its hours
 None has ever planted its flag

In its neighbour's garden

No day ever hassles the world
With the myth of a jealous god ⁷⁴

We are ultimately returned to the discourse on the relevance of postcolonial studies, which in spite of oppositional criticism, “continues to offer the promise of combining analysis, diagnosis, disclosures and critique in a manner that is implicitly, and often explicitly, both political and ethical.”⁷⁵ Osundare's *Days* lives up to this billing in the very sense in which it utilizes the metaphor of temporality to explore issues relating to questions of global relations and ethics as they intersect with cosmopolitanism. What is more, as observed by Anyokwu,⁷⁶ Osundare's poetry relies on the sound imagery and symbolism of the Yoruba language to convey meaning in his poetry.” Admittedly, this has accounted for the uniqueness of hybridization that finds expression in *Days*.

Conclusion

In the end, what we have encountered in this collection is the interactive wisdom of days and the significance it holds for the conception and practice of cosmopolitanism. From a postcolonial perspective, there is need to state on a last note that the understanding that frames Osundare's exploration of temporality in this collection exhibits the cultural hybridity that is at the core of postcolonial discourse. To that extent, the understanding of the weeks plays out as a brilliant combination of indigenously pre-colonial ontology and an exotically, if integrated western ontological articulation. Lastly, it is pertinent to observe that Osundare has been silent in the poem on the original four-day-week which was operational among the Yoruba prior to colonialism. This can be explained both in terms of the preference for the seven-day-week in modern times. It could also be understood in terms of the reckoning of the “*longue duree*” which “provides an indispensable framework for the preservation of long-term historical memories.”⁷⁷ Nonetheless, all this remains particularly relative because of the varying degrees of relevance a preferred time template holds for different social groups and individuals. The subsisting metaphor about days and the coherence in the expression of natural time is instructive for the practice of cosmopolitanism. The obvious differences attributed to the constellation of days does not precipitate chaos or discrimination as suggested/affirmed in the long poem. There is thus a sense in which the discourse of contemporary movement across space can yield itself to the ethics of equality and tolerance. This way, the ethos of hospitality in cosmopolitanism will not be a forced caveat. Otherwise, hospitality remains a contrived content whose implementation in cosmopolitan practice is short-lived, especially when it translates into citizens of the global North trying to accommodate the vulnerable citizens of the global South. Yet, citizens of the global North do not find themselves in such helpless situations upon journeying southward. Ultimately, in the natural rendition of days, global social justice stands to be improved when cosmopolitanism facilitates in reality an equal feeling of being at home everywhere in the world for all.

Notes

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3. Jennifer Powell McNutt, “Hesitant Steps: Acceptance of the Gregorian Calendar in Eigh-

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4. Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial And Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
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 7. Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” (1967) 1991: 51.
 8. Safiye Kiranlar, “Even the Calendar Changes in Modern Times: The ‘Story’ of the Calendar from the Ottomans to the Republic (1840-1945),” *International Journal of Turcologia* 3, no. 6. (2008): 39.
 9. Michael Dietler and Ingrid Herbich, “Living on Luo Time: Reckoning Sequence, Duration, History and Biography in a Rural African Society,” *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (1993): 250.
 10. C.L. Adeoye, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba* (Ibadan: Evan Brothers, 1985), 80.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Adeoye, 90.
 13. Simone Drichel, “The Time of Hybridity,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 6 (2008): 587-615.
 14. Daniel Roux, “Hybridity, Othello and the Postcolonial Critics,” *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 21 (2009): 23-29.
 15. Yulia Pushkarevskaya-Naughton, “Comparative Literature in Ireland and Worldwide: An Interview with Professor Declan Kiberd,” *Estudios Irlandeses* 5 (2010): 130.
 16. Clark in Patke, *Modern Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
 17. Samson Dare, “Temporal Metaphors and Images in the Poetry of Osundare,” *Journal of Cultural Studies* 8, no 03 (2010): 390-404.
 18. Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, “Postcolonialism,” *Social Text* 27, no. 3 (2009): 188.
 19. Robert Young, “Postcolonial Remains,” *New Literary History* 43, no. 1 (2012): 19.
 20. Jahan Ramazani, *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 2.
 21. *Days*, 6-7.
 22. Line Brandt, and Per Aage Brandt, “Cognitive Poetics and Imagery,” *European Journal of English Studies* 9, no. 2 (2005): 117.
 23. Garuba, Harry. Keynote address at the Chinua Achebe Residential Research Group Meeting—University of Pretoria, South Africa—November 20 to 21, 2013.
 24. Edward Tiryakian, “Time to Change the Calendar? Sacred and Secular Problems of Crossing the Millennium,” *International Review of Sociology—Revue Internationale de Sociologie* 11, no 3 (2001): 419.
 25. Ibid.
 26. Esu is the trickster god among the Yoruba
 27. Fela Anikulapo, the Nigerian Afro-beat legend in one of his tracks reinforces this notion of Monday as a no-nonsense day with the lyrics, “Ojo Monday Eko o le gba gbakugba” (On Monday Lagos does not tolerate non-sense). It implies that it considered the most important week day and during which everybody is expected to comport themselves accordingly.
 28. Raazani, 5.
 29. *Days*, 10-11.

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31. Arthur Plotnik, "Breathe life into literally anything: The personification of unexpected things can energize a story," *Writer* (Kalmbach Publishing Co.) 118, no. 10 (2005): 15.
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33. *Days*, 16.
34. Jahan Ramazani, "Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridity," *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no.3 (2006): 445-463.
35. Adeoye, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba*, 91
36. David Brooks, "Ambiguity, the Literary, and Close Reading," *Comparative Literature and Culture* 12, no.4 (2010): 1.
37. Adeoye, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba*, 91.
38. *Days*, 34.
39. *Days*, 36.
40. Patke, *Modern Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, 12.
41. Qiao Meng, and Noritah Omar, "Resistance Against and Collusion with Colonialism: Eileen Chang's Writing and Translation of "Steamed Osmanthus Flower Ah Xiao's Unhappy Autumn," *Pertanika: Journal Social. Science & Humanities* 20, no.2 (2012): 564.
42. Adeoye, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba*, 92.
43. *Days*, 40-41.
44. Adeoye, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba*, 43.
45. *Days*, 53.
46. Ramazani, *The Hybrid Muse*, 2.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ramazani, *The Hybrid Muse*, 19.
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58. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Emancipatory Cosmopolitanism: Towards an Agenda," *Development and Change*, 37, no. 6 (2006): 1247.
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60. Gideon Baker, "Cosmopolitanism as Hospitality: Revisiting Identity and Difference in Cosmo-

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61. Craig Hamilton, "Mapping the Mind and the Body: On W.H. Auden's Personifications." *Style* 36, no. 2 (2002): 408.
 62. Hamilton, "Mapping the Mind and the Body," 409.
 63. Karolien Vermeulen, "Mind the Gap: Ambiguity in the Story of Cain and Abel," *JBL* 133, no. 1 (2014): 29.
 64. *Days*, 103. The poem is clearly indebted to J.P. Clark's "Night Rain" especially in terms of its affirmation of uncertainty about time in the opening couplet. The fact of the convergence of multiple worlds in the work further consists in knowing that the tone and structure of the lines in Clark are clearly indebted to Robert Frost.
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 66. Bernd Witte, "Politics, Economics, and Religion in the Global Age: Walter Benjamin's *Critique of Violence* and *Capitalism as Religion*," *Symposium* 65, no.1 (2011): 5.
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 69. *Days*, 110. The italics indicate the indebted of the concluding couplet to Shakespeare.
 70. *Days*, 123.
 71. Ramazani, *The Hybrid Muse*, 17.
 72. *Days*, 127.
 73. Lindy Orthia, "'Sociopathic Abscess' or 'Yawning Chasm'? The Absent Postcolonial Transition in *Doctor Who*," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 45, no.2 (2010): 208.
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Cartographies of Transnational Desires: Bi-national Same-Sex Couples in Literature and Film

Alla Ivanchikova

HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES

The foreigner is a dreamer making love with absence, one exquisitely depressed.

Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*

Utopia. . . is a critique of the present order, and of the overarching dictate of how things are and will always be in the underlying status quo.

José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*

What does it mean to theorize transnational lives in the new millennium defined by a progressively globalizing labor economy that unevenly caters to and restricts cross-border migration and travel? In this paper, I examine the issue of transnationality from the point of view afforded by a particular perspective—a bi-national queer couple¹—that often negotiates transnational mobility in a legal climate either hostile or indifferent to its needs. Whereas in bi-national opposite-sex unions each partner can become a sponsor of his or her spouse for immigration purposes, bi-national queer couples, due to the fact that the majority of nation-states in today's world do not have provisions for immigration for same-sex unions, regularly face a sinister legal conundrum.² In the United States, prior to the historic decision by the Supreme Court to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act, Section 3 in 2013, bi-national same-sex partnerships (and marriages) were bureaucratically illegible.³ For members of such couples, national borders turned into agonizing partitions that could not be remedied via any specific legal process of application or appeal. Due to its paradoxical position in the transnational milieu, a bi-national queer couple functions as a limit concept that brings to the surface multiple issues that define transnational lives in the new millennium, more generally. Bi-national queer love is often an example of what Ulrick Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim call “distant love”—a technology-assisted intimacy without a shared domesticity—a type of intimacy that is becoming more and more widespread as a result of the transnationalization of labor economies.⁴ Straddling two or more countries or even continents, these cross-border intimacies challenge the dominant logic of nation states by appearing “stateless” and “out-of-place,” impermanent and illegible.⁵

Taking as a point of departure three cultural texts that offer representations of a bi-national queer couple's conundrum, I seek to bring attention to the structures and the vicissitudes of distant, cross-border love—its cartographies of separation and loss, along with its utopian dimension—in the transnational

milieu marked by a collision between the centripetal forces of globalization and the centrifugal forces of economic inequality and competing nationalisms. My selection of texts—a novel by American writer Philip Gambone, *Beijing* (2003); a film by Israeli director Michael Mayer, *Out in the Dark* (2012); and a film by Spanish director Julio Medem, *Room in Rome* (2010)—form a micro-archive of works united by a common theme and a shared set of sensibilities that I call the aesthetics of absence. All three texts seek to make visible (and legible) the bi-national same-sex couple's statelessness, portraying a unique cartography of exclusion, disorientation, and loss, as well as describing the mechanics of coping with distance. Gambone's novel *Beijing* was published at the dawn of U.S. same-sex marriage wars and has as its focus a relationship between an American and a Chinese man who develop a form of distant intimacy as a response to geographical distance. The two films I examine were produced during the years when global same-sex marriage debates had reached their highest point of intensity. With its focus on an Israeli-Palestinian gay male couple (*Out in the Dark*) and a Spanish-Russian lesbian couple (*Room in Rome*), these two films shift our attention away from U.S.-based marriage-equality debates onto a broader examination of lives marked by transnationality, exploring bi-national same-sex relationships as a site of convergence and collision of multiple political, cultural, and legal forces—a thick intertwining of the personal and the political realms. In all three texts, national borders intrude and encroach upon the psychic, erotic, and intimate space of the couple exposing the differentials of power and privilege, thus turning the couple into a site of a larger political and cultural tension—a locum of embodiment of global dynamisms.⁶

All three texts feature examples of “love at a distance,”⁷ depicting relationships that require negotiating not only cultural and political difference but also geographical distance. A “distant couple”—one without a shared domesticity or a claim to longevity—does not easily lend itself to legibility and theoretical analysis. A distant couple is a specific assemblage of bodies, priorities, practices, and affects that is distinctly different from both the assemblage we refer to as *desire* and the assemblage we refer to as *marriage* or a domestic partnership. Alliances of desire are mostly temporary groupings of bodies and affects. In contrast with alliances of desire, the couple is a non-ephemeral unit: it seeks some form of endurance, which—especially when it comes to love at a distance—does not necessarily involve shared domestic life or interconnectedness in terms of finances and other practical matters. In contrast to a marriage or a family unit, such a couple is neither defined by the law nor makes itself bureaucratically legible. It is not a unit constituted through an act of legal inscription. In its non-ephemeral elusiveness, the distant couple often falls through disciplinary and categorical cracks, figuring only as a “dim” object,”⁸ to use Levi Briant's term, in the realm of cultural politics and migration analytics.⁹

The three works examined in this paper are brought together by my own comparativist desire to see the common thread in disparate things. They are united, however, by a set of distinct features that flesh out the specific injury to the queer body as it enters into a bi-national relationship, dramatizing the profound sense of disorientation and the loss of status one experiences when falling in love with a foreigner. In all three works, distant love is also foreign love—a site of an encounter with cultural difference. To fall in love with a foreigner is to fall out of your proper place, to become a stranger to yourself and to those who share your set of cultural sensibilities. Consequently, all three texts are preoccupied with the issues of place and territory, and engage in obsessive mapping of their characters' idiosyncratic geographies of movement, border-crossing, and entrapment.

An obsession with absence in its various aspects is one of the most prominent features of these texts' aesthetic sensibility. In Gambone's *Beijing*, absence figures poignantly and painfully as a literal absence of the American protagonist's Chinese partner, left behind in Beijing; this gaping absence is subsumed and sublimated at the end of the novel as a universal human condition one is forced to accept and embrace as an opportunity for spiritual growth. In *Out in the Dark*, absence is contended with as an insurmountable loss, figuring as the unjust and unjustifiable lack of a national or a transnational place

where the Israeli-Palestinian queer couple can be safe. The aesthetic of absence threaded through these cultural texts contains, aside from melancholy, a utopian dimension. Whereas *Beijing* and *Out in the Dark* posit national boundaries as insurmountable obstacles and expose and critique the injustice, *Room in Rome* inscribes itself as a cathartic cross-border project, a model enactment that temporarily suspends or even overcomes the logic of nation-states as regimes of control over queer bodies. In *Room in Rome*, a queer country is inaugurated into existence in a manner similar to nation states—through an orthopedic erection of a symbol (a flag) and by claiming representation on the map of the world (a Google map). This theatrical enactment of a queer utopia, with its subsequent technological mediation via Google maps therefore turns absence into a presence—a transubstantiation that affords the couple an imaginary homeland.

These three texts await scholarly attention, especially in the context of the global marriage equality debates; aside from reviews, most of which I reference in my discussion, there has not been any analysis of these works in academic literature.¹⁰ I offer my paper as an invitation for such analysis, drawing attention to the transnational imaginaries forged by these texts—imaginaries that expose the tensions between local and global forms of belonging and point to new forms of inhabiting the globalized world. These texts deliver insights into the poetics and politics of distant love as seen from the point of view of queer couples in the new millennium, marked by unjust immigration laws, competing nationalisms, and stark differentials in power and privilege. The bi-national queer couple literally embodies multiple conflicting aspects of the globalized world thus educating the audience about the lived experiences of oppression and injustice. Shedding light on the forces that bring distant economies into intimate contact, the bi-national queer couple also makes visible the forces that regulate the movement of gendered, sexualized, and racialized bodies around the globe, underscoring the seemingly intractable institutionalized injustice represented in the figure of the nation state.

The Circuit of Desire: Boston—Beijing—Boston

Philip Gambone's novel *Beijing* serves as a prime example of early twenty-first-century marriage-equality literature, dramatizing a bi-national gay couple's dilemma as well as exploring the issues of transnational mobility in the globalized labor economy.¹¹ The novel's geography bestrides two locations: Boston and Beijing, describing a trajectory of movement from a gay neighborhood in Boston to the Chinese capital and then back. The novel centers on David—an aging gay man from Boston—who applies for a one-year position at a medical clinic in Beijing, China to combat the melancholy he feels after the loss of his long-term partner to AIDS. When his application lands him a job, he packs his bags and finds himself on the twenty-hour flight to Beijing. The fact that David is an AIDS widower is significant: by establishing a link to the literature of the AIDS epidemic, the novel follows a thread from one loss (due to the disease) to another loss David is about to experience as a member of a bi-national same-sex couple.

The novel abounds in opulent descriptions of everyday life in a Chinese metropolis as seen through the eyes of a somewhat naïve American traveler: while eager to understand the foreign culture intimately, the protagonist, who has no prior knowledge of China, inevitably eroticizes and orientalizes Chinese culture, relying in his descriptions on the inescapable proximity of the erotic and the exotic. Lost in the environment he finds incomprehensible, he spends hours of his free time walking through the city streets, intoxicated by the new experiences and oversaturated with sensations. An uplifting effect of international travel is palpable in these descriptions that capture both the excitement and the culture shock experienced by the protagonist:

People were everywhere. [...] Everyone moving, crowding, pushing, swarming, staring at me.

There were old people, their features as ancient and beautiful as craggy mountains; young people with broad, trusting smiles and unthinkably slender waists; businessmen, cell phones to their ears, decked out in Chinese knockoffs of Gucci and Armani; soldiers, some not much older than boy scouts, others with looks as menacing as Mongols, guarding who-knew what in their goose-turd green uniforms; and children, children everywhere: infants, toddlers, youngsters, streeturchins. Everywhere. Bicycles everywhere. Scooters everywhere. Dust and pollution everywhere. Bulldozers everywhere. Cigarette smoke everywhere. Exotic aromas, exquisite perfumes, appalling stench. Everywhere. The *publicness* of everything, everywhere.¹²

Rich with repetitions and following a tempo that creates a sense of the narrator being out of breath, trying to catch up with the speed of the bustling metropolis, the description is exemplary of the narrator's style as he simultaneously admires the bustling economy of hyperdevelopment (bulldozers connoting massive building projects), while maintaining a degree of voyeuristic distance from the capital's exotic residents (who boast ancient, Mongolian features and "unthinkably slender waists"). Drawn to the promise of a foreign adventure, David embarks on a cartographic project becoming a dedicated mapmaker, determined to reorient and rediscover himself in this new, unfamiliar place. His habitual understanding of public and private is reconfigured—while everything seems public in China (as a white foreigner, he is often stared at), he has to be guarded and secretive about his sexuality and learn how to navigate the gay world that is entirely different from the one he is used to. Becoming a foreigner is an exhilarating experience: if back in Boston David felt aged, heavy, and rigid, in Beijing he becomes light-weighted and elastic, open-minded and hopeful again, restored and relieved from his melancholic fixation on the lost love object.

In *Strangers to Ourselves*—a book devoted to theorizing the figure of the foreigner, Julia Kristeva writes: "The foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder."¹³ Seeking to universalize the figure of the foreigner, Kristeva claims that strangeness lies in the hidden core of our intimate selves, that each one of us, ultimately, is a stranger to oneself. By traveling to another country and having to contend with cultural difference, one becomes more attuned to this inner strangeness: a part of us gets unhinged, set in motion by leaving familiar grounds. Due to this unhinging, which can be experienced as liberation, a foreigner exits his or her usual orbit and, like an astronaut, enters a "weightless state."¹⁴ Gambone's protagonist indeed becomes weightless, his ties to his home country receding. Having managed to locate and gain entrance into a shifting, ephemeral, perpetually transient gay community in China's capital city,¹⁵ David himself enters a state of ethereal lightness and pleasurable transience, a migratory existence offering a solution to his melancholy.

By drawing attention to the excitement of foreign travel, the novel brings into focus the upbeat side of the globalization of labor economies as perceived from the point of view of a middle-class American citizen. Naïve and unaware of his privilege within the globalized labor market, David experiences his year in China as a personal emancipation. As a member of a transnational managerial class—he manages an American medical facility in Beijing—David has privileged access to sites of international gay male tourism, the hidden yet vibrant underworld of international gay bars, as well as public parks and public baths frequented by both foreign men and locals. While in Boston David felt aged, undesirable, and, ultimately, invisible in the neighborhood populated by hordes of younger and better-looking men, in Beijing his foreignness, as well as his ability to pay for meals and drinks, affords him considerable visibility and power.

Paradoxically, Kristeva contends, when a foreigner falls in love, he or she loses the state of weightlessness. "As soon as foreigners take action or passion," she writes, "they take root."¹⁶ When Gambone's protagonist becomes enamored with a young Chinese artist Bosheng, he finds himself wishing to take

root, eager to make a home with the new lover by taking him to Boston—a project that proves to be impossible. By contrast, Bosheng—a struggling young artist who is aware of his lack of privilege in the transnational milieu—is realistic and resigned to the fact that his lover will eventually leave him behind. He says: “In Boston, maybe, you can find some other boyfriends, I think.”¹⁷ For David, falling in love with a foreigner becomes a learning experience that teaches him a lesson about privilege and power in the global domain. While his American citizenship and middle-class status afford him significant advantages in a transnational labor economy, his homosexuality places him at a disadvantage. When considered transnationally, David is still a second-class global subject who is unable to sponsor his lover for immigration to the U.S. (or be sponsored by his lover for immigration to China). In the absence of international or national laws regarding same-sex couples in either China or the United States, David and his lover have to separate when David’s yearlong contract comes to an end. There is no clear path for the future, no plan, except for David’s promise to come back for Christmas and the mutual promise to write letters. Later, an immigration lawyer David hires explains that it would be very unlikely Bosheng would be ever allowed to visit David in the U.S. or get a student visa: a young unattached Chinese man, he is considered an overstay risk (a euphemism for becoming an illegal immigrant). Bosheng’s chances of getting a student visa are one in ten, the lawyer explains. David’s transnational trajectory of travel and return thus reveals a differential economy of power and privilege—between Chinese and American citizens, between opposite- and same-sex couples.

The novel ends with two letters—a letter written in the language of bureaucracy (a lawyer’s letter notifying David of the near impossibility of his unification with his lover) and a love letter from Bosheng. Upon reading both letters, David experiences a personal epiphany—an ecstatic experience in which he comes to terms with the loss of the future while simultaneously realizing that their love can persist in the absence of a shared future in the same location. He conjures a vision of their love as a distant love—a transnational relationship without shared domesticity or the promise of permanence:

Why all the frenzy about tallying up? Why all the preoccupation with what things came to? What if there were no “in the end”? And what if you could decide to live your life that way—without “in the end” in mind? [...] The tears were streaming down my cheeks now, profuse and unstoppable, for the surprise of it was that because I didn’t need Bo[sheng] anymore I was now free to love him even more. To love him without the treacherous question—*but what happens in the end?*—hissing in my ear. Of course I missed him: there by my side, sharing my bed, wrapping his delicious body tight around mine as he had that first night under his musty quilts. But here I was *now*, and now presented a different opportunity to love him, an opportunity from afar, not a better opportunity, not a worse opportunity, [...] just a different one. [...] Bo[sheng] and I were not lovers in abeyance, not lovers-to-be. *We were lovers*. Today and today and today. And our only job was to find each other, however we could, in each and whatever today we had.¹⁸

In the absence of a place to call its own, love—an enduring emotion—becomes reconceptualized as love at a distance—an transient alliance that lasts while it lasts, “today, today, and today.” The narrator’s grief is disavowed through a rhetorical gesture by which he appears to accept the absence of his lover, understanding it as a *different* way to love, but contrasted with his tears and the lawyer’s letter, it leaves the reader knowing that because there is no “solution” David must find a way to reconcile himself to the law. While positioning itself as a didactic project that educates its audience about the injustice faced by the characters, the text simultaneously seeks to universalize transience and loss as the essence of human experience *par excellence* and invites the reader to join in.

Love Amidst the Clash of Nationalisms: West Bank—Tel Aviv

As Gambone's novel shows, thinking about sexuality transnationally means examining how individuals and couples are multiply marginalized, not only in terms of their sexuality, but also their nationhood and citizenship, the global South and the global North. It also demonstrates that bi-national same-sex couples can be caught in a precarious "in-between": in-between nation states, without a legal status, without an identity, and in a state of permanent impermanence. Political philosopher Giorgio Agamben observes that in our times the logic of the nation-state is no longer an adequate framework for understanding the political realities of mass displacement, which forces us to contend with the issue of statelessness as a global condition, particularly as it is embodied in the figure of a refugee. He writes: "Inasmuch as the refugee, an apparently marginal figure, unhinges the old trinity of state-nation-territory, it deserves to be regarded as the central figure of our political history."¹⁹ The peculiar extraterritoriality of the bi-national same-sex couple is similar to the position of a refugee—a "limit concept," according to Agamben—insofar as it represents a troubling element in the order of the state, territory, and nation.²⁰

In a dramatic film that a reviewer calls "*Brokeback Mountain's* worthy successor,"²¹ Israeli director Michael Mayer examines the paradoxical space of the bi-national same-sex couple where the less privileged member of the couple, in fact, becomes a refugee—a stateless subject—thus bringing into focus the proximity between the statelessness of the refugee and the extraterritoriality of the bi-national same-sex couple. Set in contemporary Israel and Palestine, *Out in the Dark* (2012) describes the trajectories of two young gay men—a Palestinian Arab and an Israeli Jew—who, after falling in love with each other, experience a catastrophic loss of status in their respective communities ending up effectively out of place both as a couple and as individuals. Initially, the viewer might expect to see in the image of Palestinian-Israeli love a promise of hope for the two troubled nation-states, an allegory of peaceful, and even loving, coexistence. Contrary to such expectations, the film exposes a landscape of violence defined by the clash of two militant nationalisms—Israeli and Palestinian—and has its two central characters cornered, separated, and moving in opposite directions.²²

The film opens with a sequence where Nimr Mashrawi, a native of a Palestinian village, slips through the gap in the chain link fence—the permeable barrier that divides Israel from the West Bank—to visit a gay nightclub in Tel Aviv; the existence of the nightclub contrasts a restrictive Palestine to a seemingly more liberal Israel. This becomes the fateful night when Nimr meets Roy Schaefer, a young Israeli who is unaware of the difficulties Nimr has to negotiate to get to the safety of the gay club. Nimr and Roy have instant chemistry, but Nimr has to catch a ride back to the village before long. The film's geography thus straddles two dramatically different locations: the fast-paced, noisy, individualistic Tel Aviv—a city of concrete and glass—and a quiet, traditional, patriarchal Palestinian village with narrow streets and old multifamily houses built of limestone. The former is the world of Roy—a privileged, young Israeli lawyer who works for his father's prominent firm. He has a slick car, a modern apartment, and he is out to his open-minded and supportive parents who live in suburban Tel Aviv. Roy's world seems inherently Western in its liberalism, consumerism, and an endless list of privileges taken for granted. Nimr's environment is very different; in the course of the film, he continuously moves between two places: the village with its strong family ties and anti-Israel militancy and Tel-Aviv, whose queer residents' cosmopolitan, liberal attitude makes Nimr, for the time being, feel accepted. A psychology student, a pacifist, and an intellectual, Nimr tries to follow transnational knowledge economy's formula for success: having signed up for a graduate psychology class in Tel Aviv with an aim to get accepted into a doctorate program in Princeton, he says, "Failure is not an option." Considering himself to be a member of the global educated class, he envisions his life as a journey of a transnational knowledge worker: a famed professor or an expert clinician with Ivy League credentials. His actual journey, predicated on his location and identity as a young

Palestinian gay man, is very different indeed, as the director masterfully demonstrates.

In the context of the debates over the politics of pinkwashing and homonationalism in contemporary Israeli queer cinema (especially state-funded films, such as *Out in the Dark*), scholars are bound to be suspicious of representational politics that center on exposing Palestine as a “premodern” space where queer lives seem unlivable, while situating Israel as a site of liberalism and progress because of its acceptance of sexual diversity.²³ Jancovic, in her analysis of *The Bubble*—a 2006 Israeli film that can be considered *Out in the Dark*’s precursor in that it also features an Israeli-Palestinian gay couple—is critical of the film’s narrative of queer progress in Israel, capturing its formula via the term “thin critique.” A thin critique is a representational logic that, while appearing to expose the violence of the Israeli occupation, does the subtle work of legitimizing it through a cooptation of the issue of gay rights (and primarily, by reinforcing the view of Palestine as a site of queer suffering). In a footnote, she offers a similar reading of *Out in the Dark*: “[T]he 2012 feature by U.S. based Israeli film-maker Michael Mayer, *Out in the Dark* (which received Israeli state funding and contains several plot similarities to *The Bubble*), reinforces the logic of exposure undergirding the ‘untold story’ mode of Israeli stories about closeted queer Palestinians seeking better—always Israeli, European, and/or US—cultural milieus for expression of their sexual identity and full personhood.”²⁴

While I am generally sympathetic to Jancovic’s reading of Israeli queer cinema through the framework of pinkwashing,²⁵ I believe this kind of a critique too often relies on a vision of an “authentic” Palestinian queer identity that is somehow free of any preexisting Israeli/European/U.S. influence.²⁶ This vision, paradoxically, promotes the view of Palestine as lacking an “outside”—despite the profoundly transnational, diasporic character of the contemporary Palestinian community. I contend that *Out in the Dark* shows, rather effectively, that both characters’ identities already have a deep transnational dimension that is inseparable from their localized/ethnic identities. Thus, Nimr’s vision of himself as a transnational knowledge worker is a part of his identity as a modern Palestinian gay man, and the tension between the local and the global forms of belonging is central to his identity. Maintaining that representing his transnational aspirations in the film amounts to pinkwashing is a simplification, in my view. Moreover, the film portrays both Israel and Palestine as sites that are crossed by multiple transnational legal and shadow economies—such as the smuggling of goods and people across the Mediterranean Sea—making visible the network of shadow routes and providers that is used by Nimr at the end of the film. It is also important to note that *Out in the Dark* diverges from its predecessor—*The Bubble*—in that it does not situate Israel as a hospitable home for gay rights. Instead, homophobic injustice is exposed on both sides of the border; while in the Palestinian village it is presented as overt, on the Israeli side it takes a more covert, though equally sinister, form.

The title of the film—*Out in the Dark*—signals that the characters of the film develop a paradoxical relationship to the space they occupy. It indicates a trajectory of displacement: a path that is treacherous because of poor visibility, a dislodgment without a precise goal, the loss of coordinates, and the failure of one’s capacity for proper geographical positioning. To be “out” means both to have become visible but also to have become evicted from the place of safety that we associate with “inside”—a place that shelters and protects. The characters indeed are presented with a conundrum that takes them into an unchartered territory and sets them in motion, violently dislodging them from their original locations. The symbolism of darkness is poignant as well: the majority of the scenes in the film indeed happen in the dark, in the afterhours. It is in the night that the lovers meet for the first time, and it is in the night that they are separated. The darkness creates a sense of claustrophobia, where space becomes progressively more and more limited, and the walls close in on the characters as they face political forces much larger than themselves. Both locations of the film—the West Bank and Tel Aviv—become increasingly more and more inhospitable, punitive, and, ultimately, carceral spaces.

The film is set against the background of two clashing militant nationalisms—the tight network of Israeli security and a web of Palestinian resistance—that work in tandem to disallow the characters’ relationship. The film explodes into a fast-paced thriller when Nimr is confronted by Israeli secret service officers at a café in Tel Aviv. Attempting to blackmail him into becoming an informant spying on his fellow students at Birzeit University, these authority figures revoke his study permit when he refuses. Shortly after, Nimr is outed to his family, and his brother, instead of performing a ritualistic honor killing, lets him escape through the fence warning him to never come back. Evicted from his home in Palestine and an illegal in Israel, Nimr flees to his lover’s apartment, with the omniscient Israeli security searching for him.²⁷

What transpires here is the fact that the lovers’ relationship is predicated upon the fickle and conditional “benevolence” of the state of Israel—an entity that has the power to grant or revoke Nimr’s study permit without notice. The film resists the vastly criticized pinkwashing of Israel by showing that behind the façade of benevolent liberalism there lurks a landscape of unmitigated racism and state-sponsored violence.²⁸ Ultimately, Palestinian queers are not safe or welcome in Israel; vulnerable prey to Israeli security forces, they are easily blackmailed and used as spies against their own people, only to be discarded and deported to Palestine (where they are viewed as collaborators) when no longer useful. Similarly, Roy’s seemingly liberal parents, accepting of his gay identity, are unapologetic in their racism towards his Palestinian partner. The absence of a national or a third, transnational space that would accommodate the Israeli-Palestinian same-sex couple becomes poignant and palpable at the point in the film when Nimr becomes stateless, ejected from both places he previously managed to navigate.

Central to the film’s plot is a dramatization of the violence of the law as it bars the lovers from being together through its enforcement of the logic of division between nation-states. Both characters initially trust that the law will assist them, if they play by the book. Nimr believes in the benevolence of the law (and the state of Israel) when he applies for and receives the student permit. He believes in the benevolence of the transnational knowledge economy that will recognize his talent and will transport him to one of the centers of higher learning in the West. Roy’s approach is to seek legal guidance as well: when Nimr’s permit is revoked, Roy, who is himself a lawyer, arranges a meeting with an immigration specialist to tackle the couple’s problem. He is flabbergasted when he learns that Nimr has no options that would allow him to stay in Israel legally, despite the fact that he faces a threat to his life in Palestine, and that Roy has no legal means to sponsor his Palestinian partner’s travel permit, a visa, or any other document. In the course of the film, the lovers have to unlearn their initial investment in doing things by the book: Roy has to break the law to save the life of his lover by seeking assistance from the mob who agree to smuggle Nimr out of the country on a yacht.

Out in the Dark dramatizes the intersectionality of oppression, by showing how Nimr’s low status as a Palestinian—an identity marked by vulnerability—overlaps with, and is amplified by the state-sponsored lack of full recognition of gay rights—in both Palestine and Israel. As of 2016, same-sex marriages cannot be performed in Israel; however, the State of Israel has some provisions for same-sex couples: for instance, same-sex couples residing in Israel can receive benefits as common-law partners, provided that they can prove joint resident status and financial interdependence. These benefits do not amount to marriage, however, and partners’ official status remains “single.” Additionally, Israel allows for a limited recognition of a same-sex marriage conducted abroad. Even so, for partners married abroad and needing immigration provisions, the existing law becomes a legalistic quagmire if one of the partners is not Jewish and thus is not eligible to receive Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return. For instance, *Haarez* reports that Bayardo Alvarez, an American (non-Jewish) partner of Joshua Goldberg (an Israeli citizen), has been held in a troublesome legal limbo being refused immigration rights: “Alvarez was granted temporary residence after the couple had been summoned six times to the Interior Ministry branch in Eilat,

where they say they were treated in a hostile, humiliating way by the clerk. Goldberg claims it was clear they were looking for excuses not to grant him residence.”²⁹ In 2008, *Reuters* reported that a temporary residence permit was finally issued to a Palestinian gay man who had been asking for permission to live with his partner in Israel for five years and claimed that his life was in danger.³⁰ These examples make obvious that the injustice endured by bi-national queer couples is intersectional in its nature, creating conditions of statelessness for such couples even in the cases of nation-states that are lauded for their progressive laws.

The lives of the characters in the film are transnational lives: they are the site of a thick intertwining of local, national, and transnational processes and are marked by intersecting relations of power and powerlessness. As such, global processes that promote international travel for the purpose of tourism, study, and work shape the characters’ transnational desires while the clash of nationalisms interrupts these desires. Early in the film, Nimr asks Roy to elope and leave Israel for a “better” location (presumably, the United States where he hopes to go to graduate school), therefore giving consideration to a possibility of forging a “third space”³¹ for the bi-national couple in the transnational milieu. The U.S. thus figures briefly as “the final and hospitable home for cultural rights,” as Gayatri Spivak would put it,³² only to vanish from view as Nimr loses his legal status in Israel. This “third space” is then reconfigured, in a much less promising way, as Europe—a precarious “home” of illegal refugees from the Middle East—the last resort for Nimr as he escapes Israel illegally in a smuggler’s boat. Nimr and Roy are separated at the end of the film, with the final scenes showing Roy in a cell at the police station, interrogated by the Israeli security officer and Nimr meeting dawn in a yacht in the open sea. The lives of the lovers are wrecked: Nimr’s future journey as an illegal immigrant in Europe looks grim. Falling in love with a foreigner resulted in a catastrophic loss of home, the loss of the future he had envisioned, and also the loss of his lover. For Roy, becoming a member of a bi-national couple means an equally catastrophic loss of status, privilege, and freedom.

The film ends with dawn breaking, depicting two new spaces that emerge in the aftermath of the story. In the two final scenes the characters face away from one another (figure 1). In the frame that shows Roy at the police station, he looks to the left and down. His new trajectory is inward; his new space is carceral, punitive, and restricted—the security officer promises that he will “bury” Roy for having helped to secure Nimr’s freedom. The security officer’s homophobia once again challenges the myth of liberal Israel, bringing into view the hidden landscape of state-sponsored violence. The scene at the police station is juxtaposed with the very last scene that features Nimr on a yacht facing the dawn in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. His face is turned right and up, signaling movement in the opposite direction from Roy. No longer out in the dark, he is now out in the uncharted waters as a stateless subject—without a defined identity, without a passport, an unwanted illegal heading toward an unspecified European country. The film thus follows a melancholy arc similar to the one of Gambone’s novel serving as a commentary of the bi-national queer couple’s vulnerability in the transnational domain. Yet, in contrast to Gambone’s text, it offers no psychological or spiritual resolution.

A Third Space as an Allegory: Room in Rome

The statelessness of the bi-national same-sex couple is explored in a different way—allegorically—in a 2010 film by Spanish director Julio Medem *Room in Rome*—a film that conjures a paradoxical vision of utopia: a queer country extraterritorial to existing nation-states. The film takes place in the lush Italian capital and tells a story of a one-night stand between a Spanish woman called Alba and a Russian woman, Natasha—a sexual escapade that turns into a wish for a relationship, resulting in a utopian enactment. The film was reviewed favorably by critics.³³ Ponto, for instance, contends that the film is



Figure 1.

“honest and respectful in that it doesn’t reduce the situation into male fantasy, despite a male auteur behind it.” In turn, Riendeau, a writer for *AfterEllen*—a lesbian popculture website—warmly describes it as “a sexy, messy attempt at an erotic drama.”³⁴ Rich in symbolism, the film produces a visual and affective vocabulary that allegorizes the absence of transnational space that can accommodate a bi-national same-sex couple by producing—and exploring—a “third space” (a hotel room in Rome) that becomes a site of

queer utopian enactment. Thirdspace—a term coined by Soja—is a real site that acquires, paradoxically, an imaginary dimension;³⁵ similar to Foucault’s heterotopia, it serves as a counter-space that subverts and redefines established topographies of desire, normativity, and power.³⁶ The film stages such an expansion of a real place into an imagined utopian infinity through a temporal dilation and an imaginative opening of a new possibility of coexistence in this shared space. The room literally becomes a missing “third”—a space where normative relations between nation-states are subverted, and a new “country,” under the auspices of the erected white flag, is imaginatively forged—a utopia of transnational queer space, extra-territorial to existing nation-states.

The entire film unfolds in this third space—a transient, ephemeral, rented location, which serves well to foreground the precariousness of the romance the viewer witnesses. The room functions as a poignant visual allegory for relationships that are ephemeral, passing, and condemned to disappearance because they are out of place. Over the course of two hours the spectator witnesses the transformation of a lavishly decorated hotel room in the center of Rome (a rented place, an appropriate place for a one-night stand) from a space of desire (ephemeral) to a space of the couple (a paradoxical counter-site) that serves as a model and as an allegory of transnational queer space.

The story unravels over the course of one night—the shortest night of the year, the beginning of summer. The film’s sequences unfold in an oneiric temporality, where time seems to stretch out almost indefinitely. Central to the film’s imagery is the interplay of presence and absence: visually rich scenes are contrasted with the scenes that have absence and lack as their focus. The rich visuality of naked bodies, lovemaking, lush drapery, and voluptuous Renaissance paintings on walls are contrasted with moments of silence, pauses, hesitation—all emphasized by long takes that seem relatively devoid of visual content. The most visible and mysterious symbol of absence in the film is the absence of a flag on the central pole out at the balcony. The film is obsessed with this particular absence. “My room is called Two Flags,” Alba (the Spanish protagonist) says when she lures the Russian woman into her room. There is a European Union flag on one pole and a Rome city flag on the other pole. She points out that the third, central pole that crowns the hotel balcony is empty, it has no flag on it (figure 2). The naked pole at times functions as a visual boundary between the lovers—they are positioned strategically on opposite sides of the pole (figure 2). It is also phallic, upright—the lovers look up to the pole. This absence is juxtaposed with the richness of the interior space of the room where all the walls and the ceiling are richly decorated with textures, frescos, and paintings. Positioned outside, the pole is depicted as a visual boundary be-



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

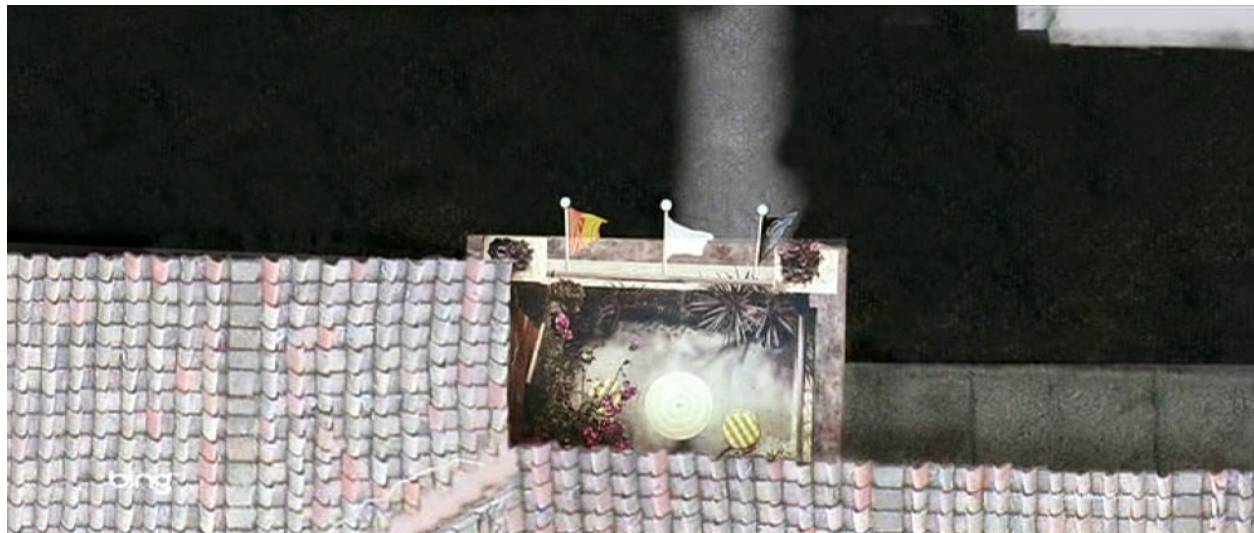


Figure 4.

tween the lovers only when they come out of the privacy of their room into the open, public space of the balcony. This open space is coded as representational space (to borrow a term from Henri Lefevbre)—a space that is defined by publicly recognizable symbols of collective identity: the city of Rome and the European community.³⁷

The absence of a collectively recognized symbol on the central pole seems mysterious: framed by the flag of the city (local) and the flag on the European Union (a transnational entity), the middle pole seems to be a logical place for a national flag (Italy). The film foregrounds this absence as significant, glaring, until it is finally filled. In the last quarter of the film, the lovers raise a white bed sheet on the pole (figure 3). This gesture, which occurs at the end of the night, is orthopedic in the Lacanian sense: it is designed to create a representation of an entity that does not yet exist.³⁸ It inaugurates a transnational queer country, transforming the protagonists from two individuals engaged in a one-night-stand into a couple in love that seeks endurance, representation, and public recognition.

Once the flag is erected, the film's mood changes dramatically, which is communicated through the changes in color, lighting, images, and symbols the film employs. Night turns into the day—dark, subdued colors recede and white becomes dominant. The lovers see each other, for the first time, in the

daylight. Horizontality prevalent throughout the first half of the film turns into upright, vertical orientation. Sexual desire (represented by the bed and the bodies located horizontally) gets reoriented as desire for a shared domesticity, such as waking up together, brushing teeth together, taking a shower. The space of desire is transformed into a domestic, familial space, the space of the couple that is mediated via a symbolic representation in the public domain—the flag. As the lovers have breakfast together on the balcony, in the shadow of the new flag, they are visible from the street; their shared domesticity is also witnessed by the Italian hotel room attendant who serves them breakfast. The couple’s status as such is mediated via the work of symbolization and witnessing, indicating the necessity of such mediation. The imagined shared life is then also enacted theatrically: the couple confess their love for one another, articulate their desire for endurance, and simulate a marriage ceremony in white bathrobes (the orientation in this scene is also vertical, upright). The vertical dimension, symbolized by the flag as well as via public witnesses, can be read as an allegorical representation of the law (and its orthopedic, constitutive effects) that is needed to inaugurate the bi-national queer couple into existence via the work of legal recognition and symbolic affirmation.

