Migration and Stereotypes in Performance and Culture

Edited by
Yana Meerzon
David Dean
Daniel McNeil

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Acknowledgements

This book was first conceived at the Migration/Representation/ Stereotypes conference that convened at the University of Ottawa in April 2017. This bilingual and international conference was organized by David Dean, Daniel McNeil, Yana Meerzon, Sylvain Schryburt, and Natalia Vesselova, and would not have been possible without the generous support and labour of many academics, artists, students, administrators and theatre enthusiasts. We would like to pay special tribute to Peter Kuling, Tina Goralski, John Lockhart, and Angela Hache of the Department of Theatre, University of Ottawa.

We would also like to extend special thanks to the Canadian and international artists who participated in this conference, including Chokri Ben Chikha of Action Zoo Humain (Belgium), Keira Loughran, Daniel David Moses, Henry Daniel, the UK performer Natasha Davis, who brought her one-woman *Teeth Show* to Ottawa, and the company *Voyageurs Immobiles* from Montréal, its artistic director Milena Buziak and performers Hodan Youssouf and Florence Blain Mbaye for presenting a staged-reading of the play *Traversée* by Estelle Savasta.

Without the supportive and good-humoured work of student-volunteers (Véronique Belinge, Ryan Borochovitz, Kyle Cameron, Emily Connell, Katarina Ghdaye, Brittany Johnston, Kellie MacDonald, Ludmylla Mar Dos Reis, Jonas Mclean, Patrick Michael Teed, and Agostino Delannoy from the University of Ottawa; and Sara Hollett and Phoebe Mannell from Carleton University), the successful delivery of the conference would not have been possible.

Although Sylvain and Natalia were unable to continue with the project as co-editors, they remain a big part of this book. We would also like to extend our special thanks to Emily Cuggy and Elizabeth Paradis who were exemplary copy editors; Aly Murphy for helping us compile the index; Elaine Aston and Brian Singleton, who supported this project from the outset and accepted it into their innovative book series; Jack Heeney and Eileen Srebernik, who provided invaluable assistance shepherding this project into publication; and the various photographers and artists who allowed us to use their work as illustrations for the book.

We would like to pay tribute to our contributors for their collegiality, incisive analysis, and ability to push us into some fresh thinking about migration and stereotypes in performance and culture.

Finally, this book is dedicated with love to Alex Taylor-McNeil for her infectious joy, which makes everything better; to Calum Dean for his passion and commitment to social justice; and to the Meerzon family for constant support, understanding, and encouragement.

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Introduction

Daniel McNeil, Yana Meerzon, and David Dean

It is a truth universally acknowledged that anyone writing a novel about "the British intellectual Left in the late twentieth century, who began by looking around for some exemplary figure to link its various trends and phases, would find themselves spontaneously reinventing Stuart Hall" (Eagleton 1996). After departing Jamaica on a Rhodes scholarship, Hall encountered and survived the distilled Englishness of Oxford in the 1950s. As director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies between 1968 and 1979, he developed telling metaphors for the British public in which the people who migrated from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean to the United Kingdom became the "sugar you stir" in the great British cup of tea (Hall 1978). As Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at the Open University from 1979 until his retirement in 1997, he grappled with the authoritarian populism of Thatcherism, a crisis of law and order, and political rhetoric that depicted migrants as unrecognizable

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aliens that threatened to pollute, undermine, or swamp British greatness. Although we still await the great British novel to feature a character modelled on Hall, posthumous collections of his essays and the Stuart Hall Library at Rivington Place in London attest to his abiding influence on British society and culture.

This interdisciplinary collection of essays pays homage to the political and critical tradition of British Cultural Studies exemplified by Hall's work and seeks to avoid the pitfalls of recent North American work that appropriates Hall as "the godfather of multiculturalism" (Yardley 2014; Martin 2014). The co-editors of the book—first and second-generation migrants to Canada from British, Caribbean, and Russian diasporas—have not only shared Hall's bewilderment with American Cultural Studies, they have also sought to consider a different possibility to political and social scientists in the West who primarily read multiculturalism as a "governmental and/or rhetorical aspiration that is primarily about group cultural rights and formal institutional inclusion" (Valluvan 2019). Our goal is not to translate and simplify the informal, messy dimensions of urban multicultures for the benefit of readers and practitioners who find it difficult to grasp the points being made (Hall 1992b; MacCabe 2008; McNeil 2015). Indeed, we have written elsewhere about "shy elitists" who, fearing that metaphor, irony, and allusions to literary fiction may not be intelligible to a broad cross-section of North Americans, end up throwing the baby of imaginative, radical work on convivial multicultures out with the bathwater of exclusionary nationalism, Eurocentrism, and racial and religious discrimination (Tator and Henry 2006, 141; Henry and Tator 2006, 235; McNeil 2020).

To transform the merely professional discussions of multiculturalism, immigration, and "race relations" into something more lively and radical, our project delves beneath the media headlines about the "migration crisis," Brexit, Trump, and similar events and spectacles that have been linked to the intensification and proliferation of stereotypes about migrants since 2015. In our initial gathering at an interdisciplinary, international, and bilingual conference on Migration/Representation/Stereotypes at the University of Ottawa in 2017, we expressed our commitment to bringing together Cultural Studies and Performance Studies, amongst other fields, to address stereotypes that (1) reduce groups to a few, simple, essential characteristics (such as irrationality, rhythm, animism, oneness with nature, and sensuality); (2) symbolically fix these characteristics as essential and

natural features of people and groups; and (3) tend to occur when there are gross inequalities of power (Hall et al. 1978; Hall 1992a; Hall 1997).

Our shared interests in Hall's intellectual project and legacy encouraged us to pursue the type of collaborative writing project that is often deemed essential to conjunctural analysis that examines "the coming together of often distinct though related contradictions" in a particular historical moment (Hall 1979; Grossberg 2019). In this collection of essays on Migration and Stereotypes in Performance and Culture, we consider the multiple problematics that emerge in a historical moment in which there are more displaced persons than at any time since World War II (approximately 244 million people were defined as international migrants in 2015, a 41% increase since 2000). We examine, for example, how neoliberal and neoconservative rhetorics conjoin to express anxieties about migrants "suspected of spreading various diseases and contagions" that threaten the production of "healthy, self-regulating, and self-fashioning citizens" (Iton 2008, 133). We show how discourse about migration intersects with the desires of subaltern subjects to "push for inclusion amongst those protected by the state while at the same time acknowledging the limits of this recognition" (Iton 2008, 202). We pay attention to affective landscapes in which multicultural national citizens are accorded greater universality and legitimacy in opposition to refugees and other groups that are imagined to be "monocultural" Others or multicultural global citizens (Melamed 2006). Essays in this collection apply keywords in Cultural Studies and Performance Studies such as abjection, agnotology, neoliberalism, precarity, securitization, self-fashioning, the society of the spectacle, and surveillance to disrupt attempts to fix refugees as dangerous, violent threats, revolting subjects as well as ineffectual, passive victims (Tyler 2013; Butler 2016; Žižek 2016). Contributors also ask how artists, academics, and practitioners may intervene in a conjuncture that is dominated by the policing of borders (the gated community, the carceral state, the walls to defend the greatness of the homeland, etc. [Goldberg 2008]), and the presumption that migrants are problems to be solved by more efficient management, increased surveillance and reformist gestures of recognition, inclusion, integration, settlement, and civic participation.

Committed to a collaborative, interdisciplinary, and multinational approach that treats the nation as one frame of meaning amongst others, this collection is able to bring together a range of discourses about citizenship and settler coloniality that, when separated from each other,

disarticulated, and struggled against in isolation, cannot be recognized, contested, and challenged. It arranges contributions into three research areas and fields of inquiry—Theatre and Performance Studies, Cultural and Migration Studies, and Applied Theatre and History. There are, however, revealing overlaps and connections across the three parts that invite readers to imagine new ways of belonging with time, space, and each other (Grossberg 2000, 89).

The Lives of Others: Precarious Bodies and Self-Fashioning

Recent scholarship has demonstrated the ability of theatre and performance to seize the attention of audiences that may be desensitized to statistics about the deaths of anonymous refugees and migrants. In telling stories about migration and confronting the bodies of the performers with the bodies of spectators in the immediacy of a live performance, theatre practitioners can transform nameless migrants into individual agents with personal histories, memories and identities. Moreover, they may resist the tendency to sentimentalize or simplify the condition of exile by treating migrants as always and only victims or comedic stereotypes (see, for example, Bauman 2004, 2011; Boym 2001; Hoffman 1990; Jestrovic 2013; Kristeva 1991; Lamming 1992; Meerzon 2012, 2017, 2018; Rudakoff 2017; Said 1984; Wilmer 2018; Zaroulia 2018). Recent studies of political theatre and cultural performance have considered the refugee challenge in Europe as an invitation to construct "a mythopoetics of migration" through theatre and cultural performance (Cox 2014). Theatre practitioners have used the tactics of adaptation as well as documentary, autobiographical, applied and multilingual theatre, and critical counter-mapping (Balfour 2013; Jeffers 2013; Nolette and Babayants 2017; Meerzon and Pewny 2018). They have also developed movement-based theatre (Mitra 2015), intercultural theatre work (Gilbert and Lo 2007; McIvor 2016), and performance interventions and activism (Fleishman 2015; Marschall 2018).

The chapters in "The Lives of Others: Precarious Bodies and Self-Fashioning" bring together close readings of theatre and film produced by several provocative, suggestive, and explorative artists. The interdisciplinary overlap—from traditional theatre performance to performance intervention, activism, and film—deepens our understanding of the impact

migratory and intercultural performances have on the conversation about the seduction and danger of cultural stereotypes. The cultural other—recognized and felt through the materiality of a migrant or diasporic body, objects displaced people carry, and languages they speak—often serves as a token of theatrical verisimilitude and authenticity that theatrical interventions and films seek when they artistically address migration. Despite their noble goals, such representations might overuse the stereotype, and hence risk further propagating the phenomenon of danger-fetishism (Ahmed 2000) and verging on political pornography (Sontag 2003). Hence chapters in this part consider how artists and scholars may contest the exploitation precarious bodies by political and media institutions and performance activists.

In her reflections on the *The Dead are Coming* (2015), a performance intervention by the German performance company The Centre for Political Beauty that seeks to energize and mobilize crowds, Meerzon shows that despite their good intentions, such artistic provocations might fall victims of their political objectives, as unintentionally they might re-enforce the negative tropes of anti-migration discourses that envisage today's displacement as bodily overflow and human waste. In contrast, Purcell-Gates demonstrates that familiarity of objects and bodies that meet in the intimate space of a theatre performance can serve as an antidote to the dangers of over-representation and stereotyping. She reminds us that in the age of technological innovations that intersect with and hijack human bodies, domestic and natural objects as well as nuanced storytelling can significantly challenge media-driven and over-simplified representations of refugees. Thus, as this part argues, a focus on making performances with "live materials" in theatres of migration can provoke more powerful affective responses. Kee-Yoon Nahm proposes another compelling perspective on the (ab)use of ethnic and cultural stereotypes on stage, specifically when it comes to the use of a racialized body. Nahm argues that theatrical performances often employ racial stereotypes for the sole purpose of making audiences—especially those who are not racialized minorities—feel uncomfortable. He reminds us that producing and multiplying racist stereotypes is not confined to the past, and so theatre is in the privileged position to make spectators confront and wrestle with their feelings of uncertainty, guilt, and responsibility when watching stereotypes on stage. This search for truth and authenticity that marks performance works about migration or created by refugee or migrant artists often characterizes their engagement with other material elements of performance. For example, the

suitcase—a necessary prop of travelling—has become a leading visual and conceptual trope in mythologizing migration on many international stages. One of the primary symbols to refer to relocation, displacement, and exile, Sarit Cofman-Simhon argues, the suitcase has emerged as a special object in Jewish cultural memory and Israeli identity more specifically. Often, in the collective psyche of Israeli audiences, belonging and homelessness are symbolically linked. However, the suitcase—both as a material object and a powerful image of exile—can also be a commanding stereotype. It can trigger collective and personal memories and serve as a reminder of the terrible pasts, but it can also act as a symbol of hope and future. In this case, a stereotype can become a welcome artistic trope and symbolic repetition.

Paradoxically, language—words themselves—can become the material signifier of migration, specifically when the traveller realizes that speaking in a new tongue and addressing new audience, he/she is inevitably caught within the impossibility of cultural translation, as suggested by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2000). Although focusing on the medium of film, J. Douglas Clayton offers a compelling argument on impossibility of translating self for the other, regardless of the medium or language one must use. Focusing on Andrey Tarkovsky's film *Nostalghia* (1983), one of the most compelling and insightful films about the hardships of exile and produced by one of the iconic figures of the twentieth-century art scene, who was himself an outcast, Clayton examines how this cinematic masterpiece deploys a familiar narrative of migration as personal nostalgia and creatively subverts stereotypes produced by the state. On the one hand, Tarkovsky's film offers a recognizable representation of the Russian intellectual standing alone and above the circumstances that led to their exile; on the other, it investigates whether a migrant can take his art with him and translate it for a new cultural environment. In this example, stereotypes work both ways—a host culture recognizes a foreigner as other and a traveller holds cultural and ideological presumptions that he brought from home. Clayton insists that the impossibility of translation or self-translation for the other becomes a device of filmmaking and narrative commentary as offered by Tarkovsky's cinematic style. Using the poetry of his father that serves as an inspiration for the aesthetics of his film, Tarkovsky provocatively asks if film offers a better medium to translate the materiality of a national culture and exilic self that poetry does not. This part, "The Lives of Others: Precarious Bodies

and Self-Fashioning," therefore, aims to mobilize the complexity of stereotype—on the one hand, each article condemns the overuse of stereotype that can only re-enforce the precarity of migrant experiences; on the other hand, it demonstrates that when it comes to performative representation stereotypes are unavoidable. It insists that when theatre or film employ stereotypes, its makers are responsible for understanding, acknowledging, and critically examining the potential emotional, psychological, and even legal impact these stereotypes can produce both on the subject matter of the performance and their audiences. Without such awareness, the political goals and the ethical outcomes of any performance about migration remain questionable.

Multiculturalism, Citizenship, and Belonging: Deep Equality and Diasporic Cultures

In addition to building on new research at the intersection of Migration and Performance Studies, this collection complicates and exemplifies new keywords in Cultural Studies and Migration Studies. In his much-cited *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams (1976) had no entries for "migration," "immigration," or "borders." *The Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, edited by Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris (2005) also omitted these contested and critical terms (although it did include the keywords "sovereignty," "diaspora," "human rights," "mobility," "post-colonialism," and "race" that relate to the study of migration and borders). To address this gap in the field of Cultural Studies, Casas-Cortes et al. (2014, 59) have proposed new keywords that specifically address migration and borders for scholars and practitioners who seek to (1) study new problem-space or problematics, following the deepening of globalization, the 2007–2008 financial crisis, and austerity politics, (2) critically support movements, such as "No One is Illegal" and "No Border," which contested the illegalization and demonization of migrants and creatively used new forms of digital and social media, and (3) "deconstruct and transform the established repertoires of both traditional and critical migration studies in productive ways."

What is this "traditional" in "traditional migration studies"? Although historians of migration have chronicled the spread of Homo erectus and Homo sapiens from the Rift Valley in Africa to Europe and other continents between 1.5 million and 5000 BCE and explained how Ancient Greek, Roman, Mesopotamian, Inca, Indus, and Zhou empires depended on migration (Koser 2007), Casas-Cortes et al. (2014) are primarily concerned with what has been framed, imagined, and invented as traditional in the relatively recent past. They associate the development of traditional migration studies with the movement of Europeans to the New World at the end of the nineteenth century and the "guest worker regime" in West Germany and other European countries in the 1950s and 1960s, which are said to inform its residual Eurocentrism, its relationship to industrialization, and its concern with the social and economic integration of the migrant (Casas-Cortes et al. 2014, 61–62).

In contradistinction to traditional migration studies, Casas-Cortes et al. associate critical migration studies with interventions that carefully engage with critical race theory, feminism, labour studies, and transnationalism to disrupt the assumption that respectable, rational, and "common sense" discussions of migration include ones that talk about a "migration crisis" threatening European sovereignty. Public intellectuals working within a tradition of critical migration studies approach, for example, may seek to smuggle discussions of a crisis of European institutions, overdevelopment, or capitalism into a liberal public sphere. Historical approaches to critical migration studies may emphasize the predominant migration event of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—a slave trade that forced an estimated 12 million people from mainly western Africa across the Atlantic to the Americas and across the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean—rather than focus on movement to and from Europe. Critical migration scholars interested in space, place, and difference may demonstrate how the use of the term "climate refugees" has recycled and redeployed racist notions of environmental determinism and a natural hierarchy of development in which "primitive Others" were framed as passive objects in need of aid, expert management, and supervision (Piguet 2013). In short, critical migration studies tend to draw on intellectual traditions that express scepticism about the deployment of the term "clash of civilisations" to describe conflicts between Western civilizations and the non-Western world (Huntington 1993), and invites reflection about the dangers of a "clash of ignorance" inspiring fearful and anxious responses to anything that is deemed foreign (Said 1978, 2001; Rappaport 2018).

Building on recent developments in critical migration studies, the chapters in "Multiculturalism, Citizenship, and Belonging: Deep Equality and Diasporic Cultures" address national citizenship ceremonies, international sporting events, and diasporic communities in which the stereotypes of migrants are sustained, reproduced, negotiated, and conditioned. The authors in this part address the processes whereby migrants bridge and maintain engagements with "host countries" and "societies of origin." They consider the ethics and aesthetics of translocal, diasporic identities in unsettling national conversations on migration that primarily revolve around the surveillance and recognition of immigrants and racialized groups. As Zaheeda P. Alibhai demonstrates in her analysis of the ban against wearing the niqab and burqa at the Canadian Citizenship Ceremony between 2011 and 2015, the racialized female body becomes an object of political and ideological manipulation, a hostage not simply to mediatized and performative discourses but to the legislative practices of Canada that guarantee freedom of one's cultural, religious, and linguistic expression. In such a context, the Canadian state assumes the role of arbiter of religious praxis as well as human rights and freedom of expression. Helin Burkay and David Dean also address an oft-overlooked area of Canadian governmentality. Drawing on public debates about what constitutes Canada's national dish, as well as restaurant menus, food festivals, and a recent stamp issue celebrating Canadian desserts, they reveal the tensions underlying the elusive concept of Canadian cuisine and posit that it is more productive to speak of a culinary tradition that is dynamic, adaptive, and multidimensional.

Shifting focus from Canadian state practices to lived multicultures in Brazil, Gana Ndiaye uses migration records and ethnographic field research conducted in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to illustrate the long history of Senegalese settlement in Brazil, the diversity of Senegalese migrants and the networks that channel them in the country, and the strategies by which they showcase their cultural difference and claim "cultural citizenship." Peter Kuling also addresses the intersection of body, state, and performance in Brazil by studying stereotypes about refugees deployed by athletes, reporters, and the organizing Olympic Committee during the 2016 Olympics. Using promotional materials and broadcasts created by the official Brazilian and international corporate media for the 2016 Games—particularly those related to the performance of the Refugee Olympic Team—Kuling demonstrates how media outlets have sought to elicit sympathy for refugees while simultaneously commodifying and fetishizing athletic bodies for global consumption.

Dreams, Memories, and Storytelling: Applied Theatre and Communities of Praxis

We are sitting in Salar's Afghan restaurant sipping tea and chewing on pita bread. We listen as Safi, a thirty-five-year-old former literature student and refugee from Syria reminds us that those joining us have travelled across the seas and across Europe to get "to safety, to our dreams … People meet, sing, share stories of great journeys and stories of home" (Murphy and Robertson 2017, 36). We are in Zhangal, the Jungle, and we, the audience, are fully immersed in this performance of lives lived in this migrant community on the outskirts of Calais. We want to comfort Salar when he hears the news of a young man's death trying to hitch a ride on a lorry to reach Britain, shout at the French police when they attack the café, and we occasionally glare at those observing at a distance, watching what is happening before their eyes replicated on television screens in front of them. They, like us, are theatre-goers, but they sit in the balcony, beyond the cliffs of Dover; we are sitting on cushions, on benches. We are in the café. We are the café. We are migrants and refugees and volunteers. We were not assigned those roles as we entered the theatre through corridors lined with bedding and supplies for the café's kitchen. We chose them because the play has compelled us to do so, through our feelings, experiences, and imaginings. We have repositioned and reinvented ourselves in the bodies and experiences of others. We have embraced difference.

The Jungle, which ran at London's Young Vic, National, and Playhouse Theatres throughout 2017 and 2018, spoke to real issues, drew on verbatim and documented stories, and performance strategies associated with the theatre of the real and the theatre of the oppressed. Positioning the play in the traditions of applied, verbatim, documentary, and realist theatre places significance on the eight months writers Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson spent working with refugees in Calais. It appreciates the theatrical energies generated by the actors, some of whom were themselves migrants and refugees—Safi was played by Ammar Haj Ahmad, an actor trained in Damascus who ended up in Britain seeking asylum (Gill 2018). It also acknowledged that the audience, who had come for a night out, was implicit in hearing these stories rarely told and sharing experiences rarely shared. And, of course, we too had our own stories.

As the change of focus and voice in this part of our introduction suggests, we shift attention in "Dreams, Memories, and Storytelling: Applied

Theatre and Communities of Praxis" from academic explorations of ste-reotypes to the experiences of theatre and performance practitioners and their audiences. This final part of our book is about histories, memories, and dreams performed. It focuses on artists who use storytelling to con-front xenophobia by capturing and sharing untold stories and the experi-ences of others. While it showcases the voices of theatre and performance activists, many who are themselves the victims of displacement or are actively engaged in working with refugee and migrant communities, the methodologies, technologies, and strategies they use are shared by public historians—academics and practitioners who create histories in the public sphere. Drawing, for example, on oral histories, the remembered stories people tell about the past, public historians, like artists engaged in docu-mentary or verbatim theatre, re-present past stories in the contemporary present with the conviction that such work will contribute to an improved future. Recognizing their role in such history-making has led not only to more transparent and openly reflexive practices by researchers, but more importantly a sharing of authority that insists on participant engagement, influence, and control in shaping outcomes (Frisch 1990, 2003; High 2014, 2018). Each of the authors in this part speaks openly about their roles in shaping the stories of the others they re-present and represent through theatre and performance.

Having experienced the effect of war trauma first-hand, Nimo Bokore writes about her project that gives voice to Somali women's experiences of forced migration, war, displacement and marginalization. Drawing on methodological frameworks informed by autoethnography and Black Feminism, Bokore gathered the stories of twelve Somali women residing in Canada and found storytelling to be a powerful tool in the journey from trauma to healing. Enabling silenced voices to be heard is also a motive behind Kasia Lech's exploration of the work of artist-immigrants who find themselves often stereotyped, both in the media and in the the-atre work they are offered to perform (as strangers or, worse, as danger-ous, evil, or unwitting foreigners). Lech demonstrates how new work by migrant theatre practitioners employ many strategies, such as multilin-gualism, to offer new perspectives that enable a reimagining of the social, one that highlights commonalities rather than differences, and challenges stereotypes rather than reinforcing them.

Sharing Lech's interest in community-based theatre work in post-Brexit Britain, Ida Casilli offers an account of her project with the Italian com-munity of Peterborough, UK. Drawing on oral histories and testimonies

that reveal a community which embodied, and even perpetuated stereotypes attached to them from the 1920s to the 1950s, Casilli's theatrical work offered opportunities for new imagining and new storytelling. Using devised and testimonial theatre approaches, the project ended with a dramatic text and a theatre performance that reflected the personal and communal experiences of Italian migrants in the United Kingdom, but also resonated with how refugees and migrants from Africa and the Middle East are represented in contemporary Britain. Michaelis Georgiou demonstrates how the techniques of truth-telling and myth-busting privileged by documentary theatre's aesthetics can combat stereotypes when representing refugees on stage. Examining the bilingual (German-French) BAAL Novo Theater Eurodistrict theatre company's productions involving community outreach, Georgiou shows how these projects played a vital role in constructing a public space in which to discuss some of the most pressing issues in the local community while fighting stereotypes related to the political and cultural realities of today's Europe.

The book concludes with Alda Terracciano's account of her multisensory project, *Streets of… 7 Cities in 7 Minutes*. Telling the story of three routes (the Indo-European migrations, the Silk Road, the transatlantic Slave trade) as they resurface in everyday lives globally, the project included interactive memory sessions with various diasporic communities living in London. Terraciano invited participants to share memories, thoughts, and feelings about a place that signified ways of understanding identity, belonging, and home. The project aspired to rouse its audiences into some fresh thinking about the use and abuse of stereotypes and expose them to the complexity of the questions and practices of mobility in today's Europe while also engaging the voices of migrants in remapping and re-thinking the relationships between the state, the media, and the Other in post-Brexit Britain.

At the start of act five of *The Jungle*, Safi asks "When does a place become home?" (Murphy and Robertson 2017, 67). Each of the chapters in part three interrogates notions of place and home, exploring how at various times and in diverse contexts individuals and communities negotiate stereotypes that exclude and navigate difference in the desire to belong. Each of the projects discussed not only dramatizes fearful and melancholic approaches to racialized minorities and migrants, but also provides us with tools to cultivate convivial multicultural spaces in which markers of racialized ethnic difference "cease to be objects of normative supervision *in the first place*" (Valluvan 2016, 219. Emphasis original). The productions and

projects discussed by Bokore, Lech, Casilli, Georgiou, and Terraciano confirm Hall's insistence that the best cultural work must destabilize categories and engage difference. Like *The Jungle*, these projects satisfy his theory of articulation, not only affirming the political nature of cultural work but being of practical value because they remain "open, partial, and incomplete" (Giroux 2000, 142; Clarke 2015).

*   *   *

Finding ourselves situated in a world that is framed as polarized and divisive—one in which journalists and social scientists repeatedly remind us of the perils of biases and stereotypes generating clashes and conflicts—our collection has sought to carve out the necessary theoretical and political space for informed, inspired, and interdisciplinary conversations about the myths and realities of culture, migration, performance, and stereotypes. Such spaces may cultivate reflection and praxis about what Zygmunt Bauman (2011) calls the unifying concept of dialogue—a skill which is not only the life-force of democracy and cohabitation but also something that can make the difference between us surviving together or perishing together. They may offer us opportunities to juxtapose geographies, histories, experiences, artistic practices, forms of cultural mediations, research methodologies, and academic practices as a means to resist agnotology or the cultural production of ignorance. They may even, perhaps, help us address what intellectuals such as Stuart Hall (2017a,b) and Edward Said considered a basic humanistic mission—the preservation of difference without, at the same time, sinking into the desire to dominate.

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The Lives of Others: Precarious Bodies and Self-Fashioning

Precarious Bodies in Performance Activism and Theatres of Migration

Yana Meerzon

In their article, "Mare Nostrum, or On Water Matters," Emma Cox and Marilena Zaroulia (2016, 141) note that as global migration is a new norm, we—artists, scholars, ordinary citizens—find ourselves "grappling with a distinct awareness of the limits of performance in the face of this most immediate and urgent of realities." This awareness emerges "alongside our understanding that forced migration is already caught within the domain of representation [...]: we classify migration, we legislate migration, we prevent or enable migration, we produce narratives and images about migration, we devise military strategies that criminalize migration" (141). At the same time, the body of a migrant remains evasive and difficult to represent without falling into blatant stereotyping, objectification, or even the further victimization of an already vulnerable subject. This difficulty with representation compels us to question the political, social, or philosophical impacts of performance activism and to consider the futility, lost opportunities, and disappointments frequently associated with them. Happenings, protests, manifestations, and organized processions

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present what Guy Debord (2002, 1) calls "an immense accumulation of *spectacles.* Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation." While watching political performances, therefore, we often ask: "What was it, exactly, that we were looking for a performance to do, ethically, aesthetically and politically? What did we expect?" (Cox and Zaroulia 2016, 141).

A participatory art form, performance activism often exploits the affectual power of excitement; it relies on "symbolic elements and uses of the body to communicate claims across borders and languages. […] More and more we witness and participate in local and global acts of protest and solidarity that entail visual, aural, and behavioral figurations evaluated by demonstrators as effective ways of making claims, reclaiming spaces, and denouncing abusive conditions" (Fuentes 2015). Performance activism is also emancipatory, in Jacques Rancière's (2009) sense of the term. It desires to "dismantle the Cartesian theatrical dichotomy of actor and spectator," turning spectators into politically engaged subjects, actively performing the acts of citizenship (Lewicki 2017, 276). By aspiring to "facilitate emotional access" to social and economic indecencies (286), performance activism energizes and mobilizes crowds. In this, although somewhat paradoxically, performance activism approximates the bread and circus tradition, a popular past-time of the Roman Empire that involved "chariot races and gladiatorial games that filled the belly and distracted the mind, allowing emperors to rule as they saw fit" (Astore 2013).

Of course, I do not want to suggest a direct link between performance activism and bread and circus past-times, but they are associated: there is danger in the use of political performance as an act of misrepresentation to deliberately excite an audience. This danger is specific to performance activism aiming at representation of the migration crisis. To remind their audiences of our transience and to focus our attention on the precariousness of life, this work stages migration as bodily overflow. It also creates circumstances of voyeurism that can edge on political pornography: "all images that display the violation of an attractive body are, to a certain degree, pornographic," Sontag (2003, 6) writes. "But images of the repulsive can also allure." Although performance activism often succeeds in mobilizing people, it also appeals to our desire for spectacle. Likewise, it begs the question of what could possibly be an adequate response to a humanitarian catastrophe, be it a war, a genocide, or a migration crisis.

This question has been raised before: from Theodor Adorno to Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas to Judith Butler, many political philosophers have challenged the aesthetics of the representation of a mutilated, raped, abused, or dead body. In theatre, there is a long tradition of fascination with staging violence. Projects that aim to raise awareness about legal, political, and social controversies surrounding migration and asylum seeking repeatedly emphasize the material experiences of migration and the body of a migrant—a site of physical suffering, an object of unwanted gaze, and, by extension, the subject of an artistic experiment. Such bodies often turn into stereotypical representations of *stranger-danger* and *stranger-fetishism* (Ahmed 2000).

For Levinas (1998), the concept of *face* stands as a metonym for both a divine entity and a human being; it acts as a "condition for humanization" (Butler 2004, 141), a reminder of our ethical responsibility towards others. Through representation, we attribute a human quality to any type of Other. At the same time, representation risks producing a personification that may "evacuate the face" as well as perform "its own dehumanization" (Butler 2004, 141). By questioning the results produced by the process of personification—a stereotype—Butler (2004) interrogates the concept of good intention, which often initiates problematic representational tactics, especially if its subject matter is the victimized or the suffering. The excessiveness of representation, Butler argues, can impede the acknowledgement of life's precariousness, and lead to numbness in our reception, which can undermine the face: our humanity. The excessiveness of representation can also mobilize the onlooker's empathy—the emotion prone to manipulation—rather than their critical thinking. Butler's emphasis on the ethics of representation: one's need to recognize the ambiguity of a good intention and the tension between giving the Other a voice and the potential for his/her (de)humanization through representation, forms the theoretical focus point of this chapter. In my conclusions, I return to the discussion of *responsibility for oneself* and *for other* as an act of recognizing a face, an abstract category of humanity and a synecdoche of a human body, the body of a migrant. I demonstrate that to remind spectators of our transience and to focus our attention on the precariousness of life, many productions of performance activism create the circumstances of an artistic encounter, estrangement, and voyeurism.

Theoretical Premise and Hypothesis

Explaining why Levinas' ethical philosophy is relevant in today's critical discourse about war, oppression, and migration, Butler (2004, 141) states: "when we consider the ordinary ways that we think about humanization and dehumanization, we find the assumption that those who gain representation, especially self-representation, have a better chance of being humanized; and those who have no chance to represent themselves run a greater risk of being treated as less than human, regarded as less than human, or indeed not regarded at all." To Butler, such assumptions can be erroneous. The excessiveness of representation does not rely on the strategies of recognition; it often capitalizes on the workings of a gaze: "we see the migrant as a victim; we sympathize, we empathize" (Cox and Zaroulia 2016, 148). Moreover, we realize that such gaze can turn a migrant's body into an object of fetishism. Sontag (2003, 6) identified this process with a form of pornography, one seeking pleasure in identifying with the victim. Cox and Zaroulia (2016, 148) argue similarly that, "Confronted with such imagery, we don't understand what we see," elaborating that, "We misinterpret it. We see the image of the boy[1] and remember the image of another child playing, perhaps ourselves. The present image picks and haunts our past."

At the same time, as Sontag (2003, 97) writes, when staging the dead body, it is the photographer and the spectator's vulnerability that the image addresses. It points at our profound ignorance of what another's pain means or entails, and what unimaginable mark it leaves on the body and soul of its victim. Looking at the photographs of dead soldiers or any victims of an act of violence, we must realize: "These dead are supremely uninterested in the living: in those who took their lives; in witnesses—and in us" and "we truly can't imagine what it was like. We can't imagine how dreadful, how terrifying war is, and how normal it becomes" (Sontag 2003, 97–98). This argument echoes Adorno's dictum about the impossibility of writing poetry after the Holocaust (2003). Any representation of such atrocity, Richardson argues (2005, 1) would fall into "the tension between ethics and aesthetics inherent in an act of artistic production that reproduces the cultural values of the society that generated the Holocaust." At the centre of this issue are questions about the unspeakable, the silence, and the truth of the past and its remembrance, about fact and fiction, and the problematic aesthetics of *representation-as*—a subjective picture of the past as experienced, remembered, and interpreted by a survivor, or as a

fictionalized account (Lang 2000). These areas of concern are echoed in today's political performances, specifically when the body of a migrant emerges as a guarantee of theatrical truth and of the authenticity of suffering. Mythologizing migration this way, the figure of a migrant risks to become "defaced," the consequence of representation itself (Butler 2004, 143). My example of this tendency is the 2015 intervention *The Dead are Coming*—a weeklong series of political actions or "operations" produced by the Berlin-based performance group Zentrum für Politische Schönheit/The Center for Political Beauty (CPB).

Staging *The Dead are Coming*, CPB aimed at "transform[ing] piles of corpses into individuals who lost their lives," turning "refugees into people" (Musyal 2015). The project

> began with the transport of the bodies of Syrian refugees who had died in the Mediterranean and were brought by the [CPB] from Italy to Berlin to be given a proper funeral ceremony. The initiative inspired individuals around Germany and Austria to erect makeshift graves, which began to pop up on roadsides and green spaces, imitating in style those burial grounds assembled in front of the Parliament. Their unknown makers thereby took part in the [CPB's] ethico-political mobilization to mourn the deaths of nameless refugees and to problematize the very absence of a public sphere where such expressions of grief could take place. (von Bieberstein and Evren 2016, 454–555)

The Dead are Coming, 2015: A Brief Example

According to its website, Zentrum für Politische Schönheit/The Center for Political Beauty (CPB), established in 2010 by political theorist Philipp Ruch, is "an assault team that establishes moral beauty, political poetry and human greatness while aiming to preserve humanitarianism. The group's basic understanding is that the legacy of the Holocaust is rendered void by political apathy, the rejection of refugees and cowardice. It believes that Germany should not only learn from its History but also take action" (The Center for Political Beauty). A grass-roots organization, as also stipulated by its website, the CPB aims to fight "against human rights violations" and remind the state of its duty to "protect the most vulnerable" (Lewicki 2017, 277). Aligned with the company's previous projects, *The Dead are Coming* clearly illustrates the artists' moral and political intentions. In its artistic tactics, *The Dead are Coming* utilizes documentary and

immersive performance that relies on its audiences' mobilization, disorientation, and desire for play. Using the corpse of a refugee as evidence of injustice, a performative prop and a symbolic object, it also calls our attention to the materiality, vulnerability, and mortality of our own bodies and experiences.

On June 16, 2015, the *New York Times* reported:

> A 34-year-old woman was buried in a Berlin cemetery on Tuesday, thousands of miles from her home in Syria and hundreds from the shores of Italy that eluded her while she was alive. Pallbearers carried a white coffin covered with a red shroud and flowers and laid it before rows of empty chairs, each taped with a sheet of white paper bearing the name of a German politician. The woman perished at sea on her way to the Italian coast in early March. Her name was withheld to protect her surviving husband and three children, who are in Germany and seeking asylum. […] With her family's permission, her body was exhumed from a plot in Sicily and buried in Germany as part of a political demonstration called "The Dead are Coming," which was organized by the Center for Political Beauty, a Berlin-based art group that focuses on protest. (Eddy 2015)

Reburial was the third step in the CPB's four-tier performance event, which included conducting extensive research into the conditions of asylum seeking in Europe—CPB's planning department collected "visual evidence of a cold storage room in Augusta [Sicily], in which 17 bodies were lying wrapped in plastic bags and stacked in piles, with blood pooling underneath"[2]; publishing the results of their research story in the German newspaper in the article entitled "Was wir sehen müssen"/"What we need to see", (282); "identifying two 'unknown' deceased refugees from Syria, contact[ing] their relatives, gain[ing] their families' permission to exhume their undignified graves, and transport[ing] their bodies across Europe"; and performing the act of public burial (Lewicki 2017, 281–82). As part of the final step, "a building plan poster between the Parliament and the Chancellery, which announced that the German Interior Ministry and Frontex […] were collaborating in the construction of a 'Memorial for the Unknown Refugee'" (284) was put up, and the CPB solicited 5000 German citizens for a procession, the March of the Determined, which ended with the digging of a dozen graves in the Square of the Republic (Lewicki 2017, 284) designated to be used for the burial of refugee bodies. The intervention revealed how the CPB was compelled to provide a public commemoration for the perished refugees in light of the European

governments' denial of these people's rights to life and official burial or mourning. Lewicki (2017, 283) describes the burial, writing:

> In a third act of citizenship, the artists collective conducted a public burial to restore the deceased's dignity. The artists contacted cemeteries with the request to hold a funeral for two Syrian refugees, a man and a woman. A majority of cemeteries in Berlin declined arguing that they did not see themselves in a position to fulfil the criteria of the Islamic ritual […] However, a director of one of those cemeteries decided not to obey her orders and allowed the man's funeral to take place in Berlin-Schöneberg, whilst the woman's burial took place at the Muslim cemetery in Berlin-Gatow. A local Imam performed the religious ritual, and each individual's story was told during the ceremony.

Even though *The Dead are Coming* was carried out in cooperation with the local authorities, including imams, priests, and gravediggers, the public response varied from highly enthusiastic to half-hearted.

> In "Süddeutsche Zeitung" newspaper, Sonja Zekri commented that the campaign borders on "political pornography." She also asked: "What will come next? The Center for Political Beauty has undertaken drastic, but clever campaigns. But this action only highlights the powerlessness of the victims." In contrast, Volker Beck, speaker for the human rights policy of the party "The Greens" was ambivalent. "It is offensive and impious to use dead refugees as an object in an artistic intervention." But Beck also sees a need to improve the political situation. "The European Union must do everything to identify these people." Katja Kipping, leader of the Left Party, deemed the action to be "pushing limits, but that's exactly why it manages to directly hit those sensitive topics." Rupert Neudeck, [co-founder of the non-profit refugee assistance association Cap Anamur-Deutsche Not-Ärzte e.V. (German Emergency Doctors)], who is also on the board of trustees of the Center for Political Beauty, defended the artist's radical and shocking scenes. (Mund 2015)

Some Syrian refugees who received asylum status in Germany questioned the ethics of this artistic work as well (Dyer 2015). In these hesitant responses, one can detect concerns similar to Butler's about the power of representation when a migrant body is subjected to political and artistic framing: the danger of that body becoming a stereotype of suffering and victimhood, and of a good intention transforming into the populist past-time.

The CPB artistic manifesto explains some of these controversies. It positions the group as engaging in "action-based art" that carries a "vision of a better fight for human rights," expressed through the aesthetics of *aggressive humanism*.

> The term aggressive humanism merges two concepts that have commonly been deemed incompatible: European humanism and aggression. Occidental humanism was the epitome of human love, benevolence and friendliness. It vindicated the position of education, love and benevolentia with decidedly friendly means. […] The term aggressive humanism argues that the fight for human rights is being fought in too friendly a fashion. The concept of aggressive humanism points to a group of highly ambitious human rights activists that offer political resistance. (The Center for Political Beauty, 2014)

Aggressive humanism links the work of the CPB to the origins of Western theatre, specifically to the myth of Antigone and her desire to pay respect to the dead, even if the price is her own life. Staging *The Dead are Coming*, the group intended to "protest the tightening of the EU's refugee policy" (Mund 2015). Calling the German government to account for its immigration policies and practices, the group planned to "exhibit their actions in the 'punishment-free' space of art" (Musyal 2015). They invited leading politicians and media to attend the ceremony, with the "Minister of Interior Thomas de Maizière and his wife, along with Chancellor Angela Merkel and her husband […] to sit in the first row" (Mund 2015). None of the politicians joined the performance; "Followed by members of the group, representatives from the cemetery, and others, two white coffins covered in red shrouds and flowers were brought to the grave and one of them lowered into the ground after imam Abdallah Hajir, joined by other Muslims, had spoken the fatiha prayer" (von Bieberstein and Evren 2016, 457). In his eulogy, Hajir "denounced the European border regime and the depiction of refugees as greedy criminals seeking to take advantage of Europe" while attendees "approached the grave and added soil and flowers in personalized gestures of mourning amid a general atmosphere of silence" (458). In this ritual, the CPB thus engaged with the symbolic functions of, as Lefebvre (1992, 185–188) expresses it, the *body as a social construct* and the *body as an object of worship*. In the words of Verdery (2000, 20), "Reburying of anonymous dead calls for a particular type of re-evaluation of history," when "entire social categories […] are repositioned or associated with different sets of values. Dead body politics of this

sort have the important effect of inserting such re-evaluation directly into the lives of persons, families, and small groups"; such manipulation of a dead body calls for political maneuvering and the rewriting of history (26–7). It makes us speak about the unthinkable, even if it prioritizes emotions over thoughts.

In its heavy symbolism, *The Dead are Coming* generated a level of ethical discomfort that Cox and Zaroulia (2016, 146) attribute to "the way the interventions were situated uneasily between different domains of representation and social practice—or perhaps more precisely, between artistic performance, political convocation and religious event. The activist/performers were engaged in *real* burials of *real* corpses. Its choreography was religious, with prayers led by an imam, but at the same time the event was attended by members of the media, framed by political speeches, recorded for public dissemination and ultimately agitation." What is more problematic, I propose, is the way the company made this event participatory, constructing it within the aesthetics of immersive theatre.

(DEAD) BODY AS EVIDENCE: TRUTH VERSUS FICTION

In *The Dead are Coming*, the CPB "explicitly plays with and blurs the conventional separation between a sphere of political action privileging facts and documentary evidence and a stage of artistic expression understood as 'unreal'" (von Bieberstein and Evren 2016, 464). Claiming that "they were neither in the business of art, nor satire, nor activism," the CPB staged the burial "as the public enactment of a possibility" (465). "Neither show, nor representation," it was reality "performatively staged, thereby partaking in the work of imagination and representation" (466). In this artistic gesture, the CPB put forward a plea for authenticity, making the burial a distant cousin to Documentary Theatre. "Playfully switching between the factual and the fake," *The Dead are Coming* was produced with the "aesthetics of truth making," in which "the invocation of 'alternative realities' […] challenges conventions of intelligibility that circumscribe what counts as performance and reality, art and politics" (466). The intervention relied on the technology, text, and body triad (Martin 2006, 9) that often marks the workings of Documentary Theatre. "In documentary theatre, the performers are sometimes those whose stories are being told. But more often than not documentary theatre is where 'real people' are absent—unavailable, dead, disappeared—yet re-enacted. They are represented through various means, including stage acting, film clips,

photographs, and other 'documents' that attest to the veracity of both the story and the people being enacted" (Martin 2006, 9). In *The Dead are Coming*, the coffin of a 34-year-old Syrian woman buried in a Berlin cemetery has taken on this symbolic and practical function of authenticating truth. Although the coffin was never opened during the ceremony, it came to represent the victim's body. The coffin turned into the "stage object"; it carried the idea of a truth and thus became a substitute for the body of the victim.

Often, in Documentary Theatre, actors "perform both as themselves and as the actual personages they represent. The absent, unavailable, dead, and disappeared make an appearance by means of surrogation" (Martin 2006, 10). Functioning as a kind of time-machine, the actor's body reflects the performer's own past, the historical or fictional setting a story, and the temporal context of the performance and its reception. An example of a "twice-behaved behavior," actors' bodies help turning a document into a public performance (20). A canvas onto which a new story, the story of making and performing a migrant self, is projected, it becomes a performative object displayed for the audience's consumption, such that the conflict between the autobiographical and the fictional (which a migrant body evokes) drives the drama forward. Political interventions stage the trauma of migration by bringing the materiality of human experience, the corporeality of life, to the forefront of their artistic and philosophical investigation. By bringing real people (or their substitutes, including objects or corpses) on stage, these interventions intend to deploy the appearance of truth (Martin 2006, 10) and they fight to restore the dignity and value of individual experience.

The relation between truth and fiction, between fact and editing, is a point of ethical discomfort in making Documentary Theatre, in general. By bringing real people (or their corpses) on stage, political intervention relies on the materiality of a theatrical sign (Malzacher 2010, 81), In *The Dead are Coming* the coffin with the corpse of a refugee is intended to accentuate the performance's fleeting sense of the present. It also turns the attention of its spectators/participants to their own embodied and thus highly personal senses of reality.

In its embodied or, rather, phenomenological dimensions, the body serves as the container for our histories and memories. It stores our past in our changing, aging cells, which turn the body into a site of death, offering the promise of departure. In its semiotic functions, the body acts as a canvas to write on; it turns into the site of another's gaze and becomes the

Other. Subjected to different types of looks and general scrutiny, the body of a stranger takes on even more specific functions. An uncanny manifestation of the duality of our own self, it foregrounds the sense of deep disconnection we carry within us.

Kristeva (1991, 191–192) theorizes uncanny as the problem of foreignness, a feature that each of us already carries within ourselves. Historically, Kristeva explains, a foreigner has been often identified "in negative fashion" as someone who "does not belong to the group, who is not 'one of them', […] the other of the family, the clan, the tribe," described so either according to the law of the soil or according to the law of blood (95). With the emergence of nation-states, the foreigner turned into someone "who does not belong to the state […], does not have the same nationality" (96), and hence falls beyond the duties and the privileges of the nation. The fascination (positive or otherwise) we associate with foreignness, Kristeva proposes, essentially stems from the one type of difference that identifies a foreigner: the difference of not belonging; the colour of one's skin and the religion one practices become the fundamental markers of foreignness that differentiate between the right of man and the right of citizen (96–97).

Expanding upon this, Sara Ahmed (2000, 51–52) adds the power of embodied encounter. The materiality of the body—one's skin colour, body type, postures, the gait and speed of one's movements, and the sounds one makes—represent an impassable elemental border between oneself and another. The body of another is a sealed phenomenological experience, unavailable both in its materiality and in its semioticity, meaning that "the stranger is produced through a dialectic of proximity and distance" (Cooke 2002, 56). When we recognize the figure of a foreigner, this unknown Other, as alien, the phenomenon of *stranger-fetishism* takes place. As Ahmed (2000, 2) writes, "The alien recuperates all that is beyond the human into the singularity of a given form. The alien hence becomes a fetish." Stanger-fetishism takes many forms and is often rooted in our prejudice. One of such forms is our obsession with the figure of the migrant, who is allegedly invading the territory to which one belongs and destroying the safety of one's community (Ahmed 2000, 5).

Staging migrant bodies as a point of truth and as a mechanism for accentuating a spectator's experience of alienation from the self, in the context of any edited, selected, or fictionalized framework in any political intervention, can bring the idea of stranger-fetishism to life; this was the effect of *The Dead are Coming*. A staged embodied encounter with a

migrant induces "Brechtian distancing that asks spectators to simultaneously understand the theatrical, the real, and the simulated, each as its own form of truth" (Martin 2006, 12). It can also move Ahmed's political project forward, as she insists, building on Levinas, that the act of encounter (and performance encounter specifically) can serve as humanity's useful tool for identifying the otherness of the Other as the otherness in oneself (Ahmed 2000, 5).

BODIES OF EXCITEMENT: ON AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The methodologies used by The Center for Political Beauty in *The Dead are Coming* to incite public excitement are quite unsettling. Aspiring to actively engage with the wrongdoings of society, Documentary Theatre frequently appeals to our sense of a disconnection between the truth of an experience and its representation, but it rarely involves its audiences directly in state politics. Although the CPB shares ideological goals with Documentary Theatre, as its website explains, it seeks to go beyond them, believing that art must "provoke and rise in revolt" (The Center for Political Beauty), which had prompted the CPB to cast its audience as one more technology of the real (Martin 2006, 9). The bodily encounters across the performance frame—real people standing in front of other real people as "bodies of evidence"—defines the company's "aesthetics of sincerity" (Cox and Zaroulia 2016, 147). Mobilizing their audiences physically, the CPB offered spectators a participatory experience. Based on its aptitude to play with and confuse reality and fiction, it turned participants into the makers and consumers of spectacle. This is how von Bieberstein and Evren (2016, 455–456) describe their experience as participants of *The Dead are Coming*:

> The news of the campaign reached us with short notice. Those linked up via social media to the [CPB] heard that the "dead were coming" only a day or two before the first burial was set to take place. By way of a crowdfunding platform, supporters were called upon to assist in covering the costs of the exhumations, transfers, and burials, and invited to attend the funeral of several migrants who had died while trying to cross the borders of the European Union. Within a day or two, about €34,000 was raised. Sponsors were promised rewards that included a psychiatric report on the interior minister's state of mind (in return for 10 euro), the chance to drive the excavator that would break through the fence in front of the Chancellery during the

"March of the Determined" (in return for €2,500) and a weekend in the Greek-Turkish borderlands with a guided tour of mass graves, room and board included (in return for €5,000).

The effect such acts of participation produce, however, is two-fold. On the one hand, it does create political awareness. On the other, it prompts euphoria. Like sensationalist photography, participation through provocation is "fatally linked to the momentary" (Butler 2007, 955). Unlike Brechtian epic theatre, which uses alienation, metaphor, and story-telling to appeal intellectually to its audiences' social consciousness, the CPB employs techniques stewed in sensation and wonder. Consequently, people who are not normally prone to violence cannot resist giving in to their basic instincts, something that Sontag (2003, 77–80), building on Freud, identifies with the pleasure we receive from observing or staging a ferocious act. By engaging its audiences with such emotional and visceral experiences as excitement, physical mobilization, and a sense of righteousness, the CPB not only wishes to make them directly face the dangers of the refugees' journey, but the team relies on the affectual power of immersive theatre, its ability to confuse reality and fiction by turning the audiences into active players in the game of theatrical transformation. As the March of the Determined came to a close, "the participants themselves, rather than the artists, […] 'got their hands dirty' to dig the memorial. They erected signs such as 'Borders kill' and 'Nobody is illegal'" (Lewicki 2017, 284). This part of the performance was "scripted only to the degree that the animated video and the instructions for pop-up graves had been circulated" (284). The CPB leaders relied on the assumption that engaging their audiences in the act of doing would appeal to their desire for pleasure through excitement. The bread and circus tradition often builds on these instincts too. It unleashes our hidden thirst for violence. When the violent act is not produced, we feel cheated because no photographic image or theatrical metaphor can provide authenticity the way the materiality of the body and the real act of violence can. The ethics of representation lies in the artist's realization of this responsibility.

The Dead are Coming indicated a troublesome tension between the subject matter and the artistic methods the group employed (Marschall 2016), as it violated "our aesthetic assumptions about proper burials and proper mourning. […] By tapping into this 'powerful magic' of the corpse [CPB] channeled the haunting force of dead bodies to draw attention to the 'death worlds' […] that underlie and condition contemporary Europe"

(von Bieberstein and Evren 2016, 463). It is at the parameters of *The Dead are Coming*'s artistic execution that an uneasiness between this politically charged act and an ethical dilemma exists. As von Bieberstein and Evren (2016, 464) state:

> the campaign explicitly plays with and blurs the conventional separation between a sphere of political action privileging facts and documentary evidence and a stage of artistic expression understood as "unreal." This lies at the core of their "mission" more generally. In a presentation of their work, members of the group emphasized that they were neither in the business of art, nor satire, nor activism. Instead they introduced themselves as a "storm troop for the erection of moral beauty, political poetry and great humane magnanimity" and defined what they do as the creation of a parallel foreign policy.

Despite these proclamations, the burial event was staged "as the public enactment of a possibility, offering a performative example of how those whose lives are deemed not worth grieving could and should—if we lived in a world of 'political beauty'—find their final rest" (465). The group insisted, at the same time, that despite its performative aspects, the burial was "absolutely real. This was neither show, nor representation, but reality" (465). In reality, *The Dead are Coming* has turned into a social media event. Traces of its social media tactics can be found on the company's elaborate website and Facebook page. "The burial video posted by the Center for Political Beauty on their YouTube page is something of a semiotic car crash […] Certain elements of the event seem to merge European funeral and corporate/convention dress codes: the sombre pallbearers, who are older white (presumably German) men, wear black suits, black ties, white gloves and white name badges. Other male and female participants are identifiable by their dress as Islamic" (Cox and Zaroulia 2016, 147). This chapter, however, does not aim to provide a recipe for an ethically sound performative intervention, nor does it make moralizing conclusions. Simply, like the CPB itself, it tries to raise awareness of the uneasy tension between noble goals and the populist means of their realization, in which performance activism seems to be often caught.

CONCLUSION

Representation is the work of dramaturgical and performative construction. To discuss the power of representation in the theatre of migration is to analyze the mechanisms of narrative composition used to make the figure of a refugee. Visual representation relies on the process of framing, in the theatre of migration representation often turns into a tool for myth-making. As Hanif Kureishi (2014) puts it, "the immigrant has become a contemporary passion in Europe, the vacant point around which ideals clash. Easily available as a token, existing everywhere and nowhere, he is talked about constantly. But in the current public conversation, this figure has not only migrated from one country to another, he has migrated from reality to the collective imagination where he has been transformed into a terrible fiction." Performance activism creates a sense of discomfort as it excessively relies on the power of re-enactment and on the audience's excitement about this form of representation. It often builds upon and references the energy of the crowd. This strategy can be both effective and dangerous. By appealing to peoples' desire for spectacle, it also ignites our nostalgia for strong ruling and nationalist sentiment. An example of this uneasiness can be found in a subsequent performative intervention the CPB made.

For their 2016 project *Devouring the Refugee*, the artists engaged four tigers, in a specially erected pavilion next to the Maxim Gorki theatre in Berlin, to entertain tourists. This intervention supported an ultimatum: the company's promise to make the tigers devour a refugee if the German government did not respond to their demand to fly Syrian refugees to Germany using a special jet sponsored by German citizens. This premise fueled audiences' anticipation and arousal not only in Germany but across the world—all were eagerly wondering if and how the company would honour their promises. In their promotion video for this project, the CPB referenced the bread and circus entertainment customs of the Roman Empire as a point of correspondence between today's Germany and its government. That tourists with photo-cameras and iPhones took selfies in front of the tigers illustrates my point. The desire for violence—watching someone being devoured by a tiger, even if this someone is supposedly a volunteer refugee fed-up with their suffering, desiring to stop the injustice of asylum seeking systems once and for all—is deeply rooted in the conflicted nature of humanity, characterized by the struggle between our two major drives: Eros, associated with sexual desire, creativity, and

reproduction, and Thanatos, associated with the desire for power, destruction, aggression, and death.

Positioning performance activism within Levinas' (1998) insistence on our responsibility for the other can keep our basic instincts under control, although it does require effort. Responsibility is a product of our labour and spiritual and ethical consciousness, the hard work of an educated mind. It is never moralistic, but does teach us to recognize the dangers of populist technologies and provocation, even when used for the right cause.

NOTES

1. Here, the authors refer to the photograph of the Kurdish boy who drowned in the summer 2015, on his way to the Greek island of Kos from the Turkish resort town of Bodrum. This photograph made the boy "a symbol of refugee crisis" (Ensor 2016), but also exemplified the "digitalized banality of evil" (Butler 2007, 960) in the way we use mediation to construct our view of the world.

2. "The artist collective reported that most individuals whose bodies appeared on the shore in Augusta had carried documents and could have been identified; nevertheless, it was not common practice to notify family members (personal conversation). Instead, the deceased were buried as 'unknown' in local cemeteries. The long duration and conditions of storage deviate from standards across the globe, but specifically violate Islamic rituals that require a timely inhumation. Such practices further deny non-European citizens the yet to be codified right to a decent burial [...], and families are deprived of their entitlement to learn about the death of their loved ones" (Lewicki 2017, 282).

