Shifting Twenty-First-Century Discourses, Borders and Identities

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Edited by

Oana-Celia Gheorghiu

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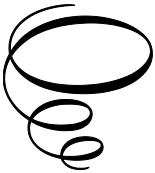

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For my dear mentor, *my brilliant friend,* Michaela Praisler.
Thank you for everything!

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FOREWORD

THE WORLD IS SPINNING AROUND US…

OANA-CELIA GHEORGHIU

The world is spinning around us and we are spinning with it – when changes occur at the geopolitical level, inevitable changes also occur in people's identity and in the way they see and represent the world.

This book is looking at the world with new eyes. Eyes of many a civilisation united as one in the advent of a new world. The key word, as obvious from its title, is shifting. When borders shift, people shift with them – identities take new shapes and discourse follows suit. Since 9/11, nothing is as it used to be.

The authors in this collection approach contemporary history (and *herstory*) from a scholarly perspective that cancels borders. Emphasis is laid on migration, geopolitics, global citizenship, human rights, the EU and the non-EU, East and West, as represented in fiction and drama or trans-lated on television. The first part of the volume deals with migration and alterations in the non-Western world, with constant references to September 11, terrorism and wars, the Syrian refugee crisis, and then the focus falls on one of the most important migration hosts nowadays, the European Union, discussing its expansion to the East, French President Macron's call for renewal, and lastly, a possible beginning of the end, announced by Brexit.

Shifting Twenty-First-Century Discourses, Borders and Identities is a mirror of the discourses of globalization, one that makes the old self-other dichotomy obsolete. We are all selves in the eye of the storm that is raving around us, bringing the change with it.

Initially envisaged as a collection of critical views on the literary and cultural representations of resonant historical and political events of the twenty-first century, this volume has proven to have *a will and a way* of its own, building up gradually, with every contribution, as an increasingly heterogeneous perspective on the world today, which has set on a course of becoming a breaking news event in its "banality of evil", to use Arendt's phrase. The outcome is magus-like, manoeuvring perspectives and 'truths'

located within and without fictions from around the world, making its contributors testify to "experiment[ing] with confrontations with 'the real'" and forcing them to "return to reconsider reality in terms of the fictional underlying it."[1]

Tributary to the duality that still characterises our worldviews, despite the multicultural, multi-layered, multiform and polyphonic voices that make up the new *Weltliteratur*, the cultural hegemony in force is easily perceivable in the two-part structure of the book. The East and West dichotomy is still an axis around which borders and identities revolve, changing places, and finally shift, if only for a little while, within predetermined frameworks. Accordingly, this collective volume is shaped as a critical heteroglossia which aims to assess the dual nature of the contemporary worlds and words of magic, as well as their insertion into 'the real'.

The first part, entitled **Heart(s) of Darkness**, a self-evident tribute to Joseph Conrad's novella – so mistakenly accused of racism or, at best, blunt Orientalism –, gathers commentaries on the current trends in postcolonial writing, which seem to have overcome the anxieties of being subject of one colonial empire or another, shifting towards finding their place in the remains of those days. It is not by chance that the world wanderer, the vacillator from East to West and back again, Mohsin Hamid, is featured with two of his novels in this book. The former, one of the hallmarks of 9/11 fiction, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, is critically assessed by Joseph Conte in a chapter which brings it together with Laila Halabi's *Once in a Promised Land.* Conte reads the post-9/11 global novel as an expression of transnational politics, as narratives that expose and foreground a cultural *différend* which resists translation into a single global idiom. In these novels, he tries to identify characters who may be cosmopolites, who instigate a shared deterritorialization, or who may be facets of an identitarianism that is in the process of transformation into global citizenship. The latter, Hamid's most recent opus, *Exit West*, is analysed by Qurratulaen Liaqat and Asia Mukhtar as a key text in the *polyphonic discourse of migration*, regarded as one of the most prominent phenomena of contemporary global and political reality. This reality, nonetheless, translates into fiction through magical doors, just as the reality of racial wars and rapes in Darfur translates into fiction through magical chants and sorcery – a metafictional guise for women's power of language/ writing in Nnedi Okorafor's speculative fiction *Who Fears Death*, here under Gabriela Debita's New Historicist/ gynocritical lens. Yet another

[1] Praisler, M. *On Modernism, Postmodernism and the Novel*, 2005, 74.

avenue is taken by Ömer Kemal Gültekin, who approaches the Muslim terrorist, as represented by Western documentary theatre. Refraining from either demonizing or justifying the violent acts that became a few years back an unfortunate commonplace of the news in the Western European media, *Talking to Terrorists,* the text analysed, draws attention to the complexity of the reasons and consequences of terrorism.

