LITERATURE WITH A WHITE HELMET:
THE TEXTUAL-CORPOREALITY OF BEING, BECOMING, AND REPRESENTING REFUGEES

Lava Asaad

Middle Tennessee State University
May 2019

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Allen Hibbard

Dr. Laura White

Dr. Marion Hollings

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank everyone and no one

ABSTRACT

This dissertation asserts that the refugee crisis and its literature should not be examined as if it is a one-dimensional phenomenon. Not all refugees' experiences circle around getting on a boat only to become a problem for a reluctant host county, although that certainly does happen. With the large number of texts produced and their common themes and styles, "refugee literature" can actually be thought of as its own unique genre. This study explores issues of refugee writers, contemporary works of fiction and nonfiction on the refugee's body and experience, the biopolitics of refugees, and disputes over the ethicality of representing refugees by writers and human rights activists. The dissertation relies on a broad selection of texts by authors who, in one way or another, have experienced displacement, witnessed it, imagined it, or co-written about it.

Although attention has been given to refugee writers and their story more recently, this study argues, specifically, that the refugee crisis is not a recent one and internal displacement is a refugee experience in itself, granted that we broaden the media-presented idea of refugees.

First, the dissertation cautiously approaches labels frequently used in academic discourse (like migrant, immigrant, refugee, persecution, human rights, and nation-state) relying on their political meanings. The refugee crisis is a political crisis par excellence. Second, the dissertation applies a new understanding to the refugee crisis through examining works by writers who are not commonly associated with being refugees. It is important to note that I am not romanticizing the label nor am I approaching it metaphorically. I am merely expanding the label to include voices and experiences that would not usually be considered as refugee literature. Finally, the work also includes

"typical" refugee narratives in order to reach a new understanding of these texts beyond the common plot tropes of persecution and escape. The dissertation adds a thread, usually missing from critical lenses on migration, that assesses Human Rights Literature in ways that problematize issues of agency and speaking on behalf of the refugees.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"What's my sin that has brought me far from my country?"

Kurdish Song

Identities as fragments, strewn across borders, within and outside national narratives, belonging to the future with complicated ties to the past, were and continue to be part of narratives I grew up with. As part of the Kurdish diaspora (I was born in 1989), whose ethnic validity has been questioned within multiple rigid national-states, such as Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran, mobility was and is ever present in stories woven about the past and the present. Being part of an imagined community that has no tangible geographical borders romanticized both the literal and the metaphorical notions of being a nomad, of constant flight away from identity erasures in the name of the homogenized nation-state. Syrian Kurd: the two halves of my identity— where the latter was forever displaced and imagined, the former was rooted, fixed, and had a place on the map. With the recent shaking-up of the mighty nation-state, Syrian bodies, alive or dead or missing, are also scattered across the globe, marking a new layer of displacement about me, of me, and perhaps in me.

My study, primarily focusing on fictionalized expressions (often autobiographically informed) of the refugee experience, has recourse to my personal experience and the lived experiences both of those who are legally defined as refugees and those who continue to roam, as immigrants. The recent refugee crisis (specifically in Europe as the crisis has been considered one of the largest movement of people from the Middle East and Africa into the continent) has left thousands of bodies lingering on

foreign borders waiting to be acknowledged and admitted. International humanitarian interest in the subject has filled the media with images of displaced Syrian refugees alongside camps, gazing hopelessly into what is behind the fenced area, or dead on some Mediterranean shore. These experiences are a constant reminder of previous incidents of human displacement. Contemporary media has aptly made the connection between the current refugee crisis and the European refugee crisis during and following World War II. Aside from the political and economic dilemma that refugees experience, their subhuman treatment has rendered them a hot topic in the media, producing a "legitimate" fear of their otherness, a common denominator between different refugee experiences across history. One of many scathing example of dehumanizing refugees as viruses and vermin is Katie Hopkins, a media personality and a columnist for British national newspapers, called refugees as "cockroaches" and who can survive even a nuclear bomb and suggesting to "burn all the boats in North Africa" (Williams). The dehumanizing image of refugees as less than human and indistinguishable mass impels us to turn to literary depiction as a way to counteract the dominant negative rhetoric. Occurring usually as a set of images bewailing their state of displacement, a new understanding of the refugee experience, of their silenced journey, should come to the front. The plight of refugees is typically seen either as a collective experience and mass of people who are treated as sub-humans, or individually where the refugee is all too often associated with malice and threat to national security. One main privilege that refugees often lose the minute they cross borders is the right to have a voice, which entails the loss of being heard and acknowledged as human beings.

In this dissertation, I explore issues of mobile bodies who have experienced different levels of displacement. The intensity and the heterogeneity of the refugee

experience cannot be wholly incorporated into one work like this one, but this dissertation can shed some light on certain commonalities. I draw from postcolonial theories on diaspora to see how the terms apply to being a postmodern refugee, which like postmodernism itself, means people cannot be fully articulated and defined. Instead of sharing one stereotypical experience, the postmodern refugees throughout this dissertation have different characteristics, lifestyles, and different goals, and most certainly, different results. The "mobility turn" in academic approaches to literatures has been a transdisciplinary catchphrase augmented by the recent surge of refugees' movement and disruption of spatial identities. Postcolonial theories, as a result, would naturally benefit from this increased interest in the Other manifested as refugees who trigger feelings of both sympathy and apprehension. The mobility turn acknowledges the circulation of people globally and in a transnational manner. Refugees are also often clumped with this process of migration. I argue how the mobility of refugees can result in immobility as well, as in the case of setting them in camps for indefinite period of times. Postcolonial terms such as hybridity and assimilation are classical in their treatment of the mobile Other; however, there may be limits to the utility of these concepts since being a refugee entails an initial state of displacement and involves a preliminary encounter with the host country.

The metaphor used in the dissertation's title, Literature with A White Helmet, is a bowing gesture to the White Helmets' volunteers who operate in conflict areas in Syria. Those are the people who have taken the responsibility upon themselves to voluntarily rescue and aid civilians. This self-less act is the driving force which parallels some writers and activists who also fuel their texts with a loud cry to help preserve the humanity of the Other. Although the current Syrian crisis is the major backbone of this

work, there have not yet been sufficient literary texts produced that deal with the humanitarian crisis of the displaced Syrians. The volatility of conditions inside Syria, the contemporaneity of the crisis, and the fluctuating reactions from the international community have resulted in a scarcity of first-hand accounts coming from inside and outside of the war-torn country. Therefore, the selection of texts that I include gives us just a glimpse of what it means to be a refugee/displaced writer, and what it means to belong to a terrorized nation in a world where the boundaries between West and East are becoming more visible, or more appropriately between rich and poor countries, or even between the global South/North, especially since many Muslim countries have also turned their backs on the refugee and deemed him/her as Other.

Voicing refugees entails the acknowledgment of their humanity, their suffering, and ultimately their rights to tell their stories. If postcolonial theory has given us anything, it is the significance of valuing each and every experience. I approach refugees' stories cautiously, differentiating between levels of displacement. Studies of mobility in a techno-modern world where texts and bodies migrate will also be examined to see what the state of our current borders and conditions of travel have altered. A few theorists upon which this dissertation rely on (to name just a few) are: Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Deleuze and Guattari, James Clifford, Arjun Appadurai, Judith Butler, Stephen Greenblatt, and Caren Kaplan.

The current influx of refugees into Europe disrupts an imagined homogenization of what Europe should look like, reminding us of Arjun Appadurai's work *Modernity at Large,* which is often cited to shed light on the uncertain relationship between local and global where the latter produces imagined conceptions of people's movements. The "Ethnoscape" of Europe is changing with the flow of people into the European Union. In

a world where nations and states are inseparable, displaced refugees are trying to capture a lost state through imagining other possibilities of existence (Appadurai 39). What is happening, however, is that European countries are also forming imagined ideas and fears of this displaced nation that is about to dominate or deplete, through their countless numbers, the economy of the host countries. Despite the current trend of globalization, initiated as a neocolonial tactic, Europe has resorted to old ideas of the nation-state that were in place since post World War II when the Protocol of 1967 offered a universal coverage to refugees coming from places outside Europe. While this amendment worked to include non-European refugees, it also set rigid definitions on who should be given the status of a refugee. The refugee's presence in Europe has awakened the continent to reconsider its globalizing strategies. The elevated fear of refugees consuming resources of the first world not only makes them a dangerous species but also blameworthy for wasting resources and thus undeserving of receiving shelter or basic means of living.

Numerous critics have written on mobility, travel, exile, and transnational identities. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* at its core addresses issues of print culture in spreading sentiments of nationalism, affiliations, and points of allegiance. The creation of a mass public by the media is a phenomenon vital to this dissertation since refugees are often seen as a horde of moving bodies. The culture of such imagined or real nation(s) can then be discussed in terms of Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, which focuses on some aspects of the power structures of representations and narration: "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (x). Representing refugees on their journey, documenting their lives, and acknowledging their human existence hinge on faithfully representing the

purpose of their movement. A more personalized understanding of displacement, Edward Said's "Reflection on Exile," contains a detailed analysis of the writer's shifting identity as physical spaces change around him. Personal experiences are inseparable from historical and political exigencies. Said's accounts allude to the fact that sometimes exile is a willful choice disrupting limits of the nation-state. Mobility critics have also heavily relied on critiquing postmodernity that once claimed the right of marginal voices to contribute to the literary scene. For example, Caren Kaplan's *Questions of Travel* explores contemporary metaphoric representations of nomadism, migration, homelessness, and exile. Definitions of race, gender, nationalities, and class have different results in travel theories undercutting discourses of a "liberatory" poststructuralism and feminism

Of major interest for this dissertation is Judith Butler's *Frames of War* that describes how abject bodies become deplorable if they do not fit certain narratives of privileged identities. Butler writes about who is worthy of life (Giorgio Agamben's distinction between bios and zoe is discussed in Chapter 4) and who is worth grieving over: "specific lives cannot be apprehended as injured or lost if they are not first apprehended as living. If certain lives do not qualify as lives or are, from the start, not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives are never lived nor lost in the full sense" (Butler 1). The refugee body is framed outside the parameters of power structures, in a third space, where its existence impairs generating genuine interest in them or in their humanity. The ontological beings of refugees are put under examination in camps whether for fear of increase in their numbers or for containment in lieu of actual solutions for the crisis. Butler defines war victims, or any identity formation, through certain frames. However, these socially constructed frames

are both solid and vulnerable. Circulation of multiple frames, in this case, has the ability to alter a narrative.

This dissertation attempts to present various dimensions of what it means to be a refugee. Where do refugee writers and critics belong—in postcolonial studies, first world studies, or in the new transnational turn in literature? Since the refugee is a mobile subject escaping territories from the East to West, and since nations' security is often perceived to be threatened by this surge of refugees into the first world zone, how does this reaction impact postcolonial studies and orientalism, now that the oriental is in the occident, or bodies, and texts, from the south are infiltrating into the north? How can our understanding of spaces change when refugees are traversing, or being fixed around certain borders? And finally, who has the agency and the privilege to tell refugee's stories? And is the audience for these stories always and only occident?

***

Understanding the legal part of the experience is as crucial as living realities of being a refugee or an immigrant. Indeed, IDs and passports have been an integral part of my experience and it has been part of the experience of others whose destiny relies on the mercy of multiple nation-states. For this purpose, the first chapter will give a brief introduction to studies of mobility to examine the role of moving bodies from a sociopolitical perspective. Travel between East/South/underdeveloped and West/North/developed is motivated by different reasons, mostly dominated by urges of discovery and knowledge or to seek out political, religious and economic prospects. Currently, theories of travel have primarily focused on a white middle-class man who enjoys open borders and who imagines leading an expatriate life. More recent studies on travel and mobility have noticed the change of stereotypes from a moving body that seeks

enlightenment to a vile moving being that only brings destruction into European safe spaces. This chapter, serving as a theoretical overview of fluidity of identities, culture, nation-state, and borders, primarily benefits from Deleuze and Guattari's nomad vs. state to examine how this interaction has changed in our contemporary times. Also, building on Foucault's discourse formation, how do moving bodies and texts shape a refugee discourse in academia? Moving across borders not only includes bodies and texts, but also images and representations of the people in crisis. Continuing in the vein of Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others*, what do we do with images of refugees circulating, migrating, across the world? What kind of ideologies do these images reinstitute and reinforce?

The inclusion of burgeoning writers from different nationalities in my study complicates notions of established reputation in the field of postcolonial fiction and a critical reception of a text as subliterary and/or an author as Subaltern. Simply put, my study targets texts to examine what the Other has written of his or her encounter with displacement.

The second chapter is the only chapter that deals with Syrian refugees—with writers and experiences primarily marked as Syrian. This chapter examines the role of intellectual voices of those who have left their nation-states seeking refugee status and freedom of expression in the West. Postcolonial studies have ample examples of writers who were persecuted in their homelands, or felt the need, aesthetically or politically, to relocate closer to centers of western knowledge and publication opportunities. Exile studies of writers —whether referring to their memories, essays, or autobiographies — usually target the successful migrant story. For example, Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, Adorno, Spivak, Ihab Hassan, Leila Ahmad and many others, are examples of an

immigrant experience whose literary experiences have rendered them transnational voices. Recently, writers who come from refugee or immigrant backgrounds are contributing to alleviate the on-going humanitarian crisis by writing stories of themselves and where they came from. More specifically, this chapter relies on writers who are refugees in the sense that they have been persecuted in their home country and decided to exile themselves as a consequence. Relying on the giant legacies of famous exile/refugee writers, recent and less-recognized voices are being rescued in the name of intellectual freedom.

Samar Yazbek and Nihad Sirees are Syrian writers who have become the focus of organizations like PEN, which dedicate their endeavors to rescue the refugee and the endangered writer. Yazbek was born in the coastal side of Syria; her family is Alawite, a religious sect that includes the ruling government in Syria. Unlike Yazbek, Sirees had political views under the authoritarian regime in Syria prior to 2011. This complicates issues of, on the one hand, being politically vocal once writers step outside their nations' borders to be free in exile, when on the other hand, we have writers like Sirees who feel like exiles in their home country. Translators and publishers have immediately picked these two authors as representative of the human crisis in Syria—in works like Yazbek's *A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of The Syrian Revolution* and *Crossing: My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria*, for instance, and Sirees's *The Silence and the Roar*. Again, Sirees's novel, written in 2004, and translated into multiple languages, including English in 2012-2013, is about a fictional writer who does not comply with the government's orders to write propaganda for the president. Several critics have described the novel as Kafkaesque, and it certainly is a novel worthy of translation. Contrarily, Yazbek's previous writings under the Syrian regime were bold in a feminist sense,

dealing with homosexuality and other gender taboos, which the government was content to allow in her novels without censoring or banning them. At this juncture, we are left with two writers who are both now "refugee writers" or writers in exile, but there remains the issue of authenticity, where levels of displacement and persecution began even before setting the body outside the borders.

Because of the unavailability of translations, this chapter widens the selection of books in order to historically contextualize the predicament of the writer across borders. The chapter moves towards Syrian writers who, before 2011, wrote ceaselessly against the Syrian dictatorship, but who cleverly and allegorically sent messages of dissent in their works and called for a social revolution, making their works living testimonies that speak not only to the past but also to Syria's current situation as a war-torn country—writers like Saadalah Wannous, who established "theater of politicization" in the 1970s, and more recently, novelists like Khalid Khalifa and Moustafa Khalifa, whose diary about his imprisonment for 13 years (published in 2008) was finally translated in 2016. Thus, this chapter asks questions regarding whose texts and voices traverse border limits as representatives of their nations. It is worth discussing whether there is an interest in the human crisis in the Middle East region or if it is just a manifestation of the West's propensity to feel good about itself by granting access to some dissenting voices from the Arab world. Refugee bodies or refugee texts, in need of translation, an access, are equally tied to the on-going discussion in this dissertation of how bodies, texts, and voices, translate into other languages and in different environments. Texts, like refugees' bodies, are edifices of ideas and a set of representations in need of acknowledgement. These kinds of arguments are addressed, questioned, and challenged in the second chapter.

While Chapter Two focuses on individual refugee writers, the third chapter examines daily lives of refugees in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits,* narrating our usual understanding of refugee displacement and the goals behind immigrating to find a "better" life in the host country. It is in this chapter where the stereotypical refugee appears; a mass of people are at the mercy of smugglers. The reality of borders, whether they are fences or bodies of water, is intensified in their portrayal in Lalami's book. The novel follows the lives of four Moroccan characters who try to get on a boat to Spain. The chapter then deals with the difficulty of mobility, the illegality of certain bodies, and the proliferation of a stock of images about refugees. The novel captures the success and the failures of transgressing national borders where the host countries are not always found to be what the refugee's mind has painted them to be. Survival not only entails completing the journey of crossing safely, but it also necessitates surviving from hardships that continue to manifest themselves in different aspects when the refugee is relocated into a different country.

It was hard not to include Mohsin Hamid's recent seminal work, *Exit West* published in 2017. The magical realism in the novel gives a humanistic approach to migration as Saeed and Nadia constantly move through magical doors, serving as borders, always changing parts of their identities. Another recent account of refugees' conditions in the host country is Viet Thanh Nguyen's collection of short stories *The Refugees* (2017). These stories deal with the flood of refugees who came from Vietnam to the United States after 1978. The stories are a reminder of how the Vietnamese were once also labeled as refugees, but now the American society considers them as a faithful national group. In an interview, Nguyen asserts how these stories aim to humanize the refugee crisis and to rebut allegations that they are a national threat. In general, issues of

cultural racism, mobility, human rights, assimilation, and national security are the focus of this chapter.

The first three chapters mainly deal with stories of immigrants and refugees from a privileged position or for the purpose of surviving. It is imperative to remember that the refugee's goal is to survive, not particularly to ask for or gain full human rights, as in the case of characters in Lalami's and Nguyen's texts. The fourth chapter turns toward voices that have been silenced and bodies that have been relegated to a state of near non-existence. The refugee's path is not always open, and sometimes blocking points mean not only the end of the journey, or the quest, but also the end of the refugee's life. Unlike exile and diaspora studies, which focus on the hardship of assimilating into a new culture under excruciating circumstances, there occur in refugee studies countless muted bodies whose stories will never be narrated, or filmed, or stereotyped. The writer then brings to life imagined stories of those whose lives have ended on the borders, in transit, or upon arriving the host country. Originally published in 1963, Ghassan Kanafani's novel *Men in the Sun* speaks truthfully to our contemporary times, and fits within this category. The novel is about a group of Palestinian refugees planning to go to Kuwait for better job prospects and better opportunities of living. Their illegal status as refugees compel them to travel inside a water tank. The novel ends with them being suffocated in the tank. Kanafani's novel is an agonizing tale of refugees caught by death in motion, their attempt at mobility resulting in an immutable silence. Similarly, a collection of short stories by the Iraqi novelist Hassan Blasim titled *The Madman in the Square* (2009) depicts a range of refugees in dire situations who are also the target of human trafficking in Serbia's forests.

Death has not only been a subject for fictional narratives in elucidating the plight of refugees; non-fiction accounts are also on the rise. Pietro Bartolo's *Tears of Salt* closely follows what the doctor sees on the shore of Lampedusa Island in Greece when thousands of refugees arrive there in critical condition. The haunting images of refugees in "A Truck to Berlin" and in *Tears of Salt* can be linked to Kanafani's novel, affirming the trans-historical reality of refugees' mobility from East to West, as they risk not only their human dignity but their lives as well.

These chapters show examples of writers who have undergone, witnessed, or imagined situations of refugee displacement. The authenticity of their stories lies in how close they are to the issue, whether they have direct or indirect knowledge of immigrant or refugee experience. Relying on Spivak's seminal question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in the fifth chapter I explore the problematic question of who gets to tell the refugee's story. To narrow the selection of texts, I focus on books that examine the refugee crisis by writers who have immersed themselves in the experience, interviewed/ recorded refugees, and then written about it. The agency of the refugee by proxy is a polemical topic since the Western writer, once again, took up the responsibility, or the burden, to represent the Other, in this case the refugee.

Some writers have been more active in involving themselves with those who have been displaced from their countries. In 2006, Dave Eggers published *What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng*, following the life of a Sudanese child who migrated to the United States. Eggers is widely known for his engagement with nonprofit organizations like *Voice of Witness*, which promotes the idea of storytelling as a means of surviving and witnessing. The reception of the novel was a mixture of celebrating the endeavor and of unfavorably examining Eggers' role in representing the Other faithfully.

This chapter includes an overview of non-fictional texts produced in the last couple of years on the global refugee crisis. I examine the purpose of their publication and the ways in which refugee subjects remain represented, photographed and muted. The chapter proceeds to analyze how different or similar their account is of refugees to those writers who are in some way affected, directly or indirectly, by the crisis. This discussion will reflect on whether or not there is a possibility of truthfully representing the Other while occupying a position as an outsider who is not necessarily directly involved in the calamity. This chapter thus raises questions concerning who has a voice in the literary world where literature cannot be egalitarian. Poststructuralism has undermined assumptions of the necessity of centers as points of knowledge, like a white, male, or western perspective. However, with the reemergence of a white/western center, the refugee's dilemma is represented through a privileged interloper. This makes us ponder over the many stories and diminished voices that have disappeared in polarized academic and humanitarian communities unless a white agent comes into the picture to function as a translator of miseries. This chapter examines the possibilities of representing the Other by writers who have taken the responsibility to bring forth the displaced into attention. Unlike the writers in previous chapters, the writers here have occupied themselves with the pursuit of writing about the plights of refugees. The act of writing in itself is worthy of admiration for bringing to light suppressed and displaced voices. However, power relations are still intact in our "globalized" world. There is still a reliance on the west to represent and, if necessary, rescue the dispossessed. The writers' products are not themselves the problem as much as the hegemonic structures that produce and maintain the crisis in the first place.

The study provides a macroscopic look at refugee experiences as represented in different texts, illustrating a pattern of encounter between East and West. Refugees in these texts go through a journey in which basic human rights are beyond the point of attainability. Theories of movement, relocation, and diaspora have generally seen the liberatory potential of increase of mobility, where in fact, the right of movement has become hierarchical and border screening processes have become more rigorous and exclusive. In order not to clump refugee studies within exile or diaspora umbrella, the texts included in this dissertation are worthy of interest and scholarly attention within their own category. Postcolonial studies, for example, can be helpful in our understanding of the refugee plight; however, journeys across borders have varying levels of complications and arduousness. The writer is different from the masses of refugees moving from one camp to another; so too are theories of mobility different from exile and hybridity studies. It is of utmost importance to provide a work that specifically focuses on the state of being a refugee. Refugees' bodies, like dead bodies washed up on shores, become lost and disposable the minute they lose control over their destiny and the minute foreign hands have the power in shaping their lot. Literature has the capacity to preserve these stories as a testimony of existence, survival, and injustices.

CHAPTER ONE

DOES THE THEORY HOLD? RE-EXAMINING MOBILITY STUDIES AND THE STATUS OF THE POSTMODERN REFUGEE

"A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries."

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR's definition of a refugee constitutes major elements: forced migration, persecution, inability to return home, and causes for becoming a refugee. The UNHCR's website begins with this definition to strictly apply the label on certain people and not on others, meaning legal or illegal immigrants, because as the Office notes, not everyone will deserve to receive refugee status in the host country. The element of persecution in the definition is imprecise; it is defined either as war or something vaguer, with no further explanation of what constitutes the specific type of violence. If the host government is willing to accept refugees and if the fleeing person fits all these conditions, then he or she will be granted legal status and will not be deported to his or her home country where persecution, war, or violence threatens the person's safety. The more we repeat the concepts of war, persecution or violence, the more exclusionary the definition becomes and the more the labels become harder to amend. "War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence" are ingredients for making an Other in one's home country and also

when one relocates. Defining, labeling, and then perceiving people only through these labels results in creating an image, an understanding, or even a stereotype of who the refugee is or should be. It is easier to process papers, applications and people through labels or valid proofs of persecution, or more obscurely, of violence. In the absence of these proofs, the person will be forced back to his or her home country where the United Nation's Human Rights charts cannot be stretched enough to include the person or offer protection. The political process of accepting refugees' mobility across borders can be as severe as the causes of persecution and violence they fled from in the first place.

In light of this definition, one might consider more deeply the identity of the refugee, the causes for flight, and the destination chosen for escape without going through a cycle of labels and preconceived notions of refugees. Ideally, the academic conversation around the refugee crisis belongs to Refugee Studies, offered in certain programs such as Refugees and Forced Migration Studies, Global Refugee Studies, or Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies. In literature, we often encounter the word refugee amongst a series of labels like diaspora, exile, or migration, without it having a theory of its own, or it can be categorized under postcolonial studies as a form of modern diaspora, or a form of a post-independence diaspora. Refugees are also an object of study in Global Studies and International Relations since the crisis extends beyond the limits of the local. (Local and global are two other terms which will be questioned later on in this chapter.)

More recently, we have encountered the rise of Mobility Studies as an interdisciplinary field of research. Both voluntary and involuntary global crisscrossing emerge in what we now know as "the mobility turn." John Urry describes twelve kinds of mobility, including people who depend on their passports and national identities,

students, service people, professionals, and even tanks and military armies (10). Referring to it as Mobilities and not the singular form, Urry works on revitalizing the field where “a wholesale revision of the ways in which social phenomena have been historically examined” has become necessary to understand every movement, how it is performed, approved or obstructed (44). These social phenomena are linked with the exercise of hegemony that makes and unmakes spaces for mobile bodies to occur and to be defined. Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* contests the idea of space as a “passive locus of social relations” ascertaining instead the role of action and knowledge that deconstructs hegemonic spaces and ideologies (11). Urry’s “Mobilities”, in this sense, exercise their unique power over strictly defined places constructed for certain communities to inhabit.

Literary theories, in the name of poststructuralism and postcolonialism, have often associated the mobility of people, not specifically refugees, with changing notions of home, belonging, identity, and nation-state. In *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (2010), Stephen Greenblatt underlines the mistake of academic programs which emphasize categorizations and divisions. Going back to the limitation of labeling, mobile bodies have been perceived as the exception to the rule of fixed national and religious affiliations, a point that Greenblatt challenges for its inaccuracy of representing the mobility of cultures across history. To trace back Greenblatt's train of thought, poststructuralism, with its critiques of fixed structures and binary oppositions, should help us undercut the conventional restrictive category we have for refugees. To be or to become a refugee necessitates an erosion of identity and a construction of a new one. To examine the role of poststructuralism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism in assembling an understanding of who the refugee is, and outlining how these theories have failed to

represent the refugee crisis independently, the following sections will elaborate on the attempts to construct a postmodern identity, bodies, mobility and literature. Although we cannot do away with major theoretical frameworks, the refugee crisis, theoretically, is a critique of the existing theories. The crisis is humanitarian and very real, but it can also be expanded to include different aspects of displacement. To understand refugeehood, one can allude to people, things, texts, images, and identities. The point of this chapter is to widen our understanding of refugee studies to include different aspects of the crisis and its theories and not just to represent the mass of people moving across borders. As a result, it is necessary to approach the subject matter by examining the interdisciplinary nature of such a field where socio-political and literary theories intertwine. The chapter merely aims to lay bare some of the theories and trajectories behind labeling people as immigrant, illegal immigrants or refugees. Theoretically speaking, the refugee crisis has ignited discussions within globalization, mobility, and postmodern theories by questioning them and remodeling them for the sake of greater equality and in the name of free movement as a fundamental human right.

Postmodernism, Postcolonialism, and Transnationalism

The refugee's making of an identity congregates different elements of race, gender, age, national ties, and religious relations.[1] To critique the absence of a sufficient understanding of who the refugee is and what the label means, admittedly, is to

---

[1] See Ala Sirriyeh's *Inhabiting Borders, Routes Home: Youth, Gender, Asylum* which focuses on young refugees in contrast to adults and children.

contextualize the refugee identity in postmodernity. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan collect arguments of the failure of postmodernism despite its promise for a dispersion of master narratives that have for so long shaped our conceptualization of an identity. Postmodernism remains as a continuation of modernism, especially in that it relies on the narrative of modernity to deconstruct its discourse in form of opposing Western hegemony of power and knowledge to give room for diverse voices. Postmodernist criticism has critiqued colonial practices in favor of including more voices that have been marginalized due to factors such as gender, race, and nationality. However, in arguing against these broad narratives that influence the shaping of subjectivity, Grewal and Kaplan highlight how marginal voices are still deemed peripheral. Kobena Mercer also examines this conundrum, expounding that "The contradiction of the postmodern requires a relational emphasis because what is experienced as a loss of identity and authority in some quarters is also an empowering experience which affirms the identities and experiences of others for precisely the same reason" (54). Criticism of postmodernism continues to dismantle the new constructed grand narratives of postmodernity by promoting an inclusive postulation theorizing the inclusion of all. The term hybridity is born out of poststructuralism and postcolonialism but it suggests that any hybrid subjectivity occurs only in the West, as if the space of postmodernity can only occur in a non-Third-World country (Mercer 7). Adding to this limitation, hybrid subjects are the result of circumstances that are out of their control. Nelly Richard comments on this process of assimilation when the center of power has not disappeared but is widened to include diversified identities and "it continues to administer by exclusive right" (11). The politics of exclusion and inclusion affect the status of who the refugee is. In light of the recent acceleration in the sheer number of bodies moving across borders, the

UNHCR's definition works better in theory than in practice. As already mentioned, postmodernity has been marked with binary oppositions despite the fact it has been trying to question those binaries. To complicate matters further, one can add a new set of antinomies: *a refugee* and *not a refugee.*

Becoming a refugee entails a revision of taken-for-granted concepts. Kaplan in *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (2010) probes ideas of home, location, travel, estrangement, and most importantly displacement with its effects on the shaping of subjectivity. Studying refugees' mobility also involves displacement. The core of Kaplan's inquiry assumes that terms like travel and displacement emerged within a colonial discourse within modernity. We often talk of displacement as an open umbrella which includes all kinds of estrangement, travels, relocations, or being away from home. Euro-American discourse of displacement, despite its inclusivity, reuses clichés and terms without fully examining the cultural and historical discourse that produced these terms. For example, Kaplan writes, "Immigrants, refugees, exiles, nomads, and the homeless also move in and out of these discourses as metaphors, tropes, and symbols but rarely as historically recognized producers of critical discourses themselves" (2). Extending Kaplan's critique, refugees in literary theories most often fall under postcolonial theories as a Third World problem, and most often examined by postcolonial writers who might have the heavy responsibility to represent them as diasporic subjects. There are more nuanced examinations of Migration Studies directing attention towards "professional migrants" whether white or nonwhite immigrants whose experience is less severe based on their socio-economic privileges, but they are not generally included in our popular imagination of immigrants as disenfranchised and without agency (Fechter and Walsh 10).

Displaced or exiled writers in the Western canon have written extensively on their individual experiences of being foreigners and not-home, therefore Kaplan introduces the question whether we should extend the definition of displacement to include mass migration. The homogenizing tropes of immigration have been placed in opposition to travel and have been aligned with postmodernity as the age of large-scale displacement. Kaplan continues to warn that "using immigration to read against the grain of modernist exile begins to demystify the construction of specific aesthetic and critical practices, yet immigration should not be universalized as a symbol of displacement" (5). Is it time for postmodernism to deconstruct "migration" which has become itself a grand narrative? Considering the many facets of movement within the umbrella narrative of migration, it is likely to see the proliferation of understanding of a concept like migration. The refugee's experience has also been homogenized as a symbol of displacement despite the varying levels of the escape journey, the mode of transportation, the pain, and possibly the trauma. People who have been called refugees may have been smuggled through forests, which is different from being smuggled on a boat, and definitely different from leaving by a plane. More broadly and precisely, Jennifer Hyndman's definition of displacement as an "involuntary movement, cultural dislocation, social disruption, material dispossession, and political disenfranchisement" constitutes the multilayered experience of forced migration (2). Representations of escape in literary works have the power to manifest different realities about flight and seeking refuge.

Whether the refugee's predicament is a Third World or a First World problem, the contact zone between the refugees and the host country does not conform to Mary Louise Pratt's definition of the term:

> an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographical and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect . . . A 'contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and 'travelees,' not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. (7)

The "contact" has been defined in terms of antagonistic correlations. In other words, the "copresence" between mobile bodies and host countries does not indicate an interaction as much as it indicates disconnection and dissonance. What we are witnessing recently, however, is the establishment of a new systematic apartheid separating between those who dwell inside refugee camps and those who are outside. These spaces not only highlight the differences of power but also they do not yield what Pratt hopes to see occurring as "interaction, interlocking understandings and practices." These zones of exclusion are indeed a close-to-borders apartheid.[2]

---

[2] Refugee camps, as new and undefined spaces between borders, are different considering the variety of the term refugee to include "situational refugees fleeing from violence, persecuted refugees, and State-in-exile refugees" (Levy, 101). Locating and containing refugees in camps disallow their acceptance into the society and the durability of their status in the host-country. The Refugee conventions at least give the asylum-seeker a "non-refoulement" status where the refugees will not be asked to return to the country from which they are fleeing (Levy, 105). Excluding the refugee into an

Redefining categories like immigration, exile and "the real" contact zone primarily causes a redefinition of belonging to a physical space, be it home or a camp in any attempt to be a mobile body. There have been many sentimental definitions of home,

---

extraterritorial space is advantageous for the state since it restricts the refugee's agency to move beyond borders or limits their access into areas where the state's population resides. Somehow these measures are taken to extremes where "the barbed wire is needed to keep out the local population where the country is located" (qtd. in Levy, 115). Alice Wilson in "Ambiguities of Space and Control: When Refugee Camp and Nomadic Encampment Meet" examines the difference between refugee camps and nomadic encampments where the former is an example of a space under state control over the mobility. However, the camp space will never be as similar to towns or cities, more sedentary spaces. The camp acts as a "rupture and preservation of mobility" where the refugee's agency of movement is supervised (41). The temporality of the camps fails to offer integration into the host-country and also deters the possibility of lingering on different borders. Camps are a solution but they are also an alternative to localizing refugees and marking them instead as an outsider, an outcast, and a nomad, despite the lack of movement under the state's panoptic control. Rootedness in the camp is falsified with the non-permanence of the location they have been asked to remain at. The Arabic word for camps is *almukhayam,* meaning "tented place," a reality of being that is simultaneously enclosed inside and exposed outside. The camp is a place epitomizing the state's power over the refugees detaining them in semi-permanent spaces that fail to give a sense of permanence identifying them as the Others within, or the familiar Others.

being home, being exiled from home, and the need to return home.[3] The mobile body carries along with it traditions from home, and specific markers of identity. Acts of violence, or estrangement inscribed on the exiled body result from the severance from home, "But what if home itself is the site of violence to the body?" Susan Stanford Friedman asks. Safety for this injured body and identity might be secured only in the process of moving out and beyond the parameters of the homeland (199). Friedman argues that finding the self sometimes only manifests itself in contradictions, juxtapositions, and in oppositions occurring all through the act of writing, writing one's self home, about home, and away from home, "The rapture of writing rupture" (207). Writing the self and one's experience necessitates a dwelling in a place, of placing the body in a semi-permanent home before writing can occur. For the refugee's mobile body, or the body who is in risk of being expelled or even worse, to be returned to the home country, writing is not often a possibility; writing only thrives in a stable condition, or in the case of expatriates, when moving is the end game which will ultimately produce an "aesthetic gain through exile" (Kaplan 36).[4]

---

[3] See Lynellyn D. Long's and Ellen Oxfeld's *Coming Home?: Refugees, Migrants, and Those Who Stayed Behind.* In this book, Long and Oxfeld study different types of the refugee's return, most of which are imaginary but almost never idealistic in constructing a future in their home country.

[4] See Paul Fussell's *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars* in which the author examines how travel was equated with freedom from war at England. Writing and travel were interlinked before the beginning of the Second World War when more restrictions were imposed on travel and subsequently on travel writing.

If literary theories have clung to labels and terminologies to assess identities and experiences, Refugee Studies have been more advanced in this regard. The next section will introduce how scholarship has been devoted to reconfiguring definitions and broadening our understanding of who the refugee is.

Reexamining Labels in Refugee Studies

The refugee crisis is a political crisis in its inception, reception, and final policy-making decisions. Thus, it is useful to begin with a historical context that considers who the refugee has been in our popular imagination and how governments have shaped and reshaped identities through their politically-driven decisions on this critical humanitarian issue.