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Spectacular Bodies, Unsettling Objects: Material Performance as Intervention in Stereotypes of Refugees

Laura Purcell-Gates

Husam Abed is a Palestinian refugee puppetry artist who runs Dafa Puppet Theatre, based in Prague, with his Hungarian partner, Réka Deák. The company performs and facilitates workshops in refugee camps and theatre festivals across the Middle East and Europe, often focusing on the animation of found objects within camps. They prioritize simplicity and metaphor in their work, a core rationale for their use of puppetry and object theatre within performances that often incorporate the human body. For Dafa, puppetry and object theatre allow for a distancing from literal interpretation in performance, which can reinforce stereotypes by merely replicating surface codes of meaning. Instead, Dafa looks to puppetry and object theatre as modes of displacing and thereby transforming these codes, by transferring meaning from the human body into puppets, and from objects' functional use into symbolic associations. They are interested in the ways in which puppetry and object theatre can "transform the

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space" by turning a dining table, for example, into a representation of the earth. Their focus on using found objects allows them to bring traces of associations and use, objects' genealogies, into the performance space to layer the objects with additional meaning (Abed and Deák 2017). *The Smooth Life* is Abed's 2016 solo show, directed by Deák, exploring his family's history migrating between refugee camps, with a focus on Abed's experiences growing up and his complex relationship with his father. The piece is performed to small audiences in intimate settings such as apartment kitchens. Abed uses objects including grains of rice, photographs, a map, a frame drum, and puppets made from cardboard, wood, and family photographs as he leads the audience through his story. In this analysis, I focus on three types of materials that Abed and Deák utilize in the piece: grains of rice, a map of the Middle East, and photographs.

When I interviewed Abed and Deák in 2017, they spoke of their shared desire to tell Abed's personal story in a simple way, a task made difficult by the platform of history on which his story and that of his family has taken place. Deák described Abed's initial work on the show as being too overtly political, which prevented him from exploring his story beyond existing and well-rehearsed political and historical narratives—narratives that courted stereotype. As they developed the piece together, they focused on returning to the theme of simplicity, using puppetry and object manipulation to delve into the layers of the story without becoming fixed within flattened and foreclosed interpretations of events. This focus on simplicity led them to choose simple materials such as rice and wood, as well as "concrete" materials coded with political and social meanings such as a map and photographs, to trace Abed's story, and that of his family, with and alongside Abed's physical presence in the performance.

The Smooth Life therefore deploys both puppetry and object theatre at the centre of its storytelling. The term object theatre derives from *théâtre d'objets* in Europe that emerged during the 1980s and involved the theatrical animation of everyday objects (Margolies 2013). Object theatre overlaps with a genre coined by Frank Proschan in 1983 of "performing objects … material images of humans, animals, or spirits that are created, displayed, or manipulated in narrative or dramatic performance" (4). Proschan's definition links the animation of objects to puppetry—for example, when a match or a ball takes on the characteristic of a human subject. Today, *théâtre d'objets*, performing objects, and puppetry are often approached by scholars and practitioners as forms of "material performance," which draw on new materialisms including object-oriented ontologies to foreground the agency of inanimate objects. In puppetry

scholar Dassia Posner's (2015, 5) words, material performance is "performance that assumes that inanimate matter contains agency not simply to mimic or mirror, but also to shape and create."

In my examination of object theatre, I draw on Bill's Brown's (2001) concept of thing theory, an area within new materialisms that focuses on the meanings given to objects by human subjects and the concurrent ways in which things mediate and partially constitute social relations and the human subject. Brown draws on Heidegger's differentiation between "things" (that which exists in the world prior to human interpretation) and "objects"(that which is used or worked with)—to distinguish the ontic "thing" (that which can exist without subjects) from the ontological "object" (a specific creation of subjects). I draw on Brown's emphasis on the ways in which ontological objects mediate and constitute social relations and the human subject in my examination of puppetry and object theatre in *The Smooth Life*, and the ways in which such human/object interactions can intervene in and disrupt the stereotyping of representations of refugees in which images are fixed and depth of meaning is collapsed into foreclosed interpretation. I also turn my focus to the ontic thing in order to consider the ways in which material attributes and processes, such as decay, figure into the performance alongside the object's mediation and constitution of social relations.

I focus in particular on the notion of detritus, or that which is discarded and excluded from use-value, linking the detritus of decaying objects to the process of human abjection within the stereotype. I draw here on Imogen Tyler's (2013) analysis of social abjection of asylum seekers in *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain*, in which she examines the ways in which media, political, and social discourses around asylum seekers in twenty-first century UK have contributed to an "asylum invasion complex" marked by a "deliberate conflation of migrants into a singular national abject—the bogus asylum seeker" that limits any transformative potential of the recognition of suffering and injustice. Arguing that this relentless dehumanization is a necessary component to the maintenance of the neoliberal state, Tyler advocates a critical counter-mapping grounded in affect—or melancholic states—as a necessary response:

> The recognition of suffering and injustice has limited transformatory political potential in a context where the deliberate conflation of migrants into a singular national abject—the bogus asylum seeker—has overwhelmed public

culture. Nevertheless, the *melancholic states* that critical processes of counter-mapping make visible are important critical responses to the ontological obliteration of personhood that is central to Britain's neoliberal immigration industry. This mapping can produce alternative ways of looking, however partial, depressed, reactive and liminal the ensuing knowledge might be. (76)

One form of such counter-mapping, I suggest, is a theatrical remapping of material detritus from an abjection model—the exclusion of detritus as part of subject formation and accepted social relations—to a model in which detritus forms a central component of subject formation and social relations through its foregrounding as site of meaning and affect. To return to Brown's (2001) formulation of the ontological object, I suggest that in theatrical contexts that invite spectators to participate in the affect produced by objects typically dismissed as "mere things"—what Brown describes as "beneath objecthood"—the processes of abjection that underpin stereotyped representations of refugee bodies can be reconfigured from an inclusion/exclusion model to a space to *linger* with these excluded objects, bodies, and feelings. This process is layered and deepened by paying attention to what is happening with materiality in the space. In *The Smooth Life*, this attention reveals materials insisting on humanity (rice) and materials (maps and photographs) whose decay matters.

Rice and Abjection

In a 2016 video of the show performed in a Swedish apartment kitchen, Abed introduces himself to the audience, then leaves his assistant to show a PowerPoint presentation that contextualizes his family's history while he begins cooking dinner for the audience in the background. Abed and Deák discussed with me their interest in sharing food with the people with whom they come into contact through their work. For them, making and eating meals together is a core component of community building, and one that they always incorporate into their puppetry work whether facilitating workshops or performing shows. Often this communal meal takes place following the theatrical event; in *The Smooth Life* it is embedded into the show itself.

In the piece, Abed makes multiple uses of grains of rice. He cites two sources for this choice: a saying from his grandfather that Palestinians are spread all over the world in diaspora like grains of rice that have been thrown, and a workshop he took with Simon Rann of the Philippe Genty

Company in which they worked with multiple materials including rice (2017). This workshop planted in Abed's imagination the idea of using rice in a theatre piece, which became the impetus for the decision while making *The Smooth Life*. For Abed and Deák, using rice on the map allowed them to play with a fluctuating metaphor anchored by a solid object. The map in this context represents solidity, both literally and figuratively, as it refers to a concrete reality even though, as discussed above, they strategically depict this concrete reality as fluctuating and contested. Abed emphasizes that using rice as a metaphor made it easier to talk about Palestine without becoming too literal. Addressing the material properties of rice and its potential for theatrical use, Deák describes rice as "so fragile, so small, so tiny, you can cook it, eat it." Abed identifies an additional layer of meaning: "If you put all these grains of rice together in [a] big sack, it has its weight, it's effective." For Abed and Deák, rice therefore serves as a potent metaphor for diaspora in exile, in which people who might feel weak separately are able to bring their abilities together in a collective. The use of rice also allows Abed and Deák to play with scale, as the human body is depicted from the small-scale grain of rice through the slightly larger-scale puppets and finally the life-size body of Abed. As each of these scales are performed on the map, they are simultaneously rendered larger-than-life in contrast to the map dimensions, providing spectators with multiple layers of perception of the scale of the human body on the stage of human-created border demarcations.

Rice makes its first appearance behind the audience as Abed boils water and begins cooking a chicken and rice casserole. As the audience watches the PowerPoint presentation, the sounds of dry rice being poured into a pot are audible in the background. When the PowerPoint presentation ends and Abed returns to the table, he introduces the audience to members of his family, represented by individual grains of rice which he carefully picks up on his finger, kisses, then lays on the map covering the table. As Abed describes his family's movement between camps, he carefully shifts the grains of rice along the surface of the map. Members of the audience peer closely at these individual rice grains, which have been given an affective resonance of loved individuals by Abed's gentle and personal interactions.

Abed traces his father's journey from Karama Refugee Camp to Baqa'a Palestinian Refugee Camp in Jordan in 1968, where Abed is born and the family begins to grow. The individual grains of rice are replaced with a mound of rice poured over the site on the map, leaving a small mountain

of grains. "But it didn't happen like this," Abed states, repeating a trope within the piece that questions its own narration. "But the story—my story—didn't start here," a repeated line as he begins telling the story, questions the origins of a personal story that is connected both biologically to ancestors and additionally to multiple intertwined historical narratives. When Abed forms the rice into a mound on the map and says "But it didn't happen like this," he is referring to the previous moments in which he performed, in a gentle and humorous way, family members leaving camps by carefully placing them in different places on the map with a kiss, implying that their movements were as gentle as his physical handling of them. In fact, these moments referenced the forced Palestinian migrations of 1948, so it "didn't happen like this."

"But it didn't happen like this" marks a shift in tone for the piece from gentle and humorous to tense. Abed pushes the mound of rice to the Palestinian portion of the map. He stares at it for a moment, then smashes it with his fist, scattering grains of rice across the map. When the grains of rice cease to be singular individuals given emotional resonance through Abed's intimate interactions with them, and instead are simply poured into a mound, a doubling of perception occurs that is central to puppetry and object theatre. The grains of rice continue to represent individual humans on a larger scale, and simultaneously conjure imagery of maggots, uncomfortably resonating with discourses of filth and contagion— "swarms," "scum," "sewage"—central to Tyler's (2013) analysis of the asylum invasion complex. Abed's smashing of the pile with his fist therefore resonates not only as the representation of historical violence, but in the moment of performance the audience is invited to have a visceral response of horror (these are loved individuals) and disgust (associated with maggots).[1]

Abed continues his piece with a focus now on more conventional puppets, small wooden carved figures with Abed's family photographs for faces, though he continually returns to the animation of rice grains. Rice performances shift between people in the narrative, to food that Abed and his siblings crave, to musical instruments as it is poured into the frame drum, to water pouring over Abed, leaving rice grains stuck to his head (Fig. 1). Abed describes these moments as drawn from a childhood ritual, when his grandmother would wash him in a circular bathtub. He wished to reenact this ritual of bathing/purification using rice which carries multiple connotations in the piece: of his family members, and in this moment of seeds and thus the potential of rebirth. The moment both invests the

Fig. 1 Husam Abed with rice and drum in *The Smooth Life* (2016). Image by Dafa Puppet Theatre

grains of rice with additional layers of meaning, and enmeshes the notion of family with that of potential and rebirth.

At the end of the piece, Abed brings out his chicken casserole and serves it to the audience. The dish contains cooked rice and is thus imbued with the strands of meaning that have been woven into rice throughout the performance. The act of consuming rice in this moment holds multiple layers of significance. Margolies describes food as acting on and altering the person consuming it: "it is the material most apt to call into question the fixed division between living and lifeless matter" (2015, 330). Bennett (2010) positions food as an actant

> in an agent assemblage that includes among its members my metabolism, cognition, and moral sensibility … Food, as a self-altering, dissipative materiality … enters into what we become. It is one of the many agencies operative in the moods, cognitive dispositions, and moral sensibilities that we bring to bear as we engage the questions of what to eat, how to get it, and when to stop. (51)

In the moment of communal consumption of rice at the end of *The Smooth Life*, these multiple ontologies of food as a material intersect with the multiple strands of significance with which rice has been layered throughout the performance. The moment is potent and has provoked different responses from audience members. Abed and Deák describe a performance of the piece in Jordan in which some audience members reacted negatively to this moment: "You are eating the refugees now!" This was not Dafa's intention; Abed emphasizes that communal eating is associated, amongst other things, with the process of death: "When people die, you celebrate death by life [eating], we are still here, we exist—this is what I want to say" (2017). This moment, for Abed, is about celebrating life, and through the communal meal celebrating the fact that "we still exist, this is our identity, this is who we are." He also associates it with a culture of generosity and of hosting people that he connects to being Palestinian.

The communal meal at the end of *The Smooth Life* enacts these intentions and functions as a locus on which multiple meanings are played out. The audience members' reactions in Jordan point to the symbolism of ingesting the food that has been imbued with additional layers of meaning, though it is not the only possible reaction to this symbolism. One alternate response I would like to consider is that the moment of shared eating enacts abjection in reverse. The object with its array of ontological meanings—including exclusion from human subjectivity—is consumed into the bodies of everyone involved in the theatrical event. Each of these object animations retains the doubling of perception initiated by Abed's opening introductions of and affectionate interactions with his family: the grains of rice are always the loved individuals that Abed gently kissed, even as they shift representations. An affective response towards the grains of rice has been established that resonates throughout their multiple enactments, lending a sense of care and humanity to "mere things." This elevates them to the status of ontological object that retains its human-associated status even when being used as accessory to human narrative and, ultimately, as human food. If the process of abjection is about dehumanization in the service of subject formation in order to construct boundaries around the human, Abed's use of object theatre in his multiple deployments of rice is about insisting on a lingering humanization of that which would normally lie outside those boundaries. This provides a critical counter-mapping, in Tyler's (2013) terms, grounded in affect and opening space to experience differently that which is normally excluded from the human.

Mapping and Metaxis

The theme of mapping frames *The Smooth Life*. At the centre of the performance space, around which the audience sits and on which Abed and the puppets/objects perform, is a large circular wooden turntable, covered by a map of the Middle East. Dafa Puppet Theatre structure their work around the ontology of objects, and according to Deák they used the map in the piece because a map has the same type of reality as a photo in that it is a "real object" with use-value. They chose the round table for its associations with the earth on which the map sits, layering the map-object with both its functional and symbolic meanings. Early in the devising process, Abed simply opened the map on the table, emphasizing its functional use. Later, he and Deák decided to fix it to the table "because we felt it had to be fixed" (2017). Abed describes this decision to make the map a permanent part of the table as an intervention in the performance space and connects it to a feature of puppet theatre to "change the space." He and Deák wished to transform the experience of "where are we now" for the spectators by introducing the table first as a dining table, then allowing it to shift meaning through the presence of the map.

As a dramaturgical device, the map allows Abed and Deák to intertwine the multiple stories in the piece which share themes of travelling, immigration, and evacuation. The map's physical presence on the table helps Abed make visible his journey as well as those of his parents and grandparents, including which camps his grandparents entered and left, the journey of Abed's mother returning to Baqa'a camp on an airplane, the family's journey from Damascus to Iran, and Abed's father taking Abed in a car back to Jordan. For Abed and Deák, making these journeys visible was of central importance to the piece, yet they wanted to find a way to avoid being "too concrete, too political" in order to tell a story that could function on a symbolic level and not become too associated with "daily politics" (2017). The map therefore represents concrete reality in symbolic form, and the forms of puppetry and object theatre Abed uses on the map allow for a layering of metaphor and a focus on a personal story that can shift across and between the boundaries of overdetermined historical and political narratives. According to Deák, this was a key strategy, as the difficulties of freeing the story from this narrative overdetermination was not only on the spectators' side but on Abed's as well. Specifically, Abed and Deák's aim for the piece was to avoid stereotypes of Palestinian victimization that would foreclose alternate meanings for Abed's story, both in its telling and its reception. Such a foreclosure of meaning, for Abed, would prevent

specificity and render invisible moments that punctured this narrative overdetermination.

On a personal scale, this approach allowed Abed to explore the specificity of his own story; on a larger scale it was linked for Abed to his officially unrecognized existence of Palestine, which contests his identity as a Palestinian refugee. Sonja Kuftinec (2009) writes:

> The contested triangle of land between the Jordan River, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Gulf of Aqaba serves not only as a stage *for* conflict, but also spatially stages the vectors *of* that conflict, particularly control over boundaries of land, identity, historical narratives, and acceptable political action. That is, conflict enters not only on the land *per se*, but on who locates and controls territorial boundaries and passage through them, and what (often depersonalized) logic sustains that control. (108)

Abed and Deák's use of a map intentionally sought to intervene in this staging of conflict through mapping Abed's story and his identity on and through a map of Palestine. As they developed the piece, they struggled to find a map that identified "Palestine," until they spotted one by chance at a shop in Prague. This is the map they continue to use in the performance, and the issue of its transformation and decay as an object—at some point it will become so faded and torn that it will be unusable—is of crucial importance due to the difficulty they will find in replacing it.

This object decay and its implications for *The Smooth Life* serve as an experiential metaphor for Abed's continual struggle for validated existence as a Palestinian refugee. His ability to tell his story as he chooses is linked to the material existence and legibility of a rare map that he will struggle to replace. The act of repeatedly telling his story using the map contributes to its decay, putting him in an impossible position: to preserve the map, he cannot tell his story, yet once the map becomes detritus without use-value, his story and identity are rendered invisible. Jane Bennett (2010) proposes a vital materialism to trouble distinctions between matter and life, drawing on Latour to argue for an agentic materiality—matter as "actant." Eleanor Margolies (2015) draws on this approach in her investigation of puppetry/object performance that uses formless materials such as food, clay, and compost. While Margolies' focus is on formless materials in performance and their potential to tell stories that "extend beyond the human in time and space, working on cosmological, geological, or evolutionary timescales" (332), I wish to consider Abed's map, and its potential

to tell stories beyond the apparent narrative and its symbolic role in performance, through the lens of this vital materialistic approach to puppetry and object theatre.

This requires a brief diversion into, and slight repurposing of, Augusto Boal's (1995) concept of metaxis, the "state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: the image of reality and the reality of the image" (43). For Boal, metaxis is derived from Plato's use of the term to denote the middle space between humans and gods which dynamically negotiates the totality of the universe. In Boal's usage it allows for an understanding of the transformative potential of theatre and forms a central analytic for his Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, including Forum Theatre, in which the space between performer and spectator is renegotiated to construct the "spect-actor," and Image Theatre, in which participants become aware of themselves simultaneously existing in the world and witnessing themselves engaging with the world. The term is often understood in general terms as referring to simultaneously existing in the real and the imagined, facilitated by theatrical practice. Warren Linds (2006) expands on this definition to include considerations of metaxis in the natural world. This includes drawing on scholars such as Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela to link Boal's metaxis to biological systems such as ants self-organizing into anthills, in which "the function of each component is to participate in the production or transformation of the set of relations" (Linds 2006, 116). Linds also draws on Fritjof Capra's distinction between designed and emergent systems, and his argument for thinking systematically in order to tap into the metaxic space of the web of interconnections within and between humans and the world. For Linds, considering Boal's metaxis through the lens of biological systems and systemic analysis contributes to comprehending and utilizing the liberatory potential of theatrical processes. By foregrounding the ways in which systems, of which we are always a part, change, we can harness that potential for change by embracing the "groundlessness" of being liberated from an ontological either/or perspective (Maturana and Varela quoted in Linds 2006, 115).

This linking of Boalian theatrical metaxis to the material world of humans/animals/systems resonates both with Bennett's (2010) call to reconsider nonorganic/organic boundaries and the false equating of life and agency solely to the latter, and with Margolies' (2015) framing of theatrical use of formless materials as extending human stories in time and space. By considering Abed's performance with the map as a metaxic

system, Abed and the map are embedded together in the decay of the map and the stakes of this decay for Abed. They are part of one material process within which the lens of focus can be trained on, for example, the material decay of the map—accelerated by Abed's performance with it—or on the process of Abed negotiating his identity within official non-recognition. What is crucial here is that both events are material processes and systems within which the object and the human are intertwined: Abed's identity is threatened with the status of detritus alongside the map's decay into detritus. A focus on such processes as interconnected dynamic systems, as Linds suggests following Maturana and Varela, sidesteps the foreclosure of meaning and the tendency towards fixed knowledge:

> Groundlessness welcomes the unexpected. Whenever we find ourselves holding tightly to being in a certain place, or seek to control outcomes, the in-between invites us to step into "another domain where coexistence takes place" (Maturana and Varela 1992, 246), a both/and rather than an either/or space. When knowing and experiencing are located in the shifting terrain of in-between-ness, new possibilities emerge for action and knowing. (2006, 115)

Abed's performance with the map, as an ongoing process of metaxic repetition, allows for new possibilities of action and knowing. Such a process avoids the foreclosure of meaning that Abed and Deák wished to work against as they created a piece that attempts to resist stereotypes as it transverses overdetermined narrative vectors of political power, contested land, victimization framings, and national and personal identities.

STEREOTYPED IMAGES AND DECAYING PHOTOGRAPHS

I turn now to Abed's mobilization of photographs within the piece. As discussed above, the piece begins with a PowerPoint presentation that reads as a documentary of sorts, providing context for the forced migration of Abed's family and tracing their movements between refugee camps. This performance mode mimics familiar media framings of historical narratives, and it is easy for the audience to "read" the photographs on the slides as their positions as consumers of media are highly familiar and rehearsed. When Abed later brings out a tattered photo album with similar family pictures and presents puppets with cutouts of the faces of family members from these photographs (Fig. 2), the position of the spectator is unsettled; this is a personal use of photographs that sits outside of the circulation of images in the media. The intimacy of the setting, a kitchen, and

Fig. 2 Husam Abed with photographs in *The Smooth Life* (2016). Image by Dafa Puppet Theatre

Abed's physical proximity to the audience seated around the table blurs the lines between theatrical event and social interaction, transforming the social relations that constitute this moment of image consumption.

The puppetry furthers this unsettling, as pictures of faces that the audience initially consumed through a familiar documentary-style performance are now a material part of a human figure animated by Abed. This performatively enacts another moment of double-vision. The stereotyped image is literally combined with a performing object that resists this fixity through both its phenomenological "thereness," to use Andrew Sofer's term (quoted in Posner 2015, 5)—these are carved and painted pieces of wood sitting on the table—and through its status as a puppet, both alive (human subject) and dead (object). As mentioned above, puppetry and object theatre are fertile sites for the unsettling of flattened representation through their double status as alive/dead, human/object. When Abed presents a puppet with a photograph of a face that we have previously seen in its stereotyped form, the stereotype itself becomes unsettled, simultaneously retaining and disrupting its fixed associations. It is in this space of unsettled doubling, I suggest, that a useful critical remapping can occur.

At the end of the piece, following the story of his father's death, Abed places a painted wooden box on the table. He lifts one side of the box, places the puppet figure of his father inside, and gently closes it. He turns the box around to reveal windows, then begins turning a handle causing photographs to scroll across the windows on the inside of the box.

This is an object that Abed has been exploring in Dafa's work for several years. He describes it as a nineteenth and early twentieth-century form of Arabic storytelling with multiple names, primarily *Sandook aldonia*, literally translated as "life box." Other names include *Sandook alajab* or "wonder box," and *Sandook alfurja* or "watching box" (2017). In workshops, Dafa uses the *Sandook aldonia* to facilitate participants telling stories from their lives by placing photographs inside the box, then using the handle to scroll the images across the windows as they tell their stories. In *The Smooth Life*, Abed used the *Sandook aldonia* to wordlessly tell the story of his father in the moments of his death, visually representing the idea of one's life flashing before their eyes. By placing the puppet of his father inside the *Sandook aldonia*, the box becomes his coffin. Layered with the scrolling images of his life, the box is simultaneously a coffin and a "life box"; Abed emphasizes that "this is our [family's] life box, this is our life." The box here with its windows opening onto photographic images suggests the screen on which media images are displayed and from which they are consumed within a circulation of the stereotype. The presence of the physical box and its hand-operated scrolling mechanism opening onto a view of print photographs detaches the "screen" from its mediatized economy, inviting spectators to witness and consume the photographs in a different way. The presence of the puppet of Abed's father inside the box adds an additional layer of materiality to the photographs, providing an actual depth to the "screen" that masks a body.

In addition to these symbolic connections to death, Abed's use of physical photographs in the piece can also be linked to detritus, as the photographs are decaying. The process of converting physical photographs to digital form for media presentation freezes the process of decay, effectively removing the materiality of the object from the realm of life, aging, and death. Margolies (2015) notes the potential of material performance that foregrounds the "unseen liveliness of matter," arguing that "[r]ather than attempting to create an illusion of life in the lifeless, such performances highlight the process of humans noticing and responding to fundamental material properties, as well as the variety of possible interactions between humans and the material world" (322–323). In this case, the fundamental

material properties of the photographs are again doubled: they are both material objects that are becoming faded, creased, and torn, and faces of Abed's family members who have, since the taking of the photograph, aged and/or died. They carry material and affective traces of their travels with Abed and his family. In their representation on the PowerPoint, the audience knows to consume them as historical artifacts, representations of a fixed past. As components of the puppets on the table, they are material witnesses to Abed's story that are aging and decaying in the moment of performance, occupying an ontological space outside of the fixity of media-driven representation. Having already been scanned into digital format, the photographs are detritus. They no longer have functional use; yet in this moment of performance, they are inextricably bound with Abed's personal narrative and physical presence, inseparable from his own aging body in the room.

Conclusion

In *The Smooth Life*, the potential of material performance to unsettle processes of exclusion is harnessed through processes of doubling and ontological instability. Processes of exclusion that are addressed in the piece include national and identity erasure, overdetermined narratives that foreclose multiple meanings, and the reduction of objects to "mere things," each of which enacts an abjection that produces human and material detritus. I have suggested that Abed and Deák made strategic use of the materials to subvert, interrupt, and deftly work around stereotypes grounded in and producing abjected bodies in order for Abed to trace a personal, flexible, and shifting story through a landscape of fixities of meaning. Rice functions both as a metaphor for family and abjected bodies, and as food that is ingested by Abed and the audience in a process that enacts a reversal of abjection. The physical, concrete presence of an officially unsanctioned map that asserts Abed's identity as a Palestinian refugee functions as both a material assertion of identity and as a transformative space of metaxis within which identity is continually negotiated. Abed deploys photographs in a mode of familiar, fixed media images, and subverts this mode of image consumption by placing material photographs in the performance space. This subversion is additionally layered with the material properties and processes of the photographs that carry traces of Abed's past as they age and decay.

Material performance in *The Smooth Life* has two functions in resisting and subverting stereotypes. The first function focuses on the strategic use of the material object by the human performer to produce particular affects and perceptions. The latter focuses on the material properties of both the object and the human body, on what these multiple materials *do* in the performance space as they operate together as an interconnected system of transformation and decay through which affect and perception circulate and, potentially, shift. This dual function marks Brown's (2001, 4) distinction between "objects" and "things" in which closer attention to the ways in which the object asserts itself as a thing allows for an understanding of the object as not merely an object separate from the subject, but as a particular subject–object relation. This distinction is key to the emerging deployments of thing theory and new materialisms in theatre and performance studies. In *Performing Objects and Theatrical Things*, Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy (2014) suggest that "Where this work (possibly) departs from its historical predecessors is in the willingness of human artists and audiences to listen to and act on object lessons and to rethink their relationship with nonhuman entities" (3).

In this analysis I have sought both to focus on Abed and Deák's strategic use of materials in the performance and to consider the ways in which a focus on the "object lessons" in the piece layered these strategies with meanings enmeshed in material processes which incorporate ontologies of human and object. Both arenas of focus are ways of paying attention to the material in the space, following Brown's (2001, 1–2) metaphor drawn from A.S. Byatt's *The Biographer's Tale* of shifting one's focus from looking *through* a window, the functional use of the object, to looking instead *at* it and seeing the dirt on the glass. Practitioners of puppetry and object theatre inherently pay attention to materials as they manipulate them to create perceptions and affects. By deepening and sharpening this to include an attentiveness to materiality and the ways in which both puppetry and object theatre are modes of material performance, the human subject is brought into relation with the materials in the piece. This disrupts the process of fixing meaning central to the stereotype, in this case towards refugee bodies, both by asking audience members to linger with the affects and perceptions produced by ontologically destabilized detritus and by disrupting models of inclusion/exclusion that incorporate the full spectrum of materiality in the space.

Note

1. In my 2017 interview with Abed and Deák, I described my interpretation of this moment and asked whether the "maggot" reference had been intentional. Abed confirmed that this reading had not been their intention, but said that their use of materials and objects in the piece was meant to function on multiple metaphoric levels, and therefore he welcomed various interpretations.

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Theatrical Border Crossings: Stereotypes against Realism in the Plays of Young Jean Lee

Kee-Yoon Nahm

Since her debut as a playwright-director in 2003, Young Jean Lee has attracted critical attention for her bold theatre pieces that tackle racism, feminist subjectivity, religion, and other political themes that require deft handling. Her style is difficult to pin down, as she adopts entirely different techniques and approaches for each new project, usually building her pieces out of discussions and improvisation sessions with her cast members on a pressing contemporary issue rather than preparing a completed script before rehearsals begin. Nevertheless, she has gained a reputation for creating ingenious, thought-provoking theatre; a review for one of her pieces in the *New York Times* begins: "Young Jean Lee is, hands down, the most adventurous downtown playwright of her generation" (Isherwood 2012). Before founding her own theatre company in 2003 in order to produce and fund her own work, Lee avidly followed the work of experimental theatre companies based in New York, such as the Wooster Group,

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New York City Players, and Radiohole (Clements 2017). As such, she follows in the footsteps of the American avant-garde, favouring patchy structures and sensory disorientation over the smoothness of conventional plot and character. Despite her distance from mainstream theatre and the deliberately off-putting nature of her work, Lee's career took off in the past decade. Her play *Straight White Men*, which premiered in 2014, was produced at the Hayes Theatre in 2018, making Lee the first Asian-American female playwright on Broadway.

As Lee gains mainstream recognition, this is an opportune time to take stock of her earlier career, in which she was primarily known for innovative pieces that explored representations and stereotypes of people of colour in the United States. Indeed, her success is especially noteworthy considering the ways in which her previous work purposefully deployed racist imagery to make audiences uncomfortable, a tactic that has given her the nickname "a queen of unease" (Soloski 2015). She prevents responses that treat her work as a satire of racist stereotypes as artifacts of the past, instead forcing her spectators to grapple head-on with these offensive images and the feelings of shame, guilt, and disgust that they produce.

In this chapter, I examine two works, *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* (2006) and *The Shipment* (2009), in which Lee seeks to affect the audience's perceptions of race. Her plays do not overtly perform migrant experiences and representations, although *Songs of the Dragons* engages with Orientalist stereotypes that impact Asian immigrants and their American-born children. Still, I argue that her ingenious handling of racial representation—for example, the enactment of African American stereotypes in *The Shipment*—critically intervenes in the cultural economy of the United States where images of Others (including migrants) are produced and consumed. In the first section of this chapter, I provide an overview of the ways in which racial stereotypes have been handled in theatre and performance vis-à-vis more "truthful" representations of people of colour before demonstrating the ways in which Lee's work both stages and undermines the distinction between these two categories. Moreover, I highlight the ways in which Lee politicizes theatrical form itself, asking who has had access to realist characterization—in other words, complex, individuated figures that connote psychological depth and socio-political agency. The jarring collision of explicit racist stereotypes and characters seemingly grounded in everyday reality exposes the ways in which realism has buttressed whiteness and nationalism on the American stage, often at the expense of people of colour and recent migrants. Drawing from Henry Giroux's (2005) work on border pedagogy, I argue that Lee's

experimental theatre counteracts the ideological power of stereotypes by turning the audience into border crossers across theatrical forms, an intervention that can make up for limitations in approaches that advocate for "accurate" representations of stereotyped groups.

The Border Between Stereotype and Realism

At least from the perspective of aesthetics and technique, realist characterization and stereotype seem to oppose one another. We generally evaluate a fictional character as "realistic" to the extent that its creator does *not* resort to stereotypes. Narrowing the focus to the history of drama and theatre, think of how characters in Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw's plays assert their "truthfulness" (which is to say their modernity) against a background of stock characters and ethnic caricatures in nineteenth-century melodrama, vaudeville, and minstrel shows. In the early to mid-twentieth century, growing demands to abolish harmful stereotypes of women, people of colour, and other socially alienated groups were accompanied by the call to create "realistic" representations of these minorities and their experiences, ideally by writers and performers who belong to the formerly stereotyped group in question. Theatrical realism served not only as a tool for raising awareness of social issues in modern drama since Ibsen; it was also a coveted cultural apparatus that allowed minority groups to replace distorted images and prejudiced associations with respectable and empathetic characters. Thus, the 1959 Broadway production of Lorraine Hansberry's social realist play *A Raisin in the Sun* is celebrated as a landmark event in African American theatre history for opening a field of representation that was previously exclusive to the white mainstream.

In this chapter, I propose a limited definition of the term "realism" that highlights the politics of racial representation in theatre and performance. I use realism as a mode of characterization in theatre that is delineated in opposition to past stereotypes. In this context, it is less important how "authentic" the character is than the fact that they challenge histories of racist representation onstage. It is somewhat of a commonplace to invoke a relational binary of stereotypical and realist characterization in American theatre historiography that focuses on various post-Civil War movements.[1] For example, Harvey Young (2013, 7–8) defines African American theatre as "the effects of artists who challenged widely popular Jim Crow stereotypes and caricatures who more accurately resembled—in look,

mannerism, and everyday concerns—the folks who resided in black neighborhoods." Theatre that engages with racial politics often becomes a struggle between modes of representation: Lena Younger in *A Raisin in the Sun* against the Mammy stereotype in earlier American popular culture.[2] Brian Herrera (2015, 138) calls the stereotype "an unyielding antagonist in a sustained battle over the discursive features of representational truth." The very act of calling out racial stereotypes implies an interventionist alternative that, I argue, entails a *discourse* of realism, even if critics and artists disagree on what this mode of representation looks like in practice. (Few of the Latina/o performances that Herrera examines conform to the tradition of American realist drama.)

The binary of realism and stereotype can be mapped onto other binaries with political ramifications, such as mainstream and fringe, domestic and foreign, Self and Other. Thus, the binary creates a border that separates characters into those who are culturally "in" and "out." My intention is not to reify this theatrical border; as I will discuss below, Lee structures her plays so that spectatorship moves across it. Before discussing Lee's work, however, it is worth considering the privilege (and thus the political repercussions) of racial representations crossing over to the realist side: namely, the privilege of being apprehended, rationally and emotionally, as human. Ntozake Shange (1992, 68) wrote in her introduction to *spell #7*, a play that stages the conflict of stereotype and authenticity in performances of blackness: "i have not ceased to be amazed when i hear members of an audience whispering to one another in the foyers of theaters /that they had never imagined they cd feel so much for characters/ even though they were black." Freedom from stereotypes was (and still is) a priority for theatre artists of colour because they clear a path for empathy. In other words, the push into realist territory counters the dehumanizing force of the stereotype, a force that in turn validates discrimination and exclusion of the stereotyped group, if not outright violence towards them. Racial struggles in the theatre also play out as unseen struggles over borders of aesthetics, form, and dramaturgy.

However, realism itself came under critical scrutiny in the latter half of the twentieth century. Roland Barthes' (1989) concept of the "reality effect" demystified the textual codes that undergird realism's stake in verisimilitude. In theatre and performance studies, feminist critics in the late-twentieth century rigorously exposed the ideological foundations of realism, reading patriarchal and heteronormative regimes of truth into what was conventionally labelled "naturalistic" or "kitchen-sink" drama

by the mid-twentieth century. Elin Diamond (1997, 4–5) argues that "realism, more than any other form of theatre representation, mystifies the process of theatrical signification" so that it becomes difficult to identify and challenge the cultural biases that sustain that representation of reality. This framework reveals that American realist drama in the tradition of Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller generally assumed a normative subjectivity that was straight, white, and male.[3] Furthermore, the focus on middle-class domesticity excluded recent migrants from realism's field of representation.

In step with these critical positions, theatre artists have explored theatrical alternatives to realism that specifically address its ideological foundations as a guarantor of normative realities. For example, the lesbian feminist theatre collective Split Britches lampooned sexist and heteronormative stereotypes through strategies of masquerade and gendered role playing, rather than pursue more realistic portrayals of women in "straight" plays.[4] George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* (1986) includes a scene titled the "The Last Mama on the Couch Play" that spoofed Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, or rather, the self-congratulatory discourse surrounding Hansberry's play—what Wolfe calls "the laziness of some white producers declaring, '*A Raisin in the Sun*. This is what it means to be Negro. This is what it means to be Black. We need to look no further, the search is done'" (quoted in Rugg and Young 2012, 416). Wolfe's biting satire demonstrates that the cultural legitimacy that comes with realist representation comes at the cost of subscribing to a white normative ideal, reducing black performance to a narrow notion of domestic realism modelled on canonical white playwrights. "The Last Mama on the Couch Play" shifts gears into a cliché-ridden all-black musical before regressing into a blackface minstrelsy sequence; the struggle between stereotype and realism comes full circle. This scene suggests that the white gaze can overpower any attempt to secure cultural legitimacy through realist representation.

In response, African American artists since the end of the twentieth century (including Wolfe) have purposefully revived racist stereotypes that were excised from the public sphere, calling attention to the economies of spectatorship that confine black performance regardless of theatrical form, in a trend that Shawn Marie Garrett (2002) dubbed the "return of the repressed." Similarly working with terminology adopted from psychoanalysis, José Esteban Muñoz (1999) established the concept of disidentification, a strategy integral to queer people of colour but one that has proven

versatile enough to inform a broad range of minoritarian performances. According to Muñoz: "Disidentification is a mode of performance whereby a toxic identity is remade and infiltrated by subjects who have been hailed by such identity categories but have not been able to own such a label" (185). Muñoz's ideas resonate with other scholarship on the self-reflexive return to stereotypes in theatre and performance, such as Josephine Lee's (1997) discussion on harnessing "the seductive possibilities of the stereotype" to reclaim them for Asian American political consciousness, as well as Brian Herrera's (2015) coinage "executing the stereotype" to describe the ways in which Latina/o stereotypes in American popular culture are enacted in order to be buried. Underlying all of these theories is Homi K. Bhabha's (2004, 95) influential definition of the stereotype as both the "effect of probabilistic truth and predictability"—in other words, a discursive product of colonial power-knowledge—but one that "must always be in *excess* of what can be empirically proved or logically construed." It is this excess that renders any stereotype ambivalent, thus creating space to rewrite its racial script through embodied performance.

Working in this lineage, Lee also seeks to undermine the ideological power of stereotypes by overperforming them. However, her plays draw attention to the binary of stereotype and realism itself, the binary that I argue encapsulates racial performance in modern American theatre history. *Songs of the Dragons* and *The Shipment* both contain sharp transitions in modes of representation and spectatorship. Rather than slipping from a parody of domestic realism to an all-black musical and, finally, a blackface minstrelsy as in *The Colored Museum*, Lee intends the shifts between stereotype and realist characterization to be jarring and confusing.

I propose the term "theatrical border crossing" to describe this dramaturgical feature, in part to make the case that Lee's work offers unique insight into the politics of representing migration. As a means of moving beyond the framework of simply labelling migrant figures in mainstream culture as "good" or "bad," Lee targets the audience's mode of spectatorship, as opposed to the stereotyped migrant, as that which moves across borders of theatrical form, national identity, and race. While I do not want to necessarily ascribe an instructive function to Lee's work, I find parallels between Lee's deliberate shaping of the audience's perception and Henry Giroux's (2005, 20–21) notion of border pedagogy, which seeks to "create pedagogical conditions in which students become border crossers in order to understand otherness in its own terms," while also "educating

students to both read [cultural] codes historically and critically while simultaneously learning the limits of such codes, including the ones they use to construct their own narratives and histories." *Songs of the Dragons* and *The Shipment* explode stereotypes of Asian Americans and African Americans on the one hand, but they also ingeniously expose the ways in which white normativity shapes perceptions of "realistic" characters, especially among white spectators who typically do not have to navigate this border in their identity formation. The work of Jacques Rancière (1991, 2009) informs my application of pedagogical theory to Lee's theatre. Beginning with the parable of the "ignorant schoolmaster," Rancière developed a definition of aesthetics that incites politically engaged and emancipatory modes of spectatorship through what he calls the "redistribution of the sensible." By way of the linkage among aesthetics, politics, and pedagogy that Rancière proposes, it is possible to apply Giroux's border pedagogy to Lee's work: *Songs of the Dragons* and *The Shipment* purposefully manipulate the audience's perceptions of race in ways that can shake loose the implicit biases and normative frameworks that guide our decoding of dramatic characters and stereotypes onstage.

To be clear, my intention is not to turn the border into a metaphor for theatrical form, to obscure actual border politics that dehumanize migrants and invalidate their experiences. Rather, I am interested in the ways in which theatrical forms interact with political lines. Realism as a form that historically served as a vessel for white normativity in American theatre can never be politically neutral. Such borders are not negated when playwrights of colour also write characters with psychological depth and social standing. Lee's plays place that border onstage so that the audience may cross it, casting theatrical realism as an object of aesthetic and ideological reflection rather than a container for either affirmative or critical representations of race.

Enforcing Borders: *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*

On numerous occasions, Lee has described her creative process as first identifying the play that she wants to write less than anything else, and then forcing herself to write it—a method that she learned from Mac Wellman when she studied playwriting at Brooklyn College. In an interview with the *New York Times*, she explains the purpose of this

unconventional writing method: "My whole aesthetic is about fighting complacency. So if I make a show that goes against my instincts of what I want to do, that creates a very tense and complicated dynamic" (Piepenburg 2007).

That was the inception of *Songs of the Dragons*, Lee's attempt to write an identity politics play about her own background as a 1.5-generation Korean immigrant—an idea that gave her severe anxiety. The play features two groups of characters who take turns presenting disjointed, skit-like scenes that do not add up to a coherent plot. The first group consists of four Asian women. Three of them wear traditional Korean garments, strikingly colourful and billowy, in stark contrast to the minimalist set and modern costumes of the other characters. The three figures are virtually indistinguishable, more so because at first they speak only in their native languages which, according to Lee's (2009, 34) published text, would ideally be a mix of Korean, Chinese, and Japanese. In later scenes, they switch to broken English with heavy "Asian" accents. These women often engage in physical comedy, giggling while playfully slapping and chasing one another around the stage. Gradually, they accumulate stereotypical associations of exoticized Asian femininity, their childlike innocence slipping into hyper-sexualized images of obedient yet promiscuous young girls. These Asian women are denied any sense of agency. All they can do is smile back when the audience gawks and chuckles at their foreignness.

These Orientalist stereotypes mark Asian bodies as perpetually alien, becoming major obstacles for Korean Americans and other Asian immigrant communities in the United States.[5] Such racist imagery, ingrained in American popular culture, has a psychological toll on the fourth Asian woman in the play: the "Korean American." Unlike the others, she dresses in a T-shirt and jeans, and speaks assertively in impeccable English. From her very first lines in the play, the Korean American distinguishes herself from the rest of the group at their expense:

> Have you ever noticed how most Asian-Americans are slightly brain-damaged from having grown up with Asian parents? It's like being raised by monkeys […]. Asian people from Asia are even more brain-damaged, but in a different way, because they are the original monkey. (Lee 2009: 39–40)

Later, she makes racist faces and gestures at the Koreans, and mimes kung fu and eating rice with chopsticks. She hates the other women for reinforcing the worst stereotypes of her ethnicity. But Lee is not interested in

portraying the Korean American as a self-hating victim. Instead, the figure puts spectators in an awkward position as she constantly covets their approval and empathy regarding her harsh treatment of the others, as in the quotation above where the Korean American directly addresses the audience. The audience is forced to constantly second-guess Lee's intentions behind this explicit racism, uncertain whether the play is making fun of Koreans, making fun of stereotypical perceptions of Koreans, or passing off racism as satire, and so on in an inescapable loop.

Rather than resolve this tension, Lee offers her audiences relief. These disturbing scenes with Asian actors are alternated with scenes of a heterosexual white couple engaged in an extended diagnosis of their romantic relationship. The couple's dialogue is so insipid that it becomes an extended joke: they express a vague desire for excitement in their lives, pamper one another with adages of self-worth, indulge in fantasies of travelling to Africa, and discuss signing up for healthcare-covered couples counselling. At one point, White Person 1 says outright, "You know what's awesome? […] Being white," to which White Person 2 responds nonchalantly, "I guess I never thought of it. And when I do think of it I feel like an asshole" (Lee 2009, 71). In contrast to the bizarre performances of the Korean women, the white couple is easily recognizable as a satire of white privilege and social insulation. It is easier to laugh comfortably at them, perhaps even empathize with them to a degree. Karen Shimakawa (2007, 100) observes that the white characters "seem suddenly, unexpectedly, *heartfelt*—it is difficult not to be moved by their naked emotionalism in these last moments." By allowing the audience to revert to conventional modes of spectatorship predicated on character psychology and emotionality (in other words, by placing the white couple closer to realism, however ironic the portrayal may be), Lee provides relief directly after scenes of acute racial unease. But then, the play returns once again to the weird Asians. The play's structure—alternating between these two groups of characters—begs the question: why is it difficult to have the same kind of sympathy for the Asian characters, who suffer much harsher ordeals? Does it have to do with their mode of representation?

The Korean American eventually fails to separate herself from her Othered sisters. She dons the same traditional garments and participates in a climactic movement sequence in which the four women take turns miming acts of gruesome self-mutilation and suicide. For example, "*Korean 3 cuts off her breast, bites a chunk out of it, throws her breast into the audience, [and] spits the chunk at the audience*" (Lee 2009, 64). Notably, Lee

dampens the horror of this grotesque scene, as the women enact their repeated deaths to the sugary tune of Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You." This sequence utterly dehumanizes the Asian women. Stereotypically submissive to violence and bodily infringement, these Othered bodies are devoid of pain and consequence. Overwhelmed by incongruous sensory stimuli and racially charged imagery, it is difficult for the audience to *feel* anything.

The scene ends abruptly when the white characters reconquer the stage, shooing the Koreans away by "*shaking their chairs at the Koreans like lion tamers*" (Lee 2009, 64). There is no suggestion of physical force; the white characters awkwardly wield the chairs at a safe distance as if their hearts are not in it, while the Asians scamper offstage of their own accord. In a video recording that the Young Jean Lee Theatre Company has made available online, the audience laughs vocally at this ridiculous tableau— arguably the most vigorous guffaw in the performance.[6] *Songs of the Dragons* is carefully structured to elicit this laugh, granting audiences relief at the precise moment when the grotesque suicide sequence ends. Furthermore, Lee "tricks" spectators into laughing at Asian bodies being deported from the stage because their foreignness is just too much to handle. The women make one final interruption after this scene to deliver a half-serious apology to offended audiences and the Korean people in a droning voice. After they show themselves out with a deep bow, the white couple take full control of the stage, talking about their failing relationship for almost twenty minutes—about a quarter of the production's run-time—until the play ends.

The tableau of two white people chasing away a stereotyped minority group effectively draws a border on the stage. Or rather, *Songs of the Dragons* calls attention to a theatrical border that had been operating in the background all along, influencing the ways in which audiences responded differently to the Asian stereotypes and comparatively realistic white couple. Realist characterization trumps the discomfort of explicit stereotypes, which overlaps with the white normative mainstream's exclusion of inassimilable Asian and Asian American identity formations. In a self-reflexive manner, Lee rehearses the policing of this long-standing border in American society and culture. It enacts the border politics that separate two groups of people—Asian and white—and two racialized modes of representation—stereotype and realism. Lee explains: "Because naturalism is associated with white people, there's a racial divide. Stereotypes are people of colour and women, and naturalism is straight white men and [some]

women" (pers. comm. 2014). She understands that any expression of Asian American experience under this schema must grapple with this invisible border. Indeed, realist family dramas by playwrights of colour are frequently perceived as being "about" racial identity, while realist plays by and about white people are rarely classified in this way. Writing the anti-identity politics play, Lee instead shows that theatrical borders have historically barred non-white characters from the privileges of individuality and universality that realist characterization supposedly offers. By reserving realism only for the white characters, Lee demonstrates that white privilege is not only a socio-economic concept but also one that entails *aesthetic* norms.[7] Meanwhile, on the other side of the border, everything slides back into familiar stereotypes.

The structure of *Song of the Dragons* also has the potential to dismantle this theatrical border. The disorienting oscillation between the two groups generates friction within the act of spectatorship, shaking the audience out of their comfort zones. Muñoz (1999, 32) writes: "The migrant status can be characterized by its need to move back and forth, to occupy at least two spaces at once. […] The very nature of this migrant drive eventually wears down the coherency of borders." Rather than present migrant characters onstage, Lee's innovative work turns the audience into figurative migrants, who make multiple journeys across the border between stereotype and realism. The audience also crosses over perceptual boundaries in *The Shipment*, continuing the formal experimentalism of *Songs of the Dragons*. In her later play, however, the theatrical border crossing occurs at one pivotal point in the two-part performance.

Crossing Borders: *The Shipment*

Lee structures *The Shipment* in two discrete acts: a series of short segments "structured like a minstrel show—dance, stand-up routine, sketches, and a song," followed by "a relatively straight naturalistic comedy" (2010, 5). Here, Lee explores black representation, developing the piece with a cast of five African American actors who improvised scenes in rehearsal based on stereotypes that black actors generally face in their careers. One early sequence features a stand-up comedian who jokes crudely about racial tension between white and black people. He fires the opening shot, so to speak, insulting and berating white people, which eases the audience into going along with the black stereotypes that appear in the following scene as the same kind of racial satire. This skit, an abbreviated crime drama

featuring a half-baked character named Rapper Omar, quickly runs through African American typecasting and stereotypes in mainstream media, such as the street rapper, the drug dealer, and the gangster criminal. Within minutes, audiences are given Rapper Omar's (entirely predictable) life story: his early days on the dangerous streets, his prison sentence, his meteoric rise as a rap star, and his demise into decadence.

Lee wrote the second half of the play based on roles that the cast said that they would like to play. The same actors from the first part, now with fleshed-out characters, chat about office politics and emotional problems while sipping drinks at an informal cocktail party. The theatrical mode shifts abruptly from presentational to utterly *re*presentational—fourth wall and all. A dramatic conflict arises when Thomas, the host of the party, shockingly announces that he has poisoned everyone's drinks out of despair over his failures in life. But then—surprise again!—he reveals it was all a joke. To alleviate the tension and awkwardness in the room, the guests decide to play a game called "Library." In this game, everyone must make up a sentence that could plausibly belong in a book randomly chosen from Thomas' shelf. The host then chooses the best entry. After a weak practice round, the guests play in earnest using as their prompt the chapter "Negro Superstitions" from an ethnography book titled *Black Magic*. The play abruptly ends in the middle of this round:

THOMAS: (*Bursting out laughing*) "The Negro believes that a Negro's hands and feet are white because the moon done touched 'em in Africa!"
           […]
OMAR: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, but I have to say that I'm really uncomfortable with all of this. I just don't think we'd be doing this if there were a black person in the room.
           (*Pause.*)
DESMOND: I guess that would depend on what kind of black person it was.
           (*Blackout.*) (Lee 2010: 53)

The play ends here, leaving the audience in the dark momentarily to think back on their impressions of the characters in the cocktail party scene, with the revelation that the black actors were not performing black roles. (Were the characters white, then?) Lee structures a clever twist at the end; indeed, Thomas and the other characters had said nothing about race, although

the numerous references to alcohol and drugs echo the black stereotypes set up in the first part, the "kind of black person" that the American media reproduces incessantly. Once again, the audience must apprehend stereotypes and realist characterization alongside one another. Yet unlike *Songs of the Dragons*, this play explores the ways in which assumptions and biases travel across this aesthetic boundary through the bodies of the five black actors, in addition to the audience's perceptions of race.

It is worth tracing the path of racial representation in the play to understand how Lee once again conjures a theatrical border. The play's structure seems fragmented and random at first, but *The Shipment*'s dramaturgy is razor-sharp. The stand-up comedy routine highlights racial politics as a central theme, underscoring the comedian's blackness even as he trades in what he self-mockingly labels "'White people are like this, and black people are like that' jokes" (Lee 2010, 11). This underscored blackness then merges with stereotypes of crime and "inner city" culture in the Rapper Omar section. As Lee wrote in the author's note for *The Shipment*: "The performers wore stereotypes like ill-fitting paper-doll outfits held on by two tabs, which denied the audience easy responses (illicit pleasure or self-righteous indignation) to racial clichés and created a kind of uncomfortable, paranoid watchfulness in everyone" (5). As a result, the second act feels off-kilter and artificial, even though the characters in the upper middle-class cocktail party conform to the realist mode. In the Rapper Omar scene, the performers are directed to "*deliver their lines and move as flatly as possible*"—in other words, to not modulate the language with "black" dialects (16). Yet strangely, it is most apparent in the cocktail party that these actors are putting on a show. The twist ending confirms the feeling that these characters are somehow unnatural, as they had been cast across racial lines. At the same time, Lee points out the problematic assumptions that turn what is technically a naturalistic scene with a "colour-blind" cast playing non-stereotypical roles into a performance thoroughly inflected by race. These figures are stuck on the border between stereotypes and realism, subconsciously scrutinized and interrogated by the audience as they try to cross over into the field of realist representation.

Although the play is based on the African American actors' experiences of being typecast, it is a mistake to view *The Shipment* as a play about blackness. Instead, Lee focuses on building dramatic structures that strategically induce certain modes of spectatorship while inhibiting others when looking at racially marked bodies. Her goal is not to represent

identity as a given truth or a locus for politics, but rather to highlight the tensions, complexities, and barriers that exist in *all* representations of race. We tend to point at explicit stereotypes as the only images that are politically charged when they are but one region in a larger map of racialized representation, performance, and spectatorship. Lee's work grants us a full view of that topography, including the unseen borders that reinforce white normativity on the American stage.

But if the structure of *Songs of the Dragons* calls attention to the border, *The Shipment* takes its audience across it. In that regard, the enigmatic title of the play could refer to the black stereotypes presented in the first half. Lee crafts the performance so that these stereotypes subliminally exert influence over the audience's perception of the realist characters in the second half, creating the lingering feeling that something is "out of bounds." *The Shipment* enacts a theatrical border crossing, situating the audience in a stereotype-filled environment, and then relocating them to a realist setting with all the cultural baggage of the former intact. It is the audience's positionality within the politics of representation that migrates through the play's two-fold structure, rather than the characters. Lee has noted that her audiences tend to be consistently "[c]ollege-educated, city-dwelling, liberal, probably not evangelical Christian" (Lee 2008). Lee is interested in impacting the ways in which such spectators with good intentions perceive race in the theatre, slyly pointing out their implicit biases. While these audiences are perhaps less threatening to migrants and people of colour compared to those who openly express racism and xenophobia, their smug, "been-there-done-that" attitude regarding race can be an equally challenging obstacle in the struggle for representational equity in American culture. From the perspective of migration politics, these white liberal audiences have never had to navigate the border—whether that is a national border, an internal border (of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.), or the racialized theatrical border that I have described above. These audiences have always felt "at home" in mainstream culture, a structure of feeling that realism reinforces not only in its focus on middle-class domesticity but also white normativity. Lee's plays shake audiences out of that complacency by shuttling them across the border, asking them to adopt new and unfamiliar modes of spectatorship that blur the perceptual line between blatant stereotypes of Others and characters that are true to life. (*Whose* life?)

When Lee embarks on a new project, she thinks first of the intended effects of the performance on the audience. She describes her playwriting

process as building a psychological trap for her audiences that can bypass the conscious assumptions and attitudes preventing deeper engagement with racial politics:

> I do kind of have a bee in my bonnet about race, and nobody wants to hear a person of color ranting about race and how unfair the world is to them. You know you don't want to hear people whine and accuse white people. All of these things are very unpopular. So to find a way to talk about the things that bother me in a way that's not going to make everybody roll their eyes and dismiss it, so that's the hardest thing for me in making theatre that is political is trying to trap the audience so they can't escape through ways of their dismissive loopholes. (Lee 2008)

This can be read as a statement on the difficulty of truly crossing borders in the theatre, of successfully applying Giroux's (2005) border pedagogy to art. The problem is not that audiences are prohibited from crossing racial, cultural, and aesthetic borders because they are walled off and policed; rather, the problem is that many audience members who profess to be liberal and culturally inclusive are unwilling to move out of familiar territory, of becoming subjects of migration themselves. In some cases, audiences fail to recognize a discriminatory border when one clearly exists—for example, those who treat unequal casting opportunities as a matter that can be simply resolved by giving the part to the "most talented" actor. Lee's innovative work with theatrical form pushes against these entrenched boundaries in a way that creates potential to redraw the map in a more inclusive way. In that regard, I understand Lee's metaphor of the trap as a compulsory border crossing that allows us to see racial representation from new perspectives and hopefully become more mobile and flexible in our readings of race in other art and cultural texts. Rancière (2009, 46) calls attention to dissensus as a form of critical spectatorship that can "crack open the given and the obviousness of the visible, in order to sketch a new topography of the possible." Lee's plays deconstruct both racist stereotypes and realist characterization, two modes of representation that are each in their own way "self-evident" and thus too easily consumed uncritically. Through her plays that stage theatrical border crossings, Lee effectively redraws the map of racial representation.