Jocularly entitled **To Europe or Not to Europe – That Is the Question** in an attempt to interact or, in millennial lingo, 'inter-*text*' with the obsolete Western canon, whose cradle, now virulently contested, is 'the old continent', the second part still lingers on migration, so as to create a link between worlds. Silvia Ruzzi discusses three novels which thematize seaborne clandestine migration across the Mediterranean Sea, narrate the individual and collective experience of border crossing, and explore the transnational face of border violence or imposed illegality. The maritime stretch of water between Africa and Europe is not only the locus of asymmetries and encounters, the scenario of ongoing b/ordering practices both inside and outside the EU, but it is also an entangled net from which migrants hardly escape, and which subsequently defines who is to cross/survive and who is to stop/perish. Migration to the EU can also be legal, desired – geopolitically, with or without border-crossings, if not at the deep level of peoples' mentalities, at least formally through people becoming European citizens after their country's accession to the EU. Olga Szmidt envisages the process of joining the European Union as a history-changing event for Poland and other Eastern countries, which nonetheless has had repercussions for the ideology of Europe and has given rise to numerous identity-dilemmas. This irreversible change in European standards and expectations, as one could describe it, was based on two separate topics. One is Polish, Czech and Hungarian nationalism and xenophobia in their increasing opposition to European values, which, in our antithetical subtitle, could stand for *not to Europe*. Another is a different discourse of national and individual identity, more obvious, in her view, in national literature(s). Fear of 'Eastern provincialism' and of clinging to national myths brings forth invigorating literary experiments that are more than open *to Europe*… or to a European Renewal, as proposed by French President Emmanuel Macron in a multi-language speech whose rhetorical devices represent the only truly non-fictional text in this collection, in the semantic and pragmatic analysis undertaken by Delia Oprea.

Not to Europe or a vigorous *NO to Europe* seems like a sad note to end a book about representations of geopolitical and identity reconfigurations on. However, history has that well-known tendency of repeating itself, whereas empires have that equally well-known tendency to rise, prosper and

fall. *The United States of Europe*, Churchill's proposal for regaining power – with or without the United Kingdom (preferably without) – materialised in the latter half of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first century as the European Union, seems to have come near the beginning of its end, close to an expected dissolution, with the resounding 'divorce' known as Brexit. Interestingly enough, the last chapter, authored by Michaela Praisler and Oana-Celia Gheorghiu, deals with the only actual border shift in the book besides the Eastern European enlargement mentioned above. It is beyond doubt that this alteration of the map of the European Union, whose machinations are put on display by the HBO filmic production *Brexit – The Uncivil War* and by Ian McEwan's dystopian novella, *The Cockroach*, will not be the last. *The stories continue to unfold*. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic is sweeping the world and leaving it in silence and disarray. Tomorrow there will be something else. But as long as humanity lasts, stories will continue to be told. And as long as stories are told, criticism will be present also, to assess the shifts observable in borders, identities or discourses.

PART I

HEART(S) OF DARKNESS

CHAPTER I

COSMOPOLITANISM AND REMIGRATION IN LAILA HALABY'S *ONCE IN A PROMISED LAND* AND MOHSIN HAMID'S *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST*

JOSEPH M. CONTE

Transversal Cosmopolitanism

In her essay, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," Martha Nussbaum argues that the assertion by Diogenes Laërtius, "I am a citizen of the world," that he is *kosmou politês*, means that he did not identify with his local origin (perhaps from the town of Laerte, in the province of Anatolia) or the class of Greek male citizens, but rather that "he defined himself in terms of more universal aspirations and concerns."[1] For Nussbaum, a cosmopolitan is a "person whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings."[2] On the contrary, the primary allegiance of a patriot or nationalist would be to his or her race, class, religion, and place of origin. A stern illustration of the latter view was advanced by (now) Vice President Mike Pence at the Republican National Convention in 2016, when he declared, "I'm a Christian, a conservative, and a Republican, in that order." Such "ethnocentric particularism," Nussbaum argues, will ultimately undermine "the values that hold a nation together, because it substitutes a colorful idol for the substantive universal values of justice and right."[3] While I am inclined to agree with her argument that the social good is better maintained by the values of the cosmopolite than by those of the nationalist, I am

[1] Nussbaum, *For Love of Country?*, 2002, 7. "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" was originally published in *The Boston Review* 1 Oct. 1994, bostonreview.net/martha-nussbaum-patriotism-and-cosmopolitanism, 8 Sept. 2017. The text of her essay in the edited volume is slightly revised, and I quote from that later version.
[2] Ibid, 4.
[3] Ibid, 5.

concerned that the cosmopolitan succumbs to a Lyotardian *différend* when one asks whether such universal values are only those spoken in the idiom of the Socratic dialogues and Plato's *Republic*. One respondent to a Hellenistic definition of cosmopolitanism, Christian Moraru, observes that "cosmopolitanism's professed universalism and internationalism proved lopsided or 'one-sided,' wedded to the Eurocentric, colonizing, and levelling underbelly of modern rationality, and socially exclusive rather than inclusive."[4] I am afraid that a cosmopolitanism defined as *katholikos* (catholic, "universal") has not been sufficiently extended to non-Christian and non-Western cultures,[5] and thus fails the test of transversality. In Deleuzian terms, transversality has neither a point of origin nor a destination; we cannot say of our students, as Nussbaum does, that as "citizens of the world" they should at least agree "to share this world with the citizens of other countries."[6] At the point of origin, the privileged consumers of a Harvard education get to be cosmopolites, while at the point of destination, the citizens of India, Bolivia, Nigeria, and Norway get to be Indian, Bolivian, Nigerian, and Norwegian. Rather, the transversal eternally occupies the middle, the interstice, and the line of becoming. The transversal, in Deleuze and Guattari's famous analogy of the wasp and the orchid, "produces a shared deterritorialization: of the wasp, in that it becomes a liberated piece of the orchid's reproductive system, but also of the orchid, in that it becomes the object of an orgasm in the wasp, also liberated from its own reproduction."[7] I am sure they were aware from their reading of Charles Darwin's *Fertilisation of Orchids* (1862) that the Orchidaceae family is rhizomatic and cosmopolitan, occurring in almost every habitat on the globe; and thus, their survival as a species depends on the itinerant wasp following them in every climate, from the tropics to the arctic tundra. In this analogy, "citizens of the world" not only agree to share it equitably with others but submit to a "shared deterritorialization" in which they are as much operated upon by transversality, altered in their conception of origin, participant in a line of becoming, mobile in state and cultural identity, as they are operating in a transversal exchange of parts with the other.