The color palette in the last section of the film emphasizes radiance—of the daylight, of the marital robes, and of the flag itself. All these elements are symbolic of absence turned into presence, private desire turned into public visibility and symbolic recognition, the ephemeral turned into the enduring. The night was short (the shortest night of the year) but the day is long and here to stay. This endurance is, of course, an impossibility and is achieved only as a symbolic act—an imitation that is an expression of a desire and a demand—a utopian enactment. The film ends with the women parting and the camera assuming a bird’s-eye view. The new white flag is photoshopped into the Google map that shows the hotel in Rome from above. The flag performs the function of a monument—to commemorate, to give endurance to the event—and a performative function: to inaugurate a country that does not exist, a queer country that is extraterritorial to existing nation states (figure 4).³⁹

Beijing, *Out in the Dark*, and *Room in Rome* conjure modes of articulating the quandary of the bi-national same-sex couple and make the absence of transnational queer space, as it pertains to such couples, visible. The texts share a number of similarities, including their preoccupation with geography and mapping, their focus on the couple rather than on the individual, and their exploration of the meaning of legal and symbolic representation on the psychic life of a couple. In their examination of the bi-national same-sex couple as an embodiment of multiple, often conflicting global forces, *Beijing* and *Out in the Dark* offer a critique of the logic of the nation-state that affects the patterns of queer subjects’ transnational mobility—in terms of travel, migration, and immigration. At the same time, *Beijing* invites the reader to embrace the border as a productive psychological space where physical absence is sublimated into a transcendent presence, and where the specific injury endured by a queer couple is universalized as a universal human condition. In *Out in the Dark*, transnational queer space (or rather its absence) emerges as a deadlock where the national border appears insoluble and the partition irremediable. In turn, *Room in Rome* can be viewed as an allegoric representation of displacement, creating a set of symbolizations and substitutions to remedy the actual limits that the couple face. The aesthetic of absence in *Room in Rome* contains a utopian dimension where a queer country is inaugurated into existence in a manner similar to nation states—through an orthopedic erection of a symbol and by claiming representation on the map of the world. *Room in Rome* thus positions itself as a cathartic cross-border project, a model enactment that temporarily suspends or even overcomes the logic of nation-states as regimes of control over queer bodies. All three works are important contributions to the contemporary queer archive as they make visible the injustice sustained by a queer couple in the transnational domain. More generally, they offer a contribution to the growing archive of the today’s “stateless” subjects—the inconceivable and unmappable “non-citizens” of the world comprised of nation-states.

Notes

1. A bi-national couple is a union where partners are citizens of two different countries and do not share a nationality. In this text, I often use the term “queer” and “same-sex” interchangeably. The three narratives I discuss feature same-sex couples. It is important to emphasize, however, that other non-heterosexual partnerships (such as couples where one or both partners are transgender) face the same or similar legal difficulties in the transnational domain.
2. As of today, the following countries have provisions for bi-national queer couples for immigration purposes: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay.
3. The issue of bi-national same-sex couples’ plight crossed into mainstream visibility in the months leading to and immediately following DOMA’s repeal. See, for instance, Maria Sachetti, “US will consider same-sex partnerships in deportations” in *Boston Globe* (28 Sep. 2012); Margaret Hartmann “The U.S. Has Approved Its First Green Card for a Gay Spouse” in *NY Mag* (June 2013); and Blake Ellis “DOMA ruling’s overlooked benefit: Immigration rights” in *Money CNN* (22 Aug. 2013). Several websites were launched to support bi-national same-sex couples and families, including The DOMA Project that existed since 2011 (*DOMAProject.org*). See also *Love Stories: Binational Couples on the Front Lines Against DOMA*—a film directed by Brynn Gelbard (2012).
4. See Ulrick Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Distant Love* (New York: Polity, 2014).
5. While immigration laws in the U.S. changed in 2013 to accommodate individuals in same-sex partnerships, the status of marriage equality around the world leaves much to be desired. New “gay propaganda” laws in Russia, the tightening of anti-gay laws on the African continent and India, and the ongoing struggle for LGBT rights in Iran signal changes that further solidify obstacles to global mobility for individuals in same-sex couples.
6. With its focus on same-sex couples caught in a transnational legal limbo, Judy Rickard’s *Torn Apart: United by Love, Divided by Law* (Forres, Scotland: Findhorn Press, 2011) offers a unique and valuable contribution to the field. See also testimonies collected on *LoveExiles.org*—a site that was launched in 2004 and *DomaProject.org* (in existence since 2011).
7. A phrase coined by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim in *Distant Love*.
8. See Levi Briant, “Five Types of Objects: Gravity and Onto-Cartography.” *LarvalSubjects.wordpress.com/*.
9. Although the issues of transnational queer space received considerable scholarly attention in recent years, it has been discussed in two ways: either as a space traversed by circuits of global mobility and desire, as trajectories of (primarily gay male) tourism navigating the globe in search of cruising spots and gay meccas, or as paths of migration trodden by asylum seekers and individual LGBT migrants, looking for relief from the pain and suffering inflicted on them by their own nation-states. See, for instance, Gabriel Giorgi, “Madrid En Tránsito: Travelers, Visibility, and Gay Identity,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no 1-2 (2002): 57-79; Arnaldo Cruz-Malave and Martin F. Manalansan, *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: NYU Press, 2002); Eithne Luibheid and Lionel Cantu Jr., *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border-Crossings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Jasbir Puar “Circuits of Queer Mobility Tourism, Travel, and Globalization”

- in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no 1-2 (2002): 101-137; and Dereka Rushbrook, "Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no 1-2 (2002): 183-206, among many others. Yet, relatively little has been said about paradoxes endured by a queer subject who enters transnational domain as a member of a bi-national couple. The summer issue of *Signs* in 2011 was groundbreaking in its effort to bring to light on the status of individuals in bi-national same-sex relationships (love exiles): Lee M.V. Badget "Separated but Not Equal: Binational Same-Sex Couples" in *Signs* 36, no 4 (2011), 793. See also Gunner Andersson, Turid Noack, Ane Seierstad, and Harald Weedon-Fekjaer "The Demographics of Same-Sex Marriages in Norway and Sweden." *Demography* 43, no. 1 (2006), 88.
10. This absence of academic criticism is attributable to the fact that all three texts are still very new: *Out in the Dark*, for instance, entered the international film festival circuit as recently as 2013 and is bound to receive scholarly attention in light of academic discussions surrounding gay rights and Israeli politics of self-representation. *Beijing* (published in 2003) awaits scholarly attention as part of the history of marriage equality literature and as an example of gay travel writing (see, for instance, Raphael Kadushin who invokes Gambone in his "Can Gay Men Save Travel Writing?" in *Gay and Lesbian Review* (July 1, 2010).
 11. The novel received favorable reviews; see, for instance, Stephen Hemrick, "West Meets East." *The Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide* 10, no. 5 (September-October 2013), 42, and Marshall Moore, "More Than a Tourist." *Lambda Book Report*, July 31, 2003.
 12. Philip Gambone, *Beijing* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 78.
 13. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 1.
 14. *Ibid.*, 12.
 15. In his non-fiction essay "Gay Life and Gay Hope in Beijing," Gambone reports that, prior to his semester in China, he tried to find out what gay life was like in Beijing, but could not find any information. "[A] gay graduate student who had recently come to the U.S. from Beijing summarily told me: 'There is no gay culture and almost no gay life. Gays are invisible.'" (*The Harvard Gay and Lesbian Review* 4.2, April 30, 1997, 14). Upon traveling to Beijing, he found that "the subculture that, while definitely still underground, was more vibrant than [he]'d been led to expect" (15).
 16. Gambone, *Beijing*, 9.
 17. *Ibid.*, 267.
 18. *Ibid.*, 311.
 19. Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 22.
 20. *Ibid.*, 23.
 21. Ray Lahey, "The New Brokeback Mountain" in *IMDB* (16 Sep. 2012).
 22. The film received a mixture of favorable reviews (see, for instance, reviews by Breen, Hoden, and Combs), and critical responses (see, for instance, responses by Bailey, Forest, and Cottey), generating controversy around the issue of coopting gay rights in Israeli cinema (see my discussion of the "pinkwashing" argument below).
 23. For the analysis of contemporary Israeli queer cinema, see Raz Yosef, *Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004) and Nir Cohen, *Soldiers, Rebels, and Drifters: Gay Representation in Israeli Cinema* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012), among others.
 24. Coleen Jancovic, "'You Can't Film Here': Queer Political Fantasy and Thin Critique of Israeli

- Occupation in *The Bubble*,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 22, no. 2 (Fall 2013), 118.
25. “Pinkwashing” is a term popularized by Sarah Schulman’s op-ed in *The New York Times* (2011), which refers to the State of Israel’s attempts to improve its image worldwide by coopting the discourse of gay rights and positioning Israel as a site of tolerance, progress, and liberal values. For a brief history of “pinkwashing,” see Schulman’s book *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International* (Atlanta: Duke University Press, 2012).
 26. For a critique of the notion of Palestinian queer identities as unlivable, see AIQaws’ (a Palestinian organization that promotes sexual and gender diversity) statement online. AIQaws states: “Understanding ‘homophobia’ in colonial contexts demands accounting for colonialism in order to understand homophobia, rather than positing homophobia as a timeless universal of all societies or the specific property of Arab and/or Muslim societies.” AIQaws.org.
 27. Jancovic points out the proximity of gay and collaborator identities in the contemporary Palestinian imaginary, since many Palestinian gay men were targeted by Israeli secret services and blackmailed into collaborating. See “‘You Can’t Film Here’: Queer Political Fantasy and Thin Critique of Israeli Occupation in *The Bubble*,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 22, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 97-118. This particular colonial situation thus exacerbates Nimr’s predicament, where he is subjected to the threat of extreme violence reserved for (gay) collaborators on the Palestinian side, and to the suspicion reserved for potential terrorists on the Israeli side.
 28. For a critique of *Out in the Dark* as pinkwashing, see Brady Forrest, “The Pinkwashing of *Out in the Dark*,” *Mondoweiss* (Sept 24, 2014).
 29. See Ilan Lior, “Israel Refuses Citizenship for Gay Man Married to Jewish Immigrant: The Law of Return is Being Put to the Test by Couple from United States,” in *Haaretz* (June 28, 2011).
 30. See Rebecca Harrison, “Gay Palestinian gets OK to live with Israeli Lover,” in *Reuters* (March 25, 2008).
 31. “Thirdspace” is a term introduced by Edward Soja. Combining the qualities of both real and imaginary spaces, the term shares many features with Foucault’s heterotopia or Muñoz’s “concrete utopias.” I will revisit the term in the last section of the essay, explaining how it figures as a utopian enactment of a transnational queer space in *Room in Rome*.
 32. Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 82.
 33. See, for instance, reviews by Jonathan Holland, “Review: ‘Room in Rome,’” in *Variety* (May 5, 2010) and Arya Ponto, “Room in Rome Review” in *Just Press Play* (March 10, 2011).
 34. See Danielle Riendeau, “Review of ‘Room in Rome,’” in *AfterEllen* (December 27, 2010).
 35. Edward Soja, interview by Christian Borch. “Interview with Edward W. Soja: Thirdspace, Post-metropolis, and Social Theory” in *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 3, no. 1 (2002): 113-120.
 36. Heterotopias are “counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found in the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” 24).
 37. Henri Lefebvre coins the term “representational space” in his seminal text *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1991).
 38. In his essay devoted to the analysis of the effects of the mirror on the formation of the “I,” Lacan talks about the function of the mirror as orthopedic. See “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001): 1285-90.
 39. Generally speaking, critics failed to recognize the underlying allegorical structure of the film with its focus of spatiality and mapping. Holland, for instance, writes: “The women show each

other photos of their houses, via computer; Medem seems fascinated by our techno-based ability to condense space and time, and the intimacies of this single hotel room are repeatedly contrasted with the vastness of the earth or even of space.” Yet, he does not know how to interpret this fascination. Similarly, Riendeau points to the film’s obsession with mapping, interpreting it as “a none-too-subtle commentary on intimacy versus technology and the vastness of our world—brought up multiple times by Alba’s amazing Earth-sized magical internet map.”

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Speaking in Tongues: Language and National Belonging in Globalizing Europe

Uli Linke

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

During the past two decades, the political landscape of Europe has undergone dramatic change. The powerful matrix of global capitalism has deeply affected European nation forms, social ideologies, and political systems, as suggested by German unification, the collapse of the Soviet regime, the war in the former Yugoslavia, and the subsequent formation of the European Union, including the Europeanization of post-socialist states. In this context, the historical fixity of borders, bodies, and spaces has been unmoored.¹ The end of the Cold War furnished new possibilities for envisioning society, promoting major transformations in the fabric of Europe's national communities.² In addition, the emergent entanglements of state and corporate interests not only changed the political contours of Europe but also altered the social conditions under which imaginaries of belonging are brought to public visibility.

How is citizenship configured in this globally transformed political space? In the European Union, the realities of ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism have unraveled the idea of *citizens* as homogenous or undifferentiated aggregates. Yet as Europe strives to achieve political and economic unity, we see a concurrent push toward inequality, cultural exclusion, and linguistic marginalization.³ The legacies of colonialism and fascist nationalism not only continue to imprint the privilege of whiteness onto the new map of Europe, but they also sustain the fortification of Europe as a hegemonic "white" space.⁴ From this perspective, the focus on citizenship in Europe by detour to the master narratives of Cold War national history, as I argue here, requires a critical reassessment. In efforts to both accommodate and repel the tension-fraught effects of a globalizing Europe, local reassertions of nationality have given rise to new measures of exclusion, framed by anti-immigrant sentiments, the closure of borders, and ethnoracial nationalism.

In this essay, I examine how such assertions of nationhood have gained prominence in European Union countries. My analysis of the shifting parameters of national belonging proceeds by a focus on one case example: post-unification Germany. While specific concerns about border security or legacies of national history might not be applicable to all European states, we see a common push toward national distinction and emergent forms of lingual citizenship. Since the 1990s, the projected frontiers of European nations, the lines dividing the native from the foreign, are increasingly mapped through the medium of language. In Germany, as in France, Holland, Belgium, and Denmark, or Austria, national identity politics have become language politics, a terrain marked by fears of linguistic estrangement and a public preoccupation with preserving an authentic national interior. The *nation* is configured as a speech community of ethnic Germans. How did this come to pass? In tracing the political production of linguistic

nationalism, my analytic attention is focused on post-unification Germany, a “nation form”⁵ that tends to legitimate itself by recourse to corporal metaphors. Linguistic nationalism draws on quasi-mythic notions of the German political community as a language-body, a closed linguistic corpus, which is presumed to be organic, essential, and pure. Language nationalism, which aims to protect the integrity of this ethno-linguistic entity, is located on an imaginary landscape of intensely charged concepts: nation, nature, and race.

Building on these insights, my reflections on language politics in contemporary Germany rely on a montage of data from multiple sources. Informed by earlier studies of ethnoracial machinations in Europe and across the globe,⁶ my project draws on long-term fieldwork in Germany. During a four-year residence as a faculty member at the University Tuebingen from 1997 to 2001, I had the opportunity to become an observing participant of the problematic formation of the European Union, the EURO zone, and the subsequent implementation of Europeanization initiatives, such as language reform and the rearticulation of immigration policies. Living and working in Germany provided me with unique opportunities to participate in diverse forms of community; to engage in discussions with students, colleagues, and family members; and to conduct informal interviews with neighbors, strangers, immigrant workers, journalists, bureaucrats, state officials, and schoolteachers. Between 2002 and 2012, I was able to refine my primary field data with follow-up research trips that ranged from a few weeks to several months each year, and included study-travel to various cities across Europe (Venice, Budapest, Frankfurt, Oslo, Bergen, Munich). My insights about German nationalism and immigrants’ everyday experiences were further enhanced by my extensive scrutiny of media images, news reports, and political discourse, as well as European Union and United Nations documents. Guided by the expansive scholarship on racial formations in twenty-first century,⁷ the presentation of my research findings follows a critical approach to contemporary forms of national belonging.

My essay begins with a brief sketch of the broader context of transborder politics in Europe. The selected vignettes include Germany’s self-representation to the world, central to which is the trope of the nation as a white female icon, whose erotic allure propagates open borders for foreign investors. This gendered fantasy of nationhood coexists with European national discourses about the entry of Muslims (most recently, Syrian refugees) into Europe, which is perceived as a threat to national sovereignty and culture. In presenting these contrary approaches to border security, my aim is to offer an overview of racializing practices in and by European countries prior to analyzing the emergent phenomenon of linguistic nationalism in specific EU member-states. In the subsequent sections of this article, my discussion turns to the German citizenship debates and the push for border fortification via the instrument of a national language. Here my evidence derives from a diversity of intersecting political fields: lingual citizenship, language reform, and the formation of German literary societies, which render visible the phantasm of language purity and the fear of linguistic difference. These are themes that I also investigate by a critical reexamination of ethnographic research. My essay interrogates language as a battleground that problematizes immigrant presence and national belonging in postunified Germany, a country which is also a core nation-state in a multiethnic and plurilingual Europe.

Whiteness as a National Emblem: Branding Distinctions

What resources are mobilized by European nation-states to reclaim their sovereignty under globalization? In the twenty-first century, the manufacture of European national distinction has increasingly shifted to the market place, the terrain of advertising, fashion, and media. Culture industries manufacture national distinction by means of commodity desire and consumption. When circulated across political borders to attract foreign investment and international consumer attention, such marketing re-

lies on familiar motifs: gender, sex, and race. Consider the following example, a worldwide marketing campaign sponsored by the German government and launched in 2006.

SNAPSHOT ONE. In London, New York, and Tokyo, gigantic billboards in subway stations and airports promote financial investment opportunities in Germany by featuring supermodel Claudia Schiffer.⁸ Seductively posed, her pale-white body is stretched horizontally across the visual frame: an endless space of whiteness. She is casually positioned, reclined on her side. The silky fabric of the German national flag, which is tenderly draped across her torso, accentuates her body's nudity, revealing the immaculate smoothness of her legs and arms. She is facing the camera, her head slightly propped up, framed by her arms and cascading blond hair. Posed against a white screen, she extends an invitation as part of the global marketing campaign: "Invest in Germany—Land of Ideas." This advocacy of monetary investment in German business ventures is further articulated by a series of suggestive slogans: "Discover the beauty of the deal"; "Invest in Germany, boys"; "Interested in a serious relationship?"; "Come on over to my place"; "Follow your instincts."

In the spaces of transborder capitalism, the German marketing initiative is infused with erotic messages. The campaign toys with the seductive image of the goddess *Europa* (interweaving myth, history, ancestry) and the lure of the iconic "white woman" to evoke gendered fantasies of sexual conquest and erotic capture. The campaign-designers envision international investors as male, as businessmen, whose lurid economic desires can be fulfilled by intimacy with the German nation as a female plaything. In this fantasy, transnational financial endeavors are crafted as intimate erotic encounters. Capital investment in Germany is presented as a sexual adventure. The white female body/nation is offered up as a consumable commodity in global capitalist space. Although the white female figure inhabits this imaginary terrain, she is branded as a political subject: the German flag envelops her body; she is marked as a national icon. Like a ventriloquist's doll, she gives corporal form and voice to the nation's desires.

But the work of neoliberal economies, with their seductive promise of unlimited possibilities, is simultaneously defended as a state-protected privilege, a concession of citizenship reserved for European nationals. The political spaces of capitalism are closely guarded. Lawmakers, politicians, and media industries call upon imaginaries of language, gender, and race to authorize or deny participation in the dreamworlds of prosperity. The formation of the European security state after 9/11 2001 has intensified this process by giving rise to new border regimes. Founded on a cohesive network of political, military, and corporate interests, the neoliberal security-state has fundamentally altered the possibilities for negotiating matters of belonging in Europe. My research across Europe's multinational spaces reveals that the collusion of global economic restructuring and entrenched local commitments propagates old as well as new disparities.

Modalities of Difference: Gender, Race, and Immigration

As a reformist entity, the European Union has positioned itself as a legal order against the unprecedented fluidity and instability of global power relations: the judicial system, according to Clare McGlynn, has become the "Union's genetic code."⁹ Although founded on a political order sensitive to difference and social equality, the quest for unity and uniformity tends to erode acceptance of otherness. In other words, Europe's preoccupation with judicial matters, which seeks to neutralize legal pluralism and minimize the incoherence of rights in political practice, produces unforeseen results. Following McGlynn: "There is a tendency for the presence of rights to somehow construct the ideal rights-bearing

citizen. This assertion of ‘ideal citizen’ models, with its consequent marginalization and exclusion of the non-ideal, carries a particular resonance for feminists” and civil rights advocates.¹⁰

European family policy reforms provide an instructive example: by a focus on protecting women’s reproductive capacity, the figure of the single, childless, or lesbian woman is rendered invisible.¹¹ While granting generous provision for maternity leave and maternal health care, such policy measures confirm prevailing gender expectations: men’s non-involvement in domestic tasks is not challenged. In the family reform documents, “women are presented as a homogeneous category without race, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, ability or any other life dimension.”¹² Women’s distinguishing feature is the ability to produce children. Europe’s legal intervention in the family aims to protect female procreativity as a matter of equal opportunity, thereby reifying women’s traditional roles as mothers and caregivers. Although focused on enabling women’s participation in the marketplace without infringing on maternal responsibilities, Europe’s legal rights discourse does not prioritize gender equality. The reforms and provisions speak to political concerns about a demographic crisis, a shrinking European population, which is attributed to decreasing fertility rates among white women.¹³

In what manner are national hegemonies of being and belonging transformed when subjected to the regulatory mechanisms of the European Union? The formation of a united Europe requires normative standards for implementing binding policies: the rights of equality or prohibitions of discrimination need to be enforceable across different nation states. Governed by efforts to avert a legitimation crisis, European unification proceeds by a turn to the global legal order: the supranational polity is stabilized by drawing on the repertoire of human rights laws and the “universally valid” normative underpinnings of legislation. Europe’s interface with global legislative standards facilitates political integration. But at the same time, as Jo Shaw cautions, “dominant ideologies about women, motherhood, family life, and the sexual division of labor” become European legal doctrine without critical attention to the diversity of women’s experience.¹⁴

In contemporary Europe, gender politics are reconfigured by a global imaginary. But in this process, ethnonational and local machinations of race, sex, and nation remain uncontested.¹⁵ The turn to global human rights is a legitimating practice: it advocates a pseudo-rational universalism that negates awareness of the existing modalities of gender and ethnoracial inequalities. In this manner, the religious practices and social worlds of Muslim women as immigrants or refugees have gained attention as critical transborder matters and national security issues rather than as formative fields of civil rights, democracy, and citizenship. Despite the interface with global human rights norms, Europe’s imaginaries of national belonging remain exclusionary and ethnocentric. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that immigration policies and cultural attitudes to ethnic diversity are not yet uniformly synchronized among European Union member states, as suggested by the following example:

SNAPSHOT TWO. In Bulgaria, a European Union state since 2007, the trope of the *Muslim woman* has promoted intense debates about the public frontiers of gendered subjectivities. As in France, where Islamophobia is implicated in the controversial ban on the Muslim headscarf in public schools, Bulgaria has considered “legal regulations on the wearing of religious symbols” by women.¹⁶ Similar controversies about the *hijab* have emerged in Holland, Belgium, Italy, and Germany, where the admissibility of ‘conspicuous’ religious clothing in public schools and secular institutional spaces has come under consideration by lawmakers. In Bulgaria, however, as Kristen Ghodsee observed, when several Muslim schoolgirls filed complaints with the national *Commission of Protection Against Discrimination*, the court’s ruling merely affirmed the local headmaster’s authority to enforce existing school uniform codes. In those cases, where such dress codes were already in place, Muslim schoolgirls were mandated to continue their public educa-

tion “bareheaded,” a decision judged to “promote gender equality.”¹⁷ In other instances, where no such dress codes were evident, the commission ruled that the schoolgirls were free to wear whatever clothing they desired. By empowering local institutions, postsocialist Bulgaria has managed to safeguard the public deportment of Muslim female bodies from state intervention.

Bulgaria’s judicial approach is remarkably different from the course of action taken in other western European countries, where the public demeanor of Muslim women is socially monitored and legally restricted. In Bulgaria, Muslims are political subjects with long-standing claims to membership in the national community: “Unlike in Germany, Britain or France, Bulgaria’s Muslims have been [citizens for centuries] as a legacy of the Ottoman Empire.”¹⁸ The religious attire of Muslim girls is thereby less entangled in debates about immigration, national security, and the resistance of ethnic minorities to integrate or westernize. While not completely disengaged from Europe’s neocolonial or imperialist legacies, including ethno-religious intolerance, the headscarf debates in Bulgaria are differently encoded by economic rationality: secondary education in Bulgaria depends on tuition-paying students and the continuous enrollment of Muslim girls in public schools is judged a critical issue.¹⁹ By contrast, in France, a Muslim woman’s hijab and facial covering is deemed an “assimilation defect,” a rejection of French values of equality,²⁰ which results in the denial or negation of citizenship status.²¹

Why has the Islamic female body been so vigorously pushed into the center of political attention? Spectacularized by media, commodified by political discourse, and scrutinized in public debates, the figure of the Muslim woman has emerged as a global symbol of modernity’s female double. In Europe’s orientalist imagination, the public sight of veiled female bodies invokes fantasies about polygamy, arranged marriages, honor killings, domestic confinement, and other imagined affronts to European sensibilities regarding gender roles and sexual mores.²² The practice of female veiling is interpreted as an outward sign of the patriarchal reach of Islam, which prevents Muslim women from shedding their cultural allegiance and inhibits their ability to become assimilated European subjects. This Europeanizing logic negates the meanings attached to the veil by Muslim women themselves, who wear it as a dense signifier of distinction, social standing, devotion, and protection. The use of the veil or some other form of head-body-covering has historically been regarded as a liberating device. As a means of “portable seclusion,” as Lila Abu-Lughod explained, it grants women the freedom of mobility.²³ Since a conventional ‘cover’ enables Muslim women to freely move about in public, it makes little sense that they should desire to denounce or abandon this article of clothing. But in Europe, in the volatile terrain of national border security and anti-immigration sentiments, this practice has been encoded with different meanings. Interpreted in political terms as a barrier to cultural integration and as an embodied sign of oppression, the practice of female concealment has become a battleground—a criminalized site—for disciplinary intervention.

Negating Europeanness: The Muslim-Arab-Other

Seen through the affective resonance of a global security lockdown, Europe’s Muslim women are linked to an intrusive, negative ‘immigrant’ presence that needs to be diminished or controlled. Under such conditions, marked by a politics of fear and fluctuating demands for border fortification, divergent images of dangerous alterities are assembled to create a unitary figure: the Muslim–Arab–Other. This iconic template presents a montage of diverse tropes: the *immigrant*, the *terrorist*, the *refugee*, and the *enemy-outsider*. Criminalized as icons of global instability, disorder, and terror, Muslims are stripped of their right to belong. In the European Union, as suggested by the Bulgarian case, this imaginative turn against Muslim minorities has however not yet garnered uniform support. Global anxieties are variously

galvanized in different countries. In Germany, the figure of the Islamic Other is given life by anti-Turkish sentiments, a racial formation energized by memories of postwar economic reconstruction, 'guest' worker recruitment programs, and the desired impermanence of a mobile ethnic labor force. Anti-Islamic politics in France are nourished by resentments against Muslim immigrants from North Africa, whose precarious status as a racial minority in the center of Europe is an effect of the aftermath of French colonial violence. In the Netherlands, the figure of the Muslim is populated by Indonesian immigrants, whose citizenship rights are entangled with their status as descendants of slave laborers in Dutch plantation colonies. In each of these cases, the ethnographic life of Muslim communities has been shaped by political histories, societal memories, and demographic realities. But such local complexities are globally unremembered, replaced by a singular, non-temporal, spatially mobile template: the Muslim Other. The negated icon can thereby subsume salient ethnicities, "drawing together West Indians, Africans, South Asians into a blackening singularity as uninvited immigrant presence."²⁴ Reified by global ideologies, the construct of the Islamic Other furnishes a distorted lens for assessing difference and alterity.

Embedded in political fantasies about national security, terrorism, and border protection, as Achille Mbembe observed, Europeanness "is imagined as an identity against the Other."²⁵ Tangible alterities or figures of difference (the veiled Muslim woman, the Arab terrorist, the black immigrant) occupy a strategic place in the determination of Europeanness and the articulation of the corresponding fields of whiteness. These "largely unspoken racial connotations" of national belonging in Europe, as Stuart Hall suggests, are encoded by a cultural logic of difference that promotes either assimilation or exclusion.²⁶ National distinction is manufactured along a narrow register that "accords differing groups cultural normativity or deviance."²⁷ In this volatile terrain, according to Leora Bilsky, the European nation state is "caught between the need to enforce sameness and the fear of absolute difference, with no middle ground."²⁸

What modalities of gender or race and what machinations of belonging are deployed by Europe's border regime when assessing residence or citizenship privileges for immigrants? Europeanness is both confirmed by appearance and corroborated by performance. Practices of "cultural citizenship" or "social processes of whitening," as Aihwa Ong points out, are monitored by public officials to ascertain whether a person's "embodiment of culturally correct citizenship and privilege" has been successful.²⁹ The Europeanization of Muslim women not only prohibits the public assertion of ethnic difference but also demands a refashioning of femininity. The forcible unveiling of the Muslim woman's body in European nation states, as in France or Germany, suggests that integration or assimilation requires compliance with the practices of capitalist consumer culture. Minority women are rendered 'white' or socially acceptable when they embody the sexualizing regimes of commoditization.

Shifting Signposts of National Belonging

At this juncture of globalization, national security, and Europeanization, the cultural politics of belonging to a nation-state in Europe continue to be haunted by the histories of empire and colony. Why should this be the case? And what impact does it have on matters of national belonging? While conventionally located in a distinct geographic space, Europe stretches far beyond continental boundaries as a result of the formation of the European Union. For concurrent with the inclusion of the various member states, the European Union has also incorporated those overseas (remnant colonial) territories that did not yet achieved independence from former imperial nations. As a geopolitical entity, the European Union thereby extends across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, reaching from Indonesia, Africa, South and Central America to Polynesia. Examples include the overseas territories of Portugal, Spain, and Denmark (Greenland), the United Kingdom (Cayman, Turks and Caicos Islands, Virgin Islands, British

Indian Ocean Territories, Bermuda), France (French Polynesia, Martinique, French Guiana, Reunion), and the Netherlands (Aruba, Antilles). National subjects who legally reside in these various non-selfgoverning parts of the world have become European citizens with the inclusion of the respective Metropolitan states as Union members. What are the implications of this political reality for European pluralism?

The resident populations of EU overseas territories are European nationals. As European Union citizens, they are granted the same privileges and rights as any other European national with regard to travel, mobility, work, and residence (across the Schengen zone). In this context, the relative degrees of ‘whiteness’, as defined by the European national self-imagination, no longer hold up as publicly validated signs of belonging. How then have European nationals “fashioned their distinction”³⁰ in attempts to reconstitute themselves as global citizens in a multi-ethnic, plurilingual, and postimperial Europe? Markers of nationality, I argue, have shifted or expanded from visual to auditory signposts. Language competence and speech habits have become political instruments for measuring degrees of assimilation and, in turn, suitability for citizenship. In addition to appearance or skin color, national languages are used as sites for demarcating inclusion and exclusion. Although the European Union population is plurilingual, member states and national regions have begun to fiercely defend their sovereign political borders by mandating language tests for immigrants. While defined by a unique political history, Germany is a case in fact.

German unification in the 1990s, that is, the integration of the socialist East with the capitalist West, posed a profound challenge: the creation of a single nation-state and the transformation of legal subjects (citizens) into nationals. A unified Germany necessitated alternative ways of *thinking* and *feeling* the nation. By what means could such a sense of participation in a political community be produced? According to Etienne Balibar, there are two complementary routes to this: by *language* and by *race*.³¹ These principles of national belonging, as my research reveals, often operate together, in tandem.

Although the collapse of the socialist regime in the German Democratic Republic and the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989 were supported internationally, visions of an expansive German state evoked an apprehensive uneasiness. Subsequent anti-refugee riots, anti-immigrant street violence, the destruction of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, the arson murders of Turkish and other immigrant families, and the fire-bombings of refugee housing, all “seemed to confirm warnings of the political consequences of German unification.”³² Segments of the German population wanted to “reaffirm ethnocultural homogeneity—as expressed in the slogan ‘Germany for Germans’ and the often repeated mantra ‘Germany is not an immigration society.’”³³ Such sentiments reemerged in 2014, energized by the PEGIDA movement (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamicization of the Occident) and its slogan: ‘We are the Nation’ (*Wir sind das Volk*). The anxieties of German integration, the influx of refugees, and matters of European border security became trigger points for excavating collective sentiments and memories of a national community of ethnic Germans.

What were the political responses to this crisis of identity formation? Preoccupied with gatekeeping, border-guarding, and national armament, German politicians were persistent in their refusal to “improve the protection of minorities through detailed anti-discrimination legislation.”³⁴ The political answer to the challenges of inclusion took form through government campaigns “against the perceived abuse of the liberal right of asylum by so-called economic refugees.”³⁵ Applicants for political refugee status were criminalized.³⁶ Portrayed as parasites, freeloaders, and welfare spongers, ethnic minorities were treated as a threat to the German nation.³⁷ The political instrumentalization of anti-foreign sentiments by mainstream democratic parties promoted an ethnic fortress mentality: the closing of national borders, the reduction of the resident alien population, and the limiting of immigration, in particular that of refugees.³⁸ A political climate, which encouraged a renaissance of nationalism, ethnicization, and racism, effectively impeded the implementation of programs designed to safeguard the legal status of foreign nationals and their offspring born in Germany.

Nurtured by an understanding of nationhood as a homogenous community based on common descent (*Abstammungsgemeinschaft*), the formation of a united Germany was complicated by an organic notion of belonging.³⁹ The citizenship law of the Federal Republic of Germany determines national membership through the idiom of descent, as expressed by the Latin term *ius sanguinis*, “power/law of blood.”⁴⁰ Enacted in 1913—and still in effect today—the German citizenship law permits, and even encourages, the “nation’s racial closure.”⁴¹ In other words, immigrant children born in Germany do not automatically acquire citizenship status.

Making Nationals: Blood, Space, and Language

How can immigrants become German citizens when nationality is rooted in descent by blood? This question became a much-contested issue in 1998, when the leftist coalition government made a concerted effort to reform the country’s naturalization practices. The German Chancellor wanted “to create an open society, with flexible borders, to make Germans capable of joining the European Union.”⁴² Yet attempts to reform the citizenship law by eliminating the blood-principle of national belonging proved unsuccessful.⁴³ A subsequent proposal, introduced by independent democrats (Free Democratic Party) under the heading “dual citizenship for children” seemed more palatable. Dual citizenship or binationality was to create a hyphenated identity for second-generation immigrants by appending German citizenship to that of national origin.

The proposal affirmed the privileged status of native-born Germans. As citizens by hereditary sanguinity, German nationals retained their membership in an ethno-racial community of descent. But immigrants, perceived as transient bodies in geopolitical space, merely gained an identity supplement. Dual citizenship, acquired by *ius soli* (territory/residence), was read as a signifier of otherness, marking a life course of displacement and uprootedness. The legal reform instituted a two-tiered, caste-like system of national belonging: by blood (descent) and by space (residence); one native-German, based on consanguinity, which is presumed to be natural, authentic, and permanent; the other foreign-German, based on territorial affinity, which is deemed artificial, inauthentic, contractual, and impermanent. Given the underlying racial paradigm, it seemed only logical that the citizenship status of immigrant children be temporary: in its current form, as ratified in 2002, German nationality can be abrogated upon a child’s entry into adulthood.⁴⁴ The hyphenated citizen is treated as a *flexible* commodity: German nationality is issued on loan; the German passport is granted to immigrants as a revocable entitlement. In a united Germany, *natural* or inherited citizenship enshrines claims of allegiance to a national community of blood; by contrast, “*flexible* citizenship”⁴⁵ is treated as a counterfeit form.

The nationality debates had a decisive impact on border matters, resulting in ever more drastic restrictions on access to citizenship. In response to the mandates of unification, and in seeking to reconcile the uneven recruitment of subjects by regimes of blood and space, German politicians began to redefine the frontiers of the nation-state in terms of linguistic practices. By the late 1990s, issues of sovereignty and nationhood were recast by visions of the German body politic as a discrete community of native-language speakers. This premise of linguistic unity was transferred to the threshold of nationality. Germanness was to be expressed through the idiom of language. The transformation of political subjects into nationals should now require an act of linguistic performance: speaking German. Such a formation of linguistic nationality, although intended to promote inclusion, became simultaneously a mechanism of segregation and exclusion.

In the accompanying public debates, the criteria of eligibility for naturalization and citizenship (*Einbürgerung*) were linked to language: the immigrants’ knowledge of German. Christian Democrats insisted that applicants for citizenship status needed to document their “integration into German soci-

ety” by having achieved an “attestable level of language fluency.”⁴⁶ Potential immigrants, according to this proposal, were expected to enroll in mandatory German language courses, preferably in their home countries; the applicants’ linguistic competence was to be certified by means of a final exam.⁴⁷ The working draft of the dual-citizenship proposal likewise insisted on “sufficient familiarity with the German language” as a prerequisite for naturalization.⁴⁸ The primary aim was to “promote the integration of foreigners by offering German language courses. Foreigners completing such courses could obtain ‘integration certificates’ that entitled them to receive unlimited work permits.”⁴⁹ Representatives from liberal and conservative political parties regarded a formal evaluation of the applicants’ “knowledge of the German language” as indispensable.⁵⁰ The Bavarian Christian Union Party demanded a standardized “spelling test” for citizenship applicants.⁵¹ Likewise, Social Democrats wanted to determine whether resident aliens had acquired “sufficient mastery of German.”⁵² Otto Schilly, then federal minister of domestic affairs, suggested in his original draft proposal that foreigners should be denied German citizenship if “communication with them proved impossible” and “if they were unable to make themselves understood in German.”⁵³ In its current form, as ratified by Germany’s parliament in 2002, and reaffirmed in 2008, the legal provisions of the national integration text determine “German language competence” as a prerequisite for residence permits (for spouses) and naturalization.⁵⁴ However, in 2011 the German Supreme Court and the EU High Court have contested these provisions as incompatible with the anti-discrimination provisions put in place in 2007.⁵⁵

This emphasis on linguistic nationality might explain why German lawmakers agreed to extend the right of citizenship to children: second-generation immigrants can “inhabit the national language and through it the nation itself.”⁵⁶ The linguistic construction of national membership “possesses plasticity,” for a language community “is by definition *open*”: ideally it “assimilates anyone, but holds no one”; and although it continuously absorbs new members, it “produces the feeling that it has always existed.”⁵⁷ Linguistic nationality fabricates “a collective memory which perpetuates itself at the cost of an individual forgetting of ‘origins.’”⁵⁸ This formative power of linguistic systems, which provides nation-states with the capacity to absorb and assimilate a diversity of subjects, seems to exhibit a democratic propensity. But such a making of nationals is also inherently coercive: through the medium of language, and its strategic deployment in citizenship and immigration politics, the nation engrafts a hegemonic memory of Germanness.

Language Proficiency and Racial Hierarchies

Language politics in a united Germany seek to reinvigorate a fictive ethnicity of Germanness: the national community, that is, the population included and governed within the political frontiers of the state, is ethnicized through language. By imagining the German nation-form as a linguistic entity, social or political disparities can be “expressed and relativized as different ways of speaking the national language.”⁵⁹ This has obvious political consequences. While the unity of a language community appears naturally predestined, German unification shows that linguistic uniformity is not sufficient to produce or to sustain ethnicity. Its historical specificity is affixed to a multitude of countries. As in the case of a divided Germany, the same language may be used by different nations. The same applies to English or French.⁶⁰ For language “to be tied down to the frontiers of a particular” national form, it requires “an extra degree of particularity,” a “principle of closure, of exclusion.”⁶¹ This principle is evident in the racialization of language.

The ability of foreign-born individuals to increase the range of their linguistic competence, and to thereby become German nationals, is guarded by a racial imaginary of segregation and prohibition. Access to language learning is severely restricted, and achieved by the closure of linguistic borders. Pub-

lic language programs for immigrants are offered, but the eligibility for enrollment is determined by their origin and residence status. Former labor migrants with their families and offspring, recognized political refugees, immigrants or resident aliens, and ethnic German resettlers are treated differentially. The categories of foreignness and ethnic difference are constructed by variable degrees of linguistic access. For instance, applicants for political asylum, even recognized refugees, are officially forbidden to enroll in state-funded German classes: “No public efforts must be made to promote the assimilation or integration of individuals, whose long-term presence in Germany has not been confirmed.”⁶² Certain foreign populations are to remain culturally excluded and linguistically isolated.⁶³ This policy of linguistic segregation for refugees stands in stark contrast to the nation-state’s treatment of other foreign-born individuals. Ethnic German resettlers from Russia or Eastern Europe are granted unconditional language access: legally defined as nationals, based on the principles of filiation and *ius sanguinis*, the blood-right of extended kinship, their linguistic integration is supported by a multitude of separate government budgets. Resident aliens or immigrants, however, can enroll in subsidized German language courses only if they meet certain conditions. The decisive factor is their national origin: citizens of the European Union states or former German contract-states are permitted to enhance their German language competence.⁶⁴ But even in these cases, learning is restrictive: the duration and intensity of language programs (by hours, vocabulary, grammar) varies with each category of the ethnic register.

Therefore, the “openness of the linguistic community is an ideal openness”:⁶⁵ its permeability is in reality controlled by the official German phantasm of hereditary ethnic substance. And the greater the state’s intervention in the foreigners’ access to German, “the more do differences in linguistic competence function as ‘caste’ differences, assigning different ‘social destinies’ to individuals.”⁶⁶ Under these conditions, strategies of linguistic exclusion come to be associated with “forms of a *corporal* habitus” that “confer on the act of speaking,” in its particular, idiosyncratic traits, “the function of a racial or quasi-racial mark”:⁶⁷ “foreign accents,” degrees of language competence (broken German), unaccustomed and non-standard “styles of speech, language ‘errors’ or, conversely, ostentatious ‘correctness’” instantly designate a non-native speaker as “belonging to a particular population and are spontaneously interpreted as reflecting a specific origin” and judicial or “hereditary” status.⁶⁸ The production of Germanness thus also entails, following Balibar, a “racialization of language” and a “verbalization of race.”

Linguistic Nationalism: The Rise of Language Purists

During the 1990s, an era marked not only by German unification but also the constitution of the European Union, the sense of belonging to a linguistic community has reemerged as an icon of Germanness, invigorated by the myth of ethnic unity through language purity. Since German unification, a diversity of literary societies has come into existence to reclaim and fortify the nation’s linguistic boundaries. Under the impact of global capitalism and European integration, which gave rise to hybrid forms of multilingual communication, Anglicization, and a traffic in foreign vocabularies, the survival of Germanness—signified by German language—is deemed threatened.⁶⁹ The rapid formation of literary societies attests to the reinvigoration of a popular nationalism committed to the closure of linguistic frontiers: a desire to purge the national idiom—the “beloved mother tongue”—of contaminating foreign influences.