*   *   *

Young Jean Lee's innovative approach to theatrical form offers a more sophisticated way to address and critique racial stereotypes. As the discourse on representation and politics developed and continues to develop, we have become too eager to point at stereotypes and call for their expulsion once and for all, so that they do not "taint" good representations—good in the sense of being accurate, respectable, positive, truthful, and so on. In this view, realism becomes an antidote to stereotyping. But we should remember that stereotypes are part of a larger regime that grants representational privilege to whiteness. The critical discourse on stereotypes and the politics of representation should recognize the fact that realism itself plays a part in sustaining a perceptual border that alienates minorities and cultural Others, a fact that Lee's work illustrates in surprising ways.

Viewing her work through the concept of border crossing complicates another topographical figure of speech that is used frequently in theatre criticism and scholarship: that of the avant-garde supposedly "pushing the boundaries" of the artform. This idea implies forward movement—in other words, historical progress—in aesthetics, form, and technique, which in turn renders some artistic approaches obsolete. In theatre history, realism has been the definitive foil for the avant-garde since the late-nineteenth century; the stuffy drawing room that forward-thinking theatre artists must dismantle. The commonplace rhetoric of leaving realism behind in the push towards new frontiers (despite its stubborn refusal to go away, I should add) can limit our critical engagement with realism's ideological foundations, especially the ongoing discrimination between (white) plays about universal human experience and identity politics dramas that are narrowly tied to a racial minority. Plays such as *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* and *The Shipment* demonstrate that realism can still create politically eye-opening experiences if it is handled thoughtfully. Lee's work calls for a different understanding of an avant-garde that crosses borders and enters unfamiliar territory. Rather than posit progress into an unknown, romanticized future, her plays ask that we find and breach the various borders that divide our society in the present moment.

Notes

1. The comprehensive reference book *A Companion to Twentieth-Century American Drama*, edited by David Krasner, illustrates my argument here. Most of the chapters on various identity-based theatre movements in the

latter half of the twentieth century discuss the ways in which theatre artists sought to challenge or critically dissect extant negative stereotypes. See chapters: Mike Sell, "The Drama of the Black Arts Movement"; Daphne Lei, "Staging the Binary: Asian American Theatre in the Late Twentieth Century"; Ann Haugo, "Native American Drama"; Tiffany Ana Lopez, "Writing Beyond Borders: A Survey of US Latina/o Drama"; Julia Listengargen, "From Eccentricity to Endurance: Jewish Comedy and the Art of Affirmation"; and Jill Dolan, "Lesbian and Gay Drama."

2. Of course, these distinctions are never clear-cut. Margaret Wilkerson notes that the specter of the stereotypical Mammy conditions the ways in which white audiences would have understood Lena Younger as a character. Nevertheless, she follows the binary scheme I outline here, imagining Hansberry's struggle "to reveal the humanity, the truth, the energy, and the complexity that emerges from a stereotype" (Elam and Krasner 2001, 335).

3. For a discussion on the valorization of psychological interiority in interwar American drama and its associations with middle-class white male identity, see Joel Pfister, *Staging Depth: Eugene O'Neill and the Politics of Psychological Discourse.*

4. See Kate Davy, *Lady Dicks and Lesbian Brothers: Staging the Unimaginable at the WOW Café Theatre* (2010), especially Chapter 5, "Staging the Unimaginable."

5. For a discussion of Orientalist stereotypes in American popular culture and their effects on Asian-American communities, see Robert G. Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (1999); and Krystyn R. Moon, *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s–1920s* (2005).

6. The video is available online at http://youngjeanlee.org/work/songs-dragons-flying-heaven/.

7. Lee pursued this relationship between realism and whiteness further in her most recent play, *Straight White Men*. The comically unsubtle title is reminiscent of a subtitle to *Songs of the Dragons* that Lee had used in early productions: "A Show About White People in Love." *Straight White Men* is the result of Lee's attempt to write in the style she found least interesting: a three-act naturalistic family drama in the tradition of Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller. It is telling that Lee was only able to meet this self-imposed challenge by writing exclusively about the most privileged social group in American society, this time pushing people of color out of the representational frame altogether and into the space between scenes, where they handled the stage transitions. For a discussion on *Straight White Men* and its relationship to Lee's earlier work, see my article "Visibly White: Realism and Race in *Appropriate* and *Straight White Men*" (2015).

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The Suitcase as a Neurotic Container in the Israeli Theatre: The Return of the Wandering Jew

Sarit Cofman-Simhon

Suitcases abound on Israeli stages. One finds them in mainstream as well as fringe theatres. Israeli theatre thus is responding to the geographical ephemerality that is part of the consciousness of almost all of its spectators: nearly everyone in Israel has experienced either migration or exile—if not they themselves, at least their parents. These are not the fashionable, functional suitcases of travelers and tourists, but containers of suffering and anxiety that encapsulate the identity of their owners. On Israeli stages they are emblematic and constitute an icon of the Wandering Jew. By focusing on the suitcase as a symbolic prop, I would like to propose a brief typology of how Israeli theatre represents Jewish migration and explore four Israeli productions that tackle deterritorialization. These productions intrinsically engage with the central myths of Israeli identity—the Bible, Diaspora, the Holocaust, and Israel's wars.

Be'Amharit Ze Nishma Yoter Tov (It Sounds Better in Amharic) (2001) by Yossi Vassa presents the Jewish immigrant's suitcase; *Orzey Ha'mizvadot*

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(*Suitcase Packers*) (1983), a canonic Israeli play by Hanoch Levin, deals with the Israeli Jew's emigrant suitcase; *Mechakim Le'Godot* (*Waiting for Godot*) by Samuel Beckett staged by Joshua Sobol (2015) relates to the Jewish refugee's suitcase; finally, Rina Yerushalmi's 1995 production *Va Yomer, Va Yelech* (*And He Said, And He Walked*), part of her *Bible Project*, concludes by tracing a connection between the paradigmatic case of Jewish wandering, the biblical Exodus, and contemporary Israel's wars. All productions centre on the suitcase as a stage prop, and as a cypher for human mobility: in each play the suitcase instantiates a different metaphor, according to the characters' various epistemological and ontological positions (immigrant, emigrant, exiled, refugee). I will be looking into these myths of identity and belonging as narratives of perpetual homelessness.

The Wandering Jew has been a central stereotype applied to Jews in Western culture, an essentialist view, making unrootedness integral to Jewish identity. Yet for Jews, Diaspora has been complemented by the belief in redemption and in returning to a utopian homeland. Paradoxically, the establishment of the State of Israel and the end of Jewish displacements has not terminated the sense of geographical ephemerality for Jews living in Israel. Suitcases in the Israeli theatre portray the tension of a story of a neurosis: the homecoming of the Wandering Jew.

Jewish Utopia and Dystopia: Wandering in Space and Time

In a book dealing with contemporary Hebrew drama, *Fields and Luggage* (2014), Avraham Oz points to the main themes of Israeli theatre as being land (or lack of it) and migration. The front cover illustrates people inside a crooked wagon seated near a table, as if in an itinerant living room. Their grim expressions and the luggage piled on the wagon roof tell of their stories as landless wandering Jews. Two thousand years of migration colour the depths of Israeli consciousness and drama, even when and where the wandering is supposed to have come to an end. In a similar vein, Shimon Levy (2016, 63–64) remarks that:

> The suitcase is a frequent stage-prop in the canonic Israeli theatre, and as a theatrical prop it is more a Jewish object than Israeli in its character … In the depth of Israeli experience are traces of Jewish anxieties, remains of the fear of expulsion, of enforced wanderings … These suitcases allude to the Jew within the Israeli, people who depend on suitcases, those who in fact have

not yet put down roots, who are still not completely at home, are always on the road to somewhere, on the road from somewhere … The suitcase reveals the Israeli collective subconscious.

Indeed, in Jewish memory, migrations and returns to homeland are markers of national consciousness. The trope of migration or exile is foundational to Jewish nationhood and religion, and the Israeli ethos is founded on the grand narrative of repeated exile from and return to Zion.[1] This trope of cyclical return has been the formative force in Jews' self-identification as wanderers for whom the only topos with the status of home is the Promised Land.

The stereotype of the Wandering Jew appears in works of non-Jewish artists, as well as in Jewish writings. In premodern Europe, an itinerant life of permanent migration was perceived as a punishment and a plague. According to the Christian legend, the Wandering Jew (also known as Ahasver) was doomed to roam the world until the end of days. As a derogatory image, it meant that God had cursed the Jews for their unbelief in Jesus. This trope of the eternal Jew, with its anti-Jewish connotation, evolved over centuries alongside the actual process of Jews moving from one place to another, itself not an insignificant influence on the literary shaping of Ahasver. Such migrations were usually, but not only, a result of frequent expulsions and harassments that included collective murder. Concomitantly, Jews were perceived as rootless, cosmopolitan people, in the worst sense of the word. The legend claims that the Jew will never pass away, nor settle down. Rejected by all nations, the eternal Jew wanders and disrupts the purity of nations and the geography of borders. Moreover, he is immortal because he is not human: "In many ways the Wandering Jew was like a vampire: he could not die and therefore he could not really live," indicates Shelly Zer-Zion (2008, 135).

Intriguingly, Judaism itself has also considered exile a divine punishment, albeit for different reasons. Starting with the biblical punishment for Cain's fratricide, "You shall become a ceaseless wanderer on earth" (Genesis 4:12), wandering was contrasted with settling down in peace: "Each will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid" (Micah 4:4). Thus, historical exiles have been viewed by Jews as having theological explanations, and most compellingly, as belonging to a narrative ultimately including redemption and return to the Land of Israel. This teleological pattern of an ahistorical narrative, of recurring homecoming, finds expression in the Israeli theatre.

Formative Jewish migrations that framed later experience include the Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Roman exiles, each of them constituting a realm of memory for Jews. As Jan Assman (2015, 3) observes, "The biblical Exodus from Egypt launched a narrative version of the revolutionary birth of both a people and a religion," including a political patrimony in the Promised Land. Dated to the fourteenth century BCE, the Exodus story constitutes the mythical migration to the Promised Land that has marked Jewish consciousness and been an emotional wellspring for the ethos of Israeli Jews. As such, it is celebrated each year during the Passover holiday. Yet Jonathan Boyarin (1992, 523) remarks that "the politics of Exodus constitute an exemplary case of the link between history and interpretive reading," pointing to the fact that whereas archaeological facts are ambiguous, in Jewish tradition the story of Exodus is firmly linked to national homecoming. Canonic Jewish texts address the descent to Egypt and the slavery there not as historical events, but rather as punishment for sinning against God and as a story of redemption.[2]

Another massive migration was the Babylonian exile: the ancestors of the modern Jews were deported from Judah[3] to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar, around 580 BCE. After the overthrow of Babylonia by the Persians, King Cyrus gave the Jews permission to return to their native land in 537 BCE. In the Hebrew Bible, the captivity in Babylon is presented as a punishment for idolatry and disobedience to God and followed by deliverance.

Yet the ultimate formative exile, the Roman exile, which eventually became the Jewish Diaspora of two millennia, occurred in 70 CE. The rabbis of the era attributed the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem to a punishment from God for the "baseless hatred" that pervaded Jewish society at the time. Most Jews who became dispersed adhered to their Judaism throughout a long and far-flung Diaspora, remembering the lost homeland in their daily prayers, and reiterating year after year on Passover night the mantra of the eternal return: "Next year in Jerusalem." They have also observed an annual fast day, regarded as the saddest day in the Jewish calendar, commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples of Jerusalem, and the exile from the Holy Land. These ritual practices function as a vital conduit, transmitting memory and a sense of belonging through reiteration. The theological aspect of exile as punishment has always been complemented by the Jewish faith in national redemption—the belief that the Jews would ultimately return to the homeland from which they had been uprooted. Migration is therefore

viewed in Jewish thought as a spatial yet atemporal move, occurring again and again, with Zion at its centre, and as final destination. Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, Jews identified themselves as living in spatial and temporal in-betweenness: "The Wandering Jew turned into a *realm of memory*, which constructed the Jewish exile as a dystopia of no-place, and the Diaspora Jew as a no-body entity," writes Zer-Zion (2008, 133). The exile thus played a central role in conserving memory and consolidating Jewish identity: living in dystopia and believing in a utopian return to the Promised Land implied that exile was temporary, that spatial homelessness would come to an end. "The *epic* of return is the implicit paradigm of the Jewish journey," explains Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi (2000, 8). This belief was decisive in preserving a distinct, essentialist Jewish identity over time and space. Yet as Galit Hasan-Rokem (2018) indicates:

> Artists and thinkers secularized the Christian motifs of the legend and transformed the Wandering Jew into an icon of modern Jewish revolution … Various ideologies of the early 20th century foresaw an end for the journey of the Wandering Jew in the near future: Communists suggested that he would disappear with the dissolution of nations, Zionists believed that he would return home and no longer be a wanderer. The Wandering Jew has not disappeared from contemporary literature, among Jews and others. The most surprising may be the presence of this figure in a number of Israeli novels from the seventies to the recent years.

Arguably, most paradoxical is his updated presence in secular Israel, in plays in which the Wandering Jew makes an entry, holding his shabby suitcase.

The Poetics of Suitcases

Andrew Sofer (2006, 164) remarks that a stage prop's mobility and portability "between here and there, between now and then, has undeniable consequences for the ontological status of its carrier." Indeed, the suitcase as a stage prop strives to demonstrate nomadic agency and the loss of control. It always risks congealing into a symbol of human helplessness and victimization. As a trope, the suitcase "remains subject to the directions of those playwrights who seek to arrest, frame, and emblematize it. But as a dynamic prop, it orchestrates the gaze of the spectators towards its trajectory onstage" (Sofer 2006, 164). Moreover, suitcases point at the

ephemerality of the present by marking an impending journey. Thus, as Sofer would have it (2006, 164), they instill a sense of unease and instability into what is occurring on stage, and "continually disrupt the human economies they traverse."

The suitcase acquires a mysterious dimension. We hardly ever know what the characters have chosen to carry with them, what is important for them. Which items have they kept from their former lives? The opacity of the suitcase hides the relationship between the characters' past and future homes.

Moreover, the suitcase represents an assault on stage time, by pointing at the temporality through which the would-be traveler passes. It is a liminal object, representing the act of moving, of crossing not only borders but also limits and boundaries. Frequently, this liminal experience of spatial and temporal freedom, as if promising a better future, is equally a mourning for the past. People holding suitcases frequently linger in no-man's land, in in-betweenness, detached from the immediate reality which does not accept them or which they want to escape, and heading towards the unknown.

THE JEWISH-ISRAELI IMMIGRANT SUITCASE: BIBLICAL HOMELAND AS UTOPIA

Ezrahi (2000, 7) points out that an idealized, utopian image of a remote homeland is by definition associated with an episteme of homelessness: "The yearning for ultimate homecoming is compatible with the most radical form of homelessness and the most protean notion of home." Furthermore, she indicates:

> The modern, not unlike the romantic, discourse on home, exile, and return, captures the intensified longing for a place of origin as ultimate reference or antecedent—the presumption of a paradise whose loss or absence preserves it in a kind of negative space. (9)

The lost paradise and the Zionist ethos of return to a concrete homeland was a common theme on Israeli stages in the early days of local theatre; characters arriving from the Diaspora holding suitcases were a symbol of hope and triumph over two thousand years of exile. In contemporary Israeli theatre, though, the suitcase of the Jewish newcomer is very rarely encountered. Intriguingly enough, the trope of yearning for the Holy

Land is currently found in shows staged by Israelis of Ethiopian origin. In *The Jerusalem Dream* (2016), a documentary film directed by Meni Elias, Ethiopian Israelis tell of their dream of Jerusalem during their childhood in Ethiopia:

> Growing up in Ethiopia, when we heard "Jerusalem," we thought it was gold from top to bottom.
> Whenever I saw a flock of birds in a V-formation, lots and lots of birds, I'd ask: "What's that Dad? What are all those birds?" He'd say: "They came from Jerusalem."
> Take us to Jerusalem, so that we may see Jerusalem. Don't let us die before we see Jerusalem.

The Black Jewish community of Ethiopia—the *Beta Israel* (House of Israel)—has existed for at least fifteen centuries, in isolation from other Jewish communities around the world, and developed a unique set of religious practices—in some ways quite different from what is typically considered "Jewish." In 2019 almost 150,000 Ethiopians live in Israel, barely two percent of Israel's Jewish population. Local theatre companies presenting plays in both Amharic (the language of Ethiopia) and Hebrew have been warmly received by Israeli theatregoers. In these performances, actors of Ethiopian origin tell the story of their excruciating odyssey on foot from Ethiopia. The memory of the journey and of the dream of Jerusalem is negotiated and reconfigured. The narrative of the Ethiopian community emphasizes the sacrifice endured by those who immigrated in their effort to reach Jerusalem: many walked on foot to Sudan and suffered famine, and even those who were airlifted made difficult journeys on foot to get to the assembly point. They view the journey to Israel as an act of will and determination, motivated by the dream of the Promised Land. By contrast, other Israelis experienced the event primarily as an accomplishment of the State of Israel than that of the newcomers, as the *New York Times* reported:

> Israel fell into joyous celebration tonight as the Government announced the successful conclusion of an emergency airlift of 14,500 Ethiopian Jews, nearly the entire Jewish population, in just under 36 hours. "We've stood up to our obligation and completed the operation bringing all the Jews," Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared tonight. (Brinkley 1991)

This declaration displays both a patronizing approach erasing the sacrifice and heroism of the newcomers and, at the same time, the fact that the State of Israel views itself obliged to offer them a safe home.

The productions *It Sounds Better in Amharic* (2001) and its counterpart *Yahid B'meeno* (*One of a Kind*) (2006), both directed by Shai Ben-Atar and co-written with Yossi Vassa, present the narrative of heroic journey, and concomitantly, a most naïve version of the ancient Jewish meta-narrative. Produced by the Nephesh (Soul) Theatre, a small theatre whose productions "reflect a plurality of beliefs, depicting different communities within Israeli society that must develop a common language and achieve mutual respect," (Nephesh Theatre n.d.) both productions were warmly received.[4] In *It Sounds Better in Amharic*, Vassa tells the story of his family's wandering on foot from Ethiopia to Sudan and, from there, to Israel. He was ten years old when he and his parents, two little brothers, and grandmother left their village on foot in the dead of night and embarked on the dangerous journey. Vassa tells of his childhood, starting with how he used to count sheep on the mountain, and ending with how this skill helped him during math classes in Israel. When the teacher talked about counting, digits, and numbers, he found the explanations too abstract and not helpful. At one point it occurred to him that instead of digits and numbers he should think of counting sheep, and instantly became the best pupil in his arithmetic class.

Vassa operates in the African storyteller tradition: holding a simple, old-fashioned blue suitcase, he tells the story of those months in Sudan, in both Amharic and Hebrew, comparing his family's experience with the biblical Exodus from Egypt. In a comic number he explains that rather than travelling on foot, he would have much preferred to have had a Ferrari and drive all the way from Ethiopia to Sudan:

> If I just had a Ferrari, I would turn on the air conditioner at 7 o'clock in the morning, and make it to Sudan by 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Relax, catch a plane to Israel, and by 7 o'clock in the evening get my passport, start learning Hebrew, and already complaining about discrimination.

The Vassas were not ordinary refugees. As opposed to the worldwide African diaspora caused by slavery, for them Africa was Diaspora. In their own eyes, they were a particular type of immigrants who finally, yet paradoxically, were starting their journey back home, to a place that they had never encountered before but had always dreamed of. Home is in this case

is not the place they were familiar with, but the place they were dreaming about, the location of wishes, in fact, the parallel of the lost paradise. Using the suitcase as a container of memories and as a mini-museum of the Diaspora, Vassa relates his family belief that one day they will reach Jerusalem and be delivered. He cancels the suitcase's opacity: opens and closes it, empties its contents and puts them back, hides behind it, transforms it into a detective's suitcase, hugs it. The suitcase encapsulates his past life, and Vassa exposes it with gestures of unsuspecting dedication, with a sense of belonging, trusting the spectators as partners and brothers in his ancient new home.

Yet in the second part of the show Vassa tells about the bold encounter with reality: Jerusalem is not solid gold, his family was sent to live in an unattractive town, skin colour became an issue, the encounter between the family's rural past and the high-tech economy of Israel was painful. Local stereotypes surfaced, raising new anti-anti-essentialist categories, as Paul Gilroy (1993) would have it: Diaspora was essential for defining Jewish identity, and in this respect, the Vassas could claim their belonging to the ancient homeland. Yet black Jews were a novelty in Israel, and ethnic absolutism, with the ambivalent experience of Ethiopian Jews being inside and outside the modern and postmodern West, set them apart in Israeli terms. As the production demonstrates, homecoming was not sheer salvation, and home was not utterly utopian.

The other play, *One of a Kind*, a production for children, shows the story of Vassa's family's journey on foot to Israel. It won first prize at the Haifa[5] International Children's Theatre Festival, it toured the United States in 2008 and received there warm responses:

> Told through the eyes of AndArgay, a charming and creative child, *One of a Kind* incorporates music, dance and video. But what is most fascinating is the way it melds Jewish and African traditions of family, song, dance and storytelling. And it does all this in a way that is always accessible to children. (Simmons n.d.)

In the play, the grandmother is ill and she dies in a Sudanese camp. Vassa dreams that in the night she comes to him and says: "I am only a dream, but you will fulfill the dream of getting to Jerusalem."

As we can see, back in Ethiopia the image of the Holy Land, the imagined homeland, was compelling and had nothing to do with reality; the imagined home was purely utopian, as it used to be for centuries, for most

Jews in Diaspora. These plays thus invite the spectators to unsettle stereo-types and suggest that, corollary to their homecoming, these newcomers faced an unexpected Jewish essentialism. The seeds of disillusion were embedded in the very utopian image of homeland, such an image possibly leading to a sense of eternal homelessness: as the dream of return to Zion became reality, what was once a romantic discourse could easily be trans-formed into a dystopian space.

THE JEWISH-ISRAELI EMIGRANT'S SUITCASE: HOMELAND AS DYSTOPIA

The Jewish poetics of exile and return was metamorphosed in the twenti-eth century by homecoming to the ancient homeland, which triggered a critical engagement with the only place that had the status of the real.

The play *Suitcase Packers* (1983), by the critically well-received play-wright Hanoch Levin, subtitled "Comedy with Eight Funerals," tells of Jewish characters who want to leave Israel where, paradoxically enough, they find there is no room for their personal dreams, which have nothing to do with Jerusalem. This production demonstrates how paradigms of utopian thinking about homecoming may fail when confronted with the absence of an ideal reality and displays the profoundly neurotic sense of being eternally unhoused. Originally directed by Michael Alfreds, it pre-miered in 1983 at the Cameri Theatre in Tel-Aviv, one of the major stages of Israel.

Hanoch Levin was one of the most prolific and at the same time con-troversial Israeli playwrights. The plot of *Suitcase Packers* is quite simple: in a certain neighbourhood, people pack suitcases, give speeches about the need to leave for another country, and then unpack. They complain about each other being provincial, bemoan their narrow lives, but do nothing about it. In between, some of them die and funerals pass by. What all these characters are articulating is the aspiration to go far away from their every-day reality, to escape their own life, like Irina in Chekhov's *Three Sisters* who wants to escape to Moscow. Yet Irina dreams of a different, more meaningful future, while Levin's characters are eager to flee not just a location, but also themselves. They have very few expectations:

Zigi: It's a small place here, you understand. The size of a dice. Abroad nobody is looking inside your pants …

Bella: I have no illusions. London isn't waiting for me. I'll be lonely there as I am here, and maybe it will be like that for the rest of my life. But in London there are more movies, good music … people are more polite … The despair becomes more comfortable there. (Levin 1983)

Most characters dream of getting far away, basically, as a gesture of deserting their prosaic life, not of getting rich or living a different life. The supposed travel abroad is a gesture of pessimism, not any kind of affirmation. All of them are aware that they may have to return. Bella summarizes aloud what everybody around her thinks tacitly: "One day you go to Europe, smiling, and one day you return to Asia, in tears." Europe is much more elegant, but is not waiting for them, and they are condemned to a Diaspora in the Levant. It sounds like a contradiction in terms, but the Promised Land does not look attractive enough. It is of major significance that the dream driving them is not only of moving to a more cosmopolitan city but about escaping their country altogether. These characters, whose parents emigrated from Europe to Israel, long for the old continent. At the same time, they know that Europe is not their home, and the desire to move stems from an existential sense of rootlessness. The suitcase thus functions as the prop of their epistemological position as eternal Wandering Jews. It forms the container of their identity: an ontological homelessness. In the play, the suitcases point at a dichotomous here/there. What they are running away from remains behind in Asia; the little they plan to take on their one-way journey is compactly packed: a negation of the present, without hope for the future. With its restricted capacity, the suitcase forces the one-way packers to classify and categorize not just their belongings but their entire history too. Evidently, they are not going anywhere, yet each act of packing marks anew the renunciation of their parents' coming "home" from the Diaspora. "Home" must remain virtual, for when it becomes real, it loses its utopian dimension. These suitcases display nomadic agency and loss of control. It is their ancestors' wanderings that they are unconsciously, and pathetically, attempting to reconstruct. There is a sense of restlessness in these characters, a feeling that they are not connected to a place, that instability is a defining aspect of their existence.

Suitcase Packers has been translated into a number of languages and staged in New York (2003), Warsaw (2006), Budapest (2012), Moscow (2011), and elsewhere. Unsurprisingly, these interpretations have stressed

the play's existential and universal dimension, not the neurotic Jewish sense of homelessness:

> The name of the play highlights the fact that in this world ultimately all of us seemingly travel and tote heavy bags with our memories and illusions until we reach our final stop destination … In front of our very own eyes the grey days of a small community, many generations of several families–parents, grandparents, children and grandchildren all come to life, funny and at the same time beautiful people who yearn for love, to love and be loved. Most of the characters however also dream of a fuller life, one that might be possibly lived out in somebody else's shoes, or at least in somebody else's costume, especially somewhere else, in another city, another country, or another time. ("The Suitcase Packers." *Slovak National Theatre Bratislava*)

A Hungarian critic writes:

> *Suitcase Packers* catches, as do most Levin plays, the essential pathos of our lives as well as their ridiculousness so that we get both laughter (lots of it), and some tears. If death is there to remind us of our lives and their meaning, then the theatre, a kind of reconstruction of life, is a reminder squared. A performance is momentary and transient, more so than the life it imitates. ("Hanoch Levin: suitcase packers 2013/advisor, assistant." *Kotka Gudmon*)

Finally, the Russian production at Moscow Academic Mayakovsky Theatre announces that:

> The dramatis personae of the comedy *Suitcase Packers* is a whole page of endless Zils and Zvis, who are tied with the bonds that one cannot make head nor tail of. One sketch follows the other … What's more, there are deaths and funerals, and tears, and visions of the deceased. Laughter by Levin is an insight in the comical yet at the same time absurd and desperate order of human life. ("Suitcase Packers." *Moscow Academic Theatre of Vladimir Mayakovsky*)

It is no surprise that international productions did not grasp the sense of eternal homelessness that resonates in the play: it is profoundly Jewish. The theme of existential wandering corresponds with Jewish Israeli audiences' experience of interminable exile and Diaspora, of being eternal Wandering Jews. Levin's play illustrates how these characters are living in "no-place," in aporia. Their existential feeling and experience is, in Martin

Heidegger's terms, that of being eternally unhoused in Being. Heidegger employs "thrownness" to characterize the state of unhoused Being that falls into non-place. This is what I view as neurotic in the Jewish Israeli suitcase: the impossibility of feeling at home anywhere, even in the long-dreamed-of homeland.

Holocaust and the Jewish Refugee's Suitcase: A Spiritual Homeland

The philosopher George Steiner (1970, 4) advocates Jewish homelessness and staying in the Diaspora as a cosmopolitan act defining Judaism: "I absolutely believe that such uprootedness is a decisive part of Judaism, and because, in a very small, personal way, such a mode of life holds trust with that central European humanism and Judaism which Hitler and Stalin made to ruin."

Steiner advocates a virtual, spiritual homeland, as Amnon Rubinstein (2004) explains:

> The homeland of the Jews is the book, not the soil, and they should remain eternal wanderers. This is the reason for Steiner's objection to Zionism, which exchanged the book as homeland with "the Golan Heights and Gaza." He considers the state of wandering, the absence of roots, as the telltale mark of high culture. In his words: "Trees have roots, people have legs"; and "people should collect passports like stamps."

In Steiner's view, Jewish alterity and the lack of a political entity explain Jews' part in human progress.

The problem with Steiner's view of existential uprootedness is evident when Jews become haunted refugees, or in Steiner's words, when they become victims of "negative ontology." In that case, even he admits that they may need a more-than-spiritual homeland. The next production I will discuss, the Yiddish Israeli staging of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1949) directed by Yehoshua Sobol (2015), tackles this issue. Even though the text does not indicate any suitcase for the two main characters, it is basically a play about homelessness. Sobol did add two shabby suitcases as a symbol of helplessness and victimization, and altered the ending, transforming it into a play about Jewish refugees during World War II.

The most common interpretation of *Waiting for Godot* is that waiting is an eternal existential state, and thus Vladimir and Estragon are going

nowhere. They remain where they are and wait for eternity. Sobol's interpretation of the play was rather subversive: he based his staging on a book published in 2008 by Pierre Temkine, who offered the interpretation that Vladimir and Estragon are Jews waiting to be smuggled over the Spanish border in 1943. They are carrying suitcases and waiting for someone called Godot to help them cross the border clandestinely. Analysing the play, Temkine argues that Beckett must have sought and found a certain distance, so that the readers or spectators who lived through the events would not recognize them on any conscious level but would rather live them from within, so to speak. The Yiddish[6] Israeli production directed by Yehoshua Sobol, altered the ending, transforming it into a play about Jewish refugees during World War II eventually deciding to flee Europe by themselves.

Yiddishpiel is the name of the Israeli Yiddish theatre. Established in 1987 in response to a vital need to reestablish the lost honour of Yiddish language and culture and to revive them, the theatre has mostly staged plays written in Yiddish in Eastern Europe, along with some translations of worldwide drama. To produce Beckett's play was a daring artistic decision, since most of the Yiddishpiel's audience are senior citizens, who expect some Jewish nostalgia: stories about their diasporic past, beloved Yiddish songs, Jewish humour. The abstract plot of *Waiting for Godot* was unexpected, and at the same time, challenging. The majority of the spectators came from Eastern Europe, their parents having lived there during World War II, and many were Holocaust survivors. For them, Sobol's interpretation was compelling. Thus, Sobol changed the play's ending: Vladimir and Estragon decide to leave, take their suitcases and step off the stage into the auditorium, breaking the "fourth wall" convention. They pass through the audience and go out. Having the two characters leave and not wait for Godot was an optimistic statement regarding the possibility of salvation of sorts, and of Jewish independence. According to Sobol, they left for Israel, thus reinforcing the Zionist narrative of a safe place for Jewish refugees (Fig. 1).

George Steiner, like the Jewish philosophers Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig before him, views exile as "a necessary condition for the advancement of Judaism's moral and cultural message" (quoted in Sagiv 2012, 201). Refraining from the positions of power that determine historical and political events, the Jews would maintain a superior sense of morality and contribute to a cosmopolitan civilization: "By submitting themselves to the laws of history and the corrupting influence of power

Fig. 1   Dori Engel as Vladimir and Yuval Rappaport as Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett. Directed by Yehoshua Sobol. July 2015. Yiddishpiel Theatre, Tel-Aviv. Photo by Gérard Alon

politics, the Jews would betray their noble destiny" (quoted in Sagiv 2012, 201). As Rosenzweig put it:

> To the eternal people, home never is home in the sense of land, as it is to the peoples of the world who plow the land and live and thrive on it, until they have all but forgotten that being a people means something besides being rooted in a land. The eternal people has not been permitted to while away time in any home. It never loses the untrammeled freedom of a wanderer, who is more faithful a knight to his country when he roams abroad. (quoted in Sagiv 2012, 201)

The Jewish refugee's suitcase is, in Israeli terms, the most loaded sign: it encapsulates the image of the displaced, the victim, the refugee; the eternal Wandering Jew. Sobol's interpretation neither touches on Jewish utopian homecoming, nor the noble cosmopolitan role and spiritual homeland which Steiner and Rosenzweig attribute to the eternal people,

but conveys the existential need for a safe home, the need to live "housed in being." In Sobol's *Waiting for Godot* it is the trope of "ontological unwantedness" that is very much at work.

From Biblical to Palestinian Suitcases: Homecoming and Israel's Wars

In 1936 David Ben-Gurion, head of the de facto Zionist government, and eventually the first prime minister of Israel, was asked to identify the basis of the Jewish claim to the Land of Israel. He replied: "The Bible is our mandate." Ben-Gurion viewed the establishment of the State of Israel as a utopian fulfillment of the biblical narrative. Yet the Israeli-Palestinian political conflict that ensued has kept this question alive and it has been examined by many theatre makers and artists, director Rina Yerushalmi among them. Along with the Itim Ensemble, a special, innovative group, Yerushalmi launched the creation of the spectacular *Bible Project*, an eight-hour-long performance consisting of two independent but interrelated productions: *Va Yomer, Va Yelech* (*And He Said, And He Walked*), staged in 1995, and *Va Yishtachu, Va Yara* (*And They Bowed, And He Saw*), staged in 1998. The much-acclaimed project was performed in Israel, Hamburg, Berlin, London, Australia, and New York. It was based on excerpts from the Hebrew Bible, delivered verbatim by twelve actors and actresses, all dressed in black. Staging biblical themes is a major challenge in Israel, as Sharon Aronson-Lehavi and Freddie Rokem (2010, 227) imply:

> Israeli theatre history is marked by numerous dramatic adaptations of biblical stories and theatrical "confrontations" with the Bible itself, precisely because of its linguistic, historical, and mythical status and its powerful presence in the collective Israeli consciousness.

Indeed, "confrontation" with the biblical text has been a pillar of the Jewish national movement since its inception, and new interventions enter a space of contested readings. In Israel the Hebrew Bible, with its mythical status, acquired more than a religious meaning, as pointed out by one of the German theatre critics (quoted in Aronson-Lehavi and Rokem 2010, 227), referring to Yerushalmi's project:

> The director and the ensemble set off on a journey after the collective soul of the State of Israel. The actors live within the tension between the brutal

duty to maintain the ancient myth, and the modern aspiration for personal happiness.

Yerushalmi staged the biblical texts in ways that comment on the social and political present of Israeli society. The second part of the performance *Va Yelech* (*And He Walked*) depicts the recent history of Israel and the Jews: "Yerushalmi theatrically suggests that the Exodus from Egypt and the biblical conquering of the Land of Israel have been repeating in modern times," say Aronson-Lehavi and Rokem (Fig. 2):

Fig. 2 *Va Yomer. Va Yelech (And He said. And He Walked)*. Based on the Hebrew Bible. Directed by Rina Yerushalmi. Itim Ensemble. January 1996. Photo by Gadi Dagon. Rina Yerushalmi Collection, The Israeli Center for the Documentation of the Performing Arts, Tel Aviv University

Especially topical was the second part of the first production, *Va Yelech* which draws parallels between the biblical story of the Exodus from Egypt and the conquest of the Land of Israel and the twentieth-century ordeals of the Jewish people. The twelve actors open this part holding brown suitcases that in Israeli culture have become icons of the Holocaust and thus signify Holocaust survivors. Gradually, however, the actors become transformed from a group of victimized wanderers into a solid, martial group ready to conquer the Land of Israel, fight in devastating wars, and even sacrifice their children. (227)

The biblical Exodus, via exile and sufferings, is linked to scenes of war, displaying the circumstances of Israel's present:

Following the scenes that depict the Holocaust and the wandering in the desert, the group fronts the next stage that is a necessary part of building the state—the wars. Here Yerushalmi demonstrates the painful price of the wars as the performance platform slowly becomes a graveyard, geometrically covered with cards on which biblical verbs are printed. (Aronson-Lehavi and Gal 2008, 162)

The semiotic instability of the suitcases the actors hold enables the metamorphosis from Wandering Jews into Israeli soldiers. Through this mutation, we witness the painful price of recurring wars.

The juxtaposition of victims with victimizers, of Jewish refugees during World War II and the Palestinians who became refugees after the war to establish the State of Israel, constitutes a central motif of homecoming and homelessness within contemporary Israeli discourses. The tension between these apparently opposed extremes, where the homecoming of one person becomes the homelessness of another, is for many Jewish Israelis unacceptable. One of the Israeli productions of the *Suitcase Packers* did reveal its political subjectivity, and the unavoidable analogy between the Jewish suitcase and the Palestinian suitcase: in 2004 the Department of Theatre Arts at Haifa University staged the play with a dual cast: one Hebrew-speaking, the other Arabic-speaking. The Palestinian students acted the translated play at the Al-Midan Theatre in Haifa. The outcome was unexpected:

[W]hen it was performed in Arabic, for a mixed Jewish and Arab audience and became a huge success, it eventually caused the closure of the theatre. Apparently we … broke some rules by achieving, or even pursuing, successful, communicative political theatre. (Itzhaki 2009, 104)

The play in Arabic (staged by the same director, Amit Gazit) unsettled the status-quo. Widely acclaimed when it was acted in Hebrew, it caused controversy when acted in Arabic. Obviously, it was not the linguistic matter per se; it was the sound of painful symmetry and tension between the epistemological condition of the Hebrew-speaking audience in Israel, and its Arabic-speaking counterpart. The political reality haunted the production: clearly, the Palestinian audience identified with the characters onstage and appropriated their experience of rootlessness as an expression of their own sense of inner exile, even of those spectators who were born in Haifa and had never moved away from their natal neighbourhood. The Palestinian Israeli spectators redefined the Diaspora, locating it inside Israel. The subjective aspects of political and ethical circumstances, as well as the existential aspects of the play, turned the suitcases into political props: whereas for the Jewish Israeliss the suitcase was a mark of homeless wanderers, for the Arab Israelis it constituted a sign of displacement from home, of deterritorialization.

Some years earlier, a similar sensitivity sparked a notorious incident in the Israeli theatre. The play *Ephraim Returns to the Army* by Yitzhak Laor, written in 1985 but first produced in 1989, was banned due to a scene centering on a schoolbag: an Arab boy uses it to camouflage the family's jewels. The play deals with an Israeli military governor in the West Bank:

> Ephraim: Eighteen years ago I had an officer … a quiet man … with an East-European accent … We conquered Quneitra [in Syria]. Suddenly a Syrian boy crossed the street with a schoolbag on his back … The officer told me to stop the boy and check his schoolbag, because he's got jewels in it, and then give him back the jewels. I stopped the boy … He had jewels in the schoolbag. We gave them back to him and let him go. We asked the officer how he knew. He said: that's how I hid my family's jewels, when the Germans came.

Although the Haifa Theatre acquired the rights to the play, it was banned by the state censor. Eventually, following a legal process, the Supreme Court overturned the censor's decision (1987), and as a consequence, censorship of theatre was abolished a year later. Laor ended up victorious, yet outside the world of theatre was deemed "too extreme for us." Avraham Oz (2014, 22) explains:

> [This] dramatic moment … had drawn a defamatory analogy between the conduct of the IDF [Israel Defence Forces] and that of Nazi soldiers. Apart

from the damaging implications of banning an image that belongs to the integral meaning of the play … the censor's judgement tellingly marks the full-range trajectory of the ideological bias informing the censorship.

This déjà vu was more than painful: the image of a boy who became a refugee after a war with the State of Israel and is now carrying a schoolbag as an accessory that represents the migrant or nomad's political and ethical circumstances is something that reaches beyond the Jewish experience of homecoming.

Conclusion

The stereotype of the Wandering Jew became an essentialist trait of Jews as, effectively, dependent on suitcases. Yet in Jewish eyes, this trope has always been complemented by "the *epic* of return" as "the implicit paradigm of the Jewish journey" (Ezrahi 2000, 8). This belief was decisive in preserving a distinct, essentialist Jewish identity over time and space. The dependence on suitcases has been internalized by Israelis and, as a neurotic container, the suitcase reveals the Israeli collective subconscious: in the productions discussed here, eternal displacement and migration is a trope associated with Jewish culture, and has religious and cultural connotations.

In embracing the figure of the Wandering Jew, these productions express ambivalence towards anti-essentialist positions: on the one hand, as we have seen in the case of Ethiopian Jews, the plays contest the idea that there is a necessary and fixed ethnic essence, an organic phenomenon, unique or intrinsic to Jews (wandering included). On the other hand, the productions invite conversation in order to unsettle stereotypes. The plays adopt an ambivalent position: while wandering was formative for the Jewish nation, homecoming does not put an end to the sense of being "unhoused in Being," and in making this assertion, the productions amount to a call for dialogue.

An affinity with the nation's founding narratives inevitably colours the Israeli theatre's struggle with issues of immigration, uprooting, and exile. As a stage prop, suitcases enact both epistemological and ontological predicaments in these productions. In *It Sounds Better in Amharic*, the epistemological condition is of homecoming. In *Suitcase Packers*, it is the longing for the Diaspora following the ontological switch caused by the establishment of a homeland; in *Waiting for Godot*, suitcases indicate the

hope for salvation, thanks to the existence of a concrete homeland. Rina Yerushalmi took these ideas a step further in her *Bible Project*, drawing a line between the biblical Exodus, the Jewish refugee's suitcase during World War II, and Israel's wars.

Deep in the Israeli consciousness, spatial and temporal uncertainty is the backdrop against which every story is related. Each character entering the stage holding a suitcase arouses anxieties and memories of severance, for "those who in fact have not yet put down roots, who are still not completely at home, are always on the road to somewhere, on the road from somewhere" (Levy 2016, 63–64). On Israeli stages, these are not the fashionable, functional suitcases of travelers and tourists. They are an icon of the Wandering Jew.

Notes

1. Zion is a place name often used as a synonym for Jerusalem as well as for the biblical Land of Israel as a whole. The word is first found in 2 Samuel 5:7 which dates from c. 630–540 BCE according to modern scholarship. It originally referred to a specific hill in Jerusalem (Mount Zion).
2. There are two main explanations: (1) the sins of the Patriarch Abraham, for which his grandchildren were enslaved, and (2) slavery was a divine educational process for the Hebrews prior to their becoming a nation.
3. Judah is the Hebrew name for Judea.
4. See Paulenne Simmons in the references list and Aryeh Dean Cohen, "Israel's Eddie Murphy," *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, May 2, 2002, pp. 25–27, Accessed September 29, 2019, http://www.nepheshtheatre. co.il/amharic/am_reviews_and_articles_8.html.
5. Haifa is a city in north Israel.
6. Yiddish is the language spoken by East European Jews.

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Keeping the Candle Aflame: Andrey Tarkovsky's Search for Spirituality in a Foreign Land

J. Douglas Clayton

"The entire history of Russian emigration bears out the Western view that 'Russians are bad emigrants'; everyone knows their tragic incapacity to be assimilated" (Tarkovsky 1987, 202). With this statement from his book *Sculpting in Time*, Andrey Tarkovsky sets the tone for the chapter on his film *Nostalghia* (1983). Despite the etymological similarity of the term to the English "nostalgia"—that is, a longing for the past, as presented in the American scholar Svetlana Boym's (2001) study of the fascination of Russians of the 1990s for the pre-revolutionary Russian past—Tarkovsky instead had in mind what we call "homesickness," the sense of loss of values and rejection of the "heathen" dominant culture he finds in Italy. Tarkovsky's choice in spelling the title of the film (the "h" after the "g" mimics the Russian pronunciation rather than the Italian or English) is intended to stress the difference in meaning. His film investigates on a deep philosophical and religious level the nature and reasons for this

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malaise, which he clearly felt very deeply. In his work, Tarkovsky stresses the difference between his reaction to the cultural treasures of the West—in this case, Italy—and the stereotypical response of Russians who idealize western European culture and bow down before the icons of Italian painting, sculpture, and architecture. Such culture-seeking Russian tourists are seen everywhere, not only in Florence, Venice, and Rome, but also in London, Paris, and other famous cultural sites. In *Nostalghia*, Tarkovsky uses the image of the protagonist Gorchakov, a Russian poet who has come to Italy to research the life of an eighteenth-century Russian serf musician, to act out the filmmaker's own feelings towards his Italian exile. To be sure, it can be argued that the representation of Italians in the film is stereotypical (for example, the lack of religious feeling of the Italian intelligentsia, exhibited by the Italian interpreter Eugenia, or the love of consumer goods, such as shoes, about which Gorchakov complains); but there is much in the character of Gorchakov that can also be called stereotypical, such as his love of vodka or his extreme intellectual positions regarding such matters as translation. The stereotypical nature of the characters of both Gorchakov and Domenico, his Italian counterpart in the latter part of the film, is, however, tinged with considerable irony (which, in the case of Gorchakov, is self-directed). That is to say, there is a playfulness that mitigates their apparent stereotypical intent.

The critical analysis of *Nostalghia* has largely focused on certain cinematic aspects, especially the combined final image of Gorchakov's house within the ruins of an Italian cathedral, or the interspersed black-and-white dream-like shots, suggesting Gorchakov's longing for Russia, of a house resembling the Tarkovsky's dacha in Russia, of Gorchakov's apartment in Moscow, and of a Russia-like landscape with Gorchakov's wife, son, and dog. For Naficy (2001, 178) these are the signs of a "quest for a lost harmony"—what Dempsey (1981, 15) calls "a deep longing for a state of Eden-before-the-Fall innocence and bliss." Ultimately, the film's closing image is clearly an unsatisfactory attempt to create artificial harmony; in fact, it could be argued that Tarkovsky intended to suggest that "never the twain shall meet"—that the two worlds of Italy and Russia are too far apart for any reconciliation, so that the final shot is as ironic as it is lyrical. As Martin (2011, 162) writes of the film: "It is Tarkovsky's most eloquent depiction of alienation."

Although the film was shot in Italy and only the main protagonist is Russian, the work is deeply embedded in Russian poetry and visual culture and there are important elements in the film that link it back to the

fundamental themes of Tarkovsky's work. To do the film justice, it is necessary to go back in time and examine certain contexts that are reflected in the film and contribute to the complex meanings that it generates. One theme in particular that has not received sufficient attention is that of poetry—specifically the poetry of Andrey Tarkovsky's father, Arseny. The film has as its background the tragic division between the Russian homeland and Russians abroad that marked the history of twentieth-century Russian art. Throughout the Soviet era, the Soviet authorities viewed Russian emigrants as non-persons, "enemies of the people." There is a long tradition of Russian exiles beginning as early as the time of Ivan the Terrible. Nothing, however, could compare to the hundreds of thousands who fled Soviet Russia during and after the civil war of 1918–1921. Among those hordes were poets, writers, and creative artists of all kinds. They scattered all over the world: Europe (Germany, Yugoslavia, France), China, the United States, and Latin America. Some took root in their new environments, while others fell victim to *nostalghia*. One of the most tragic figures was the poet Marina Tsvetayeva. She lived in extreme poverty in Paris and was ostracized by other Russian exiles when her husband, Sergey Efron, became a Soviet agent. In 1937, the Tsvetayevs' daughter Ariadna decided to return to the USSR. She was followed by Sergey and, in 1939, Marina, who found work as a translator in Moscow. Shortly after Marina's return, Ariadna and Sergey were arrested. Marina committed suicide in 1941 and her husband was executed shortly after. Marina Tsvetayeva's fate illustrates the hopeless choice that presented itself to Russian poets: they could leave Russia and be cut off from their readers, language, and culture; or they could remain in or return to the USSR with little chance of continuing their work as poets (or at least, publishing it), and risking arrest at any moment. Tsvetayeva's fate, incidentally, parallels that of Pavel Sosnovsky, the composer whose stay in Italy is the subject of Gorchakov's research in the film: we learn that after returning to Russia, Sosnovsky committed suicide. The question of whether or not to leave Russia was indeed a life-or-death problem for Russian artists, and a problem that, as Le Fanu (1987, 110) points out, had no solution. Upon her return to Russia, Tsvetayeva found herself sharing the fate of numerous poets, such as Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova, who found themselves in "internal exile"—unable to leave the USSR, and unable to practice their art. This concept of "internal exile" appears to be a typically Russian phenomenon, the result of the persecution of creative figures by the authorities and the deep reluctance of Russian artists to be separated

from their homeland. The artists were not physically displaced, but the inability to publish forced them to recede into their private spaces and create without publication. In some cases, they lived long enough to see their works published; in others, their work only appeared posthumously.

One of the few members of the Soviet cultural elite to befriend Tsvetayeva on her return to her homeland was Andrey Tarkovsky's father, the poet Arseny Tarkovsky (1907–1988). After Tsvetayeva's death, Arseny Tarkovsky dedicated a cycle of poems to her, which were written over many years. In 1946, although he had been wounded and decorated in the war, he came under attack from party officials, along with Anna Akhmatova, who had made the deliberate decision not to emigrate in the 1920s, preferring not to be separated from her Russian homeland. As part of the effort to impose the party's grip over intellectual life in post-war Soviet society, Akhmatova, along with the prose writer Mikhail Zoshchenko, was expelled from the Union of Writers and publicly criticized in front of the politburo by Andrey Zhdanov, the party official in charge of cultural matters. This made life extremely difficult: she lost all sources of income and could not publish her work. As part of the same campaign, the publication of Arseny Tarkovsky's first book of poetry, which was already in production, was halted, ostensibly because it did not contain any poems about Stalin. This was a severe blow to the poet. Essentially, he found himself in the same "internal emigration" as Akhmatova, although, like her, he continued to write poetry (which remained unpublished) in addition to translating into Russian the work of poets written in other languages of the USSR. It was only in 1962—sixteen years after he had fallen from grace—that his first volume of poetry appeared.

That year coincided with the appearance of *Ivanovo detstvo*, or *Ivan's Childhood* (1962), the first feature film by Arseny's son Andrey. After he had shot four more feature films in the USSR, which have become classics of world cinema, the obstacles placed in Andrey's way by the authorities obliged him to leave for Italy. Here, he made a documentary film about Italy, followed by the feature film *Nostalghia*, which turned out to be his penultimate work.[1] Thus Andrey Tarkovsky, unlike his father or Akhmatova, left the USSR in order to practice his art. In the post-Stalin era, those who were forced to leave the country—including such eminent artists as the poet Joseph Brodsky and the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich—lost their citizenship and were unable to return to their homeland. Tarkovsky's case was special: when he left the USSR, his citizenship was never revoked, nor did he lose the title of People's Artist of the Soviet Union. He was in a

curious no-man's land—neither exile nor emigrant, but unwilling to return to a situation in the USSR in which he would be unable to work.

It had always been difficult for Tarkovsky to pursue his career, given that his deeply poetic and spiritual work was antithetical to the atheist values of the Communist Party and contradicted the officially promulgated style of socialist realism. He struggled to obtain funding for his film projects, and his works were subjected to cuts and even withheld from circulation. In a letter to his father, who tried to persuade his son to return to the USSR, Tarkovsky wrote that "of the twenty or so years that I was employed in Soviet cinema, about seventeen I spent idle and without hope. Goskino [the Soviet agency that controlled the film industry] did not want me to do my work" (Filippov 2012, 353). Finally, unable to continue his career in the Soviet Union, he obtained permission to leave the USSR and work in Italy. He first made a documentary film about the country titled *Tempo di viaggio* (1983), but then the possibility appeared of a contract for a feature film, which Tarkovsky titled *Nostalghia*, supported financially by the Italian television chain RAI and co-sponsored by Goskino. Shooting began in October 1982, and the film was completed in time to be shown at the Cannes Film Festival in 1983, where it received several awards. At the same time, the political situation inside the USSR had changed with the demise of leader Leonid Brezhnev on November 10, 1982. His replacement was Yury Andropov, who had been chairman of the KGB and was an ideological hard-liner. It became clear to Tarkovsky that he would be unable to continue his career in the USSR, and he resisted attempts to persuade him to return, even though he failed to get permission for his son Andriusha to join him.

Tarkovsky (1987, 202) writes about *Nostalghia*: "I wanted to make a film about Russian nostalgia—about that state of mind peculiar to our nation which affects Russians who are far from their native land." The protagonist Andrey Gorchakov is a Russian poet who is collecting material about Pavel Sosnovsky, an eighteenth-century Russian composer who was exiled to Italy. In the film we hear his interpreter Eugenia read to Gorchakov the text of a letter sent by Sosnovsky, a serf, describing his brutal treatment at the hands of his master. In the letter, Sosnovsky states: "I could try to ensure that I never return to Russia, but the very thought is like death. It surely cannot be that for as long as I live I shall never again see the land where I was born: the birches and sky of my childhood" (Tarkovsky 1987, 211). Sharing Sosnovsky's letter with Eugenia is Gorchakov's way of letting her know that a relationship between them will

not work. It expresses the pain of separation—stronger than simply home-sickness, but rather a deeper spiritual link with the motherland—which Russians have traditionally called *nostalghia*. In an interview with the Swedish journalist Gideon Bachmann (1984), Tarkovsky defines the term: "[it] signifies the yearning for what is far away, for those worlds that cannot be united, but it is also yearning for one's native home, one's spiritual identity."

In an interview with Tarkovsky by the German journalist and documentary filmmaker Ebbo Demant (1989, 348; my translation), Tarkovsky defines his task in *Nostalghia* in the following way:

> I tried to ensure that the scenario of *Nostalghia* contained nothing superfluous and secondary that might stop me from achieving my main objective, which was to convey the state of someone who has entered into a deep contradiction with the world and himself, who cannot find the balance between reality and the sought-after harmony, and who therefore is experiencing a nostalgia arising not only from his geographical distance from his native soil, but also an overall sadness regarding the wholeness of existence. I was dissatisfied with the scenario until finally a certain metaphysical unity emerged in it.

Thus, Tarkovsky sees the true purpose of the film as an investigation of the state of disconnectedness and incompleteness that is the human condition, brought to the surface and dramatized by the displacement of exile. He became disoriented in Italy and was repulsed by the excess of artistic beauty. In *Nostalghia* there is no dwelling on the beauty of Italy: most of the film is shot indoors, and most of the landscapes, shot in sepia, are chosen for their similarity to Russia and represent Gorchakov's longing for his homeland.

In Tarkovsky's films, sequences of images are interrelated, so that resonances of meaning are created. Rather than the "doubles" seen by Johnson and Petrie (1994, 164), we find layered characters that combine several different images. This is true of the characters in *Nostalghia*. It is not a coincidence that Oleg Yankovsky, the actor chosen by Tarkovsky for the role of Gorchakov, was visually similar to photographs of the young Arseny Tarkovsky, Andrey's father. At the same time, it is evident that in the character of Gorchakov, whose first name is also Andrey, Tarkovsky is describing the feelings he himself experienced in Italy. Gorchakov is thus a composite figure with elements of both Andrey and his father. Andrey's

father, Arseny, is elsewhere deeply present in the film: extracts from two of his poems are read over the course of the film and the female protagonist, the Italian translator and interpreter Eugenia, has been reading a book of his translated poetry.[2] To extend the "chain of associations," we should note that in one of Arseny's poems read in the film he references his own father, Aleksandr. There is thus a paradigmatic chain of references: Aleksandr, Arseny, Andrey, Gorchakov. To this we can even add Sosnovsky, whose experience in Italy is recalled in the letter; and even Andrey Tarkovsky's son Andriusha, who is symbolized in the film by Domenico's son. This chain of association reflects the deep interconnectedness with family and homeland that forms the broad cultural context of the film: Gorchakov's pain is the pain of separation from his wife, children, Moscow apartment, country cottage, and even dog,[3] all of which haunt the dream-like sequences.