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[4] Moraru, *Cosmodernism: American Narrative, Late Globalization, and the New Cultural Imaginary*, 2011, 70.
[5] Ibid, 71-72. Moraru refuses to specify a cosmopolitanism but prefers to speak of cosmopolitanisms in the plural, some of which extend beyond "a white, male, upper-crust Western affair" to a "sort of popular, non-Western or non-elite cosmopolitanism."
[6] Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism," 6.
[7] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1987, 293.

In the revised introduction to her book, written "in the aftermath of September 11," Nussbaum urges that we offer compassion to the Muslim Americans among us and that such an expression of "cosmopolitan emotions" should also extend across national boundaries.[8] I could not agree more with her sentiment, especially in the face of the unreflective patriotism and widespread Islamophobia in the United States that followed the attacks and eventually resulted in two still-ongoing global conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq (Nussbaum's prologue was written in 2002). Yet, in another response to 9/11, George W. Bush, in his address to a joint session of Congress, asked of global terrorist groups such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda, "Why do they hate us?"[9] His response to his rhetorical question was that such groups are anti-democratic and do not respect our First-Amendment rights to freedom of religion, speech, and assembly. Aside from the obvious incommensurability of idiom in the *différend* (i.e., why *isn't* a theocratic non-state actor *regulated* by principles of western liberalism?), such an assertion of our rights as individuals does not begin to answer the question of what incented and precipitated the attacks on 9/11. The nation's failure to realize "why they hate us," the failure to accept that globalization, individualism, secularism, materialism, cultural imperialism, and an obscenely graphic society offended the theocratic ideology of the terrorists and their supporters—not that such global social forces could ever justify the slaughter of innocents—is a failure to accept any responsibility for 9/11 on the part of a hegemonic culture and therefore required no alteration in our own sociopolitical conception. So, despite the widespread claims that 9/11 was "the day that changed everything," defining the twenty-first century as an age of global terror, nothing much about our imperiousness has changed. In fact, the Trump administration's politics of ethnocentric nationalism, trade protectionism, anti-immigration, an executive order banning refugees from seven majority-Muslim countries, its disregard for human rights abroad and those of minorities at home, and oddly enough for an isolationist America First program, its military intervention in Syria and nuclear brinksmanship with Iran and North Korea, seem the very antithesis of cosmopolitanism and transnational citizenship. The "shared deterritorialization" of transversal politics requires not only compassion for alterity but also a reciprocated willingness to alter our cultural identity. If terrorism is the wasp, then globalization is the orchid; they are not resemblances or even antitheses but the "exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome."[10] Rather than ask whether cosmopolitans should

[8] Nussbaum, "Introduction: Cosmopolitan Emotions?" in *For Love of Country?*, ix.
[9] "President Bush Addresses the Nation," *Washington Post* 20 Sept. 2001.
[10] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 10.

not extend their compassion to the world's dispossessed—so long as they stay where they are, and in roughly the condition in which we find them—we should demand, with Hardt and Negri, that the right to global citizenship be conferred upon the multitude, the migrant, and the *sans papiers*.[11] Only then, when the full rights of global citizenship have been extended to any person where they live and work, can we be participatory in the double capture of transversal cosmopolitanism.

The sociologist S. A. Hamed Hosseini likewise considers the limitations of a cosmopolitanism founded upon principles of the western Enlightenment universalist ideals, and "obligations to mutual comprehension or openness to the 'stranger'" (which is incompatible with Emmanuel Levinas's concept of an unknowable Other).[12] Hosseini is wary of conventional notions of cosmopolitanism as a force of globalism in opposition to nationalism, relying on transcendental values that encourage "openness to difference through transcending divisions and creating universal spaces where widely held ideals of shared attributes across culture or groups can be practiced."[13] As an alternative to this globalist cosmopolitanism, he proposes a transversal cosmopolitanism, or transversalism, that mitigates between global resistance movements and local, grassroots action. Such transversality arrives dialectically at cultural pluralism through "interactions between conflicting grand processes such as liberalization, globalization, localization, Americanization, Balkanization, polarizations."[14] By operating as a meta-ideology that appropriates indiscriminately from any of these grand narratives, transversalism may achieve hybridization or fragmentation in some localities and cause homogenization or marginalization in others. He argues that it is the object of transversalization for all parties "to benefit mutually, receive equal recognition and representation, and finally become able to determine their destinies in their new conditions."[15] While equity, nonviolence, and democratic self-determination are unquestionably ethical and political desiderata, Hosseini's transversality works to resolve, "mutually," the shared deterritorialization that in Deleuzian transversality instigates reciprocated change, denaturalizing and dedoxifying the "representation" of both parties. Nor does the appeal of "equal recognition" (one must always ask, on whose terms? In whose idiom?) confront the Lyotardian *différend*, subjecting incommensurables to a disastrous argument

[11] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 2000, 400.
[12] Hosseini, "Occupy Cosmopolitanism: Ideological Transversalization in the Age of Global Economic Uncertainties," *Globalizations* 10, no. 3 (2013), 427.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid, 428.
[15] Ibid.

to consensus. And yet, Hosseini's definition of transversal cosmopolitanism describes the dialectical process through which global political complexities may be addressed. Transversalism