Most prominent is the “German Language Society” (*Verein Deutsche Sprache*). Founded in 1997, it recruited over 16,000 dues-paying members in less than four years. By 2013, it had more than doubled its membership.⁷⁰ The members, drawn from a broad social spectrum, stand united as “citizens for the preservation and cultivation of German.”⁷¹ According to the society’s official charter, the members are bound “to defend the self-esteem and dignity of all human beings, whose native tongue is German”; “to combat the amalgamation of German” and its “excessive inundation” by foreign words; and to protect the

“cultural distinctness” and “survival of the German language.”⁷² The movement’s publicity campaigns, via the Internet, newspapers, and television, seek to implant in public consciousness a sense of linguistic ruin: the adulteration and corruption of the “national character” of German by the infiltration of foreign idioms.⁷³ Media headlines since 1997 in both local and national papers articulate the movement’s concerns: “Battling against word heretics”; “Safeguarding the German language”; “Language purification”; “The shambles of language”; “Against language trash”; “The corruption of the German language”; “Protection against language dirt”; “The purging of language”; “Fighters for the purity of German”; “The foreign subversion of language is shameful”; “Against language colonization”; “The murder of language”; “Pro German.”⁷⁴

In an effort to sustain media coverage and public support, the German Language Society has launched a series of initiatives: the establishment of local and regional chapters; the creation of a nation-wide language forum; the production of Germanized glossaries and dictionaries; the bestowal of literary prizes and awards; and the administration of language tests. Moreover, in trying to gain recognition as a public service advocate, the *German Language Society* has inaugurated a “linguistic consumer protection” program. Under this rubric, the language practices of major service sectors are scrutinized for potential assaults on the national idiom: the use of foreign words, especially Anglicisms, is rendered a public offense. The targets of inspection include the postal service, hospitals, funeral homes, airlines, train companies, and “German health insurance providers, German TV guides, German political parties, German travel agencies, German utilities, and German mail order companies.”⁷⁵ The furor of the publicity scandals provoked by such language tests and linguistic consumer protection surveys has effectively placed an entire society on language probation: national allegiance is enforced by linguistic censorship; nationalization proceeds by the erasure of non-German vocabularies (which is also a turn against Europeanization).

The ethnicization of language is enforced by other publicity campaigns. Since 1997, this movement of “language warriors” or linguistic purists regularly conducts nation-wide media contests in search of “the most un-German word [*Unwort*] of the year,” the “language heretic [*Sprachhunzer*] of the month,” and “the language adulterer [*Sprachpanscher*] of the year.”⁷⁶ The finalists, typically businesses, institutions, or public figures, are chosen on the basis of nation-wide opinion polls; the protagonists are then put at the pillory to be publicly ridiculed or shamed on charges of language defilement.⁷⁷ Such media campaigns are televised and publicized on the news, Facebook, and Twitter, thereby broadening the public reach of shaming.

Conclusion: Language Politics in a United Europe

The ethnonational fabrication of language has profoundly altered the conditions under which issues of immigration, citizenship, and national sovereignty are brought to light in public debates in the European Union. According to Claudia Breger:

Inclusivity with respect to race, national origin, language, and/or religion has perhaps proven to be more challenging in the German context. To be sure, the new century brought, on the one hand, belated—and internally fraught—processes of opening up hegemonic German conceptions and practices of national distinction... On the other hand, these hopeful developments have been counteracted by the confluence of local legacies of exclusion with transnational Islamophobia trends... Over the course of the past decade, German public discourses have been marked by a frightening intensification, and mainstreaming of anti-Muslim racism.⁷⁸

In this social climate, questions of immigration and national identity have been variously thematized in Europe. Language has become an ethnoracial formation within the broader European concerns of border protection and national belonging. Germany is not an isolated case. France has declared French as the official national language by a constitutional mandate: government business, legal transactions, social services, health care, and public education, including universities, are bound to the exclusive use of French. This mandate is however less successful in the private sector. Despite the European Union's advocacy of multilingualism and the push for 'languages without borders,' recent surveys suggest that less than forty-two percent of the European student population achieves rudimentary competence in a second language.⁷⁹

There are notable national differences in multilingual proficiencies. In the United Kingdom, second language competence drops to fourteen percent, and in France to nine percent. These statistics are however misleading. The 2011/12 surveys focus exclusively on formal second-language education in schools, where English, French, German, and Spanish or Russian remain privileged. These studies thereby ignore immigrant students' native language skills and multilingual competence in Arabic and Turkish or other Asian or African languages, which are not perceived on equal terms with Europe's national speech communities. The political and educational institutions of the European Union not only negate non-hegemonic forms of multilingualism, but treat native-speakers of non-national languages as foreign. Language nationalism is articulated in terms of race in the United Kingdom, where the members of the white British working-class fear to become 'invisible' or 'ethnically erased' by immigrant speech-communities, a process imagined as a blackening of the white phenotype by non-European language speakers.⁸⁰

The presence of diverse populations in the European Union, whether immigrants, refugees, tourists, or citizens from member states or overseas territories, has complicated matters of national distinction by the signs of color: the racializing codes of 'whiteness' or 'blackness' are no longer reliable tools for ascertaining foreignness. In turn, language politics in Europe have become matters of national security. This is accomplished by both the racialization of language and the verbalization of race. Although the impact of global capitalism in Europe might serve as a catalyst for linguistic pluralism, such currents of change are always culturally mediated, resisted, transformed, and politically negotiated. While the future of a truly plurilingual Europe remains uncertain, the push for national sovereignty and the racialization of language has had a decisive impact on the turn toward exclusionary policies of citizenship in a globalizing Europe.

Notes

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37. Margret Jäger, "Sprache der Angst," *die tageszeitung* (March 24, 1993): 1; Linke, "Politics of Blood."
38. For further discussion, see Faruk Sen, "Managing the Integration of Foreigners in Germany," American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Washington D.C. (March 31, 1999); Philip L. Martin, *Germany: Reluctant Land of Immigration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). In response to economic pressures, German labor laws for foreigners were revised in 2000. Since then, refugees are legally permitted to seek employment after several months of residence in Germany. Yet in reality, local bureaucracies stifle this process. Applications for work permits by refugees are categorically rejected. Local labor offices justify such practices by reference to statewide unemployment figures, which show a surplus of job-seeking German citizens. However, in local demographic terms, this is a statistical fiction that is strategically deployed against foreign applicants by an ethnonationalist system of governance.
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40. Germany's Basic Law, article 116a.
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42. Thomas Darnstädt, "Staatsbürgerschaft," *Der Spiegel* 7 (February 15, 1999): 30.
43. Frank Böckelmann, "Bürgerrechte mit Rabatt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 272 (November 23, 1998): 49; Andrea Böhm, "Die Mischung macht's," *Die Zeit* 8 (February 18, 1999): 13-16.
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76. See Tagblatt, "Sprache: Unwort 1999 gesucht," *Schwäbisches Tagblatt* 55 (October 22, 1999): 1; Tagblatt, "Shea bedauert 'Unwort'," *Schwäbisches Tagblatt* 56 (February 17, 2000): 2. The media contests, ushered in by a Frankfurt linguist, attempt to censure "the irresponsible or discriminating use of public language" (Janich, "Sprachkultivierung," 82). The annual campaigns produce a form of ethno-political correctness by a focus on the "misuse" of words: language practices are monitored for "un-German" transgressions. Such a public censorship of speech acts seeks to discipline cultural attitudes and values through the policing of language.
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Making A New Forest

LINA THARSING



Making a New Forest

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches



Condor Group

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches



Preparation Room

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches



Making a Plan

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches



Tiger Diorama

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches



Everything in Its Place

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches



Denali

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches



Panthera Leo

oil on panel, 48 x 72 inches

The Poetics of Transnational Life: Rethinking Identity Across Borders

Benzi Zhang

SHANGHAI UNIVERSITY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND LAW

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational.
Homi Bhabha, "Freedom's Basis in the Indeterminate"

The global flows of immigration that overcome spatial and temporal distance/separation have created the effects of "time-space compression" and made possible "simultaneous transactions which sustain deterritorialized cultures."¹ In light of the shrinking of the globe, we need to reformulate the earlier conceptions and paradigms of national belonging that are no longer adequate to describe the change of our sense of identity in its relationship to the global/local interaction. As mutual penetration between different cultures has dramatically increased, we need to explore the consequences of transnational interaction upon the production of immigrant identity across cultural and national boundaries. In an age of cultural diversity and transnational globality, Asian immigrants in the United States, with their ethnic vacillation and cultural ambivalence, demonstrate that different national elements may merge in a process of cultural trans-relation, which challenges the force of singular national dominance by relocating the site of identity articulation in a discursive domain of plural interrelationships. Immigrants, in the process of crossing and re-crossing the borders of space, time, race, language, culture, and politics, translate and transform a static historical identity into a dynamic asynchronous transcultural entity. Although the notion of national identity is by no means outdated, there are new pressures being put on the re-defining of transnational and transcultural subjectivities exerted by the increased global/local interactions in many fields of human activities. In this context, the study of immigrant identity must move beyond the quasi-geographical boundaries into new dynamic systems of politics, economics, and culture, which are not "co-existent with the borders of nation-states."²

Transnational Passage and Borderzone Condition

The transfer of peoples and cultures from all over the world to the United States has generated an intricate transnationality and cultural globality, which are based upon the tension of interstices and overlaps of different national cultures. In a sense, the crossing of a geopolitical border is the least important aspect of immigrant experience in view of the long process of adjusting to a new society. Despite their shared cultural heritages, Asian immigrants in the United States exhibit differing attitudes towards their immigrant experiences: Some favor mutual assimilation and acculturation, while others advocate

cultural distinctness and separateness. The assimilation vs. separation dilemma and the problem of identity in relation to their old and new “homes” have created a tension between the two homes and a kind of spatial-temporal duality that defines their self-conception. As Marilyn Chin, one of the leading authors of Asian immigrant communities, describes in a poem, the emotional, cultural, and psychological identification is often related to the difference, distance, and dislocation shaped by her experience of crossing over from the East to the West:

My shadow followed me to San Diego
silently, she never complained.
No green card, no identity pass,
she is wedded to my fate.³

Born in Hong Kong, Marilyn Chin immigrated to the United States with her family and translocated herself from one sociocultural sphere into another, where she became “an other.” Her poetry reconstructs her immigrant experience and expresses the determination of her family to survive and to move forward in the new world: “Upon entering the world— / there would be no return. / Upon treading the path— / there would be no detours.”⁴ The passage into a completely new social environment, as Chin says in an interview, has tremendous impact upon her sense of identity, generating “two sides of the integral self,” which implicate a kind of “double consciousness” of her transnational inheritance.⁵ The two sides of self, like yin/yang duality, produce a tension as well as a dynamic interaction that vivifies the complexity of immigrant identity. For Chin, immigration involves not only the “out-of- country” movement, but also the “out-of-culture,” “out-of-language,” and “out-of-oneself” experiences. The multifold out-of-border journeys over various discursive and nondiscursive domains—linguistic, cultural, national, political and economic—have transformed “a single time ... into multiple spaces and tempos.”⁶

In popular media as well as in social discourse, immigrants are often represented as strangers from elsewhere who, without a sense of belonging, never feel at home in a new country, yet are unable to return to their homeland. As Iain Chambers observes, “cut off from the homelands of tradition, experiencing a constantly challenged identity, the stranger is perpetually required to make herself at home in an interminable discussion between a scattered historical inheritance and a heterogeneous present.”⁷ In this predicament, the “historical inheritance” and the “heterogeneous present” are translated into a transnational discourse, which means both border-crossing and border-redefining in spatial and temporal domains. Constantly traveling along various routes, immigrants have to revise their identities through mediation of different cultural dwellings. It seems that immigrants have to situate themselves constantly in a cross-cultural and transnational mediation; and they have to learn how to reposition themselves in a new relationship between their current residences and their previous homes. This repositioning, as Julia Kristeva observes, serves as a necessary strategy to “live with the others, to live as others.”⁸ Moreover, since immigrants develop multiple relationships that cross and span cultural and national borders, the trajectories of their identities, as a result, would occupy no singular national space but are situated in a web of social, economic, and cultural links encompassing both global and local practices. The complexities and ambivalence associated with the flows of immigration have created a transnational mode of life across cultures and a kind of spatiotemporal duality between different nations.

Immigration involves not only the crossing of geopolitical borders, but also the traversing of multiple boundaries and barriers in culture and history. Although Asian immigrants in the United States vary in terms of their original cultural and national backgrounds, they all face the same problem of how to articulate their “historical inheritance” in a “heterogeneous present.” In the drama of immigration, the historical experience of border-crossing, without a doubt, can be viewed in a positive light. As Edward Said

remarks, while “most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home,” immigrants and exiles “are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is *contrapuntal*.”⁹ With his unusual insight of paradox, Said contends that “borders and barriers which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory can also become prisons Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience.”¹⁰ However, one convulsive consequence of “breaking barrier of thought and experience,” which Said does not elaborate on adequately, is the crisis of identity that immigrants may encounter and endure in the process of border-crossing that transforms static, singular identity into shifting, multiple ones. Immigration, which opens up new spaces for cross-cultural negotiation, also creates radical effects of dislocation upon identity articulation. The complexities and ambivalence associated with immigration have posed a tremendous challenge for identity analysis, for identity should be singular by nature in “being what the others are not,” but immigrant experience has transformed identity into a paradoxical measure of “more than one/no more one” that contrapuntalizes multiple selves and subjectivities.

After relocating themselves in a new society and culture, immigrants must face various political, economic and cultural forces that threaten their sense of identity as a fixed, pure, and closed structure, which has been uprooted from its original territory by their border-crossing experiences. In the process of immigration, as mutual penetration between the local and the global discourse is intensified, the elements of different nations may mingle in a network of transnational passages, which challenges the force of a singular national domination by repositioning the site of identity articulation at the intersections of various cultural crossings. Due to their new awareness of racial and ethnic issues intensified by their experiences in America, a large number of Asian immigrants attempt to translate cultural conflicts and ambiguities into expressions of new identities over differences. As Chin describes in her poem “How I Got That Name”:

I am Marilyn Mei Ling Chin.
 Oh, how I love the resoluteness
 of that first person singular
 followed by that stalwart indicative
 of “be,” without the uncertain i-n-g
 of “becoming.” Of course,
 the name had been changed
 somewhere between Angel Island and the sea,
 when my father the person
 in the late 1950s
 obsessed with a bombshell blonde
 transliterated “Mei Ling” to “Marilyn.”¹¹

Chin’s poem suggests a process of combining two cultural artifacts, but the translation of “Mei Ling” into “Marilyn” demonstrates that neither of the cultures is sufficient to provide a fully realized identity. With an awkward name of English and Chinese compound, Marilyn Chin feels that she is caught up in the middle, a borderzone where different national and cultural discourses crisscross and overlap. “I am a contradiction in terms,” as she says.¹² Deployed as a description of cultural overlay, the metaphor of borderzone refers to a site “where crisscrossed identities are forged out of the debris of corroded, formerly (would-be) homogeneous identities.”¹³ Borderzone challenges the myth of homogeneity of singular nationhood with an emphasis on the interaction between different cultures. It opens up new spaces of cultural multiplicity in which the extra-national elements are embedded in the expressions of national-

ty. In Chambers's words, immigrant identity is "articulated across the hyphen, the transition, the bridge or passage between, rather than firmly located in any one culture, place or position."¹⁴

Over the past few decades, a wide range of strategies for mapping the configurations of immigrant identity has been established based upon the border theories developed by Gloria Anzaldúa, Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux, among others. "Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity," as Anzaldúa maintains, "is like trying to swim in a new element, an 'alien' element."¹⁵ Borderzone, however, does not mean the disappearance of national boundaries, but rather highlights the complex dimensions of a nation between and beyond various outside and inside borders. Nation, in other words, should be considered as a dynamic body of translocal interrelationships, where different cultural passages contest singular teleology by admitting foreignness and otherness within national discourses. Moreover, borderzone may not necessarily produce an entity of smooth hybridization, but instead it enacts a "mutual mirroring" process, to borrow a phrase from Wolfgang Iser, in which "different cultures are enacted under mutually alien conditions."¹⁶ The articulation of immigrant identity would be neither a simple combination of different cultural elements nor an assertion of difference as an end in itself, but a process of transnational interaction that integrates differences into a decentralized sense of co-belonging. The complicity of co-belonging, which develops on constantly changing configurations of diversity and unity, "is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity."¹⁷ The politics of borderzone constitutes a transnational condition, which embraces the complexity associated with cultural differences in articulations of identity and includes otherness in the discourse of the self. It not only acknowledges otherness in one's self-invention but also presents a gesture to recognize cultural overlay that embraces extra or extra-national dimensions of one's identity.

Asian immigrants in the United States are conventionally designated as "Asian American," and this naming, so to speak, should define an identity with Americanness *plus* Asian characteristics. Ironically, however, the *plus* also implicates simultaneously the experience of a *minus*—that is, the lack of both Asian and American potentiality, since Asian immigrants are not fully American yet less Asian than those who live in the Far East. While "Asian America" is supposed to be a *part* of both Asia and America, it turns out to be *apart* from either side. The paradoxical situation of in-betweenness, as Aihwa Ong points out, means "that there is a new mode of constructing identity, as well as new modes of subjectification that cut across political borders."¹⁸ The ever increasing transnational mobility in both political and economic terms has destabilized the performances of self and seeks recognition of new identities outside the conventional logic of nationality. In an era of globalization, different nations have permeated into one another's spaces, but mutual penetration does not always work in harmony. Caught between different sociocultural systems that cannot be fully integrated into either one, immigrants are engaged in a constant negotiation between two worlds which in turn produces ambiguous identities that contain elements of foreignness, otherness, and something recognizably different. "By explicitly, obviously, ostensibly occupying the place of the difference," as Julia Kristeva observes, "the foreigner challenges both the identity of the group and his own—a challenge that few among us are apt to take up."¹⁹ In this sense, integration of otherness into identity does not mean to find equivalence in different cultures for substitution, but to expand the space of continuity in which various configurations of relations can be formed. Immigrant identity, therefore, accepts the increasing complexity in self-invention without reducing it to rigid national structures.

In history, different nations invariably maintain an exclusivist paradigm, regarding one another as "savage" or "barbarian"; and the mutual demonization implicates unconscious psychological borders that were established to exclude the foreigners. During the Enlightenment, as Kristeva points out, the savage or stranger was nothing but "the alter ego of the philosopher"; "The foreigner then becomes the

figure onto which the penetrating, ironical mind of the philosopher is delegated—his double, his mask.”²⁰ Kristeva also argues that we are all foreigners once we are conscious of our differences. Thus, the recognition of our own differences transforms foreignness into commonality, “promoting the togetherness of those foreigners that we all recognize ourselves to be.”²¹ Due to different regimes of sociopolitical domination, immigrants may face the process of foreignization in which they become “the Other,” “the foreigners,” or “the barbarians,” but the condition of “togetherness” in modern society is based on the awareness of differences that we are all foreign and different. As Marilyn Chin describes in her poem:

The barbarians are coming: they have red beards or beardless
with a top knot.

The barbarians are coming: they are your fathers, brothers,
teachers, lovers; and they are clearly an other.²²

As an epistemological construct, the stereotyped quality of barbarianness is generated along with the numerous borders of racial, national, and cultural differences. In the case of Asian immigrants, their experiences of being foreignized in a new society push them into a position for self-reexamination. “At such a historic juncture,” as Wolfgang Iser notes, “a cross-cultural discourse begins to emerge,” which is “motivated by the need to cope with a crisis that can no longer be alleviated by the mere assimilation or appropriation of other cultures.”²³ Although immigrants may cross borders in different ways for different purposes, they all have to renegotiate their “foreignness” or “barbarianness” in the interstitial cultural spaces.

Immigration involves not only the crossover of geopolitical borders, but also the traverse of multiple ideological and cultural divides. In the late 20th Century, all forms of belonging cannot be exclusively nationalistic, and the configurations of national belonging must be deployed in transnational networks that accommodate multiple cultural attachments. For immigrants, the experience of being the same and different simultaneously suggests a paradoxical transposition between different cultural frames. In this sense, immigration can be seen as a transgressive journey which, on the one hand, crosses borders to challenge outside limits in space and, on the other hand, disrupts the status quo of inside comfort zones of nations. Moreover, as Abdul JanMohamed argues, immigrants are not “‘sitting’ on the border; rather, they are forced to *constitute themselves as the border*,” since “the border only functions as a mirror, as a site of defining the ‘identity’ and ‘homogeneity’ of the group that has constructed it.”²⁴ Immigrant identity, therefore, should be understood as a product of transnational interaction between and beyond borders. This understanding, different from the accounts of identity as unity or as hybridity, suggests that identity is seen to be itself divided and constantly in a dynamic process of interaction whereby various cultural and national presences dislocated from their original places work into new articulations. For immigrants, identity articulation is not a simple combination of different cultural elements, but rather a complex practice that compares and connects different cultural elements in a dynamic process of self-revision.

Cultural Memory and Con-Temporal Relation

If we trace the trajectory of immigrant identity into the border politics, we’d better follow Lawrence Grossberg’s advice not to “view space as passive and determined” or “treat space too empirically”; instead, we should use “spatial vocabularies as figures”—“The figural language functions, often insightfully, to describe everyday life, social relations of power and intellectual work.”²⁵ Although immigrant identity is often described in a “poetic language of travel—of homes, voyages and destinations,” its artic-

ulation is not limited to geopolitical borders. The poetic language of travel, in Grossberg's words, only "reconfigures metonymical systems into synecdochal images of identity."²⁶ What is more, the idea of border should be used not only as a geographic concept, but also as a temporal notion, since borders could be both horizontal between various locations and vertical betwixt different historical dwellings. By mapping immigrant identity in temporal terms, we can transcend the hereditary limitation of territory-determined national identity. Immigrants travel both in space and in time and, as a result, their identity is not only multilocal but con-temporal as well. Con-temporality best describes a kind of untimely identity which, as Stuart Hall observes, is "formed at the unstable point where the 'unspeakable' stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture."²⁷ Hall's remark urges us to reimagine identity as a negotiated endurance among different time vectors; and central to this con-temporality is a paradox of being situated at an unstable point simultaneously within and without the borders of time and history. In addition, the unstable point suggests a loosened structure of identity that subverts the normative system of national imaginary and reconstructs different cultural inheritances into an untimely presence of new nationhood.

In their attempt to articulate their identity, immigrants have to negotiate with different temporalities in relation to their previous cultures. The transgressive journey in time is not merely a sentimental reminiscence, but rather a retrospective movement towards the past and back again. For Asian immigrants, their ancestral homelands are particularly important, because they provide the necessary cultural resources for their development of self-realization and community solidarity. Adrift between different sociocultural spheres that cannot entirely be integrated, Asian immigrants are subject to a negotiational process in which various elements from their cultural memories are reconfigured and repositioned in relation to their current locations. Their nostalgia often draws on the cultural myths, tales, and symbols of ancestral homelands. In Marilyn Chin's poetry we find an eagerness to get access to the deep layers of history for stored cultural values. As her poem "Lost Country" shows:

To love your country
is to know its beginnings
not with the bald-face moon
or the complacent river—
but here within you.

Your heart is a house—
I/we are its inhabitants.
Although the country is lost
rivers and mountains remain.
And we shall always live
in this poetry that you love.²⁸

Chin's poem reverberates with the long tradition of Asian cultural sensibilities, which provides a wide, enriching landscape for the speaker's self-recognition. To reclaim the cultural heritage is to relive it in an imaginative space of the "lost country." The desire to look back at the country that she has left behind infuses much of Chin's poetic work; and the search for her cultural roots is a central focus of her immigrant experience. The juxtaposition of the "lost country" with the speaker's current location seems to suggest a mnemonic journey, which allows her to make connection between the two different worlds that she has experienced. Moreover, Chin's effort to weave Asian traditions into the fabric of his poetic imagination is not merely motivated by a longing to re-inhabit the ancestral past, but rather by her intention to revitalize

and to grapple with the ancient culture as an integral part of her contemporary or, to be exact, con-temporal experience. In the poet's memory, the "lost country" is supposed to be there without actually being there, since its presence is provable everywhere. Crucial to the uneasy con-temporality is a paradox of being situated at an unstable point between the past and the present.

To a certain degree, all immigrants take part of the memory of their original cultures with them. Moving into a new society, their cultural memories continuously speak of other places and other times, which are closely related to their sense of who they are and where they are from. Cultural memory, which is associated not only with the immigrants' emotional experiences but also with their deep-rooted consciousness, provides the foundation for self-understanding. Since the Renaissance times, memory has been considered as "the seat of identity." As William West asserts, "while reason made one human, it was memory that made one a particular individual."²⁹ Today, however, the situation becomes much more complicated for immigrants, since memory implicates not only a seat of their self-recognition, but also a collective realm for cultural preservation in a society where the social system of beliefs and practices constantly efface and erase their traditions. Cultural memory, in other words, involves an ongoing process of identity construction and reconstruction that are shaped by collective efforts to build community solidarity. For immigrants, the term "belonging" indicates trans-relations of cultures in time and space in search for a collective—a new and renewed recognition of the beginning of their community. "The core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space," as John R. Gillis notes, "is sustained by remembering."³⁰ It is obvious that traveling back in time is crucial for immigrants to revitalize the flow of their traditions and to redefine the meanings of their identity. As Chin describes:

The beginning is always difficult.
 The immigrant worked his knuckles to the bone
 only to die under the wheels of the railroad.
 One thousand years before him, his ancestor fell
 building yet another annex to the Great Wall—
 and was entombed with his work. And I,
 the beginning of an end, the end of a beginning,
 sit here, drink unfermented green tea,
 scrawl these paltry lines for you. Grandfather,
 on your one-hundredth birthday, I have
 the answers to your last riddles...³¹

To explore the richness and complexity of her identity, the speaker travels backward to the beginning of her cultural tradition; and she feels obliged to complete the stories that her ancestors have started and to find answers to historical "riddles" that call for new interpretations. The images of her ancestors who constructed the Great Wall in China and her grandfather who built the railroad in America seem to suggest an immanent bond that determines and describes her cultural inheritance. The meanings of her life are not confined to the time-span of her single existence but are traced back to those untimely moments in history. The poem highlights the historical depths of immigrant identity that is both new and yet conditioned by cultural traditions. The crossover of borders in time and history gives the speaker a transcendent position from which to articulate her identity as part of the dis-articulated history of her ancestry. At the very moment of dislocation, the knowledge of cultural connection is essential for immigrants. Suffering the hardship of dislocation and dismembering, immigrants strive to establish a new sense of belonging that is at once multilocal and con-temporal. It is with the mobile sense of belonging

that Asian immigrants are able to relocate and translocate their identity in a space beyond the spatiotemporal boundaries of nation-states.

For Chin, poetry is a powerful mode of transnational performance, which allows her to reconstruct her identity “in an interminable discussion between a scattered historical inheritance and a heterogeneous present.” Since what she regards as her Asian cultural heritage is virtually absent from the American society, Chin has to rely on cultural memory as a means to recapture the fading past and to rebuild connection with her cultural tradition. In her poem “Old Asian Hand,” Chin writes:

Old Asian hand,
touch me where it flutters,
my heart, my body’s butterfly,
one violet camellia,
pulses in the dead of night.

Old Asian hand,
the moon gnaws your left side.
Yellow are the grasses
that never learned to writhe.

Old Asian hand,
below the blue equator, have you discovered
the warm, moist lichen
of early autumn?

Beneath the marl of the new diaspora,
clear water runs.³²

The “old Asian hand” as Chin describes in her poem serves as a condensed image that symbolizes the long tradition of Asian cultures, which soothes her vagrant soul and heals her sense of homelessness. Time and again, the speaker in Chin’s poetry travels to the distant past of Asian civilization to explore the deep dimensions of her identity. For an immigrant poet like Chin, writing about the cultural origin is a strategy of overcoming the sense of rootlessness. As her poetic imagination roams without temporal or spatial restraints, the past is remembered, re-experienced and re-spirited to the present. The spiritual roaming itself is a transnational process of connection and interaction that bridges and abridges different cultural space-times. By linking cultures that are geographically far distant from each other, Chin draws attention to a vast network of human civilization, of which each culture is an indispensable part.

Cultural memory exhibits powerful relational potentiality that extends immigrant identity into a wide space of transnationality; and as a mode of connection, it allows for broader self-knowledge through a synchronic effect of time and place and plays a crucial role in defining the multifaceted components of identity. Asian immigrants’ yearning to remember the past entails an ongoing process of identity recovery and construction. “They need to honor the hidden histories from which they come,” as Stuart Hall observes; “They need to understand and revalue the traditions and inheritances of cultural expression and creativity.”³³ For this reason, memory occupies a significant place within the critical discourses on self-determination, since cultural consciousness is based on collective and individual memories of historical events, traditions, and community life. The engagement with the past is significant not only because it is where memory is nourished but also because it is a site of desire for continuous connection with the

spiritual resources of life. In the processes of cultural dispersal and dislocation, memory provides a wide network for Asian immigrants to associate the past with the present, and the East with the West. To embrace memory means to possess and repossess the cultural traditions which give their identities depth, fluidity, profoundness, and complexity.

Global Network and Post-National Liminality

In history of human civilization, the question of identity is also inevitably tied to the politics of place. As Gaston Bachelard notes, the idea of self stands in close relation to the passion for place—"topophilia"³⁴; and the sense of place has essential significance in the understanding of human identity. Place, however, is not a stable concept, for the notion of place as a bordered realm or a narrowly defined point in space is obviously inadequate to describe the modern flows of immigration in which place has been displaced and opened up to an undelimited system of spacing. Against Bachelard's topoanalysis, scholars in recent years have begun to reconsider the meanings of place in new contexts. Place is no longer regarded as fixed or given, but has to be redrawn and re-negotiated in relation to each instance of cross-cultural interaction. "The ongoing process of disruption and manipulation by global discourses," as Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake point out, is "rearticulated as a process of translating the transnational structurings of nation, self, and community into 'translational,' in-between spaces of negotiated language, borderland being, and bicultural ambivalence."³⁵ Under such circumstances, the configuration of immigrant identity, therefore, depends on translocal linkages that spread beyond the normative structures of nation-states. In the age of modern immigration, it is almost impossible to segregate any local place that does not involve nonlocal or extralocal linkages to a wide network. Furthermore, the dramatic change in the politics of place has blurred the historical opposition of *here* versus *there*, since to a certain extent, *there* has been both merged and emerged in the very characterization of *here*. "It is a sense of place, an understanding to 'its character' which can only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond," as Doreen Massey observes. "A progressive sense of place would recognize that, without being threatened by it. What we need, it seems to me, is a global sense of local, a global sense of place."³⁶ Massey's observation, which describes place as a node in a global network of relations, points toward a new "sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local."³⁷ Similarly yet creatively, Chin's poetry expresses new understandings of place from the standpoint of her own self-reflections on the transnational dimensions of modern life:

The same stars come around and around and around
 The same sun peeks her head at the horizon
 The same housing tract, the same shopping center
 The same blunt haircut: Chinese, Parisian, Babylonian
 The same lipstick: red and it comes off on your coffee cup
 The same stars come around and around and around.³⁸

The poem depicts a vision of expansive continuation, which is not confined to a single or singular psycho-cultural locale, but rather it moves from one locale to another to represent a transnational circumnavigation. The concept of place is redefined by the transnational circuitry that allows dispersed populations to connect, converse, and conjoin the essential elements of their social and cultural lives around the world. The parallel expressions implicate a sense of multifariousness and, at the same time, connote a spatiotemporal image that celebrates its own diversity. The poem, in other words, represents a view of paradoxical connection—what might be a discontinuous effect of separate places is more like an im-

pression of close proximity in a global network. It is the global dimension that marks the trajectory of immigrant identity which is constantly repositioned in the unsettling liminality of transnational space and temporality.

It is interesting to note that the landscape of immigration in the United States has dramatically changed in the late 20th Century, as the influx of wealthy immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia has steadily increased. The newcomers, different from the earlier poor immigrants from Asia, are professionals, “developers, financiers, and industrialists who work on both sides of the Pacific.”³⁹ As Aihwa Ong points out, “in addition to being the destination of Third World refugees and migrant workers, U.S. cities are fast becoming the sites of overseas Asian investment and settlement.”⁴⁰ The new type of immigrants is often called “astronauts,” due to the fact that “they spend so much time shuttling back and forth across the Pacific”; and “they are not always as attuned to the cultural norms” of American society “as they are to the transnational opportunities opened up by globalization.”⁴¹ These investor-immigrants, in Ong’s words, are “transnational cosmopolitans” who “strategically manage meaning as they negotiate and contest the shifting discursive terrains in the world economy.”⁴² The transnational mode of their lives, afforded by global capitalism, is characterized by multi-local attachments, dwelling, and traveling across nations. As a result, the new development of immigration invites us to reconsider the meanings of place outside of the boundaries of nation-states, since the poles that we traditionally identify as the local and the global are no longer clear-cut.

Transnational life as exemplified by the new immigrants, who shift back and forth across the Pacific, seems to contradict the conventional notion of national belonging. On the one hand, they are “footloose cosmopolitans” and, on the other hand, their mobility represents an increasing global interconnectedness. What was historically defined as national places has been diluted by international economy and rapid developments of technology. Instead “of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around,” as Doreen Massey notes, “they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings.” Moreover, adds Massey, “a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself.”⁴³ In this sense, Asian immigrants provide an appropriate case for our examination of “out of place” identity—part of America yet not American in an ambiguous zone of transnational locality. In some of her poems, Chin expresses her understanding of place in terms of communicative circuit that builds multiple connections around the world:

Hello, hello, won’t you call me from San Francisco,
Tel Aviv, Hong Kong, Canton, Ohio,
from your corporate e-mail address,
from your turbid moods and peccadilloes?
Won’t you ring me from the netherside
of the universe, from the back entry
of Eido ...⁴⁴

The complex network of connections from San Francisco to Tel Aviv, Hong Kong, Canton, and Ohio accommodates to a translocal mode of living and thinking; and it evokes interactions among different cultural passages, challenging homogeneous and exclusivist concepts of belonging. The conversation of diverse locations produces a correlative form of identity that is both immediately local and yet mediated by the wide world. Henri Lefebvre’s theory of “differential space” may help us understand how the local and the global interrelate together in modern times. What Lefebvre asserts is a paradox: On the one hand, we need to envisage a mutually supplementary correlation between the “global (or conceived)

space” and the “fragmented (or directly experienced) space”; and on the other hand, we should not ignore the tension and its resultant complexity that exist within either of the spaces.⁴⁵ What has emerged from this situation is a new global-conscious identity that operates within the very structures of local place that it attempts to transcend.

The translocal identity is indicative of the coming of an “epoch of simultaneity.” As Michel Foucault points out, “we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.”⁴⁶ Relative to the multilayered simultaneity, the conventional understanding of place as a consistent spatial construction is subject to renegotiation, since the concepts of border and locality as products of both ideological and geographic strategies of containment have been disrupted by the flows of immigration. “Transnational migrant circuits,” as Roger Rouse observes, compress separate places into a single international community “through the continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information.”⁴⁷ Immigrants can be seen as transnational agents who are affected both by “local hegemonic contentions and global contexts, while at the same time influencing them.”⁴⁸ Immigration, therefore, represents an acute feeling of identity destabilization in this transnational world; and it is exactly this destabilization that rescinds any essentialist assertions for the patrimonial authenticity or purity of nationhood. The experiences of immigration as well as the increasing transnational communication have changed the configuration of identity articulations. Although each culture originally derives from a certain place, it must move beyond its primordial territory to interact and to mingle with others to keep its vitality.

In a sense, immigration gives impetus to the process of denationalization which, in Sau-ling C. Wong’s words, “entails a relaxation of the distinction between what is Asian American and what is ‘Asian.’”⁴⁹ As mutual penetration has become an increasingly important characteristic of our age, we simply don’t know where we should draw the division between Asia and America, and between the global and the local. Immigration suggests a loosened cultural order and national structure, and opens doorways to multiple configurations and diverse articulations of identity that challenge the overdetermined, canonized national discourse. When talking about immigrant identity, we can no longer continue to think of nation as a geographical or an ethnographic locality, and we must reimagine nation as a mobile body of interrelationships, where the enunciatory interaction among the differential cultural presences trans-relate various mythical, historical, political, and psychological discourses into an accumulative entity, which contests singular national dominance by admitting foreignness of languages, alienated memories, and marginal experiences. The transnational commensurability established by cultural trans-relation suggests a new, transcending national identity. As Hamid Naficy observes, immigrants are “interstitial creatures, liminars suffused with hybrid excess”; therefore, their identities accommodate a paradox: “On the one hand, like Derrida’s ‘undecidables’ they can be ‘both and neither’”; “On the other hand, they could aptly be called, in Rushdie’s words, ‘at once plural and partial.’”⁵⁰ This paradox shows that the forces of different national elements may challenge the absolute, singular form of national belonging by relocating the site of identity articulation in correlation with global/local negotiations. Immigration thus changes the very nature of nation and offers new ways of fashioning identity among different and plural cultural locations.

Conclusion

“Nation,” to use Home Bhabha’s term, is “a metaphor”⁵¹; and this metaphor signifies numerous disjunctions and conjunctions of human populations and relations in history. What we have witnessed in the past few decades is the increasing transnational dimensions of a nation. Home, family, and commu-

nity which traditionally reside within a singular national space have become the “nodes of international” networks.⁵² Modern immigration, which calls for rethinking of the meanings of nation, should be understood in terms of continuities and discontinuities that mediate between the local and the global. Immigrants, in the process of crossing and re-crossing borders of space, time, culture, and history, have trans-related “various discourses of intimacy, home, and neighborhood, together with others of global distance” into a multinational society.⁵³ “The multinational society,” as Julia Kristeva argues, would be “conscious of its discontents and limits, knowing only indomitable people ready-to- help-themselves in their weakness, a weakness whose other name is our radical strangeness.”⁵⁴ The formation of immigrant identity is not a moment of transition, nor a time of combination, but a process of transnational interaction—an ambivalent process of splitting and overlapping that marks the identification with radical strangeness betwixt and between nations. Articulations of identity depend on the transnational linkages that are not built through the ready-made names, concepts, paradigms, or theories, but through rethinking, redescribing, and redefining our national, or rather post-national, liminalities. What immigrant discourse suggests, according to Frank Davey, “is the arrival of the post-national state—a state invisible to its own citizens, indistinguishable from its fellows, maintained by invisible political forces, and significant mainly through its position within the grid of world-class postcard cities.”⁵⁵ Immigration thus magnifies the transnational liminality of a nation and stimulates more flexible forms of subjectification. In Catherine Hall’s words, “what might be described as a ‘post-nation’” is “a society that has discarded the notion of a homogeneous nation state with singular forms of belonging.”⁵⁶ In such a post-national world, immigration evokes constant negotiations among differential global and local discourses and trans-relates diverse cultural, historical, political, and psychological presences into deterritorialized constructions which demand and activate decentered transnational communication and communities.

Notes

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2. Paul Gilroy, “Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism,” in *Cultural Studies*, eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, (New York: Routledge, 1991), 188.
3. Marilyn Chin, *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow: Poems* (New York: Norton, 2002), 45.
4. Marilyn Chin, *The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 1994), 72.
5. Ken Weisner, “Interview with Marilyn Chin,” *MELUS* 37, No. 3 (Fall 2012): 217.
6. Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 12.
7. Ibid.
8. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 195.
9. Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile,” *Granta* 13 (1984): 170-2.
10. Ibid.
11. Marilyn Chin, *The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty*, 16.
12. Marilyn Chin, *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow: Poems* (New York: Norton, 2002), 100.
13. Ibid., 15.
14. Iain Chambers, “Signs of Silence, Lines of Listening,” in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (New York: Routledge, 1996), 53.
15. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), iii.

16. Wolfgang Iser, "The Emergence of a Cross-Cultural Discourse: Thomas Carlyle's Sartor Resartus," in *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, eds. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 264.
17. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 235.
18. Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 18.
19. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 42.
20. *Ibid.*, 133.
21. *Ibid.*, 3.
22. Marilyn Chin, *The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty*, 19.
23. Wolfgang Iser, "The Emergence of a Cross-Cultural Discourse," 248.
24. Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd. "Introduction: Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse: What is to be Done?" in *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, eds. Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 103.
25. Lawrence Grossberg, "The Space of Culture, the Power of Space," in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (New York: Routledge, 1996), 178.
26. *Ibid.*, 178.
27. Stuart Hall, "Minimal Selves," in *Identity: the Real Me*, eds. Homi K. Bhaba and Lisa Appignanesi (Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1987), 44.
28. Marilyn Chin, *The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty*, i.
29. William N. West, "'No Endless Monument': Artificial Memory and Memorial Artifact in Early Modern England," in *Regimes of Memory*, eds. Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin (New York: Routledge, 2003), 62.
30. John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.
31. Marilyn Chin, *Dwarf Bamboo* (Greenfield Center, NY: The Greenfield Review Press, 1987), 3.
32. Marilyn Chin, *The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty*, 71.
33. Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference," *Radical America* 23 (1989): 19.
34. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 18.
35. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, "Introduction: Tracking the Global/Local," in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, eds. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 2.
36. Doreen Massey, "Power-geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place," in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, eds. Jon Bird, et al. (New York: Routledge, 1993), 69.
37. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), 155.
38. Marilyn Chin, *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow*, 32.
39. Aihwa Ong, "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States," 122.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, 123.
43. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, 154.
44. Marilyn Chin, *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow*, 58.
45. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Black-

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46. Michel Foucault, 1986. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics* 16 (1986): 22.
 47. Roger Rouse, "Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism," *Diaspora* 1, No. 1 (1991): 14.
 48. Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 16.
 49. Sau-ling C. Wong, "Denationalization Reconsidered: Asian American Cultural Criticism at a Theoretical Crossroads," *Amerasia Journal* 21 (1995), 5.
 50. Hamid Naficy, "Phobic Spaces and Liminal Panics: Independent Transnational Film Centre," in *Globe/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, eds. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 125.
 51. Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 293.
 52. Frank Davey, *Post-National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone Canadian Novel Since 1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 259.
 53. Ibid.
 54. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 195.
 55. Frank Davey, *Post-National Arguments*, 110.
 56. Catherine Hall, "Histories, Empires and the Post-colonial Moment," in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizon*, eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (New York: Routledge, 1996), 67.

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Transnational Identities and Religious Traditions: A Case of Religious Double Belonging in India

Enrico Beltramini
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

Double religious belonging has been growing as a phenomenon in the Roman Catholic Church and in other Christian denominations.¹ The most striking aspect has been the possibility of belonging to two distinct religious traditions. This vague and still controversial trend has finally found its way into scholarly literature and the religious consciousness.² It is in this context that a growing number of Westerners have sought in non-Christian religions not an alternative but rather a supplement or a complement to their core Christian beliefs. Paul Knitter, whose 2009 book *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian* has influenced the theology of religious pluralism, is a case in point.³ Knitter is representative of those Christians who have sought to enter into dialogue with non-Christian religions and arrived at some kind of multi-religious identity, an identity that incorporates experiencing multiple religious traditions without falling into an assemblage of identities or syncretism. However, Jeffrey Carlson defends an alternative option—that unmixed religion traditions do not exist in nature:

Belonging... is inevitably a selective reconstruction from an array of possibilities, in which the many possibilities become one coherent amalgam that works to provide meaning and purpose. If one calls oneself a Christian, or a Buddhist, it means that one has selectively appropriated aspects of a vast array of practices and beliefs that have been identified by those who came before as “Christian” or “Buddhist.”⁴

A more rigorous and more specific way for dealing with religious double belonging—if there is to be one—still needs to be articulated, particularly with regard to the relations among faith, religious tradition, and identity. Does religious double belonging include the deposit of faith, i.e., the truths of a religion, or does it operate instead at a secondary level, at the level of articulation of faith (tradition), or simply at the level of identity?