Notwithstanding these layers of meaning, it should be recognized that Gorchakov is a sort of self-portrait, a "performance" by the filmmaker of his own predicament. There are, however, some superficial differences. For example, Gorchakov pines for his wife, whereas Tarkovsky's wife was present and assisted during the filming; unlike the failed romance between Gorchakov and Eugenia, there is no evidence of Tarkovsky's attraction to any female interpreter; Gorchakov is a poet, whereas Tarkovsky is a film-maker; and there is no evidence that Gorchakov has political difficulties with the Soviet authorities that might have driven him to undertake a research trip to Italy (indeed, at the end of the film he is about to return to his homeland when he suddenly hears of Domenico's impending dem-onstration of faith and decides to take up the Italian's challenge). These differences between Tarkovsky and Gorchakov, however, only serve to underline the deeper resemblances between them. These encompass their shared values: spiritual life, a belief in the uniqueness of Russian culture, views on the impossibility of translating poetry, and religious beliefs. To some extent, Gorchakov and Tarkovsky's shared traits are stereotypically Russian: for example, Gorchakov's rejection of materialism (he wonders why Italians need so many shoes) is clearly shared by the filmmaker. Gorchakov's vices, too, are stereotypically Russian, such as his bingeing on vodka and (to some extent) his attachment to cigarettes.

Gorchakov's shared values with Tarkovsky are expressed in the fate of Arseny's book of poems, translated into Italian, that the translator and interpreter Eugenia is reading. Gorchakov tells Eugenia that poetry can-not be translated into another language. When she gives him the book he

angrily throws it into a corner. Some of the anger no doubt comes from Tarkovsky's realization of the cultural differences between Russians and Italians that render difficult the task of making a film in this environment, just as they make impossible any romantic relationship between Gorchakov and Eugenia, however much she tries. Later, we see the book burning as Gorchakov lies drinking vodka. In an interview, Tarkovsky talked about the impossibility of importing or exporting culture, of "appropriating another people's culture." He continues: "The reproduction and distribution of culture is harmful to its essence and spreads only a superficial impression. It is not possible to teach one person the culture of another" (Mitchell 1982, 54). Such a radical position seems to undercut the very project of the film and clearly expresses Tarkovsky's anger at being unable to make films in his own country.[4] To Gorchakov's outburst, Eugenia responds: "And music?" raising the question of the translatability of an artwork from one form to another. The unstated question is: "And images?" That is to say, if poetry cannot be translated from one language to another, is it possible to translate a poem into a film? Essentially, then, the film asks how a work of art can be performed in another country in another genre; how can a migrant take his art with him and make it work in a new cultural environment? Tarkovsky in fact takes the issue even further, turning his father's poetry into film and injecting it into a foreign environment—a sort of double transposition. The film itself is its own reply to Eugenia's question, since the last part of the film, in which Gorchakov carries a flickering candle across the empty Roman Baths of Saint Catherine and back, can be seen as a transformation into images, a realization of a symbol in a poem by Arseny Tarkovsky, an extract from which is read aloud during the film:

> I am a candle, I at the feast burned out,
> Gather my wax in the morning's light
> And this page will hint to you about
> How to cry and when to be proud is right,
> And how you should easily let go and die,
> Divvying up to others the banquet's last third,
> And in the shelter of a chance refuge lie
> And after death flare up like the word. (Arseny Tarkovsky 1993, 335; my translation)

This poem develops an image from Arseny's very first published poem:

Flickering like a little yellow tongue
The candle melts down more and more.
That's how you and I live
The soul burns and the body melts. (Arseny Tarkovsky 1993, 15)

Prime among the meanings contained in both poems is the notion of the sacred, of the spirituality of human life, symbolized by the candle: the human being is like a candle, composed of the wax—the body, which is burnt out by life—and the soul, the spirit that transcends the flesh. Gorchakov's act of faith is also a self-reflective metaphor for the trials Tarkovsky experienced in filmmaking, which for him was both a creative and sacred duty, one that would wear him down and eventually cost him his life.

Religion is another deep value shared between Gorchakov and his creator. One of the first shots in the film concerns the visit to the church in Monterchi where Piero della Francesca's painting *Madonna del Parto* was located. When Gorchakov and Eugenia stop their car near the church, she comments that the fog-shrouded view resembles Russia in the fall; this is the first of a number of instances where images of Russia and Italy are "montaged" in an attempt to seek parallels between the two countries. It is as if she is trying to persuade Gorchakov to accept Italy, but he rejects this argument. Although they have driven a long way to view the painting, he refuses to go and look at it. Eugenia goes to the church alone and, while viewing the painting, she has a conversation with the sacristan who tells her that in order for the Holy Mother to grant her a wish—whatever it might be—she must first kneel. Eugenia finds she cannot, and asks the sacristan why the women praying in the church are able to kneel. He tells her it is because they have faith (*fede*); the fact that she cannot kneel signals that she does not. The final shot of the sequence in the church focuses on the mass of candles placed there by women supplicants, establishing a link between the candle and the notion of faith. This link will be present until the death of both Gorchakov and the other protagonist, Domenico.

Regarding Gorchakov's refusal to see the painting, Nariman Skakov (2012, 168–169) writes: "His irritation, stemming from a feeling of alienation, is overpowering, and it prevents him from enjoying the aesthetic pleasures the foreign country has to offer." The meaning of the scene, however, lies not in Tarkovsky's avoidance of any aesthetic experience (although he professed that he had become saturated by the excesses of artistic beauty that he experienced in Italy), but rather in the fact that he

rejects aesthetic experience that is not grounded in faith. Here, Gorchakov is clearly expressing Tarkovsky's own deeply held views. The reason for Gorchakov's refusal to see the Madonna can be found in Tarkovsky's diary. He writes about a visit to Loreto on May 3, 1980: "I felt it was wrong that I can't pray in a Catholic cathedral; not that I cannot, but that I don't want to." Then, to his delight, in the cathedral in the town of Porto Nuovo, he discovers an Orthodox icon of the Vladimir Mother of God: "I couldn't believe it: suddenly to see an Orthodox ikon [*sic*] in a Catholic country, when I had just been thinking about not being able to pray at Loreto. It was wonderful" (Andrey Tarkovsky, 245). Later, in the entry for March 22, 1982, he writes: "Went […] to Porto Nuovo with Pepe to pray to my Vladimir Mother of God. It made me feel so much easier" (307). Here we see the expatriate Russian looking in an alien land for a familiar spiritual sign with which he can connect. Gorchakov, a projection of Tarkovsky, shares his distaste for Catholic religious art.

The meaning of the candle, already present in the poetry of Arseny Tarkovsky, is clearly associated in this early scene with faith. Later, Gorchakov asks Eugenia the meaning of the Italian word, which she translates into Russian for him. It is the quality of *fede* that Gorchakov recognizes in Domenico, and which arouses his interest in the idealistic mathematics teacher who had confined his family to their house for seven years. Perhaps Gorchakov recognizes in Domenico a kindred spirit.[5] His encounter with Domenico marks the end of Gorchakov's potential romance with Eugenia. An imagined, composite figure, Domenico can be seen as Gorchakov's Italian counterpart. The link between *fede*, which had been the subject of Eugenia's conversation with the sacristan, and the candle reemerges when Domenico passes Gorchakov a candle. Domenico feels driven to perform the action of crossing the Baths of Saint Catherine with a lighted candle, but the bathers, who consider him insane, have prevented him from doing so, fearing he will drown. He therefore entrusts the task—an act of faith—to Gorchakov, who performs it at the end of the film and then dies. The Roman bath, with its sulfurous fumes, is a realized metaphor for a devastated, hellish pagan world. Those who bathe in it and reject Domenico as a madman are the denizens of this living hell.[6] Gorchakov's feat echoes the life of Arseny, whose poetry had been a flickering candle of spirituality borne through the dark times of persecution and internal exile, and brought to a triumphant end. Again, the candle is a realization of a metaphor: the body has melted and only the flame of the soul is left, flaring up like the word.

Gorchakov's alienation stems from his initial failure to recognize the moral equivalent of Russian spirituality in Italy. The images of Italy presented in the film are almost post-apocalyptic—or perhaps more accurately post-diluvian—visually represented by the drained Baths of Saint Catherine with their mud-caked bicycles, bottles, and other detritus. Churches are roofless and flooded with water. Instead of candles there are cigarettes. Eugenia, whose long-haired beauty recalls the classical paintings of the Madonna (a close-up of her is juxtaposed with one of Piero della Francesca's painting), is childless, going from man to man, and finally ending up with a comical figure of an Italian Lothario named Vittorio. The sacristan, who believes that the purpose of a woman should be to bear and raise children, pronounces a verdict on her: "You want to be happy. There are more important things." She cannot attract Gorchakov, who in his dreams and reveries sees his wife and children either in Moscow or in the Russian countryside. In Gorchakov's dream, Eugenia and Maria caress each other in a mirror image: they both personify womanhood and are both beautiful; however, the purpose of this "doubling" is not to emphasize their external similarity, but the difference in their values.[7] Similarly, the later doubling of Andrey and Domenico serves to differentiate the nature of their spiritual beliefs. Immediately after there is a shot of Maria pregnant, incarnating the woman's role Eugenia rejects. When Domenico asks Gorchakov about his wife, whether she is like della Francesca's Madonna, Gorchakov replies that his wife is indeed like her, only black. This enigmatic remark becomes understandable when we recall Tarkovsky's joy when he discovered a copy of the Russian icon Vladimir Mother of God at Porto Nuovo. That icon, which is indeed much darker than della Francesca's Madonna, is in fact an "unspoken presence" in the film: something clearly on the filmmaker's mind (we recall the role of the icon in *Andrey Rublyov*). Suggestively, Tarkovsky dedicated the film to his mother, Maria, which is also the name of Gorchakov's wife in Moscow, linking them both directly to the notion of the Madonna as the ideal woman. Moreover, in Gorchakov's vision of his wife, she, like della Francesca's Madonna, is pregnant. Gorchakov's wife has a spirituality that the Italian intellectual Eugenia has lost: the latter recalls having wept the first time she saw della Francesca's painting, but now she tells the sacristan she is "just looking." Although Gorchakov tells Eugenia he finds her pretty in a certain light, she is only the visual incarnation of the Madonna, not the essence. Instead of bearing candles, she is associated with cigarettes (whose whiteness and burning end is a sort of parody of a candle). She gives

Domenico a cigarette, and indeed her last words are "I am going to buy cigarettes."[8]

   In addition to the question of faith, the other important theme in *Nostalghia* is that of the apocalypse. The theme is linked with the image of Domenico who, as Johnson and Petrie (1994, 161) point out, is a version of the Russian *yurodivy* (religious visionary). He is, however, more than that. According to Tarkovsky, the idea for Domenico was suggested by Tarkovsky's Italian scenarist Tonino Guerra and was based on a real-life fanatic who had locked himself and his family up in expectation of the end of the world. However, he also contains features reminiscent of Savonarola, who preached to the multitudes and attempted to demonstrate the truth of his words through a trial by fire (which ended farcically when it started to rain).[9] Savonarola was later condemned by a tribunal and burned to death. In the film, Domenico also locks up his family in anticipation of the apocalypse. When they are finally released by the carabinieri, his son asks, "Papa, is this the end of the world?" The utopianism and apocalypticism in Domenico's speech before he sets himself aflame is adumbrated in Gorchakov's outburst concerning the impossibility of translation: he claims that the only solution is the elimination of frontiers. But that would hardly end the problem of different languages; language barriers are more secure than any border. It is Domenico who eventually seeks the unity of all of humanity in his final, utopian declaration: "we must build pyramids" and "it is the so-called sane people who have led the world to the brink of catastrophe." Domenico has faith, and his death is an ironic *auto da fe*, but he has very few listeners, and in the end he literally "flares up like the word," dousing himself awkwardly with gasoline and, after fumbling with the lighter, finally setting himself on fire "like a candle," thus realizing the metaphorical image at the end of Arseny Tarkovsky's poem cited above. At the same time, there is a great deal of irony in the portrayal of Domenico. His attempt at a sermon on the Capitoline Hill ends farcically: the recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is garbled, and he has practically no audience. By resorting to the grandiose gesture of setting himself on fire, Domenico is a stereotypical depiction of the Italian tendency towards the theatrical; thus, it is not the migrant observer, but the native Italian who is the stereotype.

   Domenico's grandiose gesture stands in contrast to Gorchakov's action. When the Russian poet visits Domenico, the latter asks him to take upon himself the feat of carrying the candle across the Baths of Saint Catherine because "we have something big planned in Rome." At first, Gorchakov

avers, asking "Why me?" Then, even after he has accepted the candle, he puts it on the shelf before finally taking it.[10] His hesitation is evident in his intended departure, which he only puts off when Domenico reminds him, through a telephone call from Eugenia, of his commitment. His feat of carrying the candle across the drained Baths of Saint Catherine is humble and understated, unlike Domenico's self-immolation, which is clumsily executed to the point of being comic. It is the difference between the music of Bach, associated with Gorchakov, and Domenico's love of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which is first broken off when they meet in Domenico's house, and then again during the immolation scene. The humility, intimacy, and sincerity of Gorchakov's action seem to express a deeper faith than Domenico's bombast and "maximalism," as Tarkovsky calls it (1987, 206). In Rome, Gorchakov is planning to return to Russia, but hears from Eugenia what Domenico is planning. Taking a taxi to the Bagno Vignoni, he carries the candle Domenico has given him across the empty Baths of Saint Catherine, dying as he reaches his goal, while Domenico makes a grandiose speech and then sets himself aflame while standing on the horse of the statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitoline Hill. Each chooses a different way to die for his vision. Each "triumphs" in a certain measure over the Roman paganism of a fallen world. There is, however, a deep irony in the two actions: as Domenico declares, *urbi et orbi*, "Great things end, small ones last forever." The difference in style between Gorchakov and Domenico suggests, as in the case of Maria and Eugenia, that there is a "border" between the Russian and the Italian worlds, so that Domenico's magnificent gesture is doomed to be forgotten, while Gorchakov's modest feat will be forever meaningful. The difference is surely a confirmation that the dream of a world without borders is truly impossible. Nariman Skakov (2009, 330) writes: "The impossibility of the structural unity of the Tower of Babel serves as an extremely potent trope for dealing with the discourses of *Nostalgia*." In a metapoetic sense this is true, since we see Tarkovsky struggling to combine the two visual idioms of Russia and Italy in the fabric of the film. At the same time, for Tarkovsky the divisions of the world are part of a deeper spiritual malaise that all of his films seek to overcome, something that requires faith in miracles. Gorchakov's act of faith can be read as a metaphor for Tarkovsky's belief in the power of his art to bring about spiritual salvation. Domenico's final declaration and self-immolation are presented ironically as a stereotypically exaggerated and ultimately empty example of Italian bombast. Gorchakov's feat, by contrast, is presented absolutely without irony.

If the image of Gorchakov is a cinematic "self-portrait," it contains an extremely poignant element, namely the death of the poet, who suffers a heart attack and passes away at the very moment that he carries the lighted candle to the far side of the Bath of Saint Catherine. Given the high degree of autobiographical similarity between the protagonist of the film and the filmmaker himself, we are justified in reading Gorchakov's death as an example of autothanatology—that is to say, the character Gorchakov's symbolic enactment of his author's own impending death. Only three years later, in December 1986, having completed what turned out to be his final film *The Sacrifice*, Andrey Tarkovsky himself died of lung cancer. Since we know that Tarkovsky was a heavy smoker, we are obliged to re-examine, in contemplating the meanings contained within the film, the parallel noted above between the candle and the cigarette: Gorchakov dies clutching the candle, whereas his author, so to speak, dies clutching a cigarette. Here, at least, we can trace a hint of self-irony on Tarkovsky's part.

The final image with which the viewer is left returns us to Tarkovsky's plight in Italy. Samardzija (2004, 304) sees it as a utopian, unifying image: "The use of black and white in the shot links it to the nostalgic images that haunt Gorchakov. It suggests that the unification of the contrary spaces has occurred belatedly. […] And yet, the fact that Italy and Russia occupy the same space in the shot […] imparts a utopian element to the image." Surely, a simpler and more convincing reading of the scene is that Gorchakov/Tarkovsky, with his spiritual values intact and expressed in the warmth of family life experienced in the dacha, is imprisoned in Italy, surrounded inescapably by the ruins of a lost, dead spirituality. The film as a whole, and this final image in particular, expresses the author's rejection of the spiritually empty country in which he finds himself, a country whose ruined churches epitomize the loss of faith that has overcome the people. There can be no harmony in the final image, only an expression of the author's humble but genuine faith encapsulated in the image of his home and family. Tarkovsky's response to Italy is the inverse of the usual situation of the migrant, stereotyped and even rejected by the receiving society.

Nostalghia is a perfect example of the transposition of the Russian poetry of Arseny Tarkovsky into the images of his son Andrey. The filmmaker transcends the cultural boundary inhibiting translation by switching genres, although he was vocal in rejecting the very notion of interlingual translation which, ironically, had been a large part of Arseny's activity. Arseny was deeply troubled by his son's departure from Russia. For him, it was unthinkable to be a poet outside the confines of the homeland:

perhaps for this reason he tried his utmost to persuade his son to return to Russia. But exile for a poet, who works with words in the isolation of his study, is not the same as exile for a filmmaker, whose materials are physical images and sound. The filmmaker needs money and resources to produce films, as well as a distribution circuit. He also needs to be free of political interference. *Nostalghia* was Tarkovsky's answer to the political masters in Goskino, for whom a film demonstrating the spiritual superiority of Russia was an unacceptable response to the political atheism that was the ideology of the Soviet Union, and at the same time a magnificent *auto da fe*, the gesture of a man who undoubtedly knew that he had little time left to live. It is a sad irony that, as he lay dying in Paris, Tarkovsky's homeland was changing in profound ways that could have made possible his eventual triumphant return.

Notes

1. His final film, *The Sacrifice*, was made in Sweden in 1986. Andrey Tarkovsky died on December 29, 1986, in Paris.
2. We should note that the Russian *perevodchik* means both "translator" *and* "interpreter." Eugenia seems to be present in the latter role. This does not mean that she escapes Gorchakov/Tarkovsky's ire at the entire notion of translating and explaining one culture to another. His hostility echoes Nabokov's famous refusal to produce anything but a brutally literal translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*.
3. As Zoran Samardzija (2004, 202) points out, the fact that Domenico has a dog establishes a "spiritual bond" between him and Gorchakov.
4. It may also reflect a certain anger at the fate of many Soviet poets—Akhmatova, Pasternak, and Arseny Tarkovsky—who instead of pursuing poetry were condemned to translate. Ultimately, Andrey Tarkovsky's comment seems to be about his father, who had been condemned by the Soviet regime to pursue what the son sees as a meaningless task.
5. Domenico's bizarre action provokes the question: is the suffering of his family a parallel to the suffering of Andrey Tarkovsky's own family, destined to be separated for years, especially Andrey and his son, Andriusha, because of the father's pursuit of his work? The shots of Domenico and his son, and the son's question when they are released by the police from captivity—"Papa, is this the end of the world?"—seem to have a deeply personal meaning for the filmmaker. Although Andrey's wife and collaborator, Larissa, was able to join him abroad, the Soviet authorities refused to allow Andriusha to join them, essentially using him as hostage to control his father's activities.

6. The fact that the bathers call Domenico mad and stop him from carrying out his feat is perhaps an echo of the imprisonment in psychiatric hospitals of dissenters in the Soviet Union.

7. As Johnson and Petrie (1994, 162) write, Eugenia is "inescapably linked with the materialism and corruption of modern society."

8. As lines of motifs in the film, cigarettes and candles are closely related to the line of the cigarette-lighter (see Turovskaya 1989, 132).

9. I am grateful to Jakub Sadowski for pointing out the clear resemblance of the image of Domenico to Savonarola.

10. One recalls Jesus's prayer: "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22.42). Tarkovsky (1987, 206) references this Biblical passage speaking about Domenico: "Gorchakov is not able to save Domenico from the role he has implacably assigned himself—without asking life to let the cup pass him by."

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Multiculturalism, Citizenship, and Belonging: Deep Equality and Diasporic Cultures

Read Her Lips: The Ban on Wearing the Niqab and Burqa at the Canadian Citizenship Ceremony 2011–2015

Zaheeda P. Alibhai

Any contemporary study that focuses on Muslim women carries with it a history and discourse that influences not only the author, before a single word has been written, but also the reader before a single word has been read. In other words, the history of the study of Muslim women and Islam is contentiously intertwined and shaped by colonial and imperial history. In the twenty-first century, nowhere do Orientalist notions and governmentality intersect more fully than in policy debates concerning Muslim women and citizenship. This chapter critically analyses the global, national, and religious dimensions that formed the basis for the 2011–2015 Canadian Conservative government's ban on the wearing of face coverings, specifically the niqab (face covering with the eyes showing) and burqa (full-body covering with netting in front of the eyes) during the Oath of Citizenship at Canadian citizenship ceremonies. The ban against wearing the niqab and burqa is analysed as a public act that provides the

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foundation for the development of political agendas. My argument highlights the reproduction of historical narratives in contemporary ones, illustrating how colonial history invades the present (Lister 2003) and the resilience of certain notions of Islam and women that travel across centuries and contexts (Karim 2000).

However, the purpose of this chapter is not to provide a full analysis of this history or determine whether wearing the niqab and burqa is a religious obligation or cultural practice. Rather, I am concerned with the representation of the burqa and niqab in light of the misrepresentations of the religion of Islam, misrepresentations that formed the basis for prohibiting face coverings during the Oath of Citizenship at Canadian citizenship ceremonies. Such misrepresentations overlook the religious and cultural significance of the niqab and burqa from within different interpretations of Islam itself. In framing the ban not as a religious issue but a cultural one, the state assumes the role of arbiter of religious praxis by entering into a historically theological debate within different interpretations of Islam.

The debates over the niqab and burqa play into larger security discourses and speak to a broader issue that has been active globally since September 11, 2001, when the surveillance and control of those perceived as Muslim became justified under the guise of national security. This chapter focuses on the national dimensions that formed the basis for the Canadian Conservative government's joint prohibition of the niqab and burqa and argues that the ban emphasized both legal and social norms of inclusion and exclusion of Canadian citizenship. I conclude by highlighting the ways in which reflective voices shifted the divisive discourse from "horizontal inequality" (Stewart 2017) towards "deep equality" (Beaman 2017) between citizens.

Contemporary Context

On December 12, 2011, Jason Kenney, the Canadian Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism between 2008 and 2013, announced that the Conservative government was placing a ban on all face coverings, specifically the niqab and burqa, during the Oath at Canadian citizenship ceremonies. The government's rationale was that the Oath of Citizenship is a public act of devotion and loyalty to Canada in front of

one's fellow citizens and thus cannot be sworn when one's face was hidden. Minister Kenney stated that the citizenship oath is a public declaration of one's desire to join "the Canadian family, which an individual makes in front of their fellow citizens and representatives of the state" (Herhalt 2014). He further commented that the Canadian family is undergirded by liberal democratic values including respect for the freedom of religion, equality between men and women, as well as equality of all citizens before the law. Kenney argued that covering one's face undermined those basic liberal values, calling the practice a "cultural" and "tribal" custom and "not a religious obligation." He asserted that it is not a coincidence that tribal societies, which force women to cover their faces, tend to treat women as property. Having established these parameters and defined covering as "tribal," Minister Kenney then stated that a covered face is disrespectful when an individual interacts with the state and fellow citizens in a public environment such as the citizenship ceremony, and that the Canadian government would not lend the legitimacy of the Canadian state to such practices. It could well be argued that liberal conceptions of freedom and equality are both political and prescriptive projects that have contemporary implications for different modes of being in the world. In her study of the urban women's mosque movement in Egypt, Saba Mahmood (2005) has demonstrated that the desire for freedom from or subversion of norms is not an innate desire that motivates human beings at all times, but that it is profoundly mediated by cultural and historical conditions. Mahmood argues that we must start to look at the ways in which operations of power construct different kinds of bodies, knowledge, and subjectivities, and whose trajectories do not rely on normative assumptions of liberatory politics.

When knowledge is shaped within a matrix of power relations, its contemporary manifestation retains that same shape. The rhetoric that informs former minister Kenney's statements can be situated within the same discourses that sustain the colonial logic identified in this chapter. These similarities have serious implications for contemporary definitions of religion and its role in Canadian public life. To begin, we must first consider the complex background of the veil from the colonial period to today, before exploring the ramifications of this history that is at play in the Canadian ban against wearing the niqab and burqa during the oath allegiance at the Canadian citizenship ceremony.

The Historical Context: Egypt

The notion that face covering is oppressive was born from the impulse to dominate (Bullock 2010). Throughout the colonial age, Western colonial powers encountered what they termed the "veil," and thus the constructed image of veiling as a "backward" and "oppressive" practice entered the Western colonial imagination. The veil became a divisive symbol that combined all three strands of colonial and imperial rhetoric of cultural, religious, and gender-based superiority. Colonialists saw veiling as an overarching symbol of the perceived degradation of women they believed to be inherent to Islam, and as evidence of the supposed backwardness of the religion/people/civilization monolith. The veil as a symbol thus reflected the power dynamic at the heart of this aggressive conflation, and was regularly associated with the rhetoric of "holding women back" and "keeping women under men's thumbs" (Valenta 2006, 457). Consequently, it was only through "lifting" or "casting off" the veil that Muslim women and Islamic societies could progress towards civilization and participate mentally, morally, and socially in modern life (449).

During the nineteenth century in Egypt, British Consul-General Lord Cromer championed the cause of "unveiling" Muslim women, claiming the veil was a hazard to their moral and mental development. Cromer denounced the veil as being fundamentally oppressive, a way of subordinating Muslim women under the irrational rule of Muslim men. In this way, for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the veil provided a potent visual marker of what colonial and imperial powers constructed as Islamic inferiority, a symbol of backwardness whose intrinsic nature colonialists claimed was oppressive to women, in contrast to the freedoms allowed to women by colonial Christianity (Valenta 2006, 449). It must be noted that Lord Cromer's emphatic demands for the emancipation of women did not extend beyond the colonies. He was a founding member and president of the Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage in Britain (449).

Religion(s) in Context: Communities of Interpretations

Unfortunately, modern debates surrounding the burqa and niqab continue to be shaped by the gendered colonial discourse on the veil. Contemporary views often reproduce colonial rhetoric that perceives the

burqa and niqab as symbols of oppression and subordination. In March 2015, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper resurrected this argument in the Canadian House of Commons, when he asked Parliament, "Why would Canadians, contrary to our own values, embrace a practice at that time that is not transparent, that is not open and frankly is rooted in a culture that is anti-women" (Chase 2015). Harper was responding to the Federal Court of Appeal's ruling that the Conservative government's ban on face coverings during the Oath of Citizenship was unlawful.[1] He proceeded to argue that the ban on face coverings was not an issue of religious freedom, but one of defending Canadian identity since "Muslim women are not obligated, not required to cover their faces in public," and at any rate, "most moderate Muslims support the ban" ("Will Stephen Harper regret remark on niqab?" 2015).

Multiple aspects of the former Prime Minister's statements are problematic. For one, the significance and the role of covering in Islam is not so clear. Islam is a global faith with over one billion followers. Muslims encompass a multiplicity of cultural, ethnic, regional, linguistic, and racial pluralities coupled by interpretive heterogeneity. From this reality, Muslims are considered a "community of communities" (Karim 2000, 1) of heterogeneous interpretations, cultures, social organizations, traditions, and societies marked by "intra-communal difference and religious plurality" (Hirji 2010, 8). Notwithstanding this enormous diversity, some Muslims claim cultural "Muslimness" rather than religious "Muslimness" (Abu-Lughod 1995; Göle 1996; Selby 2016). Debates over covering are complex and filled with tensions, ambiguities, and contradictions that have existed since Muslim state formation and the beginnings of early Muslim communities. Muslim women who cover do so for a variety of reasons, including as a tool of empowerment or modesty, or a public expression of religious, ethnic, and cultural identity. For some, veiling is a religious obligation; these women interpret specific verses in the Qur'an (24:30–31; 33:59) as divine commands to cover as an embodiment of modesty and an integral step on their road to piety. These verses have been interpreted, debated, and argued amongst varying communities both inside and outside of Islam. Scholars, historians, and communities differ over this historically complex issue. However, women who cover believe that in order to cultivate the necessary attributes of self, the Islamic virtue of modesty must be lived and embodied in order to be realized. These women believe that covering expresses "true modesty" and is the means through which modesty as a virtue is attained. For them, modesty is the norm that they

seek to cultivate, and the veil is the bodily form of that norm. Therefore, the veiled body becomes the essential means through which modesty is both created and expressed (Mahmood 2005, 23).

Katherine Bullock (2010) questions the discourse that "pushes" Canadian Muslim women who cover out of the nation. Her research demonstrates that Muslim women in Canada who cover assert their pride in being Canadian, being Muslim, and covering—there is no conflict between their religious and national identities nor is there a loyalty test from one or the other. Atasoy (2003) found that young, highly educated, and professional Canadian Muslim women choose to cover as a medium to represent their "Canadianness." Historically and contemporarily, covering has never been a fixed practice and reflects the complexity of how religious belief and social reality are shaped and constituted by one another.

The Deeper Principle: Read Her Lips

The former Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated that the citizenship oath is the moment when prospective citizen joins the Canadian family and that it is offensive that someone would hide their identity during that moment ("Niqab-citizenship ceremony ruling will be appealed, PM says" 2015). On the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's television programme, *Power & Politics*, former minister Kenney implied that citizenship ceremony regulations provided a dual function. First, that the face of the individual must be uncovered in order to visually verify that they are indeed reciting the Oath of Citizenship—that her lips are *seen* moving. Second, the "deeper principle" frames the oath as a public act of loyalty to Canada which must therefore be recited "uncovered" to express devotion to Canada and its democratic values ("Face veils banned for citizenship oath" 2011).[2] The implicit message is that a woman who wears the burqa or niqab cannot recite the Oath of Citizenship authentically and thus cannot be loyal to Canada. This rhetoric casts the woman who chooses to wear a burqa or niqab as duplicitous, whose loyalty remains with those "tribal societies" and in opposition to the Canadian state. The subtext creates a prosthetic citizenship (cited in Perera 2009, 228) for Muslim women who cover, such that they are deemed suspicious or disloyal even if they are born in Canada or immigrate to Canada and abide by the ban. The state demands the removal of the burqa or the niqab *only* at the specific moment the oath is recited, which symbolically identifies the burqa and niqab as threats. The rhetoric implies that the state is under constant and

absolute threat and, therefore, women who wear the burqa or niqab can undermine the legitimacy of the state. Furthermore, it suggests that citizens should be on guard against the perceived threat of Muslim women. Whenever statements are made that uphold loyalty as a Canadian value, the loyalty and devotion of Muslim women are implicitly called into question as a transgression against the state. Moreover, the state adds a physical precondition for Canadian citizenship: an uncovered face (Razack 2018, 176). According to Joseph Pugliese (Perera 2009, 228), this is when citizenship acts as a prosthesis, a foreign part whose addition allows a subject to function but remains visibly adjunct to the body. It is a citizenship that cannot be corporeally owned or nativized. It is precisely this notion of citizenship that isolates and stigmatizes individuals by representing them as illegible to the nation (Melamed 2011, 39).

The public proclamations made by Prime Minister Harper and Minister Kenney brought particular identities into being and asserted authority over all of them. When the former Prime Minister stated that the citizenship oath must be recited "openly" and "freely," he inferred that women who wear the niqab or burqa are hiding something or being deceptive. His statement cast doubt as to the internal motives of a woman who chooses to recite the oath while wearing her niqab. Therefore, in everyday interactions, the state influences how women who wear the burqa and niqab are perceived and treated within the nation. Moreover, public space becomes the place where national identity and proper religious identity are actualized through the prism of visibility—after all, a good citizen/believer has nothing to hide (Amiraux 2016, 42).

It must be noted that in certain situations, Canadian Muslim women who wear the burqa or niqab do not object to publicly uncovering or showing their faces. Currently, women who wear the burqa or niqab show their faces during airport security checks, for identification cards, and when accessing hospital services. Similarly, the recitation of the oath at the Canadian citizenship ceremony is often approached in the same cooperative spirit (Clarke 2013).

Canadian Politics and Geopolitical Narratives: Egypt, Again?

In its attempt to justify the ban on face coverings during the Oath of Citizenship, the Canadian Conservative government used as "evidence" a religious decree made by the late Egyptian Sheikh Mohammad Sayyed Tantawi's[3] dismissing the burqa and niqab as secondary cultural practices not founded in Islam. In 2009, Sheikh Tantawi issued a fatwa (religious decree) and instigated a public campaign to ban female students from wearing the niqab at Egyptian universities. In this way, the current context in Egypt had a direct bearing on the contemporary Canadian ban. Moreover, what remains absent from Tantawi's decree—and thus the Canadian government's authoritative "evidence"—is the specific religious and political context, and the diversity of interpretations and tensions from which policies, decrees, and theological arguments arise that characterize the niqab and burqa as cultural practices not founded in Islam.[4]

The decree made by the late Sheikh Tantawi must be seen within the wider historical debate and contentious contemporary political struggle that had been going on in Egypt during this time. The ban against wearing the niqab in Egypt has been at the centre of the power struggle between the Egyptian state and Salafist Muslims.[5] Al-Azhar Mosque is considered an institution of the Egyptian state and plays a role in state policy formation. The decree was used to curb increasing Salafist public presence and political organizing in order to curtail Salafist influence in Egypt.[6] More importantly, sectarian Salafist Muslim women believe that wearing the burqa and niqab is a religious obligation and part of their religious practice (Al-Fartousi and Mogadime 2012, 171).

During the Canadian debates surrounding the ban, the niqab became an entity in and of itself: as the material site where geopolitical discourses, national narratives, and religious scripts combined and conflicted. In this respect, Egyptian government, politics, religion, and culture were intertwined in ways that blurred history, divisive parties, competing religious organizations, and boundaries into a social and political matrix that ultimately bled into the Canadian landscape. The Canadian government policy buttressed by certain Canadian Muslim organizations lays bare the complex historical arguments that have been used for centuries by Muslims and non-Muslims alike to argue for and against wearing the niqab and burqa. Supporting Tantawi's decree and lauding the Canadian government's ban was the Canadian Muslim Congress (MCC), a self-proclaimed

"moderate Muslim" organization that argued that covering is rooted in Middle Eastern culture and not in Islam. Tariq Ramadan (2010) argues that "moderate Muslim" is a political construction that serves the political needs of the time. The MCC not only supported the Canadian Conservative government's "courageous decision" but also pressured the government to expand the ban to other areas of public life. In October 2009, the MCC demanded that the federal government introduce legislation that would ban the wearing of niqabs, burkas, and other face coverings in public. Crucially, the MCC condemned the burqa and niqab using the rhetoric that we have seen above, which has its origins in the colonial exercise of power. The MCC calls veiling a practice that "reflects a mode of male control over women" and is a "vestige of medieval culture that has no place in Canada where our modern sensibilities have come to recognize the equality of men and women as an inalienable right for all" (Downie 2013, 30). Similarly, former minister Kenney echoed the MCC when he stated that the niqab "reflects a misogynistic culture—a treatment of women as property rather than people, which is anchored in medieval tribal customs as opposed to any religious obligation" (Solomon 2015). The Muslim Canadian Congress must be seen in a wider context that has emerged post-9/11 and that has framed most debates regarding Muslim cultural politics (Zine 2012, 14). These debates evoke concerns about how immigrants are integrating within the nation and whether immigrants are adopting "Canadian values" (6).

Citizenship debates play into these discourses and speak to a broader issue that has been reactivated globally since September 11, 2001. The surveillance and control of Muslims and those perceived as Muslims become justified under the guise of national security and the stiffening of national narratives. This is most clearly seen by statements that position religious belief as a transgression of national identity and values. Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper argued that the ban against face coverings was not an issue of religion but one of defending Canadian identity and the broader values of "an equal and open society" (Chase 2015). Indeed, concealed by discourses of conflicting values, this reveals an effective political tactic of shaping citizens through self-discipline that emphasizes both social and legal norms of inclusion and exclusion of citizenship.[7] In this way, nations and national identities are continuously being shaped, reshaped, contested, and recontested not only within a continuum of renewal but also in relation to difference (Yuval-Davis 1997).

According to Oliver Roy (2009), when a religious tradition claims to be the "true" religion, it is one that at any given moment explicitly posits culture as otherness. The centrality of the concept of "culture" as an explanatory tool made in the arguments by the Canadian government and the Muslim Canadian Congress not only redefines religion as culture but, as Joan Wallach Scott (2009, 7) implies, culture becomes an entity of objectively discernable values and traditions that come to be seen as homogeneous, immutable, and stagnant. Complexity, politics, and history are absent and become the effect of a very particular, historically specific political discourse that enacts a particular version of reality.

When the power of the state, dominant interpretations of a single religion and powerful organizations collude; they control the boundaries of what is accepted as "real" religion and who is considered a "real" citizen in the nation. In this way, a specific idea of religion emerges at the expense of religious diversity, religious freedom, and the protection of citizen rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In Canada, multiculturalism not only reflects a demographic reality but a constitutional commitment to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. According to Lori Beaman (2012), the separation of church and state is more of a Canadian cultural belief than it is a constitutional truth. For example, the preamble to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms explicitly states that Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law, guaranteeing "religious freedom." Bruce Ryder (2005, 174–175) argues that freedom of religion and state neutrality require that governments avoid laws or policies that seek to enforce the practices of a particular religion or indoctrinate citizens in particular beliefs. However, the ideal of religious freedom and state neutrality crumble when a singular form of believer is legitimized and tolerated in political spaces and is thereby made worthy of the protection and benefits of religious freedom, while other forms of religiosity are deemed illegitimate and unworthy of protection (Amiraux 2016, 41).

In this way, the steady stream of characterizations made by the "native voice" (MCC) and echoed by the Canadian government designate women who wear the niqab or burqa as prosthetic believers. A new layer of meaning is attached to the burqa and niqab, one that should be understood as constituting new forms of power (Beaman 2014, 54). The net effect of this becomes the marginalization or othering of a group's religious beliefs and embodied practices. These beliefs and practices become "defined out" as no longer religious (McGuire 2008, 74) and no longer worthy of the

protection of one's right to religious freedom under the constitution (Beaman 2014, 54).

Therefore, the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom and the cultural belief in the separation of state and religion dissolves, and instead emerges as a tool of governmentality: what Michel Foucault (1978) refers to as the conduct of conduct, or a form of activity aimed to shape, guide, or affect the conduct of individuals or, rather, citizens and believers. In the case of the ban on the niqab and burqa, the Canadian government redefines a religious obligation as a cultural product, or a strategy for religious and cultural assimilation to form new, tolerable, and more comfortable (i.e. state-approved) identities. The dominant, state-sanctioned interpretation of religion and religious tradition becomes invisible in the public sphere and renders the minority and less dominant claims to public space even more visible (Amiraux 2016, 8) and more of a clash of national values and legitimate religious beliefs. It is here where the prosthetic citizen and believer is mutually and legally defined, shaped, and disciplined by the Canadian government. Varying textual interpretations, different authority figures, complex political arrangements (e.g. between the Egyptian state and religious institutions), cultural factors, and social concerns slip into Canadian public life where they are reproduced and codified in policy. Moreover, the Canadian government participates in theology shopping[8] by selectively choosing and discarding which religious beliefs and practices are legitimate (real) and adjudicating based on this preference. This creates a false sense of a singular theological interpretation within Islam.

In this way, the semantic linking of modern governance and historical narratives effaces the power relations between different interpretations of the same religion, as well as the modality of power relations that operate according to a specific idea of how religion and religious practice should or should not be expressed and organized in the public sphere. These strands of biopower, what Foucault (1978) terms the modality of power that operates through the orchestration and regulation of daily life, became more visible when the public statements made by the Canadian government and the Muslim Canadian Congress laid bare *islamophobic* and *islamophilic* discourses (Shirock 2010). In part, a particular model of Muslim womanhood becomes constructed and assumed as normative. Muslim women who do not wear the burqa and niqab assume a normative mantle of a monolithic Muslim Woman as the standard by which other Muslim women must conform in order to be accepted by the nation. At the heart of these discourses is a simplistic bifurcation between static

identities that are based on fixed normative qualities of "good" Muslims and "real" Islam versus "bad" Muslims and "false" Islam. Thus, while the heterogeneity of "Islam" remains undisturbed in this instance, the narrative of a monolithic construction of women who wear the burqa or niqab as "oppressed" and victims of "tribal societies that treat women as property" ("Face veils banned for citizenship oath" 2011) is sustained. More importantly, the key assumption made by the Canadian government and the Muslim Canadian Congress are that women wearing the niqab or burqa are coerced into wearing them. While there may be some women who are forced into covering, a survey conducted by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) found that the majority of respondents surveyed had chosen to wear the niqab and burqa of their own free will. In some cases, this choice was made despite the protests of their families, male members included (Herhalt 2014).

At the state level, intracommunal difference as represented to the state and by the state itself "may well undermine whole groups of Muslims who do not conform to the 'Islam' defined by those who have been seen by the state as having the authority to define Islam, and concurrently have power and influence over the state" (Hirji 2010, 20). This creates a type of interlegality where the state participates in the intermingling of norms, meanings, values, and legal (religious decree by one interpretation) elements into the practice and rule of the national legal order (Hoekema 2008, 4). Talal Asad (2006, 498) argues that the state itself can assume the role of religious authority because it embodies a single absolute power and purports to represent transcendental neutrality. The critical point here, as Stuart Hall (1996) argues, is that citizenship and national culture are not simply imbricated webs of allegiance, bonding, or symbolic identification of the "social imaginary" but, rather, they are structures of power. As such, the state can face the political task of shaping the beliefs of believers, good/real Muslims versus bad/false Muslims (Mamdani 2002, 767) in ways that are most conducive to the secular complexion of the state. Lori Beaman (2014, 46) argues that these are the remnants of a Christian hegemony embedded in Canadian social and political institutions. Beaman cautions that when the intertwining of the state and particular religions becomes indistinguishable and they become embedded in the social structure, institutions, and policy, it may become impossible to untangle them from one another. Therefore, the relationship between the Canadian state and religious institutions must be watched very carefully. This is most clearly seen in the way that culture, religion, and religious freedom have

been imagined, shaped, and redefined in the ban on face coverings during the Oath of Citizenship. Islam as a global faith is objectified within a singular authority figure structure (an ambiguous mix of Egyptian authorities and "moderate Muslim" organizations) that works to maintain and sustain the Canadian Conservative government's position that "most moderate Muslims agree with the public aspect of the citizenship ceremony" ("Will Stephen Harper regret remark on niqab?" 2015). In fact, Abou El-Fadl (2005) contends that the "moderate Muslim" designation is political and coercive and is used to confirm and uphold the religious legitimacy of the idea of a one true and authentic Islam. Moreover, public statements disguised as theological decrees not only serve as a mode to render religious judgments and precedents, but the state representative acts as a religious textual exegete and becomes the interpreter, mediator, and authority figure in doctrinal debates vis-à-vis Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The residual effects of the language used by Conservative Government officials, as well as the public shaming techniques and the epistemic violence embedded in their public statements, directly affected and continues to shape the daily lives of Canadian Muslim women who wear the niqab, burqa, or hijab, or are perceived to wear them. These spatial politics add to the colonial narrative by creating the niqab as *the* iconography of fear, which in turn influences some Muslim women's experience in the nation state (Gökarıksel 2012). The National Council of Canadian Muslims confirmed that it received several reports of Muslim women being verbally or physically assaulted. Various media outlets reported a series of violent acts against women who wear or are perceived as wearing the niqab, burqa, or hijab.[9] The reported incidents had a common thread, namely that the victims' niqab, hijab, or perceived hijab were pulled off their head (MacCharles and Spurr 2015). However, it was also in the public *in between* spaces that more reflective voices shifted the focus from horizontal inequality towards deep equality between citizens.

From Horizontal Inequality to Deep Equality

In her article, "Horizontal Inequalities: Barriers to Pluralism,"[10] Frances Stewart (2017) states that horizontal inequalities (HIs)—inequalities among groups of people—are multidimensional and are seen across various economic, social, political, class, and cultural dimensions and racial, ethnic, religious, and gender identities (Stewart 2). Large HIs in nations

can create justice gaps between citizens and are "clear drivers of exclusion" that include "a lack of respect for other cultures" (5). Most often, HIs are place based, meaning that they are shaped by the particular political, social, and cultural history of societies and produce specific sets of national narratives, identities, ideologies, and practices. Yet, as Stewart argues, some horizontal inequalities based on categories of identity utilize socially constructed markers of difference such as religion and make visible the close linkage between horizontal inequalities and colonial history. As we have seen, the linkage between horizontal inequality and colonial history leads to contemporary tensional positions that constitute divisive lines that reinforce exclusionary boundaries amongst citizens (Alibhai 2019). Talal Asad (2006) argues that the implications of this tensional character is a distinctive feature of modern liberal governance that uses self-discipline, participation, and law as elements of exclusive citizen (identity) formation. Stewart cautions that while it becomes crucial to reduce HIs for social stability and justice in pluralist societies—it is insufficient by itself and requires a combination of approaches (5). Lori Beaman (2017) argues for moving away from "master narratives" of clashes and conflicts of differences between citizens and shifting towards approaches of negotiation, generosity, agonistic respect, similarities, and narratives of equality, in other words, *deep equality* amongst citizens. Deep equality centres on the collection of empirical evidence that explores, understands, and maps micro-level "everyday" instances where difference is negotiated within the values of caring, neighbourliness, and shared humanity (3) to make way for similarities between people. Deep equality is not about "differences" and the plurality of identities receding in the background but rather, a reconstituted and engaged equality that pushes past the ideals of simply "living together" as citizens and towards the continuous process of living *well* together (Elver 2012, 200) as neighbours.

It is also in the public *in between* spaces that more reflective voices can shift the focus from horizontal inequality towards deep equality between citizens. For instance, Canada's first Muslim senator, Mobeena Jaffer (2015), wrote an opinion piece in the *Vancouver Sun* titled, "Zunera Ishaq is a Canadian Hero," in which she characterized Zunera Ishaq, who challenged the ban on face coverings during the citizenship ceremony, as a hero for standing up for Canadian values. In another example, future Prime Minister Justin Trudeau argued that women who wear the niqab strengthened the Canadian family. During the 2015 Canadian federal election debates, Canadians watched and listened as a sitting Prime

Minister and his officials laid bare an exclusive ideal of what kind of citizen had the "right" values (i.e. an uncovered face). Harper and his government implied that women who wore the niqab were offensive, and that their values, although guaranteed in the constitution, conflicted with so-called Canadian values. Some Canadians expressed their disdain at such exclusionary notions of who, according to the Conservative government, could belong to the "Canadian family," by creating Twitter hashtags (#DressCodePM) and Tumblr sites (Niqabs of/du Canada). Canadians shared pictures of themselves with their faces covered by hockey masks, surgeon masks, and ski masks, and questioned if Harper would consider them offensive or disloyal to Canada; whether they were still part of the Canadian family. Others voted with their faces covered during Canada's 2015 general election to show their solidarity with women who wear the niqab and to protest against the divisive rhetoric of what a Canadian citizen should look like, be spoken about, or treated. In this way, op-eds to twitter hashtags transform the colonial-influenced narrative of Muslim women who wear the niqab to provide a powerful space for deep equality to flourish and relationships of negotiation and engagement become possible.

Conclusion: Read Her Editorial

The title of this chapter, "Read Her Lips," reflects and emphasizes the harm that occurs when stereotypes and representations slip into government policy. Indeed, while many Canadians expressed apprehension over the idea of the niqab, they were more apprehensive of a sitting Prime Minister publicly shaming Zunera Ishaq, a prospective Canadian citizen, and marginalizing the small minority of Muslim women who wear the niqab from the Canadian family. Ishaq, the woman at the centre of the debate, published an editorial in Canada's highest circulated newspaper, the *Toronto Star*, titled "Why I intend to wear a niqab at my citizenship ceremony." Ishaq recognized that, while wearing the niqab during the Oath of Citizenship might prevent Canadians from reading her *lips*, they could instead read her *words* that expressed her love, devotion, and active citizenship to Canada.

On October 19, 2015, Canadians along with new citizen Zunera Ishaq took to the polls in Canada's forty-second federal election and elected a new Liberal government. In her first act as attorney general and Minister of Justice, the Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould formally and legally

retracted the 2011–2015 niqab ban, declaring that the retraction was a symbol of the values that make us Canadian—those of diversity and inclusion (Crawford 2015).

Notes

1. The case began when Zunera Ishaq immigrated to Canada from Pakistan in 2008. Zunera legally challenged the Conservative government's ban on wearing the niqab during the citizenship ceremony. For case overview, see Zaheeda Alibhai (2018) Case Study: Zunera Ishaq v. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. *EUREL: Sociological and Religious Data on Religions in Europe and Beyond*. See http://www.eurel.info/spip.php?article3035.

2. It is important to note that prior to the recitation of the oath, prospective citizens must sign the legally binding written version of the oath.

3. Sheikh Tantawi was a leading spiritual leader in Sunni Islam. He served as the Grand Mufti of Egypt from 1986 to 1996, when former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak appointed him Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. Tantawi served in this position until his death in 2010.

4. In Egypt, Islam has come to embody a variegated process of movements, ideas, and practices. For some Egyptian Muslims, Islam is the cultural topography from which the Egyptian nation was built, a doctrinal system with political and juridical connotations of the proper ordering of state and society, and/or a system of beliefs harmonized to daily life. Whether women should cover their faces is a long-standing debate among scholars.

5. Salafism is a distinct interpretation of Sunni Islam.

6. We see these same politics playing out in France where the niqab has become linked to Salafist extremists.

7. Colleen Bell (2011, 106) has argued that, in security discourses, conflict situations are "dramatized and presented as supreme priorities." In this way, conflict situations are fashioned as more authentic if they are perceived as urgent and requiring immediate action.

8. Hoekema (2008) uses the concept of "discourse shopping" to describe "actors" switching from one style of doing justice and normative repertoire to another.

9. In Toronto, for example, a woman was wearing a scarf over her hair to protect it from the rain when someone ripped it off her and told her to go back to where she came from.

10. For a detailed analysis, see the Global Center for Pluralism publication series *Accounting for Change in Diverse Societies* that focuses on six international cases that examine specific moments when a country amended its approach to diversity by either expanding or eroding the foundations of inclusive citizenship. See Global Centre for Pluralism https://www.pluralism.ca.

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Tasting the Nation: Food, Identity, and Belonging in Canada

Helin Burkay and David Dean

"Sweet Canada" is the name of a new series of five stamps recently issued by Canada Post each featuring an iconic Canadian dessert: the Nanaimo bar, the sugar pie, the blueberry grunt, the Saskatoon berry pie, and the butter tart. Reflecting Canadians' fondness for these desserts, Canada Post argued that "[o]ur country's traditional desserts offer more than just a scrumptious way to end a meal—their origins are a tasty part of our history" (Canada Post 2019, 6). As Michael Maloney has recently argued, even in the new electronic age stamps continue to "play an active role in building national identity" (Maloney 2013). These dessert stamps can certainly be seen as an endeavour by the Canadian state to insist on another sweet narrative, namely that through their shared love of these desserts Canadians can celebrate a sense of belonging to the nation (see Fig. 1).

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Fig. 1   Canada Post, Sweet Canada: Permanent™ Domestic stamps – Booklet of 10. Screenshot taken 31 May 2019. Source: https://www.canadapost.ca/shop/collectors/stamps-by-theme/people-and-places/p-404113144.jsf?icid=Estore%7CMaywesuggest%7CProd%7CSlot_2

How might we reflect on the variety of claims of what constitutes Canadian cuisine? How might we imagine culinary narratives of Canadian food in menus, cookbooks, and recipes as practices of representation and enactment of difference at particular historical conjunctures? What are the tensions underlying the elusive concept of Canadian cuisine and what is at stake politically in attempts to fix its definition? What is the role and agency of migrant communities in defining Canadian food? We argue that part of the answer to these questions lies in troubling and complicating Canadian cuisine as a monolithic category and as a single culinary tradition confined to the borders of the nation. Building on a closer look at various moments in Canadian culinary history, we draw attention to the particular historical and contemporary tensions between attempts to fix the definition of a national culinary tradition in Canada and the continuous interpretations, adaptations, changes, and innovations of culinary practices by different communities.

There are two clearly identifiable scholarly approaches to culinary nationalism. The first, associated particularly with tourism and hospitality

studies, takes national cuisine as a category that can be technically identified based on ingredients, techniques, and culinary literature, with a view to both differentiate and brand a culinary identity of authentic national cuisine (Jacobs 2009; Ferguson 2004). The second is the more critically engaged discussion around national cuisine as a political construction and culinary practices as embedded in a myriad of colonial and transnational networks of commodities and agro-food relations (Appadurai 1988; Mintz 1996). Our approach is informed especially by the latter and posits that both the technical and narrative components of Canadian cuisine should be seen as a series of continuous adaptations that reflect the political, cultural, and economic dynamics of nation-building in Canada, starting with the arrival of European settlers to our own contemporary, environmentally sensitive, and multicultural culinary orientations. We develop this approach by loosely following the lead of Hersch Jacobs (2009) in his attempt to define Canadian cuisine by examining geographically specific ingredients and public knowledge generated through menus, cookbooks, encyclopedias, recipes, and official discourse. In taking these two components and turning them upside down, we show that the search for an authentic and uniquely Canadian cuisine is a politically powerful tool used to make claims about ownership, belonging, and nationhood.

Food as an Analytical Lens

There is nothing as mundane and as contested as food when it comes to the cultural politics of representation with respect to migrant identities, past and present colonial relations, and a changing national imaginary. Even in its most everyday state, food is much more than its ingredients. It is an edible curation of relations, representations, rituals, and symbols. Food, however, is so ordinary that it is easy to overlook the connections it reveals, as well as the contestations it brings forward in terms of belonging, representation, authenticity, and ownership. These contestations around recipes, ingredients, and techniques, as well as etiquettes of consumption, are fruitful places for identifying the dynamic politics of representation and stereotypes. Storytelling, memory work, constructing identity, and feelings of belonging revolve around making, serving, and eating food. As such, food encapsulates myriad social, political, cultural, economic, technological, and ecological connections in an edible form.

Social performances and the public presence of food also go beyond edibility. Images, techniques, processes, menus, recipes, and stories of

food circulate and evoke sensory experiences, moral judgments, or aesthetic claims that contest belonging, authenticity, and ownership. National, regional, and local narratives around food and culinary culture are full of claims about whose knowledge deserves recognition, who belongs and who does not. Contrary to the relatively depoliticized site of sensory experience and aesthetic appeal of food in public discourse, menus, recipes, and cookbooks are not just repositories of knowledge on food. They are also interventions of belonging and politicized commentaries on identity. Food hides the cruelty of forced connections of global commodity chains, colonial histories, and agricultural labour that generates profit in return for making edible ingredients abundantly available in the mass markets, especially for middle-class consumers. Although everyone eats, food deserts and unequal access to food cut across class and racial lines, making food a politically charged divider as much as a unifier.

The tensions between the practices and narratives around Canadian food demonstrate that food is a political conversation, a performative statement, an economic negotiation of resources, and a mundane daily act of sustenance. Critical engagement with some of the narratives and relations around food in Canada provides a uniquely powerful lens to understand the temporal and spatial contradictions that make up Canadian national discourse and imaginary.

Using food as an analytical lens enables us to reflect on the ways that Canadian cuisine is formed and transformed beyond national borders, and by transnational culinary histories embedded in the global circulation of ideas, ingredients, and peoples. In that sense, food is one of the most productive ways of imagining difference, plurality, and its contestations. As an omnipresent and yet highly contested and complex entity, the narratives around the value and meaning of food are condensed forms of nodes at a conjuncture of contradictions. As such, there is a good argument to be made in favour of using food as an analytical category rather than simply a thematic variation in approaches to issues of multiculturalism, citizenship, and belonging.

In the following pages, we focus on three culinary moments in Canada. First is the colonial-settler moment, where Canada's culinary identity reflected the troubles of the colonial-settler political project and was situated within international culinary narratives. In the second section, we draw attention to multicultural nation-building by focusing on hyphenated restaurants, menus, and how migrant communities negotiate their belonging by redefining Canadian culinary identity in distinct ways. In the

last section, we reflect on the current moment in the changing conversation of national culinary identity by focusing on debates around local sustainable cuisine and the environmental sensitivities that define the identity of Canadian cuisine.