Terrorist attacks paved the way for the tight association between mobility of refugees and national security, making it one of the largest problems facing European countries. New measures had to be taken to deter and to halt these mobile bodies from moving freely across borders. Narratives of refugees' human rights are unfortunately overshadowed by the narratives of fear and Islamic xenophobia as a measurement of self-protection for the host countries (Lahav 10). Retrospectively, the current crisis has cast doubts over Europe's most cherished principles of "free movement of persons, human rights protections, and social harmonization or solidarity" (Lahav 12).

Refugees' forced movements can be divided into three types: legal (moving according to prescribed international laws), political (movement because of certain politically-motivated exigencies), and sociological (movement based on reasons that are

not political in nature). After World War I, those fleeing from their country, like the countless Russians who fled the Bolsheviks, were protected by international policies to oversee procedures of resettlement. World War II witnessed the establishment of UNHCR in 1950 and later on the Geneva Convention of 1951 was instituted to include refugees fleeing from Nazi persecution. Currently, those who seek asylum and refugee status in another country may flee their homes for various reasons such as female genital mutilation, trafficking, environmental disasters, civil wars and other non-political calamities (Lahav 13). Non-western countries are now expected to absorb this influx of refugees which has increased the fragility of these countries that are already economically precarious. However, fear of persecution does not imply that violence happened in the past only, "it can look to the future, and can emerge during individuals' absence from their home country, for example, as a result of intervening political change" (Goodwin-Gill 38). Nevertheless, there are flawed moral reasonings in this definition, pushing scholars to widen the definition to include other factors beyond feeling impelled to cross borders. Andrew E. Shacknove questions definitions of the refugee, concluding that

> neither persecution nor alienage captures what is essential about refugeehood. Persecution is a sufficient, but not a necessary, condition for the severing of the normal social bond. It accounts for the absence of state protection under tyrannical conditions where a government is predatory but says nothing about the opposite, chaotic, extreme where a government (or society) has, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist. Persecution is but one manifestation of a broader phenomenon: the absence of state protection of the citizen's basic needs. It is this absence of state protection which constitutes the full and complete negation of society and the basis of refugeehood. (277)

Persecution should not be examined as political persecution. “The absence of state protection of the citizen’s basic needs” can be a sufficient condition to be a refugee, even if this sort of persecution does not lead to a traversing of national borders.

Different aspects of mobility, indebted to poststructuralism, have disrupted grand narratives of national histories, nation-state, and identity. Historical academic research on the identity of the refugee has been minimal; the field has largely been dominated by a focus on state policies. The historical angle of the field has been missing, silencing the refugee’s voice in disturbing national histories (Elie 30). To reach out to experiences of being a refugee, social historians in the 1960s favored “unconventional methods” to document the genuine experience of the displaced. Memoirs, personal recollections, and oral histories—few as they were—were gathered to help define the parameters of the experience, a way of looking at particular instances. Concerns increased over the legitimacy of going back to undefined histories of refugees to document their stories. The “ahistorical” aspect of the research, however, worked first and foremost to provide a truthful representation of the refugee voice (Elie 31). Legal protection of the refugee ensures that each refugee is entitled to his/ her human rights under protection laws.

Defining refugee studies is elusive and if based on international laws, it becomes fragmentary. Is the refugee only the person who crosses borders, fleeing violence and so is worthy to earn the status of a refugee? Or perhaps “the field should stretch to encompass the internally displaced, the trafficked, irregular migrants, second- and third-generation diasporas and those at risk of deportation. If the latter is favored, how far can refugee and forced migration studies stretch before its focus becomes too diffuse to be meaningful, blurring into the border fields of Migration Studies, Human Rights, Development Studies, or International Politics?” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, et al 1). Barbara

Harrell-Bond in *Imposing Aid* (1986) questions the value of Refugee Studies since it has no impact on refugees themselves. The rift between academic research and ethical and necessary activity underlines the exploitation of this human suffering, without helping to mitigate the hardships of the sufferers (Harrell-Bond, 3). Refugee Studies, with all its interdisciplinary angles, seems predicated on the view that "refugee and forced migration studies is a subject focused on understanding and addressing *human* experiences of displacement and dispossession" (Harrell-Bond 5). Literary theories and literature can either widen the gap between academic and abstracted concepts and between policymaking or help to reform these contesting identities vis a vis a nation-state and global policies. The human in the refugee crisis is often subject to displacement, forced mobility, and hostile host countries to a point where the humanity of the refugee is no longer as important as the political policies determined and issued on their behalf. One is always reminded of Hannah Arendt's lamentation on World War II refugees and survivors whose "abstract nakedness of being nothing but human was their greatest danger" (300). Relying on literature, in this case, can erase instead of exacerbating the divide between those who are deemed worthy to have human rights and those who are not. Adding literary voices into the sociopolitical rhetoric is one way to make refugees' cases less abstracted and less homogenous.

Defining the refugee identity and experience within clean-cut lines is thus impossible. An understanding of how refugee identity is formed is limited by more than a certain state's policies. Roger Zetter focuses on the concept of labeling in forming a refugee identity within institutionalized procedures under the banner of humanitarian actions. The act of labeling, as a political practice, not only shapes specific images of who refugees are but also limits humanitarian interventions that are narrowed by and

aligned with a very strict definition of being a refugee (Zetter 173). In a globalized world, means of dealing with refugees have changed to correspond with changing situations of migration and the destinations of migration. The mobility of people has been widely towards the Global North, although the number of internally displaced people is also alarming. The “convenient image” of the refugee is a political and a bureaucratic label to provide a ready explanation for the government's choice not to absorb the flow with best humanitarian aid and instead to deport those who claim to be refugees (Zetter 174). The flow of migration, both involuntary and voluntary, confuses the process of labeling the moving subject who can fall in either of these categories: “asylum/migration nexus” or “mixed migration flows,” both of which have been knocking on the doors of Europe (Zetter 175). The difficulty of identifying the migrant body has pushed legislators, starting with the Geneva Convention, to specify the sort of reasons that prompted people to migrate, more specifically, if they were victimized after being persecuted. Nevertheless, “Who are the ‘real’ refugees (conforming to an image of victims?) and who is being protected? In complex emergencies many people are caught up in conflict and flee, though they are not persecuted” (Zetter 176). Questions like these circulate around minorities who are under the rule of nationalistic ethnic majorities without necessarily being threatened by ethnic cleansings to satisfy the requirement to become a refugee. Socially and economically speaking, these same minorities are often excluded from circles of power in their home country, a point also critiquing the narrow definition of persecution. As for sub-Saharan Africans who cross the Mediterranean to Europe to escape dire economic conditions, for instance, “are they economic migrants or refugees?” (Zetter 178). Labels continue to be developed in an effort to align the migrant subjects with national and international policies, labels such as “genuine refugee” as opposed to a

refugee, both of which now fall under the term "asylum seeker" (Zetter 181). The more specific the labels, the more control Europe has over limiting the claim to be a refugee, which allows Europe to provide full protection according to their human rights. It is not enough to be a refugee; the migrant body has to provide proofs to justify that he/she is worthy to be granted the refugee status. Hence, any failure to meet the requirements of policies could mean a denial of entrance and/or enforced return to the country from which the refugee is fleeing. Refugees are invited to play this game of acquiring labels, to fit in a narrative, with bureaucratic tactics in exchange for a marginalized status, or in US migration terms, to acquire an *Alien Number* designated as an identity for each asylum seeker petitioner. The legitimatized mobility is an already written narrative, and the displaced migrant has to fit into this narrative to successfully be given a label as a refugee in this political game that should be a humanitarian mission: "Labels reveal the political in the apolitical," where "the refugee label is no longer a right but a prized status and expensive commodity" (Zetter 188).

Distinctions between the political refugee and the migrant continue, mainly to deter the options for settlement. The "problem" of admitting refugees into the host country comes with the possibility of a threat to national security. As a result, geographic sites secluded from the country's population are designated for refugees. European countries set up camps to house and contain refugees and immigrants. These allotted geographic spaces are not considered as part of the host country, serving instead as a temporary zone out of space, like the *zone d'attentes* in French international airports (Hyndman and Mountz 77). Moreover, the legal status of this class of detained refugee in this extra-territorial space is unclear as they occupy a stateless position, forever in a third space, out of place. To make matters easier, and to keep the risk of admitting non-

refugees at a minimum for European countries, UN agencies outside Europe deal with the procedures of identifying refugees before sending them on. The geographical distance, keeping camps and organizations overseas, is a safety measure for the host country. However, the more barriers that are constructed to make mobility impossible, the more the smuggling industry thrives, and the more lives become at risk. The European Union continues to seek and find solutions to keep refugees and undocumented immigrants outside member nation-states, hoping to create a stateless space as a sort of containment where they can stay for indefinite periods of time. These spaces of exclusion will restrain the mingling between citizens and noncitizens. Any act of state-violence, such as detaining mobile subjects with no indication of crime, is not considered as a violent or anti-humanitarian; it is, however, not unlike the state-violence from which the political refugee has fled. It is not a stretch to regard international laws against mobile bodies a violent enforcement of settlement where "a quieter, geographically more distant and dispersed war against refugees is taking place. It is the silent nature of these conflicts that is . . . most troubling: that these phenomena remain quiet to those citizens on whose behalf states are presumably acting, that they remain quiet among those protesting the world's more publicized war" (Hyndman and Mountz 85-86). Although considerable attention has been given to the recent Syrian refugee crisis, most First World citizens are unaware of the procedures that a political refugee has to go through to be admitted anywhere or the months, sometimes years, they have to stay in camps in order to be relocated into a host country. In the following section, mobility versus nomadism is explored to present the triangular relationship between the state, the nomad (the refugee) and the act of mobility.

The Age of "Posts":

The refugee exists in the endless spiral of mobility. The dire circumstances, whatever they may be, impel the traveler to become a refugee, or to fit the UN's characteristics of the label. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* highlights how mobile bodies have emerged as a necessity in our postmodern age:

> Surely it is one of the unhappiest characteristics of the age to have produced more refugees, migrants, displaced persons, and exiles than ever before in history, most of them as an accompaniment to and, ironically enough, as afterthoughts of great post-colonial and imperial conflicts. As the struggle for independence produced new states and new boundaries, it also produced homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants, unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, rejected by the established order for their intransigence and obdurate rebelliousness. (402-3)

Said situates this forced mobility within the borders of the Western empire that has been producing such extreme examples of horrifying displacement. He also distinguishes, in a lecture given at York, between "optimistic mobility" and the hordes of bodies lost between borders and states rendering immobile subjects. Undoubtedly, immobility is also embedded in mobility where the circuit of the moving body is checked, contained, and controlled. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as early as 1986 were fascinated with the idea of a nomad who knows no borders and whose movement depends on survival sources, all in opposition to controlled movements regulated by the state. The nomad occurs in smooth spaces in contrast to striated spaces. To contextualize the refugee's mobility across borders, we can sense a hint of nomadism in their routes. The smooth spaces, which are at the same time striated spaces belonging to certain governments, are

the main survival methods for refugees. Deleuze and Guattari, nevertheless, differentiate between migrants and nomads as follows:

> The nomad is not at all the same as the migrant; for the migrant goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen or not well localized. But the nomad only goes from one point to point as a consequence and as a factual necessity: in principle, points for him are relays along a trajectory. Nomads and migrants can mix in many ways, or form a common aggregate. (50)

The movement from one point to another is the experience of the refugee who shares peculiarities with both nomadism and migration. The destination is known, in theory, for the refugee, but the ultimate localization of the refugee is entirely dependent on government's receiving the influx or where smugglers decide to leave them. Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the migrant has drastically changed recently since the migrant, or the refugee, is also compelled to move "as a consequence and as a factual necessity" (380). Despite the differentiation made between migrants and the nomad, the agency is the same. Nomads might be considered more willfully determined to embark on their journey whereas migrants' and refugees' determination is born out of harsh circumstances: "If the nomad can be called the Deterritorialized *par excellence*, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization *afterwards* as with the migrant" (Deleuze and Guattari 52). However, the nomad, also analogous to the war machine, stands against the sedentary of the state which situates identities in specific and unalterable locations. The movement of both the refugee and the nomad is in reaction to the state. As Deleuze and Guattari write:

> One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of a striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism, but to control migrations and, more generally, to establish a zone of rights over an entire 'exterior,' over all of the flows traversing the ecumenon. If it can help it, the State does not dissociate itself from a process of capture of flows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital, etc. there is still a need for fixed paths in well-defined direction, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects. . . [the State] requires that movement, even the fastest, cease to be the absolute state of a moving body occupying a smooth space, to become the relative characteristic of a 'moved body' going from one point to another in a striated space. (59-60)

The circumstances, which the refugee/the migrant is fleeing from, are identical to the nomad's state which works to control all mobile subjects and objects alike, making the moving body into a "moved body" managed by state regulations. Associating our understanding of the refugee with nomadism gives refugees an active role in the decision to relocate and not just to be regarded as weak, fragile, and inefficient. The movement is a result of necessity, but it is also a political choice to leave home and nation-state affiliations behind. To perceive the refugee's movement in a romantic and in a liberatory sense similar to what we think of Deleuze and Guattari's nomad, is to recognize a determining moving body who is not a threat or a degenerate being but a dynamic decider of his/her life choices. These statements might seem contradictory in their examination of the refugee's status. The refugee is someone who has been forced to leave the home

country. The refugee is also someone who made the choice to embark on a journey, risky as it may be, to escape violence or economic deprivation. The question of being forced and the persistence of the refugee's will becomes clearer with Rosi Braidotti's explanation of the *nomadic subjects* in general. For Braidotti, the nomadic subject "constitutes an act of resistance against methodological nationalism and a critique of Eurocentrism from within. Both politically and epistemically, nomadic subjectivity provokes and sustains a critique of dominant visions of the subject, identity, and knowledge, from within one of the main 'centers' that structure the contemporary globalized world" (7-8). Refugees, as an epistemic classification, are nomadic subjects whose mobility/immobility categorize them as agents of dissent even if their lived experiences are rooted in displacement, hardship, and even death.[5]

---

[5] Liisa Malkki coins the term "Sedentarist Metaphysics" in "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees" where she examines refugee's status inside and outside camps. She also reexamines our understanding of roots and routes in relation to forming a national identity and how politics of movement have changed geographies of belonging. In the article, she alludes to Deleuze and Guattari's nomad and she affirms that the refugee is not a nomad, but the refugee is a nomad in its allegorical sense. Moreover, Ginette Verstraete and Tim Cresswell, the editors of *Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation in a Globalized World,* have expanded on Malkki's Sedentarist Metaphysics into a "Nomadic Metaphysics" fit for our postmodern age (15).

The refugee's or the nomad's mobility occurs within a localized geography that is forcibly transformed within global geography paradigms since their movement defies states with specified borders. Against the liberating ideas of the twentieth century as the age of globalism, Deleuze and Guattari situate the nomad's movement within a "relative global" which is "limited in its parts, which are assigned constant directions, are oriented in relation to one another, divisible by boundaries, and can be fit together; what is limiting (*limes* or wall, and no longer boundary), is this composite in relation to the smooth spaces it 'contains,' the growth of which it slows or prevents, and which it restricts or places outside" (53-54). The mirage of globalism constrains the nomad's movement within limits, geopolitical ones, under the gaze of the government. Globalization should not be defined as subjects and objects traversing borders; it is the negation of mobility or the supervision of any kind of mobility and where globalization is a phenomenon accompanied by increasing striation of space. Regarding the recent refugee's phenomenon as a problem and a crisis is antithetical to globalization, or of at least any ideal understanding we have of it. The movement of refugees is within a *post-globalized* age when we are no longer able to apply labels based on the movement of money, industry, or professionals across the globe. The refugee's "crisis" has awakened us to the false pretenses of globalization; the post in post-globalization is more authentic and relevant to the reality of an age of more borders and more walls.[6]

---

[6] See Partha Chatterjee's "Empire after Globalisation" where she critiques the narrative of "democracy at home, despotism abroad" thriving in the name of globalization and where "of taking democracy and human rights to backward cultures is

To speak of globalization is to invoke Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996). Appadurai clarifies modernity from a position of the construction of imagined selves. Media, and the travel of culture across the globe, have created individuals who have already transcended the local, or their nation-state boundaries. The creation of new subjectivity vis a vis a global consciousness, highly controlled by a set of images and traditions that are now deemed global, set the viewer/ recipient on a self-modeling introspection, but "the work of imagination, viewed in this context, is neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined but is a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (Appadurai 4). This is a change embodied in local and social realities.

Appadurai appraises the emergence of postnationalism as a reaction to the nation-state. The movement of texts, media, capital, and people—both voluntary and involuntary—creates connections with the local region that is left behind. These dispersed bodies have created what Appadurai calls "a diasporic public sphere" where correspondences are maintained between exile and home, creating an increase of interconnection spaces between several nations (22). When a Western country is multicultural, it only shows "the incapacity of states to prevent their minority populations from linking themselves to wider constituencies of religious or ethnic affiliation" (22). The multiculturalism, or the *globalization syndrome*, using James H. Mittelman's term, is

---

still a potent ideological drive, and hence, that the instrumental use of that ideological rhetoric for realist imperialist ends is entirely available" (4163).

a different story when we turn to those "who are hurt by them [globalization and/or multiculturalism]," or when the globalized "encounter[s] the globalizers" marking a new era of a new binary of globalized versus globalizer (3). What we have witnessed recently is the intensification of the rift between globalized and globalizer, between those who celebrate the state of false universalism and those who resist it. Ginette Verstraete in *Tracking Europe* looks into how the myth of Europe and the concept of "Unity-in-Diversity" have been destabilized through their tourism industry, another facet of modern colonialism. If Europe, according to Verstraete, is "claiming a worldly space," through cosmopolitan ideals, we are still looking at the continent, as expanded as it has become, with the globalized / globalizer binary in the name of homogenization (37). The influx of refugees into Europe has challenged notions of multiculturalism, taken as artifacts and ideologies, questioning the beliefs of diversity within the continent. The imagined multiculturalism of Europe can only be a reality if our idea of Europe becomes what Ash Amin suggests when "the principle of refuge will become vital for many more than the minorities that currently need protection from persecution and hardship," and where a new Europe should be a place of refuge and not a place of nationalities and collective identities resonating with political sense of belonging (3).

Multiculturalism and the freedom of mobility are a part of the idealistic theories of postmodernity. Appadurai's new subjectivity localizes globalization, but when the local is left behind, in the case of the refugee, postnationalism is a pre-nationalism in opposition to the nation-state and also becomes a threshold of an imagined community taking its dispersed people to bygone times. Even Appadurai, whose name is linked to globalism, voiced reservations about it in his subsequent text *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (2006) where he asks

> Why should a decade dominated by a global endorsement of open markets, free flow of finance capital, and liberal ideas of constitutional rule, good governance, and active expansion of human rights have produced a plethora of examples of ethnic cleansing on one hand and extreme forms of political violence against civilian populations (a fair definition of terrorism as a tactic) on the other? (3)

The influx of refugees is not disassociated with the fear of terrorism used as a pretext to fight back globalization. What has been missing from our understanding of globalization—the movement of people, texts, technology, capital and so on—is that terrorism has also been globalized. Globalizers often view refugees, despite their small number, as a threat to the purity of the nation-state, or even its demise. Once again, this is an incident of nationalistic tendencies, which also play on the chord that the nation-state is pure and unified against the alien presence of immigrants. Because of this large movement of certain people into spaces of other nationalities, nation-states feel endangered and are, therefore, justified to use violence as a manifestation of social uncertainty and an indication of "anxiety of incompleteness" (Appadurai, *Fear* 8).

In a book published in 2013, *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition*, Appadurai is more critical of globalization, when before it almost seemed as if borders no longer existed. However, he adds on the list of mobile subject and objects in this work such as global human rights discourse intertwining with politics, writing that "Minorities of every kind, including women, children, immigrants, refugees, political prisoners, and other weak citizens, now have the capacity to exercise pressure on the state to respect their human rights" (63). The conceptualization of human rights and its effects on the state has its ebbs and flows. Nevertheless, this could be an indication that the

humanitarian crisis is finally looked at within a humanitarian discourse. What we have been witnessing is a similar discourse counteracting human rights for minorities espoused by Right Wing politicians who warn of the vulnerability of the purer race against the possibility of increased terrorist activities within the borders of the nation-state. Appadurai terms this operation as "political surgery" to "describe the performance of violent operations on body parts and constituents to create a variety of political effects" (Appadurai, *The Future* 93). The body parts in this instance are supposed to be foreign parts lurking within the state and menacing the lives of its people.[7]

The refugee's mobility occurs within policed, permissible boundaries under the auspices of humanitarian and political decisions within a global context. Transnationalism, like globalism, has been regarded as amending postmodernism by creating new global spaces, far away from a Western gaze. As a result, we are not thinking of center vs. periphery or margins; rather, we have a new terminology to describe postmodernism through emphasizing the global-local binary. For Stuart Hall, globalization is not a new phenomenon for the West. Thus, the global-local does not replace center-periphery; a more accurate term would be power structures between "the West" and "the Rest" where the West is a "*historical*, and not a geographical, construct"

---

[7] See *Politics and the Other Scene* by Etienne Balibar where he broadens the language of borders and nation-state studies through examining religion as a border acting as a definitive and a permanent exclusionary territory. To enact the purpose of borders, and "the only way to realize the border as an absolute separation is to represent it as a religious border - even when this religion is a lay, secularized religion, a religion of language, school, and constitutional principles" (96).

(Hall 277). Transnational theories and literature, on the other hand, have emphasized the interconnectedness of disparate identities, the rise of multiculturalism, and the gradual disappearance of boundaries based on race, culture, class, and gender (Paul, 91). Transnational migration, a field of its own now, gives an agency to the migrant whose cross-border relationships create a transnational society that extends productively beyond specific sovereign states (Nieswand 1). The essence of a transnational identity is being a "transmigrant," a term coined to distinguish immigrants who "take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states" (Basch, et al 7). Yet another distinction has been made to argue that diaspora and transnationalism are concurrently focusing on "co-presence of universalizing and particularizing process" in opposition to globalism and its endorsement of sheer universalism (Faist, 16). Transnationalism also has its own risks since more mobile individuals are fostering relationships, economically, socially, religiously, and politically speaking, in two or more societies, a point that can lead to the relaxation of loyalties to one specific nation-state (Castle, et al 5). Gradually, migrants are not necessarily driven away from their countries for being persecuted or poor. There is a category of mobile subjects whose mobility blurs the line between migration and tourism or between permanent and temporary settlement (Castle, et al, 7). This perspective is widening conceptions of migration as urged by various reasons that affect both people in the Global North and South. Globalization, in theory, prompts us to value migration of any sort as an intrinsic part of crossing borders or the failure to cross them.

In considering transnational theories that foreground diaspora as a flow of people across borders, a necessity in our globalized world, diaspora as a term in postcolonial

theories has its own limitations as well. Politics of location determine the occurrence of diaspora, and "all diasporas are not alike" (Grewal and Kaplan 16). Addressing the shortcomings of diaspora studies, postcolonialism itself has come under attack for its slippery connotations.[8] Ella Shohat criticizes the vagueness of postcolonialism, as a noun, a verb, an adjective and its hyphenated form. The term has been used as a safe and a unifying description of Third World countries, of the rare intellectuals, and of literary theories in an Anglo-American sense. It presumes a bygone time of colonialism and its absences in the current time: "The 'post-colonial' inadvertently glosses over the fact that global hegemony, even in the post-cold war era, persists in forms other than overt colonial rule. As a signifier of a new historical epoch, the term 'post-colonial,' when compared with neo-colonialism, comes equipped with little evocation of contemporary power relations" (105). Or as Anne McClintock aptly describes this circular notion of past within the present: "Colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance" (86). Thus, postcolonial theory does not speak for new forms of crisis or any kind of movement, not calling it diaspora, from the Rest to the West. Postcolonialism almost celebrates an end to colonialism, of us against the Other. It is, consequently, inadequate, and inaccurate to situate refugee studies within the parameters of postcolonial theory.

---

[8] See John Lie's "International Migration to Transnational Diaspora" where he opines that our language about diaspora should be structured within a transnational frame constituting premigration and transnational networks combining the collective and the personal experiences in a transnational space.

Fortunately, there has been another “post” placed before post-colonialism to differentiate between not only between two eras but also between two kinds of literatures based on their subject matters. Mohsin Hamid defines “post-postcolonialism” as follows

> I certainly think there is a post-post-colonial generation. I'm sure a lot of voices you're seeing coming out now are people who never had a colonial experience. We don't place a burden of guilt on someone who's no longer there. So it's like, what are we doing with where we come from, and how can we address issues here. It's our fault if things aren't going well. That's a very different stance than a lot of what's come before. Also, people are writing about the subcontinent with eyes that are not meant to be seeing for someone who doesn’t live there, people who are not exoticizing where they come from. I try not to mention the minaret, because when I’m in Lahore, I don’t notice it. The basic humanity is not different from place to place.

The post-postcolonial writer then should focus on the effects of globalization, on the contemporary situation without needing to allude to a colonized past. Nevertheless, Hamid is a fiction writer, and his theory might only apply to a fictional text. Whereas Hamid’s point is different from earlier postcolonial critics, like Said who would attribute contemporary refugee crises and conflicts to aftermath of imperialism, Hamid emphasizes his mongrelized identity as a writer in a globalized world. What Hamid is suggesting is true of some contemporary literature, labeled as Anglophone, where the historicity of the nation-state is marginalized in favor of a transnational identity. The statement that all basic humanity is the same has its own problems, nevertheless, not in the philosophical notion that all humans are equal or the same, but through its materialistic and empirical application. In refugee’s case, humanity is different from

place to place. The following section will look at the status of the refugee amidst the proliferation of "posts" attempting to understand the changing circumstance regarding migration, mobility, fragmentation and borders.

Post-Globalization, Post-Transnationalism, (Postmodern Refugee): Subtitle?

Although it possesses certain limitations, it is not the best strategy to dismiss postmodernism out of hand when looking at the refugee's identity. To salvage the theory and its application, Ihab Hassan questions the very fundamentals of postmodernism, after laying bare the theory he himself pioneered. For Hassan, it is vital to restructure postmodernism within globalization and its effects on the world and not just select western countries. Like globalization, postmodernism has been "a kind of autobiography, an interpretation of our lives in developed societies, linked to an epochal crisis of identity, the other pivotal point" (305). While postmodernism is lauded in its western context when shifting the gaze from the West to the Rest, its positive character is far less clear. In postmodernity, we witness "diasporas, migrations, refugees, the killing fields, a crisis of personal and cultural values seemingly without parallel in history. Therefore, we may be permitted to conclude that "a specter is haunting Europe *and* the world – the specter of Identity" (307). Hassan's efforts to go beyond postmodernism and the set of clichés that defines its polarization require an overhaul and a revamping of taken for granted concepts, and most importantly a need to define, away from the spirit of categorizing definitions, new relationships between "selves and selves, margins and margins, centers and centers – discover what I call a new, pragmatic and planetary civility" (307).

The specter of identity or, if we may say, the specter of refugees, is indeed haunting Europe. If the magnitude of the crisis cannot find an explanation in postmodern theory, then, as Hassan implies, we can only go beyond it. Going beyond it does not mean endorsing a post-postmodern theory which began to be obsolete the minute it was invented. Jeffrey Nealon's *Post-Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (2012) approaches the renovation only focusing on the "intensification" of capitalism in our contemporary age rather than on the "fragmentation" prevalent in postmodernism (ix). Capitalism and postmodernism, an affiliation underscored by Fredric Jameson, is equally bashed by Hassan for making the condition solely a western phenomenon, ignoring the rest of the globe. I will not be endorsing Nealon's post-postmodernism argument; nor will I be disagreeing with it. It is a line of argument with a birds-eye view hastily looking at a capitalistic world consumed with its own hunger for consumption. Details are what matter, the specificity of individual lives is what matters and not sweeping generalization of identities and labels like refugees, diaspora, immigration, exile, and so on. It is time, late as it may be, to look closely at the fragmentations that postmodernism created without passing through its counterpart, post-postmodernism.

If globalization and postmodernism have failed to look at the details involving different lives, it is apt, as I referred earlier, to talk about post-globalism from a humanistic perspective, not looking at the open and free market that only feeds a European and an American economic hegemony. Mobility studies, with a special understanding of the movement, the stagnation and the paralysis of people between and across borders undermine universalism and globalization. In essence, it also undermines postmodernism with its celebration of fragmentation, especially when we have come to

realize that these very fragmented bodies are immobile, detained, or worse, left to die in the name of purity, homogeneity in the disguise of heterogeneity, and the totality of a single race.

What should we do then with Hassan's realization that postmodernism does not and cannot speak for "diasporas, migrations, refugees, the killing fields"? The nation-state is ever reviving, implicitly never ceasing to exist, from the aura of plurality created by deconstruction, postmodernism, feminism, postcolonialism and maybe even post-postcolonialism to laud transnationalist ideologies. Can we now, therefore, think of a *post*-transnationalism to mark a split with transnationalism and the emergence of its opposites, namely, more borders, more identification IDs and passports, more surveillance, more United Nation Agencies outside Europe to deal with "unwanted" bodies outside and away from the European nations? The post in post-transnationalism does not imply a cessation of what transnationalism has stood for, rather it widens the group of people it subsumes as being transnational to include those who are allowed to exist in multiple places and impact and transform two or more cultures. Some scholars have tried to look at "globalism from above" and "globalism from below" and also there have been readings of transnationalism from above and from below implying the imminent transformation of the world into a "global consumerism" (Smith and Guarnizon 3). The various angles from which to look at transnationalism indicate the incapacity of transnationalism to speak of experiences that are imbedded in (trans)nationalism.

Hassan called for deconstructing already deconstructed categorizes and labels to incorporate more multifarious identities. More recently, Saskia Sassen, the preeminent sociologist specializing in globalization and international migration who also coined the term "global city," claims in an interview that "we need new language" for immigrants,

migrants and refugees. In other words, what is at stake is a need for new concepts--concepts must be innovated for judgment to evolve/transform political judgment, where a change in language reflects an innovation in concepts of social justice. We have been yearning for a new language, new labels and ultimately a new conceptualization of our age. Combining the scholarship from Refugee Studies, which has been critiquing broad terms in policy-making processes that unjustly throw labels on people, with our liberal studies will salvage the being and the becoming of a refugee, not just in language but also to exert political change. Hassan may have given us a solution for the inclination to make sweeping generalizations about identities towards the end of his article: "As I have insisted, a postmodern spiritual attitude may become deeply acquainted with *kenosis* – self-emptying, yes, but also the self-undoing of our knowledge in the name of something more fundamental than deconstruction: that is, in the name of Reality" (313). The "self-emptying" and "self-undoing" of knowledge can mean a broadening of our literary academic field to have a more interdisciplinary comprehension of the refugee crisis, which is very much rooted in "Reality."

The Reality of the current refugee crisis is commonly thought to be born out of the Arab Spring, a point made late in the chapter intentionally. Although the current discourse on refugees has enflamed both Right and Left, the refugees' displacement is not particularly situated in the Syrian context, yet the gravity of the refugees' numbers has awakened and alarmed the specificities of the condition. The ghost of displacement of the refugees from both World Wars, the Palestinian exodus of 1948, the Balkans conflict, the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, and most recently Darfur, Iraq, Myanmar, Yemen, and Colombia—though the displaced Colombians are not labeled as refugees for they have not crossed an international border—takes us back to the limitation of the label. The

fragmentation of postmodernity is as scattered as the geopolitical locations of the refugees where masses of people are terrorized, persecuted, and expelled to other places, both legally and illegally, changing the international order. Expanding on Hyndman's assertion that "the involuntary migration of bodies across space . . . is neither passive nor apolitical," (xv) the mobility of the refugee in itself is deconstructionist, whether of geography, politics, the pretense of human rights, and or international humanitarian agencies all floating within "The Absolute Fake."[9] In a sense, our nomadic refugee is an active revolutionary par excellence.

Hamid Dabashi postulates about the revolutionary age of the Arab Spring in *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* studying the Arab nation-states in the face of the engulfing and raging populations where "anti-colonial ideologies paradoxically sealed and trapped modes of emancipation" (3). Dabashi proposes that the "Politics of despair" which the Arab Spring has witnessed makes us reevaluate the concept of revolution, which is in no way only local but has in its tendencies a transnational configuration. The revolutionary force undermines our understanding of both East or West, and South or North where "we must begin re-imagining the moral map of the 'Middle East,' first by discarding that very nasty colonial concoction that has cast the fate of millions to the middle of some colonial officer's imagined East" (6). Postcolonialism remains to work on outdated categories inherited from a colonial era, regardless of the post in the postcolonialism. The theoretical framework through which we come to understand Third World countries is based on a system of binaries of West not East, of religious versus

---

[9] Umberto Eco's *Travels in Hyperreality* is a cultural critique of our "faith in fakes" where a simulacrum of reality has become the marker of our postmodern age.

secular, of modernization not tradition, ad absurdum. If independence from colonial powers freed the state, it has not yet freed the nation from the colonial continuum. Dabashi describes the foundation of the Arab Spring revolution as "postideological, meaning they are no longer fighting according to terms dictated by their condition of coloniality, codenamed 'postcolonial'" (10) where the belated understanding that human rights for all was not necessarily the priority of Arab dictatorships in the Middle East. The revolution necessitated the revolt against not only totalitarian regimes, but also an engulfing system of global neocolonialism and capitalism.[10]

Dabashi's sharp examination of the Arab Spring formulates a dialectical relationship between old postcoloniality and new post-postcolonialism:

> What we are witnessing unfold in the Arab Spring is an epistemic emancipation from an old, domineering, dehumanizing, and subjugating geography — the geography that anthropologists have mapped out for colonialists to rule. By reclaiming a global public sphere and restoring historical agency, the world is finally discovered to be a planet, not a metaphysical bipolarity along an East–West axis. But that discovery is always delayed by the power of the old geography that refuses to let go of its habits. (54)

---

[10] To read more on the character of the Arab Spring, see Asef Bayat's "Egypt, and the Post-Islamist Middle East" where he examines the Arab Spring in Egypt focusing on the aspects of this new revolutionary spirit in the region. Today's revolution in the Middle East is, Bayat writes "neither nationalist, anti-imperialist, nor third-worldist." It is rather a post-islamist, post-nationalist and post-ideological.

However, with the refugees' mobility, crossing into the West, or the First World, the colonizer/colonized binary institutes and negates itself simultaneously. With the agency of mobility, whether voluntary or involuntary, the refugee body is crisscrossing territories which it is forbidden to transgress or occupy. Despite the heavy barbed-wires and states' increased security, the refugee's body is smuggled into these First World spaces, distributing with this same movement power hegemonies that would prefer the Rest of the world and its population to remain at bay, forever shaped and reshaped in a western imagination. On the other hand, discriminatory power structures continue to keep these moving bodies circumscribed to prevent the contamination of their safe spaces with these alien bodies, identities, and ideologies. It is more truthful to describe the current mobility upheaval as a reminder of colonial presences in what we have liked to think postcolonial and postmodern realities, where the marginalized and the colonized chooses to march into the center, notwithstanding the permeability of the presence of indestructible center. There is an insistence and determination to halt any promise of changing old geographies, which we are witnessing as a failing enterprise. Yet, what Dabashi is attempting to draw our attention to is outdatedness of terminologies or at least their uselessness to holistically understand how one is or becomes a refugee.

Although Kwame Anthony Appiah views postmodernism as not necessarily the "culture of every person in the world," in an effort to amend postmodernism's failure to account for the Other, one can still expand the theory's scope. (342-343). If "the post- in postcolonial, like the post- in postmodern, is the post- of the space-clearing gesture," then one might also think and add a post to transnationalism to account for all the identities, like the refugee, who has been left as the Other in global and transnational studies (348). The postmodern refugee—born out of postmodernity and because of the collapse of

certain, yet not all, master narratives—is a reminding critique of postcolonialism, globalization, and transnational theories. Postmodernism has been associated with politics of inclusion, and refugees have been linked with politics of exclusion. Bringing these two concepts together seems to be the summation of our age where contradiction is the defining characteristic. Depending on Hassan's appeal that theory needs to find a new aesthetic to define self and Other and on the dismantling of labels and restrictions in Refugee Studies, the *postmodern refugee* is both a metaphor of nomadism and rejection of containment where the essence of nomadism and freedom of movement has become quintessentially a western privilege. Although the Global North's discourse highlights freedom, equality, and unity, the postmodern refugee is most often denied these attributes, rendering them more prone to be visible and questionable. Unlike John K. Noyes' equation of modern nomadology with terrorism fighting the State, postmodern refugees are at once nomads in their movement, disrupting issues of belonging and state-borders but at the same time they are, like Deleuze's and Guattari's nomad, repeatedly rehabilitated and put in certain places to regulate their numbers and/or unpredicted movements. This is not to belittle the real experience of refugees, but to broaden the concept so that the solutions can be more inclusive and tolerant. Refugee texts, authors, voices, opinions, images and of course people are the components of the postmodern refugee constituting a multitude of experiences, causes, attitudes through literature and the various ways to figure out human experience, not within diaspora, exile or transnationalism, but through being and becoming a refugee in postmodernity. "Rub your eyes, rub them, please, without undue reflexivity, and without prejudice to Creation," Hassan writes, imploring us to phase out our clasp to certain ideologies and discourse. Only then will postmodernity be "neither nostalgic nor utopian" (314). The postmodern

refugee is a natural and an inevitable creation and product of our epoch. Rubbing our eyes and understandings for this phenomenon is a step beyond bewailing the displaced and a true step closer to displace the self from the center of humanity.