In this article, religious double belonging is examined through the lives of two French Roman Catholic priests who moved to India for spiritual search and mission. I discuss religious double belonging in the larger context of inculturation, and I survey inculturation as a hybrid option between colonialism and nativism. In this context, the following discussion covers 1) how hybridity operates at the different levels of identity, religious tradition, and faith, and 2) how the two French priests arrived at such a hybrid option.⁵

This is an article at the intersection of historical theology and culture. I offer a definition of

the main terms used here: “identity” is cultural identity; “faith” stands for the deposit of truths (i.e., in Christianity is the body of saving truth revealed by Christ to the Apostles) for Monchanin and “being in Christ” for le Saux. “Tradition” stands for the articulation of the deposit of faith (i.e., in Christianity is the transmission of revelation for the belief of the faithful) for Monchanin and representation of the state of “being” for le Saux. The sum of identity, tradition, and faith is labeled “characteristics;” “essential” is for unconditioned and “contextual” is for conditioned. Finally, “nativism” stands for native-born characteristics, “colonialism” for replacement of the indigenous characteristics by foreign ones; “indigenusness” stands for Indian characteristics, and “foreignness” stands for European characteristics.

Double Religious Belonging

Jules Monchanin (1895-1957) and Henri le Saux (1910-1973) were two French priests who established a Roman Catholic ashram in India in 1950. Their project was to reach the very core of the Indian soul and to Christianize it from within. As monasticism has been the primary form of spiritual quest and religious commitment in India since the Vedic era, the *raison d'être* of an Indian Benedictine ashram was an attempt to integrate into the Church the vocation of the Indian *sannyasa*. *Sannyasa* is a distinct and rare form of monasticism that avoids any sort of social and ritual engagement for the sake of the absolute, transcendent, and ineffable Divine. *Sannyasa* in Sanskrit means “renunciation of the world,” renunciation of all, including identity. The Indian *sannyasa* embraces acosmism and renounces to the self. “Who is the seer?” monks like to repeat to distinguish the speaking “I” (the phenomenological ego) from the true “I” (the interior Self). With Monchanin and le Saux, “la vie missionnaire” and “la vie contemplative,” mission and monasticism, were finally entangled for the first time since the Middle Ages. India, the timeless country of sages and holy men, the tradition of such spiritual treasures, the most precious gem of Asia, seemed at hand.

Monchanin and le Saux’s project of a Roman Catholic ashram in India was a turning point, an attempt to overcome the counterfeits and shortcomings of the previous waves of Christianization. It marked a dramatic shift in the missionary strategy: from colonialism to inculturation. Inculturation, in Monchanin’s view, maintains the priority of the faith over culture, so that Christian missionaries embrace Indian cultural forms as long as the specificity and the integrity of Christian faith are not compromised. The central point of Indianization was that Monchanin and le Saux would “become” Indian without ceasing to be Christians and would formulate their faith in Indian terms. Monchanin’s plan was to adopt Indian philosophy with a certain discernment in order to give expression to the deposit of faith in the Indian context. Accordingly, inculturation confronts both colonialism and nativism (indigenous characteristics are maintained, including faith and religious tradition). This understanding of the inculturation project of Monchanin and le Saux as a hybrid option between colonialism and nativism is a lens through which we see emerging the question of double religious belonging. Does double religious belonging operate at the level of identity, religious tradition, or faith?

Monchanin and le Saux reacted in two different ways to the process of inculturation. Monchanin arrived in India in 1939; he loved India and felt at home there. He left India only in 1945, soon after the end of the World War II, to be the secretary to his Indian bishop in Rome (he returned to India in the beginning of 1947). He also left India in September 1957, when it was discovered that Monchanin had a tumor in the abdomen, to die a month later in Paris. He forged a true transnational identity. In his encounter with Indian religious tradition, however, he experienced an absolute rejection. Monchanin considered Hinduism—fundamentally different from Christianity—homogeneous in its radical heterogeneity. He reacted by rejecting the entire indigenous religion tradition *en bloc* and recovering his European Christian tradition. He declared to a friend:

I react in a contrary direction; never have I felt myself intellectually more *Christian* and also, I must say, more *Greek*.⁶

Monchanin argued the absolute truth of Christianity and the parallel fallacy of Hinduism; he also claimed that tradition is not subject to hybridization. Le Saux, who moved to India in 1948, never left the country and formalized his Indian citizenship in 1960. He became Indian without ever ceasing to be French, maintaining multiple identities that were hierarchically structured, which he used strategically depending on his (or his audience's) circumstances. However, a more complex dynamic happened at the level of religious tradition: le Saux declared that Hinduism and Christianity are both true, since religious traditions operate at the level of culture.

In summary, two French priests, active between 1939 and 1977, negotiated their Western identity, Christian tradition, and faith in encounters with India and Hinduism. Somehow, both were in a position to consider and eventually experience some form of double belonging. In the end, Monchanin resolved to add an Indian facet to his French identity, while maintaining his native-born characteristics as far as his Christian faith and faith articulation were concerned. Le Saux also articulated a dual identity, French and Indian, but he then crossed the boundary that exists between Christians and Hindus, claiming that "Hinduism is true. I know it," an assertion grounded in his understanding of Christianity and Hinduism as religious traditions, which are true at level of faith articulation.⁷

Monchanin's Contextualist Identity and Essentialist Tradition

In pursuing his inculturation project, Monchanin necessarily adopted an "indigenization from above." He was aware of the capacity within Christianity to reproduce its constructions and then refashion them as indigenous—that is, to generate Christian reproductions of indigenous structures as a means of mission. However, the identity strategy at work within mission was always related to Christianity and therefore, despite the intent, inculturation recreated Christian structures. To put it differently, Monchanin's inculturation project proposed a hybrid identity that was constrained by the semi-essentialist tradition and essentialist faith. In fact, Monchanin's inculturation strategy was not really an attempt to negotiate French priesthood in exchange for Indian monasticism, but rather an implication of him understanding Christianity as superior to Hinduism. Monchanin's concentration of an essentialist faith, characterized by purity and perfection, functions as an anchor within the inculturation strategy, where identity can be understood as complementary. With Monchanin, inculturation is cultural hybridity, including—with a certain discernment—tradition.

He made clear that "Our task (...) is (...) to accept [in Hinduism] that which is compatible, to reject that which is incompatible with Christianity."⁸ At the level of religious traditions, the meeting with Hinduism would happen on Christianity's terms. He was careful to frame his project not as a combination of Catholic faith and Hindu thought, but rather Catholic faith and Indian thought. In this context, he made clear that identity can be negotiated, while faith cannot.

In addressing how Christian religious tradition—i.e., theological concepts and patterns of thought that have been elaborated in the European dogmatic tradition—can be negotiated in the Indian context, Monchanin proceeded with caution. In methodology, he aimed to collide with Indian thought in order to uncover the primitive expression of Christian faith. He believed that, in coming into contact with India, he would be able to "recapture Christianity in its original vigor."⁹ In terms of principle, Monchanin seemed to see tradition as composed of two parts: an "infrangible core of the Revelation itself," the dogma at its pristine state, and several "constellations" formed around this nucleus—the subsequent development that began in the times of the Apostolic Fathers carried on through the course of the European history

of Christianity. He argued that “no medieval summa and no critical history of dogmas can surpass the theology of Paul and John.”¹⁰

Thus, the dual movement of Monchanin’s theological enterprise is clear. On one side, he clashes with India in order to reach the essence of Christianity. In fact, he points out that his move to India will help him “to rethink everything in the light of theology and to rethink theology through mysticism, freeing it from everything incidental and regaining, through spirituality alone, everything essential.”¹¹

This essential core, once freed “from everything incidental,” would become the irreducible, non-negotiable pure state of Christian dogmas, the criteria presiding over the replacement of a European set of terms with Indian ones deemed more fitting to the Indian mind. In theorizing this semi-essentialist character of tradition, Monchanin creates an anti-assimilation stance against the risk of misrepresentation of the revealed mystery, and he protects faith from any sort of hybridity. The fundamental essence of faith and tradition is pure and authentic and autonomous from its cultural cloths: if the path of inculturation is reversed and Christian missionaries liberate themselves from indigenous customs, if they plumb the depths of their faith, then what they will find is fundamentally Christian.

The meeting with India did not pose the greatest threat to Monchanin’s identity, while his encounter with Hinduism forced him to reconsider the possibility of a hybrid tradition. In fact, once Monchanin clashed with Hinduism, he rediscovered his European Christian roots. He called himself “Greek” as a short-cut for the Christian mindset that emerged from the synthesis between biblical narrative and Greek philosophy in the Classic Era. European-based tradition, for Monchanin, paradoxically was reinforced in the process of inculturation, as defined as a difference from the Indian thought. Monchanin’s original notion of a “gravitational center” and successive synthesis of Christian thought in Europe and beyond was replaced by the notion that Greek metaphysics can claim exclusive privilege for interpreting Christian faith. In his mind, Christianity was unencumbered and untouched by the cultural collision birthed by the encounter with Greek philosophy. More importantly, although Monchanin envisioned a project of hybrid identity, semi-essential tradition, and essential faith, he ended up recovering entirely his nativist tradition. In the context of the alternative options between hybridity and purity, Monchanin promoted a form of purity that opposes any form of non-cultural hybridity while also opposing any form of colonialism.

Le Saux’s Contextualist Identity and Tradition

In contrast with Monchanin’s dual identity (French and Indian), le Saux’s identity is a negotiation that fluctuated between fluidity and fixity. Le Saux had multiple identities, hierarchically structured and used strategically according to specific circumstances. He was French and Indian; he was Christian and Hindu. He could identify himself as a Christian and Hindu because, as he pointed out, Christian is a *namarupa*, that is, it operates at level of “name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*).” Christian tradition—and Hindu tradition—operates at the level of culture. In other words, for le Saux, there were no non-cultural religious traditions. Every religion is rooted, encapsulated, and expressed in a culture, beginning with the most primordial and hidden archetypes which necessarily govern that religion’s worldview. That suggests that there a kind of primary experience exists, an original consciousness.¹² Le Saux clearly expressed this point in his diary, when he explained how the process from the primary experience to the dogma works.¹³ Le Saux felt deeply the challenge he faced in experiencing and expressing the relativization of religious forms.

The moment in history in which we are living calls us to a stern purification of all our means institutional, intellectual, etc. To recognize the essential beyond all the forms in which it

repeatedly embodies itself...But then, in allowing the forms to yield their place, not to lose anything of the essential. The motives for abandoning forms are so mixed—just as mixed as those for keeping them intact. Who will be able to recognize the Spirit in all its purity? Who will be willing always to want nothing but the Spirit?¹⁴

We recognize the influence of Monchanin's essentialism here. For le Saux, however, there was no pristine state; at the end of the day, the entire tradition is incidental. The line of demarcation between the essential and the incidental coincides with the change of status between the awakening and its articulation (the religious tradition). "There is only the Awakening. All that is 'notional'—myths and concepts—is only its expression."¹⁵

The nature of religious tradition, which epitomizes a fundamental difference between Monchanin and le Saux, is set in the context of missionary discourse. Monchanin takes a conservative position and argues that tradition should arise out of a synthesis of biblical faith and Greek rationality. Le Saux exposed the inadequacy of Monchanin's concentration on an essentialist tradition characterized by purity and its narrow definition of identity. In particular, an essentialist tradition cannot be self-critical or negotiated. In an essentialist tradition there are already the seeds of a hierarchical distinction between the essentialism of the Christian missionaries and the essentialism of the indigenous, because the Christian missionaries control the representation. The hierarchical distinction remains in place when the binary is inverted and a stronger position is given to the indigenous tradition. For le Saux, hybrid tradition can be liberating for the missionary because it allows the emergence of a new tradition, in essence creating conditions for a non-nativist tradition. This new tradition is no longer under the authority of the Christian missionaries and therefore is marked by unpredictability. Hybridity is then not simply the result of an inculturation strategy, but is a tradition that emerges from the interaction between the two nativist traditions. In this space of interaction, there is no longer the possibility of pure tradition, for either the missionary or the indigenous. In this case, hybridity no longer stands for confusion, but rather represents mixing, impurity, and flux. The binary Christian-Hindu vanishes and with it disappears the power of representation of Christian missionaries: the missionary is free from the authority of his Church. The hybrid tradition is a vehicle of emancipation. Le Saux defies categorization, his hybridity embodies ambivalence: he is Hindu-Christian. Hybrids have no stable identities; they are not completely subaltern identities; they are simultaneously compliant and subversive. Inevitably, Le Saux negotiates his identity within the Church. Hybridity creates a liminal space that problematizes simply binary notions of superior/subaltern.

It is in this liminal space that le Saux attempts to create a new, communal, hybrid identity. Offering himself as a model, he calls for his readers' allegiance. The radical disconnection between the subaltern and the superior is precisely what le Saux adopted as a narrative—a narrative that decenters Rome and establishes a new center as the "real" center. Le Saux speaks as a subaltern voice. If the subaltern can speak, however, then that subaltern is no longer a subaltern. While Monchanin constructs a center based on purity and perfection, le Saux constructs a subaltern center (and a subaltern periphery) based on hybridity. In 1969, for example, le Saux played an influential role in the Catholic Church's All-India Seminar in Bangalore, contributing a book-length memorandum on how the Indian Church should be renewed through contact with Hindu sources, through liturgical reform, and through contemplation.¹⁶ In *Towards the Renewal of the Indian Church* (1970), he reminds the Church of the primacy of spiritual values and contemplation.¹⁷ These narratives reify le Saux's position at the center—a position that authorizes and authenticates everything that orbits. If le Saux's position is the subaltern center, then the Indian Church represents in his mind the subaltern periphery. Le Saux is interpreting the Indian Church in a way that marks her as "other" in the relation to the pervading European-based Church (Rome). Thus, for le Saux, the Indian Church is the subaltern periphery. The religious geography between Monchanin

and le Saux firmly creates a center/margin dichotomy where le Saux functions as a “new center” that is produced by hybridity. Le Saux, then, becomes the model for the Indian Church in a reimagined world, where Rome has been displaced as the center by the Indian Church. Hybridity becomes the opportunity for le Saux to create a hybrid community in the midst of a pure, dominant, European-based tradition; however, this is not enough to put the matter to rest.

What exactly does it mean that Le Saux was Christian and Hindu? He wrote that the two traditions, the Hindu and the Christian, are the “two forms of a single ‘faith.’”¹⁸ Which faith was that “single faith”? Le Saux’s identity as one who is “I Am”—(*aham asmi*, “I am Brahman” (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10 of the Yajur Veda) and *antequam Abraham fieret, ego sum*, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58)—trumps all of his other nested identities. Le Saux would place his status as “I Am” above being French, Indian, or even being a monk (even if part of his Christianness). In what constitutes le Saux’s central argument against a Roman center, he concentrated on the relationship grace-revelation. Diminishing revelation from the outside and asserting grace from the inside was his goal. Revelation from inside is characterized as doctrinal. The complement to revelation from the outside is grace from the inside. This grace from the inside is—in the context of le Saux’s narrative—the Awakening. Diminishing revelation from the outside and asserting grace from the inside was his goal. His book *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point*, subtitled “Within the Cave of the Heart,” is a translation from the French by Sarah Grant. As she writes in the introduction, this book was written a few months before le Saux’s death, but after his experience of awakening, or “the reality of Upanishads and gospels.” He carefully wrote and scrupulously edited the book, so that it might prove helpful to readers and drive them to “the awakening... to awareness of the truth of their own being.”¹⁹ Accordingly, for le Saux awakening is awakening to a natural state of being. Le Saux devoted much effort to redefining his idea of the awakening, especially in connection with the issue of the extension of the Church and the historical phase in which she stood. The two issues found a connection soon enough, even if a long period of gestation was needed before locating an acceptable degree of completeness. The development of his thought can be followed in a few intermediate passages of his diaries. He says that “the Church is primarily all those men who are in the present state or in the potential state of their awakening.”²⁰ Here le Saux links the Church with the awakening.

As a matter of fact, it is a Pauline move. Paul understood the coming of Christ not only for the twelve tribes of Israel, but also for the disinherited nations, nations that are the result of Yahweh’s dispersal of the nations at Babel (Deuteronomy 32:8-9). Those disinherited should be appreciated with respect to Yahweh’s inheritance, Israel, and the rectifying message of Jesus. Paul saw his ministry as instrumental in bringing back those people from the disinherited nations in Israel, and he interpreted himself as a conduit for their return to the true God: “And so all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26). The reality of the emerging Church, the true Israel, including the disinherited nations, displaces the old identities and establishes a new one. In this context, Paul has—similarly to le Saux—multiple identities which he can adjust to accommodate Gentiles, Romans, and Jews, because in the end, Paul’s identity—like the one of Israel’s people—distills to one who is “in Christ.” The unity of those who are in Christ (have faith in Christ) is far more important than adherence to any law.

The same can be said of le Saux’s notion of Church of Awakening: the unity of those who are in Christ (those in the state of their awakening) is far more important than adherence to any religious tradition. Le Saux is self-identified as a Christian or a Hindu in many of his private writings, but his identity in “I Am” is his primary means of self-expression, specifically with himself. As a matter of fact, he identifies himself as “being in Christ,” because “I Am” is Christ’s name. He elaborates his view quite precisely. Le Saux clarifies that “Christ is not a *namarupa*. His true name is I AM.”²¹ So, le Saux is Christian because he is in Christ. He follows Paul in his perspective to address the Gentiles who are *in Christ*. When le Saux writes of his Church of Awakening as “primarily all those men who are in the

present state or in the potential state of their awakening,” his readers are invited to superimpose another facet to their own eventually complex, multiple identities. In other words, le Saux’s call to be part of the Church of Awakening necessitates some reprioritizing of the other facets of his readers’ multiple identities. He urges his readers to put their “being” first, “their awakening,” their “in Christ” first, as he has done, above all other components of their identity.

In Pauline terms, le Saux frames the Church as Israel, Yahweh’s inheritance. For him,

The Church is Israel extended to the Mediterranean world in the setting of the Roman Empire and its successors, but she is hardly extended beyond these limits even to our days. The Church is Israel, which does not recognize anymore the privilege of race and blood to enter the kingdom, but still recognizes members of the Kingdom those who have accepted integration into the human form of society in which she has developed.²²

He reimagines, then, a world where the Church of the Awakening now functions as the true Israel. In his writings, he retells the story of the Church to make a place for the awakened men (and women) as if they are the people of the disinherited nations. These writings capture him in the process of mythmaking, a process that incorporates the awakened people into the story of the Church. Who are these awakened people? He is Christian, and his Church of Awakening falls under the umbrella of Christianity, yet he does not imagine these people as members of the existing Church; in fact, the Church as a symbol is now exploding into symbols that are more powerful, more universal.²³ The Church as Yahweh’s inheritance is replaced by the Church as Yahweh’s all nations. Thinking in terms of multiple identities, it’s likely that le Saux imagines these awakened people as occupying a hybrid identity that is not completely “other” than what they are but is certainly not identical to their previous status. He attempts to provide different ways of being Christian (“being in Christ”), specifically insisting on an apocalyptic rupture introduced by the meeting of Christianity with India, leading to a new Church-order without the doctrinal opposition so characteristic of his current Church.

Conclusion

This article addresses the complex topic of double religious belonging in the context of a mission in India. Two French Catholic priests take a hybrid position as an alternative to a colonial and nativist position. Does religious double belonging operate at the level of faith, religious tradition, or identity? This study of Monchanin and le Saux helps identify religious tradition as the natural candidate. Monchanin’s concentrated use of purity/pollution narrative throughout his writings only accentuates his rejection of any religious double belonging. The universe, for Monchanin, is divided between Christianity and Hinduism, mutually irreducible. Once religious tradition is conceived as rhetorical rather than ritual or doctrinal, the religious barriers of the community are dismantled. The cultural dimension of tradition in le Saux leads to the emergence of a new ecclesial reality, in which Christians are equated with Hindu. In the Church of Awakening, the Christian and Hindu identities are subordinated, superimposed by the status of “being in Christ.”

Notes

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College of Theology, Delhi, India. Unless otherwise noted, all translations to English in this article are my own.

2. For a basic literature on the topic, see: John B. Cobb, Jr., "Can a Christian Be a Buddhist, Too?" *Japanese Religions* 10, no.3 (1979): 1-20; Peter C. Phan, "Multiple Religious Belonging: Opportunities and Challenges for Theology and Church." *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 495-519; Catherine Cornille (ed.), *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2002); James L. Fredericks, "Review: Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity by Catherine Cornille." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 25 (2005): 167-170; Gerard Hall SM, "Multi-Faith Dialogue in Conversation with Raimon Panikkar." *Australian eJournal of Theology* 2 (February 2004): 1-12; Rose Drew, *An Exploration of Dual Belonging* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Patrik Fridlund, "Double Religious Belonging and Some Commonly Held Ideas About Dialogue and Conversion." *Mission Studies* 31:2 (2014): 255-279. The concept of "double belonging" is developed in this article through quotations from the recent writings of a number of Western scholars, most of them Roman Catholic theologians or historians of religion. See, for example, Robert Schreiter, who has suggested three distinctive ways in which one might describe double belonging: 1. sequential belonging, in which "a person has moved from one religious tradition to another but retains some traces of the earlier belief;" 2. dialogical belonging, in which "two traditions dwell side by side within the life of a person, and there may be greater or less communication between the two The self that mediates this duality is...seen as . . . a conversation that actualizes now one tradition and then another;" and 3. simultaneous belonging, in which "a person has moved through sequential belonging but then chooses to go back and reappropriate earlier belongings on a par with current allegiances. This reappropriation does not entail subsuming one system into another but rather finding a way for them to coexist beyond dialogical belonging." He cites Raimundo Panikkar as an exponent of such a position. Robert J. Schreiter, "Christian Identity and Interreligious Dialogue: The Parliament of the World's Religions at Chicago, 1993", unpublished paper given as a lecture in the Faculty of Theology of the Free University of Amsterdam on October 28, 1993.
3. Paul Knitter, *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009). While Knitter calls himself 'a Buddhist,' Christianity remains the primary source of identity for him. In an interview, he clarified this point: "Definitely the noun is Catholic or Christian; the adjective is Buddhist. My primary identity is Christian." See: Thomas C. Fox, "Double Belonging: Buddhism and Christian Faith." *National Catholic Reporter*, June 23, 2010. Accessed January 10, 2016. <http://ncronline.org/news/double-belonging-buddhism-and-christian-faith>
4. Jeffrey Carlson, "Double Religious Belonging: A Process Approach: Responses." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 23 (2003): 77-83, 79.
5. While I am aware of the rich scholarship on intersectionality, in this article I am committed to the notion of hybridity. I believe that, in the case of Monchanin and Le Saux, the concept of hybridity, which is less compromised with notions of "power" and "domination," is more appropriate than intersectionality as a tool for analyzing their experiences.
6. Quoted in Sten Rodhe, *Jules Monchanin, Pioneer in Hindu-Christian Dialogue* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1993), 47.
7. Henri le Saux, *La Montée au Fond du Coeur: LJ journal Intime du Moine Chrétien-Sannyasi Hindou, 1948-1973*. Introduction et Notes de Raimon Panikkar (Paris: OEIL, 1986). Translated as *Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*, tr. David Fleming and James Stuart (Delhi: ISPCK, 1998), 348 (11.5.72).

8. Jules Monchanin, *Lettres à sa Mère 1913-1957* (Paris : Cerf, 1989), 542.
9. Jules Monchanin, *Théologie et Spiritualité Missionnaires* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), 85.
10. Monchanin, *Théologie et Spiritualité Missionnaires*, 86.
11. Monchanin described his farewell meeting with de Lubac, just before his leaving to India (April-May 1939) in a letter to Duperray: "J'ai revu le P. de L..., seul, longuement. Il m'a redit toute son amitié, étant celui qu'il cherchait, réalisant l'intuition qu'il avait eue, dès séminaire: repenser tout à la lumière de la théologie et celle-ci par la mystique, la dégageant de tout l'accessoire et retrouvant, par la seule spiritualité, tout l'essentiel ... Il a surtout aimé mes notes sur l'amour et celles sur l'Inde. Il pense que c'est en me heurtant à l'Inde que je pourrai refaire la théologie, beaucoup mieux qu'en creusant les problèmes théologiques pour eux-mêmes" *Ecrits spirituels, présentation d'Edouard Duperray* (Paris: Editions Le Centurion, 1965), 21-22.
12. John Glenn Friesen, "Abhishiktānanda's Non-Monistic Advaitic Experience" (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2001), 50.
13. Le Saux, *Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*, 367-71 (2.2.73).
14. James Stuart (ed.), *Swami Abhishiktananda: His Life Told Through His Letters* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 180 (14.6.66).
15. Le Saux, *Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*, 386 (11.9. 73).
16. Henri le Saux, *All India Seminar: The Church in India Today* (New Delhi: CBCI Centre, 1969).
17. Henri le Saux, *Towards the Renewal of the Indian Church* (Bangalore: Dharmaram College, 1970).
18. Quoted in Jacques Dupuis, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, tr. by Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 90.
19. Henri le Saux, *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point—Within the Cave of the Heart* (Bombay and Bangalore: CISRS, 1969). Reprinted with the author's revisions (Delhi: ISPCK, 1976), 118.
20. Le Saux, *Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*, 317 (25.8.70).
21. Le Saux, *Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*, 357 (10.7.72).
22. Le Saux, *Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*, 124 (6.9.55).
23. Le Saux, *Ascent to the Depth of the Heart*, 373 (17.2. 73).

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Transnational Ties with Azorean Multigenerational Kinship Groups: Multi-Connectedness and ICTs

Ana Gherghel and Josiane Le Gall

INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER AND UNIVERSITY OF MONTREAL

It's like we live in the same area because we always know about one another by phone.

Lucia, returnee, 64 years

Introduction¹

The development of new information and communication technology (ICT) has a substantial impact on migrants' lives. Studies generally recognize that ICTs play a major role in the conservation of transnational ties, offering innovative resources that rapidly incorporate in migrants' everyday life and facilitate family relations across national borders.² The proliferation of Internet-based communication, smartphones, and social media favors the creation of innovative forms of co-presence in transnational families.³ They are based on simultaneity and increasing frequency of contacts across time and space, thus challenging the idea that strong family relationships require face-to-face contacts and physical presence. Maintaining contacts at a distance among family members dispersed by migration is though not a new phenomenon. As Vertovec points out, in the past, traditional migratory groups, such as Portuguese or Italians, also developed modalities to maintain ties with homeland.⁴ Letters, visits, and phone calls were the main modalities to conserve transnational ties in the past. Older forms of transnationalism contrast with those currently observed due to communication patterns that changed dramatically. Today, a variety of modalities allow fluid and instant communication that was inconceivable a few years ago. The field of ICTs evolves rapidly; not only the diversity of new technologies, but the plurality of their use (calls, messaging, as well as internet can be used on smartphones) is also observed. Some authors speak about "polymedia"⁵ to describe this ever-increasing plurality of communication modalities that enhance "connected presence" in various practices. New media are understood as environments of affordances that users can navigate by in order to manage their relationships.

While there is a consensus about ICTs' influence on current transnational contacts between migrants and family left behind in homeland, most researches focus on recent migratory phenomena or particular cases, such as ageing parents⁶ or transnational motherhood.⁷ The impact of new technologies on transnational practice developed by older migrant groups is little documented yet. Old transnationalism practices and ties also exist and can be conserved in time, regardless the capacities to participate in communications allowing virtual or connected co-presence.

In this article, we question how the use of new ICTs influences transnational connections and their perpetuation in time, over long periods, within multigenerational kinship groups dispersed through migration. We draw on the case of Azorean migrants in Quebec to argue that the use and impact of ICTs on transnational contacts depends on pre-existing relationship and insertion in transnational space. This means that it depends on individual's current position in transnational space (networks, status, ideology related to family, and ethnic belonging). New technologies can consolidate existing configurations of transnational networks and eventually contribute to their transformation, but cannot create such networks or replace other forms of intimacy. Rather, new technologies are incorporated in pre-existing communication exchanges, complement other forms of sociability and can transform them, facilitating intergenerational transmission of transnational ties across time and space. Azorean multigenerational kinship groups in Canada illustrate this phenomenon: Lucia's words in the beginning express a capacity to maintain multiple connections with family members located in different countries. Lucia, a first-generation migrant in the 1960s, returned in the Azores, upon her retirement, by the end of the 1990s. She maintains contacts with her children and siblings dispersed in various locations, in Quebec, other Canadian provinces, and the US. This current state of relations is based on a long history of transnational connections, using several modalities: regular exchanges (letters, phone calls), family gatherings, visits and other transnational practice. Such transnational formation is not rare among Azorean migrant kinship groups that we have examined in our research. It emphasizes the multiple facets of sociability encompassing transnational social spaces created by Azorean migrants.

We begin this article by examining the literature on ICTs and transnational families, focusing on the impact of new media on transnational contacts over time. The context of our research, the Azorean migration, and the methodology are then presented. Our analysis is structured in two parts. The first part focuses on transnational connections, modalities used for communication at a distance and their changes across time and generations. The second part presents two factors determinant for transnational connections: family relations characterized by multi-connectedness and visits. Finally, we consider the impact of ICTs on transnational connections and we conclude emphasizing the importance of insertion in a transnational space where virtual co-presence created by ICTs juxtaposes various forms of family sociability.

Researching Transnational Kinship and ICTs

Kinship groups are considered one of the enduring types of transnational formations that can create transnational social spaces through activities and exchanges developed by their members across national borders.⁸ Transnationalism scholars point out that insertion in multigenerational family networks where transnational practice and multiple cultural references are present on a regular basis shapes second-generation descendants' identities.⁹ Children raised in family environments where ideas, persons and practices belonging to various cultural frames circulate regularly, become as adults, active actors in the perpetuation of such multi-local spaces.

However, research rarely examines the impact of ICTs' expansion in long-lasting transnational spaces, such as those created by Portuguese Azorean migrants dispersed in several locations in Canada and the US. Our ethnography on Azorean migrants in Quebec documents how various media are combined to maintain multiple family relations, locally and transnationally, over several decades and across three generations. We consider that multi-connectedness—a capacity to maintain active ties with multiple actors using various modalities according to characteristics of contacts—is determinant to perpetuation of transnational practice in time. It involves a process of incorporating new media in routines of family communication at a distance, following pre-existing communication patterns.

Development of new ICTs accelerated over the last years, contributing to emergence of new forms of sociability, based on virtual or ambient co-presence.¹⁰ Widespread diffusion of smartphones represents an essential social resource that facilitates forms of intimacy at a distance.¹¹ Social media and Internet-based communication are also heavily used in transnational family routines of communication.¹² More and more studies attempt to understand how new technologies shape transnational family life¹³ and show that ICTs influence communication between migrants and their family left behind in the origin country in different contexts.¹⁴ For instance, Nedelcu (2012) demonstrates that new transnational habitus and new “connected ways of living together” emerge among Romanian migrants in Canada and other countries, using various ICTs to create modalities of virtual co-presence and rituals of communication.¹⁵ Madianou (2012) points out that ICTs use enhances new modalities of transnational mothering for Filipina mothers in the UK, consequently transforming their identities and ways to negotiate ambivalence and conciliation of work and family responsibilities.¹⁶ Virtual co-presence created through the ICTs generates family routines that include regular exchanges with family members living in others countries, thus enhancing transformation of relations, roles, and identities. However, virtual presence complements other forms of co-presence (by proxy, physical, imagined) in families dispersed between various countries.¹⁷

Studies on transnational families and new technologies examined the nature of relations involved in new forms of sociability and intimacy at a distance.¹⁸ Accessibility of electronic media at reduced costs favour increasing frequency and intensity of exchanges in transnational families.¹⁹ Moreover, “the distinctive feature of technology-mediated tools is to break the distance and time limitations that prevented ongoing family communication.”²⁰ Communication by ICTs enhances the feeling of “closeness” between siblings.²¹ Terms such as “virtual co-presence” (Baldassar 2008) and “ambient co-presence” (Bacigalup and Camara 2012) have been recommended to describe this sense of simultaneity that ICTs create through the possibility to share information in real time.²² As Chambers points out, “unlike the kind of communication afforded by letter writing, which delivers old news, email allows migrants to become absorbed and engaged in the immediate daily routines of their families.”²³ For instance, through Internet technologies, migrant mothers actively participate to decision-making and the education of their children who live with family left behind in the origin country.²⁴ Maintaining this proximity, “shared time” or “emotional closeness,” especially during life cycle events, is considered essential for transnational family life.²⁵ To describe these new configurations of family relations, Benitez (2012) proposes the notion of “e-families” underlining that family members are constantly “connected.”²⁶ Possibility to hear the voice and exchange news in real time facilitates the fluidity of relations at a distance.²⁷ As a consequence of this diversification, new forms of co-presence at a distance are observed. For instance, Madianou defines the “ambient co-presence,” as “the peripheral, yet intense awareness of distant others made possible through the affordances of ubiquitous media environment.”²⁸

Studies on ICTs and migration mostly focus on recent migrants and their family members separated for a relatively short period of time. This emerging scholarship does not capture how new ICTs are integrated by and can modify the communication patterns of older migrant groups who maintained transnational ties over several decades and across generations. Some elements emerge from Baldassar’s long term research on Italian migrants. This research documents how Italian migrants in Australia maintain contacts with their ageing parents in Italy through letters, phone calls, and visits, and organize various caregiving arrangements. Factors that determine these transnational practices are related to the dialectics between negotiated family commitments, capacity to care and cultural notions of obligations.²⁹ Olwig’s study on Caribbean migrants also shows that kin living in European countries, Canada and the US establish and preserve complex networks of relations that facilitate their siblings’ migration, but also the exchange of care with ageing family members or youth in homeland or elsewhere.³⁰

Furthermore, transnational ties not only can be perpetuated across generations, space and time, but their modalities multiply: older forms of communication are not necessarily abandoned following the diffusion of new ICTs. Madianou and Miller coin the notion of “polymedia” to define the current global climate characterized by plurality of available media and “to describe the new emerging environment of proliferating communicative opportunities.”³¹ Each medium can highlight complementary facets of communication and thus multiple media are combined for regular communications in order to maintain intimacy in transnational contacts. Consequently, the emphasis shifts from the limitations specific to each medium (cost, quality) to the emotions and social impacts that each medium involves.³² Multiple uses of technologies can inform practices in transnational families, being also accessible to migrants with limited resources who can exchange news through online media (email, Skype).³³

We contribute to this discussion by examining how technological advances influence the frequency and form of transnational contacts among family members dispersed in several countries, over decades and across more than three generations. Portuguese Azorean migration to Canada represents an interesting case study in this area, especially for the research on transnational contacts, their transformation over time and their interplay with changes of family networks across generations. Portuguese migrants to Canada established migratory networks based on family ties that facilitated massive migration after the mid-1950s. They maintained strong ties with homeland and created, through this circulation, a transnational social space encompassing various locations in Canada, the US and Portugal where family members were installed.³⁴

Context of the Research

Portuguese from the Azores archipelago have a long history of back-and-forth movements and migration to North America. The Azores archipelago is an autonomous region of Portugal, formed of nine islands, situated in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean; it has its own local government and administrative structures, as well as a rural economy based on farming and fishing. Today, its population totalizes about 240,000; 56 percent of this total are established on the island São Miguel.³⁵ The Azores was one of the most impoverished regions of Portugal; migration thus represented a strategy for upward mobility and betterment of living conditions. In fact, emigration to Canada is the most recent important migratory route of Azoreans; Brazil and the US prevailed in the past as migrants’ destinations. Mass out-migration to Canada started in 1953-1956, when several contingents of male unskilled workers were recruited within an agreement established between Portuguese and Canadian governments. Migrants found work especially in railways and construction industries, settling in urban areas. Soon, numerous waves followed during the 1960s and 1970s; first migrants’ kin emigrated based on sponsorship through family reunification programs.³⁶ Migration involved an important part of the Azores’ population and thus had impacts on the region’s demography, society and economy.³⁷ Among others, it opened up opportunities for a social and economic mobility in the insular society structured by rigid hierarchies. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of population was formed by labourers (*lavradores*) living in rural isolated communities, impoverished, unemployed or having low paying jobs, as well as limited access to any resources and to education.³⁸ As a consequence of this massive migration, Portuguese communities in North America are principally formed by Azoreans, in proportions of 50 to 70 percent, depending on locality.³⁹

Migration Networks

Azorean intensive migration to Canada occurred through migration networks based on kinship

and friendship ties that occasioned the movement of small communities from the same villages to same destinations in the host country.⁴⁰ This phenomenon is also described as “island-centered migration chains.”⁴¹ Consequently, Azorean migrants are settled predominantly in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario (82.8 percent of the total population of Portuguese origin in Canada). They formed cohesive communities in metropolitan areas like Toronto and Montreal, where they regrouped in districts at high density of occupation and having a high level of “institutional completeness”—a variety of institutions (social, economic, cultural, religious) were gradually created.⁴² Migrants have maintained contacts with family left behind in the Azores during several decades, through letters, phone calls, visits, and sending remittances back home.⁴³

At the 2006 Canadian Census, 410,850 persons declared to be of Portuguese origin; 14 percent of this total was recorded in Quebec. More than three generations are recorded today in families of Portuguese descent in Canada. In Quebec, 57.7 percent of the population declaring a Portuguese origin, aged 15 and more, are of first generation.⁴⁴ Although emigration to Canada has a definitive character, return and sometimes re-emigration have also been noted for some first generation migrants and second generations.⁴⁵ This phenomenon contributes to the complexity of transnational family relations: returnees on the islands often maintain ties with kin living in various diaspora’s communities.

Methodological Considerations

With a multi-sited ethnographic approach, our investigation was simultaneously conducted in the receiving country, in the province of Quebec (Canada) and homeland, the island São Miguel (Azores, Portugal). In total, 129 biographic interviews with members of 45 kinship groups have been completed (79 in Quebec and 50 in the Azores). In the majority of these kinship groups, migrants and their descendants living in Quebec, as well as non-migrant family members and/or returnees in the Azores have been interviewed in order to collect various viewpoints related to their migration experience and its impact on family relations. The number of respondents in each kinship group varies between one and eight (mean=three), according to the family structure and availability of participants. The sample includes 28 Azorean migrants and 51 descendants of 1.5, second and third generations living in the province of Quebec, as well as 35 return migrants (24 first generation migrants and 11 of second generation) and 15 non-migrant relatives in the island São Miguel. From this total, 57 percent are women.

The article is based on analysis of 27 kinship groups, in which returnees, migrants and non-migrants have been systematically interviewed. These kinship groups have been selected also because they display multi-located networks with configurations characterized by significant geographic dispersion of family members participating in active ties. They are composed of family units settled in three or more countries: Canada (mostly in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia), the US (mostly in the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts), the Azores and possibly other parts of the world (Brazil, European countries, etc.). Analysis of these kinship groups served to identify migratory networks and their changes in time, as well as transnational practices and connections.

Communication at a Distance: Changes in Time

All our respondents have reported being somehow engaged in transnational contacts in the past and/or at the present time. However, we could note changes in time with regard to the frequency, modalities and forms of these contacts. At the same time, a wide range of transnational practices – remittances, information, and instrumental exchanges – were reported in all kinship groups. Their relative importance, frequency and intensity also changed in time and along the life course stages. We present in this

section an in-depth analysis of these changes.

Transnational Contacts in the Past

During the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, migrants used exclusively letters to communicate with their family living in other locations (hometown or other diasporic communities). Letters were dedicated to inform about current situation of family members and their living conditions. This kind of exchanges has been observed for other migrant groups.⁴⁶

Our data indicate that frequency of transnational exchanges varies according to existing relations between Azorean migrants and their relatives. The highest frequency of communication is observed in cases when migration caused a temporary conjugal separation. For instance, Conceição (returnee, 75 years) remembers that her husband emigrated alone in Canada in the early 1960s, while she stayed on the island. During two years of conjugal separation, they communicated through letters several times a month. By the mid-1960s, Conceição joined her husband in Quebec and maintained contacts with parents and in-laws left behind on the island, writing monthly letters. At the same time, her contacts with other siblings (brothers, sisters, etc.) had lower frequencies, once or twice per year.

Many migrants were confronted with difficulties to maintain regular contacts at a distance through correspondence as they or their siblings in the origin country were illiterate. Some of them returned to school in order to learn writing, while others improvised different ways to communicate with their families on the island. For instance, Maria José (non-migrant, 48 years) remembers that, during her childhood, her immigrant father communicated with family back home through letters written by his co-nationals or only void envelopes. Later on, she opted for recorded cassettes to facilitate these exchanges with family at a distance.

“... My father was illiterate and [...] he asked someone else to write the letters to my mother. When he couldn't get anyone, he had envelopes with the address and he sent an empty envelope, so my mom would know that he was all right. When my father came back here after five years, he was a bit more evolved, isn't it? I remember that he brought to my mother a tape recorder. We all talked in it to record a cassette for him to know about us. Then, my father had one recorder as well and he recorded the same way. So, my parents exchanged these recorded cassettes.”
(Maria José, non-migrant, 48 years)

Until the late 1980s, letters sent with various frequencies and greeting cards on important holidays like Christmas, New Year, and Easter represented the predominant means used to communicate with family abroad. Sometimes migrants also sent small amounts of money, “5, 10 dollars in a letter” as holiday's gifts for family members or for church donations.

Transnational Contacts at the Present Time

When phone communication became available during the 1980s, respondents also started to use this technology, though infrequently due to its limited accessibility and high costs of international phone calls. Some business owners had a landline for their commerce and the entire neighborhood used it to receive international calls. Several respondents remember how increased accessibility of this technology importantly changed the modalities and the frequency of exchanges during the late 1990s.

“In the past, when my aunts emigrated, they wrote letters to my mother. Nowadays they communicate only by phone. They no longer contact by letter, unless, you know, sending a card at Christmas time. [...] They switched to the phone more than 10 years ago. Before, you had to call through an operator, who did the connection. When these direct calls became accessible, people started to have more contact.”
(Joana, non-migrant, 59 years)

Like Joana’s mother, many Azoreans reduced considerably the correspondence and substituted it with regular phone calls. As a result, frequency of communications increased. For instance, since her return in the Azores, in 1999, Lucia (64 years) has maintained contacts with her children and siblings at various places in the US and Canada through phone calls (several times weekly) and letters (monthly). Availability of phone communication did not necessarily bring the extinction of letter writing. Some respondents, like Lucia, continue writing letters because they treasure this modality as a personalized testimony of the importance that the authors attach to them. To exemplify it, respondents show letters written by their grand-children or children that they dearly conserve among other souvenirs (photos, drawings, religious artefacts, etc.).

The increasing importance of phone communication is explained not only by the technology improvement, but also the cheaper costs that make it accessible to almost anyone. Pre-paid cards for international calls are available at small costs both in Portugal and Canada. Pre-paid international phone cards allow cheap long-distance calls that favour immediate, direct contact and thus overcome limitations of traditional correspondence.⁴⁷ Therefore Vertovec describes them as “the social glue of transnationalism.”⁴⁸ More recently, national telecommunication providers, such as PT Portugal, offer plans including (un)limited free international calls, during specific time periods, to main diaspora’s locations such as the US, Canada, and Brazil. Affordable plans including calls and text messages can also be provided for mobile phones. In addition, few respondents report the use of a special set-up for phone-to-computer calls provided by an online service that allows receiving free calls from Canada via a Canadian phone number installed on a computer. These various options accommodate many needs for regular connections between migrants in North America and islanders.

Furthermore, during the 2000s, the use of Internet-based communications—emails, chat, and Skype—and more recently social media, like Facebook became more and more widespread. Many respondents indicated that they regularly use such modalities to communicate with their distant kin. Mila’s family illustrates how changes of communication patterns occur in time with ICTs evolution. Immigrant in the end of the 1950s, Mila (74 years) arrived to Quebec with her children and spouse. She maintained contacts with parents and siblings in homeland through letters. Currently, she and her daughter Luisa (53 years) communicate by phone with relatives in the Azores. Her grand-daughter, Sonia (29 years), prefers Internet-based communications to exchange news, photos and videos with some of the kin living on the islands.