> refers to an underlying ideological vision within the current global resistance oriented towards redefining and redirecting global processes in alternative ways that cannot be simply identified with either radical particularism of localist visions and identity politics on one hand, or the universalism of institutional cosmopolitanism on the other hand. Transversalism attempts to rebuild global governance and transnational relations not just through institutional reforms but also predominantly through the plural participation of grassroots from below in both local and trans-local solidarity networks and autonomous public spheres.[16]

This opens the door to a transversal politics of difference, one that is neither beholden to universalist conceptions of justice nor constrained by the particularities of indigenous, exclusivist or essentialist identities. Hosseini finds the plural political ideologies of transversal cosmopolitanism "in adaptive voices such as eco-feminists, autonomist Marxists, post-anarchists, horizontalist, and affinity groups, who tend to accommodate new perceptions from other visions."[17] These hyphenated heterodoxies may more nimbly vault between transnational political challenges and local activism, between climate change and rising sea-levels in the Maldives and the sinking poverty and insularity of coal-mining towns in Appalachia.

Transnational Politics in Post-9/11 Fiction

I read the post-9/11 global novel as an expression of transnational politics, as narratives that expose and foreground a cultural *différend* which resists translation into a single global idiom. I try to identify characters in these novels who may be cosmopolites, global citizens, who instigate a shared deterritorialization or double capture, or who may be types of an identitarianism that is in the process of transformation into global citizens, since the art of the novel has always been receptive to, and indeed a mouthpiece for, cultural change. There's no question that September 11th and the so-called war on terror issued a profound challenge to the spirit of cosmopolitanism. Further, the ascendancy of nationalist populism in the American Presidential election of 2016 represents a braggadocious recidivism, with its renewed call for nation-state sovereignty, trade

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid, 429.

protectionism, immigration bans, disregard for global human rights, and rejection of transnational pacts on nuclear arms, climate change, and shared governance. And yet, the global novels that I discuss are each a *petit récit* that asserts in their own idiom the meta-ideology of transversalism, stubbornly resistant to ceding the world-ground to either the globalization of late capitalism or the ethnocentric nationalism of America First, the National Front, the British National Party, Jobbik, and the like. Probably no greater challenge to cosmopolitanism lies in the negotiation between Islam and the west. For that very reason, I want to examine two novels that will traverse in multicultural fashion this fractious relationship. Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) confronts the profiling, racism, and backlash towards Muslims in America after 9/11. The protagonists of the novel—a naturalized Jordanian hydrologist and his wife, a banker and real estate agent—are well-educated professionals and nonobservant Muslims who are forced by political circumstance to reconsider their citizenship, their practices, and their faith. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) re-envisions an American abroad—with apologies to Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad* and Henry James's *The American*—who is both naïf and ugly in his encounter with the other, innocent and guilty of the civilized savaging of a foreign land. The protagonist of Hamid's novel is an accomplished businessperson in global trade and finance who reconsiders his role as a janissary for multinational capitalism and undergoes a transversal reception (he both receives and is received) by a Middle Eastern culture that is misunderstood and demonized by the west. Significantly, the protagonists of both novels leave the United States to become global citizens.

The Muslim in America after 9/11

In the epigraph to her novel, Laila Halaby invokes the oral performance of Arabic folklore—"It was so, and it was not so"—the controlled indeterminacy of the Arabesque story, design, and folktale in her novel, *Once in a Promised Land*. Halaby is a multilingual global citizen, born in Beirut, Lebanon to a Jordanian father and an American mother; she grew up mostly in Arizona, where her novel is set. It's the morning of September 11th, and Jassim Haddad, a hydrologist specializing in water conservation in arid lands, and his wife, Salwa Khalil, a banker, real estate agent, and self-styled Queen of Pajamas, awake in Tucson to a changed world after the destruction of the World Trade Center "by Arabs, by Muslims…. But of course, they have nothing to do with what happened to the World Trade

Center. Nothing and everything."[18] The Jordanian-born Jassim is an atheist and highly-skilled scientist whose morning ritual begins not with the call to prayer but a long lap swim at the local Fitness Bar, achieving equilibrium and control through modern appurtenances. Almost immediately Jassim comes under the suspicion of Jack Franks, a retired Marine whose daughter has eloped with a Jordanian and converted to Islam. Further, he is profiled by the security guard while shopping with Salwa at the mall, despite his apparent wealth. Salwa fears "repercussion toward Arabs in this country" and wonders whether Americans are "so ignorant as to take revenge on" Jordanians, Lebanese, or Sikhs "for the act of a few extremist Saudis."[19] Halaby is agitated by a pervasive "American 'jahiliyya,' or generalized ignorance of other cultures," that under routine circumstances might be expected from the people of a continental nation and a homogenized mass culture but which under duress turns into a toxic and indiscriminate Islamophobia. Shocked by American insularity, she is especially disturbed by the presumption "that Arabs/Muslims are almost solely governed by their ethnicity/religion."[20] (Much the same was said of Italian Catholics in questioning their loyalty and suitability for public office.) Such *jahiliyya* represents the failure of Americans to respond to 9/11 in the spirit of compassionate cosmopolitanism and instead feeds an "'us-them' thinking" that according to Nussbaum all "too easily becomes a general call for American supremacy, the humiliation of 'the other.'"[21] Jassim, who has built a well-respected professional career in water conservation in the desert southwest, suffers a cold-sweat panic attack when he realizes that he is nothing more than a "visitor to this country,"[22] one who is no longer welcome. This destabilization of his identity—that he is not an assimilated "Jordanian-American" but remains a Jordanian expatriate—is compounded by an accident in which a young skateboarder, perhaps deliberately, swerves in front of Jassim while driving his Mercedes and is struck and killed. The intricacy and control of the Arabesque design in Jassim's life unravels after an investigation reveals the teen had been "freaked out" by 9/11 and began talking like a racist who "wished he could kill an Arab."[23] Serendipity is reconsidered as malevolence, and Jassim is fired from his job after a malicious co-worker informs the FBI that an "Arab" has access to the Tucson water system. The failure of tolerance and the conquest of