CHAPTER TWO

NOMADIC WRITERS: THE REFUGEE AS A WRITER, TEXTS AS REFUGEES SAMAR YAZBEK, SA'DALLAH WANNOUS, NIHAD SIREES, KHALID KHALIFA, AND MUSTAFA KHALIFA

"We are sentenced to hope, and what is happening today cannot be the end of history"

Sa'dallah Wannous

This quote reverberated throughout a small room in Damascus University in the Spring of 2012, engulfing the general spirit of change taking place in Syria at the onset of the revolution, rebellion, insurgence, or whatever you name it. I was a graduate student then, and at the time, we were reading *King is the King* and other plays by Sa'dallah Wannous (1941-1997). Allegorically, the Syrian playwright has managed to attack Arab dictatorships and their injustices against their people. The discussion remained allegorical in class and we purposefully avoided bringing up the analogy between Wannous's despot and the current-day Syrian government. Speaking for myself, the connections were clear: the intellectual voice raging against a failing government after the defeat of Arabs in the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967 is comparable to a contemporary version of the individual refusing to support the country's status quo. The quote befitted the period; hope was in the air, the youth wanted to reshape history, and the injustices of "today" cannot and should not be the sealed fate of the country's future.

By no means was Wannous the only one who grew weary of the political, economic, and social systems of the country, bringing it forward in his writings. His

characters are shadows of selves whose lives are controlled by a nameless system. The striking similarities between the dispossessed in his plays and the typical refugee are salient. Yet, Wannous, a wholeheartedly political and social intellectual, would not generally be regarded as someone who represents the refugee crisis. I argued in the first chapter how our understanding of the postmodern refugee should not be limited to a certain image of massive displacement of people fleeing war; *refugeehood*, as a state of existence, should encompass people whose human rights, including freedom of speech, are being violated. The refugee's life, in the traditional sense, has only become meaningful once the person moves across borders. Because the literature of and about refugees still operates within a narrow perspective of displacement, excavating different writers who can contribute to the multifaceted experience of refugeehood allows for a better understanding of the recent refugee crisis. The postmodern refugee, to dismantle the narrow label, includes people and texts who would not be normally classified as refugees or who are speaking for refugees in literature. How then is the refugee narrative woven into literature and what writers can claim the responsibility to represent refugees imaginatively or literally?

Refugee narratives, stories, and experiences include displacement, loss of basic human rights, loss of identity or forced belonging to a certain nation-state. Escape from persecution is the motif that often appears in writing that is termed refugee literature. Mobility in this case is what makes a refugee a refugee. Refugees earn this identification by leaving the homeland and by becoming a "problem" for other states. However, I argue that the literature of the postmodern refugee should encompass not only the flight but also the immobility of the persecuted individual. The UNHCR delineates the difference between a refugee and an internally displaced person as follows:

> Internally displaced people (IDPs) have not crossed a border to find safety. Unlike refugees, they are on the run at home. While they may have fled for similar reasons, IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for this displacement. As a result, these people are among the most vulnerable in the world.

The question of crossing borders and trespassing in other states is what prompts the United Nations and other countries to deal with this issue. The UNHCR does not deny the similar situations of persecution between refugees and the internally displaced, but the latter will not be given opportunities of protection that the former is sometimes offered. This kind of international protection has its limits, especially when it interferes with certain national sovereignties and their geopolitical rules.

Examining refugee writers, displacement and migration remain as key patterns. For example, Agnes Woolley differentiates between asylum seeking narratives, refugees, and diaspora and migration where "the materiality of displacement, statelessness and border crossing" is different from diasporic narratives, and where "refugees and asylum seekers are not metaphors for rootlessness, but socially situated subjects" (4). Yet again, rootlessness is a consequence of being displaced and misplaced. Movement and liminality are facets of the migrating refugee and thus the experience is fleshed out in the narrative.

Jopi Nyman examines how refugee writers have created a new genre of migration that is different from literature of exile, especially in contrast to writers like Salman Rushdie, Milan Kundera, Edward Said, and other privileged individuals (in the sense of their migration as workers, intellectuals, or businessmen) in that the refugee narratives

are more severe as they are transitioning to a new place (20). Nyman dismisses exilic intellectuals and writers as not fitting in with or representing the refugee narrative, asserting a limited approach to refugeehood. However, displacement and liminality are again understood as occurring only outside the home nation-state. It is true that Rushdie's or Said's journeys were not as harsh as that of most refugees, but in their writings the personal is intertwined with the collective experience of displacement, as privileged or less fortunate as them. Exilic literature sings a trope of images and experiences that the writer may or may not have gone through.

Who is our refugee writer? If the refugee, as a marked identity, is limited, refugee literature has also been identified as displacement and migration across borders. In an effort to augment labels, the representation of the crisis and its multifaceted aspects should also expand to include those intellectual voices whose literature shows similar trails of displacement, estrangement, and persecution. This chapter offers a microscopic examination of refugee Syrian writers who wrote before and during the Arab Spring. The first part of the chapter focuses on the Syrian crisis that has produced writers who have been elevated as refugee voices after the translation of their works. Excavating refugee writers is a process starting with translation, which in itself has become a selective industry. The second part works on broadening and discovering voices of refugeehood whose texts are not attached to refugee literature per se. Internally displaced writers in Syria, well before the revolution, play their part in the humanitarian tragedy witnessed recently. Both of these types of writers constitute a nomadic intellectual defined by Rosi Braidotti:

> The nomadic consciousness . . . is akin to what Foucault called countermemory, it is a form of resisting assimilation or homologation into dominant ways of

> representing the self. The feminist—or other critical intellectuals as nomadic subjects—are those who have a peripheral consciousness and have forgotten to forget injustice and symbolic poverty: their memory is activated against the stream; they enact a rebellion of subjugated knowledges . . . the antithesis of the farmer, the nomad gathers, reaps, and exchanges, but does not exploit. (60)

The nomadic writer occupies a smooth space polarizing against a status quo. The politicized message of the nomadic writer classifies him/her, as Deleuze and Guattari's nomad, as war machines, representing a contumacious position. The two categories of writers in this chapter weave into their narrative politics of countermemory, generating a sociopolitical memory un-obliterated by power structures.

In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault introduces the idea of "Plurality of Resistance" or "*a multiplicity of points of resistance*" (95-6). The refugee writer, who is quintessentially nomadic, expresses different ways of countermemory narrative with different goals: the emergence of the writer's identity, or the representative of the collective consciousness. The difference between these two kinds of nomadic refugee writers in this chapter is that one of them has been more acknowledged publicly and internationally, while the other one is kept in the past writing allegorically against the powers that be. In this respect, I am not belittling any of these manifestations of resistance or categories of nomadism. I am arguing instead that the refugee writer is not only the writer of flight and of displacement in the host country. The refugee, nomadic, writer is an internally displaced figure, literally and metaphorically. By introducing a historical cartography of nomadism and refugeehood in the Syrian literary scene, a more authentic, relevant and comprehensive understanding of displacement ensues as a starting point for the current refugee crisis. This is an important excavation to do because of the

lack of genuine, or permissible, nomadic philosophy and the inability of Syrian refugees to accumulate an archive of their individual experiences. Beyond voices we hear and read sporadically, we can reach back to recent history and restore refugee writers who can cast light on the actual representation of the refugee crisis narrative. These historical narratives and texts constitute a nomadic philosophy highlighting layers of displacement and rootlessness that now define the refugee's becoming.

Refugee Writers Across Borders and Limits of Translation

Pen International is an organization advocating for freedom of expression for writers around the world. To receive a book award from this organization means that writers are guarded against the source of oppression they are writing against. It also distinguishes the writer as the representative voice for the respective crisis, whether the writer depicts it in a book or has been prosecuted, detained, or killed. Sponsoring human right activists, the organization has granted Samar Yazbek, a Syrian writer and journalist, prestigious awards like PEN/Pinter prize and Oxfam Novib/PEN award, recognizing her as an international writer of courage. Yazbek has produced two diaries related to the on-going crisis in Syria while living in Paris for the last six years. *A Woman in the Crossfire*: *Diaries of the Syrian Revolution,* translated and published in 2012, won an English Pen Award. The work is about the inception of the Syrian revolution during its first four months. Her second book, translated and published in 2015, *The Crossing: My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria*, features her experience of going back on a short visit to Syria, crossing through Turkish borders' fences, to her hometown, Jableh, on the Syrian

coast. We are witnessing an increase of translated books from the Middle East, especially from Syria. One can say that the crisis calls for several points of intervention, translation as one of them, to represent the plight of the Syrian people to the world. How does a book traverse geographical and linguistic borders to become an award-winning find? Issues of talent and mastery of style are not always the defining distinctive points; rather, it has often become a question of how many taboos the book challenges. These kinds of arguments make us wonder what gets translated and introduced to the English reader and what is marginalized, untranslated, thus largely unknown outside its source culture. This section seeks to navigate the politics of what is translated and what is not with special consideration of types of knowledge that are readily translated and welcomed into the receiving culture.

To answer this question, it is important first to briefly introduce Yazbek, and review her affiliation, previous novels, and current status as a writer within a Syrian context. Born in the coastal side of Syria, her family is Alawite, a religious sect that includes the ruling government in Syria. To be an Alawite in Syria means that one often enjoys (although not always) certain privileges, over the majority Sunni in Syria. This is not to say that all Alawites side with the government, nor does it mean that they are economically and politically privileged, but merely to set a tone that they enjoy a degree of favoritism that has been manipulated in the country based on religious affiliation. Yazebk, as she writes, has been a source of embarrassment for her wealthy family and clan since she escaped home when she was sixteen, getting a divorce and choosing to live in Damascus alone with her daughter. She escaped her family, as she said in an interview, to not to be with a man, but to make her future, “to be a writer” (Edemariam). Her first novel was *Heavenly Girl* (2002), followed by *Cinnamon* (2007), both of which openly

deal with sexual taboos and lesbian relationships, which are both suppressed in a semi-conservative society. Yazbek worked for a time for the Syrian media writing scripts and hosting a couple of television shows. With the start of the uprising, she participated in the peaceful demonstration, a sort of activity that the government and military viewed with displeasure, regarding her a double traitor since she was one of them, an Alawite. Undoubtedly her activism, her statements, and her diaries are a truthful testimony of what has been happening in Syria. It is then unsurprising to see organizations like PEN championing her. For a writer to be a PEN winner, she needs to have an "unflinching, unswerving" gaze upon the world, and to have a "fierce intellectual determination … to define the real truth of our lives and our societies" (Pinter). A list of writers who are or have been members of this organization are Chinua Achebe, Margaret Atwood, J.M Coetzee, Joseph Conrad, Nadine Gordimer, Neil Gaiman, Vaclav Havel, Mario Vargas Llosa, Amin Malouf, Arthur Miller, Toni Morrison, Harold Pinter, Salman Rushdie, Orhan Pamuk and many more.

The atrocities of the Syrian regime are not entirely different from its practices before the uprising. Minorities and political activism that pose a threat to the government were marginalized, persecuted, and eliminated. The government did not just turn vicious in a year because of some peaceful demonstration around the country. Yazbek's pre-revolution novels were, as mentioned earlier, highly feminist in their portrayal of sexuality and women's rights. In a forward to her first diary, Rafik Schami acknowledges the fact that "the Assad regime was happy to overlook an author illicitly inserting erotic passages into her novels" especially since she belongs to a family that allowed her this much feminist expressions. Schami writes that she enjoyed "a degree of freedom not enjoyed by others but she was not blind by it" (vii).

On the first page of her first diary, *A Woman in the Crossfire*, Yazebk writes the following: “These diaries are not a literal documentation of the first four months of the Syrian uprising. They are simply pages I relied upon during those days in order to confront fear and panic as well as to generate some hope. But they are true, real, and have no connection whatsoever to the imagination” (xii). This is exactly how the book reads. Each chapter is given a date, like 25th of March 2011, and each chapter is a compilation of who she meets, how the government is acting violently towards its own people, and how she is reacting to these events as a human and as a writer. She writes of her interaction with the militants and how, at first, they give her permission to ask questions since she is recognizable as one of them, but then shun her out once her questions become too sensitive. She also documents what happens to her when she was not succumbing to the threats she used to receive for her involvement in the revolution. She was taken to a detainee center as a warning message of where she would end up if she continued to write. An officer forewarns her, “If you keep writing . . . I will make you disappear from the face of the earth” (84), or mocks her that they are going on a short trip, “so you will write better” (85). Because she was part of their Alawi clan, she was only subjected to a couple of slaps and a walk through the prison to see the hanged bodies of those who, like her, had participated in the demonstrations.

The endeavor to write, for Yazbek, is a political act. Hastily-written notes recorded during the first year of the revolution in Syria discredit the government’s accounts of foreign conspiracies and involvement in the country’s affairs: “I soon discovered that these diaries were helping me to stay alive; they were my walking stick these days” (50). Writing functions on two trajectories: the personal and the present collective, meaning her memoires do not provide historical context to situate the recent

predicament in Syria. Beyond condemning the ruling party, the text does not necessarily educate the reader on certain historical matters that are necessary to understand the revolution, the resistance, and the ongoing refugee crisis. The past seems to be almost absent in the memoirs, and the point of resistance enunciates only post 2011: "My life has become the most realistic novel. I will write all about it one day if I manage to survive. Then I will be the one preserving secrets about the Makhloufs, the Assads, and all the Alawite families who strayed from their religious path in order to decimate the Alawite sect" (81). Perhaps this is a testimony of how the present, with its atrocities, is a continuation of past violations of human rights. The postponing of producing the work, which will be the chronicle of injustices, may and can only occur outside the country when the writer is given a certain amount of safety and a certain degree of privilege to denounce an oppressive regime.

The final part of *A Woman in the Crossfire* consists of a group of testimonies by those who escaped prison, who survived persecution, and those who managed to flee the country. Here, Yazbek is only transcribing their stories, writing one horrific story after another. One of her journalist friends, Hoda Ibrahim, sent her a testimony of what she witnessed at some refugee camps along the Turkish-Syrian borders detailing the refugees' dire situations. After transcribing Hoda's testimonies, Yazbek comments on refugees' conditions: "Hoda's testimony ends here. I drown in a sadness that is hardly accidental. Bashar al-Assad and his family have turned my people into martyrs and prisoners, fugitives and refugees, prisoners of camps in foreign countries. What more can this criminal do against his own people?" (254). For a writer whose name is equated with heroism as the writer of her people, one might find this comment hurried and disappointing, a mere speedy closure of the chapter on refugees in Turkey's camps listing

"martyrs and prisoners, fugitives and refugees, prisoners" as a sufficient manifestation of her sadness (254).

Her newest book, *The Crossing My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria,* published in 2015, details Yazbek's return to Syria for short periods. In an interview, she explains her role as an intellectual in exile who has the responsibility to represent the Syrian crisis:

> *The Crossing* is a documentation of what people were going through every day, true events that I wrote in the style of a story, not as a journalist. I didn't write it for the people who told me their stories, because most of them are dead. The people who are still alive can barely afford to eat, so the book is not for them. I'm writing for the whole world to see what the people of Syria experience on a daily basis. I wanted to convey the voices of these victims to the world. It's the role of the educated Syrian elite—writers, artists—to engage in this situation, to take part in social justice. (Papa)

Yazbek might seem to be a nomadic refugee writer who wants to speak for the Syrian people inside the country and for refugees outside. Paradoxically, she does not speak for the ones she is representing, because they are dead or too destitute to care about books. It is implied that the intellectual elite, writers and artists, should dedicate their profession to the world, and not to the downtrodden, not to those who are unable to leave the war zone, and definitely not to those who managed to escape and now have become refugees. Yazbek's warning signals, in an intellectual manner through writing books and memoirs, are to be strictly academic and elitist, in the sense that they have no use for "real" people in endangered zones. Perhaps again, Yazbek has another vision for a new sort of activism that hinges on undoing circles of power starting from the elite down to the proletariat. In

the same interview, Yazbek deflates herself as a role model for Syrian women inside and outside Syria. Assuming a humility pose as an ethical stance, Yazbek cautions against the imposition of the heroic onto her personal narrative:

> Just because I was a well-known writer before, the media may see me as an angel. The West always wants to make a hero of someone. But I'm not interested in PR; I don't want that. I'm glad I escaped Syria, but there are so many women who are much greater than me. The least I can do is try to be a voice, but I'm against making heroes. That is a selfish act. (Papa)

Although Yazbek denies using a journalistic voice and style of writing, when reading her texts, she, as an author, is always reminding the reader (and here the reader, as she said, is always Western) that this is not fiction. Through studying Yazbek's interviews and texts, one can argue that "the chronicler" of the revolution, as she has been deemed, is not the quintessential nomadic refugee writer because nomadic writing should not present itself as an authoritative document; instead it should be a "model of interconnection, as a navigational tool in a collectively shared cartography of discursive, affective, and social relations" (Braidotti 18). To achieve this style of writing, which is impersonal, it should be "'postpersonal' in that it allows for a web of connections to be drawn on the axis of subjectivity and not merely along the vicissitudes of identity" (Braidotti 19). Yazbek's narrative is personal, which in some texts, such as Elie Wiesel's autobiographical memoir, *Night*, has been able to draw and effectively comment on the collective experience. Nevertheless, the personal tone in Yazbek's texts shows her defiance toward the government and highlights this "heroic" action without making the countless number of people in her texts to *own* the resistance or make her texts a tribute to the displaced people inside and outside Syria.

Yazbek's writing and depiction of the events are more effective in *The Crossing* than in the previous memoir. The opening of the memoir situates her experience, albeit less severe, among some of the experiences of refugees who cross borders. She recalls standing on the border between Turkey and Syria:

> The barbed wire lacerated my back. I was trembling uncontrollably after long hours spent waiting for nightfall, to avoid attracting the attention of the Turkish soldiers . . . Under the wire fence marking the line of the border a tiny burrow had been dug out, just big enough for one person. My feet sank into the soil and the barbs mauled my back as I crawled across the line of separation between the two countries. (3)

The description is positioned in the materiality and the physicality of the experience of facing wires, border control troops, and the wounding of the body as it is involved in the situation, exposing its fragility. Unlike refugee narratives where such a situation would point in the direction of escaping the home country, Yazbek in this memoir is entering the danger zone, shouting out loudly once she made the crossing, "This isn't a scene in a film, this is real" (3). The image of being at the border, crossing it, and being intimidated and restricted by it reappears throughout the memoir. There is an interminable need to exist without the limitations of borders: "All I longed to do was to float, to swim through into boundless, white nothingness . . . I would merge into a flowing stream of emptiness, living nowhere, without borders to define me" (44). The memoir thus oscillates between stark representation of the reality of death and being stranded in one's homeland, and imaginative flight beyond the arrant corporeality of borders, soldiers, and destruction.

The semi-nomad writer in *The Crossing* shows how she wants to preside over organizations and groups to help educate Syrian women and teach them about their

freedom and the responsibilities that come with it. She interviews the people she encounters and fills her pages with notes. Nevertheless, to write about these stories, she says that "you must forget the faces of the victims so that you can write about them later, so you can tell their stories and narrate to the outside world how their eyes shine as they watch the sky that showers us with barrel bombs and deadly gifts" (143-144). This has been a recurring theme in her two texts, to tell the world of the injustices of the Syrian government through countless accounts from the people she meets. Moreover, *The Crossing* not only consists of her personal notes, but also, like the first book, others' collected or scattered notes. She came to know a girl who has collected her own notes on her flight from her village and the rapid succession of destructive events. She passes on her notes to Yazbek, hoping that the writer would tell the world of her particular story. The emphasis of the narration is for "the world to know our story," to communicate with a collective and distant audience that may or may not respond to the girl's pleas (61). Undeniably, this effort to collect an archive of personal tragic accounts has its merits and place in chronicling the refugee crisis. Every story matters in the sense that writers like Yazbek should and ought to share stories they lived through or witnessed. The act of writing, nevertheless, is conceived as necessary as a connecting point between a distant past, a traumatized present, and an occluded future, whether it remains on the personal level or communicated to a wider audience.

What is worth mentioning in *The Crossing* is the last page before the epilogue where Yazbek reflects on her status as a writer in exile. She writes:

> Exile perhaps wasn't even the right word: it needed redefining, I needed to go back to its root meaning. For this exile, crammed full of the fleeting images of social media was no longer what exile had meant in its original sense . . . exile no

> longer entailed such an intense sense of loss of identity as it had before the emergence of the Internet. (270)

In acknowledging the limitation of definitions, of language, of words, Yazbek, as a refugee writer, can only see herself as in exile. Yazbek is right to point out that the term "exile," as a state, fails adequately to define her being or identity. Yazbek's epilogue further defines what exile means and does not mean, saying: "I have discovered, after a year of living in exile, that exile is exile and nothing else. It means walking down the street and knowing that you don't belong there" (275). In this case, her texts and narratives become her only identity through which she grapples to reestablish the identities of those who are silenced, dead, or forgotten.

To make my point clearer, I am not discrediting Yazebk's politics and her sincerity on the subject, I am merely ambivalent and perhaps skeptical. More importantly, however, this chapter highlights the status of politicized literature that speaks of displacement before the revolution as significant and important to shed light on more recent political events. However, where can we read about them and in what language? In 1990 Edward Said wrote of his interaction with an American professor who was not receptive of the idea of translating literature from the Middle East simply because, as he puts it, it is a "controversial language" without explaining the reasons for this controversy (372). Said concludes that Arabic literature is then an "embargoed literature" for reasons not unrelated to the politics of the region. He further laments that significant works in Arabic would never be translated into English because the West immediately turns its gaze to reproduce, through translation, texts that break social and political taboos in their original societies. In *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* Lawrence Venuti explains the processes behind selecting a text for translation. Publishing

houses are cultural institutions in themselves, seeking to find foreign texts that repay investments. As Venuti writes, "publishers who purchase translation rights are more likely to focus on foreign works that are easily assimilable to domestic cultural values, to prevailing trends and tastes, targeting specific markets so as to avoid the potential loss involved in creating new ones" (48). Referring to what he calls an imperialistic investment, Venuti downplays the significance of translating "bestsellers": "Translation is thus squeezed in a double bind, both commercial and cultural, which threatens to restrict access to foreign literatures and to reduce them to the status of domestic ephemera, passing with the changing interests of the broadest possible audience, falling out of print when sales diminish" (124). Venuti continues to explain connections between translation and European capitalism, contending that "what remains unchanged is the use of translation practices that establish a hierarchical relationship between the major and the minor languages, between the hegemonic and subordinate cultures. The translations enact a process of identity formation in which colonizer and colonized, transnational corporation and indigenous consumer, are positioned unequally" (165).

The commercial and imperialistic imperative in selecting texts and authors and crowning them with titles such as the best political text in the twentieth first century is a stretch. Narrowing the true literary capacity of a culture entails the survival of some texts while others are doomed to be forgotten. The positive effect of translation is that it allows us to remember Syrian writers, both privileged and unprivileged, who have written ceaselessly against the Syrian dictatorship, but who cleverly and allegorically delivered messages of dissent in their works and called for a social revolution, making their works a living testimony that speaks not only to the past but also speaks to Syria's current situation as a war-torn country. The aim of translation should not be to commercialize the

crisis and make an author a bestseller, one whose works would probably not be read in years to come. The purpose of writing and translating is to resist death. As Bella Brodzki puts it, "Translation is the mode through which what is dead, disappeared, forgotten, buried, or suppressed overcomes its determined fate by being born (and thus born anew) to other contexts across time and space" (5-6). Would Yazbek's books survive the passage of time? That question remains unanswered and relies on future posterity.

Nomadic Refugee Writers of the Past

The refugee crisis is highly political and so is its literature as it intertwines with geopolitical contexts of access or rejection in the global North. Reading about refugees elicits the need to understand their humanity and not to observe them in their current situation as persecuted and rejected subjects. Empathy is a temporary feeling and dissolves when overexposure to the common lot of these refugees and their destitution might conclusively generate compassion fatigue. It is essential in studying refugees to get a glimpse of their history instead of the repetitive emphasis on how they are just like *us* in order to abate political and social rhetoric of occlusion. Contextualizing the refugee crisis thus adds another layer, providing not only empathy but also helps us conceptualize the problems and the terror from which these masses of people are fleeing. In *Nomadic Theory*, Braidotti defines the role of the nomadic writer whose subjectivity invokes the interaction with the collective consciousness: "Whereas identity is a bound, ego-indexed habit of fixing and capitalizing on one's selfhood, subjectivity is a socially mediated process of relations and negotiations with multiple others and with multilayered social structures" (4). Nomadic refugee writers who have become "social subjects" representing "a collective enterprise" do not necessarily adhere to certain sets of self-definition or

even center themselves in their works (4). This part of the chapter introduces nomadic writers from the past whose experiences and texts signify the collective consciousness of the current refugee crisis. Sa'dallah Wannous in the 1960s and 1970s founded and structured a politicized theater revolving around the historical moments of the country in an allegorical way. Wannous and other authors who will be explored later in the chapter are just a handful of examples of writers whose literature elucidates and provides a platform to ground the refugee experience in reality and in history before addressing the present and future of displaced masses of people.

Refugee writers exhibit nomadic thought. Nomadic thought in itself can be thought of as embodying the condition of the refugee, rootless, and displaced, redressing and subverting the dominant ideology. Moreover, refugee texts can also embody nomadic thought where the subjectivity of the writer embraces a collective identity without openly addressing issues of displacement that are specific to a certain context. To shed more light on the refugee writer and who is designated as such, we might turn to Edward Said's characterization of the role of the intellectual in *Representations of the Intellectual* "as exile and marginal, as amateur, and as the author of a language that tries to speak the truth to power" (xvi). In this definition, the nomad exists on the periphery that allows him/ her a state of refugeehood detached from the clutter of power structures. These intellectuals, without whom "there has been no major counter-revolutionary movement," sow the seeds of revolution and dissent. (Said, 28-29). Said argues that intellectuals are not a universal, homogeneous group but that each geopolitical context produces its own sets of intellectuals that are different from other groups, relying on Gramsci's notions of the organic intellectual. Intellectuals are born into a certain nationality or language that makes their message uniquely theirs and only appropriate for their local audiences.

Conversely, this does not imply that their mission is only bound to their historical moment. What Wannous and other intellectuals contributed allegorically to the body of the revolutionary literature can, in fact, be universal, as Said writes:

> For the intellectual the task, I believe, is explicitly to universalize the crisis, to give greater human scope to what a particular race or nation suffered, to associate that experience with the sufferings of others . . . . This does not at all mean a loss in historical specificity, but rather it guards against the possibility that a lesson learned about oppression in one place will be forgotten or violated in another place or time. (44)

Juxtaposing Yazbek with Wannous shows the differences between them. Whereas Yazbek might appear to be a nomadic refugee writer who has access to different borders, Wannous's texts are examples of the experience of refugeehood that involves loss, injustice, and the need to speak against silencing powers.

In 1996, a year before his death, the UNESCO chose Wannous as the first Arab playwright to give the address for World Theater Day. This acknowledgment of his life-time engagement with theater and its role in changing societies culminates his efforts to politicize theaters in the Arab World. Studying Wannous's plays provides a grounded understanding of the refugee experience. Refugeehood can be contextualized, relying on new historicism, as an attempt to comprehend the layers of displacement and persecution it embodies. Refugeehood is a social and a political event that has its roots in history. Wannous is an example of a refugee writer who made it his responsibility as an intellectual to speak for the downtrodden, at a time where a dictatorial regime demanded that intellectuals rubberstamp the regime's own doctrine. In an introduction to *Four Plays from Syria: Sa'dallah Wannou*s, Robert Myers aptly underscores Wannous's background

and important role in dramatizing important dimensions of Syrian society: “Wannous, as the child of rural peasantry who was drawn to a career unmasking dangerous and denouncing social inequalities was a paradigmatic example of a Gramscian organic intellectual” (xiv). The organic intellectual is someone who is tied to the struggle of the working class, not to create another ideology, but to make their audience assimilate their writing and activism with the masses’ needs and goals. More recently, Wannous’s plays have been reexamined within the current upheaval in Syria regarding his work oeuvre as a “precursor” of the events in Syria and the Arab World (Myers xx). The connection can be stretched further to envisage Wannous as a Syrian refugee writer of his time whose works can speak to the origins of the refugee crisis and conditions of current scattered refugees.

Wannous, like Yazbek, was an Alawite, but unlike Yazbek, he comes from a working-class family that made him conscious of Marxist ideals of labor and power. Despite being an Alawite, his works did not escape censorship. Most of his plays were banned in Damascus. Though his ideas were veiled in parables, it was clear that they were allegorizing a totalitarian regime. Wannous enjoyed a degree of tolerance from the government, which allowed some of his plays to be staged to show to the world that the government permits intellectual activities. “My very existence is propaganda,” he said in an interview (Miller 317). Again, unlike Yazbek, Wannous’s works were for the people and aimed at awakening the consciousness of the masses, to politicize the masses. The main audience for these politicized plays has been common people who for a long time have lived under the oppression of their government that kept them subjugated and powerless. These Arab audiences have also suffered the tyranny of their government. Wannous believed that these people someday would lead a revolution and force a real

change (Wannous, *Alamal Al-Kamela*, 91-2). Wannous was well aware that change would not spark from his plays immediately. As he said, "theater cannot breed a revolution, and it cannot change history immediately and presently," however it can inflame resistance to the status quo (115).[1] To reiterate, I consider this important since it

[1] Wannous expressed his disappointment in the 1978 Camp David Agreement, a peace treaty signed between Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Wannous bemoaned the treaty and wrote the following: "My life has neared its end and I still dream of saying 'No.' I wanted, and I want to say 'No' to the 'Yes' citizen, to the prison-homeland, to the modernization of the methods of torture and domestication, to the official discourse, to the visas for Arab countries, to the fragmentation and the division, to the referenda of the 99.99 percent, to the balloon celebrations, to the war that strengthens the police, to the victories which offer the leadership of the Arabs to the oil princes, that increase the gains of the businessmen, and lead to the agreements of Camp David…I wanted and I want to say 'No.' And I search for my tongue but find only a foam of blood and fear. From my severed tongue the defeat started, and the funeral procession set out … From my suppressed 'No' the enemy got through, as well as the separation, the poverty, the hunger, the prison, the torturer, and the contemporary Arab collapse… Briefly, if it weren't for my suppressed 'No,' half of me wouldn't be in the coffin and the other half dragging itself behind it. And my deprivation from my 'No' made me not only into the victim and the spectator, the dead and the mourner, but also into a conspirator…[T]he 'No' citizen is, for the Arab thrones, a bigger danger than the Israeli danger, and a conspiracy worse than the imperialist

gives us an understanding of who these refugees are, where they are coming from, and why they are fleeing their home country. Sympathy with refugees should not simply be a matter of parading them in the media; an understanding of their history and contextualization of their situation are necessary steps toward acknowledging their human rights inside and outside Syria.

This section examines two of Wannous's plays that can speak of the refugee crisis, *Al-Fil Ya Malik Al-Zaman* (The Elephant, Oh King of All Times) 1969 and *Al Malik Huwa al Malik* (The King is the King) 1977. *The Elephant, Oh King of All Times* opens with people in an unidentified town who are in a state of panic and desolation because the king's pet elephant has tread on a boy, flattening him to death. This is not the elephant's first mischief. He roams the streets and destroys anything in front him. The elephant is the king's apparatus to perpetrate fear and anxiety in his people and to show them the futility of their lives. The allegorized tool of injustices symbolized by the elephant is an indirect reference to the government's colossal control over the livelihood of the people where even death is meaningless and incidental. The townspeople gather to discuss the need to complain to the king. A revolutionary young man, named Zakaria, steps out from the crowd and insists on going to the king as a group to represent the collectivity of dissatisfaction. Throughout the play, religious pleas are repeated ("May God give us patience," "We seek your mercy, oh God," or "God, forgive our sins"), exemplifying a pattern of denying or avoiding the main cause of the disasters and instead

---

conspiracies…And until I recuperate my suppressed 'No,' the funeral procession will continue, with us dragging our tails behind it" (Kassab 56-7).

seeking refuge from God, or even worse, blaming themselves for the misery in their lives. Whatever courage the townspeople muster, they lose it the minute they confront their king. Tragically, their voices diminish and Zakaria, sensing the group's fear, asks the king to find a mate for the elephant so they can have more and more elephants. The dramatization of the collective fear and submission reiterates the long-lasting effect of diminishing the sense of one's self and its worth in face of power. The ending of the play offers a moral lesson on collective weakness and the durable nature of totalitarianism. The actors break off out of their roles and say the following:

> All: This is a story.
>
> Actor 5: And we are actors
>
> Actor 3: We acted it for you so we can learn its moral lesson with you.
>
> Actor 7: Do you understand now why elephants exist?
>
> Actor 3 : Do you understand now why elephants breed?
>
> Actor 5: Our life is only a beginning
>
> Actor 4: When more elephants breed, another story begins.
>
> All: A violent and bloody story, and in another evening we will perform that story. (my translation)

Wannous believed that the dramatic work cannot go very far beyond the stage because the responsibility lies with the audience and how they react to the performance. However, as Samar Zahrawi asserts, the implied lesson in this play is "the inevitability of a revolution" (332). Wannous, in this respect, rendered an accurate reality of a society too suppressed to react, continuing to live without their civic rights. It is a violent story in which people are helpless and afraid to speak up. Thus, not only is the revolution the

result of a long-standing system of terror, the refugee today is the offshoot of silence and vulnerability of the historical moment foretold in this play.

The dispossessed and the displaced are the main subject of Wannous's theater. *The King is the King* is another play where the tyranny of the government is exposed in a folk tale, in a distant, unidentified past to evade criticism. The king is bored and wants to do tricks on his people: "I want something more violent, more vicious! I want to have some fun with the country! With the people!" (84). The actors, like in the previous play, confront the audience, lamenting the fact that this play is a game because games are allowed, dreams and fantasies are allowed, yet things become forbidden when people attempt to turn those dreams into reality. The bored king dresses up as one of the commoners and puts Abu Azza, a commoner, in his place as a king. Abu Azza holds on to the position of power he finds himself suddenly in, becoming even more violent than the "real" king had been. The king's true nature is revealed when he realizes that the surrogate king, Abu Azza, does not want to break the role-play. Adding to that, the king finds out that his people are plotting against him. In a fit of anger, the king promises destruction on everyone around him: "Only steel can protect this throne! This ax shall be my hand, my arm, my heart! My gown my bed! . . . For King, nothing cleanses like blood! I shall bathe in it! It shall be my incense and perfume! (117). Wannous's critique of the absolute power of the king is evident in the play, attesting the fact that totalitarian power of the king is manifest in the symbols around him.

On the other spectrum of the king's game are Zahid and Ubayd who try to foment a rebellion against the king, waiting for the collective power of the people to strike and shout "Down with the King" at the opportune moment. The play ends with Zahid and Ubayd postponing revolutionary action to the future, aligning the action with Wannous's

belief that theater is not a place where revolution takes place; it is rather a place that might give the first spark of the long-hoped-for-uprising:

> ZAHID: Even when a King is exchanged, the only way open to him is more terror and repression.
>
> 'UBAYD: We must wait for the right moment: not a second too early or too late.
>
> ZAHID: This right moment — is it any nearer now than before?
>
> 'UBAYD: Anyway, it can't be too far off ...
>
> *All take off character costumes and begin to take turns in speaking the following lines. Voices rise, and ultimately unite.*
>
> History tells
>
> Of a group that got fed up
>
> With misery, hunger, and injustice.
>
> They went into a furious rage.
>
> They slaughtered their King
>
> And ate him.
>
> At first
>
> Some had stomachaches
>
> And others got sick.
>
> But after a while they recovered
>
> And sat down to enjoy life

Without masks or disguises,

Without masks or disguises. (119-120)

Bill Ashcroft writes in "Conflict and Transformation" about the vitality of literature for dispossessed and downtrodden people, especially in opening up possibilities for another type of reality: "Creativity is important to oppressed peoples because its function is to inspire hope: hope for change, hope for freedom, hope for the future. This may not be its goal or its purpose—it may have nothing to do with the subject of the creative work—but it functions this way because it affirms that another world is possible" (3). The ending of *The King is the King* situates Wannous's ideas of deferred hope without showing what kind of reality the audience will have if they change their oppressive governments; the actors merely speak of equality and how good life would be. Wannous's plays, thus, do not show a utopia; instead, both these plays end with giving agency to the audience and affirming that it is their responsibility to rescue themselves and rebel against kings and their elephants. The state of abjection is manifested throughout the plays, but the solution is only narrated in the closure with actors facing the audience, demanding urgent intervention.