Modalities of Transnational Contacts by Age and Generation

Our analysis of modalities used for current transnational contacts reveals significant differences by age group. Elderly respondents aged more than 60 use almost exclusively phone calls to communicate with kin living abroad. Some of them, like Lucia, continue to exchange letters or greeting cards. However, most abandoned the practice of writing letters. Respondents aged between 40 and 60 also use phone calls and sometimes Internet-based communications, as well as social media.

According to respondents’ narratives, individual capabilities explain these differences, more

than accessibility to technology itself or socioeconomic resources. For instance, Lucia (64 years) explains that her children offered her a computer but she didn't accept it. The effort required for learning how to use a new technology is considered too important: "No, I don't have Internet. All my kids have it, but I don't. I said: forget it. It's too many things to learn. I call them and that's it." Lucia also emphasizes that her technological skills are limited, as she has only primary education. Her children, with college education and white collar professions, have the capacities to operate various technologies. Thus, their role in larger network of contacts becomes more and more predominant as they take over exchanges with other siblings through Internet. However, intensive use of phone communications facilitates frequent exchanges between mother and children about daily life and immediate needs, creating a feeling of proximity and intimacy despite the geographic distance. Combining letters and phone calls, Lucia maintains regular contacts with her three children living in the US and her numerous siblings settled in various locations in the US and Canada.

Younger respondents aged 20 to 40 years, both the Azorean-descendants in Canada and their Azorean counterparts, indicate without hesitation that they prefer Internet-based communications over other modalities. In the case of Sonia, tools available on Internet facilitate the preparation of exchanges conducted in Portuguese with her Azorean kin.

"I do not speak Portuguese well enough to conduct a conversation and my uncle does not speak English or French well enough. So, when I write to them, I go in Google translator and I write my text in French. It is translated there in Portuguese. I read it and sometimes change something if it makes no sense. But let's say that, with his children, we speak in English. On Facebook, we can also share photos. [...] We also send frequently e-cards with our pictures." (Sonia, third generation Azorean-descendant, 39 years)

Sonia's example suggests that modalities used depend on interlocutor and determine the frequency of exchanges. Highest frequencies (daily, several times per week or weekly) are registered for parents and children, as well as for grand-parents and grand-children. Younger respondents who use Internet-based communications also demonstrate high frequencies of exchanges, although not necessarily regular. Frequencies are significantly lower for communications with other types of interlocutors (aunts, uncles, nephews/ nieces, in-laws, friends).

Furthermore, Sonia's example illustrates the situation observed in many kinship groups where elder family members cannot assimilate the use of Internet-based communications and *delegate* to their children, who are familiar with new technologies, the maintenance of regular transnational contacts with kin living overseas. For instance, Lucia's children communicate between them regularly by email, chat, or Skype; thus, they are in charge to organize family gatherings and visits of their parents in the US. Cristina (non-migrant, 33 years) reports that she exchanges photos, small videos and emails with her cousins and sometimes with her aunt in Canada to communicate family news or "just stay in touch" on behalf of her parents.

These data indicate that modalities used to maintain transnational connections vary not only in time due to new available technologies and according to individual capacities, but also according to age. Transnational connections vary by generation and age according to existing relations, the frequency of exchanges, the modality used and the content transmitted. Children's abilities to use Internet can create "a knowledge gap with their parents,"⁴⁹ thus intergenerational differences with regard to Internet use are often noted.⁵⁰ At the same time, multiple modalities can be used simultaneously. Baldassar et al. found that new forms of communication do not necessarily displace existing ones, but rather add new possibili-

ties to those already in place.⁵¹ Therefore, overall frequency of communications increases alongside technology evolution. Different forms of communication can co-exist because each fills in different purposes and with different people; various modalities are used to communicate specific contents.⁵²

These variations are also reflected in our study. Respondents often combine at least two modalities of communication: Internet and phone, or phone and letters. Among respondents who use only a single modality of communication, phone is the most preferred technology, while Internet is rarely used as a unique medium. Each modality corresponds to a particular circumstance and transmits a specific type of content. Phone is preferred for sharing regular news about activities, events, health condition or just to spend some time together to fulfill the feelings of missing and longing (*saudade*). Internet is privileged for sharing photos and short videos, to plan and organize family events, for quick updates, “to say hello” or “how are you?”, as well as for business and professional activities. Visual materials are often posted on Facebook where various family members can have access and participate in exchanges, at their convenience, without the constraints of communication modalities that require simultaneous co-presence. Webcams are used for regular or exceptional exchanges to facilitate the participation of distant kin in family interactions, rituals or events. These forms of virtual co-presence that allow individuals living in different countries to nurture and perpetuate a sense of family cohesion and carry on a family life at a distance are also observed in other contexts.⁵³

Delegation of transnational contacts to descendants in Azorean families generally causes a higher participation of younger generations in transnational relations. This process sustains the ongoing transformation of family transnational networks as a consequence of ageing: the elder generation of first migrants and their non-migrant siblings fades away; younger descendants gradually take over the maintenance of transnational contacts. As descendants gain a more prominent role in communications, transnational networks reconfigure and the sense of transnational contacts is redefined.

The Cousins from Canada: Maintaining Transnational Ties Across Generations

Descendants living in various locations, as well as younger Azorean generations have been raised in a family environment where transnational relations, references to migration history and kinship living elsewhere have been themes constantly present in family narratives. They have been exposed to religious rituals and celebrations of traditional festivals, reciprocal family visits, gatherings for celebrating family rituals related to life-cycle events, as well as other transnational exchanges. On such occasions, they meet relatives living in other locations, observe how elder generations interact and familiarize with their stories about migration and homeland. As a consequence, descendants on both sides participate in transnational connections, especially when having a close, direct kinship relation, similar ages, common affinities, opportunities for shared activities and speaking Portuguese (or other common) language.⁵⁴

For instance, Cristina describes her privileged relation with some of her cousins who share common memories and similar characteristics. On the contrary, other relatives who do not share this kind of experience are not included in Cristina’s network of direct contacts, although they can have exchanges with her parents.

“We have similar ages [with cousins S.]. On the other side of the family, my uncle’s children in Toronto are older and perhaps cannot deal with the Internet, thus the contact is more difficult, more distant; in time, it fades away a little. And also they didn’t come here for some time, while [the cousins S.] came here recently. So, I had with them a personal contact recently.” (Cristina, non-migrant, 33 years)

This observation sustains Levitt's thesis (2009) that insertion in multigenerational family networks, displaying transnational practice and including multiple cultural references on a regular basis, favors the perpetuation of transnational connections among generations.⁵⁵ Current transnational contacts observed for migrants' descendants draw on a history of intensive "kinwork" (Baldassar 2007) deployed over time by first generation migrants.⁵⁶ This is particularly clear in Guida's narrative. At the time of emigration in Quebec, Guida was 12 years old. She grew up in a family climate where transnational contacts and exchanges have been part of family routines. As she explains, her parents and family members of their generation established this dynamics of exchanges that expanded over decades to include descendants. Multiple modalities are currently used to maintain this transnational family space.

"In New Year and Easter time, we contact each other by phone or we send post-cards. We also receive a lot of letters and postcards. We stay in contact all the time by phone. It's one sister or another who takes the initiative to call and ask news. If someone's ill, for instance, one of the sisters or a cousin will call to tell us about that [...]. There are periods when we don't visit each other every year, but we always take the time to inform about the others. We always gather at weddings, funerals or other events." (Guida, 1.5 generation Azorean-descendant, 42 years)

In a previous section, we show that in several families elder generations delegate transnational contacts to descendants who use Internet communications to facilitate the exchanges. This process illustrates that mechanisms to perpetuate these contacts across generations are set in place incorporating new ICTs into already existent transnational family practices. New routines of communication emerge including intergenerational transmission of family commitments to preserve transnational connections. This process in migrant families is mirrored in non-migrant part of the kinship. For instance, Joana's mother maintained regular communications with some of her immigrant sisters. Joana (non-migrant, 59 years) and her cousins in the US took over these contacts when their ageing parents, after severe illness and hearing loss, could not communicate directly anymore.

These data highlight that connected ways of living enhance the perpetuation of transnational contacts across generations. This process is discussed in the next section where we advance the notion of multi-connectedness in order to explain how multiple, pre-existent, transnational relations inform current transnational contacts. Not only first generation migrants, but also descendants as well as non-migrant kin participate to the creation and perpetuation of these contacts in time, bringing to the picture different forms and communication styles.

Multi-connectedness and Transnational Kinship Over Time

Intensification of transnational contacts depends not only on increasing accessibility of technologies, but also on other factors. Family relations are determinant and explain differences observed with regard to the forms and modalities of transnational connections by age and generation. We found that characteristics of family relations influence the perpetuation of transnational contacts in time and across generations.

Azorean migrants maintained a family life including many age-related commitments and obligations, family rituals and traditional celebrations within a transnational social space spanning localities in several countries, Canada, the US, and Portugal. We define as *multi-connectedness*, this capacity to maintain multiple connections and strong family relations across national borders, using various modalities (regular exchanges, transnational practice, family gatherings and visits) and technologies. It is

an important characteristic of Azorean kinship groups who focused their identity on this transnational bonding. Such a *savoir faire* to maintain multiple ties within and across national frontiers is based on an ideology that considers family solidarity and relationships as core values of one's cultural identity. This ideology inspired first generation migrants to form migration chains that include gradually many family members in migratory movement. The importance of multi-connectedness is expressed in Luisa's words:

"For me, it's important to maintain these relations. Even if we are far away, even if we don't visit every year, even if we don't see each other. Because it's easy to forget. This is not specific for immigration, it's for all that I do. It's important to maintain continuously the contact, even if not frequently, it still is a contact." (Luisa, 1.5 generation, 53 years)

The capacity to maintain transnational connections that Azorean migrants developed is based on several particularities. Frequency of transnational contacts varies a lot and mostly depends on kinship relation. In the past, first generation migrants maintained ties with their ageing parents and siblings left behind on the island. Following death of elders in homeland, transnational contacts loosened in some kinship groups. According to our data, transnational contacts are today mostly conserved by brothers and sisters, from the generation of first migrants, as well as some members of the following generations, living in different countries. They communicate regularly when using the Internet and the phone, and sporadically when using only the phone.

Kinship network configuration changed over time, as the older generations faded away and many siblings became migrants through established migratory chains. More and more transnational contacts today are reported among cousins of first or following generations. Most of them use phone communications, but a lot use both phone and Internet. Other transnational relations mentioned are between returnees and their children or grand-children in Canada, and with other interlocutors (aunts, uncles, nephews/nieces, in-laws, friends). As previously shown, frequency of contacts depends in general on the closeness of relations, increasing in case of direct relations and decreasing when conflicts interfere and quality deteriorates.

The diversification of modalities used and the extension of relations included in transnational connections follow several norms: exchanges occur predominantly between family members of the same age and the same generation and mostly depend on the relationship with the interlocutor. Therefore important intergenerational differences are observed. The networks of first generation migrants and their non-migrant counterparts are definitely wider, as they include active, direct ties with numerous persons situated in various locations. On the contrary, descendants of the second and following generations have selective direct contacts with some of their closest relatives, especially those of the same generation and the same age. This illustrates that multi-connectedness requires a continuous process of transformation in order to incorporate new technologies and modalities in family relations. It is a permanently evolving process, embodied by various actors. Another factor influencing these contacts is the practice of visits that shapes importantly the family relations. Visits can favor the creation of new ties or renew existing relations, and facilitate transmission of core values and rituals from one generation to the next.

Visits

Privileged ties among cousins can be formed during visits on the island, in childhood and adolescence. These visits lasting between a week and two months offer unique occasions to share special moments, organize leisure activities and develop long-lasting friendships. Some migrants have their own

house on the island, while others stay in their siblings' homes during these visits. All agree that it is important to enjoy and cultivate the opportunities to establish various forms of conviviality (*convivio*) that cement their family relationships furthermore. Most of the migrants and returnees respondents in our sample indicated at least one to three visits on the island since their migration (very few never visited and several visit every year). The frequency of visits is higher for first generation migrants than for descendants, varying according to family dynamics, individual characteristics and life stage. For example, families with young children travel less than those with teenagers. All types of visits identified in literature on other migrant groups—crisis, routine, ritual, and duty, special and tourist visits⁵⁷—have also been reported by our respondents. By visits, descendants familiarize with their ancestral homeland, revive relationships with distant kin, affirm one's belonging to the island and relieve feelings of longing for this land. Therefore they are a requisite for transmission of cultural heritage. Family obligation is an important component of the visit; visitors' presence is expected by all local kin, in family feasts and gatherings. A facilitator of this circulation across borders is the dual citizenship that many migrants acquired. This condition favours the exchanges between countries where migrants maintain affiliations.⁵⁸

At the same time, non-migrants and returnees also visit their relatives settled in Canada, especially on occasions involving life cycle rituals and celebrations, such as weddings, baptisms, anniversaries, graduations or funerals that mark individual biography and family history. Visits have higher frequencies for non-migrants travelling for multiple purposes (professional and family motivations), and for returnees when their children live abroad. For instance, Lucia and her husband, returnees in the Azores, travel to Rhodes Island every year in order to participate in family events involving their children and grandchildren. This practice can be regular or exceptional and offers settings for descendants to establish and consolidate their own relationship with their Azorean kinship.

Visits are essential for maintaining transnational family life because they offer the forms of physical co-presence that other modalities cannot provide.⁵⁹ Azoreans' insertion in family networks with active connections determines the practice of visits as an important asset for building a kinship narrative of the family regular visit to homeland, as observed for other migrant groups.⁶⁰ Such a shared storyline is also an arena for debates and negotiations about belonging, exchanges, inheritances, material proprieties and other family matters that sometime create family conflicts and rupture of ties, as other authors also emphasized.⁶¹ Having direct contact and shared experiences are central for maintaining transnational connections; affinities and common narratives can be then created and perpetuated by contacts at a distance using ICTs. Therefore pre-existing relations in a climate of multi-connectedness among migrants and their Azorean siblings are paramount for the perpetuation of transnational connections in time and across generations.

Impacts of ICTs Use on Transnational Family Relations

Considering this important continuity of transnational relations within Azorean multigenerational kinship groups, we discuss here the multiple impacts of ICTs use on transnational connections. Their consequences can be observed on the structure of family network, but also on the exchanges. On one hand, the configuration of family network transforms as parents partially delegate transnational connections to their descendants, at least for Internet-based communication. Hence, descendants, both women and men, become central, active actors of the communication patterns and functioning within the family network. Consequently, diversification of active ties due to descendants' involvement and consolidation of contacts with distant kin is observed in most kinship groups. On the other hand, types of exchanges diversified and overall transnational connections intensified and enriched, following incorporation of new ICTs in transnational routines of communication.

Respondents who use Internet-based communications indicate that the frequency of contacts has increased since these technologies have been integrated in family routines. They communicate more often, have more rapid exchanges and initiate their contacts easily due to lower costs, accessibility and facilities related to this technology. At the same time, Internet-based communication also offers the possibility to maintain more contacts with a wider network and to better accompany the lives of relatives at a distance. These various media offer forms of virtual co-presence that complement physical ones.⁶² The possibility to share the details of each other's lives at a distance generates an increasing feeling of proximity with these distant kin: better knowledge about siblings' activities and preferences, lifestyle, follow up of everyday activities, as well as special events and experiences.

Emails and social media, such as Facebook, allow informational exchanges, without limitations related to time lag or costs of communication. In addition, Internet provides translation facilities that permit overcoming linguistic barriers. This potentially constant interaction contributes to more fluid communications.

"We can follow more closely their lives there [in Canada] and, on the contrary, they probably also can accompany better ours here. For example, when [the cousin] had a child, I remember seeing the girl as a baby, and now I have thousands of pictures with her as a child. We accompany the family evolution in this way too."
(Cristina, non-migrant, 33 years)

As a consequence, the quality of transnational relations has been reinforced and relations strengthen. In some rare cases, social networks like Facebook are also used to identify distant family relatives or kinship ties with new family members or to better understand family genealogy. Another reported incidence of ICTs' use is the organization of family events at a distance; connecting participants from various countries through a platform like Skype can facilitate family gatherings when family members are dispersed in different locations.

Finally, in some rare cases, ICTs are also used to provide caregiving for ageing parents, to accompany them and offer emotional comfort. For instance, Nadia (35 years) remembers that her mother living on the island had a permanent contact with her grand-mother, aged 87, living in Montreal, using a webcam. They spent many hours talking, sharing meals or just "being together." This use of ICTs is rare among families interviewed because it requires arrangements and technical skills on both sides, which is infrequent.

This point brings us to the discussion of limitations related to sociability and intimacy at a distance. If ICTs present many opportunities that facilitate transnational contacts, they also involve physical and temporal limitations.⁶³ The use of new technologies depends on communication infrastructure that determine accessibility to appropriate technologies, on individual's resources such as physical and intellectual skills and abilities (language, literacy, etc.) to use these technologies, time and money to access them.⁶⁴ The major limitation of new technologies refers to the absence of physical co-presence. The need for physical contact persists in the context of transnational communication.⁶⁵ Therefore, the visit remains necessary to enliven transnational connections.⁶⁶ Moreover, ICTs are not convenient or adequate to all exchange.⁶⁷ In cases of illness, ageing or crisis, ICTs can be even regarded as "inadequate modes of communication."⁶⁸

In addition, the pre-existing relationships and their quality are central to maintain effective contacts through ICTs.⁶⁹ In the case of Azorean kinship groups, individuals' insertion in transnational spaces formed by kinship relations and their practices creates the premises for such relations to develop among various generations of descendants.

Concluding Remarks

Examples discussed here show that new ICTs determine an intensification of transnational contacts in multigenerational kinship groups formed by Azorean migrants in Quebec. Our results confirm previous studies on new media and migration in other contexts.⁷⁰ However, our research highlights that ICTs' impact on transnational connections, in the case of older migrant groups displaying various transnational practices over several decades, depends on individual's current position in a transnational space formed by kinship networks. New media are incorporated in routines of family communication at a distance through younger members, migrants' descendants and their non-migrant counterparts. This process occurs in a family climate characterized by multi-connectedness, attaching central importance to family conviviality, solidarity and traditions. Therefore, it contributes to transformation of transnational ties, network structure and communication styles.

We demonstrate that multiple media are combined, but also that specific media are privileged by age and generation: elder respondents, migrants of first generation prefer phone, while the younger members of second and third generations favour Internet-based communications. Forms of "old transnationalism," such as those created by Azorean migrants in Quebec, are revisited and renewed through the process of delegation that enhances younger generations' involvement in transnational connections.⁷¹ However, social and cultural contexts of family life influence the use of technologies in regular communications at a distance. New technologies are incorporated in family practices according to family relationships, expectations and commitments, and thus reinforcing characteristics of relations already present.

Our case study contributes to research on migration and ICTs demonstrating how these connected ways of living, expressed by multi-connectedness within various family relations, and facilitated by new media, favor the perpetuation of transnational contacts across time and generations in older migrant groups. In this process, insertion in transnational space is of central importance as virtual co-presence created by ICTs juxtaposes other forms of sociability that are characteristic to transnational practice. This observation highlights a larger discussion about the temporality of transnational practices and connections, their transformation over time and the factors influencing this process.

Notes

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Beyond Metropolises: Hybridity in a Transnational Context

Raihan Sharif
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

The political and economic forces fueling such crimes against humanity—whether they are unlawful wars, systemic tortures, practiced indifferences to chronic starvation, and disease or genocidal acts—are always mediated by educational forces.

Henry Giroux, *America on the Edge*

Hybridity discourses have undergone sharp criticism in academia, and one finds many of these criticisms in literary and cultural studies¹ postcolonial theories² and in the postcolonial and global studies.³ This paper attempts to critique hybridity discourses from an interdisciplinary perspective. Theoretically, it explores how bilateral relations within a transnational context are impacted by hybridity discourses. It examines how the relationship between a developing country and an imperialist one is impacted by hybridity discourse and shows how certain kinds of knowledge production in academia can have disempowering effects on countries vulnerable to neocolonial intervention.

This paper locates the nature of epistemic violence embedded in the postcolonial hybridity discourses and investigates their relationship with certain issues of development and environmental justice in a country like Bangladesh. Since the worst sufferers of epistemic violence are “third world” countries, as their intellectual, cultural, and physical spaces carry the toll in the form of “brainwashing,” cultural bankruptcy, and economic-environmental manipulation by IMF/World Bank policies, this paper considers mainly the issues of Bangladesh while alluding to similar crises in other Asian and African countries.

Hybridity in a ‘Flat’ World

“In the hands of academics that rarely understand or concern themselves with the reality of the world, works of literature are eviscerated and destroyed,” says Chris Hedges.⁴ This is true not only about many English professors, but also about many pedagogues in other disciplines in the “third world” countries busy to recycle theories and ideas from abroad, many of which get complicit with the militarization of knowledge and with the projects of the Military-Industry-Academic complex in the corporate global economy. But an intellectual dependency on others to define the interests of the “third world” countries is no less distressing than the systemic manipulation of these countries within the neoliberal global capitalist economy since the 1950s. Despite the neocolonial disempowerment of these nation-states, certain

social theories assume an increasingly “flat world” and find the neoliberal and neocolonial manipulation of some nation-states by others as a myth.⁵

In contrast to these theoreticians, Homi K. Bhabha finds the world as “uneven,” but inspires the minoritarians to seize the present, the cracks and fissures in it.⁶ As a postcolonial theoretician, Bhabha offers certain tools and tactics to the minoritarians so that they can reconfigure and accelerate their social mobility as they must transcend and go beyond polarization of identities along any self/other binary.

In this article, I argue that these tactics for the minoritarians do not serve their best interests. To do so, I identify Bhabha’s theory of hybridity, especially its ways of cross-cultural exchanges, as bereft of any understanding of the biopolitics of power. Therefore, it becomes irresponsible to the interests of the people vulnerable to neoliberal management of differences across the world. It remains shockingly indifferent to the (mal)distribution of life chances for the colonized in both home and host countries.

The article has four parts. Part I outlines and theoretically engages with some of Bhabha’s key concepts: nationhood, hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry, sly civility, etc. Part II focuses on the use of hybridity in literature and cultural theorizing. Part III goes back to Bhabha’s concept of nationhood and explains how it remains indifferent to manipulation of one nation by another. Part IV concludes the article and argues for a radical revision of the theory of hybridity.

The Politics of Hybridity: Metropolitan Metaphors

As examining cross-national exchanges would be an important aspect of the present paper, it would be helpful to outline Bhabha’s understanding of nationhood.⁷ Bhabha complicates identity formation claimed by nations. For him, a dominant narrative of nation overpowers the identity of minority groups in that nation. However, it is not that he rejects national identity entirely; rather he wants to keep such identity open. He uses his concept of “uncanny” to complicate the division between Western and non-Western identities.

For Bhabha, the nation must be perceived within the double movement of “pedagogy” and “performance.” As he says:

We then have a contested conceptual territory where the nation’s people must be thought in double-time; the people are the historical “objects” of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse, an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin in the past; the people are also the “subjects” of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the people as contemporaneity: as that sign of the present through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process.⁸

On the one hand, the pedagogy tells us that the nation and the people are what they are. On the other, the performativity keeps reminding us that the nation and the people are always generating a non-identical excess over and above what we thought they were. Bhabha thinks that even the pedagogical is caught up in this logic of the performative. The apparent stability of pedagogical statement is actually caught up by the need to endlessly restate the reality of a nation constantly exceeding its definition. The consequence is a familiar blurring of apparently polarized categories. The performative thus introduces a temporality of the “in-between.”⁹ As a result, the polarity of the pedagogical and the performative is constantly blurring. So, the pedagogy is never as stable as it wants to be, and the performative itself becomes pedagogically important.

To examine Bhabha’s nationhood, Bhabha seems to establish the dialectic between the pedagog-

ical and the performative, between time and space, between past and present. But even this dialectic—though theoretically value-free or scientifically objective—only gets complicit with the manipulation of one nation by another in cross-national exchanges. Part III of the paper will illustrate the issue. But I argue that Bhabha could have avoided the problem if he incorporated the issue of “being” along with time and space much like Edward Soja’s theory of spatialization as Soja argues:

[W]ith an informed postmodern politics of resistance and demystification, one can pull away the deceptive ideological veils that are today reifying and obscuring, in new and different ways, the restructured instrumentalities of class exploitation, gender and racial domination, cultural and personal disempowerment, and environmental degradation.¹⁰

I argue that Bhabha’s theory of hybridity should be revised in a way much like what Soja implies. He should bring back the experience of people with their everyday life struggles in an “uneven” world. He should develop better tactics to negotiate the unequal power relations that shape the world in a much more polarized way than he thinks.

Bhabha may complicate the binary Western/Non-western in his concept of nationhood but, to me, however, Said’s orientalism¹¹ is still a very powerful tool to resist consciously or unconsciously misleading understandings of people of once colonized culture. Bhabha, of course, finds it monological, as it confirms the rigid binary of the ruler and the ruled.¹² For Bhabha, colonial discursive practices are heterogeneous and ambiguous. Hence he proposes a theory of hybridity or the “third space”:

[...] all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the “third space” which enables other positions to emerge. [...] the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.¹³

In his proposed hybridity, Bhabha ushers in formation of a merging, a commingling of cultures and identities with their distinctive features. Bhabha—in his formation of hybridity and third space—takes extra caution to remind us that his “third space” is not like the frenzy of a multiculturalist melting pot, but a space in which cultural transactions or translation is an ongoing process to keep going with much required practice of negotiation of meaning and identities. As he says:

To that end, we should remember that it is the “inter”—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space—that carries the burden of meaning of culture [...] And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as others of ourselves.¹⁴

To Bhabha himself and his peers, the third space is undoubtedly a site of subversion, free from Said’s binary thinking. Bhabha foregrounds it as a threshold for a transnational culture subverting the binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized. The cornerstone of Bhabha’s theory is his much repeated argument for intercultural transaction or intercultural translation occurring in a new spatial turn, a self-othering process.

This paper intends to show how Homi K. Bhabha’s hybridity discourse misinforms the masses and tends to trap them within the grid of neocolonialism which, ironically, they fight against. Bhabha’s “hybridity” or “third space” as a ground of negotiating intercultural affinities is considered as a marked turn in postcolonial literary theories, but I argue that it depoliticizes the ideological struggle of the people

in ex-colonies vulnerable to the constantly renewing tricks and strategies within the interlocked grids of neocolonialism and neoimperialism.

I argue how an easy acceptability of hybridity discourses paves the way for developmental policies for third world countries imposed by the neoliberal tryst of developed countries, their pet corporations like IMF and World Bank, and corrupted governments in third world countries like Bangladesh. The present paper emerges from this anxiety and undertakes an attempt to consider the task of examining certain developments within postcolonial theories, development discourses, and environmental justice discourses and their reception/application in countries like Bangladesh.

This paper argues that hybridity discourse is anything but innocent, abstract theorizing, though some critics (Benita Parry, Aijaz Ahmad, Arif Dirlik, and Bart Moore Gilbert) may popularize this view:

Critics like Spivak and Homi Bhabha may well be ‘devotees’ of earlier poststructuralist thinking, but their work is distinctive because it illuminates the path out of dark and cabbalistic writing by poststructuralism’s high priests.¹⁵

I argue that a productive and material critique of Bhabha’s hybridity should go beyond the broad sweep, an accusation of poststructuralist ambiguity. It should figure out several things: what theoretical intervention does it want to bring in as it critiques and departs from Said’s colonizer/colonized binary? Bhabha may argue against the politics of polarizing and for emerging as others of ourselves, but has this appeal been merely a cover for those who do practice the politics of polarizing? If so, what theoretical insight might Bhabha offer to negotiate with this manipulative strategy?

To start off, though postcolonial theories are supposed to inspire understanding of the ongoing manipulation of people of ex-colonies, Bhabha, in his concept of hybridity, cannot provide any tools to resist such manipulation. Bhabha’s concept of ambivalence delinks itself from historicity. His “sly civility” dissipates or dispels “dissent” from “civil disobedience” practiced by Gandhi or Thoreau. Bhabha rather transforms it into consent as the only option, beyond which the colonized subjects supposedly cannot stretch their political imagination. A popular currency of this manufactured consent inspires some countries like Bangladesh to accept contracts against her own interest. I would show this by giving examples of agreements signed by Bangladesh and the US.

Bhabha does not consider that any uneven power relation may affect the constant becoming he proposes. Bhabha formulates and fixes a pattern of postcolonial resistance which does not entertain any other modes of resistance than what gets filtered through ambivalence: the double consciousness of the colonized hovering between, on the one hand, submission to authority but with a difference—that is, submission on one’s own terms; on the other, acquiescence (consent) in authority as given.

Thus, the “self-othering” has taken an ironic twist which is bereft of any anticolonial agency. The kind of resistance Bhabha’s “sly civility” allows is not enough to negotiate uneven power relations involved in such cross-cultural exchanges. The cultural translation that Bhabha propagates, and as often occurs practically, becomes a dangerous move for people in developing countries as it tells them to merge apolitically. In its ushering of transnational culture, it stands out as just another version of the politics of neoliberal multicultural management of differences which Bhabha would claim his theory confidently resists by going beyond it in the “third space,” but this is far from true, since the theory of the “third space” is indifferent to the fact that the process of cultural translation or negotiation practically occurs in an intensely contested space conditioned by ideological underpinnings “in which power operates in the guise of a universal ethics of cultural exchange and solidarity.”¹⁶

In his proposed “self-othering” or “alterity,” Bhabha inadvertently reinforces an abstract liberal humanism, which, ironically, was the cornerstone of the British colonialism many third world countries

went through. The same zombie has been resurrected to shape global neocolonialism in and through the neoliberal capital management controlled by the developed countries and some supranational institutions that prioritize the interests of the powerful nation-states of the global North. How the discourse of liberal humanism has been used as a bait to impose problematic deals and contracts between Bangladesh and the US can be used as an example. Bangladesh has signed a dozen or so agreements with the US.¹⁷ The terms of these contracts reflect the unequal power relationship which Bhabha's call for intercultural affinities carefully suppresses. The details of agreements (some signed and some in the process of being finalized), like SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement), HANA (Humanitarian Assistance Need Assessment), PISCES (Personal Identification, Secured Comparison and Evaluation System), or the latest TICFA (Trade and Investment Cooperation Framework Agreement), were never made public.

SOFA essentially provides immediate clearance to US military personnel to enter the country at any time, without anything being asked about the accompanying troops or weapons. Another deal, signed in 2003, whose details were revealed a month after it was finalized, states that no US soldier or personnel can be tried for any crime in a Bangladeshi court or handed over to the International Criminal Courts for trial. They get indemnity not only for committing crimes in Bangladesh, but they can come and take refuge after committing crimes in other parts of the world.

According to newspaper reports on PISCES (Personal Identification, Secured Comparison and Evaluation System), the Bangladesh government will cooperate in all possible ways to protect the security interests of the US if the US identifies any Bangladeshi citizen or group as possible terrorist suspects, even at the cost of human rights violations. Meanwhile, in the name of scientific and technological cooperation, Bangladesh has given Americans access to sensitive information.

The terms of all these agreements were dictated by the US. Was it really in the best interests of Bangladeshis to sign these deals? If Bangladeshi policy-makers did indeed think that, why were these agreements never made a matter of public debate? Anyone would see how these contracts give privileges to the US over Bangladesh: Bangladesh would provide sensitive information to the US, which is not bound to give any such information to Bangladesh; Bangladesh must allow unconditional entry to US soldiers while the US will not give the same privilege to Bangladesh; Bangladesh has given consent to the US's need, if any, for human rights violations but for Bangladesh such requirement is even unthinkable.

Thus, such contracts show how intercultural exchanges sacrificing nationalistic concerns become unprivileged communication for "subject countries" of the "new" empire and hybridity discourses act like catalysts in such unprivileged communication. Bhabha argues that by practicing hybridity "we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as others of ourselves."¹⁸ But the question is, who is eluding this practice of polarity and who sticks to it more and more? Bhabha's theory does not consider these practical aspects; neither does it interrupt the imperialist forces by offering any vision for eluding this polarity. This is perhaps the reason why hybridity discourse has been popular to neoimperialist forces as they officially re-inscribe the pattern of hybridity in their attempt to boost the always expanding global corporate economy.

Why this "practical" issue like US foreign policies should be examined in terms of postcolonial discourses can be perceived from Gauri Viswanathan. In an interview, Gauri Viswanathan said "South Asian Scholars need to remind themselves that their contributions don't lie simply in developing postcolonial theory but in turning literary criticism into a practice."¹⁹ She takes postcolonial as a method and appreciated Said using this method in *Culture and Imperialism* to read canonical English texts. In addition, Viswanathan has done another excellent thing: specifying the meaning of the term "postcolonial," which in its current use has achieved a kind of ambiguous multiplicity like the term "postmodern." But one needs to specify it in a direction which is most useful, as she aptly does:

Postcolonial is a misleading term because it assumes, first of all, a body of knowledge or a specifiable period of time after colonialism. It is sometimes used interchangeably with “decolonized”... I might define Postcolonial Studies broadly as a study of cultural interaction between colonizing powers and the societies they colonized, and the traces that this interaction left on literature, arts, and human sciences of both societies. But in its more popular usage, I suppose, “postcolonial” has come to signify more or less an attitude or position from which the decentering of Eurocentrism may ensue.²⁰

While I certainly agree that decentering of Eurocentrism should be a task of a postcolonial critic, I would argue that some versions of postcolonial theories and their reception/application have not done this sensibly. In the backdrop of much contested interaction between colonizing powers and the ex-colonies, the postcolonial hybridity discourse inspired by Bhabha and his peers, for example, de-historicizes and depoliticizes the interaction. While Bhabha’s hybridity turns out as privileged communication for imperialistic forces, environmental discourses, it also—as I would show—serves their neocolonialist interests.

This politics of polarization is what Bhabha finds problematic in Said’s orientalism. He proposes his concept of hybridity or third space to go beyond this polarization. But the politics of polarization in its manifestation is more nuanced than Bhabha thinks. In fact, it can be often invisible to the privileged, as they cannot see any evidences of it in their everyday life. Philomena Essed’s understanding of everyday racism can be an eye-opener:

Everyday racism can be more coded (a white teacher saying to an African-American student: “How come you write so well?”); ingrained institutional practice (appointing friends of friends for a position, as a result of which the workplace remains white); and not consciously intended (when lunch tables in a canteen or cafeteria are informally racially segregated and the white manager “naturally” joins the table with the white workers where only they will benefit from casually shared, relevant information and networking).²¹

Bhabha’s peers may argue that to destabilize this politics of polarity Bhabha does offer something in his concept of ‘mimicry.’ I would critically examine this claim. To define mimicry, Bhabha says:

[C]olonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference.²²

As Bhabha argues, colonial discourse wants the colonized to be extremely like the colonizer, but by no means identical. If there were an absolute equivalence between the two, then the ideologies justifying colonial rule would be unable to operate. The colonizer assumes that there is a structural non-equivalence, a split between superior and inferior which explains why any one group of people can dominate another at all. Bhabha intends to puncture the colonizer’s claim or assumption of superiority by relying on the slippage of meaning through which the colonized achieves their agency.

The agency is gained through not only rupturing the colonizer’s discourse but, also in the transformation of the colonized into an uncertainty which re-creates the colonial subjects in and through their constant oscillation between equivalence and excess. This constant movement makes the colonized both reassuringly similar and also terrifying, as Bhabha says: “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace.”²³ This sounds revolutionary only at the expense of disposing most colonized people. That is, Bhabha re-

duces the social to the semiotic; his hybridity is shaped by difference and remains lavishly indifferent to the capitalistic management of differences. As Ahmad rightly points out, Bhabha may call for constant becoming but does not consider that “most individuals are really not free to fashion themselves anew with each passing day, nor do communities arise out of and fade into the thin air of the infinitely contingent.”²⁴

To defend Bhabha, Huddart argues that Ahmad has misunderstood Bhabha’s notion of cultural changes and hybridity, as Huddart alleges that Ahmad has decontextualized Bhabha’s arguments. “Some people hold on to cultural forms in an attempt at survival,” Huddart argues to imply that, just because of those people’s attitude to their cultural forms, Bhabha’s notion of non-polarized plays of identity creation does not become invalid.²⁵

But Huddart, like Bhabha himself, carefully evades the fact that there must be some material reasons behind people’s reluctance in playing such a wonderful and gratifying hybridity game Bhabha has invented. In other words, for Bhabha and his peers, the actors or participants of hybridity live in an ‘open’ space and ‘flexible’ present, as Bhabha argues:

Hybridity is a form of incipient critique; it does not come as a force from ‘outside’ to impose an alternative *a priori* ground-plan on the pattern of the present. Hybridity works with, and within, the cultural design of the present to reshape our understanding of the interstices – social and psychic – that link signs of cultural similitude with emergent signifiers of alterity.²⁶

For Bhabha, an understanding of power relations in the present and applying tactics of resistance within the existing power relations are what hybridity as a form of critique invites all to get engaged with. Such a stance would logically be possible only if Bhabha assumes that all minoritarian actors are equally capable of practicing tactics of alterity in a given time and space.

If asked, he would have responded that it is not about the capability of actors but their possibility of gaining new kinds of agency that he wants to consider. Surprisingly, this is the exact stance which the neoliberal multicultural prophets would like to preach, as it helps them to make people believe in the trickle-down effect of open market policies and the rhetoric of neoliberal management of differences. It looks like Bhabha keeps his tactics open to get them hijacked by neoliberal multiculturalists, but when they actually do the hijacking, Bhabha begins a dramatic mourning:

The hostile takeover of hybridity by the discourse of neoliberal globalistas is a case in point. Hybridity, in our global moment, has become a ubiquitous form of cultural universalism, the proper name of a homogenizing pluralism. Hybridity is the celebratory sign of diversity and mixedness that figures prominently on the calling-cards of globalisers who believe that the earth is flat, markets make the world go round, and that the Internet highway gives us all common access to the New Jerusalem. The economic and cultural ‘ecosphere’ that accompanies this global perspective insistently points to the large-scale, boundary-crossing landscapes we live in. Our global cities are multicultural; our nations are part of larger transnational regionalities; our *sensus communis* is hardwired through digital connections; our sovereignty is ceded to global multinational corporations, the World Bank, the IMF.²⁷

This drama of eating cake and having it too does not offer us any progressive stance for empowering minoritarians. Bhabha, for example, critiques “any politics of polarity”, but is totally reluctant to consider practicality: who is pushing the politics of polarity and for whose interest he desires to drive it off from the colonized subject’s conceptual frames.

In short, his form of resistance in his concept of ambivalence is no resistance at all. It is resistance

only rhetorically that serves the colonizer's need to show a façade of balance of power in a supposedly democratic and just society. In this regard, Radhakrishnan raises an interesting question about the value Western society gives to certain kinds of hybridity: "For example, why is it more fashionable and/or acceptable to transgress Islam towards a secular constituency rather than the other way around? Why do Islamic forms of hybridity, such as women wearing veils and attending western schools encounter resistance and ridicule?"²⁸

Bereft of the question of "being," of people grounded in different contexts of capabilities, Bhabha does favor the neoliberal capitalist and people who have the privilege of gaining social mobility in the "present." Bhabha may preach all his tactics as hybridity or some forms of alterity and resistance, but people keen on investing privilege for their own material benefit have long known them as moves of conformity to and convergence with the more powerful culture.

After decades of proposing hybridity and upon its celebration and critique, Bhabha himself evaluates the impact of this concept, as he reflects: "We have come together to celebrate a concept – the hybrid – that has established its salience in a wide range of discourses relevant to the aesthetics of cultural difference and the politics of minorities."²⁹ In the face of such self-congratulating moves, I argue that hybridity has favored some minoritarians at the expense of abandoning others.

People living in the "periphery countries" of the global economic map carry the toll of non-polarized politics inspired by social theories like one proposed by Bhabha.³⁰ Even when these people move to the core countries with high hopes for better economic opportunities, they become victims of hybridity politics until they also evolve into predators. I will briefly illustrate this in the following.

Bhabha's tactics of resistance are basically cultural performances. He recommends non-confrontational acts like "mimicry" and "sly civility" in the face of systemic discrimination against minoritarians. For the "bottom billion" of the world, for the homeless or transgendered people in the US or for the impoverished people in the global South, non-confrontational acts reinforce discriminations against them.³¹ For the rest, however, these may work, given that they are capable of getting assimilated in the mainstream culture.

This partial success, however, is the greatest failure of non-confrontational tactics. Eventually, tactics like these would pit the impoverished people and the "bottom billion" against the relatively capable masses. It creates cultural convergence and assimilation in which capable minoritarians join the majoritarians. This is hybridization at the expense of worsening miseries of minoritarians, as it keeps structures of discriminations intact and offers fissures and cracks only to people who can seize and thrive on them. Rich Asian-Americans in the US, for example, dissociate themselves from newly arrived poor immigrants from Asia. The former calls the latter "Asian Flacks" and thus helps reinforce stereotypes about the latter.³² Bonilla-Silva refers to Saito and affirms:

[M]any Asians have reacted to the "Asian flack" they are experiencing with the rise in Immigration by fleeing the cities of immigration, disidentifying from new Asians, and invoking the image of the "good immigrant." In some communities, this has led to the older, assimilated segments of a community to dissociate from recent migrants. For example, a Nisei returning to his community after years of overseas military service told his dad the following about the city's new demography: "Goddam dad, where the hell did all these Chinese come from? Shit, this isn't even our town anymore."³³

In the example above, rich Asian-Americans are replicating white flights while affirming their preferred racial alignment towards ethno-racial groups who rank above their own. New and poor immigrants would require time and resources to reap material benefits from cultural performances and politics of

hybridity. Bereft of any other forms of resistance, they are left with non-confrontational moves, urged to find their preferred racial alignments or to use Bhabha's tools "sly civility" and "mimicry," anyways. But the return from their investment in these would also rely on all multiple intersectional vectors: race, class, sex, gender, ability, and others. In this way, Bhabha's big claim that hybridity offers some tools to empower minoritarians is simple and naïve at best. It must be complicated and evaluated within various contexts of cultural exchanges.

Thus I agree with Ahmad³⁴ and Hardt and Negri³⁵ that the postcolonial subject Bhabha ushers in is expected to assume a particular brand of identity: someone having access to resources. That this subject cannot be perceived within the vectors of race, class, sex, gender, ability, etc. substantiates the fact that this subject has been taken as a male, bourgeois onlooker whose ideology would favor "an elite population that enjoys certain rights, a certain level of wealth, and a certain position in the global hierarchy."³⁶ Hardt and Negri aptly comment on the postcolonial discourse: "[D]ifference, hybridity, and mobility are not liberatory in themselves, but neither are truth, purity, and stasis. The real revolutionary practice refers to the level of production. Truth will not make us free, but talking control of the production of truth will."³⁷

In the next section, I examine how hybridity discourses have been received in the transnational literary and cultural representations.

The Aesthetics of Hybridity: Literary and Cultural Exchanges

One site of hybridity discourse involves practicing literary criticism—translating the dominant representational modes to portray others by westerners and, ironically, by "others" themselves. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin mark how European literary criticism is ethnocentric, as they argue, "The washing out of cultural differences becomes a prominent effect of European literary criticism, since some appeal to the essential humanity of readers has been constructed as a function of the value and significance of the literary work."³⁸ Reading great authors of the west has been prescribed for the others as a means to achieve universal human values where "European" equals "universal." Overall, as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out: "European texts—anthropologies, histories, fiction, captured the non-European subjects within European frameworks which read his or her alterity as terror or lack."³⁹

I would argue that, along with European texts, the tradition of literary criticism in the form of recycling and reproduction of ideas from Western critics virtually forecloses any scope of considering the cultural contexts of the non-European others in the academically approved responses to English canonical literary texts. Some versions of the postcolonial literary theories appear in the scene with little help, as will be argued in this section.

Representations of Europe to itself and the representations of others to Europe were not accounts of different peoples and societies, but a projection of European fears and desires masquerading as scientific or objective knowledges. By the same token of objective knowledge, the West promotes and prescribes environmental policies for the "third world" countries, but those policies are incongruous and often harmful for the "third world countries," as the recommended and often imposed policies are segregated from contextual conditioning of those countries. This would be the focus of the section III, but it is important to question the perceived notion of objectivity in such transnational exchanges of ideas and policies.