Pies, Tarts, and Poutine

Readers of Canada Post's *Details* magazine learn that the origins of the sugar pie can be traced back to France (colonists were forced to adapt the homeland recipe by using maple syrup instead of brown sugar), that the earliest butter tart recipe dates from 1900, and that the blueberry grunt was a version of traditional English steamed pudding. Yet these confident statements mask competing origin stories, at least for the butter tart. This small pastry traditionally filled with butter, sugar, and egg, with a soft gooey-liquid centre and crusty top, could simply be an English-Canadian version of the much earlier French-Canadian sugar pie. Another possibility is that it was an adaptation of the English treacle tart; the first treacle tart recipe was published in England only one year before the Women's Auxiliary of the Royal Victoria Hospital of Barrie, Ontario (1900) published the first butter tart recipe in their cookbook (Jewry 1899, 578). Given, however, that the recipe's author was Mary Ethel Macleod, whose maiden name Cowie suggests that her ancestors came from the Scottish Borders, it seems at least plausible that the pie's origins lay in that region's well-known sugar pies filled with fruit and sometimes nuts.

These are foods then that reference not only a shared yearning for sweets but a shared colonial past which is not untroubled by discussions of origins and authenticity. If their Canadian-ness lies in the colonial settler homelands, what makes them distinctive from the sugar pies and butter tarts of England, Scotland, France, and Belgium? This does not seem to be a problem for the Saskatoon berry pie. It claims to be an "original Canadian recipe" because, as Canada Post is equally keen to point out, the berry was a "staple for Indigenous peoples and early settlers" and its name (like that of the city) "is derived from a Cree word misâskatômina". (Canada Post 2019, 6). Again, however, like the adoption of maple syrup as a substitute for brown sugar, colonial-settler desserts may use ingredients cultivated, prepared, and consumed by Indigenous peoples, but they are made apparently more delectable through their repositioning within European culinary traditions. These are not only stories of colonial-settler adaptation and adoption, they are tales of appropriation that mask

histories of cultural genocide. The national imaginary of the "tasty" origins "of our history" involving the butter tart, the sugar pie, and other desserts from the beginning of twentieth century coincides with the brutal intervention of European settlers into Indigenous food resources, cultivation, and production (Murton 2012, 227; Daschuk 2019, 34–36, 115–119). Canada's culinary narrative project is embedded in a national colonial-settler imaginary and in a political economy of "whitening" Canadian culinary identity and history.

Butter tarts, sugar pie, and Saskatoon berry pie frequently appear in lists compiled by journalists and foodies seeking to identify a single food or dish that represents all Canadians. It is, however, poutine that regularly comes out on top. Consisting of fries covered by a layer of cheese, curds, and smothered in gravy, poutine is associated with francophone communities across Canada, especially in the province of Québec. Culture Trip's Hayley Simpson (2017) defines poutine as the number one uniquely Canadian dish followed by the Nanaimo bar and the butter tart and then, in ninth place, the Saskatoon berry pie. The Toronto-based site Chopsticks + Forks also has poutine as the front-runner, as did the crowdsourced survey run by the national *Globe and Mail* newspaper (Allemang 2010) and Manitoba's Live & Learn, a website dedicated to introducing Canada to new Manitobans. Indeed, poutine so often tops the list in discussions seeking to determine Canada's national dish that *Maclean's* magazine (2012) ran a feature on "12 foods Canada has given the world (besides poutine)."

If there is apparent consensus that poutine is *the* national Canadian dish, it is also striking that such contests have many overlapping foods— tourtière, BeaverTails pastries, peameal bacon, Montréal bagels, Québec's split pea soup, Newfoundland's fish and brewis (cod with hard bread), and Atlantic Canada's figgy duff (scone with raisins), as well as Nanaimo bars, butter tarts, and Saskatoon berry pies. This last dish is the only frequent member of the select club with decidedly Indigenous roots. Indeed, Live & Learn is the only list to include the standby of caterers offering definitively native cuisine: bannock. Before Europeans arrived, Indigenous peoples made breads from corn, various plant roots, sap, and berries. How this related to Scottish bannock—unleavened bread baked on a griddle over an open fire— is unclear; however, the name was claimed by Indigenous peoples for what was, and has become, a cherished and determinedly Indigenous locally-based food (Cyr and Slater 2016).

The Halifax Donair and the Japadog

Adaptation has always been a two-way street. Chopsticks + Forks, drawing inspiration from Toronto's Kensington Market, listed Hawaiian pizza as a top Canadian food because it was invented in Chatham, Ontario. They also noted sushi pizza (a deep-fried rice patty topped with sushi), presumably a Japanese-Canadian take on an Italian-Canadian original (Sim n.d.). Hayley Simpson (2017) included the donair in her list of uniquely Canadian dishes. This traditional Turkish dish of bread-wrapped meat (similar to the Lebanese shawarma and Greek gyro) was adapted to local tastes in the 1970s by Peter Gamoulakos, a Greek Canadian based in Halifax who substituted lamb for beef and developed a sweet sauce to accompany the dish. On the other side of the country, in Vancouver, Japanese Canadian Noriki Tamura created the Japadog in 2005 incorporating nori, radish, and Japanese sauces into a new version of the traditional North American fast food. Such adaptations are performances of belonging speaking back to a Canadian society structured by a policy of multiculturalism that requires inclusivity while celebrating difference (Jackson 2016; Japadog n.d.).

From a cultural-political perspective, rituals, symbols, and narratives around food make these adaptations a performative act that hinges on the politics of belonging. As Sarah Daynes (2004, 159) argues, "food and music are the easiest tools to transport memories." Food is the *madeleine* of the migrant identity, an involuntary memory that enacts the affect of a particular memory from a distant past and a distant place (Proust 1981). Making, serving, and tasting certain foods create a sensory teleportation to the perceived original moment. Food, however, rarely remains the same when it is transported. Each time a recipe is made, the enactment of the memory it represents is recreated differently.

Preserving recipes, adhering to a particular way of preparing and serving food, has as much to do with repetition of the taste as it has to do with staging and performing a social ritual. Understanding the performance element in the process of replicating recipes is informed by Richard Schechner's (1985, 38) concept of performance as "twice behaved behavior." Seeking to replicate, for example, a grandmother's pierogi recipe, is an act of what Schechner calls "rebecoming" in the sense that the cook seeks to "rebecome what they never were but wish to have been or wish to become." Yet in the context of food—growing, purchasing, assembling, preparing, cooking, sharing, eating—this act of rebecoming also becomes

embodied memory work, imagining how, in this case, the grandmother performed the same actions within different spatial and temporal contexts. For the migrant grandchild, seeking to capture the texture, taste, colour, and smell of the treasured handed-down recipe for "baba's pierogis" is an act of remembering as well as replication, and of homage as well as recreation. It can be seen as an embodied practice of representing the migrant self and a celebration of diaspora.

Yet in this performance there are inevitably questions about "getting it right." How to find the "right" ingredients, how to ensure that contemporary tools and technologies do not disturb the "rightness" of the dish, and how to evaluate the authenticity of the final product with a view to the next performance. These are questions shared in many restagings of the past, from historical reenactments to historical feature films, novels, and plays. Freddie Rokem (2001) suggests that, in their performances of past events, actors draw on theatrical energies and become "hyper-historians." While they cannot fully experience the past that was, they nevertheless are "'redoing' or 'reappearing' as something/somebody that has actually existed in the past" (13). The present-day cook performs similarly as they seek to replicate a dish based on historical recipes, whether found in cookbooks or passed down through generations of families, households, and communities. The cook's sense of getting the dish right ("Just like the original") is not based on academic historical verisimilitude, but on sensory self-assessment ("Oh, this tastes right") and ideally the confirmation of others ("Yes, it tastes just like I remember").

The matter of origins, then, becomes an important topic for consideration when using food as an analytical tool. Like Rokem's (2001) actors, the cooks of today cannot experience the dish that was, they can only seek to faithfully reproduce it to the best of their abilities and circumstances. Inevitably, this is a matter of negotiation: alternatives must be sought, substitutes accepted, and compromises made. Therefore, in this edible act of rebecoming, claims about representation based on notions of originality and authenticity, of primary-ness or first-ness, are rendered rather meaningless. As such, food and culinary identity for migrant communities are both claims to the memory of homeland as well as an adjustment, hybridization, borrowing, and finding of a version of hyphenated identity within the hegemonic culture. This is especially true with regards to food because, as we argue here, dishes and recipes are troubled by competing origin stories and complicated by transnational and diasporic influences.

Like the Halifax donair and Japadog, the adjustments of recipes, cookbooks, and migrant food identities do not only happen in domestic spaces within the confines of migrant groups. Through cookbooks and restaurant menus, the culinary narratives and sensory experiences of migrant identities become part of public discourse. In the Canadian case, the hyphenated restaurant fulfills this role. They are not only places that promise *madeleine* moments. The visibility of semantic interventions in menus, either hyphenating the culinary tradition by calling themselves Chinese-Canadian or Italian-Canadian or through putting the Canadian food in a separate section of the menu, acts as an intervention to what constitutes Canadian identity as well as a marketing ploy to cater to a larger consumer palate beyond the migrant community.

Take for example the Free Times Café in Toronto, which specializes in "Authentic Homemade Jewish, Middle Eastern & Canadian Food." Their "Canadian, Eh?" section features a range of burgers (Ontario beef) and sandwiches (chicken club), salads and snacks (fries, chicken fingers, nachos and guacamole—decidedly not Canadian in origin), and poutine. Searching online for menus turned up the Happy Palace in Peterborough, Ontario, which serves "Chinese & Canadian Food." On their menu, Canadian food consists of various types of burgers (plain, cheese, banquet, chicken) and sandwiches (club, toasted Western, grilled cheese, BLT), fries, and poutine. Coniston, Ontario's ManWah House, offers similar burgers, pogos (battered sausages on a stick), fries, onion rings, and poutine in the Canadian section of their menu.[1] With the exception of poutine, what seems to pass as Canadian food for these owners, chefs, and customers are American-style fast food dishes.

Hyphenated restaurants and their menus are situated at the intersection of a dynamic public discourse on belonging in the present and collective memory of the past, making food an active part of social and cultural politics of social inclusion. Thus, the visibility of a hyphen is not just a matter of remembering and reenacting taste from home; it also secures a part in the mainstream society, negotiating visibility by claiming inclusion, and thus actively making and transforming home in Canada by adopting and adjusting to the ingredients, techniques, and technologies available.

The hyphenated restaurants and visibility of diverse culinary traditions can also be situated within a particular colonial context, where the knowledge of and interest in the "other" (and its culinary ways) was a cultural asset within the middle-class vernacular and its claims to whiteness. In Canadian national imaginary, imagining inclusivity through food appeared

as a safer and less political way of creating a national narrative. As Donna Gabaccia points out, however, this depoliticized narrative of "culinary pluralism" is founded on the political tension of its period (1998, 86). It has been made available by global migration from the South, which is itself a product of deep-seated inequalities that trouble the benign, depoliticized narratives of culinary multiculturalism domestically.

The Canuck Burger, the Canadian Pizza, and the Springtime Canadian Dosa

Pluralistic imaginaries and inclusive food narratives have been very much part of Canada's official discourse especially since the Second World War and have been woven into the country's mainstream middle-class identity. However, celebration of diversity in the aftermath of the Cold War looked very different from the vibrant cosmopolitanism of later periods. For example, in 1968, the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto published a cookbook consisting of mostly European and Eastern European dishes to acknowledge and publicize the culinary pluralism of its day (Iacovetta 2012, 371).

Before hyphenated restaurants and the adoption of culinary multiculturalism became fashionable even in its embryonic forms, Canadian cuisine first struggled to define its culinary homeland as distinct from British colonial identity. For example, the Royal Banquet of 1939 was a direct commentary on Canadian identity through culinary curation. In that period, culinary inclusiveness meant claims of lineage to European culinary traditions based on provincial cultural demographics in Canada while at the same time acknowledging British influence (Ungar 2012, 353). Inclusivity in national culinary discourse did not include the different immigrant communities that live in metropolitan areas, such as Vancouver's South Asian community, whose food cultures were simply dismissed as "smelly" with "strange modes of dress and habits" (Mehta 2012, 156).

In its current incarnation, debates around what constitutes Canadian cuisine takes a different turn in the face of an established official narrative of multiculturalism and the local food movement. In an effort to capture what constituted Canadian national cuisine, Jacobs applied a traditional approach to identifying boundaries of an elusive and ever-changing Canadian culinary identity (2009). Like most national projects, the parameters of what constituted a national cuisine drew on the example of the

French gastronomical school. Following the methodology that was developed in the process of constructing French cuisine, Jacobs compiled the ingredients, techniques, and combinations considered to be predominantly Canadian and came to the conclusion that it is impossible to define Canadian cuisine in the same way as French, Chinese, or Italian cuisine. He offers a number of reasons for this including the geographical vastness of Canada, the influence of successive waves of immigrants, and the sheer diversity of ingredients and techniques that are mixed and matched in ways that transform even the most basic recipes. For Jacobs, what makes a cuisine distinctly Canadian is the use of ingredients and techniques native to Canada, in other words, those that have their roots in Indigenous culinary traditions, which of course is a culinary tradition and method of sustenance that the state systematically sought to destroy (Jacobs 2009).

In 2018, organizers of the Canada on a Plate festival invited locals and visitors to Ottawa, the nation's capital, to "[e]xplore our national cuisine" in order to "[s]avour inspired dishes that capture the Canadian experience through our taste buds."[2] Local restaurants offered a variety of appetizers, entrees, and desserts. Scrolling through the sample menus, some foods surprise with their claims to be distinctively Canadian. The "Canuck Burger" (Canuck being slang for Canadian) insists on its Canadian-ness by granting citizenship to cattle ("100% Canadian ground beef patty"). Granting the same to pigs presumably makes the "Canadian Pizza" Canadian as well, with its "signature home-made pizza sauce, topped with pepperoni, fresh mushroom, and chopped bacon." The same is seen with "The Roaster," a Montréal-style bagel filled with "Fresh Canadian Alberta Angus AAA Beef" and "locally sourced Swiss Cheese." Setting aside the Swiss cheese, many of the dishes on offer were Canadianized versions of international cuisines: dosas "with a Canadian springtime twist" filled with fiddleheads and local cheese; English muffins with "peameal-style [Canadian] bacon"; and a butter cauliflower curry with wild rice (a staple Indigenous food). Canadian-ness seems to be found less in the dishes themselves than in the geo-identity of animals, plants, and grains. Maple syrup made an appearance as an ingredient in savoury entrees (infusing onions, brushing salmon, flavouring whipped cream), and of course desserts ("Canadian Maple Ice Cream… sweet, creamy, delicious and so Canadian"). Two of the philatelic desserts are present: Nanaimo bars and butter tarts, the latter said to be a "true representation of a Pioneer Canada dessert!"[3]

The special foods prepared by restaurants for the Canada on a Plate festival clearly indicate that what makes Canadian food Canadian is the use of ingredients found in Canada. The Ottawa restaurant Social declares its focus to be "on progressive Canadian cuisine," inviting clients to indulge "in our Canadian free-style cuisine." Most of the menu items incorporate, translate, and transform locally, regionally, and nationally sourced ingredients into a range of dishes, such as seafood linguini, beef stroganoff, and lamb tagine. Italian, Russian, and Moroccan influences sit alongside only one clearly identifiable Canadian menu item: sockeye salmon from British Columbia. "Progressive" and "free-style" are arguably code words for eclectic and fusion. They support our contention that we need to trouble rather than sustain claims for a fixed national culinary tradition.

As much as it seems like a rupture from previous narratives of culinary nationalism, focusing on ingredients and their origins resonates with the changing scene in haute-cuisine urban restaurants like Social in Ottawa. At this specific conjuncture, what constitutes "Canadian" in menus and cookbooks of new gastronomical culture emphasizes locally sourced, sustainable, Canadian-produced ingredients. In this context, the narrative of national cuisine depends much less on imagining the country as a vast land with a unified culinary tradition. The new culinary interventions into Canadian identity in these restaurant menus imagine a culinary identity that values micro-local resourcing of ingredients, community connections to farmers and producers, as well as unprecedented levels of amalgamation and experimentation with culinary diversity in current Canadian society. The menus and cookbooks reflect the celebration of the local as an ecological parameter beyond administrative borders of cities and regions, combining it with the richness of variety of combinations inspired by diverse ethnic culinary traditions. The need to hyphenate seems to have disappeared and what once would have been considered "ethnic" has become mainstream within new definitions of Canadian cuisine.

Conclusion

We have argued that attempts to define a distinctive Canadian culinary tradition in a singular and fixed way reveals the impossibility of capturing what is a complex, dynamic, adaptive, and multi-dimensional affair. Food as a social practice and cultural ritual resists these attempts, as does the political landscape, both Canada's colonial origins and successive waves of immigration. This makes it difficult for the search for a culinary national

identity to rise above the banality of stereotypes and what Svetlana Boym has called "the dictatorship of nostalgia" (2001, 154). Public debate about what constitutes distinctively Canadian dishes and the changing food-scapes in Canadian cities reveal the high stakes of the politics of representation.

The elusiveness of defining a national culinary identity is a political possibility of inclusion and creativity. Shifting the focus from finding a fixed definition, the vastness, diversity, and multi-layeredness of political contestations around food makes it possible to think of Canadian food as a performative and creative practice beyond the stereotypical representation of the migrant communities that rely on recreating and negotiating their belonging. It allows for the adaptation, mixing, changing, and remaking of belonging. Thinking about food beyond the confines of national cuisine and foregrounding its production also forces us to reckon not only with the representation of migrant communities, but also with the politics of the land and the sustainability of food as a resource within the context of the current ecological crisis and colonial-settler legacy.

NOTES

1. Similar items feature on the menu of the Antler Poutine and Burger self-styled Canadian restaurant in Kracow, Poland (see https://www.facebook.com/antlerkrakow/). Many thanks to Natalia Vesselova for this reference.
2. See http://canadianeats.ca/.
3. A dispute has emerged over the accuracy of Canada Post's visual representation of the Nanaimo bar (Mooney 2019).

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Mobility and Cultural Citizenship: The Making of a Senegalese Diaspora in Multiethnic Brazil

Gana Ndiaye

In major metropolitan areas of Brazil, such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre, the Senegalese community attracts public attention through many sociocultural and religious practices. In addition to the public celebrations of Senegalese national holidays and of victories of the national soccer team by the Senegalese community as a whole, the Muslim migrants called Murids (followers of the Muridiyya, a Sufi order found in Senegal and some West African countries) organize marches during Muslim religious holidays. The *Baay-faal*, a sub-group of the Murids, who can be recognized by their unique, colourful patchwork outfits, perform devotional music in public spaces around socio-religious organizations called *dahira*.

Studies of Senegalese migrations to Brazil have focused on the networks that channel the undocumented Senegalese migrants to Brazil and on the challenges the Senegalese at large face in the Brazilian job market

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(Tedesco and Grzybovski 2013; Tedesco and Kleidermacher 2017; Baeninger et al. 2018). When they do not focus solely on economic processes, those studies have examined private religious practices and solidarity among Senegalese Murid migrants (Baggio et al. 2017). Thus, they overlook the way Senegalese Muslim migrants signal their religious and ethnic identity in the Brazilian public sphere and speak against stereotypes about Islam, Africanness, and clichés of the Senegalese migrant as a *camelô* (street vendor) in mere search of economic gains. This chapter examines how discrete profiles of Senegalese migrants embody and project notions of Muslim and African identities in Brazil, and how the meanings of the repetitive public actions of the Senegalese affect their host communities.

For that purpose, I first situate the recent waves of Senegalese migrants to Brazil in a long history of their settlement in the country and in a broader context of the crisis in their traditional European destinations in order to examine the challenges that their presence poses for both local authorities and researchers. I start by showing current popular and media images of Senegalese immigrants, often reproduced in social scientific literature, and how they fail to illustrate not only the long history of Senegalese settlement in Brazil but also the diversity of profiles of Senegalese migrants and networks that channel them into the country as well as broader migration patterns to Brazil.[1]

Then, I argue that a distinguishing feature of Senegalese immigrants in Brazil is their involvement in economic and cultural activities, in which they showcase their cultural difference and claim "cultural citizenship." As Renato Rosaldo (1994, 57) defines it, "cultural citizenship refers to the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong, in the sense of participating in the nation state's democratic processes." Therefore, an ethnic group claims cultural citizenship when its members emphasize their right to be different without alienating themselves from the majority culture and without neglecting their political participation. In a context of increased ethno-racial protests and Afro-Brazilian activism (Johnson III 2006, 170; Paschel and Sawyer 2008, 198; Osuji 2013, 1491), the fact that the Senegalese put forward their cultural difference makes them highly visible and triggers various responses from both the state and local populations. I show that unskilled workers, the most salient category in terms of media coverage and social scientific inquiry, use the ethnic performance of religious

identity to create venues for intercultural dialogue, and have led to many cases of conversion to Islam by Brazilians and marriages between Brazilians and Senegalese.

I argue that the strategies the Murids use to counter stereotypical representations tied to their Muslim and African identities entail bodily work (through dress and self-presentation, for example), claiming public visibility and recognition through regular marches and marking of space and time, all of those actions contributing to the cultivation of a positive image of the migrant community. I examine how different categories of Brazilians react to the Senegalese presence, and how Senegalese immigrants make sense of the fact that non-white Brazilians can choose to identify with several intermediate colours that separate them from blacks (Twine 1998, 87; Schwarcz 2003, 27–30). I add to existing literature that demonstrates how racial boundaries are still sharp even though most Brazilians celebrate racial mixture (Silva and Reis 2012, 383–4). In the same vein, I show that the way the Brazilian government is dealing with new waves of unskilled Senegalese migrants is consistent with Brazil's historical attempts to bring in the "desirable immigrant" (Lesser 2013, 4): a white one.

Images and Profiles of Senegalese Migrants in Brazil

There are three major phases in the arrivals of Senegalese to Brazil, each corresponding with a shift in the country's foreign policies with sub-Saharan Africa or with a change in its economy. Each of these phases has produced discrete profiles of migrants.

Senegal and Brazil started their diplomatic relations in 1961, with an emphasis on the cultural connections between the two countries, which President Leopold Senghor stressed on his presidential visit to Brazil in 1964 (Kaly 2001). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Brazil maintained complex relationships with Senegal, especially when Senegalese diplomats supported Angolan exiles in Brazil, working for the independence of their country from Portugal (Davila 2010, 172). These ties brought the first Senegalese exchange students, trainees, and artists to Brazil in the 1990s (Kaly 2001, 463). The boom of the Brazilian economy after 2000 intensified the diplomatic and economic relations between Senegal and Brazil under President Lula (Rizzi et al. 2011, 65).[2] That coincided with the arrival of the first significant flows of unskilled Senegalese migrants (Tedesco and Grzybovski 2013, 323). The Brazilian government was also seeking to attract international students to its higher education

institutions (Feijó 2013, 37) while branding the country as a rising diplomatic and economic power and a sanctuary for refugees of various countries.[3]

The data on Senegalese migrants in Brazil is scarce and highly problematic. The Brazil government provided no data for the Senegalese in the UN Population Division 2017 report on migrations; although it did for Lusophone African countries (United Nations). However, the Brazilian Commission for Refugees reports that there have been 7206 Senegalese asylum seekers in Brazil between 2010 and 2015 (Comitê Nacional para os Refugiados 2016, 8), while the UN Refugee Agency representative in Brazil notes that "the majority of those applicants are migrants who left their country for economic reasons" (UNHCR/ACNUR 2014, 1–2). Those migrants have particularly attracted public and media attention. A November 11, 2014 news report by *R7*, a private radio and television network, illustrates the popular image of the Senegalese (often associated with Haitians) as migrants who entered Brazil without authorization via the Amazonian forest (Fala Brazil 2014). The video shows a group of migrants, referred to as "Senegalese and Haitians," in a camp where aid workers help them to process applications for *protocolos* (temporary residence permits) and work permits. Besides the inability to quantify these flows—"*eles são milhares*," or, "they are many," says the report—there is a manifest oversimplification of the composition of the group of migrants discussed and the dynamics that brought them to Brazil. To avoid that shortcoming, one should consider two important things. First, sophisticated networks of smugglers exist between Brazil and Senegal, which is a major transit zone for West African migrations. These smugglers can even obtain Senegalese passports for other West African migrants who they then channel into the destination countries (Goldberg 2004). Not only is Senegal a transit zone but West African migrants also develop survival mechanisms against the "bunkerization" of developed countries. These mechanisms include trafficking official documents,[4] applying from an African country where a given embassy is said to deliver more visas, or getting the passport of a country whose citizens have fewer visa requirements for a given destination, to name a few. One Senegalese migrant in Brazil confided to me: "I had to go to Ivory Coast in order to apply for a Brazilian visa. Someone told me it was easier to get one there. When my attempt failed, I had to pay for the road trip via Ecuador."

The smugglers are, to a large extent, the ones who inform prospective migrants of the possibility of "asylum shopping"[5] (Siegfried 2015) in

Brazil, as many of my informants have maintained. When I asked how he managed to enter Brazil without a visa, thirty-six-year-old I.S. replied: "If someone can travel to Brazil via Ecuador without a visa, it is because he has highly-placed accomplices somewhere. If they want to prevent us from coming, they know how to do it." For all these reasons, it is safe to say that the notion of "Senegalese" undocumented immigrants in Brazil is very slippery.

It is also problematic to assume that all "Senegalese" migrants "took the road"—that is to say, they came to Brazil via the Amazonian forest.[6] That is even more true given that after having entered a country without authorization, as Juan Thomas Ordóñez (2015, 100) says of the Guatemalans in the San Francisco Bay Area, economic migrants "discover" the possibility of asylum. Not being able to migrate to find work legally, many migrants who arrive in Brazil via the Amazon are helped by NGOs to file applications for refugee status. The availability of these possibilities, which are absent in Europe (Fassin 2001), produce discrete subsets of migrants who play with state regulations and attract special media attention.[7]

At times, misconceptions about Senegalese migrants may not be explained only by ignorance of key aspects of the phenomenon. Media outlets that seem to have political or nationalist agendas spread images of Senegalese in Brazil as taking opportunities away from nationals. The following anecdote is an illustration. In April 2014, the *Prefeitura* (Chief Administration) of Campos, Rio de Janeiro, announced that its employment program called *Balcão de Empregos* (job fair) helped 26,000 people—among them two Senegalese—find jobs. The title of the notice that featured the two young Senegalese, whom I met in person, says: "*Balcão de empregos insere senegaleses no mercado de trabalho*" ("Career development program helps Senegalese find jobs") (Prefeitura de Campos 2015). A day later, *Globo,* a media group known for its positions against welfare and migration policies under Lula and Dilma, took the information and published it under the title: "*Balcão de empregos em Campos, RJ, já inseriu 26 mil senegaleses*" ("Career development program in Campos, Rio de Janeiro, has already helped 26,000 Senegalese find jobs").[8]

Interestingly, the same images of Brazil being "swamped"[9] by African migrants are salient in the works of many social scientists. Using push-and-pull theories[10] (Massey et al. 1993, 440), the tendency has been to lump African immigrants together and argue that from the 1990s, Brazil started receiving Africans "who see [Brazil] as an Eldorado" (Rangel 2013, 129).

Such approaches tend to focus more on the job market experiences of less educated migrants and the challenges related to their mobility across borders (Tedesco and Grzybovski 2013; Herédia 2015). They say little about the socio-cultural processes related to the Senegalese presence in Brazil. One observes similar academic treatment of the Senegalese in Latin America at large, where everyday lives are reduced to "refugee, study and work experiences" (Malomalo et al. 2015, 1).[11]

Also, as the media and social scientists focus on Senegalese migrant workers, they seem to ignore broader migration patterns in Brazil.[12] Looking at immigration in terms of countries of origin gives little insight into broader social and historical structures of immigration from Africa, the continent which "has almost negligible representation among immigrants in the Americas" (SICREMI 2012, 13). In terms of sheer numbers, European immigrants make up "fully one fourth to one-third of all immigrants in Brazil" (SICREMI 2012, 13). Similarly, the argument that richer countries attract people from poor ones seems too simplistic to account for current migration trends in Brazil. In the city of São Paulo, for example, the major migrant communities come from developed countries. Five European countries—Portugal (100,855), Italy (33,388), Spain (26,496), Germany (9751), and France (6749)—and the United States (8475) are in the top fifteen. Interestingly, the list has no African countries (Observatorio do Turismo, n.d.).

In the advertisement below (Fig. 1), Paul, a twenty-seven-year-old French national, offers not only French classes but also English services ("*Eu posso ajudar para INGLES tambem*," or, "I can help with English as well"). His Portuguese suggests that he has newly arrived in Rio de Janeiro, and his description of himself frames him as an economic migrant:

> Bonjour!
> Eu sou de Françia, aqui no Rio para trabalhar.
> Preparaçao para os teste e os exames, proponho-me mudar de casa ou a fora em outro lugares para cursos de Francês em diferentes níveis.
> [Good morning!
> I am from France. I am here for work.
> Help with tests and exam… I offer French classes, all levels, at home or elsewhere.]

Cases like Paul's abound in Rio, and the fact that they go almost unnoticed illustrates how Brazil has historically favoured European and, to a

Fig. 1 A language tutoring advertisement at the Philosophy and Social Sciences Institute (IFCS), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, May 2016 (Credit: Photo by Gana Ndiaye)

lesser extent, Asian immigration (Lesser 2013, 4; Karam 2007, 166), and how Brazilian society has accepted those categories. At the same time, even though the focus seems to be on African economic migrants, little attention is paid to the cultural processes at play and the heterogeneity of the migrant population. Because of the diversity of their profiles and the variety of their occupations in Brazil, the Senegalese offer a compelling case to examine in this respect.

A significant number of Senegalese students came to Brazil to pursue university studies. Surprisingly, and until very recently, they constituted the majority of the migrant population from Senegal. In the city of Rio de Janeiro alone, I met five Senegalese university professors, three graduates of the naval school, and two agricultural engineers. They are former students of the PEC-G program, a scheme that gives students from some developing countries the opportunity to pursue undergraduate studies in

Brazil. For some of them, Brazil was supposed to be a transit zone. E.D., a freelance journalist, is a good example. He told me:

> I came here to continue my studies after I got a BA from the University of Dakar. I have been here for ten years now. I never thought I would stay in Brazil this long. I planned to go to the USA after a few years, after the MA.

Others have embraced their transnational status and claim their belonging to both Senegal and Brazil. Mamour, a PhD in electrical engineering and a professor at a public university, said:

> I am, and I remain Senegalese, even though my daughters were born here. I am not going to return Senegal to work there. I invest there, nevertheless. I try to be useful to Brazil as well. I am one of the coordinators of a project that seeks to provide Favelas with solar energy.

Brazil is also attracting Senegalese who studied in developed countries. The majority of Senegalese migrants who arrived after completing their education in developed countries live in the ZonaSul, Rio's wealthiest and safest neighbourhood, if we consider its low homicide rate (thirty-two percent), according to Rio's Public Safety Institute, compared to the northern parts and suburbs of the city (Instituto de Segurança Pública n.d.). The Zona Sul neighbourhood of Barra da Tijuca is the home of Lans, a university professor. He visited Brazil for one year in the early 2000s and returned to work there upon completing a doctorate in economics from Paris 3 University in France. He told me, "I came back to work in Brazil because I feel at home here. This country gave me a lot, and I go to Senegal very often because I have relatives there, but I live here."

Other Senegalese graduated from universities and invested in commerce or farming near Rio city. For example, Mamour, a university professor of electrical engineering, and his wife, Sokhna, started Africa Arte and the Espaço Savanna shopping centre in the Catete neighbourhood.[13] The business specializes in Senegalese/African fashion and cuisine, but also organizes events that Mamour and Sokhna hope will bring Africans and Brazilians together. Mamour said, "I represent Senegal and Africa. I employ people here and there [in Senegal]. By setting up this business, we hope to be useful to both countries economically and culturally." This understanding of belonging ties into Iris Young's (1986, 5) critique of radical activists and theorists' proposition of an ideal of community that

"exhibits a totalizing impulse and denies difference … within and between subjects." By foregrounding their African/Africa identity while claiming to belong to Brazil, Lans, Mamour, and Sokhna exemplify what Young advocates for and calls the "politics of difference," a conception of "social relations that embody openness to unassimilated otherness with justice and appreciation" (23).

The stories of entrepreneurs like Mamour and Sokhna serve to debunk the stereotypical image of the Senegalese as *camelôs* (street vendors). On the contrary, while they seek to find niches in the Brazilian economy, they are developing what political philosophers and anthropologists like Rosaldo (1994) have called cultural citizenship. The concept offered a lens for scholars who attempted to capture broader conceptions of citizenship that emerged out of the globalization and multiculturalism debates. As Rosaldo (1994), among other scholars, theorized it, cultural citizenship points to the cultural politics of minorities and uncouples civil and political rights with social and cultural rights. In other words, cultural citizenship calls for the recognition and respect of the cultural rights of minority groups, their "right to be different," while not alienating themselves from the dominant culture or forsaking their political participation. In addition, the concept "includes and goes beyond the dichotomous categories of legal documents, which one either has or does not have, to encompass a range of gradations in the qualities of citizen" (Rosaldo 1994, 57). This conception of citizenship is useful for understanding the ways in which immigrants who have not obtained political citizenship manage to claim social and cultural rights without laying claim to voting rights, for instance, or access to certain privileges that social welfare provides. The concept of cultural citizenship is also a useful analytical lens for capturing the various ways in which minorities, in general, and migrant communities, in particular, challenge dominant expectations about appropriate modes of belonging by simultaneously claiming cultural differences and collective rights using the language of human rights.

In the following section, I show that even *camelôs* do not limit themselves to earning a living on the sidewalks, for they engage in cultural citizenship claims. I will examine how the Murids, the group of Senegalese I chose because they were the first to have *dahiras* in Brazil and for their social activism and heterogeneity in terms of legal documents and profiles, attempt to make themselves at home in Brazil through the performance of ethnic and religious identity.

Contesting Spaces, Shaping Places and Identities

The district of Niteroi, a suburb of Rio, is home to a large portion of *baol-baols*, particularly of Murids, followers of Muridiyya. The Muridiyya is one of the Sufi brotherhoods found in Senegal. Its founder was a Senegalese man named Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (1853–1927), also known as *Khadimou Rassoul* (the servant of the Prophet) or *Serigne Touba* (in Wolof, the marabout of Touba, the holy city for the Murids in central Senegal).[14] As for *baol-baol,* the term initially refers to anybody who comes from the Baol region in Central Senegal. However, within the Senegalese diaspora in general, *baol-baol* is a synonym for less educated migrants, that is to say, those who work in the primary and secondary sectors of the informal economy (Hart 1973, 69): construction workers, meat factory workers, and *camelôs.* Many of the so-called *camelôs* see Brazil as a transit zone, as this extract from my interview with E.N. illustrates:

> When I left Senegal, I never thought I would be a construction worker here. It is a difficult job. I was hoping it would be easy to get a visa to go to the USA. I know many people who left and have gone to Mexico and who will try to cross the border. Others have gone to Argentina.

Within *baol-baols* appears a category of itinerant traders. Having state authorizations for travelling across continents, they connect different migratory spaces—Brazil, Argentina, Europe—with Senegal, and supply the informal traders, especially the undocumented ones who cannot enjoy free movement across borders, with all sorts of goods during each of their trips. These transmigrants (Glick Schiller 1999, 94) specialize in the trade of art objects and sustain the business of small street vendors across national boundaries (Diouf 2000, 679; Grillo 2007, 199). They constitute what I would call an Art'spora. I use the term in reference to the word "Diam'spora" that Sylvie Bredeloup (2007) coined to refer to the sort of diaspora created by the traders from the Senegal River Valley that specialized in the trade/smuggling of diamonds between West and South Africa in the early 1970s. A typical itinerant trader who I interviewed said:

> I went to France in 1968. I would go from flea market to flea market from Belgium to Spain. Life became hard in Europe, that is why I left. I arrived in Brazil on December 1, 2004. In the beginning, I would bring craft objects and give it to the boys [the street vendors] and go back to Senegal

or France. Now I do not do that [travel a lot]. I do most of the carving here. I am getting old, you know.

Despite the heterogeneity of their origins, they mainly depend on the religious networks that the *dahiras* create, like their counterparts in the United States, who have been studied by Babou (2002), Kane (2011), and Diouf (2000). A *dahira* refers to an organization of the Murid Sufi order.[15] It also refers to an actual gathering of Murids, during which they recite the Koran and the Sufi poetry written by Serigne Touba. Depending on the places and the circumstances, a *dahira* can have various functions, even if the salient one in Brazil is the creation of survival mechanisms.

Miller (2007, 36) distinguishes "three zones of citizenship, with partially overlapping but also distinct historicities." These zones of citizenship are the political, the economic, and the cultural. As immigrants in Brazil, the Murids stress the economic and cultural dimensions of their global citizenship. Even though there are instances in which they claim part of the political rights as global citizens, the Murids mainly emphasize their cultural right in order to ensure their economic survival. I construe this commodification of culture as a survival mechanism in which the *dahira* plays a vital role. Like the *dahiras* described by Cheikh Anta Babou (2002) in the case of Murid migrants in New York City in the late 1990s, the *dahiras* are a powerful network of solidarity that is critical to the survival of newcomers. As Larissa de Lomnitz (1981) showed:

> The survival mechanisms of the marginalized comprise the whole of their system of social relations … social networks of mutual assistance … represent part of an informal economic system, parallel to the market economy, which is characterized by the use of social resources and operates on the basis of reciprocal exchange between equals. (11–12)

By "marginalized," de Lomnitz meant those who lack a well-defined role in the industrial production system (17). In that respect, the role of a Murid *dahira* is a religious, economic, and cultural nexus that serves various ends.

Murid migrants attempt to mark the space and make themselves culturally visible in the host country, which they quickly turn into a continuation of the holy city of Touba.[16] That occurs through (re)naming. Murids hyphenate any Brazilian city in which they find themselves. Thus, we have Touba-Rio and Touba-São-Paulo, among others. With the (re)naming

comes the creation of a *siège social*[17] or *Keur Serigne Touba* (the house of Serigne Touba in Wolof language). The *Keur Serigne Touba* operates as a religious centre and, most importantly, as a solidarity hub. Depending on the size of the migrant community and their financial resources, the *Keur Serigne Touba* is typically an apartment or house that is rented or purchased by the migrant community. Newcomers are hosted in the centre until they can find housing. Migrants who lose their jobs or whose personal business is in crisis (for instance, if the police have seized a *camelô*'s belongings) may also live in the *Keur Serigne Touba* until they regain financial stability. During a *dahira* (the meeting), members regularly contribute a sum to fund various projects and help people in need. Causes may include expensive medical bills, an initial budget for a new migrant trying to work as a street vendor, a return ticket for someone whose migratory project has failed and who wishes to return home, and repatriation of the body and belongings of a deceased migrant. For all these reasons, and to paraphrase Oscar Lewis' (1952) notion of "urbanization without breakdown," one can talk of transnationalism without breakdown in the sense that moving to Brazil does not seem to constitute an obstacle to religious and cultural practices for these Murids.

Another important performative strategy for the Murids to remain in the public eye is to mark the calendar with a yearly celebration called Bamba Day. It commemorates the day Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba was exiled to Gabon by the French colonizers for his peaceful opposition to colonialism. Organizing Bamba Day requires an advanced level of integration in the host country. Permission from city officials is required to authorize the traditional march, which is accompanied by Sufi poetry and Koran recitation, along a street or around the town. Through Bamba Day, the Murids aim to spread the message of the Muridiyya, which is centred around two pillars: worship and hard work. In Brazil, as *dahiras* become more active in combatting stereotypes, the marches have also become a platform for debunking negative portrayals of Africans and Islam. During Bamba Day, various flyers that reject global terrorism are displayed by marchers as shown in this picture taken during Bamba Day celebrations in Porto Alegre on December 2, 2015 (Fig. 2).

Self-fashioning, particularly through clothing, is also a powerful performative strategy for projecting an attractive image of the Senegalese community while meeting economic goals. A.D. is a *camelô* who sells Senegalese outfits and crafts in Copacabana. When I asked if he wears the colourful patchwork outfits of a sub-group of the Murid called *Baay-faal* to work,

Fig. 2 Murids carrying a banner that says "Islam is a Religion of Peace" during a march. In Porto Alegre, RS. On December 2, 2015 (Photo by ASDPA)

he replied, "Of course! Almost every day! That is what attracts people. Some even want to take photos with me." I find useful Michel Foucault's (1988, 19) concept of technologies of the self, or "how an individual acts upon himself"; the operation an individual effects on their body, soul, thoughts, conduct, and way of being in understanding the effect of Murid politics of difference within Brazilian hierarchized societies.

Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta (1987) highlighted the way Brazilians seek to maintain hierarchies in the public sphere through bodily work. In Brazil, he argued, the *casa* (home) is the site of personal relations and hierarchies, and the *rua* (street) is that of impersonal ones. In order to maintain those hierarchies, Brazilians mark the passage from the private to the public sphere by a self-fashioning so that everyone knows who is who. The *Baal-faal* function in this sense as a significant marker of African/black pride in the Brazilian public sphere. Similarly, African migrants, particularly Senegalese, have encouraged many Afro-Brazilians to engage in public displays of their African roots. One illustration of that is the recent surge of *moda Africana*, or African fashion in Brazil.[18] In short, the cultural artefacts, besides providing economic capital, are means through which migrants forge enduring relationships with the local community. Some of those cultural encounters result in locals embracing Islam/

Muridiyya and often result in marriage. However, the Senegalese presence is raising important issues, both for policymakers and within the Brazilian society.

Local Responses and Policy Implications

Stressing the relative success of Murid migrants and their cultural activism should not overshadow the diverse local responses tied to media coverage of the flow of African migrants to Brazil in recent years. Reactions vary from one place to another and from one ethnic group to another. Many of my informants described more hostile interactions in southern Brazil than in Rio de Janeiro, for example. As S.M.N. told me: "There is much racism in the South. I lived in Caxias for some time, and it is nothing compared to Rio. Here, there are more blacks and whites [who] are more welcoming. I think, as Senegalese, they are sort of curious about us."

Thus, the Senegalese (and by extension, the West Africans) in Brazil, especially students, found themselves compared continuously to black Brazilians. As Mauricio, a Bissau Guinean graduate student in literature at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro complained: "it is disconcerting for me when some whites tell me 'you are better than our Blacks.' How can black Brazilians like us [Africans] if whites always compare us to them or Afro-Brazilians are made to believe that we take their jobs or benefit from their quotas in university programs." What Mauricio is referring to here is the difficult relationship that Africans have with some Brazilians whom one could identify as black but who do not identify as such themselves. In a country where one is neither black or white but rather can be one of the 136 human hues (Schwarcz 2003, 27–30) in the Brazilian colour spectrum (Twine 1998, 87), many of my informants expressed surprise at people they would consider "black brothers" who completely shun and avoid them. That explains what S.M.N., a young *camelô* in Copacabana, meant when he boldly said: "the most racist are the light-skinned blacks." What he soon found out was the meaning of blackness in Brazil as discussed by Schwarcz.

The so-called racist light-skinned blacks are in sharp contrast with other black Brazilians, those who defend Afrocentric views. Aida, one of my interviewees, jokingly maintained that they "think that because you come from the 'Motherland,' you must be a Candomblé priest." These kinds of reactions demonstrate the ongoing racial boundary-making in Brazil, even

though the negation of racism and claims of racial democracy are widespread.

Finally, there are the black Brazilians who, like interviewee O.S., think that "you are not African enough because you are not a practitioner of Umbanda, Candomblé or Christianity."Such a view that even some black activists hold is problematic in many ways. A question that one could raise here is why Brazilians in general and Afro-Brazilians in particular find it normal if a West African is Christian, but problematic if they are Muslim. Even though Portuguese started "planting" (Groves 1958) Christianity in West and Central Africa as early as the sixteenth century, it was two centuries later that European missionaries had a real impact in West Africa. On the contrary, Islam arrived in Senegal between 1040 and 1044—long enough for it to become Senegalese. Therefore, assuming migrants are not Muslim is even more problematic, given that ninety-four percent of the Senegalese population is Muslim. By this logic, only a few non-Muslim Senegalese would make it to Brazil.

Restrictive Brazilian immigration policies are also consistent with the fear certain media outlets distil through claims that undocumented Senegalese are coming in large numbers and passing as refugees. Diplomatic pressures from Brazil caused Ecuador to reinforce control at its borders, and decree N. 000088 of the *Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility) established the visa requirement for Senegalese citizens starting from November 16, 2015 (República del Ecuador 2015).

One of the ten passengers with whom I flew from Madrid to Dakar on June 30, 2014, was arrested for undocumented immigration as soon as we landed. While we were on board, he told me how his attempt failed because of tighter border controls in Ecuador during the FIFA World Cup hosted by Brazil. The Brazilian government went further. A decision from its Ministry of Justice required an entrance visa for holders of *protocolos* (residence permits). That meant that asylum seekers who had not yet received a decision on their application and who had temporarily left Brazil could no longer re-enter without a visa. On October 3, 2016, around thirty migrants, including Senegalese, were held at Guarulhos International Airport for days due to that decision.[19]

Negative media images of Senegalese, and African migrants more broadly, indicate that the question of first- and second-generation Senegalese in Brazil will soon become a critical issue. The case of Makeda Foluke is a telling example of this concern. In June 2016, the São

João de Meriti municipality in the state of Rio de Janeiro refused to register the daughter of a black couple because of her African name. According to the parents, who have been interviewed by many media outlets, the officials argued that Makeda Foluke, the Yoruba name for the Queen of Sheba, could cause prejudice to the daughter when she grows up. Thus, they suggested that the parents use a "Portuguese" first name (Cruz 2016). A court decision finally allowed the parents to get Makeda Foluke in the *Registro Civil de Pessoas Naturais* (Civil Registry of Natural Persons).[20] This story points to Brazil's double standards in dealing with what is foreign. While privileging a Portuguese one, the *Registro Civil* rejects the African name.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the long history of Senegalese immigrants' presence in Brazil, and the wide range of their profiles and activities, in contrast with their stereotypical representations as *camelôs* and factory workers by the Brazilian media and many social scientists. It offered an analysis that is not limited to economic factors—which have been the focus of the literature on the topic—and shows differing treatment and attitudes toward Senegalese migrants due to religion and, most importantly, ethnicity. Through cultural citizenship claims, cultural brokerage, and performance of ethnoreligious identity, the Senegalese and other African migrants are helping challenge stereotypes about Africa and Islam, while forging alliances with black Brazilians. Further research could address the experiences of second-generation African immigrants in Brazil, and the conditions under which the possibility of a hyphenated Senegalese-Brazilian identity exists, especially with regard to a much-discussed Brazilian contradiction: the belief in the myth of racial democracy coupled with a widespread devaluation of blackness (Twine 1998). While unskilled workers and undocumented migrants, on the one hand, and refugees, on the other hand, continue to be the salient categories in terms of media coverage and social scientific inquiry, further research should continue to examine how the focus on the economic side of human mobilities simultaneously obscures and produces categories of subjects whose lived experiences do not fit neatly into the refugee versus migrant dichotomy.

Notes

1. I draw from three ethnographic field trips (thirteen months) to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre between 2014 and 2018.
2. President Wade and President Lula had five official meetings between 2005 and 2009, either through state visits or during the UN General Assembly. Interviews I conducted in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the summer of 2016 indicated that the first Senegalese immigrants arrived around 2008.
3. In January 2015, the Ministry of Justice announced that Brazil "broke its record" of the number of foreigners granted refugee status.
4. A smuggler was recorded by his Senegalese client explaining how he can obtain an entry visa and a *Protocolo* for someone who is in Senegal if they are willing to mail their passport and pay CFA 2,000,000 (around $3500). If agreement is reached, the migrant will be entering Brazil for the first time, whereas the "legal" papers they will carry indicate that they are returning after a visit to Senegal (see http://www.sen360.fr/video/xalass-ndoye-bane-parle-des-traffic-de-visas-au-bresil-avec-mamadou-mohamed-ndiaye-tfm-40086.html, accessed September 15, 2016).
5. The expression has been used to refer to how asylum seekers choose between countries that are likely to grant them refugee status.
6. I interviewed seven people who arrived in Brazil via this route. They would pay someone in Dakar who was in charge of arranging with his partner in Ecuador proof of a hotel reservation, which was the only document necessary to pass border control, since Senegalese did not need a visa to travel to the country. From Ecuador, the migrants were transported—"if needed [they would] get in the trunks," one interviewee told me—via Peru to Brazil. Once in Brazil, the smugglers often "advise [them] to declare refugee status so as to get food and assistance and hope for papers." Ecuador started requiring visas for Senegalese on November 16, 2015.
7. In theorizing super-diversity, Steve Vertovec (2007, 1025) stresses this diversification of migrant populations.
8. I visited Campos, where there was only a family of four Senegalese and had the chance to know the people mentioned in the story. See Globo (2015).
9. This is the term Michael Fallon, British Secretary of Defense, used in October 2014 to talk about migrants in British East Coastal cities.
10. These theories maintain that people from poor countries are driven by employment, war, crime, and other "push factors" to developed countries.
11. See also Tedesco et al. (2013).
12. A Google search for "senegaleses no brasil" yields hundreds of items that have the phrase "haitianos e senegalese" in their titles, the Haitians being the ones associated with Senegal.

13. Africa Arte has a strong social media presence: https://www.facebook.com/africaarte/.

14. See Cheikh Babou (2007) for a thorough discussion of the genesis and the philosophy of Muridiyya.

15. Other Sufi brotheroods also have *dahiras*, but it is generally accepted that the practice was started by Murids, particularly by a guide called CheikhMbackéGaindéFatma.

16. Interestingly, as shown by Babou (2005), the creation of the city of Touba and the genesis of Muridiyya during colonial time followed a process somewhat like the one I am describing here. I adapted the title of this section from that paper.

17. One can even add that the *Keur Serigne Touba* also serves as a "*siège culturel et cultuel*": beyond its regular function as the venues for Koran recitations and the reading of Sufi poetry in Arabic, in places where there is no mosque, the headquarters of the *dahira* (*siège culturel*) becomes the site for Friday and Muslim holidays, prayers thus becoming a *siège cultuel*, where worship takes place.

18. For a report on Senegalese designers in São Paulo, see Romàrio de Oliviera, "Moda Afro: calças, saias, vestidos, sapatos, acessórios," *iG São Paulo*, July 7, 2017, https://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/colunas/afro-igualdade/2017-07-07/moda-afro.html (accessed July 20, 2018).

19. A mediation from the National Council for Refugees led the Brazilian government to postpone the application of the new law until December 31, 2016.

20. The Madeka case led many Senegalese I interviewed to ponder over the future of their own children in Brazil.

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Performance Patterns and Athletic Migration During the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games

Peter Kuling

Competing under the flag of the Olympic Movement, refugee athletes walked together as an imagined nation for the first time during the Parade of Nations at Maracanã Stadium during the Rio de Janeiro Summer Games in 2016. Ten athletes hailing from countries such as Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Ethiopia joined the procession while being announced as simply the "Refugee Olympic Team." Standing ovations followed as they walked in and waved, allowing International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach to reiterate: "This [Refugee Team] will be a symbol of hope for all the refugees in our world, and will make the world better aware of the magnitude of this crisis" (olympic.org). These athletes—migrants living between nations—were referred to by sportscasters as citizens from the nation of their birth who found a kind of athletic salvation at all-new training facilities in surrogate host countries. Not unlike other Olympic competitors who hail from

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across the globe yet train in G8 countries, such as the USA, Germany, and France, this refugee team became emblematic of the IOC's political position as a safe non-national place for refugees to temporarily have citizenship in the eyes of the world. None of the refugee athletes won any medals during competition, leaving many to wonder what flag and anthem would have been hoisted and played if any of them had medalled in Rio.

Moments of public performance at the Rio Summer Games—in competition, during ceremonies, and within media coverage—provide useful entry points to clearly understand how diverse refugee, international, and multicultural political identities are actively enacted, performed, and stereotyped through sport. Since the IOC evoked the idea of Brazil hosting the first "refugee" games, active themes and images of migration and refugees emerged—consciously as well as unconsciously—from different athletes, reporters, and even the organizing committee in Brazil. For example, the IOC developed a video playlist on their YouTube channel to showcase videos about the new Refugee Olympic Team, which corresponded to a heavy social media campaign—#TeamRefugees—used throughout Rio 2016. Great public empathy for the struggles faced by refugees occurred through these produced media, yet problems resulted for the athletes themselves as their self-narratives of migration branded them as outsiders, in coverage but also in competition. These are athletes who fled persecution in their homelands to compete as non-nationals—sometimes against people from their previous country—only to be reintroduced as "others" by competing as citizens of a non-nation composed of only refugees. None of them are discussed without mentioning their original national contexts, which further reintegrates them into the homelands they fled from in order to avoid persecution or worse; their identities are now reimagined through their appearance as survivors and via the stereotypes attached to them by media broadcasters, global audiences, and even the IOC.

Sports, as a performance experience, illustrate Richard Schechner's (1998) vision of the concepts of both play and ritual: systems of performance within dedicated communities with performance procedures and, although unknown, systematic outcomes and results from the play engaged in by competitors. Sports consistently erupt with performance moments used by audiences to engage with vast and complex systems of difference; athletes and fans all negotiate and decode—correctly and incorrectly—perceived encounters with bodies, rules, and feelings, all erupting on the field of play. According to Schechner, "An eruption is like a theatrical

event because it is not the accident itself that gathers and keeps an audience. They are held by the reconstruction and reenactment of the event" (176–77). Whether a goal has been scored or someone wins, everyone—media, players, officials, and audiences—all react immediately to this eruptive potential in sport performances, often letting their own response persist long after these events are complete. In these moments, audiences "make" these eruptions matter and proceed to move through ritual behaviour in an effort to negotiate their feelings, which is how everyone at a sporting event "plays" throughout and after the experience.

My work will use four major questions to analyze sports and Olympic performance elements present during the Rio Games, with clear and often unexpected "refugee" connections. In doing so, I will demonstrate how different performance moments—on the field, in ceremonies, during media coverage—collectively contributed to privileged ways of falsely engaging with the global refugee crisis through stereotypes and assumptions during these Olympics. These four questions are all addressed and answered throughout the various examples featured here. First, I show how aspects of Brazil's work to prepare their nation to receive international migrants, refugee athletes, and global visitors became complicit in further stereotyping, rebuking, or celebrating intercultural differences. Second, how do performance elements focused on individuals' origin points—nationally or culturally—always evoke places of origin and thereby enforce a kind of reverse migration on refugees, or others performing refugeeism? Third, how do audiences respond to identity parameters used to generate play and stereotype individual athletes and their national origins in our contemporary world? Can different levels of performance at the Olympics alter audience reactions to these cultural experiences? Finally, I look at global politics: what political messages are infused into thematic refugee and migration performances, which often include the words, bodies, images, and more of victimized people? Do athletic competitions further displace refugees by oversimplifying their trauma?

Various examples from Rio 2016 will showcase how mixed media experiences—television, artistic performances, athletics, and social media platforms—transformed a variety of performance moments. Some points will focus on the environmental and class-based policies concerning venue development prior to the Games. The opening ceremonies at Maracanã Stadium focused artistically on imagery related to refugee and migration experiences through specific use of costume and make-up design, dance,

and ceremonial choreography. For example, recurring imagery characterized Brazil as the happy final arrival point for global refugees, which historically includes many Japanese migrants. Other odd performance moments of reverse migration—the returning "home" of notable celebrities of Brazilian origin such as Gisele Bündchen—are key moments intended to reiterate Brazilian pride and identity to international audiences. Sadly, most live television broadcasts spent more time talking about Gisele's husband, Tom Brady, as she walked across the stadium pitch. Other ill-fated appropriations of refugee narrative sympathies—and subsequent appeals for clemency followed by forced apology—appears in interviews and social media posts by U.S. swimmer Ryan Lochte after he pretended to be held up at gunpoint in Rio. Lochte's use of refugee stereotypes such as feeling lost in a foreign land, being seduced into turning over money and documents, and being unfamiliar with local laws all fuelled global empathy for the fake robbery. Ryan Lochte's false victimization demonstrates how quickly one can harness misguided sympathies amongst global Olympic audiences. Despite all this, pre-existing familiarity with refugee stereotypes developed and promoted by the IOC appears to have served Lochte's conceptual development of his social media hoax gone wrong. All of these curious examples demonstrate a peculiar synthesis between ritual and play throughout the Olympics as the political decision to synthesize the plight of refugees with the national and positive aims of contemporary sports fails miserably.

The history of the Olympic Games itself structures its evolution as a migration of the human spirit and potential towards "global" competition. We can break down the countless images, performances, and symbols that champion the story of overcoming obstacles in a new environment—usually a foreign land—within the company of the greatest atheletes of all-time. These days, popular sports often seem to have less to do with unexpected athletes achieving success as they do with maintaining power relationships amongst larger nations with invested interest in continued global influence. We rarely see stories of atypical national triumph and pride in the face of remarkable odds like the Jamaican bobsled team competing at the Calgary 1988 Winter Olympics. Instead we experience the narratives of migrants, nationless athletes, and controversial socio-cultural messaging through misappropriated and stereotypical modes of simplified identity consumption circulating throughout these competitions.