Wannous is more of a symbol than a writer. Speaking for myself, "we are sentenced to hope" is an affirmation of life without denying the reality of oppression and injustices. To say that Wannous's nomadic consciousness, which somehow circumvented censorship, is the harbinger for the current state of Syrians is not an exaggeration. The king has been confronted, the elephants are being held responsible. Refugees emerged from these historical moments of suppression, of failed revolutions, and of delayed hopes, both inside Syria and outside scattered across the globe. Out of these

circumstances, refugees were bound to emerge; they are not floating dust particles suddenly ejected into the air. Wannous spoke on the behalf of the silenced masses and who visualized the refugee in a different image, not of hopelessness, but of determination, of survival, and of carrying Sisyphus's rock from one historical timeline to another, from one geographical border to another.

The Refugee Writer Resurfaces

This chapter started with Yazbek as an example of a writer who is being publically endorsed as the chronicler of the revolution outside Syria. The Syrian refugee writer encompasses voices like Yazbek writing outside Syria and writers like Wannous, and others, writing from within. Wannous, a ghost from the past, is not the only voice haunting the Syrian literary scene. Other writers such as Nihad Sirees (1950-), Mustafa Khalifa (1948-) and Khaled Khalifa (1964-) are more recent examples of refugee intellectuals who have written diligently under a repressive regime, and who are now in exile outside Syria. There is a direct line leading from Wannous to these writers whose works are slowly being acknowledged as battling the status quo. These writers deserve consideration within a discussion of the contemporary Syrian refugee writer.

Nihad Sirees comes from an Aleppian family. In the 1980s he wrote largely in a realist mode, portraying the daily life of the middle-class in Aleppo. His historical novel about Syria during World War I, *The North Wind* (1989), examines the rise of nationalistic ideals in the region. Sirees is one of the intellectuals in Syria who became involved in writing against the government during what was called *Rabīʻ Dimashq* (Damascus Spring), a period of time when intellectuals and activists desired change after the death of president Hafiz al-Asad in 2000. During these times, intellectuals and writers

would meet privately in “salons” to discuss the future of the country and the need to break from the ruling regime. The first months of Bashar al-Asad’s regime allowed for these meeting to continue, and as a result, these intellectuals issued a manifesto called “Statement 99” signed by 99 people from different backgrounds and occupations. These thinkers and activists called for the following reforms:

> End the state of emergency and martial law being applied in Syria since 1963. Issue a public pardon to all political detainees and those who are pursued for their political ideas and allow the return of all deportees and exiled citizens. Establish a rule of law that will recognize freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Free public life from the laws, constraints and various forms of surveillance imposed on it, allowing citizens to express their various interests within a framework of social harmony and peaceful [economic] competition and enable all to participate in the development and prosperity of the country. (Middle East Intelligence Bulletin 2000)

It is important first to explain what is meant by Syria’s Emergency Rule, which came to force in 1963, giving the government the full authority to question and detain individuals without trial if they posed a threat to national security, even abrogating freedom of speech if it posed a national threat (Macleod). The Damascus Spring was too good to be true, and like other counter-government operations, these thinkers started to be followed by the government. Some (at least 30) were imprisoned, some fled the country, others were forced into silence (Human Rights Watch).

In an interview, Sirees discloses the hope of intellectuals and citizens in 2000 and expounds on the general sense of relief and aspiration for a better future: “we started to publish articles at that time, which were more courageous. And I think that it was really

green days for our intellectuals. They thought that this was really a spring, so they called it Damascus Spring" (Lynxqualey). Intellectuals at that point felt the urgency to publish more and to be deeply engaged with socio-political issues in Syria. Persecuted writers in the twenty first century, like Sirees, adopt Wannous's vision of the role of literature under the gaze of an oppressive government. Sirees, like Wannous, sought to circumvent censorship by harkening back to the past, or in the case of *The Silence and the Roar*, the message is delivered clandestinely: "I try to criticize through talking about the past … literature and art can do that very well, they can push people to feel nostalgia for the good years and feel pain about something they can't say freely, but can still feel" (Irving and Ghanem). These good years, Sirees continues, would be located in the 1950s, before the institutionalization of the Baath Party as the supreme power of the country.

The Silence and the Roar was published in Beirut in 2004 by Dar al-Adab publishing house, for such a novel would instantaneously be banned in Syria. The novella has been published in German, French Dutch, Czech, Italian, Turkish, and more recently, in 2013, in English, translated by Max Weiss. It has been described as Orwellian, featuring a dystopia, and as Kafkaesque for its surreal depiction of injustices and oppression, but unfortunately, the novel has become a reality. The plot revolves around Fathi Sheen, a writer who refuses to write propaganda in favor of the Leader, and chooses instead to remain silent. Sirees got the idea for the novella when, in Aleppo, he passes through a hospital where babies are delivered, and finds a huge megaphone on the wall next to the hospital loudly broadcasting songs of praise for the Leader. The moment of birth is bracketed with the need for brainwashing the masses into loving and admiring the Leader, who remains nameless in the text, referred to only by his role. Sirees comments on the role of the writer asserting the writer's necessity to outwit suppressing agencies,

which he executed in a careful manner through universalizing the theme, not identifying the place as Syria, making it applicable to all places with similar totalitarian regimes. Sirees ensures the success of the novella by ridiculing the Leader and exposing his follies to the reader: “I purposefully made fun of the dictator in order to participate in tearing off his halo of veneration and then to topple him” (Akkawi). This kind of writing and style are reminiscent of Wannous’s plays presenting a fallible image of the King to open the possibility and potential for change.

The silence is associated with the people and the roar is relegated to the authorities, blasting their sonorous songs and praises for the Leader in marches in the street, a habit not uncommon in Syria where workers and students are forced to participate in the demonstrations in the streets. Fathi Sheen is not allowed to withdraw into his haven of silence away from the roar of politicians, people, and slogans. Sheen, as a result, is exposed for not participating in the press in lauding the Leader. The events unfold where Sheen is repeatedly threatened: “it was either the roar of the regime or the silence of the grave” (145).

In the Afterword that Sirees wrote in 2012 while living in exile in Cairo (He now lives in Berlin.), he explains the contradictory nature of the silence and the roar and what it means when the people choose to remain silent:

> this silence is also accompanied by an expansive roar, one that renders thought impossible. Thought leads to individualization, which is the most powerful enemy of the dictator. People must not think about the leader and how he runs the country; they must simply adore him, want to die for him in their adoration of him. Therefore, the leader creates a roar all around him, forcing people to celebrate him, to roar. (153)

It should be no surprise, Sirees surmises, that the current regime resorted to violence and to artillery, a more tumultuous roar that strives to ensure the longevity of subjugation of the people.

The Silence and the Roar, written before the Arab Spring, was written in a manner that did not clearly specify a Syrian setting. The state of being in exile permits numerous refugee intellectuals and authors to collect their notes, diaries, and memories and write more openly about what they witnessed in Syria. Exile, however, is not only the reason why we have an increasing number of translated books addressing the Syrian issue. Khalid Khalifa, for example, published *In Praise of Hatred* in Beirut in 2006. The novel takes the reader back to Syria in 1980s in Hama, a time when the government eradicated members of the Muslim Brotherhood, who posed a threat to the governing authorities. The story is about a teenage girl living piously with her grandparents in Aleppo. Influenced by one of her aunts, she joins the Muslim oppositional movement, and as a result is imprisoned for seven years, strengthening herself with hatred for others because this hatred is regarded as "a great weapon that makes the majority defend its confession against the ruling minority" (145). The plot juxtaposes two opposing, oppressive forces—the Baath Party and the rising Islamist alliances. Khalifa, in 2006, wrote to remind the reader of the bloody past that has been entirely buried by the government. However, Khalifa deplores the fact that this past has made a reappearance, with his book being seen as a "prophecy" of Syrian crisis where Syrians continue to pay the price of freedom with their lives (Mahmoud and Saad). In the novel, Aleppo prepares for the "oncoming plague" (128) or the "nameless chaos" (133) as the dispute grows and people turn into dead bodies. Robin Yassin-Kassab wrote the Afterword for the novel in which he praises Khalifa for embodying "one of the noblest roles available to a writer. He breaks a taboo

in order to hold a mirror to a traumatized society, to force exploration of the trauma and therefore, perhaps, to promote acceptance and learning. He offers a way to digest a tragedy, or at least to chew on its cud" (300). To read the novel is to appreciate the heroic effort of the writer not to let the past die and to remind new generations of things which were for a long-time, unspeakable stories.

No Knives in the Kitchens of this City is another novel published by Khalifa in Cairo in 2013 and translated into English by Leri Price in 2016. It depicts the life of a modern time Syrian family living under the rule of Hafez al-Assad and then the transfer of power to the son, set between 1960s and 2000s. The nameless narrator tells the story of his brother Rashid, a gifted violinist and homosexual, his sister Sawsan whose fierceness and passion sway between allegiance to the Baath Party and then renouncing it to follow Islamic ideologies, and his other sister Suad, who dies early in the story. The novel captures the sense of fear, hopelessness and the continuous decline of Aleppo: "Cities die," the narrator writes, "just like people" (38). The past is the major theme in the novel: remembering the atrocities of the past is an act of defiance against the regime which works to eliminate certain events from the memory of the people.

Unlike Yazbek and Sirees, Khalifa continued to live in Damascus, not relocating to other countries. This is not an indication that the government allows dissident writers to practice their freedom of speech; it is because, as Khalifa points out, the regime is busy with other pressing issues, with the majority of the population standing against the oppressive authority. Is Khalifa less a refugee writer than others? Certainly not! Khalifa's literature is an example of another layer of the refugee experience, one that is lived within Syria. *In Praise of Hatred* took around thirteen years to write, well before the Arab Spring, but this did not deter Khalifa from restoring the past and writing about suppressed

national tragedies, especially in Hama in 1982.[2] The departure of most of his friends and families from Syria is a major challenge as he lives in Damascus, caught between memories of the past and anticipation of the future. For Khalifa, "the issue in Syria is not one of refugees but of a whole population that is being turned into either corpses or forced to flee while the world stands silently by" ("The Long Read"). This individual predicament and losses apply not only to displaced Syrians across many borders, but also to people who continue to stay in Syria.

As a writer, Khalifa has received numerous invitations to reside in Europe or the United States, allowing him the opportunity to write. One of these was his ten-month stay at Harvard, where he worked on a new novel:

> This fellowship has indeed helped me write in a much-needed safe place, but it also allowed me to reexamine my relationship with Syria: this is the first time I stay outside of Syria for an extended period of time 'the fellowship is a 10-month program' and then I will return home. Syria is my only option for living, and I wish to never lose it under any circumstances. I am willing to continue living in danger as I already did for over four years, but I could never bear to lose it. What I know is very simple: When I am there, I feel I can do anything to help my people, even with as little as giving them hope if my stay there could give them a small drop of it. I am satisfied as many people express their good feelings about my books in Syria. (Daum)

---

[2] (Hama Massacres): in 1982, the Baath Party attacked and bombed Hama killing between 25.000 and 40.000. For more information, see Raphael Lefevre's *Ashes of Hama: The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria*.

The choice to remain in Syria is connected to gaining inspiration from reality and everyday life in his home country, the source of his fiction. His fellow Syrians, Khalifa affirms, are his first audience because, of all the readers, they have suffered the same excruciating experiences found in his novels. “I write for them, but I do not appease them,” Khalifa notes, aware of the limitation of the role of the writer but hopeful of its importance to recover voices that have been submerged by fear or by imprisonment (Daum). Whether inside Syria or outside, Khalifa is a prolific and important writer who expands refugee narratives. We are bound to find more writers and emerging voices from Syria, a point Khalifa makes, acknowledging that people who have witnessed traumatic events have recorded their testimonies, waiting for the appropriate time and chance to write fictional and nonfictional accounts of where they came from and what they have experienced.

Translation is a key element in resurrecting and rescuing forgotten stories and underrepresented writers. It is satisfying to see more and more works of Syrian literature translated into English and other languages to contextualize the Syrian crisis and to facilitate an understand of its more defining elements. Mustafa Khalifa is known for his work *Al-Qawqa‘a: Yawmiyat Mutalassis* (*The Shell: Memoirs of a Hidden Observer*), which was translated into French (*La Coquille*) and published by Actes Sud in 2007 a year before a publisher in Beirut decided to publish the novel in its original language Arabic. The novel is one of the finest examples of prison literature in Syria.[3] Digging

[3] See Miriam Cooke’s “The Cell Story: Syrian Prison Stories after Hafiz Asad” where she examines a few examples of prison literature in Syria, such as Hasiba Abd al-

through history for muted voices is to revive writers and their long-awaited revolution. Prison literature in Syria has been examined by a few critics who highlight its importance in understanding the current situation of the country and of its people. For example, Sune Haughbolle delves into prison narratives concluding that

> individuals attempt to appropriate the violence they were subjected to and turn it against their oppressors, and in so doing challenge the state narrative about Syria's post-colonial history as well as the very language used to envision politics and society.
>
> . . . Remembrance of the prison experience therefore can be seen both as a form of truth telling and historical memory that seeks to position otherwise censored evaluations of history and politics in the public sphere. (2008)

The individual awareness in prison narratives embodies the collective consciousness in creating a sense of identification with the protagonist incarcerated in prison. Remembering the past is an indispensable element in laying out the envisioned future away from nationalistic jargons and slogans. Prison narratives in Syria strip the person of different types of affiliations, political or religious, forcing us, the readers, to observe the bare human undergoing extreme suffering.

The storyline in *Al-Qawqa'a* is similar to Khalifa's own experience. He was studying art and film direction in Paris and upon his return to Damascus, he was arrested at the airport, because he was been mistaken for a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Rahman's *Al-Sharnaqa* (*The Cocoon*) the first Syrian prison narrative by a woman, Khaled Khalifa's *In Praise of Hatred* and Mustafa Khalifa's *The Shell.*

Khalifa was sent to Tadmur Prison, notoriously known as the "desert prison," staying there from 1982 to 1994. Khalifa based the work on his friend's experience who was also arrested at the airport upon his return to Damascus. Khalifa's friend comes from a Christian upbringing, but he identifies as an atheist. While in prison, the protagonist, Musa, keeps a mental diary of his days, documenting not only the suffering and the unspeakable ways of torture, but also his exclusion from the rest of prisoners, because he is Christian. The authorities instantly realized after the arrest that the man did not belong to the Muslim Brotherhood, nevertheless he remained imprisoned. The experiences in the prison cell are to be understood as a microcosmic version of the larger prison that has become the country itself.

The Syrian crisis and the international refugee problem have impelled translators to search for texts that provide narratives similar to the current refugee's experience. In 2017, Paul Starkey finished an English translation of the novel, hoping to inspire an interest in Khalifa's other upcoming works like *The Cemetery Dance*, which also deals with his incarceration. Syrian writers for a long time believed that "our literature does not leave our country," however, with refugees scattered around the world, more intellectuals and writers are approached and more works are being translated (Cooke, *Dissident Syria*, 17).

The innate affinity between writing and death comes to life as we expose more refugee writers in their own distant or recent time period. In "What is an Author?" Foucault differentiates between writing and death (Scheherazade delaying death and silence through storytelling) and the more current ways of writing in our modern times where the writer erases himself: "Writing is now linked to sacrifice and to the sacrifice of life itself; it is a voluntary obliteration of the self that does not require representation in

books because it takes place in the everyday existence of the writer. Where a work had the duty of creating immortality, it now attains the right to kill, to become the murderer of its author" (117). The kind of writing produced is offered up to the cause embodying the quintessential role of the writer. The majority of writers in this chapter have defended their profession during times when writers like themselves were only expected to produce propaganda. Writing for these writers not only warded off death, but it also put them in jeopardy for the sake of witnessing, then documenting, and ultimately producing a work of art for posterity. For example, Khalid Khalifa does not want to be known in the Arab World and the Western world as "an oppressed writer" or a "writer who lives under dictatorship," divorcing himself (the living person) from the writer he is, bequeathing his texts to his readers (Yassin-Kassab 302).

Literature in this chapter has not been divorced from reality, fighting back silencing regimes that for so long have paralyzed their people into submission. The texts examined here provide a resisting countermemory through bringing to light the buried injustices. The stories depicted in novels were only circulated among my generation as muffled or half-told stories, told by the elderly in the family. Growing up, I thought the stories were exaggerated or even surreal, combining elements of fiction and reality, passed down through storytelling. While reading these novels, I found myself remembering the stories I heard about Hama, about the Baath Party, about soldiers in the streets taking the headscarf off women's heads, and of piles of mass burial of people in Hama, of people forgotten in prisons. These refugee writers live in multiple time frames, dancing between borders, crisscrossing paths that have been too rugged to take to fend off the scythe of time and forgetfulness.

CHAPTER THREE

CLANDESTINE BODIES IN TRANSIT: REFUGEES' PIPE DREAMS

You have to understand,
no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land.
who would choose to spend days
and nights in the stomach of a truck
unless the miles travelled
meant something more than journey.
. . .
And you are greeted on the other side
with
go home blacks, refugees
dirty immigrants, asylum seekers
sucking our country dry of milk,
dark, with their hands out
smell strange, savage –
look what they've done to their own countries…

"Home" by Warsan Shire

The Somali-British poet Warsan Shire, named as the first Young Poet Laureate in London in 2014, translates in simple language in her poem "Home" the harsh reality that refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers encounter throughout their journeys of escape.[1] In a way, Shire assembles all these experiences that have become so familiar as media images in our age—of crossing the sea, being smuggled inside trucks, or walking through woods, mountains or deserts—into one universalised experience of losing one's home. It

[1] "Home" was originally inspired by Shire's visit to a deportation center in 2009, about Somali refugees who turned the Somali Embassy in Rome to their home. See Shire's "Conversations about Home (At the Deportation Center)."

is the relatedness of migration narratives that makes the poem a truthful rendition of the reality of migration. More generally, refugee narratives center on an escape route and its perils, the destination, policies, smugglers, capital, and survival. The escape method and the smuggling into the global north intersect with illegal immigration. Political debates have risen around who is a refugee and who is an illegal immigrant, concluding that states have the right to deport their illegal immigrants, whereas the refugee has basic protection rights under the 1951 Geneva Convention. As it has been argued in the first chapter, definitions of persecution, violence, flight, and victimization too often center around the emergence of war-related environments, ignoring the massive movement of people from economic degradation, non-war violence, and environmental crisis. These neglected causes are what make policies regarding migration ineffective and biased. Thus, the question of who gets to carry the identity of being a refugee is open for debate in this chapter.

Examination of the works of three writers—Moroccan-American novelist and essayist Laila Lalami, Pakistani novelist Mohsin Hamid, and Vietnamese-American novelist Viet Thanh Nguyen—highlights issues surrounding migration, the journey, and the continuation of displacement even after settlement in a western country. By expanding the circle of representing the crisis of migration, selecting different authors—a caveat is that they have all produced their works in the 2000s—epitomizes the dilemma of crossing borders as refugees and as illegal immigrants, elucidating similar patterns of experience among these groups of migrants or boundary crossers. Although the migration stories we hear about share common themes, writers in this chapter have envisioned novel ways to retell the migrant story. Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits,* Hamid's *Exit West*, and Nguyen's *The Refugees* give literary form to clandestine

migration, revealing its myriad manifestations, causes, and outcomes. One might argue that we cannot say that all literature of migration can be labeled as refugee literature. While this concern is justifiable, the works examined here problematize political differentiations between illegal immigrants or refugee migrants, considering the similar treatments both these groups face when they embark on their journey of flight. The migration narrative takes various forms, emphasizing that every immigrant or refugee story is unique, despite their being brought together into one group. The different stories in this chapter underline the multitude of and variation in experiences, both as illegal immigrants and refugees unwelcomed in host countries.

If refugee status is a basic human right given to those who are fleeing war violence, unlike illegal immigrants who are escaping religious, environmental, economic, or gender persecution, how have countries recently been allowed to establish borders against rightfully deemed refugees on the borders of Turkey – the concrete wall project – Hungary and Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Macedonia, and Greece, leaving thousands stranded between borders waiting for political laws to allow their entrance as they are fenced out by barbed wire, safety guards, and sometimes rubber bullets and tear gas (Granados et al.)? Both refugees and immigrants alike are susceptible to falling within the category "illegal" and being kept out, a fact that has resulted in a rise in the number of smugglers. The novelists in this chapter foreground journeys of flight through clandestine passages. Refugees-to-be and illegal immigrants share experiences: routes taken, the risks involved, the willful decision to endure the possibility of death to reach the other side of the border, and the resilience to withstand prejudice and dire living conditions when they make it across the fences.

Considering these three representative texts as part of clandestine migration literature not only brings together the experiences of immigrants and refugees, but also testifies to the Western reaction to growing numbers of displaced people who seek refuge in safer places. Since refugees and immigrants have dealt with similar conditions, notably intensification of border controls that deliver a clear message of "stay out," it is apt to consider these migrants as clandestine bodies instead of using socio-political terminologies of refugees or unauthorized immigrants.

Clandestine migration was and still is an umbrella term to describe an influx undocumented foreigners. These clandestine bodies move within what Zygmunt Bauman refers to as "global hierarchy of mobility" where their very existence raises opposition: "You should not be here!" (Düvell 493). Clandestine bodies are the focal point of these three writers. The journeys can only be completed once the panoptical observation of borders does not apprehend them. The clandestine nature of these bodies does not end once the immigrant or the refugee has made it to the other side of the border. The invisibility of their bodies takes on other forms of inconspicuousness as always alien, strange, and degenerate. The first example of invisible migrant bodies is encapsulated in the inception of Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). After reading the news in *Le Monde* the author decides to write a eulogy for fifteen bodies who were drowned as they were trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Morocco to Spain. The dead bodies merely represented a number in the journal, but in the novel, the characters are not only given names, but a past, dreams they wanted to achieve, determination to risk their lives to reach the imaginary line of hope and happiness, and a final death. The resurrection of these stories finds a literary place in the sub-genre of Moroccan migration literature. Illegal migration in the Moroccan dialect of Arabic is

hrig, which translates to the act of burning, implying that once immigrants embark on a boat through the Strait of Gibraltar, they must burn their identification, and metaphorically their identity, before meeting the guards on Spanish shores, a procedure that makes deportation a difficult issue (Abderrezak 463). The necessity of burning one's identity contrasts with Miriam Cooke's new epistemology of "Mediterranean Thinking" which considers this body of water as providing a space for the "crisscrossing of binaries such as land and water, fixity and fluidity, indigenous and foreign, settled and nomadic, ancient and modern, colonizer and colonized, nationalism and globalization. Suspicious of closures, Mediterranean thinking mobilizes these concrete and abstract oppositions to rethink them in an open-ended and dialogical manner" (299). *Hrig* literature, unlike Cooke's description, brings to the forefront the fixity of hierarchical modes of mobility and the absence of dialogue where clandestine bodies seal their fate with eternal invisibility as they get closer to the centers of power.

If these clandestine bodies are found, the media always "transforms clandestine immigrants into anonymous outlaws plucked out of the sea" (Abderrezak 467). Hein de Haas, the former director of the International Migration Institute at Oxford, captures in his title "The Myth of Invasion" the role of sensational media when uncovering washed up bodies on Spain's shores. Sub-Saharan refugees who are escaping environmental disasters "will flood the world" with their presence, a point that urges national securities to be alarmed and work tirelessly on "combating" these refugees (Haas 1306). In order to combat the terrorizing image of refugees and immigrants, writers feel compelled to intervene and provide a life for these drowned bodies, even if it is an imaginary story.

Writing against the media's fatalistic scenario of clandestine immigrants, Lalami begins her novel with a prologue, "The Trip," that renders to readers what they already

know of clandestine journeys of escape: night time, an overloaded small boat, Moroccans and Africans, children, a smuggler, anticipation, and possibly a tragic ending. The boat capsizes and the smuggler orders the passengers to swim for their lives. The rest of the chapters in the novel shed light on the lives of characters introduced in "The Trip," justifying their dreams of why Spain could be their refuge. In her blog, Lalami writes about why she was unconsciously drawn to write fictional stories of the drowned bodies she read about in the news: "The articles never went beyond superficial details: this one had been unemployed for five years; that one had paid $4,000; this other one was on his third attempt" ("About the Book"). Facts and figures dehumanize the clandestine immigrants. A fictional retelling of their stories contextualizes their will, history, and their potential future in Spain.

Hope focuses on four main characters. Murad, an unemployed young man who lives off his sister's financial support, constantly questions his masculinity as he fails to provide for his sister and mother. Spain, in Murad's view, would not only provide him with job opportunities, but it would reinstate his role as the man in the family. Faten is a radicalized Muslim woman as a result of her poverty, which makes young women like her easily drawn to fanatic ideas of strict religious practices. Faten is forced to leave to Spain for fear of retaliation and imprisonment after verbally attacking a political figure in Morocco. Halima is a mother who takes her children with her on a boat to escape her abusive husband. Aziz is propelled to leave his wife and mother behind in search for a job in Spain. Not all of these characters succeed in crossing the water border into Spain. For those who do, their prospects turn out to be a dangerous pursuit.

Lalami, while writing the stories, noticed how at first look, the characters' fates seem unlike hers ("About the Book"). Lalami got her doctoral degree in linguistics from

the University of Southern California and currently she is a professor of creative writing at the University of California, Riverside. However, her characters are born out of her memories of her life back in Morocco:

> It would seem I have nothing in common with my characters, but I could just as easily have been one of them, if the lottery of life had dealt me different numbers—if I had been poor, if I had not found a job. Perhaps it's not a coincidence that, like me, Murad has a degree in English, that he's an avid reader. Or that Faten reminds me of some friends I had in college, who often asked me why I didn't cover my hair. At the time, I'd shrugged off their comments, but Faten would not be so easily silenced. Maybe it's not by chance that I started to write about a mother, Halima, just as I was about to become one; and that, like Aziz, I've had to contend with the displacement that is part of the immigrant's life. ("About the Book")

The statement "this could have easily been my story" provokes empathy, an emotion that is lacking in current representations of the immigration crisis within a global paradigm that makes the movement between borders an easy enterprise for those who are privileged financially and/or racially. For this purpose, *Hope* includes tourists searching for the dark and mystical sides of Morocco, trying to re-live Paul Bowles' and William Burroughs' life in Tangier. In this way, the author "sets the clandestine trip of the four Moroccans in contrast to the untroubled journey that 'Western' tourists carry out to reach Morocco" (Marchi 607). The dichotomy is made clear as the easiness of the privileged

tourists' journey emphasizes the "global foreigners" that the clandestine bodies on the boats have become (Saunders 88).[2]

Critics have recognized the narrative pattern in the characters' stories and concluded that Lalami paints an image of displacement that is not identified with nationalistic allegiance, where these Moroccan immigrants we read about in "The Trip" on the boat have already internalized liminality, if not complete social rejection. Murad and Aziz, without a stable job, would never be able to fulfil their role as Moroccan men. Halima has already become an outcast woman in a conservative society after she decides to leave her abusive husband. Displacement provoked these characters to find a stable identity through fantasies that identified Spain as their utopian destination.

The focus of this chapter is the crossing itself where immigrants and refugees, separated as they are defined politically, are brought together on the boat. Murad, Aziz, Halima and Faten would not be accepted in Spain as refugees even if they have been exposed to economic and gender violence, and in Faten's case, she is also escaping punishment for political reasons. The journey detailed in "The Trip" maximizes the need

---

[2] There are numerous texts on the Mediterranean migration to Europe, especially on the Moroccan-Spanish crisscrossing leading the West to form an exaggerated threat of the impending Other. See Daniela Flesler's *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration* situating the migrants as Moors to recreate the past tension between Spain and North Africa. Also see Edwige Talbayev's *The Transcontinental Maghreb: Francophone Literature across the Mediterranean* that examines the different aspects of the Mediterranean as a fluid space allowing for different ethnicities and identities to emerge.

to escape, to find a refuge in the host country, and to start anew. The narrative choice of opening up the novel with the boat scene heightens the idea that these clandestine bodies might as well be refugees. On this small zodiac boat, one cannot identify who is an "immigrant" and who is a "refugee" according to international law. Both of these groups have been forced to embark on a hazardous journey that might cost them their lives.

Reading through "The Trip," one becomes familiar with images of people escaping on overloaded boats. However, the richness of the story stems from the way the novel presents what these clandestine bodies are thinking about, the fantasies they are weaving for themselves the minute they disembark the boat, maybe the regrets for leaving home, and the most common human feeling one would naturally feel in such a situation: fear. The novel starts off with Murad ruminating about the fourteen kilometers separating Morocco from Spain. For Murad, this short distance, once crossed, would mark the end of his miseries. However, he is aware of the risks involved: "Other days he could think only about the coast guards, the ice-cold water, the money he'd have to borrow, and he wondered how fourteen kilometers could separate not just two countries but two universes" (1). He calculates the money that the smugglers are making off these people on this inflatable six-meter zodiac into which thirty bodies have been jammed instead of eight. Murad looks ahead to the nearing coastline, the city of Tarifa, and recalls the Moor army invasion in 711, an image that evokes Europe's fear of conquest by foreigners. Murad, nevertheless, understands the irony of his situation and thinks that "instead of a fleet, here we are in an inflatable boat--- not just Moors, but a motley mix of people from the ex-colonies, without guns or armor, without a charismatic leader" (3). Soon after, the boat passengers' discomfort increases as some of them vomit, children cry, and smugglers urge the passengers to keep it quiet. Murad reminds himself that

despite all this misery, the boat trip is less risky than escaping through a different method: “He thinks about some of the illegals who, instead of going on a boat, try to sneak in on vegetable trucks headed from Morocco to Spain. Last year the Guardia Civil intercepted a tomato truck in Algeciras and found bodies of three illegals, dead from asphyxiation, lying on the crates” (6-7).

On the boat, a Guinean woman throws her IDs overboard. Murad watches her enviously, understanding her motives to claim to be from Sierra Leone to apply for political asylum and thus become a bona fide refugee: “He shakes his head. No such luck for him” (9). The civil war and political dispute in Sierra Leone and neighboring countries like Liberia generated hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people. Murad’s lighter complexion makes it difficult for him to pose as being from Sierra Leone in the way that someone from Guinea could.

This storyline brings to light underlying political narratives about human migrants. The category of economic migrant, that includes Murad and Aziz, is an elusive and a suspicious one. The demand for legitimacy of the migrant’s story has made European governments mistrustful of all applicants. European countries prefer to consider everyone a migrant, and thus the host country does not have to offer protection for those who seek it (Sengupta). It is increasingly challenging to determine who is a migrant and who is a refugee based on political or economic motivations, especially considering that “Armed conflict, poverty, political and economic instability, and environmental disasters all contribute to the formation of mixed flows of people on the move” (Loescher). Migrants or refugees, in this sense, have to prepare documentation of abuse and/or persecution that is strictly political. There are many loopholes regarding the rigorous policies of offering protection to politically disenfranchised people. These

policies do not acknowledge that economic disadvantages are a just factor pushing these immigrants to seek refuge in another place, not to mention that there is also gender violence that is not deemed sufficient to authorize protection. Meghana Nayak ponders over these issues in her book, *Who is Worthy of Protection?* asking:

> Who is worthy of protection? For many, the answer depends on whether one sees non-citizens as "good" migrants, vulnerable asylum seekers worthy of protection, or as "bad" migrants, criminal illegal aliens, deserving nothing more than fear and contempt. This distinction is a precarious illusory one, often pivoting on how someone relays his or her reasons for migrating. But who will be given the opportunity to tell his or her story to the government officials and immigration judges tasked with handling deportation proceedings or adjudicating asylum claims? Whose story will be convincing? (1-2)

Readers are faced with similar questions as we read about the people stranded on a boat as the smugglers order them to get off and swim to the shore for fear of being caught by the Spanish Guards. We then read about how some of the passengers are unable to swim and thus drowned. Some hang on to their bags as they float, and some make it to the shore. Making it to the shore, the surviving passengers are caught by the guards and taken to detention centers for questioning. Murad is one of the passengers who is taken back to Tangier for being an illegal immigrant:

> Murad sits on the floor and looks up through the window at the patch of blue sky. Seagulls flutter from the side of the building and fly away in formation, and for a moment he envies them their freedom. But tomorrow the police will send him back to Tangier. His future there stands before him, unalterable, despite his efforts, despite the risk he took and the price he paid. He will have to return to

> the same old apartment, to live off his mother and sister, without any prospect or opportunity (16).

We are given a glimpse of Murad's life before he decides to make the crossing. We read about how the smuggler inflamed Murad's pipe dreams about the prosperous future he will have if he makes it to Spain: "Someone like you would get a job in no time. . . I usually do not talk about this but I can tell right away whether someone's going to make it or not. And you will. You're not like the others" (104). Murad ponders the successful stories of illegal immigrants that are circulated in the town while no one prefers to bring to light stories of people drowned or deported. The illusion of success blinded Murad into borrowing money and thinking of how close to his town was Spain, a place where his dream might just come true.

While Murad's story failed to convince the officers of his right to stay in Spain, Faten did not need a story. While waiting to be questioned by the officers after swimming to the shore, the guard takes her to a private exam room and rapes her as a deal for her to stay in Spain instead of face deportation. To justify the officer's action to herself, "She remembered what her imam had said back at the underground mosque in Rabat—that extreme times sometimes demanded extreme measures" (141). The cycle of extreme measures continues as in Spain she works as a prostitute, fulfilling some men's fantasies of Moroccan women, wearing embroidered dresses and knowing very well how to please their men. In Faten's story, political corruption and religious radicalization go hand in hand whereby her only escape, after "making a derogatory comment about King Hassan within earshot of a snitch but had, rather miraculously escaped arrest," was through migration (129). Had she been given the opportunity to tell her story, considering that fear of political persecution is a legitimate reason to obtain refugee status, her case would

have been denied. For she would not have been able to prove it beyond verbal retelling of the incident.

Another example where political laws passed for determining who deserves to be protected reveal the arbitrariness of the selection process is Halima's case. Married to an abusive husband who wastes his money on drinking, she is left with meager wages from working as a janitor for a woman who works on translating documents for immigrants. Maati, Halima's husband, refuses to divorce her, which compels her to pay a fraudulent judge money to give her divorce. The money she gave to the judge came from her two brothers who now work in Europe as illegal immigrants. Anxious that she has given all her money to a crooked judge, she questions her decision and asks the judge for her money back only to be faced with an insulting response: "The judge looked offended. 'I know your type,' he said. He put his palm on her back and pressed her toward the door. She stiffened. He withdrew his hand and looked at her with those small, challenging eyes. 'Go before I change my mind'" (68). Realizing that she made a huge mistake bribing the judge, she insisted on having her money back. The judge takes his billfold out of his pocket and throws the money at her. She falls to her knees and grabs the loose bills. Contextualizing Halima's history before she risks both her life and her children's lives is essential to get a full sense of the impossibility of immigration in a legal manner, which always comes as a result of abuse or persecution. Soliciting help from the translator, Hanan, Halima timidly approaches her with these questions:

> "How difficult would it be to emigrate?" . . . "Have you seen the lines at the embassies?" Hanan asked. Halima nodded, even though she hadn't seen them. Maati had told her about them, though, about people queueing up for an entire night just to get a spot inside the buildings, never mind an actual application. . . .

> "But I have my brothers in France," she said. . . . "But isn't there some way to get a visa?" Halima asked. Hanan shrugged. "You have to have a full-time job, a bank account, a ticket, a place to stay — it's complicated." (71-72)

In fact, the process of issuing visas is a complicated matter for socioeconomically marginalized and disadavtaged groups. Lalami is hinting at a larger context where certain bodies have more obstacles to go through than other more privileged applicants. The open borders fallacy is contingent on certain elements that makes it next to impossible for people to cross borders unless they are economically affluent. In *Immigration Justice*, Peter Higgins argues that "the way an immigration policy affects a person is not idiosyncratic, but rather is a function of that person's gender, race, economic class, sexuality, ability, age, and citizenship status," so that as long as these identity markers are evaluated as equal, immigration policies will always be unjust for certain groups of people (1). Halima's case would have never been defensible had she applied legally through an embassy or a refugee agency.