[18] Halaby, *Once in a Promised Land*. 2007, viii.
[19] Ibid, 21.
[20] Halaby, "Dare I Ask," *Beacon Broadside*, 17 Jan. 2008.
[21] Nussbaum, "Introduction: Cosmopolitan Emotions?" in *For Love of Country?*, x.
[22] Halaby, *Once in a Promised Land*, 153.
[23] Ibid, 200-201.

generalized ignorance are clear enough. Against which, Jassim's passion for water: in a lecture he gives at the University of Jordan, Jassim observes that the "first known permanent human settlement was on the west bank of the River Jordan," or Palestine, with dams dating to 3000 B.C.E.[24] Further, "The Quran specifically states that all living beings have a right to water."[25] Jassim asserts the universal right to water as essential to life, not as an Arab or a Muslim but as a hydrologist. His pursuit of water sufficiency and universal access is characteristic of his responsible global citizenship, not an expression of sectarianism that pits the needs of one settlement against another. Jassim's dream of universal water rights carries him transversally from the arid lands of the West Bank to the Arizona desert; but after 9/11, his commitment will carry him back to the river Jordan.

Once in a Promised Land is an Arabesque story, and it incorporates the telling of the folktale of Nus Nsays. A woman who is desperate to become pregnant hears the cry of a merchant selling "pregnancy apples."[26] She buys a large red apple and leaves it at home while she goes about her work. Her husband arrives home from the field, eats half the apple, and saves the remainder for her. Because the woman eats only half the apple, she gives birth to a very tiny boy, Nus Nsays (whose Arabic name means *half of a halving*). The tale comes to Salwa in a dream, after she has suffered a miscarriage. Like Jassim's accident with the skateboarder, these are chance interruptions in the intricate design of life. Salwa has not told Jassim of her pregnancy because he does not wish to have children; an irreconcilable difference in their marriage, a *différend* that cannot be halved. When the morning of September 11th arrives, there is a further halving, as Salwa becomes convinced that "*We cannot live here anymore…. It is different now*, she thought. *If I am pregnant, I cannot raise my child here, away from everything I know*."[27] Because she has come under suspicion as an Arab Muslim woman—although she is not veiled—it is America that has become alien to her. Ironically, Salwa is a natural-born American citizen of migrant refugee parents, not unlike the orphaned Abdul Karim Anwar in *The Submission*. After her engagement to Jassim, her father, Abu Siham, describes Salwa as "Palestinian by blood, Jordanian by residence, and American by citizenship. That is why she uses so much water and has a taste for luxury. We tease her that she is really first world. A colonizer."[28] Despite her father's jocularity about her fine tastes, Salwa is *half of a halving*, born

[24] Ibid, 243.
[25] Ibid, 244.
[26] Ibid, 93.
[27] Ibid, 54; Halaby's emphasis.
[28] Ibid, 70.

into two worlds: she is a child of the Palestinian diaspora; *and* she is a natural-born American citizen. When a "native Tucsonan" woman refuses to work with her at the bank, Salwa identifies herself as Palestinian, raised in Jordan "because my parents were refugees. They were kicked out of their homes in 1948 when the state of Israel was established."[29] Salwa is thus twice-displaced, once by the Palestinian exodus, "al-Nakbah" (the catastrophe), and once by an accident of birth. The die is cast as she pointedly refuses to assert her citizenship, that she is *just as American* by law as the native Tucsonan. She purchases a single ticket to Amman where she intends to rejoin her family. Salwa realizes that the American Dream she has pursued is a "huge lie," and that "she did not come from a culture of happy endings."[30] By unofficially renouncing her American citizenship, Salwa fully embraces and honors her global, diasporic Palestinian identity. The novel, being an Arabesque story, ends neither with a happy resolution of the Haddads' marriage crisis nor with Salwa's departure for Jordan; instead, it ends with the folktale of Hassan and the *ghula* (sorceress) who casts a spell on a beautiful girl born "out of place" to refugee parents.[31] This suspension of an ending, because "'Happily ever after' happens only in American fairy tales,"[32] better suits Salwa's rediscovery of herself as diasporic, multinational, cosmopolitan, Palestinian, Muslim, and Queen of Pajamas.

The American Abroad after 9/11

While Halaby's novel engages with an Islamophobia after 9/11 that seeks to render alien the Muslim in America, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* depicts an American received into the arms of Islam, with a mischievous nod to Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869), in which the author is not only underwhelmed by the religious history of the Holy Land but chides the Protestant pieties of

[29] Ibid, 113.
[30] Ibid, 316-17.
[31] Ibid, 331.
[32] Ibid, 335. See also Carol Fadda-Conrey, "Representing Arabs and Muslims in the US after 9/11: Gender, Religion, and Citizenship," in *Contemporary Arab-American Literature: Transnational Reconfigurations of Citizenship and Belonging* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2014), 139-76. She argues that the Haddads are willing to abandon their transnational political engagement in Jordan for the consumerist comforts and bland multiculturalism of America, until 9/11 disturbs their complacency. The American Dream is the *ghula* that "leads them to abandon their values, culture, language, and religion and to relinquish any attempt at a permanent return home," 151.