NATIONAL PREPARATIONS

Prior to ever setting foot on the ground in Brazil, athletes and media agencies were subject to the communication and newsworthy storm of how Rio would be a challenging experience for many due to issues of poverty, infrastructure, health, and security. While the IOC does send committees to review the host nation's progress with building venues and the Olympic Village—itself a temporary migratory "shanty town" with sponsored amenities for athletes—the story emerging from Brazil was one of lack of funding and problems with standards or acceptable codes for created spaces. In relation to the forthcoming refugee focus by the IOC for these Games, media outlets ran story after story about the concerns for safe drinking and activity water in Brazil. For athletes and attendees, fears were generated about what could be drunk to not cause serious illness and how safe it would be to row, swim, or compete in various external venues with poor levels of sanitation. Following past presentations to the IOC to win their initial hosting bid, Brazil painted Rio with the same "brush" to allay humanitarian hazards or oversights, similar to the 2008 Games in Beijing. Media reporting focused on these health hazards to alarm athletes and fans alike that they could encounter training and competition situations unlike those in their home nations; conditions akin to those often faced by refugees displaced or in holding environments. The Olympics Movement hopes audiences and reporters will focus on how host nations celebrate sports, culture, and experience, yet much of the critical discourse over Games emerges as planning committees fall short of athletic standards or displace events from genuine communities truly representative of the host nation's population.

Olga Khazan (2016), writing for *The Atlantic*, uses a powerful opening phrase: "Raw sewage flows into many of Rio's Olympic venues every day. As the prospect of a full clean-up before the Games dims, the world is left wondering, who will get sick, and how?" What began as a focus on the Games and the world soon transferred into a local story about communities ignored by the IOC and Rio organizers; problems were present before and remain ignored even as the Games began. These narratives in the wider media transformed parts of Rio proper into slums and spaces of internal populations facing conditions akin to nationless or refugee encampments. Khazan remarks how "Beijing battled suffocating air pollution. Sochi had too much sun, then too few hotel rooms." Stereotypes of non-Western nations persist from the Beijing Olympics onwards in an

effort to lace performance elements of assumed stereotypes into the concerns of athletes and host nations. If a swimmer faces challenges due to the water used at the venue, then ultimately the problem remains with a nation unable to solve its own internal issues with infrastructure and population. These images of sewage-filled water venues and of homelessness beside ornate stadiums, which were started during the Brazilian 2014 World Cup, take further shape here as they are revisited and extrapolated upon. Rachel Glickhouse (2015) succinctly problematized the scatological possibilities of migrating to Brazil for the Games in her article for *Project Earth* titled "Why Brazil's Summer Games could be the shittiest Olympics ever."

Ben Carrington (2010) describes the synthesis of sports and nationalistic narratives when discussing London receiving the 2012 Olympic Games and immediately experiencing terrorist attacks on the Tube the next morning in July 2005. While these explosions did not directly result from sports backgrounds, the global focus on London was an opportune time for the terrorist plot to derail the United Kingdom. British citizens immediately underwent a collective conjuncture of their national qualities; all bonded as British and became resolute in the face of attacks on the nation. Carrington describes how many years later the London Games functioned as a means to continue addressing unity and survival: "it [sport] is accorded great powers by its boosters to produce both 'social cohesion' and 'community integration' in moments of national crisis" (141). While sports are supposedly divorced from political positions and global issues, the IOC's decision to give refugee athletes a "nation" for competition demonstrates a drastic contrary position. Sports as a competition are supposedly completely removed from external issues or concerns, but Carrington and others remind us how diverse elements of multiculturalism, nationalism, and identity become immediately implicated in their very making and structure as competitive enterprises. In fact, the IOC has attempted to withdraw any focus on specific nations or ideological movements. Even something as simple as acknowledging the unfortunate death of Georgian luge racer Nodar Kumaritashvili was only offered a brief moment of silence and lowering of the Canadian and Olympic flags during the opening ceremonies of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. All decisions on what to say, how to celebrate culture, and the visual representations of the Games are thoroughly tied to global political positioning.

Origin Points

Each member of the Refugee Nation took time to promote their migration experience in a promotional video for the IOC and the Brazil Olympic Committee. What emerged from these interviews are stylized mini-documentaries about immigration and the challenges faced by refugees, coupled with narrative resolutions about hope for Olympic success in order to complete the successful migration from difficult politics and national climates. Like sports stars in Major League Baseball or the FIFA World Cup, these refugees are shown training in their new host nations, far from their original homelands. Younger, single refugees in these videos focus on feeling better since undergoing the refugee process. Those with family left behind—a common trope in most narratives of refugees and immigration—hope Olympic success will amount to easy access to their new "host nation" for family members left behind.

Refugee team member Popole Misengo speaks via YouTube about the ways he hopes success in sports will alter his fate as a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He fled Congo for Brazil to begin training to compete in Judo at the Olympics. While being showcased in this promotional video, what resonates as the most odd yet understandable idea is Popole's desire to succeed at the Summer Games solely to return to the Congo to help his family leave as refugees. His vision of personal success has everything to do with sport, but Olympic Gold translates into an ability to "afford" him return passage to help other refugees escape the Congo he left. He does not expect a welcome return or victory parade should he medal at the Olympic Games. Popole structures his entire vision of athletic and refugee success as dedicated to ideas of total departure; even being hosted by Brazil does not lead him to state he would want to stay in the host nation. None of his story focuses on images from his past, instead showcasing images of his pre-Olympic competition. The visual messaging emphasizes his lower-class housing and training neighbourhood, which is narratively compelling as an underdog image in sports, yet all too often the financial reality of genuine refugees. Often, he discusses the improved quality of his life in new nations or places, but his eyes and body illustrate that he lives in limbo between two nations. For Popole, winning would mean a gold medal for him as well as new citizenship for his entire family.

Rami Anis from Syria, a swimmer from the Refugee Olympic Team, clearly says that his life has improved in Belgium due largely to the training

facilities and mutual respect he gets from fellow swimmers. Like a misguided relief effort commercial or nationalistic political campaign, Rami and Popole appear as refugees already representative of the "successful" global acceptance of refugee migration, despite their yet to be determined status as athletes. These IOC YouTube videos focus on the end points of the refugee experience by oversimplifying the "ease" of reconfiguring the refugee's public utility in their new nation as athletes. All these refugee athletes appear happy; sport appears to be able to heal their personal trauma. While this certainly was not the first instance of refugee athletic competition at the Olympics—Kuwait athletes competed as nationless during the 2004 Olympics in Athens—it was the first IOC campaign that allowed athletes to discuss connections between their original nation, their new nation, and their training nation. These multinational migrants move through a series of national spaces all the while being labelled, perhaps most importantly for political reasons, with the stigma of their home countries' human rights atrocities. The continued association of these individuals with countries they have fled as refugees ultimately links any personal success they achieve back to the place of trauma, further stereotyped as a kind of resurrection aimed to arouse sympathies from distant global audiences unfamiliar with migrant contexts.

Perhaps winning is not a component of the IOC's vision of successful migration; simply training temporarily in a host country appears to show that the Olympics have achieved a kind of immigration that Europe and the rest of the world struggles with daily. The refugees in these promotional videos have already won faux gold medals just for leaving their home countries; their national qualifier for the Olympics appears to be simply the physical anguish and emotional effect of literally fleeing national conflict as refugees. While none would step onto the podium in Rio, their appearance as a cultural capital allows the IOC to formally recognize political discord and strife through sport, a form of national booster (Carrington 2010, 141).

Audiences

The Olympics have recently offered host nations such as South Korea, Russia, Brazil, and Canada the unique opportunity, as Helene Vosters (2016, 189) puts it, to "capitalize on extended airtime to promote place and nation through notions of ethnic and cultural particularity." While athletic sports remain the ultimate focus of the Olympic Games, all

organizing committees are required to include some form of cultural programming for their opening and closing ceremonies in their bids to the IOC. Beatrice Garcia (2012, xv) explains, "The cultural dimensions, and the Games cultural programme as their implementation vehicle, are the main mechanism through which the Olympic Movement can fulfill its ideological aspirations." The IOC has mandated that all Olympic opening ceremonies must include "a parade of Games participants, speeches and declarations by local and international Olympic officials and the head of state of the host nation, the raising of the Olympic flag to the accompaniment of the Olympic anthem, a performance of the host nation's national anthem, the torch relay and the lighting of the Olympic cauldron, and oaths taken on behalf of participating athletes and judges" (Hogan 2003, 106). Most Olympic Games' opening ceremonies in the modern era of the competition take the opportunity to use theatre and performance—in accordance with traditional and contemporary cultural styles—of the host nation in order to share their self-vision with the world. These artistic parts of the Olympic experience are used to colour the pervasive feelings of audience members and participants alike by infusing clear motifs and ideas into the host nation's self-identity through theatre and performance.

As Chris Arning (2013, 525) explains: "Opening Ceremony organizers have deployed an arsenal of semiotic and rhetorical tools in an attempt to impress and to mollify the various constituencies, to perform various ideological tasks." For example, the 2002 Salt Lake City Games raised a torn and damaged American flag recovered from the World Trade Center as their official flag during the opening ceremonies in a moment of national empathy and performance to the global viewership. Most Games use the arrival of the Olympic Flame as a culmination of the journey or procession of the Games into the host city. Despite assuming the procession has concluded with the Flame, other aspects of the overall performance and introduction of competitors likewise take over the procession and journeying theme as they enter the main stadium to be welcomed by crowds of fans. This moment of athletic entry and welcoming, as well as many travel and journeying performance themes visible in the Brazil ceremony, function as a means to discuss the Rio Games as using an overall tone of migration throughout its opening ceremonies. Themes of migration to Brazil—whether by external migrants arriving to settle in Brazil or current Brazilians returning home—played a central thematic role in the 2016 Rio Summer Games. Recurring immigrant stereotypes were actively layered

throughout performance and artistic material, which effectively traversed into the larger narrative of the entire Games over the following two weeks of competition. Many of the ideas introduced through both aesthetic and athletic performance permeated the media coverage of the Games, athletes' embodiment of the Olympic spirit throughout the two weeks, and problematize concepts of successful versus unsanctioned immigration semiotics appearing throughout the remnant performance experiences of the Rio 2016 Games.

Olympic opening ceremonies have their greatest impact on audiences of the Games both within the venues and via the constant media attention throughout the two weeks of the Olympics. While past host nations have included some partial stories of migration in their opening celebrations, Brazil in 2016 focused heavily on the aesthetics and politics of being a new world migratory landing point. Brazil chose to actively return to the motif of "arrival" in their dance, movement, blocking, and lighting effects in the design of their artistic program. In fact, all athletes arrived and planted actual seeds, literally embedding their bodies' actions as future greenery and foliage resulting from Brazil's hosting of the Games. Throughout Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, audiences had a chance to see Brazil as a lush and environmental haven prior to the arrival of both indigenous peoples and colonizers that transformed into the nation it represents today via the arrival of different non-Brazilian identities. Much was made of the significant number of Japanese migrants to Brazil in the 1800s that form the largest diasporic Japanese community outside of Japan. Likewise, the Portuguese arrivals as well as interactions with indigenous communities form many narrative components of the dancing and large-scale choreography, making up a huge portion of the theatrical opening of the Games.

Global Politics

Olympic Games also provide chances to offer alternative global histories to audiences watching in the stadium and throughout the world. Notably, Alberto Santos-Dumont—a Brazilian with a reasonable claim to first achieving flight—was embodied by an actor on a flying machine and allowed to fulfill his take-off and flight all around the stadium; he literally brought flight to the Americas through Maracanã Stadium on his short voyage around the arena. American broadcasters—all countries share the same visual image feed but commentate on the performance and sports in their own languages—were inclined to mention the "true" origins of flight

with the Wright brothers; however, the performance and commentary function as stereotypical crisis amongst each other. An NBC reporter even mentions the constant battle between Dayton, Ohio and Kitty Hawk, North Carolina as the true birthplace of the Wright brothers' achievement. Despite this, Brazil uses an unfettered visual of the achievements of Santos-Dumont, seen as the first to use "powered" flight, to literally empower and celebrate his achievement flying above a field of athletic competition. It is worth noting the Maracanã Stadium has held many major historical football matches but was most recently featured in the 2014 World Cup final between Argentina and Germany. This building and its pitch embody many different semiotic layers as both a landscape and field of fair play for global audiences, literally a stadium most recently containing the victors of the globe's supposedly most universal sport at the end of the FIFA World Cup. In this moment, Santos-Dumont—as a character and national icon of innovation—literally flies higher than any football player and covers more ground faster than the best footballers on the planet.

Most notable to many observers of the opening ceremony was the arrival of living celebrities who encapsulate global success and during the ceremonies return home to share their successful migration with their country of origin. Not unlike refugees who leave their homelands to improve their lives, these celebrities also return home to improve the lives of friends, family, and other citizens. The appearance of supermodel Giselle Bündchen quantifies how stereotypical and problematic elements of immigration narratives would be performed and manipulated throughout these Games by people beyond the organizing committee. She may be famous for her work in front of the camera; however, general audiences and the North American media simply know her as the wife of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady. Like someone marrying for immigration or green card privileges, her achievements prior to marrying Brady are subsumed by her marriage and her relocation to Massachusetts with her husband.

Bündchen arrives on the pitch of Maracanã and walks the entire distance of the field to a live performance of the famous song "Girl from Ipanema." This is the first of all the forthcoming walking entrances subsequently performed by Olympic teams from around the world. She enters at a brisk pace and, in high heels, and walks what commentators called "the longest catwalk of her career." Oddly, many sportscasters who spoke on English coverage of the event defaulted to comments on her sheer

athletic qualities—speed, grace, and balance—effectively transforming a homecoming walk by a "successful" migrant to America into an aesthetically-scored competitive moment like gymnastics. Using a popular Brazilian song to stereotype Bündchen as the girl from Ipanema—she is in fact from Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil's most southern state—audiences confront a moment of layered stereotyping that resounds with generalizations about misplaced experience. Her walk in the opposite direction of Santos-Dumont's flight forces us to think about both journeys together.

Following the opening ceremony, there was no larger story concerning scandal, misappropriated empathy, and legal battles at the Rio Olympics than the confusing narrative of American swimmer Ryan Lochte. While recounting some of the narrative he developed and the outcomes of his lying and performance of empathy, this research overlooks the legal ramifications of his actions in place of the ensuing performance and cultural resonance from his use of migrant themes and motifs to elicit public sympathy. "Its [sic] traumatic to be out late with your friends in a foreign country—with a language barrier—and have a stranger point a gun at you and demand money to let you leave," Lochte wrote in an Instagram post from August 19, 2016. Lochte's claims concerning the gas station robbery he experienced with his teammates demonstrates a conscious attempt at appropriation of the migration narrative for global and media sympathies. His story focuses on the ideals of being out of place in terms of national and linguistic contexts and therefore being taken advantage of by police or security forces capable of hindering his successful migration "home" to the Olympic Village. While out in the city away from the safety and security of the athletes' village, Lochte claims to have been held up at gunpoint by a Brazilian official. This would later be largely refuted by video footage and witness testimony. Notably, Lochte's own unaffected appearance returning to the Olympic Village would hurt his claims to have been so unexpectedly fearful for his life. Several broadcasters saw this evolving narrative as the common trope of an American out of place in a new nation and being taken advantage of by opportunistic Brazilians. We should see it as the opposite: new refugees being abused or appealing for clemency in the face of unjust immigrant tactics, working on sympathies to garner support for their powerless plight. Lochte clearly did not realize how hyperbole and his casual development of a false narrative—one akin to many new immigrants' first experiences with border guards and police—would serve to undo him as other evidence piled up to demonstrate the falsity of his tale.

More curious than the lie circulated by Lochte and his teammates was the surrounding media campaign with interviews and persistent mistakes. Lochte's appearance on American networks and his apology on Twitter offered the chance to perform his own fears around the robbery, which gave a privileged face to common stories of misuse of authority in the wake of migration. The most intriguing part of his apology might just be the description of how he was "out with his friends" in a foreign country. Seeking empathy for the barriers he faced as a displaced American in Brazil, he cannot help but describe the larger situation as one of leisure and privilege. Lochte's lie became the focus for much of the way Americans—themselves migrant athletes over the course of the competition in Brazil—were viewed collectively for their self-involved national character. This idea was further reinforced by the ways Giselle Bündchen is frequently stereotyped by Americans as merely Mrs. Brady rather than a successful model and career woman herself. There is no world but the American world, which Lochte's lie ultimately helped demonstrate due to his contempt for anyone claiming he was in the wrong for feeling afraid and worried, common emotions for migrants and refugees. While the USA limits migration into its own nation, Lochte's "reverse" migration performance aimed to shift sympathies towards Americans' reliance on the overall refugee narrative of these Games in tandem with Lochte's celebrity. Unlike Giselle Bündchen, whose body and presence reinforced her Brazilian return home, Lochte used social media narration to perform shock and fear from a privileged position of capturing the attention of global audiences. Lochte's story—told by any member of the IOC Refugee Nation—would have similarly used trauma and violence to drive empathy. Lochte's attempt at sympathy for an encounter with a government official and the assumed abuses he faced remains suspect for its exact truth. In the pattern of past apologies, he does little to explain why things happened and only appealed to the IOC and the United States Olympic Committee to not detract from the initiatives of the Rio Games themselves. Lochte's outburst of false experience and storytelling functioned like the eruptive performance experience already designated by Schechner (1998), which Lochte's Twitter apology claimed when he wrote: "There has already been too much said and too many valuable resources dedicated to what happened last weekend." Hoping for global ignorance of his misguided attempt to lie about his "immigrant" experiences in Brazil, Lochte's shining moment of subterfuge remains one of the most prevalent post-Rio experiences still talked about today.

Conclusion

After the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Summer Games concluded, the world turned its attention to PyeongChang, South Korea. The 2018 Winter Olympics happened at a time when unprecedented tension between neighbouring North Korea and the United States circulated from social media to missile testing in the Sea of Japan. While everything proceeded as usual, the rhetoric of politics and the stereotypes of world nations, leaders, and athletes persisted through the competition at many levels. In fact, the North and South decided to compete together as a unified Korea, resulting in the divisions between athletes often impeding their capabilities as unique national teams. The Games move through Asia for the next two installments—Tokyo, Japan, and Beijing, China—before returning to countries where the politics of refugees and immigration are likely to reappear. Paris will host the Summer Games in 2024 and Los Angeles in 2028. While neither city internally has direct issues with these competitors, issues of athletic migration to Europe or America and the pursuant claim of asylum or refugee status may occur. These are not omens of fear, but rather urban venues rife for issues of immigration experience and forthcoming stereotypes. Gone will be some of the concerns with infrastructure and coming to the fore will be thoughtlessness of the political environments or repressive politics towards outsiders that have been known to happen in each of these future host countries.

The Refugee Olympic Team did not recruit athletes for the 2018 Winter Games in South Korea. It remains to be seen if this instance of nationalizing refugees into one group during Rio 2016 will recur. Refugees have certainly not disappeared, but the relative use of them as a mode of performance and empathy at the Games may shift. They are no longer part of an ensuing ritual being used by the IOC, but this does not mean they will not play. Asian host nations' opening ceremonies have often focused on the history and unity of Korea, Japan, and China in their respective artistic presentations. Likewise, France and the United States may offer a different set of theatrical performance modes for showcasing unity, history, and responding to pressing international issues of their time. While the USA is certainly a country of global migrants, they may perform other aspects of their national history, or at least focus on different histories within California, when the world arrives in Los Angeles in 2028.

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Dreams, Memories, and Storytelling: Applied Theatre and Communities of Praxis

Forced Migration, Memory, and Testimony

Nimo Bokore

I often struggle with the knowledge that past and current traumas are present in my community. As a Somali living in Canada, I have seen first-hand the effects of war trauma—during the war and for years to come. I also acknowledge the differences within my community regarding memories and the presentation of history. Depending on educational background, social status, and support systems, some Somali war survivors develop helpful individualized resettlement skills that include adaptation through education, development of ethnic businesses, and involvement in community work. But others who have moved to Canada from refugee camps continue to struggle with trauma. This chapter is based on a project I completed in 2016 called "Somali-Canadian Women: Historical Past of Survival and Facing Everyday Challenges of Resettlement," which captured the life histories of twelve Somali women using oral history, storytelling, and life history methodology. Before exploring those stories, I will first situate the project within Canada's history of multiculturalism and diversity and discuss my methodology.

According to the most recent United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report, the number of global refugees has now

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exceeded 70 million. This number of forced migrants and displaced people connotes that there is a story to be told about the human cost of war and displacement, which includes memories that are changing the lives of individuals and communities. This is a story of how twelve refugee women's struggle for identity and belonging is still connected to their past and the possibility of belonging or carving out an identity is impeded by their political, ethnic, as well as religious affiliations.

For African-born scholars like myself, this is a topic we cannot ignore as more and more of our families and people live in limbo in long-term refugee camps such as Dadaab in Kenya and Dolo Ado in Ethiopia. It is important to undertake studies that address the political and social histories of regions, the policies, and actions of humanitarian regimes, and political and religious shifts in home countries, especially in light of their gendered impacts—all are critically relevant to a comprehensive analysis of the true cost of displacement and the refugee's traumatic experiences.

My interest is in refugee and resettlement issues particularly affecting those coming from the Global South. Through personal and professional experiences, I have come to understand that war affects women more profoundly than men because gender-based violence is often used as a tool of war. For example, Ager (1999) explains that during World War II, more than 200,000 Southeast Asian women, 80 percent of whom were Korean, were abducted for use as "comfort women" to provide sexual services for Japanese soldiers. In the early 1970s, at the time of Bangladesh's independence, soldiers in the Pakistani army who were sent to suppress the rebellion raped Bengali women. According to Ager (1999, 114), "in Iran, detained teenagers executed for political reasons have first been raped, denying them the automatic entry to heaven granted to virgins." This is also true of Somalia, leading Abdi (2007, 183), a sociologist at the University of Minnesota and a scholar of Somali Studies, to declare in 2007 that the Horn of Africa, and specifically Somalia, was one of the worst places for women to live. Dr. Cawo Abdi's 2007 study shows the gendered consequence of the war in Somalia as this patriarchal society culture disintegrated and women paid the price of increased rates of emotional and physical violence. Losing the traditional male or the leader of the household protection during war increased women's vulnerability to gender-based violence.

Documenting Memories of War

I turn my attention now to the life experiences of twelve Somali women living in Canada to try to understand the impact that war has on women's lives and the lives of their children and others in their communities. I chose a life history research methodology and a black feminist framework to gather stories from these women, to explore their experiences of forced migration and their memories of war as testimonies, and to bring forth women's voices that are often culturally silenced. These women entrusted their stories to me for the purpose of recording them as testimony to what happens to women during the prolonged tribal or civil war. I gathered their stories with cultural understanding, respect, and transparency, while adhering to ethical standards and cultural guidelines. This is important to me—first as a Somali community member and a survivor of war and second because I wanted to protect the women who spoke with me.

I reviewed the available literature on civilian survivors of wars, which included a limited number of studies focusing on specific areas and used them to inform my study. Kinzie (2005), Levy and Sidel (2013), and Simich (2008) found that survivors who had experienced extreme trauma, including gender-based violence such as rape, often showed signs of persistent psychological distress. Other scholars found that civilian survivors of war struggle with mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety disorders, during the resettlement stage (Bhui et al. 2006; Rees and Pease 2007; van der Kolk 2014; Warfa et al. 2006). Several studies on developmental trauma argued that such experiences can trigger an ongoing autonomic activation, forming patterns of neural connection that often lead to physiological and psychological developmental deficits (Cozolino 2010; LeDoux 1996; McCormick et al. 2011; Meaney 2001; Siegel 2011). This existing wealth of knowledge in social neuroscience helped me to frame my questions, providing me with new insight that directed my own research. It also helped me to understand or be attuned to certain aspects of my participant's experience and hear their narratives differently.

Methodology

In my research, I focused on exploring women's stories and sharing their memories of survival, resilience, and hope for the future. From the individuals who responded to my call, I selected women who had arrived in

Canada between the late 1980s and early 2000s,[1] when most Somalis came to Canada. They were between the ages of 39 and 69, were born in different Somali regions in East Africa and lived in either Toronto or Ottawa.[2] I selected a life history research method because of its cultural congruence with the Somali method of sharing information and skills.[3] This method allowed me to note the humanizing aspects of the participants' stories: their emotions, views on memories of historical trauma, and their experiences of displacement and marginalization (Dhunpath and Samuel 2009; Goodson and Sikes 2001). Linde (1993, 20) describes life history research as a method used to present stories that say: "see what events have made me what I am" or, more precisely, "what you must know about me is know me." As Freire, quoted in Chin and Rudelious-Palmer (2010, 268) says: "Storytelling in a human rights context allows those who have been marginalized to tell their stories in authentic and meaningful dialogue and with the reflection that identifies causes." The life history method gave me the opportunity to connect the participants' stories of survival with their current responses to their resettlement challenges.

Adding a critical gender lens also allowed me to explore the distinctive means each participant used to navigate both the dynamics within the Somali community and the external, systemic, oppressive systems (Collins 2000) they encountered. Employing a Black feminist life history research approach meant highlighting the women's narratives and their meaning-making processes while also responding to the epistemological and onto-logical questions of what Collins (2000, vi) calls Black women's "self-defined viewpoints" in their journeys—an important point for documenting gendered testimonies of survival.

This methodological process allowed me to explore the impact of each stage of forced migration: (1) pre-migration, fear, and anticipation, (2) escape and survival, (3) transit and dealing with prolonged fear, gender-based violence, and emotional stress, and (4) resettlement, often in a Western country, such as Canada (Ager 1999; Papadopoulos 2002).

Relying on these analytical frameworks, I began to understand through my discussions with the women about trauma and its effects on some refugee women. "I began to understand the impact that persistent trauma and a lack of understanding of cultural norms in a new country have on refugee women's resettlement in the fourth, post-settlement stage of migration.

Prolonged War and the Process of Trauma

Some of my research participants witnessed the war between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977–1978 and lived through the collapse of the Somali central government in 1991, as well as the prolonged ethnic war that led to the destruction of the country and the dislocation of millions of Somalis. My participants' stories about war and narratives of displacement are filled with trauma, but also, survival and resilience. I saw how some of them remain frozen by fear, overwhelmed by the impact of acute experiences of trauma, reliving it every day. As van der Kolk (2014) notes, prolonged trauma becomes the scar from an old wound, impairing the functioning of the present-day body and mind. It bridges the gap between past and present experiences, enabling the trauma to become part of the everyday lives of those who experienced it.

Trauma resides in the brain's nervous system, frequently setting off the naturally ingrained human response for survival (LeDoux 1996). It is the antithesis of empowerment and leaves women vulnerable to adversities. With this knowledge, I focused on the everyday lives of my participants to understand how both past and present social and structural issues affect their resettlement. Through this process, I also wanted to add to the historical documentation of Somali women's survival and resiliency in the past three decades that goes beyond a focus on their pain and suffering, with the hope that others will continue this research. Ultimately, studying adult's experiences of war gave me the chance to capture rich and in-depth details of survival stories. I came to understand how women from different socioeconomic, educational, and tribal backgrounds dealt with xenophobia, ethnic othering,[4] discrimination, inequality, poverty, and racialization during resettlement.

Oral Testimony and Somalis

For Somalis, storytelling is a form of remembering, testimony, and oral historical documentation. Somalis used this system of oral record keeping for centuries due to their lack of a written language until the mid-1970s, when the Somali government introduced the alphabet through a mass literacy program. Prior to that, Somalis depended on their considerable storytelling abilities and poetry recitation practices for communication and historical record keeping; these skills are fundamental cultural practices for Somalis. It is common for Somalis to include a question regarding

current events in their daily greeting, saying in the Somali language, "*Maxa la sheegay*" (What is in the news? or What have been told?) It allows the individual to talk about not only one's life but also about what is happening in the larger tribal community.

Oral communication practices are also developed along gender lines. During both war and peace, boys are taught the arts of storytelling and debating, which are seen as necessary to men's social skill set, including the settling of family and tribal disputes. This oral tradition is passed from generation to generation, while poetry continues to preserve history, teaching important survival skills and instilling life lessons, values, and morals to shape the worldviews of younger generations.

Two Western-born Somali historians, B.W. Andrzejeski and I.M. Lewis (1964, 27), were fascinated by this Somali behavior and researched and described how Somalis shared their history and knowledge for centuries through oral recitation:

> Somali oral poetry of the public forum was memorized verbatim. Poetry reciters were under the strict obligation to memorize, and then reproduce as faithfully as they could, the oral texts of the poems, which they learned from poets or other poetry-reciters. Any form of willful change of the text by the reciter, such as improvised additions, deletions or substitutions, was prohibited. The reciter, who was seldom a creative poet himself, was regarded merely as a channel of communication and a memory storage device and was in no way a co-author of the version he recited.

This description shows how this ethnic group of men freely shared poetry through memorization and oral recitation. Historically, Somali nomads traveled to defend tribal territories and in search of water holes and pastural grazing lands. Along the way, they shared poetry with thousands of fellow reciters. Women have been culturally and religiously restricted from participating in this tradition, which has often limited their skills, voices, and memories.

The Challenge of Documenting Tribal and Gendered Memories of War

Somali tribal hierarchies were reinforced by the colonial powers in 1884, during the partition of Africa, and have been used to divide, disempower, and rule people along clan and sub-clan lines. Certain tribes, like the

Midgaan and Gabooye, are looked down on just as the Dalits are in India. These two minority groups, indistinguishable from other Somalis in skin color, culture, and religion, are isolated and subjected to discrimination, humiliation, and dehumanization at the hands of their fellow Somalis. The irony is that these tribes play an important economic role during both peacetime and wartime. They are skilled and resourceful groups that have historically been responsible for creating businesses, passing down cultural medical knowledge, and providing technical expertise in the creation of household and personal use items such as dishes, yet their contributions go unacknowledged and the men of these tribes are denied political participation, just like all Somali women.

For Somali women, the physical and emotional aspects of war, forced migration, and resettlement are reinforced by cultural rules and practices. For example, women have historically been denied power and silenced through the cultural practice of *hisaut,* which requires all women, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, or education, to exude modesty and display shame for going against men in political conversation or for discussing sex-related topics, whether they concern reproductive health, sexuality, or the impact of rape.

The participants in my study agreed that the culture of *hisaut or modesty* fostered a sense of humiliation and disgrace among female survivors of sexual aggression. During the war and even after resettlement, violated women, especially young girls, are often encouraged to hide their experience from members of the community, including close family. For example, a mother who becomes aware of her daughter's rape will encourage infibulation or female genital mutilation. The Somali women I spoke to struggled with war-related experiences and had the added stress of culture-based gendered silencing. They denied what they felt and had experienced, having been deliberately silenced by powerful community leaders and interest groups who do not want these types of stories on record.

Gendered political silencing is not unique to Somalis. Research shows that narratives of war are not often an accurate representation of events, but are the expression of an experience as it is remembered or presented. Pointing to these challenges, Linde (1993, 4) writes that a story is "a discontinuous unit told in separate pieces over a long period of time, since it is a long-term unit, it is necessarily subject to revision and change as the speaker drops some old meanings and adds new meanings to portions of the life story."

Understanding gendered stories of war and violence require one to pay attention to cultural limitations on what is allowed to be expressed and how it can be communicated, which affects mental and physical health as well as the documentation of memories and testimonials of survivors of wars. In my study, participants shared their experiences, thoughts, and adaptive behaviors within the context of Somali culture. Looking back into their meaning-making processes and actions, I noticed how after two decades of resettlement, cultural restrictions continued to undermine my participants' healing. Therefore, I began to focus on particular stories in their narratives of war as well as nonverbal cues that were visible in their emotional responses to painful hidden experiences.

Establishing a strong relationship and sharing my own horrible gendered experiences with my participants opened the doors for collective remembering and sharing—producing a gendered testimonial of war that allowed us to remember the painful struggle we went through and the violence we desperately want to hide. Life history researchers describe how women's experiences are shaped and modified by cultural restrictions, leading them to compartmentalize when narrating events that happened during the war. In the Somali community, narratives of survival that are shared are gendered, but also told as if it had not happened to the teller. Documenting past traumatic events necessarily requires the teller to ignore, omit, or forget certain aspects, either as a form of self-protection or because of cultural and traditional silencing. Feminist researcher Sherryl Kleinman (2007) described life histories as a method of investigating how each woman's feelings and actions are revealed in their individual voices and actions, and at each defining moment in their lives. Engaging in a life history helped me to more deeply explore the meaning-making processes in narratives of survival, allowing me to participate in the collecting of women's stories of war and the preservation of their memories and experiences. Sharing and including my own stories as a survivor also contributed to my study and the documentation of women's voices.

For me, documenting memories grows out of living through war and displacement, myself, and hearing the stories of fellow Somalis, which change over the years to fit personal comfort zones or to accommodate political and religious restrictions (the views of the storyteller inherently include his/her affiliation with powerful interest groups). Norquay (1993, 245) describes this modification of a narrative as a purposeful act of "forgetting" produced through systemic gaps, silences, and omissions within stories told by groups or survivors. For the particular women I studied,

storytelling became an act or a system that is reinforced by political, cultural, or religious demarcations, where dominant narratives took over, silencing the voices of survivors and diminishing knowledge of the human cost of war. When I began collecting stories of female survivors of war as a form of historical documentation, I was confronted by the challenge this storytelling behaviour posed. Cole and Knowles (2001, 5) say that human stories are the "central epistemological construct illuminating the interior of human experience and social context." In light of this, how does the act of forgetting function when gendered memories of war are discredited and justice claims are ignored or denied? What is the emotional impact of such denial? Decades after their resettlement in Canada, Somali women still live with the silence that is continuously promoted within their culture and religion that values female modesty.

Telling My Own Story of Displacement and Migration

My history is filled with narratives of colonization, liberation, deportation, and displacement in a region that has been in the news for many decades. My own story of torture and displacement begins in 1974, with the overthrow of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie by the military dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam. After securing his power, Mengistu began to selectively imprison or execute those who opposed his leadership and others assumed to be guilty by tribal or ethnic association. Unfortunately, in 1975, I was accused of opposing Mengistu. At the same time, I was lucky enough to escape his random imprisonment and death sentences with only minor physical injury. The unforgettable physical and mental torture I endured is still etched in my brain. But the roots of my story go back further.

My father was a respected religious and academic leader in the region now known as Somaliland (a former British colony). Before 1960, suspected Somali leaders like my father were often deported from one region under colonial rule to another. It was a practice carried out by all colonial powers who ruled Somali regions in the Horn of Africa, including the Italians, the French, and the British. Since my father's tribe resides in both Ethiopia and British Somaliland, he was first relocated to Ethiopia and then back to Somaliland. This created multiple forced displacements for him and his family and left me without a father in Ethiopia.

After a few years of resettlement struggles, including rebuilding my career, which was denied under the hidden systemic barriers I encountered as a non-European newcomer—an act that was justified by my "not having Canadian education or experience"—I began to accumulate a Canadian education and working with immigrants and refugees in the employment/resettlement sector. Here, I realized that service disparities exist for certain refugees, especially Muslims, particularly since 9/11. This specific barrier has had an impact on Somalis who arrived in Canada, as I did, in the late 1980s, from refugee camps scattered throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

In my professional work, I have encountered resettled refugees who are overwhelmed by the existing stressors that some authors describe as Canada's "economic apartheid." It is an economic marginalization often experienced by those seen as Others in Canada (Folson 2004; Galabuzi 2006). I remember a conversation I had with a resettled refugee who described her experiences:

> When I arrived, I was so busy taking care of my three children who were under five years old. When they became school age I began thinking about my other resettlement goals. including learning the English language to secure employment. I then found out that I did not qualify for the language programs I applied for. Feeling useless and depressed, all my nightmares [about the war] also began to get stronger. I am now having a hard time taking care of myself and my family.

I personally went through this struggle during my early years in Canada and I heard similar stories from the research participants. Resettled refugees not only deal with flashbacks of their refugee/war experiences and PTSD but also grieve the loss of their home country, which sometimes alienates them as the unwanted Other, giving them no option of ever going back. Living in a new country where they do not speak the language and sometimes have to deal with unfamiliar cultural and social landscapes, refugee women's stress also increases or persists. I worked with families who, as I did, arrived and resettled in lower-income, crime-ridden, racialized neighbourhoods. Due to the absence of affordable housing and a lack of language skills and basic education, some them continue to live in these neighbourhoods for decades after their arrival (Danso 2002). They report their struggles with urban youth violence, higher school dropout rates, disproportionate levels of poverty, homelessness, inadequate housing for

large families, and racial and religious discrimination, especially following 9/11 (Bokore 2009; Bokore 2012; Somali Youth Conference). While doing my research I found there is abundant literature about immigrants and their integration, however there is an absence of literature documenting refugee experiences or the prolonged economic, social, and health impacts of trauma on these communities.

Documenting My Participants' Stories of Displacement and Migration

Throughout my data collection, analysis, and many conversations with the women in my community, I have noticed among women a commonality of certain experiences of war and ways of remembering them. One of the events frozen in time and remembered by all is the initial stage of forced migration when the realization of losing everything hits. All women, including me, remember the feeling of dread and fear. Refugee researchers such as Ager explain this feeling as the fear of the unknown and the anticipation of grief from losing one's home, land, or even country. It is disorientation that happens when people realize the magnitude of what is about to happen (Ager 1999). For some Somalis it is an experience that is repeated multiple times in different regions as internally displaced refugees seek safety or survival.

My personal memory of renewed grief was supported by two research participants with whom I shared a similar migration history. One of them described her journey when I met her for a follow-up interview. Gacalo[5] was born in eastern Ethiopia and left her birthplace for the first time during the Ethiopian Somali war in 1977–78. Over the next fifteen years, she was a refugee in Africa before her arrival in Canada in 1992. During that time, she lost her temporary home a total of five times. "I feel like I have been running most of my adult life," she said. "The worst one being in 1988 when I gave birth to my first child while running from Ethiopia to Somalia." She called it "unfortunate luck" or "coincidence" that she gave birth a second time while running from Siyad Barre's attack on Somaliland. What amazed me about this participant was her resilience, her ability to take care of her family in foreign lands, where she did not speak the language. Her resiliency helped her not only to care for her family but also to land a job here, in Canada, at which she has been working for the past two decades. Her story is one of trauma, but I was amazed by her strength and

calm, even as she was sharing her story with me, talking about the positive things in her current life, including her children's achievements in higher education.

Hoodo, another participant of my study, left Ethiopia as a child during the Ethiopian-Somali war. She was a university student in Mogadishu when the longest civil war erupted and the government of Siyad Barre collapsed. She shared stories of multiple migrations lasting fourteen years before her arrival in Canada in 2001. Hoodo particularly remembers what happened to her when she realized, as a young adult, that she was about to lose the home where she had spent her childhood years:

> One day a family member told me to get her sugar from the store. Some military men who I think were related to Siyaad Barre were standing in front of our door and as soon as I came out they [asked] me to identify myself by my tribe. I could not tell them about my tribe because of my accent. I was afraid they will not believe me because at the time they were killing tribes from the north who spoke as I did. I was afraid when one of them pulled a gun and demanded that I identify myself again. Fortunately, my family heard my screams and came out to rescue me and explained my tribal connection to eastern Ethiopian Somalis, not Somaliland tribes. That was the defining moment for me living with fear for myself and my family. That is when my family decided it was time to leave Mogadishu and run to the unknown. As a family,[6] we rented a car and we headed toward Kismaayo, which was the safest option for us. I was afraid of what would happen to my other family from my father's side, which I could not reach because they were living in another part of the city. I met some of them a decade later and others are still living all over the world.

For Hoodo, those traumatizing memories remain with her, defining her behavioural responses to adversities or what she sees as a threat. In one of the follow-up interviews, I went to see Hoodo at her home in Toronto. When I arrived, she asked me if we could first go to a nearby Tim Horton's coffee shop to get a coffee. Since I knew the coffee shop was located in a plaza less than two blocks away from her home, I suggested that we could walk there to get fresh air and some exercise. I was surprised by her reaction to my suggestion: she quickly turned to me with an anxious face and said, "it is not safe to walk." She then went on to tell me about how one summer evening when she was walking in her neighbourhood, some teenagers driving a big car had thrown empty bottles at her, calling her a terrorist. She said: "I drive everywhere, which is not helping for my high

blood pressure and weight problem. I need to exercise. I can't afford female only gyms and I can't walk on the street or park because of fear."

As refugee mothers, we all experienced significant fear brought on by the possibility of being forcibly removed from our temporary shelters or made to return to our original homes to once again face war and/or persecution. Such conditioned fear makes it difficult, if not impossible, to disassociate the past from the present. Researchers argue that these kinds of memories function outside consciousness (LeDoux 1996; Siegel 2011; van der Kolk 2014).

For survivors of warlike Hoodo, traumatic memories are triggered and resurface without any warning. For Somali Canadians, there are multiple triggers, including the stress of poverty, inadequate housing, racial/systemic oppression, and living without any external support systems or buffers. In recent decades, the Somali community has seen disproportionate levels of youth violence and increased school dropout rates, which is adding to the fears of those of us who are mothers. Two of my participants, Asli and Dalmar, talked about their experiences as community service providers helping youth with drug addiction, dropping out of school, and conflicts arising from biculturalism (Canadian and Somali) and a lack of parental understanding. Another participant of my study, Bishaaro, talked about the experience of one of her family members who was struggling with her older son's drug addiction: "This mother even tried to send her son back to Kenya to live with other family members to learn about culture and family respect, or *dhaqan celine* [returning to culture] in Somali." Many Somali Canadian mothers take their children back to their tribal homelands to learn history and ritual, including the art of storytelling and religion. Unfortunately, this young relative returned to Canada with an addiction to *khat*. Although *dhaqan celine* is designed to bring back Diaspora-born children who have lost their culture, religion, and way of life, it can create additional problems, including exposure to religious extremists, renewed tribal hate, and *khat* addiction. *Khat* is an amphetamine-like stimulant used culturally by Somali men as a form of entertainment or to pass time. The drug, when chewed, initially causes excitement and language eloquence, which is useful for political or tribal debates among men. Unfortunately, as with any drug, it also has side effects, including exhaustion, loss of appetite, sexual dysfunction, and insomnia. I grew up watching families destroyed by this addiction as users spend their time looking for a fix or being in a high called *mirqaan*. One of the participants, Dalmar, attributed the failure of her marriage to *khat*.

Asli, Dalmar, and Bishaaro talked about the impact of *khat* on the community and other participants, Ladan and Mandeeq, connected this plant to community responses to trauma. They described how men are overwhelmed by what happened in the past and by what is happing to them now in the resettlement country and begin to self-medicate with *khat*. Somali men are also burdened by the guilt and shame of losing their culturally based patriarchal power and their roles as protectors of and breadwinners for the family. These roles are now often unattainable for them due to the systemic barriers they encounter that prolong their unemployment or underemployment and lead them to withdraw from family responsibilities and seek other avenues to forget the past. Sadly, for the women and the children in Somali refugee families, *khat* usage and other behaviors, such as controlling women by imposing religious family morality and excessive religious practice, are all introduced or used by men to numb their own pain and past trauma and the stressors of living in Canada.

Conclusion

When Somali youth issues come up in Canadian news media and internet postings, the focus is usually on Somali involvement with violence and drugs, on parents sending their children to fight overseas for Islamic causes, including al-Shabaab and ISIL (Aulakh 2010; Brown 2006; The Canadian Press 2010; Said 1993). Dalmar, Landan, and Mandeeq described how frequent media representations of the Somali community's involvement with terrorist groups are adding to the negative public perception of Somalis and, hence, to the systemic barriers they face. These negative stereotypes contribute to the stress and fear of the women I interviewed for this study.

In my work with the Somali community for this study, I focused on documenting stories and memories to uncover a time in history (forced migration and resettlement) through the feelings and memories of those who experienced it. While doing so, I kept in mind my commitment to confidentiality and my desire to treat those who trusted me with their life stories with utmost respect. Even though I shared many of the women's experiences, I kept in mind my own privilege as an educated woman. I was also mindful of how stories are told and retold in contexts that are constantly changing and affecting the meaning of the story.

The participants of my study shared traumatic and powerful stories to explain their life experiences, as a testimonial of what happened to them

individually and collectively as members of a tribe that has often been punished by opposing tribes. In their narratives of war, the participants highlighted what makes them vulnerable to the emotional traumas of their past and present realities.

NOTES

1. This time frame coincides with mass Somali population displacement due to the 1977–78 Ethiopian Somali War, the Somali government's attack on the Somaliland people, and the subsequent collapse of the Somali central government.
2. These are the two major Canadian cities that hosted Somali refugees at the time of their initial arrival.
3. Somalis have a passion for storytelling and poetry. They have been called a "Nation of Bards" by early explorers, researchers, and novelists, such as the Canadian novelist Margaret Laurence.
4. Somalis adhere to a tribal hierarchy and discriminate against other tribes. This means that about half the population in my home region is identified as *Gaboya*, which is similar to the Untouchable caste in India.
5. All names used are pseudonyms.
6. Hoodo is referring to family members on her mother's side.

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Claiming Their Voice: Foreign Memories on the Post-Brexit Stage

Kasia Lech

In 2017, the National Theatre premiered *My Country: A Work in Progress*, a story about Brexit (the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union) "in the words of people across the UK and Carol Ann Duffy." The play featured only British voices. Later that year, a collaboration between *The Guardian* and Headlong Theatre produced nine short movie monologues on Brexit. Only one, *Shattered*, by English actress and writer Maxine Peake, offered a migrant perspective, but its portrayal raised a question about migrant, race, gender, and cultural representations: whose perspective shapes them? The film featured an immigration lawyer, played by Nasser Memarzia, speaking with an unidentified foreign accent. The lawyer's generalized "foreignness" and profession functioned to mark his credibility to tell a story of a Pakistani woman raped by her husband and to say that "EU nationals are frightened to death they are going to be thrown out of this country." A few months earlier, the *Journal of Democracy*, one of the most influential journals in political science,

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published articles under the heading "Britain After Brexit." The essays explored Brexit in various contexts, including the 2016 American Presidential election (Ford and Goodwin 2017). However, the perspective of migrants, whose future in the UK was decided without them, was left unexplored and its absence unnoticed by the editors (Plattner and Diamond 2017).

While the immigrants' voices have been "peripheral," their foreignness was "symbolically central" in the Brexit debate (Stallybrass and White 1986, 5). The referendum became "a proxy for a debate about who should or should not be in the UK" (Burnett 2017, 88). In other words, who is a "foreigner"? The discussion has been framed by (Home Secretary, later Prime Minister) Theresa May's "hostile environment" policy to lower the number of immigrants. The pre- and post-referendum divisive rhetoric of "us" and "them" created a politically motivated, demonized, and hyper-visible image of a foreigner as a threat to British society either through claiming benefits, stealing jobs, or terrorism.[1] Following Claire Alexander's (2000) arguments, this obscured the actual absence of migrants in the debate and served to legitimize xenophobia and forms of control like the Leave campaign's slogan "Take back control." "We voted you out," said one of the abusers (Burnett 2017, 86), as if the referendum was the reality television show Big Brother. The context outlined here relates neither exclusively to the European Union migrants nor solely to migrants at all. The increased post-Brexit racism seemed to define "foreigners" as all that did not fit the past model of a "perfect Brit": white, monolinguistic, and Christian, which says more about shifts within British identity than its immigration.[2]

This chapter takes the debate on Brexit and "foreignness" to UK-based migrants. It responds to the questions about migrant identity posed in this volume's introduction by exploring how the articulation of transnational identities, foreignness, and engagement with stereotypes by UK-based EU and non-EU theatre practitioners underline their immediate responses to Brexit. The article insists that the migrant perspective is not only crucial for the debate on Brexit but, most importantly, for future directions for the UK and Europe. The essay considers the "divided Britain" and Brexit not as isolated issues, but as part of a broader European Union crisis relating to the decreased sense of commonality and solidarity amongst its member countries towards member and non-member states and citizens (Gielen 2015, 10).

The essay argues for migrants' agency over their representation, offering a platform for a new social imagination that can facilitate multicultural democratic spaces, sense of commonality, and solidarity. Rosi Braidotti (1994, 2015), who insists on the political potential of imagination, has repeatedly marked these as major challenges in the European context. This new imagination must have a translocal perspective, moving the gaze from national to a "multiplicity of spatialities within a common space marked not by firm boundaries but by the intensity and concentration of interactions" (Dirlik 2005, 397, 407). By mobilizing "translocal imagination" (Brickell and Datta 2011), this new imagination can cultivate a sense of solidarity through differences. I also insist that migrants' agency over their representation is a primary form of agency to study migrant experience and to reshape broader political discourses.

Theatre has a vital role to play here due to its potential to expand the political and social value of imagination. As Helen Nicholson (2009, 47–51) explains, in the theatre the encounter between imaginations of artists and audiences fills the gap between reality and fiction. Because of that, she says, theatre can facilitate imagining "that which was previously unimagined or unimaginable," which, in turn, challenges existing ideas and values and may evoke social change. Nicholson's point also holds in a theatre that cuts itself off from any political engagement. Just because theatre might not have a political agenda or intentions, it does not mean that it has no political roots or consequences.

My focus is on collective, cultural, and personal memories and their power to re-imagine relationships, which is enhanced by theatre (van Dijck 2004; Carlson 2003). Firstly, I look at links between politics and culture to argue for the importance of migrants' agency over their representation. The following two sections focus on theatre practitioners whose experiences spread across Spain, Argentina, Nigeria, Ireland, Poland, and the UK. I examine how they perform their agency and their transnational, translocal, and transtemporal experiences, and offer "imaginative insights into another world which, once seen, cannot be unseen" (Nicholson 2009, 58).[3]

Migrants' Agency Over Their Representation

Pascal Gielen (2015) insists that the European Union's failure to support culture is behind the decreased sense of commonality and solidarity amongst its members and current economic and political crises. Together

with Thijs Lijster, Gielen argues for culture as "a reservoir of signs." These signs denote both "a formal game of similarity and differentiation" and the process of "assigning meaning as sense that gives directions and reason for existence to both people and societies" (Gielen and Lijster 2015, 20). The European project must facilitate culture that "allows its citizens to really assign meaning to it" and to connect it with what they "value in life" and how they "view the world" (20–21).

This is not a matter of creating an idealistic and homogenous idea of European culture and community; it is about offering people who live in Europe various points of engagement with and opportunities to shape a multifaceted, multifocal, and pluralistic culture that reflects the diversity of individuals that live in today's Europe. Lijster and Gielen (2015, 52–53) stress the importance of culture being "a shared practice." In the same collection of essays, Rosi Braidotti (2015, 98, 108) argues that construction of a European identity as a "multicultural democratic space" requires "adequate, positive representations of the new trans-European condition" that escapes European geopolitical boundaries, of Europe "becoming nomadic." So far, she says, Europe has collectively failed to create a shared culture. Braidotti asks how to "develop such a new European social imaginary" that can facilitate transnational, hybrid identities, symbols, and cultures (108–111). The arguments put forth by Braidotti and by Lijster and Gielen apply to the UK, its relationship with Europe, and a global context, as these are interconnected. There is an urgent need for cultural spaces that offer opportunities to contribute to, interact with, and find points of identification with hybrid identities and cultures. This brings me to the issue of migrants' visibility, representation, and agency.

Marcel Paret and Shannon Gleeson (2016, 277, 282) explain that there are "four primary forms of agency" attached to the migrant experience that are crucial for understanding the precarity-migration-agency nexus and, through that, "key dynamics around inequality and social change" amongst migrants and native communities. These forms of agency are the decision to move, the individual agency relating to working rights, collective agency of organized movements, and agency to organize "other arenas of social life." I propose that there is a fifth form of agency: the agency over representation within a public space. This agency is imperative as it works to counter the politically motivated paradox of the migrants' presence being overemphasized within the public space, while their perspective is absent (Alexander 2000, 133; Stallybrass and White 1986, 5). Moreover, examining migrants' representation within and agency over

public space is an essential lens for studying the precarity-migration-agency nexus.

This type of agency relates to the right to vote in the country of residence and therefore to migrant experiences being reflected and their presence legitimized within democratic life and political discourse. It also recognizes the necessity of matching their input to the life of the country with democratic rights. Equally important is the influence over migrants' representation within socio-cultural spaces to overcome their identity as a "migrant" and frame immigrants as vital to the social fabric of modern society. This legitimizes their presence in everyday contexts, deconstructs dichotomies of native and foreign, challenges ethnocentric perspectives that native cultures have nothing to learn from foreign cultures (Pennycook 2001, 82), and facilitates a translocal gaze. This point relates not only to the stories of individuals, but also to translocal experiences of history and culture through histories and culture of migrants' native lands and, importantly, their perspective on history and culture of the country where they reside.

The form of agency I propose includes representation of languages spoken by migrant communities, as language impacts social interactions and the "distribution of power" and opportunities within society (Pennycook 2001, 84). I refer both to migrants' native languages and to the "new languages" created through interactions between migrants' mother tongues and their experiences of languages spoken in their country of residence (in different geographical contexts and various modes of learning) and their mother tongues (Kachru and Nelson 2001, 18). In the UK, it would be "new Englishes"; their diversity also arises from English being a global language (Pennycook 2001, 78) that various native and non-native communities have co-ownership of which must be recognized.

My argument links with Hannah Arendt's (1998) view on politics as a platform where everyone can be "seen or heard" (50), and as an action, understood as the ways in which people disclose to others "their unique and distinct identity of the agent" (175–176, 179–180). Arendt argues that this type of action is necessary for society to exist; without it, newcomers cannot contribute to the society, and lose a sense of solidarity and commonality (179–180, 183–184). The upcoming analysis looks at theatre as a critical platform for facilitating migrants' agency and reconstructed visibility and, through that, as a means to re-imagine communities.

The discussion focuses on three productions that present different aspects of migrant experience and exercise agency over migrant representation in new writing, translation, adaptation, and autobiography. *Bubble Revolution* is a translation of *Rewolucja Balonowa* by Polish playwright Julia Holewińska directed by John Currivan, an Irish writer, actor, and director, and co-created and performed by myself, a Polish scholar, actor, and storyteller. The current article looks at the version developed during summer 2016 in the UK in rehearsals involving myself, Currivan, and British voice coach Janet Morgan for the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The second production, *Rosaura,* is a devised adaptation of *Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca created by actors Paula Rodríguez (UK-based Spanish artist) and Sandra Arpa (Argentinean-trained Spanish actor). Rodríguez and Arpa performed it in London just after the Brexit referendum. Finally, *An Evening with an Immigrant*, an autobiographical work written and performed by British-based Nigerian Inua Ellams, premiered in July 2016 at the Soho Theatre in London.

Transnational identities and actors' creative ownership connect to my larger point about migrants' agency, hybrid identities, and translocal perspectives. I am interested in how these three productions use memories rooted in their native and non-native cultures as a platform for the audience to engage with transnational conditions in today's Europe and the UK, and explore these and spectators' own experiences through a translocal gaze. By doing so, these productions engage their audiences with foreignness, challenge the dichotomy of native and foreign, and broaden European geopolitical boundaries. The memories offer spectators various points of engagement with the productions' performance of "foreignness" as difference, not through a process of isolation, but rather through a process of connection that, following Bhabha (1994, 2), is "a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities." By doing so, the actors also challenge their existing representations within socio-political and cultural spaces and take co-ownership thereof.

My perspective is not an unambiguous one. I experienced *Rosaura* and *An Evening* as an audience member (of both live and recorded performances), but I have been working on and performing *Bubble Revolution* since 2013. And, while as a scholar I am interested in how these productions use memories, as a theatre practitioner, I look for similarities in our performances of difference. "Intercultural actors"—whose "cultural reality is no longer the one prescribed by a perfect juxtaposition of national and ethnic boundaries"—often experience double-foreignness; the actor is

"seen as foreigner by her social and professional environments" and spectators and, at the same time, the actor perceives "these environments and her audiences as unfamiliar" (Nascimento 2009, 9). By establishing points of tangency, I explore my connections with different performances of "foreignness," which adds another layer to these productions as platforms for engagement with trans-European conditions. It is with the issue of connection that I open my analysis.