Halima and her children were on the boat to cross the Strait of Gibraltar when the captain/ smuggler dropped them off midway, telling them to swim the remaining distance. In what the people of Casablanca thought of as miraculous, Halima's youngest son, only ten years old, was able to drag his mother and his two other siblings with a stick to shore where Spanish guards were waiting impatiently to catch the about-to-be-drowned illegal immigrants. Halima and her three children are deported back to Morocco after having spent the money she had borrowed from her brothers on the fateful trip.

Both Halima and Murad are deported, while Faten is allowed to stay in Spain to survive as a prostitute. The final story in *Hope* is about Aziz, who fortunately swam to shore without being caught by the Guardia Civil. This was his second attempt on the raft;

the first time he was deported back to Morocco. Making it to Madrid, he lives a life of isolation, avoiding suspicion for being brown Muslim and scrapping for money to send back to his wife and mother. We read about Aziz's homecoming, which is not glamorous as he imagined it would be. Aziz realizes that "he had to alter the details of his daydreams" for there was no lavish car, no steady job, no possibility of buying an apartment for his family, and his father had passed away while he was gone (146). Explaining the difficulty for achieving a financial success, Aziz suppresses the displacement experience he lived through in Madrid:

> He didn't talk about the time when he was in El Corte Ingles shopping for a jacket and the guard followed him around as if he were a criminal. He didn't describe how, at the grocery store, cashiers greeted customers with hellos and thank yous, but their eyes always gazed past him as though he were invisible, nor did he mention the constant identity checks that the police had performed these last two years. (155)

The hope of getting Zohra, his wife, to join him in Spain or making enough money to settle in Morocco and start a business was another pipe dream which he soon realized was impossible, as he survived within the liminal space in Madrid. Aziz convinces his wife that he needs to go back alone again to Spain and that soon she would be able to follow him:

> "When are you sending me the papers?" she asked, at last. "I don't know," he replied. Zohra started crying. Aziz tapped her shoulder, in an awkward attempt at consolation. He couldn't imagine her with him in Madrid . . . He couldn't think of her alone in an apartment, with no one to talk to, while he was at work.

> And he, too, had his own habits now. He closed his suitcase and lifted it off the bed. It felt lighter than when he had arrived. (167)

With this final encounter with Zohra, he realizes that the rift was widening between his older self with his daydreams and his new self and new awareness of his situation as a member of a social group destined to be defenseless. Although some critics like Rima Abunasser states that "each character finds a path toward cultural and historical reconciliation" this compromise is situated within what Ruben Andersson labels as "Illegality industry" which includes every aspect of the migrant's move, starting from socioeconomic status quo, to smugglers, to control rooms, and to their lives as targets of suspicion and threat.[3] "The Darwinian selection," as Andersson prefers to describe immigration policies, characterizes clandestine bodies who survive the brutality of the journey and of the process of examination and questioning (3). Aziz, for example, manages to swim to the less-guarded shore as he learns from his prior failed attempt. Faten also remains in Spain, giving in to the "extreme measures" she had fallen into.

While Lalami situates her clandestine bodies on a raft en route to Spain, to realistically reflect the Mediterranean-African migration, Hamid envisions a new way of transporting his illegal immigrant characters through time and space. Clandestine migration is nomadic in essence as the migrants move from one point to another warding off the sedentary state apparatus of surveillance and control. However, refugee literature

---

[3] Soudeh Oladi and John Portelli in "Traces of the Deleuzian Nomad in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*" examine Lalami's characters in light of Delueze's and Guattari's nomads as they keep fluid identities moving from one place to another.

in this chapter not only addresses narratives of persecution, escape, and displacement in a conventional sense. Lalami adjusts the narration technique for each character whereby their lives before and after the trip diverge into two selves to emulate the experience of displacement. More recently writers have combined the immigrants' status and global reaction to them in literature to shed light on aspects that have become purely political and distant from humanistic interests. They problematize human migration in a way that affects not only the migrating body but also the host countries. Borders are closing in the face of moving bodies that have been forced to travel illegally. These novelists are making a clear statement that the global north is ceaselessly trying to persecute those who are fleeing persecution. Lalami catches our interest and sympathy in the first chapter, "The Trip" as her characters swim for their lives to the shore only to be deported or delivered to more daunting experiences. On the other hand, in *Exit West*, Hamid relies on magical realism in an attempt to defamiliarize our prior knowledge of illegal crossings. Hamid's approach responds to the recent increase of masses of people displaced from their homes that equally obtrudes both the migrant and the non-migrant.

Building on his belief that "migration is a fundamental human right," Hamid draws from his own experience of his privileged experience of forming a mongrelized identity, being born in Lahore and then moving with his parents to San Francisco when he was three years old, then to London where he lived until recently when he chose to resettle in Lahore. Hordes of migrating people pushed by war, famine, climate change, corruption, and abuse are facing state retaliation manifested in barbed wires, guards, and deportation. Hamid criticizes the failure of the global north as their borders "build an apartheid planet" where passports and IDs are markers widening the breach between haves and have-nots ("Why Migration" Hamid). Like Lalami, Hamid does not distinguish

between refugees and illegal immigrants as their experiences have united them as undesirable and not worth living or protecting. He avers that "the current crisis isn't about people being refugees and migrants. The crisis is that we think of such movements of people as a crisis" (Green). The global political rhetoric affirms that we are heading towards a catastrophe caused by clandestine immigrants where only increased security of state-borders can salvage the West from this disequilibrium. Hamid believes that writers can configure a different rhetoric where migration is perceived as a positive and universal act affirming that "if we can recognize the universality of the migration experience and the universality of the refugee experience—that those of us who have never moved are also migrants and refugees—then the space for empathy opens up" (Chandler). Similar to how Lalami blurs labels of refugees vs. immigrants, Hamid shows how human mobility is inescapable. Hamid further comments on economic migration as an unalterable consequence, demonstrating how violence in its essence is deprivation and not merely physical violence, a criterion that often takes priority when examining a refugee's application: "The more that people who are economically freezing and precarious become aware of places where people are economically warmer and more safe, the more they want to move" (Tolentino). One might argue that this universal take on refugeehood overlooks the grinding reality of becoming a refugee and of the glim procedures of the escape journey. Notwithstanding, Hamid breaks the prevalent stereotype of people on the move as being treacherous and damaging to stable and more advanced societies. Only through literature, can one envision a future that is not fatalistic and dystopic, as news and politicians would like us to internalize.

"I wanted to write a very large book about the entire world on a very small scale, so I needed to find some way of covering a lot of ground," Hamid says as he explains

how one book can encompass different kinds of mobility (Alter). The migration story in *Exit West* does not replicate the conventional way of crossing borders. We do not see boats, trains, trucks or check rooms; the novel highlights the point of crossing through doors. The idea of the novel came to Hamid as he was on a Skype video-call with someone in the United States where the window of his computer served as a literal window as he was able to see the space the person was occupying in America through the computer screen (Gall). In a technologized world, the idea of doors as borders was not farfetched for Hamid. Hamid, somehow, makes going through doors a more intimate experience affecting both sides of the borders in a subtle way and in an unrealistic narrative style.

The author Sukhdev Sandhu lauds the magical realist style as the novel "shifts between forms, wriggles free of the straitjackets of social realism and eyewitness reportage, and evokes contemporary refugeedom as a narrative hybrid." Nevertheless, the idea of global migration zooms in the novel more than it zooms out. *Exit West* focuses on the love relationship between Saeed and Nadia in an unnamed city where oppression and corruption finally destroy the country as it heads towards a civil war. Saeed, who comes from a conservative family, works for an outdoor advertising company. Nadia, living alone and rebelling against the norms in her society, works for an insurance company. Through this burgeoning love story, the narration marginalizes, or at least focuses less on, the war havoc at the beginning. However, the war is the main background for this story frame. The novel starts off "In a city swollen by refugees but still mostly at peace," a statement about internally displaced people more than refugees, in our political sense (3). By calling these groups refugees, Hamid asserts their first basic human need, which is to find shelter anywhere possible. Saeed and Nadia, like the rest of the inhabitants of the

city, are growing accustomed to the consequences of the multiplying numbers of militants in the city:

> Refugees had occupied many of the open places in the city, pitching tents in the greenbelt between roads, erecting lean-tos next to the boundary walls of houses, sleeping rough on sidewalks and in the margins of the streets. Some seemed to be trying to re-create the rhythms of a normal life, as though it were completely natural to be residing, a family of four, under a sheet of plastic propped up with branches and a few chipped bricks. (26)

Not only the refugees in the city are put in a state of paralysis; residents like Saeed and Nadia, although have they have not lost the physical parameters of their homes, are all undergoing a sense of displacement, violence, and drain of resources. The difference between Saeed and Nadia and the refugees in the streets is that they have a roof over their heads, but both groups are trying to seemingly adapt to the new conditions of the besieged city. They are all exposed to the unjust and inhumane act of aggressions. Hamid's narration eloquently captures life during wartime: "She [Nadia] watched bombs falling, women exercising, men copulating, clouds gathering, waves tugging at the sand like the rasping licks of so many mortals, temporary, vanishing tongues, tongues of a planet that would one day too be no more" (41). Powerless to stop it, Nadia, or any other resident, is forced to buy into this reality of defeat and of but-life-goes-on attitude of determination.

As the city becomes more debilitated under attack, the normalcy of life evaporates, leaving residents seeking alternative options of survival. The novel bridges the use of technology and the routes of escape through doors. The world created through technology amplifies the divide between two worlds, especially for Saeed and Nadia, for

whom cellphones “were antennas, and these antennas sniffed out an invisible world, as if by magic, a world that was all around them, and also nowhere” (39). In a such surreal environment, Hamid creates a world where doors are the means of transporting people across borders. As the city is falling to the control of the militants, more people believed in the magic of these doors where “a normal door, they said, could become a special door, and it could happen without warning, to become a special door” (72). What convinced people in the city of the existence of these doors is that now international radios are broadcasting how world leaders are expressing their apprehension about these doors as they are becoming “a major global crisis” (88).

With the escalation of violence in the city, and after the killing of Saeed’s mother by artillery, Saeed and Nadia start to look for “an agent” that will show them which door they can go through. Saeed’s father refuses to leave with the young couple because the memory of his dead wife is still alive in the house and in the city and “for the past offered more to him” (96). The writer Yasmine El Rashidi comments that “Exile, in this way, is a choice—the calculation of risk against possibility and the measures of value in any particular life. Home, with its complexities of comforts and discomforts in cities not entirely free, remains hard—excruciating—to leave” (El Rashidi). Contrasting the generational dimension of the decision to stay or to leave, in a political sense, exposes how Saeed and Nadia, like illegal immigrants, are seeking a better and a safer future somewhere else.

The agent guides Saeed and Nadia to a door located in a dentist’s office. The couple have heard stories of how going through these doors “was both like dying and like being born” (104). Nadia felt as if her soul “extinguished” as she was passing through darkness into the other side only to find herself lying on the floor of some public

bathroom as the two restored their strength to rise and walk forward. They found themselves on the Greek island of Mykonos where soon they located a refugee camp containing people of many colors ranging "from dark chocolate to milky tea" (106). The island is inhabited by tourists and refugees, both seeking an alternative reality. The couple were informed of "doors to richer destinations" yet these outlets "were heavily guarded, but the doors in, the doors from poorer places, were mostly left unsecured, perhaps in the hope that people would go back to where they came from – although almost no one ever did – or perhaps there were simply too many doors from too many poorer places to guard them all" (106). Rumors circulated in the camp about the growing anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe, a point which pushed migrants to move from one place to another to escape attack or deportation.

Meanwhile, Saeed and Nadia failed to go through a door which was suddenly open to Germany after being faced with a crowd of men in uniforms with guns protecting the portal. A girl among a group of migrant sympathizers helps the couple to find a door out of the island, which they stepped through into a city which they soon discovered was London. They found themselves in a house which looked like hotel room soon to be populated by migrants who are arriving through the same door from Nigeria, Somalia, Myanmar and Thailand. The more people arrived through the door, the more Londoners and the police gathered around the house in full riot as part of a "nativist mob" in order "to reclaim Britain from Britain" (134-5). The besieged house full of migrants, and especially those that can be rightfully labeled as refugees who have international human rights protections, has soon turned into a symbol of degradation and lawlessness protecting immigrants from around the world and creating problems for the neighborhood. In this example, Hamid, is pointing to the fact that policies that are

designed to keep the "illegal" immigrant out in an attempt to rescue "real" refugees are fraudulent. They are devised to keep the Other out and as far as possible under the pretext of illegal crossings and border violations. As a result of the national panic, more surveillance policies are implemented, leading to greater tension. Hamid's depiction of how Saeed and Nadia came to understand their situation in London is not unfamiliar to us:

> The news in those days were full of war and migrants and nativists, and it was full of fracturing too, of regions pulling away from nations, and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it seemed that as everyone was coming together everyone was also moving apart. Without borders nations appeared to be becoming somehow illusory, and people were questioning what role they had to play. (158)

To imagine a different future, one that is not built on hyperbole, Hamid envisions a time and a place where those in power come to realize their situation vis a vis the flow of immigrants. The officials in London acquiesce to the idea of coexistence because "doors could not be closed, and new doors would continue to open" and because what is happening outside the nation's borders has global ramifications (166). Moving from one door to another requires the migrant to shed old identities and construct new ones. As they decide to go through another door to San Francisco, Saeed and Nadia's relationship is altered, just as it was in every instance they passed through doors. Both Saeed and Nadia accustom themselves to the idea of having each other for their shared journey and having one history from one country, but the story displays their estrangement from each other as they become different people adapting to their new surroundings.

The global image of the whole planet being on the move is reflected in the movement of Saeed and Nadia on a microscopic level, however Hamid shows other types of migration through small narratives intercepted, as brief vignettes, through the couple's story. As a woman is sleeping in Sydney, out of darkness opens a door through which a dark-skinned man is delivered through the door and then jumps out the window. Another brief glimpse is of an Englishman who instead of committing suicide is transported through a door into somewhere in Namibia where he finds a new reason to live. A man from Brazil exits through a door to Amsterdam where he falls in love with another man. While in Tokyo, a man sees two Filipina girls emerge through a door and decides to follow them. Lastly, an old woman who spends her whole life in the same house in California where everything around her seems to have been on the move and now changed altering her life completely, such that "when she went out it seemed to her that she too had migrated, that everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same houses our whole lives, because we can't help it. We are all migrants through time" (209). *Exit West*, in this sense, is not a typical refugee story. Hamid's characters are born out of the current refugee crisis where their story almost sounds familiar in a world full of refugees. In an interview, Hamid expounds on the decision he made to include these fragmented narratives in the story: "I wanted to open up lots of different models so that readers would see some part of themselves in those characters' particular stances on the doors — and therefore, hopefully, on migration" (Gall). To evoke empathy and to include the privileged and the disprivileged in the novel, Hamid tries to restore the human right of movement, willfully dismissing the increasing rhetoric of hostility and division. Focusing too much on the refugees' journey is not Hamid's strategy; instead migration and its

outcomes are the backbone of the story, making a statement of how human lives are ephemeral (Brown).

Both Lalami and Hamid, as we have seen, have explored issues of migration, the perils of the journey, and the final destination of the migrant. Their migrant is a character who escapes definition, rendering invalid political distinctions between refugee and immigrant by expanding concepts of terror and violence. On the other hand, Viet Thanh Nguyen, the Vietnamese-American refugee writer whose family left Saigon in 1975 after its fall, insists on distinguishing refugees from immigrants, acknowledging however that these two categories are treated similarly by nativists. Like Lalami's and Hamid's characters, Nguyen's clandestine bodies continue to live through invisibility even after the completion of the journey. Although Nguyen differs in his treatment of the migration narrative, labeling it as exclusively a refugee narrative, we see how writers are contemplating ways to retell the displacement stories in new ways, without losing the common ground of flight, loss, survival or death that binds together all migration stories.

Nguyen defines himself as " a refugee, an American, and a human being" although at times while he was growing up his "humanity was temporarily put into question" as he was a refugee. After leaving Saigon on a boat, his family made it to a refugee camp in Pennsylvania. For Vietnamese refugees to stay, they needed to have an American sponsor. The family was divided and Nguyen at the age of four went to live with his new white family. Nguyen grew conscious of the series of displacement he was forced to undergo while in the United States:

> I came to understand that in the United States, land of the fabled American dream, it is un-American to be a refugee. The refugee embodies fear, failure, and flight. Americans of all kinds believe that it is impossible for an American

> to become a refugee, although it is possible for refugees to become Americans and in that way be elevated one step closer to heaven. (“On Being a Refugee”)

The ideal image of America being built by immigrants did not incorporate people who were displaced by war. As a result, for America to allow boat people to stay on its land was to remind the world that communism was evil and that these refugees are expected to show gratitude.

While Lalami heightens the dire situation that pushes people to migrate, and while Hamid insists on calling his characters migrants, Nguyen attempts pointedly to focus on the refugee experience in his works, *The Sympathizer* (2015) and in his non-fiction *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (2016) writing that: “the story that I'm telling in my novel is not an immigrant story. I'm a refugee and the story I'm telling is a war story” (Gross). In her review of Nguyen’s collection of short stories, *The Refugees*, Joyce Carol Oates is cognizant of the difference between immigrants and refugees, as Nguyen intends to establish in his works, as the latter is more severe “for the punitive violence it betrays.” Distinguishing Nguyen as “one of our great chroniclers of displacement,” Oates concludes that the loss of identity that the refugee has to endure forces him or her to become, in a broader term, a “displaced person,” emphasizing the calamity not only of losing one’s home, but also becoming a nationless individual.

Dedicated to “All refugees, everywhere,” the eight short stories in the collection focus on the Vietnamese community in California and in Vietnam from the 1970s until the present. Nguyen’s stories are not about the past though what happened to the boat people as they were leaving their homeland and heading toward a country responsible for their escape is a living reality that haunts them; the journey of escape still occurs, as it were. Reading Nguyen’s stories reminds one of Bernard Malamud's German Jew, Oskar

Gassner, in "The German Refugee" who commits suicide, despite his successful escape to the United States, after hearing the news of his daughter being shot by the Nazis back in Germany. The connection is never lost; the geographical distance does not erase the past so much as the sense of fatality follows the escaping refugees. This sense of failing to escape pervades the living conditions of Nguyen's characters whom he describes as "The Zombies of the World" roaming the earth to live their eternal exodus from home and the restless positions of being in host countries (Long). The stories in the collection are a reflection of what we have already known or heard about refugees. Yiyun Li comments on Nguyen's narrative style: "the stories do not aim to surprise us with new twists or shock us with sensational details, as war and refugee stories could easily choose to do"; instead we read about characters who "tell these stories because they are the only ones known to them" (Li). Despite the fact that Nguyen insists on categorizing his narratives as refugee stories, the current situation of refugees, who are treated as illegal immigrants and denied asylum, befuddle the distinction between an immigrant story and a refugee story.

Like Hamid, Nguyen makes use of surreal elements without losing hold of real conditions. More specifically, I choose to examine the first story in the collection, "Black-Eyed Women" as it focuses on the escape journey in a way different from Lalami's and Hamid's narratives. Hamid's doors as borders have become doors of borders between the dead and the living in Nguyen's text where ghosts of those who died during the journey are still trapped in time and space to complete the journey to the other side. The story is about a thirty-eight year old female ghostwriter who is a Vietnamese refugee living with her mother in California. The reader does not know the gender of the narrator until the ninth page. As a ghostwriter, her name does not appear on the books she

writes: memoirs for those who survived traumatic experiences. The act of giving agency to those who are voiceless or unable to write their stories themselves grows as she is bewildered by her mother's stories about the ghost of her dead brother. Her mother is a character who seems to be living in the past and even though she lives in a seemingly safe condition, her character is always alarmed because she is unable to forget. Commenting on her daughter's occupation as a ghostwriter, she finds it best that her daughter's name does not appear on book covers, recalling memories of the Vietnamese government and what they did to people who write: "There was a reporter who said the government tortured the people in prison. So the government does to him exactly what he said they did to others. They send him away and no one ever sees him again. That's what happens to writers who put their names on things" (1). The reporter's story was one among many other unforgettable cautionary tales. Ghostly stories of dead relatives coming back to visit their families also circulate in their own home which made the daughter humor her mother when she told her that her brother's ghost has just visited them: "he must have disappeared because he was tired. After all, he had just completed a journey of thousands of miles across the Pacific" (4). The ghost is dripping wet, having swam all this distance. Nguyen, in this instance, is highlighting the surreal perils of the journey, and in the case of the dead brother, the completion of the journey as a ghost who is still fifteen years old although twenty-five years have passed: "They always look exactly the same as when you last saw them" (5). More accurately, the ghost is "the symptom of something wrong"; the drowning of the brother at sea detached him from his family, creating a need to be reunited with them (9).

The present of the mother and the daughter is haunted, but so was their country and the memories that they left behind--memories of fear, detention, airplanes in the sky,

and the country's history. This feeling of being out of place, even in one's own country, continued as the family makes it the United States where they are constantly barraged by Americans reminding them that they do not belong here: "In a country where possessions counted for everything, we had no belongings except our stories" (7). The more the daughter immerses herself in the past, the more the story of her brother's ghost becomes plausible. The encounter takes place as the brother makes a reappearance wearing the same T-shirt: "Even though it was not raining, he was water-soaked. I could smell the sea on him, and worse, I could smell the boat, rancid with human sweat and excreta" (8).

The refugee story here embodies the boat people who sought refuge in another country, the dead seeking a return to their family, and the living seeking refuge in their past as part of the pipe dreams motif in this chapter: "the dead move on, . . . But the living, we just stay here" (11). The mother passes her time watching Korean soap operas, mourning the fact that they were displaced because of war. She reimagines a life where the war did not break out and where she was still in Saigon having a normal life with her family. The daughter finds refuge writing in the basement: "Writing was entering into fog, feeling my way for a route from this world to the unearthly world of words, a route easier to find on some days than others" (12). Unable to find a route out of the weight of memories, she becomes overwhelmed with the boat journey and how she lost her brother when she was thirteen and he was fifteen. While at sea, a pirate ship appears and takes hold of the boat. Because she was a girl who would be taken by the pirates and could be sexually assaulted, the brother tries to disguise her as a teenager boy. Trying to protect her from a pirate, her brother gets shot failing to protect her from being assaulted by the pirate. Recollecting these incidents while her ghost brother paid her a visit, she asks him why she survived and he died, to which he replies: "You died too, . . . you just don't

know it" (17). Even though these refugees survive the journey physically, they cannot leave the terror behind and move on with their lives. Nguyen's narrative seems to imply that death is no worse than survival, especially when remaining alive only means memories haunt one indefinitely. The narrator realizes the import of her survival and breaks down in tears: "I cried for those other girls who had vanished and never come back, including myself" (18). The house the mother and the daughter occupy is crowded with ghosts of refugees, of girls abducted, of people dying during the journey, and of memories of home as the daughter tentatively listens to her mother's stories: "Sometimes this is how stories come to me, through her. 'Let me tell you a story,' she would say, once, twice, or perhaps three times. More often, though, I go hunting for the ghosts, something I can do without ever leaving home. As they haunt our country, so do we haunt theirs. They are pallid creatures, more frightened of us than we are of them" (21).

Nguyen's victimized ghosts bridge the realm of the living and the dead, pushing the reader to think of basic concepts like survival or staying alive. These ghosts in "Black-Eyed Women" who have yet to complete their journey are not that different from Faten and Aziz as they are living in death. Nor are they different from the demarcation between the kind of people Saeed and Nadia are before entering and reemerging through doors as moments of rebirth. Aspects of before and after the journey are tackled differently by the three writers, highlighting the clandestine migration through the prism of current events of massive numbers of human migration and displacement. Maybe it is apt to categorize these kinds of works as human rights literature which scrutinizes "how human rights circulate in the social imaginary, demonstrates the role of literature in imagining rights, and explores the complexity and contrasts among cultural representations of rights" (McClennen and Moore 1). The migrants' human rights in this

chapter have been articulated by policies only for these rights to be dismissed in favor of the fortified nation-states. To have rights implies the acknowledgement of one's human status. The process of dehumanizing goes hand in hand with labels that can determine the migrant's life. (Consider the *Alien* Number that every non-citizen in the United States is given.) Rescuing the migration story from monotonization, these select writers expand and give the migrant narrative specific form and character to humanize them and to legitimize their plea to be rescued and admitted into host countries. The more the migrant is denied the right to exist, the more "wasted lives," borrowing Zygmunt Bauman's term describing consequences of modernity and globalization, are produced as unnecessary and disposable. Fictionalizing the migrant story is part of the Engaged Literature that Jean-Paul Sartre advocated for after the decline of humanity after World War II. The writers in this chapter not only bring attention to the individualized clandestine bodies, but also investigate theoretically-ideal human rights in a way that blurs the line between fiction/reality and human/non-human. The basic characteristic of the twentieth-first century is that it has become the age of Foucauldian heterotopias as places far outside of the highly systematic utopias. Refugee camps and detention places designed to hold illegal or irregular immigrants figure in reimagining a utopic fortress Europe where the Other must be kept out at all costs. This chapter should not be read as idealizing the role of literature in igniting empathy or compassion for the migrant per se; it merely shows how some writers are taking the responsibility to imagine an alternative reality to the current state of affairs concerning migration. There are no solutions offered, no solace provided at the end of each work, but a holistic picture is presented to prompt readers to reconsider what it means to save or to waste a life.

CHAPTER FOUR

MUTED BODIES, OBSTRUCTED ROUTES:

GHASSAN KANAFANI, HASSAN BLASIM, PIETRO BARTOLO

What struck me the most were his little sneakers, certainly lovingly put on by his parents that morning as they dressed him for their dangerous journey. One of my favorite moments of the morning is dressing my kids and helping them put on their shoes. They always manage to put something on backwards, to our mutual amusement. Staring at the image, I couldn't help imagine that it was one of my own sons lying there drowned on the beach. … It is not an easy decision to share a brutal image of a drowned child. But I care about these children as much as my own. Maybe if Europe's leaders did too, they would try to stem this ghastly spectacle.

Peter Bouckaert,
"Dispatches: Why I Shared a Horrific Photo of a Drowned Syrian Child"

Peter Bouckaert, Emergencies Director of Human Rights Watch, in the lines in the above epigraph, describes the 3-year-old Alyan Kurdi, whose body washed ashore in Turkey shortly after a rubber inflatable boat capsized five minutes after leaving land. Bouckaert reflects on whether the world is capable of seeing the child's dead body, fully clothed and prepared for the new beginnings his family was hoping for. The possibility of relating to the image—this could be anybody's son—was sufficient motivation to have the world witness the reality of naked death that refugees are prone to experience in their route to a new imagined better life. Reactions to the photo varied between sympathy from those who hoped to see imminent policymaking changes following the spread of the photo, and those who regarded it as "a snuff photo for progressives, dead-child porn, designed not to start a serious debate about migration in the 21st century but to elicit a self-satisfied feeling of sadness among Western observers" (O'Neill). Indeed, the sympathy surge operated only on the symbolic level where the emphasis on the shirt, the

shorts, and the sneakers circulated more than the humanity of children like Alyan. His death was grieved as an artistic expression of the refugee crisis, as a metaphoric display of thousands of bodies left ashore on the Mediterranean Sea. Alyan's death was not the first, and lamentably, it won't be the last. The image was not merely circulated in social media, like other representations of the crisis tend to be found; rather it was on the cover of *The Independent* in the U.K. and *Le Monde* in France. Though the image may not have generated hoped for policy changes, some questions loom around about the global reaction it caused. Was it Alyan's half hidden face that allowed western viewers to project their fear of a sudden snatching death that can arbitrary befall anyone? Was it the absence of destruction, of bombardment, of a capsized boat that rendered the child's death more brutal? Was it the fact that the 3-year-old son, far away from home, en route to the Greek Island of Kos, is an example of the futility of escape? Was it more effective to circulate images of Alyan's dead body alone on the shore without including images of his 5-year-old brother and mother, who also drowned? And lastly, what makes Alyan's dead body more momentous than any other death emanated during the crisis?

Multiple stories proliferate both in the Global North and the Global South about migrating bodies that were lost in the woods, found dead on shores, or died crossing deserts. The moving body always focuses on the destination and how to get there by all means possible. Fiction and nonfiction accounts in literature have focused primarily on the journey, elucidating what pushed the refugees or the migrants to embark on their journey or follow the migrants once they arrive to the Global North and how they navigate between cultural, economic, and geographic borders. In the second chapter, I included writers who are vocal on issues that cause the masses of migration to escape their countries and seek refugee somewhere else. In the third chapter, I looked at writers

who envisioned the pains of the journey of escape and the perils that refugees face when they have completed their route and now they are situated in a hostile environment. While refugees decide to escape, anticipating later on to be taken to a refugee camp, some do not complete the journey. Death sometimes is the final border some migrating bodies find inescapable. This chapter, thus, examines narratives that deal with the raw reality of would-be refugees' dead bodies, often abstracted into reported numbers, if indeed the body is found at all and thus able to make its way into the statistic. Fictional narratives include the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani's novella *Men in the Sun* (1963) and the Iraqi writer Hassan Blasim's short story "The Truck To Berlin" in his short stories collection *The Madman in Freedom Square* (2009); nonfiction accounts that zoom in on the predicament of refugee bodies vis à vis death include Pietro Bartolo's *Tears of Salt: A Doctor's Story* (2018) which archives stories of bodies in pain and dead bodies on the shore of Lampedusa Island. Choosing these three different genres to speak of the corporeality of death and dying in this chapter is important to distinguish the ways in which writers have imagined or witnessed the unfolding tragedies. Juxtaposing works of fiction with non-fiction is a necessary a step toward materializing suffering and foregrounding it in reality as an important category in literature of and about refugees.

If the humanity of migrating bodies has been occluded in political rhetoric and live refugees are perceived more as a problem than as people whose human rights have been ransacked from them, where do dead migrating bodies find their place in literary discourses? The writers chosen for this chapter highlight the decomposition of the body and its worth. The effort to tell of deadly incidents does not necessarily elevate the dead bodies to a level of martyrdom, but it brings forth awareness to potentially avoid more futile killings and death in the name of keeping the nation-state intact and protected. The

selection of stories accentuates how certain bodies are deprived of minimal human rights, the right to live, to exist, to be. Only when these bodies are regarded human will their death be accounted for and mourned. Countless deaths, like Alyan's, have been witnessed, perhaps engendering sympathy, without having the power to propel actions to mitigate the human crisis of mobile bodies.

The loss of these bodies, or the vulnerability of their existence, is an example of what multiple theorists have grappled with in their examination of what it means to be human, a political being, and the workings of state apparatus in shaping subjectivities. Both Foucault and Derrida engaged with theories of state sovereignty. In *Society Must be Defended*, Foucault defines what biopolitics or biopower means, where sovereignty "is the power to 'make' live and 'let' die. The right of sovereignty was the right to take life or let live. And then this new right is established: the right to make live and to let die" (241). Pre-modernity was a time when the king had the right and the power to kill. In modernity, however, biopower has the ability to "foster life or disallow it to the point of death" (*History of Sexuality* 138). This biopower manifests itself in controlling the population through regulations, surveillance, national identities and so forth. Those who comply with the sovereignty of the state, in the modern sense, enjoy some degree of attained livability that is also defended. In Derrida's theories, the person has ipseity, a concept he works with in most of his major works. In *Rogues*, Derrida differentiates between democracy and sovereignty as paradoxical points. However, ipseity is the ability to maintain selfhood through self-power in a way that does not contradict, or clash with, the sovereignty of the state; it is "the power that *gives itself* its own law, its force of law, its self-representation" (11). The absence of this correlation between the subject and the state creates beings that lack ipseity and thus exist outside the parameters of the state, not

in a rebellious way, but in a sense of becoming non-beings.[1] The politics of death occur within the European Court of Human Rights, Article 2: The Right to Life, that protects *every* life in face of violence that puts that particular life at risk. The death of the migrating body has operated outside the parameters of basic human rights. However, the Article also denotes how death resulting from warfare is unstoppable. Thus, sustaining a living being is inseparable from biopolitics where there are certain laws that allow taking life and make subjects killable.[2]

Expanding on Foucault and Derrida's theories, Giorgio Agamben revisits the non-beings, referring to the concept of the "homo sacer" (sacred man), in a way that informs us how mobile bodies that cross borders represent bare living stripped from human rights.

---

[1] Derrida has grappled with the concept of the sovereign in many of his books, including *Politics of Friendship* (1997), *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2008), and *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Volume 1 (2009) where he examines how we live in life and how death is in life vis à vis the sovereign and the animal other.

[2] Article 2 Right to life: "1. Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law. 2. Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this Article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary: (a) in defense of any person from unlawful violence; (b) in order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained; (c) in action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection."

Agamben distinguishes between two forms of being—bare life and political being—where the latter is accompanied by the privilege of being protected by the state rule, whereas the former constitutes the absence of human rights reserved to the political life functioning within the nation-state: "in the 'politicization' of bare life . . . the humanity of the living man is decided" (8). In applying Agamben's theories of bare life to immigration realities, Hannah Arendt comes to mind in laying bare the erasure of significance from human beings, or "the right to have rights" where the absence of a place to be claimed as home means the exclusion of people wandering the earth forever expelled from what it means to be human—here in a sense a human is one who belongs to a certain nation-state that in turn offers and guarantees human rights (297). More recently, critics have identified the plight of bare life and death in regard to mobility. For example, John Lechte and Saul Newman argue in *Agamben and the Politics of Human Rights* about the insufficiency of human rights in immigration circles for it does not include stateless people, people who cross borders, in a way rhetorics of human rights operate within the sovereignty of nation-state (vi, vii). The bare life is not thus abandoned once the migrant obtains a status, meaning to become identified politically as not legitimate. Solutions should not be restricted to include the other by granting them citizenship or state protection, "but rather to break down this very ontological distinction between political community and its other, between political life and bare life" (viii, ix).

Perhaps the theorist who profoundly grasps and extrapolates Agamben's bare life concept is Judith Butler, in both *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004) and *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (2009). In *Precarious Life*, Butler poses simple yet philosophically dense questions of who counts as a life and not merely a number. With the rise of global violence and terrorism, there has become an intensified

rift between bodies that are worth saving versus bodies that are allowed to perish: “The subject who is no subject is neither alive nor dead, neither fully constituted as a subject nor fully deconstituted in death” (98). Butler’s idea of death and grieving came to fruition in *Frames of War* where she expands on her previous book. *Precarious Life*, as she argues, came before photos of Abu Ghraib where the bodies of prisoners were emptied of any sense of belonging to a fellow human, and torture was justified to protect others.

Frames, Butler continues, are what mark certain groups of people as, back to Agamben, political beings with full human rights within certain sovereignties. However, she argues, some frames can be breached. Think, for example, of how the publisher of Alyan’s image wanted to highlight similarities between western viewers and the dead innocent body of a child in order to give the latter the humanity it deserves, or would have deserved. Building on the common idea of shared humanity, through the deceased child, is not sufficient to “recognize” the child’s humanity whose death could have been preventable:

> The shared condition of precariousness leads not to reciprocal recognition, but to a specific exploitation of targeted populations, of lives that are not quite lives, cast as ‘destructible’ and ‘ungrievable.’ such populations are ‘lost-able,’ or can be forfeited, precisely because they are framed as being already lost or forfeited; they are cast as threats to human life as we know it rather than as living populations in need of protection from illegitimate state violence, famine, or pandemics. Consequently, when such lives are lost they are not grievable, since, in the twisted logic that rationalizes their death, the loss of such populations is deemed necessary to protect the lives of ‘the living.’ (*Frames,* 31)

The logic of "this could have been my son" is thus flawed. Alyan's life, in the first place, was not considered a life worth living or protecting. Accordingly, his death was only momentarily grievable when similarities were drawn between the child's attire and light complexion to those whose life is fought for by all means possible. The world's reaction would have been different, nonetheless, if Alyan had been a 30-year-old man, in certain Right-Wing frames better dead than alive. The more bodies march from the Global South into the Global North, the more their dead bodies will appear to be more ungrievable: "an ungrievable life is one that cannot be mourned because it has never lived, that is, it has never counted as a life at all" (38).