his fellow travellers. Hamid asks whether these new Innocents Abroad transversally receive Islam, the religion of peace, or whether they further alienate the Muslim in Lahore, Pakistan as Islamist foot soldiers in a global "clash of civilizations."[33] Throughout his life and career, Mohsin Hamid has been a peripatetic cosmopolite, spending part of his formative years on the San Francisco Peninsula while his father pursued a Ph.D. at Stanford University, and then attending the Lahore American School on the family's return to Pakistan. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Princeton University in its distinguished writing program, followed by studies in corporate law at Harvard Law School, graduating in 1997. Hamid holds dual citizenship in the UK and Pakistan, but like James Joyce and his poignant *Exiles* (1918), he considers himself a "transcontinental mongrel,"[34] shaped more by the miscegenation of cultures than by purist adherence to the tenets of any one civilization. In "Discontent and Its Civilizations," Hamid dismantles Samuel P. Huntington's pre-9/11 contention that civilizations identified by ethnicity and religion, rather than nation states or political ideology, will define the fault lines in global politics in the twenty-first century. Such notions of civilizations "are illusions, but these illusions are pervasive, dangerous, and powerful. They contribute to globalization's brutality. They allow us, for example to say that we believe in global free markets and, in the same breath, to discount as impossible the global free movement of labour."[35] Instead, Hamid makes his brief for cultural hybridity: "Individuals have commonalities that cut across different countries, religions, and languages—and differences that divide those who share a common country, religion, and language. The idea that we fall into civilizations, plural, is merely a politically convenient myth."[36] Pakistan, the country of his birth, is "a test bed for pluralism on a globalizing planet" because it is "one of many places whose citizenry is made up of a patchwork of intermixed ethnic and linguistic groups."[37] Hamid believes that the hybridity and self-invention of the migrant, the mongrel, and the

[33] Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.
[34] Hamid, "The Pathos of Exile," *Time Asia* 18 Aug. 2003.
[35] Hamid, "My Foreign Correspondence," in *Discontent and Its Civilizations: Dispatches from Lahore, New York, and London* 2015, 8. Hardt and Negri argue, similarly, that the politics of Empire attempts to control the paths of mass migration, and when it cannot do that, it will "only try to criminalize those who travel them, even when the movements are required for capitalist production itself," *Empire*, 398.
[36] Mohsin Hamid, "Discontent and Its Civilizations," in *Discontent and Its Civilizations*, 154.
[37] Hamid, "My Foreign Correspondence" 5.

miscegenator will "reveal the boundaries between groups to be false."[38] The effect of transversal cosmopolitanism will be to produce more "Westernized Muslims, Islamized Westerners" who are not "unrepresentative minorities" but the plurality in a post-civilization world.[39] These global citizens traversing and sending dispatches from Lahore, New York, and London are forged by the double-capture in which both groups, the Western and the Islamic, exchange qualities.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a dramatic monologue delivered by a Princeton-educated Pakistani émigré who returns to Lahore after 9/11 to lecture in the classroom against American imperialism. The native Urdu-speaking Changez regales in postcolonial British English a nameless American, most likely a CIA operative, with his melancholy story, and the reader is left to ponder the undecidable problem—the impossibility of an algorithm that leads to a correct yes-or-no answer—as to whether the fundamentalist or the operative has set a murderous trap for the other; or both, or neither. In "My Reluctant Fundamentalist," Hamid describes how he arrived, through multiple drafts of the novel, at "the frame of a dramatic monologue in which the Pakistani protagonist speaks to an American listener, and a voice born of the British colonial inflections taught in elite Pakistani schools and coloured by an anachronistic, courtly menace that resonates well with popular Western preconceptions of Islam."[40] That one-sided conversation takes place in a Lahore café, where the loquacious Changez hosts "the quiet American."[41] The latter is understandably cautious as this match is played according to the house rules and Pakistani culture of hospitality. Whatever can be said about the unnamed American, or his infrequent interjections in the conversation, must be inferred from the oblique, or transversal, recapitulations of an unreliable narrator: "You seem worried. Do not be; this burly fellow is merely our waiter, and there is no need to reach under your jacket, I assume to grasp your wallet, as we will pay him later, when we are done. Would you prefer regular tea, with milk and sugar, or green tea, or perhaps their more fragrant specialty, Kashmiri tea? Excellent choice."[42] The American's ambiguous gesture, which might signal his training in threat perception and neutralization *if* he is an

[38] Ibid, 8.
[39] Hamid, "Discontent and Its Civilizations" 155.
[40] Hamid, "My Reluctant Fundamentalist" in *Discontent and Its Civilizations*, 93.
[41] As a precursor to his silent character, Hamid may have in mind Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* (1955), in which Alden Pyle, an undercover CIA agent in Vietnam, considers whether Communism, colonialism, traditionalism, or some combination thereof, would be best for the Vietnamese.
[42] Hamid, *Reluctant Fundamentalist.* 2007, 5-6.