To un-hijab this illusion, I would like to examine the use of hybridity in literature, because I believe that the 'third space' discourses in academia, especially in English departments, prepares the ground for intellectual and emotional acceptance of neoimperialist drives, trends, desires in a way that creates an elusive world in the minds of the people living in developing countries—and these people con-

sider an entrance to this illusive world as a step towards “progress.”

In her book *Salman Rushdie's Postcolonial Metaphors: Migration, Translation, Hybridity, Blasphemy, and Globalization*, Jaina C. Sanga celebrates Rushdie's application of hybridity as revolutionary. In Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, she identifies William Methwold, the toupeed Britisher, as an icon of hybridity. She argues:

Yet Methwold himself, despite all his Englishness, uses Indian words and phrases in his communication with the Sinai family; and Ahmed Sinai, in the presence of an Englishman, talks in a voice that “has become a hideous mockery of an Oxford drawl.” Thus both Englishman and Indian have picked up the characteristics of each other's cultures; it is in this clash or collage between British and Indian, between Western and Eastern, that the notion of postcolonial hybridity is best articulated.⁴⁰

If this playful linguistic exchange is celebrated as hybridity, it does so at the expense of occluding many important questions of ideological, socio-economic, socio-historical, and socio-political underpinnings that often determine the relation between Western and Eastern. This at best can be called dress-change identity, which is done not only seriously, but only at the interpersonal level for fun.

Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts?” observes how Linda Hutcheon in her celebration of hybridity in Salman Rushdie tends to be biased towards the West:

Though Salem Sinai [of *Midnight's Children*] narrates in English ...his intertexts for both writing history and writing fiction are doubled: they are, on the one hand, from Indian legends, film, and literature, and, on the other, from the West—*The Tin Drum*, *Tristram Shandy*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and so on.⁴¹

Chakrabarty rightly observes that Hutcheon handpicks references only from the west and is indifferent to take responsibility to mention Indian texts, and this is one typical way how hybridity in literary criticism has often been celebrated. But this undoubtedly is one-sided, which can be called favoritism-hybridity or biased hybridity. Moreover, this strategic bias makes it easy to accommodate Rushdie in English departments, as Chakrabarty believes.

This can be called “dress-changing” or “showcasing hybridity” performed at a casual level, cutting off all political threads as if they simply do not matter. Such a hybridity at best is wishful reverie of the elite diaspora intellectuals; at worst, it is their alibi of entry into the elite club of the Western academic intellectuals. At best, Bhabha's hybridity is immensely theoretical and, due to its indifference to historicity, highly deceptive.

How the so-called cultural transaction or translation actually occurs can be found in the representational tropes of the Western media reinforcing orientalist fantasy. To exemplify this, I would like to mention two recurrent motifs to represent the oriental people: hijab and homophobia.

In *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar argues how the West imposes homophobia on oriental people in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iran, and some other countries and equates homophobia with barbarism in an attempt to justify war on terror.⁴² To deflate this homonationalist ideology, Puar shows the presence of gays in Iran and Palestine who are also struggling for their rights just like their counterparts in the US and UK do.

As for hijabs, the Western media in their “cultural translation” overlooks cultural differences and equates hijab with the torture of women by men, bondage, and lack of freedom, and argues the best

way to liberate them is to bomb their husbands and children. Western media's rhetorical tropes to read the East are often found in contract with neoliberal multiculturalism, which also justifies War on Terror. This cultural transaction or translation in Western media can be called neoliberal hybridity.

From the literary scene, this neoliberal hybridity can be illustrated from cultural transaction in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.⁴³ Nafisi shows how a group of Iranian women are under surveillance in their country because of their penchant for canonical texts of English literature and how they consider that their entry and cultural adaptation or adjustment to the United States may improve their intellectual and hence their overall lives. Nafisi reads Iran in American eyes, and this is hugely supported both in western academia and media as this goes with the official neoliberalism. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* depicts Iranian Muslim women desiring to become more like James's American girls in way that manufactures a will for US sponsored liberation of women in Iran. In her role as native informant, Nafisi makes us think about the unevenness of the biopolitics of global capitalism where codes for racialized and gendered difference compose an assimilative multicultural order that makes US global hegemony appear just and fair.

This pattern demonstrates neoliberal Multiculturalism's deployment of racialized and gendered difference to produce the global multicultural citizen as a privileged racial subject. In other words, these literary projects appropriate cultural authority or epistemic privileges of women of colors' feminism while hollowing out its epistemological and political project.

In such cultural translation what comes out as a stark reality is the politico-economic interest of the West to read the East. Bhabha and his peers may overlook this political economy of cultural translation, basking in the ivory tower of abstract liberal humanism, but that does not do any good to the subalterns. The only purpose it may serve is for the elite diaspora intellectuals like Spivak, Bhabha, and Azar Nafisi, who can be alleged as the cultural agent of neoliberal multiculturalism, the official principle of American neo-imperialism and neocolonialism. The postcolonial thinkers like Bhabha are much more problematic in the sense that they de-historicize and depoliticize the postcolonial discourse. Bhabha's celebration of the depoliticized "third space" resembles the stance of the West as an objective knower whom Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" identifies as the "concealed subject" who "pretends it has no geo-political determinations."⁴⁴

The Transnational (Non)Polarization: Who is Developing Whom?

To expose the uneven politics of polarity in cross-national level, I would show how the development discourses and environmental justice discourses also make people first enthusiastic and later confused and deceived in their appreciation of Western neocolonizers' strategy of violence in the name of cross-cultural affiliation. Just after Hilary Clinton's visit in Bangladesh, Bangladesh bought four Lockheed Martin C-130Es at the cost of \$180 million from the United States.⁴⁵ The US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) notified the US Congress on May 22 of 2012:

The sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by enabling the Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) to use its C-130 fleet to respond more capably to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief needs in the region and support Bangladesh's significant contributions to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, and support operations to counter violent extremist organizations.⁴⁶

If I scrutinize the rhetoric, the DSCA is concerned about "enabling" Bangladesh to work for the national security of the US and also to serve the US's business interests in the Middle Eastern oil reserves. Ban-

gladesh is made to buy these cargo planes, investing a huge amount of the taxes of the common people, ignoring a popular demand by the people at the same period of time; Bangladesh, by spending only 36 million dollars, can “enable” her state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Company Limited (BAPEX) to extract oil from the Bay of Bengal without any help from US oil companies like Shell, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips. It is often argued that BAPEX cannot successfully extract oil. But a quick glimpse of facts would tell us a different story.

To reflect on the present situation of energy sector management, natural gas in Bangladesh was first discovered in 1955 in Haripur.⁴⁷ Since then 22 gas fields have been discovered. These gas fields are divided into 23 blocks. The North-Eastern zone of Bangladesh is very rich in natural gas resources. The undiscovered gas resource ranges from 8.43 TFC (95% probability) to 65.70 TFC (5% probability). Growth of domestic consumption tracks the growth of dynamic production of natural gases. Overall growth rate of consumption is increasing 7% per year over the last several decades.

In 1993-94, eight blocks were handed over to multinational corporations and, in 1997-98, another seven.⁴⁸ Before signing Production Sharing Contracts (PSC) with US companies, BAPEX and Petro-Bangla solely continued all the research and development work on the energy sector. In this time the rate of exploration and utilization was sufficient. A simple example can prove it. BAPEX dug out 19 fields and declared success in 10 cases, while multinational corporations like Cairn, Oxidental and Naiko dug out 36 fields and succeeded in ten cases. So, BAPEX and Petro Bangla were more efficient than other companies.

The rhetoric of the US-Bangladesh partnership and friendly bond may attempt to hide the neo-colonialist drives of the US by manipulating Bangladesh’s economic interests. A quick check of some facts would reveal it. It is often believed that the US is helping Bangladesh in her infrastructure development as the US provides loans from time to time, but the fact is that Bangladesh pays taxes to the US that amounts to four times the loans the US provides to Bangladesh. Bangladesh in the last six years bought gas from Chevron, paying 160 million US dollars, whereas, by employing the state-owned company BAPEX, Bangladesh could extract and use the same amount of gas, spending only 20 million US dollars.

The Role of the US in Climate Change in Bangladesh and Gas Field Explosion

Bangladesh is an undeveloped country, and does not have either the ability or the skills to extract natural gas as do some developed countries—these simplistic assertions just don’t hold. The best example is provided by the Magurchora and Tengratila case tragedy.⁴⁹ Oxidental and Naiko combined have wasted 500 billion cubic feet of gas in an explosion caused by undertaking a wrong but cost effective method to extract gas in their bid to manipulate cheap labor in Bangladesh. Ninety acres of land were destroyed in Magurchora due to the explosion. BELA (Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association) estimates the damage to be worth 100 million dollars. Naiko eventually paid out \$525,000 in compensation to about 620 families who were affected by the disaster, and another \$100,000 for planting trees, which is only 0.65% of the total damage.

In addition, 16% of land in Bangladesh is under threat of being wiped out from the map due to global warming. The human factor that is mainly responsible for global warming and sea level rise is burning of fossil fuels. Miller states that, 75% of the human caused emissions of CO₂ since 1980 are due to fossil fuel burning.⁵⁰ The two largest contributors to current CO₂ emissions are the world’s thousands of coal burning power and industrial plants and more than 700 million gasoline-burning motor vehicles (555 million of them cars). Emissions of CO₂ from US coal burning power and industrial plants alone exceeded the combined CO₂ emissions of 146 nations, which contain 75% of the world’s people.⁵¹ As a small nation, Bangladesh plays a negligible role in greenhouse gas emission. According to National

Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) per capita CO₂ emission in Bangladesh is 0.2 ton per year.⁵² But the figures for developing countries, world average, industrial world, and United States of America are 1.6, 4.0, 6.0 and 20.0 tons respectively, and the US is solely responsible for 23% of the total yearly fossil-fuel carbon emission to the atmosphere. In contrast, Bangladesh contributes a minuscule 0.06%.⁵³

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to sea level rise, as it is a densely populated coastal country of smooth relief comprising broad and narrow ridges and depressions.⁵⁴ The World Bank showed 10 cm, 25cm and 1 m rise in sea level by 2020, 2050 and 2100; affecting 2%, 4% and 17.5% of total land mass respectively.⁵⁵ Milliman et al. reported 1.0 cm per year sea level rise in Bangladesh.⁵⁶

Bangladesh is asking for compensation from countries responsible for global warming, but no positive response has been received so far. Recently, the United States announced on May 24, 2012 to provide a total of US \$13 million grant to Bangladesh for dealing with the adverse impact of climate change.⁵⁷ Out of the amount, \$9 million would be for the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF). The grant would come through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) over the next four years as announced by the US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton during her recent visit to Bangladesh.⁵⁸

But if we compare this with the economic manipulation by corrupted political leaders and American oil companies as in the case of NAIKO's compensation, this emerges as eyewash to foreground the US as holding the flag of justice.

Conclusion

Bhabha's concepts like hybridity, mimicry, sly civility, the pedagogical, the performative, and others provide certain tools for cultural negotiations and self-representation within a fast-evolving world. In this evolution and "flattening" of the world, however, all minoritarians are not equally capable of making the best use of tools and tactics offered by Bhabha. The article has shown that these "weapons of the weak" favor certain relatively privileged minoritarians at the expense of abandoning the "bottom billion" and the most impoverished people from the global South.⁵⁹ Social theories like the one of hybridity must be evaluated across multiples sites of contestations. The present article has thus examined the transnational cultural, literary, economic exchanges and others and finds that Bhabha's theory of hybridity aligns with the conservatives forces with a façade of progress.

Interestingly, Bhabha himself has acknowledged that his notion of hybridity has been misused by neoliberal multiculturalists.⁶⁰ But I have argued that such an acknowledgement is not enough since his hybridity with its multiple tools and tactics has intrinsically been disempowering for the minoritarians from the very beginning. As social critics, we are left with this: either Bhabha must radically revise these notions, or we keep rejecting them.

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Reflections on Vivid Vagabondage: Ambrym

Thomas Dick
SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY

On a Saturday afternoon, in mid-May, during a mad and chaotic transit in Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila, I relieved myself of a large container full of carvings, for sale at the Alliance Francaise, on behalf of an artist from Vao. I was also reunited with my adopted family who had flown down from Santo earlier in the day. As usual, the airport was bubbling with transparent emotion and drama. People arriving, people leaving, hugs and longing looks, tired and weary travelers, excited tourists, and old and new friends—all creating eddies of emotion which draw some in and thrust others out. After Malekula's understated yet profound peace, the transit experience in the capital is overwhelming.

A last light rain fell as Air Vanuatu's "Twin Otter" conducted us from Bauerfield airport to Craig Cove airport on the island of Ambrym, via Lamén Bay. As I looked out the window at the aquamarine garden of the Shepherds Islands, the volcanic quintessence of Lopevi, and the landing strip of Lamén Bay, which evokes similar seaside airstrips such as Cairns and Gibraltar, I noticed a cargo ship, the MV Sarafenua—a tiny speck—making its meandering and copra-stenched way to Sesivi.

On landing in Craig Cove airport, my journey traded in its independence for a rich and lively interdependence. Driving through Craig Cove and Baiap to Sesivi, the site of the Sandroing Festival (Sand Drawing Festival), it is impossible not to notice the fundamental differences of life on an active volcano. The black volcanic rocks are scathing and sharp. The bush is less dense. There are fewer big old trees. The ground seems younger. There is practically no mud as the rain seeps straight through the porous ash. Underfoot the ash performs microscopic reflexology on one's feet. The feeling of the soft sandy ash (or is it ashy sand?) between one's toes is a relieving and engaging sensation—it feels like the land itself is massaging itself into one's feet. This was a joyful delight after the continuous deluge that made a quagmire of Sarakata's streets in Santo and was the source of the mellifluous squish of Malekula's mud.

Marveling at the newness, I wondered about my friends from Malekula and whether they had found some fuel, and a truck to make their way down to Lamap, and whether or not the river had sufficiently diminished to allow safe passage. Safe passage. This is an interesting term used extremely loosely in this part of the world.

Our hosts lead us around the village of Sesivi. We heard the arrival of the MV Sarafenua, which included in its cargo the delegation of people from the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VKS) in Port Vila. We wandered over to the top of the steep and craggy black stone staircase that leads down to the pasis (passage) where the ships load and unload their cargo. The VKS delegation disembarked amidst a babble

of excitement and relief. There was much mumbling about the smell of copra and the meandering course that the ship takes to service as many parts of the country as possible, but also much gladness at being on land and meeting old friends.

The group set about finding its first shell of kava on Ambrym. An adoptive cousin (abu or tu—in West Ambrym, the children of your mother's brothers, or your father's sisters, are the parents of your potential husband or wife) invited us to the village for a bucket-sized shell. As I turned my head against the setting sun and washed away the circuitous day with the mysterious alchemies of the peppery drink, inexplicably the feeling of having arrived home overwhelmed me. Now, back in Port Vila, remembering the feeling on the island, comparing it to the feeling of being in town, being in Santo, Malekula, or Australia, I find the concept of home disturbingly nebulous—and comfortably accessible at the same time. I was recently introduced to the poetry of Matsuo Basho, and the following lines speak to the paradox of home:

“The moon and sun are eternal travelers. Even the years wander on. A lifetime adrift in a boat, or in old age leading a tired horse into the years, every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home.”

It was not until Tuesday that the last of the contingent from Malekula arrived in Sesivi. When I finally found them and asked about the journey I listened incredulously to their story. I was reminded of something that a friend in Malekula said before I left Lakatoro. “We can plan everything to the last detail but at the end of the day *neja i toktok*”—nature has the final say. Now, sitting in the sunshine and comfort of the capital, I think back to the journey that the people from Malekula made and I am overcome with sympathy. Apart from the canoe, there was nothing “safe” about the journey at all.

There were three trips across the sea from Lamap to Sesivi. The first one was the traditional outrigger canoe that sailed with five or six people. It arrived without incident or ceremony on Saturday morning after a journey of about six hours. The sight of a dugout, outrigger canoe, under full sail is one of the most fantastic and evocative sights that Vanuatu has to offer. I remember the first time I went to North Malekula: Atchin and Vao; I was utterly astounded at the sight of flotillas of canoes—at first I assumed it was some kind of race or festival—coursing between the islands, conducting people from their homes to their gardens.

Back on Sesivi, the first speedboat from Lamap arrived after the opening ceremony of the festival. The exhausted, cold and wet passengers had faced an overloaded speedboat, an increasingly rough sea, and a powerful wind. The harrowing journey was marginally ameliorated by the skill of the driver. After two hours, they had reached the halfway point across the sea when the engine failed. No amount of coaxing and swearing could start it again. Passengers started bailing out the sea water which was licking at them hungrily, while the driver started paddling. No life jackets, no flares, no other way forward than to paddle against the wind and current. The driver paddled and ruddered his way up and down and across the swells, masterfully manoeuvring the boat towards Ambrym, with support from another passenger on the bow.

After five hours of paddling they arrived at Sesivi. Word was sent back to Lamap that the boat would not be returning that day. The delegates who were stranded in Lamap (there were still 18 of them expecting the boat to return for them) were forced to find accommodation, food and warmth as best they could and wait for other arrangements to be made.

The following day, another boat made the crossing with the remaining delegates. This time it was loaded with two bags of kava, a slaughtered bullock, a replacement engine for the first boat, and 18 passengers. The wind was blowing the sea into a frenzy of white-capped waves. Benbow's volcanic gas arrowed directly towards Lamap, showing the force and direction of the headwind they faced. Passengers bailed out water for the entire six-hour journey. Eventually, they arrived.

I listened to this story disbelievingly. I thought again of the term “safe passage.” I wondered at the

courage and fortitude of human beings. I wondered at the nature of these festivals and whether or not there is a better, more appropriate format. Perhaps the national sand drawing event could be decentralised? Would the same effect be achieved if all of the communities in Vanuatu were encouraged to engage in a simultaneous celebration of sand drawing? Communities could be invited to send delegations to other communities by canoe, reviving and celebrating traditional trade routes and cultural links (Lamap to Sesivi; Ulei to Paama; North Ambrym to Vao; etc)? As I looked around at the food, the people, and the activities, I was struck by the thought that the current format seems to promote dependence on fossil fuels, imported staple foods, and the compulsive pornography-of-otherness that the snap-happy, red-faced, tourists and bossy film crews seem to love.

I turn my gaze inwards, and question my own motives—what is my pornography? Do I really love this place? Or do I merely love its “otherness”?

I turn away from the tourists who are clearly enjoying the *kastom* dancing in the middle of the football field. I cannot help feeling a little strange about this dance. It was introduced as a “circumcision dance.” But no one has been circumcised. The dance is deeply moving and powerful. The body art and masks are indescribable. But it still seems out of place. I wonder about this “intangible cultural heritage,” this *kastom*. I wonder if there is not a *kastom* dance for arriving at Sesivi to do some sand drawings, instead of for circumcision. If someone invented a new one would it be considered *kastom*?

As reported by Dr. Kim Selling, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Museums’ Association, “cultural heritage cannot be safeguarded as an unchanging, static thing, but as a living, ever-evolving and changing way of relating to and expressing a people’s response to their environment.” The people of Sesivi, in fact all the people of Oceania have been crisscrossing the oceans and islands for thousands of years. Myself and all the other visitors to the festival are just the latest in a long history of coming and going that has helped to shape the dynamic cultures of the region in ways that I suspect, the people of Sesivi are far more comfortable with than I am.

I thought about my connection to this place and this feeling of “home.” I thought about Vanuatu as a “living” culture. I thought about how confronting and welcoming it is. I asked myself a question that I have been asked many times: “Why do I love Vanuatu?” and, perhaps for the first time, I had a clear sense of what the answer is for me. I thought about some of the things that are confronting to the undeniable privilege of my upbringing as a middle-class, suburban, white, male: the profoundly different conception of personal space and privacy; the relational construction of identity (versus my individualistic sense of “self”); the linguistic fluidity and expertise—I felt ashamed by my monolingual upbringing; and the imperative to cultivate or catch food. What makes these things so confronting here—when growing up, why was I not confronted by these things? What effect do I have, myself, on these things? What part does “*kastom*” play? Is the cultural heritage of Vanuatu a more or less “living” thing than that of Australia? or Thailand? or West Papua? What is “*kastom*,” anyway? And do I have the right to even use the word? One of the most important lessons I learnt from living in Vanuatu was the importance of situating oneself in ways that respond to issues around power and privilege that underpin these questions.

I thought about the concept of liminality, meaning the condition of being on a threshold or at the beginning of a process. This term is often reserved for transitional stages in life, but perhaps it can also describe a perpetual state of things—not necessarily a desirable one. How does this concept apply to the cultural heritage of Vanuatu? Is Vanuatu (in) a liminal state?

We are all, to some degree, liminal. We are all travelers. In ancient and medieval philosophy, “quintessence” or the “fifth element” (after earth, air, fire, and water) is a concept which describes the interconnectedness of all things. Heavenly bodies were said to be made of it and it was the fundamental essence of things on Earth. Like the moon and Pleiades, we are a negotiated rhythmic patterning looping elliptically through space. Also we are traveling through the temporal microcosm of this planet – exploring

new places, cultures, languages. We all consist of, and subsist on, this same quintessence or stardust, the same principle of interconnectedness. It is even present in the dark unknowable spaces between the stories, between the dreams.

Perhaps in this sense, from this perspective, the garden can be framed as the quintessence of *kastom*: the practical connection between people and the land and the sea, the source of nourishment and security, both fed by and feeding, reflexively forming, informing and being formed?

My journey: my home: the tenuous and fragile dreamscapes of sand drawings and stories; villages and gardens; other people's bookshelves and photographs; amniotic hot springs and the malarial chill of tropical evenings; rivers and quagmires. A vivid vagabondage through the dark space of my own mind where I found pleasure in: the way the sun looked like the moon through the volcanic gas (approximately 20% of all the volcanic gas on the planet comes from Ambrym!); the congruence of nature and culture in the unfurling fern; story as currency; and the fact that even with a 15 horsepower engine I move slower than dolphins through the water. These are the fleeting fragments of my journey as a home—as a fleeting, ephemeral, artform itself.

A Conversation with Mahmood Mamdani

CATHERINE D. GOOCH & ASHLEY RUDERMAN
DISCLOSURE EDITORS, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Dr. Mahmood Mamdani addressed the Committee on Social Theory last October as the 2015 Distinguished Speaker. His lecture, “Political Violence and Political Justice: A Critique of Criminal Justice as Accountability” introduced justice as *disClosure*’s subsequent theme. Dr. Mamdani is director of the Makerere Institute of Social Research at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, Herbert Lehman Professor of Government, and professor of Anthropology, Political Science, and African Studies at Columbia University. He is author of several books, including *Scholars in the Marketplace: The Dilemmas of Neoliberal Reform at Makerere University, 1989-2005* (Codesria, 2007). We sat down with Dr. Mamdani to get a transnational perspective on neoliberal economics in education.

***disClosure* Editors:** Your book, *Scholars in the Marketplace*, discusses the impacts of neoliberalism on higher education, particularly at Makerere University in Uganda. Though you focus on that university, it is clear that this type of neoliberal reform could impact any public university, particularly those that exist in a very market driven or capitalistic environment. Could you talk a little bit about how you see this impact in today’s public universities, especially considering the continuous global expansion of neoliberalism? Has it evolved or increased, and if so, what are the implications of this? We’re interested in your take on this issue, especially since you get to see university systems develop in so many different places.

Mahmood Mamdani: Sure. The U.S. had a great public university system. I think the shining example was the University of California, which is falling apart now. The idea behind the University of California system was that any kid could join the system given that the system had multiple entry points, from a community college to core colleges in the system. Theoretically, this kid had the possibility of moving from the community college right into Berkeley or UCLA or Irvine. Lack of funds, or inadequate preparation in high school would not be compelling factors. Since the whole system was knit together, one had the possibility of moving from the least to the best resourced unit.

There have also been other experiments like after the end of apartheid in South Africa. The University of Western Cape declared an open admissions policy, they said anybody who had passed Matric, which is their exam at the end of high school—just passed it, whatever the grade—that this person could join UWC. Years later, they carried out a survey. The survey showed that there was no connection between the grades with which students came in and the grades with which they went out. It raised

questions about entrance exams and what they measure. Are they measuring capacity? Ability? Merit? Or are they measuring privilege and opportunity? At Makerere University, for years now, we've had an affirmative action program for women students. The entry requirement for women applying to the university is lower than that for male students. Recently, there was a survey of women who came in at a lower curve point, and how they did at the University, and again, the same results appeared: they didn't necessarily do worse than those who had come in with higher grades. All of this raises questions.

The neoliberal influence in education begins in higher education. It begins with the World Bank sponsoring a whole series of studies, emphasizing one conclusion regarding the profitability of investment. The Bank measured the profitability of investment by comparing the amount of money it takes to graduate a primary school kid as opposed to a secondary school kid or a university graduate. Then they concluded the obvious, that it takes more money to graduate a university student, less to graduate a secondary school student, and even less to graduate a primary school student. On the basis of that, they claimed that higher education is a luxury, and public funds should be moved from tertiary to primary education. The World Bank marshaled the language of democracy to make this argument. This happened in Uganda starting in the late 1980s. This is the background to what I was writing about.

The second thing the World Bank did, was to say that university courses must be market responsive. So it shut down the departments that were not getting enough people, philosophy, for example. This kind of logic has guided so-called reforms in many parts of the Western world, Britain for example. And, I think to great damage to the education system. Everybody is assessed on the basis of profitability and productivity as per unit output. In Uganda, in the case of Makerere University, this experience destroyed the university as a research institution because the Bank argued that state funding for universities should be cut down. At the same time, the numbers enrolled should be increased exponentially by admitting more private fee paying students. Then they went to the faculty, and said, "Look, with the fee paying students, 80 percent of fees would come to the department where the student registers, or the faculty where the student registers, and you can decide what you want to do with these fees. For example, you can decide to double your salary. If you teach the same courses in the evening that you are teaching in the daytime, your salary will double but not your work." And indeed that's what happened because salaries were so low. The faculty decided to double and then triple or quadruple the intake of students, just to make ends meet, ended up teaching 80 hours a week, you know, like a high school, with hardly any research time.

A whole series of developments set in motion. The size of the university went up. I think by the end of the 1980s the student population was about 6,000, and rose to about 48,000 or 50,000. At the same time, classroom space had increased maybe around 5%. So you'd have "off room" classrooms. You'd have students sitting in windows that were open, students sitting on windowsills. From there, too, you got students registered for four courses, only to find that two of their courses were meeting at the same time. So this student agrees with a friend that she will attend one course, the friend will attend the other course, and they will exchange notes. That, then, led to a growing demand for teachers to circulate printed notes, and spoon-feed the students. So teaching standards and learning standards were lowered. The outcome has been tragic. There were no tutorials. At some point, they just stopped all tutorials because they didn't have the staff to do tutorials with exploding student numbers. The last step was to begin hiring teaching staff on a temporary basis, so as to go around the formal appointment procedures with their required standards. So you have staff that are appointed on a semester basis, but have been there for six or so years.

Sadly, this has happened in the US with adjuncts. You could hire somebody temporarily, for a semester, and yet that person could teach for ten years because they are renewed every semester and are paid a quarter of what people on regular appointment get. There is no evaluation, except by the head of

the department. There is no uniform standard, and hiring is always a response to a need, an emergency where they say, “Okay, we don’t have anybody else, let’s just get this person for now.” The standard is lowered to meet that need. And then, this can always be rationalized after the fact as financially sound because it doesn’t cost that much. So that is the system that is currently going around. Everybody knows that the student cannot pay for university education. In no university in the world is the cost met by fees. So, either you have private endowments or you have state funding, one of the two has to be there. But you have to have a way of meeting the shortfall.

Even at Makerere, we understood that though students were paying fees, there was always a deficit. Ironically, as the number of fee-paying students increased, the deficit increased. So the increase in student numbers created a financial problem, rather than solving it.

disClosure Editors: Thank you for speaking to that. No doubt, online education factors into this now more than ever. So many adjuncts take online courses because they’re working at multiple places, as online courses are easier for them to manage. Your book was fascinating and we think your clear explanation of the multiple layers of these economic issues is helpful to our understanding of it.

Cosmopolitanism, Migration, and Transnationalism: An Interview with Nina Glick Schiller

Lauren Copeland, Agata Grzelczak, and Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran
DISCLOSURE COLLECTIVE, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Dr. Nina Glick Schiller was founding director of the Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Culture and is Professor Emeritus at the University of Manchester and the University of New Hampshire. Dr. Glick Schiller has published more than ninety articles and nine books on migration, transnational processes and social relations, diasporic connections, and long-distance nationalism. She has also conducted research in Haiti, the US, the UK, and Germany and worked with migrants from all around the world. Her recent book, *Whose Cosmopolitanism?: Critical Perspectives, Relationalities, and Discontents*, co-edited with Andrew Irving, offers a critical look at the concept of cosmopolitanism.

disClosure Collective (DC): So, first, I would like to say your work on *Nations Unbound* was so important in defining and examining transnationalism and has continued to be incredibly influential in migration studies. Were you surprised by the great influence of your work? And can you speak a little bit about your own understanding of transnationalism and how that's changed over time?

Nina Glick Schiller (NGS): Okay, well, it was not just my book. Both *Nations Unbound* and the proceeding edited book, *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration*, were co-authored by Linda Basch and Cristina Szanton Blanc, and so the work on transnationalism was very much a collective and collaborative project. And I prefer to work collectively and collaboratively because I think that creates a much richer scholarship. And there is a sort of a triangulation when people with different kinds of life experiences and different kinds of social histories come together and see things together. Then, in a mutual way, you feel that you've got something. You've got some kind of analysis that holds up reflecting various different life experiences.

When we began working on developing a transnational migration paradigm, which was in the 1980s, actually, we knew that this was very important. We had a sense that it was urgent, that we were setting out a new direction for migration studies and that we had to organize a way to be heard. From the beginning we were convinced that we had something to say. We didn't think it was original in a sense that other people have never said this before. We knew that we were building on existing scholarship, but the previous scholarship hadn't been brought together as a challenge to migration studies. So the research was there, the data was there, some of the key concepts were there, but they weren't put together in an alternative research paradigm that challenged both assimilationism and the tendency to focus solely

on immigrant identities rather than multiple simultaneous nation-state building processes. Instead, we suggested really examining the way people lived their lives in two or more nation-states at the same time.

DC: Has your understanding changed?

NGS: Changed? Well, we were—well, let me go back to the question: “Were we surprised?” So, we weren’t surprised that the framework we offered resonated with many people, because we knew that many people were living or studying transnational lives but lacked a way of describing and analyzing these lives. So our analytical framework resonated both with people with migrant backgrounds and also with migration scholars who had data about people living their lives across borders but didn’t have the way to express it. But we were concerned that our terminology would be taken up by nation-states and used as a new way to exploit immigrants. And that happened also and we weren’t surprised, but we were concerned that migrant-sending countries increasingly were seeing immigrants as a new form of cash flow and a way of funding national economies.

However, what has surprised me over the last twenty or so years since the publication of *Nations Unbound* is the way that the global perspective of the book was ignored. The descriptive aspects of the book looked at the way people build familial ties transnationally, the way people build political ties, the way people build religious ties, the way people build social, economic, and cultural ties. That was taken up. And some scholars also began to describe simultaneity, which was in the book. The concept of simultaneity highlights that not only do people live across borders, but that they also become part of the nation-state in which they live. However, what was generally ignored in our work was the idea that we need a framework that can *explain* why people do this: why they migrate, why they settle, why they maintain ties, and how that relates to what was happening in the sending countries and the receiving countries in terms of how they are located within the global political economy.

Nations Unbound presented a framework that can put it all together and this was ignored, increasingly ignored. People were interested in what we said about human agency and not what we said about structure. For us structure and agency come together; you have to look at both. Of course you can’t just have a structural analysis without understanding what people do in the face of the conditions and opportunities and barriers that they face and how they struggle against and change structural conditions. But you can’t leave out the structural conditions. Structure and agency are mutually constituting and this was all in *Nations Unbound*, which examined globe-spanning institutions of unequal power.

And the other thing that surprised me, and I felt that I have to reiterate, is that we talked about the role of nation-states by focusing on nation-state building processes. Yet, our book was cited over and over again as if the *Nations Unbound* announced the end of nation-states, the end of nationalism. We were cited as if we said there was now a global flow of people and goods that marks the demise of the nation-state. Soon after the publication of *Nations Unbound* some authors did tend to celebrate flows of people, ideas, capital, and objects. However, we were saying something different about nation-states. We were looking at continuing national structures and borders and border regimes. We said that sending states began to see themselves as deterritorialized because they continued to claim their citizens all around wherever they settle. Meanwhile, the nation-states that were receiving migrants also remained important. They played a role in trying to tame this transnational behavior. For example, in the US we noted that the dominant narrative was “well it’s all fine that you have other flags, as long as the American flag is on top of your flag pole.” A police official once told me that directly when I interviewed him. So, the officials of both sending and receiving states were responding to the transnational networks of migrants through state discourses and narratives, and *Nations Unbound* looked at the way they did this.

In the past twenty years, I have found it necessary to reiterate over and over again that we need a

global perspective on migration. I've written a number of articles on that and on the global perspective on migration and development. More recently I've tried to stress that a global perspective must pay attention to the changing historical conjuncture that migrants face as they try to live their lives across borders. *Nations Unbound* described conditions that existed in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet people continue to study transnational migration as if the world hasn't changed—as if people can, in fact, live simultaneously in two or more places. But border regimes are changing, citizenship rights are being attenuated, and the possibility of gaining permanent residence, and the possibility of obtaining citizenship in another country is being attenuated. Currently it has become much more difficult to settle or to move or to legally achieve family reunion. You see this restriction on for family reunion taking place in Europe, for example. These changed conditions mean that the basic assumptions that we made about the way migrants can hedge their bets and live in two or more places and maintain home ties while they settle has to be rethought. You can't talk about transnational migration without examining both the conditions that make it necessary and the national and border policies that facilitate it or restrict it. We were writing at the time when the Mexican immigrants could come without documents and then, sort of, wade across the Rio Grande, and then go back and forth. They faced hassle, but not a wall. They were not risking their lives every time and not paying thousands and thousands of dollars to get to come to the United States. And the process of migration is becoming ever more expensive and dangerous for many people. The consequences are vast family indebtedness, the involvement of criminal gangs, and the growth of a whole migration industry of surveillance, detention, and fees; all this has greatly increased the difficulty of movement, even as conditions at home, including war and economic crisis, make it increasingly difficult for people to continue to live where they are.

So, we have to examine the whole way we look at migrancy and also update a global perspective on migration in light of the current conditions, the current conjuncture, and what that means for how we understand both mobility and stasis. So that perhaps answers your question about whether my understanding of transnational migration has changed.

DC: You have focused recently on issues of cosmopolitanism and worked to bring new meaning to the term. Why and how has your focus shifted towards issues of cosmopolitanism? Can you explain some of your evolution as a scholar?

NGS: I wouldn't exactly say my work or my focus has shifted. I try to encompass my reading of cosmopolitan sociability within the global perspective I've been developing and my understanding of how migrants live their lives by settling and maintaining various forms of transnational ties and responding to the barriers and racialization they face in both their mobility and settlement. My work on the processes of settlement responds to the fact that emplacement is now taking place within a growing anti-immigrant political movement and moment that claims that the problem with "these people" is that they won't learn our ways. That's what the politicians keep saying in both the US and Europe, using somewhat different terms in different places, too. The narrative claims that "the problem with these people is they just keep their culture and they keep their language." In the US, people who proudly identify as the descendants of immigrants claim that immigrants used to assimilate but now these people just keep to themselves and their culture, and so the new immigrants are threatening our social fabric. And, any evidence of transnational ties is taken as evidence that people aren't settling.

So, in response, I needed a set of concepts to look more closely at the process of how people settle, and with whom they actually build social ties, and who gets involved in transnational networks. And I felt that there was some way that we could use the term *cosmopolitanism* to speak about what happens on the ground as migrants settle, because I found over and over again is not that people hang out with people

who are like them because they share an ethnicity. Rather, migrants socialize with people who are like them in all kinds of ways and these ways may have nothing to do with their national background. They make ties with people because they share the social position of parents who face the common challenge of raising children, or because they are neighbors or they're co-workers or they're professionals, or they have some kind of interest together. Perhaps they share an interest in video games, or they like the same films. There are all kinds of ways in which people connect to other people that are not seen by politicians and many social scientists because they assume that immigrants only hang out with people who share their background.

Now the standing definition, for many people, of cosmopolitanism has been openness to the *other*, tolerance of the *other*. That creates a uniform community of the "we," the national we, in the sense of a homogeneous, racialized "we" like "we white folks," "we white folks in the UK," "we white folks in the US", or something like that. The uniform "we" is then thought to be cosmopolitan when this "we" has an appreciation for a diverse other such as migrants. Diversity in this reading of cosmopolitanism is a positive good because it makes life more interesting and more variable.

But I thought we could challenge the way the term "cosmopolitanism" has come to be used, just as we had challenged the way migration was understood. We could challenge settlement. Okay? And we could say, actually, people who were considered native and those who were considered immigrants form ties based on domains of commonality that they come to share in their daily interaction. And the reason we don't talk about this is nobody looks and we need a term to highlight these domains of commonality—and I've called it *cosmopolitan sociability*. And of course when people form such social bonds they aren't made on the basis of feeling that they have everything in common, but only a particular domain of commonality. Of course, no one, whether kin or lover, ever forms a fully encompassing social bond. However, acting on domains of commonality is one of the ways that people of migrant and non-migrant backgrounds connect to each other. So that's what I tried to do with the concept of cosmopolitanism within debates about migrant emplacement.

Furthermore, I began to realize that we can extend the concept of simultaneity to make it clear that not only do migrants both form ties of cosmopolitan sociability that are part of their emplacement within a new locality, but they also maintain their family networks, as well as various ties across borders, which may or may not be organized by ethnicity. And, through migrants' transnational ties, people who are not of migrant background but have established forms of cosmopolitan sociability with migrants also become part of transnational networks. So, migrants have all kinds of transnational ties and they have all kinds of local ties, simultaneously. Migrants do not live with networks defined by national origins or ethno-religious background either in their new home or transnationally.

DC: Is the concept of cosmopolitanism applicable to all migrant communities?

NGS: Well, I don't use the word "migrant community" and I am not applying it to all migrants. The whole trajectory of my analysis is against assuming that migrants form communities. Whether migrants form a "community" and if and when they use the term "community" is a research question. My response to your question also reflects my own experience with immigrants from Haiti. I began working with immigrants from Haiti when, during the early days of migrant settlement, many people from Haiti didn't want to know each other because they were divided by class and they were divided by politics. So when they met each other and they realized that the other person was also of Haitian background, they would check out the family background of this person. Is this someone I want to know, you know, or not. And so there was certainly not a sense of a community. I don't think it was unique to Haitians. It wasn't just them. As you know, people who migrate from the same country have regional, political, religious, and

class divisions.

Then, the anti-poverty programs of the 1970s provided Haitian immigrants with money to form organizations using the word *community* and *Haitian community centers*, okay? And then those people who received the funding that enabled them to provide immigrant services adopted these terms. I worked closely with them and we would speak in the name of “the Haitian community.” We would go to meetings and say “The Haitian community wants this; the Haitian community wants that”, and were trying to get resources for English language education and job training to Haitian immigrants. To do this we would imagine and project the narrative of community.

Most Haitian immigrants in New York City knew nothing about this. When Haitians were labeled as “people with AIDS” in the 1980s and then there was a huge outpouring of resistance to this labeling on the part of Haitians and tens of thousands of the people came into the street, they claimed to speak as a Haitian community. At that moment, and in the sense that the term became embodied and visual, there was a Haitian community, at least at that time, in relationship to those issues. But, if you just assume that people are a community, you can’t see the processes and the structural forces that contribute to this identity, okay? So that’s one thing.

And if you define your unit of study and analysis as community, you can’t see cosmopolitan sociability. In terms of cosmopolitanism, I’m saying that people of migrant backgrounds form ties with each other based on some kinds of domains of mutuality, of commonality. Some of these ties are affective and there is an emotional aspect to cosmopolitan sociability. At the same time, there is a substantive aspect to cosmopolitan sociability in terms of people coming together in relationship to things they are interested in and that they share. These common interests or activities don’t tie them totally together and for all times. However, people do often come together around interests or perspectives or activities they share. And migrants do this not just with other migrants. They do this with non-migrants, too. We can’t just assume that just because you come from the same country or the same ethno-religious group, you like each other, you think that you share the same culture, or that you bond with each other and form a community. When a social bond is actually formed, whatever the background of those who come together, we could call that *cosmopolitan sociability*.

DC: Thank you. And you said that movement doesn’t necessarily create cosmopolitanism, but what about the individuals who never move? How can these individuals be considered cosmopolitan? Do they need to know someone who has moved or migrated?

NGS: No, I think it’s a false equation to link mobility to this openness to domains of commonality, to openness to not “the other” but other people. I think this is part of the human capacity that we tend not to study. It doesn’t make sense to only focus on mobility. Some people move, learn new things, meet new people, and these experiences do foster openness. However, other people move, and they’re traumatized and they never come out of this trauma. And they don’t want to go any place except exactly what they know. A classic case in my own family history was an in-law who migrated from Russia, learned just the trolley routes in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania to specific places she needed to go. She wouldn’t go any place else but complete her errands and come back home, you know. So, people are different, and part of our problem is that we just categorize people in terms of migrant/non-migrant.

We use the national border as some kind of division between people’s behavior. This is, I think, extremely suspect. Sometimes it matters because there are border regimes that brand difference and make people behave in different ways depending on their legal status. If you’re undocumented, you have to hide more, so that will restrict you in particular ways. But to assume that a migrant experience is always the relevant explanation—whether you are claiming it makes cosmopolitans or communitarians—is just

bad social science. So if you're living in a place and you've never moved and you've never gone anywhere, and you read or you watch television and you watch films, and that gives you a sense of bonding with other people, then you may develop your cosmopolitan sensibilities without ever moving. And then when you meet people who are classified as different from you in some way, may not be ethnically—it may be you're Catholic and they're Protestant, you know, and suddenly you find the capacity to see some kind of shared human experience that otherwise you wouldn't have had because of your upbringing—could be the bonding that I call cosmopolitan sociability.

DC: Much of your work challenges binary thinking in relation to culture, nationalism, and identity. For instance, you discuss the dichotomy of self and the stranger. Why has this sort of thinking been such an issue in the social sciences? How is your understanding of cosmopolitanism helpful in challenging this problem?

NGS: Yes, I ask myself that all the time. Why the persistence of this binary? It is so strong. It came through some of the discussion that we just had. We are taught to just automatically assume migrant community/non-migrant or movement/non-movement, and we are encouraged to think in terms of binaries. Now, there are different trains of thought, different kinds of theories about this. I mean, the structuralists, including several variants of structuralist theory from those of Lévi-Strauss, for example, and those that base themselves on linguistics, and some readings of brain science, say this is hard-wired. We humans learned to think and learn languages in terms of contrast, so, of course, we learn to think in binaries. I don't think that. I think that's an imposition of a western category on top of the brain science or on top of a reading of Amazonian myths. I think it works the other way around. I think actually people have a capacity for multiplicities, and, if you really do a linguistic analysis, all phonemic contrasts are not binary. Computers may work in terms of positive and negative charges of electricity.