Counting bodies, alive or dead, and estimating the arrival of more bodies, are two essential processes of dealing with the migrant issue. Searching for dead or missing bodies is still an underrepresented area in the experience of migration where most of the narratives focus on those who lived through the journey. Numbers are kept, noting the death toll, based on actually seeing dead bodies or based on stories of friends and relatives about people gone missing or dead throughout the many steps of their journeys. In 2016, 5,143 dead/ missing people were counted, only around the Mediterranean. In 2017, the number decreased to 3,116, and so far 498 in 2018 ("Migration Flow").[3] There are a considerable number of websites and projects that track missing or dead bodies globally. In order to identify the region from which the dead migrant has come, most of the data reported by the Missing Migrants Project did not include those of unidentified region and unidentified nationalities. These inconclusive data on the number of migrant

---

[3] The number of dead refugees found in the Mediterranean that I included here, 498, changes every day. Ten days after this number was recorded, it rose to 559.

deaths result from different reasons. Sometimes the numbers are presented with little information on the dead bodies, and sometimes they have age and gender, sometimes not. The numbers are also an estimate, and most often they collect data on dead migrants, not missing ones (Laczko, et al xix). The inconclusive process of identifying the dead bodies results in part from grouping people who come from different geographical areas into one group. For instance, a large number of dead bodies coming through the Mediterranean would sometimes be labeled as "Maghreb", "sub-Saharan" or even more simply as "Africanas" (Laczko, et al xviii). Counting dead or missing bodies goes as far as those who made the journey and failed to survive it. The authors of *Fatal Journeys* have acknowledged that those who are counted in the data are those whose movement falls under the "international forced displacement," and that human rights or migration organizations pay little to no attention to those who are internally displaced (alive or dead).[4] Tara Brian examines a third category that is yet more forgotten when we think of dead or missing bodies: those who are under the conditions of "involuntary immobility, who are unable to move to escape violence and hardship by crossing a border. . . the concept of involuntary immobility and fatality is an important consideration when discussing migration deaths in the context of forced displacement, and consequent data collection parameters" (4). In a way, the bodies in motion, before they ceased moving, have the "privilege" of being counted after death. This does not imply, however, that those included in these numbers will be grieved. Counted or uncounted deaths are equally

[4] The topics for *Fatal Journeys* include: *Tracking Lives Lost During Migration* (2014) and *Identification and Tracing of Dead and Missing Migrants* (2016).

ungrievable; if anything, they make their way into being presented as shocking information or unfortunate fatalities.

Bouckaert hoped that viewers who saw a shocking picture like Alyan would experience a rising level of sympathy towards the plight of refugees, yet what is the significance of sympathy towards a dead body? In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag puts a spotlight on the importance of photography yet while also recognizing its futility. On the one hand, Sontag identifies the role of photographing the pain of others for "The photographs are a means of making 'real' (or 'more real') matters that the privileged and the merely safe might prefer to ignore" (7). On the other hand, being exposed to dead bodies without the promise of alleviating the bodily sufferings, makes us "voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be. In each instance, the gruesome invites us to be either spectators or cowards, unable to look" (42). More gruesomely, the relationship that the image creates between the viewer and the dead body in the photo paradoxically further dissociates those who watch from those who have been victimized. Writing of this relationship, Sontag notes that "so far as we feel sympathy, we feel we are not accomplices to what caused the suffering" (102). Hence, the significance of the image loses its value. The viewer is apt not to grieve or mourn the dead but to exonerate one's self from the tragedy.

Images of refugees in the media have constituted a certain level of recognizing the crisis. The images of suffering, displacement, or entrapment in camps have become the global identifier of Refugeeness, in this sense, is a physical, social, economic, and political marker of the photographed person: "the refugee" is commonly constituted as a figure who is thought to "speak" to us in a particular way: wordlessly" (390). This "anonymous corporeality" further distances the suffering refugee from the digitized image: "Generalities of bodies-dead,

wounded, starving, diseased, and homeless are pressed against the television screen as mass articles" (Feldman 407). Even when the bodies are identified, like Alyan's, it is an attempt to symbolize the dead child's body as the supreme example of the global refugee tragedy. Liisa Malkkai has examined the correlation between the increase of visual representations of refugees with the decrease of asserting their verbal stories where Alyan's story has only been imagined, constructed and verbalized through the circulated image. (386). Makkai goes on to show how a certain group of refugees always populates the journalists' or the observers' camera. Women and children are often used as the face of the refugee crisis where leaders and the people of the free world should sympathize with and help: This sentimentalized, composite figure -- at once feminine and maternal, childlike and innocent -- is an image that we use to cut across cultural and political difference, when our intent is to address the very heart of our humanity"(388). Ignoring the specificity of each represented body and focusing on the universal image of vulnerability further disembody the refugees, morphing them into a trope of symbols and metaphors. This constructed narrative ultimately has a limited degree of grievability.

To make the wasted migrating body human and grievable, the authors in this chapter refrain from the sensalization / sensualization of images of the dead that triggers an immediate yet momentary reaction that dissolves with the absence of the image. Writing is a powerful medium to reflect the dead, or the experience of ceasing to exist, for those whose voice has been muted and who, during their lives or in their deaths were they identified as humans. The discourse of death and dying informs the authors herein to commemorate a life that has been wasted or bodies that are ignored in life as much as in death.

Ghassan Kanafani is probably one of the most influential voices of resistance literature in Palestine and in the Arab World. He was not only a writer, but also a member in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a Marxist, and a refugee living in exile in multiple Arab countries, sometimes hiding from the authorities for lack of official legal status (Kilpatrick 10). His experiences in exile inspired him to write novels and short stories that revolve around the Palestinian diaspora, their loss of identity, resilience to survive, the living and breathing memory of the homeland, and the betrayal of Arab nationalism and its failure to liberate Palestine. The spokesperson and editor for many magazines, *Al-Hadaf* primarily, he did not shy away from voicing his opinions nor from sharing his virulent condemnation of Zionism. At the age of 45, in 1972, and along with his niece, his car was bombed in Beirut by Israel's national intelligence agency (Kilpatrick 9).

Writing novels was inseparable for Kanafani from political activism. The displaced Palestinian appears in his works as living diaspora in every aspect of his or her life. Some of his novels are read on the symbolic level; others are an example of a scathing reality. In particular, *Men in the Sun*, published in 1962, reflects the post-1948 Palestinian exodus and the refugee crisis. Abu Qais, Assad, and Marawan are three men from three different generations, all determined to leave their homeland and cross the Iraq-Kuwait border to find a better life in the oil-rich country of Kuwait. The fates of the three men become intertwined—when they find themselves at the mercy of the same smuggler. The novella opens with Abu Qais, a husband and a father of two, lying down on the damp earth next to Shatt Al-Arab, the convergence point of the Euphrates and the Tigris, feeling the beating heart of the land which reminds him of the land he owned and left behind in Palestine. Stranded in Basra, and unable to make the crossing to Kuwait, he

is reminded daily of his displacement, of his subhuman conditions, and his failure to provide for his family. In a conversation with himself, he recalls stories of Palestinian men in Kuwait who are sending money back to their families. Kuwait was the land of dreams where all his troubles would vanish once he makes the crossing:

> In the last ten years you have done nothing but wait. You have needed ten big hungry years to be convinced that you have lost your trees, your house, your youth, and your whole village. People have been making their own way during these long years, while you have been squatting like an old dog in a miserable hut. What do you think you were waiting for? Wealth to come through the roof of your house? Your house? It is not your house. (26)

Displacement is never a completed journey, and Kuwait, more like a mirage, is a fantasy future, while the mind beats back to the lost past, the lost house, the lost olive trees, and the lost community. The present is no more than an endless quest to find the best smuggler in Basra that would deliver his promises, not just take the money, and complete the trip with Abu Qais safe and alive.

Assad is another man who has just smuggled himself from Jordan to Iraq in route to Kuwait. His uncle back home has given him enough money to make his way to Kuwait in exchange for a promise that Assad would come back and marry his cousin Nada. He has already been betrayed by a smuggler who let him off the lorry in the middle of the desert to reach Basra on his own. Remembering the journey he had survived, while listening to the new smuggler asking for more money for the new trip, Assad is taken back in his mind to the crossing he made and his miraculous survival under the sun in the vast desert, reopening the pains of the previous trauma: “If they had taken me to the desert prison, Al-Jafr, at H4, I wonder if life would have been kinder than it is now” (31).

While the resilience of the human body lies at the forefront of the narrative, the novella is also about the psychological trauma of displacement and the arid conditions of the journey. The stark human body absorbs the surroundings, absorbs the national failure, and weaves threads of hopes to defeat despair and weakness.

Marwan, a teenage boy, has not yet learned how to navigate his existence, his being, within the harsh environment. Having left school to find a job in Kuwait to raise his parents and younger siblings in Palestine, he joins the search for the smuggler that will take him to his brother who has been living in Kuwait, but who has stopped sending money to the family after marriage. After arguing with the caricatured figure of the smuggler, he is slapped on the face for standing up against the greedy demands of the smuggler: "As the marks of the fingers on his left cheek burned, he began to digest his humiliation" (37). Leaving the smuggler's office with mixed feelings of relief and anxiety, he leans against a wall, resting the humiliated body that has lost its significance in search of a better future: "Crowds of people walked past without paying him any attention. Perhaps it was the first time in his life that he had found himself alone and a stranger in a throng of people like this" (37). The three men have coexisted with the national tragedy and have endured hardships for the sake of the awaited light at the end of the tunnel. The first time we read about Abu Qais is when he is worn out lying face down on the earth; we read about Assad's arduous journey from Jordan to Iraq under the scorching sun; and we read of young Marwan whose body has already internalized loss and invisibility.

The fragility of the bodies manifests itself clearer as the three men make a deal with a lorry driver Abul Khizuran who accepts a cheaper price for transporting the three men in his lorry to Kuwait. Abul Khizuran is supposed to pass them through two

checkpoints where the three men have to remain in the belly of the water tank for 5-7 minutes as the lorry passes through the guards. The three men, at the beginning, dreaded the prospect of being inside a tank in the burning heat of the desert: “I don’t like the sound of this game. Can you imagine it? In heat like this, who could sit in a closed water tank?” (49). However, they put their faith in Abul Khizuran and in the remaining strength of their bodies. Abul Khizuran assures them that they will be like the first Muslims who followed the Prophet in the desert: “In my own mind I compare these hundred and fifty kilometers to the path that God in the Quran promised his creatures they must cross before being directed either to Paradise or to Hell” (52).

Abul Khizuran’s body, we come to know later, has also been put to test, maimed, and humiliated. He had fought with the British army before 1948, and afterwards joined the Freedom Fighters. Abul Khizuran later remembers the incident where he lost his manhood for the sake of the nation: “He and a number of armed men were running along when all hell exploded in front of him and he fell forward on his face. That was all. And now, the terrible pain was still plunging between his thighs” (53). He remembers being shouted at: “‘Be sensible. Be sensible. At least it’s better than dying.’ . . . ‘No. it is better to be dead’” (53). Ever since that day, he had lived a sham life making up stories about women he sleeps with every night in order to restore his verility and value in a society that would shame him otherwise. In a way, Abul Khizuran’s body has been maimed and made less manly in a conservative society. His body has been framed as disposable and its humanity has been questioned in society’s eye. The layers of minimizing the body here are intriguing. On the one hand, Abul Khizuran’s body and identity as a Palestnian are effaced and weakened in contrast with the enemy he was fighting in the asymetrical

power relation of domination; on the other hand, after losing his manhood, Abul Khizuran has further internalized the inferioritiy of his body and identity.

The narrative and the suspense escalate as the lorry advances to the first checkpoint. Abul Khizuran gives the three men directions on how to survive heat and lack of air inside the tank. Abul Khizuran's nervousness is shown as he drives on, speeding through the desert, in order for the three men not to suffocate. If he drives fast enough, he thinks to himself as the lorry starts to bounce and rattle that " this shaking was enough to turn eggs into omelettes more quickly than an electric whisk could" (59). Having the responsibility to save the three men, Abul Khizuran completes the first checkpoint safely within six minutes. Bodies soaked in sweat and short of breath emerge from the tank one after the other, unable to argue with Abul Khizuran that it was more than six minutes of being entrapped in the tank.

As the lorry was driving to the second checkpoint, the guards take a longer period of time giving Abul Khizuran a hard time, discussing matters about prostitutes with him. Anxious to return to the lorry, he realizes that the watch on his hand indicates that it has been more than seven minutes. After leaving the checkpoint, the speeding lorry comes to halt and Abul Khizuran goes to the tank to check on the three men. From here on, the narrative does not mention the three men by their names. They are dead bodies where only their features point to us if this body belongs to Abu Qais, Assad or Marwan. Abul Khizuran checks the bodies and the physicality of death pervades:

> It was very dark there, and at first he couldn't make out anything, but when he moved his body away from the opening a circle of yellow light fell into the depth and showed a chest covered with thick gray hair that began to shine brightly as though coated with tin. Abul Khizuran bent to put his ear to the damp gray hair.

> The body was cold and still. Stretching out his hand, he felt his way to the back of the tank. The other body was still holding on to the metal support. He tried to find the head but could only feel the wet shoulders; then he made out the head, bowed on the chest. When his hand touched the face, it fell into a mouth open as wide as it could go. (71)

The three men suffocated, their deaths meaningless. Their fates were put in the hands of Abul Khizuran who has already put their lives in the hands of the checkpoint guards' hands. These bodies are stripped of the right to live or to be perceived as bodies worth saving. The narrative becomes more grotesque as Abul Khizuran decides to bury them next to a dumpster so that their bodies will be found when the workers come to dump or burn the garbage. Throwing each nameless corpse into the rubbish, after taking the money from their pockets, Abul Khizuran could not leave the scene without asking this imperative question with which the novella ends with:

> "Why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank? Why didn't you say anything? Why?
>
> The dessert suddenly began to send back the echo: "Why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank? Why didn't you bang on the sides of the tank? Why? Why? Why?" (74)

With these lines echoing and receiving no answer, Abul Khizuran, and the reader, contemplate the plight of the muted bodies of desperate men who did not want to risk not reaching the destination by making a noise that could save their lives, knowing that they would have been sent to prison or back to where they came from. The bodies were suffocated, but they were also self-sacrificed for the dream of completing the journey. These final lines have been turned into a summation of the Palestinian displacement. The

death of these three men is intertwined in the way their bodies were perceived before the occurance of death. Expanding on notions of sovereignty and biopower that have the right over certain groups, to kill or let live discussed earlier in the chapter, Achille Mbembe contextualizes contemporary ways of reserving death for certain people as "necropolitics": "To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power" (12). The killing of these three Palestinians, or letting death befall them, strongly suggests the intensification of powers that have turned the loss of these groups as casualties while also increasing the value of those who are destined by the sovereign to live. Their death was a mishap, perhabs, but Kanafani builds up for the reader from the beginning of the novella an expectation that just as live bodies counted for nothing, their death will count even less.

Perhaps there is no writer who appreciates Kanafani's story more than Edward Said who has has written a commentary on the novella and how Arab nationalism has turned Palestinian refugees into symbols of their fragmented nationalism. "It is not the driver's forgetfulness that nags at him [Abul Khizuran]. It is their silence," the silence of the three men at the end terrifies Said, pointing to the meaning of the story, in a way how the refugees in the belly of the tank have perceived themselves as objects, not worthy of living, or that life has no significance if not lived in Kuwait (*After* 32). The very humanity of the displaced then is in question, and Said points out, in a manner similar to the way theorists have considered bare living, that "This people ─or, if one wishes to deny them any modern conception of themselves as a people, this group of people─identified itself with the land it tilled and lived on" (*Question* 7). Kanafani's narrative starts off with the bare living conditions that the three men endure before their last silence. This silence that haunted Abul Khizuran is altered in a film version of the

novella, released in 1972, almost a decade after the publication of the novella. The final scene is changed to show that the men in the tank did try to knock on the tank wall. After leaving them on a pile of garbage, the hands are shown as they died, knocking and screaming for their lives. The alteration is intentional since "a film similar to the novella in its denouement would have appeared glaringly incongruous at a time when the resistance movements were established" (Kilpatrick 11). The film shows a determined agency of the human will to hang on to life. The dead bodies in the novella, nevertheless, manifest a deeper level of the loss of humanity where fear has turned the men into will-less objects.

The novella has been examined in several aspects. Critics have not evaded the importance of metaphors in this novella. The burning sun in the sky has been read as a metaphor of hellish existence on earth for the refugee, as elaborated in Shadi S. Neimneh's article on the novella. Others have seen the desert as being "a symbol that represents the ordeal of fire through which the Palestinians must pass" (Eid 5-6). Nadeen Shaker debates whether this novella is a national allegory, or an individual allegory where because access to the truth is unreachable, the experience has to be allegorized to reflect the collective tragedy. Muhsin Al-Musawi in *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence* reads Abul Khizuran's final question as "purposeful resistance that brings life to death" as a new dawn for the resistance movement (123). However, beyond the allegorization and the symbolization of the experience, the materiality of the body, how it is perceived by the self and others is what's at stake in the novella where selves are turned into corpses.

Butler opines that the ontological existence of the body suggests that every life and being are both conceivable within a systematic power relations: "The 'being' of the

body to which this ontology refers is one that is always given over to others, to norms, to social and political organizations that have developed historically in order to maximize precariousness for some and minimize precariousness for others" (2-3). The three men in the novella, refugees, in this sense, are to be contained within certain centers and organizations that are supposed to find solutions for these bare lives. Butler differentiates between "recognizing" a life and "apprehending" it. The former acknowledges the full humanity of the subject, while the later can "imply marking, registering, acknowledging without full cognition" (5). Apprehended subjects are those who "are living, but not a life" (8). Kanafani pertinently materializes the absence of recognizing the three men as humans. Like refugees, the three men are numbers but with continuous problems; dead refugees are numbers cataloged and archived and whose death results in nothing and changes nothing.[5]

Corpses and wasted bodies are themes that also occur in the fiction of Hassan Blasim, the Iraqi poet, filmmaker, and writer who has become a Finnish citizen after escaping from Baghdad. Blasim does not have the literary recognition that Kanafani has in the Middle East, however he is starting to become a well-known author in the West as his books are translated into serveral European languages. Blasim's period of creativity was born within the strict regulation of the Baath party in Baghdad under the reign of

---

[5] To read more about Disposable Life, see *Open Transcripts*, a website of major theorists presenting what they think of as disposable bodies in our current age like Saskia Sassen, Slavoj Žižek, Cynthia Enloe, Jean Franco, Étienne Balibar and others. opentranscripts.org/sources/histories-of-violence/disposable-life/

Saddam Hussein where in Iraq, and almost all Arab countries, only politically censored literature was published. His movies produced negative official reponse while he was living in Iraq, compelling him to seek refuge in Europe. On his journey to Europe as a refugee, Blasim says:

> It took me four years to get from Baghdad to Finland. In that period I crossed the borders of Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and so on. It took me so long because I didn't have any money. I had to work in Istanbul, for example, until I saved the money to pay the traffickers. Of course, the first attempt falls through, so you return to Istanbul to work again, you work on the black market so sometimes you don't get paid. I worked in a restaurant for three weeks – like a donkey, as we say in Arabic – and I wasn't paid. And I lost some fingers in a machine in Sofia. (Yassin-Kassab)

Although he himself was able to survive, albeit after degrading the worth of his humanity as a fugitive between countries, some characters in his short stories provide figurations of ungrievable dead bodies. In 2009, Jonathan Wright translated *The Madman of Freedom Square*, which was also translated into Finnish, Spanish, Polish and Italian. In 2012, a more edited, censored version was published in Arabic, after being rejected by several presses in the Middle East. Upon publication, the novel was banned in Jordan (Heath). *The Madman* is a collection of short stories about war tales, migration, black comedy, macabre recollections, gruesome, surreal and gory details. Reading the stories is a shocking experience, leaving no room for sympathy or pity.

Continuing with the theme of dead bodies in refugee/ migration literature, *The Madman* has two stories that focus primarily on the grisly truth of death and dying. In a short story "The Corpse Exhibition" which later titled another collection of short stories

in 2014, the narrative deals with presenting dead and mutilated bodies in creative ways in war-torn countries. However, because this chapter focuses more on bodies lost in transit, "The Truck to Berlin" is more relevant here. The story begins with a narrator, maybe Blasim, telling the reader, before retelling the story, that the surreal and gothic element the reader is about to read is not a fabrication or "a modest allegory for horror," and that the responsibility of the writer is "to write this story, like a shit stain on a nightshirt, or perhaps a stain in the form of a wild flower" (67). We are not given any reason to doubt that the story took place. Blasim, who might also be the narrator, does not feel the need to justify retelling the horror stories he heard from smugglers. While he was in Turkey, preparing to be smuggled to Europe, he comes into contact with Ali the Afghan who had endless stories of people crossing borders. Blasim, addressing the reader, is aware of how the media portrays refugees who are found drowned in the sea, as an example of forces of nature killing humans, yet "The media do not, for example, carry reports of black comedy, just as you do not read stories about what the armies of European democracies do when at night, in a vast forest, they catch a group of terrified humans, drenched in rain, hungry and cold. I have seen how the Bulgarian police beat a young Pakistani with a spade until he lost consciousness" (68). The media target stories where death could not have been stopped, death by drowning. In fact, sensationalist headlines almost always focus on death in the Mediterranean Sea, willfully ignoring the countless deaths occurring in camps, refugees stranded on borders waiting for them to be reopened, or refugees crossing through forests or through dessert before reaching North African shores.

Smuggling stories are told within and in reference to other stories and journeys taken by other migrants, who succeeded or who were tricked by smugglers. Ali the

Afghan tells the story spread in the Turkish newspaper of an Iranian smuggler who convinced the migrants in his truck that they have reached a small town in Greece, while they were actually in a village near Istanbul. The migrants were found and taken to jail. Failed experiences, however, do not stop other migrants from entrusting their lives to other smugglers. Ali the Afghan retells the story of thirty-six young Afghans who paid $4000 each to be smuggled to Berlin in a fruit truck belonging to Haj Ibrahim. While en route, after three nights have passed, the young men were confused by the driving pace of the driver, at times speeding and then driving on what seemed like a forest road. The truck comes to a halt and the engine is turned off. The young men are left in darkness for several hours, kicking the walls of the truck sometimes, and other times gasping for air and whispering to each other. Four days have passed, and Blasim, in describing or imagining their anguish and screams, writes: “It seemed that the cruelty of man, the cruelty of animals and legendary monsters had condensed and together had started to play a hellish tune” (72). The Serbian police, upon finding the abandoned truck, opened the door, and a man drenched in blood and sweat falls and escapes towards the wood. The other thirty-five were turned into corpses:

> They had not been torn apart with knives or any other weapon. Rather it was the claws and beaks of eagles, the teeth of crocodiles and other unknown instruments that had been at work on them. The truck was full of shit and piss and blood, livers ripped apart, eyes gouged out, intestines just as though hungry wolves had been there. Thirty-four young men had become a large soggy mass of flesh, blood and shit. (73)

The process of turning from human, into subhuman, and then into a dead body is an example of violence inflicted on the self, in the dark, by oneself and by others, not as

refugees but as human beings brought to face the unspeakable and the incomprehensible. Blasim, or the narrator, presents the story as though true, or perhaps fiction, but the chaos of migration is stranger than fiction. The story ends with the Serbian policeman swearing to his wife that the guy who escaped from the truck "as soon as [he] reached the forest [. . .] started to run on all fours, then turned into a grey wolf, before he vanished . . ." (73).

The short story seems like a folk tale told by Ali the Afghan which generations will pass down—stories of relatives and friends who went on a journey which they never finished. "The Truck to Berlin" paints for us an image of what could go on within enclosed spaces where humans are put out slowly. While Kanafani focused on the lives preceding death, building up the suspense after we have already become attached to the characters and their dreams, Blasim's narrative is quick, shocking, and disquieting. The characters are only presented as young men. The frightening aspect of the narrative derives from it being told as a real story, by the narrator, and witnessed by Serbian police officers. The thin line between fiction and nonfiction is played upon in this story. The bodies in the truck are not recognized as dead human beings. They cease to be Afghanis, as the bodies in Kanafani's novella cease to be Palestinians with specific names. These bare bodies and identities were politicized prior to their death, not in the sense that they were given basic human rights; instead the politicization of their lives and deaths pivots around their expulsion from circles of recognition that endow humans with certain political rights. The death of these bodies or the degeneration into insanity will continue to be mythologized stories exisiting between the realm of the real and the unreal.

As well as imaginative accounts of dead migrants and refugees, there have been nonfiction accounts, often circulated in news and the media in graphic headlines, of numbers of people found dead or images of people as dead or tortured. One example of

such a non-fictional treatment is *Tears of Salt*, co-authored by the Italian doctor Pietro Bartolo, who lives on Lampedusa Island, and the journalist Lidia Tilotta. The book was written in Italian and translated into English by Jiang Chenxin. From a medical perspective, the doctor witnesses human degradation, corpses, diseases, sexual assault victims, amputated organs, and emaciated bodies. The multiple stories in the book feature humans who barely survived as well as wasted human lives. The refugees arriving through the Mediterranean Sea have been subjected to extreme measures, and thus, if they live, they have become the abject, or branded as a source of spreading disease.

Tears of Salt has its place in a vast range of anthropologist studies on human suffering and poverty in migration. "Structural violence" is a term associated with the works of Johan Galtung who in his 1969 article "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" foregrounded the concept of violence on the human body. Galtung differentiated between actual violence and potential violence (168). In regard to the contemporary refugee crisis, Galtung no doubt would have suggested that violence on the bodies of migrants is an avoidable violence, that death and countless injuries could have been prevented. The violence inflicted on refugees in their journeys of escape is an example of direct violence, in the case of both police brutality or sexual assaults, which is itself intertwined with structural violence, defined by Galtung as follows: "The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances" (171). Because of varying social, racial, economical, and national classifications, some bodies are more prone to be violated than others. Moreover, the anthropologist and physician Paul Farmer shows how examples of structural violence and suffering are not included in facts, census, date or figures, and thus those who suffer often suffer in silence (19).

More recently, Seth Holmes, a medical anthropologist, examines layers of suffering and wasted bodies through his field work with migrants in the United States, concluding, and relying on Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic*, that the medical gaze further makes abject the sufferings of the migrants within the broader structural violence they have been subjugated to (154). Studying suffering, medically or anthropologically, necessitates that we go through what Lauren Berlant terms as "slow death" in which the crisis of bodies has become part of "crisis ordinariness" where "the actuarial imaginary of biopolitics; what seem like cool facts of suffering become hot weapons in arguments about agency and urgency that extend from imperiled bodies" (761).

Death and suffering, as portrayed in the media, have lost their capacity to alleviate bodies in pain, certain groups of people having been driven into a state of existence that is less than bare living. It is thus imperative to seek out different ways of depicting dying and suffering bodies of the migrants that avoid dramatic exposure of violence for the sake of disturbance. *Tears of Salt* provokes a sense of the urgency of the situation, the waste of human potentials, and the subjugation of certain groups to extreme measures. The medical gaze in *Tears of Salt* has been depoliticized in the name of humanity where beings are perceived as humans and bodies in need of help without contextualizing the crisis that would ultimately lead into "crisis ordinariness." If dead or suffering bodies are perceived as only "refugees" then the physical pain and distress often become normalized, if not even expected, as: *it is natural that refugees are bound to suffer.*

Complementing the traditional narrative in *Men in the Sun* where the reader is given full knowledge and an omnipresent narrator to present dying subjects and "The Truck to Berlin" with its concise retelling of a folktale or a real-life incident of young men suffocated to death, *Tears of Salt* combines elements of a memoir and an archival

documentation of suffering and dead refugees. Bartolo intertwines his relationship to the sea with that of those who arrive as refugees without the truthful account of what he witnessed becoming banal or merely a report from the media.

On the Italian island of Lampedusa stands a memorial constructed in 2008 in memory of thousands of Africans who arrived, dead or alive, in Europe via this island.[6] Mimmo Paladino built the memorial in a shape of an open door, a gate, welcoming the arrivals; it is appropriately named Porta di Lampedusa or Porta d'Europe. This small island, whose fishermen have found and rescued many bodies from the sea, has been in the news as the starting geographical point of the migration crisis in Europe ("Africans Remembered"). Bartolo, born and raised on this island, shares his experience as a fisherman and a physician. The memoir starts off with Bartolo's own experience of almost drowning in the Mediterranean when he was sixteen years old, fishing with his father on board the *Kennedy*, the family fishing boat. While young, then, Bartolo realized that the sea is not only a source of income for the family but could also be a vicious and endless deep space, apprehending the haunting memory of drowning well before later these realizations intensified when he became a doctor in charge of saving "the living, and to be the last person to touch the dead" (15). The narration shifts between the doctor's personal stories and what he witnesses on the shore where the personal becomes public and the public becomes a very personal affair. Refugees' stories vary in the book, sometimes focusing on individuals and sometimes addressing the collective plight of refugees. The story of a woman called Amina who arrived by sea among others on a boat from Libya and whose body was burned on the boat by gas flying away from a gas

[6] In 2013, 300 African bodies were found drowned or reported missing near Lampedusa (Squires).

canister is an example of a refugee whose name Bartolo was able to come to know. Burnt refugees arriving on the shore have become a common occurrence on the island. The smugglers usually fill up the tank with gasoline, some of which spills over inside the boat, mixing with salt water. The mixture of petrol and water soaks into the passangers' clothes, giving them a sensation of warmth before "the liquid slowly eats through every inch of their clothing and then goes on seeping into the flesh, softly, mangling its victims" (167). The visceral reaction this description produces reminds the reader of the fragility of body and, perhaps, awakens the reader to realize the humanity of the suffering subjects.

Every chapter of his realistic account begins with a memory, an object, an event, or a person related to the crisis or to his own personal life. As a doctor with his team on Lampedusa, Bartolo is responsible for picking up objects on the shore, things that have been left behind by dead or surviving refugees: shoes, toys, shirts, necklaces and bracelets. Recollections take Bartolo back to a time when shoes were not a necessity for him or for other boys on the island. Bartolo's family and their life stories are woven into the fabric of refugees' familial bonds during and after the journey. One of the many most horrific incidents that Bartolo shares in the memoir is the time when he passed giardiasis to his child, Rosanna. Refugees, after taking a long journey or because they had been kept in poor conditions by the traffickers or refugee centers, usually arrive on the shore with lice, scabies, and other similar diseases. The doctor saw outbreaks of these diseases where refugees' bodies were slowly deteriorating: "their hands were raw and flaking, and they scratched themselves to bits, mutilating their skin as if it were not their own" (161). The people in the town and those he works with blamed him for being near the refugees for long periods of time, bringing diseases to his own family, saying "you brought this

upon yourself" (165). The same reaction prevailed throughout the small town. People avoided places around refugee centers or families would not send their kids to school near the centers, while others demanded that migrant children not to be put in the same classroom with their own kids. The abject and the disease-ridden Other is kept outside, away from civil societies, for fear of contamination, physically and psychologically.

Many stories refugees tell Bartolo when he examines them involve violations of the body, especially the refugee's body. Jerusalem, a fifteen-year-old girl from Eritrea, and others like her, would be easy prey for rape or contraception injections given by traffickers. These contraceptives would be given to women to prevent them from getting pregnant in case they were raped. These pills can cause temporary menopause, but they could also have long-lasting effects, especially on younger women (98). We read stories of bodies raped or of pregnant women at sea, who sometimes give birth on boats or rafts, resulting in the death of the child or the mother, or if they are fortunate, give birth when they arrive the shore. Organ trafficking is yet another phenomenon on the rise, preying on migrants who have nothing of value to offer, except for their own kidneys. Staying in the hospital, for some migrants, is better than being deported or sent to jail. Bartolo shares stories of patients who swallow objects, sometimes sharp razors, to stay longer at the hospital.

Descriptions of sick bodies abound in the book, but the most arresting scene Bartolo witnessed was when bodies were fished out of the sea, or floated onto the shore. Reports flooded in about missing boats, driven off course or hammered at the shore by strong winds. Bodies were found days later and Bartolo gives a distressing account: "The corpses were in a fearful condition. They had been partially eaten by fish, and were riddled with fleas, other parasites, and even starfish. The long days these victims had

spent on the seabed had turned them into pieces of meat, to be nibbled at and rotted away" (115). The people around the doctor, as well as he himself, were unable to look at the bodies for more than seconds. The instinctive aversion spurs from the realization that these corpses were once humans before becoming food for sea creatures. Each body is then put in a coffin and each tragic story is sealed with the deceased.

One of Bartolo's experiences with dead bodies neatly coincides with the fictional stories by Kanafani and Blasim earlier in this chapter in which migrants are asked to stay in hiding while the traffickers make sure that there are no guards in sight. Bartolo's story about people put into situations leading to their death shares many traits with the other two fictional narratives in this chapter: enclosed places, suffocating conditions, signs of struggle, and temporal urgency that makes a difference between life and death. Above the deck in a boat coming from Libya there were almost two hundred and fifty migrants. In the freezer below were fifty young people who were promised to be taken above the deck once they left the harbor. Twenty-five were released, while the traffickers kept the other twenty-five inside when the vessel could not stay stable. Fifteen minutes later, those inside suffocated to death after struggling to push the door open. When the boat arrived, Bartolo found his way into the room, unaware of what he was about to find:

> It was stuffy, and there was an unpleasant sweet smell in the air. Blindly, I felt for the floor, and found that it was soft and uneven beneath my feet . . . I fumbled for my mobile telephone and switched on the torch . . . The hold was paved entirely with corpses. I had been walking on dead bodies. Innumerable young bodies. They were naked, piled on top of each other, some with limbs intertwined. It was Dantesque. The walls were scratched and dripping with blood. Many of these young dead people had no fingernails . . . They had been trying to tear the boards

> off them [walls], scraping until their fingers bled and their nails ripped, until their hands were reduced to raw flesh and splinters. (144-46).

Real accounts are not unlike what we read when Abul Khizuran jumps into the water tank and finds his way through the three suffocated bodies with haunting description of their lowered heads and open mouths gasping for air, nor are they different from the tales, real or perhaps not real, that Ali the Afghan keeps in store of his memory about young Afghans left in a truck for four days. Nonfictional accounts like Bartolo's appear too surreal, or Dantesque as he puts it, but they are not more truthful or authentic than fictional tales presented by Kanafani and Blasim in their depiction of universal human experience faced with the burden of screaming, fighting, tearing their flesh, to stay alive. The dead bodies, once found in these three examples, cease to be Libyans, Africans, Syrians, Palestinians, or Afghanis. They become dead *zoe* (biological life) and not dead *bios* (political and social being since their politicization in life was only in forms of exclusion from society). Hence, their death does not alter, influence, or instigate anything, because of the bare living condition before death. As Roberto Esposito simply describes it, "death acquires importance only in the light radiated by life" (34).

Media headlines continue to publicize numbers of the dead or missing, rising at an alarming rate. The zombification of refugees has also found its place in literary criticism as well as the media: "The person is no longer a person in either an existential or metaphysical sense" (Boon 7). Discourse on the migration crisis has made the zombie migrant into a figure not necessarily resurrected from the living; rather they remain in the limbo of political discourse, shuffled around as papers and numbers. What the authors discussed in the chapter aim to do is immortalize the experience of death and rescue it from slipping away like a memory. The scope of experiences and narratives of those

whose stories are told not only showcases the living dead in migration but also focuses on death in itself, which has often been an evanescent phenomenon or merely symbolized and allegorized. Suffering through the journey has been the prime narrative element for the migrant whereas death is not often portrayed. As long as death in narratives about refugees is not examined and apprehended in in its own right, bodies will continue to suffer their meaningless deaths. The physicality and reality of death evoked by these authors underscores the lack of the "human" in humanitarian discourse about migrants. The refugee's death signifies the absence of being, the erasure of an identity on its way to becoming another identity. Refugees, in this chapter, are an example of an interrupted becoming, of a living entity in search of its worth, yet beings or entities who ended only as a numbers or images, like Alyan's forlorn body on some shores. Nonfiction is no less valuable than fiction. The levels of hardship and endurance vary between different escape journeys, each death unique and lamentable, making each life worthy of saving and protecting.