undercover CIA agent, i.e., the possibility that he is reaching for his weapon, is recast in Changez's narrative with polite deflection, i.e., the possibility that prematurely offering to pay the bill (which tea did he choose?) would be an offense to a gracious host. As Lindsay Balfour argues in "Risky Cosmopolitanism," the etymology of hospitality in the Latin *hospes* contains a radical ambivalence, as the word can refer either to the host or the guest, and it contains within it the sub-root *hostis*, or enemy.[43] As a stranger in a strange land, the American may be well-received into the arms of Islam *and/or* he may be treated as a lethal enemy. Indeed, a tragic and naïve misconstrual of just such a radical ambivalence occurred a few years *after* the publication of Hamid's novel. Undercover CIA contractor Raymond A. Davis was driving in Lahore on January 27, 2011 when two men on a motorbike pulled alongside his nondescript Honda Civic at a traffic light.[44] Davis testified that one of the men brandished a gun. Davis shot and killed both men through the windshield of his car with his own 9mm Glock pistol. Much as the unnamed American in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* may question Changez's intentions, were the men on the motorbike intent on kidnapping Mr Davis as a valuable hostage for exchange by one of the transnational Islamist groups operating in Pakistan, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (suspected of carrying out the November 2008 Mumbai attacks)? Were they actually armed, or did he only fear that they were? Were they thieves preying on a western tourist, as he initially suggested, or is that a naïve assumption in a city rife with extremist violence? Did they intend to assassinate him, or were they interested in him at all? Had an American abroad simply made the conclusion that a western foreigner traveling alone had drawn their unwelcome attention? Davis was arrested for murder by Pakistani authorities. While the US pleaded for diplomatic immunity (a transnational concession to the rule of law), Davis was eventually freed only when the US paid a reported $2.3 million in compensation to the families of the Pakistani men. I.e., Davis was released after the payment of *diyya* (blood money) by the US State Department, under the principle of Sharia (Islamic law) that permits murder charges to be dropped if the deceased's family willingly assents, an arrangement that is relatively common in tribal Pakistani culture. In the resolution of this serious diplomatic incident which stoked anti-American anger in Pakistan

[43] Balfour, "Risky Cosmopolitanism," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 58, no. 3 (2017), 215-16. 214-225.

[44] According to Rob Crilly, Davis "was acting head of CIA in Pakistan" and tasked with gathering intelligence for drone strikes on Lashkar-e-Taiba, considered responsible for the siege of Mumbai in 2008. "Raymond Davis 'was acting head of CIA in Pakistan,'" *The Telegraph* 22 Feb. 2011.

(as would the assassination of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad on May 2, 2011), the US State Department willingly availed itself of, was made subject to, and embraced Sharia and the rituals of tribal culture in the pursuit of the American "war on terror." If Hamid didn't invent Raymond Davis, he certainly imagines his character into being in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and the fatal confrontation between an American abroad and a Pakistani man in Lahore is exactly what Hamid's narrative warns against; a mutual misconstrual across cultural boundaries that results in violence unwanted by either party. The unnamed American in the novel is made to be the silent "other," a transversal figure in the otherwise familiar dynamic of the hegemon and the subaltern,[45] the white, speaking, imperial subject (Robinson Crusoe) and the mute, half-savage lackey ("Friday" only "makes signs" until he is taught to say "Master"). In E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), the British schoolmistress, Adela Quested, accuses (gives testimony in a court of the British Raj) Dr Aziz of assaulting her amidst the confounding echo of the Marabar Caves (it reverberates, rendering speech unintelligible), whereas in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* the accuser and the accused, the speaker and the auditor, the imperialist and the extremist, are transversally changed and exchanged. In Hamid's novel, only the subaltern speaks while the hegemon remains mute.

The narrator of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* muses, "All plots tend to move deathward. This is the nature of plots."[46] In the unresolved plot of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, both Changez and the American are figures in a "double capture" that reflects the decline of American imperialism and the fortunes of "rising Asia."[47] Both are irrevocably "changed" (the pun on the speaker's name is operative), and as Yeats said of the uprising by Irish nationalists against British imperialists in "Easter 1916," "a terrible beauty in born." Changez recounts his days as an international fellowship student at Princeton University and then his fortunate employment by Underwood Samson (a metonymy for the US), "a valuation firm" that "told their clients how much their businesses were worth,"[48] stepping directly into the maw of globalization. Contrasting the "democratically *urban*" quality of congested, chaotic Lahore with the multinational, cosmopolitan appeal of New York, Changez observes, "I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was *immediately* a New Yorker."[49] The distinction is, of course, crucial to

[45] See Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 2006, 28-37.
[46] DeLillo, *White Noise*, 1986, 26.
[47] Hamid's subsequent novel, a second-person narrative written as a self-help book, is *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (New York: Riverhead, 2013).
[48] Hamid, *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 5.
[49] Ibid, 33.

the plot: as a brown-skinned Muslim, Changez is never "naturalized" as an American; as a cosmopolite in a global city, however, he is welcomed as an equal among its many transnational citizens. The novel raises such questions as whether Changez's radicalization after 9/11 comes at the cost of his cosmopolitanism, whether he has recoiled into an ethnocentric nationalism intent on doing harm to the American, or whether the meeting at the café is a last-ditch effort to probe for comity between Pakistan and the US. The impeccably polite Changez pursues a thoroughly modern love affair—but under formal courtship rules—with a Princetonian named Erica, whose "wheat-colored limbs" are, like the shafts on an old-style copper penny, all-(Am)erican.[50] But Erica is possessed by melancholy after the sudden death of her boyfriend, Chris, and her body resists penetration by the alien Changez. He can only consummate their relationship when, pathetically, he offers to "pretend I am him," pretend he is a white, Christian American. Only then did her body deny him no longer: "I watched her shut eyes, and her shut eyes watched *him*."[51] Such pretence will prove futile, and Changez as a foreign agent—even a non-observant Muslim—will be expulsed from the body of America. As Kristiaan Versluys contends, melancholy, or the "endless reenactment of trauma" that "allows for no accommodation or resolution," defines the *condition américaine* after the attacks on 9/11, and Erica's self-destructive psychosis becomes a metaphor for American ineffectuality and decline.[52]