Humans seem in different cultural traditions or places to have concepts of simultaneity and multiplicity that don't seem to have developed within modernist Western social theory. You can interpret concepts of Ying and Yang as a binary or you speak in terms of interdependence and relationality, which is very different from a contrast. So, this is a topic of ongoing debate. But I do think in Western social science there has been that an assumption that binaries can be traced to the origins of society. This assumption has been accompanied by a sort of a just-so story, a narrative of origins. A mythic past is projected which begins with people living in closed communities where they say all those outside their communal boundaries are "the stranger." So the binaries of self/other and community/the stranger have been built into Western social science and political science, sociology, and some people read anthropology that way. But if you go and you actually look, even at the anthropological works that are cited to prove that pre-industrial society was constituted around bounded community, you find something different. People may have lived in villages and in some cases may have claimed that their neighbors were cannibals, but they also intermarried with the neighbors. Moreover, the boundary between the lands of the village and its neighbors or the dividing line between one culture and another was often very flexible and mobile.

DC: How do we use cosmopolitanism to understand the establishment of Hindu temples in major urban cities throughout the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia by migrant communities? Do Hindu temples indicate a preservation of "Hindu religious identity" in a foreign land? How might the concept of cosmopolitanism be applied to this context to understand how migrants maintain a particular identity?

NGS: Well, I think that that kind of narrative needs to be considered in relationship to historical and current research and investigation, because Hindu temples in India and the concept of Hinduism, as

you know, have changed over time. And, you know, the concept of Hinduism as a unified religion was a development of British colonialism. There is an important body of scholarship that documents this change and traces how the British officials and intellectuals categorized and fixed religious boundaries in India that previously were much more fluid. In the villages there was—and in some places still is—a great deal of local multiplicities of religious practices drawing from what we now identify as different religions at the time that the British arrived. Over time the British created a concept of Hinduism, with a capital “H”, as compared to Islam with a capital “I,” but actually that’s not what people practiced, and, in some ways, it’s not what people still practice. So on the ground you have this multiplicity.

Then, when people migrate, religions always change and, depending on where they migrate, they change in different ways. So, to read what you find in London as Hinduism is to ignore the ways in which practices and beliefs have actually changed. Because you have people who come from different parts of India with different traditions, and then they come to London and they adopt a new set of practices established by a particular temple as Hinduism or establish a new temple. There’s variations; what is practiced and believed in London may not be what’s on the ground in India, and there is variation within London. So we can’t have this category “Hindu temple,” or “Hindu community”, if we look on the ground. Sometimes there is a continuity of a particular group, kin-based, caste-based group, that is now continuing and calling itself the Hindu community. In other cases, people from different kinds of more regional traditions come together at the same temple, and in that situation there are people from different traditions who would never have met otherwise.

In such cases, there is bonding, a form of openness to commonality—in that sense a form of cosmopolitan openness to commonality—that these migrants wouldn’t have experienced back home. In such cases, migration can lead to a form of openness. But, as compared to other kinds of openness, religious practitioners may at the same time draw a line between those categorized as believers and all others. However, although the degree to which practitioners are comfortable with a multiplicity of beliefs varies in different places and periods of time, not all forms and instances of religious belief impose binaries. So, that’s how I approach that.

DC: So, the book *Whose Cosmopolitanism* has a lot of different definitions of cosmopolitanism, and some are a little bit problematic. I was wondering, how do some cities use cosmopolitanism as a marketing tool? What are some of the more problematic understandings of the concept? And what is the relationship between cosmopolitanism and capitalism?

NGS: Ahh, okay. A few small questions.

DC: Just a few.

NGS: Okay. So, let’s start with those people—not me—those people who define cosmopolitanism in terms of openness to the other. And let’s look at the task that faces city developers and local politicians who, in a very neoliberal world, find that they can no longer depend on national resources or public resources to build their city. Cities have always been, to a certain degree within Western capitalism, at least, in competition with each other. If you look at the world’s fairs, such as the Chicago Exposition held at the end of the nineteenth century, or other 19th century incredible expositions such as the one in Paris, you see city-based projects with national resonances organized with the goal of attracting investment in those cities. So competition between cities and city branding are not totally new. It’s just, for a number of years, especially in the 20th century, nation-states invested resources into urban public works, and there were city-based tax structures with public monies to build urban infrastructures such as the sewers,

water systems, mass transit, roadways, parks, and libraries, schools, and clinics.

Now, cities find themselves again more on their own without national support of adequate tax revenue to stimulate employment or to maintain or build infrastructure, so they have to attract private capital investment. And, to attract capital, they also have to convince investors that they have the workforce that will make the city a perfect place to invest in various kinds of “post-industrial” sectors including high-tech, knowledge, science, health, and tourism. So, cities work to brand themselves in order to attract investors. It’s almost as if urban developers are reading from the same playbook in trying to brand their city. They’re convinced that they need a certain kind of creative youthful workforce and that they need to have a certain kind of image to attract that work force.

People such as Richard Florida have gone around the world preaching that cities that successfully attract capital and regenerate after deindustrialization are those known to be creative. Such cities must attract a creative workforce, and this workforce is key to attracting investment and revitalizing a city. Therefore, the question becomes, “How do you attract these creative people?” The assumption also in the work of Florida and like-minded urbanists is that high-tech people are young, mobile and they like to consume culture difference. And they like diversity. They don’t want to live in a boring city where everybody is the same. They like restaurants and shops that offer food and goods from all over the world. They like cities that are a bit edgy. So it’s in light of this received wisdom that cities started to brand themselves as cosmopolitan, with the idea that this label announces that creative youth should “come here, you will get a taste of the other. We are the city that has the taste of the other.” This narrative was stronger before the crash in 2008, but now Florida has re-emerged and is revitalizing his narrative, and urban regeneration continues in both powerful cities such as New York, London, and Singapore and disempowered cities such as Detroit or Liverpool.

Now, there are all kinds of contradictions in branding a city as cosmopolitan and instituting tax and zoning policies that encourage gentrification and high-end housing. Because the more urban developers regenerate city centers and raise real estate prices and rents as they gentrify to attract “the creative class”, in Richard Florida’s words, the poorer people, racialized people, including many people of migrant background—those who create the ‘edgy’ diversity of the city—are pushed to the margins. They are pushed out of the industries, the jobs, and the shops they’ve developed. Of course, “migrant” is a category that includes multiple classes and levels of education and skill. As we know from sitting around this table, and everywhere these days, there are international students, professionals from all over the world, skilled workers, large and small business owners, as well as construction workers and a wide range of service workers of migrant background, and all of whom are needed to build the city. But the cosmopolitan city builders only cater to one sector of that population, and the cost of housing, food, transportation, education, and other necessities becomes more expensive for the low paid workforce and small business owners in the city, including those of migrant background.

DC: How might you respond to critical views of cosmopolitanism that link the concept to consumption, neoliberalism, and nationalism?

NGS: Well, this is part of what I was saying in the previous answer. It’s one variety of the use of the term. It ignores the way people actually build cities. Cities everywhere have always been built by migration—rural, urban migration, as well as migration across borders. Rural people are culturally different than people in the city. Countries have regional diversities of language and culture. So all these diversities, not just the diversities from other parts of the world, have always built the city. But this is ignored in an understanding of what cities are, and how people relate to each other, in the neoliberal version of cosmopolitanism marketing to a particular strata of high income, mobile people who are assumed to

consume the cultural difference of a so-called cosmopolitan city. The irony is that, if you do research with people considered to be the creative classes or you look at how these populations live, they are usually the least open in terms of their social relations. Those who consume in the city centers gentrified through neoliberal tax and housing policies live in gated areas. They're afraid of other parts of the city and other people. They only know people of their same class. They fill some of the stereotypes of the provincial even though they're mobile because they live in their own very sheltered world. Not all of them, but many of them. They live in a sort of an expat world—so they go from city to city, but they don't really form the social ties that less well-off migrants often form in terms of local life because less well-off migrants have to find whatever kinds of social ties they can in order to help themselves. Does that respond to your question?

DC: Yes.

NGS: And nationalism. That's an interesting question because cosmopolitanism is often seen as the opposite of the nationalism. Sometimes the term is linked to highly mobile professionals who are thought to have no local roots and no nation. Now, it's true about many capitalists. Capitalists have no loyalties in their efforts to maximize their profit. They invest and develop space and resources wherever they most benefit, regardless of its effect on the 'home' country of the capitalist or the corporate entity. In general, corporations and their investors seek the cheapest labor with the least restriction and the least taxes and the most benefits, period, bottom line. However, big corporations may benefit from nationalist rhetoric and fund extremely nationalist movements if these movements protect corporate profits, tax breaks, and their control of labor conditions, including institutional racism. In addition, there are profits to be made both in the arms industry and wars fueled by nationalist rhetoric.

If capitalists in their actions have no nation, what is the relationship to the ninety-nine percent of the people who are not major capitalists? These people are capable of a multiplicity of identities. They can be caught up in nationalist rhetoric and yet, at the same time, they constantly are subject to the disruptive nature of capitalist cycles of creation and destruction. The disruption leads to anger and fear and a search for answers. Yet most people have all kinds of ties and possible identities because they live in a world that is actually constantly refigured in ways that link the "here" and "there". They can have imaginaries or social ties that link them to elsewhere while people who travel can live in a very cocoon-like world—so that's one problem. And linked to that is the fact that, if people have multiple identities, they can have a rooted identity and an open identity at the same time and one doesn't necessarily negate the other. It can, but it doesn't necessarily.

I learned this when I was working with Georges Fouron, and it comes out in our book *George Woke Up Laughing*. I have always been skeptical—having grown up in the United States—of nationalism. By distinguishing between a national culture and those defined as culturally, racially, and religiously different, as well as legitimating wars of aggression, nationalism seemed to me a justification for and exploitation of people around the world. Yet Georges Fouron, who shared my political outlook in many ways, was a fervent Haitian nationalist. But when I went to Haiti and we interviewed very poor people, who were living in squatter settlements and who had almost nothing, I began to see a different side to nationalism in a country such as Haiti. The people who interviewed expressed their fervent sense of being Haitian and their nationalism. I realized that in an oppressed nation-state such as Haiti, where people are racialized and stereotyped in ways that are integral to the history of slavery and the continuing exploitation of the population and the whole country, an assertion of nationalism is a claim for racial equality. So, for poor people in Haiti, the Haitian flag stands for their past revolution against slavery where the Haitian people led the world in demanding equality. The flag tells the world "We're just as

good as everybody else.” That is what it means to be Haitian, to be part of a proud nation that has defied slavery, stood for the equality of all human beings and the message of the French Revolution, which proclaimed liberty, equality and fraternity.

So there can be a nationalism that speaks to the rest of the world. The other thing these people, these impoverished people, were saying to us is, we stand with oppressed people, everyone. The Haitian flag stands for all oppressed people, not to be on top of them, not to be better than them, but to stand for their struggle for social justice everywhere. This was articulated to George and me by people who had never gone to school and never studied the French Revolution. However, there was a strong oral tradition of revolutionary resistance that exists in Haiti, so that’s where nationalism and what I would call cosmopolitanism can come together.

Now, that’s what the Haitian flag means to poor Haitians—and not what it means to rich Haitians. The rich Haitians and the international capitalists to whom they are allied and by whom they are supported militarily and financially use nationalism as a way of staying in power and exploiting the majority of the people. However, today, in a historical conjuncture in which increasingly capitalists’ profits are being made by accumulation through dispossession in the former centers of capital and among people who have been racialized as the majority populations in Europe and the Americas, there may be a new basis of unity among the dispossessed. In this conjuncture, all nationalism becomes a barrier to forming movements based on a sense of a commonality, a common need to build a humane, just world.

DC: What kinds of projects are you working on now?

NGS: I’m working on a book about the relationship between migrants and disempowered cities or cities that don’t have a lot of wealth and power. In this book we note that most of our theorization about migration comes, or has come until very recently, from scholars’ studies in global cities. And that’s not the only place where migrants live. It’s not the only place where other people live, right? Here we are in Lexington, Kentucky. In the last ten or fifteen years there finally has been more research on migrants settling in the south of the US—that is, settling in what are considered non-global cities—although they are part of globe-spanning networks of differential power. But much of this research is not theorized. So now we have research beyond cities considered global, but it isn’t put together. For the past fifteen years we have been asking, what if we begin here and we say, how can we broaden our understanding of migrant settlement and transnational connection by understanding how migrants build cities that are not these globally powerful cities? So we’ve written about this in, actually, the past fifteen years. We’ve written a series of articles about this and edited a book, *Locating Migration*, but we’ve never been able to bring the different aspects of our research together in our own book. We’ve critiqued the idea of ethnic entrepreneur and we’ve showed how, in these cities, people of migrant background build businesses that cater to everybody and become part of the city economy. And we’ve looked at religion and we’ve seen how people of migrant background use religious networks to build ties to a city and the social fabric of the city. We’ve looked at Pentecostalism, particularly—how people have worked with people seen as native to the city or country to make claims that they speak in the name of Jesus. And, therefore, their vision is a claim to the land. They claim that newcomers belong to the city in which they are settling because the dividing line is not between foreigner or native but between those who are on the side of Jesus and those who are on the side of the devil. These kinds of religious narratives can become part of local politics and change the view of people toward migrants.

I’ve also looked at cosmopolitan sociability—how people actually build ties to local people, and how that kind of sociability is actually part of city making. Now we are trying to bring together the different aspects of our research that we have published as articles together and write a single book that

then challenges and develops the concept of displacement and emplacement. So the other thing that's going on in this book is to theorize the changing global conjuncture. We argue that in the current historical conjuncture there is a revitalization of the processes of capital accumulation through dispossession. We argue that contemporary accumulation through dispossession in the seemingly disparate disempowered cities we have studied—Manchester, New Hampshire in the US, Halle/Saale in eastern Germany, and the Turkish city of Mardin on the Turkish-Syrian border—tie together the migrants who settle there and the people who consider themselves native. Those considered native and migrant both face displacement in terms of not only physical mobility but also social mobility because of accumulation through dispossession. They have been displaced by the neoliberal processes of urban regeneration we have discussed above. When cities compete with each other and redevelop, there are large parts of the local populations who are losers. The glitzy city center development doesn't do anything for the life of most of the people, and the redevelopment really isn't necessarily a success. Public monies are borrowed to fuel private real estate development, taxes taken from public services to pay interest on regeneration loans, and the result is wealth for some and dispossession for many. People lose their pension, housing, benefits, and social in some places, and their country and future in other places. So, we want to see whether we can theorize these processes of dispossession, displacement, and struggles for emplacement and understand what's behind the processes of settlement and connection between migrants and non-migrants in disempowered cities. So that's the project.

DC: And who are you working with on that project?

NGS: Ayse Çağlar. She's a professor of anthropology at the University of Vienna. So she brings a different background and a different history. She's also been educated part in Montreal, part in Turkey, and part in Germany. So she has the sense of multiple emplacements, and we find it very helpful to think together. She's a wonderful scholar, you should check out her work.

DC: Thank you. Finally, we'd like to know what advice you have for us or beginning scholars, scholars who are just starting to engage in issues of transnationalism, migration, and cosmopolitanism.

NGS: I would say that it's very important to look at the changing conditions in the world and to theorize that. What I'm most concerned about, that's what I spoke about yesterday, and that's why I didn't want to offend people, but I used the term *dead ends*. I think that the kind of migration and transnational migration scholarship that's been going on produces interesting, valuable descriptions, but if the project is to really understand the world, much of the current scholarship doesn't take us there. And if the project is to have a scholarship that is part of the struggle for social justice, it definitely doesn't take us there because to do that we have to understand what's going on as it impacts us in the mutual constitution of the local, national, and global. We need a *multiscalar* analysis. So many students, especially in something like anthropology or, I would say, in literature say, "How can I do that? It's not my specialty, I don't study economics and I'm just here. I'm just here in Lexington, Kentucky. What can I do? What can I do about understanding the whole world?" But that's why I emphasize, the whole world is right here. Transnational connections change Lexington, change where we are, change what we see, influence the writings of novels and films, influence migrant life wherever we are—and we have to be able to understand the way in which we are part of globe-spanning networks of power to see what's happening in front of us. So by looking at how the global and the national and the local are constantly interacting in front of our eyes and within our daily life, we can speak to the current situation.

However, this also does take some comparative reading. I think the other thing that really bothers

me—it's a bigger problem in European education including the UK than in the US—is that people don't read comparatively. It doesn't mean you have to launch a whole comparative project. But you don't know what's unique about your research material unless you know about what other people have found. You need to know what your research question looks like in other people's research conducted in places and in other times. For example, people in migration studies are always claiming that some practice or identity process is unique to "their" group. And I think, my goodness, migrants from Poland in New York City did that a hundred years ago. Or migrants from India or China have done similar things when compared to Moroccans or Iranians or Haitians.

And that's one of the fascinating things about migration research. The challenge is to explore not just the differences but also the similarities. Why do people who come from different places in the world do such similar things? Why do so many migrants build transnational families, no matter what kind of family structure they have? You know, what is it in the social situation of migration and the challenges posed by the insecurities of capitalist economies and their racialized interfaces that lead migrants who are supposed to be so culturally diverse to certain kinds of similar responses? And then, given these similarities across time and space, what's different? Because the current conjuncture has its own challenges to people's attempts to migrate and live transnational lives. So we need this kind of comparative perspective. So I would urge students who are interested in engaging the literature in the transnational migration paradigm and ideas about cosmopolitanism to read historically and comparatively so they have some sense of the forces that define their own research question.

DC: That's very helpful. Thank you for meeting with us.

Meaning in Metaphor: An Interview with Otto Santa Ana

Sheryl Felecia Means, Anna Stone, and Jonathan Tinnin
DISCLOSURE COLLECTIVE, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Dr. Otto Santa Ana is Professor in the Cesar E. Chaves Department of Chicana/o studies at University of California, Los Angeles. His interdisciplinary research interests include language and social hierarchies, mass media representation of Latinos, and political humor. His most recent book, *Juan in a Hundred*, focuses on the interplay between language, society, and immigration.

disClosure Collective (DC): We want to start by asking you how you define Social Theory?

Otto Santa Ana (OSA): Social theories are efforts to make cohesive and comprehensive sense of our world, that can potentially anticipate, or at least describe, the complex and mysterious circumstances in we live. It's the writ large social philosophy. The best known social theorists (Marx, Hobbes, Bourdieu, Habermas) have latched onto a question they see as fundamental to understanding humankind (labor, social contract, habituated daily life, communication) and attempted to build a model of what it is that makes us do what we do.

DC: How do you employ a social theory framework within your own research, and can you speak to the relevance of social theory and what it is that you do?

OSA: I am not a social theorist. I'm an empirical linguist. Because I am an empiricist, I cannot imagine that any single encompassing social theory will capture the complexity of human life. But I think scholars who engage in social theory, indeed most lifelong scholars, begin with a gnawing worm of curiosity. My worm was planted in me when I had experienced how public school teachers treated the members of my own family in arbitrary ways. I struggled to make sense of linguistic inequity. Language was my entrée into injustice and remains my motivation to political action.

Teachers treated my second cousin, who I have always admired for his intelligence and curiosity, as less gifted and capable in school than me. Early in our small town school years, we were so excited. He more so than me because he always had the answer, raising his hand first, ready with the correct answer. I know because I would sit behind him in class to ensure my own success in classes. But later he became withdrawn. He dropped out of high school, while I went on to the university and ultimately became a professor. My gnawing worm was why Miss Bates and Mrs. Timmons was so unfair to my cousin, who I

always knew was highly gifted and primed for exceptional learning.

Lots of students are not given credit for what they have in themselves, because of their class, gender, race or language. They're judged tacitly as being inferior. As I grew up it seemed to me that the kids dropped out of school were often the smartest kids in the class, the kids who were the most capable. They were not encouraged to continue their formal education. When I arrived at the University of Arizona in the early 1970s, it seemed to me that I was alone in a sea of white faces. The only black faces I saw were janitors. And the brown faces were gardeners who took care of the grounds. As an undergraduate I was so uncomfortable speaking to the white professors that my counselor—literally—was a gardener who I sat down with most Thursday afternoons under the *palo verde* trees because he was an older wiser person with whom I could identify.

I was drawn to linguistics because of the gnawing worm, the conundrum of my early classroom experiences. As I became more sophisticated in my studies, it all made sense; it was the language ideology of the nation that commandeered the teachers' understandings of who the children were. The well-meaning teachers were not aware of their own biases. That is what led me to sociolinguistics and that's why I did work with Bill Labov. His classic article, "The Logic of Non-Standard English," made my public school experience much more clear. The teachers just presumed that the kids that didn't speak Standard English were less smart, less motivated, inferior; that they were incapable and didn't merit equal treatment.

My cousin and I had been treated differently in grade school because we spoke English differently. In the first grade an otherwise caring teacher dismissed his responses and ideas, while accepting my derivative contributions because we spoke English differently. My father spoke English natively, whereas his parents only spoke Spanish. I arrived at school with a full English phonology; my cousin was still acquiring the 24-plus vowels he would readily master. By fourth grade the die was cast, and our educational paths diverged. The irony of my family's story is that neither my cousins or my siblings retained our Spanish, our heritage language as young people. The US language ideology that privileges English over all other languages cheated my cousin out of his academic potential, and later robbed both of us (and millions of others) of direct access to the rich Mexican language and culture that enriched and situated our parents' lives.

DC: How do you see the theme of transnational lives fitting within social theory? What kinds of knowledge do you think transnational lives as a study can produce?

OSA: We're finally getting to the point where we're beginning to recognize that homogeneity is a fiction. I'm very excited to see people in the 21st century trying to look at all the diversity—actually actively pursuing diversity to see what knowledge we can bring to the table that hasn't been given equal access so that we can be richer in our understanding of the world. Now we think about multilingualism as natural. We used to think it was only male and heterosexual that was appropriate and normal, and now normal is far wider; we now interrogate the idea of normal. It's just the natural progression I feel that allows us to see the world as far more complicated. We find our similarities come out once we recognize that those people who we were ignoring, who had disappeared, who were effaced from our social world are really there and standing right next to us. So yes, transnationalism is a very appropriate question to address. I see that we are trying to describe the world more accurately. Clearly transnationalism is a central part of our world, far more than a hundred years ago.

DC: You're a founding faculty member of about the César Chávez Department of Chicana/o Studies. Could you tell us about the founding of that department?

OSA: Chicano studies was like Black studies, a reaction to the white academy. It was part of the civil rights movement. Chicanos had been demonstrating in the streets, demanding better education, in Los Angeles since 1968. The “Blow Outs” were led by Sal Castro. Castro was a Lincoln High School teacher who guided Mexican American high school students. Brave Mexican American students marched in the street to demand a better education. Those students demanded a real education at a time when the history curriculum ignored Mexican Americans, when official educational policy forbade Chicano students from speaking Spanish, and where the educational quality was patently inferior, which left students with strong academic abilities little opportunity for college, and which presumed that all Mexican American students should be content with menial jobs. As can be seen in state and national high school graduation rates, and treatment of Latino students in Arizona by successive State superintendents for public education, the battle enjoined by the students of the Blow Outs must continue.

The same principles that Mexican American high school students protested had excluded, dismissed and passed over Mexican American in university curricula and research. By the early 1990s Chicano studies had only a nominal place in UCLA. The institutional structure of teaching and research guaranteed its marginalized position. The faculty who taught Chicano studies courses were formally situated 100% in the department of English or sociology, and held a “zero percent appointment” in Chicano studies. Their home departments of history or political science did not or formally could not give these professors credit for their time and effort in Chicano studies. The faculty who offered Chicano studies courses effectively volunteered their teaching. As far as the university was concerned, they might as well have been teaching astrology or alchemy out of their living rooms. Since it wasn’t institutionalized, Chicano studies was very difficult to maintain, few students could realistically major in this program, and it remained marginal.

So one bright spring day, the chancellor of UCLA decided to eliminate Chicano studies. His timing was impeccable because he chose the day that César Chávez was being buried. This was the one weekend that the world was focused on César Chávez and the plight of Mexican Americans and other people of color for whom he gave his life. Everyone made this connection. To honor César Chávez’s memory and principles of nonviolent political activism, twelve students and three community members, and one faculty member started a hunger strike to protest the loss of Chicano studies at UCLA. They went on for fourteen days. It became an international news scandal as these young people courted death in front of [the administration building]. The chancellor capitulated. He gave Chicano Studies seven faculty positions...by taking them from other departments that had been waiting their turn to add or fill a faculty position. The chancellor both formed the Chicano Studies program and created a tremendous reservoir of resentment against the new program.

I was one of the original seven untenured faculty brought to UCLA’s Chicano studies through a national search. Since our faculty positions had been commandeered from other departments, our credentials were immediately suspect. All seven earned tenure, and we have done very well. We succeeded because we had UCLA allies who helped us navigate the academic minefields. But because our program was created through a political action, we have met with resistance at the campus level. Instead of three or four years, it took ten years for our program to become a department, in spite of the fact that we had 100 majors immediately and have been graduating hundreds of students every year in the major. I wrote the first proposal for a graduate program in 1999, and in 2015 we only admitted our fourth cohort of graduate students. There’s been a lot of pushback from more conservative faculty who still believe we are usurpers.

Once we became a department, we named our department the César Chávez Department of Chicano/Chicana Studies. So we’re the only named department without a foundation or any sort of endowment. It reminds us of the reason why we exist, and the legacy that guides our work. We attempt

to combine social activism and rock solid scholarship. We strive to be activist scholars who do not compromising either side of the term.

DC: What do you see as the most important thing for the next generation of scholars?

OSA: This is a broad question. I will answer as if I were asked by a potential graduate student. How do you make your way into academia? First, lead with your heart. Find the gnawing worm that motivates you, that makes up your intellectual passion. I see a lot people who go into graduate school for the wrong reasons. Two, you have to be cognizant that academia is not a meritocracy. You have to go in with your eyes open.

Professors often tend to want to reproduce themselves, rather than attending to the passions of students and their future scholarship and career. I tend to presume that no student really wants to study what I have pursued, and try to judge a student's capacity and their conscious awareness of their motivations to pursue graduate school. Three, as you seek to refine the research questions that address your motivating intellectual passion, you must also recognize, as a graduate student, that you are in control of your education. You must be consciously strategic about making decisions. The academic world is far more competitive than it was when I was coming up. I wish you luck and clear eyed perspectives on what really is out there.

DC: How is your work, such as *Brown Tide Rising* and *Juan in a Hundred*, received in the Mexican-American community?

OSA: A former student of mine once attended a conference of US military veterans. While there he saw a vet reading my book, *Brown Tide Rising*, in the hotel lobby. [My former student] took a picture and put it on Facebook for me and said, "Hey, look, there's someone reading your work." I'm flattered and humbled because people do read it. It's very gratifying.

When I undertook the research that I wrote up in *Brown Tide Rising*, I had to create a methodology to empiricize a promising theory, conceptual metaphor theory. Its leading theoretician, George Lakoff, was creative and prolific. But he came out of the tradition of formal generative linguistics of the 1960s. In this tradition it was perfectly fine to treat his personal intuition as the only source for data he needed make any and all claims about the linguistic phenomenon he described. He claimed, on the basis of his intuited examples that he generated, he could make binding statements about how all American English speakers used conceptual metaphors to construct their views on their world, even as far as claiming he can intuit their political leaning regarding the presidential elections.

In contrast I was trained by William Labov, and he had demonstrated unequivocally that no individual has privileged access to the language a community of people use, much less the worldview of others. Indeed, American English is not a self-contained and codified "language." Instead language used in social life clusters around registers (namely speech styles, pronunciation patterns, vocabulary groupings). This means no one speaks all of any language. Each speaker of American English has more or less developed competences in using specific language resources. In formal linguistics the concept of the ideal native speaker should be dropped. In empirical sociolinguistics we now gingerly consider rather than presume shared meanings and resources within so-called speech communities. Thus to describe the heterogeneous language use of communities of speakers, one had to develop a methodology to gather appropriate data and to analyze these data. Whereas Lakoff just knew, on the basis of self-generated examples, what conceptual metaphors American English speakers use to construct their understanding of United States. His NATION AS FAMILY metaphor (based on no evidence beyond his own intuitions) led

him to two subsets of metaphors, that he associated with the contrasting political views of our nation: the liberal NURTURING PARENT metaphor versus the conservative STRICT FATHER metaphor.

When I began the work that led to *Brown Tide Rising*, I presumed I had no idea that the guiding conceptual metaphors would be. I presumed that I could not know without careful empirical study. This method uncovered guiding conceptual metaphors that were hidden in plain sight. Seven years of actual discourse in the US national public sphere (national and state newspapers) did not turn up a pattern of use of NATION AS FAMILY metaphors. Rather I found four highly productive metaphors: NATION AS HOUSE, AS BODY, AS CASTLE and AS SHIP. These guide thinking about how Americans think about the abstract political concept called “nation.”

One of the most politically and empirically salient metaphors turned out to be: IMMIGRANT AS ANIMAL, a conceptual metaphor I could not have anticipated. It’s difficult and often tedious work. But if we allow the inductive method to reveal the conceptual metaphors that people are using, we are often astonished at the findings.

DC: What do you think of the metaphor of a scar or a wound for the U.S./Mexico border, or any other metaphors for the border?

OSA: Consider conceptual metaphors to be conventionalized sets or clusters of related ideas. You can either attempt to retrieve them from public discourse, as I do, or create and promulgate them to promote a new way of thinking about a topic. Metaphors are shortcuts of conceptual reasoning, analogies, that always foreground some information and background other information. Consider love (which Lakoff did get correctly). There are only three metaphors that we use in everyday English to speak about love. But, if you actually think about what love is all about, it’s a far more complicated notion. It’s the most important thing in our world. We use metaphors as shorthand and then forget that they are conventions rather than self-evident realities—that’s why we’re blinded by them. The metaphors for love in Korean or Navaho do not correspond to those of American English. These analogies are culturally-contingent heuristics that we automatically use to make sense of a very complex reality.

You should also reflect on families or clusters of semantically related metaphors. So the BORDER AS SCAR, that’s been used a lot; it also opens up a conceptual space that doesn’t exist in reality. Notice that SCAR is directly related to the NATION AS BODY metaphor. Indeed, BODY is the same productive metaphor that Thomas Hobbes famously employed in his opus, *The Leviathan*, in 1650. You cannot directly attribute SCAR to Lakoff’s metaphor of nation.

If you are generating new productive metaphors to promulgate new ways of considering a topic, think strategically. Scholars, following Anzaldúa’s lead, have taken the BORDER AS SCAR concept very far. I would urge you to explore multiple metaphors. As scholars, you should be both complicating your world and looking at it in new ways. I would urge you to think about considering very different, even orthogonal metaphors, for any particular topic. Try sets of complementary metaphors. When you read the work of poets and scholars, you can draw from these sources. Each new metaphor will give you insight to aspects of that reality that other metaphors will not. Each will foreground and background different sets of material. Complicate your metaphors, contest them, juxtapose them.

DC: Could you talk about how you see creating metaphors that are productive, that are nourishing and life-giving?

OSA: A great example can be found in the history of science because we see a succession of scientific models (i.e. metaphors), that become the succeeding scientific paradigms that people operated with

across time. The histories of the physical, natural and social sciences are all based on a succession of conceptual metaphors that have been sequentially replaced by more observationally adequate conceptual metaphors. In the study of psychology, the metaphors of MIND have changed across time. One familiar example that I have used before is the increasingly obsolete MIND AS COMPUTER metaphor. This metaphor was preceded by the MIND AS ANIMATE BEING metaphor that arose in the recent decades in psychology. In fact, philosopher John Searle notes that thinkers across history have appealed to the latest technological device to conceptualize the brain. Thus in Searle's own youth, the brain was described as a telephone. Much earlier some referred to the brain as a telegraph. Searle states that an early British neurobiologist metaphorized the brain to be a loom, which was the first automatic weaving machine able to produce highly intricate patterns. Also in the 18th century we can find a more general form of this metaphor, namely MIND AS MACHINE. Earlier still Leibniz's metaphor was the mill, the most complicated technology of the 17th century. Searle even notes that ancient Greeks described the workings of the brain as a catapult. Each theorist uses metaphor as the basis of their model of nature and society. So, if we take social issues that are challenging and are problematic in our lives today, we should try to see what the limitations of those metaphors are and be poetic about seeking metaphors that are more encompassing.

Let's return to US public education. Public education is commonly understood to be a PATH. Look at the language we casually use to talk about education: we speak about our *curriculum vitae*, the *courses* we take, the *battery* of exams that we have to *pass* to graduate. Education is considered a path that individuals chose to *take* from ignorance to educated. Hence in the US it is considered a matter of personal choice, and the responsibility of success or failure lies direction on the student. When we use that metaphor, we impose that metaphor's framework of success and failure, of volitional responsibility and private responsibility on an elementary schoolchild. At base, the adults and institution are not implicated in the failure of a child who drops out, or off the path of education. Consider, we wouldn't allow a fourteen-year-old to get married, to make a mistake of that sort. We would say that that child was immature, not of age to make these adult decisions. And yet, we regularly allow the fourteen-year-old to drop out of school and say that it's their fault for having dropped out when, in fact, the child has been pushed out of an institution that does not accommodate that child's needs.

My students and I recognized the limits of the EDUCATION AS PATH metaphor, and sought alternative metaphors that would be better suited to the circumstances of the child. My undergraduates came up with alternative metaphors. They proposed the alternative metaphor of EDUCATION AS CULTIVATION. In this metaphor each child is likened to tree or vine that is carefully cultivated over years, and the school is an orchard or vineyard that is tended by loving and technically sophisticated viticulturalists. The timeline for productivity is not one year or one test, but a lifetime.

Alternatively, my students proposed that education be considered a construction site, and students construct knowledge like a builder builds a house. The cluster of associated metaphors—KNOWLEDGE AS CONSTRUCTION, TEACHERS AS ARCHITECTS and MASTER BUILDERS, STUDENTS AS APPRENTICES working to become journeymen—is a tremendous metaphor that we should use. These two metaphors, EDUCATION AS CULTIVATION and AS CONSTRUCTION, do not put the onus of educational failure on the child, but on educators and the schooling system. These metaphors are very much more apt for the circumstances of our public education system. Notice that these metaphors also fit the NATION AS (A MORE OR LESS CULTIVATED) BODY POLITIC, or the US AS (A MORE OR LESS WELL-CONSTRUCTED) HOUSE, which links the future prosperity of the nation to the quality of the public education. This linkage is entirely missing in the three productive conceptual metaphors that structure public education today, of which EDUCATION AS PATH is one.

DC: What is the place of education in combatting harmful metaphors, especially working to remove

racism from the way we orient ourselves to education?

OSA: In 2015 I think we're moving too slowly. But we did elect an African-American to the presidency twice. This was only a dream of my generation, when I was in my twenties. And it took until I was sixty for it to happen, but I'm glad that it has occurred. There is lots of hope; but there will always be a correspondingly strong push back. Political and ideological power is a finite resource. The problems we face today are very large. There going to be pushback, complacency, and indifference. In our society we have allowed public education to flounder, which has created an electorate that is not particularly sophisticated and easily manipulated. This puts our democracy at risk. I often employ two quotes on the political power of discourse and metaphor in discourse that are pertinent at this point as well. Foucault claimed that about the power in discourse. He wrote: "As history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle. ...Discourse is the power which is to be seized." Then there is Nietzsche. He was no defender of the weak. But he focused on the core feature of power. He once wrote: "What is Truth? It is a flexible army of metaphors...in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transformed, bejeweled, and which after long usage seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding." The struggle for power is the struggle for hegemonic discourse, and metaphor is the jewel of that and all concept building language.

DC: There's a lot of resonance between the metaphors used for Latinos and African-Americans. Can you speak to those parallels?

OSA: The metaphors used to racialize different groups of people have similar features. They are always demeaning. They are always limiting. And they're always delimiting so that they allow non-Othered people to sit comfortable and self-assured in their unmerited place of privilege. One lesson that I have learned in my work in *Brown Tide Rising* is that conceptualizing metaphors are most powerful when they are taken as matter-of-fact givens. The more that we question what privilege is and the more that we recognize and contest the terms with which the Other is constructed, the less natural and commonplace these metaphors become. Metaphors are conventions, not natural divisions in our world, so they can be altered. When privileging metaphors are toppled, then people will be seen as coequal in their differences. But it's a long term process. Privilege has its perks, so those who enjoy those perks will not readily give them up. That's why I try to do a little work in humor because I thought I had this glimmer of hope that I could inoculate young people about racist jokes and ethnic slurs. That's what led me to think about humor, how it affects children, in particular.

DC: Could you tell us more about your work on humor?

OSA: In 2006, I was leading a class; that was the year of the Great Marches where millions of immigrants and their supporters were out in the streets peacefully protesting for immigrant rights. My class was on metaphor analysis, and I said "You can study anything that interests you so long as it deals with immigrants and the media. Anything." So this kid says, "I love Jay Leno, but I hate his jokes." And that juxtaposition was so cool, so unexpected. I had never studied humor, but that is when I began.

Long story short, I realized that I'd done all the work on newspapers in *Brown Tide Rising* and the work on television news in *Juan in a Hundred*, and none of my students were reading that newspapers or watching network television news programs. They were watching Colbert and the Daily Show at that time. That's what interests, your demographic, the 18–30 year olds, and that is where you get your

political information. Through humor. That became extremely interesting for me.

I read this wonderful piece by Michael Billig, the British sociologist, on the history of the philosophy of humor. It turns out people have been studying humor for two thousand years. Aristotle and Plato wrote seriously about humor. They considered (correctly) that humor is an aspect of human nature, and they asked what does for us. Billig realized that every scholar of humor seeks an answer, trying to find something which is universal to our species. But we're all blinded by our cultural limitations. Each philosopher had his blind spot. Thus Aristotle lived in a slave-based economy, so he was blind to the fact that slaves were as human as he was. Freud wrote about humor; all his sexual jokes are just amazingly hilarious. But, he could not see race. He refused to see anti-Semitic issues. It was like he was blind to it.

And so I asked, "What am I blind to?" The one blind spot I have noted is that I tended to believe that humor is based in language. That's because I'm a linguist. But I laugh just as much at Buster Keaton's silent movie slapstick as I laugh at Robin Williams' verbal pyrotechnics. And I (we) respond in the same way to non-verbal and verbal humor. I am now a heretical linguist, since I believe humor is not fundamentally based in language.

That led me to think about humor in a different way. What that allows me to do is to place Robin Williams and Jonathan Swift and Aristophanes as different kinds of verbal humor, the cultural aspects of humor. But the foundations of laughter are pre-human. I looked for theories that would let me set up a non-linguistic based humor. It turns out Matthew Gervais and David Sloan Wilson proposed an evolutionary narrative for the origin of humor that said our antecedents laughed together for five million years before humankind appeared to foster social affiliation. I am trying to flesh out a model of humor that builds on their work, and that of a great number of scholars from many disciplines, from biology to anthropology to philosophy and history. It is an ambitious project—but it's also a hoot!

DC: A lot of the people in leadership now grew up watching television versions of the cowboy hero stereotype you discuss. Do you think those narratives influenced our leadership, especially white males?

OSA: Yes, I do. The automatic reaction of Neocons in any international crisis is to send out the special forces. And if we are afraid to send out the special forces, we'll just bomb them from our drones. Now we don't have to send in the cavalry. We can send in the droids. But this is precisely the same response.

DC: Do you think it's possible to use the cowboy narrative to build a bridge between conservative mindsets and immigrant stories? Maybe re-casting the immigrant saving his family as the cowboy hero?

OSA: This already sounds like a great movie! Have you written the screenplay? Who would Hollywood cast as the immigrant hero? Matt Damon? Russell Crowe? Mark Wahlberg? Movies about immigrant lives almost invariably involve hegemonic heroes with a tan. Or they revolve around a White hero who saves the downtrodden and teaches the good town folk to be better Christians, like Harper Lee's classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

I shouldn't be so cynical. In the article you are referring to, "The Cowboy and the Goddess," I found clear evidence that the news writers are already using the Inanna story-type to capture the complexity the US immigrant experience, rather than repeat the simple American Cowboy story. This bodes well for a long-term change in our nation's view of immigrants. Each immigrant Inanna news story troubles the simple and false myth of the Cowboy western. The immigrant Inanna story challenges the values of the western myth, because it forces US news viewers to see the immigrant as a real person, rather than as a caricatured villain. Each time this takes place, the once taken-as-normal hegemonic worldview is challenged. But what we need to finish the transformation is a new narrative for the nation.

I likely will not hear an American president speak at a future State of the Union address about the nation with a post-empire narrative.

Translocational Social Theory After “Community”: An Interview with Floya Anthias

Matt Bryant Cheney, Lucía M. Montás, and James William Lincoln
DISCLOSURE COLLECTIVE, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Floya Anthias is Professor of Sociology at the University of East London, visiting Professor of Sociology at City University in London, and Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Social Justice at Roehampton University in London. Her research spans a range of theoretical and empirical concerns related to racism, diaspora and hybridity, multiculturalism, gender and migration, labor market disadvantages and class position. Anthias’ current work develops the concept of translocational positionality as a way of addressing some of the difficulties identified with concepts of hybridity, identity, and intersectionality. Her most recent book is *Contesting Integration, Engendering Migration*.

disClosure Collective (DC): Thank you for chatting with us this morning; it is a pleasure to have you in town here in Lexington. I guess starting off, please tell us where you’re situated now in academia and how you came to be there.

Floya Anthias (FA): Well, at the moment I am Professor of Sociology at the University of East London. I have been a professor at a number of different universities. I was, for many years, at the University of Greenwich in London and then moved to Oxford Brookes University and, after that, moved on to the University of Roehampton. I actually retired from there, so I am now Emeritus Professor at the University of Roehampton. And then, after a year or so, I was appointed at the University of East London as a professor. I did my undergraduate degree at the London School of Economics, post-grad at the University of Birmingham, and PhD at the University of London’s Royal Holloway College.

DC: How often do you find yourself in the United States, coming around to universities here?

FA: I have been several times to the United States, but not terribly often. I get invited a lot in Europe and in Canada and Australia more, but the United States, not so frequently.

DC: So, how would you define social theory?

FA: Okay, well that is a difficult one, to give one definition. But social theory is that attempt to provide an analytical framework, a set of related concepts, which help you to understand and research society.

And social theory is a broader concept to sociological theory. I am actually a sociologist, but social theory includes any theory of society which might include aspects of theory and analytical concepts that come from the social sciences more generally. So social theory is a body of work that involves the production of analytical concepts which are heuristic: that is, which enable us to study, understand, and explain social relations more generally. These include institutional relations and structural relations, as well as relations between people and, of course, discourses and representations of society.

DC: Absolutely, and it is such a broad concept that you unpack very well. I think it's about not being restricted to the disciplines we find ourselves in, so that's really helpful. You mentioned that you are a sociologist. As a sociologist, how do you develop a social theory framework within sociology? I would say, from the sociologists I know and have read, not all of them would associate themselves with social theory, so how do you develop a social theory framework within your specific field?

FA: As a sociologist, I have a very long tradition of sociological theory to draw from. There are the three greats, the trio of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber, of course: the classical sociologists that provide very important tools for the nature of society. But of course each contributes very different tools: with Durkheim being concerned with the study of objective phenomena, Weber more concerned with subjective relations between actors, and, of course, Marx, who was concerned with the relationship between economy and society. So, they provide very important tools and, of course, there are traditions emanating from those three kind of areas of social theory. But, of course, not every sociologist sees themselves as a social theorist.

I happen to have always been very interested in theoretical questions, although I have done critical work. And my theoretical questions stem from trying to think about what are the tools we can deploy in order to understand things better, and I was always interested as a young person in issues of racism and issues of sexism and, of course, class inequality. So these three things always bothered me, always interested me. They were the reasons I studied sociology in the first place, because I was interested in how they operated in society. And that comes partly from my own background, because my father was a journalist and a political activist. He himself emerged from the peasant class in Cyprus to become an intellectual. So, these are the things that sort of haunted me to develop my interests in social theory, particularly in that area of gender, race, and class.

DC: Yeah, and I think the next question really speaks to this combination.

FA: Yes.

DC: And we'll follow-up on that a bit later as well. How would you define intersectionality, and how has your view changed over the years?