CREATING AND SUSTAINING "WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS"

From the start, the actors in the three productions confront spectators with the presence of their foreignness and their ownership of the event and of the space they are in; but they also establish a "welcoming environment" (as opposed to a "hostile environment") as a frame for interactions between them and the audience. In addition, they work towards extending these collaborative and welcoming frames beyond the timeframe of the performance. All actors use their native accents and *Rosaura* and *Bubble Revolution* are bilingual. The jumps between Spanish and English in *Rosaura* are emphasized by different modes of language: verse in Spanish and prose in English. In *Bubble Revolution*, I highlight various geographical roots of my English. I mix English and American vocabulary and use North-Dublin-English influences in my accent, trying to correct them with a failed attempt at the standard form of British-English pronunciation. This is to play with mono- and ethnolinguistic perspectives that associate English-speaking with the Anglo-Saxon tradition as a norm that other Englishes "abuse" (Kachru and Nelson 2001, 14–21).

Arpa and Rodríguez start *Rosaura* by establishing the right of the audience to feel lost and offering their help which they sustain throughout the play. The performance opens in darkness broken by two torch lights that examine the black box space. When the torches reveal Arpa and Rodríguez, they smile and say, "Good evening." They explain that they will tell the story of Rosaura, "the female character from *Life is a dream* by Calderón de la Barca…Do you know the play?" They wait for the answer: "Well if you get lost along the way just raise your hands." Throughout the play they check if the spectators are following, and enact sequences in Spanish translating them into or explaining them in English without patronizing the audience. "Paula, they got it," says Arpa, when Rodríguez engages in a lengthy explanation. The importance of performers also arises as the production relies on text delivery and their bodies as the main carriers of

Fig. 1   Paula Rodríguez and Sandra Arpa in *Rosaura*. Copyright Teatro Inverso

meaning (Fig. 1). In this sense, the audience's experience is similar to Segismundo's in Calderón's play guided by Rosaura as he figures out his identity in relation to the world around him. Thus, the audience may encounter the full play often divided into Rosaura's and Segismundo's plots (Sloman 1965): they hear Rosaura's story, but they may experience Segismundo's.

In the opening scene of *An Evening with an Immigrant*, Inua Ellams establishes his identity as hybrid and in flux. He frames it as playful, inviting the audience to join the fun. He dances onto the stage, accompanied by DJ Sid Mercutio's music selection, and encourages the audience to clap along. He wears traditional Nigerian attire, including a white Agbada, a zana buka, and a horse tail whip. When he takes it off, he reveals his clothes, jeans with a t-shirt, stating politely: "Never Forget to Say Thank You" (Fig. 2). Before that, however, he turns his back to the audience and moves his hips in a way that reminds one of twerking; the audience laughs. "I can't take myself seriously," Ellams responds.

By physically referencing and joking about twerking at the start of the show, Ellams immediately acknowledges and engages with existing

Fig. 2 Inua Ellams in
*An Evening with an
Immigrant.* Copyright
Inua Ellams

stereotypes, announces his ownership of how his blackness is performed, and activates a subversive potential of laughter. Manoucheka Celeste (2016, 149) argues that twerking, culturally appropriated and made viral by an infamous performance by Miley Cyrus in 2013, is an example of limitation and "appropriation of blackness for profit in popular culture." It is a representation of black culture that builds "on essentialist and stereotypic notions, the oldest tropes of blackness." Ellams' performance plays on this but also establishes what Eric Weitz (2009, 71) calls a "comic distance" (from the stereotypes), which is a "detachment from emotion, particularly necessary for adopting a playful attitude toward any given subject." It is not "a stepping back," but rather "a leaning sideways, momentarily out of the reach of serious mode's high beams," says Weitz. Ellams continues to subvert the existing stereotypes throughout the show. For example, he explains how the presence of religious conflict and the similarities in colours of Irish (green-white-orange) and Nigerian (green—white—green) flags allowed him to find his inner Irishness. "We are just a

shade away," he jokes, referring to the orange that differentiates the two flags, but also playing on the stereotypes of Irish and Nigerian bodies, and the idea of colour as a point of both differences and similarities.

Ellams introduces himself as a poet, a playwright, a performer, and an immigrant. As his memories move between Nigeria, the UK, and Ireland, the list of his identities grows. Each anecdote is accompanied by a poem that was inspired by the story told. Such a pattern of poems and memories helps the audience to avoid ethnocentric readings and to experience his poems without worrying they do not know the context. The playful opening and the informal way in which Ellams addresses the audience is also a significant factor in creating this safe environment. For example, during the live performance I attended, some spectators arrived late. Ellams acknowledged each of them either by a hand wave, a short "hey man," or "nice shoes." The manner of those comments was warm and welcoming.

"Welcoming" offers a point of departure for *Bubble Revolution*. In my performance, I ask spectators to queue before they enter as "part of the experience." The joke references communist queues, but the queue is an opportunity to create a bond between myself and each spectator and play with familiar and unfamiliar cultural contexts before the show. I welcome each spectator and ask them to draw an envelope. Each envelope has a memory about growing up in Poland in the 1980s and 1990s, collected from different Polish people[4]; space for the spectator to leave their own memory; and either a ration card or a communist dollar. A ration card entitles the spectator to one candy, and a communist dollar wins a whole box or bag of sweets. The space smells like bubble gum. These sensory elements contextualize the play's references to dreaming about sweets (rationed in 1980s Poland), but also reinforce the frame of childhood, and potentially stimulate the audience's memories (van Campen 2014) as a point of engagement with the play. During performances, I help the audience navigate the story by translating sections in Polish and explaining certain references. As a case in point, a reference to Stanisław Tymiński, a Canadian businessman of Polish origin and the strongest competitor of Lech Wałęsa in the 1990s presidential campaign, appears in the play as: "I sat next to Stan Tymiński." In the performance, I add a "footnote" (inspired by Simon Kuper's article): "a Polish Donald Trump."[5]

The immersive elements also encourage the spectator to submerge in the memories told as an experience, in a similar way to the audience in *Rosaura* and *An Evening* experience Segismundo's quest and Ellams' poems, respectively. By creating opportunities for experiencing

"foreignness" more fully, the three productions increase the possibilities for the individual spectators to discover their points of connections with stories told (Machon 2013, 26). They also work to stretch this experience beyond the timeframe of performances by boosting their memorability. I ask the audience to share their memories with me (online or by writing a note) and visit *Bubble Revolution*'s website with more memories. Arpa and Rodríguez encourage the audience to read Calderón's play. After Ellams' performances, spectators can buy his poetry and collect the National Council for Civil Liberties booklets on the Human Rights Act, its British legacy (rather than something "imposed" by the EU), and its importance for everyone in the UK. These activities may continue to shape spectators' memories of the productions, increasing chances for discovering their points of connections with "foreignness" in their lives (van Dijck 2006; Cohen 2014).

The last point has double significance for *An Evening*, *Bubble Revolution*, and *Rosaura* as they are also enactments of memories. Van Dijck (2004, 262) argues that by sharing acts of remembering with others, people can "make sense of their lives in relation to the lives of others and to their cultural context." Memories "filtered through the prism of culture," as in theatre, acknowledge the "creative tension" between individual and collective histories and become an act of mediation between "individuality and collectivity as well as between past and present" (270). The upcoming analysis takes this point further, arguing that memories in the three productions are a platform for tensions and interactions between multiple collectives, cultures, places, and histories mediated through the individual actors rooted in these contexts. Spectators, by participating in these multifaceted acts of remembering, can connect their lives to transnational experiences that cross "cultural, ideological, linguistic, and geopolitical borders and boundaries of all types but especially those of nation-states" (Duff 2015, 57). They may even shift their perspective beyond the idea of nations. To paraphrase van Dijck (2004, 262), they may "make sense of their lives" in relation to translocal experiences and hybrid identities.

Such connectedness is particularly possible as the three productions mark points of tangency between different memories and the UK audiences. The actors achieve this by using what Marvin Carlson (2003, 51) describes as "ghosting": a unique quality of theatre experience to facilitate "a simultaneous awareness of something previously experienced and of something being offered in the present that is both the same and

different." Carlson's explanation relates to memories rooted in specific cultural contexts. *An Evening*, *Bubble Revolution*, and *Rosaura* show that ghosting, when applied in transnational and translocal contexts, facilitates the creation of pluralistic, multifaceted, and multifocal cultural spaces that have the potential to stimulate solidarity and to reimagine one's relationship with "foreignness."

"Foreign" Memories as a Springboard for Encounters

Many stories shared in *An Evening* and *Bubble Revolution* are about coming of age and are easily relatable; the audience laughs often, signalling their emotional connections (Weitz 2009, 65). These moments feature a foreign actor and audience laughing together and breaking the convention of a foreign speaker as a "figure of ridicule, or at least condescension" (Carlson 2006, 10). As one of the social consequences of laughter is the creation of community (May 2006, 191), the communities that these moments can establish are inclusive and based on shared understandings.

It is through this frame of familiarity and emotional connection that *Bubble Revolution* and *An Evening* invite the spectators to engage with their differences. On Ellams' first day of school in London, a school bully calls him a "nigger," a "bad" word Ellams has never heard before, and it is up to a new friend to explain to him the connotations. When Ellams tells a story of Royal Mail losing his documents in the post, there are probably spectators that can relate; however, for Ellams and his family, the Royal Mail's losing their passports, birth certificates, and documentation for their application to remain in the UK meant they had to relocate to Dublin. Ellams does not explain it, but one can presume that due to the Common Travel Area's agreement, Ellams' family could cross the border between the UK and Ireland—getting out of the Home Office's jurisdiction and removing the threat of deportation—without passports.

Holewińska wrote *Bubble Revolution* as a manifesto of Poles born in the 1980s: the generation whose childhood fell during late communism, whose teenage years overlapped with the crawling capitalism of the 1990s, and who became adults as Poland was entering the EU in 2004. This collective experience is mediated through the story of thirty-year-old Vica. When performed in the UK, the play gains another layer: it contextualizes the exodus of Poles born in the 1980s after Poland joined the EU. This is the biggest group that emigrated from Poland, mainly to the UK and Ireland (Okólski and Salt 2014; Krings et al. 2016). The group forms a

large part of the approximately one million Polish-born people currently living in the UK (White 2016). *Bubble Revolution* confronts the audience with the stereotypes those migrants experience as Poles living in the West: "car-thieves, drunks, trouble-makers" (Holewińska 2013, 24). To make it resonate more strongly with the UK experience, I added one more stereotype: benefit-taker. "Car-thieves, drunks, trouble-makers, benefit-takers"; the only rhyme in the text marks this single Brexit reference.[6]

The context of *Bubble Revolution* as collective experience is emphasized in the production's publicity as it helps to confront existing stereotypes. It highlights that if a spectator recognizes their own experiences in Vica's story, they also connect to many Polish people whose identity goes beyond that of a Polish plumber or benefit-taker. To take that further, the production uses memories collected from various Polish people. They form an online exhibition (Lech 2016) and spectators are given selected memories before the performances. One individual, Piotr, recalls his parents bribing a doctor in Poland for his father's life-saving surgery. The memory relates to Vica describing the death of her grandmother: "The waiting list for a hospital bed was hopelessly long," and her parents' bribe came too late to "save grandma" (Holewińska 2013, 18). Piotr's memory ghosts Vica's story, which highlights the collective experience within the play. It also strengthens the audience's connection with Vica's narration as they would have already experienced a similar story through reading Piotr's or another's memories. By sharing their memories, spectators stretch this ghosting activity beyond the time frame of the performance and beyond geopolitical boundaries of Poland, the UK, or Europe and, potentially, move beyond the idea of the nation. Examples include the second-generation Pole witnessing the fall of communism from Scotland; a visit of a Hungarian youth choir to Finland in the 1980s; and someone from Montana confessing they miss their deceased father's tricks on April Fool's Day. These memories form a transnational and translocal reservoir and the act of evoking and sharing them becomes a transnational and translocal experience.

Ellams' memories move between Nigeria, the UK, and Ireland, but they start before Ellams was born. His introduction is followed by *Ash Skinned*, a poem that links Ellams to his ancestors: "a long line of trouble makers" with "a natural thirst for battle, only quenched by / breast milk." The poem paints an easily recognizable image of a child and brings it together with a contrasting image of a warrior. This near-oxymoron establishes Ellams' identity as split and conflicted from the root; he later

confirms it with stories about his ancestors and his Christian mother and Muslim father. Ellams highlights here that his story did not start when he arrived in the UK and became "a migrant"; his story has been shaped by different communities that preceded and surrounded him. This echoes van Dijck's (2004) points about memories, society, and identity; however, what van Dijck does not say and what Ellams' work shows, is how, in doing so, Ellams mediates fragmented identities of the individuals and communities he experienced. This pushes *An Evening* towards a transtemporal and transcultural encounter, which is demonstrated in the final minutes of his performance when Ellams says that the stories of the UK migrants are rooted in British soil:

> Britain invaded, pillaged, murdered, plundered 80% of earth. I think citizens of every country ever colonized have some right to come here and stick a small flag and say this part of the country is mine…Those are the wars we started. We turned these people into immigrants.

It is important that Ellams uses "we," taking responsibility for the history of the country where he now lives. He follows ghosting myths with facts: the idea of migrants as a burden is accompanied by numbers that relate to the economic contribution of migrants; the claim that there is no more space in Britain (Farage's "Breaking Point" poster is the most infamous example) is followed by the point that only 2.2 percent of the UK has been built upon.[7] Ellams also marks multicultural elements like language that are part of British culture. These final moments of *An Evening* are a call for solidarity and responsibility that goes beyond nationality, culture, religion, and so on. The power of this call arises from Ellams' ghosting that creates a transcultural web of connections, and places Ellams and spectators within it.

Rosaura engages its audience with a cultural memory of *La vida es sueño* [*Life is a Dream*] by Pedro Calderón de la Barca. The play is an integral part of Spanish and European heritage; however, says Jonathan Thacker (2007, 15), it "has made little impression on British audiences and readers" who often have Shakespeare as their point of reference (Boyle and Johnston 2007; Thacker 2007). Or, as Rodríguez and Arpa put it, the audience may not know Calderón, as the Spanish did not do such a good job popularizing his work as the English and British have with Shakespeare. There is no sarcasm in it, but one cannot help but hear the echoes of the two countries' colonial past in the phrase "good job," especially given a

well-discussed connection between Shakespeare's popularity and colonization (Bates 2008; Druin 2014).

In Rodríguez and Arpa's adaptation, Rosaura's native Moscow is replaced with "Hispania" and Poland with "the Court of Europe," pushing it beyond a national context. Astolfo "dumps" Rosaura (by text) because, of course, she wasn't good enough for his aspirations to rule Europe, "a kingdom without hope." Rosaura follows Astolfo to the Court of Europe where he competes with Segismundo for votes to become the future of Europe. The reality show-style election is run by Davina McCall (presenter of the UK version of *Big Brother*) and Oprah Winfrey, who doubt whether a foreigner like Astolfo can win. In the performance, the only precisely described feature of Astolfo was his light blond mop of hair. The line was accompanied by a physical gesture visualizing the hairstyle; the spectators laughed in recognition of Boris Johnson who, as a leading figure in the 'Vote Leave' movement (and now, of course, as Prime Minister) played a lead role in another "reality show": Brexit. The connotation also echoes the post-Brexit sentiment that the "foreigners" were "voted out" (Burnett 2017, 86). As in *Bubble Revolution* and *An Evening*, laughter is shared in recognition of common experience, but also (in contrast to the other productions) in recognition of the joke's "butt." Following F.H. Buckley's (2003, 186–187) arguments, this laughter is the expression of spectators' sense of superiority over someone who does not belong to the community: the unfaithful and fickle politician.

The line about Boris Johnson does not feature in the actual script, and it seems it was added to the performance to make that specific reference at that specific time to mark the hypocrisy of people like Johnson (a descendant of migrants) or leader of the Brexit Party Nigel Farage (a descendant of migrants, married to a German citizen) calling to stop immigration. The reference to Johnson helps the story resonate with the Brexit experience, but it also works against any simplistic decoding of both the story and Brexit in a purely British context. With Johnson being positioned (through the association with Astolfo) as a foreigner wanting to take over Europe, the story escapes national boundaries and encourages the audience to read it (and their Brexit experience by extension) in a broader translocal context of corrupted politics, far-right discourses, and failed solidarity. Towards the end of the performance, Arpa and Rodríguez paraphrase in English Rosaura's lines from the beginning of Calderón's play and stretch the context of *Rosaura* beyond Europe's geopolitical boundaries: "Badly Europe, you receive a foreigner, if with blood you scrawl its

entrance in your sand and they barely make it, when they make it in despair" (Rodríguez and Arpa 2016, 24–25). After, the two performers talk about a collective dream in which people welcome a stranger with the line: "Don't worry, there's space for everyone" (Rodríguez and Arpa 2016, 27).

This final dream in *Rosaura*, additionally highlighted as connected with the only appearance of English verse, evokes images of refugees seeking shelter known from the contemporary refugee crisis and the history of humanity. It also plays on an often-repeated claim that the lack of jobs, houses, spaces in UK hospitals, and so on is due to immigration. In *Rosaura*, however, like in *An Evening*, there is space. This change is reminiscent of Bert O. States' (1993, 119–120) arguments from *Dreaming and Storytelling*. He says that dreams, fiction, and memories are all based on repetition and, "If something is to be remembered at all, it must be remembered not as what happened but as what has happened again in a different way and will surely happen again in the future in still another way." Each "different" provides a platform for change of emotional relationship with past experiences. Carlson (2003, 2–3) quotes States in *The Haunted Stage* to discuss a link between a dream, theatre, and memory, and argues that theatre has the particular power to do that as this change in theatre can be reimagined, which echoes my earlier reference to Helen Nicholson (2009).

One can see such efforts in *Rosaura, Bubble Revolution*, and *An Evening with an Immigrant*. All three productions attempt to ghost the memories created in multiple contexts with the audience's memories and experiences, while at the same time embracing the differences. By doing so, Arpa and Rodríguez, Ellams, and myself not only work to reimagine our audiences' relationship with these experiences (following States' point), but also with ourselves, and our foreignness. And perhaps, at least for some spectators, this leads to a realization that, in the words of Nascimento (2009, 137), "on- and off-stage, the foreign and the foreigner are in us, inherent parts of our cultural, political, and psychological histories."

As the stories from the past overlap with present interactions in live performances and, potentially, beyond them, together with our audiences, we may start imagining a future society. It is multifaceted, multifocal, and pluralistic with diverse individuals cultivating translocal imaginations (Brickell and Datta 2011, 18) and, through that, a sense of solidarity through differences. This world "once seen, cannot be unseen" (Nicholson 2009, 58). I am under no illusion that these three

productions can change the world. However, together they form a small translocal theatrical web that, if connected to other similar (and yet different) webs, can only grow, multiplying their transformative potential. It is our responsibility as scholars, artists, journalists, institutions, funders, and governments to facilitate the growth of such interconnected webs within and across different disciplines. The UK, Europe, and the world cannot pass on such an opportunity.

Notes

1. For example, see Steve Doughty and James Slack, "Record number of jobless EU migrants in Britain," *Daily Mail*, May 26, 2016, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3611697/Record-number-jobless-EU-migrants-Britain-Hammer-blow-PM-270-000-EU-nationals-came-year.html#ixzz4pL40MmJW; Amber Rudd, "Speech," Conservative Party Conference, October 4, 2016, Birmingham, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/04/jeremy-hunt-nhs-doctors-theresa-may-conservative-conference-live/; Nigel Farage, interviewed by Maya Oppenheim, *Independent*, March 23, 2017, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/nigel-farage-london-terror-attack-multiculturalism-blame-immigration-lbc-radio-ukip-mep-leader-a7645586.html.
2. Linda Woodhead (2016) argues that "'no religion' has risen to rival 'Christian' as the preferred self-designation of British people," especially those under forty. However, people over sixty tend to identify as Christian and Christianity still "remains the norm," creating tensions within the society (245–247, 259–260). A similar generational split was visible in the Brexit referendum (Moore 2016), which links with Woodhead's point that an increased cultural diversity in the UK was a factor in the rise of British "nones" who in majority voted to remain in the EU.
3. I use translocal and transnational as two separate terms with the former building on "the longer-established research tradition of transnationalism" but overcoming the former's "limited focus on the nation state," directing attention to alternative discourses (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013, 380–381).
4. All memories are authentic; however, some names were changed.
5. See Kasia Lech, "Acting as the Act of Translation: Domesticating and Foreignizing Strategies as Part of the Actor's Performance in the Irish-Polish Production of *Bubble Revolution*," in *Dramaturgy of Migration: Staging Multicultural Encounters in Contemporary Theatre*, edited by Yana Meerzon and Katharina Pewny (London: Routledge, 2020).

6. For example, see Rebecca Perring, "How to get 'GENEROUS' British benefits: Shocking guide handed out to Polish migrants," *Express*, March 10, 2016, https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/651386/Polish-migrant-guide-British-benefits-system-welfare-hand-outs-unemployed.

7. This is in accordance with Mark Easton's (2012) reading of the 2011 UK National Ecosystem Assessment.

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Challenging Stereotypes: *Moving Dreams* and the Italian Community of Peterborough, UK

Ida Casilli

This chapter analyses the results of the applied theatre project *Moving Dreams,* an intergenerational multimedia heritage initiative hosted by the Italian community of Peterborough, United Kingdom.[1] The project, which I designed, directed, and produced, featured first and second-generation migrant facilitators, filmmakers, and performers. *Moving Dreams* was the first part of a larger, ongoing research project exploring how applied theatre interventions can challenge negative stereotypes of migrants and refugees, by celebrating the achievements of historically marginalized communities and highlighting the power dynamics behind those stereotypes. The work aimed to compare perceptions of modern and old patterns of migration, analysing concepts of belonging, multiple cultural identities, transformative journeys, and legacies for future generations. Of the many projects taking place in a contemporary Europe, *Moving Dreams* addressed the urge of "reforging a concept of identity in a newly diverse and pluralised society" (Jeffers 2012, 11).

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Moving Dreams analysed the patterns of Italian migration between 1920 and 1950, and how the stereotypes attached to the Italian community had been embodied and/or unwillingly perpetrated by the community itself. With the project, I also wanted to investigate the similarity between these stereotypes and those currently used to define the new influx of refugees and asylum seekers hailing from Africa and the Middle East, as well as some specific European migrant minorities. *Moving Dreams* was composed of an interview stage, a workshop-based devising process, and a final performance. It included participants that contributed in different capacities, including a large representation of first, second, and third-generation Italians, but also Spanish, Albanian, Moroccan, French, Pakistani, and Polish contributors.

The project was developed and delivered in the fertile "diaspora space" of the UK, seeing "multiple subject positions juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed and disavowed" (Brah 1996, 208), in a politically heated landscape of a United Kingdom tormented by the uncertainty of the post-Brexit referendum discourse. It was set in Peterborough, a town that has grown exponentially in the last decade and benefitted from the contribution of its multicultural dwellers to the local economy. As such, the project gained a relevance within the local community, served the purpose of creating awareness, and facilitated encounters between new and old migrants, bridging the gaps between migrant communities.

Below I will discuss the background research for *Moving Dreams* and provide more information about the project itself, analysing it from a sociological and applied theatre perspective. The study includes a personal reflection on the project outcomes to date, as well as future development plans for the initiative.

CULTURAL IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITIES: APPLIED THEATRE IN GLOBAL, REGIONAL, AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

"Applied theatre" is an umbrella term used to describe theatre practices that are used outside the mainstream theatre context to apply and reinforce research from other fields. Applied theatre research originated between the late 1970s and the early 1980s from an increased interest in the results of participatory theatre practices created by socially and politically involved artists, including the work of Augusto Boal, leading Brazilian theatre maker and founder of Theatre of The Oppressed (TO). The

principles behind TO, and its satellite theatre methods including "Forum Theatre" and "Rainbow of Desire," are based on the idea that theatre should be universally accessible. According to Boal (2006, 36), basic theatre techniques taught in the TO method could help individuals "to produce a new form of understanding, helping the subject to *feel* and, through the senses and not just intelligence, to understand social reality." Throughout my training, first as a theatre scholar and later as a director and producer, I was particularly fascinated by the power of TO. Italy had been fully exposed to Augusto Boal's work as curated by Giorgio Ursini, and organizations such as Giolli and MCE, whose founders had received formal training in TO, were running workshops for social workers and artists working within different communities.

A fledgling applied theatre practitioner, I was running storytelling workshops to facilitate cultural mediation in some suburban schools in Rome. Many stories shared by the students had an eerie resonance with the migration stories I had heard as a child from family members who had migrated abroad for work. Before moving to the UK to qualify as an applied theatre practitioner, I focused my practice and studies on the topic of cultural memory embodiment, and the inclusion of minorities in mainstream representation in Italy. I wrote a dissertation on the inclusion and representation of minorities and marginalized communities in contemporary Italian theatre, which gave me the opportunity to research some of the first Italian applied theatre experiments, including Teatro dell Albe's bilingual *A Midsummer Night's Dream*[2] and the Kenya-based theatre for development project *Pinocchio Nero* (2005) run by Marco Baliani with children living on the streets of Nairobi. Both productions were conceived and produced by established theatre directors in Italy and had roots in applied theatre projects. Both had a clear intent to represent and empower communities, enabling them to perform in a culturally vibrant environment. Nevertheless, the presence of these communities on stage embodied the political urge to take concrete action to promote inclusion and celebrate diversity. Furthermore, the community empowerment approach used by both directors, combined with a professionally-led, workshop-based devising process, succeeded in instigating a deeper level of what Augusto Boal (2008) postulates as the *change* "that spectators enact being SPECT-ACTORS. As such, spectators have the ability to change the story they are observing on stage, and therefore being inspired to change their own lives."

So, there I was, ready to bring my practice abroad and learn more skills in an international environment. I could not have predicted the challenges I would face as an international practitioner, or how my practice would develop. According to Helen Nicholson (2014, 6), "Applied Theatre practitioners and participants perform as citizens in different global, regional and social contexts, despite their cultural and identity affiliations." As an applied theatre practitioner working with many different communities, I was in close contact with participants and leaders who often had limited or basic knowledge of applied theatre research. Negotiations on technique, focus, and intent behind the creation of a more practice-based or performance-based work were often mixed with assumptions of what my contribution should have been in relation to my presumed cultural identity.

I quickly realized how the stereotypes I was labelled with because of my cultural, gender, and social identity (whether intentional or not), largely affected my freedom to fully tap into the resources of the creative industry, and disrupted the sustainability of the work I intended to do in the country. Meanwhile, the global refugee crisis was not holistically represented in the media, which fuelled the confusion and fear of the political consequences of such a crisis. Despite these obstacles, I was able to connect with and work alongside many companies and communities, challenging the status quo whenever possible. I specialized in the delivery of workshops and courses for intergenerational groups, theatre for older people, reminiscence activities for dementia patients, and youth arts.

As a European citizen, I was (and am) working in UK under the uncertain circumstances generated by the Brexit referendum. These circumstances fuelled my creativity and motivated me to pursue applied theatre research on the embodiment of stereotypes, using the Italian community in Peterborough as a starting point. My interest was in understanding how the new arrivals had embodied, coped with, or challenged prejudice, and what relevance those stereotypes would have for later generations. In short, my favourite quote from Boal I read and endlessly repeated as a student was soon going to become the motivator for my research "Nothing is going to remain the same. Let us, in the present, study the past, so as to invent the future" (Boal 2008).

ITALIAN DIASPORA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW FROM 1861 TO PRESENT

Between 1861 and 1977, a staggering 29,036,000 Italians migrated to other countries in waves following a series of different international agreements. Studies from the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (Pozzetta 1980; Pozzetta et al. 1992) have identified three main waves within the Italian diaspora. The first wave took place between 1861 and 1900, during the period of the unification of Italy. The second wave occurred between 1900 and 1914 at the beginning of World War I, with a number of migrants being associated with the fascist intelligentsia and segregated in camps alongside members of the Italian army captured in Northern Africa, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The third wave began after World War II and lasted until 1977, fuelled by the demand for unskilled labour in the growing European, American and Australian cities (Pozzetta 1992).

From the nineteenth century onwards, emigration was driven by high rates of unemployment, lack of cultivable land, poverty, overpopulation, and the absence of social welfare systems in Italy. Other factors, mostly political and economic, included the desire to escape organized crime and political corruption, lack of appropriate sanitation or food supplies, as well as overpopulation and the untameable social sprawl of the southern region (Sori 1987). Early patterns of migration to northern Europe (including Great Britain) began to shift towards the rest of the world as industrialization and the growth of world capitalism created millions of jobs for Italians searching for "work and bread." After 1945, the Italian government encouraged migration through agreements with foreign employers using earlier migrants as intermediaries (Hatton and Williamson 1994, 533).

Inevitably, Italian citizens developed a form of mutual support, with a strong community core, facilitating the employment of reliable co-citizens, and creating dedicated unions to support fellow unemployed people from their hometowns. Some former prisoners of war were assigned to recruit new workers from their towns of origin, and to facilitate the administration of "paid passage schemes" which would grant the new employees a free transfer to England. This was certainly the case for Peterborough, where the integration of new migrants was also facilitated by the church and other family-based community support initiatives (Cereste 2001). Peterborough's Italian community dates back to the post-war reconstruction period, when economic conditions in both Italy and the UK triggered migration from impoverished villages in Southern Italy and

Emilia-Romagna to England. The post-war building boom created a shortage of workers in the brickworks industry. Manual labour was demanding and not well rewarded in the eyes of British citizens. Struggling to meet the demand, the brick companies began to look overseas for workers, after having employed ex-prisoners of war and being impressed by their resilience and willingness to perform heavy duty tasks. The London and Marston Valley Brick Companies set up offices in Naples and hired labourers for the brick factories they had established in Peterborough and Bedford (Cereste 2001).

The First Development of *Moving Dreams*

Participatory theatre company Spare Tyre selected my proposal for *Moving Dreams* in a call for contributions to celebrate the company's fortieth anniversary (the celebration was officially called Spare Tyre's 40th Birthday). The project was selected under a call for entries "working with many people in many different ways." At that time, I had not yet identified a specific community to work with. Arti Prashar, the company's artistic director at that stage, encouraged me to select a community of people that shared my native language, so that the work could be developed in the community's mother tongue without marginalizing any participants who might have a language barrier. The project's subject, then, was the Italian diaspora hailing from the region where I was born[3] and who had settled in the UK mostly around the brick factories. Immediately after, I received further funding from Peterborough Presents, a consortium promoting arts activities in Peterborough and the surrounding area. The consortium had an interest in working with minority groups through the arts.

The project was called *Moving Dreams* because we wanted to collect memories and testimonies of migration in order to compare them with the present using a dream-like framework. The intent was to include pleasant (dreams) and unsettling (nightmares) content in the performance. Having worked on a similar project with the Brazilian community in London, I devised new workshop material inspired by previously tested work. As such, the *Moving Dreams* team collected memories and testimonies of migration from workshop participants and other, non-performing contributors. The material was then workshopped and devised into a play performed by the participants. The project outreach was done with the help of regional and national websites, creative networking events, and word of mouth. It was imperative that the project be intergenerational,

and so it included participants aged fifty or older, aged twenty to fifty, as well as third-generation Italian teenagers. The project's intergenerational format appealed to a diverse and broad audience, including members of the Italian community who settled in Peterborough during the 1950s; their second generation; the second generation of Italian prisoners during World War II; and the newer influx of Italian migrants who arrived in Peterborough after 1980. New migrants from other backgrounds were also drawn to the work for its topical relevance and its representation of issues similar to those that they (or their relatives) were experiencing. *Moving Dreams* was hosted by Peterborough's Italian community, and as such it was also an instrument to celebrate the efforts and achievements of this specific group. The project was not restricted to Italian migrants, though, and included testimonies from people of other minority groups that either live, work, or frequently visit Peterborough, including Polish, Albanian, Spanish, French, Moroccan, and British contributors.

The location of the project was symbolic, as the Fleet Community Centre—currently run by the Italian Community Association (ICA)—is built on the premises of the London Brick Factories of Fletton, where many migrants worked upon arrival in the UK. The project consisted of two main parts, the first consisting of image selection, conducting interviews, topic development through tailored TO drama games, and performance text-building. The second part consisted of devising, rehearsals, and performance, including a filming session with a professional filmmaker. The first part of the project was attended by participants affiliated with the Italian community of Peterborough, but was also popular amongst migrants of other nationalities, especially within the younger participants' group. The second part was mostly attended by Italians, though it was strongly supported by migrants, charities, and small local businesses of other nationalities.

How We Analysed the Stereotypes Transfer: Who Are the Modern WOPs?

Gardner et al. (1970) define ethnic stereotypes in terms of trait-descriptive adjectives associated with an ethnic group label. *Moving Dreams* traded modern Italian stereotypes for those associated with their specific ethnic group during the first wave of the diaspora. Stella's research (2003)

identified *WOPs, mafiosos and scrimas,* as the three main stereotypes for Italian migrants worldwide in that specific historical period.

An anglicized version of the Neapolitan word *guappo,* (dude, stud), or more credibly an acronym (Without Ordinary Passport) reflecting the lack of official papers held by Italian migrants waiting to acquire their freeman status, WOP was a derogatory slur to identify Italian migrants initially just in the United States. The stereotypical power of this term is directly and strongly interlinked to a number of not completely legal practices that many Italian migrants chose to do or were forced to do as less advantaged people of their community. These included underage labour and illegal busking, but also attempts to find work which violated the UK requirement to register with the police under the 1920 Alien Order. The term WOP arrived with North American films and literature, and was mostly used as a descriptor signalling a harsh and eccentric personality.

The word *scrima* (an inflection of the word "ice cream" pronounced with an Italian accent) was invented as a derogatory term to define loud and illiterate vendors of Italian origin. Although initially used to define ice cream vendors, the word was soon associated with the Italian loud tone of voice, allegedly due to a general lack of manners and education. Interestingly enough, the etymology of this word reflects the connection between the growth of the ice scream vending industry and the contribution of the Italian workforce to this success. Ice cream vending was, in fact, the most popular and profitable industry pursued by Italian migrants in the UK and beyond, together with carpentry and housebuilding.

Positive memories of successful and lucky migrants tend to prevail in collective memory (Stella 2003). However, many less successful individuals were recorded for their involvement in small criminal acts, including thefts, commissioned crimes, and participation in the black market. Last but not least, they were also recorded for playing intermediary roles in local criminal organizations affiliated with the mafia. Although a larger number of organized criminal acts associated with mafia was occurring in the USA, the stereotype of *mafioso* was soon acquired to imply a general untrustworthiness for Italian immigrants in Europe. Italian migrant communities were particularly closely-knit, self-sufficient, and self-reliant. These social characteristics ensured that unfair acts were punished by and within the community, as it would happen in smaller gangs or more organized criminal organizations like the mafia. The Italian *mafioso* stereotype simplified this extremely complex socio-political structure in a poignant expression of chauvinist misperception.

The Social Cycle of These Stereotypes: Staggering Similarities

Despite the inevitable changes in the historical and sociological landscape, there was a staggering similarity between the stereotypes forged to define Italian migrants and those used to address illegal migrants and asylum seekers. Furthermore, I noticed how the communities once stereotyped were using the same derogatory definitions to address the latest influx of migrants, feeding off the confusion regarding migration patterns generated or reinforced during the Brexit referendum campaigns. For this reason, the conditions of younger migrants, including Europeans (as well as Italians), were often associated with refugees. Consequently, they were deemed to hinder employment opportunities for British citizens. In addition, statistics confirmed that a conspicuous number of older Italian citizens living in Peterborough supported the Leave campaign in the Brexit referendum. Those supporters also agreed to be interviewed by the media to explain their reasoning, where they used derogatory terms and stereotypes to define new migrants.

Sociological studies would allow me to frame this occurrence as a phenomenon perfectly fitting within the social cycles' theory, the cyclical repetition of sociological phenomena, especially in the microcosm of small towns (Turchin 2005). Was there an opportunity to rehearse a Boalian "revolution" using theatre to change people's perspectives? (Boal 2008). I was convinced of the possibility to challenge that tendency, and applied theatre was the best instrument to negotiate power struggles and facilitate mutual understanding. The focus of my project narrowed to the perpetuation of stereotypes allocated to Italian migrants to the UK, and how those stereotypes were transferred to the new influx of migrants.

I decided to deliver workshops using a selection of stereotypes that addressed matters of legal status, stereotyping, and criminality. *WOP, Scrima,* and *mafioso* were specifically chosen for their potential to trigger the process of comparison between older and new migrants.

Both interviewees and workshop participants found it very difficult to explore creatively the *mafioso* stereotype: interviews and data collected during conversations demonstrated how there was no desire to be implicated with criminality, past or present. The Italian community of Peterborough was involved in a great deal of negotiation to integrate within the British culture. These included a strong affiliation to the local Catholic Church, and a willingness to strive for excellence in their work

and behaviours. Employees of the brick factory had to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to maintain their workmen rights. We also worked extensively on the *scrima* stereotype: one of our participants moved to Peterborough to work as an ice- cream vendor. His first-person experience was used as a starting point. We chose to gear our research on resilience, rather than response to the offense, as suggested by this specific participant.

Moving Dreams workshop participants acknowledged the potential of working with the WOP stereotype: the concept allowed them to explore feelings related to freedom of movement. Just as the older member of the Italian community worked hard—and at times struggled—to achieve their *freeman status*, so the current migrants and asylum seekers had to face uncertainty and instability. Participants were particularly concerned with the inability of refugees to reconnect to their families, as families seem to be conceived as a safe haven by all workshop participants.

Project Participants and Their Contributions to the Play Text

During the first part of the project I collected a large number of interviews from two groups: the older people participating to the regular weekly activities run by the ICA, as well as a group of younger people at the Green Backyard, a public green space animated by volunteer-led activities. Only some of the interviewees chose to participate in the second part of the project that was meant to include a set of performative activities. At the beginning of the second part of the project, workshop participants were presented with recorded testimonies from those interviews, as well as archival photos from the Italian Community Association archive, private photos collections, the Peterborough Library. The intergenerational group of participants was creative and diverse. It included a younger group aged twenty to thirty; two young people aged ten and twelve; and an older group aged fifty-five and over. Participants had different reasons to join the project but were all brought together by the desire to talk about migration. Younger participants were fascinated by the topics, and keen to take advice, while the older participants reminisced on the Italian community's achievements and were driven to serve as an example to the younger participants:

Fabio is holding two photos in his hands. He looks at them very thoroughly and then says: 'I can't see any difference. Two mothers and their children, that's all I can see. It could be my wife, it could be me, it could be my neighbour.' Fabio arrived in Peterborough in 2014, a male nurse looking for full time employment and a dream to perform—as a hobby, he swears. Giuseppe is looking at the same two photos, he recognises some landmarks of the old town that have now been replaced by other structures. 'My boss lived not far away, it wasn't too far from the location where this photo was taken.' Giuseppe arrived in the U.K. in 1952. A young boy then, he became an apprentice carpenter, and worked overtime to fulfil his dream: buying a motorbike. Sicili-ana's mother is a local artist of Italian descent. Sicili-ana feels as much Italian as English, and hopes to spend more time in Italy to learn about Italian cuisine, and nail the perfect touch to any pasta recipe. She is sure there is more to the Italian culture than cooking, but she thinks that cuisine is what Italians are famous for in Peterborough. (Casilli 2017b)

The nature of the group was crucial to the selection of topics for the play. The participants chose to develop the topics of work and better opportunities as the main threads of the play. These topics were relatable to both Italian participants and those of other nationalities.

The stories selected were poignant examples of resilience, compassion, and positivity, serving both as a testimony for the community, and as a comparison between past and more modern reasons for migration. The lack of work or suitable job opportunities provided common ground for both groups, including the teenagers, whose focus was geared more towards the ability to access resources necessary for their integration. Occasional mentions of food were made, but mostly as a metaphor for nourishment and appreciation. Despite my keenness to include some testimonies gathered from the children of prisoners of war, those pieces were discarded, as captivity carried a harsh reality that the group was not prepared to explore.

Storytelling with visual interaction (video clips) was chosen as the most suitable method for the performances. A few dialogues were created, featuring the onstage interaction of younger participants and older members to facilitate the performing process for those less confident with their theatrical skills.

The play's main character was Angela, a fictional third-generation Italian who grew up with a fascination for her grandparents' traditions. The character was named Angela after one of the project's most prolific interviewees; the name's qualities of protection and supernatural

transformation were well suited for the character's main function. Angela's quest to learn about her Italian roots is triggered by the loss of her beloved Auntie Anna, a migrant to the UK in the 1950s, who was very well known in the community. Auntie Anna was affected by dementia; her memories were "gradually fading away" (Casilli 2017a), according to the attentive ears of young Angela. So, Angelia decides to embark on a journey of discovery to unveil the untold stories of the Italian community of Peterborough.

The topics chosen were: collection of testimonies to celebrate the legacy of people's efforts and successes; separation from families in search for a better future; fear of criminality; ice-cream vending tradition; juggling life and work; income expectations; young apprentices working hard to fulfil their dreams; overworked mothers and integrated children; freeman status and illegal migration; language barriers that transform into an unexpected asset; comparison between new and old migration patterns; and analysis of the past to create an impact on the future.

Intergenerational Practice and Breaking Stereotypes

One of the greatest strengths and challenges of this project was its intergenerational core. The project aimed to create a conversation amongst the two generations of migrants, so that each of them could share their experiences and reach a common understanding of one another's achievements.

The younger participants showed appreciation and curiosity for the experiences of the older participants. The older group was very pleased with that and, once they overcame their fear of judgement, stories and memories flowed freely, enriching the pool of archival material we had started with. We decided to include testimonies from the participants in the play text, as they had an incredible relevance to the whole discourse. Despite our interpersonal and language skills that allowed us to collect many stories with minimal effort, only a small number of interviewees agreed to perform in the play. However, hearing stories directly from the subject added to the credibility of the work and made it easier for the participants to write their own stories.

What became evident throughout the work is that the stories we were analysing were not just disembodied discourses, but were deeply embedded in the lives of the second-generation Italians born in Peterborough. They were deeply ingrained in the practices of everyday life and held intense relevance to the whole process of identification as British Italians.

As such, the stories stirred up pride and content, but also recalled a series of unpleasant memories. Second-generation interviewees remembered the uncomfortable need to refute stereotypes used to define their parents, and subsequently themselves. They chose, instead, to talk about the achievements of their families, as well as the Italian community as a whole, to gain general trust and respect. According to their recollections, their families had to work harder within their occupations: their success would not only be recognized as marker of excellence, but would also serve as a trust building tool. Their parents' ability to show good manners and respect would also help the entire community be respected and appreciated. Their parents' ability to abide the law and act formally and legally would have made the entire community trustworthy. Their childhood was profoundly affected by these experiences, not always in a pleasant manner. It became evident to me that, before comparing stereotypes, I had to celebrate the achievements of the community throughout the years, and then open a discourse.

A second major challenge was the use of language itself. As verbal language and symbolization are core structures in the development of a sense of community (Brinck et al. 2017, 141), practitioners had to deal with a multiple crossover of languages. In the interview collection stage, I had to translate interviews from a number of Southern Italian dialects into contemporary Italian to render them accessible to other Italian speakers. As a second stage, I had to translate them into English. It was clear to me how the process of translation was cutting off layers of cultural expression that gave colour and depth to the stories collected. Most of the second-generation Italian contributors and workshop participants reported how, growing up within a community they could not identify with on a cultural level, they chose to speak English amongst themselves as they could not fully understand the myriad of dialects used among the Italian settlers. When choosing the language to use for the play's script, we gave participants the freedom to use some words or sentences in different dialects. They were positioned strategically in the text so that even non-Italian speakers could understand their meaning. The physical interaction was also supporting the use of such vocabulary, amalgamating it perfectly into the text.

Non-Italian contributors and audiences responded to the activity with a lot of enthusiasm, having as an only concern that of whether their contribution could hinder their identification of Italians with a play featuring their contribution. It was noted however, in many cases, that the

experience of the migrant itself had some similarity across cultures. For that reason, sentences and impressions of the non-Italian contributors featured seamlessly in the play. Similarly, non-Italian audiences were inspired by the final performance as well, and did not feel excluded or confused by the content of the play.

PERFORMANCE-DEVISING PROCESS: SUBCULTURES, IDENTIFICATION, COMMUNITY CONSENSUS, AND THE POWER OF CONVEYING POSITIVE MEMORIES

Analysing the sample of archival material and live interviews with the older members of the Italian community of Peterborough, we found a number of people reported a gradual and mostly positive integration process at the beginning of the interview process. However, a sense of nostalgia would envelop their words when reminiscing about home. We identified many representations of the notion of *home* in our interviews: most of them were concerned with the nostalgia of childhood memories of the *homeland*. Many had a more geographic connotation and a longing for long-gone community bonds, while others were concerned with the cultural values including family, decorum, and celebration that they had to leave behind when settling in the UK. All representations had a connecting thread of *diasporic intimacy* (Boym 2001, 254), where the "uprootedness and defamiliarization" of the interviewees produced a colourful carousel of memories where intimacy corresponded to a freedom of expression in its own language. The idea of home is, in fact, an imaginary place where the individual can enact a wholeness generated by a freedom of expression.

The first-generation interviewees had replaced that sense of connection with the homeland with a newly forged idea of "home away from home." This shift in focus was probably due to the lack of limitation in terms of travelling in a global era, especially within Europe. However, as the project served to celebrate the efforts of this migrant community and the positive contribution of migrants to the country's welfare, we chose to shift the focus from the tender memories of home to the creation of a diasporic identity.

Another recurring feature was the sense of split identity (Comellini 2015), in which interviewees would state their inability to fully identify as English or as Italians, after having lived in the UK for such a long time. This sense of split identity was passed to the next generation, who were

either very adamant about identifying with Italian culture or looking for a dual heritage or second-generation migrant's cultural balance. Both Angela's and Concetta's monologues address this topic:

ANGELA: Our stories are part of your story, you must keep them alive!

I shared this dream with many people: all of them think I am longing to learn more about my culture. But what is my culture? When I am with my friends, I always feel too Italian to be English and too English to be fully Italian. When I am in Italy, I really feel like I belong there. The wind, the sun, the sea, my summertime friends. But then when I am here, I love my town, my people, my family in England. My mother suggested I should look out for the people visiting my dream to learn about my origins. Their stories won't just be hidden in old dusty books, so I should look out for them. She thinks I should start by asking all of my Auntie Anna's friends, as they will know the Italians that came to Peterborough in 1950s. Auntie Anna always had so much to say about all the miles walked in search of hope, adventure and a better future. Until the moment memories started fading away, and our curiosity couldn't be satiated anymore. (Casilli 2017a)

Whereas Angela's quest for her own heritage is completely motivated by her need to heal that sense of double identity, Concetta's monologue focuses on her ability to use her dual identity to support newcomers and maintain her heritage language.

CONCETTA: When I was a child, I used to dream I would become a teacher. I was curious to learn the right way, if there was one. I wanted all of my friends and colleagues to be able to stand up and speak for themselves. Why? Well, why not? Why shouldn't I be a teacher? Because I was a foreigner and I couldn't speak or write properly? So… I was cleaning in the morning, and studying in the evening. And soon I became a teacher —I did it!—(cleaners whooping and cheering). Later I realized, I needed to teach Italian to my children, rather than teach English to other children. So, I am here now to be your teacher. It's never too late to learn! (Casilli 2017a)

In many interviews, speakers recollected their stories of being young people separated from their parents or families, and later reunited, often in a traumatic way. We chose to dedicate a large portion of the workshops to developing a truthful yet poetic way of narrating the stories of these people. Where no evidence of trauma was shared, stories were easier to reproduce. Some were very personal and quite unsettling. We choose two

stories, both of whom performed in the play, and included some childhood memories in a wider monologue:

1. When I arrived in England, I was only 15. I came all the way up with my mother to join my dad. He came with a contract to work for the London Brick Company, with many other people from our home town. The train ride was long and I was so impatient to get off. I had not seen my father for a long time, and I had forgotten what he looked like. Especially how strict he was! He was so serious! The family needed help: my father had found me a job and I started working right away. (Casilli 2017a)
2. Once mamma showed me the route along Westfield Road over Baker Perkins Bridge and round the back behind the rugby and football pitches, all the way to our allotment. I, the eldest, was chosen to push the pram as we tried to evade even the most persistent busy bodies who largely anticipated a view of the bonnie baby in the pram. Oh, the look on their faces! What a bunch of gypsy refugees we must have seemed, dressed in old allotment clothes and cut off wellies. No wonder we stood out. We felt like round pegs in square holes. (Casilli 2017a)

The second monologue clearly displays the precarious conditions of some Italian migrants. Children were given the duty to care for their younger siblings, depriving them of the ability to enjoy their own childhood. Some children were forced to work to contribute to insufficient family incomes, as also seen in the first monologue. Parents were keen for them to behave appropriately, however their appearance could not conceal the harshness of their resettling process. The nightmare section, interpreted by two younger participants, was a precise account of an interviewee's children, shouting their disappointment for not being able to spend time with their parents, who were working almost eighteen hours a day "on physically exhausting, undesirable and often dangerous work" (Iacovetta 1992, 64).

> FEDERICO: Is Babbo Natale coming tonight, mamma? Am I going to have new clothes this year? I don't like going out with these baggy trousers, mum. Uncle Nino says this jacket used to be his son's. Why am I wearing my cousins' clothes? Can I also have a dog, and a train ticket to see my nonno in Naples?

BEATRICE: And me, am I going to have a new doll? This one has a head-ache so piercing, there's a hole in her head. Look, boom! Dolly's mum works very hard, on double shifts. She is never at home with her, and when she hugs her, she always has a headache, because too much work gave her a headache. I think I need a new dolly. (Casilli 2017a)

Some interviewees requested to remain anonymous, and while they were happy to share their positive memories, they were reluctant to reveal their trying pasts. For that reason, I treasured all accounts of challenging experiences, and highlighted the endurance that the interviewees demonstrated.

Another challenging account we chose to celebrate was that of another interviewee, who was forced to choose between returning to Italy to attend to his mother at her death bed, or remaining in the UK to fulfil the five years' bond requirement on his employment contract. His inability to return to his country made the interviewee feel particularly fragile, and being unable to see his mother one last time caused him to feel displaced and uneasy.

While the younger participants identified with a myriad of subcultures, which played a crucial role in encouraging non-Italian audience members to attend the show, the older participants identified solely with the Italian community of Peterborough. Such diversity implied that some of the older participants were looking for the approval of the *older Italian community*—in other words, the other Italian people they shared their leisure time with both at the community centre and in their own communities.

Despite the incredibly rich theatrical and cinematographic Italian tradition, the older community of Italians in Peterborough was concerned that they lacked the theatrical skills necessary to take part in a community theatre project. This may be partly attributed to the fact that they were frequently exposed to folkloristic practices and/or highly skilled artistic practices in the form of regular events taking place at the community centre. The community centre functioned as a role model for artistic practice, setting a standard which seemed out of their reach. If we consider how the older Italian community had to prove their worth in the workplace by achieving excellence, some of the older community members were therefore very concerned about their perceived lack of theatrical skills. Apparently, these concerns surfaced during everyday conversations, and participants struggled to gather consensus for their decision to take part in the project because their "perceived" lack of skills might result in a

poor-quality show. The concern was handled well by the group, with the younger participants reassuring the older participants of their ability to perform, and the importance of their contribution.

The Performance: Synopsis and Provocations

The final draft of Moving Dreams was staged three times in two Fletton-based community centres: ICA—The Fleet and the Green Backyard. The audience included Italian migrants, second and third-generation Italians, younger and older migrants of other backgrounds, and a large number of local people interested in the project. The play is inspired by different pieces of interviews collected throughout the project, both before and throughout the workshop process. All characters were fictitious and inspired by different interviews, in order to celebrate multiple stories without unwanted exposure. Some performers agreed to share personal material under their name, because of its relevance and resonance to the rest of the community.

In the play, protagonist Angela, a student of Italian origin, is told by her friends/fellow students that she should spend more time finding more out about her heritage and *her people*. Wondering what the expression *her people* exactly means, Angela starts questioning her idea of community as a place of belonging. So, she starts a research to unveil the stories of Peterborough Italian community. Angela starts her research collecting old photos and letters of her beloved aunt Anna, who was suffering from Alzheimer's and had recently passed away. In a quest that often takes the shape of a dream or hallucination, past, present, and future interlace. A gallery of real or invented people from the Italian Community, with stereotypical traits, appears on stage. Each character's story develops, articulates, and defies a specific stereotype:

1. An unmarried woman leaves her country to work in Peterborough as a cleaner. Ultimately, she trains to become a successful nurse.
2. A mysterious shaman-like man who runs eco-sustainable activities for its community recounts the story of his childhood under the care of his grandmother in a post war impoverished Italy, whilst his father moved to England to become a brick worker.
3. A poor child is a young carer to his six siblings. Hanging out in rags, he fills his little brother's pram with vegetables he collects in a *secret* allotment.

4. A young man tries to leave the country to assist his mother on her deathbed, but he is not allowed to board his train.
5. A young migrant misses his connection train, can't speak the new country's language and can't find his brother in law. His ability to adapt and be grateful will make him a great ice-cream vendor.
6. A mechanic saves money to buy a motorbike in secret. His hard work allows for an easier inclusion process within the local community.
7. Two children complain about not having appropriate clothing and toys. They accuse their parents of caring more about working multiple shifts than spending time with them.
8. An unskilled worker with a poor command of the English language at the time of landing, studies and qualifies as English teacher. She also opens her own language school and promotes continuous education to the entire audience.

Each story brings the audience into a historical journey that contains a clear provocation related to Italian migrant experiences from 1950–1970: situation of unsettlement, fear of their political conditions, shame about their status, and derogatory language, all of which resonated with the experiences of modern migrants and asylum seekers. The play incorporates video footage to promote a sense of dreamlike reality, where present, past, and future interlace and influence each other. The participatory sections allow for a direct interaction with the audience, creating a classroom style dialogue with some of the characters. The play ends with Angela's monologue: a call for reflection and action, where footage of old archive photos alternates with modern photos of refugees and asylum seekers landing in Lampedusa.

Endings, Evaluation, and Potential Evolutions of *Moving Dreams*

The methodology used to assess our project included live interviews, feedback forms, question and answer session and a post-show feedback session with the workshop participants. The feedback was very positive and highlighted the fact that little or no knowledge of the endeavours of the older generation Italian migrants was available to non-Italian people in Peterborough. The exemplary nature of the stories prompted reflections

on the current political situation regarding the migration crisis. Just as we hoped, many audience members realized how easy it is to underestimate the difficulty of the whole migration process.

Angela's final monologue, as seen below, clearly proclaimed our wish to compare the stories narrated with those of stigmatized refugees in the present times in order to invite our audiences to have respect and understanding for their stories.

> Memories are what we are made of
> Cell by cell, feelings running deep.
> We tend to forget who we are, who we were
> what brought us to where we are
> and what made us the people we are.
>
>
> Our ancestors carved a path
> we are still walking.
> Different faces, different eyes wide opened
> different cultures but same concerns, same worries, same longings
> [...]
> We must keep their lessons alive,
> we must keep telling their stories
> we must fuel our journey with their wisdom.
> Lest we forget, and dreamers must not forget.
> Dreams are what keep us moving. (Casilli 2017a)

Many audience members understood and appreciated the significance of the comparison; others preferred to dismiss it. Some were clearly very moved by the testimonies, commenting that the show helped them understand what it took to change their lives completely, leaving a country where they felt they had no future and starting again in a place that was unfamiliar and sometimes unwelcoming. They had to negotiate feelings of not belonging and uprootedness and face the challenge of an uncertain future, and the performance made them proud of their family's resilience and strength. Audiences clearly felt that these were important stories to tell, that would help everyone learn to imagine what lay behind a migrant's story before judging them.

Most of the audience expressed keenness to see the show again and contribute to the project's development in the future. This project was the first of its genre to happen in Peterborough. As more funding for similar

projects is invested by local consortiums and national funders, I recognize the relevance that the project had by reaching out to an isolated community, celebrating its achievements and involving community members in a professional capacity.

In addition to this, some members of Peterborough's BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) creative community attended the performance and were inspired to develop similar projects to celebrate their own communities' contributions to the town. Participants, interviewees, and audiences shared the value of reliving their memories or creating an empathic relationship with the stories narrated. They acquired a new meaning under the light of the current Brexit discourse and its evident connection with the global refugee crisis: participants, to some extent, were able to offer their voices to instigate resistance.

Aware of the complex relationship between communities' agendas and the politics of intention that contribute to the shaping of applied discourse (Taylor 2003, 1), I am not able to provide evidence of a transformation in the audience's perception. However, with our collection of positive responses, insights, and the inevitable learning curve of such a delicate project, I remain faithful to the small relentless changes that applied theatre can instigate.