Changez has other reasons for unhappiness, including his superiors at Underwood Samson and Erica's father who address him with a "typically *American* undercurrent of condescension."[53] While on a book tour for *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Hamid is politely asked by an elderly gentleman with a copy of the novel in hand, "So tell me, sir. Why do they hate us?" In short, Hamid responds that Americans can do very little about the envy and resentment felt toward the richest, most powerful nation by people abroad; but "there is another major reason for anti-Americanism: the accreted residue of many years of US foreign policies" that have had devastating effects on countries such as Pakistan but which are largely "unknown to

[50] Ibid, 26. Balfour also observes in "Risky Cosmopolitanism" that Erica's name is "a marsupial of America," 214.
[51] Ibid, 105.
[52] Kristiaan Versluys, *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel* 2009, 20-21. Versluys does not discuss Hamid's novel in his treatment of mourning and melancholia in post-9/11 fiction, although Erica seems to be a textbook case of this psychopathology.
[53] Hamid, *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 55.

most Americans."[54] Thus, while on a business trip for Underwood Samson in Southeast Asia, Changez catches the glare of "undisguised hostility" from his Filipino limousine driver, and yet he recognizes that he "shared a sort of Third World sensibility" with the man.[55] When, at his luxury hotel in Manila, he watches as "one—and then the other—of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed," his reaction is rather un-American: "And then I *smiled*. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased."[56] A risky admission, considering his guest at the Lahore café, but Changez explains his Schadenfreude thusly:

> I was caught up in the *symbolism* of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees. Ah, I see I am only compounding your displeasure. I understand, of course; it is hateful to hear another person gloat over one's countrys misfortune. But surely you cannot be completely innocent of such feelings yourself. Do you feel no joy at the video clips—so prevalent these days—of American munitions laying waste the structures of your enemies?[57]

The attacks on 9/11 confirm to Changez that he is *foreign* to the body of America. The envy of American prosperity and the resentment of its predilection for foreign intervention prompt his instinctive satisfaction in the US's surprise defeat, while the American abroad feigns innocence not only of our assaults on sovereignty (e.g., Pinochet's Chile, or Reza Pahlavi's Iran) but also "why they hate us." Changez is interrogated on his return to New York, a city which had once welcomed him, and asked, "What is the purpose of your visit to the United States?" It is a country to which he no longer belongs and into which he is no longer assimilable.

It is on a mission for Underwood Samson, a final test of his loyalty to the firm, that Changez travels to post-Pinochet Chile, to valuate a publishing company whose literary trade authors had, ironically for Hamid, become a drag on the company's profits. While in conversation with the executive editor, Juan-Bautista, Changez senses that he is "clearly on the threshold of great change," and that his host over lunch represents the final catalyst. Juan-Bautista begs permission to ask a personal question about Changez's participation in the mission of disruptive capitalism: "Have you

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[54] Mohsin Hamid, "Why Do They Hate Us?" *Washington Post* 22 July 2007, washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/20/AR2007072001806_pf.html, 27 Sept. 2016.
[55] Hamid, *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 66-67.
[56] Ibid, 72.
[57] Ibid, 73.

heard of the janissaries? … They were Christian boys … captured by the Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army, at that time the greatest army in the world. They were ferocious and utterly loyal: they had fought to erase their own civilizations, so they had nothing else to turn to."[58] Although Changez has become a janissary in his "adopted empire" at a somewhat later age than the Christian boys, he has fought just as ferociously to expunge his native Islamic culture, beliefs, and identity on behalf of the secular materialism of late capital. Renouncing his commission in the forces of globalization, Changez abandons his post in New York and returns to Lahore to take up a position as university lecturer, advocating "a disengagement from your country by mine."[59] He becomes a "reluctant fundamentalist" because, while he declines to embrace the violence of radical Islamists, he preaches a transversal politics on behalf of "greater independence in Pakistan's domestic and international affairs."[60] If that constitutes an expression of anti-Americanism, it is in opposition to America's "fight against terrorism, which was defined to refer only to the organized and politically motivated killing of civilians by killers *not* wearing the uniforms of soldiers," and for which "the lives of those of us who lived in lands in which such killers also lived had no meaning except as collateral damage."[61] His transversal resistance to such a definition of the "war on terror" is that it exempts state-sponsored, uniformed terrorism, of which the US is one of the world's most prominent purveyors. In his assertion of this transversality, Changez echoes Noam Chomsky, that "Western powers could never abide by their own official definitions" of terrorism because "[t]o do so would at once reveal that the U.S. is a leading terrorist state, as are its clients."[62] In his one-sided conversation, Changez describes his conversion from janissary to reluctant fundamentalist. As they leave the table, the undecidable question remains: "I know you have found some of my views offensive; I hope you will not resist my attempt to shake you by the hand. But why are you reaching into your jacket, sir? I detect a glint of metal. Given that you and I are now bound by a certain shared intimacy, I trust it is from the holder of your business cards."[63] Unless there is a shared deterritorialization, unless the American is *also* changed transversally by his "conversation" with Islam, then he leaves the table to

[58] Ibid, 151.
[59] Ibid, 179.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid, 178.
[62] Noam Chomsky, "Not Since the War of 1812", 2011, 47-48.
[63] Hamid, *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 184.