CHAPTER FIVE
CAN THE REFUGEE SPEAK?
VOICES BY PROXY, STORYTELLING AND SURROGATE AGENCIES

"To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric"

Theodor W. Adorno

In one of the corners of Barnes and Nobles where new release books are, I glimpse a book cover showing half of the face of a young woman wearing hijab. I get closer to see what the book is about, thinking that it should be another book about Muslim women's rights, or driving rights for women in Saudi Arabia, or possibly the hardships of women in Afghanistan. To my surprise, it was another book on refugees titled *A Hope More Powerful than the Sea*. In handwritten cursive beneath the title it says, *The Journey of Doaa Al Zamel*, under which is a subtitle, *One Refugee's Incredible Story of Love, Loss, & Survival*. At the very bottom is the author's name: Melissa Fleming. This young woman must be Doaa, I think to myself, and this must be her handwriting. This was a new twist on books covering the refugee crisis. Usually, the cover would be of a mass of people, a solitary boat in the sea, or a solitary person seen on his or her journey. The technique of zooming in on half of Doaa's face was a new strategy, but the purpose behind it was merely something done and perpetuated by other books on refugees and migrants. The push to show the reader that this is Doaa's face and actual handwriting is part of the drive for authenticity in creating "true stories" to be read, sympathized with, and admired. It is a story of "One Refugee"; it is the triumph of the individual's past, present, face, and handwriting, that hopes to make a connection, an affinity, between the reader and the refugee, a connection bigger than the sea. I flip through the book and read a couple of passages, and beyond the half face and the cursive,

almost realistic handwriting, Doaa's story is told in third person, written by Fleming, the Head of Communications and Chief Spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

A Hope More Powerful than the Sea is one of many examples of recently published books on the global migration crisis. The attention given to the crisis is laudable, as it is a responsibility embraced not only by writers, like Hamid or Nguyen who fictionalized the experience, but also by human rights journalists and volunteers who have written of their interactions with refugees, to bring to light some voices of the crisis. The practice of representing the Other has received its fair share in criticism by major theorists like Said and Spivak who have analyzed existing power relations at play in speaking for the other. In "Righting Wrongs," Spivak critiques the endeavor of organizations and activists who have become part of human rights rhetoric: "The idea of human rights, in other words, may carry within itself the agenda of a kind of social Darwinism—the fittest must shoulder the burden of righting the wrongs of the unfit—and the possibility of an alibi" (524). The universalism of human rights language often generalizes human conditions through stories and testimony narratives. Criticism of such attempts to bear witness or pass along stories does not come without acknowledging accompanying humanitarian impulses. Writers and human rights activists work on producing counter-narratives to the hostile rhetorics and stereotypes constructed around immigrants. However, within a power paradigm, can artists and human right advocates fall into the trap of intensifying, instead of eliminating, power relations between the representor and the represented?

The assumption based on "they are just like us" has been critiqued and proven incongruous with the refugee experience. The topic has been approached politely, always

emphasizing the good and the bad in every incident of representation. Reinforcing elements of universalism and shared humanity detracts us from the original sin, the original truth, here playing on Orwell's reverberating words that "some humans are more equal than others." Unless we acknowledge that, any humanitarian aid might slide into the trap of regenerating old, colonial mechanisms of unequal relations.

Rendering the refugee experience in writing as a trope of representation has been a pivotal point in postcolonial studies and Subaltern studies on the ethics of representations pioneered by several critics. It is almost always easier to see patterns of unequal representations in film and documentaries as we see western humanitarian advocates strutting through refugee camps, interviewing people with diligent note-taking. This kind of critique is, however, hidden when we are reading journalists' accounts of what they saw on their mission to alleviate the pain of others as much as they could, or at least to bring attention to the crisis. The bearer of the truth, the eye who witnessed the displaced, and the messenger from the camps has the ability to transfer these harsh realities into words. The ethics of representation in writing, thus, are twofold. While it is certainly empowering to have more writers, journalists, and activities producing literature and works on migration and refugees, this does not mean that their efforts should evade questions such as: Why are these texts produced? Who benefits from this ample production of texts on the human plight? And, where is the refugee after we finish reading these texts?

The number one answer to why these writers felt the need to publish their texts on refugees is "to humanize the crisis." In this chapter, I examine Dave Eggers's *What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng*, published in 2006 as an example of this kind of representation in literature, to see if fiction can be a powerful medium of

giving voice and agency. Moreover, I analyze texts produced by journalists and human rights activists in a way to study this rising genre of writing. It is challenging to pin down one text of this genre. A comprehensive look at these texts allowing us to see patterns of representations will enable us better to understand, maybe appreciate, and maybe be critical of some of these texts. The chapter deals with questions about the ethicality of writing with respect to the migrants and refugees. For example, are those being represented homogenous subjects, in the colonial sense? Or do we regard the infinite number of stories as part of post-structural celebration of the pluralism of voices, and hence establishing individuals' subjectivity? If the latter is the case, how then do these stories seem almost indistinguishable from each other? Here lies the quandary of representation, of speaking on the behalf of Others, or staging the Other to speak. While we continue to endorse the words of intellectuals who speak on behalf of the oppressed, as in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" where Spivak points out "The unrecognized contradiction within a position that valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual, is maintained by a verbal slippage," we see an age of substituting the privileged writer for the humanitarian and peace advocate journalists, we tend to be forced to acknowledge the good intention behind the whole endeavor of representing the other. Spivak further invokes Marx's "*Vertretung*" (represent), as politically representing not only the Other but also the Subject's convictions and "*Darstellung*" (presentation) as staging, portraying the Other. These two are inseparable, whether the *Vertretung* is done to benefit the Others or merely to portray them (278-279). In any representation medium, there is the one oppressed and there is the one who is documenting or writing about the voiceless. The message that

comes through is a result of witnessing that may or may not accurately reflect those on whose behalf others are speaking.

The epigraph of this chapter cites Adorno's problematic assertion that writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. Adorno's cultural critique of a society that totalizes every ideology and viewpoint prompted him to denounce any genuine effort to speak against injustices:

> Even the most extreme consciousness of doom threatens to degenerate into idle chatter. . . . Absolute reification, which presupposed intellectual progress as one of its elements, is now preparing to absorb the mind entirely. Critical intelligence cannot be equal to this challenge as long as it confines itself to self-satisfied contemplation. (*Prisms* 34)

To be precise, Adorno is attacking a certain type of writing that serves nothing beyond being "idle chatter" divorced from the reality of those who suffer injustice. To write merely to be self-congratulatory, morally superior and entitled to speak for or to "humanize" the Other produces literature that in part participates in creating the cultural chasm between those who can speak and those who cannot. But whether Adorno meant his statement to be read like this or not is not the issue; it is instead how the statement has been quoted multiple times to reflect the impossibility or the improbability of literature to reflect the pains of others.

Writers' sense of duty to represent their exiled or diasporic position genuinely makes them critical of the prevailing systems of representation. In 1986, Edward Said published *After the Last Sky*, a book of photos and essays on Palestinians and how they have been portrayed in the news. In the book, he laments the fact that most representations tend to show that all Palestinians have a similar exilic experience. The

reality of the stateless people can only be reflected in fragments. The medium of representation, he believes should be "essentially unconventional, hybrid, and fragmented forms of expression" (6). For this purpose, *After the Last Sky*, "Its style and method — the interplay of text and photos, the mixture of genres, modes, styles — do not tell a constructive story, nor do they constitute a political essay" (6). The aim is then neither to have individual stories nor to have a story that compulsively unifies the experiences; rather the writing and the ideology behind it should be fluid, like the people it is speaking for.

Rendering the stories of the voiceless in literature becomes more complicated when a novel like *What is the What* is both fictional and based on a true story. Eggers, the well-known author, is cofounder of Voice of Witness: Amplifying Unheard Voices, an organization that makes a place for voices usually unheard by the mainstream media, telling and preserving stories of injustices in the United States and globally. The organization sponsored Valentino Achak Deng, one of the 4000 beneficiaries of Lost Boys of Sudan who were taken to the United States to start a new life outside refugee camps. The novel is the fruit of a four-year long collaboration between the two (Eggers and Deng), and it is based on true events told by Deng, assisted by Eggers's fictional techniques and styles which blur boundaries between fiction and nonfiction. Like Said's idea of a "fluid" story suitable to represent refugees, Eggers complicates the idea of authorship. Eggers is the owner of the book and its production, but he creates a separate persona that oscillates between Deng and himself.

The work received mixed reviews. Some have praised Eggers's artistic achievement in creating a well-rounded story, while others have felt uneasy about the power structure between Eggers and Deng. Lev Grossman opines that "What could have

been an awkward literary three-legged race became instead a synergistic collaboration," commenting on the bond established between the speaker and the listener (73). Another critic described the book and the author as "the next logical step in Dave Eggers's one-man cultural revolution" in creating the touchingly sympathetic text that would bring to light the genocides in Sudan and Sudan People's Liberation Army (Adams). Others acknowledged the uneasy feelings they had seeing how Eggers is the owner of someone else's story, but this discomfort is ameliorated by the fact that all profits will go into the Valentino Achak Deng (VAD) Foundation. The Foundation has been truly spreading help in South Sudan where they built Marial Bai Secondary School, the highest-ranking free school in the country. One can only applaud Eggers for writing a book which ultimately created good educational opportunities in Sudan. However, the question that shyly presents itself is whether this kind of intervention is a new form of neo-colonialism. The debate around the book, and other similar books, is tied not just to representations and knowledge, but also to issues of financial profit and control. For example, the choice of style is problematic like choosing to call it a novel (on the front cover) and to claim authorship under his name and not list Deng as one of the authors. Publishing the novel under Eggers's name would definitely appeal to a wider readership. The complexity of the narrative is superb in tackling issues of representation. However, the cover fails to disrupt power hegemonies.

Lee Siegel writes a rather harsh review of the book: "The eerie, slightly sickening quality about *What Is the What* is that Deng's personhood has been displaced by someone else's style and sensibility— by someone else's story. Deng survived his would-be killers in the Sudan, only to have his identity erased here" (50). Siegel continues his scathing criticism, toppling Eggers's intentions, suggesting that the author is "a creature of the

culture that he helped to create. He is a creature of the McSweeneyite confusion of good intentions with good art" (53). This searing evaluation of the work and the author, shared by other critics, stems from the fact that the book is called an "Autobiography" while written by Eggers, the western author who is serving as a proxy agency for the voiceless and the powerless, thus erasing the identity and original ownership of the story.

Nevertheless, *What is the What* cannot be dismissed simply because the western author is taking on the responsibility to speak for the oppressed. In Deng's stories, one can detect a critique of representation, the failure of humanitarian aid, and the heavy expectations put on the refugees once they are "saved" or "rescued." In the preface, Deng addresses readers, telling them about how this book came to birth: "*What is the What* is the soulful account of my life" containing details of his village Marial Bai, escaping Sudan, staying in a refugee camp in Kenya for thirteen years, how he was selected to be taken to the United States, and then how his life in the U.S. has been a constant flight from one predicament to another (xiii). Deng hopes from telling the story and turning it into a book that the world would know something of his struggles and the struggles of hundreds of thousands like himself back in Sudan and in refugee camps where human right violations continue to take place: "I told my story to many audiences, but I wanted the world to know the whole truth of my existence" (xiii). Through Mary Williams, the founder of the Lost Boys Foundation, Deng was introduced to Eggers. The collaboration between the two took the form of tape recordings, phone calls, meetings, and visiting Sudan together in 2003 to re-live some of the incidents in Deng's life. Because Deng was displaced from his family and home at an early age, he and Eggers agreed to turn the book into a novel since Deng could not have possibly remembered conversations accurately. The writer's imaginations, hence, supplemented some of the memory gaps.

One could argue that having the book as a novel and not an autobiography has its own merits. The reader has certain expectations when reading "authentic" war or refugee stories. The novel, as a genre, has allowed Eggers to implement critiques of expectations, organizations, donors, etc., a move a journalist might not be able to accomplish.

Opening up with him being tied to a chair in his apartment in Atlanta while two African Americans raid the apartment, Deng, and Eggers perhaps, show the continuation of the circle of violence engulfing certain races who are themselves entrapped in lower socioeconomic classes. Deng is aware of the powerful ways stories can be manipulated when told to different people. He has a habit of telling "silent stories" to those who have wronged him. He lives in a bubble of memories shaped at times around injustices and other times around homesickness when he feels obliged to carry those memories with him: "it is my right and obligation to send my stories into the world, even if silently, even if utterly powerless" (29). When his stories are heard, sometimes the effort is rewarded with shelter, food, compassion, or protection:

> When we were proving our case to the UN officials in Kakuma, or are now trying to convey the urgency of the situation in Sudan, we tell the most dire stories. Since I have been in the U.S., I have told abridged versions of my story to church congregations, to high school classes, to reporters, to my sponsor, Phil Mays. Perhaps a hundred times at this point I have traced the basic outline. Phil, though, wanted all the details, and I have told him the most complete account. (28-29)

One might regard this quote as Deng having control over his life story, shaping and reshaping it when extreme conditions call for it. The insistence of Phil, one of Deng's sponsors, to hear "all the details" almost has a fetishizing aspect to it, almost forcing

Deng to share his story even if he did not want to. Some critics see this control over telling a cohesive, well-structured story as empowering: "The narrative flows not only because Eggers is a good writer but also because Deng mastered the flow of his own life at a time when dissolution would have seemed a foregone conclusion" (Martin et al. 354). Deng knows what the listeners want to bear witness to, a story that vastly re-inscribes the dichotomy between western and non-western living conditions: "Didn't we all walk across the desert? . . . Didn't we all eat the hides of hyenas and goats to keep our bellies full? Didn't we all drink our own urine? This last part, of course, is apocryphal, absolutely not true for the vast majority of us, but it impresses people" (21). Somehow, the most voluntary stories we hear about are those told in secret, to Christian neighbors, to the two African Americans stealing his few belongings, and to the TV Boy who was left to make sure Deng stays tied to the chair, and to Julian, the hospital assistant.

In an interview Eggers explains how Deng constructed his narratives, choosing to tell the typical terrible aspects of his experience:

> [But I needed to] balance all the horrific parts with some measure of relief and calm and the other aspects of life, laughter and romance, all these things that make a full human life. If I didn't do that I would be ignoring his whole humanity, saying all he is a product of statistics, all he is somebody who's seen atrocities-- there's no other aspect of his life that's of value. That's what I would be saying, and that's sometimes what we do say, unfortunately. (Dawes 209)

Deng, as well as other refugees who are always asked to share their tales, have become accustomed to sharing only the gory details of their experiences, truthful as they are. Deng subtly shows how being responsible for telling stories over and over again turns him into having mechanical responses every time he is asked to retell his story. The

novel/autobiography, as Eggers prefers to define it, is centered around telling stories, but one can sense that this is what has been expected of the lost boys--to tell their story, to testify that their tragedy actually existed. Critics have debated the ethics of storytelling and its usefulness, but never have they approached the whole conundrum by disparaging the whole act of storytelling in the first place. "What is your story?" is almost a must-have question whenever meeting a refugee. Since representations have raised ethical concerns regarding the privileged westerner who takes on the role of the savior, refugees and displaced people now take on the duty to evade silence, always to be telling stories and expecting a reaction from the world. There is a complicit failure to acknowledge that storytelling and testimonial narratives will ever be of benefit to the refugees who know that to get access to protection requires a detailed account of their tragedy. We are, in essence, asking these displaced people to never forget the misfortunes that happened to them.

The narrative of *What is the What* is built on failed stories, starting from Deng as a young boy who followed those who survived in his village to Ethiopia. He was told countless stories about how lush and different Ethiopia was and how safe the country was, or when he was approached multiple times along the journey to refugee camps by SPLA soldiers who wanted to turn him into a child soldier, or when he was told by others that aid workers volunteer their time to help boys like him: "In Ethiopia I would have my own bed, like the bed the chief of Marial Bai had, stuffed with straw and with a blanket made from the skin of a gazelle" (2014). Deng subtly undermines the concept of "volunteering" that always comes with expectations on the behalf of those who receive help. In order to raise money, Mary Williams would organize events for celebrities, like Jimmy Carter and Angelina Jolie, to come and meet the Sudanese refugees. Deng paints

for us the absurdity of parading refugees for money during a Basketball game: “and there I sat, in a suit, courtside at a professional basketball game. Picture it! Picture twelve refugees from Sudan, all of us wearing suits, all of these suits one size too small, donated by our churches and sponsors. Picture us sitting, trying to make sense of it all” (165). Whether this frustration is voiced by Eggers or Deng, it is not uncommon to see perplexed refugees shown at events and in the media for motivations unknown by the refugees. The homogenization of the refugees into set, similar suits, making them indistinguishable from one another, continues in various forms. When Deng was at the refugee camp in Kakuma, children were asked to sing for the white visitors and to hold banners greeting them, but they could not approach the visitors who “cleared out when the camp erupted into temporary chaos” (373). The showcasing of refugees continued even when he was relocated to the U.S.:

> Why were we all celebrating our birthdays on the same day? . . . When we were first processed by the office of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, at Kakuma, we were assigned an age as accurately as aid workers could determine, and were all given the same birthday: January 1. To this day, I do not know why this is the case; it seems like it would have been just as easy for the UN to pick different dates at random for each of us. (167)

When admitted as refugees, the displaced Sudanese were still regarded by aid workers and volunteers as numbers in documents, to determine how much food, clothes, and tents to ask for. Nonprofit organizations and foundations operate in the same way, despite what refugees think or expect to find when relocated to host countries. These dispersed critiques throughout the novel are what make it truthful, whether or not we are still debating the ethicality of representation by western writers.

Success and gratitude were expected of the Sudanese refugees who were in part representing all the refugees who are still in camps. Being good to the church and to the sponsors further homogenizes the refugees' identity making them all as one moving mass. Each sponsor made sure that she or he took care of one refugee only, refusing to help others even if they could, but this did not stop the refugees from asking questions, like Deng does, about the core nature of nonprofit foundations or about movies to be made on their behalf: "We refugees can be celebrated one day, helped and lifted up, and then utterly ignored by all when we prove to be a nuisance. When we find trouble here, it is invariably our own fault" (239). The continual reminder that Deng is a refugee presents itself in different ways, but most obviously when each refugee is assigned an identification cards at the camp. Through these cards, the UN counts the refugees, distinguishing between those who could have shelter and food and those who could not. When Deng wanted to help a family at the camp to bring one of the daughters from Sudan, he had to give up his card, leave the camp, and come back again with a new identity to be a new refugee with a new name, Valentino. Being outside the camp again, making a circuit journey to come back to the camp, he faced further obstacles that could have led him to the SPLA. A Kenyan man gave him a red mask which protected Deng from the world: "I luxuriated in the thought of presenting this new face to all the world, a new face, without masks, blemishes, a face that told no tales" (403). Being a refugee forbids a person ever to break loose from the past. Even though unbearable, the past is what gives refugees their present source of shelter and food. One can stretch the argument further and say that *What is the What* is the result of stories but at the same time, it is a portrayal of how endless stories dehumanize the refugees by minimizing their identity into one long and painful story from their past. The stories lock a person into a

particular identity that becomes difficult if not impossible to escape. For example, Deng needed to leave and come back with a new identity to the camp, fully aware that he had to take on the stereotype identity of the refugee and have to keep repeating the stories expected of the refugee. Deng is being asked to repeatedly perform his identity /reconfirm it in ways that might erase any sense of individual identity that has survived hardships and loss. Deng always lived by the rules dictated by others around him concerning where to go, where to stay, and how to live and behave. In one of the trips outside the camp in Kenya, Tabitha, Deng's girlfriend, urged him that they should escape and go somewhere else. Deng refused, seeing how the escape would have repercussions on those back at the camp. While Deng's argument is noble and moral, Tabitha's viewpoints on how being in a camp as a refugee has eradicated Deng's identity is irrefutably precise:

> You don't have to obey the laws of where someone like you must belong, that because you have Sudanese skin and Sudanese features you have to be just a product of the war. . . . And now they tell you that you have to stay in a camp until they allow you to leave . . . What right do all these people have to draw boundaries around the life you can live? What gives them the right? Because they happened to be born Kenyan and you Sudanese? (464)

Deng not only shares the story of his journey to Sudan, to Ethiopia, to Kenya, then to the U.S., he also shares facts about what it means to receive help from different parties, something that can hardly be found in the human rights discourse of literature. Michelle Peek detects the implicit critique in the novel, offering a posthumanist reading where the novel "occupies the space of a posthumanism that is understood as a critique working

within humanist practices, paying critical attention to the subjects and subjectivities of humanitarian narrative" (116). Universalism and humanitarianism are based on colonial endeavors predicated on the responsibility to aid less capable humans. Peek examines these critiques of human rights values and asserts that only through a posthumanist reassessment of aid can we envision different kinds of help, of listening, and of even empathizing with the Other. Thinking about the politics of what's left of his identity, Deng invites readers to ponder over some issues related to being a refugee. On his way out of the camp to other parts of Kenya to participate in some events, Deng and other teenagers like him in the bus see the situations that keep them in a state of need. They saw lush parts of Kenya where crops can actually be grown; instead their camps were placed in arid places:

> Seeing this part of Kenya made it all the more depressing and inconceivable that our refugee camp had been placed where it had. . . . Do not think it was lost on us that the Kenyans, and every international body that monitors or provides for the displaced, customarily place their refugees in the least desirable region on earth. There we become utterly dependent--unable to grow our own food, to tend our own livestock, to live in any sustainable way. I do not judge the UNHCR or any nation that takes in the nationless, but I do pose the question. (454)

Lines like these make *What is the What* a book that transcends critiques of the ethicality of representation and instead meddles with issues that strip refugees from any sort of agency, down to losing their own right to choose their life and have their stories controlled by others. Deng, one of the 4000 Lost Boys who were chosen to be taken out of Kenya to the U.S., confronts new trials and tribulations. Parallel plots of Deng both in

the camp and being robbed and beaten in the US, “allow Eggers to continually lure the reader into a feeling of hope that has already been crushed. . . Deng must always, doggedly, continue fleeing” (Dawes 205). Not all of the Lost Boys turned out to be success stories, where they had to deal with new social and economic vices of racism, sexism and classism. These parts of the book give us a more genuine characterization of people like Deng to a point one can turn a blind eye to who is representing the refugee and to what end.

Having said that, the ending of the novel/ autobiography makes a problematic point for critics who see more Eggers in the ending rather than Deng: “I [Deng] will tell stories to people who will listen and to people who don’t want to listen, to people who seek me out and to those who run. All the while I will know that you are there. How can I pretend that you do not exist? It would be almost as impossible as you pretending that I do not exist” (535). Siegel sees the transformation of pain in this ending and of Deng’s whole experience into a sort of “fairytale” where violence and unjust systems controlling Deng’s life become insignificant, as if the Sudanese refugee survivor has his life under control (52). On the other hand, Peek reads the ending as defining “our embeddedness in a co-constituted world: neither of us can pretend that the other does not exist” (129). Both readings have their merits, but one cannot ignore that our co-dependence is not as egalitarian as Eggers might wish to see it. The Other exists only to remind the more privileged classes of our global order of their prerogatives. When relocated to the U.S., these refugees stumbled over their dreams and expectations put on them such that their subjectivity and identity continue to be tied to their past, creating new obstacles for their future:

> We wanted it all immediately—homes, families, college, the ability to send money home, advanced degrees, and finally some influence . . . But this has not happened, not in most cases . . . Too many have fallen, too many have failed. The pressures upon us, the promises we cannot keep with ourselves—these things are making monsters of too many of us. (Eggers 8)

Although Deng has managed to cofound a foundation in Sudan, one cannot ignore hundreds of thousands of refugees who could not leave camps like Kakuma and who continue to live under a system of gifts given by foundations and organizations. The ending emphasizes the singular, private could-have-been success story of a refugee, failing to recognize other characters in Deng's endless tales about other displaced people losing their life to the SLAP, famine, long journeys, kidnappings and other sorts of atrocities. Said's critique of using a cohesive story to represent the refugee shades light on why the reader feels the ending of *What is the What* to be superficial. While the novel form has allowed Eggers a certain degree of freedom to oppose sensitive matters, using the form of a novel imposes certain expectations for sequencing and for closure that distort the refugee experience. Once again, Deng's story is made to conform to Western storytelling conventions, failing to embrace the chaotic experience of being a refugee that has no ending.

As a condition to leave Kakuma for Atlanta the participants were asked to write their stories on their own, if they know English, or tell them to others if they didn't know the language: "Whichever strategy we applied, we knew that our stories had to be well told, that we needed to remember all that we had seen and done; and no deprivation was insignificant" (485). The process of determining who was to be saved, to be taken out of the camp, thus depended on the ability to construct a good story that could be the

dividing line between life and death. To end the novel on the power of stories seems incongruous with multiple factors that can prevent some stories from reaching those who could lend a helping hand. Of all people, Eggers should have known that not all stories can be heard and when heard, not all who receive them instantly feel the responsibility of shared humanity.

Eggers and Deng work on reaching their readers through the power of sympathy by showing hardship and extreme human resilience. In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly,* Judith Butler explores issues of body politics in regard to various political movements and reactions to the sufferings of others, demarcating between those who we recognize as people and those who are unrecognizable as such. In an interview, Butler undercuts the importance of igniting sympathy. In a conflict situation, accepting the other should not be based, as she opines, on who the subjects are "for the simple reason that the world is given to us in common and that without each other the world is not given. If the self is the basis of sympathy, our sympathy will be restricted to those who are like us. The real challenge occurs when that extrapolation of the self is thwarted by alterity" (Berbec). Responsibility, naturally, should not be built on egoistic calculations, motivations, or on the notion of proximity. Fiction, in this regard, tries to make the distanced issues close in order to spark change. In *The Land Between Two Rivers: Writing in an Age of Refugees*, Tom Sleigh, the prolific American poet, protests against speaking for a community in any form of fiction, specifically in poetry: "In its self-seriousness, it's almost stagy conviction that a hundred million can indeed scream through one mouth . . . the poem asserts poetic privilege as being unlimited, almost divine" (155). While *What is the What* is Deng's story, it is almost never separated from its role in representing the other 4000 lost boys who also moved to the U.S., and also

always working retroactively to speak for the refugees still in camps in Kenya and elsewhere. The poetic ending of the book, with its assertion that Deng will forever retell his stories for the world to notice, drags the novel into some cliché lines. Sleigh continues saying that all poets, or any writer speaking for the downtrodden, must "signal that they're aware of the limitations of their singular, subjective viewpoint" (138). Is *What is the What* Eggers's viewpoint? The unique situation of the collaboration between the refugee and the writer makes the answer unreachable, but one can wonder about how much Eggers imagined himself in Deng's situation, the surrogacy of the experience that has the power of turning harsh realities into a work of art. Although writers and readers emphasize the importance of making others heard through literature, Viet Thanh Nguyen questions the role of literature in some cases in his introduction to *The Displaced*, a collection of essays written by refugee writers sharing their experiences. Nguyen argues that "Readers and writers should not deceive themselves that literature changes the world" (20). Instead, it is action that creates change, while he leaves the word "action" open for interpretation. Again, is what Eggers does considered political activism, especially given that the collaboration between Eggers and Deng is connected to a foundation that raises money to build schools in Sudan? As mentioned earlier, *What is the What* has its place in literature and in humanitarian action which places it as a work of art diligently trying to diminish power structures of representations, even if it falls in the trap of generalizing experiences, pretending to speak for an entire community, and ending the book with unfitting hope amidst larger scope of chaos and uncertainty.

Nguyen continues his argument, illustrating a point important to this chapter: Are refugees voiceless? Nguyen thinks not, and instead, he paints for us another scenario for representing the refugees: "True justice is creating a world of social, economic, cultural,

and political opportunities that would allow all these voiceless to tell their stories and be heard, rather than be dependent on a writer or a representative of some kind" (20). The other kind of representation and speaking on behalf of the other that this chapter is interested in is the work of human rights advocates and aid workers, whether affiliated with international organizations or working independently. As mentioned at the opening part of the chapter, books like *Hope More Powerful than the Sea* have become a very popular subgenre of human rights literature where authors share their experience of visiting a refugee camp or of their contact with refugees on their journey of escape. It is essential to mention that works of fiction, like Eggers's for example, have been both praised and critiqued. However, it is hardly possible to see criticism of books representing the Other in non-fiction books.

As mentioned earlier, *After the Last Sky* is a book with a new approach on issues like exile and displacement. Said's dissatisfaction with how Palestinians have been depicted propelled him to envision new ways to represent the Other in non-fiction without generalizing experience or relegating them to objects, furthering their silence. One passage in *After the Last Sky* painfully describes how displaced people are interviewed or approached by journalists and aid workers:

> I cannot reach the actual people who were photographed, except through a European photographer who saw them for me. And I imagine that he, in turn, spoke to them through an interpreter. The one thing I know for sure, however, is that they treated him politely as someone who came from, or perhaps acted at the direction of, those who put them where they so miserably are. There was the embarrassment of people uncertain why they were being looked at and recorded. Powerless to stop it. (12-14)

The factor working on repeating some habits of documenting the Other, whether on camera or through writing, is the inability of the represented to go off the scripts of the questions prepared by the journalist. The politeness of subjects further reduces them lower in the power hegemony, having internalized that this journalist, whom they might never see again, might change their fate, and in return, they have to share everything with the person who, unlike them, can leave the camp anytime they want. Said laments how the private aspects of these identities do not exist, that they have to share the most excruciating experiences with strangers, hoping for some positive results. Silence, on the other hand, is sometimes the reason people are not given the status as refugees; if they fail to tell a "good" story that matches what the interrogator wants to hear, the person would be deported. Speaking for oneself does not always imply agency.

In *That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity*, James Dawes poses the question whether the work of humanitarian aid volunteers and journalists is "ultimately selfish" (14). He continues to evaluate the outcomes of interviewing refugees or documenting their lives by turning those experiences into a book. In this new subgenre of humanitarian writings about migrants and refugees, Dawes shows how "it is sometimes impossible to distinguish the desire to help others from the desire to amplify the self, to distinguish altruism from narcissism" (122). Human rights language, discourse, has become a global language in defending human rights, to a degree that all human rights workers have come to use the same language in a way following a certain protocol that has been "Institutionalizing human rights" (Dawes 133).

Many recent publications on the refugee crisis affirm Dawes's views on how books representing the global migration crisis have become the same, almost indistinguishable from each other. For example, the titles of these books almost share the

same words (stories, refugees, outcasts): *Cast Away: Stories of Survival from Europe's Refugee Crisis*; *Hara Hotel: A Tale of Syrian Refugees in Greece; Seven Syrians: War Accounts from Syrian Refugees*; *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees; The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees*; *The New Odyssey: The Story of the Twenty-First Century Refugee Crisis; City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World's Largest Refugee Camp* and *Dear World: A Syrian Girl's Story of War and Plea for Peace*. The emphasis on repeating words like refugee, crisis, voice, stories, tales, accounts and surviving all center around "true" events and real people being interviewed or observed throughout the time the journalist or the volunteer spent time in camps. The repeated use of the sea as a metaphor can be problematic because instead of representing a massive obstacle, some may read it as referring to the "sea of bodies" or "waves of refugees" image that some Right-Wingers use to make refugees seem more threatening. The covers of these books also have some shared elements: people on a boat in the sea, people walking across borders, or people in the middle of the desert. The books vary, some showing the collaboration between the author and the refugees, writing in the third person, while others are written in the first-person narrative as if the author was just the transcriptionist of memories. The sense of authenticity aimed toward the reader is conveyed through close-up images of refugees or their handwriting, like in *A Hope More Powerful than the Sea* and in *Dear World: A Syrian Girl's Story of War and Plea for Peace,* where the first pages of the book are written in a childish font, in perfect English, to indicate that Bana, an eight-year old refugee from Syria, wrote this book with the help of her mother and an editor, whose name we don't see anywhere in the book. The authors of these books almost all accentuate the need to show the world that the refugees are *humans*. The author of *Cast Away*, Charlotte McDonald-Gibson, says in an interview that she focused in her

book on "examples which are universal and so hopefully that shows we are really not that different. We are all the same people" (*Moody Radio Florida*). Thus, the center of humanity as western as possible is maintaining, comparing the others to *us.* Teresa Thornhill in *Hara Hotel: A Tale of Syrian Refugees in Greece* narrates her own experience of going to Greece, difficulties, the people, the expectations, and the realities. Difficulties include not knowing Greek, the currency, and the small dingy hotel room, but she is grateful to have a roof over her head while thousands of refugees are under tents. She, along with other volunteers, moves across borders every day, from Macedonia to Greece. She points out how they could do it, but the refugees could not. This would have been a golden moment for her to acknowledge her privilege of mobility, even if it is self-evident. Wendy Pearlman in *We Crossed a Bridge and it Trembled: Voices from Syria* explains how it is difficult to see refugees in the media and in political debates as human beings, and how she hopes that her book will show their humanity. These tactics deployed in this subgenre of books highlight the urgency of authenticity, or true representations and of bringing the refugees closer to the reader in hope of sparking sympathy and action. While Said attacked the series of portraits of exile that are "without names, without contexts. Images that are largely unexplained, nameless, mute" doing the opposite of this by zooming in on faces, sharing photos of mundane lifestyles of the refugees on their way of escape might not be the best alternative (12).

The section above might seem like a series of points disparaging the works of journalists and volunteers who might have genuine affiliation and sympathy for what they have witnessed. Nevertheless, Dawes comments on the complex dilemma of representing the sufferings of others even if it does not have positive effects: "We must intervene, yet our intervention looks and feels much like injuring" (212). The quandary of the situation

is irresolvable. One can find certain narratives of power and privilege that depict the pains of others, but one would also say that this core essence of journalism does not go beyond representing certain crises. There are new studies that search for alternative ways to give voice to the voiceless, emphasizing that refugees and immigrants should not always depend on a mediator that would turn their experience into a bestselling book, and that authors should no longer feel that they have the white man's burden to intervene. For example, Marie Godin and Giorgia Doná problematize the idea of giving voices to refugees. They argue how refugees who leave their countries are often portrayed by researchers and activists as apolitical subjects, focusing instead on the human aspect of their situation. Those who intervene on the behalf of refugees have constructed narratives where "different experiences are transformed into one universal refugee voice that summarizes the human/ psychological trajectory from violence to safety" (61). The emphasis has always been on individualizing experiences, and how each experience matters to counter-act hegemonic and homogenous narratives. However, authors studying the implication of such attempts conclude that "the focus on individual experiences forces the refugee to deny the collective dimension of persecution, leading to a form of unrootedness" (61). Whether we agree with this statement or not, the authors draw our attention to wider frames of analysis in which migration and displacement have been tackled by policies and regimes as individual cases that deserve to be "saved" instead of envisioning the crisis as a global issue. As a result, the authors conceive of other ways that augment refugees' agency without mediation. Doing something on behalf of the refugees, the presumed voiceless subjects, is equally problematic. In a world of social media where almost all young adult refugees have access to platforms on the Internet, video recording, documenting through images, provides alternative ways to an agency

given by proxy. Speaking for the others is an act that further reinforces the idea that refugees are silent and powerless. Engaging on social media is an act of reclaiming their voices as the sole authorized subjects to represent themselves.

The tension between aesthetics of literature and the ethics of representation can produce a work of art that not only preserves some stories but also insures their durability for generations to come. Eggers's intervention, despite criticism, has given durability to Sudan's and to Deng's story, if we to turn a blind eye to some of the moralizing and uplifting ending of the book. The purpose of any book that aims to represent tragedy is not to foresee a bright future that would only relieve tension for readers. Eggers sometimes cleverly tries to circumvent the false reassurance that readers crave by showing us the hurdles Deng faced in Atlanta. Human rights literature--whether fiction, like *What is the What*, or nonfiction like the works of human rights activists--should not be an end in itself. Writing the book on behalf of others to show the world that the victims are also humans has its place in the larger schemes of power. Patrick Kingsley in his *The New Odyssey* summarizes the purpose of documenting refugee stories in the book: "It's the story of an everyman, in whose footsteps any of us could one day tread" (12). This statement comes a page after he acknowledges his own "absurd privilege" having been able to move between borders in matter of hours with no obstacles (11). David Kennedy, known for his involvement in humanitarian missions, has also been known for questioning these missions, arguing that "Human rights remedies, even when successful, treat the symptoms rather than the illness, and this allows the illness not only to fester, but to seem like health itself" (24-25). To leave the refugee camps with a bag full of stories further distances the victim from his or her story. It is no surprise then that works on refugees and immigrants now seem interchangeable, blending stories together

even when they seek to individualize stories, as they turn into words and images while the human subject stays remote, unreachable.

CONCLUSION
EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE

Say this city has ten million souls,
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.
...
Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.
WH Auden "Refugee Blues" 1939

The inconclusiveness of the global movement and the refugee crisis makes it difficult to conclude this dissertation. This study has attempted to fragmentize the burgeoning studies on refugeehood and on immigration, juxtapose experiences, and illuminate new literary perspectives on mobility, immobility, and voices usually not included in typical refugee experiences. Structuring refugees into one holistic understanding undermines the vastly different experiences of displacement, exile, and leaving home (physically or figuratively). The refugee belongs everywhere and nowhere in academic, philosophical, historical, and political discussions. The critical juncture to which this study has sought to contribute is the paradoxical nature of situating refugees into one discipline. In essence, this study has shown how the pervasiveness of the human crisis has the capacity to encapsulate major debates on migration, nation-state, hybridity, and ethicality of representations within its own open-ended and inclusive genre of study that benefits from major theoretical lenses of postmodernism, postcolonialism, nationalism, and post-postmodernism.