Whilst I continue to express my gratitude to mentors and funders that made this project possible, I hope to be able to repeat the show in different towns to spread the discourse further. I have embarked on new creative endeavours, with the goal to soon develop new work on the topic. I hope that this project continues to generate a better understanding of migration patterns, serving as a starting point for new artistic discourses on migration, identity, and community.[4]

Notes

1. The project was funded by Spare Tyre, Peterborough Presents, and Forterra UK.
2. Teatro delle Albe specializes in intercultural theatre and new writing through adaptation of existing literature. See http://www.teatrodellealbe.com/eng/curriculum.php?id=1.
3. I was born in Molise with part of my family having migrated from Apulia, and part belonging to the old arbëreshë settlement of Campomarino (Molise).
4. Readers interested in more information, including images and video clips, can browse our website at https://movingdreamerstheatrecompany.com.

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Breaking Stereotypes: *Afrika!* and *In the Waiting Room of the Dreams*: Two Theatrical Projects with Refugees in German Border Cities Close to France

Michalis Georgiou

Since the summer of 2015, Germany has accepted approximately 1,500,000 refugees and migrants into the country. Coverage of this influx dominated the media in the first few months and the so-called "refugee crisis" remains an ongoing political and social debate (Georgiou and Zaborowski 2017). Between 2015 and 2017, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees received more than 800,000 asylum applications.[1] During this period, municipalities began building numerous refugee camps and the government announced plans for assimilation measures, such as language classes, lessons in German law, and work experience

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opportunities to encourage refugees to integrate into German society in return for being allowed to live and work in the country. This political and cultural orientation towards integration was further advanced as the German government, alongside private companies, provided financial support for hundreds of theatres to stage performances that directly engaged with issues related to the refugee crisis.

My personal connection with this topic started in the city of Offenburg in western Germany, where I worked as an office manager, an artistic director, and a dramaturge at the local theatre, BAAL Novo Theater Eurodistrict, from 2015 to 2016. Located in the state of Baden-Württemberg, fifteen kilometres east of the river Rhine, Offenburg is the capital city of the Ortenau district. Across the river, lies the French city of Strasbourg. The BAAL Novo Theater Eurodistrict is a bilingual German-French theatre that engages in artistic and sociocultural projects, with the aim of allowing people to participate in artistic processes, while providing a voice to socially marginalized groups. When I moved to Offenburg from Berlin in September 2015, I remember being surprised by the number of refugees arriving there—something that sparked my interest in working with them, which I had the opportunity to do when the director of the theatre, Edzard Schoppmann, asked me to work as a dramaturge in applied theatre projects involving refugees from different cultural backgrounds.

I wanted to combine applied theatre theory with praxis in my work with refugees. Though a literature review helped me to prepare my methodology, I soon realized that not only does new work continuously express different views about what the concept of applied theatre means, but scholars are beginning to question its meaning and value. For example, in her PhD thesis, Karen Dainty (2018) explores how empathy and sympathy emerge in applied theatre. According to her personal experience, it is hard to determine what kind of theatre and performances bring about social change, and it is even more difficult to study applied theatre without taking into account its broader sociopolitical dimensions.[2] Applied theatre is a general term for non-mainstream theatrical activities that explore issues related to individuals, communities, or societies. My work, in general, concerns a theatre practice that seeks "outcomes beyond the artistic experience" (Baldwin 2009, 134) by first providing a space where refugees can share their personal narratives, then by creating a community between the actors and the audience (Nicholson 2005). It is in this community that a transformational process takes place: the audience is confronted with situations that encourage them to reflect upon and revise their perceptions

(Taylor 2003). In addressing issues of social justice, applied theatre has social and even political dimensions, particularly when participants experience discrimination or are economically, socially, or culturally marginalized. As James Thompson (2009, 5) mentions, however, there is a difference in its effect when a performance occurs in a specific site, such as a prison, camp, or school, or, in this case, when immigrants or refugees are the subject matter. Despite its sociopolitical dimensions, applied theatre offers no immediate resolution to social justices. In the case of applied theatre about refugees and migrants, the issue is more about how these social groups can be integrated within the host country and to what degree diversity is considered acceptable within German society. This chapter is inspired by my personal experiences, interactions, and professional engagement in applied theatre with refugees.

One third of Offenburg's citizens can trace their lineage to other countries, as they have migrant backgrounds, while around 10% of them have foreign passports representing more than one hundred different nationalities. The main group is Turks, followed by French and Italians. Nevertheless, the mass arrival of refugees which began in 2015 came as a shock to the inhabitants of this relatively small community unaccustomed to such extensive change. Sociologists William Thompson and Joseph Hickey (1999) have shown that stereotypes emerge out of cultural and socialization patterns and the mass media. In Offenburg, public debate ensuing from this wave of immigration often centred on the deplorable living conditions of the refugee camps or concerns, founded on stereotypes, that the refugee population posed a threat to the social and cultural life of the city. This intense focus on refugees was exacerbated by an attack on civilians in Paris in January 2015, resulting in the deaths of twelve people in the offices of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* at the hands of two gunmen affiliated with an Islamist terrorist group.[3] The brutality of the attack influenced the critical response that ensued. Citizens and intellectuals around the world discussed a range of potential interpretations of the shooting, from a clash of civilizations to a reprisal operation countering the imperialistic policies of Western countries against Eastern ones (Zagato, ed. 2015).

It was against the backdrop of this worsening social situation that the director of the BAAL Novo theatre, Edzard Schoppmann, inspired by his own interactions with the refugee community, had the idea of creating a project that would bring together refugees and German citizens in an integrated performance that would tackle, head-on, the issues arising from

the refugee crisis. The project's title was *Afrika!* and its main intent was to reverse public understandings of the current situation by presenting a world where the West is economically deprived and politically unstable, and the African continent offers the promise of stability, privilege, and hope. In this cultural reframing, Europeans are forced to migrate because of war, poverty, and fear of persecution based on race, ethnicity, or religious or political ideologies. They flee because they are desperate to find safety and will use any means necessary to escape. We hoped that, in addition to challenging current perceptions regarding the refugee situation, the project would actively help refugees integrate into their adopted homeland through their participation in this cultural project.

The project was divided into two parts. During the first part, our team visited the refugee camps in Offenburg and met with both social workers and refugees. The social workers provided valuable background information regarding the variety of different situations the refugees had been forced to flee, as well as the conditions in which they had arrived. After a few weeks visiting the refugee camps, our team had amassed a large network of contacts and had spent a significant amount of time socializing with the refugees. Those who had an interest in joining the project included a Gambian man, three Syrian men, a Tunisian man, a Tibetan man, an Iraqi man, and an Iranian woman. Three German men, a German woman, a girl of Italian descent, a Polish woman, and a Romanian woman—all Offenburg citizens with differing immigrant backgrounds, who had already attended different performances staged by BAAL Novo— also took part in rehearsals.

Rehearsals for *Afrika!* became the primary space where we could examine and elaborate the reasons and circumstances related to refugees' fleeing their homelands, the conditions in refugee camps, as well as issues related to integration in Germany. While narrating their personal stories, the refugee members of the cast brought a richness and eloquence to their performative expressions. It was fascinating to watch how everyone learned to relate to each other during this extensive and intense process. The script evolved throughout these rehearsals, depending on what the participants were willing to do, and provided an opportunity to create a new piece of theatre that could become part of Offenburg's experimental arts and culture history.

Whilst in the process of scheduling the premiere of *Afrika!* Paris was targeted again. On November 13, 2015, gunmen and suicide bombers carried out simultaneous attacks at the Bataclan concert hall, the Stade de

France (during a football match between France and Germany), and various restaurants and bars. These were the deadliest Islamic terrorist attacks in French History, leaving 130 people dead and around 340 wounded. President Francois Hollande described the attacks as an "act of war" organized by the Islamic State (Kühnhardt 2017, 50). Refugee participants in our project worried that their religious views might make them a target in Offenburg. Among the local citizen participants of *Afrika!* however, it raised a strong feeling of sympathy and concern about how it must feel to be a survivor in a foreign, crowded country that is uninformed about the circumstances of your escape and your present needs; they encouraged the refugees to carry on with the project. The local participants wondered how they themselves would react if exposed to the same tragic conditions and insecurity faced by refugees. This reflection prompted our decision that the woman of Polish descent and the girl of Italian descent would present parts of their personal stories, as well as the Iranian refugee woman's overall experiences. The aim was not only to present the history of the Iranian refugee woman but also to present the opportunities, the experiences, the memories, and feelings of the Polish woman when she left her country after the collapse of socialism, and the Italian girl when she left southern Italy in the 1980s in order for her parents to find a work in Germany. Sympathy and a search for empathy became the occasion for the middle-aged German man of the production to present parts of the refugees' experiences by making indirect references to the 1930s and 1940s, when some European countries were controlled through dictatorships and the states became totalitarian. We thought these approaches, which seek to reframe the current refugee situation in a way that makes them more comprehensible, relatable, and immediate for the local German audience, would more effectively raise awareness, consideration, and understanding of the issues related to war, destruction, death, insecurity, and the violation of freedom and human rights faced by refugees.

Against this background of sadness and tension, *Afrika!* premiered on December 8, 2015, in the Reithalle Cultural Center in Offenburg. Despite the negative effects of recent terrorist attacks, the audience attended, undeterred, from nearby German and French cities.

The set was minimal, consisting merely of a net on which the refugees' backpacks were hung. The middle of the stage was strewn with rags and backpacks. The backpacks were used as the main focal point of the set, being, as they are, the most important item refugees take with them on their journey. They travel light, as their trek is dangerous and arduous,

discarding along the way anything that is no longer of use to them. The performance begins with the refugee participants sitting on either side of the stage, while the local performers sit in the centre singing the poem *Commit Your Way Unto the Lord* (*Befiehl du deine Wege*), written by the seventeenth-century German poet Paul Gerhardt, a piece relevant to their own sociocultural background.

After the song, the woman of Polish descent emerges from amid the rags on stage and proceeds to describe the war currently raging in the area where she used to live. She explains to the audience that she lost her husband in the conflict and is now alone with her two children. Desperate to provide a peaceful and stable life for her children, she has decided to emigrate to Africa. It's too late to receive any kind of external protection, everyone is alone now! she expresses. Following her, the girl of Italian descent, who has lived in Offenburg since childhood, enters center stage and details how the war began when she was finishing her studies. She lost her family in the ensuing violence and now believes that Africa is only safe place left for her to go, saying: "The long way to Africa is my only chance." Next, the middle-aged German man appears, explaining to the audience that he is married and an inhabitant of Offenburg. Two months ago, he decided to emigrate due to the persecution he is suffering for his evangelical Christian beliefs. He elaborates that two years ago, a military coup took place in Germany, and ever since, the state has been run by the army. There is no longer any freedom, the place is ruled by fear, persecution, and unemployment; people are oppressed, they disappear, mass executions occur, and religious freedom is banned. He explains that he has to reach a peaceful continent, and that is Africa.

This narrative material is drawn directly from personal stories told by the refugees, but is presented on stage by the citizens of Offenburg, recast into the role of victims; this reverses the contemporary situation in Germany, providing the audience with an unexpected personal, emotional link to the crisis. This approach creates an environment in which the public can come face to face with the refugee situation and reflect and revise their perceptions of it.

Gradually, the narrative is taken up by the refugee cast members, who highlight the fact that they left their homes and their countries because they had no other choice. The first issue they explore is the brutalization of women. The Iranian girl comes to the centre of the stage and stands in silence for a few seconds. Then a group on stage starts to stone her. She kneels, crying and wounded. This story is based on the "state of rejection"

that happens when certain fanatical groups abuse and torture a person who has allegedly committed sacrilege. Stoning became part of the Iranian penal code in 1979, when the Islamic government established a new judiciary system. The first cases of stoning were reported in 1980, when two women were sentenced to death by stoning in the city of Kerman. Ever since, many activists have unsuccessfully struggled to abolish legal stoning (Mouri and Batmanghelidj 2016, 348).

The second issue explored is that refugees leave their homes because they fear for their lives or those of their families, usually because one or more of their basic human rights are under attack. A central right is the freedom of opinion and expression. In the performance, the Iranian girl returns to the centre of the stage and sings a traditional song. At the end, she is gagged by someone, who puts a black bag on her head. By the mid-1990s, in Iran, the government resorted to drastic measures to restrict citizen's freedom of expression and the freedom of the press. Although Iran's current Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, has declared the notion of human rights to be fundamental in Islamic teaching and has publicly attacked the human rights record of the United States (which has criticized the Islamic Republic for hypocrisy in return), little has been done to advance human rights in Iran (Hovsepian-Bearce 2017, 191–210; 281–95). In fact, many additional restrictions have been placed on speech, religion, and gender equality, with often brutal and extreme punishment for perceived violations (Afshari 2001, 185–200). The same is true of countries like Syria, where, according to human rights organizations, human rights violations such as the killing of civilians and violence against women have been committed by both Assad's government and the various anti-regime organizations (see, e.g., Ahmed 2017). Research by the International Organization for Migration in Iraq ("Migration Flows from Iraq to Europe: Reasons behind Migration") contends that Iraqi people express the opinion that "there are no human rights in Iraq" and, instead, a system that actively works to deny freedom of speech and expression is in operation, while people are threatened or arrested and tortured because of their political beliefs (International Organization for Migration 2016).

The third main issue explored in *Afrika!* is the desire and anxiety of refugees to find work. Our theatre's participants hoped to show to the audience that refugees do not want to beg or be dependent on the state, but, rather, productive community members with much to offer. To this effect, in one scene, all the participants address the audience, shouting repeatedly: "I want to work! I want to work!" Now that many recently

arrived refugees have awaited a sufficient amount of time and have fulfilled the initial requirements to be granted asylum and search for jobs, Germany faces the challenge of incorporating them into the labour market. Generally speaking, the longer an asylum seeker has lived in Germany, the more employment or educational opportunities they will have, but it can still take months or years to secure work ("Erfolgreiche Integration. Flüchtlinge und sonstige Schutzbedürftige") (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2016). Although they are often nostalgic about their native countries and the families they left behind, most refugees still hope to create a new life in Germany. In the performance, this is imparted when the refugees address each other by shouting: "A new beginning! A new beginning!" The problems that drove many refugees in Germany to flee their home countries show no sign of ending, so they cannot go back. Most Syrians, Iranians, and Iraqis, who have fled since 2011, initially believed that war and political instability in their countries would soon be over, but in the last few years, they have realized that this is not going to happen and they must seek permanent sanctuary elsewhere. For this reason, at the end of the performance, they whisper together: "I would like to call 'the foreign' my home. I want to freely express this opinion. Here I found recognition and happiness—No, No I don't want to go back!"

The reviews of *Afrika!* in local newspapers were positive. An unknown journalist from the magazine *Galerie: Ortenau* commented that: "The experiences were used here in order for the performance to provide authenticity" (Pahn 2016). We believe that authenticity was achieved because the past experiences we staged were recreated by performers who had, themselves, lived them. What added to this sense of honesty in the emotional expressions of the cast was that individual performers revealed themselves from within the crowd as well, presenting their own personalities, spirits, characteristics, and views about their experiences, sincerely and authentically, with no pretensions.

Bettina Kühne (2015), from the journal *baden online,* stated that: "In fact, it's not just the story of the foreign participants in the theatre project. The Germans have also experienced what it's like to make a new beginning somewhere, or to integrate themselves or even to be excluded." The performance triggered memories among the local Offenburg citizens audience, as almost one third of them had migrant backgrounds, for example, at least one parent that did not acquire German citizenship by birth. They probably had also experienced migration in the past, as well as rejection by a host society, discrimination, and rights violations. *Afrika!* represented and humanized the reality refugees face by presenting a world

in which Europeans are forced to emigrate because of war, poverty, and fear of persecution. On stage, they experience some of the physical and emotional discomforts that actual refugees do on their route to safety. This role reversal makes it easier for the audience to 'Put themselves in the shoes of the refugee' and to consider the experiences of those who have been forced to leave their homes to seek asylum. Empathy thus emerged as a meaningful link between the host society and the refugees. A journalist for the German-French newspaper *Eurojournalist* expressed a similar view, writing: "This is once again a great project by BAAL Novo "Africa!", it changes the roles, overturns stereotypes and expectations, and leads the audience to a new consideration about dealing with refugees" ("Afrika! Was wäre, wenn wir die Flüchtlinge wären?").

The performance raised provocative questions about identity and belonging. By "changing the roles" it was able to challenge stereotypical representations of "new arrivals" and asylum seekers and attack the idea of "us/them" thinking. It reconceptualized theatre about refugees as a debate about nationality and citizenship and turned it into a tool to foster positive, creative intercultural dialogue between refugees and their adopted society, and communicating ideas as well as experiences on the stage. Furthermore, presenting the topic of human rights, *Afrika!* generated a genuine human connection between the newly arrived refugees and the local population through its sensory intensity, social intimacy, and the co-existence of physical bodies on and offstage.[4] As a result, the project helped to stimulate social cohesion, addressing diversity, and fostering mutual understanding and appreciation between the asylum seekers and the local population—most of whom had had no contact with refugees before the refugee crisis.

The success of *Afrika!* provided us with a springboard for a second project, which began in March 2016. We had observed during the first project that from the moment refugees arrive in Germany, they are in a permanent "standby state." They wait to be granted asylum; they wait for a work permit, an apartment, to be admitted to a German language course, or in the worst cases, for deportation. It takes months or even years until they start living life at anything resembling a regular pace. During this period of waiting, they spend a lot of time thinking about their homeland and families, whilst also dreaming of the future and hoping that better days will come. We decided that the second project should put these issues on the table. We also decided to contact the refugee camp in the city of

Lahr, near Offenburg, as it is the second largest city in Ortenau and an economic hub for the surrounding area.

This project was also divided into two parts. The director, Horst Kiss, and I visited the refugee camp in March 2016 and organized a meeting to inform the refugees about the project. During the first month, we conducted in-depth oral histories with more than thirty refugees and far more informal interviews and group dialogues. Studying the cases of people seeking asylum reinforced our belief that the "standby state" experienced by refugees has negative psychological effects. Their economic hardship combines with a perceived lack of freedom, and most refugees characterized the camp as a "prison." Our research was the starting point for *In the Waiting Room of the Dreams*, a theatre piece that blends together scenes from the documented life stories of refugees in Lahr.

On July 14, 2016, a nineteen-tonne cargo truck driven by Mohamed Lahauaiaj-Bouhlel, a Tunisian resident of France, was deliberately driven into crowds celebrating Bastille Day in Nice.[5] President Hollande's reaction was to declare a state of emergency, and he announced an intensification of French airstrikes on ISIL in Syria and Iraq (Bauman 2016, 16–18). Four days later, a teenage Afghan asylum seeker attacked five passengers with an axe on a train near Würzburg in Germany. In German cities close to the border with France, a real sense of unrest was experienced and far-right-leaning parties felt vindicated in their anti-Islamic views. The terrorist attacks had a negative impact on the preparations for our project: the refugees in the Lahr camp closed themselves off from the rest of the world. They believed that people in Germany would now take a more sceptical, prejudicial view of them, and that their participation in our project might trigger a backlash against them. They also worried it could further delay their asylum applications and jeopardize their chances of staying in Germany.

We decided to carry on visiting the camp, however, and after a few weeks, two Syrian men, an Iranian man and woman, and an Iraqi man finally decided to take part in the project. The interactive nature of the rehearsals, including a range of theatre games and exercises, provided a safe space for the refugees to express themselves freely in English and to practice their German language skills. Overcoming the language barrier was among the greatest challenges we faced. Each storyteller had a desire to share their own life experiences and during rehearsals, the refugees had adequate time to narrate their personal stories and explain their feelings. Most of the time, the focus was on a traumatic experience that they wanted

to make public. We noted that because they had previously been denied a platform to express themselves, these experiences had effectively been silenced, which was often felt by the refuges to be yet another injustice. Other times, it appeared that the refuges wanted their stories to act as cautionary tales. These accounts often revolved around the horrors of war and the personal losses they had suffered. The feeling of being stuck in limbo in Germany had provided enough thinking space for such memories to resurface, and these complex life stories and traumatic experiences became the "material" we used to improvise a series of dramatized skits, all of which were continually revised and transformed until the last rehearsal. The performers wrote their own dialogues, but the underlying thread running through the text was the feeling of waiting after their arrival in Germany, overlaid with the refuges' thoughts, memories, every-day life experiences, and expectations for the future.

Their psyches took another blow on December 19, 2016, when Anis Amri, a Tunisian failed asylum seeker, deliberately drove a stolen truck through a Christmas market next to the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church at Breitscheidplatz in Berlin, killing twelve people and injuring fifty-six. The perpetrator was supported by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, who had given him instructions. It was one of the deadliest terrorist attacks that had ever taken place in Germany (Wassermann 2017, 72–4). Tourism to the country was affected. The far-right Alternative for Germany party lost no time pointing fingers at the German government for inefficiency in confronting terrorism. Besides, stereotypical perceptions about the other and the foreign, which are static and oversimplified ideas, are based on ethnocentrism. The local public debate in Ortenau emphasized the fact that Germany hosts more refuges than it should and that the hosting of refuges would have a negative impact on the German economy and cul-ture. After the attack, some of our participants were afraid to leave their accommodations in case of physical attacks from far-right organizations. Their thoughts and worries became part of the rehearsal process, which encouraged a relaxed and cooperative atmosphere into which improvisa-tions and devised scenes were developed, resulting in changing the pro-duction to a continual work-in-progress throughout the following months.

The premiere of *In the Waiting Room of the Dreams* took place on January 10, 2017 in zeit.areal cultural center in Lahr and the audience came, once again, from different German and French cities. The set con-sists of the waiting room of an office for Migration and Refuges, with chairs and cushions on which the cast were already positioned, waiting,

while the spectators arrive. They watch the audience and then start to ask questions about waiting and feelings of boredom and stagnation. After this, they began to recount their own stories, really personalizing them. The cast uses their proper names to introduce themselves to the audience. They talk about the depression that comes from the sensation of being stuck, of having to wait to be granted asylum, to be admitted to a German course, to receive a work permit, or to find an apartment. At the same time, they talked about their pasts, trying to explain the socio-political situations in their countries and the reasons for their own subsequent escapes. A Syrian refugee recounts that he had to leave his homeland after completing his university studies because otherwise he would have had to serve in the military and take part in the war. It was his father who persuaded him to flee. Although it meant leaving his relatives, friends, and familiar life behind, it was the right decision, he decided, to have taken his younger brother and made the difficult journey to Germany. Another Syrian man then explains that he left his country not only because of the war, but because his government deemed him to be a terrorist after he fought for freedom. Next, an Iranian refugee explains that his life was threatened because he adopted the Christian faith. They all explain that they travelled from Turkey to Greece, then to Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, and Vienna, before arriving at the German border. They explain that the most difficult part of the journey, the part that still returns in their nightmares, was the crossing from Turkey to the Greek island of Lesbos. These men had spent most of their money to risk their lives crammed into a rubber boat with thirty other people. Thousands have drowned in the last few years attempting this same sea trip. An Iraqi man describes a nightmare that he often has: a king has risen up through the military hierarchy and now governs as an authoritarian dictator. His country is rich in oil and natural gas and for these reasons other countries have been trying to exploit it. Poverty and instability prevail. Many people protest against the king, who responds by using his armed forces. Terrorist organizations also participate in this conflict, fighting against the king. They use terror and religious fanaticism as a means of warfare. Other countries from the west and north now bomb his country. There is famine and poverty. Millions of children do not go to school either because the schools were destroyed or getting to school is too dangerous. War, terror, disasters—the number of refugees fleeing the country has now risen to thousands.

    After this scene, a middle-aged Iranian woman comes to the centre of the stage. She explains that she used to work as a theatre director and

writer for the Ministry of Culture in Iran. Her plays dealt with discrimination against women, but the Iranian government considered this too provocative. She was accused of offending Islamic values, suffered humiliating attacks, and finally lost her job. After suffering a breakdown, she decided to migrate to Europe.

In the end, although the refugees feel tired of waiting in the same room, where things remain static and they are submerged in their thoughts, they still want to express their goals and desires for the future, including their wishes to learn the German language well so that they are understood by other people, can study a profession or a science at the university, and can find a job.

As with *Afrika!* the newspaper reviews of this performance of *In the Waiting Room of the Dreams* were positive. The journalist Andreas Buchta (2017) from the *Offenburger Tageblatt* wrote: "The most painful thing is that the stories presented arise from the immediate, personal experiences of the participants. The correspondence of the audience is to react with great surprise." Again, this approach calls for imagination and empathy. The asylum seekers are the medium for autobiographical monologues, making the performance authentic and bringing the theatre community and the participants together. The journalist Jürgen Haberer (2017) from the *Lahrer Zeitung* mentioned that:

> The performance also tells about the rulers who ruin their country, about global conflicts of interest and Arab sheikhs, who buy everything with their oil-dollars. It focuses on the dream of a self-determined life and the hunger for freedom, which threatens to stifle at the end of the journey in the standby state, in the mills of the bureaucratic system.

This comment draws attention to the political dimension of the performance, which is about the current unstable and fluid situation in the Middle East, where many countries have absolutist monarchies or family-run autocracies; where there is a high risk of political and religious violence; and where terrorist groups mobilize support for their escalating campaign of violence. Western countries have also turned civil wars into international contests for regional influence, drawing diplomatic and military support from various foreign sponsors because countries with oil-dependent economies are very strategically important to them. The refugee-immigration issue has taken on explosive dimensions, due to the continued war in Syria, as well as the escalation of the economic interests

of global monopolies in the geopolitically critical region ranging from the Ukraine and the Balkans to the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Africa. It is a serious and complex political issue, with national and international economic, social, and ideological aspects. The war, the conflicts, and the ongoing violence in the Middle East are leading people to look for new lives elsewhere. The refugees who arrived in Germany now have to deal with bureaucracy, while economic analyses and forecasts show that Germany will face great difficulties in implementing integration measures and, as a result, many of the refugees will still be unemployed in a year's time.

The art of applied theatre operated democratically in *In the Waiting Room of the Dreams*, as the participants had an equal say in what was to be presented, while their own texts had been included in the final performance. This was encouraged through improvisation, as well as through adapting the process to the interests and needs of the refugee cast, enabling them to express their personal truths and draw on their personal skills. In this way I think it became clearer for the audience that the performers have something to say that's worth listening to.[6]

The performance raised awareness among both German and French audiences, educating them about the situations that have compelled refugees to flee their homelands and about the hostile conditions they face in places of sanctuary in Germany. *In the Waiting Room of the Dream*'s political dimension provided a vital space for discussions about the most pressing issues in the local community and because it showed the audience that refugees are not terrorists, or fanatics, or uncivilized, it battled cultural and political stereotypes. The performance presented refugee immigration as a response to war and crisis, international conflicts, poverty, and social, political, or religious persecution. While avoiding a discursive demarcation between good and evil, *In the Waiting Room of the Dreams* nonetheless helps to dispel myths, taboos, and misunderstandings about asylum seekers. Thus, we enter into a process of reflection on the sociopolitical and aesthetic relationship. As Herbert Marcuse (1978, 32–33) has said: "Art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world."

NOTES

1. For data on topics concerning asylum, see "Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl," *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* (2017), July 2017.

2. In his book *Humanitarian Performance: From Disaster Tragedies to Spectacles of War*, James Thomson (2014) uses the term "performance" even more broadly, as an "analytical concept" that can describe practices and representations of humanitarian action in war or natural disaster zones.

3. On January 7, 2015, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, forced their way into the offices of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, killing twelve people and injuring eleven others. The Kouachi brothers claimed affiliation with the Islamist terrorist group Al-Qaeda's branch in Yemen, which took responsibility for the attack. For more in detail, see *The Event of Charlie Hebdo. Imaginaries of Freedom and Control* (Zagato, ed. 2015).

4. About this capacity of the theatre see Becker et al. 2013.

5. It caused the deaths of eighty-six people and injured around 450 others. The attack was followed by an exchange of gunfire, during which the driver was shot and killed by police, see Bauman 2016, 16–18.

6. Besides, in my opinion, the successful outcome of these theatre projects was dependent largely on the non-theatrical, more social and practical factors. During the process, I realized that the more support we give to refugees' daily lives and the safer the environment we create, providing a family-feeling, the better ground is created for rehearsals. Being part of this family, I felt, was an important step in the refugee's host country. In October 2019, as I review this chapter, although I am a resident of Berlin, which is about 750 km away from Offenburg, I still maintain links with some of the refugee participants. Some of them study at Universities, others found jobs in technical professions, while some of them continue to take place in BAAL Novo's projects.

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Mapping Memory Routes: A Multisensory Digital Approach to Art, Migration, and Critical Heritage Studies

Alda Terracciano

The Beginnings

Mapping Memory Routes of Moroccan Communities was produced between April 2016 and March 2017 by Aldaterra Projects, an arts and heritage organization based in London, UK which I established in 2010 to deliver socially engaged artistic practice within the field of visual arts and new media, fostering international exchange and collaborations, and developing intergenerational and creative educational programs. The project was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with contributions from the Centre for Critical Heritage Studies (a collaboration between Gothenburg University and University College London), and Queen Mary University of London. It was built on a model I developed in 2012 for the Living Archaeology of the Place, a community engagement program running parallel to *Streets of…7 Cities in 7 Minutes*, a multisensory art installation

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that opened in London during the Olympic Games. The installation represented the culmination of eight years of artistic research focusing on uncovering the ancestral memories of three migration journeys (the Indo-European migrations, the Silk Road, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade) as they unconsciously resurface in people's everyday lives, sounds, movements, and rituals across the globe. It explored the everyday lives of people historically connected by migration journeys in Naples, Shanghai, Mumbai, Tangier, Salvador de Bahia, Lisbon, and London, configuring the concept of sensorial urbanism as a "navigation mode," a safe strategy to explore the cities.[1] Far from reproducing an objective image of them, my experience of bodily interaction with place was conveyed in seven multisensory environments in which the visual featured alongside other senses, as I described in a later article:

> The artwork that emerged from the creative process asks the audience to reconsider heavily stereotyped visual and symbolic representations of the 'other', and position oneself within the 'new epistemological project' of feminist analysis (Braidotti 2011, 73). Moving from the art space to engage with other fields of knowledge production, the artwork asks to rethink issues of vision, power, and the Western gaze, and engage with a more socially inclusive understanding of urban cultures and public spaces in our pluricultural cities. (Terracciano 2017a, 3)

By taking audiences beyond the regime of the visual, the installation aimed to awake a critical approach to cultural stereotypes and current geopolitical divisions, exposing the complexities of mobility in relation to the formation of cross-cultural identities in Europe. As remarked by an audience member who took part in the project evaluation: "It makes people feel normal on being different, on being themselves…so they do not need to fit into a set of stereotypes"(Ardakani 2013, 21).

In order to gauge a more in-depth understanding of the impact of the installation on London's culturally diverse audiences, I devised a series of interactive Memory Sessions with people of Brazilian, Chinese, Indian, Italian, Moroccan, and Portuguese cultural backgrounds living in London. I asked participants to share their feelings, thoughts, and memories of the cities represented in the artwork. The conversations focused on old traditions, everyday rituals, and contemporary urban life, as well as personal notions of home and cultural identity. This collective act of reminiscence, which unearthed the body language, sounds, gestures, and ceremonies

unique to each city, contributed to mapping out the trajectories of ancient and contemporary migration journeys, while linking together far away continents and cultures through the participants' ancestral memories of the place.[2] The result was a unique tapestry of London's cross-cultural heritage of migration via thematic areas and geographical routes.[3] The program also highlighted the importance of co-design and the application of participatory methodologies in the production of digital art projects, as some participants' feedback revealed a wish to see their personal stories included in the artwork.[4]

Radical Empathy in the Digital Archive

Mapping Memory Routes of Moroccan Communities was a response to that call. It took shape at a personal and historical conjuncture: I was researching digital economy at Queen Mary University of London when the impact of migration from war-torn Syria and the 2017 terror incidents in London and Manchester sparked severe backlash against Muslim communities in Britain (Travis 2017). At a time when European external borders were increasingly sealed off as a way of protecting local interests against unwanted waves of immigration, I decided to design a project that would use a microscopic observation of the everyday life of Muslim communities in London to uncover the interconnectedness of our histories on both sides of the Mediterranean. The employment of immersive technologies aimed to establish an intimate connection amongst otherwise divided subjectivities, counteracting the clash of ignorance and increasing resentment against Muslim people in Western countries. Drawing from relationships established by Aldaterra Projects in 2012, I invited members of the Moroccan community in West London to co-design the new activity. In particular, I worked with Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Project and Making Communities Work and Grow (MCWG) to explore the use of dynamic digital tools that would facilitate access to the underlying sociocultural values and practices shaping the tangible and intangible heritage of the Moroccan community in and around Golborne Road, including both practicing Muslims and not. As described in the funding application, the aim was:

> To explore the living heritage of members of the Moroccan communities in West London through a series of memory sessions focusing on the cultural memes of their everyday life. Extracts of their personal narratives and cultural

memories will be then shared through a digital interactive sensorial map showing Golborne Road neighbourhood, an area in North Kensington with the highest concentration of Moroccans living in London ...We will collect and share Moroccan cultural memories to facilitate an understanding of the relation between people, history, movement and geographies, and offer a response to violence and fear by positioning co-curated work in relation to the richness of experiences embedded within the community. (Aldaterra Projects 2016)

The ethical stance at the core of this process stemmed from the "affective responsibility"[5] I felt towards the intangible heritage of the place. As described by Caswell and Cifor (2016, 34) in their seminal essay on archival empathy:

By stewarding a collection, the archivist enters into a relationship of care with the record creator in which the archivist must do her best not only to empathize with the record creator, but also to allow that empathy to inform the archival decision-making processes.

Creating an oral history archive of Moroccan memories in West London required a new participant model of co-creation that would facilitate community control of the production of the records and their future display. On this basis, I designed and delivered a new series of Memory Sessions with members of the local community, affectively recreating lived, bodily experiences across time and space for the participants. The sessions facilitated a process of collective sharing of feelings, thoughts, and memories of Morocco and Golborne Road, stimulating participants' deep engagement with cultural objects to connect the past to the present through individual memory routes. A number of research questions emerged from the process, forming the basis of what would become a wider enquiry into the role of interaction design in migration studies, critical heritage, and immersive technologies. How can we build a new awareness of urban spaces that takes into account the presence of our bodies as sensors of meaning and archives of unconscious collective memories? How can migrant communities contribute to the creation of a globally connected sensorial archive and a broader, more socially inclusive understanding of heritage? In what ways can the design of an interactive, multisensory art installation engage with cultural memories, and how can we use this to critically address heavily stereotyped visual and symbolic representations of "others"?

Using this research focus, collaboration with the HCI designer Mariza Dima led to the creation of *Zelige Door on Golborne Road*, an interactive multisensory digital installation populated by artifacts, smells, tastes, and narratives of Moroccan British citizens living, working, or visiting the area. The installation, which also functioned as a digital archive of Moroccan culture in the area, aimed at creating an experience able to craft deeper connections between people, everyday life, and ancestral memories of the place. It followed the inspiration nurtured by the previous artwork *Streets of…7 Cities in 7 Minutes*, and benefited from a new collaboration with designers and olfactory technologists at Politecnico di Milano to augment the embodied experience and "negotiate notions of identity, time, presence and transmission of cultural memories through a digital interactive interface" (Terracciano et al. 2017, 354). From the point of view of its wider social engagement, the installation was designed to explore the process of gentrification in West London and its impact on the sustainability of culturally diverse intangible heritages. As pointed out by David Hill (2016) in an article published by *The Guardian* newspaper:

> Gentrification happens when the demand for living and working space outstrips its supply in cities that people want to live in…At a city-wide level, it is vital that change processes do still allow for enough diversity of income and diversity of different types of people.

This was a critical point raised by participants in the Memory Sessions, alarmed by the speed of regeneration programs in the area and the negative impact on their lives, while planners seemed unresponsive to their needs for social housing and communal spaces. As pointed out by a participant who contributed his memories of Golborne Road:

> This is the only genuine street left, because even Portobello Road is more and more commercial. The situation is that more and more local people are leaving the area because it's becoming too expensive and they build terrible things around. The corporations are trying to make profit and this is a shame. Actually they should increase this side of community, not kill it. ("Memory of Golborne Road" 2017)

In this contested space, which lacked real political thinking and action "co-produced and co-owned through dialogue across differences in

experience, values, and knowledge" (Linde and Seravalli 2018, 70), community participants became living archives of a tacit, intangible heritage rashly brushed off to make space for the shining facades of the new builds in the neoliberal city. In response to this trend, the project strived to showcase unique cultural resources and facilitate the flow of information and data amongst individuals from different social and cultural backgrounds, both within and outside the local Moroccan community, so that new meanings could surface beyond social and class boundaries, as well as stereotyped notions of cultural identity. This is in line with Ketelaar's understanding of People's Archives (2003, 8):

> Being Digital entails for archives more than preserving and providing digital documents: it presents a techno-cultural challenge to connect archives with people. Archives will be redesigned as a public sphere where individual, organisational and collective memories and stories are experienced, exchanged, and enriched.

Community Participation and Socially Engaged Artistic Practice

My engagement with the Moroccan community in Golborne Road was a reaction to the Islamophobic discourse promoted by the media, often depicting Muslim people as fundamentalist warmongers with rigid interpretations of the Holy Quran's teachings; a stereotype that had managed to polarize Western public opinion in the face of increasing global conflicts, terrorism, and widespread nationalist agendas. The installation that was produced through the project responded to such a reductionist view of the Muslim "other" by creating a playful, rich, and culturally engaging virtual experience. It included testimonies from the directors of the Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Project, a community centre actively involved since the late 1980s with issues of social justice and cultural emancipation against die-hard stereotypes, promoting equal opportunities amongst Arabic-speaking migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. The organization, which played an important role in planning, facilitated the involvement of another local organization, Making Communities Work and Grow (MCWG), a youth centre well known to people in the area, in order to succeed in the intergenerational and cross-gender ambitions of the project.

To develop new knowledge and understandings of what makes intangible heritage, participants in the sessions were invited to discuss their culture in a context that responded to their needs and interests. Between 3rd and 5th November 2016, I delivered five Memory Sessions at MCWG, as well as an open session for local residents at Goldfinger Factory, a social enterprise providing skills and training in bespoke furniture and interiors, which was also involved in the project for the production of the physical map used in the installation. An extra session was delivered to adult men on 21 November to discuss issues related to Moroccan settlement in the area and the impact of gentrification on their lives. Participants at MCWG were split into four separate groups. Eleven young women, seven young men, thirteen women, and thirteen men were eventually involved in the activities with a total of forty-four members of the local community engaged in the sessions. Of these, twenty-four participants provided written feedback and twenty-five contributed with personal narratives, which were used in the digital installation. This high level of community engagement was achieved despite the change of staff at Al-Hasaniya a week before the planned delivery of the Memory Sessions, which limited the involvement of the women visiting this centre.

As mentioned earlier, the Al-Hasaniya centre manager had suggested diversifying the social and gender composition of the project participants by involving MCWG, the local youth centre, in the activities. Although its contribution to the project initially raised some perplexities in those advocating for a more secular approach to community life, the outcomes of the project were eventually enriched by the variety of opinions that emerged from the engagement process. The complex nature of cultural and social identities that surfaced during the project development served as a critical signpost against the risk of stereotyping the community, reflecting a wider cross section of the local Moroccan cultural heritage, and contributing to a more nuanced representation in relation to class, gender, and cultural composition. This is evidenced by the participants' feedback to the Memory Sessions, which included questions on their background, personal connections to Golborne Road, links to Moroccan culture, how they experienced it in their everyday lives, whether there was a particular object that reminded them of Moroccan culture, and how they rated the event on a scale of one to ten, including what they had enjoyed most about the session. The appointed project evaluator provided a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the responses in a report produced at the end of the project, which, amongst other things, highlighted how the creative

activities managed to reflect and, to some degree, shift attitudes within the community (Knapp 2017c). According to the evaluator, this is a particularly valuable achievement in consideration of the way Moroccan culture organizes itself into broad gender groups, each with its own cultural prescriptions. This is in line with Fatima Sadiqi's (2008, 165) feminist analysis, suggesting that:

> Moroccan culture is of a type that strongly constrains the behaviour of men and women. The strength of this control comes from the fact that it is channelled through powerful cultural components that closely regulate the lives of Moroccan men and women.

Sadiqi's description of Moroccan social structure as a landscape of traditional values (however much they may be contested as valid or extant in contemporary society) provides a useful backdrop to illustrate the variations in each group's feedback and the patterns emerging from the answers. The first of these is that the older women, who are more likely to be married and occupying a prominent domestic role in the family unit, were almost uniform in stating that it was food, or shopping for food, that provided a means of interacting with Moroccan culture in everyday life. Although young women too provided several answers relating to food they also talked about interior design, tea, and language—answers that suggest a liberty to think about aesthetic concerns, communicating with peers, and socializing with others, considering the role of making and offering tea in Moroccan culture. Similarly, it is interesting that young women's answers to the question of what they enjoyed most about the sessions, mentioned both memory and the senses, whilst the older women only mentioned memory. The first speculative conclusion is that older women were grateful for the chance to talk about their memories, directing the conversation around what was important to them, something that may be uncommon in their everyday life. The second speculation is that the connections to Moroccan culture that the Memory Sessions focused on provided a means of transporting participants somewhere into their past. Considering the likelihood of the older women being first-generation immigrants to the UK, it appears that the sessions were successful in transporting them not just back in time to previous experiences, but also across space to Morocco, where they first experienced the smells, sounds, tastes, and textures that were discussed in the Memory Sessions. In the case of the younger women, who are more likely to be the second generation of

their families to live outside of Morocco, the first time they experienced those smells, tastes, and textures may well have been in Golborne Road. This was specifically stated in one woman's memory exhibited in the installation:

> It's very interesting because my mother died when I was younger. I was like six, seven years old, and I don't remember much about it. I didn't know how to connect to Morocco because you get this through your parents, don't you? So, I didn't get that much of a connection, and on top of it I didn't go to Morocco that often. So, for me, even though I didn't go, it's like Morocco came to London. All that dried fruit hanging on the wall, the smell of cinnamon and this sort of spices made me feel very Moroccan at the same time. ("Memory of Moroccan Market in Golborne Road" 2017)

This woman's testimony shows the crucial importance of retaining culturally-specific areas in the urban landscape, as they can facilitate cultural connections for second-generation migrants and restore a sense of unity with their intangible cultural heritage.

The responses from the men who took part in the project activities also provided a counterpoint that reinforced the gender differences perpetuated in Moroccan society. When asked about how they experienced Moroccan culture in everyday life, food was mentioned, but not as much as language and cultural values, both of which are the preserve of public rather than domestic life. Language provides the basis for the economic and juridical structure for any society, which, in a patriarchal system is largely the preserve of men. Similarly, whilst it may be the role of the mother to pass on cultural traditions through the food they provide and the home they make, it is the role of the father to uphold the cultural values of the society of which any particular family unit is but one constituent part. The implicit patriarchy and sense of ownership that this entails is evident in the way men's connections to Golborne Road were explicitly concerned with "place," both in their filmed testimonies and written feedback. Their answers indicated, almost explicitly, that the attention of the camera, and the project as a whole, empowered them to express themselves about their culture, suggesting that such opportunities are rare in the public space. In this respect, it is all the more valuable that the testimonies given by the directors of the Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Project also expressed strong views with regards to "place" and cultural change in the area.[6] They fall in line with a struggle against a patriarchal

system these women had opposed and hoped to change for decades, clearly positioning their views against wider societal expectations.

Although these remarks were drawn from a small sample size, they offer an interesting insight into the way projects like this can empower communities and provide a public arena for cultural reflection and discourse on cultural stereotypes, which is often hard to find.[7] It also reflects the importance of taking on board "pre-existing responsibilities," including relationships, rights, and obligations bonding community participants when designing participatory projects, as discussed by Linde and Seravalli (2018, 72) in their essay on participatory design ethics:

> These preexisting responsibilities tend to end up outside the scope and aim of co-design projects, yet they play a key role in determining if and how participation can be developed within the specific project.

Participants' involvement in project activities and their positive feedback pointed to the successful creation of a critical, dialogical space that fully embraced these responsibilities. They actively contributed to the production of new knowledge, not only in the form of digital records, but of a methodology based on an ethical approach to co-design focused on mutual learning for participants, researchers, and audiences alike.

Intangible Multisensory Heritage and Augmented Reality

While the consultation process with the local Moroccan community was taking place, the project team began to work on a new design mechanism that focused on and computationally extended the haptic, olfactory, and gustatory senses to manifest the tacit intangible heritage of the involved community. The design process of the multisensory interface was first discussed in the published extended paper abstract "Mapping Memory Routes: A Multisensory Interface for Sensorial Urbanism and Critical Heritage Studies" supporting the demo presentation at CHI'17 conference, and included contributions by Mariza Dima, Marina Carulli and Monica Bordegoni. See Terracciano, et al. 2017. The idea was to accustom people interacting with the digital interface with the practice of evoking ancestral memories through bodily experiences and sensory stimulation (Chang and Ishii 2006, 50–59). This led to the creation of the multisensory interactive installation *Zelige Door on Golborne Road,* co-curated with the

project participants and consisting of a physical map of Golborne Road, printed on Perspex panels and populated by physical objects relating to various aspects of Moroccan intangible heritage, which I selected during the consultation process. The map worked in conjunction with a mobile device running an Augmented Reality (AR) application, enabling the playback of video memories upon tracking a marker connected to the physical object. The memories filmed at the end of the Memory Sessions were rendered in transparency in order to retain sight of the map's background. As a result, the audience interaction with people's memories, which operates through the digital interface running the AR application, allowed for manual interaction with the culturally-specific objects contained in small, traditional Moroccan pots positioned along the two sides of the map. Moreover, in addition to the haptic, sound, and gustatory stimulations, the engineers at Politecnico di Milano developed an integrated olfactory system, which was originally positioned within the frame encasing the mobile device and later in four small cylinders positioned on the two sides of the map.[8] The olfactory device was similarly activated upon tracking a small selection of markers, augmenting the interaction with the physical objects and video memories through the use of smells.

More generally, the interactive design allowed the audience to move from the objects of the installation to the space, time, and cultural significance they reflected, allowing the street to be represented as a living archive of cultural memes expressed in the form of artifacts, behaviours, smells, tastes, and narratives of citizens making up the area. Each cultural meme required a different sense to be experienced. For example, sticks of cinnamon embodied the smell of spices used in traditional Moroccan cuisine. Prayer beads invited audiences to engage with the haptic sense to explore the meaning of this traditional cultural object. Hidden memes embodied in the objects then surfaced through gestural manipulation, for example the movement of the thumb passing through prayer beads to count religious recitations, which is common to other cultures and religions. By engaging with this multisensory interface, audiences were invited to explore the geographical location more deeply, picking up the objects and experiencing their personal ancestral memories through the activation of their senses, eventually taking them beyond the time/space coordinates of the installation.

This point is evidenced by the subsequent feedback received from visitors to the installation. *Zelige Door on Golborne Road* was launched in March 2017 at Rich Mix in London, and later exhibited at the CHI

(Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems) 2017 conference in Denver, Colorado, at the ACM Symposium on Virtual Reality Software and Technology (VRST) 2017 conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, and the Kulturhuset Blå Stället art centre located on the outskirts of the Nordic city. In February 2018, thanks to research funding granted by University College London, it was presented at the Curve Community Centre in West London to engage survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire[9] in conversations relating to their cultural belongings, settlement in the UK, and sensorial memories of the area. In May that year, it was exhibited at Tate Modern as part of the Tate Exchange program *Producing Memory: Maps, Materials, Belongings*, curated by Queen Mary University of London to explore the role of art in supporting communities facing challenges of producing and conserving home and identity in circumstances of displacement. During the week-long residency, the installation was successful in attracting a substantial number of visitors, as well as functioning as an elicitation tool to engage visitors in a new series of Memory Sessions, with the view of creating a new artwork based on London's collective memories.[10]

Feedback provided by audiences at Rich Mix and CHI 2017 supported several of the sentiments expressed in the participants' feedback forms, lending weight to the contention that feedback data provided an accurate representation of the audience as a whole. In addition to this, the interviewees at Rich Mix were asked about the relationship that digital technology created with the sensory elements of the installation. The feedback was entirely positive, with specific mention made to how the installation had managed to bring together members of the audience who did not know each other previously, facilitating conversations and cultural exchange. Others testified to the successful achievement of the project in surfacing, negotiating, and reframing assumptions about Moroccan culture. As noted by one member of the audience at Rich Mix:

> For me, it's like I've been living through two cultures all my life and I'm always asked what would define, or what object would define my culture, and that's really difficult. So to see this kind of project where they put all of them together, all the elements, and these are objects that represent all of Morocco—that's a difficult thing I think, because there is a big difference between North, East, South and West in Morocco and it's really impressive to see that all of these are common objects and really make sense. (Knapp 2017c, Appendix II, 2)

As previously discussed, this aesthetic choice reflected an attempt to defuse stereotypes within and outside the Muslim community, reflecting the complexity of cultures coalesced within the group of participants—a plurality which was conveyed by emphasizing subtleties in regional and intercontinental differences. The close, intimate cultural encounter between participants and audience via the interactive installation also allowed for a wider reflection on the geo-political role played by Morocco as an entry point to other North African cultures. As noted by an audience member:

> Immediately I wanted to delve in. I wanted to interact, I wanted to touch, I wanted to watch the video. It has a dramatic feel but also an intimate feel to it and it felt very comfortable for people to go and pick things up. So I was impressed with it as an artwork but also as a piece of engagement that was very welcoming. (Knapp 2017c, Appendix II, 3)

The comment supports an artistic attempt at using immersive technologies as a warm medium able to promote a critical exploration of the cultural heritage of everyday life. This was also confirmed by the Al-Hasaniya centre manager, who noted:

> It was interesting to see the younger people excited about how the project came to life and the technology helped with that, and it's really important in terms of preserving heritage. (Knapp 2017b)

The MCWG manager also agreed that the integration of technology helped the project appeal to younger members of the Golborne Road community and that this should become a priority in creating sustainable intercultural dialogues: "For me it's all about the young people, we need to do more for them in order for them to talk about their lives, their memories, their experiences" (Knapp 2017a). Finally, whilst audience members appreciated the novelty of the multisensory artwork, they also revealed an appetite for projects on a grander scale with several suggesting the use of more immersive technologies in future artworks.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the integration and computational extension of the tactile, gustatory, and olfactory senses in the installation, together with sound and vision, underpinned a design space aimed at facilitating a deeper understanding of the cultural patterns and everyday rituals of the community involved in this project. A collective curatorial approach that led the Moroccan community to select and describe the cultural artifacts populating *Zelige Door Golborne Road* created a direct connection and extension of the curator's space to that of the participants and the wider audiences, opening up new scenarios in critical heritage and urban studies. Touch, smell, and taste were introduced to act as relays of ancestral memories, fostering intercultural dialogue, enabling a deeper sense of identity and belonging, and facilitating the envisaging of utopian urban futures.

From the point of view of its contribution to a wider discourse on curatorial activism, *Mapping Memory Routes of Moroccan Communities* is symptomatic of a turn in contemporary art towards social practice, a trend that was institutionalized in 2005 with the creation of the Social Practice MFA at the California College of the Arts and has since dynamically increased globally. As noted in the project evaluation, amongst the most renowned artists associated with socially engaged practice are the Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates, winner of the Artes Mundi prize in 2013, and the London-based collective Assemble, winners of the 2015 Turner prize. While these artists were primarily concerned with urban renewal and revitalizing economies in disaffected communities, projects aimed specifically at developing a deep and nuanced understanding of the intangible urban heritage in the context of regeneration plans are still making their way into the mainstream public consciousness of contemporary art.

Another comparable trend is the turn towards archival practices in the digital art space. Artists such as Akram Zaatari, co-founder of the Arab Image Foundation, and Yto Barrada, founder of the Cinématèque de Tangier, have significantly contributed to a critical discourse on the use of archival material in artists' moving image practice. However, most of the projects that derive from these practices are generally aimed at recovering cultural figures or activities from the past often ignored by historians, or at examining constructions of "the self" by using personal and interpersonal archives, often set against the socio-political contradictions in contemporary society. The artwork produced through *Mapping Memory Routes* is distinct in that it created an archive which sat firmly within the dialogues

that produced the oral history and socially engaged practice, engaging participants in the role of co-designers of an immersive, interactive artwork aimed at promoting social change. More generally, the project demonstrated the potential for a democratic, collective process of knowledge production in heritage and urban studies, advocating the need for researching, preserving, curating, and exhibiting stories that risk otherwise being lost or going unheard in the contemporary public debate on urban regeneration.[11] It was a pilot for wider artistic practice research to collect and creatively share the voices of London's citizens, and create a public history archive open to wider uses in education and research. The collective cocreation of the installation showed that feelings, imaginaries, and sensorial memories are part of the "archival multiverse" (McKemmish et al. 2016), and that the body itself can be considered an archive of collective cultural memories and practices. At the same time, the production of new Memory Sessions at Tate Modern reflected the cumulative nature of the process, as the interactive installation functioned as an elicitation tool for the production of new archival records, an "active agent and co-creator" of potential new work.

Finally, the project represented an attempt to set up a new space for socially engaged artistic practice in the neoliberal city, by positioning migrant communities at the centre of the critical dialogue on urban geography, architecture, heritage studies, and contemporary art. The effectiveness of the attempt was manifested in an episode that took place at the launch of the installation at Rich Mix. Having been invited to co-host the evening with members of the project team, some of the Moroccan women who had participated in the Memory Sessions prepared Moroccan mint tea and cakes for the audience. The MCWG centre manager had rented a small bus to bring the women to the event, which was attended by an audience including other first and second-generation Moroccans living in the UK, artists, academics, and members of the general public. When the evening light began to fade into the darkness of the night, the women collected their belongings, said goodbye to the project team, and walked unobserved towards the exit door. It was at that moment that the sound of their voices rose above the buzzing noise of the room; it was an ululation, a long, wavering, high-pitched vocal sound traditionally performed by women in the Middle East and North Africa at weddings and funerals. As silence fell upon the room, everybody turned towards the women gathered in a circle at the exit door, unexpectedly transported to another space and time through the spontaneous performance of this traditional ritual.

Having co-owned the artwork and the space of the exhibition, they felt comfortable sharing their lived experience with strangers, in the same way they would have done in a more familiar setting. This marked an important moment in the project, as it showed how mutual learning and collective critical thinking can support professionals, participants, and audiences in addressing complex issues beyond stereotyped representations of cultural identities, and create the space for a "heritage common" where power can be equally shared and new collective knowledge democratically produced.

Notes

1. On the issue of how sensorial urbanism theory is reflected in the artistic research practice that led to the creation of the installation, see Terracciano 2017a.
2. For a more detailed description of the Memory Sessions, see Terracciano 2017b.
3. Extracts of the Memory Sessions are available online at Living Archaeology of the Place, www.aldaterra.com.
4. In her recommendations about future developments, the evaluator pointed out that those engaged in the Memory Sessions would have liked their video recordings to become a more integral part of the exhibition. She suggested: "The exhibition can become more interactive on a community level by allowing more opportunities for creative community workshops and engagement events such as the Artists Salon and memory sessions. These events would further strengthen the link between the community members, provide more opportunities for intercultural exchange, critical thinking about the various socio political and social change aspects of the programme and build stronger relationships with members of the intercultural community" (Ardakani 2013, 31).
5. I was alerted to this feminist approach in the archiving practice by Astrid von Rosen, co-leader of the Centre for Critical Heritage Studies at Gothenburg University.
6. Amongst these memories, see "Memory of Coriander" at www.aldaterra.com.
7. On issues concerning the production of data in community projects, see Taylor et al. 2015.
8. This second option was developed by the Politecnico di Milano engineers for the presentation of the installation at Tate Modern in May 2018.
9. In the early hours of Wednesday, 14 June 2017, a fridge freezer caught fire in a flat on the 4th floor of a 24-storey residential tower block in the afflu-

ent area of North Kensington. The fire caused severe damage to the 1970s building and killed 72 people, spurring an enquiry by the government into "the circumstances surrounding the fire," including its causes, and why it spread so quickly through the largely combustible cladding system that had been installed during the building's renovation in 2016. Grenfell United, the group representing the survivors and bereaved, has since then advocated for the investigation to uncover the responsibilities of the owner of the building, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the land-lord, the architects, and the suppliers to find out whether or not Grenfell Tower met building regulations, something residents had been disputing well before this deadly fire. See https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk.

10. For a discussion on the creation of digital collective memories, see Steels and Tisselli 2008.

11. For a discussion on critical approaches in community research practice, see Harding et al. 2015; and Rishbeth and Powell 2013.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.