FA: Now, I first started thinking about the questions that have now been termed "intersectionality" in a different way through looking at how ethnicity and gender particularly related in my work: in my PhD which was on Greek-Cypriot migrants in Britain. I looked at the connections between ethnicity and gender, class, and so on in that PhD. What I tried to demonstrate in one of my chapters was how women were particularly useful as resources for the ethnic group. They were used in particular ways for developing small-scale self-employment concerns for the wives, and of course the children of the migrants were being deployed. So, I looked at how gender operated in terms of "ethnic adaptation," which was the term that I used. In those days, we used to talk about "sexual divisions" rather than gender divisions.

You know we're talking about the late Seventies, before intersectionality had even entered the sphere at all. And already I was beginning to think about the connections since, in my PhD in the late Seventies, I had worked on racism before. I had also done a master's thesis on the conceptualization of racism: the ideological aspects of the concept of racism. So, I was embedded in that area.

One epiphany, partly, was going to the "Sexual Divisions in Society" Conference in 1974. It was the first time the British Sociological Association had a conference on sexual divisions. It was the time of the growth of third wave feminism, and this was fantastic, because there was one particular paper that was looking at the links between ethnicity, gender, and class. I thought, "Wow, there's somebody out there thinking about these things!" So that was important for me as well.

Another important aspect for me was when I first started academic life as a young lecturer with Nira Yuval-Davis, whose work you may know; she is very well-known. She was also very interested in the same issues, and we went to a meeting of what was called the "Sex and Class Group," which was a group that was a part of the Conference of Socialist Economists. There was this group in the UK and Britain. And in this group—you know, this group of feminists, many of them—we suggested that we should have a subgroup looking at gender and race. And at the time, I have to say, there was very little interest in it. Because feminists—these were particularly white feminists—were not particularly interested at the time on issues of race. They had other things they were interested in: developing a kind of Marxist approach to gender, socialist feminism, and so on. So Nira Yuval-Davis and I decided we would write an article on gender, race, and class, which we did, and published it in *Feminist Review* in 1983.¹ So that began a kind of collaboration with Nira, although we also worked separately.

It was not intersectionality; you see we were writing about these issues in the late Seventies and the early Eighties before, of course, Kimberlé Crenshaw's important article in 1989.² We talked about intersections and we talked about connections but did not talk about intersectionality as such. So in the "Contextualizing Feminism" article, one of the main arguments was that you couldn't have a mechanical-additive approach: you couldn't say, "there's gender inequality, and then there's racial inequality, which you add, and then there's class inequality, and that it adds up to more inequality." You could not have an additive model. Instead, we should look at the specificities of experience that emerge out of the cross-cuttings of these "social divisions," as we called them. That was the main argument, and we looked at how Marxist Feminism had failed to address issues of race and how anti-racist theories had failed to address issues of gender.

So that is how we started. But we always—I can say this for both myself and Nira—we always had a view of what later became intersectionality, which was against an additive approach, was against treating gender, race, and class merely as identity categories. We were always interested in the structural foundations of these forms of inequality—the material structures which underpinned them. And, of course, over the years, you know, I've been writing about these issues in a number of different ways. I have written quite a lot on rethinking class. How can we rethink social stratification approaches to take into account the stratifying element of gender and race, that when we look at forms of stratification and hierarchy, we shouldn't only be looking at labor market processes, or economic processes? Gender and race are *central* elements of the stratification theory of society. So, I have written a number of papers on that, and my views of intersectionality, of course, developed into what I called "translocational positionality," which tries to overcome some of the potential problems of some forms of intersectionality—not *all* forms of intersectionality—which treat intersectionality as a question of identity categories that come together in people's experiences. And I argue that it's an approach that applies to everybody; it's not just a theoretical approach that is limited to looking at certain particularly disadvantaged groups. It is more generally applicable.

DC: So translocational positionality came about not as a corrective, but a sort of retooling, to some extent, of intersectionality?

FA: Well, it came out of two things. One, it came out of a critique of particular approaches to hybridity and identity. I mean, I first talked about it in one article that was published in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.³ In that article, I critiqued those approaches to hybridity that saw culture as something that just came together, that two cultures (the migrant culture or minority culture) came together with another to produce a hybrid form. I argued that it was much more complex and provided a critique of identity there, which I later developed in another article in 2002.⁴ So it [translocational positionality] came about as a critique of a particular identity/culture discourse. Part of it was that it was a honing of the idea of how different social divisions connect together in ways which are not fixed, which are not essential or given, but are context-related. We need to incorporate both hierarchical structures and structures relating to the boundaries between categories.

DC: I think that's absolutely right—that, the more we learn, the more we see how complex it is. These are very important challenges, to sort out the identity politics paradigm that was coming out of the Nineties. It makes a lot of sense. Here in 2015, as social theorists working in these different fields, how do we move *toward* intersectionality or toward a fuller consideration of these concerns? What do you see as some of the challenges that lay ahead as we incorporate these ideas into our work?

FA: Well, there are a number of challenges, both conceptual and political. The conceptual challenges relate to the question: How do you actually live out an intersectionality framework as a theorist? Is there a methodology that we can call intersectional? There have been a number of debates about this—about, for example, different ways intersectional research can be approached, such as McCall's ideas on inter-categorical/intracategorical/anticategorical. You can either refuse categories (anticategorical), you can look at divisions within the category of gender (intracategorical), or between gender and race (intercategorical). That was an important moment, and there has been a lot of debate around that.

But, there is increasing interest in what the methodological challenges are, and I think two things come to mind. One, I don't think there is any one theory that we can say is intersectional theory. I think of intersectionality as providing a particular lens, a particular way of seeing things (an analytical sensitivity), that always asks us to interrogate how different forms of inequality interact together—to always think. If we're exploring issues of racism, to always think of the gendered aspects of that and the class aspects of that. Similarly, if we're looking at issues of gender, to always look at the racialized and the class aspects. So, it's a lens. I don't think intersectionality, *yet*, anyway, has the conceptual apparatus of its own, which allows us to say it's a theory. I don't think it's a theory, but rather a framing, rather than a *framework*. You can use a number of different theoretical traditions to explore it. You can use a more Marxist approach which is intersectional, which pays particular attention to material structures. You can use a much more Weberian approach, which is more concerned with social action and interaction amongst people. You can use a Bourdieuan approach. It allows you to choose a theoretical framework and incorporate an intersectional perspective within that. I don't think it yet has its own conceptual tools, as such, or its own methodology.

DC: So we could start to get there by drawing from other frameworks? With Bourdieu, it would seem to be around the concept of value—starting there, then folding in these other considerations. That's very helpful.

FA: Yes.

DC: So this semester, our social theory course is titled “Transnational Lives,” and we’re studying how people move across border, across nations. We wanted to know how you see the theme of transnational lives fitting in with social theory, or even within translocational positionality. What kind of knowledge can transnational lives produce?

FA: Transnational lives is a very important and very current concern. I mean, it’s very important because population movements have grown. They’ve become much more diverse. There is rampant globalization, and transnationalism provides a very important lens because it enables us—as Nina Glick Schiller⁵ has said—beyond the nation-state boundary and avoid methodological nationalism, recognizing that all people live their lives transnationally, whether they’re actually moving or not. Avtar Brah⁶ has talked already about diasporic space—she calls it “diaspora space,” where even if you are not yourself a member of a diaspora, and many of us are of course, many have also stayed where they were born and their parents have stayed where they were born. They also occupy a transnational arena inasmuch as around them the lives are transnational, and they are a part of that process.

It’s very important. The theoretical tools for transnational lives come from a much more global sociology, if you like, or social science, a more globally inflected social theory. It’s concerned with the interconnections between nation-states, the hierarchical structures globally, and the modes by which lives are led across nation-state borders. There’s the role, for example, of cultural exchanges, new forms of communications, like digitalized and internet communications, the different forms of inequality that emerge through transnationalism, such as the growth of categories that are particularly exploited with transnational movements of population, like care workers, domestic workers, and so on.

DC: Yes, and I think moving past a national framework and understanding what that entails, it’s about figuring out what the new heuristic is, or what the new “community” is, if such a thing exists. I have heard you say elsewhere that community doesn’t exist in modern society in the same way. Do you think that’s right? If we’re moving past a national framework, what do you think constitutes a group or a community? When does a collection of people turn into a body that can be studied?

FA: Yes, thank you for that question. Well, let’s attack this notion of community head-on. One of the problems, I think, with the notion of community, as such, is that it assumes an organic whole. It assumes a homogeneity. When we talk about communities, it’s as though we’re talking about sets of people that actually share exactly the same characteristics—that they are a community because they share values. Or they are a community because they bonded together in forms of solidarity. We assume some homogeneity.

And although, certainly, there are self-proclaimed communities, and there are people who come together in terms of shared values or occupy the same terrain, as social scientists we should be aware that these communities are not organic wholes and that they are not unproblematic. Because communities themselves are often structured in conflict. For example, within communities, there are leaders and there are followers. There may be some that are more powerful—there are gendered forms of exploitation that go on within communities. The community leaders, who purport to represent the community, often are representing their own interests. The voices of the marginalized, of the women and of the young, often are not heard. And there’re lots of constraints in communities about conforming. So yes, maybe communities are a good thing inasmuch as they provide people with senses of belonging, which is very important. However, communities are also fractured, and when we look at communities we should always be

looking at those elements as well. We should not assume them to be unproblematic entities.

Of course, in the modern era, community becomes even more problematized, with movements of population, with fracturing, with the growth of urbanity and particular forms of urbanism. In isolation and alienation within urban settings, we find that community no longer has the same meaning for people. I mean, people strive for community. There is an instinct, I think, to find community—a pull for belonging, if you like. Instinct is the wrong word. Maybe we should think about it as “What are the group-making practices that people are involved in in *making* groups?” Groups are not given. They don’t exist as such, but they’re made by people in their everyday lives. What prompts people into group-making practices, and how do they forge their belonging? So we can ask questions about group-making practices and belonging practices, and these are problematized in the modern world by particular forms of exclusion and boundaries that exist in the global world, in the world with modern movements. For example, nation-states attempt to control their boundaries, so that only some migrants are acceptable and others are not as acceptable, some are allowed citizenship while some are not, some are excluded more than others. There are a number of issues here about how, in a global society, how do we develop forms of belonging, engagement, and participation that are as inclusionary as possible.

DC: Emancipatory, you might say. Not restrictive.

FA: Yes.

DC: So your work proposes that it’s necessary to look at groups while simultaneously taking into account gender, race, and class, which you had mentioned toward the beginning of the interview. Do you think it would be helpful, or even necessary, to include other subject-positioning markers, such as physical and mental capacity, or capability, educational level, regional affiliation, and sexual orientation? This was something we discussed in our class. Should we talk about other categories?

FA: Yes, absolutely. There are two aspects of this answer. One is, of course, when we are doing research which is intersectional, there are some categories that are often invisible, categories that we don’t often think are salient. We must always be alert to categories that are important in people’s lives. These will of course include issues of ability and disability, age, education, and so on. There is no set number of categories that are intersectional.

Some people have tried to say there are, saying, “Oh, well there’s just the ‘big three.’ Gender, race, and class are the *most* important.” Other people have extended it. Some have said seven; others have said thirteen. In equal opportunity conversations, for example, in Britain, faith has been included, along with disability. I can’t remember all the others. So you can extend it, certainly. But I think the important thing is to ask what is operating in a salient way in the work that we do, in the world that we see around us, in terms of the focus we have in research. These categories are emergent; we will find them. They are not things we can impose. That’s one part of the answer, so I’ll say “Yes, we should also look at a range of relations around us.”

The second answer is that, in my own work, I have argued in terms of the concept of “social division.” Social division is a concept that is useful. Unlike the concept of a social category, a social division takes into account, I have said, a number of characteristics. A social division is often constructed in a very binary way, so, for example, with race, it is often in terms of white versus black, or dominant versus subordinate. In terms of class, it’s often those who have and those who haven’t. In the case of gender, it’s male and female. Of course, sexuality should be included in the categories. It’s a social division that may be heterosexual or homosexual, as a sort of binary. So, these particular binary-making categories, as social

divisions, are particularly powerful in constructing forms of exclusion and inequality.

And attached to these binaries are constructions of selves and others, and also forms of hierarchical relations, and resource allocation, forms of inferiority. People who are on the right side (white, male, heterosexual) have more power than the left side (female, black, homosexual). So, the other part of my answer is, yes there are a range of categories that become salient and which are always emergent, but in terms of conceptions of social divisions, we can think of some of them as very systematic. They appear differently in different contexts. We will find them operating in social forces across the globe in particular ways, and these would be things like gender, race, class, sexuality, maybe disability as well. We can think of all the others as well as emergent, but these seem to be the most powerful globally.

DC: Yeah, and I like how you framed the first part of your answer, which helps the second part, that we shouldn't impose these categories on our objects of study, on our topics. It's more about finding what is operational in a context we're looking at.

FA: Precisely.

DC: That's a very helpful way to think about it. I'm in literary studies, and, constantly, that's the debate: Do you find it in the text, or do you find it outside of the text? You've touched on this in some of your other answers, but how do you think intersectionality and translocational positionality can be used to analyze non-migrants? You mentioned earlier that everyone is transnational, whether they know it or not. I'd be interested to hear how you see these concepts working with non-migrants.

FA: These are not concepts that actually are specifically about migrants. If you look at intersectionality, it emerged as an approach through the work of Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Kimberlé Crenshaw, in terms particularly of understanding the experience of racialized women, particularly black women. So they emerged out of anti-racist feminism, if you like, and this is where my own work started in the late Seventies and early Eighties—through an anti-racist feminism. I was also, at that time, married to developing a Marxist approach that was able to incorporate gender and race into it. So, it wasn't specifically about migrants.

But also, intersectionality started as a way of addressing disadvantage, and one of the things we can see today with its development is that actually intersectionality can also address forms of advantage. What are the intersections that help advantaged groups? It's not just about disadvantage; we could look at the colonizers, for example. What were the intersections there, with dominant capitalist classes and so on? But apart from exploring disadvantage and advantage, it's also something we can use to explore everybody's lives; everybody lives their lives intersectionally. Everybody operates in terms of the hierarchies and boundaries of social categorization, social stigmatization, social evaluation, status, and so on. This informs everybody's lives. That's why I think it's a theoretical framing which applies to the study of society more generally, not just to groups. And groups, in any case, are always made or constructed; they're never a given. Part of the group-making exercise *is* the intersections within which group-making is forged.

Similarly, with translocational positionality, all of us are involved in this processual element, which I've called the making of translocational positionalities—that is, the making of social locations and how social locations come together in different times, in different contexts, to produce particular effects, both in terms of our objective social position and the way we position *ourselves* in relation to that.

DC: I think we have time for one more question. What advice do you have for the next generation of

scholars? What are one or two things that you wish someone had told you while you were in graduate school?

FA: Okay, let's start with the first one: what advice I would give. One of the main advices that I would give is to follow your interest, follow that which you are passionate about. I know it's not so easy always, because there is a job market out there which pulls you in particular directions. But in order to do effective academic work, my view is you really need to be engaged with what you're doing. So that's one advice: go where your heart and mind take you, then put *all* your energy into it. Secondly, never be disheartened. One of the things PhD students, or those who have recently gotten their PhDs, have said is how difficult it is for them to make an impact. It's all been said before, or they've sent some articles to publishers and received these comments that are often very hard to take. I say, if you believe in yourself, get on with it. Don't take to heart what a reviewer might say about what you've done. Polish it up. Change it. Transform it, work at it. Keep at it, and you will succeed. Those are the two aspects: passion and perseverance and belief in yourself. Don't ever let yourself be disheartened, because actually the whole review process can be very psychologically damaging. One of your supervisors might say, "I don't like what you've done." You know, I had it done to me. I had one article that was very well-cited, but when I first submitted it to a journal I was told, "You know this is not up to standard." I was a lot younger then, and it was very upsetting, but I persisted because I realized that you know what, I've got something to say, and I'm not going to let this person say otherwise. And interestingly enough, we edited a book with Nira Yuval-Davis that became quite well known—*Woman, Nation, State*—which was one of the first studies on the relationship between gender and rationalism. And we submitted our introduction to a journal in the US and got rejected. We were told, "Actually, you know, there's no empirical evidence that there's any connection between gender and nation" and so on. But we persisted because we believed in it, and I'm glad we did it. As a graduate student, I wish I'd been given this advice.

DC: This is so helpful, because we were all talking the other day about how we feel funneled into something in our work, and a lot of times our passions might not fit with those funnels. So it's helpful to think about it this way. It's encouraging.

FA: I mean, you might be saying something beyond your time in a way that the academic community, stuck in one position, is unwilling to move a little bit more or take the next step. There are always investments by scholars in particular approaches, and it can be more difficult if you're developing a theoretical tool than if you're producing empirical work. You could be regarded as a maverick, someone outside the fold trying to undermine the conventionally received wisdom of the time. But you *need* to take risks as well, that's the other thing. If you do see loopholes in problems, you should be willing to explore them, sometimes at risk. It *can* pay off in the end.

DC: Thank you.

FA: Thank *you!* These were very challenging and interesting questions.

Notes

1. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Contextualizing Feminism - Gender, Ethnic and Class Divisions," *Feminist Review* 15, no. 1 (1983): 62-75.
2. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Cri-

- tique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139-167.
3. Floya Anthias, "New Hybridities, Old Concepts: the Limits of Culture," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 4 (2001): 619-641.
 4. Floya Anthias, "Where Do I Belong? Narrating Collective Identity and Translocational Positionality," *Ethnicities* 2, no. 4 (2002): 491-514.
 5. See Nina Glick-Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristiana Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Project, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (London: Routledge, 1993).
 6. See Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Transnationalism, Xicanosmosis, and the U.S.-Mexico Border: An Interview with William Nericcio

Yorki J. Encalada Egúsquiza, Catherine D. Gooch, & Joshua D. Martin
DISCLOSURE COLLECTIVE, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Dr. William Nericcio is Professor of English and Comparative Literature & Chicano/a Studies at San Diego State University. His book, *Tex[t]-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the “Mexican” in America*, debunks stereotypes and representations of Latina/os in American popular culture. His forthcoming book, *Eyegiene*, is about visual culture in the 21st Century.

disClosure Collective (DC): How do you define social theory?

William Nericcio (WN): How do I define social theory? I think of it first as an intervention—there are so many camps of criticism within social theory, so many critical schools of thought nestled within the term that I’m going to answer the question as if you were asking me about my emotions: *social theory is always an intervention*. Social theory is what academics do when they are discontent. They want to change things, they want to improve things. It is not, for me, an objective process, I think of that pathway more as the true or the standard social sciences. For me, theory is an interruption, it’s an interception, it’s an opportunity to make things better for your students, but ultimately also for society. Social Theory is for activists, it’s not for “sit-on-your-butts” old school academics, whose silence merely reinforces the status quo.

Social theory, ideally, should be revolutionary. It should turn over the apple cart, make people pissed off—it should actually make students uncomfortable. I was telling my students the other day in my undergraduate class that confusion is a great thing, that unless you meet a point of confusion in an academic context, you’re having it too easy. That confusion is positive; it’s what happens when we are forced in our brain to rearticulate things that we thought we already know. It’s almost like the difference between ram and rom, the hard drive in your active memory on your computer. Many times we just go along with what is on the hard drive. Social theory is ram, it’s disruptive, it’s new, it’s now. It should make even progressive academics uncomfortable.

DC: Along those lines, how do you see our theme for the course “Transnational Lives” as fitting within social theory? What kind of knowledge can transnational lives produce?

WN: The knowledge a transnational approach to social theory brings is a sensitivity to frontiers and

borders. Even within social theory, even within the most progressive branches of academia, the tendency of academic culture is to mirror mass culture, and our mass American culture is filled with racism; it's filled with hate, neo-fascism and the like and there is no reason to believe that it doesn't sneak into our practice as academics. So the transnational approach forces you to admit that there are worlds outside your border, there are words (and worlds) outside the frontier that we are implicated in. I mean, the United States is an empire.

That's not a controversial remark. It's not even a political remark; it is a factual, historical, verifiable, empirical remark. So the consequences of empire are all these nasty liaisons with different countries and different peoples that the transnational approach in Social Theory forces you to come to grips with. Whether you want to be or not, when you are an intellectual within an empire, you are complicit with the system. The only hope for interrupting, slowing, displacing that complicity is to broaden your gaze, to include those domesticated properties, i.e. neighbors, whose nations your empire messes with.

My own focus in my research is Mexico and Latin America—that's the geographical, the national dimension of it; but I also am very interested in interrupting notions that are global, total; so I end up mashing up literature, proper, (the novel, the poem, the newspapers) with things like film, streaming media, Netflix, the Internet. That is, I'm interested in disrupting the autonomy of the literary world, its semantic guises. For me literature is semantic, it's semiotic, it's auditory. There are musical compositions that are literary; these kinds of mixtures are very interesting to me as a thinker. The transnational is also, in my mind, a reminder to keep things less parochial, less local, more international and more multimedia.

DC: In your book *Tex[t]-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the Mexican in America*, you argue that, and I quote, "Latina/o Americans have represented a subject[ed] population – that is, until quite recently, they have not contributed to mainstream, mass cultural textual and cinematic representations of their own communities; even when they have contributed, said acts of art have not dominated gallery space at MOMA or rollicked box offices tills from Tulsa to Portland to Texarkana." Has your view regarding the literary or filmic productions by Latina/os changed in the nearly ten years since your book's publication? If so, how?

WN: Wow! Thanks for the reminder, 10 years! God, I'm getting old, the book is old. The first thing to say is that my views have certainly evolved—keep in mind that the last two academy awards have been won by Mexican nationals, Cuarón and Iñárritu. It's the Mexican Golden Age redux—the neo-golden age of Mexican cinema, 21st century version. And certainly we've seen progress with the advent of sitcoms and the life-focus on Latino/a characters like *Jane the Virgin* and *Cristina* (just recently cancelled!). And, this fall on Fox, of all networks, *Bordertown* will premiere, a joined project by Gustavo Arellano, the editor of *OC Weekly*, and Lalo Alcaraz, who does the nationally syndicated *La Cucaracha* comic strip. This is going to be like *The Simpsons* at La Frontera, so I guess my attitudes are much more positive than they were in 2006 when the last touches were being made on the *Tex[t]-Mex* manuscript.

That said, we've also "enjoyed" (huge scare quotes) in the last 10 years, a resurgence of anti-Latina/o declarations/"infotainment," I was lecturing about this yesterday here in Lexington, of the rise of neo-fascist, racist hate.¹ Specifically against immigrant bodies, allegedly diseased Mexican bodies, thank you Lou Dobbs.

So the mass media, especially right-wing talk radio, became obsessed with distracting us away from what would've been a very progressive Obama agenda, and they were successful. The issue of race is now front and center. It's not accidental. The rise of xenophobic racism is going down on the watch of a biracial president. Obama's body, his presence, his being, is an instigator to this resurgence. It's almost like a digital lynch squad, lynch mob.

So though I am very hopeful and happy that there is more Latina/o representation in American mass media, you also have to counter that enthusiasm with the realization that hate has never been more in vogue and that a lot of that hate is directed at brown bodies, people who have a Spanish language accent. It's almost like the sound of that accent perturbs people, that the idea that the other mother tongue is so alien. That notion of the sound of Spanish being a trigger for hate, I haven't studied much as yet, but I am curious about it.

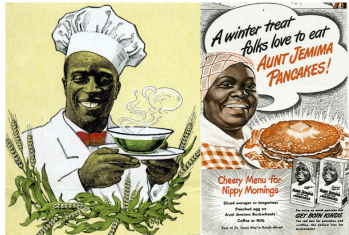
DC: In the same book, you speak about the idea of “visual indoctrination” attendant to Latina/o stereotypes. Specifically, you propose that “Mexicans and Americans of Mexican descent in U.S. popular culture have often resembled ugly marionettes in the service of mercenary puppeteers.” When did you first become aware of these stereotypes and what circumstances compelled you to study them in depth?

WN: Wow. Well, I do talk about this a little in the book, but it's worth repeating. I was trained as a Latin-Americanist, 20th century Latin-American fiction and culture, but particularly fiction. I mean, I should've gone off into the world and written books about Elena Poniatowska, Remedios Varo, Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, maybe Manuel Álvarez Bravo because I was interested in photography as well. But my first job was at the University of Connecticut, and in 1988 I'm teaching a class called *The Modern Novel*; no, *Approaches to Modern Fiction*, something like that, maybe it was on modern novel and I'm teaching a section on essays, and I'm teaching *El laberinto de la soledad*, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, by Octavio Paz. It's a book I have huge problems with, but I also merit it, credit it with being a singularly important 20th century piece of intellectual history.

I was talking about Mexican intellectual history, and this asshole in the back of the room laughed—not a broad laugh, more like a snicker, but definitely a laugh. Something about the conjunction of the words “Mexican” and “intellectual” or “Mexican intellectual” history triggered an uncontrolled response, sort of like someone fainting or vomiting. It was at that level, it was at the level of the unconscious. The student was not bored, (I mean, maybe they were a little bit bored), but they didn't purposely set out to do anything wounding. But me, I was wounded to my core. The chuckle, the laughter, would not leave me, and I became obsessed with understanding the origin of the laughter. What would create that oxymoron? That triggering oxymoron for laughter? “Mexican intellectual”?

It had to be something about the cultural history of the United States. So I started obsessing over what I would call my students' steamer trunks—you know those old ginormous steamer trunks people would take on ocean cruises back in the day? It had occurred to me that every student who walked into my Connecticut classroom was walking in with this existential steamer trunk filled with preset ideas about what a Mexican was, what a Mexican looked like. And a lot of those triggering beasts that were lurking in that steamer trunk were emotional, they were fearful and any place you have fear you don't have intellectual capacity because you revert... you revert to a kind of primordial human, you know, that terrified creature by the cave getting attacked by a mountain lion or saber-toothed tiger. And so it occurred to me that before I could teach about Octavio Paz, before I could sing of Fuentes, Poniatowska, and the wonders of Latino/a literature, I was going to have to address the steamer trunk, the monsters (and monstrous stereotypes) these kids were dragging into my room. I was going to have to do work with stereotypes, and so that's where *Tex[t]-Mex* was born.

DC: The next question relates to what you just mentioned about discussing stereotypes. I noticed that a lot of your work, especially in *Tex[t]-Mex*, focuses on discussing stereotypes in film, but it extends past that, past media and technology, to incorporate material items, and cultural artifacts, especially on your *Tex[t] Mex* gallery blog. Could you expand on the importance of including real tangible artifacts in your

	<p>3.26. Classic, historic, and ubiquitous representations of African-Americans: a “Negro chef dressed in white coat and cap holding a steaming bowl” is the The Cream of Wheat Corporation’s description of its trademark lackey; and, Aunt Jemima, in her mid-century incarnation—an illustration of the African American, Nancy Green.</p>	<p>State Archives African American Initiative, Missouri Secretary of State, Robin Carnahan, http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/africanamerican/guide/image005.asp (17 May, 2005). The Aunt Jemima ad is an original undated advertisement in the private collection of the author, circa 1950–54. The smiling Porter, brace yourself, is the “property” of The Cream of Wheat Corporation of Minneapolis, Minnesota, filing #6117 Cream of Wheat, 30, June 1930, with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, an agency of the United States Department of Commerce.</p>
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A detail from a manuscript print-out of instructions to the University of Texas Press for the first edition of *Tex[t]-Mex*--circa 2006.

Figure 1. Original photography © William A Nericcio, 2006.

work, and more specifically, how do cultural artifacts allow you to expand the concepts you present in *Tex[t]-Mex*?

WN: That was an outgrowth of actually of the social justice work I do alongside of being a professor. I have always done community work in school. I’ve always believed that one of the things that limits our range as communicators is that at the highest levels of academe we become professors—which would be fine, but a lot of these amazing (and self-aggrandizing) “professors” stop being teachers. As a teacher (and a teacher who focuses on mass culture), I know the most effective tool you can use in the classroom is a prop—a toy, an artifact, an object. So the fact that my research focuses on artifacts is actually a strange outgrowth of my pedagogy— I’ve always used props, and I jokingly call myself the Gallagher or the Carrot Top of academe because I bring in these suitcases filled with demonstrative artifacts like my talking Mister T doll; I’ve got all kinds of things like my Dora the Explorer doll and a bunch of regular Barbies and little Barbies, and they do war over a Mexican flag; I do all kinds of shtick with these marionettes. And I use these artifacts when I’m teaching, not just young children, I used them in the college classroom because people never get tired of artifacts. I bring in an old Aunt Jemima pancake box when I’m talking about African American figuration. The Cream of Wheat porter dude, I bring in that box, too (see Figure 1).

I have this great white shoe polish box that I bought in San Diego in the late 80s; no, late, early 90s. It’s called Hollywood Sani White Nurse Shoe Polish and it has the strangest Caucasian you’ve ever seen on the box cover, because it’s not just African Americans and Mexicans who would look freaky when they are turned into shields for products, semiotic selling objects, avatars for products—white people do, too. And so I’ve always found that carrying these props around enables me to connect at another level with people who get turned off by jargony terms. With props, it is different—they will look and think about a prop I pass around, even when their face goes blank as I speak of deterritorialization or deconstruction. But I have to be careful because sometimes the little kids, the fourth graders, try to steal them. I have a Speedy Gonzalez doll—this Speedy doll almost got stolen three times.

And so I’ve found that these props act as ice-breakers between me and my audiences, but they also remind me to be a teacher, that great teaching is also great performance, great theater. Don’t get so caught up with your smartness, your Ph.D. You know in Texas “Ph.D” stands for “Piled Higher and Deeper.” That’s sort of a Texas attitude: Piled higher and deeper, pile of shit. And I guess that keeps me grounded, you know, because I never want to be alienated from potential students. Our students are



Figure 2. Original photography © William A Nericcio, 2010.

everywhere.

DC: When talking about stereotypes of Latina/os, we see that a lot of them are also advanced by social media and technology in general. In your work, though, you use these same tools to try to unravel stereotypes. Do you have any advice for anyone who would like to also use technology and social media as mechanisms that help untangle these stereotypes?

WN: Yeah, don't read a book. Don't read a "How to guide." Just start doing it. I try to tell my undergraduates that, because, you know, we hear that these are students who are digitally native. I say, NO!, they're digitally ignorant. Half of my students don't know how to do a Tumblr post. They don't know where to find the submit button—a third of them are not on Facebook; they're on Snapchat or Instagram. And so what I would tell a budding electronic scholar who was interested in pursuing the study of stereotypes is to just begin. That's how I did the *Tex[t]-Mex* galleryblog (<http://textmex.blogspot.com>). I just started posting things I would run across that were related to the ideas of the book and that I didn't get to talk about in the book. And at the beginning there was extensive commentary. I mean, the first two years of *Tex[t]-Mex galleryblog*, if I were to publish them, it'd be a 3 volume book, because I was writing about these phenomena.

Nowadays I don't have time for extensive posts on the *Tex[t]-Mex* blog because I'm moving on to my new project, *Eyegiene*. And so I'll post stuff maybe once every fifteen days, ten days, on the blog related to the book, but I don't have that time to put the extensive commentary. But a 'youngin', a new person, who is just starting, you know, maybe you want to carve out your own particular phenomena.

The beauty of the web is that it's collaborative; people will write in, they'll send you stuff. You know, I get the most amazing submissions—things I have never seen before from folks I know and from complete strangers on Facebook. My career was changed by Facebook, in fact I probably owe Zuckerberg, he's already a billionaire, but I owe him about ten percent because I get so many invitations, so many new ideas from now a cluster of correspondents on his damned web—you know with over four thousand 'friends' sending me things they find, I don't have to do much digging anymore. They become my correspondents, you know, like contributing editors.

And so my big advice is don't think about it, just start. Give it a name that encapsulates what you think is your idea so you have a good hook, you do need a hook. *Tex[t]-Mex* is a good hook, *galleryblog* is not. I wish I just had named the blog *Tex[t]-Mex*. Just keep it clean.

So keep it simple and stupid, like they say, and just do it. And the thing about blogs, for the first year you have to be, you have to work it. It's like raising a crop, you have to go and post and re-post, and if someone comments you have to respond to it, so that you develop a body of co-conspirators who assist you with your work.

DC: I want to go back quickly to the idea of Mextasy and your blog. It's turning into documentary project. How did you come up with this word? Can you tell us more about this project in general and what it focuses on?

WN: Yes, here we are talking about a metamorphosis, a transition to TV. "Professors on TV"—the mind reels, all of this scary shit, all this potential for catastrophe! "Mextasy" was the name I gave to the traveling museum exhibition version of *Tex[t]-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the "Mexican" in America*. It's a pop up gallery and it's also a standard museum exhibition based on the book *Text[t]-Mex*. I didn't want to call the museum exhibition *Tex[t]-Mex* because in my own mind I associated that term only with the stereotypes: the bandit Mexican, the rapist Mexican, the Latina bombshell femme fatale, not that there

is nothing wrong with that, or the Latino bombshell home fatale.

So I didn't want to call it *Tex[t]-Mex*. I wanted to call it something positive, something exciting, something sexy; and so I thought of ecstasy one day. It was probably in the shower, TMI right? And it just hit me, Mextasy, and I wrote it down, and I didn't know how I was going to spell it. You know. Then I finally found the spelling, M E X T A S Y, that I thought worked, and the rest is history. The exhibition has been a huge success with 25 to 30 exhibitions all over the country; actually, internationally, in Canada as well.

And then the next metamorphosis, from gallery to the boob tube! What happened was about 2 years ago I had a student in my class, an older student, his name is Gerardo Juárez. His nickname is Bola. It was a large lecture, 200 students in an introduction to literature class. Bola was a graduate student, but he wanted to sit in because we had met at a Latin American Studies party, and he thought that I was curious, like "who is this Nericcio character?" So he sat in the class and at the end of the class, he turns out to be an entrepreneur, an early investor in Facebook, from Mexico City, a lawyer who didn't want to be lawyer any more, he wants to be a writer. And he says: "Nericcio," that's what he calls me, "Nericcio, we have to make this into a TV show, what you are doing is important." Turns out he works for Blindspot TV, which is an international multinational television production company based out of Mexico City. Long story short, long story long, they made me an offer I couldn't refuse. They invested close to three quarters of a million dollars in the pilot and six episodes. We finished filming the first episode and it's debuting on May 3rd at UCSD, at a film festival.

DC: Your recent work has centered upon a concept you term Xicanosmosis. How do you define this concept, and how might a transnational approach inform your work here?

WN: I'm always feeding off the work of other people, right? And the definitive works on the border that I've run across when I came up with the word Xicanosmosis were Carlos Fuentes and Gloria Anzaldúa. And both of them spoke about the border between the United States and Mexico as a wound, *una herida abierta*, or something like that. My Spanish is horrible. And this idea of an open wound or sutured wound is very poetic and very powerful and it reflects a lot of what you find at the border. The actual war between the US and Mexico, occupation forces through Veracruz, three times in the last, what, 150 years? Marines have occupied Mexican territory, and oh Jesus, I lost my train of thought....

.... Oh Xicanosmosis! So I wasn't content with the idea of a wound, though, because I'm from Laredo. For me, the border was every day, not every day, but we would cross the border and it was no big deal. You put a dime in a turnstile, you walked across and a Mexican agent on the other side would nod at you, you go across, you'd hang out, you'd party, you'd drink, you know, we buy cheap booze, we bring it back. The border was just an alternative space where for a teenager you had full freedom. You know, no one was going to card you, the clubs were great, cigarettes were cheap. It's where all your friends went. It's like Cheers, to go to Nuevo Laredo from Laredo, Texas, in the 70s was like an episode of *Cheers*. Everybody knew your name, if they didn't, they pretended to. It was great.

And so *una herida abierta* doesn't capture my experience of the border. For me the experience of the border was always about transfer. And I always think a little salaciously, I like this idea of osmosis. Osmosis for me is intercourse, it's communication, it's exchange, strictly speaking. I was a bio major. I was going to be an oncologist until I turned nineteen and flunked out of organic chemistry. So I was pretty familiar with biological metaphors, so the idea of a transfer of vital substances through semipermeable fabric or membrane—I like the idea of fabric more than membrane—but semipermeable membrane, that for me was *La Frontera*. So I took the word Chicano, because, you know, progressive left-of-center Americans of Mexican descent, me; and then "osmosis," and what I got was Xicanosmosis—what a

mouthful!

What I began to unravel were these dozens of writers, and performers and actors and painters, whose work was inflected not just by traditions that were largely American, traditions from the United States and England. No! These peoples' work was informed by Mexico and Latin America, and in a lot of cases *both simultaneously*. That is, their influence was both Latino and good old Uncle Sam. And so I wanted to talk about that. Sometimes you have to invent terms, neologisms to account for phenomena that are not chronicled, so I came up with that term. I hope it sticks. It's a mouthful, it's hard to pronounce: CHEE KAHN OSS MOE SIS, something like that!

DC: You said that you understand this term as an exchange of elements. Are there restrictions of what could be exchanged between these two sides of the border?

WN: Restrictions? Absolutely! It's a *semipermeable* membrane. Oh yes, especially since 9/11. The semi permeability of the border—it became less permeable in some respects. But this also coincides with the rise of the, you know, the Twitter-sphere, social media and digital media. So now, ironically, the border itself is harder to cross but communication and collaboration cross borders is easier. Borderlines are uncomfortable. I mean US special forces, the Border Patrol, the agents, the National Guard in some counties....everybody makes you feel criminal. It's not like in the past where it was kind of a naturalized for me. You know, *cruzar la frontera* was like breathing. Now it's like going through Checkpoint Charlie, strip and search.

So existentially, to move between borders is now more difficult, but because of mass media and social media, we, at least those of us that live along the Mexican border, we are even more bombarded now by Latino/a culture. Investment bankers are not stupid people. They make money for a reason. Investors have decided that Spanish, Spanish language, Spanish dominant Latino communities are a source of profit. So in Southern California we are entering this brave new world: Latina/o high density, high saturated popular cultural and so I feel even more immersed. So in some respects, the border is more highly policed, in other respects it's more chaotic now. It's more Latino/a than it's ever been.

DC: I'm curious as to how stereotypes regarding brown bodies have changed either since your childhood, or when you began your academic career? And kind of piggybacking off of that question, what do you see as the most prevalent or dangerous stereotype today regarding Latino/as?

WN: I will answer the first questions first and then you can remind me of the second question because it's a complicated question. The difference between when I was coming to consciousness and now is that stereotypes are more aware of themselves. I will explain with two examples: Robert Rodriguez' *Machete* films and Sofia Vergara on *Modern Family* but also with what happened at the Emmys (2014), where Sofia Vergara placed herself up on a rotating pedestal, basically as a statue, as like Pygmalion's wet dream of the Latina bombshell.

In both cases you have very self-aware Latino/a artists, fully trafficking in some of the most obvious Latino/a stereotypes that exist. In both cases though you don't have some Caucasian puppet master, you have the Latino/a artist themselves profiting off ironic and non-ironic re-depictions of classic images. In Danny Trejo's case, in *Machete*: the scary Mexican, the scary bandit Mexican with the big knife, you know, who is prone to ultraviolent acts. Trejo in person is a sweetheart, I mean, he's incredible, a really really nice cat. And so what you have here is a pretty self-aware, smart director: Robert Rodriguez, you know, Quentin Tarantino's collaborator, making films about scary Mexicans, about Mexican-US conflict that are almost outsized cinematic allegories of fear and progress at once.

And sometimes, in my argument, it gets the best of him. I think Robert is one of the most progressive filmmakers we have, who happens to be an American of Mexican descent, but I think sometimes it's show business. He wants to make a cool profit and he does. He's a filmmaker. He's a Hollywood star. And that's bound up with the economics of the traditional. Don't push it too much because your product won't sell.

Vergara is more interesting, a little more interesting to me. People were outraged at her scene at the Emmys where she placed herself on a pedestal as a kind of, I don't know, Latina Emmy award. She was a statuette. The base was rotating so that she became a kind of mock statue. That's smart. I actually think that's funny. She's a savvy woman. She's a very smart woman: head of own her own production company, multimillionaire, one of the biggest well-paid stars in Hollywood. So the difference between the past and the present is that people who are in the biz are self-aware and aware about the stereotypes and they are reshaping them for fun, profit, and sometimes just for irony, for being smart. What was the second part?

DC: The second part was: What do you see as the most prevalent or dangerous stereotype today regarding Latino/as?

WN: Oh, the most dangerous stereotype, and thank you to Fox News for this, is that of that of the undocumented diseased immigrant and then it's the immigrant that would steal your job. It's the idea of the alien without, who comes within and displaces your economy, and not just your economy, sort of your soul because they speak a different language. They are from a different tradition. And so this idea of the undocumented immigrant as one who not only steals your job, not only is sick with leprosy, or whatever disease Lou Dobbs, Jobs, Dobbs, asshole, blue asshole says (his Mexi-loathing drives me to blather!). But they are also alien, they are strange, they are frightening. You know, scary ... foreground fear and you get people on your side. That's how the fascist mind works and they are good at it. I've been trying to puzzle together, I mean, this is part of Mextasy. How someone who is from the left and progressive can capitalize on that. Obviously, it works, you know. I don't want to foment fear, but could we foment fear of the fascist in just an effective way? You know, I think of John Heartfield's montages during the Second World War of the rise of fascists and the fascists. I love Heartfield's cut-up/collage style. You know, I want to do the same thing: Limbaugh, the Koch brothers, and Hitler, why not? They do the same thing. They paint with a wide brush. We should be able to do the same things ourselves in a way that is engaging, fun, but a little bit more thoughtful.

DC: Many describe you as a public intellectual. How do you define that role and how have you tried to engage a wider audience by incorporating elements of pop culture related to the U.S./Mexico border?

WN: Scary! We don't have Chicano/a public intellectuals. We have too few. I mean, we need more Gustavo Arellanos, we need a dozen more Maria Coteras, we need a thousand more Frederick Aldamas. We need these people. I guess it hit me about fifteen, oh how many years has it been? Wow, twenty-four years ago!

One of the first things I did when I came to San Diego State is I was asked to keynote a Chicano high school conference. Every year MEChA, the Chicano student group at San Diego State University, brings high school students from across Southern California to San Diego State for a one-day fair. You know the idea "be at the university" as a guest, you'll be bound to come back as a student. And they are all high school students. So they asked me to keynote and I got up on stage. It was the first time I addressed such a mob, it was about twenty-three or twenty-four hundred people, huge audience, and it was exhilarating and as I was talking, you know, I was talking about the need for more Cesar Chavezes.

And I remember putting it to the audience, haranguing the rowdy throng with “which one of you people is going to step forward if Chavez falls and is going to take his place? Who’s going to be the face of progressivity and political action and social justice for Mexican Americans?”

And, I guess it occurred to me sometime after that, that I might have to do some of that. That some of that role was going to have to fall on me because for whatever reason, I was Mexican, but I didn’t have a Mexican accent. I was raised by television: *Captain Kangaroo* and *Gilligan’s Island*. And so I can speak with a very, you know, I’ve done radio so I know I have a voice that translates as, not Tom Brokaw, but middle of the road.

But I’m also *mexicano*, *puedo hablar español*. Not well, but you know, *entiendo y ...* I can communicate. And so if I have this linguistic shape shifting ability, I better damn well do something with it. And I’m educated; I’ve got a Ph.D from an Ivy League college. I’m just going to stay in the Ivy League, I mean university classroom? No, I had to share it. I had to go back home.

My dream was to go back the University of Texas. Boy, Texas could use me now, I think. I think Texas is on the brink of change, but man, it’s gone through fifteen years of horror, just horror. And it’s the source of a lot of hate across the United States. And other states, like Kentucky, followed Texas’s model, which is a bad model. It’s not the country, you know, my father fought for in World War II. This is not the nation that a whole generation fought for to defend. This is a scary brave new world of neo-fascism. So I guess the public intellectual dimension is a strange word because I guess it should just be like a public thinker because I don’t want to be an intellectual when I talk to the public. I just want to be someone who is relatively well educated, who might be able to bring a different perspective to things in a way that engages with a broader audience.

Notes

1. **WN:** Since this interview was recorded, anything that was subterranean about this anti-Mexican hate has surfaced in the rise of Donald Trump’s naked fascist hate speech.