Although the term "postmodern refugee" has been briefly introduced in the introduction and in the first chapter, the varying aspects of this study, in a way, explain the multitudes and the extents of the reality of the postmodern refugee in our current

times. While working on preliminary stages of this study, using texts from 1960s-1970s up to texts published in 2017, using different authors from different continents and writing on different refugee experiences, and examining fiction and nonfiction works written in different first languages seemed to be an unjustifiable stretch and uncommon. All these elements and multiple voices have foregrounded the continuity of the subject tackled by different writers from different backgrounds and from various times. Even with the numerous texts presented in this study, it has only scratched the surface of the ubiquitous experience of being and becoming a refugee. It was still challenging to narrow down selections of texts as many authors and journalists are increasingly writing about this topic in the form of fiction, memoirs, children's books, graphic novels, and autobiographies. This study focused on but a few of the representational paradigms of what it means to be politically labeled a refugee or to be denied basic "universal" human rights.

The postmodernity of the refugee experience is also reflected in the multiple ways one can approach the literature of refugees. For example, typical and traditional narratives that focus on the journey of escape are the most dominant and familiar trope of representing the crisis. While the increase of attention to this issue has pivoted around the perils of the journey, this study has stretched ways through which one can understand the conditions of being a refugee. In the first chapter, I put forth a range of theoretical backgrounds that refugee studies could belong to or have emerged from, showcasing how the complexity of the experience continues to be elaborated upon by major schools of thought. In the second chapter, and continuing on the postmodernity of the experience, I included writers who are closely associated with displacement. Additionally, I accentuated the need for not forgetting writers who wrote of their internal sense of

displacement, at the same time circumventing nation-states that continued to threaten their basic human rights. For the third chapter, I found it necessary to show immigration narratives that fluctuate between themes of considering the moving bodies immigrants or refugees, working within the political status vis a vis the actual need (as humans) to seek asylum, presented in three different texts. In the fourth chapter, I looked at issues habitually forgotten from most criticism on refugee literature, including the need to study the humanity of the refugee, which has been questioned and seen as wasted and disposable. Death and getting lost during the journey are horrific aspects of the experience, rendering the migrant/refugee a number or a casualty. For the final chapter, I examined yet another side of the experience that concerns itself with the responsibilities and the ethics of representation that often work within a hierarchical paradigm, furthering the voicelessness of the refugee. All of these edges of the experience center refugee literature as an established and deep-rooted genre which will continue to emerge in the near future. The more political, environmental, religious, gender, and ethnic strife continues, the more writers and human rights advocates will produce texts to bring refugees to the center of attention.

What has remained well beyond the scope of this study is the representations of refugees in media and films. The closest example of attempting to represent the diverse facets of refugeehood that is similar to this study would be the documentary *Human Flow* (2017) by the filmmaker Ai Weiwei, in which he examines the overwhelming experience of global displacement in many countries. Incidentally, this documentary has a wide breadth not different to what this study has strived to achieve. The lack of literary texts on the Rohingya and Yemeni refugees, the internally displaced in Africa (except for Eggers's semi-attempt to shed light on Sudanese refugees in Kenya) made it difficult to

include their experiences. They remain, however, lurking in the shadow of inefficient policies, lack of full reports on their numbers, and the scarcity of humanitarian aids discussed throughout this text. Most of these numbers arise from not only conflict-based but also disaster-based migration wherein the 1951 Geneva Convention still does not cover "climate refugees." The UNHCR abstains from using the term "climate refugees" as it might be misleading. Instead, the preferred description is "persons displaced in the context of climate change" ("Frequently Asked Questions"). Climate refugees, if acknowledged, reveal the reality that refugeehood and displacement are not only a Third World problem. For instance, Isle de Jean Charles in Louisiana is home to a tribe of Native Americans who have been declared as "America's first climate refugees" (Stein).

This study did not also cover female refugees. The humanitarian crisis focuses on shared experiences of escape, displacement, and being subjected to violence. The Refugee Rights Data Project (RRDP) conducted a survey where 41.7% of women reported gender-based violence during their stay in refugee camps in some parts in Europe, whether from other male refugees, smugglers, or administrators of the camp. Sexual assault of female refugees is a dark area in the global crisis where women's rights are doubly violated, both as political subjects and as women (5). Doreen Marie Indra notes in her book, *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice,* how the label women refugees are "comfortably categorized as a comparatively invariant kind of 'multiple minority', victimized as 'women' in their source and host culture and as 'refugees'" (xiv). These highly susceptible-to-violence female refugees are almost always bypassed by numerous studies conducted on refugees and migration, to which I have been guilty in this study in which women's issues are pointed out but not fully engaged with apart from the general refugee experience of victimization and dehumanization.

Despite the gaps in this study, this work compels us, at least, to consider the depth of how people become refugees and how they are represented in literature. Every text presented in this work tackles a specific angle of the lived reality of being a refugee, from authors who experienced it firsthand, to those who felt the pressure to contribute to the crisis by writing about it, and those who witnessed and reported it. At times, I was held back by the insufficiency of my contribution, which resulted in festered anger pouring through the pessimistic language and viewpoints in early chapters. Political restlessness surrounds this topic, especially when major governments like the United States intend to accept a maximum of 45,000 refugees in 2018, leaving precarious countries in the Middle East and Africa responsible for absorbing the refugee flow into their countries (Davis). As long as nation-states continue to push back legitimate pleas of those who seek asylum, we will continue to see ever more publications about refugees. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to provide a study, that specifically focuses on the state of being a refugee. There is still hope that literature has the capacity to preserve refugee stories in their many guises and shapes, as a testimony of existence, survival, and injustice, and this hope has been the major impetus of this project.

WORKS CITED

Abderrezak, Hakim. “Burning the Sea: Clandestine Migration Across the Strait of Gibraltar in Francophone Moroccan ‘Illiterature.’” *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies,* vol. 13, pp. 461-69. DOI: 10.1080/17409290903096335

Abunasser, Rima. "The Deterritorialised Self in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*." *Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, Mar. 2016, pp. 182-198. DOI: 10.1080/13629387.2016.1130931

Adams, Tim. “A Lost Boy Who Found his Voice.” *The Guardian*. May 19, 2007. theguardian.com/books/2007/may/20/fiction.features. Accessed 6 Aug. 2018.

“Africans Remembered: A Memorial for Europe's Lost Migrants.” *Spiegel*, 2008. www.spiegel.de/international/europe/africans-remembered-a-memorial-for-europe-s-lost-migrants-a-560218.html

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.* Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford UP, 1998.

Akkawi, Yusuf. “Writing, Revolution, and Change in Syria: An Interview with Nihad Sirees.” *Jadaliyya*, 23 Aug. 2012. www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/7006/writing-revolution-and-change-in-syria_an-intervie. Accessed 27 July 2017.

Alabed, Bana. *Dear World: A Syrian Girl’s Story of War and Plea for Peace.* Simon & Schuster, 2017.

Ala Sirriyeh, *Inhabiting Borders, Routes Home: Youth, Gender, Asylum.* Ashgate, 2013.

Al-Musawi, Muhsin. *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence.* Brill. 2003.

Alter, Alexandra. “Global Migration Meets Magic in Mohsin Hamid’s Timely Novel.” *The New York Times,* March 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/03/07/arts/exit-west-mohsin-hamid-refugee-.html. Accessed 23 Dec. 2017.

Amin, Ash. "Multi-Ethnicity and the Idea of Europe." *Theory, Culture & Society*, no. 2, 2004, pp. 1-24. DOI. org/10.1177/0263276404042132

Andersson, Ruben. *Illegality, Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. University of California Press, 2014.

Anne McClintock: “The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term ‘Post-Colonialism.’” *Social Text,* no. 31/32, 1992, pp. 84-98. DOI: 10.2307/466219

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

---. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Duke UP, 2006.

---. *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition.* Verso, 2013.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. “Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1991, pp. 336-357. www.jstor.org/stable/1343840

“Article 2: Right to Life” *Equality and Human Rights Commissio*n, 2018. www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-2-right-life

Ashcroft, Bill. “Conflict and Transformation.” *The IAFOR Journal of Literature and Librarianship,* 3.1 (Winter 2014): 1-28. iafor.org/archives/journals/iafor-journal-of-literature-and-librarianship/10.22492.ijl.3.1.02.pdf

Balibar, Etienne*. Politics and the Other Scene*, translated by Christine Jones, James Swenson, and Chris Turner, Verso, 2002.

Bartolo, Pietro and Lidia Tilotta. *Tears of Salt: A Doctor’s Story.* Translated by Chenxin Jiang. Norton & Company, 2018.

Basch, Linda, et al. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-states.* Routledge, 1994.

Bauman. Zygmunt. *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts*. Polity Press, 2004.

Bayat, Asef. "Egypt and the Post-islamist Middle East." *Opendemocracy*, 8 Feb, 2011. www.opendemocracy.net/asef-bayat/egypt-and-post-islamist-middle-east

Berbec, Stephanie. "We are Worldless Without One Another: An Interview with Judith Butler." *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Technology & Culture*, June 26, 2017. theotherjournal.com/2017/06/26/worldless-without-one-another-interview-judith-butler/. Accessed 6 Aug. 2018.

Berlant, Lauren. "Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2007, pp. 754-780. www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/521568.

Betts, Alexander. "International Relations and Forced Migration." *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,* edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, et al, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 60-73.

Blasim, Hassan. "The Truck to Berlin." *The Madman of Freedom Square*. Translated by Jonathan Wright. Comma Press, 2009.

Boon, Kevin. "And the Dead Shall Rise." *Better Off Dead: The Evolution of the Zombie as Post-Human: The Evolution of the Zombie as Post-Human.* Edited by Deborah Christie and Sarah Juliet Lauro. Fordham UP, 2011, pp. 5-8.

Bouckaert, Peter. "Dispatches: Why I Shared a Horrific Photo of a Drowned Syrian Child." *Human Rights Watch*, 2015. www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/02/dispatches-why-i-shared-horrific-photo-drowned-syrian-child

Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory.* Columbia UP, 1994.

---. *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. Columbia UP, 2011.

Brian, Tara. "The Middle East and North Africa." *Fatal Journeys Volume 3 Part 2: Improving Data on Missing Migrants*. Edited by Laczko, Frank, et al. International Organization for Migration, 2017. pp. 1-20.

Brodzki, Bella. *Can These Bones Live?: Translation, Survival, and Cultural Memory.* Stanford UP, 2007.

Brown, Don. *The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees* HMH, 2018.

Büchler, Alexandra and Alice Guthrie. "Literary Translation from Arabic into English in the United Kingdom and Ireland, 1990-2010." *Literature Across Frontiers*, 2011. lafpublications.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/literary-translation-from-arabic-into-english-in-the-united-kingdom-and-ireland-1990-2010-final3.pdf. Accessed 20 June 2017.

Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable*. Verso, 2016.

---. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard UP, 2015.

---. *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2006.

Castle, Stephen, et al. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World.* Palgrave, 2009.

Chandler, Caitlin L. "We Are All Refugees: A Conversation with Mohsin Hamid." *The Nation*, Oct, 2017. www.thenation.com/article/we-are-all-refugees-a-conversation-with-mohsin-hamid/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2017.

Cooke, Miriam. *Dissident Syria: Making Oppositional Arts Official.* Duke UP, 2007.

---. "Mediterranean Thinking: From Netizen to Medizen." *Geographical Review*, no. 2, 1999, pp. 290- DOI:10.2307/216093.

---. “The Cell Story: Syrian Prison Stories after Hafiz Asad.” *Middle East Critique*, vol. 20, issue 2, 2011, pp. 169-187. dx.doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2011.572413

Cupolo, Diego. *Seven Syrians: War Accounts from Syrian Refugees*. 8th House Publishing, 2013.

Dave, Eggers. *What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng*. Vintage, 2006.

Davis, Julie Hirschfeld. “White House Weighs Another Reduction in Refugees Admitted to U.S.” *The New York Times. Aug*, 2018. www.nytimes.com/2018/08/01/us/politics/trump-refugees-reduction.html. Accessed 10 Oct. 2018.

Daum, Rachel. “Syrian Novelist Khaled Khalifa: ‘I Have Always Wondered About the Ability of Some Writers to Remain Silent.’” Translated by Ibtihal Mahmood. *Arabic Literature (in English)*, 11 April, 2016. arablit.org/2016/04/11/syrian-novelist-khaled-khalifa-i-have-always-wondered-about-the-ability-of-some-writers-to-remain-silent/. Accessed 20 Aug. 2017.

Dawes, James. *That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Nomadology: The War Machine.* Translated by Brian Massumi, Semiotext (e), 1986.

Derrida, Jacques. *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason.* Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford UP, 2005.

Düvell, Franck. “Clandestine Migration in Europe.” *Social Science Information*, vol 47(4), pp. 479–497. DOI: 10.1177/0539018408096442

Eco, Umberto. *Travels in Hyperreality*. Harcourt, 1986.

Edemariam, Aida. "Syrian Writer, Samar Yazbek: 'A Woman Like Me Makes Life Difficult.'" *The Guardian*, 12 Oct. 2012. www.theguardian.com/books/2012/oct/13/interview-samar-yazbek-syria-revolution. Accessed 18 Sept. 2017.

Edwige Talbayev. *The Transcontinental Maghreb: Francophone Literature across the Mediterranean*. Fordham UP, 2017.

Eid, Haidar. "*Men in the Sun*: The Palestinian Diaspora." *New Academia,* vol. 2.4, 2013. pp, 1-9. interactionsforum.com/images/pdfs/newacademia/v2/i4/Dr-Haidar-Eid%203.pdf

Elie, Jerome. "Histories of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies." *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,* edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, et al, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 23-35.

El Rashidi, Yasmine. "Caught Between Worlds." *The New York Review of Books*, Apr, 2017. www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/04/20/mohsin-hamid-caught-between-worlds/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2017.

Esposito, Roberto. *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy.* Translated by Timothy C. Campbell. U of Minnesota P, 2008.

Faist, Thomas. "Diaspora and Transnationalism: What Kind of Dance Patterns?" *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, Amsterdam UP, 2010, pp. 9-34.

Farmer, Paul. "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below." *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, vol. 3, no. 1, Race and the Global Politics of Health Inequity, 2009, pp. 11-28. www.jstor.org/stable/25595022.

Fechter, Anne-Meike, and Katie Walsh. "Examining 'Expatriate' Continuities: Postcolonial Approach to Mobile Professionals." *The New Expatriates: Postcolonial Approaches to Mobile Professionals.* Routledge, 2012, pp. 9-22.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, et al. "Introduction: Refugee and Forced Migration Studies in Transition." *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,* edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, et al, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 1-19.

Fleming, Melissa, *A Hope More Powerful than the Sea.* Flatiron, 2017.

Flesler, Daniela. *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration.* Purdue UP, 2008.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Bodies on the Move: A Poetics of Home and Diaspora." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2004, pp. 189-212. DOI: 10.2307/20455187

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory.* Edited by Neil Leach. Routledge. 1997, pp. 330-336.

---. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*. translated by David Macey. Picador, 2003.

---. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction.* Translated by Robert Hurley. Vintage, 1990.

---. "What is an Author?" *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews.* Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Cornell UP, 1977. pp. 113-138.

Fussell, Paul. *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*. Oxford UP, 1980.

Gall, Amy. “We Can’t Go Back: Mohsin Hamid on *Exit West*.” *Barnes & Noble,* March 2017. www.barnesandnoble.com/review/mohsin-hamid-exit-west-interview. Accessed 23 Dec. 2017.

Galtung, Johan. “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research.” Journal of Peace Research, vol. 6, no. 3, 1969, pp. 167-191. www.jstor.org/stable/422690

Godin, Marie and Giorgia Doná. “'Refugee Voices', New Social Media and Politics of Representation: Young Congolese in the Diaspora and Beyond.” *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees*, vol 32, no 1, 2016, pp. 60-71. refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40384/36384. Accessed Aug 2. 2018.

Goodwin-Gill, Guy S. “The International Law of Refugee Protection.” *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,* edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, et al, Oxford UP, 2014, pp. 36-47.

Granados, Samuel, et al. “Fenced Out, A New Age of Walls.” *The Washington Post*, Oct, 2016. www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/border-barriers/global-illegal-immigration-prevention/. Accessed 22 Dec. 2017.

Green, Graeme. “‘Migration will become a Human Right.’” *New Internationalist: The World Unspun,* May 2017.newint.org/columns/finally/2017/06/01/and-finally-mohsin-hamid. Accessed 23 Dec. 2017.

Greenblatt, Stephen, et al. *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*. Cambridge UP, 2010.

Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices.* University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Gross, Terry. “Author Viet Thanh Nguyen Discusses '*The Sympathizer*' And His Escape from Vietnam.” *NPR Books*, May 2016. www.npr.org/2016/05/17/478384200/author-viet-thanh-nguyen-discusses-the-sympathizer-and-his-escape-from-vietnam. Accessed 2 Jan. 2018.

Grossman, Lev. "I See Him in Me." *Time International*, vol. 168, issue 19, 2006. 75.

Haas, De Hein. “The Myth of Invasion: The Inconvenient Realities of African Migration to Europe.” *Third World Quarterly,* 29, no. 7 (2008), pp.1305-1322. DOI: 10.1080/01436590802386435

Hall, Stuart. “The West and The Rest: Discourse and Power.” *Formations of Modernity,* edited by Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben, the Open University, 1992, pp. 275-320.

Hamid, Dabashi. *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism.* Zed Books, 2012.

Hamid, Mohsin. *Exit West.* Riverhead Books, 2017.

---. “Mohsin Hamid: Why Migration is a Fundamental Human Right.” *The Guardian*, Nov, 2014.www.theguardian.com/books/2014/nov/21/mohsin-hamid-why-migration-is-a-fundamental-human-right. Accessed 22 Dec. 2017.

---. *The Chronicle Online: The Independent Daily at Duke University.* February 18, 2000. /issuu.com/dukechronicleprintarchives/docs/the_chronicle_2000-02-18_sm

Hannah Arendt. *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* Schocken Books, 1951.

Harrell-Bond, Barbara. *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees.* Oxford UP, 1986.

Hassan, Ihab. “Beyond Postmodernism: Toward an Aesthetic of Trust.” *Modern Greek Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand*, vol, 11, 2003, pp. 303-16.

Haugbolle, Sune. “Imprisonment, Truth Telling and Historical Memory in Syria.” *Mediterranean Politics,* vol. 13, no. 2, 2008, pp. 261–276. dx.doi.org/10.1080/13629390802127646

Heath, Vicki. “An Interview with Hassan Blasim.” *Thresholds*, 2013. thresholds.chi.ac.uk/an-interview-with-hassan-blasim/

Higgins, Peter. *Immigration Justice.* Edinburgh UP, 2013.

Holmes, Seth M. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. U of California P, 2013.

Human Rights Watch. “The Forgotten Damascus Spring.” 23 Feb. 2009. www.hrw.org/news/2009/02/23/forgotten-damascus-spring. Accessed 2 Sept. 2017.

Hyndman, Jennifer. *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Hyndman, Jennifer and Alison Mountz. “Refuge or Refusal: The Geography of Exclusion.” *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror, and Political Violence,* edited by Derek Gregory Derek and Allan Pred, Routledge, 2006.

Indra, Doreen, ed. “Introduction.” In *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice.* Berghahn, 1999, xii-xvii.

Irving, Sarah, and Nadia Ghanem. “Two Views of ‘Syria Speaks’: A Lens on Syria Through the Arts.” *Arabic Literature (in English)*, 2 Feb. 2013. arablit.org/2013/02/02/two-views-of-syria-speaks-a-view-of-syria-through-the-arts/. Accessed 27 July 2017.

Jay, Paul L. *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies.* Cornell UP, 2010.

John Lie "From International Migration to Transnational Diaspora." *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 24, no. 4 (1995), pp. 303-306. www.jstor.org/stable/2077625

Kanafani, Ghassan. *Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*. Translated by Hilary Kilpatrick. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.

Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourse of Displacement*. Duke UP, 1996.

Kassab, Elizabeth. *Contemporary Arab Thought, Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective.* Columbia UP, 2010.

Khalifa, Khalid. *In Praise of Hatred*. Translated by Leri Price. Thomas Dunne Books, 2014.

---. *No Knives in the Kitchens of this City*. Translated by Leri Price. Hoopoe Fiction, AUC Press, 2016.

---. "The Long Read: Living in a Void: Life in Damascus after the Exodus." Translated by Jonathan Wright. *The Guardian*, 22 Aug. 2017. theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/22/living-in-a-void-life-in-damascus-after-the-exodus. Accessed 1 Oct. 2017.

Khalifa, Mustafa. *The Shell: Memoirs of a Hidden Observer*. Translated by Paul Starkey. Interlink: 2016.

Kilpatrick, Hilary. "Introduction." *Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*. Translated by Hilary Kilpatrick. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999, pp. 9-15.

Kingsley, Patrick. *The New Odyssey: The Story of the Twenty-First Century Refugee Crisis.* Liveright, 2017.

Laczko, Frank, et al, eds. *Fatal Journeys Volume 3 Part 2: Improving Data on Missing Migrants.* International Organization for Migration, 2017.

Lahav, Gallya. "The Global Challenge of the Refugee Exodus." *Current History*, no. 777, 2016, pp.10-16. www.currenthistory.com/Article.php?ID=1291

Leatherdale, Mary Beth. *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees*. Annick Press, 2017.

Lechte, John and Saul Newman. *Agamben and the Politics of Human Rights: Statelessness, Images, Violence*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2013.

Laila Lalami, "About the Book." *Laila Lalami* (blog).n.d. lailalalami.com/hope-and-other-dangerous-pursuits/about/. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

---. *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits.* Harvest Books, 2005.

Li, Yiyun. "*The Refugees* by Viet Thanh Nguyen Review – Stories of Anger, Humor and Hope." *The Guardian*, Jan 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jan/27/the-refugees-viet-thanh-nguyen-review. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

Lefevre, Raphael. *Ashes of Hama: The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria*. Oxford UP, 2013.

Levy, Carl. "Refugees, Europe, Camps/ State of Exception: 'Into the Zone', the European Union and Extraterritorial Processing of Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum-seekers (Theories and Practice)." *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 29 (1), 2010, pp. 92-119. eprints.gold.ac.uk./4593/

Liisa Malkki "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1992, pp. 24-44.

Loescher, Gil. "'Asylum Crisis in the UK and Europe." *OpenDemocracy*, May 2003. www.opendemocracy.net/people-migrationeurope/article_1234.jsp. Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.

Long, Karen. “In Viet Thanh Nguyen's '*The Refugees*,' Wistfulness is an Anthem of Displacement.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 2017. beta.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-ca-jc-refugees-viet-thanh-nguyen-20170223-story.html. Accessed 5 Jan. 2018.

Lynellyn D, Long, and Ellen Oxfeld, editors. *Coming Home?: Refugees, Migrants, and Those Who Stayed Behind.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Lynx-Qualey, M. “‘Let Me Call It Disorder’: Syrian Novelist Nihad Sirees on Writing in Berlin, Imagining Syria.” *Arabic Literature (in English)*, 25 March 2015. arablit.org/2015/03/25/nihad-sirees/. Accessed 29 July 2017.

Macleod, Hugh. “Syria: Ending State of Emergency Does not Stop Human Rights Abuses.” *Public Radio International*, 21 Apr. 2011. www.pri.org/stories/2011-04-21/syria-ending-state-emergency-does-not-stop-human-rights-abuses. Accessed 27 July 2017.

Malamud, Bernard. "The German Refugee." *The Stories of Bernard Malamud.* Plume Book, 1984.

Marchi, Lisa. "Ghosts, Guests, Hosts: Rethinking ‘Illegal’ Migration and Hospitality through Arab Diasporic Literature." *Comparative Literature Studies*, no. 4, 2014, pp. 603-626. DOI:10.5325/complitstudies.51.4.0603

Martin, Andres and Laura M. Pager. “*What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng*.” *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, vol. 47, Issue 3 , 353 – 355. DOI.org/10.1097/01.CHI.0000270806.81185.43

McClennen, Sophia A. and Alexandra Schultheis Moore. “Introduction: Aporia and Affirmative Critique: Mapping the Landscape of Literary Approaches to Human

Rights Research." *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Human Rights,* McClennen, Sophia A and Alexandra Schultheis Moore, eds. Routledge, 2016. 1-20.

McDonald-Gibson, Charlotte. *Cast Away: True Stories of Survival from Europe s Refugee Crisis.* The New Press, 2016.

Mercer, Kobena. "Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and Diversity in Postmodern Politics." *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 1990, pp. 43-71.

Mbembe, Achille and Libby Meintjes. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture*, vol. 15, no 1, 2003, pp. 11-40. muse.jhu.edu/article/39984

Middle East Intelligence Bulletin. "Document File: Syria." Vol. 2, no. 9. 27 Sept. 2000. www.meforum.org/meib/articles/0010_sdoc0927.htm. Accessed 1 Sept. 2017

"Migration Flows-Europe". *International Organization for Migration*. migration.iom.int/europe/

Miller, Judith. *God Has Ninety-Nine Names: Reporting from a Militant Middle East.* Touchstone Books, 1996.

Mittelman, James H. *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance.* Princeton UP, 2000.

Moody Radio Florida. "*Cast Away: True Stories of Survival from Europe's Refugee Crisis* by Charlotte McDonald-Gibson." 2016. soundcloud.com/moodyradioflorida/2016-09-22-charlotte-mcdonald-gibson-cast-away. Accessed 8 Aug. 2018.

Myers, Robert. Introduction. *Four Plays from Syria, by Sa'dallah Wannous*. Martin E. Segal, 2014, pp. xiii-xxxvi.

Nayak, Meghana. *Who is Worthy of Protection?: Gender-based Asylum and US Immigration Politics.* Oxford UP, 2015.

Nealon, Jeffrey T. *Post-Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Just-In-Time Capitalism*. Stanford UP, 2012.

Neimneh, Shadi S. "The Symbolism of the Sun in Ghassan Kanafani's Fiction: A Political Critique." *International Journal of Comparative Literature & Translation Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2017. pp, 67-71. DOI:10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.5n.3p.67

Nguyen, Viet Thanah. "Introduction." *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives.* Abrams Press, 2018, pp. 11-22.

---. "Viet Thanh Nguyen on Being a Refugee, an American -- and a Human Being." *Financial Times,* Feb, 2017. www.ft.com/content/0cd9f69a-e89e-11e6-967b-c88452263daf. Accessed 6 Jan. 2018.

---. *The Refugees*. Grove Press, 2017.

Nieswand, Boris. *Theorising Transnational Migration: The Status Paradox of Migration.* Routledge, 2011.

Noyes, John K. "Nomadism, Nomadology, Postcolonialism." *Interventions*, vol 6 (2), 2004, pp. 159-168. dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369801042000238300

Nyman, Jopi. *Displacement, Memory, and Travel in Contemporary Migrant Writing*. Leiden Rodopi Brill, 2017.

Oates, Joyce Carol. "Refugees in America." *The New Yorker,* Feb, 2017. www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/13/refugees-in-america. Accessed 4 Jan. 2018.

Oladi, Soudeh and John Portelli. "Traces of the Deleuzian Nomad in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*." *Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4, Sept. 2017, pp. 665-78. DOI:10.1080/13629387.2017.1296358

O'Neill, Brendan. "Sharing a Photo of a Dead Syrian Child isn't Compassionate, it's Narcissistic." *The Spectator,* 2015. blogs.spectator.co.uk/2015/09/sharing-a-photo-of-the-dead-syrian-child-isnt-compassionate-its-narcissistic/

Papa, Stephanie. "'The Most Important Way to Love and Peace Is Justice': A Conversation with Samar Yazbek." Translated by Emma Suleiman. *World Literature Today,* May 2016. www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2016/november/most-important-way-love-and-peace-justice-conversation-samar-yazbek-stephanie-papa. Accessed 10 Sept. 2017.

Partha Chatterjee, "Empire After Globalisation." *Economic and Political Weekly*, no. 37, 2004, pp. 4155-4164. www.jstor.org/stable/4415532

Pearlman, Wendy. *We Crossed a Bridge and it Trembled: Voices from Syria*. Custom House, 2017.

Peek, Michelle. "Humanitarian Narrative and Posthumanist Critique: Dave Eggers's *What Is the What*." *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2012, pp. 115-136. DOI: 10.1353/bio.2012.0002. Accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

Pinter, Harold. "Art, Truth, and politics." *The Guardian*, 8 Dec. 2005. www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/dec/08/theatre.nobelprize. Accessed 18 Sept. 2017.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* Routledge, 1992.

Rawlence, Ben. *City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World's Largest Refugee Camp.* Picador, 2017.

Refugee Rights Data Project. "Universal Periodic Review (Third Cycle)." 2017. www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/united_kingdom/session_27_-_may_2017/rrdp_upr27_gbr_e_main.pdf. Accessed 10 Oct. 2018.

Richard, Nelly. "Postmodernism and Periphery." *Third Text*, vol 1 (2), 1987, pp. 5-12. dx.doi.org/10.1080/09528828708576178

Said, Edward W. *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives.* Colombia UP, 1999.

---. *Culture and Imperialism.* Vintage Books, 1993.

---. "Edward Said's Lecture at York University." York University, Toronto, February 10, 1993. saiayork.org/saia-blog/2014/9/29/edward-saids-lecture-at-york-university

---. *Representations of the Intellectual*. Vintage, 1996.

---. *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1969-1994.* Vintage, 1994.

---. *The Question of Palestine.* Vintage books, 1992.

Sandhu, Sukhdev. "*Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid-- Magical Vision of the Refugee Crisis." *The Guardian*, March 2017. www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/12/exit-west-mohsin-hamid-review-refugee-crisis. Accessed 8 Jan. 2018.

Sassen, Saskia. "Refugees. Saskia Sassen: 'History will not Treat European Policy Makers Kindly.'" *Tysm, Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 24, issue no. 34, 2016.

Saunders, Rebecca. "Uncanny Presence: The Foreigner at the Gate of Globalization." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, no. 1, 2001, pp. 88.-98. DOI: 10.1215/1089201X-21-1-2-88.

Schami, Rafik. Foreword. *A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian Revolution*, by Samar Yazbek. Haus, 2012, pp.vi-xi.

Sengupta, Somini. "Migrant or Refugee? There Is a Difference, With Legal Implications." *The New York Times*, Aug, 2015. www.nytimes.com/2015/08/28/world/migrants-refugees-europe-syria.html. Accessed 12 Dec. 2017.

Shacknove, Andrew E. "Who Is a Refugee?" *Ethics,* vol. 95, no. 2, 1985, pp. 274-284. www.jstor.org/stable/2380340

Shaker, Nadeen. ""*Men in the Sun*" and the Modern Allegory." *The Postcolonialist*, 2015. postcolonialist.com/arts/men-sun-modern-allegory/

Sirees, Nihad. *The Silence of the Roar*. Translated by Max Weiss. Other Press, 2013.

Siegel, Lee. "The Niceness Racket." *The New Republic*, vol. 236 Issue 14, April 22, 2007. 49-53. newrepublic.com/article/62544/the-niceness-racket. Accessed 28 July 2018.

Shire, Warsan. "Home." *The Globe and Mail*, Dec, 2015. www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/home/article27608299/. Accessed 3 Jan. 2018.

---. "Conversations About Home (at a Deportation Centre)" OpenDemocracy, Nov, 2012. www.opendemocracy.net/5050/warsan-shire/conversations-about-home-at-deportation-centre. Accessed 3 Jan. 2018.

Shohat, Ella. "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial." *Social Text,* no. 31/32, 1992, pp. 99-113. DOI: 10.2307/466220

Sleigh, Tom. *The Land between Two Rivers: Writing in an Age of Refugees*. Graywolf Press, 2018. Accessed 28 July 2018.

Smith, Michael P. and Luis Guarnizo. *Transnationalism from Below*. Transaction Publishers, 1998.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Edited by Cary Nelson, Lawrence Grossberg. U of Illinois P. 1988, pp. 271-301.

---. "Righting Wrongs." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 103 no. 2, 2004, pp. 523-581. Project MUSE, muse.jhu.edu/article/169150.

---. "The Politics of Translation." *Outside in the Teaching Machine.* Routledge, 1993. pp. 179-200.

Squires, Nick. "Italy Mourns 300 Dead in Lampedusa Migrant Boat Tragedy." *The Telegraph*, 2013.www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/10355661/Italy-mourns-300-dead-in-Lampedusa-migrant-boat-tragedy.html

Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others.* Picador, 2003.

Stein, Michael Isaac. "How to Save A Town from Rising Waters." *Wired*, Jan 25, 2018. www.wired.com/story/how-to-save-a-town-from-rising-waters/. Accessed 9 Oct. 2018.

Thornhill, Teresa. *Hara Hotel: A Tale of Syrian Refugees in Greece*. Verso, 2018.

Tolentino, Jia. "A Novel About Refugees That Feels Instantly Canonical." *The New Yorker,* March, 2017. www.newyorker.com/culture/jia-tolentino/a-novel-about-refugees-that-feels-instantly-canonical. Accessed 5 Jan. 2018.

UNHCR. "Frequently Asked Questions on Climate Change and Disaster Displacement." Nov, 2016. www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/11/581f52dc4/frequently-asked-questions-climate-change-disaster-displacement.html. Accessed 10 Oct. 2018.

---. "Internally Displaced People." www.unhcr.org/en-us/internally-displaced-people.html. Accessed 10 Aug. 2017.

Urry, John. *Mobilities.* Polity P, 2007.

Vad Foundation. "Home." vadfoundation.org/.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference.* Routledge, 1998.

Vertovec, Steven. *Transnationalism.* Routledge, 2009.

Verstraete, Ginette. *Tracking Europe: Mobility, Diaspora and the Politics of Location.* Duke UP, 2010.

Verstraete, Ginette and Tim Cresswell, editors. *Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation in a Globalized World.* Rodopi, 2002.

Wannous, Sa'dallah. *Al-A'mal Al-Kamila*, vol 3. Alahali, 1996.

---. *Al-Fil Ya Malik Al-Zaman.* Dar Al-adab, 1969.

---. *Four Plays from Syria*. Translated by Marvin Carlson, Safi Mahfouz, Robert Myers, and Nada Saab, edited by Marvin Carlson and Safi Mahfouz. Martin E. Segal, 2014.

---. *The King is the King.* Translated by Ghassan Maleh and Thomas G. Ezzy. In *Modern Arabic Drama: An Anthology*, edited by Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Roger Allen. Indiana UP, 1995. pp. 79-120.

Williams, Zoe. “Katie Hopkins Calling Migrants Vermin Recalls the Darkest Events of History.” *The Guardian*, 2015. www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/19/katie-hopkins-migrants-vermin-darkest-history-drownings. Accessed 10 Oct. 2018.

Wilson, Alice. “Ambiguities of Space and Control: When Refugee Camp and Nomadic Encampment Meet.” *Nomadic Peoples*, vol 18, no, 1, 2014, pp. 38-60. DOI: doi.org/10.3197/np.2014.180104

Woolley, Agnes. *Contemporary Asylum Narratives: Representing Refugees in the Twenty-First Century*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Yassine-Kassab, Robin. Afterword. *In Praise of Hatred*, by Khalid Khalifa, Thomas Dunne Books, 2014. pp. 297-302.

---. “‘This is Only the Beginning of the Crisis’: Iraqi Author Hassan Blasim on Refugees, War and Futurism.” *The National*, 2017. www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/this-is-only-the-beginning-of-the-crisis-iraqi-author-hassan-blasim-on-refugees-war-and-futurism-1.79602

Yazbek, Samar. *A Woman in the Crossfire: Diaries of the Syrian Revolution*. Translated by Max Weiss, Haus Publishing, 2012.

---. *The Crossing: My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria.* Translated by Nashwa Gowanlock and Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp, Rider, 2015.

Zahrawi, Samar. “Syrian Drama Escaping Censorship: Sa'dallah Wannous's *The King's Elephant* and *The King Is King*.” *Arab World English Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2, June 2015, pp. 329-336. dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol6no2.25

Zetter, Roger "More Labels, Fewer Refugees: Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalization." *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20 (2), 2007, pp. 172-192. doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fem011